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Social and Psychological Impacts Villagization: The case of Gambella Peoples National Regional State, Ethiopia

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Abstract- Villagization is "the grouping of the population into centralized planned settlements. The official aim of villagization in Ethiopia was to introduce social and economic change through a socialist agrarian transformation which also included mechanization and corporatization. And the strategy is primarily aimed at gathering pastoral and semi-pastoral communities in Afar, Somali, Gambella, and Benishangul-gumuz regions voluntarily. The plan was to villagize about 1.5million people by 2013, and relocations started in 2010. This study implemented both a quantitative and qualitative approach, and sequential explanatory research design is used. By using a simple random sampling method about 360 participants were engaged in the study. The study obtained information through questionnaires (Wisconsin Quality of Life: Client Questionnaire) semi-structured interview and observational checklist is employed.

Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data obtained through questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 20 software. To minimize decision error the study used 0.05 alpha levels.

Keywords: *quality of life, social service access, villagization.*

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Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data obtained through questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 20 software. To minimize decision error the study used 0.05 alpha levels. This study is employed descriptive statistics such as mean and percentage distribution to explore the distribution's socio-demographic distribution of the people. And the difference between previous and current change is analyzed by using inferential statistics one-sample t-test.

The study indicates that the life quality of the peoples who resettled in the woreda is completely changed. Most of the respondent witnessed that their precious lives were very difficult when it compared to the current.

After the implementation of the program people in the villages, access to education, health, and, transport services improved as compared to the previous time due to the proximity of people to them. But challenged by lack of textbooks, clean water, and school compound. Lack of drugs, especially emergency drugs, store for expired drugs, bed for patients, and lights are challenges that the inhabitants are facing this time.

Keywords: quality of life, social service access, villagization.

I. Background

Villagization is "the grouping of the population into centralized planned settlements" (Survival International 1988). And, it is frequently confused with 'resettlement' as the two policies often occur at the same time and may overlap. The basic conception of villagization is re-grouping into villages, which usually does not involved together.

According to Chambers (1969), Resettlement is bringing together populations who are properly scattered. A sub-form is known as 'sedentarisation', which aims to settle pastoralists and may not involve moving peoples from the area in which they were living.

The official aim of villagization in Ethiopia was to introduce social and economic change through a socialist agrarian transformation, which also included mechanization and corporatization (Pankhurst, A., 1992). And the strategy is primarily aimed at gathering pastoral and semi-pastoral communities in Afar, Somal, Gambella, and Benishangul-gumuz regions voluntarily. The plan was to villagize about 1.5million people by 2013, and relocations started in 2010 (GR, 2010; HRW, 2011). It aims at, besides supplying rural infrastructures and socio-economic services, helping them lead a sedentary way of life (NCFSE, 2003).

So, the voluntary villagization program in Gambella 45 region is started in 2010, and 47 until 2012, about 5105 households have benefited. The large portion of the fund is allocated 50 for the provision of socio-economic services and the construction of infrastructures (Mandefro, 2016).

Generally, this study is focus to find out the changes that come on the quality of life of resettlers, social benefits, and challenges that still exist with the society after the program had implemented. The study would have positive contributions to various national and regional level development-oriented organizations in terms of giving scientific information about the success of the program. And for it shade s overall challenges, it helps to review, and to remove the constraints of the program.

II. Methods

This study implemented both a quantitative and qualitative approach, and sequential explanatory research design is used.

a) Sample size and sampling techniques population

Populations of the study were peoples who involved in voluntary villagization programs in Gambella Peoples National Regional State, Itang Woreda. A total

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of 360 participants had been engaged from the total populations of 5105 households' by a simple random sampling technique.

b) Tools of data collection

The study obtained information through questionnaires (Wisconsin Quality of Life: Client Questionnaire*)* semi-structured interview and observational checklist was employed.

c) Methods of data analysis

Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data obtained through questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 20 software. To minimize decision error the study used 0.05 alpha levels. This study will employ descriptive statistics such as mean and percentage distribution to explore social and psychological benefits. Also the difference between previous and current changes of the people is analyzed by using inferential statistics *one-sample t-test.*

III. Results

a) Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The data is collected from 360 participants in the study. Table 1 presents the descriptive data related to the socio-demographic characteristics of participants.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics

