

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FLAVOURS OF ETHIOPIAN COFFEE: REVIEW



Sivakumar, K.P^{1*}, Tigist Tarekegne² and Uma Natarajan³

¹IGNOU Regional Centre, St. Mary's University College, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;

² Gender Diversity and Inclusive Education Directorate, Ambo University, Ethiopia;

³ School of Natural and Computational Sciences, Ambo University, Ethiopia.

*Email: sivakumarkp001@gmail.com Mob: 00251 921762265

Received on: 10 October 2013, accepted on: 12 December 2013

Abstract: Ethiopia is home to two thousand indigenous strains of coffee of which 24 formal varieties of Arabica coffee are identified through researches. Eight popular varieties of Ethiopian coffee that have demand across the world include Yirgacheffee, Harar, Sidama, Limmu, Djimma, Tepi, Bebeke and Lekempti. Coffee that constitutes major share of total exports is cardinal to Ethiopian economy and a significant means for livelihood for over fifteen million people. Coffee grows wild in forests along the south-west parts of the country and serves as a copious genetic resource. Ethiopia is noted for producing forest coffee, semi forest coffee, garden coffee and plantation coffee. Coffee farmers of the country show high resilience over challenges of time and keep the country at sixth position in the list of largest coffee producing countries. The largest regional state, Oromia produces largest share of coffee – 64 percent followed by Southern Nations and Nationalities People's Region – 35 percent. Country's coffee industry is vibrant at four levels: Primary level coffee transaction centres, Ethiopian Commodity Exchange which provides secondary level coffee transaction and international coffee market. According to Ethiopia's Ministry of Trade, in 2011-12 the country exported 196117 tons of coffee to 54 countries to fetch US\$ 841.65 million. Out of the 120 exporters, 95 percent is private entrepreneurs; 5 coffee growing farmer cooperatives and two government enterprises. Germany, US, Saudi Arabia, Belgium and Italy are principal importers of Ethiopian coffee. Emerging from a country famous as the birthplace of coffee, Ethiopian coffee could get an inimitable brand name. Ethiopian coffee is exported as green bean which is roasted by receiving countries. Ethiopian coffee has got a significant place in the global value chain due to its exceptional quality. Ethiopia is also noted for being the largest coffee consumer among African countries. While examining the social aspects, it is vivid that coffee is well ingrained in the social fabric of the country. Coffee for Ethiopians is among the sentiments insulating them against the cultural penetration in the era of globalisation. People of Ethiopia continue practicing traditional coffee giving ceremony with all its charm. Coffee giving ceremony finds women as chief organisers and occurs every day at workplaces and residences – either as a ritual or as a mark of honour to guests. The ceremony is noted for the prominence of women in its organization, and as a means for socialisation and communication. Piggybacking of coffee ceremony for participatory communication is being successfully adopted by organisations to sensitize people on a number of socially significant issues like child abuse and HIV/AIDS awareness. Though landholdings of women is lesser compared to men, coffee becomes a means for women empowerment as more women come into the fore as coffee growers. Women enjoy equal rights with men in holding and administering rural land for coffee cultivation. In a country where male domination is not uncommon, coffee serves dignity for women. Despite daily household chores, women prove their skills as labourers in coffee rearing, harvesting and post harvesting. Women coffee drink vendors are also common in Ethiopia. Female imprints on the value chain of Ethiopian coffee are hence undisputable. Based on the review of available literature, it is assumed that coffee in Ethiopia has manifold implications that include means of livelihood, employment, foreign currency for the country, upkeep of a heritage and women empowerment. Couple of threats recently noticed in the coffee production include a root disease that frequently occurs and the popularity gained for growing 'Kchat' a legal stimulant plant variety. The government upholds a promising 'agricultural development led industrialization strategy' which envisages rapid growth of the agricultural sector to enhance the industry's share and social services in terms of output and employment. Such committed and concerted efforts provide a promising future of sustainability for Ethiopian coffee.

Key words: Arabica coffee, Coffee giving ceremony, Participatory communication, Women empowerment

INTRODUCTION

As a drink, coffee is one of the world's most popular beverages. Each year over 500 billion cups of coffee are consumed throughout the world. Coffee plant requires at least 3-4 years for getting themselves mature enough to bear in each of

them around 450 grams of coffee beans per season. Legends linked to coffee dates back to 9th century tale of an Ethiopian goat herder named Khaldi who noticed abnormal excitement among his goats. He could find that the reason

for excitement was attributed to the animals nibbling certain red berries that were later introduced to the world as coffee (www.facts.randomhistory.com). Ethiopia is the sixth largest producer of coffee in the world and largest producer in Africa. About 15 million people of Ethiopia, i.e. almost 20 percent of the country's population directly or indirectly depend on coffee for their living (Global Agricultural Information Network, 2012). With a population of around 75 million, Ethiopia is Sub-Saharan Africa's second most populous nation. It is also one of the world's poorest countries with a per capita income of US\$ 220, much lower than Sub-Saharan African average. Ethiopia ranks 169 of the 177 listed according to Human Development Index by the UNDP in 2007 and the World Bank in 2009.

