



BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
GRADUATE PROGRAM

**Characterization of Sheep Fattening Cooperatives in Ethiopia: Member Satisfaction
and Female Participation**

M.Sc. Thesis Research

By

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**Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Science (MSc.) in Animal Production**

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Abstract

Cooperatives play crucial roles in economic and social development of both men and women. The study was conducted to determine the participation of sheep farmers in sheep fattening cooperatives (SFC) in four regional states of Ethiopia with a special focus on women. Variables studied included characteristics of members, length of membership (LM), extent of participation in decision making (EPDM), satisfaction of the level of management (SLM), interaction with cooperative officials (ICO), interaction with members (ICM), satisfaction level on interaction (SLI), members taken into consideration (MTC), annual revenue of the cooperative (ARC), share of meetings attended (SMA). Fifty four legally registered SFC were selected purposively based on their current status and their accessibility. Probability proportionate to size (PPS) technique was used to determine the number of producer members to be studied. A total of 314 members and 54 chairpersons of the cooperatives were interviewed using structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics (mean, percentage and frequency) and econometric model (tobit and logit) were employed for data analysis using Statistical Analytic Software (SAS) ver. 9.2. Results showed that the majority (69.7%) of members in SFC were men. The SFC in this study showed no trend of increasing membership. Members (53.8) participated moderately in decision making, while 38% had a moderate level of satisfaction in the management. There were high levels of interaction as shown by proportions of producer members who interacted with officials (58.8%) and among themselves (60.4). The proportion of members who attended all cooperative meetings was 30.6%. There were no correlations between age of members and length of membership with other variables. EPDM was strongly correlated ($P < 0.01$) with SLM, ICM, SLI, MTC, ARC and SMA but not correlated ($P > 0.05$) with ICO. From the result of this study, majority (68.9%) of respondent members have no intention of increasing the number of sheep per fattening cycle. Poor market linkage and information, feed, cash and space ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th as factor that limit the number of fattening sheep per cycle. Internal factors were mentioned to have a strong influence on the future existence of SFC as compared to external factors. There was a significantly higher ($P < 0.05$) proportion of women membership in SFC initiated by NGOs and cooperatives that have women in the leadership positions. There was significantly lower ($P < 0.001$) proportions of women in SFC whereby members buy shares at the start-up. The level of literacy had an effect on women's participation in leadership. Women had a higher chance of being leaders in SFC that were women-based, those with higher proportions of female membership, and those with leaders who have undertaken gender-related training courses. Membership in SFC resulted in

improved women's access and control over inputs and resources, training and credit, and participation in decision making and management activities. However, their proportion and participation in leadership of SFC is still limited. Therefore, awareness creation and gender inclusive trainings, access to resources and education should be done and improved in order to involve women effectively in cooperative development.

Key words; Ethiopia, Sheep fattening, Cooperatives, Women, Participation

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Justification

Ethiopia has approximately 25.5 million sheep (CSA, 2013) grouped into about 14 traditional sheep breeds (Solomon *et al.*, 2007). They are widely distributed across the different agro-ecological zones of the country (EARO, 2000). Even though the livestock sector in general and the sheep sector in particular has a huge potential, it is constrained by shortage and fluctuation of feed in quality and quantity, poor and eroding genetic resource base, poor management practices, diseases, poor market infrastructure, inefficient service delivery and inadequate policy and institutional arrangements. To ameliorate the development constraints and realize the benefits from the huge but untapped livestock resource, efforts have been made in various aspects to develop the livestock sector. These efforts include the provision of input and services such as animal health, breed improvement, feed resources development, research, extension services and development, finance and marketing (Azage *et al.*, 2006).

There are a number of cooperatives engaged in livestock production including sheep fattening. According to FCA (2012) there are about 11, 452 registered agricultural cooperatives in the country. Cooperatives play crucial roles in economic and social development. The social role of cooperatives is promoted through voicing of common goals, enhanced participation in value chains, and protection of producers from unfair pricing. Cooperatives also create opportunities for networking and working in partnership with other agencies. Taking this into account, Ethiopia has formulated a five year cooperative development programme. This demonstrates that the federal and regional governments have realized the contribution of cooperatives to economic and social development, food security and poverty reduction in Ethiopia (Bezabih, 2009).

The key to being a successful cooperative is to perform functions and provide services needed and desired by its members to their satisfaction (Liebrand *et al.*, 2014). Attitudes of members towards their cooperatives have a significant impact on their cooperative participation behavioural intentions. The attitudes people hold towards an organisation could, and do influence their behaviour towards that organisation. The more positive attitude one holds towards an organisation, the more likelihood it is that the person will patronize or use a service

from it, according to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). The level of knowledge of cooperative principles and commitment to these principles positively influence some of the success of cooperatives success (John *et al.*, 2006; Amodeo, 2007; Amini and Ramezani, 2006; USDA, 2002).

Furthermore, interpersonal and management factors influence success of cooperatives (Russoa *et al.*, 2005). Cooperatives in many African countries comprise of resource-poor farmers, which makes external assistance necessary for the group to achieve various economic gains from their successful cooperatives (Chambo *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, Hill *et al.* (2007) reported that assistance (technical and financial) that acts as motivation for farmers, government policies, regulatory frameworks and market factors are essential external factors in the success of cooperative. These factors can influence the success of cooperatives, especially in developing countries, where cooperatives are still underdeveloped.

In Ethiopia, women participation in agricultural cooperatives is generally very low. Women face major obstacles in joining and being active members of typically male-dominated cooperatives. Due to prevailing gender norms and relations, women have a lower socio-economic status compared to their male counterparts, which limits their opportunities to access and participate in formal groups. Freedom of women is constrained by men's control over their mobility, by socio-cultural expectations that they are primarily responsible for all domestic work, and in relation to this, by their uneven reproductive, productive and community work burdens. Their restricted access to, control over, and ownership of land, credit, and information, as compared to men, disadvantage them from meeting conditions of formal group membership and leadership (FAO, 2011b; World Bank, 2009).

The number of cooperatives in the country is increasing with an increasing rate and these cooperatives in have received significant attention by researchers over the past ten years, highlighting their potential strength and limitations (FCA, 2012), however sheep fattening cooperatives are not well studied and characterized. In order to design relevant research that suits the country, it is essential that researchers understand the prevailing situations. For the research to be effective and to meet the needs of the cooperatives, characterization of sheep fattening cooperatives and understanding of their existing performance is vital to devise appropriate development interventions.

With the factors that contribute to women participation in agricultural cooperatives, in Ethiopia, women are engaged in different cooperatives including consumers, saving and credit, construction, handicraft, diary, and different multi-purpose cooperatives (Oxfam International, 2008). However, the current involvement and participation of women and the challenges against women involvement in SFC in Ethiopia has not well been studied. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the participation of women within SFC and the challenges and constraints that adversely affect the benefits from their membership. In general the aim of this study was to characterize sheep fattening cooperatives by evaluating member satisfaction and women's participation in Ethiopia.

1.2. Objectives of this Study

1.2.1. General Objective

The overall objective of this study was to assess how sheep fattening is undertaken by cooperatives in Ethiopia.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

- To characterize sheep fattening cooperatives in Ethiopia
- To study member's perceptions on future opportunities of SFCs in Ethiopia
- to evaluate women's participation within SFC

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Sheep Fattening Systems in Ethiopia

2.1.1. Rural Smallholder Sheep Fattening System

This system generally depends on grazing natural or planted pastures with variable degrees of supplementation. Animals require a long period of time to attain market weight and condition. It is also associated with huge fluctuations in the weights and conditions of the animals depending on feed availability. This system can be improved to supply animals of acceptable condition to slaughterhouses for ultimate export. The conditioned animals may also go into a finishing operation targeted to supply the local market. Several improved traditional systems are in use, but they are not widespread. For example, systems of sheep fattening exist in the Adillo area of the southern region where conditioned animals are fattened by feeding sweet potatoes and other high value ingredients. These fattened animals fetch very high prices (Alemu and Merkel, 2007).

