

How Women's Financial Exclusion is Affecting Gender Equity in Tea Farming in Singorwet Ward, Bomet County

Chepkirui Agnes¹, Dr. D. S Parsitau, PhD², Dr. Diana A. Opolo, PhD³

¹Masters Student Egerton University, P.O BOX 153,20400 BOMET

^{2,3}Senior Lecturer Egerton University, P.O BOX 536-20115, EGERTON-NJORO

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ABSTRACT

Access to finance by women within communities is key to ensuring improved economies and better livelihoods. Having money at hand means women can purchase/ access quality seeds, good farm equipment and efficient technologies. Indeed, money will help women improve their own life style and that of their families (FAO, 2019) The research objectives were to examine the extent of financial exclusion of women in tea farming from the farm all the way to accessing benefits from tea and how it's affecting gender equity. A cross sectional study design was used and a sample size of 532 tea farmers' respondents (comprising of 431 male tea farmers and 101 female tea farmers), 2 directors and 10 farm labourers were involved in this study. Purposive sampling was used to pick two director zones in Singorwet ward and stratified random sampling to pick five tea buying centres within Singorwet Zone and Mugango Zone. Questionnaire, interviews and observation schedule were used for data collection. From the findings, it is evident that women though the majority in the tea farming workforce; are the minority in tea farm monthly pay and bonuses. The study recommends a detailed and close to communities' financial literacy that presents information on owning a tea farm, having a bank account, savings and getting credit from credible sources.

Keywords: Gendered tea farms, Financial exclusion, financial equity, financial prowess, Agricultural financing.

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring financial inclusion for all is an item of focus in the sustainable development goals. It is so because it will help in bringing down poverty rates. Financial inclusion involves ensuring that all adults have access to credits, savings, insurance and other payments in affordable and convenient way (DITC, TNCD, & UNCTAD, 2020). In fact goal number 5 of SDGs emphasize on gender equality and empowering of girls and women. Many institutions agree that financial inclusion of women will boost rural development. Even with this in mind, it has been found out that 1.1 billion women do not have formal bank accounts needed to spur their economic development (Kunt, 2015) The gap then is the push for the research. The main objectives of the study is to examine the number of men and women who own tea farms and investigate the barriers that women face in access and control over tea farms. The information gathered is meant to encourage KTDA and other tea farming stakeholders to embrace gender inclusive policies from the farm, through tea buying centres, tea leaf transportation, tea milling, tea sales and tea earnings.

Main Objective

To examine the effect of restricted access and land control in tea farming on gender equity in Singorwet

Ward of Bomet County.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to examine the number of men and women who own tea farms as well as the size of the owned land, identify the barriers that women face in access to and control over land and suggest the interventions that can increase more women access to and control over land.

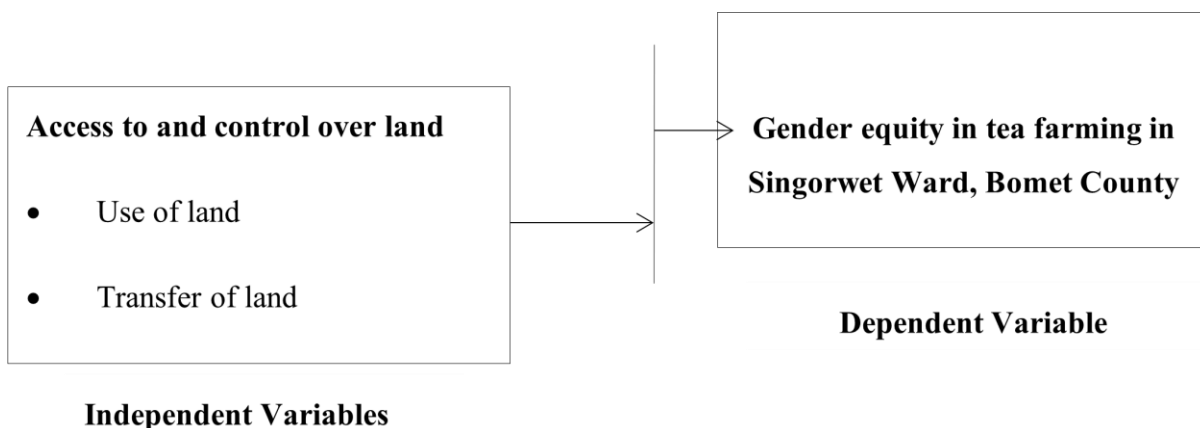
Theoretical Framework

The Moser Gender Planning Framework

The study is based on The Moser Gender Planning Framework by Caroline Moser (1993). The framework aims to ensure women’s liberation from subordinate positions and help them work toward equality, fairness, and empowerment. It thus realizes that the roles that women perform as per society serve to maintain their low status and thus wants to stir in women the need to move to a position of equity. The main concepts in the framework are women’s triple roles, gender needs, women in development, and gender and development. From this, the argument is that women have many roles that they have to accomplish and this sets them to require some needs termed as practical and strategic needs (Candida et al., 1999). These needs involve those basic needs that will not lead to any change in the existing gender relations. From this, it is evident that women’s roles present them with certain challenges that specific strategies have to be employed to help them manage or come out of them.

