

# **Reconstruction and Development Programme: An Afrocentric analysis of the historical developments, challenges and Remedies**

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**Abstract:** The year 1994 initialized a shift of the South African regime from an Apartheid rule to a democratic rule, which led to the creation of a new economic policy known as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1995. The intention was to establish an equal society through construction and development as well as strengthening democracy for all South Africans. Much of the scholarly literature has shifted focus from RDP to discuss recent policies, even though it still exists and very much relevant in the academic arena. The authors of this article employ Afrocentricity as the theoretical framework in analysing the historical developments, daunting challenges of RDP and seeks to offer solutions to these problems. The central question grappled with in this article is to examine whether RDP has become a successful project in South Africa or not. This article argues that RDP in South Africa can serve as a stepping-stone to promote development in South Africa. The thread of the context of this article can be best understood when located into historicity. The foregoing should be understood within the context that this article discusses the historical developments and challenges of RDP as an economic policy from 1995 to 2018. Methodologically, this article relies on document study and interdisciplinary discourse analysis in their broadest form.

**Keywords:** Afrocentricity, RDP, historical developments, Challenges, Remedies

## INTRODUCTION

The African National Congress's (ANC) origins dates far back to 1912, subsequent to grievances such as the dissatisfaction of blacks, particularly antagonising the Act of 1910 which established the Union of South Africa and imposed several laws which controlled and restricted black people (South-African-Government 2019). The movement was founded by historical pioneers including, Josiah Gumede (a teacher), John Dube (a philosopher, educator, politician and editor from Natal), Pixley ka Isaka Seme who became the first Black Lawyer in South Africa and Sol Plaatjie (Journalist, Politician and writer) (Cape Talk, 2016). As a result, the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was formed in Bloemfontein by these pioneers (Permalink 2012). By then, the main mandate of the ANC in the general body politics of South Africa was premised on the principles of "common, non-racial society, informed by Christian and liberal conceptions of justice and humanity" (De Jager, Gumede, Neehtling and Welsh, 2015:154). Starting from its formation in the year 1912 at the first meeting of the SANNC conference, which later renamed. The ANC since 1923 until the year 1994, fought hard against colonialism and this movement remains one that curbed the injustices imposed by white minorities on Black population (Kanyane & Houston, 2012:3).

Kanyane & Houston (2012:3) state that "the Natives Land Bill, subsequently becoming an act of the South African Parliament as the "Natives Land Act, 1913" and later retitled "Bantu Land Act, 1913 and Black Land Act, 1913, Act No. 27 of 1913" and the restriction of Africans to 7% of land was at the core of the formation of the African movement". Hundreds of educated South African elites gathered on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 1912 in Bloemfontein and formed the ANC with the mandate of denouncing racial discrimination and antagonizing all the injustices. The ANC was to spend the next 82 years fighting for justice for the dominated race groups of South Africa, and against

injustice around the world. Every one of these battles moulded ANC policy on administration both as far as what governments ought not to do, and what governments ought to do (Kanyane & Houston, 2012:).

### **Post-Apartheid ANC and Policy developments**

After the ANC's attainment of power at the foremost democratic general elections of 1994. It adhered on a programme aimed at dismantling all discriminatory legislation that preceded it and were still in place. An introduction of a process that involved millions of South Africans forming part to the contribution to constricting a brand new constitution of the Republic which was inclusive of a Bill of Rights that represented the principles that had been fought by the ANC since its inception (Kanyane & Houston, 2012:21). The RDP was instituted as a brand-new economic policy and its programmes were implemented. Cling (2001: 18 ) states that "the RDP's aimed resolutions or programmes such as the likes of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), Affirmative Action and others which were intended to better most of the poor South Africans along the provision of electricity, housing and acquirement of education".

From 1994 onwards, the ANC adopted a range of socio-economic policies that aimed at improving the living standards of all South Africans through the creation of employment opportunities and to ensure a fair distribution of the country's wealth for the benefit of all citizens (De Jager, et al, 2015). Contrary to that, the marginalized citizens and those who were discriminated against did not benefit from the pursued economic policies. The time ANC took power under the leadership of President Nelson, Thabo Mbeki, Kgalema Motlanthe, Jacob Zuma and now Cyril Ramaphosa respectively, the ANC has taken control of least five (5) successive operations. Kanyane and Houston (2012: 16) argue that "the South African democracy is maturing and there are signs of

betterment in the lives of many South Africans in the post-apartheid era; and this cannot be underestimated. However, the pace of development is very slow”.

