

Policy Article

**Barriers to women contesting for political positions: A case of Iringa Municipality in
Tanzania**

ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to find out the barriers to women contesting for political positions. The study used a cross-sectional study design grounded on mixed research approach. Primary data were collected using Questionnaires, Interviews and Focus Group Discussion while secondary data were attained through documentary reviews. Only purposive sampling techniques was used in selecting 27 respondents and 10 key informants for this study. The data attained through questionnaire, interview and document analysis were analysed qualitatively.

The major findings of the study are the hindrances that hamper women from contesting for political leadership positions in Iringa Municipality since utmost positions in figures are now being substantially dominated by manly political leaders and with veritably many in figures are women positions that comprises of a veritably low participation in contesting indeed before attaining those in political positions after election. Low participation of women in contesting for political leadership positions is attributed to different personal, social, cultural, institutional and economic factors. It was also found that social and cultural beliefs and practices; family and home responsibilities as well as institutional factors affected women's participation in contesting for political leadership positions.

The overall recommendation of the study was to improve women's hope, mindfulness creation program and bringing perceptual and attitudinal changes in all men and women that can be conducted through furnishing training, workshops and experience sharing.

Key words: Women contesting, Political leadership, political Positions for Womenn

1. INTRODUCTION

Women are underrepresented at all levels of decision-making globally, according to the research, and this coupled with the low number of women contesting for political office globally makes gender parity in politics an unattainable goal. Contesting for political leadership positions and the general involvement in other political activities is some constitutional rights of men and women in Africa. But in most African countries they are still far from achieving women's equal and effective provision of chances for contesting and participating in political decision-making positions. Women constitute only 24% of the 12,113 parliamentarians in Africa, 25% in the lower houses and 20% in the upper houses of parliaments, according to the first Women's Political Participation Africa Barometer (2021).

Tanzania like in other countries, there is low percentage of women contesting for political position. According to (Yoon, 2013), women make up only 34.61% of those who are directly elected and a total of 37.4% when including those who are indirectly elected in the parliament as of this writing, Tanzania NEC, (2020).

Like other regions of Tanzania, Iringa has few women contesting for various political positions in the elections. Women that competed and have been doing so at the constituency level have won in a recent 2020 elections, and one has been noted to have won a post as regional chairperson since independence, along with a select few others who are chosen to fit in for special seats and special appointments. In most cases, men win elections and hold more political leadership positions than women, whether at the party or national level. With this in mind, the study has focused in investigation on finding the causes of the relatively low number of women contestants for political position in Iringa Municipality.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Literature Review

The theoretical framework intends to provide the understanding of key concepts of the study and thereby provide working definition of the concepts for the study and in this study, was guided by Liberal Feminist, Social Learning Theory and Participation Theories.

Liberal feminist theory provides a suitable framework for analysing the participation of women political leaders in decision-making organs. The theory is useful because it brings an understanding of women's participation in contesting for political positions and be in the local

government structures as a tool for achieving gender equality in local politics according to Bimer and Mihrete, (2018) in their study on Liberal feminism, while Social learning theory this theory contends that gender roles are learnt through reinforcement, punishment, and modelling. Children are rewarded and reinforced for behaving in accordance with gender roles and penalised for breaching gender roles. Furthermore, social learning theory contends that children learn many of their gender roles by mimicking the behaviours of adults and older children and, as a result, develop notions about what behaviours are suitable for each gender, but the emphasis is on Bundara's social learning theory, and

Participation theory this study employed this theory not to present a new concept; it represents a move from the global, top down strategies that dominated early development initiative to more locally sensitive methodologies (Ross, 2014). There are differing opinions to origins of participation theory. According to (Midgley, 2016) historical antecedents of community participation including women participation in politics, involves the legacy of western ideology, the influence of community development and contribution of social and political science. Another opinion suggests that, the dominance of the top down approaches to development was largely result of modernization theory or modernization idea. The modernization idea is postulated by numerous authors with the most prominent being (Inglehart: Welzel, 2015), and (Norris: Welzel, 2013). The important proposition is that modernization brings about economic development and consequently gender equality in politics. In the mild of this theory, modernization of the financial approaches is a very vital component for human development According to (Kolavalli: Kerr, 2014), modernization point of view meant involving of community including women in the implementation of a development activity with the purpose of increasing acceptance and efficiency use.

