

THE ROLE OF HOMEGROWN GOVERNANCE SYSTEM IN ELIMINATING POVERTY IN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF RWANDA

Geliş Tarihi (Received Date) 20.12.2017
Kabul Tarihi (Accepted Date) 07.03.2018

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Abstract

Africa has been suffering from extreme poverty for a long time despite the abundance of natural resources and there are many causes linked to this extreme poverty. This paper puts emphasis on the governance issues as the sole cause of poverty in many African countries. International institutions like the IMF and the World Bank have proposed certain governance systems to help African countries come out of poverty, such as the structural adjustment policies. However, this style of governance still fails to work in Africa in helping to fight and eliminate poverty in the continent. This article discusses why African economies like Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya that had GDPs higher than that of many Asian tiger countries in 1906s remain stagnant compared to the East Asian countries. Does this mean that Africa needs its own approach through a unique system of governance to fight poverty? If yes, this paper discusses how homegrown governance system can help African countries overcome poverty tragedy. The paper also takes the case study of Rwanda's style of governance by lying out its traditional homegrown governance system and what lessons developing countries can learn from it. Finally, the premise that African countries need their own governance system will be justified.

Keywords: Homegrown, Governance, Poverty, Rwanda

AFRİKA'DA YOKSULLUĞUN ORTADAN KALDIRILMASINDA YEREL YÖNETİM SİSTEMİNİN ROLÜ: RUANDA'DA BİR VAKA ÇALIŞMASI

Özet

Afrika, doğal kaynakların bolluğuna rağmen yoksulluk nedeniyle uzun zamandır acı çeken bir bölgedir. Kıtada karşı karşıya kalınan yoksulluğun birçok nedeni bulunmaktadır. Bu makalede, birçok Afrika ülkesinde yoksulluğun önemli bir kaynağı olan yönetim sorunları incelenecektir. IMF ve Dünya Bankası gibi uluslararası kuruluşlar, Afrika ülkelerinin yoksulluktan çıkmasına yardım etmek için yapısal uyum politikaları gibi bazı yönetim sistemleri önermişlerdir. Bununla birlikte bu yönetim biçimi, Afrika'daki yoksullukla savaşa ve yoksulluğun ortadan kaldırılması süreçlerinde çok başarılı olamadı. Makale, 1906'da şu an Asya'da hızla gelişmekte olan birçok doğu Asya kaplan ülkesinden daha yüksek milli gelire sahip olan Nijerya, Gana ve Kenya gibi Afrika ekonomilerinin şimdilerde neden bu ülkelere kıyasla çok gerilerde kaldığını tartışıyor. Bu sorunun cevabı, Afrika'nın yoksullukla mücadele için benzersiz bir yönetim sistemi aracılığıyla kendi yaklaşımına ihtiyacı olduğu mudur? Cevap evet ise, bu makalede, geliştirilecek yerli yönetim sisteminin Afrikalı ülkelere yoksulluk trajedisini aşmada nasıl yardımcı olabileceği incelenecek. Makalede Ruanda'nın yönetim tarzı vaka incelemeleriyle değerlendirilecek, geliştirilen yerli yönetim sisteminin daha iyi olması için gelişmekte olan ülkelerden hangi uygulamaların alınabileceği tartışılacaktır. Sonuçta temel tezimiz olan sorunun çözümünde Afrika ülkelerinin kendi yönetim sistemlerine ihtiyaçları olduğu savı doğrulanmaya çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yerel, Yönetim, Yoksulluk, Ruanda

1. INTRODUCTION

The African continent has for several decades been considered the poorest continent in the world simply because not only the majority of children and adults suffer from extreme poverty but also the presence of both epidemic and pandemics. These range from floods in Mozambique to droughts and famine in Somalia, south Sudan and Ethiopia. , civil wars in sierra Leon to the genocide in Rwanda, malaria, Ebola, and AIDS. Such disasters are for a long time been a common definition of Africa. The continent is highly depended on humanitarianism and foreign Aid, with hug deficits on national budget and peacekeeping troops for security. The economist magazine described Africa as "Hopeless Africa" in the article published in May 2011.

