



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
CENTER FOR REGIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**ASSESSMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WOREDA
DECENTRALIZATION IN GAMBELLA REGIONAL STATE: THE CASE OF
ABOBO AND LARE WOREDAS**

BY
ABRHAM G/SELASSIE G/YES

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENTS OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN REGIONAL
AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

ADVISOR: PROF. TEGEGNE GEBRE-EGZIABHER



JULY, 2011
ADDIS ABABA



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JULY, 2011
ADDIS ABABA

Acknowledgements

First and for most, I wish to express my thanks and gratitude to the *Almighty GOD* for giving me the courage, strength and ability to bring this work to a final stage.

This thesis would not have come to a successful completion without the help of a number of people and institutions. I would like to acknowledge early researchers, on whose findings this research is based. My deepest appreciation and thanks particularly goes to my advisor, *Professor Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher* for his constructive suggestions, criticisms and useful comments. Without his dedication, the work would not have become a reality.

My special thanks go to my parents (Ato G/Selassie, W/ro Diribe & Ethet) for their unconditional love and encouragement throughout my school career, my sisters (Selly and Emu) and brothers (Ermy and Fish) for their moral support and concern throughout the years of the study.

It is also my pleasure to thank Gambella ATVET College and RLDS for providing me the fund and the chance to do this research. I am most grateful to all the respondents who took their precious time to give me all the necessary information needed for this work. Especially to the CBCB DLDP coordinator, officials and experts of different regional sector bureaus, Abobo and Lare woreda officials and experts and all individuals who participated in the interviews and focus group discussions.

My special gratitude also goes to my friends especially Tariku Tsegaye, A²JHZ, Gizachew Teshome, Muluneh Ayalew, Rahwa Siltan, Helen Retta and GATVET College colleagues who have been sharing my worries and have been source of encouragement, material, professional and moral support and they have given me the strength to pass all the difficulties during my stay at Addis Ababa University.

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Acronyms

AAU	Addis Ababa University
ABE	Alternative Basic Education
AIDS	Acquire Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ATVET	Agricultural Technical Vocational and Education Training
BoARD	Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development
BoE	Bureau of Education
BoFED	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development
BoH	Bureau of Health
BoJ	Bureau of Justice
BoRAA	Bureau of Revenue Administration Authority
BoRRA	Bureau of Rural Road Authority
BoWMER	Bureau of Water, Mineral and Energy Resource
CBCB	Capacity Building Coordination Bureau
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSA	Central Statistical Authority
CSB	Civil Service Bureau
DLDP	District Level Decentralization Program
E.C	Ethiopian Calendar
ECBO	Education and Capacity Building Office
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ERA	Ethiopian Road Authority
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GPNRS	Gambella People's National Regional State
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HO	Health Office

KM	Kilometer
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MCB	Ministry of Capacity Building
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
NDR	National Democratic Revolution
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
NRDP	Natural Resource Development Program
OFED	Office of Finance and Economic Development
OARD	Office of Agriculture and Rural Development
PSCAP	Public Sector Capacity Building Program
PTAs	Parent-Teacher Associations
RLDS	Regional and Local Development Studies
RPSCAP	Regional Public Sector Capacity Building Program
S.C	Share Company
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program
SNNPRS	Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissions for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAO	Woreda Administration Office
WB	World Bank
WRDO	Water Resource Development Office

Abstract

This research is concerned with the assessment on the implementation of woreda decentralization in Gambella Peoples National Regional State with particular emphasis to Abobo and Lare woredas. It attempted to explore the objectives, legal and institutional frameworks and implementation status of the recently embarked DLDP and fiscal decentralization in the Gambella region. Secondly, the study provided a modest preliminary investigation of some performance indicators of the program in terms of power and authority, local governance processes, inter-governmental relations, financial and administrative capacities, planning and budgeting processes, community participation and basic service delivery trends with particular reference to the two woredas. Finally, the study tried to illustrate some of the major inherent and encountered problems and the possible prospects of the program.

To meet the above objectives, the research employed more of qualitative case study approach. Both primary and secondary data sources were used in gathering pertinent information. The technique of collecting primary data includes in-depth interviews at regional, woreda and kebele levels, focus group discussions with the community and personal observation. Secondary sources are published and unpublished materials such as books, different reports and manuals that cover federal to the woreda. Descriptive method of analysis is used to analyze the primary and secondary data.

The study found out that decentralization in general and woreda decentralization in particular had not been implemented adequately due to several reasons. It is challenged by many problems such as inadequate devolution of power, limited decisions-making authority and autonomy transferred to local governments, absence of political will and commitment to devolve power in real sense, lack of legal and institutional framework, poor inter-governmental relations and weak coordination with different stakeholders, upward accountability and absence of transparency in the operation of local governments, shortage of resources (skilled human power and material), limited administrative, institutional and technical local capacities, weak budgeting and expenditure administration, poor revenue generating capacity and heavy financial dependency on federal and regional governments, and weak public sector service deliveries. Regarding participation, there is low level of community participation in different sectors at the stage of problem identification, prioritization of needs, planning and budgeting processes and decision making activities at regional and local levels.

Hence, to make decentralization meaningful and benefits of woreda decentralization to be realized, recommendations are made on power and authority, political commitments, legal and institutional frameworks, capacity issues, inter-governmental relations, accountability, transparency, financial and human resources and community participation.

Key Words: Woreda Decentralization, Devolution, Local Governance, Local Capacity, Planning and Budgeting, Community Participation and Service Delivery.

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Key Words: Woreda Decentralization, Devolution, Local Governance, Local Capacity, Planning and Budgeting, Community Participation and Service Delivery.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Decentralization in its various forms has been advocated for as a fundamental political agenda for democratic self governance, administrative and fiscal instrument and socio-economic development for over three decades (Meheret, 1998). It is a concept which is surrounded by a variety of complexities, dynamism and confusion which should be cautiously analyzed in any particular situation, setting, context and country/region before using it as a development policy for reorganization of political, fiscal, administrative and service delivery responsibilities to lower levels.

Currently, decentralization policy is becoming popular and prominent development strategy in most developing countries. During the 1980s, the economic reforms in different parts of the world largely focused on increasing the role of the market and improving the environment in which it operates. The importance of the public sector in achieving broader objectives such as economic stability, sustainable growth and provision of public services received little attention (Ebel and Yilmaz, 2001:1). However, the underlying facts leading to market failure to provide public goods and services has necessitated the potential role of the public sector. As a result, there have been widespread attempts to redefine the potential role of the public sector and improve its performance to achieve the objectives mentioned above. An important component of these reforms is the introduction of policies to decentralize government functions (Smoke, 2001: 3).

Decentralization is simply defined as “a process of transferring political power, administrative, and fiscal responsibilities from central government to lower levels of government” (Derrese, 2003:1). The practice is then occurring worldwide for different reasons, at different paces, and through different means. Decentralization, in developing countries, has been practiced for the last three decades. More recently transferring power to local governments has gained momentum to address not only political stability and contribute to democratic governance, but also improve economic development, service delivery and attain equity of a country. Reassigning of decision making power and execution authorities from the central government to sub-national bodies particularly local self governing organization is necessary on important grounds (Tanzi, 1999).

The government sector of every country consists of more than one level of government. Typically, a country has a Central government that exercises a jurisdiction over the entire national territory. Many countries have one or more levels of governments, which only exercise jurisdiction over a particular region, district, or locality. While some countries have two levels of government (central and local), many others have three levels of government including a Central (or Federal) government, Regional (or State) government, and local governments (Boex, 2001:12). In Ethiopian context, for example, proclamation number 7 of 1992 created and defined the powers of three levels of government- Central, Regional and Woreda level (Proc. No.7/1992:7-8).

