

CIVIL SOCIETY IN TANZANIA: AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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Abstract

This paper is an examination of the profile of civil societies in Tanzania and analytical review of sources of information relating to these societies. Data for research were obtained from secondary sources, self-administered questionnaires, interviews and document searches. Secondary sources of data were gathered from library and documentation centers in Dar es salaam, Arusha and Mwanza. Questionnaires were sent to various Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Interviews were conducted with key informants who are involved in civil society issues. Document searches were carried out to identify and list items on civil society. Data processing and analysis included the preparation of abstracts and creation of computerized database of civil society in Tanzania. The findings show, among others, that forty two percent of all the civil societies surveyed were established and registered in the period between 1997 and 1999; ninety six percent of all the civil societies were local as opposed to four percent which were international. Forty three percent of all civil societies were located in Dar es Salaam. Sixty percent of civil societies deal with social development programmes. Additionally, results show that most civil societies had disproportionate staffing problems; and sixty six percent depended on international sources of funding while 46% reported that they secured funds from both local and foreign sources of financing.

Introduction

The role of civil society in Tanzania has grown rapidly in the last 15 years coinciding with major changes in the political and government system as well as in the economy. Until the mid-1980's, under socialism and the single party political system there was little scope for the development of a dynamic, vocal and vibrant civil society. The multi-party pluralism of the 1990's; the encouragement of the private sector, and the compulsory cost sharing by communities of basic services, and some excesses of the market economy have strengthened the role of the civil society in providing greater access to social services. The civil society also began to play an active role in promoting economic enterprises, reducing poverty and advocating for greater respect for the basic human rights of women, men and children.

The term civil society is used to describe a wide range of organized groupings and associations, which occupy the public space between the government and industry on the one hand and the individual citizens on the other. Civil society organizations (CSOs) include formally organized and registered trade unions; charitable bodies; associations; non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and community based organizations (CBOs) as well as informal groupings for social or economic purposes such as youth, or income-generating groups.

In spite of the rapid development of civil society in the 1990's, there is no easily accessible data on the CSOs even as to their number. Current numbers range from 800 to 8000. While NGOs and CBOs need to be registered, the informal groups do not have to be unless they are applying for formal loans or grants. CBOs have to be registered under the Societies Ordinance of 1954 and NGOs; can be registered under three other different ordinances.

There are no comprehensive studies of CSOs and a systematic analysis of their actual and potential role in social, economic and political development. Several studies of some individual NGO's exist but have not been systematically collected or documented. Additionally information contained in such documents may not be available since many are in private offices and therefore not accessible to the public. With the exception of few CSOs such as the Tanzania Gender Network Programme (TGNP), Tanzania Association of Non-governmental Organizations (TANGO) and Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA), Economic and Social Science Research Foundation (ESRF), most do not have documentation centers. A few well organized and better endowed NGO's have e-mail addresses but none are linked to the new information technology through websites or homepages on the Internet. Consequently very little information is available on most CSOs in Tanzania.

The overall purpose of the project was to create an analytical bibliography and database of sources of information on civil society in Tanzania and thereby:

Increase the flow of information on civil society in Tanzania to a cross-section of stakeholders by preparing and making accessible an analytical bibliography on the topic in electronic media; enhance

knowledge and understanding of the trends in the development of civil society in Tanzania; increase our understanding of the growth patterns of literature on civil society in Tanzania.

This research was therefore undertaken to provide answers to the following questions:

What is the extent of the CSO's growth and what kind of activities are they involved in? What kinds of documents are available on the functions and contributions of civil society and various CSOs? What are the issues and trends that emerge from the literature on CSOs? In what ways can ICT be used to solve access problems to information on CSOs?

Literature Review

Review of literature has shown that CSOs were growing globally in the past two decades. Countless citizen groups and organizations were being formed to participate in governing their respective societies (Mihan Foundation, 2000). Notwithstanding this fact, there has been no universally agreed definition of civil society, but consensus is emerging on that this is the third sector after government and business (Midttun, 2005; Hauss, 2003). Whereas the government is considered as the provider of public services and locus for political aggregation of people's interests, business is associated with market economics whose outlook is profit maximization without broader societal concerns (Friedman, 1970). CSOs on the other hand are concerned with the socio-economic well being of the societies.

