LEGAL AID SERVICE INTERVENTIONS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A CASE OF MOROGORO RURAL AND KONGWA DISTRICTS, TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

Legal Aid Service (LAS) intervention is considered to have an influence on women empowerment through raising awareness of women towards their rights. Using Kongwa and Morogoro Rural districts as study areas, a study was conducted involving 240 women (120 beneficiaries and 120 non-beneficiaries of LAS). A cross-sectional research design was used, whereby random selection of respondents was done. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. A Composite Empowerment Index (CEI) was used to measure the extent of women empowerment among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of LAS interventions. Women in the study areas were categorized at medium level of empowerment. Beneficiaries of LAS interventions were found to be more empowered relative to their counterparts. Ordinal logistic regression analysis results showed that involvement of women in LAS interventions, awareness of women legal rights, marital status and age at first marriage were the most determinant factors that influence women empowerment in Morogoro Rural and Kongwa district. Hence persistent sensitization of women about their rights is critical for reducing violence against them and ultimately achieving high levels of empowerment. Also, rigorous enforcement of existing laws and policies is required to discourage and ultimately eliminate the practice of early marriage.

Contribution/ Originality: This study provides preliminary paradigm for the influence of Legal Aid Services interventions on women empowerment. The study also contributes in the existing literature that awareness of women legal rights had positive significant effect on women empowerment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment is a vital component towards reducing violence against women and the realization of human rights that contributes to sustainable development. Several initiatives have been implemented to promote human and women rights at the global level. The initiatives such as the formation of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948, the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women of 1993 and the Fourth World Conference on Women Action for Development Equality and Peace of 1995 (LHRC, 2012). Para 61 (a) of the Beijing Platform

for Action requires that governments ensure free or low cost Legal Aid Services (LAS), including legal literacy, especially to women. In line with this, the Government of Tanzania ratified international conventions, human rights treaties and subscribes to principles of the soft law and international declarations. Such treaties include: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948. Under UDHR, articles 7 and 11 are related to justice and LAS. At the regional level, the Government ratified regional instruments which are related to LAS and rights of women known as "the Maputo Protocol" the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights of Women in Africa (Legal Services Facility (LSF), 2012).

Legal Aid Services (LASs), is defined as free or subsidized services to eligible individuals or groups, mainly poor and vulnerable people. LASs are provided to people as a means to strengthen their access to justice (Danish Institute for human Rights (DIHR), 2011) such as legal information and education, legal advice and assistance, alternative dispute resolution and legal representation. The importance of LAS has been recognized by the Tanzania government by permitting establishment of NGOs and Paralegal Organizations to enhance awareness of women right issues (Legal and Human Right Center (LHRC), 2004).

Despite a number of initiatives that have been taken by the Government such as ratification of legal instruments and allowing establishment of LAS organizations to advocate women rights, violations of women rights has continued to increase among women around the world. For example, WHO (2013) reported that about 35% of women worldwide in 2013 experienced physical and sexual intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence. In addition, more than 700 million of women today were married below 18 years of age and some 250 million were married before 15 years. Further, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is recognized as a human rights violation and is one of manifestations of gender inequality.UNICEF (2014) estimated that 133 million girls and women had experienced some forms of FGM in Africa and the Middle East. Besides, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and ICF Macro (2011) indicated that, in Tanzania, about 45% of the women aged between 15 and 49 years experienced either physical or sexual violence in 2010.

Violation of women rights is one of the most direct expressions of the power imbalance between men and women (Begum, 2014). Hence, empowerment of women in Tanzania and elsewhere is crucial as a strategy for tackling the existing forms of GBV against women.

Generally, empowerment and women's empowerment in particular is pointed out as multidimensional (occurs within sociological, psychological, economic and political dimensions). Also, empowerment is a complex concept which can be interpreted differently from diverse perspectives (Malhotra et al., 2002; Mosedale, 2005). Most scholars from different disciplines such as political science, social welfare, education and social studies conceive empowerment as a process of learning, mobilizing, transforming, conscientizing, inspiring, liberating, power within, power with and power to (Freire, 1973; Friedmann, 1992; Weissberg, 1999; Parpart et al., 2003). Peterson et al. (2005) define empowerment as a social process as it takes place in relation to others and occurs at various levels such as individuals, group and community. While, Narayan (2005) viewed broadly empowerment as a process of increasing poor people's freedom of choice and action to shape their own lives; it is the process of enhancing an individual's or group's capacity to make effective choices.

According to Freire (1973) empowerment is perceived as a means of liberating oppressed people and presented three progressive steps of empowerment: conscientizing, inspiring, and liberating. The oppressed or the disadvantaged people, such as women, can become empowered by learning social inequality "conscientizing"[1].

