

Why a shift from Coffee to Chat? A Study of the Kersa Woreda in Jimma Zone of South Western Ethiopia

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Abstract

Ethiopia is known as the birth place of the coffee and it is deep-rooted to the life and culture of Ethiopians. Since ages Jimma zone is considered as the synonyms of 'Bunna' or coffee. These brown beans remain the mainstay of their economic as well as socio-cultural life. But in last two decades the situation had changed rapidly by a new cash crop-"Chat". Chat, an evergreen bushy crop is presently fetching a big demand from domestic and international markets for its stimulant leaves. Farmers are shifting from coffee to chat cultivation, posing a big threat to the coffee industry of country. Present study is a descriptive research based on the , empirical information gathered through the field survey using questionnaire (open and close ended questions); focus group discussion and interview of the concerned resource persons. Study brings a clear description and comparison of both crops and their impacts on the rural economy and society of the area. The socio-economic situation of the farmers is not good and high population pressure and lower educational status of the families worsen the situation. They are opting Chat and replacing Coffee without considering its negative impacts on the society. There is a lack of marketing skill that could bring good economic returns from coffee giving an opportunity for stimulant leaf. Study recommends a strong intervention of government for the coffee trade through opening an extensive network of storage and purchasing centers, declaring purchasing price in advance, and providing insurance to the crop and farmers as well. Education, especially adult education, and health awareness programs are very much needed in the study area that may improve the livelihood of farmers and encourage them to produce the food crop in place of stimulant leaves.

Keywords: Cash crop, Coffee, Chat, Ethiopia, Jimma, Rural management strategies.

1. Introduction

Coffee is one of the world's most important agricultural commodities ranking second most valuable Export commodity after oil (Pendergrass, 1999). Several countries in Africa base their economies on coffee export revenues. About 33 million people in 25 African countries drive their livelihoods from growing coffee, mainly on subsistence farm (Kotecha, 2002). According to Oxfam report (2002) until 2000, coffee contributed 80% of Burundi's, 67% of Ethiopians, 55% of Ugandans and 30% of Nicaragua's Export earnings, respectively. Ethiopia is one of the major producers and exporters of coffee in the world. In 2005 it was the sixth largest coffee producers and the seventh largest Exporter worldwide (Petit, 2007). The bulk of *Coffea arabica* is produced in the eastern, southern and western part of Ethiopia with altitudes ranging from 1,300 to 1800 m.a.s.l (Alemayehu, 2009).

Ethiopia's annual production of coffee is between 140, 000 and 180,000 tons annually and about 44% of the coffee produced in the country is exported to other countries and the rest 66% consumed in the country. About 25% of the entire population of the counters livelihood is depend on coffee directly or indirectly. About 98% of the coffee in Ethiopia is produced by on small farms that are less than a hectare and the remaining 2% is produced by the State forms (MOA-Govt of ET 2007). Jimma zone in South-Western Ethiopia is renowned for its long history of coffee production and is one of the main source areas of coffee in Ethiopia. Coffee is predominantly cultivated in 11 of the 17 woredas of the zone. Of these, Mana and Goma woredas are the main places of coffee production. On average the zone produces about 30, 000 tons of production. Hence the zone is one of the top three coffee producers of the country (KWAO-2009).

The low to very low income of coffee growers is a big challenge for the development of the farmers and the zone Selling their coffee beans for much less than they cost to produce aggravates coffee farmers' poverty .Furthermore; rural unemployment related to low income of coffee production is increasingly becoming a source of social unrest and mobilization, fuelling poverty, malnutrition and migration (Eakin and Tickeel, 2002)The very low income of the coffee growers in Ethiopia may be due to the very low productivity of their coffee farm which is about 300Kg per hectare. compared to Kenya that produces 700 kg/ha, (CSAE-2005).

