

Introduction: Socioeconomic Development in Botswana

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In 2011, the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) Botswana Chapter, partnered with the *Journal of Social Development in Africa (JSDA)*, in order to produce a Special Issue of the Journal. The OSSREA Botswana Chapter was founded in 1985, and draws membership from educational and research institutions, non-governmental organisation, as well as individual social science researchers and graduate students.

The *JSDA* which is a peer-reviewed Journal hosted by the University of Zimbabwe's School of Social Work, has been in circulation for over 25 years without interruption. The Journal publishes analyses, findings and recommendations relating to social development in Africa, including theoretical, empirical and descriptive works and relevant scholarly discussions of ethics. The Special Issue of the *JSDA* focused on key issues relating to Botswana's socio-economic development policies and practices. The partnership between OSSREA and the *JSDA* demonstrates the ongoing efforts of the two entities to promote mentorship and capacity-building in the area of research and publications.

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Botswana is still experiencing the residual effects of the global economic slump, which negatively affected its economic growth from the end of 2008. This setback notwithstanding, in the past four decades since Independence, Botswana registered impressive economic growth which has enabled the country's leaders to implement various programmes geared towards improving the welfare and livelihoods of Botswana. The steady economic growth and development enabled Botswana to graduate from extreme poverty, into a middle income country. The stable democratic political dispensation has also contributed to Botswana's robust developmental growth.

The major challenge to Botswana's economic growth over the years has been the country's heavy reliance on the mineral sector, in addition to a fledgling industrial and manufacturing base, and a small market for its goods and services. Lately, the Government of Botswana has adopted multi-sectoral approaches to development in the drive towards economic diversification. Education and skills development have constituted key areas of focus in ensuring sustained economic growth. The lack of adequate alignment of educational provision with Botswana's socio-economic realities and imperatives, has presented challenges, which are also linked to the lack of an entrepreneurial culture.

The country's rapid economic development has also caused a variety of interrelated social ills and associated challenges, which have wrought far-reaching transformations in the country's socio-cultural structures. Amongst the enduring challenges, is gender inequality, which continues to pose a serious impediment to equitable resource distribution, and the HIV and AIDS epidemic, which threatens to reverse the country's overall socio-economic gains. In order to deal with the various developmental challenges, the Government has formulated socioeconomic policies and programmes that are geared

towards economic diversification and poverty eradication. CEDA, LEA and ISPAAD constitute examples of Government-driven initiatives that were launched to augment existing micro-level economic programmes, in order to promote and support citizen entrepreneurship. This Special Issue of the *Journal of Social Development in Africa* accorded academics and researchers an opportunity to interrogate the various developmental challenges to, as well as the opportunities for, the promotion of Botswana's sustained socioeconomic development.

Botswana's tourism sector is growing exponentially, and has contributed significantly to economic growth in the country. To this end, there is increasing recognition and acknowledgment of the critical role of cultural heritage, incorporating both tangible and intangible heritage, in promoting tourism-related activities in the country.

In recognition of the importance of cultural heritage, the paper by Disele, Tyler and Power is premised on the provisions of the National Policy on Culture of 2001 and the National Ecotourism Strategy of 2002. These documents highlight the commitment of the Government of Botswana to the preservation of the country's cultural and historical heritage. The authors examined the role of national dress, as one of the necessary pre-conditions for a cohesive national identity and pride. A combination of participant observation methods, interviews and focus group discussions were used to gain an understanding of the perceived cultural meaning of dress generally, and ethnic dress in particular, its symbolism and society's perceptions regarding its various roles and functions. The authors attended key events of a cultural nature, such as installations of traditional leaders and interviewed both adults and youth, in both the rural and urban areas.

Disele, Tyler and Power explored the concept of a national traditional dress, in terms of what it is and how it relates to the wider concept of dress, both internationally and in the context of Botswana.

They drew the conclusion that while there were some over-arching similarities in the different types and forms of traditional dress, there was generally no common national dress, but rather various forms and styles of attires symbolizing collective ethnic membership and cohesion. There also appeared to be some traditional dress materials and types, which are common across Botswana, that could be integrated into what could serve as a national traditional/ethnic dress.

The study noted that there was a general desire for a national traditional dress in the country. The informants in the study recommended country-wide consultations, in order to come up with concrete suggestions for a national dress that reflects and incorporates the country's ethnic diversity. The views and perceptions about dress provide a framework for beginning the dialogue on the possible characteristics of the national traditional/ethnic dress that could be adopted in Botswana. This work will add to existing knowledge on traditional dress and its uses within the context of Botswana culture, and fills a knowledge gap identified in the current National Policy on Culture.

Governments all over the world have increasingly acknowledged the role of entrepreneurship in improving overall education development, as well as its role in promoting overall economic development. Mokgosi's paper explores the importance of the discipline of Business Studies in the education system, in the context of the role of education in national and economic development per se, particularly during hard times. It acknowledges that Business Studies as a subject was introduced in the Botswana Basic education curriculum, to enhance the quality of education, with a view ultimately to promote business skills and entrepreneurship. The paper explores the prevailing definitions and understandings of the concept of quality education, and articulates the complexity of the meaning of this concept, and contextualizes

it to Botswana. Mokgosi's paper specifically explores the views of stakeholders, pertaining to what constitutes quality education, as well as their perceptions about the role of Business Studies in the promotion of quality education towards achievement of overall economic development. The study concludes by highlighting recommendations made by the stakeholders, which emphasise the need to improve aspects of education policy and implementation, to achieve quality education through offering Business Studies.

