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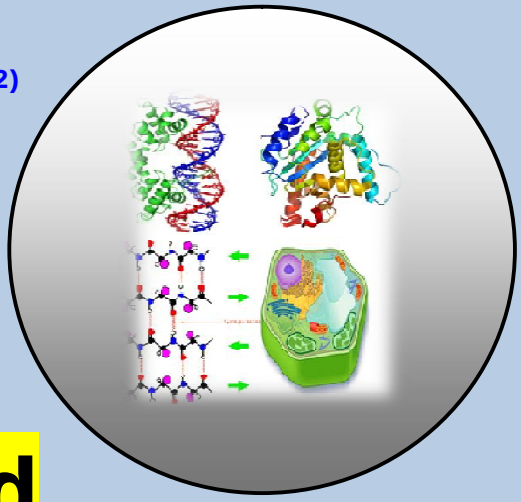

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RESEARCH PAPER
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Implementation of Socioeconomic and Environmental Impact Assessment by Large Scale Projects in Ethiopia. The Case of Cotton Farming Projects in Benishangul Gumuz Region

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ABSTRACT

To bring sustained economic growth and attain the Five Year Growth and Transformation Plan of 2010/11-2014/15, Ethiopia launched massive development projects with the intention of overthrowing poverty and ensuring sustainable economic growth in the country. However, this goal is achieved if and only if their environmental, social and economic impact is appropriately analyzed and implemented according to the guidelines of EPA. Thus, this study aimed at assessing the extent, challenges and consequences of environmental impact assessment for large scale development projects in Ethiopia. The study was conducted in Benishangul Gumuz Region, Dangur woreda (one of growth corridor selected by federal government to realize sustainable economic growth and development). Primary data were collected from household farmers between January 12-25/2013. Four FGDs were conducted at Zonal, Woreda, Kebele and large scale cotton farming project site supplemented by extensive field observations and Key informant interview. Secondary data on ecological and socio-economic issues were obtained from different government organizations in the region. The result shows that in Benishangul Gumuz Region, assessment of EIA for large scale cotton farming shows significant negative socio-economic and environment impact due to absence of effective EIA preparation and proper implementation until the time of data collection. Under-implementation of EIA, lack of M&E, reluctance and lack of will of investors for EIA, lack of local community participation on site selection, and gaps in promise and practice to mitigate the negative impacts were found to be major challenges of large scale cotton farming in the study area. In Dangur Woreda, where a number of large scale development projects are currently undertaking, a lot of promises were given to the affected local people. They were promised to be compensated through adequateate infrastructure and employment opportunity, however, when practically evaluated it was found to be a false promise. ***Contd……***

As the result, the environmental consequences such as massive deforestation and migration of precious animal such as lion, elephant and buffalo to Sudan and South Sudan were some of the overwhelming environmental problem that concern sustainability future development endeavour. Therefore, it is recommended that continuous awareness creation and training on EIA preparation and implementation is vital for investors, and local communities and government officials at different levels.
Keywords: Large Scale Projects, Environmental Impact Assessment, Focus Group Discussion, Negative, Benishangul Gumuz Region and Ethiopia.

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia, like many African countries, has endorsed the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). To make effective the MDG's goals, the government of Ethiopia has also implemented a national development strategy which has passed through 3 stages of implementation, each of which has been for 5 years. These are Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP, 2000/2001 to 2005/2006); Plan for Accelerated Sustainable Development to End Poverty (PASDEP, 2005/2006 to 2010/11) and the current Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP, 2010/11 to 2014/15). In line with these development strategy requirements, the country had adopted an ambitious and massive agricultural intensification program which includes establishment of large scale development projects. However, unless appropriate control measure is simultaneously carried out the development efforts of the project /plan could damage the environment and must have an adverse impact on livelihood of the people and sustainability of the development projects. Some research findings indicated that the past two development practices have not anticipated, eliminated or mitigated potential environmental problems early in the planning process (EPA, 2000). This has resulted in a situation where the country experiences a seriously degraded natural environment. Nevertheless, environmental sustainability has been given due attention in GTP than the past development programmes. Consequently, the GTP has formulated policies, strategies, laws and standards, which foster social and economic development to enhance the welfare of humans and the safety of the environment sustainably (MoFED, 2010). Recognizing the current adverse effects of environmental problems and its pervasive effect on the sustainability of the economy, the Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) launched the Strategy Document for Ethiopia's' Resilience Green Economy Initiative (CRGE) in Addis Ababa. Form this initiative, it could be realized that through the time, the vital importance of environmental conservation for sustainable development has been recognized by the current government of Ethiopia. In this context, EIA arose in response to the pollution and the unnecessary degradation of natural resources caused by rapid and unsustainable industrialization, agricultural development, and technological progress. In connection to this, (UNEP, 1988) has summarized that EIA provides a forum for public involvement in the decision-making process and assist the formulation of proper development policy and ensure sustainable development.

