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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF VILLAGIZATION PROGRAM IN AFAR NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

The issue of villagization program in pastoral area now has wide currency all over the world and in Ethiopia as well, especially on those attempts to reduce poverty and provide basic social services for pastoralists. This paper tried to explore the challenges and prospects of villagization program in Afar National Regional State. Out of nine *woredas*, six of them were selected purposely in this study. Purposive sampling was also utilized to select participants. The primary data were generated using in-depth interview, focus group discussion, ethnographic conversations, field observation and questionnaires. The study found out that the implementation level of the program varied across years and *woredas*. The total implementation plan of the program in the last three years was below expected. Provision of basic social services remained inadequate in some villagizationcenters. Lack of awareness creation, inadequate implementation capacity, lack of clean water and lack and/or delay of farmland distribution were the main challenges contributed to the under-implementation of the program. Thus, provision of basic social services, strengthening community participation and ensuring pastoralists' land ownership deed are highly required for the betterment of the villagization program.

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INTRODUCTION

Villagization has been defined as "the grouping of population into centralized planned settlements" (Steingraber, 1987). It is frequently confused with 'resettlement' as the two policies often occur at the same time and may overlap. As Alula (1992) argued that the basic notion of villagization is re-groupment into villages, which usually does not involve moving significant distances. The houses in the villages may be laid out in straight lines, in a grid pattern, but this is not always the case. However, resettlement involves large-scale movements of the population. A sub-form of resettlement is 'sedentarization', which aims to settle pastoralists and may not involve moving away from the area in which people were living (Champers, 1969). Because of rapid economic growth, population pressure and the degradation of natural resources, the resettlement of people to new locations has become a dominant development discourse in many parts of the world.

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Over the last few decades, resettlement in Ethiopia has been adopted as a strategy to alleviate various socio-economic problems (see Alula, 2009; Gebre, 2004; Getachew, 2004). For Alula (1992; 2009) the thinking behind resettlement schemes can be understood in terms of both social protection and agricultural policy goals. Facilitating the relocation of farming families from areas where land is constrained, agricultural productivity is low and agricultural risk is high, to areas where land is more abundant, agricultural productivity is potentially higher and agricultural risk is lower, seems like an effective strategy for reducing vulnerability and raising farm yields (Alula, 1992; Getachew, 2004; Feleke, 2004). While this sounds like a 'win-win' outcome in theory, in practice resettlement schemes in Africa have more often failed than succeeded, mainly because they are implemented too quickly with inadequate preparation (e.g. providing basic infrastructure and services at the relocation sites) (Steingraber, 1987; Alula, 1992; 2009; Feleke, 2004). In fact, villagization has the objective of grouping scattered farming communities into small villages of several hundred households each. The period of Ethiopia's political history of direct relevance to the policy of villagization begins when Haile Selassie was deposed in 1974, in a military coup (Steingraber, 1987). According to

Alula (2009) the official rationale for villagizationat the time was to promote rational land use; conserve resources; strengthen security; and provide access to clean water, health and education infrastructure. However, these new villages were often the source of forced labor for government projects - whether for road construction, agricultural production, or other infrastructure development.

Hence, resettlement was considered by the Derguregime as a long-term solution to the drought/famine problem (Steingraber, 1987; Alula, 1992). This involved the permanent relocation of an estimated 1.5 million people from the drought prone North to the relatively sparse and so-called virgin arable lands of the South and West (Alula, 2009; Getachew, 2004; Feleke, 2004). Even though the effort was welcomed at first, however, once the process had begun in earnest, there was widespread criticism of the program's poor planning and execution, which actually increased the number of famine deaths (Ibid.). In addition, over the last few decades, resettlement in Ethiopia has been adopted as a strategy to alleviate various socio-economic problems (Alula, 2009; Getachew, 2004). Regarding the current government-sponsored resettlement situation in Ethiopia, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) was initially reluctant to consider resettlement as a viable option for development (Alula, 2009). However, the occurrence of a severe drought in the early 2000s and the resultant food security crises has initiated the government to launch intra-regional resettlement (also known as access to improved land) program (Alula, 2009).

