

The Institutional Frameworks Guiding the Decision making in the Tanzanian Local Government Authorities: Are they gender sensitive?

Idda Lyatonga Swai^{1*} <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4027-1668>, George Igulu¹ <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5065-2208>, Faraja Cosmas Uhahula¹ <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5401-5542>, Kavakule Juliani Kaamo¹ <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-6334-7956>, Elisha John Enos² <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9708-8695>, Nicholaus Mkazeni,² Balthazar Kayagula² <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1259-4827>, Sania Ibrahimu² <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3054-2072>, Paul Maro², Imani R Mwambomba² <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3657-5738>, Issa Mohamed Issa², Martha Paul Mhame² <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-3152-300X>, Jumanne James William², Mwahija Mohamed Kisoma² <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1026-2477>, Dominicus Dominikus Nyoni² <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6245-6682>, Lupi Massawe² Winnie Ndiege³ <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5384-8628>, Noel Otieno Ogweyo³, Emmanuel Gambay³ <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-9426-8401>, Hashimu Rukumbwe Hassan³, Naanjela Geoffrey Killenga³, Mariam Haji³ <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-6733-641X>, & Mackfallen G Anasel³ <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3020-1108>

*Corresponding Author: Idda Lyatonga Swai; ilyatonga@mzumbe.ac.tz; +255783128049

Received: 16 April 2024
Revised: 12 December 2024
Accepted: 17 March 2025
Published: 21 March 2025

ABSTRACT

Men and women have equal rights to participate in the governance of a nation and its decision-making bodies. Decision-making in the Local Government Authority (LGA) is a collective process that involves all councillors in their committees and the council after addressing issues from the wards and villages/streets. The Council is the LGA's highest policy and decision-making body, exercising its responsibilities through standing committees and statutory sub-committees. This paper aims to identify the institutional frameworks through which the council makes its decisions and examine how these influence women's participation in decision-making. A documentary review approach was employed to gather data from various documents. Content analysis was guided by three predetermined themes: equity, equality, and gender in decision-making. The findings indicate that the current institutional frameworks applied in LGAs encompass the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977, the Local Government Acts 7 and 8 of 1982, and the council standing orders. However, the provisions and principles do not differentiate between male and female councillors during decision-making, assuming all councillors possess equal capabilities, skills, knowledge, and experience. This paper advocates for incorporating of gender-sensitive policies and mechanisms that facilitate and encourage women's participation in decision-making within the existing institutional frameworks. Restructuring the institutional framework of the Tanzanian LGA to make it more gender-responsive is expected to promote gender equality and empower women to raise their concerns during decision-making effectively.

Keywords: Institutional frameworks, Decision making, Gender-sensitive, Local government authorities, Tanzania

¹ Department of Local Governance and Management Studies, School of Public Administration and Management, Mzumbe University, Tanzania

² Department of Public Service Human Resource Management, School of Public Administration and Management, Mzumbe University, Tanzania

³ Department of Health Systems Management, School of Public Administration and Management, Mzumbe University, Tanzania

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Decision-making is the process of making a choice(s) among alternatives to satisfy the objectives by solving the existing problem. The choice has to promote the public's interest by addressing the societal, political, or economic problem (Anosisye, 2017). Decision-making is influenced by several factors, such as societal values, economics, and the values of the people involved in the decision-making (Nghah et al., 2015). Any institution can make it like in other jurisdictions; local government authorities make strategic and day-to-day decisions guided by the specific frameworks within and outside the institution. The institutional framework plays a crucial role in shaping the decision-making. Moreover, effective decision-making requires a good representation of the members affected by such decisions. The representation, among others, should consider gender, experts, power and critical thinking.

Gender sensitivity in decision-making is gaining momentum. Globally, there have been efforts to promote gender equality, remarkably increasing opportunities for women's participation in decision-making. Like in other parts of the world, Tanzania has ratified several declarations, including the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), to achieve equality between men and women in the decision-making organs. The country is also a signatory to the 2008 SADC protocol and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), now sustainable development goals (SDGs), and has introduced a quota system known as 'special seats' stipulating a minimum number of female members not less than 30% for representative bodies (Dahlerup, 2005; Mushi, 2011; Mkilanya, 2011; Swai, 2023). Since the 1980s, Tanzania has primarily set aside vacancies for women in parliament and councils to reduce male supremacy. The assumption is that female voices can be heard, resulting in more equitable policy outcomes as the rate of women's participation increases (Meena, 2003; Oxfam, 2008).

