

# **Historical Analysis of Status and Trends of Gender Gaps in Provision of Higher Education in Post-Independence Tanzania: Case of University of Dar es Salaam**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper focuses on the historical analysis of the status and trends of gender gaps in the provision of higher education in Tanzania in the post-independence era of the University of Dar es Salaam. Also, it reviews and documents interventions that research evidence suggests that can lead to an expansion and improvement in females' education. Findings revealed that: firstly, females are more educated today than in the 1960s; secondly, females have remained less educated compared to men; thirdly, gender gaps widened as more males maintain good progression than females. Several interventions have been employed to close gender gaps. It concludes that improving females' education is a moral imperative and an important drive for socio-economic development. Closing gender gaps in education requires a holistic approach.*

**Keywords:** *equality, gender, gender gap, higher education,*

## **Background**

Education is a fundamental, transformative tool in fostering values of human rights including gender equality. Education as a human right has been recognized by the international community since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (United Nations, 1948). Gender equality is a global priority and linked to the efforts of promoting right to education and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). Achieving gender equality through education is at the heart of the human rights agenda, a pathway to social justice and the key to achieving the transformational 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Global Partnership for Education's Gender Equality Policy and Strategy 2016-2020 (GEPS), consider achieving gender equality as equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women, men, girls, and boys, and equal power to shape their own lives and contribute to society. Thus, to achieve gender equality in education call for a holistic approach that requires system-wide institutional change in terms of policies and plans are developed to ensure inclusive for both men and women. The Sustainable Development Goal Education 2030 agenda recognizes that gender equality requires an approach that 'ensures that girls and boys, women and men not only gain

access to and complete education cycles, but are empowered equally in and through education' (UNESCO, 2016). Unfortunately, gender gaps in education are both a symptom and a cause of gender inequality in society.

While it is evident that education and training are potential to equipping girls and young women with knowledge, skills and societal values, for many decades, due to varied social-cultural factors, traditional cultural practices and gender stereotypical beliefs girls and young women have been deprived of the right of opportunity to access quality education. These practices not only affect the women's self-aspiration as they do not realize their potentials, but also contradict with the Sustainable Development Goal No.4 and 5. The Goal 4 ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all; while Goal 5 aims at achieving gender equality and empowers all women and girls. Various national and international commitments have been geared to address gender equality and access to quality education as a basic human right especially for girls. Among others, these commitments include the international commitments that include, but not limited to: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979; The World Declaration for Education for All (EFA) 1990 whereby its key priority was to ensure access to and promote quality of education for girls and women and to eradicate every form of obstacles that prevent them from participating in leadership. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPFA) 1995, which outlines the objectives and actions to be taken as regards to education and training of women; the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948, and the Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960.

In supporting efforts by the international conventions and commitments, the Government of Tanzania for many years, has been implementing different international agreements and conventions by translating them into national policies, programmes, strategies, and plans undertaken to achieve gender parity to create more education opportunities especially for girls. Some of the initiatives include: Article 11, 12 and 13 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania protects women's and men's rights to realising their full potential in education. Apparently, Tanzania Development Vision 2025 embraces gender equality and empowerment of women as essential goals to the realization of the vision. Also, the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (2005) NSGRP (MKUKUTA) considers gender imbalances as one of the cross-cutting issues. Moreover, in 2010 the government through the Ministry responsible for

education and training developed a Five year Strategic Plan for Gender Mainstreaming (2010/11-2014/15) as its key mission to provide a gender-responsive education environment for enhancing gender equity and equality in policy, policies and practices. All these emphasises gender mainstreaming as one of the strategies to bring about gender equality and women empowerment.

