

CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN LEADERS AMONGST LOCAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES IN TANZANIA

Pelagia A. Mutarubukwa and Mzomwe Y. Mazana, College of Business Education - Dar-Es-Salaam
P.O Box 1968 Dar-Es-Salaam– Tanzania, Email: y.mzomwe@cbe.ac.tz; p.mutarubukwa@cbe.ac.tz

ABSTRACT

Efforts have been made worldwide to reduce gender parity in all aspects of life, by increasing accessibility and equity of women in various areas, decision making being one. Today, women occupy a relative amount of positions of power in the country, despite their number being small in such positions. However, women in decision making positions are faced by various challenges. Despite different research and efforts done by the Government of Tanzania and others, the situation is not promising. Generally, this study aimed at exploring the challenges faced by women leaders, their ability to cope, ways they engage in coping with the situation and suggest ways of reducing the challenges. The study employed a qualitative strategy, drawing from 10 in-depth interviews of women in decision making positions purposively sampled. Data were analyzed qualitatively based on categories and emerged major themes. The study revealed the following challenges; dominant masculine culture, negative attitude from subordinates, woman natural roles, low level of commitment and confidence, lack of time to socialize and networking. All the respondents show that are able to cope with the challenges and their coping strategies are: being hard working, balancing between the office and family, employing participatory techniques in management, further education and training, especially on management skills, setting achievable goals, avoid unethical practices such as corruption and sexual affairs, doing away with discriminatory traditions and laws, mentoring and coaching and use of alumni and role models. Grounded on the liberal feminist theory the study concluded that, women are not different from men and the existing gender inequalities are not biologically created but rather socially constructed. Therefore, in order to bring social change and reduce gender inequality eliminating impediments and put in place policies, laws that promote equal rights of women is crucial for attainment of 50% women representation in management and decision making positions. The study recommends that, alumni and role models share their experiences, coach and mentor girls from low school age, prioritise further education and training for women, appointing women based on their merits, appointees getting proper orientation, identifying capable girls, nurture, and mentor them, engage women in awareness campaigns, and advocate for change in discriminatory laws and practices.

Keywords: Women, leaders, challenge, leader's roles.

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, women have been regarded as inferior human beings, whose roles being home making (ILO, 2015). Even though, women in performing these responsibilities indirectly exercised managerial practices in their families. However, their roles as homemakers went unappreciated as a society could not establish the extent of leadership that was required to handle family matters (Ceil & Sykes, 2012). Today, women have broken through the traditional garb and are occupying bigger leadership positions to the extent of being presidents of countries or states like Angela Merkel of German, the Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Joyce Banda of Malawi, Asha Rose Migiro the retired UN Deputy secretary and Samia Suluhu Hassan the vice President of Tanzania just to mention a few.

These achievements stem from various initiatives and programs worldwide that had helped in empowering women in various aspects of life. Various countries committed themselves to attain gender equality through different policies, projects and programs. Tanzania has always strived to achieve gender equality in leadership

and over the years, the government has been committed in removing all forms of discrimination in the society (Kombo & Minungu, 2012). This is due to its supports to several national and international gender conventions and declarations.

Some of these conventions include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1979), The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC 1989), The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women of 1993, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA 1985), Jomtien World Conference of 1990, Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All of 2000, Article 4 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU), The Protocol of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and Rights of Women in Africa of 2003, The AU Gender Policy, The AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equity in Africa of 2004, and Goals of the African Union (URT, 2010), and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2015) whereby goal 5 is on Gender Equality that aims at achieving Gender Equality and empower all Women and Girls, specifically clause 5.1 and 5.5, that emphasize on ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere as well as ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life respectively (UN, 2015).

All these documents emphasize the necessity to eliminate all forms of discrimination, promote gender equality, gender inclusion and empowerment. In addition, policies and instruments were put in place to promote gender equality. The bill of rights incorporated in the constitution that bans all forms of discrimination on all grounds, the establishment of National Development Plans and strategies, operationalization of the Women and Gender Development Policy in 2000, the National Strategy for Gender Development (2005) are illustrative.