Decentralization is the basic platform and instrument for addressing the development, democratic and governance needs of the country. Ethiopia, with no exception is among federal countries embarking on the process and it has a long and complex history of regional and local administration. It was immediately after the restoration of independence from Italian occupation (1935-1941) that Emperor Haile Selassie initiated to bring a system of local government throughout the country. Thus, decree No.1, 1942 created local government administrations (Daniel, 1994: 99 cited in Mebratu, 2008). Accordingly, the Ministry of the Interior was given the authority to supervise provincial administrations and governors at all levels that were appointed by the Emperor.

It was in 1966 that the first ever attempt to decentralize power to lower levels of administration were made by the Imperial regime (Meheret, 2002: 134). And the second experiment to decentralize power was made by the military civilian dictatorship that ruled Ethiopia from 1974-1991, popularly also known as the Derg. As it is stated in the works of Meheret (1998) the Derg established the institute of nationalities as the government think-tank to draft a national constitution and advise it on the reorganization of the Ethiopian State.

The 1991 government change in Ethiopia has ushered in a decentralized system of governance. This is a departure from the past political system which did not allow for self-rule and institutional development and harmony between the different ethnic groups. Decentralization to Regional States was accompanied with the formation of the Federal Government structure in 1992. The decentralization drive in Ethiopia has proceeded in two phases. The first wave of decentralization (1991-2001) was centered on creating and empowering National/Regional Governments and hence was termed as mid-level decentralization (Tegegne, 1998). During this period, National/Regional Governments were established with changes in the local and central government system (Yigremew, 2001).

The National/Regional Governments were entrusted with legislative, executive and judicial powers in respect of all matters within their areas, and with the exception of those that fall under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government like defense, foreign affairs, economic policy, etc (Kassahun and Tegegne, 2004). In particular, they are empowered, among others, to issue regional constitutions and other laws, plan and execute social and economic development. The second wave of decentralization has been introduced in 2001, for deepening power to lower tiers of government to districts and urban administrations by rationalizing the powers earlier vested to Regional States.

The major thrust of the initiative of DLDP program was to devolve decision making authority to woredas and transform them into strong institutions of local democratic governance and efficient means for delivering public services (Meheret, 2007). Zonal and regional authorities had controlling mechanism to check and monitor the powers and responsibilities of woreda government structures. This situation promoted the central government to take the initiative to further devolve powers and responsibilities to woredas in 2001 (Kassahun and Tegegne, 2004).

Following the promulgation of the Transitional Period Charter (TGE, 1991) which contains pertinent provisions (Chapter I, Article: a, b, and c), Gambella Peoples National Regional State (GPNRS) has acquired the right to administer its own affairs within its own defined territory and to effectively participate on the basis of fair and proper representation with the central government. Thus, it is this Charter that gave the right to GPNRS to self-administer and establish its own Regional Government. However, a lot of problems and challenges were faced to set up the regional state and to actually exercise the power acquired during the transitional charter in 1991.

Some of these problems and challenges during the years from 1991 to actual year of establishment of the regional state in (1992) include: (i) ethnic conflict among the nations and nationalities of the region, i.e., between Agnuak and Nuer as a result of disagreement on sharing of power on key political positions of executive offices and control of resources; (ii) lack of infrastructure facilities, limited and/or lack of skilled human power and (iii) conflicts with the highlanders and the indigenous people especially the Agnuak were the major bottlenecks since the establishment of the regional state. Nonetheless, ethnic strife, lack of skilled manpower, absence of political commitment of higher regional officials and limited potential and opportunity of revenue raising capacities of woredas in the region are not yet solved.

In general, there is broad consensus that DLDP is a key to improve local economic development by enhancing service delivery and local empowerment. However, the full impact of woreda decentralization and the challenges faced in its implementation requires an area specific and thorough assessment (Kumera, 2006). Therefore, the focus of this study is to assess the implementation of woreda decentralization in GPNRS. The aim of the paper is to examine the evolution, practices, constraints and prospects of woreda decentralization in two local governments: Lare and Abobo woredas in GPNRS.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The main motive of decentralization is to transfer decision-making power in the hands of the local people and empower them to determine their own development process. It is also to provide an opportunity for establishing transparency, local accountability and the rule of law, as well as bring together stakeholders from all levels for dialogue, decision-making, budgeting and reporting (TGE, 1992).

After decades of highly centralized and unitary political system and administrative setup, Ethiopia has been following federal system of government and decentralization policy of regional and local governance and democratization process immediately after the downfall of the military regime (the Dergue) in 1991. Ethiopia, which had experienced a concentrated political, administrative, fiscal and planning system for a long time, initiated in 1992 (Proclamation No. 7/1992) far-reaching institutional and political transformations. Important measures have been taken to decentralize the government and restructure it along federal lines (Van der Loop, 2002).

The decentralization process of Ethiopia has two phases. The first was practiced from 1991-2001 which was known as mid-level decentralization; and the second phase which has been practiced since 2001/02, is the District-Level Decentralization Program (DLDP) to expand the process of decentralization to woreda level.

One of the objectives of the recent woreda decentralization derive in Ethiopia is stated as enabling local governments to provide quality and efficient services at decentralized levels through promoting good governance, enhancing organizational effectiveness and improving human power capacity (Kumera, 2006; Mohammed, 2006). To achieve these objectives, interventions in the form of institutional arrangement, managing/staffing and training, fiscal transfer and revenue enhancement, local planning and control, entrenching grassroots participation, and standard service and equipment supply were deemed essential (Worku, 2005).

The woreda decentralization program in Ethiopia was initially launched in 430 woredas covering the four major regions of Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and SNNPR, but was subsequently to be implemented in the other regions as well (Meheret, 2007). Following the implementation of the woreda decentralization program, there has been some progress in enhancing the administrative and budgetary capacity of woreda administrations with a view to creating local governance institutions with a greater degree of accountability and responsiveness to the needs and concerns of the community at the grassroots level (Lissane and Mohammed, 2005).

However, there have been challenges in instituting viable woreda administrations with the requisite capacity for self-government and local economic development. As Meheret (1998), Fenta (1998), Worku (2005) and Mohammed (2006) pointed out that most of the problems at woreda level governments are poor and inadequate revenue base to undertake meaningful local economic development, scarcity of skilled manpower in public service delivery, lack of experience in decentralized governance, absence of effective legal and policy framework for woreda decentralization and lack of popular participation and consultation in place.

The MCB (2004) indicate the serious problems faced in the process of implementing the woreda decentralization program as: lack of an integrated system of procedure in service delivery, lack of efficient organizational structure, well coordinated structure and locally adopted working system for planning and budgeting are among the constraints challenging the performance of woreda decentralization in Ethiopia. Furthermore, insufficient experiences in managing federalism, wide gap in administrative and institutional capacity among the regions have posed serious challenges to the success of Ethiopia's decentralization policy. Especially, regions like Gambella, Afar, Benishangul Gumuz and Somali suffer from common problems related to administrative and institutional capacity to undertake development on their own and exercise self-rule (Fenta, 1998).

There is broad consensus that devolving power and authority to woredas is a key to local empowerment and meaningful self-government. However, the full impact of the government's woreda decentralization program and the challenges faced in instituting democratic governance structures have not been properly assessed (Meheret, 2007). The value added of DLDP and woreda decentralization needs to be rigorously examined in order to better understand the implications of the recent move in decentralization (Tegegne, 2007). In order to address the challenges in the implementation of woreda decentralization an investigation of the existing gaps is highly relevant and crucial.

Decentralization in general is an emerging issue and is introduced relatively recently in Ethiopia. As a result, only few researches are available on the subject. When it is perceived region wise, it is fledgling in the Gambella region. Since its establishment as a region in 1992, there are different decentralization schemes launched with the intent to improve the overall performance of the region. One important area where decentralization hinged on is the implementation of DLDP. An evaluation of the practical role of the hitherto schemes of woreda decentralization is worthwhile. Unfortunately, not enough has been done in this regard.

