

Local Governance Systems and Women Participation in Tanzania: The Case of Kibondo District, Kigoma

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ABSTRACT

Gender discourse is a multi-faced issue since it means different things to different people and our understanding of the term affects our discussion of it and conclusions we make out of the discussion. Discussions about gender often bring about emotional responses in both female and male participants because the discussions make us feel, think and examine our own lives through a different lens – the gender lens. This paper discusses the link between gender and local governance issues in Kibondo district. This is so since there is close link between gender relation and the form of governance and the nature of men and women, boys' and girls' involvement in social life and development in particular.

Keywords: women, participation, local governance

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The quest for sustainable development and participation of citizens in the country's development initiatives lists top among the priorities of many governments all over the world. In that respect, there have been many attempts to create conducive governance systems to enhance people's participation in development planning as well as implementation. However, the challenge key to this has been on how to have an engendered participation because undertaking a gendered participation in development and in governance has been and remains one of the challenging but noble undertakings that have to be in place if the society is to progress positively and rapidly. Partly is the misconception to think gendered development and governance means involving women and men. This is

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not the case as from time in memorial both men and women have been actively involved in development endeavour, but basing on the power relation between men and women; they have benefited differently from their involvement. Gender is about power and the lack there of (Khosla, Barth and UN-HABITAT, 2008, p. 7). Thus there is a need for gender analysis to unveil ills that limit equal participation of women and men in development and governance is imperative.

This essay is divided into three main parts. Part one is an introduction. This is immediately followed by second part that presents a brief survey of conceptual /definitional issues related to gender discourse, synoptic historical survey of local government systems in Tanzania, introduces the geographical and demographic aspects, and finally situating the local governance system in the case Kibondo. In part three the paper concentrates on local governance and gender issues in Kibondo focusing on the practical gender needs (PGN) and strategic gender needs (SGN) within the study area. The essay closes by part four which is a conclusion and recommendation part in which a policy to challenges inequalities in Kibondo and some general recommendations are suggested to Tanzania and the African Union (AU) as well. This is followed by a list of selected sources used in the essay and a list of appendixes.

2.0 CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

2.1 Gender Participation and Development

Gender discourse is a multi-faced issue. Thus, gender means different things to different people and our understanding of the term affects our discussion of it and conclusions we make out of the discussion (Ayanga, 2011). Discussions about gender often bring about emotional responses in both female and male participants because the discussions make us feel, think and examine our own lives through a different lens – the gender lens (Khosla, Barth and UN-HABITAT, 2008). But what is gender? Gender is mostly confused with sex and women and at times these words are used interchangeably while they mean different thing altogether. As such, there is a need for clear cut dichotomy of these terms. The World Bank defines gender as “socially constructed roles and socially learned behaviours and expectations associated with females and males (2001, p. 2).” Also it “refers to the social interpretations and values assigned to being a woman, a man, a boy or a girl. Gender is about social relationships. [Thus] Gender is an analytical concept. It is socially determined and not based on the sex of the

individual (Khosla, Barth and UN-HABITAT, 2008).” In other words: “While sex refers to the biological differences between females and males and which are universal, gender refers to social attributes and opportunities associated with being a female or a male and the relationships between women and men, girls and boys (ILO, 2010).” There is a close link between gender relation and the form of governance and the nature of men and women, boys’ and girls’ involvement in social life and development in particular. Development may be defined as “the participation of people in a mutual learning experience involving themselves, their local resources, external change agents and outside resources. People cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves by participation and co-operative activities which affect their wellbeing (Nyerere, 1968 quoted in Mollel, 2010).” Using Nyerere’s words suffice to argue that there is a need for health gender relation in governance system to realise active participation in realising targeted development goals. It is the interest of this paper to propose on how to engender Kibondo governance system; but before getting into it, understanding what entails governance and a schemer of how Tanzanian public administration is organised, function and how local governance is linked to the central governance system is of greater help.

2.2 Governance and Public Administration in Tanzania

2.2.1 Governance

The UNDP (1996) defines governance as “the complex ensemble of mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and social groupings manage their interests and conflicts (as cited by Chaligha, *et al.*, 2007).” In this perspective, governance comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (Braathen, *et al.*, 2005). It entails a more devolved system of governance as opposed to centralized one, which opens door for common people to participate in the governing of their own affairs and creating a sense of ownership (Masabo, 2013). In its simplest form, governance refers to group decision-making that addresses shared problems. In addition, governance is more about the process through which a decision is made, rather than the substance of the decision itself (Carrington, *et al.*, 2008). Within such understanding, three pillars of governance can be identified, namely economic, political, and administrative governance. That is decision-making processes that influence a country’s economic activities and its relationships with

other economies; process of decision-making to formulate policy; and the system of policy implementation respectively (Chaligha, *et al.*, 2007). But what is local governance? Local governance refers to the way a local authority fulfils its responsibilities towards the citizens in their areas of jurisdiction. It covers relationships between local authority leaders and the citizens, as well as political parties and non-governmental organizations, and the central government in all phases of formulating and implementing policies that affect people in their localities (Braathen, *et al.*, 2005). In Tanzania, this people's exercise of governance is within the complex network of public administration which regulates both the central and local government system.

