

Women Participation in the Construction Industry: Lessons from Tanzania

Huba Nguluma¹, Harriet Eliufoo²

¹Institute of Human Settlements Studies, Ardhi University, P.O Box 35176, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

²School of Architecture Construction Economics and Management (SACEM), Ardhi University, P.O Box 35176, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to share findings on the involvement of women and division of labour in construction sites. This paper used empirical evidence from thirteen case studies conducted in Dodoma and Dar es Salaam Regions, Tanzania. A total of 90 respondents were interviewed, complemented by questionnaires, and observations. The paper has established that allocation of tasks is gender specific; a majority of women are engaged in unskilled work at construction sites that has low pay; tool ownership amongst women workers is non-existent hence lessening employment opportunities. Gender specific constraints and challenges have also been established by the study. The paper makes recommendations at both policy and operational level in tackling these challenges and encourages more women to develop skills through training so as to cope with a male dominated industry.

Keywords - Women, Participation, Construction Industry, Tanzania.

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most productive attempts to rejuvenate the process of creating knowledge is gender research. Gender is a cross cutting discipline which is critical to any meaningful analysis of the process of sustainable development. It is obvious that skilled and unskilled women provide labour in the construction industry for improving performance in production. An understanding of gendered relations in construction sites is the critical element of this paper. The broader issue is to examine the gender relations in the process of carrying out different activities in construction sites.

Studies made by Fielden et al, (2000) looked into the problems faced by women entering and working in the construction industry and identified typical factors being: the education process, image of the industry, recruitment practices, sexist attitudes, organizational culture and working environment. The studies which mainly focused in the United Kingdom revealed that not only women were under represented in the construction industry but their distribution was also highly skewed, most being in the supportive responsibilities like clerks, typists etc. Fielden (2000) further found the number of female manual workers within the construction industry in the UK was so

low that it did not warrant registration in the employment services statistical analysis of construction employees and hence concluded that the construction industry is not just a male-dominated but is devoid of female labourers. Ozumba and Ozumba (2012) had similar observations where women in construction industry comprised only 13% of the employed population in South Africa. Identification of the gender situation facilitated the contemplation on how problems specific to women or men working in the construction sector are alleviated. In some countries guidelines have been introduced to address the problem (Gale, 1998), and affirmative action has been suggested for construction companies to promote equality.

The construction labour process is site specific. This has important implications in the organization of construction projects meaning each labour process is temporary. Moreover, it is a sequential assembly process and not repetitive. The nature of the labour process on one site continually varies as the different elements of the construction process follow through from the ground works to the superstructure and to the finishing trades. Hence each site is a series of temporary labour processes making recruitment to be significantly casual. The contracting mode of carrying out construction projects further contributes to the causality of employment. The casual nature of the industry creates insecurity for those who serve the industry. (Giunchi and Emmanuel, 2016; Bienefeld, 1976). Bienefeld's observations in a dispute of a then prominent construction organization in Tanzania, MECCO's casual labours regarding the irregularity of employment, stated that in socialist countries the problems could be marginalised by the fact that the instrument of production and control are owned by the Government – hence employment can be stabilized through controlling investment programs. In Tanzania, since independence in 1960, the major client of the construction industry has been the government; though with the introduction of trade liberalization in 1986, the private sector has increasingly become a significant contributor to the industry. Hence presently government intervention towards stabilizing the employment is limited. Owusuaa (2012) on the other hand has discussed challenges of the construction industry created by its

temporal employment, and the informality of its workforce. The irregularity of employment has been associated not only to the nature of the labour process but to the organization of capital within the construction industry as well (Rainnie, Smith and Swain, 2002).

