

Paradox of Villarization, In Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, Western Ethiopia

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Abstract- The study aimed to assess and explore the paradox of villagization in Benishangul-Gumuz regional state, Ethiopia. The study employed mixed research method. The research employed descriptive research design on the paradox of the villagization program. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques of data analysis or binary logistic regression supported by SPSS version 21 were carried out. The government and non-government officials with the sufficient awareness of the program also took part in this study as key informants and discussants. The data was collected using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, observation and document review. Those who previously lacked or had a limited access to educational service can now go to school without walking any significant distance. The study showed that some promised social services such new schools, health centers and farming training centers were not provided. Villagization is susceptible to various problems in terms of implementation and also poses obstacles to the well-being of the relocated populations. It urges service providers to reconsider the issue of basic services and provide additional ones to the relocated people. The policies or programs of villagization should have clearly set standards and guidelines which must be followed during implementation so as to benefit the people to the fullest.

Keywords: Relocation, Paradox, nucleated settlement, villagization,

I. INTRODUCTION

Villagization is characterized by the relinquishment of the traditional scattered or semipermanent way of settlements predominantly used by pastoralists or shifting cultivators and the adoption of concentrated and permanent settlements among various sections of the society towards settled agriculture. Debates about how to improve the quality life of the peoples and on the nature of how development conceived is still important for Africa where myriads of developmental models failed [1].

Villagization is the collection of scattered settlement pattern of rural populations into a nucleated form of villages to sustainably supply rural communities with social and economic infrastructures so that they can improve agricultural production and productivity [2]. The most common official objective for the implementation of villagization programmes is the provision of, or improvement of, basic economic and social services, such as infrastructure, housing, health care, access to food and water, education, farming facilities and so on. The aim of the villagization is to transform the living condition of pastoral and semi-pastoral communities of these regions sustainably by improving their access to socio-economic services on the principles of voluntarism [2].

According to [3] the official rationale for villagization at 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. 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 [3].

As stated in the above paragraph, those challenges have not been assessed by the researchers particularly in Assosa zone to what extent they are affecting the settlers in the study area. Therefore this study, aims to explore the paradox of villagization in BGR so as to understand how well it has been going on, the awareness and attitude of villager towards it, its development indicators and finally its policy implications so as to suggest some possible remedies for the future.

II. RELATED WORKS

[4], investigated the history of villagization in Arsi during the derg regime with particular reference to the history of Wabe model villages. His study revealed that the villagers were not happy in the clustered model villages in spite of

the much effort and resources which were dedicated to the establishment of the villages.

State officials at the federal and local levels also claim that, prior to implementation, pastoral communities were informed about the nature, implementation processes and the expected benefits of the programme. The government was also expected to pay compensation to communities who were resettled because their pastoral communal land was appropriated for development projects [5].

A study conducted by [6] on the impact of voluntary villagization program on rural households' poverty revealed that the program played a significant role in reducing poverty and increasing household consumption expenditure.

As [7] found, clean water provision was not carefully managed in various villages in Afar region. 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.

According to [2] Study the failure to fulfill the promises by the government that would have been implemented ahead of relocation of the villagers was one of the challenges faced in many sites of Benishangul-Gumuz.

Currently the loss of male labor from this highly labor-intensive farming system of the area through displacement has created a complex set of problems to the women who are left behind and at the ecological level the impact of male out migration is related to the reduction in natural resource conservation and soil fertility maintenance efforts due to reduced labor inputs for such activities [8].

Additionally [9] found that the main positive aspect of villagization was the provision of various social services and increase in their accessibility. He noted that clean water service provision was adequate and that villagers were enjoying an unlimited access to safe drinking water. He also found that schools were built in villagization sites which were non-existent in former settlement sites and this was regarded as the good side of the program by the villagers.

In addition, some other studies [4, 6, 7, 8] focus on challenges and prospects, villagization in relation to land grabbing, history of villagization and impact of villagization on rural households' poverty and do not address villagization in relation to its contributions to the lives of villagers.

[9] In his study of the status of villagers in Nono district (Central Ethiopia), also found that villagers were sufficiently endowed with basic infrastructures and ensured their food security by attaining nationally set minimum dietary requirement, which they had never had in their origin areas.

In countries like Ethiopia that are heavily dependent on rain fed agriculture, assessment of the spatial and temporal

distribution of rainfall and temperature and observing their trends are vital input for sustainable agricultural production [10].

