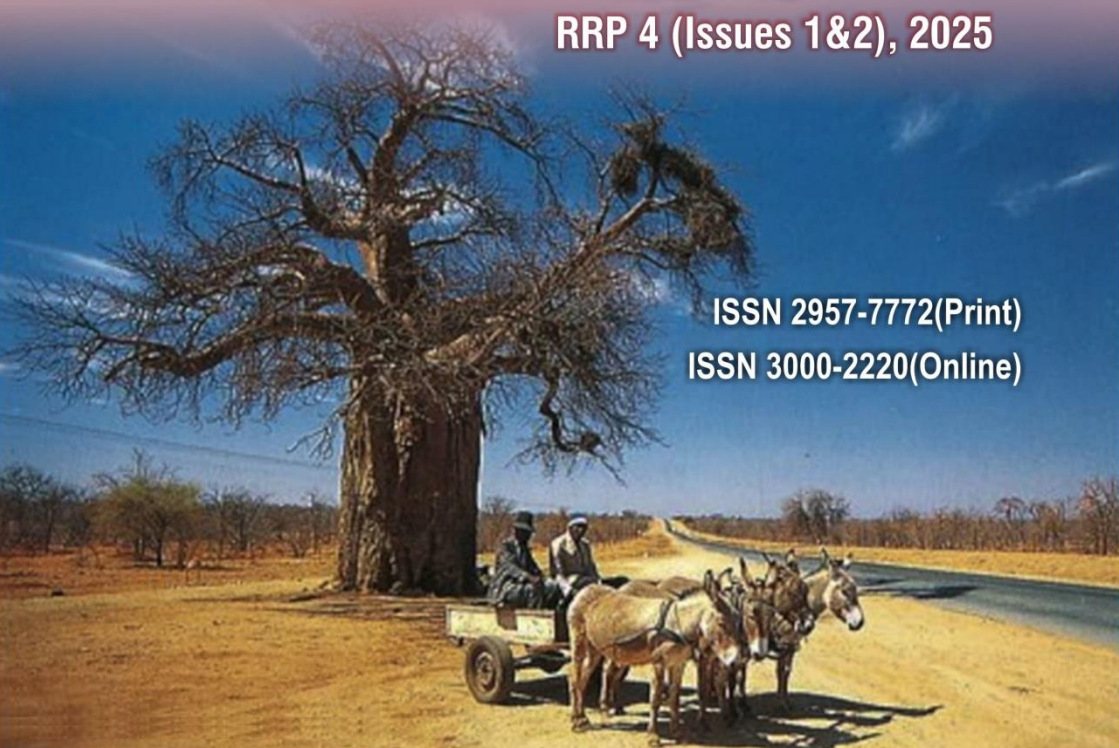




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About the Journal

JOURNAL PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Review of Rural Resilience Praxis* is to provide a forum for disaster risk mitigation, adaptation and preparedness.

CONTRIBUTION AND READERSHIP

Sociologists, demographers, psychologists, development experts, planners, social workers, social engineers, economists, among others whose focus is that of rural resilience.

JOURNAL SPECIFICATIONS

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SCOPE AND FOCUS

As much as the urban territory is increasing by each day, the rural economy, especially in many developing countries, still retains a great proportion of the extractive and accommodation industry. Retaining some space as rural remains critical given the sectors role in providing ecosystem services to both wildlife and humanity. In this light, rural resilience as practice beckons for critical studies especially in the face of the ever-threatening extreme weather events and climate change that then impact on the livelihoods and lifestyles of the rural communities. Review of Rural Resilience Praxis (RRRP) comes in as a platform for critical engagement by scholars, practitioners and leaders as they seek to debate and proffer solutions of the rural sector and trying to champion the philosophy of the right to be rural. The issue of conviviality between the different constituencies of the sectors, compiled with the competing challenges of improving rural spaces while also making the conservation and preservation debates matter is the hallmark of this platform of criticality. The journal is produced bi-annually.

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Rural Industrialisation: Some Global and Regional Perspectives and Lessons for the 21st Century

AFRICA MUNETI¹, TAFADZWANASHE JAMES MAGAVUDE² AND WENDY W TSORIYO³

Abstract

The study critically explores global and regional perspectives of rural economic growth strategies, drawing lessons for the 21st century. Rural areas in developing countries face the problem of underdevelopment, widening the rural-urban divide. Rural poverty has made investors to shun doing business in these areas, limiting the opportunities for people living in the countryside. Rural development of industries has emerged as a strategy for rural development, allowing communities to craft better surviving skills. The study is premised on the argument that most perspectives of rural development (agriculture-based approaches, mining and tourism) have failed due to a lack of viable infrastructure to support industrialisation. A qualitative methodology with a case study design is employed. The study utilises secondary information through the use of Google Scholar articles and news reports. The study makes use of thematic data analysis. The findings of the study reveal that rural industrial development has value-addition of local resources. They also show that rural economic development has been crafted to create sustainable livelihoods for rural residents. The study findings are in sync with the conceptual framework -the sustainable livelihoods framework as rural industrialisation has become a people-centred approach as shown by the role of higher education community engagement. The study concludes that rural industrial development can bridge the rural-urban divide and recommends the creation of rural industrial parks and innovation hubs to accelerate value addition.

