

Gender Imbalance in Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Activities: A Case Study of Morogoro Rural District, Tanzania.

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Abstract

This article is based on findings from a study conducted in Mkindo village Morogoro district between November 2001 and March 2002. The aim of the study was to assess gender involvement in agricultural activities and its impact on household food security. The specific objectives were to determine how both genders are involved in agricultural and non-agricultural activities and to determine the relative share of each gender in the ownership of the means of production. The study used an explanatory cross sectional design in which data was collected once through a structured questionnaire with some open and closed ended questions. A total of 75 respondents were involved in this study whereby 43 were female and 32 were male. Purposive and simple random sampling were used to get the intended respondents. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics namely frequencies, means, percentages and range were used to summarize the information. A number of issues affecting household income generation were identified. There was unequal ownership of the means of production, the share of women being marginal. Women, however, carried a heavier load of domestic work while men held in their hands. However, men mostly controlled the agricultural produce. The participation of men in non-agricultural income generating activities was also insignificant. In order to enhance effective participation of both genders in agricultural production which eventually would lead to eventually more food secure households, gender imbalance in the above mentioned aspects should be sought.

Introduction

Agriculture is the backbone of Tanzania's economy and it will continue for a long time to play a predominant role in supporting employment, food production and exports (Ngirwa 1997). It is estimated that 84 % of the Tanzanian population work in the agricultural sector producing about 60% of both domestic gross product (GDP) and mechanized export. Agricultural production is still the primary source of livelihood for about 85% of the Tanzanian population to whom it ensures economic sustenance in terms of food security, income generation and employment (Ngirwa, 1997). Based on the national accounts food crops dominate the agricultural economy by totaling 55% of the agricultural GDP. However, food crops account for 30%, the traditional export crops account for 8%, livestock farming and hunting accounts for 6% while forestry accounts for 1% (Ngirwa 1997). In the 1950s and a better part of 1960s, Tanzania was a net exporter of food crops. However, since 1973 to date Tanzania has become a net importer of food. Inadequate

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rainfall coupled with poor production technologies, high population growth rate, gender imbalance in agricultural production and natural disasters have contributed to undermine our capacity to ensure food security (MAFS, 2000).

Both women and men play critical roles in agriculture throughout the world, producing, processing and providing the food we eat. Rural women in particular are responsible for half of the world's food production and produce between 60 and 80 percent of the food in most developing countries. Yet, despite their contribution to global food security, women farmers are frequently underestimated and overlooked in development strategies (FAO, 2003). Albeit their participation in agricultural activities, their output is limited by the lack of sufficient time, little share in the ownership of major resources such as land and other inputs (Sirima, 1993). Women play a crucial role in determining and guaranteeing food security and well being for the entire household. Equitable, effective and sustainable agriculture and rural development cannot be pursued without an explicit recognition of these realities (Sabba, 2001) as cited by Ancelm (2003).

Meeting world food needs in the year 2020 will depend even more than it does now, on the capabilities and resources of women (Brown *et al.*, 1995). Women are responsible for generating food security for their families in many developing countries, particularly sub-Saharan Africa (Brown *et al.*, 1995). Women are processors, purchasers and are the ones who prepare food. Women also play a significant role in national agriculture production producing both food and cash crops (Brown *et al.*, 1995).

In many African countries, women do many activities apart from agriculture production as compared to men, provision of water, fuel and childcare (Sirima, 1993). All these impose a heavy burden to them and reduce the time available to work in their fields for agricultural production (Sirima, 1993). Disparities in male/female access to land are virtually universal. In Latin America, men and women do not have equal access to land even in those countries where legislation has removed gender barriers to land ownership. In this region, as well as in the Caribbean, women's access to land and to other property generally takes place through a male relative. In most of (patrilineal) Africa, the usufruct right to land prevails and customary land use practices often determine access to land in terms of use rights or ownership. Women are essentially temporary custodians of land passing from father to male heir, even though they may be *de facto* heads of household (FAO, 1996). FAO (1994) reported that extension workers often ignore women even in areas where women not only do much field labour but also may be managing farms completely on their own whether customarily or due to male migration.

The major objective of this study was to assess the gender imbalances in agricultural and non-agricultural income generating activities in Morogoro rural district. The following sections provide the methodology, findings conclusion and recommendation of the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected from Mkindo village in Turiani division in Morogoro rural district. The area was selected because it has being highly affected by food shortages for most of households. In addition, the area was selected to represent other rural areas in Tanzania, since most of them have a more or less similar situation. Data collection involved the use

of structured questionnaires. The questionnaires comprised both open and close-ended questions, which were answered by respondents. A total of 75 respondents were involved in this study, in which 43 were women and 32 were men. Purposive sampling was used so as to include the required respondents (married women and non-married), and simple random sampling was used to get the male respondents. Descriptive statistics including computation of frequencies, means, standard deviation and range was done.

