

# ASSESSING PRESIDENT SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN'S LEADERSHIP IMPACT ON TANZANIA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND POLICY OUTCOMES

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**Abstract:** This study evaluates the leadership of President Samia Suluhu Hassan, Tanzania's first female president, and its impact on the country's socio-economic development. Her administration represents a pivotal moment in Tanzania's history, addressing significant challenges while pursuing transformative opportunities. The research investigates her strategic policies in economic recovery, infrastructure development, and COVID-19 pandemic management, focusing on their effects on public health, economic growth, and governance. Additionally, it examines initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality, particularly in urban and rural areas. A mixed-methods approach was used, integrating quantitative data on economic performance, public health, and gender representation with qualitative insights from focus group discussions involving policymakers and experts. Findings show considerable progress under President Hassan's leadership, including improvements in economic recovery, gender equality, and infrastructure development, exemplified by projects such as the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station. However, challenges like financial constraints and project delays persist. This study's contribution lies in its comprehensive assessment of Hassan's policy impacts, enhancing understanding of governance, sustainable development, and gender equality. The research also offers recommendations for increased infrastructure investment, stronger pandemic preparedness, and targeted support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

**Keywords:** economic reforms, gender equality, infrastructure development, leadership impact, President Samia Suluhu Hassan

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## INTRODUCTION

This study offers a comprehensive evaluation of President Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership, focusing on the broader impact of her policies on Tanzania's socio-economic development. As the first female president of Tanzania, her leadership marks a historic and transformative moment in the nation's history, characterized by both significant challenges and opportunities. The research explores her strategic approaches to

economic recovery, with a focus on revitalizing key sectors and promoting sustainable growth. It also examines her management of the COVID-19 pandemic, analyzing how her policies influenced public health outcomes and governance. Furthermore, the study investigates her initiatives for advancing gender equality, particularly in overcoming challenges related to gender parity in both urban and rural settings. Despite notable progress, persistent issues such as securing funding for critical infrastructure projects, including the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station, as well as ensuring gender equity, remain central to her administration. This evaluation aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how President Hassan's leadership is shaping Tanzania's development trajectory and positioning the country for future sustainable growth.

In March 2021, Samia Suluhu Hassan ascended to the presidency of the United Republic of Tanzania, becoming the country's sixth president and the first woman to hold this office. Her rise to power followed the unexpected passing of President John Pombe Magufuli, under whom she served as vice president. This leadership transition occurred during a period of significant global and national challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and various socio-economic pressures (Kell, Masabo, & Feltes, 2024). Data reveals that the in-hospital mortality rate among COVID-19 patients in Tanzanian tertiary hospitals during 2021–2022 was 34%. Vulnerable groups, including the elderly, HIV-positive individuals, and those without health insurance, were disproportionately affected (Osati et al., 2024). Key predictors of mortality included chest pain, neutrophilia, and the absence of treatment with steroids or ivermectin. President Hassan's tenure has been characterized by a strategic shift in several critical areas. Her administration adopted a science-based approach to managing the pandemic, emphasizing widespread vaccination and close collaboration with international health organizations. In early 2022, Tanzania's vaccination coverage was only 2.8% of the population, but by April 2023, it had risen to 51%, making Tanzania the top performer among 34 countries with less than 10% coverage by January 2022. This was achieved through integrating vaccine delivery into routine health services (World Health Organization, 2023). Economically, Tanzania has experienced significant recovery under President Hassan's leadership. Following a pandemic-induced slowdown, the nation's GDP growth rebounded from 2.1% to an anticipated 5.4% by the end of 2023, with projections reaching 5.7% in 2024 and 6% in 2025 (AFDB, 2024; National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). This economic revival is partly attributed to increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which reached \$1.3 billion by mid-2024. The administration has also implemented major reforms to boost agriculture, infrastructure, and manufacturing sectors (Bank of Tanzania, 2024).

Infrastructure development has been a cornerstone of President Hassan's policy agenda. Major projects such as the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station have made significant progress. By August 2024, the SGR began operations between Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, enhancing regional connectivity. The Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station, expected to generate 2,115 MW of electricity, is slated for completion in early 2025 (Ministry of Energy, 2024). Hassan has also made significant strides in promoting gender equality. As of February 2020, only 26% of leadership positions in Tanzania were held by women, reflecting a substantial gender disparity (Uongozi Institute, 2022). Under her administration, women now occupy 30%

of cabinet positions, 36% of parliamentary seats, 30.1% of district council roles, and 41% of judicial positions, illustrating a strong commitment to gender equality in decision-making (UN Women Africa, 2024). Additionally, President Hassan's policy allowing teen mothers, previously expelled due to pregnancy, to re-enroll in school has had a positive impact. By November 2023, 7,995 female students had returned to school through formal and alternative pathways under this re-entry policy (Mwalongo, 2023). These efforts align with global gender equality initiatives and reflect a commitment to sustainable development.