The framework brings into light the multiple roles of women and particularly how they affect access to and control over the household and social resources. This confirms that the roles confine women to the domestic sphere (Reproductive Roles) filled with unpaid work and reduces their participation in the tea farms (Productive roles), KTDA annual general meetings, and vying for Tea area directorship positions (Community roles), therefore limiting their voice and benefits in smallholder tea farming (Moser, 1993).

Conceptual Framework



EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Land Ownership and Control

The land is one of the important assets that communities possess. It is considered a pillar in the economic growth of any country. It holds and lifts businesses, livelihoods and investments. Furthermore, it is considered a sign/object of personal empowerment (IOM, 2016; Mishra & Sam, 2016; Montenegro et al., 2016). Land is a major property that is key to sustainable agriculture. This is because its purpose runs across

crop growing, livestock management, fishing on it, tea growing, and hunting grounds (Madison, 2019; Zhang et al, 2020). Societies in different parts of the world have certain lifestyles that perpetuate gender relations in agriculture such that one kind of gender may benefit over another. For example in Vietnam, unequal gender relations are witnessed through access to land, land size, cultivated land, and irrigated land.

Males have up to 91% of commercial agricultural farms under them and only 9% are owned by females (Mohan, 2017; Alvarado et al., 2015; Khuat Thu Hong et al., 2015). In terms of land size, female households can access sizes that are 27% smaller than what men can get. Due to the disadvantages that a particular gender encounters as a result of gender roles, the study explored the constraints that the roles place on men and women and how each of them has been copied under these roles.

Men and women participate in agricultural activities. Many studies that have been done in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific contend that women spend more time working than men accounting for twelve hours more than that men. Women-based labor is sought out more than male-based labor.

Mitra (2018) observes that 80% of tea plantation workers involved in tea plucking in India are women. This duty of tea plucking is the kind of work that takes a lot of time and climaxes in the transportation of heavy loads of tea to the tea weighing center. Even with these many working hours, women have limited access to resources and services which affect their productivity and earnings and do not help in any way to reduce their burden of responsibility (Joshi & Martinez, 2017). Bose & Das (2017) remarks that ownership of land is mostly under a male in the household with the title deed registered in the male's name. This leaves the women in families with few chances of owning the land limiting it to periods of joint ownership or when the male head of the household has passed on and so the ownership passes on to the woman by extension.

Bose & Das (*ibid*) claims that because of cash crops, tea being one of them, women have lost some level of ownership of productive land instead they have been driven to unproductive lands. Mohan (2017) point out that male dominance in land ownership started with the establishment of customary laws during the colonial era. This gave men at the time an opportunity to create a defensive wall around the traditions of the community which in essence gave way to the strengthening of African patriarchy. This placed women in a subordinate position where men had an upper hand in decisions and women were reduced to respecting what men passed. This has given rise to men being in control and accessing benefits from the land they own while women can only receive the benefits when men say so. This, therefore, explains why most women's work is unpaid, unrecognized, and not valued. In most cases, women's roles in agriculture build on the financial benefits of the male owners and farmers. Women end up in a disadvantaged position than men (Joshi & Martinez, 2017). The study opened up the land ownership issue vis-à-vis men and women and revealed a connection between ownership and benefits.

In many studies, therefore, the woman factor appears as the drive to inequality in issues concerning land rights. There are many issues at local, national, and international levels of society that limit women's access to and control over land. The main issue is the thought that since men head households so should they own land among others (Mishra & Sam, 2016; Anderson et al., 2017, Kenya Land Alliance- KLA, 2018). This is well explained as customary law and practice. Though many strides have been made by various countries to enable equal rights in land access and control, more needs to be looked into. The various laws in the constitutions of some countries have embraced equality to be in tandem with international human rights standards and obligations for instance CEDAW. In Nepal, there is a great improvement in terms of the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment. Its government ratified 1991 the UN Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This for them has led to improved access to education, health, and employment by their women folk. But with all these efforts limited access to resources seems to persist due to sociocultural practices (USAID, 2019; Kathmandu, 2016; Anderson et al., 2017, Dworkin, 2017).

Other countries like South Africa, Mozambique, Uganda, and Kenya among others have introduced articles into their constitutions that prohibit discrimination. The issue then becomes the ill-informed/little-informed women population on the available provisions that protect them. They then still stick to traditional practices where women are in the back seat (UN, 2019; Dworkin et al., 2017). In Ghana, for instance, land customarily was an asset owned by all community members but in its real sense, women are secondary in terms of ownership. There are customary laws that restrict full utilization of the asset for example the law passing the property through the male descendants (Kizito et al, 2018). Indeed land is tied to society, which has norms. These norms mostly traditional regulate the assignment and ownership procedures of land (Chimhowu, 2019; Ayano, 2018; Killic et al., 2021)

In Kenya, the Land Policy (2009), The Constitution (2010) and the Land Act (2012) are among the legislation on land. In all of them, there is recognition of equal land rights for men and women. But like other nations, the enforcement challenge, the awareness issue, and the existing customary law seem to bar full enjoyment of equal provision (Maneno, 2017; Land Registration Act and Land Commission Act, 2012). Suggestions have been made and adopted by countries on ways to boost women's access to land. The first is to include women in decision-making, especially concerning the law, policy, and program development. For instance, the Botswana government developed an Agricultural Sector Gender Policy Framework with the main goal of 'promoting equality and equity in agricultural development processes. This led to improved women's participation in agriculture as a whole. Uganda on the other hand adopted the Uganda National Land Policy Final Draft in 2011. This was with a focus on addressing pertinent women's issues and ensuring the development of gender-sensitive land laws (Doss et al., 2020; Hasanbasri et al, 2021).

