

Role of Rural Women Entrepreneurship in Household Food Security: The Case of Boloso Sore Woreda, Wolaita Zone, Southern Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study attempts to assess the current status of women entrepreneurship in the study area, analyse the contribution of Entrepreneurship to Household food security and find constraints affecting rural women Entrepreneurship in Boloso Sore woreda, Wolaita Zone. Data were collected from 120 sample rural women entrepreneurs in three Kebele Administrations using random sampling techniques. Primary data were collected by conducting a rural women entrepreneur survey. In addition, key informant interviews were used. Secondary data were collected from various sources. Finally, the data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage, and frequency distribution. Moreover, the chi-square test was used to describe the relation of rural women-owned businesses type with an education background. Food security was measured by the expenditure method. All the study sample rural women entrepreneurs were married and had large size family. With the increasing family size, cultivating land size is highly decreasing proportionally. Hence, an annually harvested product from farmland cannot feed for more than two months; the above facts push factors into entrepreneurship activities. Types of businesses owned by the sample population were retail, manufacturing, service render and others which most educated entrepreneurs operating from retail businesses: fruit, used cloths and mini-shop retail and from service render businesses: rural cafeteria, rural alcohol grocery and rural restaurant services, while illiterate entrepreneurs operating from retail businesses: flour, grain, vegetables and coffee and all manufacturing businesses (Brewing borde, baking enjera, brew kinoto, baking bread) and others such as Vegetative plant trade and Livestock Trade. The majority of entrepreneurs started operating mentioned businesses ten years. The Source of the initial capital of the study sample was self-saving and household deposit. While household food expenses in a week mean 195 Birr, businesses contribute 63% of the household total food expenditure in a week. According to food security status, most study sample populations are highly food secure. With look upon problems, lack of market and lack of credit facilities are dominating problems. Because of daily food expenses, working financial capital is not increasing. However, Rural Women Entrepreneurship is profitable and dramatically contributes to household food security.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneurship, Food Security, Households' Food Expenditure, Manufacturing Businesses, Retail Business

Introduction

Background Information

The role of women entrepreneurs is explained as the engine of economic development, national heroes and industrial development, stimulating and encouraging investment, job creation factor, the main options and the technology transfer agent, and removing bottlenecks fractured in the market (Bagher Arayesh and Mehdi Karimi Rad, 2013). Women entrepreneurs have been designated as the new source for growth and the rising stars of the economies in developing countries to bring prosperity and welfare. Various stakeholders have pointed to them as an important 'untapped source' of economic growth and development (Veena and Nagaraja, 2013).

Rurality is viewed as a dynamic entrepreneurial resource that shapes opportunities and constraints. Location, natural resources, the landscape, social capital, rural governance, business and social networks, and information and communication technologies exert dynamic and complex influences on entrepreneurial activity in rural areas (Stathopoulou et al., 2004).

As income earners, food producers, food preparers and child caregivers, women are heavily involved in ensuring household food security and adequate child nutrition. Women account for 70 to 80 percent of household food production in sub-Saharan Africa, 65 percent in Asia, and 45 percent in Latin America. In Africa, it is estimated that women spend 70 percent of all time on food production, 100 percent on food processing, 50 percent on food storage and husbandry, 60 percent on marketing and 90 percent on beer brewing (Martha, 1998).

With 85 percent of the Ethiopian population living in rural areas, the non-farm activities of women could be an independent engine of growth for rural development. However, most non-farm activities produce goods and services linked to agriculture via forwarding, backward, and consumer demand linkages (Sawada and Harishchandra, 2011).

In the Wolaita zone, many rural women have been working on entrepreneurial activities to ensure household food security for a long time. Rural women's entrepreneurship has long been run in rural areas by rural women, but any party does not

recognize it. Even the household members do not give value to their contribution. As these entrepreneurial activities are not new, they must be measured, and their role in household food security must be identified. Considering all the facts mentioned above and the gradual reduction in food aid from developed countries, the issue of food insecurity has been given due attention, and collaborative intervention activities should be made. This study assessed unrecognized income source activities and the activities' contribution to household livelihood and social economy. Hence to overcome food insecurity, creating additional income-generating sources is the best option.

Objectives

General Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to analyze the role of Rural Women Entrepreneurship on Household food security in Boloso Sore Woreda of Wolaita Zone.

Specific Objectives

- To assess the current status of women entrepreneurship in the study area.
- To analyse the contribution of women entrepreneurship to household food security, and
- To find out constraints affecting women entrepreneurship.

Literature Review

Women in Entrepreneurship

An entrepreneur is an economic man who tries to maximize profits through innovation. Innovation involves problem-solving, and the entrepreneur gets satisfaction from using capabilities in attacking problems. Women entrepreneurs may be defined as women or a group who initiate, organize and run a business enterprise. Women-owned businesses are highly increasing (Anita et al., 2011).

Acceleration to the rural development process is entrepreneurship. Defining it is not an easy tasking as many words are similar to the meaning of entrepreneurship with innovation, risk-taking and even owning and managing a small business. A person creating new combinations of production factors in new markets and organizational

forms is known as an entrepreneur. He/she is also a person willing to take risks by exploiting market opportunities and operating a business independently. Entrepreneurship is most important for rural areas as it is necessary to bear in mind the entrepreneurial skills to improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities. The possibility of entrepreneurial behaviour by women who lack knowledge as per entrepreneurial base in the rural area face many challenges in the newly started business. Entrepreneurship needs nothing new from a global perspective. Adopting new forms of business, technologies and goods not previously available at a location is considered a prime mover in developing nations, regions and communities by providing identity to the women and promoting entrepreneurship development (Chakravarty, 2013).

