Achieving Good Governance and Development in Tanzania: Is Leadership the Missing Link?

By Gelase Mutahaba

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is about power and/or influence in society. In real life, leadership means being in control of something, a situation, a social trend, or a group of people. This control may include how the followers think, act, and live as well as the pattern they adopt in arriving at different conclusions. According to Aristotle (1992:57), a leader uses his/her intelligence to look ahead. Leadership makes a difference only insofar as it is holistically conceptualized and its significance across different historical epochs fully grasped (Balogun, 2006). In general, leadership can be explained as the behaviour over time of individuals holding formal leadership positions in various working places. The term also covers leaders that are no longer in active service but who continue to exert formal or informal influence on the governorship or development process.

In Tanzania, the role of leadership in governance and development is not clearly understood. For example, it is not clear whether leadership contributes to governance and development process. In addition, question like ‘does governance and/or development really need leaders to happen’ has to be clearly assessed. Furthermore, there must be a clear clarification on what ‘leadership’ means and there must be an extricable link between power and leadership. The salience of these questions lies in the conflicting positions taken by scholars on the role of leadership in development and on the link between leadership and power.

While some observers are of the view that leadership presents limitless theoretical possibilities in development, others argue that it is a mere chance occurrence (an accidental collocation of personalities and circumstances whose behaviour cannot be logically explained or predicted with any degree of certainty). Therefore, this paper aimed at examining whether leadership has contributed to improvements in the quality of governance and development in Tanzania, since pre-independence days. The paper raises a broad question of whether the nature of leadership has had an impact on governance and development. This is done by identifying flaws in the nature of leadership in the past and what needs to be done to create conditions for improving the contribution of leadership to governance and development in future.

2. Leadership

Meaning of Leadership in Tanzania

In Tanzania, the definition of who is a ‘leader’ is a function of who is being asked that question. For example, before Tanzania attained its independence, at official level, leaders included people holding management and professional positions, who were invariably appointed by the colonial regime or traditional rulers who had been co-opted into colonial administration under the indirect rule system and could exercise authority over citizens.

At the unofficial level, ‘leaders’ were those who exercised power over them and enforced government orders and directives at different levels of governance. When Tanzania became independent, any one could become a leader through the elective means. As the state expanded its developmental role, the number of management (administrative leaders) with little linkage to the governed also expanded and a ‘leader’ was synonymous with the occupation of a political/administrative position in government.

Leadership Categories

According to Aristotelian rulers, real leaders can be found across a wide social spectrum such as in local communities, in youth and student associations, in the political and economic arena, in the arts and the sciences, as well as in the academic or fashion world. While leadership ‘qualifications’ or competencies are generally difficult to establish, formal and informal rules have been developed for selecting government and public service leaders. To be assigned to top-level policy positions, and depending on the systems in place at any point in time, incumbents must either have obtained the mandate of electors or, in the alternative, enjoy the confidence of those who do.
Leadership Indicators

Leadership is a highly complex and elusive subject to measure because the tendency to view it in general and qualitative terms constitutes a major barrier. However, there are some indicators that can assist in understanding the complexity of leadership. Among the indicators critical to understanding leadership concept are foresight and prevision, charisma, team building competency, grassroots penetration and support and environmental engagement capacity.

While the relevance of any indicator would depend to a large extent on the uniqueness of each leadership situation, this paper suggests the adoption of a 10-point scale to assess the suitability of candidates for leadership roles in general as well as their performance in or out of office. The 10-point scale system is shown in table 1. According to this scale, scores of between 6 and 10 on each indicator would place a candidate within the leadership range; a score of 5 is a borderline case; while scores falling below 5 render the assessed person ineligible for further consideration. The same 10-point scale could also be applied to assess the performance of incumbent or disengaged leaders.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 1: A Model Leadership Score Card</th>
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<td>Scores</td>
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3. Leadership, Governorship and Development: The Theory and the Reality

According to Allen (1995), Wilson (1989) and Burns (1978), the relationship between leadership and development tends to be viewed in one of the four ways: plainly skeptical, transformational, transactional and situational. The skeptical view sees no correlation between leadership and social change (Wilson, 1989; and Allen, 1995). For example, Wilson (1989) views leadership as centred on personalities, and, by implication, on accidents of history. On the other hand, Allen (1995) rejects the ‘leadership theories’, particularly when such theories are not placed within ‘the appropriate historical sequence’

In the transformational leadership model, a leader is someone ‘endowed’ or ‘born’ with some rare (possibly, super-human) attributes. For instance, s/he has a long-term vision that addresses the followers’ intrinsic needs. S/he inspires motivation, challenges existing assumptions, stimulates the intellect, applies the most effective means of communicating his/her ideas, builds consensus around noble ideals and takes measures to ensure the transmission of good (or bad) practices across generations (Burns, 1978). The transformational model thus projects leaders as persons capable of transforming environments and influencing the course of history (Rotberg, 2002; 2004), or guaranteeing political order in rapidly changing societies (Huntington, 1968).

