



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT

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**DETERMINANTS OF VEGETABLE CHANNEL SELECTION IN RURAL TIGRAY, NORTHERN ETHIOPIA****ABEBE EJIGU ALEMU****PH. D. CANDIDATE, DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT AND EARTH SCIENCES, KATHOLIKIE UNIVERSITET LEUVEN, BELGIUM****ASST. PROFESSOR****DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT****COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS****MEKELLE UNIVERSITY****ETHIOPIA****BIHON KASSA ABRHA****PH. D. CANDIDATE, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA****ASST. PROFESSOR****DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT****COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS****MEKELLE UNIVERSITY****ETHIOPIA****GEBREMEDHIN YIHDEGO TEKLU****PH. D. CANDIDATE, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA****ASST. PROFESSOR****DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT****COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS****MEKELLE UNIVERSITY****ETHIOPIA****ABSTRACT**

*This paper aims at assessing determinants of marketing channel choice among the vegetable growers in rural Tigray, northern Ethiopia. Structured questionnaire was administered to 150 vegetable growers in three districts in Tigray Region, Northern Ethiopia. Multinomial logit model was employed to measure the statistical significance of the determinant factors. The model result revealed that the further the distance from Mekelle (Regional Capital) resulted in the involvement of vegetable growers more on open markets in the nearest market centers. Vegetable growers having access to nearest market around them were shown retailing the vegetable in open markets rather than delivering it to traders. Access to extension services was found negatively contributing to open markets that might be due to the reason that extension agents provided assistance more on production than marketing. Lack of stall to sell vegetable on open markets forced vegetable growers to rely on traders. Perishable products motivated growers to use the trader channel than open markets.*

**KEYWORDS**

Channel, Determinants, Multinomial logit, Vegetable.

**INTRODUCTION**

The market mechanism has been an engine to bring efficiency and to induce economic growth and development. However, performing exchange is costly inhibiting producers' market participation especially for rural producers. Rural markets in Ethiopia are underperforming as a result of high transaction costs, lack of access to farm inputs, technology, finance, lacking or ill-functioning institutions and weak transport and communication infrastructure (Bienabe et al., 2004; Eleni, 2001; Wolday, 2001; Staal, et al., 1999).

The weak market participation of rural producers' adversely affects the level of production and their orientation to the market. This in turn determines the input and technology use in their production process. The input and technology provision in agrifood supply chain has been dominated by the government that limits its distribution. These factors of production have long been supplied by the government. Even though there were products to the market, high transaction and transportation costs deprive them from participation. These transaction costs and resource constraints force them to look for alternative channels providing them better incentives (Boger, 2001; Chowdhury, 2004; Coase, 1937; Hobbs, 2003; Williamson, 1991).

In Ethiopia, the lion's share (84 %) of the population has been agrarian for long that produce agricultural products for the household consumption leaving little produce to the market (CSA 2008). Moreover, the characteristic of the rural market is fragmented and informal in nature. Hence, the farmers did not have an incentive to increase productivity and supply more goods to the market. However, liberalization and globalization demands farmers to focus on high value agriculture and coordinate them with supply chains enabling farmers' link to the wider domain of the domestic and export markets and then raise production and income (Gulati et al., 2007).

The agricultural marketing system in Ethiopia tends to be informal, unregulated and constrained by weak market linkages and lack of rural infrastructure. Most farmers live more than a half-day walk from the nearest road. There is also a severe lack of institutional infrastructure that can facilitate farmers' links to markets and the overall economy. Traders, cooperatives (farmers' organizations) and other local institutions are supposed to play important role for smooth functioning of the market but they tend to be weak or absent especially in fruit and vegetable marketing. The weaknesses contribute to the subsistence orientation of the Ethiopian rural economy and constrain its growth (Eleni, 2001; World Bank, 2004).

