

Small Holder's Perception towards Gender Inequitable Practices at Household Level in Arumeru District, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality in household decisions entails important economic and socio-psychological consequences to women. In this paper, the perception of men and women towards gender inequitable practices in households was examined among the smallholder communities of Arumeru District. Three hundred participants (50% women and 50% men) were randomly chosen among the members of smallholder groups (including farmer producers' groups, rotating savings groups, dairy farming groups, faith-based and women's groups in Arumeru) and non-group members. Focus group discussion, in-depth, key-informant interviews and the household survey questionnaire was administered. Various statistical procedures including the Mann-Whitney U test was used to check the statistical significance of the factors influencing perception on gender equitable practices. Descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages and means were also used. Overall, the majority of smallholder farmers in Arumeru District were found to have positive attitudes towards gender equitable norms/practices. Generally, the study has found negative relationship between perceptions on gender equitable practices/norms and various factors such as education level ($P=0.004$), leadership experience ($P=0.001$), group membership ($P=0.033$), and age cohorts ($P=0.000$). Areas for improvement were also identified in which it is generally recommended that, gender inclusive approaches should be applied and that men should also be part and parcel of processes implied in designing and implementing programs aiming at addressing gender inequalities.

Keywords: Perception, Gender, Equity, Empowerment

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The household is traditionally described as a single economic unit that “works as a group for its own good”. This implies that, all members of the household contribute in an altruistic manner towards the benefit and functioning of the entire household (William, 2011). In the same essence, it is within the households where economic production, consumption, inheritance, child rearing, and shelter are organized and carried out (William, 2011). It is as well worthwhile noting that important decisions that affect and mould the lives of many people take place within households or family. Besides, household decisions are an important factor to consider in local level planning and policy formulation, especially by government and non-governmental organizations (GOs and NGOs) for rural areas (Devkota *et al.*, 1998).

The persistence of gender inequalities within households and across cultures have been reported by different scholars including Mader and Schneebaum (2013); Magesa *et al.* (2013); Krishnan *et al.* (2012); Lyngstad *et al.* (2011); Dema-Moreno (2009); Jenkins and Scott (2007); Mahmood (2002) and Ansell (2002) whereas most important decisions are considered as a men’s domain. Drawing from the words of Losindilo *et al.* (2010), customary laws have given men more power and control over resources and decision-making processes, hence making the systems in the society both patriarchal and undemocratic. Such idea is also shared in Boonzaaiers and Sharps (1988) views as cited in Aaca (2013) who also portrays power to dominate over women as inherent in men. In the same tune, Garcia-Moreno (2002), asserts that, the dominantly held construction of patriarchy that subordinates women to men has been one of the sources of gender based violence in homes and in the society at large.

In Tanzania, as it is in many developing countries, efforts to empower women have been focused on improving women status through education, training, access to health, and family planning services as well as legal counseling and support (Jeckoniah *et al.*, 2012). Nonetheless, gender inequality in its many facets is still vivid in many spheres within the Tanzanian society. Within the households, women are still marginalized from the important decisions that affect their lives and lives of their children (TGNP, 2004). Some of the many faces of gender inequality in the household includes among others, unequal access to education between girls and boys (Meena, 1996; GCE, 2012); Women’s limited position in household decisions (URT, 2011); unequal control over productive resources (Galiel *et al.*, 2015); unequal division of household labor (Feinstein and Sabrow, 2010); Inequalities in household income earnings and distribution (TGNP, 2004) as well as early marriages and gender based violence (Sikira and Urassa, 2015).

The intensity of the outcomes of gender inequality within households is highly reflected by unequal socio-economic and political realm of the Tanzanian society. Meena (2009) affirms that, up to 2009 only 16 names of females had ever held full cabinet positions from 1962 when the first cabinet was formed. During the 2010 elections, women accounted for 36 percent in the parliament and 16 percent of the legislators, senior officials and managers across the country (World Bank, 2014). Worse still, during the same electoral-period of 2010 only 21 out of 239 elected MP’s from the constituencies are women. Thus, 105 women are in the National Assembly through the affirmative action (Tanzanian Parliament, 2012; IPU, 2011; 2015). Such levels of representation are relatively low compared to other African countries like Rwanda where participation of women at different levels of decision making is impressive. For instance, women constitute 50 per cent of the judiciary, 39 per cent cabinet, 40 per cent provincial governors, 43.2 per cent of district council members and 83.3 per cent of vice mayors in charge of social affairs. Today, Rwanda leads the world in terms of women’s representation in parliament, increasing from 56.3 per cent in 2008 to 64 per cent in 2013 elections (Gogineni, 2013; Ngoboka, 2015; IPU, 2015).

