

Ujamaa as a Development Philosophy in Tanzania: Lessons for Rural Development in Nigeria

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Abstract: *The quest for Nigeria and developing countries in general to attain the status of developed countries has failed because the developments of rural areas that have majority of the population have been neglected. This paper relied on secondary sources of data by making use of past literature in order to examine the historical background, success and failures of Ujamaa in Tanzania. The thrust of this paper was to draw out lessons that Nigeria can learn from the Ujamaa experience in Tanzania. It was clear that the settlement reorganization and collective cultivation as well as a rekindling of the African traditional socialist values will drive the needed development. The paper concluded by suggesting some measures to ensure sustainable rural development programmes in Nigeria. These include the encouragement of citizen participation, design of a comprehensive rural development template, spatial reorganization and ideological reorientation among others.*

Keywords: Ujamaa, Rural development, Tanzania and Nigeria

1. Introduction

The failure of most development efforts (programme) of African countries particularly Nigeria is attributed to the wiping of traditional African socialism by the long years of colonial rule that have change the ideological orientation of the leaders and followers towards the western style of development. Available statistics show that Nigeria is still predominantly a rural country. Majority of Nigerians (about 75 percent) still live in rural areas are by virtue of the circumstances of their habitat subject cited to serious handicaps and constrained to scratch the earth for a rather miserable living (Agbodike 1995).

Ujamaa rural development programme in Tanzania was a rekindling of the African traditional socialist values towards solving the problem of underdevelopment in Africa.

The philosophy of Ujamaa was centered on space reorganization and collective cultivation in order to reduce land use conflicts and promote rural productivity due to the scattered settlement pattern of rural Tanzania. In view of the above Mabogunje (1980) as cited in Nwafor and Madu (2002) rightly pointed out that space reorganization which hinges on spatial issues such as land, settlement, community system and labour as well as spatio-temporal synchronization of changes has been prescribed as a strategy for rural development.

It is regrettable that little attention has been paid to spatial components of rural development in Nigeria in the previous development plans enunciated by the various administrations. The success of Tanzania along this path would have spelt out a development panacea to most African countries particularly Nigeria. It is the focus of this paper to examine the Ujamaa rural development programme in Tanzania and the lessons which Nigeria can learn from it.

2. Conceptual /Historical Development of Ujamaa in Tanzania

At independence there was a pocket of capitalist famers, traders, urban based petty bourgeoisie, disproportionate development and colonial administrative machinery that was handed over to a handful of local elites, who were attended to by a class of labourers. A situation, which created class structure and made worse the issue of land alienation and underdevelopment.

Aimed at achieving more social equality and sealing off the elite form becoming a class, president Nyerere officially launched the Ujamaa programme after the Arusha public declaration of 1967. He stated that “unless the widely scattered people of Tanganyika are brought together, we shall not be able to use tractors, we shall not be able to provide schools for our children, and we shall not be able to build hospitals or have clean drinking water.

Ujamaa is a Swahili word meaning family hood. This was a reintroduction of a prototype African socialism that was eroded by the advent of western colonialism. It involves the organization of society’s mode of production according to family leanings. Judging from the failure of previous development programmes in the country, Nyerere reasoned that Tanzania being a poor country, is better to embark on a labour intensive programme that is dependent on self help initiative and by sourcing for local resources to being about an enviable development rather than embarking on such capital intensive programmes.

Also as a result of this failure, the sixteenth biennial TANU (Tanzania African National Union) conference of 1973, in reviewing the situation decided on a policy which recognized a three stage sequence in the evolution of an Ujamaa village. The first stage was the physical creation of villages; the second, the introduction of co-operative organizations, and the third, the move towards a collective mode of production. This three-stage process was reflected in the new terminology, development villages (*vijiji vya maudelo*) are nucleated settlements or in some cases areas

of dispersed but concentrated rural settlements where individual and family modes of production are to be diversified and supported by the village primary co-operative society. In the third stage, Ujamaa village (vijiyi vya Ujamaa) can be formed when the production activities are conducted on a fully-fledged collective or communal basis. The conference also decided that the first stage of villagisation must be completed throughout the county by 1976.

