

# Community Perception Toward Animal's Welfare in Bishoftu, Central Ethiopia

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**Abstract:** Animal welfare means animal production systems, transport and slaughter of animals, all situations where the perception of animal welfare differs from one region and culture to another, from one person to another. The study was conducted in Bishoftu with the objective of assessing the community attitude and general awareness toward animals' welfare. Out of 400 interviewees, only 26 of them were clear with animal welfare concept, 180 of them said they have little knowledge and 194 of them didn't be heard animal welfare. Majority (92.8%) of respondents were never looking for information regarding to animals and the rest 7.8% were uses only three type of sources (internet, discussion and books). About 50.8% of participants were treating their animal by themselves in a traditional way, while 49.2% of them were calling/advising veterinarians when their animals become sick. About 28.8% of respondents were perform different action for different purpose. Majority (61.75%) of interviewees were desired to be more informed while, 31% possess at least some familiarities with the condition, or partially interested and only 7.25% of them were not desired to know more about animal welfare. This survey showed animals undergo suffering in various areas of human use and there is less animal welfare consideration, poor animal welfare understanding and there is awareness creation gap and keeping animals under conditions for which they are not genetically suited. In summary, farm animal welfare is not recognized and more efforts are needed to improve the public conception to animal welfare in general.

**Keywords:** Animal Welfare, Community, Perception Bishoftu, Awareness

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## 1. Introduction

According to OIE, animal welfare means animal production systems, transport and slaughter of animals, all situations where the perception of animal welfare differs from one region and culture to another, from one person to another [18]. It is a multi-faceted issue which implies important scientific, ethical, economic and political dimensions [13]. Also, it is not only about ensuring an animal is not treated cruelly or caused unnecessary pain or suffering, it is about ensuring that an animal's physical state, its mental state and its ability to fulfil its natural needs and desires are considered and attended to [20, 24].

There is an historical evolution in the change of attitudes towards animals in each country and region of the world [7]. There are also different stages of development of the animal movement and different approaches adopted can influence the speed and progress of these [17]. Concern for

animal suffering can be found in Hindu thought, and the Buddhist idea of compassion is a universal one, extending to animals as well as humans, but Western traditions are very different [3].

Human-animal relationships have changed through agricultural development, economic growth, urban expansion and political changes. The 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialisation stimulated changes in attitudes towards the natural world and also affected the urbanisation of social life, particularly in Britain [6]. With the industrialisation of society, people gradually lost contact and affinity with animals, as traditional ways of keeping and depending on animals declined. Intensive farming methods were introduced after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, which moved many animals from free-range, outdoor keeping into the sheds of the factory farm and this divorced people

from animals [15] and food animals were reared out of sight, packaged and processed, and purchased through supermarkets [16].

The OIE implemented the first international guidelines for animal welfare in 2005 and 167 countries accepted these. The five freedoms were outlined in the 1970s in England and have since then been a fundamental basis for animal welfare all over the world:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst: by providing constant access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;
  2. Freedom from discomfort: by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area;
  3. Freedom from pain, injury, or disease: by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment;
  4. Freedom to express normal behaviour: by providing sufficient space, proper facilities, and company of the animal's own kind;
  5. Freedom from fear and distress: by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering [4].
- However, there is still a lack of guidelines and regulations for animal welfare in Ethiopia [3].

It is true most proportions of Africans livestock owners do not realize as animals are sensitive to beatings and mistreatment. Some individuals believe that no animal should suffer pain because of human activity and many of them make branding in order to identify their animals on prominent parts of the animal body [2]. Yet others believe that any human need is more important than any need that a non-human animal might have [1]. These conflicting views, in the political context of the United States, have produced a variety of legal outcomes [12].

In Ethiopia there are no animal welfare regulations or any constitution that protect animals from suffering except few articles present in criminal laws of the country presented since Emperor King Minilik II [18]. About six or seven organisations that work for animals Welfare and the first was established as early as 1954. Even if they are under progress and hopefully ready within near future, but, still they have not yet accomplished the main objectives of their work to implement animal welfare [3]. The country tried to articulate the animal welfare issues since 1889 when the first Italian Veterinary Mission came to Ethiopia to study the impact of the disease in the country and also tried to pass two proclamations about animal welfare, called as Animal welfare notice No. 187/1947 ET and Endemic animals' welfare regulation No. 191/1947 ET [2]. However, there is still a lack of guidelines and regulations for animal welfare in Ethiopia [3]. Since a world where humans exist independently of animals is unimaginable, it is clearly imperative that we, as a community, make well informed and carefully considered decisions about how animals are to be managed, cared for, and integrated into future human societies. It is well recognized that good animal care can have far reaching and positive benefits in a number of

areas, including human physical and psychological health, social development, poverty and hunger reduction, disaster management and environmental sustainability. Therefore the objective of this study was to evaluate community awareness and perception about animal welfare.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Description of Study Area

