



Full Length Research Paper

Challenges and Opportunities of Community Driven Socio-economic Development in Damota Mountain Hill Woliata Zone SNNPR Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study was undertaken in Woliata zone Damota Mountain to assess the utilization of community potential through integrating indigenous and modern practical knowledge to enhance environmental rehabilitation has been satisfactory. The study has employed personal interviews, questionnaire, focus group discussions, and observation in addition to using available documents. As the result, agricultural production like wheat production during 2010 before the rehabilitation was started 4.5 quintal per hectares. However, after five years the rehabilitation process the productivity level increased to 40.5 quintal per hectares. Soon after a year the productivity of wheat become 52.5 quintals per hectares. It also indicated that the level of awareness in the mountain rehabilitation and sense of ownership within the local people was satisfactory in the study area. Similarly, the productivity increment of sweet potato and taro, from 2010 to 2015 and in 2016 was 58,245 and 362.5 quintals, and 50,180 and 205 quintals per hectares respectively. Therefore, local communities were fully engaged in the rehabilitation activities of the mountain, there is continuous increment in the productivity, as the researcher's observation and understanding from the respondents, most of the local communities were expected to involve in the situation where the physical resources only on the bases of 40 by 60 ratio. The 40 by 60 means, out of the total work load the community covers (labour cost) 60% without any payment but the rest of 40% have been paid for each of the community members who work above the given quota in the study area.

Key words: Community Driven Development, Coordination, Integrating

Introduction

Community driven development is a highly fashionable term in current development practice. Until the 1990's, development discourse emphasized the role of the state and of international agencies in delivering development to people. This blueprint approach was progressively challenged because of its various reasons to effectively address the underlying causes of poverty. The rationale behind community based development is multifold: increased people's participation is supposed to promote greater efficiency, more accountability and transparency, enhanced ownership and empowerment. Ultimately, participation is supposed to be the key to genuine and sustainable poverty alleviation by shifting power to those who are "local and poor" (Nelson, 2005).

Behind the buzzword of community participation, lays a wide range of structure, mechanisms and processes all of which are context-specific and have a different impact on the overall performance of participation. Involvement of the local people in different environmental rehabilitation activity's plan or design, implementation, maintenance and decision making empowers the local people as well. Thus, community participation is highly encouraged in the programs like natural resource conservation, utilization of mountain land for production in order to ensure the sustainable local economic development (Taddese, D., 2001). Ethiopia has begun community participation in environmental rehabilitation programs and practices. However, there are some problems in order to achieve effective, full participatory and accountable system through which the local communities own in environmental rehabilitation (Desalegn, 2011). Insufficient coordination of the local government, disintegration between communities at local level, low participation of community in decision making are common problems in the study area (Beamlaki, 2012).

In this respect, there is limited systematic research that could inform policy makers and empirical understanding in the study area. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to assess the impact of community based social and economic development in Damota Mountain hill. It describes about Damota Mountain before and after rehabilitation program; analysis the difference between productivity before and after activities in the study area.

Materials and methods

Description of the study

Woliata Zone is one of the 14 zones in Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). The Zone is bordered on the south by GamoGoffa zone on the west by the Dawuro Zone on the north, northwest& northeast by KembataTembaro zone, on the east by the Hadiya, and on the south east by Sidama and north east Oromia region. The administrative centre of Woliata Zone is Woliata Sodo City. Based on 2017 sample survey data the Zone has a total population of 1,966,404 averagely, out of which 970,450 are men and 995,955 are women. The total area of Woliata Zone is 4,511.7 square kilometres. Damota Mountain is 3Km far from Woliata Sodo city to the north (BoFED, 2017).

Data Collection Methods

The study was descriptive case study that employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to analysis the present status of community socio-economic development in the study area. The reasons behind using a combination of both methods were to reduce the limitations of each method by taking detail data from different sources. The two major sources of data were primary and secondary sources.

From the former source, some relevant data were obtained by making use of open & closed-ended questionnaire, observation, checklists prepared for focus group discussion (FGD) and interview; while from the later source, it was collected through reviewing and analyzing the existing documents under study. The major reasons for relying upon primary and secondary types of data were to make easy the broad nature of the concept of community participation in environmental rehabilitation.

Sampling Techniques

The study employed different sampling procedures. Based data collection instruments the respondents explained their view. The community based association's representatives as well as Zonal agriculture and natural resources development department experts were involved as a key informant for interview purpose. The above technique was used intentionally in order to get detail data from the key informants on the issues in the study area. There are about 13 villages on the top of the mountain with 236 households in average (BoFED, 2016).

Out of 13 villages 5 were selected purposively and 123 households were selected by using stratified sampling method. The stratification was based on gender i.e. male and female headed households to identify the present status of the mount damota. The proportion of male-headed households has been computed in the similar fashion. Finally, in order to supplement data obtained through questionnaires and key informant interviews, focus group discussions were held in different groups purposively. Three focus group discussions in each of the five sampled villages totally fifteen focus group discussions were conducted in the study area. Each focus group discussions contained 8 households from different age groups, were purposively selected from the study area.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis was both quantitatively and qualitatively with the purpose of describing different numerical evidences in the study. The data analysis process was also made by making use of frequency distribution tables and pie charts. The raw data that were collected from both primary and secondary sources were subsequently be edited and tallied manually and entered in to computer software program of MS-excel.

