

**ASSESSMENT OF THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY WOMEN
COOPERATIVES: THE CASE OF MALGA DISTRICT, SIDAMA ZONE,
SNNPR, ETHIOPIA**

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TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGMENT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENT.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
ACRONYMS	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Research Problem	2
1.3 Research Objective	2
1.4 Research Question	2
1.5 Significance of the Study	3
1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study.....	3
1.7 Organization of the Thesis.....	3
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	4
2.1 Concept and Principles of Cooperatives	4
2.1.1 Informal Cooperatives.....	4
2.1.2 Formal Cooperatives	4
2.1.3 Cooperative Values and Principles.....	5
2.2 The Socio-Economic Benefit of Cooperatives	5
2.3 Gender and Cooperatives	6
2.3.1 Gender Issues in Cooperatives.....	6
2.3.2 Need for Gender Issue in Cooperatives	6
2.3.3 Women Participation in Cooperatives	7

2.3.4 The Role of Women in Rural Society.....	7
2.4 Gender and Cooperative Environment of the Area.....	8
2.4.1 Political Characteristics of the Area	8
2.4.2 Economic Characteristics of the Area	8
2.4.3 Socio-Cultural Characteristics of the Area.....	9
2.5 Conceptual Framework.....	10
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	11
3.1 Overview of the Research Area	11
3.1.1 Overview of the SNNPR.....	11
3.1.2 Overview of Sidama Zone.....	11
3.1.3 Overview of Malga District (the Study Area)	11
3.2 Profile of the Cooperative Society.....	13
3.3 Research Method	13
3.4 Sampling Procedure.....	13
3.4.1 Selection of the Study Area	13
3.4.2 Sampling Design.....	14
3.5 Method of Data Collection.....	14
3.6 Validity and Reliability of Tools Used for Data Collection.....	15
3.7 Method of Data Analysis.....	15
4. RESULT AND DESCUSSION.....	16
4.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents	16
4.1.1 Age Group of the Respondents.....	16
4.1.2 Marital Status of the respondents	16
4.1.3 Educational levels of the Respondents	17
4.1.4 Family Size of the Respondents	17

4.1.5 Religion.....	17
4.2 Individual Factors.....	18
4.2.1 Awareness and Initiations for the Establishment of Women Cooperatives.....	18
4.2.2 Members and Leaders Relation in Performing and Sharing Responsibilities.....	19
4.3 Institutional Factors.....	20
4.3.1 Election of Leaders in Cooperatives.....	20
4.3.2 Impact of Promoters towards Cooperatives.....	20
4.3.3 Impacts of Services Delivery Performance on Cooperative Members.....	21
4.4 Environmental Factors.....	22
4.4.1. Impacts of Activities of Men and Women Members on the Cooperatives.....	22
4.4.1.1 <i>Productive Activities of the Members</i>	22
4.4.1.2 <i>Reproductive Activity of the Members</i>	23
4.4.2 Implication of Access and Control over Resources on Women Members of the Cooperatives	24
4.4.3 Socio-Cultural and Economical Influence on Women Cooperatives.....	25
5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....	28
5.1 Conclusion.....	28
5.2 Recommendations.....	29
REFERENCES.....	31
ANNEX I: OPERATIONAL DEFINATION OF KEY TERMS.....	33
Annex II: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRES.....	34
Annex III: CHECK LIST FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION.....	38
ANNEX IV: MALGA DISTRICT COOPERATIVE SOCIETY PROFILE OF THE YEAR 2010.....	41
ANNEX V: MALGA DISTRICT WOMEN'S WORK LOAD AS MEASURED BY TIME.....	42
ANNEX VI: SIDAMA ZONE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY PROFILE OF THE YEAR 2010.....	43

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of cooperative principles adopted by ICA in 1995.....	5
Table 2 Types of cooperatives in Malga district.....	12
Table 3: The sampling design of the study for the interview (questioner) and FGD	14
Table 4: Age of the respondents	16
Table 5: Household size of the respondents	17
Table 6: Source of information for joining cooperatives.....	18
Table 7: Influential factors in joining cooperatives	19
Table 8: Election of leaders in cooperatives	20
Table 9: Gendered division of labor in Malga cooperative society	23
Table 10: Gender disaggregated access to and control over resources and benefits.....	25
Table 11: Socio-cultural and economic influence on women cooperatives	26
Table 12: Source of income for members of the cooperatives.....	27

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Conceptual frame work of the research.....	10
Figure 2: Administrative map of Malga District	12
Figure 3: Marital status of women	16
Figure 4: Education level of the respondent	17
Figure 5: Religion of the respondent	18
Figure 6: Service delivery (fertilizer) by male dominant cooperative.....	22
Figure 7: Unequal division of labor.....	24
Figure 8: Sell of cabbage as a source of income to members of cooperatives.	27

ACRONYMS

ARDO	Agricultural and Rural Development Organization
COOP	Cooperatives
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
ICA	International Cooperative Alliance
KI	Key Informant
MDARDO	Malaga District Agricultural and Rural Development Office
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
SACO	Saving and credit cooperative
SNNPRS	Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional state

ABSTRACT

This study has attempted to contribute to the research gap observed in studies related to unsuccessfulness of women cooperatives. It was conducted taking the case of Malaga district, Sideman zone Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional States (SNNPR) of Ethiopia. To this end, the study assessed the demographic, institutional, individual and environmental factors of sampled cooperatives members of both women and men at district level through qualitative research methods.

Five cooperatives were selected purposely out of which four cooperatives were from unsuccessful womens cooperatives and one from strongly functioned men dominant cooperative. Totally five cooperatives have participated, out of the total number of 144 populations, 31 sampled respondents were selected by using systematic random sampling method. The data was collected by using semi-structured questionnaire and also includes; focused group discussion, key informant, document review and direct observation. Focus group discussion comprising of 10 members and key informants involving 5 officials of the district cooperative promotion office were selected purposely.

The results of the study discovered that women were subject to Demographical, institutional, individual, environmental, specially socio-cultural and economical influences. These influences finally lead to passive participation in cooperatives. The community perceives that women are not capable of expressing themselves in public, deciding independently, and caring out activities except the household routines. Economically they are dependent on their husbands and even if they have their own income source, it will be monopolized by their husbands and they cannot use it to buy shares in cooperatives. As women also spend most of their time doing the household activities; they don't have plenty of time to engage themselves in cooperatives.

In addition, women were not aware of the working principles and benefits of cooperatives. They only listened to rumors from their neighbors or friends and were not well informed about it. This is mainly because of illiteracy and lack of convenient information source or media.

In line with this, the prevailed socio-cultural beliefs made women not to be treated equally with men. Cooperative's promoters were partial to men. Let alone giving special attention to the historically oppressed women, they didn't even offer them with the minimum advisory services. Cooperative Leaders also lacked the basic professional skill for the post. They were not technically equipped with management and accounting skills for the recording documents and financial systems. These altogether contribute to the unsuccessfulness in women cooperatives.

In a nut shell, to bridge the gap in this sector, special assistance should be given to women by the concerning agent, be the government or Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Women should have education and their own income source. Awareness should be created among the society concerning the traditional socio-cultural beliefs that aggravate women's passive participation and to their husbands concerning cooperative concepts. Trainings should also be given to promoters, cooperative members and leaders in order to enhance women's involvement.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In Ethiopia, the first cooperative organizations were established in the 1950s (Couture, 2002). During the Derge regime (1975-1991), the country developed socialist network of cooperative system following mandatory membership whereby farmers were expected to deliver grain in quotas. These cooperatives were generally unsuccessful (USAID/ETHIOPIA, 2002). But after the new government Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), cooperatives have started involving in the free market economic system. This indicates the diversified nature of the new cooperatives from the system of the previous regime.

In 1998, the activities of farmers' cooperatives were formally re-energized by the Cooperative Societies Proclamation No. 147/1998(7). The Proclamation defines cooperatives as organizations formed by individuals on voluntary basis (Kodama, 2007). Currently, the Ethiopia Government has been encouraging and supporting the organization of cooperatives in various sector of the country's economy. Consequently, the cooperatives movements have been increasing at a fast rate. According to the federal cooperative agency of Ethiopia, 14,423 cooperatives were registered by the year 2005 (FCA, cited in ILO, 2009). There are various types of cooperatives involved under the category of services providing and producer type of cooperatives. Thus, these diversified types of cooperatives stand for different objectives, economic dimensions and have different legal states and internal structures.

Cooperatives can contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (Birdcall, 2004), including gender equality and reduction of child mortality. However, the numbers of cooperatives and the extent of membership in the country have not been able to explore and utilize the potential services of cooperatives (ILO, 2009).

Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional state (SNNPRS) which usually known as southern Ethiopia region have strong cooperative unions, among them Sideman coffee cooperative union is well known by its provision of coffee to the national and international markets.

Malega district is one of the nine districts of Sideman zone having Multipurpose, Artisan and saving and credit type of cooperatives. There are governmental organizations and NGOs in the district working towards the implementation of the food security policy of the country. The policy encourages women participation in the production process for contributing their part in bringing food security. This is possible by acknowledging the role and participation of women in the production process of farming activities and helping them to improve their livelihood through cooperatives.

However, as far as the research is concerned, no satisfactory studies have been conducted in Ethiopia in general and in SNNPR in particular to show the difficulties of women cooperative in the zone and how to support these women cooperatives in achieving their success and attain food security in the zone. Thus, in an attempt to contribute to the research gap observed related to the causes of unsuccessfulness of women cooperatives and the status of the cooperatives activities in to their development process, this study aimed at assessing causes for unsuccessfulness of women cooperatives in the district. And make recommendation about issues of unsuccessfulness of women cooperatives in the district and its implication for the successful work of cooperative in Malaga district and in the region as a whole.

1.2 Research Problem

According to central statistics agency (2008) report, 49.5% of the population of Ethiopia is accounted by women. Ethiopian women's are involved in different economic activities together with cultivation of land, harvesting, food preparation, marketing, house construction and animal husbandry. By doing so, women provide approximately 40% of family labor (Habtemeriam, 1996). As a whole, women are the most important labor force in the majority of rural Ethiopia where agriculture is the back bone of the economy.

The government of Ethiopia has a policy of ensuring food security to be implemented all over the country. One of the strategies undertaken for ensuring food security is acknowledging women participation in over all activities. The policy pretends that women cooperatives are the means through which the interest of the women and the aim of the policy can be achieved.