Secondly, boost enforcement and implementation of existing laws and policies to enable justice for all. It is worth noting even from most literature that countries have laws but the law is nothing without practice. Some studies, therefore, suggest the development of specialized courts, putting more funds into women's courses, and ensuring that judicial decisions are not gender-biased. In Kenya for example, leaders at the local level are expected to uphold non-discriminatory law and are held responsible to ensure they defend women's land rights at the grassroots. There are programs in Sub-Saharan Africa managed by UN Women tasked with awareness creation in communities about land rights and inheritance (UN Human Rights and UN Women, 2019). Thirdly, is about ensuring that various laws and policies on land are well explained and harmonized. This will allow the zipping of gaps that may be reasons for injustice to women. Some countries have managed to harmonize their land laws for example India, Kenya, Mozambique, and Namibia (Munyaradzi et al, 2018).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The researcher used a cross-sectional mixed method study design which allows a collection of information using both quantitative and qualitative methods. This design allows the understanding of the prevalence of gender inequity issues and its link to the gender roles, practices, attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs of certain groups of people that could be related to the issue being handled (Rohr, 2022).

The study was done within Singorwet Ward of Bomet Central Constituency in Bomet County. The ward has a majority of its population engaged in smallholder tea farming. The road network in the area is mainly composed of murrum roads which are impassable during the rainy seasons. This has caused the factory vehicles to come either so early or so late to collect tea from the tea-buying centers. The area normally receives heavy rains in three seasons within the year April, August, and December. The area is occupied by the Kipsigis community, a sub-tribe of the larger Kalenjin community, still attached to the traditional cultural norms and values. In this community, men are considered in control of many decisions such that

family disputes, land ownership, and any other property is deemed appropriate to be transferred to men rather than women.

The study targeted a population of 21, 795 people spread within 43.60 Square Kilometres. (G.o.K, 2009). The target tea farmers’ population is based on registered tea grower suppliers’ number to Tirgaga Tea Factory as of 1st August 2020 where 5,320 were residents of Singorwet Ward.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The selection of sample size was based on Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) that suggested a sample size of between 10 – 30% of the targeted population for a descriptive study. For populations below 1000, Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) suggested 30%, while those above 1000 suggested 10% respectively.

The tea farmers sample size calculation was as outlined:

$$n=10/100 N$$

Where: **N** is the target household population and **n** is the sample size

$$n=10/100 X 5,320$$

= 532, which formed the target sample size.

Table 3.1: Sampling Matrix

Target population	Data Collection tool	Sampling design	Tea Buying Centre’s (One per Sub-location in Singorwet Ward)					Total Target Sample size
			Stratified random	KP19	KP119	KP25	KP29	
Directors (2)	Interview	Purposive						2
Tea farmers (5,320)	Questionnaire	Simple Random	106	107	106	107	106	532
Tea farm laborers	Interview	Purposive	2	2	2	2	2	10
Factory Managers/ Assistants (5)	Questionnaire	Purposive						5
Factory staff (145)	Questionnaire	Simple Random						40
Key: KP19: Kamasenga TBC (Singorwet Sub-Location), KP119: Chepkitach TBC (Kabungut Sub-Location), KP25: Aisaik TBC (Aisaik Sub-Location), KP29: Semoi TBC (Mugango Sub-Location) and KP40: Kitoben TBC (Kitoben Sub-Location).								

Purposive stratified random sampling was employed to get five zones based on sub-locations within two director zones in Singorwet ward and then tea buying centres were randomly selected within the zones. The

target sample size was finally proportioned equally among the four tea buying centres. Since there were no specific figure for the farm laborers in the study area the study opted to conduct an interview on this group purposively picking two from each buying Centre selected.

The factory staff (including managers) sample size calculation was as outlined:

$$n = \frac{10}{100} N$$

Where: N is the target household population and n is the sample size

$$n = \frac{30}{100} \times 150$$

= 45, which formed the target sample size.

All five managers were targeted while the remaining forty were randomly selected to fill the questionnaires. The two directors were targeted and interview in Singorwet ward.

Data Collection

Primary and secondary methods of data collection were used. Questionnaire and interviews were used during primary data collection. The tools that were used in the study include questionnaires, interviews and observations.

