Towards Long Term Development in Kenya: A Policy Analysis

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Abstract

Background: “Kenya vision 2030” policy was launched in 2008, with the objectives of reducing poverty and enhancing wealth distribution equitably. The aim of this paper is to analyse the policy and assess its implementation for policy recommendations on effective strategies for eradicating poverty in all its forms, including extreme poverty in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Subjects and Method: A literature search was carried out using PubMed, Medline, CINAL and Google Scholar where both key terms and free text search were conducted. The triangle of policy framework was utilized to determine the relevant actors, context, content, and process. The Stages Heuristic model was applied to assess the levels of agenda setting, legitimacy, feasibility, and support for the policy, while the three dimensions of the Kingdon’s model, streams of problem, policy and politics established whether a window of opportunity was created in agenda setting.

Results: The context revealed social-economic factors, ethnic violence, and both local and international pressure upon the Government to act. The main actors were the Government, development assistance partners, local and international experts, NGO’s, the civil society and the private sector. Content refers to a long-term development policy implemented through consecutive five-year Medium-Term Plans (MTP). The process showed that The Kenya vision 2030 reached the political agenda because of a policy window, and high support, feasibility, and legitimacy by all the stakeholders.

Conclusion: While significant progress has been made to meet some of the MTP indicators and goals, several gaps and challenges have also been identified. Kenya is not on track to eradicate poverty by 2030, with COVID pandemic, Ukraine war and the drought slowing down the process by alleviating the resources to fight the pandemic. Further steps are necessary to put the efforts against poverty back in track.

Keywords: Kenya Vision 2030, Medium Term Plans, poverty reduction, sustainable development

Background

Kenya is a lower middle-income country situated in the sub-Saharan region of Africa (Group, 2018). It is a former British colony and home to 53,005,614 individuals in 2021 as per World Bank (World Bank, 2023a).Although the official languages are English and Swahili, Kenya is a multicultural country comprising of more than 42 ethnic groups which can be classified into three broad linguistic groups namely Bantu, Nilotes and Cushites. The major ethnic groups are Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin, Luo, and Kamba, who make up approximately 17.1%, 14.3%, 13.4%, 10.7%, and 9.8% of the population respectively (CIA, 2023)(Kisaka & Nyadera, 2019).

Britain's colonization of Kenya begun in 1895 and ended on the 12th of December 1963 when Kenya regained its independence (Okia, 2019). Even though Kenya has a rich and diverse culture, there has been ethnic land grievances and inequalities, some of which can be traced back to the colonial era (Mati, 2019).

The postcolonial state retained all colonial institutions (Whittaker, 2015). Hence, the colonial heritage largely influenced the post-colonial state such that the imposition of colonial boundaries resulted in dividing single communities and nurturing negative ethnicity due to competition for colonial resources. Moreover, most of the populations in the north and north eastern part of Kenya, were concerned about the restriction of movement imposed by the post-colonial government, just like the British had done (Branch, 2011)Carrier & Kochore, 2014). Postcolonial population movements, the exponential population growth, transition to multiparty politics and the economic crisis in the 70´s have both contributed to making the ethnic demography politically salient especially regarding inequalities (Kasara, 2013). This has resulted to instrumentalized ethnicity which has been used for political mobilization in competition for power promoting exclusionary politics based on tribalism, regional inequalities due to skewed allocation of national resources in favour of the President's region, corruption and lack of national identity (Horowitz & Klaus, 2020).

