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Assessment of Local People's Attitude Towards Participatory Forest Management: The Case of Wabe Forest in Cheha Woreda, Gurage Zone of SNNPs Region

A Senior Research Project Report

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ABSTRACT

In Ethiopia, full participation of local communities and indigenous people in Participatory Forest Management (PFM) was far from being reality. Society related issues were thought to challenge the Ethiopia forestry other than biological constraints mainly the non-participatory nature of development strategies. The study is aimed at assessing local people's attitude and perception towards participatory forest management in Wabe forest, located in Cheha Woreda, Gurage Zone in south western part of Ethiopia. Data were collected from different research participants including households and key informants. Sample households were collected through simple random selection method, and secondary data were also collated from secondary sources. Descriptive statistics was employed and statistical software SPSS Version 20 was used for data analysis. Results from the household survey confirmed local communities have the attitude that forest is a key source of local livelihood while its conservation and use was made possible because of the PFM where different actors including local communities take active role. Thus, the the PFM is perceived positively by the overwhelming majority of the respondents and its beneficial use so valuable. However, there remain a number of technical and institutional challenges encountered in sustainably managing these resources. Therefore, future forest management initiatives should engage the PFM approach in order to ensure the active participation of local communities and sustainable management of forest resources.

Keywords: attitude, forest management, perception, PFM,

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CWAO	Cheha Woreda Agriculture Office
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FDA	Forest Dwellers Association
FFS	Farmers' Field School
FOSA	Forest Outlook Studies in Africa
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NCS	National Conservation Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PADETS	Participatory Agricultural Demonstration and Extension Training System
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SNNPS	Southern Nations Nationalities and People's State

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Justification

Tropical forests are being destroyed at an alarming rate all over the world. More than 5 million ha per year are being converted in to poorly manage secondary vegetation (CIFOR, 2001). As a result, collaboration between different stakeholders is developing as a way to reduce forest degradation for which national governments throughout Latin America, Asia and Africa are shifting the responsibilities for managing natural Resource to municipal governments and community based organizations (CIFOR, 2001).

Forest resources in Ethiopia are important assets that communities depend upon for food, feed and income. The forest area in Ethiopia, which at one time might have covered as much as 35% of the country, has been continuously declining over time. By the 1950's this figure was reduced to an estimated 16% and by the early 1970's it was down to 4% of Ethiopia's land cover (Yitebitu *et al*, 2010). The forest resource in Ethiopia has significantly and steadily declined both in size and quality which has now been reduced to about 2.3% (EFAP, 1994). Part of the problem is attributed to the fact that in the past forests were managed by the government, excluding communities from participation and denying their use rights. To overcome or at least minimize the problem, the development actor's mainly NGO's introduced the concept of participatory forest management in Ethiopia about a decade ago (Irwin, 2004). However, participation remains a difficult term to define since it has been historically applied in different contexts that bear up on its current meaning (Nelson and Wright, 1995).

In Ethiopia, the involvement of local people in natural resource management activities can be traced back to the countrywide massive programs for natural resource conservation and rehabilitation that were initiated in response to the 1972/73 famine (Admassie, 2000). According to Admassie (2000), communities involvement in these programs, sometimes also referred as participation, is understood to be a contribution of labor and resources that often is arranged together with food-for-work or cash-for-work arrangements. Particularly, the involvement of people in soil and water conservation and afforestation programs was a top-down and coercive process which is far from voluntary participation. Thus, the efforts were not complemented with the necessary commitment and enthusiasm from the local people and were even met with resistance that ended with little beneficial outcome to show for the enormous investments made.

Admassie (2000) indicated that both the lack of appropriate local level institutions and the ineffective mode of the participation process failed to ensure successful implementation of community-based natural resource management programs. Local level organizations including Peasant Associations, despite their mandate to organize collective action and manage common goods, had no prior experience in collective natural resource management (common property management) and they were discredited in the eyes of their members due to their association with the socialist regime, where they served as instruments of unpopular rural programs. Owing to the large area under the PA's jurisdiction, there was a low level of shared sense of community that resulted in less effective collective action. Management of natural forests has been the task of the state, particularly following their designation as state forests by the 1975 proclamation that nationalized rural lands and forest resources. Following this nationalization, local people were legally prohibited from access to the traditional benefits they used to get from state forests. However, the enforcement of the state ownership was weak and inefficient (Bekele, 2003) because of its exclusion and lack of sense of ownership. Despite its draw backs, PFM remains one of the approaches to sustainably manage forest resources in many parts of Ethiopia including the central highlands of Ethiopia agro-ecological systems.

Cheha Woreda is one of the Woredas in Gurage zone in SNNPs regional state of Ethiopia. The Woreda is one of the districts where participatory forest management (PFM) initiative has been initiated as part of community-based PFM project. With increased involvement of local communities, the participatory approach attempted to pay attention to the needs and priorities of local communities. Over time, they have developed various ways of meeting their needs through production of timber and non-timber forest products for food, feed and income (Ensermu and Stoop, 2007). Due to a number of factors including population boom and subsequent demands for forest products, the natural resource is put under extreme pressure that caused a serious environmental, social and economic problem which led to deforestation and degradation. During the last decades, several factors including rapid population growth due to immigration related to settlement schemes and agricultural development projects resulted in increasing pressure on the forests.

