

# Assessment of Gender Issues in the Construction Industry in Tanzania

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## Abstract

*Gender imbalance in the construction industry is a problem in Tanzania and world at large. The Tanzania Development Vision 2025 through the Construction Industry Policy has set a goal to promote women participation in the Construction activities. The study therefore aimed at assessing the extent of achievement of Construction Industry Policy directions through set strategies addressing gender issues in Tanzania construction industry, and determining the challenges hindering achievement of the Construction Industry Policy directions to attain the goal on women participation by 2025. The study was conducted through questionnaire survey administered on 40 main actors for promoting women participation in the construction industry in Tanzania. The primary data were mainly analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0. The study found that gender issues have been poorly achieved to an extent below 50% for the 15 years now since the policy establishment in 2003. Top three challenges hindering achievement of the policy directions to attain the goal on women participation by 2025 through set strategies are recruitment practices based on women discrimination, limited career knowledge, and culture and environment. It is therefore recommended that a council should be formed to strictly deal with women matters within the construction industry at regional level. Also, women professionals themselves should form a union as a coordination unit at regional levels where they can meet and discuss their matters.*

## Keywords

*Gender Issues, Construction Industry Policy, Policy directions, Women Participation, Strategies, Tanzania Development Vision 2025, Construction Industry.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Construction sector is among the leading male-dominated sectors of economy. The construction sector seems to be more resistant than other sectors to increase women participation [1]. Studies indicate that the construction industry's traditional, blue-collared, male-dominated, craft-based culture represents a significant barrier to women recruitment,

participation and career progression [2]. Evidence demonstrates that the persistence of gender inequality in construction affects women's recruitment, retention and progress and is largely attributable to cultural and structural barriers [3].

There are many studies discussing the reasons why female workers shy away from the construction industry ([4], [5]). Common barriers include social acceptance of employment, sexually-inappropriate occupation, sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, physical incapability, unqualified for blue-collar jobs and labour conditions such as extreme weather, unsociable work-hours and exposure to hazards. According to [6], traditionally women are clustered in secretarial and other low paying jobs which are not only low paying but danger of being phased out as a result of technology advancement.

Reference [7] recognized gender equality as one of underlying principles and objectives (by 2025, racial and gender imbalances will have been addressed such that economic activities won't be identifiable by gender, or race). Therefore, Construction Industry policy (CIP) was formulated as a tool to achieve the development vision 2025 on the side of construction sector. Reference [8] pointed out that the Construction Sector needs a comprehensive policy to ensure the national, social and economic development objectives and goals.

According to [9], one of the policy goals is to ensure full recognition and appreciation of women participation and involvement in national development programs at all levels. Towards solution to gender imbalance in the construction sector, the policy has highlighted the objective, policy directions and strategies towards achievement of the objective i.e. to promote women and youth participation in construction Industry. To enable implementation of the policy directions, an Implementation Action Programme was formed which indicates the strategies in each policy direction and responsible main actors. Since the policy establishment in 2003, no measures have been taken to assess the extent of achievement of the addressed strategies. Therefore, this study focuses on assessing the extent of achievement of Construction Industry Policy directions through set strategies addressing gender

issues in Tanzania construction industry, and determining the challenges hindering achievement of the Construction Industry Policy directions to attain the goal on women participation by 2025.

This study is delimited to the strategies indicated in the implementation action programme for the construction industry policy on promoting women participation in the construction sector on three gender issues namely gender inequality, gender mainstreaming, and gender and development (GAD).

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The Tanzania Development Vision 2025 is a new national development vision prepared by the people of Tanzania led by their Government to guide economic and social development efforts up to the year 2025. The objective of this development vision is to awaken, co-ordinate and direct the people's efforts, minds and national resources towards those core sectors that will enable people to attain development goals and withstand the expected intensive economic competition [7]. On realizing the issue of gender equality addressed by the Tanzania development vision 2025, the construction sector has realized the issues and through the construction industry policy, it has set goal and policy directions. Therefore, [8] established a comprehensive policy to ensure compliance with the national, social and economic development objectives and goals. As stated earlier,

One of policy goals is to promote women and youth participation in construction industry activities. The attainment of the construction industry policy goals and objectives requires the implementation of mutually reinforcing policy directions. Basically, promoting women participation in construction industry is among of the cross cutting issues [8]. Table I indicates the policy directions, strategies and main actors responsible for implementing each strategy in implementation action programme for the CIP on promoting women participation in the construction sector. The actors shown in Table V and other terms have been presented in abbreviations (short forms) to save space. The clarifications of these abbreviations are given in Table V.