As maintained by Hao (2013), gender inequality is a product of the actions performed by people on a daily life. Despite of being captured and presented in figures and indices, it is undeniably true that gender inequality derives from people’s minds. However, most of the gender

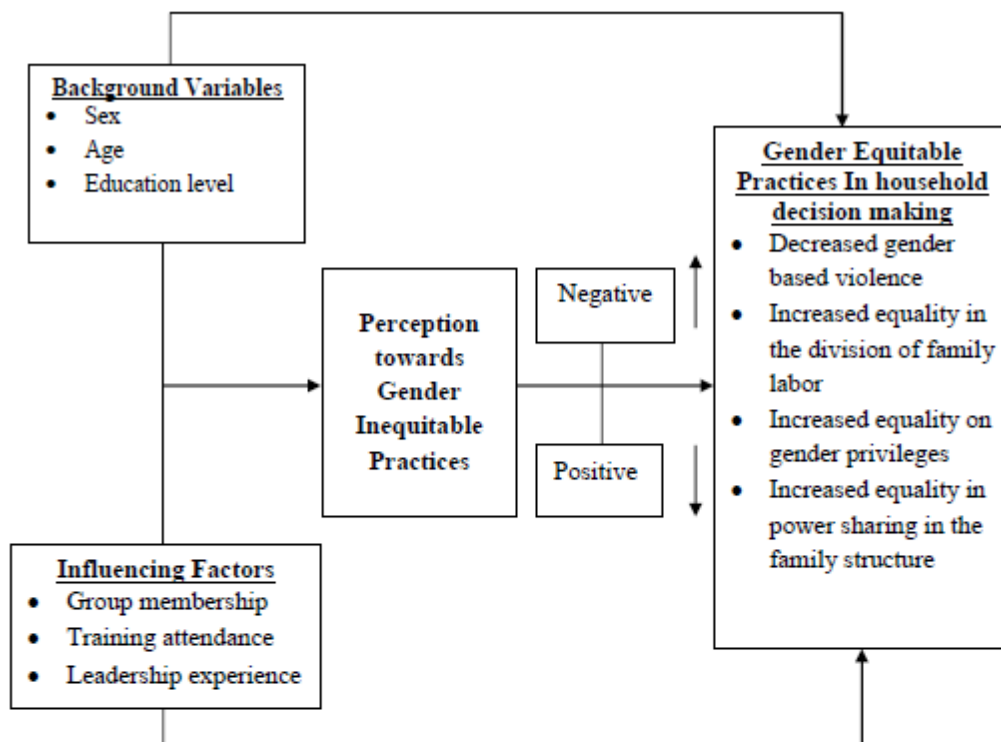
studies in Tanzania have focused on the reality side of gender inequality while doing very little on the perception aspect. This paper is therefore an attempt to bridge such gap. According to Dijksterhuis and Bargh (2001); Chartrand *et al.* (2012), perception and behavior are inextricably intertwined such that people automatically behave as they perceive. Similarly, popular views shape perceptions of the legitimacy of different developmental activities and may thus facilitate or hinder their implementation (Eisinga *et al.* 1999). Moreover, according to Chartrand *et al.* (2012), the perception of observables may activate specific behavioral representations, trait constructs, or stereotypes among the individuals.

In the same essence, public beliefs about gender have important implications for future planning and implementation of policies, strategies and projects aiming at eliminating gender inequality. Therefore, the examination of people's perceptions on household gender inequality is decisively significant not only for understanding gender inequality, but also for combating gender inequality across communities in Tanzania. In that essence, the present paper has an empirical goal of gauging from the smallholder communities their perception towards gender inequitable practices in the household.

Theoretically, the present paper is supported by the social change theory adopted from Thomas Khun's (1962) perspective of "*Paradigm shift*". Even though Kuhn himself restricted the use of the term paradigm shift to the hard sciences, the term has also been used since the 1960s in numerous non-scientific contexts to describe a profound change in a fundamental model or perception of events. Kuhn states that "awareness is prerequisite to all acceptable changes of theory" (p. 67). It all begins in the mind of the person. So in that case, what people perceive, whether normal or meta-normal, conscious or unconscious, is subject to the limitations and distortions produced by their inherited and socially conditional nature. Nevertheless, people are not restricted by this for they can change; many people are awakening as their conscious awareness expands.

Fig. 1 presents a conceptual framework illustrating the interdependent between variables. Perception towards gender inequitable practices is regarded as the moderating variable which is also affected by various factors including group membership, training attendance, and leadership experience; and also by the demographic variables such as age, sex and education level. Perceptions that favor gender inequitable practices exacerbate the prevalence of cultural norms like gender based violence, unequal division of family labor, unequal gender privileges as well as unequal power sharing in the family structure whilst on the other hand, positive perceptions revert the prevalence of such unequal cultural norms.