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Keywords: *sustainable livelihoods, people-centred, development, community engagement, innovation, higher education*

INTRODUCTION

Rural industrialisation has become a necessity in all parts of the world, even in socialist countries, at least since 1935, after the philosophy of socialist realism was adopted by Soviet writers (Al Siddiq *et al.*, 2019). The primary purpose of rural industrialisation is job-creation in these areas through carving of employment opportunities aimed at the reduction of unemployment and poverty (Ao *et al.*, 2021). The notion of rural industrialisation has led to income growth due to increased employment and industrial activity for rural residents and is aimed at addressing the urban-rural divide which has had rural poverty on an all-time high in the early 1990s in countries like China (Yar, 2024). With more income and employment, rural communities can improve their infrastructure, access to services and overall quality of life (Chen *et al.*, 2023). The notion of rural industrialisation brings about the diversification of the economy and creates sustainable industries, thereby contributing towards long-term economic and social development (Han *et al.*, 2023). Rural industrialisation has brought about sustainable livelihoods for rural residents, giving them a chance to survive without rural-urban migration.

This study problematises the burdens of rural communities due to lack of industries locally, leading to a transactional costs burden on the farmers and other countryside people transporting their goods. Rural industrialisation presents a chance for rural communities to redeem themselves and create sustainable development to reduce rural-urban migration which has depopulated rural areas in most countries. The aim of the study is to establish that rural industrialisation, as a form of a development strategy which can create economic growth that can diversify rural livelihoods and create sustainable development. The objective of the study is to establish the perspectives of global and regional rural industrialisation, and to draw lessons for the 21st century from the perspectives of global and regional rural industrialisation. The gap that the study seeks to address is the potential of rural industrialisation to reducing rural-urban migration. The study is significant as rural industrialisation presents an opportunity towards sustainable livelihoods in the rural areas of developing countries. It is

significant as it can reduce the bright lights syndrome, the cause of rural-urban migration, by providing employment opportunities to the rural people, while improving access to services.

The study consists of an introduction giving the background to the study, the conceptual framework, the literature review, the research design and methodology, the findings of the study, discussion, and conclusion and recommendations. It is against the backdrop of the persistence of rural poverty that has crippled rural areas, compounded by climate change which marks the end of agro-based economies in rural areas. The study presents the perspectives of global and regional rural industrialisation to promote the diversification of rural livelihoods and reduce rural-urban migration in Chile, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

The study utilises the sustainable livelihoods theoretical framework as an analytical lens to rural industrialisation. The sustainable livelihoods theoretical approach was conceived in the mid-1980s by Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway as a way to assess the different contexts of vulnerability and enhance the efficiency of development cooperation (Kollmair and Gamper, 2002). The approach was adopted by the UN at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and its promotion of the Agenda 21 (Agenda for the 21st Century) where the aspiration that everyone must have the opportunity to earn a sustainable livelihood (Morse and McNamara, 2013) was conceived. The sustainable livelihoods framework (SLF) is a holistic, people-centred approach that aims to improve livelihoods by focusing on assets, strategies and outcomes of individuals and communities; while also considering the broader context and vulnerability they face (UNDP, 2020). The SLF acknowledges that people employ different strategies to make a living, which can include income-generating activities, resource management and social interactions (Natarajan *et al.*, 2022). It has directed development interventions of governmental, multi-lateral and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) improving the lives of the rural South (Chambers and Conway, 1992). The approach supports the attainment of equality in opportunities in earning sustainable lives, hence leaving no one and no place behind as the approach can be used to establish rural industrialisation to improve rural livelihoods.

The notion of livelihood encompasses the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living (DFID, 2002). When a livelihood is sustainable, it has the capabilities to cope and recover from stress and shock, maintaining or enhancing its capabilities and assets while providing a sustainable future for generation to come which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at local and global levels in the short- and long-term (Chamber and Conway, 1992). There are six core concepts of the SLF which are: people-centred, holistic, dynamic, building on strengths, micro-macro links and sustainability (DFID, 2001). A people-centred approach affirms that activities for livelihood improvements is successful only if development agencies work together with people on their livelihood strategies (Natarajan *et al.*, 2022). This makes the SLF relevant to the study as rural industrialisation seeks to improve the lives of local rural people while providing a platform for economic growth for the communities.