Chat (*Catha edulis* Forsk) is an evergreen tree of Celastraceae family cultivated for its stimulant leaves primarily in East Africa. Presently Ethiopia is a main producer and exporter of chat and it is used by more than 10 million people in the world. The leaves have a euphonizing and psycho stimulant effect. The chewing of chat

is practiced for centuries for social and psychological reasons (Andualem, 2002; Bongard *et al.*, 2011; Ezekiel, 2005; Yeshigeta and Abraham, 2004; Wabel, 2011). The culture of chewing chat began with elderly in social get together which has now become common among all levels of the community. The large numbers of consumers have increased the demand but result in consequences of health and socio economic conditions (Ashbury, 2009; Dawit *et al.*, 2005). Khat is the export crop after coffee and oil seeds and plays a considerable role in the national economy. Its trade have a great influence on the farmers who cultivate them, the traders and exporters. The stimulating content in the leaves cathionine and cathine have a high impact on the social, economic and health status of th society (Aden *et al.*, 2006; Bongard *et al.*, 2011). The leaves are chewed by a large population in Ethiopia leading to aggressive manic actions and recklessness (Dawit, 2005). The leaves were mainly is used for recreation but now has become common among students in different chat using counties, motor vehicle and truck drivers and other working community (Yeshigeta and Abraham, 2004; Alsanosy *et al.*, 2013).

2. The Study Area

Present study is focused on the Kersa Woreda of Jimma Zone, in the South Eastern part of Ethiopia. Jimma is located between 7° 13' 20" to 8° 53' 16" North latitudes and 35° 51' 07" to 37° 36' 16" East longitudes. The study area is found in southern part of Jimma zone. The altitude of the study area ranges from 1740 to 2660 m.a.s.l The Kersa woreda is characterized by a tropical high land climate with heavy rain fall, warm temperature and long wet period. The mean annual rainfall ranges between 1200-2500 mm with mean annual temperature of 20-25°C. About 50% (9,658.4km²) is under cultivation and coffee is the dominant crop and most farmers are dependent on coffee cultivation (KWA-2009).

3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to observe the shift of farmers from coffee to chat cultivation and to investigate the causes of shift and to suggest strategies for making the coffee cultivation sustainable at this heart of coffee growing belt of Ethiopia.

4. Research Method:

Descriptive research method with survey type approach was followed with collection of primary and secondary data from various sources. The study area was purposively selected for its high population density and mainstream coffee growers. Out of the 8 Kebeles of the Woreda two were selected randomly- (Beda Bunna and Bulbul). Out of the total 260 households (Beda Bunna-132 and Bulbul 128) from both kebeles 25 percent (64HHS) samples were selected by giving equal representation to both kebeles. Survey with both open and close ended questions, semi structure interview with experts (eight) and focus group discussions (two), were the tools for collection of primary data. Besides the books, research papers, reports, secondary information were also collected from the Kersa Woreda Administration and Zonal Administration of Jimma. Descriptive statistical techniques were used for the analysis of data and represented through graphic methods.

5. Results and Discussions:

5.1 Social Aspects: Under social aspects the factors like religion, family profile and educational status were observed.

5.1.1 Religion and Ethnicity: The study area dominated by the Muslim religion (91%) and only 9% of the population are Orthodox Christians. Muslims being natives of this area originated from Oromia Ethnic Group while Orthodox families are the migrants to this area largely during Dergs regime. They are coming from different Ethnic groups like Gurage, Amahara and Oromia etc.

5.1.2. Family Profile: Family profile gives the basic understanding of the house hold level demographic setup in the given area. The distribution was calculated on the basis of age and sex.

Fig 02 clearly depicts that the largest portion of the population lies between the age of 16-65 years or the working age group while less than 8% is the older age. It shows a growing population with least ageing factor. But the growing population demands more resources for future which could be a big challenge for this hilly terrain with already higher population.

