Levels, Causes and Consequences of the Fear Phenomena: Findinngs from a Pilot Study in Tanzania

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Introduction - According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, Tanzania is the most democratic nation in the East Africa region, although according to UNDP (n. d.) popular attitudes towards democratic practice in the country are ambivalent (Sunday Citizen, 15/01/ 2012). A comparative civic study done by Riutta (2007) concluded that Tanzanians were generally interested in politics. Despite this there is also a sense that citizens do not get the chance to truly engage in the political process for several reasons, includng fear, apathy and domination by a single party for a good part of the country's political history. Citizens often lack awareness of their rights and how these rights can be voiced and channelled into the government system. Indeed according to critical analysts (Chaligha et al, 2002; Schellschmidt, 2006; Jensen, 2010), Tanzanian villages are more used to receiving government directives than being involved in making decisions that involve the government. In 1993, the renowned judge Lugakingira had occasion to observe that Tanzanins found contentment in being "receivers" rather than "seekers", and hinted that, "...over the years since independence Tanzanians have developed a culture of apathy and silence" (Lugakingira, 1993).

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Levels, Causes and Consequences of the Fear Phenomena: Findinngs from a Pilot Study in Tanzania[1]

Simeon Mesaki [α] & Edmund Matotay [σ]

I. Introduction

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, Tanzania is the most democratic nation in the East Africa region, although according to UNDP (n. d.) popular attitudes towards democratic practice in the country are ambivalent (Sunday Citizen, 15/01/ 2012). A comparative civic study done by Riutta (2007) concluded that Tanzanians were generally interested in politics. Despite this there is also a sense that citizens do not get the chance to truly engage in the political process for several reasons, includng fear, apathy and domination by a single party for a good part of the country's political history. Citizens often lack awareness of their rights and how these rights can be voiced and channelled into the government system. Indeed according to critical analysts (Chaligha et al, 2002; Schellschmidt, 2006; Jensen, 2010), Tanzanian villages are more used to receiving government directives than being involved in making decisions that involve the government. In 1993, the renowned judge Lugakingira had occasion to observe that Tanzanins found contentment in being "receivers" rather than "seekers", and hinted that, "...over the years since independence Tanzanians have developed a culture of apathy and silence" (Lugakingira, 1993). Lange, et al (2000) found that the "culture of silence" that developed during one-party rule seemed to prevail and apparently there was no culture of voicing discontent, not to mention taking action. An African Afrobarometer Survey of 2002 concluded that Tanzanians exhibited a high level of patience, which was manifested through "uncritical and passive acceptance" of the status quo (Chaligha, et al op. cit). The survey went on to claim that there was a tendency among Tanzanians to accept whatever their leaders gave them, resulting in a paradox whereby trust in government institutions and satisfaction with the performance of political leaders endured, even if people were disgruntled. The same survey found that civic competence was extremely weak, demonstrated by a lack of awareness of rights and duties and limited constructive engagement with political actors (Chaligha, et al op.cit). A more recent study claims that in Tanzanian society there is no culture or tradition of speaking up or petitioning (Jensen, 2010). Another recent study (Rabé, et al, 2012) of power and participation at the local level, using the "power cube" analytical framework, quotes verbatim from a focus group discussion (FGD) held in rural Tanzania as follows, "...we normally discuss our family issues, not development issues...we fear to make our views heard. If you want your life to be safe and stable in this village, you'd better stay calm and engage [in] your affairs". It refers to the lack of agency that is related to poor leadership or limitations in the formal participation process, due to villagers' fear of [their] leaders ("we are afraid of the leaders; no-one can speak out"; The report concludes, "...fear and frustration appears to stymy any motivation for collective action and results in a kind of tyranny of low expectations" (Rebe et al, op cit). The leader of the opposition in the Tanzanian Parliament, (Bunge), Hon. Freeeman Mbowe, was reported to have discovered and was disapapointed by the fact that most Tanzanians were fearfully obedient instead of adhering to the cardinal tenets of demanding basic rights and obligations. Alluding to how Tanzanains are renowned for their fear and failure to air basic demands, he said that statistics showed that as many as 78% of Tanzanians were fearful (Tanzania Daima Februari, 13, 2011).

II. Rationale for the Study

The research emanated from Oxfam's Chukua Hatua-CH (Take Action) programme, which began in August 2010, the goal of which is to achieve increased accountability and responsiveness of the government to its citizens by creating active citizenship; that is citizens who know their rights and responsibilities, are demanding them, and are able to search for and access information. The overall objective was to assess the

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status and constraints of citizens' interaction, deliberation and advocacy on issues of societal importance, including participation in politics and governance systems and what progress has been made in grappling with the embedded "culture of silence" or "fear factor".

III. Philosophy, Approach and Methodology

This was a qualitative research using ethnographic methods and techniques, including participant observation, face-to-face interviews, FGD and life histories, which were deemed more appropriate for this type of research as being more comprehensive, relativistic, giving the 'bigger picture' and entailing thick description. In total, the study involved twelve villages from the six districts of the former Shinyanga region before some of its wards were transferred to form the new Simiyu and Geita administrative regions.

