

Review on Contribution of Agricultural Cooperative for Socio-Economic Development with Special Reference to Ethiopia

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Abstract: This review is based on the fact that Agricultural cooperative is an essential weapon for development. It played an important role to provide market access; providing competitive returns for independent farmers; facilitating the market power of producers ; marketing of agricultural inputs to the members primarily and the non-members; provision of agricultural credit to the members; improve production and marketing of seeds and seedlings; Processing of produces particularly coffee and oilseeds; provision of storage facilities; marketing of members' agricultural produces; supply of consumer goods; operating a flourmill for grinding of food grains and other spices for both members and non-members; improve women participation, enhance innovation, increase food security, employment creation, income generation, improve production and productivity and to facilitate agricultural financing. As the general objective, this seminar reviewed the contribution of agricultural cooperative for socio-economic development in Ethiopia. The specific objective of this seminar is to assess social impact and economic contribution of agricultural cooperative in the country. The contribution of agricultural cooperative for socio-economic development is not satisfactory like developed countries; as a result, the following bodies should participate to increase the role of agricultural cooperatives. Such as: potential members of agricultural cooperative, farmers, researchers and consumers.

Key word: Contribution • Agricultural • Cooperative • Socio-Economic • Development • Ethiopia

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Review: According to [1] study in Ethiopia, the foundation of traditional and outdated associations (e.g. 'Edir', 'Ekub', 'Debbo', etc) was dated many years ago. The farmers long understood the importance of cooperation for enhanced productivity and for the task that require collective effort. For example, 'Guza or Debbo' is one of the traditional self-help organizations prevailing in agrarian societies of Ethiopia. By this form of traditional cooperation people living in a given particular geographical boundary help one another in ploughing, weeding, harvesting, house construction etc.

For more than a decade, that those current associations' societies came to established. These organizations were organized during the emperor (1960 to 1975), but after emperor (1975 to 1990) the association is inactive and now after 1990. It implies that

cooperatives that were established during the previous two governments were not sustainable because they were used as political tools and member's willingness was not given priority it deserves. It is even very difficult to get rid of those bad images of cooperatives printed in the minds of farmers for the establishment of similar voluntary associations such as cooperative societies in order to enhance bargaining power, raise sales and purchase, transaction volumes and so on [2].

The UN has acknowledged important direct and indirect impacts on socio-economic development in terms of promoting and supporting entrepreneurial development, creating productive employment, raising incomes and helping to reduce poverty while enhancing social inclusion, social protection and community-building [3]. According to report of this organization several studies argue cooperatives not only directly benefit their members, but also have positive effects for the rest of society. Cooperatives are often described as

promoting both economic and social goals the evidence in regard to the latter is weaker and sometimes contradictory [4] finds that whilst cooperatives may have a significant direct impact on people's life through the services they deliver (e.g. credit, agricultural inputs, access to markets, storage and transport, housing, among others), evidence of their significance in other social and societal domains has not been particularly forthcoming. Cooperatives are also promoted to facilitate the general economic and social improvement of work and living conditions, foster self-help activities through mutual help and to popularly participate in general development and income creation throughout the country and in rural communities in particular [5].

In Ethiopia there are different types of multipurpose primary cooperatives that play a crucial role in solving the socio-economic problems of the community. In line with these all realities, the research attempt to analyze the factors that affecting the development of multipurpose primary cooperatives societies. Besides, in this research, an attempt made to find out issues which require further research and investigations so that other researcher can easily come up with outstanding recommendations to enhance the factors that affects the development of multipurpose primary cooperatives and its contribution to the economic, social and ecological development of the woreda in particular and the country in general. As a result of this, the researcher was motivated to conduct this research so as to assess the factors that affect the developments of multipurpose primary cooperatives in Ethiopia According to [6] report, cooperatives have expected to provide efficient and effective service to the members. In order to do so cooperatives like saving and credit cooperatives societies, multipurpose and consumer cooperative carried out and provide different informal ways of doing together service to the members. The unsuccessful story of cooperatives and dissolution of most cooperative societies of Ethiopia is attributed mainly to managerial and lack of awareness problems [7].

According this author, Cooperatives are considered as a means to increase the production and quality of crops intended for export, to drag the indigenous population into far economy condition [7].