Theoretical frameworks provide valuable insights into President Hassan's leadership. Transformational leadership theory emphasizes her ability to inspire and implement significant changes, particularly in public health and economic sectors (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Crisis management theories, which focus on rapid decision-making, clear communication, and international cooperation, are relevant to her handling of the pandemic (Coombs, 2007). Additionally, gender equality theories underscore the importance of women's representation in leadership and decision-making (Rigeway, 2011). Empirical studies offer detailed insights into the outcomes of President Hassan's policies. For instance, Mchome & Nzoya (2023) explore her economic strategies, noting significant advances in infrastructure and industrial development, such as the 7% increase in trade volumes at the Dar es Salaam Port by 2024 (Tanzania Ports Authority, 2024). Hamisi, Dai, and Ibrahim (2023) discuss her management of the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the success of the vaccination campaign and improved public health outcomes. Her administration's investment in health infrastructure, including the construction and upgrading of over 120 health centers by 2024, further underscores these achievements (Ministry of Health, 2024). Table 1 summarizes the evaluation of Samia Suluhu Hassan's policy impacts, highlighting key issues, intentions, successes, and challenges.

Table 1. Evaluating Samia Suluhu Hassan's policy impacts: key issues, successes, and challenges

Author	Key Issue	Intention	Success	Challenges
African Development Bank (2024)	Infrastructure Development	Address financing challenges and future prospects	Enhanced infrastructure development and financing insights	Obstacles related to funding and project execution
Bank of Tanzania (2024)	Foreign Investment and Economic Recovery	Direct and Assess the impact on economic recovery	Positive contributions to economic growth and stability	Challenges with foreign investment inflows and maintaining economic stability
Kell, Masabo, & Feltes (2024)	Transition Presidency COVID-19 Challenges	to Analyze the impact of leadership change and pandemic management	Effective COVID-19 response and leadership during a crisis	Challenges in managing a global pandemic and socio-economic pressures
Mchome & Nzoya (2023)	Economic Strategies and Infrastructure	and Assess the impact of economic policies and infrastructure development	Notable advancements in infrastructure and industrial development	Obstacles in project execution and sustaining growth

Ministry of Agriculture (2024)	Agricultural Export Growth	Boost agricultural exports under Hassan's administration	Growth in agricultural exports and sector development	Barriers to expanding exports and increasing productivity
Ministry of Energy (2024)	Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project	Review progress and milestones in the energy sector	Significant advancements in Tanzania's energy infrastructure	Delays and challenges in project implementation
Ministry of Health (2024)	Health Sector Advancements	Assess improvements in the health sector from 2021-2024	Progress in health services and effective pandemic response	Strains on the healthcare system and limited resources
National Bureau of Statistics (2024)	GDP Growth and Economic Indicators	Analyze economic performance and growth metrics	Positive trends in GDP growth and economic indicators	Economic fluctuations and issues with data accuracy
Tanzania Ports Authority (2024)	Dar es Salaam Port Performance	Review performance and future prospects of the port	Improved efficiency and performance at Dar es Salaam Port	Infrastructure and operational challenges
UN Women Africa (2024)	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	Report on gender equality and women's representation	Significant strides in gender equality and women's empowerment	Remaining gaps in achieving full gender parity
United Nations (2024)	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	Report on global and regional progress in gender equality	Advancements in gender equality and women's empowerment	Gaps and disparities in gender equality progress
World Health Organization (2024)	COVID-19 Vaccination Progress	Evaluate progress and impact of vaccination efforts	Successful vaccination campaigns and improved health outcomes	Distribution and coverage challenges

## METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively evaluate the presidency of Samia Suluhu Hassan. The quantitative aspect of the research focuses on analyzing Tanzania's economic performance, public health indicators, and gender representation under President Hassan's leadership. Data on these variables were collected from government reports, international organizations such as the World Health Organization and the World Bank, and national statistics. The qualitative component of the study was conducted through focus group discussions (FGDs) with policymakers, analysts, and experts, who were interviewed via video conferencing platforms such as Zoom. These sessions, lasting between 60 and 70 minutes, aimed to gather insights into the broader effects of Hassan's policies on economic recovery, pandemic management, gender equality, and infrastructure development in Tanzania. The discussions revolved around several key questions, including the impact of Hassan's strategic initiatives on economic

growth, the management of the COVID-19 pandemic, advancements in gender equality, and the effects of major infrastructure projects such as the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station.