Hossain and Jaim (2011) assert that a woman suffers from different types of powerlessness in social, political and economic spheres of life; while disempowerment of women reflects inadequate awareness of laws, less control of property, low educational level and limited participation in decision making. On the other hand CARE International

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[1]Conscientizing referred as increasing awareness of how social and political structures affect individuals and groups to powerlessness Freire (1973).

(2009) referred to empowerment as sum total of changes needed for a woman to realize her full human rights: the combined effect of changes in her own aspirations and capabilities, the environment that surrounds and conditions her choices, and the power relations through which she negotiates her path.

Based on perspectives from different literature sources, this study defined women empowerment as adopted from CARE (2009). The study anticipates that LAS interventions can influence women empowerment through raising awareness of human and women rights, towards knowing the existing social inequalities and structures; that contributed to violation of their rights. Empowerment will consequently, liberate them by challenging behaviours and attitude which contributes to their violent situation.

Few studies have been carried out on women empowerment in relation to LAS for example: the study by Rodriguez (2000) attempted to review legal aid intervention on how it can effect women's empowerment in Ecuador. In Tanzania, several empirical studies have been conducted on women empowerment, just to mention a few (Sikira, 2010; Jeckoniah, 2012; Kato and Kratzer, 2013) who analysed women empowerment and other aspects, but their analyses did not empirically focus on the context of LAS intervention. Yet, little is known on LASs intervention and women empowerment in Tanzania. Hence, information on whether LASs interventions have any influence on women empowerment in Tanzania is scantly discussed. Given that women are the majority of people involved in LAS interventions and who face high levels of violence, it is important to understand as to whether, LAS had any influence on women empowerment. Therefore, this chapter examined women's empowerment in relation to their involvement in LAS interventions in Kongwa and Morogoro Rural districts. Particularly, the chapter (i) assessed the extent of women empowerment among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of LAS Interventions, (ii) analysed determinants factors that influence women empowerment in relation to LAS and tested the hypothesis that: LAS related factors are likely to influence levels of women empowerment.

The findings from this paper contribute to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Number 5, which specifically focuses on fighting violence against women as a way of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (Osborn et al., 2015). The findings also contribute to the implementation of UDHR, articles 7 and 11 which promote women's rights in relation to LAS (LSF, 2012). The information from this chapter provides insights during planning interventions for promoting women's legal rights to enhance women empowerment. In addition, the findings will enlighten policy makers, LAS providers, and the community at large. The information from this chapter will also be used as a reference material for decision making with regard to provision of LAS concerning women empowerment in Tanzania context.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is adapted from the framework developed by CARE (2009) the framework mainly measured empowerment by focusing on three interrelated dimensions namely: agency, structure and relations[2]; these dimensions also are structuring and influencing as one another to produce or undermine an empowerment process as well impact on women empowerment outcomes (Figure 4.1).

Beside the framework is aligned with structuration theory developed by Giddens (1984) which assert that structures are both medium and outcome of practices which constitute social systems; the theory assumes that structures can shape people's practices, but it is also people's practices can be shaped by structures (i.e. duality of the structural properties in a social system can serve as both enabling and constraining forces).

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[2]The term 'agency' refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices. The term 'structure' covers the rules and social forces (such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, customs, etc.) that limit or influence the opportunities that determine the actions of individuals. Relations are the social relationships through which women negotiate their path and rights with other actors CARE (2009). both agency and structure are mediated through relationships between and among social actors.

Based on these theoretical assumptions, this study assumes that the interaction between independent variables in agency, structures and relation (access to LASs, awareness of women legal rights, involvement to LAS interventions, group networks apart from LASs) and background variables age, education attainment, marital status, age at first marriage and type of marriage; although background variables not indicated in (Fig. 1).

