



Institutional Barriers to Women Contesting for Political Positions, A Case of Iringa Municipality in Tanzania

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to find out the barriers to women contesting for political positions. This study aimed to investigate the institutional barriers to women contesting for political positions in Iringa Municipality, Iringa region, Tanzania. The study adopted a cross sectional study design where interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and document analysis were used to collect information from the women political leaders facing the barriers to contesting for political positions, Women Ex Members of parliament and the ward councillors. The thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative information collected from the respondents. From the study findings, it is concluded that the institutional barriers that women encounter when contesting for political positions are Political parties, Political motivation, Supportive Networks, International Organizations, Governmental and Electoral Institutional policy and Religious Institutions. Therefore, the study recommended that in order to increase women political participation, political parties, supportive networks, international organisations, governmental and electoral institutional

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policy and the religious institutions are advised to pursue measures like taking advantage of the ongoing constitutional review process, the government should make sure that gender-equitable principles are incorporated into the new constitution in accordance with the nation's obligations under international, regional, and domestic agreements like the Beijing Platform for Action, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, also by insisting formation of the intra party leadership quota trainings and mentoring between experienced and inexperienced women to improve leadership and decision-making, public speaking and self-assertion again is political campaigning to increase women's political knowledge, skills and capacity without forgetting a general consideration on laws of campaigning funds that can promote or diminish women political participation.

Keywords: *Women contesting; political leadership; political positions for women.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Improving women underrepresentation at all levels of decision-making Tanzania, this coupled with the low number of women contesting for political office globally makes gender parity in politics an unattainable goal. Muirhead., & Rosenblum, [1]. Contesting for political leadership positions and the general involvement in other political activities is some constitutional rights of men and women in Africa. According to research et al. Tanzania like in other countries, there is low percentage of women contesting for political position. Women make up only 34.61% of those who are directly elected and a total of 37.4% when including those who are indirectly elected in the parliament as of this writing. (Tanzania NEC, 2020).

The empirical literature has observed the existence of a limiting number of studies undertaken in the area of institutional barriers to women contesting for political positions. This study, therefore was undertaken to fill the identified knowledge gap by informing relevant authorities about making use of the advantage of the ongoing constitutional review process that the government should improve the planning and implementation of the laws, policies, and programs on women well-being and omit possible barriers for their political leadership, nominations and contesting at large in Iringa Municipality in Iringa Region, Tanzania.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

This study was guided by three theories which includes Liberal feminist theory, social learning theory and participation theory from which liberal feminist theory provides a suitable framework for analysing the participation of women political leaders in decision-making organs. The theory is useful because it brings an understanding of

women's participation in contesting for political positions and be in the local government structures as a tool for achieving gender equality in local politics according to (Bimer and Mihrete, 2018), in their study on Liberal feminism, while Social learning theory this theory contends that gender roles are learnt through reinforcement, punishment, and modelling. Children are rewarded and reinforced for behaving in accordance with gender roles and penalised for breaching gender roles. Furthermore, social learning theory contends that children learn many of their gender roles by mimicking the behaviours of adults and older children and, as a result, develop notions about what behaviours are suitable for each gender, but the emphasis is on Bundara's social learning theory, and Participation theory this study employed this theory not to present a new concept; it represents a move from the global, top down strategies that dominated early development initiative to more locally sensitive methodologies (Ross, 2014). There are differing opinions to origins of participation theory. According to (Midgley, 2016) historical antecedents of community participation including women participation in politics, involves the legacy of western ideology, the influence of community development and contribution of social and political science. Another opinion suggests that, the dominance of the top down approaches to development was largely result of modernization theory or modernization idea. The modernization idea is postulated by numerous authors with the most prominent being (Inglehart: Welzel, 2015), and (Norris: Welzel, 2013). The important proposition is that modernization brings about economic development and consequently gender equality in politics. In the mild of this theory, modernization of the financial approaches is a very vital component for human development According to (Kolavalli: Kerr, 2014), modernization point of view meant involving of

community including women in the implementation of a development activity with the purpose of increasing acceptance and efficiency use.