Several marketing channels also help link small farmers with domestic and global markets through processors, collectors, and retail and supermarket chains. Economic agents in the chain could tackle producers' problems of information and finance, creating demand; improve quality and quantity, which help improve their earnings and wealth (Maertens et al, 2007). Furthermore, these chains help transform the subsistence agriculture to market oriented agriculture in the developing and least developed countries as producers start to focus on consumers wants (Bijman, 2002).

Therefore, this paper aims at identifying determinants of choosing a particular marketing channel to distribute various types of vegetables. The remaining part of the paper is organized as follows: the next part gives brief reviews of literature and theoretical framework. The third part presents results and discussion and the last part provides conclusions and policy implications.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite the fact that the market mechanism is an engine for growth, the agricultural marketing system has several difficulties that specifically limited the market participation of smallholder farmers. These difficulties consist of lack of access to markets by the smallholders due to remoteness and small number of operators, high transaction costs resulted from low volume of transactions; supply rigidity due to perishability of agricultural products; instability of prices due to seasonal demand; inequity of prices due to isolation that imply lack of alternatives and producers' lack of information; frequent frauds on input quality and units of measurement; poor productivity potential due to lack of investment and farmers' aversion of risk when major transformations of systems are required; and few possibilities to improve products' quality due to lack of incentives (Bienabe et al., 2004).

The specific challenges that limit smallholder farmers' market participation can be broadly categorized as constraints on production and constraints on trade. Trade related constraints are related to barriers to entry, high transaction costs, high risk, and asymmetry of information, low bargaining power, lack of organization, and lack of human and social capital. Due to lack of finance to invest on storage and processing equipment accelerates quality deterioration and forces farmers to sell products without considering the market situation. Financial constraints also limit farmers from investing on the production systems to improve productivity.

Lack of access to facilities constitutes a barrier to entry to agricultural markets that left their produce remain at home or sell at lower prices to fulfill their cash needs. Lack of storage facilities increases risk of losses that affect the quality of products and limit the access to markets with high quality standards (Wolday, 2002).

Rural producers are far remote to the market and are not able to access market information that enables them to know the preferences of their buyers (Chowdhury, 2004; Eleni 2004). The poor transport and communication infrastructure exposed them to high transaction costs. High transaction costs limit farmers motivation to increase productivity thereby abstains from market and produce for domestic or household consumption. Lack of quality assuring institutions forces buyers to focus on self inspection and they are exposed to opportunistic buyer behavior (Hobbs and Young, 1999). These results in transactions to be personalized limiting the free flow of goods in the market (Eleni 2004). The small nature of the farmers' produce and the respective meager amount to the market limits their market power. It erodes rural producers' bargaining power with the buyers. Opportunistic buyer behavior discourages farmers from benefiting from the market. Marketing channels mitigate against the opportunistic behavior because mutual interest guides the exchange relationships (Hobbs, 1996).

The input and technology market is not well developed to supply required seed, fertilizer and other farm inputs to the producers to the level of their requirement. Farmers are constrained not only by the availability but also shortage of money to finance these inputs and technology. Though there are microfinance institutions, the loan amount is limited that could not finance the technology they need to adopt. Rural producers also face constraints in terms of accessing the market. Due to the limited infrastructure and information problems, producers are not able to find buyers when they present agricultural products to the market. Due to poor storage devices, producers do not have the chance to wait for appropriate market situations so as to benefit from the market.

Contractual arrangements and creating relationships with traders solve financial and input market problems in rural areas. Smallholder producers receive inputs and equipment on credit and repay the loan using the agricultural produce. Hence, coordination arrangements are driven by risk, transaction costs, size, farm demographics, and socioeconomic characteristics (Davis and Gillespie, 2007).

Information asymmetry may result in firms incurring costs when they attempt to exchange (buy or sell goods or services). For instance, lack of information about potential buyers/sellers may lead to selling at lower/higher prices as in the case of many rural and suburban markets. Firms want to minimize total costs that are made up of both production and transaction costs. Under some circumstances, transaction costs may be lower if the transaction takes place in an open (spot) market, whereas in other situations, costs may be lower under other forms of vertical coordination as contracting or integration (MacDonald and Korb, 2003).

