



Review Article

**The Role of Socio-Economic Factors In the Development of Post-Independence Africa:
Focus on Somalia**

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Abstract

The current world economic structure created by the advanced nations in their bid to achieve their imperialistic desires led to the division of the world into the 'haves' and 'have nots', the latter being where Africa belongs to despite being blessed with abundant human and material resources. Africa has witnessed a lot of socio-economic challenges since the end of colonial rule. A continent, which at the point of her countries' independence, had a bright economic future. What went wrong? It is on this axiom that this paper examines the role socio-economic factors have played in the development of Africa with focus on Somalia. Adopting historical methodology which encouraged ample utilization of primary and secondary resources, this paper will be limited to the use of secondary sources. This will be based on the use of facts and sources reviewed and retrieved from the existing literatures by scholars and diplomats made available for this study. These facts will be retrieved from the following secondary sources; textbooks, journals, magazines, library materials and extensive use of internet sources. The extensive use of these materials would aid the authors with much needed information to make this paper a success. Findings however reviewed that the once celebrated social institutions in Somalia collapsed as a result of bad leadership and outbreak of the civil war in 1991. These have continued to hamper the much expected growth and development in the country. Recommendations were therefore provided on how to solve the problems identified in this study.

Keywords: Development, Growth, Economic, Social, Africa and Somalia

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Introduction

Africa is one of the continents of the world blessed with abundant natural resources. Covering about 23 percent of the world's total land area and 13 percent of the population, the continent is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on the west, Indian and the red sea on the east, and the Mediterranean Sea on the north. It is connected with Asia by the Sinai Peninsula (Africa, 2014).

The issue of socio-economic development has remained topical in Africa since independence. Africa, generally endowed with great resources that she needs for transformation still falls under group of 'have nots'. It brings one to question why Africa has remained poor even when countries referred to as 'Asian Tigers' who gained independence almost the same time with Africa has gone ahead in the area of development.

In analyzing the development of Africa with focus on Somalia since independence from socio-economic dimension, this paper will focus on major sectors of the Somalia economy such as; agriculture, health, education, leadership, economic policy and aid to buttress its argument. Comprising of four sections, section one embodies the introduction, and section two did a conceptual and theoretical explanations of development while the third section took a look at the country, Somalia, divulging the necessary features of the African polity. In section four, information on the socio-economic factors in the development of Somalia were critically analyzed while in the next section, recommendations were made that will proffer solution to the issues identified where necessary.

Concept of Development

In analyzing economies of nations, growth and development are often used. By conceptual definition, growth simply means increase in per capita income or increase in Gross National Product (GNP). It is the increase in the amount of goods and services produced by economy overtime. Simply put, it refers to sustained increase in a country's output of goods and services.

The concept of development is wide. Although no one knows when the concept originated, most people agree that development is closely bound up with the evolution of capitalism and demise of feudalism (Contreas, 1999). Generally speaking about development always refers to the problems of underdeveloped countries. Development is a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectored concept which has remained elusive. It brings about progressive changes in the socio-economic structure of any country.

Okobia (1984:12) view development as a process of economic, political and social change in a progress direction towards a better social well-being for the members of the society. Nwana (1998:5) sees it as harnessing of the resources for the realization of major objectives, solving their major problems.

This means that development from the foregoing consists of activities required in improving the attitudes and potentials of people. Probably this justifies the view of Boateng (1990) who describes development as the process aimed at improving the living conditions and circumstances of human beings both directly and indirectly.

Economic development generally refers to the sustained, concerted actions of policymakers and communities to promote the standard of living and economic health of a specific area. Such actions can involve multiple areas including development of human capital, critical infrastructure, regional competitiveness, social inclusion, safety, literacy and other initiatives. One growing understanding in economic development is the promotion of regional clusters and a thriving metropolitan economy (Abbot, 2003). In today's global landscape, location is vitally important and becomes a key in competitive economy as Somalia is not a landlocked country but has access to the Indian Ocean to the east. Even though, Somalia's terrain consists mainly of plateaus, plains and highlands (Somalia, 2009).

