

Evaluation of Local Community Participation in Joint Forest and Wildlife Resources Management: the case of *Dodola-WAJIB*, West-Arsi, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Currently, participatory approach has been advocated as a key instrument to achieve sustainable use of natural resources like forest and wildlife. Likewise, the current Ethiopian government has shown the political will to involve local communities in rural development projects giving special focus for forest and wildlife enterprises. However, the extent of residents' involvement in making decision is unclear. This study was aimed at examining the place forest dwellers have in co-management activities and level of their participation to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the enterprise for sustainable use of forest and wildlife resources in Dodola-WAJIB. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Qualitative data were generated from WAJIB executive committee members, forest block leaders, ordinary WAJIB members, youths and experts via focus group discussion, key informant interview, formal interview, and field observation. Quantitative data were gathered from randomly selected one hundred and thirty three WAJIB members through household survey. Related documents were analyzed to produce secondary data. The data obtained via both (qualitative and quantitative) techniques were analyzed by using thematic narrative and descriptive statistics. Findings showed that participation of the forest dwellers in joint forest and wildlife management activities is generally low. It was found out that the level of forest dwellers participation in co-management activities is the highest (55.08%) at implementation phase and the lowest (25.57%) at planning stage. Generally, the extent of involvement and empowerment on the part of the local community is more limited to consultation; hence, it needs fundamental shift in the approach to conservation and participation of forest dwellers.

Keywords: Empowerment, Forest Dwellers, Participatory approach

1. INTRODUCTION

In the field of development, participatory models to environment and development have become widely recognized. Furthermore, they are seen as standards with great importance providing room for community based natural resources management (Junge, 2002). According to Western (2003), the necessity for local community involvement in the wildlife conservation was appreciated by some investigators working in Africa. Additionally, according to the same author, contribution of local participation for biodiversity conservation has been given serious consideration internationally.

Currently, participatory natural resources conservation approach is relatively a new concept in Ethiopia. However, there are some experiences particularly in collaborative forest and wildlife resources management (Terefe, 2003). According to the same author, Adaba-Dodola community managed ecotourism and hunting area in Oromia region is known for its joint forest and wildlife resources management. It is recognized as *WAJIB* (*Waldaa Jiraatotaa Bosonaa*) in local language substitute for Forest Dwellers Association. It was first established in Dodola Woreda Barisa Kebele Sokora block.

According to Girma (2006) the main principle of the *WAJIB* approach is granting exclusive user rights to the recognized members of *WAJIB* in the state-owned forest. The principle recognizes communities as forest users. The recognition is mainly aimed at seeking to secure their co-operation by granting them legal access to certain products or a share in forest-derived benefits. However, true participation is ensured when residents are involved in decision making (Thwala, 2009). In order to provide a binding agreement, a Forest Block Allocation Agreement (FBAA) has been elaborated. It sets out the rights and duties of the forest administration and the forest dwellers (Tsegaye, 2005).

Designers of rural development projects need to follow participatory approach. Local community participation in planning and management of development projects like forest and wildlife enterprise is crucial to their lasting success. In community participation, the values and interest of the community should be a guideline for development processes. Since they are well informed about their local situation, communities in rural area should have opportunity to identify, define and prioritize their needs. Residents can also provide critical input on the requirements such as identifying cultural barriers as well as opportunities that can be derived from the local community. Real participation only takes place when local communities are part of the decision-making process (Mezegibe, 2011).

According to Addis (2005), poor people know best their own economic and social needs and have

insights and ideas about what might be done to solve them. As it was noted by the same author, genuine participation of the poor and marginalized would be initiated to be an integral element of the work of all governments, NGOs and other development organizations which develop project designed to benefit the poor. Community’s participation should not be limited to a certain stages of a project. Unless the community members themselves get the opportunity to decide their own development, no sustainable development is possible (Anonymous, 1997). To date, a total of 72 user groups have concluded contracts with the Dodola Woreda forest and wildlife enterprise office; hence the co-management activities are ongoing in each forest block. This study concentrates on the extent of forest dwellers participation in collaborative forest and wildlife resources management of Dodola-WAJIB.

2. CONCEPTS OF PARTICIPATION

2.1 Community Participation

The term community participation also carries different interpretations and inclinations. However, the interpretations and inclinations cannot be divorced from the broader aim of encouraging the active participation of local people in the process as a whole (Theresia, 2010). It refers to an active process shared by beneficiaries that influence the direction and execution of development projects rather than receive share of project benefits (Mezegibe, 2011). According to the same author, community participation means that community plays an active role in its own affairs by sharing and exercising political and economic power. Moreover, it is community involvement in development projects. Generally, community involvement ranges from participation in activities defined by outsiders to the management and ownership of activities developed primarily by community members themselves (Aubel and Samba, 1996). The cornerstone of community-based development initiatives is the active involvement of defined community in project design and its management (Mansuri and Rao, 2004).

