

## Socio-economic challenges and opportunities of the post-2010 resettlement program at Bambasi district

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### ABSTRACT:

**Introduction:** Apparently, implementation of resettlement programs could lead to simultaneous destruction of the environment; and possesses threats to the economic and cultural survival of the local communities. This study investigated the socio-economic challenges, opportunities and future implications of the post-2010 resettlement program at Bambasi district, BGR.

**Methods:** The study involved a cross-sectional survey of 202 households, FGDs, document analysis and key informant interviews.

**Results:** The resettlement program was government initiated and voluntary. The program has created opportunities like access to productive land, strong social tie, better livelihood, access to health post and primary school and access to drinkable water for the resettled households. Lack of sufficient grazed land for cattle's, inadequate irrigable land and infrastructure, insufficient and poor quality health service and malaria epidemic, no nearby market places and financial institutions, absence of farmer's trade union, deforestation, youth joblessness and lack of strong government structure were challenges to the households.

**Conclusion:** The program has impacted positively the life of the resettled communities; however its successfulness was found questionable as environmental degradation, political discrimination, youth joblessness, limited access to financial institution, poor infrastructure remains impoverishment risk factors for the life of the households.

**KEYWORDS:** Household, Impoverishment, Resettlement, Socio-economic, Voluntary

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

Ethiopia, a population of about 102 million in 2016, is the second most populous nation in Africa, following Nigeria. The country is also one of the poorest nations, with a per capita income of \$660; where 30 percent of the population is living under the poverty line<sup>[1][2]</sup>. Yet, its economy is one of the fastest growing economies, averaging 10.5% a year from 2005/06 to 2015/16, in the region. The government of Ethiopia however desires the country to reach lower-middle-income rank by 2025<sup>[2]</sup>.

Some 25 years to now, agriculture is thought to be the mainstay for the country to boost the economy and bring sustainable development. But, agriculture fails to bring the intended development in the country with the imagined timeframe, else benefited few. It is with this context that the incumbent government is insisting on planning and execution of various rural development policies, strategies and programs; one after the other. Few of these policies, strategies and programs may include: Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP), Agriculture Development Led Industrialization (ADLI), Rural Development Policies and Strategies (RDPS), Food Security Strategy (FSS), The Productive Safety net Program (PSNP), Pastoral Development Policy (PDP), and Voluntary Resettlement Program (VRP)<sup>[3]</sup>. Yet, the problems in the rural areas of the country persisting for so long period remained as they are while the implementation of all those alternatives had been proceeding.

In the year 2000, 55.3% of Ethiopians lived in life-threatening poverty; however by 2011 this figure was 33.5%. Today, the government is effecting the second phase of its Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II). GTP II, which will run to 2019/20, aims to continue work on physical infrastructure through public investment projects, and to transform Ethiopia into a manufacturing hub. Along with this, resettling drought affected rural communities to other areas has been also given due consideration as a mechanism improving the socio-economic status of those people<sup>[2]</sup>. By 2013, the Ethiopian government planned to resettle 1.5 million people in four regions: Gambella, Afar, Somali, and Benishangul-Gumuz<sup>[4]</sup>. However, according to Tsegaye (2013)<sup>[5]</sup>,

such a resettlement process has led to simultaneous destruction of local traditional farming economies and the environment. Hence, it poses apparent threats to the economic and cultural survival of the local communities. Also, as argued by Downing cited in Phonepraseuth (2012)<sup>[6]</sup>, resettlement may affect the life displaced people in terms of both “the loss of physical” and “nonphysical assets”, such as: homes, productive land, cultural sites, social structures, networks and ties, and cultural identity. The same fashion, Tsegaye (2013)<sup>[5]</sup>, further insisted that the displacement of local communities from their homes and lands in some districts of Benishangul Gumuz Regional State, where resettlement has been taking place as a result of massive investment activities, leading to a loss of access to their basic resources and the adverse processes.