According to Ranis, economic growth and human development is a two-way relationship. Moreover, the first chain consists of economic growth benefiting human development with GNP. Specifically, GNP increases human development by expenditure from families, government and organizations such as NGOs. With the rise in economic growth, families and individuals will likely increase expenditures with heightened incomes, which in turn leads to growth in human development? Further, with the increased consumption, health and education grow, also contributing to economic growth (Anad and Sen, 2000).

Concisely, the relationship between human development and economic development can be explained in three ways. First, increase in average income leads to improvement in health and nutrition (known as Capability Expansion through Economic Growth). Second, it is believed that social outcomes can only be improved by reducing income poverty (known as Capability Expansion through Poverty Reduction). Lastly, social outcomes can also be improved with essential services such as education, healthcare, and clean drinking water (known as Capability Expansion through Social Services) (Peterson and Estenson). Development implies change in technological and institutional organization of production as well as in distributive pattern of income. The process of development is capital extensive. Beside the rise in output, it also involves changes in composition of output, progressive move in the allocation of productive resources, and all these are aim to reduce poverty, inequalities and unemployment. In the context of this work, it is not the case in Somalia.

An Overview of Somalia

A country located in the Horn of Africa. It is bordered by Ethiopia to the west, Djibouti to the northwest, the Gulf of Aden to the north, the Indian Ocean to the east and Kenya to the southwest. With a land area of 637,657 square kilometers, its coastline is more than 3,333km in length, the longest mainland Africa and the Middle East (Issa-Abdisalam, 1996). Hot conditions prevail year-round, along with periodic monsoon winds and

irregular rainfall (Samatar, 1985). Geology suggests the presence of valuable mineral deposits such as uranium, iron ore, tin, salt, copper, natural gas.

Federal Republic of Somalia formerly known as the Somalia Democratic Republic is a country whose capital is Mogadishu. Somalia was an important centre for commerce with the rest of the ancient world and according to most scholars; it is among the most probable locations of the fabled ancient Land of Punt (Maldy, 2005). During the middle ages, several powerful Somalia empires dominated the regional trade, including the Ajuran Sultanate, the Adal Sultanate, the Warsangali Sultanate and the Majeerteen Sultanate.

In the late 19th century, through a succession of treaties with these kingdoms, the British and Italians gained control of parts of the coast and established British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland (Issa-Abdisalam, 1996). This occupation lasted until 1941 when it was replaced by a British military administration. Northwestern Somalia would remain a protectorate while northeastern, central and southern Somalia by agreement became a United Nations Trusteeship on April 1 1950, with a promise of independence after 10 years. On July 1 1960, the two regions united as planned to form the independent Somalia republic under a civilian agreement. The Somalia national assembly, headed by Haji Bashir Ismail Yusuf, approved the act uniting the former Italian Somaliland and British Somaliland, establishing the Republic of Somalia (Greystone Press Staff, 1967). Hassan Sheikh Mohamud is the incumbent President elected in 2012.

Socio-Economic Factors in the Development of Post-Independence Somalia

As we said earlier, this paper will narrow its focus to some key sectors of the economy;

(A) Agriculture

Somalia's agricultural sector is the main driver of the country's economy. More than two-thirds of the country's labour force is employed in agriculture and the sector accounts for 60% of the country's output (Pyrtel, 2012). But decades of the civil war, neglect, administrative mismanagement and a series of environmental disasters have seriously damaged Somalia's agricultural productivity. Irrigation schemes that once fed commercial crops such as bananas and sugarcane in Juba and Shebelle growing region have collapsed and fallen into despair.

According to some sources, the European Union Commission has been the most consistent donor partner to Somalia, particularly by its support in the agricultural sector. These supports are in the areas of policy analysis and support, the re-establishment of strategic information system for emergency preparedness, recovery and development, the promotion of conservative and sustainable use of plant genetic resources, the expansion of production and productivity, the development of market access and support to marketing interventions (EU Report, 2012).

Some 70% of the population is rural of which about 55% are pastoralists and agro pastoralists, 24% are crop farmers and 1% is fishermen. The other 20% of the population

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are urban dwellers. Livestock products produce 55% of calorie intake by the people as only 45% of calories are obtain from cereals. The four main types of livestock production found in Somali areas are; nomadic pastoralism, agro pastoralism, settled mixed farming and urban stall feeding (F.A.O, 2004). According to a report prepared by Hector Mckillingan (2014:1), the lower Shebelle region used to be responsible for over 90% of the banana production in Somalia but the civil war in the 1990s caused collapse of the banana export trade and subsequent neglect of the irrigation system has also led to under grown regions which at present are grown for domestic market.

