

Low Women Sea Fearers in Maritime Industry in Relation to the Blue Economy in Tanzania

Benjamin Mbeba Meli

Dares Salaam Maritime Institute,
Department of Science and Management
P.O Box 6727, Dares Salaam, Tanzania, East Africa
Email: benjaminmbeba@gmail.com; benjamin.meli@dmi.ac.tz

Hiacinter Burchard Rwechungura,

Dares Salaam Maritime Institute,
Department of Maritime Transport and Nautical Sciences,
P.O Box 6727, Dares Salaam, Tanzania, East Africa,
Email: hiacinter@yahoo.co.uk or hiacinter.rwechungura@dmi.ac.tz

Lucas Pastory Mwisila

Dares Salaam Maritime Institute,
Department of Science and Management,
P.O Box 6727, Dares Salaam, Tanzania, East Africa,
Email: lmwisila@yahoo.com or lucas.mwisila@dmi.ac.tz

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Abstract

The reality of a global gender imbalance in the maritime industry as sea fearers is undeniable whole the world particularly in Africa as an example. However, it is even more profound in the traditionally male-dominated maritime industry against women in Tanzania particularly the area of sea farers. Although the maritime industry has adopted initiatives towards closing the existing gender gap, the integration of women into the maritime industry in the area of sea farers has been at a sluggish rate due to various impediments. Therefore, the paper will address critically on why women participation in sea farers in Tanzania is still limited despite the efforts done by the government and some Maritime industry stakeholders to raise the number of women participation in this area. The paper will also trace the issue of the gender imbalance to its historical roots but also to highlight the current impediments and challenges unique to the maritime industry towards achieving gender equality in its workforce. Using a review of literature, this paper will also bring forward the various initiatives put in place to facilitate the integration of women into the maritime sector and suggests recommendations for the same. The paper will use descriptive research design to describe some reasons which hinders women participation in the area of sea farers. The data were collected from the field into two phases: In

the first phase, qualitative data on low limited number of women participation in sea farers, the challenges unique contributing to a limited number of women in sea farers, and how to overcome. The paper acknowledges that women are a growing force and there is a need to close the gender gap is widely accepted. However, even though many initiatives have led to an increase of female presence, there is room for further efforts to support women for increasing number of sea farers as an important sector in maritime industry because they are the part and parcel of the society. Furthermore, the government through ministry of transport and Ministry of Education and Culture must ensure parity in primary education and initiate from primary level teaching programs in sea farers, to encourage women training in the field of maritime navigation by offering professional and technical opportunities at maritime training institute and establishment of national and regional policy to promote women embankment on board ship to complete their training as seafarers.

Key words: *Seafarers, Maritime industry, Blue economy, gender balance/imbalance, united Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*

Introduction

The blue economy is all of the world's water bodies, including lakes, rivers and groundwater, as well as seas and oceans. The blue economy can play a vital role in sustainable economic growth and social development of states. The main activities of blue economy are based on fisheries, aquacultures, tourism, transport, the port sector, the mining and the energy sector. It should be noted that blue economy approach not only emphasized these emerging and promising sectors, but also incorporate social considerations such as gender equality, food security, reducing poverty, resources preservation or also jobs creation.

It aims to move beyond business as usual and to consider economic development and ocean health as compatible propositions. It is generally understood to be a long-term strategy aimed at supporting sustainable and equitable economic growth through oceans-related sectors and activities. The blue economy is relevant to all countries and can be applied on various scales, from local to global. In order to become actionable, the blue economy concept must be supported by a trusted and diversified knowledge base, and complemented with management and development resources that help inspire and support innovation.

In order to participate fully in the blue economy, it is revealed that women are required to an important role to the maritime industry all the world so as to enable them to be familiar in the productivity of the blue economy (Aggrey, 2000). On the hand, (Aldosari, 2015) argues that, in 2015, the need to advance women's role in maritime activities has become a subject of unprecedented awareness and interest. The International Transport Workers' Federation

estimates that only 2% of the world's maritime workforce is made up of women.

It is time to change this statistic by enhancing opportunities for women to be educated and gain experience in maritime activities. Equally important is changing the culture in the maritime sector to reduce the prejudices women encounter on a daily basis. Fortunately, there is evidence that efforts to do so are yielding results, even though building experience among women in the sector is no easy task.

Shipping and seafaring, from the time people first put to sea, has become increasingly diverse in terms of race, class and nationality. Sailors work for a mix of individual owners and companies that reflect this intricate and globalised industry that the world economy depends on. However, the diversity of the motley crew of global seafarers has yet to take on a visible mixture of men and women – as many seafaring occupations remaining the preserve of men.