Basically in Malaga district, different types of cooperatives including women cooperatives were organized by the cooperative department of rural and agricultural office, women affairs office and NGOs. In district there were 11 cooperatives with a total of 374 members, out of which there were 4 women cooperatives with 144 members. But, regardless of the type of cooperative, women cooperatives were practically seen unsuccessful or without showing any sign of progress. Yet there was no tangible practice that has been performed to know the real problem for the case.

The organization, Agricultural and Rural Development Office (ARDO) has confronted this problem by trial and error method without identifying the real problem systematically. The organization, as a governmental office, has a responsibility to work for the policy of the country on its part. Organizing women in cooperatives is one of the strategies of the ARDO; to attain its mission through which the role and participation of women in the production process of farming activities are required and led to improve their livelihood. Nevertheless, women cooperatives in the district were not successful and members were showing no sign of improvement in their lives as a result of their engagement in the cooperatives.

1.3 Research Objective

To identify the major difficulties that cause for the unsuccessfulness' of women cooperatives and to make recommendations for cooperative organizers and stakeholders to strength women cooperatives in the study area.

1.4 Research Question

1. What are the factors that contribute for the unsuccessfulness' of women cooperatives?
 - 1.1 What make women aware and initiate them for the establishment of women Cooperatives?
 - 1.2 How members and leaders of women cooperatives are performing and sharing their responsibility among themselves?
 - 1.3 What are the influences of promoters towards women cooperatives?

1.4 What are the services of cooperatives given to the members?

1.5 What are the activities of men and women members in the cooperatives?

1.6 Which members have an access and control over the resources and benefit in Cooperatives?

1.7 What are the influences of economical and socio-cultural factors on women cooperatives of the district?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The existence of an organization, institution, cooperatives societies, and nongovernmental organization is to up lift the rural poor, to improve the living standard of the community, to improve the skill of innovation and discoveries through proper monitoring and evaluation on the basis of gender equality. The aim of most research is to make recommendation and to pinpoint the gap in the theoretical and practical framework. Therefore, the significance of this research is to provide information to the policy makers, cooperative promoters, organizers and extension workers in order to consider the research findings when organizing women cooperatives in Malega district.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study is limited to Malega district primary cooperative societies, in Sideman Zone, SNNPRS. The research was undertaken on the specified district and cooperative societies alone. Cooperative societies other than the specified cooperative are not included. The limited availability of time, updated primary and secondary data on the issue of cooperatives and gender was the limitation of the study. Absence of some of the respondents during data collection exposed the research for additional time requirement. This is due to officials were actively involved in accomplishment of governmental tasks such as inventory duties since the time was end of budget year so that they didn't give priority to the research work. Moreover, it was also agricultural plowing season that women were engaged in such activities. Therefore convenient times were used in order to get cooperation from them.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis consists of five major sections. In the first and introductory section, sub topics that include back ground, research problem, objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study and organization of the thesis were incorporated. The second section elaborates the review of literature; i.e. theoretical and practical conceptualization with respect to cooperative and gender in general. A brief explanation of the study area and a thorough explanation of the methodology used for the study area are presented in section three. The finding of the study was presented in the result and discussion part in section four. Finally, conclusions and recommendation are drawn from the study

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept and Principles of Cooperatives

Cooperatives are self governed and democratic associations by which communities work hand-in-hand to solve their social, economic or cultural drawbacks. (ICA, 1995). These associations fasten social and economic development as they follow a wider set of values as compared to other profit association (FNG, 1966). Since users of the services of cooperatives are at the same time owners, the decisions made balance the interests of its members with the need for profitability. It also provides equal access to market and services to its members in its mission to accomplish economic development. Even though, cooperatives are not main sources of employment they provide work opportunities to members and employees in the rural and urban areas and pave the way to financial support by sharing profits, paying wages and salaries according to the type of the cooperatives. However, awareness of the members is mandatory in order for them to make use of the cooperatives.

Therefore, human beings associate with their society for lots of reasons, be social, religious, economic, political or any other sector. Man has found enormous benefits in working together and cooperation in all over the world. This worldwide phenomenon is also seen in Ethiopia where people cooperate in traditional form of associations like Debi, Maher and Idier which are taught to be cornerstones for modern associations.

2.1.1 Informal Cooperatives

Some self-help cooperatives are found in Ethiopia which is popular among the varied cultures of the society. They are also given local names by the community even though they share similar objectives. Here below there is a list of some self-help cooperatives among the many:

- I. "Debi" -This form of cooperation which doesn't have permanent members is carried out when the community (farmers) need assistance in farming or house building. The assistance is support through labor. Farmers may need help in times of sloughing, weeding and threshing, or house building and make use of such kind of cooperation.
- II. "Maher"- It's an association mainly formulated for aid related support through religious relativity. As a religious association it furnishes its members through spiritual gathering and worship. It also develops the skill of social interaction. It's characterized by support through times of unfavorable conditions.
- III. "Idier"- it's a society buildup to help one another during burial and in times when mutual cooperation is needed. It gives support to its members when they face adverse situations. Its provision is not limited to financial, material, labor and physiological support, it also involves in infrastructural and social services development.

2.1.2 Formal Cooperatives

Formal cooperatives in Africa did not originated from the interest of the people, rather it traced with the colonizers interest to use cooperatives as an instrument to implement their socio-economic policies (Develtere, 1994). Since Ethiopia was not colonized, formal cooperatives

haven't flourished earlier as compared to other African nations. Despite the fact that consumer cooperatives were established in Addis Ababa in 1945, it was after the announcement No. 44 of 1960 that modern cooperatives were introduced (Haileselassie, 2003).

2.1.3 Cooperative Values and Principles

The "Statement of Cooperative Identity" which is adopted by the ICA states the values as: self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, solidarity, honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

According to ICA (1995), any cooperative should pass through the following guiding principles in order to convert the intended values on paper work into practice. Table 1 provides a description of these principles.

Table 1: Summary of cooperative principles adopted by ICA in 1995

Principle	Description
1. Voluntary and Open Membership	Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people who are able to use the co-op's goods and services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.
2. Democratic Member Control	Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members. In general, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote).
3. Member Economic Participation	Members contribute to and democratically control the capital of their cooperatives. They receive limited compensation, if any, on capital contributed as a condition of membership. Profits are allocated to reserves and/or are used to benefit members in proportion to their transaction with the cooperative.
4. Autonomy and Independence	Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations. Democratic control by the members must be maintained in all contracts the cooperatives enter into.
5. Education, Training and Information	Cooperatives provide education and training for their members and staff to help them fully participate in the democratic control and development of the cooperative.
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives	Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local and national groups.
7. Concern for Community	While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities.

2.2 The Socio-Economic Benefit of Cooperatives

Economic benefits are not the only outcomes of cooperatives, there are many more (Barracked, Jo, 2006). This is because the objective of cooperative is to make the members' life much more sustaining and humane. It also works to improve the social relation of the community and make its members live their life to the full extent both at the personal and national levels. As compared to the economic benefits, the social role of cooperation is far more reaching. Some of the social cooperative purposes are as follows: to produce an industrial relation where power division is

more equally distributed among its members as compared to other private sectors, to be in a spirit of family and relatedness and feel the power of pride and impartiality, to foster group benefit than individual benefit, to reach a constructive agreement in order to solve economic and social problems, to secure rations, to train for political power, and to provide education in democracy.

Cooperative helps to rationalize distribution pattern, increases purchasing power, promote consumer protection, and narrow the housing gap (Barraket, Jo, 2006). They modernize small scale production in agriculture, fisheries, handicraft and industry. They provide increased quality and higher production together with proficient market with great output. They also produce dynamic capital formation among individuals. In a nut shell, cooperative growth leads to economic growth.

Cooperatives give services to its members at a lower cost. These may be socio-economic services comprising of holding, the formation of irrigation scheme, the contouring of land, the obtaining of technical knowledge, the administration of credit, the sales of fertilizer, pesticides, seeds, electricity, machinery services, consumer goods, the processing and marketing of products, the provision of insurance, health and medical care or education (Veerakumaran, 2003).

2.3 Gender and Cooperatives

2.3.1 Gender Issues in Cooperatives

Gender issues are features and roles that bring distinction between men and women. (March,C.et al., 2005). When we see the gap in men's and women's work activities and the resources they have, it implies that there is a problem of inequality. This is the driving force that brings gender issue into existence, and should be the concern of the cooperative society. Man can never live alone without woman, since they may be related as mother and a child, husband and wife or sister and brother. Institutional factors aggravate it since these inequalities are related to gender issues in social, political and economic manner. Gender issue can also be considered as developmental issue. The potential of men and women are not executed to their full potential due to reasons related to gender. So, taking this issue in to account will at least make half part of the society engage in developmental activities. Not only is these, gender issue is also an issue of justice and human right. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian constitution (1995) on article 25, say that, "All persons are equal before the law", which is to mean that no one should be discriminated based on race, color, sex, language political opinion, national origin and wealth. If there is unjust condition concerning this among men and women, then it will lead to a dilemma and abuse of human right.

2.3.2 Need for Gender Issue in Cooperatives

Gender is an issue among the society, cooperatives and anywhere where there is inequality between the two sexes. Even though these inequalities are highly seen in developing countries, they also exist in the developed world. This scope in the developing countries is because of socio-economic factors like: illiteracy, lack of employment opportunities, and lack of concern to the female children. We encounter gender oppressions in every corner. In the traditional society there is conscious subordination of women and their rights where it's common in developing countries. Such oppressions are due to backward thoughts like: giving lower values to women

and taking them as inferiors, perceiving that they can't win challenges and biasing them (ARMTI, 2006).

The power balance in gender equality shifts to male, where he shows his dominance to females. In such a society women cannot enjoy their rights and are treated as unequal (Smith, 2004). There exists gender prejudice in areas where policies are formulated, plans are executed, programs are implemented, and when decisions are made due to backward traditional beliefs. This inequality is also encountered in economic and social development processes. Plans are made by men in many societies, and implementations are also left for them. These plans do not consider women and are also partial to men. These kinds of differences are most seen in developing countries (Moser, C. 1993).

Such kind of disparities in male and female are also seen in cooperatives. Women are abandoned from areas of admission, sharing benefits, representation in the management bodies and decision making. Most of the time women by themselves are not showing effort to make use of their rights due to feeling inferior, work load at family level and other cultural influences (Randall, 1998).