While Somalia is presently a food deficit country, it has potential to significantly increase crop production and reduce its dependence on food imports. However, there are lots of challenges facing the sector. The inhibitor remains a central issue of security and this issue remains the most difficult to effectively address. The sector is also composed by lack of investment, limited technical skill and knowledge, poor management and ineffective farming system.

(B) Education

The bedrock of a country's development is education. In other words, education plays a major role in development of a people. Africa must through education adopt models of development that would enable a level playing ground in globalization. Before the outbreak of war in 1991, education in Somalia was free and compulsory for children between the ages of six and thirteen. Mass education programmes undertaken by the military in the 70s received public support throughout the nation and new primary and secondary schools were opened across the country. As a result of an intensive government sponsored literacy campaign for youths and adults in both rural and urban areas, literacy rates in education increased from five percent of the adult to nearly sixty-five percent in 1990.

Since 1991, the educational sector has borne the brunt of the civil war with near complete destruction and closure of all education institution in the country especially in the south-central zone- present day Republic of Somalia (Somali Federal Republic, 2014). In order to close the gap and in response to the growing need for emergency education, some educated intellectuals established privately owned educational institutions. They typically use different curricula and issue certificates. The public education system is lacking except for a few schools that are under the supervision of the Directorate of Education but funded by different education partners. In the absence of an educational policy, community schools endeavour to fill the gap although the needs are overwhelming. For example, there are currently about eight schools in Bendair (Mogadishu) regions but because conditions are poor, teacher run over are very high (The Somalia Federal Republic, 2014).

Furthermore, Somalia is an Islamic society and Islamic schools have shown considerable resilience even during the recent period of national conflict. One estimate suggests that as many as 50% of young people receive up to two years of basic Koranic education, perhaps 10% continue on the Maharajahs (Higher education) (Cummings and Tonningten, 2013).

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This is possible because of their establishment throughout Somalia, both in urban and rural areas. These schools tend to have flexible schedules suited to the schedules of young children and they are often taught by volunteer teachers who think of service as part of their religious obligations.

In order to improve the standard of education, the government established Ministry of Human Development and Public Services and Directorate of Education which is to manage the education in Somalia. With the prevailing relative peace and government's increasing control of south-central zone (Republic of Somalia), an opportunity exists for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the educational sector.

In June 2013, the Directorate with the support of UNICEF and UNESCO organized "The National Education Conference for Somalia towards the Realization of the Right of Education for all Somalia". The conference identified five thematic areas (education governance, access to education, quality of education, higher education and youth education) (The Ministry of Human Development and Public Services in Somali, 2014). The conference also identified for south-central directorate to take steps to restructure its operations with common policy strategic framework, build human resource and departmental capacity and achieve acceptable standards in systems and procedures. The ongoing improvement in security efforts offers an opportunity for the directorate to re-establish control of education institutions and in particular, to address the urgent need of providing education to communities of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

(C) Health

It is a known fact that a healthy nation is a wealthy nation. Among all regions in the world, Africa seem to have the highest rate and largest number of people that are inflicted with diseases such as AIDS, cholera etc. The health sector in Somalia is poorly managed. The Federal Ministry of Health faces major challenges in becoming effective across Somalia. In the absence of satisfactory health services, the private sector and the nongovernmental organization (NGOs), health care provisions play available role. However, private health services are expensive than public services and are unregulated, which contributes to problems of drug counterfeiting, bogus professional and proliferating of supplies from health facilities.

Children and infant mortality rate during 2003-2006 are estimated respectively; 156 and 96 per 1,000 live births, roughly one in 15 Somali women die as a result of pregnancy and childbirth complications, anemia and female genital mutilation widely affect marital health. The report went further to estimate that only one in three births are delivered by skilled personnel and just one percent of married women of reproductive age use modern contraceptives. Thus, nutritional health levels are also poor as around 35% of children under the age of five are assessed to be moderately or severally underweight (UN Transition Plan for Somali, 2007).