III. RESEARCH METHOD

In order to achieve the general and specific objectives of the study mixed research method was employed. Quantitative data was collected and analyzed first, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data, meaning that qualitative and quantitative data are not combined (mixed) in the data analysis; rather, integration takes place when the findings are interpreted .

Research design

The research employed exploratory research design on the challenges and implementation of the program and it employed mainly qualitative methods. A survey was used to validate the qualitative findings and to come up with additional numerical information on the structural basic socio-economic conditions of the villagers.

Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used. The primary data gathering instruments for the research comprised structured interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussion and observation . Secondary sources of data: written documents used or reviewed to enrich the study.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

To make the sample area manageable and representative, from the seven woredas in the zone only four woredas were included in the sample. Based on this, Assosa, Bambasi, Kurmuk and Sherkole woredas were selected purposively in line with severity of problem.

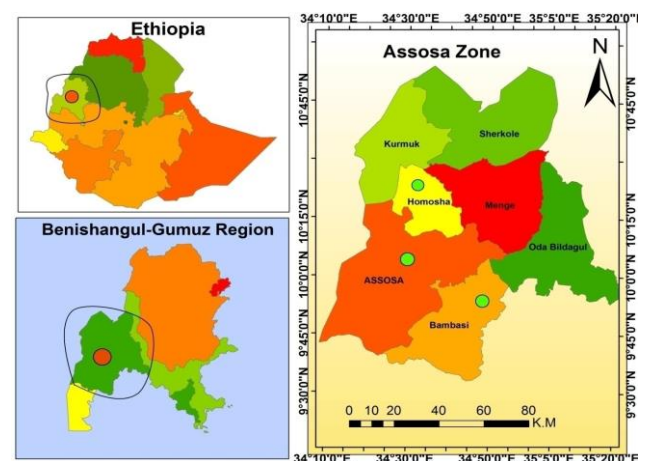


Figure.1 Administrative map of the study area

The sample size of the settler respondents for each site were determined by proportional sampling technique and in each site, settler respondents were selected by simple random sampling technique.

The sample frame from which sample respondents were selected was 4228 households. Based on the formula

suggested by [15], sample size of 225 sample households was determined. The formula and the calculation are given as follows:

$$S = X^2 NP (1-P) \div d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)$$

Where; S = required sample size.

X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05).

Methods of Data Analysis

As mixed methods design for data collection, mixed methods of data analysis was employed. The quantitative that will be collected through questionnaire survey and qualitative data that collected through FGDs, KIIs, and field observations was analyzed in a mixed fashion. The quantitative data will be first analyzed and presented and then triangulated with qualitative results.. Before analyzing the data, it was checked for non-response rate, and edited, organized, made ready for entry into SPSS and binary logistic regression was employed.

After data entry is performed, the quantitative data analysis will pass through different stages. Similarly, the data on socioeconomic infrastructure will be analyzed and presented qualitatively and quantitatively.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter has two parts; the first part deals with the characteristics of the respondents; and the second part present the analysis and interpretation of the main data. The objective of the study is exploring the practices and challenges of villagization in Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Assosa zone selected woredas.

Personal Characteristics of respondents

Gender of Respondents

Since the study's focus is on the practice and challenge of villagization, out of the total of 168 respondents 34 were women whereas the rest (n=134) were male respondents. Women respondents are included so as to compare and contrast the reliance resource endowment, access to support services and other factors which influence livelihood of rural households between the households which are run by de facto women heads of households and male headed households.

Age of Respondents

The average age of the household head in the study was 40.1 (SD=10.4). The age of the youngest respondent in the study was 18 years old whereas the oldest respondent was 74 years old. The average age for women respondents was found out to be 39.06 years (SD=9.6) whereas that of men was found to be 44.25 years (SD=12.6).

Educational Status

Out of the total respondents 23 per cent are literate (above first cycle) whereas 62 are found to be unable to read and write. Out of the male respondents 20 are literate of which 2 have attended college level school and the rest attended secondary school and below that. Out of the 41(24.5%) of the literate women in the sample only two of them completed elementary school the rest are dropouts from elementary school at various levels. No one of the women in the sample attended high school.