A large body of literature on women at work has devoted itself to the identification of specific problems and potential barriers to career advancement experienced by women once they enter workplaces (Crawford et al 2015). Barriers to women entering and working in the construction industry have been identified (Fielden et al, 2001). The barriers include: the industry's masculine image; construction related career knowledge amongst students and adults; selection criteria in male dominated courses; recruitment practices and procedures; sexist attitudes; male dominated culture; and the work environment. Crawford et al., (2015) characterize the construction industry's culture as constituting: male domination, crisis, aggression and conflict, gallant behaviour and traditional attitudes. They consider one of the prerequisites for employment in the industry is the initiation into such a culture, through a socialization process inherent in the education system. According to Anaman et al (2007) construction industry is very important especially in promotion of local employment and therefore economic growth acceleration. Essentially they state lack of education bars the initiation into the industry's culture and hence employment. Bulent (2017) identified unemployment as a critical social problem in both developed and developing countries is. Bennett et al., (1999) in an investigation of experiences of female and male construction undergraduates and employees observed that in construction, male values are considered the 'norm'; a norm that is rewarded and is associated with long working hours, competition, independence and full-time working. Women that join the industry are hence compelled to adapt 'male values-cum-construction industry values' for them to survive (Dainty et al, 2001). It is thus viewed that the construction industry's cultural values will not change overnight for as long as both male and female workers in the industry continue upholding such values; where male workers consider them as the 'norm' and female workers finding themselves in a 'fit-in' situation. (Gale, 1994).

There is no statutory wage differentiation between men and women in Tanzania. In the formal employment equal work by men and women pays equally. However due to the fact that most women in Tanzania in paid employment have less education and skills they end up earning less than their male counterparts. Mascarenhas et al (1983) had described women as being the lowest paid, unskilled and having a tendency to go for the manual 'dirty work'.

They state that women also represent a large proportion of the temporary workers not covered by most workers' benefits. The Tanzania labour force Survey carried in 1990/91 and the 2000/01 indicated that irrespective of industry and in every sector of employment, average monthly income paid is less for women than men.

Women remain at the lower end of a segregated labour market and continue to be concentrated in a few occupations, to hold positions of little or no authority and to receive less pay than men (Elder, 2010). Although women's participation in the labour market is viewed to have increased, women remain highly concentrated in the lower paying informal labour (Saifuddin et al., 2013; ILO, 2005). When women work outside the home, they are generally crowded into a relatively narrow range of occupations and work under conditions of employment that are informal, casual and insecure. They also earn less than men because the skills associated with female type of occupation tend to have a lower social status. Though there have been some progress in recent years, the majority of women continued earning on average only 50-80% of what men earn. (Special Report, Daily Mail Nov.1998). Women are subordinated in labour markets partly because their efforts and time are absorbed by unpaid domestic labour that limits their opportunities for paid work. Women are said to represent a cheap labour supply through Africa and that the unpaid work which women do in the home and the fields contribute to cheapening of the value of labour or labour power (Mascarenhas et al 1983). According to the International Labour Organization reports, women in developing countries spend 31-42 hours per week in unpaid work, compared with 5-15 hours for men. Overall, the combined paid and unpaid work burden of women exceeds that of men.

Increasing women's work outside the home would give women greater control over income within the household though at the expense of even greater pressure on their home (Mbughuni, 1994; Tanzania Gender Networking Programme, 1993). The pressure appearing in forms of marital and family problems (Makombe et al., 1999). A study of women sand miners in Dar es Salaam established that women prefer to work near their home surroundings. This was to enable them to keep pace with the domestic responsibilities (Eliufoo and Marobhe, 2001). The study revealed mobility as a factor of why the women opted for the sand digging activity. The close vicinity to a sand-mining site made it easy for them to undertake the activity. The women's predicament has also been expressed in a UNDP Poverty Report (1998) which discussed the poverty situation among the poor. The report stated that poor people face many trade-off between different dimensions of poverty, but

women face more than men, and experience poverty differently and often more acutely.

