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Contested Notions and Practices of Development and Resettlement in Ethiopia: Evidence from Resettlement Sites in Gambella Regional State

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ABSTRACT

Since 2010, the Ethiopian government launched large scale development plans as part of the Five Year Growth and Transformational Plan. Within this context, the government embarked on resettling pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in the peripheral regions of the country under the broader "vision" of improving the livelihood of the people. The resettlement program was criticized and interpreted differently by actors with competing perspectives and interests for its lack of consent (participation) of the people concerned and for its multidimensional socio-economic and environment consequences. This paper focuses on contested notions and practices of development and resettlement in Ethiopia with particular reference to the implementation of resettlement programs in Gambella. To this end, the study employed triangulation method where multiple sources (Secondary sources and primary sources from government officials, non-government actors, investors and local people) and multiple instruments (interview, personal observation, and focus group discussion) were triangulated. As a method of data analysis, Cernea's Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model has been used for analyzing the current and potential risks of the program. The findings of the study revealed that the process of the program implementation was based on pseudo-participation-where the process of implementing the program took the form of informing the people; and pseudo-voluntarism principle-where the local community were deceived by unfulfilled promises of government. Finally, based on the data-based model analysis, it has been found out that the resettlement program has resulted in complex sets of consequences that demand policy response from all concerned bodies.

Key words: *Competing Interests, Development, Resettlement, Villagization*

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Introduction

Development is a concept which is contested both theoretically and politically, and is inherently both complex and ambiguous (Thomas, 2004). Even though, [a] common theme within most definitions is that 'development' encompasses the notion 'good change' in a variety of aspects of the human condition and "development" is all about good change; questions arise about what is good, what sort of change matters and whether 'bad change' is also viewed as a form of development (Kanbur, 2006; Chamber, 2004). Consequently, many things in the world in general and the conditions of millions of people in the so called developing countries in particular make us to wonders us if "this is development " (Chambers, 2004; Shanmugaratnam, 2001)

This is due to the fact that development has mixed consequences. On one hand, there is accumulation of wealth and enhancement of freedoms and well-beings, of the people .On the other hand there is impoverishment, marginalization, reinforcement of oppressive power structures, violations of human rights, the spread of destructive internal war –which in many instances has contributed to dispossession and estimated forced migration of 250 million people worldwide in the name "Development" over the past 25 years (Shanmugaratnam, 2001; Kate and Jennifer, 2007). Consequently, in Africa in general and specifically in Ethiopia, governmentally designed and implemented projects, policies and programs are becoming the center of discourse for different development actors, and concerned bodies like government, international institutions,, politicians, scholars, interest groups, local communities, and civil society organizations.

In the five year Growth and Transformational Plan (2010-2015), "villagization" (a program for collectivization of scattered population in pastoral and semi pastoral areas) was identified

as target program, especially in pastoralist areas. In terms of regional share about 500,000 people in Somali, 500,000 people in Afar, 225,000 in Benishangul-Gumuz and 225,000 in Gambella will move into resettlement locations in the respective regions and the program is under its implementation in Gambella region since 2010 (Davison, 2011). In the process of implementing the program, the present Ethiopian government marked the third phase of resettlement in Ethiopian history. Thus, the debate over the purpose, process and impact of the program has dominated the national and international media. The government's justification for the program is for provision of social services by collecting the people together and, various government progress reports indicate that the implementation process was smooth and successful. However, different actors like, international research institutions, human right organizations, civil society organizations and political activists argued that the program has an objective away from providing social services like making the land free for large scale commercial farming and getting people together for political objective. Therefore, the study tried to negotiate the extremists' view by providing scientific analysis of empirical data gathered through different instruments.

Methodology of the study

In Gambella Regional State, out of twelve woredas (Godere, Mengeshi, Gog , Abobo , Gambella, Dima, Jor, Itang, Jikawo, Wantwa , Lare , Akobo) with in which Villagization program is implemented, as a sample seven woredas were selected for the study. These woredas were Gambella, Abobo, Gok, Lare, Etang, Makwe, Kikwo, Matwar. These seven of them were selected purposively because of their highest (more than 70 %) population share and the sites were the center of program's implementation. Primary data was gathered through observation check list by visiting the resettlement sites and social services provided

by the government; semi-structured in-depth interview was intensively used to gather data from local community leaders, resettled people, Administrators (woreda, zonal, regional and federal level administrators), Ministry of Federal Affairs officials, Ministry of Agriculture experts, Foreign and local investors, and focus group discussions were organized with villagers in the seven woredas selected for triangulating data about the process of implementation, the facilities in the villages, and the impacts of the program. While secondary data sources like books from library, international legislations and guidelines, FDRE constitution, journal articles, magazines, organizational and institutional research results, like Human Right Watch Reports, Oakland Institutes Reports, UN Reports, AU guidelines and reports, government progress reports and plans were properly utilized.

