



Who Does What? Analysing Gender Division of Labour in Cocoa Households in the Asante Akim North Municipality, Ghana

Rubaba Mohammed¹, Esther Owusu-Mensah¹, Enoch Kwame
Tham-Agyekum¹, Fred Ankuyi², John-Eudes Andivi Bakang¹

¹ Department of Agricultural Economics, Agribusiness and Extension, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana.

² International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Legon, Accra, Ghana.

ABSTRACT

In a typical cocoa farming household, the question of who among the different genders does what needs to be assessed. This is because it is often thought that males do the majority of work in the household. In bringing balance to this argument, this study assessed the gender division of labour in cocoa households in the Asante Akim North Municipality in Ghana. In using a mixed methods approach, questionnaires were administered to three hundred (300) respondents and a focus group discussion was organized for a group of 12 (six males and six females) in the Municipality. The study found that most of the women were responsible for performing the reproductive roles whilst the males performed the majority of the productive roles and the community management roles. Limiting women to the performance of reproductive roles can be detrimental to the development of society at large, most especially in a situation where few women take part in productive and communal developmental. Women should therefore be encouraged and allowed to partake in all community activities and decision-making procedures to ensure there is no gender inequality.

Correspondence

Enoch Kwame

Tham-Agyekum

Email: ektagyekum@knust.edu.gh

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INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector, over the years, has played a key role in promoting Ghana's economy and it has contributed about 50% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Its resources, namely cocoa, timber, rubber, and yam among others serve as huge sources of foreign exchange. Agriculture also provides a livelihood for millions of the populace, especially for those in rural communities and along the value chains of various agricultural commodities.¹ As stated by Danquah and Iddrisu, agriculture employs about 44.7% of Ghana's workforce.² However, there has been a decline in its contribution to Ghana's economy with the service and the industrial sector surpassing it in recent years. According to

¹ A. O'Neill, "Share of Economic Sectors in the GDP in Ghana 2021," *Statista*, 2022.

² Michael Danquah and Abdul Malik Iddrisu, "Ghana's Long Run Growth: Policy Options for Inclusivity and Equity," *African Development Bank*, Accra, 2016.

O'Neil, agriculture's contribution to Ghana's GDP has declined from 23.66 per cent in 2011 to 19.71 per cent in 2021 whilst the other sectors of the economy have seen a significant increase in their contribution to GDP.³

Cocoa, which is a major source of foreign income, earned the country about 2.82 billion Ghana Cedis.⁴ Its contribution to the agricultural sector's GDP cannot be underestimated and as at 2018, the cocoa sector contributes about 1.8% to Ghana's GDP and it is a source of livelihood for almost four million of the entire populace.⁵ It is normally grown in the middle belt of the country, that is, the Ashanti, Eastern, Western, Western North, Bono and Ahafo Regions. Nevertheless, due to the prevalence of pests and diseases, there has been a gradual decrease in its total output and the activities of illegal miners have led to the destruction of many cocoa farmlands. Again, in Ghana, cocoa farming is predominantly seen as a man's work, especially in the past and hence, women's contributions were deemed insignificant and this can be attributed to specified gender roles for both sexes.⁶

Gender roles as defined by Selemine are a set of preconceptions regarding the duty of a particular gender in society.⁷ It is normally underpinned by cultural and personal activities and it predicts how males and females should think, communicate, dress and interact within society. Included in gender roles are reproductive roles, productive roles and community management roles. Also, Fausia and Prasetyaningsih defined reproductive roles as the roles that are related to the responsibilities of child care and domestic tasks necessary to ensure the maintenance and reproduction of labour regarding the continuity of the family.⁸ For example; giving birth, cooking, nurturing and caring for children, fetching water, washing, cleaning and so on.

Fajarwati et al. described the productive role as the role undertaken by both men and women to get paid in cash or to produce goods that are not consumed by themselves.⁹ It includes market production with an exchange rate and subsistence level of production with a use value. Examples include; working in the formal and informal sectors such as farming, trade, farm labour and many more whilst the roles of community management are all activities undertaken as an extension of the reproductive role. This role includes activities that are built together, solidarity between people, and maintaining the needs of the community as a social gathering, weddings, funerals ceremonies and others, either voluntary or unpaid. It was further stated that this role aims to take decisions that affect people's lives such as the election of village heads, land division meetings, meetings to arrange water and others.¹⁰

In Ghana, some activities are considered to be performed strictly by either men or women. There have been so many instances where some farming activities or the planting of a particular crop are deemed to be for men and this tends to negatively affect women's participation in agriculture.¹¹ The performance of the agricultural sector in developing countries like Ghana has been low and this can be attributed to the restriction on access to productive inputs for women in society.¹² They further

³ O'Neill, "Share of Economic Sectors in the GDP in Ghana 2021."

⁴ Doris Dokua Sasu, "Ghana: Contribution of Cocoa to GDP 2014-2025," Statista, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1235774/contribution-from-cocoa-sector-to-gdp-in-ghana/>.

⁵ Ghana Statistical Service, *Provisional 2017 Annual Gross Domestic Product* (Accra, 2018).

⁶ Armando Barrientos, *Social Assistance in Developing Countries* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁷ Julian Selemine, "Gender Roles: What Are They?," WebMD, 2022, <https://www.webmd.com/sex-relationships/what-are-gender-roles-and-stereotypes>.

⁸ Lusi Fausia and P Nasyiah, "Gender Dalam Kawasan DAS Citanduy: Kajian Aktivitas Reproduksi Dan Produktif Perempuan Dalam Sumberdaya Alam," 2005.

⁹ Alia Fajarwati et al., "The Productive and Reproductive Activities of Women as Form of Adaptation and Post-Disaster Livelihood Strategies in Huntap Kuwang and Huntap Plosokerep," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 227 (2016): 370-77.