2.2 Level of Participation

Approaches to stakeholder participation have progressed through a series of recognizable phases. Currently Arnstein’s “ladder of participation” is the most commonly used approach to describe level of participation. According to Haruța and Radu (2010), Arnstein’s “ladder of participation” is adapted to eight rungs. These include, according to the same author, manipulation, therapy, informing, consulting, placation, partnership delegated power and citizen control. These categories are grouped in to four classes based on the relationship between the extent of control or power and participation.

These classes are 1) domestication 2) paternalism 3) cooperation and 4) empowerment. Domestication and paternalism are defined as “passive participation”, while cooperation and empowerment are “active participation”.

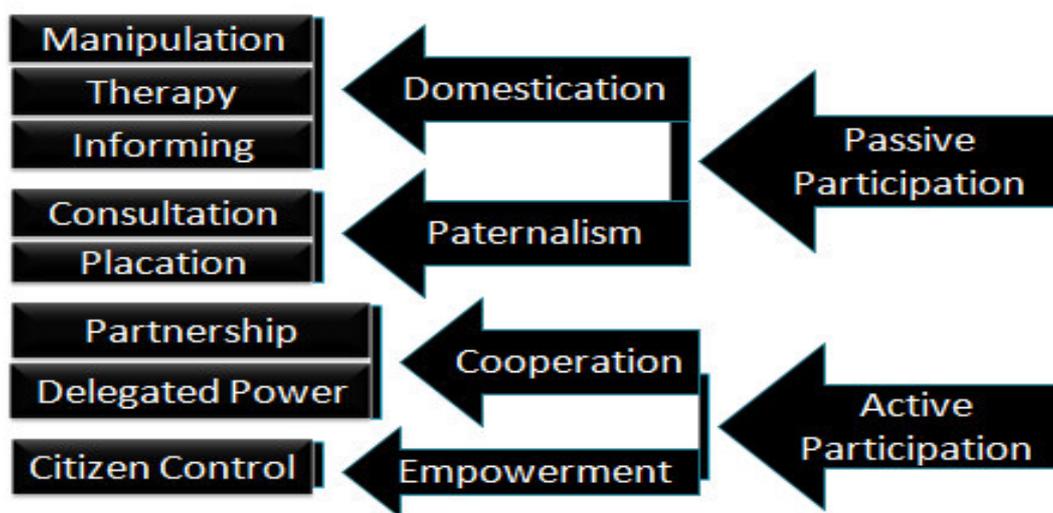


Figure 1 Level of participation

Source: Adapted from Haruța and Radu (2010, pp. 79)

According to Haruța and Radu (2010), domestication is a type of participation where control over a given activity lies in the hands of planners, local elites and other professionals. It (domestication) is achieved by

using pseudo-participation techniques to manipulate people to do what outsiders perceive as important. Participation as paternalism suggests that power and control remains in the hands of an external agent or an elite community member. Members of participating group receive information and are consulted or placated. They may be informed about activities but have no influence over decision making or control over benefits.

Participation as cooperation involves peoples working with outsiders to implement activities intended to benefit them directly. Decision making takes place through dialogue between insiders and outsiders. Participants are also actively involved in implementation. Here, power and control are shared throughout the project. It is ideally an inductive, bottom-up rather than a top-down process. Participation as empowerment is an approach in which people fully hold power over control of a program. Empowerment is achieved through growing consciousness, democratization, solidarity and leadership.

3. RESEARCH METODOLOGY

3.1 Study Area

The study area is in Oromia National Regional State (ONRS), West Arsi Zone, Dodola Woreda. It is located at latitude and longitude of 06°59'N 39°11'E. The total population of the Woreda is about 194,000 (CSA, 2008). The urban population of 35, 000 (18%) is one of the largest in the zone. An early estimate indicated that 95% percent of the total population belongs to the Oromo ethnic group and the remaining 5% constituted mainly of the Amhara and Guraghe ethnic groups (GFA, 1991). Document analysis indicated that, about 60% of the rainfall comes during the main rainy season from June to August while a small amount of rainfall occurs between January and March followed by a dry spell in May.

The main dry season is in November and December (IFMP, 2002). According to Agricultural & Rural development office of Dodola Woreda (2010), the daily temperature varies between 14°C and 17°C at an altitude of 2500m. A daily temperature variation between 8°C and 27°C has been recorded for the years 1996 –2000.