Tanzania is among the 20 top SADC member states to include in its constitution a clause that requires a minimum of 30% women representation in Parliament. As a result, the percentage of women in cabinet in Tanzania has increased in more than two folds since 2000 to 2012 from 13% to 30% respectively (SADC 2012). Despite these efforts, women are underrepresented in decision making positions particularly in Tanzania. For example, in 2013 out of 55 ministers and deputy ministers, women were only 15 (27.3%) (URT, 2014) and in 2015 the number has come down to 8 women out of 38 ministers (21.05%) women representation (URT, 2015). On the other hand, among the 372 members of the parliament in the 2015 elections, women are 136 which is 36% representation (WB, 2015). This means that the country has not attained the 50% women representation as stipulated in the Beijing Declaration and within the region of Africa. Even in the SDGs stipulate that gender equality and empowerment of all girls and women in all aspects of life and levels is fundamental for achieving these goals (UN, 2015).

Customarily, gender roles of women require them to take care of the home and family while men spend most of their time away from home (Hora, 2014; Corner, 1997; Karelaia & Guillen, 2011). Studies conducted elsewhere point out that, women who have full time employment face challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities. While at work women face challenges related to gender biases; they are considered to be weak, soft and less committed to work than their counterparts (Zinyemba 2013; Andela, Escandon, Garlo & Kamungi 2008; Ceil & Sykes, 2012).

These challenges faced by women in fulfilling their multiple roles increases the gap in number between women and men in various sectors and levels, decision making being one. Despite the various research and efforts done by the GoT and other stakeholders both local and international, the situation is not promising. Local stakeholders include Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP), Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA), Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA) just to mention a few. At an international level the UNDP report shows that 61 percent of working African women face economic exclusion due to the fact that women are mostly found in the informal sector performing underpaid and undervalued jobs. About 66 percent of women are in non agricultural sectors and manage only 7 and 30 percent of private firms (Siema, Bal, Macharia, Bel, & Cathro, 2016).

In this case, the challenges facing women in decision making positions require further investigation to inform various stakeholders. Therefore aid in formulation of suitable policies, programmes, rules and regulations that will bridge gender gap in managerial positions. This will enhance development as women and men have different talents and skills that need to be tapped.

Therefore, this study aimed at exploring the challenges faced by women in the decision making positions, their capability to cope, ways they engage in coping with the situation and suggest ways of reducing those challenges. The study was guided by the following questions; firstly, what are the challenges that face women in decision making positions in Tanzania. Secondly, are these women capable of coping with the challenges? Third, what are the different ways these women use in coping with the situations and lastly, what are the suggested ways to reduce those challenges?.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Liberal Feminist Theory

The study adopted the liberal feminist theory as stated in (Lorber, 1997). Liberal feminism believe that, gender differences are not biologically based, that means, men and women are not different, therefore they cannot be differently treated (Greer & Greene,2003; Lorber, 1997).They contend that, men and women should have the same rights of education and work opportunities. Politically liberal feminist focuses on sources of gender discrimination like gendered jobs, inequitable paying scales, involving more women in positions of authority (in this study means getting more women in decision making positions)

In addition, this theory believes that, gender inequality originates from traditions that have created impediments to women progress and that, socialization of women into gender roles also contributes to gender inequality (In view of this study, these impediments are the challenges that women in decision making positions face while undertaking their duties and responsibilities).Therefore, to bring about social change and reduce gender inequality, feminists propose eliminating impediments to the progress of women and put in place policies that promote equal rights of women. This has been a catalyst of many legislation changes dealing with bringing in gender equality worldwide.

Liberal feminist employ civil rights movement including ant-discrimination legislation and affirmative action to fight for gender inequality in work market. Affirmative action requires finding qualified people to bridge the gender gap in the work place. That means women should be empowered and encouraged to train for skills and knowledge deemed necessary for decision making positions. Having qualified men and women employers can achieve a balance in appointing people in decision making positions that will increase the number of women climbing the ladder to top positions.

Challenges Facing Women Leaders

A number of studies have investigated on the various challenges facing women leaders and these act as hinderances from either climbing on top positions or affecting their performance. The challenges cited from literature include women roles, vestigates and prejudice, resistance of women's leadership, issues of leadership style, and under investment in social capital (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Others are demands of family life, life style conflicts, stereotyping leadership style (Elmuti, Heather, & Henry, 2009). Mwando, Mamimine, Kanokaga, and Chimutingiza (2014) identified impediments on women leaders success to include constraints due to multiple roles, dominant masculine culture, negative attitude from subordinates, element of being risk averse and nature of women and nature of the job. On the other hand, Andela *et al* (2008); Ngara and Ayabam, (2013), found low level of education and lack of self confidence to be some of the hinderances while networking as a challenge on women leaders was identified by Somashekhar and Patil, (2016).