2.1.2. Urban and Peri-urban Sheep Fattening System

These are fatteners within and near the main cities, where almost over half of the households make their major source of living from agriculture and livestock keeping (Azage *et al.*, 2002). The number of lambs per fattening batch relies on cash available. Feeding strategies rely on a combination of grazing (if available) and concentrates. Many small-holders close to urban areas were involved in these systems as the livestock production form fitted well with other household employment strategies (Hartwell *et al.*, 2006). The number of sheep per household varies from those with 3 sheep to those with 10 sheep, with average number of 7 animals per household (Azage *et al.*, 2002).

2.2. Basic Concepts and Definitions of Cooperatives

Cooperation has been the very basis of human civilization. The inter-dependence and the mutual help among human beings have been the basis of social life (Krishna, 1992). However,

modern type of co-operative enterprise has its origins in the 19th century and has become one of the most ever-present example forms of business/economic enterprise.

Different authors defined cooperatives in different ways and meanings. For instance, Center for Cooperatives (2002) defined cooperative as a private business organization that is owned and controlled by the people who use its products, supplies or services. Although cooperatives vary in type and membership size, all were formed to meet the specific objectives of members, and are structured to adapt to members' changing needs. Chukwu (1990) Contemplate cooperative as a democratically controlled business i.e. it is owned and controlled by the members and gives benefit to the members.

However, the International Cooperatives alliance (ICA) defined cooperative in 1995 as an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise (ICA, 1995). The statement is often supplemented with the distinguishing features of seven principles adopted by ICA. Moreover, according to the 1995 statement, cooperatives function based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others (ICA, 1995).

2.3. The Cooperative Sector in Ethiopia

The inter-dependence and the mutual help among human beings have been the basis of social life. Since the beginning of human society individuals have found advantage in working together and helping one another; first in foraging, then in hunting, later in agriculture and still in manufacture (Krishna, 1992).

Cooperation is an age-old tradition that runs through the history of Ethiopian society. For centuries, the spirit of self-help has been an integral part of farming communities. However, despite the existence of 19147 various types of cooperatives in Ethiopia, with a membership of 4.076 million, smallholder farmers are still continued to be under-served, exploited and marginalized (Appendix VII). Since 1991, Ethiopia has been undergoing major political and economic changes. The authoritarian centrally planned and controlled economy of the previous

two decades is being replaced by free-market economic development. In line with the government's plan to privatize business, NGOs' funding is helping to restructure these cooperatives to become farmer owned and controlled, democratic and transparent (FCA, 2005).

2.3.1. Traditional Farmer's organizations

In Ethiopia farmer's organizations have a long history. The traditional forms of farmer's organizations were not formal types rather they were informal. These organizations vary from place to place according to the culture and economic activities of the area where they undertake their activities. The traditional self-help groups may be classified into two main categories. These are: work groups whose members help each other in rotation or jointly carry out farming activities like (Jigie, Wonfel) and rotating saving and credit type association whose members make regular contributions to a revolving loan fund (Iqub). However, these traditional organizations have not yet been developed to the modern cooperatives or any other kind of business organization (Zerihun, 1998).

2.3.2. Modern Cooperatives Movement

Over 40 years have been counted since the modern farmer's cooperatives came into existence in Ethiopia. The first period to the emergence of modern cooperative societies was during the Emperor Haileselesie ruling period in 1961. During the imperial ruling period, modern cooperatives in the agriculture sector came in to existence mainly to undertake commercial agricultural production for export purposes.

During this time the first cooperative legal action was made and it is known by Decree number 44/1961. The main reasons for this decree was the increase in number of unemployment, the fast increase of migration from rural area to urban, the increase in number of students who drop out of their education, and finally the disarmament of the military without proper compensation and pension. Cooperative movement in Ethiopia was started in the 1960s with the launching of the comprehensive agricultural development projects such as the Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU) (Zerihun, 1998).

2.4. Role of Cooperatives in Livestock Production in Ethiopia

Enhancing the ability of poor smallholder farmers to reach markets and actively engage in them poses a pressing development challenge. Difficult market access restricts opportunities for income generation. Remoteness results in reduced farm-gate prices increased input costs and lower returns to labor and capital. This in turn, reduces incentives to participate in economic transactions and results in subsistent rather than market-oriented production systems. Sparsely populated rural areas, remoteness from towns and high transport costs all pose physical barriers impeding market access. Transaction costs such as lack of information about markets, lack of negotiating skills, and lack of collective organization are other impediments to market access.

The major problems in traditional management system is that the system is not market oriented, underdeveloped marketing and infrastructure system, and poor financial facility, etc. (Azage *et al.*, 2006). Long market chain is an important barrier for producers and inhibits them from direct benefiting through sell of their animals without involvement of brokers (Endrias and Tsedeke, 2006). Poor marketing information and problems of credit facilities reduced the benefit gained by the smallholders. Inadequate infrastructure like road accessibility and marketing facilities are also contributing for the reduced benefit made from the sale of animals by the producers (Tibbo, 2006).

However, cooperatives in Ethiopia may be able to generate even greater benefits for smallholders through resource pooling and collective marketing for many other commercial crops e.g., dairy, fruits, and vegetables (Spielman *et al.*, 2006). Specifically, cooperatives can play a crucial role in the procurement of inputs (seed, fertilizer, credit) and the sale of surpluses into markets where traders and processors frequently extract benefit from chronic information asymmetries, concentrations of market power, high transactions costs, and weak contract enforcement. They can also serve as portals or interfaces between smallholders and other innovation actors, e.g., public, private, and civil society organizations engaged in research, extension, business education, or entrepreneurship training. Of course, Ethiopian cooperatives also face many of the well-documented challenges that have been experienced by cooperatives in other countries, e.g., free-rider ship, membership commitment problems, government interference and acute politicization (Sykuta and Cook, 2001).

2.5. Membership and Members' Participation

Tesfaye (1995) revealed that producers' cooperatives failed in the past not because of failure inherent in the collective management but because of forced membership without the interest of the farmers and formation of the cooperatives in hurry without any sufficient preparation and feasibility study. The problem of intervention of the Derg regime in the affairs of cooperatives i.e. using them for its political ends and the largeness and complexity of the organizations for the managerial capacity of the farmers were also a reason for the failures of the cooperatives (Tesfaye, 1995).

Haileselasie (2003), in his study about cooperatives in Saesi-Tsaeda-Imba, investigated that 78.7 percent of the members became member in cooperatives through mobilization and persuasion by the civil societies such as Farmers, Youth and Women's Associations. As a result, the members' were not aware of the duties and rights they have in the cooperative societies. According to Haileselasie's finding, for example, out of the total respondents members' participation in the annual meeting was 12.2 per cent and 68.8 per cent of the total respondents had bought only one share. The result of the study revealed that the overall participation of members in the study area was weak (Haileselasie, 2003).

