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**FACTORS AFFECTING EFFECTIVE YOUTHS'  
PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURAL MARKETING  
CO-OPERATIVES IN TANZANIA  
EXPERIENCE FROM SELECTED AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES  
IN ARUSHA AND MOSHI DISTRICT COUNCILS, TANZANIA**

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**Abstract**

*Main aim of the paper was to identify the socio-cultural and economic factors affecting effective youths' participation in agricultural marketing co-operative societies. Specifically, the study intended to; examine the operations of agricultural and marketing co-operatives, determine the pre-requisites for person becoming a member of agricultural and marketing co-operatives, examine the socio-cultural factors hindering effective youth's participation in agricultural and marketing co-operatives and examine the economic factors hindering effective youth's participation in agricultural and marketing co-operatives. The paper used a multi-case study design were used in describing various issues relating to the study. The cases that were used in this study were Mweka Sungu, Mruwia and Njari in Uru North from Moshi district council and Engare Olmotony and Sokoni II AMCOS in Arusha district council, Tanzania. The study revealed that the socio-cultural factors affecting youths participation in AMCOS include among others; male biasness in coffee ownership, social inequality and generational difference*

*between youths and older members, lack of interest and inadequate co-operative education among youths, limited range of services provided by AMCOS, unfavourable production and distribution relations, young women are over-occupied with domestic chores and life hardship in rural areas and rural-urban migration among other factors.*

*Keywords: Agriculture, Marketing, Youth, Co-operatives, Participation and Effectiveness*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of Agricultural Marketing Co-operatives in Coffee Production**

The ILO Recommendation No. 193 of 2002 defined a co-operative as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise”. In Africa, it is estimated that some 7% of the population is affiliated with the movement, and that this is on the increase (Develtere *et.al*, 2008). Regardless of the sector they belong to or the types of cooperative they represent – whether marketing, financial, workers’, or housing, for instance, co-operatives are powerful vehicles for social inclusion, political and economic empowerment of their members (Majurin, 2010).

Traditionally the type of co-operative that has been dominant in Tanzania mainland is the one that has focused on marketing of peasant’s agricultural crops. Peasants in Tanganyika (now the mainland Tanzania) started as informal (unregistered) societies in 1925 so that they could capture part of the trade profit of their crops such as coffee and later cotton. The first co-operative union in the country was the Kilimanjaro Native Co-operative Union (KNCU), which was registered with its eleven affiliated coffee primary co-operatives on 1st of January 1933 the event took place in Moshi district, which by then comprised of the current Rombo, Hai, Moshi, Siha, and Mwangi districts (Maghimbi, 2010).

Tanzania Coffee Board -TCB, (2012) indicated that coffee is one of Tanzania’s primary agricultural export crops representing about 5 percent of total exports, 24% of traditional cash crops and generating export earnings to more than 15%. More than 90% of Tanzanian coffee originates from smallholder farmers. The industry provides direct income to more than 400,000 households and benefits directly or indirectly the livelihoods of over 2.4 million Tanzanians.

Within Tanzania, coffee production is concentrated in the northern zone, the southern highlands zone, and the western lake zone. Mild Arabica, which constituted 64% in 2009/10 crop year, is grown in the northern and southern highland zones). Robusta is produced in the western parts of Tanzania and it accounts for about 33% of Tanzanian coffee. Hard Arabica accounted for just about 3 percent. The volcanic soil around the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro in

the northern zone is known for the production of high quality Colombian Mild Arabica coffee (TCB, 2012). The northern zone constitutes the regions of Kilimanjaro, Arusha, Manyara, and Tanga whereby Kilimanjaro contributes more than 70% of the total coffee produced in the zone. A large proportion of coffee is grown by a large number of smallholder farmers and most of them are organized into co-operative organizations (Mmari, 2012).

Tanzania's coffee industry is dominated by a two-tier co-operative system. Each village contains a *primary society* run by officers elected from the community. Primary societies are organized regionally under the umbrella of *co-operative unions*. Unions are responsible for financing, transporting, marketing and supervising the sale of coffee supplied by their primary societies. All the coffee produced has to be sold to the national coffee auction. Unions wishing to export directly had first to sell and then repurchase their coffee. The co-operative unions pay farmers an advance when their coffee is collected but the unions do not receive revenue until the coffee is sold at an auction (Parrish *et.al*, 2005).

In order to bring positive impacts to members, co-operatives should work close with their members in overcoming their challenges since globalization exposed coffee co-operatives to the hazards of both domestic and international free market competition. Kodama (2007) indicated that co-operative activities could play an effective role in supporting coffee farmers by supplying the price information, capital, and transportation that small-scale farmers often lack. Furthermore, a co-operative as a representative of smallholder coffee farmers can be a stronger negotiator than an individual farmer in the international market. Therefore, for the co-operatives to be sustainable and operate effectively, they must work closely with their members, develop all necessary internal capacity and ensure popular participation of members of various gender and age in co-operative related affairs. Youth involvement in co-operatives is essential and unavoidable in order to ensure the sustainability of AMCOS.

