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Women Participation and Representation in Politics and Governance in Zanzibar

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Abstract

Women occupy more than half of the Zanzibar population and more than half of voters in general elections while they are underrepresented in decision making positions. This study was aimed to analyse the status of women's participation and representation in the political process (election) and Governance in Zanzibar in reference to the re-introduction of multiparty. A mixed approach used to collect data and in analyzing data. Results revealed that still women are under-representation as an insignificant number of women stand as contesters and elected in the general elections. For the past of 25years since the re-introduction of the Multi-party system, women elected in the general election reached 6% for Member of Parliaments, 12% for the member of the House of Representatives and 20.7% for the Councilor position. By the year 2020, in the House of Representatives women occupied 36%, in the Central government key decision making positions women occupied 30% and in Regional and Local Government Administration, women occupied 20% of key decision making positions. Women have never been elected as President of Zanzibar, City Council or Municipal Council Mayor. Similarly, women have never appointed to hold the position of Vice President or Attorney General or Chief Secretary. Various challenges analyzed but the main challenge affecting women's participation and representation is a legal framework. The study has recommended a specific review of the legal framework including removal of special seats which shall be compensated through institutionalize the idea of 50% of men and women within political parties on the nomination of candidates.

Introduction

Zanzibar is a partner state of the United Republic of Tanzania since 1964. Zanzibar enjoys semi-autonomy as it has a full government system which includes Executive, House of Representative (HoRs) as Lawmaking body and Judiciary. Administratively, to date Zanzibar composed into 5 regions, 11 Districts, 54 Constituencies, 111 Wards, and 388 Shehia [1; 2]. In 2012 Population Census, Zanzibar had a population of 1,303,569 people whereby 672,892 equivalent to 51.5% were women [3].

Background of the problem

Participation and representation of women in politics and governance is a topic that has received the interest of many researchers and scholars since the end of the 20th century. This is due to a historic underrepresentation of women on the political processes (elections) and governance. By 1995 women's participation in decision making bodies around the world was about 11.3% [4]. However, since the introduction of a Beijing Platform for action 1995, several efforts have been made which has led to positive progress. Currently, women occupy 24.3% in decision making positions globally. In Parliaments, Rwanda has 64% and Bolivia has 53% respectively. In Ministerial positions, Spain has 64.7%, Nicaragua 55.6% as well as Sweden, Albania, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Rwanda respectively has over 50% [5; 6].

Zanzibar's political system and governance have been featured by gender inequality of male dominance in decision-making positions since the post-revolution of 1964. In 1988, Zanzibar had only one female Minister out of 11 Ministers [7]. Theoretical and practical factors contributed such a situation including cultural practices which consider men as the right person for political life and key decision-maker while women tuned for social life, not for politics. Other factors include; low educational level among women, single-party system and little movement for women [8].

Zanzibar is a politically active society and both men and women are sensitive to their rights especially political rights [8]. Women occupy over 50% of registered voters [9; 2] and they are the one who shapes political campaigns and voting cues during elections. However, after the election, few women elected and appointed to hold a decision making position. Like other countries of the world, since the 1990s, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar has launched many initiatives to boost women's participation in

decision making bodies. Thus, as much has been done, and considering women's majorities, probably, women's interest to participate in governance shall be increased. Therefore, this study was critically conducted to;

- i. Review policy and legal framework governing women participation in Zanzibar.
- ii. Examine the status of women contested and elected in general elections.
- iii. Examine the status of women's participation in decision making positions in the Government.
- iv. Identify the current challenges facing women's participation in Zanzibar politics.
- v. Recommend measures to overcome challenges and improving their participation.

Rationale of the study

To date, there is no empirical study that has been conducted to examine the progress of women representation and current challenges that women face in political life considering afore taken efforts. So this study as measurement toward the strongness of taken measures. The outcomes of the study have many implications for the government, Civil Society, and women themselves toward involvement in politics and governance.

Scope of the Study

The study cover five general elections held in Zanzibar (1995 – 2016) for the positions of President, Member of Parliament (MPs), Member of House Representatives (MoHR), and Councilors. In the same line, the study examines the trend of women in key decision making positions in government bodies from 2005 to 2020. Finally, the study highlights the current challenges women face that facilitating under participation and representation of women in politics and governance in Zanzibar.

Literature Review

Brief History of Multi-party Politics in Zanzibar

A multi-party system existed in Zanzibar before her Independence of 1964. Once after the revolution of 1964 spearheaded by Afro –Shirazi Party (ASP) which led Zanzibar to her independence, the multi-party system was banned [10]. The wave of political changes that started to take place in many African countries in the mid of 1980s extended to Zanzibar following the official re-introduction of the Multi-party system in 1992 [11].