While numbers are a helpful criterion (Kilonzo & Nguyahambi, 2022), the increasing number of female representatives alone may only add something if it is accompanied by efforts to make the growing number impact decisions (Tinker, 2004; Mushi, 2011; Meena, 2009). While the efforts have increased the number of women in decision making from 926 in 2000 to 1,184 in 2010, 1,408 in 2015 and 1,634 in 2020 (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 2010; URT, 2015; URT, 2020), the government's efforts to implement its policy have not yet led to parity between men and women as women are still suffering significant barriers to airing their voices in decision making (Swai, 2019, Swai & Masue, 2019).

One of the critical factors influencing women's participation in decision-making bodies is the institutional framework that governs local government operations (Swai, 2017). This institutional framework has been the topic of order in the councils and, therefore, deserves special attention, especially on how it influences councillors' participation, specifically women councillors. The council is governed by the laws governing the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and the permanent standing orders of the councils (Yoon & Swai, 2024). Despite the increased number of women in the decision-making

organs (bodies), the question is: What gender-sensitive institutional frameworks are used in LGAs to guide decision-making, and how do they influence women's participation in decision-making? These questions are addressed in this paper.

2.0 METHODS

The study used exploratory research design to understand how the institutional framework guiding the decision-making process in Tanzania's local government authority affects the participation of female councillors. Sixteen (16) documents were selected purposively, including the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977, the Local Government Acts number 7 & 8 of 1982, the Council Standing Orders and published materials. These documents were reviewed and analysed to determine how the institutional framework influences women's involvement in decision making. The review focused on identifying provisions within the regulations, bylaws, and acts that support women's participation in decision making. The basis for this analysis is to determine whether the increased number of women in the decision-making who were also found to have less confidence (Swai, 2017) is supported by the existing frameworks that guide the decision making in the Local Government Authorities (LGAs).

A content analysis technique was used to examine accessed documents (Anasel et al., 2019; Anasel, 2020). The analysis began with a thorough reading of the documents from beginning to end, followed by a second reading of the text fragments that reflect the identified themes—equity, equality, and gender in decision-making, and the themes were highlighted. Researchers specifically searched for references to these themes within the documents. Manual counting procedures were used to populate a matrix table to assess the gender sensitivity of the documents and explore how the documents addressed issues of equity, equality, and gender and, therefore, gender sensitivity.

Moreover, the review was conducted with careful attention to ethical principles to ensure academic integrity in handling all reviewed documents. This review utilised legally sourced documents, with proper citations included to acknowledge the original authors. Furthermore, to avoid selection bias, the selection of documents for review was guided by a predefined set of inclusion and exclusion criteria (Meline, 2006). Such criteria included the topic relevancy, objectives and publication period, which defined the decision to include and exclude the reviewed documents. On the other hand, the author's professionalism and the journals through which the reviewed articles were published were set as criteria to avoid bias, exclude some articles and draw conclusions from the inclusion.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Institutional Frameworks Guiding the Decision Making

The legal and institutional frameworks guiding gender equality and decision-making in local government in Tanzania are rooted in several key documents. The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977), particularly Articles 14 and 66, provides a foundation for decision-making. Moreover, the Local Government Acts Nos. 7 and 8 of

1982, along with the Council Standing Orders, establish the framework and regulate council proceedings.

