Assessment of Factors Affecting Members’ Participation in Fishery Cooperatives
(The Case of Gambella Region, Ethiopia)

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Abstract
This research was conducted in Gambella region, Ethiopia, to assess the factors affecting members’ participation in fishery cooperatives in the region. To address the objectives of the research; both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used to collect the data from primary and secondary sources using semi-structured questionnaires, focus group discussion and review of relevant literatures. The researchers used a two-stage sampling procedures in which Gambella was selected purposively and then, simple random sampling technique applied to select the sample respondents in proportion to size. To analyze both quantitative and qualitative data, simple descriptive statistical tools (frequency, percentage, mean, and std. deviation) documents analysis, focus group discussion and binary logistic regression were used. By setting the statistical significance at $\alpha \leq 0.05$, the result of binary logistic regression model applied reveal that awareness, access to training, market, credit and leadership skills are significant at 1% and 5% confidence levels. Therefore, the overall findings of this study show that the major factors affecting the participation of members in fishery cooperatives organized in Gambella, Ethiopia are lack of feasibility study, poor awareness about cooperative principles and values, inadequate access to training, inadequate markets, poor credit systems, incapable leaders, lack of audit and inspection, seasonal change and conflicts.

Keywords: Factors, Fishery cooperatives, Gambella region, Members, Participation.

Introduction
Background of the Study
Millions of individuals in many countries all over the world get their sources of income and livelihood from fish sector. The most recent estimates indicated that in 2010, 54.8 million people engaged in the primary sector of captured fisheries. Above 87% of all people employed in the fisheries sector in the same year were in Asia, followed by more than 7% in Africa and 3.6% in both Latin America and the Caribbean. Around 16.6 million (30%) of all people working in the fisheries sector participated in fish farming, and majority of them concentrated in Asia (97%), followed by Latin America (1.5%), and Africa (1%) (Isolina et al, 2013).

In developing countries like Ethiopia, cooperative formation is a strategic intervention by governments in order to promote farmers participation in the supply chain; and are helpful in overcoming access barriers to assets, information, services, inputs and output markets (Clegg, 2006).

Ethiopia is a landlocked agriculture based country, which depends on the inland waters for the supply of fish resources. Its agricultural activities include crop farming, livestock rearing, beekeeping and fishing. It has various lakes and rivers with large quantity of fish supply.

According to Abdurrahman (2002), the total area of the lakes and reservoirs ranges from 7000-8000 km² and the main rivers extend above 7000 km in the country.

The country has the potential to produce over 51,500 tons of fish per annum. However, their exploitation and their contributions to food security and growth in the country are very less despite the technologies capable of resolving the problems of fisheries production (Dayan dan, 2014).

There are differences in farming system among the ethnic groups depending on culture, geo-climatic conditions and settlement pattern. In Gambella National Regional State, the projected fish production potentials from rivers alone are found to be 3,720 tons per year. But the recent reported annual production of fish in the region is about 380 tons per year whereby much of the production is from the floodplain areas including Lake Tata, Alwero dam, reservoirs and ponds. And still the current level of production is under the estimated maximum sustainable yield, which is less than 1% of its potential (Hussien et al 2010).

Intervention to trim down these problems of fish production may be realized through organizing members based fishery cooperatives in the region. Cooperatives in the fisheries sector are ways of maximizing long-term community benefits to deal with threats of fisheries misma-
mangement, livelihood insecurity and poverty-harsh realities for many of the world’s small-scale fisheries. As cited in Ostron (1990), communities with successful community based organizations are better compared with those without.

Fishery cooperatives played a significant role in helping small-scale farmers to cope with competitive and fluctuating market and high transaction cost to develop their communities and have the potential to empower small-scale fishers against environmental and socio-economic shocks. They can: a) increases fishers’ price negotiating power with market intermediaries, help stabilize markets and improve post-harvest practices and facilities, b) increase market competition by setting up auctioning systems, c) use their greater negotiating power to make cost-saving bulk purchases of fishing gears, equipment and d) facilitate micro-credit schemes for fishers to reduce their dependency on intermediaries and give them greater freedom in selecting buyers (Clegg, 2006; FAO, 2009).

According to Deacon (2012), fishery cooperative defined as a group of cooperatives’ members who are joined voluntarily to participate in catching fishes or supplying fishes from fish farmers. Cooperatives, as business entities and as self-help associations, play a significant role in improving the socio-economic situations of the members and the communities (Ochan, 2014). The current status of cooperatives in the country shows that there are 64,126 primary cooperatives with 10.4 million members. From these 64,126 primary cooperatives, 668 are cooperative societies organized in Gambella region of which only 15 of them are fishery cooperatives with 318 members (FCA, 2015). According to the annual report of the FCA (2015), membership contribution of all cooperatives in Gambella and fishery cooperatives in particular are below 1.05% and 0.5% compared to national status of cooperatives. These percentages show that there is a poor participation of local communities to join fishery cooperatives membership due to poor performance of the regional cooperative promotion agency and inadequate studies carried out to identify the problems of fishery cooperatives.

Therefore, this research is designed to assess the problems of members’ participation in fishery cooperatives organized in the entire region.

Research Objectives
General objective; The general objective of this research is to study factors affecting members’ participation in fishery cooperatives in Gambella Region, Ethiopia.

Specific objectives
a) To assess the current status of fishery cooperatives in the region.
b) To identify the factors that influence members’ participation in fishery cooperatives.
c) To investigate the extent of members’ participation in fishery cooperatives.

Research Questions
a) What is the current status of fishery cooperatives in the region?
b) What are the factors that influence members’ participation in fishery cooperatives?
c) What is the extent of members’ participation in their cooperatives?

Significance of the Study
Cooperatives are community-based organizations play an increasingly important role worldwide in poverty reduction, making employment opportunities, economic growth and social change (Gibson, 2005).

As far as this study is concerned, it will be important and used as an input for decision makers, Cooperative Promotion Agency to understand the status of cooperatives they have organized, members of fishery cooperatives to identify their problems, Non Governmental Organizations which participate in supporting self-help groups and it will be used as a reference for other researchers as secondary data for further studies.

Scope and Delimitation of the Research
This research conducted only on fishery cooperatives established in Gambella Region, Ethiopia. Regarding areas of the study, it delimited to cover all districts of Gambella region where fishery cooperatives are found to assess the factors affecting their members’ participation and the current status of members and cooperatives.

