

Implementation of Primary Education Development Programme in Rural Tanzania: Voices from the Marginalized Communities

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Abstract

Education is the social institution dealing with the transmission of knowledge and skills from one generation to another. It is the foundation of economic, political development and social stability in one's country. The government of Tanzania has formulated Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) as a means of improving primary education quantitatively and qualitatively as a sustainable strategy for achieving the Millennium Development Goals 2015 and Tanzania Development Vision 2025. Through this programme, enrolment rate in both pre- primary and primary schools increased tremendously and the number of primary schools together with qualified teachers also increased. Consequently, Tanzania received a special prize from the United Nations for excelling in enrolling an increased number of primary school pupils. This further validates that Tanzania has done an incredible job on Universal Primary Education enrolment. However, there are still many challenges ahead related to retention, completion as well as quality education of rural communities as they are the most affected places in Tanzania. Special attention should be made by the government to ensure that pupils in the peripheral communities access quality education so that they become productive members in the future. Provision of quality education to the marginalized communities has a direct correlation with the attainment of rural development and transformation of agriculture, which is the main source of livelihood for the majority of Tanzanians and backbone of the nation's economy.

Keywords: Primary Education, Marginalized Communities and Rural Development

1. Introduction

Education is essential not only for economic development but also for social stability (Mbelle 2008). The Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948 (*article 26*) recognizes education along with other basic needs namely: food, shelter and clothes as vital to human development. Segun and Olanrewaju (2011) pointed out that the development of any country in the 21st century will be determined by the level and growth of its human capital. Investment in education is one major component of human capital development.

1.1 The Essence of Primary Education in Tanzania

Primary Education focuses on laying the socio- cultural foundations which ethically and morally characterize the Tanzanian citizen and nation. It prepares every citizen to continue on the unending journey of lifelong education, training and learning progresses. Primary education is fundamental to the strengthening of higher levels of education, laying strong foundations in scientific and technological literacy and capacity and thus a means to self – reliant personal and national development. This education sub sector enables every child to understand and appreciate his or her human person and enrich the common cultural background and moral values, social customs and traditions as well as national unity, identity and pride (URT 1995). Primary education enables every child in Tanzania to acquire basic skills of literacy, communication and problem solving as well as basic learning content of integrated relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for survival and development (Msoke 2013). More information from URT (2012) revealed that primary education provides the child with the foundations leading to self – initiative, self – advancement and self confidence and prepares the child for the world of work.

1.2 The concept of Rural Development

The term “rural” is very complex because different countries define it differently. However, in the Tanzanian context rural areas are defined as geographical areas in which primary production takes place and where populations are found in varying densities (RDS 2001 as cited by Amani and Mkumbo 2012). Rural areas experience a variety of social, economic, political and moral problems such as per capita income, lower educational levels, fewer employment opportunities, limited educational facilities, out- migration, less developed health and transport services, fewer commercial facilities, declining small towns and less confidence in the future prospects (Navaratnam 1996). Findings from various scientific sources have shown that basic education is a key to rural development since it equips rural people with knowledge and skills to utilize available resources for securing their livelihood. It has a desirable controlling influence over the development of rural communities in all aspects. According to UNESCO report (2002) Education for a large number of people in rural areas is crucial for achieving sustainable development.

Rural Development is attained in communities where economic and social services are available and accessible for all people regardless of their ethnicity, faith and other material forces. But the empirical evidence

shows clearly that development in rural communities usually occur in areas where literacy rate among community members is high and the vice versa is true. Olayide et.al (1981) outlined rural development as a process whereby concerted efforts are made in order to facilitate significant increase in rural resources productivity with the central objective of enhancing rural income and creating employment in rural communities for rural dwellers to remain in the area. It is also an integrated approach to food production, provision of physical, social and institutional infrastructure with an ultimate goal of bringing about a good healthcare delivery system, affordable and quality education and improving agricultural sector.

2.0 Implementation of Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) in Tanzania

The Government of Tanzania has recognized that ignorance is the barrier to development in the country. A Report from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (2012) articulates that, PEDP is an effort to translate Tanzania Development Vision 2025, the Education and Training Policy (1995), the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP), the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) together with the Education for All (EFA 2000) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into feasible strategies and actions for the development of pre primary and primary education.

