

## RE-VISIONING KENYA'S SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA FOR INDUSTRIALIZATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract**

Kenya aspires to become a globally competitive and prosperous Nation with high quality of life by the year 2030. This quest began soon after independence with the realization the government needed to put in place measures to ensure rapid economic development and social progress for all citizens. A premier social policy; sessional paper no. 1 of 1965 on African Socialism and its application to planning in Kenya envisaged to spur economic growth by rapid industrialization and development of the productive agricultural sector in rural areas failed to embrace decentralized decision-making and local participation and by 1970's the inadequacies of the economic growth & top down approaches had become apparent. In the subsequent decades, the government formulated and implemented various policies and reform measures aimed at decentralization efforts to enhance equity and faster pro-poor growth. In the education sector, the Gachathi report (1976) and Mackay report (1981) among others sought to emphasize the need for education for practical orientation and self reliance , While in the health sector the government launched its proposal for far reaching changes placing greater emphasis upon decentralized priority setting and equitable allocation of resources alongside the national development plans. In 1983, the District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD) strategy was launched with the sole aim of making the district the locus for project identification and implementation. More recently, the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERSEWC 2003) which outlined interventions and strategies for reducing poverty aimed at enhancing access to the benefits of economic growth by the most disadvantaged members of the society was formulated, culminating in the current blue –print, The Kenya Vision 2030. This paper assesses the reforms and their resultant impacts on social development in Kenya over the decades, with greater emphasis placed on the current programmes. It argues that whereas the strategy's foundation is erected on the economic, social and political pillars, strengthening the on-going institutional and governance reforms will go a long way in raising efficiency in the production and social sectors. Data was obtained mainly from secondary sources including; sessional papers, National development plans and statistical abstracts. Discourse analysis involving a critical review of the existing literature indicates that the implementation of various development policies notwithstanding, poverty and other development related setbacks persisted. It is recommended that constructive civic engagement, curbing brain drain among highly trained technocrats, ensuring sustainable peace and tranquility especially in the neighboring countries and restoring financial discipline including curbing corruption will go a long way in guarding against depleting the much prized gusto necessary for propelling the county towards industrialization by the year 2030.

**Key words:** Participatory governance, vision 2030, social development, decentralisation

## **1.0 Introduction**

At independence Kenya pursued a development strategy that was informed by African Socialism (Republic of Kenya, 1964). The policy placed emphasis on rapid economic growth rather than human development and assumed that poverty, unemployment and income disparities would improve as a result of a robust economy. Access to education, health services and political participation were envisioned from a purely economic perspective. With the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP'S) drastic measures involving trade liberalization and reduction in government expenditure led to imposition of user fees on such social amenities as education and health and diminished the access to these services by the poor and vulnerable. At the same time, the country's economy grew by an average of 6% between 1964 and 1980 and by 4% between 1980 and 1990, but between 1990 to 2002 the country experienced an annual GDP growth of 1.9% while the population grew at 2.9% annually. However, even with sustained economic recovery and declines in absolute poverty from 53% to 46% by 2007, Kenya remains one of the poorest countries in Africa.

In order to overcome the persistent development challenges and bottlenecks, the country developed a long term National Development strategy called "Kenya Vision 2030" which envisions a globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality of life by 2030. The Vision is anchored on three key pillars; The Economic and the Social Pillars aimed at achieving a just and cohesive society enjoying equitable social development in a clean and secure environment and Political pillar aimed at establishing an accountable democratic political system. Despite the ambitious formulations in the document, which is on its third year of implementation, recent research findings indicate that the government social policy has not reduced poverty nor inequality, with all indications to the contrary – economic growth has increased and widened inequality and deepened poverty (Bujra and Keriga, 2009).

### **1.1 Objectives**

The objectives of the paper are to assess the successive social reform Agenda and its effectiveness in enhancing sustainable development in Kenya; examine the nexus among the various pillars that constitute Vision 2030 and recommend viable strategies to be adopted in order to propel the country towards the status of a newly industrialized Nation by the year 2030.

### **1.2 Overview of Social Policy Development in Kenya since Independence**

In all countries education systems differ in their organization, structure, content and have different goals. These goals tend to fall under four major categories; Utilitarianism, Social, Cultural and Personal goals. Of interest to this paper is the aspect of utilitarianism. The goals of utilitarianism are considered at two levels; First It is the duty of the state to invest in education of her people to produce manpower for national development. Secondly, from the individual point of view the benefits of education should be; the ability to read and write, to eradicate poverty and illiteracy. Social goals of education emphasize the importance of socialization i.e how to fit into school life, at home, in the community and society at large. In every society culture is important .Its values and virtues should be taught to the youth through the promotion of social sciences. Finally every education system should foster personal goals. The individual should be able to develop their potentialities to attain self- actualization. The goals can be achieved as long as they are supported by the community to the extent to which a country can stretch her limited resources, both human and physical capital. Education, therefore, has turned out to be one of the most important social institutions in modern society that can be relied upon to foster sustainable development. It is important to note that education transmits skills, knowledge, norms and values from generation to generation.