Religion

All the respondents are either Christians or Muslim. It was found out that 58% of the total respondents are Christians whereas 42 % are Muslim. Out of all women respondents 56% are Orthodox and the rest 44% are Protestant. Of the male respondents 60% are Christians whereas 40% are Muslim. However, it is to be noted that strong cultural elements and a set of taboos are strongly adhered to in the community as a whole.

Household Characteristics

Family Size

The average family size for the respondent households was found out to be 4.93 (SD=2.27), which is slightly higher than the regional average of 4.7 (CSA, 2007). The minimum family size in the sample respondents was found to be 1 whereas the maximum was 10 persons. The average family size for de facto women head households was 4.52 (SD=2.01), whereas the average family size for male-headed households was 6.55 (SD=2.26). The age dependency ration was found to be 1.04 which is higher than the regional figure of 0.95 (Regional Statistic and Population Office 2007).

Land Holding

The average landholding of the total respondents (n=168) is 1.56 ha. The average landholding of the certain households in one woreda is found to be lower than that of other households of the woreda. Due to shortage of farming land men are pressured to engage in other economic activities and leave their origin.

Household Labor Supply

In the study area farm labor is the most critical input in the production process because of the highly labor intensive agricultural production system. In the study area family labor, hired labor and labor sharing arrangements are the most important sources of labor for agricultural activity. Most of the respondent households in the survey have reported that they hire labor for different operation in the farming cycle.

Livelihood Strategies

Mixed subsistence farming where the crop and the animal sub-sectors are mutually interdependent is the standard kind of livelihood for all households interviewed. All households, however, mentioned that crop production is more important than livestock production to them in terms of immediate food supply and income to the household.

Livestock ownership is considered vital for access to manure and as an important means of survival in case of unexpected crises and shock to livelihood due to natural or artificial reasons through sale of the animals as described in previous section

Improvement in Access to Basic Social Services

In some villages, access to basic social services like education, health service, safe drinking water and mills improved not because new social services were provided, but because of the already available ones. In fact, the government promised the inhabitants of the villages to build new schools and health centers which happen rarely. As respondent said, mills and water pumps were installed

and started to provide service but never lasted long. However, improvement in accessing social services came because there were already schools, health centers, water pumps and mills which had already started giving services before villagization program was implemented.

As the informants said, social services already existed prior to villagization program but the problem was that people lived far away from them and did not have a good access to them. These services were accessible only to those who lived closer to them but difficult to access by those who lived in scattered settlements. Here the bar drawn below shows the variation in the response of participants in relation with availability of services.

