Unveiling obstacles and Possibilities for Gender Equality in Governance Structures in Tanzania.

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Abstract	*NG-Journal of Social Development*
Tanzania has made stride in enhancing women's political representation through initiatives such as gender quotas and reserved seats in parliament. However, the translation of representation into substantive participation and influence remains a challenge. The paper employs and adopts a survey design with a descriptive approach, utilizing questionnaire for data collection. The collected data from 230 civil servants underwent descriptive analysis. The findings shed light on various challenges including limited representation, discriminatory legal frameworks, sociocultural barriers, restricted access to resources, institutional biases, violence/harassment, lack of gender-sensitive policies, underrepresentation in leadership, and inadequate support systems. These challenges collectively underscore the barriers to gender equality in Tanzanian governance structures. The paper concludes that while Tanzania has witnessed advancement in women's political representation, there are persistent challenges impeding substantive gender equality in governance structures. The paper recommends the following: implement gender –sensitive policies, enact legal reforms to remove barriers, strengthen women's empowerment programs, conduct education and awareness campaigns, undertake institutional reforms to address biases, and foster supportive leadership to create an inclusive and equitable governance environment that enables women to actively participate in decision making process and contribute to positive governance outcomes.	

1. Introduction

Gender equality in governance structures remains a critical global issue, with persistent challenges alongside emerging opportunities (UN, 2019). Across the world, disparities in political representation, decision-making power, and access to resources continue to marginalize women and hinder progress toward gender equality (Porter, 2019). Despite progress in recent decades, women remain significantly underrepresented in political leadership roles globally. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's 2021 report, women held only 25.5% of parliamentary seats worldwide, with significant regional variations. This underrepresentation limits women's ability to influence policy decisions and shape governance agendas (Eden & Wagstaff, 2021).

General tendency worldwide indicate that gender inequality intersects with other forms of discrimination, such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and disability, further marginalizing certain groups of women within governance structures. Intersectional perspectives highlight the need for policies and initiatives that address the unique challenges faced by diverse groups of women and promote inclusive decision-making processes (Cole, 2022). Women in politics often face gender-based violence, harassment, and intimidation, both online and offline. Threats to their safety and security undermine their ability to fully engage in political activities and contribute to a climate of fear that deters other women from entering politics (Posetti Storm, 2018). Addressing violence and harassment against women in politics is therefore essential for fostering an enabling environment for gender equality in governance.

Sub Saharan Africa witnesses various barriers that prevent women from entering and advancing within political spheres. These barriers include cultural norms and stereotypes that perpetuate traditional gender roles, limited access to education and resources, discriminatory laws and policies, and entrenched patriarchal power structures within political parties and institutions. These factors create formidable obstacles for women seeking to participate in governance processes at all levels (Shannon et al. 2019).

Emerging trends, such as the growing influence of feminist movements, the digitalization of politics, and increased international cooperation on gender issues, present new opportunities for advancing gender equality in governance (Sen, 2019). Harnessing these opportunities requires coordinated efforts from governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, and international actors to address the root causes of gender inequality and create more inclusive and equitable governance systems. Gender equality in governance structures is a critical aspect of achieving inclusive and sustainable development (Glass & Newig, 2019).

In Tanzania, achieving gender equality remains a significant challenge despite efforts to promote women's participation in decision-making processes (Razav, 2016). Tanzania has made strides in promoting gender equality, evident in policies and legal frameworks such as the 1971 Law of Marriage Act and the 1984 Local Government Act, which aim to enhance women's rights and participation in governance. However, historical and cultural norms still pose significant barriers to women's leadership roles, perpetuating gender disparities in decision-making positions (UNDP, 2016).

There has been a progress in women's political representation in the country, with initiatives such as gender quotas and reserved seats in parliament. However, challenges persist in translating representation into substantive participation and influence. Women continue to face barriers in accessing resources, navigating party politics, and combating gender-based violence and intimidation during elections. Despite challenges, Tanzania presents opportunities for advancing gender equality in governance. Strengthening legal frameworks, enhancing women's access to education and training, promoting women's economic empowerment, and fostering inclusive political cultures are essential strategies.

