

# **Africa Has the Wherewithal to Fend for Herself: A Focus on Tanzania Battling of Covid-19**

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To be presented at **African Economic Conference 2020** themed: **Africa beyond COVID-19: acceleration towards inclusive sustainable development.**  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2020 TO THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2020 (Virtual)

## **Abstract**

*Since independence African states have depended on foreign aids in their development efforts. The chronic dependence syndrome has featured plethora of studies. This dependence coverage by literatures has eclipsed the efforts by some African communities to become self-reliant. This study therefore aims at finding out the extent Tanzania has been able to muster up her own resources in battling COVID-19 pandemic. This study is guided by Participatory Local Social Development (PLSD) which posits that there three key elements of development, to wit; resources, organisation and norms. Resources have to be integrated into development process by an actor, an organisation, which is founded on strong norms. A total of 124 respondents from Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDEC), National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR), Small Industries Development Organizations (SIDO), religious and educational institutions, small traders, members of the community, herbalists participated in the study. The data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document review. The findings were: Speeches by government leaders insisting on the use of indigenous knowledge and partial lockdown in the war against COVID-19, disseminating information and education to the public about the disease by both public and private institutions, Religious and education institutions initiating shifting sessions to avoid congestion, individuals making steam inhalation and washing facilities. There was also support from international organisations like USAID, WaterAid, World Vision. It is recommended by the study that for the community to be self reliance in the face of disasters like COVID-19, it has to be able to organise itself to effectively and efficiently utilize her resources. This community organisation should be founded on strong norms. Norms are set of rules which regulate the direction of activities of the organisation and streamline members' behaviour and conducts in accordance with the roles and functions given to them. More importantly, the study warns against foreign aids becoming an avenue for external assistance playing the main role in implementing the activities with the local people's less involvement.*

**Key words:** PLSD, Dependence, Self-reliance.

## **1.0 Introduction**

Post independence Africa has largely been characterized by dependency syndrome (Lensink and White 2001; Tavares 2003; Rena, 2010). Faced with the fact, few would disagree with this statement. Dependency is any chronic behaviour affecting a person or society so as to force it perpetually to succumb to depending on someone or society to address his, her or its needs and

sometimes problems in order to develop (Rena 2013; Mhango 2017). Simply put, dependency is antithesis of independency. The areas Africa has depended on the outsiders include, but not limited to education, health, finance, technology, infrastructure, food and agriculture (Bondarenko, Nkyabonaki and Mkunde 2014; Alemu and Lee 2015; Agbebi and Virtanen 2017). In buttressing dependency argument, Ngowi (2010) observes that most African countries have been highly donor-dependent in their development efforts substantially on their former colonial masters and other so called development partners (DPs) for aid.

On the other hand, the call for Africa self-reliance has recently occupied the front burner. Strand of literatures representing thoughts of those advocating for self reliance associate foreign aids with Africa underdevelopment. Akonor (2007) and Matunhu (2011) maintain that the structure of African economies today, notwithstanding the volume of aid and loans, remains as it was during the colonial era. The study goes on to assert that most of them are integrated into the world economy as raw material producers and importers of manufactured goods, with very little control of pricing on the world market. This disarticulation between production and consumption has condemned Africa into perpetual dependency. For instance, Jackson et al (2016) and Okosun et al (2016) describe unsavory food shortage situation in Nigeria compelling the country to import all classes of food stuffs. According to the studies, relying on imported food for the country that boasts huge chunks of arable land and teems with human resource is appalling as it indicates diminishing self reliant altitude among recipients. Thus, it can safely be concluded that foreign aids have not helped Africa to pick up its pieces and move forward (Moyo 2009, Abbas and Niyiragira 2009, Brown 2013).

The picture is not all gloomy, if self reliance is given its due impetus Africa can break free from the deep-seated dependency. Development comes when the communities themselves take a centre stage in the process (Aruma 2018). Jamieson and Chisakala (2016) argue that local-level development that is dependent upon the participation and motivation of key players is more likely to precede community changes which could then be described as sustainable. The study further posits that by validating indigenous knowledge an alternative model that resists dependence on external aid empowers community development, and provides opportunities to sustain development activity through local initiative. This is in line with Nyerere (1967) quoted in Mukhungulu et al (2017) that a truly liberated nation is one that is self-reliant and has freedom from economic and cultural dependencies on other nations. Such a nation is capable of self-development and independent, free and equal cooperation with other nations and can stave off poverty, disease and ignorance. Under Mwalimu Nyerere administration Tanzania launched the Arusha Declaration which advocated for *Ujamaa* a Kiswahili word meaning familyhood or brotherhood and self reliance (Cornelli, 2012). Though defunct, the Arusha Declaration embodied a noble goal, to build a country which is politically, economically and culturally independent.

Voices on how African countries should manage the COVID-19 pandemic with less reliance on foreign aids are beginning to emerge. For instance, Ozili (2020) observes that many African countries have taken bold quarantine and lockdown measures to control the spread of COVID-19, albeit, with painful economic crisis and recession. Psychological and physical injuries on the people by law enforcers have also been reported (Brooks et al., 2020; Mboera et al. 2020). Ozili

(2020) suggests provision of financial support by the governments to individuals, entrepreneurs and cooperates to rescue them from the economic crisis caused by the corona virus. However, these measures leave a lot to be desired, with crippled businesses both at individual and cooperate levels the government loses sources of income, taxes, thus making it unable to provide financial assistance.