2.3.3 Women Participation in Cooperatives

Women participation in cooperatives is low especially in rural areas as the World over statistics show (FAO 1996). This may be difficult to explain in the developed world as gender based discrimination is lower. In the developing world, cultural and traditional beliefs such as: women's "inside" role, discrimination, not being able to confront in front of men, letting men take care of money matters, illiteracy, supposed inferior abilities, and other social pressures make women not to take prominent role in social affairs. Commerce cooperatives deal in particularly cash crops, which tend to be male precincts, is also another factor for women's cooperative problem. In addition men resistance to women's participation also goes along this line. Absolute lack of time to join up with other women is a major factor everywhere.

Women cooperatives in the rural areas of India can be illustrated by the Anand pattern dairy cooperative. Women are primary producers of dairy products and are involved in the majority of dairying activities. Even though effort is made by the National Dairy Development Board, the government and NGOs, women's participation in the cooperative is too low (nearly 16% nationally) (FAO, 1996).

2.3.4 The Role of Women in Rural Society

The development of rural small-holder farming sector is mainly dominant in many countries' agenda. Women, who take the greater number in membership of this sector in developing countries, are hard working people so as to meet family's food need and generate additional income. They contribute to more than 80% of the food production in Sub-Saharan Africa. In rural society women are the hidden agricultural producers. They provide half of world's food demands while they are ignored (FAO, 1993). Crop production and animal husbandry are among farming activities which consume about 85% of their labor (Yeshi, 2005). The multiple roles of women in Ethiopia threaten their health, living status, food security, productivity and potential contribution to development (Senait, 2000).

Many women in rural society are also the main actor of the overall work within the home. But this does not earn an income so that it fails to be acknowledged as a contribution to the national accounts. According to UNDP (1995, 97 cited in Oxfam GB 2001) it was estimated that unpaid

invisible work of women is value around US\$11 trillion per year. Due to this invisibility, women's contribution were not counted by the statistical economy of the country.

2.4 Gender and Cooperative Environment of the Area

2.4.1 Political Characteristics of the Area

In the previous Dirge regime of Ethiopia cooperatives were owned and controlled by the state itself. During the period cooperatives were organized by proclamation No 138/1970 which made cooperatives to not only be controlled by the state but also by the board of directors who were elected from the ruling parties.

Now a day, after the coming of Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to power, cooperatives were not controlled by the state. The government only determines the legislative frame work, while cooperatives can function in their own economic and social policies. There are structural lines from the federal cooperative agency up to the district level for promoting cooperatives in general and women participation in particular.

The agricultural development-led industrialization strategy of Ethiopia's five year development plan is in other words rural-focused and agriculture centered. The case of access to and control over land that had hindered women from enjoying their basic economic right was addressed in the new Ethiopian constitution under the right of property (article 40, 1995).The government has designed policies and put legislative measures that have empowered women by giving them access to credit facilities, extension services, and encouraging and assisting them through cooperatives and improved agricultural technologies. This policy of the country is applied in the district and it encourages and assists cooperatives as one of its strategy.

The office of the prime minister also formulated the first ever women's policy document in Ethiopia in1993, recognizing that women carry out 85% of the agricultural work load in the country. The objective was to create equality among the sexes and develop women's livelihood (Women's Affairs Sector 1993 cited in Bushy and Basined 2005)

2.4.2 Economic Characteristics of the Area

The area is highly characterized by mixed farming system, where coffee and a stimulant "chat" production is dominant. There are two growing seasons and the three major crops grown are maize, barley and wheat. Agricultural production is market oriented and is the main source of livelihoods. Agriculture is mainly rain fed. The Main agricultural inputs used are fertilizer and improved seed, which have never been adequately provided by Agricultural and rural development offices.

The average annual income is about 3,000 Birr, which is equivalent to 2 Birr per capita per day or 0.23 USD an amount below the poverty line of 1 USD/ day. The majority of the villagers live in a thatched roof, which is one of the indicators of poor standard of living. According to Malga District Agricultural and Rural Development Office (2009), Regarding to ownership of agricultural assets, the average oxen per farm household of the district is 0.25. A considerable number of farmers do not own oxen.

Above all, women of the district face serious economic and social challenges; such as women can't be involved in economical activities independently without the allowance of the husband

and the society don't allow her to inherit land if the husband dies. The prevailing tradition of the district also affects women more than men. The already started developmental activities and plans of the country are not as well alleviating women's lack of income and high cost of living at the district level. Thus, women are developing sense pessimism and even hopelessness on issues related to their equality and benefits (MoWA, 2006)

2.4.3 Socio-Cultural Characteristics of the Area

Culture is defined as a way of life of a group of people-the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next(TAMU,2010).

Generally, culture is about people's behavior, what they believe value and accept. In Ethiopian culture, it is believed that women are inferior to men both in family and society because the society is mostly male dominant. This cultural trend continues and taken as an unwritten rule of the society.

The Sidama culture cannot be described as being women friendly. For example, married women are forbidden from going out of house for business and any kind of activities which is performed out of the house without the permission of their husbands. Women of the district are not permitted to inherit property; they may also lose access to land and other assets when their husband dies. In some cases, if the husband dies, the cultural division of labor makes it impossible for women to assume the farming tasks previously performed by their husbands, and they are forced to abandon farming. Women also experience multiple forms of other deprivations, such as longer working days, low levels of education relative to men. Violence and discrimination against women is still widespread in the area.

In many ways, women are the major victim of afflictions. Their participation and benefits in basic health services and education have actually not reaching the desired level. Parents prefer their daughter to send home and assist their mothers rather than go to schools with the belief that girls can achieve nothing by learning. On the other hand, non availability of sufficient schools is also a problem. Even if with the existing school, there is a tendency to prevent girls from attending for fear of violence against them if they need to walk long distances.

There are traditional proverbs commonly used by the community indicating that women are incapable of being good leader and with limited knowledge beyond the domestic sphere (Buchy and Felekech, 2005). See Box 1 below.

Box 1

Widely Used Traditional Proverbs Cited by women members

Wonde ladebabaye set lemajet. Man for political work but women for kitchen.

Yesiet ewket kekushina ayalifim: Women's knowledge does not go beyond the kitchen.

Siet yebalwa nebret nech: Women are the property of their husband.

Siet kemitimera ager biworer yishalal: A colonized country is better than a country ruled by women.

Besiet yemimera bechilema yemihed: Followers of women are like people who walk in the dark.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

This framework tries to show the contribution of Demographic, individual, institutional and environmental factors to the unsuccessfulness of women cooperatives of Malga district.

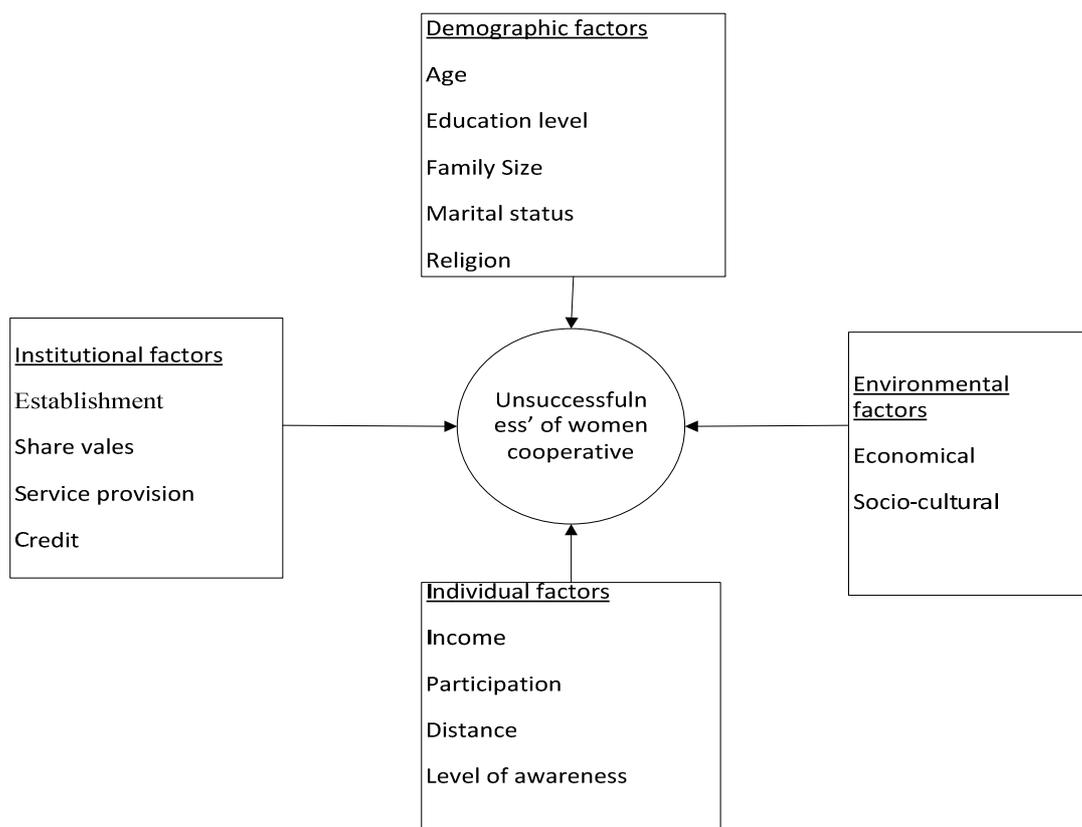


Figure 1: Conceptual frame work of the research

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Research Area

3.1.1 Overview of the SNNPR

The southern Nations and Nationalities and people's Region is located in the southern part of the country bordering with Kenya in the south, the Sudan republic in the North-west and Oromia region in the North and East.

According to central statistics agency (2008), the region has an area of about 110931.9 sq. Km which ranks 4th in size and accounts for about 10 % of the total area of the country. For administrative facilities, the region is divided in to 13 Zones, 8 special districts, and 126 small administrative units called districts.

3.1.2 Overview of Sidama Zone

Sidama zone is one of the 13 zones of SNNPRS. It covers 6972.1 square kilometer and It is divided in to 19 districts with a total population of 2,966,652 (CSA). Its geographic location lies between 4⁰27' and 8⁰30' latitude north and 34⁰ 21' and 39⁰11' longitude east. The average density of the Zone is 390 km² around one of the densely populated zone in the region. The current cooperative statues of the Zone was shown in (Annex VI)

3.1.3 Overview of Malga District (the Study Area)

Malga District is situated in Sidama Zone, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS) of Ethiopia. The district was established in 2006. Before this year, the district was categorized under the administration of Hawassa district, but due to political demarcation of the areas, Hawassa district was divided into four independent districts and Malga is one of them. It has 23 kebeles (the lowest administrative unit in Ethiopia). According to central statistics agency (2008) report, the district has a total population of 114,030 having 50.6% male and 49.4% female.