Ethiopia is one of the fast growing non-oil economies of Africa. Tremendous efforts towards poverty reduction are fetching slow progresses. The number of people living in poverty has fallen from 46 percent in 1995-96 to 39 percent in 2004-05. High fuel and food price has emerged as a challenge resulted from twin threats of balance of payments and domestic inflation. Agriculture is Ethiopia's key sector contributing around 46.3 percent of gross domestic production in 2007. Among the major bulk of exports from Ethiopia are coffee, pulses and oil seeds (Overseas Development Institute, 2009).

In Ethiopia, coffee's economic significance is due to several facts including coffee's top position in the list of exports. Enormous resolve exhibited by the government, foreign aid agencies and the farmers for keeping coffee brewing successfully in the country, is worth learning. Inevitable impacts of global coffee prices upon the Ethiopian scenario, the historic legal fight that won the patent battle in favour of Ethiopia, are all resplendent of the country's will to safeguard one of its precious traditional natural resources. Social significance of coffee emerges from antique tales of origin of coffee, diverse original varieties of coffee forming a nice genetic resource, women's enhanced role in coffee cultivation and post harvest processes; and the indispensable custom of 'coffee giving ceremony' that forms a medium for socialisation, and bondage between members of families and friends. An International Trade Centre analysis

unveils that in Africa, over 70 percent of maintenance and harvesting jobs are done by women. Though women rarely own land or financial control, coffee production has got a considerable share of women input. Training and proper networking would enable women to enhance their legitimate share out of coffee scenario. Prospects women earn from coffee sector, similar to their earnings from any field, can fetch multiple benefits according to an observation made by East African Fine Coffee Association. This is because women use their earnings for the well-being of their children, family and community (Sarah, 2012). This has been underlined by an International Trade Centre report that states that women should be offered sufficient place in regional and global coffee value chains since women tend to reinvest almost 90 percent of their income in their family, compared to males. Major share of women's investments would be in health and education (www.intracen.org). Altogether, these points substantiate the inspiration for conceiving this review paper based on literature available.

Social features of coffee in Ethiopia

Genetic resource

According to a project profile published by the German Federal Agency for Nature (BfN), *Coffea arabica* is one of the economically important endemic varieties of coffee in Ethiopia. This variety, popularly known as Arabica coffee is grown wild along the mountainous regions of the country. Wild coffee is not only consumed locally and sent commercially to worldwide, but constitutes a key breeding stock for new varieties. This has got added significance as the forest cover of Ethiopia has already been shrunken to a less than 3 percent of its land surface. Hence wild coffee population is also facing a concomitant threat of becoming endangered. Another document published by the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade (2012) proclaims that the country is a resource for about two thousand varieties of coffee. Among these, 24 varieties are better and eight varieties have become most popular. Eight most popular varieties of coffee from Ethiopia are Yiragacheffee, Harar, Sidama, Limmu, Djimma, Tepi, Bebeke and Lekempti. Major harvesting season for Ethiopian coffee falls during October – December (www.longbottomcoffee.com).

World's only wild population of wild *Coffea arabica* grows along Ethiopian montane forests. Around 75% of the world's coffee production is from *Coffea arabica*, which is hence definitely critical for coffee breeding (Gete, 2010). Efforts are on to preserve the natural virtue and wellbeing of wild coffee in Ethiopia. There are indigenous endeavours as well as ventures launched with due foreign assistance. For example, participative forest management and UNESCO biosphere reserve were sought as two options for conserving the wild coffee reserves of Ethiopia at a workshop on Biodiversity Conservation and Poverty Reduction in Human-transformed Landscapes in Ethiopia held in Addis Ababa in 2006. The BfN profile mentions about German Ministry of Education and Research funding investigations held by the University of Bonn for conservation of such forests and their biodiversity during 2002-2009.

The intimate nurturing of coffee plants requires enough shade provided by other plants that surround the plantation. Hence coffee growing produces a concomitant improvement in the local environment by way of protecting the greenery of the area. Sentimental attachments to coffee plants as well as plants that provide shade for it are reported from Yirgacheffe (www.oxfam.org).

Gender aspect

In addition to the age old bondage between coffee, its origin and Ethiopia, the former has got a deep rooted place in the social fabric of the country. A Coffee Roundtable held in Addis Ababa in 2010 has unveiled the increased role of women in the activities related to coffee cultivation and processing. African women in general and Ethiopian women in particular enjoy huge involvement on family owned coffee plantations. Most of the exported coffee originates from such plantations. While looking into the distribution of income generated out of coffee, it has been noted that women do not enjoy a proportionate control over the proceedings. Generally, the market potential of coffee relies in the hands of males.

Coffee needs increased nurturing especially at younger stages of growth. Women are found to provide more care for young as well as old coffee

plants along Ethiopian plantations. Women also forms considerable part of labour engaged with post harvesting activities of cleaning and making coffee beans ready for market introduction.

In Ethiopia, large scale coffee cultivation revolves around two major policy measures: one, Rural Land Administration and Use Policy; and two, Investment Policy. There are no gender discrimination with the content and meaning of these policies; instead there are all sorts of encouragement for women entrepreneurs to enter large scale investment in agriculture. This has paved way for many women farmers to prove their potential in coffee arena.