Consequently, the degradation and sustainability concerns called for urgent need to pursue sustainable forest conservation and use in the Woreda including Wabe forest in particular and the Gurage highlands in general (Ensermu and Stoop, 2007). As a result, participatory forest

management approach was introduced to ensure the sustainable conservation and use of forest resources. Despite its introduction, little study has been conducted to assess the perception and attitude of the local people towards the PFM and draw information that improves PRM outcomes in the future. The aim of this study is therefore to examine local peoples' perception towards participatory forest management in Wabe forest.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

- To assess the perceptions of local peoples towards participatory forest management, and key challenges in pursuing PFM in Wabe forest

1.3. Significance of the Study

The information to be generated from this specific study will therefore help to fill the knowledge and information gap on how the local communities view PFM in Wabe forest. Further to that, the study results will help as inputs for decision making to improve the PFM outcomes by different actors such as local governments and NGOs in Wabe district in particular, and the forest ecosystems in Gurage highlands, in general.

1.4. Limitation of the Study

Different problems encountered this study at different stages of the research process though there impact was not considered significant. People's attitude towards supplying accurate information, the language barrier between researchers and local communities, and shortage of allocated time and lack of financial resources were major problems which put limitations on this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in Ethiopia

Participation has a range of meanings spanning disciplines as it has been historically applied in different contexts. Furthermore, the definition of the term can be far from its actual application in practice owing to ideological connotations or meanings given by people situated differently (Nelson and Wright, 1995). There are three main ways in which the term participation is used - as a cosmetic label (to keep up appearances), as a co-opting practice (to mobilize labor and reduce costs), and as an empowering process (Chambers, 1995). Nevertheless, it is evident that there is a major shift for various reasons among development practitioners from "things to people" such as recognition of the failures of top-down approaches, concern for cost-effectiveness, preoccupation with sustainability, the insight that involvement will increase incentives for commitment, and the ideological belief that poor people should be empowered (Chambers, 1995). The predominant concern of participatory development will therefore dictate the positions of the participants. (Nelson and Wright, 1995) identify four forms of participation in a rural development context: participation in decision making, implementation, benefit and evaluation.

The World Bank (1996) defined participation as "a process through which stakeholder's influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them." According to Nelson and Wright (1995), this definition was intended to exclude situations in which primary stakeholders are involved simply as passive recipients, informants or laborers in a development effort. It gives priority to getting communities to decide on their own needs and priorities (transformative) rather than getting people to buy into a project (instrumental). However, the prevailing practice of participation in most project contexts is criticized for emphasizing instrumentality and an excessive focus on techniques while failing to adequately address issues of power and control of information (Cleaver, 1999). In this regard, Khotari (2001) explains the failure of the commonly applied participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques to disclose and dislodge those forms of control and dominance that cannot be simply articulated in the direct and immediate relationship between participant and observer.

In Ethiopia, the involvement of local people in natural resource management activities can be traced back to the countrywide massive programs for natural resource conservation and rehabilitation that were initiated as a reaction to the 1972/73 famine (Admassie, 2000). According to Admassie (2000), communities "involvement in these programs, sometimes also referred as

participation, is understood to be a contribution of labor and resources that often is arranged together with food-for-work payments." Particularly, the involvement of people in soil and water conservation and afforestation programs was a top-down and coercive process. Thus, the efforts were not complemented with the necessary commitment and enthusiasm from the local people and were even met with resistance that ended with little outcome to show for the enormous investments made.

Admassie (2000) indicated both the lack of appropriate local level institutions and the ineffective mode of the participation process that failed to implement successful community based natural resource management. Local level organizations (Peasant Associations), despite their mandate to organize collective action and manage common goods, had no prior experience in natural resource management (common property management) and they were discredited in the eyes of their local members due to their association with the regime, where they served as instruments of unpopular rural programs. Owing to the large area under the PA's jurisdiction, there was a low level of shared sense of community that resulted in less effective collective action. Management of natural forests has been the task of the state, particularly following their designation as state forests by the 1975 proclamation that nationalized rural lands and forest resources in the country. Following this nationalization, local people were legally prohibited from access to the traditional benefits they used to get from state forests though the enforcement of the state ownership was weak and inefficient (Bekele, 2003).

The 1980 forest and wildlife conservation and development proclamation (Proclamation no. 192/1980) defined most of the natural forests as state forests. A government order further identified all forest areas above 80 hectare as state forests, although this was not recognized by local administrations as it was not issued as a legal regulation (Bendz, 1988). This has created uncertainty about ownership in most forest areas. The traditional or customary rights to forest use by local people therefore still loom large in real practice, creating a de facto legal pluralism and strengthening an open access situation with no or limited incentives for the sustainable use and management of forest resources (Bendz, 1988). The situation typically portrayed description of the conditions for the evolution of an open access situation in third world countries - the presence of heterogeneous claimants, high stakes in terms of livelihood security, a certain amount of state incapacity or illegitimacy, some degradation in local norm-based systems, and a degree of antagonism and overlap between legal and norm-based property arrangements (Fitzpatrick,

2006). This situation combined with the pressing need of local people for forest products and land for crop production and grazing precipitates an ever shrinking forest area and environmental degradation.