The current Ethiopian government has implemented various development programs and put in effect many policies to end poverty, particularly in rural areas. One among many other options to reduce poverty is a resettlement program. However, for the past few decades, development induced resettlements has resulted greater potential of risk impoverishing the local people, threatening their livelihood and trapping them with less chance for sustainable development<sup>[6]</sup>. During the 1970s and 1980s, the basis for Vilegization programs were mainly ideological, connected with socialist ideals of collectivization; hence there has been several programs implemented throughout the years, most importantly under the Derg regime<sup>[1]</sup>. Three weeks after the media attention to the famine in October 1984, the Ethiopian government officially launched what was to be the most controversial aspect of its whole famine policy: resettlement. The plan was to move a large section of the population from the north to the south. The target of this resettlement program was 1.5 million people. In fact, about 600,000 people were moved in three phases within five consecutive years of 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, and 1988. The justification for these resettlement programs was presented to the people of the country as a famine relief measure taken by the government (Pankhurst (1990) cited in Kassa, 2004)<sup>[7]</sup>.

Beginning in 2003, the Ethiopian government under the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front launched a larger scale settlement program with the objective to enable 2.2 million chronically food insecure people attain food security<sup>[8]</sup>. However, according to Shumete's statement, such a pilot project left many children dying in poorly prepared resettlement camps. In addressing the question why resettlement program failed from 2002 to 2005, two reasons can be mentioned. First, it’s because of resettlement is a complex process which is difficult to predict about the outcomes. Second, failed to effectively and efficiently plan and implement the programs<sup>[8]</sup>. Hence, critics claimed that the resettlement schemes have being hastily executed without through preparation<sup>[9]</sup>. Despite of the critics, this current researcher is fairly and firmly convinced to assess the socio-economic opportunities, challenges and future implications of the post-2010 resettlement program at Bambasi district. Moreover, studies conducted about resettlement programs in different parts of Ethiopia have emphasized on the challenges that people faced as result of massive resettlement programs. Yet, sociological theories about resettlement where not adequately employed to study the issue in Ethiopian context. To this end, there needs more research undertaking regarding the practical experiences of resettled communities in different districts of the Benishangul Gumuz Regional State. The study has a significance of initiating policy makers and development practitioners to consider and reconsider better ways of implementing resettlement programs by considering the case of Bamabsi district.

## 1.2. Objectives

The study addressed the following three specific objectives:

- To assess the socio-economic challenges of the post-2010 resettled communities’ in the study area.
- To investigate the socio-economic opportunities experienced by the post-2010 resettled communities’ in the study area.
- To ascertain the future implications of the resettlement program in the study area.

## 1.3. Theoretical Framework

### 1.3.1. The Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction Model (IRR)

Cernea (1996)<sup>[10]</sup> has proposed an ‘Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction Model’ (IRR) in order to mitigate the risks of a resettlement program and to help in the analysis and prediction of risks in relation to forced displacement. According to the IRR model, development-induced displacement may lead to eight forms of social and economic risks which may include: unemployment, homelessness, landlessness, marginalization, food insecurity, loss of access to common property, erosion of health status, and social disarticulation. According to the IRR model, development-induced population displacement harms the lives and livelihoods of people that are avoidable, and the harmful effects can be mitigated through more enlightened national and international policies. Hence, this model was appropriated for this study in guiding to address the major socio-economic economic challenges, opportunities and implications of the post-2010 resettlement program in Bambasi district and to over view its impoverishment risks.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1. Study Design

The study is a cross-sectional design with descriptive purposes. The study described the socio-economic challenges, opportunities and future implications of the post-2010 resettlement program at Bambasi district, BGR. The study employed mixed method research approach. Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks<sup>[11]</sup>. Specifically, the study used triangulation of data, data sources, data collection tools, and data analysis.

### 2.2. Study Area

The research was conducted in Benishangul Gumuz Regional State in Bambasi district of three kebeles: "Sisa 1", "Sisa 2", and "Kish-mando 5".

### 2.3. Sampling

To select respondents of the survey questionnaire, a total list of 404 households, was obtained from the kebele administrative offices. Hence, it was used as a sample frame for this study.

### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

#### Inclusion Criteria

- Being dweller of the new resettlement kebeles of Bamabasi district such as: "Sisa 1", "Sisa 2" and "Kish-mando 5".
- Those who volunteered (gave consent) to participate in this study.
- Individuals whose age was between 18 and 65 years old.

#### Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals whose age categories below 18 and above 65 were exempted from participating in this study.

Survey respondents were selected systematically from a total population 404 households in the new resettlement three kebeles ("Sisa 1", "Sisa 2" and "Kish-mando 5") of Bamabasi district by using the published tables to determine representative sample size<sup>[12][13]</sup>. The total sample size of the survey participants was 202.

Systematic random sampling method was employed for the reason that it decreases sampling bias, it is easy to apply it and it extends the sample to all the population. On the other hand, a non probability sampling technique, purposive sampling was used to select 24 participants for three FGDs and nine key informants of the interview. The FGDs were held with discussants from youths, members of females association, representatives of people living with disabilities and elderly, representatives of pity business owners and health and agricultural extension workers. Each FGD sessions approximately took 50 minutes of discussion and were moderated by the researchers. Moreover, nine (9) participants for the key informant interviewees were selected from youths, higher kebele officials, and experts from Bambasi district working for the district council and the administrative office.

### 2.4. Data Management and Analysis

Qualitative data was collected from the focus group discussions and the key informants' interviews; and transcribed from the tape recordings into electronic and print forms. The transcript was read thoroughly and descriptive summary was arranged in different categories of themes. Document review was made carefully through categorization and detail analysis. Quantitative data processing, cleaning and analysis was completed using SPSS version 20.0. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the socio-demographic profile of the study participants. More so, study participants responses about access to socio-economic infrastructures and facilities around the new resettlement places was tabulated and described in percentages and numbers. Hence, descriptive analysis was the strategy used to analyze qualitative and quantitative data collected by using focus group discussion, interview, document review, and survey questionnaire.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 3.1. Who are the Resettled Communities and the Study Participants?

This study was concerned with peoples who have resettled from around Assosa and Bambasi towns to the new resettlement places which are by far places in Bambasi district during 2010. According to the resettlement study and plan (2010)<sup>[14]</sup>, the total number of people who were planned to be resettled amounts 4,850 households from Around Assosa and Bambasi towns. The specific area of their original places were; "Amba" 12, 16, 3 and 4 and "Mender" 40, 44, 48, 47, 46, 43, 45, 49, and 41. The plan was to resettle peoples from the aforementioned places to the following seven new area of resettlement; "Sheho Bergushe", "Boshema Kerkigii", "Sisa" 1, 2, 3 and 4 and "Kesh Mando".

Among 202 survey questionnaire respondents, 195 (96.5%) of them were young and in productive age category of 15 to 64. In terms of the respondents ethnicity, 189 (93.6%) were from Amhara ethnic group. Around three fourth of the study participants (75.2%) used to live in Bambasi town (its periphery), surrounding kebeles before they moved to the new resettlement areas. The mass majority (60.9%) of the study participants did have four-six household members. Almost all study participants (99%) did lived for six years since the time of the resettlement, while the remaining 1% come to the new resettlement area at least three years before of the time of data collection for this study.

Despite of the fact that the resettlement plan addressed large number of households (4,597) as part of the resettlement program during 2010, only 1886 households gave their consent to be part of the program. Even, according to data obtained from focus group discussion participants, there were large number of households that gave their consent to part of the resettlement program and that later changed their mind. There was also significant number of households that returned back to the older places as they were unable to cope with challenges faced at early time of the resettlement process. Some of the reasons for early decisions of the returnees include: suffering from malaria, rampant deadly animal diseases and inaccessibility of infrastructure in place.