Result and Discussion

The Present Situations of Community Based Development

The qualitative field data indicated that, development agents are intermediaries between the zonal government and the local community on the mountain who disseminates and implements government directives, information and are again responsible for mobilizing local community for group work of environmental rehabilitation activities in the study area. Village's leaders are also influential, particularly during land measurement and resources distribution.

Zonal agriculture and natural resources development department is the basic co-coordinating unit at the mountain for implementation of soil and water conservation practice activities so as to increase productivity of agriculture in the study area. Different researcher investigated that community driven development planning is a planning which addresses social, economic and political needs of the local people. It is also a process that involves decisions, or choices, about alternative ways of using available resources in the area with the aim of achieving particular goals at some time in the future (Unifruit, 2011). As table 1 below indicated that wheat production during 2010 before the rehabilitation was started 4.5 quintal per hectares. However, after five years the rehabilitation has been done the productivity level increased to 40.5 quintal per hectares. Soon after a year the productivity of wheat become 52.5 quintals per hectares. This indicates that the level of awareness in the mountain rehabilitation and sense of ownership within the local people was satisfactory in the study area. Accordingly, about the productivity of barley increased from 4 to 17 quintals per hectares in the same years. Just after 2015 it become 40 quintals per hectares.

Similarly, the productivity increment of sweet potato and taro, from 2010 to 2015 and in 2016 was 58,245 and 362.5 quintals, and 50,180 and 205 quintals per hectares respectively. These help to understand most of the local communities were invited to engage in

the environmental rehabilitation activities of the mountain so that there is continuous increment in the productivity, as the researcher's observation and understanding from the respondents, most of the local communities were expected to involve in the situation where the physical resources only on the bases of 40 by 60 ratio. The 40 by 60 means, out of the total work load the community covers (labour cost) 60% without any payment but the rest of 40% have been paid for each of the community members who work above the given quota in the study area.

Therefore, not only the actual participation of local people basically in the contribution of resources is good, but also the way through which the zonal government being active, is capable of solving the problem of mount damota and local community's livelihood conditions. Zonal agriculture and natural resources development department has good coordination team for all the activities carried out by the people to the people in the mount damota, because to create more and more ownership and sense of belongingness for the activities going on and so as to bring the communities to control their resources from erosion day and night with greatest interest and commitment in the study area. Focus group discussions indicated that the local community's involvement in planning and implementation was less before eight years ago but just after 2009 the levels of involvement have been increasing at high speed in all the community.

During the field survey, an attempt was made to collect quantitative data to assess the level of decision-making at the community level in damota mountain hill. Accordingly, the respondents were asked to indicate who makes most of the decisions in the community for each and every environmental rehabilitation activities. As figure 1 mentioned, 64% indicated that the local people make most of the decisions. A total of 16% of the respondents said that it is the development agents who make the decisions, while the remaining 18% responded that zonal agriculture and natural resources development department took the decision and, the rest 2% they did not know who make decisions in the environmental rehabilitation activities in the study area.

As it can be seen from Table 2, an overwhelming majority (96.75%) of the sample households replied that they were involved in the planning of Damota Mountain rehabilitation program in the study area. This indicates how the zonal government is making participatory planning in the area. As articulated by interviewees earlier, such kind of thinking generates sense of belongingness within the community. This has been evidenced by participation of the local community on a regular basis in the mentioned activities in the study area.

This has been evidenced by the households' high level of interest to participate in the planning as well as their willingness to implement what is planned in collaboration with the zonal government. For instance, as indicated in the same table above, about 91.87% and 99.19% of the sample households have been participated in the decision making process of different physical structures which helps soil and water erosion and, with full interest to implement the rehabilitation process respectively. Therefore, the key ingredient of establishing a successful community driven development process in community is flexible.

Means of Community Involvement in Environmental Rehabilitation

As the focus group discussants and interviewees indicated that many local communities have indigenous knowledge of mobilizing the community by using different mechanisms in order to plan, implement, utilize and control the resources distribution to live in economically capable area. As articulated by interviewees, in the study area the indigenous knowledge system of the local people has increasingly becoming vulnerable to challenges brought by an inevitable modernization processes in the area. Accordingly, pressures related to modernization such as growth of educational systems, environmental degradation, population growth and increased local people connectivity with various communities both within and abroad are now eroding the indigenous knowledge system of the area. However, local people in the study area have developed and adopted several traditional mechanisms of community participation in their environmental rehabilitation activities like improved fallows, use of cover crops, use of farm implements for soil and water conservation, practices to control soil erosion and use of green manure by forming active development collaborative groups. This kind of mechanism is grouping peoples to conserve land and water resources, construction and maintenance road, enhance their productivity and integrate their indigenous technologies with the modern ones. The qualitative data indicated that, in addition to the traditional one, the other best way that the local government in cooperation with the villages councils including, community based associations representatives have been directing different modern mechanisms of community participation to bring improvement in the environmental rehabilitation practices.