3.1.1 The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977

The local government in Tanzania was established by the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977, particularly under Articles 145 and 146, with the primary aim of facilitating governance at the local level. The Constitution provides a robust foundation for women's participation in local governance, as illustrated by several key articles:

- **Article 14:** This article guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on any grounds, including gender. It ensures that women have the same legal rights as men and can fully participate in all aspects of public life.
- **Article 18:** This article guarantees the right to contribute in public matters. It establishes the principle of universal suffrage, ensuring that all citizens, regardless of gender, have the right to vote.
- **Article 25:** This article guarantees the right to form political associations and participate in political activities. It allows women to join political parties, run for office, and hold leadership positions.
- **Article 45:** This article establishes the principle of gender equality and prohibits discrimination based on gender. It mandates the government to take affirmative action to promote gender equality and ensure women have equal opportunities in all spheres of life, including governance.
- **Article 66** This article establishes Members of Parliament. Subject to the other provisions of this Article, there shall be the following categories of Members of Parliament: members elected to represent constituencies; and women members, who shall make up not less than thirty per cent of all the members stated.
- **Article 140:** This article establishes the principle of devolving power to local governments. It empowers local authorities to make decisions on matters affecting their communities, including issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

These articles collectively reflect the Tanzanian Constitution's commitment to gender equality and women's participation in governance. They provide a legal framework that supports women's rights to participate in decision-making processes at the local level. Additionally, the Tanzanian Constitution further describes the composition of Parliament members, explicitly providing space for women politicians. According to Article 66-(1), there must be women members making up not less than thirty per cent of all members mentioned in paragraphs (a), (c), (d), (e), and (f), with qualifications as stated in Article 67. However, political parties elect these women per Article 78, based on proportional representation. At the same time, the Constitution provides a strong foundation of how women have to be included in decision making bodies, implementation challenges such as the limited representation of women in leadership positions, unequal access to

financial, economic, and land resources, and cultural and societal norms that may restrict women's ability to fully engage in decision-making (Swai et al., 2023).

3.1.2 The Local Government Act No. 7 & 8 of 1982

The country is administratively divided into rural and urban authorities, with a council governing the Local Government Authorities (LGAs). In this paper, the term 'council' refers to both the decision-making body and the geographical jurisdiction within which it operates. The operations of the LGAs are regulated by the Local Government (District Authorities) Act No 7 of 1982 and the Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act No 8 of 1982. Other key acts that govern the LGAs include the Local Government Laws Miscellaneous Act No 6 of 1999, the Local Government Finances Act 1982, the Urban Authorities (Rating) Act 1983, the Local Authorities Elections Act 1979, and the Regional Administration Act 1997.

The Local Government Acts No. 7 and 8 of 1982 provide the legal frameworks for local governance in Tanzania, establishing procedures for decision-making within district and urban authorities. These Acts emphasise inclusivity and public participation in governance, which, in principle, extend to women's participation in decision-making. Specifically, Section 35 of The Local Government (District Authorities) Act No. 7 of 1982 outlines that district councils must ensure the equitable representation of different groups within their communities, which includes women. Furthermore, Section 54 of The Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act No. 8 of 1982 requires urban councils to facilitate community participation, which, under Tanzania's legal framework, includes provisions for the involvement of women in local governance. Additionally, the Acts align with the Constitution's mandates, particularly Article 66-(1) regarding the representation of women in Parliament, which sets a precedent for local government structures to be similarly inclusive. However, while these legal frameworks acknowledge the need for inclusivity, challenges remain in ensuring these provisions translate into practical gender-sensitive decision-making processes. Gaps in implementation often stem from cultural norms and structural barriers that hinder women's full engagement and leadership within local authorities (Swai, 2017; Swai et al., 2023).

3.1.3 Council Standing Order

Council Standing Orders differ between rural and urban councils in Tanzania. Each Local Government Authority (LGA) has unique standing orders that outline its proceedings, which require approval from the minister overseeing LGAs (Government of Tanzania, 1982). In Tanzanian LGAs, the Council Standing Orders function as internal rules that direct council operations, including the conduct of meetings, decision-making processes, and member engagement. These orders ensure councils operate within an organized framework, fostering inclusive and participatory governance (Swai et al., 2023).

