

---

## **THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY IN ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF AIRA WOREDA IN WESTERN WOLLEGA ZONE, OROMIYA REGIONAL STATE**

**Moa Alemayehu (MA in Sociology and Social policy)**

Department of Sociology, Ambo University, Ethiopia

---

**ABSTRACT:** *Women play active role in almost all aspects of agricultural activities across the world. However, their contribution is underestimated due to the deep rooted gender based division of labour in developing countries. So the study concentrated on the reflection of women's role in agricultural economy in Aira woreda western wollega zone Oromiya regional state. The objective of this study is to assess the evidence based role of women in development in general and agricultural economy in particular. The study was conducted by using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The relevant data collection tools such as interview, Focus group discussion guideline and questionnaires were used. Using these method relevant data was gathered and these data were analyzed in descriptive way. It was found that women's role is more important for economic development in general and agricultural development in particular. These findings also indicate that women play a significant role in almost all aspects of agricultural activities such as crop production, animal husbandry, domestic and other income generating activities. Finally the study has concluded that the role of women is important for economic development in general and effective development of agricultural sector in particular. Based on the findings the researcher recommends that, education is the most important tools to aware the existing social barriers that undermine the role of women in agricultural activities and also multifaceted efforts have to be made to avoid harmful traditional perceptions that hinder the participation of women in agricultural sector.*

**KEY WORDS:** Women, agriculture activities, gender, development

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the world, the role of women in economic development in general and agricultural in particular viewed as passive and supportive traditionally. Based on the historical experience of western countries, economic development was seen as requiring rapid structural transformation of the economy from one predominantly focused on agricultural activities to a more complex modern industrial and service society.

Today development economists have come to realize that far from playing passive supportive role, the process of economic development in agricultural sector in particular and the rural economy in general must play indispensable part in my overall strategy of economic progress especially for the low income developing countries(Todaro 2003). However, in developing countries, there was gender based division of labor.Women's main role in life was expected to be that of a house wife

and mother and typically working class women could expected to be pregnant about ten times and spend many years of her life bearing and nursing children rather than participating in any economic activity (Negaso 1984). The history of such division of labor indeed goes back to the time of primitive society. But in the process of economic development, people tend to specialize in a particular task (Boserup 1970). Not only in traditional form, but there are what is known as male job and female job in current world (UNECA1996).

Development interventionists affect men and women in different ways and both sexes have different knowledge, skill and perspective to provide to the society. However, development planners often fail to analyze gender role and their decision making relations. As a result, they underestimate women's contributions to the development activities and the effect of development activity on women. Consequently, women are often involved in the activities of problem analysis, decision making and planning and are not offered with necessary resource, information, training and other support they expected when compared with men. Moreover, the society by itself assigns role and statuses to both sexes according to its traditional, beliefs, culture, custom and social structures. As a result, the assignment of role and status for men and women becomes social rather than biological.

Although different theories or approaches such as Gender and development (GAD)(Rathegeberger.1989:in Wickrama Sighe.2000), Women and development (WAD)(Pishparan 1999 in Wickrama Singhe 2000) and Women in development (WID)(Todaro 2003) are tried to uncover the importance or contribution of women for the development and the oppression of women in the development, the role of women in agricultural activity is not recognized as significant in most societies. Some of the activities outside the home are regarded as assistance to their husbands. But, since women constitute about 50% of the labor force in rural population, there should be complete utilization of the labor power and creativity of both sexes if the society wants to pursue economic development to improve the life of the people. That means, there should be change in attitude towards women and women should be integrated into development process if real economic development is to be achieved.

In developing countries, like Ethiopia where traditional agriculture predominates, women contribute a lot to the family in particular and to the society in general through house hold care and maintenance, crop production, animal husbandry, marketing and several domestic works. But, despite their key role due to prevailing culture and attitude towards women or due to house hold activities load over them, it is believed men as bread winners should be support the family where as women an early age socialized to become wives and mother (Daniel 1984:9).