Villagization and Resettlement Program in Gambella Regional State

Villagization and Resettlement Program was one of the programs designed by the government to be implemented in Gambella Regional State in the years of 2011-2014 with the objective of resettling 45000 households (GTP -I, 2010-2015). From the government point of view the program has been intended solely for making the people the beneficiary of basic infrastructural facilities, shifting their lifestyle, and the government argued that its implications resulted in the improvement of the life of the people. On the other hand, the real purpose and motive of the program, the process and its resultant outcomes were differently interpreted by different actors with both positive and negative implications. Despite the differing views and perspectives up on the objectives and results of the program, the program has been implemented and the people were resettled in to formed villages. Therefore, this part of the paper commits itself to analyze the contested notions of development and resettlement focusing on the purpose, process and impact of villagization

and resettlement program, and its implications to the underway development progress based on the empirical data gathered through different instruments.

The Objectives /Purpose/ of the Program

A political and professional activist of Gambella People, based his living in UK, Mr. Nyikaw Ochalla (on international conference held in India), argued:

Hundreds of thousands of small-scale farmers and pastoralists are being denied access to arable farmland, grazing and water points, and hunting grounds. Beside, government is moving ahead with its plans for so-called "progress," which relies on tactics of widespread human rights abuses including harassment, rapes, arbitrary detention and imprisonment without trial, displacement, increased food insecurity, destitution, and destruction of the environment (Ochalla, 2013).

In addition, the Human Right Watch, in its report, and commentary letter to Ethiopian government, UNDP Country Representative, Karaturi and other concerned bodies, described that the resettlement program being implemented was unconstitutional, involuntarily, and it has involved different human right abuses. And, the social services promised by the government are yet not provided and the service objective has not been achieved. Moreover, the report boldly described that the government is making the land free to be grabbed by investors (HRW, 2012).

For the warning and commentator letter written by HRW (2012) to Ethiopian government with the subject of "Villagization and Rights Abuses in Ethiopia's Gambella Region", Ethiopian Government (ministry of federal affairs) described the main purpose of the program as it was designed solely to improve the livelihood of the people within the framework of national growth and development plan. The targets are to provide

efficient and effective economic and social services like safe drinking water, optimum health care, education, improved agronomy practices, market access and etc (Human Right Watch, 2012).

Similarly, by the interview made with Woreda administrators, Ministry of Federal Affairs; Gambella office representative, and Gambella Villagization Program Officer, the officials confirmed the idea indicated on the letter written by the government to Human Right Watch. Whereas, villagers argued that they are not yet clear with the purpose of the program, and confused of the program's purpose due to different reasons. Firstly, the promises of the government about full service provisions and other compensations are yet not provided. Thus, what government intended to achieve was not successful enough. Secondly, during the mobilization and implementation phase activists and some government officials protested and informed villagers that their land was to be taken by investors; but the land is yet not taken by investors. Hence, as neither of the purposes presented in both sides were realized, people could not really understand why the program has been put in place. Furthermore, the administrators were asked about the future fate of the land from which the villagers fled to the villages. And, they stated that either it will be used by the owner or will be given for investors for commercial farming.

Therefore, based on the above data and observations made by the researcher, the study puts the program as it was with short term objective which was explicitly stated as infrastructural service provision and long term objective which was implicitly projected for making land free for commercial farming. And, the triangulated data from government and non – government respondents confirmed the existence of means-end relationship in between the programs (Service provision and villagization as a means for achieving political and developmental

objective), but failed due to the reactions of the people and other actors. It has been observed that the land from which villagers fled to the village formed became an idle land-neither used by villagers nor used by investors and government. The government and investors are in fear of the people to invest on it. But, it is possible to put that, in the long run, the more the resellers will fled to the formed village, the more the land will be free and call investors for large commercial farming. Hence as administrators clearly stated, in the long run, the long run objective (using land for commercial farming) will be achieved, but, presently neither the explicitly nor the implicitly stated are achieved.