Fig. 1: A Conceptual framework used to study Small Holder's Perception towards Gender Inequitable Practices



2.0 METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Arumeru District which is among the six districts in Arusha region (URT, 2013). The district was purposively selected on the merit that it is among the patriarchal communities where gender inequality is still rampant (Magesa *et al.*, 2013; Kimaro *et al.*, 2013). Data were collected at one point in-time using the cross-sectional research design. The design was preferable since it is the recommended design for descriptive studies intending to analyze the association between and among variables to provide a snapshot of ideas, opinions and information necessary for the intended purposes (Mann, 2003; Sikira and Urassa, 2015). Purposive sampling was used to select specific villages which had smallholder groups of interest for the study. In that case, six villages were identified, including Ekenywa, Mlangarini, Nduruma, Inshupu, Manyata and Kikwe. These villages were later stratified into three groups whereas those villages with similar attributes in-terms of the target population were proportionally grouped into the same stratum. The first stratum comprised of farmer's groups affiliated with the Tanzania Network of Small holder farmers (MVIWATA); the second stratum incorporated smallholder groups that are not registered with MVIWATA. The last stratum was that containing non-group farming households. For the first stratum, at least one of the couples in the household was required to be an active member in any of the many groups registered with MVIWATA. For the second stratum, households were only interviewed if at least one of the couples is a member of any non-MVIWATA group; while for the third stratum, only those farming households whose couples are not (and have never been) members of smallholder groups were chosen for the study. The smallholder groups considered in the study include farmer producers' groups, rotating savings groups (VICOBA and SACCOS), dairy farming

groups, faith-based and women's groups. In total, three hundred participants (50% women and 50% men) were randomly chosen for the study. The names of the participants registered with the smallholder groups in the study area were used to select respondents whereas for non-group participants; respondents were randomly selected based on the names obtained from the village registry. According to Teddlie *et al.* (2007); Teddlie and Tashakkori, (2009), using both probability sampling and purposive sampling strategies in the same study, will help to increase external validity and transferability.

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007) using a combination of data collection methods including household survey questionnaire, focus group discussions (FGDs), In-depth and key informant interviews. A five-level Likert scale containing twenty items was used to gauge smallholders' perceptions on gender inequitable practices. This scale was later reduced to three levels where the most related responses were combined into a single response. Data from the Likert scale were then worked out using descriptive statistical analysis (Allen *et al.* 2007). On the other hand, Mann-Whitney U test was used to compute the statistical significance of the factors influencing perception on gender inequitable practices. The aggregate formula used for Mann-Whitney U test is as follows:

$$U_1 + U_2 = R_1 - \frac{n_1(n_1 - 1)}{2} + R_2 - \frac{n_2(n_2 - 1)}{2} \quad (1)$$

where, n_1 is the size of sample 1 and n_2 is the size of sample 2, and R_1 is the adjusted rank sum for sample 1 and R_2 is the adjusted rank sum of sample 2 (Jerrold, 1998). Either way, internal consistency reliability analyses were conducted by calculating Cronbach's alphas with internal consistency level of 0.717. In computing the Cronbach's alpha the following formula proposed by Cronbach (1970) was used:

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^k P_i Q_i}{\sigma_X^2} \right) \quad (2)$$

whereas, σ_X^2 is the variance of the observed total test scores; P_i is the proportion scoring 1 on item i , and $Q_i = 1 - P_i$.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Three hundred respondents all married were involved in the study. The average age for these participants was found to be 44.09 years. The youngest participant in the survey was 20 years old while the oldest participant was 80 years old. This study regarded marriage as the major criterion for the person to be interviewed and thus respondents were selected regardless of their age. The average household size was 5.19 whereas the smallest household had 2 members while the largest had 10 members. The majority of the participants (76%) had completed at least some primary level education whilst only 14% of them had completed secondary schooling. Kimaro *et al.* (2013), who did a study about gender roles in smallholder dairy farming in Arumeru also found primary education as the common level of education to most (75.3%) participants. In the present study, very few of the participants (3.3%) were not able to read and write in an official language. Some 88% of the participants had farming as their primary occupation whilst 2% were either employed as civil servants, engaged in petty business or working as laborers on non-farm activities and only 4.7% were employed in private enterprises. Despite of being reported as a secondary activity by most respondents (38%), house-work was found to be largely a wife's domain.

On the other hand, 48.7% of the participants were members of at least one of the smallholder groups in the study area and among them about 38.6% had some leadership experience in their respective groups. With regards to leadership experience, male respondents were more likely to report that they had some experience in leadership as compared to female respondents. Generally, 47.7% of the participants confirmed to have attended at least one of the trainings offered by different institutions (Governmental organizations and NGO's) in the locality whereas female participants were more likely to report that they have attended some training than their male counterparts.