Both women and men work but many aspect of their work is different. Women are employed in low paid jobs which do not promise upward progression in status and remuneration (Mori, 2014). Time use statistics considering all work i.e. paid and unpaid economic activities and unpaid housework, shows that women spend more time working than men all over the world with the exception of North America and Australia where the hours are almost equal (Ministry of Community Development and Tanzania and Bureau of Statistics, 1995). There is gender predominance in various production sectors within Tanzania. However women are a minority in the Transport, Building and Construction. A major obstacle to women's movement into wage labour has been stated to be a combination of patriarchal relations and the traditional sexual division of labour. It is also true that it is in the interest of women to destroy patriarchal relations, which belittle them. However, it is forewarned that the strategies to be adopted need to carefully consider the social transformations involved to avoid a situation where women are free from subordination from the patriarchal system and only to find themselves prey to capitalist and state owners of sectors of production (Mascarenhas et al, 1983). Green (1995) had suggested the improvement of women's conditions through: technical training, the women's rights to access and ownership of resources and indulgence of institution wide gender training.

II. METHODOLOGY

The case study research strategy was employed. Combinations of criteria were used to choose case study areas. These included the attempt to select urban areas which are inter alia, information rich, that is with a lot of construction activities taking place in relation to the present socio-economic condition. The main target was to study and analyse the whole process and interpret what is happening.

Dodoma and Dar es Salaam city were used for detailed study cases. Dar es Salaam was proposed since it is the largest city in Tanzania with fairly a lot of construction activities taking place. Because of the underlying socio-economic and historical factors, it attracts more people and therefore is constantly under pressure for demand of new developments in terms of public housing and residential houses. Dar es Salaam, therefore, represented an interesting case with challenging exposition of the study phenomena

Dodoma was considered for case study because it is a political capital of the country and the Capital Development Project promoted co-operative housing projects as a strategy for housing provision for the low-income group. Dodoma is perhaps one of the few

Tanzania cities that are flocked with construction activities. It therefore provided information rich cases to study.

Consistent with this research strategy, multiple data collection methods were employed. The methodological triangulation was used meaning that multiple methods were used to gendered division of labour in construction sites. The methods that were used included review of documents, interviews, observations and group discussions. Women and men working in Dodoma and Dar es Salaam construction sites were interviewed. In Dodoma a total of 4 sites were visited while in Dar es Salaam a total of 9 sites were visited respectively.

A total of 90 respondents for both regions were interviewed. 50 respondents from Dodoma region where 72% were female and 28% male construction workers; for Dar es Salaam, out of a total of 40, women respondents were 30 and 10 were men. Semi structured questionnaires with closed and open-ended questions were used to collect social economic data. Open-ended questions enabled respondents to explore their views; this provided an opportunity for researchers to listen to the stories of what happened and how they were faring in the construction industry especially in participation and division of labour. During this process it was possible to unveil key issues that underpin women participation and division of labour in construction industry.

Group discussions with key persons were conducted and ten interviews of construction company owners (contractors) of the respective work sites so as to solicit their perception with regard to the subject matter.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Factors guiding employment

Factors guiding employment in construction sites for both skilled and unskilled labour-female and male in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma show almost similar trends. For example, as the requirement for employing skilled labour in Dar es Salaam entails individual skills/education, nature of tasks to be performed and human resources requirement in the reference firm as dictated by the magnitude and nature of work available. In Dodoma the main factors include individual skills/education/qualification, experience on the particular type of job, ability to work and deliver as well as the nature of jobs to be done. So, in a way, one can generally say that the factors guiding employment of workers in the construction industry are mainly dictated by type and magnitude of jobs to be performed which in turn dictate whether skilled or unskilled labour is required. Other main factors include education/qualification, individual capacity to work and deliver as well as the human resource requirement to accomplish the magnitude of work in a particular time. On the other hand, as employment on permanent basis

seems to be unpopular in Dodoma, the situation is the opposite in Dar es Salaam where employment of this category is based on individual qualification and number of projects/extent/magnitude of work. Further, women are preferably employed because of peripheral factors such as honesty, empathy (to assist them to earn income) as well as good health. Looking at these factors in a holistic approach gives and concludes the assertion that there is a very narrow room for women to secure employment in the construction industry because of the requirement which mostly fits well with men. These for example include; physical fitness necessary for undertaking tough and masculine works and individual skills. As revealed in both Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, a big proportion of men have more skills than women in almost all construction works with an exception to painting.