No.	Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
1.	Kebele	Wathgach	61	16.9
		Waar	59	16.4
		Dorong	60	16.7
		Basiel	70	19.4
		Biljakoak	63	17.5
		Pilual	47	13.1
		Total	360	100
2.	Sex	Male	174	48.3
		Female	186	51.7
		Total	360	100
3.	Age	20-29	78	21.7
		30-39	148	41.1
		40-49	134	37.2
		Total	360	100.0
4.	Educational level	Unable to read and write	180	50
		Elementary school	100	27.7
		High School	60	16.2
		Collage/ University	20	6.1
		Total	360	100.0
5.	Previous work	Agriculture	90	25.0
		Pastoral	124	34.4
		Semi pastoral	146	40.6
		Total	360	100.0

The above table reveals that 16.9% (61) of the participant was from Wathgachkebele, 16.4% (59) of them were from Waarkebele, 16.7% (60) of them from Dorong, 19.4% (70) from Baseil, 17.5% (63) of them were from Biljakoak, and 13.1% (47) of them were from Pilualkebele.

In terms of sex distribution, 48.3% (174) male and 52.7% (186) female participated. This indicates that the study is included female participants in higher numbers than males.

Age distribution of the participants was 21.7% (78) of the participants are between the ages of 20-29, 41.1% (148) is between the age 30-39 and 37.4% (134) of them were above the age of 40. The above information indicates that most participants of the study are young and able to recognize life before and after villagization.

In relations with the educational background of the participants, 50% (180) of the were unable to read and write, 27.7% (100) them were completed elementary school, 16.2% (60) of them were attend high school and only 6.1% (20) them were completed collage and above college education.

Their previous work is, 25% (90) of them were agrarian, 34.4% (124) of them were pastoral and 40.6% (146) were semi-pastoral.

b) Change in Quality of life

To assess the success of villagization program, [a One-Sample] t-test was conducted. This helps to know whether there is a significant difference in the

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quality of life of participants between before villagization and after villagization.

Table 3: Summary of change in life quality of inhabitants before and after villagization.

One Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Before villagization	53.646	359	.000	1.66389	1.6029	1.7249
After villagization	52.214	359	.000	1.95556	1.8819	2.0292

The significance level is 0.05

Depending on the above table, the value of the One-Sample t-Test is .000 with a significance level of 0.05. So, there is a significant difference between before villagization and after villagization in the quality of life of participants. The above information reveals that the life quality of the peoples who are resettled is completely changed. Most of the respondent witnessed that their precious lives was very hard when it compared to the current.

c) *Social changes*

Below are social changes that come after the implementation of the villagization program, and it obtained through a semi-structured interview.

i. *Health Access*

Concerning health service, access was very poor service, and people suffered a lot from not being able to access the service as they needed. As Powpow, one of the responded said,

"*…The distance of health service was always a problem for people in scattered settlement, including pregnant women. For them, the situation was very unbreakable because of the distance they had to walk when they were about to give birth. Most of the time, they forced to deliver at home or on the way to a health center, for they are not able to walk the long-distance, which is risky….*"

Another respondent speaks about the current situation regarding health service,

"…now we can go easily to the clinic; our wife's even started to follow their pregnancy level long time before deliverance. We don't fear their health like the previous time…."

ii. *Transportation Access*

Villagers mentioned transportation service as the other service that people previously had very poor access to road. People were scattered across the land and no vehicle could reach them since there were no roads for cars. During this time, people usually traveled on foot to the town for various purposes as there was no permanent transport service. Cars were coming, but this happened only sporadically and not regularly. And the ones who benefited were those living by the main road. Those who scattered in distant areas did not gain because they lived in places that were not accessible by cars.

The villagization program is follows the main road which passes over the kebeles. The respondent from Baseilkabele "Gatbah" said that,

"…thanks to God, we are very close to the main road, and it has an expediential difference from the previous one. We can easily go to the market, we can use many different options of transportation, the market is near to us, and this makes our life simple…"

iii. *Educational access*

The condition before the villagization program was very tough for the people who lived in scattered settlements basically because they had very meager access to social services like education, health service, clean water, mill houses, and transportation. During this time, accessing educational service was something extremely difficult for the inhabitants for it is near to us. It was hard for children to register and attend school as the distance between places of residence and schools was long. Since the schools were located far from people during life before the villagization program, a child had to be ten years old and above to register and start schooling. Children could not go to school at an early age or when they were ready. Accordingly, the school dropout rate was very high. A lot of people, especially youngsters, dropped out of schools and became delinquents.

