

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN TEA FARMING IN TIGANIA EAST, MERU COUNTY

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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APPROVAL

This proposal has been submitted for examination with my approval as university supervisor.

Signed

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents Mr & Mrs Stephen Thinkii

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to determine the role women play in tea farming in Tigania East, Meru County. Specifically, the study sought to (1) analyze the attitudes and perceptions of women towards tea farming, (2) explore ways in which women engage in tea farming, (3) examine challenges that bar effective women's participation in tea farming. The sample size was 55 respondents with 30 of them being women. The researcher employed a mixed study approach and data collection instruments used were questionnaires, discussion groups and key informants. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to represent the descriptive statistics data into frequencies distributions and pie charts, while information from open ended questions, discussion groups and key informants was carefully selected and categorized according to themes and issues to reflect views of respondents which emerged from the field.

The findings indicated that women play great roles in tea farming in terms of labour. However, the study also revealed that women face significant challenges such as sexual harassment, insecurity, too much work load, less rewards for their labour, and lack of participation in decision making, among others.

Therefore, the study recommends that certain policy interventions to be put in place such as economic empowerment for women, sectoral networking, training of both men and women on the importance of tea farming, among other recommendations.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AEZ - Agro ecological zone

CTC – Crush, Tear, Curl

DIT - Directorate of Industrial Training

KTDA - Kenya Tea Development Agency

LH – lower High Land

SPSS – Statistical Package for the social sciences

UM1- Upper Midland 1

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

Odhiambo (2003) argues that being the backbone of the Kenyan economy, agriculture contributes to employment and poverty reduction both directly and indirectly. Directly, Odhiambo asserts that agriculture contributes 26% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and

60% of the export earnings. Indirectly, this sector contributes 27% to the GDP through linkages with manufacturing, distribution and service related sectors. It accounts for 60% of total national employment, with women providing 75% of the labour force. Furthermore, majority of the Kenyans (80%) live in rural areas and derive their livelihood from agriculture.

With 51% of Kenyan population being food insecure, agriculture is critical in the country's economic development and alleviation of poverty (Gitau *et al.*, 2008). Despite the critical role played by the tea industry in national economic growth and its successful history, the industry is experiencing some challenges which include among others, distortions in the marketing, pricing and macroeconomic policies suspected to largely affect the growth of the industry (Nyangito, 1999). The industry woes have escalated due to persistent decline in producers' prices, which started in 1994 resulting from low world tea prices (Nyangito, 1999), against high inflation rates (Kimuyu *et al.*, 2000) rendering the real producer price very low.

The impacts of these have been shown in various aspects including the high levels of poverty among smallholder tea growers with more than 35% living below the poverty line (Kimuyu *et al.*, 2000). The figure rises to 82% when tea farming is solely considered as a source of household income. The industry has had a prolonged dispute over labour issues (Mwaura *et al.*, 2005). The ever increasing costs of inputs such as labour and fertilizers have seen profits from the sub sector fall drastically over the recent past.

Traditionally land cannot be passed outside the patrilineage and must remain in the hands of men

(Whitehead and Tsikata 2003, Akech 2001, Ik Dahl et al. 2005, MacKenzie 1986, Cotula 2002, Musembi 2007, Pottier 2005, Yngstrom 2002). Traditional social structure delivers justification for such behavior, since women are often considered —just a person to pour water on the crops, passengers at worst, and —managers at best, but not confirmed members of a patrilineage

Similarly, in settings where men are portrayed and perceived as the main breadwinners, women's ability to offer family assets as collateral and their incentives to invest in productive activities are influenced by family dynamics that are likely to prioritize men's investments (Ospina, 1998).

Fletschner and Mesbah (2010) compared husbands and wives knowledge of financial markets and found that rural women in the Paraguay are 15 to 12 percent likely than men to have basic information about financial institutions in their communities. And even when they have access to information on financial services and market opportunities available to them women are less equipped to process it because of their lower levels of literacy and lack of exposure to other languages especially relative to male family members.

Following a similar line of thought, Kevane (2004) has observed that social norms define the type of economic activities in which women can engage their time by investing in them and the markets they can access.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Women continue to play a vital role in tea production although their contribution in most cases is unnoticed. Women's contributions especially on labour, has not been fully integrated into many agricultural programmes. In Kenya for instance, where societies sustain rigid male supremacy, women's work and economic contributions tend to be viewed as nonessential and are regarded as assisting men. The labelling of tea production as a male activity has resulted in women facing challenges in striving to make ends meet in agriculture. Access to and control of productive resources like land, farm equipment and inputs is male dominated. Therefore, sustainable interventions towards addressing women's practical and strategic needs are significant. Women

being an important stakeholder in agricultural development need to be equipped with all the necessary capacity to enable them contribute effectively and tea farming is no exception.

Addressing the challenges of women in agriculture is vital since it is the major strategy in reduction of poverty as they make up the majority of people living in poverty. It is from the foregoing that, there is need to empower women especially on access and control over factors of agricultural production to which they are the major stakeholder. Therefore the study will attempt to answer the following questions;

- i. What are the attitudes and perceptions of women towards tea farming?
- ii. What challenges are faced by women involved in tea farming?
- iii. What do women do in tea farming?

1.3 Research objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

To determine the role women play in tea farming in Tigania East Constituency, Meru County

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- a) To analyse the attitudes and perceptions of women towards tea farming;
- b) To analyse ways in which women engage in tea farming.
- c) To examine challenges that bar effective women's participation in tea farming;

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What are the attitudes and perceptions of women towards tea farming
- ii. How are women involved in tea farming?
- iii. What are the challenges faced by women practicing tea farming in Tigania

1.5 Significance of the Study

It was expected that study would reveal the attitudes and perception of women in tea farming as well as examine the factors affecting the women's participation in tea farming. The findings will

be important to financial institutions on how to adjust to meet the need of women farmers through policy adjustments.

The research would also supplement to the existing knowledge regarding women and their participation in agriculture in general. It will practically explore ways in which women engagement in tea farming and at the same time suggest ways in which both men and women can share rewards especially financial gains that may accrue as a result of their involvement in tea farming.

The findings of the research will be of great use to policy makers and add value in decision making. In this case the results would help them revise the current or come up with new policies and guidelines that promote small scale farmers.

The findings will be of benefit to the government of Kenya to know the factors affecting women farmers in general and act accordingly. This would help them revise the current or come up with new policies and guidelines that promote the small scale farmers in Kenya.

The study results would also add to the body of knowledge on issues related to gender disparity in small scale tea farming. In this case, future researchers and academicians may use the results as a foundation of the research works in the same field.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study was carried out in Tigania East constituency, in Meru county of Kenya. The focus of this study was on understanding the role of women in tea farming. This study was guided by the Empowerment theory. The study was both qualitative and quantitative. The study focuses on majorly the women and a minimal number of men. Subjective information was collected from key informants and focus group discussions.

On risk factors look at climatic conditions changes, repayment interest and low agricultural output. This will help understand at the women's' contribution to tea farming and how the factors affect their role in tea farming.

Finally, some respondents were unwilling to reveal information which would be classified as confidential. To minimize this, the researcher informed the respondents that their information would be treated with utmost confidentiality and that it was only meant for academic purposes only.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the literature reviewed on role of women in tea farming and the issues surrounding the concept as presented by other authors and academicians. The main areas presented are on Women Tea farming; challenges facing women tea farmers and socio – economic impacts of tea farming on women and the theoretical framework of the study.

2.2 Agriculture in Kenya

Agriculture remains the most important economic activity in Kenya, although less than 8% of the land is used for crop and feed production. Less than 20% of the land is suitable for cultivation, of which only 12% is classified as high potential (adequate rainfall) agricultural land and about 8% is medium potential land. The rest of the land is arid or semiarid. About 80% of the work force engages in agriculture or food processing. Farming in Kenya is typically carried out by small producers who usually cultivate no more than two hectares (about five acres) using limited technology. These small farms, operated by about three million farming families, account for 75% of total production. Although there are still important European-owned coffee, tea, and sisal plantations, an increasing number of peasant farmers grow cash crops.

From independence in 1963 to the oil crisis in 1973, the agricultural sector expanded by undergoing two basic changes: first, widespread acceptance of private ownership (replacing tribal ownership) and cash crop farming; second, the success of intensive nationwide efforts to expand and upgrade the production of African smallholders. Before World War II (1939–45) ended, agricultural development occurred almost exclusively in the "White Highlands," an area of some 31,000 sq km (12,000 sq mi) allocated to immigrant white settlers and plantation companies. Since independence, as part of a land consolidation and resettlement policy, the Kenya government, with financial aid from the United Kingdom, has gradually transferred large

areas to African ownership. European-owned agriculture remains generally large-scale and almost entirely commercial.

Tea was first introduced in Kenya in 1903 but commercial planting started in 1924 in areas around Kiambu and later Kericho (Owour *et al*, 1997). Tea in Kenya is traditionally grown in lower Highland Zone (LH) which is the most suitable Agro ecological zone (AEZ) where the tea was first introduced in 1903. However, over the years tea production has been expanded to the upper midland zone 1 (UM1). This is a marginal tea zone with relatively higher temperatures and lower average annual rainfall than the LH zone (Jaetzold & Schmidz, 1983). They also reiterate that traditionally the tea growing area around Mount Kenya i.e. areas around Meru, Kirinyaga, Nyeri, Murang'a and Kiambu is usually referred to as East of the Rift Valley, while the western region of Kericho, Kisii, Kakamega and Nandi among others is usually referred to as West of the Rift Valley.

The Kenya tea industry falls into two distinct sub-sectors comprising of the large scale owned mainly by multinationals and the small -holder sub-sector. The estate sub-sector pioneered tea production in Kenya. Besides generating foreign exchange, tea sector directly employs well over 70,000 Kenyans (Othieno, 1991). As a whole the tea industry makes an important contribution to the Kenyan economy owing to the large volume of processed tea destined for export market, enlisting Kenya as being among the three major world tea exporters. The earnings accruing from tea exports since 2006 have been increasing. For instance, Kenya tea earned Kshs 47.2 billion (2006), 43.1 billion (2007), 62.1 billion (2008), 69.6 billion (2009) and 97 billion in 2010, thereby competing favorably with horticulture and tourism (TBK, 2010) in terms of foreign exchange earnings.

