

## IS KENYA SUFFERING FROM LACK OF TECHNOLOGY TO COMBAT DROUGHT OR IS IT THE GOODWILL WHICH IS MISSING?

In simple language, drought is a spell of a long period of dry weather without rain. We often keep on referring to droughts, especially the current and ongoing ones, but Kenyans like in the case of the fire tragedy have never learnt to withstand and improve from past disasters. With technology and communication advancing, we have seen live pictures of the drought in 1984-1985 in Ethiopia and in 2005 in Northern Kenya. But is there any way in which we can use the available technology to overcome these droughts? Our leaders are often heard saying that we should do this and that. But in reality how many have really done what they preach?

We again arrive at the debate of the genetically modified organisms (GMOs). This technology is just next to the green revolution. South Africa has succeeded in feeding its population and withstanding droughts. This is just because they have been able to weigh out the balance of the pros and cons of GMOs and have realized that this technology if treated with and used cautiously, does more good than harm. For Kenyans the situation of drought often looms into famine. But this seems not to be a disastrous lesson for the nation as yet. We are for sure certain that we shall be able to avert the crisis through food aid through the culture of begging. We have international organizations like Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) in the country which is ready to give their valuable researched suggestions if advice is really taken or, is it that KARI had been consulted in secret and they have hinted that GMOs are to be done away with? Have they also hinted that if GMOs are grown, then the starvation and death rates will be greater than that of the current food crisis?

Prices of maize flour in the Kenyan market have soared up as maize is a scarce commodity. But the attribute to this

price hike is simple - "drought" in areas like Ukambani. But if genetically modified maize was introduced and grown like we had in the 1980s adopted to the Katumani variety, we would have had not only cheap maize flour available, but also at lower prices.

While we complain that rains are a failure, what have we done when we had ample rains? In which parts of the country have we successfully harvested water? Budalangi has had disastrous floods. Leaders often talk of water catchments. But when the rain water gets wasted in terms of flash floods and carries away millions of tonnes of top soil, all is quiet. It is only later on, as said "when the night falls, all is quiet but when the day begins, the noise starts" and that is when our leaders realize that the rain waters have been wasted. All this goes back to technology. There is so much technology available but when and how we use it only time will tell. Many African leaders have utilized available technology. For example former President Gamal Nasser of Egypt had the Aswan High Dam built to control floods and so did Ghana's leaders as seen in the case of the Akosombo Dam. If other developing countries have learnt to adopt and make use of technology when the need arises, why is there a delay in Kenya only? Yet we talk about Vision 2030. Can the blame go to lack of funds, or lack of human resources in identifying which technology suits us or is it the will of our politicians which has failed us?

Kenyans need to rise up before it is too late. Our politicians and leaders are all educated and know what is the best for the people. Action needs to be taken now before it is too late. Let our leaders realize that it is better to invest in technology which will save the lives of people rather than having a nation without people to rule.

**P**arita Shah - Freelance  
writer, Oshwal Academy,  
Nairobi.

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