In Tanzania, non-governmental organizations provided an alternative view on issues such environment, mineral exploitation, policy and finance. For example, Lawyers Environmental Action Team (LEAT), a non-governmental organization formed by environmental lawyers that deals with the environment has been protesting on ways in which the government of Tanzania has been privatizing the mining sector to foreign-based firms without prior consideration and compensation for local people. Demonstrating its seriousness on the issue, it has filed a petition to the High Court of Tanzania. Additionally, non-governmental organizations have protested against the decision of the government to purchase a presidential jet worth billions of dollars.

Other CSOs dealing with poverty have challenged the existing government policies for example on the fairness of payments being made by foreign mining companies to the government. Of particular interest here is not the conflict between civil societies and the government but the inability of the state to control CSOs which in turn could be a watch dog of the government and the private sector. CSOs influence public policies, strengthen democracy and exert pressure to other sectors to meet social responsibilities (Hauss, 2003). The conflict between HakiElimu and the Ministry of Education in Tanzania is a case in point.

According Hauss (2003), government and business sectors have been extensively covered in literature but little has been done on civil society organizations despite their importance and expansion. Little is known regarding types of available organizations, their scope and reach, number of staff and sources of information.

This study was carried out to bridge this gap and determine the state of civil society organizations in Tanzania. The findings were anticipated to benefit civil society organizations, the government, researchers and public at large.

Research Methodology

The overall research design for this study integrated both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The project was undertaken in two phases: the first phase included the initial work relating to search of print and electronic media within Dar es Salaam. It also involved preparation of a profile of basic data on civil society organizations based on available data supplemented by questionnaires and visits to civil societies in Dar es Salaam. The second phase involved data collection in Mwanza and Arusha. The third phase involved the creation of the electronic databases of civil society organizations profiles and an analytical bibliography.

A number of methods were used to collect materials on the extent and range of civil society organizations. The materials indicated the role, activities, and scope of the civil society organizations. The data collection started with the umbrella organizations like the Tanzanian Association of Non-governmental Organizations (TANGO), the Office of the Registrar of Societies and the Vice-President's Office which has a special division for NGOs and the focal point for the registration of civil society organizations.

A questionnaire was designed to obtain the necessary information about civil societies in Tanzania. The questions requested the following data: name of the organization, year of establishment, registration number, location, addresses, status (local, international, local umbrella) type (gender, legal aid, training, advocacy), objectives, activities, geographic areas of operation, collaborating organizations, funding, number of professional and non-professional staff and decision-making processes. This information was used to create a database on the profile of civil societies in Tanzania.

Face to face interviews were conducted with the managers of civil society organizations. Managers are involved in civil society organization's planning and decision-making. Face to face interviews provided the opportunity for further probing.

Data Collection for the Analytical Bibliography Materials was collected from both print and electronic sources. The process involved starting with the resources at the University of Dar es Salaam, both the main library and the collections from departmental libraries. Outside the University of Dar es Salaam, materials were collected through visits to the various civil society organizations, a few of which (TGNP, ESRF, TANGO) had their own documentation centers. The materials collected were then reviewed and abstracted.

Data processing of profiles of civil societies was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics. Data analysis of the materials about CSOs was based on abstracts and analysis of the themes, trends and gaps.

Findings

Profile of Civil Society Organizations

The main sources for the profile have been the published directories of NGOs supplemented by data from the interviews and personal visits. The online database has been created and has a total of 3,015 records. This database can be accessed at the UDSM Library Website at: <http://www.udsm.ac.tz/library/index.htm>

Growth of Civil Society Organizations

The data showed that the development of registered civil societies in Tanzania span over several decades (*see Table 1*).² Despite the long history of civil societies in Tanzania, the study revealed that majority of these were established in the 1990s and within this decade most of the civil societies were formed and registered between 1997 and 1999 only. Forty two percent of all the civil societies giving information on the year that they were first established were registered during these three years. This finding confirms the arguments of several studies (Kiondo; 1995) on the development of civil society in Tanzania. The demise of the socialist policies in Tanzania in the 1980's led to the creation of a more pluralistic society in terms of politics with the initiation of multi-party politics. At the same time there were major shifts in the economic policies with the adoption of privatization, liberalization and structural adjustment. The changes in the political and economic arenas reinforced the crisis in the state apparatuses with its failure to intervene in the social-economic lives of the people. This decade then saw the mushrooming of the civil societies to fill this gap.