## **RDP**

Karriem and Hoskins (2016: 22) state that “since the introduction of Democracy in 1994, the post-apartheid state has attempted to significantly address the socio-economic legacies of apartheid. Despite the way that advancement has been made in tending to the apartheid legacy, destitution, disparity, and joblessness remain determinedly high. Considering the extraordinary financial cleavages experienced by the majority Black populace, the ANC-led government saw an interventionist or a formative state as the vehicle through which to change the economy, create jobs, and give since quite a while ago it denied people their needs, which includede land and housing “.

In 1994, “the RDP was presented by the ANC government as a method for changing the lopsided characteristics of the past and re-directing economic development”. The thought was to have a coordinated, intelligible financial strategy that would address issues realized by the absence of fair advancement under politically-sanctioned racial segregation” (SACBC, 2017 :33). In addition to that, its point was to assemble all who lived in South Africa, and the nation's assets, towards the last destruction of the politically-sanctioned racial segregation legacy and the structure of a law based on a non-racial and non-sexist future. Thus, its attention was on major socio-economic issues, for example, poverty, joblessness, wellbeing, the arrangement of water and power, education, transport and essentially the development of housing for the millions who, because of the legacy of apartheid, couldn't generally bear the cost of it (Cling ,2001).

AP Framework (2014: 16) defines RDP as an “integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework. It seeks to mobilise all South African people and the country's resources toward the last eradication of apartheid regime and the structure of a fair, non-racial and non-sexist future. Inside the system for strategy spoken to by the RDP, the ANC will create point by point positions and an authoritative program of government”. The ANC-led union in counsel with other key mass associations has drawn up the RDP. A wide scope of non-governmental organization (NGOs) and research associations aided the procedure. This procedure of counsel and joint arrangement detailing must proceed as the RDP is formed into a successful program of government. Other key segments of our general public, for example, the business network must be counselled and urged to partake as completely as they may pick (AP framework, 2014).

Cling (2001) articulates that “the six (6) basic principle of RDP are (1) An incorporated and feasible program whereby the RDP united techniques to tackle assets in a lucid and deliberate exertion that could be supported into what's to come. These procedures were actualized at Common place and nearby levels by government, parastatals, and common society associations working inside the system of the RDP. The second one (2) A people-driven procedure where in which the RDP tried to put individuals first, with focus on individuals' quick needs and, thus, depending on their energies and commitment to address these issues. Since advancement does not include inactive natives, yet rather empowers the dynamic contribution and support of residents, it would guarantee that South Africans had the option to shape their own future”.

The third one is (3) Peace and security for all. Its centres Promoting harmony and security included all natives and founded on and expanded the National Peace Initiative. To start the remaking and improvement process, security controls that addressed and reflected the racial and sexual orientation character of the nation were built up. These powers were required to be non-fanatic

and expert, to keep up the Constitution, and to respect human rights. The lawful structure, too, experienced change to reflect society's racial and sex creation, and to give decency and fairness to all under the steady gaze of the law (SACBC, 2017). The fourth one is (4) Nation building which manages the socio-economic emergencies acquired by the democratic government in 1994 originated from the enormous divisions and disparities deserted by the politically-sanctioned racial segregation system; likewise, it was important to guarantee that this inheritance was overwhelmed by concentrating on methods for utilizing open assets to manufacture the country overall. Also, this 'nation building' filled in as the reason on which to ensure that the country could take up a suitable employment inside the world system. National power must be cultivated when a program is completed that looks revolves around monetary, political and social appropriateness and freedom (SACBC, 2017).