Socioeconomic characteristics such as sex, education and experience have effects on the knowledge of the market and decisions on the channel choice (Abduli and Birachi, 2008). The various roles male and female farmers have within the community affects the time they spent on the market. Women producers are likely to have more time for market and likely to prefer open markets that require high searching time. However, male producers spent much of their time on production who spent little time for marketing.

Experience and education demonstrates accumulation of human capital and learning about the market. Those who are educated and experienced are likely to be more informed and knowledgeable about the market that enable them reduce the effects of the opportunistic behavior of the trading partners. Hence they are more likely to operate in open markets than other marketing arrangements (Abduli and Birachi, 2008).

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Three districts popular in irrigation use and vegetable production were purposively identified. In each district, one Tabia (local administration) was selected and 150 vegetable growers were randomly selected from the whole list of growers. A structured questionnaire was administered to the sampled vegetable growers and 149 of them were returned and subject to analysis. The questionnaire was prepared in English and filled by trained enumerators in each Tabia. The second primary instrument was in-depth focus group discussion conducted with 24 farmers, local administrators, extension agents and other stakeholders in two Tabias.

## ESTIMATING PROCEDURE

Decision on market channel selection is a discrete choice from among alternative channels available to vegetable growers. The dominant channels were open markets and using traders. It is found that farmers employ open markets, traders or both channels. A few of the traders used both channel. Hence, Multinomial logit is proposed to be used assuming that there are three channel options. The probability of an individual vegetable producer's adoption of a particular channel is predicted using the following logistic distribution (Davis and Gillespie, 2007; Abdulai and Birachi, 2009):

$$\Pr(Y_i = j / X_{ij}) = \frac{\exp(\beta_j X_{ij})}{\sum_{j=0}^2 \exp(\beta_j X_{ij})}, j = 0, 1, 2 \dots n \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where y is the probability of marketing arrangement j, x represents vector of explanatory variables determining channel choice, that includes searching time, input prices, distance to market, transportation costs, access to information, size of the irrigated land, product characteristics, frequency of harvest, and socioeconomic characteristics.

## VARIABLES USED FOR THE EMPIRICAL MODEL AND EXPECTED SIGNS

The following explanatory variables are supposed to be determinants of marketing channel adoption and their brief explanation are presented below:

### 1. Demographic Variables

- a. Gender: it is expected that women are more involved in open markets and they have ample time to retail on the spot market rather than selling it to traders.

- b. Family size: the larger the family size the lesser will be the volume of vegetables supplied to the market. Hence, their market participation will be less and small amount will be supplied to the market. The smaller the amount, the more will be their involvement on spot marketing. Traders do not have also interest in dealing with small lots.
- c. Age: old farmers look conservative and want to present goods on the market rather than relying on contracts with traders.
2. Transaction characteristics
- a. Distance to Mekelle – DISMEKELLE - the longer the distance the more will be on spot): if producers are far from Mekelle, there is less tendency of selling and retailing at the Mekelle market. Hence they retail it in the nearest market or sell it to traders.
- b. Distance to nearest market- DISNEAREST - the shorter the distance the more the involvement in spot markets): the distance of the Tabia to the nearest market has opposite relationship to open market. The nearest the distance to the nearest market the more will be the involvement of the producer to retail in spot markets.
- c. Cost per quintal to Mekelle –COSTQMEK- the higher the fare to transport a quintal of vegetable to Mekelle, the less will be the participation in open markets and growers prefer traders to open markets.
- d. Knowledge – KNOWLEDGE: knowledge and frequent coaching with the extension agent means more information to the producer about the market. Hence, they operate more on spot than selling it to the trader.
- e. Lack of space to sell goods- LCKPLACE: if they do not have stall or selling place in Mekelle, they will not retail it and they are forced to deliver it to the trader.
- f. Trust on buyers-TRUSTBUR- when growers trust traders, they get highly involved with traders than open markets.
3. Size of the farm
- a. Irrigation land size- IRRISIZE: the size of the irrigated land has direct impact on the volume of vegetable to the market. The larger the volume, the more will be their dependence of farmers on traders as they carry on all the stock available to the market.
- b. Frequency of harvest- FREQHRVST: if producers frequently harvest vegetable, they will develop marketing relationship with a particular trader specializing on vegetable distribution. Hence, selling to the trader will be the more preferable channel of distribution.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF VARIABLES