2.2 Institutional barriers to women contesting for political positions

Laws and rules influence gender equality and women's involvement in elections. The way we choose who gets elected has a big effect on this issue. In simpler terms, using Temporary Special Measures like quotas has been found to be very important in helping more women get elected into government, since Government policies, political parties and Electoral system haven't actually taken any action to support female candidates.

2.2.1 Government policies and women's contesting for political position

Critical insists is on how Tanzania has multitudinous structures that advance gender equality and engage women. The laws of Tanzania and Zanzibar say that it's important for men and women to be treated inversely and for women to have more distant control according to The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania 1977 which of Zanzibar of 1984 stipulate the need for gender equality and women empowerment. The Tanzania Development Vision 2025 and Zanzibar Development Vision 2050 also say that it's important to treat women and men equally and provide women more distant power.

2.2.2 Political parties and women's contesting for political position

Political parties are the primary mechanism via which women can gain access to electoral office and political leadership positions (UNDP & NDI, 2012). Political parties are the primary gatekeepers in determining which candidates will contest for office. They play a critical role in facilitating or blocking women's participation in decision-making processes by utilizing existing internal leadership structures that determine who leads the parties and who makes decisions about electoral candidate nomination processes. Several studies on internal party democracy in Tanzania have concluded that most political parties are male-dominated, decision-making processes are hierarchical, and women play a minimal role in these decisions (Makulilo, 2014; Meena & Makulilo, 2015), which has an impact on candidate nomination. It is stated that these parties only make a minimal effort to enhance the representation of women, despite the fact that some of the major parties' manifestos contain ideals for gender empowerment (Orji, 2018). As of 2015, there were no legal requirements for parties to appoint a particular proportion of women. Longley, (2021). Claims that "most political parties have failed to put their party gender policies into practise in spite of them being dissected in their structure, and there are no sanctions imposed by the members for this failure."

2.2.3 Electoral system and women's contesting for political position

A country's electoral system influences women's political representation (IPU, 2014; Shvedova, 2005). Electoral systems are the rules that govern how candidates and parties are elected and how those offices are organised. The most well-known variant of the system is first-past-the-post, in which candidates compete in a district or electorate and the candidate with the most votes is proclaimed the winner. The IPU promotes proportional systems because they allow for

more women to be elected because parties nominate a list of candidates rather than a single competitor. Similarly, Norris (2013), asserts that in proportional representation systems, voters choose a party rather than individual candidates. Some elected candidates are women among the party candidates. Because major party organisations wield significant power in candidate selection, they can present a more equal list by including more women alongside men.

2.2.4 Quotas in the legislature and women's contesting for political positions

Quotas have become an important feature of the electoral scene in many nations around the world (Tripp & Kang, 2018). As of 2015, 129 nations had implemented some form of quota system to enhance the number of female candidates in electoral politics. Gender quotas can take many different forms in different countries. Quotas are a type of affirmative action approach used to address the under-representation of women and other minority groups in various areas of society, including employment, education, and politics (McCann, 2013). Dahrelup (2015). As a result, quotas may discourage women from participating in electoral politics in the long run. Furthermore, women elected under quotas may be accused as being unnecessarily privileged, inept, and completely devoted to male party leaders (Christa 2022; Babeiya, 2012; Lovenduski, 2000; Berry, 2021). Although various gender quotas are frequently used around the world to encourage women's engagement in politics, their execution is contentious, limiting women's participation in top political posts.

3 METHODS

The study was carried out purposively in Iringa Municipality, Iringa Tanzania because it is experiencing the problems related to barriers women face on contesting for political positions. The study used a cross-sectional study design with a qualitative approach. The design was used to collect data on barriers to women contesting for political office at one point in time. Because all data were collected at once, the researcher was able to save both time and money by using a cross-sectional/survey design., Data related to the study was analysed using thematic analysis. After transcribing and translating the interviews, the researcher identified, analysed and reported on patterns and themes within the data by means of thematic analysis. Purposive sampling techniques was used in the study by selected ten (10) key informants from women members of

parliament, women ward representatives, women wing party chairpersons and secretaries and other few active women in politics critical case sampling techniques used in this study to select thirty (27) respondents were obtained.