2. Theoretical framework

Institutional theory in sociology and organizational studies has been developed by multiple scholars over time. However, key contributors include sociologists such as John W. Meyer, Richard L. Scott, and Paul J. DiMaggio. The theory emerged in the 1970s and has since evolved through various iterations and applications. It focuses on the structures, rules, norms, and routines that guide individuals and organizations within a social system. Institutional theory suggests that organizations tend to conform to institutionalized norms and practices in their environment to gain legitimacy and acceptance.

Institutional theorists argue that the practices and procedures within and organisation can be understood and explained through the lens of culture (Thornton et al., 2012). This perspective suggest that cultural factors shape the strategies and actions of individuals within organizations, ultimately influencing organizational outcomes. Swidler (1986) proposes that culture provides resources that individuals draw upon to construct their strategies of action. To investigate the relationship between cultural influences and organizational outcomes, researchers have turned to the concept of institutional logic "Friedland and Alford (1991), Ocasio and Thornton (2008) are notable contributors to this line of inquiry. They argue that institutional logics are the socially constructed beliefs, values, and assumptions that guide the behaviour and decision making of individuals within organizations. They highlight how cultural factors and institutional forces interact to influence the behaviour and practices of organizations, ultimately contributing to broader societal structures such as global governance

In the context of governance structures, institutional theory is concerned with understanding how formal institutions (e.g., laws, regulations, policies) and informal institutions (e.g., cultural norms, social expectations) influence decision-making processes, power dynamics, and outcomes. This theory helps explain why certain governance arrangements persist over time, how they shape behavior and attitudes, and what factors contribute to institutional change (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). The theory assumes that organizations tend to mimic or conform to prevailing institutional norms, rules, and practices in their environment. Organizations seek legitimacy by adhering to institutionalized norms and values, which enhances their social acceptance and support. Institutional structures and practices exhibit stability and resistance to change, leading to path dependency and continuity over time (Greenwood et al., 2002)

The study used the institutional theory to analyze how institutional arrangements, such as quota systems, electoral laws, and policy frameworks, either facilitate or impede efforts to promote gender equality. The institutional theory explores how these formal and informal

institutions are established, legitimized, and enforced, as well as their impact on women's representation, participation, and empowerment in governance. Additionally, institutional theory helps identify the barriers and opportunities for reform within governance institutions, shedding light on strategies for advancing gender equality agendas effectively.

In the context of investigating the challenges and opportunities for gender equality in governance structures in Tanzania, the theory offers valuable insights into how formal and informal institutions shape behavior and outcomes. It help to analyze the adoption and implementation of gender quota systems in Tanzanian governance structures. It examines how these formal institutional arrangements are legitimized, adopted, and enforced, and how they influence women's representation and participation in decision-making roles.

Institutional theory was applied to assess the impact of electoral laws on gender equality in political representation. This includes examining the role of electoral systems, constituency boundaries, and candidate nomination processes in either facilitating or hindering women's access to political office. Institutional theory provides a framework for analyzing the development and implementation of gender equality policies and frameworks within the Tanzanian government. It explores how these formal institutional mechanisms interact with informal norms, values, and power structures to shape the advancement of gender equality initiatives.

The theory provided the insight to understand the normative pressures that influence governance actors' behavior towards gender equality. It examines how institutionalized norms and values surrounding gender roles, leadership, and decision-making shape individuals' attitudes, actions, and policy preferences. Institutional theory highlights the barriers to change within governance structures, including inertia, resistance to new norms, and institutionalized discrimination. The application of institutional theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex dynamics between gender, institutions and governance. It uncover the underlying mechanisms and processes that contribute to gender inequality, empowering them to develop targeted interventions and strategies for promoting gender equality within governance system

3. Methodology
3.1 Research approach
A quantitative research approach with a descriptive research design was used for investigating the challenges and opportunities for gender equality in governance structures in Tanzania. This design allows for the thorough examination and description of the current state of gender equality in governance, without necessarily inferring causality. The study focused on Tanzania, covering six regions and administrative divisions namely; Dar es Salaam, Coast, Morogoro, Dodoma, Tanga and Iringa and Coast regions to ensure representation across the country. The unit of analysis is individuals involved in governance structures, in this case, civil servants and members of civil society organizations working on gender issues were selected.

