

RESETTLEMENT AS A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR PASTORALIST COMMUNITIES IN ETHIOPIA

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***Abstract:** Resettlement programme has become an integral part of the national economic and social development programme in Ethiopia. Villagization has been considered as one of the key and quickest ways to achieve food security in a short and medium-terms and socio-economic development in the long run and the Ethiopian government considers villagization as a final strategy to transform the life of pastoralists. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which villagization programme in Afar Regional State has helped in transforming the socio-economic life of pastoralist communities. The study used explanatory research designs. Data for this study were collected through qualitative methods like informant interviews, observation, focus group discussions and document analysis. Ninety-six participants were interviewed and eight focus group discussions were conducted. The qualitative dataset was thematically analyzed through deductive identification of themes. The central argument of this study is that villagization programme in Afar Regional State didn't not achieved its intended purpose, improving the living conditions of pastoralist communities due to failure of the government to fulfill the necessary inputs and services, pastoralists' and regional leaders' negative attitude towards the programme and absence of proper organizational structure of the unit responsible to follow up and coordinate the implementation of villagization programme. The researcher recommended that the government has to fulfill the necessary inputs and infrastructures; sufficient awareness has to be created among the community to get their consent and to make the programme meet its purpose.*

***KeyWords:** Afar Region, development, Ethiopia, pastoralists, villagization programme*

Introduction

Ethiopian regimes have been implementing villagization programme as a development project. Inter-regional resettling of people were carried out during the Imperial (1930-1974) and the military (1974-1991) regimes. The Government of EPRDF that came to power after the overthrow of the military regime restructured the country along ethnic lines which made inter-regional settlement programme difficult. Thus, intra-regional settlement has been conducted since 2003 particularly in developing regional states largely inhabited by pastoralist communities. The government of Ethiopia gave emphasis to the settlement of pastoralists because it is believed that food insecurity and poverty are as pervasive and deep in pastoral communities across the country. It is with this assumption that villagization programme has been carried out in Afar region since 2012. The paper analyzes the contribution of villagization programme in ensuring food security and improving the living conditions of Afar pastoralist communities. The paper begins with a brief account of villagization programme across regimes. This was followed by an analysis the implementation and challenges of villagization programme in Afar Regional State and its impacts on the socio-economic development of Afar Regional State.

Literature review

Implementation of villagization programme in Ethiopia

Villagization Programme has been implemented as a development project by Ethiopian regimes. The programme was practiced during the Imperial regime (1930- 1974). For instance, Clark (1986) mentioned that some 20,000 families were settled mainly from the drought afflicted and over populated north to the south before the military seizure of power. Nevertheless, the villagization programmes carried out during the imperial period were not successful due to inadequate planning of programmes, inappropriate settler selection, inadequate budgetary support, and inexperienced staff (Dessalegn, 2003).

Villagization programme was also carried out during the military regime (1974-1991). Following the 1984 devastating famine, the military government embarked on villagization programme, to change the highlands' historic patterns of settlement from scattered hamlets located near water and fields to concentrated dwellings clustered along the main communication lines (Marcus, 1994).

At the core of any resettlement programme is the need to undertake a more rigorous analysis of environmental, economic and social factors as well as alternative and promising land use potentials (Shumete, 2013). The resettlement programme implemented by the military government lacked this important element which as a result failed to achieve its intended purposes. That was why the massive resettlement undertaken by the military government was condemned by many authors due to its involuntary nature and its devastating effects on the settlers. In this regard, the HRW (1994) report revealed out that the resettlement involved massive human rights abuses, poor preparation, lack of resources, and almost certainly led to further impoverishment of Ethiopia's peasants. Similarly, Gizachew (2014) contend that the programme lacked standards of human rights and it played its own part in worsening the famine situation. Although the military regime's state-sponsored resettlement programme failed to achieve its intended purpose due to poor preparation and execution which ultimately lead to the suffering of settlers. However, the EPRDF government, (hereafter Government of Ethiopia) did not abandon the villagization programme rather it is considered as a major instrument for ensuring food security and improving the living conditions of settlers. This was because resource degradation and decline of production capacity in many densely populated areas of the country threatened the food security of many people (Kassa, 2004).