Regional executive committees were instructed to draw up plans for the immediate implementation of "operation vijini", that is the mobilization of the entire rural population to take up residence in the new village settlements. On 1st March 1974, the first phase of the operations started under the supervision of district development directors. This phase comprised both the measurement and evaluating of old housing and the identification of suitable sites for the new settlements. The latter involved consultation at the ward level and with district planning officials. It took into consideration such criteria as land availability, road accessibility, and existing services such as co-operative societies, dispensaries, schools and water supply. At the same time, the pattern of homestead plots of about one and half acres was laid down. In addition to these plots, farmers were allocated land in the area surrounding the village, during the first year of operation they were allowed to continue cultivation on their old plots so as to avoid the loss of inputs, especially labour already expanded.

The movement of people to the new villages commenced by April 1974, depending on the need to complete surveys and establish sites. By July, over 70 percent of the population was in the process of shifting to the new villages, although many houses were still in the course of construction. By August, the process had been completed everywhere.

A further phase in operation vijini was the enactment of villages and Ujamaa villages (Registration and administration) Act of August 1973, where provisions were made for every village to become multi-purpose co-operative society.

3. Conceptualizing Rural Area

The concept of rural area has been addressed in various ways by different scholars depending on varying context. It is also conceptualize as it occurs to different countries and nations based on geographical, activities and population characteristics. The 1996 census dictionary defines rural areas as sparsely populated lands lying outside urban areas (statistics Canada 199:226). United states census (2000 census) as cited in Agbodike (1995) defines rural areas as comprising open country and settlements with fewer than 2500 residents (population/administrative based), areas designated as rural can have populations densities as high as 1999 persons per square mile or as low as one person per square mile (population/land use-based). United States Department of Agriculture (2002 farm bill) defines rural areas as any area other than a city or town that has a population of greater than 50, 000 inhabitants, and also the urbanized areas contiguous and adjacent to such a city or town. Functionally a rural area is a geographical area

characterized by primary activities such as extraction, farming and gathering among others.

Harmonizing all these definitions, especially as concerned this paper, rural Nigeria is measured by two indices a spatial index, indicating the percentage of the population living in rural areas, and by occupational index which shows the percentage of the labour price in agricultural occupation. It therefore connotes a spatial entity with low population density and whose activities are majorly of primary activities such as agriculture, extraction and gathering among others. The rural area in Nigeria is still largely characterized by absence of basic human needs and underdevelopment in agricultural and non agricultural activities (Williams, 1994).

4. Concept of Rural Development

The concept of rural development has different interpretation to different people because of its multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary nature. Hunter (1964) was among the earliest to use the expression rural development which he considered as the 'starting point of development characterized by subsistence. According to Mabogunje (1980), rural development implies a broad-based reorganization and mobilization of the rural masses so as to cope effectively with the daily tasks of their lives and with changes consequent upon this. As stated elsewhere, rural development is a process of mobilizing and harnessing human and material resources of all the rural populaces with a view to improving socio-economic situations through qualitative and quantitative changes (Ogunnowo, 1997). In essence, rural development is a planned change in the living standards of the rural population and making the process of their development self-sustaining. World Bank (1995) defined rural development as a process through which rural poverty is alleviated by sustained increases in the productivity and incomes of low-income rural dwellers and households. This definition is defective as it dwelt mainly on economic growth which is just an aspect of development. Taking into Cognizance, the economic growth and social upliftment aspects of development, Ijere (1990) cited in Raheem and Bako (2014) regarded rural development, as the process of increasing the per capita income and the quality of life of the rural dwellers to enable them become prime mover of their own destiny.

The united nations agency for social and economic development posits that rural development is the quantitative change or upliftment in the standard of people in the rural areas, brought about through integrated approach, by both governmental and non-governmental agencies and the people themselves. Obinine in ogidefa (2010) perceived rural development to involve creating and widening opportunities for rural individuals to realize full potential through education and sharing in decision and action which affect their lives. He also viewed it as efforts to increase rural output and create employment opportunities while eliminating fundamental (or extreme) cases of poverty, diseases and ignorance. Therefore, combining all the essential elements of development, rural development can be described as the integrated approach to food production as well as physical, social and institutional infrastructural provisions with an ultimate goal of bringing about both

quantitative and qualitative changes which result in improved living standard of the rural population. Although it is argued that agricultural productivity is not synonymous with rural development but constitutes a very crucial aspect in achieving it since it is the main stay of the economy and that most of the people in the rural areas are engaged on land (Abass 1993).