In Tanzania, formulating national policies for promoting equal access to education HE in particular, a number of achievements have been realized. For example, the Education and Training Policy of 1995 that was reviewed in 2014 has improved education delivery services at all levels, including HE. In addition, the then Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (MSTHE) was established and mandated to oversee all matters pertaining to HE and HE policy was then put in place in 1999. HE Policy (1999) was sought to address issue of gender imbalance and improve female participation in Science, Mathematics and Technology. National Science and Technology Policy for Tanzania stipulates that in order to enhance gender parity in the promotion and utilization of science and technology, the government should implement the following: review policies and establish plans to increase the proportion of women participation in decision making, and planning; strengthen women's non-governmental organizations and groups in enhancing capacity building for sustainable development; take deliberate measures to raise the level of literacy among females, expand enrolment of women and girls in educational institutions, and increase educational training opportunities for women and girls in science and technology; establish programmes to reduce drudgery and increase comfort for women, and children at home and outside through the establishment of facilities and promotion of the provision of appropriate technologies which have been designed, developed and improved in consultation with women; and design programmes to develop consumer awareness and active participation of women in productive activities Mbilinyi (1990, p. 2).

Hence, the realization of the above objectives would depend on a number of females who have an access to quality education, especially at HE. However, access to HE depends on performance of lower levels. Generally, the presence of the above legal instruments initiatives, strategies and policies form a detailed framework inside and within the system for which the gender dimension of education can be assured and sustained. However, commitment to these instruments which have been connected to the family of the world nations, including Tanzania can only be possible if effective partnerships are formed to construct a more human society in order to realize the

potential of investment in girls and young women and appreciate their contribution to leadership and socio-economic development at large.

Gender is typically understood as a culturally and socially structured set of norms and values based on assumptions and challenges about masculinity and femininity. Gender defines and differentiates the personal lives of women and men as shaped by social relations and culture. Gender is the social and cultural characteristics that are attached to females and males in any particular social context. These characteristics are determined by the specific society one stays in, the cultures that the society holds. Gender gap –based inequalities that are predominant in all societies. One of the most crucial dimensions in which gender differences manifest themselves is in the provision of education in which consequently lead to gender gaps that ultimately determine gender disparities in a broad set of socioeconomic dimensions including work, family, and public life. Thus, gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality is therefore the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in their home, their community and their society (UNESCO, 2003).

This paper documents the growing body of research in history of education which concentrates on the education gender gap and its evolution over time in post-independence era. The survey focuses on gender differentials in the historical period that roughly goes from 1961 to 2020 accounting for the reasons for gender gaps; interventions of achieving gender gaps while keeping a strong emphasis on an historical perspective for institutional change.

### **Historical background of higher education institutions in Africa**

Historically, in Africa's colonial-era universities began as extensions of elitist metropolitan institutions, which were set out to recruit the brightest and the best of young men from the colonial classes. They would train and prepare them to become a new elite destined to serve the colonial state and govern "the natives" (Mama, 2009). African students of the 1950s and 1960s recall gracious conditions of teaching, learning, residence and resource allocation that today's often under-resourced students can only envy (Mama, 2006). With independence, a new mission, that of training the indigenous for nation-building and development began to take shape, but with the same institutional form. These institutional cultures and

gendered hierarchies within Africa's HE systems persist to the present day. Colonialism left behind a legacy that severely reconfigured gender relation within and outside the family to women's disadvantage (Mama, 2009; Mama and Barnes, 2007; Barnes, 2007; Odejide, 2007).

Nevertheless, the issues of gender equality in education provision came up later, on the agenda in response to pressure from both national and global levels through various interventions. Numerous researches have indicated that women's participation in HE has significantly increased in response to the need and struggle to produce new and relevant knowledge in the 21st century (Howson and Buckley, 2016; Coate et al, 2015; David, 2015). Women have displayed their commitment to education and have increasingly regarded it as a route to personal and collective liberation and empowerment (Mama, 2012). Universities play a key role in shaping society and building active citizens. The international institutions, such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank (WB), have declared that women's equality is crucial to solving the challenges of development and poverty, but to date, there is no part of the world where women and men are treated equally (Kilgour, 2012; World Bank, 2003). Apparently, despite the fact that women make up the half of the world's population and over 40 per cent of the global labour force, gender inequality is still present in the 21st century (World Development Report [WBR], 2012). The under-representation of women (and girls) in HE presents a serious barrier to their empowerment and the contributions they can make to strengthening tertiary education and innovation systems in ways that are necessary to drive economic and societal transformation (WBR, 2012; Kilgour, 2012).