While specific articles in the Council Standing Orders may differ between LGAs, they generally include provisions for public participation, representation of marginalised groups, and adherence to gender equity policies (UN Women, 2021). These orders are crucial for regulating the conduct of council meetings, decision-making processes, and

overall governance. They outline procedures that ensure orderly participation by all members, including women. For instance, the Standing Orders often include provisions that require council meetings to reflect principles of inclusivity, ensuring that women are given equal opportunities to participate in discussions and decision-making processes (Swai et al., 2023). Additionally, the Standing Orders frequently mandate that certain committees or positions within the council be reserved for women, aligning with national policies that promote gender balance in leadership roles (Government of Tanzania, 1982).

These provisions function within broader legislative frameworks, such as the Constitution and the Local Government Acts, to ensure that women are represented in local government structures and actively engaged in decision-making processes (Government of Tanzania, 1982). However, although the Council Standing Orders establish a framework for gender-sensitive governance, challenges such as traditional gender roles and societal norms can still impede women's effective participation in practice (UN Women, 2021). This necessitates a continuous review of the institutional framework and the enforcement of the Standing Orders to ensure they promote women's empowerment in local governance (Swai et al., 2023).

3.2 The Decision-Making Organs in LGAs

Local government authorities make decisions through the council and its committees. The authority oversees the provision of public services at the local level via councils, which are composed of councillors along with various standing and subcommittees. While the committees and subcommittees concentrate on specific issues within their remit and ensure that the council remains well-informed to make decisions, the council ultimately makes the final decisions on all matters affecting the local community.

3.2.1 The Local Government Authorities

The LGAs play a crucial role in the governance and provision of public services in their geographical area (Yoon & Swai, 2024). The Local Government Act of 1982 stipulated all powers and functions of the local government. The LGAs are responsible for maintaining peace, order and good governance; delivering services, including infrastructure development; and promoting the social and economic welfare of the people, such as health care, education, water supply, sanitation, and waste management (Tupas & Cacho, 2020). In addition, the LGAs, through the council, make their own decisions based on the priorities of their constituents and the government directives. These decisions made by the LGAs include the allocation of resources, development planning, and policy formulation (Bell & Bland, 2014). The LGAs are obliged to monitor and control the performance and to ensure the collection while ensuring proper utilisation of resources. Whatever decisions a council makes are ultimately reflected in the Council Plan and other key strategic documents of the particular LGAs. The LGAs, therefore, have the power to make policy and operational decisions consistent with the requirements of the laws of the land and other government policies. Local governments must make decisions to guarantee their independence (Shayo & Kashonda, 2019). The council makes decisions regarding how and when to perform the functions of the LGAs.

3.2.2 Councils

The council is the supreme policy and decision-making body in the LGAs. The council is made up of councillors who make the decisions. Three types of council members are elected councillors, special-seat councillors, and parliament members (MPs) residing in the district (Swai, 2017). The councillors must make all decisions guided by the laws (URT, 1982). All LGAs are required by the Local Government Act No. 7 & 8 of 1982 to hold at least three ordinary meetings annually for the transaction of their business. The members of the meeting (full council) are all councillors, and the meeting is chaired by a council mayor (in urban councils) or a council chairperson (in rural councils). The council receives and discusses issues channelled from the village/street, compiled at the ward level through the Ward Development Committee (WDC) and discussed by the councillors in their specific council committees. The quorum for a full council meeting is one-half of all the council members, and the decision-making processes, the committees and the roles of councillors are specified in the council standing orders.

A full council meeting is open to the public, and therefore, the LGAs announce the meeting at least three days before the meeting. The council decides by a simple majority of votes by all the members present in a meeting. The executive director is the secretary of the full council meeting, and the heads of departments attend the meetings to provide technical clarification when needed. Still, they have the right to vote. The business details transacted in the meetings are recorded in minutes retained by the executive director for reference purposes. The minutes of the full council meeting are open to council members and any other person following the submission of the request and approval by the council chairperson and the council director (URT,1982). The council receives the issues from the committees formed according to the Local Government Act number 7 & 8 of 1982.

