

**REDUCING THE GENDER GAP THROUGH MAINSTREAMING
GENDER IN TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT**

THE CASE OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

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1.0 FOREWORD

Gender issues and gender mainstreaming are now household terms, arising from the day to day human relations. The wellbeing of people are governed by how the system is organized and mechanisms determining roles and responsibilities of individuals. In most developing countries especially African countries, family and therefore community set ups are determined by their social and cultural norms and values. The complex traditional systems have powers to assign roles and responsibilities, and enforcement mechanism. The roles and responsibilities were formulated in order to preserve traditions and identities of particular societies.

Emergence of commodity relations has transformed the system so much that some norms and values are neither important nor necessary. The underlying principals influencing rules and regulations guiding people's behavior and the roles and responsibilities assigned to people have to be revisited.

In this discussion some insights of actual situations of gender inequalities in developing countries will be explored. Studies and experiences from developing countries sites customary and traditional laws as the main source of gender inequality, as they were prepared and set to favour men as a dominant gender group. Economies of developing countries are hinged on agriculture as people's source of economic wellbeing. Agriculture is done on customary land which men are entrusted by the customs to be custodians. The rest of the people have no say on the product of their labour despite their backbreaking farm work.

Women are active participants in most social and economic activities; they are daily users and managers of natural resources but mostly for the benefit of others. Women are not even involved in major decisions that affect resources they depend on and the environment. Women constitute more than half of the population in developing countries and from experience, turn out in numbers in political gatherings and elections, but yet are visibly absent in the decision making levels.

The world is changing, and rules and traditions that fail to recognize that fact and hinder particular societies to be part of the change have to change too. One of the ways towards that development is to uplift the status of women and increase their abilities to actively participate in decision-making mechanisms.

There are a number of initiatives that are being taken by governments and the civil societies to address the gender inequality situation, and therefore promote gender mainstreaming in their respective areas. Gender mainstreaming is necessary from household/family level to national and even international level.

I believe it is at no ones interest to still continue with the decaying segregative way of social and economic relations.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the recognition of existence of gender gap in all aspects of trade and development, and discusses different measures, strategies that could be advanced to alleviate the already worse gender imbalance. It gives a touch on Tanzania's experience as a case representative of developing countries. The current gender position in trade and development activities has its roots in the gender-biased traditions, formal and informal rules. The traditional laws and procedures places men on the upper hand as far as ownership of property, right to express opinion and influence decisions, sharing of the results of the common sweat.

There is growing evidence that, if the society is properly sensitized and women encouraged to participate in economic activities, it makes a very big difference even without special preference. The paper argues that, even though the private sector is now taking the leading role in aspects of trade and development, but for any party to effectively participate, certain qualities and standards have to be reached. With the 'status quo', male dominance will persist considering the fact that gender-neutral policy and strategies tend to be generally male favoring/dominated.

All stakeholders at international, national, enterprise and household/family levels have to individually and collectively participate in gender mainstreaming process.

3.0 DEFINITION

The term gender mainstreaming is defined by different parties in accordance with their roles and functions, but all definitions converge on the fact of recognizing and taking on board equal social relations between women and men.

While ILO defines gender mainstreaming as the process of changing the organization to adequately respond to gender equality concerns.

UNDP expands it further by stating that the process has to take into account the gender concerns in all policy, programme, administrative and financial activities, and in organizational procedures, thereby contributing to a profound organizational transformation.

For the purpose of this discussion I define gender mainstreaming as a process that in a transparent way recognizes and incorporates gender concerns in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of development policies and programmes at all levels.

4.0 IMPORTANCE OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

All activities in societies in developing countries are governed by the ruling socio-cultural values and norms. The current setup specifies roles, responsibilities and rights to men and women and power relations emanating from the balance, shape the development process, the extent and way each party participates.

Most development policies and strategies in force are gender neutral in the sense that they don't openly indicate any gender preference. But as a matter of practice, gender neutral initiatives favors the most dominant gender group and in particular men as far as developing countries is concerned.