The periodic election is conducted every five years to elect the President of Zanzibar, Members of House of Representatives and Councilors. As part of the United Republic of Tanzania, Zanzibaris also elected Member of Parliaments from respective constituencies. Zanzibar has conducted five general elections; 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015/6 while, preparing for the 6th general election in October 2020. In all previous elections, Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) and the Civic United Front (CUF) were the main political parties.

Awkwardly, since the first multi-party general election of 1995 Zanzibar has experienced political unrest due to irregularities during the elections [12]. The situation that has caused demonstrations, bloodshed, deaths, curfews, boycotts of elected leaders in the decision-making bodies, and migration of Zanzibaris to abroad [13; 14 & 15]. International and regional efforts have been made to ensure Zanzibar be in a peaceful life. Memorable interventions are political negotiations and agreements between CCM and CUF including Muafaka (accord) I and II in 1999 and 2001 respectively [16 & 8].

Although the implementation of those accords was not smooth, the outcomes of such accords have led to various improvements in the politics of Zanzibar through legal framework. The Constitution of Zanzibar of 1984 and laws were amended to overthrow some of the irregularities. In 2010, the Constitution of Zanzibar of 1984 amended, among other things was to establish the Government of National Unit (GNU) [17]. Such amendment was very fruitful to Zanzibar Multi-party Politics as for the first time Zanzibaris enjoyed a peaceful election in 2010 [18; 19 & 9].

However, the general election of 2015 was conducted in a peaceful manner but the election was nullified due to what was reported as irregularities in the election [2]. Following the nullification, the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) which is a responsible organ to organize and manage elections in Zanzibar announced the re-run election in 2016. CUF boycotted to participate in re-run vote [12]. The boycott of CUF seem truly practiced during the vote re-run as CCM won all seats for the position of President of Zanzibar, MoHRs, and Councilors [2].

Definitions of the Concepts

Participation

Khan, 2006 defined a concept of Participation as a development approach, which recognizes the need to involve disadvantaged segments of the population in the design and implementation of policies concerning their wellbeing. The concept means a direct involvement of a person or group in a political life [20]. Shanker (2014) adds that political participation of women can be measured in three dimensions which are; participation as a voter, participation as elected representative and participation in the actual decision-making process [21].

ZEC, 2015 defined Political participation as those actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or to support government and politics. It includes participation in electoral processes which involves both voting and the ability to take part in the conduct of electoral processes as a public affair and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to the campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government [22].

Representation

Pitkin (1967), define the term representation is simply to “make present again.” On this definition, political representation is the activity of making citizens' voices, opinions, and perspectives “present” in the public policy - making processes. Political representation occurs when political actors speak, advocate, symbolize, and act on the behalf of others in the political arena [23].

Policy and legal framework governing women participation

Zanzibar is committed to protecting human rights and facilitating women's participation in politics and governance. Zanzibar Constitution of 1984 contains a Bill of rights including political rights like the right to participate in governance Article 21 and rights to vote under Article 7. Article 21 (1) of the Zanzibar Constitution promises that; “*every Zanzibari is entitled to take part in matter pertaining to governance of the country, either directly or through representatives freely elected*”[24]. Apart from that, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar since the 1990s has launched various initiatives to put women in decision-making organs. International declarations, conventions,

resolutions, and treaties have been ratified and accommodated in the country's legal framework system. The following are among remarkable pieces of evidence;-

- i. **Constitutional amendments.** The Zanzibar Constitution has amended several time so as to create space for women to participate in politics and governance of the State. Most remarkable amendments of Zanzibar Constitution includes;
 - Establishment of Multi-party system in 1992 as per Article 5
 - Introduction of special seats for women in the House of Representatives. It started with 30% in 2000 and increased to 40% in 2010 of the total members of the House of the Representatives elected directly from the Constituencies as per Article 67 (1), of the current Constitution version of 2010.
 - Establishment of the Government of National Unity as the abolition of 'winner takes all' political culture. Article 39, of the Constitution, establishes the post of the First and Second Vice President positions. This offer probability of women appointment for the higher rank position.
 - Appointment of Ministers and Deputy Ministers by President among the MoHRs as per Article 42 (2) of the Constitution of 2010 version.
- ii. **Enactment and Review of laws.** Several Laws have been amended and enacted which directly and indirectly have implications toward women participation in politics and governance system. These include;
 - Election Act of 2018 [25]. This Act is very important toward gender equality as it is responsible for managing free and fair general elections and responsible to register voters in a permanent voter's registration book.
 - Societies Act, No. 6 of 1995 [26]. This Act allows the establishment of Civil Societies. Today Zanzibar has many Civil Societies that help women on different Matters. For example, the Zanzibar Female Lawyer Association, and Zanzibar Legal Service Centre help women on legal matters.
 - Regional Administration Act, 2014 [27] and Zanzibar Local Government Authority Act, 2014 [28]. The Acts provide comprehensive frameworks for Regional and Local Government Administration. Several administrative posts have been established under these Acts including; Regional Commissioner (RC), District Commissioner (DC), Sheha (Ward Officer), and Councilors. Other posts