While universities strive for an environment that preserves equal chances for both women and men (David, 2015; Collins, 2000), the situation in Tanzanian HE is far from equal participation due to gendered culture associated with socialization processes, historical factors and lack of support systems (Nawe, 2002; Lihamba, Mwaipopo & Shule, 2006). The distribution of power and financial resources is not the same for females and males. The institutional framework for fixing the problem of gender balance in education provision should be linked to the policy implementation to create a non-gendered institutional environment that is conducive for equal representation. This paper explores the historical analysis of the status and trends of gender gaps in the provision of HE in Tanzania between 1960s and 2000s while also arguing for institutional change.

### **Higher education and the quest for gender parity in provision of education**

The literature reviewed is anchored around the gender towards expansion of higher education in Africa and Tanzania in particular, its historical evolution and development as well as general understanding of the gender and HE debate. HE has experienced rapid transformation in terms of participation and access. This expansion is evident worldwide. We learn from Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley (2009) that HE participation has expanded in stages across countries and world regions. They further note that the United States and Canada were first to achieve mass HE in the 1960s, followed by Western Europe and Japan in the 1980s. This trend then spread towards emerging regions.

Studies indicate that women's participation in HE has increased in response to the need and struggle to produce new and relevant knowledge in the twenty-first century (Collins, 2000; Lihamba, Mwaipopo and Shule, 2006; Shefer & Aulette, 2009; Ahikire 2010; Mama, 2012; Coate et al, 2015; David, 2015; Mulyampiti and Kanabahita, 2015; Howson and Buckley, 2016). Women show their commitment to education as they regard it as a route to personal and collective liberation and empowerment (Mbilinyi, 1990; Mama, 2012). Some studies show how women embrace modern public Universities with dedication and enthusiasm, attending them as learners, and serving them as scholars and researchers, teachers and administrators, not to mention the support roles in the various sections in welfare, catering, health, cleaning and other support services that are crucial to the daily operation of universities (Mama & Barnes, 2007; David, 2015; Coate et al., 2015).

The rapid expansion of HE in Africa was evident from the mid-1990s with an increase in annual growth of higher education enrolment from 5.9 to 8.4 per cent (Tremblay, Lalancette & Roseveare, 2012). Despite the increasing enrolment, statistics indicate a relatively small population in Africa joins higher education compared to the global average of 26 per cent (AAI, 2015). Literature further indicates that higher education growth in Sub-Saharan Africa is largely accompanied by gender disparity. Evidence shows that female enrolment and participation in higher education ranges between 34 and 38 per cent for most Sub-Saharan countries (Ibrahim & Lilian –Rita, 2010). In Tanzania, the number of higher education institutions increased from 1 in 1961 to around 71 in 2016 (TCU, 2016). For example at UDSM, the academic year 1979/80 a total number of students enrolled was 2,436 of which female was 542(22.2%) whereas in the

academic year 2019/20 the total annual enrolled students was 38,649 of with females constituting 17,813 (46%) and males 20,836 (54%) (UDSM, 2019).

### **Theoretical framework**

The Von Bertalanffy's Systems Theory (1968) employed to guide the inquiry in this study. The main argument of the theory is that any organisation is composed of systems that have goals to achieve (Von Bertalanffy, 1968; Mele, Pels & Polese, 2010). The theory further maintains that an organization as a system has four main features, namely inputs, transformation processes, outputs and feedback. These four features are interdependent. "Inputs" connote the capital and human resources that are essential to run an organization and have to be carefully planned, organised, motivated and controlled if goals are to be realized "Transformation processes" are the guidelines and directions that regulate the use of resources. These are essential because they provide clear guidelines and expectations of how activities need to be carried out and they also give structure to an organisation, without which the organisation may collapse due to abuse of resources, chaos and mismanagement. "Outputs" in the Systems Theory denotes the end products and services that are offered by an organisation that justify the worth of resources that are invested into a system. Outputs are measured in line with objectives that are set by the organization. Lastly, "feedback" comes from the human resources carrying out the processes and other areas affected by the organization. This is mainly done through research that measures improvements in different aspects of the system. The systems theory is important for this study because it acknowledges the interrelations of different subsystems that are operational at the UDSM in implementing the SDG goals 4 and 5 towards bridging the gender gaps in provision of education. The theory therefore assisted in assessing the trends and status of bridging the gender gaps in the provision of HE focusing on various interventions taken by the UDSM from historical perspective.

