

Determinants of smallholder farmers' engagement in non-farm activities in Damot Woyde Woreda of Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia

Asrat Worku¹ and Senapathy M²

Abstract: *Ethiopian Poverty has been deep rooted in the community that leads to unemployment, lack of income and lack of resource mobilization etc. All these challenges posed farmers to enter into the labor market. Therefore, non-farm activities provide different types of employment opportunities to the farmers to divert their minds to involve many sources of income. The main objectives of the study are to analyze the existing situation of the farmers on non-farm activities and to identify the determinants of non-farm activity participation in the Damot Woyde Woreda in Wolaita Zone, Southern Ethiopia. The primary data were collected from 140 farmers' households, out of which 80 farmers were involved in both farm and non-farm activities but the rest 60 respondents were involved in farm activities only. There were eight Independent variables included in the model of which five variables were found to be significant at less in a 10 percent probability level. The significant variables are age, education, credit use, distance from the road and distance from the market were found to be highly influencing the farmers' involvement in non-farm activities. Therefore, these factors have to be considered while planning of rural farm and non-farm activities by the policy makers to come up with project to implement for the farming community.*

Key words: Non-farm activities, farmers' engagement, smallholder farmer and Annual Income

Introduction

The farmers are predominantly following the agriculture as main source of income for their livelihood. They are depending upon the monopoly of income generating activities which is generated from the agriculture that may not be sufficient for their livelihood. It is highly recommended to have one more additional sources of income through non-farm employment activities according to their capacity as well as the resources available in the surrounding environment. The time has come out to find out the alternative sources of income generating activities to support the needy farmers and landless laborers. Ethiopia is one of the least developed countries in the world that facing a lot of problems at the ground level. Its per capita income is the lowest among the least developed countries and its reliance on agriculture is among the highest of the group (IMF, 2010).

It has been identified that many factors have affected the weak performance of agriculture in Ethiopia. The rigid policies, natural catastrophe like drought and environmental

¹ Dean, College of Agriculture, Wolaita Sodo University, SNNPR, Ethiopia, East Africa.
Email: asishw268@gmail.com

² Associate Professor, Department of Rural Development and Agricultural Extension, College of Agriculture, Wolaita Sodo University, SNNPR, Ethiopia, East Africa.

Corresponding author: Senapathy can be contacted at: drsenapathy@gmail.com
Any remaining errors or omissions rest solely with the author(s) of this paper.