

Building Sustainable Livelihood for Rural Women: The Case of Women Members of Agricultural Cooperatives in the Districts of West Shewa Zone

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Abstract

Agricultural activity is the main backbone of economic activities of Ethiopia and above 80% of livelihood activities of Ethiopian residence were rely on agricultural activities. Recently, the government has given attention for the development of agricultural irrigation activities to increase income level of the households. Multipurpose agricultural cooperatives societies play crucial role to bearing sustainable food security for communities and empowering rural women in socio-economic cavities. The centric role of primary multipurpose agricultural cooperative societies is increasing incoming level of the societies and reducing the consequence of vulnerability which adversely affects the exposure of livelihood outcomes of members in cooperatives. In the study, the performance of agricultural cooperative societies to build sustainable livelihood for rural women had been clearly evaluated and the majority of rural members in cooperative had access different types of assets pentagon after joined cooperatives. West Shewa zone has 22 districts and out of the existing districts, six districts were selected to carry out the research study for evaluating the effort of agricultural cooperatives to build up sustainable livelihood for rural women in cooperatives members. The total population of rural members in the focused study area were 4,867 and sample size of the research was 356 and it determined by using Kothari formula. The main objective of the study is to assess the role of primary agricultural cooperatives in enabling women to cope with stresses and shocks through building sustainable livelihood; evaluate the factors affecting the role of agricultural cooperatives to build up sustainable livelihood for rural women. The study employed mixed method research approach as research design. It also employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The study implies that, the primary multipurpose agricultural cooperatives societies did not deliver the expected livelihood assets to its membership and some parts of the members could not satisfy to the cooperatives due to sometimes inequality treatment appeared among their own cooperatives. The study also indicated that the cooperatives has promoted the culture of members diversify from consolidated from specific farming activities to multidimensional activities, in this sides, before joining cooperatives, the major of members were not engaged in cultivation of cash crops and vegetables and fruits but after joined cooperatives they were commenced to cultivate those activities which promote their livelihood activities. The income level of members had been increased after joining cooperatives and they can sustain their livelihood in better situation by survive every associated cost comes to their living standards. The stress likes declining fertility of soil, declining farm size, declining common property resources, declining of rainfall or sometimes heavy rains are the common stress that faced women in cooperatives and disposed to them to decreasing their livelihood assets or income. Therefore, in order to cope from these risks and stress, the members needs support from their cooperatives with integrated government organ in ways of enabling them to access adequate livelihood capitals such as natural, human, physical, financial and social capitals and access of livelihood outcomes of women in cooperatives impacted by the factors of accessing livestock, land, labor and capitals.

Key words: Building Sustainable livelihood, rural women and agricultural cooperatives

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable livelihood is the dependent variables that affected by other factors. The variables such as influence of transforming structure and process, livelihood strategies, vulnerability context, assets pentagons, factors affecting role of primary cooperative societies are shocks and stress, participation and problem face of rural women in cooperatives are the common factors that influence sustainable livelihood or livelihood outcomes of rural women. Thus, sustainable livelihood is a comprehensive result of reduced vulnerability context, increased income and production trend and improved food security. By enabling women and men farmers, or women only, to come together for purposes of acquiring inputs, production services, and the marketing of their produce, among others, agricultural cooperatives enhance productive capacity and give access to markets to those such as women small holders who when operating individually would not be able to benefit from these opportunities due for instance to a low purchasing power, a lack of productive assets, or cultural barriers. While women's presence in agricultural cooperatives in Africa is limited (because of factors such as landownership patterns, the division of roles and types of jobs in agriculture), women are

becoming increasingly cooperatively organized in agriculture, and there is solid evidence that cooperative membership enhances productivity, incomes and the quality of life for both the members as well as the community at wide.

Sustainable livelihood is interconnected with varies independent variables such like vulnerability context (stress and shocks, adverse trend and changes), role of cooperatives societies, participation of members in cooperatives, problem face of members in cooperatives, influence of transforming structures and process and livelihood strategies is predictive variables that influence sustainable livelihood of communities. The concept of livelihood has attracted widespread attention from development agencies and analysts during recent years. Cooperative has played a significant role in improving the livelihood status of the communities or societies by accelerating production capacity of their members which in previous time they did not engaged in. The members of cooperatives has generated good livelihood outcomes after joining cooperatives by availing different modality services from the cooperatives and their pentagon assets indicated improvement with increasing from time to time. Overall, the members are benefited from their cooperatives and their production capacity has increased above 50% as compared with before their joining cooperatives.

The researcher has modified set of conceptual framework by DFID framework to further assess the role of primary multipurpose agricultural cooperative societies in building sustainable livelihood of rural women through investigate the influence of transforming structures, policies and process of cooperatives, factors affecting role of primary cooperative societies, shocks and stress, participation level and problem of rural women in cooperative which highly impact sustainability livelihood of rural women.