Status of Women Entrepreneurship

The last ten years of the Indian economy made it evident that the ownership structure in the industrial sector, agriculture, the trade and commerce sectors have changed. Many women entered the world of business, trade commerce. Some critical issues of Women Entrepreneurship in Rural India have become successful entrepreneurs in various business activities. However, the rate of participation or inclusion in the business world is shallow, despite its increase in the last ten years. This growth rate of women's participation in economic activities is much lower than expected. If we look at the developed countries, women actively participate in business and trade activities, including agriculture, without any social or other restrictions. However, in India, many social and cultural restrictions exist on women. Hence, women's participation in entrepreneurial activities is less than the requirement for the fast growth of India (Vijay, 2013).

In rural and urban Ethiopia, women's entrepreneurship is increasing from time to time and contributes a key role in society and the economy. In Ethiopia, women dominate the micro-enterprise sector both in rural and urban areas. According to the Central Statistical Authority (CSA), women account for close to 70% of micro-enterprises in Ethiopia are run by women. However, their participation in small, medium and large enterprises diminishes as we

climb the ladder. Beyond participating in productive activities such as agriculture, trade and industry, women have multiple societal roles (Desta, 2008).

Role of Rural Women Entrepreneurship on Household Food Security

Rural women play a vital role in the farm and home system. They contribute substantially to the physical aspect of farming, livestock management, post-harvest and allied activities. Their direct and indirect contribution at the farm and home level and livestock management operation has helped save their assets and increased the family income. They perform various farm, livestock, post-harvest and allied activities and possess skills and indigenous knowledge in these areas. The women were technically empowering themselves to cope with the changing times and productively using their free time and existing skills to set and sustain enterprises. They were engaged in starting individual or collective income generation programs with the help of self-help groups. This will generate income for them and improve their decision-making capabilities, leading to empowerment (Sathiabama, 2010).

The causes and factors of rural food insecurity in Ethiopia stem from both food availability decline (FAD) and food entitlement decline (FED). Farmers remain predominantly subsistence farmers, where food is grown for household consumption. However, the ever-decreasing plots of land lead to a downward spiral into destitution and dependency. Poverty throughout kebeles means few alternative sources of income, whether waged or self-employed, resulting in the poorest being priced out of the market. Observation of the sustainable livelihoods framework highlights the vulnerabilities of Ethiopia's rural poor. Shocks are frequent and increasing; trends are negative; institutions are weak and difficult to access, leaving few livelihood strategies (Kevin, 2011).

Rural women's contribution to food security is also explained according to an old Chinese proverb, "women hold up half the sky". In the battle against hunger and poverty, women, especially rural women, most certainly hold up the heavier half. Therefore, to ensure food security at the household level, it is essential to realize the critical role women play and to include them in all development processes toward achieving food security (AWDF, 2011).

Methodology

Description of the Study Area

Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Regional has fifty-six nationalities with different cultures, demographics and geographical locations. Wolaita has a population of more than 2.5 million among these nationalities and is organized at Zone level administration. It is known that Wolaita Zone is a highly densely populated area in Ethiopia. In this Zone, there are fifteen woredas, and Boloso Sore is one of them in the Zone, which is high-densely populated and where many small-sized farmland holders live. Boloso Sore Woreda has a total land area of 32,091 hectares. It is surrounded by Kembata and Tambaro Zone in the north, Sodo Zuria Woreda in the south, Damot Gale Woreda in the east, Boloso Bombe Woreda in the west. The capital of this woreda is Areka which is found at a distance of 300 kms from Addis Ababa through Hossa'ena. In this Woreda, at the household level, women are highly responsive to managing food access to the family. In addition, women work on entrepreneurial activities to improve their family's food security and generate income.

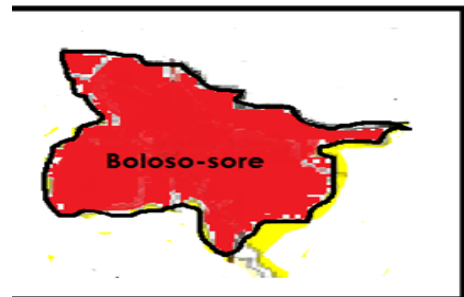
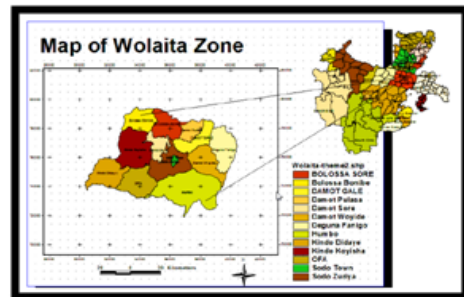
Research Design

The research design was a non-experimental method based on different data collection techniques. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques was employed in line with the study's objectives and nature of research questions. This section discusses sampling techniques and procedures and determination of sample size, sources and types of data, method of data collection, the definition of variables and methods of data analysis.

Sampling Technique

Accurate information about the given population was obtained only from a census study. However, due to financial and time constraints, complete population coverage was impossible in many cases. Thus, sampling allowed the researcher to study a relatively small number of units representing the whole population (Saratakos, 1998).