Data Analysis

Data collected was edited to check for any incomplete questions and presentation of inconsistent answers. After this, data was coded and summarized and then the analysis of the data was undertaken. Analysis was done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 25 for quantitative data analysis and QDA Miner Lite version 1.4.1 for qualitative data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

This study gives an account of returned data collection tools. It answers whether interviews and questionnaires used produced representative data to make informed conclusions for the study. The results were as summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Target population	Data Collection tool	Total Target Sample size	Return Sample Rate	Return Rate (%)
Directors (2)	Interview	2	2	100.0%
Tea farmers (5,320)	Questionnaire	532	510	95.9%
Tea farm laborers	Interview	10	10	100.0%
Factory staff (150)	Questionnaire	45	43	95.6%

Source: Authors (2019)

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate below 40% is unreliable, a response rate of 40% – 50% is poor, a response rate of 50% – 60% is acceptable for analysis and reporting, a response rate of

60% – 70% is fair, 70% – 80% is good and above 80% is excellent. The interviews return rate was 100% since all the two Tea Area Directors and ten sampled Farm laborers who were the key informants were interviewed. Both questionnaires and interviews response rates for this study fall above 80% and therefore excellent to be relied upon.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic profiles discussed in this section included; gender, marital status, level of education, main occupation and level of household income from tea of the respondents.

Gender of the Respondents

The study established that the gender of the respondents was as shown in Figure 4.1.



Figure 4.1: Gender of the Respondents

Source: Authors, 2019

The study comprised of only male directors, among tea farmers 81.0% were males and 19.0% were females, with factory staff 48.8% were males whereas 51.2% were females, and among farm laborers 20.0% were males and 80.0% were females. From this finding, it shows that the information collected was representative especially among factory staff, with a ratio of 1:1 since both had equal chance to air their views on to examine the gender roles in tea farming and its effect on gender equity in Singorwet Ward of Bomet County. Contrary among directors 100.0% and tea farmers having 80.0 % being male shows opinion disparity which is also evident among farm laborers with majority, 80.0% being women. The findings of the

study concur with what is presented by Koyenikan & Ikharea (2014) who state that women are the majority in the agriculture labour force.

Marital Status of the Respondents

The study sought to find out the marital status of the respondents, the results were as presented in Figure 4.2.

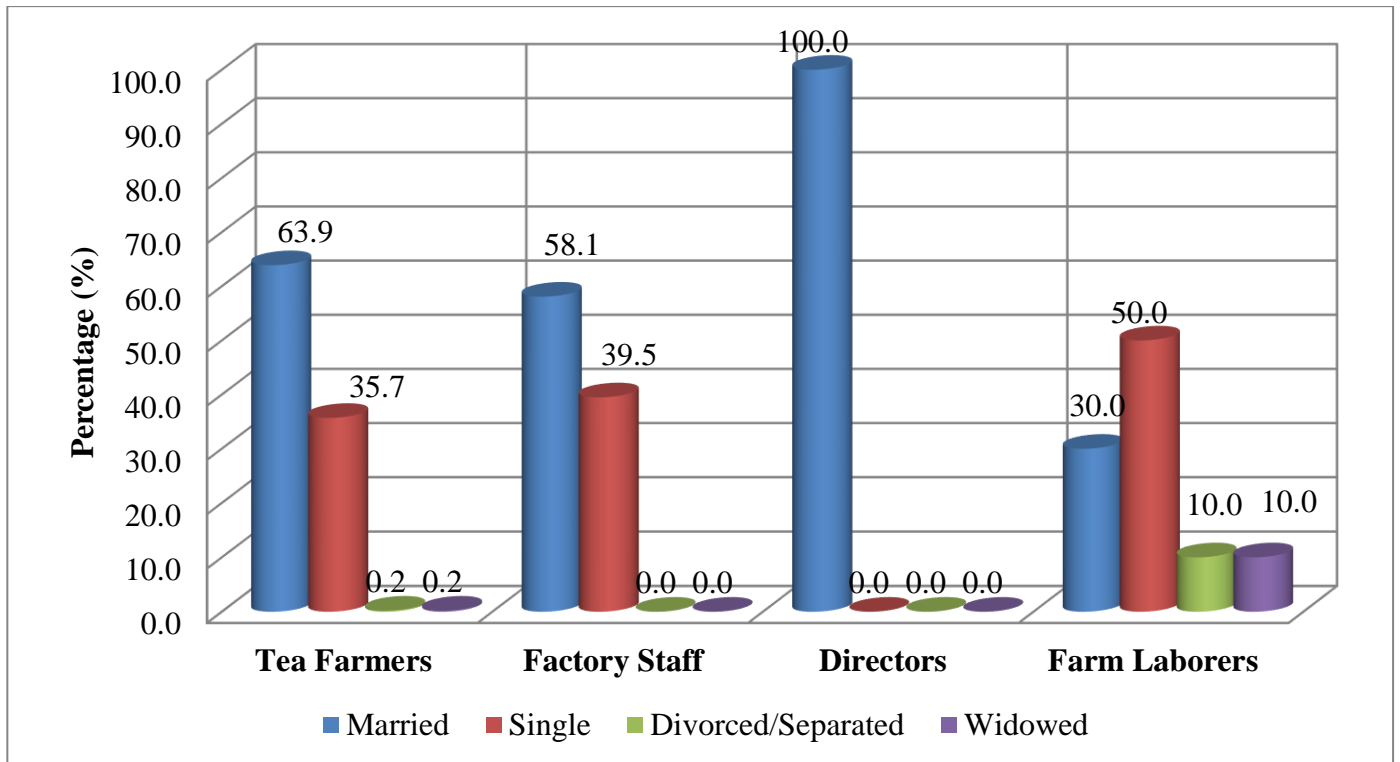


Figure 4.2: Marital status of the Respondents

Source: Author, 2019

Marital status results show that a majority; 63.9% tea farmers, 58.1% factory staff and all directors were married. Most (50.0%) farm laborers were single with only 30.0% who were married. This finding was important because it meant that all the views of the different categories of the respondents were captured. The dominant married on all categories except farm laborers was deemed better placed to outline gender roles. The findings agree with those presented by Muhamadi & Boz (2021) indicating that most farmers are married and engage together in the farming activities. The single parents and unmarried seem to face financial strains and are less likely to have the requisite educational qualifications to compete for better employment and thus easily engage in tea farms as labourers (Granek et al., 2014)