Too many young people are experiencing a dangerous mix of high unemployment, increased inactivity and precarious work as well as persistently high working poverty. The co-operative form of enterprise provides young people a means to create their own employment, find jobs with enterprises that often align themselves with their own values and participate as member-owners of enterprises where their voice is heard (ILO, 2012).

Co-operatives operate according to their principles that put people first, instead of the pursuit of profit at the centre of their business. The democratic nature of the co-operative organizations attracts participation, increase more ownership and promote youth empowerment. Therefore, young people may realize that the co-operative values and principles make co-operatives become more attractive to them both a means to create their own enterprises or as a potential employer who will provide them better works. The co-operative form of enterprise is an

option for young people as it has capital requirements, limited liability and in cases where members are also employees and the flexibility of self-employment.

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), (2011) indicated that there are some 500 million smallholder farms worldwide. These small farms produce about 80 percent of the food consumed in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Also IFAD, (2012) established that young people account for a large percentage of the rural population, and are often unemployed or underemployed despite the need for labour force in agriculture. Rural youth do not perceive agriculture as a remunerative or prestigious profession and until they find meaningful economic opportunities and attractive environments in rural areas, they will continue migrating to the cities. This has effects on food production and hinders effective productivity from rural agricultural co-operatives as a result widening and deepening rural poverty.

Fernando, (2012) indicated that youths aged 15-24 (1.2 billion) accounting for approximately 18% of the global population. Over half of them live in rural areas of developing countries. Up to 70% of the youth in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia live in rural areas, and over half of those in the labour force engage in agriculture. While agriculture remains a significant employer of young population in rural areas, manufacturing and services increasingly provide another outlet, especially in Asia. An estimated 93% of the jobs available to young people in developing countries are in the informal economy, where earnings are low, working conditions are unsafe, and there is little or no social protection. Lack of job prospects in rural areas force youths to migrate to urban centers or abroad. Migration has contributed to the steady decline of the proportion of rural youth from the 1950s to date with sharper decreases predicted for the future. Nevertheless, the absolute number of rural youth continues to grow, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In many developing countries, young farmers are ignored in policies and programmes. This is partly a result of weak farmers' organizations and co-operatives which often fail to represent their interests. As a result, rural youth including young farmers, tend to have lower aspirations than their urban peers. There is often a disconnection between youth's potential and their actual access to resources (FAO, 2012).

The essence of the co-operative approach to organization is that it 'enables individuals to become actively involved with others in solving their own problems and meeting their own needs. Taking the co-operative approach seriously demands meaningful participation by all members of the co-operative including youth. The young people must be empowered and enabled to emerge from the enveloping state of dependence. Young people must know, feel

and believe that they have some control over their situations in the sense of having ability to influence intentionally what happens to them and their community. Some of the limiting factors for effective youth participation in agricultural marketing co-operatives include among others land ownership patterns, coffee ownership which is dominated by parents and annual membership contribution.

Co-operative best practice implies that young people can and must contribute to their own development through the co-operative of which they form a part (McCarthy, 1999). Therefore, there is a need to empower youths so as to retain and attract them to join the agricultural co-operatives in rural areas. By so doing it will boost farm productivity, ensure food security, promote rural economies, reduce rural poverty and strength co-operative movement in general.

## **Research Objectives**

### ***Main Objective***

The main objective of this paper was to analyze factors hindering effective participation of youth in agricultural marketing co-operatives.

### ***Specific Objectives***

The above main objective was achieved through the following specific objectives:

- (i) To examine the operations of agricultural marketing co-operatives.
- (ii) To determine the pre-requisites for person to become a member of agricultural marketing co-operatives.
- (iii) To identify the socio-cultural factors hindering effective youths' participation in agricultural marketing co-operatives.
- (iv) To identify the economic factors hindering effective youth participation in agricultural marketing co-operatives.

## **Research Questions**

- (i) How the Agricultural Marketing Co-operative societies do operates?
- (ii) What are the pre-requisites for a person to become a member of agricultural marketing co-operative society?
- (iii) What are the socio-cultural factors hindering effective youth's participation in agricultural marketing co-operatives?
- (iv) What are the economic factors hindering youth participation in agricultural marketing co-operative?

### **Significance of the Study**

The effective involvement of the youths is very essential for the sustainability of the agricultural marketing co-operatives. These findings will contribute to the co-operative movement in various ways. The findings will enable the co-operative members, government and other stakeholders in the sector to be aware of various socio-cultural and economic factors hindering effective participation of youths in agricultural marketing co-operatives. Also the findings are expected to provide various strategies that may be adapted or modified for the purpose of empowering youth and enhancing their participation in AMCOS and other types of co-operatives.

Furthermore, the findings will contribute in influencing policy makers and other co-operative stakeholders to make intervention in policy reforms for matters relating to youth empowerment in the co-operative sector so as to make them active members and therefore attracted to join co-operative organizations for the best interests of meeting their socio-economic needs and aspirations and ensuring sustainability of AMCOS. In addition, the findings are expected to be useful for academic purposes for researchers and scholars dealing with the same or related issue.

