

Joshua Kwizera

The Role Of Good Governance In Eliminating Poverty In Sub-Sahara Africa

A Case Study Of Rwanda

Case Study

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THE ROLE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN ELIMINATING POVERTY IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICA; A CASE OF RWANDA

Introduction.....2

The Republic of Rwanda5

Governance system in Rwanda.....6

Home-Grown Solutions in Governance.....6

Conclusion9

References.....10

List of Figures.....10

Introduction

African continent has for several decades been considered the poorest continent in the world simply because the majority of children and adults suffer from extreme poverty.¹ 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 ²sub-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 development. No matter how true these predictions might be, sub-Sahara Africa's economic development is slower and the situation on ground don'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 that has since 2013 become a serious social problem to Europe. The illegal immigrant who are fleeing the continent for green pastures in Europe risking their lives in the Mediterranean Sea is a clear indicators of high poverty levels and political instabilities due to bad governance in sub-Sahara part of Africa. According to the article by Chris Tomlinson published in Breitbart connect,³ the Australia military intelligence predicted that a sharp rise in unemployment across the African nations will lead to 15 million massive increase of economic migrants by 2020, the agency went ahead to suggest that European countries should invest in sub-Sahara Africa to create employment as this will stop immigrants from migrating to Europe, this in my opinion is not the sole solution to this problem since investment amidst bad governance is life putting Ghee butter on fire. In 1960s sub-Sahara African countries were gaining their independence from their colonial masters, in this same period of time, the four Asian dragons or Tigers (South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore) were struggling with building their economies, in fact some African countries for example at independence in 1957, Ghana 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.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/oct/05/nearly-half-all-children-sub-saharan-africa-extreme-poverty-unicf-world-bank-report-warns>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Africa

³ <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2017/01/07/austrian-intelligence-warns-15-million-african-migrants-2020>

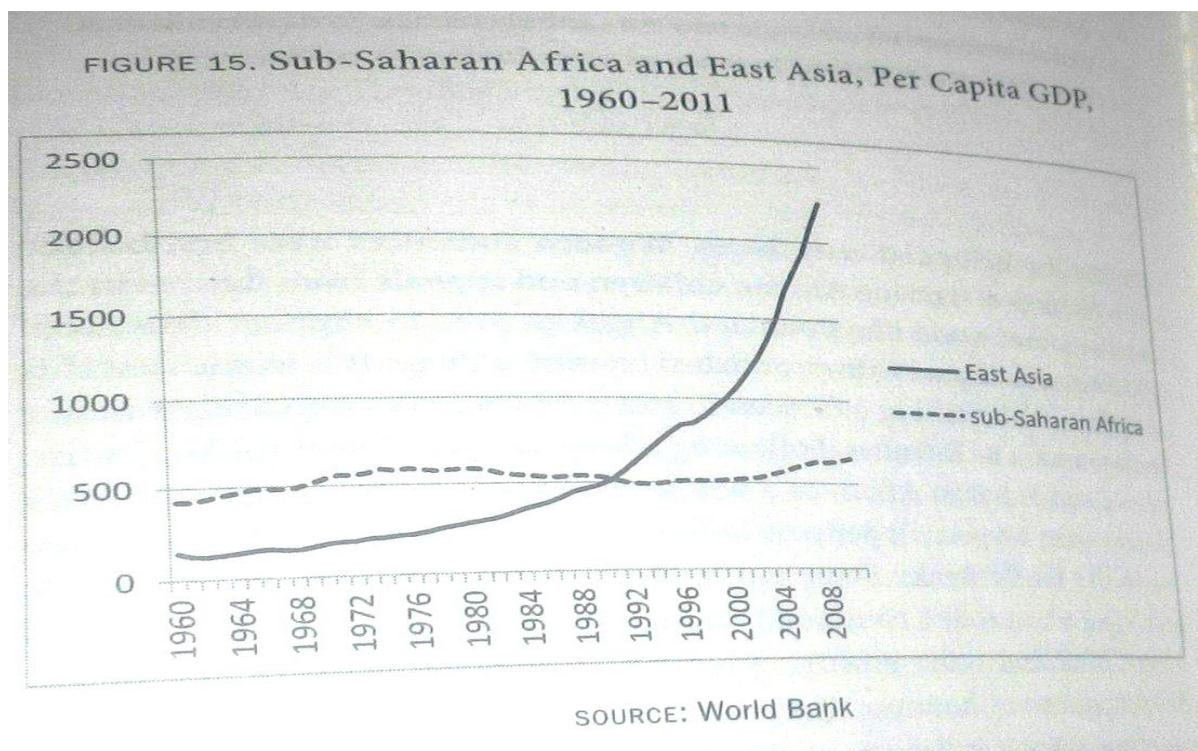


Figure 1.1: *The World Bank (2011) sub-Sahara Africa and East Asia, per capita GDP*