Table 1: Growth of Civil Society Organizations between 1940s and 1990s.

Year of Registration	Number of Civil Societies	Percent distribution
Up to 1969	12	0.6%
1970-1979	5	0.2%
1980-1989	38	2%
1990-1999	1793	96.5%
2000	9	4%
Total	1857	100%

Source: Data from Directories and Interviews

The status

The data was analyzed to find out to what extent the growth of the civil society is a national phenomenon. Ninety six percent of all the civil societies are local (defined as within Tanzania) and only 4% are international NGOs. Most NGOs have a very narrow coverage, restricted to a district or even a few villages in a district. Nevertheless, there are some NGOs that have branches in several

² Data was not available for about 39% of the CSOs

regions as well as in some districts. SHEDPHA + is a good example. Others like TGNP have networks that create a link from the national level to the grassroots.

Areas of Operation and Location of Headquarters

Forty three percent of all registered civil societies are located in Dar es Salaam Region (see Table 2). This supports the finding by Fleming and Mascarenhas (1999) in their analysis of NGOs in 1999. Other regions like Arusha, Morogoro and Kilimanjaro also have a substantial number of civil societies (see table 2). Lindi is the region with the lowest number of registered civil societies located in the region with only about 0.3% of all civil societies. Other regions with low number of civil societies include Shinyanga, Singida and Tabora (see table 3). The four regions combined had only about 2% of all civil societies. The dominance of Dar es Salaam could be due to a number of factors. One, Dar es Salaam is the de facto capital and the major industrial and commercial city. Second, some of the civil societies were located in Dar es Salaam for strategic purposes but operate in other regions.

Table 2: Regions accounting for larger number of CSOs

Name of the Region	Number of CSOs	Percent distribution
Dar es Salaam	1301	42.8 %
Arusha	233	7.5%
Morogoro	160	5.1%
Kilimanjaro	153	4.8%

Table 3: Regions accounting for smaller (less than 1%) number of CSOs

Name of the Region	Number of CSOs	Percent distribution
Shinyanga	19	0.6%
Tabora	19	0.6%
Singida	17	0.6%
Lindi	10	0.3%

Most civil societies are located in regions where they operate. However, operations may not be region-wise as some operate within communities, villages or wards. About 43% of all civil societies operate in Dar es Salaam Region; followed by Arusha Region with about 7%, Morogoro 5.3% and Kilimanjaro 5%.

The Nature of Activities and Programmes

Information on the categorization of CSOs activities was based on information provided in the *Directory of NGOs (2000)* produced by the Office of the Vice-President. The data shows that civil societies in Tanzania are engaged in a wide variety of activities and areas (see Table 4). Sixty percent of all civil society organizations were involved in social development activities (See Table 4).

Table 4: Ten Dominant Activity Programmes of CSOs in Tanzania

Type of Program	Percent distribution
Social Development	59.5%
Economic Development	20.5%
Education and Training	14.5%
Environment	12.3%
Gender	10.5%
Agriculture	8.9%
Health	8.6%
Youth/Children	7.9%
Religious	6.5%
Professional Associations	5.7%

The dominance of social development programmes is not surprising. This is a broad area covering many sub-areas including health and education. These two social services had been negatively affected by Structural Adjustment Programme. Other programmes relating to issues of gender and environment are gaining importance therefore emerging as popular activity areas for local civil societies. The growth of civil societies in the health sector is partly explained by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Civil society organizations on HIV/AIDS are involved in research, counseling and awareness creation on the disease.

Human Resources

The *Directory of NGOs (2000)* published by the Vice President's Office does not include information on staffing of civil societies in Tanzania. Information on this variable was obtained from 32 civil society organizations. The findings show that 25% of civil societies had no full-time employees, 41% had between 1 and 10; 16% had between 11 and 20; 13% between 21 and 40; and 6% had above 50 full-time employees. This indicates that a substantial number of

CSOs have permanent or full-time employees. Two CSOs had no part-time staff and 12 had between 1 and 10 part-time staff. Only nine civil societies had more than 10 part-time staff. This situation is probably due to the fact that most civil societies have poor financial resources to attract, train and retain capable staff. As a result most CSOs lack skills and expertise in many areas, making it difficult for them to plan, implement and evaluate their programme activities. On coordination of CSOs data shows that about 66% had coordinators with postgraduate qualifications.