The Kenyan tea industry expanded and experienced a successful development in the first two decades after independence, due to a number of favourable factors. The industry has shown expansion with improved productivity in the entire post-independence era. Over the duration acreage among smallholders experienced an annual expansion of 9% while the estate had a 2% increment. The expansion in acreage among smallholders diminished to about 1% annually after market liberalization period with the large estates remaining constant (Nyangito, 2001). The

amount of tea produced by the two categories of farmers increased eighteen fold from 18,000 MT in 1963 to 378,000 MT in 2011 (TBK, 2011). In general, productivity has been experiencing improvement at the rate of 9% for the smallholders and 3.3% for the estates. The annual rate of yield improvement was 11% and 4.6% among smallholders and estates respectively before liberalization. Post liberalization experienced reduction in the annual rate of yield improvement to 1% and 3.1 % among the estates and smallholder respectively. Although opportunity to improve productivity exists especially among smallholders to be in tandem with the estates, more problems are being experienced on the marketing side due to diminishing returns resulting from increased costs of production against marginal increase in market prices of tea globally.

The boom that propelled the successful development of the tea industry before liberalization was as a result of land distribution in the early years of independence, favourable global prices, breakthrough in research on tea, efficient extension services that led to adoption of recommended technologies, favourable agricultural and macroeconomics policies that facilitated the expansion of the industry, increased demand for the Kenyan tea in the global market, and lower operational costs (Nyangito, 1999).

Internationally, five tea producing countries account for over 77% of the total crop produced (International Tea Committee, (2011). Kenya is ranked third in annual tea production after China and India. The tea produced in Kenya accounts for about 10% of the world production and about 25.5 % of the export share. Over 95% of the Kenyan tea is exported as a generic product which is used to blend the low quality teas from other countries. Kenyan teas are produced hygienically following good agricultural practices and good manufacturing practices and are completely pesticide free. Currently, Kenya produces black CTC tea as the only major product, for which the international unit prices have stagnated. There is therefore a need for product diversification and improvement of the quality of tea products to make Kenya a leading exporter of high value teas.

This is a major challenge to be addressed by researchers, processors and product promoters.

The industry faces challenges of high and escalating cost of production which is causing great uncertainty in the future of tea farming. Kenyan tea is predominantly for export and competes

mainly on its quality. Low quality teas from other producers in the region and elsewhere compete on low cost production. However, Kenya is among the high cost producers with its cost of production currently at US \$ 1.33 per Kg of made tea. The cost of production compares poorly with other low cost tea producing countries like Vietnam and Indonesia at US \$ 0.81 and \$ 0.58 per Kg of made tea respectively. In Africa and closer at home in East Africa, Kenya has the highest cost of production compared to Rwanda (US \$ 1.32), Uganda (US \$ 1.20), Tanzania (US \$ 1.16), Malawi (US \$ 1.14) and Zimbabwe (US \$ 1.11)(ROK, 2007).

The main factors identified as contributing to high cost of production of tea in Kenya are high cost of plucking labor, which constitute over 25 percent of farm operations for the smallholders and over 60 percent for the estates, mainly due to scarcity of labour in tea areas and unsustainable wage demands by the trade unions. Currently, the Kenyan tea industry pays its labour at the rate of US \$ 2.58 per day compared to competitors like Malawi, Rwanda and Uganda who pay less than US \$ 1.0 per day (Figure 1.3). In Africa, Kenyan wage rates are second to South Africa which pays US \$ 4.16 per day and whose tea industry has since collapsed. The Kenyan tea industry currently pays labour wages which are more than twice the minimum agricultural wages in the Country (US \$ 1.26) per day as per the regulation of wages under the (Agricultural industry Amendment Order, 2006 issued by the Minister for Labour and Human Resource Development). This is due to the fact that tea industry is excluded from the Agricultural Wages Order, (ROK 2007). The other factor is the high and increasing cost of farm inputs particularly fertilizers and finally the numerous taxes and levies - (Land rates, Land Rents, Agricultural Produce Cess, Value Added Tax, Manufacturing Cess, Corporate tax, and Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) levy which have become a heavy burden to the producers.

According to CPDA (2008) the cost of tea production in Kenya is USD1.33 per Kilogram and this compares poorly with other countries such as Vietnam (USD 0.81 per kg) as well as its neighbours in East Africa community; Rwanda (USD 1.32 per kg, Uganda (USD 1.20 per kg) and Tanzania (USD 1.16 per kg).

Njunjiri notes that Kenya is one of the poorest countries in the world and also one of the most heavily indebted. She says that Kenyan women make up of 52% of the entire population of between 60% -70% of the poor. Several factors have contributed to this feminization of poverty. They include: Property rights and control over assets. Legal regulations and customary rules often restrict women access to and control over assets that can be accepted as collateral such as land or livestock, women are much less likely to have land titled under their name, even when their families own land and are less likely to than men to have control over land even when they do formally own it. Biased inheritance rights often bestow land to male relatives leaving both widows and daughters at a disadvantage (Agarwal, 2003).

2.3 The Role of Women in Cash Crop Production

At independence in 1963, the government of Kenya lifted completely colonial restrictions on cash crop growing by Africans. In the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, cash crop production on small-holdings provided farmers with substantial incomes, and provided the state with foreign exchange. However, in the last half of the 1970s, coffee began to lose its attraction for smallholder producers. State corruption swallowed sales income and farmers were not being paid fairly and promptly. The "hey day" of cash crop expansion continued throughout the 1960s as world commodity prices rose until the first oil shock in 1973. It was also a time when many African small holders first obtained access to cropping opportunities previously reserved for colonial farmers (Heyer, Maitha, & Senga, 1975).

With this increased responsibility for family subsistence, women often do not have adequate land, labour and time to produce their own cash crops. Furthermore, in most cases, wives work as unpaid family labourers in their husband's cash crop fields. Men are not necessarily under any obligation to share the proceeds from their fields with their wives (Kiriti, Tisdell, & Roy, 2002; Kennedy & Cogill, 1985).

Cash crop production is largely a family affair, often though not always orchestrated by male household heads, as their work is mainly supervisory. An exception to this pattern is the female-

headed compound where women bear the major responsibility for agricultural tasks regardless of gender norms (Davison, 1988).

Fafchamps (1992) argues that other things being equal, a risk-averse farmer whose share of food in total expenditure is large will produce proportionally more food than a similarly risk-averse farmer whose share of food in total expenditure is small. Only farmers with low share of food in total expenditure will devote a significant amount of resources to cash crop production. Therefore the most likely relationship between farm size and cash crop emphasis is positive. Women spend the bulk of their time cultivating and harvesting tea yet it is the owner (the husband) of the land and tea crop who largely benefits from production. Cash cropping and increased income does not necessarily lead to increased welfare for women and children.

Fortmann (1982) found that agricultural policies had reduced their income and their families' well being. The competition for arable land between cash crops and food crops means that women depend increasingly upon cash to buy food they no longer produce themselves. Because cash is necessary to buy commodities not produced at home and is necessary for children's school fees, women farmers are allocating more of their labour time to the production of crops that bring a cash-value (Davison, 1988).

Julin (1993) contends that modernization efforts in the Kenyan agricultural sector have been directed towards cash crop production and introduction of modern technologies, areas that are traditionally dominated by men. Men's productivity has therefore increased resulting in decreased demand for male labour, while the demand for female labour by men has increased due to the larger land areas prepared by men and the increase in the number of crops. Women's ability to produce their own food and cash crops has diminished due to lack of time. Women work as unpaid family workers on their husband's fields and have no control of the profit from this work. This view supports that of Davison (1988).

According to (Gladwin et al., 1991), Structural Adjustments Programs (SAPS) designed to stimulate cash crop production benefit men more than women. Women often have little access to

the vital agricultural inputs necessary to increase production. SAPS that focus on those factors, without also focusing on increasing their availability to women, do not benefit women directly and may serve to decrease food availability as prices rise and supplies diminish. Women are the major food producers for families in many developing countries. At the same time, they increasingly have a need to generate cash income for commodities and services such as education and the health services required by their children, that they cannot directly provide. In areas where a cash economy has taken hold, women's agricultural labour at the compound-house hold level is likely to be under-compensated or not compensated at all (Safilios-Rothschild,1988).

Angelique (1995) found that in Kenya the people who really pick the coffee are not men, it is the women and children. But when time comes for the payment, the people who actually collect the money are men, not women. The labour is for the wife and the children, but the money is for the husband. The state and transnational corporations continue to regulate women's labour by giving credit to male title deed-holders to encourage horticulture. This is a labour intensive and chemically dependent type of export production.

Women may also find that their decision-making role is reduced significantly with cash crop farming. Specific characteristics of non-food cash crops may imply certain household food security and nutritional effects. For example, if a cash crop that is also a food is introduced, has several products, has a short maturation period, fits into existing cropping patterns, women have a role in farm decision-making and marketing systems are efficient, the crop may have a positive impact on food security and nutrition. On the other hand if a cash crop introduced is a non-food, is backed up with a comprehensive research, extension and marketing service which ignores all the food crops, inputs may be subsidized to the exclusion of the staple crops, has a long maturation period, revenues from it are lumpy and is controlled by men, does not fit with the existing cropping patterns, it may have a negative impact on food security and nutrition (Longhurst, 1988).

The technical characteristics of crops impinge on the ability of farm households to respond to changing price ratios in the short run. The characteristics of perennials such as coffee and tea production give less ability in the short run to respond to price changes than is the case for annual crops such as carrots, potatoes, maize and beans. Coffee and tea represent a semi-fixed factor situation to a farmer who has switched to these. If after the switch is made and investments are made, the terms of trade between coffee and a competing crop (say maize) shift in favour of the competing crop, then moving out of coffee is constrained in the short run. Production of tea and coffee will continue as long as variable costs are covered (Islam, 1994).