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 become global leading financial centers while South Korea and Taiwan heavily investing 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 for instance towards the end of 1980s,⁴ Ethiopia was experiencing 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. War in Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, and Sudan was a huge obstacle to the development of these sub-Sahara African nations. In 1990s a horror of genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda (1994), the civil war in Sierra Leon (1991-2002) and the civil war in Somalia(1991). In the other part of sub-Sahara Africa especially Uganda and South

⁴ <http://countrystudies.us/ethiopia/35.htm>

Africa, HIV/AIDS pandemic prevalence and incidence were high and eating up humans leaving many families with orphans and in poverty tragedy. Also the fact that sub-Sahara African states engaged in running large state-owned corporations like agricultural marketing boards that negatively affected the productivity yet governments spent much in capital investment in these corporations (Francis Fukuyama 2004p6). Fukuyama also goes on to argue that the characterized the regimes in in sub-Sahara of states as “neopatrimonial” where political powers are used to service a clientelistic network of supporters of the countries leader like Mubutu sese seko in DRC (Joseph 1987), such states are predatory because most of the resources and tax payers 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 argent action to implement the millennium development goals and the two Breton woods 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. According to Larry Elliott in his article the lost decade published by the guardian,⁵1990s was a lost decade for Africa and the world’s poor fell further behind. Yet this same period of time was referred to as by some economists as the East Asian miracle. This journal intends to contribute to the academic literature on the role good governance in eliminating poverty in sub-Sahara Africa taking into consideration Rwanda’s success story of achieving good results in economic growth and development through good governance.

⁵ Larry Elliott (The lost decade), the guardian Wednesday July 2003 11;20

The Republic of Rwanda

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 in the map below.

Figure 2.2: 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.⁶ International institutions like the World Bank is 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 journal 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.

⁶ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa>

Governance system in Rwanda

Good governance is a new approach that includes all the values necessary for the consolidation of democratic management. These principles may include: participation, transparency, accountability, effectiveness, consistency, fairness and the rule of law (Fikret Toksöz 2008). ⁷These 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 govern 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 the 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 levels (Ndahiro, 2015), comprising the mechanism, process and institutions through which that authority is directed. ⁸

Good governance has been the key contributor to improving Rwanda’s economic growth and development. This has been achieved through Home-grown solution governance and through this, the country has registered a significant results in fighting poverty.

Home-Grown Solutions in Governance

These home-grown solutions in governance is a unique system where traditional culture is used as a source of inspiration in finding solutions to modern day challenges (Ndahiro, 2015). The system of governance in Rwanda is idiosyncratic in nature, it involves what James Scott (19980) labels metis- 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.

- I. Performance contracts (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

⁷ Fikret Toksöz (2008), good governance: improving quality of life, Tesev instambul

⁸ A. Ndahiro, J. Rwagatara and A.Nkusi(2015), Rwanda: Rebuilding of a Nation, fountain publishers, Kigali Rwanda.

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 lose 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 district level. District mayors and the ministers sign 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.

- II. 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 facilitate and promote 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.
- III. National Dialogue Council (Umushikirano); Constitutionally, Umushikirano was established in 2003 in 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 serve 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.
- IV. 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 a rise. 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 sit 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 nutrition⁹. 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.

⁹ <http://rab.gov.rw/animal-resources-department/one-cup-of-milk-per-child-program>

Conclusion

Good governance although has universal principles does not necessarily mean that the method of applying those principles is the same. In Rwanda for example, Home-grown solution system of governance is applied in a way that traditional 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 level in sub-Saharan Africa and transform. 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 operate.

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List of Figures

Figure 1.1. *The World Bank (2011) sub-Sahara Africa and East Asia, per capita GDP*

Figure 2.2. *The map of Rwanda*

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