PEDP is more comprehensive in its scope. In addition to addressing access, it includes an emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning, increasing funding available at the school level and making institutional arrangements more democratic and transparent throughout the system (Sumra 2003). This programme has been divided into three major phases: PEDP I, II and III. The first phase of this programme was implemented between 2002 and 2006, the second phase existed from 2007 to 2011 and the third phase started in 2012 and will be completed in 2016.

The Government of Tanzania along with several donor partners has articulated a comprehensive basic education strategy which addresses most of the systematic issues needed to improve service delivery and quality in primary education. Steps that have been taken by the government to ensure proper implementation of the programme include: abolishing school fees for primary education, increasing budget for primary education, introducing and disbursing capitation grants to primary schools and provision of council development grants to support primary schools in both urban and rural places. Provision of primary education is not the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training alone but several ministries and departments are involved. Other participants include; Prime Minister's Office – Regional Authorities and Local Government (PMO –RALG), Ministry of Community Development and Children and the Public Services Commission. This implies that in every financial year, the sub- sectors' budget is allocated and implemented by the respective authorities. Suleiman and Katabaro (2014) pointed out that the total Government Budget in Tanzania has increased from 11.6 Trillion (Tshs) in 2010/2011 to 19.6 Trillion (Tshs) in 2014/15. Although the national budget has been increasing every year, the ratio of the education budget as a proportion of national budget has been decreasing.

This situation has opened room for debate on the real commitment of the Government on improving education in the country and whether the Millennium Development Goals will be attained by the end of 2015 in both qualitative and quantitative aspects.

Table 1: Trends in Government Budget Allocation to Education (Tshs Trillion)

ITEM	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Total Government Budget	11.6	13.5	15.1	18.2	19.6
Education to Total Govt. Budget (%)	18	18	17	17	17

Source: (URT), 2014

Furthermore, statistics from the respective ministries reveal that for almost ten years, primary education sub – sector has been given the first priority in the education sector. This implies that, more resources have been allocated for improving primary education than other education sub sectors. Table 2 points out the trends of budget allocation by sector from 2008/09 to 2012/13.

Table 2: Trends of Education's Budget allocation by sub - sector

Sub – sector	2008/09	2009/10	2010/2011	2011/12	2012/13
Primary Education	46.6%	47.6%	44.1%	40.0%	55.8%
Secondary Education	9.8%	11.3%	18.9%	20.5%	17.6%
Vocational Training	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	1.9%	1.8%
Teachers' Education	1.8%	2.7%	1.3%	1.5%	1.6%
University Education	23.5%	23.7%	23.9%	25.0%	20.2%

Source: URT, 2012.

Table 2 shows clearly that the ratio of primary education in the budget increased from 46.6 percent in 2008/09 to 55.8 percent in 2012/13. This situation verifies that among all education sub sectors, primary education has been given the first priority because of its necessity in human development.

But the opponents have pointed out that for many years primary education's budget has been focusing more on re – current expenditure (65 percent) than on development purpose (only 35 percent). Statistical and

empirical evidences have revealed that the largest portion of the budget has been spent for allowances, soft drinks and administrative issues instead of constructing classrooms, teachers' houses, latrines and procuring textbooks and desks. Another critique is that the sector budget depends on donors by more than seventy percent. So when they refuse to release funds on time, it becomes difficult for the government to implement the programme in accordance with its plans and priorities. Consequently, there is a high possibility that country would fail to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in 2015.

2.1 Achievements of PEDP since 2001

Through PEDP, Tanzania has experienced impressive achievements. Such achievements include:

- Pre-primary enrolment increased from 638,974 in 2005 to 1,069,208 in 2011.
- Total enrolment in primary schools increased from 4,881,588 pupils in 2001 to 8,231,913 in 2013.
- The number of primary schools increased from 12,815 in 2001 to 16,343 in 2013.
- The transition rate from primary to secondary school increased from 22.4 percent in 2001 to 63 percent in 2012.
- The number of qualified teachers increased from 105,921 in 2001 to 187,413 in 2013.
- Tanzanians in rural and urban areas together with Faith Based Organizations and Non Government Organizations have been working closely with the government in implementing PEDP projects in their respective communities for the common good.
- Tanzania received a prize from the United Nations for excelling in enrolling primary school pupils in 2011.

