

Book Reviews

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A.G.M. Ishumi, THE URBAN JOBLESS IN EASTERN AFRICA.

Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, 1984. (112p)

K.J. Mchombu

THE problem of urban joblessness is an old and thorny issue in the socio-economic development strategy of most Third World countries, Tanzania being a very typical example. Attempts to solve this problem started in the late sixties. The solution was based on the simplistic assumption that if the jobless were repatriated to the rural areas they would stay put, and the problem would have been solved.

However, the reality has proved otherwise; not only have the repatriees returned to their "jobless corners" in the towns, but other jobless people have been streaming into the towns in ever-increasing numbers. What had started as a trickle in the colonial days, has turned into an alarming flood after *Uhuru*.

The conspicuous failure of the government in Tanzania to find a lasting solution to this problem of urban unemployment can partly be attributed to the inadequate information on the basic causes, and the interrelated issues linked with urban unemployment. It has become evident to many concerned parties that urban unemployment is just the tip of an otherwise huge socio-economic problem. It does no good to attempt to solve the urban unemployment problem in isolation, while doing very little to uproot the source and major cause of urban joblessness.

In the light of *Nguvu Kazi* (the latest in a series of similar past slogans), the present book *The Urban Jobless in Eastern Africa* (1984) by Professor Ishumi, therefore, is both welcome and timely because it provides the necessary research-based data and reveals the different options available, which are often ignored pre-conditions for intelligent decision-making.

"The purpose of this study," writes Prof. Ishumi, "is to address itself to these questions:... how big is this unemployed population, and what is its nature? What are the geographic and community backgrounds of the individuals involved? What are their social and economic characteristics? How do they live in this environment and what activities do they engage in? What difficulties do they face and how do they surmount them?" (p30)

The book is divided into six chapters, each focussing on specific aspects of the theme of urban joblessness.

In chapter one, Ishumi provides a historical background to urbanisation, reviews the scantily available research documents on this subject. A point of

popular interest raised here is that contrary to what one would expect, Dar es Salaam was not an important town until fairly recently. The most important towns, historically dating from the 15th century, are Lindi, Kilwa, and Bagamoyo.

This chapter also provides data which reveals the rapid population growth in East Africa as a whole, and the explosive population growth in all major urban centres. In Tanzania, for example, it is pointed out that the population was 7.4 million in 1948, which had shot up to 11.9 million by 1967, and was estimated to be 19.1 million by 1982. The rate of growth has increased from 1.8 per cent in the 1950's to the present figure of over 3.5 per cent.

Kenya's population growth is even more alarming than Tanzania's. By 1969 Kenya had 10.9 million people—a figure which shot up to 14.3 million by 1977, and the estimate for 1982 was 17 million. The current population growth rate for Kenya is 4 per cent—one of the highest in the world.

It is pointed out that, although the population has been increasing rapidly in all the East African states, it is in the major urban centres that a dramatic and potentially explosive population growth has occurred, especially after independence.

A deeper analysis of these urban jobless people is conducted in chapter three in which the author enumerates the jobless population as a percentage of the town's population, their distribution by age, sex, geographical and ethnic background, and their social and educational backgrounds.

This chapter is of major significance because it explores the social conditions and contexts which have created and perpetuated the problem of urban joblessness. The analysis is based on interviews and observations carried out in the towns of Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza and Tabora in 1978. The research method employed has one obvious limitation: that the urban jobless will be always moving from one jobless corner to another. This has excluded large numbers of the jobless people who stay at home most of the time—especially women, and no doubt a substantial number of men as well.

It is this limitation which partly explains why, for example, in Dar es Salaam only 4,791 were identified as jobless, Arusha 510, Mwanza 1,111 and Tabora 1,145. In percentage terms, this means in Dar es Salaam 0.56 per cent and in Arusha 0.66 per cent of the town's population is unemployed. The author, however, admits (p. 36) that the correct figure of all the unemployed people in urban areas in Tanzania is around 20 per cent of the town's populations.

In terms of age, the study discovered that most of the urban jobless, i.e. 80 per cent, are young people between the ages of 10 and 35 years; those above 36 years are a minority—making up only 16 per cent. In terms of sex, the researchers discovered that the urban jobless are mostly males, i.e. 75 per cent while females make up 25 per cent. The study also discovered that in the majority of cases, the jobless come from the immediate surrounding area.