Assessments made by independent institutions and researchers do not yet give sufficient insight into the practice of decentralization in the Gambella region. There is no major study that focuses on the practice of woreda decentralization in the region. The extent to which DLDP has been implemented and whether it had brought any meaningful changes in GPNRS is not yet well known.

Therefore, the study attempts to assess the implementation of woreda decentralization in GPNRS by selecting two local governments, i.e., Lare and Abobo woredas. The study explores the objectives, legal and institutional frameworks and implementation status of the recently embarked DLDP and fiscal decentralization in the Gambella region. It also provides a modest preliminary investigation of some performance indicators of the program in terms of power and authority, local governance processes, inter-governmental relations, financial and administrative capacities, planning and budgeting processes, community participation and basic service delivery trends with particular reference to the selected woredas. With these, it is hoped that the study will fill the gap by giving a glimpse about the role of woreda decentralization in the region since its implementation.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study is to assess the implementation and progress of decentralization in general and of woreda decentralization in particular in Gambella Peoples National Regional State for selected study areas by concentrating on parameters like power devolution, capacity, finance (budget and its adequacy), planning, community participation and service delivery.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To examine the extent to which the Gambella region has devolved powers, functions and resources to lower levels of government and determine at which level that functions and responsibilities are concentrated;
- To examine the local governance process and important aspects of inter-governmental relations, i.e., woreda-region,-zone and -kebele relations;
- To assess the financial (budget and revenue) and administrative capacities of woredas to carry out the tasks of local economic development and provision of socio-economic services;
- To assess planning and budgeting process, level of community participation and trends of service delivery in selected sectors;
- To identify the major constraints and prospects related to the practical implementation of woreda decentralization;
- Based on the findings of the research, forward viable recommendations.

1.4. Research Questions

The research seeks to give answer for the following basic questions:

1. Does the regional government of GPNRS transfer adequate authorities to woredas in order to make necessary decisions, taking appropriate actions and utilizing resources?
2. To what extent decentralization has provided real opportunities for establishing local accountability, transparency and inter-governmental relations among the lower levels of government?
3. Are the woredas' financial and administrative capacities adequate to provide socio-economic services effectively?
4. What are the planning and budgeting process and trends of service delivery in the study woredas?
5. How far is the level of community participation in the study woredas?
6. What are the problems and prospects in the implementation of woreda decentralization?

1.5. Methodology of the Study

1.5.1. The Research Method

There are several types of research methods in social research to choose from. But for the purpose of this study, case study approach that views any social unit as a whole is found appropriate. The approach enables to know how a unit of study is affected by the item being studied through observations of the unit in its setting, and through field interaction and information or data gathered about the unit. The approach is chosen in this study because it has many advantages.

It is both intensive and comprehensive in nature and allows deep and thorough study in exploring and analyzing the unit. Since it deals with various aspects of the unit of study thoroughly, the subject matter or a problem is studied in all its dimensions and ramification. It has the strength of dealing with and a full variety of evidence from documents, interviews and focus group discussion. In view of this, the aim of the study is to provide and collect more information and get a deeper understanding and multiple interpretations of the dynamics of decentralization process and implementation of woreda decentralization in GPNRS. The study employed more of qualitative case study approach.

1.5.2. Sampling Design and Selection of Study Area

The implementation of decentralization in general and woreda decentralization in particular have not been studied in GPNRS, one of the emerging regions of Ethiopia. In order to assess the state of decentralization, the woreda level administration and sector offices are taken as units of analysis for the study. Woreda level government structure was considered due to its relative closeness to the grassroots population and its being viable unit of government for meaningful socio-economic development at the local level.

Currently, the GPNRS is divided into three administrative zones, eleven woredas, one special woreda and one administrative town (Gambella Town). The three administrative zones are Agnuak zone with five woredas; Nuer zone with four woredas and Mejenger zone with two woredas. The only special woreda is Etang special woreda. According to the 2007 population census, both Agnuak and Nuer zones represent almost 70% of the total population living in the region. Out of this population, two woredas (Abobo from Agnuak zone and Lare from Nuer zone) are being chosen purposively as the sample of the study in order to assess the implementation of woreda decentralization in the region.

The selection of specific woredas as a study area is justified based on the following arguments. First, a survey of more woredas limits making thorough study and analysis of the subject. Secondly, conducting a study that represents more woredas is also difficult and requires more time and resource. The two woredas have been selected for reasons of convenience to the researcher in view of data collection due to its accessibility and proximity. In addition, one of the two woredas (Abobo) selected represents urban woredas in the region while the other one (Lare) woreda represents rural woredas. Furthermore, Abobo is close to the regional town and has relatively better infrastructure facilities. On the other hand, Lare is the remotest and is seen as one of the poorly operating woredas. Generally, from the viewpoint of political, economic and social activities, the two woredas are the core and better representative of their zones in particular and the region in general.

The respondents of the study are grouped into different categories. These are planners and analysts of the program, top officials and sector office heads and experts at the regional level, elected and assigned officials and sector office heads and experts at woreda levels and a sample of community members at woreda level. The type of sampling technique applied in this study is non-probability sampling, in which purposive sampling was applied to select respondents, the concerned offices and officials at regional and woreda levels.

1.5.3. Data Types and Sources

To achieve the objectives of the study, data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from in-depth interview of selected informants, focus group discussions and field observation. In-depth interviews were made with key informants using unstructured questionnaire where as discussion guide or semi structured questionnaire was employed for FGD that were made with groups formed from the community members.

Secondary data were collected from published and unpublished materials which are available in the form of journal articles, proclamations, government policy briefs, federal and regional constitutions, laws, regulations, annual plans, performance reports, research papers prepared and presented for policy discussions and conferences, etc. Moreover, semi structured document review check list was used to collect secondary data on the socio-economic and demographic profile of the study woredas: their current administration structure, distribution and coverage of the social services and the institutional, financial and human resource capacities of the woredas under study.

1.5.4. Methods of Data Collection

1.5.4.1. In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants who are from different tiers of government bureaus/offices (See table 1.1). They were selected according to their expertise in the subject under investigation. Therefore, it is more or less like targeted interview, as it only targeted those with the right information or knowledge on issues of decentralization and its implementation at the woreda level due to their experience, political position or professional capacity concerning the achievements, challenges and prospects of the implementation of woreda decentralization in the study areas.

A. Regional Level

Twenty one personal interviews were conducted to gather information from experts and higher officials with the knowledge relating to decentralization drawn from CBCB, Regional State Council Bureau, BoFED, BoRAA, BoH, BoE, BoWMER, BoRRA, BoARD, CSB and BoJ. The questions were both open and broad as they were intended to collect as much information as possible. For open ended questions, probing was used to stay in track with the answers being sought. The questions here asked were more related with policy issues, and show the general trends of how decentralization has been under implementation in the region.

B. Woreda Level

At Abobo (Agnuak zone and Abobo woreda) and Lare woredas, 16 and 13 personal interviews were conducted respectively with heads and experts of woreda sector offices. The questions here were semi-structured and an in-depth interview (for key-informants like heads of line sector offices) that focused mostly on their capacity to deliver public services to the people and their constraints in doing so.

Both open ended and closed ended questions were used at this level. Closed ended questions were used to rate their opinion towards the capacities of woredas to execute development activities for the community. The questions also focused on the woredas capability in planning and budgeting; on their accountability and transparency; their relation with higher tiers of government as well as with the community. Finally, they were asked to make a general appraisal of decentralization reforms in relation to local governance achievements and constraints.

C. Kebele Level

At kebele levels, two kebele chairpersons in each woreda were interviewed. These interviews were intended to get local views of the decentralization process at kebele levels. Questions here were open ended and the contents of the questions included issues such as the relationship between them and woreda officials, the frequency of community meetings, which they organize, issues discussed on problems and constraints and so forth.