The study used both primary and secondary source of data collection where by primary data were collected from both respondents and key informants of the study using interviews and Focus Group Discussion while secondary data were obtained through documentary analysis in the form of different published as well as unpublished organization documents, tertiary sources such as books, review articles, published reports, web site related to women and analysis essays are used for the study. The review enabled the researcher to obtain the information necessary to provide sufficient evidence of the study. The collected data were noted, recorded, cleaned, processed; finally, analysed qualitatively. To ensure the validity of the study different data collection tools such as key- informant interviews, FGDs and documentary analysis were used while reliability was controlled through pre-testing of questionnaires, key-informant interviews guide and FGDs questions to check their comprehensiveness on collecting data required for the study.

4 PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This study aimed to find out the barriers to women contesting for political positions in Iringa Municipality, Iringa region, Tanzania. The study revealed four specific objectives with institutional barriers as one in a list that has six major areas from which women face challenges when seeking for chance to be nominated and contesting in various political positions as analysed below:

4.1 Institutional Role to Promote Women Participation in Politics

Laws and rules influence gender equality and women's involvement in elections. The way we choose who gets elected has a big effect on this issue. In simpler terms, using Temporary Special Measures like quotas has been found to be very important in helping more women get elected into government. Although there is not enough information in many areas, it is clear that women are not adequately represented in politics and decision-making at any level. During elections, many different groups can promise to support the fair treatment of men and women and encourage women to participate. These groups include political parties, organizations that

manage elections, groups in society, people who watch the elections, the media, and people who help other countries with their elections.

Electoral Management Bodies can explore different ways to involve more women and promote equal treatment in their own organization. Some of the ways these organizations try to achieve gender equality are by gathering information separately for males and females, making sure their plans and internal rules promote gender equality, forming groups or committees to focus on gender-related issues, making efforts to have an equal number of men and women working during elections, and arranging programs to develop knowledge and skills, among other methods. Moreover, EMBs and other important groups can try to encourage gender equality and women's involvement in different parts of the election process, such as getting people registered to vote, choosing candidates, reaching out to voters, handling election day activities, and resolving conflicts. Besides, this topic covers papers, plans, and instances from individuals involved in elections who are also working towards fairness between genders in the electoral system.

4.1.1 Political parties

Political parties have been seen as a key player in influencing representation in candidates contesting in national elections. Since the Tanzanian constitution does not allow for a stand-alone candidate and if that is the case, then every candidate for any national elections must be appointed by a specific political party (Tanzania National Constitution 1977), this study includes the parties represented in the national Parliament as being registered by the national registrar for political parties.

It has been generally asserted that this similar phenomenon is real and that women will have more opportunities to enter government if they are represented in Parliament and at the municipal level. According to Wide (2016), the relationship between these elements is not as great as one may believe.

The absence of information regarding the representation of women in party congresses and other significant bodies is evident throughout the political parties. Because of this, it is particularly challenging to map the proportion of women participating in political party decision-making processes.

Women's rights advocates emphasise how crucial it is for political parties to implement internal quotas. It's critical to hold frequent training sessions within parties to demonstrate to women that they are capable of advancing in the party just as effectively as males. The purpose of this programme is to empower women by boosting their self-esteem and encouraging them to have faith in their own abilities to succeed in their chosen fields. While political parties include provisions in their constitutions and manifestos for women's representation in parliament and local government, according to a number of papers and discussions I read about the process, there is frequently little discussion of women's roles within the parties themselves. Since each political party insists on capable leaders beginning with oneself before the party mentions any, and to which there is a greater low number of their presence in performing and showing off their ability in representation politics compared to men, women do not frequently hold leadership positions within political parties in Tanzania. Political parties have the authority to support female candidates for office and leadership positions if they so choose.

4.1.2 Political motivation

With a summary of respondents' opinions on institutional impediments to women contesting for political position, the following important motivation-related issues were investigated in this section of the analysis: (i) There is lack of opportunities of promotion for women political leaders in the political parties to the next leadership levels (ii) The community's awareness does not recognize women political authority (iii) Lack of incentive to women hinders their participation in contesting for political leadership positions. (iv) Adequate recognition does not give a strong and successful women political leaders by the political party colleagues (v) Commitment of the political parties in applying for affirmative action is practically low.

Concerning item 1: Respondents were asked to view their perception on if there is lack of opportunities of promotion for women political leaders in the political parties to the next leadership levels that ranks the third in a list, the issue was rated as a "moderate cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women contesting for political leadership positions. Regarding to this, the majority of respondents agreed that there aren't enough opportunities for promotion; this implies that because of this, new women aren't motivated to join political parties, which, to be honest, has an impact on their participation in contesting for political leaderships.