Historically, gender and development movement are traced from the universal declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Since 1990's, the gender perspective is still struggling to be clearly set into the development Agenda of International treaties or objectives such as Millennium Development Goals. The principles only focus on gender equality and do not concentrate enough on women's centrality to other development areas [10]. A particular pressing problem in the construction in most countries is gender balance [4]. Furthermore, women are poorly remunerated in the labour force relative to their male counterparts and they tend to be self-employed in the informal sector like construction sector. This

generates the highest incidence of women impoverishing. Women work for low pay in unskilled and informal jobs, under unhealthy and substandard condition in Africa [11].

Previous studies have shown that women have a major impact on economy development to those countries which give opportunity to women. They have marked a positive change. Women are strict to professional ethics, more committed to their work and less corrupt compared to men. Countries with high female labour participation are the most successful. Normally, low presentation of women in the construction sector will subject the industry to constant skills shortage, low productivity and profitability and increased dependence on immigrants and finally poor performance of the industry [12].

There have been a number of strategies performed towards promoting women participation in the construction industry viewed from different studies. For making women equal partners and shareholders in development, gender mainstreaming is a necessary step. Some of the strategies include diversity recruitment, gender mainstreaming policies, education system, stereotypes of genders done by teachers, specific actions for minorities, access to resources and information, skills upgrading/training opportunities, promotion of dialogue between stakeholders, women career build up in the construction field, good hiring and employment practices, good practices to increase retention and change in the education curriculum [13].

Apart from various strategies undertaken by different construction stakeholders as movement towards promoting women participation in the construction industry, there are many challenges hindering women participation in the construction industry. Reference [14] indicated that the main barriers to women participation in the construction trades appear to be negative perceptions of such careers and limited knowledge of apprenticeship as an option. Reference [15] lists issues causing women to leave the construction sector, including low or unequal pay, long working hours, inflexible and un-family-friendly working hours, sidelining, limited areas of work, stressful working conditions, protective paternalism preventing development, redundancy and dismissal.

Although increased recruitment may increase the numbers of women in previously segregated occupations, retention of women requires more efforts [16]. Furthermore, construction sector has been considered to be male dominated due to the nature of its activities being unfriendly to women. Currently, according to [17], many stakeholders in the construction industry have changed thinking by moving the construction industry from being male-dominated due to demographics. Statistics show that the number of workforce in the industry decreases due to increment of aged workers and decrease of youth resulted from limitation to diversity

recruitment in the sector and structural changes within construction.

**TABLE I: THE POLICY DIRECTION, ACTIONS AND MAIN ACTORS FOR THE CIP GOAL OF PROMOTING WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

S/N	Policy direction	Action	Main actors
1	The government and the stakeholders of the industry shall promote the development, participation and representation of women and youth in the construction industry to enable them acquire marketable skills and thus enhance income generation opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Sensitization of stakeholders through seminars and news media.</li> <li>ii. Encourage positive discriminative training needs assessment for women and youth.</li> <li>iii. Undertake training needs assessment for women and youth in respect to construction industry.</li> <li>iv. Encourage females to pursue science subjects.</li> </ul>	<p>MoID, MCDGC, NCC, CRB, TGNP, WEQA, NGOs.</p> <p>MoID, WEQA, NGOs</p> <p>MoEVT, WEQA, NGOs</p> <p>MoEVT, MoID, WEQA, NGOs</p>
2	The government shall at regional levels establish co-ordination units to facilitate implementation of women and youth participation activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Establish regional coordination units to facilitate the implementation of women and youth participation.</li> </ul>	MoID, PMORALD, LGAs (Regional secretaries)
3	Implement positive discrimination measures in order to allow enhanced participation of women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Review procurement conditions to encourage women participation in construction works at all levels e.g. Through provision of preference</li> </ul>	MoID, MoF, PMORALG, LGAs, WEQA
4	Promote voluntary collaboration forums for women and youth in technical fields related to the construction industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify existing collaborative forums</li> <li>2. Promote membership of women and youth in relevant technical fields related to construction industry NGO's.</li> <li>3. Strengthen and build capacity of existing voluntary collaborative forums.</li> </ul>	<p>MoID, WEQA</p> <p>MoID, WEQA, NGOs</p> <p>MoID, WEQA, NGOs</p>

SOURCE: [9]

### III.METHODOLOGY

The researcher was able to collect data using questionnaires based on close ended questions from selected sample size which is 40 actors of the construction industry policy as shown in Table I. This sample consisted of 25 members from NGOs based in Dar es Salaam, 6 members from MoID and its five agencies (NCC, TBA, AQRB, CRB and ERB), 3 members from Kinondoni, Ilala and Temeke local government authorities (found in Dar es Salaam), and remaining 6 members from MoEVT, MCDGC, TGNP, WEQA, PMORALD, MoFAIC. Therefore, this makes a total of 40 members in the sample. As stated earlier, the clarifications of these abbreviations are given in Table V.