The SLF as a holistic concept involves the understanding that the stakeholders as a whole, identify major barriers they face and promising opportunities regardless of where they occur (Kollmair and Gamper, 2002). It is a concept applicable across different social groups and geographical spheres and it recognises multiple actors such as private companies, public agencies and community-based organisations (CBOs) while looking to achieve multiple livelihoods outcomes (DFID, 2001). This concept is applicable to this study as rural industrialisation has multiple approaches and strategies for stabilising and improving livelihoods of the communities. The dynamic concept refers to the process of learning from change in order to mitigate negative impacts and maximise positive effects of people's livelihoods and institutions that shape them (Natarajan *et al.*, 2022). This concept is applicable in this study as rural industrialisation is building from the challenges that rural livelihoods built around rain-fed agriculture are dwindling. Building strength in the framework of SLF relates to identification of each individual's potential in order to achieve their own objectives (Chambers and Conway, 1992). These are important in relation to rural industrialisation as they can improve rural industrialisation strategies and their efficacy through centring them on people and recognising their needs.

Natarajan *et al.* (2022) bring to the fore the fact that the SLF presents the chance to poor communities to transform their livelihoods and inspire economic resilience and development which can bring about growth. The conceptual framework focuses on people as the main components that rural industrialisation must focus on transforming, rather than focusing on other entities. The approach includes a holistic approach that incorporates the entirety of rural livelihoods to ensure their survival. The conceptual framework is relevant to the study as it brings out the importance of multiple livelihoods and their sustainability. The framework about the study of rural industrialisation is relevant as it brings to the fore the potential of rural industrialisation through the creation of a people-centred approach to rural development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the literature review on rural industrialisation, navigating the notion as a necessary developmental strategy responding to the challenges in rural communities emanating from climate change and historical poverty. Normally rural societies are based on agrarian economies, especially in African countries and India (Singh *et al.*, 2022; Tirivangasi and Nyahunda, 2022). Climate change has altered the agricultural sector across the global rural areas, with most of the communities that depended on rain-fed agriculture failing to create sustainable livelihoods due to rainfall variability (Phiri *et al.*, 2021). This prompts the intense need for industrialisation in rural areas with proper attention to exploring opportunities that can guarantee communities sustainable livelihoods.

In addition, rural industrialisation means a focus on the promotion of rural based industries by involving local people, resources and expertise or exploring new business opportunities relative to available resources in that particular rural area or cluster in a professional way (Vivekanada, 2020). The purpose of rural industrialisation is to create an alternate model for overall development of rural society to avoid over-dependency on farming by utilising available opportunities to establish small and medium industries (Ao *et al.*, 2021). Rural industrialisation must not be linked to the establishment of heavy industries or machinery, but should promote rural entrepreneurship at local level in a professional manner by enhancing skills and knowledge of

local people (Liu *et al.*, 2022). Kakati (2021) observes how rural industrialisation can be promoted through the establishment of non-farm product business through the prioritisation of local rural artisan work. The promotion of opportunities diversification can promote rural industrialisation and enhance economic growth of local economies, reducing the risk of depopulation through rural-urban migration.

There are various strategies that rural industries can use to transform livelihoods and local economies. Vivekanada (2020) observes that, for rural industrialisation to create strong economies, there is need for agro-based industries related to the processing of agro products such as sugar production from sugarcane, wine production from grapes and other related processing from raw agro products. The other strategy for rural industrialisation are traditional industries like handicrafts and other local artisan product manufacturing with potential to become professionally managed small and medium industries, as there is high demand in the market for traditional handloom and handicraft products (Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2017). Rural industrialisation can use the strategy of forest-based industries by establishing industries related to wood products, bamboo products, honey, preparing manure from plant leaves and herbal medicines production (Kakati, 2021). These strategies can bring economic growth in rural areas and enhancing the lives of the local people.