In the context of this study individual agency assumed to be enhanced through awareness rising on women legal rights, household domination, access to information, as well as involvement in LAS interventions; while social structure (ethnicity, access to justice and access to LAS) improved or changed an individual agency depending on relationships in group networks such as self-helps, farmers, credit and spiritual. Empowerment in LAS interventions as conceptualized in this study can be considered to happen when a woman change and realize her human rights that lead her towards: making household decisions, acquire personal autonomy, having freedom of movement, and being free from violence.
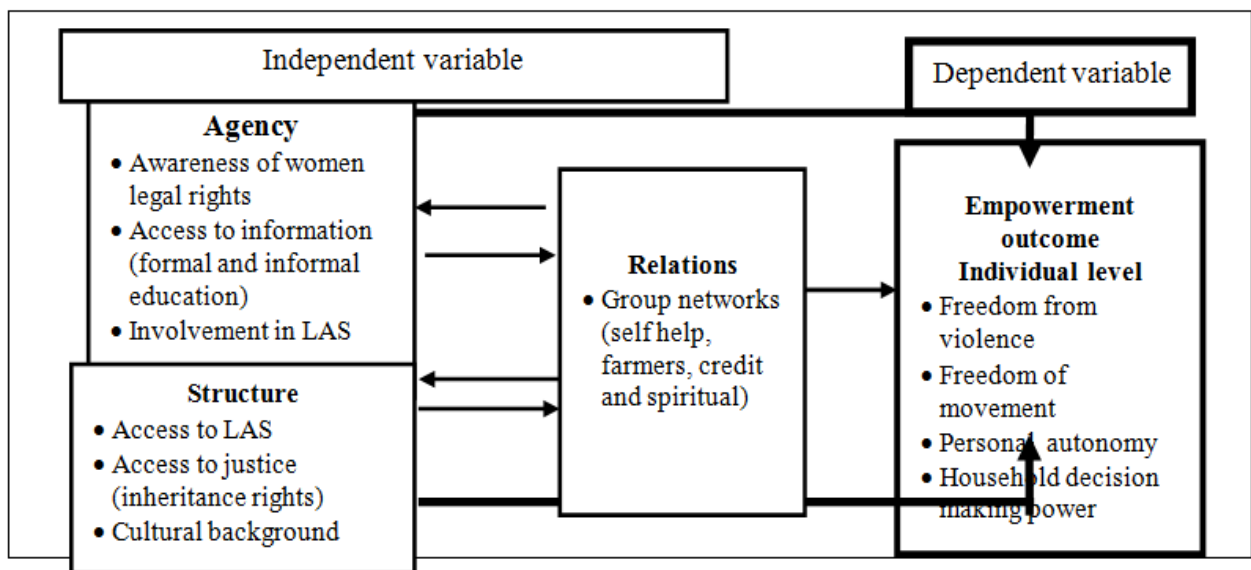

Figure-1. Conceptual frame work adapted from CARE (2009)

Source: Survey data (3013)

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Description of the Study Area

The study was carried out in Morogoro Rural and Kongwa districts which are found in Morogoro and Dodoma Regions respectively. The districts were selected for the study because had some villages which are benefited from various LAS interventions programmes: such as education training on women's legal rights including, various forms of VAW such as FGM, land and inheritance rights issues. Moreover, the districts are within the top five regions[3] in Tanzania with high prevalence of physical violence in 2010 National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and ICF Macro (2011). Hence to be a good study area for the case being studied.

2.2. Research Design

The study applied a cross sectional research design which allows data to be collected in multiple cases at a single point in time and it is useful for description purposes as well as for determination of relationship between variables (Babbie, 1990). Further, the design allows collection of both qualitative and quantitative data for two or more variables, which are then examined to detect patterns of associations (Bryman, 2004; Rwegoshora, 2006;

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[3]The top five regions with high prevalence of physical violence in 2010 were Dodoma, Mara, Ruvuma, Morogoro, and Kagera National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and ICF Macro (2011).

Kitala, 2014). Four wards and eight villages were selected for the study. Two ward and four villages were selected purposely from each district based on the presence of LAS providers. On the other hand two ward and four villages were also selected purposely from each district in regard to absence of LAS providers during time of the study (Table 1).

Table-1. Villages selected for the study

Districts	Divisions	LASW	LASIV	NWS	NLASIW	NLASIV	NWS
Kongwa	Mlali	Mlali	Mlali Iyegu	30	Iduo	Iduo	30
			Masinyeti	30		Nghumbi	30
Morogoro Rural	Mvuha	Mvuha	Mvuha	30	Kongwa	Kongwa	30
			Lukulunge	30		Tulo	30
				120			120

Note: LASIW=LAS Intervention Ward, LASIV= LAS Intervention Villages, NWS= Number of Women Selected, NLASIW=Non LAS Intervention Wards, NLASIV=Non LAS Intervention Villages

2.3. Sample Size Determination

The sampling unit for this study was an individual woman aged from 15 years and above with different marital status. Women were the respondents in this study because they are the ones actively involved in LAS interventions and mostly affected by violence. For the purpose of this study, all female respondents were regarded as women regardless of their age and marital status. A woman involved in LAS interventions is regarded as a beneficiary of LAS interventions; this means that they are either affiliated to LAS organization or group of LAS providers at village level and those who attended educational training on women legal rights and related issues on GBV against women organized by LAS providers. Women who were not involved in LAS intervention at time of study are regarded as non-beneficiaries. In addition, women who accessed LASs such as those who were counseled on any issues related to VAW, matrimonial cases and land conflict issues offered by LAS providers are not regarded as beneficiaries of LAS interventions as they lack aspects of membership and educational training package offered by LAS providers.