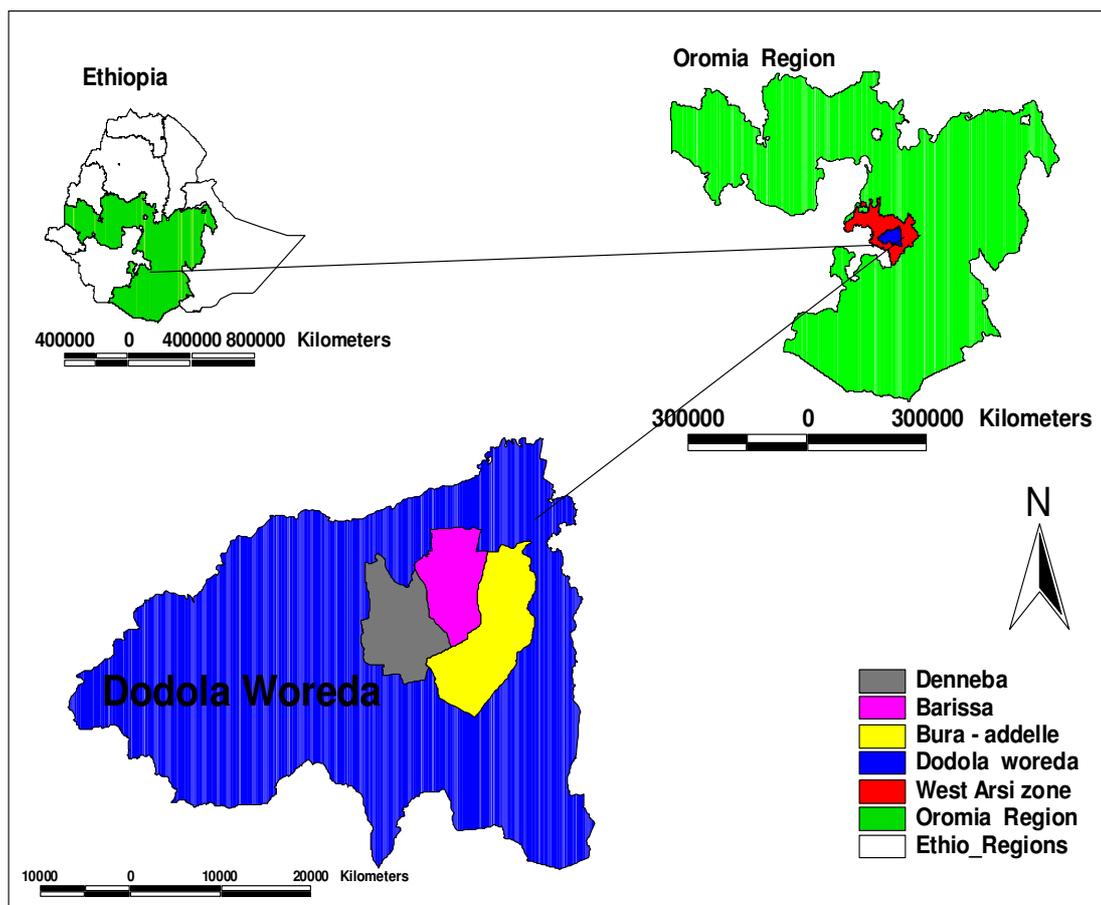


Figure 2 Geographical location of the study area

3.2 Data collection and analysis

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained from the household

survey through structured questionnaire consisting of both open and close-ended questions, focus group discussion, key informants interviews and field observation based on set of questions in relation to the study objectives. Checklists were prepared for gathering information from key informants and for the focus group discussion. Secondary information was obtained through an extensive literature review of various documents and an internet search. Data were collected from purposively chosen three kebeles (*Barisa, Deneba, and Bura-Adele*). These Kebeles were selected because they are the first three *Kebeles* at which *WAJIB* as participatory forest and wildlife management approach was launched. Additionally, they are the main sites of wildlife movement.

A total of 133 households were involved in survey. Six focus group discussion and six key informants were used as source of qualitative source of data. The households were selected using simple random sampling techniques from randomly selected forest blocks.

3.3 Statistical analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16 and Microsoft excel. The data were mainly expressed as descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, and graphs.

4. RESULTS

This study used Arnstein's "ladder of participation" which was adapted by Haruța and Radu (2010) as framework and model of participation to measure the extent of forest dwellers participation in joint forest and wildlife management. Their participation was measured taking four separate phases in joint management activities: planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and sharing benefits. For each activity four concerns where forest dwellers participation could be elicited were identified and evaluated in terms of domestication (D), paternalism (P), cooperation (C), and empowerment (E). If three of four responses to these activities were of the active participation type (cooperation plus empowerment), then it is classified as active participation. Otherwise, the respondent was considered to exhibit passive participation. The responses of these four (D-P-C-E) concerns with an average were summarized for each phase of joint management. If an activity received an equal number of passive and active participation responses, then it is considered as exhibiting a combination (both active and passive) type of participation.

Regarding participation, it was found out that all surveyed households had some form of participation in joint forest and wildlife management. However, the level of their participation varied across households and management phases. In principle, forest dwellers were expected to participate at all stages of the project.

4.1 Participation in Planning Co-management Activities

Regarding the local community participation in joint forest and wildlife management at the planning phase, data collected via PRA revealed that there was orientation from local government authorities and experts that an open access situation resulted loss of forest and wildlife resources. The focus group discussants noted that, the authorities and experts explained about the over exploitation of natural resources giving special focus to diminishing of existing forest and wildlife. According to the same source, a series of introductory meetings were conducted by informing and consulting both local leaders and communities on the above issues. FGD participants also expressed that there was ambition from local authorities and experts side seeking formal agreement for *WAJIB* implementation. Consequently, the model bylaw and Forest Block Allocation Agreement (FBAA) were accepted as guiding documents.

