

Full Length Research Paper

The impact of road accessibility of rural villages on recognition of poverty reduction opportunities

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This study was carried out in four villages of Gairo Division, Kilo a district, Morogoro Region-Tanzania. The overall objective of this study was to assess the impact of road accessibility on recognition of poverty reduction opportunities. Questionnaire and focus group discussions were used to collect data. Statistical package for social science (SPSS), version 6.0.1 computer software was used to analyze the data. Results indicated that: Firstly, poverty reduction opportunities listed in the document of the National Poverty Eradication strategy (Tanzania) were relatively more known to rural communities in villages which were more accessible by road than those which were less accessible. Secondly, majority of rural community members recognize land as the main opportunity for poverty reduction. Thirdly, rural community members feel that they were not accessing some of the support provided by the international community for poverty reduction. Fourthly, some development programs were not appropriate for rural situation. Lastly, rural communities especially in interior areas hardly access information. The study recommends that in order to achieve poverty reduction goals, awareness on poverty reduction opportunities should be raised among rural community members, rural roads should be improved; land utilization should be promoted among rural community members.

Key words: Poverty, accessibility, rural development, opportunities, infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

Tanzania is one of the world's poorest countries. Poverty is more prevalent in the rural areas as compared to urban areas as a result of unbalanced rural-urban development associated with the absence of basic physical, economic, social, financial and institutional infrastructure and services (URT, 2000). This prevents the poor from taking effective initiatives towards income generating opportunities and from gaining access to productive assets. In Tanzania, poverty eradication initiatives have been undertaken for a long time under different names such as poverty reduction, poverty alleviation, combating poverty and fighting against poverty (Kayunze, 2001). In trying to maximize success in poverty reduction, the Government of Tanzania has formulated national strategies to address issues of poverty. The strategies include the National

Poverty Eradication Strategy (NPES) United Republic of Tanzania (URT, 1998) and the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (URT, 2005). The NPES has put clear considerable opportunities that community members can take advantage in the implementation of poverty eradication programs (URT, 1998). Poverty has remained a problem particularly in rural areas (Figures 1 and 2). The government of Tanzania has reported disparity in achievement of poverty reduction between the rural and urban area (URT, 2001). The disparity in achievement can be associated with various factors. This study intends to assess the impact of road accessibility on recognition of poverty reduction opportunities in rural villages.

Despite abundant resources and opportunities for poverty reduction existing in Tanzania, poverty is still a major problem and so widespread that it cannot be eradicated in the short run (URT, 2000). Recent surveys have revealed that in Tanzania, over fifty percent of the population still live in poverty and about one-tenth of the

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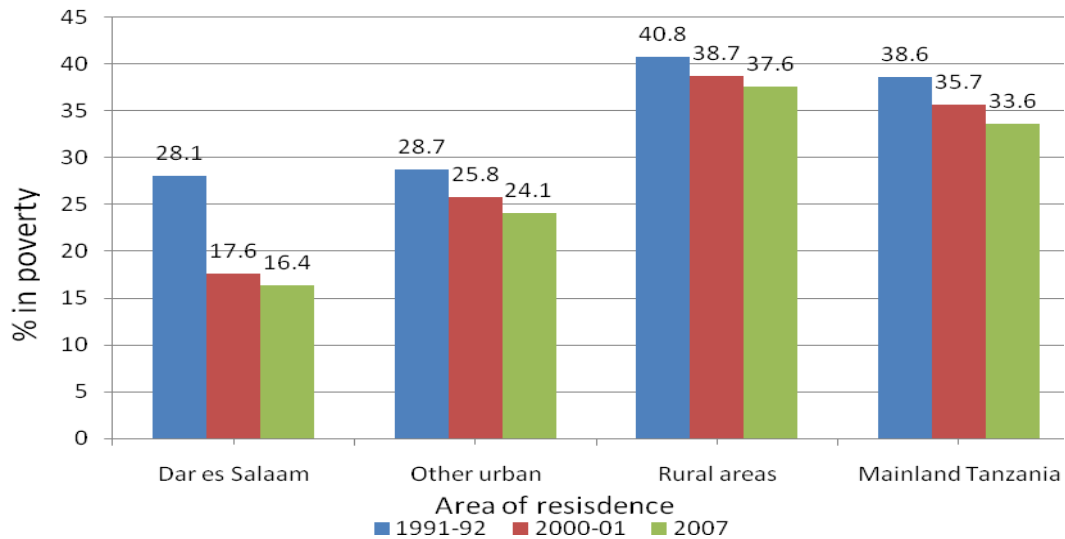


Figure 1. Percentage of households living in below the basic needs poverty line by area of residence in mainland Tanzania, 1991-1992, 2000-2001 and 2007. Source: NBS 2009.