More reported efforts in Africa include the creation of Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Kapata et al, 2020). Additionally, there is a huge investments into surveillance and preparedness (Sohrabi et all 2020; Kapata et al, 2020; Hoffman and Silverberg, 2018; Largent, 2016; Omoleke et al., 2016). In collaboration with United States-CDC, WHO and the International Civil Aviation Authority Africa has been able to train numerous participants from across the continent on enhancing detection of COVID-19 at entry points (Kapata et al, 2020). While these studies are recommendable for indicating such significant efforts, they hold a top-down view by dealing more with what authorities have done and should do, turning a blind eye on communities' critical role and potentials in the war against this pandemic. According to Harries (2020) and Airhihenbuwa et al. (2020) consideration on the nature of communities and their critical role in fighting COVID-19 should not be underplayed if victory is to be assured. The authors maintain that understanding the community is important because there is no one-size-fits-all in the war against COVID-19, an approach that works in one part of the world may not be appropriate and effective somewhere else.

Thus, most literatures reflect a skeptic picture on Africa self-reliance commitment and more so on how African communities can be main actors in development process. Since there is only so much written on success stories in as far as Africa self reliance is concerned, this study, therefore, as a step towards filling this serious gap, seeks to find out the extent Tanzania has been able to muster up her own resources in battling COVID-19 pandemic.

### **1.1 Theoretical framework: Participatory Local Social Development (PLSD)**

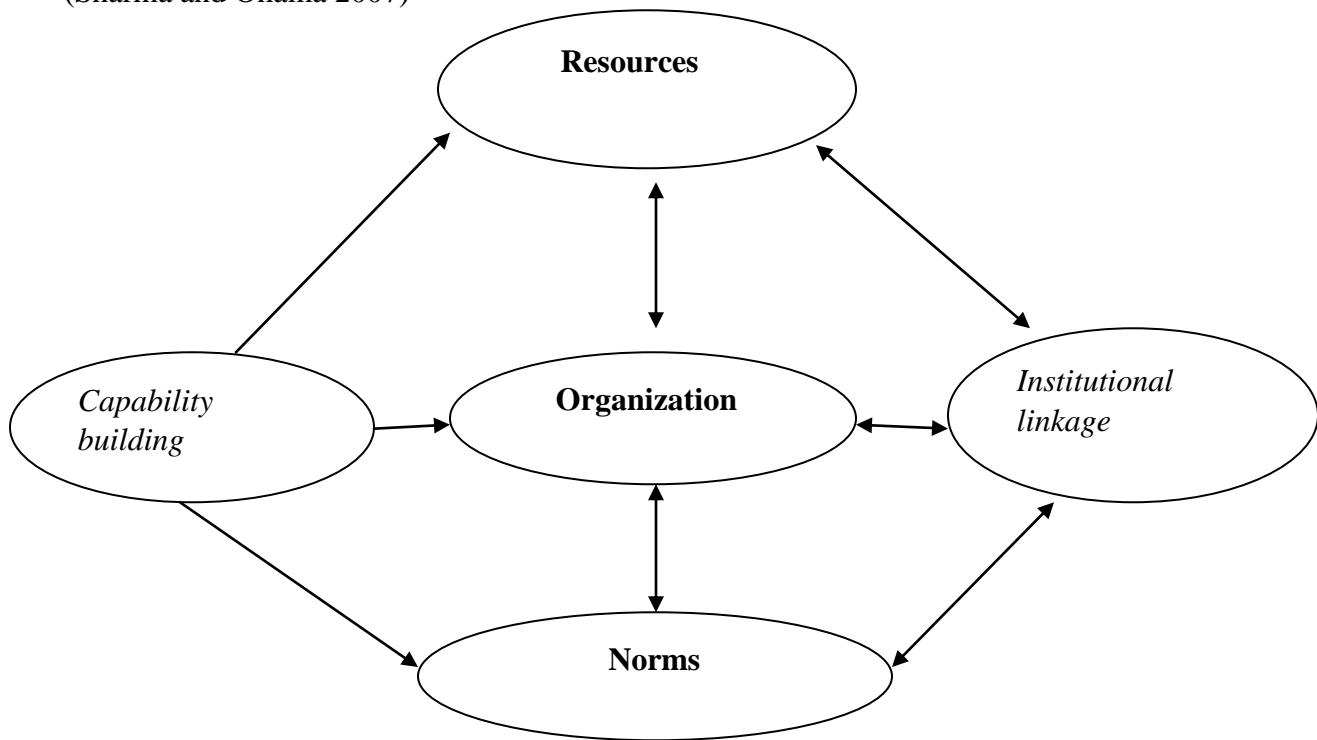
This study is guided by Participatory Local Social Development framework (PLSD). PLSD is a bottom-up approach in community development which was developed by Japanese participatory community development expert Yutaka Ohama. In the book *Participatory Local Social Development – An Emerging Discipline (2007)* Professor Ohama observes that the main goal of PLSD is to facilitate the process of building capability and strengthening institutional mechanism of a society as a whole toward self-reliant and sustainable development (Sharma and Ohama 2007).