B. Factors guiding payment of female and male workers

An investigation of factors used to peg payment rates to both casual and permanent employees denoted a notable difference between Dar es Salaam and Dodoma. For example, as Dar es Salaam generally adopt a market rate of Tzs. 15,000/= per day (equivalent to 6.5 USD as per the Bank of Tanzania exchange rate year 2007) for casual employees regardless of gender, in Dodoma the general approach is adoption of the lower ceiling set by the government. On the other hand, employment of skilled labour in Dar es Salaam was found to be generally dependent upon nature of work and sometimes equal rates are paid across genders. In Dodoma the general approach is adoption of the higher ceiling set by the government. However, looking into these categorization in absolute terms, the unskilled workers in Dar es Salaam received an average of Tzs. 15,000/= per day which is exactly the same of what is paid to the majority of similar cadre of employees in Dodoma which the employers are referring to as the lower ceiling set by the government. On the other hand, while pegging of payment for skilled labour in Dar es Salaam is widely determined by the nature of work, in Dodoma they adopt the government ceilings. However, further investigation into this indicates that higher ceiling that employers referred to in Dodoma is non-existent but rather depends on negotiation between the employer and the employee. However, a clear fact is that skilled labourers receives a higher amount of up to Tzs 25,000 to Tzs. 30,000 per day(Equivalent to 10 USD and 13 USD) compared to the unskilled labour who receive an average of Tzs, 15,000. Another striking revelation is the wide room for manoeuvre enjoyed by the skilled labours who are mostly men and a few women especially on the painting sector. They are able to secure more than one job at a time and then sub-contract to casual labourers at a lower rate. Because many women lack the skills necessary for working in the construction

industry, they end up falling victims of this arrangement and hence continue to earn little money despite working for many hours on a number of tasks.

C. Educational background of the respondents

Majority of those employed in the construction industry have only attained up to primary school education, 67.5% (Dar es Salaam) and 66% (Dodoma). In both Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, these are followed by those who have attained primary school education and proceeded to Vocational Training, 17.5% and 18% in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma respectively. On the other hand, 5% of the respondents in Dar es Salaam (all women) have not attained any formal education while in Dodoma 14% of the respondents fall in this category. Further looking into these details, majority of those with primary school education are women. For example, out of the 67.5% and 66% recorded in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma respectively, women comprise 60% and 48% respectively. On the other hand, those with Vocational training education portray a reciprocal relationship where few women were recorded in Dar es Salaam (2.5% out of total 17.5%) and more women were recorded in Dodoma (12% out of total 18%). This information tells one important thing, that majority of women have less chance to attain formal education and hence have resorted to the type of employment that requires no intensive training or any particular skills. The fact that a small number of women both in Dodoma and Dar es Salaam are seen engaged in painting or operating machines such as excavators, graders, concrete-mixing machines this indicates an emerging struggle among women to make their position more secure, felt and appreciated within the construction industry; something which was previously looked upon as an exclusive male-domain. One can say that most women are less educated compared to men and that is why they are mostly found working in the construction industry and in the less-skill requiring jobs. Consequently, these kinds of jobs fetch less pay.

D. Age group of employees in the construction industry

Statistics from Dodoma and Dar es Salaam case studies indicates that majority of those working in the construction industry lie in the age group of between 26-30 years of age followed by the 21-25 age-group. A similar trend is also depicted in the age-group 15-20 in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma respectively. For example, the age group 15-20 for Dar es Salaam comprising 12.5%, were all women. These age groups (15-20) in Dodoma comprise 10% of which 8% were women. In essence therefore, looking into these breakdowns between women and men, it is vividly clear that more women than men within the age group 15-20 are working in the construction industry for both case studies. It is also worth noting that age groups from 15 to 30 years old

comprise not only the active labour force but also the reproductively active group.