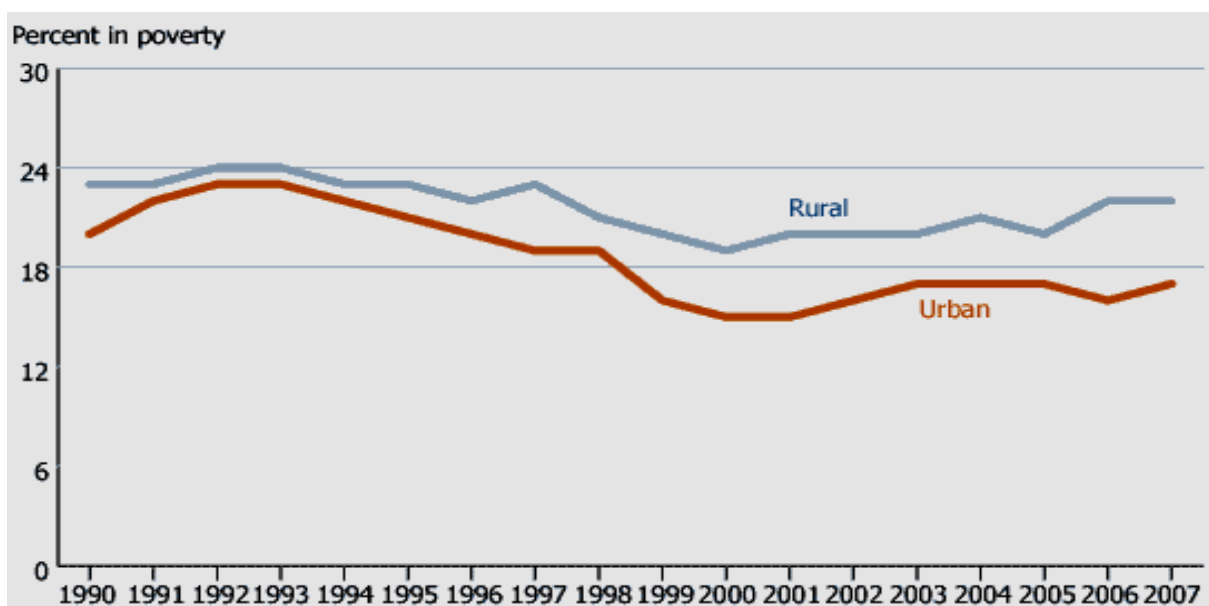


Figure 2. Global percentage of poverty between rural and urban households. Source: WB 2007

households are severely undernourished (Bagachwa, 2000). Prevalence of income poverty is high. According to the Household Budget Survey of 2000/01, the proportion of the population below the national food poverty line was 18.7% and that below the national basic needs poverty line was 35.7% (URT, 2005). There is also a big disparity between urban and rural poverty for both food and basic needs poverty. There is sufficient evidence to indicate that poverty is more prevalent in rural areas relative to urban areas (URT, 1998; URT, 2000; URT, 2005). At a glance, over 1 billion of the

world's poorest people do not have access to roads (IDA, 2009). In fighting against poverty (millennium development goals (MDG-1)), it has been reported that, Tanzania has relatively progressed significantly in re-establishing macro-economic stability in urban areas than the rural areas (URT, 2001). This disparity on the achievements of the urban and the rural communities on poverty reduction impose a series of questions some of which could be directed to accessibility of rural villages and issues related to poverty reduction opportunities. It is not clear whether the rural communities are aware of the

opportunities available for their economic development and what are their opinions concerning those opportunities. Furthermore, it is not clear on how recognition and awareness on the opportunities is influenced by road accessibility. Therefore, the specific objectives of this study were to assess the awareness and opinions of the rural communities concerning poverty reduction opportunities identified by the government and to identify the poverty reduction opportunities available in the study area.