According to PLSD framework, there are three fundamental elements for development and sustainability, namely; *norms*, *organisation* and *resources* (Sharma and Ohama 2007). The *resources* are basic element in the development process, they include human resource, physical resource such as land, forest, water bodies, and financial resource however, they are by no means self-sufficient. For the resources to yield the desired outcomes, they have to be integrated by an appropriate actor which is an *organisation*. It is further observed that, for the organisation to work efficiently it needs to be guided by specific *norms* conducive for the objective achievement. The norms are rules and regulations that govern the community or an organisation. They regulate the direction of activities of the organisation and streamline members' behaviour and conducts in accordance with the roles and functions given to them (Ohama 2001, Sharma

and Ohama 2007, Mwanga 2011, URT 2019) There are two types of norms, namely; Cognisant norms, these are customs, cultural and traditional based rules. Cognisant norms are evidenced by collaboration, participation, cooperation by community members (Ohama 2002, Yogo 2001, Sharma and Ohama 2007). Operational norms; these are functional rules, for examples setting an entry fee to join a certain social group, or setting constitutions for an organization.

According to Mwanga (2011) the three elements of development by Sharma and Ohama (2007) correspond with Tanzania first President, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere’s four prerequisites for development which are (i) People; (ii) Land; (iii) Good Policies; and (iv) Good leadership (Nyerere 1977). The correspondence goes thus: (i) **People** (human resource), (ii) **Land** (natural resources), (iii) **Good policies** (norms) (iv) **Good leadership** (organization). Sharma and Ohama (2007) add that *capability building* and *institutional linkage* through networking are trigger factors to unleash the three factors of development. *Capability building* is enabling the community through facilitation and awareness creation to identify the available resources and effectively using them. It is also about empowering the community to organize themselves, set rules and regulation (norms) to guide them to use the available resources for development. *Institutional linkage* is also important because no community can prosper in isolation, linking it with outsiders like government, non-government organizations and individuals is important (Mwanga 2011). Capability building and institutional linkage need to be carefully managed lest they become an avenue for external assistance playing the main role in implementing the activities with the local people’s less involvement (Sharma and Ohama 2007).

The diagram below summarizes the inter-relationship between the factors for development (Sharma and Ohama 2007)



(Sharma and Ohama 2007:132)

*Norms, organization and resources* are key elements for development. For the community to develop itself using the three elements, *capability building* is also important. Capability building can be on enabling the community to set effective *operational norms* to run its projects sustainably or capitalize on good existing traditional norms (*cognizant norms*) to develop itself. In addition to that, capability building can target to enable the community to effectively use the available *resources*. Thus, capability building aims at enabling a community to plan and implement its own self-help efforts. Since no community can develop in isolation, *institutional linkage* is indispensable. A community develops relationship with NGOs, government organizations, institutions and sometimes individuals. This relationship can be on the aspects of resources, organisation or on norms.

### **1.3 PLSD: Empirical studies**

PLSD is an emerging discipline, (Sharma and Ohama 2007) and thus it should not come as a surprise that only so much have been written about it. Mwakisisya (2020) shows that PLSD is a participatory community based model employed in the rolling out of the improved Opportunities and Obstacles to Development (improved O and OD) system to empower the people in developing themselves in Tanzania. The improved O and OD is a new version that replaces the old one which is blamed for being largely top down. About the old version Cooksey & Kikula (2005) and Mlupilo (2005) observe that it lacked active community participation as the community took part in development planning by listing what should be done for them or setting priorities for the government to implement. It was a passive role by the community of preparing a shopping list of items and waiting for the government to do everything for them. In the view of this, the government of Tanzania in collaboration with JICA initiated the improved O and OD which employs a PLSD framework. Mwakisisya (2020) gives a success story of improved O and OD from Maseyu village in Morogoro region. The village had been facing deaths of patients, especially the expectant mothers on their way to a very far health facility. However, the villagers resolved to turn things around and decided to build a dispensary of their own. The village mobilized all its available resources ranging from human, physical to financial and managed to build its own dispensary at an estimated cost of 52,000USD, something they previously thought inconceivable!

Consider another successive PLSD based experience on how Pawaga village in Iringa region, Tanzania battled food insecurity. People in Pawaga village had been facing food insecurity. Through improved O and OD the people received capacity building on how they can mobilize the available resources to ensure food was available throughout the year. The community efforts involved identifying and utilization of irrigation schemes, construction of modern paddy irrigation scheme and establishment of warehouse system for storing food crops. These initiatives guaranteed Pawaga village of food security (President's Office- Regional Administration and Local Government 2016)

Therefore in the cases discussed above we see members of the community who are indeed the beneficiary of the outcome of the development process taking a centre stage. The three factors of development according to PLSD to wit; resources, organization and norms are at work in those cases. People organize themselves as a community, an appropriate actor and set norms, the norms are important in ensuring the behaviour and conducts of the members are in accordance

with the roles and functions given to them in the development process. Well organized community guided by norms lead to effective utilization of resources.

