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RESEARCH ARTICLE

GENDER PARITY IN POST PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT OF THE SMALL HOLDER TEA SUB  
SECTOR IN IMENTI SOUTH, KENYA

M'Itunga A. M, Kaburu M'Ribu, Kiprono, P. and \*Sudoj, V.

Department of Environment Biology and Health, University of Eldoret

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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to compare gender representation in the smallholder tea post production management in Imenti South District, Kenya, involving three smallholder tea factory companies, 150 public tea buying centers, and a tea growers' Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO). There were a gender significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) differences in the recruitment of factory directors, senior management staff, technical and skilled staff, and unskilled staff, all to the disadvantage of women. There was no significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) difference for the factory office staff cadre. Women were underrepresented in all categories of tea buying center committee members. There was no woman chairperson out of the 150 tea buying center chairpersons. Women were also unrepresented in the management committee (Board of Directors) and the senior management categories of the tea growers' SACCO. Gender balance was however fair in the SACCO when the entire establishment was considered. There were no significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) differences among the factories. It was concluded that women were disadvantaged and the situation required redress through specific policy interventions.

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INTRODUCTION

Tea has been the leading foreign exchange earner crop for Kenya contributing about 49.4% of the total agricultural export earnings for the period 2006 to 2010 (Tallontire, 2001) and over 20% in the preceding years (Maina, 2001; ROK, 2010). It is also one of the most important agricultural enterprises in Imenti South District. It is grown in the Lower Highlands One (LH1) and Upper Midlands One (UM1) agro-ecological zones of the district (ILO/EAMAT, 1999). It contributes to about 88% of the total households' income in these zones. Studies in Kenya have shown that the incidence of poverty is higher and more severe among women than men, in both the urban and rural areas (FAO, 2011; MOA, 1999). Lingering legal and cultural discrimination impede women's access to property ownership, especially, land. This leads to low status of women and lack of empowerment. These important findings indicate need for integrating gender issues in strategies for poverty alleviation in the country (FAO, 2011; MOA, 1999). It is now noteworthy that the new constitution 2010 (ROK, 2005; ROK, 2010), article 60 (f), has eliminated "the gender discrimination in law, customs and practices related to land and property in land". During the International Women's Day (Anon, 2002), various leaders had different opinions about gender inequalities in Kenya. This included failure by male MP's to widen democratic space to accommodate women, few women representatives in parliament, failure to elect women MP's to

any of the eight parliamentary committees though capable, and low representation in senior administration appointments although they bore the brunt of poor administrative decisions. Various women groups' representatives were reported to have called for support from all sections of society to help women realize equality (Anon, 2002). They resolved to lobby for the passing of the Political Parties Bill (2005), and the Constitution of Kenya Amendment Bill (2006), which promised affirmative action on gender issues, (Anon, 2002). The United Nations Development Program uses two indices to measure gender inequalities in human development, namely, Gender related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), (Anon, 2002).

GDI measures achievements in basic human development adjusted for gender inequalities while GEM measures gender inequality in economic and political opportunities (Anon, 20002). Kenya had a GDI of 0.52 in 2002, which compared well with 0.512 according to the 2001 Human Development Report and was ranked No. 112 globally (Anon, 2002). However, according to available information and practical experience, Kenyan women continued to constitute a disadvantaged social group in many spheres. Nairobi had the highest GDI (0.652) while North Eastern province had the lowest (0.401), (Anon, 2006). The GEM index (which is a composite indicator for representation of women in political, administrative, managerial, professional and technical positions as well as women's share in total income) was estimated at 0.414 for Kenya. Kenya was not ranked globally in 2001 but it was estimated that it would be placed among

\*Corresponding author: Sudoj, V.

Department of Environment Biology and Health, University of Eldoret

countries with low gender empowerment (Anon, 2002). Women made over 50% of the population in Kenya (Anon, 2002; CIDA, 2002) but held 4.1 % of parliamentary seats. Other countries in the region had respective parliamentary representation of: Tanzania 22%, Uganda 17% and Rwanda 25% (Anon, 2002). In the same report Kenya women held 14.7% of administrative and managerial positions and 36.2% of professional and technical workers positions respectively (Anon, 2002). This showed that while women were fairly well represented at professional and technical levels (above 30%), they were underrepresented at administrative and managerial levels (below 30%). While Rwanda's women parliamentary representation has improved to 45 Members of Parliament (56.3%), (MCSS, 1996) becoming the world's best for women representation after their September 2008 elections, out of 190 countries evaluated, Kenya achieved only 22 women out of 224 Mps or 9.8% (<http://www.fidakenya.org>; MCSS, 1996) representation after its December 2007 elections, which were troubled by widespread violence resulting from disputed presidential results. It is also important to note that out of 42 full ministers, only 6 (15%) are women and out of 50 assistant ministers only 6 (12%) are women (CIDA, 2002).

