

Exploring the Panacea and Perfidy of Indigenization as a Driver to Avert Youth Unemployment in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT This paper seeks to explore the desirable (panacea) and undesirable (perfidy) factors associated with indigenization as a driver to avert Zimbabwean youth unemployment. The paper uses a literature review methodology. The following factors have been considered a panacea associated with Zimbabwean indigenization: emphasis on ownership of the local resources by the indigenous people, encouraging land reform as a tool of indigenization, having mining activities in the hands of the locals, and the government encouraging the non-local companies to partner with local companies or government. The phenomenon of indigenization is considered undesirable (perfidy) because it has lowered capacities to utilize land and mining, small-holder farming has replaced large-scale mechanized farming, unavailability of capital by the local people to optimally utilize the land and other resources, the policy is driven by political selfishness as opposed to economic goals and objectives, and it has been associated with economic sanctions. The paper recommends to the government to prepare its people through training and funding so that they can position themselves for indigenization.

INTRODUCTION

According to the Oxford South African dictionary (2010), unemployment is a state in which one is looking for work or job he/she has expertise or requisite knowledge of, but cannot find one. It is well-documented and known that youth unemployment poses a great concern in virtually all the countries of the globe, with countries of the developing part of the world experiencing the worst form of it. This is because their economic growths have not been commensurate with higher rates of population growth (Kakwag and Ikwuba 2010). These countries also experience higher incidences of mal-governance, mal-administration and corruption (Mulinge and Mufune 2003). Besides, these countries' educational curriculums do not appear to adequately address the challenges of their economies. This has made their economies to either stagnate or move at a snail's pace (Mulinge and Mufune 2003).

The International Labor Organization indicated that in 2009, about 75.8 million young people remained unemployed globally. Statistically, this data indicates that the youth unemployment rate was 12.5 percent, compared to 4.8 percent for adults (ILO 2010). The report also indicated that youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa was sixty percent. In case of South Africa,

official unemployment rate dipped to twenty-four percent in the fourth quarter of 2007—from 25.3 percent in the third quarter and 24.2 percent a year earlier according to the latest quarterly labor force survey by Statistics South Africa (SSA) (Yu, Derek 2007). In Nigeria, the official figures from the Bureau of Statistics point out that unemployment rate was at 19.7 percent, which is about 30 million people. Contrastingly, this figure is said to not have included the 40 million other Nigerian youths captured in the World Bank statistics of 2009. Therefore, it means that if Nigeria's population is 140 million, then about fifty percent of Nigerians are unemployed (Njoku and Okezie 2011). In Zimbabwe, the unemployment rate is about eighty percent. However, statistics indicate that the formal sector unemployment stood at ninety-four percent of which 67.7 percent constitutes the youths (Mansaka 2013).

Perhaps this is why a couple of development practitioners have been calling for African countries to consider changing their curriculum, restructure it and make it respond to the needs of its people (Kang'ethe 2014; Osei Hwedie 1996; Mupedziswa 2001, 2005). This has been strengthened by the ideologies of indigenization. Indigenization is a process of identifying, examining, tapping and harnessing the local or indige-

nous resources in an endeavor to raise their productivity for the benefit of the communities and the countries at large. The proponents of indigenization as argued by Osei Hwedie, Mpedziswa and Kang'ethe include that the current educational curricula needs to be restructured to make it respond to the needs of the people, and to give way to tapping and harnessing of the local resources. Perhaps this would be in line with taking the World Health Organization's advice for the developing world to look for their solutions from within their backgrounds (WHO 2002). WHO (2002) advises these countries to consider going back to the roots. This means looking at the indigenous resources, investing adequately in them so that their productivity can help solve some of the problems bedeviling their countries such as the higher rates of unemployment (Osei Hwedie 1996; Mpedziswa 2001, 2005; Kang'ethe 2014).

With the ever-rising rates of unemployment amid many other development challenges such as shrinking economy, poor infrastructure, mal-governance, mal-administration and high levels of corruption and impunity, these researchers view indigenization as a panacea in Zimbabwe. This is because the country is adequately endowed with natural resources that if adequately harnessed can possibly turn around the Zimbabwean economy, or to some extent, reduce the unemployment statistics. These researchers, therefore, consider exploring various ways of indigenization in Zimbabwe central and urgent.