IV. Villages and Districts Involved

District	Villages
Maswa	Sola
	Kidema
Bariadi	Gaswa
	Mahembe
Shinyanga (rural)	Ishinabulandi
	Mwambasha
Kishapu	Itilima
	Negezi
Kahama	Kakebe
	Mimwe
Mbogwe (formerly Bukombe)	Masumbwe
	Lugunga

V. Study Findings

These findings were gleaned from the responses gathered in the field from various categories of people, such as women, men and youth, from FGD and one-to-one interviews (with prominent persons, currently working and retired civil servants, political and religious leaders and disabled persons). The findings are arranged according to the way in which the questions were posed, and the chronological order of the study's specific objectives is also considered.

VI. Level and Extent of Participation in Local Political Processes

The aim here was to ascertain the level and extent of participation in local political processes and politics and the findings have been arranged in four categories:

a) Meaning of politics

The respondents varied in their understanding of the meaning and concept of politics. Whereas some viewed politics as a form of persuasion (ushawishi), others perceived it as joke or game (mchezo), and yet others believed it to be propaganda and some argued that politics has matured into falsehood (siasa ni uongo uliokomaa. In Sukuma language: "Nduhu ning'we, ng'wandandya sela guhe" (Gaswa village activist). Beyond these stereotypical responses, the study could not go into a detailed discussion on the purpose of politics given its nature and the perceived level of understanding of the respondents. However, there were some more informed respondents, especially those who had been exposed to the outside world or retirees and returnees, who viewed politics as involving questions and ideologies and political parties striving to control or retain political power.

b) Political participation

With regard to participation and engagement, the UHURU NA KAZI women's group of Shenda (Masumbwe) claimed that political participation had declined significantly because people have become disillusioned with dishonest political leaders, the opinions of people not being acted on, government budgets not meeting the needs of the citizens, and elected leaders (MPs and councillors) failing to come back to their electorate, resulting in loss of confidence in the government. However, the respondents had the following perspectives on political participation.

c) Voters' registration and voting

The respondents explained that registering to vote and being able to vote was a measure of participation in politics. However they believed that women were more likely to vote than other categories of people. According to Mwilima, a ruling CCM functionary, "...it is estimated that 68% of the total number of eligible voters prepared to turn up to vote on Election Day are women" (Mwilima, UWT National Secretary in FES Political Handbook, 2011). On the other hand, it was said that older males voted to make sure that the ruling party wins, fearing that if opposition parties came to power there would be chaos. In the same vein, most youths do not vote if their preferred candidates are not nominated to contest elections. If participation in politics is to be gauged by electoral behaviour, i.e. registering and voting, then the past four general elections have shown a declining trend, in that whereas voter turnout in electing MPs in 1995 was 76.51% it went down to 72.77% in 2000, fell a bit to 72.52% in 2005 and plummeted to 39.49% in 2010 (The Citizen, 11/10/2011).This drastic decline has been described as, "…a remarkably low figure by any standard…. In addition, this figure represents only those who registered, and thus the turnout in terms of eligible voters is appallingly low" (Gahnström, 2012)." The fortunes of the ruling party vis-à-vis the opposition is illustrated by Makulilo (2012:6), who found that, "..in 1995 opposition popular votes stood at 38.2% while the

ruling party got 61.8%, ...in 2000, the ruling party gained up to 71.7% and the opposition dropped to 28.3%, ...in 2005. The ruling party gained further to 80.2% of support while the opposition got 19.8%, ..in the 2010 elections, CCM dropped to 61.17% while the opposition gained 38.83%". This trend has led some political analysts to suggest that Tanzania should enact a compulsory voting law as is the case in countries like Bolivia, Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, Greece and the Netherlands, to mention a few (see A. Tairo in the Citizen 11 October 2011).

d) Presence and vibrancy of opposition parties

Another measure of political participation was the growth of opposition parties. In the past the ruling party, CCM, had no opponents, but since the 2010 elections the Civic United Front (CUF) and Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA) have shown their presence and vitality as an alternative. The respondents viewed this change as a sign of increased levels of political participation. It is interesting to note that Shinyanga region, previously regarded as a CCM stronghold, in the 2010 parliamentary elections four rural constituencies were won by opposition parties (i.e. Meatu, Bariadi East, Maswa West and Bukombe).

e) Forums for people to speak up

The official forums in which people in the study villages air their views include the sub-village (kitongoji) meetings, whole village assemblies, emergency meetings (Mwano[2]), inter-village meetings, and Ward Development Committee meetings. Village assemblies are formal meetings, convened by village and local government leaders, which are supposed to be held every 3 months. These meetings discuss people's concerns and receive reports on revenue and expenditure. However the manner in which these meetings are conducted often reflects the power play between groups and individuals. For example, in Itilima village, Kishapu district, the village leaders would not or could not respond to the questions directed at them in a village assembly and in fact they went to the extent of warning that court action awaited the alleged "trouble makers". Indeed in Negezi village, the people believe a conspiracy was hatched to arraign and convict a person who, in the village meeting, had questioned the misuse of funds for the construction of a school building. He was sent to jail for eight months, although he appealed and was set free after being incarcerated for only three months. In Ishinabulandi village, a youth was remanded in prison after he had inquired about the money provided for reconstructing a water pipeline destroyed during the construction of the Mwanza road. Such examples are not uncommon and deter people from asking questions and inquiring about things they think