The long interaction of (mostly) men and the sea has also created significant cultural barriers to the participation of women in seafaring. This is, however, no excuse for the continued exclusion of women, or for failing to support the many women who have pushed past out-dated gender norms and made great strides in improving the participation of women in maritime.

The African Union (AU) is leading the way on the continent, as seen in the two events it hosted this year – one in Luanda, Angola in March on African Maritime Women: Towards Africa's Blue Economy and another in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July. Moreover, the theme of the AU summit in January was Women Empowerment in Africa, as a step towards achieving the goals of the AU's Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 says that 'Africa's ... ocean economy, which is three times the size of its landmass, shall be a major contributor to continental transformation and growth.'

AU Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma has also made a number of important statements calling for greater participation of women in maritime industries, especially in the development of Africa's Blue Economy. If achieved, this will see increasing interest in African countries that are developing maritime industries. That could translate into economic benefit from maritime resources for Africa as well as opportunities in fields such as ship ownership, fishing, manufacturing and shipbuilding, and natural resource extraction (Dragomir and Surugiu. 2013)



Figure 1: Activities of Shipping Industry

Contrasting Theoretical Strands on Gender imbalance In Maritime Industry as Sea Fearers

"Empowering Women in the Maritime Community" was the World Maritime Day theme for 2019. The theme provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality, in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to highlight the important contribution of women all over the world to the maritime sector.

The Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), meeting for its 120th session at IMO Headquarters in London, endorsed the theme, following a proposal by IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim. "IMO has a strong commitment to helping achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and continues to support the participation of women in both shore-based and seagoing posts, in line with the goals outlined under SDG 5: 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'

- IMO sets International Day for Women in Maritime - International Day for Women in Maritime will be observed on 18 May every year
- The power of visibility – IMO launches photo search for women in maritime - March 6, 2020
- Video message of the IMO Secretary-General, Kitack Lim, "Empowering Women in the Maritime Community"
- IMO's gender programme: new logo to increase visibility for women in maritime
- IN FOCUS: Women in the Maritime - IMO's Gender Programme
- Captain Radhika Menon: The first female captain in the Indian Merchant Navy and the

first female to receive the IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea. (IMO Technical Co-operation Committee. 2013) and IMO (2016).

There is ample evidence that investing in women is the most effective way to lift communities, companies, and even countries with more gender equality have better economic growth. Companies with more women leaders perform better than those who have men.

According to IMO report (2016) shows that today, women represent only 1.2% percent of the global seafarer workforce. This represents a positive trend in gender balance, with the report estimating 24,059 women serving as seafarers, which is a 45.8% increase compared with the 2015 report where the number of women were limited. Within this historically male dominated industry, IMO has been making a concerted effort to help the industry move forward and support women to achieve a representation that is in keeping with twenty-first century expectations. IMO is strongly committed to helping its Member States achieve the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls".

IMO's gender programme was initiated in 1988. At that time, only a few maritime training institutes opened their doors to female students. Since then, IMO's gender and capacity-building programme has helped put in place an institutional framework to incorporate a gender dimension into IMO's policies and procedures. This has supported access to maritime training and employment opportunities for women in the maritime sector.

Table 1 and 2 show the low number of women participation in maritime industry in the blue economy for the last three years (2019 -2022) in both global and Tanzania.

Table 1: Women Participation as Sea farers globally

Year	Total number of women participation	Percentage
2019	20,640	32
2020	24,059	45.8
2021	28,320	46.6

Source: Researcher, 2022

Table 2: Women Participation as Sea farers in Tanzania

Year	Total number of women participation	Percentage
2019	NIL	NIL
2020	NIL	NIL

2021	1	Undefined
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Source: Researcher, 2022

Basing on the above data, it revealed that in Tanzania the number of women participation in maritime industry is not given first priority compared to the number of women in globally which seemed to higher than Tanzanian sea fearers.

The descriptive of the study Area

The study on which this paper is based was conducted in Mwanza and Dares, Salaam Ports as well as Dares, Salaam Maritime Institute (DMI) to investigate clearly the number of women sea fearers for promoting blue economy in Tanzania.

Methodology

Primary data was collected using both qualitative and n quantitative methods for data collection, whereas, secondary data were obtained from literature search and review of relevant official documents. The literature review further highlighted the efforts taken by International Maritime Organization (IMO) to promote women participation in Maritime industry as sea farers in relation to blue economy.

Findings of the Study

The findings of the study are presented under the following subsections:

Limited number of Women Participation as Sea Fearers

Study revealed that women participation in maritime industry is very low and they faced a lot of impediments in social, economic and political in their daily lives.

