

REVIEW OF TANZANIAN POLICIES ON WOMEN
SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: USING EQUITY –
EQUALITY APPROACH

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Abstract

This desk review intended to carry out gender analysis in selected Tanzanian policies on girl empowerment using equity- equality approach. Specific objectives were to identify policies on girl empowerment, to explore areas in status quo that were still relevant, outdated and missing. The study employed documentary review to get secondary data. Policies reviewed include the national education policy (2009), national water policy (2002), national health policy (2007) and national population policy (2006). The study found that on equity basis, girls were highly considered in water resources management, reduction of workload among girls, adequate maternal health and non-formal education. In addition, equity weaknesses include failure to define the marriage age for a girl, having few programs to address reproductive health among girls and existence of traditions affecting implementation of policies. Similarly, equality weakness observed include having many illiterate women as compared to men. This study recommends that the government should ensure that special programs on women should be strengthened and culture should be analysed during redesigning of policies to bridge the equity- equality policy paralysis.

Key words: Policy, girls, empowerment, equity, equality

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1.0 Introduction

Connecting girls who are inspiring futures with the goal of attaining gender equity and equality has been a critical message in commemorating the event that is marked as International Women's day across Sub-Saharan Africa and around the world for the year 2012 (UN, 2012). According to United Nations (1997), International Women's Day (8 March each year) has a long history; since when it was originally called International Working Women's Day. This is when women on all continents, often divided by national boundaries and by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences, come together to celebrate their day, and look back to a tradition that represents at least nine decades of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development. This is for the reason that, it is an event marked by women's groups around the world and was rooted in the centuries-old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men.

Gender equality, equity and empowerment have considerable attention in the past three decades since the Beijing China (1995) meeting. Scholars have been coming up with not only explicit definitions of these terms but also to some extent confusing interpretation. The term gender equality has been referred to the situation where both men and women are treated and given the same consideration when it comes into social, economic, political and other developmental issues (Whitehead, 1990). On the other hand, gender equity refers to a situation whereby both men and women are treated fairly. This means that there should be fair treatment of every one based on his or her respective needs and special consideration (Elsa, 2002). The term empowerment has also received due weight in many parts of the world. This term has been used differently to mean making women to have control over the decisions and issues that affect one's life. This means that having representation in decision-making bodies and control over the distribution of resources among women. Where women are underrepresented in decision-making fora, deliberate policy action to redress the imbalance is necessary. Participation in planning and decision-making processes has the additional benefit of increasing a sense of commitment to and ownership of the plan's objectives on women (Whitehead, 1990).

International Women's Day (IWD) started as a Socialist political event where by the holiday was blended in the culture of many countries, primarily Eastern Europe, Russia, and the former Soviet bloc in early 19s, where by for most of the countries, the day was commemorated in different dates. However, in the West, International Women's Day was first observed as a popular event after 1977 when the United Nations General Assembly invited member states to proclaim March 8 as the UN Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (United Nations, 1997).

Currently, each year around the world, International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated on March 8. Thousands of events occur not just on this day but throughout March to mark the economic, political and social achievements of women. There have been various themes on the day, for instance based on UN (2012), the previous United Nation International Women's Day themes for the past seven years ago were; equal access to education, training and science and technology (2011), equal rights, equal opportunities: progress for all (2010); women and men united to end violence against women and girls (2009); investing in women and girls (2008); ending Impunity for violence against women and girls (2007); women in decision-making (2006); : and gender equality beyond 2005: building a more secure future (2005) (UN, 2012).

Tanzania as one of countries in sub-Saharan Africa has not disassociated itself from the aforementioned move. It has been celebrating this day in yearly basis with a focus on narrowing the gender inequality and inequity between men and women in the society. There is evidence that Tanzania has invested a lot on past progress on women's rights and continue to prioritize women's education and health and utilises the pledge of the UN's ongoing commitment to support Tanzania's government (Nyambura, 2011).