Results from this study uncover the impact of road accessibility on rural communities' awareness and recognition of poverty reduction opportunities. Results from this study also increase awareness of policy makers, development partners and the communities in general on the impact of road accessibility hence consider it as important factor in planning for successful poverty reduction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Poverty: Definition; causes and characteristics

Poverty is a broad phenomenon. However, researchers have attempted to describe it using monetary and non-monetary measures of welfare. The terminologies 'poor' and 'poverty' have been described as a monolithic group and issue (World Bank, 2002). Sections on poverty profile still differentiate between subgroups of poor as rural, urban, women or minorities. The phenomenon refers to a condition of living below a defined poverty line or standard of living (Bagachwa, 2000). The line is subject to variation by socio-politico-economic cultural set up. However, strategic directions rarely pick this variance up subsuming the poor into one homogenous group if mentioned at all requiring uniform policy treatment (URT, 1998). According to the International Trade Centre (2011) poverty should be defined as much more than just a shortfall of income (that is living on less than 2 USD per day). It should be regarded as a dimensional issue involving all aspects of human development, including lack of power, lack of education, lack of opportunities for development, lack of sanitation facilities. In summary, it is the lack of access to the fundamental collective or social opportunities that constitute the essence of individual human dignity.

According to Hoogeveen and Ruhinduka (2009), individuals are considered poor when their consumption is less than the 'basic needs poverty line'. This indicator is based on the cost of a basket of food plus non-food items. Housing, consumer durables and telecommunications are not included, nor are health and education expenses. The poverty line basket was valued using prices collected in the 2000/01 survey. At that time the poverty line was TShs 7,253. Between 2000/01 and 2007, prices of goods and services in the basket

increased by 93%, so the poverty line in 2007 is TShs 13,998. Poverty is characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It includes a lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion.

The causes of poverty are very diverse. According to URT (1998), the phenomenon results from many mutually reinforce factors, including lack of productive resources to generate material wealth, illiteracy, prevalence of disease, discriminative socio-economic and political systems and natural calamities such as drought, floods and wars. Ellis and Mdoe (2003) argue that rural poverty is strongly associated with lack of land and livestock, as well as inability to secure nonfarm alternatives to diminishing farm opportunities. The rural poor encounter a public sector institutional context that is neutral or blocking rather than enabling them to construct their own pathways out of poverty.

According to IFAD (2011), households fall into poverty primarily as a result of shocks such as ill health, poor harvests, social expenses, or conflict and disasters. It is highly correlated with household characteristics such as family size, education and ownership of physical assets, and it is also dependent on good health. Beyond household-level factors, economic growth, and local availability of opportunities, markets, infrastructure (for example, roads) and enabling institutions including good governance are very important in deciding on the level of poverty. There seems to be a clear disparity in distribution of poverty between rural and urban households within each country. Certain groups particularly rural women, youth, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities are often disproportionately held back by disadvantages rooted in inequalities in access to opportunities (URT, 2005). Addressing these disadvantages requires building people's assets and strengthening their capabilities both individual and collective, while creating awareness to recognition of locally available opportunities and helping them to better manage the risks they face.

Global and national poverty situation

A major development problem facing the world today is the ever growing phenomenon of poverty (Mashashua et al., 2009). It is estimated that over 1.3 billion people live on less than one dollar per day and about one billion people cannot meet basic requirements (Peralta, 2003). Furthermore, it is estimated that about 315 million people (one in every two people) in Sub Saharan Africa survive on less than one dollar per day and 184 million people

(33% of the African population) suffer from malnutrition (Mashashua et al., 2011). In Tanzania the situation is worse, as 50% of Tanzanians are considered to be basically poor with approximately one third of people living in abject poverty (URT, 2000). In addition to the Household Budget Survey of 2000/01 that the proportion of the population below the national food poverty line is 18.9 % and that below the national basic needs poverty line is 35.7%, indicators of income poverty also show growing disparities between urban and rural population, as well as across and within regions and districts; the urban poor constitute about 13% compared to 87% in rural areas (URT, 2003). National Bureau of Statistics (2009) and World Bank Report (2007) also indicated a higher percentage of households in rural areas are in poverty than their urban counterparts (Figures 1 and 2).

According to the World Bank, the Tanzanian gross national income per capita (current prices) in 2006 was estimated to be \$980 (in comparison to the overall African per capita of \$624), which ranked Tanzania as 190 out of 208 countries (World Bank, 2008). A combination of low production, low productivity and low quality of agricultural produce and poor road accessibility has significant limiting effects on rural growth and therefore on poverty reduction (Wuyts, 2006). Major factors contributing to this situation include low levels of education and literacy among smallholder farmers, exposure to variable weather conditions, price shocks, limited investments and a weak government investment on infrastructure (feeder roads) in the rural for transportation of crops.