¹⁰ Fausia and Nasyiah, "Gender Dalam Kawasan DAS Citanduy: Kajian Aktivitas Reproduksi Dan Produktif Perempuan Dalam Sumberdaya Alam"; Fajarwati et al., "The Productive and Reproductive Activities of Women as Form of Adaptation and Post-Disaster Livelihood Strategies in Huntap Kuwang and Huntap Plosokerep."

¹¹ Ebenezer Yiadom-Boakye et al., "Gender, Resource Use and Technical Efficiency among Rice Farmers in the Ashanti Region, Ghana," 2013.

¹² Gideon Danso-Abbeam, Lloyd J S Baiyegunhi, and Temitope O Ojo, "Gender Differentials in Technical Efficiency of Ghanaian Cocoa Farms," *Heliyon* 6, no. 5 (2020): e04012.

stated that women make up about 43% of the agricultural workforce in the world and empowering them will go a long way in helping to improve the sector.¹³

Also, other studies highlighted that there are fewer women than men involved in productive jobs. Nevertheless, women contribute significantly to both the development of the agricultural sector and the economy. They play varied roles in society and most especially within their households.¹⁴ Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies.¹⁵ This provides more emphasis on the key role women play in our societies. As a result, gender equality has become a key topic on both national and international levels with the introduction of various policies to empower women in society as this will help enhance the welfare of citizens and contribute to the development of the economy, most especially in developing countries.¹⁶ The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) indicated that bridging the gender gap can help improve farm productivity in developing countries by 2.5 per cent to 4 per cent.¹⁷

Empowering women is therefore deemed to be vital in increasing agricultural productivity as it will help in the alleviation of poverty in rural societies whilst ensuring food security within the country. To help deal with the gender gap concerning access to inputs and income inequality, many interventions or programmes have been introduced by many international institutions to narrow or bridge this gap in the years ahead. Also, many women-related projects have been implemented in West Africa to support women in the cocoa sector. The Mondelēz International Cocoa Life in association with other NGOs and organisations such as Kuapa-Kokoo are taking steps to help in building the capacities of women through pilots such as Barry Callebaut's tree nursery and farmer training as well as the World Cocoa Foundation's use of video clubs to reach women cocoa farmers in Ghana.¹⁸ Hence, it is expected that the deficit in women's access to resources would decrease and afterwards lead to a reduction in the productivity gap.¹⁹

However, the production of cash crops like cocoa is seen to be for men whilst there is the perception that the production of crops and farming on a subsistence level befits women.²⁰ This ideology has had a negative impact on agriculture since resources or inputs are not shared equally among men and women in society. Also, this has created a gender gap between men and women and as such women have limited access to credit facilities, training services, farm inputs, cooperative membership and markets which has further enhanced the income inequality gap.²¹ Women have been at a disadvantage for many years and as such, they are not able to fully achieve their full productive

¹³ United Nations, *The Advancement of Women* (New York: United Nations, 1998).

¹⁴ Yiadom-Boakye et al., "Gender, Resource Use and Technical Efficiency among Rice Farmers in the Ashanti Region, Ghana."

¹⁵ SOFA Team and C Doss, "The Role of Women in Agriculture, Economic Development Analysis Division (ESA)" (Working Paper, 2011).

¹⁶ Danso-Abbeam, Baiyegunhi, and Ojo, "Gender Differentials in Technical Efficiency of Ghanaian Cocoa Farms."

¹⁷ FAO, "The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-2011- Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development - World | ReliefWeb," Reliefweb, 2011, https://reliefweb.int/report/world/state-food-and-agriculture-2010-2011-women-agriculture-closing-gender-gap-development?gclid=CjwKCAjwoIqhBhAGEiwArXT7K52ch11EohgdQ1Tgy-oysUYj4N67_kmPSOiWxs1iIL94wL4N5-v0WxoCjCsQAvD_BwE.

¹⁸ Danso-Abbeam, Baiyegunhi, and Ojo, "Gender Differentials in Technical Efficiency of Ghanaian Cocoa Farms."

¹⁹ Team and Doss, "The Role of Women in Agriculture, Economic Development Analysis Division (ESA)"; African Development Bank, "Economic Empowerment of African Women through Equitable Participation in Agricultural Value Chains," 2015,

https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Economic_Empowerment_of_African_Women_through_Equitable_Participation_in_Agricultural_Value_Chains.pdf; Man-Kwun Chan, "Improving Opportunities for Women in Smallholder-Based Supply Chains," *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: Https://Docs. Gatesfoundation. Org/Documents/Gender-Value-Chainguide. Pdf*, 2010.

²⁰ Danso-Abbeam, Baiyegunhi, and Ojo, "Gender Differentials in Technical Efficiency of Ghanaian Cocoa Farms"; Jemimah Njuki et al., "Linking Smallholder Farmers to Markets, Gender and Intra-Household Dynamics: Does the Choice of Commodity Matter?," *The European Journal of Development Research* 23 (2011): 426-43.