3.2 Attitudes of men and women towards gender-based violence / wife battering

A general depiction from the findings in Table 1 indicates a positive trend whereas the perceptions of the majority of the participants are against inequitable gender practices related to gender based violence and wife battering in particular. In this case, the majority of women (87.3%) are in agreement with the statement that women have the right to defend themselves and to report to the authorities any mistreatment or aggression. Likewise, the proportion of women supporting the notion that a woman has the right to live a life free of violence is a bit higher (84.0%) as compared to that of men (76.0%). Men were also more likely than women to oppose the idea that women have the right to defend themselves and to report to the authorities any mistreatment or aggression. Moreover, while women are more inclined than men to think that a woman should tolerate violence to keep her family together, men are more inclined than women to think that a man is justified to beat his wife if she is unfaithful. Findings of this nature tally with Jacobsen's (2014) portrayal that men believe that a woman being beaten it could be her own fault.

Table 1: Perception towards gender based violence

STATEMENTS	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	Men %	Women%	Men %	Women%	Men %	Women%
A woman should tolerate violence for family's sake	10.7	12.0	1.3	0.7	88.0	87.3
It is alright for a man to beat his wife if she is unfaithful	18.7	15.3	-	0.7	81.3	84.0
Women have the right to live a life free of violence.	76.0	84.0	0.7	1.3	23.3	14.7
Women have the right to defend themselves against violence	78.0	87.3	-	-	22.0	12.7

During one of the in-depth interviews, a woman from the Meru council reported the persistence of wife beating behavior among the Meru community saying; *"....it is true that changes can be seen in many areas within the Meru culture due to cultural transformation and diffusion but you can still find many people (Men) beating their wives despite their awareness level"*. Moreover, during one of the key Informant Interviews, the Ward Executive Officer (WEO) gave a remark on wife beating, he said, *"Nowadays it is not very common to hear that someone has beaten his wife...though I am not saying that it does not happen at all, but I think urbanization, the role of the media and work done by different NGO's in our area have helped to shape the mindsets of our people. Most of them (Men) now see wife beating as an outdated practice to do unlike in the past where wife beating was a very common phenomena..."* despite of the positive trend suggested by such a remark with regards to wife battering behavior among the smallholders in Arumeru; an in-depth interview with a woman whose husband is an alcoholic signify that gender based violence in

its different facets is still prominent in the district, she says, “....when my husband drinks his stuff nothing else matters to him, he does irritating things in-front of the kids, insulting me and even overreacting when he finds no food on the table... It is now approaching the second week since he left any amount of money for home consumptions.....only God knows how depressing this is”.

3.3 Attitudes of men and women towards gender role division at household level

Table 2 results show a pattern of men's attitude that is somewhat incompatible with women's attitude towards the division of family labor in domestic chores. More men than women are in agreement with the idea that domestic chores like changing diapers, feeding and giving the kids a bath are the responsibility of the mother. Such findings are also shared in literature by Patel, (2011), where also majority of men believe that home chores are responsibility of a woman. In this study, it was also noted that more women (69.3%) as compared to men (60.0%) were in agreement with the statement that a man has to help his wife with daily housework if she works outside home. Likewise, female respondents (83.3%) were more likely than men (81.3%) to support the statement that daughters should be taught to have few children so they can work outside home and earn money. Generally, the majority of the respondents were in agreement with the positive statements.

Table 2: Perception towards the division of family labor in domestic chores

STATEMENTS	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	Men %	Women%	Men %	Women%	Men %	Women%
Feeding and caring the kids is the mother's responsibility	57.3	42.7	0.7	0.7	42.0	56.7
Daughters should be told to have few children	81.3	83.3	2.0	2.7	16.7	14.0
Husbands should help wife working outside home with housework	60.0	69.3	0.7	0.7	39.3	30.0

One women FGD participant in Ekenywa village in Arusha District council condemned of the existing social and cultural norms that perpetuate negative patriarchal attitudes among young men, she said, “Most of the young boys' minds change a lot after they go for circumcision and its merely impossible to make them do the kind of things/home activities that are normally performed by women and girls even if they used to do such activities before their circumcision”. Nevertheless, it was beyond the scope of this paper to address the question as to how do trainings offered during initiation/circumcision period perpetuate gender inequality. In one of the papers by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2007) cited in Sikira and Urassa (2015), male circumcision is advocated as a means to reduce risk for contracting HIV; but it is high time now that the lessons, values and practices taught during initiation ceremonies shall be reconsidered to make sure that they help to promote equity among men and women in the society.