### 3.2. The Rationale Behind the Resettlement Program (2010)

According to the resettlement plan document (2010)<sup>[14]</sup>, the reasons of resettling the people to new areas were mainly economic, which includes: unproductiveness of the cultivable land, rampant youth unemployment and scarcity of cultivable land because of the expansion of Assosa and Bambasi towns. During the planning time of the resettlement, for instance, 893 households were identified among the resettled households because of the expansion of Assosa town and the establishment of government organizations like Assosa Air Port, Assosa University and the Agricultural Research Institute. The households which were in Bamabsi "Mender 44" and "Kebele 01" that lost their cultivable land as a result of the expansion of Bambasi town were around 305 at the time of the resettlement visibility study of 2010. On the other hand, youths which were unemployed and having no cultivable land around Bambasi district were 427. Also there were 679 people that the resettlement document has identified as youngster more than 18 years old and living within their family that claimed to access a cultivable land other than land owned by their family. Over all, the resettlement plan document did properly identify the households that have to be resettled and the reasons why they have too. Hence, the ultimate goal of the resettlement plan was to economically empower the identified households through providing them enough productive cultivable land in the new resettlement areas. Yet, there were some disparities of moving the identified households to the new resettlement areas. For instance, the households in "Enzi-Shederia" kebele around Assosa, which were thought to be part of the resettlement, were however privileged by regional government to get access to land within Assosa town to construct house as a means of compensation than moving to another areas. From the resettlement plan document page 68, it says that the households in "Enzi-shederia" did opted to be treated under the proclamation and laws that the town of Assosa has in dealing with issues related to land taken as result of town expansion than moving to a new place. This statement depicts that some household members and kebeles were given priorities of opting a solution to the problem that the resettlement plan was intended to mitigate. Hence, while some households were convinced by government to move to another place without compensation to the new resettlement area; others were privileged to opt for any other means of livelihoods and to remain being part of Assosa town administration. By the same fashion, the unemployed youths around Bamabsi district were not given other opportunities to opt as a means of livelihood than moving to the new resettlement program and to remain as farmers. The issue here is that, the resettlement program during that time did have some sort of political implication of moving a certain group far from the town of Assosa and Bambasi district. Such political motive of the resettlement program later on was clearly directed by denying the right of the new resettlement places to be a legal entity (legally established kebele Administrations). As a result, peoples resettled in the resettlement places were not give the right to participate in any government concern and were not represented in district level council. Exemplifying the problem, one of the farmers that participated in the key informant interview argued in the following way:

This is "Sis 2" and nowadays around 169 households live here making agriculture as a means of livelihood. As we were denied our right of being legal's to stay here, sometimes armed individuals and investors embark on as to leave our small cultivable land. They say, you are not legal to live here once you do not have even a legal seal of a kebele, the regional government does not know you and you are illegal's. They frustrate as each time they went to snatch a plot of land from us. The worst is when we present the issue to local administration at district level through community representatives, they say, do not be a source of conflict and against investment or else u will be imprisoned. I know farmers accused and frequently traveling to Bambasi to appear in front of a court at the expense of their right, time and money; without doing any crime.

Evidence suggests that on land and land allocation process in Benishangul Gumuz Regional State has lack genuine community consultation and participation at grass root level<sup>[5]</sup>. Whereby, the new resettlement program implemented around Bambasi district during 2010 did manifest multiple and confusing goals including

economic, social and political implications. Thus, the resettlement program apparently involved politicians from a political party holding government power at regional level. From literature, resettlement programs implemented so far in the region were not guided by comprehensive resettlement policy, rather than ruled by context wise political-economic interest of the current government <sup>[9]</sup>.

### **3.3. Pre-resettlement Consultations and Community Concerns**

According to the 2010 resettlement plan document of the BGRS, which was prepared by 7 experts coming from different regional bureaus, the resettlement program was initiated by the regional government and pre resettlement consultation made with the communities incorporated under the program. This document clearly states that under the pre-resettlement process peoples were consulted adequately and decision was made to voluntarily resettle them in the new areas without any compensation. And, all survey questionnaire respondents of this study confirmed that the resettlement program was voluntary. However, there were certain issues that the people under the resettlement program have claimed as necessary pre-condition to be fulfilled to relocate to the new places. Some of these pre-conditions include: access and ownership to productive 3 hectars of cultivable land to be granted, infrastructure like health post, primary school, farmers training center, water pampas, road, electricity and the like to be fulfilled and safe transportation of the people and their properties and strong follow up at the actual period of the resettlement.

