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Tanzanians applaud government efforts to promote gender equality but want more

Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 707 | Cornel Jahari, Jane Mpapalika, and Derick Msafiri

Summary

Tanzania, which gained its first female president in Samia Suluhu Hassan in 2021, has made substantial progress in advancing gender equality. Its achievements are recognised by the Global Gender Gap Index, which ranks Tanzania 48th out of 146 countries in 2023, up from 82nd in 2021 and 64th in 2022 (World Economic Forum, 2023).

Gender equality is enshrined in Tanzania's Constitution and integrated in national plans, including the National Women and Gender Development Policy of 2000, the National Strategy for Gender and Development of 2002, the 2016 National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children, and the National Development Vision 2025. Internationally, Tanzania is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the Southern African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development, among others.

Women now hold about 35% of Cabinet positions and 37% of parliamentary seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023; Msafiri, 2023a). They account for 48.8% of the labour force (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022), and Tanzania is among the world's highest-scoring countries on income parity, though only 14% of firms have female top managers (World Economic Forum, 2023). Other persistent gender challenges include greater land insecurity, lower levels of financial inclusion, and high rates of gender-based violence (World Bank, 2022a, b).

This dispatch reports on a special survey module included in the Afrobarometer Round 9 (2021/2023) questionnaire to explore Africans' experiences and perceptions of gender equality in control over assets, hiring, land ownership, and political leadership. (For findings on gender-based violence, see Msafiri, 2023b).

In Tanzania, strong majorities express support for women's right to equality in hiring, land ownership, and political leadership. But substantial minorities also consider it likely that a woman might suffer criticism, harassment, or family problems if she runs for elective office. Most Tanzanians approve of the government's performance on promoting equal rights and opportunities for women, although they also say that greater efforts are needed.

Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Nine rounds of surveys have been conducted in up to 42 countries since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) cover 39 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Tanzania, led by REPOA, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 2,400 Tanzanian adults in September-October 2022.

A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Tanzania in 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2021.