The sampling frame was a list of names of women registered in LAS intervention networks or groups and village register for non-beneficiaries. Simple random sampling technique using lottery method was used to obtain sample size of 240 respondents with equal proportion of both LAS beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (Appendix 4).

Mixed methods of data collection were employed whereby both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The combination was considered useful as it provides triangulation of information (Creswell, 2013). A structured questionnaire with close and open-ended questions was used to collect quantitative data. Pre-testing of the instrument for reliability was done in Mtamba village near Mvuha village in Morogoro Rural District, with twenty respondents.

Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were used to collect qualitative data. Key informants were people believed to have in-depth understanding and knowledge on women empowerment and LAS perspectives in the study areas. The interviews involved 20 key informants including four representatives from LAS providers, two police officers working at the gender desk at the district level, two Divisions Community Development Officers, four ward and eight Village Executive Officers. One FGD was conducted per village, comprising twelve women as participants in eight groups. In addition FGDs of men only which involved twelve people per FGD were held in each village to explore more information on women empowerment matters.

2.4. Data Analysis

Qualitative data were categorized into sets of meaningful themes using content analysis. Women empowerment was measured by using Women Empowerment Index (WEI). The most commonly indices used in

different studies (Haque *et al.*, 2011; Kundu and Chakraborty, 2012; Jeckoniah, 2013) for measuring women empowerment are: Personal Autonomy Index (PAI), Household Decision Making Index (HDMI), Domestic Consultation Index (DCI) and Economic Decision Making Index (EDMI). For the purpose of this chapter four indices are adapted which include PAI, HDMI, Freedom of Movement Index (FMI) and Free from Violence Index (FVI). The indices were used because they are appropriate to construct a Composite Empowerment Index (CEI) as could have been resulting from LAS interventions. Each index was weighted equally based on the explained variables in an individual index, whereby the values ranged between zero and one.

For purpose of this study PAI contained six variables, namely "whether a woman was able to visit her parental home, hospital or clinic, market", whether a woman: "helps relatives with money, sets aside money for personal use or seeks financial help without asking permission from her husband". This dimension was computed on 1/6 variables in three responses: never '0', occasionally '0.0835' and frequently '0.167'.

HDMI included 13 variables on who makes decisions over children's education, family planning, day to day family expenditure, purchase of permanent assets, going outside home, medical treatment, spending personal income, use of family income, marriages of sons or daughters, selection of crops to plant in the field, entertaining guests, purchasing food and clothes. The HDMI was calculated on 1/13 variables in three responses: husband alone '0', joint decision '0.0385' and wife alone 0.077.

FVI consisted of six variables which assessed, whether a woman has been a victim of the most common forms of violence: Wife battering, deprivation of acquiring basic needs, experience of FGM, forced sexual intercourse, marriage before attaining physical maturity, and deprivation of rights to inherit family resources. FVI was computed on 1/6 variables in dummy '0' if not and '0.167' if yes.

FMI involved seven variables regarding women's freedom to visit market, medical facility, relatives' or friends' houses, attending meetings or workshops, social functions e.g. wedding ceremonies, organization of cultural programmes and visiting financial institutions e.g. VICOBA. The index was calculated on 1/7 variables in five responses: never '0', occasionally '0.03575', frequently '0.0715' accompanied '0.10725' and ever gone alone '0.143'. Since women empowerment is multidimensional and measured in different aspects of empowerment. Therefore, all four indices were combined into a single index (CEI) to measure women empowerment. CEI was obtained by averaging those indices as indicated in Equation (i). The use of CEI to measure women empowerment is well documented in a number of literatures sources such as Jeckoniah *et al.* (2012); Alam *et al.* (2015); (Sheikh *et al.*, 2016).

Y (CEI) = 1/4 indices (PAI+ HDMI + FVI+ FMI) …………………………..Equation (i)

The cut-off points for empowerment levels were based on human development achievements, as introduced by United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) (2014). The achievements were measured on an index ranging between the values of 0 to 1 and human achievements classified into four levels: low human development (0-0.549), medium human development (0.550- 0.699), high human development (0.7-0.799) and very high human development (0.8-1). The cut-off points based on classification of human development achievement as adapted from UNDP 2014, because empowerment is considered as important aspects of human development. Therefore, this study classified empowerment into four levels on an index ranging from values of 0-1.Women scores 0 on CEI were classified as 'no empowerment', women scores (0.1-0.549) 'low empowerment', women scores (0.550- 0.799) 'medium empowerment', and women scores (0.8-1) 'high empowerment'. None of woman scored 0 on CEI for that reason, at the end levels of empowerment were classified into three levels.