It should be noted that, the theme for the year 2012 on girls is of importance to women's development since it reflects the policy and strategic initiatives that have been under taken by countries to narrow the gender inequity and inequality socially, economically, and politically. Statistically, in 2003 about 85 percent that is equivalent to more than 1 billion adolescents in the world lived in developing countries (UNICEF, WHO, & UNFPA 2003). Nearly 700 million adolescents lived in Asia (South, East and West) and the Pacific, another 150 million lived in Africa, nearly 100 million lived in South America and the Caribbean, and approximately 90 million lived in the Arab States (UNFPA, 2003) and in many countries, majority of them are girls. Furthermore, Women and girls are estimated to comprise more than 70 percent of the world's 1.4 billion poor people (Care, 2006) and they are the ones faced with illiteracy, poverty, gender inequality and health inequities. For instance, about 25% of girls in developing countries are not in school. About one in seven will marry before the age of 15, and 38% will marry before the age of 18. In addition, medical complications from pregnancy are the leading cause of death among girls aged 15 to 19 worldwide (Care, 2006).

Furthermore, it is generally accepted that adolescents particularly girls face enormous challenges in the transition from childhood to adulthood (UNICEF, WHO & UNFPA, 2003). The main challenges affecting adolescents especially girls, are HIV/AIDS, poverty, illiteracy, conflict and violence. Yet, adolescents, girls and boys alike, can also be agents of change and can inspire hope for a better future. According to Care (2006), when a girl in the developing world receives seven or more years of education, she marries four years later and has fewer children and when women and girls earn income, through small business loans for example, they reinvest 90% of it into their families, as compared to only 30 to 40% for a man .

Similar trend exists in Tanzania where it is also accepted that girls are more vulnerable to various challenges. This is supported by The Citizen *published on 11 March 2011* a statement by UNFPA Representative Julitta Onabanjo marking International Women's Day on behalf of the UN Resident Coordinator in Tanzania. Ms. Onabanjo urged that, the existing situation is urgently calling for significant progress on women rights in Tanzania. She emphasized that, as long as one in three Tanzanian girls are beaten, coerced into sex, or abused in some way. Unfortunately these crimes remain unpunished, this calls for enacting and enforcing equitable laws and practice justice. As long as also **some** (65 percent) of women in Tanzania can neither read nor write; this calls for enactment and enforcement of equitable laws and we have to stand up for equal rights and opportunity(Citizen *on 11 March 2011*).

Therefore, the aim of this paper was to review selected policies related to girl's empowerment, emancipation and advocacy to inform policy-making process.

2.0 Rationales for Policy analysis

A number of global treaties and frameworks with a special focus on gender equality and women's empowerment have been discussed, debated and endorsed by the United Nations (UN) and a substantial number of these have been acceded to by worldwide country governments especially African governments (UN, 2008). These treaties and frameworks have been vital instruments in changes of policies of these countries especially those related to women and girls. Among the treaties and frameworks that have been worked out by African countries are The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and its follow up Plans of Action. These have been of enormous importance in upholding the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of sex, providing for the elimination of discrimination against women in all fields, particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, through a range of legal and policy interventions dealing explicitly with women's rights. They also continue to provide the overarching global frameworks on gender equality and empowerment.

The recent popular framework to be introduced was The Millennium Declaration of 2000 that resolved at promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combating poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate sustainable development. In other words, the framework aimed at recognizing the centrality of gender equality and empowerment of women to the achievement of all international development goals (UN, 2008).

A part from the earlier observed frameworks and treaties, there have been other initiatives in ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment is achieved. For instance, The World Summit for Children's Goal 5 emphasizes on education to every child, where by it states that all girls and boys must have access to and complete primary education that is free, compulsory and of good quality as a cornerstone of an inclusive basic education and gender disparities in primary and secondary education must be eliminated (DeJaeghere, 2004). In the same note, Tanzania's government in its efforts has ensured that gender equity and women empowerment has been adopted as per numerous global frameworks including the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action and the MDGs (Nyambura, 2011). However, evidence on how policy initiatives such as education, water, health and population to mention a few on empowering girls who inspire the future in the country is patchy and limited. There is an assumption that majority of policies do not address adequately the priority of empowering girls to be able to contribute to the future national economy. Therefore, this study intended to use the equity- equality approach to explore areas in various selected policies that are still relevant in the context of empowering a girl that inspires the future, areas that are outdated, missing and how to take advantage of culture and technology to design policy frameworks on preparing girls with bright future.

3.0 Policy Analysis Methodology

This policy brief is centred on the selected policies such as National population policy (2006), the national education policy (2009), National water policy (2002) and national health policy (2007). These policies were purposively selected since they represent potential sectors of the economy of which a girl has to be part of it. The desk based study used documentary review to get secondary data on how selected policies enlight the empowerment, advocacy and emancipation of a girl. The analysis also based on the pre- determined goal or criteria such as equity and equality. Some data analysis was done using content analysis.