Gebbru (2006) found out in his study that the participation of women accounts 20-25 per cent in various cooperative types in Tigray region. And he concluded that though women are underrepresented in membership and leadership, the condition is improving from year to year in the region. Gebbru (2006), in his conclusion stated that cooperatives are assisting farmers in far and remote areas of the region to distribute agricultural input and credit. He also concluded that despite international price increases over time for the agricultural input particularly fertilizer, cooperatives are distributing at faire and reasonable price (Gebbru, 2006).

2.6. Women's Participation in Agricultural Cooperatives

Agricultural cooperatives offer important benefits for economically weak farmers—both female and male to improve their livelihoods through developing their collective and individual capacities (Alkali, 1991; World Bank, 2009). However, in Ethiopia, cooperative membership is generally very low. According to a study based on 2005 data, only 9 percent of smallholders were members of agricultural cooperatives and only 40 percent of rural households had access

to cooperatives within their *kebeles* (Bernard and Spielman, 2009). In the case of women, while their representation is slowly growing, they represent fewer than 20 percent of cooperative membership; and there are even fewer women in leadership positions.

Men dominate in agricultural cooperative membership and management (Mogues *et al.*, 2009). A main contributing factor to women's low participation in cooperatives are deep-rooted socio-cultural norms and practices which put women and girls in a much lower position relative to men and boys. Dominant gender norms, stereotypes, and practices shape gender power relations at household, community, and institutional levels. These influence women's social and economic capabilities and opportunities to engage in cooperative activities in the same way as men. Typically, men and boys are expected to be self-reliant, household heads, the main income earner within the household, decision makers, and public leaders.

In contrast, women are assumed to be mothers, caretakers of all household domestic and care duties, under the authority of male figures, second in command, and valued for being docile and submissive (Jones *et al.*, 2010; UNFPA 2008). Women and girls have lower decision-making power and lower educational attainment (i.e. only 38 percent of women aged 15–49 years are literate as compared to 65 percent for men aged 15–59 years (CSA and ICF International 2012)). They typically have lower self-esteem and fear voicing their opinions in public spaces. These socially and culturally ascribed roles are changeable but tend to structure gender relations inside and outside the household. They limit women's social and economic networks and opportunities. In comparison, due to higher social status and expectations, men dominate public spaces, including more formal groups like cooperatives.

In addition, men tend to have a broader range of associations as a result of their more publicly accepted role and broader range of opportunities. In contrast, due to men's control over women and women's heavy work, women tend to have a narrower repertoire of social networks and community associations. They have less time and information to participate in more formal community groups (Aregu *et al.*, 2010).

The barriers women face shift according to individual and social group characteristics such as social and educational status, age, and location. One study found that older, wealthier, more educated, unmarried, female household heads are more likely to be members of agricultural cooperatives as compared to other women (Oxfam International, 2013). These women have

fewer household responsibilities, less time constraints, greater access to assets and resources, and a wider range of informal and formal group memberships. Due to a variety of factors e.g., cultural traditions that constrain mobility and bargaining power married women face unequal access to and control over key productive assets such as land ownership, financing, agricultural technologies, and formal agricultural extension services. They are overburdened with labor and time-intensive reproductive and social chores that leave them little time and energy for equally participating in formal cooperative meetings and activities, as compared to men. These gender specific constraints and vulnerabilities hinder them in reaching their full economic potential (Jones *et al.*, 2010).

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Data Collection

This study was conducted in 19 districts (*woredas*) in four regional states of Ethiopia, namely Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR. This study was carried out in 54 legally registered SFC, 13 in Amhara, 18 in Tigray, 12 in SNNPRs and 11 in Oromia regions. The SFC were selected purposively based on their current status (cooperatives which are currently functioning) and their accessibility. Due to the varying number of members within each cooperatives, the number of members to be interviewed from each SFC were determined using Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS) technique (Alam *et al.*, 2015). Thus, a total of randomly selected 314 producer members (Table 1), plus purposively selected 54 chair persons were interviewed.

The data was collected from November 2014 – February 2016. Primary data was collected from sample cooperatives through a structured questionnaire interview schedule (individual meeting). Secondary data were collected using documentary review. Primary data collected included: cooperative characteristics like promotion of start-up, location and source of initial capital, cooperative objectives, inputs and services provided, training offered, and women's role in leadership and management activities of the cooperatives. Secondary data which included number of SFC, cooperatives promotion, and other supplementary ideas was obtained from various sources such as reports of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Bureau of Agriculture of each *woreda*, other published and unpublished materials.

3.2. Statistical Analyses

Data were analyzed using descriptive and econometric methods. Descriptive Statistics such as percentages and frequency distribution tables were used to analyze data on selected personal and characteristics of the cooperatives and their participation in SFC. Most of the result was presented in percentages and Chi-square test was used to show the significant difference between variables. Mean was used to describe age and length of membership. To study the relationship between members' characteristics, social interaction and members' participation, Pearson correlation was employed.

ANOVA (mean differences) were employed to show the relationship between cooperative characteristics and average proportion of women in SFC. Two types of analysis were done.

First, to examine the association of cooperative characteristics with proportion of women members in the cooperatives, Tobit models were employed. The dependent variable in these models is the proportion of women members from the total number of cooperative members. The model specification is as follows; -

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_i X_i + \varepsilon_i \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where Y_i refers to the proportion of women members in the i th cooperative; X_i refers to cooperative characteristics included in the model to explain the variation in Y_i ; β_0 and β_i are the constant and slope coefficients to be estimated; and ε_i is the disturbance term, which is assumed to be normally distributed [$\varepsilon_i \sim NID(0, \delta^2)$]. The model was truncated from below at zero because there were some cooperatives in the dataset that had no women members.

A second econometric model was used to study the determinants of leadership. The variable of interest here is why SFC had women leaders. Therefore, the dependent variable is binary (0 for no women leader and 1 for women leader). A logit model was used, recognizing the discrete choice nature of the dependent variable. Let the observed outcome be Y_i and the underlying latent variable Y_i^* , which is the unobserved threshold level that marks between being a leaders or not in a cooperative. It is assumed that this is a function of observed personal and socioeconomic factors, X_i , and unobserved characteristics, ε_i , for respondent i .

This can be expressed in equation form as:

$$Y_i^* = X_i \beta + \varepsilon_i, [\varepsilon_i \sim NID(0, \delta^2)] \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

$$y_i = 1 \text{ if } Y_i^* > 0, 0 \text{ if } Y_i^* \leq 0 \dots \dots \dots (2.1)$$

Data analysis were employed using SAS for windows ver. 9.2.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Classification of SFCs in Ethiopia

Classification of SFCs in Ethiopia based on some characteristics is presented in Table 1. From the results of this study, majority (70.4%) of SFCs in Ethiopia are distributed in Rural parts of the country and it was significant at ($p < 0.001$). Based on the promoters of start-up, majority (92.6%) of SFCs were initiated by the local government and the remaining were initiated by NGOs. The proportion of SFCs that took loan as a start-up capital was significantly higher ($p < 0.001$) than those receive a free capital. Sixty-three percent of SFCs in this study have a mixed type of gender basis, while the rest were men only and women only with the proportion of 29.6 and 7.4%, respectively.

