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The Role of District Commissioners in Managing Sustainable Development in Tanzania

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Abstract: Sustainable development is a concept that refers to a mode of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves balancing economic growth, social progress, and environmental protection in a way that promotes long term well-being for society. Sustainable development aims to address current challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation while ensuring that resources are managed responsibly for the benefit of both present and future generations. Sustainable development requires partners that are arranged cordially in works to enable them to perform what we call a mutual understanding. It is achieved through waying the development, which is achieved from looking to the right, to the left, behind and to the future. To enhance this sustainable development, in Tanzania we observe that leaders of the government are divided in three main categories: The president and his/her cabinet, Regional Commissioners, and District Commissioners. This paper entails to check the role of district commissioners in managing sustainable development in Tanzania. The issue we are looking at is because of the potentials of the district commissioners and the mandate this carder has over the rest of the carder. We understand that in Tanzania the District Commissioners and Regional Commissioners carry equal weight with the president of Tanzania in terms of power to detain people. We do not have any other carder or a person whose mandate to detain people are provided by the law other than the president, regional commissioners, and district commissioners. Most research has gone to elude regional commissioners but very few have endorsed the district commissioners. It is an important carder because they are appointed by the president of united republic of Tanzania. The two carders are regional commissioners and district commissioners. These oversee every activity that is performed in their district. Just as the president is sole in charge of every activity that is pursued in the entire land known as Tanzania, equally the district commissioner and the regional commissioner. We notice that from the first regime of Tanzania which was led by Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere he was keen at appointing regional commissioners and district commissioners. He could change the ministers but for the regional commissioners and district commissioners their vetting was too huge to change them, hence sustainable development. This paper is a case study design which focusses on one country known as Tanzania. We have used documentation, experiential, interviews, and observations as a leading data collection tool. We have further, used the qualitative data analysis strategies to analyze data and avail conclusion. The paper concludes that in Tanzania the District Commissioner are the pillar to sustainable development. It further, reveals that for the country to depend on the district commissioners for enhancing sustainable development, the appointing authority must way on the qualities of persons who are appointed to discharge as district commissioners. And that junior and incompetent workers should not be considered for the appointment of district commissioners due to huge mandate they carry.

Keywords: Development; District Commissioners; Managing; Sustainable Development

Introduction

In Tanzania the government can be said is formulated through three distinct levels. The first level is of the president and his cabinet ministers, the second is regional commissioners, and the third is district commissioners. These three levels play an active role in management of resources of the entire country to ensure sustainable development. We can equally narrate that even the understanding of people during the formulation of the new government is vested in ministers as the most important, regional commissioners as seconded to the importance and district commissioners are the third placed important. District commissioners and regional commissioners are considered equal to the president because of the mandatory vested to them in the area they are nominated to perform. For example, the regional commissioner for Dar es Salaam is supra mandatory to all areas of development. Currently we do have a certain number of ministries and thus ministers, and all functions of these ministries in a region are vested to the regional commissioner. Equally, the district commissioners are the sole mandate of the whole area of the entire district. In this regard, they oversee development, peace, and tranquility. They supervise construction of roads, government buildings particularly, schools and health center construction. Their mandate is enshrined in the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania 1977 (s.145) and other laws of local government administration. The district authorities act of 1982 provides the mandates of the district commissioners.

Mandates of District Commissioners

The mandates of district commissioners are impliedly vested in the constitution of the United republic of Tanzania (1977). The constitution has clearly put the regional commissioners and has ignored the district commissioners. Nevertheless, the laws of local government administration have covered the gape of the constitution by clearly providing the mandates of regional commissioner to be equal with the mandates of district commissioners.

The appointment of district commissioner is covered in Act of 1997, 5(1) which sets out the process of appointing the regional commissioners and the district commissioners. The Act to suffice sustainable development provides the qualities of regional commissioners, which includes being citizen of Tanzania, hold a degree from recognized university or its equivalent. Have relevant experience in public administration or management and possess other qualifications as may be prescribed by the president [Act 1997, 6(1)].