In early 2000s, population relocation schemes were resuscitated and reintegrated into Ethiopia's food security and rural development strategies (Fana, 2014). However, unlike the experiences the past, the institutionalization of ethnic federalism and restructuring of the country's administrative regions along ethnic lines severely limited inter-regional resettlement (Kassa, 2004). Therefore, government policies envisaged intra-regional villagization programme as an important instrument of ensuring food security which at the same time would help to avoid friction and mistrust among various ethnic groups because people are made to settle within their own regions where they will live together with people with the same ethnic, language and cultural backgrounds (MOIPAD, 2001). The official statements of the Government of Ethiopia underscored that villagization programmes will have positive contribution to rural development if relocation of people is conducted based on a well-conceived plan and with government assistance (MoFED, 2003). In this regard, the country's development policy, Agricultural Development Led

Industrialization (ADLI) and the National Food Security Strategy documents revealed that resettlement program which could change under-utilized land into economic use will have a positive effect on food security, improvement of the welfare of the relocated communities as well as to the economic growth of the country (MoFED, 2002).

Villagization is considered as one of the key and quickest ways to achieve food security in a short- and medium-terms (Megerssa, 2012). The Government of Ethiopia initially began a pilot resettlement scheme in 2003 that has resulted in intra-regional resettlement of about 45,000 households (180,000 people) in three regions: Amhara, Oromiya, and Tigray (MoFED, 2003). Six months after the pilot phase, the government planned to implement a more intensive and prolonged intra-regional resettlement scheme targeting to resettle about 440,000 households (2.2 million people) within three years (2003-2005) and between 2003 and 2004 over 149,000 households were resettled (MoFED, 2006). Despite of the different arrangements at all levels; the Government of Ethiopia was not able to materialize its ambitious plan of settling that huge number of people in 2009 let alone at the end of 2005. The performance of the implementation of the villagization programme was found to be low due to the delay in the preparatory works on the newly identified resettlement sites (MoFED, 2003; Kassa, 2004).

Rational for the implementation of villagization programme in pastoral areas of Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the human population of pastoral areas is estimated to be between 12-15% of the country (MoFED, 2002). Food insecurity and poverty are as pervasive and deep in pastoral communities across the country because the rainfall in these areas is too scanty and too intermittent to support rain-fed crop production (MoFED, 2003). According to the Ethiopian Resettlement Policy Framework document, development issues faced by pastoralists include weak governance structures with limited public participation in local decision making processes; poor access to social services, especially to quality education and health care; dependence on extensive livestock production with poorly developed support infrastructure and services; environmental degradation, particularly of rangelands; vulnerability to recurring droughts exacerbated by climate change; increasing competition for use of land for intermittent grazing and lack of access to water supply schemes; and conflicts over natural resources (HRW, 1994). The move towards sedentarization of pastoralists, which is highly propagated by the Pastoral Policy of Ethiopia, is an area of debate among researchers. Different researches conducted on pastoralism suggested that mobile pastoralism has high adaptive capacity to arid and semi-arid areas characterized by harsh climatic conditions. They argue that mobile life is guaranteed for flexible use of temporally and spatially variable resources (Getachew, 2001).

On the other hand, the various policies, strategies and programmes of the Government of Ethiopia such as the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP) and Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) advocate for the sedentarization of pastoralists over the long term (PFE, 2009). For instance, the Ethiopia's 2006, PASDEP made clear that special effort will be made to provide pastoral areas with basic services and to facilitate the slow transition towards settlement on voluntary basis (MoFED, 2006). The Ethiopian government's policy approaches pastoralism as a transitory livelihood strategy rather than a permanent way of

life that pastoralists have to stay with (Firehiwot and Yonas, 2015). Resettlement programmes have become part and parcel of the national economic and social development programme. The various policy, strategy and intervention documents of the Government of Ethiopia underscored that development approaches/interventions in pastoral areas should give priority to the resettlement of pastoralists to ensure food security and sustainable development (MoFED, 2003). The above policy directions, strategies and interventions attest that the Ethiopian government considers settlement as a final strategy to transform the life of pastoralists (Yohannes and Mahmud, 2015). The governments' advocacy for crop production as a best strategy in all climatic Zones, including in the pastoralist areas, seems a deviation from its policy context and the constitutional right of pastoralists not to be displaced from their land.