Furthermore, mineral-based industries have also emerged as a strategy for rural industrialisation involving and prioritising local people in the exploration of minerals and other resources (Suresh and Reddy, 2020). The exploration of minerals in rural areas for proper utilisation requires a processing unit in the concerned rural area, as this helps to minimise the initial cost of transportation and other processing costs (Vivekanada, 2020). The establishment of mineral-based rural industrialisation creates employment opportunities and economic growth for local communities, making it possible for these areas to develop infrastructure and service centres. Renewable energy industry is another strategy for rural industrialisation in rural communities to create resilient rural economies (Kakati, 2021). Rural areas can be converted into industrial hubs for processing renewable energy by setting up solar cell units, bio-gas plants and other uses of alternative energy commercially (Srivastava, 2020). These

strategies can improve the local economies within the rural areas and create opportunities for local people to benefit which is the basis for rural industrialisation. Dairy industry presents another form of rural industrialisation that has been observed as a strategy to develop rural economies by involving local people in these processing activities (Kakati, 2021). The rural industrialisation processes aim to improve rural livelihoods and develop economies of value that involve local people, changing their lives in the process. The mineral-based approaches of rural industrialisation are an important way to develop rural areas but they are different from the use of agriculture as they can lead to environmental degradation.

Rural industrialisation is significant in rural development as it has potential to transform rural economies and livelihoods. Vivekananda (2020) observes that in a country like India, where the population of rural areas is exploding and a lack of infrastructure facilities, there is under employment and lack of education. This has led to migration to urban areas. This can be solved by rural industrialisation in such communities. Agricultural business is shrinking due to unprofitability, lack of skilled labour, irrigation facilities and over-dependency on rainfall in India, indicating the need for other development approaches such as industrialisation (Kakati and Behera, 2014). Due to unfavourable economic conditions in rural India, some of the emerging problems are migration of rural population to urban areas, increased poverty, under-utilisation of resources and shutdown of traditional businesses (Hand *et al.*, 2023). This makes rural industrialisation imperative as it improves the deteriorating livelihoods in rural communities. This industrialisation provides opportunities for employment and economic growth for local communities, leading to the creation of infrastructural development and improvement of service centres. Rural industrialisation is important as it addresses the aforementioned social and economic disparities, including income differences and living standards, between urban and rural communities (Yar, 2024). This has prompted planners to adopt new rural development strategies, particularly focusing on rural industrialisation to create sustainable livelihoods.

Due to their role in creating jobs, increasing income and reducing poverty in rural communities, especially in regions dominated by agricultural economies, rural industries hold significant importance (*ibid.*). Therefore, rural

industrialisation is crucial for the diversification of rural economies and enhancing its efficiency through the creation of various economic activities, prompting infrastructural development in local communities (Hand *et al.*, 2023). One of the key strategies of improving employment, raising income levels and, ultimately preventing rural migration to urban areas, is rural industrialisation (Ao *et al.*, 2021). The theory of rural industrialisation, as a catalyst for job creation and income generation, is considered a potential solution to the problem of rural poverty (Li *et al.*, 2022). Yar and Shaheedzooy (2024) allude that rural industrialisation and the expansion of non-agricultural activities are critical for improving welfare and providing essential goods and services to rural households. Thus, industrialisation can play a vital role in rural development by increasing rural production, creating employment opportunities, meeting basic needs and establishing linkages with other economic sectors (Han *et al.*, 2023). The impact of industries on rural areas does not only create vibrant rural economies, but also has multiplier effect related to a spillage effect to other sectors of the economy.

Rural industrialisation, as a process, is of significance, as it provides the means for diversifying rural economies. As an economic approach, through job creation, income growth and more balanced income distribution, it leads to the improvement of living standards of rural communities (Yar, 2024). Consequently, rural industrialisation paves the way for achieving sustainable rural development as the industries contribute to the economic, social and environmental reconstruction of rural areas (Woodhill *et al.*, 2022). Alongside economic and social sectors, the industry must be recognised as the most important component of any comprehensive rural development programme (Hu *et al.*, 2023). The nature and pattern of industrialisation, whether in small-scale and handicraft industries or large-scale industries, depend on raw materials and human resources at local and regional levels (Fu *et al.*, 2024). The most significant services that rural industrialisation can bring are provision of support for agriculture and increased income for agricultural workers, conversion of agricultural products into necessary goods and services, preventing excessive outflow of foreign currency (Wang *et al.*, 2024). The key take-away point from rural industrialisation is the diversification of rural economies by establishing industrial sectors, which

increases rural income beyond agriculture and attracts labour into the services and distribution sectors.

In most developing countries, the creation of employment has been the primary goal of rural industrialisation. This is because rural areas in these countries are often much more backward than urban areas and face severe problems of unemployment and underemployment (Liu *et al.*, 2022). Since large capital-intensive industries located in major urban centres absorb only a small fraction of the rapidly growing labour force, and subsistence agriculture cannot support even the current rural population, policies and programmes for rural industrialisation have been devised to create non-agricultural employment in rural areas (Xiao *et al.*, 2022). Another reason necessitating the emphasis on rural industrialisation in most developing countries is to diversify rural economies and, in turn, help modernise agriculture and raise the income levels of the people (Wang *et al.* 2023). The traditional rural industries are closely linked to agriculture, using rural products as raw materials and selling their goods mainly in rural areas (Yar, 2024). Moreover, creating a strong and vibrant rural industry can foster close links between rural and urban areas by acting as subcontractors for large urban industries (Fu *et al.*, 2024). This can reduce the gap between rural and urban areas not only in terms of income and benefits, but also in technology (Deng *et al.*, 2023). The aforementioned emphasis is on the significance of rural industrialisation in developing countries, showing the need for rural industrialisation across all developing countries as it can diversify the economies while creating economies of value.