Poverty eradication has remained a major challenge for political leadership since independence. Its levels have continued to rise despite the efforts successive governments have taken to address it through several policy and strategy frameworks(PEC), 2014). By the 1980s the economy had declined exacerbated by food shortage caused by the 1980s drought, increasing inflation and poverty, and tremendous decrease in living standards and wellbeing (Okereke & Agupusi, 2015b). Structural adjustment programmes (SAP) and other reform programmes were then introduced as a tactic to hasten development. But due to their emphasis on macroeconomic stabilization and growth, while neglecting the social and human capital development, the result was high levels of unemployment, inflation and budget deficit because of loans from IMF and the World Bank. There was therefore little success due to political instability and insensitivity to socio-economic and historical imperatives such as the assumption that rapid growth of key sectors like industry, service and agriculture, would automatically trickle down to the poor

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(Omiti et al., 2002)Okereke & Agupusi, 2015b). Furthermore, policies to address poverty, have failed due to poor formulation, initiation, planning or implementation of poverty alleviation programmes (Omiti et al., 2002).

In 2007, the share of the population in Kenya living under extreme poverty1 was 42.81% and under relative poverty 68.95% (Our World in Data 2022).This meant that a significant share of the population of 39 million was struggling to fulfil the most basic needs.

Problems of hunger, malnutrition and disease affect mostly the poorest in Kenya. This is because they have no or limited access to the most basic needs like food, shelter, water, health and sanitation. They are therefore rendered vulnerable to communicable diseases like pneumonia, malaria and diarrheal diseases which are the top 3 leading causes of under-five mortality in Kenya. Furthermore, their productivity is reduced which in turn slows economic growth and can perpetuate a cycle of poverty and ill-health (WHO, 2023a)

Kenya's economy was stagnant and had even shrunk in the 1990s, making the poverty issue much more severe, reflected by a 12% ascending poverty incidence rate from 1996 to 2003. In addition, between the years 1986-2000 a decline in life expectancy from 57 to 47 years was observed increased illiteracy rates as well as urban unemployment from 16% in 1986 to 25% in 1999.

Infant mortality had increased from 62 to 78 per a 1000 from 1993 to 2003, while under five mortality rose from 96 to 114 per 1000 births, in the same period. Stunting in children had also increased from 29% in 1993 to 31% in 2003. There were also large geographical variations in the distribution of poverty (IMF 2005b).

A new Government took office in 2002 after the first multi-party election since 1964. A new transformation programme called the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation Paper (ERSWCEP 2003) was introduced (Okereke & Agupusi, 2015b).

The Government wanted to trigger faster economic growth and development through e.g. strengthening of the macroeconomic framework by for example improving accountability in the use of public resources. To address equity and reduce poverty, focus needed to be put on the social gradient objectives like universal primary education and improved access to basic health services (IMF 2005b).

The ERSWCEP 2003 was the first major policy and strategy developed and implemented by the government to combat the root causes of inequality and widespread poverty in Kenya. It later served as a foundation to envision and develop the "Kenya vision 2030", policy with the ultimate goal to decrease poverty in the country achieving a remarkable development under the SDG#1 (UN, 2023a).

Research Aim

The overall objective of this study is to analyse the policy "Kenya Vision 2030" according to three policy frameworks (Policy triangle, Stages Heuristic model, and Kingdon model) with a secondary goal to highlight its impact for policy recommendations.

[1]Extreme poverty is living on less than 1.90 international dollars (int.-$. Per day).

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Subject and Method Identification of relevant studies

A literature search was carried out between 15 August 2021 to 30 November 2021 using PubMed, Medline, CINAHL and Google Scholar, where both key terms and free text search were conducted. Another search was performed in April of 2023. The search terms used were Kenya vision 2030, with poverty, reduction, alleviation, eradication, ethnic politics and/or independence. The search was expanded to include reports from international organisations including WHO, World Bank and UN, government agencies, ministries, as well as NGOs including Aid Agencies where data was collected through their respective websites.

A media review was also carried out as part of our non-academic source. The aim here was to investigate the media on reports, news articles that were published from 2003-2021. In addition, international TV news, interviews, and social media to obtain an overview of social, cultural or political factors that might have influenced the policy as well as identify the relevant actors were surveyed.

