

Velocity 2003 – Paris.

Main topic - 3

A SUMMARY
OF

**A BICYCLE IN THE AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE;
IN LIGHT OF GLOBILISATION AND PUBLIC POLICIES.**

BY: KAYEMBA PATRICK G.
Programmes Manager
FABIO – Uganda.

Introduction

In this era of globalisation where the world is expected to become a global village many people in the developing world have been left out of the village since many aspects that concern them directly do not always appear on the development agenda. This is due to the fact that they are comparatively weak, and disenfranchised groups whose voice can hardly be reorganised.

Well as the term globalisation itself if it is considered in the direction of the poor people would bring out some better results, however, globalisation in practice has had different implications on the poor economies considering the different perceptions by the different scholars.

One can consider globalisation as expressed by international **capital flows and international trade** in forms of goods and services such as transport, communication, education, health etc. in this case the different recipients of this global capital have in any way to conform to a greater extent to the foreign policies. *Jan Nederveen Pieterse* in his article "Going global: Features of capitalism, Development and the Change".

It is rather difficult to ascertain whether developing countries make their own policies for their national development. Particularly in a situation where the international capital flows with its strategies that determine the social, economic and political directions of the different countries. Issues like employment, labour policies, transport, education etc. to a greater extent are determined by the international Authority.

The question is the involvement of the different countries on one hand and the "international Authority" on the other in the process of allocation of resources and values for national development remains a challenge to the development in Africa

and many of other developing countries.

In this view, transport systems have not been exceptional since the motoristic ideology in transport has dominated the system disregarding the real needs of the communities.

Transport and Planning in view of the bicycle.

Have the SSA Governments shown awareness of the bicycle's economic utility under the present economic conditions as well as its special potential as a mode of transport benefiting the poorer stratum of the society in both urban and the rural areas, or does it continue to be overlooked, and actually discriminated against in a variety of ways? *John Howe and Ron Dennis "The bicycle in Africa Luxury or necessity?" (1993).*

*The answer to this question is **NO**, the bicycle has remained a double faced commodity from two perspectives of the different categories of people, the well to do urban rich and the rural poor societies.*

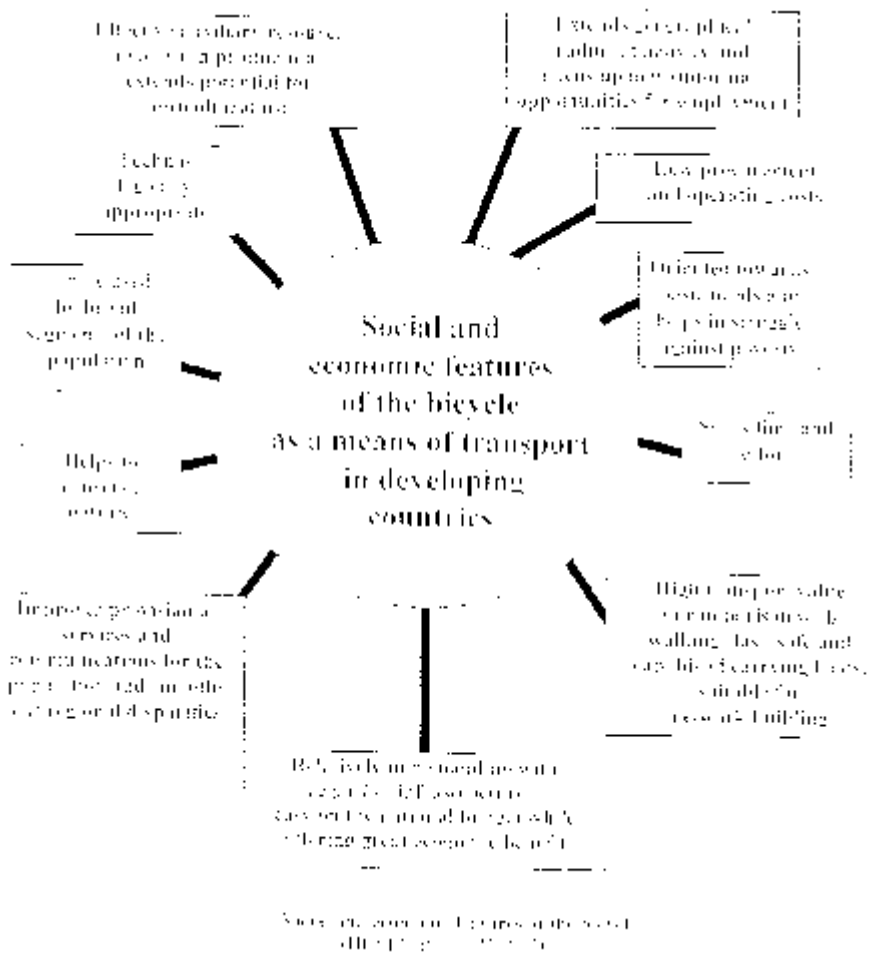
Taking Uganda as an example it categorically state in its **National Vision 2025** to have motorised transport for all Ugandans by the year 2025. Considering that many of the Ugandan population is rural based, composed of poor and marginalised societies with very different needs from what is being provided by the planners. The nature of the roads in both rural and urban make it very dangerous for the cyclists in most cases. This situation has made many of the people having limited access to the basic social services like water, health facilities, education, market etc, considering the long distances some people have to walk to access such services.

