

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT POLICY IN PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE AND DECISION MAKING IN ZANZIBAR- TANZANIA

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Abstract. This paper explores the need of creating a strong policy for empowering women Zanzibar. It also provides an overview of the situation of Women empowerment policy in participation in Public life and decision making in Zanzibar-Tanzania.

Key words. Women empowerment, Zanzibar-Tanzania, policy participation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The semi-autonomous island state of Zanzibar forms part of the union between the former Republic of Tanganyika and the People's Republic of Zanzibar. Administratively, it is divided into five regions and ten districts. The basic unit of governance in Zanzibar is the Shehia. According to the 2012 Census, there are 1,303,569 million inhabitants in Zanzibar, 672,892 which is equal to 51.6% of whom are women.

Zanzibar underwent significant political reforms in 2010 through the 10th amendment to the Zanzibar Constitution. A Government of National Unity (GNU) was formed headed by the President of Zanzibar, who is also the chairman of the Revolutionary Council. Because of the arrangement under the GNU there are two vice presidents. The Zanzibar House of Representative (popularly, known as *Baraza la Wawakilishi Zanzibar*) forms the Legislature, while the Judiciary consists of the High Court of Zanzibar and subordinate courts.

Towards pushing the agenda for gender equality the United Nations (UN) in 1995, adopted the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) outlining twelve critical areas of concern mainly: women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment and the girl child.

Therefore, this paper will find out the need creating the strong policy for empowering women Zanzibar and provide an overview of the situation of Women empowerment policy in participation in Public life and decision making in Zanzibar-Tanzania.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

On 18th December 1979, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and entered into force on 3rd September 1981. In essence, the CEDAW establishes an international bill of rights for women and outlines an agenda for action by countries to guarantee the enjoyment of those rights. At the global level, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is mandated to follow- up and review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. 2015 was an important milestone for the global community particularly with regards to monitoring progress towards gender equality. It marked 20 years since the adoption of the Beijing

Declaration and Platform for Action and the conclusion of the MDGs which has some important gender targets that have defined national development strategies. For the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, this review offers a platform to showcase achievements made and draws lessons on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

In February 2015, the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) developed a Gender and Social Inclusion Policy to enhance equality and inclusive participation in the electoral process in Zanzibar. This policy acts as a strategic guide on how election activities should be executed based on principles and best practices of gender equality and social inclusion. Formation of Gender and Social Inclusion Committee is essential in ensuring that gender issues are taken aboard during elections is stipulated in the policy.

In 2018, Zanzibar House of Representatives enacted a new law of Election. The Election regulations developed in such a way to provide equal access to women and other historically marginalized groups to participate fully in electoral processes. The Law provides for female spouse to be registered as a voter if she is in marital union as long as her spouse is a permanent resident in the respective area where registration will take place. Secretariat of ZEC initiated the dialogue and advocates for mainstreaming gender in the appointment of its Commissioners and recruitment of permanent staff. ZEC has a total of 78 staff of which 24 are women, an increase of 4 women from 2017.

In preparation for the 2014/15 elections, ZEC developed posters clearly depicting priority given to pregnant and breastfeeding women, to the disabled and aged in the voting queue. Targeted Voter Education town-hall style meetings were held for women's groups. To accommodate the vision-impaired population, ZEC also experimented with tactile ballots. ZEC also provided training on women and election to some of its staff and members of CSOs through a Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE), UN Women as well as other actors to sensitize community members, including religious and tradition leaders and training of women aspirants to run for political posts. TAMWA engaged with several actors including women, politicians, religious leaders, media, CSOs, community

members as well as identification and training of women political aspirants. As a result, 192 women contested, and 14 women won, whereby 6 won at the House of Representatives level and 8 won the position of Councillorship through constituency election, breaking the traditional roles of a woman. The Zanzibar House of Representative (HoRs) comprises 88 members, 36% of whom are women including 22 special seats and 3 nominations by the President, only 7 were directly elected. Because of the quota/special seats provision, number of women in various leadership positions has increased as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Selected Gender Indicators on Participation of Women on Leadership Positions

