



How the Discovery of Natural Gas Influences Development in Mtwara

80. Umoja

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Introduction:

Mtwara is one among regions in Tanzania found to have a discovery of natural gas. The gas was discovered in Mnazi bay in 1982 (The natural gas policy, 2013). The Mnazi bay natural gas was commercialized in 2006 and since that time, Mtwara has experienced further exploration both on – shore and off – shore.

From experience of other countries, the discovery and production of natural gas is likely to stimulate wide range of opportunities for scaling up the rate of economic growth. It is a long time since the production and commercialization of natural gas in Mtwara started. But there is no particular study that has been conducted to assess how the discovery of natural gas influences economic development in Mtwara.

The purpose of this project is to assess how the discovery of natural gas influences economic development in Mtwara. The project based on individual economic development, general economic development of Mtwara, chances of employment and involvement of gas companies in providing social development.

Method:

The project employed both questionnaire and observation methods in collecting data. The questionnaires were prepared to assess the influence of gas to the economic development. The reason for using this method was due to its importance of efficiency in data collection. The method was chosen due to its advantages. It is relatively easy to analyze, they are simple to administer and large sample of the given population can be contacted at relatively low cost. First, the questionnaires were distributed to few respondents to test for their validity and then distributed to the targeted respondents to fill them.

Also, observation method was used to make comments on the general economic development of Mtwara since the discovery and commercialization of natural gas at Mnazi bay. The method was applied so that more relevant data like photos are obtained to bring about a clear assessment on how the discovery of natural gas in Mnazi bay influences economic development in Mtwara.



The pipeline

Results:

About 51% of respondents said that the economic position of people in Mtwara is average and 19% said it is good. About 66% of non – staff respondents and 76% of the staff respondents said that, the peoples' awareness on opportunities in different sectors is poor, 26% of non – staff respondents and 8% of staff respondents said that the peoples' awareness to opportunities is average. In the case of Chances of employment, 53% of non – staff respondents and 76% of staff respondents said that it is average, 22% of non –staff respondents and 4% said it is good. Also about 97% of non – respondents said that they are not aware with the Natural gas policy of Tanzania and only 3% of respondents were aware of the Natural gas policy of Tanzania. Also, 92% of the respondents from gas companies said that they provide social services to the community.