Variable Type	Description	Expected effect
GENDER	The sex of the Household Head	-
AGE	The Age of the Household Head	?
DISMEKELLE	The distance of the Tabia to Mekelle (regional capital)	+
DISNEAREST	The distance of the Tabia to the nearest market	-
COSTQMEK	The fare to transport a quintal of vegetable to Mekelle	+
KNOWLEDGE	Knowledge of the extension agent	+
LCKPLACE	Lack of place to retail on spot in Mekelle	-
IRRISIZE	The size of the irrigated land	-
FREQHRVST	Frequency of harvesting vegetable in a given year	+
TRUSTBUR	The trust growers have on the trader	+

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The total sample from the three Tabias is 150 vegetable producing households out of which one has failed to fill the questionnaire. Fifty sample respondents were selected from each specific Tabia within each Woreda. The three Woredas are purposely selected because they have irrigation potential and practice to produce vegetables and the three selected Tabias have more or less similar size of irrigation user population. Out of the 49 respondents who sell their vegetable to traders, 38 (77.55%) are from Hintalo-Wajirat (Tabia Hiwane), 7 (14.29%) are from Emba-Alaje (Tabia Betmara) and 4 (8.16%) are from Enderta (Tabia Didba). However, 45 (57.69%) of the respondents who sell their vegetable to traders are from Enderta (Tabia Didba), 29 (37.18%) from Emba-Alaje (Tabia Betmara) and 4 (5.13%) of them are from Hintalo-Wajirat (Tabia Hiwane).

TABLE 2: SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR SELECTED VARIABLES

Variable	No. of Observation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Vegetable sales	148	4740.27	8090.43
Spot market participants	148	0.33	0.47
Family Size	148	6.26	2.12
Gender	148	0.87	0.34
Distance to Mekelle	148	49.03	20.84
Irrigated land size	148	0.25	0.25
Prior market	148	0.78	0.49
KNOWLEDGE	148	0.80	0.40
FREQHRVST	148	2.36	0.55

Source: survey 2010

The 129 (86.58%) of the respondents were male and 20 (13.42) of them were female headed farmers. The average age of the male respondents is 49.75 while that of female respondents is 50 years. The female respondents are slightly older than the male respondents. The average family size of the respondents is 6.26 persons. Respondents' distribution according to market channel and family size is trader 78, spot 49 and spot and trader 18 with an average family size of 6.44, 6.09 and 6.22 persons respectively. With regard to channel sex distribution, out of the total 78 respondents who sell to traders, the 93.59% are male and 6.41% female. Out of the 49 respondents who sell at the spot market, 83.67% are male and 16.33% are female.

The average active family members of the respondents who sell in the spot (48), traders (78) and spot and traders (18) markets are 2.71, 2.60 and 3.06 respectively. On the other hand, the average active members of the total respondents are 2.67. The average active members of the respondents who sell at the spot market and to traders are more or less similar to the average active members of the total respondents.

The average owned and rented land holding size of the total respondents is 1.14 hectares. Nevertheless, the average land holding size of women is significantly less (0.58 hectares) than that of men (1.23 hectares). The maximum landholding size of women is 2.5 hectares whereas the maximum landholding size of men is 6 hectares. The land size difference also applies to the irrigable landholding size although the variation is not as significant as that of total landholding size. The irrigable landholding size of the farmers who sell to traders is greater by 0.08 (0.29-0.21) hectares than that of the farmers who sell at the spot market.