There are many organisations formed to sense the local pulse of the agricultural initiatives in general and coffee farming in particular. For example, the Coffee Growers, Producers and Exporters' Association strives for enhancing the quality and quantity from coffee plantations. Still, out of the sixty members, only five are women in this association.

It is also observed that Ethiopian women engaged with coffee growing is driven by a passion formed due to the fact that they are born under its loving shade or that they have been seeing coffee plants since their birth. Exemplary talent and leadership exhibited by women coffee planters, their hard work led by a vision for benefiting individually and collectively are also visible. International Trade Centre, in cooperation with the International Women's Coffee Alliance promotes constituting women's coffee associations with special attention towards East Africa of which Ethiopia is a part. These associations offer women a chance to work together to solve issues they face collectively so as to progress more socially and economically. As part of these initiatives, along with other African counterparts, Ethiopian women in coffee sector also obtain leadership training, microfinance and branding (www.intracen.org).

A few women could also enter and establish a place in the coffee export scenario. For example, Tseganesh Taye in 2009 constituted Mecha Coffee Farmers' Cooperative in western Ethiopian locality. Her optimism is that through coffee income, families there can lower poverty and gain better living conditions. Over 30 percent of the 96-member cooperative is constituted by women (www.courageina.cup.com).

Women's increased role in coffee production and sales is not influenced by the headship of households – whether male-headed or female-headed (Overseas Development Institute, 2009). According to Eastern African Fine Coffees Association, in order to promote women in coffee field, necessary are: equity in decision making in coffee growing families; right to have and make choices; access to opportunities as well as training in the field; and an overall sense of worth and accomplishment.

Ethiopian Coffee Development Programme has been giving added importance for enhancing women's role in coffee value chain. Project area women are supported to receive maximum ability of women in gathering necessary synergy for the production and development of coffee.

An evaluation study of 2010 among tea and coffee smallholder certification in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda by the International Development Corporation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark could unveil certain promising evolvments. Fairtrade certified case studies underline effective female participation in farmer organizations. While inspecting non-randomly selected group of participants, direct and indirect gender benefits through sustainability schemes could be observed. The study was primarily analysing Fairtrade, UTZ Certified and Rainforest Alliance standards among tea and coffee farmers of these countries (Riisgaard *et al.*, 2010). 'UTZ Certified' is a foundation for the worldwide implementation of a standard for responsible coffee, cocoa and tea farming and sourcing.

Good number of young females is employed in restaurants and coffee shops as coffee drink servers. Besides such positive gender inputs, the huge domestic coffee consumption is a means for good employment for both male and female technicians. A recent report published in Allafrika.com speaks on the technicians who repair as well as rent out repaired coffee vending machines for earning monthly income ranging from 400 to 700 Ethiopian Birr. A machine service can earn up to Birr 250 to 1100 Birr, depending upon the gravity of the machine's issue (www.allafrika.com).

Coffee ceremony and participatory communication

Coffee (Bunna) ceremony is integral of Ethiopian households. It is practiced once or more times a day in almost every household. Women have got a lead role in the coffee ceremony which serves as a warm, daily get-together of family members, friends and guests. Thus coffee becomes a symbol that bounds together members of family and hence society. Women get a chance for nice socialisation during coffee ceremony. It is also an occasion for enjoying three courses of pure and natural coffee drink. Female identity formation is largely furthered through this intimate ceremony. The ceremony begins with dried coffee beans being friend until aroma fills the air. Dried coffee beans are powdered and poured into boiling water in a traditional earthen pot placed over traditional charcoal-burning traditional kiln. When ready, the coffee drink is served thrice – first with high concentration and following cups with lesser concentration. Altogether, the traditional coffee ceremony provides ample time for the members to gather and talk and exchange fraternity. Since it is happening on a daily basis, possibility of participatory communication is huge. Coffee ceremony is in a way a ritual, too, conducted within religious context or to honouring a guest. The coffee preparation is delayed deliberately to enjoy more time chatting with the guest making it more an opportunity for communication, socialization and friendship fostering (Brinkerhoff, 2011). Figure 1 shows a coffee ceremony scene inside a home.



Fig. 1. A woman engaged in coffee ceremony at her home in Ambo, Oromiya region, Ethiopia.

Piggybacking of coffee ceremony for effective participatory communication is getting more popularity among various social organisations in Ethiopia. For example, around Merkato area in Addis Ababa which is well known for being one of the largest commercial centre in Africa, coffee giving ceremony plays the role of a forum for participatory communication for women to resolve issues including child abuse and exploitation and other problems. Since collective existence and action are notable features of Ethiopian societies, such participatory communication method making use of coffee ceremony stands cardinal. The ambience and context provides a favourable occasion for sending, sharing and receiving messages through unrepressed talks. CHAD-ET (Children Aid Ethiopia) is one among many voluntary service agencies that successfully use coffee ceremony to spread and gather vital ideas related to socially significant issues (Anteneh, 2011). In another incident, coffee ceremony is held at a remote forest village of Lephis, where the occasion serves for sensitizing people on issues of HIV/AIDS. Considering the arduous road access and amenities, coffee ceremony is more attractive option for gathering people to communicate on such significant issues (www.eastafrica.usaid.gov).