E. Marital status of the respondents

From the Dar es Salaam and Dodoma statistics, the employees in the construction industry comprise a mixture of unmarried young people (bachelors and spinsters), the married living with their spouses as well as single parent families. For example, in Dodoma it was recorded that majority of the workers 42% (comprising 22% women and 20% men) are married and living with their spouses. Further, statistics shows that (16%) of the respondents are single-parent families. In Dar es Salaam, it was recorded that 50% of the women working in the construction industry are single (not married). Furthermore, 8% of the women working in the construction industry have children ranging between 1 and 6 in number. Therefore, one can conclude that the construction industry is gaining ground as another source of employment and a source of income for all social groups.

F. Reasons that attracted people to join construction industry

Both interviews in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma indicate that the reasons that made majority to join the construction industry are similar though with varying weights among women and men. For example, in Dodoma women mainly joined the construction industry because of life hardships as well as collapse of former business they were engaged into. On their counterpart, in Dar es Salaam, most women joined the construction industry because of collapse of former business, influence by relatives and friends already working in the construction industry, possession of skills, failure to get employment elsewhere because of lack of required skills, easy entry into the construction industry as well as the need to raise income necessary to support life. On the other hand, the reasons that made men and women to join the construction industry are almost similar. They include: life hardships and hence the need to raise income to support life; possession of professional skills; possession of and social influences through being advised by relatives and friends. So, in general one main conclusion could be drawn here; that is the fact that construction industry is equally an employment option as any other one.

G. Working tools, health and safety gears

In both case studies of Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, possession of working tools was noted as one of the key considerations for one to get a job, especially those requiring certain skills. A prospective job-seeker will either make it or miss a job depending on whether s/he has working tools or not. It is only for cases of highly specialized and

heavy machinery such as concrete-mixer machine or roller machines that are provided by the employer. In a way, lack of provisioning of working tools by the employer constitutes a disincentive for the employees. In other instances, good workers may miss an opportunity to work and help to achieve better results simply because they don't possess any working tools. On the other hand, it was revealed that most of those owning working tools are men. Going by possession of working tools as a pre-qualification for employment, women become more vulnerable and fail to secure any employment in the construction sites. If this situation is to continue as it is, women will largely remain as casual labourers supplying concrete to the artisans and undertaking cleaning works or watering concrete works. Last but not least is the wearing of protective gears such as face-masks, boots and gloves. Of the sites visited, only a few were found to have put on the necessary gears for safety purposes. In the absence of these, cases of accidents resulting from the working environment will continue to inflict injuries and result to unnecessary cost of treatment for workers. Note also that this is a great impediment as none of the interviewed contractors were found to provide medical care for their employees. Such costs remain to be fully borne by the affected employees.

H. Payment modalities

Payment modalities could better be explained in conjunction with nature of employment. As revealed both in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, employment on casual basis i.e. temporary terms/daily basis comprise the largest percentage (92.5% in Dar es Salaam and 74% in Dodoma). This also tells us the nature of payment which is mostly on day rate. However, one striking element noted in both Dar es Salaam and Dodoma is the fact that majority of the employees on daily basis do not get their pay as the day finishes but instead these are accumulated and paid at the end of a working week. For example, 66.6% of women employed in construction industry in Dar es Salaam are employed on daily basis but are paid a cumulative sum at the end of the week to carter for all the days worked. In Dodoma for example, out of the total number of women employed in the construction industry, 54% of them are employed on daily basis but get their cumulative sum at the end of the week. On the other hand, those employed and get paid on piece work basis was found to comprise 22% in Dodoma (10% women and 12% men) but was not recorded in Dar es Salaam. Although this arrangement was not reported in Dar es Salaam, the practice (in Dodoma as well) is that the skilled artisan do lobby and negotiate for a number of jobs which they later sell out or sub-contract to others in need of a job. This means that the skilled artisan becomes middlemen. They get paid by the contractor and in turn they pay the one they have sub-contracted the work. Trying to look into these arrangements

especially the day-work being paid at the end of the week in the absence of any binding contract leave for the employees, whom most of them are women, in a more vulnerable position in case the employer does not honour his/her obligation. In a positive way however this could be viewed as an opportunity to the employees that at least she/he has an employment secured for the whole week. Despite these informal arrangement within a formal undertaking, the conclusive revelation here is that employment conditions/terms and payment modalities in construction industry is still vague, giving employers a lot of room to manipulate their employees including how much to pay and when to pay. This leaves a lot to be desired with respect to adherence to labour laws, obligations and rights and both parties.

