Influence of Gender on Women's Participation in Political Leadership in Chama Cha Mapinduzi in Manyoni District

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Abstract: *The increase of women's participation in political leadership in different part of the world as a result of efforts made to empower women in different sectors politics included has also raised the political participation of women in Tanzania to the level that is recognizable. The use of different forms of quota has contributed a lot to the increase in women's political leadership participation. However the drastic increase in political participation of women has been witnessed to occur in one side of the country (urban areas) and women still face difficulties in their participation. This study assessed influence of gender on women's participation in political leadership in Chama cha Mapinduzi in Manyoni district. In order to achieve the objective of this study the researcher used case study design with a sample of 186 people selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected using interview, focus group discussion and questionnaire. Qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis while quantitative data were analyzed using statistical package for social studies (SPSS) software version 16.0 and presented using figures, frequencies and percentages. The study found that gender has great influence on women's participation in political leadership. The study recommends that gender equity should be considered very much within the political parties. Civic education should be enhanced by both the government and other stakeholders so as to continue enlightening the society on the inclusive politics.*

Keywords: Gender, Women's Participation Inpolitical Leadership, Political Participation

1. Introduction

The participation in political life is a vital nerve in the exercise of the right of human rights in life, frank and practical expression of the sovereignty of the values of freedom, justice and equality in society as well as being a strong indicator of the extent of under development of the society and its political system or their development, it means that the coupling and documentation between them and the development efforts (Kafarneh, 2013).

Women, particularly young women and women from marginalized groups, report that they have difficulty engaging in or influencing the policy process in their countries. Women face a variety of barriers to their participation in politics and decision-making-discriminatory political structures, as well as social, economic, and cultural barriers (United Nations, 2005). These issues were examined thoroughly throughout the six weeks of discussion. Participants addressed different levels of Government (national, local), as well as different types of leadership (elected and appointed, civil servants, etc (United Nations, 2007).

The factors that hamper or facilitate women's political participation vary with level of socio-economic development, geography, culture, and the type of political system. Women themselves are not a homogeneous group; there are major differences between them, based on class, race, ethnicity, cultural background and education. The exclusion of women from decision making bodies limits the possibilities for entrenching the principles of democracy in a society, hindering economic development and discouraging the attainment of gender equality (Meena, 2003).

If men monopolize the political process, passing laws which affect society at large, the decision-making process does not always balance the interests of the male and female populations. As noted in the Millennium Development Goals, women's equal participation with men in power and decision making is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life, and at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment. Women have to be active participants in determining development agendas. (Shvedova, 2005)

On political empowerment, Tanzania Constitution in Articles 66 (1, b) and 78 (1), states that women members must not make up less than 30% of the National Assembly. The special seats for women are distributed among the political parties in proportion to the number of seats awarded to them in parliament (URT, 2005). The introduction of a quota system in Tanzania in 1985 and the adoption of Affirmative Action have indeed increased women political participation. Despite the fact that this system has helped address the issue of gender imbalance in terms of number, it has nevertheless been unsuccessful so far in building the capacity of the majority of women to progress further and to aspire to the presidential post in Tanzania (Mushi, 2010).

There are several initiatives which might be introduced to support women in the political arena. It is important to make the system accessible to women who are capable of competing for the highest position, yet there is a basic problem that women cannot join men in election campaigns because they simply don't have resources to do so (Policy Forum, 2015; United Nations, 2005). Also, it is important to find ways of breaking down cultural barriers which have become embedded within patriarchal systems: when it is easier to cross such barriers, more women will be enabled to join the race. Positive messages will help to break down

preconceptions: it has been built into the minds of so many of us that the "Presidential Post" is a post to which only men can aspire. We must not forget that our constitution provides this right to any Tanzanian who meets the requirements regardless of their sex (Policy Forum, 2015).

It is a history for the first time to appoint a woman the potential Vice-President of the union government. Making the pick, Dr John Magufuli, the party's presidential candidate, vowed to build on the success of his predecessors, stressing that divisive politics have no place in the party, he said he has picked a woman as his running mate because of the trust he has in women's abilities and commitment, revealing that his political mentor when he was appointed deputy minister for works over a decade ago was a woman (Barasa, 2015).

2. Problem Statement

Recent decades have witnessed an international move towards promoting women participation in various social and economic development processes, including political activities at all levels (Shayo, 2005).

In the 2015 general election, of the 1,250 contestants for parliamentary seats, only 238 (19 percent) were women. Many women picked the nomination forms within political parties but were screened out during the initial stages. The ratio is even worse for councillorship contestants whereby of the 10,879 contestants, women were only 679 (6.2percent percent) (Tacceo and Temco, 2015).

