

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND RELATED TECHNOLOGICAL FACTORS
INFLUENCING PRODUCTIVITY IN THE SMALLHOLDER SUB-
SECTOR OF THE KENYA TEA INDUSTRY:
A CASE STUDY OF NANDI DISTRICT.**

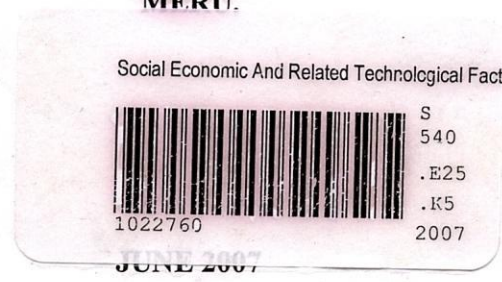
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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENT OF
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL
DEVELOPMENT.**

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ABSTRACT.

Tea continues to be one of the main foreign exchange earners in the Kenyan economy and the industry employ 75% of the rural population. It is composed of the large scale sub sector owned by the multinationals and the smallholder sub sector mainly owned by the local farmers. Tea production in the smallholder sub sector is still very low compared to the large scale/estate subsector. The low production in the sub sector has been attributed to several socio-economic and technological factors which include, poor labour utilization, low fertilizer application, low adoption of improved technologies, and low plant population among others.

A study was carried out to identify the socio-economic and technological related factors which influence tea productivity in the smallholder sub sector of Nandi district. A field survey was carried out among 126 farmers who were randomly sampled from the list of registered tea growers in Chebut tea factory. Key informants were also identified and interviewed, data from the survey and secondary sources was analyzed, and the following were identified as the main socio-economic factors that influence tea productivity, low labour allocated to tea production, low number of tea bushes owned, and low proportion of land under tea where as low use of mineral fertilizer and low number of plucking rounds are the technical factors which do influence productivity.

It was concluded that the factors that influence yield significantly include rate of fertilizer application, number of bushes owned by the farmer, amount of labour utilized and its efficiency. Other factors such as off-farm income, number of clones, proportion of land under tea and tea as a main income were not significant in explaining tea productivity in the catchment. It was recommended that proper system of remuneration should be developed to motivate and employ a higher percentage of the available family labour in tea production. The extension service department should sensitize farmers on proper fertilizer use. This study indicated that fertilizer application highly influenced productivity.

