Introduction

The discourse is based on the problem of abject rural poverty in the post-apartheid South Africa, but with specific reference to the Amathole Rural District (ARD) in the Eastern Cape Province. Abject poverty is conceptualized as inability to meet the basic human needs such as food, water, shelter and clothes. The discourse centres on the revisionist theory of rural economic development, which regards agriculture as the ‘engine’ for rural development. The discourse centres addresses the following issues on rural poverty reduction in the ARD: the efficacy of rural agriculture in rural poverty reduction, value-adding to rural farm produce, support that is required and social factors that may affect the residents’ ability to fight poverty through agriculture. The major purpose of this discourse is to participate in the search of comprehensive and sustainable agro-based rural development programme for the residents of the ARD. The discourse also contributes towards the general understanding of rural poverty in the ARD. Such information could be vital for the state, private sector and non-governmental organisations in their planning of poverty reduction initiatives for the district. The production also updates policy-makers, scholars and the public with emerging expectations from the government, the private sector and the rural residents on rural development.