Table 1.1: Summary of Key Informants and their Bureaus/Offices

No	Name of Bureaus/Offices	No of Key Informants Interviewed
1	Regional Capacity Building Coordinating Bureau	3
2	Regional Bureau of Finance and Economic Development	4
3	Regional Council Bureau	3
4	Regional Bureau of Education	2
5	Regional Bureau of Health	1
6	Regional Bureau of Water, Mineral and Energy Resource	1
7	Regional Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development	2
8	Regional Bureau of Rural Road Authority	1
9	Regional Bureau of Revenue Administration Authority	2
10	Regional Civil Service Bureau	1
11	Regional Bureau of Justice	1
13	Abobo/Lare Woreda Education and Capacity Building Office	6 (three in each woreda)
14	Abobo/Lare Woreda Office of Finance and Economic Development	6 >>
15	Abobo/Lare Woreda Office of Agriculture and Rural Development	4 (two in each woreda)
16	Abobo/Lare Woreda Administration Office	4 >>
17	Abobo/Lare Woreda Revenue Office	2 (one in each woreda)
18	Abobo/Lare Woreda Health Office	2 >>
19	Abobo/Lare Woreda Water Resource Development Office	2 >>
20	Agnuak Zone Administration Office (Abobo)	1
21	Agnuak Zone Office of Finance and Economic Development	2
22	Abobo/Lare Two Kebele Administrations	4 (two kebeles in each woreda)
	Total	54

Source: Own Sample

1.5.4.2. Focus Group Discussions

Two focus group discussions were held in Abobo and Lare woredas with the community members from different backgrounds of status, age and sex to get sufficient information on basic services delivery such as access to education and health services, quality of services and the level of community participation in planning and budgeting. Each focus group had 10 members or participants.

During the discussion the community discussed good governance issues in the village and the problems that emerge. The discussants were also asked to comment on their access to information such as budgets, reports, resources, etc. This group discussed most sensitive issues but they were facilitated strategically that nothing was taken personal. The information was treated with strict confidence and binding ground rules were set so that people could speak freely.

1.5.4.3. Field Observation

In contemporary field research, observation is the most important technique to collect original data. This is because sometimes the information that the researcher gather from the informants may contradict with that of the real situation. Therefore, observation is better to get first hand information from the original sources. The researcher, while stayed in Gambella for over a month to collect the data, had also the opportunity to watch, listen and communicate informally with the staff members of various offices at various levels at the regional and woreda levels. The researcher had also the chance to observe corresponding official letters between the woreda and regional government. In general, the information gathered from observation was useful to identify the sources of data, the existing problems and to have a general picture of what is going on regarding with the implementation of decentralization in the region in general and in the study woredas in particular.

1.5.5. Method of Data Analysis

The researcher used descriptive method to analyze the primary and secondary data. Since the data collected are qualitative and quantitative in nature, this research relies on both quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Different tables, percentages, simple averages and figures were applied to organize, analyze and interpret the study. Narration and explanation of information and/or data obtained using key-informants interview and physical observation were put into place. To achieve the maximum validity of the data, the researcher employed triangulation method.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study contributes to a better understanding of the current status and process of decentralization in general and implementation of woreda decentralization in sub-national governments in particular. This study, it is hoped, also contributes to a deeper understanding of the problems and possible prospects of the implementation of woreda decentralization in Gambella region. It is expected to provoke the regional policy makers of Gambella region to look for appropriate solutions on the challenges of decentralization in a way to meet the possible maximum needs of their local constituents.

Since the study is the first of its kind so far conducted in the region, it would have an immense importance and impact in the region in general and the subject matter in particular. It will be an added value to the knowledge base on the implementation of woreda decentralization and a stepping stone and springboard for future research studies and researchers in this particular subject in the region. And also, the policy makers, practitioners and the academicians are expected to benefit from the findings of this research.

1.7. Scope of the Study

All regional states and city administrations in Ethiopia have been implementing woreda decentralization policy. Likewise the GPNRS has launched DLDP since 2004/05. In assessing the implementation of decentralization process, the study was primarily focused on how woreda decentralization is being under implementation in the region; what achievements and problems were encountered in the region so far. The study is geographically limited to two woredas (Abobo and Lare) of GPNRS of Ethiopia. Additionally, revenue generating capacities, budget and expenditure trends, planning and budgeting process, community participation and service delivery of the study woredas have also been assessed in the study.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

In addition to financial and time limitations, the study is constrained by the following limitations:

- There is no prior study in the woredas to be used as a springboard,
- Lack of organized secondary data due to the absence of documentation and organized database system in the region in general and the study woredas in particular,
- Lack of willingness of respondents to give first hand (primary data) information,
- Absence of officials and some experts from office during data collection, and
- High staff turnover and frequent restructuring of the woreda government offices also made the data collection tedious conditions.

Therefore, the study relies on a combination of different primary data collection mechanisms with special emphasis to in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and personal observation, and of course with their limitation conceded. However, utmost effort was made to minimize the negative impact of such constraints on the result of the study.

1.9. Organization of the Study

The paper is organized into six chapters. The first chapter presents background information, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, research methodology, significance, scope and limitations of the study. The second chapter contains review of related literatures which are related to decentralization and DLDP. The third chapter provides a general profile, objectives, driving force, legal and institutional frameworks, the powers and functional structures, fiscal decentralization, and planning and budgeting process in the Gambella region. The fourth chapter assessed the performance indications and contributions of the decentralization reforms in the promotion of good local governance, powers and functions, capacity issues, inter-governmental relations, planning and budgeting process, community participation, and service delivery trend in the study woredas. It also investigates the budget and expenditure trends, revenue generating potentials and inter-governmental transfers in the study woredas. The fifth chapter tries to reveal some of the major constraints and the prospects of woreda decentralization. The sixth chapter summarizes the findings and it finally draws conclusion and offers recommendations. References and appendices will be next to the closing chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. The Concept of Decentralization

The term decentralization is an ever-changing concept in terms of meaning and content as well as the degree of its application. It may mean different things to different people and countries at different times. Nowadays, there are varied definitions of decentralization by different scholars. Nevertheless, it is not validity that makes a definition or a theory preferable for adoption. Decentralization embraces a variety of concepts, which must be carefully analyzed in any particular country before determining if projects or programs should support reorganization of financial, administrative or service delivery systems (World Bank, 2003).

Commonly understood, decentralization is the distribution of decision making power and responsibilities to levels of government and the private sector. Contrary to this generalization of the term, decentralization is complex and multidimensional, and has various forms and types (Litvack *et al*, 1998).

Historically, the word “decentralization” has been used to refer to many quite different institutional reforms. As it is indicated in the works of (Camille *et al*, 1997:1-20 as cited in Mebratu, 2008), to the public finance economist, decentralization usually means fiscal decentralization. Reforming the intergovernmental fiscal system is usually the first priority. To the political scientist, decentralization usually means a set of policy issues, a focus on who has authority and responsibility. The political scientist tends to focus on the structure of power and authority and how it is wielded. To the institutional economist, it usually involves getting an incentive system in place so that individual behavior meets expectations. To the sociologist, decentralization usually means participation, and the role of informal organizations and community groups is a major focal point. The urban planner may stress yet another element-decentralization as a strategy for enhancing local economic development. Finally the civil society experts see decentralization as a path to democratic local governance. From this regard; the term decentralization is a dynamic and every changing concept both in terms of meaning and content to different disciplines. It may mean different thing to different people and countries at different times.