3.2.3 Committees

A committee is an organ supporting the implementation of the council's functions. The standing committees vary across the rural and urban councils. The committees in rural LGAs are the Finance, Administration and Planning Committees. The committees include the Finance and Administration Committee, Economic Affairs, Education and Health Committee and an Urban Planning and Environment Committee. The LGAs may have other statutory subcommittees such as the committees for HIV/AIDS, work and ethics—the Local Government Act No. 7 & 8 of 1982 guides the establishment of committees and sub-committees. LGAs may establish a maximum of three standing committees and up to three other subcommittees. The sub-committees are formed to perform a specific role of the standing committee, and they are disbanded after submitting the final report.

The full council elects the members of the standing committees, while the members of the sub-committees are appointed by the standing committee forming the subcommittee. The membership in the standing committee is one year, and the members of the standing committees, except finance and administration, shall consist of at most one-third of the council members (URT, 1982). All members of the committee and sub-committees have

the right to vote on the committee. The committee is not the decision-making organ. They discuss the issues brought from the ward and forward their proposals to the full council meeting for final decision-making (Ngah et al. 2015). Once the committee discuss and makes a proposal, the room for discussion in the full council is somewhat limited, and the chances for the proposal to be approved are higher (TAWLA, 2019).

Each standing committee has a specific task related to the roles of the LGA. The committees meet every three months, generally before the council meeting. The Finance and Administration Committee meets every month. The Finance and Administration committee chairperson is the council mayor/chairperson, while the chairperson of other standing committees is elected among the committee members. The quorum in all meetings of the standing committees is one-third of all members, and the decisions are made if the majority of the committee members agree. The chairperson of the meeting has a casting and deliberative vote (URT, 1982).

3.3 The Decision Making in the LGA

Making decisions in the LGA is a collective process (Ngah et al., 2015; Swai, 2017) that involves all councillors in their committees and the council after receiving issues from the ward and village/street. The councillors serve in various capacities as a committee and council member, a constituency representative and a political party partisan. The councillors in leadership positions have even more roles, including advocating policies and representing the council. Within this range, through the formal meetings, the citizens bring forward their priorities for discussion. Then, they are forwarded to the ward, where the ward development committee discusses and consolidates them for submission to the council (Swai, 2016). This is one of the ways the council is informed about the actual situation in the wards and villages. The issues from the councillors feed the decision making of the council. The councillors have roles to play in their wards and the council to ensure the process of decision making is successful. At the council level, the proposals from the wards are discussed in the committee and then forwarded to the Administration and Finance committee. The councillors discuss and ensure the issues from their ward survive the discussion. The councillors combine knowledge, skills, and experience of living with the constituents to deliver real benefits to their community.

The finance and administration committee plays a crucial role. The committee meets monthly to debate all proposals furthered by the other committees. The financial implications of the committee proposals are discussed, and the proposal or plan is sent to the full council meeting (Ammons & Roenigk, 2021). The committee is also responsible for preparing the budget and assisting other sector committees in coordinating their activities. It also carries out the financial performance control of the council and supervises revenue collection. The councillors become members of the finance and administration committee based on their position in the council, as clarified by the council standing orders. The members include the council mayor/chairperson and the deputy, all chairpersons of the standing committees, the constituency MP(s) and any other member appointed by the full council meeting. The committee meetings are confidential; they are not open to the public, and permission to attend such meetings can

be given depending on the purpose. The councillors have the same right to engage in debate during the decision-making and have the right to vote for or against a proposal.

Each councillor contributes to whatever is decided by the council (Swai et al., 2013). Each councillor has the right to submit a proposal concerning any concern in the council's authority. A proposal is to be submitted in writing, and the councillor can submit the proposal at least ten days before a full council meeting and four days before the committee meeting. In addition, the councillor is entitled to put forward an alternative proposal if the original proposal is not accepted. Every councillor asks questions concerning the issue under discussion during the meeting, although the opportunity is limited in the full council meeting. The members of the committee that forward the issue to the full council are not allowed to ask questions or oppose the proposal in the full council meeting with an assumption that the individual had an opportunity to do that in the committee meeting (Swai et al., 2013; Swai, 2017).