Table 1 Classification of SFCs in Ethiopia

Characteristics of cooperatives		Regions				Values	
		Amhara	Tigray	SNNPRs	Oromia	X ²	P
Location	Urban	76.9	27.8	0.0	9.1	21.253	0.000
	Rural	23.1	72.2	100.0	90.9		
Promotion of start up	Government	84.6	94.4	100.0	90.9	2.302	0.512
	NGOs	15.4	5.6	0.0	9.1		
Start up capital	Loan	76.9	94.4	100.0	90.9	4.473	0.215
	Free start up	23.1	5.6	0.0	9.1		
Gender basis (%)	Men only	30.8	16.7	50.0	27.3	7.979	0.240
	Women only	7.7	0.0	8.3	18.2		
	Mixed	61.5	83.3	41.7	54.5		
Main function of coop	Sheep Fattening only	69.2	77.8	100.0	72.7	4.298	0.231

Sheep Fattening and others	30.8	22.2	0.0	27.3
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There was a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) on the main function of SFCs in this study, the result showed that the main function for the majority (79.6%) of SFCs were sheep fattening only. Some (20.4%) of SFCs in this study have other functions besides sheep fattening, like cattle and goat fattening, chicken distribution and honey production.

4.1.2 Members Structure of SFCs in Ethiopia

The result of this study shows that the majority of ($X^2 = 92.23$; $p = 0.000$) members in SFC were men. Oromia region had significantly higher ($p < 0.05$) in the proportion of women than SNNPRs (Table 2). The membership pattern in mixed sex SFC in Ethiopia is shown in Figure 1. From the total proportion (31.7%) of female members in mixed sex SFC in this study, Tigray region had significantly ($p < 0.05$) highest proportion (18.1%) of females. As compared to men counterparts, majority of women members in this study were widowed and divorced with the proportion of 63.6 and 60.9%, respectively. The level of illiteracy in SFC for both men and women members was low. However, from all illiterate members significantly higher ($p < 0.05$) proportion were women. Majority (33.7%) of women members were not household heads. There was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) on age and family size between men and women members.

4.1.3. Social Interaction and Participation of Members in SFCs in Ethiopia

Member participation in decision making, interaction between members and officials and consideration of members by SFCs in Ethiopia is presented in Table 3. From the result of this study, majority (53.8%) of members moderately (sometimes) participate in decision making process of the cooperatives. The remaining of members either they always participate or do not participate at all, with the proportion 30.6 and 15.6%, respectively.

Table 2 Demographic characteristics of members in SFC in Ethiopia.

Demographic characteristics	District						Sex		Values	
	Amhara	Tigray	SNNPRs	Oromia	X ²	P	Male	Female	X ²	P
Sex (%)					10.4	0.015				
Male	70.8	70.8	81.8	57.1						
Female	29.2 ^{ab}	29.2 ^{ab}	18.2 ^b	42.9 ^a						
Marital status (%)					7.31	0.605			37.8	0.000
Single	50.8	50.9	57.6	48.1			53.4	47.4		
Married	23.1	32.1	31.8	33.8			37.0	15.8		
Divorced	12.3	6.6	4.5	6.5			4.1	14.7		
Widowed	13.8	10.4	6.1	11.7			5.5	22.1		
Educational status (%)					3.16	0.789			6.06	0.048
Illiterate	9.2	9.4	6.1	6.5			6.4	14.7		
Informal	15.4	24.5	22.7	20.8			21.0	22.1		
Formal	75.4	66.0	71.2	72.7			72.6	63.2		
Household head (%)					3.02	0.389			1.95	0.162
Yes	49.2	56.6	43.9	54.5			42.1	50.7		
No	50.8	43.4	56.1	45.5			57.9	49.3		
Age (mean ±SD)	28.7±5.7 ^a	28.1±5.8 ^{ab}	26.2±3.5 ^b	27.9±5.5 ^{ab}			27.6±5.3	28.1±5.5		
Family size (mean ±SD)	3.9±1.4 ^{bc}	3.8±1.5 ^c	4.5±1.3 ^{ab}	4.7±1.4 ^a			4.23±1.4	4.04±1.5		

^{abc} means are significantly different at p<0.05; SD= Standard deviation.

Thirty-one percent of members in this study were extremely dissatisfied with the level of management within the cooperatives. The remaining 30.4 and 38.0% of members have a high to moderate level of satisfaction, respectively. The result on interaction of members with officials and other producer members showed that majority of members have a high interaction level with the proportion of 58.8% and 60.4%, respectively. In addition, 57.7% of respondent members were satisfied with the level of interaction they have with officials and other members. From all of respondent members, 63.2% of them think that members are taken into consideration by the cooperative, while the remaining (36.8%) members replied that they are not taken into consideration by cooperatives.

Majority (74.4%) of members know the annual revenue of their cooperatives, but the remaining members did not know the annual revenue of their cooperatives. The result on share of meetings attended by producer members showed that majority (43.8%) of members have attended most of the meetings held by the cooperatives. The proportion of members that did not attend any of the meetings held by the cooperatives in this study was 15.6%.

Table 3 Members participation in decision making, interaction between members and officials and consideration of members by SFCs in Ethiopia

Characteristics of members		Districts				Values	
		Amhara	Tigray	SNNPRs	Oromia	X ²	P
How often do you participate in decision making	Always	43.1	22.6	24.2	32.5	18.132	0.006
	Sometimes	49.2	64.2	48.5	53.2		
	Not at all	7.7	13.2	27.3	14.3		
Satisfaction level of management	Highly	43.1	22.6	24.2	32.5	88.093	0.000
	Moderately	41.6	56.6	40.9	13.0		
	Extremely dissatisfied	15.4	20.7	34.9	54.6		
Interaction with cooperative officials	Highly	69.2	70.8	57.6	37.7	28.329	0.000
	Moderately	10.8	6.6	7.6	7.8		
	Low	20.0	22.6	34.8	54.5		
Interaction with other members of the cooperative	Highly	73.8	72.6	57.6	37.7	30.401	0.000
	Moderately	10.8	17.0	22.7	29.9		
	Low	15.4	10.4	19.7	32.5		
Satisfaction level of interaction	Yes	73.8	50.9	53.0	53.2	9.950	0.019
	No	26.2	49.1	47.0	46.8		
Does members taken into consideration?	Yes	80.0	70.8	57.6	44.2	23.437	0.000
	No	20.0	29.2	42.4	55.8		
Do you know the annual revenue of the cooperative?	Yes	78.5	76.4	62.1	80.5	7.582	0.055
	No	21.5	23.6	37.9	19.5		
Share of meetings attended	All	43.1	22.6	24.2	32.5	22.416	0.008
	Most	35.4	53.8	37.9	48.1		
	Some	13.8	10.4	10.6	5.2		
	None	7.7	13.2	27.3	14.3		

4.1.4. Correlation between Members Characteristics, Social Interaction and Participation in SFCs in Ethiopia

Correlation between members' characteristics and social interaction and participation in SFCs in Ethiopia is presented in Table 4. The correlation result showed that, age and length of membership have no strong correlation ($p > 0.05$) with other variables. EPDM was strongly

correlated ($p < 0.01$) with SLM, ICM, SLI, MTC, ARC and SMA but not correlated ($p > 0.05$) with ICO. ICO was not correlated ($p > 0.05$) with all variables, except with MTC. SLM were strongly correlated ($p < 0.01$) with ICM, SLI, MTC, ARC and SMA. ICM were strongly correlated ($p < 0.01$) with SLI, MTC, ARC and SMA. SLI were strongly correlated ($p < 0.01$) with MTC and ($p < 0.05$) with SMA. MTC were strongly correlated ($p < 0.01$) with ARC and SMA. ARC were strongly correlated ($p < 0.01$) with SMA.

4.1.5. Expected Plan on Fattening and Factors Affecting the Number of Sheep under Fattening SFCs in Ethiopia

Expected plan to increase number of sheep per fattening cycle and factors that limit the number of fattening sheep in SFCs in Ethiopia is presented in Table. From the result of this study, majority (68.9%) of respondent members have no plan in increasing the number of sheep per fattening cycle.

