



Gender Dimensions in Tanzanian Legal Practices: An Ethnographic Inquiry into Sub-Saharan Africa Contexts

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Published: 24 January 2011 | **Received:** 24 September 2010 | **Accepted:** 30 November 2010

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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18940604](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18940604)

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Abstract

Gender dimensions in legal practices are increasingly recognised as crucial for understanding societal dynamics, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where traditional and modern legal systems coexist. Tanzania's legal environment provides a fertile ground to explore these intersections through ethnographic inquiry. An ethnographic approach was employed, involving participant observation and semi-structured interviews with judges, lawyers, legislators, and community leaders across various legal domains. Data collection focused on qualitative insights into gendered interactions and outcomes within Tanzanian legal practices. Findings indicate that women are underrepresented in judicial roles but play significant advisory and support functions for male counterparts. Customary courts often reflect traditional patriarchal structures, while formal courts show a growing trend towards more equitable gender representation in decision-making processes. The study underscores the need for comprehensive legal reforms to address persistent gender biases within Tanzanian legal systems, particularly in customary practices where women's rights are most vulnerable. Enhancing judicial training and community engagement can promote a more inclusive legal environment. Recommendations include developing specialized training programmes for judges on gender-sensitive jurisprudence and fostering partnerships between legal authorities and local communities to ensure equitable application of laws.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan, African, South, Cultural, Literature*

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