2.4 Gender and Cash Crop Production in Kenya

Land policies since Kenya's independence in 1963 have continued the trend first established by the Sywnnerton Plan. By 1978, 7.6 million hectares had been registered in the names of African males (Barnes, 1983). In addition, technical inputs and agricultural extension services promoted by transnational and national donor agencies to increase production of small holders have continued to favour male rather than female producers (Staudt, 1987).

Many women do not directly benefit from their increased work efforts or efficiency as individuals. Instead, men control the incomes (Julin 1993). Women work as unpaid family workers on their husband's fields and have no control of the profit from this work. Muntemba (1982, p.99) gives the example of an old Zambian woman farmer who said,

"Now a woman is like a slave. She works hard... At the end of the year, the family sells one hundred bags of maize. The man gives her 20 Kwacha. The following year the family sells three hundred bags. He still gives her 20 Kwacha. What is that but slavery?"

However, husbands' payments to wives for work on their fields have been documented in some cases in Nigeria (Galtetti *et al.*, 1956). In Ghana male cocoa farmers prefer wives' labour because they can delay wage payment (Okali, 1983), and payments occur in the Gambia (Dey, 1982) and in Cameroon (Guyer 1984 and Jones, 1983). Introduction of cash cropping has brought about greater gender segregation in labour tasks with men increasingly becoming agricultural manager.

Capitalisation of land and production in Kenya means that although women have continued to play a major role in subsistence food production, men exercise an increasingly dominant role in the management of resources (including agricultural inputs), control of land, and the distribution of goods and services. As a result women experience a greater loss of socio-economic power (Boserup, 1970; Staudt, 1982; Nasimiyu, 1985).

Tisdell, Roy, and Regmi (2001) found that whereas the wife has control over the food that she grows for the family, she has little or no control over cash. It is generally contended that noncash food production is under the control of the wife and directly used for family nutrition. However, cash income is not, and it is considered that husbands are less likely to use cash for the welfare of wives and children (Kaiser & Dewey, 1991).

Thus, in the Kenyan case, women appear to have very little say in decisions on cash crops but they seem to have more leeway in matters concerning food crops. In other words, women appear to lose their ability to make decisions with increased commercialization and this may impact negatively not only on food availability in general but also on the nutrition of children (*See also*, Von Braun, de Haen, & Blanken, 1991; Kaiser & Dewey, 1991).

Although many authors agree that women's role as food producers has been left at the periphery by the introduction of cash cropping (eg. Boserup, 1970; Safilios-Rothschild, 1982; Barnes, 1983; Guyer, 1984; Kennedy & Coggill, 1985; Nasimiyu, 1985), others find that women producers in some areas of West Africa, in particular, have actually benefited from the introduction of cash cropping and the commercialization of land (*e.g.*, Berry, 1975; Okali, 1983; Afonja, 1986).

Besteman (1995) notes that the commercialization and mechanization of agriculture leading to increased production of cash crops, has had both positive and negative consequences for women of the Third World. The benefits lie primarily in enabling them to earn cash income in an increasingly cash-based economy. Yet, as more productive land is dedicated to cash crop production, which is often controlled by male farmers, women are left with less land and with

increasingly marginal land. In Africa, cash crop production has been a major factor in shifting land tenure systems from use rights on community land to the individualization and consolidation of land rights. In this process, women lose their traditional use rights.

Women in developing countries are often considered responsible for feeding the family. Where wives and husbands keep separate fields, as is frequently so in Africa, men have traditionally had more options for moving into cash cropping on their own fields and leaving the production of subsistence crops to their wives. (Kiriti, Tisdell and Roy, 2002; Kennedy and Cogill, 1985).

Charlton, Everett et al (1989) claim that Third World countries have been increasingly drawn into the international trade in foodstuffs, because many governments actively encourage the production of crops that can be sold for badly needed foreign currencies. Women are most disadvantaged by this policy when they have no choice but to continue working in the subsistence economy with few resources and no institutional support. Worldwide, men are often in better positions to exploit new cash crops, and thus women become increasingly responsible for food crop production (Safilios-Rothschild, 1988). Changes in production strategies seem to have resulted in increased work and decreased access to cash for women in many developing countries.

Cash crop production has intruded on subsistence forms of production. Its impact is experienced differently depending upon pre-existing and changing forms of production and exchange, kinship patterns of inheritance and land use practices. Women appear to lose their ability to make decisions with increased commercialization and this may impact negatively not only on food availability in general but also on the nutrition of children. (von Braun, and Blanken 1991; Kaiser and Dewey 1991).

Julin (1993) contends that commercialization leads to increased productivity for men resulting in decreased demand for male labour while the demand for female labour increases due to the larger land areas prepared by men and the increase in the number of crops planted. Our results suggest that the demand for female labour increases with commercialization when husbands are

present in the household which support Julin's hypothesis. Married women living with husbands work more hours than men and they not only work on non-cash food crops but also on non-food cash crops findings that contradict von Braun and Kennedy (1986). They found that in general, women work less on the more commercialized crops than do men or hired labourers, who are mostly men. They contend that women generally work much more on subsistence crops than they do on commercialized crops. There is also evidence to show that women living with husbands work more hours than those married but living alone and also the unmarried women who are household heads. A possible reason may be that the presence of husbands puts pressure on their wives to work much more on cash crop fields as well as on food crops which is not the case for the married women living alone and the unmarried women who decide how and for how long they can work on their farms. However, this study seeks to find out the role of women in tea farming, which is but only an aspect of commercialization. Therefore, we turn our attention to tea farming in Kenya.

2.5 Tea Farming in Kenya

Tea was first introduced in Kenya in 1903 by GWL Caine and was planted in present day Limuru. However, commercialization of the tea started in 1924 and since then the nation became a major producer of black tea. Kenyan tea is also one of the top foreign exchange earners, alongside tourism, horticulture, and Kenyan coffee. The task of managing the small scale holder lies with the Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA). Currently the KTDA has 62 tea factories serving over 500,000 small scale farmers cultivating over 100,000 hectares. Of all tea produced in Kenya, KTDA members produce over 60% while the rest is produced by large scale producer.

Poor government policies and weak public administration continue to suppress economic freedom and entrepreneurial activity. In particular, the rule of law remains weak, corruption is widespread, and the judiciary is subject to political influence. Efforts to improve regulatory efficiency and open markets continue but at a slow pace and with little discernible impact. Measures have been implemented to improve public financial management, and the government continues to offer reforms related to business development and easing the customs process. An overhaul of contract enforcement and remediation is a good step, but much more is needed to foster the institutions necessary for sustained economic growth. In many developing countries,

much land and other resources are devoted to the production of agricultural crops for export. Davison (1988) contends that as more land is converted to cash crop production, land scarcity becomes a pressing reality, and women's obligation to produce food for their families is at risk. The author found that smallholders with more land tend to allocate relatively more of it to cash value crops and conversely, those with less land tend to allocate relatively more of it to food production. Besteman (1995), Agarwal (1992) and Goheen (1991) also argue that commercialisation of agriculture decreases women's access to land. Julin (1993) contends that commercialisation results in a decreased demand for male labour while at the same time increasing the demand for female labour.

2.5.1 Gender and Women Participation in Tea Farming

Collier (1989a) uses an example from Kenya to explain the general pattern of labour allocation by sector and gender. The differential constraints that women face make them less mobile intersectorally than men and this poses a policy problem since the goals of the structural adjustment programmes cannot be achieved without labour mobility. He argues that women are concentrated in two activities, food production and the provision of non-tradables such as marketing services. Overall, women are under-represented in export agriculture compared to food agriculture, due to the constraints that were discussed above. Women are also under-represented in the public sector and in private sector wage employment, as compared to food agriculture (Collier, 1989a:19–20).

Women are under-represented in the private formal sector wage labour market due to their lower levels of education, reproductive obligations which affect their time and interrupt their career pattern, and discrimination by firms. The disadvantages which women face in entering public sector employment are made worse by women's lower social status, which affects their bargaining power within a patronage system.

A crop tends to be managed by men when the method of production is changed by the use of hybrids and chemical inputs. A common situation is where women are significant, though partial, managers of the use of land, but have no ultimate control over inputs and outputs. There are

many instances of *de facto* female household heads, where the husband is away in wage employment and the woman is left with the task of making day-to-day operational decisions with regard to farm management, but the husband determines which crops to plant and controls the proceeds from their sale. In cases where women are allocated land specifically to grow the family's food, the divisions of management are more apparent.

Apart from being involved in farm activities, farming women are also often involved in other off-farm income-generating activities such as beer brewing (Palmer, 1991:36–38). Palmer argues that stabilization and structural adjustment programmes can only achieve efficiency by properly costing resources, and that this must include women's labour, both paid and unpaid. The issue of gender is very significant in the analysis of the use of existing resources to produce more output. Women's labour is already fully employed but, in the short run, the most significant ways that output can be increased make heavy demands on women's time. For instance, weeding is, according to Palmer, the most important factor in the short to medium term production outcomes of the adjustment programmes (Palmer, 1991). Palmer's main policy recommendation is based on the argument that there is a need to bring as much as possible of the reproduction labour tax on women into the paid economy. She wants to price as much unpaid labour as possible, including unpaid agricultural labour and unpaid reproductive labour. In order to reduce the reproduction labour tax on women, Palmer recommends the provision of tap water and electricity in homes, child minding facilities in the villages as well as in formal and informal sector enterprises, and maternity leave legislation. She suggests that funding for this should come from an employment tax on all registered enterprises to be paid into a national provident fund. In the rural areas, funds will be raised from a sales tax on selected cash crops.