Indicator	2010/2015	2017/2018/ 2019
Proportion of seats held by women in the HoRs	33	37(2018)
Proportion of women Ministers	25	29(2018)
Proportion of women Deputy Ministers	66.7	36(2018)
Proportion of women Judges	33	38(2019)
Proportion of women Court Magistrates		28.2(2017)
Proportion of women Regional mMagistrates	21	33.3(2019)
Proportion of women District Magistrates		41.7(2017)
Proportion of women Primary Court Magistrates		69.2(2017)
Proportion of Principal Secretaries		29(2019)
Proportion of Deputy Principal Secretaries		37(2019)

Source: Office of the Government statistician Zanzibar.

Table 2: Elected versus Nominated Women Leaders

	Councillors		House of Representatives	
	2010	2016	2010	2016
Elected	19 out of 122	23 out of 111	4 out of 50	7 out of 54
Special Seats	42	-	2 0	2 2
Appointed by the Minister for Local Government (Councillors) and President (members of HoRs)	1	36 out of 55	4 out of 10	2 out of 10

Source: Office of the Government statistician Zanzibar

Women

Women in Zanzibar are twice as likely as men to be uneducated. This has contributed to increasing employment inequalities since an education is becoming more essential to obtaining a job. Approximately 32% of female youths in Zanzibar are unemployed in comparison to only 10% of male youth. Women who do have jobs often earn less with 73% of women being paid at a lower rate than their husbands (MESWYWCD 2014).

Additionally, only 16% of women in Zanzibar have bank accounts, and 91% do not own land, making it hard for women to become economically self-sufficient. When women do own land or other assets, these things are often controlled by their husband or male relatives. Female empowerment in Zanzibar involves women gaining financial and economic freedom as well as increasing their social status.

Women at decision –making bodies

The Zanzibar Constitution strives to ensure that women are present in key decision-making structures. Article 67(1) provides for 40% women representation. Similar provisions are in the Regional Administration Authority Act No. 8 of 1996 and the Municipal Councils Act No.3 of 1995 that provide for 30% women representation.

There is slight improvement in the area of women in decision making in Zanzibar for 2010 to 2021. Women Ministers constitute 25% of 4 Ministers, Women

deputy ministers constitute 66.7% of 6 deputy ministers, 33% of 81 Member of the House of Representatives are women. 19 of the 26 women representatives (76%) were nominated through special seats, women judges are 33% while women Magistrates are 21%. Women Shehas (lowest levels of administration in Zanzibar) are 24 out of 339 which is equal to 7.0 %.

Women and economic empowerment

The government of Zanzibar has tightened to promote women's economic status in Zanzibar. Zanzibar has put in place gender responsive Employment Policy of 2009 to address issues of gender in employment. Further, a special department for empowerment has been established in 2010 to enhance business in informal sector wherein a significant number of women do engage.

Women in Zanzibar constitute 74% of the labour force in agro enterprises and are predominant in offshore fisheries. The majority of women are employed in the informal economy (subsistence farming, informal sector activities and as casual labourers in commercial plantations) (MKUZAI 2010). Women employees in the formal sector account for 36.4%, out of that number, 8.64% are employed in technical and supervisory posts in the public sector (ZILFS 2006). Female Headed household is increased to 31% in 2012 compare to 21% in 2010 in Zanzibar (Population Census 2012).

The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar has put in place policies, programs, guidelines and plans to promote women economic empowerment. In 2010, it established special departments to enhance women economic empowerment. One of these departments is aimed to enhance business in the informal sector. In 2017 the Department completed the Economics Empowerment Policy of 2018 to provide comprehensive guidelines on empowerment women issues in Zanzibar. The Department also has the role of coordinating empowerment programs and initiatives in Zanzibar. It enhances the economic empowerment initiatives of women since majority are engaged in the informal economy. The Zanzibar Employment Policy of 2009 and Economic empowerment policy of 2018 both has an objective to addresses the issues of gender and employment by enhancing decent employment to women which complement the role of the department of economic empowerment of creating jobs to the Zanzibarians.

