Chapter 3
The Fight Against Climate Change From an Indigenous System Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The 21st century has witnessed that climate change has become an acute daily agony. In Africa, to be specific, it has made the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals a myth. It is argued that the implications of climate change are evident in numerous ways on the African continent: incessant floods, cyclones, droughts, and heat waves. These have introduced disastrous outcomes: a heightened threat of food security, inadequate water resource availability, diminished biodiversity, decline in human health viability, and increasing land degradation. At the centre of all this, a more robust understanding of climate change and appropriate palliatives is called for. In South Africa, conservation by the state and numerous stakeholders on the thorny issue of climate change has tended to favour and privilege Western scientific interpretations at the expense of the "indigenous" interpretations as informed by their indigenous epistemologies.

INTRODUCTION

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ways on the African continent; incessant floods, cyclones, droughts and heat waves. These have introduced disastrous outcomes; 'a heightened threat of food security, inadequate water resource availability, diminished biodiversity, decline in human health viability and increasing land degradation'. At the centre of all this, a more robust understanding of climate change and appropriate palliatives is called for. In South Africa, conservation by the state and numerous stakeholders on the thorny issue of climate change has tended to favour and privilege Western scientific interpretations at the expense of the 'indigenous' interpretations as informed by their indigenous epistemologies. Against this backdrop, this book chapter thus represents an attempt to rethink climate change by adopting the VhaVenda ways as its case study. In other words, it is premised on Africanising the fight against climate change.

This chapter is outlined as follows:

- Exploring the notion of climate change – African and Western paradigms.
- Appraising African indigenous environmental conservation.
- Examining the practical manifestations and application of Tshivenda environmental conservation ways and tools.
- A critique on Africanising the fight against climate change.
- Tools of knowledge management to foster the African indigenous knowledge fight against climate change.

BACKGROUND

Climate change influences the capacity of indigenous communities to fulfil inherent environmental needs (Ogbodo, et al., 2018). Even though changes have been happening over many years, indigenous communities have been adjusting to these progressions for the duration of their life utilizing indigenous environmental knowledge. The latter knowledge is maintained to be generally modest, promptly accessible to indigenous communities and it is a climatically smart apparatus for sustainable development and the administration of environment (Hammed, et al., 2018). According to Kolawole, et al., (2016),

Environmental problems vary spatio-temporarily, but rural farmers, through continued experimentation, trial and error, and sustained interactions with their local environment, have developed a vast local knowledge about nature in their locale that they use in coping with and solving their problems, amongst which are climate-related problems.

Climate change is 'any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or because of human activity' (Ngwenya, et al., 2016). According to a study by Kamara, et al., 2018), 'climate change is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods' (Kolawole, et al., 2017). Indigenous people's knowledge and view of climate and ecological change is a component of customs and norms, given to them by their progenitors. In most African countries, indigenous climate and ecological knowledge is underpinned on customs and culture which enable them to appropriately plan and make designs to cope with the effects of environmental change in all sectors.

Views of these changes by indigenous communities are focused on observations in temperature, precipitation, and vegetation designs, which are frequently supported by mixing such insights with