In Ethiopia, the PFM approach was initiated about a decade ago. In the past forests were managed by the government, excluding communities from participation and denying their use rights. Participatory management of natural resources has become a major subject of policy debates in Ethiopia in the recent past on a par with food security and rehabilitation of natural resources (Ensermu and Stoop, 2007). The participatory agenda was revived following the extensive destruction of conservation structures and deforestation activities during the change of government in the early 1990s. These incidents were conceived as manifestations of public discontent and the failure of the heavy-handed, top-down, and campaign style approaches to natural resources management.

As a result, discourses on the need to understand rural livelihoods, local contexts, and the need for consensual involvement of the community in development and conservation activities began to gain ground in the policy debate. Concurrently, the National Conservation Strategy (NCS) (1994) of Ethiopia widely acknowledged the need to integrate development with environmental protection and the importance of the participation of local population. The conservation strategy adopted a decentralized approach in developing the strategies that facilitated the consideration of ecological diversity and the integration of institutional and stakeholders conflicts in the use and management of natural resources (NCS, 1994).

As stated in the NCS, “If a conservation project is to be really participatory, the community has to feel, at least as much as the planning expert, that it has decided that conservation is its priority problem, and that it wants to undertake specified conservation measures, e.g. planting trees. In addition, two important aspects of participation are emphasized in the NCS - 1) it stresses an equal share of power in decision-making between local people and the government (experts) and, 2) the need to define the participating stakeholders based on their perception or view of forests as resources. Further, the decentralization processes started by the current government and the increasing emphasis on participation in the international development literature also have their impact in strengthening the participatory agenda (Nelson and Wright, 1995). As a result, participatory approaches proliferated in many development activities in the country - in land use planning, agricultural extension and training (Participatory Agricultural

Demonstration and Extension Training System) and in conservation and sustainable management of natural resources (Harrison, 2002).

SOS Sahel and FARM-Africa are the NGOs that pioneered the current participatory natural resource and forest management initiatives in Ethiopia. Participatory forest management (PFM) was used as an umbrella term to refer to the various systems that have been developed in different countries including community forest management, collaborative forest management, and joint forest management (Anders, 2000). Initiatives were also supported by other development agencies and NGOs including German Society for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). PFM projects have the overall objective of promoting sustainable management and conservation of forest ecosystems and improving the livelihoods of people living in or around these resources (IFMP, 2002).

The guideline developed by FARM-Africa describes the main principle of PFM as partnership based on shared goals and beliefs and a common understanding between the local community (user groups) and the government concerning the need for sustainable use, joint management and the requirements of the participatory arrangement (Anders, 2000). The PFM projects invariably share the idea of forest-dependent rural households and recognize the conflict between livelihood activities and the objectives of conservation. They also accept the moral and practical need to reconcile the two by integrating development and conservation activities (IFMP, 1999; Anders, 2000; JICA, 2003; PFMP, 2006). There was a strong optimism about the projects as promising initiatives to promote community participation in the management of forest resources in line with the conservation strategy of the country (EPA, 2003).

There are various intervention sites in Ethiopia where PFM was introduced with the intention of improved forest management outcome**.** Some of the major PFM intervention sites include - Bonga forests in Kaffa zone, Benj Maji forest in Bench Maji zone, and Wabe forest in Gurage zone in SNNP region (Ensurmu and stoop, 2007). In addition, Oromia National Regional State also has PFM intervention sites including the Adaba Dodola forest in west Arsi zone, Chilimo forest in west Shewa zone, Beleta Gera and Shebe Sombo forests in Borena and Guji zone, and Bale mountain forest in Bale zone. However, most government forestry efforts are still focused on the nurseries, seedling production and afforestation though natural forest clearance continues at an alarming rate (Irwin, 2004). Thus the introduction of PFM requires significant reorientation of the forestry sector.

2.2. Social Organization and PFM

Social organization of the community plays a central role in the management of natural resource including forests. Social organization is a systematic ordering of social relations by acts of choice and decision which is guided by priority or superiority made available by social structure (Chambers, 1995). The social organization maintains the systematic relation among members guarding against social disorder that exacerbate environmental degradation. The traditional use of natural resource was based on traditional values and institutions (Wond and Olijira, 2005). However, the attitude, concern and beliefs of different members of the local community towards forest are very different. The management is based on customary rules that identify rights and obligation of the individuals. Strict observance of beliefs can play a positive role in bringing about the orderly behavior of people which help in the conservation of the forest (Zewdie, 2007).

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. The Study Area

3.1.1. Location

The survey was conducted in Wabe forest in Karacha Kebele, Cheha Woreda in Gurage zone SNNP, Ethiopia. The study area is located 150 km Southwest of the capital Addis Ababa and 7km from Wolkite town which is the capital of Gurage administrative zone. Geographically, the study area is found between 10^0 33, 00" North latitude and 37^0 05, 30" East longitude.