More importantly, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has participated in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, at the Rio+20 Conference held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2012.

The theme of the conference was a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and institutional framework for sustainable development. In line with this, Ethiopia has showed its commitment in announcing climate resilient green economy strategy sustainable and integrated development planning documents of the 5-year Growth and Transformation Plan and the Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy in the conference (FRDE, 2012). This means a carbon neutral and climate resilient economy and enforcement of existing environmental laws were given priority actions in connection to the environmental conservation and sustained economic development. However, the implementation of EIA in Ethiopia was not as expected as satisfactory because of several factors. Mellese and Mesfin (2005) indicated that one important factor that lowers the implementation of the process is that EIA is a complex process involving a large number of actors that can affect its proper implementation. Hence, the intention of this paper is to identify practical challenges in implementation and preparation of EIA for large scale development projects in line with the EPA's guideline.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this paper is to assess whether development projects in Ethiopia are implementing EIA in line with guidelines and the standard set by EPA and identify the gaps and challenges faced during its implementation. More specifically this study intends to achieve the following few objectives:

1. Assess how far socio-economic and environmental impact assessment issues are addressed in implementation of development projects in Ethiopia.
2. Identify the challenges and gaps of environmental impact assessment (EIA) in Ethiopia.
3. Assess the causes for failure in proper implementation of environmental impact assessment (EIA) in Ethiopia.

REVIEW OF THEOREIES, TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Basic Concepts and Definitions of EIA

EIA is the methodology for identifying and evaluating in advance any affect, be it positive or negative that result from the implementation of a proposed project or public instrument (EIA Proclamation, 2002). Asferachew, 2008 defined EIA as a method of identifying and analysing the potential impacts of a project on the environment, with the view of ensuring environmentally sustainable development. In this regard, sustainable development can be achieved only through taking into consideration social, economic and environmental situations. Similarly, MELCA Mahiber, 2008 defined EIA as a method of identifying and analyzing the potential impacts of a project on the environment, with the view of ensuring environmentally sustainable development. According to Ghana's definition, EIA is the process of evaluating the direct and indirect environmental and social implications of a proposed development project. It is meant to be a flexible process and can employ a large number of evaluation methods and techniques.

Cameroon's definition of EIA makes reference to impacts on the standard and quality of life of populations and the environment in general, which can be extrapolated to cover a broad range of issues impacting on livelihoods and wellbeing of the societies.

Tunisia's definition of EIA focuses on environmental impacts. In Uganda, the practice of EIA considers environmental, social and economic impacts as demonstrated in its good practice case described in a subsequent section. Economic Commission for Africa, 2005 defined EIA as "The process for the orderly and systematic identification, prediction and evaluation of the likely environmental, socioeconomic cultural and health effects of an undertaking and the mitigation and management of those effects". In the same fashion, MIGA (2011) also explained EIA as the study that would enable to assess the existing environmental situation of the project areas, potential impacts expected to result due to project implementation and to propose mitigation measures to enable minimize adverse impacts and to enhance the beneficial impacts of the project.

Based on the above definitions, one can conclude that EIA is undertaken to prevent, reduce or offset the significant adverse, social, economic and environmental effects of development proposals/projects, and to enhance the positive sides of the intervention. Hence for this paper the definition given by MELCA Mahiber is adopted.