are wrong. As regards informal settings, dances (mbina), beer-drinking clubs, coffee-drinking places and even funerals were mentioned. There are also 'emergency meetings' (Mwano), which involve a village or more than one village. These meetings are held in response to episodes such as the theft of cattle, or somebody being killed allegedly through witchcraft. In these meetings, apart from discussing the major issues that brought together a large crowd, other societal issues are also discussed. Participation in these meetings depends on the nature of the Mwano, for if it is about theft, then women will not be in conspicuous attendance. It is youths and a few old people who will respond to such a traditional emergency. Mwano occasions are organized and chaired by the leaders of militia (Sungusungu) groups and not the usual government bureaucrats, and they have their own modalities of engagement, so that people are more confident to speak about their problems. It was claimed that it is easy to report a problem to a sungusungu leader, who will handle it in a way that will not jeorpadise the complainant. In fact, people who are afraid of governemnt and village leaders go straight to sungusungu commanders, where they can air their concerns freely.

f) Factors that preclude people from speaking out without fear

The main factor that prevents people from speaking out without fear is threats from leaders, especially local government leaders. These threats include being taken to court, jailed, threat to life, blackmail, and verbal warnings, which were reported in all the villages sampled. People fear to enter [government] offices, as sometimes they are not sure of the right office to take their problems to and this makes them end up being disappointed "nahene nduhu umhayo" ('to be disappointed, embarrased' in Sukuma, a native language). Other reasons mentioned after probing include lack of knowledge of the constitution and their constitutional rights, as well as legal and human rights issues and skills, lack of confidence in matters relating to rights, and outmoded customs and taboos. Generally people do not know their basic rights, but they also have a natural propensity to fear the state and its machinery. In addition, few people know where to start when they are faced with a particular issue. People refrain from speaking out because they think it will get them into trouble with the militia or police, who may demand a bribe. Income poverty was also mentioned as a factor. People living in poverty felt they had no say in matters concerning them for two reasons: one is they fear they will not be listened to given their economic situation and secondly if they get a chance to speak, they will not be taken seriously. People also mentioned that the meetings are badly planned and are disorganised. Some meetings do not follow the agreed

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[5] Form of collective summoning by villagers to attend a matter of urgency

time schedule, but instead are called on an ad hoc basis and so potential attendees are uninformed, thus missing the occasion. Agendas are also not availed beforehand to allow people to prepare themselves. In addition, in many of the meetings it was alleged that village leaders allowed only people in favour of them to speak or those who were prearranged and staged to speak on issues that were in favour of the village leaders. Furthermore, sometimes the meetings started late and/or were adjourned for failure to get a quorum. All these factors preclude people from showing up when meetings are called. With regard to women's participation in village meetings, it was evident that old customs prevail to a considerable extent. The women in Sukumaland are brought up to understand that their position is in the domestic realm and that men are the leaders in society. It is unusual for women to feature in most public meetings out of custom but also because they are prohibited by their husbands. Another factor why some members of the community do not attend meetings is that they have become disillusioned after failing to get answers to the questions they ask and the fact that sometimes leaders do not fulfil the promises they made. The findings above confirm that many factors preclude people from speaking without fear, including risks, sanctions and overt as well as covert control mechanisms. People understand that the government has an "iron hand", is forceful, and so people are afraid.

g) Breaking the wall of silence

The study also examined the reasons that lead people to break the wall of silence and become campaigners on issues in their locality. Education was mentioned as the first reason. It was argued that educated people in the villages have a better understanding of their rights and how the government is supposed to be run. Few people in the villages have been taught or are aware of how to deal with state power. Indeed, as the dictum goes, education is power; knowledge of the workings of government gives people the confidence to ask questions and demand or even defend their rights in a manner that will not harm them. Therefore having a more educated citizenry was seen as essential to ensure that the wall of silence will eventually be broken. Leaders' misuse of public resources was also considered to be a trigger causing people to react and talk about such misdeeds. Consistent suppression, abuse of power and misconduct by leaders and law-enforcement agents eventually leads to people feeling fed up and the need to stand up. When people get tired of such actions they decide to come together and talk in order to stop them or defend their rights. Frequent and publicised misuse of public resources has raised people's awareness so that others in neighbouring villagers or hamlets would want to do the same thing by demanding the accountability of officials and leaders.

Villagers are encouraged when the effort of raising their voices is rewarded by action being taken against the culprits, even if it is not spectacular. For example, in the cases concerning the misuse of funds in Mwambasha, Negezi and Itilima villages, the money that had been misappropriated was repaid by the culprits, which will give villagers a common voice to ensure local leaders' accountability in the future. The respondents also felt that women's awareness of their position in terms of rights and responsibilities has been important in raising their voices. It was mentioned that following various efforts, women are slowly but surely becoming aware of their rights and are confronting their husbands over being given a fair share of the proceeds of their labour on the farm and in the household. In many cases women are starting to ask questions. Reforming the electoral procedure could be instrumental in changing confidence levels and encouraging people to speak up without fear. According to the respondents, the lack of transparency and alleged 'unfair electoral processes' has disillusioned many voters when it comes to what happens before and after elections. The respondents felt strongly that now is the time for the electoral process to become fair, free and transparent so that the results will reflect the will of the people.

h) Government openness

Much of the discussion focused on the failure of government and political leaders to open up and give citizens space as regards governance, participation and involvement. The following comments reflect common issues cited by the respondents:

- *Protection of their position:* The respondents believe that leaders are afraid of losing their position when issues and concerns are raised openly. Leaders are perceived to use different ways to conceal their misdeeds and present an image that things are well when they are not.