The review of the study reveals that sustainable rural industrialisation is the missing link as most approaches (agricultural-based development, forestry and mining alone) are proving detrimental to the environment. The reviewed literature shows that rural industrialisation has become a rural development strategy on a global scale, contributing towards the creation of sustainable livelihoods in local communities. It also shows that rural development has been used as a strategy for the diversification of rural economies, contributing towards the development of economies of value which employ a large pool of rural residents. This has been done through localisation of industries and their operations. Rural industrialisation is applicable in developing countries where

a large proportion of the population is unemployed and dependent on agro-based economic activities that are dwindling due to climate change and lack of investments in agriculture. This has become a fundamental part of the rural economies contributing towards the creation of sustainable livelihoods through their involvement in the industry. It can then be argued that rural industrialisation has become a global strategy for the strengthening and creation of sustainable livelihoods which developing countries can adopt.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research methodology that is the, research approach, research design, data collection methods and data analysis. The study uses a qualitative research approach with a case studies research approach to understand the global and regional perspectives of rural industrialisation. The allure of qualitative research methodology, as Tenny *et al.* (2022) buttress this study, is that the technique can help explore poorly studied subjects with opinions of individuals and social issues that affect the general public. The study adopts this approach because it allows for the gathering of social facts without presenting them as codes and numbers. The study utilises secondary information for data collection as observed by Martins *et al.* (2018), that secondary data can be used in an attempt to answer new questions or attempt an alternative perspective on the original question of a previous study, in this case, the global and regional perspectives of rural industrialisation. The data was gathered from Google Scholar articles and newspaper reports and the selection criteria was rural industrialisation and rural development. The secondary information was selected using the criteria of the words ‘rural development’ and ‘rural industrialisation’, as the inclusion category. The data from secondary information can illustrate the bias of the past studies’ conclusions. To solve this challenge, the research explored multiple sources to understand the issue canvassed in the study. The study used thematic data analysis to analyse the findings and understand, and put them into different categories. Anderson *et al.* (2020) underscore that by generating themes and interpreting patterns of meaning across a data set thematic, data analysis allows researchers to uncover nuances and subtleties that might otherwise be overlooked.

FINDINGS

This section presents case studies from Vietnam, Chile and Zimbabwe. These were adopted to understand the trends of rural industrialisation from developing countries working towards the attainment of upper middle-class economies by 2030. These cases were chosen because the research needed to understand the efforts of developing countries' governments in creating inclusive development.

CASE STUDY OF VIETNAM

Vietnam is a country located in southeast Asia, specifically on the Indonesia Peninsula bordering the South China Sea to the east and sharing land borders with China to the north, Laos and Cambodia to the west and the Gulf of Thailand to the south (Asia Society, 2023). The total population of Vietnam is approximately 100.3 million, with a rural population of approximately 60.7 million people, representing 63% of the total population (Lotus Project, 2024). Rural-urban disparities are significant in terms of income, access to resources and living standards (Trading Economics, 2023). Most rural residents in Vietnam depend on agriculture, forestry and aquaculture for their income (IFAD, 2024). Vietnam needs rural development to address the rural-urban disparities.

Vietnam's rural industrialisation involves the growth of non-agriculture economic growth and services in rural areas, leading to diversified livelihoods, job creation and economic growth, but the process also involves some environmental challenges (World Bank Open Data, 2024). Rural households in Vietnam are increasingly engaging in non-agricultural activities, either by starting businesses or seeking employment in nearby industrial clusters (Tuan, 2018). Rural economic development strategies used in Vietnam include the creation of craft villages and there are 2 790 of those nationwide, including 240 traditional ones, creating jobs for around 11 million people (Phu, 2019). The Government of Vietnam has encouraged the creation of industrial parks with large factories being established in major national highways creating rural employment and economic growth (Dang, 2020).