Livelihood assets: refer to the resource base of the community and of different categories of households. Different types of livelihood assets available to local peoples or rural women such as human, natural, financial, physical and social. These assets are interlinked to each other,s.

- ❖ **Human capital:** household members, active labor, education, knowledge and skills
- ❖ **Physical capital:** livestock, equipment, vehicles, houses and irrigation pumps
- ❖ **Natural capital:** access to land, forests, water, grazing, fishing, wild products and biodiversity.
- ❖ **Financial capital:** savings/debt, gold/jewelry, income, credit, insurance
- ❖ **Social capital:** kin networks, group membership, socio-political voice and influence

Livelihood strategies: are "the range and combination of activities and choices that people make in order to achieve their livelihood goals." On the basis of their personal goals, their resource base and their understanding of the options available, different categories of households - poor and less poor - develop and pursue different livelihood strategies. These strategies include short term considerations such as ways of earning a living, coping with shocks and managing risk, as well as longer-term aspirations for children's future and old age.

A **livelihood system:** is the total combination of activities undertaken by a typical household to ensure a living. Most rural households have several income earners, who pursue a combination of crop and livestock, farm, off-farm and non-farm activities in different seasons to earn a living. Income brought by different household members may be pooled in a common "pot" or "purse" or income earners may hold part of it back for personal spending money. Finally, participation in community-level socio-cultural and political activities is part of the livelihood system. The livelihood system also includes the total pattern of labor allocation of household members between crops, livestock, off-farm work, non-farm business and reproductive and community tasks.

Cooperatives & Sustainable Livelihood of Rural Women

Chambers and Conway (1991:6) have defined sustainable livelihood as follows: Sustainable livelihood is a livelihood which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood for the next generation; and which contributes net benefit to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long terms.

The rural poor in developing countries are often at a competitive disadvantage in the wider economy because of persistent market, state and institutional failures. They may face difficulties in selling their small agricultural surpluses because of the prohibitively high transactions costs incurred in assembling, transporting and marketing these surpluses. Smallholders may be unable to access necessary public sector services needed to sustain and improve their livelihoods services such as input supply, output marketing, credit provision, or conflict mediation because the state's infrastructure is insufficiently responsive to their needs (Spielman and Bernard, 2007:1).

In developing countries, among the poor, rural women are the poorest and more vulnerable groups of society. Women in rural areas are more adversely affected by poverty than men. The incidence of poverty among rural women is on the rise in most of the developing countries (ESPS, 2005). No doubt that poor women who lack access to productive assets and services, are vulnerable to various shocks and stresses. Rural cooperatives can promote the development of not only the livelihood of women, but also of rural development. Governance & Social Development Resource Center (2007) has reported that rural based cooperatives can promote the participation of women in economic production, which in turn helps in food production and rural development through cooperatives; women are able to unite in solidarity and provide a network of mutual support to overcome cultural restrictions to pursuing commercial or economic activities.

Multi-purpose agricultural cooperatives deliver credit services to the members so as to endorse their investment in agriculture and other economic activities. Access to credit to finance micro, small and medium enterprise generates employment and incomes. Low-cost savings facilities for the poor and small depositors, particularly women, help to reduce vulnerabilities to shocks such as medical emergencies, and encourage future investments, including education and small business enterprises. These in turn contribute to the sustainable livelihood of rural women (GSDRC, 2007:5). Cooperatives can play important roles in overcoming the barriers faced by women and in supporting small agricultural producers. Evidence shows that cooperatives have the capacity to empower their members economically and socially by create sustainable employment through equitable and inclusive business models that are more resilient to shocks. Cooperatives offer small producers a range of services, aimed at improving the livelihood of its members (Harris, 2010).

Factors Affecting Women Participation in Cooperative

The world over, statistics show that women's participation in cooperatives is low, especially in rural cooperatives. In the developing world, cultural and religious factors are often hinder its movement: women's "inside" role, discretion, not speaking in front of men, traditions of men negotiating and handling money matters, illiteracy, family size supposed inferior abilities, and social pressures make it difficult for women to play an active and visible public role (Journal of International Women's Studies, 2002).

To date women's active involvement and leadership in agricultural cooperatives continue to be rather low. Beyond the social, political and economic constraints, women often face cultural barriers that restrict their involvement in public meetings or that place their domestic responsibilities before their economic or social involvement in agricultural cooperatives. In some countries, this is due to the basic fact that only owners and tenants of land, most often men, can become members of agricultural cooperatives or that the fee charged for cooperative membership is beyond the means of economically dependent rural women (FAO, 2010).