2.2 Challenges facing Primary Education Development Programme in Rural Tanzania

2.2.1 Disbursements of capitation grants

The government has been disbursing capitation grants to all public primary schools for quality improvement. The decision to release such grants came into being as a means to replace revenue lost to schools after the abolition of fees. Currently each government primary school is entitled to receive 10,000 (Tshs) per pupil annually. Such financial resources are used for procuring books, learning materials, renovation and supporting schools' administration and management. But findings from HAKI ELIMU (2011) and Msoke (2013) revealed that many rural primary schools receive less capitation grants than the actual amount as indicated in the councils' budgets. Schools from peripheral communities receive between 2,500 and 5,000 (Tshs) per year instead of 10,000. Further details – Table 3:

Table 3: Proposed Capitation Grant and the Actual amount of money received

Year	Number of pupils	Capitation Grant received at the district	Capitation Grant in the budget	Deficit	Deficit in percentage
2007/08	442,334	2.2 billion	4.4 billion	2.2 billion	50%
2008/09	447,614	2.6 billion	4.5 billion	1.9 billion	42%
2009/10	440,541	1.9 billion	4.4 billion	2.5 billion	57%

Source: HAKI ELIMU, 2011.

From Table 3, it is evident that many district councils where marginalized communities exist have been receiving insufficient funds for procuring school facilities and covering administration costs. As a result, most of the primary schools in periphery communities continue to experience problems because of inadequate funding from the responsible authorities.

2.2.2 Lack of committed and qualified primary school teachers

Through PEDP, enrolment levels in Tanzania have been increasing tremendously, however recruitment of primary school teachers especially in rural areas has not kept up with the expansion. Empirical findings from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Trainings indicated that the average pupil – teacher ratio (PTR) in rural primary schools is 60:1 instead of the desired national ration 45:1. This situation undermines the quality of primary education as pupils are unable to get sufficient time to discuss and capture relevant ideas from their teachers. Most teachers in rural primary schools have been complaining about the workload and denial of their rights. They have remained in poor houses with leaking roofs and walls. Others complain that, special attention has been given on constructing classrooms and latrines instead of allocating sufficient funds for constructing or renovating teachers' houses, classrooms, pit latrines, administrative offices and procuring learning materials. Galabawa (2001) argued that enhancing quality education is likely to be elusive if highly qualified; dedicated, hardworking and well motivated teachers are not in place. The massive resources that continue to be invested in education may be wasted, if the required numbers of highly quality teachers is not available to facilitate realization of the desired quality improvement.

2.2.3 Poor infrastructural facilities in rural primary schools

It is indubitable that the Government of Tanzania in collaboration with local and international partners has constructed thousands of classrooms, pit latrines, teachers' houses and procured textbooks in order to improve the

quality of primary education in the country. But still, most primary schools in rural Tanzania lack essential infrastructure to enable them functionally safe, efficient and effective institutions. Such essential services include water, energy and sanitation.

In some places, primary schools still exist in poor condition. The physical state of some classrooms is very poor with floors full of holes, unlockable doors, damaged roofs and broken ceilings. Thousands of pupils in rural schools sit on the floor when studying because of the shortage of desks (Galinda 2011). Kalisa (2013) surveyed five primary schools in Ngara District and experienced major variation in the availability of books. Some primary schools had fewer books while others had sufficient number of books. Also he found that teachers who worked in schools with fewer books were forced to borrow from neighboring schools but in most cases they did not get all required textbooks on time. This terrible situation has undermined the quality of primary education in rural areas and contributed to poor performance in internal and national examinations for many years (see Table 4).