According to Eshiwani (1984) education aims at socializing individuals to fit into their society so as to function adequately within it when they become adults. Nyerere (1967) says that the purpose of education is to transmit from one generation to the next the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society and prepare the young people for their future membership of the society and their active participation in its maintenance or development.

The Ominde Commission report (1965) was a master piece in that it was the only one that catered for utilitarian, social, cultural and personal goals of education. The commission emphasized the development of manpower for nation building. The emphasis was to make education provide manpower for national development. This was reiterated by Ndegwa commission (1971) whose goals and objectives were echoed in the First and Second Development Plans of 1964-70 and 1970 -1974 respectively. The government was committed to expanding educational opportunities to meet public demand for education.

The third development plan (1979-1988) stressed on tackling the constraints imposed on development by under utilization of human resources and the lack of appropriate skills at all levels. The education system was called upon to provide the high level skills needed for; economic and industrial growth, the vocational, technical, training for employment and promotion of attitudes favorable for development.

The Gachathi report (NCEOP, 1976) emphasized restructuring the education system to meet the demands of the country. The commission related education to employment opportunities and was critical to the educational system then. The Mackay commission (1981) reported that education is aimed at enabling the youth to apply a more effective role in the life of the nation by imparting to them necessary skills and knowledge and inculcating the right attitudes. The commission established a second university which aimed at emphasizing on vocation – based courses, stressed the importance of education in serving the needs of national development. The Mackay report recommended the initiation of the 8-4-4 system of education, geared towards practical and technical education. The new education system was designed to provide life-long education to make individuals self-sufficient and in and productive in agriculture, industry and any other services.

According to the National Development plan (2002-2008) emphasis was laid on education training and capacity and asserted, education is a functional strategy for human resource development and subsequent economic development. The vocational and technical training for artisan, craftsmen technician, technologists and masters of technology will go a long way to promote industrial development.

In the vision 2030 the Government of Kenya is committed to the provision of quality education, training and research for all Kenyans. The major reforms the education sector has undergone include; The launch and implementation of free primary education (FPE) in January 2003, Development of sessional paper No.1 of 2005 on Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research, Adoption of sector wide Approach (SWAO) to planning and financing of education and training, Development and implementation of Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) which is an investment programme that allows stakeholders to support the sector in the medium term, and Recently introduced Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE).

In the Health sector, an explicit policy focusing on curative and preventive services was published in Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1965 on Africa socialism and its application to planning in Kenya and by 1965 provision of health care was declared free (Kimelū *et al*, 2004). In 1970, the Kenyan Government took over the running of services previously run by local councils resulting in an increase in number of rural health facilities provided by government. However, with decline of world economic performance between late 1970's to 1980's a policy shift commonly referred to as the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPS) leading to the formation of the *Kenya Health Policy Framework* of 1994 and *National Health sector strategic plan 1999-2004*. A key feature of the latter was the introduction of cost –sharing, which was, however not sustainable due to increasing poverty level and declining performance which was recorded at its worst in the period 2000-2002. In order to reduce inequalities in health care, the *National health sector strategic plan* (NHSSP-11:2005-2010) currently on implementation was formulated.

## **2.0 An assessment of Kenya's Social Development Policy since Independence**

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that various attempts have been made at initiating viable development strategies geared towards propelling the country towards prosperity anchored on an all –round adoption of science, technology and innovation as an implementation tool. In education, attempts have been made by the Government to attain an Educational system capable of catering for the needs of the society, creation of manpower for nation building, provision of appropriate skills at all levels needed for economic and Industrial growth.

Despite all the mayor strides made in education and training a number of challenges still persist. These include the cost of training, inequality in access, high wastage rates, problem of relevance and quality and under enrolment in key post - school courses for developing a labour force for industrialization (Republic Of Kenya, 2002). With regard to quality and relevance, concern continues to be raised on failure to satisfactorily inculcate a modern scientific culture and imbue the learners with desirable social skills and values. This is attributed to inadequacies in the provision and maintenance of essential physical facilities, instructional and

research materials and human resource capacity. Various, there has been the problem of tending to emphasize on certification at the expense of vocationalization and skills acquisition.