The reasons for the persisting gender inequality are numerous and complex, but include, among others factors, basic structural and socio-cultural issues beyond the control of the cooperative movement – such as inequalities in access to resources, education and training, unequal division of labour and use of time between women and men as well as stereotyped conceptions on the roles of women and men as well as legal constraints stemming from cooperative law or, as is more of frequently the case, related legislation (property, land and inheritance rights) or cooperative by-laws (Eva M., 2010). A research conducted on Socio-economic factors affecting the participation of women in agricultural co-operatives in Gwoza local government, Borno state, Nigeria revealed that cultural beliefs and low level of education were found to be the major problems militating against women participation in co-operatives (YL Idrisa, et al, 2007).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND SAMPLING

The study employed a mixed research design, uses both primary data and secondary data collected to evaluate the role of cooperatives in enabling rural women to access livelihood capitals, modality service of the cooperatives to the rural women, to assess the influence of shocks and stress on livelihood outcomes of rural women and to assess the factor affecting the role of agricultural cooperatives in building sustainable livelihood of the rural women. FGD and interview methods were also employed so as to identify the factors affecting participation of women in cooperatives and their livelihood activities. Research survey has

been collected from 356 respondents of the twelve primary multipurpose agricultural cooperatives societies selected in six districts of West Shewa Zone.

The role of primary multipurpose agricultural cooperatives societies in building sustainable livelihood of rural women were investigated in detail through focused on Six Districts of West Shewa Zone selected. The researcher purposively used the large proportion of women members of primary multipurpose agricultural cooperative societies to determine the focus area of District and target of area of multipurpose agricultural cooperatives to avoid the sample biased. There were exist 481 primary multipurpose agricultural cooperatives societies in the zone and the researcher had selected six districts purposively rely on the large proportion of members of rural women and from each Woreda two Primary multipurpose agricultural cooperatives societies were selected purposively that had faith large proportion of members of rural women in primary agricultural cooperatives for further assessing the role of primary multipurpose agricultural cooperatives societies in building sustainable livelihood of rural women.

West Shewa zone had 22 districts or in local language Woreda and only six districts selected purposively focusing on the large proportion of rural women members in agricultural cooperatives and from each selected districts; two PMACS generally 12 were chosen based on large proportion of members of rural women in cooperatives. The total population of the target cooperatives was 4,867 and difficult to contact all population due to time and budget constraints. For this fact, the researcher had used Kothari (2004) formula to determine sample size that present true value of population and the determined sample size had been contacted by using simple random sampling methods. Thus, sample size survey from members of multipurpose agricultural cooperatives is 356 and from the two discussions focus group is to be 16 and key informant interview is 3 respondents. Therefore, the total samples size including key informant interviewee and focus discussion group is to be 375.

The role of PMACS in Enabling Rural Women to Access Livelihood Capitals

As far as the outcomes of sustainable livelihood framework are concerned, increased income is one of key indicators for sustainable livelihood (Turner, 2001). Increased income has great significance for livelihood of rural women for it affects their livelihood choices to significant degree. With increased income, they can better access social services, diversify their livelihood sources and cope with stress and shocks. Cooperatives served as source of income to the women by distributing the profit in the form of dividend. Cooperatives can play important roles in overcoming the barriers faced by women and in supporting small agricultural producers. The data from the survey shows that cooperatives have the capacity to empower their members economically and socially and to create sustainable employment through equitable and inclusive business models that are more resilient to shocks.

Role of PMACS to enables rural women to access livelihood assets

View for cooperative to improve livelihood assets		Degree of Agreement				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think it was the right decision to join cooperative	Count	22	9	44	100	181
	%	6.2%	2.5%	12.4%	28.1%	50.8%
I feel more secured now than before joining the Cooperative	Count	53	17	49	114	123
	%	14.9%	4.8%	13.8%	32.0%	34.6%
Cooperative helped me in becoming economically independent	Count	66	13	58	95	124
	%	18.5%	3.7%	16.3%	26.7%	34.8%
Cooperatives helped me to access resources otherwise which I couldn't	Count	66	14	75	93	108
	%	18.5%	3.9%	21.1%	26.1%	30.3%
I think other women also should join cooperative if they have to improve their lives	Count	23	18	65	113	137
	%	6.5%	5.1%	18.3%	31.7%	38.5%
I thought cooperative help me better than expectation	Count	62	36	77	89	92
	%	17.4%	10.1%	21.6%	25.0%	25.8%
I am afraid to withstand if troubles occur to my life	Count	119	52	85	34	66
	%	33.4%	14.6%	23.9%	9.6%	18.5%
I am just wasting my time by participating in	Count	193	79	31	20	33