2.2.2 Public administration in Tanzania

Public administration in Tanzania is a complex network of ministries; independent departments and commissions; agencies; area administration i.e. regions, districts, divisions, ward and villages; public enterprises and popular participation organs (Mukandala, 1991). In real practice however, public administration in Tanzania is organised in three main layers namely central government, regional administration and local government authorities. Over years, the design and organisation of public administration in Tanzania and more specific the organisation of these three layers have been influenced by different concern such as centralised control, centralised federalism, politics - administration dichotomy, sectoral specificity and concern for equality (Mkandala, 1991) just mentioning a few. For example, studying public administration in Tanzania from historical perspective as from 1961 to early 1990s one will discover various characteristics that characterised public administration in Tanzania such as: "subordination of administration to politics, *personalismo*, over-bearing role of the President, official impatience, bureaucratism, poor record keeping, new project mania and poor planning and administration of area activities (ibid). Today public administration in Tanzania experiences a lot of changes in terms of structures and functions. Public administration in Tanzania of 1960s has drastic differences from that of the late 2000s. Of all these, my interests are the organisation and re-organisation of local governance in which I intend to deduce the engendering.

2.3 Local Government (Governance) System in Tanzania

2.3.1 Evolution of local government in Tanzania: A synoptic historical view

Local government in Tanzania has evolved over a span period of time traced in the various traditional leadership and political organisation of pre-colonial days. However radical changes that can characterize the present organisation of local government were felt from 1926 after Tanzania (Tanganyika) transferred to British as a Mandatory territory in 1920. Its present form is the result of the radical changes that were adopted as from 1996 with the institution of the Local Government Reform Agenda (LGRA) 1996-2000. Its existence and function, draws its foundation both in the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (CURT), 1977 and a set of related acts that regulate and define powers and limits.

2.3.2 Legal and policy framework for local government in Tanzania

The Tanzanian local government system is based on political devolution and decentralization of functional responsibilities, powers and resources from central government to local government and from higher levels of local government to lower levels of local government and overall empower the people to have ultimate control over their welfare (REPOA, 2008). Since 1982 there have been a series of Acts that aimed at enabling Tanzania to have more active and delivering Local Government Authorities (LGAs). These are such as: The Local Government (District Authorities) Act, 1982, No. 7 of 1982; The Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act, 1982, No. 8 of 1982; The Local Government Finances Act, 1982, No. 9 of 1982; The Local Government Service Act, 1982, No. 10 of 1982; and The Local Government Negotiating Machinery Act, 1982, No. 11 of 1982. Following years, in 1984 the CURT was amended to accommodate the intended changes.

CURT Articles 145 and 146 are of importance to the existence and functioning of local government in Tanzania. Article 145 (1) institutes the establishment of LGAs while Article 145 (2) empowers the Parliament or the House of Representatives, to “enact law providing for establishment of local government authorities, their structures and composition, source of revenue and procedures for the conduct of their business.” On other hand Article 146 (1) states the purpose as well as rights and power of LGAs such as “to transfer authority to people, rights and power to participate and involve people in the planning and implementation

of development programmes within their respective areas and generally throughout the country. Article 145 (2) stipulates the function of LGAs which include: “(a) to perform the functions of local government within its area; (b) to ensure enforcement of law and public safety of the people; and (c) to consolidate democracy within the its area and apply it to accelerate the development of people.” These two articles from the legal foundation for the establishment and function of the LGAs in Tanzania.

Pursuant to these two articles of the Constitution, The Local Government (District Authorities) Act, 1982, No. 7 of 1982; The Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act, 1982, No. 8 of 1982; and The Village and Ujamaa Village (Registration Designation and Administration) Act, No. 25 of 1975 are legal instruments for the establishment of district councils; city, municipal and town authorities and village governments bodies, the village assembly and village council respectively. In regard to policy, the LGAs reform was guided by the idea of decentralization by devolution [that] was finally revived in two major policy documents, the *Local Government Reform Agenda, 1996-2000* (“the Agenda”) published in October 1996, and the *Policy Paper on Local Government Reform* (“the Policy paper”) as part of the general public sector reform (REPOA, 2008). In respect to implementation of the legal and policy provisions; various LGAs have been established which can be categories into two namely urban authorities and rural authorities. The urban authorities comprise of cities, municipals and town councils while rural councils comprise of district councils, and sub-district levels, including the township authorities. As such the structure, LGAs can be “viewed in three perspectives, geographical divisions or levels (rural and urban), the administrative (the executive part) and the governance (the oversight part) (REPOA, 2008).”