Problem Statement

Whether perceived from global, regional, national or local lenses, youth unemployment has been a great cause of concern, but with debilitating effects in countries of the developing part of the world (International Labor Organization 2010). This is because the phenomenon is associated with poverty, crime, lowered life expectancies and quality of life. It is therefore pertinent and central that pragmatic approaches are employed to reduce or mitigate its effects. Since governments of especially the developing countries appear overwhelmed as the modern sector is increasingly failing to address the state of unemployment, these researchers have used literature reviews to explore various indigenous ways to complement the modern sector in addressing youth unemployment. Perhaps of cen-

tral importance is to demystify the concept of indigenization in Zimbabwe as it is associated and surrounded by myths making individuals not follow their role of indigenization to create employment.

METHODOLOGY

The research has adopted a desktop review of literature. This includes widely relevant journals, conference papers as well as books. The researchers hope that the paper will lay credibility of the ideology of indigenization as a way to mitigate youth unemployment in Zimbabwe.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Panacea of Indigenization in Zimbabwe

Policy Environment of Indigenization

Perhaps one of the indicators of the government's realization of the importance of indigenization as an avenue of national development is the institution of the Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenization and Empowerment (Kondo and Moyo 2012). To that effect, there are several policies that govern indigenization in Zimbabwe. The Mines and Minerals Act (chapter 21:05), for example, focuses on extraction of resources (Horowitz 2006). It is critical that such a policy is in place because if left uncontrolled, the mineral extraction can be detrimental to the environment. This would eventually be detrimental to the communities living in mineral-bearing areas. This is because the people who are mining there have no appropriate technological knowledge as well as the fact that the apparatus and machinery they use may not be friendly to the environment (Katsaura 2010). These policies are set to protect the best interests of the citizens or whoever is involved in a particular or certain activity. However, it is important that this policy environment is debated with the aim of identifying gaps and also suggests plausible ways to fill them. This is because of the beliefs held by these researchers that indigenization should occupy a critical niche in the economy of Zimbabwe. They are in no doubt that competencies on how to recognize, examine, tap and harness these indigenous resources can be built through effective policy formulation and implementation.

Emphasis on Land Utilization

Agriculture has been the backbone of the Zimbabwean economy since time immemorial. However, sometimes modernization has led people to abandon the sector for other activities. This is evident when individuals get educated and leave their rural areas to stay in cities and towns (Helgesson 2006). Some people also consider agriculture to be a secondary source of income and prefer to go and roam the cities with the hope of securing white collar jobs, some of which pay insignificantly (Helgesson 2006). This means that some lands lie idle and therefore jeopardize the issue of food security (Moyo 2011). Mobilizing such individuals to undergo a paradigm shift of their ideas and thoughts as regards to the importance of land utilization as a resource that is sustainable would be an important aspect of indigenization. This is because if people can use their modern education and apply it in farming, land productivity could possibly rise. Again with globalization taking toll almost in all the corners of the globe, this, if exploited adequately can lead to better market negotiations and therefore raise land productivity. In these researchers' contention, this is the route that most African countries should take. This is because their economies are not increasing the pace of employment. Perhaps remembering that Zimbabwe was once a breadbasket of Africa could help people reconsider to give farming much time and also invest resources in it (Moyo 2011). This would be following the route of indigenization.

Land Reforms as a Tool of Indigenization

Perhaps one of the pillars of encouraging people to invest more on land in order to ward off the challenge of food insecurity and also as a source of employment is to ensure that people have access to productive land. Unfortunately, even after the declaration of freedom, a larger part of the population has been living in dry and sandy areas. These areas have poor soils and unreliable rainfall, and the producers lack control over water rights and are excluded from the bulk of the nations' natural resources. This is because the white farmers have had the best land. The indigenization process, therefore, needs to consider the issue of disparities in the distribution of productive land. Perhaps an as-

pect of land distribution, although by default, might have been achieved after the 2008 land reforms. In the 2008 land reform, the white land farmers were dislodged from the land crudely and the indigenous people had the land redistributed. However, this achieved some level of indigenization because many people especially the youths who never had access to fertile land now owned the land (Kondo and Moyo 2012). However, critics of the land reforms indicate that the process took place amid a lot of unpreparedness (Raftopolous and Mlambo 2009). This is because the acquisition of land was politically motivated and not economically motivated. People got the farms not out of desire or encouragement, but as a reward for their party loyalty and affiliation (Mufune 2010). However, reports indicate that Zimbabwe's tobacco farmers have been doing well, but poorly when compared with the former white farmers. If the land reform was well orchestrated where the government would buy some land from the whites at market rates and give it to the indigenous people who were ready to do farming, perhaps that would not have affected food production of the country and food security (Chitsike 2003). Therefore, the policy of dislodging the white farmers from the land they had occupied for many years to give it to the blacks as a way of indigenizing the economy never accrued significant dividends. Gravely, the country has become a food importer instead of a food exporter. Therefore, this policy or practice was ill carried out.