In developing countries rural development encompasses all efforts targeted at improving the fortunes of rural dwellers. They include agricultural set-up projects, rural water supply projects, rural electrification projects, rural health and disease control projects, rural education, rural feeder-road and maintenance projects, adult education campaign, rural telecommunication system and rural industrialization. The Ujamaa villagization policy in Tanzania was aimed at achieving all these.

5. The Philosophy (Principles) of Ujamaa

Ujamaa villagisation is a system of organizing co-operative communities in which people lived together and worked together for the common good of all. It was hoped, would enable the government deal with the largely dispersed nature of the countries rural settlements and population which had made it difficult to achieve greater returns from agriculture on individual holdings, and to provide essential productive and social services to the farming population.

The irony of Ujamaa philosophy is that, it is a re-awakening of the basic and fundamental economic principles within which Africans identified themselves during the stage of communalism. In other words, Ujamaa was an attempt to incorporate the best of the past with the relevant aspects of modern technology and production methods that fit into Tanzania realities.

More specifically, Ujamaa villagisation therefore entailed.

- a) Village grouping according to family hood, which meant voluntary collectivization or rationalization of the scattered settlements and population into nucleated villages.
- b) Communal production and ownership of land resources. Every member of the family had to be catered for irrespective of whether you are producing or not.
- c) The programme was to rely on indigenous resources, which can be harnessed locally. It also involved the formation of village government with power to plan and implement local projects that have direct bearing on the lives of the people.
- d) The provision of social services such as schools, dispensaries and water supply to these nucleated villages.

With this, it was hoped that the benefit of development will get to the rest majority of the people while the gap between urban and rural incomes will be reduced. On the whole, the overriding principle of Ujamaa is self-reliance.

6. Successes of Ujamaa in Tanzania

Between 1967-69, a selective approach was adopted in which a few villages were agreed to serve as models for the whole country. During the second five-year plan in 1969,

only 180 Ujamaa villages embracing 60,000 people had been formed. As a result, the new plan spelt out in greater detail total government commitment to the Ujamaa programme and enjoined all party and government institutions to assist in its vigorous prosecution. Never the less, some considerable progress was made especially in regions with special problems such as flooding, drought or famine. The total number of Ujamaa villages rose from 650 in 1969 to 5,628 in 1973 and the population involved from 300,000 to over 2 million. By this time most of the rural Tanzania was regrouped. All these rural settlements in Tanzania as pointed out by Wali (1986) in sergeant (2009) were organized against 5-tier hierarchy ranging from the major district centres, minor district centres, major rural centres, minor rural centres and lastly, villages. This was to say outside these there were no settlements.

Infact the main effect of Ujamaasation has been in stimulating rapid expansion of access to basic social services and amenities like schools, water supply, medical care, seasonal credit and transport facilities. For instance, the government I 1973 fiscal year declared a free education system for all school age children of Tanzania. This was an attempt to become self-reliant in manpower by 1980.

Ujamaa being a rural based programme directed toward the upliftment of the living conditions of rural Tanzanians who were predominantly farmers, agriculture was taught along with other academic disciplines in school. This was to make the children who after completing the primary school and cannot get to the secondary but with the knowledge of agriculture can return to farming and make a difference in the Ujamaa villages.

The objective of rural socialism in Tanzania is to create a socialist agricultural base in order to mobilize a surplus for internal consumption over which Tanzanians will have control. As an overall alternative, industrialization lies in the future as far as primary emphasis is concerned. A country without adequate food supply will survive mainly on importation of foodstuffs, which will tend to divert resources that would be invested in the other sectors.

Also in an attempt to eradicate the class structure and land alienation habits entrenched by the colonial administration, a building acquisition act was enacted 1971 to abolish land Lordism in Urban housing. President Nyerere also succeeded in shutting off the importation of non-essential consumer goods like cars, which formerly absorbed so much of the country's scarce foreign exchange. The encouragement of traditional local craftsmanship is also a good strategy of enhancing self-reliance.

7. Failures of Ujamaa in Tanzania

The program however did not spell out the modus operandi for achieving this nation-wide Ujamaa villagisation of making appropriate resource allocation to the programme and indicating realistic production targets. The initial progress in the programme was slow because of open hostility to the programme in some areas like the rich agricultural district of Kilimajaro.