Somalia is lacking clean water service, people in the rural areas generally have access to only surface water and clean water is available on limited basis in urban areas usually managed by the private sector. Data on access to water are sketchy but would indicate that less than 20% of the population in rural areas and about 30% in urban centres have access to safe water while less than 50% overall have access to sanitation (Ploch, 2010).

(D) Economic Policies

Somalia is classified by the United Nations as a least developed country. Despite experiencing two decades of civil war, the country has maintained an informal economy based mainly on livestock, remittance/money transfers from abroad and telecommunications (Samatar, 1985). In the 1980s, the Bretton Woods Institutions initiated the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programme on governments of East Africa. They were forced to make drastic budgetary cuts, as one of the goals of SAPs was to make a general savings by cutting government spending. According to some assessments, however, these macroeconomic reforms resulted in emasculating state capacities and provided a windfall of opportunities for political movements (mostly Islamist) to take root, as public spending for delivery of essential services such as education, health, electricity, water and security decreased substantially and was confined to the urban middleclass and elite areas. Income distribution also polarized due to the structural adjustment as many individuals formerly employed in the state sector lost their jobs. For example, in Somalia, the government was unable to employ university graduates to sectors such as education and healthcare, which were formerly administered by the state, which caused almost all schools and medical facilities to shut down (Zakaria, 2014).

The Somalia ruling elites over the years have received millions of dollars. For instance, between 1965 and 1987, despite the fact that the country's economy had stagnated, Somalia received over \$800million from United States alone (Ayittery, 2007). International aid gave Barre's regime the ability to maintain its grip on the state and keep his challengers at bay. Thus, the strategic location of Somalia made it attractive and approachable by both the USA and defunct USSR during the cold war era (1945-1990). Among the projects was the over \$2050 million spent on 450km road in the sparse populated and barren desert area between Garowe and Bossaso (Ayittery, 1994 in Abdullahi A.).

These funds had been spent in a wasteful and corrupted fashion. This aid increased inequality among Somalis. Infact, the whole area in southern Mogadishu where huge houses were built by the elites became known as 'BooliQaran', meaning stolen public money. Arthur Gavison (1981:267) was of the view that by 1977, the defunct Soviet Union had given Somalia up to \$450 million in economic and military aid making her the strongest country of African states.

(E) Leadership

By and large, the Somalia political leadership like that of her counterparts in many East African states also failed to meet people's expectations for socio-economic development. Indeed, the corruption and embezzlement of public funds by the political leadership of Somalia increased simultaneously with the spread of poverty, unemployment and tribalism (inter-tribal conflict). By the late 1980s, the government of Somalia could no longer fulfill its core function of providing basic public services to the population, the state had become irrelevant to people's lives and various extremist and rebel groups began to exploit segments of the population and challenge the central government. It was as a result of corruption in leadership that led to the outbreak of civil wars in the 1990s which followed the fall of former President Mohammed Siad Barre thereby exposing the state to violence and instability (Zakaria, 2014).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the analogies stated above in this paper, it is of the view that the socio-economic factors has yielded the much needed effect on Somalia economy and this has hampered drastically the development of the country. However, there is still hope for the future of the Somalia; it is for the government to make the right policies that will turn around the misfortune of the country to the better so as to bring the much needed development expected.

This paper therefore recommends the followings:

Government of Somalia should improve the once celebrated social sectors of the country such as education, health and agriculture. This is so because inadequate provision of these retards the human productive capacity as it will lead to high mortality rate and low literate level which causes slow development.

That Somalia is in a middle of large and growing challenges cannot be over emphasized. It does not need knowledge to sense the link between insecurity and economic development. There can never be development in a country where there is political unrest and insecurity. In other words, for economic development to take place there must be political stability and security.

Better integration of national, regional and international instruments based on the shared goals of greater security as well as development will result in more comprehensive and long-term solutions; this will strengthen respective national government and countering radicalization and promoting socio-economic development regionally. Such an effort involves improved communication and collaboration between countries of the region, key donors and multi-lateral bodies.

Somalia's once vibrant agricultural sector can still recover if peace replaces civil conflict and refugees return home safely. And as stability returns, foreign direct investment in Somalia can replace capital flights out of the country and help employment expert to rebuild the national infrastructure, restore markets and growth in the economy.

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