Overview of EIA System in Ethiopia

EIA was formally developed in united sates of America in1969 in order to examine technical and environmental options of development projects thereby by alleviating their potential impacts. In Ethiopia, since the Environmental Impact Assessment Proclamation No. 299 of 2002 was adopted by the House of Peoples' Representatives; some efforts have been made to implement the law by the EPA and the relevant regional environmental agencies. In spite of these efforts, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a recent phenomenon in Ethiopia and EIA in Ethiopia has until now remained weak particularly in terms of its implementation. From this perspective, one can attest that even though about a decade has been elapsed since the adoption of the EIA law in Ethiopia, the practice is still in its infant stage due to a number of interacting factors that have slowed the progress.

Evidences indicated that most EIA Procedural Guideline adapted by different country is derived from a range of sources and has been adapted, where appropriate, to suit the environmental and social situation of the country, however, the primary source of the environmental policy of Ethiopia is from the constitution of the country. Hence, most of the issues which are raised in establishing the mechanism for effective implementation of the EIA procedure in the development projects of all sectors are essentially similar. In effect, most consultants are expected to follow the procedure of EPA Terms of Reference (TOR) for the EIA which was adapted from World Bank guidelines and take account of national and regional EIA guidelines for its preparation. But some proposed procedures adopted by development projects in Ethiopia do not show detailed aspects of such technical issues that are pertinent to projects in particular sectors. On the other hand, the procedure adopted to prepare EIA in some parts of the country, for instance, in Tigray Region Raya Azebo district by Unifruit Ethiopia was so detail and could be exemplary.

On the contrary, my practical filed supervision in BGR on large scale cotton farms revealed that several development projects are established without assessing the environmental, social and economic impacts assessment. This could alter the suitability of the intended government development targets.

BENEFITS AND CONSTRAINTS OF IMPLEMENTING EIA IN ETHIOPIA

The main reasons for conducting EIA is that it forecasts both positive and negative changes that may occur to the environment, and demands a baseline understanding of the natural driving forces at the proposed project location. Identification of impacts that may occur in the area reduces the risk of future adverse environmental effects, and permits the proposal of mitigation strategies to avoid or reduce significant adverse effects (Worley Parsons, 2006). According to UNEP (1988) the rational to provide EIA is for effective means of harmonizing and integrating environmental, economic, cultural and social considerations into a decision-making process in a manner that promotes sustainable development prior to approval of a project or a public instrument. Moreover, it brings about administrative transparency and accountability, as well as to involve the public and communities in the planning of and decision-making on development processes (UNEP, 1988). This may contribute to the sustainability of the development projects. Evidences indicated that the EIA system has helped the EPA and other decision makers to anticipate potential impacts of proposed development activities, beneficial and adverse, assisting in the identification of optional alternatives which maximize beneficial impacts and mitigate adverse impacts on the environment. The EIA process allows project developers to have sufficient information regarding environmental impact so that they can make sound development choices. Even though the government of Ethiopia appears to have some commitment to environmental issues, the following are considered to be the main gaps and challenges observed in the Ethiopian EIA process. Most research findings indicated that very little is known about EIA in Ethiopia. One of the reasons for such low level of knowledge about EIA is that the law making process has not been participatory. EIA law is enacted most often without the sufficient participation of all stakeholders. Local communities who can be directly affected by a development project have never been properly, timely and adequately consulted during the law making process that finally resulted in Proclamation № 299/2002. As it has been seen in Gilgel Gibe hydroelectric projects the local administrations and other government officials are one of the key actors who were allowed in the process of the EIA preparation. In this regard, Solomon (2006) pointed out that project owners and investors also have inadequate awareness about the importance of EIA. It is concluded that the implementation of the EIA; in general, monitoring and evaluation, in particular*, are* neglected and ineffective. As a consequence, most implemented projects must have caused damage to the environment. From my field visit and experience, some of the leaders are either de-motivated or demoted because of different reasons. From this one could conclude that although the guidelines of EPA are fairly comprehensive, but they are limited in their applicability. In general it could be perceived that the main constraints that weaken the implementation of EIA might be absence of enforcement tools such as monitoring system, lack of public consultation mechanism, insufficiency of EIA to integrate
environmental considerations at the planning phases of development efforts above the project level (at policy, plan, and program level), limited technical and managerial capacities to implement EIAs, inadequate financial and technical resources for capacity building and competence in EIA which were also identified (Yonas, 2008). The ultimate impact of failure in effective implementation of EIA is not only on socio-economic and environmental issues but also on suitability of the broader development agenda of the country.