2.2 Institutional Barriers to Women Contesting for Political Positions

Laws and rules influence gender equality and women's involvement in elections. The way we choose who gets elected has a big effect on this issue. In simpler terms, using Temporary Special Measures like quotas has been found to be very important in helping more women get elected into government, since Government policies, political parties and Electoral system have actually taken a little or no any action to support female candidates. governmental and electoral institutional policy, religious institution critically insists is on how Tanzania has multitudinous structures that advance gender equality and engage women equally to men in all sphere of human life aspects. Political parties are the primary mechanism via which women can gain access to electoral office and political leadership positions. UNDP & NDI, (2012). International organisations, Political motivations, supportive networks have several studies on internal party democracy in Tanzania have concluded that most political parties are male-dominated, decision-making processes are hierarchical, and women play a minimal role in these decisions (Makulilo, 2014; Meena & Makulilo, 2015), Quotas have become an important feature of the electoral scene in many nations around the world (Tripp & Kang, 2018). As of 2015, 129 nations had implemented some form of quota system to enhance the number of female candidates in electoral politics.

A country's electoral system influences women's political representation (IPU, 2014; Shvedova, 2005). Electoral systems are the rules that govern how candidates and parties are elected and how those offices are organised. The laws of Tanzania and Zanzibar say that it's important for men and women to be treated inversely and for women to have more distant control according to The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania 1977 which of Zanzibar of 1984 stipulate the need for gender equality and women empowerment. The Tanzania Development Vision 2025 and Zanzibar Development Vision 2050 also say that it's important to treat women and men equally and provide women more distant power. United Republic of Tanzania, [2].

3. METHODS

3.1 Description of the Study Area

The research was conducted in Iringa Municipality to which is one among the 4 districts found in Iringa region in Tanzania. Iringa Municipality is administratively divided into 18 wards. According to the report of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) Census done in August 2022, the district has the total population of 202,490 from which 92,392 are males and 106,098 are females with a gender ratio of 91, is bordered by Iringa District Council at North and West with a population of 315,354, and bordered by Kilolo District Council at East with a population of 263,559 and Mufindi District Council at South with a population of 288,996. The study has accessed information on the barriers to women contesting for political positions in Iringa, a case of Iringa Municipality [3-5].

3.2 Research Methodology

The study population for this study was women active politicians that have contested for political positions, women wing leaders from different political parties in Iringa Municipality. A case study research design was used to collect information from the study participants. A purposive sampling technique was used to obtain information's within the study population, whereas, and respondents were sampled purposively. In-depth information on barriers to women contesting for political positions was collected through FGDs. The interview was conducted with 12 women politicians, 6 Ex Women members of parliament, and 9 political party's women wing leaders in the study area. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative information collected from the selected respondents.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results show that Institutional Role to Promote Women Participation in Politics is basically on Laws and rules that influence gender equality and women's involvement in elections. The way we choose who gets elected has a big effect on this issue. In simpler terms, using Temporary Special Measures like quotas has been found to be very important in helping more women get elected into government. Although there is not enough information in many areas, it is clear that women are not adequately

represented in politics and decision-making at any level. During elections, many different groups can promise to support the fair treatment of men and women and encourage women to participate [6-10]. These groups include political parties, organizations that manage elections, groups in society, people who watch the elections, the media, and people who help other countries with their elections. Electoral Management Bodies can explore different ways to involve more women and promote equal treatment in their own organization. Some of the ways these organizations try to achieve gender equality are by gathering information separately for males and females, making sure their plans and internal rules promote gender equality, forming groups or committees to focus on gender-related issues, making efforts to have an equal number of men and women working during elections, and arranging programs to develop knowledge and skills, among other methods. Moreover, important groups can try to encourage gender equality and women's involvement in different parts of the election process, such as getting people registered to vote, choosing candidates, reaching out to voters, handling election day activities, and resolving conflicts. Besides, this topic covers papers, plans, and instances from individuals involved in elections who are also working towards fairness between genders in the electoral system.

4.1 Political Parties Roles on Women Contesting for Political positions

It has been seen as a key player in influencing representation in candidates contesting in national elections. Since the Tanzanian constitution does not allow for a stand-alone candidate and if that is the case, then every candidate for any national elections must be appointed by a specific political party [2], this study includes the parties represented in the national Parliament as being registered by the national registrar for political parties. It has been generally asserted that this similar phenomenon is real and that women will have more opportunities to enter government if they are represented in Parliament and at the municipal level. According to Wide (2016), the relationship between these elements is not as great as one may believe. The absence of information regarding the representation of women in party congresses and other significant bodies is evident throughout the political parties. Because of this, it is particularly challenging to map the

proportion of women participating in political party decision-making processes [11-15].

