Pitfalls and Successes towards Creating Self-Employment Opportunities for Youths: The Story and Experiences in Eastern and Southern Africa, 1960s–2000s

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Abstract

In any nation, the country's own citizens are its most important human resource and—particularly the nation's youth—its potential asset, far more important than material facilities such as natural resources and machinery in the land. If all citizens of a country were able to participate effectively in economic and social productive activities, no doubt a difference would soon be noticed and could even quantified in terms of their well-being and of wealth-generation both at a personal and at a general community level. Society and its population would not only have to be expected to demonstrate general cognitive abilities such as basic literacy (reading, writing and numeracy); they would not only have to be expected to solve their own existential problems in their homes and more widely within their communities; but also they would be able to demonstrate certain creative psycho-motive skills that constitute and transform a workplace. If this statement applies to all countries in all economies and all cultures, then an immediate question would be why this has not been the case in societies in Africa (and to some extent in other Third-World countries)? What went wrong with youth? Where was the "false start" in Africa? A set of theoretical and conceptual assumptions will be expounded concerning youth, as a basis for the issues at stake in many societies in Africa.

The paper will trace the problem from the roots within the colonial set-up before the 1960s, which seems to have continued during the early years of political independence. The paper will give investigative research evidence to demonstrate conditions under which youth could be a blessing or a danger in a nation and will seek to emphasise implications for a constructive policy framework that is anticipatory of and conducive to job-creation and self-employment potentialities for elementary children and youth at general school level and those out of a formal school curriculum.Tanzania will be used to provide a combined research-based-cum-experiential case study of a phenomenon.

KeyWords: Successes, Creating, Self-Employment