Similarly, the data collected through household questionnaire survey on the basis of selected activities strengthened the above qualitative findings. The four activities used to assess participation in the planning phase were problem analysis and objective setting, decision making, rules and regulations (bylaws) formulation, and yearly planning. In terms of objective setting, 84% of the respondents assessed their participation as passive (62% domestication, 22% paternalism). Nonetheless, 16% considered that they were active participants in this process (11% cooperation, 5% empowerment). The majority of the respondents felt that though they knew their community as well as their problem very well, it was the "*WAJIB* leaders" and experts that analyzed the problem of the community and setup the objectives. In terms of making decision, the majority of the respondents (74%) viewed their participation as passive (domestication 39%, paternalism 35%). People did not feel they were as involved as "*WAJIB* leaders" and experts in decision making about co-management activities. However, a few people felt they were involved in making decisions about co-management activities (cooperation 19%, empowerment 7%). Concerning decisions affecting what rules and regulations were adopted to implement *WAJIB* approach, 70% of respondents viewed their participation as passive. Yet, few people felt they were actively engaged in these activities (cooperation 20%, empowerment 10%). In terms of participation in yearly planning of co-management activities, 71% of the respondents viewed their participation as passive (domestication 16%, paternalism 55%). The respondents clearly sensed that these activities were carried out mainly by *WAJIB* leaders and experts. Only a few (29%) of the respondents felt that they were active participants

in these activities. Fig. 3 shows how household respondents viewed their participation at planning phase of joint forest and wildlife management.

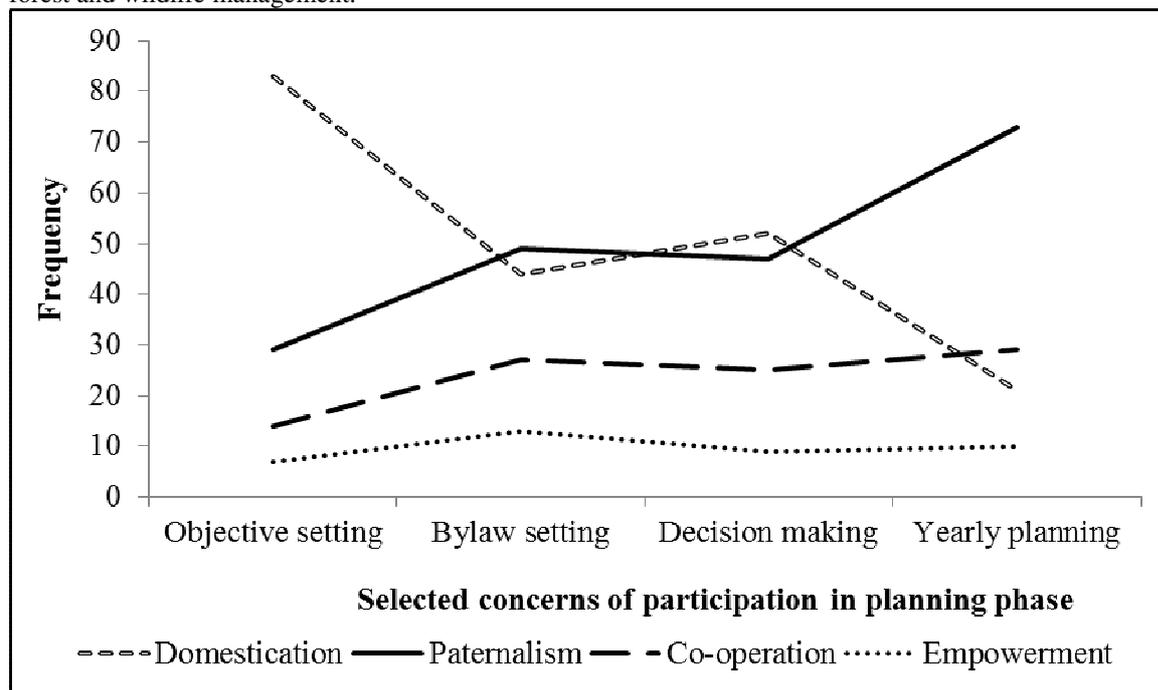


Figure 3 Forest dwellers participation at planning phase

4.2 Participation in Implementation Co-management Activities

The four activities used to assess participation in the implementation phase were, meeting handling, leader election, plan implementation, and *WAJIB* organizational setting. Concerning participation in forest block meetings, the FDG participants noted that meetings were conducted and led by forest block leaders and experts. As a result, the dominant roles of expert and forest block leaders lessen its quality. The result of the questionnaire survey also witnessed that 78% of respondents assessed their participation in meetings as passive. Many participants felt that meetings were dominated by forest block leaders. However, considerable portion of respondents (22%), detected that their participation in meetings were active.

