

## **Session Twelve: HARAMBEE AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **12.1 Objectives**

By the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

- i. Define the term harambee
- ii. Describe Harambee and development
- iii. Discuss history of harambee movement in traditional African societies
- iv. Explain Forms of harambee
- v. Discuss Principles of harambee
- vi. Describe Contribution of harambee to development

### **12.2 Lecture Overview**

Harambee is a Kiswahili word that means, “let us all pull together”. It is a Bantu word which has its origin in the word “Halambee”. This word was originally used by porters at the coastal parts of Kenya, like Mombasa, Lamu, and Malindi and later throughout the country (Ombudo, 1986). It is normally pronounced as haa-raam-bay, literally, it means “let us all pull together,” and is variously described as a way of life in Kenya (Ngethe, 1979), and a traditional custom of Kenyans (Kenya Development Plan, 1979). The word has also been adopted as a political slogan to symbolize the unity of man to help achieve a worthy end. It encourages Kenyans to give their best in order to complete any task at hand for community development.

### **12.3 Harambee and Development**

Harambee is a Kenyan tradition of community self-help events, e.g. fundraising or development activities. Harambee literally means "all pull together" in Swahili, and is also the official motto of Kenya and appears on its coat of arms.

Harambee events may range from informal affairs lasting a few hours, in which invitations are spread by word of mouth, to formal, multi-day events advertised in newspapers. These events have long been important in parts of East Africa, as ways to build and maintain communities.

Following Kenya's independence in 1963, the first Prime Minister, and later first President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta adopted "Harambee" as a concept of pulling the country together to build

a new nation. He encouraged communities to work together to raise funds for all sorts of local projects, pledging that the government would provide their startup costs. Under this system, wealthy individuals wishing to get into politics could donate large amounts of money to local Harambee drives, thereby gaining legitimacy; however, such practices were never institutionalized during Kenyatta's presidency.

A popular terminology is derived from the name of a Hindu goddess, Amba Mata. It was proposed, supposedly via Hindu railway linesmen carrying loads of iron rails and sleeper blocks who would chant "har, har Ambe!" ("Praise Amba") when working. The first president, Jomo Kenyatta has been said to have witnessed such a railway line team as it worked in cohesion and harmony and derived the term from there. This has led to criticism against the official use of the term on the part of Kenyan Christians. The terminology is, however, cited as genuinely Bantu, from the Miji Kenda term halumbe "to pull or push together". The objections have also been dismissed based on the fact that even if the supposed derivation were true, it has become irrelevant to the term's modern usage and meaning.

The Harambee philosophy has contributed towards the development of early childhood Development and Education programs in Kenya.

- i) Communities have been able to acquire physical facilities for the early childhood development programs.
- ii) Feeding programs have been initiated/ maintained thus encouraging enrolment
- iii) The school management committees are able to pay teachers' salary through the funds donated by the community.
- iv) Untrained Early Childhood Development and Education teachers have been sponsored for training.
- v) Communities have developed a sense of ownership for the early childhood development and education programs/ people come together in times of need.
- vi) Teaching/ learning materials have been made available.
  - i) Communities have been able to exploit their local resources for the development of the early childhood development programme.

## **12.4 Forms of harambee**

### **1. Fundraising**

2. Contribution of materials and labour to various development projects

### **12.5 Principles of harambee**

1. Bottom up development strategy
2. Collective good rather than individual gain
3. Choice of the project is guided by the felt needs of the majority
4. Project implementation to maximize the utilization of local resources

The harambee projects are normally in two main categories: -

1. Self-help activities towards the construction of public facilities like schools, health facilities, water projects, etc
2. Women projects e.g. merry-go-round

Harambee for individual benefit

1. Pre-wedding
2. Hospital bills
3. School fees

### **12.6 Contribution of harambee to development**

1. Education
2. Health centres
3. Water projects
4. Cattle dips

### **12.7 Summary**

In summary, the lecture aimed at understanding what Project Management is, why do we need Project Management, Project Management Skills, Types of projects, Project Proposal Writing, Proposed Format (Layout) for a Full Project Proposal and Attachments/Appendices to project proposals

It also aimed at understanding Harambee and development, history of harambee movement in traditional African societies, forms of harambee, Principles of harambee and contribution of harambee to development

### **12.8 Self-Assessment Questions**

- i. Reasons why project proposal is important
- ii. Write an example of a project proposal
- iii. Discuss why the spirit of harambee is still carried out to date

### **12.9 Further Reading**

Desai, V. & Potter, R. (2014). *The Companion to Development Studies*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). London: Routledge. ISBN-13:978-1444167245.

Byrd, M. & Edwards, S. (2014). *Leadership Development Studies: A Humanities Approach*. (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Plymouth, USA: Hayden-Mc Publishing. ISBN-13: 978-0738066042.

Spear, J. & Williams, P. D. (2012). *Security and Development in Global Politics: A critical Comparison*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. ISBN-13: 978-1589018860

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