5.0 DETERMINANTS OF EMPOWERMENT AMONG WOMEN PRODUCERS OF IMPROVED CHICKENS IN BARIADI AND MUHEZA DISTRICTS, TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment is a dynamic and multidimensional process whereby various factors could influence differently the extent to which women are empowered in different contexts. Rigorous evidence on the determinants of women empowerment in specific agricultural projects is scantily documented. Therefore, the paper examines the determinants of women empowerment in keeping improved chickens in Bariadi and Muheza Districts. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. A sample size of 240 women was involved, including 120 beneficiaries of African Chicken Genetic Gain (ACGG) and 120 non-beneficiaries. Data were collected through a questionnaire-based survey, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and ordinal logistic regression while qualitative data were analysed using content analysis. A Composite Empowerment Index (CEI) was used to gauge women empowerment. Women engaged in the ACGG project were categorized into higher level of empowerment than were non-beneficiaries (CEI = 0.714 and 0.529 respectively). Ordinal logistic regression results showed that age, religion, forms of marriage and involvement in ACGG project were the main predictors for women empowerment (p < 0.05). The findings showed that the ACGG project provided the enabling environment for increasing women's agency through supporting women's access to productive resources and women control over the benefits. In addition, ACGG project through Community Innovation Platforms (CIPs) provided opportunities for stakeholders networking, not only along chicken value chain, but also along other value chain among stakeholders responsible for gender integration and community development at large. The study recommends for development stakeholders such as Local Government Authorities (LGAs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), and private sectors to scale up improved chicken intervention to other areas. These entities should also engage in the provision of capacity building on how to empower women along the chicken value chain at the district level.

Key words: Women empowerment, Composite Empowerment Index, African Chicken Genetic Gain

1.0   INTRODUCTION

There is an emerging consensus within the international development community that gender equality and women's empowerment are important goals for human rights and for achieving a range of economic and social development objectives (Assaad *et al.,* 2014; Johnson *et al.,* 2017). Women's empowerment occupies a prominent place among 17 global goals and 169 indicators adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015 as of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (Lee and Finlay, 2017). Women empowerment came into the limelight at Beijing conference in 1995 (UN, 2015). However, twenty years after the Fourth World Conference on Women, no country has fully achieved equality and empowerment for women and girls (van Eerdewijk *et al.,* 2017; UN, 2015; UN, 2014).

Power imbalance between women and men originates from gender inequalities, which are exacerbated by the on-going discrimination and weaknesses in laws, policies, institutions, and social relations (Fox, 2018). The power imbalance or disempowerment manifests itself in women's lower education level, less income, less control over their own income, less bargaining power, less participation in decision making bodies, and less access to production inputs and resources than is the case with men (Hossain and Jail, 2011).

Women empowerment is an active, complex, and multidimensional process, which enables women to realize their full potential and power in all spheres of life (Mathialagan, 2014; Mathialagan, 2015; Pan, 2017; Gupta, 2017). Women empowerment comprises various dimensions such as economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political and psychological (Malhotra *et al.,* 2002; Assaad *et al.,* 2014). Women empowerment is a complex concept, which can be defined and interpreted differently from diverse standpoints. In this paper, women empowerment is considered from socio-economic dimensions. Thus, women socio-economic empowerment is a process whereby women gain access to and control over economic resources, and ensuring that they can use these to exert increased control over other areas of their lives (Hunt and Samman, 2016; Taylor and Pereznieto, 2014).

The conceptualization of women empowerment is mainly based on three defining elements namely agency, resources, and achievement that are common to the empowerment frameworks (Kabeer, 2005). The first defining feature is that of agency, which is the "ability to define one's goals and act upon them" (Kabeer, 1999) or the ability to control various aspects of one's life (Kishor and Gupta, 2004). The second element is access to and control over resources (materials, human and social) that a woman acquires from multitudes of relationships in the various domains of family, market, and community. Finally, the broader setting that characterizes the circumstances of a woman's life such as marriage, living arrangements, household wealth, and characteristics of influential family members shape the opportunities and choices available to her (Kabeer, 1999).

