

**THE LAND RESTITUTION CLAIM MODEL, TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF ZEBEDIELA COUNTRY ESTATE COMMUNITY IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Land is of the utmost significance in rural communities, providing opportunities for social and economic survival. The importance of income distribution is a universal need in the Pan-African discourse. The research approach is expected to provide answers to the study questions and objectives. In this desktop study, the method of secondary data collection through document analysis was used. The study used convenience and purposive sampling where variables were sampled from the total population. The theoretical framework followed was the Collective Replacement Theory, which draws on socialism and focuses on non-individualised outcomes of land tenure reform. The study has corroborated that the Land Restitution Programme applies to individuals who have been historically impacted by Apartheid, especially women who have been imprisoned in poverty. The findings of the case study were that the restitution programme has had a positive impact on the beneficiaries. The study concludes that it is of critical importance to embark on a strategic partnership with someone who is knowledgeable and experienced in the field and discipline. The business model adopted was the most meaningful and successful one, and it is the purpose of this paper to share lessons of success to be replicated in other land restitution projects. Overall, the government should focus on the proposed framework to be able to alleviate poverty and enhance the quality of life. This study contributes towards socio-economic transformation within the sustainable development space. Future studies will track progress and changes to the Land Reform Programme.

**Keywords:** Land reform, rural development, strategic partner, sustainable development.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The indigenous people of South Africa have historically been dispossessed of land where they were arrayed in native reserves, concentration camps and later unproductive land referred to as Bantustans. The South African populace was colonised during the Anglo Boer War, when the British were in control of the country. The farmers were forced off their land and turned into migrant labourers. The 1913 Natives Land Act enacted at the time, did not take cognisance of the eighty percent African majority, and only settled them on thirteen percent of the land. Agricultural growth contributes towards poverty alleviation among the rural poor. This situation went on until the democratic government came to power in 1994. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, section 25, seeks to redress the injustices of the past. The government has undertaken a comprehensive land reform programme, which seeks to redress the inequalities in land ownership. The land reform programme aims to contribute towards poverty reduction, restore economic imbalances, and create an inclusive economy and rural development through land tenure, land restoration, and land redistribution for the marginalised groups. The government spent R33 billion on land acquisition and reform since 1994. According to De Lange (2017), black people purchased 5 million hectares of agricultural land of which 1.7 million hectares were for non-agricultural purposes, which equalled 73.3 percent in 2016. The government only acquired and redistributed 2.1 million hectares of agricultural land.

Land has the potential to shape the economic landscape and make an impact in improving livelihoods through household food security. There have been several strategies, particularly in the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural development, to actualise the land reform programme for sustainable development. One such programme was the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CASP), which served to support the rural communities in producing their own food for food security and sustainable livelihoods.

## **CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH AIM**

It is reiterated that land access is a critical component for socio-economic growth globally. In the South African context, as enshrined in the Constitution, land is used to correct the historical injustices for the reduction of the severity of poverty among the citizens as a way of overcoming the legacies of the colonial and segregationist era. These pose a major challenge to economic policy, and economic security, specifically for indigenous South Africans. Despite their accessibility to land as stipulated in the Land Rights Bill, most people remain underprivileged, marginalised, and might become even poorer in future because they are mostly excluded from

the land reform programme.

“Overcoming the legacies of colonial and segregationist eras remain a major challenge to economic policy and the land redistribution is moderately remunerated” (Cousins 2019:7). Lack of access to land causes economic insecurity and inequality, especially for indigenous South Africans. Despite the implementation of the Land Rights Bill and its efforts to ensure that all South Africans are included in the land reform programme, marginalisation still exists, as the process of land reform has been slow. Notwithstanding the sluggish progress, which leaves people hopeless and disgruntled to the extent of giving up, land redistribution followed by government still affects the process of poverty alleviation for achieving sustainable development. The strategic objectives of the land redistribution contributing to the redistribution of 30 % of the country’s agricultural land over 15 years; was for improving nutrition and incomes of the rural poor who want to farm on any scale; de-congesting overcrowded former homeland areas; and expanding opportunities for women and young people who stay in rural areas.

