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Gendered Task Allocation in Clove Farming Households in Amani Ward Tanzania

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Abstract
Gendered task allocation shapes the positions that household members occupy in agricultural value chains, but involvement in production does not necessarily establish control over earnings. This study examined reported task allocation in clove-farming households in Amani Ward, Muheza District, Tanzania, and considered participant accounts of household livelihood uses. A cross-sectional household survey conducted in 2024 provided 147 responses, complemented by qualitative accounts from farmers and local stakeholders. Frequencies and percentages described respondent characteristics and the actors recorded for seven clove-related activities. Men constituted 78.9% of survey respondents and women 21.1%. Women were recorded for sorting and grading in 98 households (66.7%) and drying in 95 (64.6%). Men were recorded for harvesting in 147 households (100.0%), pruning and packaging in 142 each (96.6%), storage in 99 (67.3%), and marketing in 134 (91.2%). These percentages describe household reports, rather than shares of labour time. Participant accounts associated clove earnings with housing, education, debt repayment, and reinvestment, while an extension officer raised concerns about advance sales and weak collective marketing. The findings locate women's reported involvement mainly in quality-related handling and men's involvement mainly in marketing. They do not establish sex-specific income gains, control over revenue, or causal livelihood effects. Interventions should assess women's access to marketing opportunities alongside practical post-harvest support and collective marketing arrangements.

1.0 Introduction

Clove production links household farming with post-harvest handling and markets. The value retained by producers depends partly on the quality of the product and the conditions under which it is sold. A study of organically grown cloves and black pepper in Tawa Ward, Morogoro, documented harvesting and handling practices relevant to product quality (Mkojera & Chove, 2021). Research on clove exports in Zanzibar examined production and price-related constraints, illustrating the importance of market conditions while addressing a different geographical and

analytical scale (Kabote & Tunguhole, 2022). Neither study establishes the allocation of household tasks in Amani Ward.

Understanding household participation requires identifying who performs particular tasks. A household may grow and sell cloves collectively while assigning sorting, drying, storage, and marketing to different members. A single measure of household participation can conceal this allocation. Similarly, involvement in sorting or drying does not demonstrate access to buyers, influence over sales, or control of proceeds. These distinctions are relevant when interpreting gendered contributions to agricultural livelihoods.

This study focuses on Amani Ward in Muheza District, Tanga Region. It provides a stage-specific description of reported household task allocation, interpreted alongside accounts of marketing and livelihood uses. It distinguishes respondent sex from the actors reported for particular tasks and separates participation from unmeasured control over earnings. The household-level evidence provides a basis for identifying questions about women's market participation without assuming that unequal task allocation necessarily produces a particular distribution of benefits.

The study examined gendered task allocation in clove-farming households and its implications for participation in handling and marketing activities. Specifically, it described the actors recorded for seven clove-related activities, examined participant accounts of market arrangements and household uses of earnings, and identified implications for inclusive support services. Livelihood accounts provide contextual evidence; the study does not estimate the effect of women's participation on household income, food security, or resilience.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

Porter's (1985) value-chain perspective directs attention to distinct activities through which a product is produced, handled, and brought to market. Later work on value-chain thinking also distinguishes activities involved in delivering and capturing value (Simatupang et al., 2017). For this study, the perspective helps organise the seven recorded household activities and examine where different actors appear. It is used as an interpretive lens rather than as a tested model of profitability or a complete mapping of commercial transactions.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework complements this perspective by considering the resources and wider conditions through which households pursue livelihoods. Natarajan et al. (2022) emphasise a structural and relational treatment of livelihoods. Here, participant accounts of earnings, reinvestment, and market constraints help interpret the household relevance of clove activities. The survey does not operationalise all livelihood assets or test pathways linking women's labour to household outcomes, so the framework guides discussion rather than supplying evidence of those pathways.

Together, the perspectives distinguish three analytical questions: which actor is recorded for each activity, what market arrangements participants describe, and which uses of earnings they report. Task allocation is observed through household reports. Benefit distribution and control over earnings remain questions requiring direct measurement. The discussion therefore treats women's concentration in handling and men's concentration in marketing as an allocation pattern, without equating that pattern with economic empowerment or exclusion from all decisions.

3.0 Research Methodology

3 1 Setting design and participants

A cross-sectional study was conducted in Amani Ward, Muheza District, Tanzania. The field-survey results are dated 2024. The clove farmers' household was the unit of analysis, and the results comprise 147 household respondents randomly sampled from a list of registered clove farmers in the study area. The survey collected respondent characteristics and information about household clove activities. Respondents included men and women, but the design did not provide separate interviews with every household member. The household reports about women's activities therefore include information supplied by male respondents. Qualitative material included participant accounts of production, marketing, uses of earnings, and support services, with local officers and agricultural stakeholders represented in the narrative evidence.