include City Council Mayor, Municipal Council Mayor, Town Council Mayor, and District Council Chairperson. The Acts require, 40% of appointed Councilors to be a woman.

- The Civil Servant (Participation in Politics) Act, 2003 [29], Public Service Act, 2011[30] and Public Service Regulations 2014 [31]. These documents provide directives on how civil servants can participate in politics.
- i. **Policy formulation and implementations.** Zanzibar has made entrepreneurial policies that boost women's capacities and a chance to take part in politics and governance. Some of these policies include; the Zanzibar Education policy, 2006 [32], Zanzibar Gender Policy, 2016 [33], and Gender and Social Inclusion Policy, 2015 [22].

Therefore, those above reviewed legal frameworks stand as a primary opportunity for Zanzibaris women to have a chance to participate in politics through the election process as well as participate in decision making through direct appointments.

Methodology

- Research design: The study use descriptive cross-section design.
- Sampling strategy. The purposive sampling strategy used to select 30 key participants for an in-depth interview. Participants were from government departments, political parties, and Non-Government organizations.
- Data collection: Secondary data collected from through documental review and primary data were collected through in-depth interviews. A data from three consecutive periods of governance have been collected to demonstrate a clear picture of women's status in decision making bodies of the House of Representatives, Central Government, and Local Government organs respectively.
- Data analysis: Mixed approach used in analyzing data. Grounded theory on the side of qualitative data used and descriptive statistical analysis used for quantitative data.
- Validity and reliability of data. Triangulation and member check techniques were used to validate the study findings.

Main Findings

Women Participation and Representation General Elections

Table 1 below shows the number of women contested and elected in five general elections for the positions of President, MPs, MoHRs, and Councilors.

Table 1: Status of Women Contested and Elected in General Elections conducted in Zanzibar

| Year | Women Candidates Contested | | | | Women Candidates Elected | | | |
|----------|----------------------------|---------|--------|-----------|--------------------------|------|------|-----------|
| | President | MPs | MHRs | Councilor | President | MPs | MHRs | Councilor |
| 1995 | - | 5/114 | 13/114 | 24/276 | - | 1/50 | 5/50 | 11/141 |
| | | 4.40% | 11.40% | 8.70% | | 2% | 10% | 7.80% |
| 2000 | - | 12/159 | 17/159 | 28/294 | - | 3/50 | 4/50 | 14/141 |
| | | 7.50% | 10.70% | 9.50% | | 6% | 8% | 9.90% |
| 2005 | 1/8 | 31/323 | 23/219 | 28/340 | - | 1/50 | 5/50 | 11/141 |
| | 12.5% | 9.60% | 10.50% | 8.20% | | 2% | 10% | 7.80% |
| 2010 | - | 50/273 | 17/140 | 78/387 | - | 3/50 | 3/50 | 20/141 |
| | | 18.30% | 12.10% | 20.20% | | 6% | 6% | 14.20% |
| 2015/16* | - | 84 /278 | 30/180 | 87/345 | - | 3/50 | 7/54 | 23/111 |
| | | 30% | 17% | 25% | | 6% | 12% | 20.70% |

Source: Researcher, 2020 (Data compiled from [34; 35; 36; 37; 38; 39; 40 & 41])

**The general election of Zanzibar was repeated in 2016 after nullification of 2015 election results for the posts of President of Zanzibar, MoHRs and Councilors*

From table 1 above, it is clear that Women's participation as contesters and representation as elected through the election system still remained insignificant even if the number is increased. The number of women contesters has increased from 5 (4.4%), 13(11.4%) and 24(8.7%) in 1995 election to 84(30%), 30(17%) and 87(25%) in the election of 2015/16 for the positions of MPs, MoHRs and Councilors respectively. On the side of elected, a number of women elected have little progress as it experienced a steady increase from 1(2%), 5(10%), and 11(7.8%) in 1995 election to 3(6%), 7(12%) and 23 (20.7%) in the 2015/16 election for the positions of MPs, MoHRs and Councilors respectively. One woman has tried to contest for the position of president. This trend is not satisfactory, considering that women are the majority in population and registered voters.