### **Operationalization of the Study**

This paper is written based on the field experience which authors acquired from various agricultural marketing co-operatives (AMCOS) in Arusha and Moshi district councils. The multiple case study design was applied where the descriptions of various cases were done. The cases that were used in this study were Mweka Sungu, Mruwia and Njari in Uru North from Moshi district council and Engare Olmotony and Sokoni II AMCOS in Arusha district council. The paper has mostly applied the qualitative approach in describing various issues. In most cases, it has used secondary data and information. Secondary data were collected through desk review methods where references were made from various books, journals, reports and other online materials relating to the subject matter.

## **DISCUSSION**

This part contains the discussion about the operations of co-operatives and the pre-requisites for person to be members as well as socio-cultural factors and economic factors affecting youths' participation in agricultural marketing co-operatives.

### **The Operations of Agricultural and Marketing Co-operatives**

California Centre for Co-operatives Development (CCCD) (2015) describes that agricultural cooperatives are organized to help farmers gain market power by joining together to market

their crops, increase their bargaining power by achieving economies of scale, processing their commodity to add value, and/or to purchase supplies and services. Benefits and profits gained from the co-operative are distributed equitably to member-farmers.

The agricultural and marketing co-operatives have some unique characteristics that distinguish them from other types of businesses. They are owned by farmer-members, they are democratically controlled by the farmers who own and use the business, economic benefits are equally distributed to members on the basis of the member's use of the cooperative (more product then more economic gain) and they are designed to provide benefits to producer-members as users, not as investors.

Traditionally, many co-operatives were involved in three main areas of business: (1) purchase and sale of agricultural inputs and equipment; (2) purchase, storage and subsequent sale of agricultural commodities; and (3) transport services (Piesse *et al.*, 2003). However, the agricultural marketing co-operatives can also be used as cooperatives agents because it provide short- and medium-term credit to commercial farmers at subsidized interest rates to the people or areas that are poorly served. In some situations, the AMCOS have been used by the government to channel materials for disaster assistance to farmers and financial help (usually in form of debt consolidation). The agricultural co-operatives thus became financial intermediaries.

Prakash, (2000) provided that in rural areas, agricultural co-operatives have been playing significant roles by way of disbursement of farm credit, farm supplies, marketing and agro-processing. Although there are a large number of such co-operatives, their main functions largely remain confined to the distribution of credit, fertilizers and procurement of farm products for national food stocks. Marketing, agro-processing, warehousing activities are still weak. Their services to the members are inadequate. Many of the agricultural co-operatives largely remain blissfully content with implementing some of the government-sponsored programmes. Income by way of commissions and service charges received by the co-operatives often form a major portion of their working capital.

Similar issues were observed in the studied co-operatives in Arusha and Moshi districts. The agricultural marketing co-operatives were found to be dealing with collecting, sorting, processing, storing, packing as well as organizing auctions and marketing of members' products mainly coffee in both domestic and foreign markets. The co-operatives enable members to get place to keep their products and also enable members to secure better market. They also provide farm inputs to members like seedlings, seeds, fertilizers, and pest control products, members are able to obtain the best price on products. Also they offer services like providing farm credits, transportation of members' produce and provision of agricultural education.



### **Pre-requisites for a Person to Become a Member of Agricultural Marketing Co-operatives**

Coltrain *et al.*, (2000) indicated that traditional co-operatives commonly have low eligibility restrictions for membership. In general, agricultural marketing co-operatives require members to be producers or associations of producers. Some co-operatives require members to sign a marketing agreement stipulating certain conditions, such as growing or quality requirements, for membership.

The study by Nugussie, (2010) in Ethiopia found that most of agricultural co-operatives, (92%) of studied societies are with opened membership on the condition that the new entrants pay share-capital (the total amount of money which members contribute annually into the co-operative) and registration fee. The share-capital and registration fees vary among different agricultural co-operatives depending on the annual budget, future promise, capacity and strength of the co-operatives as well as numbers of members.

Based on the studies made on the agricultural and marketing co-operatives (AMCOS) in Arusha and Moshi districts, it was furthermore identified that for a person to be a co-operative member there are some requirements that he/she should meet. These qualifications for membership include; payment of membership fees, paying for minimum amount of share set (usually at least 5 shares with a value of about Tshs 500 to Tshs 1000 depending to the decision by specific co-operative), to be a person with the age of 18 years or above, must be mentally fit and have good behaviour. Also the prospective members must have a plot of land to grow coffee and be ready to sell it through the co-operatives, comply with co-operative by-laws and other regulations set aside.

However, Frederick, (1991) provided that although co-operative principles and some of the legal requirements based on them, suggest current patronage is required of all members, complete compliance with such a standard will usually be impractical. Farmer-members of agricultural co-operatives may find themselves unable to use their co-operatives perhaps for an entire business year because of crop failure, a decision not to produce or fail to produce due to sickness or disability.