According to the global development report published by the guardian in 2016, Sub-Saharan Africa not only has the highest percentage of children living in extreme poverty (49%), it is home to the largest share of the world's extremely poor children (51%). South Asia has the second highest share (36%). Although many experts have indicated that Sub-Sahara Africa, in particular, is expected to reach a GDP of \$29 trillion by 2050, there is little to indicate how this growth correlates with economic

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development. No matter how true these predictions might be, sub-Sahara Africa's economic development is slower and the situation on the ground doesn't reflect whether this growth will soon give birth to economic development as exports argue. Sub-Sahara Africa is losing energetic labor force through economic migration that has since 2013 become a serious social problem to Europe. The illegal immigrants who are fleeing the continent for green pastures in Europe risking their lives in the Mediterranean Sea is a clear indicator of high poverty levels and political instabilities due to bad governance in this part of the continent. In fact Australia military intelligence has predicted that a sharp rise in unemployment across the African nations will lead to 15 million massive increase of economic migrants by 2020 in the article by Chris Tomlinson published in Breitbart connect. The agency went ahead to suggest that European countries should invest in sub-Sahara Africa to create employment as this will stop immigrants from pouring into Europe, this, in my opinion, should not be the solution to this problem since investment amidst bad governance is like putting Ghee butter on fire.

Imagine the fact that in 1960s when sub-Sahara African countries were gaining their independence from their colonial masters, the four Asian dragons or Tigers (South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore) were struggling with building their economies, some African countries like Ghana in 1957 during independence had the same GDP per capita with South Korea and Nigeria was a better palm oil export to Malaysia but currently Nigeria is one of the major consumptions of Malaysia's palm oil instead. In figure one, traces the per capita GDP for sub-Sahara Africa compared to the developing countries of East Asia. It indicates how the latter region went from being fraction of Africa to a level nearly four times as great, from 1970s to 1990s African per capita incomes actually dropped.

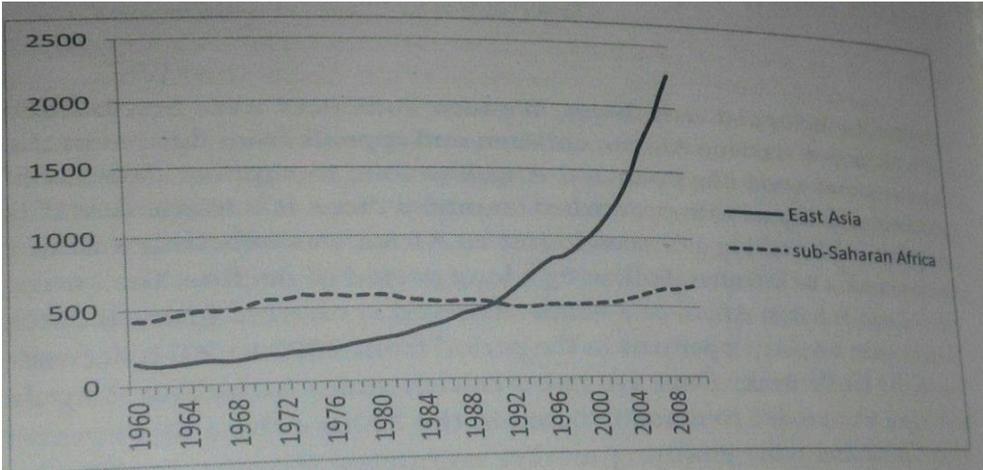


Figure 1: The World Bank (2011) sub-Sahara Africa and East Asia, per capita GDP
Source: World Bank

However by the 21st century, the four Asian tigers were considered advanced and high-income economies, the only difference between sub-Sahara Africa and the Asian tigers was that the later specialized in the areas of competitive advantage. Singapore and Hong Kong, for instance, became global leading financial centers while South Korea and Taiwan heavily invested in information technology and industrialization, this was backed by good governance with strict laws against corruption. Sub-Sahara Africa, on the other hand, was suffering from disasters towards the end of the 1980s, Ethiopia, for instance, was experiencing an intensifying drought that brought famine where 5.8 million people were dependent on relief food. This situation had put Ethiopia's economy into a state of collapse. The war in Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, and Sudan was a huge obstacle to the development of some of sub-Sahara African nations.

In the 1990s, a horror of genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, the civil war in Sierra Leone (1991-2002) and the civil war in Somalia (1991). In the other part of sub-Sahara Africa especially Uganda and South Africa, HIV/AIDS pandemic prevalence, and incidence were high and eating up humans leaving many families with orphans and in poverty tragedy. Amidst these disasters, sub-Sahara African states engaged in running large state-owned corporations like agricultural marketing boards that negatively affected the productivity yet governments spent much on capital investment on these corporations (Fukuyama F. 2004:6). According to Fukuyama governments in most governments in Africa are referred

to as:”Neopatrimonialism” borrowing the definition of max weber, “these are governments staffed by the family and friends of the ruler who run the government for their own benefits. Instead of choosing the officials based on merit or expertise and should run the government following the public interest. Political powers are used to service a client network of supporters of the countries leader for instance, Mobutu Sese Seko of DRC (Joseph 1987), such states are predatory because most of the resources and tax payer's money are used to benefit a few individuals instead of the whole population.