The narrative provided above clearly points to the importance of land reform in providing socio-economic benefits; however, the slippages and the sluggishness could be addressed, if the land restitution programme can provide post-settlement assistance to the beneficiaries under the circumstances (Lahiff, 2007:11). Numerous land restitution programmes have previously been administered, with various degrees of success and failure. This study leans towards the successful one for sharing best practices, as most scholars write about the failing ones as a way of criticising government. The Zebediela Citrus farm has been selected as a case study to represent those restitution and land redistribution programmes which have impacted positively on the socio-economic living conditions of the indigenous people in rural areas. Mukurukuru Media (2020) states that the Zebediela Citrus Estate was once the biggest producer of oranges in the Southern Hemisphere. It was returned to the Bjatladi community under the land reform process in 2003. Zebediela Estate consists of 5973 hectares and is owned by the Bjatladi Community Property Association. It is the largest exporter of citrus fruit to destinations such as America, Europe and Asia, Canada, Russia, Japan, China, and South America. Mukurukuru Media (2020) further posits that over the years the yield dropped due to alleged mismanagement which resulted in unpaid bills, late payment of workers, and drastic cuts in labour which contributed to a drop in production. It should be noted that the estate was transferred to a community-owned enterprise after the land was restored back to communities through the government’s restitution programme. It has since been under the ownership and

management of the Bjaladi Communal property Association (CPA) on behalf of the claimant communities. According to Eales (1984), Zebediela Citrus Estate has been in existence since 1871 under the Schlesinger organisation and later, African Realty Trust. It was later purchased in 1917. The estate employed three thousand black workers at the time where they were paid 25 shillings per month, excluding provisions. In the 1930's however, the South African economy moved from a period of depression to one of rapid development, with the demand and competition for labour increasing accordingly as migrants sought (Eales, 1984). He further explicated that the shortage of labour at Zebediela became acute to an extent that the management was obliged to recruit labour further afield through the established recruiting agencies operating from Messina, the Mozambican border, and across the Limpopo. Thus, from the mid-1930's, the bulk of Zebediela's labour was drawn from Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

A status report on the estate by the Limpopo's Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (2020) denotes "limited investment" in the farm over the past 30 years. Some of the orchards at the Zebediela Citrus Estate were planted over 30 years ago and are deemed to be less productive because of their age. The packhouse dates back 50 years and uses a rope-and-roller sorting system with manual classification. The dual challenge of low yields from old trees and inefficient sorting and classification from an outdated packhouse is exacerbated by ageing infrastructure and irrigation systems." The department estimates that R465 million in capital will be needed to redevelop the estate. Most importantly, these would require private investment and partnerships since the government alone cannot afford it, even in the medium to long term (SA News, 2020). According to SA News (2020), "the outcome of the revitalisation programme would be an estate with 734 ha of citrus, a modern technology packhouse, efficient electricity infrastructure and a sustainable water source." It was envisaged that, through partnership funding from the government, the IDC and private investors, the estate would be "recapitalised and operated in a financially sustainable manner". The Zebediela Citrus Estate in Limpopo, South Africa is set to receive a 500-million-rand (USD\$34 million) grant as part of the government's post-Covid-19 economic recovery plan.

## **STUDY OBJECTIVES**

This study seeks to explore the effect of a land restitution project on socio-economic development. Overall, the ultimate goals are to critically analyse the impact which the land restitution has had on the sustainable livelihoods of the claimants; secondly, to reconnoitre the success factors of a

restitution claim for possible replication to other land reform projects; and lastly, to explore critical considerations for a successful land reform programme.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The major goal of this segment is to give various perspectives on studies that have been conducted in relation to the socio-economic issues faced by communities that have partaken in the land restitution programme.

### **Land reform and rural development**

Equality in land ownership according to Negrão, (2002), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), 2002, Borras, 2006, has been empirically proven to be effective towards sustainable development for various reasons, such as poverty alleviation and food security. Land reform is vast and can be defined in various ways within the context of a country, meaning that it is country specific. Within the South African context, Lahiff and Li (2012:5) describe land reform as a “means to achieve both land access and land ownership, the efficient use of land while contributing to rural development”. In other countries, where their context of rural is the squatter camps or slums which are stacked above each other where there is scarcity of land, their definition of land reform will differ from the South African context.