Poverty reduction opportunities

There are a number of factors that affect poverty reduction efforts. Availability of socio-economic services such as credit facilities, input supply and extension services affect participation of rural communities in poverty eradication strategies (Freeman and Pankhurst, 2003). Rural communities lack essential resources required by the target group for change such as skilled manpower. According to the National Poverty Eradication Strategy (URT, 1998), the government of Tanzania believes that it has the capacity to eradicate poverty if the available opportunities are utilized. In the strategy, the government has put clear the opportunities for poverty reduction.

Among many opportunities, the following are recognized by the government: Government commitment to eradicate poverty, peace and political stability, natural resources and multiparty democracy. Others are economic reforms and market liberalization, supportive international community, participation of non-government institutions, and enhanced information dissemination (URT, 1998). Tanzania is endowed with rich natural resources, which can be utilized to eradicate poverty.

These include ample arable land, a wealth of mineral resources and game reserves. There is also abundant of untapped water sources, which could be used for irrigation, electricity and for domestic use (URT, 1998).

The current multiparty democratic process creates and strengthens among Tanzanians culture of self-expression and reaching consensus on critical national development issues. It also provides opportunity for people's views and concerns to be heard at the highest level of leadership; and for these views to be reflected into policy formulation and design of development programs. In addition, economic reforms and market liberalization has brought many changes in the country. One of the major changes is the withdrawal of the government from direct production, processing, manufacturing and marketing while at the same time promoting private sector participation in production and distribution of goods and services (URT, 2005). During recent international forums, agreement has been reached to support poverty eradication initiatives worldwide (URT, 1998).

This encourages increased flow of international resources to meet the needs of poor countries. Debt relief contributes to poverty reduction. However, according to the international monetary fund (IMF) and World Bank (2005), countries that received limited debt relief under existing programs have doubled poverty-reducing expenditures from 1999 to 2004. Non-governmental associations such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community based organizations (CBOs) and grassroots organizations (GROs) have a long experience and capacity to work with grassroots communities (URT, 2005). If adequately involved, they can greatly contribute to the success of poverty reduction initiatives and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (TANGO, 2004).

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) can contribute significantly to poverty reduction in all three dimensions of empowerment, opportunity and security, and to an attainment of the Multilateral Development Goals (Gerster and Zimmermann, 2003). The same author clarify further that ICTs can promote opportunities for livelihoods: An increase in agricultural productivity, a broadening of the food crop basket, improved market access for cash crops, and the creation of employment opportunities and higher chances of finding jobs.

Poverty reduction and accessibility

Poverty reduction include improving the quality of peoples lives, such as education and healthcare or by improving their access to ways in which they can make money, either through employment or small businesses (World Bank, 2002). The relationship between transport and poverty reduction is neither straightforward nor automatic (IDA, 2009). According to the same source of information, it is apparent that improvements in transport

have the greatest impact on poor people when made in concert with activities in other sectors. It is becoming increasingly clear that if infrastructure investments for example construction of new roads or rehabilitation of old roads are properly made, they significantly contribute to poverty reduction (Ahmed and Hossain, 1990). In other words, not only can a lack of infrastructure be an impediment to more investment, but it can also be one of the dimensions of the so-called 'poverty trap'. For example, most African countries have yet to reach such infrastructure threshold levels, and understanding this helps to explain why it has been difficult to detect any significant correlation between infrastructure provision and growth in Africa (Lumbila, 2005). The direct impact of roads on poverty reduction is also impressive and shows that the Government's consistent policy of improving access to a strong hierarchy of roads remains a viable and necessary development strategy (Fang and Kang, 2005). Transport creates opportunities to increase the productivity of the poor (Antle, 1983). Road as the most transport mode carry 70% of the country's freight and 90% of the passengers (Mkiaru, 2004). Consistently, transport is seen as having the most significant impact on the incomes of the poor in communities (Fang and Kang, 2005).

Reliable access from villages to markets and social services is an essential component of the quality of life for rural population. However, many poor villages in developing countries do not have all-weather road access and are often cut off for long periods during the wet season when access roads become impassable. (Dieter and Zhi, 2000). Despite this knowledge, an estimated one billion people, or about 40% of the rural population in regions served by the international development association (IDA), the World Bank's fund for the world's poorest countries, lack direct access to an all-season road. Poverty is a complex issue thus needs to be tackled on a range of fronts including, but not limited to, improving economic growth. To alleviate poverty, countries must attain basic thresholds in several key areas: governance, health, education, infrastructure, debt levels and access to markets (URT, 2006).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A social survey was conducted whereby a descriptive, cross sectional study design was adopted. According to Bernard (1996), Babbie (1990) and Kothari (2004), cross sectional designs provide useful information for simple statistical description and interpretation. The methodology was adopted since it entails the observation of a sample of the target population at a single point in time or time interval. This means that costs are minimal and loss to follow up is not a problem (Grimes and Schultz, 2002). Non probability sampling was used to obtain the sample population that is, household heads who were the ultimate unit of analysis. Total sample size was 160 respondents who were all household heads. Purposive sampling was applied to obtain a study division and villages. Whereby Gairo division was chosen among nine divisions of Kilosa district, four villages with desired characteristics for

