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Formulating Public Policy to Address Increasing Population, Rapid Urbanization and Cultural/Gender Discrimination in Tanzania

Agriculture is the production of farm crops or livestock. In the east African country of Tanzania, this includes production of crops such as beans, corn, millet, sorghum, and paddy, horticultural crops such as vegetables and fruits; and livestock such as cattle, swine, sheep, goats, poultry and others. Many people in Tanzania, about 90.5%, practice subsistence agriculture, and just few, about 9.5%, practice commercial agriculture, typically for larger companies and government. An example of commercial agriculture is Hale Sisal estate in Tanga region owned by the Government of Tanzania. Subsistence agriculture means growing of crops, enough to feed the family and commercial agriculture means production of agriculture for commercial purposes. Many people in Tanzania depend on corn as corn produces a popular food in Tanzania known as *Ugali*(stiff porridge). Other crops grown in many places of Tanzania include coffee (especially in Kilimanjaro region, northeast Tanzania), beans, sorghum, and groundnuts and so on. The process of preparing the farm is quite difficult because in Tanzania, we don't have machines for farm preparations but instead we use hand hoes, which is difficult work. Also in weeding the farms we use the same process and in harvesting we don't use machines but rather we use our hands and put the crops in the big sacks and carry them home.

After harvesting the crops, the surplus remains for some families to sell it to town areas. In big cities like Dar es Salaam there are no farms, therefore people in town areas depend on people from village areas to buy food from. Companies that own plantations sell their crops to industries as raw materials and others export the crops to other foreign countries.

People in rural areas mainly practice agriculture. Many people in village areas, especially youth, tend to migrate to town areas which lead to serious urbanization. Many people in Tanzania have big families which results in population pressure. Another problem in Tanzania is that many people treat others differently based sex which can lead to gender and cultural discrimination.

Population means the total number of organisms in particular area; it could be human beings or animals living in a certain area. Population increase is the change in population over time and can be quantified as the change in the number of individuals in a population per unit time of a measurement.

One of the effects of increased population could be an increase in deforestation, which can lead to detrimental effects on soil fertility and crop yields or food production which have very negative effects on agriculture. Also, when population increases it can lead to shortage of land for practicing agriculture, because as people increase, the number of houses also increases. Furthermore, as population continues to increase people establish settlements, in order to establish settlements people cut down trees and this can lead to destruction of environment, including decline in soil fertility and desertification. For crops to grow well they need fertile soil and rainfall. How can these two factors be retained if the environment is not preserved? In Tanzania, populations have increased over the recent past census. The most current census conducted in 2002 shows populations of Tanzania was 41,048,532.

Increased population occurs when people tend to have large families. As health care improves, life expectancy also increases which results in a larger population. One of the government policies to decrease or limit population pressure should be based on educating people how to plan families and limit birth rate, especially in rural areas. Many people in Tanzania tend to have big families. As a result, the parents often can not provide basic needs to the children, which eventually can lead to street children and children not attending schools. Hence, an underdevelopment of a nation results, thus perpetuating the problem. This is especially of the tribe known as Maasai, in Northern East of Tanzania.

In order to solve this problem, institutions like United Nation Organization (UNO) and the World Food Program (WFP) should help our country to solve this problem by means of education to the people on how to plan families and other help needed because Tanzanians cannot solve this problem alone without any external help. Other factors which can reduce population are diseases and wars as well as the occurrence of big disasters such as hurricanes and tornados.

Urbanization means the physical growth of urban areas from rural areas as a result of population immigration to an existing urban area. Urbanization can affect agriculture because when the number of towns increases the number of industries increases. This can lead to acidic rainfall because the industries produce fumes which go directly to the atmosphere and cause global warming due to destruction of the ozone layer. Additionally, waste materials come from the industries and go to the farm areas, adding harmful chemicals to the soil, which can negatively affect crops grown on that land.

Some people believe that in the rural villages there are limited job opportunities and thus limited ability to earn an income. Without an education, they believe that going to a town will make everything better and that money will be found there. When no money is easily acquired, they often turn to illegal activities, such as drug abuse and theft. It would be better for people to have stayed in their rural areas where many activities and occupations exist to earn income. Fishing in rivers, growing gardens, or raising livestock are good ways to make a business and earn a steady income. Now-a-days, many people want money easily without doing a job, or working too hard. A custom of hard work needs to be taught to young people. Public policy initiatives could provide advice and education to young people and guide them to improve their local area. Extension people could be available to advise and assist young people as to how to get more profit out of their crops. Also, improvement in health services is needed and shops must be available for people to purchase important agricultural equipment such as plows, pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides.

People must also be healthy in order to do straining agricultural work. Medicine and health facilities should be available in rural villages. People have to travel far from one place to another and without transportation; it is difficult for people to get good medical help. If the medical assistance is available locally, people will take advantage of the services and maintain better health. This will lead to greater productivity.