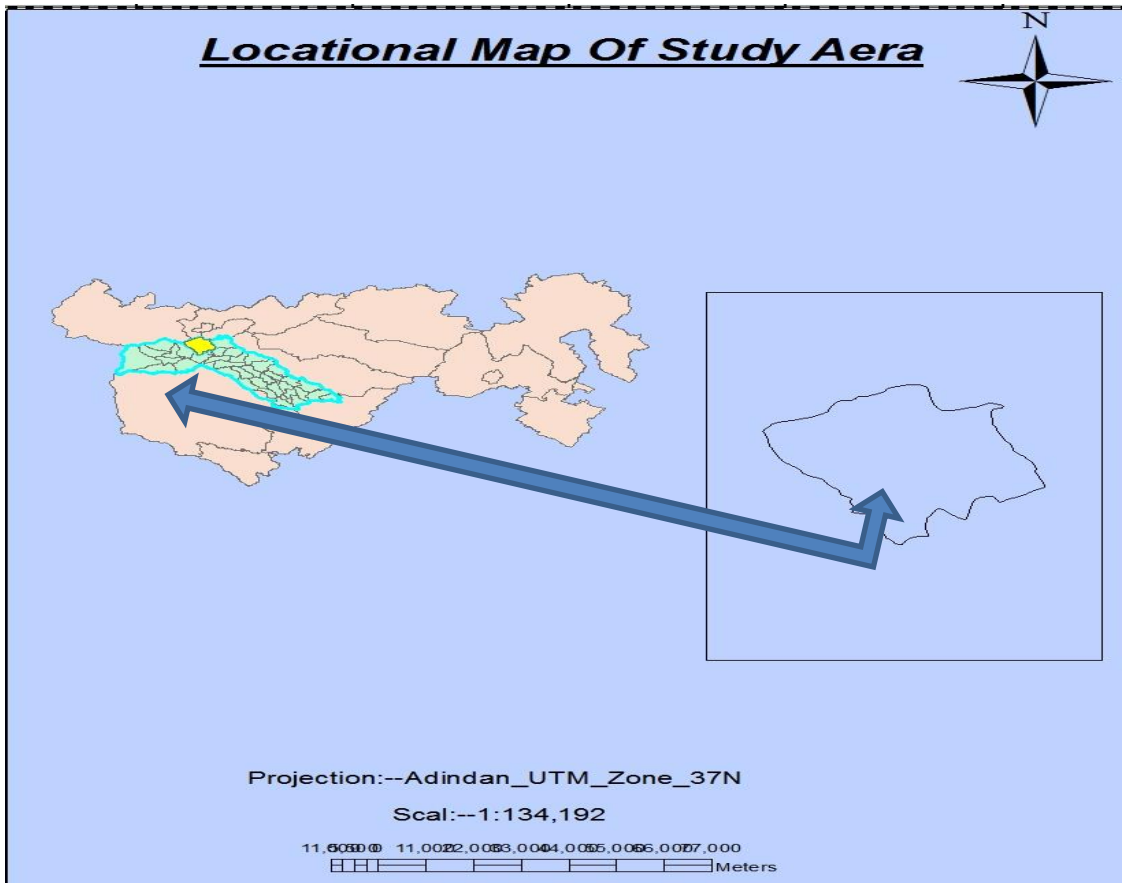


Figure 1. Map of the study area, Wabe forest in Cheha Woreda, Gurage zone

3.1.2. Population

The total population of Karacha Kebele is 3516 of which 1,725 are male and 1791 female. The Kebele has a total of 411 households with 319 male and 92 females headed households (CWAO Unpolished report, 2019).

3.1.3. Climate

The climate of the study area is Woinadega (Meteorology Agency, 2008), the climate of the Kebele ranges from Woyna Dega (45%) to Dega (45%) that influence the suitability for production of different crop species and forest related activities. The area has an average annual rainfall of 2000 mm with most of the rainfall in the study area coming from April to October (Cheha Woreda Unpublished report, 2019). The average annual temperature is 25 ^{o}C.

3.1.4. Soil

In the study area is endowed with different types of soil textural classes, such as sandy clay and silty. The soils have different colors (Black, Brown and Red) whereby the most dominant soil colors being red and black (Karacha kebele, Unpublished report)

3.1.5. Land use

Land use of the area is dominated by agriculture with both cultivation of crops and grazing land for livestock rearing. The most important crops produced in the study area are cereal crops which includes Teff and maize, and root crops like Enset. Local communities also grow different fruits including mango, avocado, banana and orange.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

3.2.1. Sampling and data collection

In the study area, because of time and financial resource constraints, we were limited to a sample size of 40 households to collect data in the study. A simple random sampling procedure was used to identify our research participant households and FGDs. The primary data was obtained through household interviews (40), focus group discussions (4) and field observation methods. We used a close-ended questionnaire prepared in Amharic language for the rural household interview to gather responses from the local people. For the FGDs we used an open ended questionnaire to collect their collective responses. In addition, we have had an informal discussion with other key stakeholders in PFM in the study area.

Preliminary survey was done before the onset of the formal research work. Informal discussion was carried out with them on the attitude and perceptions of local peoples towards PFM. With that information in mind we conducted field visit to verify the information acquired at office level. Further to that, we have had informal discussions with experts and subject matter specialists working in the area on issues related to the study such as historical trends, religions

and cultural experiences of people involved in the forest management system. In addition, personal observations were made to complement data collected through household interviews and FGDs.

