Assessing Gender Relations in Ginantuzu Community in Simiyu Region of Tanzania

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ABSTRACT
Concerns regarding gender relations vary depending on the context. Thus, this study assessed gender relations in the ginantuzu community of the Simiyu region in Tanzania. Specifically, the study determined community opinion on gender relations in land access and control, gender differences in crop production, and domestic works in the Ginantuzu community. The paper is based on qualitative data which were obtained through interviews and literature reviews. Primary data were collected by using interviews with the ginantuzu people of Mwamoto and Byuna villages in the Simiyu region. A convenient sampling technique was used to select a sample of 20 families from the two villages. Qualitative data were analysed by content analysis, where the researcher developed sub themes that reflect the objective of the study. Unlike other research, gender relations in the Ginantuzu community are not regarded as stances of gender inequality. In the Ginantuzu community, for instance, gender relations and practices in household chores, land access, and control, and agriculture do not imply gender inequality. Both sexes adhere to the norms associated with their respective genders. However, like other communities, ginantuzu women are constrained by the burden of triple roles, which is furthered by limited access to technology and a lack of technological innovations. Interventions aimed at addressing the burden of women in agricultural activities, reproductive roles, and domestic roles are recommended.

KEYWORDS
Gender relations, Gender inequality, Gender equality, Ginantuzu community, Land access and control, agricultural activities, domestic activities.

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1. Introduction
Gender inequalities have become a setback for our society as it has led to a loss of economic, social, and political opportunities for half of the world. Women are discriminated against in all spheres, political, social, cultural, and economic aspects. The issue of gender inequality has been publicly echoing throughout society for decades (UN, 2023; Wani and Dastidar, 2018). This implies that gender inequality is an issue that impact societies worldwide, including Tanzanian communities, for a long period of time. Over the years, women have made great strides in many areas, with remarkable progress in sinking some gender gaps. Yet, the afflicted world in which we live is characterized by deeply unequal sharing of the burden of adversities between men and women. Sprawling inequalities persist in their access to education, health care, physical and financial resources, and opportunities in the political, economic, and social evil. Although governments throughout the world have taken some steps to improve women's lives, gender inequalities still exist (UN, 2023; Wani and Dastidar, 2018). Halfway through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the world is failing to achieve gender equality, making it an increasingly distant goal. Deeply rooted biases against women, manifesting in unequal access to sexual and reproductive health, unequal political representation, economic disparities, and a lack of legal protection, among other issues, prevent tangible progress (UN, 2023). Due to the global concern about eliminating gender inequalities, a growing interest in this topic has encouraged organisations like the United Nations to research gender inequality internationally and to develop a mechanism for comparing the level of inequality in each country (UN, 2023; UN, 2014; Feinstain et al., 2010). Studies on gender inequality in Tanzania showed that men are considered the primary holders of economic and political power; they are ultimately the decision-makers regarding social expectations and norms (UN, 2023; Kongela, 2020;
Gender inequality in Tanzania is portrayed in a variety of social and economic aspects. For instance, women face major constrain in accessing land for agriculture. Nearly three-quarters of all landholders are men (Nchansi et al., 2021; FAO, 2014). Leavens and Anderson (2011) revealed that customary laws constrain women’s land rights. Although the statutory framework prohibits discrimination, customary laws are deeply ingrained, and women often do not know their rights to land nor their ability to protect these rights through village councils and the judicial process. Although the current land laws address gender inequalities pertaining to women’s access to, ownership of, and control over land, the impact of such reforms has been minimal. The current study entails to determine community opinion on the existence of gender inequality in land access and control in the Ginantuzu community.

In agricultural production, gender inequality originated from social norms that determine the role of women and men in the community at large. For instance, a study by Kongela (2020) in Kisarawe and Mkuranga revealed that varieties of crops produced are gender specific; women were engaged largely in subsistence crops such as maize, paddy, cassava, and vegetables, while men were mainly engaged in profitable and marketable crops such as coconut, cashew nuts, oranges, and mangoes. The differences in types of crops produced among men and women are perceived as gender inequalities. Men are expected to earn income from cash crops, while women are expected to produce food for the family. However, it is not clear whether such differences are persived as gender inequality in ginantuzu society. The current study entails to find out the perception of ginantuzu people towards gender differences in crop production.