3.2 Sample, Sampling technique

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation from different levels of governance (national, regional, local), as well as different sectors (government, civil society, private sector). The study used a sample of 230 civil servants and members of civil society organizations to represent the entire population to make the best use of the time available to extract information relevant to the study. The sample size was determined based on the study subject, demographic, research purpose, analysis methodology, sample size in comparable studies, and the number of subgroups in the sample, population variability and research design (Delice, 2010). Although many researchers believe that a sample size of 30 to 500 at a confidence level of 5% is adequate (Morse, 2000), However, the decision on the size (230) reflects the sample's quality over this wide range (Myers et al., 2010).

3.3 Data sources

This study employed a comprehensive approach by utilizing both primary data collection through questionnaires and secondary data collection through documentary reviews, to gain a deeper understanding of gender equality in governance structures in Tanzania. The primary data collection involved the use of questionnaires as a crucial tool for obtaining quantitative information on gender equality within governance structures. The structured questionnaire was specifically designed to capture essential variables such as representation, decision-making power, access to resources, and perceptions of discrimination. It incorporated a combination of closed –ended and Likert scale questions.

To gather primary data, the questionnaire was administrated, either electronically or in person depending on accessibility of the respondents. A diverse sample of individuals involved in governance, including civil servants and members of civil society organizations, were targeted for data collection. Survey administrators underwent training to ensure consistency in administering the questionnaire and collecting data. Additionally, clear instructions were provided to respondents to facilitate accurate completion. In order to complement the primary data, secondary data were collected through a reviews of relevant documents. These documents were carefully selected to provide additional insight and context to the study, supplementing the primary data collected through the questionnaires.

3.4 Data analysis

This study employed descriptive analysis to examine the challenges and opportunities for gender equality within governance structures in Tanzania. Descriptive analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the dataset, allowing the study to characterize the distribution, central tendency, and variability of variables associated with gender equality in governance structures in Tanzania. It serves as a foundational step in data analysis, informing subsequent inferential analyses and interpretations. By conducting descriptive analysis, the study obtained a detailed understanding of the patterns and characteristics of the collected data. This analysis involved examining various statistical measures, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, to summarize and describe the key variables of interest. The descriptive analysis provided a foundation for subsequent inferential analyses and interpretations.

4. Results
4.1 Demographic characteristics
The age distribution among respondents in the Tanzanian civil service reveals a diverse representation across various life stages. The largest group comprises individuals aged 25-34 years comprising 30% of the total. Followed closely behind are those at age groups 35-44 and 45-54 years at 25% each. Those at age group 19-24 represent 5 %, while individuals in the age group 55 and above make up to 15% of the respondents.

Table 1: Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
19-24	12	5
25-34	68	30
35-44	58	25
45-54	58	25
55 and above	34	15
Total	230	100

Source: Field computations, (2024)

Sex

Among the respondents in the Tanzanian civil service, males represent the majority, comprising 138 (60%) of the total, while females constitute 92 (40%). This gender distribution underlines a significant presence of both male and female civil servants, albeit with a notable numerical difference favoring males. This finding suggests the importance of understanding and addressing gender dynamics within governance structures, particularly in promoting opportunities for female representation and leadership. Further analysis of these numbers alongside qualitative data could reveal insights into the challenges and opportunities for achieving gender equality within the Tanzanian civil service, thereby guiding targeted initiatives aimed at fostering inclusive and equitable governance practices.