Theoretical framework

The policy triangle framework was then used to analyze the policy retrospectively through its four components namely, context, content, process, and actors. (Buse, et al., 2012)

The context revealed all the systemic factors that could have had an impact on the policy. These referred to situational factors that were not permanent but could have influenced the policy including low economic growth. Additional influences including the political system, cultural and societal values and beliefs as well as international or environmental aspects beyond the Kenyan political system may have an impact on the policy.

Actors or stakeholders were all those that were involved or could affect the decision making of the policy, and they operate on different levels, i.e., NGOs and civil society in local, national and global level, government officials, politicians, WHO, the IMF, the World Bank as well as other stakeholders at global level.

The process which involves policy initiation, development, negotiation, formulation, implementation, and evaluation, was explained through the "stages heuristic" model, first presented by Laswell in 1956, adapted by Hall et al, 1975, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993 (Benneke et al., 2018)Hansen & Andrioti, 2017). It uses the following main steps to present how the process might have occurred: Problem identification, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation.

Problem identification

According to the stages heuristic model, for "Kenya Vision 2030" to reach the political agenda, it must go through the process of agenda setting. This means that there needed to be high support, legitimacy, and feasibility. Support is characterised by those issues to which the public and some key political interests require that action is taken. Legitimacy refers to issues which the policy makers consider as appropriate for the government to act on. Finally, feasibility refers to those issues to which there is potential for implementation and thus a practical solution. This could be in the form of theoretical and technical knowledge, resources, and administrative abilities for potential implementation (Buse, et al., 2012).

The Kingdon's model on the other hand specifies that there should be a window of opportunity of agenda setting which happens only when the three streams - the problem stream, the politics stream and the policy stream run together allowing the item to move onto the governments' formal agenda. The problem stream refers to the issue that requires government action and it can be revealed or identified through indicators. The policy stream relates to the evaluations and analysis of problems and their proposed solutions. The politics stream is the willingness and ability of politicians to make a policy change, and is comprised of national mood, changes of government and campaigns by interest groups (Buse, et al., 2012).

Policy Formulation

It involves the identification of the course of action by actors involved, and also how it was conceived and agreed upon.

Policy Implementation

This is the translating the goals and objectives of the policy into action. If the policy is altered or not implemented as proposed, the expected outputs, outcomes, and impact, may be different.

Policy Evaluation/feedback

After the implementation of the policy on the specified timeframe, the achievements or gaps identified in relation to objectives are assessed and estimated against the goals set.

Results Context

A thorough understanding of the critical factors that either foster or undermine the policy towards Kenya's development was necessary (Labonté & Ruckert, 2019). The ultimate goal was the reduction of poverty in accordance with the SDG #1. Local and international experts were involved in the research (First Medium Term Plan (2008-2012).

According to the first model (policy framework) these factors can be analysed in:

The situational factors include the increasing poverty rate as mentioned earlier and the bloody postelection strife that engulfed Kenya in December 2007 causing more than 1100 deaths. The crisis also caused Kenya's economic growth which stood at about 7% at the end of December, to fall to under 2% in the first quarter of 2008 (Kanyinga & Long, 2012).

Structural factors: As a unitary state, Kenya is governed by the central government where the lower levels of government are strictly subordinate to higher levels (Mbondenyi & Ambani, 2012). The government was therefore able to make rapid decisions concerning the policy "Kenya Vision 2030", expecting federal governments to implement the respective polices.

Kenya's 2010 constitution decentralised power to 47 county authorities. However, the devolution strategy applied was not enough for the county authorities to federate with. The central government retained the power of critical functions making Kenya a quasi-federal system

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(Mbondenyi & Ambani, 2012). This ensures that the government continues to make rapid decisions regarding this policy, without taking into account the new structures created under the devolved system of government. Matters related to the roles and relations between county governments and the central government, with potential issues in the implementation phase of the policy were hardly considered.

Nationally and internationally, media covered extensively the policy “Kenya Vision 2030” thus informing and raising public awareness and rising public expectations towards eradicating poverty.

