

Local Community's Perception, Assessment and Management of Food Insecurity Risks: The Case of Family Farming Households in South West Ethiopia



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Introduction

- Family farmers constitute over 81% of the total Ethiopian population and account for over 95% of total agricultural production (CSA, 2016).
- However, they are operating under continuous threat of risks (Von Braun & Olofinbiyi, 2009), which leads to structural food insecurity (Dorosh & Rashid, 2012).
- Family farmers perceive and assess these risks based on their experiences of different shocks in the past (Doss, et al., 2008).
- Based on how they perceived risks and the level of their resilience to the different risks, family farming households use diverse risk management strategies.
- The purpose of this study is to understand how family farming households perceive, assess and manage sources of food insecurity risks.

The study areas

- Three districts in Southwest Ethiopia (Figure 1):
 - ✓ Kersa
 - ✓ Omonada
 - ✓ Bako-Tibe
- Rain fed agriculture (crop and livestock)
- Main rainy season: March-September
- Mean annual rainfall: 900-1300mm
- Average temperature: 13-28 °C

Figure 1: Map of the study areas



Methods

- Mixed methods approach used for data collection (Creswell, 2014)
- Qualitative data collected through Focus Group Discussions (34 groups, total of 210 people), in-depth interviews with 150 family farmers and observation of community practices
- Quantitative data from random household survey with 228 households

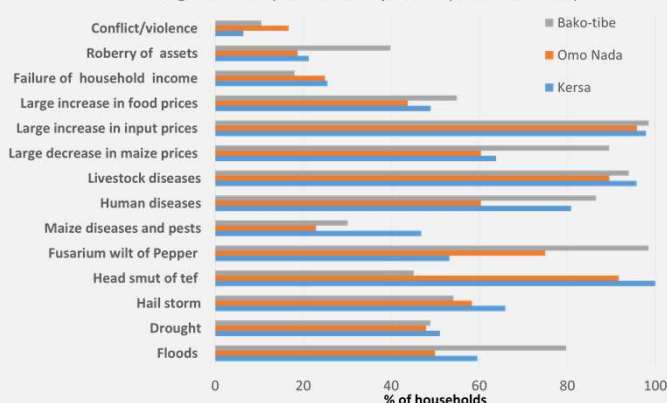
Figure 2: Focus group discussions in the field



Results

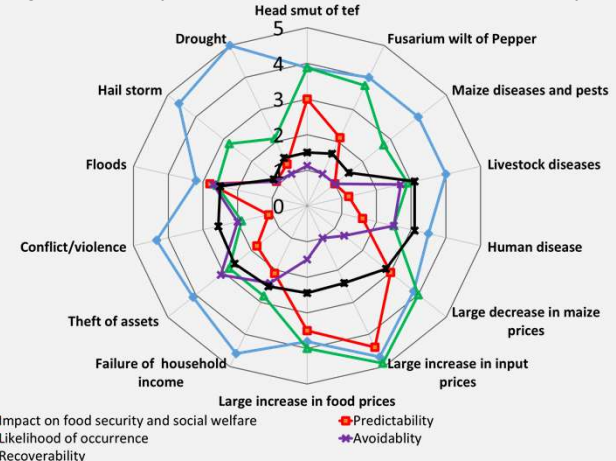
Risks perception by family farmers

Figure 3: Perception of risks by district (% of households)



Risk assessment

Figure 4: Community assessment of different sources of risk of food insecurity



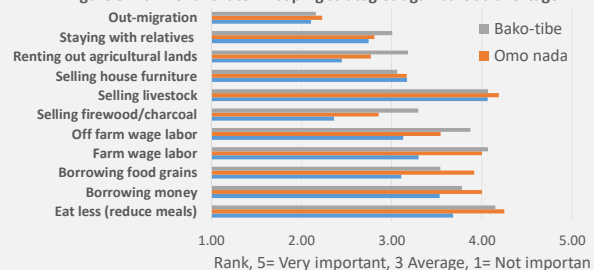
Risk management strategies

1. Mitigation/preventive measures

- Geniso/growing tef using early rain and harvesting before the occurrence of head smut/
- Vaccination against major livestock diseases
- Soil conservation measures

2. Short term coping strategies against food shortage

Figure 5: Rank of short term coping strategies against food shortage



3. Long term adaptation strategies

- Use of drought tolerant, early maturing crop varieties
- Crop diversification
- Better forage management to reduce feed shortage
- Strengthening informal institutions

Conclusions

- Climate variables, crop and livestock diseases, market and institution related issues are perceived as the most relevant risks to cause food insecurity of family farms.
- Family farmers perceive and assess risks based on their experience from exposure to similar risks in the past.
- The risk management strategies vary based on their perceptions and access to resources among others.
- Understanding the risk perception, assessment and management strategies could be important inputs in development of policies, strategies and plans to reduce food insecurity.

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