So far, gender inequality in Tanzania persists across various sectors, hindering women’s social, economic, and political advancement. Research on gender inequality can be studied from varied disciplines such as agriculture, education, health, employment opportunities and politics. In this paper, an assessment is made of the existence of gender inequality in access to productive resources and agricultural activities, as well as gender roles in the context of the Ginantuzu community. As scholars (Akter et al., 2017; Leavens and Anderson, 2011; Feinstain et al., 2010) assert, gender inequality is determined by social norms that are diverse and context specific in Tanzania. Therefore, understanding social norms in different contexts is paramount. Therefore, this study intends to assess gender inequality in the Ginantuzu community in Simiyu, Tanzania.

The study employ three theories, namely socio-cultural theory, biological-essentialist theory, and functionalist theory. The functionalist approach holds society with the interdependent parts which constitute the whole. So, gender relations, in this approach, gets place in a very functional way, which is formed at the beginning of history. In ancient times, there was a very useful and efficient division of labor between men and women; hunter and gatherer societies allocate men as hunter and outsider and women as mother, nurse, and housekeeping (Lindsey, 2011). According to functionalists, this division of labor derives from biological differences between men and women. According to the biological-essentialist theory, gender differences arisen from biological make up between men and women. Men and women have distinct genetic and hormonal features that determine masculinity and femininity (Fine, 2017; Richardson, 2013; van Anders, 2013 and; Dar-Nimrod and Heine, 2011). A socio-cultural theory view gender as an emergent feature of social situations rather than a property of individuals (Parker et al. 2017). According to the socio-cultural explanation, girls and boys, and later on men and women, are being treated differently by others in a way that creates and reinforces gender differences (Saguy, 2021). Therefore, in this study, gender relations in the Ginantuzu community is determined through socio-cultural and biological construct.

2. Literature Review
A growing strand of literature on gender equality in agricultural land ownership in rural areas shows that women are not accorded the same rights as men (FAO, 2018; Asantemungu, 2011; Deere and Doss, 2006; Dery, 2015; Doss et al., 2018; Doss et al., 2015; Ikdahl, 2007; Ikdahl et al., 2005). Although women comprise about 43 percent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, only a small fraction of farmland is owned by women in some form of secure long-term tenure (Prosterman, 2013). For instance, it is reported that men in rural Tanzania make most of the decisions concerning agricultural activities, among other major family decisions (World Bank, FAO, and IFAD, 2009). Gender difference in land resources is manifested by gender norms and traditions of specific locality. Therefore, understanding the nature of gender differences requires focusing on a specific locality. Thus, this study entails to unveil gender relations in agricultural production in the Ginantuzu community in the Simiyu region.

Lusasi and Mwaseba (2020), in their article entitled: “Gender Inequality and Symbolic Violence in Women’s Access to Family Land in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania,” revealed that women have equal rights to land. Tanzania enacted two pieces of legislation: the Land Act and the Village Land Act, both in 1999. While recognizing existing customary rights, these laws decentralized the land administration system to village councils, and prohibited discriminatory practices preventing access to land by women (URT, 1999). Specifically, Section 3 (2) of the Village Land Act stipulates: “the right of every adult woman to acquire, hold, use, deal with and
transmit land by or obtain land through the operations of a will, shall be to the same extent and subject to the same restrictions as the right of every adult man.” Despite the assurance of land access stipulated in the land laws, land access remains skewed more to men than to women, although practice has improved somewhat (Pedersen, 2015). Gender systems are diverse and complex as they are determined by community norms and values (Akter et al., 2017). Thus, the current study seeks to assess gender differences in land access and control in the ginantuzu community.