The research design starts by identifying the strategies addressing each policy direction, then identify the main actors addressed in each strategy. Thereafter, the data were collected from the main actors basing on the extent of achievement of the policy directions through set strategies towards achievement of the development vision 2025, and challenges hindering their achievement.

The data are mainly analysed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) for the data's obtained from questionnaires. Also, data processing and analysis in this study involves tabulation, classification basis on ranking scale used on data collected. Table II shows the ranking scales for data analysis.

**TABLE III: RANKING SCALES FOR DATA ANALYSIS**

Ranking scales	Mean score (MS)	Extent of achievement	Extent of Challenges
0-25%	$1 \leq MS < 2$	Poor	Less serious
25-50%	$2 \leq MS < 3$	Good	Somehow serious
50-75%	$3 \leq MS < 4$	Very Good	Serious
75-100%	$MS \geq 4$	Excellent	Very serious

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall percentage of respondents was 95% (38) out of 40 distributed questionnaires. This response was used in the analysis of this study. This part involves mainly two sections namely extent of achievement of the set strategies, and the challenges hindering achievement of the policy directions through the set strategies as discussed hereafter.

##### A. Extent of Achievement of CIP Directions through Set Strategies

Five policy directions were set by the CIP. These are acquiring marketable skills to women, enhancing income generation to women, facilitate women participation in construction activities, implement positive discriminative measures to allow enhanced women participation at all levels, and promoting voluntary collaboration forums for women in construction technical fields. Table III indicates responses from the respondents on the each strategy as discussed hereafter.

Based on ranking scales for data analysis, from Table III, the responses on acquiring marketable skills to women show that strategies have achieved the directions at an extent of 25-50% as it has 2.08 minimum mean score and 2.36 maximum mean score. This implies that undertaking training needs assessment for women in respect to construction industry leads into enabling acquiring marketable skills to women. Despite the fact that, encouraging female students to pursue science subjects seems to have caused achievement of the goal at a small extent. MoEVT has been in a programme for the construction of laboratories to rural areas for the intention of promoting girls to take science subjects. Furthermore, MoEVT have worked on a programme for construction of special girls' hostel to rural areas.

Second policy direction on promoting women participation is on enhancing income generation opportunities to women, it shows that most of those strategies have good achievement of enhancing income generation to women to an extent 25-50% as they scored 2.16, 2.34 and 2.46 mean scores while only one strategy achieved at an extent of 1.64 mean

score i.e. poor (0-25%). This implies that encouraging females to pursue science subjects and undertake training needs for women in respect to construction industry have highly enabled enhancing income generation opportunities. For instance, ERB has been undertaking training programmes on graduates. This increase the number of professionals who have worked towards owning their companies, for instance, there have been an increase in construction companies owned by women in 2014.

Third policy direction on achievement for facilitating women participation in construction activities shows that the strategy has caused poor achievement (0-25%) on facilitating women participation in construction activities as it scores 1.61 mean score. This implies that, establishing regional coordination units have failed to facilitate women participation in the construction activities. This is obvious as there is no regional coordination units formed despite its importance on facilitating women participation.

Fourth policy direction on implementing positive discriminative measures to enhance women participation shows that the strategy has poor achievement (0-25%) on facilitating women participation in construction activities as it scores 1.94 mean score. This implies that review of the procurement conditions has poorly achieved implementation of positive discriminative measures to allow enhanced women participation. This is because the public procurement Act does not include a clause promoting women in the construction field of which could be a guide on employment bases for women in construction. However, main actors have been undertaking diversity recruitment aimed at similar policy direction e.g. MoW.

The fifth policy direction on promoting voluntary collaboration forums for women construction technical fields shows that all the strategies have caused good achievement (25-50%) on promoting voluntary collaboration forums as they score 2.09, 2.27 and 2.30 mean scores. This implies that identifying existing collaborate forums, promoting women membership in construction technical fields, strengthening and building capacity of the existing forums have caused good achievement of promoting voluntary collaboration forums for women in construction technical fields.

##### B. Challenges Hindering Achievement of CIP Directions for Women Participation

From Table IV, the responses show that challenges hinder the achievement of the policy directions on gender issues to an extent ranging from serious to somehow serious level as they score 2.38 minimum score and 3.26 maximum score. This implies that all the challenges are hindering the achievement of the policy directions especially recruitment based on women discrimination.