Literature Review
Basic Concepts of participation
Cooperatives have long been recognized to play important roles in society to improve the living conditions of their members, particularly the low income earning portion of the society, as well as the entire population. Cooperative societies being voluntary, democratic and self-controlled business enterprises, offer the organizational framework through which nearby communities gain control over the productive activities from which they derive their livelihoods (Oftein, 2005). Participating members tap the energies of group effort and economies of scale to undertake economic activities which they would not have otherwise been able to carry out on their own, thereby boosting their chances to get better living conditions. It is for this reason that cooperatives continue to be promoted in many developing countries around the world.
Participation is a process by which members influence the direction, scope and operations as well as activities of their cooperatives. According to ICA (1995), cooperation is a form of organization where individuals come together as human beings to meet their economic, social and cultural needs. They are expected to supply essential goods on one hand and services on the other hand, as close to cost as possible. Other than the provision of economic services in terms of cheap availability of goods to the community, the cooperatives are conceived as social organizations which educate the people in economic management (Selvaraj R. 2000).

According to Vishwanathan (1994), participation is a process that makes member participates in the economic activity and in making decision. Participation in decision making is the only means to make them realize that they are the owners of the organization.

Participation is a generic term covering a broad range of activities ranging from one-shot problem identification exercise to continuing association in which rural communities and individual farm families play more active role (Chowdhry and Gilbert, 1996).

As cited in Surendran (2000), participation is a process in which two or more teams influence one another in making certain plans, policies, and decisions.

Members’ Participation
Participation is an important indicator in improving farmers’ understanding of their cooperative’s organization. Member's participation is the act of taking part in any activity of the society by all members of the society. According to Selvaraj (2000), for effective functioning of the cooperative movement, enlightened members are the pole of the cooperative. These are members who are well-informed about cooperatives and their values and philosophy. These members will make themselves aware of the problems and have the willingness to contribute to the progress of the cooperatives. Such membership ensures the participation of member in the business and managerial concerns of the cooperatives. Vigilant members prevent financial irregularities and the occurrence of special interest in cooperatives.

As cited in Gnigwo (2010), ignorant, sleepy, inactive and indifferent members become a problem in their cooperatives as compared to enlightened members. They are prone to exploitation by the convert elements in the society. In more practical terms, members’ participation is viewed in terms of participation in management, decision making and control, in business activities and in capital (Vishwanathan, 2000). But with the increasing size of the primary cooperatives and emergence of vertical structures, making decision is slowly shifting away from the base level units.

Osterberg and Nilson (2009) stated that there was significantly higher member disloyalty, when members were dissatisfied with the management of their cooperative.

According to Borgen (2001), members were seen to be highly devoted to decisions in which they have participated actively rather than decisions which were forced on them. The more members participate in their cooperatives, the more they will be dedicated to their cooperative and grow it.

Types of Participation
According to Pimbert and Pretty (1997) as cited in Gignwo (2010), participation is classified into seven types. They are:

a) **Passive Participation**: People take part by being told what is going to happen.
b) **Participation in giving information**: People participate by answering questions posed by extractive research and project managers.
c) **Participation by consultation**: People participate by being consulted, and external agents listen to their views. The external agents define both problems and solutions.
d) **Participation for material incentives**: People participate by offering resources. For instance labor, in return for food, cash or other material incentives.
e) **Functional participation**: People participate by creating groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project that can involve the development of social organization externally initiated.
f) **Interactive participation**: People participate in groups which lead them to action plans and the formation of new local groups or the strengthening of existing ones.
g) **Self- mobilization**: People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems.

Overview of Fishery Cooperatives in Ethiopia
Fishery cooperative societies have huge potential to support in dealing with problems that occur in the fishery sector (Franquesa, 2004; Ünal et al., 2009a) and can be the backbone assisting rational management. But, only successfully run cooperatives can play important roles. A successful cooperative is able to persuade its members to linger in the organization as well as to recruit new members and thus continuously maximize its membership ratio. This ratio relies on increasing members' expectations and qualities of services and is thus an essential indicator of cooperative sectors abilities. An increases
membership ratio shows that many members are satisfied with the cooperatives. The decision to become a member is usually depend on the expectation that the membership benefits will exceed the costs (Ünal and Yercan, 2006).

The Ethiopian government made efforts in 1994 to promote new generation cooperatives which distinct from their ancestors that were established under previous regimes. These new forms of cooperatives should depend on the members’ choice to establish, ability to highly participate in the free market and free of government interference in their internal affairs (Proclamation No. 85/1994). For instance, Ethiopia’s Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program strives to organize, strengthen and diversify independent cooperatives to offer improved marketing services and serve as a link between small farmers and other non-farmers private business sectors (Bernard et al, 2013).

Fish as a source of human diet has a long history in Ethiopia. Artisanal fishery is one of the most significant economic activities in Ethiopia (FAO, 2012). Improvements in fishery sector would reduce poverty and sustain the development in Ethiopia.

According to FCA (2013), there were 46 fishery cooperatives in a country with total members of 3125 (2962 Males and 163 Females). Of these 46 fishery cooperatives, 8 were found in Gambella region with membership of 207 (145 Males and 62 Females). Currently, there are 15 fishery cooperatives with only 318 members in Gambella region.

Fishing in the region is mainly artisanal. According to Hussien et al (2010), most fish caught is used for family consumption whereas a small amount is sold at a local market to obtain additional cash income. Thousands of people who live near water meet more of their animal protein requirements resulted from fish consumption. Fishery is practiced in a traditional way and tools as past time activity. Riverine fishing is seasonal and the supply of fish is mostly available during dry season (November to May), however, rare fishers catch fish during the wet season (June – October). The importance of fishing in terms of economics, food security and employment opportunity is enormous. However, the current available fish resource is not fully utilized to benefit the local people due to several factors (ibid).

As cited by Assefa (2013), people use to eat large amount of fish in fasting period whereas the domestic market for fish is very small. The reasons which account for this low level of local fish consumption are the following; (i) Fish was not integrated into the diet of many people, (ii) because of religious influences on consumption programs, fish demand is only seasonal and (iii) the other factors that contribute to the low consumption level are inadequate supply of fish product and its high price.