Table 4: Pupils – Book ratio in Primary School

Subjects	Primary Schools and Books Ratio				
	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
Mathematics	1:5	1:10	1:34	1:5	1:18
English	1:9	1:14	1:30	1:6	1:16
Science	1:10	1:32	1:35	1:5	1:15
Kiswahili	1:8	1:8	1:25	1:3	1:3
Geography	1:7	1:10	1:35	1:3	1:10
History	1:9	1:13	1:20	1:4	1:8
Tehama	1:23	1:24	1:25	1:26	1:27

Source: Kalisa (2013).

2.2.4 High dropout rate in rural primary schools

Despite the fact that enrolment rate in primary schools has exceeded 95 percent, the recent findings have shown that the problem of dropout among pupils especially in rural societies continues to prevail. According to URT (2014) in 2012, nearly 55,302 children dropped out before completing primary education where 12,021 of them were in standard one. More findings from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training showed that between 2008 and 2012, about 21,000 girls dropped out of school because of teenage pregnancies and sexual harassment. Kalisa (2013) pointed out that the deplorable conditions of rural primary schools and inability of many poor families to afford costs of schooling such as school uniforms and textbooks are the major factors contributing to high dropout rate among pupils in marginalized communities. Msoke (2013) argued that dropout rate is higher in rural Tanzania than in urban areas because some parents perceive primary education as a worthless thing in human life.

2.2.5 Inability of the Tanzanian school inspectorate system to perform its duties

According to Grauwe (2007), the core role of school inspectors in Tanzania has traditionally been to control teachers and their performances in the classroom. The Education Act No.25 of 1978 section 42 gives school inspectors power and authority to monitor the quality of education provided in the country (URT 1995). Therefore, they have to carry out supervisory visits in schools for monitoring the quality and standards in pre – primary, primary and secondary education and ultimately provide feedback to the responsible authorities in the government. Sumra and Katabaro (2014) identified that in 2001 every school was inspected at least once but in 2013 only 39.2 percent of pre primary schools and 37.4 percent of primary schools were inspected. Table 5 illustrates in detail:

Table 5: School inspection for 2012/2013

Institutions	Targeted for Inspection	Inspected	% Inspected
Pre – Primary Schools	6,166	2,026	32.9
Primary Schools	7,165	2,682	37.4

The inspectorate system in Tanzania does not function properly because of financial constraints. Consequently, inspection has been done in urban primary schools because of easy accessibility but schools in remote areas are not reachable due to transport problems, geographical barriers (floods and poor infrastructure) and economic difficulties (allowance and other privileges).

2.2.6 Government’s investment of Pre – Primary education

The Policy of Education and Training (1995) and PEDP stipulated on the importance of investing in early childhood education for Tanzanian children. But the Government has failed to set funds in the budget for improving this education sub sector. In urban areas, most of pre-primary schools which provide quality education are possessed by Faith Based Organizations and Non Government Organizations and not government schools. Rural areas do not have enough pre-primary schools and worse enough the available ones are in poor condition and do not provide quality education.

An analysis of the 2014/2015 budget estimates, enacted budgets, budget speeches of respective ministries and the sector itself shows that no specific funds have ever been set for pre-primary education. PEDP III commits

the government to improve the quality of pre-primary education by providing capitation grant of 10,000 (Tshs) per pupil annually and 20,000 (Tshs) per pupil with special needs. However, to date there is neither any evidence of disbursing these funds from Treasury nor of being received in schools specifically for supporting to improve pre-primary classes (HAKI ELIMU 2014). This is a sign that pre-primary education has been neglected and the government does not recognize its necessity in human's academic life.

2.2.7 Hunger

Data from the World Food Programme revealed that between 50 and 70 percent of pupils in different parts of Tanzania go to school without breakfast and do not get any meal during school hours. Consequently, they experience nutritional problems like protein- *energy malnutrition, vitamin A deficiency and iodine deficiency disorders* (Mallume 2012). Poor nutrition among school age children diminishes their cognitive development through physiological changes or by reducing their ability to participate in learning experiences or both (Mamuya 2012). Empirical evidences from prone food insecure districts (Simanjiro, Iramba, Singida rural and Kishapu) have shown that a high rate of absenteeism and sometimes dropout occurs during famine periods when food is scarce. This implies that there is a correlation between hunger and poor performance of pupils in primary schools found in peripheral communities.