What is Sustainable Development ?

Sustainable development is a pattern of development that permits future generation to live at least as well as the current generation (Todaro and Smith (2003). It is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development focuses on the preservation of natural resources through careful use without wasting them, the reduction of losses, wastes and nuisances, and the prevention of irreversible damage to the environment. Sustainable development refers to a mode of human development in which resource use aims to meet human needs while ensuring the sustainability of natural systems and the environment, so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for generations to come. It incorporates the sustainable management of its natural resources. The "Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development" adopted at the 2002 UN Sustainable Development conference called on to support developing countries to develop integrated natural resource management by 2005. The concepts of sustainability are an interwoven in all aspects of development strategy. Currently, in most parts of the LDCs it is taken as the best way of bringing economic growth and development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Description of the Study *Woreda*

Dangur is one of the 20 *woreda* s in Metekel Zone, Benishangul-Gumuz Region of Ethiopia. Dangur is bordered by Amhara Region in the northeast, by Pawe special *woreda* in the east, by Mandura in the southeast, by Bulen in the south, by Wenbera in the southwest, and by Guba in the west all of which are found in BGR. Manbuk has a latitude and longitude of 11°17′N 36°13′E. The 2007 national census reported a total population for this *woreda* of 48,537, of whom 24,360 were men and 24,177 were women; 8,352 or 17.21% of its population were urban dwellers. The majority of the inhabitants are followers of Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, with 59.83% of the population reporting they observed this belief, while 26.84% of the populations are Moslem, and 12.85% practiced traditional beliefs. Dangur has a population density of 5 people per square kilometer which is less than the Zone average of 8.57.

Abay-Dar *kebele* is the biggest with 180, 050 hector land size but with the least in terms of infrastructure and social services. This *kebele* is considered as one of the growth consider in the country. Despite huge availability of fertile land for investment, access to road, health and education is extremely low.

The Gumuz and Agew ethnics live in Aba-Dar *kebele*. The livelihood of the people basically depends on agriculture and hunting. It is the richest in terms biodiversity. Economically important three species such as *Deza and Etan* are widely available. Precious animals like elephant, lion, buffalo and others are currently available but endangered animal species due to natural and animal actions.