However, women play an important role in the economic activity particularly in agricultural sector. This role may vary from one area to another and is not very considered significant by the society due to different reasons including gender based division of labor. Because of these reason, inadequate attention has been given to women's role in productive input for economic development in general and agriculture in particular. Therefore, an intensive investigation about women's involvement in agricultural will enable us to understand their actual contribution and main obstacles encountered on which a sound and sustainable solution could be devised. The role

of women in agriculture activities among Aira woreda in western wollega is the main concern of this study.

### **Statement of the problem**

Currently gender issues have drawn the attention of many international national and regional scenes now there is an overall consensus among concerned bodies about women disadvantage position in various spheres of the life and the need to reoriented the traditional order in most societies there is sharply gender based division of labor between men and women which is socially constructed accordingly various socio- economic activities performed by people are characterized by vivid division of labor among which gender dimension are more apparent the history of such division of labor indeed goes back to the time of primitive society but in the process of economic development people tend to specialize in a particular task (Boserup 1970)

Boserup (1970) argued that many perceive the existing division of labor as natural because most of most of the task accomplished by the certain sex has not show any fundamental change for generations. One of important characteristic division of labor in a family unit is that the age-old gender division as survived for the fact that made children is shaped up in line with father's roles while female with that of their mothers. More over it has been believed for long that any attempt to change or modified the defined the defined gender division of labor is regarded as inducing on upset into the accepted natural order.

Also grade and more up to traditional societies. "Men bring food and women prepare it" is a saying that has commonly been used to describe the role of women and men with in the societies (Boserup 1970). Accordingly Women's roles or activities exclusively under taken by women includes cooking, cleaning, Washing, fetching water, collecting fire wood, marketing, Rearing and nurturing children, Preparing meal for the family, Caring for the sick and elderly . Whereas men's role includes outside work like ploughing, etc.

However, because of the above reasons inadequate attention has been given to women's role in productive input for economic development in general and agriculture in particular. Despite their major role, the contributions of women in agricultural activities remain unrecorded, unrecognized, disguised and undervalued but women are suffering from much longer hours of labor each day than men (ILO1985). Although the extent of women's involvement in the agricultural practices depends on the overall characteristics of the area in question their contribution is generally disguised and undervalue as a result of the age old patriarchal system lack of skill and training are some of the old of the consequence tradition.

The negligence of the gender dimension in agricultural labor input is thought to contribute its part to the sectors low performance consequently food insecurity and associated crises affect women more severely than men therefore although success in agricultural promotion is a merit to all it revives women from their burden beside their domestic duties rural women play as significant role in the production processes and livestock management generally speaking this holds true for women in Ethiopia and Aira woreda women perform various activities ritual economic and social therefore an intensive investigation about women's involvement in agricultural will enable us to

understand their actual contribution and main obstacles encountered on which a sound and sustainable solution could be devised based on the stated problem

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Description of the study area**

The Aira woreda is located in western part of Ethiopia. They found in western wollega zone in Oromiyaa region. It is located on 504km distance from the central part of Oromiyaa (Addis Ababa) to the western hemisphere of the country and 173km away from Nekemte. The Aira woreda of Wollega Oromo community belong to the Cushitic family. Afaan Oromoo (oromic language) their language and it is official language of the area with the Oromoo people. There are also other ethnic groups such as foreigners from Germany, USA, Sweden and Finland and from the internal Gurage and Amhara. Qallu system is one of the traditional religions. But now, most of the people are Protestants, Orthodox, Muslim, and Adventist or follow other religions. The place is bounded in north by Gulliso woreda, in south by Lalokile woreda, in west by Dalle sadi woreda and in east by yubdo woreda.

The climate condition of the area is Badda Daree (Woinadega) and it is highly suitable for crop production and animal husbandry. Most of the peasants in the study area are dependent on seasonal rainfall for crop cultivation and also irrigation schemes are rarely practiced on the rivers and other small streams. The main economic activity of the area is mixed farming which includes crop production and animal husbandry. Women participate in hand crafts, milking cows and sell their products. They also sell traditional drinks like "Tella", "Areke" "Tej" and so on. They were also horticultures producing vegetable like cabbage, onion, carrot, tomato, potato and etc. Men cut the seed and plough the land to produce maize, sorghum and teff for the purposes of sale. They also keep animals like oxen used for meat and cows for giving milk. Both donkeys and horses are used to transport materials and human beings.