Throughout the world, development partners such as governments, NGOs, and development organizations are concerned with women empowerment. Many efforts to empower women at household and community levels have been focusing on raising women's status through education, and training (Hunt and Samman, 2016; Aslam, 2013; Jeckoniah *et al.,* 2012). Other efforts have been on access to health and family planning services, increased women representation in decision making organs, involving women in credit and microfinance

programmes as well as legal counselling and support (Jeckoniah *et al.,* 2012; Kumar, 2015). In recent times, development practitioners have incorporated women empowerment objectives into the design and implementation of their agricultural projects and programmes (Jeckoniah *et al.,* 2012; Johnson *et al.,* 2017). For instance, in the livestock sector, the African Chicken Genetic Gain (ACGG) project in Tanzania has introduced genetically improved chicken breeds in rural areas with the aim of increasing smallholder chicken productivity and women empowerment (ACGG, 2015). Due to the complexity and multidimensional nature of women empowerment, various factors could influence differently the extent to which women are empowered in different contexts (Akter *et al.,* 2017; Assaad *et al.,* 2014). Rigorous evidence on the determinants of women empowerment in specific agricultural development projects is limited (Johnson *et al.,* 2017; Tesfaye *et al.,* 2018). Therefore, this paper examines the determinants of women empowerment in the context of improved chicken production in selected districts.

The paper was guided by women empowerment theory. Kabeer (2005) considers empowerment as comprising three dimensions namely, agency, structures, and relations. Agency represents the processes by which choices are made and put into effect. A person or group's agency can be largely predicted by their asset endowment. Assets are the stocks of resources that equip actors to use economic, social, and political opportunities to improve their lives (Alsop *et al.,* 2006). Structure comprises institutions that govern people's behaviour and influence the success or failure of the choices that they make. Institutions can be formal or informal. Formal institutions include the sets of rules, laws, and regulatory frameworks that govern political processes, public services, private organizations, and market. Informal institutions include "unofficial" rules that structure incentives and govern relationships within organizations, informal cultural practices, value systems and norms that operate in households or among social groups (Alsop *et al.,* 2006). Structure can have recognizable forms, such as how households are organised (monogamous, polygamous, etc), producer groups, development agencies, government institutions and laws (Farnworth *et al.,* 2013).

Relations are closely linked to structures and agency. Relation is the ability to create, participate, and benefit from networks or coalitions. Relations are about the connections people have both within and outside their communities. Thus, relations are about women's freedom to participate in women's groups; women's freedom to take part in coalitions to claim their rights to land and other resources; women's being directly acknowledged and worked with by development partners; women's participating actively in value chain partnerships, such as in producer and marketing groups and in value chain platforms (Farnworth *et al..* 2013). In this paper, the theory assumes that the determinants of women empowerment could be determined through the dimensions of agency, structure, and relations. Women empowerment could be realised if the agency increases to the extent that women can influence positive change to the social institutions and actively network with other stakeholders.

2.0   METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Bariadi and Muheza District Councils in Simiyu and Tanga Regions respectively. Bariadi and Muheza District Councils were among the areas that had benefited from the ACGG project. Other District Councils that had benefited from ACGG project are Masasi, Newala, Ruangwa, Lindi Rural, Mbeya Rural, Ileje, Njombe Rural, Wanging'ombe, Manyoni, and Iramba. Others are Bahi, Chamwino, Kilombero, Morogoro Rural, Korogwe, Maswa, Misungwi, and Sengerema. Bariadi and Muheza Districts were purposefully selected as study areas due to the socio-cultural and socio-economic differences between them. Bariadi District is dominated by agro-pastoral Sukuma people, in the hinterland, while Muheza District largely comprises diverse ethnic groups, relying on agriculture and with more inclination to coastal culture. Therefore, the difference between the two districts perhaps could bring a different picture in terms of the determinants of women empowerment. In each district, three villages were included that is Mwamoto, Byuna and Ibulyu from Bariadi District and Kwaisaka, Kisiwani Nkumba and Mlingano villages from Muheza District.