2.5.2 Challenges faced by women in Tea farming

Gender relations affect smallholder tea production negatively and lead to low productivity and neglected tea fields (Sorensen and von Bulow 1990). Tensions arise as a result of conflicts over the control of proceeds of tea sales, as the smallholder controls the labour of the household members only to the extent that they also benefit from production. As women make up large part of the labour force in smallholder tea schemes (Owuor *et al.*, 2005; Kavoi *et al.*, 2003), it is vital to consider gender in relation to extension service, transfer of skills, choice of technology and

effects of subsistence crops (Lamb & Muller, 1982; Sorensen & Von Bulow, 1990). The smallholders are unwilling to subdivide the tea holdings to their children past high school age despite the children doing most of the work on the farms. This acts as a disincentive for them to work on tea farms. There is need to develop a proper rewarding system for the family labour and to attract the younger generations into tea production.

Palmer (1991) emphasizes that women farmers face pressing time constraints. They may not necessarily spend more time in farming activities than men, but their working day becomes longer due to other tasks, including child care and domestic chores. Women's labour is very demanding during the planting and weeding seasons. Furthermore, support services at the farm level tend to favour male farmers. Women farmers' yields are generally lower than those of male farmers in cases where the same crop is grown due to poor land use by women, credit constraints, and the lack of new technology or information. Apart from being involved in farm activities, farming women are also often involved in other off-farm income-generating activities such as beer brewing (Palmer, 1991:36–38). Palmer argues that stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes can only achieve efficiency by properly costing resources, and that this must include women's labour, both paid and unpaid.

Elson's line of argument is that changes in relative prices brought about by price reforms and devaluation do not operate simply to redistribute the existing workload. This is mainly because "there are limits to which relative prices can restructure an important non-tradable sector, the household production of non-tradables, including the production and reproduction of labour itself" (1993a:9). Elson identifies the following limits: Limits to the reduction in the time spent on child care. She points out that: "Women do not usually regard their children as just another crop, to be tended if the benefits are high enough, and to be left to rot if the costs of production become too high in relation to benefits." (Elson 1993a:9); Persistence of the gender division of labour which assigns the bulk of reproductive work to women and girls, and which designates some paid work (e.g. light industry) as women's work, and other paid work (e.g. heavy industry) as men's work; Limits to the way household expenditure can be switched, due to the fact that men tend to retain a portion of their income for their personal expenditure on leisure activities

such as drinking and smoking. To obtain sufficient cash to maintain household nutrition in the face of rising food prices, women have to undertake more paid work.

According to Collier (1989), the four main constraints that women face are the discrimination outside the household, in the labour and credit markets: This makes it difficult for women to engage and benefit from tea farming like their male counterparts. Also different obligations for men and women: In rural Africa, women are mainly involved in subsistence production, water fetching, firewood gathering, cooking, and taking care of the children, while men are involved in meeting the cash needs of the family. This results in long working hours for women and no say in the control of cash proceeds.

Reproductive duties as well, especially the child-bearing mothers: This hinders women from joining and actively participating in the labour market. Finally difficult access to the export sector: The export sector is the sector which is expected to attract resources during the structural adjustment period. In most parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the export sector is mainly male dominated. Collier cites a study on the adoption of tree crops in Kenya (Bevan, Collier, & Gunning, 1989) to further illustrate his point that female farmers may not be in a position to compete favorably in the export sector. He reports the findings of this study as follows: female-headed households had only half the propensity of male-headed households to adopt tea, secondly, most of the labour of tea picking is done by females. Thirdly, holding other household characteristics constant, extra male labour has no effect upon the propensity to adopt tea whereas extra female labour leads to a statistically significant increase. Fourthly, in Kenya, women do most of the work on tea. Finally that, households with more women are more likely to adopt the crop yet households headed by women are less likely to do so (Collier, 1989).

Palmer (1991) has developed a theoretical framework that focuses on distortions in the pricing of resources as the key to understanding the interactions between structural adjustment programmes and gender relations. She argues that policy design has not yet succeeded in incorporating measures to remove gender-based price distortions. Palmer (1991) examines four main gender considerations that are important to the functioning of markets: gender discrimination in access

to resources or outlets for selling produce; additional tasks women face in reproduction and family maintenance; intra-household markets; and the final disposal of incomes.

The first consideration, discrimination, could arise from social and cultural factors or government policies. For instance, the absence of land titles limits women's access to productive resources such as credit, extension, training and information. In most parts of sub-Saharan Africa, land is patrilineally inherited. Women simply get some rights to use land as a way of fulfilling their obligation to the family. Thus, women only have usufructuary rights and are insecure in their use of land. Furthermore, policies of land adjudication and registration discriminate against women in land titling by registering only men's names as heads of households and ignoring women's traditional rights to use land. This results in an inefficient allocation of resources. Resources such as credit and fertilizer will only move to their most efficient use when women enjoy equal access with men. The efficient allocation of resources refers to a situation where the use of resources leads to a greater total output.

The second consideration is that women have roles and obligations that are different from those of men in that they have to nurse the sick, cook the food, take care of the young children, and collect water and firewood. All these obligations represent what Palmer refers to as "a labour overhead" or a "reproduction tax" on women (Palmer, 1991:12). They must pay this tax before embarking on any income-generating activity. The reproduction tax not only restricts the time women can spend on economic activities but also confines them to activities that are compatible with their home schedule. Like any tax on particular activities, the reproduction tax changes choices and can be seen as distorting resource allocation away from the pattern that would have prevailed without it.

The third consideration stems from the fact that in sub-Saharan Africa, the household cannot be treated as a simple unit. In many countries, within the household, women and men operate separate accounting units,² and there is both cooperation and conflict within it. The terms of exchange within the household are not equal between men and women and do not represent an efficient distribution of the combined resources of the household. In other words, the terms of

trade are biased against women. Men have a degree of command over family labour that is not reciprocated by an equal degree of command by women over the proceeds of their work. Women are more likely to labour for men than men for women. This leads to what Palmer calls an asymmetry of access to resources (and income) between women and men. Unless these differences are considered, the efficiency goal may not be realized.

The fourth consideration concerns the unequal distribution of income within households. This means that women often do not directly receive incentives from increases in the prices of crops which are marketed by their husbands. Both men's and women's labour is required for the production of most crops but some crops are managed by men and some by women. According to Palmer, there are two principal determinants of whether a crop is managed by the woman or man. According to Palmer, "Separate accounting units mean that the wife and husband may draw separate personal incomes from agriculture and associated activities to meet separate financial obligations" (1991:21). This is more pronounced in West Africa than in East and Southern Africa.

Palmer (1991) emphasizes that women farmers face pressing time constraints. They may not necessarily spend more time in farming activities than men, but their working day becomes longer due to other tasks, including child care and domestic chores. Women's labour is very demanding during the planting and weeding seasons. Furthermore, support services at the farm level tend to favour male farmers. Women farmers' yields are generally lower than those of male farmers in cases where the same crop is grown due to poor land use by women, credit constraints, and the lack of new technology or information.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the *Women's Empowerment theory* developed by Longwe as a way of conceptualizing the process of empowerment through a sequence of measurable actions (Longwe, 1991). This helps women achieve empowerment by enabling them to achieve equal control over the factors of production and participate equally in the development process. The tool highlights the ascending levels of gender equality, although the levels are not linear in nature, but rather are conceptualized as reinforcing in nature. The path can be used as a frame of

reference for progressive steps towards increasing equality, starting from meeting basic welfare needs to equality in the control over the means of production.

The five “levels of equality” in the Women’s Empowerment Framework include:

Welfare: This refers to the improvement in the socioeconomic status, such as income, better nutrition, and housing, among others. It pertains to the level of material welfare of women relative to men, with respect to food supply, income and medical care but without reference to whether women are themselves the active creators and producers of their material needs

Access: This means increased access to resources. This is the first step in empowerment as women increase their access relative to men. It pertains to women’s access to factors of production such as land, labour, credit, training, marketing facilities, and all publicly available services and benefits on an equal basis with men.

Conscientisation: This involves the recognition of structural forces that disadvantage and discriminate against women coupled with the collective aim to address these discriminations. It pertains to an understanding of the difference between sex roles and gender roles and the belief that gender relations and the gender division of labour should be fair and agreeable to both sides, and not based on the domination of one over the other.

Participation: This pertains to women’s equal participation in the decision-making process, policy-making, planning and administration. In development projects, it includes involvement in needs assessment, project design, implementation and evaluation.

Control: This involves the level of access reached and control of resources that have shifted as a result of collective claim making and action. It implies using the participation of women in the decision-making process to achieve balance of control between men and women over the factors of production, without one in a position of dominance.

2.6.1 Relevance of the theory

In this case, women can be enlightened to benefit from tea farming and this affects the households as well as the country's economy. This is so because women are the largest labour providers and with empowerment they can go far. Equality is obtained by securing equal opportunities through legal reform to remove discriminatory provisions. Tea farming should benefit both men and women and men in most cases benefit more. There is need for women to be aware of the information that is helpful to them concerning tea farming so that it can work for the advantage of many. For example they should be able to know various credit facilities that exists, co operatives so that they participate in them for easier access of credit facilities as well the various trainings that take place that are geared towards tea farming or Agriculture in general. There is need to use the bottom up approach such that the various stakeholders like the State, Nongovernmental Organizations among others can go the grassroots and speak to the women about tea farming.

Women will speak up on the challenges towards their participation in tea farming as well as come up with various ways in which they can boost its production. There is need for looking at the blocks towards women's participation in tea farming. For example patriarchy that promotes male dominance in ownership and control of factors of production; women can't use land without permission from their husbands, among other evils. If all this is looked into, there will be increase in agriculture production in general.

2.7 STUDY ASSUMPTIONS

1. The attitudes and perceptions of women affect women's participation towards tea farming.
2. Women are involved in tea farming.
3. Women face challenges in their participation of tea farming.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the methodology of the study. It gives the specific procedures that are followed in undertaking the study. The research site, research design, study population, sample size and sampling procedure. Data collection methods and data analysis are all described in this chapter. Finally, ethical issues regarding the study are highlighted.