Multistage sampling was used for this study since it accommodates different techniques simultaneously. Hence, the first research proposal was submitted to Boloso Sore Woreda



Source: National Map Agency, 2003

Figure 1 Study area map

Agricultural Office and selected sample kebele administrations were recognized, which were forwarded to select three kebele administrations. Secondly, each kebele administration manager provided a list of women entrepreneurs in their kebele. Finally, the number of sample samples from each kebele was determined based on the list of rural women entrepreneurs, total sample size and proportion in line with the number of entrepreneurs. The target group of this research sample were rural women entrepreneurs those who were working individually (not in an organized group) and existing traditional entrepreneur businesses (Borde drink, local alcohol, flour, tobacco, grain and so on) in their village small markets (qochi) to achieve their household well-being by pushing of different factors throughout long years.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The study's sample size was determined depending on the nature of the study, cost, time, and cooperation of involved participants. Three sample rural kebele administrations in Boloso Sore Woreda were selected purposively by considering farm size, population, and accessibility for sampling. From several approaches to determining sample size, this study used a simple random sampling system of ten percent of the total study population. The sample size was allocated for the three rural kebele administrations based on population proportion sampling.

Types and Source of Data

Both primary and secondary data were gathered from reliable sources. Secondary data were collected from stakeholders to get relevant information for this study. Primary data were collected from sample respondents on variables hypothesized to affect the Rural Women Entrepreneurship Activities. From survey work, qualitative information was also gathered through focus group discussions, observation, and interviews of key informants. Secondary data were searched from books, journals, reports, magazines, proceedings, and unpublished and published documents. Primary data were collected using a semi-structured interview and checklists from the relevant respondents.

Methods of Data Collection

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected based on both primary and secondary sources using different methods. For primary data, semi-structured and structured interviews, focus group discussion, key informants, and personal observation using checklists were used depending on the context of specific objectives of the study. Secondary data were obtained from different proceedings, published and unpublished documents. Enumerators were selected at the study area and were oriented and instructed to undertake a structured and semi-structured interview. The pre-test was done, and essential amendments were made if needed.

Method of Data Analysis

Based on the study's objectives and the nature of the data available, different data analysis methods were employed using SPSS Version 20. Descriptive statistics were implemented to summarise parameters such as mean, percentage, frequencies and tables used to present and categorize the data. Inferential statistics such as the chi-square test were used to assess the association between different variables. The test value < 0.05 was considered an indicator of statistically significant association for a chi-square. According to food security, the data were analysed using the expenditure method. Data have been collected on total expenditure by listing each household's food and non-food expenditure source and converted to financial value. The food security status of respondents' households was calculated according to Smith and Subandoro (2007) by dividing household food per week by total weekly expenditure. The poorest households in the world spend more than 75 percent of their expenditure on food. On the other hand, households in the richest countries, such as the United States and Canada, spend less than 15 percent of their expenditures on food. Based on the above fact, below 50% of total expenditure is food expense, the household food security status is high, 50–65% of total expenditure is food expense, the household food security status is medium, 66–75% of total expenditure is food expense, the household food security status is low, and 75 and above percent of total expenditure is on food expense, the household food security status is very poor.

Results and Discussion

This part of the thesis presents the summarized results of sample rural women's demographic, socio-economic, and associated entrepreneurship activities. In addition, the current status of rural women's entrepreneurship activities, their business contribution to household food security and the major challenges they face during their business operation in the study area were presented and discussed.



Figure 2 Women’s Entrepreneurs in the Study Villages

Demographic Information

Age

Respondents’ ages were recorded as individual years and summarized in different categories. The result of the age range distribution of the respondents (Table 1) showed that 19.2% of the respondents were in the 20-30 age groups, while 54.2% and 26.6 % were in the 31-40 and 41-50 age groups, respectively. This implies that the majority of the rural women entrepreneurs in the study were in the range of economically active age category and are also more likely to be involved in undertaking additional family responsibilities as wives and mothers

Table 1 Age Range Distribution of Rural Women Entrepreneurs

| Age group | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| 20-30 | 23 | 19.2 |
| 31-40 | 65 | 54.2 |
| 41-50 | 32 | 26.6 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Marital Status of Respondents

All sample respondents have started their business activity after getting marriage. Qualitative data were collected on the respondent’s current marital status. The result of this study (Table 2) showed that 89.2%of the respondents were married and living with their husbands, 0.8%, 5% and 5% were

separated, divorced, and widowed, respectively. In addition to marital status, the type of marriage was also assessed, and hence 85% of respondents were in a monogamy type of marriage while 15% were in a polygamy marriage. This implies that all respondents are responsible for household well-being, and some face double marriage system problems.

Table 2 Marital Status of Rural Women Entrepreneurs

| Marital status | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Married | 107 | 89.2 |
| Separated | 1 | 0.8 |
| Divorced | 6 | 5.0 |
| Widowed | 6 | 5.0 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Family Size of Respondents

The number of family members of respondents was surveyed and collected by categorizing family size into four groups. The result indicates that 30.8% of respondents had 5-7 family members, while 62.5%, 5% and 1.7% of respondents had 8-10, 11-13 and above 13 family members, respectively. This implies that the respondents’ large family size is one factor in entering into entrepreneurship.

Table 3 Family Size

| Members | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| 5-7 | 37 | 30.8 |
| 8-10 | 75 | 62.5 |
| 11-13 | 6 | 5.0 |
| Above 13 | 2 | 1.7 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Socio-Economic Characteristics

Education Information

The education level of the study sample population was surveyed, and different levels of education were collected data. As a result, the respondents who were not educated were recorded as illiterate, while the educated respondents were recorded based on school level. The result showed that 66.6% of respondents were illiterate, while 29.2% and 4.2% attained primary and secondary school levels, respectively. This implies that the majority of respondents are not educated.