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design, which enables the observation of two or more variables at a single point in time. The design is useful for description purposes as well as for the determination of relationships between variables (Babbie, 1990). The design is commonly used in survey research to differentiate at least two categories of people (Malamsha, 2014). This paper determined the relationships between the selected independent variables and women empowerment (dependent variable) in the context of keeping improved chicken.

The sampling unit of the study was women aged 18 years and above. The population of the study comprised both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of African Chicken Genetic Gain intervention. The beneficiaries of ACGG intervention were those who were provided with improved chickens, whereby each participating household received 25 pre-brooded and pre-vaccinated chickens. Lists of ACGG beneficiaries and of non-beneficiaries from village registers were used as sampling frames. Simple random sampling using lottery method was used to select sample from the list of names selected from each village. The sample size was 240 women (120 beneficiaries and 120 non-beneficiaries from Bariadi and Muheza Districts respectively). These were determined using Cochran's formula (1977). $n = {}^{N}/{1 + N\,(e)^{2}}$ Where: n   =   Sample size; N = the population size; e = the level of precision or sampling error, estimated in percentages (0.05).

Mixed methods of data collection were used whereby quantitative methods were used to determine cause-effect relationship among the variables, respondent's characteristics, trends, and beliefs of people while qualitative methods were used to get in-depth information about the variables. Mixing of the methods was considered useful as it provides triangulation of information (Creswell, 2013). A structured questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data on household socio-economic characteristics, assets ownership, access to productive resources and socio-cultural settings related to the production of improved chicken. Qualitative data on women empowerment and improved chicken were collected from May to June 2018 using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The criteria of selecting KIIs and FGDs participants were based on their knowledge and skills on improved chicken production and

gender issues. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involved women and men keeping improved chickens or those participated in various trainings on the management of improved chicken. The

issues that were discussed in FGDs included the role of stakeholders in chicken value chain that is from access to productive resources, production, marketing, and consumptions of the chicken products. Twelve FGDs were conducted in six villages. In each village, two FGDs comprised men only and women only. The number of participants in each FGD ranged from 8 to 10, this is in line with advice by Barbour (2011) and Bryman (2004) that if the FGD participants are too many some of them just sit idle without giving their opinions and that if they are too few they may not be able to discuss difficult topics effectively.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were held with people who were believed to have in-depth understanding and knowledge on chicken production and the role of improved chicken keeping in promoting women empowerment. Key informants included 2 District Livestock and Fisheries Officers (DLFOs), 2 District Community Development Officers (DCO), 6 Village Extension Officers (VEO) and 2 ACGG zone coordinators. The issues that were explored during key informant interviews included leaders and individuals' views on women issues in the context of chicken production. Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis technique after organising the data into different themes that addressed the objectives. A tape recorder and a checklist were used as tools for data collection in both FDGs and key informant interviews.

Content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. Transcriptions were done after every interview and FGD. Data were organized into different themes and were interpreted to reflect the objectives of the study. Quantitative data were entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS version 20) computer software and analysed by using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and mean), F test, and ordinal regression model. Women empowerment was measured by developing a Women Empowerment Index (WEI). Commonly used indices for measuring women empowerment included Household Decision Making Index (HDMI), Domestic Consultation Index (DCI), Personal Autonomy Index (PAI), Economic Decision Making (EDM), and Freedom of Movement Index (FMI) (Haque *et al.,* 2011; Jeckoniah *et al.,* 2012; Kundu and Chakraborty, 2012). However, in this paper, a Household Decision Making Index (HDMI), a Domestic Consultation Index (DCI), a Personal Autonomy Index (PAI), and a Freedom of Movement Index (FMI) were adapted to construct a Composite Empowerment Index (CEI). The CEI denoted by Y in equation (1) was constructed by averaging the above four women empowerment indices, which are HDMI, DCI, PAI, and FMI.