The key informants' interview and FGD indicated that organizational structure of *WAJIB* was setup by government. Particularly, the focus group discussants mentioned as they had been asked to elect their leaders without giving them opportunity to decide concerning their organizational structure. Also the result of the questionnaire survey was in line with the qualitative one. Majority of respondents (80%) perceived their role to be passive in *WAJIB* organizational structure setting. They felt that the organizational structure was setup by experts by consulting some user group leaders and executive committee members. Twenty percent of respondents felt they actively participated in the setup of the organizational structure.

On the other hand the direct observation and the FGD revealed that user groups (*WAJIB* members) were actively participating in plan implementation activities like monitoring forest block and wildlife from illegal use. Similarly, majority of questionnaire survey respondents felt that their participation in the implementation of co-management activities was active (cooperation 71%, empowerment 14%). However, a small portion (15%), felt that they were passively engaged in the implementation of these activities.

Fig 4 below shows how household respondents viewed their participation in co-management activities at implementation stage.

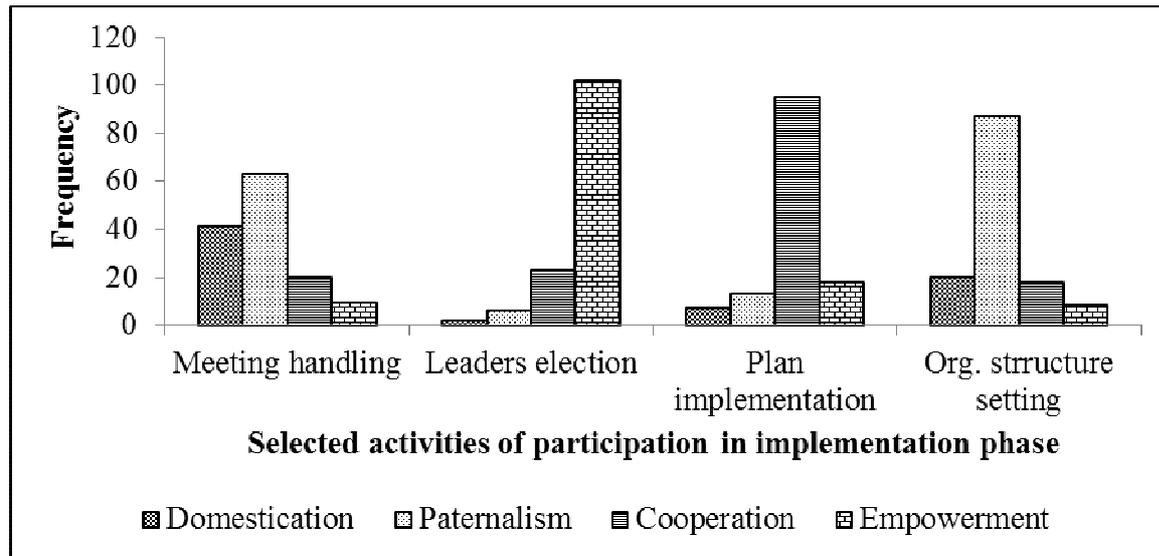


Figure 4 Forest dwellers participation at implementation phase

4.3 Participation in Monitoring and Evaluation of Co-management Activities

Experts told that participatory monitoring and evaluation provides an opportunity for forest dwellers to reflect their indigenous knowledge. Moreover, according to the same source, it helps them to analyze the existing problem as well as proposing solutions and take corrective actions. However, when they (experts) were asked to explain their experience in applying genuine participatory monitoring and evaluation in co-management activities, they were not able to convey convincing tangibles. Similarly, the data collected from FGD showed that except patrolling their forest blocks on daily basis, forest dwellers had no means to check whether *WAJIB* is serving its objectives or not. According to FGD participants and key informants, at present, there was no regular participatory evaluation. Currently, even their participation in *THABO* is becoming insignificant.

The result of the questionnaire survey also coincides with the above qualitative data results. In the case of this study participation in monitoring and evaluation phase consisted of four selected activities: Selection of the monitoring and evaluation team, participation in monitoring and evaluation activities, preparation of the annual evaluation, and assessment of the monitoring and evaluation information. Concerning selection of the monitoring and evaluation team members, most respondents felt that they were active participants in selection of monitoring and evaluation team members (cooperation 63%, empowerment 20%). Whereas, small number (17%) of respondents sensed monitoring and evaluation team members were selected entirely by forest block leaders and experts. In terms of determining monitoring and evaluation activities, the majority (87%) of respondents detected that they were passive participants (domestication 17%, paternalism 70%). However, the rest (13%) perceived their participation as active. Regarding preparation of the annual evaluation, except the 6% which accounted their participation as active, a vast majority (94%) of respondents sensed that, they were passive participants in these activities. On the other hand, 91% of respondents viewed their participation in assessing information on monitoring and evaluation activities were active. However, 9% sensed that they were passively engaged in examining monitoring and evaluation information. Fig. 5, shows how respondents felt their participation in monitoring and evaluation activities.