The fifth one is (5) Linking, remaking and advancement that expresses that in request to reinforce the economy, neediness should be annihilated. Hence, building the economy and working up the country expected to occur, and the RDP guided the procedure. Accomplishment in connecting reproduction and advancement was basic if harmony and security were to be accomplished for all. To accomplish this, the RDP expected to incorporate development, improvement, remaking and redistribution into a bound together program (SACBC, 2017). The last one is (6) Democratization of society states that the first five principles of RDP relied upon this last advance. To change the disparities of the past, where the minority had practically unlimited oversight over everything, there was a need to begin to make society, just as the economy. Democratizing the nation was how improvement would be supported, as it would offer everybody the chance to shape their own lives just as to contribute towards the advancement of the nation (SACBC, 2017). Individuals influenced by the social and financial imbalances of the apartheid framework must be permitted to take an

interest in basic leadership forms. Along these lines, since majority rule government is a functioning procedure empowering everybody to add to reproduction and improvement, it would start to change both the state and common society (SACBC, 2017).

The following are five key programmes of RDP. The first one is (1) Meeting basic needs, which is the first on the plan of RDP key Programs. Those requirements are following: "occupations, land, housing, water, power, broadcast communications, transport, a perfect and sound condition, sustenance, human services and social welfare (AP framework, 2014). "The RDP prioritized these basic needs of South Africans" (De Jager, et al, 2015: 13). The second one is (2) Developing Human Resources. The RDP is a people-focused program, South African individuals must be associated with the basic leadership process, in execution, in new position openings requiring new aptitudes, and in overseeing and administering our general public. At the end of the day, open investment is vital. It additionally manages the arrangement of instruction from essential to tertiary level. Balance among ladies and men is additionally a point of convergence under this part of RDP (AP framework, 2014).

The third one is (3) Building the economy. The economy has qualities and shortcomings. Mining, fabricating, farming, business, money related administrations and framework ought to be very much created. The shortcoming of the economy should be tended to assist African individuals. The legacy of Apartheid keeps on making negative nature in the South African culture, for example, racial and sexual orientation disparities in possession, work and abilities (AP framework, 2014). "The forth one is Democratizing the State and the Society. Democratization fills in as a fundamental piece of RDP and without this procedure, the assets and capability of the nation and individuals won't be accessible for the program. Through connecting democracy, advancement and a people-focused methodology, another just request is conceivable" (AP framework: 16). The last

one is Implementing the RDP. For the usage and coordination of the RDP, the foundation of compelling RDP structures in government at a national, common and neighbourhood level will be required. This section of the program manages proposition for the prerequisites in actualizing it, rebuilding of present arranging forms and a defence of the mind boggling, supremacist and divided structures that exist is required (AP framework).

## **HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

RDP was one of the programmes which were included on the voting stage of the ANC in the 1994 votes and it remained selected as the essential social and economic programme (African National Congress, 1994). Brits (2014) verbalizes that in 1995 one in each five city blacks were certain that they are going to profit from the RDP. Thus, a far lesser extent of coloureds (6%), Indians (6%) and whites (2%), at that organize, viewed themselves as Recipients. RDP was seen to have made an impact to the following sectors: Improved conditions of living (2%), Installation of electricity (3%), Water (2%), Housing (2%), Better Health institutions (2%) and learning institutions (2%).

Despite an expansion in consciousness of the RDP around South African residents, the desire that the RDP will be of help with the future has declined. Amongst black civilians, one individual in each two was foreseeing that the RDP would be useful to them; which appears differently in relation to just one in each four coloured's and one in each seven Indians (Luiz, 2007). Wallis (1995) states that not very many whites anticipated that the RDP would be furthering their potential benefit and the real regions where blacks expected the RDP would be of Assistance were in job creation (52%), shelter (46%), Job training (35%), education institutions (29%), better environment (28%) and wellbeing institutions (23%). Despite that, RDP was big on the application technique but extremely restricted on specific goals. Benjamin (1998: 19) communicated that "the main goal of RDP was to build up an equivalent society through renovation and growth and

consolidation democracy for all south Africans”. Henceforth, RDP was successful in certain regions, for instance, social security whereby the legislature set up a remarkably extensive wellbeing framework and it likewise provided meals for the Old, Children, Unable as well as many others that cannot afford their daily needs (Visser, 2004).