The PLSD framework fits the current study because it promotes effective utilization of the available resources by the community who are indeed the protagonists in the battle against poverty or disasters like corona virus disease (COVID-19. Imported solution, according to PLSD, takes secondary place in dealing with community problems. Additionally, the PLSD gives credence to community norms. Community norms are the hardly considered but unquestionable important aspect of community development. Community norms embody customs and traditions, which in PLSD framework they are known as cognisant norms. Taking into consideration customs and traditions of a society in fighting disasters like COVID-19 makes people feel part of the solution.

## **2.0 Research Methodology**

### **2.1 Study Design and Area**

Since the study aimed at gaining opinions and insights into people's experience on the battle against COVID-19, a qualitative case study design was employed. The approach made it possible to explore multiple perspectives of various stakeholders on the war against COVID-19. The study was conducted in Dodoma, Dar es Salaam and Arusha regions. These regions were purposefully selected as they were the first and most hit by COVID-19. Data were collected through in-depth interviews which were administered to key informants from Ministry of Health, staffs from health facilities that were set aside for COVID-19 patients, SIDO, NIMR and business persons. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were also conducted involving members of the community in the selected regions.

### **2.2 Study Population and Sampling Strategy**

The population of this study included officials from Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDEC). MoHCDEC was purposefully selected because it is in charge of ensuring healthy citizens and it architects any battle against diseases. From the Ministry 3 respondents were purposefully selected, 2 were from epidemiology unit and 1 from liaison office. Snowballing sampling were used to get other organizations and respondents for the study. In each of the 3 regions of the study staffs from health facilities designated for COVID-19 patients were involved in the study. A total of 6 respondents, 2 from each facility were purposefully chosen for the study from the 3 study regions. 2 officials from National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) in the Directorate of Research Coordination and Promotions were chosen for the study. 2 officials were also selected from Small Industries Development Organizations (SIDO). SIDO was chosen by snowballing sampling. This study involved 10 small traders randomly chosen in each study regions, namely Dodoma, Dar es Salaam and Arusha. Small traders were important in this study because of the large number of clients they serve and the places they conduct their business both at the market and residence neighbourhoods. Other respondents for the study included 15 members of the community in each study regions. These included randomly sampled family members and individuals whom the researcher reached with the help of ward executive officers from urban centres of the study regions. From family and community members the researcher wanted to know their efforts against COVID-19 and their opinions on the government measures to battling the pandemic.

Since they host big congregations, religious and education institutions were part of the study. From purposefully selected religious institutions a total of 4 clerics i.e 2 Christians and 2 Muslims from each study regions were chosen. A total of 6 staffs from education institutions i.e 2 from colleges, 2 from secondary schools and 2 from primary schools were purposefully selected from each study regions. Through snowballing the researcher got and interviewed 6 herbalists i.e 2 from each of the study regions. Thus, the total number of respondents for the study was 124.

### **2.3 Data Collection Methods**

The study used qualitative research design. This study used eclectic methods in data collection namely interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) and documentary review. In-depth-interviews were administered to key informants to wit, officials from MoHCDEC, NIMR, SIDO, health facility staffs, religious and education institution staffs, and the herbalists. The selected key informants provided in-depth analysis on how they participated in the fight against COVID-19. The study also used focus group discussions. These were conducted with the family members and the other members of the community. Through FGD the participants' perspectives and experience as a result of their involvement in the war against COVID-19 were captured. The document review started with the search of relevant documents on the internet through accessing websites of the institutions under review and using key search terms such as COVID-19 and ministry of health in Tanzania. The search produced documents inter alia; Guidelines on covid-19 testing, Guidelines on covid-19 victim burial ceremony, and Guidelines on covid-19 preventive measures in education institutions. Documentary reviews enabled the researcher to learn the response by government, private institutions, individuals and other stakeholders against COVID-19. The search of documents was followed by a critical reading, evaluation and interpretation in relation to the purpose of the current study. The speech by the Presidents and members of the parliament were tape-recorded from the television set during live broadcasting and repeat programs on Tanzania Broadcasting Cooperation (TBC) and Independent Television (ITV)

### **2.4 Data Analysis**

The collected data were analysed thematically. Creswell (2009) provides three steps for thematic analysis which the researcher adhered to: First, audio data recorded during the television programs, interviews and FGDs were transcribed to produce written text. Then, the researcher read the textual data including documentary review information repeatedly to gain a general understanding and to reflect on their overall meaning. Second, the author organised the data into segments of text and generated themes and sub-themes for analysis. Third, the author conveyed and clustered the findings stemming from the analysis whereby similar and related ideas were put together resulting into the following major themes: Speeches by the government leaders; efforts by public and private institutions, efforts by individuals; and links with external organizations. Verbatim quotations from participants are included to capture ideas from their own perspective. Then, the author discussed and interpreted the findings by relating them to the PLSD theoretical framework and empirical literatures.

### **3. 0 Findings**

The findings presented in this part predicate the unrelenting call from the reviewed literatures that it is about time Africa fend for herself in the face of disasters like COVID 19. These

findings represent the internal efforts by government of Tanzania and its people in the war against COVID-19. External aids were involved too, but played a secondary role.