There is a difference in the system of farming among the ethnic groups depending on cultural and geo-climatic conditions and settlement pattern. The great majority of the population practices the riverside cultivation along the banks of the major rivers in the region - Baro (Openo), Gilo, Alwero and Akobo Rivers (Hussein et al, 2010).

**Factors Affecting Members’ Participation in Fishery Cooperatives**

Clark (1991), recognized the elements essential for securing active participation of farmers’ groups such as: (a) small homogenous group, (b) supplementary income generation activities, (c) institutional credit, (d) group promoters (e) training to group members, (f) group savings, (g) ready access to extension service, (h) participatory monitoring and evaluation and (i) group self-reliance. He also noted the indicators of self-reliance of farmers’ groups as; (i) regulatory of group meetings and level of attendance, (ii) shared leadership and member participation in group decision making, (iii) continuous growth in group savings, (iv) high rates of loans repayment, (v) group problem solving, and (vi) effective link with extension and other development services. Mukherjee (1997) observed that the level of participation tends to fluctuate with passage of time. Sometimes it remains at a low key and then takes off and dissipates.

While on other occasions, there emerges a high level community participation which slowly moderates itself and becomes steady. Rehman and Rehman (1998) found out the factors which determine the nature of participation of the people in development programs such as: (1) the willingness to participate; (2) the desirability to participate; (3) the representative nature of participants in the local bodies in terms of society as a whole or classes and castes; (4) the asset distribution pattern among the participants and the resultant dynamics in inter-relationships; and (5) the conflict of interests between the stakeholders and direct beneficiaries of the development program.

Factors affecting members’ participation classified in to internal and external factors. The key external factors influencing the organizational effectiveness include: (1) the level of development of marketing and transportation infrastructure; (2) the level of development of other sectors in the economy; (3) coherence between government policies and association’s goals; (4) natural endowment of the area; (5) an appropriate degree of professionalism among staff; (6) participatory management style; and (7) organizational channels of communication between members, staff and management (Berahne, 2008).
Cheney (1995) identified wage solidarity, cultural transformation, competition and expansion, centralization and reorganization, and program to increase productivity and participation as the five challenges facing cooperatives. In addition to the above factors that mentioned, below are some of the factors that may affect members' participation in fishery cooperatives which could be either internal or external factors.

**Awareness about cooperatives:** Awareness is an important indicator of cooperation that can play a substantial role in cooperatives by doing things according the knowledge that is built about cooperatives through its principles and values (Gnigwo, 2010). It is through the principle of education, training and information that awareness could be created to develop a sense of responsibility and an ability of members to take right decisions and to prepare them to exercise their rights and responsibilities and be vigilant to be active participant in their cooperative (Krishnaswami and Kulandaiswamy, 2000).

**Access to training:** Training as one of the functions of human resource management and as a principle of cooperatives, defined as the systematic way of developing skills, knowledge and attitudes demanded by an individual to perform tasks given on the job (Armstrong, 2006). According to Gordon (1992), training defined as the planned and systematic modification of behavior, events, activities and programs through learning which result in the participants achieving the levels of knowledge and skills to perform their work effectively.

Every cooperative has a purpose of acquiring and improving knowledge, skills and attitudes toward work related tasks through training. It aims at upgrading members’ skills in anticipation of achieving objectives and goals of their society. Training brings various benefits to individual members as well as the society. According to Cole (2010, as cited in Nassazi, 2013), benefit of training summarize as follow:

a) **High morale:** Employees who obtain training have raised confidence and motivation.

b) **Lower production cost:** Training eradicates risks when trained personnel are able to make better and economic use of materials and equipments thereby reducing and avoiding waste.

c) **Lower turnover:** Training brings a sense of security at the workplace which in turn reduces labor turnover and avoid absenteeism.

d) **Change management:** Training helps to manage change by increasing the understanding and the involvement of employees in the change process and imparts the skills and abilities required to adapt to new situations.

e) **Provide recognition,** enhanced responsibility and the possibility of increased pay and promotion, and

f) **Helps to improve the availability and quality of staff.**

As cited in Ahammad (2013), lack or poor training brings out high employees turnover and the delivery of substandard product and services. The study conducted in Gog Woreda of Gambella region in 2014, revealed that 86.5% of the respondents from agricultural cooperatives did not get training that resulted in poor performance and inactive participation Ochan (2015).

**Leadership skills:** In a world of business, global leadership effectiveness becomes a major issue (Harteis, 2012). According to Punnett (2004), leadership is a key component of all organizations but its function and capacity get more complicated with the highest involvement in globalization and technology development. In a competitive business, a sustainable advantage of business depends on the skills and abilities of a leader who could manage and implement business strategies (Okoro, 2012).

Different authors have tried to define leadership differently and the factors that may affect leadership. Yokl (2010) defined leadership as the ability of individual to persuade, inspire and empower others to make contribution toward the effectiveness and success of the organization. Northhouse, (2013) and Yokl, (2010) described leadership as a process whereby a person influences other individuals to accomplish common group goals. Leadership plays a significant role in persuading the direction of an organization. Leaders are meant to initiate and promote the policies which the organizations manage (Fulton, 2001).

In cooperative, leadership involves a process of reaching an agreement through a group’s decisions. Internal leadership is very crucial in applying policies and tasks which constantly enhance the operations of the cooperatives. A cooperative, although being a democratic organization fails to adopt the most efficient policies for its members. According to Fulton (2001), leadership problems occur when the cooperative fails to opt for the leader that recommended the most effective policy for the organization and where effective policy for the organization is defined in terms of what is best for the members. This would lead to poor performance and the cooperative, in this case, is more likely to be pushed out of the market, by other more efficient organizations or players. This would call for the election of visionary leaders and a transparent election process, without candidates getting votes by manipulation. Strong leaders will help members to make decisions, based on their values and it should be able to balance the internal and external tensions, in order to create and empower enduring groups. Therefore,
competent leaders have to be able to involve the groups in an efficient communication process to ensure members express their views.

**Decision making ability:** Participation in decision making is a social and emotional involvement of person in a group situation which encourages him/her to provide group specific goals and allocate responsibility in a group activity (Berhane, 2008). Decision making is very essential for the activities of cooperative where every task to be done must be decided by the general assembly of the cooperative. Ochan (2015) in his study, observed that 61% of the respondents never participate in the decision making of setting objectives, preparation of by-laws and annual plan of their cooperatives because of less educational background and lack of awareness about cooperative’s principles and values.