Social and cultural factors

The findings of the study showed clearly that social and cultural factors women affected negatively women participation in maritime industry as sea farers, and most of these factors are inherited within their societies. The stereotyping existed in their societies and discrimination against maritime women persisted. One of the respondents from

interviewed group from Mwanza Port noted that:

“Women cannot be seafarers because they can conceive any time. So it is difficult to a woman to be sea farers, a fisherman or officer onboard, navy vessel or onboard or merchant shipping.”

Another respondent had the following view on limited number of women participation in Tanzania that:

“.....women cannot do jobs involving strength and heavy mechanical work...”

Based on the above narrations; it is obviously that the societies are still holding their traditional beliefs which decimate women from men on performing the jobs. Women are still regarded today as among the African traditions as weak people. This fact remains that today where as seafarers activities are increasingly to be male-dominated.

.Discriminatory gender and social norms prohibit women from participating in certain aspects of the blue economy, and create additional labor burden on them. Social attitudes frown on and punish women for being in certain spaces. These findings were concurred with what Kitanda (2013) who argues that, the first barrier for women seafarers is culture embedded in occupation. He studied the occupational culture of seafaring and concluded that masculine norms and values are reflected in the work culture on board ships. Seafaring jobs are often assumed to require muscles to operate equipment on board. Finally he conclude that women seafarers is still difficult to work, even though technology is advanced, using muscle power demonstrates the traditional masculine value of labor and privileges the employment of strong and tough men. The idea of masculinity embraced in the occupational culture of seafaring is not limited to physical aspects but also to mental aspects.

Family roles and Religious Beliefs Among African Societies

The findings of this study revealed that Religion, tradition and cultural, social and customary patterns influence women’s status in some African societies. One of the interviewees, from Mwanza Port, explained on traditional and cultural practices, a combination of deep-rooted psychological, sexual and cultural beliefs in Tanzania to a large extent. Women in some Tanzanian societies are regarded as inferior to men. On this basis, some parents refuse to send their female children to school, as a waste of money and time. They believe the end result for a girl is to be taken away into marriage. This has a negative effect on the development of women. Societal discrimination has a damaging effect on the mentality of women, such that some women in this 21st century contribute to low participation in maritime industry and therefore to break

out the importance of blue economy to the development of Tanzania.

Therefore, one can imagine what a woman has to go through to settle with the family if they do not accept the concept, especially within families and communities where the concept of equality for women is not very much accepted. A woman, born in a farming village in Mwanza region (Tanzania), she remembers when her parents learnt that she wanted to go to sea, they thought she was crazy. The villagers also said that they should stop her from doing so. This is a narration from one of the respondent from Dares Salaam Maritime Institute.

Lack of Education and awareness among Societies about Seafarers

Education is the cornerstone for speeding up human development (Nyerere, 1967), Galabawa, et, al., (2000) and Roth (1998). Lack of education in the societies about women seafarers is deteriorating the number of women participation in the blue economy. The findings of this study showed that majority of women in Tanzania are still holding poor misconception that women are not suitable for seafaring jobs and this is a common prejudice worldwide. Women tend to be perceived as suitable for ‘caring’ jobs while men are likely to fit to muscle-required or managerial jobs. Stereotypes for both masculine and feminine types of jobs are culturally and socio-economically constructed and hinder the opposite gender from entering a gender-segregated industry (e.g. the ideas of seafaring being unsuitable for women; and nursing not suitable for men). An overall development plan of gender equality by reducing a bias against women in general would affect the ways in which women seafarers are perceived and accepted on board as well as in shore communities. Hence, the integration of women into seafaring jobs should be a long-term strategic objective for the industry.

Negative attitudes of Ship Owners towards women Sea farers

The study also showed that ship owners companies (companies) are still holding a negative altitude for women employment. Despite the progress made by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and other international organizations over this last decade, it is still difficult for women to be accepted by some shipping companies. Most companies responded positively after the call by the United Nations at the first world conference on women in Mexico City in 1975. Most of the ship-owners associations do not intend to employ women. This decimation goes further to salaries payment between men and women are also different. This is pointed out by one of the interviews from Dares Salaam who strictly said that:

“ it has long been known that women mariners earn less than their counterparts the men...”

Initiatives taken for promoting Women Awareness towards Sea Farers

The findings of the study revealed that despite the limited number of women seafarers in Tanzania and the world wide in particular, there are also initiatives taken by Tanzania

government and other International push to increase women awareness towards maritime industry. These are as follows:

- Arab Women in Maritime Association (AWiMA)

One of AWiMA's objectives is to encourage and promote gender equality for Arab women in the maritime sector.