Indigenizing Mining

Undeniably, Zimbabwe is adequately endowed with vast mineral resources and has vast mines, which the country has been relying on for its economic growth for a long period of time (Katsaura 2010). However, evidence on the ground suggests that the mineral industry has been benefitting the companies doing the mining at the expense of the country. For example, prior to the initiation of the indigenization process, mines were owned by British Anglo-American organizations. These companies have from the onset been ripping the lion's share of the profits and siphoning it back to their countries (Hollaway 1997).

In addition to that, there are also platinum plants at the Ngezi mine, which have been extracted by Zimplats Company without any local

partnership. But upon the implementation of the indigenization policy, fifty-one percent of the profits now go to the government and the company takes forty-nine percent of the shares (New Zimbabwe.com, 1 September 2013). For the benefit of the locals, employment priority was given to the locals so that the natives can benefit and gain from the mineral extraction. This implementation has been successful. However, regardless of the company's lowered production, which can be best understood as a way of sabotaging the operations and as a reaction to the implementation of the indigenization policy, the locals are now benefitting from the venture (New Zimbabwe.com, 1 September 2013).

Perfidy of Indigenization in Zimbabwe

Lowered Capacities to Effectuate Mining

Though indigenization of mineral extraction has been appreciated in that the local Zimbabweans have a say and control of them, technologically the extraction of minerals by the local companies has been problematic (Katsaura 2010). The individuals do not have capital to install plants and machinery to effectuate effective exploration of the minerals especially to process them into finished and marketable products (Katsaura 2010). Therefore, the locals appear to resort to relatively inefficient and ineffective means of mineral extraction. For instance, in the extraction of diamond in Chiyadzwa area of Manicaland, reports indicate that the extractors are now using tools such as digging iron rods (*migwara*), steel picks, sharp iron bars and spades for loading the ore in sacs (Katsaura 2010). In this case, if indigenization entails the use of such primitive and substandard tools and archaic approaches to mineral extraction, then there is no hope of accruing any significant dividends from the venture. Then, in this case, indigenization becomes retrogressive to the country's GDP. However, indigenization in terms of the locals achieving the ownership of the process has to be appreciated.

Smallholder Farming Replacing Large-Scale Mechanized Farming

Indigenization has changed land ownership in that the big tracks of land formerly owned by the white settlers has been redistributed to es-

pecially the poor masses who never owned agriculturally rich land (Mufune 2010). These new beneficiaries cannot afford to run mechanized farms, but have been using donkeys and cows to plough the land. This is the same approach they have adopted in cultivating the land they were given. They have therefore not been able to produce much compared to the white farmers. They have also not been able to till much land. This means that some chunks of their land lie idle and thereby rendering the farms' production lower. This could perhaps explain the fact that the country has become a net food importer instead of an exporter (Mufune 2010). Even when the government gives them farm implements such as tractors, they have not been able to adequately utilize the land. There have been technological, ideological and visionary challenges. Therefore, although the land has opened chances of employment and ownership by the locals, its productivity has shrunk significantly (Mufune 2010). The locals' capacity and technology to do it the way the white farmers were doing is glaringly lacking. Therefore, the net employment has reduced instead of increasing. Pathetically, the land reforms in the name of indigenization have made the country sink further into a state of youth unemployment.