Table 4 Education Level

| Education Level | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| Illiterates | 80 | 66.7 |
| Primary | 35 | 29.2 |
| Secondary | 5 | 4.2 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Size of Farming Land

It is known that land is the primary resource in all agricultural undertakings. Therefore, it is natural that as the population grows or as the family expands, household land possessions are redistributed to the newly formed households (Desalegn, 2007).

The study area is one of the main areas in Ethiopia where land fragmentation and shortage is the primary factor that has significantly affected households' livelihood. Farmers in the study area languish from acute farmland shortage. According to information from Agriculture and Rural Development Offices, the average cultivating land holding of sample kebeles is estimated to be 0.25 hectares.

As inferred from table 5, 10%, 75.8%, and 14.2% of the respondents are reported to cultivate

land holding below 0.25, 0.25-0.50 and 0.50-0.75 hectares of holding, respectively. However, the above figures do not precisely signify the exact pattern of cultivating land holding as the holding is very fragmented in highland and mid-land areas.

Table 5 Farming Land Size in Hectares

| Land size in hectares | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|
| <0.25 | 12 | 10.0 |
| 0.25-0.50 | 91 | 75.8 |
| 0.51-0.75 | 17 | 14.2 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Annual Production for Self-Consumption Duration

Like the national economy of Ethiopia, households in the study area mainly depend on small-scale subsistence agriculture to derive their livelihoods. The existing agricultural production from the given farm size could not enable them to generate the adequate food required. So, households engage and pursue diverse off/non-farm livelihood activities to fulfil the food gap. Comprehending the food security status of households as an outcome of livelihood strategies is crucial to improving the response mechanisms related to food security and livelihood improvement in the study area. A review of food aid recipients in the Wolaita Zone shows that annual agriculture product is not enough for the year's consumption. The number of households that depend on seasonal food assistance is increasing yearly in contrast to reports of bumper harvests at the national level in recent years (Yishak et al., 2014).

The annual product consumption duration data were collected based on the months the households consumed their harvest products. Therefore, the survey data were collected annually from harvested product consumption in a month without any additional contribution. The study indicates that 85.9% of respondents consumed for below 2 months, while 8.3% and 5.9% of respondents consumed for about 2-4 and 5-7 months of their harvest product in a year. This implies that the annual production of study sample respondents is not enough to cover their consumption for an entire year.

Table 6 Production for Self-Consumption
Duration in Year

| Duration | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| <2 month | 103 | 85.9 |
| 2-4 month | 10 | 8.3 |
| 5-7 month | 7 | 5.8 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Table 7 Age of Enterprise

| Business age | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| <5 year | 22 | 18.3 |
| 6-10 year | 36 | 30.0 |
| 11-15 year | 13 | 10.8 |
| 16-20 year | 26 | 21.7 |
| >20 year | 23 | 19.2 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Profile of Enterprises Owned by the Respondents

Because of small-sized farmland, large families and other reasons mentioned above in the study area, sample respondents started small entrepreneurship activities. These activities are many, and mention the main one’s local alcohol retail trade, retail flour trade, retail fruit trade, backing enjera, making local alcohol, butter trade, local cafeteria service, soft drink trade(borde, kinoto), used clothing trade, retail grain trade(faba-bean, pea, chickpea, barley, wheat, maize...), coffee retail trade, spices retail trade, and so on. In addition, qualitative data were collected on the size of the business, age of business, starting capital of business, current working capital, the reason to start, source of start-up funding, the business’s profitability and contribution to household food security.

Age of Enterprises

Currently, rural women entrepreneurship activities are emerging and promoting organized individuals in the group to pull rural women to enter into entrepreneurial activities with the support of different institutions. Nevertheless, the existing traditional entrepreneurship activities were known long ago in the study area. In this study, the present status of entrepreneurship activities is assessed. The quantitative data on the age of the enterprise were collected. According to the collected data, the result of the study showed that the age of each entrepreneur’s business since started indicates that 18.3% of respondents started their business before 5 years, while 30%, 10.8%, 21.7% and 19.2% of respondents started before 5-10, 11-15, 16-20 and 20 years, respectively. This implies that self-employment is widespread in the study population starting before a long year.

Category and Sector of Enterprises in Relation to Educational Background

In the study area, there is no large-scale business running by selected samples; all respondents were operating different types of small-scale businesses. These business types were described as their activities and consumers’ demand at rural area mini (qochi) markets. Data were collected from each respondent by listing directly the material or service provided to customers, and in favour of analysis work, they are categorized into four groups. The retail trade was categorized as flour trade, fruit, grain, coffee, vegetable, used cloth, mini shop (different commodities) and other daily consumable commodities trade. In the manufacturing, the category was brewing local alcoholic liquor, borde, baking enjera, kinoto, baking bread and distributing to retailers. Service rendering business was also categorized as local cafeteria service, local alcohol service, soft liquor service, and restaurant service. Moreover, other business types were purchasing crops at the vegetative stage from the farm and waiting until they matured, harvesting and selling to retailers, purchasing livestock and feeding, increasing market bargaining capacity, and then selling and others.

The relation between the types of businesses they selected and their educational background was analyzed. Hence the result showed that, out of 120 sample respondents, 92 were operating a retail business, 64 were illiterate, while 27 and 1 business owners were in primary and secondary school, respectively. The result also showed that 11 respondents were illiterate and operating manufacturing businesses, and 2 illiterate, 7 and 4 were educated at primary and secondary school,

respectively, were own service render businesses. Other types of business owners are 3 illiterate and 1 primary school level. This implies that illiterate respondents owned retail and manufacturing businesses while literate respondents operated

service-rendering businesses. Therefore, the chi-square value of 37.866 is statistically significant at less than 1%, and the association between the type of businesses and owners' education level is very strong.

