



**Gender Parity in the Smallholder Tea Sub Sector in Imenti
South District, Kenya**

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Abstract

Tea is an enterprise that utilizes a lot of labor. This study was conducted to compare women and men in ownership, production, and post production management of tea. The study was organized into two parts; one, covering ownership and production activities, and the other, post production management. It covered 104 registered smallholder tea farmers in three factory companies, one Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO), and one hundred and fifty (150) public tea buying centers in Imenti South District.

Women owned 1% of registered land parcels and 0.2% of the total land area. Approximately 25% of tea SACCO bank accounts were registered in their names. In terms of total productivity, there was no significant difference between farms owned by men or women. Women did more than twice the number of roles performed by men and spent more hours awake per day. However they spent fewer hours on tea. On an equal working day, women significantly picked more tea than men. They also provided the bulk of family labor as well as casual and overall total labor used for picking. Approximately 94% of total labor was sourced from the tea growing areas within Imenti South District, and 51% was hired. Women were disadvantaged in the recruitment of directors, senior management staff, technical and skilled staff, and unskilled staff. There was no significant difference in gender for the factory office staff cadre. From the study results it is concluded that women were disadvantaged and the situation requires redress through specific policy changes in the sub sector.