

## Natural Resources: Redefining The Jargon

In a world where people are constantly bombarded with tonnes of information, it's no wonder the most essential life information and efficient use of resources at our disposal are constantly brushed aside. It is worth mentioning that my argument will mainly lean towards the use of water resources as an example to illustrate my points.

The problem is people do not know or appreciate the value of natural resources and eventually abuse is inevitable. Abuse of natural resources spirals out of our homes from simple tasks such as leaving the water tap running while brushing teeth and snowballs to a range of other activities that affect a whole country's economic performance. A study by Venables (2016) highlights that developing economies are finding it hard to use natural resource wealth to improve the performance of their economies. South Africa alone is faced with clean water scarcity, especially deterioration in water quality. The South African authorities attribute the problem of scarcity to lack of coherent planning, implementation, compliance monitoring and enforcement (Nevin, 2015).

A study by Aswathanarayana (2012) offers some solutions and defines two principles relating to natural resource management and the first is Science-illuminated and consists of elements such as earth, space, hydrological, sciences, information etc. and the second is management of local resources and constitutes waters, soils minerals, sediments, rocks etc. Furthermore natural resource management is suggested to be achieved through ecologically sustainable manner and value adding through the processing of natural resource products. This is all well and good but the question is, what does this all mean to an average person walking down the street whose attention is grasped on surviving and getting through the pressure of life itself?

As a personal reflection on the matter, I strongly tend to believe that at the centre of it all there is an immense lack of empathy in the human race. The lack in ability to place ourselves in other people's shoes and imagine what it feels like to live without some basic resources and therefore guide our behaviours in how we ought to use the abundant resources we are privileged to have.

It will continue to be difficult to change deep-rooted behaviours such as enjoying the luxury of long showers and especially where people believe that the problem of scarcity of natural resources does not affect them. There is need to educate the masses and I dare recommend that we develop engaging awareness campaigns of the problem at hand. Take the message where the masses are, flood social media platforms with a message tailored to appeal to the different segments of demographics.

I write as a young adult who is approaching his 30s and perhaps on behalf of million others reflect the reality that there is not much noise about using natural resources wisely in an engaging way whether it's Science-illuminated or management of local resources. It is true that there is a lot of research being conducted on the subject but much of this information remains buried under sophisticated academic jargon and journals stored away in exclusive databases that will not appeal to most teenagers and later on young adults and other stakeholder groups. If awareness is to be created, the right message should be tailored through the right media platforms and in a language that is relatable to those different groups.

I would further suggest that perhaps government bodies representing different economies across the globe first get correct the coherent planning, implementation, compliance monitoring and enforcement

of natural resources before selling the idea to the masses. This definitely applies to more than just South Africa. Let's first define attainable goal then communicate and sell a product that actually works, then we could start to cover significant ground. In many cases it comes down to cost and therefore imperative to show how people benefit and save, what is in it for them to change their behaviours.

## References

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