Marais (2001:45) states that “under this programme, free health care programmes were implemented for pregnant women and small children, and free meals were provided for between 3, 5 to 5 million school children”. Despite that, in 1996 Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) was put into practice by which it included most of the public aims of the RDP but was also designed at dropping economic shortfalls, dropping development, lowering tariff and non-tariff barriers, liberating the flow of capital and maintaining stability of trade rates (Heymans, 1995). Additionally, (Luiz, 2007:24) articulate that “management of public finances improved drastically under GEAR and the only success seen about Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was that the negative growth rate of the early nineties was reversed “. However, regardless of the mentioned accomplishments, isolated investment, job formation and GDP growth pointers were not appealing. Hence, in 2005 the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) was introduced as a programme that will supplement the first two developing Plans. It was introduced by Thabo Mbeki with the main goal of continuing to build on the fundamentals of the aims of the RDP which are: uniting the population, forming a democratic government, also forming non-sexist and non-racial society, and a one merged economy (Brits, 2014).

Rapanyane (2019) states that “After Thabo Mbeki fell as the president, the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) was substituted by the New Growth Path (GNP) and this was declared by Jacob Zuma during his State of Nation Address (SONA) in 2010”. Hence, GNP considered that Poverty remains to affect most of the South African; Cruelty of workers

remains; joblessness remains extremely high and that the inequality is now bigger than before. In this regard, the GNP's aims were to, and to reduce poverty, Joblessness, inequality and accelerate growth in the South African economy. In addition to that, to contribute immensely to the achievements of higher levels of the economic growth of GNP and overcome the structural challenges (Makhura, 2019). Thus, (Visser, 2004: 15) "articulates that the government has introduced the National Development Plan (NDP)-2030 in early 2013 as South Africa's long-term socio-economic development roadmap eliminating poverty and reducing inequality in South Africa by 2030".

### **AFROCENTRICITY AS A THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

This article utilizes Afrocentricity as its theoretical framework. It mainly focuses on the works of (Asante, 2003), Stelly (1997), Conyers (2003), Chawane (2016), Asante (2009) and Shai (2016). In this context, Stelly (1997) understands Afrocentricity as a framework whereby an event is understood from the standpoint of an African individual. Similarly, Conyers (2003) posit that the Afrocentric outlook pursue the takeover of the African human being. Correspondingly, Asante (2009) defines Afrocentricity as a sample found on the thinking that African people must re-affirm a feeling of action as to be able to attain wisdom or rationality. An equal significant illustration of Asante was that, an Afrocentric case in point is a rebellious change in thinking suggested as a constructivist adaptation to African disorientation, decent redness, and the absence of action. As an illustration, Afrocentricity installs the centeredness of Africans, which entails African ideals and values, as communicated in the high-ranking forms of African lifestyles and actuate awareness as a practical aspect of any rebellious way to any situation (Asante , 2009).

Indeed, Afrocentricity remains the way of reasoning, which centralizes African values, desires and perspectives. Thus, Afrocentricity remains a task in realization and a new frame of reference in historical and contemporary affairs that stresses the culture and achievements of Africans. Shai (2016) reinforces conception of Afrocentricity as a change of values, principles, postures and results of behaviour. The foregoing analysis suggests that it remains the earliest and only actuality for the people of Africa as it places them at the centre of any appraisal of African situations in the form of functioning and accomplishment (Chawane, 2016).

Emerging from all the above, Afrocentricity was deemed relevant for this article by the current authors because Afrocentricity has a cognitive and functional role. As such, it has a potential to assist in the provision of Africa rooted alternative perspective to the role of the AU in resolving conflict in Sudan without negative progressive views, critics and perspective emerging from elsewhere. Above all, Afrocentricity was chosen by the current authors due to its propensity to foster epistemic justice. The latter is achieved by affording African-centred ideas, theories and philosophies to co-exist as equals with their North American-Eurocentric counterparts who were previously falsely presented as being universally applicable ( Maleka and Shai, 2016).

## **CHALLENGES**

Brits (2014:507) states that, “the RDP essentially as a national macro-economic up-liftment programme, was abandoned after 2 years because of inadequate capital to finance it and the inability of the public administration to implement it “. This was because of the different internal organisation failings, which are: the deficiency of policy direction and operation skills within the ANC sown positions and that the loyalty of the mandatory public employers was not trusted. Despite that, shortage of resources was also a factor (Heymans, 1995). (Marais, 2001: 15) states

that “only 2% of the national budget which is equivalent to R2.5-billion was the amount which was issued out by the government towards the RDP which was insufficient to decrease the accumulation in the distribution of equivalent substructure and facilities to those who need them “.