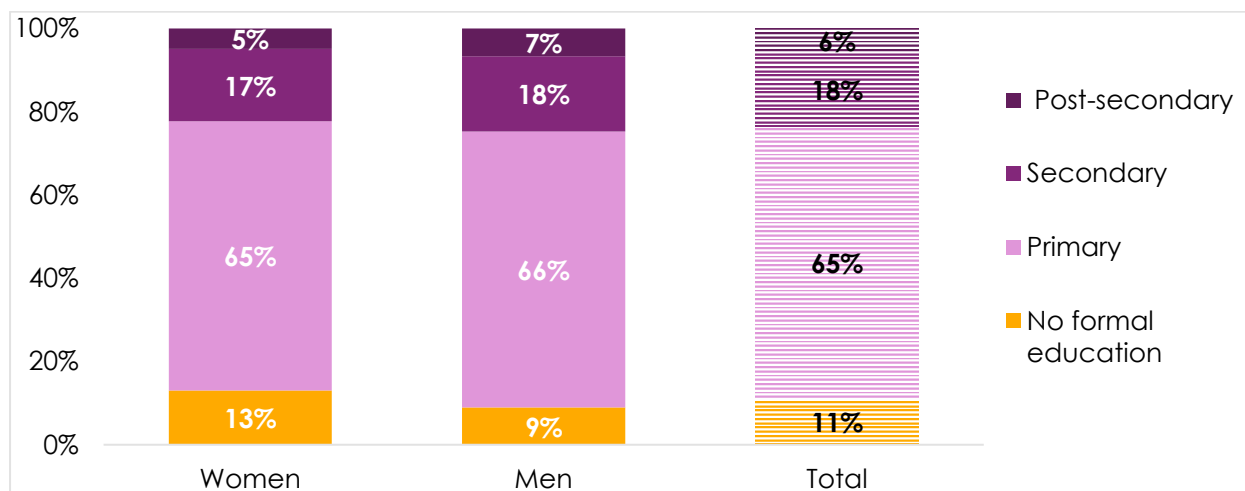
Key findings

- In Tanzania, women are about as likely as men to have primary, secondary, and post-secondary education.
- But women are significantly less likely to have control over key assets such as a mobile phone (70% vs. 83%), a bank account (15% vs. 23%), a motor vehicle (9% vs. 16%), and a computer (3% vs. 7%).
- Strong majorities say women should have the same rights as men to get a job (60%) and to own and inherit land (85%).
 - More than eight in 10 citizens say that, in Tanzania today, women in fact enjoy equal rights when it comes to jobs (87%) and land (82%).
- Seven in 10 Tanzanians (70%) say women should have the same chance as men of being elected to public office.
 - More than one-third of citizens think that a woman running for office will probably be criticised or harassed (38%) or will face problems with her family (35%).
- More than eight in 10 Tanzanians (83%) say their government is doing a “fairly good” or “very good” job of promoting equal rights and opportunities for women.
 - But three-quarters (75%) think the government should do more to promote gender equality.

Education and control of assets

Educational achievement is nearly gender-equal in Tanzania (Figure 1). Women are about as likely as men to have primary schooling (65% vs. 66%), secondary schooling (17% vs. 18%), and post-secondary education (5% vs. 7%), though they are slightly more likely than men to lack formal schooling (13% vs. 9%).

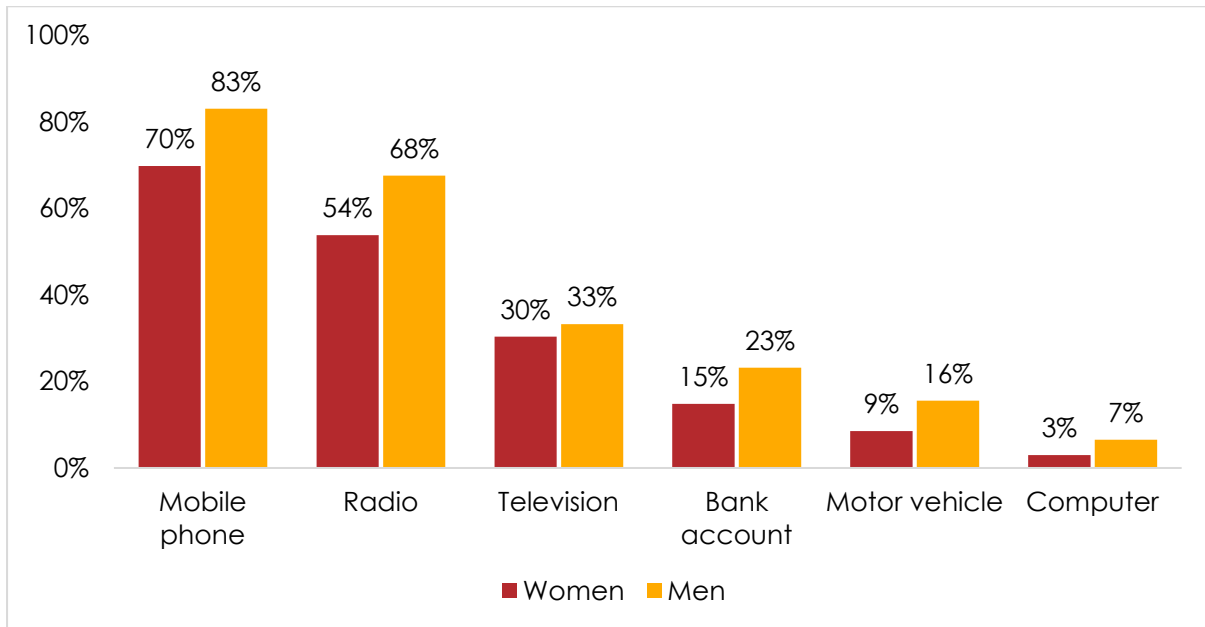
Figure 1: Educational attainment | by gender | Tanzania | 2022



Respondents were asked: What is your highest level of education?