It is now important to note that article 81 (b) and (e) of the new constitution 2010 (ROK, 2010), promulgated on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2010 (Tallontire, 2001), mainstreams gender representation in public electoral processes and respectively state that not more than two thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender and that free and fair elections (shall be) by (i) secret ballot; (ii) free from violence, intimidation, improper influence; (iii) conducted by an independent body; (iv) transparent, and (v) administered in an impartial, neutral, efficient, accurate and accountable manner. The new constitution has also created the Gender Commission to promote gender equality, equity and mainstreaming in national development. According to Maina (Jaetzold *et al.*, 1983), there was no disaggregated data on gender contribution to economic growth by sector nationally, regionally and worldwide. It is generally known that the success of the smallholder tea sub sector has been due to the supplementary roles played by both women and men in production activities. However no study appears to have been done to show how well the women are represented in opportunities which arise in post production management of tea. The main objective of this study was to compare how the available opportunities in post production management of tea were shared between men and women. The essence of the study was to provide gender disaggregated data in the sub sector institutions as desired by Women's Bureau, Kenya (1996) in order to depict the imbalances which might have been veiled by aggregate statistics (Jaetzold *et al.*, 1983; MCSS, 1996).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was carried out in Imenti South District tea growing areas which are found in UM<sub>1</sub> and LH<sub>1</sub> agro-ecological zones. The area lies between altitudes 1520 and 2200 meters above sea level (Jaetzold *et al.*, 1983). The target population comprised of approximately 18,000 smallholder tea farmers distributed across three adjacent tea factory catchments namely, Imenti, Kinoro, and Kionyo. The samples comprised of all the leaders and personnel in the three factory companies,

namely, Imenti, Kinoro and Kionyo; the South Imenti Tea Growers 'SACCO and all the 150 public smallholder tea buying centers in the site. The study was designed to capture the status of gender leadership and personnel recruitment in the three factories, the Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO), and all the 150 public tea buying centers. Thus the entire personnel and leadership establishment in the tea factories, tea buying centers and the tea grower's SACCO formed the samples since the full secondary data was kindly availed by the relevant institutions on request. The study was carried out between 8<sup>th</sup> December 2005 and 6<sup>th</sup> January 2006. Six personnel/leadership categories for the tea factories (Table 1), five for the buying centers (Table 2) and seven for the SACCO (Table 3) were made. Data were collected using a structured format according to the categories. The data for the factories and the buying centers were analyzed through Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) GLM procedure. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the SACCO data through chi-square. Results were presented in tables in form of totals, percentages, and statistical significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Recruitment of factory directors was greatly in favor of men. Out of 18 directors there was no single woman (Table 1). Women were underrepresented in the categories of senior managers, Technical and skilled staff, and the unskilled staff. There was no significant difference for the office staff cadre. There was clear disparity in all the categories of tea buying centre committees. Out of 150 chairpersons there was not a single woman. There were significant differences in all categories in favor of men (Table 2). There was however no significant difference in gender recruitment among factories (Table 2). Disparity in senior positions for the SACCO was also high (Table 3). Women were unrepresented in the management committee (Board of Directors) and the senior management categories. For the 9 management committee members (directors) and 3 senior managers there was no woman. Women were underrepresented in the departmental heads cadre. They were however fairly represented in the section heads, clerks and support staff cadres by over 30% (Table 3). There was however no significant difference between men and women when the entire SACCO establishment was considered (Table 3).

**Table 1. Categories of tea factory companies' personnel showing gender**

Category	Males		Females		Total	Significance Level
	No.	%	No.	%		
Directors	18	100	0	0	18	***
Senior managers	20	87	3	13	23	*
Technical and skilled staff	231	66.4	117	36.4	348	*
Office staff	13	43.3	17	56.7	30	NS
Unskilled staff	241	74.6	82	25.4	323	*
Total	523	70.5	219	29.5	742	

NS= Not Significant; \* = Significance Level (\* = p≤ 0.05) (\*\*\*) p≤ 0.01)

The results generally show that while women contribute equally or more than men in the production activities of tea in the farms (M'Itunga and M'Ribu, 2009), they appear greatly underrepresented in the sharing of opportunities which arise in the post production management of the small holder tea sub sector institutions. These findings concurred with the report