[3] has found out that during derg period, cooperatives were faced with organizational, operational, leadership as well as production and distribution problems. This bad image was affecting the developments of multi- purpose primary cooperatives. Thus, the development of multi-purpose primary cooperatives is

critical issue in Ethiopian context at large and in the study area in particular. Obviously, there is no adequate study on the developments of multi -purpose primary cooperatives in Ethiopia. As a result, cooperative planners, policy makers and promoters had no enough information on the developments of multi- purpose primary cooperatives in Ethiopian context at large and in the study area in particular. That is why the researcher was eager to conduct this investigation [8].

According to [9] report, Agricultural cooperatives is important to fully achieve women participation in all aspects and provide agricultural inputs at a reasonable price; also it is important in creating employment. Even though, different researches have been done on nature, performance and determinant of agricultural cooperatives for Socio- economic development in different part of Ethiopia. None of these researches did not give attention to contribution of agricultural cooperative in socio-economic development. Due to this fact, in view of the above statements the review is interested to focus the contribution of agricultural cooperative in socio-economic development in Ethiopia. Therefore, the objectives of this review paper are: to review the importance of agricultural cooperative in socio-economic development and also to highlight policy implication to focus on further implementation of Agricultural cooperatives.

Review of Literature

Historical Development of Cooperatives in Ethiopia:

Formal cooperatives started in Ethiopia during the ruling era of Emperor Haile Selassie I in 1960 the first legislative called "Farm Workers Cooperatives Decree" was declared as Decree No. 44/1961. The objective needed to enact this decree was: to accelerate the development of the agricultural economy of the country. In Ethiopia there are three well known traditional cooperatives or self-help groups which are the base for development of primary cooperatives societies namely Edir, Ekub and Debo (Wonfel) or Lefenty [6].

In 1974, the Military rule overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie's Government and established a socialist Government. The socialist Government gave cooperative organization proclamation number 138/1978 in 1978. During this era, tremendous efforts were made to promote primary cooperatives. At that time the existing government gave due attention for the cooperatives with together socialist ideology [10].

Socio-Economic Importance of Cooperatives Developments: Cooperative businesses allow entrepreneurs to generate economies of scale that reduce transaction costs and/or increase incomes through volume sales and increase efficiencies along the value chain through greater access to information and networks [11]. Cooperatives allow individuals to achieve mutual economic goals, from the local to the global level that cannot be met in isolation. Opening up the developing world to this type of economic opportunity is not only the key to alleviating poverty, but to broader global security [12].

Cooperatives can provide social services to remotely located, low income segments of society that may not be otherwise served, including providing critical health services and educating millions at risk of developing HIV/AIDS [13]. Of the values important to the social contract, trust is perhaps the most fundamental. Whether as cooperative members or as part of society, with trust, individuals act contrary to their own individual interests in order to ensure a degree of stability and longer-term benefit. If trust is not a common value in a society, forming a cooperative becomes more challenging, but efforts made through cooperative development projects can increase trust and reinforce it in a broader societal context [14]. Cooperatives also indirectly employ through the spillover effects of their activities, as well as opportunities created by, cooperative ventures [15]. The impact of cooperatives on employment creation is more discernible in the self-employment realm. About 900,000 people in the cooperatives sector of Ethiopia are estimated to generate part of job opportunity through their cooperatives [8].

Cooperatives help build “stakes in stability” by providing economic opportunities during and after conflict and by rebuilding the social capital and trust needed to provide a sense of collective identity and shared destiny. The societies successfully created jobs for returning minorities and ex-combatants to conflict regions and have been particularly effective in creating new links to distant and high-value markets [16]. In some African country especially in Uganda Cooperative Transport Union has had its drivers and members of staff sensitized on how to avoid getting the virus [17]. The UCA has also been instrumental in offering social protection to its members specifically for women and youth development. For instance, the Cooperative Food Security Project [18] targeted women with the objective of increasing food production and storage.

Major Tools That Associated with Cooperatives Developments: Training is the main instrument for cooperatives to create enlightened members and explain to members about the benefits of cooperatives. It was given more emphasis for the development of cooperatives and considered partly under the 5th principle of cooperation approved by the ICA 1999 Congress Training have to be needed for the development and sustainability of cooperatives. Continuous training program can contribute towards building capacity and more skilled members to improve their livelihood and to increase their participation in cooperatives supported by research of [13].

To develop a self-sustaining education and training program for the cooperative development by making the best use of a broad range of cooperative wings and provide training for the youth and women. In the 1960s and 1970s, cooperative education and training focused very much on cooperative values, principles and ideology, but neglected cooperative management. This approach prepared (or accompanied) the “cooperativization” process that took place in several African countries and largely contributed to the negative image of cooperatives.