The study was conducted in the Oromia regional state in and around Bishoftu town, Adea district. Bishoftu town is located about 47 km Southeast of Addis Ababa, just on the escarpment of the Great Rift Valley and the geography of the area is marked by creator lakes. The area is located at 94° N latitude and 404° E longitude. The altitude is about 1880 meters above sea level. The average annual rainfall is 866 mm with a bimodal distribution. The mean annual minimum and maximum temperatures are 14°C and 26°C, respectively. The mean relative humidity is 61.3% [22]. Bishoftu has a human population of about 147, 000 [11]. There are about 160,697 cattle, 22,181 sheep, 37,510 goat, 5660 horse, 38,726 donkey, 268 mule and 191,380 poultry population in Bishoftu [9]. The livestock production system in the area is both intensive and extensive type [10].

### 2.2. Study Design

A cross sectional survey was undertaken from November to May to evaluate the general awareness and perception of the community on animal welfare in and around Bishoftu town. The survey questioner were first created in English, translated the local language (Afan Oromo) to ensure that the English and local language versions carried the same meanings and disseminated by face to face interview method. The interviews were carried out at farms, on streets, cafeteria and etc.

### 2.3. Study Population

The study was conducted on 400 randomly selected respondents from different villages of Bishoftu approximately at 5 Km radius from the center of the town.

### 2.4. Questionnaire Survey

Evaluation of community awareness, malpractices, feeding habit, health management and etc were done through designed questionnaires and interviews. A total of 400 participants of different age groups, educational status and occupation were contacted to collect information. The questions in the questionnaires included; sex (male and female), age (under 25 years, 25-40 years and above 40 years), educational status (non-formal educated, primary school secondary school higher education) occupation (farmers, students professional, self-employed, jobless and cart driver), level of knowledge on animal welfare (a lot, a little and nothing at all) belief of community on reaction of

animal to pain, stress, disturbance (yes/no), importance of animal welfare (yes/no), experience of keeping animal (yes/no), identification of diseased animal (yes/no), treating of sick animal (traditionally treating and advising veterinarians or taking to veterinary clinic), making of branding on animal (yes/no), amount of feeding and watering per day (yes/no), overworking of working animals and over loading of pack animals (yes-no), interest of respondents to know more about animal welfare (yes, may be and no), source of information (Television, Radio, Daily newspapers, The Internet, Discussions, Books and Never look for such information).

**2.5. Data Management and Analysis**

Data for the questionnaire survey was entered in to a Microsoft Excel spread sheets program and then transferred to SPSS version 20 for analysis. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, chi-square and Fischer’s exact test (p-value at 0.05) were computed in order to draw conclusion.

**3. Result**

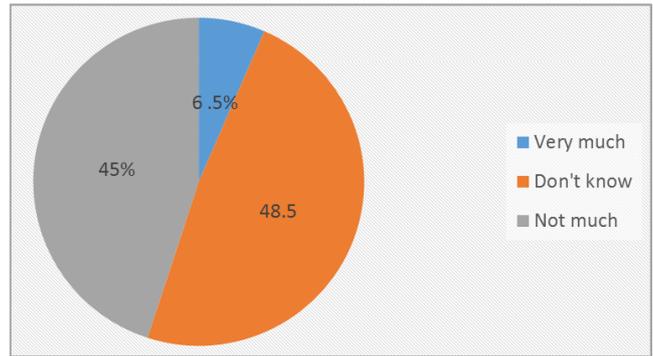
Out of 400 respondents 61% were male and 39% were female. Concerning their age; 47% were under 25 years old, 38% were ranged between (25-40) years old and 15% were above 40 years old. In terms of educational status; 17.5% of respondents had no formal education, 22% primary school education, 38.8 %secondary school and the remaining 21.8% have higher education. Regarding their occupation; 18.3% were farmers, 21.3%, were students, 15.0% were professionals, 22.3% self-employees, 41 were no job and, 13.0% were cart drivers respectively (Table 1).