Focus group discussion participants and key interview informants at a time of data collection mentioned that infrastructure like water pumps, health posts and school were not in place at time of their arrival in the new resettlement place. Hence, it was harder time for the resettled people to overcome challenging situations like malaria. Even children were forced to travel long distance on their bare-foot to attend schooling. Many cattle's were dead at early times of the resettlement in the new places as a result of lack of appropriate medication and access to health post. Because of road problem between the new resettlement places and Bambasi town, during the early time of the resettlement and even today transportation is costly and unaffordable to the local community. More so, access to financial institutions in the new resettlement places has been difficult for the resettled community as they were forced to travel up to 27 km to Bambasi. Despite the fact that the resettlement plan (2010) adequately addressed issues that could potentially make the resettlement program more successful, the problems mentioned above clearly indicates that the resettlement process was implemented without adequate preparation and no enough budgets to construct infrastructures right in place. Kassa (2015) in these regard argues that the resettlement programmes in Amahara and Southern region were implemented without proper planning and allocation of the necessary resources.

As data collected from the key informant interviewees indicates, after a weak of their arrival to the new resettlement places, the resettlement committee members and concerned officials from Bambasi district did disappeared instead of supporting them during the days of challenging life. Follow up and support was absent in early days from the resettlement committee and the respective government regional offices from which each committee members were delegated. Two and three years after arrival of the households, infrastructures were constructed in the new resettlement places by regional concerned bureaus. Still, the infrastructures constructed lacked quality and were not furnished with adequate facilities to provide better service to the community of the new resettlement places. Nowadays, the primary school and health post buildings in each resettlement places were in a deteriorated situation and at risk of total demolishment. Hence, lack of the regional government attention and political disfavor from Bambasi district did take the lion share to the existing situation and aggravated problems that exited now in the new resettlement places; "Sisa 1", "Sisa 2" and "Keshimando 5".

### **3.4. Socio-economic Opportunities of the Resettlement Program**

#### **3.4.1. Access to Natural Resources and Livelihood Opportunities**

One of the best opportunities gained by the resettled communities in the new resettlement places was access to productive land. 178 (88%) of the study respondents responded as the land they access is so productive as compared to the land in their previous residence. In this regard, FGD participants and key informant interviewees also agree that the land they accessed in the new resettlement places is highly fertile and productive which has positively and significantly impacted their life. As farming remains a means of livelihood for 99% of the study participants, such an access to productive land in the new resettlement can be considered as a great opportunity. With regards to access to grazed land for domestic cattle's, 169 (83.7%) of the study participants argued they do have access to such natural resource, while the reaming 16.3% of the study participants claimed that they did not have access to grazed land for their cattle's. This means that the new resettlement places have created a greater opportunity for farmers to engage themselves in other livelihood means alongside farming. The existence of irrigable land around the new resettlement places can be mentioned as the other opportunity gained by farmers. If appropriately utilized and more invested on it such an access to irrigable land could have transformed the life of the resettled households.

Thus, with access to fertile land in the new resettlement places, 198 (98%) of the study participants confirmed that they have sustainable job (i.e. farming). Hence, relaying on farming as a means of livelihood, 97.5% of the study participants have secured their households annual food demand. Majority participants of this study also

boldly claimed that their household income has significantly improved after their arrival to the new resettlement places. Participants of the key informant interview and the focus group discussion also confirmed the life of the people in the new resettlement places was significantly changed. One of the FGD participants in "Sis 1" argues;

"The land is "virgin" and productive and the farmers benefit a lot from selling their farming products. This upend because we were moved to this place. In our former places, we were not productive and life was so difficult".

