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Research and Policy Making: Half Travelled; Half in Trouble. By Taye Alamirew (PhD fellow Comparative and International Education) 1

Abstract
The production of new knowledge through the practices of research and scholarship lies at the heart of the university’s mission. Yet without effective and ongoing dissemination of knowledge, the efforts of researchers and scholars are wasted. The objective of the descriptive study was to examine research output communication strategies employed by researchers to reach education expertise (policy makers). Data was collected using questionnaire from a sample of 160 academicians (education faculty researchers) from eight public universities and 78 education expertise (federal ministry of education) selected randomly. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test, ANOVA). Results showed that inviting government office representatives to attend research conferences, sending copies of research publication outputs to government offices and disseminating via electronic media (on line services) are the most frequently communication efforts made by respondents (passive dissemination strategies) whereas preparing policy briefs, informing findings accompanied by formal letters and press briefings are the least exploited communication efforts. Statistical analysis of research dissemination efforts revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female (T(158) = 0.753, p >

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By contrast, applying Tukey HSD test to academic rank; level of education and length of work suggest that the mean difference is significant for respondents whose academic rank were between Assistant Professors and Lecturers (F (3,156) = 7.596, p<.05) ; whose qualification level were between PhD and MA/MSC holders (F (2,157) = 5.496, p<.05) ; whose length of work in HEIs were between 6-10 and 11-15 year groups (F (4,155) = 7.913, p<.05) but age was an insignificant moderator variable. From the study it was learned that the effective dissemination of research results to policymakers is an essential element of any research program, not only as a means of translating research results into policy action, but also research outputs without appropriate communication or active dissemination efforts is wastage in so far as policy relevant ideas are generated. Consequently, research dissemination should be a planned process, goal and audience oriented and should be accompanied by various active dissemination channels (face to face interaction, printed materials, internet, mass media) and communication tactics (such as scientific conference presentation, workshops, seminars for policymakers, coaching or consultation, policy briefs, tool kits, E-newsletter, Web sites, newsletters, press release, best practice guides, leaflets, brochures, posters, interactive CD or DVD etc) leading to awareness, understanding and action for an education issue identified as important such as quality and equity of education.

Key words: education research, research communication, policy influence.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The work of the faculty in higher education institutions has traditionally been trifocal, consisting of teaching, research and community service/extension (Mosha, 1986). Consequently, university faculty members are required to become effective teachers, innovative researchers, and service-oriented professionals. Research and community engagement have been believed to
contribute to development into four major pathways (DFID, 2014): economic growth (research leads to basic discovery and invention, and in turn to the creation of technology; technology leads to growth both where it is developed, and in other places when it is transferred); human capital (human capital is built by ‘doing’ research; through specific capacity building activities; and through impacts of research on tertiary education); products and technologies (products and technologies invented have direct positive impacts on human lives) and evidence-informed policy/practice (policy and practice decisions are better as a result of using research evidence as it informs specific interventions and enable to understand general contexts). Leathwood and Read also, in Cloete and Bunting (2013), describe the pressure on institutions and academics as follows: Research is a key purpose of higher education, and in a globalised and highly competitive knowledge-intensive world, it has become increasingly important to global, regional and national policy agenda. As a consequence, academics are also under ever greater pressure to perform to meet the demands of the new research economy (2013: 2).

Harkavy (1998) also argues that universities are under increasing pressure to be “relevant” in solving today’s complex challenges by adopting a community-oriented lens toward research activities and forming partnership and engagement relationships with communities. That is why, a ‘demand-pull’ model of knowledge transfer in which universities are increasingly interacting with the wider society has largely been advised by replacing the outdated ‘supply-push’ model which saw universities determine research priorities, often with little or no regard for the immediate needs of society (Innovative Research Universities Australia, 2005). As a result most faculty members in higher learning institutions are expected to be productive in research, teaching, and extension service (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Fair weather, 2002).
So, research, whether for academic or non academic impacts, is a component of an intellectually vigorous university environment and is an integral part of the mission of University. However; the interpretations of what constitutes research productivity and how it can be measured varies between authors and universities. Academic institutions primarily measure research productivity based on published works, externally funded grants, and the number of citations the published works received (Middaugh, 2001). The most common productivity measures look at publications that are submitted, accepted (in press), or published. The published works could be journal articles (refereed and non-refereed), books (including edited books and textbooks), book chapters, monographs, conference papers, and research proposals written to receive external and internal grants (Middaugh, 2001). Still while some universities measure research productivity in terms of a wide array of outputs (such as text books, book chapters, research reports, conference proceedings and graduate student supervision), Hardre et al. (2011: 20) note that peer-reviewed articles are the most general stable measure of research productivity across all academic fields. Print and Hattie (1997) highlighted the value of publications as the most direct measure of research performance and includes: articles in refereed journals, commercially published peer reviewed books, major refereed conference presentations, papers in refereed conference proceedings, articles weighed by journal citation impact, competitive peer reviewed grants, postgraduate research degrees supervised to completion, and editor/editorial board of recognized journals. Perhaps the most widely-used definition is that provided by Cresswell (1986), who describes research productivity as:

the extent to which lecturers engage in relevant research and publish scientific articles in refereed journals, conference proceedings, writing a book or a chapter, gathering and analyzing original
evidence, working with postgraduate students on dissertations and class projects, obtaining research grants, carrying out editorial duties, obtaining patents and licenses, writing monographs, presenting at professional meetings, developing experimental designs, producing works of an artistic or a creative nature, engaging in public debates and commentaries.

However; various factors affect research productivity especially in developing nations. Significant factors that affect scholarly productivity included quantity and quality of publications; highest degree earned; teaching and research interests; beliefs about relationship between publication and promotion and tenure; motivation to publish for enjoyment, to advance knowledge, and to fulfill professional obligation; age at first publication; primary teaching responsibilities; percentage of time devoted to teaching and research; hours of face to face instruction; postmaster's credits; credits toward doctorate; number of professional journals received; years since doctorate and first master's degree; memberships in the Council of national Researchers association (Kohlenberg, 1992). In general, an examination of the literature reveals that two general types of variables are assumed to explain the variance in individual research productivity: individual variables, and environmental variables (Bean, 1982; Fox, 1985; McGee & Ford, 1987; Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Dundar & Lewis, 1998) or what Bland et al (2002) noted as individual, institutional, and leadership characteristics’. The individual factors are characteristics of faculty members and it includes socio-demographic data (sex, age), career variables (career age, discipline, prestige of the institution faculty member attended graduate school), and motivation (Fox, 1983; Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). The environmental characteristics are the institutional resources, norms or physical plant that will limit or enhance faculty productivity (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). In his exhaustive review, Creswell (1985) summarized the
literature of faculty research productivity until 1985 and he offered four explanations of the variation in faculty research productivity: psychological-individual, cumulative advantage, reinforcement and discipline. Creswell (1985) noted that the relationship between individual and environmental variables and research performance remains unsolved. He suggested that “researchers might consider using academic rank, discipline, institutional affiliation, even perhaps career age ...as control variables in a predictive model and examine closely the significant correlates of productivity that are related to the work environment of the scholar” (p.71). Research productivity is often associated with socio-demographic, psychological and sociological factors. At the individual level most researchers used socio-demographic variables as predictors. Age is studied widely as one of the predicting factors of research productivity. Although the results of previous studies have not always been entirely consistent, it seems to be quite firmly established that there is a curvilinear relationship between age and productivity. Age served as an indicator of academic research experience and maturity (Perry, Clifton, Menec, Struthers, & Menges, 2000). Those who publish more at an early age continue to publish (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). However, productivity decreases with the advancement of age. Also, many studies have shown large gender differences in scientific productivity (Aksnes et al., 2011; Kyvik & Teigen, 1996), where female researcher are less productive. For example, Aksnes et al found that for almost all age groups and domains men are more prolific than women. Female scientists tend to publish generally between 20–40 per cent fewer publications than their male colleagues. With regard to many studies have shown that the productivity of publications at individual levels tends to increase within the hierarchy of academic positions (Bordonset al., 2003; Kyvik, 1991), where professors are the most prolific personnel. A large-scale study by Aksneset al. (2011) also showed that the professors are by far the most
productive persons. On average, male professors published 9.5 publications during a four year period. Next followed associate professors (4.8 publications), post doctors (4.5 publications) while the PhD students had the lowest productivity (2.9 publications). However, the average productivity of publications is lower for women than in all categories. Others include availability of Institutional resources (finance, human), organizational context (leadership, support, culture) (Ibid).

By contrast, Bland and Schmitz, (1986, cited in Hekelman, Zyzanski, & Flocke, 1995), noted 13 characteristics of effective researchers:

*Characteristics of productive researchers include personal motivation, adequate research time, mentors/advisors, in-depth content knowledge, research skills, early scholarly habits, local peer support, a network of productive colleagues, internal and external orientation, autonomy and commitment to the organization, multiple projects, socialization to academic environments, and sufficient resources (p. 239).*

However; Search is not complete until it is written up and its results shared, not only with other scientists who may build upon it to further advance the science, but also with those who may benefit from it, who may use it, and who have a stake in it. Researchers may engage in various research activities either for academic impact or non academic impact (policy influence) or a combination of these (LSE Public Policy Group, 2011). For policy mind researchers, the intention is to influence government body by supplying alternatives to current scenario(s) and to push to consider while (re) formulating, implementing, monitoring, evaluating or reviewing policy or sub policy agenda. Also, Knowledge utilization literatures suggest that, educational research can be used conceptually, instrumentally and symbolically (Weiss, 1979; Estabrooks, 1999). Knowledge utilization is a field of research concerned with factors explaining the utilization of scientific and technical knowledge by decision
makers and those in professional practices (Landry, Amara and Lamari, 2001). Other terms used to describe similar linking of research, policy and practice efforts are: knowledge translation, knowledge adaption, knowledge transfer, knowledge mobilization, knowledge exchange, diffusion of innovation etc. RU is a specific kind of knowledge utilization whereby the knowledge has a research base to substantiate it (Graham et al, 2006). Research utilization theories, such as Weiss’ theories (1979), describe research knowledge utilization as either directly influencing the policy (instrumental use), changing the policy-makers’ understanding of the issue (conceptual use), or as a form of support (symbolic). Nutley and colleagues’ conceptual type of research utilization highlights the fact that the final decision need not follow directly from researchers’ recommendations (Nutley, Walter, Davies HTO, 2003). The definition one chooses will affect the interpretation of the factors influencing research utilization. The stages model of research utilization provided by Knott and Wildavsky (1980) is useful for understanding the fact that using research is not a single event. This model looks at research findings as a process in and of itself. The process involves: reception (relevant information is received), cognition (information is read, digested, and understood), reference (information changes the views, preferences, or understanding of the magnitude or probabilities of the impact), effort (information influences actions; effort is made to adopt a study’s recommendations), adoption (information is put into policy and it influences policy outcomes), implementation (information is implemented) and impact (policy is implemented with desired effects). The basic concept is that research findings must first reach policy-makers, be read and understood by them, and then considered amongst other options before efforts can be made to adopt and implement them. Successful passage of such stages leads to Instrumental use of research which is research that is directly applied in a certain decisions. Also, research knowledge can be used
conceptually and persuasively. Conceptual use is research used for purposes of general enlightenment, to provide new concepts, ideas and perspectives that might be useful in a more indirect way and persuasive use is research use to persuade others, with the aim of influencing, for example, resource allocation or policies. A consequence of recognizing conceptual, instrumental and persuasive role of research evidence by policy mind researchers is that educational research outputs should be communicated or disseminated via electronic media, print materials and in person interaction with concern policy makers or any combination of these channels and tactics (Bryson, 2004; Macoubrie & Harrison, 2013). Hutchinson and Huberman, (1994) argue that transfer of research knowledge with and across settings should be a planned process that involves consideration of target audiences and the settings in which research findings are to be received, and where appropriate, communicated in ways that will facilitate research utilization in decision-making processes and practice (Wilson, et al 2010). Dissemination planning which involves not only looking at where and when the information should be disseminated but what should be communicated and how it should be presented so as to maximize research findings relevance, usefulness and accessibility to policy makers (CARE, 2009) or according to Havelock (1969), the knowledge transfer process involves: (1) who says (2) what to (3) whom by (4) what channel to (5) what effect for (6) what purpose seems shallow. Dissemination is a complex process whose success depends simultaneously on several dimensions like the dissemination agent’s characteristics (e.g., its credibility), the disseminated product (e.g., relevance of research results for users), the final user’s characteristics (e.g., personal motivation to use research results), the communication channels used (e.g., collaboration networks), the communication format (e.g., presentations, reports, etc.), as well as the resources allowed for these activities (e.g. time, human and financial resources)
(Huberman and Gather-Thurler 1991; Kirst 2000). Failing to take these dimensions into account, is often cited as one of the reasons why research results are under-utilized by practitioners in education (Boostrom et al. 1993; Hemsley-Brown 2004; Wikeley 1998; Willmott 1994) in Becheikh et al (n.d). To make effective, Stone, Maxwell and Keating (2001) advise: communication and dissemination strategies should be considered from the beginning of research project, should understand policy makers information needs; construct research results in a way that makes ideas useful (eg. timely reports, use of non-technical language, executive summaries, etc.); develop clear policy recommendations in research report; promote policy entrepreneur skills; develop a systematic dissemination strategy (including advocacy and campaign techniques); build channels of communication (web-sites, publications, media liaison, etc); organize workshops, conferences and other public or professional events; tailor research products to different audiences; target findings to user groups or stakeholders. Also, maximizing press and media exposure; widespread distribution of brochures and pamphlets; immediate advertising of research results; increasing the use of internet and other electronic means of dissemination; publishing research papers; engaging with policy makers through policy debates (especially on television) and holding open seminar presentations or other forum are noted (Jumah 1999; Abdel Jaber 1999; Ciupagea 1999; Garrett and Islam 1998) in Stone, Maxwell and Keating (2001). Ideally, results of research are used to improve policy and practice. For this to happen, communication must occur between those who carry out research and those who might use the results for some practical or policy-related purpose (Puchner, 2003).The goal of all dissemination should be utilization rather than distribution of products or papers through various tools such as training events (scientific conferences, workshops, academic courses, training for scientists and / or policy makers meetings, computer-based discussion lists, open days,
visits ) and *products*( reports, articles in peer-reviewed journal, videos tapes, newsletters, press release, websites, research summary sheets, best practice guides, leaflets, brochures, posters etc ) are primary tools that may or may not help you reach your dissemination goals with certain target audiences (NCCMT, 2010) as well as different channels and tactics indicated below.

**Table 1.1 Channels and tactics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channels</th>
<th>Communication tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Conference presentation, workshops, seminars for policymakers, Training or Train the Trainer, two-way dialogue or debate, group or team process to resolve concerns and issues, testimony to authorities, respond to questions, coalition of credible sponsors, technical assistance, knowledge broker, linking agent, legislative staff interaction, embedded researcher, interactive CD or DVD training, phone information service, phone conferencing, coaching or phone consultation, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web internet</td>
<td>Computer-mediated group discussion and/or decision making, E-learning, courses, or online training, <em>E-newsletter</em>, Listserv, Webinars, informal email messaging (e.g., short summaries of Cochrane Reviews), Web clearinghouse, Blog, Community of Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass media</td>
<td>Attention-getting activities to generate press, Media campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio/visual media</td>
<td>Interactive CD or DVD training, phone information service, phone conferencing, Coaching or phone consultation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An asterisk (*) designates items that audience research finds are audience preferences; these are primarily policymaker and administrator studies

Source: Macoubrie & Harrison (2013)

**1.2 Statement of the problem**

For many researchers, influencing policy makers and/or decision makers are an intended result or expectation of their research outputs but the question is it a reality? In Ethiopia, introduction of higher education, in early 1950s, had
inspired the need for conducting educational research, at least, either for academic purposes (such as academic dialogue, publication, promotion) (Degarge, 2000). It was, however; with the establishment of educational research center in 1968 (now Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University), institutionalized studies of educational problems started (Seyoum, 1996). The government recognizes the important role that research can play in policy development and demands appropriate nexus among Education, Training, Research and development, For instance; the existing education and training policy (MOE,1994, p.27) states that “research of practical societal impact will be given priority and the necessary steps will also be taken to facilitate the coordinated efforts of all those concerned” and the higher education proclamation (proc. no 650/2009, article 4(2)), demands to “promote and enhance research focusing on knowledge and technology transfer consistent with the country's priority needs”. However; it is common to hear educational researchers and policy makers blaming each other. For instance; it is common to hear that policy-makers in social service sectors are criticizing researchers as out of touch, impractical and irrelevant and social researchers on their own part criticizing policy makers in the media, journal, and conferences or in the tea room for ignoring, under-utilizing or misrepresenting research findings when formulating or implementing policy or sub policy activities. Also, getting whether usable research outputs (in quantity and frequency ) are being undertaken and research outputs are being disseminated well widely to potential users by scientists are rare to the best of the researcher’s experience and overview of study reports. And in my belief, this is a point missed in Ethiopian education system to be documented including scientific production and stakeholder communication strategies. This descriptive survey, therefore; looks at research productivity by educational faculty and communication strategies. To this effect, the study was guided by the following research questions.
How frequently and diversely did educational Researchers engage in research productivity?

What research outputs communication strategies did Educational Researchers employ to influence Education expertise?

Contextual meanings of some terms

Research productivity - scholarly publications in journals (national, abroad), books (text book or book chapter) and in conference proceedings, involving in editorial works (journals, books, proceedings), research conference presentations (institutional, national and international), writing proposals to win grants (internal or external agency), post graduate student supervision, writing monographs and press briefing of research results made in the last five years assuming that a five year window for book publishing (Cresswell, 1986).

Dissemination/ Communication - consist of purposive, goal-oriented communication of information or knowledge that is specific and potentially useable, from one social system to another (Louis and van Velzen, 1988). That is, dissemination is a process requiring a careful match among (a) the creation of products or knowledge, and the context of that creation, (b) the target audiences, and (c) the content, media, formats, and language used in getting the outcomes into the hands (and minds) of those target audiences (Mace-Matluck, 1986; NCDDR, 2001).

2. Methods and procedures of the study

2.1 Research Design: Descriptive Survey

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) argued that "many educational research methods are descriptive…. seeking to describe and to interpret what is" (p.169). A descriptive research study focuses on conditions and relationship that prevail. It seeks to point out views, and attitudes that are held. It tries to find out processes that are going on. This study is based on a process design view of descriptive survey because surveys are appropriate for measuring people’s
perceptions, opinions, knowledge, attitudes, behavioral intentions, behavior and thoughts of a representative sample of individuals at a given point in time and place using primarily closed-ended questions (Kalaian, 2011).