- *Corruption:* There is a perception that some leaders are actually bribing vocal people in the villages not to speak during meetings or mobilising others to give a collective voice at a village meeting and not to expose or discuss issues that are not being done properly. The respondents said that such leaders fear being held accountable.

- *Inadequate budget:* The respondents said that elected leaders often fail to honour their promises made during election campaigns because of the inadequate budget and so they fear having an open discussion as they will be criticised because they have not kept their promises. As Mollel (2010:95) put it with respect to the overall situation in Tanzania, "…'the current system does not facilitate local empowerment. For instance, local people are not empowered to be able to develop and execute their plan. Besides, the resources at the local level are limited and those transferred through the council

are earmarked for specific areas leaving little room for local discretion."

- *Fear of criticism:* It was mentioned that leaders in some areas are afraid of obtaining critical views and opinions on what they are or are not doing. These can either be from people of their own affiliation or from those supporting opposition parties.

- *Incapable leaders:* The respondents said that some of the leaders have a low level of education, and lack experience and confidence. This makes them afraid to listen to the grievances and opinions that may reveal their ignorance and poor performance.

- *Prejudice against the poor:* The respondents felt that some leaders do not think that the opinions and views of poor people add value to socio-economic and political development. These people then feel disillusioned and stop attending meetings because they feel their voice is not listened to.

- *Illiteracy:* In some villages it was reported that the leaders take advantage of the illiteracy level of the community and try to push forward their agenda quickly, sometimes not following the required procedures or faking the minutes of meetings.

i)   *Perceptions of good governance*

In gauging villagers' perceptions and understanding of the concept of good governance, the respondents were asked about what they think causes the village government and the associated machinery not to work as they would like. The following examples were mentioned as being anti-good governance practices.

- *Poor performance of the existing system:* A ⌐ Core Welfare Indicator Surveys (CWIQ for Shinyanga of 2006 (URT, 2006) probed into governance issues, including satisfaction with leaders, and the main reasons for dissatisfaction with governance at different levels of government. Reasons ranged from embezzlement/corruption to people not being listened to, and from favouritism to the failure of leaders to visit citizens.

- *Inequality in the provision of opportunities:* The respondents alleged that people related to political leaders benefit most from any opportunities arising, such as when there was a programme to help youths become self-employed. This kind of nepotism was regularly cited as an indicator of poor governance in the villages.

- *Lack of transparency:* The respondents also mentioned lack of transparency as an indicator of the lack of good governance. There were many examples of those in authority failing to give reports on income and expenditure and of corruption, including selling a plot of land earmarked for the construction of a health centre and a secondary school and misusing the money supplied by the Tanzania Electricity Supply Company for installing high tension electricity poles in villages in Shinyanga Rural District.

- *Lack of freedom to express views:* There was a recurrent perception that 'good governance is a joke' (utawala bora ni uchizi). People are not involved in decision making; they feel they do not have any power regarding how decisions are reached or projects implemented.

Overall, the respondents felt that good governance means respect for the pillars of democracy which they perceive as being transparency, responsibility and truth. When asked to rate their own villages in terms of good governance, the average score given was 50%, while they rated the central government at 60%.

"They don't care about us (their voters)" was commonly cited by villagers as a factor underlying poor governance. An example was given where cotton buyers were allowed to come to the villages to buy the crop at a very low price. The farmers became angry and even attacked the cotton buyers but the District Commissioner intervened and warned the people not to take the law into their own hands. In the end the farmers had no option but to sell their cotton at give-away prices and their anger remains to date against the leaders.

The concept of governance and how it fares in Shinyanga region has been well captured in the following box, as expounded by Oxfam's Chukua Hatua project:

"Relative to many countries, Tanzania has an impressive structure in place for local governance at the sub-village, village, ward and district level. However, the effectiveness of this structure in really allowing local people to be influential is questionable. Village- and district-level councils are elected and it is their role to oversee bottom-up planning and decision making through to the full council at district level. However, effective control at both levels tends to be held by centrally appointed officials. Elected representatives at local level often lack the desire or capacity to hold these appointed officials to account. At local level, meetings are only called by the village chair and executive. These should take place quarterly, but often they happen rarely or not at all. When they do take place, they are not well attended because local people have little faith in them, as one young artist points out: 'We ask questions in meetings but don't get satisfactory or truthful answers or we are prevented from asking because only a short time is set aside for questions.' There is also a sense of insecurity: people are afraid of being excluded from the patronage system and of losing its benefit or protection. There is evidence of more direct threats to individuals who speak out. Party polarization is also an issue, with any challenge by ordinary citizens often taken by leaders as an indication of opposition politics. In addition, there is a lack of information about policies, laws, people's rights and even what is happening in the country. In rural areas, most people get their information from the radio, but the reception is sometimes poor and people, women in particular, do not have time to listen. Print media are less popular because newspapers arrive very late (up to a week after publication) and in any case many people cannot read" (Oxfam, 2012)