cooperative	%	54.2%	22.2%	8.7%	5.6%	9.3%
I think that they are men who shall participate in cooperative rather than women	Count	49	58	113	54	82
	%	13.8%	16.3%	31.7%	15.2%	23.0%
In my opinion cooperative lacks ability to changes women's lives	Count	179	62	28	35	52
	%	50.3%	17.4%	7.9%	9.8%	14.6%
Cooperatives are ways of incurring adequate livelihood capitals	Count	56	15	98	103	84
	%	15.7%	4.2%	27.5%	28.9%	23.6%
Cooperatives are the place where inequality promoted and disrupt interest of rural women.	Count	180	96	16	11	53
	%	50.6%	27.0%	4.5%	3.1%	14.9%
I thought that cooperatives with affordable price provide agricultural inputs for us and source of our funds.	Count	31	24	66	103	132
	%	8.7%	6.7%	18.5%	28.9%	37.1%
Principles of cooperatives not clearly practiced due to either private or government interfered.	Count	73	44	61	89	89
	%	20.5%	12.4%	17.1%	25.0%	25.0%

Source: From Researcher survey, 2023

n=356

The researcher has provided different questions to the rural women members of primary multipurpose agricultural cooperative societies to evaluate the cooperatives activities to bring improvement in livelihood assets of the member's cooperatives. Regarding the question that I think it was the right decision to join cooperative about the frequency of 50.8% (181) and 28.1% (100) were strongly agree and agree respectively from those rural women responded, understood that to join cooperatives was the first choice to improve livelihood assets and improve the income level of the members more than before joining the cooperatives. Some numbers of respondents that 6.2% (22), 12.5% (9) and 12.4% (44) were strongly disagree, disagree and neutral respond respectively. The majority of the respondents were confirmed that strongly agree and agree which it is more prefer to join cooperatives to get adequate service within a period. The majority of participants 34.6%(123) has strongly agreed on I feel more secured now than before joining the cooperative, followed by 32% (114) which was agreed that I feel more secured now than before joining the cooperatives, 14.9% (53) and 4.8%(17) of the participants were strongly disagree and disagree respectively and 13.8%(49) of respondents were responded that neutral. This implies that, the primary multipurpose agricultural cooperatives societies did not deliver the expected livelihood assets to its membership and some parts of the members could not satisfy to the cooperatives due to sometimes inequality treatment appeared among their own cooperatives.

Majority of participants 33.4%(119) were strongly disagree and 23.9% (85) of respondents answered neutral, this mean the cooperatives has promoted self-confidence rather than fright survive for which the sudden disturbance would be appear to daily life of the members of cooperatives. About 18.5% (66) and 9.6%(34) were strongly agree and agree, this was the contrary to the positive implication of cooperatives, meaning the some participants reflexed their suggestion that feeling afraid for which sudden trouble coming issue in their life. Concerning I am just wasting my time by participating in cooperatives, 54.2% (193) and 22.2%(27) of respondents reflexed their response in state that strongly disagree and disagree respectively, this result shows that the participating in cooperatives act as the membership got adequate resource and realized independently coped with from shocks and stress. In others, some participants about 9.3% (33), 5.6% (20) and 8.7% (31) had been responded that strongly agreed, agreed and neutral as participating in cooperatives.

Concerning, the cooperatives are ways of incurring adequate livelihood assets, about 28.9% (103) strongly agree response, 27.5%(98) and 23.6%(84) of respondents of rural women had responded that neutral and strongly agree that cooperatives sufficiently provided livelihood assets to its members and about 15.7% (56) and 4.2%(15) of respondents of rural women are strongly disagree and disagree that the cooperatives provide adequate livelihood assets to the membership of cooperatives. From this survey, the scholar understood that primary multipurpose agricultural cooperatives societies has not adequately performed on contribution of livelihood assets to the members of cooperatives specially for rural women with reason out poor linkage of cooperatives with the government and NGO on getting subsidiaries materials that can sustenance all members of cooperatives.

The members has got physical assets from their respective cooperatives such as pump water, house utensils, furniture and fixtures, drip irrigation, plough disc and tractor. In others, cooperatives had delivered training service and scholarship service for some number of members relied on the members who could not follow their education due to lack of resources to continuously follow their education program. The participants on interview also clearly stated the modality service and role of

cooperatives had in increasing the access of resource, as result , cooperative had provided service to their members such agricultural inputs (variety seeds, herbicides, pest insect, irrigation materials), fertilizers, and credit service where are the mains service provided by the cooperatives with affordable prices. The great issued raised during the interview was the cooperatives did not delivered such modality service upon the time and they delivered after the majority of agricultural activities taken without got agricultural inputs which promoted the productivity level. The issues rose as instance was distribution of fertilizer both DAP and UREA, pest insects and herbicides are provided after some agricultural activities adversely affected. Thoroughly, the participants on interview, they acknowledged that the role of cooperatives should have been provide all agricultural inputs upon time and other modality service upon time of agricultural activities to be carry out to promote production trend of the members of cooperatives.