comparison were obtained. The characteristics are easily accessed by road (Chakwale and Kwipipa villages) and less accessed by road (Ndogomi and Luhwaji villages). A list of households from each of the study villages was used as a sampling frame. From each village, a computer generated randomization list (simple random sampling technique) was used to select 40 households used for this study. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire administered to individual respondents. Open and close ended questions were used to allow collection of sufficient information. A checklist or semi-structured interview guide was used to facilitate focus group discussions so as to supplement information gaps from individual respondent interviews. Focus group discussions were composed of village leaders and key informants from respective villages. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected.

Secondary data was collected from different documents, from district to village level. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0.1 computer software was used to analyze the data. Chi-square test was used throughout to analyze associations between village accessibility by road and knowledge on poverty reduction opportunities. Content analysis was used to analyze information resulting from focus group discussions. This method of analysis has been defined as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing a large number of words in the form of text into a compressed content of categories based on explicit rules of coding (Stemler, 2001). The assumption made is that the words that are mentioned most often are the words that reflect the greatest concerns (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980; Weber, 1990).

RESULTS

Characteristics of respondents

The major economic activities in the study area are crop farming and livestock keeping. Others include forestry, beekeeping, fishing and trading. In some villages of the study area, the majority of the population lives in critical poverty and their access to socio-economic services is limited. Major ethnic groups in the district are Pogoro, Kaguru, Sagara, Gogo, Maasai and Barbaig. Age of respondents ranged between 20 and 77 years. Most of respondents (83.8%) were men and only 16.2% were women. More than ninety-one percent (91.9%) of the interviewed respondents were married. Others were widowers (3.8%), separated (3.1%) and widows (1.3%). Most of them (63.1%) attained primary school education and 13% were illiterate. This indicates that generally, majority of the community members in the study area had low level of education. All of the interviewed respondents were involved in agriculture whereby 45.6% practiced crop farming only and 51.9% practiced both crop farming and livestock keeping. The remaining minority (2.5%) practiced small scale business in addition to crop farming.

Opinions of rural community members on opportunities for poverty reduction

Table 1 shows general opinions of rural community members on the government claimed opportunities for

Table 1. Opinions of rural community members on the government claimed opportunities for eradicating poverty.

Opportunity	Relatively more accessible villages (Chakwale and Kwipipa) (n = 80)			Remote and less accessible villages (Ndogomi and Luhwaji) (n = 80)		
	Important (%)	Not important (%)	Not sure (%)	Important (%)	Not important (%)	Not sure (%)
Opportunity (1)	73.75	10.00	16.25	58.75	22.50	18.75
Opportunity (2)	78.75	6.25	15.00	63.75	21.25	15.00
Opportunity (3)	53.75	35.00	11.25	27.50	46.25	26.50
Opportunity (4)	33.75	16.25	50.00	27.50	20.00	52.50
Opportunity (5)	70.00	6.25	23.75	45.00	23.75	31.25
Opportunity (6)	57.50	10.00	32.50	38.75	18.75	42.50
Opportunity (7)	70.00	18.75	11.25	57.50	3.75	38.75
Opportunity (8)	51.25	36.25	12.50	53.75	35.00	11.25

Key to Table 1: Opportunity 1 = Government commitment to eradicate poverty; Opportunity 2 = Peace and political stability; Opportunity 3 = Market liberalization; Opportunity 4 = Supportive international community; Opportunity 5 = Natural resources; Opportunity 6 = Participation of non governmental institutions; Opportunity 7 = Information dissemination; Opportunity 8 = Multiparty democracy.