Education Level of the Respondents per Gender

The level of education of the respondents was very important in the study as it varies the community members' information to examine the gender roles in tea farming and its effect on gender equity. The results were as presented in Table 4.3

With regard to tea farmers' level of education, 45.9% attained their highest education in tertiary colleges followed by primary carder 25.7%, secondary 21.6%, university level 3.7% and lastly with no formal education 3.1%. Among factory staff many had secondary level education 46.5%, 39.5% with tertiary education and 14.0% with university degree. Farm laborers had no one with university degree and majority

was with primary (30.0%) and secondary (30.0%) education. Those with no formal education were 20.0% and the remaining 20.0% had attained tertiary education.

Table 4.3: Education level of the Respondents

Education Level	Tea Farmers		Factory Staffs		Directors		Farm Laborers	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
No formal education	16	3.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	20.0
Primary	131	25.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	30.0
Secondary	110	21.6	20	46.5	0	0.0	3	30.0
Tertiary College	234	45.9	17	39.5	2	100.0	2	20.0
University	19	3.7	6	14.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	510	100.0	43	100.0	2	100.0	10	100.0

Source: Research data (2019)

From education level findings of the study, it can be said that most of the respondents interviewed had basic primary or secondary education. As the literacy can be linked with the level of awareness of gender roles and stereotypes associated. The findings above concur with Fahad et al., (2018), which states that education level of the farmer affects their perception on various things, gender equity included.

Household Tea Income of the Respondents

The level of tea income of a population is an important aspect in ascertaining the effects of gender roles in tea farming. To establish this, the respondents were asked to indicate their monthly tea proceeds. The Household's monthly income results were as summarized in Figure 4.5.

Table 4.4: Monthly Tea Income of the Respondents

Monthly Tea Income (Shillings)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 5,000	294	57.6
5,001 – 10,000	103	20.2
10,001 – 15,000	84	16.5
15,001 – 20,000	2	.4
More than 20,000	27	5.3
Total	510	100.0

Majority of the Households 57.6% (294) earn less than Kshs. 5,000, followed by 20.2% (103) earning Kshs. 5,001 – 10,000 and 16.5% (84) who earned Kshs. 10,001 – 15,000. Furthermore, 5.3% (27) earned between Kshs. 15,001 – 20,000 and only 2 (0.4%) earned more than Kshs. 20,000. The fact of the findings show that majority of the respondent were small scale farmers and was the targeted group. The above findings concur with what Boz (2019) presents indicating that farming done efficiently can bring in good income.

The Effect of Restricted Access and Land Control in Tea Farming on Gender Equity

The first objective of the study was to examine the effect of restricted access and land control in tea farming

on gender equity in Singorwet Ward of Bomet County. This objective was handled based on; land ownership and size, land accessibility and control in relation to gender equity.

Land Ownership Size Per Gender

The study utilized tea farmers’ questionnaire to seek their views concerning the land ownership and size per gender. The results were as summarized in Table 4.3.

Table 4.5: Land Ownership Size Per Gender

Gender	Size of land owned						Total	
	Less than 1 acre		(1 – 5) Acres		More than 5 Acres			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Male	288	99.3	66	41.0	59	100.0	413	81.0
Female	2	0.7	95	59.0	0	0.0	97	19.0
Total	290	100.0	161	100.0	59	100.0	510	100.0

It was noted that majority (99.3%) of men owned land less than one acre followed by the group with more than five acres then the group with 1-5 acres. On the other there was no woman who owned more than five acres of land, 59.0% owned 1-5 acres with a handful (0.7%) who owned less than one acre. The findings above are in line with what Doss et al., (2015); it indicates that most women in developing countries have small pieces of land, most not owned and have limited power in utilizing it.

Land Acquisition per Gender

Although all respondents indicated that they were farmers and owned land under their extended families the study further interrogated on how they acquired the land. Land acquisition helps know the genesis of the land. Figure 4.3 give a detailed overview of the results.