### **The Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Youth Participation in Agricultural Marketing Co-operatives**

In this paper, the following are some of the identified socio-cultural factors affecting effective youths' participation in agricultural marketing co-operatives.

### ***Land ownership patterns Arusha and Moshi Rural districts***

The land ownership in Arusha and Moshi districts is being mostly influenced by the customary laws. People acquire land from their parents and grandparents. Furthermore, there is gender and age biasness in land ownership. For decades, men have been given more priority in owning land in Arusha and Moshi rural districts compared to women. This has then resulted into older men having access to land and grow coffee while women remained with no or little portions of land. Given the age biasness on who should be given land, youths are not given or inherit land unless they are married or when their parents die. Furthermore, female youths are more excluded to access land compared to male youths. Given the condition that to be a member of AMCOS, one should have land and grow coffee, it creates a barrier for youths to join and participate effectively in co-operatives since they do not own land.

Youth face specific constraints in joining a co-operative such as presence of demands like land ownership and the payment of membership fees of which youth often cannot meet. Youth, particularly young women typically do not own land and cannot pay membership fees (IFAD, 2012). In most cases, women (in agriculture) undertake most of the cultivation but do not own land. Women therefore, lack of access to or control over credit and assets and not targeted in technical training.

The study by MIJARC, FAO and IFAD (2012) found out that, approximately 52% of the young farmers who replied to the survey, mentioned access to land as the biggest challenge when they started farming. As a result from the survey, inheritance is still the most common system to obtain land in most developing countries. Land is usually passed on from father to son(s). For young women it is even more difficult to acquire land. Action Aid, (2010) reports that less than 2% of the available land worldwide is owned by the women. Many of these traditional customary laws deny women's rights to own land.

### ***Coffee Ownership is Male Biased***

It can generally be seen that the customary laws and rights of land ownership are also giving older men more rights and being perceived as owners of coffee. For example, during the field study to the AMCOS in Moshi rural co-operatives, the discussion with some leaders and ordinary members in Mruwia, Mweka Sungu, Uru and North Njari AMCOS, it was revealed that one of the key challenge for low youth involvement in their co-operative was due to the perception that coffee belongs to older parents (father and grandfathers) not youth and women. This has contributed much to youths' reluctance to engage in coffee production activities and even delay joining co-operatives as they feel gaining nothing from coffee farms and from being

co-operative members. Similar results were observed in Engare Olmotony and Sokon II AMCOS in Arusha district council.

### ***Poor Youth Representation and Inclusion in Co-Operative Affairs***

The presence of low youth participation is also caused by the way youth are presented and involved in the agricultural co-operatives. In most cases, youth in agricultural co-operatives are mostly less represented and being involved in the affairs of the co-operatives. The older men are the one holding various leadership positions and they are the major influencers and makers of most of the major decisions. The absence of enough young leaders, lack of trust on youths and their capacity by older members and exclusion of the existing young members in co-operatives are contributing much for the ineffective/low youth participation in agricultural co-operatives.

Although youth often form large percentage of the membership of mixed organizations, they are frequently not well represented and hence excluded from decision-making processes. Young people's limited participation within organizations also undermines their ability to participate (IFAD, 2012). Youth who have integrated into co-operatives face vertical mobility and representation barriers. Also Okwany, (2012) indicated older males are "gatekeepers" in cooperatives and lead to exclusion of women and blocked mobility of youth "wait hood". The youths are under-represented in co-operatives as most of them do not hold leadership positions in co-operatives. They are mostly being marginalized by older co-operative members.

### ***Social Inequality and Generational Difference between Youths and Older Member***

Social inequality is about the absence of equality between people of different ages and sex in various aspects of social life like decision making, access to services and opportunities in life. In the studied AMCOS, it was revealed that social inequality in terms of gender inequality and age-biased decision making within co-operatives are among other factors hindering effective youths' participation in co-operatives. Youths are in most cases being excluded from decision making process in co-operatives. Also as the situation facing the older women, female youth are less involved in co-operative decision making process. Furthermore, the existence of the age differences between youths and their counterparts' older members (mostly older male members) is leading to low level of co-operation between youths and the older members. On the other side, older members do not trust youth and are reluctant to integrate with youths in co-operatives (and farming activities).

United Nations, (2012) indicated the presence of generational division between the younger and older generations leading to difficulty in integration of youth into the co-operative

movement. The older generation perceives young people as their competitors or as lacking commitment. The findings in the final report of 2012 for the project jointly done by MIJARC, FAO and IFAD indicated that culture and traditions affect 'real' youth participation in farmers and rural organizations. Most societies in developing world are characterized by hierarchical relationships where youth are expected to obey and respect the older generations. African regional consultation meetings (RCM) participants stated that *'African culture makes youth fear the elderly and they are not free to express themselves. Within mixed organizations, there is poor interaction between generations because the elderly do not trust the youth'* and Asian RCM participants mentioned that *'Traditionally leadership is held by the elderly. Our culture prescribes loyalty to these elderly leaders'*.