The council standing orders specify that a councillor whose proposal is debated has the right to speak for ten minutes when introducing the proposal, while other council members can contribute for five minutes during the debate. The councillor who proposed the agenda can speak for another five minutes to respond to all questions raised during the discussion before making the final decision. Each council member can ask one primary and supplementary question after registering their names at least a day before the meeting. A councillor who asks a fundamental question can add a follow-up question if they are not satisfied with the response to the initial question (Swai, 2017).

3.4 The Influence of the Institutional Framework on Women Councillors' Participation

The full council usually makes decisions in local government authorities, composed of elected and special seats. The institutional frameworks guide the overall process of making decisions where the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977, as amended from time to time, article 140 underscores the inclusion of both men and women in matters related to community affairs at the local level. It is also evidenced under Article 14 that both males and females have equal rights to participate in decision-making in all matters that affect their lives. In another aspect, council standing orders promote women's representation in decision making by ensuring that every council have 25% for special seats.

The study emphasises the importance of women's participation in local governance. Participation improves women's confidence, as they can freely share their ideas concerning various developmental aspects in their localities. It also enables women to become independent and confident leaders (Mwakasangula et al., 2010). Though the extent of women's representation in politics at the local government level has increased, women leaders are often not involved in decision-making at the local level (Zing & Shishkina, 2024; Swai, 2017).

The findings show that gender sensitivity under the institutional frameworks guiding decision-making in local government was underscored differently from one framework over the other. The available frameworks do not clearly show the extent or the level into which a particular gender should be involved in the decision-making process, which might affect gender representativeness. Also, there is differentiation in terms of the roles and powers that the element of gender sensitivity has when it comes to decision-making. For instance, in the council, there is a special seat which encourages women's inclusion, but their position or powers in decision-making are not clearly shown in the available frameworks. Lack of clarity in powers and authority between elected and special seats led to misunderstanding between these two parties, hence lowering the position of women in general.

The limited policies and frameworks for gender sensitivity in Tanzania have been depicted in several studies; for example, the survey conducted by Genda (2024) underpinned that in Tanzania, there are no clear gender-sensitive policies, thus contributing to the underrepresentation of women in leadership and decision-making organs. This means the availability of gender-sensitive policies and frameworks, especially in governance structures, improves women's representation and participation. Like in other parts of the world, women in Tanzania are underrepresented in many aspects, which calls for a need to enhance women's powers in decision-making as it plays a role in improving gender equity (Owoputi et al., 2024).

While some scholars, such as Ngah et al. (2015) and Ntuli et al. (2023), recommend clear guidelines to assist councillors in making the right decisions. However, the need for a gender-sensitive guideline is unspoken. The provisions and principles of the existing policies and frameworks apply to male and female councillors equally without considering the differences in capacities, skills, knowledge, and experiences of females compared to male councillors.

The existing institutional framework often needs more gender-sensitive policies and mechanisms that actively promote and support women's involvement in decision-making. This includes issues such as limited representation of women in leadership positions, unequal access to financial, economic and land resources and opportunities (Swai et al., 2023) and cultural and societal norms that may restrict women's ability to engage in decision-making processes fully. The presence of patriarchal sentiments and norms within the institutional framework and in decision-making serves as a significant barrier to women's participation in decision-making. Furthermore, the lack of sufficient gender mainstreaming in policy formulation and legislation (TAWLA, 2019) perpetuates the marginalisation of women and limits their engagement as decision-makers with equal rights but limited capacities and experiences (Yoon & Swai, 2024).

To enhance women's participation in decision-making, particularly in the local government authorities, it is crucial to reform the institutional framework within the Tanzanian local government authority by adding provisions that prioritise women during discussions. The increasing number of female councillors in the LGA will make a

meaningful contribution if women are empowered to raise their voices and influence the decisions (Swai & Zeegers, 2023; Mushemeza, 2009). This involves developing and implementing gender-sensitive policies, regulations, acts and legislations, capacity-building programs for women leaders and creating supportive networks to empower and mentor women in local government. In addition, it is essential to engage with local communities and stakeholders (Ammons & Roenigk, 2021) to address the underlying cultural and societal barriers that impact women's participation. A more inclusive and supportive institutional framework in the Tanzanian local government authority enables women to have a meaningful voice in decision-making processes and contribute to the development and well-being of their communities. Moreover, addressing patriarchal attitudes, norms, beliefs and practices within the community and in the local government decision-making organs while creating a gender-sensitive institutional framework is essential.