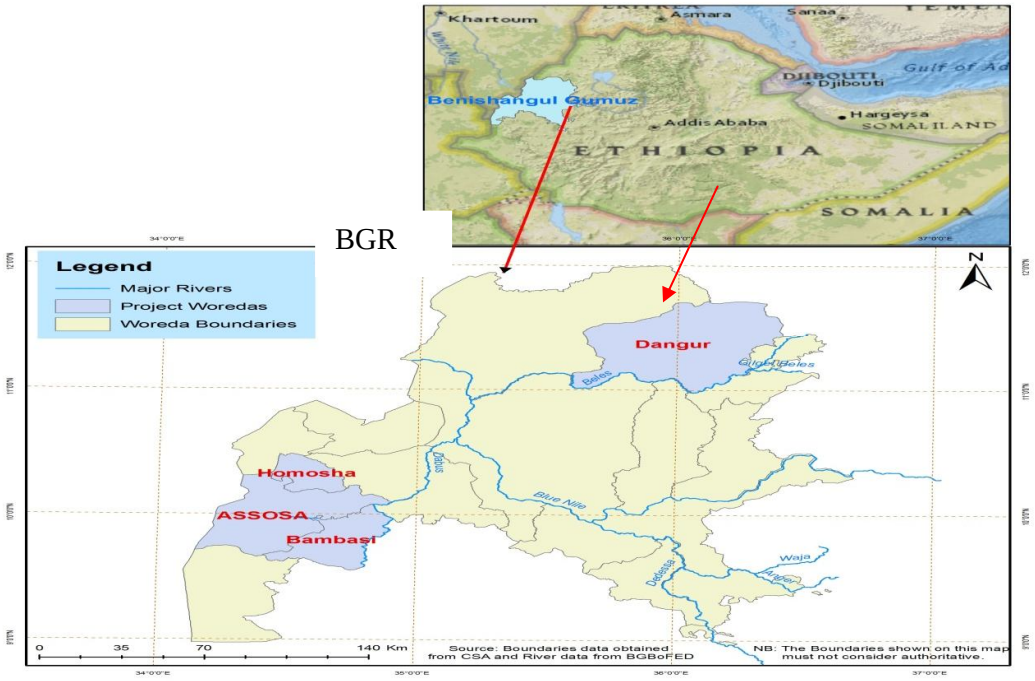

Figure 1. Administrative Map of Benishangul-gumuz Regional State.

Source: ***Google Earth, 2013***

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study is conducted in Benishangul Gumuz region. The region is selected purposively based on the availability of natural resources and significance number of private investor engaged on large scale cotton investment. This case study focuses on large scale cotton framings in Benishangul Gumuz region.The study mainly targeted on local farmers (main participants) in *Abay-Dar Kebele*. Moreover, government experts at zonal, *woreda* and *kebele* levels; and employees of cotton farming PLC are incorporated.

Primary data sources are employed to achieve the stated objectives. A total of 100 individuals have participated in the discussion process. However, to supplement primary data, ecological, and socio-economic data are obtained from environmental protection land administration bureau; rural and agricultural development bureaus at different administrative echelons in the region. Three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with people at different level and adequate knowledge are carried out.

Extensive field observation and transact walk are adequately performed. Key informant interviews with government bureaucrats, local elders and other key informants generated information on challenges of social infrastructure and resource governance system. Consequently, a qualitative in–depth analysis of selected cases is used and looked into the specific factors that challenge large scale investment in the region. Data were collected for 15 days *i.e* January 12- 25/2013. Because of the nature of the study type preferred, brief narration and qualitative arguments have been made taking into account the guidelines of EPA.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Organization of public consultation was suggested as one means to create awareness and convince displaced local people so that they can develop sense of ownership for sustainability of the project. The respondents suggested organization of public consultation to resolve the information gap between government bodies and the private investors in terms of sharing responsibility and accountability during site selection, tax collection, and M&E. However, Dangur *woreda* administrators, experts, and local communities strongly complain against private investors for their unfair and unmanaged action. Therefore, they request urgent solution and policy direction from the concerned higher level government officials.

FGD conducted with Dangur *Woreda* administrator and experts also raised the following essential points. According to their response, information gap among different government administrative echelon is the most overwhelming challenge. In this regard, *Woreda* administrators claim that information was not provided to them either by regional or federal government officials as to how to engage in supporting or facilitating the development activities of large scale cotton farming investment in their *Woreda.* In fact, their claim was not surprised as both the zonal administrators and regional officials support it by indicating that they are not aware about the number, type and even the specific location of large scale cotton farming investment (*i.e* greater than 3000 hector of investment) in the region.

However, during my 15 days filed survey in the region it has been realized that different large-scale development projects have been undertaken by private investors with the view of promoting regional development. It has been recognized that these large-scale development projects are perceived as a threat by the local communities and causes investor-farmers conflict as indicated by the local communities. In addition to displacement from farm lands, absence of environmental impact assessment before the commencement of large scale cotton projects was found to be the main challenge which resulted conflict in the study area. In consequence, deforestation and environmental degradation in such areas are apparently very high. However, efforts to manage and conserve natural resource by investor are found to be the serious problems. Indeed, effort to manage conflict between investors and the local communities through community education is lacking by the concerned bodies. Most writers associate such types of private investment activities with "Land Graving), Dessalegn (2011).