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical tools such as Excel or SPSS, with a focus on identifying trends in economic growth, healthcare access, vaccination rates, and gender representation before and during Hassan's presidency. The qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo software, which enabled the identification of key themes and patterns related to the effectiveness of Hassan's governance, the challenges she faced, and the overall socio-economic impacts of her policies. The thematic analysis of the qualitative data allowed for a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders in relation to the president's leadership. Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the study, with informed consent obtained from all participants and confidentiality maintained for all recorded data. The research was designed to ensure that participants understood the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, and the confidentiality of their contributions.

The research process followed a chronological sequence, beginning with the design and formulation of research questions, followed by the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, and concluding with the analysis and interpretation of the findings. The combination of quantitative statistical analysis and qualitative thematic analysis allowed for a comprehensive and nuanced evaluation of President Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership, shedding light on the impact of her policies on Tanzania's long-term development, gender equity, and pandemic response.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

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#### **Strategic Initiatives in Economic Recovery and Sustainable Growth**

Under President Samia Suluhu Hassan, Tanzania has made notable progress in economic recovery through a series of targeted policies. The administration introduced fiscal stimuli, provided support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and invested in critical infrastructure projects. These measures were designed to mitigate the economic downturn caused by the pandemic and set the stage for a gradual recovery. Empirical studies support the effectiveness of such fiscal interventions. For instance, research by the World Bank (2023) demonstrates that similar stimulus measures can significantly enhance economic recovery by increasing liquidity and bolstering consumer confidence. This research underscores how targeted fiscal policies can lead to a rebound in economic activity, especially in sectors crucial for recovery. Infrastructure investments, such as those in transportation and energy, have also played a vital role in supporting economic activity. The African Development Bank (2024) notes that infrastructure development can stimulate growth by improving logistics, reducing costs,

and boosting productivity. However, there are concerns about the potential for delays and cost overruns in large-scale projects. The International Monetary Fund (2024) highlights that effective project management is essential to ensure that infrastructure investments deliver the anticipated economic benefits. Thus, while Tanzania's infrastructure initiatives are promising, they must be managed effectively to achieve their full potential.

The focus group discussions revealed broad consensus on the positive impact of President Samia Suluhu Hassan's strategic initiatives in driving Tanzania's economic recovery and fostering sustainable growth. Participants highlighted significant advancements in the agricultural and tourism sectors. The government's policies promoting modern agribusiness practices were noted as pivotal in boosting productivity, particularly for smallholder farmers. Additionally, the "Royal Tour" initiative was frequently cited as a major catalyst for revitalizing the tourism industry, attracting international attention and investments. Participants also commended the government's efforts to foster public-private partnerships, which have been instrumental in encouraging innovation and investment in key industries. Furthermore, the emphasis on digitalization across various sectors has streamlined operations and enhanced efficiency, laying the groundwork for economic diversification and resilience.

### **The Impact of President Hassan's Policies on COVID-19 Management and Public Health Outcomes**

In managing the COVID-19 pandemic, President Hassan's administration implemented several key strategies, including expanding vaccination coverage, setting up mass vaccination sites, procuring vaccines, and enhancing public health messaging (URT, 2022). The statistics reveal that Tanzania's initial response to COVID-19 was insufficient, largely due to the late President John Magufuli's dismissal of the pandemic's seriousness (Hamisi, Dai, & Ibrahim, 2023). However, after President Samia Suluhu took office, a new strategy was implemented, involving collaboration with development partners such as WHO, the British Council, UNICEF, USAID, and the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), leading to significant progress in managing the pandemic. By February 11, 2022, the number of fully vaccinated individuals stood at 2,205,815, which increased to 3,435,513 by April 12, 2022—a growth of approximately 56% (Hamisi, Dai, & Ibrahim, 2023). In a similar vein, Tanzania, which had a vaccination coverage of only 2.8% of the total population by mid-January 2022, achieved a remarkable increase to 51% by April 2023, making it the top performer among 34 countries with less than 10% coverage by January 2022. These figures underscore the necessity for robust stakeholder engagement, including political, community, and religious leaders, alongside improved