4 CONCLUSION

The institutional framework within Tanzanian local government authorities significantly shapes women's participation in decision-making processes. The Local Government Act of 1982 and the permanent standing orders of councils provide a formal structure that treats all councillors equally, regardless of gender. However, these rules assume equality in capacities, skills, knowledge, and experiences, which overlooks the persistent gender disparities in practice. While men and women have equal legal rights in council decisions, deeply entrenched patriarchal norms continue to hinder women's active involvement in local governance. Women often face limitations in capacity-building opportunities and have restricted experiences in council affairs, perpetuating their marginalisation in decision-making. To address these challenges, the institutional framework must evolve to become more gender-sensitive. This requires legal reforms and establishing mechanisms that promote women's participation and empowerment within local government structures.

Additionally, local communities and stakeholders are advised to work together to dismantle cultural and societal barriers undermining women's engagement in governance. This paper recommends reforming the institutional framework to prioritise women's representation and participation in decision-making processes, ensuring that gender equity is central to the functioning of local governments in Tanzania. By fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment, women can be better equipped to contribute meaningfully to the governance process, ultimately leading to more equitable and effective local governance.

REFERENCES

- Ammons, D. N., & Roenigk, D. J. (2021). *Tools for Decision Making: A Practical Guide for Local Government*. Routledge.

- Anasel, M. G. (2020). Family Planning in Tanzania: A Systematic Review of Published Empirical Literature from 1970s to 2012. *Central African Journal of Public Health*, 6(3), 154-163. Retrieved 06.09.2024 from <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.cajph.20200603.17>
- Anasel, M. G., Swai, I. L., Lameck, W. U., & Igulu, G. (2019). Emerging Issues from Conducting Researches in Tanzania: Reflections from Selected Cases. *Journal of Policy and Leadership*, 8(1), 5-23.
- Bell, M. M., & Bland, G. (2014). *Fostering Blueprints for Local Government Development: The Local Governance Development Framework*. RTI Press.
- Dahlerup, D. (2005). Increasing Women's Political Representation: New Trends in Gender Quotas. *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*, 141.
- Kapologwe, N. A., Kalolo, A., Kengia, J., Swai, I. L., Kesale, A. M., Kacholi, G., & Kini, M. and Governance, Leadership and Governance in Primary Healthcare, 91.
- Makalanga, L. B., Kilonzo, R. G., & Nguyahambi, A. M. (2022). Women Political Leaders' Participation in Local Decision-Making Structures in Tanzania. *African Journal of Applied Research*, 8(2), 68-82.
- Meena, R. (2003). The politics of quota in Tanzania. A Paper Presented at the International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance. IDEA publication.
- Meline, T. (2006). *Selecting Studies for Systematic Review: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria* The University of Texas—Pan American, Edinburg, TX. Retrieved from; file:///C:/Users/JTEX/Desktop/selecting-studies-for-systemic-review-inclusion-and-exclusion-criteria.pdf on 28th November 2024 at 0800Hrs.
- Mkilanya, V. M. (2011). *The Substantive Representation of Women in the Tanzanian Parliament* (Masters dissertation, Dublin City University).
- Mushemeza, E. D. (2009). Women are Contributing to Legislation and Policy Formulation and Implementation in Uganda (1995-2005). *Africa Development*, 34(3-4).
- Mushi, A. (2011), *Achieving Gender Parity in Political Participation in Tanzania*, Tanzania Gender Networking Programme, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.
- Mwakasangula E. Msabila D. & Mushi V. (2010). *Women Participation in Development and Local Governance in Tanzania*. Institute of Development Studies: Mzumbe
- Ngah, K., Zakaria, Z., Noordin, N., & Mustaffa, J. (2015). Decision-making Model at Local Government Level: A New Proposed for Majlis Perbandaran Kuantan. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 6(1), 1-13.
- Owoputi, I., Kayanda, R., Bezner Kerr, R., Dismas, J., Ganyara, P., Hoddinott, J., & Dickin, K. (2024). Gender Differences in Perceptions of "joint" Decision-making About Spending Mmoney Among Couples in Rural Tanzania. *Plos one*, 19(6), e0302071. Retrieved 06.09.2024 from <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0302071>.