### **Methodology**

The methodology used to collect this data was documentary search from secondary sources from the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM). The University then referred to as University College of Dar es Salaam [UCD], of the University of East Africa, which was established in 1961 in special relationship with the University of London. In 1963, it became a Constituent College of the University of East Africa, along with Makerere College in Uganda and Royal College

Nairobi in Kenya; having only one faculty (Law) and fourteen students. The national university, UDSM, was established in August 1970 with a primary focus being an institution where people are trained at the highest level for clear and independent thinking, analysis and problem solving. It was established with three main objectives, namely: to transmit knowledge as a basis of action, from one generation to another; to act as a centre for advancing frontiers of knowledge through scientific research; and to meet the high level human resource needs of the Tanzanian society. In 2019/2020 academic year, UDSM had a total of 38,649 students which is an increase of 58 per cent of the past five years ago of academic year 2014/2015 (UDSM, 2020).

The data were obtained from University of Dar es Salaam records and reports, documentary of key policies, online articles, publications and ministry of higher education website. Using the case of the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) was justified by the historical landmarks being an independent and oldest institution of higher education in Tanzania. The scope of 60 years from the establishment of UDSM was informed by a need to assess a progress made to close gender gaps by increasing access to HE among female students. Specifically in this research, the status and trends of female enrolment at UDSM were documented with the intention to ascertain increase or decrease patterns and their implications. Content analysis guided the review and analysis of the data and information for this research. The targeted variables selected for analysis include reasons for gender gaps, enrolments rates and trends as well as interventions made over time to increase access to female students. These were key variables of analyses because this study intended to document status and trend in female access to HE in a historical perspective. Therefore, analysis of the variables reflects time dimension for interpretations in relation to UDSM, national as well as international contexts and commitments.

## **Results**

### **Reasons for gender gaps in HE provision at UDSM**

#### **i. Unequal access to education**

Gender gaps in HE can be considered as a phenomenon rooted far back in history from colonialism. While it is well documented that access to HE in UDSM has been increasing significantly over time after independence, still the increase is largely accompanied by gender disparities. This is because access to HE is fundamentally dependent on access to education at lower levels. A satisfactory increase in females' access to education at lower levels does not mean the same in HE. This means, the rates of female transition from secondary education to HE

in low relatively to male. For example, Statistics show that there is an increase of 1.8% with respect to secondary education enrolment from 1,774,3831 in 2014 to 806,955 (M=905896; F=901059) in 2015 (MoEST, 2016). Gender parity has also improved in favour of girls from 0.43 in 2015 to 0.55 in 2016. However, dropout is reported to be one among the major challenges affecting school attendance and successful completion rates of students at secondary education and eventual access to HE. Available data from the UDSM presents the historical trend of gender gaps in students' enrolments as well as various evidence from literature that presents challenges that would explain why women are under-represented in HE. Table 1, 2 and 3 presents the trend of enrolments at the UDSM by gender in selected academic years, from 1979/80-2000/2001 and 2011/12-2019/20.

Table 1: *UDSM Students' Enrolment from 1979-2001 by Gender from 1979/80-2000/01*

Academic Year	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total
1979/80	1894	77.8	542	22.2	2436
1980/81	2110	78.8	568	21.2	2678
1981/82	1821	81.3	419	18.7	2240
1982/83	2177	78.8	584	21.2	2761
1983/84	2502	80.5	608	19.5	3110
1984/85	2371	81.4	542	18.6	2913
1985/86	2538	83.3	507	16.7	3045
1986/87	2502	84.2	470	15.8	2972
1987/88	2436	84.3	455	15.7	2891
1988/89	2255	82.2	487	17.8	2742
1989/90	2200	78.1	616	21.8	2816
1990/91	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
1991/92	2681	82.7	559	17.3	3240
1992/93	2155	81.1	501	18.9	2656
1993/94	2100	82.6	442	17.4	2542
1994/95	2733	81.4	626	18.6	3359
1995/96	2966	75.2	976	24.8	3942
1997/97	2979	75.2	985	24.8	3964
1997/98	3795	79.6	972	20.4	4767
1998/99	3640	78.4	1004	21.6	4644
1999/2000	4552	78.8	1221	21.2	5773
2000/2001	6770	76.2	2113	23.8	8883
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59177</b>	<b>79.6</b>	<b>15197</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>74374</b>