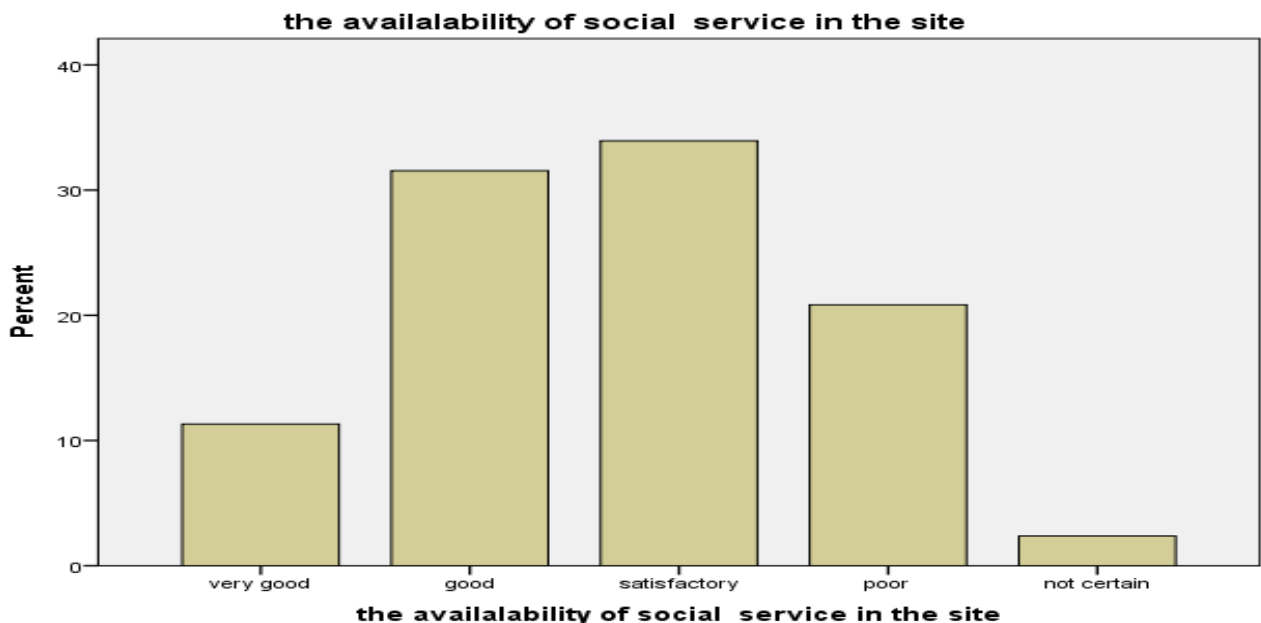


Figure.2

So, when the people who lived in scattered settlements were villagized in the villages, their access to these social services improved due to their proximity to them. The largest number of respondent 57(33.9%) or sampled households are satisfied by the service provided for them due to villagization program. Out of 168 respondents 19 (11.3%) said, the improvement in access to basic social service was very good and 53(31.5) said, the improvement in access to basic social service was good. Out of 168 respondents 35(20.8%) said, the improvement in access to basic social service was poor.

Educational Service

Coming to educational service, as the survey result shows, people who previously lacked better access to it began to access the service after their settlement in the villages. Now, education is no longer a problem like before as schools are close to people. Villagers are also very happy, especially about the fact that children do not have to wait

until the age of ten to start school like before. As per the observation, discussion with focus group discussants there are primary schools in almost all the villages with teachers employed by the government who regularly do their job.

As was said, children can now go to school easily whenever they are ready or at early ages without the problem of distance which characterized the previous life but still it is major problem in Agusha villagization site. In addition, one can easily find a child in a higher grade due to the fact that starting school early has become possible. Those who previously lacked or had a limited access to educational service can now go to school without walking any significant distance. However, the issues of quality and availability of resources (book, human power and other infrastructure for laboratory and library) did not take into account. Out of 168 respondent 87(51.8) were said, they got adequate education service.

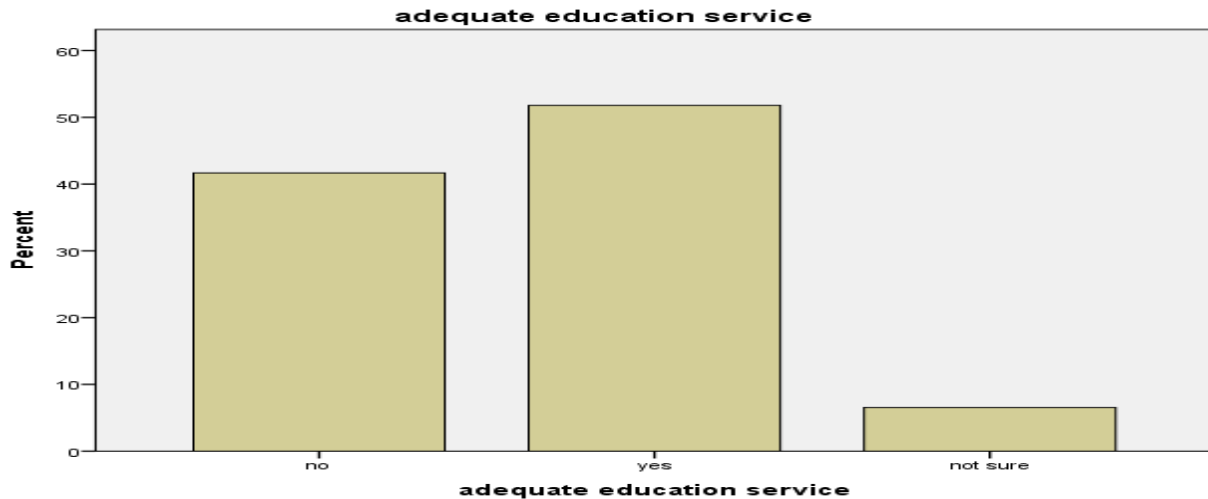


Figure.3

Survey data,2019

Mohammed expressed his view concerning the accessibility of education service as follows:

" I am so happy about villagization program basically because of the fact that children are now able to go to school. Going to school was something very hard for children in the past. But now, due to villagization program and the settlement of people in villages, schools became closer. For this reason, I am no longer worried because children can now access what was inaccessible to them in the past."