Visser (2004: 34) states that “also the incapability of the ANC management to put first the RDP and merge it as a director to its social and economic policies was also an addition to the challenges”. (Visser, 2004). Therefore, the incapability of the RDP to distribute threatens the future of free enterprise in south Africa because when people do not get what they feel is entitled to them they tend to the temptation of demanding compensation and redressing those who are comparatively well-off (Harsch ,2001). Wallis (1995:65) states, “what is also conceived is that the people employed by the Public Service will move rapidly towards a close match of South Africa's race and gender proportions, certainly as far as recruitment and training are concerned”. Thus, those individuals who will be gaining from the affirmative action programmes are the non-whites, females and those who are disabled (Luiz, 2007).

Rapanyane (2019) states that “The policy of RDP entails a huge reconstruction of the civic facility. Despite that, 40 per cent or more South African citizens live below the poverty line. Thus, this shows that a lot wants to be done within a limited budget by those in charge and time”. Even though it is simple to grasp the main aim of the programme. Therefore, what can be seen is that a huge amount of the National capital is being taken in favour of those who were discriminated against in the past. RDP is seen as the keystone of the government progressive policy as it did not deliver as it promised, specifically in terms of the economic development, which disadvantaged the policy itself (Marais, 2001) and one other problem is the shortage of competent civic provision

(Heymans, 1995). Therefore, to conclude from the challenges it seems that the government is not prioritising the collection of brand-new levying instead it is putting all its attention on the financial diligence and the alteration of the old dividends (Harsch ,2001).

## **REMEDIES**

The following are possible remedies that if implemented, could address the challenges outlined above. Firstly, the government should mobilize the country's resources in the form of nationalization of means of production and make that a priority in order to amass enough capital and finance this fundamental policy. Secondly, the ANC government should conduct several research projects that focuses on specifically the implementation of this policy and employ people based on the capability rather than of their struggle credentials. In doing so, the people who are to be employed would produce desired outcomes as they be having the required knowledge and expertise to fulfil the purpose.

Thirdly to address the challenge of policy lacking coordination and implementation. The government should intensify its effort on financing extensive research in order to bring out valid and well backed up research to bring about solutions to the challenges. Fourthly, it looks like the post ANC government has never been serious in resolving the triple socio economic problems of the people of South Africa which are poverty, inequality and unemployment and that is why it allocated only 2.5 billion for this project considering the fact that RDP is a countrywide project. Thus, the ANC should allocate a budget of at least 10-20 Billion for this Project, as they are able to collect 1 trillion in taxes each year. Fifthly, the ANC led government has lost confidence in the RDP project and now it has been side-lined and not taken seriously. This is attributed to three reasons: the ANC has prioritized economic growth

over the provision of social services such as houses and jobs. The ANC has also come to put more emphasis on winning elections and gaining great electoral elections over the needs of the people. The combination of this led to the failures of RDP. As such, the ANC should embrace workers who are more skilled and management, who are effective and have a clear policy strategic implementation plans for RDP so the policy can yield good results.

Sixthly, literacy should be prioritized and be accessible to all. What can be done is that the ANC should provide education and training system that is inclusive and provide equal opportunities to all South Africa's. Equally important is the curriculums which must undergo a significant transformation to prepare students at all higher levels for the development and reconstruction process. Thus, there needs to be a through preparation of workers and managers who are ready to tackle the new economic and political conditions of South Africa in the progression of implementing RDP. Lastly to solve the challenge of lack of efficient public service. The ANC led government should enforce the codes of conduct for the officials of the government by ensuring that the set of standards for professional service is practised to all South Africans in the public sector. This can be done by affording public servants with efficient training to serve the people of South Africa effectively and with no biasness.

## **CONCLUSION**

The aim of this Afrocentric article was to determine: First, it sought to determine if the RDP in South Africa has served as a stepping-stone to promote development in South Africa. Second, it aimed to determine if weather the RDP has been successful or not. The article discussed the historical developments and challenges of RDP as an economic policy from 1996 to 2018. It also

shows how the RDP came to existence and those behind the implementation of it. The article also outlines the challenges which the RDP faces or faced since it came into existence in 1996 as well as give possible remedies which if put into place can possible solve most of the challenges which RDP faces or has faced.

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