There is no significant change in the number of women contesting as compared to the 2010 election. In 2010 there were 1,036 parliamentary contestants, only 191 were women (18 percent). This means that despite all the domestic and international efforts, the situation is not changing. The statistics serve as testimony that there is a long way to go in having an alternative socio-political system that would bring about gender equality in politics and that deliberate efforts should continue to be employed towards achieving this goal.

Additionally, the environment in which elections take place is still retrogressive and male dominated. The quota system through special seats has contributed to women accessing more seats in the Tanzanian parliament in spite of many existing challenges (Mushi, 2010). Decision-making within the existing political parties in Tanzania is also male dominated. Starting from the nomination process, most women are screened out through unclear criteria set by party central committees, who, according to those who participated in the process, are mainly men (Mushi, 2010).

Women face numerous hurdles that constrain their participation in politics. Some of the constraints include the claim that women lack experience and the election system is based on a wrong assumption about women participation. Practices emanating from the entrenched patriarchy system have continued to dominate political processes, including the election. Gender based violence is also seen to discourage women's participation. Many decisions on women participation are made by political parties based on the discriminatory ideology (Tacceo and Temco, 2015). this

study investigated on the influence of gender on women's participations in political leadership in Chama Cha Mapinduzi in Manyoni district.

3. Purpose of the Study

The general objective of the study was to assess the influence of gender on women's participation in political lairdship in Chama Cha Mapinduzi in Manyoni district. The study sought to look on how men and women influence political participation basing on the perceptions and ideologies that are socially constructed together with the support that women who participate in political leadership get form both men and women of which both of these contribute to the women's participation in political leadership.
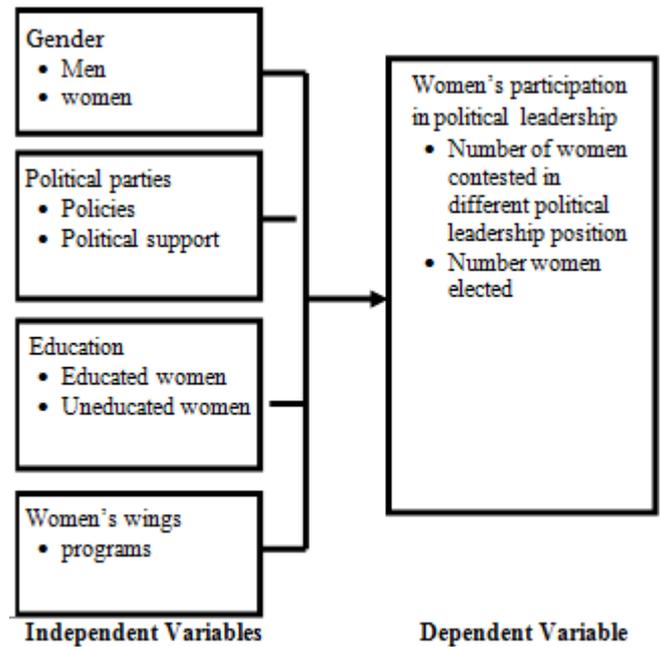

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

4. Research Methodology

This study employed a case study research design. Case study design was adopted to determine the influence of gender on women's participations in political leadership in Chama Cha Mapinduzi in Manyoni district. A sample of 186 respondents was drawn from a sample frame of 356 people using purposive sampling. Primary data was collected through interview, questionnaires and focus group discussion while secondary data were collected through documentary review. Qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis and the quantitative data were analyzed by using statistical packages for social studies (SPSS) software version 16.0. The quantitative data were analyzed through tabulation in which the raw data were arranged and summarized in statistical tables. The analysis was done after the data were being edited to ensure accuracy, consistency, and uniformity and then coded. Data coding was done to ensure efficient analysis. The data presentation was done by using figures, frequencies and percentages.