3.4 Attitudes of men and women towards gender rights and privileges

The rights and privileges (right to education, birth privileges and marital rights) that men and women are entitled differently within the society have often been one of the major social-cultural attributes gearing gender inequality. As it is indicated in Table 3, majority of the respondents were in support of the gender equitable norms regarding rights and privileges asserted to men and women in their community. Few exceptions were noted especially with marital rights where more men (52.7%) than women (37.3%) were in-line with the idea that parents should have a final say on the issues of their children's marriage. According to Greene (2014), discussions around parents' having

a final say on issues of child marriage, matters a lot to girls more than it does to boys. This is due to undeniable fact that some of the parents tend to marry off their daughters who are not matured enough to make choices about marriage. Marrying too young can lead to lasting emotional, physical, and psychological harm. Moreover, development experts say child marriage stunts girls' educational opportunities and income-earning prospects, and perpetuates poverty in communities worldwide, inhibiting progress toward national and global development goals and threatening stability (CRF, 2013).

On the other hand, none of the respondents were against the statements related to equal rights to education and professional development. More less the same pattern of attitude is revealed through the results related to child preference at birth whereas 100.0% of the male and 96.7% of the female respondents disagreed with the notion that a real man produces a male child. Moreover, about 98.7% of men and 96.7% of women were in support of the statement that daughters and sons should have equal rights to inherit property from their parents. Surprisingly though, results obtained from the household survey questionnaire concerning children's inheritance rights, contradicts results from the focus group discussions. Such contradiction portrays that, the idea of daughters inheriting resources from their parents is more rhetoric and so in actual practice girls do not stand in the same chance as boys in inheriting resources from parents.

Table 3: Perception of men and women towards gender rights and privileges

STATEMENTS	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	Men %	Women%	Men %	Women%	Men %	Women%
A real man produces a male child	-	1.3	-	2.0	100.0	96.7
Women and men should have equal rights for professional development	100.0	100.0	-	-	-	-
If funds for tutoring are limited, should be spent on sons first	-	-	-	-	100.0	100.0
Parents should decide about child's marriage	52.7	37.3	2.0	1.3	45.3	61.3
Daughters and sons should have equal inheritance rights	98.7	96.7	-	0.7	1.3	2.7

During the FGDs, a general question, "Does a daughter deserve to inherit properties from her parents?".....was asked, from which a mixture of responses from FGD participants revealed a clear picture of ambiguity around the issue of inheritance among the girls' in Arumeru. For instance, words from one of the FGD correspondents in the Meru precinct connote that; a girl cannot stand in the same foot as boys as far as inheritance is concerned in the Meru culture, he said, "You know, in our culture it is the men who takes care of the security of properties and family, so the father does every possible thing within his capability to ensure that his sons are equipped not only with the spirit of manhood and fearlessness but he (father) also gives him (son) weapons necessary to win the battle and reconstruct the clan...". Words like "weapons" have been

symbolically used by the discussant to imply necessary resources like land and cattle needed by a man to start life and develop his own clan.

The same question was asked repeatedly in the group of women FGD in Ekenywa and multiple answers were obtained. Interestingly, 3/8 women (*Whose views were more-less related) supported the answer given by their fellow who said, *"I don't think if my husband will ever think of giving anything inheritable to our two daughters, he treasures his boys too much.....he even refused to take our first daughter to school after she'd failed in her ordinary secondary education...and I'll never forget his words on that day, he came home drunk and said (here quoting her husband),... 'how can I take someone's wife to school, after all I'm tired of wasting my money over lazy kids' (According to wife's understanding, he said kids but implying his two daughters because he was frequently in clashes with them). Results of this kind are also shared by Walsh et al. (2003), who reports of a Maasai woman with seven children who inherited nothing when her parents died in 1998 while her brothers inherited sheep and cattle. Quoting from that woman the author reported, "A lady does not inherit, if you are a woman and not married, you inherit something small". Results of this nature suggest that issues around daughters' and sons' inheritance still demand public attention to be fully addressed.*

3.5 Attitudes of men and women towards power sharing in the family structure

Every family is unique, and there is no simple or fixed set of rules that can explain the dynamics of decision-making processes within families. The results in Table 4 reveal an interesting pattern of attitude regarding the way decision making power should be shared across the gender groups in the family structure. More than half, (69.3%) of men and only 45.3% of women agreed with the argument that a man should have a final say about decisions in his home. On the other hand, female participants (72.0%) were more likely than men (64.0%) to support the arguments that women and men have the same right to make their own decisions. With such results, one might grasp that the hegemony of masculinity that is usually inherent in men most often inhibits and in one way or another destructs the grounds for shared decision making power in the family. This is also typical of what is depicted in the study of women empowerment in agricultural value chains by Jeckoniah et al. (2012) from which it is contended that, more often, 'men's beliefs is that they are the custodians of the traditional norms; therefore, a change that does not involve their permission is not usually accepted.