3.0 The Quality of Education in Rural Primary Schools from Tanzanian Perspective

PEDP has been launched with the purpose of improving primary education both quantitatively and qualitatively. Many resources whether from within or outside Tanzania have been allocated for attaining the same goals. But the statistical and empirical evidences reveal that PEDP has been highly successful in quantitative terms and not in the qualitative aspect. It is evident that the government has failed to transform the available resources and bring about qualitative changes in the respective programme.

The assessment made by Uweza (2010) in 38 Local Government Authorities found that 1 out of every 5 standard seven pupils could not read a Swahili book accurately. More findings revealed that the majority of students who joined secondary education from rural primary schools had a poor background in Mathematics, Science and English subjects which are essential in secondary education. The same organization made another assessment in 2013 and identified that pupils in urban primary schools perform better than pupils from rural primary schools. Further details in Table 6:

Table 6: Percentages of Children passing all three Subjects Tested by Districts, 2012

District	Kiswahili	English	Mathematics	All 3 subjects	Rank
Temeke	74.2	45.8	80.4	66.8	1
Arusha Urban	64.8	55.0	78.4	66.1	2
Morogoro Urban	72.3	46.2	77.8	65.4	3
Songea Urban	68.2	51.3	75.9	65.1	4
Kinondoni	76.1	43.6	73.8	64.5	5
Tarime	17.9	12.3	43.4	24.5	122
Biharamulo	27.0	9.2	36.3	24.2	123
Serengeti	15.4	9.5	44.7	23.2	124
Bariadi	18.8	13.9	36.1	22.9	125
Kasulu	25.3	5.7	33.0	21.3	126

Note: Ranks 1 to 5 involve urban primary schools and **the rest** are rural primary schools.

Source: Uweza, 2013

These findings show clearly that the performance of urban primary schools was better than rural schools. This disparity exists because urban primary schools have enough qualified and competent teachers and learning materials are available and accessible. Another reason is that the majority of parents in urban communities invest a lot of resources for education while rural parents concentrate more on productive roles. Parent's attitude towards education determines the level of participation and achievement in primary education and in other education sub sectors.

Moreover, pupils in urban communities have more chances to study well than their counterparts in peripheral communities. Apart from attending ordinary classes, pupils in urban areas attend tuition classes where they capture more relevant concepts from their teachers. They can easily access information from internet and libraries. The situation is different in rural areas where education has been neglected and educational facilities are scarce and only few children can access proper reading materials from relevant sources. This disparity in primary education will be tackled if the government decides willingly to invest the available resources for improving the learning environment in rural communities where more than 70 percent of Tanzanians live.

4.0 Low Quality of Primary Education as the barrier for Rural Transformation in Tanzania

According to the 2012 Population and Housing Census results, Tanzania has a population of 44,928,923 of which 43,625,354 are in Tanzania Mainland and 1,303,359 are in Tanzania Zanzibar (URT 2014). About 70.9 percent of

Tanzanians in the mainland live in rural areas while 29.1 percent reside in urban areas. In Tanzania Zanzibar, only 46.3 percent of people are urban dwellers while 53.7 of them live in rural areas.

The prevalent deprivation in primary education sub sector in rural communities has a negative impact to the development of Tanzania because more than 70 percent of Tanzanians are rural dwellers. Furthermore, this situation verifies that approaching the Millennium Development Goals (2015) and Tanzania Development Vision (TDV 2025) will not be possible without having proper and implementable strategies to improve education in marginalized communities because it is a key to rural development.

Given that the majority of Tanzanians live in rural areas and that the majority of the poor are also located in rural areas, transforming the rural sector becomes subservient if the country has to achieve significant broader economic growth and poverty reduction (Amani and Mkumbo 2012). Rural transformation requires development of appropriate skills and implementing capacity and creation of institutions at the local, regional and national levels to ensure effective use of resources. It also requires devolution of powers to local governments (UNESCO 2002). But rural transformation will never take place in communities where the majorities are illiterate. Primary education should be considered as the starting point of rural transformation. When people are literate, it becomes easier to empower them so that they can act as active participants in development issues. Therefore it is necessary for the government to invest seriously in primary education as the immediate strategy to combat illiteracy in rural communities and as the most appropriate approach for attaining rural development in the country.