**TABLE III: THE EXTENTS OF ACHIEVEMENT OF CIP DIRECTIONS THROUGH SET STRATEGIES**

Strategies	Mean Score	Rank	Remarks
<b>I. Acquiring marketable Skills</b>			
1. Sensitization of stakeholders through seminars and news media	2.22	6	good
2. Encourage positive discriminative training needs	2.10	8	good
3. Undertake training needs assessment for women in respect to CI	2.36	2	good
4. Encourage females pursue science subjects.	2.08	10	good
<b>II. Enhancing income generation to women</b>			
5. Sensitization of stakeholders through seminars and news media.	2.16	7	good
6. Encourage positive discriminative training needs	1.64	12	poor
7. Undertake training needs assessment for women in respect to CI	2.34	3	good
8. Encourage females pursue science subjects.	2.46	1	good
<b>III. Facilitate women participation in construction activities</b>			
9. Establishing regional coordination units	1.61	13	poor
<b>IV. Implement positive discriminative measures to allow enhanced women participation at all levels</b>			
10. Review procurement conditions.	1.94	11	poor
<b>V. Promoting voluntary collaboration forums for women in construction technical fields</b>			
11. Identify existing collaborate forums	2.30	4	good
12. Promote women membership in construction technical fields	2.27	5	good
13. Strengthen and build capacity of the existing voluntary collaborative forums.	2.09	9	good

**TABLE IV: CHALLENGES LIMITING ACHIEVEMENT OF CIP DIRECTIONS THROUGH SET STRATEGIES**

Challenges	Mean Score	Rank	Remarks
1. Unequal access to employment	2.86	6	Somehow serious
2. Lack of enough capital	2.43	10	Somehow serious
3. Lack of professional development	2.74	8	Somehow serious
4. Lack of good leadership within the construction sector	2.39	11	Somehow serious
5. Focus on short term initiatives and not long term initiatives	2.92	4	Somehow serious
6. Poor retention in the industry	2.56	9	Somehow serious
7. Limited career knowledge	3.09	2	Serious
8. Culture and environment	3.08	3	Serious
9. Unequal sharing of household activities between men and women	2.87	5	Serious
10. Male dominated training courses	2.38	12	Somehow serious
11. Recruitment practices based on women discrimination.	3.26	1	Serious
12. Unattractive image of the industry to women.	2.84	7	Somehow serious

**TABLE V: LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

Statement	Abbreviation
Construction Industry Policy	CIP
International Labour Organisation	ILO
United Republic of Tanzania	URT
Local Government Authorities	LGAs
Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children	MCDGC
Ministry of Education and Vocational Training	MoEVT
Ministry of Infrastructure Development	MoID
Ministry of Works	MoW
National Construction Council	NCC
Non- Governmental Organisations	NGOs
Prime Minister's Office-Regional Administration and Local Government	PMORALG
Tanzania Builders Agency	TBA
Contractors Registration Board	CRB
Tanzania Gender Networking Programme	TGNP
Women Engineers Quantity surveyors and Architects	WEQA
Ministry of Finance	MoF
Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Board	AQRB
Engineers Registration Board	ERB
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	MoFAIC

Recruitment in Tanzania construction industry has been shown to be discriminatory. This is evident on the number of male employees compared to females from site to administrative level. Culture and environment have also been major factors limiting women in the industry. A society is still carrying the negative perception that women don't fit in construction due to nature of the activities. On top of that, there have been limited career knowledge of women towards construction professionalism due to poor foundation in school and even society in general i.e. limited role models in construction industry is one of the reason behind.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that women participation in the construction industry is still minimal in Tanzania despite of the policy existence. The Construction Industry Policy (CIP) directions based on attaining The Tanzania Development Vision 2025 in the construction sector in view of gender issues have been poorly achieved to an extent below 50% for the 15 years now since the policy establishment in 2003. This marks about 60% of the overall planned period (2003-2025).

Furthermore, the study found that top three challenges hindering achievement of the policy directions to attain the goal on women participation by 2025 through set strategies are recruitment practices based on women discrimination, limited career knowledge, and culture and environment.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

For increasing women participation in construction industry in compliance to Tanzania Development Vision 2025, a council should be formed to strictly deal with women matters within the construction industry at regional level. A body that will make decisions towards encouraging women participation, women professionals will consult for advice. This implies that women can easily be promoted by the government through the council which will basically mean to oversee women matters in construction to keep and protect their rights in the industry and save their interests.

Furthermore, women professionals themselves should form a union as a coordination unit at regional levels where they can meet and discuss their matters. The union should be legal and known to the government for support. The union will be a source for training women professionals on construction programmes through seminars, advice and encourage each other towards participation in the industry. Also, women professionals have to update themselves on new technologies concerning construction and share job opportunities to increase their capacity in the field.

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