Livelihood Activities of women in Cooperatives

The mainstream of economic activities in Ethiopia is the agricultural farming that exist at first stage followed by industrial development and in building sustainable livelihood activities of women, agricultural activities is the best alternatives in cooperatives to improve daily life of women by improving their livelihood outcomes by diversification of farming. Under herewith clearly stated what women has engaged in livelihood activities to improve their livelihood outcomes.

The result of the study shows that 72.8% of respondents have engaged in agricultural farming and 7.6 % participants are involved in cattle rearing to cope with the stress and shocks and improve their livelihood outcomes. The majority of the respondent had engaged in farming activities to subsistence of their living and some part of participant has engaged in mixed livelihood activities such as cattle rearing and farming activities were the main common among the mixed livelihood activities. Among participants, 9% of respondents have reacted as they engaged in petty trading service such like kiosks and retail trade of consumer good, distribution of construction materials and small stationery shops. Some of participants 5.1% and 3.7% has involved in craftwork or aircraft and labor work correspondingly. Minimal participants 2% has involved in others activities such as retail trade of cereals crops, commission work as agents, knitting or interweaving garments, mining gypsum stone or quarry of materials that used for gypsum broad work and aggregate crushing hard stone for housing construction, those are main the activities of rural women to bearing dynamic change for their lives habits or to empower their living conditions. When the livelihood strategies pursued generate adequate food and income and the household is resilient against shocks such as drought and price fluctuations the outcome will be sustainable livelihood.

The majority of participants are engaged in farming activities which activities is more sensitivity easily affected by others factors such shortage of rainfall or heavy rainfall at harvesting time, soil fertility status, political stability of farming area. Therefore, concentrated on one of livelihood activities might be reasonable to the rural women missed to cope with from shocks and stress that will be sudden comes to their farming activities, so engaged in different livelihood activities or diversification of business is the main mechanisms to mitigate shock of stress events run thorough the livelihood of human beings.

During research survey, the researcher had observed that the main livelihood activities of the members were rely on farming activities such cultivation of cereals crops (teff, maize, sorghum, wheat and barley) and followed by petty trading service which was off-farm activities such as retail trade of cereals crops, retail trade of kiosks and consumer goods and services (small shop), distribution of construction materials in small scale and aircrafts (pottery, weaver and knitting garment) to empower their subsistence of livelihood activities. Sustainable livelihood can be ensured by what household members achieve through their livelihood strategies, such as levels of increased productivity, increased income, reduced vulnerability context (health, well-being, asset accumulation and high status in the community). Thus, in order to improve the livelihood of women members or communities, the intention of government work with cooperatives and running to solve poor accessibility of agricultural ingredients is the best strategy to enhance socio-economic development such as increased earning capacity, create employment opportunities and increased infrastructure facilitates and social welfare. Unsuccessful livelihood outcomes commenced from lack of accessing of sufficient farming inputs, variety seeds, credit services and political stability that could be sensitive for food and income insecurity, high vulnerability to shocks, loss of assets and impoverishment and poor secured livelihood assets.

Women members in cooperatives has engaged in different agricultural or farming activities such as cultivation of cereals crops, pulses or oilseed, cash crops and vegetables and fruits were the common activities and off-farm activities included petty trading services, labor work and air craft or hand crafts to ensure their subsistence of living. The common ways of the members earned cash is through selling their agricultural productivities and then return to use for accessing the consumer goods and services from the petty trading service available surrounding their living. Before joining cooperatives, the majority of the participants or members were not participate in cultivation of cash crops and vegetables and fruits to earn more assurance about their livelihood

outcomes and subsistence to nurturing their consumption without constraints. However, after joining cooperatives, the majority of the members has been started to cultivate Cash crops and vegetables and fruits by supported the awareness creation of their cooperatives and training service inline of agricultural product diversification (Daniel, 2023).

The main types of cereal crops cultivated by members are maize, sorghum, wheat, barley, white and red teff are the common activities. A great yield of production are used as a main source of their own food consumption and they sell some part of their agricultural products yields at their local or nearby their town for purpose of get cash to utilize for the consumption of goods and service, their child education expense, clothing or addressing expense, their farm land tenure tax and others associated cost to sustain sustainable livelihood. The rural women in cooperatives also engaged in cultivation of oilseeds or pulses such as bean, pea, soybean, lentil, and sesame for the purpose of obtain adequate cash to runs their livelihood activities in better ways and some of those product yield used for home consumption. Pulses production is the common cash earning of the women in cooperatives.