2.3.3 Local governance system in Kibondo

Kibondo District Council was established in accordance to the two articles of the Constitution; Articles 145 and 146 (1) and (2), and The Local Government (District Authorities) Act, 1982, No. 7 of 1982. It borders the Republic of Burundi in the West, Geita and Tabora regions in the East, Uvinza district in the South, Kasulu district in the North and South West and Kakonko district in the North. It has a total population of 26, 331 people of which 136, 047 are female and 125, 284 are male (URT, 2013). It has a total of 13 wards and 44 villages and in terms of LGAs the governance in Kibondo is organised in wards, villages and hamlets.

In that respect it has one District council, 13 Ward Development Committees (WDC) and 44 Villages Councils (VC). Under these there are number of hamlets (*vitongoji*) in villages and few streets (*mitaa*) in the district headquarters township.

There are two major organs of governance at the village level, village assembly (VA) and Village Council (VC). The village assembly is composed of all adult members' resident in the village. The village assembly elects Village Councils of not less than 15 and not more than 25 members headed by an elected chairperson. All chairpersons of *Vitongoji* are *ex-officio* (REPOA, 2008). The WDC membership includes all chairpersons of Village Governments in the Ward and all VEOs. The Councilor of the Ward chairs the WDC and the WEO is the Secretary. The WDC is just a committee responsible for coordinating development activities and planning in the Ward and linking with the district level.

3.0 LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND GENDER ISSUES IN KIBONDO

While gender is an important component of governance; studies and reports have revealed that gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting are among components that are under realised in most of LGAs and under LGRA (Kombo and Minungu, 2012; Masabo, 2009; NORAD, 2008; CMI, 2008 and Chaligha, *et al.*, 2007). Kibondo is not an exception. It as well continues to reflect the stronger patriarchal governance structure in which gender mainstreaming and budgeting remains in the official documents with little in practice. For example, in his study on gender inequality in Kigoma, Masabo (2009) found-out that “though gender inequalities existed before the coming of colonialist who however intensified it, independent government (of Tanzania however) has continued to marginalize the area in terms of development and infrastructures which could have helped in alleviating heavy burden on women shoulders’. As such the expectations that decentralization will “increases the access of women to decision making and that women find it easier to participate as political representatives [and making] service delivery more gender sensitive” (Beall, 2005) have not been a reality. Also, as Chaligha *et al* (2007) reports; “Discussions with various council officials indicated that the issue of gender mainstreaming had not been an important aspect when developing the council plans. Although some of the council planning officers insisted that gender mainstreaming has been introduced to every sector, there had not been concrete measures to implement this”. Thus, it should be underscored that for a better gendered local governance two things have to be in

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place: gender sensitive leadership and gender mainstreaming in local governance, [that is] opportunities for women to become leaders and behave in a more gender sensitive way; and stimulate male leaders to become more gender sensitive (Evertzen, 2010) to accept and cooperate actively with women leaders.

3.1 Gender Issues Affecting Women and Men Performance in Governance in Kibondo

Historically, in Kibondo, “men dominated the political arena; men formulated the rules of the political game; and men’s needs and interests were embedded in the structures and practices of political institutions. In that respect, there is male dominance in governance (Evertzen, 2010).” These limit both women and men in performance Does male dominance exclude men such that they are sailing in the same boat as to women?. . It is so because institutions are historically constructed frameworks which continue to serve the political and social interests for which they were designed to serve in the first place. As such, “to have a policy and law is one thing and realisation of what is prescribed is another thing. For example, “economic disempowerment of women ... deep-rooted traditions and customs ... and women adoptive preferences” (Rwegasira, 2012) are still rampant regardless of the law calling for equality. Thus, since, “interests of men and women are different and even potentially conflicting, and therefore women are needed in representative institutions to articulate their interests; (Evertzen, 2010).” Things are disappointing in Kibondo because there have been some bottlenecks for women to make it.

