

Factors Determining Establishment of Participatory Forest Management (PFM): The Case of Konso Woreda Gocha Kebele, Ethiopia

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Abstract

In this study the assessment of determining factors for the establishment of participatory forest management (PFM) in Gocha kebele, Konso woreda Segen Area Peoples Zone South Ethiopia was studied. The objective of the study was identifying the major factors that determine PFM in the study area. The study was designed to collect data on the factors that determining PFM establishment. From the total of 400 HHs in the study area, purposely selected 10% which are 40 HHs were selected and a structured questionnaire was administered for individual HHs. It was identified that about 57.5% of the total respondents were the member of PFM and the rest 42.5% were not. About 72.5% of the PFM members are involved in decision making. Knowledge gap, access and distance to the forests and limitation in income and subsistent need were the major determining factors for the establishment and participation in the PFM in the study area. Finally, it was recommended that awareness creation, providing alternative sources for income and energy are the key ways to conserve forest resources.

Keywords: Afforestation, Decision making, Deforestation, Forest conservation, PFM

1. INTRODUCTION

Forest and woodland resources face enormous pressure from the expansion of agricultural activities, settlements, livestock grazing, fires, charcoal making, illegal harvesting and mining. Ethiopia has been subject to extensive deforestation; estimates show that the country is losing up to 140,000 hectares of forest each year (FRA, 2005). Hundreds years ago, about 40% of the Ethiopia land was covered by forest whereas only less than 3% of the land is covered by forest currently. The major reason behind degradation of forest is human interferences such as expansion of farm lands, firewood collection and poverty (Bedru, 2007); because, according to FAO (2010), the livelihood of most rural people of developing countries is strongly linked to natural resources like forest.

Protected forest areas with restricted access for local communities have often been introduced as a solution to tackle deforestation and its effects. When looking at the approach from a social perspective, restricting access to forest resources and relocating communities living in forest areas is, at present, becoming more frequently considered as unsustainable from a social perspective (Ellen, 2010).

Participatory Forest Management (PFM) is an umbrella name for a process and mechanism which enables community groups living in and around forests to take part in the management of the forest resources (MoA, 2012). More specifically, PFM refers to a component of participatory forestry that focuses on local communities as key stakeholders for sustainability. The concept has constantly implemented focusing on the local people living nearby the forests (Maheshwar and Asuda, 2008).

The forest resources need proper management so that they may benefit present and future generations. As in many countries in Africa, for a long time forests in Ethiopia have been managed without full participation of the local communities that live in the vicinity of the resources. This approach has resulted in unsustainability of the resources. Local communities have a significant role in improving forest and woodland management, and their participation can contribute significantly to the sustainability of these resources. This study was designed to identify the determinants for participation of local communities in PFM in the study area.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The main objective of the study is to identify factors that hinder the establishment of participatory forest management in Gocha Kebele.

1.3.2 Specific Objective

The specific objectives of this study were:

- To identify the major factors those determine involvement in participatory forest management.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Description of the Area

The Study was conducted at Gocha Kebele. Gocha Kebele is found in Konso Woreda which is found in SNNPRS in Segen Area Peoples' Zone. Konso is one of the Woreda in SNNPRS of Ethiopia and is bordered with Borana Teltele Woreda) in South; Bena Tsemay and Alli Woreda in West; Derashe Woreda in North; and Burji Woreda and Borana in East. The administrative centre of the Woreda is Karat which is located at 595km from Addis Ababa; from the capital of Ethiopia. The total land area size of the Woreda is 202,286 hectare. Thus all the land in the Woreda are used for different purposes. For example land use for livestock grazing is 41,948 ha farming 39,662ha; 120,675.2 ha of land for other uses (Konso Woreda, 2003).

2.1.1 Climate of the Study Area

Climate is one of the elements of the physical environment which has pronounced impact on settlement pattern, human way of life, the type of soil, flora and fauna existed and/or developed and so forth. In the Woreda, the annual temperature ranges from 26-35^oC and the Woreda receives a mean annual rainfall of 765mm through the year.

2.2. Sampling Methods

The data used in this research was collected from rural households (Kilkilo) and Kamola district found in this Gocha Kebele. There were a total of 400 households in the study area. From the total households, 10% (40 households) were purposively selected for the study based on the living situation and access to forest resources of the communities.

2.3. Method of Data Collection

The preliminary survey was done before the actual study. The data were collected from the sample respondents using structured questionnaires and discussion with local elders, kebele leaders and development agents.