In its basic definitions, decentralization is the transfer of part of the power of the central government to regional or local authorities (Yigremew *et al*, 2005; Kasahun and Tegegne, 2004). It entails the sharing of central government powers with other institutions, especially those geographically separated or responsible for specific functions, or those given jurisdictions over specific physical locations (Ndegwa, 2002). It also defined as the transfer of responsibility and authority for planning, management and the raising and allocation of resources from the central government and its agencies to field units level of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations area wide regional or functional authorities or non-governmental private voluntary organizations that are closer to the public to be served (Rondinelli, 1998).

Furthermore, Decentralization is also the transfer of legal and political authority from a central government and its affiliates to sub-national units of government into the process of making decision and managing public functions (Kasahun and Tegegne, 2004). This means the transfer of legal and political authority from a central government to a sub-national entity at lower unit.

Decentralization is a means to ensure the participation of the public in the diverse affairs of their locality. It is not only allows local governments to effectively attend to the tastes and needs of local residents but also enhances inter-jurisdictional competition and innovations in the provision of public services and ensures consistency of level and mix of public services with votes pretenses (Litvack and Seddon, 1999).

Decentralization connotes generally the transfer of political power from central governments to sub-national governments. In principle, decentralization is perceived as a means of improving the efficiency and responsiveness of the public sectors. By transferring decision making power to levels of government that are close to beneficiaries, decentralization can give citizens greater influence over the level and mix of government services they consume and greater ability to hold their officials accountable (Akpan, 2007).

2.1.2. Forms/Dimensions of Decentralization

According to Rondinelli (1998), there are many ways in which a government may devolve power to the sub-national level. It is useful to distinguish the different types of decentralization for highlighting its many dimensions and the need for coordination, these concepts overlap considerably. The common forms of decentralization are political, administrative, fiscal, and market decentralization, which can appear in different forms and combinations across countries, within countries, and even within sectors.

A. Political Decentralization

Political decentralization aims to give citizens and their elected representatives more power in public decision making. It is often associated with pluralistic politics and representative government, but it can also support democratization by giving citizens or their representatives more influence in formulating and implementing policies (Rondinelli, 1998).

Advocates of political decentralization assume that decisions made with greater participation will be better informed and more relevant to diverse interests in society than those made only by national political authorities. The concept implies that the selection of representatives from local electoral jurisdictions allows citizens to better know their political representatives and allows elected officials to better know the needs and desires of their constituents. It often requires constitutional or statutory reforms, development of pluralistic political parties, strengthening of legislatures, creation of local political units, and encouragement of effective public interest groups (Litvack and Seddon, 1999).

B. Administrative Decentralization

Administrative decentralization seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility, and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of government. It is the transfer of responsibility for planning, financing, and managing certain public functions from the central government and its agencies to field units of government agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, or area wide, regional, or functional authorities (Meheret, 1998).

According to (Rondinelli, 1998), Administrative decentralization has three major forms (deconcentration, delegation, and devolution) each with different characteristics.

Deconcentration: It is the redistribution of decision making authority and financial and management responsibilities among different levels of the central government, which is often considered the weakest form of decentralization and is used most frequently in unitary states. Within this category, however, policies and opportunities for local input vary. It can merely shift responsibilities from central government officials in the capital city to those working in regions, provinces, or districts, or it can create strong field administration or local administrative capacity under the supervision of central government ministries.

Delegation: It is a more extensive form of decentralization. Through delegation central governments transfer responsibility for decision making and administration of public functions to semi-autonomous organizations not wholly controlled by the central government, but ultimately accountable to it. Governments delegate responsibilities when they create public enterprises or corporations, housing authorities, transportation authorities, special service districts, semiautonomous school districts, regional development corporations, or special project implementation units. Usually these organizations have a great deal of discretion in decision making. They may be exempt from constraints on regular civil service personnel and may be able to charge users directly for services.

Devolution: It is the transfer of authority for decision making, finance, and management to quasi-autonomous units of local government with corporate status. Devolution usually transfers responsibilities for services to municipalities that elect their own mayors and councils, raise their own revenues, and have independent authority to make investment decisions. In a devolved system, local governments have clear and legally recognized geographical boundaries over which they exercise authority and within which they perform public functions. It is this type of administrative decentralization that underlies most political decentralization.

C. Fiscal Decentralization

Fiscal decentralization is commonly defined as the transfer of fiscal power and resources from the central government to subordinate or quasi-independent (sub-national) government units. It deals with how revenues and public expenditures are distributed among the different tiers (Deresse, 2003). Financial responsibility is a core component of decentralization.

Four components define the fiscal dimensions of decentralization: (i) allocation of expenditure responsibilities by central and local tiers of government; (ii) assignment of taxes by government tiers; (iii) the design of an intergovernmental grant system; and (iv) the budgeting and monitoring of fiscal flows between different government tiers. Local governments will be less accountable for delivering good services if they can manipulate these components to shift fiscal liabilities to the center-what is often referred to as a “soft budget constraint” (Litvack *et al*, 1998).

According to Bahal (1999), Fiscal decentralization can take many forms, including:

- Self-financing or cost recovery through user charges
- Cofinancing or coproduction, in which users participate in providing services and infrastructure through monetary or labor contributions
- Expansion of local revenues through property or sales taxes or indirect charges
- Intergovernmental transfers of general revenues from taxes collected by the central government to local governments for general or specific uses
- Authorization of municipal borrowing and mobilization of national or local government resources through loan guarantees.

If local governments and private organizations are to carry out decentralized functions effectively, they must have adequate revenues—raised locally or transferred from the central government—as well as the authority to make expenditure decisions. In many developing countries local governments or administrative units possess the legal authority to impose taxes, but the tax base is so weak and the dependence on central government subsidies so ingrained that no attempt is made to exercise that authority (Litvack and Seddon, 1999).

D. Economic or Market Decentralization

The most complete forms of decentralization from a government's perspective are privatization and deregulation; they shift responsibility for functions from the public to the private sector. They allow functions that had been primarily or exclusively the responsibility of government to be carried out by businesses, community groups, cooperatives, private voluntary associations, and other NGOs (Boko, 2002; Meheret, 1998).

According to (Litvack and Seddon, 1999), privatization and deregulation are usually accompanied by economic liberalization and market development policies.

- **Privatization:** It can range in scope from the provision of goods and services based entirely on the free operation of the market to public-private partnerships in which government and the private sector cooperate to provide services or infrastructure. Privatization can mean allowing private enterprises to perform functions that had previously been monopolized by government. It can also mean contracting out the provision or management of public services or facilities to commercial enterprises.

Privatization can also mean the transfer of responsibility from government to NGOs, voluntary organization, community associations or private enterprises for specified functions. And finally, it can mean transferring responsibility for providing services from the public to the private sector through the divestiture of state-owned enterprises.

- **Deregulation:** It reduces the legal constraints on private participation in service provision or allows competition among private suppliers for services previously provided by the government or by regulated monopolies.

2.1.3. The Rationales for Decentralization

- The rationale and objectives of decentralization are often varied and ambitious. Much of the decentralization which has taken place in the past decades has been motivated by political concern. Thus political forces are the most common impetus for decentralization processes in many developing countries (Tsegaye, 2008).

The major rationale for decentralization is the transfer of significant amounts of power or authority, functions and capacity (financial and human resource base) from the central government to the local institutions to ensure efficient and effective local decision making based on local knowledge without changing the socio-cultural, political and natural environment of these local areas. Decentralization also aims at promoting high level community participation, democratic governance and maximum accountability of decision-making. Thus, decentralized system of governance seeks to instill in the local people commitment and understanding of their development process so as to make them contribute positively to it (Kwasi, 2005).

Much of the decentralization that has taken place in the past decade has been motivated by political concerns. For example, in Latin America decentralization has been an essential part of the democratization process as discredited autocratic central regimes are replaced by elected governments operating under new constitutions. In Africa, the spread of multiparty political systems is creating demand for more local voice in decision making. In some countries, such as Ethiopia, decentralization has come in response to pressures from regional or ethnic groups for more control or participation in the political process (Litvack and Seddon, 1999).