**Table 2. Categories of tea buying center committee members showing gender**

Category	Males		Females		Total	Significance	
	No.	%	No.	%		Gender	Factory
Total Membership	719	95.9	31	4.1	750	**	NS
Total executives (3/TBC)	441	98	9	2	450	**	NS
Total chairpersons	150	100	0	0	150	**	NS
Total secretaries	142	94.7	8	5.3	150	*	NS
Total treasurers	149	99.3	1	0.7	150	**	NS

NS= not significant; \* =Significance Level (\*= p≤ 0.05)

**Table 3. Categories of South Imenti Tea Growers' SACCO personnel showing gender**

Category	Males		Females		Total
	No	%	No	%	
Management committee	9	100	0	0	9
Senior managers	3	100	0	0	3
Departmental heads	4	80	1	20	5
Section heads	5	41.7	7	58.3	12
Clerks	2	50	2	50	4
Support staff	6	66.7	3	33.3	9
Total	29	69	13	31	42

that Kenyan women constituted a disadvantaged social group in many spheres (Anon, 2002). The report had made Kenya be placed among countries with low gender empowerment index of 0.414 globally (Anon, 2002). The great disparity exhibited by this study may imply that certain issues specific to gender may have been overlooked in the past. According to prepared by the NALEP programme (NALEP, 2004), men and women are recognized as being equally important in agricultural production. Women's participation in the production activities of tea is therefore as important as men's. They provide much of the crucial picking labor and attend to most of the reproductive roles without which tea production would be less efficient (M'Itunga and M'Ribu, 2009). Their roles in production activities should therefore be reflected in the opportunities which arise in post production management. Women's rights were not incorporated in the tea industry during the structural adjustment program (Ongile, 1996).

The liberalization and restructuring of the industry (Maina, 2001) did not also consider gender matters. This appears to be the reason for the great disparity due to lack of policy. Women have also not aggressively sought elective posts such as members of tea buying centre committees, directors of tea factory companies, and members (directors) of SACCO management committee as much as their male counterparts. Intimidation, bribery/corruption through beer buying and dishing out money, name calling, and violence, have generally been cited as some of the reasons for lack of interest by women, in addition to excess gender roles at their homes (8). Based on these findings, policy makers in the sub sector should come up with a clear gender friendly policy that recognizes the great role played by women and how opportunities in the sub sector should be shared between men and women commensurate with their respective contributions. To ensure gender representation at all times, in all the sub sector institutions, affirmative action should be applied so that for each institution a female and a male are competitively elected by the entire electorate for the entire institution requiring elected representatives, on the same lines as for parliamentary county women representatives, while professional and technical personnel are recruited following the 30% constitutional rule (ROK, 2010; ROK, Fri. Aug. 27,

2010). This consideration will in future avoid situations where Boards of Directors or Management Committees in the sub sector are hundred percent gender insensitive as hitherto appears to have been the norm (Tables 1 and 2). To get the balance of the required elected representatives, the entire catchment area may be subdivided into similar number of electoral units and elections for them held competitively regardless of the gender that may win. This consideration may finally lead to the 30% minimum gender requirement, while other policy options are sought in cases where the constitutional requirement is not met. Article 27 (3) of the constitution 2010, (ROK, 2010; ROK, Fri. Aug. 27, 2010), on equality and freedom from discrimination should be applied in the sub sector to ensure fairness in elective posts and in the hiring of personnel. Article 56 (a) and (c) of the constitution 2010 (ROK, 2010; ROK, Fri. Aug. 27, 2010) should be used to ensure women are not marginalized and have access to employment opportunities in the sub sector. Article 81(b) and (e) of the new constitution 2010 (ROK, 2010; ROK, Fri. Aug. 27, 2010) should be invoked to ensure fairness in electoral representation free from violence, intimidation, improper influence or corruption of any form. Voting at all levels should be by secret ballot as provided for in the constitution (ROK, 2010; ROK, Fri. Aug. 27, 2010). There should be no option for voting through queuing (Mlolongo) or acclamation even if it is the wish of the majority of the electorate because these forms of voting may be interpreted as being intimidators. The Kenya National Human Rights and Equality Commission (Article 59 (1) and (2) (b)) should be used to mainstream the gender policy in the sub sector through gender equality and equity; and the ministry of Cooperative Development should fully implement it in line with the new constitution 2010 (ROK, 2010; ROK, Fri. Aug. 27, 2010).

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