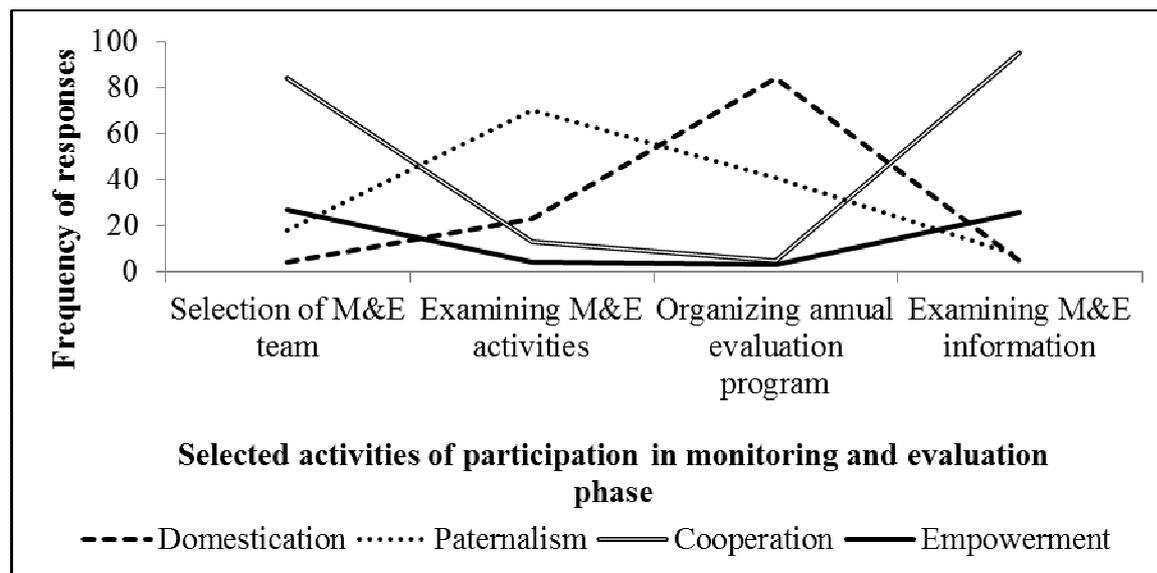


Figure 5 Forest dwellers participation at monitoring and evaluation phase

4.4 Participation in Benefit Sharing Phase

Data collected from key informants and formal interview identified forest products use, forest rent distribution, and alternative income generation mechanisms (trophy hunting, ecotourism, etc.) as the main issues which link government and the user groups (forest dwellers). The output of qualitative data indicated that the user groups were asked to discuss on proposals of benefit sharing mechanisms particularly concerning use of forest products, forest rent distribution and trophy hunting. Contrary to this, experts participated in both key informant and formal interviews noted that there had been participation of user groups on the mentioned issues. But, the techniques used for the negotiation were not more than informing and consulting. In contrast, the alternative income generating activities except trophy hunting were controlled by *WAJIB* members.

The quantitative result of the questionnaire survey also reported that this phase is dominated by passive participation. The indicators used to measure the level of participation in benefit sharing phase focused on how much forest dwellers influence decisions related to benefits from natural resources, materials, social development, and economic development. Accordingly, majority of the respondents (74%) perceived that they were passive participants in decision about how benefit from natural resources (Land & Forest) was to be shared. However, the remaining 26% perceive their participation in these activities as active. Similarly, except 6% of respondents, all the remaining viewed that they were passive participants in deciding forest rent distribution (domestication 52%, paternalism 42%). Likewise, large majority of respondents (90%) felt that decisions on how benefits from trophy hunting would be shared were made by forest block leaders and experts. Conversely, the remaining 10% perceive themselves as active participants in these activities. On the other hand, 86 % of respondents noticed that decisions about how benefits from economic development would be shared were entirely controlled by *WAJIB* members (cooperation 46%, empowerment 40%). However, 14% felt that they were passive participants in deciding about benefit sharing from economic development activities. Tables 1, below shows how user groups viewed their participation in co-management of benefit sharing.

Table 5 Forest dwellers participation level at benefit sharing phase

Concerns for assessment	Level of Forest dwellers participation (Percentages)			
	D	P	C	E
Decision on sharing benefit from natural resources	35.34	38.34	16	10.32
Decision on forest rent distribution	52	42	6	0
Decision on sharing benefit from trophy hunting	79.70	10.32	9.98	0
Decision on sharing benefit from economic development	9.77	3.76	45.86	40.61

4.5 Summary of Results

In assessing the overall degree of participation, it is evident that a large portion of respondents perceived their participation to be passive (Table 2). Generally, except implementation phase, passive participation dominated all the rest stages of co-management activity: 74.43% in planning, 67.67% in benefit sharing and 52% in the monitoring and evaluation phase.

On the positive side, however, respondents perceived that they have been actively involved in planning

(25.57%), implementation (55.08%), benefit sharing (32.33%) and monitoring and evaluation (48%). This is meaningful because it might encourage them to become more involved in co-management activities in the future if government becomes loyal and transparent in making decision.