There was a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) on location coverage for marketing between SFCs in this study (Table). The result showed that majority (86.9%) of cooperatives in this study sold their fattened sheep the same *woreda* where the cooperative is located. Only 10.3 and 2.8% of SFCs sold their sheep at zonal and beyond zonal level, respectively. Intension to increase the location coverage between SFCs in this study showed no significant difference ($p > 0.05$). While, there was a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) on intensions of SFCs in decreasing the location coverage. Majority (80.9%) of SFCs had a plan to work on the same location coverage, while the remaining (19.1%) of SFCs were planning to decrease their location coverage.

According to the respondent members in this study, the first ranked (53.5%) factor that limits the number of fattening sheep per cycle was lack of market linkage and poor information. Next to market, the second factor for most of producer members (58.9%) were feed related factors (both in quality and quantity, and price). Money and space ranked third and fourth limiting factors with the proportion of 67.8 and 72.9%. Some factors like high shortage of water (*Wolenchiti (Boset) district*), and poor interaction between members and officials were also forcing some cooperatives to decrease (stop) fattening animals per cycle.

Table 4 Correlation between member characteristics and social interaction and participation in SFCs in Ethiopia.

	Age	EPDM	SLM	ICO	ICM	SLI	MTC	ARC	SMA	LM
Age	1									
EPDM	.071	1								
	.212									
SLM	.059	.879**	1							
	.298	.000								
ICO	-.044	.008	.079	1						
	.440	.887	.163							
ICM	.047	.630**	.799**	.070	1					
	.410	.000	.000	.217						
SLI	.006	.152**	.151**	-.016	.201**	1				
	.910	.007	.007	.772	.000					
MTC	.019	.651**	.812**	.112*	.820**	.149**	1			
	.742	.000	.000	.048	.000	.008				
ARC	.067	.665**	.500**	.011	.452**	.086	.443**	1		
	.240	.000	.000	.849	.000	.130	.000			
SMA	.075	.946**	.795**	.010	.610**	.137*	.620**	.872**	1	
	.183	.000	.000	.860	.000	.015	.000	.000		
LM	.086	.075	.030	.013	-.058	-.013	-.008	.026	.060	1
	.127	.188	.603	.822	.309	.817	.883	.646	.287	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; EPDM= Extent of participation in decision making; SLM= Satisfaction level of management; ICO= Interaction with cooperative officials; ICM= Interaction with members; SLI= Satisfaction level on interaction; MTC= Members taken into consideration; ARC= Annual revenue of the cooperative; SMA= Share of meetings attended; LM= Length of membership

4.1.6. Factors Affecting the Future Existence of SFCs

Factors affecting the future existence of SFCs in Ethiopia was presented in Table. According to respondent members in this study the major (81.2%) factor influencing the existence of SFCs were internal factors and it was significant at (P< 0.000). Among the internal factors mentioned

by respondent members, the major (36.0%) factor was social interaction of members with other members and officials, followed by management and member commitment with the proportion of 27.1 and 18.2%, respectively. Cooperative officials were poor in linking members to different services and benefits, facilitating trainings and advisory services. The result showed that, only in one (1.9%) SFC members enjoyed a saving and credit service. In any of the SFCs, no facilitation of training and advisory service were done by cooperative officials. Besides to internal factors, the remaining (18.8%) factors were external factors including external assistance and policy issues with the proportion of 11.8 and 7.0%, respectively. Majority (79.1%) of SFCs in this study had from poor to medium relation with extension agencies and workers. No SFCs in this study were related/linked with research institute. Relation between SFCs and MFIs in this study showed a good to average relation with the proportion of 42.5 and 53.7%, respectively.

Table 5 Expected plan to increase number of sheep per fattening cycle and factors that limit the number of fattening sheep in SFCs in Ethiopia

		Regions				Values	
		Amhara	Tigray	SNNPRs	Oromia	X ²	P
Plan to increase animals/fattening cycle						26.956	0.000
Yes		24.6	52.8	19.7	27.3		
No		75.4	47.2	80.3	72.7		
Factors that limit the number of fattening sheep		Rank				Values	
		1	2	3	4	X ²	P
Money		10.2	12.7	67.8	10.8	256.92	0.000
Space		13.4	2.9	15.0	72.9	352.31	0.000
Feed		21.3	58.9	10.2	7.6	311.29	0.000
Market		53.5	24.5	7.0	8.6	385.39	0.000
Others		1.3	1.0	-	-	-	-

4.1.7. Women's Membership Patterns in SFC

The result of this study shows that the majority of ($X^2= 92.23$; $p= 0.000$) members in SFC were men. Oromia region had significantly higher ($p< 0.05$) in the proportion of women than SNNPRs (Table 2). The membership pattern in mixed sex SFC in Ethiopia is shown in Figure 1. From the total proportion (31.7%) of female members in mixed sex SFC in this study, Tigray region had significantly ($p< 0.05$) highest proportion (18.1%) of females. As compared to men counterparts, majority of women members in this study were widowed and divorced with the proportion of 63.6 and 60.9%, respectively. The level of illiteracy in SFC for both men and women members was low. However, from all illiterate members significantly higher ($p< 0.05$) proportion were women. Majority (33.7%) of women members were not household heads. There was no significant difference ($p> 0.05$) on age and family size between men and women members.

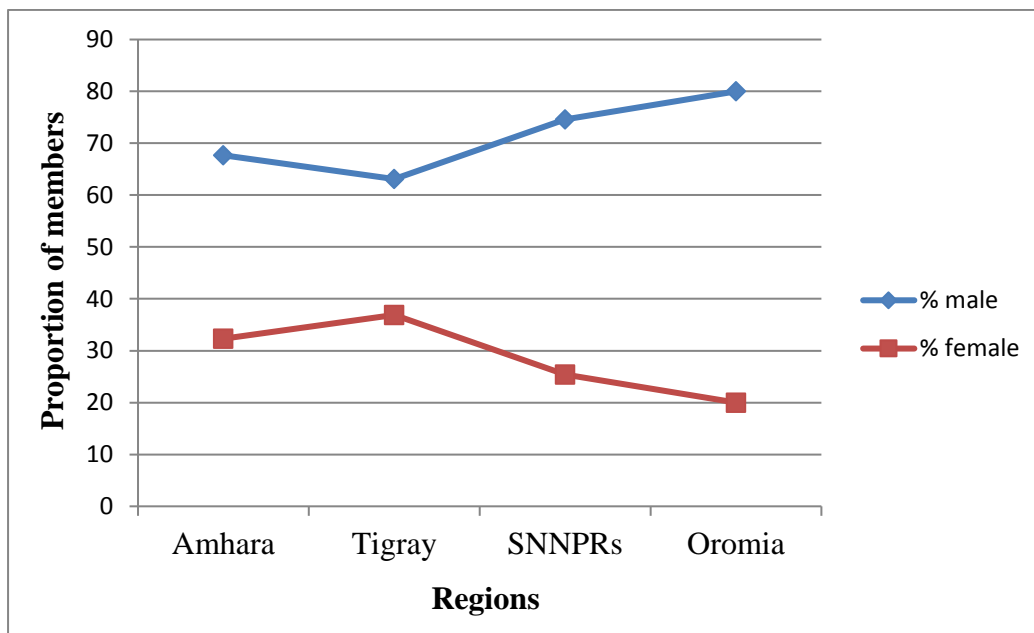


Figure 1: Proportion of women in mixed sex SFC in Ethiopia.