I. Potential areas for improving/enhancing earnings/incomes

Several options geared towards raising incomes were made. For example in Dar es Salaam, among the best options considered by the employees in the construction industry include to go for further training (increasing working skills) so as to qualify for employment in a different discipline 33.3% (25.4% women and 7.9% men); applying for a loan to enable them buy working tools to continue working in the construction industry 25.8% (22.2% women and 3.6% men); the use of better working tools to be provided by the employer 15.8% (7.9% for both women and men) as well as possibility of working for more time/hours 14.2% (6.3% women and 7.9 men). A similar picture was observed in Dodoma where majority thought of attaining further training but on the same profession 20.3% (14.5% women and 5.8% men); further training in the different profession 19.9% (14.5% women and 5.4% men); better working tools 16.6% (11.6 women and 5.0% men) as well as loans to buy working tools 16.2% (11.6% women and 4.6% men). Looking at these options in the construction industry both in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, a general pattern could be discerned, that at least there is a quest for further training be it in the same profession or a different one. Training ranks second in Dodoma while in Dar es Salaam it ranks first. The need for having better working tools was also reiterated in both case studies, either to be supplied by the employer to be bought by individuals if they can access small loans from financial institutions. The need for better working tools ranks third and fourth in Dodoma while in Dar es Salaam, it ranks second and third.

Majority of women are marginalized to access formal employment elsewhere because of lack of skills and formal education and are left with limited chances one of which is to join the construction industry. Even when they join the construction industry things are not levelled yet. They have to bear with the difficult working

environment, abusive language (from some of the male partners), longer working time as well as harassment from male workers. This is further exemplified by the fact that employees in the construction industry have little chances to engage in other activities so as to compliment the meagre income they earn. For example, as no single women in Dar es Salaam is able to attend to any other income generating activity after a day in the construction industry, their counterpart in Dodoma only do it marginally. Only 40% (28% women and 12% men) are able to take extra work after a working day, the remaining 60% cannot. However, further looking into the extra activities/work done by women in Dodoma they mostly cover domestic cores (34%), petty trading/stall business (19%) crushing and selling stones (7%) gravel (8%), tailoring (2%), agriculture (2%), teaching nursery schools (2%), masonry (3%). The remaining 25% only spend time to rest after a tiring working day.

J. Gender specific problems experienced in the construction industry

Studies in Dar es Salaam indicate low prevalence of gender specific problems apart from a few cases of backache and injury when at work. However, the case was different in Dodoma where a number of health and work relations-related problems were cited. For example only 38% of all women reported that there are no problems at all while the remaining reported various forms of problems. These include harassment of female partners by the male partners, mistreatment by site foremen especially delayed payment, fights among the workers. Health-wise similar cases like Dar es Salaam were also reported. These include body pains, general body malaise, accidents/injuries as well as loss of appetite. Furthermore, specific problems facing women were also mentioned in Dodoma. These include disrupted menstruation cycles because of hard work, losing interest in intimacy relationship, delivery problems as well as contracting Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

Through comparing the two case studies and the attempts to unearth this information, it is quite clear that a lot of stigma still overshadows this area, especially on the social-related problems. For example, interviewees were very hesitant to speak of problems such as harassments by the male partner or the demand (by some unethical site foremen) for sexual relations before granting one with employment. For example a female respondent in Dodoma narrated how she had to quit her job in one site for the same reason. This was also confirmed by a different case from a male respondent who stated very clear that he cannot allow her wife (or opposite sex partners) to work in the construction site because of the rampant sexual relations among the workers and the site foremen he is seeing around. The important point to be highlighted here is that women

are going through a lot of plights than what is seen or told from the surface. Furthermore, it will remain difficult and take a long time before a realistic intervention is staged to this end because women themselves are part of the problem for not being open and vocal about this.