Cultural factors-Kenya’s economy was affected by the post-election violence that had been provoked by ethical grievances. There was a need for projects towards national healing and reconciliation as the different ethnic groups did not trust each other.

International or exogenous factors: Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030 fared to the Sustainable Development Goals as SDG#1 following the conclusion of the Millennium Development Goals (2000/2015). Political leaders together with essential stakeholders including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) committed to support policies geared towards sustainable poverty reduction strategies(IMF, 2012).

Actors

The state including various arms and structures of Government at central, regional & local levels were the main actors. Charged with formulating and processing the policy, the government officials have the power (hard and soft) and resources (tangible and intangible) (Buse et al., 2012) to influence and collaborate with the other actors. The policy was supported by the WHO and the UN via the SDGs. There were also Development Assistance partners including international partners and donors (Bretton Wood Institutions), bilateral and multilateral donors, local and international NGOs. They are supportive and have a high interest, power, and also possess tangible and intangible resources including the World Bank, and the IMF. The relationship between international donors and Kenya took a more concrete approach in the crafting of Vision 2030 (Okereke & Agupusi, 2015a).

Civil Society participations were sought through NGO-organized workshops in rural and urban areas to obtain an in-depth understanding of the country’s development challenges (Kenya: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper-Progress Report, 2012, p. 4).The local communities have high interest and supported the policy as they are the immediate beneficiaries.

The private sector, together with civil society, members of parliament and key institutions of Government on ways to fast track the implementation of the Vision 2030 programs, especially the flagship projects related to infrastructure such as modernization of aviation facilities, the Konza Techno City, energy, transport like the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport corridor –LAPPSET, the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), toll roads, the Build Own Operate and Transfer (BoT) arrangements and the development of a Rapid Bus and light rail system in the

Nairobi metropolitan (GoK, 2012). The private sector has played a key role in the flagship projects supporting of the implementation of the SDGs.

Local and International Experts from research institutions, private and public sector stakeholders, were consulted to synthesize the findings (GoK, 2012). Following a country situation analysis, the report identified sectors with the most promising potential in driving Kenya's economic growth up to 2030, as the basis for the respective policy recommendations. Among them as priorities were suggested the "Big Four" initiatives explained below in the MTP III, as this would contribute to a broad based inclusive sustainable economic growth, faster job creation and reduction of poverty and inequality.

Content

The main objective of Kenya Vision 2030 is to help transform Kenya into a newly industrializing middle-income country that provides a high quality of life to all its citizens in a sound and secure environment (Gok 2018). Launched in 2008, it aimed to achieve and sustain an economic growth rate of 10 per cent per annum till 2030 to generate more resources to address among others the SDG#1 of ending poverty in all its forms everywhere (UN, 2023b). According to the then president, "It is a call to Kenyans to make it possible for us to wipe out from our land absolute poverty, famine, mass unemployment, and preventable deaths from malaria and water-borne diseases"("Kenya: Vision 2030 Launched," 2007).

The vision is being implemented at the national and sub-national levels, through successive five-year Medium-Term Plans (MTPs) and County Integrated Development Plans which are aligned to the National MTP (Third Annual Progress Report 2020/21, p2). Each term identifies key policy actions, reforms as well as programs and projects to implement in their respective periods, in line with the agreed priorities, and the long-term objectives of vision 2030. This means that a new government following the recommendations agreed with stakeholders can choose their own set of development priorities, but they should also build on the successes of the previous government term.

The vision has also highlighted some flagship projects in every sector to be implemented during the vision period to facilitate the desired growth rate. These projects will directly address priorities in key sectors such as agriculture (GoK, 2012).

The vision is based on 3 pillars namely social, economic, and political with the political pillar envisioning a democratic system reflecting the aspirations of the people of Kenya. Even though the policy does not mention health as a human right, it however mentions that it aims to provide an efficient and high-quality health care system with the best standards.