Table 7 shows the average proportion of women members in certain characteristics of SFC. The result in this study shows that there was a significantly higher ($p< 0.001$) proportion of women in SFC that have women in the leadership and management activities of the cooperatives. This result shows that women are likely to be a member when there are other women in certain positions of the cooperatives. The proportion of women members were

significantly lower ($p < 0.01$) in SFC initiated by the local government than NGOs. This indicates that there is much effort needed by the local government in order to involve more women in SFC. In addition, there was significantly lower ($p < 0.05$) proportion of women members in SFC that took loan from MFIs than that obtain a free start-up capital. This shows that women had a lesser way in to get a loan from MFIs.

A tobit regression modelling for women's proportion is shown Table 6. Promoter of the start-up and cooperatives that have women in the leadership positions shows a significant impact on proportion of women, at $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$, respectively. SFC that the members buy shares at the start-up have significantly lowest ($p < 0.001$) proportion of women. This result indicates that women are not prone to buy shares of the cooperative so that they are unable to join SFC.

Table 6 Modelling women's proportion in SFC in Ethiopia.

Explanatory variables	Estimate	P
Members are from one kebele (1=yes)	4.380319	0.6025
Promoters of start-up	43.83017	0.0435 *
Objective of the cooperative	-26.5431	0.3848
Have women in the leadership (1=yes)	62.64136	0.0151 **
Leaders took some sort of training (1=yes)	7.893326	0.7358
Members buy share at start-up (1=yes)	-31.1626	0.0034 ***
Provide input to members (1=yes)	12.41153	0.094 *
Provide credit to member (1=yes)	31.89727	0.3812

Inputs that the cooperatives provide and their impact on women's representation shows that, cooperatives that offer input to members attract more women than those that do not. Even if the impact was insignificant, cooperatives that provide credit and link members to service had higher proportion women than that do not. This results indicates that women prefer cooperatives that do put forward better input services may be fulfilling women's needs for increased access to and control over resources and thus attracting them to join and stay on.

Table 7 Mean differences in women's proportion in cooperatives with or without certain characteristics

Cooperatives characteristics	N	APF	MD	Sig.
Women in the leadership of the cooperatives			0.438	***
Yes	7	0.662		
No	47	0.224		
Have women in the management activities			0.264	***
Yes	24	0.427		
No	30	0.163		
Cooperatives provide credit to members			0.3257	ns
Yes	1	0.6000		
No	53	0.2743		
Initiated by the local Government			-0.3993	**
Yes	50	0.2508		
No	4	0.6500		
Established before 2013			-0.005	ns
Yes	19	0.287		
No	35	0.282		
Took loan from MFIs			-0.2877	*
Yes	49	0.2537		
No	5	0.5414		
Cooperatives that fatten together			0.117	ns
Yes	42	0.306		
No	12	0.189		
Link members to services			0.176	ns
Yes	2	0.450		
No	52	0.274		
Location of the cooperatives			0.039	ns
Urban	16	0.308		
Rural	38	0.269		
Number of members			-0.050	ns
Decreasing	30	0.258		
Stable	24	0.308		

The statically insignificant ($p > 0.05$) impact of leaders training on women representation and majority of the trainings offered were not related to gender issues, shows that the trainings offered failed to satisfy women needs thus they are less likely to become members.

4.1.8. Women's Participation in SFC

According to respondents in this study, women members work equally in the day to day activity of the fattening process. These activities include feeding, watering and treatment of the fattening sheep, and cleaning of the shed. From all of the mixed sex SFC in this study, majority

(55.9%) of them had a woman participating in the management of SFC as secretary, committee member and treasurer. Although the participation of women in the management of SFC was high, their participation in leadership was very limited. From all of SFC in this study only 7.4% of them had a women leader and this SFC were women only. But, there was no mixed sex SFC with a women leader.

According to district cooperative office report and experts, the main reasons for lower proportion of women's in SFC were psycho-social pressures that influencing women's to focus and participate in household activities. Members of SFC in this study mentioned that the main reasons for lower participation of women's in leadership were, members prefer to elect male members which are respected, and women members themselves had a fear, low self-esteem and confidence to be a leader.

Binary logistic regression on the association between women leadership and certain characteristics is presented in Table 8. With regards to the association between women participation in leadership and women and men based cooperatives, the result in this study indicates that women will have a higher chance of being a leader when the cooperative is women based. The significant impact of the proportion of women with in the cooperative on women's participation in leadership shows that high membership rate of women could improve the chance of women representation in the leadership of SFC.

The higher illiterate women as compared to illiterate men (Table 2) and a significant ($p= 0.001$) impact of level of literacy on participation of women in leadership of SFC (Table 6) indicates that women educational status should be improved in order to involve more women in leadership. Women's participation in leadership of SFC was higher for cooperatives that received a training to gender. This indicates that trainings that involve gender related issues may improve women self-confidence and other member perception that men are a natural leader.

Age and location of women shows insignificant impact on women representation in leadership positions of SFC. In addition, leaders' perception on having a women in the leadership and cooperatives that changed the leaders before shows insignificant impact. This result shows that even if the leaders were changed there is no chance of women to be selected and represented in leadership position.

Table 8 Modelling determinants of leadership (Logit model) in SFC in Ethiopia.

Explanatory variables	Coefficient	P
Men based cooperatives (1=yes)	1.819	0.177
Women based cooperatives (1=yes)	54.000	0.000
Proportion of women	27.109	0.000
Level of literacy	12.104	0.001
Age	3.088	0.079
Location	0.044	0.833
Leaders think it's better to have women in leadership (1=yes)	2.670	0.102
Leaders took gender related training (1=yes)	39.706	0.000
Cooperative changed leaders before (1=yes)	0.540	0.462

4.1.9. Benefits of SFC for Women

Women in SFC in this study had a significantly higher ($P < 0.001$) access to training, road, electric supply and credit than non-cooperated fatteners (Table 9). In all of SFC that gone through training, both men and women members had an equal participation. From all of the women only SFC in this study, 2 (50%) of them got a free start-up capital from Gene bank and World vision.

There was a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) on ownership pattern and labour utilization between cooperated and non-cooperated fatteners. All of the members (both men and women) of SFC in this study had an equal ownership of the fattening sheep and equal participation in looking after, feeding, watering, taking care of health and selling the fattening sheep, fetching water and cleaning of the shed. While, in non-cooperated fatteners, there was a limited ownership and gender specific work division. Women family members (wife and daughter) mostly participate in fetching water and cleaning of the shed.

Being cooperated in SFC in this study significantly improved ($p < 0.001$) women's participation in decision making processes. Both men and women members had an equal decision making in the number and beginning fattening, selling and price of the fattened sheep. But, most of the decisions in non-cooperated fatteners were given by the husbands.

Table 9 Access to training, road, electricity and credit between cooperated and non-cooperated fatteners in Ethiopia.