*Table 1. Demographic Information of Respondents.*

demographic	Category	Total	Percentage
Sex	Male	244	61%
	Female	156	39%
Age	Under 25 years	188	47%
	25-40 years	152	38%
	Above 40 years	60	15%
Educational status	No formal education	70	17.5%
	Primary school	88	22%
	Secondary school	155	38.8%
	Higher education	87	21.8%
occupation	Farmer	73	18.3%
	Student	85	21.3%
	Professional	60	15%
	Self-employed	89	22.3%
	No job	41	10%
	Cart driver	52	13%

**3.1. Level of Knowledge Aboutthe Welfare ofAnimal**

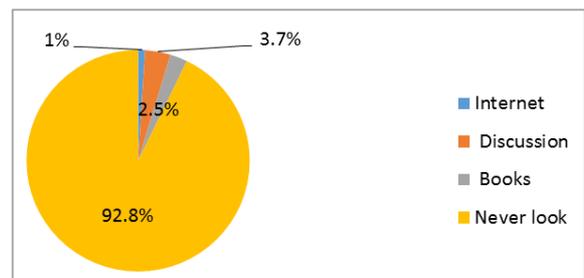
As indicated below in figure 1, about 51.5% respondents claimed to have some knowledge of animal welfare. However, only 6.5% of them were well informed about animal welfare, while 45% were less informed about welfare of animals. On the other hand, 48.5% of the respondents felt new to the welfare of animals.



*Figure 1. Awareness of community on animal welfare.*

**3.2. Source of Information AboutAnimal Welfare**

Regarding the source of various information about animal welfare it was determined that, 3.8%, 2.5% and 1% of the respondents obtained most of the information about animal welfare from peer discussion, books and internet respectively. Majority (92.8%) of participants had no any information regarding animal welfare.



*Figure 2. Source of Information about Animal Welfare.*

**3.3. Measures Taken to Sick Animal**

As shown in the following table 2, from the total of 400 respondents, 50.8% of them were treating their animal by themselves in a traditional way or medicate their animal with drug brought from drug store, while 49.2% of them were calling/advising veterinarians when their animal becomes sick.

*Table 2. Measures taken to sick animal.*

Demographic	Treating traditionally	Advising veterinarians
Educational status		
No formal education	45 (11.2%)	25 (6.2%)
Primary school	51 (12.8%)	37 (9.2%)
Secondarieschool	75 (18.8%)	80 (20%)
Higher education	32 (8%)	55 (13.8%)
Age		
Under 25 years	80 (20%)	108 (27%)
25-40 years	79 (19.8%)	73 (18.2%)
Above 40 years	44 (11%)	16 (4%)
Total	203 (50.8%)	197 (49.2%)

**3.4. Desire for Information to Know More AboutAnimal Welfare**

When the respondents were asked for their interest to know

about animal welfare, 61.75% of respondents were shown interest to know more animal welfare, while 31% of them were

not sure about their interest. Only 7.25% of respondents had not interested to know more about animal welfare.

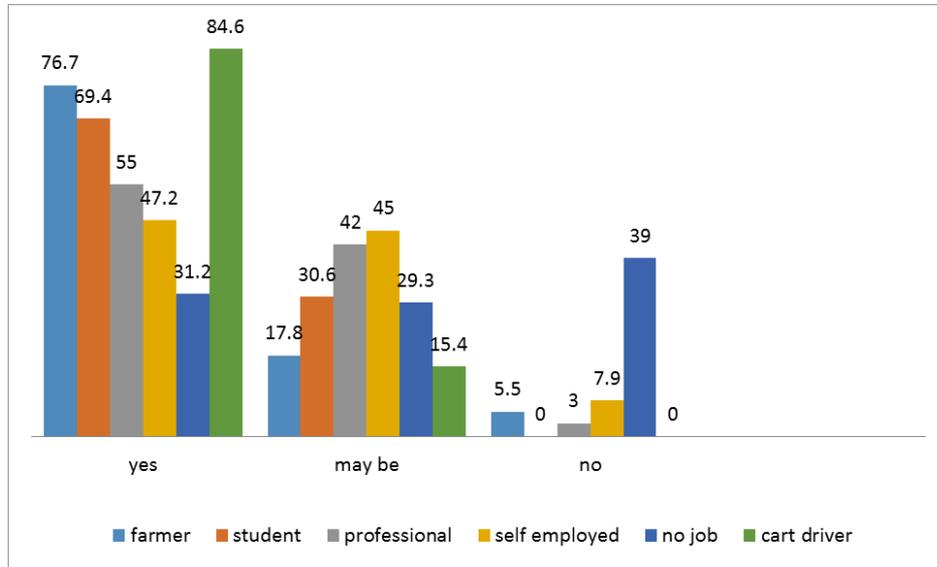


Figure 3. Desire for more information to know more about animal welfare.

As indicated in the above figure, Cart driver and farmer were more interested than the other followed by students and different professionals where more than half of participants were interested to know more about animal’s welfare. Participants with no jobs respondents were less desired to know more about animal welfare.