Villagization and Resettlement Program in Gambella Regional State

According to Gambella Villagization Program Officer, the process followed in program formulation and implementation took the following ways; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development designed villagization program for collecting scattered pastoralist and semi-pastoralist people in Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz, South Omo, Afar and other regional states. In case of Gambella, *in the first phase*, the ministry's assessment result and the way forward policy was presented for regional and federal level higher officials. The presented alternatives were welcomed by regional and federal officials, then, *in the second phase* they decided on how to move forward by giving special responsibilities: for regional government to be led by vice regional governor, to be handled by villagization program officer under the umbrella of regional agricultural office and, to be supported by Ministry of Federal Affairs. Then, the regional government started to initiate the policy by preparing stages of discussion with woreda and zonal administrators. In parallel to the regional government, the Ministry of Federal Affairs also provided its supportive functions of facilitation, coordination, initiation, and expertise consultation and supervision roles. Subsequently, the facilitation, initiation and mobilization of the community for

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the program has been carried out in collaboration with woreda administrators, zonal administrators, regional government, villagization program office in collaboration with Agriculture office.

While, different private and non-governmental organizations- had participated specially in supporting the provisions of services. Thus, as the regional governors were taken as mere mission accomplishes and the people were taken as mere beneficiaries than legitimate claimants. Hence, in contrary to the national and international provisions to stakeholders' engagement, the concerned bodies followed top-down approach in crafting program. Besides, though, article 43 (2) of Ethiopian constitution, IDMC (2010), and Nederveen Pieterse (2001) cited in Fasika (2013), stated that any kind of development effort should be conducted within an inclusive and participatory framework- it is found that the process has been based on the principle of "informing villagers to go" than giving the chance to participate in the process. Thus, the level (step) of participation exercised in the process of crafting and implementing villagization and resettlement is known as passive Participation or nominal participation where villagers had participated by being told what is going to happen or has already happened, which is described as 'tokenism' or as 'manipulated' participation or as 'pseudo' participation by Hart, (1992), Bordenave (1994) and by White *et al.*, (1994), respectively.

Voluntary and Involuntary Nature of the Program Implementation

Different activists, medias and social networks have been presenting the involuntarily nature of program's implementation. For example, for a letter written by HRW and comments given by different media and activists, Ethiopian government underlined that the reports and comments are more of allegation, and described that villagization program and other development interventions were implemented in

accordance with FDRE constitution. Besides, the government also stated that it was fully conducted on voluntary basis and with the full consent and participation of the beneficiaries (HRW, 2012).

In addition, the sample villagers depicted except peace keeping militias (deposed only to maintain peace from which majority of them are local people with gun) nobody has forcibly enforced them to come to the new village, no military forces were deposed, no beating, no any kind of rape, or any other kind of torture that they experienced due to their reluctance to accept the policy. Even, they added that some of their friends and families have returned back to their original place and also, if they need to return back nobody would ask them. But all interviewees stated that they were fully deceived by government officials' unfulfilled promises. Because, government officials used to create abstract or ideal village where –there would be no food shortage, where everything would be full with free cost, where tractors would be used to plough. Moreover, community leaders had actively participated in the mobilization process, and they were used by the government as an instrument to make people to believe and accept the program.

Thus, it is impossible to say that the process has been involuntary because villagers came in to the new villages by their interest not by force. And, it is incredible also to say that the process was voluntarily, because the process of program implementation has been supported and undertaken with fabricated information and unrealistic promises by government officials. Hence, it is likely to conclude that the government has done neither direct human right attack as it has been described by activists (private and local and international NGOs), nor voluntary based practice as it has been described by the government. Rather, it is deceitful practice exercised by government officials, and could be described as induced or

deceived or persuaded or provoked resettlement. Hence, how the government officials will be asked legally for this wrongful practice will be the other research areas/gap which the study shows for concerned bodies.

The Pros and Cons of the Program in Gambella Regional State

As it has been discussed in the first section, the explicit purpose of the program was, to make the pastoralist and semi-pastoralist people to be the beneficiary of the infrastructural and public services. Therefore, in assessing the realization of the promises made by the government, the following results were found through the study. Firstly, regarding the availability of water service, the FGD and interview results revealed that the water service provided by the government is sufficient. Compared with their previous experiences, right now they could have get a better access to water service both in terms of quality and quantity. Therefore, even though, it is difficult to say that the service provided is "Fully sufficient" the study found the progress as a remarkable and astonishing move. Besides, administrators of the sample woredas stated that they are still working over the project of addressing pure water for all.

