

Full Length Research

Assessment of Rural Women's Participation in Agricultural Production: the Case of Awaro Kora Peasant Associations, Ambo District West Shewa Zone, Oromia Region

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This study is mainly focused on the assessment of the involvement of women in the agricultural production of Awaro Kora Peasant Associations, west shewa zone of Ambo district, Ethiopia.

Key words: women. Agricultural production, participation

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INTRODUCTION

The status of women in the world wide

A detailed over view of the status of the worlds women, issued by the united nations in 2000, noted that women and men live in different worlds; worlds that differ in terms of access to educations and work opportunities, as well as in health, personal security and human rights (UN:2002)

It estimated that women grow half of the world: food, but they rarely own land. They constitute one- third of the worlds paid labor force but are generally found in the

lowest, paying job. Single parent household, headed by women, which appear to be other increase in many nations, are major typically found in the poorest section of the populations. The Feminization of poverty has become a global phenomenon. Despite social norms regarding the support and protections, many widows around the world receive little concrete support from extended family net -works (UN, 2002)

Women participation in the labor force and entering the job markets find their options restricted in important ways. Particularly damaging is occupational segregations or

confinement to sex- typed “women’s jobs” (UN, 2002).

Global over view of women equality, empowerment and sustainable development.

As confirmed by women’s environment and development organizations (WEDO; 2001) women equality is not only a goal in its own right, but an essential ingredient for achieving all the MDG’s, be it poverty eradication protecting the environment or access health care.

The convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) established in 1979 market on important steps towards explicit prohibition of against women (Baden and Reeves, 2000:37, as cited in Gemechu, 2008)

Moreover, the 1993 Vienna conference on human right was water shed as it markets the first international recognition of violence against women as human rights violations.

Many women’s have special skills in for instances marketing and trading, while others have special knowledge and capabilities, which have been at all unknowledged.

The active involvement of women (the invisible work force) will make economically and politically strong (Birhanu, 2006:15).

Women’s and sustainable development in Ethiopia

The establishment of the women’s affairs office and insurance of national policy on Ethiopian women which entitles and ensures on women’s right to property, employment and pension could be mentioned as important miles stones for the current regimes towards the realization of gender issues and mitigation measures in Ethiopia (UN 2002:28).

Victimization of Ethiopian women by gender- based oppression and exploitation in all spheres of life, lack of adequate recognition and economic valuation of their contribution, denial of their right to have access to and control over means over means of production and their major shares of category of the poorest of the poor were reported as the basic reasons why the government of Ethiopia has given due to the consideration to the multi-faceted problems of Ethiopian women (Gemechu, 2008:21)

The level of concisousness in a society of the role played by women in the development of the country. The deep- rooted cultural benefits and traditional practices of a society that prevent women playing their full role in the development process; lack of appropriate technology to reduce the work load of women at household level; shortage of property qualified women development agents to understand and help motivated and empower

rural women were reported as some of the major constraints hindering the progress of women in sustainable development in Ethiopia (UN, 2002:28). But these days, sustainable development has a buzz word. According to the world commission on environment and development (WCED, 1987), “Sustainable development- is a development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs”.

Constancy of natural resources and environment is necessary conditions for sustainable development. The set of sufficient conditions includes on appropriate institutional framework and governance system for implementations of sustainable development policy (Gemechu, 2008).

Relationship between agricultural production, natural resources management and women’s role

Understanding the relationship amongst crop production, animal rearing, natural as resource management women’s role is very important in sustainable development agricultural and rural development efforts.

(Upadhyay, 2005:230) confirms that throughout the developing world, females are significantly involved in the use and management of natural resources. In other word females clearly out do males in terms of involvement. Yet women’s are always underrepresented in natural resources decision- making establishment of local and community organization and reducing the work burden of women in key tasks and improving their decisions making ability in natural resource management.

Access to and control over resources Benefits among rural women’s

Rural women and men have different levels access to control over natural or community, human and financial resources as well as to public services and facilities. In patriarchal system of society women by large are deprived of direct ownership of resources such as land most in Ethiopia, especially most rural women and men of low class have little control over different resources in agricultural production of the country.