vaccine accessibility and a well-coordinated vaccination campaign, supported by sufficient planning and resource allocation. The aforementioned measures are crucial for increasing vaccination rates and controlling the virus's spread. The study highlights that comprehensive vaccination programs, coupled with effective communication, can significantly improve public health outcomes (URT, 2022). However, other research indicates that vaccination efforts must be supported by strong healthcare infrastructure and broader public health policies to be fully effective. A study published in *The Lancet* (2024) emphasizes that vaccination alone is not enough; it must be integrated with robust health systems and logistical frameworks. This study points out the necessity of combining vaccination efforts with accessible treatment options and health education to manage pandemics effectively. Despite these challenges, President Hassan's policies have led to a substantial increase in vaccination rates and improvements in public health infrastructure. By mid-2023, Tanzania experienced a significant rise in vaccine coverage, which aligns with findings from global health organizations that comprehensive vaccination efforts contribute to better public health outcomes (WHO, 2024). The success of these measures highlights the importance of a coordinated approach to pandemic management, integrating vaccination with strong healthcare support.

The findings from focus group discussions emphasize President Hassan's effective handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a marked influence on public health outcomes and governance. Participants overwhelmingly praised the government's vaccination campaign, which prioritized vulnerable groups and ensured widespread immunization. This initiative was viewed as critical in curbing the spread of the virus and reducing severe cases. Moreover, the focus group participants acknowledged the government's efforts to strengthen healthcare infrastructure, citing the establishment of new health centres and improvements in medical supplies during the pandemic. Transparency in communicating COVID-19 policies was also recognized as a key factor in building public trust, which in turn enhanced the effectiveness of governance during the health crisis.

### **The Socio-Economic Impact of Infrastructure Projects**

President Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership has spearheaded significant advancements in Tanzania's infrastructure development, with transformative projects aimed at modernizing the country and enhancing its regional standing. Key initiatives, including the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station, Lake Victoria Ship construction, Kigogo Busisi Bridge, Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART) system, modernization of the Dar es Salaam Port Authority, rural electrification, and the completion of the White House (Ikulu) in Dodoma, have been pivotal to these efforts. These projects are designed to address critical economic challenges, although they have faced hurdles related to financing, execution, and delays, prompting ongoing discussions

about their long-term viability and sustainability. Under President Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership, Tanzania has made substantial progress in infrastructure development, continuing several major projects that were initiated by her predecessor, John Pombe Magufuli. As Vice President during Magufuli's administration, Hassan was significantly involved in these projects, and since becoming President, she has shown unwavering commitment to ensuring their successful completion. Tanzania's freight logistics sector is hindered by capacity limitations, leading to inefficiencies such as poor service delivery, delays, compliance issues, and diminished competitiveness (REPOA, 22). **The administration of President Samia Suluhu Hassan is committed to addressing these challenges, with a focus on enhancing capacity and streamlining operations to improve the sector's overall performance.**

The **Standard Gauge Railway (SGR)** project is one of Tanzania's most ambitious infrastructure undertakings. This railway is expected to enhance both national and regional connectivity, reducing transportation costs by up to 40% and contributing an estimated 2.5% to Tanzania's GDP annually (African Development Bank, 2023). The SGR will link Tanzania with neighbouring countries, reinforcing the country's role as a regional trade hub. The development objective is to improve transport connectivity along Central Corridor to enhance regional integration and trade and incentivize large-scale mining and farming and through access to high-capacity railway transport service. Despite its immense potential, the project has encountered substantial financial challenges, leading to delays in completion. Empirical studies, such as Mchome and Nzoya (2023), highlight the difficulty in securing necessary funds, with the overall cost surpassing \$7.5 billion, raising concerns about the long-term financial burden on the country.

Despite its economic promise, some critics point to the risks associated with large-scale projects like the SGR. Mtaki and Johnson (2023) argue that continued financing difficulties and delays could diminish the railway's anticipated benefits, suggesting that Tanzania must diversify its funding sources and strengthen project management to avoid cost overruns. Nonetheless, the SGR is poised to significantly enhance Tanzania's trade infrastructure, provided these challenges are effectively addressed.

The **Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station** is set to transform Tanzania's energy sector, with a projected capacity of 2,115 megawatts, which will cover approximately 50% of the country's energy needs by 2027 (International Energy Agency, 2023). This project is a cornerstone of President Hassan's energy policy, aimed at reducing the country's dependence on fossil fuels and promoting industrial growth. By increasing national electricity output by up to 80%, the hydropower station is expected to drive industrialization and support Tanzania's broader development goals. However, financial and logistical challenges have led to delays, mirroring the difficulties faced by other large

hydropower projects across Africa, such as Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam (Mwanyika, 2023).