Unavailability of Capital to Tap Indigenous Resources

Though indigenization has put most of the indigenous resources, such as farms and mineral resources, in the hands of the locals, the major challenge that the local entrepreneurs face is lack of capital (Chigumira and Masiyandima 2003). Capital is the required means to start a business and it involves many things such as finance, labor, machinery, equipment, implements and knowledge (Chigumira and Masiyandima 2003). The local people have found it difficult to secure capital or loans to efficiently and effectively manage resources such as land. Although initially people were given farm implements such as tractors, ploughs, disc harrows, planters, seed drills, boom sprays, seeds, fertilizers and fuel to run the tractors by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ), these have not been recurrent and capital to buy other items such as the irrigation pipes has been necessary. Lack of capital, therefore, has made most farmers produce only food for their own consumption and only a little for

sale. This has seen the bigger chunks of formerly mechanized farms degenerate to smallholders. This has seen food production in Zimbabwe shrink hugely.

Indigenization Serving Political Rather Than Economic Interests

Although indigenization as a policy of bestowing the mammoth resources in the hands of the locals has been welcomed, not only in Zimbabwe, but also in many countries especially where the economies have been run by the non-locals, it is important that it is driven by economic goals other than political interests especially of the ruling parties. In Zimbabwe, these researchers contend that the drive was more politically motivated to especially favor the ruling party (Mufune 2010). The country did not prepare the people's minds and mechanisms for take over of the farms and competently run them. This could explain why indigenization in Zimbabwe is not doing well.

Economic Sanctions Impeding Indigenization

Perhaps why indigenization has not taken deeper roots in Zimbabwe is because of the fact that the western countries have not been supporting the case. In fact the land reforms issue saw more economic sanctions slammed on the country. The economic sanctions have also been advocated and supported by the opposition politicians. With no meaningful countries from the West being interested in buying Zimbabwean goods, or continue in their funding programs, the country has almost gone into its knees economically. This was especially very critical when the country experienced the worst ever inflation in the world in 2008. This saw the Zimbabwean dollar being replaced by the South African Rand and the US Dollar. Therefore, the government's indigenization policy did not have space and environment to takeoff (Raftopolous and Mlambo 2009). Perhaps this is why the country has been looking for trading partners from oriental countries such as China.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the exploitation of indigenous resources if executed well can be a panacea to youth unemployment. However, the Zimbabwe-

an indigenization policy does not appear to be working well. For example, the employment of the youths in the farms has shrunk. This is because the Zimbabwean black farmers have not been able to effectively and efficiently manage the land. It is important that these people are trained and adequately funded so that they can slowly get into the shoes of the former white farmers. The fact that the move was more political than economical has made the policy not to work well. More importantly, indigenization should be transformed to bear an economic orientation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Indigenization is a Panacea

There is a need of an understanding that indigenization is a way of giving back what belongs to the natives of the country. This is to raise the level of ownership, citizenship and democracy. A country cannot take pride in its sovereignty if its mammoth resources are in the hands of the foreigners. Taking the Zimbabwean issue, one of these researchers supports the Zimbabwean move to initiate indigenization, which involved forced eviction of the white farmers and have the land redistributed to the locals. However, the second researcher feels that the move was not motivated by economic interests but served the selfish political interests of the governing party. Therefore, he does not support indigenization, unless it was economically driven or people driven.

People Need to be Equipped for Indigenization

An indigenization policy will only be a driver for youth employment if it is well managed. For example, the government needs to do massive training for the farmers so that they can become good farmers. People also need to be funded so that they can carry on with mechanized farming the same way the white settlers were. Therefore, indigenization needs to be driven by economic goals as opposed to political for goals.

Government to Allow Political Democracy

The government of Zimbabwe needs to shed its hard political stance to allow economic sanc-

tions to be lifted. The government should realize that it is the Zimbabweans who are being sacrificed by the stance, yet the ruling party is doing it for its selfish political survival. The government should allow democracy to flourish in the country. This would mean that the ruling party does not interfere with the institutions. This is likely to bring back the investor confidence. Such could give hope of an increased employment for the youths.

NOTES

Definition of the Concepts

Indigenous Resources and Indigenization

Indigenous resources are native, homegrown natural resources that are utilized for the benefit of the citizens, while *indigenization* is the use of natural resources for economic development and growth.

Youth

According to Chirisa and Muchini (2011; 2), "a youth is referred to the population in the age group of 14-30 years, but usually unmarried, out of school and/or in search of employment".

Panacea and Perfidy

While the word panacea means a solution to all maladies or problems, it is operationalized here to mean desirable effects. On the other hand, the word perfidy means treachery, trickery and dishonesty. It is operationalized in the paper to mean undesirable effects.

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