Almost all resources are controlled of their husbands, fathers brothers, in low etc. female headed households are even worse of because of some structural problem to gender (Birhanu, 2006:34)

Women’s advancement, empowerment in decision making including women’s participation in national and international economic system management and control of environmental degradations is a key are for sustainable development. (Baden and Oxoal, 1997:37)

As stated in recent report on millennium development

goals (MDGs), wage differentials, occupational segregations higher unemployment rates and their disproportionate representation in the formal and subsistence sectors are the major limiting factors for females economic advancement (UNICEF, 2006:8)

The 1974 Ethiopian land form was not gender biased except if the use of language taking the consideration article 4 of the proclamation, this reads without differentiation of the sex, any person who is willing to personally cultivate land shall be allotted rural land sufficient for his maintenance and that of his family. It sounds that land given to household thee by both wife and husband seems to b on the same footing with men (Birhanu, 2007)

Constraints of Agricultural production in Ethiopia

The agricultural sector is the main factor that dominates the economy of Ethiopia though depends mostly on the subsistence, small scale farming system and remains a vulnerable sector (Deres and Kelemawork, 2005:23). It is the main source of livelihood and revenue for the country. Adverse environmental conditions, slow growth of the agriculture sector and rapid population growth are the main factors holding back the development of Ethiopian culture. Small scale farmers who are dependent on low input and low output rain fed mixed farming with traditional technologies dominate the agriculture sector.

Other causes are tenure insecurity; weak agricultural research and extension services: lack of agricultural marketing; an inadequate transport network; low use of fertilizers improved seeds and pesticides and the use of traditional farm implements. However, the major causes of under production are drought, which often causes famine since early 1970's and floods. This climate related disasters make the nation dependent on food aid. (Deres, 2007:5)

Socio-cultural factors that affect women's in agriculture

Many socio- cultural factors, such as societal institution, popular culture, foster male, female distinction in many ways. Gone are the days when the media almost exclusively portrayed women in stereotypical, powerless roles, still research indicated that some gender stereotyping persists for example in TV commercials and programs in countries around the world (Furnhama and Skae, 1997: Lovedal, 1989: Mulang, 1996)

The socio- cultural based gender division of labor which burdens females in the help of different stakeholders. The role of the religious institutions and rural organizations influencing the behavior of males in the satieties is

immense. On top of that gender sensitization programs are needed to encourage males and females to hare in domestic tasks. This could take place through non – formal education activities such as extension meetings, and main streaming gender issues in school curriculum of all levels. Moreover non- formal education activities organized for rural farmers should take not of the heavily domestic work load of females so that such activities are schedules at appropriate time to enable females to attend (Gemechu, 2008:109).

Although the laws until the 1974 revolution did not clearly deny women's ownership, the fact is that women were not permitted to own land from the cultural aspect during the era of feudalism (JICA, 1997:17)

A gender division of labor in rural Ethiopia varies by farming system, across cultural settings and location, based on different wealth categories (Abera et al, 2006:18). In most rural parts of Ethiopia gender roles do vary according to ethnicity, income, status, location and other factors.

Major crops grown and animal raising in study kebele

Table 1 summarizes priority crops and animal raising in the study community. Women's participation and their role in agricultural production were undertake during major farming activities and seasonal calendars of the years.

The types of crop that were grown in Awaro peasant associations were teff, wheat, and horse bean were ranked respectively.

This priority of crops given because of their market and food values. Besides during focus group discussion (FGD) and key informant interviews farmers were confirmed that teff is endemic crop to Ethiopia and cultivated as human food to make local bread which is called 'budena or "enjera". Moreover teff straw has high value for feeding of livestock and for construction of houses.