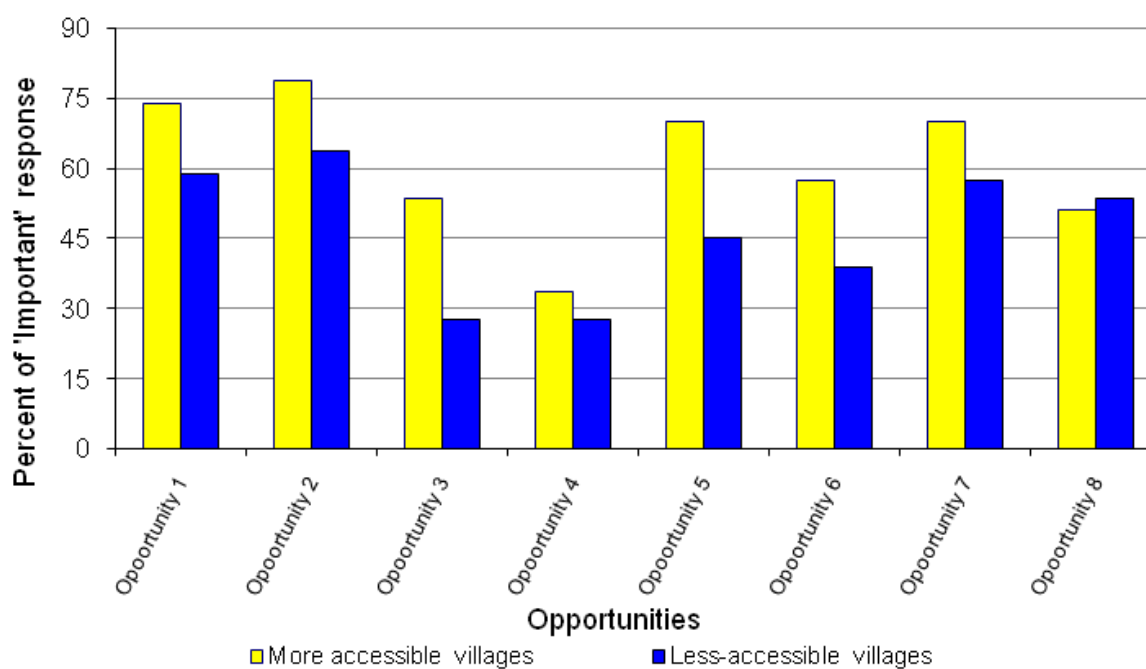


Figure 3. Proportion of respondents who accepted the various government-claimed opportunities to be important in reduction of poverty. Key to Figure 3: Opportunity 1 = Government commitment to eradicate poverty; Opportunity 2 = Peace and political stability; Opportunity 3 = Market liberalization; Opportunity 4 = Supportive international community; Opportunity 5 = Natural resources; Opportunity 6 = Participation of non governmental institutions; Opportunity 7 = Information dissemination and Opportunity 8 = Multiparty democracy.

reduction of poverty, and Figure 3 specifies those who say the opportunities are important. The respondents' villages were separated in two categories according to accessibility of the villages that is, more accessible (Chakwale and Kwipipa) and less accessible (Ndogomi and Luhwaji). Results presented in Table 1 and Figure 3 shows that, for each poverty reduction opportunity listed, higher proportions of community members in more accessible villages accept that the opportunities are very important for poverty reduction than community members

in less accessible villages. This indicates that accessibility of an area affects recognition of poverty reduction opportunities by the residents. Results show that 73.75% of the respondents from the more accessible villages agreed that government commitment was important for poverty reduction. Similarly, 58.75% of those from less accessible villages argue the same (Table 1 and Figure 3). On the other hand, 16.25 and 18.75% of respondents from more accessible villages and less accessible villages respectively were not sure of the importance of

the opportunity. However, chi-square test revealed that there was no statistical difference in awareness.

Further results show that more than three quarters (78.75%) of respondents from the more accessible village and 63.75% from less accessible villages, indicated that peace and political stability were important for poverty eradication (Table 1 and Figure 3). On the other hand, 15% from each group were not sure of its importance for poverty reduction. There was statistical significance difference at $P \leq 0.05$ between the two locations. While almost half (53.75%) of the respondents from more accessible villages acknowledge the importance of market liberalization in poverty reduction, only 27.5% from less accessible villages argued the same. On the other hand, 11.25% of respondents from more accessible villages and 26.5% from less accessible villages were not sure whether the opportunity was important for poverty reduction.

Chi-square test showed that the difference in appreciation of the importance of the opportunity between respondents from more and less accessible villages was statistically significant ($X^2 = 12.831$) at $P < 0.01$. It was further found that less than a half of the respondents (33.75 and 27.5%) from more accessible and less accessible villages respectively, agreed that supportive international community have substantial contribution to poverty reduction.