Findings and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study that was conducted in Mkindo Village in Morogoro rural district from November 2001 – March 2002. The study was mainly undertaken to investigate gender imbalances in agricultural and non-agricultural activities.

Household Characteristics of the Respondents

Results obtained from the study show that 42.7% of the respondents were male and 57.3% were female as shown in Table 1. The results also show that 13.3% of the respondents were either unmarried or living single and 58.7% were married (Table 1). Female respondents composed 57.3% while 42.7% were male respondents (Table 1). The majority (98.7%) of the respondents had farming as their main occupation as shown in Table 1. These findings support Ngirwa (1997) that 84 % of the Tanzanian population work in the agricultural sector producing about 60% of both domestic gross product (GDP) and mechanized export. Agricultural production is still the primary source of livelihood for about 85% of the Tanzanian population to whom it ensures economic sustenance in terms of food security, income generation and employment (Ngirwa, 1997). About two thirds (64%) of the respondents were primary school leavers, a few (8%) had attended adult education and the rest (28%) had no formal education. Some of these household characteristics can either influence or cause imbalances in agricultural and non-agricultural activities, which in turn may lead to household food insecurity. The mean age of respondents was 44.59 whereby the minimum and maximum ages were 23 and 78 years respectively. Mean household size was 4.79 with 1.00 and 10.0 being the minimum and maximum household size respectively.

Table 1.0: Household Characteristics (n=75)

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Sex		
• Male	32	42.7
• Female	43	57.3
2. Marital Status		
• Single	10	13.3
• Married	44	58.7
• Widowed	9	12.0
• Divorced and Separated	12	16.0

3. Main occupation of Respondents.

• Farmer	74	98.6
• Farmer and Nurse	1	1.4

4. Education level of respondents

• No formal education	21	28.0
• Adult education	6	8.0
• Primary education	48	64

5.0 Age of respondents

(In years)

• Mean	
• Minimum	44.59
• Maximum	23

6.0 Household size

• Mean	Units
• Minimum	5
• Maximum	1

7.0 Household adult equivalent units

• Mean	Units
• Minimum	4.02
• Maximum	0.70
	6.20

Source: survey data 2002.

Gender Division of Labour in Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Activities

Division of Labour in Agricultural Activities

The results show that 25.3%, 68% and 6.7 % of those involved in agricultural production were women, both women and men and men respectively as shown in Table 2. These findings indicate that women play a major role in agricultural production. Sabba (2001) as cited by Ancelm (2003) reported similar observations. Boserup (1970) reported that women perform a greater role in agricultural activities in Sub-Saharan Africa and are the main producers as compared to men. Boserup (1970) further observed that women played a greater role than men in sparsely populated traditional societies where most agricultural activities were for subsistence. The author reported an opposite observation in societies where agricultural production was intensive asserting that most of the agricultural work was undertaken by men by use of modern facilities such as tractors. For an intermediate society the author reported equal participation of men and women in agricultural activities. The results of the present study imply an encouraging transition from a traditional society to an intermediate agricultural society since in all the seven agricultural practices presented, the greatest proportion of respondents reported joint efforts in the household (Table 2).

Division of Labour in Non-Agricultural Activities

Observations from the study show women to be the major participants in non-agricultural activities as compared to men. Based on the study, childcare was mainly a female domain, whereas 89.3% of the respondents admitted that child care is provided by women only 1.3% of the respondents contended that men participate directly in child care as shown in Table 3. The study further revealed that fetching water, firewood collection, and cooking were mainly a female domain as reported by 93.3%, 93.3% and 74.7% of the respondents respectively (Table 3). The negligible participation by males in the non-agricultural activities is no wonder as the findings are in line with most African cultures whereby childcare and other household chores are mainly a female domain. The results further revealed that, of the 50.7% the interviewed households which were engaged in small businesses male participation was also negligible as shown in Table 3. Sirima (1993) reported that the daily life of agricultural women starts well before sun rise the first core being to fetch water, then washing the pots and pans from the night's meal and setting about the tasks of preparing breakfast and perhaps the mid-day meal as well, next they wash and feed the children and get them ready for school. The results from agricultural and non-agricultural activities in the study area show that women are the main participants in both activities, while men seemed to base only on agricultural activities. This mode of division of labour increases the workloads on women and affects both their energy and time leading to less food production and so food insecurity to most households. Sabba (2001) reported that, rural women make a tremendous contribution to food and agricultural production and they play a crucial role in determining and guaranteeing food security and well being for the entire household. Carolyn (1983) reported that, in many developing countries, particularly in Africa, women have a primary responsibility for meeting the day-to-day food requirement of their families. All these previous works are in line with the findings of the present study implying that the problem of heavy workload for women is not limited to a few geographical locations but is a trans-cultural problem.