Poverty in pastoralist areas is generally worse than elsewhere in the country in terms of conventional human development indicators (MoFED, 2006) and villagization programmes have become part and parcel of the national economic and social development programme (MoFED, 2002). It was in the light of this plan that the Government of Ethiopia launched its villagization program in the four Developing Regional States (Gambella, Afar, Somali and Benishangul) in the middle of 2010 (Guru, 2012). The state rhetoric behind the villagization among pastoralist/agro-pastoralist communities in these regional states is to provide basic socio-economic infrastructures such as health services, schooling, roads, houses, fertile farmland and water which aimed at ensuring food security, bringing socio-economic and cultural transformation for the relocated people (HRW, 2012). This agrarian biased programme might indicate the influence of the federal government in policy making. Policy making in federal Ethiopia is still top down approach and regional states administered by affiliated parties are recipients of policies designed by the federal government. Moreover, EPRDF's program underscored that the front is the organization of agriculturalists while declaring pastoralism as incompatible to the ideology of Revolutionary Democracy (FDRE, 2001).

Research Methodology

Research design

The conceptual framework for doing research is known as the research design. It serves as the guide for data gathering, measurement, and analysis. The study design specifies what information is needed, how it will be obtained and analyzed, and how it will address the research topic (Kothari, 2004). Explanatory research design is employed in this study because this research design is used to examine the reasons "why" something occurs (Lee, 2008). Since the main assumption of this study is that villagization programme implemented in Afar Regional State is not achieved its intended purpose, explanatory research design was appropriate to explain why this is the case

Sources of data

Afar Regional State is divided into five administrative zones which constitute 32 Woredas (Districts). Based on the economic livelihood of the peoples of the Afar region, the Woredas in the regional state can be classified into three categories: predominantly pastoralist, agro-pastoralists, Woredas having better infrastructure, investment projects and modern mechanized agriculture. Teru, Assaita and Amibara Woredas were selected to

reflect the above respective Woreda characteristics respectively. Accordingly, data for this study were collected from the Federal institutions, Semera (regional capital) and the three selected Woredas.

Sampling design and sample size

The problem to be examined was brought up with knowledge participants using a purposeful and snowballing sampling strategy. As suggested by Marshall and Rossman (2016), this technique helped the researcher in removing worthless answers and gaining comprehensive and practical viewpoints. Thus, participants were purposefully selected from federal institutions, Afar Regional State Bureaus, Zone and Woreda Offices, Regional State Council Members, members of Afar Peoples Democratic Party, local officials, clan leaders, community members, young people and women.

Data collection instruments

Data for this study was gathered through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, personal observation and document analysis. Generally, Ninety Six participants were interviewed from federal institutions, regional, Zonal and Woreda levels administration, community and experts in the regional state Coordination Office for Basin Development and Villagization Programme. The researcher also conducted 8 focus group discussions with a group of 6- 8 purposefully selected participants in each focus group discussions both in the regional capital and in the three selected Woredas.

Results and Discussions

Implementation of villagization programme in Afar regional state

The present rural development policies and strategies of Ethiopia advocate sedentarization as the last option to bring development in pastoral areas of the country. For instance, the FDRE Rural Development Policy and Strategies document considered settlement of pastoralists as a viable economic and social development option to bring about meaningful and lasting impacts on the lives of herders. Hence it underscored that the ultimate goal is to settle the entire pastoralist population (MoFED, 2003). In line with the federal policies and strategies regional state governments' policies and strategies also stressed on the importance of villagization programme. In this regard, the Afar National Regional State Rural Land Use and Administration Policy and Strategies (ANRS-RLUAPS) considered settlement of pastoralists as an important option to transform the life of the Afar:

The Afar pastoralists usually roam from place to place in search of grazing and water for their cattle and other animals. This system of livelihood has helped to balance and protect the eco-system from destruction. However, the repetitive and cyclical drought has made the traditional system of roaming in search of water and grazing totally unreliable and is threatening the very existence of the pastoralists. Creating suitable environment to settle pastoralists has therefore become an urgent and important task. This issue and direction have already been given sufficient attention in the Rural Development Policies, Strategies, and Tactics document of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; and other documents that outline the visions for pastoral areas development and good governance (ANRS-RLUAPS, 2009, p.13).

Another document of the regional state (ANRS, 2017) underscored that the livelihood of the Afar will basically change only through the implementation of the resettlement programme. It further elaborated that Villagization programme in Afar region is not something that will be practiced when it is successful and interrupted when it is not. Rather, the implementation of Villagization programme for the Afar is the priority action with no other alternative. There are also people who do not view pastoralism as a viable pursuance of life. For instance, Mohammed and Abule (2015) underscored that in the past, the use of indigenous knowledge about livestock and rangeland management practices has enabled the Afar pastoralists to live friendly with their environment. However, in recent time, the traditional resource management system became shrinking due to modernization, population increment and drought making pastoralism unreliable. In the same fashion, Piguët (2001.p.7) asserted that the “*Afar feel that their way of life has failed in terms of the viability of their pastoral economy*”. Similarly, according to Eriksen and Marin (2011) mobility is becoming more difficult and less viable.

