

ABSTRACT

The study was conducted purposeful to assess the contribution of cooperative societies towards poverty alleviation of tobacco growers. It stressed on Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Societies (AMCOS) that dealing with tobacco cash crop. To draw the reliable conclusion the researcher based on three specific objectives which are examination of marketing strategies used by AMCOS, assessment of training programs provided by AMCOS and finding out the agricultural inputs provided by the AMCOS. However, the research instruments used in data collection included the combination of questionnaires, interview, focus group discussion and observation. The data obtained were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed and granted the study with high degree of validity and reliability. As tobacco is among the few commercial crops remain in Tanzania, the study looks forward to policy development that will make the crop sustainable as well as streamlining the crop to be a decisive catalyst in improving the livelihood of the farmers. However, to trade through AMCOS includes collecting all the farm produce to the AMCOS for the purpose of boosting the price and easily accessing the market, at the end on behalf of the farmers AMCOS sell them and distribute the sales revenue to farmers net of agricultural inputs debts.

The study conducted revealed that the contribution of AMCOS towards poverty alleviation of tobacco growers is very insignificant, this gives the early warning signal that in near future the AMCOS will not have any role to play in poverty alleviation. AMCOS encounter some challenges in its attempts to improve farmers' welfare, the challenges that stand as inhibitive factors include illegal payments to grades men to fairly grade the produce, absence of advertisement and exhibitions, absence of training to farmers, excess of inputs debts in relation to sales revenue, delay in supply of agricultural inputs to farmers, non-existent of many buyers and suppliers of inputs and lack of policy that guides the supply of agricultural inputs and marketing and distribution of tobacco crops. With these bottlenecks in place the AMCOS are only assisting farmers in substance level (food, shelter and clothes) and contribution at a very low rate towards poverty alleviation to tobacco growers. Farmers and AMCOS must focus on the quality and quantities of tobacco produced in order to enhance sales revenue.