In many African countries, BAS were the exclusive domain of the Cooperative department whose staff did not always have the necessary competence and commitment. With the downsizing of the civil service, other solutions have to be found. On the other hand, BAS have become very important in the turbulent period of structural adjustment. The participants in a recent workshop on the privatization of cooperative support services concluded that BAS should be demand-oriented, problem [12]. Organizational development should not become an end in itself, nor the objective of an external actor, but a tool of producers to reach a common goal [19].

Increase Food Security: According to [20] report, Food security on the other hand means avoiding hunger for all. As a global phenomenon, food security for all is the best indicator of food security for the world. This assures food security for national access on a broad average. But this form of assurance of access of food for the world is only an average and quantitative indicator of food security. Qualitative measures of access would look into actual access indicators of food energy requirement levels [20]. Many researchers in food and food policy have carried out in depth research on the

subject. Food security is achieved when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food preferences for active and healthy life [21].

Agricultural cooperatives also help in food security by giving incentives to small and subsistence farmers to contribute in food production. Through economies of scale in obtaining training, credit for farm inputs and arranging for irrigation, cooperatives enable these farmers to improve their productivities and raise output. With improved marketing, cooperatives enable these farmers to obtain better prices in the market place, giving them the right incentives to produce for surplus [3].

According to [21] report, there is close correlation between food security and large size co-operative organizations. This correlation however, was made possible on account those small farmers had disposable cash income earned from co-operative activity, to buy food from ordinary village markets. According to the ideas of above author, all main cash crop growing areas, such as cotton, tobacco and coffee, are also climatically, the main food growing areas such as bananas, coffee, maize, rice and wheat. So apart from having cash income from co-operative business, small farmers have also been food secure, due to climatic advantages. This was possible with the institution of government food buying bodies which bought all cereals from co-operative organizations. Food marketing co-operatives were the first to go under, due to stiff market competition. Some minor co-operative action however, still remains today with high value food crops such as vegetables and horticultural crops. While there is reasonable potential for the promotion of a range of food based co-operatives, they however, require a different co-operative strategy distinct from the traditional member patronage type of agricultural co-operatives to a more member investor co-operative type [22].

Agricultural cooperatives are the best institutional intervention for attaining food security in any country [3]. In Ethiopia currently 2007 the Cooperatives is playing a crucial role in attaining food security through;

- The provision of agriculture input and output marketing;
- Facilitating irrigation for crop production;
- Value addition;
- Creation of employment and
- Through establishment of small and micro enterprises.

Employment Creation: On the basis of available data from grain marketing co-operatives and coffee farmers' co-operative unions in Ethiopia, [15] estimates that over 21,000 people are employed for casual labor services in co-operatives every year. Agricultural cooperatives exerted utmost their effort to reduce the unemployment problem through generating employment opportunities, providing financial support for those unemployed that enable them to engage in micro and small business activities and promoting awareness on self-employment and job innovation strategy. Agricultural cooperatives generated different types of employment such as daily laborer, seller, guard, accountant, cashier, manager, storekeeper and so forth for many members and nonmembers [23].

[24] Agricultural cooperatives can effectively create and maintain employment (both direct/ salaried/ employment and self-employment) in both urban and rural areas. They can provide self-employment through millions of worker-owned production and service delivery activities (producer cooperatives); by promoting resource mobilizing and saving for productive investment; and provision of affordable goods and services and thereby enable the community to save a proportion of their income for investment (consumer cooperatives). Similarly user-owned cooperatives such as housing, utility, health and social care cooperatives provide affordable access to basic services and help them to get access to various self-employment opportunities [25].

[15] suggested about role of co-operatives in create employment opportunities in three different ways. First, they offer direct wage employment to people who work in primary and secondary co-operatives as well as in governmental co-operative support institutions (e.g. ministries, departments, co-operative colleges, etc). Secondly, co-operatives offer self-employment to members, whose participation in the economic activities that they make possible substantially guarantees a civilized income. Thirdly, co-operatives also indirectly employ through the overflow effects of their activities on non-members whose income generating activities are only viable through the transactions they have with, as well as opportunities created by, co-operative ventures [26]. On the other hand, agricultural cooperatives can create enormous direct or salaried employment opportunities by engaging themselves in various sectors of the economy such as production, marketing, processing and so on [25].