Economic features of coffee in Ethiopia

Production

Coffee constitutes the backbone of Ethiopian economy. The country is one of the major producer and exporter of coffee. Coffee provides over one-thirds of Ethiopia's export income. Coffee production and trade involves almost one-thirds of rural population. A quarter of Ethiopia's population is related to coffee production and related works. Of over one million coffee growers, more than 90 percent are small scale farmers (Overseas Development Institute, 2009).

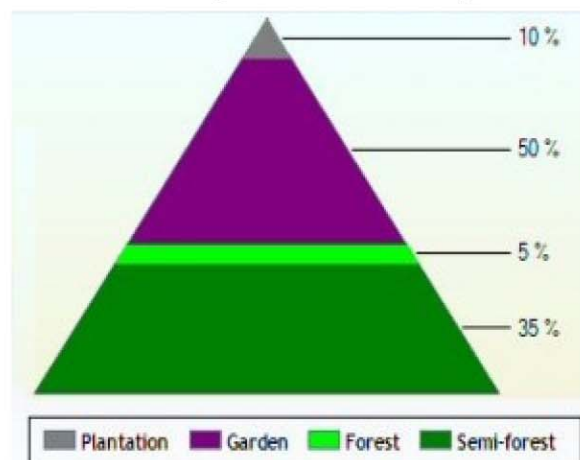


Fig. 2. Cultivation of different varieties of coffee in Ethiopia. Source: www.coffeehabitat.com

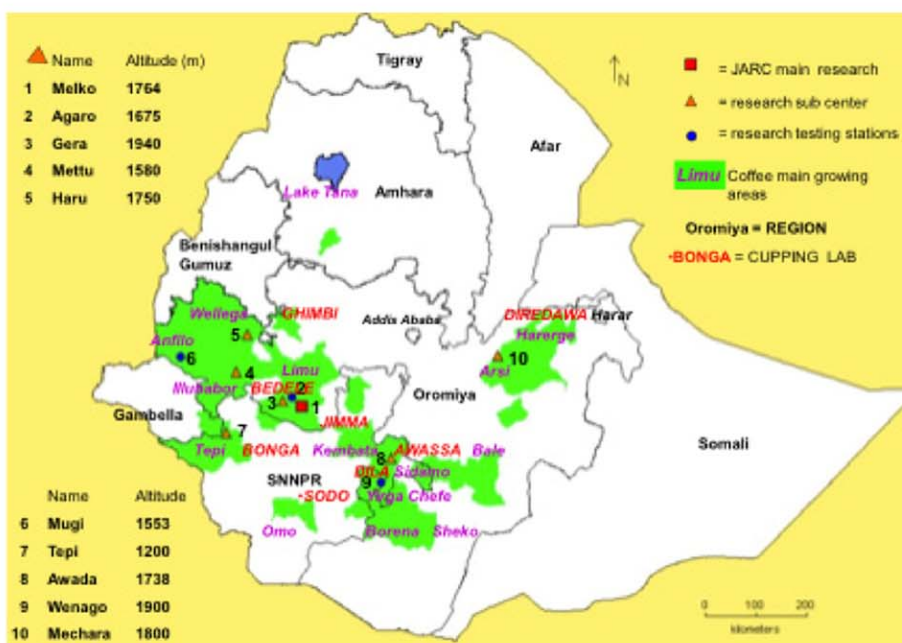


Fig. 3. Regions in Ethiopia that grow coffee. Source: International Trade Centre, 2011

Forest coffee, Semi forest coffee, garden coffee and plantation coffee are the four types produced in Ethiopia. Of the nine regional states, Oromia tops with 64 percent of coffee production followed by Southern Nations and Nationalities People's Regional State (SNNPRS) with 35 percent. Figure 2 shows the percentage share of various varieties of coffee produced in Ethiopia and Figure 3 displays coffee producing regions in Ethiopia. Major part of coffee exported from Ethiopia is in the form of green bean.

The original wild forest coffee production in Ethiopia is but just around 5 percent. Wild coffee beans are picked from plants that grow in forests without any external interventions related to their management and growth. They are naturally grown and surrounded by wild vegetations. Yield along such wild coffee plants are usually less than 200kg per hectare per year. Garden coffee provided the largest share (50 percent) of coffee production. Also known as semi-forest coffee, these are coffee plants transplanted along the land adjacent to farmer homes. Originally such plants come from proximate forest lands. Southern Ethiopian localities including Sidamo have got garden coffee population. Normal yield is between 200-700 kg per ha per year. Semi-forest coffee counts for 35 percent of coffee production. Semi forest coffee production is by virtue of altering the natural features of wild coffee forests to manage more sunlight and growth conditions. Semi-forest coffee fields can yield around 400kg coffee per ha per year (www.coffeehabitat.com). According to the extent of coffee plant

population, there are major, medium and minor coffee grower *woredas* (districts) in the country. Major and medium coffee grower *woredas* normally possess around 800 thousand coffee farmers working on about 520 thousand ha of coffee plantation. The Ethiopian coffee production scenario is noted for smallholder producers making around 95 percent, state-owned plantations 4.4 percent and private investor plantations about 0.6 percent of total production (Petit, 2007).

