

Increasing Access and Equity in Higher Education in Tanzania: A Case Study of University of Dar es Salaam

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Abstract: Since the independence in 1961, gender equality and equity has become one of the country's agenda in Tanzania, various policies and programmes of action have been made for the purpose of insuring gender equity for higher education in Tanzania. This study focuses on programmes of action introduced and designed to facilitate women's participation at the University of Dar es Salaam. The results of this study found that the programmes of action have positive efforts towards increasing female students' participation at the University of Dar es Salaam, although the number has not reached parity by sex. More strategies are needed to deliberately favour comparative increase in the rate of admission of females into Universities in Tanzania to ensure adequate representation of female graduates in the professional and the production sectors.

Key words: Higher education, education policies, gender equity, gender equality, gender sensitization, access to higher education

INTRODUCTION

Higher education policies and programmes of action have been designed to promote gender equity in higher education in Tanzania. After the independence in 1961 gender equality and equity in all levels of education has been one of the country's long term pursuits.

The policies and plans of action introduced by the Tanzanian government after independence have succeeded in increasing female enrolment in higher education, for example at the university of Dar es Salaam female enrolment rose from 17% in 1995/1996 to 29% in 1996/97.

However, action taken so far is far from adequate therefore there is need for more policies and plans-of-action towards gender equity in higher education as well as making these policies and plans-of-action a sustainable process during the 21st century.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is based on secondary data obtained from university of Dar es Salaam records and reports as well as a documentary review of key policies. Other sources of information in this study include: books and ministry of Higher Education's Website. The analysis was carried out through critical examination of the roles played by education policies and programmes of action that are

tailored to increasing women access to higher education in Tanzania. The results are shown in the Table 1 and 2.

Education policies and plans of action in higher education in Tanzania: Tanzania has a population of 36.5 million of which 51% are females (World population Data sheet PRB, 2005). It has been faced with gender inequality in higher education for a long time.

The sex imbalance in top management and other senior positions in both government and private sectors has contributed to unequal educational qualifications that women and men have which otherwise would have enabled women to compete on equal footing for such posts.

By the end of the 1980s, female representation in professions as well as in politics was very low the ruling party introduced guidelines for increasing women's representation in Parliament. By 2001, women constituted 22.5% of the parliament and in the current parliament (December, 2005 to October, 2010), female representation has reached the projected 30%.

Since the 1970s, strategic initiatives towards gender equity at various levels of education have been introduced. In 1974 the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy of 1974 was enacted and its implementation began in 1977). While UPE did not affect enrolment in higher education directly the Musoma Resolution of 1974 was one of the first policy actions that resulted in the increase

Table 1: Preferential admission criteria as applied for UDSM admissions in selected disciplines for the 2005/06 academic year

Degree programme	Total admitted	Number admitted (M/F)		Percentage of female students admitted	UDSM entry qualification			
		M	F		Minimum points for A levels		Matriculation cut-off score (%)	
					M	F	M	F
BA (Culture and heritage)	17	7	10	59	10.5	8.5	60+	53+
BA (Fine and performing arts)	22	9	13	59	9.5	8.5	69+	50+
BA (Statistics)	31	26	5	16	8.5	6.5	62.7+	56+
BA (Political science and sociology)	90	44	46	51	11.5	11.5	72+	47+
BSc (Mechanical engineering)	13	11	2	15	6.5	7.5	52+	52+
BSc (Chemical and process engineering)	20	16	4	20	7.5	6.0	50+	62+
BSc (Mining engineering)	18	16	2	11	7.5	9.5	60+	63+
BSc (Computer engineering and information technology)	4	4	0	0	4.4	4.1	40+	-
BSc (Pharmacy)	30	19	11	37	9.0	8.0	40+	40+
Doctor of dental surgery	35	30	5	14	8.0	7.0	40+	40+
BSc (Land management and valuation)	68	52	16	24	8.5	6.5	59+	62+

Admissions Office Records, UDSM, November 2005

Table 2: UDSM first year students' enrolment of 2000/2001 illustrating the difference in enrolment on application of PAC

Programme	Total admitted	Total female admitted	Female admission same criteria	Female admission after PAC	Percentage female admission with same criteria	Percentage female total admission
BA	494	242	74	168	15	49
B.Com.	273	45	45	-	16	16
B.A (Ed.)	144	34	20	14	14	24
Engineering	405	23	11	12	3	6
Law	197	101	61	40	31	51
UCLAS	212	25	17	8	8	12
Medicine	132	33	22	11	17	25
Dentistry	14	0	0	-	0	0
Pharmacy	26	12	12	-	46	46
PESC	25	13	1	12	4	52
Nursing	23	13	3	10	13	57
Sciences	382	87	44	43	12	23
Total	2327	628	310	318		30
Av. total					15%	