Health Service

As the above table indicate, out of surveyed 168 sample respondent household, 84(50%) stated the health service provided for them were not adequate as promised for them by government. Remaining 71(42.3) of respondent out 168 said the service that provided for them were adequate and satisfied by what happening in their own respective villagization site. Thirteen respondent household are not sure about the service whether it is improved or not.

As the survey result shows, the other most important thing that happened due to villagization program is the fact that access to health service has improved. Now, people are able to get medical treatment whenever sicknesses occur because there is a health center as well as health posts in the almost all villages which provide services to the people. If someone gets sick in the village, he/she can easily be taken to the health center/health post and get a treatment right away. No one dies anymore because of the distance of health service like before.

As Ali from wemba site said,

"The fact that health service is now closer to me in the village has brought a huge relief. I now have a better access to the service and can access it any time I feel the need. I believe everyone is happy about this as well."

Kedija from Abrihamo further explained this as follows:

".....The other most important thing that happened due to villagization program is the introduction of pit latrines. As a result of the teachings of health extension workers, we dug holes for toilets and hence, many people in the village started to use their own toilets.

I myself have my own toilet now and am happy that I am a user. Therefore, I thank the government for hiring health workers to teach us, create awareness and introduce the use of toilet''.

The following chart portrays the level how health service improved after implementation of the program in the site.

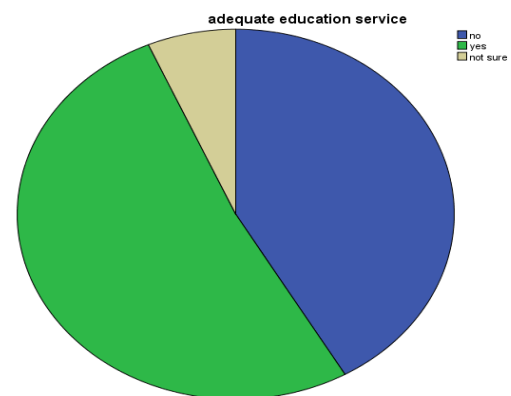


Figure.4

As the analyzed document revealed, there are model households in the villages that have received trainings and have now started to use toilets. In Dabuse village, a total of sixty six (70) households are currently users of toilets. In Wemba village, there are seventy six (76) households with their own toilets and forty one (41) in Urra village. Since the number of people using toilets in the villages has increased, using the surrounding area or open space for the purpose of toilet has been reduced as well.

Clean Water, Mills, Transportation and Mobile Networks**table 4.8 shows availability of adequate water supply for domestic use and livestock**

Have get adequate water supply?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	76	45.2	45.2	45.2
Yes	82	48.8	48.8	94.0
not sure	10	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	168	100.0	100.0	

As the above table indicate, out of surveyed 168 sample respondent household, 76(45.2%) stated the water supply provided for them were not adequate as promised for them by government. Remaining 82(48.8) of respondent out 168 said the service that provided for them were adequate and satisfied by what happening in their own respective villagization site. Ten respondent households are not sure about the service whether it is improved or not.

Senait from Abrihamo put it like this,

"What made villagization very good to me is the fact that mill houses are closer. I no longer grind corns with my hands like I did in the past since there is a mill house in the village where I can take my corn and have it ground whenever I want."

As Abdul Kharim said,

"There are vehicles coming to our village and provide transport service to the villagers. Though the road is not asphalted, the fact that there is a road along which a car can come to us is enough because it has at least reduced the problem of walking on foot."

Meseret from wemba village said,

"I am very happy because I can now use a mobile phone and call someone in or outside the village. Though the network is not always active and disappears sometimes, its availability in the village has helped me. Even if you do not have a mobile phone, you can borrow your neighbor's or ask him/her to call someone you need to talk to."

Improvement in Communication

As the survey result indicates, the improvement in communication that happened as a result of villagization is attributable to the fact that people are together and can easily hear from one another. This togetherness has enabled the inhabitants to interact well and get to know one another as members of the same village.

As one of informants in sherkole woreda said,

"Communication has greatly improved among the villagers because they can now access information they deserve to know. Anything can easily be communicated among themselves as well. In addition, they can hear and know about not only what happens in the villages, but also something that happens somewhere."

Communication between villagers and government has become easy and possible after the implementation of villagization program. As was said, one of the reasons behind the implementation of villagization program was to

promote effective communication between people and the government by narrowing the distance or closing the gap between the two. Now that people are living together in villages, it is easy for the villagers to communicate with the government.