Coffee trade

According to Ethiopian Ministry of Trade, the country's economy is mainly supported by service, agriculture and industries sectors that constitute 43.4 percent, 42.9 percent and 13.7 percent respectively of the GDP. Major export items are coffee, oil seeds, kchat (a stimulant leaf), flower, gold, pulses, live animals, meat and leather. Currently over 25 percent of foreign exchange earnings is contributed by coffee. During 2005-06 to 2010-11, the country could record annual average growth rate of 1.05 percent in the domestic coffee market. Considering 60kg bag as the basic unit, Ethiopia increased from 4200 thousands of coffee bags in 2010-11 to 8313 thousand bags in 2011-12; bringing a clear 97.93 percent growth. The Ministry statistics also underline a 13.9 percent growth in coffee production and a 59.3 percent growth in its international value in dollars in 2010-11 compared to 2004-05. In 2010-11, Germany, the USA and the KSA were the three top importers of Ethiopian coffee claiming 32.61 percent, 11.43 percent and 11.38 percent respectively of the

	1980-89	1990-99	2000-09	2010-12
TOTAL AFRICA	19 888	16 078	15 372	15 712
Ethiopia	3 128	2 973	4 904	6 450
Uganda	2 724	2 811	2 924	3 002
Côte d'Ivoire	4 338	3 448	2 692	1 291
Cameroon	1 771	1 022	821	845
Tanzania	875	779	796	686
Congo, D.R.	1 610	1 019	383	681
Kenya	1 726	1 377	766	669
Madagascar	1 092	780	490	566
Others	2 625	1 868	1 597	1 522

Table 1. Ethiopia's position in coffee production among African nations. (Averages in thousand bags)

	1980-89	1990-99	2000-09	2010-12
TOTAL AFRICA	16 664	14 636	11 546	10 676
Uganda	2 448	3 002	2 769	2 939
Ethiopia	1 370	1 481	2 368	2 927
Côte d'Ivoire	3 806	3 823	2 393	1 311
Tanzania	851	783	766	709
Kenya	1 631	1 363	747	661
Cameroon	1 643	1 050	741	515
Guinea	59	123	344	373
Burundi	508	483	321	304
Rwanda	594	336	303	254
Others	3 755	2 193	793	683

Table 2. Ethiopia's position in coffee export among African nations (Averages in thousand bags)

country's total coffee export. In 2010-11, Ethiopia exported 196,117 tonnes of coffee worth US\$ 842.65 million. Out of the 120 exporting companies 95 percent are private entrepreneurs. There are five cooperatives and two government firms related to coffee export. Table 1 and Table 2 respectively show the production and export status of Ethiopia and other African nations during 1980-2012.

International Labour Organization's success story with inducing cooperative reform in Ethiopia shows how the cooperative system has marked success with the coffee scenario. The ILO's mission started in 1993. Now, the ILO cites the Oromia Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union (OCFCU) as a success model which enables its members' capacity to access global markets, bettering their income and social conditions. The OCFCU is one of the largest exporters of organic, fairtrade coffee. The European Union (EU), the United States and Australia import the OCFCU's coffee. It could negotiate fair trade deals with coffee dealers in some of the EU countries and set up coffee shops in the UK, Germany, Japan and Canada (ILO, 2012). Today, the OCFCU comprises of 250 cooperatives with more than 250 thousand members.

Value chain

Ethiopian coffee commerce remains on three major pillars constituted by Primary Level Coffee Transaction Centres (PLCTCs); Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) and International

Coffee Market, according to Ministry of Trade. Proximate to coffee farms there are at least 979 PLCTCs functioning to bring market benefits at the convenient access of farmers. Formed in 2008, the ECX operates as a public-private enterprise along eight centres in Dire Dawa, Hawasa, Dilla, Sodo, Bonga, Dijimmah, Bedele and Gimbi. Major part of ECX's transactions is related to unwashed coffee. Hence ECX has been of great help for farmers who find marketing and earning right prices easier (Global Agricultural Information Network, 2012).

The ECX's revolutionary changes have brought in positive results benefiting the farmers. Introduction of taste-testers, warehousing, price guarantee and electronic transactions between buyers and sellers have all made entire process transparent enough. Consequently over 10 percent of the small farmers of the country has sought ECX as medium for transaction worth more than US\$200 million. Professionalism has also been brought to the scene as could be seen in formal indoor settings populated with sellers wearing green jackets and buyers clad in khaki. Since everything has been well accounted for, there is huge degree of confidence built concomitantly (UNDP, 2013).