Another problem is the lack of variety of crops planted within the same plot. This approach tends to weaken the soil. People must be taught to use legume crops such beans and groundnuts one season, rotating with corn, millet, sorghum, and other crops the next. Also, the farm may need to rest without planting for a year. This break in planting allows the soil to improve.

Also in order to solve this problem our country, Tanzania, will need help from the United Nations institutions, especially those working to improve education for Tanzanians. This can be very helpful because educated people do not want to work in village areas. This should especially include teachers and agriculture extension officers after they finish their studies in universities and colleges. The government could give some of them the responsibility to work in rural areas. Unfortunately, educated people like the luxuries found in the city. This makes them not want to work in rural areas and as a result they want to be transferred to town areas. When the Government refuses their request they resign and find another job. Hence, poor people in rural areas remain uneducated and they lack agriculture knowledge. Not only could these institutions provide education, but they could also make sure to provide agricultural facilities in rural areas including plows, artificial seeds based on the climate of an area, pesticides and herbicides. One example of the best institution to help many rural Tanzanians is World Vision.

Gender comprises a range of differences between men and women, extending from the biological to the social. Gender discrimination refers to the process of treating people differently based on their sex. In Tanzania as well as many other African countries this has been a very big problem. Many people in Tanzania believe that women have limited capabilities; they regard them as sexual objects: unintelligent and weak. This is a very big problem because when there is no cooperation between the sexes; agriculture activity will not develop well, especially in developing countries like Tanzania.

In Tanzania, when a woman is married and she has a job, her husband often tells her to resign from her job and stay at home doing domestic activities such as cooking for him, taking care of the children and farming activities. Also, many people believe that what a man can do, a woman can't do, so there is separation of jobs between men and woman. For example, difficult jobs such as engineering in construction, mechanical repair, pilots, and doctors; these jobs are for men. Cooking, taking care of the children, farming activities and other simple domestic activities are the work of women. Also in schools difficult subjects such as Science and Mathematics, are regarded as subjects for men and simple subjects such as Arts, which include Swahili and English Languages, History civics, etc. are for women. The system of education of Tanzania is quite different from that of the United States. After finishing secondary school (grades 9-12) in Tanzania you go to the high school Form 5 and 6 and you will study 3 main subjects in form of combination. Science combinations include PCM (Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics) or PCB (Physics, Chemistry and Biology) etc. These difficult combinations are being studied more by men, while simple combinations such as HKL (History, Kiswahili and English) or HGL (History, Geography and English) etc. are mostly studied by women. So, there is not only separation of jobs, but also in subjects at school.

The main participants in agricultural activities are women who face the lot of difficulties because they have many chores to do. However, if they do not do them they will be scolded and beaten by their husbands. In this way, gender discrimination affects agriculture because the women can't do all the chores at home as well as all agriculture responsibilities.

Government policies should include efforts to provide equal opportunities for women and men. An education can help women to know and understand their rights and have equal opportunities for work. This increase in education can also lead to a decrease in domestic violence.

Women should also be given equal opportunity for loans to enable them to develop businesses and other entrepreneurial activities. With this increased financial capability, women can form cooperative unions and other business plans. Examples of some cooperative unions formed by women of Tanzania include the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), and Tanzania Gender Networking Program (TGNP).

Women should also be given employment opportunities by the government and other non-governmental organizations (NGO's) so that they will not be solely dependent upon men for financial security. When women are given employment opportunities they can be confident and also they can help others in their family who do not have employment.

Women should also be advised to contest for leadership at higher levels so that they can easily defend their rights since they have their representatives in the government. Also, women in schools should be encouraged to take science subjects so that the number of women professionals can grow. The Tanzanian government should also form policies which can support women's development activities and make women more confident. For example, the government can support women in small business activities such as the selling of their crops at the market. The government should form policies which can help women to arrange prices of their crops at the market.

Help from United Nations institution will be needed, in terms of educating women to know their rights. They could also support their cooperative unions by giving them loans, which can help women to start and develop their projects.

In order to improve agriculture in East Africa, population should be controlled as explained in the essay above. The government should also form policies based on sending agricultural experts to village areas so that farmers can ask for advice in doing their farming activities. Also agricultural equipment and tools such as plows, harvesting machines, and chemicals such as herbicides, fungicides, pesticides and other chemicals which are important for successful agriculture.

The environment should be conserved in order to ensure soil fertility and to avoid land degradation and desertification. Environmental conservation can help to prevent global warming. The government should take responsibility to reduce the number of industries in order to avoid chemical spills from industries, which can enter in to the farms, and also to avoid acidic rainfall, which has negative effects on agriculture.

Moreover, the government should empower women as explained in the essay, giving them first priority in education and employment opportunities and leadership in important sectors such as education, finance and agriculture. As the Tanzanian proverb says: *“When you educate women the whole nation will be educated.”*

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