The length of time spent and the distance travelled by vegetable producers are among the factors that influence the transaction cost of vegetable market and channel choice of the producers. In this research, the average time and distance is considered although the distance time farmers spend and the distance they travel depends on residence and farming site of farmers of each village within each Tabia. The distance of the residence and farming site of farmers differs from village to village taking the different market centres: the nearest, the Woreda and Mekelle markets. The length of time female producers spend in searching buyers is less than the time male producers spend by 0.08 hours.



The nearest market for Tabia Didba is Mereb-Mietti, for Tabia Hiwane, Hiwane and for Tabia Betmara is Betmara. The nearest market centres are the nearest small towns for the producers. Accordingly, the average distance producers travelled from Tabia Didiba, Hiwane and Betmara to the nearest markets are 2.82, 2.69 and 3.95 kilometres respectively. This indicates the average distance producers from Tabia Betmara travel to the nearest market are longer than the others. On the other hand, the average distance the producers travel to the Woreda market is longer than the nearest market centres. The average distance producers travel from Tabia Didiba, Hiwane and Betmara to the Woreda markets is 14.12, 24.64 and 21.78 kilometres respectively. Producers from Tabia Hiwane travel the longest distance as compared to the others. Taking Mekelle as a market cent for the three of them farmers from Betmara travel the longest distance (67.5 kms) followed by farmers from Hiwane (59.68 kms) and Didba (20.45 kms). This shows producers from Tabia Didba have closer proximity to Mekelle.

The average transportation cost per person to the Woreda market is Birr 3.45, 5 and Birr 7.88 for Didba, Hiwane and Betmara farmers respectively. The Betmara vegetable producers pay the highest cost while the Didba producers pay the least cost. But the transportation cost per person to Mekelle is Birr 5.35 for Didba, 13.20 for Hiwane and 15.52 for Betmara. This is logical because their actual distance from Mekelle also confirms this information. The transportation cost per person varies with the distance to Woreda market and Mekelle.

Information and searching costs were among the determinant factors that affect farmer's adoption of marketing channel. Information and communication infrastructure affects the access of the producers to information. The more informed farmers are about markets and prices, the better will be their decision on the channel. Moreover, their knowledge of extension agents in the Tabia would determine their access to production and market information. The descriptive result reveals that 80% of the respondents still did not have access to telephone and the remaining 20% had access to telephone services. From among those having access to telephone, 70% had trading relationships with traders. Eighty percent of the respondents knew the extension agents. This implies that their source of information is mainly these extension agents. Twenty per cent of them did not know extension agents implying that they did not receive extension services.

The frequency of vegetable harvest has been also one of the issues considered in selecting a channel. It is expected that those who frequently harvest vegetables need to have clients or traders to carry on all the staff they presented to the market. The result reveals that those who used the trader channel were better in frequency of harvesting of vegetables.

Absence of enough space or market place in the market forces traders to rely on traders. Lack of space in the market prohibited them from retailing and they prefer to sell through the trader channel. The 29 of the respondents who distributed through traders replied that they had problem of stall or space in the market for retailing.

Utilization of fertilizer, selected seed and pesticides is associated with the frequency and the bulk or production. Accordingly, those farmers who used trader channel were better in frequency and production volume. It is also anticipated that producers would get such inputs and technology from traders as they have relationships with producers. Hence, those who employed trader channel had shown investing more on technology.

From the total respondents only 78 were engaged in producing and selling onion. The majority of onion sellers were in favor of open marketing channel. The possible reason for the open market channel is that producers have the knowledge that onion is somewhat less perishable and take the risk of selling their produce by themselves. While an open channel often provides higher prices as compared to traders, open markets also require more producer and customer interaction, and additional time requirement of the grower.