Most of the challenges are stemming from traditions whereby most societies including Tanzania are patriarchal in nature. A patriarchal society is the one that exhibit male dominated power structure among the entire

organised society and how individuals are related (Napikoski). Yoon (2011) described Tanzania as a patriarchal society that practise gender roles based on the sex of an individual, where by women are believed to be inferior and are weak for holding leadership positions. A patriarchy society is related to muscune culture that separates gender roles among men and women, where as men are expected to behave as assertive, tough and focusing on material success like money and power, while on the other hand women should be modest, tender and worried with the quality of life (Hofstede).

These gender roles, naturally, put a woman into a family as a care taker, a wife and her place is in the kitchen. These responsibilities make a woman to spend a lot of time for the family Hora (2014) and denies her time for networking. Networking is described as the process of exchanging of information or services in between individuals, groups, or institutions that aims at creating a productive relationship for either employment or business (Definition of networking). In the study by Hora (2014), it was found that women leaders stand at better positions with their feminine leadership traits except on networking. According to Kele and Pietersen (2015) networking is seen to be a very important ingredient for leadership and career development. This is because previously, leadership was taken to be in-person while with paradigm shift of leadership, it is all about teamwork.

Ngara and Ayabam (2013) pointed out that, women are challenged with lack of self confidence. According to (Confidence) confidence is a belief in oneself and one's powers or abilities. This means by women lacking confidence they don't trust themselves as being capable for holding top leadership positions and this jeopardises their positions. Hora (2014) found that, women leaders lack confidence on their own ability and capacity to lead. To make things worse even subordinate women do not have confidence in the leadership abilities of their fellow women. In this study subordinates are all workers who are under the authority of a certain specific women leader.

In this case, all these practices are a result of socialisation. At an individual level, socialisation is referred as the process through which the person learns social behaviour and develops his/ her 'self'. In a societal view, socialisation is the way in which a society pass through its culture from one generation to another and preserves itself (Socialisation: The meaning).

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative exploratory grounded theory strategy, drawing from ten (10) in-depth interviews. The Interviewees were obtained through purposive and snowball sampling techniques drawn from three deputy directors, one region commissioner, one district education officer, one permanent secretary, three heads of department, one from a higher learning institution and one Chief Executive Officer (CEO). These people were selected depending on their positions and various levels of involvement in decision making structures. The purposive method was used in order to get rich information on the subject matter, therefore only women leaders were contacted. Other women leaders were referred by the ones contacted before, therefore snowball technique.

In qualitative research sample size is determined with the data saturation criteria. According to Francis, Johnston, Robertson, Glidewella, Entwistle, Eccles and Grimshaw (2010) the proposed criteria involve selecting the initial analysis sample where at least 10 interviews are conducted, then setting the stopping criteria whereby after 10 interviews, further 3 successive interviews result into no more new themes. The data saturation for this saturation was untrained at the eighth interview and confirmed with two more interviews. Women Leaders names and their contact phone numbers were identified and then they were contacted. The interviewees were scheduled after calling asking for their consent and a convenient time. The interviewees were through telephone and took an average of about 60 minutes and above.

Data were analysed qualitatively based on categories and emerged major themes. The interviews were hand written as field notes, where the notes were then transcribed verbatim, coded and presented according to

emerged themes. The process of data collection and analysis were done simultaneously. The transcriptions were read by two different individuals to confirm the codes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Dominant Masculine Culture

The study shows that, when women acquiring the decision making positions are generally marginalised by the institutional settings that reflect men's needs and situation while ignoring women's different needs and experience (Corner, 1997). The respondents claim that, women leaders are compared with their male counterparts and are perceived to be incompetent, lacking merit, to the extent of associating their appointments with sexual relationships resulting to women discrimination and untrustworthiness. This is evidenced by a comment from one of the respondents, "... some people have a feeling that you do not have the qualification of being appointed and this is associated with sexual relationships with the appointee...". On the other hand, men are anticipated to be competent even when they cannot prove their capabilities. Women are to offer strong arguments to support their opinions while men are believed, based on their professional qualifications and personal relationships. Sentences like "...argument since is from a woman.... it is difficult to be accepted by men ...", "...you are just a woman..." "...you need to position yourself and show all your capabilities to gain trust..." are illustrative. This finding is supported by (Mwando, Mamimine, & Chimutingiza, 2014) who argue that, organisations culture is perceived by some to be masculine, whereby the study participant perceived the dominant male culture and attitude as an obstacle to their career development and stressed that, women's career progress is hindered by the existence of male culture and old boys network.