4.0 Findings

In her efforts to ensure gender equity, equality and women empowerment is mainstreamed in social, economic and political welfare, apart from adopting various treaties and frameworks, Tanzania has introduced girl empowerment, advocacy and emancipation in various policies. The policies related to gender empowerment in Tanzania are National Population Policy (2006), Education and Training Policy(2009), National Health Policy (2007) and National Water Policy (2002). However, for the purpose of analysis in this paper, the policy particularly related to girls that will be analysed in terms of equity-equality model to take advantage of the changing social, economic, political and technological changes are National population policy (2006), the national education policy (2009), National water policy (2002) and national health policy (2007).

4.1 National Water Policy (2002)

The revised National Water Policy (NAWAPO) of 2002, emphasized on the four main issues. The revision of the policy, which started about three years ago, has been done through a multi-stakeholder consultation following national and international socio-economic policy reforms in the 1990s. The four key issues in the revised policy are demand responsive approach (DRA) principle leading to community ownership and management (COM) of water/sanitation facilities; private sector participation (PSP); integration of water supply and sanitation and lastly decentralization of service delivery from central government to district councils (Gazigelle, 2002). The analysis of the policy statement is as follows:-

Equality

Strengths: The earlier mentioned key issues seem to be beneficial to women, particularly girls since they has led to the development of the management strategy Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) which involves all relevant stakeholders in water management decisions that are taken at the lowest appropriate level and therefore promotes rational and sustainable use of water. It also allows their participation in the management of water resources. In addition, the policy insist on participation of different groups in the society such as youths, men and women as per section 4.10 that *Participation of both men and women in decision-making, planning, management and implementation of water resources management and development will be enhanced. Youth and children as the future managers of water resources have to be involved from the early stages for better management and future sustainability. Youth and children will be educated on the management, protection, conservation and development of water resources as they are the facilitators for change.*

Weaknesses: Extensive awareness rising about the benefits of the NAWAPO is still lacking at the community level in order to solve the problem of collective action and ensure equitable allocation and sustainable water use.

Equity

Strengths: The policy allows two important things to women. First, rational and sustainable use of water is so crucial to girls since it ease their core role in many societies and families, especially rural areas where women takes longer to search for water. In the water policy for instance, the role of women has been given due weight in the management of water resources. Policy statement 3.3 states that *Women play central role in the use, management and protection of water resources and thus should be involved fully in the decision making process. In addition, Planning shall involve all stakeholders and will be intersectoral in character.*

Weakness: the policy seems to overlook a number of issues such as addressing the concerns of the marginalised communities, especially women and girls, in accessing safe water and adequate sanitation (TGNP, 2009). The observed weaknesses have threatened water availability to some of girls groups and hinder the participation of women in the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) management strategy.

4.2 National Population Policy (2006)

The vision of this policy has been to enable Tanzania achieve an improved standard of living and quality of life for its people. Among the objectives that clearly shows gender equity and women empowerment particularly to girls in the National Population policy are those dealing with promoting gender equity, equality, and women empowerment at all levels and transforming socio-economic and cultural values and attitudes that hinder gender equality and equity. The analysis of the policy statement is as follows:-

Equity

Strengths: The policy has been insisting much on creating an environment conducive to the reduction in women's workload and ensuring mainstreaming of gender issues in development plans and policies. The directions give opportunities to girls to access various services that increase their welfare. For instance, there have been a number of programs and projects run by government and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on fighting against gender violence, women participation in political and social matters.

Weaknesses: The current policy builds its foundation on the 1971 Marriage Act that stipulates a legal minimum age of marriage of 15 years for females and 18 for males. This has threatened the welfare of girls since it results into early and nearly universal marriage for women. For instance, the median age at first marriage for women aged 15-49 is 18 years and by the age of 20, over 69 percent of women in Tanzania have married at least once (URT, 2006). The policy may lead to an increase in illiteracy rate to women.

Equality

Strengths: The directives that are beneficial to women are those dealing with increasing awareness of the society about the importance of education for all children, promoting the participation of women in decision-making, including in political affairs at all levels, eliminating all forms of discrimination and gender-based violence. In addition, the policy statements focus on

creating an environment conducive for various stakeholders to carry out advocacy activities on gender and population issues.