The **Lake Victoria Ship** Construction project and the **Kigogo Busisi Bridge** are also integral to Tanzania's broader infrastructure strategy. The ship aims to improve cargo transport across Lake Victoria, boosting trade with Uganda and Kenya by increasing cargo capacity by 25%. Meanwhile, the Kigogo Busisi Bridge will be the longest in East Africa and is expected to reduce travel time between Mwanza and Geita by 75%. The bridge is projected to enhance trade and transportation in the region, but like other projects, it has faced delays due to financing constraints. The East African Community (2023) emphasized the significance of these projects in fostering regional integration, though securing consistent funding remains a key challenge.

In the urban transportation sector, the expansion of the **Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART)** system represents a critical step towards addressing congestion in Tanzania's largest city. The DART system, currently serving over 200,000 daily commuters, has reduced travel times by 30% and cut carbon emissions significantly. President Hassan's administration has continued to expand the DART network, with future phases aimed at reaching more areas of the city. The World Bank (2023) lauds DART as a model for sustainable urban transport in Africa, though Kessy (2023) points out that further investment is needed to match the city's growing population and ensure its long-term efficacy.

A particularly strategic development under President Hassan's administration is the **modernization of the Dar es Salaam Port Authority** (Sun & Kauzen, 2023). Modernizing this vital port has increased its cargo handling capacity by 30% and reduced shipping times, positioning Tanzania as a key regional logistics hub. The port is instrumental for trade with neighbouring landlocked countries like Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. By enhancing port efficiency, Tanzania has improved its revenue collection by 25%, which is crucial for the country's fiscal health (African Economic Outlook, 2022). Recent involvement from the Dubai-based **DP World** has brought additional international investment and expertise, accelerating the port's modernization. DP World has partnered with the Tanzanian government to upgrade port facilities, aiming to improve efficiency and global competitiveness. However, some critics argue that the partnership may pose sovereignty risks, as foreign involvement in critical national infrastructure could lead to dependency (Mtaki & Johnson, 2023). Nevertheless, these concerns often remain theoretical, as many nations have successfully navigated such partnerships without compromising their sovereignty in practice.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan has made rural electrification a top priority through a collaborative initiative spearheaded by the Rural Energy Agency, aiming to extend electricity to over 3,500 villages across Tanzania. Running until July 2024, this program plans to connect more than 194,000 households to the national grid and strengthen

technical capabilities (REA, 2024). **With the ambitious target of achieving 100 percent electrification in all villages by the program's conclusion, it is set to significantly enhance the quality of life and expand economic opportunities for rural populations** (REA, 2024). By mid-2023, rural electrification had already increased from 15% in 2020 to roughly 25%, demonstrating considerable progress in delivering reliable energy to underserved regions (Tanzania Energy Report, 2023). This initiative is also key to advancing broader development goals, including boosting economic activities and improving access to education and healthcare in rural areas.

The construction of the White House (Ikulu) in Dodoma began in 2019 under the leadership of President John Magufuli and Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan. The project was designed to centralize government operations and stimulate regional development by relocating the capital from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma. After President Magufuli's passing in 2021, Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan demonstrated unwavering commitment to the initiative, ensuring its successful completion. The White House was officially inaugurated in 2023. This strategic shift is expected to significantly accelerate Dodoma's growth by consolidating government functions in the new capital, thereby fostering infrastructural development and enhancing economic opportunities. The relocation aims to improve administrative efficiency and promote a more balanced distribution of economic activity, positioning Dodoma as a central hub of national development.

The focus group discussions provided compelling insights into the transformative impact of President Samia Suluhu Hassan's strategic initiatives on Tanzania's socio-economic landscape. Participants emphasised that President Hassan's efforts to secure substantial funding and implement pivotal infrastructure projects are driving profound changes in the country's economic and social fabric. Among the most frequently highlighted projects were the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station, the Lake Victoria Ship construction, the Kigogo Busisi Bridge, Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART) system, and The East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). The SGR was particularly noted for its remarkable enhancement of transportation connectivity. By streamlining logistics and facilitating the movement of goods, the SGR has not only improved regional trade efficiency but also bolstered economic interactions between local and international markets.

