

MEMBERS' PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING IN PRIMARY AGRICULTURAL MARKETING COOPERATIVES IN TANZANIA, EVIDENCE FROM SELECTED PRIMARY COOPERATIVES OF BUKOBA AND MOSHI DISTRICTS

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ABSTRACT

Globally, the importance of a co-operative as a member owned socio-economic institution is becoming evident and the aspect of member participation is becoming important in co-operative democracy. In Tanzania co-operative policy and legislation highlights ownership and participative democracy to co-operatives; various efforts have been made to ensure primary Agriculture Marketing Co-operative Society (AMCOS) use participative democracy in decision making. Generally, the study assessed the extent to which democratic practices reflect member ownership in different decision making processes. The study objective was to examine members' participation in decision making in primary AMCOS in Tanzania basing on evidence from Bukoba and Moshi district. The findings of the study revealed that member in the primary AMCOS were registered based on selling coffee. Membership share status indicates only few have paid all required shares. The democratic practice of the majority of respondent had low mean scores. Members who sell all their produce in the primary AMCOS were below fifty percent. Also the findings showed that members found to be satisfied by the primary AMCOS services. However dissatisfaction was reported in the aspects of; accessing agricultural inputs and members' education and training as well as getting agro credits. The rights of members to engage in decision making were found to be limited. Findings on the governing instrument assessment revealed that none of the primary AMCOS had Vision, Mission, Core values, financial regulation and Strategic plan. In assessing member complaint it was identified that low price of coffee that indicates that most of primary AMCOS were affected by low price. However some primary AMCOS had a problem of transparency while others were in complaining of misuse of primary AMCOS funds. Among other things, the study recommends education to members so that members can achieve best options for participation in different decision making organs and create fed back mechanisms.

Keywords; Members' participation, Participation in decision making, Primary Agricultural Marketing Cooperatives.