Table 8 Type of Business Sector in Relation to the Educational Background of Rural Women Entrepreneurs

| Type of Business | Education Level | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| | Illiterates | | Primary | | Secondary | | Total | |
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| Retail | 64 | 53.3% | 27 | 22.5% | 1 | .8% | 92 | 76.7% |
| Manufacturing | 11 | 9.2% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 11 | 9.2% |
| Service | 2 | 1.7% | 7 | 5.8% | 4 | 3.3% | 13 | 10.8% |
| Other | 3 | 2.5% | 1 | .8% | 0 | 0.0% | 4 | 3.3% |
| Total | 80 | 66.7% | 35 | 29.2% | 5 | 4.2% | 120 | 100.0% |

Chi-square = 37.866 (significant at less than 1% probability level)

Source: own survey, 2014

Legal Status of Business

In Ethiopia, business legality depends on business type, size, sectors, and location. The rural businesses in the rural marketplace were recognized at the national level. While business operation requires a license, small-scale businesses running in rural marketplaces (qochis) do not require a license. The type of businesses run in society should be harmless to health, psychology and general citizens' productivity. The survey was done on the legal entities of rural women who owned businesses and observed as all were sole proprietor businesses. Data were collected by listing specific types of businesses owned by each respondent. The study showed that while traditionally established businesses owned by rural women were not licensed, the products they provided and services rendered played a pivotal role in the national economy without violating country regulations.

Motivating factors for Starting a Business

All respondents enter business with the motivation of different factors. During the field survey, respondents were asked about a critical motivating/pushing factor to enter the business. The motivating factors are summarized below in Table: 9. The most common motivating factors for going into business were to fulfil household food demand next self-employment. The result indicates that each

respondent had a key factor motivating them to start a business. Hence, out of 120 respondents, 75.8% of respondents were found to enter the business to fulfil their household food demands. In contrast, 16.7% of respondents reported being self-employed, and 4.2% and 3.3% reported having entered business for the need of independence and self-achievement, respectively. This result implies that most respondents started a business to overcome household food shortages and contribute to household food security.

Table 9 Motivating Factors for Starting a Business

| Motivating | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| To cover household food demand | 91 | 75.8 |
| To be self-employed | 20 | 16.7 |
| Need of independency | 5 | 4.2 |
| Self-achievement | 4 | 3.3 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Opportunities

Small businesses and entrepreneurship are essential in stimulating economic activity, creating jobs, alleviating poverty and uplifting living standards, and have been recognized internationally and in Africa (Vuuren and Groenewald, 2007). It is

widely accepted that the Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE) sectors have the potential to provide a livelihood for a considerably large number of people in developing countries such as Ethiopia (Stevenson and St-onge, 2005). In Ethiopia, micro and small enterprises are considered the base of poor rural and urban women. However, studies confirm that women in Ethiopia are engaged in a wide variety of economic activities and that their income from such activities has been pivotal to the survival of low-income families. Mainly in this study area, the government and non-government organizations run numerous rural development activities. For instance, good progress infrastructures, transportation access, market access, women’s right, security, the demand for products and services, and others are opportunities to start rural women entrepreneurship.

Initial Capital

It is a fact that considering their different problems; the sample population is entering into business because of finance availability. Self- they start businesses with finance accessible or available on hand at a spot of time. Hence the amount of finance at starting is not significant. However, entrepreneurs who started businesses in recent years invested slightly more significant amounts than earlier. Therefore, quantitative data were collected on financial capital starting in Birr. The result showed that 25% of respondents starting capital was less than 100 Birr, while 50%, 15%, 4.2% and 5.8% of respondents’ starting capital was 100-300, 301-500, 501-700 and 701-1000 Birr respectively. Therefore, considering the current purchasing power of money, it is possible to start rural women’s businesses with a small amount of finance.

Table 10 Starting Finance

| Starting Birr group | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| <100 birr | 30 | 25.0 |
| 100-300 birr | 60 | 50.0 |
| 301-500 birr | 18 | 15.0 |
| 501-700 birr | 5 | 4.2 |
| 701-1000 birr | 7 | 5.8 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Source of Initial Capital

To start entrepreneurship, the accessibility of starting finance is an essential factor in determining its establishment. Therefore, qualitative data were collected on the finance source of rural women entrepreneurs. The result shows that 65.8% of respondents’ finance source is personal savings. In comparison, 15.8%, 14.2%, and 4.2% of respondents’ finance source was household deposit, borrowed money from informal lenders in villages and many from formal micro-financing institutions, respectively. This implies that most of the sample population accessed finance through their effort.

Table 11 Source of Initial Capital

| Source | Frequency | Distribution |
|---|------------|--------------|
| Personal saving | 79 | 65.8 |
| Household deposit | 19 | 15.8 |
| Borrowed from relatives, friends or money lenders | 17 | 14.2 |
| Microfinance institutions | 5 | 4.2 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Current Financial Capital

Financial capital is cash invested, net income included, and then circulating in a specific business. Data collected on the current finance capital of Rural Women Entrepreneurs indicates that 20.8% of respondents working in finance was less than 500 Birr, while 16.7%, 33.3%, 10.8% and 18.3% of respondents working in finance is 500-700, 701-1000, 1001-1500 and above 1500 Birr working finance. This implies that the growth of financial capital is very retarding according to business age.