Also, Majurin, (2010) indicated that the reasons for the persisting gender inequality are numerous and complex, but include among others factors, basic structural and socio-cultural issues beyond the control of the cooperative movement such as inequalities in access to resources, education and training, unequal division of labour and use of time between women and men as well as stereotyped conceptions on the roles of women.

### ***Lack of Interest and Inadequate Co-Operative Education among Youths***

Co-operative education is an important asset in attracting and maintaining membership but also in ensuring sustainability. The co-operative education is not well provided to the youths. Youths are lacking adequate understanding about co-operative organization including its meaning, its operations and most important the social and economic benefits of co-operative enterprises. This has even led to growth of negative perception and lack of interests about co-operatives among youths.

As UN, (2012) argued that younger people see co-operatives as outdated or do not perceive them as viable job options. The study by Rutta, (2012) showed that Young people both in urban and rural areas revealed that agriculture is the last career or job choice. For many people agriculture remains an old fashioned sector, a sector that cannot generate income for their living. Even those who wish to engage in agriculture would want to practice modern agriculture that use more of technical skills and less energy to produce.

### ***Limited Range of Services Provided by AMCOS***

The presence of un-diversified range of services within agricultural and marketing co-operatives (AMCOS) forms a challenge in attracting youths to join agricultural co-operatives. The AMCOS are mostly dealing with buying, transporting and marketing of the coffee as primary functions. However there are supplementary activities like supplying farm inputs and agro-credit but

usually these services are poorly provided. The absence or lack of good services to attract youths to join co-operatives affects their participation. For example, youths are mostly in need for credits, but the funds set for agricultural credits are usually inadequate to lend many youths to do their farming and off-farm activities. This also is seen in limited supply of farm inputs within co-operatives. All these are making youths prefer joining SACCOS rather than AMCOS due to credit access factor. Furthermore, lack of special services for youths is also discouraging for instance, lack of special youths fund, youth affairs unit and other special treatment to youths like leasing co-operative land and business rental buildings to youths.

### ***Unfavourable Production and Distribution Relations***

A sustainable and conducive relation of production is achieved if there is equality or fair in producing and sharing what have been produced among individuals, families or society. In coffee production, the relation of production and distribution is imbalanced, women and youths (girl and boys) do not own land and coffee but they are the one engaging fully in coffee production from preparing farms (digging pits), planting, weeding, picking, processing, drying and carrying coffee to the co-operative. Older men role starts mostly during selling of coffee where they actively intervene by taking the revenue from sales then decide how and when to give the share of income to family members or not to give the all.

Youths feel this as exploitation and not beneficial to them therefore they tend to concentrate with their own income generating activities, for example male youths engage in activities like motorbike transport (Boda boda) services, dairy farming and food crops production or migrate elsewhere including going to urban areas. This leads to fall in productivity and reluctance of youths to engage in coffee production and join co-operatives. As a result both older and young women work in coffee farms but cannot be co-operative members since they have no right to land they rarely becomes active co-operative members.

### ***Young Women Spending More Time in Family Chores***

In general, young women who are married are getting too occupied with family productive and reproductive roles. For example, they have to bear and take care of the children, produce food, fetch water and firewood, wash dishes, clothes and cooking. Even for the unmarried young women, they are involved in assisting doing these activities. As a result, many young women are getting less time to concentrate with co-operative affairs like attending meetings, voting, making decisions and contest for and hold leadership positions hence their participation is becoming passive.

This relates to Okweny, (2012) who indicated that woman's productive and reproductive roles are among barriers to active involvement of youths and women in co-operatives. Also UNIFEM, (2009) established that compared with rural men, rural women have greater workloads and time constraints in both productive and domestic activities. Also Karunakaran and Gebru, (2015) revealed that Women are supposed to confine themselves to the role of "homemakers" and thus they are unable to take an initiative to become the member of the cooperatives.

### ***Life Hardship and Rural-Urban Migration***

Presence of unfavourable environment to enable young people prospering in rural areas is leading to endless trend of rural-urban migration of youths in Arusha and Moshi districts. Youths suffer from unemployment, income poverty, inadequate or lack of capital and inadequate support to establish viable and sustainable business activities including agricultural-based activities. Furthermore, the failure of co-operative to set better environment to attract youths in rural areas and improve their living conditions have made impossible to control rural-urban migration. As a result co-operatives are experiencing low number of energetic young members. Youths feel that it is a better option going to urban areas rather than joining co-operatives as far as resource ownership and distribution are concerned.

Similarly, Fernando, (2012) established that every year rural areas lose a vital part of its workforce as young people (mostly in developing countries) who migrate to cities or move abroad in search of economic opportunities. Also Rutta, (2012) indicated that in Tanzania agriculture is the primary economic activity in rural areas, the ongoing migration of rural workforce to urban areas is a challenge to attract young people in agriculture. The main reasons for rural-urban migration have been poor performance and failure of the agriculture sector to generate incomes and improve lives of rural population.

### **The Economic Factors Affecting Youths' Participation in Agricultural Marketing Co-operatives**

The following are the economic factors identified to be affecting effective youths' participation in agricultural and marketing co-operatives.