2.2 Data sources and Variables of the study
Educational researchers and documents are main sources for the study. Lee and Schuele (2010) see demographic variables as independent variables because they cannot be manipulated. Demographic factors are included in this study in order to see if there are any factors that have intrinsic problems associated with them that interfere with an academic researchers’ ability to carry out research or education expertise’s ability to use research findings and includes age, gender, years of experience, educational qualifications, work position and academic status. Research productivity and communication efforts are dependent variables.

2.3 Target population, Sampling techniques and Sample size
The target populations for the study were college/ institutes /school of education and behavioral science faculties. In this study, the academic community includes faculty working in universities in the areas of teacher preparation (science, language, educational psychology, pedagogy, curriculum, special need, early childhood education) and education leadership and management with the status (rank) of professor, associate professor, assistant professor and PhD student (lecturer). Across the country, currently, there are 30 public universities having teacher education (long term and short term training) organized as College or institute or faculty or school of Education and Behavioral studies. Considering the staff composition, program diversity (undergraduate, post graduate), institutional age, presence of institutional publications series (journal, proceeding), series of organizing institutional, national and international conferences and regional distribution, nine universities were selected purposefully. Respondents from the academic
community in the rank of lecturers who are attending PhD were selected randomly while academic researchers in the academic rank of assistant professors and above were included comprehensively (all included in the study).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Legible staff size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addis Ababa</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahir Dar</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haromaya</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimma</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilla</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawassa</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekelle</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JigJiga</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td><strong>314</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>290</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 Data collection: instruments, development and validation

This cross-sectional survey employed self-administered questionnaires and semi structured interview with the intention of assessing academic community perceptions, opinions and practices on research outputs and communication strategies.
Initially, the items included in the survey questionnaire of the present study were largely based on the review of related literatures and/or adaptations of other works produced in the area of education, health, sociology and criminal justice in the western world. Mainly, the Adapted were Scholarly Productivity Index (Wakefield-Fisher, 1987) for research productivity; Wildavsky (1980) ladder of climbing research utilization scale, and Rogers (2003) diffusion of innovation. The survey instrument was tested through multiple confirmatory means such as theoretical guidance, an extensive literature review, peer review by expert opinion and the dissertation supervisory, pre-testing and calculation of Cronbach’s Alpha (Cronbach's Alpha (α = 0.05) = 0.802; 0.963 & 0.963 for research productivity, dissemination effort, degree of knowledge translation respectively).

2.5 Methods of Data Analysis
For closed questionnaire items, after checking completely and partially filled questionnaire, the collected response sheets were given an ID code numbered from 001 to 160 for academic community. Only completely filled questionnaire considered. For statistical analysis, data is viewed as a collection of different pieces of information or facts or variables. Quantitative data analyses in the form of descriptive statistical analysis were employed that included a measure of central tendencies (e.g., frequency, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test, correlation coefficient, analysis of variance). Unless noted otherwise all tests for quantitative analyses were two-tailed with a statistical significance level of 0.05. The data for this study were entered and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 (SPSS) and presented in a descriptive fashion.

2.6 Data presentation, Analysis and Discussion
Profile of participants
Data were collected among university Teacher educators and educational Leadership Trainers (n= 290) of seven public universities (Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Mekelle, Dilla, Hawassa, Haramaya, JigJiga Universities). During the field work of data collection I have got the access to contact 200 respondents whereas the rest were not around the respective university compound by the time I was there due to various reasons such as retirement, sabbatical leave, field work for research projects, sickness and visiting other institutions as a guest lecture as I try to explore information from the dean of each college/school/institute of education and behavioral studies. Of 200 distributed questionnaires, the response rate was 80%. Statistically, the vast majority of the respondents were males (91.3%), between 36 and 45 years old (51.9%), obtained a PhD degree (34.4) and PhD students (37.5%), worked for 6 to 10 years in higher education institutions (59.4%) but less than half of respondents (43.8%) were assistant professors’ and above in academic rank.

3. Data presentation, Analysis, Discussion, findings, conclusion and recommendation

3.1 Data presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Research question one: How frequently and diversely did educational Researchers engage in research productivity?

The highest and lowest over all mean was for the item that asks presentation at scientific conference (X = 1.18 SD =1.027) and writing a monograph (X =0.14 SD = .445) respectively compared to the overall mean and standard deviation for the research productivity scale (x =0.565; Sd= 0.781). As indicated in table below, presentation at scientific conference followed by submission for journal publication, submitting a proposal for grant, publishing in conference proceeding and publishing in peer reviewed journals are the five frequently research outputs of respondents (educational researchers) accomplished during 2010 to 2015 in decreasing order of 1-2 times, 3-4 times and 5-10 times. By
contrast, writing a monograph (88.8%), publishing chapters in a book (82.5%), press briefings (81.9%), publishing a text book (79.4%) are the four rarely practiced. In the scientific production scale, over all, 28.86%; 8.67%, 2.38%, 0.764% respondents produced scientific works 1-2 times, 3-4 times, 5-10 times and more than ten times respectively while a little more than half of respondents (58.1%) engagement in various research based activities is almost negligible during the survey period (2010-2015). This shows that research based activities of academicians in the studied institutions and period were inadequate, both in variety and frequency. In the open-ended questionnaire item that request respondents to suggest possible challenges contributing to be fairly unsuccessful or very unsuccessful to research performances (if any), various factors were solicited:

*The research culture of the Ethiopian researchers is only to get academic award; lack of motivational strategies from the government side to encourage the researchers; the bureaucracies in higher institution including the finance issue; difficulty to secure needed budget or budget constraint, time constraint; experience, time and information resource to publish on journal; there is no access and/or facilities to send articles to publishers; overload on postgraduate thesis advising; lack of fund for research; inadequate incentive after getting published; there is no encouraging environment in our country to conduct and participate in research activities; unable to get chances to participate in different research activities, work load, lack of motivational strategies by institutions, poor attention for institutions unavailability of funding agencies and less emphasis given for educational research; lack of motivation, skill on research gap; lack of budget, motivational elements (such as reward and working environment); lack of published professional work, poor culture*
research in the institution, low academic status composition; lack of organized office, lack of commitment, inadequacy of resources such as finance, time; limited institutional thematic area, inadequate cost to cover the study process; confusion on the reputability of the journals; doing research for income generating purpose than knowledge production and transfer.

So, from the descriptive and interview information, the inadequacies of scientific production are hypothesized to be individual, departmental, institutional and/or governmental related factors. A study on factors and obstacles affecting research productivity among academic staff at medical and health colleges in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, by Alghanim and Alhamali (2011), using 389 valid respondents, found that lack of time, lack of research assistants, and lack of financial incentives were the most cited barriers to research productivity reported by more than two-thirds of respondents followed by obstacles such as heavy teaching schedule, lack of management support, and poor research atmosphere reported by approximately half of respondents followed by lack of interest in carrying out research, lack of knowledge in statistics, lack of secretarial support and lack of colleagues support as other barriers for conducting scientific research reported by more than one third of respondents (more discussion in chapter nine).

Table 3.1 Research engagement practice and Diversity of Research Outputs (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research outputs during (2010-2015)</th>
<th>1-2 times</th>
<th>3-4 times</th>
<th>5-10 times</th>
<th>&gt;10 times</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

22
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Quartiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Made a presentation at a scientific (professional) conference</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submitted scholarly article for publication in an academic or policy study journal</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submitted a research proposal to a government or private agency to win grant</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published scholarly articles in conference proceedings</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published scholarly articles in referred academic journals (reputable, peer reviewed)</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written a research report for an agency, institution, or other group</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed articles for a professional journal</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked with postgraduate students for dissertations and theses supervision/advise</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edited the proceedings of a professional meeting</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published scholarly articles in policy study journals (reputable, peer reviewed)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published a text book</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written for the popular press</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>81.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published chapters in a book</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrote a monograph (a detailed written study of a single specialized thematic area)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>8.67</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>.764</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research question two:** What research out communication strategies did Educational Researchers employ to influence Education expertise?

With regard to the role of educational research findings to policy inputs, table 8.5, respondents reported that ranges from with no contribution (5.9%), to little
contribution (19.7%), to moderate contribution (29.54%), and to great contribution (13.45%) while 32.1% of respondents put ‘no opinion’. Reducing the five scaled response in to three categories, by merging no/little and moderate/ great in one, shows extent of educational research contribution to educational sub policy making activities/inputs becomes 24.9% and 43% to the extent of rarely and greatly respectively. On item basis, using rarely- no opinion-greatly category; more than half of academic community respondents reported that research findings have the potentials to increases policy makers' awareness (63.7%) of an educational issue (such as education quality, equity); inform future policy decisions /directions (56.9%) ; influence a policy maker’s thinking and understanding of an issue (53.2%) and provide policy-makers with pragmatic, action-oriented recommendations for addressing an issue, question, or problem (54.4%). On the other hand, such roles are said to be conceptual use of research – a research that may be used to change opinion or mind set about a specific practice area or influence a practitioner’s thinking and understanding, but not necessarily particular actions. This indirect application of research is believed to occur more often in practice than instrumental use, but in a less tangible way. Scientists influence the policy agenda and 'enlighten' politicians hereby. In such cases scientists are idea providers or problem spotters (Bax, 2011; Blake & Ottoson, 2009). By contrast, using research findings as ammunition to support the decisions made and being implemented, to justify and legitimate the final policy and using it as a political tool to legitimate policies and decisions in progress are the least perceived roles (as rated below the average mean) implying the persuasively or politically usage of research in Ethiopia is minimum.

Table 3.2 Academic Respondents Belief on the contribution of Research to policy input
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Roles</th>
<th>No to extent %</th>
<th>Little extent %</th>
<th>No opinion%</th>
<th>Moderate extent %</th>
<th>Great extent %</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>No/little</th>
<th>Moderate/great</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increases policy makers’ awareness of an educational issue</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform future policy decisions /directions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence a policy maker’s thinking and understanding of an issue</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide policy-makers with pragmatic, action-oriented recommendations for addressing an issue, question, or problem</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help policy makers to identify policy alternatives and to choose the preferred policy option</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be applied directly in guiding specific interventions</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change opinion or mind set about a specific education issue</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change minds of other people, usually decision makers</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be directly applied in specific decisions</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be used as ammunition to support the decisions made and being implemented</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justify and legitimate the final policy</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be used as a political tool to legitimate policies and decisions in progress</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of table 8.5 also suggest that respondents believe that educational research can be used instrumentally (e.g. be directly applied in specific decisions) and symbolically (e.g. be used as a political tool to legitimate policies and decisions in progress). And this finding is consistent with what Weiss (1979) and Estabrooks (1999) advocate: instrumental use of research is that it
is directly applied in a certain decisions; conceptual purposes of general enlightenment, to provide new concepts, ideas and perspectives that might be useful in a more indirect way; and persuasive use to persuade others, with the aim of influencing, for example, resource allocation or policies. A consequence of recognizing conceptual, instrumental and persuasive role of research evidence by policy mind researchers is that educational research outputs should be communicated or disseminated via electronic media, print materials, in person interaction with concern policy makers or any combination of these channels and tactics (Bryson, 2004; Macoubrie & Harrison, 2013). Hutchinson and Huberman, (1994) argue that transfer of research knowledge with and across settings should not be with the expectations that the knowledge will be ‘used’ conceptually… or instrumentally, rather dissemination should be a planned process that involves consideration of target audiences and the settings in which research findings are to be received, and where appropriate, communicated in ways that will facilitate research utilization in decision-making processes and practice (Wilson, 2010). Consequently, the effective dissemination of research results to policymakers is an essential element of any research program, not only as a means of translating research results into policy action, but also to provide ‘pay-back’ for the investment in research (Askew, 2002). With regard to research outputs communication/dissemination efforts to reach knowledge consumers (policy makers), the highest mean above the overall mean was for the item that asks invitation of government body to attend scientific conference (X = 1.74 SD = .0746) while the overall mean and standard deviation for the research communication strategies were 1.59 and 0.582. As indicated in table 8.6, inviting government office representatives to attend research conferences (by a little more than half of respondents), sending copies of research publication outputs to government offices (about 43%) and disseminating via electronic media (about 37%) are the communication
channels made by respondents whereas preparing policy briefs, informing findings accompanied by formal letters and press briefings are the least exploited communication channels (less than 25%) accomplished during 2010 to 2015. In the research communication efforts scale, over all, 26.36%; 5.01%, 0.64% and 0.17% of respondents disseminated scientific works 1-2 times, 3-4 times, 5-10 times and more than ten times respectively while more than half of respondents (67.89%) dissemination efforts is almost negligible during the survey period (2010-2015).

A general director who attended research conferences held in Ethiopia also shared what he observed in the past stating that:

_....in education conferences, there is passive dissemination trend being practiced especially from education policy making perspectives.......... simply conducting a one day or two days conference on a series of multi education issues and making information public with the hope someone will find and use it (e.g., through a journal article) may not be appropriate channel and tactic instead dissemination should be active, involving a change agent deliberately engaged in actions to increase spread of new information and speed of utilization both from the university as a pushing agent and the ministry as policy/sub policy idea entrepreneur(pulling agent)._

This shows that communicating research findings to policy makers for policy or product development (e.g. input into official guidelines or protocols); sector benefits (e.g. impacts on specific sub policy issues) and wider societal benefits using print and electronic media and seminars (in person interactions) in a language that favors end users (policy makers) are inadequate or passively disseminated which may further hint out that the research engagement and outputs of educational researchers may be for academic purposes such as for publications (e.g peer-reviewed journals), research capacity building (e.g.
learning), institutional requirement (e.g. career development) or any combination of theses.

Table 3.3 Dissemination Efforts of respondent to Influence Policy Making Bodies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication strategies</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>1-2 times</th>
<th>3-4 times</th>
<th>5-10 times</th>
<th>&gt;10 times</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerned government body invited to attend research conferences, workshops</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>0.746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies of journals or proceedings submitted to directly concerned government body</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results disseminated via webpage, open days, e-mail, exhibitions</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned government body contacted personally and issues discussed well</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>0.597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy briefs produced and submitted to concerned government body</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter written to concerned government body about research findings and policy implications</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefings made using press release</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>67.89</strong></td>
<td><strong>26.36</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.01</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.64</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.17</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.59</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.582</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Climbing Ladder of Research Translation

Chart 3.1, visualizes the number of researchers climbing and falling at the different echelons of the ladder of knowledge utilization. The highest echelon of the ladder, that is application (impact) of knowledge, is successfully reached by 3 of the 160 scholars surveyed. The same Chart also indicates that 121 of the researchers do not even succeed to reach the first echelon of the ladder that is the mere transmission of their research results to users. The other echelons where researchers fall in great proportion are the stage of reference and
influence. Generally, it seems that the number of researchers who successfully failed the stages is increasing from transmission to cognition to effort to influence to application (less likely opinion)

Chart 3.1 Academicians climbing the ladder of research utilization

Decreasing trend of transmission of research to cognition of findings to reference made to significant studies to efforts made to operate findings to influence seen on decisions and finally to application of research to policy and/or practice may suggest the variety of research outputs and its relevance, communication channels and tactics in place, systems built between knowledge producers and knowledge consumers (education expertise) are inadequate. However; such staged models can tend to over-weight the instrumental uses of research at the expense of conceptual effects. They also have an implicit over-reliance on linear assumptions (for example, they tend to suggest that all stages will be passed through in sequence; that the stages are equally important and cumulative; and that similar efforts are required to move across stages). In contrast, empirical studies have shown that only rarely will research impacts be direct, instrumental and clearly identifiable, such as when research leads
directly to specific policy choices, or when research is neatly captured and codified in tools and instruments such as guidelines, protocols or organizational processes (Davies, Nutley and Walter, 2005).

**Effects of demographic and Career Variables on research productivity and communication**

Variables of gender as a result of socialization difference, age as a maturity, educational level as exposure to complex and sophisticated level of reasoning and work experience as organizational expertise and specialization are common in empirical studies. Applying inferential statistics, gender (using two sample independent t-tests) has no significance difference in any one of the dependent variables (research productivity, communication effort and degree of knowledge translation. Age has shown a significance difference among age groups for research productivity (F (3,156) = 2.742, p<.05) so that as age increases from **26 – 35 to 36 - 45 research productivity also increases and then decline to 46 - 55**. There is also a mean difference among length of work in HEIs groups for research productivity (F (4,155) = 7.913, p<.05) and for research dissemination efforts (F (4,155) = 3.716, p<.05) so that as work length increases from 1-5 to 6-10 years in HEIs, both research productivity and research dissemination efforts, increases and **then declines to 11-15 to 16-20 to 21- 25 years**. Level of Education (qualification) Effects make a difference for research outputs (F (2,157) = 45.474, p<.05), research dissemination efforts (F (2,157) = 5.496, p<.05) and climbing ladder of research translation (F (2,157) = 8.808, p<.05) so that as education status increases from MA/MSC holder to being PhD student to PhD holder, both research productivity (outputs), dissemination effort and degree of translation also increases sharply. With regard to academic rank, there is mean difference among level of academic career groups for research outputs (F (3,156) = 39.721, p<.05), for research dissemination efforts (F (3,156) = 7.596,
and climbing ladder of research translation (F (3,156) = 3.522, p<.05) so that as academic title increases from lecturer to assistant professor to associate professor to professor, both research productivity (outputs), dissemination effort and climbing ladder of research translation also increases sharply.

3.2 Summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations

The purpose of the study was to assess research productivity and communication strategies of educational researchers. To this, effect, using research productivity indicators - scholarly publications in journals (national, abroad), books (text book or book chapter) and in conference proceedings, involving in editorial works (journals, books, proceedings), research conference presentations (institutional, national and international), writing proposals to win grants (internal or external agency), post graduate student supervision, writing monographs and press briefing of research results made in the last five years assuming that a five year window for book publishing - the study revealed that presentation at scientific conference followed by submission for journal publication, writing a proposal for grant, publishing in conference proceeding and publishing in peer reviewed journals are the five frequently research outputs of respondents by more than 50% of respondents but with decreasing frequency of 1-2 times, 3-4 times and 5-10 times. On the other hand, writing a monograph, publishing chapters in a book, press briefings and publishing a text book are the four rarely practiced scientific productions during the surveyed period.