Teff production in Ethiopia has the following major advantages for small scale farmers (Ketema, 1987, as cited in Gemechu, 2008):-

- It can be grown under moisture- stresses areas;
- It can be grown under water lagged conditions;
- It is suitable and is used for double and relay cropping.
- Its straw is a valuable animal feed during the dry season when there is acute shortage feed.
- It has acceptance in the national diet and enables farmers to earn more because of its high price.
- It is reliable and low- risk crop.
- It is useful as rescue or catch crop moisture stress areas.
- It can be stored easily under local storage

Table 3. Factors influence women knowledge of land preparation

| Headship | | Socio-economic | | Socio-cultural | | Training | |
|-----------------|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------|----|
| Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| 6 | 17 | 5 | 14 | 16 | 46 | 8 | 23 |

Source- own field data, 2012

Table 4. Factors influencing women's knowledge of planting

| Headship | | Socio- economic | | Socio- cultural | | Training | |
|-----------------|----|------------------------|----|------------------------|----|-----------------|----|
| Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| 6 | 17 | 6 | 17 | 15 | 43 | 8 | 23 |

Source- own field data, 2012

Table 5. Factors influence knowledge of technological applications

| Access of information | | Family headship | | Socio-economic | | Access to extension | | Level of education | | Socio-cultural | | Headship & socio-cultural | |
|------------------------------|----|------------------------|---|-----------------------|----|----------------------------|---|---------------------------|----|-----------------------|----|--------------------------------------|----|
| Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| 6 | 17 | 3 | 9 | 9 | 26 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 11 | 1 | 14 | 6 | 17 |

Source- own field data, 2012

engaged knowledge of planting in their family and the same is true for animal raising activities. In addition to these from the Table 1 depicted above one could observe that the majority of respondents (40%) was low, (28.5%) of respondents were high, (22.5%) the respondents were no knowledge and (9%) the respondents were very high of knowledge in technological application on agricultural production.

Moreover the majority (31.4%) high and low with the same proportion, (26%) was very high and (11.2%) of the respondents were responses no knowledge of weed control in agricultural production. As it was summarized in above Table 1 the majorities of the respondents had high knowledge in the agricultural production in both crop and animal raising. While the least numbers had no knowledge of both crop production and animal raising practices in their family and kebele. But even if they had high knowledge they were not able to participated as they had knowledge due to a low status in a society and their contribution were not recognized in the family, community and society at large. This study result was in line with or conformation with "women's role in the economy has often been under estimated, and their work in agriculture has long been invisible" (Gemetchu, 2008:9)

Factors influencing women's participation in agricultural production

The respondents were asked what factors influence the

women's knowledge and participation in agricultural production. A greater proportion of respondents which account (46%) reported that socio -cultural factor as a major influencing ones, for knowledge on land preparation, followed by (23%) were lack of training on land preparation, Headship account (17%) of respondents and (14%) were reported socio- economic a factor for influencing women knowledge on land preparation.

As it was indicated in the below Table 3, A greater proportion of the respondents (43%) reported socio-cultural followed by (23%) training, (17%) of the respondents for the same proportion of both socio-economic and head ship respectively as a major factor for influencing women knowledge in planting.

As shown on the above Table 5 the greater proportion of respondents (26%) reported socio-economic as followed by (17%) of the respondents family headship and socio- cultural with same proportion with accessing information, (14%) socio- cultural (11%) were level of education, (9%) were family headship and (6%) of the respondents were put as the major factors for influencing the knowledge of women on technological application and their participation in agricultural production. As it was indicated in the Table 4 socio- economic factor had great proportion influence knowledge of women in technological application.

As indicated on the above Table 6 a greater proportion (34%) respondent, were reported level of education as major factors influencing knowledge of women in food

Table 6. Factors influencing women's knowledge of food processing

| Training | | Family headship | | Socio-economic | | Access to extension | | Level of education | |
|-----------|----|-----------------|---|----------------|----|---------------------|----|--------------------|----|
| Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| 10 | 29 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 14 | 5 | 14 | 12 | 34 |