#### ***Long Coffee Production Cycle***

Lack of patience for the time before they start benefiting from coffee limits youths' participation in agricultural co-operatives. It takes a long time for the peasants to start harvesting coffee after planting. Based on the kind coffee, it takes around 3 to 4 years for coffee to bear fruits (cherries) that can be picked and processed ready for sale. This has been a great challenge to many

youths who are not willing to sacrifice their efforts and money to care coffee for all these 3 to 4 years without seeing any monetary benefits. As a result, sometimes even if the youths are given land by parents or grandparents, they are not willing to grow coffee or even tend to uproot the existing coffee and plant banana and other commercial-food crops or construct living houses, rooms for business/rent and other fast and continuous income generating activities. All these have led to poor youths' participation in co-operatives and even delay or reluctance to join co-operatives.

### ***High Costs of Coffee Production***

Just like other cash crops, coffee production also involves a lot of costs that are to be incurred during production process. These include demand for money for buying seedlings, pesticides, processing and storage facilities and buying spraying pumps. Also peasants are needed to spend enough time in taking care of the coffee throughout their life span like weeding, spraying pesticides, picking and processing coffee and drying coffee before selling.

These high demands for time and funds for coffee production is challenging youths involvement since most of them cannot afford them especially due to unemployment, poverty and unstable income sources hence making difficult for youths to afford production costs. By making comparisons of costs and low profits from sales of coffee, youths are less attracted to engage in coffee production and join agricultural co-operatives even if they will be given farm to grow coffee.

### ***Price Fluctuations***

The volatility of the prices of coffee in both local and foreign markets is discouraging the younger members to join or commit more efforts to the agricultural co-operatives. For many years, the prices of coffee in the world market have been at lower levels to an extent that most of existing co-operators got severe discouraged to continue growing or take care of their coffee. Similarly, youths have been discouraged with the prices of coffee compared to the time, efforts and cost they must spend in production. This has made youths (especially young men) to put less or no efforts in boosting coffee productivity. With unstable prices, they feel that engaging in coffee production and joining co-operatives is wastage of time, funds and efforts.

### ***Limited Land Size Available for Coffee Production***

One of the main conditions of being the eligible AMCOS members dealing with coffee in Arusha and Moshi districts is to have the farm(s) with grown coffee in it. However, as the population pressure keeps on increasing, Moshi district is experiencing severe land shortage while the



demand for land keeps on increasing. The desire for some youths to join co-operatives is becoming limited with the absence of enough land to allow them grow coffee as the available land belongs to fathers and has to be shared among all family members. Therefore, even with high sensitization, still land remains a great challenge for most of families because of the customary laws in places.

### ***Expanding Economic/Income Generating Opportunities in Non Co-Operative Sectors***

Youths in both rural and urban areas have a lot of ambitions in their quest for better life. For the youths who decided to remain in the rural areas, diversifying their income sources has been one of their greater priorities in life. This is mainly shifting from crop production to non-farm activities or farming activities with good return of investments (profits). The growing interests in activities like motorbike transportation (Bodaboda), domestication of animals (like pigs, dairy cattle and goats), kiosks/shops, food crops (mostly onions, sweet pepper, carrots, onions etc) and poultry farming have made youths in rural areas to lose interests in coffee production and from join co-operatives. With the growing income potentials in most of these rural businesses, youths are assured for income within shorter period compared to engaging in coffee production.

### ***Free Riders' Effects***

Having access to the services provided by the co-operatives is one of the motives for a person to join a co-operative society. In co-operatives with large number of membership and for those doing activities relating to other done by majority in the society, then free-riding becomes common. It may be relevant to assume that if non-members can have access to co-operatives services, then it might be a reason for them feels no need to join co-operatives. This kind of free-riding was observed in Moshi rural agricultural co-operatives.

The youths are sometimes having coffee in their farms but they feel no need to be (active) co-operative members since they can have easy access to the co-operative services by selling their coffee through their parents and/or other relatives as far as they do not want to be more concerned with co-operative affairs. This limits the effective participation of youths in co-operative issues.

This relates to the study by Kodama, (2007) who found that in Ethiopia children of members claimed that they did not need to become independent members by paying the entry fee because they ship their coffee to co-operatives along with their fathers' coffee. The average age of nonmembers in areas where cooperatives are active was much younger, at 28 years old, than the average age of members, at 42 for the members. Resulting from the generational



difference between members and nonmembers, the size of the landholding of nonmembers was smaller, and thus the amount of coffee production was also less than that of members.

### **Negative Impacts of Low Youths' Participation in AMCOS**

If any agricultural and marketing co-operative is having low level youths participation in co-operative affairs, it may experience the following negative impacts.