Secondly, vis-à-vis education service for the villages created, villagers confirmed the existence of schools in a way their children could access it. But, they also revealed that, as the program was implemented with no sufficient time for service construction and preparation, some of the schools were constructed with poor raw materials. Also, the raw materials for in class room teaching are not as sufficient as even for minimum requirements.

Though the schools are with very poor quality of services and facilities, Villagers described the existence of the school as the good side of the program. Researcher also observed the scenarios and conducted FDGs with villagers, and found that, despite poor facilities in the

schools, it is possible to conclude that the access of schools in the study area is a first-rate compared with the other pastoral communities and their past experience.

Thirdly, regarding health service, there are many constructed health centers with no service, centers being used for other purposes, while some others are filled materials and used as stores. The researcher visited all health centers in the selected villages, while visitation he has never seen any health center providing service; even no health service was open. And, also, the villagers confirmed the existence of health center buildings without any service, without any equipments and professionals. They further elaborated that except during polio campaign and ambulance provision, the health services in the region are not functioning. Therefore, it is possible to boldly conclude that the health centers nature in the region especially in the selected samples can be classified under one of the three natures.

The Impact of Villagization and Resettlement Program

In any means a policy formulated and implemented within one community results in a given change- either it helps the people to flourish or it results in the destitution of the people. Accordingly, the villagization program implemented in Gambella region has resulted in a given result; however, the result has been described by different actors differently. To this end, this study has employed Michael Carnea's Model in assessing the impact of the program.

The Interlinked Potential Risks of Resettlement in Gambella Regional State

According to Scudder (1973), several rural resettlement studies have documented high failure rates; demonstrating resettlement is a distinctive and complex type of development intervention. There are three victims of inadequately designed and purely planned rural resettlement schemes: the resettlers, the host

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population, and the physical environment. The success and failure of resettlement schemes highly depend on how settlers can best adopt to their new environment and to what degree they become self-sufficient. But, scientifically studied facts about resettlement reveal that, in many countries of the world, the state sponsored resettlement schemes lacks sound policy, and legal frameworks to fully protect the rights of the resettlers and host population (Mathur, 1996).

Thus, the study utilized two models recognized and accepted by World Bank as standard to deal with resettlement issues. These models were Cernea's Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model which puts the eight identified interlinked potential risks intrinsic to displacement model and the Socio- Economic Rights of villagers in the new resettlement Villages. Thus, the following discussions are made based on the interview conducted with all concerned government officials, deep Focus Group Discussions and interviews undertaken with villagers, and observation made by the researcher.

A. **Landlessness:** According to Carnea (2000) expropriation of land removes the main foundation upon which people's production system, commercial activities, and livelihoods are built. In addition to the Carnea's view of landlessness (the resettled people must be given enough land for farming, grassing, housing,) Art 40(5) of Ethiopian constitution states that pastoralists and semi-pastoralists have constitutional rights to have a free land for grazing and cultivating. Accordingly, Villagization Program Officer, Woreda Administrators and report prepared by Gambella Regional office, have shown that the Promised Land (3-4 hectare) has been allotted to all villagers. Contrary to this, except in Abobo Woreda, villagers in all woredas' revealed that they were given only with the land for constructing their homes. While the land (3-

4 hectare) promised to be given as a compensation for the lost grassing and cultivation land is still not given for them. Due to this some of the villagers have changed their means of income from farming to wood selling, charcoal selling , selling *atturbub* (local alcohol) and others have joined Investors' company as laborers. Therefore, it is possible to boldly conclude that landlessness is the most visible problem for villagers. This happened due to the unfulfilled promises of the government, and the improper selection of sites for resettlement.

B. **Joblessness:** According to Carnea (2000), unless and otherwise it is managed very well, joblessness is one of the negative outcome of any resettlement program. In the same token , villagers interviewed depicted that, in their previous place no body sits without work, even when there is no work to be done they would to go to forest hunting, to make home equipments, for fishing, for keeping their cattle's and etc. Whereas, now after they came in to the new village, as the land provided as compensation is not sufficient for farming, grassing and using it for other purpose; they revealed that they are suffering from joblessness.