It is crucial at this juncture to consider the requirements of both men and women, because they are the stakeholders of trade and development process. They both contribute to human capital component to the development process and poverty reduction initiatives. Both are intended beneficiaries of trade and development process.

By recognizing and accommodating women requirements the process will constitute a positive added value. Equal participation will lead to a change in the essence of the system itself.

5.0 OBSTACLES FACING WOMEN AS PARTICIPANTS IN TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Participation of women in trade and development activities will prominently be in the picture if certain generic aspects are addressed:

Land - land reforms need to be slowly changed to recognize the need and importance of women to be part of heirs and owners of customary land. If the nature of trade and development is land based, then without consideration of equal or increased recognition and participation of women, it will still remain a days dream to expect recognizable contribution from the feminine part of the community. Consider a case of a woman led subsistence family, it will not be possible for a woman and her children to plan and effect development on land they don't own and control.

Ownership of property - in most customary laws men are custodians of family properties. Unless male members of the families are proactive and developmental, very rarely accepts developmental opinions and suggestions from their female counterparts.

Capital forms the basis of action in trade and development activities. Often very few operate businesses by using their own capital, most use borrowed capital. Women's participation in formal credit programmes are basically constrained by legal barriers, cumbersome application procedures, relatively high opportunity costs, sociocultural constraints like lack of secure title to property and other forms

of collateral, even where they play a big role in production and marketing in the rural areas. Women experience similar difficulties in their efforts to establish or expand their own enterprises and sources of self employment, and more often are forced to turn to informal, high cost sources of credit.

Unproportionate participation in trade and development has its roots in the informal and formal educational and training system. As evidenced from a serial enrolment records and dropout trend, women take less than their proportionate share in the whole education system. The percentage of participation declines the higher it moves up the education ladder. Training programs in the rural as well as urban areas do not consider and accommodate specific factors that affect the availability and effectiveness of educational and training programs to women like location of training centers, convenience of hours of courses and the relative curricula and teaching materials, and use of appropriate methods to transfer technology. All these deny women a chance to develop their entrepreneurial development and upgrading.

6.0 EXPERIENCE OF OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

It is increasingly recognized that development of the world particularly developing countries cannot be without full participation of both women and men. It is also a clear fact that women are key economic resource to developing countries, while in Africa women comprise 60% of the informal sector which provide about 70% of total agricultural labor, in Asia it has been proved also that women have almost three times as much labor load than their men counterparts. Despite the fact, women are continuing to be discriminated in accessing basic technologies and resources vital for their economic roles. Gender differentials persist at all levels of education and the gap widens at the higher levels. Low levels of education and training, poor health and nutritional status and limited access to

resources depress women's quality of life and hinder economic efficiency and growth.

It is argued that poverty in Africa is widespread and growing, this fact has a root cause in inequality of gender participation in economic activities. In spite of their less knowledge and skills, women have longer working time schedule than men considering the fact that time required to carry out multiple roles has a bearing in overburdening their capacities and abilities at the cost of efficiency in economic and welfare activities.

Like in Tanzania, women's access to formal credit facilities is a big problem. Studies conducted in Cameroon and Uganda reveals the fact that a small proportion of women use the formal financial sector. ¹While it is 2.6% in Cameroon, in Uganda banks' records indicate that 5-20% of their total portfolio serves women projects. The rest of women use semi-formal and informal financial institutions as their main source of capital 95% in Cameroon out of which 58% use informal rotating saving and credit associations. Reliance on this kind of financing arrangement has inherent problems; semi-formal and informal institutions have small capital base, limited outreach, charge high interest rates and women participation is more often compromised by failure to obtain endorsements from their spouses.