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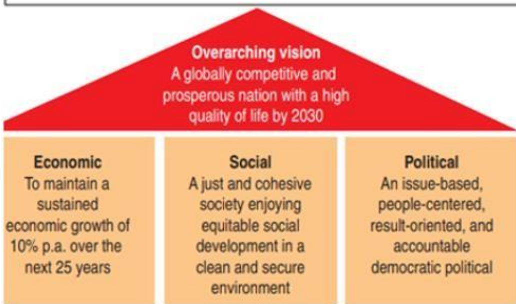
Figure 1. The Economic Social and Political pillars



Economic Pillar	Social Pillar	Political Pillar
Agriculture and livestock	Universal Health coverage Housing and urbanization	Devolution
Manufacturing	Education and Training, Sports, Culture and Arts	Governance and Rule of Law
Tourism, trade, BPO/ITES, Financial Services	Environment, Water, Sanitation and Regional Development	
Oil gas and other minerals, blue economy	Gender, Youth and Vulnerable Groups	

Source: GoK 2007

These three pillars in figure 1, (GOK, 2007) will be anchored on the foundations of macroeconomic stability, continuity in governance reforms, enhanced equity and wealth creation opportunities for the poor, infrastructure, energy, security, land reform, public sector reforms, science technology and innovation (STI) and human resources development (GoK, 2012).

The main goal of the First MTP 2008-2012 was reducing poverty with a measurable figure of Kenyans living below the poverty line, from 46 per cent to 28 per cent (GoK, 2008). Several projects were aimed towards national healing after the post-election violence as well as rapid reconstruction to reverse the damage. Some of the progress reported by 2012 included a 22% capacity increase for generation of electricity and 2,200 km of roads constructed exceeding the target of 1500 (highlighting the progress done mainly in the infrastructure). However, there were still challenges in the areas of employment and poverty, while 740,000 jobs were projected, only of 511,000 jobs were created. Furthermore, around 80% of the jobs created were informal, characterized by potential low payments and forgone taxes for the country.

The main objectives for the Second MTP 2013-2017 included to increase the scale and pace of economic transformation through infrastructure development, and strategic emphasis on priority sectors under the economic and social pillars of Vision 2030 (Gok, 2013). Other objectives were implementing devolution, to provide equitable, affordable and quality healthcare to all citizens and to create one million new jobs annually to address youth unemployment and improve skills. Key achievements of this plan included a fall in poverty levels from 46% in 2005-2006 to 36.1% in 2015-2016 and devolution2. 826,600 jobs were created (GoK, 2013). Again, however only 112,820 positions were created in the formal sector.

The third MTP III 2018-2022 was consistent with the previous forms. The target was to increase the real GDP annual growth from an average of 5.5 per cent achieved over the 2013-2017 period to 7 per cent by end of the Plan period (GoK, 2018). It is driven by the “Big Four” initiatives namely: Raise the share of manufacturing sector to 15 per cent of GDP;

2“a shift in power, authority, resources, and responsibilities from the Centre to other lower levels of government”

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Food security and improved nutrition for all by 2022; achieving Universal Health Coverage and delivering 500,000 affordable housing units (Gok, 2013).The implementation of these initiatives was expected to support higher economic growth and faster job creation, but also to reduce the high cost of living affecting many Kenyans and thus contributing to decrease poverty via reducing the cost of housing. Significant achievements were recorded in the various sectors yet Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected the 2020 economic performance which was at -0.3% (KNBS, 2022b).

The fourth MTP 2023-2027 will target to expand the real GDP by 9.2% by 2027 (GoK, 2018), as well as prioritize the implementation of economic recovery strategies in the aftermath of Covid-19 pandemic.

The implementation process is coordinated by the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate (MED) within the Ministry of State for Planning, National Development, which works closely with local and government agencies, private sector and NGOs. The relevant sectors carry out the implementation of the policy.