Head of the woreda agricultural bureau of Kurmuk, said,

"The government now has a better relationship and communication with the villagers after villagization. Villagers can now communicate with the government better than before and vice versa. If villagers want something or anything happens to them, the woreda government can easily know and respond."

The Movement of People to the Villages

As the variety of document shows the state undertaking or enabling a development project are obliged to inform communities fully of its nature and consequences, to consult them adequately and effectively and to allow them to participate meaningfully in all a parts of the process, including the planning phase , that are relevant to their lives.

Moreover, to cross check the participation of local people in the process of program formulation and implementation, villagers were interviewed and the followings are the testimonies of villagers about level of participation.

One of our respondents from Bambasi said:

"... They arranged meeting and said to us, it is already approved by the government to resettle you in a new place where you can find everything. And, on that meeting they said; "if you deny going there, first no service would be provided for you in this village (previous)... second you will be affected by Morlee, so...it is up you and no one will look after you".

As Informants said, after the officials had finished the discussions with the local people and succeeded in convincing them, people from scattered settlements came and settled in the villages. In fact, the movement was voluntary. People moved to the villages without being forced by the authorities. Surprisingly, some people started the movement on their own account and settled in the villages without waiting for the scheduled and official date. They did this because they were motivated by the promises made by the government. They even took the initiative by cutting trees (timbers) for building houses. They were ready to work together with the government in

order to make the implementation of the program effective and successful.

As the survey result shows, With regard to the provision of shelter, it did not go as expected. The promised temporary shelters were never provided. Instead, after settling and staying for a certain period, people were made to make their shelters on their own. They were told to build their houses by themselves.

A Keshimando nor 2 village resident, kedir said,

"It brought an happiness to us that water pumps were installed and started to give services after our settlement in the village. Though it took the government some time to provide the services, when they came, we were happy. But, they never lasted long in that they stopped functioning after working for a certain period of time."

When the government brought the tools to the people in order to plough the land by themselves, villagers were a little bit unhappy because they knew that the government was the one responsible for clearing the land.

Major Challenges to Villagization:

Table 4.10 :shows challenges of villagization program

	Main challenges	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	misunderstanding of community	47	28.0	28.0	28.0
2	lack of awareness	47	28.0	28.0	56.0
3	commitment of implementers	27	16.1	16.1	72.0
4	pressure of host communities	20	11.9	11.9	83.9
5	access of service	27	16.1	16.1	100.0
	Total	168	100.0	100.0	

Survey data ,(2019)

Misunderstanding of community

According to the survey results 47 (28%) of the household reported that the main challenges implementing villagization program is misunderstanding of community toward it.

Villagization is susceptible to various challenges in terms of implementation and also poses challenges to the well-being of the relocated populations.

As [6] puts, the problems arising from villagisation can be divided into those derived from the way villagisation was implemented and those arising from the actual experience of living in the new villages.

According to the survey results indicated in the above table 47 (28%) of the household reported that there was less awareness creation program held, and even in some development centers, it was totally absent. In Bambasi and Assosa woreda, for instance, 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.

According to informants, with regard to the experiences of villagers, challenges usually include the physical location of the villages, especially their distance from the fields, in terms of walking to them and protecting them from vermin and theft, and lack of water and fuel wood.

Lack of Awareness

The Regional Resettlement Program Strategy document 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.