### 3.1 Speeches by government leaders

Speeches by government leaders laid down a foundation for and streamlined the fight against COVID-19. The efforts by citizens and other stakeholders reflected what was communicated by leaders through speeches. Here speeches by the President of United Republic of Tanzania and some members of parliament are reviewed.

#### *Speeches by the President*

Let's start with the speech on COVID-19 delivered by the President on May 3, 2020. In the said speech President John Pombe Magufuli called to question the accuracy of COVID-19 testing kits. The samples from jackfruits, pawpaw and a goat had tested positive for COVID-19, a clear indication the kits had technical error or designed to instigate fear. The President said:

*We had randomly obtained several non-human samples, including from a pawpaw, a goat and a sheep, but had assigned them human names and ages. The kits returned positive results.*

*"There is something happening. I said before we should not accept that every aid is meant to be good for this nation," ( source: TBC and ITV Exclusive programs May 3, 2020)*

The president called for thorough and forensic investigation on the matter by the security organs lest a dirty game was at play. He insisted that not everything from abroad is in our best interest however benign it may seem to be.

The President also used the same speech to refuse borrowing money from international institutions like WB and IMF. Magufuli rejected the idea as unhealthy to his country's economy. WB had availed a loan package for developing countries to fight COVID-19. Magufuli's Refusal to WB or IMF loan is based on the fact that Tanzania is already indebted to these organizations; more loans would mean more economic difficulties.

In the same speech, the President expressed interests to join efforts with fellow African country, by ordering a potion claimed to cure COVID-19 from Madagascar.

*"I have already written to Madagascar's president and we will soon dispatch a plane to fetch the medicine so that Tanzania can also benefit from it," (source: TBC and ITV Exclusive programs May 3, 2020)*

According to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and East Africa Cooperation, the potion brought to Tanzania from Madagascar was to undergo local clinical testing by Tanzanian experts.

*"I want to make it clear among Tanzanians that we haven't come with medicines to prescribe to COVID-19 patients. We have brought a consignment for research and analysis,"*



In another speech on May 17, 2020 President Magufuli said he is considering reopening schools and colleges as number of COVID-19 cases were significantly dropping. As of June lockdown had been eased, people had to go on with their hustling while observing health protocols like keeping social distancing and frequently hand washing. According to the President total lockdown may lead to other serious disasters.

*“Locking people indoors may lead to bigger disasters like hunger.... Locking down Dar es salaam, the country’s economic hub, may lead to serious economic woes. There is nothing to worry about as covid cases are dropping significantly.” (source: TBC and ITV Exclusive programs May 3, 2020)*

Emphasising on easing restrictions a respondent from MoHCDEC noted that:

*“Total lockdown may not be a solution in Africa because we African what we earn today cannot take us the next day. We also like visiting, helping each other and we are also good mosque and church goers, these things are in our blood. what is important is the people to eat nutritious food like vegetables, fruits to boost their immunity against corona virus. The efforts we are putting up are bearing fruits no new cases of covid.”*

With easing COVID-19 restrictions. People were now able to go to work and run their life while observing health protocols like frequently handwashing, wearing face masks and keeping social distance. People were happy with this move by the government. One of the respondents had this to say:

*“This was one of the wisest decisions I have seen in my life. Imagine if were to be locked indoors where could we get food to feed our families, on top of that you pay house rent. Total lockdown could land us into deep trouble.” Additionally, most of these restrictions are contrary to our communal kind of life. It is threatening our culture.*

The other respondent said:

*We are happy we are not locked indoors, so hunger is not going to kill us, the only thing we need to do is wash our hands frequently, put on masks, avoid shaking hands and hugging and keeping distance. And as you can see we are defeating COVID, no new cases have been reported.*

Respondent were of the idea that relaxing restrictions has saved the nation from economic and social problems.

### ***Speeches by the members of the parliament***

Members of parliaments too laid their accent on the war against corona pandemic. They insisted on the use of traditional ways of treating COVID-19 since it doesn’t differ much with other types of fever. Fever has been around for generations and there has always been ways to deal with it. One legislator observed:

*“It is important we uphold the use of indigenous knowledge system in our fight against COVID-19 like the use of steam inhalation”.* (Source: TBC and ITV Parliament live coverage May5, 2020)

The other legislator cautioned against ignoring traditional ways of treating ailments. She went on to condemn the attitude of embracing imported solutions at the expense of our traditional modus operandi. She also advocated the use of steam inhalation.