However, women trail men in control over assets. They are considerably less likely than men to report personal ownership of key household assets, including a mobile phone (70% vs. 83%), a bank account (15% vs. 23%), a motor vehicle (9% vs. 16%), and a computer (3% vs. 7%) (Figure 2).

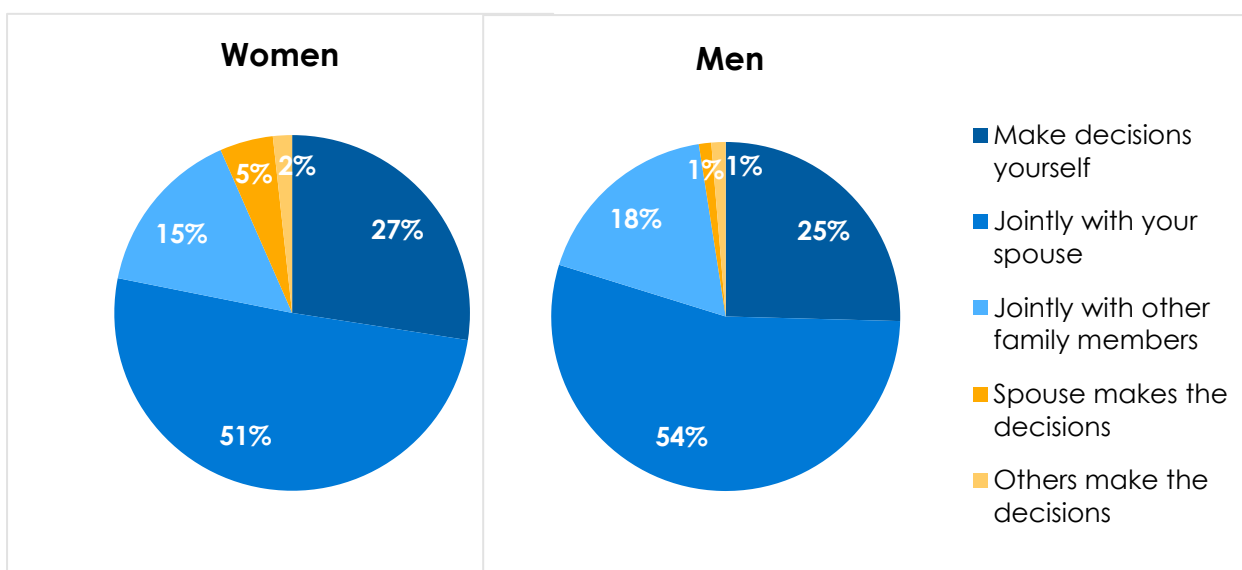
Figure 2: Asset ownership | by gender | Tanzania | 2022



Respondents were asked: Which of these things do you personally own?

When it comes to who makes decisions about how household money is spent, women and men are about equally likely to say they make the decisions themselves (27% of women, 25% of men) or jointly with their spouse (51% of women, 54% of men). More women than men say that others make the decisions without consulting them (7% vs. 2%) (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Who decides how money is used? | by gender | Tanzania | 2022



Respondents were asked: What is the main way that decisions are made about how to use any money that you have or earn, for example from a job, a business, selling things, or other activities?

