



COMMUNICATING GLOBALIZATION TO THE GRASSROOTS: EDUCATION BARRIERS IN SOUTHEASTERN – TANZANIA

Festo W. Gabriel

Ruaha Catholic University (RUCU)

ABSTRACT

Globalization has been considered as an eye-opener to socio-cultural developments due to the benefits gained from multinational interconnectedness. However, its impact to rural communities is still minimal. Education which no doubt is a driving force to enhance penetration of globalization across borders is itself still unrealized in most areas of southern Tanzania, especially in rural areas. This is due to the high shortage of schools, teachers and other teaching facilities but mainly caused by cultural rooted factors. This paper discusses the state of affairs with regard to how education barriers also emerge as barriers towards communicating important national and global issues for the sake of socio-economic development of rural communities particularly that of Mtwara region in Tanzania. The paper unveils the current situation with regard to both education and globalization and the way indigenous communities in Mtwara region respond to globalization pressure. In its conclusion the paper suggests the possible measures to be taken in order to promote education for the betterment of not only intellectual development but get to a better way of accommodating the pressure of globalization.

Keywords: *Globalization, Development, Education, Illiteracy, Literacy, Human rights, Colonialism*

INTRODUCTION

Globalization, a term that relatively connotes interconnectedness among multinational relations, be it politically, economically or socio-culturally rooted, has unavoidably linked the world nations. Africa is caught up in a world revolution which is so dynamic that it has almost got out of human control. John Mbiti (1971) calls this a revolution of man as a whole, and therefore no people or country can remain unaffected by this new rhythm of human history. Without warning and without physical or psychological preparation, Africa has been invaded by a world revolution that has been taking place across historical epochs from colonial to post-colonial times. Now a new and rapid rhythm is beating from the drums of science and technology, modern communications and mass media, schools and universities, cities and towns but also economic investments and trade networks.

Some scholars (e.g. Rugumamu 2005, Alphonse 2006) argue that while colonialism was justified by rationale such as “the white man’s burden” and civilizing missions”, the current phase of capitalist expansion (globalization) is justified by such slogans as “the end of history”, “universal civilization” and the “inevitability of capitalism”. Africa is, thus, not a new

comer into the modern world capitalist system but has been an integral part from the mercantilist capitalism to the present phase; from the slave trade, through colonialism to neocolonialism. Africa’s development trajectories have by and large depended on the wishes and demands of the economies of the North.

This paper presents some reflections on the state of education in Mtwara region in response to unavoidable waves of globalization through ongoing economic investments by foreigners in natural and cultural resources sectors. The treatises and sentiments contained in the paper are basically the results of my own experience as a researcher but also my familiarity to the community under discussion (Mtwara region community). My PhD fieldwork that focused most on ‘Community Archaeology and Cultural Heritages in Mtwara region’ has exposed me to the really situation on devastating illiteracy and massive poverty to the indigenous majority amid unstoppable speed of global influences in the region. It is this fact which has brought on surface a thirsty to make some reflections on this situation from which this paper is its product.