Though governments in developing countries have realized the fact and are taking necessary measures to arrest the already worse situation. Improvement in recognizing women participation in the socio-economic setup of the societies in developing countries is showing encouraging results. Social-cultural values and roles are still taking toll of the developing positive signs, while in some societies in Asia preference in son bearing and upbringing is given weight, in some African

¹ Demanding Dignity: Women confronting Economic Reforms in Africa. By Dzodzi Tsikata and Joanna Kerr.

communities sending a girl to school is just like throwing away wealth that has to be realized when the daughter get married.

Experience has also shown that in male dominated societies, all what is being produced irrespective of who did it are men's products. It is not surprising the contribution of women in trade and development activities is not pronouncedly seen. On the other hand, ²although women constitute the majority of those considered illiterate, but have acquired other forms of literacy, ability to read the world around them, to identify the means and strategies for survival and promote human dignity. There are many women who are highly qualified to offer valuable technical insights'.

It therefore means, mainstreaming provides an opportunity to take on board knowledge, skills and experiences that were formally ignored.

7.0 TANZANIA'S EXPERIENCE

7.1 Situation analysis

The United Republic of Tanzania as one of the developing countries experience similar social and economic set up as is in other developing countries. The population of these countries is rural based and their economies are mainly dominated or determined by the extent of development of agriculture the dominant activity. The extent of involvement in production and distribution of the products of labour depend on the socio-economic set up of the society especially on who owns and has a right to what.

² (Assessment of Gender Mainstreaming in Sub Saharan Africa. A review of UNDP supported activities).

Statistics in Tanzania reveal the fact that women contribute 75% of agriculture labour force. Based on 2002 census results, Tanzania has 34 million people with an average growth rate of 2.8%. About 80% of the population is rural and the remaining 20% live in urban and peri-urban areas.

The country is basically agrarian with agriculture as the mainstay of the economy-supporting livelihood of over 85% of the population. Agriculture contributes over 60% of exports. Other productive sectors are industry (8%), mineral (1.5%) and the rest is contributed by financial and services sectors.

Although the agriculture sector ranks high in its contribution to the economy its potential has not been tapped fully. Quite often the country is experiencing an incidence of lack of inadequate food to feed its people. On the other hand what is produced is not well harvested, as post harvest losses are very high, estimated at an average of over 40%; 30% in cereal and up to 80% in fruits and vegetables.

A current estimate of real value added is put at about 4%. This compares poorly with estimates of the USA 65%, Brazil 70%, Philippines 75% and Malaysia 83%

Contribution of manufacturing to GDP is still low at 8%, Agriculture production is also still low despite the immense existing potential. Business is still in very few hands and a vast majority of Tanzanians are limited to petty business with hardly 1% involved in substantive manufacturing.

The Tanzania Development Vision 2025 and Poverty Reduction Strategy paper have set a goal of eradicating absolute poverty by the year 2025 and reduce it by half by the year 2010. Poverty is caused by many factors among others, one of the most important being unbalanced gender relations attributed by low education attainment amongst women, limited access to decision making, low income levels, poor infrastructure in rural areas, low agriculture productivity, inadequate post harvest handling and processing facilities.

7.2 The status of gender mainstreaming in economic activities

Since women make a bigger proportion in the labour force of the agricultural sector, its general performance and the economy depend on their level of knowledge and skills as main production participants. In order to increase productivity, sales, value addition, income and wealth creation, deliberate efforts to improve women's participation position in terms of resources, skills and their recognition as key contributors to development initiatives, and assurance of giving them a fair share of the product of their labour is required.

The government as the main stakeholder, has all what it takes to influence any change towards the gender mainstreamed society.

The problem of gender inequality and recognition of women's participation in development activities is not only noticeable at individual or family level, but also even at national as well as international levels. As a testimony to that, different countries are formulating various policies and programmes to specifically address and even out particular gender issues, which constrain free participation of different parties in economic activities right from the planning up to evaluation stage of development programmes. Governments now have recognized the fact

that gender mainstreaming is not only desirable but also a necessity to faster and sustainable development.

