

# **RURAL FOOD SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP (RFS)**

INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT~ STUDIES

## **GENDER, WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

Bertha Koda

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### 1.0 Introduction

The official policy under review is the Policy on Women In Development (~WID) which was adopted in 1992. Our focus will be on the strengths and limitations of the policy both in terms of

conceptualization and implementation and the need to envision a gender policy which has a bearing on rural food security and sustainable livelihoods.

## 2.0 Vision and Mission

As highlighted in the policy document, the vision of the WI' policy is to have a society which recognizes and appreciates women's contribution, ensures women's full participation and involvement in national development programmes and guarantees equitable distribution of resources and benefits accrued from its members' labour input (para 8).

Elaborating on the vision of this policy, the policy document concludes that proper implementation (of this policy) will put to an end women's oppression and heavy workload since women will have their legitimate rights of ownership and use of property and wealth~and that they will participate in executive and managerial posts (pp.22:84).

## 3.0 Overall Objective

The overall objective is to mainstream women's concerns in sectoral policies, ensure gender sensitive plans and programmes and guarantee equitable distribution of resources (pp.4 para 8 (iii)).

## 4.0 Specific Objectives

The Will) policy has five specific objectives. These include:

- (i) Defining the meaning of the "concept of women in development".
- (ii) Identifying problems arising from planning without gender focus and giving guidelines in planning with a gender focus.
- (iii) Identifying obstacles hindering the participation of women in development and directing ways of removing the same.
- (iv) Initiating strategies and establishing a system of reducing women's heavy workload.
- (v) Expounding on ways which will be used in coordinating women development programmes.

The policy also acknowledges Tanzania's belief in Equality and Human Rights as well as appreciating the fact that Tanzania is signatory to the United Nations Declaration on Human rights, the OAU's Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and that she has also ratified the UN convention on the eradication of all forms of discrimination and prejudice against women (pg. 1).

- (iii) To amend and enact laws that enhance the role of women and supervise their enforcement.

## 6.0 Responsible Institutions

The policy (document) further elaborates on responsible institutions for each and every activity proposed in the policy. Institutions responsible for preparing and providing guidelines on planning for instance are said to include ministries responsible for planning, Regional Administration Local government and Women Affairs. The same institutions are expected to educate the planners on the methodology to mainstreaming gender in the planning process. Training institutions are also expected to participate by incorporating gender specific planning in their curricula while ministries responsible for Regional Administration and local government together with the women machinery should sensitize the society on the importance of gender equity in resource allocation.

The institution responsible for planning is given the central role of facilitating for preparation of a framework for involvement and incorporation of women's participation in the planning process and a comprehensive procedure for getting feedback on the same.

Law review for the amendment of laws oppressing women was also highlighted as a key activity and the Ministry of Justice was expected to facilitate this process.

In the economic sphere, the Treasury and Financial institutions are to collaborate with the women's machinery and formulate credit policy guidelines to establish a *Women 'S Financial Institutions* and ensure women's access to credit.

As for the government in general, it is supposed to establish a *Special Body/Women Machinery* to deal with specific issues on women's development.

## 7.0 Strategies for Implementation

The policy goes further to elaborate on strategies to ensure women's full participation in the development process. These include availing more educational and training opportunities to women, establishing a quota system which would allocate special vacancies for women in both appointed and elected posts at all levels so as to have a fair ratio of gendered representation, creating more vacancies for women's employment in the formal sector and addressing women's work load through adoption of conducive labour regulations/procedures.

Responsible institutions for these activities are also mentioned and these include almost all ministries. The emphasis on having national plans rather than scattered projects is underscored in the policy document. The document for instance points out that "there should be national plans to help alleviate women's workload" (pp 19:B) while strategies to alleviate women's work load are also specified (pp 19 items 65-72). Both the women's machinery and other institutions responsible for Planning, Science, Technology, Industries, Vocational training and Higher education are earmarked as key units in addressing this issue.

Apart from allocating responsibilities to each relevant institution, the issue of coordination of all the efforts geared towards implementation of this policy is also under-scored. This was in anticipation of the fact that women's issues are crosscutting across ministries and other key development institutions and hence the need for common approach and proper/ effective coordination. The policy proposes for establishment of "a Specific body for Coordinating, planning and evaluating the implementation of women development plans" (pg.21:78). The special body is often referred to as Women *Niachipie*," which would have full powers and authority to issue guidelines, and make follow-up and coordinate women development" (p-p 21:881) The same organ is supposed to be the

chief advisor to the government on all matters affecting women's development" (pp. 2-81). To strengthen the coordination process, each relevant institution is expected to have gender experts and adequate resources to fulfill the required coordination.

## 8.0 Resources

The policy also underscores the need for having adequate resources. Equitable distribution of resources according to needs is also emphasized, hence the proposed strategy on creation of viable financial institutions which are responsive to women's credit needs (pg. 11:v).