The villagization plan introduced in November 2010 apparently emphasizes on rural development while incentivizing easier access to education and health facilities. Thus, it is seen as a way to facilitate the delivery of services to people living in scattered homesteads had been harder to reach. The government plans to villagize 1.5 million people by 2013 in four regions: Gambella, Afar, Ethiopian Somali and Benishangule-Gumuz (Champers, 2012). According to Afar National Regional State (ANRS, 2013a) document, in the region, which is the focus of this study, alone, it planned to villagize 150,000 households until the end of the 1st GTP plan (2011-2015). Afar Region is known in having wider farmlands, though not properly studied and efficiently utilized yet. CSA (2007) indicates that the total arable land of the region comprises about 304,830 hectare out of which about 167,782 is assumed suitable to cereal crop production. However, the majority of people in the region are food insecure and living much far away from basic socio-economic and other infrastructures services (Getachew, 2004; ANRS, 2013a). In response to this, the villagazation program was launched to transform the livelihood of the pastoral community and assures food security. The program strategy is primarily choice agricultural development plan, and it includes access of the provision of basic socio-economic services (ANRS, 2013a). The program was designed based on three potential resources: surface water, potential ground water and mineral resources of the region. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Afar regional pastoral and rural development bureau separate reports on villagization program indicated that the plan implementation was not as expected, and meaning that has been inadequately met (MoA, 2012; ANRS, 2013b). There are, however, the reason behind the challenges and prospects of the regional scheme never studied and few independent and recent studies that have been done on issue related to pastoralist villagization program at a country level (Guyu, 2012). Researching the villagazation program planning and implementation level and processes including identification of potential village sites, community participation, preparations at host areas, and its outcomes would be indispensable to provide lesson as to what and how it could be done in the future in pastoral areas (Messay and Bekure, 2011). This study is, therefore, intended to investigate the challenges and prospects of villagization program in Afar region, Ethiopia.

Study Area

Afar National Regional State is one of the regional states in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia which is located in the Northeast part of the country. It is located between 390 34' and 420 28' East Longitude and 80 49' and 140 30' North Latitude (Ali, 2008). According to CSA (2007), the total population of Afar region estimated for the year 2012 about 1,449,000, consisting of 55.73% male and 44.27% female population. About 10% of the total population is estimated to be urban inhabitants while the remaining are rural inhabitants. The average population density stands at 14.9 persons per sq. km.The region boarders four national Regional States i.e. in the Northwest Tigray Region, in the West and Southwest; Amhara Region, in the South; Oromia Region and in Southwest; Somalia Region. The region also shares international borders with Djibouti and Eritrea to the East and Northeast, respectively (Ali, 2008). Annual temperature of the region ranges from 23^0C to 33^0C and the hottest months May, June and July with maximum temperature reaching more than 45^0C (Ali, 2008). Rainfall is bi-modal throughout the region with a mean annual rainfall below 300 mm. The region receives three rainy seasons. The main rain that is locally called *Karma* accounts for most of annual rainfall occurring from mid-June to mid-September. This is followed by rainy showers in mid-December locally is called *dada* and a short rainy season during March-April called *Sugum* (ANRS, 2010).

Afar region possess varying types of land cover that is not common in most parts of Ethiopia. Arable irrigated land is predominantly found along the banks of Awash River. Lowlands (*Kolla*), and pastoral rangelands (*berha*) are common in parts of the region. Major types of vegetation there are bushes, woodlands and shrubs (ANRS, 2010). The total area of the region estimated to be about 95,265.67 km2. As CSA (2007) indicates that the total arable land of the region comprises about 304,830 hectare, out of which about 167,782 ha is assumed to be suitable to cereal crop production. The region is endowed with plenty of natural resources including fertile arable land, huge amount of livestock, various water resources and different minerals. However, the region is one of the pastoral areas that have been threatened by drought, adverse impacts of development schemes, environmental crisis, conflicts and political instability (see Ali, 2008; Ayalew, 1997; Getachew, 2001; Gamaledin, 1992; 1993). This in turn forced the pastoralists moving for long time across the region in searching for grazing and drinking water for their livestock. In order to curb this situation, the current government insisted

on implementing villagization programs as its national development policy to improve pastoralists' livelihood (ANRS, 2013a). For centuries the Afar had used the Awash River valley as a source of grazing for their livestock. Except Ewa*woreda* (Zone 4), the rest selected five study *woredas* are located in nearby Awash River basin and they are boundary zone between pastoral area and agro-pastoral area where pastoralists engaged in cultivation (Getachew, 2004).