In Tanzania for instance, the government has recognized the need and is taking corrective measure at different levels and therefore influencing the process of change by:

- Recognizing, signing and ratifying international conventions against any gender based discrimination. At the national level, it supports transformation towards gender equality at policy level.
- Promoting women participation in the policy formulation and implementation process at different levels.
- Facilitating gender mainstreaming in all sector policies, government offices and state institutions.

Recognition and ratification of conventions is a good starting step, in itself can not bring desired results but probably with women empowerment significant effect can be realized. Failure to merge these complementing issues, contributes to the emergence of gender activists, gender focused Non Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organizations in Tanzania.

Although the government has shown determination and efforts to address the problem of inequalities, more proactiveness is required particularly in the following areas:

- Enhancement of women's legal capacity
 - i) Change laws, which discriminate against women eg customary law and land laws.
 - ii) Effect changes in the administration of justice to enable women get a fair and equal treatment before law.
 - iii) Raise women's awareness of their rights as equal human beings.

- Economic empowerment of women
 - i) Promote greater equality in performing reproductive and productive activities.

The social system and family structure influences the socio-cultural , ideological beliefs and values of communities in the society. The beliefs and values in turn influences the behavior, relationship and total way of life of people. For instance the patrilineal kinship system has been institutionalized in family, religion, work place and politics. The system alienates women by subordination, discrimination and exploitation. It all evolves on who has the right to what. The kinship is influenced by traditional socialization processes, which identifies and assigns gender roles, ownership and decision making patterns that are mostly at the disadvantage of women and girls.

The Women In Development Policy of 1992, recognizes the gender gap and emphasizes the need to develop ways and means

of eradicating all forms of discrimination against women, at the same time enabling them to become active partners in the development process. The policy specifies the right of property ownership, control over the proceeds of labour and the right to training and education. The policy in general terms advocates for encouragement of mainstreaming gender issues in policies and programmes, promotion of women development and gives way for advocacy of gender issues.

Even though the legal system may be pro-women, the socio-economic environment tends to be hostile to women due to the fact that are usually ill equipped in terms of analytical skills, appropriate and timely information and timing of political and economic events. Most women particularly rural based lack self-confidence due to limited access to appropriate information and knowledge on current issues on development.

The prevailing customs and social attitudes condemn women to inferior position and status. They are seen to have no ability to engage in independent thinking or have original ideas, and therefore are marginalized from decision making and on matters of social importance.

- ii) Organize and provide entrepreneurial training specifically aimed at uplifting women's entrepreneurial status.

**A case for a women entrepreneurship development project
(WED) Tanzania.**

The project was particularly initiated to enhance entrepreneurial capacity to women in Food Processing in Tanzania. The project was started in 1993, and all along it is being implemented jointly by SIDO with the assistance from UNIDO. The programme aims at promoting productive employment and gender equality, in the wake of poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihood initiatives. The programme contributes to empowerment of women in Tanzania, employment creation and income distribution. The programme offers a range of services to women participants i.e. assistance in business plan/feasibility studies preparation, food processing and entrepreneurship skills, sourcing and selling food processing equipment and inputs, provides facilities for food processing and testing and organizes processed foods promotional events.

The programme has produced though not significant but encouraging results;

- 85 Women trainers were trained by the programme and are executing training function in all the regions.
- 2134 women entrepreneurs have been trained.
- Over 70% of trainees are in business of which 50% produce regularly.
- The programme has created 1660 permanent employment opportunities for course participants.

Particular women food processors have gained experience and confidence that some of them have already had their products certified to standards, sold in the super markets and some are exporting.

The programme is just one of many initiatives being advanced by different parties to empower women and increase their participation in trade and development activities.

- iii) Promote women's increased access to credit, land and employment.