Analyzing using research dissemination indicators – research conferences/workshops, in-person contact government body, informing results by official letter writing, informing via preparing policy briefs, press briefings, informing via journal or proceedings and electronic media as channels of communication – the study revealed that inviting government office representatives to attend research conferences (by a little more than half of
respondents), followed by sending copies of journals/proceedings government offices (about 43%) and disseminating via electronic media (about 37%) are relatively communication strategies practiced by respondents. On the other hand; communicating via preparing policy briefs, via formal letters and press briefings are the least exploited communication channels during 2010 to 2015.

**Conclusion**

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that scientific productions of academicians in the studied institutions and periods were inadequate, both in quantity and variety. Also, research communications strategies are limited, infrequent and even the applied tactics are traditional passive dissemination strategies that may not have proved influence on end users (education expertise).

**Recommendations**

Traditionally, the success or otherwise of academic research has been judged in quite narrow ways, usually by an assessment of peer-reviewed published output. Extensions to this view have seen bibliometric analyses that have assessed not only the amount of published output, but also the quality of that output (e.g. by peer esteem or by impact factors of the outlets used), and the extent to which the output has influenced others in the same field (e.g. by citation tracking). Such approaches have long been used to assess the ‘productivity’ of individual researchers, projects or programmes or to map networks of relations between researchers (and between researchers and policy makers/practitioners) in similar or overlapping areas of study (Lindsey, 1989; Hicks, 1991). More recently, attempts have been made to go beyond simply examining research outputs to describe and quantify impacts of research, sometimes using models that call attention to ‘return on investment’ or ‘research payback’ (Buxton & Hanney, 1996; Hanney et al 2002; Wooding et al, 2004) in Davies, Nutley and Walter (2005). These approaches typically
identify a number of categories where outputs/impacts might be expected from research, for example: knowledge production (e.g. peer-reviewed papers), research capacity building (e.g. postgraduate training and career development); policy or product development (e.g. input in to official guidelines or protocols); sector benefits (e.g. impacts on specific client groups); and wider societal benefits (e.g. economic benefits from increased population education or productivity). To boost non–academic impact of researches, conducting research on policy and for policy is vital and these are realized when individual, departmental, institutional and governmental related factors are solved out as low research productivity and hence communication to stakeholders are associated to it. So, it recommended that at individual level (e.g issues of motivation, self determination, research self efficacy), departmental level (e.g teaching/research balance), institutional level (leadership, financial and human resource support, capacity building) and at government level (e.g design research policy, strategy and set incentive mechanism) should be given due emphasis. Also, research dissemination should be a planned process, goal and audience oriented and should be accompanied by various active dissemination channels (face to face interaction, printed materials, internet, mass media) and communication tactics (such as scientific conference presentation, workshops, seminars for policymakers, coaching or consultation, policy briefs, tool kits, E-newsletter, Web sites, newsletters, press release, best practice guides, leaflets, brochures, posters , interactive CD or DVD etc) leading to awareness, understanding and action for an education issue identified as important such as quality and equity of education.

Another important issue is further research in the area of research use. Non-academic research impact is about identifying the influences of research findings on policy, managerial and professional practices, social behavior or public discourse. Such impact may be instrumental, influencing changes in
policy, practices and behavior, or conceptual, changing people’s knowledge, understanding and attitudes towards social issues. There are various models which seek to capture both these different types of research impact and the process by which this impact occurs. These models are important because they shape, and provide a means of assessing the appropriateness of, different approaches to assessing research impact. But still verifying the existing models and conducting depth study in the context of developing countries is an investigation area.

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Entrepreneurs are Creative Force for the Economy: How could the Universities’ Research contribute in equipping these Forces? By: Marga Fekadu Angerasa

Abstract
This article assesses the ways in which universities’ research can develop new entrepreneurs and strengthen the existing entrepreneur, giving more emphases on Ethiopian universities’ research. Entrepreneurship is often associated with stimulating economic growth, innovation, job and venture creations. Universities, on the other hand, are supposed to be a place where, not only the potential entrepreneurs are produced, but also a place where value-adding researches are to be conducted. Focusing on Ethiopian higher education institutions I argue that, it is their responsibility to forge relationships and partnerships with industries on the bases of mutual benefits. The paper is doctrinal, thus, many literatures related to the topic and the practice of different countries analyzed. The Article concludes that the contribution of the universities’ research for the entrepreneurship is multifarious and the country can reap the maximum advantages of the entrepreneurship if its higher education institutions are working in cooperation with industries and entrepreneurs through the internship programs and doing the problem solving and innovative researches.

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Key words: Universities’ research, Entrepreneurship, higher education institutions, Ethiopia and innovation, triple helix and entrepreneurial universities.

Introduction
Entrepreneurs are the innovate force of the economy. However, the contribution for the development in general and their innovative nature in particular depends in many factors among which their use and absorptive capacity of the new technology is the major. It is also, widely accepted that the universities are the driving force for the entrepreneurship development in wider regional, social and community environment. There are many ways through which universities can contributed to the development of the entrepreneurship. For instance, the role of universities’ researches is of significant importance in the enhancement of the development of the entrepreneurs. This paper described the role of the universities’ researches for the development of the entrepreneurship. For this purpose, the paper is prepared under five sections. The first section deals with the definition of the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship The concept of entrepreneurial universities and its definition, the triple helix model and linear model is provided under section two. While section three is about the innovate nature of the entrepreneurship, under this section I discussed the factors that affects and the way the entrepreneurs be the innovate force of the economy. Section four gives the definition for the universities’ researches. Section five is the main part of the paper. It explains the different ways through which the universities’ research helps the entrepreneurs. Then about seven ways are given the detail explanation and finally the paper ends with the conclusion and findings.
1. The Definition of Entrepreneurship

It is difficult to come up with generally accepted definition of entrepreneurship or entrepreneur. This can be attributed to the dynamic nature of entrepreneurship and the way in which different scholars understand it differs based their countries background. Word entrepreneurship is coined during the 17th century by French economist Richard Cantillon\(^3\). He defined it as a self employment of any sort which envisages the risk taking\(^4\). This definition of entrepreneurship is too narrow to include all types of entrepreneurship. For instance, the entrepreneurship can be reflected in the employment work where the employee can create new process or market system\(^5\). Further, the institution or certain business organizations can establishes branches through which they produce new products or processes\(^6\). The definition given by Cantillon thus, could encompass neither of them.

On the other hand, entrepreneurship is defined as the manifest ability and willingness of individuals, on their own, in teams, within and outside existing organizations to perceive and create new economic opportunities (new

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\(^6\) ID .p. 65
products, new production methods, new organizational schemes, and new product–market combinations), and to introduce their ideas to the market.\(^7\)

A prophet of innovation economist Joseph Schumpeter explained entrepreneurship as “a process of creative destruction\(^8\).” According to him, the activity of creating a new way/thing or upgrading the existing thing or way was Entrepreneurship\(^9\). For him, the entrepreneurship is the process for destruction of the existing to replace them with the newly invented one. While he gives the summary to the constituent element of the entrepreneurship, he provides three yardsticks in terms of which we can categorize a given work as the works of entrepreneurs\(^10\). These are: the innovation (invention of new ideas, process, products or market system) the initiative to make profit and acceptance of the possible risks. Innovation is either inventing the universally new or to bring something from place of its origin to a place where they do not exist (the latter mainly shows adoption of new technologies or ideas).

For the purpose of this piece, entrepreneurs can be defined as an individual or enterprise (entrepreneur) who innovate the new product, processes or market accepting the potential risks on the area where the profit can be earned. Individuals can be considered as entrepreneur at two levels; where they act on their own behalf or by their managerial position for an enterprise.

2. The Concept of Entrepreneurial University

The necessity to translate academic knowledge into technological applications as a source of social and economic development has transformed the traditional

\(^7\) Ibid
\(^9\) *Supra-note* 3, WEROTAW p.21
\(^10\) *Supra-note* 4, THURIK, p.566
teaching and research role of the university. The traditional role of the universities were teaching and conducting researches while new social mission is turning academia into the central actor of a complex network in which interactions with industrial and governmental spheres are fundamental to commercialize research and create an organizational system of innovation\textsuperscript{11}. In addition to teaching and research, there is what often called “the third mission” of the universities in regional economic development, which can be described as “community service”\textsuperscript{12}.

Entrepreneurial university is defined in terms of its function, as university whose graduates have received necessary entrepreneurship skills within study courses during their education, with the university offering practical exercises and case analysis in short term courses and workshops by sector professionals. Integration of schools of entrepreneurship in a study process helps to diversify courses by adding entrepreneurial modules. In such a course, students learn basic concepts, the importance and the role of entrepreneurship in establishing small and average companies, get market and economic development understanding, and learn how to get commercial return from investment into R&D\textsuperscript{13}.

Entrepreneurial university is further defined as “a type of modern university that stands on its own feet in order to adapt, on its own terms, to a highly

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{11} DAVID MINGUILLO AND MIKE THELWALL, 2011, The Entrepreneurial Role of the University: A Link Analysis of York Science Park, p.1
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid
\textsuperscript{13} NATALJA JAROHNOVICH AND CHEM. VALDIS AVOTIŅŠ, 2013 The Changing Role of the Entrepreneurial University in Developing Countries: The Case of Latvia, Journal Of Higher Education Theory And Practice Vol. 13(2), p.124
\end{flushright}
complex and highly uncertain world\textsuperscript{14}. This includes the capability of universities to fund themselves through commercialization of their own technology and research by collaborating with industries\textsuperscript{15}.

Thus, entrepreneurial universities are those universities which beside and beyond their traditional role of teaching and research, work for the general welfare of the society through commercialization of their researches and which are flexible enough to work with the industries and the government. It can be both the public and private universities.

The role of entrepreneurial universities can be summarized as; entrepreneur generation such as (students, alumni professors and trainers), doing applied research, knowledge and technology transfer, contribution in socio-economic development, and developing an entrepreneurial culture regarding the role of the universities in the community service there are two models\textsuperscript{16}.

- \textit{triple helix model} and
- \textit{linear model} (traditional model)

The concepts of \textit{triple helix}, suggest the interdependence between the three institutions (universities, industries and government) maintaining their autonomy. According to the \textit{triple helix} model, the government supports the universities by initiating new policy programs which includes, among other things, monetary incentives, quasi-market mechanisms and by establishment of science parks and co-operative R&D centers, and initiate various programs so that, the knowledge could be transferred from university researches to the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{14} Id. p.125 \\
\textsuperscript{15} Id, p.127 \\
\end{flushright}
exiting industry or resulted in the establishment of new industries. On the other hand, the industries can contributed to the development of the universities’ research through provision of funds for the research to be conducted. By having such collaboration with the government and industries, the universities achieve, at least, three purposes;
Firstly, they supply their researches and technologies to the entrepreneurs (through licensing its copy and patent right, by concluding research contract, through establishments of the star-ups) which in turns enhance the development of the entrepreneurship which is the driving forces for economic development of the country. This is one of the ways through which the universities can contributed the community service, i.e. supplying their researches to the industries in general and to the entrepreneurship in particular.
Secondly, the universities get the opportunity to change their researches in to income (commercialization of researches and technologies) which helps them in funding themselves than being dependent on the state or their original funders\textsuperscript{17}. Being independent from the state for budget by itself amounts to “community service” for the budget that would have been allocated for the universities can be used by the state for other community services.
Finally, the Faculty and students face practical problems and gain access to knowledge developed outside the academy. This is particularly important in many emerging fields where academic research and publication usually lags industry. This can have the forms of internships, doing applied projects and researches.

\textsuperscript{17} ALOK K. CHAKRABARTI AND MARK RICE, 2003, Changing Roles of Universities in Developing Entrepreneurial Regions: The case of Finland and the US, MIT IPC Working Paper IPC-03-003,p.4
The linear model, however, argues for the academic autonomy. They consider innovations as they were resulting automatically from basic research, thus there was no need for enhanced political intervention into the scientific realm, they conclude.\textsuperscript{18} This traditional model promotes the clear boundary demarcation between the three institutions the universities, government and the industries. According to this model, the government should not cooperate with universities in conducting researches for such cooperation is against the principle of academic freedom. It more or less has influenced by the neo-liberalism economic theory. It suggests the industries should left for the markets, the government for its traditional role (only protecting the peace and security) and the universities for academics\textsuperscript{19}. There should be any kind of linkage between them as far as their role is concerned.

Today, it is very problematic to support the linear model line of argument especially, in case of the countries following the developmental state policy. In developing countries one of the challenges of universities is their dependence on the state for their funding while it is very difficult for these states to fund them. On the other hand, the cooperation between the government and universities enable the former to rely on the universities’ research for its policy making. Further, the industries fund the universities on one hand and get the research results and technology of university for the improvement of their production.

However arguing this line it presupposes the existence of the autonomy between the three institutions (university, government and industries). The triplex helix model does not suggest the structurally intermingled nature of these institutions.


\textsuperscript{19} Ibid
They maintain their traditional roles but cooperate for some purpose; which the welfare of the community. Still when we argue for the triple helix model we have to take in to consideration about the nature of the government. The government should be democratic and cooperate with the universities not for its political purpose but in the way it ensures the academic freedom.

Coming to the Ethiopian case, it is the universities obligation to give consultancy and other supplementary activities to the community in line with their core missions. Accordingly, Higher Education Proclamation No. 650/2009 (the proclamation governing the higher education institutions) stipulates the responsibility of the higher education institutions to cooperate with industries as:

“Every institution shall have the responsibility to forge relations with industries for mutual benefits and on the basis of principled and transparent negotiations and agreements”. Article 26(4)

Further article 4(5) provides that the objective of the higher education institutions should ensure institutional autonomy with the accountability. Thus, Cumulative reading of article 26(4) and 4 (5) implies that the Ethiopian education policy advocates the cooperation of the three institutions on one hand the academic freedom on the other hand.

However, contrary to this, literatures show that the cooperation among the university-industry-govern ment, is weak, especially between the universities and industries. This cooperation is very weak especially when it comes to the younger universities. Even the old universities’ cooperation with international

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21 EDUCATION STRATEGY CENTER, 2015, *Towards more Entrepreneurial Universities in Ethiopia* Policy Brief 9, p.7
and national organizations mostly is with educational institutions not industries. The same study shows that, none of Ethiopian universities have partnership with external companies aimed at jointly undertaking business as part of its income generating strategy\textsuperscript{22}.

In this regard, I recommend that the universities should strengthen their partnership, especially with industries through the mechanisms like students’ externship, doing the coordinated researches and through researches contracts. That is the best way they can achieve their third mission the community service.

3. **Why we bother about the entrepreneurship? Are the entrepreneur really creative forces of the economy?**

According to my point of view, the answer for the question is affirmative. As I have mentioned it above, the innovation is at the center of the entrepreneurship, we cannot imagine the entrepreneurs without innovation. Innovation is the process of bringing the best ideas into reality, which triggers a creative idea, which generates a series of innovative events. Innovation is the creation of new value. It is the process that transforms new ideas into new values. You cannot innovate without creativity.

Entrepreneurship is often associated with stimulating economic growth, innovation, job and venture creations. It is clear that the highly-knowledgeable, experienced and skilled entrepreneurs to innovate; create employment opportunity and economic growth, which link them directly with regional and national economic development and industry policies\textsuperscript{23}.

Furthermore, the entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity. Entrepreneurs are responsible for the commercial

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid

\textsuperscript{23} *Infra-note*, 23 ADAM SZIRMAI, p.6
introduction of many new products and services, and for opening new markets. However, it should be noted that not all opportunity exploitation will necessarily be in society’s best interest for, entrepreneurs very broadly as ‘persons who are ingenious and creative in finding ways that add to their own wealth, power, and prestige. Thus, entrepreneurial talent can be allocated in ways that retard economic development than being the creative force for the economy.\textsuperscript{24}

“Entrepreneurship can contribute in important ways to economic development. One way it does this is through innovation, which involves the development of new products, new processes, new sources of supply, but also the exploitation of new markets and the development of new ways to organize business”\textsuperscript{25}.

The innovative nature of the entrepreneurship can be manifested in three ways,

1. By creating something which is universally new (to the whole world).
2. Through transfer and diffusion of technology which is already in work in certain country to once own locality and
3. Through improving the informal or traditional activities existing in once locality to the more modernized way or to the formal one.

Though, the three innovative nature of the entrepreneurship exists, but the development of entrepreneurship and their contribution as the creative force of the economy is not for granted. It mostly relies, on factors such as explicit economic policy, free and fair market competition, securing patent right for creativity, incentive for further capacity development, incentive for modern

\textsuperscript{24} ADAM SZIRMAI, WIM NAUDÉ, AND MICHELINE GOEDHUYS, \textit{Entrepreneurship, Innovation, And Economic Development: An Overview}, p5, available online at: \url{http://i.unu.edu/media/unu.edu/publication/12592/chapter-1.pdf} last accessed on, April 14,2016 p.24

\textsuperscript{25} Id, p.26
economic sector, good condition for investment, the attitude of the society towards it, and equipped and well enlightened policy implementers. Most important of all, countries whose entrepreneurs are supported by the researches and technology created in the university can reap the maximum advantages of them. Countries of well crafted economic policies which encourage entrepreneurial universities pave the way for the development of new entrepreneurs and strengthen the existing entrepreneur, which in turns create the job opportunities and results in the economic growth. Among the major obstacles to the modernization and development of small industries are the persistence of a low level of technology, the shortage and inadequate entrepreneurial skills of operators the major. This makes their product of poor quality which in turns makes it difficult for them to compete in a technologically driven, knowledge based and export oriented globalized economy. To survive in such competition, the ideal strategy for small scale enterprise or entrepreneurship is tapping the considerable R&D efforts that take place at universities and other higher educational institutional through increased commercialization or technology transfer of research result. On the other hand, it is very clear that small scale industries are decisive factors in the economic development of certain country.

Thus, the creativity, innovative and the contribution of the entrepreneurship to the economy depend on the level of their technology and researches. In this regarding, the role of universities, as the place where many research is conducted and many potential entrepreneurs can be produced is very paramount.

26 Id, p.27
27 JOSÉ GUIMÓN, 2013, Promoting University-Industry Collaboration in Developing Countries, World Bank, Policy Brief of 2013 p.4
so, we have take in to consideration they way the universities’ researches can enhance the development of the entrepreneurships.