K. Cultural values/morals and women in the construction industry

This study has established that cultural values are not an obstacle for women to work in the construction industry although a few reservations still exists, especially in Dodoma. In Dar es Salaam it was observed that it is just common for women to work in the construction industry and there are no domestic conflicts related to this. A similar picture was also observed in Dodoma where majority 78% (58% women and 20% men) indicated existence of no conflicts. However, the remaining 22% (13% women and 9% men) registered some reservations that women (especially the married ones) should not only refrain from working in the construction industry, but any type of employment. They should instead stay at home taking care of the family.

These inclinations provides a bold endeavour towards women empowerment though doing away from some oppressive traditional norms that reduces them to mere house-warmers instead of equal partner to support the family and supplement incomes earned by the other partner especially for the married ones. On the other hand, it is equally an important liberation achievement even for the younger girls who at least are getting an opportunity to work and raise a legal income necessary to support their lives instead of depending on men.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

It has been empirically established that a good number of women are participating in carrying out different activities in the construction industry. It has also been established that overall allocated tasks are gender specific with a clear distinction in division of labour. Majority of women are carrying out unskilled work while majority of men are carrying out skilled work. As a result, male workers are getting better remunerations than women because of the nature of tasks they perform; while female construction workers receive low remunerations as most undertake low paid jobs.

Ownership of working tools leads to differential opportunities for employment and consequently levels of remuneration. Ownership of resources such as small working tools dominantly exists only for male construction workers, giving them an upper hand over female construction workers in employment opportunities and earnings.

The paper also unveiled existence of gender specific constraints in construction sites. Taking for example women who are the focal point of this study, the problems include; insecurity of employment amongst women as most are predominantly engaged as casual labours, health problems that are a result of the burden of work for female workers as they still maintain their domestic chores, unlike their male counterparts, sexual harassment and low job satisfaction as against male workers

B. Policy Level Recommendations

It is imperative that concerted efforts are done to enhance more meaningful participation of women in the construction industry. This is in support by the National Construction Industry Policy (2003) that reiterates increased participation of women and youths in the construction industry (sections 6g and 8.2.5b). Towards addressing this situation, the policy advocates establishment of coordination units at Regional levels in order to promote participation of women and youths in construction activities, implementation of positive preferential measures, promotion of voluntary collaboration, creation of forums for women and youths in technical fields related to the construction industry.

The foregoing suggests an ambivalent situation in the policy environment with respect to women participation in the construction industry. The same is also underlined in the National Employment Policy which cites increased employment in the private sector which also comprises the construction industry (Section 3). For example the said policy reports that employment in this sector increased from 141,438 in 1970s to 433,136 in 1990s; the policy further outlines strategies necessary to enhance performance of the sector which include preparing a conducive environment for the unemployed to employ themselves, continuous application of appropriate technology in order to increase labour productivity, involvement of all groups of people in all employment programmes including women and youths, expansion and strengthening of vocational training education, removal of discriminatory laws against women as well as to ensure unconditional employment in terms of gender (Sections 9 and 10.6).

Despite the good intents, the situation with respect to women employment in the construction industry as depicted in the case studies, for Dar es Salaam is less favourable. While the government has repeatedly reiterated its ambition to facilitate and provide enabling environment for women in the construction industry, limited initiatives have been forthcoming. However, these statements are yet to be translated into programmes and projects and therefore provide impact to the women who participate in the industry. In essence therefore, and taking into account the fact

that the construction industry is gaining prominence in the national economy as not only a contributor, but also an equally employment providing sector, there is a need now to fully operationalize the policy suggestions geared to enhance women involvement in the construction sector. Needed now is to first make all those involved aware of the legal and institutional frameworks that provide for women, guide their conduct and stipulates their rights, obligations and limitations. Among these for example include the establishment of voluntary collaborative forums and non-discriminatory policies of gender in employment.