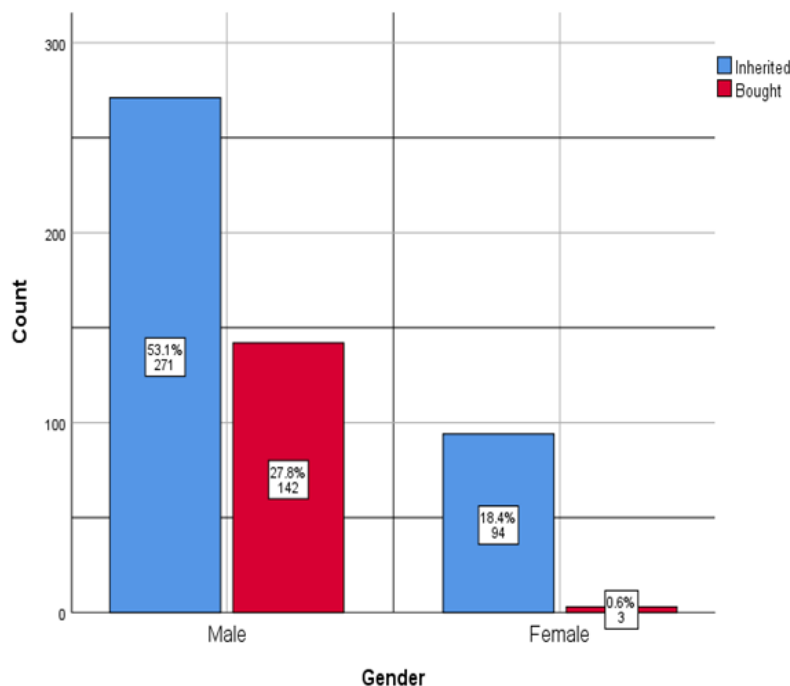


Figure 4. 3: Land Acquisition Statuses of the Respondents

Majority of men and women inherited land from their parents which was admitted by 53.1% and 18.4% respectively. 27.8% of men and 0.35% of women bought their lands. Culture influences this as parents pass their land to their children especially boy-child. The findings are consistent with what was unveiled by Thi et al., (2020), that displayed inequalities in the ownership of land between men and women. According to the researchers women record slow progress in farming due to such inequality.

Distribution of Respondents per Years in Tea Farming

Majority (61.2%) were men who had been in tea farming for less than 5 years, 11.25% registered 6-10 Years, 6.3% reported 11-15 years and the remaining 2.4% had been in tea farming for over 15 years. On the other hand many (18.4%) were women who admitted to have been in tea farming for 11-15 years and findings from the open ended question shows majority of this group were widows who inherited the farm from their late husbands. The findings are consistent with the observations by Maina et al., (2015) who noted that men compared to women take the upper hand in tea. Men engage more in Annual General Meetings with KTDA because they have a grower number and the necessary kilograms to influence decisions.