Production of coffee and "chat" (stimulant) are the major cash crops which are produced and much of men and women farmers time are spent on the production of this crops. Cereal crops are grown in the highland part consisting of wheat, barley and beans, vegetables are also grown seasonally and continuously through irrigation at some distance of the rivers.

Malga District Agricultural and Rural Development Office (MDARDO) is the one responsible for all cooperative organizations which are established formally. This organization consists of cooperative department through which technical supports to other organizers and cooperatives are provided. According to the cooperative department of the district, currently about 11 cooperative organizations exist in the district. And there were 4 women cooperatives engaged in saving and credit cooperative (SACO), artisan and local food processing. The cooperative society of the study area is described in (table 2).

Table 2 Types of cooperatives in Malga district

N ^o	Type of cooperatives	Owned by	Number of cooperatives	Men to women ratio of members
1	SACO	Women	2	0:4
2	Artisan	Women	1	0:4
3	Food processing	Women	1	0:4
4	Multipurpose farmers coop.	Farmers (Men and Women)	7	3.5:1

Source: Malga district cooperative office 2010.

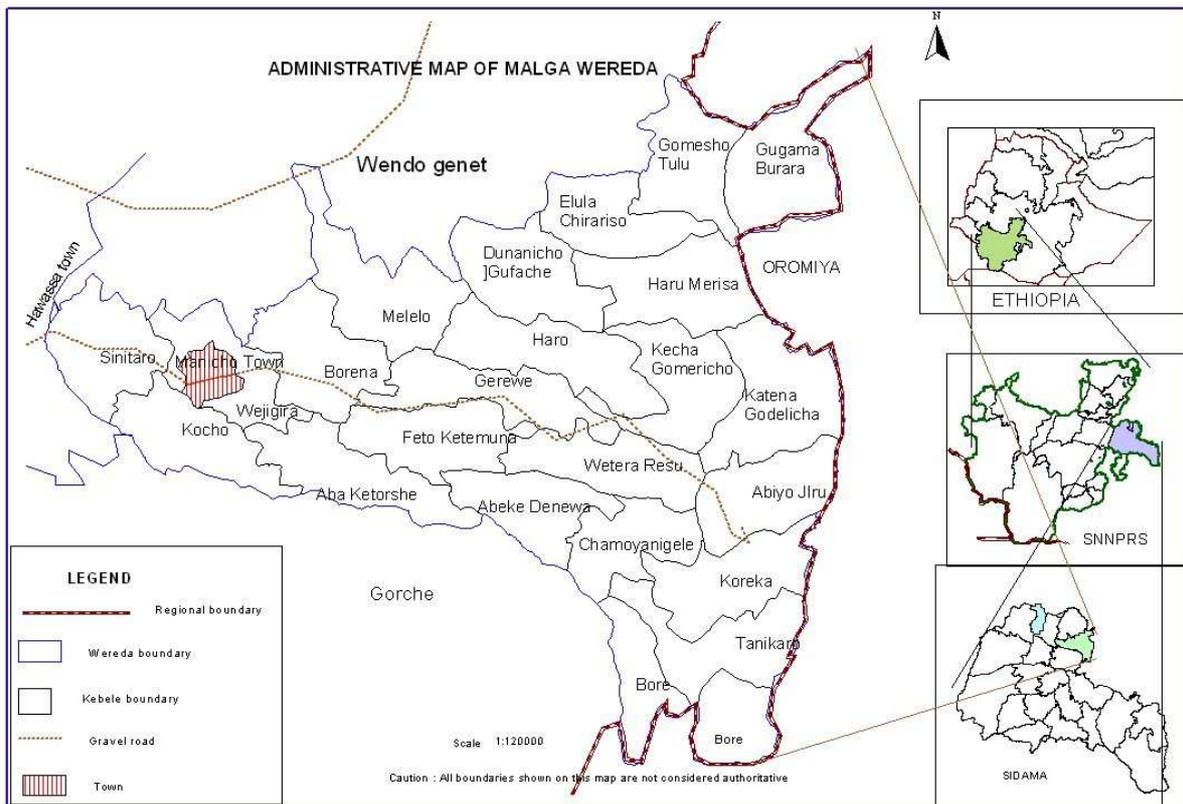


Figure 2: Administrative map of Malga District
Source: SNNPR finance Bureau

3.2 Profile of the Cooperative Society

In Malga district currently there were 7 farmers' cooperative societies which were engaged in multipurpose cooperatives. Among this, Wujigra multipurpose farmers' cooperative was used as a sample for this research.

Wujigra multipurpose farmers' cooperative was established in 2006 with a total of 30 members, out of it four were women and 26 were men. Its objectives are to work for the improvement of economical standards of members by coordinating their knowledge, wealth and labor, and to improve the living standards of members by reducing production and service costs. Currently it has a total capital of 20,000 Birr, and its operational area is wujigra.

There are also four women cooperatives sampled for this research namely: Chabicho women SACO, Koreka women artesian coop, Tankaro women SACO and Manicho women food processing cooperative. Currently none of them is functional. For more detail (Annex IV)

3.3 Research Method

The aim of this research is to make recommendations for cooperative organizers (supporters) on strengthening women cooperatives by studying the root causes for the unsuccessfulness of women cooperatives in the district.

The research approach that was employed in this study was qualitative method. Qualitative method is usually employed for deeply rooted studies that attempt to interpret social realities. Since the case to be studied includes human behavior, it utilized mainly the qualitative method of investigation. Therefore the design applied to the study was descriptive case study which follows qualitative approach to identify the major difficulties that cause for the unsuccessfulness of women cooperative. Qualitative data are so powerful because they are sensitive to the social and historical context in which the data are to be collected. (Best and Kahan, 2003)

3.4 Sampling Procedure

3.4.1 Selection of the Study Area

The selection of the study area in this study was purposive sampling. Malga district had featured the aforementioned women cooperative unsuccessful. I had experienced these while working for four years as a cooperative head. I also took into account my exposure to resources like: logistic supports, manpower and more than that willingness of farmers and other community members who in one way or another are associated with cooperatives, in order to select the district as my study area. According to (Sarantakos: 1998) qualitative study samples few number of people nested in their context in depth. Following this study method I selected four unsuccessful women cooperatives and one successful men dominant cooperative out of 11 cooperatives in the district. The districts do not have successful women cooperatives that can use as a role model for identifying the differences with that of unsuccessful cooperatives. All of them are weak and unfunctional as well. For this reason and to study the gender aspect, the successful men-dominant cooperative was selected.

3.4.2 Sampling Design

The sampling design that was employed for interview was systematic random sampling. From the total population the required number of sampled member was selected randomly to arrive at the intended respondents. Key informants were strategically chosen, considering the structure of the society and the content of the inquiry (David, 2004). They were officials from promotion office working in cooperatives were purposefully selected. That was because; the individuals are professionals and experts that can provide valuable data on cooperatives of the district. Focus groups were also intentionally selected from the cooperative leaders and members. These members were those who haven't participated in the interview.

From the total population of 144, a representative sample size about 21% was calculated for each cooperative society (Chabicho saving and credit coop, 34, koerka artisian 45, Tankaro SACCO 16 and Manicho food processing cooperatives 19) and Wujigra multy purpose farmers cooperative 30 as indicated in the table 3 below.

Table 3: The sampling design of the study for the interview (questioner) and FGD

	Cooperative Name	Total population of the selected cooperative society			Sample of the total population			Selected FGD & KI					
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	FGD			KI		
								M	F	T	M	F	T
1	Chabicho women SACO		34	34		7	7	3	7	10	2	3	5
2	Koreka women artesian coop.		45	45		10	10						
3	Tankaro SACO		16	16		4	4						
4	Manicho food processing		19	19		3	3						
5	Wujigra Multipurpose Farmers coop	26	4	30	7		7						
							31	One group in mixed			One group in mixed		

Source: Own construction

3.5 Method of Data Collection

Cooperatives are complex organizations which can be studied in a number of different ways as a result the data was gathered from primary and secondary source. In the data collection method, semi-structured questionnaire was used to identify factors that contribute for the 'unsuccessfulness' of women cooperatives. The form of data collection followed an interview format on face to face discussion between me and the respondents. As I am a man, I also used

women interviewer so as to help getting as much information as possible especially in sensitive areas that women could not feel free to respond. The discussions were carried out for men and women separately in order to allow women to speak freely, as they tend not to do this in front of men. The questionnaire was translated to 'Amharic' language to avoid ambiguity and to maximize accuracy. The conversational model was familiar and comfortable to all participants and this was most likely to draw the trust, confidence and ease among participant necessary for yielding elaborate, refined, and valid data.

FGD was used as one instrument for primary data collection. The total number of FGD was 1 group which has 10 in number, 7 women members and 3 men members of the cooperative. The selected members were not inculcated during the interview. The purpose of FGD was to collect data in detail about factors contribute for unsuccessfulness of cooperatives and for triangulating the findings of the interview when justification is required. Interviews were conducted with individual or groups to ascertain their perception. The respondents were selected knowingly to dig out the required data. Key informants (KI) were used as one source of information for primary data regarding to institutional, individual, and environmental factors of women and the cooperative. The total sample size of the KI was 5 in number comprising of officials from promotion office working in cooperatives as chairperson, members of cooperative, and experts. Both structured questionnaire and focus group discussion are attached in the appendix II and III.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Tools Used for Data Collection

The overall goal of the research was to communicate and explain the real experience of the selected population. Appropriate methods were used in order to hit this target. Questionnaires were first written in English. They were carefully articulated so as to make them clear, unbiased, and reveal the required information. Since the local people can't speak English, the Questionnaires were then translated to Amharic with a great deal of care in order not to lose the content and structure. A pre-test was carried out on sample representatives to see whether the questions were measuring what was intended to be measured. The simplicity of the wording among the sampled respondents was also checked to avoid research bias. Finally it was found out that the respondents save apprehended it well.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis is about giving meaning to the first notion and the final compilation. The intensive study was then made after all the data was integrated to case study or case records. The nature of the study, the focus of the research question and the curiosity of the researcher pretty well determine what analytical strategies (level) should be followed (Stake, 1995). Several levels (strategies) of analysis are possible ranging from developing of descriptive account of the finding to developing categories, themes or other concept that interpret the meaning of the data in a more abstract form. Therefore I employed simple descriptive method of data analysis and Harvard analytical framework I and II to understand the role of women's member of the cooperatives' in the community, and their access and control over resources with respect to their responsibility in the cooperatives.