5. Results and Discussion

The study focused on determining the perceptions of respondents on women who participate in political leadership and the support that they get from both gender in Chama cha Mapinduzi in Manyoni district. Majority of the respondents who interviewed on their perception of women who participate in politics they had positive perceptions towards women's participation in political leadership. This was justified by the following responses:

> "...I see it as a good sign for women to participate in party politics....it is good opportunity for them to solve the challenges facing them in our communities..." (Male respondent, 2015)

On the other hand another respondent reacted by saying this:

> "...in the current century everyone has a right to do anything as far as she/he does not break the laws of the land, women also have the freedom to join politics..." (Female respondent, 2015)

Response from the CCM Manyoni District Chairperson who was among the key informants showed that the party had faith in women leadership as he said:

> " ... I have positive perception on women participation in political leadership, especially in our party (CCM). Women are good at leadership; they are good in executing and making things progress well. Though some people say that women are poor in leadership, and that they cannot be led by women, but from my experience as a chairman in this district I can assure you that women are better at making fast and informed decisions than men. Generally most of women are good at leadership and administration..." (CCM District Chairperson, 2015)

The study further established that women in Manyoni district were politically conscious and therefore they were eager to involve themselves in political issues as pointed out by one male respondent:

> "...they are politically conscious, my perception is positive that they are capable of leading and that is why they are contesting for various political posts within the party..." (Male respondent, 2015)

In the FGD the same question received the following responses from those respondents who participated in the discussion:

> "...few women have dared and tried, but majority are not confident and they have low understanding about politics. There is also a problem of patriarchal system in our community which is a barrier to them..." (Female participant, 2015)

On the other hand another participant opined that:

> "...they are using their constitutional right which stipulates that every person has a right to participate in political affairs in spite of their sex, and that they have the right to vote and be voted for in any post as far as they meet the set criteria..." (Female participant, 2015)

The findings revealed that the society is aware of the political maturity of women in the country and political parties' constitutions which accommodates both gender in political leadership. The perception is positive on those women who involve themselves fully in politics. The awareness of the population on the provisions in the national constitution that give room for both men and women to be treated equally and given equal chance to vote and be voted for in political posts, has given them the opportunity to perceive positively those women who participate in politics.

When asked as to whether CCM men were supporting women who participated in political leadership, majority of the respondents 101(84.2%) reported yes meaning that men were supporting women while, 19 respondents (15.8%) reported no denying that men were supporting women. Figure 4.5 summarizes the findings.
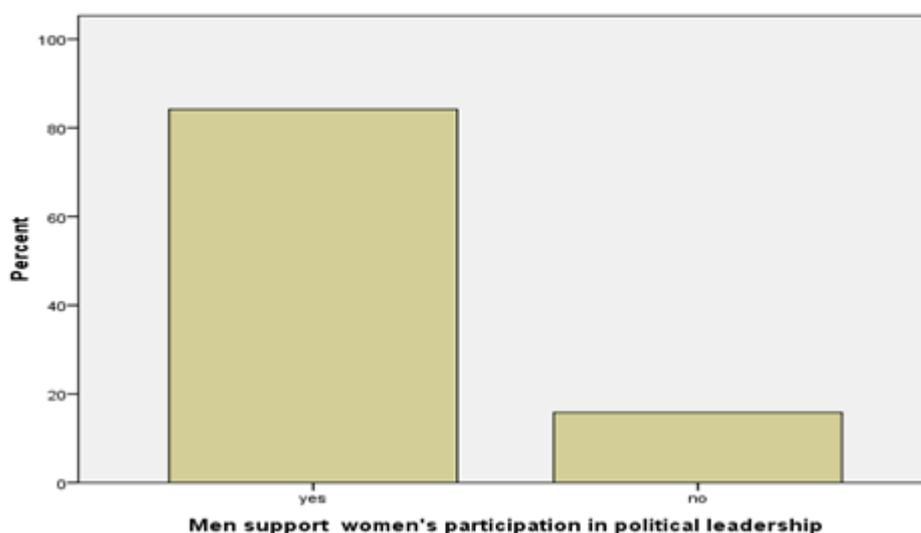

Figure 4.1: Supports of men to women who participate in political leadership

These findings indicate that women are capable of leading though there are still some people in the society with the mentality that women are weak and incapable of holding political and administrative posts. However, there were those people who denied that men were supporting women

who participate in political leadership. The following were some responses given during the interview:

"...majority of men do not support women because they think that women are not capable of leading. They also think that party's works are more voluntary than paying ones..."

Additionally another respondent responded by saying that:

"...men in Manyoni do not support women who participate in political leadership for historical reasons that women are people who should only take care of children and not to involve themselves in politics..." (Male respondent, 2015)

Those respondents who reported that men were not supporting women who participate in political leadership had the arguments that women were not supported by men for various reasons which include; women incapability of leading the people in the political offices; historical factors that women were created only to serve men, bare children and take care of the families, the notion which undermined women during pre colonial and post colonial era. These were the main factors which emerged as a barrier for men not to give support to those women who participated in political leadership.