*“Traditional, complementary and alternative medicine like steam inhalation has many benefits and Africa has a long history of traditional medicine. It is about time we stop waiting for the outsiders to impose solution on us. Some of these imported solutions may not be in our best interests”* (Source: TBC and ITV Parliament live coverage May5, 2020)

### **3.2 Efforts by public and private institutions**

The study also found a number of things that public and private institutions had done in the fight against corona virus. These are:

#### ***Disseminating information and education to the public about COVID-19***

One of the most remarkable roles these institutions played was awareness creation through different forms of media. Some of these media houses were Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation, IPP Media, Azam Media and Sahara Media Group. Information about covid-19 was disseminated in both electronic and print media. On the role of the media the respondent from MoHCDEC said:

*“The media has done an excellent job in educating the public, they have devoted much of their airtime and space in both electronic and print outlets to disseminate information about covid-19. Without their efforts the war against the virus would be very difficult”.*

#### ***Making handwashing facilities***

On the other hand, to effect safe handwashing, SIDO, the government owned organ embarked in making handwashing facilities that are operated by feet and do not require a user to touch the water tap. An official from SIDO said:

*“Facilities that were operated by hands could easily spread the virus because just after washing their hands the users touch the same tap, causing contamination.”*

#### ***Religious and education institutions initiated shifting sessions to avoid congestion***

During the study religious and education institutions efforts in the battle against COVID-19 were also evident. They made sure all the health protocols are observed by both the staffs and clients. One cleric observed:

*“We have initiated shifting system to avoid overcrowding. We have divided ourselves in groups and attend worshipping sessions in a shifting system to effect social distancing. Handwashing facilities are placed in every strategic position and we insist on the use of facemask”.*

The same was observed by one of the teaching staffs from education institutions

*“We have introduced shifting system, a class is divided into manageable size. This helped to effect social distancing”.*

### **3.3 Efforts by individuals**

During the study it was found that the people as individuals were important actors in the war against COVID-19. Let’s consider some of their notable efforts they exerted against covid-19.

#### ***Making steam inhalation structures***

Promoting the use of traditional ways in treating COVID-19 by government leaders got a positive response from the public. Individual herbalists decided to make big permanent structures for steam inhalation. One of these structures called *nyumba* in Kiswahili ‘house’ was built in Arusha. This steam inhalation structure is made of iron bars and a tent. The other inhalation structure was found in Kimara suburb in Dar es salaam, it is made of plywood.

They are improved and more effective than the traditional home made ones. A user gets into the structure and stays there for 10 minutes as one of the client say:

*“This is a modern machine for steam inhalation,10 minutes are enough to make you sweat profusely, and there after you feel better than before”.*

#### ***Individuals volunteered to provide handwashing facilities in public places***

The war against corona virus gained its momentum as individuals donated their resources for public use. The study found individuals who volunteered to provide and set handwashing facilities in bus stops. One of the volunteers said:

*“I decided to buy these facilities and set them here because in bus stops it is where people can contract the virus easily, being cheap, public transport attract majority of users”.*

The other one had this to say:

*“We need to cooperate with the government in the fight against the COVID-19, the government cannot do everything for us”.*

The other volunteering spirit involved a breathtaking innovation by young man who had made a handwashing bucket that is operated by mobile phone to avoid contamination. The bucket had a phone number which the user has to call for the water to flow and cancel the call to block the flow. He is not planning to sell these buckets for the time being. He said:

*“I have made only few and I will place them on my neighbourhood for the people to use them. Business may come later”.*

### **3.4 Efforts by small traders**

Like any other stakeholders, the importance of small traders in the war against COVID-19 cannot be overemphasized. One of the areas where their contribution was vivid was on

upholding COVID-19 health protocols even when they had to serve many people. One of the traders said:

*“We make sure our customers observe social distancing we don’t allow our customers to crowd on our shops. No one is served without washing their hands, as you see handwashing facilities are on every shop”.*

The other respondent who does his small business at an open market observed:

*“We have handwashing buckets everywhere here, we insist on the use of face masks, and avoiding crowd and we are happy everybody is responding positively to those healthy protocols”.*

The study also found that small traders were main suppliers of fruits like lemons, oranges, vegetables and spices like ginger, garlic and honey. These products, according to MoHCDGEC and NIMR, strengthen body immunity, so people need to take them in abundance during this time of COVID-19 eruption. Following this emphasis on the use of fruits and vegetables, the consumption has soared. One fruit vendor said:

*“Before COVID-19 it could take a week or more to sell one bucket of lemons, but today a bucket of lemon takes only a day. Even the price has gone up, before corona one lemon was sold at 100/- Tanzanian Shillings, but today it is 300/-Tanzanian shillings”.*

The same story was reported about oranges as this respondent puts it:

*“Before corona it was normal during oranges or pineapples season to see them left decaying on the ground at the market, today things have changed, tones of fruits are offloaded here and in a matter of 2 or 3 days nothing is left”.*

### **3.5 Links with the external organizations**

During the study it was learned that there were also some efforts from countries and international organizations. An official at the MoHCDGEC acknowledged the kind of support the government received from development partners.

*“Outsiders and other development partners have been important in the war against the pandemic. Their support varies from financial to the area of disseminating information about COVID-19. We have received support from USAID, World Vision, WaterAid to name but a few”.*

The author visited the website of each of the mentioned organizations and found the following supports:

World Vision has donated equipment worth about 86,021 USD to the government. The equipment supplies comprised of thermal scanners, megaphones, personal protective equipment (PPE) hand-washing facilities, and sanitation supplies such as sanitisers. On other hand United States Government Provided 1.9 million USD while WaterAid Tanzania worked with the Ministry to scale up water, sanitation and hygiene services, such as handwashing facilities at key locations, using mass media to share important handwashing and hygiene messages, and supporting healthcare and frontline workers on Infection Prevention and Control training.