Characteristics	Type of fatteners		Values	
	Cooperated	Non-cooperated	X ²	P
Gone through training			298.2	0.000
	Yes	94.2	17.8	
	No	5.8	82.2	
Road accessibility			34.8	0.000
	Good	75.7	49.7	
	Bad	24.3	50.3	
Electricity supply			47.5	0.000
	Yes	39.2	10.3	
	No	60.8	89.7	
Access to credit			347.4	0.000
	Yes	94.8	11.4	
	No	5.2	88.6	

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. Characteristics of Cooperatives

Classification of SFC based on location in this study was similar to the report of Chukwu (1990) who indicated based on area of operation cooperatives can be classified as urban and rural cooperatives. Distribution of SFCs in urban and rural areas shows that cooperative promoters planned to cover all parts of the country. The cooperative promotion office is about to become an independent office with the mandate of promoting both rural and urban cooperatives under one umbrella (Emana, 2009). Promotion of most sheep fattening cooperatives by the government and NGOs in this study shows that much attention is given by government and other organizations for the sector. Emana (2009) reported that the government established federal and regional cooperative institutions that facilitate the organization of cooperatives. The function and service of SFCs in this study was in agreement with Bernard *et al.*, (2013) who reported Ethiopian agricultural cooperatives offer a variety of services, ranging from services directly related to agricultural production or commercialization to those less directly concerned with farmer production. The main reasons provided by the respondents for inclusion

of other activities along with sheep fattening were seasonal market preference for sheep and lower profitability of sheep fattening.

4.2.2. Members Structure

The proportion of female members in this study was comparable with the national figure on the proportion of female members in all primary cooperatives is 21.5%, it was higher than Bernard *et al.* (2013) who reported percentage of female members in the agricultural cooperatives which is 12 percent. This indicates that the involvement of women is increasing. Gebru (2006) concluded that though women are under-represented in membership and leadership, the condition is improving from year to year in the region. The age structure of members in this study shows that the majority of members are in working age and it differs from the report of (Mesfin, 2008), who reported 74% of members in dairy cooperatives was in the age group of 36-50 years. The educational status of members in this study was similar with the report of Mahmud (2008) who reported active participant members had a good educational status. From the result of this study no cooperative had an increasing trend in membership. The stable trend of membership in this study was due to cooperatives in Ethiopia had been regulated by the promoters (Emana, 2009).

4.2.3. Social Interaction and Participation of Members in SFCs in Ethiopia

Member participation on decision making process of SFCs have an impact on members participation and social interaction (Table 4). For members to be committed, there is the need to address the issues of involving them in decision the decision making process (Dakurah *et al.*, 2005). The low satisfaction of members on level of management in this study indicates that there is a need to improve their interaction in order to improve the performance and members participation in SFCs. Because, the strength of a cooperative depends, in part, upon its ability to mobilize its resources and members not only in gaining market share and achieve economic growth, but also in maintaining member commitment, satisfaction and retaining them (Abdelrahman and Smith, 2007).

The participation of members in cooperatives meetings in SFCs in this study was strongly influenced by satisfaction level on their management (Table 4). Members participation will decrease as members lost confidence in their leaders (Nkhoma, 2011). However, the majority

of members in this study have attended most to all of the meetings. This result indicates that member participation in cooperatives meeting has been improved.

4.2.4. Correlation between Members Characteristics and Social Interaction and Participation in SFCs in Ethiopia

The correlation between social interaction and participation of members in this study was in line with the finding of Mesfin (2008), who reported the higher the members' participation in cooperative affairs, decision making and general issues, the higher is the members' satisfaction. According to Mahmud (2008) failure of members to involve in general meeting, poor participation in decision-making and limitation in exercising their democratic right were the most important problems to determine the performances of cooperatives. The strong correlation of SLM with SLI, SMA, MTC and ARC in this study indicates that managers of the cooperative can improve member participation. The ability of a cooperative to meet its members' expectations depends on whether management effectively evaluates membership needs (Dakurah *et al.*, 2005). Satisfied, highly committed members are more likely to support their cooperative by participating in all cooperative activities (*Ibid*).

4.2.5. Expected Plan on Fattening and Factors Affecting the Number of Sheep under Fattening SFCs in Ethiopia

Poor market information, linkage and price fluctuation in this study shows that the SFCs was using marketing system similar with the traditional sheep producers, because the major problem in traditional management system is that the system is not market oriented, underdeveloped marketing (Tegegne *et al.*, 2006). Long market chain is an important barrier for producers and inhibits them from direct benefiting through sell of their animals without involvement of brokers (Endrias and Tsedeke, 2006). Poor marketing information and problems of credit facilities reduced the benefit gained by the smallholders (Tibbo, 2006).

High price and shortage of feed in this study holds true for other cooperatives, according to Mesfin (2008) lack of feed and its cost is one major problem that may threaten the very existence of the dairy cooperative and farming. Feed is the single largest cost associated with raising small ruminants, typically accounting for $\geq 60\%$ of total production costs (Susan, 2009). The limitation of land in SFCs in this study was an important factor hindering the production

and productivity of cooperatives, according to Mahmud (2008) the size of farmland is also essential factor of production and productivity of cooperatives.

4.2.6. Factors Affecting the Future Existence of SFCs in Ethiopia

Poor interaction and commitment among members and officials in this study might be due to lack of members to make decisions (Table), limited capacity of boards and employees and lack of awareness on their duties and responsibilities are important problems to impede cooperatives performance (*Ibid*). Costa (2003) found that trust between members in team working is positively related to the cooperatives' success and negatively to monitoring colleagues, indicating that the trust can work as an alternative for such a monitoring task. Understanding the cooperation concept in cooperative relations, fostering or maintenance of social interactions should be considered as a purpose (du Plessis, 2008) and an instrument for the survival of a cooperative in long run operation (Brislin *et al.*, 2006).

Karantininis and Zago (2001) suggest that if managing directors do not develop new approaches to handle with the members' heterogeneity and disengagement, they will only attract dissatisfied and unproductive farmer producers. As a result, the low level of satisfaction among the members may discourage them in collective actions and thus reasons cooperatives to fail. This is the case in Abdelrahman and Smith (2007) study which found some of agricultural cooperatives in Sudan have not been successful because of the lack of the members' motivation in their cooperative actions.

The external factors in this study was in line with Chambo (2009) who reported since the state is generally the promoter of cooperatives, it results in a small amount of ownership with minimal share contribution from members and it is seen as being state controlled. The cooperative policy is largely determined by the government and the role of cooperative unions in making policies is currently minor, as most of the cooperative union's lack the capacity to make independent decisions (Emana, 2009). Rankin and Russell (2005) also indicated that cooperatives are being pushed in to different directions by interested stakeholders, including governments, business interests and various agencies.

The need for external support by respondent members in this study was in line with Hill *et al.*, (2007), who reported support had significantly improved rural livelihood of the community and it had facilitated cooperatives' access to markets for their produce. It was argued that, external assistance can create dependency syndrome which in turn affects the success and sustainability of the cooperatives (COPAC, 1995). In addition, assistance may also contribute to adverse problems that may attract members that are after the benefit and not committed to cooperatives success.

4.2.7. Women's Involvement in SFC

Cooperatives are believed to assemble the common economic, social and cultural needs of members through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise (Clugston, 2014). The involvement of women then could enhance the economic, political power, scope and social status of cooperatives. Women are often more apprehensive with social development issues and view things in different sides (Pellegrino *et al.*, 2011), so that the scenarios and decisions in the cooperatives will improve, and often problems will be solved differently, than men do.

One mixed sex SFC in this study provide saving and credit service to members and it have a higher proportion of women members. This indicates that when women are involved in cooperatives, members will enjoy additional benefits. This might be due to the fact that women are often more attracted to smaller scale village saving and loan groups to support the economic status of themselves and even their families (World Bank, 2009; Oxfam International, 2013).

The comparable proportion of women members both in urban and rural SFC, which were promoted by governmental and NGOs, shows that much attention is given for the sector in all parts of the country. Emanu (2009) reported that the government established federal and regional cooperative institutions that facilitate the organization of cooperatives either by themselves or working with NGOs.