Determinant factors that influence womens' empowerment in relation to LAS interventions were determined by using ordinal logistic regression model. The model was relevant because the dependent variable (Y) was classified in terms of ordered empowerment levels (low, medium and high). Ordinal logistic regression is appropriate when the outcome is at ordinal level with more than two categories (Agresti and Finlay, 2009). The ordinal logistic regression equation according to Agresti and Finlay (2009) is expressed as:

$$P(Y) = \frac{e^{\alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_k X_k}}{1 + e^{\alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_k X_k}}$$

Where:

P(Y) = the probability of the success alternative occurring, Y = dependent variable, e = the natural log, α = the intercept of the equation, β_1 to β_k = coefficients of the predictor variables, X_1 to X_k = independent variables entered in the regression model.

In this paper:

P(Y = 1) the probability of being grouped in the category of high level of empowerment, X_1 = age of respondent in years, X_2 = education level of respondent in years of schooling, X_3= marital status (married 1 and 0 otherwise), X_3 = age at first marriage (married above 18 years 1 and 0 if married below 18 years), X_5= types of marriage (monogamous 1 and 0 polygamous), X_6 = involvement in LAS interventions activities (beneficiary 1 and 0 non- beneficiary of LAS), X_7 = access to LAS (received LAS services 1 and 0 otherwise), X_8 = awareness of women rights (total scores on women legal right index) and X_9 = involvement in groups network (being member of any group network apart from LAS 1 and 0 otherwise). Explanation of the output from the model focused on p-values for testing the significance of the effect; coefficients for measuring the directions of women empowerment to higher or low category, as of influencing factors by observing negative or positive signs; Wald statistics for measuring the strength of the influence on women empowerment.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Characteristics of the Respondents

The findings presented in Table 2 show that the mean age of respondents was 36.8 years. A quarter (25%) of the beneficiaries and 16% non-beneficiaries had age ranging from 30 to 44 years. This indicates that a greater proportion of the respondents in the study areas were at their active reproductive and productive age.

Access to basic education has been recognized as a fundamental human right (United Nations (UN), 1949). Also education has been mentioned as an important key to empowering women to participate in decision making in society (UN, 1995). Besides, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2005); Lewis and Lockheed (2008) indicated that education enhances women's well-being as it reduces violence, gives them more autonomy in shaping women's lives and gives them greater voice in household decision making. Findings show 65.4% of the women attained primary education and 21.2% of the respondents have no formal education (Table 2). Since 21.2% the respondents have no formal education, it is possible that this proportion can slow down process of empowerment.

Findings in Table 2 show that majority (67.9%) of the women were married or cohabiting, and monogamy (61.3%) was the most common forms of marital engagements in Morogoro Rural and Kongwa districts. Furthermore, the findings show that 34.5% of LAS beneficiaries and 32.3% non-beneficiaries were married for the first time at the age above 18 years. About one third (33.2%) of the women respondents were first married below age of 18 years. Early marriage is a fundamental violation of human rights. Women's rights in Tanzania is protected and promoted by various international and regional legal instruments such as: Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), UDHR of 1948, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Child (Jullu et al., 2009) which define a child as a human being below the age of 18. In accordance with this definition, CRC and CEDAW recommended that the minimum age for marriage for boys and girls be set at 18 years. Conversely, Tanzania Law of Marriage Act of 1971, Section 13(2) allows marriage of a girl below 18 years of age but disallows a male below the age of 18 years from getting marriage (LHRC, 2013). This implies that the legal framework in Tanzania still encourages early marriage for girls, despite the fact that the Government ratified to the aforementioned international and regional legal instruments on the rights of the child.

Table-2. Distribution of respondents by social-demographic characteristics (n = 240)

