

Rural Education in South Africa: A Critical Reflection on Government Reconstruction and Development Efforts

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ABSTRACT Rural development strategies in South Africa are not achieving their goals, namely, the reconstruction and restructuring of the living conditions of the majority of people located in rural areas. Although different rural development strategies have been introduced by the African National Congress (ANC) government since it came to power in 1994, the state of provision of education to rural learners remains abysmal. This article provides a critical reflection on state reconstruction and development in South Africa by reviewing the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy and the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP). The article further investigates the impact of the ANC's economic policy on the provision of education in rural areas. Document analysis as a research method is used to examine and interpret data in order to extract meaning, gain comprehension, and furthermore develop and widen empirical knowledge on the influence of government policies on the provision of education to learners in rural areas. The findings reveal that the government's reconstruction and development policies, backed by neo-liberal thinking, failed to make an impact on reducing past imbalances, and thus failed to address pressing issues in rural areas. Based on the findings, the study calls for the government to take the central role and to ensure that its reconstruction and development policies address what they are intended for.