Even if involving women could be a benefit for cooperatives and its members, the proportion of women members in SFC in this study was very lower as compared to male counterparts. This points out women are under-represented in membership of cooperatives. Similarly, the proportion of women in agricultural cooperatives and all primary cooperatives in Ethiopia was

12% (Bernand *et al.*, 2013) and 21.5% (FCA, 2007), respectively. This holds true for many African and Asian countries in which women comprises <30% (Eva, 2012) and 2 -10.5% (Prakash, 2003), respectively.

4.2.8. Women in Management and Leadership of SFC

Since leadership in a group context involves innovation, decision making and working with creativity and common goals (SNV, 2014), it needs a diverse perspective and experiences which are critical to work out complex problems and control rapidly changing conditions (Clugston, 2014), and women are known for bearing in mind things differently, the participation of both men and women in the cooperative results in having a diversity of perspectives that strengthens the cooperative.

In addition, the result in this study revealed that having a women in the leadership of cooperatives had increased the average proportion of women members. This might be due to women are likely to join the cooperatives when there is a women leader who act as a role model. Oxfam International (2013) report showed that where women are active in leadership positions this can have a positive influence on other women active participation.

Despite gender integration in leadership of cooperatives found to be important, the participation of women in the leadership of SFC in this study was very low. This lower participation of women in leadership positions in this study, where most of the members were male, shows that they likely prefer to elect respected male as a leader, and it could be a result of socio-cultural conceptions that men are natural leaders. By most male members, men are recognized as leaders in their own right (Oxfam International, 2013).

It was also noted that women themselves may be reluctant to vote for other women, and that the persistence of negative cultural attitudes towards women leadership by women can be seen clearly in the fact that women tend to be less well represented in elected positions (Wanyama, 2010).

The good participation of women in management activities of SFC in this study shows that women are trusted by members for their ability handling budgets and documents, and for being

less confrontational than men. Women's are commonly viewed as honourable, incorruptible, more transparent in accounts management, and more effective at negotiating payments than men (Eva, 2012; World Bank, 2007).

4.2.9. Benefits to Women

Women members in this study had an improved access to market and this could be due to cooperatives role in facilitating access to local and distant markets. Cooperatives link products to different markets and make a better price by enhancing members' bargaining power (Markelova and Mwangi, 2010; Poole *et al.*, 2013).

Women's participation in management activities and decision making process of SFC in this study shows that cooperatives had an ability to improve women's skill and confidence. Tesfay and Tadele (2013), stated that cooperatives are a basic ground to enhance women's their knowledge and capacities, that in turn help them to make appropriate choice and decisions (Mayoux, 2005; Mosedale, 2005; Naryaan, 2002). Cooperatives can enhance self-stem of women that leads to acceptance and recognition by the community (Eva, 2012).

Women's ownership pattern, control over resources and social interaction by working collectively with members and officials. This enhancement could be derived from cooperatives ability to gain women exposure to inputs and resources. Cooperatives as an autonomous organization run different inputs and facilities that provides women with an opportunity to ownership and control over resources (Mosedale, 2005; Naryaan, 2002), productivity and social inclusion through the provision of additional services (Barham and Chitemi, 2009).

Better access to training, loan and infrastructures of cooperated women in this study could be the wide range of supports by the Government and NGOs to cooperatives, including material, technical, financial support and training (Emana, 2009).

4.2.10. Challenges for Women Membership and Leadership

The low membership pattern of women in SFC in this study could be resulted from lack of start-up resources. Cooperative Societies Proclamation No. 147/1998 stated that the capital

which enables the society to expand its work activities shall be obtained from paid up shares of each member in accordance of the decision of the general assembly. A member is allowed to hold a maximum of 10 percent of the total paid up share capital of the society. Jones *et al.* (2012) women's low income, resulted from lack of access to and control over land and crops, is an obstacle for satisfying membership conditions. Women family members from non-cooperated fatteners in this study had a limited ownership and access to fattening income. Such discrimination hampers them not to earn incomes and not to actively participate in cooperatives (Kebeer, 1999).

Existing psycho-cultural norms that that influencing women to focus and participate in household activities could also be the reason for lower proportion of women's in SFC. Due to traditional norms and conceptions, there is expected behavioural patterns on the roles of women and men (World Bank, 2007), women lack exposure to the public sphere, and family resistance (ILO, 2002). Women family members from non-cooperated fatteners in this study also shows that there is uneven share of time and energy to take care of household activities. Eva (2012) explained that women have to devote to unpaid care work or other forms of unpaid work, leaving little time and opportunities for engaging in cooperatives.

Women are engaged in a wide variety of activities besides the membership, including the constriction of houses, land cultivating and harvesting, and food storage and marketing (FAO, 2011b). They have low involvement in development activities and have low decision-making power, and their labour contribution to the agricultural sector is invisible because of the gender division of labour in communities (Tegegne, 2012).

Participation of women in various types of cooperatives in Amhara Region by Oxfam International (2008) shows that from the 13 different types of cooperatives, majority of women are engaged in consumer-society cooperatives. This indicates that there might be a gender differences in (self) employment patterns in joining cooperatives. Wanyama (2010) stated that women employment is more heavily concentrated in non-cash crop agriculture, as well as, outside of the agricultural sector.

The strong association between participation in leadership and proportion of women indicates that, the factors associated with lower membership pattern of women in SFC had an impact on women's participation in leadership. The deeply rooted traditions and societal perceptions that

leadership of groups is considered to be in the men's province (Oxfam International, 2013), so that women tend to be underrepresented in elected positions (Eva, 2012). Women's low self-esteem and confidence that restrict them to participate in leadership positions could also be resulted from psycho-social and cultural influences and limited literacy and technical skills level (Oxfam International, 2008).

Women lower socio-economic status, resulted from their restricted access to, control over, and ownership, and information, as compared to men, disadvantage them from meeting conditions of formal group membership and leadership (Woldu *et al.*, 2013; FAO, 2011b; World Bank, 2009).

5. CONCLUSIONS

From the result of this there is a distribution of SFCs on both urban and rural areas and there was a good effort by government and NGOs to promote SFCs by providing loans and free start-up capital. The member structure in this study showed that there should be much effort to be done to increase the involvement of females in to SFCs. Based on the findings of this study, member participation on different activities and social interaction within the cooperatives still needs an attention by concerning bodies. Future plan on fattening and future existence of SFCs in this study showed that most of cooperatives were at edge of separation due to different factors. In order for the cooperatives to work continuously, there is a need to undertake awareness creation, different trainings especially related with collective action should be given to members and officials.

Cooperatives as a basic grounds to empower women, the result in this study shows that cooperatives have the ability to improve the economic activities, access to agro-inputs, training and credit and infrastructure for both man and woman members. In addition women's ownership, decision making and participation in management positions was also enhanced. However, women proportion and participation in leadership is still very limited. Thus, improved and combined efforts should be done to improve women's membership and leadership pattern. From the findings of this study the following measures are recommended;

Lower financial power that restricts women from buying capital shares of cooperatives can be enhanced by subsidizing or modifying membership fee payment systems and/or creating women self-help groups that improve their economic status, thus make possible for women to join. Awareness, on the benefits of cooperatives for women members, must be created non-member women, their families and the community as a whole. Thus, more women can be attracted and the community will allow women membership.

Having an improved women participation in leadership when cooperatives leaders undergone gender related trainings, thus, gender-equitable trainings should be given to cooperative leaders. In addition to leaders, trainings must also show the importance of having women both in membership and leadership of the cooperative.

Women educational status and technical skills should be improved through capacity building and special trainings in order to improve their self-confidence and acceptance by the society as well as other members.

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