The third model, the transactional leadership model, considers leaders as those who have taken on leadership roles by default, commonly termed as ‘strong women/men’ or ‘godfathers’. The ‘strong women/men’ rely on a combination of positive and negative sanctions to keep their followers in line and to induce or command obedience. Leadership in one-party rule falls under military and/or one-party rule heading.

Nevertheless, all the above leadership models do not fully explain the meaning of a leader in environmental engagement. For example, the transformational model makes a promise which in reality is impossible to fulfill, whereas the transactional model takes too pessimistic a view of leadership to account for the impressive development outcomes. Whatever the leadership model is taken, as long as leadership is viewed exclusively as a concept built around personal attributes, it would be difficult to construct a viable theory of leadership-driven change. Thus, in this paper, it is suggested that the leadership model that stands the greatest chance to drive and achieve change is the ‘environmental (or dynamic) engagement’. In this model, leadership is conceived as an evolutionary process. The key elements of a leader in this model are vision, equal distribution of resources among various social groups and ultimate governorship and development outcome.

4. Assessing Tanzania’s Record in Approaching Leadership Issues

In section 2, we have discussed in details the meaning of leadership in Tanzania, types of leadership and indicators for assessing the performance of a leader. This section discusses leadership issues such as visionary and charismatic leaders, leadership since the emergence of Political Prularism and leadership engagement or disengagement after retiring.

The Visionary and Charismatic Leader: Mwalimu Julius Nyerere

After independent, Mwalimu Nyerere realized that deliberate action was needed to guide the developmental vision of the country. Therefore, he resigned from his transactional position as Prime Minister and became a parliamentary backbencher. His intention was to get more time in thinking and working with the party grass root members on a vision and strategy for tackling the potential hurdles to development. After one year, Mwalimu Nyerere was elected as the President of the country and took a number of measures that distinguished him from the transactional leaders who run the government in the first year of independence. After being elected as the President, Mwalimu Nyerere embarked on building a Tanzania nation, by taking hard policy decision including the emphasis of using Swahili as the national language, nationalization of religious denominated schools (as a strategy to address potential religious strife and taking measures to achieve regional balance in the allocation of social services) and the adoption of the Arusha Declaration (socialist path to development). The Arusha Declaration included nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy and encouraging citizens to relocate to living in settlement commonly known as ‘Vijji vya Ujamaa’. These examples show that Mwalimu Nyerere was a visionary and charismatic leader.

Leadership since the Emergence of Political Prularism

The emergence of political prularism opened opportunities for changes in the conception of leadership in Tanzania,
by bringing into other players in the leadership equation. The new players include intellectuals, political party leaders, civic leaders, clerics as well as opinion leaders. This category also includes leaders of the opposition in Parliament, leaders of the opposition in local authority councils and leaders for civil society. Thus, the opening up and acceptance of a broader definition of who is a leader should be pursued more vigorously by evolving novel ways of building an inclusive leadership. This would, in turn, enhance the contribution of leadership to governance and development.

**Engagement or Disengaged Leaders in Governance and Development**

Improving governance and development in Tanzania will need the galvanization of society using the dynamic engagement leadership model. In this section, we explore the possibility of using more productively the rich reservoir of retired leaders such as former Presidents, Ministers and member of Parliaments (MPs).

- **Mwalimu Nyerere: Engaged or Disengaged?**

  After retiring from the Presidency post, Mwalimu Nyerere, left Dar es salaam, to his birth place, Butiama. The reason was to create a space for the new President to govern without his shadow looming over him. During his stay in Butiama, many national and international leaders often went to his village to seek his counsel. There are several evidences showing Mwalimu Nyerere’s engagement after retiring. For example, a senior clergy in an interview described Nyerere as:

  “…..Nyerere was a true son of Tanzania, Africa and the world over. He was one of the precious gifts that God gave to mankind in the 20th Century. He was a man genuinely touched by whatever atrocities that befall fellow human beings…He was a humble man and a man who practised what he was preaching. He loved peace and wanted peace to prevail on earth…Until his death in 1999 he was engaged in efforts toward restoring peace in the neighbouring ethnic conflict-torn Burundi.”

  Other related stories of Mwalimu Nyerere engagement on governorship and development were published by the Daily News and the Guardian between 1990 and 1995. In summary, the two newspapers indicated that Mwalimu Nyerere was actively involved in making sure that the 1995 first multiparty election was peaceful, free and fair. He also emphasized the need to elect competent leaders who would be able to uphold the country’s cherished history of peace and national unity. One of the extracts from the Daily News was on 1995 general election: ‘Opposition parties unhappy with Nyerere’s decision to campaign for CCM (incumbent party) in 1995 general elections.”