Relating to item 2: Respondents were asked to view their insights on the community's awareness does not recognize women political authority at a rank of fourth, the respondents rating the item as a 'moderate cause' for the under representation of women contesting for political leadership positions. This result led the researcher to the conclusion that communities do not recognise women leaders, which discourages women from contesting for political leadership posts.

In relation to item 3: Respondents were asked to view their perception on if lacking of incentive to women hinders their participation in contesting for political leadership positions which ranks the first in a list, the issue was rated as a "major cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women contesting for political leadership positions. Based on this conclusion, the majority of respondents agreed that their political party did not encourage women to hold leadership positions, preventing them from holding positions.

Regarding item 4: Respondents were asked to view their perception in adequate recognition does not give a strong and successful women political leaders by the political party colleagues that was ranked a second in a list, the issue was rated as a "main cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women in political leadership posts. Respondent agreed that there is a difficulty with acknowledging strong women in all political parties in Iringa Municipality in light of this. This suggests that women political leaders, especially those who succeed, lack motivation, which discourages them from joining campaigns for elected positions.

Concerning item 5: Respondents were asked to view their opinions on low commitment of the political parties in applying for affirmative action as in practice it ranked the third, the item was rated as a "major cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women contesting for political leadership positions. The majority of respondents agreed that there was a lack of commitment to really implement affirmative action in this regard. This finding makes it safe to draw the conclusion that the organisation does not successfully employ affirmative action in practise, which would significantly increase the chances of underrepresented women contesting for political leadership positions.

4.1.3 Supportive Networks

A valuable resource for female political leaders, social and supportive networks can help increase the number of candidates contesting for political leadership posts at various levels. In total, 14 respondents strongly agreed with the idea that their networks were very helpful in assisting them in their pursuit of leadership positions, with only a handful strongly opposing. These networks had different levels of utility. For instance, the majority of respondents with more than 20 years of experience in Parliament singled out the UWT, the women's organisation of the ruling party and BAWACHA as CHADEMA's national women wing as an essential network that often forces or helps people into entering politics, with no other in a country to date.

Other respondents mentioned CSOs that provide training and are focused on empowering women and men, such as the Tanzania Gender Network Programme (TGNP). Family, friends, religious organisations, and professional networks were among the other informal networks. The encouragement to make a choice was expressed in dialogues as well as more tangible forms, such as financial assistance during campaigns. On this regard, Hon. Ritha Kabati an MP through special seat spoke on the necessity for social networks of support by saying:

“The UWT was the only supportive network I had when I first started in politics. The UWT use to recruit educated women to the party and into politics. She also offered some of us political help whenever there were conflicts. Other civil society organisation like TGNP and T-WCPT-WCP (also known as T-WCP) began to form over time. The latter network unites women from all political parties and is cross-party. We stress that, despite our political differences, women must support one another and put aside our differences when women-specific concerns are discussed. This made it easier to pass legislation like the sexual offences statute”.

These results demonstrate that social networks inside the women's movement (non-governmental, community-based, and grassroots women's organisations) and outside significantly contribute to boosting women's leadership when these potential and supportive platforms are effectively utilised. In order to give women a place to prepare for political leadership roles, networks both formal and informal have played a crucial role.

4.1.4 International organizations

It is a group that has a crucial role to play in promoting and advancing greater inclusivity and gender equality within political parties and the political system. The following international organisations are suggested by the respondents:

Create chances for women to be at the forefront of talks about party change, both on their own and as a part of bigger events. Give international examples of how other political parties have dealt with cultures of violence towards women within different ranks. Party participants can discuss their difficulties and benefit from others' experiences while also learning about VAW-PP and its advantages.

Help parties create policies prohibiting women from being isolated during elections, systems for reporting and penalising violations, and education initiatives for party members.

To advance gender equality and women's involvement in the election process for political office inside political parties, collaborate with government organisations and CSOs on civic education and awareness initiatives.

Collect information and conduct gender-disaggregated research on party participation, leadership, and influence over decision-making in order to encourage women to showcase their abilities so that the members can approve their capacity and enable them to be nominated based on their merits rather than just their gender.

In order to transform the political culture across parties, especially the dominance of men in leadership, it is important to encourage inter-party cooperation. This will allow advancements to be codified into law and best practises to be shared.