3.2.2. Data analysis

The collected quantitative and qualitative data was checked, entered into statistical software and analyzed using descriptive statistics methods. Results were expressed interns of table, percentage and average values. The analyses were conducted using statistical software SPSS Version 20.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Households Socioeconomic Characteristics

Among the respondents, about 60% of the respondents are male while the rest 40% are female with an average age of the respondents to be about 34 years. The average family size in a household was about five persons with an average variation of 2 persons. Regarding the level of education, 47.5% of the respondents attended no formal education while 20% spent school years in formal education (Table 1). In terms of settlement, most of them are original settlements around the forest while some are newly settled communities. The average residency in the forest communities is about 20 years.

Table 1. Household socioeconomic characteristics of the research participants

Variables	Descriptive result	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	60
	Female	40
Age	Mean = 34 years; SD = 10.20	
Family size	Mean = 4.5 persons; SD = 1.769	
Education status of household	Religious Education	17.5
	Adult Education	10.0
	No formal Education	47.5
	Primary Education	10.0
	Secondary Education	7.5
	University Education	2.5
Length of duration of residence in the area (in years)	Mean = 19.90 years; SD = 12.146	

About 70% of the respondents were engaged in mixed crop-livestock farming while forest farming is an additional source of income. Despite the benefit of mixed crop-livestock farming, all of the respondents noted that they perceive forest benefits as crucial source of income while participatory forest management is a viable management approach. This is because the respondents get benefit and generate incomes from the forest in the form of fuel wood, fodder for their livestock, construction materials, fruit, charcoal, honey, coffee and timber. They also have

the view that forest management in the area is participatory as 85% of them responded that they actively take part in the management.

The respondents noted that the past forest management practices had several negative implications, including the degradation of the forest resource and inequitable use of the forest due to unequal access. Moreover, the forest in the past was used only by some individuals, and the local people did not have good impressions about the forest management and their control over the forest resource was also negligible. The majority of the respondents (83%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the existing forest management is via participatory approach (Table 2) while about 4% have the feeling that the management is not fully participatory which at times become a top-down approach. In this view, 70 % of the participants feel that local communities receive significant economic benefits from the forest resources. However, there were problems associated with the existing PFM system, including expansion of small-scale farming, livestock grazing/browsing, selective logging and encroachment by immigrating people and poaching of wildlife (Table 1).

Table 2. Households farm attributes in participatory forest management

Variables	**Descriptive result**	**Percentage (%)**
Main income source or Occupation type of household	Mixed farming	70
	Trade	22.5
	Forest use	2.5
Forest products as source of benefits to the local people due to PFM	Fruits	67.5
	Timber	17.5
	Firewood	70.0
	Charcoal	42.5
	Grass/Feed for livestock	42.5
	Honey	32.5
	Coffee	20.0
	Constriction material	25.0
Benefitting from PFM	Yes	70
	Unsure	22.5
	No	7.5
Forest management approach	Participatory	83.0
	Top down	4.5

	Mixed	4.0
Agreed that respondents had the responsibility to protect Forest resource	Yes	85.0
	Unsure	7.5
	No	7.5
Commonly used activity/methods to manage forest on the PFM	Tree planting	55.0
	Forest fire protection	87.5
	Silviculture	2.5
	Wild life management	40.5
	Forest Thinning	17.5
Knew that there was problem with the existing PFM system	Yes	70.0
	Unsure	12.5
	No	17.5
Kinds of problem in the existing PFM system	Expansion of Small scale farming	57.5
	Livestock grazing/browsing	42.5
	Selective logging	27.5
	Encroachment by immigrating people	7.5
	Poaching of wild life	52.5

The forest communities used different management techniques to conserve and use forest in the study area. Most of the respondents (87.5%) stated forest fire protection as a key management strategy while tree planting is the second most common strategy. In addition to this the respondents used tree planting (55%), wild life management (40.5%), and forest thinning (17.5%) as common household activities for forest management.

In addition, 83% of the respondents confirmed that PFM is beneficial in terms of ensuring benefits in the form of products and services. Firewood and fruits are by far the most common and beneficial forest products that complement local communities' income and contribute to subsistence livelihoods. Firewood is by far the primary and important source of household income whereby it is supplied to local markets while fruits are also used as food and source of household income from their sales. Additional benefits to the local people due to the presence of PFM includes source of medicinal plants, aesthetic and recreational value (Figure 2).