Table 1. Overall GDP (actual vs target) year per year 2013-2022

	MTP II at 2013-2017					MTP III at 2018-2022				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Actual	5.9	5.4	5.7	4.2	3.8	5.6	5.1	-0.3	7.5	5.5
Target	6.1	7.2	8.7	9.6	10.6	5.8	6.3	6.6		

Source: Economic Survey 2018-2022 (KNBS, 2022)

The GDP was oscillating around the 5% during the MTP (II).
As indicated in the above Table, the economy recorded growth rates were lower than projected in the MTP II. This can be explained by adverse weather patterns which affected growth in the agriculture sector and insecurity which caused low investment and growth in sectors like tourism. Another reason is slow growth in the manufacturing sector resulting in the import of cheaper products and subsequent reductions in the share of Kenya's manufactured export in the regional market, impediments in the access of credit and a slow uptake public private partnership (Gok, 2013). In MTP III the GDP that was oscillating around 5%, hit a low of -0.3% in 2020 due to the Covid-19 containment mitigations, instead of the targeted 10%. The GDP expanded to 7.5% in 2021, before descending to 5.5% again due to the inflative consequences of the Ukraine war as well as the drought (World Bank, 2018, p.2, GoK, 2021).

Process

The Hall et al. model

The problem identification entails poverty eradication reaching the political agenda. It achieved legitimacy due to the increase in poverty levels as shown in the high prevalence of hunger, malnutrition and infectious diseases. Support was gained through public demand for a better quality of life, the government opposition were also supporting. Feasibility was achieved through research which gave the government both theoretical and practical knowledge. The policy formulation was made by the government in collaboration with stakeholders.

The Kingdon model:

According to the Kingdom model, a policy window opened for poverty eradication to reach the political agenda when the three streams- problem, politics, and policy ran together. The problem of high levels of poverty had been a reality in the country and the actions taken with politics as usual, mainly ethnic politics had failed (Kyung, 2020, p. 362). In the politics stream, the tragedy of the post-election violence resurfaced ethical grievances forcing the governmental coalition to undertake reforms to address among others poverty and inequalities (Kanyinga & Long, 2012, p. 33). In the policy stream, there was need for a solution to reduce the high poverty levels. Kenya's evolution from a centralized elitist to a decentralized pluralist governance system facilitated the involvement and collaboration of many stakeholders including local and international experts, politicians and especially the local societies (Mitullah, 2021). It was an all-inclusive stakeholder consultative process that engaged multiple important actors who could influence politicians.

A Policy window opened following the evidence-based research in the area, the willingness of the government to cooperate with the opposition to make the necessary changes in the country. This opportunity clearly showed the willingness of the Government, the opposition and the people to join forces. In line of this, In Kenya, all the respective stakeholders agreed on the need to move from politics as usual.

Discussion

The main objective of this study was analysis of "Kenya vision 2030" with a secondary goal to highlight its impact for policy recommendations on effective strategies for eradicating poverty in all its forms, including extreme poverty in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Although significant progress and achievements have been reported in the last 3 MTPs, Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine war exposed the scale of poverty and inequalities in Kenya causing the Government to accelerate poverty eradication by adopting an economy recovery plan (World Bank, 2020). It involved short and long-term interventions put in place to mitigate this impact, including fiscal and monetary policies to support the healthcare system, and protect the most vulnerable households by allowing significant investments to be made in food security, and targeted money transfers to the poorest as well as support firms to help preserve jobs, incomes, and the economy (World Bank, 2020).

The pandemic revealed the importance of safety nets delivery systems especially those with better outcomes like Ethiopia's rural Productive Safety Net Program whose works targeted community integrated and participatory management, resulting in water and soil conservation, and diversified household livelihoods (Cochrane & Tamiru, 2016). Kenya has the Hunger Safety Net Program, an unconditional Government cash transfer program aimed at reducing extreme hunger by delivering unconditional cash transfers to targeted households (KNBS, 2022a). However the IV MTP recognizes the need to finance development through cost sharing model with project beneficiaries, as it improves the rate of irrigation development, ownership and sustainability, (GoK, 2021) given that access to safe and adequate food is a basic human right.