Karli et al (2006) found that the decision making of members in their cooperatives is determined by the level of education, communication, income, farm size and the level of technology they may use.

**Conflict resolution:** Conflict is a universal feature of human societies. It takes its origin in economic differentiation, cultural transformation, social and psychological development and political organizations – all of which are inherently conflictual and becomes apparent through the formation of conflict parties, which perceived to have mutual incompatible goals. That means the identity of the conflict parties, the levels at which conflict is contested, and issues fought over may vary over time and may themselves be disputed (Wallensteen, 2007; Bercovitch, 2009).

Kohlrieser (2007) described conflict as a difference between or among persons or groups created by disagreement and emotion, where bonding is broken or lacking. Conflict plays a negative and destructive role in the process of organizational development if not managed effectively through cooperative in confronting matters of extensive power structures and marginalization. Lack of access to credit financing from the government and banks for farmers, fishermen and small entrepreneurs has mobilized the people to assert the traditional way of improving their communities’ well-being.

Kohlrieser (2007) explained six fundamental skills for managing or resolving conflict effectively. These skills are:

- **Creating and maintaining a bond, even with an “adversary”** - Treating the person as a friend, not an enemy, and base relationship on mutual respect, positive regard and cooperation.
- **Establishing a dialogue and negotiate** - Keeping the conversation relevant, stay focus on a positive outcome and remain aware of the common goal to avoid being hostile or aggressive.

- **Understanding what causes conflict** - Being able to create a dialogue aimed at resolving conflict through understanding the root of disagreement which may result from differences over goals, powers, status and insecurity.
- **Using the law of reciprocity** - It is the foundation of cooperation and collaboration. That means what you give out is likely to be what you get back.
- **Building a positive relationship** - It is nurturing the relationship as well as pursuing goals by understanding each other’s point of view.
- **Put the fish on the table** – An expression implies to raising a difficult issue without being aggressive.

**Access to credit:** Credit is the pivot which the development of any sector rests on. Access is central to every public service in terms of productive assets such as credit and education, land and water, extension and public health services. Cooperative through community action has been recognized by the state and collective action leads to better conditions. As stated by Macaranas (2001), the participatory capabilities could be used effectively through cooperative in confronting matters of extensive power structures and marginalization. Lack of access to credit financing from the government and banks for farmers, fishermen and small entrepreneurs has mobilized the people to assert the traditional way of improving their communities’ well-being.

**Research Methodology**

**Description of the study area**

This study was carried out in Gambella Region, Ethiopia. The area was selected purposively since no adequate studies had been conducted earlier on the factors affecting members’ participation in fishery cooperatives.

Gambella Region, which is found in the south western part of Ethiopia, is located between 7°0’0”–8°17’0”N of latitude and 33°0’0”– 36°0’0”E of longitude. It is bounded by Oromia region to the North and East, SNNP region to the South and the Republic of South Sudan to the West.

Administratively, the region has 3 zones which is further divided into 12 woredas and 1 town administration. The region estimated to have a total population of 409,002 in 2015 of which 213,001(52.08%) is male and the remaining 196,001(47.92%) is female. Out of 409,002, 132,001(32.27%) and 277,001(67.73%) are urban and rural dwellers respectively (CSA, 2013).

The altitude of the region ranges between 300-2300m.a.s.l. The annual rainfall of the region within an elevation of 400-2000 m. a. s. l varies from 900mm-2100mm. It is during May to October that 80-90% of the
total rainfall occurs in the region and December till February considered as dry season. Gambella is endowed with large volume and several inland water resources including rivers, lakes, reservoirs, ponds and huge floodplain areas.

Research Design
This research was typically descriptive since it applied a design that used a probability sampling design and structured instruments of data collection. It also explanatory type as it used a non probability sampling design and unstructured instruments of data collection (Kothari, 2004). It was a concurrent mixed design because it used both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to collect two different types of data concurrently.

Sampling Techniques & Procedures
According to the FCA (2015), 15 fishery cooperatives are operating currently in the region. For the purpose of this study, Gambella regional state was selected purposively to assess the problems of members' participation in fishery cooperatives due to high potential of fish production which is not appropriately utilized.

And to select the respondents, individual members was selected randomly from 318 members of all fishery cooperatives based on the probability proportionate to size. Thus, to determine the sample size, the researcher applied Kothari (2003) formula given below.

\[ n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q \cdot N}{e^2(N-1)+Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q} \]

Where:
- N = size of population
- p = sample proportion of successes
- n = size of sample
- q = 1-p
- z = the value of the standard variation at a specific confidence level
- e = acceptable error (the precision)

\[ n = \frac{25.05601182}{0.20559249} = 122 \]

Sampling Frame
Sample frame of the selected fishery cooperatives in Gambella Region (From 2012-2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperative</th>
<th>Members/Cooperative</th>
<th>Sample size per coop</th>
<th>Woreda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pinykeew</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>(20*122)/318 = 8</td>
<td>Gambella Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyikwoo</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>(49*122)/318 = 19</td>
<td>Abol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleela</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>(21*122)/318 = 8</td>
<td>Abobo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaanoo</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>(23*122)/318 = 9</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Gin Mo-Beer✓</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(24*122)/318 = 9</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Kaak✓</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>(19*122)/318 = 7</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gidip</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(24*122)/318 = 9</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tic Beer✓</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(22*122)/318 = 8</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marwa</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>(25*122)/318 = 10</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuromeer Ki Hoolo✓</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(10*122)/318 = 4</td>
<td>Gog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinyuudo</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(12*122)/318 = 5</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aranya Raach✓</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(10*122)/318 = 4</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thatha Youth✓</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(14*122)/318 = 5</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itang Kiir</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>(28*122)/318 = 11</td>
<td>Itang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paari</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>(17*122)/318 = 6</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 318 = 122

Source: Gambella Regional Cooperative Promotion Agency: January, 2016
✓ “Active fishery cooperatives

In addition to the 122 sample respondents, other 54 individuals including cooperatives' leaders and experts were selected for the focus group discussion of this study. Thus, the total sample size was 174 respondents.

Data Collection Methods
Depending on the objectives of this study, primary data were collected from members of fishery cooperatives and experts of cooperative by using semi-structured questionnaires and focus group discussions (FGD). The secondary data were collected through reviewing relevant literatures that include books, documents of the fishery cooperatives and the internet.