It is important to note that the power to detain people without cause pending the information that the detainer has on a particular person or people is vested to three individuals who are president, regional commissioner, and district commissioners. That is why arguably people do rank the regional commissioners and district commissioners as the president of their areas among other reasons. Of course, other reasons are supra mandate that are vested to these individuals to oversee the sustainable development issues in the entire area of their jurisdiction just as the president would do for the entire piece of land known as Tanzania.

Literature Review

In the constitution of the united republic of Tanzania, the mandates and roles of regional commissioners and district commissioners are provided under the provisions related to the administration of local government and public administration. Specifically, the powers and functions of regional commissioners and district commissioners are provided in the local government laws, which scarlet in detail the responsibilities, functions, and powers of regional commissioners and district commissioners.

Several writings have indicated the importance of district commissioners in Tanzania (Milanzi, 1994; Norman, 2005; Max, 2007). And equally several politicians basically on the opposition political parties do not see the importance of district commissioners and they do propose the vanishment of the post (Mbowe, 1999; 2005; Lissu, 2015;2020). The reasons they give are duplicate of mandates with executive posts in the entire districts such as City Executive Directors (CED), Municipal Executive Directors (MED), Town Executive Directors (TED), District Executive Directors (DED) and even the District Administrative Secretary (DAS). They further insist that even the regional commissioner's office should be removed from local government administration rather they propose that a regional representative should be replaced by the elect just as it is on every council in Tanzania, we do have a member of parliament (Mbowe, 2005). Certainly, the regional offices should be headed by the Member of Parliament (MP), upper house, and the council Member of Parliament should be lower house (Lissu, 2015).

We do not despise the arguments that are posed by these several carders of Tanzania. But we do think that certainly they do lack an understanding of who is the district commissioners, in terms of their role and contribution to the sustainable development of Tanzania. It is important here that we highlight some key mandates of the district commissioners, which are not part of mandatory power of the CED, MED, TED, DED, and DAS.

It further noted that some political parties argue that there is no relevance for the existence of a district commissioners and regional commissioners because they believe that district commissioners and regional commissioners, who are appointed by the central government, may undermine the principles of decentralization and local governance (Max, 2007). They argue that regional commissioners and district commissioners, as representatives of the central government, may interfere with the autonomy and decision of local elected officials such as councilors and members of parliament and local government authority. Additionally, some political parties may view the role of district commissioners and regional commissioners as redundant or unnecessary in the context of decentralized governance structure, where power is meant to be devolved to local levels without central government interference.

The law provides that the regional commissioners and of course the district commissioners shall be the subject matter of all the undertakings of the area of jurisdiction in enhancing peace and tranquility. Generally, the mandates of the district commissioner are drawn from the colonial powers of the United Kingdom -Britain. Whose establishment in Tanzania started in the year 1918 after the World War 1. The United Kingdom did not rule Tanzania as her cologne. However, the United Kingdom did have a colonial presence in Tanzania. Tanzania, which was formally known as Tanganyika and Zanzibar, was under German colonial rule until World War 1, after which it became a British mandate under the league of nations. The United Kingdom administered Tanganyika until it gained independence on December 9th, 1961. Henceforth, this study aims at realizing the contribution of the district commissioners in enhancing and managing sustainable development in the districts they are appointed.

In this regard, it is found that sustainable development is a concept that aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Dervish, 2003; Dixon and Fallon, 1989). Hence the presence of these district commissioners would do a lot in terms of ensuring that issues that are needed for sustainable development to happen are met. These include balancing economic, social, and environmental considerations to create a sustainable and equitable future (Elo and Kyngas, 2008). Sustainable development seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection in a way that is mutually reinforcing and beneficial for all (Dixon and Fallon, 1989). It involves addressing issues such as poverty alleviation, resource management, climate change, and social justice to ensure a better quality of life for the current and future generations (Abubakar, 2017; Mensah, 2019).

Objectives of the Study

This narrative work is concerned with realizing the mandates of the district commissioners and their capability to bring forth sustainable development in the areas they lead in Tanzania. Henceforth the role of the district commissioners in managing sustainable development in Tanzania is the first objective of the study. Thus, objectives are divided into three with one main objective and the two are minor.