In vision 2030 the social pillar, which houses the education sector, Kenya has designed an impressive goal for quality education, training and research to her citizens for development and enhanced well being. This was a replica of the previous successive impressive commissions of inquiry tasked with reforming the country's education system. The programmes designed were never fully implemented but ended up emphasizing examination oriented practices and other malpractices.

Secondly, a country has to invest in, among other areas, health if it has to accumulate the human capital necessary for sustainable economic growth. Provision Of health care is not only a basic need but a prerequisite for developments (BUJRA et al, 2009). Healthy individuals increase their value in the labour markets. An increase in productivity frees up resources to create new technologies and wealth, eventually resulting in increased economic growth and human welfare (KIPPRA, 2009) .The health sector is the key components addressing equity under the social pillar in vision 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2008) .The Key challenges in the health sector are; Low level of life expectancy, inadequate funding, health infrastructure and personnel. In order to raise the level of life expectancy, the country needs to reforms its health goals to reduce Infant Mortality. Thus, more funds should be allocated to the fight against the burden of the disease including prevention of HIV AIDS by increasing the coverage for ART, ARVS, and PMTC, VCT treatment of opportunistic infections such as T.B and Malaria among others. Even with continued health care policy revision, health care is elusive to most households and individuals especially in rural areas.

### **3.0 Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **3.1 Conclusions**

The education sector remains the single most important vehicle for propelling the country towards sustainable economic development and industrialization. For this reason , Several successive Education policies and plans have been designed since independence .In the same vein, Health care provision has not improved much even with the continuous policy revision. A quick glimpse of the indicators as reflected by the Child Mortality Rates, Maternal Mortality and Life expectancy indicate that not much has changed in the ability of the health care system to improve well being of individuals. Quality of health care system is still low; access is limited; disease burden continues to affect the populace and health care disparities still characterized the health landscape in Kenya .Most important, it should be observed that the realization of the vision is not cast on stone and, therefore, has several assumptions that must hold for it to be a reality. They include; Macro-Economic stability, sustained governance reforms, adequate energy for wealth creation and enhanced security to make the environment conducive for constructive civic engagement and quality entrepreneurship (Misati and Mwendwa, 2010).

#### **3.2 Recommendations**

This study has illuminated the critical role played by the key social welfare services provision in the long term realization of the country's vision of becoming a newly industrialized country in a span of 20 –30 years as well as the implications of lack of a transformed and reformed national governance structures characterized by high level executive capability consistent with a rapidly industrializing country. In order to enhance decentralization and public participation in governance, the devolved funds should be used to strengthen decentralization of development projects at the community level. To attain this goal; improved planning, prioritization and coordination of such projects at the local level should be accorded priority.

As already pointed out, the three pillars of the vision are seen to affect one another in a triangular relationship, such that adverse performance of one pillar negatively affects the others. For instance political maladministration (political pillar) negatively affects economic growth (Economic Pillar) as investors withdraw, eventually reversing the anticipated gains in development. Hence challenges in one sector presents difficulties for effective implementation of the entire blue – print. Furthermore, there are several bottlenecks that stand on the way, hence making the progress towards 2030 a mirage.

To start with, unconstructive civic engagement manifested in the form of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts have had a negative impact on peaceful co-existence and nation building. It is to be noted that these occurrences have been seen to escalate with the advent of multiparty politics in Kenya in the 1990s with disastrous impact on welfare indicators. For example, while the implementation of the ERSWEC has had numerous gains in the

development of the country, the 2007/2008 post election violence reversed many of the gains made through destruction of property, loss of lives and disruption of economic opportunities, all of which have a direct relationship to national development. It is important that we quantify the impact of the violence and sensitize the citizenry, particularly the youth who are more prone to manipulation and misuse as weapons of violence.

Ill-health in Kenya including HIV/AIDS, malaria among other diseases has over a long time strained the health care system and taken a high toll on personnel. This has, therefore, adversely affected the implementation of development projects and nation building. In addition, the health sector has over a long time been dependent on development partners and their withdrawal has had a devastating impact on access to health services. This is more pronounced among the citizens in the lower socio-economic echelons who mainly depend on public health facilities. Moreover, there has been a considerable brain drain among highly trained technocrats, which in turn affects the quality of health care services. Most important, Kenya is known to rely heavily on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), which are not only unguaranteed, but also unsustainable. Consequently, it is going to be a tall order for the country to achieve most of the vision 2030 targets in the absence of seriously addressing the foregoing issues.