Table 6 Summary of forest dwellers participation across co-management phases

Phases of Co-management	Level of Forest dwellers participation (Percentages)			
	D	P	C	E
Planning Phase	37.59	36.84	18.04	7.53
Implementation Phase	13.53	31.39	29.32	25.76
Monitoring and evaluation Phase	21.80	30	36.84	11.36
Benefit sharing Phase	44.36	23.31	19.55	12.78

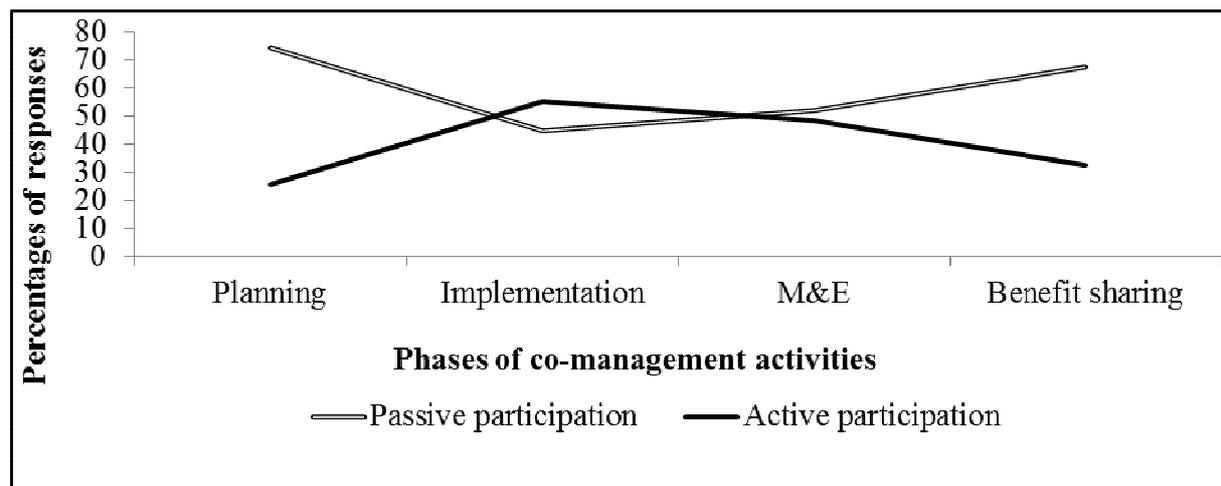


Figure 6 Passive versus Active participation pattern across co-management phases

5. DISCUSSION

Forest dwellers participation was measured taking four separate phases in joint management activities. These include, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and sharing benefits. Problem analysis and objective setting, decision making, rules and regulations (bylaws) formulation, and yearly planning are the four selected activities to assess participation in planning phase. The majority (84%) of the respondents felt that though they knew their community as well as their problem very well, it was the “WAJIB leaders” and experts that analyzed the problem of community and setup the objectives (Figure 3). Treves *et al.* (2009) argued that involving local communities in problem analysis and objective setting of development projects transfer them from consumers of natural resources to partners in the co-management activities. Moreover, according to the same source, genuine participation develops the spirit of ownership and belongingness.

Contrary to this premise, 74% of respondents did not feel they were as involved as forest block leaders and experts in decision making about co-management activities. Conversely, World Bank (2004) claimed that deciding together recognizes that participants bring knowledge and ideas to projects, as well as an insight into how people’s experience of sustainable use of natural resources. On the other hand, according to USAID (2012), the community based forest and wildlife management in Tanzania has devolved making decision rights to the lowest possible level of local management. And this has proven that, according to the same source, it is more successful so far than joint forest and wildlife management which perceive local community as users only. Furthermore, the community forestry and wildlife program in Nepal encompasses a set of policy and institutional innovations that empower local communities to decide on forest and wildlife management (Ojha *et al.*, 2009). Additionally, in Nepal, deep ownership and empowerment in the community forestry and wildlife program facilitated achievements within local communities that substantially affected household livelihoods (Bk *et al.* 2009).

Concerning decisions affecting what rules and regulations were adopted to implement co-management, 70% of respondents viewed their participation in these activities as passive. Contrary to this result, Asian Development Bank (2007) argued that availability of information and clarity about government rules and regulations create greater transparency in natural resources governance. On the other hand, regarding planning, forest dwellers clearly sensed that yearly planning activities were carried out mainly by forest block leaders and experts. Similarly, Tsegaye (2005) noted that the forest expert together with the community representatives can compile the plan. In principle, participation of local community in natural resources management planning should be optimized (Treves *et al.*, 2009).