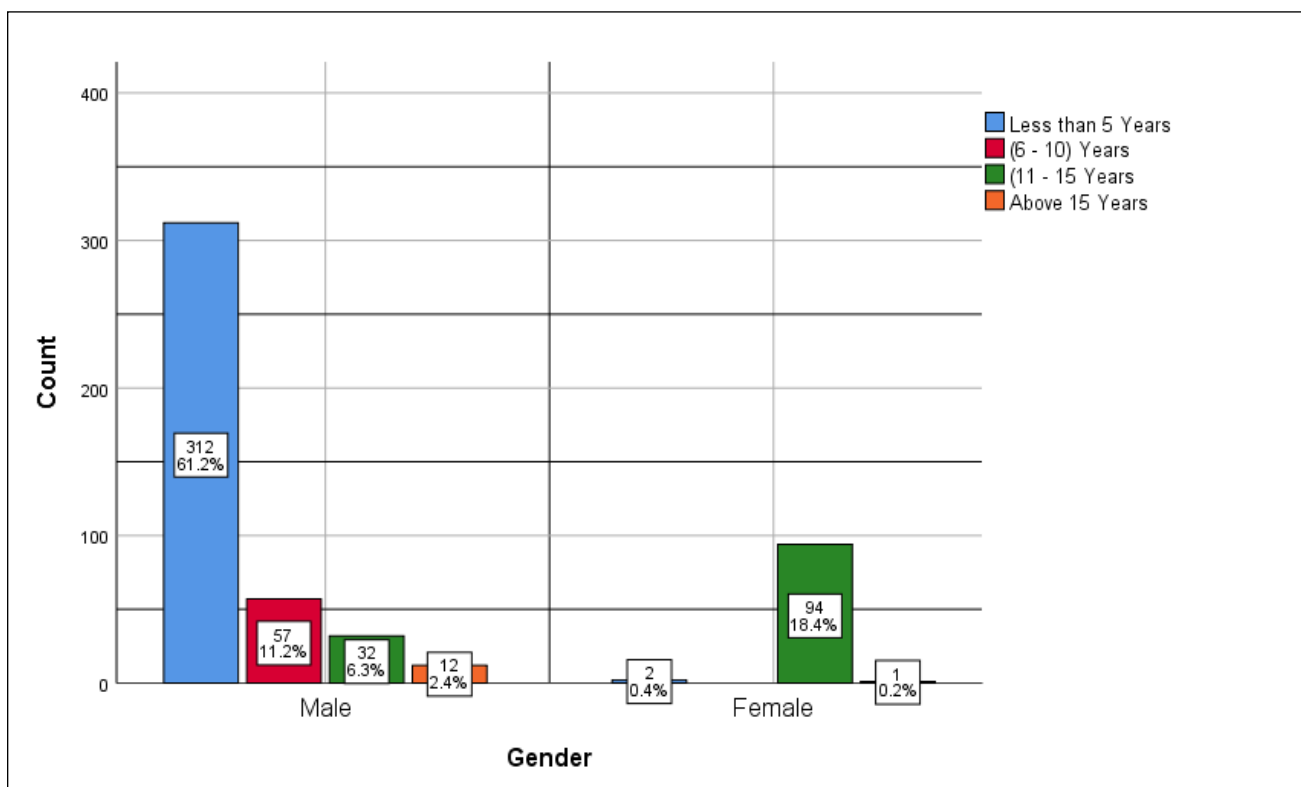


Figure 4. 4: Gender Distributions Per Years in Tea Farming

Evidence on restricted access and land control on tea farming

Results captured from the tea farmers questionnaires soundly indicated that men (80.4%) were the decision makers because they were the owners of those lands. The few (19.6%) women who owned land were either those who inherited from their late husbands or those who bought. According to FAO (2009) and Yemisi & Idisi (2014), women who were displayed to have power to utilize the land and benefit from tea income are those who are widows or single. The women who are married participate in tea farm activities but do not have a tea grower right to earn income directly to their accounts, rather they earn through their husbands accounts. The results were as summarized in Figure 4.5.

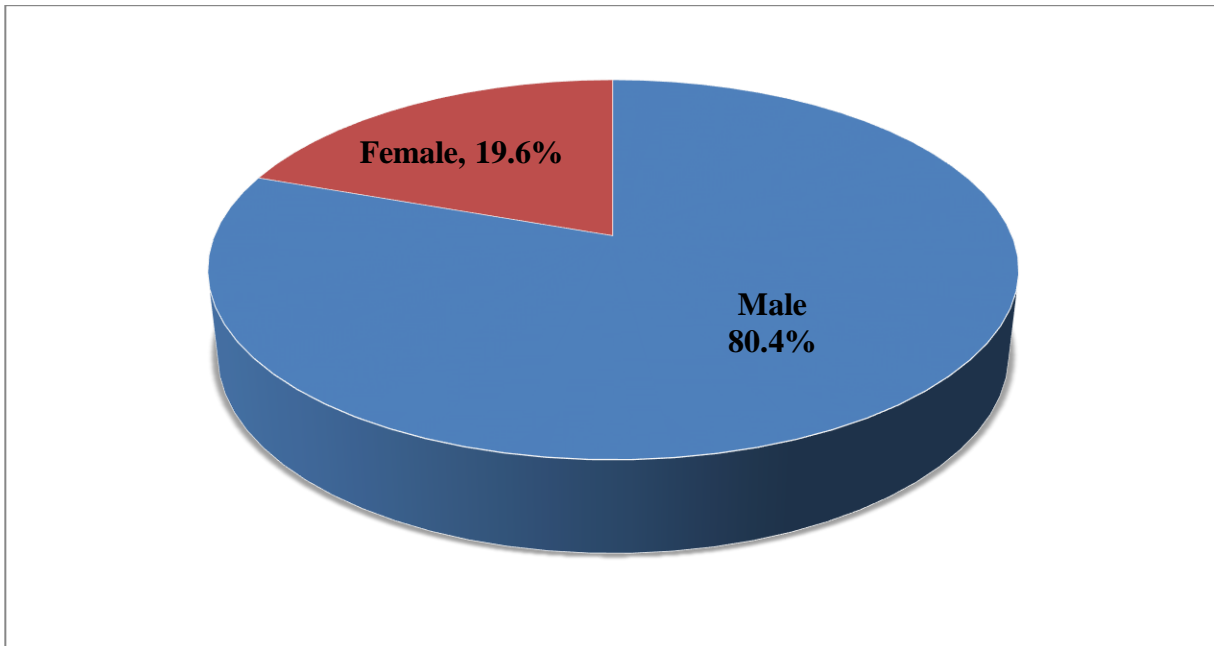


Figure 4. 5 Rate of Decision Making Per Gender

Effect of Gender Based Restricted Access and Land Control in Tea Farming

The study further sought the effect of gender based restricted access and land control. The tea farmers respondents were asked to rate their views based on five point likert scale ranging from no extent to very large extent on men own land and all major decisions on tea farming rest with them. The observations above concur with Bose & Das (2017) which notes that gender differences are still existing in terms of inheritance. Laws within cultures and religion encourage the support of one gender over another (Mohan, 2017). Results were as tabulated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.6: Inferential Statistics on Land and Access Control in Tea Farming

			Men own land and major decisions makers			Total
			Small Extent	Large Extent	Very Large Extent	
Generally there is gender equity	Yes	Count	1	242	173	416
		% within gender equity	0.2%	58.2%	41.6%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.2%	47.5%	33.9%	81.6%
	No	Count	0	93	1	94
		% within gender equity	0.0%	98.9%	1.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	18.2%	0.2%	18.4%
Total	Count	1	335	174	510	
	% within gender equity	0.2%	65.7%	34.1%	100.0%	
	% of Total	0.2%	65.7%	34.1%	100.0%	

Majority though said there were gender equity rated to a large extent 47.5% (n=242), to a very large extent

33.9% (n=173) that men owned land and all major decisions on tea farming rest with them. The few with the opinion that there were no gender equity still rated to a large extent 18.2% (n=93) that men owned land and all major decisions on tea farming rest with them.