4.1.5 Government and electoral institutional policy

Below is a list of the respondents' responses, ranked according to how they felt about the institutions' plans and tactics for removing obstacles that women faced when contesting for political position in Iringa Municipality: (i) Clear policy and strategy that empower women and promote on the political leadership positions within the government and the political parties (ii) Policy and strategy have problems on achieving women contesting for political positions (iii)

Policy and strategy of the government are not effectively implemented in the political parties that empower women contesting for political positions (iv) Implementers does not have knowledge of policies and strategy that could empower women on political leadership and affairs (v) Lack of careful monitoring and evaluation of the policy implementation that improve women's contesting for political leadership positions

Regarding item 1: Respondents were asked to rank if there is a clear policy and strategy that empower women and promote on the political leadership positions within the government and the political parties. The majority of respondents determined that there is a clear policy and plan in this regard. According to the interviewees, there are policies that encourage women to contest for leadership positions of any kind. For example, the United Republic of Tanzania has a clear strategy stating that there must be 50% female leaders in higher positions and 30% in middle leadership positions.

In addition to this, every government entity has introduced measures such as priority, quotas, and positive discrimination that are intended to prevent gender inequality in leadership of any kind. This conclusion is corroborated by Hana's (2016) 2016 study, which found that Ethiopian policy environments on female leadership systems have a suitable scope to the requirements, concerns, and safety of women when promoting them to political leadership positions.

Regarding item 2: Respondents were asked to rank if the policy and strategy have problems on achieving women contesting for political positions. In respect to this, the majority of respondents believed that there are no issues with policy or strategy. As a result of this finding, the researcher came to the conclusion that the country's current policies and strategies for general participation of women in contesting for political leadership positions, as well as the institutions in place, do not pose an issue. The policy and strategy of the Ethiopian government, which is confirmed by Adonay (2014), does not exclude women from holding leadership roles; rather, it gives them precedence.

Regarding item 3: Respondents were asked to rank if the Policy and strategy of the government are not effectively implemented in the political parties that empower women contesting for political positions, the issue was rated as a "major cause" by the respondents for the

underrepresentation of women contesting for political leadership positions. The majority of respondents agreed that the policy and strategy in question are not effectively implemented, indicating that the government, through the electoral commission and the political parties, does not do a good job of putting these policies and strategies into practice, which contributes to the underrepresentation of women in those who contest for political office.

Concerning item 4: Respondents were asked to rank on if the Implementers does not have knowledge of policies and strategy that could empower women on political leadership and affairs, the issue was rated as a "moderate cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women contesting for political leadership positions. Many respondents concurred that implementers lack expertise of policies and strategies in this regard. As a result of this finding, the researcher came to the conclusion that the political parties and government offices in charge of politics in Iringa Municipality as the implementers lack sufficient understanding and expertise of policies and plans. They lack awareness, which contributes to a low number of women contesting for political leadership positions in Iringa Municipality.

Regarding item 5: Respondents were asked to rank on if a Lack of careful monitoring and evaluation of the policy implementation that improve women's contesting for political leadership positions, the issue was rated as a "major cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women contesting for political leadership positions. In this regard, a substantial portion of respondents stated that there is a problem with attentive monitoring and evaluation of policies made on whether or not they are implemented, and everything appears to be left behind only after the completion of the general elections. Based on this finding, it is safe to conclude that there is a significant problem with monitoring and evaluating policies and strategies that improve women's participation in contesting for political leadership positions, which causes women to occupy below-average numbers of those contesting for leadership positions.

4.1.6 Religious Institutions


Many religious groups have adopted the new reality of empowered women in the last few decades, thanks to women's capacity to stand up for themselves and make an effect as leaders. Most women in Christianity refer to several women mentioned in the biblical story who stood out as major individuals in society. Women like Naomi, Ruth, and Ester exemplify the women

who shown their ability to serve God as leaders in situations dominated by men. Most women oppose religious constraints and see leadership as a God-given responsibility that should be done rigorously in faith without regard for gender.

However, the majority of scholars place the blame on the patriarchal nature of most religions, which operate under strict rules that, in most cases, discount the ability of women to hold positions of power, connect faith, education, and leadership in defining women in leadership positions, and the restrictive elements ingrained in religion (Carbajal, 2018). Faith, according to the article, is strongly embedded in the cultural beliefs of various societies, that determines how people live (Carbajal, 2018). In the midst of the cultural catastrophe that religion has prevented, women have now come to recognise the oppressive qualities of religion and have started to speak up for themselves. The majority of Christian women's groups around the world have developed to overcome all obstacles in order to hold important leadership roles. As with Islamic religious belief, perceptions, myths, and realities.