Moreover, the highest average sale per person per annum is seen in the case of the open and contract marketing channel. But the number of onion producers involved in both open and contract were only two respondents. This is because the contract form of marketing channel in Ethiopia is weak and contracting entities are not in the position to respect their agreements. In the rare contracting arrangements there are problems of long payment or delays to deliver products.

In both garlic and spinach sales, the open market channel was found dominant. Compared to the other types of vegetables, the number of respondents who were engaged in selling garlic and spinach were few. The average sales on both cases were also small implying a little produce to the market. The volume of production is, therefore, one motivating factor to select the type of marketing channel. When growers presented small volume to the market, the likely channel would be open markets rather than traders. Traders did not prefer small volume of production as it is costly to inspect quality and traceability problems.

The majority of cabbage producers selected trader channel as the preferred marketing channel. The trader marketing channel typically requires the ability to move large quantities of produce quickly and most of the time at a lower price than through an open market channel. The lower price of trader or wholesale marketing channel is reflected in the average sales of cabbage received by producers.

An open marketing channel generally offer higher prices, but needs much time to stay in the market that could otherwise be productive. Further, the irrigated land allotted to cabbage by farmers who selected open and a trader marketing channel was compared. Hence, farmers using open and trader marketing channel have allotted an irrigated land of 0.25 and 0.35 hectares respectively. This indicates the larger the plot size for the particular item, the higher the volume of produce. This larger volume of produce attracts traders to be engaged with producers. Some farmers also view an open market sale as a distraction from the real business of farming such as production and harvest. Most of the farmers are faced with a dilemma, i.e. they can move large volumes of produce through traders at relatively lower prices or seek higher prices in open markets and that they may run the risk of unsold leftovers.

Perishable products require quick movement where traders could be preferred as they carry all the produce growers present to the market. Hence, tomato is perishable product that does not give time for producers to negotiate and take the risk of unsold leftovers. Hence, the trader marketing channel which has the capacity for a bulky purchase is expected to be the best channel to avoid the risk of spoilage. Tomato growers seem well aware of the perishable nature of the product and tried to reduce the volume of harvest. This is reflected in the allocation of irrigated plot for tomato production, the availability of water and the price. For cabbage and tomato production 0.28 and 0.18 hectares of irrigated land is allocated respectively. Consequently, the preferred option for small volume of produce was an open channel.

The descriptive statistics revealed that the majority of household respondents use trader as marketing channel to sell the product they produced. The reason why trader marketing channel is used is related with the volume of harvest. Most of the respondents want to grow potato. It is because potato is less perishable compared to other produces like tomato. This helps them to take time and search for traders that have the interest to buy their produce in the market place. Moreover, if the producers remain with some of their produce unsold they could use it for their own consumption. These alternatives encourage farmers to grow potato in a better volume than others and take risk to find traders to sell their produce.

The majority of carrot producers are also in favor of trader marketing channel. This is because the quantity of carrot demanded by final consumers was so small to sell all the products. Instead, the trader marketing channel is the best way out to sell the products and these traders sell them to restaurants, grocery, other retailers and final consumers.

It is found that the average annual sale of the majority (95%) of respondents is between less or equal 20,000 Birr. The trader marketing channel is also used by the majority of the sampled respondents. There are only seven respondents who are having a sales value of 20,000 birr. The age of the household is also under consideration due to the fact that that young producer can afford the labor cost to participate in open market channel. The descriptive statistics revealed that 67% of the adults used open market compared to 44.9% of the adults who used the trader channel. As the age increases, it was shown that producers shifted to trader channel.

## EMPIRICAL MODEL RESULT ON DETERMINATES OF CHANNEL CHOICE

To assess determinants in choosing a particular channel, the multinomial logit model was employed by taking three channel options available for vegetable grower. The result of the model can be classified in to socioeconomic, transaction cost related frequency of harvest that depends of the availability of water that shows the amount of vegetable to be presented to the market (Table 3). The result reveals that older growers used traders; and the payment they made to carry vegetable to Mekelle is forcing them to adopt open markets; that is, the higher the fare, the more is their involvement in open markets to the nearby market. The result reveals that information costs were found influential in determining the channel to be chosen. Those who had prior market information, and

access to extension agents were found using traders as a channel. Those who frequently harvest vegetable used traders as their outlet to the market as traders carried all what grower made available to the market. Growers also suffer from a market place to their products and such absence of market place is shown forcing vegetable growers to use traders.