4. **Universities’ Researches**

Research universities are increasingly critical hubs in the ecosystem of global innovation. Broad commercialization of scientific discoveries and technological breakthroughs is a rising priority for many if not most research universities. For the purpose of this writing, the universities’ research includes, the researches by the universities research centers, the dissertation by the students of different academic level (it includes both undergraduate and post graduate), the researches by the lecturer both (sponsored and unsponsored), researches made by the university (both public and private) in collaboration with different stakeholders like the government and industries.

5. **The Ways the Universities Research Contributes to the Establishment of New and Strengthen the Existing Entrepreneurs.**

The amount and significance of new knowledge and technology emerging in research practicing higher education institutions assign them with a unique role in enhancing development. World-class research universities have a major economic impact on their surrounding areas. There are many ways through which the universities can contribute to the economic development in general and for the development of the entrepreneurships in particular such as:

- The universities researches where they published can help the industries,

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• The universities’ research on the entrepreneurship education can contribute to the act of entrepreneurship by creating the positive attitudes in the students, who are the potential entrepreneurs,

• It also contribute to the development of entrepreneur industries through patent and copy right license and research contracts of the,

• The universities research can go as far as creating new entrepreneurial industries like spin-off and incubators.


Knowledge diffusion can be achieved mainly, by its communication to the public at large through publications. The universities’ researches published through different mechanisms such as: online, on the journals and they can be published in the form of books which can easily available on the market. Since, the universities researches and laboratories are the place where new technologies which are indispensable for the development of the entrepreneurs are created, once they published those which are not protected by the patent and copy right exploited by the entrepreneurs for the business goals. Once it published, the universities’ researches also inform the entrepreneurs the existence and the way to use of new technology. It informs the entrepreneurs the feasibility of certain business on certain area. It further help them in developing their informal business to formal one and direct the way they way to success and inform the possible challenges. These are they ways through which the publicized university research contribute to in the equipping the innovative force of the economy the entrepreneurs.
5.2. By Developing the Students’ Potential Towards the Entrepreneurship

As mentioned in the preceding sections the helices (universities, the industries and government) cooperation empower the students of not only the theoretical knowledge but also the practical application of them. Since future entrepreneurs can be found amongst those who are currently undergoing their educational process at the universities, entrepreneurship education has been used as one of the most effective ways to promote the transition of graduates into the world of entrepreneurship. In other words, the universities’ research on the entrepreneurship education can contribute to the act of entrepreneurship by creating the positive attitudes in the students, who are the potential entrepreneurs. If there is the problem in the entrepreneurship education, it is very unlikely that the students become the entrepreneurs after their graduation. The well arranged entrepreneurship education courses motivate the students to become the entrepreneurs.

In addition, the universities’ researches centers can enhance and promote the concept of the entrepreneurship to the students, for instance through preparing different business plan and entrepreneurship essay competitions. This includes the philanthropic activities of the universities. For example, to see the experiences of different countries in US one day business plan made between the students the winners of which get about USD 55 000 for the establishment and running of their business. By using this fund the students start running of

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30 Supra-note 12, NATALJA JAROHNOVICH p.124
31 Supra-note, 27, ALLAN GIBB, p.8
their own business. Thus in this regard, the universities’ research centers and their research, particularly on the entrepreneurship education is of a paramount importance for the establishment and successful running of the entrepreneurship activities and thereby contributes to the innovational and employment creation in the country.

Provision of highly skilled and talented graduates equipped with problem-solving skills to both private and non-commercial organizations represent the most valuable contribution of the university to society\(^32\). The contribution of universities and its research especially, for the small scale enterprise is indispensable.

New graduates bring to firms knowledge of recent scientific research, ability to solve complex problems, perform research and develop ideas, even though firms often have to train graduates before they can be employed effectively. The skills acquired during education are a necessary precursor to the development of more industry specific skills and knowledge

5.3. **Technology Transfer**

Knowledge and technology transfer is also an integral part of such university. An entrepreneurial university deals with establishing science and technology parks, and technology transfer contracts\(^33\). Technology transfer presupposes the existence of new technology somewhere and the need to have it in some other place. Innovation (including innovation of technology), as discussed above, can

\(^32\) *Ibid*

\(^33\) *VINCENT AMANOR-BOADU AND CHANDRA MOHAN REDDY METLA, 2008, Research Faculty, Entrepreneurship and Commercialization: The Case of Kansas State University*, p.5
be the invention of the universally new technology or the adoption of the already existing technology to the local context. In this sense, the universities researches and laboratories are the place where new technologies which are indispensable for the development of the entrepreneurs are created. The universities’ Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) are the bridge through which the technology is transferred from universities’ researches and laboratories and then diffused to enhance the entrepreneurships activities. In addition, the researches by the students, professors and by other centers supported by the universities reveals as to the existence and the way to use of the technology form the practice an experience of other countries to the local entrepreneurs through the publication by universities of the same. By doing so, the universities’ researches increase the absorptive capacities of local entrepreneurs of high technologies and then resolve the problem of specially, of developing countries’ management in new technologies. It makes the high and complex technologies usable in small and new enterprises. Furthermore, the universities’ research enhances the changing of informal and cultural entrepreneurs to the formal and modernized one in giving them awareness how to do so.

5.4. Licensing Patents and Copy Rights

Licensing is a contract type option where the universities and enterprises come together on mutually agreed clauses for the exchange of the product or process technology for consideration as per the agreement. Licenses can be classified in to exclusive and non-exclusive. In US the licensing of the copy and patent rights by universities was legalized by Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 which begins acceleration of tech transfer, and competence builds in tech transfer offices. Technology licensing agreements have proven to be an effective mechanism for the commercialization of the university held innovation. It facilitates

34 Ibid
commercialization of university innovation by transferring the innovation knowledge to existing and new entrepreneurs in return for fee or royalty payment\textsuperscript{35}. The intellectual property (generated new knowledge, inventions, and proof of concept) can be protected by a patent, and a patent owned by the university can be commercialized either via giving a license to or selling the patent to a the enterprises. Sale of the IP (intellectual property) right differs from the licensing in the latter results in complete transfer of the right to the buyer. Sale of IP right is also another way through which universities’ research contributes for the entrepreneur’s enhancement\textsuperscript{36}.

According to different literature, what is problem with licensing the intellectual property of the universities to the entrepreneurs is that their fee may be very high in the new and small entrepreneurs cannot afford to license these technology and researches.\textsuperscript{37} Still, however, the technology license agreement of affordable price can enhance the development of new and existing entrepreneurs through supply of new idea and ways of expression of ideas (technology and proof of concept). By return earned from the licensing of its intellectual property universities fund themselves which in turn enable them to escape from the problem of lack of budget which is one of the universities’ role in community service.

5.5. Establishment of Start-ups and Spin-off

Beyond its research and technology contribution to the industries the university can establishes and run their own business such as incase of the Science parks,


\textsuperscript{36} Ibid

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid, p.158
spin-off and start-up which in many literatures are used interchangeably. Spin-off is an entirely new business that is formed around the universities innovation and may be wholly owned by or cated jointly with partner firms. As such the university can create their own venture and become the entrepreneur itself. In addition, the spin-off firm workers can establishes their own business based on the knowledge they got in such firm.

5.6. **Research Contracts**

For the purpose of this study, research contract is the contract between the firms and universities in which the university undertake to provide the research results for the firms up on consideration. *The core assumption here is that firms increasingly innovate by using external source of knowledge, and universities have increasing role as overall external knowledge providers.* The university should earn money from research contracts with private and public sectors. This is one character of the entrepreneurial university. The industrial or applied research which is much closer to market needs is more guided towards commercial return by the universities. *In this regard, the contract research between the universities and enterprises shouldn’t only bring in money, but also (new) knowledge which adds values to the development of the enterprise’s production.* As it is mentioned in the preceding sections the major obstacles to the development of the newly established and small scale enterprises is the lack of usage of the new technology which enables them to competitively survive in the market with big and technologically self sufficient enterprises. For this problem, the concluding the research contract with universities is the way out.

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38 Id p.7  
39*Supra-note 27, ALLAN GIBB.P.7*  
40*Supra-note 15, JAHANGIR p.196*  
41*Supra-note 27, ALLAN GIBB P.9*
for small scale firms since it is economically less costly for them than establishing their own R&D and it is clear that the universities’ research help them in improving the quality of their products which in turns make them competitive. In this way the universities’ research can keep the industries that would have been driven out of the market because of their lack of R&D in the market i.e. by providing them the research results and technology for comparatively cheap prices.

5.7. Collaborative Research, Development and Joint Venture

Collaborative research and development (R&D) is collaboration between the universities and industries for the purposes of jointly conducting research on specified area, usually on the business area of the collaborating industry. The research to be conducted by universities collaboratively with industry or clusters of technological firms has the core tasks of doing research which the built-up expertise could be used to team up with industry (one company or a group of companies) to focus on more industrial oriented research leading to the development of new products.\(^{42}\) It includes the sponsored researches which universities do under the sponsorships of the industries. It may also have the forms of joint venture (JV). Joint venture is a form of investment where by two or more enterprises come together and establish any kind of enterprises. For the purpose of the study joint ventures are partnerships that are formed by the university and another organization to commercialize the discovery or invention and it can involve university taking equity in the company where the IP would be used\(^ {43}\). Accordingly, the universities contribute their research results and

\(^{42}\)Supra-note 12, NATALJA p.127

\(^{43}\)Supra-note 32, VINCENT, p.5
technology discovered by the students or by professors to the venture while the industries contribute other capitals. Then, the universities’ researches establish new business legal entity from which the university receives equity; the return for invested knowledge expertise and patents licenses.

6. Conclusions
Entrepreneurs are the innovate force of the economy. However, the contribution for the development in general and their innovative nature in particular depends in many factors among which their use and absorptive capacity of the new technology is the major. Further, the creativity, innovative and the contribution of the entrepreneurship to the economy depend on the level of their technology and researches. In this regarding, the role of universities, as the place where many research is conducted and many potential entrepreneurs can be produced is very paramount. In addition to their traditional roles of teaching and researching, the contemporary universities have the third role which is often called “the third mission” which is the community service aspects of the university. Focusing on this mission by universities, help the entrepreneurs as the part of community. The universities’ research is an important tool in enhancement of the entrepreneurship. It helps the exiting as well as new entrepreneurs through

- The universities researches where they published can help the industries,
- The universities’ research on the entrepreneurship education can contribute to the act of entrepreneurship by creating the positive attitudes in the students, who are the potential entrepreneurs,
- Through transfer and adaption of new technologies.
- It also contribute to the development of entrepreneur industries through patent and copy right license and research contracts of the,
The universities research can go as far as creating new entrepreneurial industries like spin-off and incubators. Regarding the Ethiopian universities, their partnership with companies is very weak; this is for both the old and young universities in the country. However, to what extent universities’ research, of this country is contributing to the development of the entrepreneurs needs empirical studies and the study in impact assessment. This calls the researchers for further research on the issue and the universities to have their own community service impact assessment of their research.

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VINCENT AMANOR-BOADU AND CHANDRA MOHAN REDDY METLA, 2008, *Research Faculty, Entrepreneurship and Commercialization: The Case of Kansas State University*
Role of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Socio-Economic Change of Vulnerable Poor: The case of Bishoftu Town.
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Abstract
Currently, microfinance in Ethiopia in the form of Self Help Groups (SHGs) of both urban and rural areas is being used extensively for poverty alleviation by providing these groups with credit. Self help groups (SHGs) have emerged as popular method of working with people in recent years. This movement comes from the people’s desires to meet their needs and determine their own destinies through the principle “by the people, for the people and of the people”. Ordinarily ‘self help’ refers to the provision to aid self, but here self is also taken internally. Self – help emphasizes self-reliance, self production and self-employment by mobilizing internal resource of the persons, the group or the community. The programme is seen to be successful in most places with several studies reporting increase in women’s income and good repayment of loans taken by them from the banks. The self-help groups, changes the pattern of social interaction. When such patterns change, substantial number of society members assumes new status and play new roles in the community. SHGs in social change imply not only the change of outer form of a community or a society but also in the social institutions as well as ideas of the people living in that society. In other words, it also applies to the changes in the material aspects of life as well as in the ideas, values and attitudes of the people. The study
attempts to examine this trend by focusing on a kebele’s in Bishoftu town that has witnessed the SHG phenomenon for some years. This study is essentially a descriptive one. It aims at describing and exploring the changes among the members after joining SHGs. It is based on primary data and it was collected through a structural interview schedule. The study was carried out in 9 kebeles of Bishoftu town and 3 SHGs of each kebele. The total sample constitutes 135, that is, 5 members from each SHG, using purposive sampling method. Our study shows that indeed the SHG movement is affecting the social dynamics of kebele life as never before: men are now encouraging the women to step out of the household to earn incomes and women are being given increasing say in the way in which the household income is spent. But even more importantly, the women themselves, empowered by the SHG movement and this changed social dynamics are participating in community life like never before.

**Key word:** Self help groups, social change and socio-economic development

### 1. Introduction

One of the most essential features of development is the transformation of community, which embraces social progress from traditional relations, social norms, and traditional ways of health care, education and methods of production to more improved ones. Changes associated with development provide communities as well as individuals with more control and influence over their own destiny. Development enriches the lives of individuals by widening the horizons of choices and freedoms by reducing their sense of isolation. Hence, the development strategy that is planned to bring sustainable affirmative change into effect must be aimed at facilitating the transformation of society by identifying the potential catalysts and barriers to change.

Self – help groups are voluntary gatherings of persons who share needs or problems that are not being addressed by existing organizations, institutions, or
other types of groups. The broad goals of a self–help group are to bring about personal and social–economic change for its members and society. All of those groups emphasis face to face interaction among members and stress a set of values or ideology that enhances a member’s personal sense of identity. As Bezabih(2007), presents SHG development model is a community owned and managed development scheme designed to alleviate poverty in general and the miserable life condition of poor in particular. According to Rajkumar (2007), self–help groups (SHG) is a group who have volunteered to organize themselves into a group for improvement or change in life of the members. They agree to save money regularly and convert their savings into a common fund known as the group corpus. The members of the group agree to use this common fund and such other funds that they may receive as a group through a common management. Experiences from various development attempts that have been made to minimize the effect of poverty has demonstrated observable change in the miserable life condition of many poor people in many parts of the globe, which otherwise not easy to occur. In the so-called poor nations of the world, many development strategies experimented through various development agents/organizations, have not yielded the desired results. However, it is evident that few countries have benefited from such development efforts and have succeeded in rapid economic growth and poverty alleviation.

2. Statement of the problem
In order to cope up with their problems through collective action, Ethiopians have their own traditional way of pooling their resources so as to help each other at the neighborhood level. ‘Iqub’, Iddir, and ‘Mahber’ are among the major strategies that poor people usually form to cope up with poverty. Although these coping mechanisms are not exactly the same with the Self Help Group (SHG) concept, which this study has attempted to examine, they share
some common characteristics with it. Self Help Group development model is a community owned and managed development scheme designed to alleviate poverty in general and the miserable life condition of poor women in particular.

3. Objective of the study

General objective
The general objective of this study is Assessing the Role of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in socio-economic change of vulnerable poor

Specific Objective
i.) To identify personal changes, if any in the group members.

ii.) To analyze the changes, if any in the socio-economic, political, cultural, health and behavioral conditions of the members after participation in the SHGs.

iii.) To identify the influencing factors for social change.

4. Methodology
This study is essentially a descriptive one. It aims at describing and exploring the changes among the members after joining SHGs.

Sample and sampling technique
The study was carried out in 9 kebeles of Bishoftu town and 3 SHGs of each kebele. The total sample constitutes 135, that is, 5 members from each SHG, using purposive sampling method. Method and tools of data collection
The study is based on primary data and it was collected through a structural interview schedule.

5. Results and Discussion

Characteristics of SHGs
i.) The number of member to form SHGs is 5 to 20.

ii.) All members have not met regularly.

iii.) The SHGs will have office bearers like president and secretary, group members elect them.
iv.) SHGs itself with the help of NGO makes assessment of individual credit needs of its members and submits to the bank for sanction of collective loans in its name.

v.) NGO helps the SHGs in procuring raw materials and also marketing of the product.

vi.) SHGs collectively ensure repayment of bank loans.

Aims and objectives of SHGs

i.) SHGs aim at improving the standard of living and value systems.

ii.) They are for sustainable development of members.

iii.) Giving loan at a low interest to develop themselves.

iv.) They develop savings habit among members.

v.) NGOs organize the women.

vi.) To achieve Self-reliance.

This scheme promotes thrift savings and confidence among the members of the group.

Working pattern of SHGs

SHGs collect the deposits from their members and lend to the needy members for production purpose and also for substance and consumption needs. They also borrow loans from the banks or voluntary agencies or self-help promoting institutions to meet the needs of the members.

Social change

Social change is the systematic study of variation in social and cultural “system”. There are inherent methodological problems of identification and measurement of change, and rarely does one cause produce one effect.

The entire society is involved in a process of social change; however, this change may be so incremental that the members of the society are hardly aware of it. People living in every traditional society would be in this category. Society
is characterized by change; the rate of change, the process of change, and the directions of change.

**Meaning and definition of social change**

“Change” means variation or a difference in anything observed over some period of time. K. Davis defined this process as “an alteration in structure and contentment of a society”.

According to H. T. Mazumdar, “Social change may be defined as a new fashion or mode, either modifying or replacing the old, in the life of a people, or in the operation of a society”.

**Factors of SHGs in social change**

Society is in continuous flux. Various factors and forces, as well as external, determine the rate and directions of social change. The factors of self-help groups, which change the root in the physical environment, biological factors are the responsible factors for social changes. The following are the factors of SHGs in social change.

**Biological factors:** Human biological environment changes due to the SHG, it includes the factors that determine the number, composition and the hereditary quality for successive generations. The human element is always changing. It is like the size and composition of population produce and aware about family planning.

**Cultural factors:** The SHG affects the speed and direction of social change. Cultural factors consists changes of our values and beliefs, customs and traditional and various institutions. SHG changes the beliefs of witchcraft, supernatural power and also widow marriage. It also changes social structure and social relationships.

**Technological factors:** The society is changing every time. The SHG supports changes in the system of invention. It has influenced our environment, education, attitudes, politics, and sprite, due to the intervention of SHGs.
From the data presented in the Table 1, it is clear that out of 135 respondents majority (36%) of them are from the age group of 30 - 40 years. Only few respondents (9%) are found in the age group of 50-60 and 13% of them are in the age group below 20 years age.