Women's rights advocates emphasise how crucial it is for political parties to implement internal quotas. It's critical to hold frequent training sessions within parties to demonstrate to women that they are capable of advancing in the party just as effectively as males. The purpose of this programme is to empower women by boosting their self-esteem and encouraging them to have faith in their own abilities to succeed in their chosen fields. While political parties include provisions in their constitutions and manifestos for women's representation in parliament and local government, according to a number of papers and discussions I read about the process, there is frequently little discussion of women's roles within the parties themselves. Since each political party insists on capable leaders beginning with oneself before the party mentions any, and to which there is a greater low number of their presence in performing and showing off their ability in representation politics compared to men, women do not frequently hold leadership positions within political parties in Tanzania. Political parties have the authority to support female candidates for office and leadership positions if they so choose.

4.2 Political Motivation Roles on Women Contesting for Political Positions

With a summary of respondents' opinions on institutional impediments to women contesting for political position, the following important motivation-related issues were investigated in this section of the analysis: (i) There is lack of opportunities of promotion for women political leaders in the political parties to the next leadership levels (ii) The community's awareness does not recognize women political authority (iii) Lack of incentive to women hinders their participation in contesting for political leadership positions. (iv) Adequate recognition does not give a strong and successful women political leaders by the political party colleagues (v) Commitment of the political parties in applying for affirmative action is practically low.

Respondents were asked to view their perception on if there is lack of opportunities of promotion for women political leaders in the political parties to the next leadership levels that ranks the third in a list, the issue was rated as a "moderate

cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women contesting for political leadership positions. Regarding to this, the majority of respondents agreed that there aren't enough opportunities for promotion; this implies that because of this, new women aren't motivated to join political parties, which, to be honest, has an impact on their participation in contesting for political leaderships [16,17]. Respondents were asked to view their insights on the community's awareness does not recognize women political authority at a rank of fourth, the respondents rating the item as a 'moderate cause' for the under representation of women contesting for political leadership positions. This result led the researcher to the conclusion that communities do not recognise women leaders, which discourages women from contesting for political leadership posts.

Respondents were asked to view their perception on if lacking of incentive to women hinders their participation in contesting for political leadership positions which ranks the first in a list, the issue was rated as a "major cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women contesting for political leadership positions. Based on this conclusion, the majority of respondents agreed that their political party did not encourage women to hold leadership positions, preventing them from holding positions.

Respondents were asked to view their perception in adequate recognition does not give a strong and successful women political leaders by the political party colleagues that was ranked a second in a list, the issue was rated as a "main cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women in political leadership posts. Respondent agreed that there is a difficulty with acknowledging strong women in all political parties in Iringa Municipality in light of this. This suggests that women political leaders, especially those who succeed, lack motivation, which discourages them from joining campaigns for elected positions [18-20].

Respondents were asked to view their opinions on low commitment of the political parties in applying for affirmative action as in practice it ranked the third, the item was rated as a "major cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women contesting for political leadership positions. The majority of respondents agreed that there was a lack of

commitment to really implement affirmative action in this regard. This finding makes it safe to draw the conclusion that the organisation does not successfully employ affirmative action in practise, which would significantly increase the chances of underrepresented women contesting for political leadership positions.

4.3 Supportive Networks Roles on Women Contesting for Political Positions

A valuable resource for female political leaders, social and supportive networks can help increase the number of candidates contesting for political leadership posts at various levels. In total, 14 respondents strongly agreed with the idea that their networks were very helpful in assisting them in their pursuit of leadership positions, with only a handful strongly opposing. These networks had different levels of utility. For instance, the majority of respondents with more than 20 years of experience in Parliament singled out the UWT, the women's organisation of the ruling party and BAWACHA as CHADEMA's national women wing as an essential network that often forces or helps people into entering politics, with no other in a country to date. Other respondents mentioned CSOs that provide training and are focused on empowering women and men, such as the Tanzania Gender Network Programme (TGNP). Family, friends, religious organisations, and professional networks were among the other informal networks. The encouragement to make a choice was expressed in dialogues as well as more tangible forms, such as financial assistance during campaigns. On this regard to an Ex MP through special seat spoke on the necessity for social networks of support by saying:

The UWT was the only supportive network I had when I first started in politics. The UWT use to recruit educated women to the party and into politics. She also offered some of us political help whenever there were conflicts. Other civil society organisation like TGNP and T-WCPT-WCP (also known as T-WCP) began to form over time. The latter network unites women from all political parties and is cross-party. We stress that, despite our political differences, women must support one another and put aside our differences when women-specific concerns are discussed. This made it easier to pass legislation like the sexual offences statute.