TABLE 3: MARGINAL EFFECT, MULTINOMIAL LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULT

Variable	Open market		trader		both	
	$\beta$	Std. Err.	$\beta$	Std. Err.	$\beta$	Std. Err.
AGE	-.0055979	.00456	0080648*	.00436	-.0024669	.00192
GENDER	-.1041072	.21249	.1804558	.22949	-.0763486	.10241
DISNEA~T	.0098447	.02752	-.0056078	.02706	-.004237	.00496
COSTQ~KE	.1282815***	.03485	-.1163706***	.03621	-.0119109	.01013
IRRISIZE	-.0295899	.24849	.0279479	.24124	.001642	.03844
PRIRMK~F	-.2743375**	.13156	.2900577**	.13386	-.0157201	.0412
KNOWLE~E	.0629671	.14919	.5910593***	.12914	-.6540264***	.23016
FREQHR~T	-.3516464**	.14154	.2934811**	.14494	.0581653	.0399
TRUSTBUR	-.1778929	.15308	.221855	.14828	-.0439621	.04835
LCKPLACE	-.2705737*	.15596	-.0993424	.166	.3699161**	.14622
Number of observation		127				
Wald chi2(20)		61.82***				
Pseudo R2		0.44				

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Female headed growers were found highly involved in open markets than male headed counter parts. The proportion of vegetable sales in the open market decreases due to lack of stall or space in the market for retailing. An open channel often provides higher prices as compared to traders but it also require more producer and customer interaction, and additional time for the growers. Some of the farmers encounter a dilemma, i.e. they can move large volumes of produce through traders at relatively lower prices or seek higher prices in open markets and that they may run the risk of unsold leftovers. Little transaction on contract form of marketing was exercised in the research area. In the rare contracting arrangements, there were problems of payment delays for delivered products. The volume of production was one of the dictating factor to select the type of marketing channel. Small volume of produce was sold using open marketing channel because the items might not be large enough to attract traders and contract arrangements

It is observed that farmers' sensitivity to irrigation use has increased and the land allocated to irrigation has shown significant improvement compared to the land irrigated in previous periods as we learned from the focus group discussions we had. The income of growers from vegetable has also shown increment due to the various channels they employed to enrich the product to the market. They still have an interest to sell in open markets like Mekelle or organize themselves in cooperatives to have bargaining power.

An open marketing channel generally offer higher prices, but consume small quantities of produces with high transaction time. Those rely on traders were those growers who produce and market relatively high volume of vegetables. Extension agents provided support not only in production but in marketing that is why growers contact and knowledge of the extension agents has proven positive contribution to sales.

Extension agents often provide extension services to improve agricultural productivity. They were found less trained and concerned with the marketing aspect. Hence, extension agents should also get training regarding markets and support farmers in choosing channels that offer growers prices and income from the sales. The research result has shown that channels of distribution have to do with growers' income from sales they made. Hence, those experts working on marketing should further investigate how contributory various channels are in generating revenue and provide extension services to the growers. Those vegetable growers operating with traders has also better access to telecommunication services that further improve the access of growers to information.

Water harvesting should also be strengthened as it affected the amount of vegetable to the market and their desire to irrigate. The action of traders should be regulated by government institutions that protect exploitation of traders. Those growers operate with traders are shown investing more on technology and this must be recognized by the government as interaction with traders motivate farmers to grow more. Growers need to organize themselves in the form of cooperatives that enable them improve their market power. In sum, those farmers working on irrigation are better in educating their children, food security and livelihood.

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