Exceptionally, the response of villagers from Abobo woreda is different from all villagers and the researcher has also, observed visible difference in between other villages and villages in AboboWoreda. Though villagers in other villages were observed by the researcher sitting without work, playing, taking local cigarette, local alcohol; villagers in Abobo woreda like in Tegni village were observed being busy as busy as bees. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that except in Abobo woreda, villagers in all woredas observed are suffering from joblessness due to: the absence of sufficient land, farness of the villages from the forest

and river, and also the hardness and unproductive nature of the land provided.

- C. **Food Insecurity:** The research also tried to address the impact and correlation of villagization program with food insecurity. To this end, the researcher used simple food insecurity measurements like their yearly production, daily consumption and year to year consumption. For this, villagers were asked, whether they do have sufficient production, whether there is any kind of change in their consumption pattern?. And, whether their yearly production is sufficient for their yearly consumption or not. Hence, except from Abobo woreda , all respondents from sample woredas, depicted, *Firstly*, due to the failure of the government to provide the promised land. *Secondly* the hardness of the land in newly created village and, *thirdly* due to the absence optional food due to the distance in between the resettlement sites and the forest and rive. The production of villagers is lesser compared with their past production level. These and other factors resulted in the existence of extreme production differences- which has directly resulted in change of consumption pattern (decreasing consumption pattern).

Therefore, it is possible to say that the villagization program implemented in the region resulted in the reduction of production and productivity of the people. This also confirms the prediction made by OI about *food insecurity* due to villagization program (OI, 2011) and the conclusion of Human Right Watch that food insecurity has happened in the region (HRW, 2012:23). But food insecurity condition in the region also, excludes Abobo Woreda. Because, out of the seven sample woredas selected for the study this woreda was the only successful woreda in implementing the program and managing the resultant outcomes. Even, this woreda has been the

only and the most widely used woreda by government medias (newspaper, television, Radio) to claim and justify that villagization program implemented in the region is successful and resulted in the improvement of the life people.

- D. **Homelessness:** According to Carneas' analysis homelessness is another resultant outcome of resettlement. In addition to Corneas model of impoverishment, the UN Committee on the ICESCR has openly defined the components of the right to housing under General Comment No. 4. Accordingly the Committee stated that a house should not be constructed as just as a roof over one's head, but it has to meet a number of conditions and facilities like (UNHABITAT and OHCHR, cited in Fasika (2013). And, the committee listed: security of tenure, availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, affordability, habitability, location wise and the cultural adequacy requirements as the standards to be considered as housing facilities.

As the Gambella regional state is dominated by pastoralists and agro- pastoralists; it is hardly possible to use and measure the housing condition of the people by international housing standard. But it is possible to see the difference in their housing condition before and after resettlement. In the process of housing construction the Woreda Administrators revealed that they supported villagers by providing them with wood, huts and other materials. Even though, the support of the government is confirmed by the people, villagers stated that their previous home was better than the present one. Because, the previous one was well built with hard materials, and they used to have more than one houses to live in. But presently, they do have mostly one home to live in which is formed of very with poor quality materials.

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This happened due to very limited time for construction and, the insufficiency of the materials provided.

Hence, Out of the criterias listed above by the committee, the right to education, the right to health and the right to work are discussed in the above. Thus, housing issues are seen from the areas of its security of tenure, availability of service, habitability, affordability, availability to weaker section, location, and cultural adequacy are taken as the point of discussion.

In relation to the security of tenure; from the very beginning one of the government's ways of deceiving people was giving certificate of land for local people and registering their own part. But, villagers revealed that land certification is given in a very limited area and they are still open for such unexpected program oriented resettlement. Hence, there is no security of tenure for villagers, and, also the availability of service is problematic as it has been discussed in the above section. But, as no payment has been made for both materials used, for the land used for construction, the housing system was affordable by villagers.

However the houses constructed meet the cultural adequacy as far as their style and nature is concerned , the interview result and, observation made by the researcher revealed that the present housing system doesn't not fit habitability (it has to provide adequate space, as well as protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain and wind) criteria due to reasons like the space given for house construction is less than the previous one, the garden is 2-3 times less than the previous one, since the time given for house construction was very short, the quality is very poor, the materials used were not selective and strong, the capacity of the

houses to protect the rainy, cold and wind is very less.