Variable	LAS Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries		All	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Age (Yrs)						
15-29	29	12.1	43	17.9	72	30.0
30-44	60	25.0	40	16.7	100	41.7
45+	31	12.9	37	15.4	68	28.3
Education level						
Not attended school	18	7.5	33	13.8	51	21.2
Primary education	88	36.7	69	28.8	157	65.4
Secondary education	13	5.4	17	7.1	30	12.5
Diploma education	1	0.4	1	0.4	2	0.8
Marital status						
Married or cohabitating	84	35.0	79	32.9	163	67.9
Divorced	18	7.5	16	6.7	34	14.2
Single	11	4.6	12	5.0	23	9.6
Widowed	7	2.9	13	5.4	20	8.2
Type of marriage						
Monogamy	64	29.5	69	31.8	133	61.3
Polygamy	45	20.4	39	18.3	84	38.7
Age at first marriage						
>18 years	75	34.5	70	32.3	145	66.8
<18 years	34	15.7	38	17.5	72	33.2
Age of husband						
Same age	3	1.4	5	2.3	8	3.7
Younger than	1	0.5	3	1.4	4	1.8
1-3 years older	27	12.4	26	12.0	53	24.4
4-6 years older	31	14.3	22	10.1	53	24.4
7-9 years older	14	6.5	15	6.9	29	13.4
More than 10 years older	33	15.2	37	17.1	70	32.3

Note: f=Frequency, %=percent

Moreover, the findings, as indicated in Table 2, show that slightly more than one quarter (32.3%) of the respondents were married to husbands who were more than ten years older than themselves, implying that age difference between spouses was very high, which intensifies the inherent power imbalance between spouses. During FGDs it was revealed that women married at younger age had less life experience which impedes them to have closer relationship with their spouses. Consequently, because of their immaturity, they are less likely to make household decisions and have less freedom of movement.

3.2. Levels of Women Empowerment

The importance of increasing women's decision making power in the household is widely acknowledged as a key to women's empowerment as it also increases a woman's agency (Kabeer, 1999). However, the findings as presented in Table 3 show that one third (30%) of non-beneficiaries and 28.8% beneficiaries of LAS have attained low level of empowerment in household decision making. This indicates that women in the study areas are not well involved in household decision making. The findings are contrary to what was reported by two male FGDs in Mlali-Iyegu and Mvuha villages; they claimed to involve their wives in household decisions making in all matters relating to their families. However, one of the male FGD participants in Mvuha village was quoted as saying: *"…Not all decisions done by women are usually implemented".* (Male FGD, Mvuha Village)

Moreover, 28.3% of beneficiaries and 26.2% of non-beneficiaries of LASs intervention were at low level of empowerment in free from violence index (Table 3). The findings imply that women in Morogoro Rural and Kongwa districts experience different forms of violence in spite of their involvement in LAS intervention.

Table-3. Distribution of respondents by levels of empowerment in individual indices

LE	Empowerment Indices											
	FMI			PAI			HDMI			FVI		
	B	N-B	All	B	N-B	All	B	N-B	All	B	N-B	All
NE	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.8	2.9	3.8	2.1	2.5	4.6
LE	4.2	27.9	32.1	17.5	32.5	50.0	28.8	30.0	58.8	28.3	26.2	54.6
ME	18.3	3.8	22.1	23.3	12.9	36.2	6.2	2.9	9.2	15.0	17.1	32.1
HE	27.5	18.3	45.8	9.2	4.6	13.8	14.2	14.2	28.4	4.6	4.2	8.8

Note: LE= levels of empowerment, NE=No Empowerment, LE=Low Empowerment, ME=medium Empowerment, FM=Freedom of Movement Index, PAI=Personal Autonomy Index, HDMI= Household Decision Making Index, FV=Free of Violence Index, B=Beneficiaries, N-B=Non-Beneficiaries

More than one-third (32.5%) of non-beneficiaries and 17.5% of beneficiaries of LAS have attained low level of empowerment in Personal Autonomy Index (PAI), while less than a quarter (23.3%) of beneficiaries and 12.9% beneficiaries of LAS have attained medium level of empowerment in personal autonomy. More than a quarter (27.5%) of beneficiaries and 18.3% of non-beneficiaries have achieved high levels of empowerment in freedom of movement (Table 3).

3.4. The overall extent of women empowerment

Based on CEI, the mean index was 0.588, which is within the medium level of women empowerment as described in Section 2.4 of this paper. Thus, women in Morogoro Rural and Kongwa districts were classified in medium level of empowerment. About one third (32.5%) of the beneficiaries and 14.6% of the non-beneficiaries of LAS have attained medium level of empowerment, while 38.7% of the non-beneficiaries and only few (8.8%) of the women beneficiaries were categorized into low level of empowerment (Figure 2).