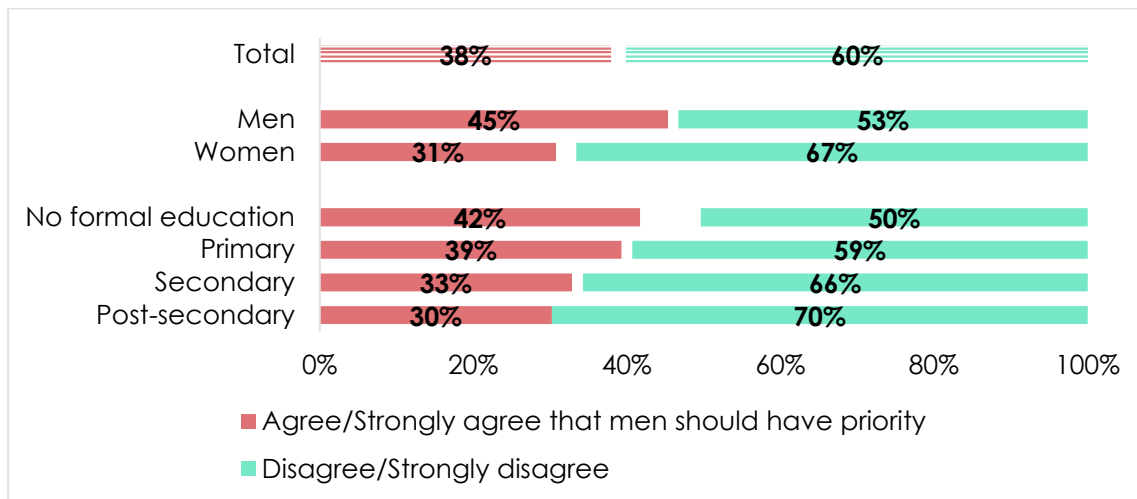
Rights to a job and land

The ability to claim certain rights can be a tool to promote gender equality – or to maintain inequality. Do Tanzanians want gender equality when it comes to jobs and land? And, if so, how close to equality are they?

About four in 10 Tanzanians (38%) endorse the idea that men should be given priority over women in hiring when jobs are scarce, while six in 10 (60%) reject this form of gender discrimination (Figure 4). Men (53%) trail women (67%) in insisting on equality when it comes to jobs. Support for equality in hiring increases with respondents' education level, ranging from 50% of those with no formal schooling to 70% of those with post-secondary qualifications.

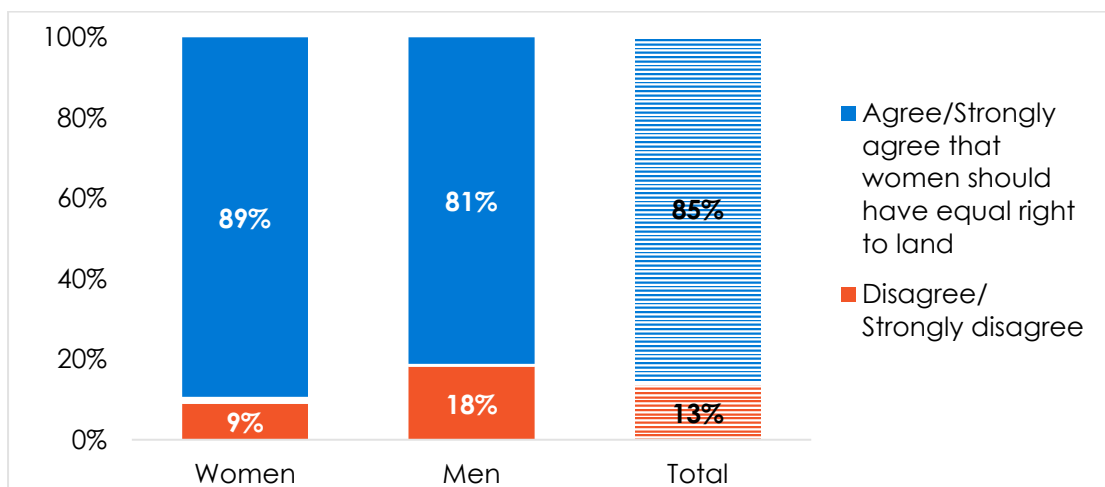
An even larger majority (85%) endorse equal rights to own and inherit land. In this case, too, men are somewhat less likely than women to believe in equality (81% vs. 89%) (Figure 5).

Figure 4: Should men have priority when jobs are scarce? | by gender and education | Tanzania | 2022



Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree: When jobs are scarce, men should have more rights to a job than women.