Implementation phase of joint forest and wildlife management is the stage at which the project is delivered in to practice. The four activities used to assess participation in this phase were, meeting handling, leader election, plan implementation, and *WAJIB* organizational setting. 78% of participants felt that meetings were controlled by forest block leaders and experts; hence, their dominance lessens its quality. In line with this finding, Abdurahiman (2002) said that the forest administration has the right of access to the forest blocks at any time, and the right to call and attend forest block meetings. On the other hand, respondents sensed as they were actively participated in their leaders election and delivery of project plan in to practice. Alike with this finding, Tsegaye (2005) believed that, it is left entirely to the *WAJIB* to determine the management of the respective forest blocks. According to the same author, the user groups' indigenous knowledge supplemented by forest and wildlife professionals will help to implement the plan in such a way that contributing for sustainable utilization of forest and wildlife resources.

Monitoring and evaluation phase is the stage at which achievement of planned performance is measured. Forest dwellers are expected to follow up their forest block and participate in periodic evaluation. Figure 5 shows that forest dwellers were actively participated in selection of monitoring and evaluation team members. However, the determination of activities to be monitored and evaluated was dominated by *WAJIB* leaders and experts. Similarly, the user groups' role is very less in organizing annual evaluation program except being engaged in examining monitoring and evaluation information. Cumulatively, almost 52% of respondents viewed that they were passive participants in monitoring and evaluating the co-management activities of forest and wildlife resources. However, the rest 48% perceived their participation as active. Conversely, Berhanu *et al.* (2010) claimed that monitoring and evaluation in development projects need to bring the affected part of community at the grass root level and should be loyal to involve them in follow up process and periodic assessment.

Benefit sharing phase is a stage at which decisions related with advantage distribution are made. The qualitative results indicated that it is the most sensitive phase of joint forest and wildlife management. The reason behind its sensitivity is the livelihood of the forest dwellers. According to Yemiru *et al.* (2010), due to the widespread poverty and intrinsic dependence of local livelihoods including for cash income on the forest, attention must be given to improve the financial benefit of joint forest and wildlife management. The indicators used to measure the level of participation in benefit sharing phase focused on how much forest dwellers influence decisions related with benefits from natural resources, materials, social development, and economic development. Except handling benefit sharing from economic development, almost all decisions concerning benefit sharing were dominated by forest block leaders and experts. Majority of the respondents (67.67%) perceived that they were passive participants in decision about how benefits from co-management activities were to be shared (Figure 6). Unlikely, Blomley and Iddi (2009) argued that benefit sharing arrangement is among main subjects that deserve attention and should be made clear and transparent for successful implementation of development projects. It is further claimed that transparency in government decision-making and public policy implementation reduces uncertainty and can help inhibit corruption among public officials and other stakeholders involved in natural resources management (Zoysa and Inoue, 2008). Moreover, appropriate measures of transparency catalyze greater sustainability in natural resources management (Munilla and Pories, 2006).

In assessing the overall degree of participation of forest dwellers in the co-management activities of *Dodola-WAJIB*, it is evident that a large portion of respondents perceived their participation to be passive. Except implementation phase, passive participation dominated all the rest phases of co-management activity: 74.43% in planning, 67.67% in benefit sharing and 52% in the monitoring and evaluation phase (Figure 6). It is consistent with the qualitative study Mezegibe (2011) in which local community participation in Rural Water Supply Project is highest (39.5%) at implementation phase and lowest (20%) at planning phase. Many times, user groups in the participatory natural resources management are still passive recipients of environmental conservation projects (Tang and Zhao, 2011). On the contrary, according to Pandit and Bevilacqua (2011), active participation of local community in forest and wildlife resources management in Nepal has brought a positive change in local environment and slowed the accelerating rate of deforestation and wildlife degradation. Furthermore, in Tanzania, empowerment of local community in forest and wildlife resources management improved the sustainability of forest and wildlife use, the livelihoods of local residents, and the accountability of natural resources management institutions (Lund and Treue, 2008). Besides these, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism of Tanzania [MNRTT] (2006) witnessed that many communities reported as of their livelihood diversified and improved, forests recovered, and game numbers increase when placed under the management of the Village Land Forest Reserves (VLFR). In the case of Dodola community managed ecotourism and hunting area, though forest dwellers are arranged in user groups' called *WAJIB*, they have no power to identify, define and prioritize their needs and decide on managerial arrangements which affect their lives.

On the positive side, however, respondents perceive that they have been actively involved in planning (25.57%), implementation (55%), benefit sharing (32.33%) and monitoring and evaluation (48%). This is

meaningful because it might encourage them to become more involved in co-management activities in the future if co-management staff members become loyal and transparent in making decision. Sunderlin *et al.* (2008) argued that active local community involvement in natural resources management is believed to be a nucleus of both sustainable use and development.

6. Conclusion

A study was designed to evaluate the place forest dwellers have in co-management activities and level of their participation to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the enterprise for sustainable use of forest and wildlife resources in Dodola-WAJIB. This study has shown that user groups' right in co-management activities in *Dodola-WAJIB* is restricted to inhabiting forest and using its products under a range of conditions and management arrangements. In general, the extent of involvement and empowerment on the part of the local community, particularly forest dwellers is more limited to consultation. Though, it is true that not all projects necessarily require the most involved level of community participation to be successful, community based conservation projects like forest and wildlife enterprise needs to engage local community in decision making.

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