Results from Dangur *Woreda*

The discussion in Dangur *woreda* primarily has focused on assessing the perception of the local people towards large scale cotton farming, and their social, economic and environmental impacts. The result indicated that both local people and *woreda* administrator have adequate awareness and positive attitude towards socio-economic benefits of such projects. The FGD participants associate the traditional long term history of Shinasha people in using cotton for making local clothes. According to their explanation, Shinasha people used to wearing local made clothes like "Gabi", local name for clothes made from cotton which can substitute the modern blanket.

However, they are not aware about the existence of large scale cotton farming such as Mamaye Mihiret PL cotton farming and Askay PL cotton farming and others established in their wodera (Dangur), in Abay–Dar *kebele*. Some of the *woreda* experts and elite leaders claim that they should have been informed by the concerned bodies at least the establishment of the project in their *kebele.* The reliability of their claim has been cross-checked with available secondary data sources. Secondary data sources from Dangur *woreda* revealed serous information gap among federal up to the lowest government administrative structures regarding the responsibility and accountability of the government structure and the private investors. The same scenario has been observed when discussion was conducted with chair man of Metekel Zone. According to his comment since large scale investment are not under the mandate and control of regional government, data and information was lacking about such large scale private investment.

Discussion with Project Site Managers and Employees and Results

Mamaye Mihret PL cotton farming is one large scale investment project established in Dangur *woreda* Abay-Dar *kebele.* This project has about 760 Km far from the Manbuk (*Woreda* town). From my field observation it has been recognized that the project has adequate number of health services to its employees. However, problems of access to road, lack of demand for their output (cotton), ethnic based conflict between employees, and shortage of labor during peak period were mentioned by the discussion participants. These challenges have been witnessed during the field visit; particularly problem of road was the series problem. Because of lack of access for road from Dangur *woreda* to Abay–Dar *kebele* residents of the *kebele* people travel about 760 Km or walk for more than 4 days on foot.

Discussion with Abay-Dar *kebele* Leaders and Local Communities

A large number of people have participated on the discussion held at Abay-Dar *kebele* comprising representative of youth and women, religious leaders and elders, development agents and health extension workers. According to their response, large scale framings are not allowed to manage and follow at *kebele* level. As the result there is lack of responsibility and sense of ownership to follow and manage the activities of the private investors who are currently engaged on cotton farming in their *kebele.*

Figure 1. FGD discussion with Abay-Dar *kebele* representatives.
Source: Field Photo, 2013

Six *keble* leaders bitterly complain against such private investors. During the discussion the residents shouted that large scale investors are engaged in destructing our economically important tree species and transport it to Amhara region. When the local people and *kebele* leaders request the project owners to pay some permit cost or to show them any kind of legal license they (investors) often fail to do so. Rather their response is that, as indicated by the discussion participants, large scale project are under control of federal government and *woreda* does not have the mandate to request.

Figure 2. Massive Deforestation in Dangur *Woreda*.

Source: Field Photo, 2013

Despite all round (political, economic and social) responsibility of *kebele* leadrs, large scale investors are not responsible and willing to report and receive resident identity card from *kebele* leaders for their employees based on the rules of the region. In consequence, theft, crime and ethnic conflict between employees and investors, employees of the project and *kebele* leaders and local community, become a serious challenge.

Another hotbed public discussion was regarding the role of private investment on infrastructural development and service provision to people around the project areas. In light of this, all most all people who participated in the discussion strongly blame the investors. They said when the investors initially come to their *kebele*, they promised to provide a lot of development activities, but in the end they found it as false promise, just to mimic the local people. Some of the people associate such activities with land graving. For example, according to their response, the investors have promised to construct heath post, primary education and access to road. However, until the time of data collection, nothing has been done by such private investors; just they came here to accumulate their profit by distracting our environment. My field observation also confirmed that the role of private investors in infrastructural development and social service provision was found to be very insignificant. Moreover, large scale large cotton investors are not providing employment opportunities to the local communities. According to the data from the project site and *kebele* office, from a total of 200 employees (permanent and temporary) only two are the residents of Abay-Dar *kebele.* During the field supervision this claim has been recognized by the researcher. In this regard, the project manager was interviewed and had undoubtedly confirmed the complain of the local people.