Figure 1: Sex of respondents
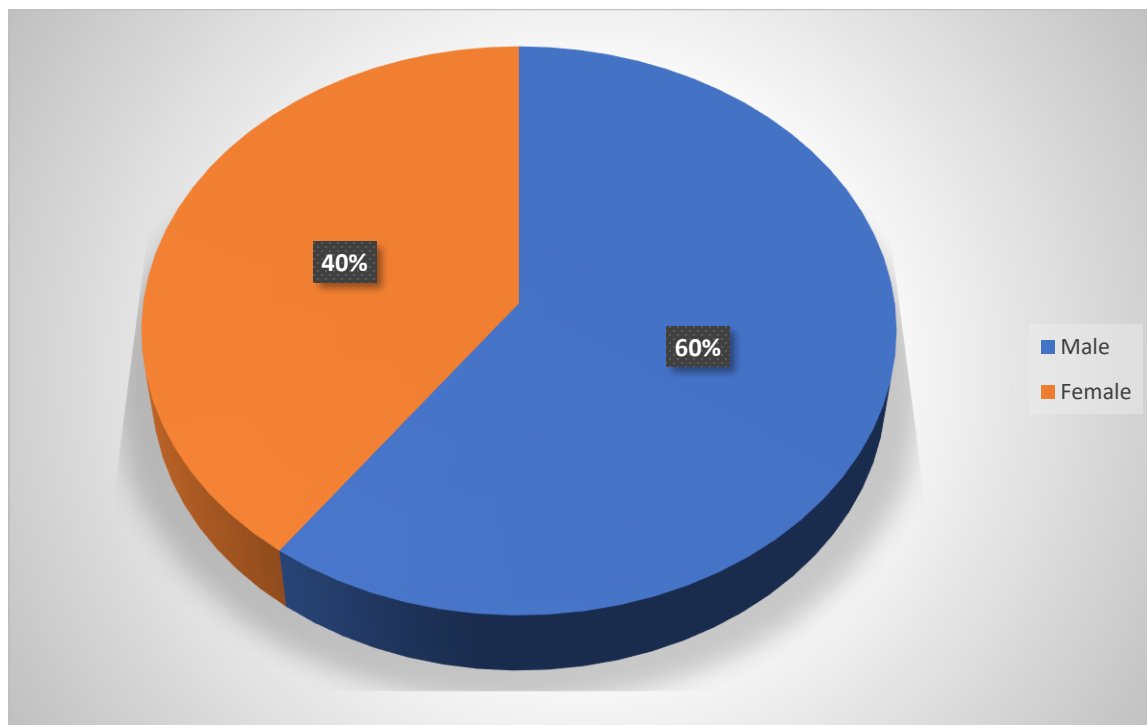
Source: Field data, (2024)

Education level

The education level distribution among respondents designate a diverse spectrum of qualifications within the Tanzanian civil service. The results present in Table 2 indicate that respondents with primary education represent 10% whereas those with secondary education represents 20% of respondents, indicating a substantial portion with foundational education. Those with College education accounts for 22%, indicating a significant number with vocational or community college training. Bachelor's Degree respondents make up 35%, representing a substantial cohort with specialized knowledge. Lastly, those with Master's Degree or above constitute 18%, reflecting a smaller yet notable group with advanced qualifications. Examining these findings alongside gender-disaggregated data elucidated challenges and opportunities for fostering gender equality within governance structures, thus informing targeted policies and interventions to address potential imbalances. While this distribution underscores a varied educational landscape, there's a need for further analysis to assess gender disparities across these levels.

Table 2: Education level of respondents

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	23	10
Secondary	34	15
College (Vocational or community)	51	22
Bachelor	81	35
Masters and above	41	18
Total	230	100

Source: Field data, (2024)

4.2 Gender equality in governance structures in Tanzania

Tanzania, similar to several other Sub Saharan African countries and various other parts of the world, faces significant obstacles in achieving gender equality within its governance structures. These challenges arise from a range of factors including legal frameworks, institutional biases, socio-economic disparities and societal norms. It is essential to comprehend these barriers in order to develop effective strategies for promoting gender equality in governance.

4.2.1 Limited Representation

One significant barrier revealed by the study was limited representation as revealed by 20 (8.70%) of respondents. This highlights the stark underrepresentation of women in governance roles, indicating that women's voices and perspectives are insufficiently represented in decision-making positions. Consequently, there is a notable absence of diverse viewpoints and priorities in governance, which may hinder the formulation of inclusive policies and strategies that address the needs of all citizens. Addressing the issue of limited representation is crucial for fostering a more representative and responsive governance structure, where women's contributions are recognized and valued, and where decisions reflect the interests of the entire population.

4.2.2 Discriminatory Legal Frameworks

The findings indicate that discriminatory legal frameworks are a significant obstacle to achieving gender equality in governance structures, with 35 (15.2%) respondents identifying this challenge. This highlights the existence of laws and regulations that systematically disadvantage women, impeding their access to rights, resources, and opportunities within their families and communities. Consequently, gender inequality persists due to these legal barriers, which not only limit women's participation but also perpetuate disparities in achieving leadership roles. This underscores the urgent need for legal reforms to dismantle discriminatory practices and promote a more inclusive and equitable governance environment.