Table 2: Estimated employment and related income in the cooperative movement

Employment Variable	Union	Primary cooperative	Total
Self-employed		115,079	115,079
Permanent employees	2,860	57,918	60778
Casual employees	643,500	6,950,100	7593600
Permanent employment income	71,500,000	347,505,000	419,005,000
Casual employment income	9,652,500	104,251,500	113,904,000

Source: FCA (2008)

Improve Production and Productivity: Agricultural cooperatives could engage in any of the following operations:

- Supplying of artificial fertilizers, selected improved seeds or plants, chemicals tools and technical equipment's, lubricating oil and other similar products and animal feed;
- Provision of financial means trough credit, supply of other needs goods etc and the arrangements for their repayment;
- Consultation on agricultural problems with respect to choice of crops, selection of proper cultivation methods;
- Produce storage on farms and in the corporative establishment; and
- Marketing of cash crops by exportation and of minor crops (vegetables, citrus, fruits, etc, within the nation or outside [13].

Farmer cooperatives in Ethiopia have found a clear position in the production of high-value export crops such as coffee [9].

[17] explained about agricultural cooperatives played an important role in food production and distribution. Agricultural cooperatives improved farm productivity by obtaining inputs at low cost and by adopting sustainable farming techniques and through management and organizational development of members. Through economies of scale in obtaining training, credit for farm inputs and arranging for irrigation, cooperatives enable these farmers to improve their productivities and raise output. With improved marketing, cooperatives enable these farmers to obtain better prices in the market place, giving them the right incentives to produce for surplus. Enhancing productivity and commercialization among smallholder farmers is widely perceived as a key strategy for rural development, poverty reduction and food security [26].

[17] Agricultural co-operatives create the ability for the supply of required agricultural inputs so that production of commodities is done timely to enhance productivity. They also provide an assured market for commodities produced by farmers in the rural areas.

With collective action, agricultural co-operatives can capture the benefits of value added, because of bulking and take advantages of introducing grades and standards allowing agro- processing value addition for the members. In addition, agricultural co-operatives were responsible for stimulating poor farmers to make entry into markets, enhancing demand for standards and grades for perishable commodities such as bananas, onions and tomatoes [27].

For productivity gains to be achieved, smallholder farmers need to have better access to technology and improve their technical efficiency. It is important for smallholders to have easy access to extension services in order to optimize on-farm technical efficiency and productivity, given the limited resources available. While the private sector is gradually emerging as a competitor, the public sector remains the major provider of extension services [13].

Income Generation: The impact of co-operatives on employment creation and income-generation was more evident in the self-employment area. A significant proportion of farmers and their households sell their produce to earn an income through their co-operatives in [28]. Agricultural co-operatives, maintain higher levels of income, making small farmers able to construct respectable houses, send their children to school and provide health insurance to sustain rural livelihoods [17]. Cooperatives created additional income for their members and regarding the way how cooperatives created additional income, again all mentioned by securing higher price for their products as shown in the table below, 20.39% by providing training to increase productivity, 14.81% by lowering input costs, 9.24% introducing new and efficient technologies and 18.52% by creating employment opportunities and other categories each [13].

In Ethiopia, about 900,000 people in the agricultural sector generated part or all of their income through their co-operatives [15]. Even more significant for income-generation is the fact that these co-operatives not only created marketing opportunities for members, but also try to increase their income margins by negotiating for better prices. Moreover, cooperatives had the greatest direct

Table 3: Yearly Fertilizer distributions by cooperatives in Tigray in quintals

Type of fertilizer	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
DAP	1054	12546	34472	43771	34551	62438	25485	33195	50860
Urea	1171	9432	28132	37793	30180	26572	21764	25438	38634
Total	2225	21978	62604	81564	64731	89010	47249	58633	89494
% change to 1998	100.00	988.00	2814.00	2909.00	3666.00	4000.00	2124.00	2635.00	4022.00

Source: Tigray Cooperative Promotion Office and Enderta Cooperative Union 2006

Table 4: Ways of creating Additional Income by agricultural cooperatives

Ways of creating Additional income	Percentage
Lowering input cost	14.81%
Securing high price for our product	37.04%
Providing training to increase productivity	20.39%
Introducing new and efficient technology	9.24%
Creating employment opportunity	18.52%

Source: [13]

economic impact at the micro level in creating additional income for their members. They achieve this by securing higher prices for members' products lowering input costs for members, by creating employment opportunities and by introducing technological innovations. Besides, they can provide consumable goods, deliver education, housing and other socio-economic service as lower price and thereby help the local community save their income for further investment [12].