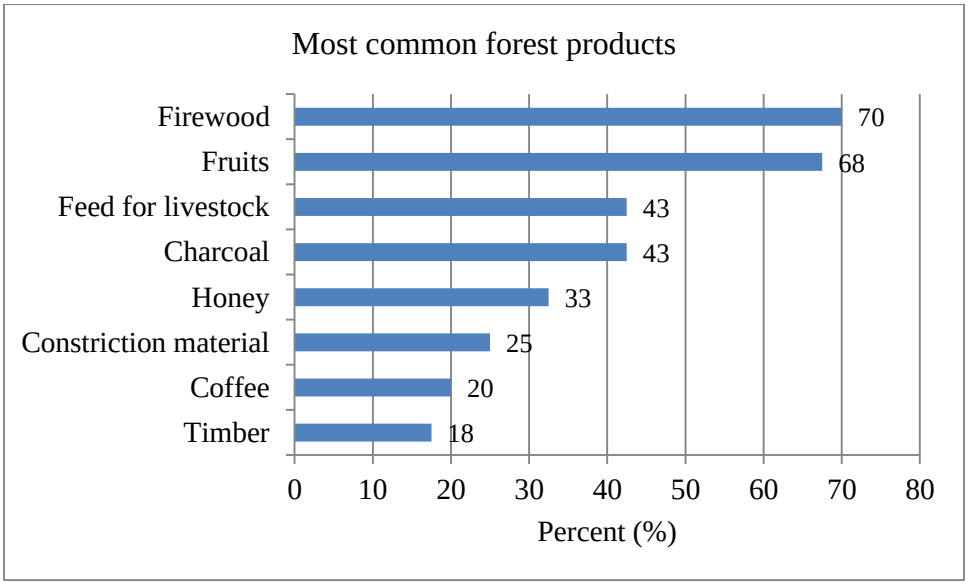


Figure 2. Most common forest products obtained by communities in the study area

4.2. Attitude of Different Actors Towards PFM

4.2.1. Respondents attitude towards PFM

As there are many people with different interests over natural resource in the study area, there are also multiple views and perceptions about the resource and its use/management. Some have negative attitude, other have positive attitude while the rest are neutral. The PFM in the study area was introduced in 1996 and the local people have different attitude and perception about forest management before and after the PFM is introduced. Different households said that before establishment of PFM we can use forest resource as open access resource with good but unsustainable income because of lack of knowledge. They mentioned that they even distract the forest resource with the aim of expanding agricultural land. But, after the PFM was introduced individual access to the forest is both regulated and limited while use of the forest resource is in a sustainable manner because local NGO'S like JICA helped to improve their awareness and understanding about the need to manage the forest in a participatory and sustainably manner while benefiting from the forest resource.

The local communities do not only have a positive attitude and perception towards the PFM but also negative views. They gave a reason that the forest resource is used as shelter for the wild life such as monkeys, apes and grivets which attacks domestic animals such as hens, sheep. The wildlife also attacks their crops such as maize which actually reduce their harvest and household farm income. Sometimes, their attacks can extend to children. Because of this reason some local people need to distract the forest because they consider forest as a home for these wild animals the PFM system does not allow them or prohibit them from taking individual actions. In addition to this, a few group of people think that destroying and converting the forest land to agricultural land could provide them more advantage and economic benefits as compared to their use of as forest products.

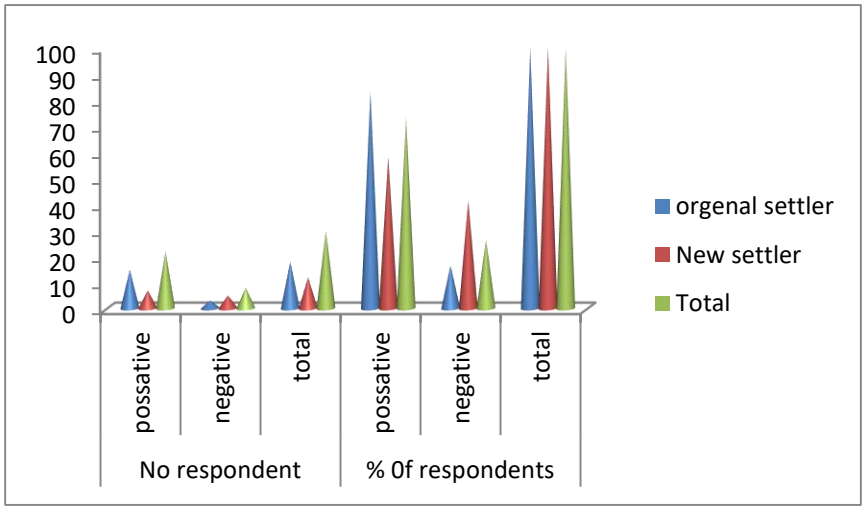


Figure 3. Attitude of respondents towards PFM according to their settlement time

The result shows that about 83.4% of the original settlers fully accepted the aim of PFM while the rest 16.4% had negative attitude to forest. These could be because of the fact that before the PFM individuals had unlimited access from the forest which actually caused a free-rider problem. Also from new settler about 58.4% accepted the PFM in positive manner and 41.6% negative attitude and perception to the forest. From focus group discussions, it was learnt that introduction of PFM has empowered that original settler community (Table 2). As it has been also presented in the Table 1, the attitude of the new settler is highly negative than the original settler. As key informants of new settler group explained, this is because of the perception that PFM approach

allowed equal access and use right of the resource compared with the original settler group. Without the PFM, the new settlers could have faced exclusion by the original settlers.