Table 12 Current Finance Capital

| Amount | Frequency | Distribution |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| <500 birr | 25 | 20.8 |
| 500-700 birr | 20 | 16.7 |
| 701-1000 birr | 40 | 33.3 |
| 1001-1500 birr | 13 | 10.8 |
| >1500 birr | 22 | 18.3 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Factors Facilitated Business

Establishing Rural Women Entrepreneurship requires the commitment of stakeholders and needs targeting on the future return. The businesses owned by the study sample population are established and facilitated by different factors. The study result shows that 95.9% of respondents were reported to be self-facilitated, while 0.8%, 0.8% and 2.5% of respondents' relatives, already family and friends facilitated, respectively. This implies that the majority of respondents facilitated the businesses by themselves.

Table 13 Factors Facilitating

| Facilitator | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Self | 115 | 95.9 |
| Relatives | 1 | .8 |
| Already Established by Family | 1 | .8 |
| With friends | 3 | 2.5 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Support Service Obtained

The study's sample population is found to have been involved in operating small-scale enterprises. Most of the sample population is illiterate and gets different types of support. Therefore, qualitative data were collected on essential support obtained among their owned businesses to rural women entrepreneurs. The result shows that 15.8% obtained technical support, while 5%, 73.3%, 1.7% and 4.2% obtained managerial, market information, networking and other types of support, respectively. This implies the majority of respondents get market information support than the rest types of support.

Table 14 Support Service Obtained

| Obtained services | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|
| Technical | 19 | 15.8 |
| Managerial | 6 | 5.0 |
| Market information | 88 | 73.3 |
| Market Networking | 2 | 1.7 |
| Others | 5 | 4.2 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Support for Rural Women's Needs

Individuals with common business knowledge primarily run small-scale enterprises. To succeed in business and upgrade the scale requires basic knowledge or skill. The Ethiopian government has set a policy to establish and support small-scale enterprises. Rural Women Entrepreneurs are owners of small-scale businesses and need different types of support. The survey was done on critical support that rural women needed. The result indicates that 10.8% of the respondents needed training/skill/knowledge. In contrast, 53.3%, 3.3%, 8.3%, 12.5%, 2.5%, 6.7% and 2.5% of the respondents needed financial support, tool/equipment/machine, business advice, networking with other businesses, marketing information, infrastructure and need other type support respectively. This implies that financial support is vital to increase work capital, expand the business and maximize business profit.

Table 15 Support Rural Women's Need

| Support type | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Training/Skill/Knowledge | 13 | 10.8 |
| Financial Support | 64 | 53.3 |
| Tool, Equipment and Machine | 4 | 3.3 |
| Business advise | 10 | 8.3 |
| Network With Other Businesses | 15 | 12.5 |
| Marketing information | 3 | 2.5 |
| Infrastructures | 8 | 6.7 |
| Others | 3 | 2.5 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Household Food Security and Expenditure

Households usually allocate their income and products to meet their family's food and non-food needs. The sample household was asked about the type of expenditure and volume of food consumed for the last seven days, and then food expenditure was computed by giving market value in Birr.

Total Expenditure in Week

Total weekly expenditure of respondents is measured by listing all financial expenses incurred

in a week, and non-financial items such as consumed crops from their farm, firewood, animal products and others consumed at home are converted into rural area cost and school fee, health cause expense, clothing

cost and other social expenses are quantified. Total week expenditure data are separated into food and non-food expenditures.

Table 16 Food and Non-food Weekly Expenditure

| Food Expenditure in Birr | | | Non-food Expenditure in Birr | | |
|--------------------------|------------|--------------|------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Expenditure | Frequency | Percent | Expenditure in Birr | Frequency | Percent |
| 160-178 | 19 | 15.8 | 62-110 | 16 | 13.3 |
| 179-188 | 20 | 16.7 | 111-160 | 52 | 43.3 |
| 189-198 | 26 | 21.7 | 161-210 | 33 | 27.5 |
| 199-210 | 43 | 35.8 | 211-260 | 15 | 12.5 |
| 211-251 | 12 | 10.0 | 261-301 | 4 | 3.3 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 | Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Based on mentioned facts mean household expenditure of the respondents was 352 Birr per week (Table 17). Quantitative was collected on respondents' household total expenditure in a week and grouped. The result indicates that 25% of respondents' household weekly expenditure was found to be in the range of 240-312 Birr, while 22.5%, 15.8%, 15.8% and 20.8% of the respondents' household weekly expenditure was 313-344, 345-369, 370-389 and 390-501 Birr respectively. This implies that while the agricultural sector contribution is low, the above expenditure requires additional sources.

Table 17 Weekly Expenditure

| Total Week Expenditure | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------|------------|------------|
| 240-312 | 30 | 25 |
| 313-344 | 27 | 22.5 |
| 345-369 | 19 | 15.8 |
| 370-389 | 19 | 15.8 |
| 390-501 | 25 | 20.8 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Food Expenditure for the Week

How households adjust their consumption in response to changes in prices and income is a crucial determinant of the effects of various shocks to market prices and commodity supplies. These adjustments in demand are particularly significant in Ethiopia, where many households consume inadequate

quantities of calories, protein and other nutrients. Household consumption behaviour in the country is also rather complex. Regional consumption patterns differ considerably, with no single staple dominating. Instead, four different kinds of cereal (teff, wheat, maize and sorghum) are important staples in parts of the country. Even within most regions, two or more food staples account for relatively large shares of total calories and food expenditures (Kibrom Tafere et al.,2010).