On the other hand, nearly equal proportions of respondents from each of more accessible and less accessible villages (50 and 52.5%, respectively) were not sure whether the supportive international community was an opportunity for poverty reduction. Results presented in Table 1 and Figure 3 shows that, while 70% from more accessible villages support the government opinion that natural resources are important for poverty reduction, only 46% of the respondents from less accessible villages support this opinion. About twenty three percent (23.75%) from more accessible villages and 31.25% from less accessible villages were not sure whether the mentioned opportunity was important for poverty reduction or not. Chi-square statistic test showed statistical significance ($X^2 = 13.333$) difference at $P \leq 0.01$ between people from more accessible villages and those from less accessible villages.

Results indicate that while 57.7% of respondents from more accessible villages accepted that participation of non-governmental institutions contributed to poverty reduction, only 38.75% of respondents from less accessible villages recognize the contribution of those institutions. Likewise, 32.5% of the respondents from accessible villages and 42.5% from less accessible villages were not sure whether these institutions contributed to poverty reduction or not. The differences were statistically significant at $P \leq 0.05$. General observations showed that more accessible villages received higher number of non-governmental institutions for development support compared to less accessible villages.

Assessment on information dissemination as an opportunity revealed that more than half of the respondents (70% from more accessible villages and 57.5% from less accessible villages) agreed that information dissemination contributed to poverty reduction (Table 1 and Figure 3). The difference in response was statistically significant at chi-square 28.482 and P-value less than 0.01. Furthermore, 38.75% of respondents from less accessible villages and 11.25% from more accessible villages were not sure of the importance of the opportunity for poverty reduction.

Focus group discussions revealed that generally, rural communities were hardly accessing information media like newspapers, televisions and radio. For this reason, these communities mostly either missed information or received information which is outdated. Further assessment on the opportunities showed that about equal proportions of respondents from both the more accessible and less accessible villages (51.25 and 53.75%, respectively) agreed that multiparty democracy was important for poverty reduction. Only 12.5% from more accessible and 11.25% from less accessible villages were not sure.

Poverty reduction opportunities identified in the study area

Focus group discussions and observations revealed that the main opportunities for poverty reduction in the study area were agricultural land and the resulting markets for agricultural products. Majority of respondents (97.5%) said that the main opportunity they saw around in their area was farming. Few of them (18.1%) mentioned loans as opportunities that can be accessed. Only 6.3% of the respondents mentioned opportunities such as markets, employment and mining. These results imply that poverty reduction in the study area is mostly dependent on land use. However, agriculture was dominated by small-scale subsistence farming. This is in line with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (2001) that despite abundance of underutilized land, Tanzanian agriculture is dominated by small-scale subsistence farming because of heavy reliance on the hand hoe as the main cultivating tool. This explains why majority of rural community members are poor regardless of the abundance of land they possess.

DISCUSSION

The respondents from both types of villages (more accessible and less accessible) had different opinions concerning the opportunities claimed by the government for poverty reduction. With exception of multiparty democracy opportunity, the opportunities identified by the government are more recognized by the rural

communities in more accessible villages as compared to those in less accessible villages. This is in line with Ahmed and Hossain (1990) that a new or rehabilitated road contributes to poverty reduction. The difference in awareness of community members on poverty reduction opportunities between more and less accessed villages can be associated with the rate of interactions of people from different parts of the country and access to development services, which may influence exposure on different opportunities and their utilization. Concerning government claimed opportunities:

First, government commitment to eradicate poverty: The rural community members had opinion that the government could have more effect on poverty reduction if it would support farmer's production. Important support needed by the rural communities were identified as provision of working capital, ensuring proper expenditure of development funds from different sources and facilitating access to opportunities available for poverty reduction.

Secondly, peace and political stability: Those who indicated that the opportunity was important had an opinion that the opportunity allows for the involvement of people in poverty reduction activities. This opinion is similar to that of the government that peace and political stability allows for the participation of the people in decision-making process, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of poverty eradication programs (URT, 1998).

The few who considered this opportunity as not important for poverty reduction argued that peace and political stability has been there for most of the time but their poverty situation has remained high. In addition, the respondents also complained that they were not enjoying the peace and political stability claimed by the government due to poverty related problems which they face. They mentioned some of the problems as diseases, food shortages poor education and health services. Although, this study did not go further to assess the magnitude of the mentioned problems, it shows that in order to make the rural community members appreciate the importance of peace and political stability, the government should strive to address problems associated with poverty facing rural communities.