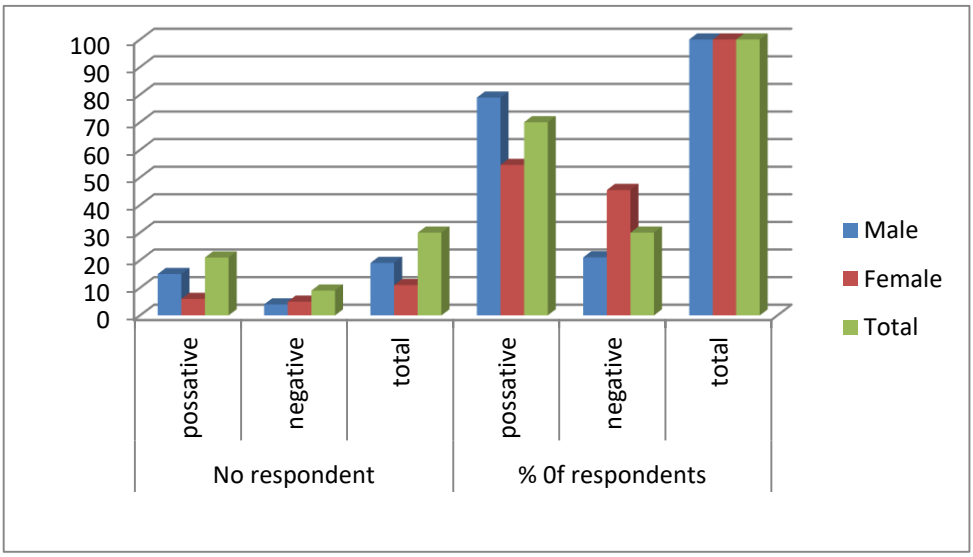


Figure 4. Attitude of respondents towards PFM according to their gender

According to above Table 2, the male and female respondents accepted 83.4% of male and16.6% of female respondents accepted the PFM in a positive manner. But disaggregated by gender, 58.4% of women and 41.4% men got negative attitude towards the forest, respectively. Thus more female respondents have negatively perceived PFM than male headed households. Women can benefit from PFM of the forest through harvesting NTFP's such as coffee, fuel wood and others because of this women's need to enhance the role of PFM. This also in turn underlined by local people's differences in perception towards interests in the forest. It seems true that in Ethiopia the government sometimes becomes reluctant to initiate participatory approach to serve large sum of money obtained from the sale of wood in the conservation forests (Elias, 20004). Men and women often have different perceptions towards the forests. Men might want to grow poles for cash income while females need production of fuel wood (Tesfaye, 1997).

4.2.2. The perception of local government towards PFM

According to our informal discussions with local government officials, in the past, official forest management practices that were protection, development and utilization of forest were carried out

by the state with little participation of the local community. The government used to own the forest without permission of the right to use by local communities. Despite lack of permission, the local communities which live in and around the forest had been clearing the forest land, especially for timber production and agricultural land expansion through shifting cultivation practices.

According to Woreda Department of Agriculture (WDoA) officials, in recent times, the government also perceived that in order to sustain the use of forest resource, introducing private ownership is part of the solution to reduce destruction of the resource. This was made in order to reduce the expansion of forest destruction by illegal users. According to the explanations of both Zone Rural Development Cooperation Department (ZRDCD) and WDoA the cure to reduce and minimize the destruction of forest resource is to engage the local community through PFM. Since, the current government desire is to conserve and manage the resource in partnership with all interested parties who need to use forest resource and manage the resource, PFM has become an increasingly viable alternative to government ownership of forest sites

4.2.3. NGO's attitude towards PFM

According to one of the NGOs JICA, which was found in the study area, has the view that as an NGO it can play a great role in natural resource conservation, especially forest in the study area and the country. It has the feeling that the sustainable use of forest can be achieved through ensuring that forest resources can create income and promote development to the local community. In this regard, JICA in partnership with the government introduced the PFM approach and the implementation process has been ongoing since 1996 in the study area. JICA believed that the PFM is better way for sharing of benefits and burdens among different forest community and user groups. Moreover, PFM is believed to contribute to building equitable and effective local governance ensuring the equitable distribution of benefits. The JICA creates the FFS and teach the local community on how they can increase or improve their production in the existing farm land in alternative to the forest production, which helped to minimize or reduce the forest distraction in the study area.

4.2.4. Extension workers' attitudes towards PFM

We also had consultations with local extension agents working on forest management in the study area. The extension workers, generally covering the study area, all of them believe that

PFM is a good management strategy or approach in their village among the forest community groups. There are many reasons why they adopted and implemented PFM approach in their working site. The most common reason is that the PFM program improves the quality of life of rural community by contributing towards their socio economic aspiration and strengthening their local organizations while ensuring sustainable management of forest resources. They have the perception that, PFM puts farmers and local communities at the center of the forest management and decision making thus providing them significant rights to control their own resource and engaging their active participation. On top of that, PFM utilizes traditional knowledge and promotes farmers-to-farmer exchange of participatory system thereby strengthening social organization and empowering rural communities.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusion

This study clearly indicates that there have been different attitudes of different actors including local people towards participatory forest management in Wabe forest. It was revealed from this study that PFM is perceived positively by the majority of local communities' settlement time and gender. The livelihood of the local people depends on the forest products such as timber and none timber products in addition to mixed crop-livestock agriculture. Many of the informants stated the importance of the forest for their livelihood by declaring that forest is an important source of income, while the PFM helped a lot in its sustainable management. This study also revealed that the forest communities in Wabe have strong relation and attachment with forest that helped them to develop their own conception of forest management. Forest is natural asset that the local people mange through their traditional or indigenous knowledge with support from the local government and NGOs. Generally, not only the local people, but also the governments and NGO's have a good attitude and perception towards PFM as it helped the income generation and sustainable management of forest resources in the area though more has to be done. Particularly, the NGO's can play a great role to improve or increase the productivity of the forest resource in the study area by creating awareness and raising understanding of the local people on how they conserve and use the forest resource thereby increase their production in conjunction with their engagement in the smallscale agriculture.