**A case of National Entrepreneurship Development Fund (NEDF)
Tanzania.**

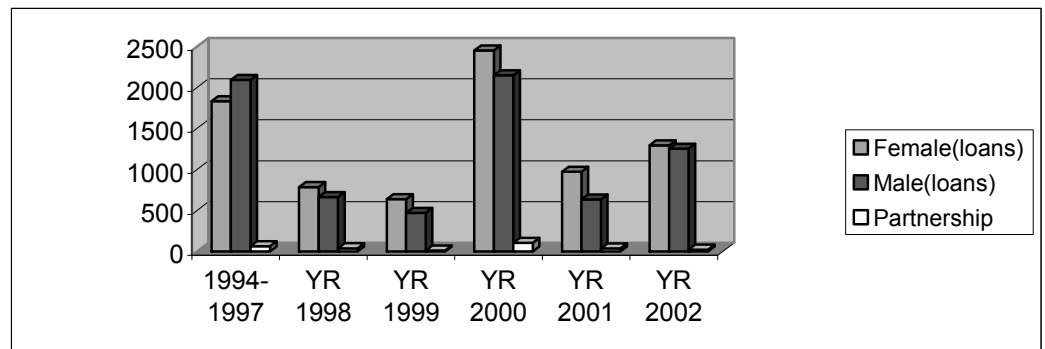
This fund was established by the government in 1994, and its implementation and general administration is being done by SIDO to promote entrepreneurship development amongst micro and small entrepreneurs. All what is required for any entrepreneur to participate is possession of a business idea and/or existing growing business, be of a good character and the viability of the project. The underlying conditions and terms are gender neutral, in the sense that no gender related preference is mentioned.

Since when the project was started, applications from all kinds of people were received and processed. The nine years the project has been operating, proves the fact that even when women are not given any preference but encouraged, can still participate competitively.

The table below shows a summary of loan disbursements by gender.

NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT FUND

GENDER BALANCE IN CREDIT PROGRAMMES			
LOAN DISBURSEMENTS (QUANTITY)			
Year	Female(loans)	Male(loans)	Partnership
1994-1997	1834	2092	65
YR 1998	788	666	41
YR 1999	639	473	13
YR 2000	2453	2150	106
YR 2001	972	635	38
YR 2002	1296	1253	25



Source: SIDO NEDF Report 2003

Over all the years disbursements have been mostly going to women entrepreneurs (more than 50%) over their male counterparts.

- iv) Promote increased access to technology especially in information and communication technology.

Develop and make available technologies, which will reduce women labour drudgery and therefore enable them to have ample time to think and participate in other developmental activities.

- v) Promote and encourage linkages and networking amongst women individually and in groups.

- Political empowerment
 - i) Promote increased share of women participation in the whole political infrastructure.

As it can be observed from the figures in the table below, women are very much under represented in the decision making process despite the fact that the constitution grants equal rights for women and men to vote and be elected to public office. But even when representation of women increases, it may not in itself sufficiently address the structural constraints, which inhibit women's interest or competitive ability to enter electoral politics.

NUMBER OF WOMEN IN KEY POSITIONS IN TANZANIA

Position	Women	Men	Total	% of Women
President	0	1	1	0
Vice President	0	1	1	0
Prime Minister	0	1	1	0
Cabinet	4	23	27	14.8
Deputy Ministers	5	13	18	27
Permanent Secretaries	6	23	29	20.6
Ambassadors	1	32	33	3
Attorney General	0	1	1	0
Speaker of Parliament	0	1	1	0
Deputy Speaker	0	1	1	0
Secretary of Parliament	0	1	1	0
Members of Parliament	63	232	296	21.3
Councilors	696	1392	2088	33.3
Regional Commissioners	2	19	21	9.5
District Commissioners	20	79	99	20.2
Judges(total)	8	37	45	17.7
High Court Judges	7	30	37	18.9
Court of Appeal Judges	1	7	8	12.5
District Magistrates	17	266	283	6
Primary Court Magistrates	148	354	502	29.4
Regional Police Commanders	2	24	26	7.6

Source: President's speech to the Parliament 30 January, 2001

The situation is even worse at the local level, where the village council as a grass root structure that gives power to the people to decide their own socio-economic activities. Women participation is low, e.g. in 1993 women councilors constituted only 6% of the total number of 86,227 seats despite the fact that it is mandatory to have 25% of village and district councilors as women.