Female percentage in middle age group is higher than their counterpart, due to higher rate of death of males of middle age by excess consumption of Chat and liquor and associated diseases. (Table 01)

5.1.3. Educational Status: The educational status of a society is an important parameter that determines the foresight to adopt the positive to develop themselves. The educational status of the study area seems to be grim. Fig 03 gives interesting information that a high ratio of population falls in the category of illiterates and schools dropouts. The number of school dropouts (largely at primary stage) observed during field observations and also supported by the experts is a matter of concern. The drop out are not a serious concern for the families which exhibits the ignorant approach of the society towards education. For poor families bread comes first, and labour is in great demand for the commercial crop like coffee and chat so children are used for agriculture practices.

Females are quite low in terms of literacy and education. Besides the traditional approach for female's education the religious education at mosque/ madaras are preferred by majority of families than the formal education.

Among not literates, 50 percent never attended formal school and 13 percent joined school but due to several reasons discontinued the education.. Among literates, 69 percent have their primary education and only 5 percent of the total literates and educated population have got preparatory or higher education. It was evident that the education status is very poor, with illiterate or literate having only primary education and adult education program was not observed or reported during field survey(Figure 04 a & b)

5.1.4. The Economic Status: For survival and progress, human being perform activities expressed as their economic activity. Ethiopia being a agriculture based country, the prime activity of this study area is also agriculture bringing 69 percent of the house hold income(Fig 05) Being close to the city of Jimma some are engaged in private jobs and seasonal jobs of labour work in construction and as farm labours. Other activities like small scale trading and other village service activities and as petty sellers. Agriculture is the prime occupation of native people since ages with extensive cultivation of coffee making the area unique. The share of commercial crop is quite high in this zone making 70 percent of the total agriculture produce. Earlier there was only one commercial crop-the coffee but the absolute domination of coffee is being challenged by the new upcoming crop-Chat.

The chat is now cultivated in almost one third area of coffee cultivation (Telake,2007).The transport facilities have expanded the chat utilization across the country and the increase of national revenue is also influencing the nation's economy. During 2010, the export value of chat was increased by 51% whereas the coffee and leather were 40% and 25.4% (Gesese, 2013, Andualem, 2002; Guesh, 2012). The understanding of the negative social and physical effects that is affecting the society need to be considered while substituting the coffee by chat (Dechasa,2001).

Figure 07 vividly shows that still coffee has a share of 3/5th in the total income from agriculture produce. But here is not the eye of cyclone, the eye lies on the share of Chat which has reached to more than 1/10th of the share of the total agricultural produce. Two points creates more anxiety among the planners- First the share of 11 percent is acquired by the Chat by almost replacing coffee from its strong hold and the second is that it is spreading rapidly by becoming the choice of farmers. Planners of coffee industry are seriously threatened because of this shift in commercial crop. They have already witnessed such change in Eastern Haraghe zone of Ethiopia, which was ones known for its Harar Coffee but now it is known for its quality Chat giving rise to the big trade towns like Awaday and Hirna, but coffee literally marginalized if not vanished. Loosing zones like Jimma and Kaffa means losing the supremacy of coffee trade in Ethiopia.

Knowing farmers perception on Chat cultivation here is of simian importance. Table 02 gives the information that 100% of farmers are chat cultivators showing the absolute acceptance of this new crop with an exception few small farmers (8%) and farmers believe that it was a right move and going to increase the area of Chat replacing Coffee.

The prime factor responsible for the shift from coffee to chat is profit is more than coffee. Though coffee is a traditionally grown crop, the return period of the crop is long while Chat gives return in the same year and continues round the year. The market network also affects the profit of the farmers. Though pests and diseases are not common every time that demands a lot of expenditure the increasing price of Chat in market is more or less steady that compensates the inputs.

Megerssa *et al.*(2014) have also reported about the socio economic impact of Khat in Jimma zone. They have observed that the community is facing a disintegration of the socio economic and health status. They also reported the higher chewing habit development in the area of study that adversely affected the labor and productivity of the area. These researchers considering the negative impacts have suggested creating awareness about the ill effects of the crop and reducing the utility. These should be developed to the generation at early levels from schools as the learning institutions can make a healthy society.