3.2 Research Site

The study was carried out in Tigania East constituency, Meru County, (Fig 3.1) Igembe, Ntonyiri, Tigania West, Tigania East, North Imenti, Central Imenti and South Imenti. The Larger Meru North District is made up of four districts namely: Igembe South, Igembe North, Tigania West and Tigania East Districts. Meru North covers an area of 4057 Km² of which 833 Km² is Meru National Park. It has an estimated population of 740,035 people (Igembe 471,836 and Tigania 268,199) and 123,770 children below 5 years (Igembe 75,494 and Tigania 48,276). Giving an average proportion of 16.7% children under 5 years. The people of the district are mainly of Igembe and Tigania origins. Borans, Somalis, and others are also residents of the district (Muluka, 2012).

The Meru constituency lies within latitudes 0° 00' and 0° 40' North, and longitudes 37° 50' East, with the southern boundary lying along the equator. Altitude ranges from 2,145m above sea level in the higher regions to 600m in the lower parts which cover the greatest land area (3/4 of total area). These low lying areas were designated as the Northern Grazing Areas (NGA) and are characterized by low and erratic rainfall. The soils are predominantly volcanic clay loams with patches of rock and black cotton soils. Rainfall amounts range from 380mm p.a. in the lower areas to 2500mm p.a. in the higher areas. Its spatial distribution is highly dependent on elevation, with the high altitude areas receiving the most amounts compared to the low-lying areas. Rainfall is bimodal with long rains expected from mid-March to May and the short rains expected from mid-October to late November. Short rains are most reliable.

Agro-ecological zones in the district range from LH2 (tea and dairy) to L6 (lowland grazing zones). LH2 zones cover a very small area while L6 covers the greatest area of the district. The district comprises of six livelihood zones namely; marginal mixed farming, mixed farming food crops, mixed farming: Tea/dairy, rain fed cropping and rain fed tea/dairy. Majority of the population fall under marginal mixed farming .Miraa is a major cash crop being farmed and is harvested throughout the whole year.



Fig 3.1 Map of Kenya

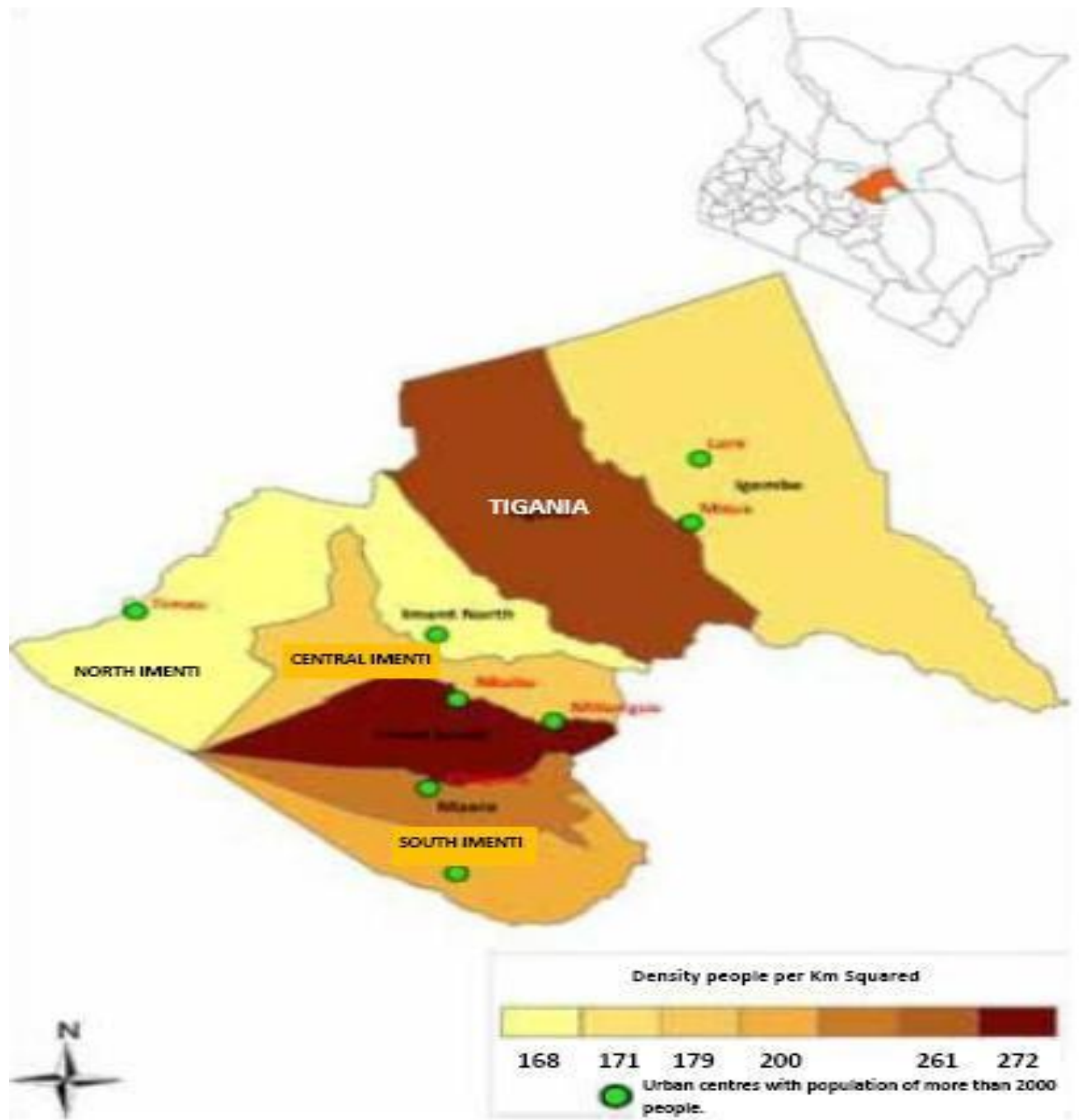


Fig. 3.2 Meru County Map

3.3 Sampling Procedure

A multi - stage sampling procedure was employed in the study. The first stage will involve a convenience random sampling technique; the sample will be women tea farmers Tigania, East. Purposive sampling will involve all the women who owned, leased, or else were considered for the study.

3.4 Research Design

This study used mixed method research design. The study was conducted through a in-depth interviews with key informants, focused group discussions with women tea farmers and through a survey of women tea farmers in Tigania, East. This design was considered because it allows greater flexibility in terms of money and time as well as avoiding the hardship of hunting for respondents more than once to produce high response rate. Further, it develops an understanding of the individuals and events in their natural setting, taking into account the relevant context (Borg & Borg, 1993:194). In this case it helped analyse and examine the role of women in farming of tea.

3.5 Study population

The population of this study will comprise all women practicing tea farming at Tigania, East. This involves all registered women farmers in the region all of whom partly owns the tea plantations or lease or are in partnership, or their husbands had given them sections to manage and each has a green leaf number.

3.6 Sample size

The researcher interviewed 5 key informants, 15 tea farmers under focus group discussion in two groups of 7 & 8, and also distributed 55 questionnaires to both male and female farmers who were literate.

3.7 Sampling Procedure

The researcher used random sampling where the females and males were randomly selected.

3.8 Data Collection Methods

An interview questionnaire was developed for the research. The questionnaire was designed to collect data needed to meet the objectives of the research. Two levels of respondents were used in the study: the individual farmers and key informants. The interview for individual farmers involved a survey interview for sample of the farmers using a developed questionnaire on a small sample which were chosen from the large sample. Thirty-five (35) individuals were interviewed, 25 women and 10 men. Five (5) key informant interviews were conducted to obtain the necessary data on the availability of credit services in our research area and the processes involved in obtaining credit. These were, two officials from the local tea factory, the are chief, group leader of the merry go round owned by tea farmers, an official from a local co operative and women group leader in the area. The key informants interviews were used to validate the results obtained from farmers interviews. To address the objectives of the key informant interviews a guideline was prepared prior to the interviews (see appendix 4: Interview guide).

This study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from self-administered questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. Secondary data includes the publications, journals, periodicals and information obtained from the internet. Secondary data will be collected by use of desk top research techniques from published reports and other documents from Kenya tea development agency because they keep records therefore both primary and secondary data will collected.

3.9 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analysed by computing statistics such as Mean, Percentage, Tabulations and Frequency distribution. Before processing the responses, the completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency while the incomplete ones were entirely eliminated. The data was then coded to enable the responses to be grouped into various categories. A descriptive analysis was employed. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviation and frequency distribution was used to analyze the data.

Quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS). For the qualitative data, data was analyzed based on different themes in verbatim forms.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Due to sensitivity of some information collected, the researcher holds a moral obligation to treat the information with utmost propriety. Some respondents were reluctant to disclose some information, the researcher reassured the respondents of confidentiality of the information given and that the research report was for purely academic/examination purpose. The researcher was obliged to avail a copy of the completed project to the respondents upon their request. The researcher upheld ethical considerations expected of the researcher in the design, conduct, analysis and dissemination phases of the study. The researcher informed all the study's participants of the main purpose of the study and sought their consent prior to their participation in the study. The identity and respect of the participants was upheld. The rights of the participants' were respected, including those who declined to participate in the study, since participation in the study was voluntary. The data collected was used solely for purposes of this evaluation study. Accuracy standards was followed in the collection, analysis, and interpretation and reporting of the study findings. Ethics pertaining to academic writing and publishing was followed by the researcher throughout the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings from the study, followed by an analysis and discussion of these findings.