Facilitate Agricultural Financing: Access to agricultural credit was one of the challenges to agricultural production. Historically, agricultural financing is provided by cooperative banks rather than agricultural cooperatives [3]. Agricultural cooperatives enable members to meet their needs for financial services, such as savings and credit, at low-cost and with easy access through the pooling of limited capital. The members' mandatory purchase of ownership shares in the cooperative and their deposit/savings accounts serve as the funding base to enable the cooperative to extend credit to members [26]. According to [15] studied the financial performance of agricultural cooperatives. He noted that the task of measuring the financial performance of agricultural cooperatives made problematic by the attributes of the cooperative form of business. Most of the commonly used financial measures give an incomplete picture of a cooperative's performance.

More recently, however, agricultural cooperatives are becoming more involved in agricultural financing, directly or indirectly. Agricultural cooperatives are diversifying their activities into savings and credit provision. In other countries, agricultural cooperatives enter into credit arrangements with cooperative banks. Using credit provided by agricultural cooperative bank, the apex

organization purchases farm inputs which it distributes to its primary societies or cooperatives before the harvest and the next planting season. The remaining net proceeds are paid out to the cooperatives and support their production. This integrates credit, acquisition of inputs and marketing with the agricultural produce as collateral [26] Agricultural cooperatives provide access to credit for members who might not typically have access to saving and commercial banks. This is significant in markets where financial providers are absent owing to poor revenue prospects, high risks, or high transaction costs. Because of their low cost structure and low profit targets, agricultural cooperatives are able to offer credit facilities at attractive rates, thereby providing alternatives to predatory lending and reducing the vulnerability of the poor to exploitation. Loan products offered by agricultural cooperatives include salary advances, agricultural input loans, working capital loans and equipment purchase [15].

Factors Affecting Cooperatives Developments in Ethiopia:

During imperial period the factors of cooperatives developments in country faced various problems in different economic system of the country. The major obstacles faced in the development of cooperative society are; lack of efficient marketing system, inadequate budget allocation, inadequate trained man power and no man power of educated in implementing cooperative law and policies, due to low organization, low technical support are the major problems [7]. There is also a problem during Derg period such as distorted training system for the available man power, lack of coordination between cooperatives policies (principles) and state policies and inadequate member support are the main ones [3].

Board members have often not adequately appreciated the need for member serving commercial operations because of low equity participation; they have not had a sufficient commitment to the organization [22]. Another effect of the above has been the cooperative inexperience in effectively representing the interests of the small cooperatives members.

The major external factor that undermine democratic control relate to the substantial role of government in the promotion, direction and operations of the cooperative

movement. The internal factors include that cooperative principles are not sufficiently known or understood by the members, that the financial stake of the members in their societies is limited and that the economically weak societies offer only limited benefits to their members. This situation also characterizes the relationship between all the tiers of the cooperative structure [28].

The transformation of political structures of the former countries into those of democratic states together with structural adjustment program usually referred to as developing countries”, have changed the environment for private social and economic activities considerably. After withdrawal of the state from economic activities and Privatization of former state enterprises, there is more scope for private business organizations including co-operatives [29]. The strengthening of cooperative finances is particularly important in the evolving market economy. With liberalization such facilities are no longer freely available. The cooperatives find it difficult to obtain bank financing for necessary business investment and activities, including agricultural marketing, due to their weak asset and equity base [3].

The worldwide general trends that influence the development cooperatives in social groupings are growing individualism, progressive disintegration of family, clan and other conventional group Structures,

which have kept human society together for centuries. This implies changes in motivation for working together and for group solidarity, from “mechanical” solidarity of face to-face groups to organized solidarity based on free decision, pursuit of individual interest and economic reasoning. Changes of social structures of the environment are brought about the same time contribute to changes of value systems. Where old and known values are no longer respected or lose their importance, people search for new values, suitable for coping with new challenges of a new environment [30].