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents on the basis of age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data clearly reveals that age group between 30 – 40 years is mainly engaged in SHGs and it shows that middle aged people are interested in joining the group. These age groups are very responsible people and socially settled and they were marginal farmers, landless poor and agricultural laborers. Since they don’t have options to engage in and sustain their life they are actively working as the members of SHGs.

**Table 2. Distribution of respondents on the basis of education**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 2 shows that the educational qualification of the respondents. Among the respondents 16% of them are illiterates, 37% of them have primary education, 21% of them have secondary education, another 19% have TVET and only 10% of them have diploma. It looks obvious that the women who have Primary level education are much more interested in joining SHGs. We can also conclude that TVET and diploma graduates are not as many as primary and secondary school graduates in SHGs it seems partly because they can create jobs or be employ in private, government or other organizations.

Table 3. Marital status of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Un Married</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 3 shows the number of married and unmarried respondent take the lion share in SHGs. It is found that 78% of the respondents are married and 18%
of the respondents are unmarried and only 4% of them are Widows. This can also be compared with age group as majority of the respondent are in the age group of 30 to 40 years. It is found from the study that majority of the respondents who joined SHGs are married.

Table 4. Occupational structure of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban-agriculture</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer cooperatives</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self employee</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov’t employee</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Table 4 above the occupations of the respondents are shown. It is very significant that majority (50%) of the respondents have taken consumer cooperatives and 28% are self-employee and 25% of the respondents are government employees, 20% of them have urban-agriculture occupation and only 10% are persons who are retired from different salaried occupations. This shows the awareness about the self-employment among the respondents and their spirit to take up the same. But in the previous days people use to do their class based occupation. But now the entire scenario has been changed due
to the intervention of SHGs people are working on the basis of their knowledge and skills. The need of the hour is only skill based knowledge.

**Table 5. Inspiration for joining SHGs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspiration</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal interest</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO s</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government’s offices</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>135</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 is an attempt to depict the inspiration for joining SHGs. It is good factor to note that many of the respondents had joined SHG on their own interest which represents 59 and 16% joined with the initiation of NGO’s working in their areas.11% of them joined to SHG the inspiration of their family members and very few, that is, 6% because of their friend’s inspiration, joined SHGs. This reveals that people are aware of use and importance of SHGs. The goals are met only through the support of the society and their own interest. The personal interest determines the way of acquiring knowledge about the self-help group.

**Table 6. Purpose behind joining SHGs**
The above Table 6 explains the purpose of joining SHGs. Money is the major aspect in modern life. Majority of the respondents (45.5%) joined SHGs in order to save money and 30% of them joined for personality development. Only 19% of them joined for getting loan and very few 7.5% joined for recreation purpose. It is understood from the study that, majority of the respondents joined SHGs for savings purpose.

Table 7. Representing the Increase of Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

72
Almost all people had opined that their income is increased after joining SHG. This shows in Table 7 that SHGs are playing a significant role in improving economic status of the respondents.

**Table 7. Distribution on the basis of Political knowledge**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not improved</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Savings enhance the self-confidence of the individuals, as it is a sign of group encouragement in the time of taking loan. These activities are increasing their income. The Table 8 shows that SHGs are helping the respondents to know about the present political system. 93% of them have opinion that their political knowledge is improved after joining SHGs. And 7% of them are not improved. It reveals that SHGs are playing a vital role in giving awareness about political system to its members.
An impact of SHGs in creating conducive atmosphere to its members and empowering them to become capable to take advantage of government development schemes was assessed. Accordingly, it was understood from the discussion that few have benefited from micro credit services acquired from a government small business development program. However, it was also learnt from the discussion that some who participated in the micro credit programs did not benefit from the program as the major focus of the credit providing agencies was giving loan and looking for a repayment. They further elaborated that unless the micro credit service provision is based on supporting the borrower as to how to undertake the business, the focus on loan provision and repayment alone cannot ensure sustainable development in general, and empowerment of women in particular.

Self help groups were essentially formed for the purpose of empowering the poor to take charge of critical decisions concerning the improvement of the quality of their lives. The process adopted for SHG formation, has a major influence over the way the group would evolve overtime. Importantly, women’s participation in various activities from the inception of SHG formation is important for meeting the broad objectives of micro- financing, and for the effective functioning of SHGs.

In response to the question regarding their motivation to join the groups, it was found out that during the project commencement period, the project staffs’ motivation helped them to join the group; but thereafter, most joined the group through self-motivation. Furthermore, it was reported that members’ involvement in the group development endeavor was an active dynamic in their life; and currently even those who did not involved in the group understood the benefit of the group; and as a result of this, self motivation outweighed any external push for new members to come and join the group.
Discussion on the members’ involvement in income generation activities (IGAs) before and after their SHG involvement revealed that most of the SHG members were involved in some petty trades, such as vegetable and cereal retail sales, used clothes sales, animal fattening, etc with the loan service they were provided by micro finance institutions (MFIs) before they become members of the SHGs. However, after being involved in the SHG, members with feasible business plan and those could get group collateral managed to get group loan and involved in IGAs.

The present SHGs give awareness about the present political system and its activities. It enhances the knowledge to decide which government is necessary, and which government ruled effectively in identifying problems, formulating alternatives and allocating resources.

**Table 9. Inspiration of the members in participating political activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table 9 highlights that 89% of the respondents’ opinion that SHG has inspired them in participating political activities and 11% them opinion that they are not inspired by SHG for political participation.
Table 10. Changes in the respondents after joining SHG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relationship</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above Table 10 shows that 94% of the respondents are influenced by SHGs in their day-to-day behavior. 6% of them say that their interpersonal relationship has been change positively after joining SHGs and all 100% of them opined that their level of self-confidence has been significantly increased after joining SHGs.

In explaining the major problems and challenges that the groups have faced so far, the SHG leaders have mentioned both internal and external factors. They reported that in the process of promoting and implementing the SHG development model, problems such as the unavailability of profitable micro businesses, lack of adequate seed-money, members’ poor educational standards, a low level of confidence among members, apathy and a lack of commitment among SHG members, lack of committed and well experienced staff, lack of community support, existence of some NGOs working against the SHG development modality, and the low purchasing power caused by the current unbearable basic commodity price rise, etc were found to be the major problems and challenges of the SHGs.

Financial Management
The financial management of SHGs has been found to be ranging from weak to average. Specifically, internal controls at SHGs and SHG Federations are lacking. Internal controls represent the systems and processes that manage the day to day transaction flow and ensure that roles and responsibilities are defined and executed to safeguard assets. Field studies have indicated that these systems and processes have been ill-defined and poorly executed by members.

In addition to internal controls, how SHGs are managing their cash flows is especially important. Since SHGs are accessing external borrowings through SHG Bank Linkage and then lends these funds to its members, there have been cases of poor cash flow management to repay debts not just externally but also internally. The risk of overleveraging SHGs is high.

**Governance**

Since SHGs are an informal organization and a SHG Federation is a composition of informal groups, there is poor governance and the capacity of the members to enact good governance is weak. The members of SHGs do not have much experience with establishing formalized monitoring and review functions or complying with legal regulations. With the growing size of the loans being made to SHGs, a strong governance system is needed to ensure that there is accountability.

**Human Resources**

While the achievements of the women members to form common interest groups to help themselves is remarkable, there is a long way to go to build the capacities of the staff of SHGs. The role of NGOs to provide support is essential to many SHGs success stories. The support needed ranges from bookkeeping and accounting, organizational structure, governance and other areas.

The role of SHGs is both as an inspiration and as a financer. Impoverished women develop greater language and financial skills through the SHG which provides the building blocks for higher levels of confidence to engage the
world. Also, the SHG sometimes finances the campaign of its members that stand for election. SHGs not only empower its members but also wield a powerful political role as a group as well. At local village meetings, the leaders of SHGs are often invited to attend and speak.

**Social Harmony**

Broadly defined, social harmony encompasses the equality and integrity of relationships between different social groups. The composition of SHGs is sometimes exclusively one particular social group or a mix. The impact of SHGs on social harmony has also been mixed. While it has been observed that in groups with mixed membership had group leaders that came from a variety of the social groups. In the vast majority of instances, groups’ leaders were almost exclusively from the dominant social groups’ category. This demonstrates a lack of equality and unity across caste divisions. Given the relatively young history of SHGs, it is to be expected that their impact on bridging centuries old divisions would be slow.

**Social Justice**

Social justice is the presence of moral and ethical conduct in areas that are historically typified with backward and abusive customs. There have been several occurrences of SHGs resolving disputes between members and the community at large. These instances include initiating legal action, arbitration, divorce and others. While there have long been dispute resolution mechanisms in villages, in the past it was controlled by men. Now, there are instances of women, SHG members, being involved in resolving disputes. Whether or not the women are working for their own interests or in the case for justice varies, regardless SHGs’ impact on the political arena is certainly being seen also in social justice, albeit in a slow and evolutionary process.

**Community**
Being a group based organization of members of similar caste and geography, the community resources that are shared by are affected by the SHG. Recent analysis has shown that the impact that SHGs have on the community at large have been minor. There have been few instances of significant contributions from SHGs to education, family planning, eradication of child labour and hygiene.

To interpret these findings further it should be noted that such community problems are often large financial commitments which SHGs simply do not have the capacity to afford. Also, of the few instances where there have been significant contributions from the SHGs to the community, the SHG demonstrated a clear leadership role and rallied the support of the entire village. This demonstrates that given the opportunity, SHGs, assuming they have the capacity, can act as a director of community development. The perception of taking of a woman’s based organization taking a leading role for the betterment of the greater good has monumental impacts on the local community. Gender dynamics begin to balance in instances such as these.

Livelihoods
Livelihoods, meaning a persons’ economic activity, is an area that is vitally important to SHGs. The loans that SHG members receive are intended to improve their livelihoods so that they can receive greater and steadier cash flows. In rural areas, livelihoods range from agriculture farming, animal husbandry, dairy and various other goods and services activities. Experience has shown that SHGs have had improved livelihoods to the extent of providing the leveraging needed to start an enterprise. However, the interventions to introduce new livelihoods or refine existing ones that could yield better economic results were done by external agencies.

Suggestions and policy implications
Since the socio-economic scenario has changed a lot, it is suggested that the SHGs should take up the new challenges such as socio-economic development, use of science and technology in the rural areas and human resources development in perfect manner. The voluntary agencies should be encouraged to be self-supportive by way of creating their own sources of the finance. SHGs members should be made aware about national and international politics. In this regard the local organizations, schools, college have to conduct workshop, awareness camp about the existing political conditions to the SHG members. Existing SHGs must publish articles in newspaper, conduct radio program on importance of SHGs.

**Supporting the SHG Movement**

The impact of the SHG movement on various aspects of civil society has been varied. As mentioned, the development of SHGs has varied from state to state but, regardless of the phase of evolution, SHGs require external help to continue to grow and have greater outreach and impact to civil society. It is clear from research that some of the obstacles to evolution are beyond the control of the SHGs. The following is a pointed analysis of where government, NGOs, Banks and others, including the private sector, can work together to help answer the needs to SHGs in a measured and effective manner in hopes of not overloading them leading to failure.

**Social Justice: Awareness of Legal Rights and Entitlements**

SHGs have played an important role in the lives of distressed members. Given the years of suppression of women in India, it is to be expected that SHGs take up the cause of their members. However, they are also responding from a desire to see justice done. Therefore, if helped to process the pros and cons of various situations and arriving at just and sustainable situations, women could be chosen by local communities as arbitrators. Arbitration in most villages is currently a male domain, but the experiences of women in negotiating for
women’s rights could be taken to the next logical step of involvement of women in local justice issues, whether or not a member is involved, and whether or not a member is “right. Similar to the political arena, SHPIs need to be able to provide the technical support to help SHGs equip themselves as arbitrators.

**Communities: Provide Strategic Support**

SHGs have helped their members and their communities. By taking a leadership role in community development, SHGs are perceived to be a guiding force for the village. Though the instances of SHGs engaging in community development are low, given the capacity, there has been proven results.

**Livelihoods: Technical Livelihood Support**

The support of livelihoods is increasingly being seen as an important area related to microfinance. Indeed, the term of livelihood finance has been coined and is en vogue at leading NGOs. The need for livelihood support is critical to SHGs development as livelihoods are typically financed by the loans that members receive from the SHG. The need of SHGs varies from the introduction of new livelihoods to providing support such as market linkages or procurement techniques to refine existing livelihoods. Experience has indicated that these benefits would not have possible without external intervention. Thus, SHPIs can provide the technical livelihood support as needed to help develop SHGs.

In addition to actual technical support, government policy can help support the SHG movement in the previously mentioned areas. Poverty is invariably characterized by lack of public investment in infrastructure or dysfunctional public systems including education and health care and underdeveloped markets. Large scale investment is required to build infrastructure like roads and bridges so that there can be access to markets. These sorts of investment will have to be completed by the state government. The payoff such costs though is infinite. An improved infrastructure will help to increase investment and mobility of staff.
Further, livelihoods can be enriched through greater access to markets. In some areas, there is a reasonable amount of infrastructure that state-owned rural banks operate. As some SHGs have grown and matured to a sizeable scale, they need access to more financial services. Governments can address this need through their state-owned banks by introducing flexible and easily accessible products. Specifically, products such as innovative savings products, micro-insurance, larger loans and enterprise financing can be introduced. Banks lending to SHG federations could also facilitate access to livelihood finance by the women SHG members. Not only will programs such as these address the service gap but it will also change perceptions among bankers. If the state-owned banks take the lead, other bankers will likely follow and make an investment to work with the poor and expand their services to them.

6. Conclusion
The findings of the study clearly reveal that, the SHGs have the power to create a socio-economic revolution in the country. When observing the whole data the people have come out of their problems and traditional bound. Self help groups have paved the way to bring the rural people in the main stream of social and economic progress of the society.

The SHG can contribute to changes in economic conditions, social status, decision making and increases women in outdoor activities. These SHGs play a very important role in social change. SHG not only changes the outer form of a community or a society but also the social institutions as well as ideas of the people living in the society. In other words it also applies to change the material aspects of life as well as in the ideas, values and attitudes of the people.

This paper has outlined several areas of working with SHGs to further their impact on civil society. It should be noted though that the sustainability of SHGs to effect such change is directly linked to their financial sustainability.
While this latter issue was not the intended focus on the report, any external intervention to SHGs should bear this issue in mind. Research has shown that SHGs' financial management is average or weak. Thus, it is vitally important that both government and NGOs work to bear all the costs in mind of interventions to make them sustainable; otherwise, the SHGs will be overburdened and destined to failure.

Government regulations could help manage this risk and increase the emphasis on sustainability of SHGs. There are key areas of SHG financial management that need to be improved such as internal controls, accounting, management stewardship, organizational efficiency, and others. If the government were to enact policy that would regulate the quality of SHGs and tie this to their eligibility for SHG Bank Linkage, then this would help bring about a more measured and responsible growth to the movement.

Both for SHGs and SHG federations, there is a need to aspire to attain standards following the best practices. As the SHG federations are emerging as community-owned microfinance institutions, there is a need for significant investment in providing institution-building support. These SHG federations being bodies like corporations as they are registered under an appropriate legal form, must comply with the prudential and legal norms. There is a need for a well-developed third-party rating system for SHG federations before they are linked with financial institutions to act as an intermediary as they handle large volumes of funds from the bank linkage and also undertake savings from their members.

There is a need for establishing a computerized MIS for SHGs and SHG federations to monitor their performance on a regular basis. SHG Federations must be able to publish their annual reports and share those with all their members.
Governance of SHG federations is a major challenge. For the SHG members to manage their own institutions with professional staff and large volumes of transactions will be difficult. Government must provide the needed support for the SHG federations to develop into sustainable institutions of the poor. Considerable investments would be needed to facilitate and sustain SHG federations across the nation.

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The Assessment of Youth Socio-Economic Empowerment and Challenges of Youths in Bishoftu Town, East Showa.

By: Bikila Oljira, Rifty Valley University, Bishoftu campus

Abstract

Youth empowerment and development is vital in developing well-balanced citizens with the capacity to actively engage in social, cultural, political, and economic matters of their communities and country. This study focuses on assessing the empowerment of youths and challenges of youths in Bishoftu Town. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected from selected youth respondents and key informants in the town respectively. Questionnaire and interview guide lines were used as instruments of data collection. Participants were chosen by using availability and purposive sampling technique. The finding of the study clearly revealed that various activities have been undertaking to empower youths in the town, some among the activities include organizing in small business activities; Provisions of different Trainings; Ensuring equal participation of males and females in development activities. Besides, the finding of the study indicated that youths in the town face many challenges. The challenges identified include financial problem, lack of life skill trainings, unemployment, and difficulty to fulfill basic necessities of life, and low participation in decisions concerning the socio-economic matters of their community. To cope up with the challenges many of the youths indicated that they involve in negative coping strategies such as substance abuse. Besides, the finding of the study revealed that majority of the respondents knows nothing about youth mobilization and organizations. Therefore, it’s recommendable that to secure the community’s future prosperity in general and youths in
particular, concerned stakeholders should give a due emphasize to positive youth development to redress the challenges.

**Key Words**: youths, empowerment, challenges,
1. Introduction

Background of the Study

Young people are growing in number across the world. About 20% of the world’s populations are youths (UNESCO, 2010). Today, youth face many problems; in many parts of the world, particularly, in developing countries, lack of access to relevant education, lack of decision-making power, unemployment and the scourge of HIV/AIDS are some of these problems. For boys and girls growing up in unsecured environs, the challenges are even greater, as it impacts negatively on all dimensions of their lives (UNECA, 2011).