### **Qualitative methods**

The research design of this study consists both qualitative and quantitative methods.

**Complete observation:** - A researcher traveled to the Aira woreda community to observe how and when women play a role in the agricultural economy. I have observed women's participation in agricultural activities such as crop production, animal husbandry and other domestic and income generating activities.

**Key informant interview:** - I have chosen and interviewed two individuals from agricultural development bureau, five women from Aira woreda women's affairs and nine farmers of the area by including both men and women to gain information about place of women in agricultural economy.

**Focus group discussion:** - I have used one focus group discussion consisting of 7 individuals based on age, sex and educational status.

**Case studies:** using this method, I have chosen four cases. These are women participating in farming, handicrafts and off-farm activities like selling traditional drinks like *Tela*, *Areke*, milk of cows and its products.

### **Quantitative method**

From quantitative method, I have used survey method.

### **Sampling technique:**

In this study, I have used non-probability sampling technique particularly purposive sampling. Based on this techniques, I could selected eligible people who are more experienced about the society and culture of the area. This techniques helped me to get those individuals who give more information which is real and clear for the study. Those individuals include farmers, women, elders and other professionals on the topic under consideration.

**Sample size:** - although the woreda has many kebeles, it could be difficult to conduct the study in all kebeles due to time effort and financial constraints. As a result, I purposively selected one kebele. So, I have chosen Gudina Aira Kebele which consists both men and women who are long live in the area. According to data from central statistical authorities (CSA) of 2009, the total population of this kebele is about 952. So, 95 individual could be selected as the sample size of the study. The reason why I selected this kebele is it contains more experienced elders, women and farmers than others kebeles. And also there were women who actively participate in agricultural economy but lack adequate consideration due to influence of culture and attitude towards them.

### **Research instruments**

I have developed questionnaires as an instrument to collect data from different relevant sources regarding the study. It contains both appropriate close-ended and open-ended questions in which the respondents are required to provide their responses by putting a mark or by writing their responses (ideas) according to the requested to respond on the space provided in the questionnaires.

### **Sources of data**

In this study, I have used secondary sources from written documents like books, magazines, newspaper, and internet, published and unpublished sources for relevant information throughout the period of this study. I have also used primary source by using questionnaires, interview and observation to gather information from farmers, elders, women and professionals. .

### **Data Analysis**

The data that are collected in the aforementioned methods could be summarized and analyzed by using statistical tools such as percentages, ratios and others in order to make the data easily understandable. The result could be presented using tables and when necessary, the analyzed data has interpreted and described verbally.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **The Role of women in crop production**

Women assist their husbands in agricultural activities such as soil preparation, maturing, weeding and harvesting. This holds true regarding the role of women in crop production in Aira woreda. Women of Aira woreda participate in agricultural activities in various ways. According to this study, majority (86.3%) of respondents witnessed the active role of women in activities such as clearing and preparation of farm land, weeding, harvesting, and preparing the threshing grounds. The only farm production from which women are invariably excluded are ploughing and sowing. Having said this, let us discuss briefly the role of Aira woreda women in crop production.

Particularly from the period of one harvest to the next ploughing period, weeding species grow faster on the cropland and make the next plough very difficult. Hence before a farmer goes to plough his land, he has to make sure that the weeds are already cleared. In most cases, clearing the land is the task of women. While a woman clears the weeds with an axe or sickle going in front of the farmer and removing cleared land weeding is also as common tasks women in the study area.

When the respondents are asked the type of tasks they do at field work, the first answer they responded is weeding. It is done starting after the crop is sown up to the crop is ready to be harvested. Hence weeding can be done in most case up to three rounds on a single cropland. Usually, women participate in weeding in cooperation with their neighbors. It is called “Daboo”. They have to weed the plots of each of the members of “Daboo” turn by turn. Crops such as maize, pepper and potatoes which needs digging side by side with weeding are exclusively under taken by women.