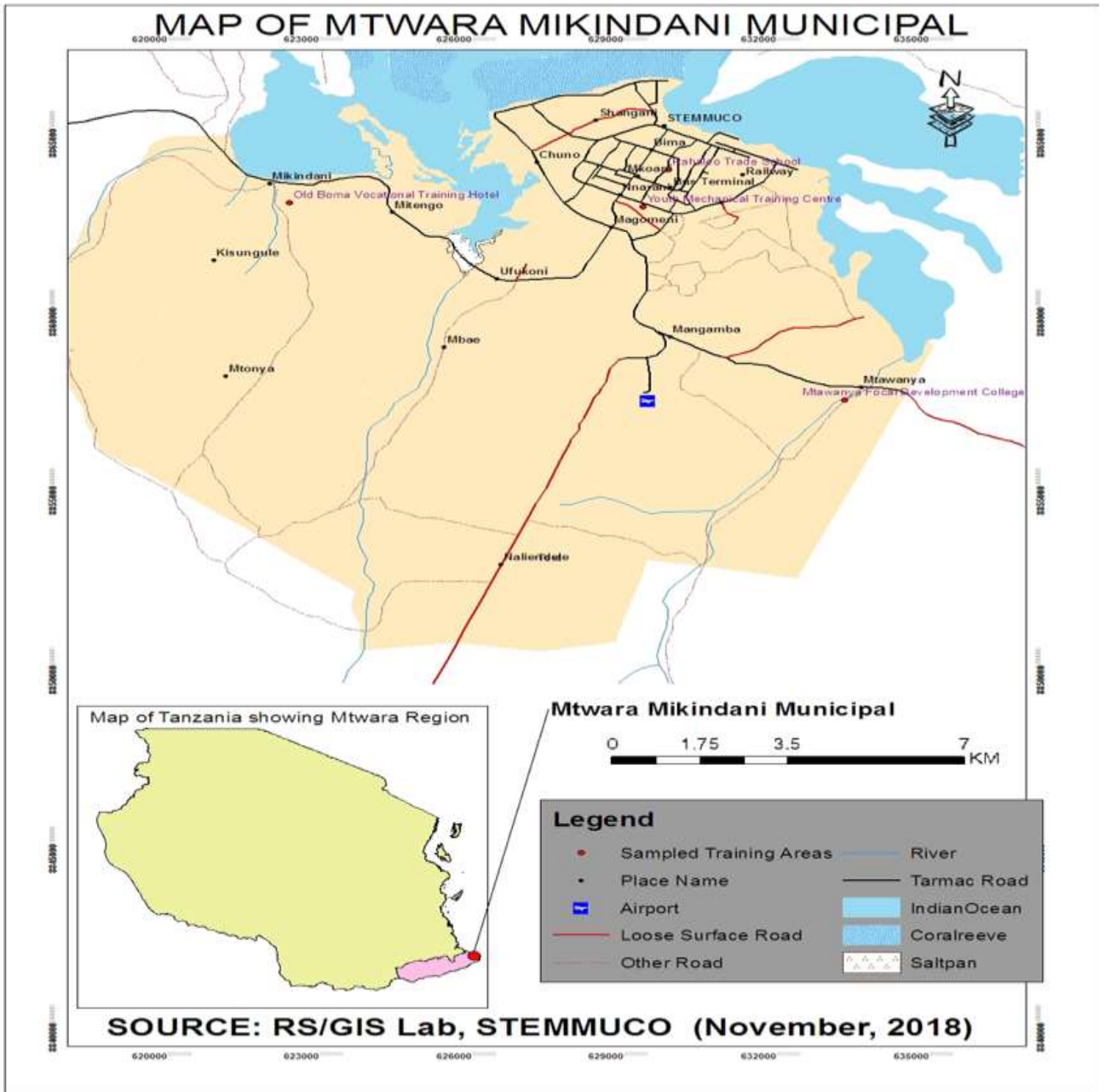
CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE STUDY AREA AND GLOBALIZATION INDICATORS

Mtwara region is located along the Southeast Coast of Tanzania between 8°S and 10°30'S (Kwekason 2011). It forms a part of the Swahili coast that stretches from Sofala in Mozambique to Mogadishu in Somalia. The Swahili coast also includes the offshore islands of Comoro, Zanzibar and Pemba as well as northern parts of Madagascar (Chami 2005). The indigenous ethnic groups of Mtwara region are to a great percentage Makonde groups though the region is also shared with other ethnic groups such as; the WaMakua, WaMwera, WaYao and WaMatambwe and Swahili communities on the coast.

The pressure of globalization has been quite evident in Mtwara region in recent years especially in this 21st century. There are a number of socio-economic far from political aspects which can be recalled as being among indicators of globalization in the region. Mtwara region (Fig. 1) was expected to be one of the fastest growing regions in Tanzania given plans by the government to transform it into an industrial region especially after the discovery of gas and oil deposits in the region. The influence of these new developments in the region cannot be separated from the whole concept

of globalization. This can be evidenced by the inflow of multi-national companies venturing for investment especially in the gas sector. A number of development projects are being directed in the region by the government in collaboration with foreign investors. These developmental initiatives are less conceived by the indigenous communities who are the primary custodians of the economic development of region.

Apart from its wealth in gas and oil resource which have attracted attention of multinational companies, Mtwara region is becoming attractive to many other industrial and infrastructural investments. These include; Dangote Cement Industry Tanzania Ltd, the Mtwara Development Corridor Spatial Development Initiatives (SDI) aiming at promoting trade and investment in the Region. The initiatives would potentially transform the Southern Tanzania and Northern Mozambique. The SDI is being promoted by the governments of Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and South Africa and hinge on the development of deep-water port of Mtwara and the road to Mbamba Bay on Lake Nyasa/Malawi. Recently, the present of Tanzania, Honorable Samia Suluhu Hassan showed a need to develop the Mtwara Port so that transportation of all cashew nuts from southern Tanzania should use the Mtwara Port.



African youths culturally confused (Alphonse 2006).



Those attending schools also became vehicles of carrying the new changes and introducing them to their villages (Mbiti 1997). This was possible due to the knowledge and skills that people acquired from missionary schools. Regardless of the initiatives made by early missionaries in the southern part of Tanzania to promote education through building schools and other training centers, illiteracy remains among predominant diseases to the indigenous people of Mtwara region.