The above-mentioned tragedies left the whole region of sub-Sahara Africa in a tough situation since many countries suffered indirectly especially with refugee influx. As many countries in sub-Sahara Africa suffered extreme poverty due to poor economic policies, bad governance associated with corruption and authoritarianism, UN called for urgent action to implement the millennium development goals and the two Breton kinds of wood institutions(IMF and the World Bank) required certain conditions for a country to borrow money, these conditions were called the structural adjustment policies (SAPS) which included privatization, reduction of trade barriers and currency devaluation. Elliott L. (1990) in his article the lost decade published by the Guardian, the 1990s was a lost decade for Africa and the world's poor fell further behind. Yet this same period of time was referred East Asian miracle by some economists. This journal intends to contribute to the academic literature on the role good governance and use of homegrown governance systems in eliminating poverty in sub-Sahara Africa taking into consideration Rwanda's success story of achieving good results in economic growth and development through this kind of system.

2. The Republic of Rwanda: History and Geography

The occupation of Rwanda by humans is thought to have begun shortly after the last ice age. In the 16th century, the inhabitants were organized into a number of kingdoms. In the 19th century, *Mwami* Rwabugiri(king) of the Kingdom of the modern day Rwanda conducted a decades-long process of military conquest and administrative consolidation that resulted in the kingdom to form modern Rwanda. The colonial powers (Germany and Belgium), allied with the Rwandan court. A convergence of anti-colonial, and anti-Tutsi sentiment resulted in Belgium granting national independence in 1961. Direct elections resulted in a representative government dominated by the majority Hutu under President Grégoire Kayibanda. Unsettled ethnic and political tensions were worsened when Juvénal Habyarimana, the president then who had seized power in 1973 was killed. The war ground on, worsening ethnic tensions, as the Hutu feared losing their gains. In 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel group composed of 10,000 Tutsi refugees from previous decades of unrest, invaded the country, starting a war to liberate the country from genocide. This rebel group managed to take over power in 1994 lighting a frame of home in the country once described by the western media as” The home of the devil”.

Rwanda is located in the Central-East Africa and by area it covers 26,338sq km (10,169 sq. miles), its population is estimated to be 11.2 million people. Rwanda's immediate neighbors are Uganda, Congo, Tanzania and Burundi as indicated on the map below.



Figure 2: shows the map of Rwanda

Source: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/africa/rwanda>

For many people, when you mention Rwanda what emanates in their mind is 1994 genocide against the Tutsi that claimed 1 million lives, today, Rwanda has become a living success story in the contemporary politics of governance and state building. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa>

International institutions like the World Bank are currently praising Rwanda for remarkable development success that seen the country reduce poverty and inequalities. The debate is how this Central-East African country with limited natural resources has recovered from both economic and political wounds of 1994 genocide against the Tutsi into a strong economy. This article will draw more attention to the governance system in Rwanda and examine how it is helping the country to eliminate poverty and bring economic growth and development.

3. Governance system in Rwanda

Good governance is a new approach that includes all the values necessary for the consolidation of democratic management. It includes certain principles like participation, transparency, accountability, effectiveness, consistency, fairness and the rule of law. These principles of good governance mentioned by Fikret also exist at four levels, namely: public level, private sector level, NGO level and individual level. These levels form political, economic and administrative power that societies use to administer themselves. The significance of this is to transform the system from where one side governs the other to a set of relationship where mutual interaction takes place in order to make a desirable choice for citizens. There is no universal formula that shows how good governance is run, different countries use different methods to govern themselves what matters is how it gives good results.

In Rwanda, the Joint Governance Assessments (JGA) refer to governance as "the exercise" of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a countries affair at all Rwanda: Rebuilding of a Nation, fountain publishers, Kigali Rwanda. Good governance has been the key contributor to improving Rwanda's economic growth and development. The government has achieved through the use of Home-grown governance solutions and this has helped Rwanda registered significant results in eliminating poverty.

Home-Grown governance solution are traditional solutions existed in the accent monarchy of Rwanda that ensured proper spending and accountability. in governance is a system where traditional culture is used as a source of inspiration in finding solutions to modern day challenges The system of governance in Rwanda is idiosyncratic in nature, it involves what James Scott (19980) labels "Metis" meaning the ability to use local knowledge to create local solutions. In Rwanda, it has strongly cemented people's willingness to participate in management, reconstruction, and development of their country.