Source- own field data, 2012

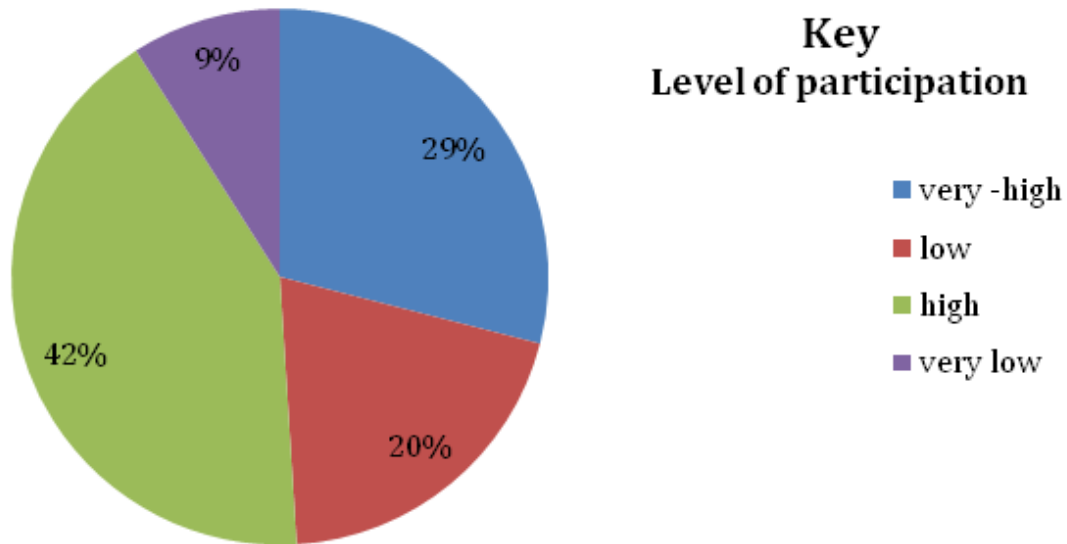


Figure 1. level of education women participation in productive activities.
 Sour: own field data, 2012

processing followed by (29%) lack of training, (14%) were socio- economic access to extension, (9%) were put family headship as major factor that influence women knowledge in food processing.

Responses on the level of women participation in productive activities

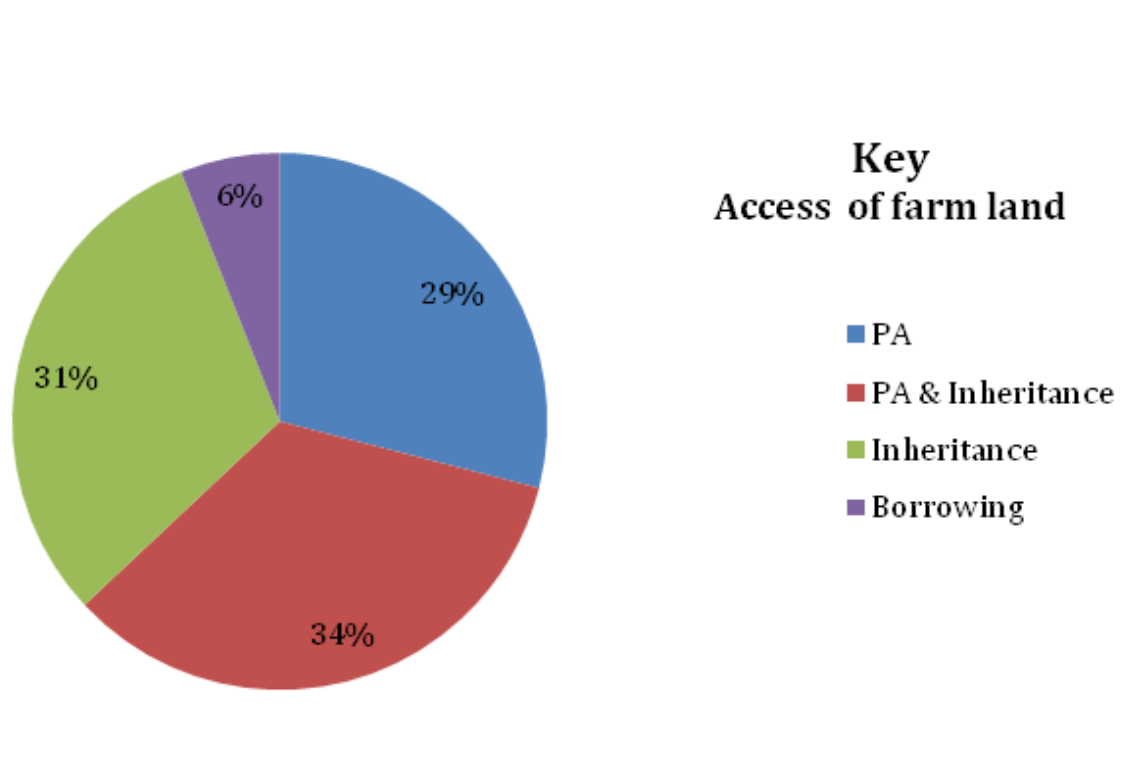
As shown on the above pie chart (Figure 1) majorities of (42%) of the respondent were high in their level of participation in agricultural production followed by (29%) of respondents reported very high, (20%) of the respondents low and (9%) of were reported as very low to participate on the productive activity in agricultural production.