In accordance with what have been stated above, Africa is the world’s youngest continent, as the proportion of youths among the region’s total population is higher than in any other continent. In 2010, 70% of the region’s population was under the age of 30, and slightly more than 20% were young people between the ages of 15 to 24 (UNICEF, 2011). These young and energetic people of Africa have potential, ability, creativity, enthusiasm, and energy for achieving Africa’s renaissance, as articulated by leaders of the continent. However, the greater proportion of youth does not have the opportunity to fully develop its potential and contribute effectively to the realization of the declared development vision. The majority of African youth continue to face problems such as unemployment, underemployment, lack of skills, lack of relevant education, lack of access to capital, unmet need for health-related information and services including those related to diagnosis, treatment, and care of those living with HIV and, above all, prevention of new HIV infections among them. This situation is even more accentuated among youth in rural areas and among females than males. And along with other groups including as women and the disabled, youth bear the brunt of internal and
external crisis, be it those related to financial, food crisis, climate change and human insecurity amongst others. In addition, many disadvantaged youth are unwittingly conscripted into armed struggle, used to settle political scores, and are exposed to various negative media that erodes their positive heritage- leading them to delinquency, drug use, and other risky behavior. Furthermore, most youth those migrates to foreign countries or even within the continent, in search of greener pasture also face exploitation, extreme abuse and mistreatments among other things (UNECA, 2009, 2011). The situation of youth in Ethiopia is not different from the rest of the world. A very large proportion of Ethiopia's population (85%) lives in the rural areas, and its population is predominantly young in which over 50 percent being under 18 years of age and the youth (15-29 ages) cohort constitute 30% of the population (CSA, 2007). This indicated that a significant number the population is at a crucial stage that can determine not only their personal growth and development but also the future growth and development the country. However, recurrent drought, environmental degradation, deep rooted gender discrimination, and economic, political, cultural and social situations which the country experienced have seriously affected youth. Youth has been both the direct and indirect victims of social and economic stagnation and poor governance. Most of youth related problems are intimately related to the overall process of socio-economic development of the country (CYAO, 1995). As explained by Emeh (2012) and Otumba and Alao (2013) dwindling economy resulting from corrupt practices, lack of entrepreneurial skills, lack of marketable and productive skills have all been considered as the root causes of youth problems. Taking into consideration the above issues, eight years ago(in July 2006), the African Union Heads of States and
Governments that met in Banjul, Gambia, endorsed the African Youth Charter; the Charter is the political and legal document which serves as the strategic framework that gives direction for youth empowerment and development at continental, regional and national levels. Furthermore, the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the African Union declared the years 2009 to 2018 as the Decade on Youth Development in Africa. During the Executive Council meeting held in January 2009 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The African Union envisioned an integrated African economic, social, cultural and political development by the year 2025. A prosperous Africa at peace with itself and its partners, it aims to enable the continent to not only reduce poverty but also propel it to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The vision is designed to be driven by Africa’s own citizens. Because, it’s believed that the vision can be fully realized only if it’s demographic advantage “large population of youth” is mobilized and equipped. This simple indicate that to realize the vision Africa needs deliberate efforts to accelerate social development that give high priority to youth empowerment and development (African Union Commission, 2011).

Thus, there is a full recognition of the awful challenges and great opportunities of youth so that most African countries, are making efforts to involve young people in political and decision making processes as reflected in the establishment of national youth parliaments and youth appointment in executive positions and consultation with young people on policies and programs that affect their lives (World Bank, 2009).

The Plan of Action on Youth empowerment and development in Africa, are directly concerned with Youth capacity building in terms of: encouraging and supporting youth
entrepreneurship; improving access to performance based education and skills; scaling-up youth volunteer work; good employment; youth rights and leadership; institutional representation by youth; environmental security; youth with special needs, and youth migration, tradition and gender (Aberra, 2003). Accordingly, in Ethiopia, the commonly suggested way out from the precarious situations is youth empowerment and development. Youth empowerment and development drives are accepted as the invaluable steps to secure Ethiopia’s future prosperity, and are in practice, because this is believed to be an enormously essential condition which determines the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and the sustainability of socioeconomic development of the country (Abebe, 2011, CYAO, 1995).

Thus, this study was conducted with the rationale to assess and reveal the current youth socio economic empowerment and challenges of youths in Bishoftu town. Bishoftu is one among the towns Located in oromia region. The interest to conduct the study in the town arose from my personal observation. As resident of the town I have observed that youths face many challenges and to address the challenges the government has been undertaking various activities. The interest to identify the challenges youths are facing and the activities that has been undertaking by government and non-government organization to empower youths is the rationale behind selection of the town.

**Statement of the Problem**

Youth empowerment and development is vital in developing well balanced citizens with the capacity to actively engage in social, cultural, political, and economic matters of their communities and country. However, majority of the youth population live in developing countries where development constraints, such as limited access to resources,
education and training, health care, employment and broader socio-economic development opportunities, create range of challenges to youth empowerment and development. Thus lack of viable skills and appropriate knowledge are common there among youth so that unemployment, petty crime, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, and etc are common in developing countries, including Ethiopia (UNICEF, 2010). Thus, the current Ethiopian Government acknowledges that the highly diverse youth population of the country, including those out-of-school and in disadvantaged regions, need to be mobilized, organized, and equipped with knowledge, skills and capacity that will empower them to contribute in addressing developmental issues and to make informed decisions regarding socioeconomic matters (CYAO, 1995).

Accordingly the establishment of Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture in 2002, and the endorsement of National Youth Policy in 2004, and other supporting polices such as Health, Education, HIV/AIDS, Women, Population, and Developmental Social Welfare, and youth packages which were developed in order to put the policy and other youth issues into practice were established to address the needs and rights of the Ethiopian youth so that to promote youth empowerment and development in the country (Hamilton, 2004). The National Youth policy was envisioned to create an empowered young generation with democratic outlook and ideals, equipped with knowledge and professional skills, organized and built with ethical integrity. The policy envisioned among others establishing of teenage and youth counseling centers which offer counseling services, disseminate population related information through community organizations such as youth groups. On the other hand, the national women policy addresses youth issues directly which provides the right of women to career guidance and the need to educate concerned
communities against unlawful practices such as circumcision and the marriage of young girls before they reach puberty. The Development and Social Welfare Policy adopted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in 1996 emphasized youth’s needs as of special priority. It clearly states the willingness of the government to address the needs of the youth by providing youth with appropriate vocational/technical training, job placement services and related support. Moreover, the current five-year Growth and Transformation Plan has also clearly shown a policy direction for the youth, which focuses on the need to boost youth participation in all aspects of life to ensure that the youth benefit from the socio-economic development activities (MYC, 2002). Generally, the policy and the youth packages focus on enabling youth to challenge and overcome cultural and social inhibitions, enabling them participate in income generating activities or get access to material and financial resources that plays a key role in influencing decision making, building youth capacity to understand development and its interventions, and focus on increasing the number of young people in leadership positions to enable the youth to play an active role in building a good governance so that promote socio economic development of the country (MOFED, 2010). Accordingly, as part of the overall government strategy to promote the empowerment of youth in the economic, social, and political aspects of the country, a numbers of youth development activities are in implementation by various governmental and nongovernmental organizations in all regions of the country; the interventions include, exposing the youth to information and knowledge exchange activities, encouraging youth entrepreneurship, increasing the number of youth centers at different levels, mainstreaming youth development programs into other development programs, strengthening
youth associations and organizations, and so on (MYC, 2002).

As it can be understood from aforementioned explanations, much had been written on youth empowerment and development objectives and on youth empowerment and development interventions and activities that are in practice, in Ethiopia. However, regarding youth empowerment and development conditions vis-à-vis the practical implementation of the strategies concerned with the issue at grassroots levels, particularly, in the previously more disadvantaged regions of the country, little was known. Consequently, this study aimed at readdressing the gaps by assessing the situation of youth socio-economic empowerment and Development in Bishoftu Town.

**Objectives of the Study**

**I. General Objective**

The overall objective of this study was to assess youth socioeconomic empowerment and challenges of youths in Bishoftu town.

**II. Specific Objectives**

Specific objectives of the study were:

- To identify youth empowerment activities in the town
- To assess the major challenges in empowerment of youths
- To identify challenges of youths in the town
- To describe the coping strategies to address the challenges

**Significance of the Study**

The study has various significances. The study provides adequate information about the condition of youth empowerment activities that has been undertaking by government and non-government organizations. Thus, the outcome of the study can enable different governmental and
nongovernmental organizations to implement a wide range of activities to promote youth empowerment by addressing the challenges. Besides, since Rift Valley University is one among non-governmental organizations involving in empowerment of youths in the town, this study is helpful to assess the success so far and show future measures to be undertaken. Moreover, the study can also help different stakeholders who are implementing various youth empowerment and development activities, to know the challenges of youths in the town and the ways to address the challenges.

Scope of the Study
Taking into consideration financial and time issues, the study has both geographical and thematically delimitation. Geographically the scope of this study is delimited to Bishoftu town. It is one among the towns located in oromia region. The town is located 50km far apart from Finfine. Thematically it’s limited to assessing the empowerment activities that have been undertaking in the town and the challenges of youths in the town are facing.

Limitations of the Study
Some among the limitations of the study include: the data is not representative; due to lack of clear sampling frame the researcher fail to select the respondents by using probability sampling technique. Besides, the scope of the study is very limited, it focuses only on assessing the challenges of youths and empowerment activities that have been undertaking in the town.

2. Literature Review
This part of the study focus on reviewing prior existing literatures surrounding youths in general and socio-economic condition of youths in particular from both published and unpublished documents. It begins by providing discussions on youth issues and problems. Followed by youth
empowerment and development and finally it end up by discussing youth empowerment and development in Ethiopia

**Youth Issues and Problems**

Today, 1.2 billion adolescents stand at the challenging crossroads between childhood and the adult world, and youth represent 25 per cent of the working age population and account for 47 percent (88 million) of the world’s unemployed people. An estimated 515 million young people, nearly 45 percent of the total, live on less than two dollars a day. In many developing countries, over half of the population is younger than 25 years of age and many of them are teenagers (UNICEF, 2010). And despite gains in primary education, 133 million 15-24 year olds are illiterate. Among these are many of the 13 million young women every year who give birth aged 15 to 19 (World Bank, 2005). The economic and social base, the youth population, have in many cases been ravaged by HIV/AIDS: In 2005, more than half the estimated 5 million people who contracted HIV worldwide were young people aged 15-24, more than half of them young women (UNECA, 2011).

Accordingly, the African population is estimated to be more than a billion people of whom roughly youth constitute more than 20%. By 2050 according to predictions, 29 percent of the total world youth population will reside in Africa. Thus, African youth have high potential to be a great impetus for Africa’s development, provided that appropriate investments in their issues are made. However, if youth issues are not addressed, Africa’s development could be negatively affected (UNECA, 2011).

The socioeconomic conditions of young Africans have improved in recent years, but not significantly; and there has been an increase in school enrolment over the past 20 years, and the gender gap in education has narrowed, however, young Africans continue to face major difficulties in
the realms of higher education, employment, health, and participation in decision-making processes (UNECA 2010; World Bank, 2010).

1. Education: There has been significant improvement in access to primary education and literacy across Africa in the last decades. However, the increase in primary education enrolment rates has not necessarily been followed by an equivalent increase in secondary and tertiary education rates, especially for young women and girls. Emphasis, by governments and international actors is normally placed on primary education (e.g.in the campaign for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals), and this prevents many young people from entering the labor market and therefore from establishing themselves as fully independent adults, as well as from developing the capacity to resist different manipulations (UNECA, 2011).

2. Employment: Closely connected to the issue of education is another major concern in young people’s lives: getting a job with a living wage. A growing number of young people – from university graduates to illiterate youths – are unable to gain access to paid employment, and hence to the full status of adults. Educated young people have been increasingly vulnerable to failing to obtain the type of employment considered commensurate to their qualifications, and there has been intensifying competition among aspirants for such employment. And as education is largely failing to provide students with an avenue towards a better future, young people increasingly regard education as irrelevant or useless. The problem is not only linked to the availability, quality and relevance of education, but also more broadly to the economic and social constraints in which most developing countries find themselves. According to estimates of the International Labor Organization (ILO), in 2009, the youth unemployment rate was at 11.9 per cent in Sub Saharan Africa. The problem affects the
majority of adults in both rural and urban areas, even if its incidence is higher amongst youth, women, and rural populations (UNECA, 2011).

3. Health: Africa collectively aspires to universal access to health care and coverage. However, the various constraints in health financing are affecting the most vulnerable Africans, including youth. HIV/AIDS remains a major cause of death among the African youth. “By killing mostly young adults, AIDS does more than destroy the human capital embodied in them; it deprives their children of the very things they need to become economically productive adults – their parents’ loving care, knowledge, and capacity to finance education.”(Bell and others quoted in the World Development Report 2007, World Bank). Vulnerability increases for the many youth in the region who suffers from poverty, the effects of nutritional deficiencies, infectious diseases, rural to urban migration, and deleterious environments. Girls are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection due to early marriage, violence against women and sexual abuse and due to biological reasons. In 2007, an estimated 3.2 million young people were living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa alone. And more than one out of two deaths among young African females is as a result of AIDS or AIDS-related illnesses (Blum, M. 1998).

4. Participation in the Decision-Making Process: Efforts to engage youth in policy formulation have increased over the past few years at all levels. Youth participation across Africa occurs through various fora, such as through youth organizations, national youth councils, and youth parliaments set up at the national or regional levels. However, the work of national youth councils and youth parliaments is often limited to one-off events. Often, Governments lack an understanding of the benefits of youth involvement in consultation processes. And few opportunities exist for active youth participation in decision-making processes due to limited
skills, tools and resources, among both young people and the Governments that are required to engage in effective consultative processes, and to implement action plans (Kidanu and Konjit, 2001).

2.1.1. Youth Issues and Problems in Ethiopia

Ethiopia’s population is predominantly young in which over 50 percent being under 18 years of age (CSA, 2007) and the youth (15-29 ages) constituting 30% of the population. And this significant segment of the country’s population has been and is in the forefront of economic production and the process of social change in the country. However, this group of the population has been both the direct and indirect victims of the problem of social and economic stagnation and poor governance. That is, the economic, political, and social situation in Ethiopia has seriously affected this group. And most of youth related problems are intimately related to the overall process of socio-economic development of the country (CYAO, 1995).

Although Ethiopia has demonstrated significant development gains recently (while the economic growth of the last decade and the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals has been interesting), Ethiopian youth have been facing a multitude of problems caused by several deep rooted problems. Government policies and programs so far have tried to address the needs of youth along with those of the general population. However, as an age group, youth material, social, and health needs have not been given the required attention, and access to quality education, employment opportunities and health services remain limited, particularly for young rural women and men whose problems are multifaceted and interrelated (Kurey, B., 2005).

According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA), 87 percent of all registered job seekers are between the ages of 15 and 29 (MOLSA, 1997). Among registered job seekers only 5 percent reported that
they were able to get jobs. Youth migrate from rural to urban areas looking for jobs. Young women are increasingly employed in menial jobs and may work as housemaids, cleaners, or commercial sex workers. Young men often end up as day laborers and become exposed to and engage in various types of risk behavior including criminal activity, unsafe sex and use of alcohol and drugs (UNECA (2009); young people in Ethiopia have low access to information on reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases. And the major reproductive health problems faced by the young population in the country are gender inequality, early marriage, female genital cutting, unwanted pregnancy, closely spaced pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and Sexually Transmitted Infection (UNICEF, 2011).

And the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like HIV/AIDS is relatively high among young people in Ethiopia. Traditional practices and poor living conditions often lead young people to engage in sex at an early age. Many young women are forced to practice sex for money; for instance, financial need was cited by 85 percent of respondents, in Addis Ababa, as the reason for resorting to prostitution (Fisseha, 1997). It is difficult to estimate the number of commercial sex workers, but it is believed to be in a number of thousands in Ethiopia. Most of the prostitutes are quite young. Young prostitutes are exposed to many types of violence. The consequences of childhood prostitution include health problems resulting from physical abuse, early and unwanted pregnancy, STDs, HIV/AIDS, and abortion, as well as psychological problems, low self-esteem, hopelessness, and stigma.

And as mentioned above, drug trafficking and drug abuse are becoming more common in Ethiopia. According to the MOH Department of Pharmacy report for 1993-94, of the 291 drug abusers and traffickers for which age was reported, 223 (77 percent) were aged 15-25.
The majority of these young people were students or unemployed youth. Chewing chat has become a major problem among youth. It is exacerbated by lack of employment opportunities and general feelings of hopelessness (CYAO, 1995).

Generally, majority of the youth population have limited access to resources, education and training, health care, employment and broader socio-economic development opportunities, thus lack of viable skills and appropriate knowledge are common among youth so that unemployment, petty crime, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, and etc are common in the country (UNICEF, 2012).

However, for Ethiopia to secure her future prosperity, the government must be increasingly involved in addressing the needs and rights of children and young people and must renew efforts by aggressively embarking on empowerment and development programs in agriculture & agro-allied, manufacturing, information technology and telecommunications, educational establishments, production services, tourism, solid minerals, construction, technical and vocational education and the development of the rural areas to check rural-urban migration and etc through concerted efforts of different bodies such as ministries of agriculture, health, education, youth development, National Directorate of Employment and other empowerment and development agencies such as the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency, private sector, nongovernmental organizations and individuals (CYAO, 1995).

Because if these young population are safeguarded and given the opportunity, they can be intrepid innovators, productive workers, enterprising entrepreneurs, active union workers and valued customers, and can become active participants in seeking sustainable solutions for
challenges, such as, poverty, environmental degradation, and inequality that affect them and their community (Vaughan, Sarah, 2004).

3. Methodology

In this part of the study the research design, data sources, research methods and procedures, sampling technique, study setting, and data analysis and presentation techniques were presented.

Nature of the study and study design

This is a non-experimental exploratory study. It is exploratory because the socio-economic situations of youths in the town have not been studied in detail. Since this research aimed at exploration, it employed a qualitative research method. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research is conducted when we need a complex, detailed exploration of the issue, instead of making statistical generalizations about a large number of cases.

Data sources

Both primary and secondary data sources were used for this study. Primary data was generated through questionnaire and interview guide. In order to support primary data secondary data were gathered from different published and unpublished materials which are related to the issue.

Data Collection Instruments

Interview was the main data collection technique used in this study. According to Cunningham (1993), interviews represent important parts of any social research project because it provides opportunity for the researcher to investigate further, to solve problems, and to gather data, which could not have been obtained in other ways. As argued by this scholar the aim of using interview was to explore empowerment activities of youths in the town and the challenges youths in the town are facing.
Accordingly, an in-depth interview which was discussed further through probing was utilized as the primary method of data collection to explicate detail experiences of the participants. According to Johnson (2002), researchers use in-depth interviewing to seek ‘deep’ information, knowledge and understanding.