The decentralization process has an objective of ensuring maximum coordination between the various agencies involved in planning and implementation of development programs at the local level. As a result, under any form of decentralization, local institutions including public, private and community based organizations are encouraged to collaborate in the design and implementation of development process. It also aims at ensuring spatial equity in the sharing of planning, decision-making and management functions from the central government unit. Once lower units of administration are established, it becomes imperative for central government to channel some level of resources to such units. Such resources are supposed to be used to address the development problems of the local areas as a way of bridging any intra and inter local areas spatial inequalities in development (Kwasi, 2005).

Decentralization is also advocated as a way of improving the management of development by enhancing the governance of development, increasing flexibility and responsiveness. Thus projects and programs that are implemented at the local level can be adjusted more easily when unanticipated changes are required instead of such matters of a local nature being determined by central government authorities. In addition, decentralization has an objective of making maximum use of both local, natural and human resources in a sustainable way to ensure rapid development of local areas. There is therefore always a link between decentralization, local resource mobilization and utilization, and national development. This is because it is the local people who have an in-depth knowledge about the resource base and will thus be able to utilize them to the maximum benefit of the local area in particular and the nation as a whole (Ibid).

Economists justify decentralization on the grounds of allocative efficiency. Their economic rationale is that decisions about public expenditure that are made by a level of government that is closer and more responsive to a local constituency are more likely to reflect the demand for local services than decisions made by a remote central government. A second economic rationale for decentralization is to improve the “competitiveness” of governments and enhance innovation—and hence the likelihood that governments will act to satisfy the wishes of citizens. Another potential benefit for decentralization is that people are more willing to pay for services that respond to their priorities, especially if they have been involved in the decision making process for the delivery of these services (Rondinelli, 1998).

Concerns about equity—inter-jurisdictional and interpersonal—have been central to the discussion of decentralization. Some jurisdictions are better endowed with resources than others, perhaps because of size or location. It is usually argued that central governments are ultimately responsible for ensuring interpersonal equity. Where local economies are intrinsically open and many resources, especially key human resources, are mobile, only limited success should be expected from jurisdictionally focused distributional programs. Still, local governments can and do play very important roles in implementing central distributional programs and in determining a host of tax, expenditure, and intra-locality transfer schemes (Litvack and Seddon, 1999).

On the other hand, scholars noted that decentralization cannot be a panacea for all development ills. There are limits to decentralization. Decentralization policies do not always achieve their declared objectives. Ideological and political, administrative and planning, human and financial resource considerations and constraints affect the outcomes. Defining tasks and responsibilities to be transferred and how to finance them at the local level is also an essential task. As much as decentralization is now an accepted strategy, it has its own pitfalls arising from design, implementation and impact (Boko, 2002).

2.2. Factors Affecting the Implementation of Decentralization

The concept of decentralization is influenced by a mix of economic, political and social factor. Thus in utilizing the concept of decentralization it would be useful to fully understand its dynamics. A host of factors is likely to influence the performance of decentralization in sub national governments. These include the political framework; fiscal aspects of decentralization; transparency of government actions; citizen participation; the effectiveness of civil society; aspects of the social structure; the capacity of sub-national governments, and other factors (Azfar *et. al.*, 2005).

Although politics is the driving force behind decentralization in most countries, decentralization may be one of those happy instances in which good politics and good economics serve the same end. The political objectives of increased political responsiveness and participation at the local level can coincide with the economic objectives of better decisions about the use of public resources and increased willingness to pay for local services.

Decentralization is desirable but where the ingredients necessary for its proper implementation are lacking then decentralization at lower levels of government remains problematic. According to (Akpan, 2007) and (Litvack and Seddon, 1999), certain necessary ingredients for decentralization to be implemented successfully include:

- Full commitment from national and sub-national government in addition to adequate resources. The central government must be willing to give up control and recognize the importance of sub-national government in service delivery, among other matters.
- It requires an appropriate legislative framework which clearly defines responsibilities and powers of sub-national governments as well as the expected relationship between central and lower levels of government. It also necessitates the structure of service delivery responsibilities and the intergovernmental fiscal system which must be designed to support the political objectives.
- There is a need for accountability and transparency. Decentralization must be accompanied by checks and balances so that there is no abuse of power. This is one way of fighting corruption and clientelism. Corruption implies a breakdown of cooperative behaviour in which few collude to the detriment of all. Thus, devolving functions to smaller units that are closer to the population should in theory increase consensus and legitimacy concerning the choice of public services. This, in turn, can be expected to foster cooperation, vigilance, as well as acceptance of and adherence to rules of public sector integrity ('rule-obedience').
- Effective decentralization needs adequate financial and staff resources. Sub-national governments must have the legal authority to raise revenue to support its expenditure requirements. Thus, the fiscal relationship between the centre and lower-levels of government must be clearly worked out on the basis of equity, fairness and justice.
- Communities need a mechanism for expressing their preferences in a way that is binding on politicians, so that there is a credible incentive for people to participate.
- It is useful that both the centre and lower levels of government engage in dialogue to reduce tension and areas of conflict; more importantly, dialogue is necessary in trying to resolve new challenges. Dialogue is crucial to ensure co-ordination between the centre and sub-national governments; in the final analysis, there is one economy but different layers of government.
- Local communities must be informed about the costs of services and delivery options and the resource envelope and its sources, so that the decisions they make are meaningful. Participatory budgeting is one way to create this condition.

- Capacity must exist at the sub-national government level. Sub-national government must have sufficient professional and well-trained staff. Where shortages of qualified and experienced persons exist, the training and re-training should be put in place in order to develop professional and technical expertise that will provide public services efficiently. Capacity connotes the ability, competency, efficiency of sub-national governments to plan, implement, manage and evaluate policies, strategies or programmes designed to impact on social conditions in the jurisdiction. This aspect is referred to as one of the performance factors and includes human capital, physical capital and incentive structures within government (Ahmed *et al*, 2005).

On the other hand, according to Cheema and Rondinelli (1983) the degree of implementation and the degree of accomplishment of intended goals of decentralization policy depends on a range of political, social, behavioural, economical and organizational factors. These all put together will lead to performance and achievement of policy goals, local capacity improvement, productivity, participation and better service delivery. Since these factors are interrelated, it implies that, if some of these conditions (as the case is in most circumstances) are missing which in turn implies that, the program is limping and may not produce desired outcomes.

In addition to the above mentioned issues influencing decentralization policy, practical experience as well as scholarly studies (e.g. WB publications and Kalin, 1998) point out various conditions which are indispensable for successful decentralization which among other things include: (a) secure existence of local government, (b) availability of adequate resources (financial, human, material, etc) and autonomy to use and manage it, (c) accountability and transparency, (d) political will and partnership, and (e) strong legal framework- setting out the powers, rights and duties of local governments clearly.

Lastly but not the least, a decentralization programs to be successful highly depends on an effective and efficient design before it is implemented showing the sequence and steps of implementation, what is required at every step, the legal framework governing the process at every step, the institutional framework and continuous fine tuning during its implementation. In designing decentralization program, the fiscal (functional assignment, revenue assignment, transfers system, etc) design is a key condition for successful decentralization program (Vergara, 1999).

(Conyers, 2007) concludes that the following factors have led to weak administrative performance under decentralisation which include inadequate devolution of power, particularly over finance and staff; vague and/or inappropriate systems and procedures; inadequately qualified, underpaid and unmotivated staff; political 'interference', corruption and abuse of power; and lack of 'downward' accountability.