Y = 1/4 (HDMI+DCI+FMI+PAI)…………………………………..…… (Equation 1)

The Composite Empowerment Index (CEI) was further categorized into four levels of empowerment, "no empowerment" for an average of 0, "low empowerment" for an average range from 0.1 to 0.5, "medium empowerment" for an average range from   0.6 to 0.7, "high empowerment" for an average score from 0.8 and above. The empowerment levels were categorized based on Human Development Index developed by UNDP (2005).

Factors that influence women empowerment were determined using ordinal logistic regression model. The model was relevant because the dependent variable (Y) was classified in terms of ordered empowerment levels (low, medium, and high). Ordinal logistic regression is appropriate when the dependent variable is at ordinal level with more than two categories (Agrest and Finlay,

2009). The model is defined as:

$$P(Y) = 0\underline{e^{\alpha+ \beta 1x1 + \ldots \beta kxkk}}$$

$$1 + e^{\alpha+ \beta 1x1 + \ldots \beta kxk}$$ ………………………………..…….. (Equation 2)

Where:

P(Y) = the probability of the success alternative occurring, Y = dependent variable, e = the natural log, α = the intercept of the equation, β_1 to β_k= coefficients of the predictor variables, X_1 to X_k = independent variables entered in the regression model.

In this study, the dependent variable Y represented three levels of empowerment. Thus, the model was used to estimate the factors that influence the probability of being in a certain level of empowerment (Composite Empowerment Index (CEI)). The independent variables (Xs) included age, family size, education, religion, type of marriage, involvement to ACGG interventions, organization member, and Community Health Insurance Funds (CHIF) member.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 *Socio-economic profile of the respondents*

The respondents from both ACGG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries had a mean age of 42 years, which is a productive and active working age group. This means that age suggests that the selected women were the best representative sample since most of them were experienced and well informed on issues concerning decision making in the household and were engaged in various economic activities. Details on the age of the respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: **Distribution of respondents by socio-economic characteristics (n=240)**

Variable	ACGG Beneficiaries (n=120)		Non-Beneficiaries (n=120)		All	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Age						
15-24	2	1.7	6	5	8	3.3
25-54	92	76.7	91	75.8	183	76.3
55-64	16	13.3	20	16.7	36	15
65 and Above	10	8.3	3	2.5	13	5.4
Education						
Informal education	28	23.3	27	22.5	55	22.9
Primary	83	69.2	87	72.5	170	70.8
O-level	9	7.5	5	4.2	14	5.8
A-level	0	0	1	0.8	1	0.4
Marital status						
Single	12	10.0	9	7.5	21	8.8

Married	98	81.7	97	80.8	195	81.3
Separated	3	2.5	4	3.4	7	2.9
Widow	7	5.8	10	8.3	17	7.0
Marriage forms						
Monogamy	68	69.4	73	75.3	141	72.3
Polygamy	30	30.6	24	24.7	54	27.7
Religion						
Christian	56	46.7	55	45.8	111	46.3
Muslim	36	30.0	39	32.5	75	31.3
None	28	23.3	26	21.7	54	22.5
Economic activity						
Crops & livestock	100	83.3	102	85.0	202	84.2
Crops, livestock & petty trade	20	16.7	18	15.0	38	15.8

The majority that is, 69.2 and 72.5 percent of the ACGG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries respectively among the respondents had attained primary education. This level of literacy was enough to allow access to information and integrate it in various economic activities including access to productive resources.

The results showed further that over 80 percent of the respondents were married. Monogamy was the most common form of marriage with 72 percent of the respondents falling into this category. All ACGG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries depended on agricultural activities (crop production and livestock keeping) as their main economic activities through which they derived their livelihoods. Moreover, livestock keeping was mostly dominated by chickens.

3.2   Women empowerment levels and socio-economic factors

The findings reveal that, overall, women in the study area were categorised into medium level of empowerment (CEI = 0.622). Women who participated in keeping improved chicken had higher empowerment (CEI = 0.714) level compared to those who did not (CEI = 0.529) (Table 2). The CEI of the ACGG beneficiaries were statistically different from that of non-beneficiaries (F = 40.20, P < 0.001).