²¹ M N Mangheni et al., "Gender Norms, Technology Access, and Women Farmers' Vulnerability to Climate Change in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Agriculture and Ecosystem Resilience in Sub Saharan Africa: Livelihood Pathways Under Changing Climate*, 2019, 715-28.

capacity in our rural communities. The World Cocoa Foundation further stated that women were far less productive in the management of farms, especially cocoa farms than males in Sub-Saharan Africa. Akresh highlighted that this could be due to the inefficient allocation of farm inputs to women.²² A gender analysis is appropriate to help in understanding and appreciating the role both genders play in cocoa production. Therefore, this study seeks to (1) find out the reproductive roles played by men and women in the study area (2) identify the productive roles played by both parties and (3) the roles men and women play in terms of community management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The capacities approach is one way to comprehend gender dynamics. Development, according to Sen is the process of extending the actual freedoms that people possess.²³ Sen contends that freedoms depend on other determinants, such as social and economic arrangements (such as facilities for education and health care), as well as political and civil rights, as opposed to narrower notions of well-being and development such as personal income, economic growth, industrialisation, or social modernisation. Sen understands these measures only as means to expand freedoms. Functionings and capabilities are the core ideas covered by the capability approach. Functionings are actions or states of being that a person may appreciate, and they can range from the most fundamental (such as being adequately fed, housed, and healthy) to the most sophisticated (being able to take part in the life of the community). The ability to realise one's potential functionings, or capabilities, reflects a certain level of freedom and the chance to do the things we love. Accordingly, a person's combined functionings reflect her actual accomplishments or results, and her capabilities indicate the options and flexibility to achieve different functional combinations.

Since inequality is ultimately related to the nature of human diversity, it is common for it to increase in one area whilst decreasing in another. Therefore, it becomes sensible to include certain sets of categories based on differences in age, gender and the social, and economic foundations of freedom and well-being when analyzing inequality. The systematic differences in the capabilities or freedoms that men and women have in society as a result of unequal social and political circumstances make gender one foundation of classification that is particularly pertinent in the context of inequalities in capability deprivations.²⁴

Looking only at the means to freedom such as income or other resources, cannot reveal gender-based disparities in capability deprivations since women may have unique challenges in turning means into specific functionings. Therefore, if we merely focus on the availability of means, the degree to which women are impoverished may be underestimated. The contextualisation of economic and social factors that support or oppose the change in societal attitudes toward women's empowerment, which are greatly shaped and influenced by socio-cultural gender norms, is necessary to identify factors influencing the specific capability deprivation among women.²⁵ Putting this in the context of the gender gap in agriculture, giving people access to productive resources does not guarantee that they would use them and benefit from them. Social gender norms need to be changed for women to actively use and benefit from resources, as they significantly contribute to the deprivation of women's agency.²⁶

²² Rozemarijn Apotheker, Anna Laven, and Noortje Verhart, *The Gender and Cocoa Livelihoods Toolbox A Practical Guide for Business to Work on Gender in the Cocoa Livelihood Program Matching Grants Commissioned by the World Cocoa Foundation* (Amsterdam: KIT, 2014), www.kit.nl/sed; Richard Akresh, "Understanding Pareto Inefficient Intrahousehold Allocations," 2005.

²³ Gita Sen and Avanti Mukherjee, "No Empowerment without Rights, No Rights without Politics: Gender-Equality, MDGs and the Post-2015 Development Agenda," *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 15, no. 2–3 (2014): 188–202.

²⁴ Naila Kabeer, "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment," *Development and Change* 30, no. 3 (1999): 435–64; Sen and Mukherjee, "No Empowerment without Rights, No Rights without Politics: Gender-Equality, MDGs and the Post-2015 Development Agenda."

²⁵ Sen and Mukherjee, "No Empowerment without Rights, No Rights without Politics: Gender-Equality, MDGs and the Post-2015 Development Agenda."

²⁶ Kabeer, "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment."

MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to Dulock, a research design is termed a strategy adopted to help address the research objectives and the control of variance.²⁷ This study, therefore, made use of a mixed research approach, thus, a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The embedded method was used; where both qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently. The Qualitative research consisted of the gathering and analysing of non-numerical data to understand the concepts, opinions and experiences of the respondents whilst quantitative involved the collection and analysis of numerical data for statistical analysis.²⁸ The adoption of this approach helped the researchers to have in-depth knowledge of the experiences and opinions of respondents concerning gender roles. It also helped to gain meaningful insights into issues of gender division of labour. This was done through the use of questionnaires and focus group discussions.

This study was conducted in Dwease, Juaso, Agogo, Odumase, Akutuase, Sakune, Amantana and Aninsua Nyinamponase in the Asante Akim North Municipality in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. They are agrarian communities and agricultural activities range from the production of field crops, tree crops, livestock rearing, aquaculture and apiculture with cocoa farming being dominant in the community. It can be located between latitude 6.7728° North and longitude 1°9'50" West. As of 2020, the population of this Municipality stood at 89,261 out of which 49.2 per cent are males and 50.8 per cent are females. Ninety-one per cent of females were engaged in field-crop farming whilst 82.3 per cent were involved in other types of farming. In terms of tree-crop farming, 67.7 per cent of males were engaged in it as compared to females who were 51.7 per cent.²⁹