In Tanzania, Kongela (2020) revealed that women were engaged largely in subsistence crops such as maize, paddy, cassava, and vegetables, while men were mainly engaged in profitable and marketable crops such as coconut, cashew nuts, oranges, and mangoes. Gender inequality in agricultural activities was not by choice but was due to structural issues (Heavens and Anderson (2011). It has been observed that social norms and traditions continue to detect gender division of labour as far as agricultural activities is concerned. Social norms and traditions in agricultural activities are not the same across cultures. In general, gender inequality has been extensively researched by many scholars (Kongela, 2020; Mwaseba, 2020; FAO, 2018; Doss et al., 2018; Akter et al., 2017; Dery, 2015; Doss et al., 2015; Asantemungu, 2011; Deere and Doss, 2006; Ikdahl, 2007; Ikdahl et al., 2005). So far, little is known about the nature of the gender division of labour and land control in the Ginatunzu community.

3. Methodology
The study employed the case study design where the Ginatunzu community from Mwamoto and Byuna villages in Simiyu Region were selected as the case study. The study used qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is highly contextual as it incorporates people’s own motivations, emotions, prejudices, and incidents of interpersonal cooperation and conflict (Gray, 2004; Charmaz, 1995).

Non probability sampling was employed, where a sample of 20 families from two villages was selected through a convenient sampling technique. Qualitative data on issues pertaining to gender relations in domestic activities, land access, agricultural activities, and family support were gathered. Primary data were collected through unstructured interviews, while secondary data was collected through literature reviews extracted from publications like journals, books, and reports. Primary data and secondary data were analysed through a content analysis where the researcher developed sub themes which reflect the objective of the study. Content analysis involves the making of inferences about data by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics (classes or categories) within them (Booth et al., 2008).

4. Results and Discussion
The findings of this study revealed that the Ginatunzu people have a rich cultural heritage of traditional practices land tenure systems. The dynamics of gender disparities in land rights among the ginantuzu community, social norms, and traditions contribute to what scholars term gender inequalities. However, unlike many claims made by scholars such as Kongela, 2020; Mwaseba, 2020; FAO, 2018; Doss et al., 2018; Akter et al., 2017; Dery, 2015; Doss et al., 2015 about gender inequalities, the Ginatunzu community does not view some traditional practices, especially in agricultural production, as gender inequalities. This study ascertained gender relations in the ginantuzu community in various aspects such as land resources access, crop and livestock production as well as domestic activities.

4.1 Gendered Access to Land Resources
The findings show that in Ginatunzu community, the system of land inheritance is passed through men side. Women have no share of land from the family of origin. Women are considered to own land together with their husband through marriage union. This system of land inheritance is accepted by the ginantuzu community as it ensure protection of land resources over generations. For instance, one of the woman respondents said:

Ginantuzu: Unkima agadulile kubiza na nsi gete. Isi ikabizaga ya bhagosha.Twabasanga abhabyaji biswe agitaga chene kwinga kale. tugadule gupinula tukuzung’wa nabhtale biswe.

English: a woman cannot own land property at all. Land belongs to men. We have found our parents having that practice over years. We cannot change; we will be cursed by our ancestors).

Widows were entitled to own land only when there is no son, or the son is to young. This system of land tenure enables the family members to remain intact with the widow and ensure protection of land. However, when the widow wants to establish new marriage has to leave and handle the family land to the husband’s family. This is a common practice in ginantuzu community and does not mean injustice among women rather land preservation for future generation of the same clan. One of the woman confirmed that:

Ginantuzu:.......Isababu inhale kuilinda nsi ni shikolo shayo. Ulu shimbe utolwa hangi, imali yakwe ikajaga na ngosha kulanguno ituzujimila.
When the widow remarries, ownership of the productive resources will also shift to the second husband. If the widow desires to re marry, they ask her to leave the house and establish new life in another area.

One of the key informants said that.