More over the Government of Ethiopia is keen to ensure certain important aspects including unobstructed export as well as unblemished quality of the commodity. For example, the government has made it illegal to sell export

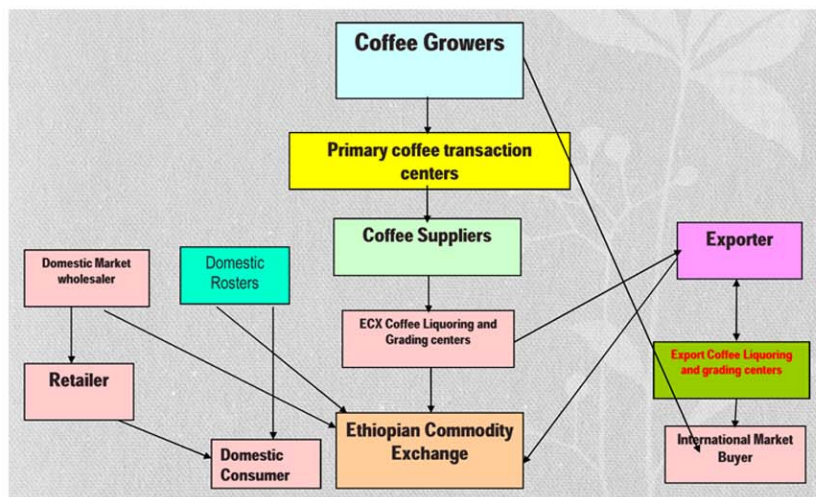


Fig. 4. Coffee value chain of Ethiopia. Source: Ministry of Trade, Ethiopia, 2012

quality coffee in domestic market. There are discrete licenses applicable for entrepreneurs functioning as roasters, domestic wholesalers and exporters. Also, everyone in the export supply chain are required to get certified their quality by the government during collection, processing, storing and transporting coffee (Global Agricultural Information Network, 2012). Existing value chain of coffee is shown as Fig. 4.

Opportunities and challenges

Coffee has got a historical tie with Ethiopia and its ageless culture. The climatic conditions also favour growth of coffee in Ethiopia. The country has got altitude, rainfall and optimum temperature for coffee growth. Fertile soil, low labour costs and suitable planting materials further the coffee prospects of the country. By prudently exploiting these favourable conditions, Ethiopia can widen its export scopes through sustainable production and supply of fine coffee of all types. Thus it can meet up the challenge of other coffee sources of the world. Ethiopia's domestic coffee consumption is also considerable – highest in Africa. Since coffee is firmly ingrained into Ethiopian culture, the domestic consumption would only go on increasing. International price as well as behaviour of the world coffee market always have got significant influence upon Ethiopian coffee sector. Petit (2007) quoted the UNDP's observation that 'what happens in international coffee markets has a profound bearing on Ethiopia's prospects for achieving the Millennium Development Goals'. For example, in 2003, using household-level data, the UNDP estimated about US\$200 loss in income per household; and US\$1 loss per each US\$2 received in aid by Ethiopia – all due to slump in coffee prices. Coffee in Ethiopia is hence extremely vulnerable to exogenous shocks.

Winning intellectual property rights: Ethiopian coffee beans are noted for the unique quality that is often used to 'upgrade' coffee blends to enhance overall flavour and aroma. Coffee farming in the country is distributed along over four million small plots of land looked after by about 600 thousand independent farmers through remote locations. Hence instead of going for impractical solution of gaining

geographical indication rights, Ethiopia turned wisely towards obtaining intellectual property rights (www.wipo.int). Ethiopia's initiative to secure intellectual property rights for its fine specialty coffee was in the wake of coffee giants like the Starbucks revolutionizing the industry with huge demand for specialty coffee. It was in 2003 with a strong initiative of Getachew Mengiste, then Director General of the Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office (EIPO) that the country surged ahead into the trademark registry initiative. In 2004, funded by the UK Department for International Development, Ethiopian Coffee Trademarking and Licensing Initiative were launched. This has unleashed a legal fight between business giant Starbucks and the Ethiopian authorities. Finally, determined and concerted efforts from Ethiopia duly supported by Oxfam, could win over Starbucks to get registration for Yirgacheffe, Sidamo and Harar/Harrar varieties (Sereke-Brhan, 2010). World Intellectual Property Organization has viewed that the achievement by Ethiopia would have definite impacts beyond coffee as well as beyond the borders of Ethiopia. Since many developing countries continued to get marginal returns, more of them would emulate Ethiopian tale and gain benefits from their intellectual property assets (www.wipo.int).

According to the Overseas Development Institute's Ethiopia Trademarking and Licensing Initiative of 2006-2007, there has been an Aid for Trade initiative that aimed at increasing Ethiopia's coffee export income and ensuring higher and predictable income for coffee farmers of the country. The programme for example, envisaged registration of trademarks for Ethiopia's three leading high quality coffee varieties, which would enable farmers to negotiate more confidently with exporters and retailers. Value chain analysis, trademarking and branding; licensing and brand management; and creating a transparent market are all contained in this project.

There have been strong initiatives from the part of the Government of Ethiopia since 1992 onwards. Many reforms since then could lead to an increased participation of private sector at different levels of marketing chain; increased export price received by growers; and a positive supply response and improved coffee export

performance. Too complex system of imposing huge export taxes were replaced by single tax of 6.5 percent in 1998. This simplicity could considerably reduce smuggling of coffee to neighbouring countries. Once, in 2002, the government showed its inclination for farmer's welfare by even removing taxes when coffee prices went down world over, with an intention to reinstate taxes when the prices become better (Petit, 2007).