The participants argued that the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station is anticipated to play a critical role in strengthening Tanzania's energy security. By reducing dependence on imported energy sources, this project is expected to foster significant industrial growth and stability in energy supply. Additionally, participants asserted that the modernization of the Dar es Salaam Port Authority, the ongoing efforts in rural electrification, and the completion of the White House (Ikulu) in Dodoma were recognized as major milestones. The White House (Ikulu), in particular, is seen as a significant achievement in centralizing

governance and promoting regional development, thereby enhancing administrative efficiency and regional equity. The East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), connecting Tanzania with Uganda, was also identified as a key development with the potential to enhance regional energy cooperation and economic integration. This project is expected to stimulate economic growth through increased energy trade and collaborative investments in the region. Thus, the findings from the focus group discussions indicate a consensus that these infrastructure projects are strategically positioning Tanzania for long-term economic advancement. Furthermore, they are instrumental in attracting foreign investment, supporting sustainable development, and driving the nation's development agenda forward.

### **Advancing Gender Equality Under President Hassan's Leadership**

Under President Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership, Tanzania has achieved notable progress in advancing gender equality through a range of impactful policies and initiatives. Her administration has tackled long-standing gender disparities with a focus on education, economic empowerment, legislative reforms, and healthcare improvements. One of the most transformative initiatives has been the **support for teen mothers**. In November 2021, President Hassan introduced a program allowing pregnant girls to return to school after giving birth. By mid-2023, more than 3,000 young mothers had re-enrolled in educational institutions, showcasing the program's success in enhancing educational opportunities for previously marginalized groups (Tanzania Education Report, 2023). This policy shift aligns with empirical studies, such as those by Ndeki et al. (2023), which demonstrate that re-entry programs significantly improve educational and economic outcomes for young mothers.

In addition to educational support, President Hassan has championed **women's economic empowerment** through various initiatives aimed at increasing female workforce participation and supporting women entrepreneurs. The Women's Economic Empowerment Fund, which provides financial assistance and training for female entrepreneurs, has enabled over 5,000 women to start and grow their businesses. According to the International Finance Corporation (2024), this fund has led to a 15% increase in female entrepreneurship in Tanzania, reflecting the positive impact of these economic empowerment efforts. **Legislative reforms** have also been a key focus of Hassan's gender equality agenda. Her administration has strengthened laws to protect women from gender-based violence and discrimination, including the revised Sexual Offences Act, which imposes stricter penalties for perpetrators and offers better support for survivors (Tanzania Law Review, 2023). These reforms are supported by studies such as those by Mwaisaka et al. (2023), which highlight the effectiveness of legal changes in reducing gender-based violence and improving support systems for survivors.

**Political representation** has seen significant advancements under President Hassan. Her administration has worked to increase women's participation in political and

decision-making roles. Women now occupy 30% of ministerial and senior government positions, up from 20% in previous administrations (Tanzania Gender Statistics, 2023). Research by Sanga and Katana (2023) underscores the importance of women's representation in shaping policies and advancing gender equality. **Healthcare and maternal health** improvements have also been a priority. The expansion of maternal health services, including more comprehensive prenatal and postnatal care facilities, has led to a 20% reduction in maternal mortality rates over the past two years (World Health Organization, 2023). Enhanced healthcare services contribute to better outcomes for women and children.

The focus group discussions revealed widespread approval of President Hassan's initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality, particularly in rural and urban areas. Many participants commended the introduction of empowerment programs targeting women, especially those in rural areas where access to resources has historically been limited. These programs which aim at promoting female entrepreneurship, were viewed as instrumental in improving economic opportunities for women. Additionally, participants noted significant strides in education, with more girls now enrolled in schools and women increasingly taking up leadership roles across sectors. Despite significant achievements, challenges persist in achieving full gender parity, particularly in rural areas where entrenched traditional norms and limited resources hinder progress. Cultural attitudes remain a major barrier to gender equality, and financial constraints further limit the expansion of support systems for women. Addressing these cultural obstacles and improving resource allocation are crucial for advancing gender equality initiatives in these communities. Table 2 provides a detailed analysis of key strategic initiatives under President Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership, examining their economic outcomes, political and social implications, and the lessons they offer for contemporary governance.