Generally, the findings show that women involved in LAS intervention have acquired relatively higher level of empowerment than their counterparts (Figure 4.2). This result was expected because LAS was considered to be an intervention which creates awareness among women on their rights, which is documented in literature that it can facilitate the process of empowerment. This finding is in line with what Chaudhary *et al.* (2012) has reported that consciousness of women about their rights had positive significant effect on women empowerment. Likewise, Freire (1973) highlighted that the oppressed or disadvantaged people such as women can become empowered by learning about social inequality.
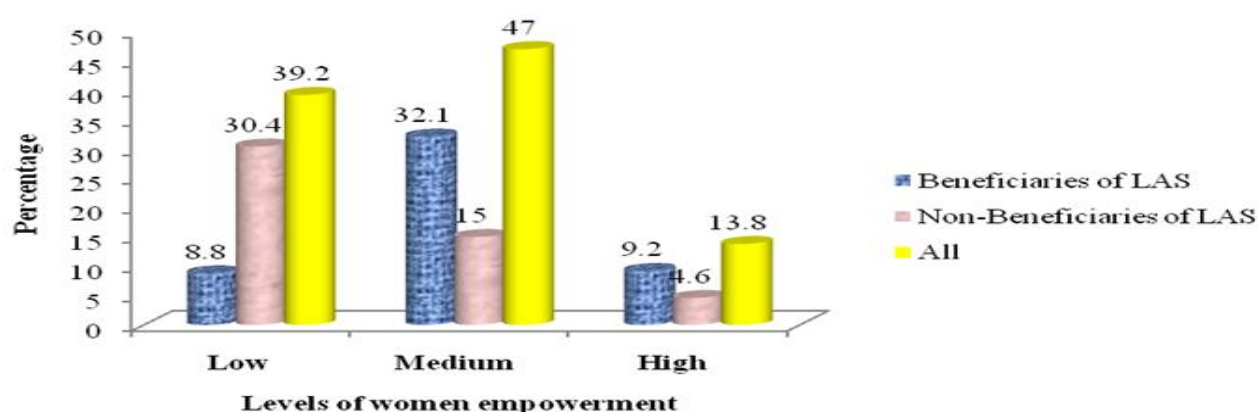

Figure-2. Extent of women empowerment among Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries of LAS
Source: Survey data (2013)

3.5. Variation of Women Empowerment by Socio-Cultural and Demographic Variables

The findings as presented in Table 4.4 show mean values of Cumulative empowerment index (CEI) scores with some socio-cultural and demographic variables. Study findings indicate a significant (p ≤ 0.001) variation in women

empowerment and marital status as well as age at first marriage. Women empowerment increased with increase in age at first marriage (Table 4). The mean score on CEI was highest among those married after 18 years of age and low among those married below 18 years of age.

With respect to marital status, scores on CEI was higher among divorced women and relatively low among single women. This high status of women empowerment for divorced women was contributed by the opportunity they had in making their own decisions and freedom of movement, while low status of women empowerment for single women was contributed by their adolescent age: they mostly depend on their parents and other family members to make decisions for them, which results into low status of empowerment.

Table-4. Women empowerment by Socio-cultural and demographic variables (n = 240)

Variables	Mean index	F	p
Age			
15-29 years	0.555	2.107	0.124
30-44 years	0.590		
45+	0.621		
Marital status			
Single	0.502	61.436	0.000
Married / cohabitating	0.750		
Widow	0.771		
Divorced	0.784		
Age at first marriage			
Below 18 years	0.514	10.535	0.001
18+ years	0.599		
Religion			
Christian	0.568	1.181	0.155
Moslem	0.615		
Pagan	0.640		
Inheritance rights			
Male only	1.546	2.762	0.098
All family members (including women)	1.598		
Cultural background			
Patrilineal	0.576	0.905	0.343
Semi-matrilineal	0.600		
Index mean	**0.588**		

Source: Surey data (2013)

3.6. Determinant Factors Influencing Women Empowerment

Ordinal Logistic Model (OLM) is relevant in prediction of dependent variables with greater than two categories measured at ordinal level of measurement (Agresti and Finlay, 2009). In this paper, women empowerment was measured at low, medium and high levels of empowerment. Therefore, the OLM was appropriate to determine influence of independent variables on women empowerment. Generally, model fitting information, showed statistically significant chi-square statistic ($p \leq 0.05$). This indicates the presence of association between the dependent variable (women empowerment) and a combination of independent variables. The Pseudo R-Square was 0.600 Cox and Snell while Nagelkerke was 0.701, implying that 70% of variation in women empowerment was explained by combination of the independent variables entered in the model. The results on test of parallel lines observed ($p > 0.05$) signifying that the lines are parallel, which was adequate to non-rejection of the null hypothesis. Explanation of the overall output from the model focused on: p-values for testing the significance of the effect; coefficients for measuring the directions of women empowerment to higher or low category, the value for individual coefficient is indicated by a positive or negative sign. A positive sign associated with an indication of a coefficient variable increases the probability of being grouped in the category of high level of empowerment and vice versa; Wald statistics allied with measuring the strength of the influence on women empowerment.

