

Opportunities and challenges for women participation in non-traditional occupations in Tanzania: A case of upcountry public bus transport

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The study explored the opportunities and challenges for women working in non-traditional occupations such as public transport service in Tanzania. More specifically, the study was guided by three specific objectives, namely; to examine nature and forms of public transport services available, opportunities available for women in the up-country bus services, the challenges that women face and the strategies women employ to cope with a traditionally male dominated occupation. The study was conducted at Ubungo Bus Terminal based in Dar es salaam city . Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect the data from the 62 women and 43 men who participated in the study. Qualitative methods include the use of semi-structured checklist of questions that was used during in –depth interviews with key informants. Direct observation was also used during this study. Quantitative data involved an administration of a structured questionnaire with both open and close ended questions. The overall study findings reveal that to date the continuing employment of women in traditionally male dominated occupations within the transport industry are constrained by patriarchal social attitudes which play a big role in creating sexual division of labour. The study has managed to demonstrate that there are various opportunities within the public transport sub-sector in which if patriarchal attitudes are addressed , more women can participate in public transport sector. This study concludes that despite of the awareness to the community about women working in the transport sector as bus conductors and drivers, female operators are still facing challenges such as lack of legal contracts, abuse and lack of special laws and regulations which could guide bus owners and employers in promoting gender balance and equality in public bus profession. Therefore, the study recommends that, women should form their own associations which will help them to address and present issues concerning unequal treatment and general challenges at work to the responsible authorities, also women should step out of their comfort zone and grab opportunities available in transport sector.