3.5. Perform Branding on Animal for Different Purposes

About 28.7% of respondents were performing different branding for different purposes and support the idea of branding. This includes; castration, identification, trimming of

hoof and much different action for the purpose of aesthetic value (Table 3).

3.6. Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate analysis was performed between general awareness of community on animal Welfare and independent variables to know whether there is an association or no (independent of each other). As state in table (Table 4) except sex (.704), all variables were statistically significant or associated with general awareness of community perception about animal welfare.

Table 3. Perform branding on animal for different purposes.

Variables	No	Yes
Sex		
Male	166 (40.2%)	83 (20.8%)
Female	124 (31%)	32 (8%)
Age		
Under 25 years	130 (32.5%)	58 (14.5%)
25-40 years	114 (28.5%)	38 (9.5%)
Above 40 years	41 (10.2%)	19 (4.8%)
Educational status		
No formal education	48 (12%)	22 (5.5%)
Primary school	56 (14%)	32 (8%)
Secondarieschool	110 (27.5%)	45 (11.2%)
Higher education	71 (17.8%)	16 (4%)
Total	285 (71.2%)	115 (28.7%)

Table 4. General awareness of community on animal welfare.

Variables	Nothing at all	A little	A lot	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	Df	p-value
Age							
15-24 years	108	68	12	188			
25-40 years	72	68	12	152	26.326	4	.000
Above 40 years	14	44	2	60			
Total	194	180	26	400			

Variables	Nothing at all	A little	A lot	Total	X <sup>2</sup>	Df	p-value
Occupation							
Farmers	24	45	4	73			
Students	58	27	0	85			
Gov.t employers	18	39	3	60	103.074	10	.000
Self employed	45	35	9	89			
Job less	40	1	0	41			
Cart driver	9	33	10	52			
Total	194 (48.5%)	180 (45%)	26 (6.5%)	400 (10%)			
Educationallevel							
Illiteracy	21	41	8	70			
Elementary	46	38	4	88	33.254	6	.000
High school	97	54	4	155			
Certified	30	47	10	87			
Total	194	180	26	400			
Experience							
Experienced	48	65	18	131	22.282	2	.000
Non Experienced	146	115	8	269			
Total	194 (48.5%)	180 (45.0%)	26 (6.5%)	400 (100.0%)			

## 4. Discussion

It is widely acknowledged that animal welfare science is a dynamic and multi-disciplinary field of endeavor and its application includes scientific and ethical obligations to the physical and mental wellbeing of animals, and it has also ethical implications in regards to human social and cultural needs [27]. The result of this study suggest that out of the interviewed respondents, only 6.5% interviewee were knowledgeable about animal welfare and 45% of them say that they possess little knowledge while the rest 48.5% lack of awareness about animal welfare at all. The survey conducted in Jimma town on cart horse owners indicated that, majority (62%) of participants lack awareness about animal welfare at all while only 38% had the awareness which they never practiced it appropriately [21] and as revealed by [28] 36.6%, a little more than one third, has ever heard of 'animal welfare while the majority of the public did not ever hear of this concept. In both cases level of awareness is higher than the present study because; since 2003 animal welfare is well developing, rule and regulation was strictly implemented in many in China and the survey conducted in Jimma was purposive study or interviewed a cart owner only that's why they were more aware. Peoples who have animal and who contact with animal are well informed and more desired to know more about animal welfare [25]. Poverty is major cause of poor animal welfare in developing country and compared to developed and middle income countries.

Concerning measures taken to sick animals, 50.8% of the population treats their animal by themselves in a traditional way or medicate their animal with drug brought from drug store, while (49,2%) of them said that, they prefer to calling/advising veterinarians when their animal become sick. Similar to this, [21] stated that, nearly half of the community used to take their sick animals to veterinary clinic, while one third of respondents prefer traditional treatment and almost quarter of interviewee equally looks for both veterinary clinic and traditional treatment. However, most of the time traditional way of treatment has a side effect

on animal health and animal welfare as a whole. In addition, as stated by 5, 23, this type of ostensibly treatment of animal is the most severe on as it is inadvertent cruelty to animals.

In higher educated people expressed a higher concern for animal welfare, age groups (inversely related to the concern for animal welfare; higher concern toward animal welfare among younger people). This is similar with [26] finding; a higher concern toward animal welfare among younger people and higher educated.