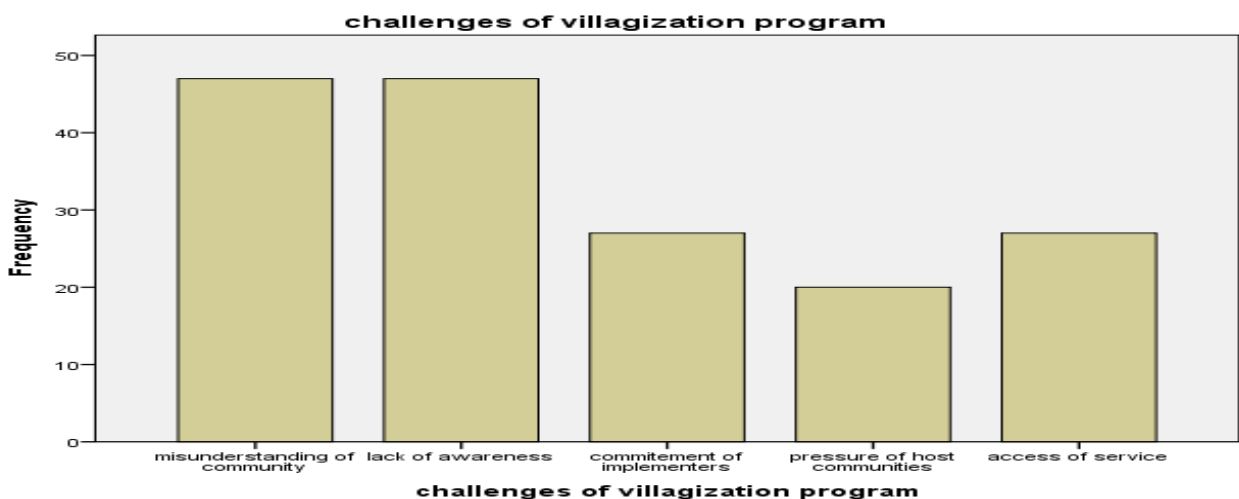


Figure.5

Seeing the case of sherkole and kurmuk village centers, for instance, participants were highly dissatisfied with the awareness creation endeavor made prior to villagizing household. 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.

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 institutions at different development centers. The regional government appears to have succeeded less in providing the development centers with all the promised basic services.

As the informants stated, 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 Clean Water in the village

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.

The study 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. 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.

V. CONCLUSION

The study done to investigate the paradox of villagization and looking into how the program was implemented. The study also identified the changes and improvements that resulted from the implementation of villagization program. This study showed that the villagers in the all villages had difficult lives and poor living conditions prior to villagization program.

The findings of this study showed villagization was implemented to make the lives of the people better by providing basic social services to them. The program was aimed at bringing scattered people together to benefit from government services while living together in villages. Before the relocation of people, various discussions were held with the local people in order to convince them of accepting the program. The local people were consulted and informed of things they needed to know. Moreover, various social services were promised to them although not all the promised services materialized. After the discussion and consultation, people moved to the villages without being forced to do so and settled there. Villagization program has brought positive changes in lives of the villagers in terms of accessing social services. After the implementation of the program and settlement of people in the villages, access to education, health, transport, mill and clean water services improved as compared to the previous time due to the proximity of people to them.

Now, it is possible for children to start school at school age because distance is no longer a problem. No one has to walk a long distance to the health center, mill house and to fetch water because these services are available at a closer distance. Women have particularly benefitted from the availability of these services due to their proximity to them as they no longer have to fetch water from far away, grind corns with their hands or walk a long distance to the mill house. In addition, mobile networks have become accessible and people became beneficiaries of the service. As this study showed, villagization has improved communication and interaction among the villagers due to their togetherness. People have got to know one another better than before and now identify themselves as members of the same community. If anyone is in trouble and needs help, others can easily hear about it and come to help. There is a sense of harmony and unity among the villagers as a result of villagization program. The government can also reach the people whenever it wants them because they are together in villages. People can now work together and solve their problems. Due to their sense of belonging together and the presence of village government, security improved in the villages.

This study indicated the role that villagization program played in making social services accessible and improving the lives of the villagers after their settlement in the villages. It also showed that some promised social services such as new schools, health centers and farming training centers were not provided. As the study shows, the improvement in accessing social services happened due to the settlement of people in villages and their proximity to the already available services which existed before villagization.

RECOMMENDATION

- Policy makers **should** make policies which will best respond to the needs of the resettled people, and should use valuable information which will help in making a policy that can bring sustainable changes.
- Decision makers **should** design a policy involving participatory population movement and set clear standards for a successful and effective implementation of villagization program.
- Policies or programs of villagization **should** have clearly set standards and guidelines which must be followed during implementation so as to benefit the people to the fullest.
- Policy makers as well as implementers **should** reconsider villagization program and see it from the point of view of the target population.
- The government **should** provide all essential services first before relocating the people, instead of promising things that will not be provided
- The movement of people to the villages **should** take place only after everything that is basic and indispensable has been made available and ready. This has to be a principle in villagization policy that must never be compromised.
- Villagization program **should not** be implemented unless the basic principles inherent in it are respected.
- Discussions **should** be held with the local people in order to convince them of accepting the program before the relocation of people,
- The government **should** brought the tools to the people in order to plough the land by themselves,

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