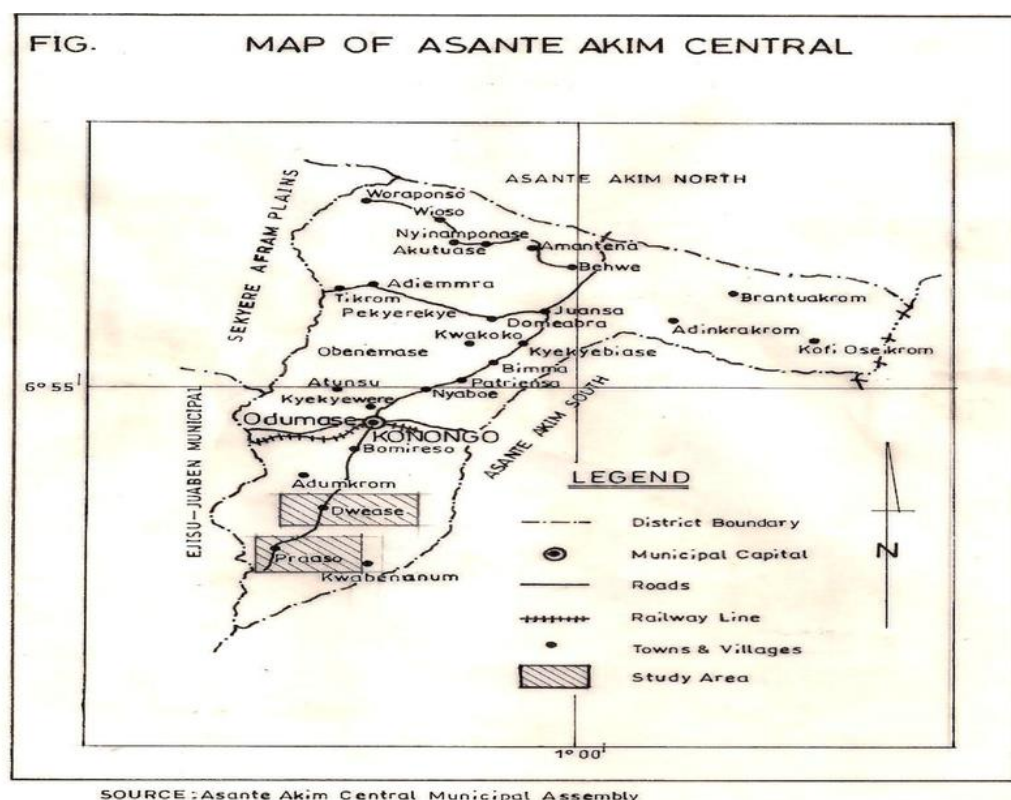


Figure 1. Map of Asante Akim North Municipality.

The target population of this study was all cocoa farmers in the Municipality. The study focused on the various gender roles played by cocoa farmers in the community and as such the sample size for

²⁷ Helen L Dulock, "Research Design: Descriptive Research," *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing* 10, no. 4 (1993): 154-57.

²⁸ Pritha Bhandari, "What Is Qualitative Research? | Methods & Examples," 2020, <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-research/>.

²⁹ Asante Akim North Municipal. <https://www.ghanadistricts.com/Home/District/9>

this study was three hundred (300) farming households comprising equal numbers of both males and females. The Cochran formula was used in arriving at the sample size of 300 since the exact population of cocoa farmers in the Municipality was unknown. The selection of respondents was done using systematic random sampling among the various households within the communities. All the targeted respondents answered the questionnaire with valid responses. Data for this study were ascertained through the combination of different instruments [a structured questionnaire (for 300 respondents) and an interview guide (for a group of 12- six males and six females) for the focus group discussion. In all, six different farming households (husband and wife) were selected. The farmers who were selected for the focus group discussion were selected purposively. This was because, they were identified by the researchers as the respondents who could appropriately engage in the discussion and offer the right responses. The focus group discussion was also used in soliciting their views, opinions and perceptions regarding the various gender roles. Questions asked were based on reproductive, productive and community roles. Quantitative data ascertained was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used in the analysis and the presentation of results. Qualitative information was analysed using content analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reproductive roles played by males and females

Table 1 shows the various reproductive roles played by male and female cocoa farmers, either separately or jointly. From Table 1, it can be seen that waking family up (63.33%), bathing kids (51.67%), sending kids to school (55%) and budgeting for the house (76.67%) were mostly carried out by both sexes. This demonstrates how the dual-earner, dual-career model has gradually replaced the male breadwinner model in the study area.³⁰

Reproductive roles mostly performed by men included paying school fees (73.33%), paying for health care (76.67%), daily money for children (63.33%), buying clothes (61.67%), money for household (65%), maintenance of the house (85%), family security (88.33%) and fixing of bulbs (95%). According to a study by Hegg et al., men also strongly support and provide for their children financially.³¹ When fathers spend more time with their kids, not only do the kids benefit immensely but also their mothers and even the dads themselves.³²

Aside from the roles required by nature to be performed by women i.e. pregnancy, breastfeeding and childbirth, the majority of the reproductive activities including preparing food (86.67%), cleaning the house (88.33%), washing dishes (95%) and clothes (93.33%), caring for the children (93.33%), fetching of water (91.67%), fetching of firewood (76.67%), buying from the market (81.67%), planning of menu (76.67%) and picking kids from school (63.33%) are carried out by females. Hegg et al. stated that 66% of the men interviewed in their study agreed that women are responsible for feeding children. Women take care of the home, and the kids, and frequently work outside the home for money.³³

According to Baxter, women generally report having greater responsibility for child care than men do at all times - roughly 66 to 67 per cent vs. 35 to 42 per cent for men.³⁴ Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard contend that even if more women are entering the workforce in paid positions, women still

³⁰ Livia Sz Oláh, "Gendering Fertility: Second Births in Sweden and Hungary," *Population Research and Policy Review* 22 (2003): 171–200.

³¹ M Ortega Hegg, R Centeno Orozco, and M Castillo Venerio, *Masculinity and Sociocultural Factors Associated with Men's Behavior: Study in Four Central American Countries*, UNFPA-ECLAC (Managua: UNFPA-ECLAC, 2005), https://elsalvador.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/masculinidad_factores_socioculturales.pdf.

³² Gary Barker, "Men's Participation as Fathers in the Latin American and Caribbean Region," *A Critical Literature Review with Policy Considerations. Promundo. Save the Children: Brasil*, 2008; Olayinka Akanle, Jimi O Adesina, and A O Ogbimi, "Men at Work Keep-off: Male Roles and Household Chores in Nigeria," *Gender and Behaviour* 14, no. 3 (2016): 7833–54.

³³ Judith L Gibbons and Sandra E Luna, "For Men Life Is Hard, for Women Life Is Harder: Gender Roles in Central America," *Psychology of Gender through the Lens of Culture: Theories and Applications*, 2015, 307–25.