Women Representation in the HoRs in Zanzibar

The House of Representatives is a law-making organ and national budget approval body. So the presence of women shall be of utmost importance as this body determine the death

or life of the country. To pick the quick picture, data were collected on three sequential terms of governance as indicated in Table 2 below;

Table 2: Status of Women Representation in the HoRs Zanzibar

| Posts | 2005 – 2010 | | 2010 – 2015 | | 2016 -2020 | |
|------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|------------|
| | Total Position | Female | Total Position | Female | Total Position | Female |
| Speaker | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Deputy Speaker | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Attorney General | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| House Chairmen | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| House Secretary | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Other Members | 76 | 19 | 77 | 26 | 83 | 30 |
| Total | 81 | 19 | 83 | 27 | 89 | 33 |
| Women % | | 23.5% | | 32.5% | | 36% |

Source: House of Representatives Zanzibar, 2020

From Table 2, the results revealed that; women are just quota of total members. However, the results show an increase of 12.5% from 2010 to 2020 as it moves from 23.5% in 2005/10, 32.5% in 2010/15 to 36% in 2016/20. This is very good progress, although no women has held the position of speaker of the house or Attorney General. This progress as an outcome of a special seat reservation approach.

Women Representation in the Central Government Level in Zanzibar

Table 3 below shows the trend of women appointed to hold several decision - making posts in the central government structure of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar.

Table 3: Status of Women Representation on Decision Making Positions on Central Government Level Zanzibar

| Posts | 2005 - 2010 | | | 2010 – 2015 | | | 2016 -2020 | | |
|--------------------|----------------|----------|------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|-----------|------------|
| | Total Position | Female | % of women | Total Position | Female | % of women | Total Position | Female | % of women |
| Vice President | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Chief Secretary | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Ministers | 14 | 3 | 21% | 19 | 4 | 21% | 17 | 5 | 29% |
| Deputy Ministers | 4 | 1 | 25% | 8 | 4 | 50% | 10 | 4 | 40% |
| P. Secretaries* | 13 | 2 | 15% | 13 | 3 | 23% | 15 | 5 | 33% |
| Grand Total | 33 | 6 | 18% | 43 | 11 | 25.6% | 44 | 14 | 32% |

*Principal Secretary

Source: Ministry of State, President Office, Public Service and Good Governance, 2020 and House of Representatives Zanzibar, April, 2020

From table 3 above; the results reveal that women's status has reached 32% as it has increased by 14% from 2005 to 2020. There is a big gap for Ministerial positions as out 17 ministers only 5 are women, same as for the position of Principal Secretary. No women have appointed as Vice President or Chief Secretary.

Women Representation in the Regional and Local Government Administration

Regional administration and Local Government represent the Middle and lower tier in the governance of a state.

Table 3: Status of Women Representation on Decision Making Positions on Regional and Local Government Administration Zanzibar

| Administrative Posts | 2005 - 2010 | | | 2010 - 2015 | | | 2016 -2020 | | |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| | Total Position | Female | % of women | Total Position | Female | % of women | Total Position | Female | % of women |
| RC | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 20% | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| DC | 10 | 2 | 20% | 10 | 2 | 20% | 11 | 2 | 18% |
| City C. Mayor | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| M. Mayor | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| D. C. Chairman | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| T.C. Chairman | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 33% |
| Other Councilors* | 168 | 53 | 31.5% | 168 | 53 | 31.5% | 153 | 59 | 38.7% |
| Sheha | 303 | 14 | 4.6% | 332 | 14 | 4.2% | 388 | 51 | 13% |
| Grand Total | 501 | 69 | 13.8% | 530 | 70 | 13.2% | 569 | 113 | 20% |

*Councilors posts include both elected and appointed members. RC = Regional Commissioner;

DC = District Commissioner; City C. Mayor = City Council Mayor

Source: Ministry of State President Office Regional Administration, Local Government and Special Departments by March, 2020)

From the above table 3, the results revealed that status of women on key decision-making posts in regional and local government is just 20%. It indicated an increase of 7% form 2005. One woman had hold position of Regional Commissioner, 2 women as District Commissioners out of 11. No women have elected as Mayor of the City Council and Municipal as well as Chairmen of the District Council so far. For the position of Sheha, the percentage of women is 13% as an increase of 8% from 2005 to 2020. For Councilor post, women percentage has reached quota due to the presence of special seats and appointment system.