Methods of Data Analysis
Relying on the objectives of the research and the type of data that existed, analysis was made based on different approaches. In this research, data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative statistical procedures and methods.
The main descriptive statistical tools such as percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the quantitative data and presented in the form of tables, charts and graphs. Bivariate logistic regression analyses were used as statistics tools to identify the independent predictors of members’ participation. Statistical significance was set at $\alpha \leq 0.05$. On the other hand, qualitative data were analyzed and narrated by the researchers on spot during data collection.

Results And Discussions
This chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of the results of the data collected through semi-structured questionnaires from the respondent members and focus group discussions.

Socio-demographic factors
The socio-demographic characteristics of the sample respondents selected for the study are: sex, age, marital status, family size, educational level, income, distance and membership duration.

Thus, to analyze the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, simple descriptive statistics such as mean, minimum, maximum, standard deviation, frequency and percentage were used.

Survey Results
a) Sex; Sex of a member refers to the condition of being either male or female. Results for sex of the respondents show that 82.79% are males and 17.21% are females. Therefore, the overall sector of fishery cooperatives in Gambella national regional state of Ethiopia is a male dominated business compared to female members.

b) Marital status; Majority of 63.9% are married. The remaining 27.9% and 8.2% are respondents who are single and divorced respectively.

c) Age; Age refers to the number of years a member has lived until the day of this study’s interview. Following the descriptive statistics results, the average age of the respondents is 30.17 with a standard deviation of 7.51 and a minimum and maximum age of 18 and 51 respectively.

d) Family size; Sample size implies to the number of persons living together in the same house. The respondents have an average family size of 3.86 and a minimum and maximum size of 1 and 9 with a standard deviation of 1.98.

e) Education; Education is one of the most important principles of cooperatives established by the ICA in 1995. As far as educational level of the respondents is concerned, the results show that the average educational level of the respondents is 9.09 with a standard deviation of 2.11 and a minimum and maximum of 4 and 15(12+3) respectively.

f) Monthly income; Income stands for the amount of money that a member generates per month. Result of income depicts that the average monthly income of the respondents is 542.79 birr with a minimum and maximum income of 340 and 1500 with a standard deviation of 170.25. Distance; Distance describes how far is the place of production from a member’s home which is measured in kilometers. Members travel a distance of kilometers from their homes to the place of production and then to the market. The result shows that respondents travel an average of 4.59km and a minimum and maximum of 0.5km and 12km away with a standard deviation of 3.77 kilometers.

h) Membership duration; Duration refers to the time a member has spent in fishery cooperatives. The result indicates that members have spent average membership duration of 3.25 years within their cooperatives with a standard deviation of 1.65 years and minimum and maximum years of 1 and 7 respectively.

i) Reason for Joining Cooperatives; It observed that 31.1% of the members joined fishery cooperatives as additional sources of income. 23% of them joined for the purpose of getting market access which followed by 18.9% who joined to get fishing materials supplies. The remaining 16.4% and 10.6% of the members joined the fishery cooperatives as a way of improving their living condition and a means of minimizing market risk. It realized that, when the members were not able to achieve the reasons they have joined cooperatives for, they would not stick to that cooperatives for a long time.

j) Occupation; Occupation refers to the job by which person earns a living. 62.3% of the respondents of the study were engaged in both fishing and non-fishing activities followed by 27.9% and 9.8% who engaged only in fishing and non fishing activities respectively. From members who engaged in both fishing and non-fishing activities, 65.9% of them engaged in crop farming followed by 17% who are civil servant. The remaining 9.1% and 8% are respondents who engaged in trade and other activities respectively.
Current Status of Membership and Fishery Cooperatives (From 2012-2016)

Line charts are used to display trends over time period. As presented in the chart 4.1 above, the result of membership and fishery cooperatives in Gambella Region decreased from 2014 till 2016. From 2012 to 2013, the number of cooperatives decreased from 10 to 8 and membership decreased from 287 (Male=71.43% and Female=28.57%) to 207 (Male=70.05% and Female=29.95%).

Even if there was an increase of membership and cooperatives from 2013 to 2014, membership continuously decreased from 436 (Male=76.15% and Female=23.85%) in 2014 to 374 (Male=73.27% and Female=26.73%) in 2016. Even though there are 15 fishery cooperatives registered by the Regional Cooperative Promotion Agency, in June of 2016, 9 of them are inactive and only 6 are active with a membership status of only 97 (Male=83.5% and Female=16.5%). Therefore, the current status of both membership and numbers of fishery cooperatives are continuously declining for the last three consecutive years.

Factors Affecting Members’ Participation

Awareness: Awareness about cooperatives is important indicator of cooperation. It defined as the level of understanding and knowhow of the members towards the principles and values, bylaws, objectives, functions and management of cooperatives in general and fishery cooperatives in particular. The members were asked agree and disagree questions regarding awareness about fishery cooperatives and the results of the field survey shows that 56.6% of the respondents did not have awareness about the principles and values, bylaws, objectives, functions, management and members’ rights and duties of the fishery cooperatives. On the other hand, from 53 respondents who have awareness about fishery cooperatives, 81.1%, 79.2% and 73.2% have awareness about principles and values, objectives and functions followed by 82.6%, 67.9% and 58.5% of the respondents who have awareness about rights and duties of members, management of cooperatives and bylaws of their specific fishery cooperatives. Therefore, when members lack awareness about their right and duties within the cooperatives and the functions of their cooperative organization, their participation will be affected negatively.

Training: Training as one of the principle of cooperatives described as a process of teaching and learning a skill or job. Training defined as the systematic way of developing skills, knowledge and attitudes demanded by an individual to perform adequately a given task on the job (Armstrong, 2006). Cooperative training defined as those training activities that are organized to improve job performance of the cooperative staff and of government employees engaged in support and supervision of cooperatives. The survey result indicates that from 122 respondents, only 18.9% of them are members who got training on the use of gears, awareness creation, habit of saving and others types of training where as 81.1% of the respondents have never got any training since they join fishery cooperatives.

The organizations that provided training to these few members are NGOs, cooperative promotion agency and government agents. It is through training that members learn new things in order to improve their knowledge and skills as well as their performance that may increase their participation in cooperatives.