Harvesting is also an activity in which women participate more. However, even if women participate in harvesting all types of crops, it can be categorized as male dominance and female dominance. Female dominance of the harvest is only for specific crops such as maize, sorghum, beans, peas, pepper and Niger seeds.

Aira woreda women also participate in threshing and transporting crops. In this activity, there is no much differentiation and women participate in all types of crops equally as men. Usually it is an activity in which both husband and wife participate together equally. At the same time, it involves carrying the harvested crop to the threshing ground which is smoothened, muddled and dried. Once the crop is threshed and processed, the yields must be transported to the store by using both animal and human labor depending on the distance to be transported. If the distance is short, women some time play dominant role in transporting the products of household. This is particularly true for female headed households especially those who do not have unmarried grown up sons.

Manuring is also women's tasks in households with no access to chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizers are now widely used for crop production and the agricultural extension program. Men receive new insights and trained on chemical fertilizer and its application system while women are not exposed to the practices.



Empirical investigation regarding input of crop production confirms the prevalence of a defined gender based division of labor. Based on the responses, 86.3% of the respondents indicated that women do not participate in ploughing and sowing but the rest 13.7% claim the opposite.

An attempt has been made to explore the reason why women did not take part in these activities and shown in table below.

Table 1.4 Reason given by respondents for why not women participate in plough and Sowing

Reasons for women not plough or sow	No of respondents	Percentage
They are men's job by culture	78	82%
Women are preoccupied by domestic duties	3	3.1%
Because women are weak	14	14.7%
Shortage of land	-	-
Total	95	100%

Source: field survey 2010

The above table indicate that the majority of respondents 82% still consider plough and sowing as men's culturally defined task. According to respondents, ploughing is entirely men's activity. There is a belief that "yoo dubartiin qotte roobni hin roobu" literally mean (if women cultivate, there will be no rainfall). Another strong belief is also in place the community believes that father is analogous to god (waaqaa) as mother is analogous to earth (lafa). god gives rain to earth so that the earth bears different kinds of plants just as mother bears children after receiving the father's semen. So if a mother analogous to earth, it is shame (taboo) that women cannot till the earth.

As to sowing, there is also a traditional belief that "yoo dubartiin sanyii facaaste niqaaqata" literally mean (if women sow seed, it will become seed less). But this does not mean that there is not exceptional women who plough and sow. The result indicated that very few women do participate in ploughing and sowing. For instance, if the husband had to be away for an extended period of time women would be responsible for ploughing and sowing. However, 3.1% respondents mentioned load of household maintenance as the main obstacle for women to undertake ploughing and sowing. The remaining 14.7% described women as physically weak to perform such activities.

As indicated by the respondents, Aira worda women are active in crop production. In subsistence agricultural around the homestead, women plays significant role. In horticultural production, many of the women participate in sowing, watering, transplanting, weeding and harvesting of vegetables. Regarding the role of women in crop production in general and horticultural production in particular I have in depth case studies which I would get from my informants and discuss in below section

**Case 1:** She is 31 years old and has four children two boys and two girls. She has a husband and he is a farmer. They have 4 hectares of land and they produce cereals including wheat, bean and maize throughout the years. Apart from helping her husband in agricultural activities, she produce some vegetables during the rainy season. Her husband gives small pieces of land from their total land and she grows cabbage, potato and onion. In a years, she grows only one type of crop because

*of the small size of the land. She can decide what to be growth and sold to market. The income is used to cover household expenses like salt, oil, soap and cooking and eating things.*

### **The role of women in Animal Husbandry**

As noted before, women not only participated in the field work but often are charged with animal rearing activities. That means, women engage both in field activities and home activities. Women's contribution in animal rearing takes the central place among Aira woreda. Cattle are the most valuable animals for them. Cattle raising is secondary to crop production. In spite of their active involvement in agriculture, they still prefer cattle as an asset and cattle raising as a culturally viable task. Like other community, raising livestock has been the foundation of the social and economic structure of Aira woreda community.