4. RESULT AND DESCUSSION

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

4.1.1 Age Group of the Respondents

The sample size of the total respondent for this research was 31. Out of these respondents, 24 were women and the remaining 7 were men. In total 31 respondents were interviewed, the distribution of the respondents by age showed that 96 % of women respondents were in the age group 25-50 years, whereas those of age groups below 25 years were 4%. The majority of men respondents were also found under the age group of 25-50 years that consist of 71% and the remaining 29% were above 50 years of age. According to the respondents, the age groups that were below 25 and above 50 were not proposed for leader position due to lack of experience for the younger and inactiveness of the older age group. Majority of women were in the age of 25 to 50. Women in this age categories were highly productive in household activities and were leaders of the cooperatives, beside that they were exposed for pregnancy. For a woman it is a taboo to discuss about family planning with her husband and culturally children of male sex were the inheritor for the property of the family so that husbands are not willing to use family planning until he get enough boys. As a result, women of age groups 25 to 50 do not get time to participate actively in cooperatives regularly, this difference with men in cooperatives (Table 4).

Table 4: Age of the respondents

Age of the respondents	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %
<25	1	4	0	0
25-50	23	96	5	71
>50	0	0	2	29
Total	24	100	7	100

Source: Field result 2010

4.1.2 Marital Status of the respondents

100%of men respondents were marred and currently living with their spouse and percentage of women respondents belonging to married and divorced are shown in figure 3 below.

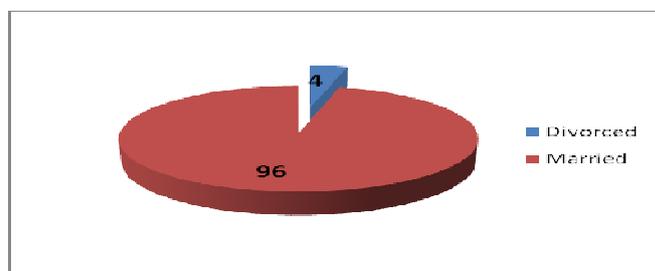


Figure 3: Marital status of women

4.1.3 Educational levels of the Respondents

The distributions of respondents by educational status revealed that majority of them were illiterate. Among them 92% were women and 43% were men. The remaining respondents who can read and write consists of 8% were women and 43% were men. Only 14% of the respondents were literate attended secondary education up to grad seven which was all from men. (Figure: 4)

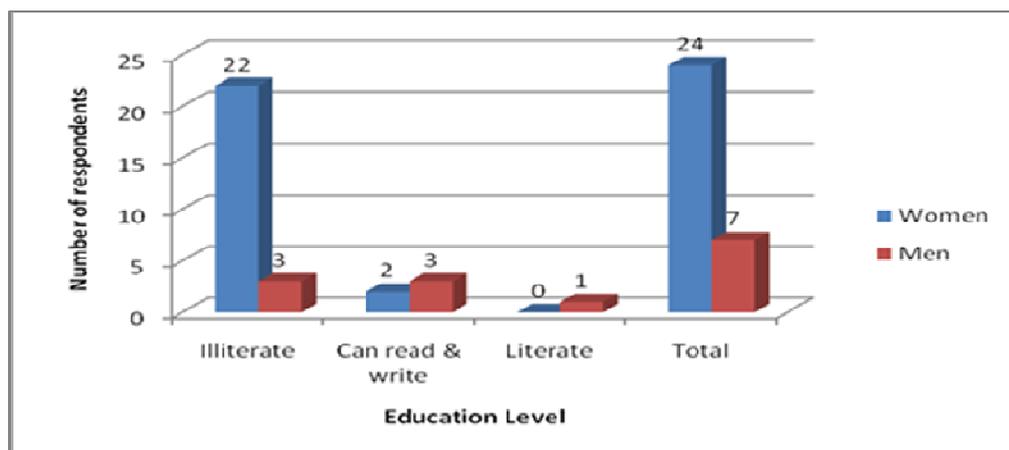


Figure 4: Education level of the respondent

Source: Field result 2010

4.1.4 Family Size of the Respondents

The family size is often considered as a primary institution in the society. The household size determines the work burden of the women as well as the participation in cooperatives. The majority of both men and women respondents have a family size of 6 to 9 incorporating 58% of women and 71% of men respondents. Similarly, 42% of women and 29% of men respondent had a family size of 3 to 5. See (Table 5) below. As a result the higher the family size, the lower the participation of women in cooperatives due to women exposure for heavy work load. Higher family size is also due to lack of education and family planning knowledge.

Table 5: Household size of the respondents

Household size of the respondents	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %
≤2	0	0	0	0
3 to 5	10	42	2	29
6 to 9	14	58	5	71
Total	24	100	7	100

Source: Field result 201

4.1.5 Religion

Among the respondents, 83% of women and 71% of men were Protestants. Out of the Muslim respondent 7% were men and 29% were women. According to the focused group discussion, women from the Muslim religion explained that it was very difficult to attend cooperative activities since Muslim husbands are so strict not to send their wives. So that members need permissions to participate any activity of the cooperative. Though the problem also existed in protestant religion followers, it was not as such serious relatively. See figure 5 below.

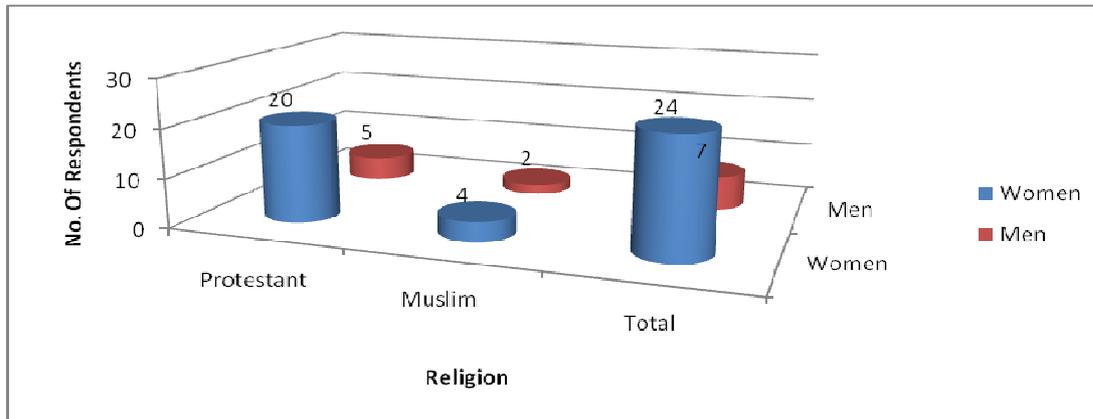


Figure 5: Religion of the respondent

4.2 Individual Factors

4.2.1 Awareness and Initiations for the Establishment of Women Cooperatives

- ❖ Majority of men heard of about cooperatives from media (57%) as they have access and time to it as compared to the busy women(21%) rushing in the kitchen to prepare food and other staff. From neighbors as information source comprises 50% by women and 14% by men. Likewise friends as information source comprise 29% by women and 29% by men. As shown in figure 4 above of educational level, the majorities (92%) of women respondents were illiterate as a result they have no access of getting information from different source. So that women gather information from their fellow mates (neighbors and friends) as they don't have access to media, they share the largest percentages according to them (table 6). Gashew (2008) in his work states that "Members in cooperatives have limited access and opportunities to lesson about cooperatives, this influence on the awareness of members."

Table 6: Source of information for joining cooperatives

Source of information	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent%	Frequency	Percent%
From friend	7	29	2	29
From neighbors	12	50	1	14
From media	5	21	4	57
Total	24	100	7	100

Source: Field result 2010

According to the ICA (1995) principle of cooperatives, cooperatives are member driven organizations. It means that the prospective member will join cooperatives by their internal

willingness and motivation. As the table 7 depicts, out of the selected sample cooperative 38% of women were a member of cooperative by the influence of their friends as a result they are not developing sense of belongingness for their cooperative and it also violate the basic principle of cooperative (voluntary and open membership) that they were not personally motivated. Not only this but also It shows that majority of women joined without full awareness of cooperatives and with the traditional cliché words (like that they will change their life and be economically benefited) that leaders say in order to increase the number of their members. This is thought to be one of the causes of their difficulties. But in the case of men members, majority of them became member of cooperative by their internal felling and they were aware enough even after joining. As a result, their cooperatives are still functional. This is also agree with ICA (1995) cooperative principles number one, stating that cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people who are able to use the cooperatives goods and services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership

Table 7: Influential factors in joining cooperatives

Influential factors in joining cooperatives	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Individual's decision	2	8	6	86
Friend's influence	9	38	1	14
Leader's influence	13	54	0	0
Total	24	100	7	100

Source: Field result 2010

Having this awareness the respondents join cooperatives due to different influences. Women were highly initiated by leader's influence (54%), as they have no plenty of information. Women were also persuaded by their friends beliefs as 38% of them chose to join cooperatives. as a result Individuals' decision take the majority of the initiations for men to be members of cooperatives(86%), which is too high in accordance to women. This reveals that women were not good enough to decide by themselves as a result of socio-cultural and economical influences.

4.2.2 Members and Leaders Relation in Performing and Sharing Responsibilities

For the success of cooperative there should be enlightened leaders and cordial relationship between member and leader since cooperative is member owned and controlled organization (Nakkiran, 2002). Leaders of cooperatives in the district try to have discussions among each other in order to solve member's problems and share responsibilities among each other and to the members as well, but as leaders in focused group discussion have indicated these discussions most of the time does not exist. This is mainly because of shortage of time as leaders also are loaded with house hold works. It was also difficult to get all leaders in their management meeting. This means women carry out their activities only as they are told by their leader in an organized way. Beside that leaders were not capable to plan activities and share responsibilities among members. Sometimes there was arousal of conflicts when member work together. These make members to act passively in cooperatives. As a result it contributes to unsuccessfulness of cooperatives as it opposed to the basic principle of cooperatives.

It was also mentioned in the FGD, members are facing difficulties of choosing the day long programmers by different offices at the same time. This made them to switch to other program than cooperatives since women have no time attending all.

4.3 Institutional Factors

4.3.1 Election of Leaders in Cooperatives

As to the cooperative society proclamation number 147/98 of Ethiopia, cooperative is a democratic organization and the members has the right to elect and be elected in the leadership position. One person has one vote regardless of the number of share. Nearly 100% of men elected their leaders by themselves and similarly 42% of women respondents elected their leaders by own while the rest 58% had been forced to elect without having a clue about their leadership skills and their commitment to be responsible for their duties. Most of the time Women members hesitate to join cooperative committee (Randall, 1998) as a result of cultural beliefs that they cannot express themselves in public and since most of the time they are not elected by the members as there is partiality to men.