On the other hand, only 76% of men compared to 88.7% of women were skeptical about whether a good woman is the one that never questions her husband's opinions even if she is not sure she agrees with them. In the same essence, most of the men (96.7%) as compared to only 48.7% of women rebutted the argument that their wives had more say than they do about the important decisions that affect them. The results of this kind suggest that, for a woman to appear fitting in a family as deemed by most men, she has to be submissive to the principles of her husband. Such a patriarchal perspective is however refuted by Sultana (2011), in his argument that both husband and wife's equal participation in family decision-making is necessary for a happy family.

Moreover, 96.7% of women and about 95.3% of men agreed with the argument that the woman should be free to decide if she wants to work outside the home. Further analysis reveals that, men are more inclined than women to support the idea that women should not work outside home. Findings of this kind are also reported by PRC, (2010) that in some countries such as in Egypt and Jordan, male respondents are considerably more likely than female respondents to agree that men should have more right to a job than women when jobs are scarce. On the other hand, the present study found that, about 99.3% of men and 95.3% of women, support the idea that childcare should be shared between spouses.

Table 4: Perception towards power sharing in the family structure

STATEMENTS	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	Men %	Women%	Men %	Women%	Men %	Women%
A man's word should be final in his home	69.3	45.3	-	-	30.7	54.7
Women and men have same right to make own decisions	64.0	72.0	-	0.7	36.0	27.3
A good woman never questions her husband's opinions	24.0	10.7	-	0.7	76.0	88.7
Childcare should be shared between spouses.	99.3	95.3	-	-	0.7	4.7
My wife has more decision making power than i do	2.0	-	1.3	-	96.7	-
My husband has more decision making power than i do	-	51.3	-	-	-	48.7
My partner gets things done his/her way most of the time	0.7	46.7	-	0.7	99.3	52.7
Women should have freedom to work outside the home	95.3	96.7	-	-	4.7	3.3

Results obtained from the qualitative data were different from those obtained from the quantitative data in some constructs. For instance, with regards to power sharing in the family structure the divergence were vivid. While responding to questions posed during a key informant interview, one of the local leaders in Arusha District council said, "...what kind of wife would that be if she just does everything without questioning? ...i would never advice my son to marry someone of that nature." To him a good woman is the one that constantly challenges her husband and mould him to become a 'socially respectable man'. Again, despite of the positivity connoted by such attitude about the role of women in shaping the reputation of the family; it carries within it a stereotypic attitude that women have to sacrifice their time, efforts and even opportunities in order to set things right whenever the man's pride is at jeopardy. Contrarily however, men would never do the same. According to Jeckoniah *et al.* (2012), women perceive that men would not like them (women) to be empowered because of the benefit they rip out of their disempowerment. They usually exercise power over their wives (Sikira and Urasa, 2015) and in most cases they dominate in major household decisions.

One of the very rare observations made during the household survey questionnaire is that of three men out of one hundred and fifty reported that their wives have more say about important decisions at home. Due to its peculiarity, a follow-up investigation was made on these 3 cases where the findings in two of the cases suggests that, it is sometimes possible for a woman whose husband is too much alcoholic to assume decision making roles even for the matters perceived to be

out of reach for women in most patriarchal societies. These claims were vivid in the words of one Village Community development Officer, who puts it straight forward that a man with a drunken mind is worth nothing as far as strategic household decisions are concerned. Drawing from Moselhy *et al.* (2001); Bechara *et al.* (2001); Noël *et al.* (2007) and Glass *et al.* (2009); severe use of alcohol has been consistently associated with neuropsychological impairments with respect to cognitive flexibility, problem solving, decision making, risky behavior and further aspects of cognitive function. In the third case, the man reported that he was okay with his wife making most of the decisions regarding their livelihood. However, this sort of egalitarianism was backed up by the fact that a woman was the sole bread earner in that household.

With regards to women's decisions about working outside home, it was learnt in one of the women FGD's in Arusha District Council, that most women face a lot of complications from their husbands at times when a woman needs to seek an income earning job. All FGD participants (8/8) agreed that seeking off-farm employments for a woman is even a threat to marital relations in the households where men are pro-culture. Two out of eight women in that group were victims of such complications. Also, results from one of the in-depth interviews provide a similar depiction as seen in box 1.