Figure 5: Should women have equal rights to land? | by gender | Tanzania | 2022



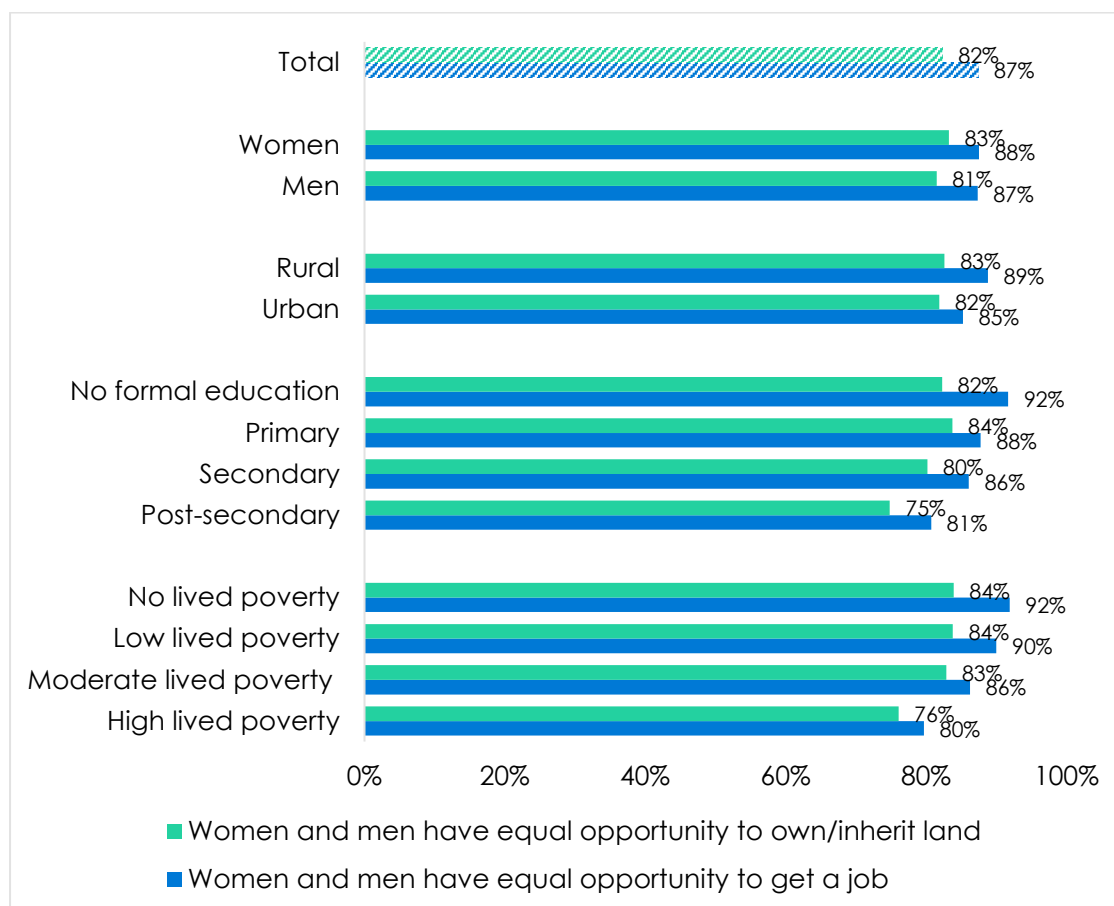
Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree: Women should have the same rights as men to own and inherit land.

While large majorities say women should have equal rights to jobs and land, are these rights a reality? Most Tanzanians say women do have the same opportunities as men to get a paying job (87%) and to own and inherit land (82%) (Figure 6).

Women and men offer similar assessments on these questions, as do urban and rural residents. But perceptions of equal opportunity decrease as respondents' education level rises. Among citizens with no formal schooling, 92% say job opportunities are equal, compared to 81% among those with post-secondary qualifications.

Views on equal opportunity for women and men also vary by respondents' economic level: Among the best-off citizens (those experiencing no lived poverty¹), 92% perceive job opportunities as equal, compared to 80% of those with high lived poverty.