Current challenges contributing to the underrepresentation of Women on Elections and Appointment Positions in Zanzibar

- i. **Nature of political party affiliation.** The political life in Zanzibar is dominated by only two main political parties which are CCM and CUF. Thus, only contesters from these parties for the position of President, MPs, MoHRs, and Councilors were elected [2; 9; 37; 39; & 41].
- ii. **Legal framework.** Current laws has a number of weakness for women to hold decision making positions. Among them are;
 - a) **Legal framework has focus on secondary stage rather than primary stage.** Current laws have introduced 40% special seats for women for members in HoRs and in local government organs. Yet, no percentage set for contesting positions per political party and on appointment positions of Ministerial Cabinet and regional administration.
 - b) **Lack of consistency.** Women of the special seats can be appointed for any Ministerial position in the House of Representatives but a woman of the special seat in the Municipality, City, and Town Councils cannot be a person to hold a Mayor position.
 - c) **Voter Registration requirement.** According to the Election Act, 2018, for a person to be allowed to vote or contest in a certain Constituency, he/she must be a resident of such place for 36 months. The time is huge based on the nature of women's life. Women are migrants as they are married and follow their husband. And if she divorced, she has to return to her parental homes. Cited during the interview that; *“Our election law is a problem for us women especially on time set to vote or contest. 36 months are so long”*.
 - d) **Local Councilors are not full time employees.** The Zanzibar Local Government Authority Act, 2014 under Section 38, declare that Deputy Mayors and other local Councilors shall not full-time employee. They are not entitled to a monthly salary. This automatically discourages many women to contest for Councilor position.

- iii. **Low Inter party democracy.** Within the parties, there is a hidden gender bias. Men dominate the structural system. Cited from many women in the interview:

“There is no fairness and distribution for direct election positions within parties. And men put much competition to women looking for position during the inter-party election.”

Such words indicating a lack of consideration for women during the nomination of candidates. More evidence can be referred on the general election of 2015/16 whereby CCM won all seats for positions of MoHRs and Councilors. Out of 54 constituencies for the position of MoHRs, only 7 equivalent to 12% were women candidates. For the position of Councilors out 111 positions, only 23 equivalent to 20.7% were women [2].

- iv. **Corruption.** Zanzibar's politics have all elements of business-like. A give and you take is a practical culture during election time. Candidates tried to buy voters through money or other gifts. Cited from many respondents that:

“When you decide to look for any position, you must get well-prepared in terms of finance because voters in all level demand payment”.

- v. **Cultural perception (gender role Ideology).** Zanzibaris especially in rural areas still has an attitude politics is for men not for women. Such ideology affects women contesters as a result men take the seats. Cited during the interview from a different participant that:
- “We women are so many, but we are not supporting each other. This is because still people think that- women are not fit for political positions”.*

- vi. **Earlier satisfaction.** Most women who are in employment gain earlier satisfaction from the position they hold. So they do not engage in looking for political positions. Cited from the interview that:
- “Most of us (women) are happy once got a job. So there are many women, but they have no interest to look for positions within the political party. So we end up as voters and office workers but not decision-makers”.*

- vi. **Presence of Special Seat.** Most women run away from tough competitive politics which involve men. More women opt to compete each other on special seat. Cited

from many respondents during the interview that; *“Yeah women keep focus much on the nomination for special seats compared to elected seats”*.

Conclusion

The overall purpose of the study was to examine the status of women's participation and representation in politics and decision-making organs in Zanzibar. The results revealed that; despite the efforts made still number of women contested and elected in elections is very low and on appointment posts. Only in the House of Representatives women has reached 36% of all members. The main factor is the legal framework but there are other contributory factors. The legal framework governing elections or any society might be one of the systematic mechanisms for political discrimination and exclusion of certain sections in society in the governance of such society [42]. Thus, the legal framework as an effective tool for defining and maintenance of the acceptable culture in any institution and society.

Recommendations

Based on the results demonstrated in the study, the following recommendations offered;

- Removal of special seat percentage reserved for women and replace it by institutionalizing and incorporate the idea of equal access of 50% into political parties. Thus, each political party must have 50% of women contesters in the general election.
- Incorporate the idea of 50% for direct appointment posts into other decision-making positions like Ministerial Cabinet, Regional Administration, and Sheha.
- Councilors must be a full-time employee with full salary and fringe benefits.
- Women must provide full support to each other especially in a direct election positions. This includes develop networks to advance women in politics across party lines.
- Non-governmental organizations have to continue on the advancement of women's political participation. Priorities may include providing training. This should be their continuous exercise and not seasonal events.
- Women must support each other rather than keep support political parties during voting exercise.

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