Over the past few decades there has been no other concept in social, political and educational theory as widely and passionately debated as globalization. Not only globalization has become a buzzword, it has also divided theorists and practitioners alike along highly ideological lines. Deep disputes have emerged surrounding the historical and cultural origins of globalization, as well as its political consequences (Rizvi 2004). Little consensus exists with respect to not only definitions and explanations of globalization but also its implications for policy, and prescriptions for a 'new world order'. Globalization has been linked to almost every purported social change in recent years, from an emergent knowledge economy, the declining authority and the demise of the traditional cultural practices to the spread of neo-liberal economic regimes and the advent of the postmodern consumer culture. In normative terms, some have viewed globalization as a major new source for optimism in the world, while others have seen it in entirely negative terms.

Globalization has been much debated in comparative education, with respect to the ways in which it has affected different policy communities, as well as its implications for the direction and politics of educational change (Burbules and Torres 2000). Communities worldwide have different responses upon the pressure of globalization. Some would perceive global interconnectedness as intending to exploit the targeted destinations but others would take it as a mutual way of economic gains among the participating parties. The later is also my position that if each party plays 'a fair game' which is nowhere else rooted but in education, there would be mutual though not necessarily equal gains from globalization between the globalizing and the globalized parties.

It is obvious that education has been and will continue to be a fundamental tool in the expansion of globalization worldwide as it needs both creative and technological skills. But it is also undeniable fact that the same education is an important tool that can be used to philosophically harmonize the pressure of globalization by getting some benefits from it rather than surrendering and considering it as an exploitative form of relation.

Therefore, there is a mutual relationship between globalization and education given that both globalizing and globalized ones cannot survive without education.

THE STATE OF ART AND BARRIERS TO EDUCATION IN MTWARA REGION

Tanzania under the leadership of Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere put in place education policies generally aiming at equipping a good number of citizens with at least the ability to read and write. What owes more to the imprint of Nyerere himself, as a thinker, reader and crusader, was his policy of Education for Self-Reliance (ESR), a micro-level idea introduced in March 1967; a treatise that bore the philosophical stamp of a national leader intent on making a country's education system part of the larger socio-economic machine aimed at benefiting everyone (Legum and Mmari 1995). It is unfortunate that this good will from the Late Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere famously known to the people of his nation as '*Baba wa Taifa*' (The Father of the Nation) was not equally implemented in the country.

Compared to many other regions in the country, Mtwara region falls among the regions whose investment in education is qualitatively and quantitatively "a drop in a sea". When viewed from the low levels (primary schools) to the higher levels (colleges) Mtwara region is disadvantaged in almost every level of education. Currently, the region experiences a big shortage of schools – both primary and secondary schools. For example, there are villages which do not have even one primary school and the situation is worse to secondary schools. Even the few available schools, both primary and secondary schools have a terrible shortage of teachers but also other education facilities. This has created a massive illiteracy accompanied by devastating poverty to the community in the region to the point that it has been difficult to march with the pace of globalization. Consequently, the community finds itself in a bulldozed situation as globalization unlimitedly blurs across every sphere of life.

EDUCATION LIMITATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES TO THE COMMUNITY

The new era of educational imperialism in contemporary Africa is still designed to exalt the image of Europeanism, just as the colonial path prevented Africans from developing intellectual skills consistent with the local mindset and indigenous learning. This form of educational policy has created horrific inequities and unspeakable poverty, and, in re-ordering the world's socio-political, educational and cultural relationships, it continues to interfere in nation-building and state legitimacy, economic development and



productivity as well as in social and cultural development – the (re) production of ‘Traditional Culture’ (Babaci-Wilte and Geo-JaJa 2011).

It is argued that human rights are key to human development (Dachi 2006) and education is both a right to individuals and a necessity for society’s development. The two are considered indivisible, but more so, primary education and human development (UNICEF, 1999a). In that recognition, article 26 of the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights points out that, ‘education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages’ (UNICEF, 1999b). Principle 7 of the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child states that, ‘the child shall be entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory at least, in the elementary stages’ (Dachi 2006). As far as adult education is concerned Tanzania made provision to start an institute to cater for it. The government also instituted a legal and policy framework for adult learning.

Regardless of the policies instituted to promote education in Tanzania the implementation part of the agenda remained uneven in the country’s more than 28 regions. That unevenness of education distribution in the country has created a state of despair among the disadvantaged people hence affecting them in combating social problems that would need education solutions. For example, given the on-going establishment of foreign investments in Mtwara region as previously noted, the opened opportunities for employment are not benefiting the illiterate indigenous communities of Mtwara but mostly favouring literate people from outside the Mtwara region. As a result, the people in Mtwara region have developed negative attitudes towards these investments taking place in the region as they do not seem to have direct benefit to the indigenous communities.