The climate induced drought across the horn of Africa has exacerbating health risks and inflation caused by supply chain disruptions and the Ukraine war (Calderon & Vijdan; Goyal, 2022; Breisinger et al. 2022; WHO, 2023b). However, as indicated in Table 1, it was already unclear whether the goals of Kenya Vision 2030 were going to be met by 2030. The pandemic and containment measures had caused an increase in poverty levels by 4% (World Bank, 2020) pushing more people below the extreme poverty line and doubling the unemployment rate to 20% by June of 2020 (World Bank, 2020). Even though the GDP grew at 7.5% in 2021, it dropped to 5.5% in 2022 causing the poverty rate to decline after having risen momentarily during the pandemic (World Bank, 2023). The war situation could potentially undermine Kenya's economy and increase poverty especially due to Kenya's dependency of imports including up to 50% of wheat grains that comes from Russia and Ukraine (Breisinger et al. 2022;).

Poverty is the denial of human rights to basic capabilities such as nourishment, living in good health and being a part of decision-making processes (PEC, 2014). Successful poverty reduction requires that individuals have rights and that they are enabled to fend for and make their own decisions. The first successful attempt to reduce poverty resulted in an increase of the GDP from a low of 0.6 per cent in 2002 to 6.1 per cent in 2006 (Okereke & Agupusi, 2015). This could be an indication that pursuing equity towards the social determinants of health, and prioritizing policies, programmes and projects, designed to meet identified targets like universal primary education and improved access to basic health, could accelerate poverty reduction as well as increase equity in wealth distribution (IMF 2005a).

Concurrently, Egypt has managed to reduce poverty rates from 32.5% to 29.7% in two years by implementing the economic reform program "Egypt vision 2030". It targeted social injustice not only by helping the poor, but by fighting poverty at the financial, educational, health and cultural levels through various national initiatives.

Health problems play a big role into driving people to poverty. This is because people with poor health conditions decrease household incomes and increase medical expenditure (WHO, 2023b). In addition, poverty increases dop-out from education, with the girls being affected the most, thus leading to gender inequalities and increases vulnerability. Poverty causes hunger, malnutrition, and disease. Poor living conditions influence the appearance of communicable diseases including pneumonia, malaria and diarrheal diseases which are the top 3 leading causes of under-five mortality in Kenya. Furthermore, sick individuals are in a fragile position, prone to unemployment with low quality of livelihood, and can perpetuate a cycle of poverty and ill-health leading to low life expectancy (WHO 2021)

Substantial progress has been recorded like the decline of under-five mortality from 114.6 in 2003 to 52.4 deaths in 2014 (World Bank, 2018). To achieve universal health coverage, the national health insurance fund has been expanded to ensure that the most vulnerable Kenyans are covered. However, several concerns related to the quality of services offered should be addressed including concerns on quality of maternal healthcare when there are under 16 nurses or midwives for every 10,000 women (Diwakar and Shepherd, 2018).

"Kenya Vision 2030" aims "…to provide a high-quality life for all its citizens." Among the important determinants of poverty in Kenya are geographical location, unemployment, inequalities in level of education, income, gender, life expectancy and health outreach (IMF, 2005). Primary education is free, yet parents' fear for quality causes them to enrol their children in low fee schools. Consequently, education inequalities widen in later years, heightened by the gender gap widening as girls drop out due to inadequate support. (Diwakar and Shepherd, 2018). While the Vision uses a multidimensional approach to counter the possible root causes of poverty, the macroeconomic stability seems to be emphasized more in the Kenya Vision 2030 compared to building a self- reliant sustainable economy (Okereke & Agupusi, 2015a, p. 106). This could be explained by the donors' development assistance programmes approach: development first, then poverty decreases.