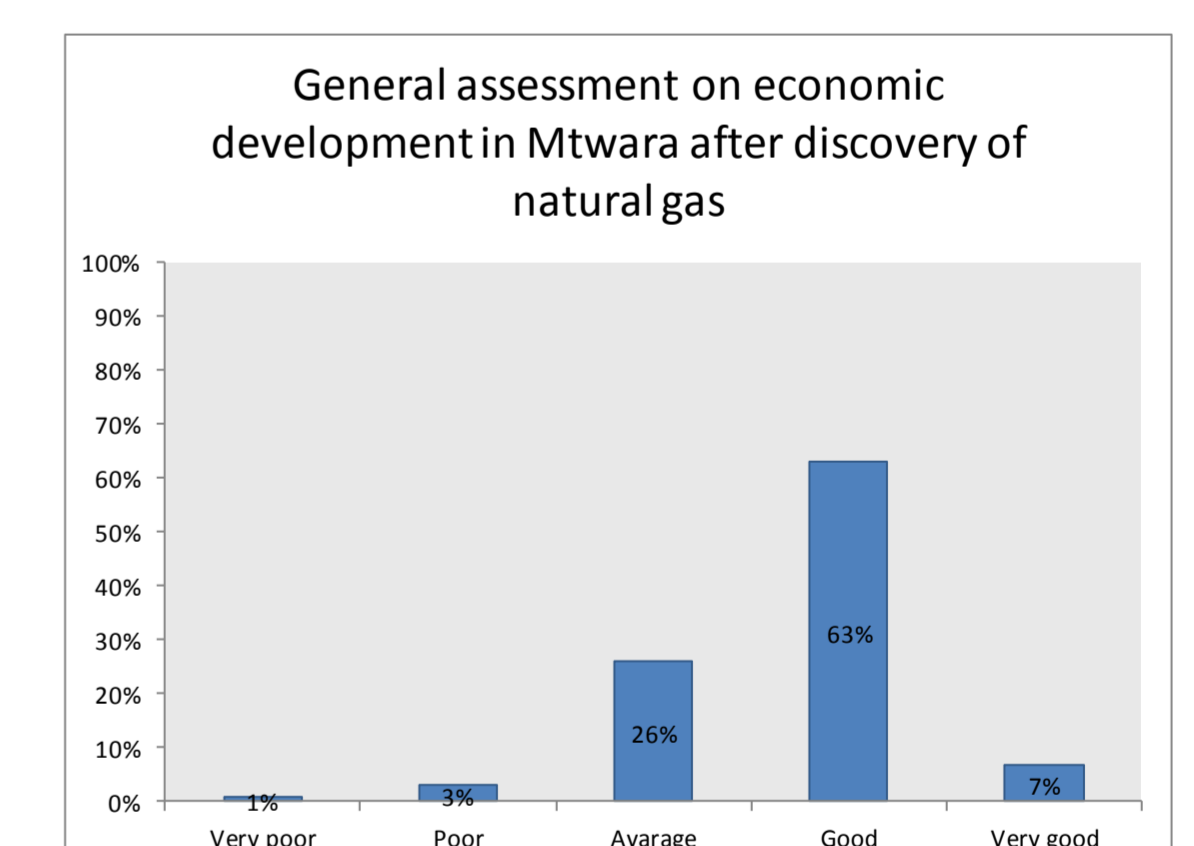
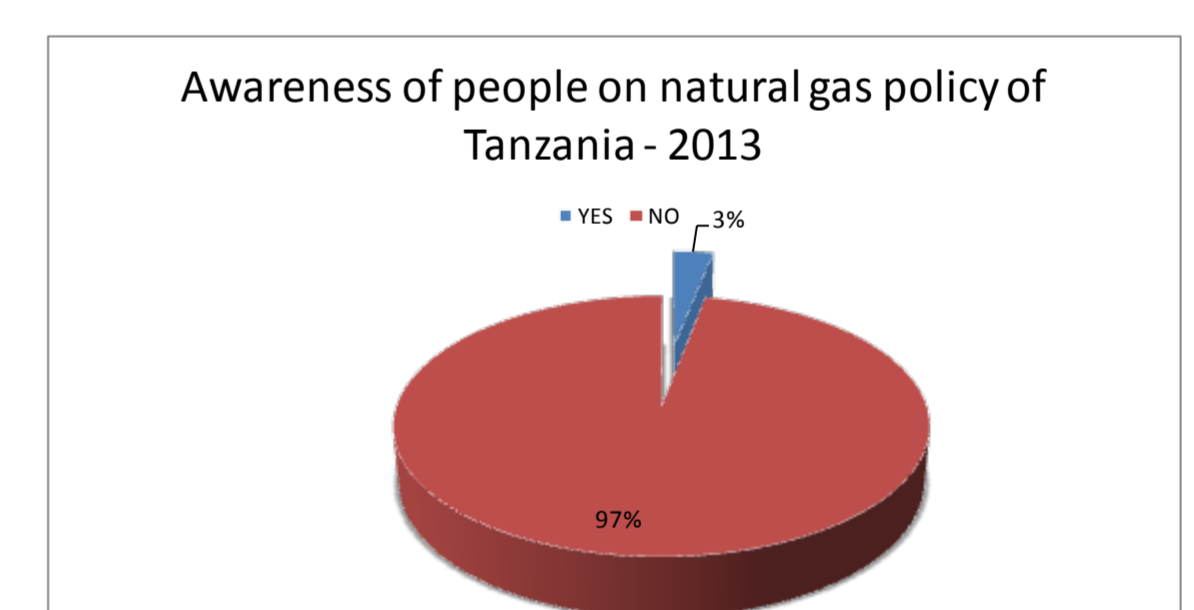
It can be seen that, the economic position of people in Mtwara is almost well, this may be due to the increase of chances of employment to the people after the discovery of natural gas. For example, the establishment of Mtwara Supply Base(the department dealing with receiving tools for research of gas and oil) in Mtwara harbour created employment to the people. The employment was in various field such as driving, storekeepers, forklift operators, etc. (TPDC, 2014).

Despite the discovery of natural gas in Mtwara, it shows that many people are not aware of the opportunities present. This means that there are some opportunities lost which could help them to rise up their economic status.

In addition to that, it shows that a big number of people in Mtwara do not know the Natural gas policy of Tanzania. This may lead to poor perceptions of people to their government especially in the utilization of the natural gas resource. According to the policy, natural gas is the National resource that belongs to the people of the United Republic of Tanzania, that is to say it should benefit all citizens of Tanzania.



A new road from Mtwara harbour



Conclusions:

The results show that, the discovery of natural gas has influenced economic development through providing employment to people hence rising up their economic position. In addition, the gas companies have involved in building of schools, supply of water service to people in villages, drilling wells of water in villages. The natural gas companies have provided scholarship to students in various education institutions like VETA and Universities. There are good roads have been constructed from Mtwara harbor. These roads are used in transporting tools for research of gas and pipes from the harbour. On other hands, people benefit from those roads.

Currently, Mtwara is known to be among regions with reliable power produced from the natural gas.

The value of Mtwara region has increased after the discovery of natural gas and many people from different places come to invest in Mtwara. This was not experienced before. Mtwara was a difficult place to live because of problems in roads, power and even lack of some services like housing.

Suggestion, further study is required to investigate how the discovery of natural gas empowers women to involve in community economic development. This will help to discover if women benefit from the discovery of natural gas or not as it is known that women are being discriminated from economic activities.

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