The study also revealed that, the existence of masculine culture in most organisations is a hindrance to women leaders in smooth undertaking of their responsibilities as this respondent comments, "... it is very difficult to work in a male dominated culture which is different from the one you are coming from...". This issue have also been observed by Jepkemboi (2015) who found similar results among female Head teachers especially those working in a different cultural set up. This is due to the fact that, women in many African cultures are not supposed to undertake some responsibilities like being leaders; since they are required to be quiet, submissive, polite, nurturing (Elimunti et al., 2009); but not vocal and with masculinity traits. When a woman has masculinity trait like being vocal, committed, making hard decisions, strict follow ups and reprimanding is perceived to be acting like a man (Kadaga, 2013), and this makes it difficult for women to work in such unfriendly environment.

However, the respondent added "...decisions are not supposed to come from one person, leading is a team work...distribute the work to your subordinates based on their capabilities and specialisation, for example if you need to develop a proposal on child abuse you give it to a person capable on that as participatory means of leadership...". Leading is about team work, accommodating people with their cultural diversities reaching into consensus decisions. This is evidenced by (Kele & Peterson, 2015) who identified this practice as cultural intelligence as an important factor in leadership as it accommodates cultural diversities.

Negative Attitudes from Subordinates

Most of the respondents reported to be challenged by the negative attitude from both men and women subordinates. During the interview it was pointed out that, it is difficult to deal with male subordinates, especially when the subordinates were older. This was evidenced by the comments which were given by one respondent "... at times male subordinates have to argue with you to despise your commands..." she argue further that, "...things do not move as intended...a woman has no value... you have to earn respect with extra efforts...". It is amazing to find that, even their fellow women subordinates pose challenges to their women superiors. Another respondent narrated "...at times, especially the young girls when they are given an assignment or task they do not perform as required..." Similar results were produced by Mwando et al. (2014), and Hora (2014) who argued that, female counterparts add to the challenges faced by women leaders.

Natural Role as a Woman

Modern work arrangements and practices are designed for men who have a support from a wife to take care of their family and household tasks. The woman being a mother, a wife and a leader have to play multiple roles. In this regard; the respondents were concerned with the balance between the roles. This is shown by the respondent's comments as one of them said *"...you have to find time for your family, from my experience, most men are not keen for their children and even if a child comes in with a different pair of socks the father will not be able to note the difference..."*

The environment in which women work, is not family friendly; as the long hours, inflexibility of the working day and the location of the work, poses challenges to working women in meeting their multiple roles, thus, giving rise to role conflict. One respondent stipulated that *"... the husband denies eating food prepared by the housemaid...despite your responsibilities and long work hours you need to leave the office early..."* The results of Karelaia and Guillen (2011) found also that, women identity interference pose a challenge to women leaders who find themselves entrapped as being women and at the same time as woman leaders. This situation affects their psychological well being and end some of them end up with life desertification.

It was also revealed that, being a leader might result in conflict with a spouse. This is because the place of the woman was in the home, so changing women's roles by acquiring leadership position and earning a living make some men inferior. It was also observed; whatever is suggested by a woman is perceived by men as a means of overshadowing him which is an element of insecurity and jealousy. This is illustrated with a comment given by a respondent, that, *"... if you take a loan intending to invest in a family business the husband will not be supportive... he thinks you want to overshadow him..."* Another one added *"... you are a woman, a wife and a mother at the end of the day you have to be submissive..."* These results confirm the findings by Zinyemba (2013) who carried a study on the leadership challenges for women managers in the hospitality and financial services in Zimbabwe and Hora (2014) who stresses on women leaders and professionals being faced with both traditional roles and work expectations and lack support from their male family members being spouses and male relatives, in such a way that, women have to go an extra mile to be able to perform equally like men.

Low Level of Confidence

A leader is the one who bears the biggest responsibility in an organisation and requires possessing leadership traits such as confidence. Respondents revealed that women lack confidence that adversely affects their leadership as one said *"...at the end of the day decisions are being made by men as women don't believe in themselves and whatever they want to do they consult men..."*. This is evidenced by Hora (2014) who found that, among the major factors hindering women's participation in leadership and decision making is lack of confidence from women themselves; (Kombo & Miningu 2012; Ngara & Ayabam, 2013) argued also that, there is a very low self confidence among women that tend to affect their motivation to compete for the position of leadership.

Lack of Time to Socialize and Networking

Women in leadership positions spend a lot of time for career and family affairs, therefore, left with limited time for other social activities such as being club members, meeting with friends and close relatives as one respondent narrated *"... peers tend to shy away because you are a leader and if someone is close to you others think that is spying or gossiping over them, and at times you lose good friends..."*. Kombo and Miningu (2012) found similar results.