Other authors refer to land reform as the provision of land to the landless, where land disposition is redressed for the transformation of the agrarian economy. Importantly, the author of this paper who has been in the centre of the land reform process when the implementation was starting, as a previous employee of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture, would define land reform in simpler terms as a programme whose aim is to give back the land to its previous owners for production of food to meet food security needs, sustainable livelihoods within the political, social, and economic landscape. Land is everyone’s human right and land restoration should be redressed for all those who were dispossessed of it through a resettlement process.

Within an arena of events, for land reform to be effective, the rural poor should have access to credit systems, training, marketing support, and research services. Importantly, the rural development programmes aim to provide socio-economic change, improvement in agricultural production, and redistribution of wealth, to create employment and provide better livelihoods. A relationship between rural development and land reform is essential for the redistribution of land and increased productivity in rural areas.

### **Overview of other countries' experiences on land reform**

Ghimire (2001) explicates that land reform in various nations involves a variety of challenges, including access to land, formalisation of land rights and entitlements, and strengthening post-reform production systems and livelihoods, to name a few, while Groenewald (2003) postulates that the international view on land reform was shaped by the development agenda to dismantle undemocratic power structures based on skewed land ownership patterns. Conversely, Bruce (1993) elucidates that land reform was carried out in the international setting, primarily in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, using the land-to-the-tiller paradigm where the tenants became owners of the land, which they previously rented.

Lahif (2007) postulates that the land question was high on the political agenda in Zimbabwe in the 1980s, dormant for much of the 1990s, and then resurfaced in 1999. According to Moyo, Jha, & Yeros, (2013), the re-emergence of landreform on the development agenda in the mid-1990s and the re-launching of the resettlement programme in Zimbabwe marked the latest phase of a conflict relationship between peasants, government, and global institutions. South Africa has a lengthy history of colonisation, racial dominance, and land dispossession, with a white minority owning most agricultural land. According to Matukane (2011), several factors must be considered for land restitution programmes to be successful. It is important to mention that without environmental management, ownership, support services, and full involvement in the land restitution process, there will be no sustainability.

### **A South African perspective on land reform**

The process of the land distribution has been through many phases (Ntsebeza 2007: 119). Hall and Kepe (2017:126) illuminate that the first phase was during President Thabo Mbeki's tenure, followed by that of President Jacob Zuma, and then President Cyril Ramaphosa. The Thabo Mbeki administration wanted the land redistribution policy to promote black capitalists with their means to engage in commercial production, whilst the Zuma administration adopted the willing seller/willing buyer principle. However, at the 54<sup>th</sup> ANC Conference, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that the ANC's approach to land reform would be that of expropriation without compensation. Land expropriation without compensation gained prominence in South African debates around land reform, property rights and constitutional amendments. As a process of ensuring economic inclusion for all South Africans, the Constitutional Review Committee has adopted a final report to amend section 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, and this comes as a step towards the expropriation of land without compensation. Tjale, Mwale and Kilonzo (2021) point out that should the government pursue the issue of expropriation,

historical acquisition of land and African labour exploitation should be taken into consideration when determining compensation.

The Expropriation Bill of 2019, which was open for public comment, proposes that the amount of compensation, time, and manner of payment for the expropriated land should be just and equitable. Beinart and Delius (2019: 2) argue that expropriating land without compensation undermines the confidence of landowners. The position is fundamentally based on the erosion of property rights, aggressive state control, and central planning over the economy. Land reform in South Africa is separated into three legs: land restitution, land redistribution, and tenure reform. The Zebediela estate followed the land restitution process, which means compensating the previous owners through resettlement.

### **The future of land reform in South Africa**

The report of the Presidential Advisory Panel on land reform and agriculture was released in July 2019 and proposed recommendations in the process of land reform in South Africa. Beinart and Delius (2019:1) are sceptical that the recommendations proposed by the Presidential Advisory Panel on land reform and agriculture can carry weight considering the expectations that have been created. They further emphasised that the recommendations in the report fail to locate it within the current fiscal crisis, which will place tight limits on state expenditure in the foreseeable future. Du Toit (2019: 7) states that expropriation without compensation discourses create tricky situations for rural development policy makers and researchers, where significant political discourses were decidedly unhelpful.

