Abstract

This empirical study addressed the problem of poverty in the post-apartheid South Africa. The Amathole Rural District (ARD) in the Eastern Cape Province (the poorest province in the country) is the focal point. The theoretical framework of the study is the revisionist theory of rural economic development, which regards agriculture as the 'engine' for rural development. The study attended to the following thematic issues; the efficacy of rural agriculture in rural poverty reduction, value-adding to rural farm produce, support that is required by the rural residents and social factors that affect the residents' ability to fight poverty through agriculture. The concurrent transformative mixed research methodology was adopted. Data were collected from documentary review as well as from sample of 138 respondents. Unstructured interviews and semi-structured questionnaires were used with the respondents. The ARD residents were keen to fight abject poverty through rural agriculture but were constrained by the lack of arable land, financial resources, technological support, corruption and HIV/AIDS. Deep collaboration and participation of strategic partners such as government, rural residents, NGOs and the business sector is essential in the fight against the development ills in the ARD.