In addition, Sakata (2022) observes how a significant area of rice fields, especially along major national highways, has been converted into large

factories and industrial parks, while small-scale businesses in the industrial and service sectors are being established everywhere in Vietnam. Rural industrialisation has moved Vietnam from a mainly agricultural economy to a diversified and advanced industrialised economy, moving the country away from being reliant on agriculture (Dang and Tran, 2020). Vietnamese rural progress has seen the growth of socio-economic infrastructure being built in rural areas, scientific and technological advances being applied in agricultural production to improve productivity and competitiveness (Phu, 2019). Rural progress in Vietnam has taken many forms such as the formation of small-scale businesses and industrial parks, converting agricultural fields to trade areas and, therefore, diversifying the rural economy.

Although rural industrialisation contributes substantially to the rural economy and society, these benefits have come at the cost of severe environmental pollution and resource depletion (Dang and Tran, 2020). As rural industries expand, modernise and diversify their products to meet international and domestic demands, environmental challenges have increased exponentially (Dang, 2020). Severe pollution has contaminated the air, water and soil with respective impacts on agricultural production, the health and welfare of local residents and neighbouring communities (Tuan, 2018). Despite the environmental challenges, there are also market challenges that are affecting rural industrialisation in Vietnam as intense market competition among craft villages is also exacerbating pollution due to intense production to meet the market competition (Phu, 2019). Rural labourers lack necessary skills for industrial jobs. This has slowed down the growth of rural industrialisation (Nguyen *et al.*, 2016). Rural industrial development in Vietnam faces multiple challenges which threaten the environment and, at the same time, lack of it can rewind the clock back to the early 1990s period of under-development in rural centres of Vietnam.

CASE STUDY OF CHILE

Chile is a long and narrow country, stretching along South America's western edge with more than 6 000km of the Pacific Ocean coastline (Worldometer, 2024). The rural population of Chile is 2.3 million and it is estimated that 25% of Chile's population lives in territories with a high degree of rurality, which cover 82% of the national territory (World Bank Open Data, 2024). The

population of Chile is 84% urban dwellers and 12% (16.8 million) are rural dwellers (Trading Economics, 2023).

Chile has focused on rural development through policies and projects aimed at improving infrastructure, promoting economic opportunities and fostering sustainable practices, with an emphasis on digital transformation and sustainable agriculture (UNDP, 2022). Joint SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Fund (2024) underscores the fact that the Government of Chile has implemented policies to speed-up rural development in the country through improving rural digital connectivity, improving the quality of life and entrepreneurial activities in these areas. Chile has a national rural development policy, officially published in May 2020, that focuses on four main areas, that is, Social Welfare, Economic Opportunities, Environmental Sustainability and Culture and Identity (Melo *et al.*, 2021). The policy aims to achieve these goals through strategic axes and specific guidelines (Ulloa, 2022). The Government of Chile has implemented projects to expand rural infrastructure, particularly in hard-to-reach areas linking infrastructure to productive use (OECD, 2022). These projects have resulted in the creation of territorial development framework plans, financed rural infrastructure projects and undertaken productive initiatives, benefiting rural communities (Novoa, 2024). The World Bank (2023) notes that in Chile, there has been infrastructural development that has seen the institutional and financial arrangements for infrastructure service provision in rural areas to allow people to access services that allow them to have better economic growth.

Modrego (2021) argues that rural areas in Chile are fertile grounds for entrepreneurial activities for the creation of middle-income economies, leading to the creation of small and medium enterprises. Rural industrialisation in Chile has taken the form of entrepreneurship, with communities focusing on the formation of small start-ups. Campos (2016) alludes that agriculture remains the core strategy for rural industrialisation, with the government implementing policies that support mechanisation of the agricultural sector. Melo *et al.* (2021) stress that Chile has created a form of rural industrialisation through the production of poplar wood, focusing particularly on roundwood production, which has seen the growth of rural economies. The International Trade Administration (2023) observes that Chile

has developed a lucrative rural industrialisation through the establishment of a food processing industry in rural areas which generates \$23.3 billion annually and is forecast to grow by 35% by 2030. Rural industrialisation in Chile presents a mixture of ideas from agriculture, agroforestry and digitisation to improve entrepreneurship among rural residents, improving their well-being, while moving towards the creation of a middle-income economy.