j) *"What has culture got to do with it"?*

This study was also interested in learning from the villagers their perception of the role of culture in influencing people's capacity and willingness to speak out. Culture is complex in the way in which it shapes an individual's relationships across households, between men and women, a girl child and a boy child, people and their environment, common beliefs, and interpersonal perceptions, attitudes and conduct. Following are some of the issues raised by the respondents on cultural and traditional issues and how these affect citizens' ability and interest in speaking out.

- *"In Sukuma, but it is also African culture, youths are supposed to obey elders and comply with what they want due to the fear that they will be cursed, evicted from their families and alienated from them. This then becomes an inherent tendency for youth not to speak in front of elders. As it starts at the household level, this tendency develops further until it becomes dominant so that youths keep silent when they should speak in village or school meetings".* This was concluded by the research assistant who worked for a month in villages in Kishapu and Shinyanga rural districts.

- *"People with disabilities (including people with albinism) are not given equal access to education, and economic and social activities, in the belief that they cannot perform up to expectations. For example, in Itilima village an albino girl was about to be killed by unknown people, but when her father tried to follow this up with the proper authorities, community leaders prevented him with the explanation that if the culprits became known and were sent to court and tried and then jailed, this would bring shame on the village. Therefore, they advised the father to drop the issue. This is an example of an intention influenced by culture to*

prevent a person with a good cause from being able to speak and follow up on what he think is right for him and his child" Again this is an observation by the research assistant, who worked for a month in villages in Kishapu and Shinyanga rural districts.

- *"The traditional activities during which societal issues were aired meaningfully are on the decline these days. Those that are being practised, e.g. 'beni & dongo' (traditional activities, including the 'ngoma' used during the farm cultivation period), 'wigashe' (old people's songs) and 'kwaya' (choir) do not nowadays contain powerful messages regarding governance, participation or human rights. Instead they are concerned with showing off",* A quote from the councillor for Gaswa Ward, Shinyanga rural.

- *"There are cultural activities and dances, like "mbina ja bhakima na beni', but they only sing about personal things, like praising traditional healers called "bafumu" and how powerful they are in the game (healing...), they don't talk about governance or basic rights or about speaking on people's behalf".* A quote from CCM Ward Secretary, Sola Ward.

- "Because people are afraid to air their views, a school has developed the idea of a 'suggestion box' as a technique for making them speak out. Some of them use it, but many don't". A quote from a Sola Primary School Teacher.

- "People don't like to be exposed in meetings. They are afraid of making mistakes when speaking, which can lead to one being a laughing stock in public". A quote from Women's Entreprenuer group, Kakebe. "Some people were born that way, and so they ask others to assist in airing concerns. They are afraid of making mistakes when speaking (in Sukuma: "hamo naguhuba" - maybe I will make mistakes), or ("huwe guhe naneke, nagwita

mashidima" - let me just leave him alone, otherwise I will rise up and make an enemy)" A quote from the Village Chairman Kidema.

- "Sometimes villagers are afraid of making enemies of their leaders. This is because they lack awareness when raising issues as they tend to think that if they ask questions it could result in more problems". A summary of the responses from the FGD.

As the above responses testify, there is a complex nexus between culture and empowerment. The nation's Vision 2025 takes a more general approach. It states: "Efforts must be made to empower the people and catalyze their democratic and popular participation. The strategy should entail empowering local governments and communities and promote broad-based grassroots in the mobilization of resources, knowledge and experience with a view to stimulating initiatives at all levels of society." (URT, 1999: 15)

k) *Gender-based opportunities, constraints and consequences of speaking out*

> *"We have been affected by the male dominated system; women desire to be more active but society has notgiven them a chance and has yet to have trust in them. In Kisukuma they normally say, "duteng' we mdili" meaning we can't be led by weak people, that iswomen".* A quote from the Councillor, Mahembe Ward

In writings on gender and language, the "silencing of women" as a dominated group has been identified as a matter of great concern, their experience being described as that of a "muted group". While any group in a society generates its own ideas about reality, articulation of these ideas is only listened to if expressed in the mode of the dominant group. Women are not only told to be silent, limits are also set as to what they may say and how they may say it (Houston et al 1991 quoted in Hanak, 1997). Women are silenced through socialization, social pressure or overt force. Women defying social norms of conduct and acquiescence often experience restrictions and obstacles from others. Hanak (1997) points out that in many societies silence is ascribed to particular groups as appropriate behaviour, with silence often seen as suitable behaviour for the younger generation and women. Silence as communicative behaviour forced on dominated or powerless groups becomes oppressive, particularly when these groups are not allowed to break the silence of their own accord. In the case of Tanzania, Swilla (1995) describes how in official gatherings in rural Tanzania, "men dominate in speaking and women are often reduced to silent listeners...traditions and practices that exclude women from participating effectively in the community are widespread and lead to

self-censorship, which is born out of fear of being ridiculed, attacked or ignored".