The views of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists seem to support the arguments of those who questioned the viability of pastoralism. Pastoralists interviewed in the three selected Woredas, mentioned that they were totally opposing the villagization programme. But in recent times, they had started to change their mind because of the deterioration grazing lands from time to time and government propaganda regarding the importance and reliability of sedentary way of life. For instance, one of the pastoralists who settled in a settlement village in Galifage Kebele in Assaita Woreda stated: *Ensuring food security, sustaining and improving our lives cannot be materialized through the traditional mobile way of life in an era of climate change which has been causing the deterioration of the resources upon which our livelihood heavily depend on. In the past, we were able to sustain our mobile way of life because it had helped us to use alternative resources available in different areas. However, starting from the past few decades, recurrent drought and the invasion of Prosopis have seriously affected rangelands and water sources. This in turn has undermined the viability of mobility (Interview, 14 March, 2019, Assaita).*

Leaders of the regional state at all levels interviewed during the field visit in 2018 and 2019 underscored that the regional state government evaluated the low performance in the implementation of the villagization programme conducted between 2012 and 2015. They further explained that unlike the experiences in the preceding years, in 2016, the regional state designed a new villagization programme, which centered on the availability of water and tried to ensure the supply of social and economic service giving institutions like schools, clinics, health centers for human and animals, electricity and roads. As explained above, the documents of Afar regional state such as ANRS-RLUAPS and Afar (2017) made clear that settling pastoralists in selected settlement villages is the best alternative to improve the living conditions of pastoralists. Moreover, the Afar Regional State Villagization Programme Strategy (2016) underscored that the implementation of basin based villagization programme is the core principle of the regional state government. The regional state government considered that in recent years mobility has exposed the movement of pastoralists from place to place to natural and manmade hazards as well as to social, economic and human crisis. Therefore, villagization is considered to be important to move pastoralists and agro-pastoralists out of their backward way of life which forced them to live under absolute poverty and to enable them lead settled and permanent way of life.

Challenges in the implementation villagization programme in Afar regional state

According to the report of the Equitable Development Directorate General of the Ministry of Federal Affairs (MoFA) for the 6 month of the 2017, the number of households living in old village centers in Somali, Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella regional states was 183, 252, 23, 144, 82,968 and 40,437 respectively. This report showed that the implementation of the villagization programme in Afar Regional State is lower than in other Developing Regional States (MoFA, 2017). According to the explanation of an expert in the regional Coordination Office for Basin Development and Villagization Programme (COBDVP) interviewed in February 2019, there are two main reasons behind the low performance in the implementation of the villagization programme in this fiscal year was due lack of continuity in the awareness creation campaigns, pastoralists have not been fully convinced although they found that mobility could not help to sustain their livelihood like in the past. The implementation of the villagization programme in 2018/19 was found to be very low. The regional state planned to settle 5,200 households but only 485 households which is 9.3% plan accomplishment. An overview of the implementation of the villagization programme in the three selected Woredas would be helpful to understand the challenges and the failure of the villagization programme to achieve its intended purpose, ensuring food security and bringing sustainable development in Afar Regional State.

Pastoralists in the three selected Woredas interviewed during the field visit in December 2018 and March 2019 asserted that pastoralists deserted the settlement villages because of the insufficiency of the services and facilities provided. One pastoralist in Teru Woreda reflected that it is difficult for them to live in the settlement villages permanently. They have not yet fully adapted plough agriculture. But they want to secure the benefits obtained from both mobility and settled way of life. The government cannot fulfill all the necessary facilities and infrastructures. Therefore, they move to other places when they encountered lack of pasture to their animals. They have a good culture of information sharing called, *Dagu*. Thus, they moved back to their villages when they get information about government's plan of counting pastoralists in the settlement villages because they don't want to miss the services provided there (Interview 6 March 2019, Alelu).