Particular of members in cooperatives has been engaged in cultivation of cash crops (coffee and spice ingredient) and vegetables and fruits of lettuce, spine, potato, tomato, sweet potato, carrot, sugarcane, cabbage and redroot, from fruits avocado, mango, banana and apples. They used partially for home consumption and the remaining supply to their nearby market service to earn cash which encourage their livelihood outcomes. As a research result shows some of members were in engaged in off-farm activities and with mixed activities means off-farm and farm activities with along together to survive their livelihood and increase their source of income. off-farm activities included petty trade, hand or air craft and labor work, hence, some of women in cooperatives has been survive their livelihood through participated in petty trading such like retail trade of agricultural products, grain milling services, kiosk or small shop, supply of stationery materials and retail trade of construction materials, from hand crafts work like pottery, woodwork, knitting or weaver garment product. For minimal number of participants used labor work as source of income to ensure their livelihood outcomes through participate in mining or quarry working activities, harvesting time to collect matured grains with relative rent price and daily force work.

During the observation of livelihood activities, the researcher had observed that specific stress react women to risk and affect their capacity to cope with shocks and stress. The stress likes declining fertility of soil, declining farm size, declining common property resources, declining of rainfall or sometimes heavy rains are the common stress that faced women in cooperatives and disposed to them to decreasing their livelihood assets or income. Therefore, in order to cope from these risks and stress, the members needs support from their cooperatives with integrated government organ in ways of enabling them to access adequate livelihood capitals such as natural, human, physical, financial and social capitals and access of livelihood outcomes of women in cooperatives impacted by the factors of accessing livestock, land, labor and capitals. For poor accessing of this factor, some of participants are faced with the problem of food consumption especially during summer from the beginning of August to end of September, due to harvested ended and the fresh crops ongoing to mature, in this period they survive by employed strategy to claims relatives or credit service from nearby friendship and

Production Capacity of women before and after Joining Cooperatives.

All members of cooperatives had engaged in different types of livelihood activities such as farming, cattle rearing, petty trading, daily labor and crafts works, retail trade of cereals crops, aggregate hard stone crushing, and mining of raw materials of gypsum stone to cope with stress and shocks that might be affect their livelihood outcomes. Accordingly, to warrant changes comes to women members through that build their sustainable livelihood from their contribution of cooperatives, the researcher has provided enquiry to the rural women who are cooperatives members inline of their production capacity of cereals, pulses and cash crops and vegetables and fruits before and after joining their cooperatives. Multi-purpose cooperatives are considered as institutional intervention to increase agricultural production and productivity. Multi-purpose cooperatives play a vital role in providing small holders with access to input (fertilizer, improved seed, pesticide input loan, chemicals, etc).

Besides, food security, multipurpose cooperative societies play crucial role to bearing sustainable food security for communities. The centric role of primary multipurpose agricultural cooperative societies is increasing incoming level of the societies and reducing the consequence of vulnerability which adversely affects the exposure of livelihood outcomes of members in cooperatives. The study implies that the cooperatives has promoted the culture of members diversify from consolidated from specific farming activities to multidimensional activities, in this sides, before joining cooperatives, the major of members were not engaged in cultivation of cash crops and vegetables and fruits but after joined cooperatives they were commenced to cultivate those activities which promote their livelihood activities. The income level of members had been increased after joining cooperatives and they can sustain their livelihood in better situation by survive every associated cost comes to their living standards.

Environmental sustainability have great role in building sustainable livelihood of women in cooperatives by ensuring their capacity to properly utilize natural resources available surrounding them without compromising the future generation and provided access of natural resources and tangible assets that advance livelihood outcomes and sustainable alive of women in

cooperatives (Daniel, 2023). The below figure 4.8 has stated clearly the production of capacity of the rural women before and after joining to the cooperatives and also the growth rate of the production elaborated in clear ways. The scholar has understood that as the primary multipurpose agricultural cooperative societies play incredible changes to building sustainable livelihood of the cooperative's members and the improvement has learnt from data obtained from primary sources like questionnaires, observation, interview and focus group discussion with the selected participants in cooperatives.

The Production capacity of rural women before and after joining cooperatives

The above figure 4.2 revealed that the aggregate production of respondents had produced quintals of cereals crops 3954, pulses crops 952.75, cash crops 1,001 and vegetable and fruits quintals 1,562.5 before joining cooperatives and the aggregate production of respondents after joining cooperatives quintals of cereals crops 6,412.24, pulses crop or oilseeds 1,520.87, cash crops 1650.10 and vegetables and fruits of 2,742.30 had been produced. The figure indicated that the production capacity of participants are increased after joining cooperatives for instance, production of cereals crops of the products has increased by 62.17% growth rate when evaluated with before joining cooperatives, the production capacity of pulses or oilseeds augmented by 59.63% growth rate as evaluated along with before joining cooperatives, production trend of cash crops and vegetables and fruits improved by 64.85% and 75.51% as gaged along with before joining cooperatives. Thus, cooperative had a significant role to improve livelihood outcomes of women in cooperatives by providing fertilizer, variety seeds, water pump, credit services and hybrid animals genesis for the respondents involved in cattle rearing and currently the capability of the cooperatives to deliver agricultural inputs on time had been decreased due to higher shortage of their accessibility from the sources.

