

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES TOWARDS SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION: THE TANZANIA EXPERIENCE

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Abstract:

This paper seeks to describe the experience of Tanzania in strengthening social integration and inclusion. The Tanzania experience with social integration has resulted in a relatively high social stability and is worth examining closely with a view to identifying challenges of nation building in a developing post-colonial country. This paper outlines the government policies, strategies and plans initiated to promote and maintain social integration and inclusion within country.

The paper shows that the Government of Tanzania has been implementing a number of policies targeting specific socially excluded groups; generally excluded populations; and people with specific conditions – such as those in situations of temporary and long-term disadvantage. The Government has also implemented anti-discriminatory policies for more equitable distribution and for civic participation. Furthermore the government has formulated a number of units to facilitate social integration, such as the Human Rights Commission as well as those dealing with legal and regulating basic human rights.

However all of these efforts have been facing a number of significant challenges hindering the realization of the national goal of social, economic and political integration and inclusion.

Introduction:

Social integration and inclusion in Tanzania results from a relatively high degree of social stability inherited from the post-independence period when the first president Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere installed a sense of national identity, unity and cohesion among all

Tanzanians. During this time, the adherence to an established principle of social and economic liberation, which emphasized human dignity, equality of opportunities and freedom of individuals, peace and stability, detribalization and the creation of a national consciousness, promoted social integration in Tanzania (Abdulaziz 1980). Furthermore adherence to the national language policy, religious tolerance and state secularism helped in downplaying the existing religious differences. The national language policy helped in muting ethnic and tribal conflicts as it brought a sense of national unity (Polome 1980; Barkan 1974). Since that time, the country has continued to reap the benefit of the propitious social and political stability installed by the late father of the nation (Wangwe 2005; Miguel 2003).

The Tanzanian government, in its efforts towards promoting social inclusion, has continued to involve its people socially, politically and economically. Specifically, efforts have continued to be directed towards including individuals and groups of people who have been wholly or partially excluded from participating in economic, political and social life due to discrimination based on gender, HIV status, disability, age, poverty, unemployment and job precariousness (Mwakibibi 2008). The main objective is to remove social exclusion caused by two major causes, (i) poverty-related factors - such as generalized poverty, which leaves people excluded from goods and services; income inequality; unequal rural- urban development; unequal distribution of assets (land); unequal access to social services; and inadequate social protection strategies, and (ii) discrimination-related factors such as discrimination based on gender, disability and HIV/AIDS.

Due to the above causes, various groups have faced social exclusion in Tanzania. Almost all national indicators, such as literacy, unemployment, and HIV prevalence rate, have shown women to be an excluded group. Some existing customary laws also place women in Tanzania at risk of exclusion, such as the customary land law which denies women the right to access land. Children, especially street-orphan children have also formed another socially excluded group in Tanzania. In addition, people living with *HIV-AIDS (PLWHA)* have been discriminated against in accessing basic social services such as medical care, and have often faced rejection from their families. *Youth* have mainly faced exclusion from employment, while the *elderly* have faced exclusion due to loneliness, low income, dwindling respect and lack of access to health services. In some areas, the elderly have also faced molestation on account of belief in witchcraft. Lastly *persons with disabilities* have faced stigma and discrimination, and lacked training, employment and facilitating devices such as wheel chairs, Braille books, crutches and artificial limbs.

Government Initiatives towards social integration and inclusion:

In promoting social integration and inclusion, the Government of Tanzania has formulated a number of inclusive policy frameworks for promoting social inclusion of traditionally excluded groups. These can be grouped into five major categories: specific group policies, general policies, policies for people with specific conditions, anti-discriminatory policies, and policies to promote civic participation.

I. Specific group policies:

In promoting social integration and inclusion, the government of Tanzania has established a number of policies targeting specific groups of people who have been excluded. These policies have helped to improve economic opportunities and access to services for women, youth, children, older persons and persons with disabilities. These government policies include, among others, the Women's Development Policy, National Youth Development Policy, Policy on Development of People with Disabilities, and the National Ageing Policy.