³⁴ Janeen Baxter, "Patterns of Change and Stability in the Gender Division of Household Labour in Australia, 1986–1997," *Journal of Sociology* 38, no. 4 (2002): 399–424.

handle the majority of household chores.³⁵ The results counter with those of Mollel and Mtenga who claimed in their research that obtaining fuel wood is primarily done by men and shopping is essentially evenly distributed.³⁶ In their research in Nigeria, Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard discovered that men were active in cooking, dishwashing and bathing children.³⁷

Table 1: Reproductive roles

Reproductive Roles	Male		Female		Both	
	Freq.	Per cent (%)	Freq.	Percentage (%)	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Waking family up	39	13.00	53	17.67	208	69.33
Bathing kids	24	8.00	76	25.33	200	66.67
Preparing food	0	0.00	152	50.67	148	49.33
Cleaning the house	1	0.33	153	51.00	146	48.67
Washing dishes	0	0.00	257	85.67	43	14.33
Washing clothes	8	2.67	247	82.33	45	15.00
Sending children to school	12	4.00	87	29.00	201	67.00
Paying school fees	90	30.00	201	67.00	9	3.00
Care of children	14	4.67	156	52.00	130	43.33
Paying for health care	186	62.00	55	18.33	59	19.67
Daily money for children	238	79.33	26	8.67	36	12.00
Money for household food	176	58.67	9	3.00	115	38.33
Buying clothes and shoes	237	79.00	36	12.00	27	9.00
Fetching water	11	3.67	255	85.00	34	11.33
Fetching firewood	44	14.67	246	82.00	10	3.33
Buying from the market	3	1.00	249	83.00	48	16.00
Maintenance of the house	251	83.67	3	1.00	46	15.33
Family security	253	84.33	11	3.67	36	12.00
Pregnancy	0	0.00	300	100.00	0	0.00
Breastfeeding	0	0.00	300	100.00	0	0.00
Childbirth	0	0.00	300	100.00	0	0.00
Washing of family vehicle	249	83.00	0	0.00	51	17.00
Maintenance of appliances	256	85.33	0	0.00	44	14.67
Fixing of bulb	257	85.67	10	3.33	33	11.00
Budgeting for the house	8	2.67	6	2.00	286	95.33
Planning of menu	5	1.67	246	82.00	49	16.33
Picking children from school	12	4.00	229	76.33	59	19.67

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Most of the women stated that they were the ones responsible for performing the reproductive roles and their husbands rarely had an interest in performing such roles. In the past, it was believed that traditionally, the household roles were the responsibility of the women. As girls, they were trained to fetch water, clean the house and prepare food for the family. These roles were assigned to them from childhood. The men followed their fathers to farm, and they were also made to learn a trade to enable

³⁵ Mylène Lachance-Grzela and Geneviève Bouchard, "Why Do Women Do the Lion's Share of Housework? A Decade of Research," *Sex Roles* 63 (2010): 767–80.

³⁶ N M Mollel and N A Mtenga, "Gender Roles in the Household and Farming Systems of Tchenzema, Morogoro-Tanzania," *South African Journal of Agricultural Extension* 29, no. 1 (2000): 73–88.

³⁷ Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard, "Why Do Women Do the Lion's Share of Housework? A Decade of Research."

them to provide for the family. An elderly woman in the village stated that: *“For many years, my husband has refused to assist me in performing household chores because he believes it is the role of women to do so, and his is to ensure he works to provide food for the family. Even though I need the help, he said he was not trained to carry out such roles so he cannot help me.”* The finding is corroborated by Akanle et al., who claimed the culture in Nigeria normally does not accept men performing domestic tasks including cooking, getting water, cleaning the dishes, and washing clothes.³⁸ Accordingly, Feinstein et al. suggested that women are accountable for performing all domestic tasks, including serving men, cooking, gathering water and caring for children.³⁹

Another woman stated that; *“since men do not spend a lot of hours in the house, it becomes the sole responsibility of women to ensure that all household chores are duly performed”*. Dillip et al. found that women in Tanzania typically spend more time at home taking care of all household chores.⁴⁰ Fox argued that women spend far more time than men do on domestic duties on average.⁴¹ Again, one of the issues raised by some men was that; *“in terms of house chores, women work harder than them but they provide money for the upkeep of the house and give money to the children through the women and as such children think that their mothers are the ones that provide the money”*. The Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children claims that men are pressured to conform to expectations of what a male should do, feel and think.⁴²

In rural communities, it is mostly the females who are in the house whilst the males go out to work to provide a better livelihood for the family. Some of the biological roles such as pregnancy, breastfeeding and childbirth by nature are performed by only females. Nevertheless, in times of the aforementioned moments, some males still hesitate to assist the females in executing the other reproductive roles. Due to this, a woman remarked that: *During the pregnancy period and even after childbirth, her male counterpart is still not willing to help her carry out some of these roles as he expects the female to still do so even in the condition that she is in.* From the interviews and focus group discussions conducted, it was observed that the majority of the reproductive roles like bathing the kids, cooking, cleaning, washing clothes and dishes, fetching water and firewood, and caring for the children were all done by the females.

An elderly male, during one of the interviews, stated that: *“To perform roles like washing dishes and going to fetch water, he felt embarrassed and shy and this deterred him from involving himself in such roles”*. As stated earlier, this can be attributed to the way they were brought up as they were made to believe that such roles were for only females and it was not right for males to do them. According to Dillip et al., there is a definite difference between men and women when it comes to housework.⁴³ Communities have come to accept this as true and it is considered abnormal when someone behaves differently than is expected of them.

However, it was also found that even though some of the females had jobs of their own, they still deemed it the sole responsibility of males to provide financial support to the entire family and only assisted when things became extremely difficult for the entire household. Therefore, from the various interviews and discussions, it was identified that the males were the ones responsible for paying school fees and healthcare, providing daily money for the family, buying clothes, providing shelter, and fixing anything that became faulty in the house. One of the responses provided by a male respondent was:

³⁸ Akanle, Adesina, and Ogbimi, “Men at Work Keep-off: Male Roles and Household Chores in Nigeria.”