Post-settlement support exists to ensure that restituted and redistributed land is utilised to its full potential and has received very little attention. The transfer of land and the number of formerly disadvantaged groups who acquire land through the land reform programme receive the most attention (DRDLR, 2015–2020). In South Africa, post-settlement support is provided to recipients after they have purchased land through the land reform project. The goal of post-settlement support services is to promote and facilitate agricultural development among land reform beneficiaries (Business Enterprise, 2013). Land reform recipients were found to be presented with challenges that made it difficult to progress without mitigation (Manenzhe, Zwane, & van Niekerk 2016). Importantly, land usage was limited due to lack of planning and technical support as well as weak infrastructure.

Many farmers assistance programmes have come and gone. The Department of Agriculture

devised several means to introduce programmes which were meant to support post-settlement farmers to address the issues for sustainability. The first programme was the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP), which was launched in 2004 to address the issue of insufficient post-settlement support services. This program's goal was to give agricultural support services to land reformers and new farmers to promote agricultural development and help farmers contribute to the economy (Mabuza 2016). CASP provides support for training services, technical guidance, marketing strategies, business planning, infrastructure development, and financial aid to land restitution projects (Ledwaba 2013:27).

The other programme was the Recapitalization and Development Programme (RECAP) which was implemented in 2009, (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, 2011). Cousins (2019) states that the programme was created to revitalise and develop unproductive land reform programmes. The programme concentrates mainly on distressed farms that have recently been acquired under the land restitution and redistribution programme, which has been in place since 1994. It also supports new black farmers who don't have access to grant funds, are not part of the land reform programme, and live-in communal areas. The focus of the programme is capacity development, infrastructure development, and operational inputs. According to Mabuza (2016), RECAP was supported on a five-year cycle.

Another programme was the Micro-Agricultural Financial Institutions of South Africa (MAFISA). According to Mabuza (2016), the National Department of Agriculture launched MAFISA in 2005 to secure financial assistance for land restitution programmes. MAFISA is a state-owned programme that was designed to provide micro and retail agricultural financial services on a cost-effective and sustainable basis for the purpose of boosting farmer assistance and transforming the agricultural sector. This initiative is aimed at economically active farmers in peri-urban and rural areas. According to Lamosa (2010), despite the advances gained, the money did not give the other critical support that land reform and emerging farmers require, such as mentorship, training, and market connections.

However, the question whether these rural land reform programmes are justified and can be effective as tools for reducing unemployment and poverty by contributing towards the overall improvement of rural household welfare remains unrequited and still needs in-depth empirical evidence. Even if they do, is it really something which can get an individual from poverty to wealth? It has not been the case in several studies conducted by various scholars, but its



effectiveness is seen only where the people subjected to serious poverty pockets transition to better livelihoods. To this date, there is no model which can actualise that, and no evidence can be sought.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical rhetoric in this study of land restoration is on collectivism as a best way to overcome the socio-economic challenges that communities face. Hull, Babalola, and Whittal (2019) mention numerous theoretical typologies on land tenure systems, such as Replacement or Conservation theory, Conservative Theory, Democratic Adaptation Theory, Hybrid Adaptative Theory, Incremental Approaches, Evolutionary Replacement Theory, Collective Replacement Theory, and Systematic Titling.

The Collective Replacement Theory, which draws on socialism and focuses on non-individualised outcomes of land tenure reform, is found to be the most relevant to the study and will therefore be the only one briefly discussed due to page and space limit in this paper. Its relevance is attributed to the fact that it addresses the social and economic inequality, as is the case with the objectives of this specific land restitution model. Hull et al. (2019) explicate that this approach may characterise customary tenure systems wherein the State represents the successor to the tribe. Conversely, it is stated that the second version focuses on improving production through collective farming villages, such as in the case of the claimants in Zebediela villages, who are the Bjatladi clan.