In investigating the economic background of the jobless, the study found that 91.4 per cent of them come from poor homes, those earning 1000/- or less per year. In the same section the study reveals that 77.1 per cent of the jobless come directly from a background of peasant farming.

In analysing the educational background of the urban jobless the study found out that most of them are educated up to or slightly beyond primary school, i.e. 80 per cent, out of which 54 per cent are primary school graduates who failed to secure the few secondary school places. Those who have received

no school education make up 18.6 per cent of the total population of the jobless.

In chapter four and five the study concentrates on how the jobless manage to survive in the towns. According to their replies, the means of subsistence are: depend on relatives (34.8 per cent); petty business (24.2 per cent); depend on friends (15.2 per cent); just depend on luck (12.1 per cent); and other (unspecified)— 13.6 per cent.

In further investigation, the study analyses the problem of pupils who run away from schools in urban schools. According to the findings, the two most influential factors are: poverty of parents and a discouraging teaching/learning environment (p. 86)

In highlighting the discouraging learning environment, the study points out that such schools are characterised by the following keywords: Authoritarianism and punitive atmosphere, laxity and negligence, disorder and lack of orientation in the whole school, oversize classes (up to 55 pupils per class), no essential textbooks, overworked, half-trained and disillusioned teachers.

The study arrives at a number of conclusions, and makes a number of suggestions in relation to the urban jobless.

The rural-to-urban exodus is increasing steadily, and it is mainly the young ex-primary school leavers who migrate; that agriculture in Tanzania has not been a profitable occupation and that it has not improved rural life and thus, to the young people, "it is a flight from poverty to anticipated wealth in towns".

The author concludes that contrary to the government's rural development statements, it is the urban areas which have obtained the main benefits and assistance from the government. Underlying his conclusion that the government has done very little to develop agriculture, the study points out that the rural areas have been neglected to the point of deprivation.

Agriculture has been a sad case connected with rural poverty. The sector, involving more than 90 per cent of the national population, has in practice suffered from official neglect, not only in terms of adequate and efficient delivery of farm inputs as well as professional advice to farmers, but also in terms of timely collection of farmers' market crops... so laboriously produced... These negative factors (have) led to a dangerous vicious cycle of effects: frustration and apathy, little production... reduced income, diminished purchasing power... degeneration of incentives... (p. 95)

The study refutes, convincingly, claims that there is something basically wrong with the agricultural extension services; it is the government's policy and practice which need to be changed. It is argued that:

... the extension staff will not take over the hoe from the farmer's hands and begin to cultivate land for him if the farmer does not want to because of discouragingly low prices for his cotton, maize, coffee, pyrethrum, etc. or because his... house is over-stocked with bags of the product which has never been bought for the past one or two seasons.

Agricultural training and extension staff have no influence on or control over these things. (p. 96)

The study also concludes that the parastatal crop authorities have done serious harm in their exploitative, repressive, patronising and bureaucratic attitude to farmers. In the meantime, these parasitic parastatals have been growing in size in paper functions and they have steadily distanced themselves from the farmers to the extent that they have become insensitive to their needs, their complaints, their ideas and their agricultural requirements.

The study also arrives at a number of conclusions and suggestions to repair the damaged education system in Tanzania. It starts by revealing that the quantitative achievement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) is less of an achievement because it has not been accompanied by any qualitative achievement.

The fact that most of the urban jobless are products of the education system "... means that the specifically intended goals of equipping children with the basic literacy skills, of providing them with the necessary knowledge scope and critical... productive skills for a self-reliant rural life, and hence of making primary school education complete in itself, have not yet been fully attained..."

The study further argues that the policy of Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) has not been successfully integrated into the education system. Schools which have been successful in ESR activities have shown very poor academic results, and academic results have proved to be poor in ESR activities. The author points out that the problem is not that ESR is not good, but rather that it has never been properly worked out how ESR programme is to be fitted into the tight and crowded school programme.

The suggestion made is that the curriculum should be streamlined, giving adequate time to learning and grasping school subjects, and lengthening the primary school number of years to give enough time for learning the productive and practical skills envisaged in ESR. It is suggested that two more years should be added to primary education for this purpose as it has already been done by Kenya's polytechnic education system and Botswana's Swaneng-Brigades system.