Figure 6: Do women and men have equal opportunities to get a job and to own/inherit land? | by demographic group | Tanzania | 2022



Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree:

In our country today, women and men have equal opportunities to get a job that pays a wage or salary.

In our country today, women and men have equal opportunities to own and inherit land.

(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

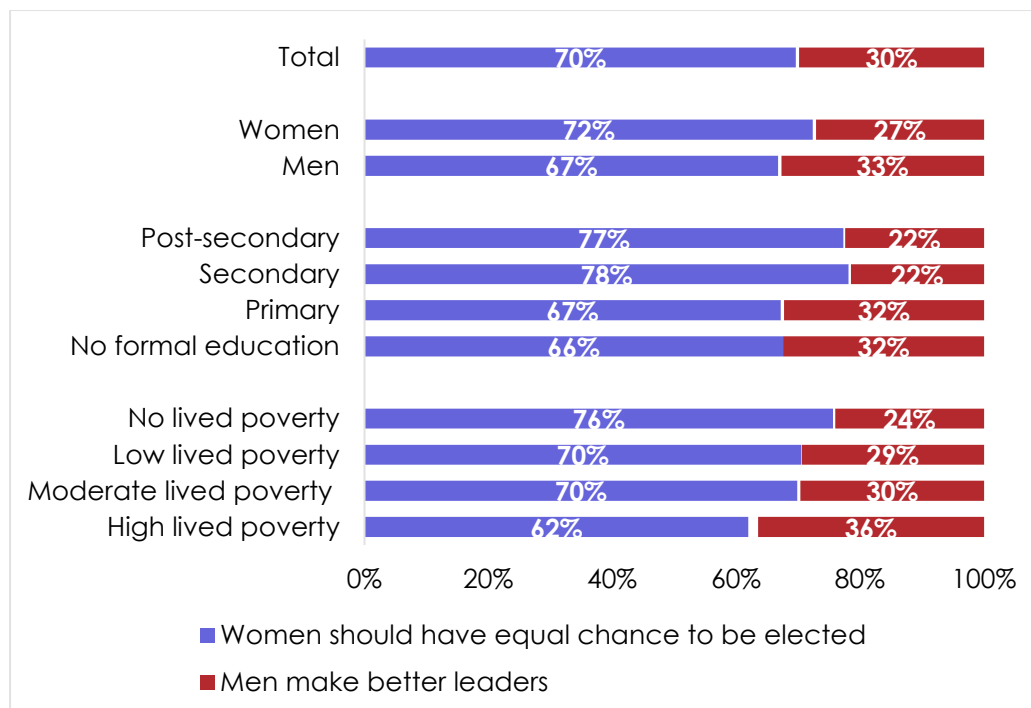
¹ Afrobarometer's Lived Poverty Index (LPI) measures respondents' levels of material deprivation by asking how often they or their families went without basic necessities (enough food, enough water, medical care, enough cooking fuel, and a cash income) during the preceding year. For more on lived poverty, see Mattes and Patel (2022).

Gender equality in political participation

One critical aspect of gender equality is women's participation in political leadership, which helps ensure that women's voices are heard in policy making.

In Tanzania, seven in 10 citizens (70%) say women should have the same chance as men to vie for political office, rejecting the idea that men make better political leaders and should thus be given priority as candidates (Figure 7). More women (72%) than men (67%) endorse equality in politics. Support for this aspect of gender equality is stronger among citizens with secondary or post-secondary education (77%-78%) than among their less educated counterparts (66%-67%). It also increases with respondents' economic status, ranging from 62% of those with high lived poverty to 76% of well-off respondents.

Figure 7: Should women have an equal chance to be elected? | by gender
 | Tanzania | 2022



Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Men make better political leaders than women and should be elected rather than women.

Statement 2: Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men.