The results presented in Table 5 indicate that the most significant (p ≤ 0.05) variables on the influence of women empowerment were: Marital status, age at first marriage, involvement of women to LAS interventions and awareness of women legal rights. Marital status had negative and strongest (Wald = 62.78) influence on women empowerment. This indicates that chances of single women being grouped in high level of empowerment decreased by -4.957 holding other factors constant (Table 5). This means that a single woman becomes less likely to be in higher level of empowerment. This may be due to the fact that a married woman, can gain empowerment because of getting an opportunity of joint decision making (with husbands) and access to family resources, while most single women still depend on their parents and other family members on different matters relating to them. Hence, they had limited or low decision making, lack of access to or ownership of material resources because of their dependency.

Involvement of women in LAS interventions had negative and stronger (Wald = 25.43) influence on women empowerment. The results also show that chances of non-beneficiaries of LASs interventions to attain high level of empowerment decreased by -3.579 holding other factors constant. This implies that women who were involved in LAS interventions in Morogoro Rural and Kongwa districts were more likely to be in higher level of empowerment than non-beneficiaries. This may be due to the fact that women involvement in LASs interventions had an opportunity of acquiring legal information and educational training on: women legal rights, legal advice, different forms of GBV against women and matrimonial issues which enhance their level of empowerment.

Furthermore results in Table 5 also show age at first marriage had negative and strong (Wald=17.411) influence on women empowerment. This indicates that chances for women married before attaining the age of 18 years being grouped in high level of empowerment is decreased by -1.748 holding other factors constant. The result implies that women married below18 years of age, were less likely to attain higher level of empowerment. This means that women married from 18 years of age and above were more likely to attain high level of empowerment than those who were married at their younger age. The result is in agreement with a finding by Mostofa *et al.* (2008) who reported that women who are married at relatively older ages are expected to experience more empowerment than those married at their adolescent ages; this could be because of better understanding and experience of marital relationships including fulfillment of certain social obligations. The experience acquired may also be transformed into self-confidence which resulted from marrying at an older age, consequently making older-married women more autonomous than those married at their adolescence.

Awareness of women's legal rights had a positive influence, meaning that the chances of women who were aware of their legal rights being in a higher level of empowerment increased by 0.078. This implies that the more women understand their rights, the more they are likely to increase odds of attaining higher level of empowerment than those who are unaware of their rights. Similar results were reported by Chaudhary *et al.* (2012) that consciousness of women about their rights had positive significant effect on women empowerment.

On the contrary, during focus group discussions (FGDs) by men group in Mvuha Village, it was revealed that women's recognition of their rights sometimes leads to more violence, when trying to defend their rights against their spouses. However, findings from key informant interviews (KIIs) depicted that recognition of women about their rights is like a ladder towards women empowerment. One of the key informant interviewees at Mvuha emphasized: *"…awareness of women about their rights has no doubt that women are better informed on their rights and how to exercise them. Thus, they become active in contesting for leadership positions and can participate confidently in social and decision making processes…."* (KI, Mvuha Village)

Table-5. Factors influencing Empowerment (n=240)

Variables	Coefficient	SE	Wald	Sig.
Age	0.025	0.016	2.525	0.112
Education	0.041	0.054	0.572	0.449
Marital status	-4.957	0.626	62.781	0.000
Age at first marriage	-1.748	0.419	17.411	0.000
Type of marriage	-0.235	0.384	0.373	0.541
Involvement to LAS interventions	-3.579	0.710	25.426	0.000
Access to Legal aid services	0.595	0.655	0.825	0.364
Awareness of women legal rights	0.078	0.037	4.455	0.035
Group networks	0.106	0.063	2.869	0.090

p = 0.000; Goodness of-Fit =1; Cox and Snell = 0.600, Nagelkerke = 0.701; Test of Parallel line = 0.207

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and discussion from this paper it is concluded that majority of the women had attained medium level of empowerment. Generally, beneficiaries of LAS interventions are more empowered than non-beneficiaries. However, women in Morogoro Rural and Kongwa districts are still at low level of empowerment in household decision making, their autonomy and free from violence. The most determinant factors influencing women empowerment in context to LASs in this chapter are involvement of women to LAS interventions and awareness of women legal rights. However, some other social demographic factors which are marital status and age at first marriage are also found to have an influence on women empowerment.

Therefore, based on conclusions of this paper it is recommended that LAS providers, women organizations and community based organizations should continue to raise awareness on women legal rights as it is essential towards achieving the goal of women empowerment. Besides, policy makers should ensure rigorous enforcement of existing laws and policies to discourage early marriage.

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