Table 8: Election of leaders in cooperatives

Election of leaders in cooperatives	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
By members	10	42	7	100
By others	14	58	0	0
Total	24	100	7	100

Source: Field result 2010

As a result of this, insufficiency was seen on the management of the cooperatives. Leaders were not keeping what they promised for the members as they lack sense of ownership. Members have developed sense of dependency on the government to assist them on each step. This shows that members have not understood that cooperatives are autonomous organizations where members work for members to attain the common good. This misunderstanding is due to the initial lack of awareness about the knowledge of cooperatives. As a result the majority of women members do not have trust on their leaders and lose sense of belongingness and motivation to participate in cooperatives.

4.3.2 Impact of Promoters towards Cooperatives

For the development and fruitful movement of cooperative there should be a positive assistance of the stakeholders and government. Out of 31 respondents who were interviewed, 100% of women respondents said that they don't get equal technical assistance from promoters related to training and follow up in the activity of the cooperative. On the contrary, 100 % of men respondents said that they had trainings and technical assistant regarding cooperative activities by the promoters. One interviewee from the women respondent said that:

“You know Most of the promoters are males and give emphasis to males and neglect women. They perceive that women are not productive and cannot accomplish their goals. So that they do not give us training, they don't want to spent time for nothing, rather they prefer in assisting others' (men).”

Moreover, one men interviewee noted that he attend meetings designed by promoters on cooperative management and how to work together to share responsibilities. He also stated that he valued the confidence, knowledge, and training that he received from the promoters. According to these two interviewees, it is obvious that promoters were partial to men as a result of reflection of the culture. This implies promoters provide biased assistance to cooperatives.

According to the discussion with KI, both women and men participant from promoters agreed that, one of the causes for weakness could be that promoters are evaluated by the progress of cooperatives they are working with. This situation could lead to difficulty especially for men promoters in creating interaction easily with women members due to the cultural influence of the society. Because of this, promoters didn't have patience to attend women cooperatives. Instead they prefer to assist cooperatives with men members in order to attain progress on them and by then scoring better efficiency which maximize chance for further educational opportunity.

Cooperative promoters during KI discussion highlighted that, the cooperative principles that the promoters following are not fitting to women cooperatives of the district. They are using it directly as it is for all cooperatives of the district. The principles were not contextualized in to the local condition. This is due to lack of knowledge and experience of the promoter. Members of KI also agreed that this experience on women cooperatives in the locality shows that it is difficult to apply all principles in the condition of the district on women cooperatives. They raised the 5th principle as an example "Cooperatives provide education and training for their members and staff to help them fully participates in the democratic control and development of the cooperatives." To this regard no cooperatives of the district have leaders in a position to undertake this task to their members; instead it is being done by promoters.

4.3.3 Impacts of Services Delivery Performance on Cooperative Members

According to the Ethiopian cooperative proclamation number 147/1998, the objectives of cooperative society could be to develop the social and economic culture of the members through education and training. Accordingly 100% of the respondents answered that they had a saving account though the function differs between men and women. All respondents followed monthly saving pattern. Amount of saving for all women respondent was five "Birr" constantly, whereas all men respondents save between 20 and 30 "Birr". One "Birr" for their transaction increase sense of belongingness, saving and transaction on regular bases (Daniel, 2006). The saving pattern of women indicates that they save little money which can't meet their requirement. In this regard the feeling on money for men and women is different; women use it for home consumption, where as men thinking on profit maximizing even though it depends on the personality of the individual. Therefore Men's pattern of saving is subject to change depending on the season of harvesting- when they harvest a lot, they save much and vice versa. On the contrary, women save the same amount no matter how their income is varying. According to the FGD and KI discussion, women are not saving more is not only due to shortage of money but also they are not aware about the possibility of saving more as they can. This may affect their saving since the gross gain may not be attractive.

Dividends should be distributed to cooperatives members in regular basis. But, as indicated by the respondents, there is no sharing of dividends. This was encountered in the district because there is shortage of money and leaders are not capable of executing the accounting tasks well. It can also possible to see the case of other services. Even though there is satisfaction among the men concerning services delivered by the cooperatives like distribution of fertilizers at low price, there is no positive response from the women. Women enumerate reasons like: lack of

working capital, shortage of leadership skill and deficiency of assistance from other sectors who should involve in helping cooperatives were reasons for absence of getting services from their cooperative. Members also raised the same reason for not being provided with credits. Together with this they have stated that they don't buy shares since they are not economically fit and have thoughts that shares are always bought by the same person and no other person can buy it. Members were few and no increase was seen in number and the shares were not always bought and finished, since only a few capable members bought. These contribute to the unsuccessful of women cooperatives for its poor working capital and for the very reason that members cannot benefited from the activity of the cooperatives with the share they have. This is also shown in the following research. Demeke (2007) analyzed the performance of coffee farmers marketing cooperatives and level of members' satisfaction in Dale district of SNNPRS, and found that the performances of the coffee farmers' cooperatives were inefficient and the members were found to be dissatisfied with the services rendered by their respective cooperatives resulting poor participation.

However, men dominant cooperative of the district are providing services to the members with low price. Among the services provided by the cooperative; fertilizer, improved seed and pest sides are common. The distribution of fertilizer to the members is shown in figure 6 below.



Figure 6: Service delivery (fertilizer) by male dominant cooperative

4.4 Environmental Factors

4.4.1. Impacts of Activities of Men and Women Members on the Cooperatives

I carried out focus group discussions (see annex III) in order to encounter how women and men were affected by the gendered tasks that in turn aims to answer my research question. In the first section the gendered division of labor was categorized as productive, reproductive and community activities. See also (annex 1) to have better understanding of the terms productive activity and reproductive activity.

4.4.1.1 Productive Activities of the Members

As table 9 indicates men share the larger percentage of seedbed preparation, loading and unloading of coffee products while women covers concurrent work tasks like: watering seedlings, cleaning nursery sight, transplanting, harvesting of coffee, sorting impurities, washing and selling of products.

Focus group discussants stated that women are engaged in a variety of activities and spend much of their time doing so. As it was discussed and shown in table 9 below that women engage in the district starting from looking after children to involving in agricultural activities. Most of the interviewed women agreed that this was the main reason for women's low participation in cooperative.

4.4.1.2 Reproductive Activity of the Members

These activities are termed as feminine tasks as it is thought that it would have stronger correlation with women. These include: food preparation, collecting of fire wood, fetching water, washing clothes, care for children and elderly members of the family and sick members of the household. According to the result of FGD, women carry out all productive activities except land preparation. Table 9 shows that household activities are completely done by women. This indicates that women in the district are highly occupied by work load that would hamper their participation in cooperatives. See (annex v) women's workload as measured by time of a day.

Table 9: Gendered division of labor in Malga cooperative society

Activities	Women	Men	Both
Productive Activities			
Seedbed preparation		X	
Watering seedlings	X X	X	X
Cleaning the nursery site	X X	X	X
Transplanting	X	X	X
Harvesting	X	X	X
sorting from impurity	X X	X	X
Washing	X	X	X
Drying and starching	X X	X	X
loading and unloading		X	
Selling product to local market	X	X	X
Reproductive Activities			
Food preparation	X		
Collecting fire wood	X		
Fetching water	X		
Washing clothes	X X	X	X
Animal care	X	x	X
Care for child, sick persons and elderly	X		
Feeding cattle	X	X	X
Community Activities			
Participating in clan meetings		X	
Security related activities		X	
Weeding			X
Funerals			X

Source: Field result, Focus group discussion, Malga District 2010

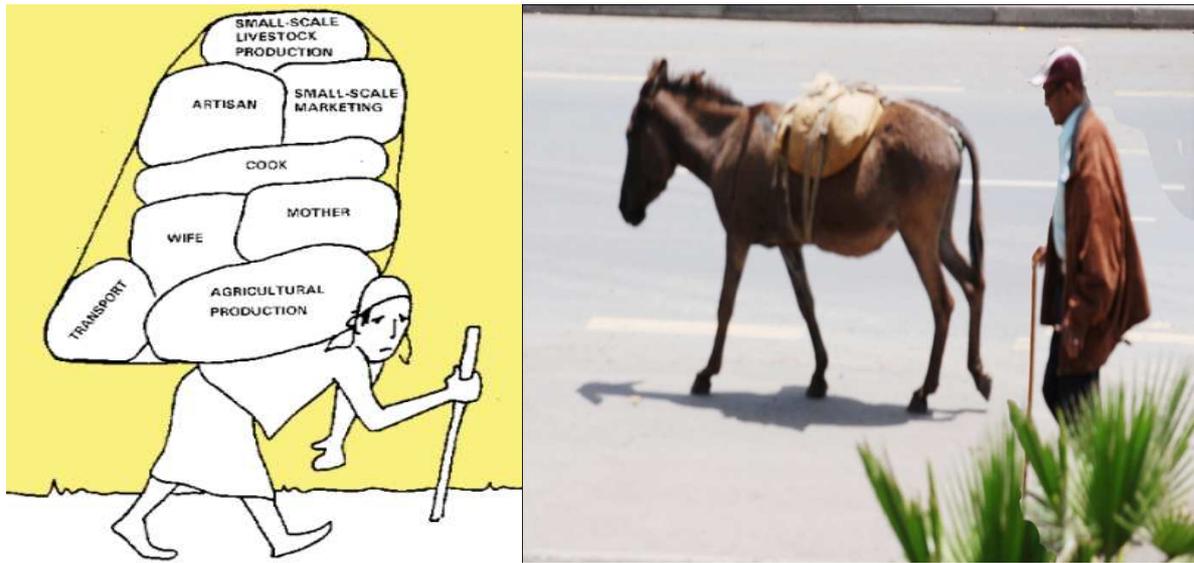


Figure 7: Unequal division of labor

Source: <http://www.cartoonstock.com/> And Owen photo.

4.4.2 Implication of Access and Control over Resources on Women Members of the Cooperatives

Control over a resource gives the power to decide who will use the asset and who has access to it. Therefore anyone who has control will hold the ultimate decision making ability over the use and allocation of benefits and resources. The capacity of controlling resources and benefits entails the authority of disposing the assets and reaping the benefits generated (March, et al., 2005).