Total food expenditure in the week is measured by recording the source of food as home product, food aid and purchase and converting home product and food aid relatively on the low market cost of the study area. Data were collected on respondents' household food consumption per week and showed 195 Birr mean consumption. The study sample report indicates that 15.8% of respondents' week household food expenditure is 160-178 Birr, 16.7% of respondents' week household food expenditure is 179-188 Birr, 21.7% of respondents' week household food expenditure is 189-198 Birr, 35% of respondents' week household food expenditure is 199-210 Birr and 10.8% of respondents' week household food expenditure is 211-251Birr. This implies that as annual production-consumption is short, additional food sources are needed for food expenditure.

Table 18 Food Expenditure for the Week

| Food expenditure | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| 160-178 | 19 | 15.8 |
| 179-188 | 20 | 16.7 |
| 189-198 | 26 | 21.7 |
| 199-210 | 42 | 35 |
| 211-251 | 13 | 10.8 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Total Weekly Profit

Quantitative data were collected on rural women’s entrepreneurship activities’ profitability in the last seven days. The study result shows that the mean week gross profit earned is 233 Birr, and in detail, it indicates that 44.2% of respondents earned 140-210 Birr, 40.8%, 12.5%, 1.7% and 0.8% of respondents earned 211-280, 281-350, 351-420 and 421-480 Birr profit in a week. This implies that with low starting finance and education background, weekly profit is well.

Table 19 Total Weekly Profit

| Profit in Birr | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|------------|------------|
| 140-210 | 53 | 44.2 |
| 211-280 | 49 | 40.8 |
| 281-350 | 15 | 12.5 |
| 351-420 | 2 | 1.7 |
| 421-480 | 1 | 0.8 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Profit Expended on Household Food in Week

The study sample population is expecting a return on business at the moment to fulfil the daily household food demand. When they returned from the marketing area, purchasing different foods and items was common. The data on respondents showed that the amount of profit expended on food in the week was 124 Birr. The result also indicates that 16.7% of respondents spend 75-104 Birr, while 33.3%, 22.5%, 15%, and 12.5% of respondents’ households spend 105-120, 121-130, 131-148 and 149-230 Birr profit in a week respectively. This implies that a large portion of businesses’ profit is directly spent on household food.

Table 20 Profit Expended on Household Food in Week

| Expanded Profit in Birr | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| 75-104 | 20 | 16.7 |
| 105-120 | 40 | 33.3 |
| 121-130 | 27 | 22.5 |
| 131-148 | 18 | 15 |
| 149-230 | 15 | 12.5 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Businesses’ Contribution to Household Food Expenditure in Week

According to Table 18 and 20 data, business contribution to household food expenditure is measured by dividing the profit of businesses that purchased food and food items by total food expenditure per week. The study shows that business profit covers 63% of household food expenditure. Detail data indicate that 7.5% of respondents’ businesses share 39-52% of household total food expenditure in the week, while 15%, 45.8%, 21.7%, and 10% of respondents’ businesses share 53-59%, 60-65%, 66-71% and 72-92% of household total food expenditure in the week was covered by businesses profit respectively. This implies that rural women’s entrepreneurship is vital in making household food available.

Table 21 Business Contribution to Household Food Expenditure in Percent

| Business contribution | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|
| 39-52% | 9 | 7.5 |
| 53-59% | 18 | 15 |
| 60-65% | 55 | 45.8 |
| 66-71% | 26 | 21.7 |
| 72-92% | 12 | 10 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Food Security Status

The food security status of respondents’ households was calculated according to Smith and Subandoro by dividing household food expenditure in the week by total weekly expenditure. The poorest households in the world spend more than 75 percent

on food. On the other hand, households in the richest countries, such as the United States and Canada, spend less than 15 percent of their expenditures on food. Based on the above fact, below 50% of total expenditure is food expense, the household food security status is high, 50–65% of total expenditure is food expense, the household food security status is medium, 66–75% of total expenditure is food expense, the household food security is low, and 75% and above percent of total expenditure is food expense, the household food security status is very poor.

Hence, table 20 indicates that 20.8% of respondents' household food security is below 50%, which is high food security. In comparison, 69.2%, 8.3% and 1.7% of respondents' household food security status is 50-65% which is medium, 66-75%, which is low and above 75%, which is very poor food secure, respectively. This implies that most of the study sample population was at medium food security status.

Table 22 Household Food Security Status

| Food Security Status | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------|------------|--------------|
| Below 50% | 25 | 20.8 |
| 50-65% | 83 | 69.2 |
| 66-75% | 10 | 8.3 |
| Above 75% | 2 | 1.7 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Significant Challenges of Rural Women's Entrepreneurship

One way to develop rural women's entrepreneurship is to identify and remove barriers they face. For example, the main result of ILO (2011) in Ethiopia is that removing the social, cultural, legal, and political barriers in addition to supporting the business environments can help gender equality in rural societies and rural women entrepreneurship development (Farhad et al., 2012).

There are different challenges that rural women entrepreneurs face throughout their business operation period. In this study, significant challenges were forwarded to respondents and quoted more than one type of challenge by each respondent. Because of this, multiple response data were summarized, and challenges were prioritized by rank. As a result,

shown in Table 23, the five most unique constraints quoted by respondents and indicated lack of market rate were quoted at 113 and hence ranked as the first challenge. In contrast, the rate of lack of credit facility, shortage of working financial capital, loss and lack of workspace was reported at 100, 95, 92 and 27 hence ranked 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th constraints, respectively. This implies that the lack of attractive markets and credit facilities are the main challenges for rural women's entrepreneurship.