Business plan: Business plan is an important tool for all types of businesses. It is a written document that identifies the nature and context of the business opportunity and it presents the approach the business person plans to use and take the advantage of the opportunity. Respondents were asked agree or disagree questions about the availability of any business plan developed for their fishery cooperatives. The results of the survey reveal that 57.4% of the respondents disagreed with the availability of business plan developed for their fishery cooperatives. The results of the survey reveal that 57.4% of the respondents disagreed with the availability of business plan developed for their respective cooperative where as the remaining 42.6% of them agreed that there is a business plan available. 65.4% of the respondents who said there is business plan for their cooperatives did not involve in the preparation of their own cooperative’s business plan.
Leadership skills; Leadership is an important function of management which helps to maximize efficiency and to achieve organizational goals. Leadership defined as a process by which an executive can direct, guide and influence the behavior and work of others towards accomplishment of specific goals in a given situation. The results of good managers’ leadership skills show that 61.5% of the sample respondents did not believe that their managers have good leadership skills about their cooperatives and only 38.5% of the respondents believed in good leadership of their managers. As far as the areas that require good leadership skills by the cooperatives’ leaders are concerned, the result reveals that over 83% of the respondents believed that their managers never communicate with customers and submit reports to the general assembly. The same is true where 68.9%, 61.5%, 59% and 55.7% of the respondents believe that the managers never call and lead the general assembly meetings, follow the principles and values of cooperatives, initiate the general assembly to make decision, prepare annual plan and maintain documents and books of the society respectively. It is only in executing the decision made by the general assembly that 46.7% and 27.9% of the respondents who sometimes and always believe in good managerial skills of their managers respectively.

Decision making; Decision-making is a universal function of all the managers in every part of the organization. In the management of cooperative organization, decision-making is the bounden duty of directors and managers both in the developmental and functional spheres. The decision making should not only conform to rational choice and objective requirements under various decision situations; but it must also ensure that uniform action is achieved, there is proper participation and collaboration between members and employees in carrying out the decision.

The result presented indicates that 40.2% of the interviewed respondents take part in decision making within the cooperatives where as the remaining 59.8% of the respondents never take part in making decisions about their cooperatives.

From 49 respondents who participate in decision making process, over 55% of them sometimes participate in the decision of setting annual objectives, approving annual plan and budget, setting the prices for fishes, deciding the target market and solving conflict within cooperative. Since cooperatives are members owned and controlled democratic organization, 2/3 of the general assembly must participate in the meeting for the decision to be implemented.

When majority do not take part in the decision making process, they will not consider the decision as their own and hesitate to participate in the activities to be done by the cooperatives.

Conflict resolution skills; Conflict resolution involves the resolution of disagreement that sometimes arises between or among members within the cooperative societies by means of arbitration or any resolution mechanism. It observed that 100% of the respondents agreed with the availability of conflicts within and outside the cooperatives that may affect their participation. As far as the types of conflicts affecting the cooperatives believed by 74.6% of the interviewed respondents is both internal and external conflicts followed by 15.6% and 9.8% who said that the cooperatives are affected by internal conflicts and external conflicts respectively. 23.8%, 21.4% and 17.2% of the respondents believed that the existing conflicts are caused by the incompatibility role of the leaders, lack of communication among members and leaders and ethnic conflicts within the region followed by 13.9%, 9.8% and 4.1% of these who said the conflicts are caused by the perception difference, unclear authority structures, officials interferences and competition for the limited resources among cooperatives respectively.

Again the same result shows that 46.7% of the respondents believe in solving conflicts through negotiation methods followed by 44.3% and 9% of respondents who believe in solving the conflicts through arbitration and civil court respectively. Therefore, when the conflict is external like ethnic group conflict, it will be very difficult for the cooperatives since no transportation services and no more producers and customers coming to the market places.

Market; According to the data collected for this study, the response given by the respondents show that 64.8% of them agreed that they have access to market where as the remaining 35.2% do not have access to market. From the same result, 64.6% of the respondents who have access decide their target market to be consumers followed by 35.4% of the respondents whose target markets are traders respectively.

Fish price; Price is the amount of money charged for a product or service or the sum of the values that consumers exchange for the benefit of using the product/service. It represents the value of a good or service for both the seller and buyers. Price decision must be coordinated with all the costs spent before reaching the market including transportation costs and others. According to the results of the survey, only 20.5% of the respondents agreed that there are good prices for fish products where as a majority of 79.5% of the respondents disagreed with having good prices for their products. To decide the prices for the fishes, 66.4% of the respondents agreed...
that the prices are decided by members alone followed by 18.9% and 14.7% who said that the prices decided by the market and cooperative society respectively. For fishery cooperative members to have good prices, they need to have good sources of information for prices. The only sources of information used for setting the prices are one’s own prices and competitors as responded by 76.2% and 23.8% of the respondents respectively.

**Fishing gears:** 45.1% of the interviewed respondents have fishing gears and the remaining 54.9% of them do not have access to fishing gears. From 55 respondents who have fishing gears, 56.3%, 18.2% and 25.5% have nets, hooks and other types of fishing gears. Again, table 4.13 indicates that the types of fishing gears like nets, hooks, and others were provided by NGOs, Agriculture and Natural Resource Bureau and other organizations.

**Access to transportation service:** The results of the respondents show that only 35.2% have access to transportation services and the remaining 64.8% of the respondents lack access to transport services. From 43 respondents who have access to transportation services 44.2% of them transport their products by person followed by 32.6% and 23.3% who use bicycle and car transport.

**Availability of financial institutions:** The results reveal that only 31.1% of the respondents agreed that there are financial institutions available in their locations whereas a majority 68.9% of the respondents said there are no financial institutions in their nearby areas. The same survey shows that 55.3% and 44.7% of them said micro-finance and SACCOs are the only financial institutions available in their areas. These who have access are people who live in the main towns of the Woreda in a region.

**Access to credit:** Credit is a device for facilitating transfer of purchasing power from one individual or organization to another. It provides the basis for increased production efficiency through specialization of functions within the cooperative sector.

As presented in this study, the results suggest that only 30.3% of the respondents have access to credits and the remaining 69.7% of them lack access to credits. From the 37 respondents who got credits, 56.8% and 43.2% of them said they got credits from micro-finance and others financial institutions respectively. Even if there are micro-finance institutions in every Woreda they are found only at the center where collateral is needed to get credits. These who organized their fishery cooperatives far distance from the town have no access to credits.