There was also cooperation with Madagascar government in the fight against COVID-19. The government of Tanzania decided to import Madagascar COVID-19 potion. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and East Africa Cooperation revealed that the potion brought to Tanzania from Madagascar was to undergo local clinical testing by Tanzanian experts.

*“We have brought a consignment for research and analysis”*

According to the government the aim of research and analysis of the Madagascar potion was to establish its effectiveness in treating and curing the COVID-19.

#### **4. Discussion of the findings**

This study aimed at finding out the extent Tanzania has been able to muster up her resources and other endowments in the fight against COVID-19. This part discusses the findings basing on PLSD framework, shedding lights on the key elements of development, to wit; resources, organization and norms as well as the enabling factors namely; capability building and institutional linkage as propounded by Sharma and Ohama (2007).

##### *Resources*

Resources are the key element needed for any project to succeed. In the fight against COVID-19 resources in all its forms were employed i.e human, physical resources and financial. Human resource was effectively utilized in providing service especially in medical facilities like hospitals and quarantine centres as the number of patient soared. More interesting was the individuals who used their skills and creativity to make handwashing facilities like the bucket operated by a mobile phone. Physical resources were also an important asset in the war against the pandemic. The study found that heightened usage of scraps or discarded iron in making of handwashing and steam inhalation facilities. Additionally, water was found to be the widely used physical resource as evidenced by presence of handwashing facilities on almost every door and window of residence and business buildings. There were also growing demand of food stuffs like fruits and vegetables. According to MoHCDGEC fruits and vegetables intake boosts body immunity. Strong body immunity will protect people from COVID-19. Resources are no more than resources, they are only beneficial when they are integrated and utilized by an appropriate actor the *organisation* (Sharma and Ohama 2007). Let's next focus an organisation.

##### *Organisation*

As stated earlier, an organisation is an actor which has to see to it that the resources are being integrated into a project. During the corona virus outbreak the leading actor was the government with all its ministries, agencies and institutions, although MoHCDGEC coordinated the efforts. Private institutions, communities and families fell into the big organisation, the government, since they acted according to its instructions. The performance of an organisation depends much on the *norms*.

##### *Norms*

Like mentioned earlier, the aim of norms is to regulate the direction of activities of the organisation and streamline members' behaviour and conducts in accordance with the roles and functions given to them. There were a number of restrictions imposed by medical authorities to

protect communities from the corona virus. These healthy protocols included staying at home, frequently handwashing, keeping social distance, not touching faces, wearing masks, not shaking hands and avoiding hugging, among others. In PLSD framework we categorize these protocols as *functional* or *operational* norms. Furthermore, communities have their own customs and traditions, according to Sharma and Ohama (2007) they are called cognisant norms and they are obvious through collaboration, participation, cooperation by community members. During the study Tanzania communities were found to have the following cognisant norms: First: community members were very cooperative and social, they live together, help and visit each other and above all, greetings through handshaking and hugging are common features. Tanzanians were also found to be good mosque and church goers. Most members of the communities are hand-to-mouth hustlers. They don't work for surplus. Whatever is earned is spent on that same day. But now we may ask, how could COVID-19 healthy protocols, operational norms, work in a community with such cognisant norms? Each of the two types of norms seems to embody some contradicting aspects.

This question is vital because any project becomes successful and sustainable if the community owns the process (Cooksey & Kikula, 2005 and Mlupilo, 2005). Needless to say, the community members feel part of the project if their cognisant norms are given consideration in the implementation of the project (Ohama 2002, Yogo 2001, Sharma and Ohama 2007, Mwanga 2011). It is for this very reason the government opted for partial lockdown instead of total lockdown. Partial lockdown embodied what Sharma and Ohama (2007) describe as *norms* conducive for the objective achievement. The stay at home protocol was compromised among the operational norms. People had to adhere to other healthy protocols like frequently handwashing, keeping social distance, not touching faces, wearing masks. The communities had to refrain from some traditional practices (cognisant norms) that could spread the virus like handshaking, hugging, huge gatherings, visiting each other. This indicated an independent thinking by the government, choosing what works better for its people.

The understanding stance by the government created harmony, peace and tranquility. The people were also more willing to cooperate with the government in the fight against the pandemic as attested by some citizens who volunteered to provide handwashing facilities to be used in public places. In other countries disregarding cognisant norms by imposing total lockdown has been associated with physical and psychological injuries on the people by law enforcers. (Brooks et al., 2020; Mboera et al. 2020). The government and its people formed a strong united front ahead of COVID-19. This is a thought we also get from Harries (2020) and Airhihenbuwa et al. (2020) who assert that understanding the nature of the community is unavoidable for sustainable and successful project. Upholding cognisant norms can also be noted in Mwalimu Julius Nyerere advocate for familyhood and self reliance in the Arusha Declaration because it was part of customs and traditions of most African communities including Tanzania. (Nyerere 1967; Cornelli, 2012; Mukhungulu et al (2017).