In nutshell the problem perceived by the farmers for coffee production is its marketing profitability. The coffee business is controlled by the international market which shows a high fluctuation in price and so the return to the farmers. There is no storage facilities of coffee beans to sell them at the increased market values during the fluctuation.. The income from coffee at the harvesting season will be utilized for domestic needs. By the next harvesting season the farmers are already under the accumulated burden of loan and in the clutches of the businessman who are mostly the brokers for the big businessman of Addis. This becomes worse in case of crop failure or big fluctuation in the price of coffee.

Chat has emerged as a reliving factor from coffee cultivation getting profit round the year with a steady market and less pest management problems.. But Chat - develops social problems with its stimulant impact and people getting addicted to it. It makes the people lazy and money being used for its consumption leads to the family conflicts and disintegration, serious health problems. Ayalu *et al.*(2012) has also reported the consequences of chat chewing among the school students and the adverse impacts towards the society.

6. Recommendations:

To retain the status of coffee cultivation in Jimma Zone of Oromia National Region, the following strategies are recommended-

- Promotion of education, specially the female education should be made mandatory for understanding the problem and future planning.
- Extensive adult education program can be planned to create awareness.
- A network of coffee purchasing centres should be established at rural areas or promote to establish a 'coffee farmers cooperative' to improve the trade of coffee. .
- The Federal Ministry should declare the government purchasing price in advance and initiate the crop insurance scheme at reasonable premium to give security to the coffee farmers.
- Storage Centres should be developed to facilitate the sale at profit
- National level training cum implementation program should be planned for Agricultural officers and farmers of the area to enhance the technical knowhow and pest and disease management.
- Awareness creation about the negative impact of Chat addiction on the future generation and community

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Table 1. Family size (surveyed house hold)

Kebele	No of HH	Total Male	Total Femal	Total popn	Average male/HH	Average female /HH	Average family size
Beda Bunna	32	84	108	192	2.63	3.38	6.00
Bulbul	32	112	100	212	3.50	3.13	6.63
Total	64	196	208	404	3.06	3.25	6.31

Table 2. Farmers Perception on Shifting From Coffee to Chat

ISSUES	Perception (%)	
	Yes	No
Are you a Chat Cultivator	100	0
Did you replace Coffee by Chat	92	8
Do you cultivate Chat for personal use only	8	92
Do you Cultivate Chat for both Personal & market	92	0
Do you think your decision for Chat cultivation was correct	100	0
Are you intended to further increase the area under Chat Cultivation	92	8

Table 3. Farmers Perception on the Factors Responsible for Shifting from Coffee to Chat and their Respective Rank Score

S. N.	Factors Responsible for Promotion of Chat Cultivation	Perception in Priority (in %)			Total Score Value	Overall Ranking
		Ist	2nd	3rd		
1	Chat is more profitable than Coffee	30	40	30	33	I
2	Chat Gives Cash in the shorter period while coffee takes a long time	20	12	20	17.6	II
3	Chat Gives Cash round the year while coffee gives for a season	8	12	12	10	III
4	Chat has a local market and local network of traders, while Coffee has National network controlled by big trades	12	8	6	9.6	IV
5	Chat have Less risk of Paste and Disease than Coffee	8	8	12	8.8	V
6	Chat has a secured market price with an increasing trend while Coffee price shows big fluctuation	14	16	16	8.8	V
7	It is cheaper to grow for personal use	8	0	0	4	VI
8	Coffee is more labour intensive than Chat	0	4	4	2	VII

Note: Score Values: First= .05, Second= 0.3, Third = 0.2.