It is widely acknowledged that education plays a central role in the development of any country and therefore the welfare of its citizenry. In Kenya, gender, regional and socio-economic disparities regarding access to education are so acute. It is skewed in favour of males, some regions and the upper and middle income echelons (Republic of Kenya, 2008). The foregoing has far reaching implications on gender and regional equity, balanced national development and in effect the achievement of Kenya Vision 2030 targets. For example, the arid, semi-arid, urban informal settlements and other marginalized areas do not only lack viable infrastructure, but also the necessary personnel, which hampers delivery of quality education services. Suffice it to mention, bridging the disparities would require pumping enormous resources in this sector. In addition, the inadequacy of personnel is partly to be attributed to the phenomena of brain drain, responsible for the migration of well-trained and experienced personnel in search of greener pastures. These factors hold back the progress of the country towards achieving the Vision 2030 targets and thus require urgent redress.

Sustainable peace and tranquility has eluded the region for a long time and conflict and civil strife has been seen to escalate in the last two decades with the fall of the Siad Barre regime in the former Republic of Somalia. The impact has been the proliferation of refugees and illegal fire-arms and ammunition into Kenya (Omosa, 2005; Mwendwa & Njaramba, 2006) leading to a state of insecurity and thus affecting national development as investors are kept off. It is important that an atmosphere peace and tranquility is cultivated in the country first by securing international borders and secondly disarming pastoral communities and criminal gangs mainly in urban and some rural areas. Indeed, disarmament of the pastoral communities while the international borders remain porous is unlikely to achieve much. Failing to provide a safe haven for investment will erode investor confidence and thus render vision 2030 a mirage.

While planning is important for the achievement of development priorities and for ensuring sustainable wealth creation and hence poverty reduction, some of Kenya's development plans and targets are over-ambitious and unrealistic. For example, in the 1980s and early 1990s, the government promised to provide adequate tap water for every home by the year 2000. However, such a feat was not to be and it would seem that in 2000, taps that had running water in the 1980s had dried up, making Kenya a water scarce country (UNDP, 2008). In addition, in 1999, the government came up with an anti-poverty initiative, dubbed the National Poverty Eradication Plan (NPEP) 1999-2015 (Republic of Kenya, 1999) another yet over-ambitious plan given that even esteemed democracies of Western Europe and North America have yet to eradicate poverty among their citizenry. One would then be compelled to ask: is it really possible to *eradicate* poverty? Against this backdrop there is every reason to hypothesize that the Kenya Vision 2030 is yet another over-ambitious development blueprint!

Many areas of Kenya, particularly, ASALs experience perennial hunger, malnutrition and starvation due to the frequent yet predictable adverse weather patterns. As a result many people in the country cannot meet their basic needs of food, water and shelter. At the same time, there are vast pieces of land in agricultural potential areas that lie idle at the expense of food production. The government has recognized this problem and formulated the Kenya National Land Policy (Republic of Kenya, 2009). This policy has envisaged land reforms that would lead to prudent utilization of idle land to enhance national development. However, this may rise ``political temperatures`` given that the vast and yet idle land is the property of the *politico-economic elite*. It is

important, therefore, that the land policy and the recently promulgated constitution are implemented to the letter to forestall hunger and associated problems in society. Only once the very basic needs of Kenyans are met can we think of achieving higher ideals as the targets in the Kenya Vision 2030.

In many areas of the country adverse weather conditions leave the areas devastated and therefore requiring humanitarian assistance. In much of arid and semi-arid areas, natural as well as human induced catastrophes have been seen to leave behind them a great trail of human suffering. This is partly blamed on the absence of a viable Early Warning Systems (EWS) for major disasters. For example, floods and drought have been seen to occur within months of each other from year to year (UN, 2007). These events have the tendency to retard development and therefore seen as impediments to the achievement of the Vision 2030. It is imperative that viable disaster EWSs are developed and personnel deployed in disaster-prone areas to ward off their consequences.

Financial indiscipline is not strange to Kenya and it would seem that corruption has been institutionalized to the detriment of development and the welfare of Kenyan citizenry (Mulei, 2000). From land scandals to Goldenberg, Anglo Leasing scandal and political mischief, Kenya has lost substantial resources that would otherwise be invested in the provision of social services such as education, security, health and water that are glaringly unmet. This is compounded by government red tape regarding access to social services, considerably disillusioning the tax payer. These are significant impediments to the achievement of Vision 2030 proposals and hence the need to tackle them decisively. It is important that such vices and their breeding grounds are effectively dismantled and those culpable in both the public and private sector made to face the law as a deterrence to others.

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