These results demonstrate that social networks inside the women's movement (non-

governmental, community-based, and grassroots women's organisations) and outside significantly contribute to boosting women's leadership when these potential and supportive platforms are effectively utilised. In order to give women a place to prepare for political leadership roles, networks both formal and informal have played a crucial role.

4.4 International Organizations Role on Women Contesting for Political Position

It is a group that has a crucial role to play in promoting and advancing greater inclusivity and gender equality within political parties and the political system. The following international organisations are suggested by the respondents:

Create chances for women to be at the forefront of talks about party change, both on their own and as a part of bigger events. Give international examples of how other political parties have dealt with cultures of violence towards women within different ranks. Party participants can discuss their difficulties and benefit from others' experiences while also learning about VAW-PP and its advantages.

Help parties and NGOs to create policies prohibiting women from being isolated during elections, systems for reporting and penalising violations, and education initiatives for party members. To advance gender equality and women's involvement in the election process for political office inside political parties, collaborate with government organisations and CSOs on civic education and awareness initiatives. Collect information and conduct gender-disaggregated research on party participation, leadership, and influence over decision-making in order to encourage women to showcase their abilities so that the members can approve their capacity and enable them to be nominated based on their merits rather than just their gender. In order to transform the political culture across parties, especially the dominance of men in leadership, it is important to encourage inter-party cooperation. This will allow advancements to be codified into law and best practises to be shared.

4.5 Government and Electoral Institutional Policy Roles on Women Contesting for Political Positions

Results obtained thematically and according to how respondents felt about the government and institutions' plans and tactics for removing

obstacles that women faced when contesting for political position in Iringa Municipality: (i) Clear policy and strategy that empower women and promote on the political leadership positions within the government and the political parties (ii) Policy and strategy have problems on achieving women contesting for political positions (iii) Policy and strategy of the government are not effectively implemented in the political parties that empower women contesting for political positions (iv) Implementers does not have knowledge of policies and strategy that could empower women on political leadership and affairs (v) Lack of careful monitoring and evaluation of the policy implementation that improve women's contesting for political leadership positions.

Respondents were asked to rank if there is a clear policy and strategy that empower women and promote on the political leadership positions within the government and the political parties. The majority of respondents determined that there is a clear policy and plan in this regard. According to the interviewees, there are policies that encourage women to contest for leadership positions of any kind. For example, the United Republic of Tanzania has a clear strategy stating that there must be 50% female leaders in higher positions and 30% in middle leadership positions. In addition to this, every government entity has introduced measures such as priority, quotas, and positive discrimination that are intended to prevent gender inequality in leadership of any kind. This conclusion is corroborated by Hana's (2016) 2016 study, which found that Ethiopian policy environments on female leadership systems have a suitable scope to the requirements, concerns, and safety of women when promoting them to political leadership positions.

Respondents were asked to rank if the policy and strategy have problems on achieving women contesting for political positions. In respect to this, the majority of respondents believed that there are no issues with policy or strategy. As a result of this finding, the researcher came to the conclusion that the country's current policies and strategies for general participation of women in contesting for political leadership positions, as well as the institutions in place, do not pose an issue. The policy and strategy of the Ethiopian government, which is confirmed by (Adonay, 2014), does not exclude women from holding leadership roles; rather, it gives them precedence.

Respondents were asked to rank if the Policy and strategy of the government are not effectively implemented in the political parties that empower women contesting for political positions, the issue was rated as a "major cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women contesting for political leadership positions. The majority of respondents agreed that the policy and strategy in question are not effectively implemented, indicating that the government, through the electoral commission and the political parties, does not do a good job of putting these policies and strategies into practise, which contributes to the underrepresentation of women in those who contest for political office.