  However, being the founding father of CCM, he was unable to disguise his love for, and commitment to his party. This compromised his position as a neutral umpire, and as the father of the nation. At the international level, the retired Mwalimu Nyerere is also found to have played major roles, e.g., as Chairman of the South-South Commission, and as an advocate of Africa at global forums. His views on the restructuring of the United Nations and the reordering of the international economic order are very well known. He was a believer in African self-reliance and in the dignity of the black race. Nyerere also played a major part in former Rhodesia (current Zimbabwe) liberation and the ending of apartheid in South Africa.

- **Mzee Mwinyi, Benjamin Mkapa and Rashid Kawawa**

  The findings from content analyses of newspapers generally indicate that the second Prime Minister (Rashid Kawawa) and the Second President (Ali H. Mwinyi) remained engaged in governance and development after retirement. For example, a survey of Uhuru local newspaper in the years 1985, 1986 and 1987 indicated a remarkable engagement of Rashid Kawawa. Also a survey of local Daily News and the Guardian in 1990; 1995-2000 demonstrated that retired President Mwinyi was also active in Governance matters. However, the main difference between Mwalimu Nyerere and Rashid Kawawa and Ali H. Mwinyi is that the engagement of the two larders (Rashid Kawawa and Ali H. Mwinyi) has largely been on domestic issues. Furthermore, there was no perception that the engagements of Ali H. Mwinyi were crowding the space of President Benjamin Mkapa.

  The former President, Benjamin Mkapa, has been engaged on international panels, and has played highly effective roles in settling regional conflicts. Recently, he has been actively engaged in the ruling Party electoral campaigns, which has raised eyebrows as to whether those types of engagements were appropriate for the former head of state.

- **Other Retired Tanzanian Leaders (MPs and Ministers)**

  Responses from interviews conducted for both ruling party and opposition party MPs indicated the need for MPs and Ministers to continue to be engaged in the country’s governance and development after formal disengagement for current positions. However, many MPs were of the view that the initiative for continuous engagement must come from two sources: the retired MP/Minister him/herself, and the state. With regard to the latter, the MPs stressed that Parliament Office has a duty to establish a data bank of retired MPs (regardless of their party affiliation) so that those capable can be called upon to serve the country in other capacities. In the former, it will depend if the retired reader made a significance difference during his/her political career. For example, one the interviewed MP Hon. Dr W.Slaa, who said:

  ‘The issue of post-retirement engagement in the country’s governance and development’ is primarily to be based on deliverables by the MP/Minister when still in formal politics…People will just look for you if you made a difference during your political career. One should not expect to be called for engagement if he/she was inactive. There are good examples of both national and international statesmen. We have Mandela, Nyerere, Tutu, etc…These do/did not ask if being engaged after retirement. They just get engaged naturally and automatically.’

  The data from Speaker’s Office in June 2007 indicated a good proportion of retired leaders who served in the

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immediate post-independence period died early in their retirement. Also a significant proportion went into farming (20) while a sizeable group reinvented themselves within the political arena (18). The current placements of the retired leaders from 2005 to 2008 are shown in table 2. The table shows that the business sector has attracted the largest number of retired MPs and Ministers when compared to other sectors. This is partly because of sector’s buoyancy after the liberalization of the mid-1980s. It is also indicated in the table that a significant number of retired MPs and Ministers are moving to civil society roles. When the business and civil society sectors are excluded, it can be seen from table 2 that there is an increasing tendency of the retired MPs and Ministers to return to politics, while no retired MPs and Ministers wishes to move to teach at universities and colleges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Engagement</th>
<th>Number of Retired MPs and Ministers</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2005-To-date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-ditto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil society</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>-ditto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-ditto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-ditto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully Retired</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-ditto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-ditto-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Speakers Office, Parliament of Tanzania, supplemented by interview responses from MPs, Dodoma, Tanzania conducted in June, 2007

5. Conclusion

This paper aimed at examining whether leadership has contributed to improvements in the quality of governance and development in Tanzania, since pre-independence days. The results of the assessment seems to suggest that the Tanzania polity during the colonial period as well as much of the period since independence conceived leadership in narrow terms, taking leaders to mean persons holding positions that are linked to power but not governance and development. However, Mwalimu Nyerere, had a vision for transforming the country using Ujamaa Vijijini concept and his charisma. Since Mwalimu could not be everywhere, his message and that of the few converts could not reach the population; when it did it was often distorted. Thus, Ujamaa Vijijini concept failed to materialize. Fortunately, some of the underlying philosophical foundations, such as empathy and national cohesion are still alive.

Under the political pluralism, where leaders are not necessarily those holding power, Tanzania should create institutions that make governorship a shared business. This should involve politicians in office and in opposition, civil society leaders, civil servants, clerics and sheiks and more particularly leaders who have retired but are not tired.

References