Finally, FGD, KIIs, and local communities who participated in the discussion requested involvement of higher government officials to delineate and clarify their mandate in relation with large scale development projects in their *kebele.*

CONCLUSIONS

The 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia provides a strong constitutional foundation for the introduction and effective implementation of the EIA system. More importantly, the Environmental Impact Assessment Proclamation No. 299 of 2002 has subjected development projects and public instruments in the country to pass through an EIA process prior to commencement of operation. However, even though EIA has been introduced as a legal requirement, it is seldom enforced because of a number of challenges and gapes. Some of the gaps and challenges are lack of awareness and widespread misconceptions about EIA in Ethiopia. This is not only related to the general public but also to some of the main actors in the EIA process. Form my field observation, EIA in the study area is simply considered as a paper tiger. This means that EIA may remain on the paper, if at all it exists, usually unutilized and ineffective. For example, recommendations presented in some EIA document are practiced and implemented as there is little following up. Reviewed literature indicated that the Ethiopian government had relocated local communities in lower stream of Awash valley without adequate consultation or compensation to make hydroelectric power (which needs further detail confirmation). However, my Field visit to BGR revealed the same problem. Information gapes of government, investors and other stakeholders as to how to M&E large scale private investors in the region is mentioned by the FGD and KII conducted at all levels. Form this it can be concluded, in the study area knowledge on EIA and large scale investment is shallow in terms of monitoring and evaluation. In some cases public participation is a mere nominal, in some cases local leaders, *Keble* representatives and government cadres are included as the representatives of the local community and were used to suggesting distorted ideas on behalf of the general public.

In other instances, EIA is simply developed without understanding sustainability of the project, which is not including its cultural and social significance. But, the relationship between sustainable development policies and the natural resource management and government development interest is very complex indicating collective effects of local community, government, privet investors and other governmental and nongovernmental agents who concern for both development and sustainability of the environment. Nowadays, multinational financing institutions made EIA mandatory that all development projects should be subjected to EIA before they can be funded. However, EIA depends government's political commitment and will; for effective implementation of environmental legislation; institutional support; proper development objectives; and trained personnel; and unfortunately many of these factors are not in place in the study region including Ethiopia at large. In BGR, Abay-Dar *kebele* a lot of promises are given to the affected people as the means compensation. They were promised to compensate the local people by providing adequate infrastructure and employment opportunity, when evaluated it was found to be a fake promise. According to the results of field visit in BGR, EIA is not undertaken before the commencement of the project. This might have created biased outcome when post ante EIA or environmental impact management is conducted.

RECOMMENDATION

- Based on the findings and review of literature the followings recommendations are provided. Investors participating on large scale cotton farming in BGR are seriously destructing biodiversity of the project area. Therefore, the investors need to participate in afforestation program by establishing seedling of economically important tree species such as Bamboo and *Etan* trees in Abay-Dar *kebele* along with development agents of government.
- In Abay-Dar *kebele* different wild animals are currently migrating to Sudan because of destruction of forest and the associated biodiversity loss. Hence there is a need to establish Animal Park by regional and federal government to keep wild animals like lion, elephant, bufallo and other species in the area.
- Access to the road is found to be the most challenging problem from Dangur *woreda* to project site. Thus, the investors and government should provide access to all weather roads to the community.
- Information gap between government officials at different level, local community and the private investors regarding large scale farming is inconsistent and biased. Therefore continuous awareness creation and training is vital by federal government.
- Nowadays, local communities are lacking trust and ownership on large scale development projects in Dangur *Woreda*, Abay-Dar *kebele*. So, large scale project owners need to provide adequate employment opportunity to the local community in order to enhance ownership and trust of the local people on the projects.
- Effective EIA implementation inline the guideline of EPA plays a vital role in bringing sustainable development. However, the local people and the private investors in the study area lack profound understanding on the principles and basic concepts of sustainable development. Hence, this study suggested effective and continuous awareness creation through local community education using woreda level development agents.

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