The study *woredas* are characterized by hot climate and as a result plant growth periods are short and medium which is to some extent inadequate to support crop agriculture without supplementary irrigation (ANRS, 2013a).

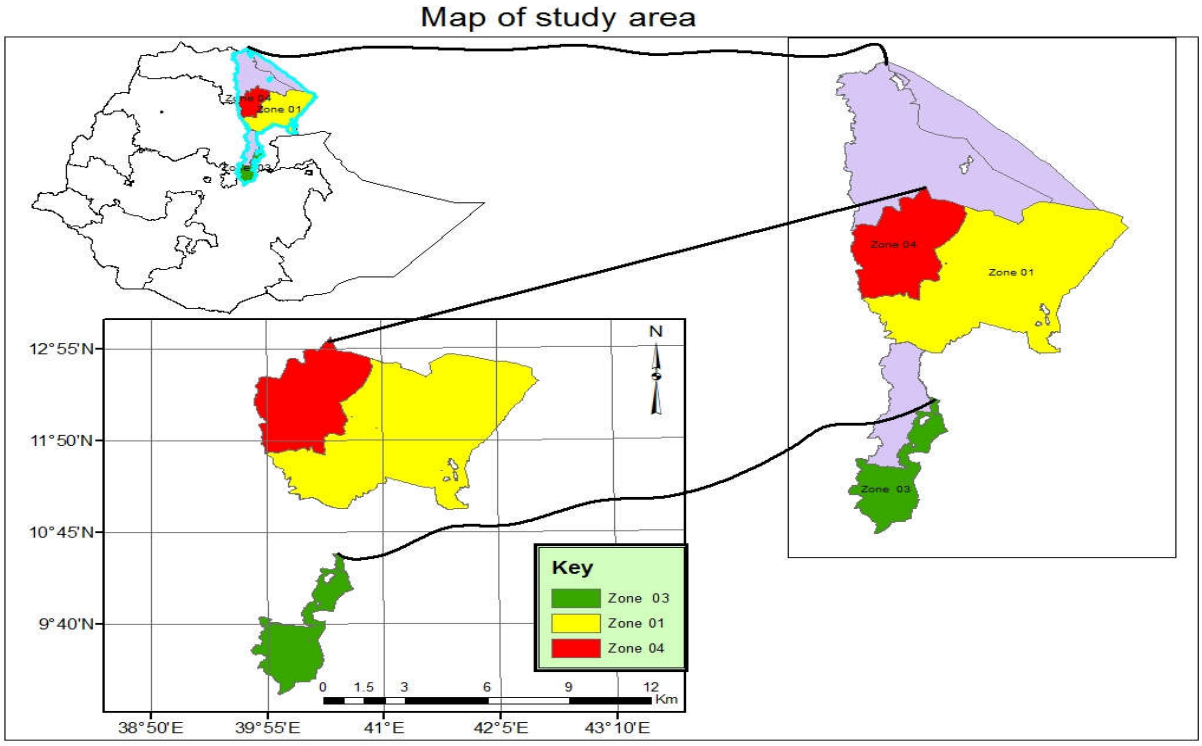

Figure 1. Map of the study area

Table 1. Program Implementation Plan and Achievements

Major planned Activities	2012/13			2013/14			Total	Total
	Planned	Achieved	%	Planned	Achieved	%	Achieved (1+2)	%
Settling villagers	15391	8005	52.01	10000	7432	74.32	15437	60.8
Establishing of new development centers	29	26	89.65	24	24	100	50	94.3
Building of new socio-economic institutions	194	103	53.1	44	15	34.1	118	49.6
Community discussions	15391	13974	90.79	10000	-	-	-	-
Training for implementers	6910	2459	35.59	3500	702	20.05	3161	30.36
Supply of small agricultural equipment	99908	62451	65.58	80975	8195	10.12	70646	39.05
Supply of crop seeds	2770	1970	71.1	2534	9284.1	366.4	11254.1	212.2
Provision of small & medium water pumps	131	00	00	131	699	533.6	699	266.8
Preparation of farmland (hec.)	10760	7523.6	69.92	9852	13839	140.5	21362.6	103.6
Agricultural out puts (quintals)	260991	182485	69.92	312527	481675	154.1	664159.9	115.8

Source: Computed from ANRS's Annual reports on the implementation of 2012/13-2013/14 Villagization plan; June, 2013b & July, 2014.