- a) To find out the role of district commissioners in managing sustainable development in Tanzania.
- b) To find out people's perception on the influence of district commissioners on managing sustainable development.
- c) To find out the level of honoring or dishonoring the mandates of the district commissioners by the people whom s/he leads through councilors in issues of managing sustainable development.

Main Questions for the Study

- a) What is the role of the district commissioners in managing sustainable development in their district?
- b) What is the perception of the people on the district commissioners influence on availing sustainable development?
- c) As a counselor, what is the level of honoring or dishonoring the mandates of the district commissioners by the people whom s/he leads?

Importance of the study

This study is important in bringing about the clear understanding to the people of Tanzania and the world at large on the roles vested in the hands of district commissioners in bringing about sustainable development. It is important also in setting up an agenda of copying the mandates of district commissioners of Tanzania to other governance worldwide who shall find merit in the execution of the district commissioner of Tanzania. The study reveals the

importance of the presence of the district commissioners in relation to sustainable development even to people who casually dismiss the pertinence of the presence of the district commissioners. It finally gives the perception that the people of Tanzania have, in relation to the functions of the district commissioners in bringing about sustainable development, peace and tranquility and immediate interventions, which these district commissioners' cessionary do. The study shall remain a supreme contributor to the literature available on the internet and shall enable generations after generations to excel in understanding the pertinence or impertinence of the district commissioners.

Materials and Methods

This study is mainly qualitative. The sample of the study was mainly 250 councilors from Ilala, Ubungo, Temeke, Kindoni and Kigamboni. We have opted for all councilors available in the valid councils of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Each of the council was represented by the whole wing of members that were available. The sample was all councilors male and female. The data collections strategies used were interview, questionnaire, observation, documentation and experiential because some of us saved in these carders. We have opted for the Dar es Salaam city alone due to many councils found in there, and due to multimixer of population in Dar es Salaam. Henceforth considered as an assumingly representative of Tanzania.

Methodological Assumption

The following methodological assumption was considered implicit in this investigation. The sample which was considered perfect for this study was normal citizens who are elected as representatives of the wards -councilors. Hence, the validity of the councilors in this regard would depend on the normal elections that we pursued in 2020. Because of the nature of elections 99.9 members of councilors are from the ruling political party. Equally, 99.99% of the members of parliament in the mainland were from the ruling party. Certainly, would jeopardize the response since on the elections of 2015 most councilors in Dar es Salaam city were from the opposition. Hence methodological assumptions are:

The sample of respondents was sufficiently representative of the population to permit a reasonable degree of generalization of the findings. 2) The participants answered accurately and honestly the items of the questionnaire. 3) The reliability and validity of the instrument used were sufficient to permit an accurate description and analysis of data. 4) The data collected was interpreted fairly and accurately. 5) The design and sampling procedure were appropriate to the intent of investigation.

Presentation of the Findings

What is the role of the district commissioner in managing sustainable development of the district? In Tanzania the role of the district commissioners to manage sustainable development is hereby noted. We shall call respondents as R. And R1 shall mean first respondents.

R1 had this to say, district commissioners have power and mandate to do anything they want to pursue. They are the chairman of the peace committee, which is associated with all army, police force, intelligence department. He can decide what to be done in society and it could be done. Regarding sustainable development, of course they are the managers. They can narrate on the way forward of this development and it could be done. The response of Ilala councilor.

R2 had this today, District commissioners are very worthy to development. They are the president of the areas they represent. They can do anything they want, and it will be done. Regarding sustainable development, these district commissioners are the leaders who are representative of the president, and they are government leaders whose mandate are supra. Thus, when they say anything, we are sure that the president has endorsed. This was a response from Ilala also.

R23, this was a female representative and had this to say, your question on how district commissioners can manage sustainable development in the district they are appointed is obvious. Because these DCs are the representative of the president in their districts. They are the source of development projects. Look, unto the roads, supermarkets construction, health centers, schools, and everything regarding development the district commissioners are the source. We arguably narrate on mandates but do something wrong you will know that the district commissioners are present. This was a female representative from Kinondoni.

R45 had this to say, investigate this Ubungo district council the way roads are constructed, look on the Magufuli bus terminal, these were essentially the works of the central government, and the in-charge person is the district commissioner. Everything concerning peace and tranquility, the central government is reliable, and the district

commissioner is the number one leader on all these developments. She responded to the councilor from Ubungo council.