4.2 Questionnaire findings

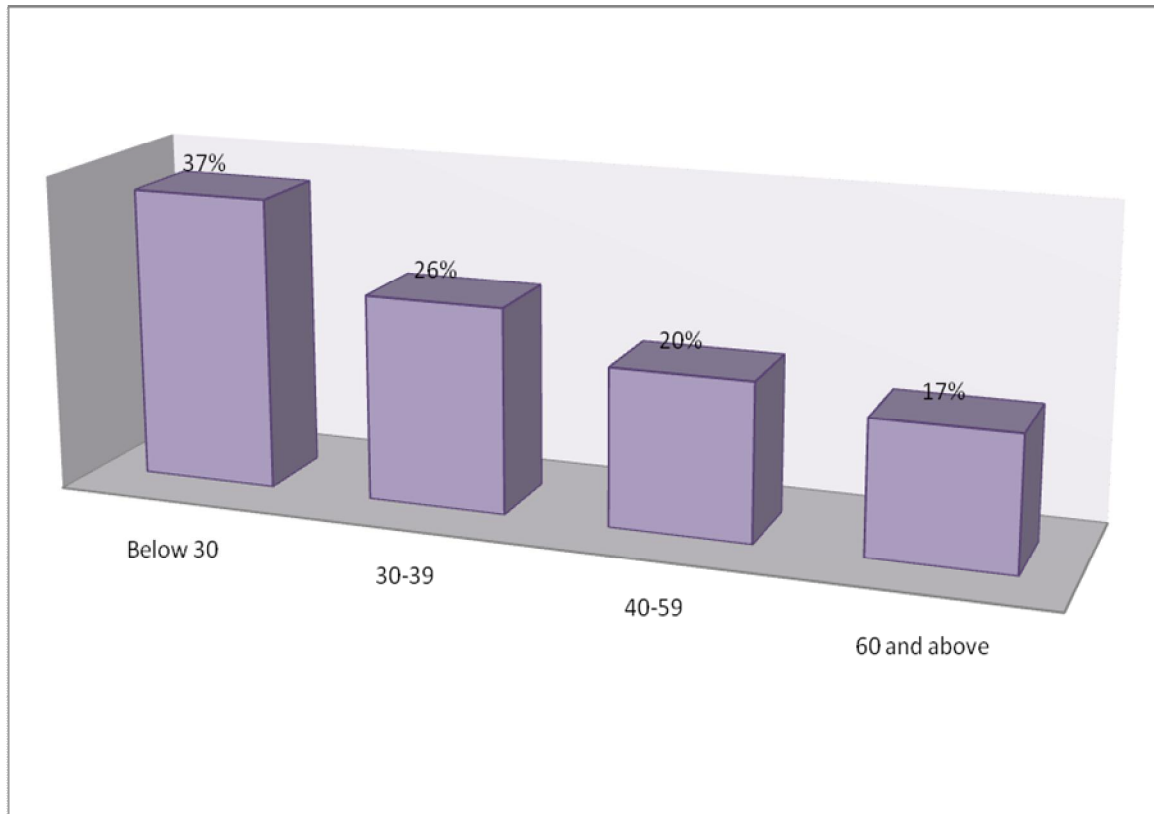
The findings are presented following the research questions. The summaries of the findings are given in charts, table of frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data was carefully selected, categorized and summarized to reflect the situation as reported by the respondents.

Table 4.1 Sex of the respondents

Gender	Total	Percentage
Male	10	29
Female	25	71
Total	35	100

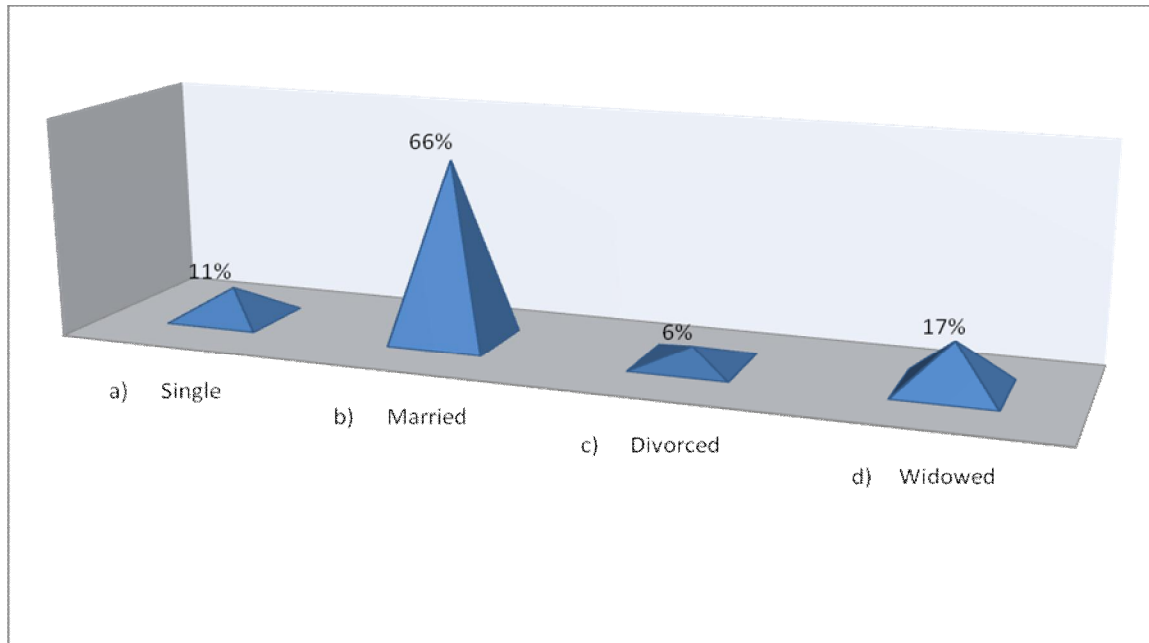
From table 4.1 above, we note that 71% (n=25) of the respondents were female and 29% (n=10) were male. This means that a majority of my respondents were female. This is in line with the purpose of the study which was to assess the role of women in tea farming. Sex will help differentiate between males females.

Fig. 4.1: Age of the respondents



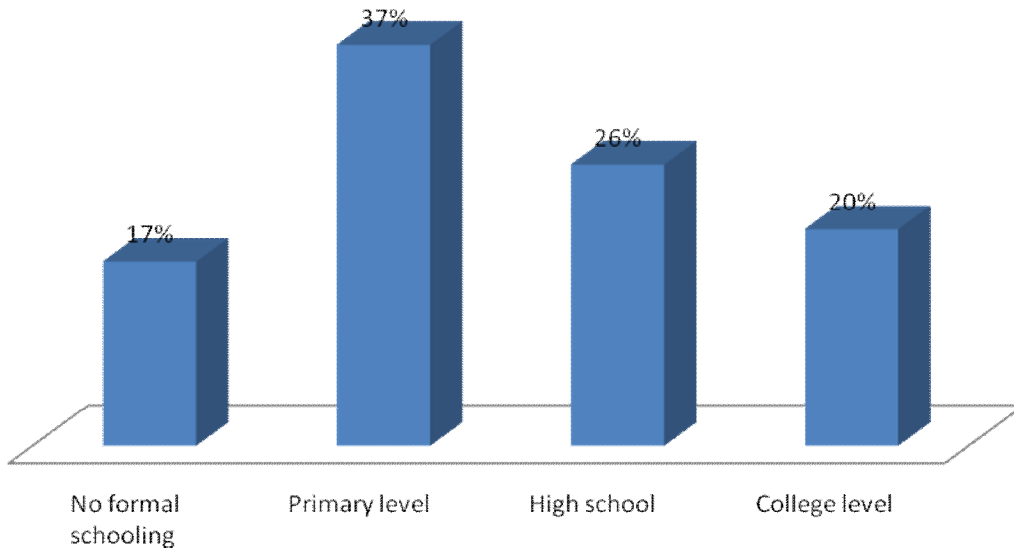
Most of the respondents' (37%) were below the age of 30, followed by those between 30-39 years (26%) while the least population (17%) was 60 years and above. This means that a majority of people engaged in tea farming are still relatively young; that is, most of them are still below 30 years. This is because tea farming is such a tedious job and one requires a lot of energy and strength to do it. Secondly, since tea farming is mostly done for commercial purposes, we expect the youth to be much more involved in it than elderly people given their ability to network and look for markets for their crops. This is a plausible explanation on why many young people are engaged in it as opposed to elderly people. The age of the respondents is important as it gives the age of those actively involved in the tea farming and experience.

Fig. 4.2: Marital status



A majority, that is, 60% of the respondents are still married; 17% are widowed and 11% are still single. The respondents who are divorced form the least percentage; which is a mere 6%. The reason for this is that Meru culture just like many other African cultures, still does value marriage; and everyone is encouraged to get married. More so, most people get married at a very young age especially the girls. Upon being married, women are expected to help their husbands with domestic chores and more so, in tea farming. This is the most plausible reason why we see many respondents as being married. When their partners die, most women take up are left with the burden of educating their children and providing for the family; so, most of them take up tea farming as a way of generating income for their households. Marital status question will understand if those involved in tea farming are married as it affects land ownership since most land is owned by men and women can access through marriage.

Fig. 4.3 Level of education



Majority of the population have achieved primary level of education making 37% while 26% have gone up to high school level. 20% of the populations have achieved college level and 17% have no formal schooling. This shows that education is still valued although not as expected and this can be explained by the low literacy levels of education for most parents which in turn affects the schooling of their children. Poverty of most families also influences the level of education of the people and culture that does not support girl child education or see its importance. Education is important since the income from the tea could influence the affordability of education..

4.5 Religion

Majority (94%) of the respondents are christians while 6% are muslims as indicated in figure 4.5 below. This means that christianity is the predominant religion in Meru county as a tested by the numerous churches in the area. Religion is important in peoples lives and it can also influence their participation in tea farming, for intance some religions do not allow women to work while others do.