Table 2. Farmland preparation and distribution in 2012/13 in 8 'Woredas' of ANRS

Zone	Woreda	Beneficiary households in 2012/13 year		Farmland Distribution (hk)				
		Planned no. of hhs	Benefited hhs	Communally owned land	Prepared land	Distributed	Covered with seeds	Ave. Ha/hh Given
One	Afambo	1324	967	2302.8	00	00	1834.6	00
	Aysaita	3921	2170	6710	00	1043	3570	0.48
	Dubti	3750	713	00	1955.5	1955.5	1209	2.74
Three	Gewane	1525	1035	1132.5	328	961.8	108	0.93
	Awash F.	803	771	50	392	257	257	0.33
	Amibara	1350	1155	18	843	861	396	0.75
Four	Ewa	2160	56	00	00	34	30	0.61
Five	Gelealo	902	1,153	410	351	380	143	0.33
Total		15735	8020	10623.3	3869.5	5492.3	7547.6	0.68

Source: Computed from ANRS's Annual report on the implementation of 2013 Villagization plan; June, 2013b

METHODS

The study is an exploratory research on the challenges and prospects of the program and it employed mainly qualitative methods. When the program was officially launched, three zones and nine *woredas*were targeted (see Table 2). Of these, six study *woredas* where purposely selected namely; Aysaita, Dubti, Afambo, Gewane, Awash Fentale, and Ewa. Reasons for inclusion and exclusion of *woredas* include the time span the program was started, *woredas'* geographical representativeness of the region, socio-economic data obtained from the feasibility study and the regional villagization strategy document that shows the selected *woredas* were the first proposed implementation sites in 2010/11 (ANRS, 2011; 2013a)

A survey was used to validate the qualitative findings and to come up with additional numerical information on the structural basic livelihood status and socio-economic conditions of the villagers. Several field trips were carried out between 2012/13 and 2013/14 to study *woredas*. Convenience sampling technique was employed to select survey participants, and thus 100 survey questionnaires were administered on those purposely-selected villagization centers and 84 of them returned to the researchers. Frequent observations were made in order to see the changes and development stages of various socio-economic institutions. In-depth interview were held with villagers, officials at regional bureaus, program coordinators at Zone and *woreda* level, members of villagization steering committee, Kebele leaders, and youth and women associations. Focus-group discussions were managed with various groups of participants to generate additional data. During fieldworks, ethnographic conversations (informal discussions) were also held with various groups of community. The secondary data, on the other hand, were collected from both published and unpublished documents such as books, journals, proceedings, and relevant reports and policy documents from concerned regional government offices. The reliability and validity of secondary data of the government were firmly ensured prior to using it for this study. The collected quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as percentages, minimum, maximum and mean, and thus used to support the qualitative analysis. The qualitative data were organized into different themes based on the pre-coded characteristics and attributes and then analyzed qualitatively. Hence, some of the responses were quoted as they are.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Major Planned Activities and their Success in 2012/13-2013/14 Implementation Period

The regional Resettlement Program Strategy document shows that experts in consultation with local administrators and community representatives selected sites for villagization, and made brief assessments related to availability of farmland, agricultural potential and socio-economic accessibility of the sites (9). Settlers were promised a package of assistance-irrigable farmland, seed, simple farm tools, cooking utensils and food rations until their first harvest. They were also guaranteed sufficient access to essential public services- water, health, education and feeder road (9). The study, however, found out that 73.8% of respondents were dissatisfied with the service made available to them stating that they were not provided with what they had been promised prior to the start of the villagization endeavor.

As shown in Table 1, in the specified period settling the villagers were relatively attained above half of its plan 15,437 households (60.8%) whereas establishing of new development sites were successfully achieved (94.3%). Totally, in the last 2 years (2012/13- 2013/14), the program was planned to villagize 25,391 households and yet about 15,437 households (60.8%) were villagizedshowing encouraging achievement. Greatest achievement was documented in provision of small and medium water pumps (266.8%) and distribution of various crop seeds (221.2%) to the settlers. Although report on community discussion plan of the 2013/14 was absent from the above table as well as not specifically reported on the annual document, in 2012/13 good achievement was recorded which is 90.28%. Regarding community discussion, the study result, however, contradicts with the regional annual report. More than half, 53.6%, of respondents reported that no discussion was held while the remaining 46.4% of them explained that discussions were held at various stages even before they settled to new villages. Nonetheless, community participation at all stages of development would be important to achieve sustainable development. As Rahmena (1999 cited in Messay and Bekure, 2011) identified participation is no longer a threat to development; rather it has been accepted as an instrument for effective implementation of projects. On the other side, the focus group discussion and field observation indicated that the established institutions were not fully giving the expected services to the settlers.