It could be seen from the pie-chart the high percentage of respondents engaged or more participated in agricultural production was due to most proportion of the respondents as stated earlier on the Table 4 where their source of income was farming. Hence this shows their

participation was more on agricultural activity to increase their annual incomes. Clearly stated that focus group discussion (FGD) and by key informant interviews, even if women's participation is high in production activity they have low status and their works were not recognized. This study results was conformation with women in Ethiopia, like their fellow sisters in other developing countries women have been victims of gender based oppression and exploitation in all aspects of life. Moreover, their contribution has never been adequately recognized nor given economic value (UN, 2002:28)

Respondents access to farming land

A greater proportion of respondents (34%) acquiring farming and through peasant associations and inheritance followed by (31%) were got through inheritance, (29%) of the respondents acquired their land distribution of peasant associations and (6%) of the respondents were acquired by borrowing from relatives.



Figures 2. Methods of acquiring farming land in percentage
Source: own field data, 2012

As indicated in the above pie-chart the majority (34%) of the respondents was acquired their lands from both peasant associations and inheritance from their family and less number of respondents acquired by borrowing from the relatives. Thus, one could recognize from the above Figure 2 during focus group discussions (FGD) as well as interviews of key informants.

The respondents reported acquiring the farm lands from peasant associations and inheritance had high contribution in the participation of women in agricultural production. Acquiring from inheritance had great importance for their participation equal proportion with men in production. Therefore, acquiring land from both peasant association and inheritance contribute to women participate in agricultural production and maximize their productivity.

In depicted on the Figure 3 below on bar graph percentage distribution of respondents by size of farming lands (29%) of the respondents reported a farming land size 3.1-5 hectares followed by (26%) of respondents 0.5 hectares, (22%) of the respondents 2.1-3 hectares, (14%) the respondents had 0.6-1.5 hectares and (9%) of the respondents reported 1.6-2 hectares respectively.