These home-grown governance systems include; performance contracts locally referred to as (Imihigo), this system of governance is traditional, it was used in the former kingdom of Rwanda, here contracts between the warriors and the king to bring success in terms of conquests and spoils of war were signed, as the declarations were made by the warriors in the presence of the peers, efforts were made to bring success at home at any cost. There were certain punishment and loss of respect for failing to bring success by the king to his warriors and yet there were rewards and conquering heroes were praised in songs and poems. Today, performance contracts (Imihigo) is a public commitment to achieve certain goals in any public office although it's institutionalized at the district level. District mayors and the ministers' sign performance contracts with the president committing themselves to bring significant results in activities like construction of health care centers, roads, provision of electricity to local peoples, safe water and better performance in schools. The accountability is then given to the president and the citizens at large where after rewards are given to best performers on the annual basis. Imihigo has helped bring results through competition.

Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) this is built on the traditional values of solidarity and mutual support towards common agenda in ensuring social welfare. Here assistance is provided to any activity or pressing duty that cannot be handled without common participation. It is a multi-stakeholder platform that facilitates and promote the full participation of citizens in the decentralized and participatory governance in order to improve service provision processes. It involves public sector, private and civil society. It is based on the notion of replicating traditional practice combined with modern participatory concepts such as creating space for inclusive dialogue, synergy, and accountability, establishing a shared agenda of development in the district and determining outcomes for monitoring and peer-review.

National Dialogue Council (Umushikirano); Constitutionally, Umushikirano was established in 2003, article 168 and it's a home-grown annual event chaired by the president of Rwanda that brings together representatives of local councils, civil society and other members of the community to debate the state of the nation particularly state of local government and national unity. This dialogue council meeting serves as a platform for the entire nation to share to share ideas that will contribute to finding solutions to the existing challenges through the direct participation of citizens. This has helped the government of Rwanda register significant progress in achieving its vision 2020.

Itorero; it was a traditional leadership development institution in the pre-colonial time where youth would be taught values like nationalism, patriotism, hard work, honesty and integrity for unified Rwanda. Itorero is now open to all Rwandans regardless of gender. It helps the young generation understand and appreciate their society and ready to serve in any capacity any time need arise. Since the re-introduction of itorero, citizens have gone through this kind of training that goes done to the village level (Umuganda) which is nation general cleaning day on the last Saturday of every month. Village members help build houses to for the old people and the widow, also seat to discuss challenges they face as a community in order to find solutions.

Fighting poverty through home-grown governance in Rwanda has been observed through agriculture. An example is a livestock project locally known as (Girinka), one cow per poor family program launched in 2006 as an initiative of the president of Rwanda to support poor families access nutrition, the project has since reached out to 196,000 vulnerable families.

By 2010, 68.2% of rural households had access to livestock with most households owning goats (53%), cattle (47.3%), chicken (45.5%), and pigs (24.1%). These animals become a great source of income and improved the local's lives. And has greatly contributed to reduction of poverty levels as milk production increased from 92, 628 tons in 1999 to 487,961 tons in 2013 resulting to a school milk program of one cup per child as a way of improving nutrition to support this sector, the government of Rwanda in conjunction with the private sector established milk collection centers and processing plants to support the dairy value chain. In 2013, the dairy seal of quality was launched to provide consumer reassurance about the milk products and meat sector.

Rwanda is a country that is trying to reserve its dignity by making sure that there is less dependency on foreign aid. From the African traditional setting, people were royal to the king and culture played a big role to bring harmony, using traditional means of governance remind people about their traditional values and responsibilities in their communities although forces of globalization are still a challenge to this.

4. CONCLUSION

There is no proved evidence that governance has a universal formula, although the international community has always suggested certain principles to developing countries dictating how they should govern themselves, this method has failed in many developing countries. As kurlaztack indicated in his book "democracy in retreat, the Chinese model has become and impetus for many countries all over the world to come up with their own models of governance. In Rwanda for example, Home-grown solution system of governance system mean the application of traditional methods of resource management through pro that is different from the western one. per accountability to yield good performance results. This how the methods of governance are used to solve modern challenges. This has greatly helped the citizens to take part in the social economic development of the country and the policy makers in Rwanda are able to design policies that are suitable for their citizens. The fact that this system is more focused on performance and accountability has seen the country turn into one of the world's fastest growing economy with an annual growth rate of 6% as of 2017 and predicted to be 7% 2018 according to the World Bank. Good governance, therefore, is the only medicine that can cure poverty problem in sub-Saharan Africa and transform the citizens to better life style by enjoying good social services. Law enforcement on corruption-related crimes should be taken seriously and ensuring that accountability and performance are the pillars and values within which civil servant should operate. Poor governance system which has accommodated corruption is responsible for Africa's underscores on the development field.

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