Figure 4.4 Religion

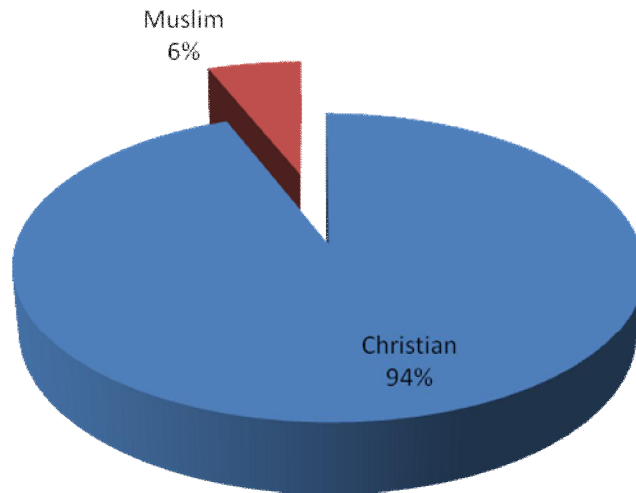
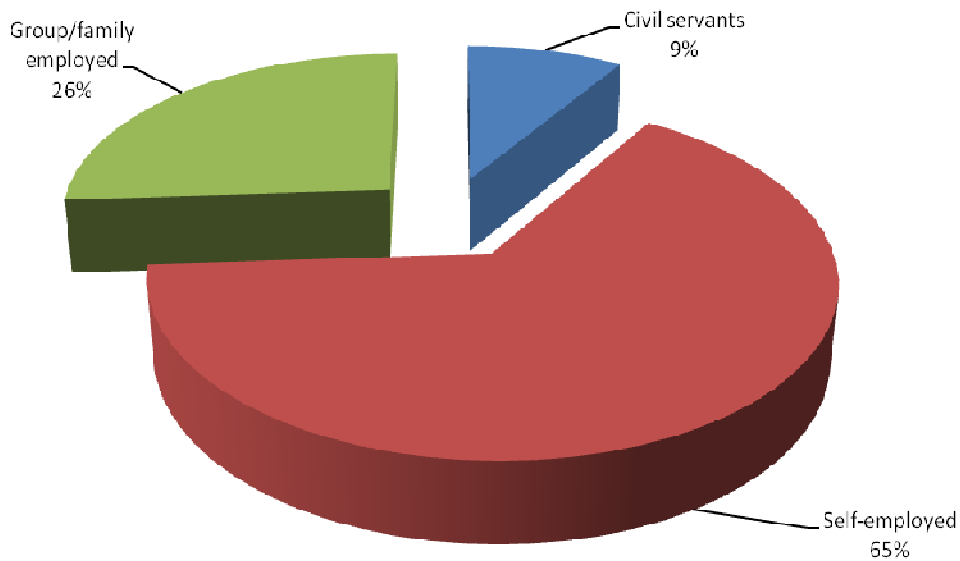


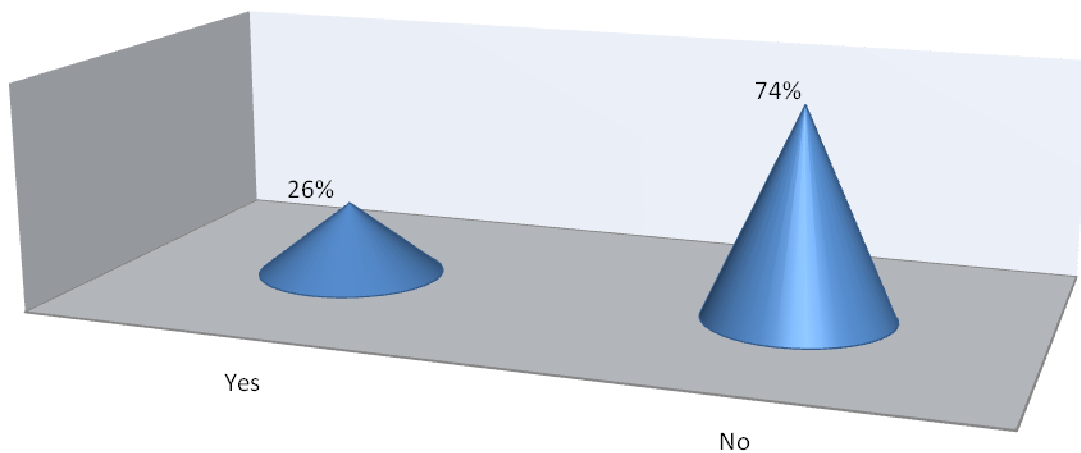
Figure 4.5 Occupation



Majority of the respondents are self employed making up of 65% and this can be explained by low level of education which does not favour them for employment. 26% are in group/family employment in that they participate in their family or group farms. This is because they offer labour to their farms. 9% of the population are civil servants and this is because of a few that are

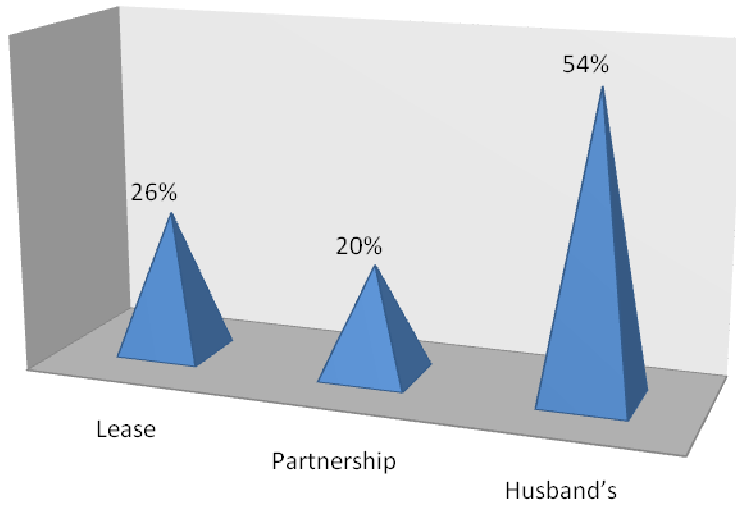
educated to college level. Occupation may affect the involvement in the tea farming, this is in terms of their availability to participate in tea farming and the time they offer to the activities.

Figure 4.6 Ownership of land



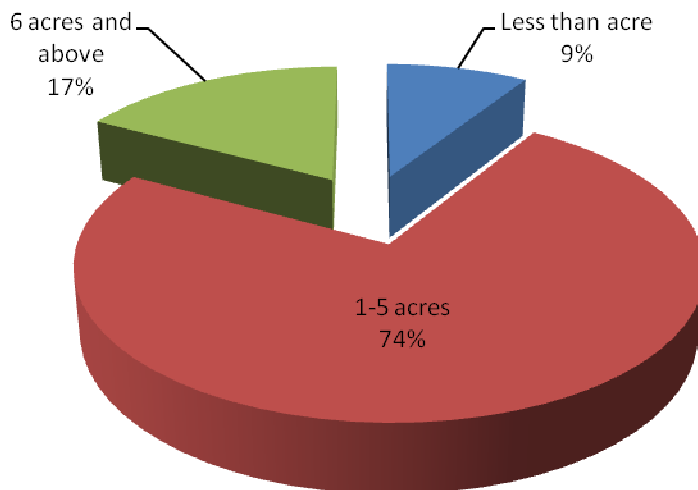
Since most population comprises of women who are not allowed to own land as culture dictates 74% do not own land. While 26% own land of whom are men. Its is important to know if the respondent owns the land for the tea farming or not since this affects the income and size of the farm as well.

Figure 4.7 Land tenure status



54% which is above average makes up of the land owned by their husbands. While 26% is on lease as land cannot be enough hence some lease while 20% are in partnership and this is to cut cost in maintenance. The land tenure status affects the freedom of the tea farming in terms of its size and income as well.

Figure 4.8 Farm size



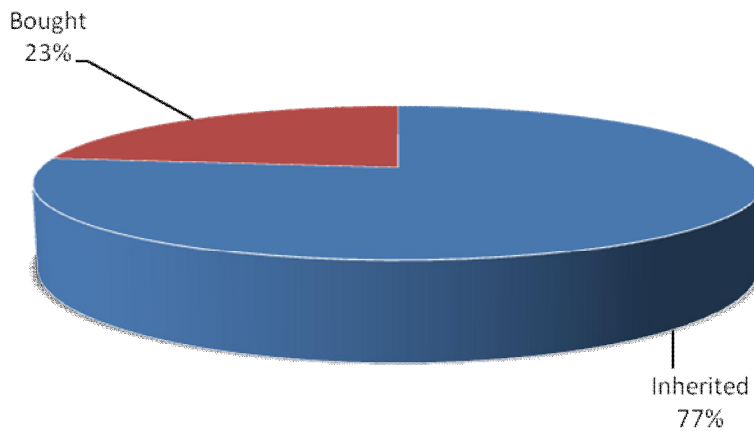
Majority of the population making up of 74% own at least 1-5 acres of tea farm. While 17% own 6 acres and above, 9% less than an acre. This is because they plant other crops and also land is scarce. It is necessary to know the farm size as it influences the income.

Table 4.2 Number of years in farming

Number of years	Total	Percentage
Less than 5	11	31
6 – 10	16	46
11 – 15	6	17
16 and above	2	6
	35	100

46% have 6 – 10years in tea farming. 31% have less than 5years in tea farming. 17% have 11 – 15 years and 6% have 16years and above in tea farming. Most people start participating in tea farming at an early age as is expected of them to provide labour to the farms. This will help know the experience of the respondents in the tea farming.

Figure 4.9 Acquisition of land



77% of the population inherited land from their parents while 23% buy land. Culture influences this as parents pass their land to their children especially boychild. Land acquisition helps know the genesis of the land.

Table 4.3 Average monthly income

Monthly income (KShs)	Total	Percentage
10,000 & Below	4	11
10,001 – 25 000	2	6
25,001 – 30000	15	43
30,001 – 50000	11	31
5,0000 – 100000	3	9
	35	100

43% of the population earn between Ksh 25,001 – Ksh30,000. 31% get Ksh30,001 – Ksh 50,000 and 11% get Ksh 10,000 and below while 9% get Ksh 50,000 – Ksh 100,000, 6% get Ksh 10,001 – Ksh 25,000. This is explained by the number of acres the population own or use which affects their income inclusive of the tea bonus they also get.