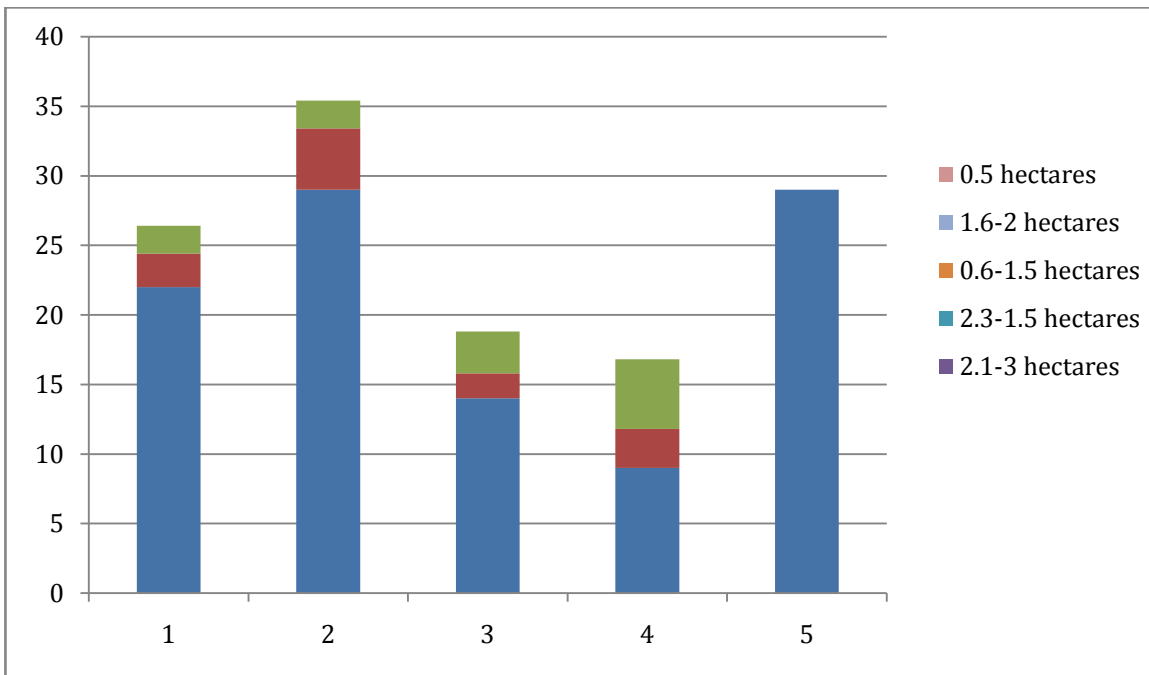
From the above bar graph one could observe that great portion (29%) of respondents had 3.1-5 hectares followed by (26%) of the respondents owned 0.5 hectares, the rest

(22%) of the respondents owned 2.1-3, (14%) reported as 0.6-1.5 hectares and 9% of the respondents owned 1.6-2 hectares. So as it was indicated on the above bar graph the majority of respondents owned enough farm land. So the finding of the study depicts a higher participation of women in agricultural production, this was also increased because as it indicated on earlier pie-chart 4.2 as women acquired more land by inheritance and distribution of peasant association their participation were higher than that of acquired by borrowing from relatives.

In general, it is possible to say that size of farm land could play great role for women participation. This we also confirmed from interviews conducted and questionnaires that reported by respondents of the resident's kebele, the respondents reported in key informants Interview that as the size of farm land increase their dependence on agricultural production increase. While, as the size of farm land decrease their dependence (participation) on agricultural production decrease because they participated on other works.

Respondents primary use of their land

According to the Table 7 the majority (63%) of the respondents were used their land by cultivation followed



Size of farm land

Figure 3. Bar graph percentage distributions of respondents by size of farming land in hectares.

Table 7. The percentage distribution of respondents by primary use of farm land

| Primary use of land | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Cultivation | | Grazing | | Cultivation and grazing | |
| Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 22 | 63 | 3 | 8 | 10 | 29 |

Source- own field data, 2012

by (29%) of the respondents reported both cultivation and grazing in the same time and the rest (8%) were used their land, for grazing.

As indicated on the above Table 7 the great portion land were used for cultivation and grazing. Therefore, one could be observe that a major number of respondents were depends on both crop production and animal raising at the same time and their dependency on agricultural production was high. So primary use of their lands and women participation in agriculture go hand in hand. They reported on key informants interview that as they use land for both cultivation and grazing their interest to participated was high due to their productivity becomes high.

Respondents access to rural institution

Regard to access to rural institutions (43%) of the farmers reported they are members of peasant associations (PAs) while (26%) were members of both

peasant associations and religious institutions, (17%) of the respondents are members of religious institutions and (14%) of the respondents are members of both micro finance and credits saving respectively.

The role of rural institutions in helping rural farmers in the study community to help them alleviate their socio-economic and environmental challenges is a reality. For example Idir associations were reported to help rural farmers to deal with gave prices and agricultural products for members of associations when the houses of the individuals were damaged or burnt they help each other. So this a good example of the role of rural institutions in helping rural farmers especially for female headed household. Therefore, rural women’s are more participated in rural institution in order to save from the problem and increase their productivity.