Participants emphasised that Islam has a good impact on female participation, in contrast to popular conceptions that Islam may have a detrimental impact on women's development. Women have the right to participate in political, economic, and social activities, some participants emphasised, and they also enjoy "freedom of will". One participant supported her viewpoint by citing the following verse from the Qur'an: According to the verse in Yusuf Ali's translation of 16:97, *"Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him we will give a new Life, a life that is good and pure, and we will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their deeds."*

Other participants stated how they perceived the impact of Islamic principles on women's status as follows:



Islam makes no distinction between the rights of men and women. Islam, on the other hand, bestows a great number of blessings to women, whether they belong to the household or the larger society. "Islam has granted Muslim women numerous rights at various levels.... There is no obstacle for a woman to hold a

leadership role as long as she is qualified to do so, which is determined by her comprehension of the Qur'an, Sunna, and, of course, scholars.

Some participants, while still emphasising a gender role perspective, had very positive views of the roles that women play within their own families. I also learned that in Islam, women play very important roles that are even more significant than a man's capacity to earn money and provide for his family, since these are his responsibilities. As opposed to this, a woman's role is to teach her children to be good people, support her husband, be a loving, caring daughter, be a leader and influencer, and be someone who can handle a lot of responsibility while still being able to do more and be more.

Some participants felt that women had the opportunity to work in a variety of occupations and perform at a level comparable to men, with some exceptions, when it comes to women in political leadership. According to the respondent, for instance; The statement *"females can... access different jobs, with the exception of being the foremost religious authority [Imam]"* was made in the context of the explanation that *"Islam provides women the right to be leaders and take a responsible part in society. It promotes women."*

However, many participants felt it was crucial for a woman leader to uphold her set of beliefs while adhering to the fundamentals of Islam. Another respondent, among many others, plainly expressed this when they said: *"Obeying Allah's laws and instructions while working is the most crucial thing for me when it comes to working [women]"*.

Participants agreed that Islam encourages women to lead and succeed, yet there were definite differences between them and men. Another respondent argued, *"I believe that girls should be educated from an early age to recognise their individuality and be supported in ways that help them bring out the best in themselves in order to grow and become productive Muslim women who can best serve their families, institutions, and nations."*

In general, the respondents observed that while Islam places great significance on women's emancipation, there are many misinterpretations. Another commenter brought up this concept by stating that: *"The issue is how people actually perceive and comprehend [Islam]; it is largely shaped by customs and what people are brought up believing to be righteous,"* and *"Islam did*

not forbid or prohibit women from working in leadership positions, but by giving preference to men over women, people have turned away from their religion,"

Another reply supported this viewpoint by pointing out that various individuals may have erroneous assumptions and beliefs about the core ideas of Islam: *"Islam did not forbid or prohibit women from working in leadership positions, but by giving preference to men over women, people have turned away from their religion,"*

Participants stated that: *"Customs and traditions" as well as "extremism in people's understanding of religion" are to blame for misinterpretations. Another respondent cited additional causes to "culture and poor education," as well as to the school system and some men's mentalities;*

Of certainly, generations' mentalities and ways of thinking are impacted by [false] education.

Within similar lines, another respondent noted that: *"Men struggle to accept women leading them because they have been used to being in positions of leadership for such a long time".*

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

All the study respondents agreed that the path to political leadership is like climbing a hill through thorn bushes, where each stage involves cutting through a multitude of thorns before progressing to the next stage, and each individual handling situations in a unique manner. All respondents admitted that the context remains a challenge, and that social and cultural norms and beliefs continue to create structural obstacles that limit women's access to the political sphere. While the rhetoric of empowering women is widespread, the context has not been transformed to facilitate their entry to leadership positions, and the work environment remains difficult. Further, the political contributions that women have made remain invisible. Nevertheless, the equal participation of women and men in political leadership is crucial to realising women's democratic rights and contributing to the overall economic performance of the country. Tanzania is praised for ratifying key international, regional and sub-regional human and women rights instruments which among other things lay the basic principles and prerequisites for

attaining meaningful and effective participation of women in political and electoral spaces. Adoption of measures such as women reserved seats and the ongoing engendering of the electoral and political legal frameworks depict the country's strong commitment towards the realization of equal representation of men and women in decision-making process. Special seats arrangement has for instance been key in promoting gender sensitive policies and laws. Special seats arrangement has paved way for women to run in competitive seats while motivating many women to aspire for political careers. Special seats have opened up doors for women to be accepted in high positions such as those of the ministers, deputy ministers, vice President and speaker(s) of the National Assembly.