GLOBALIZATION CHALLENGES AND THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN MTWARA REGION

There is a mismatch between the speed and influence of globalization in relation to the state and speed of education provision in the southeastern part of Tanzania particularly the Mtwara region. According to Babaci-Wilthite and Geo-JaJa (2011), education that has become an *elusive human right as regards equity* is enshrined in the declaration that; “everyone has right to education. Education shall be free...Education shall be directed to...the development of human personality and to the strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedom (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Article 26)”. Regardless of the goodwill of this

declaration, its realization remains a nightmare given that the current education system has basically been commercialized. This has made it unaffordable to poor people in the peripheries of the country especially the indigenous majority of Mtwara region.

Globalization and its challenges have at least ignited education-loving spirit among the people of Mtwara who as noted before have been lagging behind other regions of the country in terms of development. People have realized that the only way to survive amid globalization pressure is to have formal educational skills. Few people who are economically healthy now see the need of investing in education by taking their children to schools. The number of schools is slowly increasing although students’ performance is not yet encouraging. The establishment of the University institution in Mtwara region (Stella Maris Mtwara University College – *A Constituent College of St. Augustine University of Tanzania*) has been another catalyst and new hope to the future of education in Mtwara region. Being established in 2009, STEMUCO¹ provides an important contribution to the development of education in the southern part of Tanzania particularly Mtwara and Lindi region. To a great extent the college has reduced the problem of shortage of teachers in these regions by itself being a cooking pot of teachers but also allocating student-teachers in almost every school in Mtwara and Lindi for teaching practice which is done every year. More still, many graduates from this college have shown their interest to seek employment in Mtwara and Lindi schools. Therefore, the presence of this university college which is the only university in the southeastern part of Tanzania (with exception of the Open University of Tanzania) and the efforts currently being made by the government to promote education in Mtwara region is a green-light to the future development of education in the region in few years to come.

CONCLUSION

Globalization is our present life as well as our tomorrow’s expectations. It is some thing we can not attempt to abandon but to have prepared mindset built on the roots of education to face it. Education should be part of the struggle against the colonial past and its on-going legacy of globalization. The reflections presented in this paper show that for African societies including those of Mtwara region to survive the waves of globalization, investment in education is a must. Therefore, collective efforts are needed among

¹ Stella Maris Mtwara University College



education stakeholders in Mtwara region and the country at large to promote education sector. This can be done through community awareness programmes, building of schools in villages where there are no schools, but also establishing conducive teaching and learning environment to both teachers and students. The aim of all these initiatives is not to fight globalization but to create an environment whereby communities can harmoniously accommodate the pressure of globalization instead of continuing taking it as a threat. It is only through education that globalization can be easily understood and communicated to the grassroots communities.

13. UNICEF (1999b) *The State of the World's Children 1999*, New York: UNICEF.

REFERENCES

1. Alphonse, N. (2006) *The Language of Education, Literacy and Self Identity: Implications for Tanzania*. *Journal of the School of Education* 30: University of Dar es Salaam.
2. Babaci-Wilhite, Z. and Geo-Jaja, M. (2011) *A Critique and Rethinking of 'Modern Education' in Africa's Development in the 21st Century*. *Journal of the School of Education* 30: University of Dar es Salaam,
3. Burbules, N. and Torres. A. (eds) (2000) *Education and Globalization: Critical Analysis*. New York: Routledge
4. Chami, F. (2005) *Current Archaeological Research in Mainland Tanzania*. In Mapunda and Msemwa (eds) *Salvaging Tanzania's Cultural Heritage*. Dar es Salaam, Dares Salaam University Press
5. Dachi, A. H. (2006) *Investing in Children's Right to Learn Through the Language of Teaching and Learning: An Investment in Human Capital*. *Journal of the School of Education* 26: University of Dar es Salaam,
6. Kwekason, A. (2011) *Holocene Archaeology of Southern Coast Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam, E&D Vision Publishing.
7. Legum, C. and Mmari, G. (eds) (1995) *Mwalimu: The influence of Nyerere*. London: James Currey
8. Mbiti, S. J. (1971) *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann
9. Rizvi, F. (2004) *Debating Globalization and Education after September 11*. *Comparative Education*, Vol. 40. No. 2. Special Issue (28). *Postcolonialism and Comparative Education*, pp. 157-171
10. Rugumamu, S. (2005) *Globalization Demystified: Africa's Possible Development Futures*, Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam University Press
11. Schultz, T. W. (1961) *Education and Economic Growth*. In *Social Forces Influencing American Education*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 46-48.
12. UNICEF (1999a) *The Convention of Rights of the Child*: www.unicef.org/crc