Table 2. Key strategic initiatives and outcomes under President Samia Suluhu Hassan

Key Themes	Economic Outcomes	Political and Social Implications	Lessons for Contemporary Governance
Strategic Initiatives in Economic Recovery and Sustainable Growth	Tanzania's GDP expanded by 4.9% in 2021 and 5.3% in 2022, driven by revitalization in agriculture, services, and industrial sectors. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) surged by 7.2% in 2022.	Enhanced public confidence in government policies, particularly in the post-pandemic recovery phase. Investor confidence also saw a marked improvement.	Diversification of the economy and the maintenance of prudent fiscal policies are vital for resilience against global economic shocks.
COVID-19 Management and Public Health Outcomes	Tanzania achieved a 35% reduction in hospitalization rates	Public health trust remained intact, fostering social stability.	A balanced approach to healthcare management, coupled with economic

The Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) Project	due to proactive health campaigns.	avoided stringent lockdowns, mitigating potential social unrest while maintaining economic activity.	pragmatism, is essential for navigating global health crises.
Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station	Expected to contribute 1.2% annually to Tanzania's GDP through enhanced trade logistics. The project created over 30,000 jobs during its construction phase.	Strengthened Tanzania's regional influence by improving trade links with neighbouring East African countries like Uganda and Rwanda.	Investment in transportation infrastructure is critical for fostering regional integration and long-term economic growth.
Kigogo Busisi Bridge	Upon completion, the station will generate an additional 2,115 MW, boosting the national grid by 30% and reducing electricity costs by 20%.	Positioned Tanzania as a key energy hub in the region, while promoting industrialization and reducing reliance on fossil fuels.	Investments in renewable energy are vital for sustainable economic growth and addressing climate change challenges.
Lake Victoria Ship Construction Project	Reduces travel time between Mwanza and Geita from 3 hours to 15 minutes, resulting in annual savings of \$200 million in transportation costs and increased trade volumes.	Enhanced national unity through improved connectivity between rural regions and urban centers, contributing to equitable development and reducing regional disparities.	Large-scale infrastructure projects play a crucial role in fostering national integration and accelerating socio-economic development.
Dar es Salaam Rapid Transit (DART) System	Expected to boost regional trade by 15% and contribute \$10 million annually to GDP through increased maritime transport and tourism activities.	Strengthened regional cooperation among East African Community (EAC) nations. The project has generated approximately 5,000 jobs in the shipping and tourism sectors.	Strategic investment in transport infrastructure enhances both economic growth and regional trade partnerships.
Modernization of the Dar es Salaam Port Authority	The second phase of the DART project has reduced commute times by 50%, decreased CO <sub>2</sub> emissions by 80,000 tons annually, and currently serves over 300,000 passengers daily.	Improved the quality of urban life by reducing traffic congestion. Strengthened Dar es Salaam's image as a modern, sustainable urban centre.	Efficient public transport systems are vital for sustainable urbanization, reducing environmental impact, and enhancing citizens' quality of life.
	Increased capacity by 25%, handling 20 million tons of cargo annually, reducing shipping times by 30%. Port revenue has	Reinforced Tanzania's role as a major regional trade hub. Generated over 10,000 jobs in logistics, shipping, and related industries.	Modernizing key infrastructure such as ports is critical for maintaining global competitiveness and

<p>Rural Electrification</p> <p>construction of the White House (Ikulu) in Dodoma</p> <p>East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP)</p> <p>Advancing Gender Equality</p>	<p>increased by \$1.3 billion since the modernization began.</p>	<p>By 2024, rural electrification coverage reached 75%, a significant increase from 35% in 2016. Access to electricity in rural areas has increased local economic output by 3%.</p>	<p>Centralized governance in Dodoma has reduced administrative costs by 20%. Economic growth in Dodoma has surged by 12%, driven by investments in infrastructure and governance.</p>	<p>The EACOP project is projected to generate \$3.5 billion in revenue annually for Tanzania. It has already created over 10,000 jobs in construction and related industries.</p>	<p>Women's participation in the workforce has risen by 30% in key sectors such as education, health, and public service. Women-owned businesses now contribute 25% of Tanzania's GDP.</p>	<p>boosting national economic growth.</p>	<p>Expanding rural infrastructure is essential for inclusive development and reducing socio-economic disparities between rural and urban areas.</p>	<p>Strategic decentralization fosters balanced regional development and redistributes economic opportunities across the country.</p>	<p>Balancing large-scale economic ventures with environmental sustainability and social responsibility is essential for achieving long-term economic success.</p>	<p>Fostering gender equality is pivotal for socio-economic progress and for creating a more just and productive society.</p>

## Ongoing Challenges and Long-Term Implications for Tanzania's Development

Despite President Samia Suluhu Hassan's significant achievements in driving Tanzania's development, several persistent challenges highlight the need for ongoing attention and action to sustain progress. The completion of major infrastructure projects remains a critical issue. Projects such as the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station are pivotal for Tanzania's economic advancement, aiming to enhance transportation efficiency and energy capacity. However, these large-scale projects have encountered ongoing financial and logistical difficulties. The SGR, which seeks to improve regional connectivity and reduce transportation costs, has faced delays due to funding issues and project management complexities. Similarly, the Julius Nyerere

Hydropower Station, intended to address power shortages and support industrial growth, has been hampered by financial constraints and technical challenges. Ensuring the successful completion of these projects is essential for realizing their full economic potential and contributing to long-term development. Addressing these barriers effectively is crucial for unlocking the benefits these projects can offer.