**Members’ participation:** Participation is an important indicator in improving farmers’ understanding of their cooperative's organization. Member's participation is the act of taking part in any activity of the society such as attending the general assembly meeting, involvement in the development of business plan, election process, decision making, exercising leadership responsibilities, monitoring and evaluation of activities related to cooperatives by all members. Members were asked agree and disagree questions regarding their participation in the cooperatives to know their participations in different activities.

The results presents that 71.31% of the interviewed sample respondents agreed that they participate in the activities of the cooperatives where as the remaining 28.69% of them said they do not participate in every activity of their specific fishery cooperative societies.
Members’ awareness (AWARENESS): The results of the marginal effects after logit in the table 4.19 above show that increase of members’ awareness to affect their participation in fishery cooperatives is positively significant at 1%. By one percent increase of members’ awareness, the individual member participation in fishery cooperative is increased by 22%, other covariates being constant. Therefore, results of odds ratio show that members who have awareness are more likely to participate 5.76 times than members who do not have awareness. This is similar with the result of the study conducted by Berhane (2008).

Access to training (TRAINING): Increase of training to affect members’ participation in fishery cooperatives is positively significant at 1%. By one percent increase of access to training, the individual member participation in fishery cooperative is increased by 45%, other covariates being constant. Hence, odds ratio shows that members who have got training are more likely to participate 22 times than members who have not any training.

Leadership skills (LEADSKIL): Increase of leadership skills to affect members’ participation in fishery cooperatives is positively significant at 5%. By one percent increase of leadership skills, the individual member participation in cooperative is increased by 25%, other covariates being constant. Leaders who have good leadership skills are more likely to participate 8 times than leaders who lack leadership skills.

Access to market (ACCESMKT): Reduction of access to market to affect members’ participation in fishery cooperatives is negatively significant at 1%. By one percents decrease of access to market, the individual member participation in fishery cooperative is decreased by 17%, other covariates being constant. Therefore, members who lack access to markets are less likely to participate 0.23 times than those who have access to markets.

Access to credit (ACCCRDIT): Increase of access to credit to affect members’ participation in fishery cooperatives is positively significant at 1%. By one percent increase of access to credit, the individual member participation in fishery cooperative is increased by 25%, other covariates being constant. Members who got access to credit are more likely to participate 6.6 times in cooperatives than members who have not got any credit.

Results of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

For the purpose of conducting the focus group discussion as proposed by the researchers, 6 different groups of 54 participants (leaders of cooperatives and experts) were selected from the existing 15 fishery cooperatives and cooperative promotion agency with each group containing 9 participants and conducted 6 different group discussions for 6 days. The information collected during FGD was directly recorded in the form of Minute as they were forwarded by the participants of the group so as to simplify it for the analysis. The responses and opinions of the participants who attended FGD were discussed like the following:

Experience of leaders: As far as the experience of the leaders or managers is concerned, only 4 from 15 leaders of fishery cooperatives have work experience of more than 3 years within their specific cooperatives whereas the rest served only for 1 or 2 years. None of the leaders get any experience sharing since they joined cooperatives. Thus, when leaders lack experience they will face difficulty of managing the activities of cooperatives.

Knowledge about principles and values: Cooperative principles are the guiding rules that arise out of the characteristic features of cooperation. Voluntary and open membership, autonomous and independent, member democratic control, member economic participation, education, training and information, cooperation among cooperatives and concern for the community are the seven principles; and the ten values such as self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity are expected to known by all leaders. In the tradition...
of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others. When the group discussions were started many of the leaders lack knowledge about the principles and values of cooperatives. Therefore, the researchers found that many leaders did not know and must have the knowledge of basic cooperative principles and values of which the establishment of any cooperative including fishery cooperatives is based on in order to improve members’ participation.

**General assembly meeting:** General assembly meeting is meeting of all members of cooperative societies. According to the Ethiopian cooperative proclamation No. 147/1998, article 22, sub-article 1, stated that “the general assembly shall meet at least once in a year”. During focus group discussion of this study, the researchers identified some fishery cooperatives that did not called the general assembly meeting for the last 2 years. Instead, few leaders conduct meeting and pass decision and the decision will be considered as passed by general assembly without the presence of 2/3 of the members. So, if members were not participated in the decision made within their cooperatives, they would not feel as they were part of the decision and not take part in the implementation of that decision.

**Availability of bylaw:** According to the Ethiopian cooperative proclamation No. 147/1998, article 11, sub-article 1, stated that “Every society shall have its own bylaws”. Concerning the bylaws of the fishery cooperatives in Gambella National Regional State, their bylaws were not known by the majority of members due to lack of offices by many cooperatives and the bylaws were found only in the hands of few leaders. Since everything is found in the bylaw, all members should know their own bylaw in order to understand their level of participation with the cooperative society.

**Conflicts:** Gambella is one of the regional state that mostly affected by conflicts. Conflict refers to the arising of disagreements among or between the members within the organization. Conflict resolution involves the resolution of disagreement that sometimes arises between or among members within the cooperative societies by means of arbitration or any resolution mechanism. According to the results of the focus group discussions, many cooperatives including fishery cooperatives were dissolved due to conflict of interests, limited resource and abuse of powers among members, cooperative leaders and other government officials. Most of the conflicts with the government officials arise from the case of tax. On the other hand, the inter-ethnic conflicts within the region affect the performance and participation of members in the cooperatives, this is because when there is conflict, there will be no market, no transportation service and as a result the raw fishes will be discarded.

**Seasonal factors:** According to the discussions that we made with the experts and cooperative leaders, the performance of fishery cooperatives organized along the rivers such as Baro and Gilo are negatively affected during summer season. This is because of the heavy rain which falls from the month of May to the month of October that fills the rivers and makes it difficult for members of cooperatives to perform their activities. For example, fishery cooperatives organized in Itang, Gambella and Pinyudo towns were found not active during this summer time. Only these cooperatives organized around Lake Tata and Alwero dam that are active throughout the year.

**Feasibility study:** Feasibility study refers to a detailed analysis of most viable project ideas to obtain conclusive information about each and every aspect of a project prior to making final investment decision and committing substantial resources. It is expected to provide conclusive information about the commercial, technical, financial and economic aspects of a project and associated risks and uncertainties so as to make final investment decision. The fishery cooperatives in Gambella National Regional State were organized without any feasibility study conducted by the Regional Cooperative Promotion Agency. That’s the reason why many cooperatives including fishery in the entire region failed before achieving the objectives they established for.