- ii) Women have slowly began to gain confidence and are now able to successfully contest with men in different democratic platforms raising of issues of discrimination, sexual abuse, child abuse etc

7.3 Gender mainstreaming at organizational level

Although the importance of gender mainstreaming was realized sometime back by the government, but institutions operating under the government umbrella were yet to openly carryout similar exercises. Currently, government ministries are taking necessary steps towards initiating gender mainstreaming in their mandated areas. The Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO), a parastatal organization working under the Ministry of Industries and Trade (which I work for) is taking similar measures with the assistance of ILO. The organization is carrying out a ³FAMOS check (gender audit), which aims at evaluating the policies, programmes, organizational setup and operations in terms of services being offered, facilities being used, physical and human resources available, the general working environment and establish if there are gender mainstreaming elements within the system. Thereafter, areas of improvements identified, gender

³ FAMOS is an abbreviation representing Female And Male Operated Small enterprises.

mainstreaming strategies set and implementation action plan prepared in that regard.

8.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The discussion of the above experiences reveals reasons behind prevailing inequalities in developing countries. Women in most cases are the most ignored parties in almost every aspect of development while are actually main shadow participants. In order to develop a gender mainstreamed society, then contribution of women has to be recognized and valued. Gender mainstreaming might ensure transparent, fair and sustainable operational trade and development systems as it will take into account all gender concerns.

Future policies and strategies need to specifically address and uplift capacities of the currently disadvantaged parties in trade and development, and I believe Inter governmental Organizations like UNCTAD can influence the process. The contribution towards this transformation could be felt through effecting among others the following strategies;

- i. Influence creation of enabling environment at international level to avoid negative economic trends which increased hardships and cause poverty to weak system participants. Allow active participation of benefiting countries in the setting up of country development programs so that field facts can be exposed and considered and therefore guide the process to programs implementable to their working environment.
- ii. Include the aspect of mainstreaming in all development policies and plans. Strategies and policy measures to be instituted has to base on field experiences. The best principal and approach is to start working on issues

guided by knowledge and experiences gained by IGOs, NGOs that have been operating in developing countries in different capacities serving under normal and emergency circumstances. Their expertise and experience could be valuable and could provide cost effective approach to mainstream gender in trade and development activities

iii. Influence creation of enabling environment for women participation at national level through;

- Advocating for policies that would eliminate the disadvantages of labour market segmentation, occupational discrimination.
- Support the improvement of women's access to labour saving and income generating technologies.
- Facilitate women's access to unbiased information and professional networks.
- Support training that helps women to analyze, actively negotiate and participate in the policy dialogue.
- Support the development of gender sensitive policies of banks and financial institutions and government departments to improve women's access to finance and mainstream financial institutions.

iv. Organize capacity building programmes that will aim at strengthening women's knowledge, skills in trade and development and therefore integrate them in trade and development systems.

- Set targets for women trainees and employees
- Develop flexible training programmes for women in new technologies to respond to the changing demands of industry
- Offer women targeted scholarships by industrial enterprises tied to an employment offer

- Promote increased flexibility, job sharing, part time and home based work to more senior levels to encourage more women to accept senior positions
 - Introduce and promote flexible working hours, home based work, job sharing and part time employment for both men and women to reduce conflict between work and family roles.
 - Provide training in leadership skills to prepare women for participation in management.
 - Provide training to prepare women to cope with male dominated workplace environments, and prepare men to cope with women entering previously non-traditional occupations.
 - Facilitate sharing of information and experiences amongst developing countries. Organize exchange learning visits/tours from countries that have less mainstreamed systems to ones that have made positive gender mainstreaming strides.
- v. Ensure a gender specialist reviews programmes initiated and implemented in order to ensure that gender concerns are taken into account and can advise on opportunities for enhancing women's participation in program activities. Gender related knowledge and skills should be imparted to all those to be active participants of the programs

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