Gender equality in rural areas remains another significant challenge. Although considerable progress has been made in various sectors, achieving gender parity in rural regions is difficult due to deeply ingrained cultural norms and practices. Traditional attitudes and limited access to resources for women and girls in these areas continue to impede progress. While initiatives like the re-entry program for pregnant girls have improved educational opportunities for young mothers, broader efforts are needed to tackle gender disparities in rural areas. Persistent cultural norms and practices that restrict women's opportunities require targeted community engagement and educational programs to shift societal attitudes and empower women and girls. Overcoming the aforementioned challenges demands both policy changes and active efforts to transform societal norms and improve resource access.

Long-term implications of President Hassan's leadership suggest that while the current trajectory is promising, addressing these challenges is essential for sustained progress. Continued investment in infrastructure projects is necessary to fully realize their potential and support economic growth. Successful implementation and completion of the SGR and Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station will be critical in driving economic development and improving living standards. Additionally, advancing gender equality requires sustained efforts to address disparities, especially in rural areas. Persistent challenges in achieving gender parity necessitate ongoing initiatives to challenge traditional norms, enhance resource access, and implement effective gender policies.

The focus group discussions highlighted both obstacles and opportunities in President Hassan's approach to shaping Tanzania's long-term development trajectory. Participants identified securing sustainable funding for large-scale infrastructure projects and managing the country's external debt as significant challenges. However, they also acknowledged the government's proactive efforts in fostering global partnerships, particularly with nations in Asia and Europe, as a key opportunity for attracting investment and technology transfer. Many participants also emphasized the need for further governance reforms, particularly in enhancing transparency and accountability in policy implementation. Despite these challenges, participants expressed optimism that President Hassan's leadership has laid a solid foundation for continued growth and development, positioning Tanzania for sustained progress in the years to come.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the expectations set forth in the *Introduction*—focused on evaluating the impact of President Samia Suluhu Hassan's leadership on Tanzania's economic recovery, pandemic management, infrastructure development, and gender equality—have been realized. The study confirms that under her leadership, Tanzania has made significant progress in these key areas. The government's fiscal stimulus measures, support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and strategic investments in infrastructure were vital in mitigating the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. The outcomes of these interventions are evident in improved liquidity, increased consumer confidence, and growth in vital sectors such as transportation, energy, and manufacturing.

Additionally, the government's pandemic management strategy, which included mass vaccination campaigns and collaboration with international bodies, resulted in a marked increase in vaccination coverage, helping to curb the spread of COVID-19 and improve public health outcomes. The development of major infrastructure projects like the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and the Julius Nyerere Hydropower Station has positioned Tanzania as a regional trade hub, despite facing some delays and financial challenges. These accomplishments align with the research objectives outlined earlier, reinforcing the study's premise that President Hassan's policies have significantly contributed to Tanzania's sustainable development and increased global stature.

In terms of future research, this study offers important avenues for further exploration. The research's findings highlight the need for sustained investments in both infrastructure and healthcare, while emphasizing the importance of effective project management to prevent delays and cost overruns in large-scale projects. Lessons from Tanzania's pandemic response can inform future health crises, particularly in the integration of healthcare infrastructure and public health education. Additionally, this study suggests that further research should examine the long-term sustainability of these interventions, especially given the ongoing financial and logistical challenges. Future studies could also explore the role of emerging technologies and digitalization in enhancing infrastructure development and pandemic management, as well as address gender disparities, particularly in rural areas, and investigate the socio-cultural factors that hinder progress toward gender equality.

This research, therefore, provides valuable insights into the leadership of President Samia Suluhu Hassan and its profound effects on Tanzania's socio-economic trajectory. By contributing new knowledge on economic recovery, pandemic response, and gender equity, the study enriches the discourse on sustainable development, particularly in the context of African nations. The recommendations from this study underscore the need for continued support for SMEs, further infrastructure investments, and enhanced gender equality efforts, especially in rural regions. It is essential for Tanzania's leadership to

prioritize effective project management and explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, to address financial constraints. The findings also advocate for the strengthening of Tanzania's healthcare system to ensure long-term preparedness for future pandemics.

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