Statuses of women empowerment by socio-economic variables are shown in Table 2. The empowerment of women in Bariadi District was a little higher (CEI = 0.648) than that of women from Muheza District (CEI = 0.595). This is because Bariadi is dominated by agro-pastoral Sukuma people whereby women are mostly engaged in poultry keeping while men dominated in keeping large animals such as cattle. Therefore, decisions regarding chicken keeping were mainly under women control. It was found further that empowerment level among the widowed, separated, and single women (CEI = 1.000) was higher than that among married women (CEI = 0.534).

Table 2: Status of Women Empowerment by Selected Socio-Economic Variables

Socio-demographic variable	Mean index		
	Muheza	Bariadi	Muheza & Bariadi
1. District	0.595	0.648	0.622
2. Participation			
-Women with ACGG chicken	0.685	0.743	0.714
-Women without ACGG chicken	0.505	0.553	0.529
3. Marital status			
-Single	1.000	1.000	1.000
-Married	0.466	0.594	0.534
-Separated	1.000	1.000	1.000
-Widow	1.000	1.000	1.000
4. Marriage(Form)			
-Polygamy	0.586	0.621	0.617
-Monogamy	0.456	0.572	0.503
5. Wives reside the same compound with the husband			
No	0.600	0.657	0.648
Yes	0.458	0.571	0.511
6. Education status			
- No formal education	0.522	0.728	0.695
- Primary education	0.604	0.589	0.598
- Secondary education	0.575	0.833	0.627
7. Age group			
15-24	0.625	0.350	0.488
25-54	0.557	0.629	0.594
55-64	0.650	0.738	0.689
65 and Above	0.900	0.917	0.908
8. Economic activities			
-Farming and livestock keeper	0.623	0.647	0.635
-Farming, livestock and petty trade	0.447	0.658	0.553
9. Religious			
-Christian	0.615	0.608	0.611
-Muslim	0.582	-	0.582
-Paganism	-	0.698	0.698

Based on the type of marriage, women who are in polygamous marriage had higher level of empowerment (CEI = 0.617) compared to women in monogamous marriage (CEI = 0.503). The findings indicate that women in polygamous marriage who spend most of their time alone are not directly affected by the patriarchy system at the household level. They were engaged in most of decision making about their lives; therefore, they had the opportunity of being empowered because decision making rests on women themselves.

The empowerment level was found to increase with an increase in the level of education of the respondents in Muheza District, while in Bariadi District the trend was different perhaps because of having big numbers of women with no formal education. In Bariadi 38.3 percent had no formal education as compared to 7.5 percent of the respondents with no formal education in Muheza District. In this case, tacit knowledge accumulated over life experiences could have played a significant role on women empowerment. Furthermore, women empowerment level was found to be increasing with age for all groups of respondents. Christian women (CEI = 0.6170) were found to be more empowered compared to Muslim women (CEI = 0.5787) perhaps because patriarchal belief is more common in Islamic than in Christian religion.

3.3 Determinants of women empowerment

Ordinal logistic regression model is used to model the relationship between an ordered multilevel dependent variable and independent variables (Lu, Wang and Tolliver, 2019). For this study, the values of the dependent variable (women empowerment) had a natural order; and they were measured at low, medium, and high levels of empowerment. Therefore, the model was appropriate in determining the influence of independent variables on women empowerment. Model fitting information showed statistically chi-statistic ($p \leq 0.05$). This indicates the presence of association between the dependent variable and independent variables. The Pseudo R- Square was 0.590 Cox and Snell while Nagelkerke was 0.677, implying that 67 percent of variation in women empowerment was explained by a combination of the independent variables entered in the model. The results on the test of parallel lines observed ($p > 0.05$) signify that the lines are parallel.