The department of economic empowerment (DEE) coordinates the establishment and strengthening of clustering development for maximizing production, processes, quality control and marketing. It enhances the entrepreneurship capacity especially to women. A total of four (4) business clusters has been established in Zanzibar from 2010 to 2021. From 2010 to July 2014 a total of 600 entrepreneurs supported to strengthen their business and increase production by the DEE. The department also supports women entrepreneurs to participate in various, local, regional and international trade exhibitions to exchange their experiences, new products development, market contacts and linkages as well as share networking. A total of 150 from 2010 to July 2014 have been supported to participate in various National, Regional and International Exhibition (MESWYWC, 2014).

In developing entrepreneurship culture and to simultaneously with professional requirements, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, under the empowerment department, coordinates the establishment of incubation center which will develop entrepreneurs into appropriate entrepreneurial skills in their carriers like ICT, Agro business and Tourism. Women will benefit more in this center. One incubation center has been established in Unguja. In order to ensure proper sustainability of entrepreneurship traits in Zanzibar, the department capacitates Zanzibar Universities and higher learning institutions in the area of entrepreneurship development. It is also in the process of lobbying the inclusion of the entrepreneurship studies in curriculum.

The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar of the establish the Barefoot College which will facilitate large amount of women to engage in the production of solar electrification equipment's like solar lamp and installation of solar energy in various household in Zanzibar. A total of 180 household has been solar electrified in Zanzibar by women solar engineers in Kendwa and Nungwi North Region of Unguja. These initiatives of solar energy help to empower women in the area of energy saving. The Ministry responsible for women issues undertakes mapping exercise to women income generating groups in Zanzibar for proper planning and informed decisions on enhancement of the groups and alleviation of poverty to women. A total of 1651 women income generating groups have been registered in Unguja (981) and Pemba

(670).

The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar has put special emphasis toward improvement of women economics empowerment through cooperatives. To realize it, focus towards reform cooperative sectors was giving top priority, as it's considered as important vehicle for attaining sustainable economic development particularly for women.

The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar has strengthened policy and legal framework where formulation of Cooperative Development policy has been completed. The policy puts in place strategies to empower women to take management roles into their cooperatives. Specific efforts to enhance women access to finance through Umoja wa Wanawake Zanzibar (UWAZA) SACCOS were put in place whereby a good number of women joined UWAZA SACCOS. For example, from July 2014 to 2021 .In 197 SACCOS which have a total number of 13,387 members, about 9138 of their members are women which is equal to 68.26%. A total of 3.9 billion loans outstanding issued by SACCOS the majority of beneficiary are women.

The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar enhances the capacity of women through cooperatives in the area of leaderships, governance and record keeping as well as rights and responsibility of members whereby a total of 4,692 women have benefited in this program out of 6,649 members (add %). This helped to enhance women confidence in leadership, management and decision making in their cooperatives as well as at the family level.

It also established Empowerment Funds which provide soft loans to entrepreneurs and small scale producers whereby majority are women for the purpose of promoting their business and production as well as to fulfill the goal of MKUZA reducing income poverty to Zanzibarians. As at July 2014, from the 1,246 loans provided in Unguja and Pemba a total of 679 loans were for women. The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar has coordinated microfinance institutions to ensure reliable access to finance particularly to women (Ministry of Social welfare, Elders, Youth Women and Children Development 2014).

In 2015 a special fund for women known as Women entrepreneurship development trust fund (WEDTF) has been established to facilitate easy income for women entrepreneurs. A total of 18,400 loans have been provided since 2016 worth 3.0 billion Tsh and 95% out of the beneficiaries are women. The government is in the process of establishing a Women's Bank in Zanzibar. The Ministry has conducted a feasibility study for establishment a Women Bank in Zanzibar which among other things will provide soft loans for women. The State's aim in the establishment of this bank is to strongly facilitate women's efforts towards realizing women economic self-reliance so to enable them to fully participate to national economic and social development processes.