Apart from the established policies, the Government of Tanzania has also established some specific strategies and plans to promote social inclusion for these groups. These strategies include:

- *Strengthening funds for providing loans to women* - This has been done through promotion of savings and credit services in rural and urban areas, and the establishment of the Tanzania Women's Bank (TWB) for empowering women's access to affordable credit for micro-economic activities;
- *Removing discriminatory laws against women* – these include laws pertaining to ownership of land and inheritance of property;
- *Establishing a national action plan on the prevention and eradication of violence against women and children;*
- *Ensuring unconditional employment in terms of gender and encouraging women to acquire economic power through involving them in various economic activities;*

- *Stimulating and facilitating private investment in the private sector enterprises of all sizes* through public investment programmes, human resource development; and institutional capacity development for the functioning labour market; and
- *Provision of free health services to older people, children and pregnant women.*

II. General policies

To achieve social integration, the Government has put in place policies, strategies and programmes that give its citizens access to rights such as rights to food, shelter, individual freedom, security, social services, equality, and quality socioeconomic opportunities. The Government of Tanzania has also made significant contributions in the provision of basic services. This has been done through direct funding of basic necessities such as health, education and water, and through subsidies on basic goods such as food. All of these are efforts to provide social protection to the population.

In addition, the Government has recognised that the majority of people are in the informal economic sector, which is characterized by poverty. As such, in order for pro-poor growth to be realized, they are working to empower this sector so that it can participate fully in the development process. This process includes strategies such as:

- Organizing training programmes aimed at enabling people in the informal sector to employ themselves in order to reduce poverty. In doing this the Government of Tanzania collaborates with Non-State Actors (NSAs);
- Improving the business climate by facilitating investment in its economic and social infrastructure;¹
- Dealing with challenges of employment creation and service delivery for the urban poor through the Employment Creation in Municipal Service Delivery Programme;

¹ ILO project as an example of how the government facilitated investment in economic and social infrastructure at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/eiip/countries/africa/tanzania.htm> and http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/daressalaam/download/employment_creation_in_municipal_service_delivery_project.pdf.

- Encouraging local government authorities (LGAs) to attract investors and employment in their localities by creating an enabling environment for investors;
- Improving the business environment in Tanzania through implementing the Business Environment Strengthening for Tanzania (BEST) programme to scale up the reduction of administrative hurdles inherent in the taxation and business licensing systems with a view to reducing high costs of starting and doing business; and
- Improving the legal and regulatory framework needed to reduce the cost of doing business and thereby improving the environment for doing business in Tanzania² through review of regulations, focusing on removing obstacles to private sector development, harmonization of local government taxation to remove , and other similar strategies.

Other programmes have also been established to facilitate both local and foreign investments, and fuel job creation. These include the Mini Tiger 2020 Plan, which aims at increasing the rate of economic growth and the per capita income by increasing job opportunities. Similarly, the Government has developed a policy of empowerment of Tanzanians to enable their participation in various economic activities. In addition, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are being guaranteed by the Bank of Tanzania (BOT) when they seek loans from financial institutions as a means of promoting entrepreneurship.

III. Policies for people with specific conditions

This category of policies has been implemented to protect those in situations of temporary and long term disadvantage.

a) Pro-poor Policies;

The United Nations and its agencies have suggested that “sustaining economic growth” and “poverty reduction” are mutually reinforcing development goals. This perspective was solidified at the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) held in Copenhagen in March 1995 in the creation of The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, which outlined 10

² Country Report on the Implementation Status of the Brussels Plan of Action, 2005, p. 7
<http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrrls/ldc/MTR/Tanzania.pdf>

commitments for social development. Tanzania was among those the attending countries to adopt the 10 Commitments of Copenhagen, by implementing pro-poor policies that aim to combine economic growth and social policies to achieve poverty reduction (Wangwe 2005). Among the pro-poor policies adopted were:

- Implementation of NSGRP/MKUKUTA and ZSGRP/ MKUZA from Zanzibar to eradicate poverty;
- Implementation of national and sub-national processes and reforms for wider participation of citizens in development processes e.g. Public Sector Reforms, Local Government Reforms, Parastatal Sector Reforms, the BEST programme and Public Financial Management Reforms; and
- Implementation of Mini Tiger 2020 Plan which aims at raising the rate of economic growth and per capita income through increasing job opportunities.

b) Social protection

The Government of Tanzania has finalized the formulation of a Social Protection Framework (SPF) developed through a participatory process. Apart from the existing formal social protection schemes, there are also traditional and non-traditional informal social protection schemes.

Tanzania, like many other countries in the developing world, has had strong informal/traditional safety nets built on family and/or community support and informal income transfers. The traditional social security systems are often based on customary rights, or on spiritual and religious grounds. They are often organized around family groups, kinship groups or neighbourhood and community groups. While it is recognized that over time traditional social system have tended to decay and change forms in response to the forces of urbanization and industrialization, there are indications that family and community social support systems have remained the main safety nets, particularly among the rural poor and other vulnerable groups.

c) Conditional cash transfer programmes

The Government, through the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) has implementing Conditional Cash Transfers after successful piloting of Cash Transfers (CT) programmes nationwide. These were implemented with the aim of supporting (i) cash transfers to poor and food insecure households that had able-bodied person and (ii) grants to vulnerable groups for income

generation activities. CCT are to be delivered through the Social Fund and community management committees.