B. Operational level recommendations-construction industry in general

In order to improve the participation of women in the construction industry, the following general recommendations are made:

- There is a need for owners of construction firms to fully evoke labour laws providing for employment, remuneration, rights and obligations of their employees as well as themselves. As of now, these are only mentioned but not adhered to. For example, none of the interviewed contractors was able to provide neither a copy of the National Construction Policy nor the national Employment Policy as among the mother documents providing for the establishment and conduct of their activities. It is because of this weakness that they pointed to general statements such as the minimum or maximum government wage. This is vague because even the maximum wages goes with educational levels, experience and type of work performed together with other incentive packages.
- Lack of working tools is a big problem noted in the construction sites visited. With an exception of heavy working tools like graders and concrete mixer, the rest of the working tools have to be borne by the employee. This is among the concerns of the National Construction Policy which attributes the problem to lack of capital base among the local contractors, lack of credit facilities as well as low level of investments through the sector (section 8.1.8). Among the policy directives to remedy this situation include assisting local contractors and consultants to acquire equipments through plant advances, hire-purchase and other forms of credit arrangements, enhanced technical and managerial capability for proper selection and efficient utilization of equipment etc. As of now, these provisions are in support of this paper. Trying to analyse this within the context of lending institutions in Tanzania, owners of construction companies stand a better chance of qualifying for a loan rather than an ordinary citizen without any investment.

Therefore, a recommendation put forward here is that, proprietors of construction firms should realise the opportunities at their disposal and fully utilize them. Engaging in construction activities is equally an investment and it thus requires entrepreneurial skills as to when to invest, how to invest, how much to invest, how to schedule the activities and how much should come out of the investment. They should understand that having better working tools simplify the job ahead of them, increase performance efficiency and attain great levels of turn-overs rather than using crude, traditional tools like hand hoes, small hand shovels and the like, which, to the worse, they have to be purchased by the employees.

- Provision of protective gears is equally important as working tools. As noted in the construction industries visited both in Dodoma and Dar es Salaam, many of the employees have no protective gears. It is only a few who are having hand gloves and masks to prevent dust. To a greater extent, lack of protective gears expose workers to a number of accidents which could have been avoided easily were protective gears supplied. Incidences of accidents caused by lack of protective gears results to injuries which are negatively reflected in the form of time and cost incurred for treatment. Worse, as it was revealed in the visited case studies, these costs are born by employees who are practically low paid. So, in a way, it has further implication to the families whose members are working in the construction industry. On the other hand, it also impairs productivity in the respective construction industries.
- The mode of employment in the construction industry leaves employees without any contract. It is based on verbal agreement without any documentation which makes the employee more vulnerable because the employer can easily default and still make away with it because of lack of evidence. This vulnerability is also reflected in the sense that the employees have no rights whatsoever apart from the pay per day, week or month they have agreed upon. It is because of this weakness that even when an employee falls sick or sustains injuries at work, it becomes a sole responsibility of the employee to foot the medical costs.

C. Operational level recommendations-improving entry and participation of women working in the construction industry

- There is a great need of making young women aware of the opportunities in construction industry by encouraging them to seek careers within the construction industry and gain appropriate qualifications and training.

- Visiting, sensitizing and holding career events at primary and secondary schools by women (role-models) working in the construction industry will help to first, uplift the construction industry as an equally employment sector, but also help serve as a forum to solicit for more attention from the society and owners of the construction firms. They are part of the society any way, and thus it is like a feedback mechanism.
- Encourage training programmes necessary to alleviate women-related constraints to participate fully in the construction industry. The training should target to acquire:
 - Technical or crafts skills that will help them to get better jobs that are well paid within the construction industry. This will subsequently improve their earnings at places of employment
 - Entrepreneur skills especially for semi-skilled or unskilled workers to finally make them more pro-active in soliciting for jobs as against being co-opted (hired) on works that have been originally secured by male colleagues in the same field.
 - Self awareness, confidence and recognition of one's ability to work and deliver.

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