In line with searching information, 92.8% of respondents were not looking for such information and only 7.2% were uses three different source of information (internet, books and discussion with each other). Radio, television and daily newspaper were not used at all because; there is no access of those sources of information. However, these sources of information are preferable and reach farthest geographical location and also easy and comfortable for all classes of community because they published and transmitted by local or national language. The survey conducted by [14] in 25 European countries show that, television is the most preferable source of information followed by radio and daily newspaper. Almost all of respondents say that, there is no source of information regarding animal welfare as whole.

Majority (92.75%) of respondents were expressing their desire to know more about animal welfare. The result indicated that cart drivers were more interested followed by farmers and students while jobless were less interested. This shows that, peoples who have animal, or their daily activities related with animal are more interested to know more about animal welfare and seeking for information. This result is similar with 8, 19; those who contact with animal and provide feed to animal expresses higher concern, or show more interest in animal welfare.

About 28.8% of respondents were performing different branding action for different purpose including, castration, identification, aesthetic value and etc. in a traditional way or by themselves. Nonetheless, these types of mal practice are the most critically need understanding since they are cruelty to animal welfare.

The current study indicates that, except sex, all study

variables had significant association with general awareness and perception of community on animal Welfare. Accordingly, regarding age of participants, chi-square test analysis showed that there was significant association between participants and their general awareness about animal welfare i.e. As their age increases their knowledge regarding animal welfare also increases. In similar way, the study revealed that, there was a significant association between participant's level of education and general awareness about animal welfare. More educated people were more aware about animal welfare. Furthermore, there is association between participant's occupation and general awareness about animal welfare. Those who have contact or their job relate with animals were more aware than those who don't relate with animal. Also, there is an association, between experiences of participants and general awareness about animal welfare. Those more stay with animals were aware more compared to those not.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In Ethiopia domestic animals are traditionally raised in backyard and treated as an important component of family wealth. The study revealed that, very little respondents has ever heard of 'animal welfare'. In other words, the majority of the public did not ever hear of this concept. But it's undeniable that ideas of treating animals with love, which can be found in Oromo's traditional culture, are similar to the concept of animal welfare. Such ideas include kindness to humans and other creatures and loving human and every creature. But, animal welfare is not only a moral and ethical issue, also a legal one. No source of information, regulation and guidelines concerning animal welfare at national level except one course which is given by higher institution (university). Because of this, community is not getting sufficient information concerning the welfare conditions and protection of animals. Depending up on present study the following recommendations are forwarded:-

- 1) Animal Welfare issue should also need to go deep into the community, farmers and farm owner's level to have the basic concept.
- 2) Local administrates and governors need to customize rules and regulation to endorse animal welfare in areas like abattoir, marketing places, transportation and etc.
- 3) Awareness creation program as well as educating the society is the best way to make the community clear with concept of animal welfare.

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AVMA: American veterinary medical association  
 CSA: Central Statistical Agency  
 OIE: Organization for Animal Health  
 NMSA: National Metrology and Statistical Agency  
 WVA: World veterinary association

## Conflicts of Interest

There was no conflict of interest.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all participants for their positive react to my survey by supplying the information that has been used in compiling of this study.

## Appendix

### Questionnaires Survey

1. Full Name -----
2. Sex: A. Female B. male
3. Age: A. 18-24 years, B. 25-40 years, C. Above 40 years
4. Position/occupation:  
 A. Farmer B. Student C. Government employee  
 D. Self-employer E. Jobless F. Cart driver
5. What's your educational status?  
 A. Illiteracy C. high school  
 B. Elementary D. Certified in specific field of study
6. How much do you know about animal welfare?  
 A. Very much  
 B. Not much  
 C. No
7. Do you believe animals feel sense of pain, stress, disturbed and etc?  
 A. Yes B. No
8. Is it necessary to give attention to animal's welfare?  
 A. Yes B. No
9. Have you an experience of keeping animal? If yes, for how long time?  
 A. Yes B. No
10. Can you differentiate a diseased animal?  
 A. Yes B. No
11. If your animal is diseased or injured, what do you do?  
 A. Using traditional medicine or traditional way of treatment  
 B. Advising professional
12. Do you make any types of branding on your animal for aesthetic value or to reduce harmfulness and abnormality?  
 A. Yes B. No
13. Do you know how many times you have to feed and watering your animal per day?  
 A. Yes B. No

14. Do you know the maximum working time of pack animal and oxen per day and also their maximum loading capacity (pack animal)?  
A. Yes                      B. No
15. Are you interested to know more about animal's welfare?  
A. Yes,  
B. May be  
C. No
16. Do you want to know more about animal's welfare? if you were looking for information about animals welfare which of the following sources would you use?  
A. Television  
B. Radio  
C. Daily newspapers  
D. The Internet  
F. Discussions  
G. Books  
H. Never look for such information, not interested

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