Livestock production is central and basic for oxen drawn plough. That means, livestock especially cattle today play an essential part in every agricultural system. First, oxen represent the main energy source for cultivation and threshing. Second, pack animal especially donkeys and horses are major means for transportation of the threshed harvest to home and the market. Moreover, small stocks are the important sources of food and cash. The cattle also plays a significant role in ritual and ceremonies such wedding.

Moreover, according to focus group discussion results, cattle represents the major investment in rural areas of Aira woreda and the number of cattle one own generally measures wealth. That means, cattle are a symbol of status. Most of the respondents believe that the number of milk cow shows the status of women. For instance, if they are many she may be called as "giiftii Loonii" mean (queen of cows) which indicates high status. On the other hands, the number of oxen shows the status of men. Because of all these reasons, the society highly value raising activity. Aira woreda women play vital role in animal husbandry. Their participation include heading or tending preparation and feeding and caring for calves. For instance, women provide water, green grass and feed animals. The remaining parts of local drink which known as "Ate" usually for calves. Donkeys, horses or mules which stay around home stead during rainy season.

Women usually clean the stationed cattle kraal and calves enclosure. When asked to comment on the distribution of responsibilities between men and women for different types of animals, 80% respondents said women are responsible for calves, milk cows and small stocks than larger animals with which usually men deal. All respondents said that milking is the duty of women in livestock production. It is carried out twice a day: in the morning and in the evening.

### **Women's role in Domestic Activities**

Women spent a large part of their time in domestic activities for they were much involves in grinding grain as well as cooking. It is obvious that women in the village awake up early in the morning and sleep after every individual in the family slept. They perform domestic activities such as: child care, fetching water, collecting fire wood, food processing and cooking, house cleaning, grinding and washing clothes etc. According to focus group discussion results, women engage in time consuming and back breaking activities. For instance, housekeeping is one of the most time consuming activities of Aira woreda women. The process of grain is almost exclusive women's



activity. The task includes precooking (setting out the grains to dry, washing, Pounding and grinding) and cooking activities. Milling using millstone is undoubtedly the most laborious of households' tasks. Modern mills are increasingly used for the milling of the grain. However, poor households find the few cents required too expensive and still rely on the labor of women.

Women also spent much time in cooking food. In the process of cooking what comes to the forefront is the necessity of fuel wood and water. In other words, the whole process of cooking cannot be done without water and fire wood. Because of this, collecting fire wood and fetching water is another activity of women. Fuel wood collection is one of the hardest tasks performed by women if fuel wood consumption is not substituted by electricity and kerosene. If electric and kerosene available, it would reduce the time wasted in fire wood collection thereby women's role in subsistence agriculture may increase. Where fuel wood is not available, animal dung and farm residues are used as substitutes. Dung is collected and prepared by women. Women collect dung from the land surrounding their homestead and from wide area of land in the vicinity or from grazing areas of far places.

The main sources of water for the vast majority (96%) of rural population in Aira Woreda district are unreliable and contaminated. Many localities during the harvest and dry season have no water at all and have to travel long distance for several hours to find water. Fetching water is left solely to women. It ultimately becomes clear that the health of women is affected not by the contaminated water alone but also by the hard job involved in finding water supply.

Women among Aira Woreda district play major role in production of clothes. It was based on a rigid sexual division of labor. Women are responsible for the first stages of the operation (cleaning cotton and spinning) while men monopolized the latter phases (weaving and tailoring). Women also play active role in basketry and pottery. This is also a more laborious task. Which needs women to walk long distance in search of raw materials. For such activities in general, Aira Woreda women are the first in the family to get up early in the morning and the last to go to bed at the night. According to key informant results, women could not get rest at home because of a saying that "Gundoo fi nadheen hin teessu" mean (Gundoo\* and women are always busy).