Admissions Office, University of Dar es Salaam, 1996

of female enrolment in higher education. Through the Musoma resolution, females were able to enter the university directly from secondary schools and were exempted from 2 years compulsory work period. Through cost sharing, Tanzania government introduced Higher Education Student Loans policy (2005) enabling students from lower socio-economic groups admitted to higher education in a privatized higher education environment, and is an incentive for those educating female children. In particular, Tanzania Education and Training Policy (1995), National Science and Technology Policy for Tanzania (1996), Women Development and Gender Policy (2000) and Primary and Secondary Education Development Plans (2002-2006) and (20004-2006), respectively have had direct effects on females' enrolment in higher education. In particular in order to increase access to higher education the University of Dar es Salaam, female candidates are admitted at up to 1.5 points lower than male candidates but not lower than the university entry points. As a result the enrolment percentage rose from 17% in 1995/1996 to 29% in 1996/1997. Gender Studies have also been

introduced in such forms as the Women Studies Centre at the University of Dar es Salaam. For example gender Studies Courses have been introduced in the institute of Development Studies and Sociology while a gender perspective has been adopted from some courses in the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, Law and Education and the College of Land and Architectural Studies.

The institute of Finance Management and the Sokoine University of Agriculture also have a few courses with a gender perspective (UDSM, 2004, 2005). Pre-Entry Programme (PEP) has also been introduced in order to increase the number of students in science disciplines. In order to do that the PEP programme was initially designed to provide access to girls who had not attained the required academic points to enter the faculty of science of University of Dar es Salaam. Six weeks remedial course is run each year and those who pass the examination gain the entry. The programme was later expanded to include those who wanted to enter Engineering, Economics and Statistics programmes. As can be noted, most of these directives circumvented the limitations to female's

education inculcated by traditional and societal perceptions on women's roles in society. Such perceptions included that university education fits more for men while the major role of women is to get marriage, bear and care for children, husband, family members and property. They believe that if they are married and enroll with university studies it will contradict expected married roles in society and create conflict with spouses because being married and studying at the same time will overburden women for them they already have many tasks to do in the family. They feel university education destroys women's traditional value of being wives, mothers and home makers. Regional and International initiatives have been made with a focus on gender equity and equality. At International level key policies concerning gender equity and equality process have included: the Beijing Platform (1995) and UN Millennium Development Goals (2000). At a regional level, Tanzania has ratified the African charter on Human and People's Right (1981) and the Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Human Rights (1997). These efforts for gender equity and equality in fact have been worked and continue to work with the targets of expansion of education for girls mainly in higher education and removal of the various obstacles hindering women participation in higher education.

Education action programmes at UDSM: Due to increased policy commitments and other pressures to address gender inequality and inequity at the UDSM, a number of processes were adopted which became the springboard and nurturer of the education action programmes at the institution. Earlier in the 1970s, female and male academics at UDSM, some who organized themselves in professional, research and gender-related NGOs, conducted research, seminars and several other sensitization tactics including producing publications and interacting with non-academics to question the sex disparity in higher education in the country. It was however not until 1992 that UDSM took concerted steps towards institutionalizing gender. In 1992, UDSM's Institutional Transformation Programme (ITP) was inaugurated, born out of a combination of institutional weaknesses and resource shortages affecting the University's functioning at that time. Directed by both local and external factors in its reform processes, ITP laid down as one of its major objectives the continual move towards gender parity. ITP's Strategic Objective No. 13 aims at improving gender mainstreaming among the staff and students (UDSM, 1994). ITP also provided the rationale for the establishment of the Gender Dimension

Task Force (GDTF) which was later in 1997 replaced by the Gender Dimension Programme Committee (GDPC). This Committee became an instrumental structure in the facilitation and implementation of some of the education programmes of action at UDSM which have been credited with the increase in female enrolment in some disciplines specifically and the whole university generally.

The current discussion focuses on two major education programmes that the University has used as strategies to open up and increase female enrolment. These actions are the Pre-entry Programme (PEP) and Preferential Admission Criteria (PAC). All two education programme interventions were established in the 1996/97 academic year and while differing in their specific objectives they aim to increase the enrolment and participation of women in academia as students and staff.

The objectives of Pre-Entry Programme (PEP) have been to increase the number of female students in science disciplines and thus increase the number of female A-level science subject teachers in the country. In order to do that, the PEP programme was initially designed to provide access to girls who had not attained the required academic points to enter the Faculty of Science of UDSM. A 6 week remedial course is run each year and those who pass the examination gain University entry. The programme was later expanded to include those who wanted to enter Engineering, Economics and Statistics programmes. From 1997-2004, these PEP programmes have been able to facilitate the enrolment of 486 female students.

The second major UDSM education programme is the Preferential Admission Criteria for Female students (PAC) which has had the broader objective of facilitating the admission of qualified female applicants but with A-level grades and matriculation points lower than those of male applicants in all faculties at UDSM.

The application of PAC depends on the number of applicants in each year as well as the level of performance in relation to UDSM's minimum entry qualifications. In addition, while PAC is applied by the whole University, the decision to apply it or agree on a cut-off point is made by individual departments. Table 1 shows the variations in cut-off points as determined in different selected disciplines.