Respondents were asked to rank on if the Implementers does not have knowledge of policies and strategy that could empower women on political leadership and affairs, the issue was rated as a "moderate cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women contesting for political leadership positions. Many respondents concurred that implementers lack expertise of policies and strategies in this regard. As a result of this finding, the researcher came to the conclusion that the political parties and government offices in charge of politics in Iringa Municipality as the implementers lack sufficient understanding and expertise of policies and plans. They lack awareness, which contributes to a low number of women contesting for political leadership positions in Iringa Municipality.

Respondents were asked to rank on if a Lack of careful monitoring and evaluation of the policy implementation that improve women's contesting for political leadership positions, the issue was rated as a "major cause" by the respondents for the underrepresentation of women contesting for political leadership positions. In this regard, a substantial portion of respondents stated that there is a problem with attentive monitoring and evaluation of policies made on whether or not they are implemented, and everything appears to be left behind only after the completion of the general elections. Based on this finding, it is safe to conclude that there is a significant problem with monitoring and evaluating policies and strategies that improve women's participation in contesting for political leadership positions, which causes women to occupy below-average numbers of those contesting for leadership positions.

4.7 Religious Institutions Roles on Women contesting for Political Positions

Many religious groups have adopted the new reality of empowered women in the last few decades, thanks to women's capacity to stand up for themselves and make an effect as leaders. Most women in Christianity refer to several women mentioned in the biblical story who stood out as major individuals in society. Women like Naomi, Ruth, and Ester exemplify the women who shown their ability to serve God as leaders in situations dominated by men. Most women oppose religious constraints and see leadership as a God-given responsibility that should be done rigorously in faith without regard for gender.

However, the majority of scholars place the blame on the patriarchal nature of most religions, which operate under strict rules that, in most cases, discount the ability of women to hold positions of power, connect faith, education, and leadership in defining women in leadership positions, and the restrictive elements ingrained in religion (Carbajal, 2018). Faith, according to the article, is strongly embedded in the cultural beliefs of various societies, that determines how people live (Carbajal, 2018). In the midst of the cultural catastrophe that religion has prevented, women have now come to recognise the oppressive qualities of religion and have started to speak up for themselves. The majority of Christian women's groups around the world have developed to overcome all obstacles in order to hold important leadership roles. As with Islamic religious belief, perceptions, myths, and realities.

Participants emphasised that Islam has a good impact on female participation, in contrast to popular conceptions that Islam may have a detrimental impact on women's development. Women have the right to participate in political, economic, and social activities, some participants emphasised, and they also enjoy "freedom of will". One participant supported her viewpoint by citing the following verse from the Qur'an: According to the verse in Yusuf Ali's translation of 16:97, *"Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him we will give a new Life, a life that is good and pure, and we will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their deeds."* Other participants stated how they perceived the impact of Islamic principles on women's status as follows:

Islam makes no distinction between the rights of men and women. Islam, on the other hand, bestows a great number of blessings to women, whether they belong to the household or the larger society. "Islam has granted Muslim women numerous rights at various levels.... There is no obstacle for a woman to hold a leadership role as long as she is qualified to do so, which is determined by her comprehension of the Qur'an, Sunna, and, of course, scholars.

Some participants, while still emphasising a gender role perspective, had very positive views of the roles that women play within their own families. I also learned that in Islam, women play very important roles that are even more significant than a man's capacity to earn money and provide for his family, since these are his responsibilities. As opposed to this, a woman's role is to teach her children to be good people, support her husband, be a loving, caring daughter, be a leader and influencer, and be someone who can handle a lot of responsibility while still being able to do more and be more. Some participants felt that women had the opportunity to work in a variety of occupations and perform at a level comparable to men, with some exceptions, when it comes to women in political leadership. According to the respondent, for instance; The statement *"females can... access different jobs, with the exception of being the foremost religious authority [Imam]"* was made in the context of the explanation that *"Islam provides women the right to be leaders and take a responsible part in society. It promotes women."*

However, many participants felt it was crucial for a woman leader to uphold her set of beliefs while adhering to the fundamentals of Islam. Another respondent, among many others, plainly expressed this when they said: *"Obeying Allah's laws and instructions while working is the most crucial thing for me when it comes to working [women]"*. Participants agreed that Islam encourages women to lead and succeed, yet there were definite differences between them and men. Another respondent argued, *"I believe that girls should be educated from an early age to recognise their individuality and be supported in ways that help them bring out the best in themselves in order to grow and become productive Muslim women who can best serve their families, institutions, and nations."*