Thirdly, market liberalization: Regardless the level of accessibility of the village, the respondents who recognize the importance of market liberalization in poverty reduction supported their opinion that the opportunity allows farmers to have a wider choice of selling and buying various products. This opinion is in line with the government (URT, 1998) strategy. However, it was obvious that many people from more accessible villages acknowledge the importance of market liberalization in poverty reduction because transport services affect production, processing, manufacturing, marketing and distribution of goods and services, which are important outcomes of the market liberalization. These services

were less likely to be enjoyed in less accessible villages. Fang and Kang (2005) argue that reliable access from villages to markets and social services is an essential component of the quality of life for rural population.

Fourthly, supportive International community: The majority of respondents who indicated that supportive International community were not important had the opinion that in most cases, rural community members did not access support provided by the international community. This comply with opponents of debt relief who argue that debt relief is like a 'blank cheque' to governments, and they fear that the savings may not reach the poor in countries plagued by corruption (IMF and World Bank, 2009). This is contrary to the government's argument (URT, 1998) that supportive international community encourages increased flow of international resources to meet the needs of the poor.

Fifthly, natural resources: Majority of those who appreciated the importance of natural resources in poverty reduction, mentioned land as the main natural resource accessed and used by the majority of rural community members. This confirms reliance of rural communities on land as important means of their livelihood and poverty reduction. However, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (2001) noted that despite abundance of unutilized land, Tanzanian agriculture is dominated by small-scale subsistence farming. This is because of the heavy reliance on the hand hoe as the main cultivating tool. This is contrary to the argument of Tanzania government that the country is endowed with rich natural resources, which can be utilized to eradicate poverty (URT, 1998). The results reveal further that rural community members had low understanding on types of natural resources and their utilization; which reflects high possibility of underutilization and unsustainable use of available resources. Therefore, achievement in poverty reduction will be obtained if the claimed resources that is, arable land, mineral resources and game reserves will be properly utilized.

Sixth, participation of non-governmental institutions: The difference in opinions on contribution of non-governmental institutions in poverty reduction between more accessible and less accessible villages can be associated with different factors. The factors can include individual perception, awareness on non governmental operations, variation in nongovernmental performance, donors' interests and supporting capacity etc. Respondents felt that some non-governmental institutions were formed for the institution owners' interests but making use of rural communities' problems to justify project funds from donors. The respondents explained that some institutions undertook programs that were not suitable for conditions of the rural communities. One of such programs is credit program with high interest rates as compared to money circulation in rural areas. Similarly, Frank and Mdoe (2003) argue that the rural poor encounter a public sector institutional context that is

neutral or blocking rather than enabling for them to construct their own pathways out of poverty.

Seventh: Information dissemination: It was observed that rural communities especially those in interior areas hardly access information particularly through newspapers and other publications. These results contradict with the government opinion (URT, 1998) that there is now good communication media to reach everyone that can be used to raise people's understanding and awareness on poverty reduction issues.

Eighth, multiparty democracy: Respondents who indicated that multiparty democracy was important for poverty reduction supported their opinion that opposition political parties were challenging the government thus, making it more active. Those who disagreed felt that many political parties were not for helping people but rather were for personal interests. It was interesting to find that multiparty democracy was the only opportunity that appreciated more by rural community members in interior areas than those in more accessible areas (Figure 3). This indicates that rural communities were more involved in politics than other opportunities for poverty reduction.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study conclude that the eight opportunities identified by the government for reduction of poverty in Tanzania are more recognized by communities in the more accessible villages as compared to communities in remote areas. It is also concluded that the main poverty reduction opportunity realized by community members in the rural area is land. Also, rural community members have important concerns about poverty reduction opportunities. This study recommends that: for enhancing achievement of the rural communities in poverty reduction, the government and other development agencies should raise awareness of rural communities on poverty reduction opportunities.

Awareness raising should focus on kind of opportunities, available opportunities and their accessibility, utilization and sustainability. In addition to that, raising awareness on the opportunities should go hand in hand with promotion of land use to ensure effective and sustainable use of it. Also, rural communities should be facilitated to form farmer groups so as to improve their power of negotiation and ability to access other opportunities. Rural communities' concerns about poverty reduction opportunities should be considered by development stakeholders so as to enable the communities participate fully in poverty reduction strategies.

In addition to that, the government of Tanzania should ensure access of rural communities to poverty reduction resources or opportunities provided by the international community. Enabling communities to take full advantage of emerging opportunities should start with individuals/households within their living places.

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