Needless to emphasise the consequences of limited access to these basic facilities are enormous and have a direct effect to the economy and the people's livelihood activities and opportunities.

It is therefore not surprising that the bicycle is very high on the list of priorities for many households in the developing countries: 58% of all people questioned for a transport project in Tanzania gave a bicycle the highest priority as the solution to their transport problems (*SIEBER 1996, pg 90*).

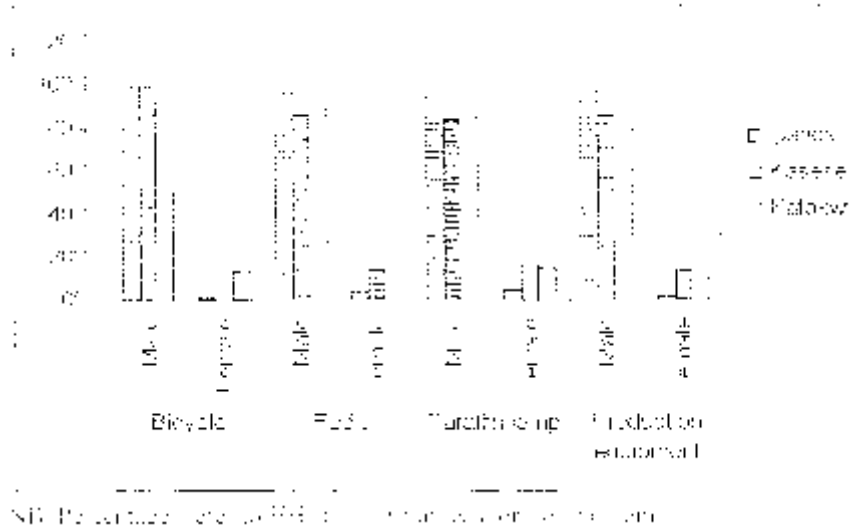
In addition to satisfying the basic human needs, the bicycle can also be used as a productive tool to expand opportunities of the rural poor people. *Jurgen Heyen Perschon (2001).*

The diagram below highlights the social economic potential of a bicycle to the development of the African economies:



The situation is made complex when it comes to women's control and access to bicycle in many of the African societies. The table below reflects examples of such situations.

Figure 14: Ownership of Bicycles and other Selected Goods by Gender



When you consider the role women and children play in the agricultural sector in Uganda and comparing it with situation above, there is no reason for this sector to remain of subsistence nature.

Planning at lower Levels:

At lower levels in this case at (District, Provincial or Regional) plans are developed from the center in most cases, and forwarded to lower levels for implementation in form of (framework).

This situation make it difficult for the lower planners to change plans so as to take care of the interest of the lower people. influenced by the international authority.

BICYCLE AND GLOBILISATION

I should recorgonise that the intergration of concerns of the poor in designing and implementing development programms generally and the adjustment programs specifically has been one of the major concerns of the world bank in the recent years. However on the other hand designing these action plans and accessing their effectiveness has been seriously humpered by the social economic data in most of the African countries. Particularly data on peoples income destrubutions, livelihood and consumption partners have remained questionable. As aresult it is possible to make quantitative observations on the current situation of the verious segments of the population and the probable effects of the policies and programm of the different countires in Africa.

In the same direction qualitative and quantitative data being provided to explain the

globalisation process and challenges to the economic development of Uganda for example have not been exceptional. This data is being expressed qualitatively in worlds and statments, quantitatively in simple summery statistics, i.e., tables, total, percentages, etc. Such records have a lot of influence of the “interntional authority” . *“The globalisation process and challenges to the governments of Asia and Africa”* edited by Ingrid H.Rima (1993).

The levels of corruption and indebttness and the mentality of the policy makers and planners who still regard a bicycle as an infirior commodity have made it difficult for developing countries to go out of this circle. Despit the fact that increasing body of case studies from varous parts of the developing countries demonstrate that the bicycle can and does play a significant economic role in resource- constained envirnment in the present depressed circumstances in which many of African countries find themselves.

There is no doubt in such a situation many of the rural development and poverty eradication programmes are likely to fail.

PAN AFRICAN BICYCLE NETWORK (PABIN)

For the last 13 years The First African bicycle information Office (FABIO) in Uganda has been involved in the promotion of the use of the bicycle given its potential in stumulating development for the poor econmies.

With in this period of time it was continuously realised that policies are key factor in influencing accessiblity and affordabilitfy of the bicycle by the rural people who make up the majority of the population in many of the developing countries. The tendence of associating the bicycle to inferiority and back wardness by many of the planners and policy makers has contributed a great deal in having the bicycle remain a scarce commodity in the eyes of poor people. It was further realised that many of the African countries were experiencing the same situation and that a bicycle is regarded differntly by the people from the developed countries of Europe and America.

To this effect a Pan African Bicycle conference was organised on the 21st – 25th, November 2001 in Jinja with a theme of **“The Changing role the bicycle in the 21st centuary”**. This conference was attende by over 100 delagations from the different countries in Africa, Asia and Europe.

On of the Pan African Bicycle Network (PABIN) came out as a loose organ to facilitate the sharing of information among the different actor so as to push the issue of the bicycle on the African development agender.

A team of organisations from Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and Tanzania was put in place headed by ITDG – Kenya to push this idea ahaed and also organise the PABIC-II 2004 in Nairobi.