3.2 Strategic Gender Needs (SGN) and Practical Gender Needs (PGN) in Kibondo

The mere presence of women in structures of governance does not guarantee that gender considerations are mainstreamed in laws, policies and programmes (Evertzen, 2010). Thus, there is a need for identifying what constitutes gender needs in the governance system. Gender needs are needs “related to satisfying both men’s, women’s, girls’ and boys’ basic material needs for day to day survival (such as food, water, clothing and shelter), or they can concern issues like equity, empowerment, and control over resources (ILO, 2010). Moser (1989) categorises them as strategic and practical gender needs. Gender strategic needs are those which are formulated from the analysis of women subordination to men... [While] practical gender needs are formulated from concrete conditions

women experience...and are formulated directly by women in these positions, (Moser, 1989). Molyneux (1985) list of strategic gender needs fits most those needed in Kibondo. There is a need for “the abolition of the sexual division of labor; the alleviation of the burden of domestic labor and childcare; the removal of institutionalized forms of discrimination such as rights to own land or property, or access to credit; the establishment of political equality: freedom of choice over childbearing; and the adoption of adequate measures against male violence and control over women (as cited in Moser, 1989).” The (2005) study by Women Legal Aid Centre (WLAC) captures the breadth of practical gender needs. The general response was that “About 90% respondents confirmed that women’s rights in Kibondo are not observed due to the existence of the strong patriarchy principles. Subsequently numbers of gender discriminations were listed. Thus practical gender needs in Kibondo but not limited to “abolishing sex based discrimination, provision of education, challenging discrimination on access and ownership to matrimonial asserts, ending the practice of inheriting widows, involving women in decision making access to health and ambulance services.

3.3 Gender Development Approaches to Address Gender Issues and Needs in Kibondo

Engendering local governance or addressing gender issues and needs require adoption of the best gender development approach among many. But “choice of a suitable framework will depend on the task in hand, the context and resources” (March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay, 1999). As such, Gender and Development (GAD) fits in transforming patriarchal and policy neutral structures in the local government in Kibondo. GAD refers to a set of policy approaches to gender and women’s rights which emerged during 1980 as a response to challenges faced by Women in Development (WID) policy approaches of 1970s (Khosla, Barth and UN-HABITAT, 2008). Unlike WID, GAD addresses “discrimination against women and gender inequality in the context of gender relations. This means that, rather than working exclusively with women, GAD approaches work tactically with both women and men, in recognition of the fact that efforts to promote gender equality require commitment and behaviour changes from both sexes” (ibid). It “recognize that, while women are subject to the vast majority of gender inequalities, in some specific contexts or sectors males can also find themselves marginalized in development processes” (ibid.). In environment where LGAs have failed to deliver issues of gender to the extent confusing the gender

mainstreaming to women integration, GAD can redress the confusion. That is “since women are the category that is devoid of power, it is often women who are at the forefront of the struggle for gender equality; that is, equality between women and men. Above all, because women are more disadvantaged than men in ... [Kibondo] at all levels, action for gender equality both numerically and substantively [should]...pay more attention to women than men in order to address gender imbalances existing. GAD approach is qualified to take this task and thus if well used can help in addressing the gender imbalances without family destruction as the approach is developmental oriented, address the problem of unequal relation of power (rich and poor, women and men), aim at equitable, sustainable development with women and men as decision-makers and address strategic interest of the poor through people-centred development (Cf: King, 1999). Under a GAD approach, a gender analysis may result in the formulation of interventions bringing women and men together, or with women as a separate group, or with men as a separate group (Khosla, Barth and UN-HABITAT, 2008).

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Without equal political, social and economic participation of women So this is all about women participation and for this matter, better outright reflect it in the title, it will not be possible to overcome poverty, underdevelopment and inequality in access to income, education, health and food. Governance therefore has to be more participative. As such addressing gender issues is essential in advancing development and reducing poverty. The need for gender sensitive governance that addresses the interests of both women and men and enhances access to and control over local resources for both is imperative. However, to do it there is a need for undertaking drastic change before any propose policy can make impact. For gender active participation, we need enlarging quota systems that facilitate access to political posts; increase women networks to promote women; make sure that women's interests are clearly addressed, women's interests are linked to the concrete needs of the people; women get financial funds, training and publicity; and make the possibilities of women empower themselves. A call should be to repeal all oppressive law as that are not gender sensitive laws. In particular, there is a need to fight poverty and adopt purposeful measures to raise women economic power, and provision of gender education. Basing on the Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service's (TCRS) Community Empowerment Programme (CEP) in Kibondo which have include “institution of Village Community Bank (VICOBA),

illiteracy programmes disaster preparedness, environmental management, sanitation and food security, women empowerment and HIV/AIDS awareness rising, good governance, civic education, democracy and human rights” in 12 villages, two proposals can be made. One is to enhance the CEP in all the 44 villages as its remarkable progress and promising impact in addressing the challenge of credits accessibility to the poor and mostly women and illiteracy programme which opens the new horizons of active participation in issues pertaining gender cannot be underestimated. The second is to formulate Tanzania Local Community Empowerment Policy. This policy is to guide and regulate issues of funding village community banks; health facilities and health services access; leadership, skills and literacy training programs as well to institute the need to LGAs to set funds for community and individual economic empowerment. To African Union, there is a need for mainstreaming local governance and community empowerment programmes (CEP) in its priorities.

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