Source: Institutional Transformation Programme: PMU/UDSM – 2000. (2001). Facts and Figures, Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salaam

Table 2: *UDSM first Year Registered Students by Gender From 2011/12-2019/20*

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total</b>
2011/12	5462	63	3201	37	8663
2012/13	6422	67	3213	33	9635
2013/14	6100	65	3215	35	9315
2014/15	6357	61.5	3977	38.5	10334
2015/16	7795	68	3653	22	11448
2016/17	7775	63	4993	37	12268
2017/18	6334	44	8081	56	14415
2018/19	6298	47	7093	53	13391
2019/20	8111	53	7133	47	15224

Source: UDSM, 2019

Findings in Table 2 indicates that the trend of the number of female first year registered students from 2011/2012 to 2019/2020 academic year has increased significantly from 3,201 students in the academic year 2011/2012 to 7,133 students in the academic year 2019/2020. Based on the percentage, the data indicated that there was significant increase from 37% in the 2011/2012 academic year to 47% registered annual percentage of females in 2019/2020 academic year. However, it was noted that the proportion of female students to the total annual enrolment fluctuates over time, for example, the trend decrease in the last six years, from 40% in 2011/12 to 34% in 2016/17. This implies that more institutional initiatives towards increase proportion of female students are of urgent necessity. The data further indicates that the trend in overall annual enrolment increased drastically from 41% in 2017/18 to 46% in 2019/2020. It was noted that this significant increase is partly attributed to the strategic commitment of the University management to promote gender equality and address the gender gap at the UDSM. Furthermore, it was noted that UDSM in her attempt to promote gender equality and address gender gap, the University has upgraded the Gender Centre into the Institute of Gender Studies (IGS) and established a merit-based scholarship for undergraduates and postgraduate female students. Moreover, it was noted that the University conducts special sensitisation campaigns in secondary schools for students to encourage them to apply to the UDSM. Such initiatives seem to increase the number of female students over the past years.

Table 3: *UDSM Overall Enrolment Trends in Relation to Gender, from 2011/12-2019/20*

Academic Year	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total
2011/12	12213	60	8116	40	20329
2012/13	13915	63	8147	37	22062
2013/14	13956	65	7654	35	21610
2014/2015	15743	64	8795	36	24538
2015/16	18202	66	9201	34	27403
2016/17	19229	66	9896	34	29125
2017/18	19594	59	13411	41	33005
2018/19	20321	57	15179	43	35500
2019/20	20836	54	17813	46	38649

Source: UDSM, 2019

The data in Table 3 shows that, the enrolment has increased from 20329 students in 2011/2012 to 38,649 students in the 2019/2020 academic year, which is an increase of 58 per cent. Similarly, the proportion of female students to the students' annual enrolment has increased from 8116 (40%) in 2011/12 to 17813(46%) in the 2019/2020 academic years. However, the data indicated that the number of female significantly drop sharply in the academic years from the academic year 2012/13 (37%); 2013/14 (35%); 2014/15 (36%); 2015/16 (34%) and 2016/17(34%). These fluctuations in the trend of female annual enrolment imply that the UDSM seek for more deliberate initiatives to maintain the trend to grow.

From the findings presented in Table 1, 2 and 3 the following facts about gender gaps at UDSM can be established:

*a) On historical analysis Women are more educated today than ever in history*

As Table 1 and figure 1 illustrates, the trend of male and female educational attainment in each in each year, marked improvement for women. This is an indication that women had more education in the year 2020 (46%) than in the 1970s (22.2%). However, the, increases in women's education have been accompanied by increases in men's education attainment that widened the gap as well. The evidence from the statistics in Table 1, 2 and 3 suggests that similar gains are for both men and women. Generally, the trends of women's education have shown substantial improvements especially from the 2011/12 to 2019/20 academic years.