³⁹ Sheryl Feinstein, Rachel Feinstein, and Sophia Sabrow, “Gender Inequality in the Division of Household Labour in Tanzania,” *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie* 14, no. 2 (2010): 98–109.

⁴⁰ Angel Dillip et al., “‘To Be Honest, Women Do Everything’: Understanding Roles of Men and Women in Net Care and Repair in Southern Tanzania,” *Malaria Journal* 17 (2018): 1–8.

⁴¹ Louise Fox, “Gender, Economic Transformation and Women’s Economic Empowerment in Tanzania,” *ODI Supporting Economic Transformation*, 2016, 1–18.

⁴² Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, “Masculinities: Male Roles and Male Involvement in the Promotion of Gender Equality - A Resource Packet - World,” ReliefWeb, 2005, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/masculinities-male-roles-and-male-involvement-promotion-gender-equality-resource-packet>.

⁴³ Dillip et al., “‘To Be Honest, Women Do Everything’: Understanding Roles of Men and Women in Net Care and Repair in Southern Tanzania.”

“My wife and I are both working (the male is a farmer whilst the female is a trader), but she is disinterested in supporting me to cater for the financial needs of the family as she thinks that it is my duty and in times of difficulty, she is still reluctant to give me money to help me increase my farm operations”.

It can be seen that in the household, some of the roles have been assigned to either the male or the female by society and the other is unwilling to perform the others' role. In the absence of either one of them, the other person finds it difficult to adapt to perform the other person's role since they are not used to doing them. The findings confirm inequality as they show that women are typically more involved in domestic duties than their male counterparts are. Additionally, men are more involved in domestic tasks that are typically masculine (such as home maintenance and family administration), whilst women are more involved in those that are traditionally feminine (i.e., childcare or shopping). The findings are corroborated by Cerrato and Cifre who found that on aggregate, women participate in domestic duties at a rate that exceeds twice that of men.⁴⁴

Productive roles played by males or females

Table 2 shows the various productive roles played by male and female cocoa farmers, either separately or jointly. Productive roles refer to the roles which are performed to earn some income or wages. Both sexes confirmed that most of these roles are executed by males since it is believed to be their responsibility to provide a source of livelihood for the entire family. In this part of the world, it is the primary role of a man to take care of the family and females seldom do that, especially since the heads of the households are mostly males.

Table 2: Productive roles

Productive roles	Male		Female		Both	
	Freq.	Percentage (%)	Freq.	Percentage (%)	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Weeding	247	82.33	46	15.33	7	2.33
Seedling production	243	81.00	49	16.33	8	2.67
Land preparation for planting	251	83.67	23	7.67	26	8.67
Planting of foodstuffs	11	3.67	29	9.67	260	86.67
Fertilizer application	246	82.00	35	11.67	19	6.33
Irrigation	256	85.33	21	7.00	23	7.67
Pruning	252	84.00	42	14.00	6	2.00
Purchasing farm implements	250	83.33	32	10.67	18	6.00
Harvesting of foodstuffs	37	12.33	17	5.67	246	82.00
Postharvest activities on the farm	24	8.00	39	13.00	237	79.00
Transportation of foodstuffs	47	15.67	20	6.67	233	77.67
Storage of foodstuffs	38	12.67	32	10.67	230	76.67
Local sale of foodstuff	45	15.00	247	82.33	8	2.67
External sale of foodstuff	49	16.33	241	80.33	10	3.33
Tending to livestock	238	79.33	44	14.67	18	6.00
Processing of foodstuffs	54	18.00	236	78.67	10	3.33
Packaging of foodstuffs	45	15.00	238	79.33	17	5.67
Keeping farm records	245	81.67	46	15.33	9	3.00
Hiring of extra labour	222	74.00	39	13.00	39	13.00

Source: Field Survey, 2022

⁴⁴ Javier Cerrato and Eva Cifre, “Gender Inequality in Household Chores and Work-Family Conflict,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 9 (2018): 1330.

As stated earlier, these are roles undertaken to get paid. From Table 2 below, it was identified that most of the roles were carried out by males or both sexes. The roles performed mostly by females included the processing of foodstuffs (60%), packaging of foodstuffs (63.33%), local (76.67%) and external sale of foodstuffs (68.33%). Shortall emphasizes that men are seen as the farmers and the ones in command whilst describing the position of women as that of a helper.⁴⁵ This agrees with the findings of Koyenikan and Ikharea who stated that women mostly partake more in marketing activities than men.⁴⁶ Again, both sexes were involved in the planting (58.33%) and harvesting of foodstuffs (76.67%), postharvest activities on the farm (61.67%) and the transportation of foodstuff (55%).

Males performed the majority of the productive roles and the ones they dominated in were irrigation (93.33%), pruning (86.67%), purchasing of farm equipment (83.33) and preparation of the land (85%). Other roles included weeding (78.33%), production of seedlings (71.67%), rearing of livestock (63.33%), application of fertilizer (76.67%) and keeping farm records (75%). The findings are corroborated by Mollel and Mtenga, who made the case that men are more likely to hire labour and apply fertilizer and pesticides.⁴⁷ According to CIAS, women's purchasing power is constrained by their low level of income and financial resources.⁴⁸ Among the various responses about the productive roles, some women stated that; *"they are mostly expected to stay in the house and carry out the household duties and as such men are the ones who go out to perform these roles because it is primarily their responsibility to provide money for the families' upkeep."*

One response from a middle-aged woman was: *"The male members in my household are the ones who perform all the farm duties like clearing the land, weeding, spraying, and applying fertiliser to the farmland. After all these roles, my husband has taken on extra activities like carpentry and masonry to provide income for the family's upkeep"*. Most males indicated that they were the ones responsible for executing farming activities ranging from the clearing of the land, weeding, and application of fertiliser among others. Planting of seedlings is mostly done by women as well as the marketing of the farm produce. This is supported by one response provided by a male respondent: *"The clearing of the land for the production of the foodstuff is the responsibility of the man. Afterwards, the female takes the commodities to the market to sell. The females are good at selling the produce as compared to us, the males. I only help her to package the foodstuffs and then transport the commodities to the marketplace"*.