### **The role of women in income generating Activities**

Beside to agriculture, there is also other means of income generating activities women participate. In all parts of the country, rural women heavily participate in the informal economy including marketing activities. Marketing is one of the activities of rural women. As women are active contributors to agricultural production, they are also active exchangers of the product. Products like (milk, butter, and cheese), their hand crafts (pottery, basketry), homemade drinks (areke, tella, tej) and even wood are their sources of income. They buy consumer goods such as salt, oil, onion, sugar, soap, clothes and even exercise book for their children. As the respondents replied, women's sell their agricultural products to the town. From these agricultural products: vegetables, fruits and the like things are brought in the market by women's. Cereal crop by men's. In addition, animal's products such as milk, butter, cheese are sold by women's in the town for getting money and eating purpose. Concerning this I have case study on one woman.

**Case2:** *She was born in Aira Woreda. She is 29 years old and she has six children:4 boys and 2 girls. Her husband is a merchant. He buys and resells oxen and cows at profit. Her daily task is milking cow bought by her husband. She milks 10 liters per day in the morning and evening. She sells 8 liters of milk per day to Meseret Hotel. The remaining two liters are used in her house and sometimes she sells milk once a month. As a result, she generates income to cover all of her household expenses.*

The survey finding indicates that, out of 95 respondents 91 of them sell their products (usually dairy products, small animals and some amount of grains). As they said, women's those who have a drunker and weak husband are fully responsible for their house by engaging in trade activities. However, still they have no right in making decision in the crucial household affairs and on their products (selling livestock and crops). That means most of time, the opinion of the husbands carry more weight than that of the wife in decision making. Women's decision making power in the household is discouraged by custom with saying that "mootummaan dubartii karra cufaatti oolcha" literally means Governance by women would result in poor decision making. For instance, 83 individuals of the 95 respondents husband is the sole decision maker. In 8 both the husband and the wife. In 4 households the wife. Respondents were also asked whether or not women could decide to sell agricultural product (crop and animals) on their own will. 86.6% of the respondents said no and only 13.4% said yes. Those who said no were asked to give reasons and the response are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Reason why women do not decide to sell products of their labor (bulk crops and cattle).

Reason	No of respondents	Percentage
Ignorance	24	25.3%
All products are controlled by their husbands	71	74.7%
No access to market	-	-
Total	95	100%

Source: Field survey 2010

The table illustrates the extent of women's participation in decision making process to sell products of their labor (usually cattle and bulk crops). Accordingly, 74.7% of the reported that women do not decide on the sale of cattle and bulk crops because they are controlled by their husbands while 25.3% of them attributed this fact to ignorance of women.

**Marketing hand crafts:**

Handcrafts are one of the important and common ways of income generating for Aira woreda women. Hand crafts traditionally focus on pottery and other material products. It is hereditary system. Daughters learn from their mothers how to make and market hand crafts. To indicate this I have one case study on women regarding hand crafts.

**Case 3:** *She was born in Aira woreda. She is 34 years old. She has one son and three daughters. She earns money from the crafts. She makes different potteries and other material products as a way of generating additional income. She sells these products at the market on Saturday. She gets at least seventy five to hundred birr on one day market. With this money, she can cover her household expenses and help her children. Her husband is daily laborer for other people. He gets little amount of money each day at least ten to twelve birr.*

**Marketing homemade drinks:** - related with the following case study.

**Case 4:** *She was born in Aira woreda. She is 31 years old and has 3 children two boys and a girl. Her husband he is a tailor. She sell the traditional drinks such as areke, tella and tej. She prepare these drinks from cereals and plant called gesho, honey for tej. The cereals types are wheat, barley and maize. Saturday is market day in Aira woreda. With the help of her first daughter, she sells at least 250 birr worth of alcohol on Saturday. On other days, she gets an average of 100 birr per day. With the money she makes from selling alcohol she can construct a new house, buy enough food and clothes for her children and herself including a lot of furniture for the house and etc.*

**The impacts of culture to women's activity in agriculture**

As respondents indicated especially experienced individuals in Aira district, there are traditions that undermine the role of women in agricultural activity. Most of the time, this tradition affects women's negatively. It affects women's moral and psychological makeup. Table below shows traditions that undermine women in agricultural activities.