### 3.4.2. Availability of Social and Economic Institutions as an Opportunity

It is known that availability of social and economic infrastructures in any new resettlement area can determine the success of the resettlement and the improvement of people's life. Among many other social and economic institution that has to exist in new resettlement areas, education and health are the major ones. Thus, 199 (98%) of the study participants argued that there is a primary school in their new resettlement places. Farmers in the new resettlement places are able to send their children to schooling which is only up to fourth Grade. After accomplishing grade four, however children's are forced to travel 10 - 20 km to attend grade five which is a huge burden for children's and their families. With regard to the existence of health post, 128 (63.4%) of the study participants confirmed as there exists a health post around the new resettlement places. Significant number of respondents, 74 (36.6%), did argued that there is no health post around their new resettlement places, which implies that they were not satisfied with the services provided by the existing health posts. Though, health posts are there standing in each new resettlement places, service provided lacks quality and adequate health professionals are missing. Whatever the case is about the quality of the service provided at the health posts, FGD participants and the key interviewee's informants do believe that good to have the health posts around them.

On the other hand, the existence of social institutions such as religious institutions in a given resettlement place can significantly and positively influence the social ties among resettled communities. 199 (98.5%) of the respondents of study claimed that they do have access to religious institutions in their new resettlement places. And 200 (99%) of the study participants also argue that there exists other social institutions like "Mahiber" and "Senbete" that strengthen social ties in the new resettlement places among re-settlers. With this, 191 (94.6%) respondents of the study argue as no loose of social tie has been encountered since the time they have arrived at the new resettlement places. All study respondents and FGD participants argued that there exists strong social attachment among farmers in the new resettlement places since the time they have arrived. Alongside this, ownership of common properties (manmade and natural resources) in and around the new resettlement places was found not problematic for 160 (79.2%) of the study respondents, expect land grabbing from the investors side by the name of investment and mass farming.

### 3.4.3. Infrastructure Opportunities

Study respondents were asked to express their concern about the existence of infrastructure like water pip in their new resettlement places. 197 (97.5%) of the study participants argued that water pipe is available in their new resettlement places and they do have access to drinkable water. FGD participants and key informant interviewees also argued that only at early time of their arrival that they have suffered from luck of drinkable water.

## 3.5. Socio-economic Challenges of the Resettlement Program

### 3.5.1. Land Related Challenges

Despite of the fact that the promised three hectares of cultivable land from government side was not handled to all farmers in the new resettlement places, farmers are satisfied with the productivity of the land. However, the challenge of land grabbing as a result of the growing expansion of private investment has incurred them in to a protracted conflict with investors. As participants of the FGD revealed that a portion of land demarked by government for their cattle's (land for graze) has been taken and owned by investors. In this regard, most majority (169 (83.7%) of the study respondents argued that land for grazing was not enough in the new resettlement places. On the other hand, having less access to irrigable land was a challenge for the resettled community. According to the key informant interviewees in "Keshimando 5", there are nearby small rivers around each resettlement places, however these small rivers are seasonal and farmers could not depend on them to cultivate crops and vegetables that could substantially support their incomes. Also, 105 (52%) of the questionnaire respondents have argued that they did not practice irrigation because of no access to such irrigable land. FGD participants in all study sites, in this regard, argued that if water line is built around the seasonal small rivers, benefits could have been maximized from the resettlement program. One of the key informant interviewee from "Sis 2" claims;

*"We are much eager and committed to depend on irrigation to get our life better. However, this comes to be a dream for us for long and the potential of land around the seasonal rivers was not unutilized well."*

### 3.5.2. Infrastructure Challenges

One of the major infrastructures among many others that have existed in new resettlement places is road. However, well constructed road was lacking in three of the new resettlement places. Specifically, during summer time, travel becomes difficult to the new resettlement places as no bridge was constructed on small rivers. Hence, transportation remains the major challenge to the farmers in all new resettlement places. As the FGD participants of the study argued, so far selling for better cost of their agricultural products has been so difficult and impossible. They further argued that Bajaj transportation is too much costly and restricted their movement to access services in Bambasi town. Such transportation problem in the new resettlement places disadvantaged the study participants in many ways and significantly challenged their life. The other major infrastructural challenge to the study participants was no access to electricity in all new resettlement places.