*b. Women are still not as educated as men with historical dimension*

While women's education increased dramatically in every academic years between 1979 (22.2%) and 2020 (46%), the gender gap in educational attainment still persists in all years of enrolment

at UDSM. Throughout the period, the gender gap widened in all years (as shown in Table 1, 2 and 3)—so women enrolments are fewer in number and percentage relatively to their counterpart men in all years.

*c. Gender gaps often got worse before they got better*

While several interventions has been on place since the attainment of independence both globally, nationally and at UDSM in specific, gender gaps widened before beginning to narrow. The gaps deteriorated from year to year before beginning to improve to its peak as to men (see Table 1, 2 and 3). This pattern contradicts the available interventions of closing gender gaps by increasing women/female enrolments at UDSM. The central question remains as to why such situation of experiencing gender gaps gets worse before they get better? Researchers like Eloundou-Enyegue et al. (2009) with the use of household survey data from across Africa in the 1990s and early 2000s, observed that as countries' total enrolments increased, so did the gender gap. Thus, maintains that most countries that experience this phenomenon had low levels of both men's and women's education in 1960s. The findings suggest that as educational opportunities begin to expand, those countries tended to invest first in education for men. Thus similar situation has been the case in Tanzania.

**ii. Cultural beliefs and stereotyping**

Access to education at all levels is one of the potential indicators of women's status in a given society. Thus, socio-cultural beliefs, perceptions and practices of the roles attached to women in a given society are critical to deciding as to whether or not females should learn and/or own resources. Over years, stereotyped notions about women have been reported to constitute major barriers for equal access to quality education and resources. Examples of socio-cultural beliefs and practices that militate against the education of girls and women include less value attached to education of a female and the high value placed on marriage, motherhood and their accompanying gender specific roles (Bunyi, 2003, p.2). A good reflection of stereotypic beliefs is also evident when it comes to career choices and aspirations (Mbilinyi, 1990). Majority of female students who join HE are often confined to the so-called "feminine" fields, such as social sciences, humanities, services and health-related courses. By contrast, male counterparts are believed to be able to pursue "muscular" related fields such as engineering, natural sciences,

Geology, etc. Again, this attitude does not promote females' chances of equal job opportunities as compared to men.

### **iii. Lack of commitment to implement gender mainstreaming policies**

It is important to note that there has been a gap between what has been planned in policies; the other related plans and their ways of implementation on the ground. Several initiatives undertaken to ensure that gender equality and equity in education are achieved not only nationally but also internationally. However, from statistical point of view, UDSM has not yet achieved having equal access and participation of female into various degrees offered. This status quo raises three fundamental questions: What role do the universities play in making gender mainstreaming and its enhancement to practicality. How does the institutional culture impede the on-going initiatives? How preparedness and willing are the members of the whole community in terms of changing their poor beliefs and stereotypic attitudes towards women? It should be understood that, a powerful cultural ideology must emerge from radical HE reforms to suggest and boldly carry out leading role for effective succession. This is an essential ingredient for any institution that must succeed in organisational transformation that would results into gender between women and men.

### **Interventions strategies for closing gender gaps at the University of Dar es Salaam**

Several efforts have been put in place, for example, the UDSM in order to ensure that gender mainstreaming and gender equality are important areas connected to its all core functions and in line with the core objectives and functions of the university as stated in the University Charter (2007), the University has established a centre to deal with gender issues and mainstreaming. For example, the UDSM 2061 and corporate strategic plan (2014-2023) both embrace the gender equality and inclusiveness. In fact, the University recognizes that achieving gender equality and inclusiveness enables to bridging the gender gaps in education provision. In the Vision 2061 several other strategies are evident as a way forward towards achieving gender equality at UDSM namely:

- a. Establishment of scholarship schemes for women since the early 1994 to date. A number of bursaries through international agencies have been provided for undergraduate and postgraduate studies in all discipline to enhance the capacity of UDSM to promote

gender mainstreaming with improved female education. However, Nawe (2002) noted that there are scholarships targeting females only and the other targeting both males and females students.