3 2 Instruments and data analysis

The household questionnaire included categorical questions, numerical demographic questions, open-ended questions, and five-point agreement items. The agreement scale ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The present analysis uses the reported demographic and task-allocation frequencies, supplemented by contextual household classifications and qualitative accounts. Frequencies and percentages describe respondents and the actors recorded for each task. Percentages in the task-allocation table were recalculated from the documented frequencies using a denominator of 147. Each row totals 147, suggesting one recorded category per household in the published tabulation; the coding rule requires confirmation. The categories are retained as men, women, and children, as originally coded. Qualitative accounts were considered alongside the survey results to identify descriptions of livelihood uses and market constraints.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Respondent characteristics

Of the 147 respondents, 116 were men (78.9%) and 31 were women (21.1%; Table 1). This distribution reflects the survey sample rather than the proportion of household labour supplied by each sex. The mean age was 53.67 years, with a median of 54 and a range of 25–90. The mean household size was 4.35 members. Primary education was reported by 75 respondents (51.0%), adult literacy by 14 (9.5%), secondary education by 38 (25.9%), and college education by 20 (13.6%).

Table 1: Sex of household survey respondents

Respondent sex	n	%
Men	116	78.9
Women	31	21.1
Total	147	100.0

Note. Field survey, 2024.

A separate household-involvement item recorded the whole family in 143 households (97.3%), the husband alone in three (2.0%), and the wife alone in one (0.7%). This indicates that the respondents commonly described clove farming as a household activity. It does not establish that family members contributed equal labour or received equal benefits. It also makes the distinction between broad household involvement and the single-category task tabulation important.

4.2 Recorded actors for clove activities

Task allocation differed across the seven activities (Table 2). Men were recorded for harvesting in all 147 households and for pruning and packaging in 142 households each (96.6%). Women were recorded for pruning and packaging in five households each (3.4%). These results describe the tabulated household reports and do not establish that women never assisted with harvesting or that men were the only contributors to an activity.

Table 2: Actors recorded for household clove activities

Activity	Men n (%)	Women n (%)	Children n (%)
Harvesting	147 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Pruning	142 (96.6)	5 (3.4)	0 (0.0)
Sorting and grading	41 (27.9)	98 (66.7)	8 (5.4)
Drying	46 (31.3)	95 (64.6)	6 (4.1)
Packaging	142 (96.6)	5 (3.4)	0 (0.0)
Storage	99 (67.3)	48 (32.7)	0 (0.0)
Marketing	134 (91.2)	13 (8.8)	0 (0.0)

Note. Field survey, 2024.

Women were recorded for sorting and grading in 98 households (66.7%) and drying in 95 (64.6%). Men were recorded for these activities in 41 (27.9%) and 46 households (31.3%), respectively. Children appeared in eight sorting and grading records (5.4%) and six drying records (4.1%). The age range, nature of the work, and whether children assisted adults were not specified, so these entries cannot establish the extent or conditions of children's participation.

Storage was attributed to men in 99 households (67.3%) and women in 48 (32.7%). Marketing was attributed to men in 134 households (91.2%) and women in 13 (8.8%). The central descriptive finding is therefore women's greater recorded presence in sorting and drying alongside men's greater recorded presence in marketing.

4.3 Market arrangements and participant accounts

The qualitative material identifies farmers, hired workers, assemblers, traders, processors, and support-service actors in clove-related activities. Farmers described cultivation and handling, while intermediary accounts concerned buying, transporting, and selling. A local processing group described mixing cloves with other spices for products sold through local markets and receiving processing training.

4.4 Household livelihood context

The household classifications provide additional descriptive context (Table 3). The largest categories were moderate food security, with 94 households (63.9%), and moderate resilience to shocks, with 118 (80.3%). These are study-defined classifications.

Table 3: Study-defined household livelihood classifications

Classification	Low n (%)	Moderate n (%)	High n (%)
Food security	13 (8.8)	94 (63.9)	40 (27.2)
Resilience to shocks	13 (8.8)	118 (80.3)	16 (10.9)

Taken together, the accounts and classifications provide livelihood context for the gendered task pattern. They do not demonstrate that households where women sort or dry cloves have higher earnings, food security, or resilience than other households. Such a comparison would require linked task and outcome data, defensible outcome measures, and an analysis that addresses relevant differences between households.

Therefore, the activity perspective draws attention to women's recorded involvement in handling operations and men's recorded involvement in marketing. The distinction matters because contributing to product preparation and engaging with buyers are different positions in a chain. Household participation can therefore be extensive while particular tasks remain unevenly allocated.

The livelihood perspective places those activities within participants' accounts of household spending and market constraints. The accounts support the relevance of clove earnings to household plans, but they also show why a task count cannot establish empowerment. Training or improved handling equipment may address technical needs; whether these measures expand

women's opportunities depends on access, ownership, and household decisions that were not directly measured.

5.0 Conclusion and Implications for Women's Development

Among the 147 surveyed households, women were more frequently recorded for sorting and drying, while men were more frequently recorded for harvesting, pruning, packaging, storage, and marketing. Participant accounts linked clove earnings with housing, education, debt repayment, and reinvestment, and raised concerns about advance sales and collective marketing. These findings support examining participation at the level of specific tasks rather than treating clove-farming households as homogeneous actors. They do not establish that women's handling activities produced a particular income gain or that men alone controlled earnings.

Support programmes should assess women's access to practical handling training, suitable equipment, and opportunities to engage with buyers and marketing groups. Collective marketing proposals should be developed with farmers and women involved in handling, and evaluated for their effects on sales conditions and participation. These are implications for intervention design, not demonstrated effects of the existing arrangements.

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