What is the influence of district commissioners in availing sustainable development of the districts?

The influence of the district commissioners to the people is huge, R157 responded. She adds that, everyone knows that the district commissioners say what the president and the entire government appeals for. Henceforth, the appointing authority must be keen on how to appoint the district commissioners. People who have quality in the entire government sector. The influence of district commissioners on sustainable development can be said it depends on the type of district commissioner. She responded R178 councilor from Temeke. In the past I would say yes, but currently it depends on how the appointing authority has appointed them. Some indeed are good to influence sustainable development some are not because they have very little experience.

R70 had this to respond to, I assure you that the district commissioners influence on sustainable development is marvelous, but it depends on the type of the district commissioner. Look at the district commissioner for Hai district and what the people said before the court of law, such a person cannot bring about development nor can he influence towards sustainable development. District commissioners are people with huge experience of how to manage people. Responded a councilor from Kinondoni.

What is the level of honoring or dishonoring the mandates of the district commissioners as far as sustainable development is concerned?

R27 from Temeke municipal council had this to respond, generally influence is based on the ability that the person must know the job and other things that he or she may know regarding people. In the past we used to see district commissioners as people of influence but in recent days the value has declined because of the type of people who are appointed to discharge as district commissioners. New people at work should not be appointed as district or regional commissioners. They appointed should be people of good habit and character and should have worked with several other departments or organizations.

R105 had this to say, I do not see the influence of the district commissioners on bringing about sustainable development. This is because of the type of district commissioners we have. But for obvious reasons district commissioners should have mandate to influence sustainable development. The chairman of the committee responded from Ubungo.

R75 from Kigamboni Council had this to say, the influence is huge, but it depends on the type on the district commissioner. Some district commissioners have huge influence pending on the areas they worked in before becoming the district commissioner. Some are not influential because they are appointed to execute as district commissioners as new jobs to them. This will splinter the mandates of the district commissioners. District commissioners are important, and they can influence sustainable development pending the nature of them. In this regard, where they worked before being appointed as district commissioners. The chairman of the council responded.

The general response of the councilor has indicated that 81% of the councilors view that district commissioners are very vital to bring about sustainable development of the areas they are appointed. Some members of parliament said the problem currently we face is that we do have poor nomination from appointing authority. And they said it is important that the appointing authority nominates people who have huge knowledge to manage the government issues such as district commissioners and regional commissioners. 71% view that district commissioners have influence on availing sustainable development. They have also critically cited the district commissioner for Hai who was sent before the court of law as a sign of irresponsible district commissioners. 62% had the view that district commissioners can bring about suitable sustainable development. Equally, they cited weakness of the appointed people as a key towards failure.

Conclusion

This study has availed an important phenomenon on the contribution of district commissioners on managing sustainable development. Much as we know that sustainable development requires a combination of actions and strategies across various sectors and levels of society. Some key steps that can contribute to sustainable development include: 1) Promoting renewable energy sources and reducing reliance on fossil fuels. 2) Implementing sustainable land use practices to protect ecosystems and biodiversity. 3) Encouraging sustainable agriculture practices to ensure food security and reduce environmental impact. 4) Investing in sustainable infrastructure and transportation systems to reduce emissions and improve efficiency. 5) Promoting sustainable water management and conservation efforts.

6) Enhancing education and awareness about sustainable issues. 7) Encouraging sustainable consumption and production patterns. 8) Addressing social inequalities and promoting social inclusion. 9) Encouraging stakeholders and fostering collaboration among governments. 10) Monitoring progress and evaluating the impact of sustainable development initiatives.

We therefore conclude that the district commissioner's contribution to sustainable development is viewed at 81%. While the influence of district commissioners on the people whom they lead to attain sustainable development is viewed at 71%, and perception on how people would honor or dishonor the district commissioners stands at 62%. It is arguably noted that appointing authority should be keen at executing mandates on appointing district commissioners, because they have huge mandates which should be compatible with the appointed person. Junior personalities should not be considered in the positions of district commissioner and regional commissioners because of the weight they carry in the areas they work.

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