Land Preparation and Distribution in Development Centers

Although the distribution of proposed 600 square meters of land for residence construction was already undergone in the majority of village centers, the farmland distribution varies between the study *woredas* and even in some villages it is totally not implemented. According to the above table, an average of 0.68 ha of farmland was given for a household. Thus, in 2012/13 year, 5,492.25 ha of land distributed for 8,020hhs. The size of farm lands allocated for a household villager was ranges between 0.33 to 2.74 hectares. Likewise, there were differences in per capita land distribution among the 4 Zones and 8 *woredas*. For instance, the highest average per capita land distribution was recorded in Dubti*woreda* (2.74ha) while the lowest (0.33ha) were recorded in Awash Fentale and Gelealo*woredas* each. In the study region, land deals become very sensitive particularly for those pastoralists who are affected by the impact of large-scale land investment policy directly or indirectly. Some studies (Alula, 1992; Ayalew, 1997; Getachew, 2001) show that within the past many years significant amount of pastoral land were allocated for large-scale industrial crops production such as sugarcane plantation and rice. According to (James, *et al*. 2014) for sugar development in Afar region, compensation of 2,500 Birr (US$ 140) per hectare had been provided, with 60 million Birr (US$

3.3 million) paid out to pastoralists. Likewise, for loss of access to resources and local relocationof the pastoralists in Dubti, Aysaita and Awash Fentale*woredas*, the government promised to provide new social services and farmland. Informants in Dubti*woreda* indicated that acceptance of the land distribution, the provision of farming inputs, access to water points and provision of social services enable them start settled life. Additionally, informants in Ewa and Dubti*woredas* recounted:

The farmland preparation and distribution was made in our villages and some of us are started agricultural activities, even if it was not enough to go ahead and produce more agricultural outputs. As an incentive each villager household per head of members received a monthly take-home pay of foodstuff, approximate of 20kg.

In contrary, interviews and group discussions held with villagers and *woreda* experts in Afambo and Aysaita *woreda* conveyed that farmland distribution was entirely absent. Informant in Afambo*woreda* states: *Of course we are provided with residence land and also able to build the house. What is now left is the farmland. It is not still distributed in our village.* Equally, the regional field visit report (ANRS, 2013c) on 28 development centers also identified that lack and/or delay of farmland preparation and distribution as one of the main indication of under-implementation of the program. According to the latest regional report (ANRS, 2014), however, in the last three-implementation periods (2011/12-2013/14) more than 31,971.8 hectare of pastoral land was prepared and converted into farmland.

Major Factors Hindering the Full Implementation of the Program

Awareness Creation and Community Participation

The Regional Resettlement Program Strategy document (ANRS, 2013a) states that a detail discussion was made with regional higher officials, community leaders and many other stakeholders before the implementation of the program. However, the gathered field data shows that discussion with local communities and other stakeholders have been overlooked in the program. Many informants argued that there was lessawareness creation program held, and even in some development center, it was totally absent. Seeing the case of Dubti*woreda* of Boyna, Debel and Undaburi village centers, for instance, participants were highly dissatisfied with the awareness creation endeavor made prior to villagizing pastoralists. Taking the argument further, even those officials who were assigned at development centers have seldom understood and captured the aim of the program, and thus had been unable to convince settlers and escort the overall implementation of the program. Similarly, the information generated from focus group discussion held in Dubti and Aysaita*woredas* states that the implementation of the program faced challenges from the settlers as they had no adequate information related to the intention and importance of villagization program. Likewise, development extension experts and pastoral and agricultural development officers of Aysaita and Dubti*woreda* also stated that:

There was less awareness creation discussion made with the community regarding to the aim and significance of the program, and thus pressure from higher officials led villagization to be executed promptly. As a result, the community accepted villagization program seldom.

However, in some study kebeles, such as Mego 1, Sunuta and Gelealado, voluntarism for villagization program was observed, and meaning that it got acceptance among settlers of these villages. Informants indicate that the presence of ground water and Awash River provide an opportunity to engage in agricultural activity including crop production, and thus secure their livelihood. This would justify the extent to which pastoralists are voracious on water resources.