5.2. Recommendations

- This study has only touched some outstanding points though not in a much needed depth. Therefore, detail studies should be conducted in the future involving local people and other stakeholders which take into account the sociocultural frame work and economic condition of the local forest communities.
- The government should enhance the contribution of the PFM through raising local communities' knowledge and understanding on the need for sustainable management of forest resources through awareness creation, experience sharing and introducing NGO'S which work in natural resource conservation. It improves communication with local people more productive and helpful to pay attention to the needs and priorities of the local people.
- Nowadays, because of shortage of agricultural land in the study area, some segments of the local community have the desire to destroy the forest with the aim of expanding the

agricultural land. Therefore, the stakeholders or extension workers should enhance local peoples' knowledge and understanding on how they can improve their production and productivity in the already existing farmland through use of improved farming technologies and practices.

- In the study area, is the negative attitude towards the forest in relation to the wildlife management is one of the key problems such that the local government should work towards minimizing the negative impacts of wildlife on local livelihoods.

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7. APPENDEX

Questionnaire for Household Interview

A. General

1. Name of respondent: _____ _____

2. Gender: 1.Male 2. Female

3. How old are you? _____ (yrs)

4. What is your marital status? 1.Married 2.Single 3.Divorced 4.Widowed

5. What is your education status? 1.Religious education 2.Adult education 3.No formal education 4.Primary school (grade ____) 5.Secondary school (grade ____) 6.Senior secondary school (grade ____) 7.College diploma 8.University degree

6. What is your religious affiliation? 1.Muslim 2.Christian Orthodox 3.Christian protestant 4. Other, specify _____

7. What is your total family size? _____

8. How many years of approximate forest use experience do you have? _____

9. Are you involved in farming activities in addition to being a forest user?

a)Yes b)No

If yes, what is your private farm size?

a)Cultivated land b)Grazing land c)Tree planting d)Other, _____

B. Forest Management

Benefits

10. In what livelihood activity do you mainly depend on to earn income and food?

a)Farming b)Forest use c)Trade d)Family support e)Others, _____

11. What kind of forest products do you get from the PFM as member of the forest community?

a)Fruits b)Timber c)Firewood d) Charcoal e)Grass/Feed for livestock

f) Honey g)Coffee h)Inscence/Gums i)Bamboo j)Construction materials

i)Others, _____

12. What was the estimated Total annual income of the Household in 2017/2018 (2010 EC) production year from? ETB_____ ($US_____)

13. What was the estimated total annual farm income of the household in 2017/2018 (2010 EC) production year? ETB_____ ($US_____)

14. What was the estimated total annual income of the household in 2017/2018 (2010 EC) production year Forest use? ETB_____ ($US_____)

15. What do you think of your life will be in ten years from now as a forest user community?

1.Better off 2.Same 3.Worseoff 4.Difficult to predict

Perception

16. What do you think of the forest management approach system in your area?

a) Participatory b) Top-down c) Participatory but at times top-down

17. Are you happy being involved in participatory management of forests in your area?

a)Yes b)No

18. In your perception, are you significantly benefitting from PFM in your area?

a)Yes b)No c)Not sure

19. Are you a member of any Forest User group in your area?

a)Yes b)No c)Not sure

20. Do you think that you are responsible for the protection of forest resource?

a)Yes b)No c)Not sure

PFM Practices

21. What kinds of forest management activities are you engaged on the PFM in your area?

a) Tree planting b) Silviculture

b) Forest fire protection d) Wildlife management

e) Forest Thinning f) Others, _____

22. Do you think there is a problem with existing participatory forest management (PFM) system?

a)Yes b)No c)Not sure

7.1 If you say yes, what are problems?

a) Expansion of Small scale farming b)Livestock grazing/browsing

c) Selective logging
d) Encroachment by immigrating people
e) Poaching of wildlife
f) Others, _____

Checklist for the FGD

1. Have you ever used face to face contact with the community stakeholders on the issue of participatory forest management?

2. What does the community attitude and perception towards forest look like before and after PFM is established?

3. To what extent does community among deferent forest management institution from national to local people involve local community based organization (CBO)?

4. To what extent does the economic benefit from PFM approach compete with other alternatives land uses in the area?

5. Do you think that the existing PFM system in the area is inclusive of marginalized groups in the community like the women and the poor?

6. What are the levels of community's partnership and empowerment?

7. What do you think are the major constraints in the area in the application of PFM as a modern forest governance system, mainly in terms of the competing land use types and other socio-economic factors that would lead to the negative attitude and perception of the local communities towards PFM?

8. Who are the stakeholders of the project (PFM) in study area?

9. What are the roles of each stakeholder in the establishment of PFM?