

Towards Democratic Developmental States

Democratic Developmental State - definition

Democratic Developmental State' shall mean an ethical, transparent, participatory and accountable state that is underpinned by a developmental ideology and a serious commitment to deploy its administrative and political resources to the task of achieving socio-economic development.



Issues to be answered

- Can African states be both democratic and developmental under conditions of globalisation?
- What are the indicators and mechanisms for democratic developmentalism?
- What are the prerequisites for the establishment of democratic developmental states and do these prerequisites exist in Africa?
- What are the prospects of introducing such democratic developmentalism under the present conditions of globalisation?

Introduction

- The history of the post-independent African state is that of monumental democratic and developmental failures.
- At the economic level, Africa has been marked by:
 - a) the dominance of the primary sector – agriculture, oil and minerals - partly as a result of the inability of the African state to foster an environment for high value added economic activities
 - b) low domestic capital formation and declining direct foreign investment
 - c) foreign aid dependence
 - d) heavy indebtedness
 - e) high unemployment and the informalisation of the economies where the majority of its people live in poverty.
 - f) Consequently, at the beginning of the 21st century, Africa is unable to compete in the global economy.

Introduction

- During the 1980s and 90s – the lost decades of development for Sub-Saharan – African states implemented Structural Adjustment Programmes at the behest of the IMF and World Bank.
- The new millennium, however, witnessed a change of fortunes, marked by rising growth at an annual average of at least 5% during the period 2000-2019.
- This sustained growth was driven by increased demand for Africa's primary commodities largely from emerging economies, especially China, as well as improved economic management.

Features of a democratic developmental state

- Development-oriented political leadership with a high level of commitment and will to attain economic and social development and to reduce inequality and poverty;
- A highly competent, professional and committed bureaucracy with a strong planning capacity that is able to implement developmental policies and programmes;
- Political legitimacy to take developmental decisions, for example the process followed to determine developmental goals and whose interests they serve;
- The state not only regulates markets (which are political constructs) but also directly influences the operations of the market;



Features of a democratic developmental state

- The state provides a vision for society and creates the institutions required to achieve this vision;
- The state defies the principle of international comparative advantage and instead focuses on the development of productive capacities and human development based on social needs;
- The state has social anchoring and robust societal institutions to prevent it from behaving in a predatory manner (democratic oversight to ensure the attainment of socially desirable development outcomes);
- The state mediates conflicts around the development trajectory between various interests with a view to ensuring the broadest possible support.



THE POLITICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL TRAJECTORIES OF AFRICA SINCE 1960

- At independence, most African governments set for themselves the task of pursuing vigorously the process of nation-building with the aim of uniting their multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious societies (1).
- In fact nation building and national unity was the rallying cry of the immediate post-colonial African leaders.
- But this process was undertaken in typical top-down fashion with centralising tendencies. This had far-reaching adverse consequences for development and governance.




LESSONS FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTAL STATES

- The dominance of neo-liberal policies in developing countries since the early 1980s took their economies along a trajectory characterised by the 'stabilisation trap' of low investment, growth and social development.
- It had been argued that in the presence of clientalism and rent-seeking behaviour, a minimalist state would do Africa good.
- However, critics pointed out the inherent contradictions in such an approach that resulted in the African state being both fiscally and politically squeezed to such an extent that it could not perform basic functions owing to demoralisation, corruption, moonlighting and other vices, which were further used as evidence that the African state is incapable of playing a developmental role.



LESSONS FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTAL STATES

- Yet, in the same breath, those that allege African state incapacity prescribe roles for it that are beyond its capacities. The paralysis of the emasculated African state, which in turn is requested to undertake additional institutional and governance reforms beyond its current capacity, reinforces the vicious cycle of underdevelopment.
- Hence, African development scholars have reminded us that, in the first instance, ‘developmental states’ were never free gifts, but social constructs that emerged from social (and even political) struggles (see Mkandawire, 2001; ANSA, 2006; ECA, 2013).



Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?

- file:///F:/BACKUP_22.04.2019/1.SGH/WYKLADY/1.%20AFRYKA/Can%20Africa%20Claim%20the%2021st%20Century.pdf

1. Laakso, Liisa & Olukoshi, Adebayo O. 'The Crisis of the Post-Colonial Nation-State Project in Africa.' in Olukoshi Adebayo O, Laakso Liisa (eds). *Challenges to the Nation-State in Africa*. Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute, 1996.