Inadequate Implementation Performance

Field data and researchers' observation at various village centers revealed that the construction of residences, schools, feeder roads and veterinary clinics are on progress. However, establishment of water points, shops, electric power supply, provision of agricultural inputs and training centers are the left back activities. There is, therefore, a gap in planning and implementation of the social and economic institutionsat different development centers. The regional government appears to have succeeded less in providing the development centers with all the promised basic services. In a similar vein, (Getache, 2004) summarized the 1970s settlement of the Afar pastoralists of the Middle Awash valley as follows:

Some settlements were implemented in speed with little preparation based on poor planning and implementation, and insufficient resources and little participation of the settler in the management and decision- making process.

Lack of full Commitment by Planners and Implementers

At the start of the program, unsubstantiated assumption and prejudices attitudes of administrative bodies and program implementers at all levels had negatively affected the program implementation process. The regional report also indicated that lack of good governance and commitment on the part of the executive bodies and implementers at every level of the program were regarded as threatening issues (ANRS, 2014).

Lack of Clean Water

Clean water provision was not carefully managed in various villages. Though the program prioritize clean and sufficient water supply, it persistently encountered problems in identifying potential water points, completion of water projects construction and purification of surface water. For instance, by the end of 2013, the Ministry of Water and Energy has planned to construct 15 clean water projects in 3 *woredas*. However, only 13.33% of them were completed (ANRS, 2013b). This indicates that the implementation performance of water projects were very low, and delay of these projects impedes the successful implementation of villagization programs. Some informants and group discussant stated that absence of water for human and livestock in some villages resulted in returning of settlers to their previous homestead. For instance, in 2013, in Biedaforo village of Gelealo*woreda*, 50 hhs who were

already villagized have returned into their previous place of residence due to lack of clean water (ANRS, 2013b). Interview held with officer in Dubti*woreda* confirm that there is a case where villagers returned to their previous location due to lack of clean water and pasture. Researchers' field observation also confirmed that there is clean water supply problem, and even in those villages where the access is available they are characterized by poor hygiene and lack of water harvesting machineries.

Lack and/or Delay of Farmland Distribution

The study found out that farmland preparation and distributions for farming activity were lagged behind. Even, lack of preparation and/or delay of farmland distribution in some sites brought insecurity on the villagers. Communal land ownership system is identified as a major contributing factor for achieving less in farmland preparation and distribution endeavor. One government official stated that:

The regional government approved legislation on the "Proper utilization of the region's land," but it was not yet implemented. Thus, we are facing very serious challenge in preparing and distributing farmland to settlers in many villagization centers. The issue highly is controversial in society like us where land is communally owned.

Repeated Flooding

Some evidences suggested that recently the duration and intensity of floods have been increasing particularly in those low-lying areas and around settlements located near the Awash River (ANRS, 2010). It made settlers not to carry out agricultural activity particularly crop production effectively. Field observation in Afambo and Asaita*woredas*, for instance, shows that repeated occurrence of flooding of Awash River had created a great deal of uncertainty among settlers.

Major Consequences of the program

Impact of Villagization Program on the Local Environment

The potentially negative effect of resettlement/villagization on the local environment has been highlighted in a number of studies (Alula, 1992; 2009; Gebre, 2004; Getachew, 2001). As previously discussed, in villagization centers, the small plot of land distributed to the households were not enough for them to grow garden crop, raise small animals and perform other activities to supplement their income and satisfy consumption needs. This led pastoralists to look for other alternatives such as selling wood and wood products by exploiting the available trees. In addition, the program will have ecological problems in the long run if it is not carefully managed. For instance, the improper and repeated utilization of irrigated farmland removes the top soil, which is crucial in maintaining its fertility. An interview held with implementing officers in Dubti and Gewane*woredas* strengthened the above argument:

The repeated utilization of irrigation based farming over a period of time has brought possibility of salinization or increased soil acidity in the development centers. Since soil fertility is a major factor in improving agricultural productivity, there should be proper management of land to sustain its productivity.

Moreover, settlers cut forests for various purposes, particularly house construction. Thus, if this trend continues, it might accelerate loss of indigenous trees in the study areas.