Muranda, Mphela and Nyakudya's article contributes to the discourse on the interface between entrepreneurship policy, motivation in business start-ups, growth and enterprise diversification. Their intervention is based on a nation-wide survey conducted among two-hundred and twenty-six (226) operators of small and medium enterprises in Botswana. The authors start by providing a historical analysis of the policy environment for industrial development, clearly showing that the focal entrepreneurial policy measures were introduced in 1999 with the launch of the Small and Medium Enterprises policy framework. The authors' conceptual model is premised on the notion that entrepreneurial diversity derives from sound entrepreneurial policy and individual motivation.

The literature reviewed for the paper highlights the key differences in terms of entrepreneurial motivation in developed and developing countries. In developed countries, entrepreneurial motivation is premised on the desire for independence and autonomy. In developing countries, however, 'push' factors are primarily due to economic hardships triggered off by such challenges as unemployment. In addition to the policy environment, these factors contribute to the success or failure of enterprises, and their propensity for either stagnation or growth.

The results of the study, which was conducted in five urban areas

in eastern Botswana, indicate that the usual 'push' factors identified in many developing countries that face economic hardships, do not seem to exist to the same extent in the context of Botswana due to factors such as the country's relatively positive economic outlook. Consequently, factors that lead to business start-up in Botswana may be identical more with those associated with people in the developed countries. The findings show that interest in diversification of the economy is negatively affected by the lack of capital, a narrow skill-base, and poor institutional support.

Kamwendo's paper focuses on the internationalization of the language curriculum at the University of Botswana. Defining internationalization as involving mobility, academic collaboration and knowledge transfer, the author acknowledges that these processes have been in existence at the University of Botswana since its establishment in 1982. The development of a deliberate policy on internationalization and its related institutional structure - the Office of International Education and Partnerships (OIEP) - however, only occurred in 2006. He examines the implications, actual and potential challenges of internationalizing the language curriculum, citing the dilemmas that the University of Botswana faces in trying to maintain national and regional relevance within the context of globalization.

Kamwendo commences his paper by contextualizing the internationalization dynamic at UB. He does this by first explaining the process of language diffusion in African universities. He laments the lasting effects of the colonial experience of language use in Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone African universities. Drawing from official UB documents, key informant interviews at UB and personal experience, the author identifies the challenges and inherent contradictions of teaching English to Botswana in an Anglophone country. While applauding the offering of French,

Portuguese and Chinese which are part of the internationalization menu, the author underscores the importance of keeping a balance between the global, the regional, national and local interests. In his conclusion, Kamwendo challenges scholars to debate the merits and demerits of internationalization, as well as the maintenance of local relevance within the context of UB, which institution fashions itself as a distinctly African University.

Jotia's paper explores democracy and education issues in Botswana. The purpose of the paper is three-fold. Firstly, it explains the importance of democratic education; secondly, it highlights the challenges of promoting democratic education in Botswana; and lastly, it makes recommendations regarding the way forward. The author identifies a number of advantages of allowing learners to participate fully in the teaching - learning process, and these include: the improvement of intellectual independence; the improvement of problem solving abilities; the development of higher levels of creativity; as well as the development of higher degrees of tolerance and cooperation which will help the learners in future to become active participants within democratic communities. Jotia argues that despite the above mentioned advantages of democratic education, the education system in Botswana has a long way to go to achieve democracy.

According to Jotia, challenges of realising democratic education in Botswana include: failure by the system to allow various minority languages to be heard within the school; inadequate attention that is paid to low achievers and to those with speech deformities; and, the use of corporal punishment in schools. As for the way forward, Jotia recommends the following: that the school system should provide a platform where both teachers and students can experience democracy daily; the introduction of multicultural education in all institutions of learning; allowing and encouraging learners to question the socio-

economic and political realities surrounding them; and the use, in the school system, of participatory methods of learning and assessment such as group discussions, dialogue, drama, research projects, experimentation, field trips and films.

Finally, Ruele's paper uses the contextual theology of liberation method to address the question of poverty. He argues that this method is relevant for poverty eradication because it views poverty as a form of oppression that requires liberation. Ruele argues that salvation is not confined to personal liberation, but rather encompasses liberation from oppression and social inequalities brought on by political and social structures which he argues, must be removed. In this sense, salvation forms an important part of the process of poverty eradication. The author asserts that the contextual theology of liberation method associates poverty with landlessness, economic disparity, ethnic, racial and cultural beliefs, gender oppression, and incurable diseases such as HIV and AIDS.

Ruele further argues that the church in Botswana can contribute to poverty eradication through, among other things, the provision of moral and ethical guidance on how to use and share the land; and, the extending of charity activities to the poor. In order to illustrate the issues relating to landlessness, and general socio-economic deprivation, Ruele uses the Basarwa tribe of Botswana, who are widely considered to be the most marginalized ethnic group in Botswana.

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