According to Cervantess- Godoy and Dewbre (2010) study result shows that particularly, agricultural transformation is a necessary condition for economic development in the poorest countries of the world where the share of population in agriculture as well as the share of agriculture in the overall economy is high. Agricultural transformation provides agrarian nations with food for its population; increased income and saving for the farmer as well as enough produce for raw-materials and export. Accordingly, Tsakok and Gardner (2007) and Gollin (2010) amplify that income generation streams must first come from the agriculture sector, if agrarian nations should make any substantial economic and structural transformation. Therefore, agricultural activities is the backbone of economy growth of the developing country, as result agricultural transformation play an incredible change in improving the livelihood outcomes of rural residence and increasing rural-urban linkages to mutual benefiting each other's,

The study depicted that majority of participants before joining cooperatives not produced cash and vegetables and fruits and they concentrated on cultivation of cereals and oilseeds but after joining cooperatives they begun to produces cash crops and vegetables and fruits by taking training services from their cooperatives, rural development agents or extension, NGO (USAIDS, FAO,ILRI) and government organs (Federal cooperative Agency and Oromia Cooperative Promotion Office and in respective office from Regional to Worked Offices). Adapting to engage in additional farming activities had increased the capacity of membership to reduce vulnerability and capacitate them withstand by with shocks and stress probability run to their livelihood outcomes. So, it is considered as the best livelihood strategy employed to prevent uncertainty or risky events that could be discouraged livelihood activities.

Cooperative has played a significant role in improving the livelihood status of the communities or societies by accelerating production capacity of their members which in previous time they did not engaged in. The members of cooperatives has generated good livelihood outcomes after joining cooperatives by availing different modality services from the cooperatives and their pentagon assets indicated improvement with increasing from time to time. Overall, the members are benefited from their cooperatives and their production capacity has increased above 50% as compared with before their joining cooperatives.

Factors affecting the Livelihood Activities of Women in Cooperatives

The study of Prakash (2033) shows that Inadequate health care services in rural areas, inadequate water supply for household and farm operations, lack of appropriate agricultural technology aimed at reducing the physical burden of farm women, inadequate access to credit and agricultural inputs and other services, lack of female farm extension workers, lack of marketing facilities and opportunities, traditional, religious, social and cultural obstacles, less participation in decision-making and even within the household, male migration/urban drift which increases pressure on women, lack of opportunities to improve socio-economic status of farm women, lack of skills and attitudes in leadership and management development are also constraints from which rural women suffer a lot. In this study, poor access of credit service, agricultural inputs supply and marketing service, and political instability in a region were the main problem of rural women to improve their livelihood outcomes or sustainable livelihood.

Political instability and social conflicts among the factors affecting the participation of women in cooperatives is the second ranked next to highly speed costs of inputs increased. Accordingly, political instability and social conflict is the serious important problem of cooperatives for 66% of respondents while 34% of participants replied that it is as less important problem of

cooperatives. Lack of sufficient market for the final product due to similar competition or new entrant who supply same or better quality product increased in the market destination. In order to rank market status of final products of the women in cooperatives, the researcher has asked participants, as result about 48.9% of respondents responded that market saturation for the final product is less important problem and 20.5% of participants reacted that it is as an important problem while 41.9% of participants shows that don't know about the problem. Transportation service is very vital as far as reducing spatial cost of transactions in resources and out puts is concerned. Since the agricultural marketing service is heavily influenced by transportation service, the problem needs immediate response. The transportation problem is not only with inaccessibility of vehicles, problem with the road infrastructure poses additional problem for the cooperative.

As a result shown in above table 4.5, about 85.4% (304) of respondents had responded that as they faced with lacks of access of credit service, farm inputs, marketing service and dominated by the power of men. Out of respondents responded "yes" for the question „do you face any problem while working with the cooperatives“, mainstream of respondents 45.5% (162) had reacted as they encountered with the problem of lacks accessing of farm input from their cooperatives or union from which they are membered, followed by 27.2% (97) of respondents lacks accessing of credit service. A slighter number of participants nearby 10.4% (37) and 2.2% (8) had answered that as they faced with the problem of accessing market service and dominated by the supremacy of men which inherited from traditional perceptions. In others, 14.6% (45) participants had been not encountered with the problems while working the cooperatives. The study findings shows that cooperatives could not able to provide farming inputs, credit and marketing service with time which enabling rural women to build their sustainable livelihood and livelihood assets that empower them to improve their purchasing power and incomes. Such events had limited increment of capital, amount of dividend and increasing production yield and ability to reduce vulnerability of women in cooperatives.