Possible Opportunities for Successful Implementation of the Villagization Program

Improved Access to Basic Social and Economic Services

The region has been making effort of provision of basic social and economic services such as schools, human and animal health centers, water wells and house construction for villagers. In addition, the attempts made on assigning teachers, health workers, development agents and animal health experts there were also encouraging. Discussions made at various administrative levels unanimously indicated that the establishments of these institutions were started in an effort to improve villagers' life. For instance**,** provision of pastoral health extension services has been implemented as it planned to meet the Millennium Development Goals of the region related to health sector. Important steps have been also taken both by the regional and federal government to adequately staff schools and health centers. In general, the program facilitated an opportunity for improved access to socio-economic services.

Income Diversification

The study found out that emerging feature of off-farm income generating activities in some villages. Villagers diversify means of income by engaging mainly in petty trade, charcoal production, selling animal and crop products, and handicraft activities. This would capacitate villagers and thus ultimately help them to cope up with drought-induced shocks.

Introduction of Integrated Irrigation based Agricultural System

The prime objective of villagization program is to enable pastoralists to become self-sufficient in food and improve their livelihoods. Thus, introduction of modern agricultural practice is considered as pathway. In this regard, provision of agricultural inputs and introduction of irrigation based agricultural system has created an opportunity of increasing and diversifying households' income of some villagers. Field visits in Sunuta, Mego no. 1 and Boyna village centers indicate that villagers already started to harvest corn, onion, and tomato which in turn increased their income. This will hopefully enable them to achieve the expected food self-sufficiency in the long run.

Conclusion

The program is making it far reaching for the government to deliver basic services, including health centers, schools, water supplies, roads and other developments. However, the study indicates that the total implementation plan of the program in

the last three years (2011/12-2013/14) was 63,011 households. However, only 15,847 hhs (25.15%) were villagized showing very low achievement. Hence, it is far away from the number of planned to be achieved at the end of the first five years implementation phase i.e., 150,000 hhs. It means about 134,153 hhs are expected to be villagized in the remaining one and half years, which seems unachievable. Majority of the village centers were experiencing challenges in access to education, primary health care, clean water, credit service, feeder roads and electric power services. This is mainly due to the delay of construction projects, inadequately staffed education and health services, and the inaccessibility of the village centers.

Although the program implementation performance showed an increment across years, in general, various factors contributed for its low accomplishment. Inadequate awareness creation endeavor, poor implementation capacity, less commitment of officials, lack of clean water, delay of farmland distribution and repeated flooding were the main challenges that the program comes across.

The study found out encouraging prospects of villagization in some villages, particularly efforts made to improve well-being of villagers by accessing basic socio-economic services. Moreover, provision of agricultural inputs and introduction of irrigation has created an opportunity to increase and diversify income of households of some villagers, even if its improper and repetitive utilization along with deforestation has adversely affected the environment.

Recommendations

On the basis of the study findings, the following recommendations are forwarded to improve the performance of the program:

- To advance the provision of socio-economic institutions
- Strengthening villagers' access to markets, credit service, training center, feeder road and enhanced veterinary service are also crucial. In addition, fulfilling the old and new established schools, health centers and veterinary clinics with the necessary facilities and skilled personnel is a critical task.
- The villagers should be involved throughout the implementation phase of water supply projects. This would help to manage water sources on sustainable base.
- More importance for the agricultural practice and the development of the farming systems through the provision of farmland inputs is vital.
- Provision of off-farm opportunities will increase the household self-sufficiency in food. It would reduce the number of non-motivated pastoralist who took up farming just because they had no other options, thus paving the way for more efficient farming.
- In order to increase the participation level of villagers the communication approach has to be refined to the betterment of beneficiary engagement. Conducting continuous awareness creation programs will increase the motivation of the villagers towards the program.
- Strengthening and building the capacities of program implementers and managers at all level and deployment of the workforce to meet the standard of services is very important.
- The land distribution strategy should be given a great attention, as it is the major input to agricultural practice. Ensuring pastoralists' land ownership is very essential. More, the necessary attention should be given for the displaced pastoralists of the study *woredas*.
- Introducing environmental rehabilitation program in reconcilable with pastoralist's interests and benefits in mutually reinforcing ways are very important. P*rosopisjulifora* plant and the acidity of the soil should be treated early. Flooding problem need high attention, handled through, and support the construction of diversion canals and dikes.

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