The results of ordinal logistic regression model (Table 3) reveal that age, religion, type of marriage and involvement in ACGG project were the most important factors for women empowerment in Bariadi and Muheza Districts ($p < 0.05$). The age of the respondents significantly influenced women empowerment. The positive coefficient of age implies that women empowerment increases with age. As women become older, the level of respect increases due to the recognition of their contribution to the household. Therefore, older women gained confidence in decision making at the household level, domestic consultation, freedom of movement and personal autonomy. This result conforms to reports by Heshmati (2017); Nyange *et al*. (2017); Peterman *et al.* (2015). In contrast to this result, Jeckoniah *et al.* (2012) found that women at younger ages and those aged above 50 years had lower level of empowerment. This implies that the influence of age on women empowerment varies according to the context and nature of intervention. In the current study, women beyond 50 years were also found to have high level of empowerment.

Involvement of women in ACGG had negative coefficient and strong influence (Wald = 76.88) on women empowerment. This implies that women who were not involved in ACGG intervention were relatively less empowered than were their counterparts. The involvement in ACGG project enabled women to access resources, training, and advice related to the production of improved chickens and gender relations. In FGDs, most of the participants who benefited from the ACGG revealed that their level of income was increased due to the support provided by the project. This finding was affirmed by a key informant who reported that:

> *"Women who are engaged in the ACGG project are more empowered than non-beneficiaries. Access to productive resources of improved chickens enables them to benefit from the selling of eggs and cocks. Therefore, women's earnings from improved chickens provide opportunities for them to contribute to the households and to be involved in decision making" (KII one at Kwaisaka village, 10.05.2018).*

Similar findings, as reported by Haghighat (2014), showed that access to resources enables women to advance their social status and power. However, the findings in this study showed that apart from women's access to productive resources, ACGG project provided enabling environment for stakeholders' engagement particularly in challenging the existing social structures that hinder women empowerment. The realization of women empowerment depends on how interventions are tailored to increase women's agency, to challenge harmful social institutions and to enhance networking for mutual benefits.

Table 3: Factors influencing Women empowerment (n=240)

Variables	CoefficientS.E		Wald	Sig.	95% C. I	
					L.B	U.B
Age	.048	.019	6.373	.012	.011	.086
Family size	-.042	.071	.343	.558	-.182	.098
Education	.067	.065	1.051	.305	-.061	.194
Type of marriage	-1.481	.462	10.264	.001*	-2.387	-.575
ACGG beneficiary	-4.598	.524	76.883	.000*	-5.625	-3.570
CHIF member	.051	.399	.016	.899	-.731	.832
Organizational member	-.297	.374	.630	.427	-1.030	.436
Religion	-1.956	.498	15.451	.000*	-2.931	-.981

p = 0.000; Goodness of Fit=1; Cox and Snell R^2= 0.590; Nagelkerke R^2= 0.677; Test of Parallel line = 0.849

It was further revealed that there was significant variation in women empowerment across religions ($P < 0.01$). Christians were more empowered than were Muslims and therefore Bariadi District is more empowered than Muheza as it is comprised mostly of Christians (66%) and traditional beliefs, while Muheza is comprised of 62 percent Muslims (Table 4). Christianity beliefs provide opportunities for women to have certain powers of control over household assets as compared to Islamic beliefs that ascribe man as the overall controller of the household resources and benefits. The results are in line with Njoh and Akiwumi (2012) who reported that Christianity has positive influence on women empowerment than Islamic religion. Christianity beliefs put more emphasis on the collaboration of women and men on the issues pertaining to

access to and control over the household resources. For example in the Bible, Paul insisted cooperation among women and men in social life (Gal 3:28; 1 Corinthians 11:11; Galatians 3:28). However, this depends on how people are affirmed to Christianity beliefs.