Conceptual Frame Work: The study conceptualized with in the frame work of factors that directly affecting development of primary cooperative society by the outcomes problems.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary and Conclusion: This review revealed that: Farmers are collectively able to negotiate better prices for inputs, obtained transport, processing and storage facilities. Agricultural cooperatives could be an effective means to create a safe environment for women to increase their self-confidence, bargaining power promote gender equality and their income generating ability. Contributed

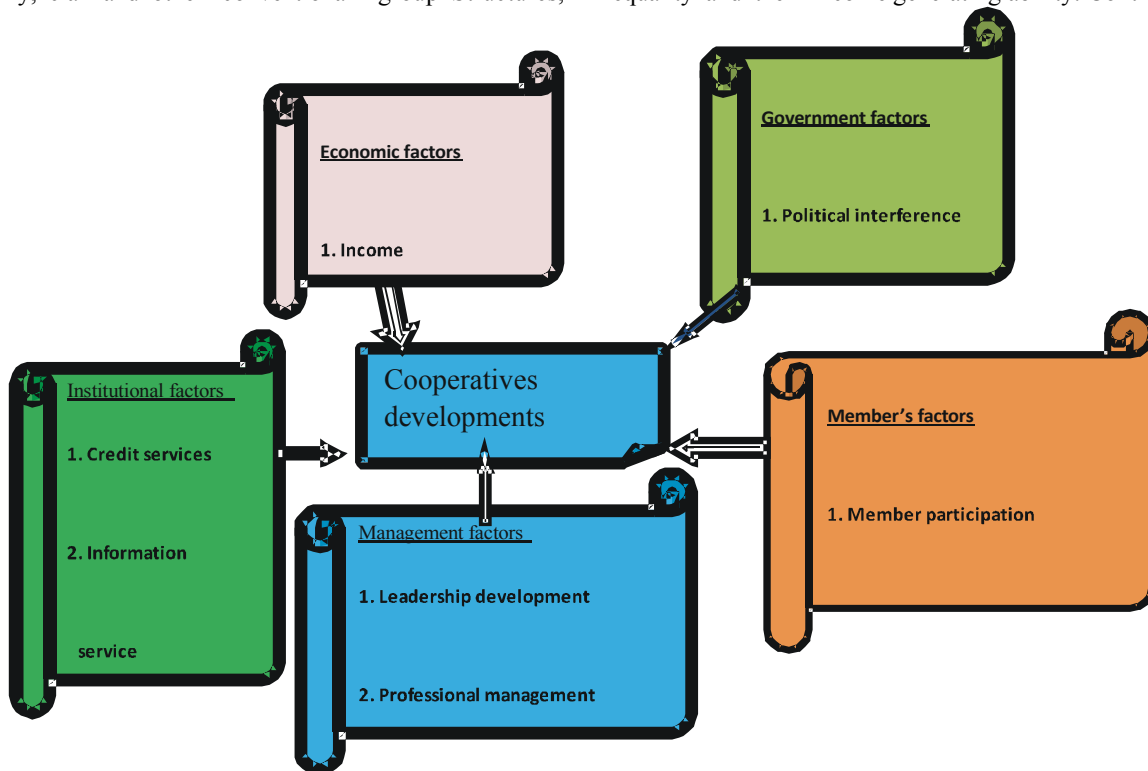


Fig. 1: Conceptual frame work

considerably to the process of transference, diffusion and adoption of technology. Agricultural cooperatives played a crucial role in attaining food security through; the provision of agriculture input and output marketing; facilitating irrigation for crop production and value addition. Agricultural cooperatives can effectively create and maintain employment (both direct/ salaried/ employment and self-employment) in both urban and rural areas. Farmer cooperatives in Ethiopia have found a clear position in the production of high-value export crops such as coffee. In Ethiopia, about 900,000 people in the agricultural sector generate part or all of their income through their co-operatives. Agricultural cooperatives are diversifying their activities into savings and credit provision at low interest rate.

Recommendation: Although there are different agricultural cooperatives in Ethiopia, their contribution to economic and social development is not that much satisfactory because of different problems in management, lack of capital, education and training skill. So the following points should be recommended to upgrade the contribution of agricultural cooperative: The members of agricultural cooperative should select an appropriate environment to facilitate their activity easily. Different facility should be fulfilled like transportation service, water, health service, electricity and market place; The farmers should be members to agricultural cooperative in order to get different inputs at a reasonable price and to sell their output at a good price; The farmers should purchase fertilizer, improved seed varieties and other inputs from agricultural cooperative in order to save their money; Members should use the income they generated from their cooperatives not only just to meet their household consumption needs but also to enhance potential income generating capacity together with investing on education and health care requirements. For this, there should be continuous awareness creation system through education, training and other means so as to enable them diversify income generation and Consumers should invite agricultural cooperatives to get a quality and quantity of goods and services at low price.

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