Ginantuzu: abhanatunzu bhali na malika, agalindagwa na ngosha giti umwili kaya kwangaliwa na ngosha. Abhakimya bhatinhang’wa kubhiza bhangalizi kulwanguno bhali na milimo ningino, nichene bhatina mulamiji bhugololoku umung’walida

English: ...... “Ginantuzu recognize family as an economic firm; therefore, one should stand as manager, so in the household, the husband is the manager. Women were not entitled to be managers because they have multiple roles to play and therefore they are not stable in decision making, especially for major issues of the family.”

The results are in line with the findings from Kongela (2020) in Tanzania or elsewhere, as it is the fact that there are other societies in the country where discrimination against women on accessing and owning agricultural land is still significantly higher, mainly due to persistent patriarchal and cultural norms that prevail in those societies. However, in Ginantuzu society, land inheritance through the male side is not considered discrimination in land ownership and access, so long as the benefits accrued from that land are shared among all members of the households. When the husband dies, women continue to own and access land. She can lose her ownership and access status only when she decides to remarry. This is a strategy to protect land and avoid some conflicts among members of the households.

4.2 Gender Relations in Crop and Livestock Production

Gender relations in crop and livestock production is determined through gender norms, which determine who is managing what. In the Ginantuzu community, women and men have specific roles to play in the household. The main economic activities of Ginantuzu are crop production and livestock keeping. With respect to crop production, men are focused on cash crops, while women are focused on food crops and leguminous crops.

One of the participants said:

Ginantuzu: Kulwakubhiza namilimo ningi abhakima na hanguno hangi na ya wibhyaji, bhakwisanga bhabanile. Bhakolima shakulya hile na mukaya abho, ukwipande la sikolo, abhakima bhakasabhaga ngoko lelo Mbuli, ng’holo na Ng’ombe bhagosha.

English: "Women are consistently participating in domestic works as well as agricultural activities around home stead. In livestock keeping, women own and manage small animals such as poultry. Large animals like cows are actually managed and owned by men.”

The findings from the Ginantuzu community, which is a patrilineal system, are consistence with that of Kongela (2021), who revealed that even in a matrilineal society, women engage largely in subsistence farming mainly on annual crops such as maize, paddy, cassava and vegetables. High involvement of women in agricultural activities was not by choice but was due to structural issues. Men were mainly engaged in permanent crops such as coconut, cashew nuts, oranges, mangoes and in non-agricultural activities.

Another respondents said:

Ginantuzu: Abhakima bhatagujaga ishiliwa bhila kubhuja kubhagosha. Bhakabhujaga nulu kulomba kubhagoshi bhabho ili bhzunilijiwe

English: Women are free to sell and use income from food crops for household consumptions. They need to seek permission when they want to sell cash crops. Women are considered to make light decisions because of they are engaged mostly with multiple activities around home.

The findings imply that disparities in crop type by gender in agriculture is evidenced in both patrilineal and matrilineal societies of Tanzania. It is a strategy which enable both men and women to participate effectively in their respective roles (Berker, 1991). Engagement of women in agriculture around home stead provides opportunities for them to engage in biological roles/caring. Therefore, the division of labour in the Ginantuzu community is a technique for managing household resources for the benefit of all family members. For instance, working around home stead for women signifies an enabling environment for doing the caring role and reproductive roles. However, limited technology and innovations continue to increase the burden of women’s triple roles.
4.3 Gendered Domestic and Productive Activities

At the household level, domestic activities are mainly organized on a gender basis. In the Ginantuzu community, women engaged mostly in their reproductive roles and other task productive roles around the home stead. Men, on the other hand, participate effectively in production roles and heavy duties like drought farming. The division of labour in Ginantuzu is not a new thing, as it started with the existence of hunters and gatherers. Therefore, the Ginantuzu community are firmly attached to their traditional believes, and the gender division of labour is clearly demarcated; for example, one of the respondents said:

Ginantuzu: abhanantuzu bhakugije bhatale bhabho na giki abhakima bha ginantuzu bhakugije getegete, alibhuhaya na gushika mabhadiliko abhakima bhatimo ugumambo ga bhulaya

English: “Ginantuzu people respect and believe their gods strongly; Ginantuzu women seems to maintain their traditional believes and practices. For the majority, it is normal to adhere there traditions. When it comes to the changes of gender roles, they are resistant to the changes; they say we cannot do that foreign thing”.