The study also points to the relevant curriculum offered under the British colonial days—the middle school days (1952—1960's)—which was more appropriate to the present education requirements. It is suggested that specialised teachers should be trained in agriculture, handicrafts, and other practical skill areas.

There is little doubt that this study is a valuable tool to the intelligent policy makers dealing with the twin problems of urban unemployment and rural under-development. This, however, is not to say that this book has no weak points.

It would have been very helpful, for example, if the author had traced the problem of urban joblessness to its rural origins in order to find out what percentage of the ex-primary leavers have left for urban centres. How have those left in the rural areas fared vis-a-vis their contemporaries who left for the urban centres?

Secondly, this study represents the actions of policy makers and their negative consequence on a particular section of the country's population.

Based on these findings, the author suggests corrective actions. There is very little participation and involvement by the victims themselves in articulating how they feel and their perception of how they can be helped to help themselves.

There is an elitist assumption that the attitude and perception of the unemployed is not a critical part of the whole equation. This is a problem which can only be solved if the unemployed are active participants in the search for its solution.

These last few remarks notwithstanding, Professor Ishumi deserves to be congratulated for this in-depth study of a chronic problem.

**Z.E. Lawuo, *Education and Social Change in a Rural Community.*
Dar es Salaam University Press, Dar es Salaam (n.d. but 1984)
(167 pp)**

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This book, published in 1984, is an historical account of the beginnings and development of Western formal education in a local community of what was then Tanganyika in East Africa. The area in focus is Chaggaland on Mount Kilimanjaro, a community that became an interesting "exchange market" yet a progressive "battleground" between the outside world as represented by European explorers, Christian missionaries and the colonial administrations and the indigenous forces from within.

The study takes a look at the nature and pattern of the external thrust on Chagga country. Chapter 1 thus not only sketches the locale and the initial informal contacts such as those by Rev. Johannes Rebmann, Henry Hamilton Johnston, Baron Carl Claus Von de Decken, Richard Thornton, Rev Charles New and Joseph Thomson, but also describes in detail more permanent and impacting forces. Three initial external forces include German colonial influence that unfolded after the formation of the *Gesellschaft fur Deutsche Kolonisation* in 1884, the establishment of mission stations, the Leipzig Lutheran society stamping itself in 1893 as the first on the district map after the ill-fated English CMS, and the establishment of economic activities.

Chapter 2 through 4 delve into the laying-down of British rule after World War I, which went hand in hand with the establishment, by the colonial administration of Native Authorities following a framework of "indirect rule" as well as an active revitalisation of coffee cropping that had been introduced

earlier in the district by the Germans as a money-earning means of paying the hut and poll tax. Problems besetting a coffee cash crop revitalisation, in the wake of a post-war economic slump are analysed, and they show the intricacy of an economy in which innovations were being popularised against the self-protecting interests of European settlers in the territory supported by their compatriots in the Kenya Highlands.

The educational policies (such as that on language medium, the scheme for native education and a government central school) do demonstrate, as the author maintains, that, for the colonial regime "education was meant to serve the express socio-economic and political needs of the colonizer... which, of course, were dictated by industrial Europe of the nineteenth and twentieth century... Thus, while Chagga receptiveness to colonial education was supposed to be in the interest and advantage of the colonizing administration and its allies, this was bound to lead to a clash of interests and purpose in a situation where the belated awareness of the local community was going to force people into countervailing self-help activities for their own community progress". (p. 4)

This is exactly what happened, as is well described and disentangled in Chapter 5 and 6. The local Chagga communities, in co-operation with various local leaders, embarked on a number of school construction projects and local governing and bargaining councils, all of which were not always a product of peaceful encounter with the administration, but more often of fights and butts. That the community succeeded in the end is not only due to untiring insistence but also to a cohesive spirit of decision-making and articulation with little risk of double-crossings and betrayals. Readers and observers familiar with the community sociology of Chaggaland would have to judge for themselves whether or not this spirit has endured the test of time to the present moment and whether it is not the very element that underlies much of the community drive, push and struggle for progress and local excellence. One would have but to admire the proportions of privately-harnessed community projects (whether schools, factories or trust funds) against publicly provided or government-assisted ones, a proportion that reverses dramatically in the case of communities and districts that have had a different development story.

The book is worth reading by all students of the history of education in East Africa and, of course, by specialist historians with a taste for archival material and documentary analysis.