

The Role of Traditional Leaders in the Midst of The Covid-19 Pandemic: Was It Sufficient?

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Abstract

The central aim of this paper is to interrogate the role played by traditional leaders in fostering service delivery and tackling the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in rural areas. The institution of traditional leadership play a pivotal role in supporting municipalities in rendering services to communities. It can therefore be asserted that all organs of State are duty and morally bound to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by putting measures in place targeted at mitigating the spread of the virus. In rural areas, municipalities are working closely with the institution of traditional leadership in tackling the spread of the virus. Traditional leaders play imperative roles in local government by improving governance via public participation, development planning, increasing service delivery, an advisory role in the municipal council, and enhancing the livelihoods of local communities in a sustainable manner. During COVID-19 Pandemic, traditional leaders have thus far been proactive in rural areas in the fight against the virus. Methodologically, this paper adopted a Critical Discourse Analysis and secondary data covering the role of traditional leadership in rural areas. The paper concludes by recognising the existence of the institution of traditional leadership as part of public administration. Consequently, the status and identification of the institution of traditional leadership are also recognised by different pieces of legislation, though their role is not clearly defined. Thus, this paper recommends that the role of traditional leaders in local government needs to be redefined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and other pieces of legislation as they are no clear.

Keywords: Traditional leadership, COVID-19 pandemic, Role and Local government

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