In Amibara Woreda pastoralists were made to settle in seven settlement villages. The report revealed that villagized pastoralists were promised to be given different services like education, health and water as well as other facilities including farm and pasture land, seeds, agricultural tools and anti-pest chemicals. They reported that the performance in the implementation of the villagization programme did not show progress due to several challenges such as the low awareness of pastoralists regarding the importance of the villagization programme, inability to produce crops in some settlement villages, lack of proper maintenance on the old irrigation canals in all settlement villages; absence of pure drinking water in Waydolale and Yueren settlement villages, inability to supply different inputs timely; absence of tractors to plough virgin lands which are hard to plough by oxen, lack of commitment on the part of the leadership and weak follow up and evaluation system (Interview 21 December, 2019, Andido).

The above idea is substantiated by the arguments of focus group discussants. They asserted that the Woreda administration has not been able to accomplish its plan of settling more pastoralists in consecutive years. They further explained that the pastoralists' interest to be villagized declined because the government failed to provide the necessary

infrastructures which could enable them lead sedentary way of life in the settlement villages. The statement of one pastoralist who participated in the FGD seems to support the above assertion: *Our livelihood was dependent on the rearing of cattle, camel and goat but their number has been reducing at alarming rate. We started irrigation agriculture and produce market crops like onion and tomato to cope with the challenge that we have been facing. We have been buying fuel for our generator to pull water from the ground but our capacity of affording for fuel has become costly. Unless the government helps us by making channels to use the Awash River for irrigation, we cannot benefit from the cultivation of crops, fruits and vegetables (FGD, 26 December, 2018, Andido).*

According to discussions the researcher held with pastoralists during field observations in Amibara Woreda, many pastoralists desert the settlement villages and started their mobile way of life due to the presence of wide gap between government promises and actual practices in the provision of inputs and infrastructures. In the words of a pastoralist who settled in Keleat-Buri settlement village in 2013 explained that they rushed to the settlement village with the expectation of improved way of life in the settlement villages. But they quickly left the settlement village because the government was not able to keep up its promise of supplying inputs and services (Interview, on 13 March 2019, Andido). In Assaita Woreda eleven settlement villages are established but water supply is still a problem although all Kebeles are found along the Awash River. According the explanation of an expert in Assaita Woreda Water Development Office interviewed in January, 2019, the government has been trying to excavate underground water in different Kebeles of the Woreda but the water found to have high fluoride content. He further elaborated that purifying the water requires high cost. Similarly, one of the top leaders of the Woreda Water Office underscored that the Woreda government has been stretching pipelines for the purpose of supplying water to Kebeles from Assaita town. So far Kebeles like Berga, Hinele and Karatura have got pure drinking water. He further mentioned that enabling the pastoralists living in Gehertu Kebele get access to water is still impossible because the area is where the Awash River sinks and the salt and fluoride content is extremely high (Interview, 15 March 2019 Assaita). Assaita Woreda has been considered as developed area of the Afar region because of its long experience in crop production and expansion of government projects since the imperial period. However, the villagization programme being implemented in the Woreda has still wide gaps. The researcher's personal observation during the field work in January 2018 and March 2019, in two settlement villages in Galifage Kebele namely Aybayito and Galateluberi located on the side of the main road (Assaita to Semera) attest that the villagization program being practiced is still unable to achieve its intended purpose, improving the living conditions of pastoralist communities.

The explanation of another expert in Assaita Woreda Water Development Office indicated that provision of water supply has remained to be a serious problem in Assaita Woreda although the Woreda is rich in underground water. This shortage of water supply for Assaita town could signify the inability of the regional state to resolve problems related to pastoralists' demand for water. If the water supply for the old town, Assaita is found at this stage, shortage of water supply in rural Kebeles will not be something surprising. Other problems in the Woreda are absence of road to connect the Woreda capital, Assaita Town with rural Kebeles and lack of market facilities. Analyzing the situation of the pastoralists in Berga Kebele which is just three kilometers far away from the Woreda capital, Assaita

town would be helpful to understand the general condition of the Woreda in this regard. During the field work in December 2018 and March 2019, the researcher observed pastoralists dumping matured tomatoes on their farm. One agro-pastoralist in Berga Kebele interviewed during the field visit reported that although they exerted great energy starting from clearing forests, land preparation and growing vegetables, they have not been benefited from their cultivation of vegetables due to lack of access to market. The voices of an agro-pastoralist settled in Qurqura settlement village in Assaita Woreda interviewed in March 2019 seems to support the situation of pastoralists in the three settlement villages. He underlined that several pastoralists left their newly established villages when the water in the ponds dried during dry seasons. According to another pastoralist who has been living in Halai-Debi settlement village in Amibara Woreda, government promises were very attractive before they settled but it has been unable to fulfill the necessary services and in puts.