According to the responses from FGD, men are in control of basic assets like: land, farming equipments, input, income from sales of coffee and chat which is the most demanded, while women are left with control of the lower assets like: chicken, butter, cooking utensils (table10).

Furthermore, key informants added that men are decision makers in the household. All of them agreed that men made decision related to coffee and “chat” productions. Men also hold the power to decide for their wife weather they can join cooperatives or not. These aggregated causes show that women don’t have power to decide on matters that concern themselves and this also affect them in accessing production resources.

Table 10: Gender disaggregated access to and control over resources and benefits

	Access		Control	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Resources				
Land	X	X		X
Farming equipment	X	X		X
Labour	X	X		X
Cash from sale(coffee and chat)	X	X		X
Input	X	X		X
Extension service	X	X		X
Time for social gathering	X	X		X
Chicken, butter, cooking utensils	X	X	X	
Benefits				
Basic needs	X	X		X
Credit facility	X	X		X
Outside income(dividend	X	X		X
Cooperative training	X	X		X

Source: Field result, Focus group discussion, Malga District 2010

The overall failure to implement the right to equal access and control of the resources exposed members to various challenges. In particular women spend 15-18 hours burdened with heavy work load with which women members loaded on a daily basis (Annex V). Moreover, they are not beneficiaries and owners of the fruits of their work. Their right to equal access and control on resources was not given due recognition by the family or the community they live in. Resource type that is provided by government such as extension service are not accessed and controlled by most women members. Findings from the study revealed that less than 20 percent of women had access to the various training opportunities in cooperatives (ARMTI, 2006). Due to the less opportunity of women in deciding on the basic resources including moneys and time, women participation were much lower than that of men in the cooperative society of the district.

4.4.3 Socio-Cultural and Economical Influence on Women Cooperatives

Women are not encouraged to join cooperatives by their community as a result of socio- cultural and economical influences as Yekedem (2009) also pointed out. 100% of women and 57% of men respondents have totally agreed that the socio-cultural influence of the society have not allowed them to participate in cooperatives. On the contrary, 43% of male respondents revealed that socio-cultural influence has no impact on the participation of women in cooperatives, but noted that their participation depends on the willingness of their husband (Table 11). Together with this, men promoters prefer to work with men members, because 'it is socially not acceptable for a man to talk to women and if seen doing so, he may be neglected from the society; women are also busy and resource less (Buchy and Basaznew, 2005).

Table 11: Socio-cultural and economic influence on women cooperatives

Socio-cultural and economical influence	Women		Men	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes	24	100	4	57
No	0	0	3	43
Total	24	100	7	100

Source: Field result 2010

According to the respondent's justification, the socio-cultural impacts on women members are listed as follows:

- They are not motivated to be seen at public, since they are thought that they cannot express themselves well.
- They are guided by their husband and do not take part in decisions that will shape their future.
- Economically they are dependent on their husbands and even if they have their own income source, it will be monopolized by their husbands and they cannot use it to buy shares in cooperatives.
- The use of traditional proverbs (mentioned in box1 above) that will negatively influence the moral of women, makes them to hide from the community.
- They are highly engaged in household activities and spend much of their time thinking of the household and their large family.
- In addition to the above factors gender based violence is also the other factor for women members of cooperatives. They have no freedom to move here and there and also to participate in the day to day activities of the cooperative coupled with the distance of cooperative's offices in their residential area.

From the above mentioned lists, the district cooperatives were highly influenced by the deeply rooted socio-cultural beliefs which suppress women from participating in cooperative activities. This leads to the unsuccessfulness of women cooperatives by discouraging the members to participate.

Concerning the economical influence on cooperatives, 77% of women respondent indicates that economic condition doesn't initiate them to join cooperatives since they have low source of. Income to the extent that women were not able to cover membership payment at ones; they are nearly dependent on husband's income and willingness. Beside that women have large family size and face difficulties to cover living cost. Such aggregate economical reasons contribute a negative influence on the success of women cooperatives.

As the table 12 below reveals, for majority of male members the source of income is 'chat' and coffee. From these products men can get a better income in annual and daily bases as a result he can actively participate in the business activities of their cooperative and can have the capacity to purchase products to maximize his benefit from cooperatives. Therefore the cooperatives were sustainable and provide services efficiently as they have capable members. On the other hand the income sources for women were their husbands, egg sell, and Cabbage sell. The incomes generated from this market is not that much enough and they only utilize it for

house expenses. As a result they are passive participants in the economic affair of the cooperative.

Table 12: Source of income for members of the cooperatives

Source of income	Women		Men	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Husbands	16	67	0	0
Egg sell	3	12	0	0
Cabbage sell	5	21	0	0
'Chat' sell	0	0	4	57
Coffee sell	0	0	3	43
Total	24	100	7	100

Source: Field result 2010

Men have access and control to the basic income sources like 'chat' and coffee sales. 'Chat' is a very common stimulant among the young and other age groups; it's also an export item. Coffee, is a very popular domestic product, and is mainly exported and also sold at the local market. Men are highly benefited from the sales of 'chat' and coffee. As Table 10 above refers women are only in control of chicken, butter, and cooking utensils and the income they get from the sales is too low as compared to men's income. The inferiority of women regarding income source made them subject to their husbands and wait for their answers in order to decide

As the problems highlighted above, women cooperative were found highly influenced by the existing socio cultural and economical factors of the district.



Figure 8: Sell of cabbage as a source of income to members of cooperatives.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

The research was carried out to pin point the major difficulties that cause unsuccessfulness in women cooperatives of the Malga district and to provide recommendations for the cooperative organizers and stakeholders. From the study it has been discussed that diversified problems have been figured out and reasonable conclusions were made.

Women cooperatives in Malga district were highly influenced by demographic, institutional, individual and environmental (economical and socio-cultural) factors. The traditional and cultural beliefs of the community had challenged women participation in cooperatives. They were not given equal services and opportunities like men. The cultural influence has given lower values to women and thus the situation forced them to stick to household activities. Most women have also accepted this cultural fact as they are members of the community.

Promoters are partial to men. They consider women as subjects of their husband and didn't offer them equitable services. They are also lack experiences how to apply principles in local context. Women were not motivated to work with them and promoters spend much of their time with men. Cooperative leaders are also indifferent and don't show any motivation to women members. They also lacked the basic managerial and accounting skills which made the environment of cooperative adverse. They didn't empower members, call on general meeting, and report the financial condition of the cooperatives to the members in a timely manner as a result of poor bookkeeping skill.

The greater economical dependence of women on their husband had made them to rely on the financial income of their husband in order to make any payment to the cooperatives such as monthly saving or buying shares. Husbands perceive that women can't handle money well. So, they don't always offer them money. In addition, women do not have substantial source of income. They spend most of their time in the household; those who are engaged in sales in the market even are not financially secured since the income is too low. As a result, women don't buy shares in cooperatives and are also averted to take loan. Thus, the financial drawback had aggravated the difficulties that cause women cooperatives unsuccessful.

Their engagement in the household activities makes them to spend much of their time in preparing food, looking after children, house cleaning and so forth. Since they don't follow family planning policies they end up with great number of children and invest their power and money towards it. This business makes them to neglect issues related to cooperatives.

The participation of women in education makes them know their rights and involve in decision making process. They can also have access to basic information source if they are educated and know the primary skills of writing, reading and listening. Nevertheless, as indicated by figure 4, 88% of women are illiterate and only 40% can read and write. This worsens their role in cooperatives. They can't read printed materials concerning cooperatives and don't use modern technologies like radios and TVs. They only listen to their neighbors and friends' rumors and do not get the relevant information. This made woman not to understand and internalize the objectives and working principles of cooperatives. In addition to this problem, due to cultural

beliefs, women are not willing to be elected as committee members. Lack of awareness and cultural beliefs had made men not to cooperate with women in using family planning methods and this made them to end up in uncontrolled family size. These factors contributed for a greater work load in household activities and thus made women not to participate in women cooperatives.

Lack of having successful women cooperative as a model in the district has also accounted for less fruitfulness of the women cooperatives. Most of the women cooperatives in the district are facing such challenges. But, lack of such kind of cooperatives made women lose hope and perceive cooperatives as unproductive organization

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research conducted, the following recommendations are made for overall betterment of women cooperatives.

- Since the traditional beliefs have been a barrier for the success of women cooperatives, a great deal of effort is needed to increase participation of women in cooperatives. The district gender mainstreaming section in each office and other NGOs are advised to take part in giving continuous awareness creation to the community through informal cooperatives (“eddir”, “ekub” and “debo”). It would be more robust if artists, athletes, elder people, popular leaders and other personalities who are given great prestige among the community are also willing to work hand in hand to this act.
- Most women in the district are illiterate and as a result they are not active in community based participations like cooperatives. Therefore, prior to establishing women cooperatives, the district cooperative office should create awareness among the community taking into account their illiteracy and past legacies. These programs should be executed by the district cooperative office, since it is directly related to it and it has the responsibility to undertake related decisions. Furthermore, educating girls should be prioritized as a long term solution.
- Trainings should be given to cooperatives’ promoters and women leaders in order to enhance their management and accounting performance. Leaders and promoters handle the majority of the responsibilities and their actions contribute to the success of cooperatives. The insufficiencies seen on them, in the research, had brought difficulties for the success of women cooperatives. Thus, the district cooperative office may arrange leader and promoter based trainings so as to aware them in how to provide affirmative action to women considering their history of oppression, in how to make general meeting with leaders and members in order to alleviate their problems.
- Awareness creation should be given to both women and men on the importance of cooperatives. The training should target not only women but also their husband in order to acknowledge the husband helps and permission for the cooperative activities.
- The district’s cooperative and education office should incorporate women cooperative in their work plan to give special attention for educating women and skill transformation.

- Integrated work activity and time schedule among sector offices (such as health and agricultural offices) should be arranged in calling women for trainings and meetings in order to save their time.
- Since, women share a large percentage of workloads, the district agricultural office, Administrative office and NGO's should make a link with research centers to find efficient way for time and energy saving technological utensils like stoves and other cooking machines specific to the area in order to avail optimum time for women to participate in social services including cooperative activities.
- Women-specific and modest (locally applicable) principles should be devised by district cooperative office and NGO's of the district to target the development of women cooperatives.
- More women promoters in cooperative movement should to be invited to work in the district cooperative office and NGOs in order to have good communication and assistance to women members of the cooperatives.
- More specific research on the issue of analyzing the difficulties of women cooperatives has to be further conducted in the study area so as to help policy makers and legislators made informed decisions.