The war against the corona virus in Tanzania was characterized by effective utilization of available resources and independent thinking which are outstanding features of PLSD. Effective utilization of resources was seen in increased demands of foodstuffs like fruits, vegetables, garlic

and ginger. Discarded iron and scraps were also found to be useful in making steam inhalation and handwashing facilities. This came after the government had encouraged the use of the available resources in protecting against, treating and curing COVID-19. Independent thinking is attested when President Magufuli wanted to establish the accuracy of imported test kits. After samples from jackfruits, pawpaw and a goat had tested positive for COVID-19, the President raised a caution against overreliance on foreign aids. In the same vein the President rejected loans from World Bank and IMF availed for COVID-19 as unnecessary burden. He added that his country is already indebted to these financial institutions, the only rational decision for them was to write off the debts, so that the saving could be directed to the war against COVID-19. The President's idea corresponds to Akonor (2007) and Matunhu (2011) who maintain that aid and loans have integrated African countries into the world economy as dependants, raw material producers and importers of manufactured goods, with very little control of pricing on the world market. The members of parliament echoed the President's idea by insisting on the use of traditional ways like steam inhalation as well as having a diet with more fruits and vegetables for treatment and protection against COVID-19. They insisted on the use of indigenous knowledge in grappling with the pandemic. Indigenous knowledge is a classic example of cognitive norms.

Thus, *norms* enabled the *organisation* which is an appropriate actor to effectively integrate *resources* in the fight against the corona disease. These three elements of development depend on each other, thanks to this independence, the community becomes self-reliance. When these three elements are not well coordinated it is very difficult to develop. A chronic food shortage situation in Africa while the continent boasts huge chunks of land and energetic population reported by Jackson et al (2016) and Okosun et al (2016) helps to explain the importance of having resources, organisation and norms unitedly working. Resources, no matter how amply available, without organisation (actor) founded on strong norms are unproductive. Besides the three key elements, there are enabling factors according to PLSD, namely; capability building, and institutional linkage.

#### *Capability building*

During the outbreak of COVID-19 capability building was done by disseminating the information to the public. The MoHCDCGEC cooperated with media houses and social media in making sure the public gets genuine information about the disease. With awareness creation the public was empowered and took the necessary step to protect themselves from the corona virus. Moreover due to awareness creation individuals volunteered to make and provide handwashing facilities to be used in public places. The good response from the people in the fight against the pandemic was a result of capability building. Capability building can also be done by an outsider. For example during the study WaterAid Tanzania an international NGO played a great role in sharing important handwashing and hygiene messages.

#### *Institutional linkage*

Institutional linkage is also important because no community can prosper and achieve its objective in isolation. During COVID-19 outbreak Tanzania had linkage with outsiders like government, non-government organisations. The most notable linkage was that with Madagascar government. The government of Tanzania decided to import Madagascar potion claimed to cure COVID-19. According to the government the potion was to be subjected under research and

analysis so as to establish its effectiveness in treating and curing COVID-19. Through institutional linkage the government received financial assistance, thermal scanners, megaphones, personal protective equipment (PPE) hand-washing facilities, and sanitation supplies such as sanitisers from USAID and World Vision.

Despite this assistance from the outsiders, the government and its people remained the main actors and took full charge of the battle against the pandemic. This is in line with Sharma and Ohama (2007) who maintain that capability building and institutional linkage need to be carefully managed lest they become an avenue for external assistance playing the main role in implementing the activities with the local people's less involvement. Development comes when the community members themselves take a centre stage in the process (Aruma 2018).

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study aimed at finding out how Tanzania has been able to use its endowments in the fight against COVID-19. The efforts included those by individuals like using their skills and resources to make handwashing and steam inhalation facilities for public use; institutional efforts like schools and colleges initiating shifting sessions in the course of serving their clients. Institutions also disseminated information about the disease. More importantly was the role of the government leaders whose speeches on COVID-19 laid down a foundation for and streamlined the fight against the pandemic. The support from countries and international organisations included educating the public about COVID-19, provision of supplies like thermal scanners, megaphones, personal protective equipment (PPE) hand-washing facilities, and sanitisers from USAID and World Vision.

The study uses PLSD framework in its analysis. PLSD posits that there are three key elements for any project to succeed, namely resource, organization and norms. In the war against COVID-19 the resources used were human, physical and financial resources. Human resource was effectively utilized in medical facilities like hospitals and quarantine centres as the number of patient soared. More interesting was the individuals who used their skills to make handwashing facilities like the bucket operated by a mobile phone. Physical resources with heightened usage were scraps or discarded iron for making handwashing and steam inhalation facilities, water, food stuffs like fruits and vegetables. The other key element was organisation which included the government, ministry, public and private institutions, communities and families. The organisations were founded on the third key element, the norms. Additionally, there were enabling factors namely; capability building through media, and institutional linkage with countries and international organisations.

It is recommended by the study that for the community to succeed and be self reliant in any project it has to be able to identify all the resources that it is endowed with. More importantly the people themselves should be at the centre of the development process while foreign assistance takes a scaffolding role. It is also important to give consideration to customs and traditions of the community, this will make the people feel the ownership of the project. Productive traditional practices should be upheld in the implementation of the project.



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