CASE STUDY OF ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe is a country in southern Africa with a population of almost 17 million people, comprising a rural population of 67% and 33% urban (Worldometer, 2024). The government views increasing energy access through rural electrification as a major pillar in enhancing socio-economic development in rural communities (Trading Economics, 2024). Zimbabwe is focusing on rural industrialisation to enhance domestic productivity, create local employment and uplift rural communities by utilising local resources for value-added projects, particularly in agriculture (FAO, 2020). The Midlands State University (MSU) (2024) observes that Zimbabwe has leapt towards rural industrialisation and agro-innovation, through the collaboration of higher education institutions and communities, focusing on fisheries and farming activities aligned with national aspirations for an upper-middle-income economy by 2030. *The Chronicle* (March 8, 2024) carries a story which points out that the Ministry of Industry and Commerce is working on creating a platform that links rural entrepreneurs with established companies and potential investors as part of efforts to promote rural industrialisation which aims to boost domestic productivity. These efforts are towards utilisation of local resources towards value-addition. Under the rural industrialisation drive, communities are capitalising on locally available endowments such as minerals, wildlife, land and water resources, among others, to set up commercial industrial activities which include localised value-addition projects that generate income for many households (Jani *et al.*, 2019). Rural industrialisation in Zimbabwe is focusing on creating sustainable livelihoods with a people-centred approach developing value-added cash streams for rural communities.

The Chronicle (October 18, 2023) contains a story rural industrialisation transforming lives as Matabeleland South Province has benefited from rural

industrialisation with thriving projects, such as the Beitbridge Juicing Company, which has employed thousands, and the *amacimbi* processing plant in Beitbridge, the Zulu Lithium Project in Insiza, as communities capitalise on locally available endowments. The rural industrialisation drive in Zimbabwe is focusing on economic success from locally available resources through value-addition. This has answered Zimbabwe's long call for the beneficiation of local resources. *The Herald* (February 6, 2024) paints a picture of rural industrialisation fuelling economic growth through the agriculture and food systems transformation strategy that aims to develop the agricultural sector, expected to anchor the rural industrialisation programme. The MSU (2022) observes how the Midlands State University has been engaging societies in the drought-prone Mberengwa District to alleviate poverty by harnessing local resources and adding value. Higher education has partnered with rural communities to reduce emerging problems and the widening gap of socioeconomic challenges through teaching climate-smart agriculture (Phiri *et al.*, 2024). *The Herald* (6 August, 2024) reports that the Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) has moved to tame poverty and hunger in the arid Chivi area, to socio-economically transform the lives of farmers in the country to operationalise Education 5.0, providing solutions for communities in line with the *Nyika Inovakwa Nevene Vayo* concept (loosely translated, a country is built by its citizens). Rural industrialisation in Zimbabwe has been catapulted by higher education institutions which have positioned themselves as anchors of sustainable development.

In addition, Dzvimbo *et al.* (2022) observe that the Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) has been engaging communities moving in the direction of training them on disaster management and local resources value-addition. The MSU (2020) indicates that it has collaborated with local communities in the creation of drinks from fruits such as baobab fruits. *The Herald* (August 6, 2024) states that the GZU has become an anchor for rural industrialisation through the operationalisation of Education 5.0, by introducing small grains farming and established milling plants, improving food and income security. The GZU (2023) has engaged communities to harness local resources such as wild fruits to add value and create markets for them, creating employment for local communities. Rural industrialisation in

Zimbabwe has been people-centred, encouraging communities to craft sustainable livelihoods.

Table 1: *A comparison of rural industrialisation.*

| | zimbabwe | malawi |
|--|--|--|
| structural development that improves financial arrangements for service provision. | industrialisation has used locally available resources and endowments to create industrialisation (Jani <i>et al.</i> , 2019). | highways converted to large factories and industrial parks. |
| industrialisation has destroyed the ecosystem, creating problems for carbon sequestration. | industrialisation has caused environmental degradation through mineral-based approaches. | industrialisation has caused environmental impacts through industrial pollution. |
| country has created a thriving agricultural industry with steady growth. | industrialisation has created processing industries for locally available resources to help in value-addition. | if necessary skills have slowed the growth of rural industrialisation. |

Even though rural development, through industries, can improve countryside livelihoods, it has potential to create inequalities between communities with resources and those without. Rural industrialisation can face challenges during implementation as the authorities can become corrupt and divert the funding to their own gain. In conclusion, the findings of the study show that agriculture and other land-based industrial exploits are the main forms of development being undertaken in developing countries. The developing countries are using value-addition and creation of industrial zones along highways to reduce transactional costs (transportation fees for the produce) for farmers. It can be concluded that despite the economic benefits of rural industrialisation, it poses a great threat to the environment and the future generations’ use of resources.