4.2.3 Sociocultural Barriers

The sociocultural barriers were reported by 30 respondents, constituting 13.0% of the total. This suggests that traditional norms and practices significantly impede women's involvement in governance. These barriers arises from deeply ingrained cultural beliefs regarding gender roles, restricting women's ability to assert their agency and attain leadership positions in the political realm. Such constraints create formidable obstacles for women seeking to

participate meaningfully in governance, perpetuating an environment where women's voices and contributions are undervalued and underrepresented. Addressing these sociocultural barriers is crucial for fostering gender equality in governance structures, necessitating concerted efforts to challenge and transform entrenched gender norms and stereotypes.

4.2.4 Limited Access to Resources

The results highlight that 25 respondents, accounting for 10.9% of the total, identified limited access to resources as a significant challenge. This underscores the presence of economic and social disparities that obstruct women's involvement in governance. Insufficient access to resources such as education, financial capital, and networks creates formidable barriers for women aspiring to leadership roles and actively participating in decision-making processes. Without adequate support, women encounter hurdles in accessing opportunities and acquiring the necessary skills and connections to advance in governance. Addressing these resource limitations is imperative for promoting gender equality in governance structures, necessitating interventions aimed at enhancing women's access to education, financial resources, and networks to facilitate their meaningful participation and leadership in governance.

4.2.5 Institutional Bias and Violence/Harassment

The findings indicate that 25 respondents, representing 11.0% of the total, identified both institutional bias and violence/harassment as significant challenges. This sheds light on the hostile environments that women encounter within governance structures. Institutional biases perpetuate systemic discrimination against women, resulting in unequal treatment and limited opportunities for advancement. Concurrently, the prevalence of violence and harassment creates safety concerns and acts as a deterrent for women aspiring to seek or sustain positions of leadership. These dual challenges not only undermine women's confidence and well-being but also erode trust in governance institutions. Addressing institutional bias and violence/harassment is imperative for fostering a more inclusive and equitable governance environment, where women feel safe, valued, and empowered to actively participate in decision-making processes.

4.2.6 Lack of Gender-sensitive Policies, Underrepresentation in Leadership, and Lack of Support Systems

The findings show a cluster of challenges, each reported by varying frequencies ranging from 15 to 25 respondents, representing percentages from 6.50% to 10.90% of the total. Collectively, these challenges underscore the multifaceted nature of barriers to gender equality in governance structures. The absence of gender-sensitive policies, as indicated by 20 respondents (8.70%), signifies a critical gap in the regulatory framework. Without policies that account for gender disparities and promote inclusivity, women's needs and perspectives may not be adequately addressed in governance decisions, perpetuating inequality. Underrepresentation in leadership, reported by 25 respondents (10.90%), points to a systemic issue where women are disproportionately excluded from key decision-making positions. This lack of representation not only undermines diversity but also limits the range of experiences and insights brought to governance processes.

Furthermore, the reported lack of support systems by 15 respondents (6.50%) underscores the absence of mechanisms to assist women in navigating the challenges they face in governance roles. Without adequate support structures such as mentorship programs or childcare facilities, women may encounter additional barriers to their participation and advancement. These findings collectively emphasize the complex interplay of factors contributing to gender inequality in governance. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies that encompass policy reforms, efforts to promote women's leadership, and the establishment of support mechanisms to enable women to participate fully and effectively in governance structures.

Table 3: Challenges for gender equality in governance structures

N/S	Challenge for gender equality	Frequency	Percentage
1	Limited Representation	20	8.70
2	Discriminatory Legal Frameworks	35	15.2
3	Sociocultural Barriers	30	13.0
4	Limited Access to Resources	25	10.9
5	Institutional Bias	30	13.0
6	Violence and Harassment	30	13.0
7	Lack of Gender-sensitive Policies	20	8.70
8	Underrepresentation in Leadership	25	10.90
9	Lack of Support Systems	15	6.50
	Total	230	100

Source: Field data, 2024

4.3 Opportunities for gender equality in governance structures in Tanzania

The findings from the study on opportunities for gender equality in governance structures in Tanzania reveal several promising avenues for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment within governmental systems.

4.3.1 Gender-sensitive Policy Implementation

With 40% of respondents reported, that the implementation of gender-sensitive policies stands out as a significant opportunity. This suggests a recognition of the importance of policies tailored to address gender disparities and promote equal opportunities for women within governance structures. Effective implementation of such policies can lead to tangible improvements in women's representation and participation in decision-making processes.