A woman also recounted that: *"Some of the farm activities are too difficult for the females to carry out so they leave it for the males to do that. We only involve ourselves when it is time to plant the seedlings, process and package the foodstuffs, and the selling of the produce at the farm gate and various markets"*. According to Enete and Amusa, men significantly outperform women in pre-harvest tasks related to cocoa cultivation.⁴⁹ These tasks include everything from picking a farm location to clearing the soil, nurturing cocoa seedlings, acquiring planting supplies, transplanting, locating farm inputs, spraying cocoa against pests and diseases and weeding. Ojo asserted that men are the ones who start the cocoa farming process and are in charge of the crucial early agricultural tasks, with women merely serving as assistants.⁵⁰ According to FAO and Enete and Amusa, women's participation in agroforestry is less substantial than their essential roles in the cultivation of food crops and the care of

⁴⁵ Sally Shortall, "Farming, Identity and Well-Being: Managing Changing Gender Roles within Western European Farm Families," *Anthropological Notebooks* 20, no. 3 (2014).

⁴⁶ M J Koyenikan and V E Ikharea, "Gender Access to and Control of Agricultural Resources in South Zone of Edo State, Nigeria," *Journal of Agricultural Economics, Extension and Rural Development* 1, no. 7 (2014): 138–45.

⁴⁷ Mollel and Mtenga, "Gender Roles in the Household and Farming Systems of Tchenzema, Morogoro-Tanzania."

⁴⁸ Centre for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS), "Women on Dairy Farms; Juggling Roles and Responsibilities," 2004, <http://www.cias.wisc.edu/archives/>.

⁴⁹ Anselm A Enete and Taofeeq A Amusa, "Contribution of Men and Women to Farming Decisions in Cocoa Based Agroforestry Households of Ekiti State, Nigeria," *Tropicultura* 28, no. 2 (2010): 77–83.

⁵⁰ Olatunji Ojo, "Yoruba Women, Cash Crop Production and the Colonial State; 1920-1957," in *A Paper Presented at the Conference on Atlantic Crossings: Women's Voice, Women's Stories from the Caribbean and the Nigerian Hinterland*. Dartmouth College, May, 2001, 18–20.

animals.⁵¹ The breaking and scooping out of cocoa seeds, fermenting, transporting cocoa, sun-drying, and marketing of cocoa all include substantial efforts from women. Women usually handle all facets of farm food processing, marketing, and preservation in Nigeria, they said.

Furthermore, it was observed that males were charged with the roles of rearing livestock and purchasing inputs and implement to be used on the farm. A younger man interviewed stated that: *“Hardly would you see a female looking after livestock and performing activities like sending livestock for grazing or attending to them. So, the males perform all roles related to the production of livestock”*. Responses from the interviewees confirmed what is already known since males were the ones who were executing most of the productive roles, especially when it comes to farm activities.

Community Management Roles by Males or Females

Table 3 shows the various community managing roles played by male and female cocoa farmers, either separately or jointly. Community managing roles have to do with the roles performed by members of the community to ensure its progression. These comprise roles performed within the society to ensure its progression.

Table 3: Community management roles

Community Management Roles	Male		Female		Both	
	Freq.	Percentage (%)	Freq.	Percentage (%)	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Participation in communal labour	6	2.00	85	28.33	209	69.67
Family head role	153	51.00	96	32.00	51	17.00
Naming of children	227	75.67	0	0.00	73	24.33
Naming ceremony participation	1	0.33	220	73.33	79	26.33
Participation in marriages	1	0.33	141	47.00	158	52.67
Participation in funerals	35	11.67	113	37.67	152	50.67
Cleaning of the place of worship	29	9.67	136	45.33	135	45.00
Cleaning of the market	88	29.33	85	28.33	127	42.33
Community meetings	64	21.33	99	33.00	137	45.67
Construction of bridges	91	30.33	126	42.00	83	27.67
Construction of schools	53	17.67	119	39.67	128	42.67
Community security	300	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Participation in community meetings	194	64.67	39	13.00	67	22.33
Taking communal decisions	42	14.00	65	21.67	193	64.33

Source: Field survey, 2022

In terms of the community management roles, women had much dominance in the cleaning of the place of worship which comprised 60% whilst the remaining was made up of males (10%) and both (30%). The role of community security was carried out solely by men (100%) and other roles like being family head (71.67%), naming of children (95%), construction of bridges (85%) and schools (81.67%) and taking communal decisions (70%). However, roles such as participation in communal labour (81.67%), naming ceremony participation (95%), participation in marriage ceremonies (96.77%) and funerals (86.67%) and community meetings (61.67%). The reason for women playing

⁵¹ FAO, *Women, Agriculture and Rural Development in the near East: Findings of an FAO Study* (Rome, Italy: FAO, 1995); Enete and Amusa, “Contribution of Men and Women to Farming Decisions in Cocoa Based Agroforestry Households of Ekiti State, Nigeria.”

fewer roles in community management can be attributed to the fact that men form the majority of the community leadership and hence, are responsible for carrying out those roles.