In general, the respondents observed that while Islam places great significance on women's

emancipation, there are many misinterpretations. Another commenter brought up this concept by stating that: *"The issue is how people actually perceive and comprehend [Islam]; it is largely shaped by customs and what people are brought up believing to be righteous,"* and *"Islam did not forbid or prohibit women from working in leadership positions, but by giving preference to men over women, people have turned away from their religion,"* Another reply supported this viewpoint by pointing out that various individuals may have erroneous assumptions and beliefs about the core ideas of Islam: *"Islam did not forbid or prohibit women from working in leadership positions, but by giving preference to men over women, people have turned away from their religion,"*

Participants stated that: *"Customs and traditions" as well as "extremism in people's understanding of religion" are to blame for misinterpretations. Another respondent cited additional causes to "culture and poor education," as well as to the school system and some men's mentalities;* Of certainly, generations' mentalities and ways of thinking are impacted by [false] education. Within similar lines, another respondent noted that: *"Men struggle to accept women leading them because they have been used to being in positions of leadership for such a long time".*

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Respondents agreed that the path to political leadership is like climbing a hill through thorn bushes, where each stage involves cutting through a multitude of thorns before progressing to the next stage, and each individual handling situations in a unique manner. All respondents admitted that the context remains a challenge. Nevertheless, the equal participation of women and men in political leadership is crucial to realising women's democratic rights and contributing to the overall economic performance of the country. Tanzania is praised for ratifying key international, regional and sub-regional human and women rights instruments which among other things lay the basic principles and prerequisites for attaining meaningful and effective participation of women in political and electoral spaces. Adoption of measures such as women reserved seats and the ongoing engendering of the electoral and political legal

frameworks depict the country's strong commitment towards the realization of equal representation of men and women in decision-making process. Special seats have opened up doors for women to be accepted in high positions such as those of the ministers, deputy ministers, vice President and speaker(s) of the National Assembly.

Despite the ratification of the international, regional and sub-regional human and women's rights instruments and the progress that Tanzania has achieved, still a minimum involvement of women in decision-making positions and structures from the lower to higher party levels is noted. There are no measures to ensure women are part of the main party leadership positions at all levels. As women are not in the key decision-making positions within the party' administrative levels, a tokenism approach is witnessed. Women get few 'representative' seats during the key decision-making meetings such as general assemblies and the executive/central committee meetings. Further, parties have not adopted voluntary candidate quotas to ensure certain number of candidates are women. While each party has an established women wing, their autonomy, funding and capacity to influence gender sensitive policies and practices remain the biggest challenge.

5.2 Recommendations

Therefore, the study recommended that in order to increase women political participation, the various institution as analysed above should take advantage of the ongoing constitutional review process, the government should make sure that gender-equitable principles are incorporated into the new constitution in accordance with the nation's obligations under international, regional, and domestic agreements like the Beijing Platform for Action, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, again to analyse the extent to which the Commissions' policies, systems, and practises mainstreamed gender equality, to concentrate on the external context in which the Commission carries out its mandate, particularly the state of women's participation in political campaigns and the necessary legal framework. The Commission's internal processes and capacities are also being examined, including senior management's commitment to gender equality, technical capacity, and human resource policies and practises. Involving a diverse spectrum of

gender and electoral stakeholders. The Gender Strategy is currently an institutional mechanism used by the Election Commission to encourage women to run for political office in order to increase women's representation and level the playing field but also all ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) of the central government as well as local government authorities (LGAs) should integrate the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data into their normal data management and reporting systems. Accurate data will make it possible to pinpoint the stages of a woman's life cycle during which gender inequities are most pronounced and will guide the creation of programmes aimed at empowering girls and women and lastly is NGOs and stakeholder's groups should promote the advancement of women in leadership roles by developing follow-up systems that will allow women to practise their leadership responsibilities. This can be accomplished by empowering women and allowing them to participate in leadership and decision-making. Women should also be encouraged to pursue higher education so they can improve their abilities and become more suited to hold positions of leadership. without forgetting a general consideration on laws of campaigning funds that can promote or diminish women political participation.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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