DISCUSSION

The study objective is to understand the global and regional perspectives of rural industrialisation, as it has become a developmental strategy towards pivoting socio-economic success. The study reveals that rural industrialisation has focused on the mechanisation and development of the agricultural sector, making it a multi-sector that creates employment opportunities, while

reducing the operational costs by creating processing industries within rural communities. Rural development has become a strategy to improve rural lives by creating employment opportunities and value-addition services that have allowed for infrastructural development within the rural communities. Rural industrial processes development has been mainly people-centred through the creation of agriculture-related industries to support local people and reduce rural-urban migration. In support of the research findings is the conceptual framework as Natarajan *et al.* (2022) argue that sustainable livelihoods are created through a people-centred approach giving precedent to local communities and all stakeholders for development to be sustainable. All the three regions are using agriculture as an approach promoting opportunities for local people and giving them employment through the creation of processing industries for agricultural produces. Rural development has become a strategy that 21st century lessons can be drawn from. For development to happen, it has to be people-centred, focusing on creating growth across all areas. Lessons can be drawn from the rural industrialisation process of increasing agriculture-related industries in the rural areas by observing that employment creation and sustainable livelihoods have been improved in rural areas, giving rural areas a chance towards bridging the rural-urban divide. All the case studies from the three countries are focusing on resource-based approaches, showing that natural resources are the cash cow for rural industrialisation.

Rural industrialisation has focused on the harnessing of locally available resources such as mineral-based resources. The study findings reveal that rural industrialisation has concentrated on harnessing locally available resources to create economic development in the rural areas. This industrialisation has utilised local endowments to develop local communities. Resources such as minerals, wildlife, land and water have been harnessed to benefit local rural communities with activities such as eco-tourism being used to benefit rural communities. Wildlife resources are being used as a basis to promote eco-tourism in one region as natural endowments in this region attract tourist. Rural industrialisation has improved the livelihoods of local communities through the harnessing of the resources that are locally available adding value to them and creating sustainable livelihoods. In support of the study is Johnson (2020), who posits that rural communities have been industrialised

through the use of local endowments giving local people a chance towards attaining sustainable development. The lesson that can be drawn from rural industrialisation is that rural communities must utilise locally available resources to create sustainable development.

The study findings reveal that rural industrialisation has been anchored by higher education institutions through the creation of partnerships with rural people, providing them knowledge on how to add value to their resources. The perspective of rural industrialisation using higher education institutions as anchors of development of sustainable livelihoods has created self-sufficient rural economies that have guaranteed food and income security from the proceeds of the processing industries. Similar to the research findings are Bellandi *et al.*, (2021) who argue that higher education institutions are speeding up rural industrialisation by teaching rural communities entrepreneurship to improve their harnessing and trade of local endowments. The lesson that can be drawn is that in 21st century universities do not have to be ivory towers; but can be portals of knowledge, creating value-addition hubs and innovation portals that create sustainable livelihoods in rural communities. It can then be argued that rural industrialisation has become a beacon of hope for rural communities and bridging of the rural-urban divide which has generally been associated with rural poverty in most developing countries.

Rural industrialisation, as a rural development strategy in developing countries, has become a beacon of hope of transforming livelihoods and creating sustainability. It can then be concluded that rural revitalisation through the creation of employment and value-addition of locally available resources has created development to reduce rural-urban migration in most low-income countries. However, rural industrialisation has not been occurring in a vacuum, since it has impacted the sustainability of the environment, leading to land degradation. In mining towns, the land has been affected by the rural industrialisation related to extraction of minerals.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study reveals that rural industrialisation has become a strategy for national development in developing countries. The study findings reflect that

rural industrialisation has been using the development of agricultural processing industries, entrepreneurship and the creation of small-scale industries and the use higher education community engagement. It holds great promise in speeding up economic growth and improving living standards in countryside communities. In conclusion, by promoting the establishment of trade and businesses in rural areas, developing countries can create job opportunities closer to home, thereby reducing the influx of rural residents into overpopulated cities. The creation of rural industries can create opportunities for countries to reduce problems of over-population in urban areas. It can then be concluded that rural industrial development in developing countries can be anchored on agricultural activities through the promotion of agro-businesses, value-addition of agricultural products and creating market linkages for local endowments. However, it can also be concluded that rural development of industries can create environmental challenges such as environment degradation, leading to the destruction of ecosystems. This has implications on the broader society as it can lead to over-use of resources, which will affect the next generation.

The research recommends future studies to probe the role of government policies that regulate rural industrialisation in developing countries. The study suggests the creation of rural industrial parks to reduce the urban-rural divide so as to alleviate poverty in rural communities. The study recommends the creation of rural agricultural produce processing zones. Future studies should look into the alignment of the National Development Strategies to rural industrialisation for the attainment of sustainable livelihoods. The study recommends the injection of financial assistance towards viable rural projects that seek to add value to rural products. The diversification of economic activities in rural areas of developing countries, and the enhancement of public services and promotion of sustainable and inclusive growth through local communities' empowerment should be looked into by future studies. However, these recommendations can face challenges such as lack of funding, as most developing countries are cash-strapped. The recommendations can have limitations due to lack of infrastructural development to accommodate rural industrialisation in developing countries.

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