- Association of Women Managers in the Maritime Sector in Eastern and Southern Africa (WOMESA)

WOMESA was initiated by the IMO and launched in December 2007, in Mombasa, Kenya, under IMO's program on the Integration of Women in the Maritime Sector (IWMS). Tanzania through Dares salaam Maritime Institute (DMI) has a branch.

- ILO Sectoral Meeting on the Recruitment and Retention of Seafarers and the Promotion of Opportunities for Women Seafarers

The Meeting of February 25 - March 1, 2019 discussed the issues raised in the resolution adopted by the 94th (Maritime) Session of the International Labor Conference (2006).

- International Association of Ports & Harbors Women's Forum (IAPHWF)

IAPHWF aspires to advance and empower women in the maritime industry; create a platform for discussing women's issues in the industry; encourage women to join the industry; and to promote training programs.

- International Women Seafarers Foundation (IWSF)

The International Women Seafarers foundation was conceived with the intention of promoting and supporting women seafarers in their sailing career.

- Maritime UK - Women in Maritime

Maritime UK has established a Taskforce to address fairness, equality and inclusion within the maritime sector. Other initiatives include the Women in Maritime Pledge and the Women in Maritime Charter.

- MENA & Africa Arab Women's International Maritime Forum (MENA & Africa AIWMF)

MENA & Africa AIWMF is a non- profit organization for enhancing Arab maritime

women's role in the maritime industry.

- Nautilus International Women's Forum

The Women's Forum of Nautilus International offers an opportunity for female members to engage in discussions on the specific challenges facing women in the maritime profession.

- Pacific Women in Maritime Association (PacWIMA)
- PacWIMA was established in 2005 under the guidance of IMO's gender programme for women in the maritime sector, with the assistance from the Pacific Community (SPC), Regional Maritime Programme Sea Sisters

(RMP).

The mission of Sea Sisters is to promote the recruitment and retention of women in the maritime industry.

- She of the Sea

She of the Sea is the community of professional women in the Yachting industry, and those who support them.

- Women in Maritime Africa (WIMAFRICA)

WIMAFRICA is a maritime women & leaders Organization, comprising all African women in the marine & maritime sectors (i.e including all sea related activities)

- Women in Maritime Association, Caribbean (WiMAC)

A Regional group of female maritime professionals committed to increasing the performance, participation and contribution of women in the maritime sector.

- Women Offshore, LLC

Women Offshore, LLC is an online organization providing resources to foster long-term careers and sharing the latest efforts on gender diversity and inclusion in the offshore and maritime industries.

- Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA International)

WISTA connects female executives and decision makers around the world. More than 40

countries support a National WISTA Association, each of which in turn is a member of WISTA International (Razavi and Miller, 1995).

CONCLUSION

To conclude, it should be noted that maritime industry needs more women, especially in technical positions such as shipping and management roles in order to sharpen up the blue economy which plays a great role for the growth of the Tanzanian economy. In this end, governments will have to take measures in training and capacity building and promotion of women in maritime sector including shipping field, supported by regional and international organizations in order to raise the number of women seafarers in Tanzania.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings and the ensuing conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- Government must introduce the course of Maritime industry in primary education to the higher level of education for both men and women sea farers training in order to minimize misconception of women to be sea farers. This training will encourage women training in the field of maritime navigation by offering professional and technical opportunities at maritime training institute;
- Both government and regional cooperation like East African Community (EAC), South African Development (SADC) must establishment of national and regional policy on Maritime to promote women embankment on board ship to complete their training as seafarer. This will strengthen of technical equipments of the national and regional maritime training institutes for an appropriate adapted technical training;
- The government through Ministry of Transport must empower Tanzania Shipping Cooperation (TASC) to register local and International Ship companies in order to increase the number of national ships that can facilitate the embankment of seafarers trainees ;
- Both government and private sectors must facilitate by funding women missions. This participation of maritime sector for women meetings organized by the regional women associations of maritime sector will be framework and vehicle to

deal with the women issues in maritime sectors;

- Tanzanians Writers/authors must publish at national and regional level, books highlighting the success stories of women in sea farers sector to serve as model to younger generations or future generations. This will attract more women to engage in Maritime industry;
- The government must weigh the relative importance of each sector of the blue economy and decide, based on its own priorities and circumstances, which ones to prioritize. This prioritization can be carried out through appropriate investments and should be based on accurate valuation of its national capital, natural, human and productive;
- The effective implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is a necessary aspect of promoting the blue economy concept worldwide. That convention sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out, including the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources. The effective implementation of the Convention, its Implementing Agreements and other relevant instruments is essential to build robust legal and institutional frameworks, including for investment and business
- The private sector can and must play a key role in the blue economy. Business is the engine for trade, economic growth and jobs, which are critical to poverty reduction

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