2.3. A Conceptual Framework for Analyzing Decentralization Policies

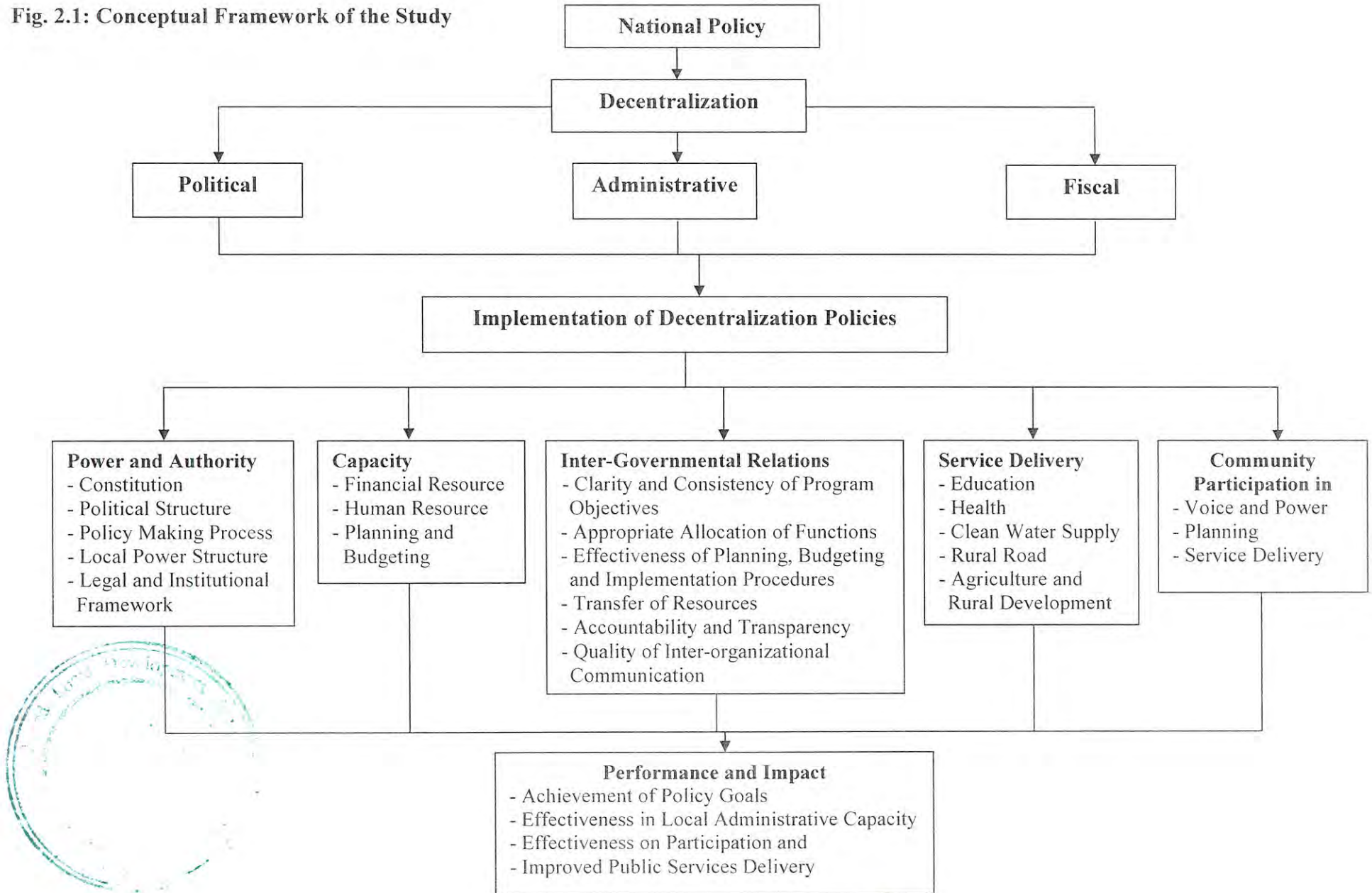
Policies are a guide to decision-making. They establish the broad framework within which officials operating at various levels and engaged in various functions, make decisions of a recurrent nature (Agarwal, 1982:74). Rondinelli and Cheema (1983: 26-31) stated that public policies are incorporated in public documents such as the constitution, long and medium range plans, and annual budgets, and they are usually expressed most explicitly through government statements on specific issues. They further noted that the scope of public policies can range from broad statements of intended goals, to guiding principles for public actions, to specific schemes for achieving objectives.

In reality, however, making public policies is not what government intends to do, but what it actually does. A program is a collection of related activities that is designed to harmonize, and integrate actions by government agencies and other organizations for achieving policy objectives. Implementation has been defined as a “process of interaction between the setting of goals and actions geared to achieving them. There are two views from literature about policy implementation of decentralization: the “Compliance” approach and the “political” approach (Rondinelli’s and Cheema’s, 1983).

The first assumes the implementation as a technical, routine and a political process of carrying out predetermined plans and that administrators or implementers are subordinates who comply with guidelines established by political leaders. Whereas, the political approach views administration as an integral part of the policy making process in which policies are refined, formulated, or even abandoned in the process of implementing them, thus making implementation complicated and unpredictable (Ibid).

As it has also been noted by Rondinelli and Cheema (1983), since many of the developing countries who formulate the decentralization policies hold the “compliance” view of administration so that the factors that influence policy implementation have not been given adequate attention. Thus, these countries assume that once policies are announced they will be implemented by subordinate administrators and that the intended results will be achieved in a non political and technically competent way. However, the experience with decentralization in developing countries, and with other programs and policies as well, indicates that implementation is not merely a technical process of carrying out preconceived plans, but is a dynamic and somewhat unpredictable process of political interaction.

Fig. 2.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study



According to Rondinelli and Cheema (1983: 26-30) as depicted above in figure, a variety of factors such as; environmental conditions, inter-organizational relations, available resources and the characteristics of implementing agencies influence the implementation of decentralization policies in developing countries.

Many analyses of decentralization consider the transfer of powers in three sectors to be necessary for success. (Vergara, 1999), for example argues if it is to have significant promise decentralization must entail a mixture of all three types: democratic, fiscal, and administrative. The three main elements of decentralization political, fiscal and administrative should be implemented together. Although political, fiscal and administrative are critical for state craft they do not hold up as analytical categories. New tools such as actors, powers and accountability are necessary to understand the principles that make decentralization effective.

Agrawal and Ribot (2002: 4-9) suggested that three distinct dimensions underlie all acts of decentralization: actors, powers and accountability. According to these writers without an understanding of the powers of various actors, the domains in which they exercise their powers, and to whom and how they are accountable, it is impossible to learn the extent to which meaningful decentralization has taken place. In their conceptualization, the political and administrative domains of decentralization are characterized by the mix of these three underlying analytical dimensions.

2.3.1. Actors in Decentralization

Actors in local arena who exercise powers over resources may include appointed or elected officials, NGOs, Chiefs, powerful individuals or corporate bodies such as communities', cooperatives, and committees. Each of these actors is typically located in particular relations of accountability and has certain types of powers (World Bank, 1997:215-219). Consequently, the nature of decentralization depends to a significant degree upon who gets to exercise power and the accountability relations to which they are subject.

2.3.2. Types of Powers

According to (Vergara, 1999), there are three more familiar powers of decision-making being crucial for understanding decentralization. These powers are (a) legislative (Creation of rules) (b) executive (making, implementing, and enforcing of decisions) and (c) judicial (adjudication of disputes). It is certainly possible that in particular decentralization effort, powers to enforce are transferred to administrative branches of the state rather than to representative local governments at the same level. Whether such transfers of power leads to effective decentralization depends on the nature of accountability relations, mix of powers that a given actor holds and the horizontal relations among actors at the same level.

2.3.3. Accountability in Decentralization

Rulers claim to be responsible to their people; people try to hold them to account. Accountability is thus the measure of responsibility (Litvack and Seddon, 1999).