Table 1.6 Traditions that undermine women in agricultural activities.

Tradition that undermine women	No of respondents	percentage
Different saying and proverbs	76	80%
Thinking women as weak	6	6.3%
Due to patriarchic domination	13	13.7%
	95	100%

Source: Field survey 2010

According to the above table, 80% of the respondents indicated that different proverbs that passed away from generation to generation in the society hinder women to participate in some agricultural activity.

For instance, Sayings “yoo nadheen qotte, midhaan hin barakatu” literally mean if women plough, crops do not last long. This is in case of ploughing the land. In the case of sowing, “Dubartiin

Sanyii facaasuu haa hafuu sanyiin ishee irraa yoo bu'ee sanyii fixxi" mean, let alone women sow seeds, they finish the seed to be sown if the seed fall on them. 6.3% of them indicate there is a belief that women are naturally weak but men are naturally strong. Because of this belief, they attribute some light activities towards women and hard activities towards men. Others 13.7% of respondents said that, the reason that hinders women in participating in some agricultural activities is patriarchal domination. Some husbands are not volunteers that his wife plough the land or change the corral of cattle and sow seed. Because if his wife performs this task in the community, this is shame for him. That means others consider him as weak and Lazy.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Conclusion**

The study indicates. The roles of women in agricultural economy in Aria woreda as a result of the study. The role of women in all aspects of agricultural activities are very high. In crop production. Women's participation starts from preparing farm land for sowing and ends storing in small ganary kept in house what is known as Gumbi in Afan Oromo. Their role looks like following: women clear field before cultivating. Prepare the land for sowing. Participate in weeding. Harvesting. Gathering the crop. Preparing. Threshing floor. Winnowing and transport the produced crop to home.

Women's contribution in animal takes the central place. This includes their participation in driving and out animals to grazing. Animals by collecting grass. Provide care and nourishment. Looking after and bring them into enclosure. Women perform domestic activities such as child care fetching water. Collecting fire wood. Food processing and cooking housekeeping grinding grain using mill stone and washing clothes. Etc...

Not only in agricultural had women also participate in other means of income generating activities. From trading homemade drinks. Making pottery are major ones.

Even though the roles of women in agricultural activities are high. Various constraints hinder their full participation in development activities. First there are traditional influences such as sayings. Proverbs that either obscure or degrade their remarkable contribution. Second. Women have limited power in their household affairs and on their produce which limits their contribution and roles.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations to support the efforts of improving women's productive and household maintenance tasks.

- ❖ Education for the women should be given using all possible means to make them aware of existing social barrier. Economically more active and they are strong creators of social and economic wealth in the rural life of the society.
- ❖ Development and provisions of water resources and introduction and training of fire wood substitution methods should be implemented in the study area so as to reduce their problems and enhance their roles in development.

- ❖ Government should promote the skills of by training and providing credit for those who are engage in traditional hand craft works as spinning. Pottery. Basketry etc.
- ❖ Encouraging women indecision making activities in all aspects of social life and agricultural activities.
- ❖ The agricultural extension program which is now widely applied throughout the country need to consider dimension of labor in put system have to be devised to include packages focused on women.
- ❖ Multi faceted efforts have to be made to avoid harmful traditional perceptions. Beliefs and practices that undermine women in agricultural activities. This is through educating all members of rural area. How traditional sayings or proverbs affect the role of women in agricultural activities.

### **References**

- Boserup.E.1970 Women's Role In Economic Development: Allen Union London.
- Daniel Haile 1984 Legal Status of Ethiopian Women in Agricultural Development, Hawassa, Ethiopia.
- ILO 1985. Women in Rural Development: Critical Issue, Geneva.
- Negaso Gidada 1984 The History of Sayyo Oromo of South Western Wollega, From About 1930 to 1886 Frank Furt Aim Main.
- Todaro .2003 economic development newyork pearson education limited
- Wickramasinghe. M.2000 From Theory To Action, Gender And Development Fredrick- Ebert-stiftug (FES) publication.