Much as the need for a strong resource-base for implementation of this policy is underscored, the policy does not give guidance on strategies for resource mobilization. Hence the limited level of implementation (of this policy) as shall be elaborated below. However, a limited amount of resources has been mobilized and utilized as noted below.

## 9.0 Critique of the Policy

### (i) *Process of policy formulation*

The process of policy formulation is semi-transparent in the sense that much as the concerns addressed in the policy emanate from the field experience gathered by the respective ministry's extension workers through working with the stake-holders, the actual formulation is done

by experts derived from the gender sensitive elite

*society/NGOs/ICBOs* have also contributed to reforming some gender insensitive laws. This applies to the land laws of 1999 and the Sexual Harassment law of 1999 both of that have been widely debated on by the civil society.

More efforts to publicize the policy include those of the donor community including UNFPA which had a special programme during the mid 1990s to publicize the policy and assist in its implementation. The Gender, Population and Development Programme executed by the MCDWAC and implemented by the Institute of Development Studies' Women Study Group is one such effort which underscored the need for inter-sectoral collaboration for addressing gender issues. The need for coordination of gender related initiative was also emphasized by this Programme and efforts to sensitize planners and NGOs dealing with population issues on the same were also made.

### *(iii) Gaps in achievements*

- Resource mobilization and allocation

Donor dependency seems to have influenced efforts for resource mobilization and allocation. Activities to be performed by different ministries were expected to get funding allocation from respective ministries but this has tended to be donor influenced. Resources from the ministry from which the policy emanates were also donor influenced, hence the project related approach was adopted in both publicity and actual implementation of the policy. *There was no strategic plan to mobilize adequate resources.* However limited resources were mobilized through having collaborative ventures with resourceful institutions such as those having gender experts e.g. from the NGO community such as the Tanzania Gender Networkin-

Programme and the Institute of Development Studies' Women Study Group, to mention only a few.

Funding from the government in terms of budgetary allocation for specific activities was also accessed but even here the allocated amount was inadequate. A good example is the budgetary annual allocation for creation **Of** a *special credit fund for women* to the tune of Tshs 500 million but this amount could not meet the demand. Indeed, the credit scheme for women was established within the ministry responsible for women affairs but although both the budgetary allocation and donor fiinding were used to create this scheme, majority of poor women were not able to access this facility both because of its small size and its mode of operation. It should be underscored that majority of women have credit needs but available facilities hardly suffice for their needs especially the needs of rural-based women.

As for other marginalized groups like the youth and pastoralist communities, resources for both publicity of the policy and accessing the credit facility to them were even more limited. Todate, a very small number of rural based youth and other socially marginal ized groups and poor people are aware of the existence of the WI') policy despite the 8 years of its existence. Even the human resource from the NGOs' community was not flilly mobilized and utilized for the publicity and implementation of the Policy.

The media resource has been effectively used in publicizing resources available at the ministry responsible for women affairs but not in publicizing the policy as such. This applies to the *Credit fund* created for women and *the Training Fund* created for women (the Training Fund for Tanzanian Women) to mention only a few. Yet the small size of such frinds has led to limited access by the intended beneficiaries.

**(iv) Probable relevance/impact of the policy on food security and poverty eradication**

*from a gender perspective*

Relevance of the *Will* policy on food security and poverty eradication is not far-fetched. As noted in the policy document, issues on reduction of women's workload, access to credit facilities for promotion of women's small and micro enterprises and women's empowerment through skills development and knowledge acquisition are highlighted as key areas of concern. These very issues are related to production and marketing of goods and services which are essential for ensuring household food security. If women are over-worked with household chores for instance, they usually spend less time and energy on production of food and marketed crops and this consequently reduce the size of household income with strong bearing on household food security.

The policy also condemns outdated customs and practices which discriminate women. Customs such as those promoting domestic violence, polygamy, the paying of bride price and those which discourage women from owning and controlling resources/property (such as land and cattle) have strong and direct bearing on household food security as they de-motivate women from participating fully in creating goods and services/wealth for the household. Some of these customs also lead to over-stretching of available resources at household level and result in limited investment, less output and inadequate resources for meeting basic food needs

pertaining to households. A good example is the case of polygamy where husbands are known to have used the wealth created by their wives and children to pay dowries for new wives instead of re-investing such wealth in production, in educating their children or in purchasing modern farm inputs/implements. If the latter was done, it is very likely that production could be increased and hence the increased capacity for sustainable livelihood for the respective households.

In a nutshell therefore, every aspect of the Will) policy has a bearing on household food security and poverty eradication.

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**List of Resource Persons Interviewed**

1. Ms. Mary Mwingira:
2. Ms. Mary Rusimbi
3. Ms. E. Kiondo
4. Ms. Ave Maria Semakafti:

TANGO Executive Director  
TGNP Programme Coordinator  
TACOSODE Acting Chief Executive  
IDSWSG Secretary