One of my respondents said that," *…It was very unlucky that the education service did not exist in the place where I used to live. Accessing this basic service was always a problem and as a result, children did not have the opportunity to attend school at an early age. They had to wait until they were ten years old and above to start school. Besides, those who attended school from a long-distance suffered because they had to wake up early and walk two to three hours.*"

d) *Results from Observation*

Villagization is executed on rural populations with the justification that it is 'for their good'; This argument is present in the claim by governments that villagization will facilitate the delivery of services, such as health care, education, or marketing, to previously scattered populations.

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From the observation, all kebeles have at least one elementary and high school except biljakoak kebeles, who are still learning under the trees by the lack of enough classroom for the students. Baseil kebele, which is inordinately achieving the purpose of the villagization, has two elementary schools and functioning well. Health care centers are built for all kebeles. These facilities makes it easy for the communities to get better health service from the center. Road and transportation are very remarkable, and even some old kebeles has no such comfortable for transportation service to move to market, clinic or school.

e) Challenges of Resettlers

Even though there is a lot of improvement in the access to infrastructures in the village, participants have some complaints about the quality of services provided to them.

Biljakoak kebele students do not have enough classroom, and they learn outside under the tree. As the aim of the villagization program is to improve such a problem, teachers of the school raise this question. Some High school, for Example, Baseil school lacks, the textbook for grade nine (9) and ten (10), clean water and school compound. Lack of drugs, especially emergency drugs, store for expired drugs bed for patients are challenges that the inhabitants are facing this time. Light problem is another challenge that seeks more attention for the better advancement of and to the higher life quality of the community.

IV. Discussion

A quantitative analysis of the study shows that there is a significant difference between the previous and current life of dwellers. From the data observed, these people were previously living in the scattered form. This makes it difficult for the government to manage, provide recourses, and build infrastructures. Even the spread form of living is difficult to ensure the security of these people, and they were vulnerable to external forces. But, know the respondents witnessed that their life is improved and they are living better situations of the prior.

The health service is improved, they are living near to the main road, and their children are attending education. The above information is also supported by qualitative data presented in the previous part; they can easily communicate about the change that they gain from the program.

Now, people can get medical treatment whenever sicknesses occur because there is a health center as well as health posts in the three villages which provide services to the people. If someone gets sick, he/she can certainly be taken to the health center/health post and get treatment right away.

People are enjoying virtuous access to transportation service because there are buses which regularly come to the villages, take people to the city and bring them back whenever they need it. These has made a big difference in the lives of the residents of the five villages who were lived in scattered form, and far from the service. But, now no longer walk on foot to the city, school, and clinic.

The upstairs results are opposed to the report of the Human Rights watch. In January 2012, Human Rights Watch released a 119 page report '"Waiting Here for Death": Forced Displacement and "Villagization" in Ethiopia's Gambella Region'; which examined the first year of the Villagization program. Human Rights Watch asserted the Ethiopian government was forcibly relocating approximately 70000 indigenous people, mainly Nuer and Anuak people, to new villages that lack adequate food, farmland, healthcare, and educational facilities (Human Rights Watch, 2012a).

The quality of life of the people is changed significantly with a significant level of 0.000 with the alpha value of 0.05. And this result is confirmed that the inquiry of Mandefro. He concluded that the voluntary villagization program has a major role in reducing poverty and increasing household consumption expenditure. Based on the empirical findings, this study concludes the program has profound and far-reaching socioeconomic impacts on the lives of rural people in the study areas (Mandefro, 2016).

V. Conclusion

The findings of this study showed villagization is implemented to make the lives of the people better by providing social services to them. The program is aimed at bringing scattered people together to benefit from government services while living together in villages. Before the relocation of people, various discussions were held with the local people to convince them of accepting the program. The local people were consulted and informed of things they needed to know. Moreover, various social services were promised to them although, some are not materialized. Villagization program has brought positive changes in the lives of the villagers in terms of accessing social services. After the implementation of the program and settlement of people in the villages, access to education, health, and, transport services improved as compared to the previous time due to the proximity of people to them. Now, children can start school at school age because the distance is no longer a problem. But, Some High School, for Example Baseil School lacks, the textbooks, clean water and school compound. Lack of drugs especially emergency drugs, store for expired drugs bed for patients and lights, are challenges that the inhabitants are facing this time.

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Important Note:

- Terms such as
- Wathgach*
- Waar*
- Dorong*
- Basiel*
- Biljakoak*
- Pilual*
- Gambella**
- Benishl Gul Gumuz**
- Somale**

Are not English words and they are names of Kebeles* and names of Regions** in Ethiopia that the peoples live.

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