Table 2.0: Division of Labour In Agricultural Activities (n=75)

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Land preparation		
• Men	5	6.7
• Women	19	25.3
• Both	51	68.0
2. Cultivation		
• Men	5	6.7
• Women	19	25.3
• Both	51	68.0

**3.Planting
/Growing/Transplanting**

• Men	5	6.7
• Women	19	25.3
• Both	51	68.0

4.Ploughing

• Men	5	6.7
• Women	19	25.3
• Both	51	68.0

5.Weeding

• Men	5	6.7
• Women	19	25.3
• Both	46	68.0

6.Harvesting

• Men	5	6.7
• Women	19	25.3
• Both	51	68.0

7.Transportation and Storage

• Men	6	8.0
• Women	19	27.1
• Both	50	66.7

Source: survey data 2002.

Table 3.0: Division of Labour In Non-Agricultural Activities (n=75)

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.Collection of firewood		
• Men	17	22.7
• Women	56	74.7
• Both	2	2.7
2.Childcare		
• No child	6	8.0
• Men	1	1.3
• Women	67	89.3

• Both	1	1.4
3.Small Business		
• Men	2	2.7
• Women	37	46.7
• Both	1	1.3
• No Small Business	35	49.3
4.Cooking		
• Men	4	5.3
• Women	70	93.3
• Both	1	1.3
5.Fetching water		
• Men	6	8.0
• Women	67	89.3
• Both	1	1.3

Source: survey data 2002.

Control of the Means of Production and Involvement in Decision-Making

Results from this study show that only 13.3% of the respondents said women owned the means of production (land), while 58.7% reported the means of production to be owned by men. Furthermore, 28.0% of the respondents said that both men and women had equal rights of ownership as shown in Figure 1. Such a distribution has a large effect on food production and availability especially when it comes to female-headed households. Takyiwaa 1998 observed that low income and increasing uncertainties and the risks that women face in their production activities are compounded by the lack of access to land which pushes many of them out of traditional agriculture. It was also observed in this study that 35% of the female respondents had their own plots, the rest (65%) depended either on common household farm or on their husband's farm as shown in Figure 2. Such a situation limits the ability of women to produce enough food for their families. Lack of land denies women the power to decide what crops to cultivate. This finding is in line with Morgan (2000) who reports that land and labour shortage, limit the expansion of the cultivated area and so reinforces the low productivity on female-headed households.

Control of Crop Produced

The study shows that the output of about 48.0% of the respondents was controlled by men, while that of 28.0% and 24.0% was controlled by both men and women and women alone respectively as shown in Figure 3. Morgan (2000) reported that women tend to spend more on dependants including members of the extended family and in replacing food supplies when they run out, while men tend to spend more on themselves and to save the rest. Morgan (2000) also pointed out that men spend a high proportion of their income on alcohol leaving less available for the "household Pool" which is largely spent on food, clothing and schooling.

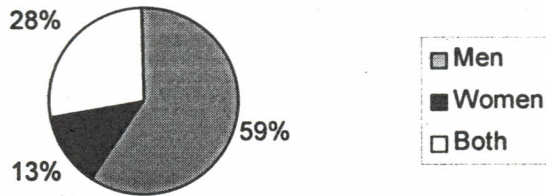


Figure 1: Respondents control over the means of production

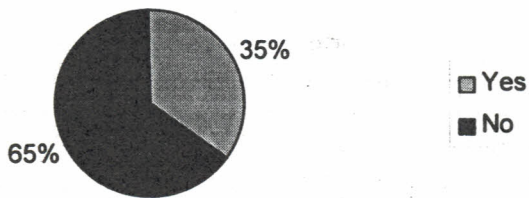


Figure 2: Women ownership of Farm Plots

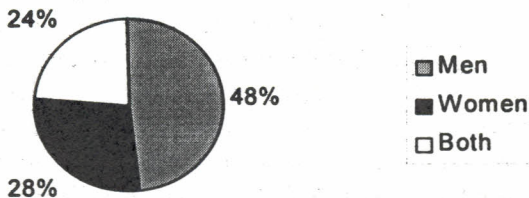


Figure 3: Control of the Crop Produced

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

It is concluded from this study that there is unequal ownership of means of production between men and women. It is also concluded that agricultural activities, domestic work and non-agricultural activities as compared to men overburden women and such a tendency may lead to a situation of food insecurity to the household.

Recommendations

In order to alleviate the problem of low agricultural production and to enhance food security the following are recommended:

1. Equal ownership of means of production should be encouraged in order to enable women to own land and so increase food production.
2. Equal participation in agricultural activities between men and women should be encouraged.

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