Source: Field Survey (August 2010)

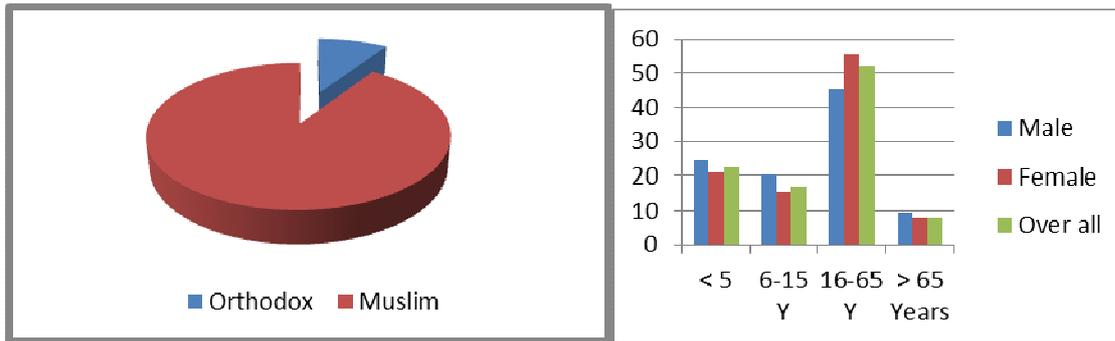


Figure 1. The Religious Composition of the Study Area.. Figure 2. Distribution of Population (Age and Sex)

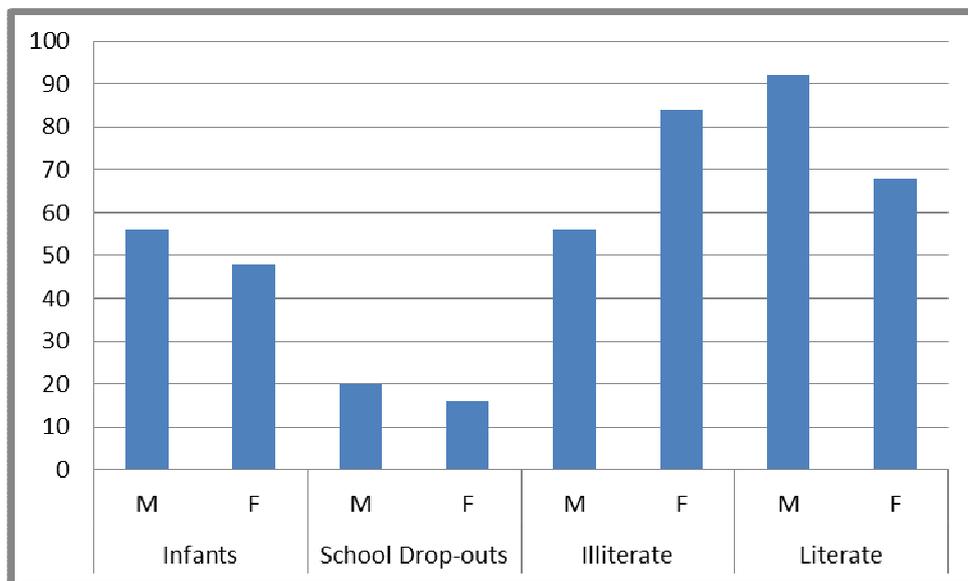


Figure 3. The Educational Status of the Population (in Nos.).