- b. Introduction of Remedial Pre-University Programmers that can be traced back to 1997 where the pre-entry program was introduced by the faculty of science. This was organized for a period of six weeks and meant for female students who fail to meet the cut-off points in Engineering and science programmes.
- c. In 1997 the UDSM introduced Lower Admission Cut-off Points for Females to enable more enrolment of female students who fails to meet the cut of points in science related programmes.
- d. Other strategies were included in its Institutional Transformation Programme like
  - Intensifying expansion of female student enrolment in Science and Engineering by running special upgrading programmes for qualifying female candidates prior to admission for selected qualifying candidates starting 1998/99 ;
  - Mainstreaming gender issues in the curricula of all faculties at UDSM, hence enhancing the running of gender related programme;
  - setting up and supporting counselling services to handle gender based psychological pressures within the first year;
  - Continuing to lower the cut-off level point by 1-2 points for all qualifying female candidates during the next five years.

## **Discussion and Policy Implications**

This section presents discussion with reflections from the literature review on gendered cultures within organizations, hence the need for support structures for closing gender gaps in HE in Tanzania. It is important to note that, the inclusion for women does not necessarily reflect a linear and age-related chronology, in terms of life events such as marriage, child-upbringing, and other related roles that tend to affect their career development decisions and confidence in aspiring for HE (Mbilinyi, 1990; Morley, 2010). Most of the HEIs are surrounded by characteristics that are strongly gendered culture and lack of support systems (Lihamba, Mwaipopo and Shule, 2006). The institutional framework for fixing the problem of under-representation of women in education provision should be linked to the policy implementation in

order to create a non-gendered institutional environment that is conducive for equal representation of both women and men.

Moodly (2015) and Moodly and Toni (2015), observe that that problem must be in the context of existing policy. In addition, enabling policies are already in place globally to facilitate women's access to HE. Usually, the policy provides guidelines on how the issue of gendered cultures should be addressed. Unfortunately, HE institutions demonstrate a typical failure in implementing the policies (Binns & Kerfoot, 2011; Singh, 2008). More importantly, effective policy implementation can aid in addressing barriers of gendered cultures as well as lack of intra-institutional support for women within HEIs. The policy should, therefore, be part of any model that orientates to the core functioning and good governance of HEIs. To effectively implement this, Moodly and Toni (2015) insists that accountability is a key to the implementation of existing policies that facilitate women's access to HEIs and introduce policy where institutions are silent.

As interventions for closing gender gaps in HE, women should not be considered as victims of all-powerful patriarchal system of knowledge production. According to Bagilhole and White (2011), women are entering education system develop high intellect and innovative as well as men. However, there have been positive interventions for change in diverse cultural background settings. Schiebinger (1999) contended that thinking about women in organizations, one has to focus on three areas, namely: fix the women, fix the organisation and fix the knowledge. In fixing the women, meaning enhancing women's confidence and self-esteem, empowerment, capacity-building, encouraging women to be more competitive, assertive and risk-taking. Whereas fixing the organisation implicates gender mainstreaming, institutional transformation, for example, gender equality policies, processes and practices, challenging discriminatory structures, gender impact assessments, audits and reviews, introducing work/ life balance schemes including flexible working. Apparently, in fixing the knowledge it means identifying bias, curriculum change, for example, the introduction of gender as a category of analysis in all disciplines, gender and women's studies.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This paper has offered a broad but selective analysis of the growing body of contributions in history of education in HE which tries to shed light on the gender gaps in education historical analysis across the world and Tanzania in particular. Evidence has shown several interventions and efforts have been done in trying to close the gender gap in HE in Tanzania specifically at UDSM. However, closing gender gaps in HE provision remain to be challenge due to attributed factors. Therefore, this paper call for critical lens in evaluation and reflection of gender practices in HE with reference to targeted policies, practices and research needed to change these processes and assure that the education system promotes gender-equitable experiences for all. In order to break the glass ceiling which has been evident over years around the world, HE institutions needs to learn what worked better in line with the best lessons from successful countries. Apparently, HEIs has to revisit the factors that determine gender-specific attrition and the contextually relevant retention strategies for to increase the female enrolment rates, transition rates and retention rate in HE.

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