Weaknesses: The information collected from the 2002 Population and Housing Census has shown that males have achieved more in education than females. Whereas, the national level literacy rate was found to be 77 percent, this is also the national average literacy rate for males while for female it is 65 percent.

4.3 National Health Policy (2007)

The vision of this policy has been to improve the health and well being of all Tanzanians with a focus on those most at risk, and to encourage the health system to be more responsive to the needs of the people. One of the pertinent objectives related to gender equity and women empowerment in National health policy is that related to reducing the burden of disease, maternal and infant mortality and increases their life expectancy (URT, 2007). The analysis of the policy statements follows below-

Equity

Strengths: The policy ensures that there is provision of adequate and equitable maternal and child health services and promotion of youth friendly services to improve access to reproductive health information and services. These provide an opportunity for girls, who according to URT (2006) majority of them experiences early marriages. In addition, the policy provided for the right state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters related to the reproductive system, including its functions and processes. This also provides an opportunity for girls to have the right information and therefore make the right decisions on their reproductive health such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), safe sex and others.

Weaknesses: There are still inadequate programmes that address reproductive health needs for specific population group's especially adolescent girls in particular those living in rural areas. This endangers their efforts to be energetic future leaders and contributors to the national economy.

Equality

Strength: The policy insists that community should be more involved in planning, implementation and evaluation of all health programs from village to national levels. This should be achieved in terms of making the community responsible for the safety of medicine, medical supplies and equipment in providing security to their health facilities. This analysis believes that both girls and boys will be equally involved in this process.

Weaknesses: The institutional framework in which ministry expects to work by using it where by multisectoral approach is prioritised, it is not well arranged. Therefore, it has been a challenge in accomplishing the objective (URT, 2007). This has made low and slow contribution of other stakeholders expected and therefore Infant and child morbidity and mortality rates are decreasing in a slow pace.

4.4 Education and Training Policy (2009)

The over all vision on of this policy is to ensure that the society has access to quality education services regardless of classes. To achieve this, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training has developed various policies to ensure that there are relevant national development policies and programs, including the Secondary and Primary Education Development Plan (S/PEDP) 2004 – 2009, Education and Training Policies of 1995 and Education and Training Policies of 2009.

Equity

Strength: The policy has provided the opportunity of non-formal or second chance education for girls who dropped out or never had the chance to enrol. This has positive impact on girls since are the most neglected in the community and assume much responsibility at family level. So giving them next chance is an advantage to the community and herself in particular.

Weaknesses: Most policy effort is directed only at enrolment of the girls into elementary levels but there are not adequate strategies to ensure the gender constraint relating to retention, performance and achievement are addressed. In addition, education policy is lacking consideration of re-entry into school for pregnant schoolgirls after delivery. This has also negative socio-economic effects on girls that inspire the future. The major challenge affecting the achievement of gender parity in formal employment includes the low educational level of women and girls and lack of required skills.

Equality

Strengths: The policy has put more emphasis related to girl's empowerment in terms of equal opportunities for girls and boys in education. In order to ensure that, ministry of education has adopted policies with some of gender responsive measures. For instance, Tanzania is among countries that have already mainstreamed the provision of scholarships to needy boys and girls, with more quotas to girls, in the national education system and budget. A part from that, the education and training policies of Tanzania promotes Centres of Excellence (COE) intervention. The overall intention the COE intervention is to transform the school and its surrounding community into an environment, which is physically, academically and socially gender responsive.

Weakness: This policy has not been adequately implemented in order to ensure education systems are addressing gender disparities at the school and community level effectively. There is evidence that traditional norms and belief still dominate our families and put more weigh on the boy than the girl when it comes into education planning. This is to say, equality in education is not much practiced especially in pastoral communities.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

As the world was celebrating the International Women Day (2012), community focus was centred on how a girl is empowered to see a bright future. This has taken us into analysis of various policies such as water, population; health and education to identify policy statements using equity - equality approach that are still relevant, outdated and missing. The study found that the role of a girl should not be ignored in the policy development process. This is due to the fact that, historically, women have been given little consideration as compared to men in development areas such as education, decision making and health programs. Using equity-

equality approach has been useful to review such policies and develop a stand on how to empower and advocate on girl's rights. The analysis recommends that regular policy review should be carried out to diagnose specific inadequacies in various policies related to girls empowerment. More importantly, cultural issues should not be ignored to inform the policy making process since it has impeded the policy implementation.

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