Within Tanzania and in the study area, the power relations between women and men are such that men tend to be dominant in terms of ownership of assets, their voice and position. This study probes how gender relations have an impact on political participation and speaking out. Some of the responses on the question of gender are reproduced below:

- *"Progressively these days many people have come to recognise the importance of valuing women. Though it may take time, efforts were being made to integrate women and girls into the militia (Sungusungu). In fact in Mwabujiku village the Mtemi (Commander) of the militia (sungusungu) is a woman."* A quote from the Sungusungu leader, Sola Ward.

- *"About 20% of village leaders are female and even at family level they are given the same chances as men. Therefore it is just a question of confidence and not of being oppressed".* A quote from a religious leader, Sola Village.

- "Most women are afraid to talk, (in Sukuma, *'nugubuka guhe boba gete'*)" A quote from the Village Chairman, Gaswa)

- *"We are not free to talk because male parents and in-laws attend meetings together. There is a natural shame of speaking openly when your father in-law or mother in-law is among the listeners. ('aliho nkwilima' shame of speaking in front of your in-laws). Women don't talk much and they don't believe in themselves, whereas by nature men have enough confidence to speak out. Women are afraid of making mistakes or being ashamed if they fumble"* A quote from the village Chaiman, Gaswa

- *"Many women are despised by their husbands. They are branded as being too talkative and even hypocrites by their husbands if they dare to speak in public places/meetings" (in Sukuma 'uligayombi no nang'ho, ugubiza galomolomo")* A quote from the Acting Village Executive Officer, Kidema.

- *"Gender equality in leadership is okay, 50%. But in meetings few women (about 25%) ask questions, and most of them pass the questions to men to air on their behalf - "wanawanong'oneza wanaume" "(Swahili for 'they whisper to men')".* A quote from the CCM Branch Secretary, Kidema.

l) *Gender-inspired efforts on political participation*

AcT (n. d.) observes "Women's participation in the political process is severely restricted by their position in society. Patriarchal customs and attitudes mean that women have fewer opportunities to participate than men and, although they do attend meetings, they rarely speak". The Government of Tanzania on its part has made considerable efforts to minimize gender imbalance and inequality that would

prevent society from realizing its full economic, social and political development potential. Significant efforts have been made to promote women's participation in political and leadership positions. The proportion of women in leadership positions has reached 30%. Women's participation in public service also increased from 20% in 2004/05 to 22% in 2008/09 and 25% in 2011. Gender equity in both private and public schools shows a positive trend. The World Bank rating, which measures gender equality by the extent to which a country has installed institutions and programmes to enforce laws and policies that promote equal access for men and women in relation to education, health, the economy and their protection under the law, was 4 (out of 6) for four consecutive years until 2009. Despite the strides made in gender mainstreaming, challenges remain in addressing gender issues, especially at the community level.

m) Youths and their voice

A survey by the NGO "Restless Development" (2011) showed that young people's knowledge of and participation in policy development, implementation and monitoring was low at 10.4%, and awareness of key national policies, such the anti-poverty strategy popularly known as MKUKUTA, stood at 24% in some regions. Nevertheless, TAMASHA's ('Taasisi ya Maendeleo Shirikishi Arusha or Institute for Youth Participatory Development) recent survey (2012) listed the following aspects regarding Tanzanian youths:

- Young people have few resources and limited access to credit (which is tied to their lack of resources).
- There are no projects for young people to enable them to develop themselves.
- They are not expected to have a voice but only to provide the free labour required of them by the villages or households
- They have no institutions or organizations of their own to enable them to look after their own interests and negotiate with government institutions and other forces.
- Where young people have been given the chance to be involved in governance, they have proved to be enthusiastic and effective.
- The needs and rights of young people are not being addressed at any level and attention needs to be given to these needs and rights to allow them to play a useful role in society.

n) Limited Chances for youth to open up and have their voices heard

The study examined the limited chances for youths to open up and have their voices heard. Following are some of the opinions gathered by the research.

The respondents said that the concerns of youth are not often discussed in village meetings. Even if they are discussed the opinions and views of the youth are not taken seriously and their problems not addressed seriously. Poor education was mentioned as something that limited youth in the study areas. For two consecutive years Shinyanga was in last position in terms of performance in primary as well as secondary education. In Ishinabulandi village there are 506 households with 7,826 children, but there is only one primary school. The only secondary school available is the ward secondary school, which is overcrowded, has very few teachers and lacks working equipment. The poor performance in education is reflected in low literacy levels and lack of confidence when it comes to speaking out. The educated youths alienate themselves from the general community as they consider themselves superior, as they have acquired some education like their teachers. They enter the extension service or work in public management and so live in urban or semi-urban areas. According to the findings from Shinyanga and Kishapu, leaders tend to divert attention away from their involvement in development activities and scapegoat youths as being the source of conflicts, while the truth is these youths are uncovering the hidden bad doings of leaders. Consequently, there is a perception that young people do not realize their potential because of the stereotype that they are troublesome. There are also allegations from all the research sites (see field notes and reports) that youths are lazy, that they take life easy and do not want to work. They are overly dependent on their parents and are unable to think independently, which prevents them from having a common voice in the community. This sense of alienation is leading some youths to engage in deviant behaviour, including criminal acts and drug abuse. At the same time it should be borne in mind that it is the poor economic situation that causes many youths to lack confidence. During the dry season they have few opportunities and there is no real productive activity they can engage in. Some migrate away from their villages and those who are remain feel that politics and what is entailed in the whole process is of no importance to their lives.