The cooperative was provide service in adequate before three years ago (2021) as per the capacity of members to demand and relied on their farm size but recently the cooperative had reached unable to delivery what the members desires such as fertilizer, agricultural inputs, credit services and others upon time and in ways of distributing what exist resources based on biased which mean its transparency was invisible. In others, some members were come to hopeless from their cooperatives for the reality of poor accessing service and partiality activities of cooperatives delivering service relied on having strong and blood relations. Difficult political situation that had forced the cooperative to ceased services delivery to the members of cooperatives at a season, so peace is first stage for human being development and bring dynamic change in business movement, accordingly we inspired stability of politics then matter of poor accessing service from cooperatives will be solved because of leading problem of cooperatives sourced from security issue. In others, during deliveries of service, sometimes irregularities activities also visible from head of cooperativessuchaspoor transparency on service delivery and equal participation in meeting available, conflict of interest rarely had been visible to benefit some members and missed others.

Conclusion

The study revealed that as the women passed through different shocks such as main of stated are social conflict that raised from political unrest in the region, death of family members, sickness, drought, famine epidemics of pest crops and animals, loss of assets through theft or robbery, death of more valued animals and land slip are the main shocks that faced women in their cooperative.

Besides of stress, the study also depicted that the women members in cooperatives has faced with stress which could be minimize their livelihood activities such as declining of labor wages, declining of soil fertility, decreasing of their farm size, decreasing of common properties resources, indebtedness and others including declining consumption trend and decline saving habits due to inflation exploited the individual resources. The researcher also observed that strategies formulated by the respondents to copied with stress and shocks that happened through their daily activities, accordingly they employed strategies of reducing consumption, selling assets, making claim on their relatives, obtaining from government and NGO, migrating to others place and others mechanism that support them from shocks and stress. The majority of respondents have employed reduction of consumption strategies to recover from shocks and stress. Thus, reduction consumption is the ways that respondents could be handled under their power and no needed other support to carry out this strategies because of additional support not enforced from other organ in this strategies.

Cooperative has played a significant role in improving the livelihood status of the communities or societies by accelerating production capacity of their members which in previous time they did not engaged in. The members of cooperatives has generated good livelihood outcomes after joining cooperatives by availing different modality services from the cooperatives and their pentagon assets indicated improvement with increasing from time to time. Overall, the members are benefited from their cooperatives and their production capacity has increased above 50% as compared with before their joining cooperatives.

The research founded that the majority of respondents have engaged in farming activities among different livelihood activities such as cattle rearing, petty trading, craft and labor work and others included such as knitting or interweaving garments, mining gypsum stone or quarry of materials that used for gypsum broad work and aggregate crushing hard stone for housing construction, those are main the activities of rural women to bearing dynamic change for their lives habits.

Recommendations

The majority of participants are engaged in farming activities which activities is more sensitivity easily affected by others factors such as shortage of rainfall or heavily raining at harvesting time, soil fertility status and political instability of farming area. Therefore, concentrated on one of livelihood activities might be reasonable to the rural women missed to cope with from shocks and stress that will be sudden comes to their farming activities. The cooperatives incorporated with the concerned government organ should delivery training services in ways of membership comes to diversify their livelihood activities or business rather than concentrated on specific livelihood activities. The role of cooperatives had in increasing the access of resource, as result , cooperative had provided service to their members such as agricultural inputs (variety seeds, herbicides, pest insect, irrigation materials), fertilizers, and credit service is a great. The great problem was the cooperatives do not delivered such modality service upon the time and they delivered after the majority of agricultural activities taken without agricultural inputs. Therefore, proactively standby of the cooperatives to delivery core modality service is very important to build sustainable livelihood of women in their cooperatives by capacitate their production level in their livelihood activities.

Difficult political situation that had forced the cooperative to ceased services delivery to the members of cooperatives at a season, so peace is first stage for human being development to sustain sustainable livelihood and bring dynamic change in business movement, thus, the political instability which adversely affects sustainability of livelihood of community shouldbe solved because of leading problem of cooperatives sourced from security issue.

The study implies that lack of education access of women has limited their equally participation in agricultural cooperatives. Since most women have no access to education they did not recognize the advantage of some development interventions so that they are unwilling to accept something which is new for them. In other, education of women so as to develop their ability and to have confidence on their action, therefore, cooperative should facilitate the access of education with formal and informal to improve human capital of women because education is key factors that change human being and having great contribution in socio-economic development.

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