It is evident that agriculture employs more than 74 percent of Tanzanians and it has been given special treatment through various programmes; for example Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP) The Government in collaboration with development partners has invested a lot of resources with the expectation that rural farmers would become productive and bring positive changes in rural communities. But in many places, rural farmers have remained poor because the underlying barrier for rural poverty has not been identified and treated. This implies that the current approach towards rural development is not appropriate.

Empirical evidences have shown that many countries that managed to transform agriculture as part of rural transformation like China, Vietnam, India and Brazil did not jump directly into agriculture. They allocated massive resources for improving basic education in marginalized communities. Amani and Mkumbo (2012) argued that the progress of basic education in China constitutes one of the major factors contributing to the development of township enterprises, migration of rural labor force and the growth of agriculture.

Literate farmers can play a very important role in the growth of agriculture. They can easily learn and put into practice new agricultural methods and techniques and become efficient in agricultural production. But this is not easier for illiterate farmers who usually respect and value old and outdated techniques which are not viable and effective. Therefore policy makers in African countries including Tanzania can learn a lesson from Asian countries by giving education special attention for the betterment of the marginalized people and the country at large.

5.0 Recommendations

After addressing the concept of PEDP and its relationship with rural development issues, the study puts forward the following recommendations:

- Quality education involves three major issues: equity, education excellence and education performance. It is a combination of several factors such as: good education policy, availability of teaching and learning materials, availability of qualified and competent teachers, presence of all required infrastructure, mastery of medium of instruction and good inspectorate system. Therefore it is a duty of the government and other stakeholders to ensure that all these indicators are in place and quality education is attained.
- The government should be accountable to the people by ensuring that funds indicated in the budget for development and re-current expenditures are released on time and recipients receive them as per budget on time and utilize them coherently for the betterment of all people. Moreover school committees (especially in rural primary schools) should be empowered so that they can perform their duties accordingly for the common good.
- The law of Marriage Act of 1971 allows girls with 15 years of age to get married. At this age, girls are still immature biologically and psychologically. This act is in conflict with some local and international legal provisions because it paves a way for early marriage, teenage pregnancy and finally contributes to high rate of girls' dropout. So this act should be reviewed in order to stop all undesirable cultural practices which limit opportunities for girls to study well and complete primary education fruitfully.
- It is obvious that a school feeding programme is the best strategy for academic achievement since it enables pupils to attend classes regularly and ultimately influences good performance in examinations. But this programme benefits very few beneficiaries compared to the reality. Therefore the government should extend this programme by involving Local Government Authorities, Faith Based Organizations and Non Governmental Organizations together with community members regardless of their economic, social, political and cultural status. This approach will help pupils in both rural and urban areas to access

nutritious food, participate fully in academic affairs and perform well in internal and external examinations.

- Rural Development is a multi-sectoral, multidimensional and multi-disciplinary phenomenon which focuses on improving the well being of the rural people and their surroundings. But it doesn't occur by chance or by accident. Among strategies for attaining rural development, policy makers and implementers have to make sure that the educational sector gets special support in words and actions in order to curb the problem of illiteracy in rural communities and develop the spirit of creativeness, innovativeness and hardwork for the better future of the country. Education (primary education inclusive) should be considered as the foundation of development in any society.

6.0 Conclusion

Primary Education is the lifeblood of any modern country because it is the tool for eliminating illiteracy among community members and making them productive and innovative for attaining development. It is the duty of the government to ensure that all children access quality education for the better future of Tanzania and the world at large. Special attention should be made on improving the environment in rural primary schools which experience more challenges than urban schools. Without a proper education system, it will be difficult to transform agriculture and other productive sectors which employ thousands of marginalized people in rural communities. Also the failure to improve primary education in rural areas would affect the attainment of the Tanzania Development Vision 2025. Therefore strong political commitment together with good leadership is necessary for undergoing constructive changes in primary education and bringing about actual development in the country.

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