CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS PROCESS IN TANZANIA

BY;

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CHALLENGES AFFECTING WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES IN TANZANIA:

Introduction

- Reaching gender equality in politics means more balanced and inclusive society with better state of welfare and human rights.
- Significant numbers of the world population are routinely subjected to marginalisation, torture, starvation, terrorism, humiliation, mutilation and even murder – reason being that they are women!
- Gender inequality surrounding election in Tanzania defeat and stagnate different initiatives for attainment of democracy.
WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

The question is a major reason behind the establishment of Tanzania Women Cross-Party Platform

- Democracy and inclusivity political parties.
  - Women are regarded as ectopic in the whole political system. The women wings of political parties are used to assist the “democracy” of respective political parties.

- Women members of political parties after series of consultations came into a conclusion that they face similar problems despite their political affiliation.
WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

- They identified the following as key to their advancement politically
  - Patriachal systems embodied within political party systems
  - Corruption and sexual exploitation faced by women in politics
  - Mis-Definition of democracy by both political parties and development partners

- And therefore decided that they are obliged to be accountable and take action to re-define ‘democracy’
Tanzania Women Cross-Party Platform

The first Platform in Tanzania by women across party line

- Enhance the level of women’s participation in politics, within and beyond parties: community/village leadership, councils, parliament, political parties, public offices etc
- To raise and coordinate public debates and issues of women’s rights in political processes at different levels
- To ensure key laws and policies supporting women’s equal participation in politics/parties, e.g. constitution, election laws and procedures, party manifestoes etc are reviewed to benefit the realities.
When talking of reaching out women in Tanzania it means reaching those in marginal locations.
2.) Those who do not have official timetable for work
3.) Those with multiple responsibilities of caring for Orphans, the sick and old
4.) Those who lead at the local level despite their academic, economic and social background
Gender, Democracy and Leadership in Tanzania

Facts

- Out of 357 MPs in Tanzania, Women MPs are 119 with only 18 from constituents
- Out of 29 Cabinet Ministers, Women are 9
- Out of 21 Deputy Minister, 3 are women
- Out of 32 Ambassadors, women are 3
- Out of 72 high court judges, women are 25
- For the first time Parliament Speaker
- For the first time Deputy Governor Central Bank
Women and participation in election in Tanzania

- Inaccessibility to education, food, shelter and self-determination by women due to poverty, culture and other reasons, is a source of violation of their democratic rights to equally participate in election.

- In politics, women face repression because dominant image of political actors in today’s world is man.
  - Political rights and political pluralism is therefore a man’s right.
  - For that matter Democracy is brought down to mean inclusivity of men from different political parties in governance structures.
KEY CHALLENGES

Challenges facing women participation in Tanzania are discussed in three different levels

From **individual women** point; culture
{Education, poverty}

From **political system**
- Government {electoral systems and procedures}
- Political party {intra-party democracy}
- Corruption

From the **election partners** point
Challenges facing women participation in elections

- **Culture (male supremacy) still influence Tanzanian political setting**
  - Women exclude themselves from participating in politics because of the oppressive culture which made them to be convinced that politics and leadership is for men.
  - Lack of resources to facilitate their participation:
    - To manage coping at family level
    - To manage direct and indirect expenses for contesting
Challenges facing women participation in elections (1b)

Access to education

- Seven years of compulsory education not enough to enable women take-up leadership position within political and government structures both at national and local levels. However this is the highest level of education for majority of women (80%)

- Drop-out due to pregnancy and truancy in primary, secondary and high schools

This leave many women with less competence compared to men
Challenges facing women participation in elections: Political parties/government

- Patriarchal system within government and political parties
  - Lack of political will and commitment on the part of political leaders and government
    - The discussions and decision for gender equality are disregarded.
  - 50:50 parity in Parliament and Local Authorities but not within political parties
  - Gender equality is implemented through will of political leader in place there is no legal binding
Challenges facing women participation in elections: Political parties/government

- Corruption
  - Election process and practices from within political parties
    - People with money
    - Women are subjected to sex corruption to win appointment position within political parties
  - Election management leave room for corruption and vulnerability for sexual violence
    - Geographical coverage of constituencies
    - Problem of communication
Challenges facing women participation in elections: From Election Partners

- The style of partnership intensify and justify gender inequality
  - Through supporting political parties in the name of democracy (Women are excluded in most programmes)
- Methods of identifying women’s needs for enhancing participation in politics and elections excludes women politicians.
- Gender equality is regarded as non “non issue” in politics
Challenges facing women participation in elections From Political: Election Partners cont..

- Parachuted capacity building programmes for women politicians (wrong timing, irrelevant content) Importation of partnership programmes
  - Copying programmes implemented in other countries and ‘forces’ them to the local
  - Use of foreign consultants and organisations which do not understand the realities of women of Tanzania
Challenges facing women participation in elections: General

- Lack of/missed civic and voter education
  - The support for civic education aimed at empowering women and people in general for effective participation in election is delayed and provided when too late.

- Dis-regard of local partners for capacity building (Use of foreign human resources for local capacity building)

- Sexual exploitation and violence still a major problem; From within parties and some partners
Women aspirants received a 3 days intensive training on how to manage the platform and campaign.
Capacity building programme for young women for expanded democracy.
Conclusion

- It is therefore clear that democratisation that fails to incorporate a gender perspective and impact of certain groups in a given society is a flaw. The Platform is determined to work for proper definition of democracy for effective expanded access of women in politics as voters and candidates.

- The Platform to advocate for election partners to have effective programmes that will have empowering results for women participation in election. From registering, campaign and voting.