Box 1: A Story from **Mama Adela in Ekenywa Village (Mama Adela is not her real name)**

"...it is only the grace of God that has brought me at this level of life; I remember the first day I told my husband that I wish to join some other women in our village who used to go to a nearby market to engage in small businesses of buying and selling food crops and vegetables, he replied nothing that morning; but when he came back during the evening...he asked me a few questions but all indicating that he misinterpreted my idea of doing business. Then just out of nowhere, he started to accuse me of having an affair with another man; such accusations went on for days and so I decided to share my problem to his brother whose house is just next to ours...to my husband, that was the worst thing I did, because after he learnt that his brother knew what was happening between us he came back angrily and he really beaten me that night to the extent that I was hospitalized for one week. It wasn't until we had the other two fights when I told him in front of my father in-law and other elders during a reconciliation meeting that, I'm tired of carrying false allegations on my back...it's enough already, "I said" and I insisted that if no one want to believe me then I've no choice but to pack my things and go back to my parents. Off-course it did not happen that day because after that meeting we managed to stay peacefully for months before he started again...but this time I reacted differently, I chose to vacate the house and I went to my parents where I stayed there for two months and some days. All this time my husband was sending our children one after another to try to persuade me to go back but he realized that things couldn't work as he expected so he then decided to come on his own and explained to my father his side of the story. It wasn't that easy to change my mind, though after a series of attempts and after re-thinking so broadly, I realized that it wasn't a good idea to leave my kids alone at the hands of the father 'like him'....it was for such reason that I decided to return to my husband but on the condition that I shall be allowed to engage in business like the other women. Though it took time for my husband to adapt to the new environment but I thank God it is now the fifth year since I started to engage in business and I managed to buy two cross-breed dairy cattle and three of our kids are in school, one in primary and two in secondary school on my effort".

With cases like presented above, women's capabilities and talents are curtailed and even swallowed by men's negativity which in most cases leads to poor standards of living within the household. Therefore, increasing women's freedom to work outside the home is crucial for increasing their freedom in domains such as the home, healthcare, education, reproductive health control, as well as social and political life (Koggel, 2003).

4.0 Attitude Index of Men and Women towards Gender Inequitable Practices across the Smallholder Communities

Prior to construction of an attitude index, statements with positive and negative connotations were developed. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement as to whether they “Strongly agree”, “agree”, “Undecided”, “Disagree”, and “Strongly disagree” for each of the Likert-scale statements. This scale was later reduced to three levels where the most related responses were combined into a single response. The scale was scored so that a greater number was equivalent to more support for gender-equitable practices. Later on, an attitude index was developed by summing up the scores obtained from the 19 Likert-scale statements, focusing on examining perceptions of smallholders towards gender inequitable practices. Ultimately, descriptive analysis was computed so as to obtain the Mean Index Score which in this case is 34.03. All those participants whose total scores for all 19 Likert items were below the Mean Index Score of 34 were regarded as having negative attitudes towards gender equitable practices and vice versa.

The results presented in Table 13 generally depicts that many of the smallholders in Arumeru District (63.0%) had positive attitudes towards gender equitable practices. Further analysis shows that, women who are group participants (75.3%) were more likely than women not in groups (54.1%) to have positive attitudes towards gender equitable practices. Contrarily however, non-group male participants were more likely (60.2%) than the male group participants (56.2%) to have positive attitudes on gender equitable practices. For women, it seems group membership helps them to easily understand their rights and equip them with a mindset that compels them to seek for more equity hence perceiving gender equitable practices positively than those who are not exposed to farmers’ groups. For men however, findings indicate that non-group male participants are more egalitarian than those who are members in the farmers’ groups. Although this does not ideally presuppose that group membership has less contribution towards men’s egalitarianism but it rather postulate either of the two possibilities; such possibilities emanate from the truth that, egalitarianism of a person is more controversial since its application has a limited scope in a public life than in a private life. For instance, while responding to questions during the survey, some of the men tend to provide an impression that they involve their wives in making household decisions while in reality they don’t, on the other hand there are those who tend to portray themselves as heads of the household by saying that they make all the decisions in the household while in actual practice they either make decisions jointly or their wives decides solely for some items.