4.3.2 Legal Reforms

The results indicate that 35% of respondents reported legal reforms as another crucial opportunity for advancing gender equality in governance. This suggests a recognition of the need to address discriminatory laws and regulations that hinder women's rights and opportunities. Through enacting and enforcing laws that promote gender equality, Tanzania can create a more supportive legal framework for women's participation in governance.

4.3.3 Women Empowerment Programs

The high frequency of 50% attributed to women empowerment programs underscores their potential as a powerful tool for advancing gender equality in governance. These programs can encompass various initiatives aimed at enhancing women's skills, knowledge, and

leadership capabilities, thereby enabling them to actively engage in political and decision-making processes.

4.3.4 Education and Awareness Campaigns
Education and awareness campaigns, is reported by 45% of respondents as it represents a valuable opportunity for challenging societal norms and stereotypes that perpetuate gender inequality. Through raising awareness about the importance of gender equality and women's rights, Tanzania can foster a more supportive environment for women's participation in governance and decision-making roles.

4.3.5 Institutional Reforms and Supportive Leadership
Institutional reforms (30%) and supportive leadership (30%) are identified as key opportunities for creating more inclusive governance structures. This suggests a recognition of the need to address institutional biases and promote leadership that is responsive to gender equality concerns. Through reforming governance institutions and fostering supportive leadership at all levels, Tanzania can create an enabling environment for women to thrive in governance roles.

Generally, the results highlight several promising opportunities for advancing gender equality in governance structures in Tanzania. By prioritizing gender-sensitive policy implementation, legal reforms, women empowerment programs, education and awareness campaigns, and institutional reforms, Tanzania can take significant strides towards building more inclusive and equitable governance systems that fully harness the potential of all its citizens, regardless of gender.

Table 4: Opportunities for gender equality in governance structures

N/S	Opportunity for gender equality	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender-sensitive Policy Implementation	40	17.40
2	Legal Reforms	35	15.20
3	Women Empowerment Programs	50	21.70
4	Education and Awareness Campaigns	45	19.60
5	Institutional Reforms	30	13.00
6	Supportive Leadership	30	13.00
7	Quota Systems	20	8.70
8	Capacity Building	25	10.90
9	Strengthening Civil Society	15	6.500

Source: Field data, 2024

5. Discussion
The findings of this study illuminate the intricate challenges impeding gender equality in governance structures in Tanzania, echoing broader global patterns. Limited representation emerged as a poignant concern, with a noticeable dearth of women in decision-making roles, indicating a lack of diversity that may hinder inclusive policy formulation and implementation (Kongo et al., 2010). Discriminatory legal frameworks were highlighted as significant obstacles, perpetuating systemic disadvantages for women and reinforcing gender

disparities in governance (Goetz & Jenkins, 2018). These challenges underscore the need for targeted interventions to dismantle discriminatory practices and foster a more inclusive governance environment.

Moreover, sociocultural barriers, deeply rooted in traditional norms and practices, pose formidable challenges by constraining women's involvement in governance and perpetuating gender stereotypes (James-Hawkins et al., 2017). Similar findings from previous research emphasize the pervasive impact of gender norms on women's political participation and leadership opportunities (Holmelin, 2019). Additionally, limited access to resources emerged as a substantial barrier, reflecting broader economic and social disparities that hinder women's advancement in governance (Kim, 2019). Institutional bias and violence/harassment within governance structures create hostile environments for women, undermining their confidence and trust in governance institutions (Stamarski & Son High, 2015).

However, the study also identifies promising opportunities for promoting gender equality in governance. The implementation of gender-sensitive policies stands out as a crucial avenue, recognizing the importance of tailored policies to address gender disparities and promote women's participation in decision-making processes (True & Riveros-Morales, 2019). Legal reforms are seen as essential for dismantling discriminatory laws and regulations that hinder women's rights and opportunities within governance (Heymann et al., 2019). Women empowerment programs, education, and awareness campaigns offer valuable opportunities for enhancing women's skills, knowledge, and leadership capabilities, thereby enabling their active engagement in governance (Brody et al., 2015).