Note: Here Literate represents the literates and Educated

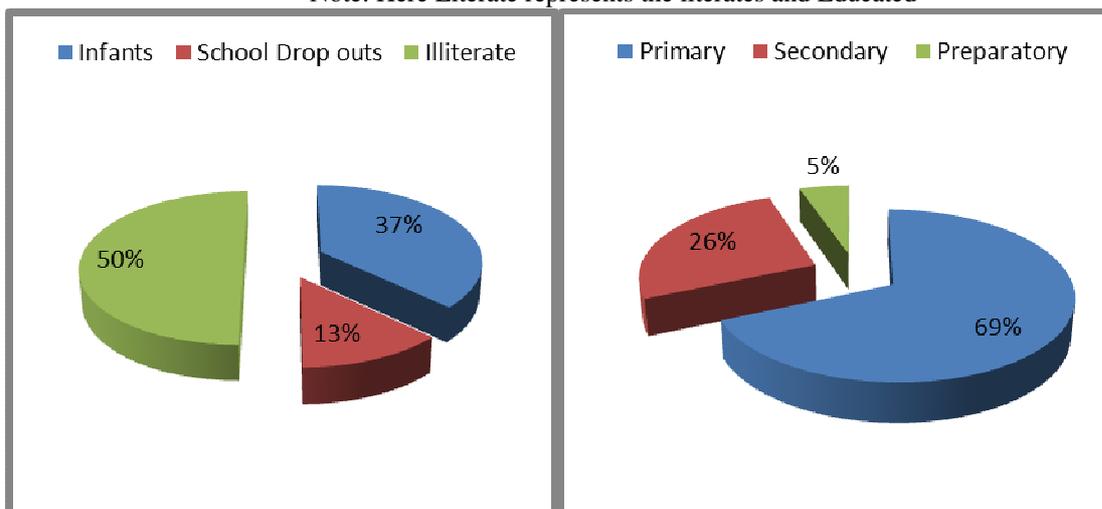


Figure 4. Educational Status of Illiterates and Literates.

Note: Literate represents the literates and Educated. Preparatory also includes higher education.

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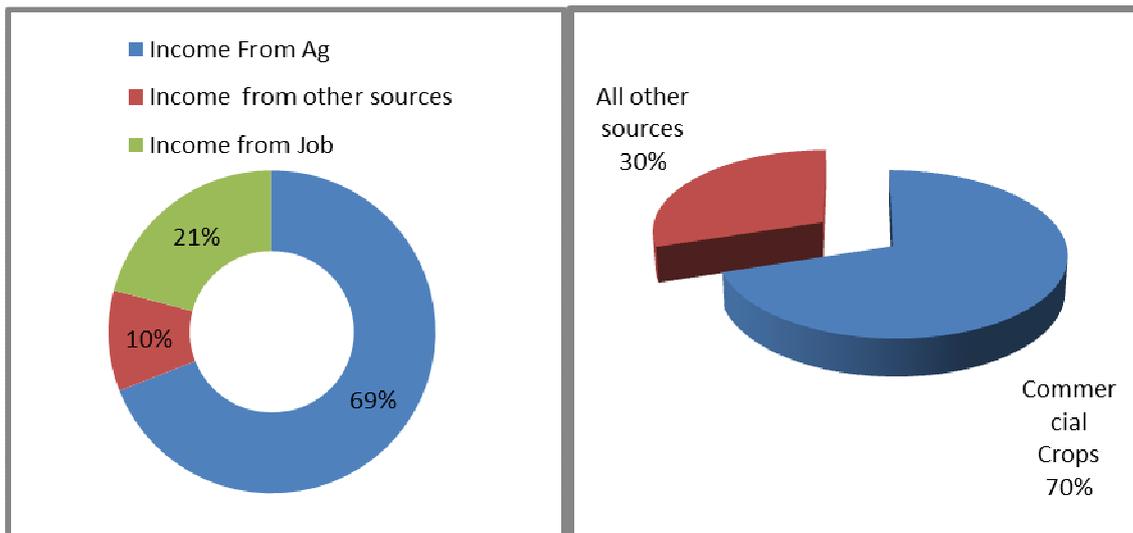


Figure 5. House Hold Income from Different Sources. Figure 6. The Share of Commercial Crop in total Agriculture Income

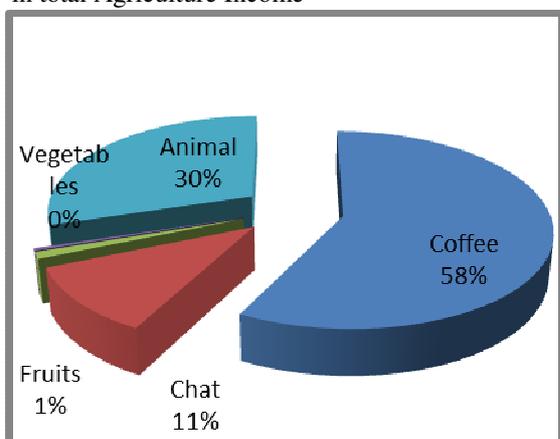


Figure 7. The Share of Different Agricultural Produce in Overall Income.

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