These responsibilities denies a person time to attend social activities like funerals, weddings that widen the gap between women leaders and their fellow women as well as the society at large. This may result in women becoming lonely, losing close friends and lack of recognition that may lead to frustrations and hence low performance. Kombo and Miningu (2012) stresses the effects of lacking networking activities among women, both formal and informal that results into lack of recognition that leads to advancement. Further evidence was observed by Mwando et al., (2014) that, women lack time to network which is contrary to what is believed to be

new paradigm shift of leadership, that shift leadership from person centered to be a collective process that is spread along the network of people.

Other challenges facing women leaders include lack of women role models who could have been acting as a learning ground as well as a means of getting encouragement for junior women appointees and girls still in schools. These results are supported by Hora (2014) in the study of factors that affect women's participation in leadership and decision making positions in Ethiopia who found that, one among factors affecting women leaders is lack of role models.

Cope and Coping Strategies

Respondents were asked whether they are able to cope and how do they cope. All of them confirmed the ability to cope with the challenges and the following were revealed as their coping strategies.

Copping strategies

Working hard

Men and women are born leaders, however, women are perceived to be incapable, in this circumstance women are required to work hard and go an extra mile so as to deliver. It was established also that, in order to cope with challenges, women leaders need to be knowledgeable to the extent that the organisation is in the fingertips to be able to manage resources well.

Developing confidence

Women leaders emphasised that, confidence is one of the weapons that a woman leader should possess. Confidence is one among the traits of a good leader, thus having this trait women leaders will gain recognition and trust among their subordinates. In the long run, this will impact positively to subordinates to the extent of changing their negative attitudes toward women leaders. Some respondents suggested that “...in dealing with issues of negative attitude sometimes you need to have a hard talk... when on safari the office usually is left to the stubborn ones to create a good rapport between each other...”.

Balancing work and family

In order to create harmony at home, some respondents saw it wise to sacrifice official trips and leave that to the subordinates. Respondents further pointed out that, balancing work and family is very important to avoid losing on one side, especially the family. Elmunti et al. (2009) have also observation that, due to time constraints and job demands, women are forced to choose the family rather than their career. They further noted that, many women have voluntarily left their jobs due to family decisions. Women carry a big share of the burden that eat most of their time and at times, children and other family members might not understand the situation.

Women suggested enhancing cooperation among the family to be another means of coping with the challenges by using participatory approach as a means of easing communication and creation of a better and mutual understanding among family members. This will ease these women with tensions faced in their families and hence concentrate in their careers. Sharing of earnings with the family was proposed as another coping strategy as one respondent said “...the family need to benefit from the earnings as this will make them appreciate and stand on your side...”

Setting achievable goals

Respondents mentioned that, in order to minimise challenges women leaders need to be goal oriented and prioritise goals and activities. They pointed out that, women leaders need to stick on the laid down rules and regulations and with high level of transparency.

Employing participatory techniques in management

Respondents proposed the use of delegation and decentralisation of power as a coping mechanism against challenges faced by women leaders. This participatory strategy will enhance cooperation among the staff to the

extent that, members of the staff have a feeling of owning the organisation. This is evidenced by a comment from one respondent that “... *don't carry it all for yourself, you need to identify individuals who are capable in specific areas and assign them responsibilities... for example, comes in an assignment to write a proposal on children's affairs, or old people give it to the competent ones... this is also a way of mentoring...*”

Avoid unethical practices

Leadership is the ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organisations with a high level of ethical practices (Ciulla, 2004). Therefore, practices such as corruption, sexual relationships, frauds and others are to be avoided as two respondents stressed, “...*if there are things that leaders really need to avoid are issues of corruption, engage in frauds, sexual relationship as these, not only are unethical practices... being a woman people will judge you differently from men, although you have committed a similar crime...*”

Further education and training

Respondents of the study felt that, going for further studies, training and attending seminars could help women leaders to cope with the challenges. This supports the contention by Elmunti et al. (2009) regarding the importance of education and training in preparing women for leadership roles.