Furthermore, institutional reforms and supportive leadership are identified as key opportunities for creating more inclusive governance structures. Similar studies underscore the importance of institutional reforms, such as gender mainstreaming policies and gender quotas, in dismantling barriers to women's political participation and representation (Krook, 2016). Supportive leadership that champions gender equality can foster an enabling environment for women to thrive in governance roles (de Vries, 2015). However, it should be noted that the absence of gender-sensitive policies and limited representation point to critical gaps in the regulatory framework, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies to address these systemic issues (Gupta, 2019).

These findings underscore the complex interplay of factors contributing to gender inequality in governance structures in Tanzania. The array of challenges identified, including limited representation, discriminatory legal frameworks, sociocultural barriers, limited access to resources, institutional bias, violence/harassment, lack of gender-sensitive policies, underrepresentation in leadership, and lack of support systems, collectively underscore the multifaceted nature of barriers to gender equality in governance structures in Tanzania. These challenges highlight systemic issues that hinder women's meaningful participation and leadership in decision-making processes, ultimately perpetuating inequality and undermining the effectiveness and legitimacy of governance institutions. Addressing these barriers is essential for fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and responsive governance environment where women's voices and contributions are valued and where decisions reflect the needs

and interests of the entire population. The findings of this study align with previous studies that highlight the ongoing struggle to achieve political equality (Goswami et al., 2023).Despite efforts to promote gender equality, women continue to face numerous challenges in accessing positions of power and influence within governance structures.

Addressing discriminatory legal frameworks requires comprehensive legal reforms aimed at removing discriminatory provisions and promoting gender equality within the legal system. This includes reviewing and amending existing laws, strengthening enforcement mechanisms, and ensuring compliance with international human rights standards. Additionally, efforts should be made to provide access to justice for women who have experienced discrimination or violations of their rights. Challenging sociocultural barriers necessitates concerted efforts to challenge and transform entrenched gender norms and stereotypes. This includes raising awareness about the importance of gender equality, promoting positive role models, and engaging with communities to challenge harmful practices and promote gender-sensitive attitudes and behaviors. Enhancing access to resources requires interventions aimed at addressing economic and social disparities that hinder women's participation in governance. This includes investing in education and skills development, promoting women's economic empowerment, and providing support for women to access financial resources, networks, and opportunities for leadership development.

The emphasis on gender-sensitive policy implementation highlights the importance of developing and implementing policies that address gender disparities and promote equal opportunities for women. Policymakers should prioritize the adoption and effective implementation of gender-sensitive policies across all sectors of governance. This includes policies aimed at promoting women's representation in decision-making bodies, addressing gender-based violence, and ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities for women. Moreover, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be established to track the implementation of these policies and assess their impact on gender equality outcomes.

The recognition of legal reforms as a crucial opportunity underscores the need for comprehensive legal reforms to address discriminatory laws and regulations that hinder women's rights and opportunities. Policymakers should prioritize the review and amendment of existing laws to remove discriminatory provisions and ensure compliance with international human rights standards, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Additionally, efforts should be made to strengthen enforcement mechanisms and provide access to justice for women who have experienced discrimination or violations of their rights. The high frequency attributed to women empowerment programs underscores the potential of such initiatives as powerful tools for advancing gender equality in governance.

5. Conclusion
The study conclude that while Tanzania has witnessed advancement in women's political representation, there are persistent challenges impeding substantive gender equality in governance structures. The study findings highlights the need for concerted efforts to address

the identified barriers comprehensively. Recognizing the importance of gender sensitive policy implementation, legal reforms, women's empowerment programs education and awareness campaigns, institutional reforms, and supportive leadership is crucial for promoting substantive gender equality. This will provide equal opportunities for women to participate in decision making process and contribute effectively.

Recommendation

In order to promote gender equality in governance structure, government and its stake holders need to implement gender –sensitive policies, enact legal reforms to remove barriers, strengthen women's empowerment programs, conduct education and awareness campaigns, undertake institutional reforms to address biases, and foster supportive leadership to create an inclusive and equitable governance environment that enables women to actively participate in decision making process and contribute to positive governance outcomes.

Policymakers on the other hand, should invest in the design and implementation of women empowerment programs that focus on enhancing women's skills, knowledge, and leadership capabilities. These programs should be tailored to address the specific needs and challenges faced by women in governance and provide opportunities for mentorship, training, and networking. Furthermore, efforts should be made to ensure the sustainability and scalability of these programs through partnerships with civil society organizations, private sector actors, and international donors.

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