**Awareness creation:** As far as awareness creation about cooperatives in general and fishery cooperatives in particular is concerned, the Regional Cooperative Promotion Agency did not create any awareness for the last three years. The Agency should not be blamed because of lack of adequate budget allocation by the regional government for the development of cooperatives in the region.

**Training, Audit and Inspection:** Training is one of the principles of cooperatives which is very important for improving the knowledge and skills required to upgrade the participation and performance of the members. As we have understood from the FGD, not only fishery cooperative, majority of cooperative established in the region were not given any training by the agency and other concerned body. The same is true for audit and inspection. According to the Ethiopian Cooperative Proclamation No. 147/1998, Article 36(1) and 37(1), it stated that “The appropriate authority shall audit or cause to be audited by a person assigned by it, the accounts of any society at least once in a year” and “The appropriate authority may, make or cause to be made by such person to be assigned by it an inspection to the organiza-
tion, work execution, documents and financial condition
of a society at least once in a year. But the reality is; only
1 out of 15 fishery cooperatives was audited and 3 out of
15 were inspected since they were established. Therefore, members of some better cooperatives share the
profits according their own agreements.

Regional fishery legislation; Fishing considered as a
tradition in many parts of Ethiopia including Gambella
region where many people depend on fish consumption.
Before the year 2003, there was no fishery proclamation
in the country till the first Proclamation No. 315/2003
known as “Fishery Development and Utilization Procla-
mation” established in accordance with Article 55 (1) of
the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of
Ethiopia. None of the members and experts of coopera-
tive promotion agency in the region knows this procla-
mation.

According to “Proclamation No. 315/2003, Article 5,
Capture Fisheries from Natural and Man-made Water
Bodies, sub article (1) Any person who wishes to under-
take commercial fishing from natural and manmade wa-
ter bodies shall do so upon acquisition of a legal fishing
permit and (4) Any person who wishes to undertake sub-
sistence fishing, commercial fishing or recreational fis-
ting within a protected fishery area shall obtain a written
permit from the Ministry or concerned Regional Authori-
ty”.

Except for the legal certificate of cooperative societies
granted by the regional cooperative agency for the mem-
ers of fishery cooperatives, majority of people are un-
undertaking fishing without any permission from any con-
cerned authority since there is no regional fishery proc-
lamation in Gambella regional state.

Conclusion And Recommendations

Conclusion

This study was conducted in Gambella national regional
state with the objective to assess the factors affecting
members’ participation in fishery cooperative societies
established in the entire region. To address the objectives
of the study, both quantitative and qualitative methodol-
gies were used to collect the data from primary and
secondary sources using structured questionnaires, focus
group discussion and reviewing relevant literatures.

The study used a two-stage sampling procedure in which
Gambella national regional state was selected purposive-
ly to assess members’ participation in all fishery cooper-
aves and then, simple random sampling technique ap-
plied to select the sample respondents in proportion to
size.

Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percen-
tage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze
the quantitative data and documents analysis and focus
group discussion used. The results for sex and marital
status shows that majority of 101(82.79%) and
78(63.9%) of the respondents were male and married
members respectively. As far as the socio-demographic
characteristics of the respondents is concerned, the re-
sults reveal that the average age, family size, educational
level, monthly income, distance and membership dura-
tion of the respondents were 30.17, 3.86, 4.09, 542.79,
4.59 and 3.25 with the standard deviation of 7.51, 1.98,
2.11, 170, 25, 3.77 and 1.65 respectively.

According to this study, members’ participation in fi-
shery cooperatives in the region was challenged by many
factors. The factors that limited members’ participation
were awareness about cooperative’s principles and val-
ues, access to training, leadership skills, taking part in
decision making, conflicts, access to market, fishing
gears and transportation services, availability of financial
institutions and access to credit services.

Only 53(43.4%) of the respondents have awareness of
the principles and values, bylaws, rights and duties, ob-
jectives and functions of fishery cooperatives. With re-
gard to training, 99(81.1%) of them did not get any train-
ing since they join cooperative and 75(61.5%) said that
there was business plan available for their cooperatives.

On the other hand, 73(59.8%) do not participate in every
decision due to miscommunication among members and
122(100%) of the respondents agree that their participa-
tion was negatively affected by both internal and exter-
nal conflicts. Even though 79(64.8%) of the respondents
agreed with access to market, the prices in the near (lo-
cal) market is less profitable compared to the market in
Gambella town. 69(54.9%) of the respondents have no
access to fishing gears. The same problem is true for
transportation service where 79(64.8%) of them agreed
with inadequate transportation service in the areas.
Again the results of the study show that 84(68.9%) and
85(69.7%) of the respondents have no access to financial
institutions and access to credit respectively.

Results of the logistic regression model applied in this
study reveal that awareness, access to training, market,
credit and leadership skills are significant at 1% and 5%
confidence levels respectively.

Therefore, the overall findings of this study show that
the major factors affecting the participation of members
in fishery cooperatives organized in Gambella national
Regional State are lack of feasibility study, inadequate
awareness about cooperative principles and values, ina-
dequate access to training, inaccessibility to markets,
poor credit services, incapable leadership skills, lack of audit inspection, seasonal change and conflicts.

Recommendations
Based on the overall findings and conclusion drawn for this study, the following specific recommendations are suggested by the researchers in order to improve members’ participation in fishery cooperatives established in Gambella national regional state:

a) Regional cooperative promotion agency at regional level and cooperative offices at woreda level must conduct feasibility studies before organizing any new fishery cooperatives in the region.

b) All members of fishery cooperatives must get training in order to have awareness about the principles and values that govern the overall activities of their specific cooperative as well as to improve the leadership skills of their leaders.

c) Regional cooperative promotion agency together with the department of marketing under Agriculture and natural resource bureau and other partners have to find markets for the fish products of cooperatives.

d) Government and cooperative offices must find ways that make ease of access to credits for cooperatives’ members since micro-finance institutions which are available in the main towns of the districts need collateral to provide credit services to the members who are in need of credits.

e) For members of cooperatives to benefit from their fishery cooperative societies, they have to sell the product to the cooperatives and then cooperatives as organizations should take them to the local or regional markets.

f) All cooperatives should be audited and inspected by the regional cooperative agency and other concerned organizations. It is only through inspection that cooperative agency could understand the performance of all fishery cooperative societies.

References