Use of alumni and role models

Women leaders felt that alumni and role models could play a big role in inspiring girls and women in attaining higher positions in management. They further pointed that, alumni and role models should work together in empowering girls through encouragement and sharing the best practices and experiences. Alumni are indebted of going back to their respective schools and colleges to talk to girls while role models should share their experiences for the encouragement and empowerment of girls. This is evidenced by statements given by two respondents “*alumni and role models have a big impact on girls different from their teachers whom they are used to hear almost every day*”. Myenzi (2007) supports this idea and emphasised the importance of role models in encouraging women, he further gave an example of the Honourable Getrude Mongela and the appointment of Dr. Asha Rose Migiro the then as Deputy UN Secretary General as a sign of confidence on women and a challenge to male dominated systems that women are powerful players in politics.

Mentoring and coaching

It was proposed by the interviewed women that, in order to increase the number of women in decision making positions and cope with challenges, mentoring and coaching should start right from the lower level schools. The capable ones should be identified, nurtured, coached and mentored. This is also recommended by Myenzi (2007) who proposed that outstanding figures of Tanzania should help in mentoring young girls in special gender academies to build confidence in them and spill over the effects. Gender empowerment has to be emphasised by doing more on gender mainstreaming and by employing more strategies that engage women in the awareness campaign and these efforts should reach the grass roots.

Doing away with discriminatory traditions and laws

Women leaders argued that, most of the challenges faced by women in decision making stem from traditions and cultural practices, they further propose that, there is a need of changing cultural practices that discriminate women. Children have to be differently and socialized in order to change their beliefs, norms and attitude towards each other. Most importantly, there is a need to revisit laws that discriminate women, for example, the law of marriage that allows girls by the age of fourteen under the parents' consent to be married. Marriage at the age of fourteen is going contrary to the United Nations (UN) definition of a child. This also denies children the opportunity for further education and they might be prospective leaders.

Lessons Learnt:

In light of liberal feminist, gender inequality originates from traditions that have created impediments to women progress and that, socialization of women into gender roles also contributes to gender inequality (In

view of this study, these impediments are the challenges that women in decision making positions face while undertaking their duties and responsibilities). It was revealed in the study that, dominant masculine culture that include; institutional arrangement and organisation culture discriminates women. Other impediments are negative attitude from subordinates, natural roles as a woman, that make them play multiple roles as a wife, mother and leader at the same time and low level of confidence. Looking at these challenges it can be deducted from the theory that, they are not biologically based rather socially constructed. Therefore, to bring about social change and reduce gender inequality feminists propose eliminating impediments to the progress of women and put in place policies that promote equal rights of women. This has been a catalyst of many legislation changes dealing with bringing in gender equality worldwide. In this case, it has been proposed that, in doing away with the challenges faced by women in decision making, further education and training, making use of alumni and role models, mentoring and coaching and doing away with discriminatory traditions and laws. Liberal feminist employ civil rights movement including anti-discrimination legislation and affirmative action to fight for gender inequality in work market. Affirmative action requires finding qualified people to bridge the gender gap in the work place. As it has been revealed in this study that, further education play a crucial role in empowering women and thus women should be encouraged to train for skills and knowledge deemed necessary for decision making positions. In due regard, alumni and role models have the responsibility of coaching, encouraging and mentoring women and girls so as to empower more women to acquire various in the work places. Thus, having qualified men and women employers can achieve a balance in appointing people in decision making positions that will increase the number of women climbing the ladder to top positions and receive equal treatment from both men and women.

Worldwide the struggle is to attain 50% representation in various aspects and levels of management. Even though, 50 % representation has not been attained in Tanzania (WB, 2015). According to the findings of this paper, based on the liberal feminist theory, doing away with challenges that impede women progress will foster the struggle to attain 50% women representation in management and decision making.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Women in decision making positions are faced with various challenges that hamper them in fulfilling their roles. These include, dominant masculine culture, negative attitude from subordinates, woman natural roles, low level of commitment and confidence, lack of time to socialize and networking. All the respondents' shows that are able to cope with the challenges and through strategies such as: working hard, balancing between the family and office, employing participatory techniques in management, further education and training, especially on management skills, developing confidence, setting achievable goals and avoid unethical practices such as corruption and sexual affairs.

The liberal feminist theory proposes that, women are not different from men and the existing gender inequalities are not biologically created rather socially constructed. The theory suggested further that, in order to bring social change and reduce gender inequality eliminating impediments to the progress of women and put in place policies, laws that promote equal rights of women is crucial for women advancement and attainment of 50% women representation in management and decision making positions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that, alumni and role models share their experiences, coach and mentor girls from low school age, provide education and training, appointing women based on their merits, appointees should get proper orientation, identifying capable girls, nurture, and mentor them, engage women in awareness campaigns, and change discriminatory practices and laws.

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