Most importantly, the theory expounds that the objectives are equitable distribution of resources; democratisation of traditional and community leadership; increased development and improved land productivity; focus on self-reliance; and efficient distribution of services such as water, electricity, education, and health, which were similar to the objectives of the Bjatladi clan in this case. Collective ownership of land was the order of the day where the poor land reform beneficiaries benefited from the claim through group support. While collective ownership and production are not in themselves problematic, the imposition of such an approach on inexperienced groups takes no consideration of their desires or needs (Hull et al., 2019). While this framework posits that the beneficiaries are also not given sufficient post-settlement support from the state, it is a different case in the South African context as the beneficiaries are still getting post-settlement support from the government.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs qualitative analysis which is expected to provide solutions to the study objectives. The desktop analysis as a method of secondary data collection is used to analyse the reports published on the Zebediela Citrus Estate as a case study. Case study protocol is a formal document capturing the entire set of procedures involved in the collection of empirical material (Yin, 2009). It extends direction to researchers for gathering evidence, empirical material analysis, and case study reporting (Yin, 1994). Secondary data collection considered published materials related to land tenure reform publications, which included newspaper articles, conference proceedings, books, reports, and peer-reviewed journal articles. The Zebediela Citrus Estate has been selected as a case study to represent those restitution and land redistribution programmes which have impacted positively on the socio-economic living conditions of the indigenous people in rural areas.

The study employed a convenience sampling technique. Bryman (2012: 201) defines a convenience sample as a sample that is available to the researcher by its accessibility. The study preferred to use the non-probability sampling method since the first available primary data source used for the research was without additional requirements. This was used to gain initial primary data regarding specific issues which assisted the researcher to select the sample from a population of subjects to address the specific research questions for this paper. These were easily accessible to the researcher, hence convenience in a form of purposive sampling.

Haque and Bharati, (2010) indicate that the research selects the best sample representing the goals of the investigation. In this case, the sample selected was purposive since all the subjects which are referred to as the variables were selected from a taxonomy of a population to obtain rich information, which allowed the researcher to perform an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon, which was described in line with Patton (1990)'s context. The purposive sampling technique therefore encompassed a population of sixteen variables, of which nine (9) were drawn as subjects. Purposive sampling was the most relevant technique to provide answers to the research questions on socio-economic sustainability.

The following overall themes in the left column form the population of the study, while the selected items in the right column are the ones forming a sample from the population: -

POPULATION	SAMPLE
Age	Demographics
Gender	Ownership
Training	Support services
Skills	Group project dynamics
Poverty levels	Training and skills development
Group project dynamic	
Marketing	Climate change
Financial assistance	Employment
Governance of the project	
Climate change	
Strategic partnership	Strategic partnership
Environment	
Stakeholder relationship	
Ownership	
Support services	
Production and inputs	Production and inputs

The population of the sample consists of sixteen variables of which nine were drawn as samples. The information will be processed and edited before being presented in the form of a table.

## PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

VARIABLES	FINDINGS
Demographics on ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There were originally 331 households represented, of which 180 were female-headed households.</li> <li>▪ 1 573 individuals were included in the claim.</li> <li>▪ Of this, 752 were women and 821 men.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are 230 female-headed households.</li> <li>▪ The claimant community is not homogenous – many pursue multiple livelihood strategies and are stratified.</li> <li>▪ The claimant community is made up of farm workers, those previously defined as labour tenants, middle-class entrepreneurs, schoolteachers, shopkeepers, unemployed youth, and the elderly, pensioners</li> </ul>
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Winters in the area can be very cold and black frost, frequently occurring during the flowering season, affects the citrus yield negatively.</li> <li>▪ The estate is in a summer rainfall area.</li> <li>▪ The average rainfall over the last 90 years was 633 ml.</li> <li>▪ Given the rainfall pattern in the area, the estate relies on irrigation.</li> <li>▪ Storage dams and boreholes have increasingly failed to provide a secure supply of water for irrigation purposes in the Limpopo region, with boreholes drying up and rivers and dams being dry in 1995–1996, 2004–2005 due to climate change, which ended in severe drought.</li> <li>▪ The citrus is dependent on the availability of water.</li> </ul>
Skills development and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The strategic partner provides training in technical and managerial matters to empower the members of the Community Property Association (CPA) and the Workers’ Trust to be able to fill key positions in the company and continue with the operation of the company during and after the initial contractual period of 15 years.</li> <li>▪ The strategic partner undertakes to build capacity amongst the employees through training and transfer of skills, to ensure that sufficient managerial and technical expertise is created during the initial period.</li> <li>▪ Agricultural Sector Education and Training Agency (AgriSET) is also on board, guided by the skills development plan.</li> <li>▪ The training is targeted for the employees, learnerships, adult basic education (ABET), and numerical training.</li> <li>▪ Mentoring on packhouse, human resources, livestock, finance, orchards is also part of the package.</li> <li>▪ The training is geared towards the workforce, middle management, and top management.</li> <li>▪ The Department of Agriculture provides scholarships for beneficiary/claimant families to study agricultural courses such as horticulture, engineering, and entomology. Upon the request of the Department, extension officers support the community with agricultural training and skills transfer.</li> </ul>