The community system in rural areas is normally headed by males and they are responsible for making plans and taking decisions for the entire community. When a discussion was held separately for females, one of them outlined that: *“In our community, when it comes to leadership, the majority of the people involved are males with just one or two elderly females. Even looking at the traditional council system, they are all males with just a female who is considered to be the queen mother. Due to this, decisions taken mostly favour the men within the community”*. Women's achievements frequently go unnoticed, although women have played a significant role in the community.⁵² Huang went on to say that although women are the majority of program participants in communities, they do not hold any significant leadership positions. Typically, the male representatives or chairs create the programs to suit the preferences of men. According to Adise, women are not considered formal participants in the community system and only male community functionaries actively participate in community activities.⁵³

It has been the responsibility of the males to name the children and that is what both sexes have been accustomed to. A response provided by one female was: *“Since we were born, we have known that it is the responsibility of the father of a child to provide a name for him or her and also perform the naming rites”*. Nevertheless, in terms of participating in communal activities, both females and males take part. It was recounted that: *“when it comes to communal labour participation, the men weed around and do most of the labour-intensive activities whilst the females sweep and do the other cleaning of the environment”*. According to Gibbons and Luna, the lives of women and men take place in niches that are specifically influenced by their gender as well as their socioeconomic status, ethnicity and place of residence in the country or the city.⁵⁴

It was also observed that cleaning of the marketplace and place of worship was carried out by females but when it comes to the building of facilities, it was the responsibility of the males. Both sexes participated in the community meetings but males were more involved in taking communal decisions as compared to their female counterparts. In terms of community security, it is the males that volunteered to protect the community and ensure peace and order. In general, the community management roles were carried out by males with females having a minor role in them. The study's findings, which are corroborated by those of Abebe et al. and Adise, indicate that there is unequal engagement in community activities between men and women.⁵⁵ According to Abebe et al., men community members are structurally more dominating than female.⁵⁶

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this part of the world, the gender gap between men and women is huge and as such leads to their various gender roles. Women play a crucial role in the production and marketing of agricultural products, yet they are less endowed in terms of resources, especially in rural areas. Compared to men, they have limited access to good arable lands for farming, lack of access to credit and financial services and inadequate farm inputs or resources for farming. Nevertheless, they form the majority of the agricultural workforce and empowering them equally as men will result in a general improvement in agricultural productivity. Findings from the study indicated that women carried out the majority of the

⁵² Yen-Yi Huang, “Women’s Contradictory Roles in the Community: A Case Study of the Community Development Project in Taiwan,” *International Social Work* 44, no. 3 (2001): 361–73.

⁵³ A Adise, *Tourism Potential of Hawassa City*. Hawassa City Administration Culture, Tourism and Communication Affairs Department (Hawassa, Ethiopia: ZAK Printing Press, 2014).

⁵⁴ Gibbons and Luna, “For Men Life Is Hard, for Women Life Is Harder: Gender Roles in Central America.”

⁵⁵ Alemine Abebe, Wassie Kebede, and Ajanaw Alemie, “Roles of Ego Social Networks for Community Development in Southern Ethiopia: The Case of Tullo Community,” *The International Journal of Community and Social Development* 1, no. 4 (2019): 332–49; Adise, *Tourism Potential of Hawassa City*. Hawassa City Administration Culture, Tourism and Communication Affairs Department.

⁵⁶ Abebe, Kebede, and Alemie, “Roles of Ego Social Networks for Community Development in Southern Ethiopia: The Case of Tullo Community.”

reproductive roles as compared to men. This is due to the ideology that females are required to stay in the house and cater for the children and ensure the family's well-being. However, men carried out most of the roles in the productive and community management section.

This has implications for the strategic and practical gender needs of both men and women cocoa farmers. Most often than not, females are at a disadvantage in our rural communities as compared to males. Males are given better opportunities in society to progress as we have been made to believe that if males progress, they will be more endowed to provide for the entire family. Decisions like that promote gender inequality within rural communities and this does not help in development. It impoverishes females and they are not able to help efficiently in building the capacities of women in society. As such, it is essential to address the practical and strategic gender needs of society through the lens of women and men. To help meet the practical gender needs of women in society, policies should be made to grant them equal access to land, healthcare, credit and financial facilities. They should be provided with the required training, education and inputs needed to empower females to cater for their families and themselves. This, in the long run, will reduce their dependency on males to provide them, the females, with necessities. In terms of meeting the strategic gender needs, the formation of women's cooperative groups, providing equal opportunities for employment and an upgrade on the current social system can help women in improving their status within the community.

Limiting women to the performance of reproductive can be detrimental to the development of society at large, most especially in a situation where few women take part in communal decisions. Women should therefore be encouraged and allowed to partake in all community activities and decision-making procedures to ensure there is no gender inequality. They should be given the same opportunity and resources as men to see to it that every aspect of the community and the agricultural sector is well developed.

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ABOUT AUTHORS

Rubaba Mohammed is an MPhil student in Agricultural Extension and Development Communication at the Department of Agricultural Economics, Agribusiness and Extension, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Esther Owusu-Mensah Rubaba Mohammed is an MPhil student in Agricultural Extension and Development Communication at the Department of Agricultural Economics, Agribusiness and Extension, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Enoch Kwame Tham-Agyekum (PhD) is a lecturer at the Department of Agricultural Economics, Agribusiness and Extension, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. His areas of expertise are development communication and media studies, rural development, extension education,

management of organisations in development, gender studies, programme planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Fred Ankuyi holds an MPhil in Agricultural Extension and Development Communication from the Department of Agricultural Economics, Agribusiness and Extension, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. He currently works with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Legon, Accra, Ghana.

John-Eudes Andivi Bakang (PhD) is an associate professor with over 25 years of experience in the field of agricultural extension. He works with the Department of Agricultural Economics, Agribusiness and Extension, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. His areas of expertise are development sociology, extension education, programme planning, monitoring and evaluation and rural development.