As it can be observed from the Table 8 & 9 the greater portion (83%) of the respondents are satisfied by being a member of rural institutions and only (17%) of the respondents were not satisfied by their being member of

Table 8. Percentage distribution of respondents' access rural institution

| Rural institutions | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|----|------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|----|-----------|----|
| Peasant association | | PAs & religious institutions | | MFI's & credit & save religious | | | |
| Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| 25 | 43 | 9 | 26 | 6 | 17 | 5 | 14 |

Source- own field data, 2012

Table 9. the current satisfaction status of respondents about their rural institutions

| Satisfaction status | No of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 29 | 83 |
| No | 6 | 17 |

Source- own field data, 2012

their rural institution.

Accordingly, as respondents reported that they get many facilities from their rural institutions such as credit, selling agricultural production, improved seeds and fertilization. Example they get credit from saving and credit institutions, and also they are many factors that influence many of them to satisfied with rural institution as reported such as frequent participation in religious ceremony, poor in supply of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, chemicals) poor in credit supply and the economy they have are limited.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary conclusions

The result of the study was based on primary and secondary data from different sources. The general objective of the study was to assess rural women's participation in agricultural production in case of Awaro kora peasant association, Ambo district, Ethiopia and the investigation were based on their role and knowledge they have in agricultural production.

The results of the study describe the significant knowledge of women's in agricultural production; significantly high contributions of women's in agricultural and different impact on women's farmers.

Like in all other places in Africa and in our county Ethiopia rural women's in Awaro kora peasant association are more depend on small- scale agriculture and farm labor. Many study shows that they efforts to reduce rural poverty and increase adequate food sufficiency will not be successful, unless issues relating to women involvement in agriculture are taken in into consideration. These issues the contribution of women to household food supply and income, access land resources and the impact of policy reforms on the economic, cultural and social role of women and household food security.

Women's in most rural communities are heavily affected to their many roles, especially the task in the house were done solely by them. For example the tasks of carrying baby, collecting fuel wood, fetching water, cooking which take long hours else are considered solely as the task of women. Women farmers have different technological needs for increase their productivity, but thus technology transfer programs will not be effective due to:

The findings of the study confirm that women interest of participation are high and low status of the society and have lower incomes. The problems faced by such women's vary according to their degree of access to productive resources including land, credit, technology. Moreover, although women farmers play predominant role in food production, land preparation, planting, weed control and harvesting due to they often lack of access to agricultural services, such as, training and extension.

The results of the study reveal that different factors influence them not participated in agricultural production. Those are socio-cultural factors, access of educations, training socio- economic, headship and extension services are play pivotal role in influencing women's knowledge in agricultural production. In addition to these, the institutional factors like religious institutions and marriage hold back the women's farmers participated in agricultural production as they need were also mentioned.

RECOMMENDATION

From the finding of the study and conclusion the authors recommended the following forward.

- Rewarding model female farmer and good practices of that female farmer to initiate others.
- It is better to provide training for women

culturally acceptable and appropriate.

- Increase women's access to education and promote family planning and projects.
- Raise awareness in a community about the knowledge of women's in growth of productivity.
- Increase the linkage and interaction of women's affairs office all religious institutions
- Giving awareness for the society about merits and demerits of traditional activities.
- Create linkage, and introduction among women's affairs office and NGO's
- Teaching women's about their rights and responsibilities in a family, community and society at large being with concerned bodies.
- Design and implement on agricultural services for females.
- Increase women's, training on application of technology they use in agriculture

Finally increase rural women's participation agricultural production the governments, NGOs and the Awaro Kora peasant administration will be put in the consideration based on the above recommendation to solve women's participation in agricultural production.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| CEDAW: | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| FGD: | Focus Group Discussion |
| MDG: | Millennium Development Goals |
| UN: | United Nation |
| WCED: | World Commission on Environment and Development |
| WEDO: | Women's Environment and Development Organizations |

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