Generally, it is my intention to understand the activities that have been undertaking to empower and develop youths in the town in detail and challenges youths in the town were facing that initiated me to opt in-depth interview as a data gathering technique for this study. Few questions followed by probing questions that believed to be helpful to understand the phenomena in detail were asked to collect the data.

In-depth interview guides were employed to collect information from the key informants. It was conducted with officials of different organizations and youths selected by using non-probability sampling technique. The key informants were directors or experts in women, children and youth affairs bureau, small and micro enterprise development bureau, and youth federation bureau of the town.

**Study population, sampling technique and sample size**

Out of the non probability sampling techniques to recruit the participants I have used purposeful sampling technique. Purposeful sampling is described by Maxwell (2005, p.88) as “a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that can’t be gotten from other choices.” As argued by this scholar, I have used the technique for inclusion of participants who could richly contribute to examine the activities that have been undertaking to empower youths in the town and identify challenges of youths in the town. Accordingly, for in-depth interview, five offices’ directors/experts were selected from the
aforementioned bureaus and ten youths were selected by using purposeful sampling technique.

**Data presentation and analysis technique**

The following steps were followed in the analysis of the collected data. Since the data was gathered in Afan Oromo and Ahmaric, the first step in the analysis process was transcribing the data. The second step was translating the interview from Afan Oromo and Ahmaric to English. After translating the interview, the steps followed are organizing and preparing the data for analysis, reading and rereading of each interview a number of times in which I conducted a pre-coding through bolding and underlining important sentences. Followed by coding in which I have undertaken a first and second level coding. In the first level coding I identified important points and gave number. Then, in the second level coding, I summarized the coded data to develop sub-themes. Finally, by bringing similar subthemes together I developed super-themes (themes). Generally, in this study thematic analysis was used to analyze and present the collected data.

**Operational Definitions of Terms**

- **Youth:** Youth are those who are between 15 and 29 years old as used in the study of the General State of the Ethiopian Youth (MYC, 2002).

- **Youth empowerment:** It is a process whereby young people gain the ability and authority to make decisions and implement change in their own lives.

- **Youth Development:** It refers to the ongoing growth processes in which youth are engaged in attempting to meet their basic personal and social needs to be safe, feel cared for, valued, useful and spiritually grounded and build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives.
4. Data Analysis and Presentation (where is chapter 1 & 2?)

In this part of the study, the data obtained from the study participants regarding youth socio-economic empowerment and development conditions, have been presented, analyzed and discussed. It is organized under two sections. The first part deals with discussing youth empowerment activities that have been undertaking in the town and the second part focus on presenting the challenges youths in the town are facing and coping strategies.

Youth empowerment and development activities in the town

As part of the overall government strategy to promote the empowerment of the youth in the economic, social, and political aspects of the country, numbers of youth empowerment and development activities/programs are under implementation by various organizations in the town. Among these interventions: increasing the number of youth centers at different levels; organizing and strengthening youth associations; providing training; encouraging youth entrepreneurship.

The interview conducted with experts and leaders of different organizations in the town indicated that various measures have been undertaking to empower and develop youths in the town. Some of the activities that has been undertaking include:

Youth mobilization and organization

In describing the activities that have been undertaken to empower and develop youths in the town, the key informants revealed that organizing youths in associations was one among the activities that have been undertaken to make youth self-reliant. Interviewed experts of Small and micro business enterprise and youth and sport office of the town indicated that most of the associations are organized in the form of
small business enterprises and they are involving in various activities to improve their income which has indirect effect on the economic development of the town specifically and the country in general. The associations were organized on urban agriculture, manufacturing, construction, service and trade. The data collected from the participants revealed that in 2008 there are 41 associations having 1028 members that are organized on urban agriculture. Manufacturing sector share the largest number of association. At the time of data collection there were 56 manufacturing associations having 2142 members. The third type of associations on which youths were involving was on construction. At the time of the interview there were forty eighty associations having one thousand two hundred members. The associations were involved in construction of different infrastructures. The fourth type of association on which youths were organized was on service. Seventh two associations having one thousand nine hundred seventy two members were organized on provision of services. Finally twenty six associations having six hundred forty two members were organized on trade. Generally, the interview conducted with the participants revealed that totally there were two hundred forty three associations having six thousand nine hundred sixty eight members in the town.

**Engagement in Seasonal Employment:** another way of empowering youths in the town was by facilitating youths to participate in seasonal employment. Such as day laborer, collection of wastes and others. The interview from youth and sport office of the stated that seven thousand one hundred forty nine youths were leading their life by engaging in seasonal employment

**Provisions of Trainings**

In addition to youths
mobilization and organization, another measure that has been undertaken as youth empowerment and development effort in the town, is provision of training on various issues, such as life skills, entrepreneurship, and generate your business in collaboration with different government and non-government organizations such as kelehiwot and Rakson.

The officer further stated that they have been providing tutorial services and trainings on various issues for high school students during the summer. He explained that each year by organizing university students who return to their family for vacation, the leadership facilitates the provision of tutorial services to improve academic performance of high school students. Besides, in addition to facilitating the provision of trainings for youths on the above youth’s issues, he stated that the leadership is facilitating panel discussions with youths on different issues.

In support of the above view the interviewees explained that they are working to provide trainings for youth on various issues, expert in youth, children, and women affairs office of the town mentioned that the bureau is supporting, financially, support for needy youths to pursue their education by seeking collaboration from different non-government organizations.

**Ensuring equal participation of males and females in development activities** The Ethiopian Millennium Development Goal report, (2012) claims that ensuring gender equality is a decisive factor in development activities, and the report shows, gender equality has increasingly become an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all national development programs in the country. And Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) and similar bureaus at federal, regional, and sub-regional levels are some of the indicators of Government’s commitment in addressing gender disparities and promoting women’s empowerment in Ethiopia.
Accordingly, many efforts have been undertaking in order to ensure equal participation of males and females in development activities, in towns. Women and children affairs office of the town contended that the office is doing its best to realize equal treatment of males and females. Some of the measures the office is undertaking to ensure gender equality are the following:

**Awareness creation:** To change the attitude of the community, the children and women affairs office has been providing various trainings to females at different level. Regarding, its success, to some extent there is a change in attitude female youths. But, the change was not remarkable; mainly presumption of the society towards division of labor in the family was not changed.

**Provision of loan service:** An expert from small business enterprise bureau of the town explained that in collaboration with different government and nongovernmental organizations the bureau is providing financial service which will be paid back. Interviewees explained that they are facilitating this service to realize socio-economic empowerment and development of youths in the town.

**Construction of youth centers:** the key informants indicated building of youth centers the best strategy to empower youth. There were five youth centers in the town; three of the centers were functional at a time of data collection. The main goal of the centers is to produce productive and healthful youth. The services provided in the centers include internet, library, swimming pool, and gymnasium services. The center has dual benefit, for the users it helps to get these services at least cost and for associations providing the service to maximize their benefit. The leaders of youth centers indicated that the price of the products in center is fair. The price of tea is 1 birr; coffee 2 birr, internet 20 cents per minute, swimming
pool 12birr per individual and library service is provided freely. The interview conducted in three kebeles indicated that there are more than two hundred users per day.

**Challenges to empower youths**

Almost all of the key informants expressed that they have faced various challenges in their effort to empower and develop youth. Besides, the youths have also reflected as they are facing various challenges. The common challenges to empower and develop youths and challenges of youths in the towns include:

**Financial problem:** All of the participants reported financial problem as the main challenge to realize youth socio-economic empowerment and development. They raised lack of financial support from the government and unnecessary bureaucracy as their main concern. Youth federation of town stated that there are many youths in the town, thus, it’s difficult to meet the financial needs of the youths in the town.

Besides, the expert of the small and business enterprise of the town stated that shortage of budget is the main problem of the bureau. She stated that the budget allotted to the bureau is not enough to involve youths in different income generating activities.

In explaining their financial problems youths hired in industries and different construction stated that their monthly salary is insignificant to meet their basic necessities. In expressing her experience one of the key informants stated that her monthly salary is 620 birr, where as the rent of the house is 600 birr. To share cost of life they are leaving in group of four, she reported as living in group has various difficulties.

**Problems of the youth centers:** the interview conducted with experts of the youth centers indicated those centers which are providing service have various challenges. Some among the challenges include infrastructural
problem like shortage of books, computer and water and electricity supply. Besides, two youth centers hadn’t started provision of services due to lack of essential amenities. Moreover, workers in the youth center have also stated as their monthly salary is insignificant to meet their need. They indicated as this will directly or indirectly affect their performance, motivation and satisfaction in the center.

**Low political participation:** One of the key informants acknowledged that the participation of youths in political system at different level is very low. He believes that competition and affirmative action will enable more young people to assume leadership roles. Besides, one of the participants indicated that the government policy is not such serious in the effort to improve the living situation of the youth, their no fund for youths.

**Poor education and training:** some of the participants argued that Education systems often fail to prepare young people adequately to participate in decision-making. Key informants from small and business enterprise of the town argued as some of the graduates do not have the necessary analytical skills for critical thinking or problem-solving. Many of youths even if they graduated from university and collage they do not have practical know how to involve in income generating activities. In some cases young people are given the opportunity to participate in decision-making without ensuring that they receive adequate training or access to the appropriate information that would enable them to make informed decisions and effective contribution to community development.

**Unequally treatment:** Addressing inequality and the social exclusion of particular groups of young people is a big challenge within the youth sector. Some of the key informant youths indicated that they face discrimination to participate in different activities in the town.
Participating in income generating activities is difficulty unless the youths are capable of meeting the needs of the kabele leaders either by giving bribe or having relationship with them (nepotism).

Lack of awareness from youths: Due to lack of understanding/awareness, some of the youths have no interest to participate in youth empowering activities such as youth associations which are facilitated by government and non-government organizations.

Unemployment: Key informants from government organizations and from youth argued that unemployment as one among the basic challenges of youths in the town. But, there is difference on their perspective regarding the reason of unemployment. Youths raise unfair distribution of resources as one reason. They stated that resources are concentrated in the hand of few individuals. So, there is no comfortable situation to involve youths in income generating activities. Another issue they raised is loans and financial assistance. During the course of this study some young people lamented about the limited loans they could get and expressed their desire to have enough financial assistance to venture into businesses. However, some of the key informants from government organizations stated that some of the youths are not entrepreneurial in nature, rather than using the opportunity prepared by government, they look for employment. Besides, the key informant acknowledged that most of the business started in the town fails before they celebrate their first birth day. Some of the key informant youths revealed that the loan that is given for youths was too little. To make youths effectively use little resources key informant from government organization indicated that they are trying to make youths innovative because when you are innovative there are lots of things you can do with little resources. Furthermore, All of the key informants
contends that there is no youth fund in the town specifically and the country in general. The key informants reported that the number of unemployed youths in the town has been increasing from time to time. They mentioned migration from rural to urban areas as the main reason. Since the town is one among the industrial centers in the country, many youths migrate to center from all corners of the country in search of job. Thus, migration is one among the contributing factors for increment in number of unemployed youths in the town. Besides, increment in number of graduates is also increasing the number of educated youth unemployment.

**Lack of linkages:** participants mentioned that there are many youth associations working on various activities, however, there is no interlinkages and market linkages among them. Besides, even though, there are many non-governmental organizations, in the town, with a vision of supporting and empowering youths, they hadn’t taken decisive steps due to lack of linkages.

**Difficulty to get identification card:** The participants expressed difficulty to have identification card. Especially, those who lead their life by renting house expressed as they are facing difficulty to have identification card of the town. Because, there are many pre-request that individuals are expected to fulfill.

**Dependence of Associations:** The other challenges to youth empowerment and development in the town, especially in youth mobilizations and organizations, are the following. Many of the associations are dependent on non-governmental organizations whose existence is temporary. Thus, in many cases interviewees mentioned that unless effective measures are undertaken to ensure the sustainability of the associations, the existence of the associations is under question. In addition, there is a disagreement
among members, in different youth associations, on varies issues. Furthermore, lack of money and conducive place for meeting/discussions, and resistance from young people to participate effectively, were also among the most common problems that many of the associations face. Moreover, as mentioned above, the interviewees noted lack of sustainability of activities and services provided for associations; there is lack of planning and coordination of activities as well as unsustainable flow of required resources. The interview revealed that many of the associations did not have the capacity, clearly set goals, directions, strategies, clear structure, rules and regulations and resources to attract and retain members as efficiently as possible, thus many of the associations are unable to satisfy and cope with the growing and diverse interest of youth so that association members often come and stay for a while and then leave the associations.

In addition, the equality of gender is not practical in many associations. Another problem raised was conflict of interest and misunderstanding between the members. Youth leaders also lacked knowledge and (counseling) skills important for them to lead the day-to-day activity of the association in the area of management, monitoring and evaluation of their activities and others.

**Copping strategies:** Regarding the attempts that have been undertaken to overcome the challenges and to promote youths socio economic empowerment and development in the study communities, experts, specially, from youth, and sport bureau, small and micro enterprise development bureau and youth federation bureau of the town stated that some among the helpful strategies to overcome the challenges youth in the town are facing are:

**Working with young people and initiating involvement of different organizations:** one of the interview stated that realizing young people’s
right to participation is the responsibility of a wide range of actors. Each actor (as well as collaborating with others) represents a potential arena for participation – be it an institution or social group. Networks which bring together these different stakeholders can help to identify and address obstacles to participation. Thus, participation of youths and searching of different organization that help empowerment of youths was used as one strategy

**Advocacy:** the interview also indicated that in addition to undertaking different activities to enhance youth participation in different activities, the bureau has been trying its best specially to pursue the town’s cabine to fairly distribute annual budget by taking into consideration the situation of youth.

**Participation of the community:** One of our key informants in town articulated provision of different trainings and education as the best strategy to overcome the obstacles. He contends that “Education has a capacity to bring a profound change in knowledge and behavior of youths and to enhance youth socio economic empowerment and development”. He stated the town is trying its best to equip all youth with appropriate trainings.

**Support from private organizations.** Private organizations play a pivotal role in empowerment and development of youths in the town. Rift Valley University is one among the private organizations that is playing remarkable role in empowerment of youths in the town. Both the youths and interviewed government employees indicated that they want many things from the university to assure socio-economic empowerment and development of youths in the study communities. Some of the supports the interviewees asked from the university are books and other related materials for the youth centers; trainings issue such risky sexual behaviors; entrepreneurship and other related issues.
5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The finding of the study indicated that various measures have been undertaking to empower and develop youths in the towns. The activities identified include youth mobilization; provision of trainings; construction of youth centers; awareness creation, and advocacy, but the attempts are not remarkable. Majority of the interviewed youths indicated that they are not curious of activities that are undertaking in the town.

The measures undertaking to empower and develop youth in the town are not remarkable. The main challenges identified for the failure are financial problem, Problems of the youth centers, unequally treatment, Lack of awareness from youths, Unemployment, Lack of linkages, and dependence of the Associations. Besides, The finding of this study indicated that the budget allotted to concerned organizations directly or indirectly influence activities to empower youths. Thus, from the finding of this study, it’s possible to conclude that youth empowerment activities are directly or indirectly influenced by budget allotted to concerned organizations and involvement of different stakeholders.

Moreover, the finding of the study also revealed that the concerned organization have been undertaking various attempts to address the challenges, and to promote youths socio economic empowerment and development in the town. Such advocacy, participation of the community and seeking Support from private organizations. Generally, various attempts have been undertaking to empower youths in the town. Despite the attempts youths in the selected town’s are suffering from various problems.
Recommendation

Today youth empowerment and development activities are suggested as decisive measures to be employed because it is believed that a country's development rests on the shoulders of its youth. Thus, in order to secure the community's future prosperity, youth socio economic conditions demands a special attention. However, the success of youth socio economic empowerment and development largely depends on concerted efforts of all stakeholders. Thus, undertaking of the following is important to address the challenges youths and assure their participation in their community development:

- Educational institutions including and other responsible bodies should give sufficient and relevant trainings and education to solve the social, economic, and cultural problems of targeted groups;
- Government should promote and support an integrated approach to provide opportunities for youth to develop new professional skills and to get involved in (income generating) activities that support the broader community;
- For youth empowerment and development to thrive, the government must provide basic infrastructures that will enhance job creation. Because unless this is done, the youth may still face difficulties in developing their businesses;
- Rift Valley University and other responsible bodies should promote educational workshops on issues relevant to youth such as drug-use, sexually transmitting infections, entrepreneurship, and personal and community values.
- The peer education system that enables youth to achieve behavioral change must be well structured.
Relevant trainings must be given to Youth associations to build a transparent system and productive system.

Linkages should be created amongst youth associations, educational, health bureaus, youth federations, youth and sport office, small and micro enterprise bureaus, and NGOs to promote youth empowerment and development, and

Necessary materials must be fulfilled for both youth centers which are operational and didn’t started provision of services.

6. Reference


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World Bank (2010), African Development Indicators, World Bank Development Data Base, Washington D.C.
Corporate Social Responsibility Practices and Financial Performance of Manufacturing Firms: A Case Study of Sebeta and Gelan Towns. By: Workineh Bayisa Jima (PhD), Assistant Professor of Management and Daniel Tolesa Agama, Assistant Professor of Accounting and Finance, RVU, mobile: 0911793044

Abstract
This study examine attitude of managers, employees and local communities towards CSR practices of manufacturing firms. Today most companies consider corporate social responsibility (CSR) as their objective to ensure that their business action provides equal and sustainable benefits for diverse stakeholders and used as a competitive advantage for the firm. Thus, we used the four major stakeholders (community, customers, employees and environment) as a measure of CSR practices of the manufacturing firms and then link of the CSR to the financial performance of the firm. We used structured questionnaire to secure data from the three categories of respondents (managers, employees and local community). The data collected from the respondent via questionnaire were analyzed by using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of SPSS. To deal with descriptive data; we employed descriptive statistical tools such as percentage, mean, and standard deviations. Correlation and other statistical procedures such as t-test and ANOVA were used to examine the relationship and difference between the study variables. The results of the study found out that the firm did not play discretionary role to help the surrounding community and specifically from the local community viewpoint, social contribution of manufacturing firms limited. The result also found out that manufacturing firms surveyed have not properly carried out CSR activities especially in waste management. Furthermore, lack of business strategy and
policies related to CSR and lack of coordination from other firms or communities are the major challenge for the success of CSR in the study areas. Similarly, the study also found out that a socially responsible firms are found to be financially successful than others.