IV. Civic Participation

The Government relationship with CSOs and the overall strength of democracy play a significant role in the quality of participatory processes (Christian Aid, 2002). Tanzania cultivated good relations with citizens from the ‘*ujamaa*’ (African Socialism) era in the late 1960s and government has since maintained a liberal attitude towards participation, allowing a fairly open society even under the previous one-party rule. In order to ensure an inclusive society, Tanzanian government promotes active participation in civic, economic and political activities by all. In encouraging all-inclusive participation, the Government has done the following;

- a. Broaden the participation of citizen in policy design and implementation through their involvement in national and local planning processes, in budgeting and in expenditure tracking and poverty monitoring;
- b. Empowered communities at grass root levels through communication strategies;
- c. Promoted equitable distribution of economic and social resources; and
- d. Practised affirmative action to include women in decision-making,

V. Specific Unit for Social Integration:

In order to achieve social integration, the Government has put in place policies, strategies and programmes that give its citizens access to rights, including basic human rights such as rights to food, shelter, individual freedom, security, social services, equality and quality socioeconomic opportunities. This has included the formation of the Commission of Human Rights and Good Governance which is charged with educating the people on their rights and investigating human rights violations. The Commission also investigates injustice, corruption, and abuse of power and unfair treatment to any person by a public officer in exercise of her/his official duties, and takes appropriate actions, (Wangwe 2005).

POLICY CHALLENGES

Existing approaches to promote social integration and social inclusion in Tanzania

i) Specific Group Policies

Efforts toward women's social integration are still faced with a number of challenges. For example, violence against women is still a significant problem despite the government intervention on the issue. The established laws and regulations against violence are not effective enough due to the lack of recognition and/or implementation at the household level. In many instances, if a wife has been abused by a husband or a child abused by his/her parents, the issue is left to the household to settle. Furthermore, many women are still not aware of their rights.

Inadequate services also present a problem. For example medical care for poor people is still limited and there are limited special schools for children with disabilities. In addition, service provision tends to be heavily urban-based.

ii) General Policies

The level of access to basic services like water, health care and primary education at the district level is still poor. Furthermore even in those areas where these services are present, the quality of services leaves much to be desired. For example, primary school facilities are overcrowded from shortage of schools and classrooms, and this has led to poor quality in the education provided. As a result, even though free education has been provided since independence, the country still experiences social exclusion due to lack of education, such as exclusion from economic participation due to lack of necessary qualifications.

As far as public health is concerned, the health provision process in the country continues to face challenges such as shortage of staff, corruption, lack of medicine and inefficiency at local, rural-based health units.

iii) Policies for people with special conditions

a) Pro-poor based policies:

Since Tanzania has recognized the importance of combining economic growth and poverty reduction, pro-poor policies have been seen as another way of bringing social integration. However since this is still new, the government has not yet succeeded in fully integrating poverty reduction policies into macro-economic policy frameworks.

b) Social Protection:

Social protection in Tanzania is one of the central measures to prevent disintegration and promote inclusion and integration. However there is evidence on the declining (sometimes erosion) of traditional Social Security Networks i.e. Social safety nets, particularly due to falling economic performance and reduced remittances to dependants. Even the formal Social Security Networks are faced with challenges such as corruption and inadequate services, such as the lack of available medicine in the free medical care system.

c) Conditional Cash Transfer:

Among the major challenges of conditional cash transfers is the limited fiscal space for social protection including. In addition, there is high demand for skills training, particularly among rural youth, but they are constrained by inability to pay for the training. Sustainability and scaling-up of cash transfer programmes also proves problematic without external support.

vi) Specific Units for Social Integration:

Although the act establishing the Commission provides for its jurisdiction in both the Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar the government still faces a challenge of difficulties in extending its mandate to Zanzibar due to ambiguity in the Constitutional allocation of powers over union and non-union matters, and the roles of the National Assembly and the House of Representatives. The powers of the Commission have limitations. For instance, the Commission cannot investigate the President of Tanzania or Zanzibar, or matters that are pending in a Court of Law or Judicial Tribunal.

Lastly, following the establishment of the East African Community, it is expected that Tanzania will be facing another challenge as a result of the process of integration. This state-level integration could mean more problems and challenges in attaining national development plans. Furthermore, as the integration involves unequal partners, the disproportionate allocation of benefits may create friction between countries.

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