Moreover, the results indicated that most of the Sukuma people being Christians in Bariadi have strong affiliation to their cultural norms and beliefs, which actually subordinate the position of women and girls. For example, one of the key informants reported that:

> *"... the traditional dance known as mbina promotes early marriage whereby girls are denied the right to education" (KII two, Bariadi District, 05.06.2018).*

In addition, another key informant reported that:

> *"...girls are advised not to work hard in schools by their mothers. When it happens that girls pass their exams in primary school, mothers are likely to be divorced. Girls are expected to get married soon after primary schooling so as to bring wealth in terms of dowry price to their fathers" (KII three, Mwamoto Village" , 01.06.2018).*

The results are in line with those reported by James (2018) that religious beliefs are among the driving forces for discriminatory practices against women. The result implies that social institutions including most of religious beliefs and practices continue to restrict women from accessing productive resources, income, and education that in turn constrain women empowerment efforts. Changes of the harmful institutional settings (structure) and religious beliefs in particular could enhance women empowerment especially through improving women access to productive resources and women control over the assets.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by religious affiliations (n=240)

Muheza			Bariadi		
Religion	**Frequency**	**%**	**Religion**	**Frequency**	**%**
Christian	46	38.3	Christian	79	65.8
Muslim	74	61.7	Muslim	1	0.8
Traditional beliefs	0	0.0	Traditional beliefs	40	33.3
Total	120	100.0	Total	120	100.0

Moreover, there was significant women empowerment variation among the types of marriage (p < 0.01). In a monogamous system, the man's power over the control of resources is stronger than in a polygamous system whereby one woman may be left alone to make her own decisions. Muheza District with a high proportion of Muslims is dominated by monogamous system of marriage contrary to the report by Newbury (2017) who said that polygamous system is more common in Islamic societies. The difference could be location specific and other socio-economic forces that have changed attitude towards small manageable families.

Majority of participants in the FGDs reported that women in polygamous marriage were more empowered than were those married in monogamous marriage. In polygamous societies, women who reside on different compounds with their husbands, have chances of being more empowered. They have the opportunities of making own decisions particularly when the husband is absent or frequently living with another wife. These results were affirmed by one of the key informants at Ibulyu village in Bariadi who said:

> *"One of the women benefits in polygamous system is responsibility of making most of the household decisions including management of improved chickens because the husband spends most of the time with another wife. (KII four, 26.05.2018).*

Similar results have been obtained by Newbury (2017) who noted that most of the women in polygamous unions exercise a level of control over the use of resources generated from small income generating activities. However, patriarchy dominance in many settings continues to persist (Lauwo, 2018). For example, one of the key informants from Muheza District reported that:

> *"Patriarchy dominance is very common in Muheza District, overall decisions over the control of productive resources and benefits accrued from income generating activities continue to be under men's control" (KII five, 09.05.2018).*

This implies that in both polygamous and monogamous forms of marriage, there is a certain level of men dominance at the household level. Therefore, even if women are supported with productive resources, which improve their income generating activities, their motivation is likely to be restricted by patriarchy culture.

4.0   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ACGG project provides the enabling environment for increasing women's agency through supporting women's access to productive resources and women access to benefits. In addition, ACGG project mobilized engagement of diverse stakeholders for increasing women's agency, challenging harmful social institutions, and enhancing networking along the chicken value chain.

Social cultural institutions play an important role of either supporting or hindering women empowerment efforts. For instance, women empowerment was higher in polygamous system than in monogamous systems of marriage because polygamous system provides opportunities that promote women self-autonomy. However, a patriarchy culture dominates among both monogamous and polygamous systems of marriage. Despite the positive influence of Christianity beliefs on women empowerment, traditional institutions continue to restrict women from accessing productive resources, income and education which in turn constrain women empowerment efforts.

In view of the above results and conclusions, it is thus, recommended that

- Policy makers and development partners should integrate components of gender equality in policies, programmes, and projects.
- Development stakeholders such as Local Government Authorities, Non-Governmental Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, private sectors, donors, and individuals should provide improved chicken intervention to other areas.
- Capacity building on how to empower women should be done by various stakeholders along the chicken value chain.
- Awareness creation on harmful religious and traditional beliefs should be done at various levels from the community to the national level.

The study propose that further studies should look at (i) How cultural beliefs and practice influence socio-economic women empowerment in different context (ii) How different religious beliefs and practices enhances or hinders women's access to productive resources and women

access to benefits and (iii) The relationship between co-ownership (legal) of household assets and socio-economic women empowerment.

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