### 3.5.3. Financial and Economic Challenges

The existence of well established and functional financial and economic institution in a given community plays vital role in accelerating development and advancing life to better position. Among others, credit and saving institutions, market places and trade unions are vital ones. According to 158 (78.2%) participants of this study, there was no nearby access to saving and credit institution in the new resettlement places. Hence traveling to Bambasi town, which is far and costly has been a daily routine to these people. To save money obtained from sold agricultural products, the farmers in the new resettlement were forced to incur into additional cost and time wastage traveling KMs to Bambasi town.

Farmer's trade unions do have emeses contribution in assisting farmers to wisely and effectively use the resources and money they have at hand. However, farmers in the new resettlement places are challenged by no access to such an institution. 122 (60.4%) of the study participants claimed access to farmers trade union was absent around their new resettlement places. The aforementioned figure shows that there are established farmers trade unions but they are not fully functional and problem solving. On the other hand, lack of nearby market for the farmers has been another challenge in the new resettlement places. The only market place that the people in the new resettlement place could rely on to sell their agricultural products and cattle's was the market in Bambasi town. Thus, lack of nearby credit and saving institution, market place and farmer's trade union are major challenges of the farmers from economic and finance point view in the new resettlement place.

### 3.5.4. Health Related Challenges

Early from the pre- resettlement time, typical tropical animal and human diseases were identified and thought to challenge the people and their cattle's in the new resettlement places. Malaria was one of a human disease that has threatened the life of the farmers in all of the resettlement places. Despite the fact that malaria is a preventable disease and can be controlled easily, malaria disease persisted in the new resettlement areas and was affecting significantly the life of the people. According to the FGD participants in "Sisa 2", with lack of commitment from the regional government side, controlling the spread of malaria disease and to minimize its human health burden come to be impossible by the farmer's effort in the new resettlement places.

A cattle's disease known as "Antras aba senga" was the major health problem to cattle's of the farmers in the new resettlement places. Key informant interviews and FGD participants of this study argue that this disease has killed and now killing many cows and sheep's of the farmers: essentially discouraging them to rear cattle's around the new resettlement places. "Antras aba senga" has been also tremendously affecting farmers farming activity as cows are dying frequently from this disease which are used to farm the land. The disease is preventable; however with little attention from regional and district level higher officials and experts, the disease remained as a major health problem for cattle's of the farmers in the new resettlement places.

### 3.5.5. Administrative Challenges

With discussions made with all FGD participants in the study area, administrative challenges that are experienced by the farmers in the new resettlement places were raised. The first and most important challenge for the farms was that the new resettlement places did not get legal recognition from the council of Bambasi district as independent kebeles (villages) and peoples in these places are not represented in this district council. Claims so far made to be legally recognized kebeles by the resettled communities got no attention and a lot of pressure was a response from politicians side responsible of administering Bambasi district. Second, the peoples in the new resettlement places do not have any political say about the political and administrative decisions made about them and their properties. Specifically, land and related issues has been administratively manipulated by Bambasi district administrators against the right and interest of the local communities in the new resettlement places. For example, land grabbing by investors has been typical problem which has been much more deliberately organized and run by political elites. Third, kebele level structures are not established in the new resettlement since the time of arrival, which was another administrative challenge to the farmers and it was a systematic denial of self rule right of the people from the Ethiopian constitution. Finally, the farmers under the new resettlement places were denied the right to be treated equally and fairly in front of the court at district level.