<p>Group project dynamic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initially, there were several challenges regarding the verification of members and how people's rights to membership and to the use of land were understood during the verification process.</li> <li>▪ However, the process was straightforward and members themselves could verify those who were members of the community.</li> <li>▪ Towards the end of the process, when people could see that there was a gain attached to getting land, they began to contest the claim.</li> <li>▪ The Worker's Trust was dissatisfied as workers only get a 15% share in the operating entity, while members of the CPA, who might not make any direct contribution to the project, are entitled to a 30% (and in the near future, 40%) share in the operation.</li> <li>▪ Although workers receive a salary in exchange for their labour and, as shareholders, are entitled to receive dividends, there is a perception that the shareholding structure is not equitable.</li> </ul>
<p>Strategic partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The strategic partner, Henley Farm Properties (Pty) Ltd, was partnered to manage the farm or company for 15 years.</li> <li>▪ Responsibilities include, inter alia, the general management of the company, human resources in terms of general manager, production manager, pack-house manager, maintenance and engineering manager and administration manager.</li> <li>▪ Responsible for the management of day-to-day operations of the estate, such as sewage disposal, water, and electricity.</li> <li>▪ During gradual handover, CPA members were employed as farm manager, dairy farm manager, livestock farm manager (CPA chairperson) and citrus farm manager.</li> <li>▪ Decision-making regarding technical, personnel and operational matters, and skills development</li> <li>▪ Provide working capital to the company.</li> <li>▪ The Limpopo Department of Agriculture is also a strategic partner for providing monitoring, oversight, scholarships and bursaries, capital, relationship support, and mediation.</li> <li>▪ The shareholding ratio in the business of the operating company is as follows: the strategic partner (Henley Farm Properties (Pty) Ltd) – 55%, the Bjatladi CPA – 30%, and the Workers' Trust – 15%.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The tribal authority gets 2% of the dividends.</li> </ul>
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The estate currently provides employment for 254 people on a permanent basis and for 500 on a seasonal basis.</li> <li>▪ Some of the workers are members or beneficiaries of the CPA while others are not.</li> <li>▪ CPA members are given preference in obtaining work opportunities</li> <li>▪ If members are not interested, workers from outside may be employed.</li> <li>▪ If there are non-CPA members who have experience and expertise, they are considered. There is an attempt to create a 50:50 balance between CPA members and non-CPA members working in the packhouse.</li> <li>▪ Workers are paid in accordance with the Sectoral Determination for Agricultural Workers.</li> <li>▪ The minimum wage earned is R885. Initially, workers were unionised under SAAPAWU, but now fall under FAWU.</li> </ul>
Production and Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Over the years, the farm has been deteriorating, with aging infrastructure and a decline in production.</li> <li>▪ The yield also dropped due to alleged mismanagement which resulted in unpaid bills, late payment of workers, and drastic cuts in labour which contributed to a drop in production.</li> <li>▪ The farming project stopped exporting after its ownership was transferred. The production of citrus consists of lemons, navel and valencia oranges. approximately 10 500 tons of citrus is produced per season in Zebediela which is about 13% of citrus production in South Africa and 50% of citrus production in the Limpopo Province. The major contributor to the citrus production on this farm is lemons contributing approximately 30% to the total production.</li> </ul>

## DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

### The impact of land restitution programme on sustainable livelihoods

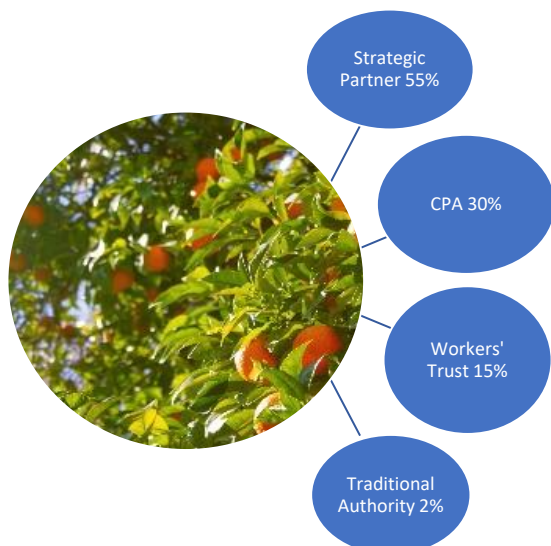
The first objective of this research was to critically analyse the impact which the land restitution had on the sustainable livelihoods of the claimants. This study found that the Bjatladi Community Property Association (CPA) has performed well given the number of beneficiaries employed on

the farm. It was discovered that in 2007, 254 people were permanently employed, while 500 were employed seasonally. This is a big number considering the scarcity of employment which the government is battling with. With a minimum wage of R885, people can survive in the rural areas. They can feed their families and sustain their livelihoods. The workers on the farm also have a 15% share in the total operations.

It can be argued that the wages are not competitive, however, the fact that they are part owners, with the 15% share in the operating entity, is a big advantage. The non-working members of the CPA are entitled to a 30% share in the operation. This has a positive impact on the families, in view of the dividends which they also get. The main focus of the revitalisation program was centred around the upgrading of water source and irrigation infrastructure, re-establishment of the orchards, a modern technology packhouse and upgrading of electricity reticulation infrastructure.

The revitalisation is expected to increase the yields from 30 to more than 66 tons per hectare. Although the total hectares planted will reduce slightly to give way for macadamia nuts development for diversification purposes, the tonnage produced will be more than double. Export cartons will increase from just more than 700 000 to more than 2 million. Revenue will grow with 13% per annum and profit per hectare will grow by 35% per annum between 2021 and 2034. It is estimated that additional 500 jobs would be created (SAnews, 2020).

Figure 1, Share Structure at Zebediela Citrus Estate



Source: Author

The shares are distributed as per figure 1 above. The strategic partner is allocated 55% of the shares. Some members have secured employment at managerial level, such as dairy farm manager, livestock farm manager (CPA chairperson) and a citrus farm manager. Within the same terrain, the children of the claimants also get bursaries and scholarships from the Limpopo Department of Agriculture to study agriculture to be able to add value to the farms on completion of their studies. A total of 1 573 individuals are benefitting from the farm and 752 of those beneficiaries are females. Besides farm owners, other members pursue multiple livelihood strategies in that some are entrepreneurs, schoolteachers on the estate, shopkeepers, guest house owners, and others have markets and provide transportation. The youth and elderly people, who are pensioners, are also beneficiaries. To a certain extent, this attests to an inclusive economy.