Another respondent said:

Ginantuzu: …… guduhu nyanda nulu ndosha kwita milimo ya mukaya giti guziga, gufula, gukola ng’wi na gudaha minzi. Abhagosha bhagitaka milimo midim giti guzenga numba na gulima ng’ombe ……abhakima atitaga imilimo midimu, bhagabhwilaga abhagoshi gutola ungi, bhangi kubhambilija…..aligiki ucha ngo shi obho, unkima untale okangalilaga iling’walida.

English: It is strictly prohibited for a boy on man to engage in domestic activities such as cooking, washing utensils, fetching water, fetching firewood, etc. Men should engage in heavy duties such as ploughing, preparation of firewood, building houses, etc. In case the woman cannot effectively engage in all domestic work, they advise their husband to marry another wife. ..... in our community, it is common to find many wives reside together on the same compound under the supervision of a husband, and if the husband is not around, then the first wife stands on behalf of the husband.

Contrary to the findings, Jaspers et al. (2022) posit that in low income countries, inequality is reflected in women’s responsibility for childcare and domestic tasks. Division of labour of men and women have originated from the distinct genetic and hormonal features that determine masculinity and femininity (Fine, 2017; Richardson, 2013; van Anders, 2013 and; Dar-Nimrod and Heine, 2011). In the Ginantuzu community, women participation in child and domestic work is considered as a normal household arrangement of tasks. Additionally, the division of labour in the Ginantuzu community manifests from their traditions and cultural orientations, which places women in domestic work and men in heavy duty/outside works. This finding is in line with social cultural theory. The Ginantuzu community is perceived to be wealthier than other communities in the sukuma tribe due to their commitment to labour participation. The results have been supported by one of the key informants who said:

Ginantuzu version: Ubhiswe abhantuzu tulibhasabhi no kunguno ya bhutumami wa Milimo ni Milimo yiswe ikigile ya bhakima na bhagosha.

English version: Nyantuzu community is very rich because of hardworking and that our works are divided basing on gender context of Men and Women.

The finding above is consistent with Becker’s ‘new home economics’ (NHE) model. Becker (1991) revealed that It is more efficient for women with lower socio-economic resources to specialize in domestic work. In Becker’s perspective, specialization is the most efficient way to organize household duties, resulting in the highest possible production and partners would rationally decide on which division would benefit the entire household most. Thus, the ginantuzu community provides evidence of the community which become economically active due to the efficient gender division of labour.

5. Conclusion

Gender relations meant differently depending on social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. In the Ginantuzu community, gender relations is defined within the framework of traditional norms and practices. For instance, gender division of labour is perceived as a normal arrangement of responsibilities which enables women and men to effectively participate in daily routine. The land tenure system is male based; however, the land tenure system in ginantuzu is not claimed as gender inequality; rather, it is land inheritance that aimed at protecting land for the household and the coming generations. Daughter owns land through their husband, while sons inherit land from their fathers.
With respect to domestic work, ginantuzu confine women to do all domestic chores, and men were engaged in heavy duties activities outside the home. In Agriculture, crop and livestock production is gender based. Women participate in producing food crops while men in cash crops. Large animals such as cattle are managed by men, while poultry are managed and owned by women. Gender differences in domestic work, crop production, and livestock rearing are perceived as normal arrangements by both men and women. However, women are constrained by triple roles due to inadequate technological innovations in agricultural activities, domestic work, and reproductive work that increase women’s burdens in triple roles.

The burden of women in triple roles should be addressed through time saving technologies and rural innovations. For example, the use of biogas rather than firewood/charcoal, the use of mechanized equipment for agricultural production and processing, investing in developing infrastructures such as roads, schools, hospitals, and markets. Thus, the Government and other development partners should prioritize and invest in affordable social services, infrastructure, agricultural technologies, and energy-saving technologies.

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