1. Increased diversion of land use from coffee farming to other farming and non-farming activities as a coping strategy.
2. Decrease in coffee productivity and loss of manpower in agricultural co-operatives
3. Limited youths capacity to overcome various life challenges as they are staying in isolation without being organized in co-operatives
4. Uncertain sustainability of the co-operative movement in the district and national levels since in the near future, the co-operatives will have few younger members hence lack enough energetic members
5. If youths are scattered and not organized in co-operatives, it becomes very difficult for them to address different challenges facing them and cannot be easily mobilized to get or be given any government or donor assistance.

### **Benefits of Agricultural Marketing Co-operatives to Youths**

If the youths can join the agricultural and marketing co-operatives, there are number of benefits which can be obtained unlike when they are out or less involved in the co-operatives. These benefits may include the following:

#### ***Employment Opportunities***

The self-employment option is particularly important for young people to enter into the labour market when faced with problems of finding a first job due to lack of opportunities or lack of experience. Co-operatives can also formalize informal employment through collective voice and economies of scale and extension of social protection. In Africa entrepreneurs' cooperatives are showing signs of growth, with small and medium businesses whereby many of them are informal, come together to form a cooperative to share services.

#### ***Provision of Co-operative Education and Training***

In many countries across the world, co-operatives offer entrepreneurship training and education. This is useful in helping youths to develop their own viable and business enterprise while they continue engaging in the co-operatives activities.

### ***The Access to Co-operative Services***

Young people can benefit from accessible and affordable products and services that cooperatives offer for their members and the communities in which they operate, such as food and consumer retail, financial services, health and social care, housing, transport, communications, utilities, mobile phone and internet services. As members they also have the opportunity to influence the types of services available and terms on which they are offered (ILO, 2012).

### ***Social Protection***

The agricultural and marketing co-operative are socially protecting their members through solidarity schemes. Apart for helping to reduce poverty, they are enhancing social inclusion, social protection and community-building. As indicated by the United Nations, (2009), cooperatives and mutual benefit societies are substantial providers of social protection, especially health coverage, and they operate as voluntary community-based schemes. In some countries, they also participate in the management of compulsory health insurance or provide services through their networks of health and social facilities.

The AMCOS provide micro credits services to members to finance their activities and overcome (unexpected) social and economic shocks/calamities, they help materially, morally and financially in case of deaths and sickness in any member' households, overcome food insecurity through providing subsidized farm inputs as well as providing farming and nutritional education to members. Also AMCOS provide employments direct to members or assist them to be self employed. Wanyama *et al.*, (2008) argued that in various ways, cooperatives are increasingly protecting their members and the wider community against unexpected calamities that tend to disrupt livelihoods.

### **CONCLUSION**

In general, the involvement and empowerment of the youths is essential for the development and sustainability of a co-operative organization. This call for the establishment of deliberate efforts by the agricultural and marketing co-operatives (AMCOS) to empower youths in rural areas through promoting effective participation of youths so that they may become active members in their co-operatives and attain better living condition through a co-operative enterprise. As most rural youth do not foresee a prosperous future for themselves in the agricultural sector, being in a co-operative may be a wise step for them to be empowered to enhance their productivity and benefit from what they produce.

Furthermore, the social relation between youths and parents and older members need to be more improved and all socio-cultural barriers toward effective participation should be removed so that youths may see the need to commit their efforts, time and resources to engage in coffee productivity and become active members that will assure a better future of an agricultural and marketing co-operatives.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In order to address the about identified factors hindering effective youths participation and negative impacts of low youths participation, the following are recommended to be done;

### **Addressing Gender Inequality Concerns in Co-Operatives**

Co-operatives should become youth-sensitive, particularly in their representation, governance and overcome inequalities. Youth sections should be created within mixed co-operatives, and gender inequalities should be addressed to ensure the active participation of young women. Culture and traditions characterized by hierarchical relationships in which young people are expected to obey older community members also complicate youth's participation in cooperatives. Again, young women face additional challenges in having their voices heard (IFAD, 2012). Therefore, there is a need to ensure adequate representation of young people in cooperatives and their active participation in decision-making. The membership in cooperatives should be expanded and include young people, establishing youth structures within the organization, and promoting youth leadership in agricultural co-operatives. This may attract more youth to join co-operatives.

### **Encouraging Balanced Production-Distribution Relations among Household Members**

Overcoming inequality in production and distribution should be among the key areas of focus in creating a stable co-operative society. The co-operatives and other stakeholders in the sector should sensitize both members to co-operate in production and avoid exploitation among family members during selling of coffee. This will create fairness among youths to commit their efforts in their farms and co-operatives.

### **Financial and Material Support to Youths in Agricultural Co-Operatives**

Through supporting of the few youths available in co-operatives, may be used as a catalyst to attract young members and retain the existing one. The co-operatives should set more funds to help youths get access to agricultural credits, have a special youths' funds and enable youths to get access to various subsidized inputs like pesticides, processing and storage facilities and

other farm equipments to motivate them to do their farming activities, grow coffee and proceed being active members. This also may attract new youth members.