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ANNEX I: OPERATIONAL DEFINATION OF KEY TERMS

Access to, and Control over resources

It refers to how resources are allocated between male and female. It will be helpful to see the difference between them

Access: it refers to the exposure towards resource and the ability to make use of it.

Control: it is the power to decide who can use resources and determine who can have access to it. (March, C.et al., 2005).

Cooperative: - are self governed associations where people come together in order to solve their social, economic and cultural problems and meet their needs through jointly and mutually controlled democratic enterprises (ICA, 1995).

Gender: - the relationship that exists between male and female in social, economic and decision making practice within the cooperative societies. Gender provides characteristics of male and female as opposed to the biologically known facts. The notion of gender should be taken into consideration since it is beneficial to planning, management, monitoring and evaluation for the development of cooperative projects, since women should not be put aside and taken as isolated groups.

Management Committee: - the body which come to power through election by the general assembly and carry out managing process of the society.

Productive Activities: it refers to the production of goods and services that will be mandatory for survival or income. This is taken as the work national economic statistics. Men and women both contribute their part to these activities, but their work is not valued in an equal manner.

Reproductive Activities: it refers to the concern and protection of household and its members such as cooking, washing, cleaning, nursing, bearing children and looking after them, building and maintaining shelter. It is rarely given equal value as the productive and not counted in conventional economic statistics.

Cooperative organizers: government organizations or NGOs who are engaged in forming or organizing cooperatives based on cooperative principles

Cooperative promoters: professionals who are working under the cooperative office on organizing, advocating and giving training about cooperatives.

Annex II: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRES

Title: Assessment of the difficulties faced by Women Cooperatives: the case of Malga District, Sidama Zone, SNNPR, Ethiopia.

Instruction for the interviewer

- .Introduce you're self with the selected person
- .Circle the letters for the closed question
- .Explain clearly the purpose of the study
- .Should be ethical for the data

N.B The questioner is used only for the academic purpose.

A. General information

1. Name of the interviewer _____
2. Date_____
3. Name of the cooperative_____
4. Kebele (village)_____
4. Name of the respondent_____
5. ID number of the respondent_____
6. Signature of the enumerator_____

B. Demographic Factors

1. Sex of the respondent 1) men 2) women
2. Age in completed year.....
3. Marital status
 1. Single 2. Currently married 3. Widowed 4. Divorced 5. Separated
4. Educational level
 1. Illiterate 2. Can read and write 3. Literate (grade specification).....
5. Religion
 1. Orthodox 2. Muslim 3. Protestant 4. Catholic 5. Others
6. Family size.....

C. Individual Factors

1. From where did you first hear about cooperatives? _____
2. How did you join to women cooperative? _____
3. Why do you join to women cooperative? _____
4. What is your source of income? _____
5. What is your position in the cooperative?
1) Leader 2) member
6. If you are a leader, how do you performing and sharing responsibilities with other
Leaders? _____ and members? _____
7. If you are a member, how do you performing and sharing responsibilities with other
Members? _____.
leaders? _____
8. Do you participate in every activities of your cooperative?
1. Yes 2. No
9. If yes what are those? _____
10. If no why? _____

D. Institutional Factors

1. Who elect the leaders? _____
2. What are the problems on the management of the cooperatives? _____
3. Was the promoter provided equal technical assistance for all cooperatives? _____
4. If no, what do you think of the reason? _____
5. Did you have saving account in your cooperative? _____
6. If yes to 5.what type of saving term (interval) you are followed? _____
7. If yes to 5, how many birr you are saving? _____
8. If no to 5, what is the reason? _____
9. Do you get money as a dividend from the cooperative? _____
10. If no to 9, what is the reason? _____

11. Does your cooperative provide adequate service to the members? _____
12. If yes to 11 what are the service? _____
13. If no to 11, what is the reason? _____
14. Does the cooperative provide appropriate credit for the member based on their request? ___
15. If yes to 14, do you get credit from the cooperative? _____
16. If no to 15 what is the reason? _____
17. Does the cooperative issue additional share to the existing member? _____
18. If yes to 17, do you purchase additional share from the cooperative? _____
19. If no to 17, why? _____
20. How fairly men and women are participating in purchasing the share? _____
21. How far the location of the respondents far from the cooperative? _____ KM
22. Is there any other economic service provided by the cooperative?
 1. Yes
 - 2.No
23. If yes to 22, what are those? _____, _____
24. Does the cooperative undertake the general assembly meeting _____?
25. If yes to 24, do you attend the meeting? _____
26. Does men and women equally attend in the meeting? _____
27. If no to 26, what is the possible reason? _____
28. Does the cooperative have its own management committee? _____
29. If yes to 28, are you a member of the committee? _____
30. If no to 28, what is the reason? _____

E. Environmental Factors

1. Does the cooperative provide community service activities? _____
2. If yes to 1, do you participate in the activities? _____
3. If no to 1, what is the reason? _____
4. Does the culture of the society affect you to participate in cooperatives? _____
5. If yes to Q4 how? _____

6. Dose the economical factors initiates you to form cooperatives? _____

7. If yes to Q 6 how? _____

8. If NO to Q 6 how? _____

9. Does the social factors initiate you to participate in women cooperatives? _____

10. If yes how? _____

11. If NO how? _____

12. What other factors hinder the participation of women in cooperatives? _____

1. Gender based violence

2. Gender stereotype

3. Others specify. _____

Annex III: CHECK LIST FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Guidelines for FGD

The objective of this session is to identify the gendered tasks, access to resources, control over resources and how these aspects have an impact on the involvement of cooperative members. To do gender analysis, tasks and activities in production, domestic reproduction and community work were listed by the participants. Finally participants will also identify to which members of the cooperatives have access to and control over resources. Here, control indicators will include decisions over usage of resources.

1. What activities are performed by men and women of cooperative members in the community? Use the following activity profile by making (x).

Activities	Women	Men	Both
Productive Activities			
Reproductive Activities			
Community activity			

2. Who have an access and control over the resources in your community? Use the following access and control profile by making (X, if more XX)

	Access		Control	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Resources				
Land				
Farming equipment				
Labor				
Cash				
Input				
Extension service				
Time for social gathering				
chicken, butter, cooking utensils				
Benefits				
Basic needs				
Credit facility				
Outside income(dividend)				
Extension program				

3. What are the tasks and activities of cooperative members in agricultural production, domestic reproduction and community work?

4. How many hours (approximately) do women spend for reproductive activities in a day?

5. How do women manage their productive and reproductive activities in a given day?

6. Do husband's (men) share the tasks assigned for women in domestic reproduction when women are busy?

7. To what resources (land, money etc) men and women have access and control?

8. Do women are able to buy her needs using the income gained from sale of vegetables? If not, why?

9. Dose the government policies initiates you to form women cooperatives? _____

10. If yes how? _____

11. Dose the economical factors initiates you to form women cooperatives? _____

12. If yes/no how? _____

13. Dose the socio cultural factors initiates you to participate in women cooperatives? _____

- Do you have equal status with your husband in the house management? Women's status in the community

- How do you manage church program and cooperative meeting day?

- Does your religion have any problems with cooperative ideas?

If yes, specify (explain) _____

14. If yes/no to Q13 how? _____

Key informant

1. What are the main challenges facing in organizing cooperatives in the district? _____

2. Does the district cooperative promotion office provide assistance for cooperative? y/n

3. If yes to q2, what are the technical assistances provided for both men and women cooperatives? _____

4. If no why? _____

5. What are the reasons for the unsuccessfulness of women's cooperative in the district? _____

6. What do you suggest to have strong women cooperative? _____

7. Is there anything that you would like to discuss on women and cooperatives? _____

ANNEX IV: MALGA DISTRICT COOPERATIVE SOCIETY PROFILE OF THE YEAR 2010

Malga district cooperative society profile (from 1-5 are sampled for the research)

	Name of cooperatives	Date of establishment	Date of registration	Membership			Membership growth				Objective	Operational area
				women	men	sum	2007	2008	2009	2010		
1	Chabicho women SACO	2007	2007	34	0	34	34	34	-	-	For better living standard	Chabicho and surrounding
2	Koreka women artesian coop.	2006	2006	45	0	45	45	45	-	-	For better living standard	Koreka and surrounding
3	Tankaro women SACO	2008	2008	15	0	15	15	15	-	-	For better living standard	Tankaro and surrounding
4	Manicho women food processing	2008	2008	19	0	19	19	19	-	-	For better living standard	Manicho and surrounding
5	Wujigra Multipurpose Farmers coop	2006	2006	4	26	30	20	20	25	30	For better living standard and economical benefit	Malga and surrounding
From 6-11 are Multipurpose cooperatives.												
6	Manicho wotatoch	2007		6	44	50	40	40	50	50	For better living standard	Manicho and surrounding
7	Gudumaly wotatoch	2007		8	30	38	33	35	38	38	For better living standard	Gudumaly and surrounding
8	Melelo wotatoch	2007		7	35	42	38	38	40	42	For better living standard	Melelo and surrounding
9	Fito K. wotatoch	2008		10	33	43	35	37	41	43	For better living standard	Fito K. and surrounding
10	Abake wotatoch	2008		5	22	27	25	27	27	27	For better living standard	Abake and surrounding
11	Chamo y. wotato	2008		7	24	31	25	30	31	31	For better living standard	Chamo y and surrounding

Source: Malga district cooperative office 2010.

ANNEX V: MALGA DISTRICT WOMEN'S WORK LOAD AS MEASURED BY TIME.

Type of work	Time spent for work																							
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	4
Agriculture				X																				
Harvesting											X	X	X	X										
Marketing						X	X	X	X	X														
Child care	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Grinding meal	X	X	X																					
Baking				X																				
Cooking							X																	
Coffee making		X	X																					
Rest																		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fetching water		X																						
Fire wood collection						X	X	X																
Cleaning				X	X																			
Feeding cattle							X	X																

Source: Malga district women affairs office

ANNEX VI: SIDAMA ZONE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY PROFILE OF THE YEAR 2010

No	Types of coop.	Total coop.	Membership		
			Men	Women	Total
1	Women SACO	25	0	1288	1288
2	women artesian coop	10	0	154	154
3	women food processing coop	15	0	373	373
4	Consumers Cooperative	14	678	130	808
5	Mining Cooperative	3	143	7	150
6	Multipurpose Farmers coop	716	22992	5889	38881
7	Sidama Ealto farmers producers Union	1	200	7300	75000
8	Sidama Coffee Union	1	100	7900	8000
8	Chelala SACOO Union	1	200	4300	4500

Source, Sidama zone coop. office