E. Marginalization: According to Carneas' analysis marginalization occur when families lose economic power, if many individuals cannot use their earlier-acquired skills at the new location; human capital is lost or rendered inactive or obsolete. He added that improperly managed resettlement may results in the marginalization of the people. Consequently, except in Abobo woreda, the FGD result in almost all villages revealed that the result is characterized by, very limited land to farm, Very hard and unproductive land provided, Absence of alternative means of income, Change from farming to charcoal and wood selling, being employed under different investment projects as laborers, higher Joblessness, Psychologically stress by remembering the previous life condition, Less production etc.

Therefore, if there is limited production and limited means of income, it is possible to say that there is less economic power. If there is less economic power, and their previous resource is destructed, it is possible to deduce that their dominating economic activity is affected by the program. Thus, if there is no job to be done, the probability of being under *marginalization* would be very broad. But, this result also, excludes Abobo woreda. Because the villagers revealed that, their economic power is increasing, and there is good production and productivity so that they have a lot of alternative means of income compared with others.

F. Social Disintegration: In pursuit to see whether any social organizations were destructed by the program, villagers revealed that they have lost many social organizations and social relationships. Though, they now re-formed other social organizations and social integration systems

with the new villagers, the communal social relationships and systems developed for a long period of time is being dismantled, and resulted in the social, cultural and spiritual crisis of the people -which has more of incalculable costs/consequences.

- G. **Loss of Access to Common Property:** In Gambella regional state, the resource available is more of communal and it belongs to all. Due to this, forest, water, land is defined as the matter of survival by Gambella people. The villagers revealed that they left these all at their previous place, and the absence of care for these resources resulted in the significant of deterioration of the income and livelihood levels. As it is already discussed specially in the food insecurity part, this program has resulted in loss of common property.

Therefore, except in Abobo woreda (Tengi, Cubo. Oman kebeles) in all other selected sample woredas; landlessness, homelessness, Joblessness, marginalization, and food insecurity are the main problems identified by the assessments. Whereas the loss of common property, social disintegration problems are the common problems seen in all study areas including Abobo woreda. Hence, it is possible to conclude that the policy argued to be the way for the improvement of the life of the people has resulted in the impoverishment of the people with multiple consequences.

Conclusion

It is difficult to give clear picture whether the development rhetoric of the government has been translated into practice or not. This is because, first and foremost, development is by itself a contested notion and it depends on the views and interests of different actors. Secondly, the empirical data from the field shows contradictory results. In some cases the

resettlement program put in practice resulted in the impoverished local communities, whereas, in some case it resulted in the improvement of the life of the people and has a promising prospects in areas such as education, health and water service.

Another point of conclusion is the objectives, process and nature of the resettlement program. In this regard, the program was implemented by the government with explicit and explicit objective to be achieved in the short and long run respectively. Though the explicitly stated government argument focuses on the service provision, there are evident cases that the resettlement programs are also the part of the government's intention to promote development through leasing land for domestic and foreign investors and having a complete control over the region in the long run. Moreover, the process of program formulation and implementation contradicts the national and international standards available for policy formulation and implementations. The nature of program design and implementation was mainly took the form of top-down approach with pseudo-participation or nominal form of community participation that ultimately lead to limited involvement of local communities in the process. As a result, the interest, views and knowledge of local communities were not taken into consideration. Besides, the process of program implementation was neither voluntary resettlement nor involuntary resettlement; rather it was deceived resettlement or provoked resettlement where the people were deceived by the unfulfilled promises of government officials.

Lastly the program implementation and resultant outcomes of the program was another point of discussion. The program mainly caused the shortage of land. This condition resulted in two consequences. Firstly, it resulted in a shift in the means of income from farming to Charcoal selling, wood selling, and being hired daily laborers in the investors' project. Secondly, it

has resulted in unemployment and non-productivity of the man power. On the other hand, a shift in the means of income caused deforestation and marginalization of the people, while unemployment and non-productivity caused poverty, hunger and humiliation. These poverty, hunger and humiliation lead to the inequality, powerlessness, un-empowerment, unemployment, and the prevailing marginalization. Finally, the study revealed that, the inequality and powerlessness happened in the region lead to the questionability of the development progress going on in the region, and the nature of deforestation and marginalization retrospectively lead to the questionability of sustainable development.

Conflict of Interest

I hereby declare that Contested Notions and Practices of Development and Resettlement in Ethiopia: Evidence from Resettlement Sites in Gambella Regional State is my original work and that all the sources that I used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. The author is with full responsible that could be raised as conflict of interest of ownership, ethical and financial issues.

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