Table 5: Attitude index of men and women towards gender inequitable practices across the smallholder communities

SCORES	Group Participants		Non-Group Participants		Overall N = 300
	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	
1	24	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6
2	25	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6
3	26	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0
4	27	0.0	1.1	2.5	1.6
5	28	0.0	2.2	1.7	4.9
6	29	0.0	0.0	5.1	4.9
7	30	6.2	2.2	6.8	4.9
8	31	3.1	3.4	9.3	8.2
9	32	18.8	9.0	5.1	11.5
10	33	15.6	5.6	9.3	6.6
1	34	6.2	15.7	9.3	13.1
2	35	9.4	18.0	16.1	16.4
3	36	18.8	20.2	11.9	13.1
4	37	12.5	6.7	8.5	4.9
5	38	9.4	14.6	14.4	6.6

Attitude towards gender inequitable practices	Mean index Score = 34.03				
	Positive	56.2	75.3	60.2	54.1
	Negative	43.8	24.7	39.8	45.9

5.0 Factors Affecting Perception of Small Holders towards Gender Inequitable Practices

From the findings presented in Table 14, the influence of education on people's perception was found to be negative ($P=0.004$, $Z = -2.901$, C.I. = 95%). Findings of this kind suggest that, an additional year of schooling tends to reduce chances for egalitarian perception towards gender equitable norms. According to Kane (1995), education "may actually legitimate rather than challenge inequality" by emphasizing the importance of individual talent or effort in social accomplishment. When this happens, education can have a negative impact on gender-equality perception. It is also postulated by Yoshida (2012) that education tends to reproduce the inequality perception in Malaysia, unlike in the other three studied countries including Indonesia, Thailand and Philippines where education has a persistently positive impact. Such empirical findings when compared with other studies lead us to a conclusion that it is merely impossible for one to naively conclude that education has a negative or positive influence on perception towards gender issues.

Table 6: Factors influencing perception on gender inequitable practices

	Sex of the respondent	Education level	Leadership experience	Gender Training attendance	Group membership	age cohorts
Mann-Whitney U	9664.500	8909.000	8916.500	9845.000	9174.000	8024.500
Wilcoxon W	15880.500	15125.000	15132.500	16061.000	27129.000	14240.500
Z	-1.313	-2.901	-3.370	-.980	-2.134	-3.745
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.189	0.004	0.001	0.327	0.033	0.000

On the other hand, people from different age cohorts were found to perceive gender equitable practices differently ($P=0.000$, $Z = -3.745$, C.I. = 95%). Negative perceptions were more prominent to the elderly population than the young ones. These findings are similar to Yoshida's (2012) suggestions that elderly people may have more conservative attitudes about gender than the young population. Other factors that were found to be influencing perception of gender equitable practices negatively include leadership experience ($P=0.001$); and group membership ($P=0.033$). Such empirical findings clearly connote that, among members of smallholder groups, the association of beliefs in gender hierarchy (sexism) and participation in group's activities depend on whether group membership challenges or promotes the status quo. According to Ryan and Branscombe (2013) when the status quo is threatened the more powerful group (men) adopt beliefs concerning the natural disadvantage resulting thereof and innate differences which provide justification for gender inequality. Undoubtedly, the gender stereotypes that are part and parcel of patriarchal beliefs inform self-perception in ways that promote the status quo and prevent change in structural gender relations.

On the other hand, there was no statistical significant association between sex of the respondents and their perception levels. This implies that both male and female respondents were likely to accept or reject the gender inequitable practices. Again, gender training attendance did not seem to have any statistical significant association with the perception levels. Previously, Afolabi (2013) also found no significant difference between the perception of untrained and trained teachers

of their conditions of service. This may carry with it the connotation that despite of the significance that training may have towards promoting gender equitable practices, there may still be some critical faults that need to be addressed in order to reap the actual benefits that trainings could implicate towards changing the perceptions of the community. Such faults may include in one hand weak institutional capacity of the machinery necessary for implementing these trainings in rural areas; secondly, it may be lack of necessary feasibility studies or mechanisms to cross-check the awareness gap and/or contextual/socio-cultural components that would bring potential threats to the success of the community trainings. Lastly but with vital importance is lack of considerable follow-up mechanisms to assess the aftermath of the community trainings. The results from the key-informant interviews with the leaders of farmers groups indicates that, most of the trainings conducted in their areas are provided using the conventional approaches to participation. This would probably end-up with either irrelevant trainings being offered to the community or an appropriate training being offered inadequately hence jeopardizing the potential of the trainings designed to optimize cognitive and perceptual performance of the community.

6.0 CONCLUSION

From the findings, analysis of the levels of perception towards gender equitable practices indicates that most of the smallholders had positive attitudes. However, it was observed that girls are still deprived their rights to inherit from their parents, women's rights to work outside the home are still withheld by their very husbands, cases of wife battering and domestic violence are still rampant in the district and that efforts are still needed to address the situation. Some of the approaches that could help towards attaining the gender equitable society could be to facilitate communities to take self-initiatives including addressing gender issues through the local meetings, organizing local awareness groups such as women groups, youth groups and involving the elders who are in most cases the custodians of traditions and customs that perpetuate gender inequality. Besides, both public and private practitioners should utilize more gender inclusive approaches from the scratch of the policy formulation processes and that, men should also be part and parcel of the programs aiming at addressing gender inequality.

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