### **3.6. The Implications of the Resettlement Program (2010)**

#### **3.6.1. Social-economic Implication of the Resettlement Program**

FGD discussants from "Sisa 1" argued that there is lack of enough cultivable land around the new resettlement places, young individuals aged above 18 are becoming unemployed and dependent on their parent's income. Thus, landlessness and unemployment are becoming a growing problem of the youths in the new resettlement places. So, as the problems of youths are not timely addressed, they do have implied impact of exacerbating family problems and impoverishing effective on the community in the new resettlement places. On the other hand, lack of strong nearby saving and credit institutions, market places and farmer's trade union are challenges that persisted over time negatively impacting farmer's economic situation. If these problems are not going to be solved well, the current good economic status of the farmers in the new resettlement places will decline and high impoverishment risk becomes immanent to these people. A study conducted by Bisrat (2011) also revealed similar findings to this study that poor and inadequate health services and transportation and access to market for livestock were the major challenges that affect the livelihood of the settlers in Abobo woreda, Gambella People's Regional State.

#### **3.6.2. Environmental Implication**

As participants of the FGD and the key informant's interview in this study revealed that the forest coverage around the new resettlement places has declined after their arrival. Farmers around the new resettlement places used to highly depend on the woods obtained from the nearby forest to make charcoal. The investors are also clearing the forest at massive rate to expand their land cultivated. Such a massive clearing of the forests come to damage the existing fauna and flora putting the environment in danger. Now a day, the non domesticated animals (such as apes, lion, hyena, chimpanzee and etc) that were in the forests around the new resettlement places have moved away. Hence, environmental destruction has become one of the serious problems that the farmers in the new resettlement place have encountered with. In this regard, Tsegaye (2013) insisted that land transfer process and investment underway in BGR not only displaced communities from their villages and cultivated lands, but also has a destruction effect of the natural environment.

#### **3.6.3. Administrative and Political Implication**

Once resettlers' of the new resettlement places were deprived of their administrative and political rights like no right to make political decisions and lack of representation in district level council, lack of appropriate district legal government structures and unjust treatment in front of the law; the very democratic and human rights of the communities in the new resettlement places has been denied and violated enormously in many ways than what is mentioned here. Hence systematic and coordinated political discrimination against the people in the new resettlement has been a means to repress their voices and an intimidation of their life to be peaceful, prosperous and stable.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Despite the fact that the resettlement program of 2010 in BGR has impacted positively the life of the resettled communities, the successfulness of the program was questionable as major challenges like environmental degradation, administrative and political discrimination, youth unemployment (joblessness) and limited access to financial institution and poor infrastructure remain as an impoverishment risk factors of the life of the households at the new resettlement places. The conclusion drawn from this study cannot be however generalized to another resettlement programs implemented in BGR. Thus, the resettled local communities, district level government bodies and NGOs working on environmental protection have to address concerns related to the physical environment and must devise appropriate ways of minimizing forest clearing and miss use of the various physical resources through designing and implementing environmental friendly agricultural activities, way of living and mental setups among the resettled communities, local investors and the nearby neighborhoods. District level government bodies in Bambasi town and regional level bureaus such as BGRS health, education, land administration, credit and saving, water, Electric, and food security, population settlement, disaster prevention & preparedness bureaus have to work hard towards better access to basic services, facilities and infrastructure like adequate access to electricity, education and health facility and service, financial institutions, agricultural inputs and market to households in the new resettlement places of Bambasi district. The regional bureau of justice and courts should work hard that the democratic and human rights of the peoples in the new areas of resettlement were respected and exercised constitutionally without any exceptions. The federal government of Ethiopia has to establish excellent system of follow-up and technical support to the regional governments during the times of mass resettlement program like the resettlement program investigated in this study so that problems during the preparation, implementation and post implementation stage were clearly identified and mitigated appropriately to the best interest of the households. The better future research interventions in these areas give emphasis deeper understanding of the situation of the resettled communities through qualitative research to track explicitly the lived experiences of the households in the new resettlement



places of 2010 in Benishangul Gumuz Region. Policy makers in Ethiopia should give emphasis to the design of a resettlement strategy and guideline that insights the appropriate directions to be followed before and after implementation of resettlement programs which are government initiated.

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