Accordingly, information dissemination by the local community members within a community is decisive, because the local community has the behaviour of immediately accepting information about technologies of new agricultural practice, soil and water conservation, family planning and sanitation from their neighbour and community based associations than, the other government officials. Currently, information sharing through consultation, co-operation and jointly working for one objective of increasing productivity and environmental rehabilitations is highly increasing at normal rate in the study area.

Challenges of Community Participation in Environmental Rehabilitation

As articulated by focus group discussants and interviewees the insufficient coordination level of the village administration and lack of transparency within the administrative bodies working procedure in the resource allocation processes. Lack of unity between the communities at local level is also taken as another big problem in the area because it affected the interests as well as the commitment level of local people to participate in different activities of environmental rehabilitation of the study area.

Accordingly, the unsatisfactory level of community participation basically in implementation is the main problems that aggravate other challenging factors which hinder the development speed of the study area. Here, the village administration structure within the study area operates not only the environmental rehabilitation activities but also become very important tool to mobilize any political issues and other unrelated field works thrown from the district in their area. This has also negative impact in the improvement processes of service delivery of agricultural and natural resources department experts and agents' performance in the study area.

Accordingly, majority of the respondents confirmed that, the co-ordination level, resources controlling, critical identification of the communities need and goals to plan, two way communication between the government and community, site selection to implement through high degree of community involvement and trends of continuous follow up of the local government down to village level for the ongoing activities should be improved.

Table 1. Level of productivity increment from 2010 to 2016

Types of crop	Productivity in 2010 per Quantile	Productivity in 2015 per Quantile	Productivity in 2016 per Quantile
Wheat	4.5	40.5	52.5
Barley	4	17	40
Bean	6	25.5	41
Pea	4.5	29	39.5
Chickpea	6	16.5	23
Haricot bean	4.5	16.5	19.5
Sweet potato	58	245	362.5
Taro	50	180	205
Cabbage	22.5	268	355
Avocado	3	5.5	408
Apple	0	16	16

Source: Compiled by the research in 2017

Table 2. Households' response to the community driven environmental rehabilitation in Damota Mountain Hill

S.N	Items	Alternatives	Respondent		Total
			Yes	No	
	You have involved in the planning of Damota Mountain rehabilitation program in your area.	Frequency	119	4	123
		%	96.75	3.25	100
	You participated in the decision making process of different physical structures which helps soil and water erosion in your area	Frequency	113	10	123
		%	91.87	8.13	100
	The Damota rehabilitation activities are being carried out by you on the basis 40% paid but 60% without payment?	Frequency	123	0	123
		%	100	0	100
	You are fully interested to implement the rehabilitation process in your villages.	Frequency	122	1	123
		%	99.19	0.81	100
	The local community structure is well made in order to control the resources and perform the environmental rehabilitation in the study area.	Frequency	99	24	123
		%	80.49	19.51	100

Source: Field survey 2017

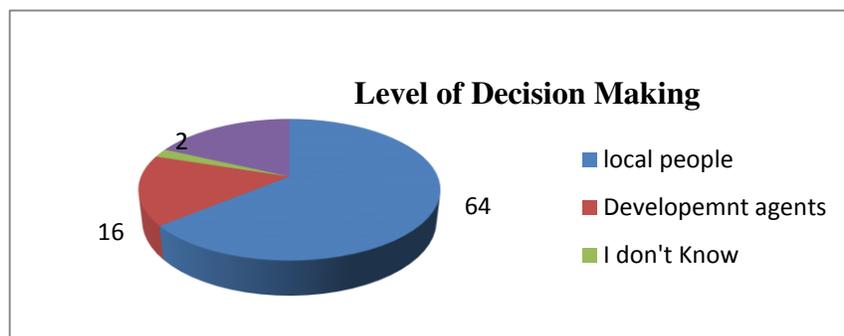


Fig 1: Decision making at the local community Level



Fig 2 Before rehabilitation of Damota Mountain; *Source: compiled by the researcher*



Fig 3. After rehabilitation of Damota Mountain



Fig 4. Apple productions after rehabilitation

Conclusion

Local people in the study area have developed and adopted several traditional mechanisms of community participation in the activities environmental rehabilitation by forming active development collaborative groups. These all have been taken into considered due to the local people's behaviour of accepting information immediately from their neighbour and community based associations than, the other government officials in the study area.

Based on the findings of the study, the followings are recommended that the government and other concerned stakeholders should find the root causes of local community's lesser commitment and interest level in the participation of environmental rehabilitation in their area. Community and local government collaboration with respect to environmental protection and agricultural productivity should further be consolidated. To this end, its associated challenges should clearly be detected and remedial measures should be undertaken against the same. Indigenous knowledge resource of the local community should properly be equipped, documented, and integrated with the scientific methods of resource conservation.

One of the challenges in the study area, is unsatisfactory level of community participation basically in implementation is the main problems that aggravate other challenging factors which hinder the development speed of the study area. Here, the village administration structure within the study area operates not only the environmental rehabilitation activities but also become very important tool to mobilize any political issues and other unrelated field works thrown from the district in their area

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