The bitter experience of Tanzania in the area of undue interference by the world super power (France and USA) and the World Bank experts representing the interest of the western world that came with their evil intended assistance to the programme. The hard disposition of Nyerere towards receiving any foreign assistance was penetrated through the constant persuasion of the top class members of the Nyerere's ruling party to resist Ujamaasation. All these compelled Nyerere to accepting the loan. Attached to the loan was a condition to relax the socialist policies in Tanzania. The eventual acceptance of the loan signaled the fall of Ujamaa. This is an educative lesson, third world countries particularly African countries have to be aware of the exploitative ulterior motives of the western world in their beautifully looking financial assistance to third world countries in their drive towards attaining development (Rodney, 2001).

More important also is the problem of tradition, a people who decades of colonial rule have eroded their traditional socialist values need time to retrace their way back to true African socialism as opposed to the short time visionalised by Nyerere. With the advent of colonialism the economic system became mentioned and people did not see any need in catering for unproductive members of the family but prefer to accumulate wealth and live in affluence.

Socialism in Tanzania was non-scientific but based on traditional values. But for any development to succeed it must be accompanied with advances in science and technology. The outputs of Ujamaa villages were still small and unevenly because the agricultural extension services were rather slow in adjusting to the new system. Moreover, most Ujamaa members were not yet fully disposed towards the system because propaganda machinery was still weak. The incoherent implementation of the programme in the different regions of the country was also a major setback to the success of the programme.

Tanzania did not succeed in presenting a blue print in terms of an integrated industrial strategy, production target planning has not been satisfactory because the speed up in income redistribution naturally shifted the demand pattern and also because the linkage between national macro-estimates and decentralized public production was still loose and fragmented. In addition, the process of villagization was poorly planned and hastily carried out. It would appear that government officials and party functionaries were more interested in the quantitative increase in Ujamaa villages to the neglect of the purposes for which villagisation was being undertaken in the first place. The rush to villagise caused considerable disorganization and discomfort and the resulting hostility from this inevitably diminished the potential of the Ujamaa villages for realizing their original aims, particularly the aim of increasing productivity (Nyerere, 2000).

The hostility arising from hasty villagisation was further reinforced by emphasis on cash crops as opposed to food crops. The emphasis on cash crops led to food shortages. The shortages further defected the original tenets of villagization by compelling substantial food imports. In the face of these difficulties the government of Tanzania felt

obligated to spoon-fed the Ujamaa villages in an attempt to win legitimacy not only for the programme but also for the regime; free rations, salaries comparable to urban wages for workers on the collective farms, liberal dividends for shelter families, pocket money per month among others. However, they constituted an immense financial burden on the economy. The financial burden of villagisation was increased by too much mechanization in some of the Ujamaa villages. In particular there were too many tractors. The programme was conceived and carried out with authoritarianism by a political class which demanded every scarifies from others and little from itself (Nyerere, 2011).

8. Lessons of Ujamaa for Rural Development in Nigeria

Nigeria can derive maximum benefits from the past experiences of Tanzania in her adoption of Ujamaa as a radical approach to solving her problem of underdevelopment.

It is regrettable that Nigeria has paid little attention to the spatial components of rural development in the various development plans. Aligning with this view, Madu(1992) cited in Nwafor and Madu (2002) stated that the neglect of spatial or geographic perspectives constitute a missing link in the effort towards the achievement of rural development objectives in Nigeria. He further stressed that the neglect of spatial forms and processes is quite unfortunate because they are a critical and indispensable components of rural development since every development project is rooted in geographic space. One of the principles of Ujamaa which was centered on settlement rationalization and collective cultivation if adopted by Nigeria will promote the growth of nucleated settlements and intensive cultivation which will help resolve most of land use conflicts that Nigeria is facing in its present scattered settlement pattern. This settlement nucleation will also make it easier for government to provide the needed social amenities and infrastructures to help reduce the influx of able-bodied young men who constitute the working population into urban centers in search of better living conditions thereby increasing rural productivity. The importance of this strategy cannot be overemphasized especially now that Nigeria is grappling with the perennial problem of Fulani herdsmen and crop farmer's crises. That is space rationalization will create more fallow lands for other economic activities and the population concentration in the villages will help boost defense.

Ujamaa was anchored on the philosophy of family hood or brotherhood that embraced the principles of equality, freedom, democracy, state property, ownership and self reliance. This will reawaken our traditional African socialist values that have been decayed as a result of western influence. This family hood principle if imbibed by our leaders from national to local level will go a long way in eliminating corruption and nepotism which is major cancer worm to Nigeria's development in general.