According to a USAID study in 2010, Ethiopia's coffee prospects would soar higher if the quantity of specialty coffee is increased. The country has got a potential for transforming up to two-thirds of coffee into speciality kind. This can be achieved by way of establishing more washing centres and exporting more washed coffee beans. Moreover, the sundried coffee could be certified rainforest or organic making it top quality to catch up to 80 per cent of exports as specialty. Congruent to this idea, the International Trade Centre (ITC) has launched a project aimed to eliminate the huge information gap that exists among scattered farmers of Ethiopian coffee sector, whose knowledge on required quality is insufficient or even nil. Duly assisted by the ITC, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Ethiopia steers the project. The project envisages these cardinal things: Empowering producers with knowledge over their product; securing earnings out of all levels of coffee trade by enhancing the volume of export quality coffee; discouraging mixing of lower and higher quality coffee types and increasing the amount of specialty or higher grade coffee; and increasing the pace with which the coffee reach the export point after quality tests (ITC, 2011).

Ethiopia's Ministry of Trade has also well identified the strengths that can be gathered and sustained so as to keep the country soar more heights in the coffee cultivation and commerce. Government's commitment and policy pertaining to coffee cultivation, the well established brand name of Ethiopian coffee of being originated from the birthplace of coffee - are all noted as the strengths that can be further used to increase the coffee prospects of the country. Comparatively larger volumes of production, splendid land availability and cheaper labour are also among the features that

assure a bright future for coffee. Government's initiatives like the ECX further makes the scenario conducive for small, medium and large scale farmers related with coffee trade. It is promising to see that the ECX's vision is to revolutionize Ethiopian agriculture through a dynamic, efficient and orderly marketing system. Since this vision ensures equal access to power and participation, quality, market access, risk management and planning for all farmers, this should provide a beneficial future for the coffee farmers of the country (Eleni, 2007). Girma (2011) could see the ECX specifically addressing the ways suppliers and exporters transact with transparency to improve access to information thereby strengthening the bargaining power of farmers.

The Ministry of Trade has also identified certain weaknesses that need immediate attention. These include among others, low productivity, low return for farmers and poor agricultural practices. There is also lack of a price risk management system that would buffer the farmers from the effects of severe price slumps. The comparatively longer chain from farm to port of discharge is also prohibitive. Spread of a root disease and unbridled dispersal of a legal stimulant plant known as 'kchat' are also limiting coffee prospects of the country. Many coffee plants are uprooted due to rotting of roots in parts of Oromia, the region which constituted major share of coffee. Along the trade routes to the Middle East in the eastern parts of the country, the legal stimulant plant Kchat is getting more space in farming. Kchat has got huge consumption in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa (Global Agricultural Information Network, 2012). Fast growing and pest-resistant features of Kchat and less labour demand makes it a better option for many farmers. More over a bushel of Kchat could be sold for a high price of US\$9 whereas coffee in its place would earn just US\$0.01 (Sereke-Brhan, 2010).

The government is but aware of overcoming all such challenges through concerted efforts. Attaining improved production and consistent quality of farm products through appropriate technologies has already been well accepted. Improved post harvest technologies are also among the goals to be reached faster. Traceability and transparency along value chain,

enhanced promotion in the international arena, and inception of price risk management are seriously considered. Special support to commercial coffee farmers as well as providing easy access to capital for those who come forward to purchase coffee or invest in coffee, are also among the priorities.

CONCLUSIONS

Coffee remains well ingrained in the social fabric of Ethiopia. Legends related to coffee's evolution in Ethiopia only strengthens the deep bondage coffee has with Ethiopian culture. Ethiopian coffee stands different from coffee originated from other countries in many ways. An important difference is the wild forest coffee still found extensively in the country. Wild coffee forests of Ethiopia hence stand as a precious genetic resource. By virtue of all these facts, coffee in Ethiopia has got extensive sociological value. Country's women could establish an indisputable role in the coffee value chain. Women's presence is conspicuous as entrepreneurs investing in coffee cultivation, as workers related to post harvest processes and as coffee drink tenders along restaurants. Coffee ceremony, an inseparable traditional practice carried out at least once a day through Ethiopian homes and institutions finds women taking lead role in making coffee drink and serving to participants. Cordial, very informal and free environment created by coffee ceremony has made it a very effective occasion for participatory communication as used by a number of government and non government organisations. Coffee's contribution to the Ethiopian economy is commendable. Lion share of Ethiopian export is coffee. Over one quarter of Ethiopia's foreign exchange is fetched through coffee export. Among the government initiatives, the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange has got wide popularity by virtue of its transparency and access provided for farmers of all scales. Ethiopian government's will to foster coffee economy is reflected in its policies. Historic achievement of intellectual property right to the country's major coffee varieties not only proclaims the Ethiopian will to preserve its traditional coffee glory, but also serves as a source of inspiration for every country that seeks for protecting its indigenous property. The

government has also identified significant challenges and enormous opportunities in the field. Altogether such commitments form a promising picture for coffee scenario in Ethiopia.