Table 23 Major Challenges of Rural Women Entrepreneurship by Rank

| Major challenges | Rate | Rank |
|-----------------------------|------|------|
| Lack of workspace | 27 | 5 |
| Lack of market | 113 | 1 |
| Loss | 92 | 4 |
| Shortage of working finance | 95 | 3 |
| Lack of credit facilities | 100 | 2 |

Source: own survey, 2014

Summary

The study under the title "The Role of Rural Women Entrepreneurship in Household Food Security" has been done according to specific objectives, assessing entrepreneurship's current status, analysing entrepreneurship's contribution to household food security and determining major problems throughout entrepreneurship operation.

According to the methodology, a random sampling system was done in the study area by selecting three rural kebele administrations, and the sample size was sampled as population proportion. The number of samples from each rural kebele administration was selected randomly. Collected data with the survey were analyzed using SPSS descriptive method, and the results were frequency, percent and meant of study.

The study population was more in the productive age category, and most respondents were below 40. Regarding marital status, all respondents were married, and 15% of respondents had polygamy. According to family size, more respondents had large families, which made them dependent. The respondents' farmland was very low, which cannot accommodate family size proportion. With

the increasing family size, cultivation land size is decreasing proportionally. Annual harvesting products from respondents' farmland cannot feed the household for a year. Harvested food consumption duration time of respondents is below two months in mean. Based on the above facts (family size, farming land size and food shortage), the study population pushed to enter into entrepreneurship activities.

In the study area, starting and operating entrepreneurship activities did not require much working financial capital before fifteen years. The study sample's working financial capital is own savings and household deposit. Types of businesses in the study area owned by the sample population are retail, manufacturing, service render and others which most educated entrepreneurs operate from retail businesses: fruit, used cloths and mini-shop retail and from service render businesses such as rural cafeteria, rural alcohol grocery and rural restaurant services while illiterate entrepreneurs operating from retail businesses: flour, grain, vegetables and coffee and all manufacturing businesses (Brewing borde, baking enjera, brew kinoto, baking bread) and others such as Vegetative plant trade Livestock Trade. The majority of entrepreneurs started operating mentioned businesses ten years.

While household total food expense in the mean is 195 Birr per week, and these businesses are profitable, entrepreneurship activities significantly contribute by covering an average of 63% of the household total food expenditure.

According to food security status, the majority of the study sample population households' food security status is medium and high food security. However, with look upon to problems, shortage of working financial capital and lack of credit facilities are dominating problems entrepreneurs face through business operation time.

Conclusion

In the study area, rural women's entrepreneurship activities are started by pushing large family size, small farmland, short time duration of self-consumption production and mainly household food shortage.

Entrepreneurs select types of businesses based on society's demand, availability of initial capital,

educational background and low-level risk. These businesses are consistently profitable and satisfy entrepreneurs' food needs.

Total household expenditure per week is also significant and cannot be afforded without additional income. Women in rural areas generally bear primary responsibility for their children's nutrition from gestation through weaning and throughout the critical period of growth. In addition, they are the principal food producers and preparers for the rest of the family. Hence, in addition to self-consumption products that exist for a short period, they purchase food and food items daily. Because of this, the business working capital is not increasing proportionally as earning profit throughout entrepreneurship operation time.

According to the role, rural women entrepreneurship contributes more than 60% of household food expenditure by businesses profit, and their households are food secured.

Also, rural women may face various problems entering the world of entrepreneurship and operating and expanding businesses. However, the lack of attractive markets and credit facilities are the primary challenges to rural women's entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

Based on the findings discussed above, the following recommendations are critical to ensure food security at the household level in rural society through developing women's entrepreneurship. The possible areas of involvement include:

In rural society, household food security depends on the size of household members. Therefore, the intensity of food insecurity increases as the number of dependent members increases. This situation calls for family planning that should be implemented through awareness creation and the provision of education to rural women and men.

Rural women entrepreneurs are at a productive age and responsible for convincing household food security. However, their households face food shortages because of large family sizes, small farms and low self-consumption production. Because of food shortage, they are motivated to enter into entrepreneurship. Hence, empowering rural women entrepreneurs needs thoughtful attention to improve household food security.

The majority of the study population started entrepreneurship activities in eleven years. However, the businesses they operate are more similar and very small. Innovating new business sectors is not exercised. It is recommended that periodic training programmes be organized for rural women entrepreneurs to establish more types of businesses, improve their bargaining power, and enhance access to factors of entrepreneurship to improve household income and food security.

According to households' total expenditure, rural women entrepreneurs are working a long time in a day to afford it. Especially entrepreneur women are expected to make food available and accessible at the household level to improve food security. They spent a large portion of businesses' profits purchasing food and items. Hence, they have no saving opportunity and increasing financial capital. Financial capital is the engine of entrepreneurship activities. It is also recommended that rural women entrepreneurs internalize saving advantages; on-work training is essential. Micro and small-scale finance institutions should also facilitate credit access to finance and promote and expand rural women's entrepreneurship activities.

Delivering products and providing services to the market is a critical issue. It initiates entrepreneurs to set objectives and increase effort to reach them. Creating a market line is critical, and government administration should contact rural women entrepreneurs with modern marketing segments. Finally, practical steps should be taken by government authorities and non-government organizations to address critical constraints faced by rural women entrepreneurs in their entrepreneurship activities. This will encourage rural women entrepreneurs to make food available and accessible at the household level to improve food security.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have declared that they have any conflict of interest.

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