To ensure equal opportunities to male and females are provided, in 2014 a Labour Market Information Center (LMIC) has been established. The LMIC has developed mechanisms to coordinate and is entrusted with collecting information on employment opportunities and channel the same to women and men seeking jobs. Entrepreneurship skills for women have been increased and widen their coverage in Unguja and Pemba. Over the period covering 2012 to 2013//14 a total of 2,485 entrepreneurs were reached with entrepreneurship trainings, of whom, 2036 (82%) are women. A special fund for women (WEDTF) for instance has been established to facilitate easy income for women entrepreneurs. A total of 18,400 loans amounting TZS 3.0 billion were provided whereby 95% of the beneficiaries are women.

Women in education

Gender equality and equity in the education sector is a key commitment made by the government to reduce gender disparity or plead for the gender balance in education. The 2006 Education Policy states in chapter 8, that gender equity shall be promoted at all education levels. Likewise, the Education Act gives recognition to gender issues and protects girls from being married before completing basic education and also protecting them against sexual abuse practices.

Zanzibar is ahead of Mainland Tanzania in granting school girls who fall pregnant a second chance to pursue an education. Section 16(1) of the Spinster and Single Parent Children Protection Act passed in 2005 provides an impetus for the re-

entry policy. Girls can return to school two years following their delivery.

The Government of Zanzibar has also focused on addressing gender specific gaps in mathematics and science at secondary schools and is providing specific training to female teachers who teach science as a subject. It has also established special science classes for girls in two schools and established links with other institutions that promote girls education. Zanzibar is beginning to bear fruit from her investments in education especially at Secondary and Tertiary levels. In the year 2013 for instance, more girls sat for National O level examinations and transited to High School (6,768 girls compared to boys 4,427).

Women in health

Health and health services remain a priority area under numerous development frameworks including the Zanzibar Vision 2020, MKUZA II, SDGs and 5 replicated in MKUZA, the Zanzibar Health Policy 2011, the Health Sector Strategic Plan III 2013/2014 and a host of others. It continues to obtain a significant portion of the national budget. 95% of the population is living within or less than a 5km radius from a public health facility.

Maternal and child health has received due attention under Health Sector Reforms. Government through the Ministry of Health has generated meaningful policy structures and programs in relation to the promotion of health services and facilities for women. The Ministry of Health has developed a Road Map to accelerate the reduction of maternal and child mortality of 2008 – 2015. Numerous gender interventions arise from the Roadmap including the Reproductive and Child Health Programs, the Youth Friendly Services Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018, the Maternal Mortality Project, the Integrated Reproductive and Child Health Programme, the IMCI programs and the Non Communicable Disease Strategic Plan 2014.

Hospitals and Health Centers in Zanzibar have also introduced some important life saving strategies. For example, health screening for breast and uterine cancer is provided free weekly to all women, ANC services are integrated at all Primary Health Care Units while RCH services available at all levels of health care from hospitals to Primary Health Care Units to adequately and easily serve women who are the primary beneficiaries.

Gaps

Despite all those effort to increase the number of women in leadership and decision making structures, women are most found in the middle and low cadres' management portfolios. Few women are ministers or deputies. Only 20% of the 10 District Commissioners are women. A meager 4.2% (14) of the 332 Shehas or local government leaders are women. Political tensions, especially during elections, contributes to the problem with many capable women fearing to have their reputations tarnished or political parties feeling they have to field contestants who will demonstrate power.

Only 18 (12.67%) women out of 142 candidates were appointed to vie for Constituency seats for the House of Representatives, and only 76 women out of 385 (8.4) contestants were nominated for Councilors Seats. The Zanzibar MDG Report (2014) indicates that there is slight achievement in participation of women in decision making, for example there are 33% of members of the House of Representatives, 15.8% Ministers, 62.5% Deputy Ministers, 215 Principal Secretaries and 20 % District Commissioners. Also, there are 339 Shehas whereby (14) are women.