To be sure youths face many challenges in trying to improve their economic situation that affects their ability to engage in the political process. They lack access to productive resources and property and find it very difficult to access credit and financial services. There has been a build-up of unemployed youths feeling disenfranchised and lacking a sense of having a stake in society. The patriarchal system and the culture preventing the girl child from going to school so that she can get married and bring bride wealth was also mentioned as that which silences the voice of youth early in life. Once a girl is married while young, and given the patriarchal system dominating society, her

voice is lost. She will have very few or no opportunities at all to speak. The respondents said that there is a lack of cooperation among the youth. Many shy away from joining age-groups with a common purpose, as was the case in the past such as dance, cultivation and cultural groups.

o) *The influence of youth on formal and informal avenues*

While formal political forums seem to sideline youth, the study did find some avenues that could be used or are available to youths to exercise their influence in matters that impact their lives. It must be appreciated that in this pilot study it was not possible to go deeper into the parameters of inclusion and exclusion.

p) *Formal avenues*

- The problems of youth are discussed in election campaigns, especially by the opposition parties. There appears to be more opportunities for youths to hold leadership positions in opposition parties than in the ruling party.
- CCM has a youth wing in which youths' problems are discussed and it has a number of youth-related programmes to prepare youths to become leaders of the future. However the concerns of youth are not a strong issue in CCM campaign rallies where youth are mainly visible as Green Guards for security.
- Youths' problems are discussed in some religious meetings and gatherings, and there are religious groups that youths can join where they are provided with the opportunity to be trained to work as religious leaders and on productive ventures.
- The Village Community Bank keeps the savings of members and provides loans. Youths can join these groups and increase their chances of economic advancement. Economic and social groups are ready-made places for airing concerns and creating a dialogue on issues touching life.
- The Chukua Hatua Group provides civic education. With this, and the use of a leaflet and the books supplied, youths got the chance to excel in terms of political awareness of rights and responsibilities and political accountability.
- Agape is a religious institution, which is involved in the provision of human rights education. This organisation is able to provide human rights education that is fundamental to the building up of active citizenship.
- The Roman Catholic Tanzania Youth Coalition prepares youths to become God's Shepherds. Apart from religious studies, the church provides its youth with a typical secular education, including training for technicians, training in entrepreneurship and even a teacher training programme. This is an important avenue through which youths and their

communities can start raising their voices, hence bringing about change.

- The Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) provides support for development activities. Youths can also join some groups supported by TASAF, thereby increasing their economic opportunities.
- Barrick Gold Mine provides employment to youths and offers support for development activities. For example, Barrick supported the construction of a school and houses for teachers in Ishinabulandi village in Shinyanga district.
- World Vision supports development projects, especially for youths in difficult circumstances. This is an important avenue too, because the influence starts with a small group, which then spreads to the wider community.
- Youths, through the African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) programme, get the chance to discuss their lives, their bodies, their environment and the institutions that affect them. Through this, new voices are born, hidden voices stand a good chance of being rejuvenated, and sidelined voices are heard due to confidence building.
- In some villages institutions like World Vision and Oxfam support village-based groups like farmers in their activities. This provides them not only with the opportunity to acquire some needed practical skills and gain experience, but the training acts as an eye-opener to many and so they start to be issue-based campaigners in their communities.

q) *Informal Institutions*

Sukuma society with its traditions also offers informal settings for youths to be visible. The most important of such institutions is the local militia, popularly known as Sungusungu. Participating in Sungusungu is the yearning of many a youth in Sukumaland, to the extent that these days even female youths aspire to join and in Mwabujiku village the commander of Sungusungu is a woman. The following parapharased quotation from a research assistant's report says that it is all about the value of this unique informal institution. "In most villages Sungusungu is more honoured for its governance than the normal local government structures. People believe in and respect Sungusungu leaders and respect their decisions. They can easily face Sungusungu leaders when they have problems, even personal problems. It is obviously wise to depend on Sungusungu leaders because they are more reliable and trustworthy. When problems are reported to the local government machinery it usually involves giving bribes and often it ends up with the problems not being solved appropriately and not on time. In short, people trust Sungusungu more than government systems. Although traditional drama and dance groups are legendary among Sukuma people for providing entertainment and the chance to socialise,

these days they are important entry points for delivering information on HIV/AIDS, and above all some political messages." A quote from the Research Assistant in Bariadi and Mwaswa districts.