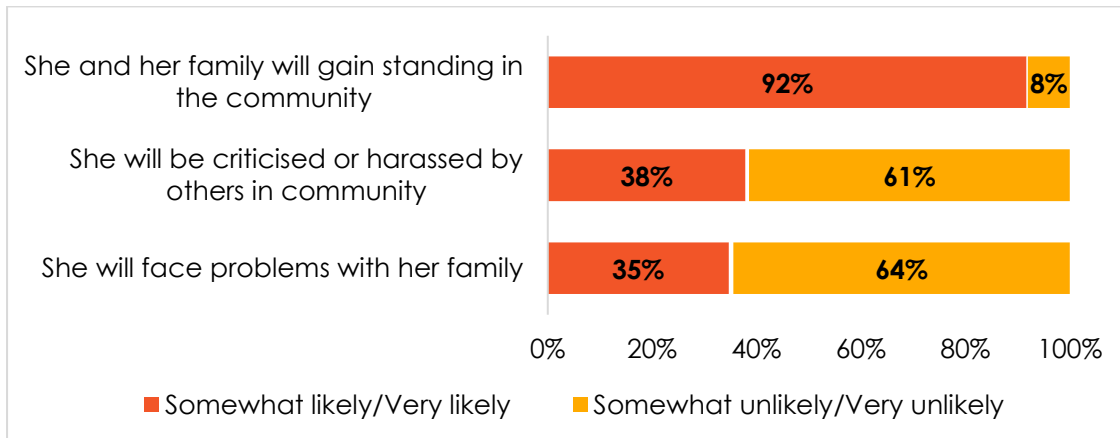
(% who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement)

Even if she believes that voters will give her the same consideration as a male candidate, a woman may be encouraged to run for public office – or discouraged from doing so – by other consequences she expects to result from her candidacy.

On the positive side, nine in 10 Tanzanians (92%) say it is "somewhat likely" or "very likely" that a woman and her family will gain standing in the community if she runs for elective office (Figure 8).

Moreover, majorities consider it "somewhat unlikely" or "very unlikely" that others in the community will criticise a female candidate, call her names, or harass her for seeking public office (61%) or that she will face problems with her family (64%). Still, more than one-third of respondents consider such negative reactions likely, which could contribute to some women's reservations about throwing their hats into the ring.

Figure 8: For better or for worse: How running for elective office might affect women's lives | Tanzania | 2022



Respondents were asked: *If a woman in your community runs for elected office, how likely or unlikely is it that the following things might occur?*

She and her family will gain standing in the community?

She will be criticised, called names, or harassed by others in the community?

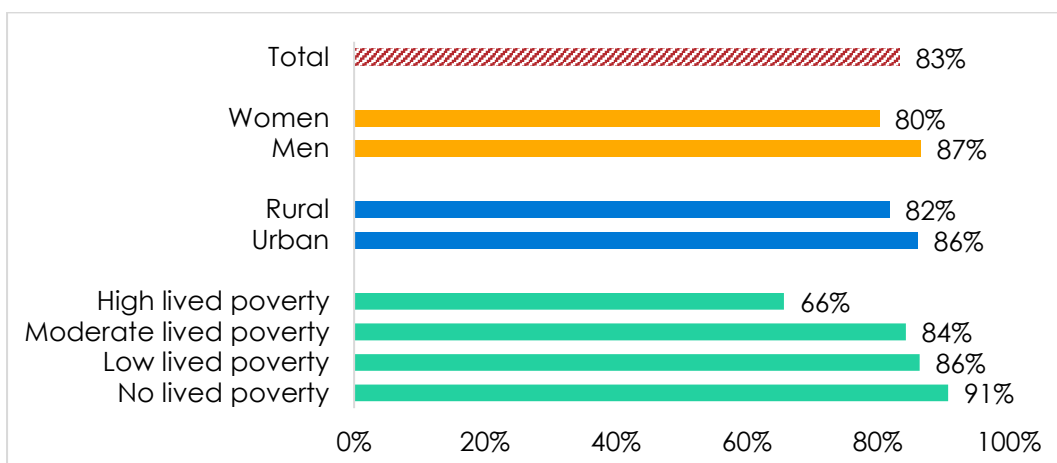
She will face problems with her family?