Political parties seem content with the proportional representation system to appoint women in different representative structures following elections and are not keen to make 50-50 representation and internal agenda from the stage of party nominations. The silence in relevant legislations mainly the Zanzibar Elections Act (No. 11 of 1984) Law Amending the Elections Act of 1984 (Law No. 12 of 2002), the Election Act (1985), the Political Parties Act (1992), and the Election Expenses Act has not helped the situation.

Women remain under-represented in political and socio-economic decision making in the Executive and in the Judiciary as well as in rural areas, due to poor implementation of laws combined with cultural practices and customs which exclude women and discriminate them against ownership of productive assets.

Another challenge involves the low capacity of women leaders to influence decisions that effects women welfare and development at different levels of decision making. Barriers contributing to Women's low level of participation at decision making levels include lack of proper education for some of them, lack of leadership

skills /training, absence of a sound system of qualifications for appointment to different vacancies in decision making bodies, inadequate confidence, women's weak economic ability and socio cultural norms.

Women's access to loans in various financial institutions has been faced with some obstacles in that collateral is always sought which women do not have. Even in some financial institutions which use groups as collateral, women have been faced with similar challenge as some of the group members fail to pay their portions hence, the group take responsibility and finally break up.

3. COVID 19 IMPACT ON WOMEN IN TANZANIA

Tanzania (Zanzibar) like other developing countries most women work in low-paying, insecure and informal sectors. Tanzania's experience with COVID-19 will yield a similar outcome because there are fewer women than men in sectors which are likely to be formal. 51% of women work in the informal sector employed or running micro and small enterprises. This sector is characterized by daily wages, limited social protection measures and savings, making women vulnerable particularly at times like these. Another important characteristic of the informal sector is their reliance on the entrepreneur (they usually are owned and operated by the one person) for their usual functioning making them very vulnerable to risks. Furthermore, women's sources of income are in sectors that are hard hit by restrictions on movement and lowered consumer demand in export markets. An initial survey by the Tanzania Women Chamber of Commerce (TWCC) conducted among members who are largely Women SMEs in Agriculture, Trade and cross border trade and tourism to analyze the effect of the COVID-19 on their businesses provided the findings below: There is a decrease in sales due to the speculative nature of consumers. The general public has reduced expenditures due to economic uncertainties. Women businesses in beauty, textile and others have reported the average decrease of 53% of sales. The reduction of business volume has led to delays in loan repayment hence increasing the risk of collateral loss. Banks and microfinance have shown a low level of flexibility to restructure trade credits and other loans. 80% of respondent members in retailing businesses were forced to put their businesses on halt since most business products are imported from China. There is also a marked

reduction in cross border trade: Women in Tanzania play an important role in interregional trade activities through formal trade or informal and small-scale level activities. According to TMEA, 70% of cross border traders in East Africa are women. Unpaid care work has increased, with children out-of-school, heightened care needs of older persons and overwhelmed health services. Also, as the COVID-19 pandemic deepens economic and social stress coupled with restricted movement and social isolation measures, gender-based violence is increasing exponentially. Many women are being forced to 'lockdown' at home with their abusers at the same time that services to support survivors are being disrupted or made inaccessible. All of these impacts are further amplified in contexts of fragility, conflict, and emergencies where social cohesion is already undermined, and institutional capacity and services are limited.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This overview set the panorama and open the door to the government and Zanzibar community at large in the Women empowerment policy in participation in Public life and decision making. The Research will recommend the central government through local authorities to provide support to the women and local communities based on mobilization, political opportunities, and overcoming barriers that facing women in participating in Social, Political and Economic activities.

Also shows that there is a need to provide support and awareness to the communities of Urban West Region and other rural areas regarding women participation in politics and decision makings. Advancing women's political participation in democratic transition countries like Zanzibar requires determined efforts not only by women themselves, but also by governments, the international community and civil society.

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