Table 4.7: Chi-square Test on Land and Access Control in Tea Farming

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	56.526 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	79.359	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	510		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .18.

According to Melville and Goddard (1968), the chi-square is used for dependence of two categorical variables. There was significant association between gender equity and men owned land and all major decisions on tea farming rest with them; $X^2(2, N=510) = 56.526^a$, $P=0.000$ as detailed in Table 4.5. According to Roy (2008) owning land is a key in making decisions towards use of that land. Most societies have not embraced passing land to women, therefore women’s voice in farms is scarce.

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Findings

This study objectively examined the gender roles in tea farming and its effect on gender equity in Singorwet Ward of Bomet County. The interviews return rate was 100% since all the two Tea Area Directors and ten sampled Farm laborers who were the key informants were interviewed. Both questionnaires and interviews response rates for this study fall above 80% and therefore excellent to be relied upon.

The study comprised of only male directors, among tea farmers 81.0% were males and 19.0% were females, with factory staff 48.8% were males whereas 51.2% were females, and among farm laborers 20.0% were males and 80.0% were females. Among tea farmers majority 58.6% of the respondents were aged from 38–47 years old, followed by 48–59 years old at 19.2%, while those within 28-37 years were 12.9% and over 60 years old were 9.2%. Factory staff had 37.2% at 48-59 years, followed by 34.9% with 38-47 years then the remaining 27.9% within 28-37 years. Directors were distributed within 38-59 years of age whereas farm laborers had majority 60.0% at a younger age. Majority; 63.9% tea farmers, 58.1% factory staff and all directors were married. Most (50.0%) farm laborers were single with only 30.0% who were single. tea farmers’ level of education, 45.9% attained their highest education in tertiary colleges followed by primary carder 25.7%, Among factory staff many had secondary level education 46.5%, 39.5% with tertiary education. Farm laborers had no one with university degree and majority was with primary (30.0%) and secondary (30.0%) education. Majority of the Households 57.6% (294) earn less than Kshs. 5,000, followed by 20.2% (103) earning Kshs. 5,001 – 10,000.

The study objective was to examine the effect of restricted access and land control in tea farming on gender equity in Singorwet Ward of Bomet County. It was noted that majority (99.3%) of men owned land less than one acre followed by the group with more than five acres then the group with 1-5 acres, woman who owned more than five acres of land, 59.0% owned 1-5 acres with a handful (0.7%) who owned less than one acre. Majority of men and women inherited land from their parents which was admitted by 53.1% and 18.4% respectively. 27.8% of men and 0.35% of women bought their lands. Majority (61.2%) were men who had been in tea farming for less than 5 years, 11.25% registered 6-10 Years, 6.3% reported 11-15 years and the remaining 2.4% had been in tea farming for over 15 years. On the other hand many (18.4%) were women who admitted to have been in tea farming for 11-15 years and findings from the open ended question shows

majority of this group were widows who inherited the farm from their late husbands.

The tea farmers' questionnaires soundly indicated that men (80.4%) were the decision makers because they were the owners of those lands. The few (19.6%) women who owned land were either those who inherited from their late husbands or those who bought. Majority though said there were gender equity rated to a large extent (n=242), to a very large extent (n=173) that men owned land and all major decisions on tea farming rest with them. The few with the opinion that there were no gender equity still rated to a large extent (n=93), to a very large extent (n=174) that men owned land and all major decisions on tea farming rest with them. There was significant association between gender equity and men owned land and all major decisions on tea farming rest with them; $X^2(2, N=510) = 56.526^a, P=0.000$.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the main findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Improve women's access to credit and assets like land. This can be done through trainings of community opinion leaders to ensure they embrace the constitutional right of women to be given land under inheritance. Owning land can then allow women use it as security to get credit.
2. Increase women's participation in training programs and revise training programs to be gender sensitive. This can be done by localizing training to make them nearer to homes thus allowing more women to attend.
3. Invest in programs to reduce time pressures for women and support joint decision making and ownership of income and resources at the household level.
4. Achieve greater gender balance in leadership positions and develop a list of gender equity principles for tea to unite and galvanize the industry. This can be done by boosting the gender rule application in leadership positions to allow women be nominated unto directorship positions and even tea buying centre committees.

CONCLUSIONS

The challenges of gender equity is a household and community issue which requires men and women working together to achieve different and better ways of relating to one another. It was evident from the findings that culture influences this as parents pass their land to their children especially boy-child and to some extent own land through inheritance from their late husbands or bought small portions. Men were the majority land owners and dominant decision makers in tea farming. Women were depicted significantly to lack access and control over finances accrued from tea farming. There were no distinct women roles yet few men distinct roles which include tea pruning. Both qualitative and quantitative shows significant association that women domestic chores has a major effect in tea farming roles especially in vying for elective positions.

Suggestions for Further Studies

In view of the gaps identified by the study there is need to examine the following areas in detail:

1. Relaxation of tea grower registration to allow women register as growers with leased land
2. Embracing of equality in voting for Directors of Zones so that voting is one man one vote and not kilograms determining the voter count.
3. Comprehensive tea grower trainings especially on access to credit to allow equal involvement of men and women.

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