Financial Resources

Information on the sources of funding was largely not available in the Directory of NGOs (2000). However, information was available from other sources for a small proportion of the CSOs. Results showed that most CSOs mobilize funding from a variety of sources, both local and international. Twenty seven percent depend entirely on local sources of funding such as membership fees. Sixty six percent depend on international sources of funding while 46% reported that they depended on both local and foreign sources of financing. Generally the limited financial resources are one of the factors that constrain the capacity of most CSOs to implement their activities and programmes.

Organizational Structures

Fourteen civil societies indicated that they had board of directors. Seventeen reported to have had management committee meetings and 16 had regular meetings of members. The organizational structure is important especially in issues of accountability and transparency. Civil societies have been criticized for lacking clear operational and accounting procedures of finances and other resources.

Collaborative Links

Only 3% of the civil societies indicated to have collaboration with other civil societies or institutions in and outside of Tanzania. Probably this is because of the dominance of the local NGOs that are probably not well connected and funded. It also could be a reflection of the lack of skilled manpower and especially of well qualified coordinators who could forge such links and collaborate for the benefit of their organizations.

Access to Communication Facilities

Access to communication facilities is critical for the development and the day-to-day operations of civil societies. The available data shows that CSOs in Tanzania are not well connected. For those that are located in the rural areas the question of access to such communication facilities is even more problematic although these are the ones that need it most because of the poor transport services.

Table 5: Availability of Communication Facilities

Type of facility	Frequency	Percent distribution
Telephone	483	16%
Fax	232	8%
E-mail	135	4%
Web-site	3	0.1%

Analytical Bibliography

The analytical bibliography on civil society contains abstracts on materials that are published locally and overseas. One hundred and sixty publications were collected, abstracted and entered into the database.

Types of Publications Produced by CSOs

Most of the materials produced by CSOs are mainly available in print format. However, there are few CSOs such as REPOA and ESRF with materials on electronic formats and had institutional websites. Information is also available on the internet and CD-ROMs. Many CSOs produced brochures, with information about the Vision, Mission, Objectives and current programmes. Few CSOs had Annual Reports and newsletters. Publications also include materials of academic nature such as journal articles, theses, dissertations, reports and in-depth case studies.

Thematic areas

Several themes and trends were identified from the analysis of documents on civil society in Tanzania. These themes include civil society and the state, NGO policy, advocacy for policy change, and coalitions and networks.

Civil society and the State

Most of the academic type publications discuss the relationship between the civil society and the state. The general consensus of the

local authors was that the civil society was suppressed by the colonial and post-independence (under one-party system) governments. However a more tolerant but uneasy partnership is emerging following the adoption of the multi-party democratic process and the economic liberalization and structural adjustment. Related to this are several sub-topics, including the role of civil society organizations and the impact of donor support in shaping civil society programmes.

Civil Society Organizations

Detailed information on the CSOs was available in the form of Annual Reports, Newsletters, Brochures, and Calendars and on the Web through Websites of some of these NGOs or through other websites reporting on these CSOs. In addition there were case studies of a few of them from the perspective of state-civil society relations or from the perspective of good governance. Not all CSOs were equally documented. The research found more materials on NGOs than on CBOs.

NGO Policy

The consultative process leading to the finalizations of the draft National NGO Policy was well documented. The process involved consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, and workshops held at national and regional levels.

Advocacy for Policy Change

Traditionally NGO's have been providers of social services such as health, education, and water where the government provision was inadequate. A number of publications examined the role of CSOs in the provision of these services

Coalitions and Networks

Associated with advocacy for policy change is the development of networks and coalitions. Publications dealing with both aspects were identified.

Conclusion and recommendation

The study of civil society is a fairly new phenomenon and apparently under-researched in the conventional sense. The CSOs are under-resourced and have little time to document their invaluable activities and ensure that these documents are well organized. The research provided many insights into the

characteristics and activities of the civil society organizations. Findings showed that the range of CSOs was very wide and that the resources and capacities of NGO's were as varied as their activities. Some CSOs were found to have no physical addresses although they had telephone numbers. This confirms the perception that a number of CSOs are "briefcase" CSOs. Findings also revealed that many CSOs have very limited human resources to efficiently and effectively manage their activities. The study recommends that the collection of data about these CSOs be an on-going activity.

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