**Key Words:** Corporate Social Responsibility, Community, Customers, Employees, Environment, Financial Performance.

1. **Introduction**

An important issue facing today’s managers is whether corporate sector has some responsibility to improve the society or only to improve their earnings. Until the last decade, particularly in developing countries a firm was generally viewed, as an economic institution to provide wanted goods and services for public consumption and a profit for the owners (Potluri and Zelalem, 2008). Since Ethiopia is one of the developing countries, the philosophy of corporate social responsibility is not well developed and also the governance system takes the form of mere control and decision making rather than well developed ethical code of conduct.

Companies engage in CSR for both normative and strategic reasons (Marom, 2006). On one hand, the normative argument emphasizes the moral imperatives for firms engaging in CSR practices. On the other hand, the strategic rationale focuses on the cause-effect relationships between social responsible practices and financial performance (Rowley and Berman, 2000; Weber, 2008). According to Carroll and Shabana (2010), researchers' interests have gradually shifted from normative and ethics-oriented studies to performance-oriented analysis.

Chahal and Sharma (2006) define Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a firm’s commitment to protect and improve society and its organizational welfare by utilizing different business and social actions to ensure that it provides equal and sustainable benefits for diverse stakeholders. Moreover,
Branco and Rodigues (2006) found that CSR includes many issues, such as human resource management, healthy and safe working conditions, and building relationships with local communities, suppliers, and consumers. They further suggest that firms should deal with problems resulting from their operation independently, without being forced by laws and governmental regulation.

The issue of CSR has been one of the topics of discourse in the last four or five decades. Many manufacturing and service companies have also been saying that they have a component for CSR. On the other hand, many blame those companies especially manufacturing firms for being irresponsible with regard to CSR. Most of the manufacturing industries in Ethiopia in general and in the study areas in particular are newly emerging industries because of the country development strategy emphasizing on import substitutions for saving foreign exchange and give a work opportunity to many jobless society. Due to this direct and indirect support from the government, a number of manufacturing firms particularly in the study towns emerged and continued to increase in size and type.

However, the industry is accused for environmental and socio-economic problems. Environmentally ecological concerns such as pollution and waste disposal are the major ones. In addition, socio-economically, the industry has a problem with the community like labors are not paid the right amount of wage; the machines used by most of the firms are outdated and not safe for employees operating with it. Because of these employees in some firms suffering health problem and even their right to form a union and bargain on their working condition is also denied in some firms. According to study by Belwal & Chala (2008), many environmental activists still argue that environmental policies or standards, labor regulations are not implemented by many companies within the industry as per the standards provided by the government.
In spite of lack of well organized form of corporate social responsibility practices in the developing country like Ethiopia, the study assesses how the manufacturing firms practice corporate social responsibility both within the organization as well as to the community in terms of four major stakeholders’: community, customers, environment and employees in Sebeta and Gelan towns. A model was used by different previous studies (Cochran & Wood, 1984; McGuire et al., 1988; Lin, 2009; Sweeney, 2009) to guide the research in the CSR areas. The model was assumed to cover the four major stakeholders as a measure of CSR practices of the manufacturing firms and then link of the CSR to the financial performance of the firm. In this study, we also follow the same model and figure 1 describes the model redeveloped from previous studies.

Figure 1: Study assumption

Source: Developed from Sweeney (2009)

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to explore CSR practice of selected manufacturing firms in Sebeta and Gelan town and to examine the links between firms’ CSR practices and their financial performance.
Specifically, the objectives of the study are:-

- To assess the managers and employees familiarity with the term of CSR and level of participation.
- To examine the contributions of the firms in terms of the four major stakeholders; community investment, environment stewardship, customers and employees.
- To analyze the relationship between demographic factors (years of operation, size of the firm and ownership) and firms CSR practices.
- To investigate the relationship between CSR activities of the firm and its financial performance.
- To identify the major barriers for manufacturing firms to practices CSR activities in the study areas.

3. Research Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research approach as quantitative methods help us to generate statistics through large scale survey research using questionnaire (Dawson, 2007; Creswell, 2003). The survey instrument has become a widely used and acknowledged research method worldwide. It consists of asking structured questions (Malhotra and Birks, 2000) of a representative cross section of the population at a single point in time. Thus, this study employed a cross sectional survey method using structured questionnaire. Furthermore, the research is a multi-organizational study and the methods and procedures constitute descriptive research to describe rather than explain a set of conditions, characteristics, or attributes of respondents in a population, based on measurement of a sample.

In addition the study examined the attitudes of managers, employees and the local community towards firms’ CSR practices. It is assumed that by understanding an individual’s attitudes towards something, we can predict that individual’s overall pattern of response to object (Zu, 2009). An assessment of
a manager’s attitude toward CSR may provide an indication of the managers’ predisposition to respond in a particular way to CSR. Similarly, the assessment of the communities’ attitude toward the firm’s contribution to the society may provide an indication of CSR.

3.1 Target Population
This study focused on selected manufacturing firms in two towns; Sebeta and Gelan in Special Zone, Administration of Oromia Surrounding Finfinee, Ethiopia. The areas considered as the major industrialized area as a number of manufacturing firms could be found. Thus, the target population for this research is manufacturing firms operating in Sebeta and Gelan towns by taking into consideration the firms’ ownership (public, private and foreigners). The firms in operation for the past five years were considered as the target population of this study.

3.2 Sample Size & The Sampling Procedure
The survey study was used to examine the attitudes of managers, employees and local community toward CSR activities of the manufacturing firms in the two towns. The total numbers of respondents for the questionnaire were determined by the formula for infinite population \( n = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{e^2} \) (Kothari, 2004). When the reliability is estimated to 95% and ±5% error, \( n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 385 \). However, some 235 valid responses were received producing a response rate of 55% and used in the analysis. The sampling procedure was a simple random sample of the target population. A random sample was used in order to attempt to insure that the sample was unbiased and had a high degree of probability that it was representative of the
target population as a whole. Hence, respondents from employee and local community were selected randomly to fill the questionnaire.

3.3 Data Collection

The study employed structured questionnaire for self-completing by managers and employees and interview for the local community to collect primary data. Based on the research objectives and the review of literature, structured questionnaires were designed for primary data collection. The questionnaire structured in four parts. The first part of the questionnaire devoted to collection of information about the profiles and background of manufacturing firms: including years of operations, firms’ size in terms of number of employees, ownership.

The second part of the questionnaire designed to gather information on the CSR practice of firms in the study areas. This part of the questionnaire incorporates different types of questions about the contribution of firms towards the employees, local community, customers and environment using a likert scale with six possible answers (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = inclined to disagree, 4 = inclined to agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree) with the statement.

Part three of the questionnaire dealt with financial performance of the manufacturing firms in the study areas. Questions were designed to assess the response of managers and employees on the financial performance of the firm in terms of sales and profit; and respondents were rate subjectively from much higher than expected to much lower than expected.

The final part of the questionnaire consisting of questions about respondents’ background information such as their job category or position, level of formal education, work experience, and gender.

A pilot survey was conducted for validation purposes of the questionnaire. The response from the pilot survey of five managers, 10 employees and 10 community representatives were used in the modification of the final
questionnaire. So that irrelevant questions and words that was deemed difficult to the respondents were removed from the questionnaire.

3.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected through questionnaire from the sampled respondents were edited, coded, classified and summarized to make suitable for statistical application. Validity and reliability of the survey questionnaires were assessed. Content validity, appropriateness of the questions and the clarity of the language were evaluated by peers and other professors at Jimma University. Moreover, reliability was assessed by using Cronbach’s alpha and the result presented in table 1.

Table 1: Internal Consistency- Coefficient Alpha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cronbach´s alpha(α)</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>.896</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer</td>
<td>.812</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>.802</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>.910</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>.776</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>.701</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researchers computation

When the Cronbach’s alpha is low, it indicates low reliability and this means that the measuring instrument is not consistent in its measurement. According to Leech, et al., (2005) an instrument can be considered reliable if the results of alpha coefficient value is .70 or greater. Similarly, Morgan, et al. (2004) indicated that reliability coefficients of .70 are adequate for research instruments. Therefore, from the alpha value obtained, we can conclude that the research instrument is reliable and consistent.
4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Previous studies have been shown that personal characteristics of those responsible individuals in the organization have a significant influence over the CSR activities within an organization. In particular, the educational level and work experience of managers’ are believed to have impact the extent of CSR within an organization (Schaper and Savery, 2004). Hence, Table 2 presents descriptive analysis about respondents (manager, employee and local community) personal information.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on respondent’s category, education and work experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents Category</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Community</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Formal Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 12 Grade</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Degree</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree and above</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Work Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 5 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 10 years</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15 years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 20 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 reveals that the sample represents 20% of managers, 18% of employees and the remaining 62% of local community. Though we tried our best to influence respondent managers to fill the questionnaire through personal contact and frequent telephone calling; the response rate is very small as compared to the number of questionnaires distributed to them. This is because managers in some organizations were not willing to respond on the issue of corporate social responsibility. In addition to this, some other managers were busy to fill the questionnaire. The 18% respondent of the employees in the organization is also small as compared to our research plan, this is mainly because of some firms totally blocked us not to consult their employees for unjustifiable reasons. Despite of these facts, the variety of respondent category shows the analysis of the problem is based on different source of information. Table 2 also shows that 36% of the respondents have first degree and only a few respondents (2%) have masters and above. A separate analysis of formal educational level for managers and employees was made and the result shows that 56% of the respondent managers and employees are first degree graduates and only 3% have masters degree and above.

Bessera and Miller (2000) found managers with higher educational achievement reported higher levels of community involvement. Schaper and Savery (2004) argue that level of education significantly affect manger’s propensity to donate to charity. Some slightly similar findings were noted in this study on single item questions to the respondents. For instance, 59.3% of manager respondents having first degree and above responses indicate the firms overall contribution for the local community and local investments increases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Above 20 years</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89a</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1The total work experience was analyzed only for manager and employee respondents
for the past five years as compared to 40.7% manager respondents having diploma or lower education level. However, the ANOVA test result for the overall contribution of firms to CSR in terms of community, customer, environment and employee indicates insignificant relationship between managers’ level of education and firms’ contribution to CSR. Concerning the work experience of managers and employees, 65% of the manager and employee respondents have less than 10 years of total work experience and only 6% above 20 years.

4.2 Familiarity With CSR
Manager and employee respondents were asked whether they are familiar with the term CSR and the result was presented in table 4 below.

Table 4: Respondents Familiarity with term Corporate Social Responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you familiar with the term Corporate Social Responsibility?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the firm have any concerned department to handle CSR?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Survey Questionnaire, 2012.*

The majority of respondents were familiar with the term, as table 4 illustrates, 64% of respondents answered yes to the question, “Are you familiar with the
term Corporate Social Responsibility?” In today’s modern business, different authors argue that CSR is an issue of growing importance in all business regardless of type and size (Basu and Palazzo, 2008; Burton and Goldsby, 2009). However, 74% of the respondent managers and employees replied “No” for the question “Does the firm have any concerned department to handle CSR?” This indicates that even though managers and employees are familiar with the term, there is no responsible body in their organization to carry out CSR activities.

4.3 Level of Firm’s Participation

A question is raised to respondents whether the firm contribute to the local community and philanthropic in the areas of operation. The responses for the questions were presented in the following table.

Table 5: Contribution of firms to the local community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the firm contribute to charity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the firm contribute to the surrounding community in terms of skills and time of employees?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey Questionnaire, 2012.

Table 5 shows that, 53.2% of the respondents believe that the firm did not play discretionary role to help the surrounding community. The 55.3% responses of
the respondents also show that the contribution of firms in terms of skill and time of employees to the local community was limited. Further analysis was made to see if there is difference between managers & employees and local community respondents on the contribution of the firm for the local communities. The result of the independents t-test between the two group managers & employees and local community was presented in table 6 below.

Table 6: Independent sample test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of firms to the local community*</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Average of the two questions in the table 3.4. above

Source: Survey Questionnaire, 2012.

The independent sample test reveals that managers and employees favorably agree with the social contribution of the firm as compared to local community counterpart. That is, there is significant difference in responding to the question t(233) = 4.08, p < .001. From this we can infer that either the firm contribution is limited or the firm fails to communicate what it contributed to the community. To support this argument, a question “How many times the firm discuss about CSR with the local community per year” was asked to respondents and 75.5% of the respondents responded that the firm do not discuss the issue of CSR at all with any concerned bodies in the areas.

4.4 Firms Contribution to CSR
Independent samples t-test was conducted to see if there is significant difference between managers & employees and local communities on their responses about the CSR role of firms based on the average value of community, customer, environment and employees presented in table 7, 8, 9 and 10 respectively. Accordingly, table 11 presents the result.

Table 11: Comparison of response of the community, customer, environment & employee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers &amp; employees</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local communities</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers &amp; employees</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local communities</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers &amp; employees</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local communities</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employees</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11 shows that, there is no significant difference between managers & employees and local communities’ response regarding CSR role of the firm towards community. This indicates that both manager & employee and local community respondents believe that the contribution of the firm to help community is not sufficient. However, concerning customer \( t(193) = 3.49, p < .01 \) and environment \( t(196) = 4.23, p < .001 \), there is significant difference between the two respondent categories. Inspection of the two groups mean indicates that in both case manager & employee respondents’ score tend to favor firms CSR role as compared to local community respondents.

With respect to the CSR role of the firm towards employee, there is statistically significant difference \( t(87) = 6.18, p < .001 \) between employee and manager respondents score (see table 10). An examination to the mean score for the six scale reveal that managers agree with the firms CSR activity towards employee as compared to their employee counterpart. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to see if there is difference among firms based on ownership in their role of CSR contribution regarding the four stakeholders (community, customer, environment and employees).

### 4.5 Relationships between CSR and Financial Performance

The data related to FP of the firms collected from the managers and employee respondents subjectively. That is, the measures of financial performance rely on self reports from respondents regarding their firm’s profit and sales performance. The reason for using the subjective self reporting rather than the objective (sales and profit from income statement) is that, all firms are not willing to give us their financial statement or any report related to sales and profit during pilot study. Previous research in a similar studies were also used

| Employees | 42 | 1.78 | 1.06 |

*The t test was made for the response difference between managers and employees,*
the subjective performance measures; sales and profit reported by respondents (Moore, 2001; Wall et al., 2004; Burton and Goldsby, 2009). According to Richard et al. (2009), the use of subjective or objective measures should be determined based on the favorable measure under the particular circumstances of the research context. Thus, five questions in the questionnaire with Likert scale of five (1 much lower than expectation; to 5 much higher than expectation) presented to manager and employee respondents and they rate accordingly. Finally, the items summed into one to find the association between financial performance and firms CSR activities in terms of community, customer, environment and employee.

Table 14: Pearson correlations for CSR activities and firms’ performance (N = 89)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Firms’ Performance</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Community</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>3*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Customer</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
<td>2**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Environment</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Employee</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at 0.05; ** Correlation is significant at 0.01
The community, customer, and employee related CSR activities of the firm have a significant correlation with firms’ financial performance. The Pearson correlation for firm’s performance to community contribution \( r = .26, p < .05 \); firm’s performance to customer \( r = .23, p < .05 \) and firm’s performance to employee \( r = .29, p < .01 \) show that as the manufacturing firms improve their contribution to community, handling customers and employees responsibly, the firm’s financial performance improve.

In addition to the above analysis, the correlation was tested for the sum of all the four stakeholders of CSR activities of the firm against the financial performance (FP). The results indicate that firms’ financial performance is statistically significantly and positively \( (r = .29, p < .01) \) related to firms CSR activities, see table 14 below.

Table 14: Correlations between CSR and financial performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>.290**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| CSR         | Pearson Correlation | .290** | 1 |
|-------------|---------------------|--------|
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .007 | |
| N           | 86                  | 89 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01

The results of this investigation are consistent with the theoretical constructs of corporate social performance that predict a positive corporate social performance and FP link. It is also consistent with several previous research findings by different research scholars. According to O’Bannon, (1997) social
and financial performance are positively associated, but that the causal or lead-lag relationship is from financial to social performance. In the same way, Rettab et al. (2009) and Weber (2008) similarly found a weak positive significant relationship between these two variables. Moreover, study by Fombrun et al. (2000) and Sweeney (2009) found a positive indirect relationship between CSR and financial performance with intermediate variables like customer loyalty, employee attraction, retention and motivation, social reputation, business reputation, access to capital between firms CSR activities and FP. However, even if there is a positive relationship between CSR and financial performance, it is not necessarily the case that CSR has brought about greater financial performance. As has been argued in the literature (P. Stanwick and S. Stanwick, 1998, Rettab, et al. 2009, Lin, 2009), it may be the case that strong financial performance allows a firm to undertake CSR activities. Other studies have also indicated there is no significant relationship between CSR and Financial Performance. For instance, Hitchens et al. (2003) found out that CSR has no impact on financial performance.

4.6 Major Problems Hindering Manufacturing Firms to Carryout CSR Activities

The final objective of this study is to assess the major barriers for the firm to practice CSR activities. We identified six problems also considered as barrier in similar studies, in the final part of the questionnaire. The manager and employee respondents were asked to rank the problems on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 not at all a barrier to 5 at a great extent) to see which identified problem is mainly hinder the CSR activities of a manufacturing firms in the research areas. Table 3.15 presents the means and standard deviations for the problems and the ranks for the mean.
Table 3.16 Mean, standard deviation and rank of the barriers to the CSR activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of business strategy &amp; policies related to CSR</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of coordination (from other firms or communities)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of collaboration from local authorities</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top management does not support it</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources (human, money, material etc.)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey Questionnaire, 2012.

An examination of table 3.16 reveals that the manager and employee respondents rate lack of strategy and business policy, lack of coordination (from other firms/local communities) and lack of collaboration from local authorities as the first three top barriers for the manufacturing firms in the area to practice CSR. While top management does not support it, lack of resources (human, money, material etc.) and lack of time are considered as the least problems respectively.

5. Limitation and Future Research Direction

- Difficulty in the measure of a firm’s corporate social performance and financial performance.
- Other primary stakeholders include owners, suppliers and shareholders were not incorporated.
- The sample was very limited and the study did not control important variable that could influence the relationships between the variables such as politics, socio-cultural, etc;
- The data collection is based on cross sectional survey method (i.e. information has been obtained at a single point in time). A longitudinal study may provide more detailed information regarding the relationship between CSR and financial performance as it would allow
financial performance to be measured over time as levels of CSR changed.

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