Settled pastoralists living in the settlement villages of Teru Woreda asserted that the services they having been given are less of what the government promised to supply. Even they insisted that their former pastoral life based on mobility was much better than the new settled way of life. One pastoralist living in Barentu settlement village in Teru Woreda 20 kilometer far away from the Woreda capital, Alelu, asserted that unlike the previous time, now they want to settle in settlement villages. However, the government failed to provide the necessary infrastructures as per its promises. He further elaborated that there is no difference between the services they were used to have during their old, scattered and mobile way of life and the services they have been provided after they are made to settle in settlement villages. According to him, in the past they were able to rescue the lives of their cattle by moving and searching alternative sources of pasture and water. But after settlement, their village gets water supply once or no in a week and hence many of the settlers desert the settlement village and returned back to their place of origin due to absence of service provision (Interview 7 March 2019, Alelu). Despite of the regional state rhetoric success in the Villagization programme, the practice in Teru Woreda indicated wide gaps in the implementation. Interview participants attested that due to absence of roads the communication between Woreda and the settlement villages has been interrupted during rainy seasons. For instance, an expert in Teru Woreda's Water Development Office asserted: *There are nine settlement villages (villages) in our Woreda and 288 households have been living in the seven settlement villages which are far away from the Woreda capital. These villages have been obtaining water supply from Digdiga Kebele where the government dugout water. It is from Digdiga that 94-kilometer pipeline is stretched to enable rural Kebeles get access to water. However, there is irregularity in the provision of water supply. During the summer season (May-August), flood has been interrupting the communication between the Woreda and these villages. During this time, the Woreda Water Office cannot solve problems related to water supply in these villages (Interview 8 March 2018 Alelu)*

Factors adversely affecting the implementation of villagization programme in Afar Regional State include people's negative attitude towards the villagization because the government started to implement the programme without ensuring their consent. Moreover, Pastoralists thought that the government deliberately gathered them in certain centers to use their land for government projects and private investors. The inconsistent efforts to create awareness among the public has its own impact in changing their

perception. Not only members of the community but also the leaders of Afar regional state had negative attitude towards the villagization programme. Initially, the leadership did not wholeheartedly accept the importance of permanent settlement for the improvement of the lives of the pastoralists. Thus, the low performance in the implementation of the villagization programme is attributed to lack of motivation, less effort to make socio-economic services and infrastructures available in the settlement villages, continuous village desertion of settled pastoralists, inability to ensure pasture and fodder development strategy in accordance with the scheduled time; lack of water supply or interruption of the service due to malfunctions in some of the development centers; lack of coordination among stakeholders and absence of the necessary infrastructures (road network, lack of electric service in most development centers). Therefore, plan accomplishment of the villagization programme was far from reach even after the regional state designed and implemented the new strategy since 2016.

The survey research conducted in 2016 by the Afar National Regional State COBDVP revealed that lack of commitment on the part of the leadership at various levels of the regional state was one of the factors contributing for the weak performance in the implementation of the villagization programme. In the first case no attempt was made to conduct research and to identify the problems of pastoralists before the start of the programme. Moreover, there was no coordination among sector institutions participating in the implementation of the villagization programme. After eight years when the current Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed visited Afar Region and discussed about the new reform on 28 June 2018, participants from different Woredas of the region reported problems related to villagization programme. They raised issues like the loss of animal resources, absence of rural roads, absence of fair distribution of resources, insufficiency services provided to support settled pastoralists and conflicts. The words of a participant from Awash Fentale Woreda, Sabure Kebele, could show how the problems of the pastoralists remained unresolved over years: *There is a wide gap between what we were promised and what the government delivered. Although efforts were made in the last three years, many things are left to ensure the benefits of the community. We were promised that the government will establish schools, health institutions and supply of pure drinking water. Still now we gained none of these services. Let alone getting pure drinking water, the Awash River which has been used for drinking since time immemorial is now contaminated and subject us for different diseases (Conference Participant 28 June, 2018, Semera).*

Many of the participants questioned the commitment of the regional state government and asked what the federal government could do in response to their demands to help them lead sedentary way of life in settlement villages where they have been living. Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists living in different settlement villages in the three sample Woredas whom the researcher interviewed during the field visit in 2018 and 2019, underlined that the government promised them to supply agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers, axes, shovels, ant-pest chemicals, animal health vaccinations; socio-economic services such as schools, water supplies, clinics and health posts for the communities and their animals, electricity, mills and telecommunication as well as infrastructures like rural roads, bridges, irrigation schemes and markets. They further underscored that there are wide gaps between what the government promised to deliver and actual services provided as well as the infrastructure assets available in all settlement villages.