Despite the ratification of the international, regional and sub-regional human and women's rights instruments and the progress that Tanzania has achieved, still a minimum involvement of women in decision-making positions and structures from the lower to higher party levels is noted. There are no measures to ensure women are part of the main party leadership positions at all levels. As women are not in the key decision-making positions within the party' administrative levels, a tokenism approach is witnessed. Women get few 'representative' seats during the key decision-making meetings such as general assemblies and the executive/central committee meetings. Further, parties have not adopted voluntary candidate quotas to ensure certain number of candidates are women. While each party has an established women wing, their autonomy, funding and capacity to influence gender sensitive policies and practices remain the biggest challenge.

5.2 Recommendations for Action

The researcher offers the following recommendations to actively support women's considerations when they contest for political positions in Tanzania based on the data gathered throughout the study.

- Create programmes that encourage aspiring young women leaders, raise awareness of the advantages that women bring to leadership positions, and fight for the equal representation of men and women (50:50) in politics and leadership.
- Through the successful execution of its laws, rules, and regulations, the government should recognise the participation of women in leadership roles.

- Set up initiatives and systems to address the systemic problems that prevent women from holding positions of leadership in the civil and political spheres. Interventions are vitally important to protect women's rights to govern their own lives both within and outside of the home, to increase their access to economic resources, to remove social and legal barriers to their participation in the country's change, and to remove any other obstacles. In particular, the education system will need to give girls and young women the chance to finish secondary school and move on to tertiary-level studies, and the health system will need to guarantee women's access to necessary health and reproductive services, including comprehensive family planning services.
- Women must be competitive on an equal basis with males for positions of political leadership. To qualify for political leadership roles, they must make an effort on their own and improve their education, expertise, and abilities. Through social media and by developing close relationships with people in and outside of their political parties and other official organisations that support women in leadership positions, they should expand their social networks.
- Make sure that women are participating in decision-making at higher and higher levels of administration. In this regard, it will be crucial to encourage women's political participation from the grassroots level up to national representation to continue implementing the Local Government Reform Programme, which gives local communities and authorities the power to identify and carry out development activities in line with local priorities.
- Enforce all applicable laws to guarantee that men and women have the same rights to make decisions, govern their lives, and earn a living, as well as to stop all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination. These include the equal rights of women in marriage, the right to vote and the right to vote participation, the right to own, inherit, and manage land, the right to sign contracts, the right to register and run enterprises, and the ability to access credit and financial services. In particular, the Marriage Act (1971) would need to be changed to raise the minimum age of marriage for women to 18 years of age in light of the important ruling rendered by the High Court of Tanzania in 2016.
- To analyse the extent to which the Commissions' policies, systems, and practises mainstreamed gender equality, to concentrate on the external context in which the

Commission carries out its mandate, particularly the state of women's participation in political campaigns and the necessary legal framework. The Commission's internal processes and capacities are also being examined, including senior management's commitment to gender equality, technical capacity, and human resource policies and practises. Involving a diverse spectrum of gender and electoral stakeholders. The Gender Strategy is currently an institutional mechanism used by the Election Commission to encourage women to run for political office in order to increase women's representation and level the playing field.

- All ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) of the central government as well as local government authorities (LGAs) should integrate the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data into their normal data management and reporting systems. Accurate data will make it possible to pinpoint the stages of a woman's life cycle during which gender inequities are most pronounced and will guide the creation of programmes aimed at empowering girls and women.
- To change the mentality of girls, boys, men, and women that places an unfair amount of household responsibility on girls and women, restricts their access to education and employment opportunities, and justifies the politics of exclusion, increase gender awareness through effective programmes of education and mass communication. It will be vital in this regard to incorporate male-targeted programmes and find male advocates for women's social and political rights.
- Taking advantage of the ongoing constitutional review process, the government should make sure that gender-equitable principles are incorporated into the new constitution in accordance with the nation's obligations under international, regional, and domestic agreements like the Beijing Platform for Action, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- To address gender inequities in Tanzania, all government policies, plans, initiatives, and activities must take gender considerations into account, as outlined in the Women and Gender Development Policy (2000) and supporting National Strategy for Gender Development. Implementing gender-sensitive planning and budgetary procedures in all ministries, as well as regional and local authorities, will be a key step in ensuring that

sufficient funds are allocated to reducing gender inequalities. The process of gender mainstreaming will be further advanced by enhancing the function of gender focal points in sectoral ministries and other governmental bodies.