REFERENCES

- Anteneh Mekuria Tesfaye. 2011. Piggybacking the Traditional Coffee Ceremony as a Participatory Communication Strategy to Resolve Social Problems: an Assessment of Practices in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, *J. Communication and Media Technologies*, 1(4), 121-149.
- Brinkerhoff, J.A. 2011. Being a Good Ethiopian Woman: Participation in the 'Buna (Coffee) Ceremony and Identity, PhD. Thesis, Arizona State University.
- Eleni Gabre-Madhin. 2007. The Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECEX): Making the market work for all, Expert Meeting on the Trade and Development Implications of Financial Services and Commodity Exchanges (Part I), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 3 September 2007.
- German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), Project Profile: Ethiopia, Nature conservation cooperation with Ethiopia, Accessed from: www.bfn.de/0310_steckbrief_aethiopien+M52087573abo.html, Accessed on 13 July 2013.
- Gete Zeleke. 2010. A study on mountain externalities in Ethiopia, Final report, FAO Sustainable Agriculture and Sustainable Development, Mountain Policy Project, Addis Ababa, July 2010.
- Girma Negussie Kinato. 2011. Marketing Information Operation in Ethiopia with special reference to the Ethiopia Commodity Exchange (ECX) Coffee Trading, Master Thesis, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden.
- Global Agricultural Information Network, Coffee Annual Report, Ethiopia, May 2012. Accessed from: http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Coffee%20Annual_Addis%20Ababa_Ethiopia_4-25-2012.pdf Accessed on 13 July 2013.

- International Labour Organization. 2012. Green and fair: Cooperatives in Ethiopia. Accessed from: [www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_183643/lang—en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_183643/lang-en/index.htm), Accessed on 13 July 2013.
- International Trade Centre, 2011. Ethiopian Coffee Quality Improvement Project, Aid for Trade Global Review Case Story. Accessed from: www.intracen.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=512147, Accessed on 14 July 2013.
- Ministry of Trade, Government of Ethiopia, Coffee Opportunities in Ethiopia, February 2012, Accessed from: <http://www.eafca.org/wvc/downloads/AFCCE09/presentations/Coffee%20Opportunities%20in%20Ethiopia%20-%20%20Ministry%20of%20Trade.pdf> Accessed on 13 July 2013.
- Overseas Development Institute. 2009. Ethiopia Trademarking and Licensing Initiative: Supporting a better deal for coffee producers through Aid for Trade, 2006-2007. Accessed from: <http://www.odi.org.uk/> Accessed on 13 July 2013.
- Petit Nicolas. 2007. Ethiopia's Coffee Sector: A Bitter or Better Future?, *J. Agrarian Change*, 7 (2), 225-263.
- Riisgaard Lone, Fibla Anna Maria Escobar, Ponte Stefano 2010. Gender and Value Chain Development, Evaluation Study, The Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Sarah A. Schach, 2012. Women in Coffee Strategy, East African Fine Coffee Association, 9th African Fine Coffee Conference and Exhibition 16-18 February, 2012, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Sereke-Brhan Heran. 2010. Coffee, Culture, and Intellectual Property: Lessons for Africa from the Ethiopian Fine Coffee Initiative, The Pardee Papers/ No. 11/ July 2010, The Frederick S. Pardee Center for the Study of Longer-Range Future, Boston University, Boston.
- Sette Jose D. 2012. Ethiopian Coffee Challenges and Opportunities, Ethiopian Coffee Export Conference, 8-9 November 2012, Addis Ababa.
- UNDP. 2013. Coffee flavoured success in Ethiopia. Accessed from http://www.intracen.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/successstories/Ethiopia_stock_exchange/ Accessed on 13 July 2013.
- USAID. 2010. Ethiopia Coffee Industry Value Chain Analysis; profiling the actors, their interactions, costs, constraints and opportunities; Accessed from: http://agoa.info/images/documents/5157/Ethiopian_Coffee_Industry_Value_Chain_Analysis_2010.pdf Accessed on: 19 July 2013.
- www.allafrica.com/stories/201301212686.html, Accessed on 14 July 2013.
- www.coffeehabitat.com/2011/02/ethiopia-wild-forest-coffee, Accessed on 29 September 2013.
- www.courageinacup.com/2013/03/03/a-catalyst-for-coffee-women-in-western-ethiopia, Accessed on 13 July 2013.
- www.eastafrica.usaid.gov/en/USAID/Article/2944/Culture_Coffee_and_HIV_Prevention, Accessed on 14 July 2013.
- www.facts.randomhistory.com/coffee-facts.html, Accessed on 14 July 2013.
- www.intracen.org/news/Empowering-women-coffee-producers-in-East-Africa, Accessed on 13 July 2013.
- www.intracen.org/women-in-coffee/ Accessed on 13 July 2013.
- www.longbottomcoffee.com/ctuo3.cfm, Accessed on 29 July 2013.
- www.oxfam.org/en/development/ethiopia/coffee-growers-earn-better-price-protect-environment, Accessed on 13 July 2013.
- www.wipo.int/ipadvantage/en/details.jsp?id=2621, Accessed on 13 July 2013.