An expert in the regional COBDVP Office interviewed in January 2019 asserted that basin development and villagization programme could play decisive roles in settling pastoralists in certain centers and to enable them benefit from development and good governance. For effective implementation of the programme, the office mandated to coordinate these activities should have to be organized with the status of a Bureau and manned with adequate manpower and experts. The head of the office have not been directly participating in the steering committee meetings and discussions because of its lower status, which could be one of the factors adversely affecting its coordinating capacity. It seems with this understanding that the regional state promoted the status of the office into commission in 2019. Absence of rural roads has been exacerbating the problems of pastoralists in various settlement villages. There are several Kebeles cut off from their respective Woreda administration during summer season due to floods. For instance, Romayitu, Mamule, Handeg and Ahayile Kebeles in Assaita Woreda; Keleatburi, Angelele, Halai-Debi and Gelsa Kebeles in Amibara Woreda; and Asabera, Barentu Boyna, Debaho, Dirma, Maramara and Mebay Kebeles in Teru Woreda have been separated from their respected Woreda administration between May and September. Therefore, during summer time pastoralists cannot get the necessary professional support from different Woreda Offices. Absence of roads coupled with lack of vehicles has been creating serious problem hindering the communication between Woredas and their respective Kebeles. Participants of the interviews and focus group discussions in almost all offices in the three sample Woredas underscored that absence of vehicles has been challenging activities performed by experts of Woreda Offices not only during summer seasons but throughout the year because professionals cannot travel to the settlement villages.

In addition to the data obtained through document analysis, interviews and FGDs, the researcher's personal observation attest that settlement villages visited during the field work do not have the necessary facilities which could enable pastoralists permanently settle in certain areas. Some villages may have schools and health posts but lack other services like water, roads, and pasturelands. Let alone Kebeles and settlement villages, the capital of the three selected Woredas do not have the necessary facilities. For instance, all Woreda offices were not equipped with the necessary facilities, even chairs and tables for the workers. The oldest town, Assaita, the capital of Assaita Woreda where all the Woreda offices are found has no wash-room and workers have to go back to their home to get the service; Andido, the capital of Amibara Woreda has no water supply and other facilities and Alelu, the capital of Teru Woreda had no power supply and each sector offices have no sufficient rooms.

Conclusions

Villagization programs implemented by successive Ethiopian regimes as a development strategy are far from success. The FDRE government continued the villagization programme because it considered the programme as a major instrument of ensuring food security and socio-economic development. Unlike the experience of past regimes, the government of EPRDF implemented intra-regional resettlement programme because the institutionalization of ethnic federalism since 1991 has created friction and mistrust among various ethnic groups which made inter-regional resettlement programme

difficult. The resettlement programme has been one of the priority areas by the national development policy because it is believed that villagization programme will change under-utilized land into economic use, ensure food security and improve the socio-economic life the relocated communities in particular and the economic growth of the country in general. Villagization programme has been given special focus in pastoralist areas of Ethiopia because food insecurity and poverty have been considered as pervasive and deep in pastoral communities. The government has identified several development challenges faced by pastoralist communities and considered pastoralism as a transitory livelihood strategy rather than a permanent way of life that pastoralists have to stay with. Similarly the government of Afar Regional State underscored that creating suitable environment to settle pastoralists has become an urgent task to bring about development in the region. It was with this intension that villagization programme has been carried out in Afar Regional State. However, the villagization programme implemented in Afar Region is far from success because the federal government has failed to give appropriate support to implement the programme, negative attitude among leaders at different levels and local community towards the programme, misappropriation of resources, absence of properly organized structure to coordinate the implementation of the programme, lack of infrastructures, facilities and in puts in the settlement villages and failure of the regional state government to put into practice the rhetoric water-based settlement of pastoralists. Pastoralists were made to settle in areas selected by regional leaders, simply location change which as a result many pastoralists desert the settlement villages and moved back to their place of origin.

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