### **Sensitization Efforts to Stimulate Youths Participation in Agricultural Co-Operatives**

Because of the existing negative perceptions about co-operatives and lack of adequate co-operative education there is a need to sensitize youths in Moshi and Arusha districts, Tanzania and Africa in general on making youths understand the nature and uniqueness of co-operatives enterprises and the benefits of being in a co-operative society as well as their rights and obligations as members. The position and need for youths in co-operatives should be put clear.

### **External Stakeholders' Interventions**

The presence of young women and men farmer members represent a real asset for the future of the agricultural co-operatives in Tanzania and elsewhere. There is a need for various co-operative and agricultural stakeholders to establish specific programmes and policies aiming at empowering young women and men farmers at regional, national and local levels. However, for ensuring full implementation, such initiatives must be provided with adequate resources. FAO, (2012) indicated that in coordination with relevant stakeholders including young women and men farmers, governments can help to create enabling environments that strengthen the capacities of existing independent young farmers' organizations and facilitate the creation of new ones where they do not exist.

### **Expanding Activities That May Attract and Utilize Youths Potentials**

The experience shows that co-operatives are experiencing low youths participation since the youths are mostly interested with the business that generates income continuously. Therefore, there is a need for the co-operatives to diversify their economic activities that generate more income rather than relying only in coffee buying and selling. Business like establishing rental rooms for business, form transport unit in co-operatives and diversifying into dairy farming, food crop processing firms etc may attract more youths and even create youth employment.

### **Enhancing Youths Accessibility to Land**

Family land transfer to youths can be useful in enabling youths to get land. Through this system, the elderly transfer their land to younger family members while they are still alive. This may be useful to both parties since elderly often do not have the capacity any more to manage their lands in the most efficient way and youth are keen to have their own land and have better access to new farming techniques. Also the government must ensure the accessibility and

understanding of land policies and land laws by the youth while organizing sensitization programmes in rural areas. The rural youth are involved in designing, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of policies and laws related to agriculture. Also as proposed by Rutta, (2012), the government should develop suitable land reform policies which will recognize youth and allocate land for youth agricultural projects in urban and rural areas.

### **Mainstreaming of Youths in Co-Operatives**

There is a need to maintain the momentum for youth participation through national youth alliances and national conferences for the youth. The talk about cooperative and role of youths should go beyond the public speaking and encourage promoting intergenerational dialogue. The attitude change should be sensitized within co-operatives and intergenerational dialogue done instead of leaving separatism existing between youths and older male members. Finally, the initiatives need to be done to address structural and disturbing issues leading to youth marginalization in co-operatives hence open space for male and female youths' engagement.

### **Promote Strong Youth Representation and Inclusion in Co-Operative Affairs**

To ensure that their needs are addressed, mixed-age cooperatives need to raise the awareness of their members and put in place the right governance structures, such as youth committees and boards as well as encouraging the effective participation of young women and men farmers in their activities and decision making processes. Youths should be mentored to take up leadership roles in the co-operatives. The inclusion of youths is not a generational shift, but ensuring opportunities for meaningful collaborative participation.

### **Inclusion of Co-Operative Studies in Education Curriculum at all Education Levels**

In many countries cooperative issues are not included in school curricula, and so young people do not have the opportunity to learn about the form of enterprise during their studies. Existing mainstream entrepreneurship education and business support services also neglect the co-operative model (ILO, 2012).

### **Forming Youth-Only Co-Operatives**

Finally, if working with the older members is still a serious challenge in co-operatives, there is a need to form special kind of co-operatives that will be dealing with certain kind of business relevant for youths. The co-operatives for youths only may enable youths to be free to do their activities and make decisions without being interfered with older members. It will help youths to

determine their destiny and engage in activities that reflect most of their interests and potential for income generation.

### **State Intervention in Price and Markets Accessibility**

There is a need for the government of Tanzania to intervene in the coffee sector to regulate price of coffee in local markets so that producers may benefit from better prices. Also there is a need for the government to assist coffee co-operatives to find better markets outside the country to help producer have assured markets for their coffee. The presence of better prices and stable markets will act as a catalyst to attract youths to join and be active in coffee production and in their co-operative since they will realize the potentialities of the coffee production and co-operatives to their socio-economic livelihood.

### **Other Interventions/Strategies**

Furthermore, there is a need to encourage more youth involvement and retention in AMCOS, there is a need to invest more in coffee researches in order to produce coffee species that take shorter period before starting harvesting coffee, providing adequate subsidized farm inputs to enable youths to get cheap quality inputs for coffee production, improve rural environment to attract local investment in social and economic activities to generate opportunities for youths in rural areas.

### **FURTHER STUDIES**

This study was conducted to examine factors affecting the effectiveness youths' participation in Agricultural Marketing Co-operatives in Moshi and Arusha districts, Tanzania. Under normal circumstance, Tanzanian youths' participation is not only limited in agricultural marketing co-operative but also in other fields of production which impair the sustainability of general community economic production. Therefore, further study can be conducted in non-agricultural marketing co-operatives income generating activities so that comprehensive understanding can be attained with regard to youths' participation. This is important because some of the factors are not only limited in agricultural marketing co-operatives but are found also in other income generating activities within the societies.

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