However there were some respondents who had the view that men in Manyoni do support women who participate in political leadership. Their arguments were based on the number of those women and the patriarchal system that exist in the society that does not give women chance to participate fully in politics. They argued that women who contest for various political posts within their party are few n number hence men support them because they are not a threat for men's interests. One respondent had the following argument:

"... Men support women because those who contest for political leadership are few hence they are acceptable..." (Male respondent, 2015)

The study found that majority of men are not happy with women's leadership and therefore they are not ready to be lead by women. This resistance is associated with the tradition and customs that resulted from patriarchal system that had existed in the society which have undermined women for centuries now. This persistence has been a major barrier to women social and political well being.

The findings on the question which asked if women in Manyoni were supporting their fellow women who participate in political leadership showed that 66 respondents (55.0%) reported yes, meaning that women were supporting their fellow women, while 54 respondents (45%) reported no to deny that women were supporting their fellow who participated in political leadership. Figure 4.6 gives the summary.
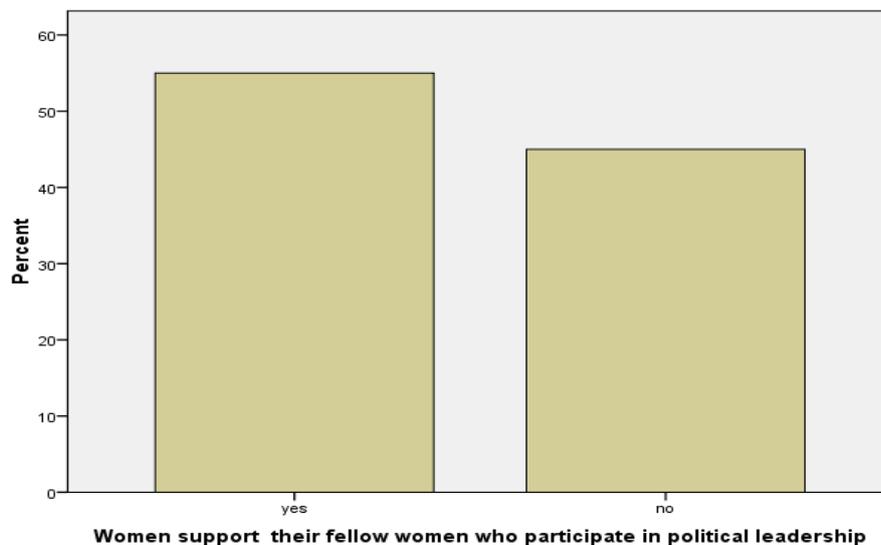

Figure 4.2: Support by women to their fellow who participate in political leadership

Those who reported that women were not supporting their fellow women, gave the following arguments for their position; one male respondent argued that:

"....women are not supporting their fellows who participate in political leadership because they do not love each other, and also difference in perception about educated women and none educated..." (Male respondent, 2015)

On the other hand one female respondent reacted on this question by saying that:

"...most of women do not trust their fellow, so it makes them difficult to support their fellow who

contest for political leadership...they also do not support their fellow because they are not united since majority of them are not in good terms with each other, they do not like to see their fellow succeed through politics..." (Female respondent, 2015)

These findings indicated that there is a problem of distrust, jealousy, hatred and lack of unity among women and these act as a barrier for women to support their fellow who contest for political posts within and outside the party.

6. Summary of the Major Findings

The study found that gender has great influence on women's participation in political leadership in the ruling party (CCM), since there was positive perception among the population on the women who participate in political leadership in the community. Both men and women in the party are treated equally with respect as the party members and not because of their gender or sex and besides the equal treatment, women do get support from both men and women when they stand out and contest for different political leadership posts and this influence more women to come out and take chances to contest for different political posts, however there are few men who still embrace the patriarchy system and women who do not trust , hate and feel jealous of their fellow women who dare to stand out and contest. The study further revealed that there are women who have strong convincing power than men. It was established that women are good at making informed decisions on matters that are very crucial for the wellbeing and development of the party and therefore they are generally trusted.

7. Conclusions

Gender has great influence on women's participation in political leadership in the ruling party (CCM). The society has positive perception on those women who participate in political leadership in the society. The patriarchal system which denied women their right and opportunity to participate fully in political leadership is being phased out and now women have their share in the political platforms in the country particularly within the political parties.

8. Recommendations

The study recommends that there should be continue improvement in gender equity within the political parties for a sustainable political empowerment among women. Women should break gender barriers and get rid of the mentality that they would continue over the years to be given favor through special seats as it is currently done. Women should learn to stand by themselves and contest for the political posts they wish to contest for.

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