The top-down approach used in the implementation of the programmes is yet to be felt in the local levels. According to the chair of Kenya's Vision 2030 Delivery Board, James Mwangi, the emphasis has been put on infrastructure and institution building, which would explain why ordinary Kenyans have not yet felt the impact of the vision. The roads created which have exceeded the target, are not benefiting local farmers in the rural areas like North and north eastern counties which have high and stagnating poverty rates (Pape & Mejia-Mantilla, 2019).

The poorest in Kenya live in the rural areas where poverty rates are higher (40% compared to 29% in core-urban). Their main source of income is farming and livestock (Diwakar and Shepherd, 2018, p.4,7). As a major contributor to GDP, agriculture accounts for 60% of employment (Eichsteller, Njagi and Nyukuri, 2022, p.2). Smallholder productivity is hindered by lack of access to roads, irrigation, electricity, improved seed, and regulatory and extension services (World Bank, 2018). Moreover, subsidy programs like the current untargeted and regressive fertilizer input scheme are not only costly, but disproportionately benefits large and medium sized farmers and crowds-out private investment in the purchase 3and distribution of fertilizers. There is therefore potential for agricultural productivity gains when a smart better targeted subsidy scheme is implemented. (World Bank, 2020.)

Most of the jobs created are in the informal sector. However, the informal sector employees are rendered vulnerable to lacking job security, few labour rights, lack of trade-union organization and they also suffer from low access to social protection (Diwakar and Shepherd, 2018, p.22). Moreover, most of the inequalities mentioned exist due to ethnic politics that continued to dominate post-colonial period (1963-2002) under the leadership of the first president Kenyatta and his successor Daniel Moi whose legacies include disregard for rule of law and manipulation of the constitution to serve their political and economic interests and those of their allies (Shilaho, 2018). This prevented the development of equitable politics to benefit all citizens. Kenyans long for speedy and effective rule of law reform following two decades of broken promises and the tragedy of the post-election violence.

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Given the gaps and challenges identified that continue to undermine poverty eradication in Kenya, key policy recommendations include; rapid inclusive growth as well as a reduction in inequalities geographically as poverty and hunger are concentrated in rural areas, and there should also be reduction in inequalities in access to social determinants of health. Growth benefits must reach everyone equitably for growth to make an impact on sustainable poverty eradication. While Kenya vision 2030 prioritizes macroeconomic stability, building a self-reliant sustainable economy could ensure that economic growth improves the lives of the extremely poor. Evidence shows that there is no tension between pro-growth policies and redistribution, it is therefore vital to observe both public policy and market-based mechanisms to reduce inequalities driven by opportunities in access to employment, infrastructure and services (UN, 2017).

A strength in this study is that the application of the triangle of policy framework revealed through its context and content, why and how the policy came into place, including the key actors, as well as the impact of the policy. The Kingdom model showed the quick adoption of the agenda as the window of opportunity presented itself.

A limitation of this study is that it would have been interesting to carry out qualitative research sides this literature search, both regarding how the policy came into place and the impact of the policy.

Conclusion

The quest to end poverty by 2030 has suffered a setback due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing Ukraine war and the climate induced drought. Although the economy recovered from the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic to expand to expand by 7.5% in 2021, from a low of -0.3% in 2020, the Ukraine war and the drought have however reversed these achievements such that the government is not on track to eradicate poverty by 2030 especially due to the uncertain future with the ongoing war and drought. Kenya is currently on its MTP (IV). The overall achievements made after implementation of the MTPs, and the challenges to build on, were identified after the evaluation of every MTP plans. Several gaps were however identified including the lack of a clear indication of what the local challenges are and how to best resolve them. Implementation of the 2010 Kenya constitution devolved power to counties where equity in distribution of national resources and ethnic diversity in public posts is to be observed. The counties as well as central government should identify economic activities that are dominant and consistent with every county and then target them with the right program and policy.

Author Contribution

DAB and GH conceived, design the study, and critically revised the manuscript. JJ did data curation, analysis, wrote and edit the draft manuscript. FB assisted with the preparation of the manuscript and its critical revisions. All the authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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