VII. New State-Societal Relationships Needed

The study sought suggestions from people concerning a new relationship between the state and the people in order to break the wall of silence. Following is a summary of what was suggested:

- The main stumbling block is the lack of education and awarenss on the part of the people. Therefore providing the general public with civic and human rights education is essential. People have to be educated on basic civic and human rights and the importance of participating in the political process, such as attending meetings, voting in elections and being involved in political party matters and other civil activities. There is no officially mandated institution or agency responsible for the conduct of civic education in a systematic and consistent way. There should some systematic efforts to ensure this happens.
- Establish and strengthen official militia groups and community policing.
- Establish functioning community/family/clan reconciliation structures.
- Use legal experts (advocates/paralegals) to represent people in court who cannot represent themselves.
- Use fully the ongoing constitution-making exercise and create awareness of the importance of the basic laws, rights and responsibilities and political accountability in the country.
- Conduct free and fair elections in order to put in power those leaders who really understand the problems of the people who elected them, and who are ready to work for the people. Of course it has to be realised that free and fair elections are only one element of democratic development and democratic practice, and the furtherance of the civil and political rights of citizens (cf. UNDP's "Democratic Empowerment Project Tanzania 2012-2015")
- Those in power, their associated machinery and the people too should adhere to and observe the rule of law and democratic principles.
- Develop programmes that encourage and facilitate the capacity to speak out, which is important given the nature of society whereby only one group in society tends to speak. People's problem with this is in their minds and so their mindset needs to be changed. This could be done through sensitisation and advocacy programmes, which aim to liberate them from the shackles that are reinforced by their poverty.
- Women need to be empowered and motivated to fight for their rights to ensure that they are able to participate fully in politics, including voting and vying for political positions at various levels.
- Leaders should be judged on the results of their performance and be held accountable for the expectations they raised.
- The Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) should be strengthened and enabled to oversee the work of law enforcement organs because there are many things needing independent analysis.
- The reforms brought about by the Local Government Reform Programme should be put into effect. They look good on paper, but their implementation is still lacking.
- There should be a time limit for those serving as councillors and members of parliament, e.g. a maximum of five years only.
- The appointment of leaders should be abolished as they tend to safeguard the interests of the one who appointed them, for example, regional and district commissioners and members of parliament with special seats. These types of leaders should be elected by the people and be accountable to the people.

VIII. Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the pilot study: -

It was evident that a number of factors prevent people from speaking out and fear is one of them. Others are apathy, passivity, the lack of civic awareness or competence, ignorance of basic human rights, lack of faith in the system and/or public officials and traditional beliefs or customs, etc.

- Factors that make people afraid to speak out ranged from verbal and tangible threats from those in power, to leaders allowing only the people they favour or those who were prearranged to speak. In addition, most people do not know how to deal with the state and are also hampered by illiteracy.
- A number of reasons were mentioned by citizens for the failure of government and political leaders to open up and give citizens space as regards governance, participation and involvement. These include protection of their position, corruption, budgetary constraints and fear of criticism.
- Despite the many factors constraining them, some people dare to speak out.
- The respondents varied in their understanding of the concept of politics, as well as the extent of participation and engagement. Participation in voting may not necessarily mean that citizens

influence policy and decision making. The way in which power is exercised leads many people to despair and stop taking part in the political process.

- The forums in which people in the study villages aired their views were both formal (village government meetings) and informal (dances, funerals). The formal channels were more 'frightening', with cited examples of intimidation, threats and people being stopped from asking questions and inquiring about things that go wrong. The informal forums were more harmonious.

- The respondents gave their understanding of good governance and mentioned lack of transparency, such as those in authority failing to give reports on income and expenditure because as they have misused/misallocated the funds as an example of bad governance, as well as people not being free to express their views.

- Cultural factors said to influence people speaking out or not included age, belief system and disability.

- Gender-based constraints were spelt out showing that women's voices were being silenced by traditions, norms and socialisation.

- The respondents felt that more thought needs to be devoted to dealing with the situation of youths in the country.

- Young people have a limited understanding of participation. A recent study (2012) by the Institute of Participatory Development Arusha (TAMASHA) found that young people think that participation means the act of being present and has nothing to do with whether or not they took part in influencing or making decisions. The needs and rights of young people are not being addressed judiciously.

- Young people are not adequately aware of how they can become involved in decision making and that is why they are not getting involved.

- Tanzania does not have a national youth council to unite young people and help them to raise their voices and channel their ideas to influence public decisions.

- The Tanzania youth council, which should have been established, never was, because civil society organisations would not participate in a government council steered by the CCM youth wing.

- A number of national strategies and policies refer to young people, but as yet do not include young people in their design and implementation or in the monitoring of progress.

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Acronyms

AcT	Accountability Tanzania
AMREF	African Medical Research Foundation
CHADEMA	Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo
CCM	Chama Cha Mapinduzi
CH	Chukua Hatua-Take Action
CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicator Surveys
CUF	Civic United Front
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
MKUKUTA	Mkakati wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kupunguza Umaskini
PCCB	Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau
TAMASHA	Taasisi ya Maendeleo Shirikishi Arusha
TASAF	Tanzania Social Action Fund
VEO	Village Executive Officer
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
URT	United Republic of Tanzania
UWT	Umoja wa Wanawake Tanzania (Tanzania Women's Organisation)
WEO	Ward Executive Officer