- NGO and stakeholder groups should promote the advancement of women in leadership roles by developing follow-up systems that will allow women to practise their leadership responsibilities. This can be accomplished by empowering women and allowing them to participate in leadership and decision-making. Women should also be encouraged to pursue higher education so they can improve their abilities and become more suited to hold positions of leadership.

In addition to documenting and sharing best practises for encouraging women to run for leadership positions in political positions, support research on the structural barriers to women's successful engagement in both public and private institutions. Since the family is the cornerstone of society, parents must treat their children equally in all circumstances, regardless of their sex. In order to reduce the stresses of home responsibilities and foster a culture of shared commitment that makes it simpler for competent female leaders, family-friendly policies should be implemented.

In order to increase women political participation, political parties are advised to pursue the following measures: -

- i) Establish intraparty leadership quota to bring more women into the leadership of political parties on an equal basis with men.
- ii) Establish party voluntary candidate quotas to ensure equal proportion of candidates for political offices are women.
- iii) Have transparent criteria for political and electoral decision-making positions and ensure that the candidate selecting bodies have a gender-balanced composition.
- iv) Incorporate and ensure gender equality agenda is an integral part of the entire political parties' agenda.
- v) Ensure part of the subvention is used to advance women participation in party politics and beyond.
- vi) Create series of trainings and mentoring between experienced and inexperienced women to improve training on leadership and decision-making, public speaking and

- self-assertion, and political campaigning to increase women's political knowledge, skills and capacity.
- vii) Provide leadership and self-esteem training to assist women and girls, particularly those with special needs, women with disabilities and other minorities to strengthen their self-esteem and to encourage them to take decision-making positions
 - viii) Provide gender-sensitive training for women and men in the political parties to promote non-discriminatory working relationships and respect at the political party level.
 - ix) Ensure functioning, resourced and autonomous women wings
 - x) Strengthen collaborations with CSOs to benefit from gender analyses and trainings.
 - xi) Adopt and operationalize a gender policy at a political party level

5.5 Recommendations of areas for further study

The study was conducted in Iringa Municipal Council one among other four district councils of Iringa region. It is obvious that though the findings were qualitatively valid and reliable, there is need to conduct an extensive study that could cover all districts of Iringa regions as to find out how far are women participative in contesting for political positions. The study would serve to create a region plan of action for encouraging and motivating women to participate in politics. Another study could be undertaken to investigate the role of political parties in improving the participation of women in political positions. The study would be useful to understand which political party promotes women participation, how and on what practical mechanism. The study suggests that further research to be done on the following:

- How political issues affect the representation of women in leadership.
- How economic considerations affect the representation of women in leadership roles.

5.6 Limitation of the Study

It should be evident that research work has some inherent limitations. Geographically, the study was limited to the Iringa Municipality; however, if it had been conducted at a regional or national level, with wide coverage and a comparable or similar context, and a much larger number of respondents, it would have revealed much more detailed and insightful information about the obstacles facing women who wish to run for political office.

The further limitations were methodologically there are extraneous variables which were beyond the researcher control such as respondents' honesty; personal biases and uncontrolled setting of the study. The research instruments on the barriers to women contesting for political positions are not standardized. Therefore, a validity and reliability test was being done to produce a credible measurement of the research variables. Other limitation of the research was the respondents' reaction towards the questionnaires. Due to the fact that women competed for various political positions in general elections for constituency and council representation, as well as other decision-making positions within the major four political parties listed above, and top women wings leadership positions in each political party, the majority of them did not timely respond, which had an impact on the research schedules. Consequently, this prolonged and complicated the data collecting. The other issue was that some female political leaders refused interviews out of fear that the information would be used against them because they were alarmed by the association of a researcher with one of the political parties on a list.

Despite having intended to capture the interview on tape, the researcher was obliged to use writing on notes because the respondents were not willing to participate. However, advantageous circumstances for the interviewees were taken into account to reduce situational elements that affect the data's quality. The researcher went above and beyond what he could have expected to accomplish, though, in order to increase the validity and precision of the results, and he successfully completed the study work.

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