#### **The exploration of the success factors for possible replication**

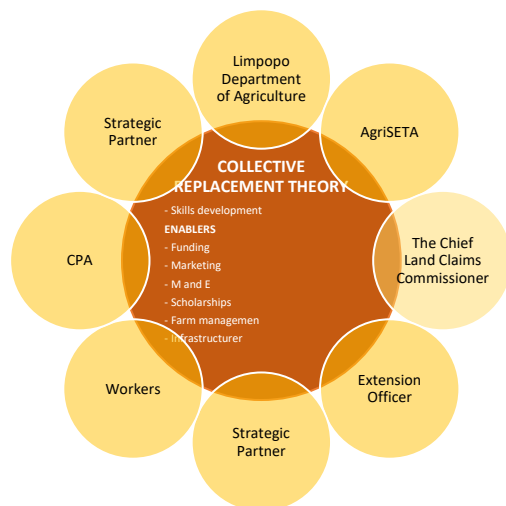
The second objective, to reconnoitre the success factors of a restitution claim for possible replication in other land reform projects, has been corroborated in the paragraph above. This initiative does indeed yield positive results. Other success factors are pertaining to the strategic partner, who is on board and playing a significant role in taking the farm to where it is currently. It is explicated by Lahiff (2007) that the strategic partner, Henley Farm Properties (Pty) Ltd, was partnered to manage the farm and the company for 15 years. The responsibilities of the strategic partner were the general management of the company. They were partnered because of their experience with this type of enterprise, and they provided their own manpower, such as general manager, production manager, packhouse manager, maintenance, engineering manager, and administration manager. They provided the management of day-to-day operations. It is critical for other claimants to learn and understand that it is difficult to manage without an investor. The partner is a shareholder with majority shares for a period of 15 years, and he also assists the company with capital. The strategic partner assists the company with marketing as they have clients with whom they have established a rapport when they were still operating as a private entity.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS: Exploration of critical considerations for a successful land reform programme**



The third objective for the study seeks to explore critical considerations for a successful land reform programme by way of recommending the most appropriate approaches and strategies of an effective land reform programme. Often, in the case of big enterprises of this calibre, group project dynamics in terms of status, finances, and shareholding would often end in disaster, to an extent of collapse. In this instance, the project approach, where government was involved in the pre-settlement, settlement, and post-settlement stage, was employed. Despite many challenges experienced in terms of claimants forming part of the process, share capital structure, leadership positions, finances, and other factors such as communal land matters, the differences were well managed by the Limpopo Department of Agriculture, who served as a mediator and transactional advisor. The Chief Land Claims Commissioner was also available throughout all the settlement phases. Challenges were experienced in terms of climate change, which nearly brought the project to a halt, but the project still thrived due to the support, knowledge, and expertise of the strategic partner, who diversified the enterprise with other commodities which are water resistant, like macadamia nuts, and reducing the size of the land where citrus crops were planted. The strategic partner has been useful and helpful, and played a significant role in ensuring sustainability of the project.

**Figure 2 Sustainable Post-Settlement model practised:**



Source: Author

The business model adopted, as illustrated in figure 2, was the most meaningful and successful one, and it is the purpose of this paper to share lessons of success. The activities undertaken during

the post-settlement period and the extent of post-settlement support provision were examined which fitted well within the Collective Replacement Theory.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, the conclusion focuses on the unique set of circumstances surrounding the settlement of the claim; the exclusive nature of the relationship between the community and the strategic partner and the implications of this for support provision. The study highlighted issues for consideration regarding the strategic partnership arrangement as a model for the provision of post-settlement support and drew conclusions about the central issues emerging from the investigation. All the research objectives have been fulfilled and the research problem solved. This study contributed largely and uniquely to the body of knowledge on public administration towards land reform as a contested topic in the political sphere for redressing the injustices of the past through the restoration of heritage assets. The study also contributes to sustainable development as far as an inclusive economy, access to land, food security and poverty alleviation are concerned. There is still a need for a future study to be undertaken to measure the extent to which land reform has changed the socio-economic status of people, enabling financial independence and a transition from poverty to gain.

It is reiterated that the findings on the case study were that the restitution programme has had a positive impact on the beneficiaries which were concomitant with the post-settlement strategies proposed by the Presidential Advisory Panel. The study concludes that it is of critical importance to embark on a strategic partnership with someone who is knowledgeable and experienced in the field and discipline. The business model adopted was the most evocative and successful one and it is the purpose of this paper to share lessons of success to be replicated in other restitution programmes. The study corroborates the aspirations of the Presidential Advisory Committee which are within the auspices of the collective replacement theory which is modelled in this paper. Overall, the government should focus on the proposed framework to be able to alleviate poverty and enhance quality of life. This study contributes towards socio-economic transformation within the sustainable development space. Future studies will track progress of and changes in the Land Reform Programme.

Commented [NM1]:

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