Table 1 shows that the application of PAC has facilitated percentage increases in female admission in some disciplines over the years since 1996/97. In the year 2005/2006 percentage of female students admitted in BA disciplines was 59%. Males continued to dominate in subjects related to engineering, pharmacy and dental surgery. Table 2 shows the UDSM first year students'

Table 3: Summary of Students' Enrolment from 1996/97-2006/07

Years	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total
1996/97	2979	75	985	25	3964
1997/98	3795	80	972	20	4767
1998/99	3640	78	1004	22	4644
1999/2000	4552	79	1221	21	5773
2000/2001	6770	76	2113	24	8883
2002/2003	5985	59	4163	41	10148
2003/2004	7365	68	3501	32	10866
2004/2005	7036	58	5108	42	12144
2005/2006	9935	66	5146	34	15081
2006/2007	9910	63	5699	37	15609
Total	61967		29912		91879
Av. total		70		30	

Institutional Transformation Programme: PMU/UDSM-2000 (2001). Facts and Figures, Dar es Salaam: PMU/UDSM-2000 (2001). Facts and Figures, Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salaam. Tanzania Commission for Universities Admissions 2002/2003-2007

enrolment of 2000/2001 illustrating the difference in enrolment on application of PAC. Table 3 shows trends in students' enrolments from 1996/97-2006/2007.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 and 2 shows that Preferential Admission Criteria (PAC) applied by the University of Dar es salaam has facilitated percentage increases in female admission in some disciplines over the years since 1996/97. In the year 2005/2006 percentage of female students admitted in BA disciplines was 59%. Men still dominate in the subjects related to engineering, pharmacy, dental surgery and statistics.

Furthermore, the findings here have revealed that the education plans of action at UDSM have led to significant improvement in female students' enrolment to UDSM, although the number has not reached parity by sex. It also agrees with the observation of Morley (1997) that there is need to strategize and create equality in higher education between males and females. Also the findings show that the much expected 50-50 enrolment between males and females is still far from being achieved.

The existing gender inequality may seem to be a function of factors beyond the universities in Tanzania, irrespective of the phenomenal increase in the number of universities. This may be a result of high levels of female dropout and poor attendance at the secondary education. It can also be attributed to the several factors that affect girls' education at the lower levels of the education system such as cultural issues, early marriages, poverty, parents' negative attitude to girls' education, absence of role-models, among others. Table 3 shows that the enrolments of girl students increased from 985 in 1996/97 to 5699 in 2006/2007. The increases in the total number of girls' admission reported in Table 3 which reached 5699 was stimulated by the affirmative action. But its still hard to explain why girls' admission rates dropped from 985 in

1996/97 to only 972 in 1997/98 and from 4163 in 2002 to only 3501 in 2003/2004. The observations from Table 3 show the importance of affirmative action in increasing females' participation in higher education in Tanzania and in particular to the University of Dar es Salaam. That is to say from the year 1996/97 when the affirmatives action was established; especially PAC and Pre-Entry Programme (PEP), female admission to University of Dar es Salaam increases six times from 985 1996/97 to 5699 in 2006/2007. While statistically this increase appears huge, and the fact that it occurred within ten year's period, it is still relatively low compared to the total enrolment of the University of Dar es Salaam during that period. That is to say the University of Dar es Salaam's total female students enrolment of 5699, reached in 2006/2007 was only 37% of the total enrolment.

Despite the positive efforts of gender-sensitive policies, factors that constrain women's entry into tertiary educational institutions seem to exert a greater impact on gendered access in the contemporary context than factors that facilitate it. Kethusigile *et al.* (2000) indicates that social-economic and cultural factors which inhibit girls' access to education in primary and secondary levels effectively cut off their access to tertiary education. Furthermore Tanzanian's post-independence Constitution affirmed the rights of all citizens to education to the highest level' (United Republic of Tanzania, 1998). Yet in spite of these aspirations, by the beginning of the 1990s participation rates were low and men were the majority.

The aspirations of the University of Dar es Salaam to expand female admission into Universities do reflect the whole country on the issues relating to the education of women in higher education. UNESCO (1998) had expressed a great concern over the absence of the gender dimension in higher education in general and in the higher education curriculum in particular. There seems to be evidence that; there should be strong alignment between policy discourses and organizational practices. This is very important in policy implementation concerning sensitization in higher education in particular and all levels of the education system in Tanzania.

CONCLUSION

Several steps have been undertaken for the purpose of increasing female student's entry into higher education through policies and programmes of action initiatives. In order to ensure that education action plans are sustainable processes, the University of Dar es Salaam also has been engineering outreach programmes with secondary schools to expand the recruitment base for female students (UDSM, 2004).

However, the action taken so far is far from adequate, therefore there is a need for more plans of action toward gender equity and equality in higher education so as to ensure 50-50 admission of girls to higher education. University of Dar es Salaam should continue empowering female entrants through gender sensitization programmes and counseling in order to equip them with skills and confidence to handle the challenges of university life and career advancement through higher education.

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