The tenets of family hood if also appropriately harnessed will promote community participation in rural development programmes to enhance the longevity of these policies. The rural communities will be allowed to identify their problems

and goals, analyze their own needs, and commit themselves to the achievements of these targets. Local experts, chiefs, community leaders, interest groups, cooperatives and professional organizations will be given room to participate in deciding what projects to embark upon, where and how to execute them while government and the policy makers only advice and guide. That is the principle have suggested that the model of bottom up approach should be favoured against its top-down counterpart to achieve meaningful rural development. This development approach used for the implementation of most of the World Bank sponsored projects have worked well in most cases. Ujamaa gave a political empowerment and liberation to the rural people of Tanzania through the formation of village governments. This is a leaf that Nigeria can borrow to do away with this tradition that sees local government administration presumed to be the closest to the people of the grass root as mere appendages to states. This rather than organize elections and allow the locals to control their affairs by themselves, majority of the managers of local administration is now "imported managers" who are appointed by Governors without the consent of the people. Apart from that, some of them do not know the problems of the community, they are at the mercy of the state governors who hire and can fire them should they deviate from their agenda which in most cases may not be in tandem with the wishes of the rural community. Allocations meant to develop the rural communities are siphoned leaving rural areas in perpetual underdevelopment and misery.

A reawakening of the traditional African socialism will bring about attitudinal change and value reorientation in both the leadership and the followership. This will make Nigerians eschew corruption, indiscipline, nepotism and other acts capable of reversing the wheel of development. The inordinate ambition to enrich self at the detriment of masses if controlled will help in raising the standard of living of the rural people.

In advocating for spontaneous development (citizen participation) reflecting the aspirations of the local people not as felt by the drivers of urban political economy, Ujamaa encouraged the use of indigenous or local resources. The encouragement of local craftsmanship with the use of resources was aimed at making the nation self reliant. Nigeria with its huge human and material resources has the potentials of achieving the desired level of development with the requisite science and technology that can industrialize all fashioned through a well patterned educational philosophy.

The Nigerian rural development programme lacks a philosophical, ideological and holistic foundation. The usual practice has been to be in office propounding slogans and manifestations for the people below. This has been instrumental to the failure of most rural development programmes in Nigeria. Tapping from the tenets of Ujamaa, Nigeria can design and develop a comprehensive rural development template (plan) that is ideological in nature to serve as a master plan for an integrated and sustainable rural development policy. This will serve as a source from which any government in power derives its modus operandi for enduring rural development plan. With this in place, the

issue of policy summersault that have characterized our rural development policies in the past will be eliminated.

However, Nigeria has some bitter lessons to learn from the past experiences of Tanzania in her adoption of Ujamaa as a radical approach to solving her problems of underdevelopment ranging from undue interference by the world super powers, poor planning and hasty implementation, incoherent implementation, emphasis on cash crops to detriment of food crops among others as outlined above under the failures of the programme. This will help Nigeria tie the loose ends and improve upon the pitfalls.

9. Conclusion

Having X-rayed the principles of Ujamaa, its successes and failures, it was discovered that most developing nations and particularly Nigeria have failed to attain levels of development comparable to the so called developed countries as a result of land use crises, erosion of the traditional African socialistic, disarticulated rural development policy lacking an ideological foundation, lack of spatial focus in rural development to lack of community participation among others. It was also discovered that there are some peculiarities common to Nigeria and Tanzania therefore, the application of Ujamaa villagisation in Nigeria must be situated in the Nigerian context and made to reflect the wishes and aspirations of Nigerians since development has to be human oriented for it be sustained.

10. Suggestions

- Design of a comprehensive rural development master plan to provide a road map for integrated and sustainable rural development.
- There should be a legislation of the national assembly backing the National Rural Development master plan to ensure that successive administrations do not deviate from the master plan.
- The rural dwellers should be encouraged to form discussion groups to articulate their problems and assisted to solve them internally.
- The Local Government tier of government should be granted full autonomy in order to make it serve the purpose of grass root development for which it was created.
- The anti-graft agencies should be empowered to act stiffly without favour in any act of corruption. Nigeria can borrow from the Asian tiger's death penalty where a case of embezzlement of public funds is established against any individual.
- The land use Act should be reviewed.
- The traditional African socialism should be accompanied with advances in science and technology for the needed rural development to be achieved.
- Similarly, there should inter sectoral complementarity, which in turn will guarantee forward and backward linkages that are *sin qua non* for rural transformation

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