- OXFAM (2008), *Women Leadership and Participation: Overview*, Programme Insight, Oxfam G
- Richard, M., Sutz, P., & Seigneret, A. (2019). *How Local Rules Can Promote Inclusive Land Governance in Tanzania*. IIED Briefing Paper-International Institute For Environment and Development, (17721).
- Rugeiyamu, R., Shayo, A., Kashonda, E., & Mohamed, B. (2021). *Role of Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in Promoting Local Economic Development and Service Delivery to Local Community in Tanzania*. *Local Gov Stud*, 14(2), 103-122.
- Swai, F. A., Mallya, G. M., & Kamala, D. (2023). *Gender and Governance in Tanzania: Challenges and Opportunities*. *Journal of African Studies*, 18(2), 123-140.
- Swai, I. L. (2017). *The Relative Participation and Influence of Female Councillors in the Decisions of the Councils in Tanzania*.
- Swai, I. L., & Anasel, M. G. (2020). *What Are They Speaking for: The Relative Participation of Female Councillors on Influencing "Health Related Female Interests" in the Decision Making Processes*. *Advances in Applied Sociology*, 10(2), 11-22.
- Swai, I. L., & Masue, O. S. (2019). *Towards Achievement of Gender Parity in Decision Making? Experience from the Participation of Male and Female MPs in the Parliament of Tanzania*. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 9(1), 126-134.
- Swai, I. L., & Nicolle, Z. (2023). *Whom are you speaking for? Obstacles to Participation Encountered by Sspecial-seat Councillors in Tanzania Local Councils*. 10.31532/GendWomensStud.5.1.003, *Gender and Women Studies*, Rivera Open
- Swai, I. L., Uhahula, F. C., Ndesekio, V. E., Nyakega, C. T., & Igulu, G. (2023). *Conflicts Among Councillors in the Local Government Authorities: A Tale of Msalala District Council*. *African Journal of Governance and Development* | Volume, 12(2), 7.
- TAWLA (2019) *How Local Rules Can Promote Inclusive Land Governance in Tanzania: Governance and Gender*
- Tinker, I (2004), *Quotas for Women in Elected Legislatures: Do they Really Empower Women?* Women Studies International Forum, University of California, USA.
- Tupas, F. P., & Cacho, A. A. A. (2020). *Green Governance-An Integrated Program of Local Government Units: A case of Northern Iloilo, Philippines*. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 13(26), 2686-2699.
- United Nations Women. (2021). *Women's Participation in Local Governance: Challenges and Best Practices in Tanzania*. UN Women Report.
- United Republic of Tanzania. URT. (2015) *Kuhusu uteuzi wa madiwani wanawake wa viti maalum*, Tume ya Taifa ya uchaguzi, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- United Republic of Tanzania. (1982). *The Local Government (District Authorities) Act No. 7 of 1982*. Government Press.

- United Republic of Tanzania. (1982). The Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act No. 8 of 1982. Government Press.
- United Republic of Tanzania. (2010) The National Elections Act, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- United Republic of Tanzania (2020) Report on the 2020 Presidential, Parliamentary and Councillors' Elections, National Election Commission, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- United Republic of Tanzania. (1982). The Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act No. 8 of 1982 (Councillors Code of Conduct) Regulations, 2000 Government Notice 281 of 2000 Published in Tanzania Government Gazette
- Yoon, M. Y. (2011), More Women in the Tanzanian Legislature: Do numbers matter? *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 29(1), 83-98.
- Yoon, M. Y., & Swai, I. L. (2024). Women's Career Move From Local to National Politics: The Case of Tanzania. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 00219096241228867.
- Zing M. & Shishkina A. (2024). The Role of Women's Participation in Effective Decision-Making in Politics at the Local Level: The Experience of Ghana. Published by Policies and Ethics: Moscow