2.4. Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed by using simple statistical tools and finally the result of the study was presented in the form of table as a report.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSION

This chapter deals with findings or results and analysis of the study. It includes background information of the respondents, participation of the respondents in the PFM, determining factor of PFM, benefits and negative effects of PFM, livelihood diversification of the respondents, the role of PFM and what respondents recommend were described under this discussion.

3.1. Age Distribution of Respondents

As the field survey indicated, the age of respondents is mostly between 18-38 years with average age of 28 which about 65% were followed by the age of 39-48 years and 49-60 years were of 7 (17.5%) and 5 (12.5%) respectively and the rest 2 (5%) of the respondents were the age of 60 years. Table 4: Age Distribution of Respondents.

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<18 years	-	-
18-28 years	16	40
29-38 years	10	25
39-48 years	7	17.5
49-60 years	5	12.5
Above 60 years	2	5
Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey 2014

Table 1: Age category of Respondents

4.2. Membership and Decision Making in Community Forest Management

According to Scott (2000), community forest management must be flexible and responsive to the inputs and participation of all the parties. It was identified that from the total sampled respondents 57.5% were the members of the community forest management group and the remaining 42.5% were not the members of the community forest management.

No	Factor	Yes	%	No	%	Total	Remark
1	Participation in PFM	23	57.5	17	42.5	100	
2	Involved in the decision making	29	72.5	11	27.5	100	

Source: Own Field Survey 2014

Table 5: Participants in PFM and Decision making

The major reason raised for unwillingness of participation in forest management group is fear of the future access of resources. PFM also encompasses a wide range of different co-management arrangements with different levels of control from relatively conservative “benefit sharing” to genuine “community-based natural resource management” where local communities have full control over management of the resource and the allocation of costs and benefits (Kate *et al.*, 2006).

As show in the table above (table 2), from the total sampled respondents majority, (72.5%) of them were involved in the decision making of PFM whereas, about (27.5%) of the respondents were not involved in the decision making of PFM project in the community. Participatory Forest Management (PFM) is a mechanism to protect forests and enhance the livelihoods of communities who use and benefit from them in the process (Ellen, 2010). Thus, it has to be participatory and common understanding among the user group has to be developed.

4.3. Determining Factors of PFM

It was identified that suspecting future disadvantages like limitation of open access to resources, sources of income and subsistence need, knowledge gap to the resource and access and distance to the forest are the major determining factor for implementation and participation of PFM. As depicted in the table 3 below, majority of the respondents (77.5%) replayed that PFM acceptance and participation in the approach is determined by the fear for the future access to the forest resources. Forest are known by supporting the livelihoods of rural poor people either by their timer or non timber products (Alemayehu, 2010, Muzayen, 2009, and Tamirat *et al.*, 2014); thus, about 65% of the total respondents expressed as they worried about the future sources of income and the subsistence benefit that they have been getting from the forest area. On the other hand, knowledge gap regarding the approach was another concern which was raised by 32.5% of the total respondents.

No	Factor	Frequency	Percentage	Remark
1	Knowledge to the approach	13	32.5	
2	Access and distance from forest	9	22.5	
3	Limiting open access	31	77.5	
4	Source of income and subsistence need	26	65	

Source: Own field survey 2014

Table 6: Determining factors for establishment of PFM

4.4 Recommendation for Successful Establishment of PFM

Many factors could possibly affect people’s participation in Natural Resource Management; for the successful implementation of PFM, consideration has to be given to the local people in decision making so as to let them share responsibility. As the most important actors or stakeholders in forest management are users, indigenous institutions, NGOs, government and development agent (Terefe, 2003), there has to be clear understanding of the approach in between the community members for the successful establishment and implementation. Additionally, the following figure has to be used for sustainable forest management.

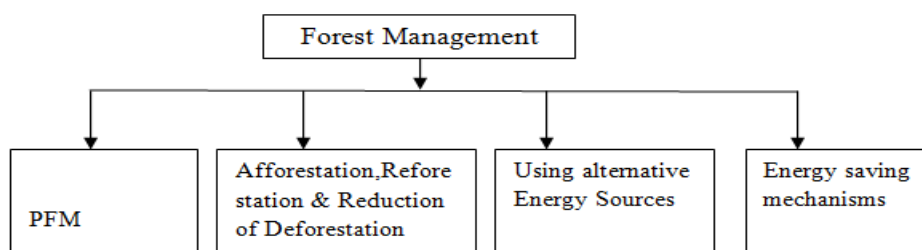


Figure 8: Forest Management Mechanisms

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