4.3 The impact of the income received.

The income helps them in many ways and this was also supported by the focus group discussion who also felt the same as Tea farming helps the population buy food for the family, build houses for the family as they can now afford the building materials. They too are able to pay school fees for their children and sustain them in schools. Mostly the women get cash to engage in merry go rounds and all still have something left for them save in saccos. All this improves the living standards of the people.

The men are the ones who receive the pays and the women who received were either widowed or sole owners of the land. The focus group discussions said that, three quarter of the payments are received by men as their names are registered at the factories. And the man is taken to be the breadwinner and decision maker of the family.

The focus group discussions said in line with men receiving the income, they offer the land on which tea is planted as they are in most cases the key owners. Making all the decisions pertaining to the farm, including when to plant, prune harvest among others. Play a role in credit facilitation as they offer security; this is so because they own the title deeds. Attending meetings in the

factory and the cooperatives, as their names are registered at the factories hence they are called for the meetings when need arises and also they get important information and training and other incentives like fertilizers.

Culture being the people's way of life influences the woman's participation in tea farming as they are expected to get involved in the family activities and this can result to child labour because young girls do what their mothers do which includes cooking food for those in the farms and actual tea picking. Early and unplanned pregnancies happen to the women as they are engaged in their reproductive role as women. This curtails their participation in tea farming.

This was supported by the key informants that they offer land that is used for tea farming, they make all the decisions pertaining to the farm, play a role in credit facilitation as they offer security through the title deeds of the land they own. They attend meetings in the factory and the cooperatives and get information and training from the cooperatives when available.

4.4 Roles of women in tea farming.

Women offer most of the labour and this was supported by the focus group discussion who also supported this as in most cases that men are the only owners of land and that women are just helpers. The focus group discussion supported this as they said Meru is no exception of beliefs and customs affecting women even in tea farming. Most land is owned by men, very few women own land. This affects women's decision making capacity as the men make all the decisions. That is so since women are not allowed to own land hence the title deeds are on the names of men and so they cannot seek for a loan as the title deed acts as a security in most cases. Women are expected to do house chores and take care of the family, hence women get overburdened.

They get involved in tea farming because most men dictate what should be planted on the farms and they choose tea. The focus group explained this as others inherit the land with the tea bushes hence they continue with tea farming. For others, tea farming is rewarding, as they get good income from it and can be measured by the improved living standards. The weather in those areas is very conducive for tea growing and is manageable.

According to the key informants the country trades with other countries and Offers employment to the citizens in the factories and those who seek jobs in the farms.

4.5 Challenges that hinder both men and women from full participation in tea farming.

Various challenges are experienced by tea farmers. Poor weather conditions especially since those areas have a humid weather, this brings health risks and also poor dressing by the people can lead to health risks if they are not warm enough. They can also get cuts from the tea bushes as they are in the farm, snake and insect's bites are also not inevitable.

Poor roads is a challenge as in most cases there are those who walk long distances to the factory. Insecurity affects the people as they wake up very early to go to the farms and get home late. The government pays them late, like after six months and this affects them as they need cash to run the farms and daily survival. Poor weather conditions. Corruption at the weighing point discourages them especially those who have smaller pieces of land. The focus group discussion had the same points as the others.

Women do not get involved in decision making hence even when they have ideas that can improve the produce they cannot contribute. Sexual harassment is experienced as the women are no exceptional in waking up in the morning and they can meet with men who can rape them, also corruption at the weighing point. Insecurity threatens the women because they are more vulnerable and seen as weak hence easy targets for criminals who can attack them. They do not get proper training neither get involved in important meetings relevant to tea growers, this is so because they do not get permission from their husbands and also lack of time as they are involved at home doing house chaos. This was too echoed by the focus group discussions.

The government should consider paying the farmers earlier. Gender sensitization is important as both men and women need to know that both contribute to the outcome of tea farming. Empowerment programmes are vital as issues like on saving, planting other types crops, saving programs. Investment skills need to be looked at. The focus group shared the same views. They also came up with reasons as to why they don't depend on various forms of lending institutions like the following:

Banks: Majority of the population does not depend on banks for capital as the interest rates are very high and they lack security for borrowing.

Shylocks: There are those who borrow many so that they return with interest. They rely on this as the interest is minimal.

Lending institutions: A reasonable number of the population rely on lending institutions for capital

Cooperatives: Majority of the population rely on cooperatives for capital. This is because they are aware of their benefits for example dividends.

The interest rates are lower, the source is readily available. They too own accounts with the banks, Sacco's and cooperatives. The dividends from them are rewarding.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the study's findings against the research objectives and gives a summary and recommendations.

5.2 Discussion

From this research, it is clear that women play a major role in the tea farming. Women are involved in pruning, harvesting the tea. They too take the harvest to the factory for weighing and soughing out the leaves according to the quality or grade.

The attitudes and perceptions of women towards tea farming came out clearly as women have a positive attitude towards tea farming. The women get minimal rewards from the farms as the men control the income and this is influence by the cultural beliefs which state that men are the bread winners and this makes women go unrewarded for their efforts in the farms.

However women more than women face more challenges in tea farming such as intense labour, sexual harassment, reproductive duties especially the child-bearing mothers: This hinders women from joining and actively participating in the labour market, Discrimination outside the household, in the labour and credit markets, Insecurity threatens the women because they are more vulnerable and seen as weak hence easy targets for criminals who can attack them. They do not get proper training neither get involved in important meetings relevant to tea growers, this is so because they do not get permission from their husbands and also lack of time as they are involved at home doing house chaos. This makes it difficult for women to engage and benefit from tea farming like their male counterparts; Different obligations for men and women: In rural Africa, women are mainly involved in subsistence production, water fetching, firewood gathering, cooking, and taking care of the children, while men are involved in meeting the cash needs of the family. This results in long working hours for women and no say in the control of cash proceeds; deteriorating health and work conditions, limited access to education, low income insecurity among others.

Women provide majority of the labour in the fields and also prepare food for the day that they take to the farms for the day. They also contribute towards the economy of the country.

The empowerment theory supported this as women go well with increase of their inner power. For the women who run the tea farms on their own, they are able to access the needed information for the proper results from the farms. They also improve their socio economic status through the income, better nutrition and housing. Same as other women who do not own the land of the tea bushes but the husbands cater for their material welfare, food supply, medical care. Women are able to access the factors of production through the husband and directly for the women who own land. As women know the importance of tea farming, they participate through offering labour. As for those who own the farms they are able to make their own decisions concerning the income and when to do pruning or the harvesting. Hence the empowerment theory fits well. The researcher reviewed literature from various books. The researcher also employed survey research design which targeted 55 people of which all took part and gave their feedback. Focus group discussions and key informants Questionnaire was used to collect information from the sample described. The data obtained was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and the information obtained was presented into frequencies distribution tables and charts.

5.3 Conclusion and Recommendations

Tea Farming is very important and there is need to address the challenges that come with it as it does not only benefit the individuals but the country's economic growth as well. Tea farming influences positively the lives of both men and women. The income they get, even the bonus from the government, does impact the living standards of the people. However, a lot needs to be done and I recommend the following:

The Non governmental organisations need to address women issues that influence their participation like cultural beliefs

Women need to be equipped with more knowledge on their rights and the law to deal with their challenges like on sexual harassment.

Gender education needs to offer at grass root levels to sensitize about gender parity in development.

The government should come up with policies that influence the pricing of the tea at local levels and land ownership policies need to be reviewed so as to encourage more women owning and accessing land.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introductory letter

Dear Respondent,

I am a student doing a Masters degree in Gender and Development Studies at the university of Nairobi. I am carrying out a research on the topic: *The role of Women in tea farming in Tigania East Constituency Meru County*.

Precisely, the purpose of this study is to identify the role women play in tea farming as well as the challenges they face in the production and come up with recommendations.

Your response will be treated with high regard and confidentiality. I therefore kindly ask for your contribution to this work by answering the questions.

Thank you very much!

Faith kawira Thinkii

Appendix 2: Research Questionnaire

PART A

1. Sex:

a. a)Female []

b. b) Male []

2. Age:

Below 30	
30-40	
40-60	
Over 60	

3. Marital status

a. Single []

b. Married []

c. Divorced []

d. Widowed []

4. Educational level

a. No formal schooling []

b. Primary level []

c. High school []

d. College level []

e. Other specify.....

5. Religion.....

a. Christian []

b. Muslim []

6. Occupation
- a. Civil servant []
 - b. Self-employed []
 - c. Group/family employed []
 - d. Others..... (Specify)

PART B

7. Do you own the land/portion of tea farm you hold?
- a. Yes [] No []

8. If (NO) in (8) above, what is the Land tenure status?
- a. Lease []
 - b. Partnership []
 - c. Husband's []

Other specify.....

9. Farm size
- a. less than acre []
 - b. 1-5 acres []
 - c. more than 5 acres []

10. How many years in farming
- a. Less than 5yrs []
 - b. 6 – 10yrs []
 - c. 11 – 15 []
 - d. Above 16 []

11. How did you acquire the land?

a. Inherited []

b. Bought []

12. Average monthly household income

Below Ksh. 10000	
Ksh 10001 – 25 000	
Ksh 25001 – 30000	
Ksh 30001 – 50000	
Ksh50000 – 100000	

13. Indicate how the income above has managed to influence your socio – economic lifestyle.

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14. Indicate the various roles as a woman you have in tea farming

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15. What beliefs and customs are there in your society that either makes women be discriminated

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16. What challenges prevent you from effectively participating in tea farming?

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17. What challenges prevent you from effectively participating in tea farming as a woman?

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18. What are some of the solutions to 16&17 above?

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19. Who receives the cash after sell of tea?

- a. Self []
- b. Spouse []

20. Why are you involved in tea farming and not any other cash crops?

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Appendix 3: Key Informants' Guide

1. The challenges faced by tea farmers
2. The role of women in tea farming.
3. The contribution of men to tea farming.

Appendix 4: Focused Group Discussion Guide

1. The factors affecting women participation in tea farming
2. The role of women in tea farming.
3. The solutions to the challenges faced by women in tea farming.
4. The influence of culture on women participation in tea farming.