Government performance in promoting equal rights and opportunities

Overall, more than eight in 10 Tanzanians (83%) say their government is doing a “fairly good” or “very good” job of promoting equal rights and opportunities for women (Figure 9). Men (87%) are more likely than women (80%) to be satisfied with the government’s efforts on gender equality.

Approval ratings are somewhat higher in cities than in rural areas (86% vs. 82%) and vary strongly by respondents’ economic levels: 91% of well-off respondents approve of the government’s efforts on gender equality, compared to only 66% of citizens experiencing high levels of lived poverty. These findings suggest that poorer citizens may not be sharing equally in the benefits of growing gender equality.

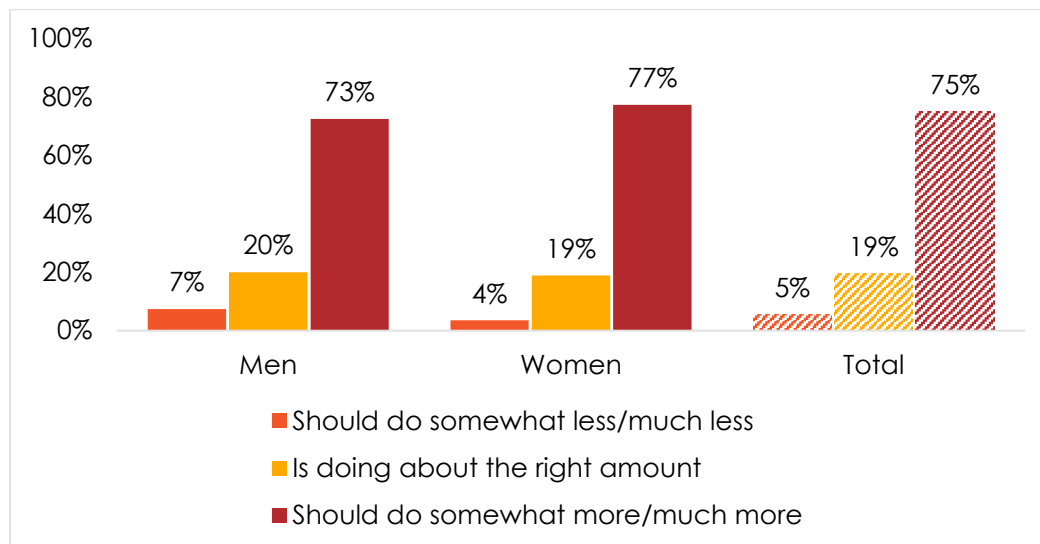
Figure 9: Government performance in promoting equal rights and opportunities for women | Tanzania | 2022



Respondents were asked: *How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Promoting equal rights and opportunities for women? (% who say “fairly well” or “very well”)*

Even if the government's performance ratings are positive, three-quarters (75%) of citizens think it should do "somewhat more" or "much more" to promote equal rights and opportunities for women. Women (77%) are slightly more likely than men (73%) to want greater efforts on gender equality (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Should the government do more or less to promote equal rights and opportunities for women? | by gender | Tanzania | 2022



Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, should government and elected officials be doing more than they are doing now to advance the rights and equality of women, or should they be doing less, or are they doing about the right amount?*

Conclusion

Survey findings show that educational attainment and financial decision making are nearly gender-equal in Tanzania, but women still trail men in the ownership of key assets. Most Tanzanians support gender equality in access to paying jobs, ownership of land, and political leadership, though a significant proportion of citizens think women may face criticism and problems with their families if they run for elective office.

Overall, most Tanzanians are pleased with the government's performance on promoting gender equality, but a large majority want these efforts to intensify.

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Afrobarometer, a nonprofit corporation with headquarters in Ghana, is a pan-African, non-partisan research network. Regional coordination of national partners in about 35 countries is provided by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in South Africa, and the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Nairobi in Kenya. Michigan State University (MSU) and the University of Cape Town (UCT) provide technical support to the network.

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