

Women participation in politics in Tanzania: a case study of women participation in the general elections as voters and candidates in Kinondoni district, Dar es Salaam

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This study aimed at assessing the extent of women's participation in politics as voters and candidates in the general elections in Kinondoni District, Dar es Salaam. Specifically, the study focused on examining the extent of women's participation in politics as voter and candidates in the general elections, exploring enabling factors for women's participation in politics, identifying major problems and challenges faced by women as voters and candidates, and lastly suggesting appropriate measures which will increase women's participation. To achieve these ends, the study employed a cross-sectional survey through descriptive and qualitative research approach. The study found out that the extent of women's participation in the general elections as candidates and voters is still low though there is a significant increase of the number of women in the parliament, the House of Representatives, councillorship, and in the governmental positions. With regard to the enabling factors for women's participation in politics as candidates and voters, the study has revealed that the media, women's organizations and political parties have played a significant role. The media provide civic education to voters, advertise women candidates, encourage people to vote for women candidates, explain the effects of corruption in the general election, organize meetings for women candidates, and publicize women candidates' ideas or plans. The study also found out that women's organizations organize fund raising for women candidates, encourage people to vote for women candidates, and advise women candidates and women voters to participate fully in the elections without fear. The finding further revealed that political parties set aside special seats for women candidates to contest for the leaderships. Regarding the challenges facing women candidates in the general elections, the study has found out that women candidates and women voters had less time and space for strategizing the political issues, less or with no experience and skills on political matters, limited resources to manage campaigns, and socio-cultural constraints either within their families or in the society as a whole. Lastly, with regard to the suggested appropriate measures to increase women's participation in the general elections, the study has found out that there is a need to improve training/seminars for women to raise awareness

among women to fight against gender-based harassment, early preparation for the election process, and use of democratic means of getting participants which is expected to favor women candidates. From the study findings, it is recommended that NEC, political parties, CSOs, NGOs women's organizations, the media, development partners, and the government as a whole should join their efforts to foster policies on gender balances in the leadership by having 50:50 representations in the top positions.