According to (Litvack and Seddon, 1999), the allocation of different sets of power for decision-making and rule-making to lower level actors creates decentralization. Thus, if powers are decentralized to actors who are not accountable to their electorate, or who are accountable only to themselves or superior authorities within the structure of the government then decentralization is not likely to accomplish its stated aims.

2.3.4. Essential Characteristics for the Implementation of Decentralization

Decentralization's multiple dimensions, goals and arenas make it a complicated and somewhat difficult phenomenon to understand, let alone support effectively. Despite all this complexity, however, no matter what form decentralization takes, toward what goal it is intended or in what arena it is adopted, all decentralizing changes must embody certain key characteristics in order to succeed.

According to (USAID, 2007) handbook there is four characteristics; *authority, autonomy, accountability and capacity* to provide analytical coherence to what are empirically a complicated and often incoherent phenomenon.

1. Authority: sub-national governments or sub national administrative units of the national government must be given *authority* to undertake specific functions. For decentralization to be meaningful sub national administrative units or governments must do something to benefit their citizen-residents, who must know what local administrators or councilors are authorized to do in order to interact with them effectively. Authority, which can be mandatory or permissive (allowed but not compulsory or prohibited) can be enshrined in a constitution and/or outlined in laws (USAID, 2007:4).

It can also be decreed administratively, but this is weaker than constitutional and legislative authority. An important requirement is that authority must be rule based so as to limit self-interested manipulation by politicians and central bureaucrats. In many developing countries, formal sub national authority co-exists with traditional community or tribal authority, which may serve key roles that need to be respected or even nurtured (Ibid).

2. Autonomy: decentralization requires that sub national administrative units or governments be given some degree of *autonomy* over functions they now have the authority to undertake. The national government has a legitimate stake in maintaining some control over functions that support critical national goals (such as stability, democracy and development), but certain functions or aspects thereof can often be assigned to sub national actors. Autonomy provides sub national officials with flexibility to respond more effectively to local conditions and the specific needs of local people. Of course, autonomy has a different quality when exercised by appointed administrators than it does when exercised by elected officials, but the former can often productively be given an element of managerial discretion to better meet local requirements (Ibid).

3. Accountability: decentralization must create a degree of *accountability* to empowered local citizens, who know what to hold sub national public officials accountable for by virtue of the specific authorities allowed to them. Of course, accountability is more powerful in cases where voters can replace elected officials if they do not adequately respond to local needs, but even if sub national officials are appointed, a range of mechanisms can help to improve accountability (Agrawal and Ribot, 2002:9). These include complain adjudication boards, citizens report cards and performance based employee reviews that include citizen feedback. The critical concern is that accountability mechanisms provide a central link between formal decentralized institutions and citizens, the core relationship in democratic local governance. Without them, sub national officials with strong authority and autonomy are the functional equivalent of autocrats.

At the same time, an element of vertical accountability to the center is almost invariably required—even in industrialized countries higher level governments have the right to ensure that basic standards are maintained in the delivery of key local services and that legality requirements are met on electoral processes, fiscal responsibility and procurement. Moreover, decentralization also involves horizontal accountability relationships (e.g. between elected councilors and local civil servants, among sub national departments) that are critical for effective performance (Ibid).

4. Capacity: Effective decentralization requires that sub national administrative units or governments have adequate *capacity* to use their authority and autonomy to be responsive to local people. If sub national officials are unable to deliver functions that local residents expect from them, the potential benefits of decentralization are unlikely to be realized. At the same time, civil society must have sufficient capacity to hold local administrations and governments accountable if decentralization, much less true democratic local governance, is to take root and flourish. Even central agencies must often develop new capacities to support the transformation of their role from controlling sub national jurisdictions to enabling, coordinating and legally overseeing them. Obviously this treatment of the four characteristics is highly simplified—the relationships among authority, autonomy, accountability and capacity are complex and can involve substantial tradeoffs (USAID, 2007:4-5). Nevertheless, these four characteristics capture much of what is most important about decentralization.

2.3.5. Community Participation in Public Services Delivery

The argument that decentralization improves resource allocation, accountability, and cost recovery relies heavily on the assumption that sub-national governments have better information than the central government about the needs and preferences of the local population, and that the population is more aware of actions of sub-national governments than of the central government. Sub-national governments, however, do not automatically have better information about user preferences than the central government. The sheer physical proximity to constituents does not ensure that sub-national governments have the needed information unless they make an effort to elicit it. Similarly, the local population is not necessarily aware of the activities of sub-national governments (Azfar *et. al.*, 2005).

Whether sub-national governments have information about the preferences of citizens depends critically on the existence of mechanisms for the local population to participate in the delivery of public services and have their voice heard in decision making. Citizen Participation in service delivery facilitates information flows between the government and local population and thereby reduces asymmetric information. It provides means for demand revelation and helps the government to match the allocation of resources to user preferences. Citizen participation in service delivery also can promote government accountability by increasing citizens' awareness of the actions of, and their control over, sub-national governments (Ahmad *et al.*, 2005).

The extent to which users have voice about the service depends on the processes of citizen participation in government decision-making. Constitutions, laws, and government policies can establish several mechanisms through which the citizenry can express in a systematic way its preferences and perceived problems with public service delivery. Participation can take many forms: voicing the demand and perceived problems with the delivery; making choices; or being involved in projects and service management (Litvack and Seddon, 1999).

Citizens can also have their voice heard through direct participation in service delivery. They may participate in the implementation of specific projects by contributing to the design, construction and/or operation and maintenance of services. In other words, government and communities may coproduce the services (Azfar *et al.*, 2005).

Failure of governments alone to provide adequate levels of services has in the past decade led to the adoption of a community-based approach to the delivery of some local services, in particular rural infrastructure services such as village water and irrigation. The evidence on the rural water sector indicates that water systems provided by projects that followed the community-based approach have, on average, performed better than systems built and managed by government alone (Ibid).

The community-based approach is argued to have three benefits: it provides means to better tailor the services to users' needs and preferences by involving users in service design; it enables the use of local resources (such as labor and materials) by involving users in construction and service management, thereby alleviating fiscal pressures on government; and it increases transparency and accountability in resource use by increasing the flow of information and interaction between users and government (Ibid).

2.4. Decentralization in Ethiopia

Like many African countries, Ethiopia is a complex mosaic of ethnic groups with different religious and cultural backgrounds. The country has a long history of centralized system of governance. Attempts to respond to the question of decentralized government began during the last decade of Emperor Haile Selassie I rule (Fenta, 1998). Although there were some deconcentration (rather than decentralization) programs in a form of establishing provincial administration during the times of the Emperor and the Derg governments, there was no genuine decentralization to talk about. Following the ouster of the military regime in May 1991, Ethiopia has developed a decentralization program that is among the most significant and ambitious in the developing world, certainly one of the most substantial in Africa and has become the political agenda of the Ethiopian government (Smoke, 2001; Yigremew *et al.*, 2005).

The 1995 Federal Constitution of the Government of Ethiopia has formally created a federal state comprising regional sub-governments carved out on the basis of ethno-linguistic criteria. It clearly laid down the foundation for decentralized system of governance by giving various and substantial powers (political, administrative, financial, etc) to regions (now nine regions and two city administrations) to make decisions concerning them as well as reporting and accountability relationship.

The constitution defined the powers of the federal and regional states. Regional states have been granted a substantial degree of decision making authority with a decentralized system of fiscal and infrastructure administration. It has also provided a suggestion and justifications to *woreda* decentralization to confer adequate power to the lowest unit of government to allow the community at local level to equally participate directly and indirectly in the administration of their own affairs (FDRE, 1995).

Although the FDRE constitution clearly indicated that powers and authority should be devolved to local (*woreda*) level, it did not materialized (except for some deconcentration) but instead decentralization was confined to regional level until 2001/2002 in which it was implemented in two phase as broader part of the famous PSCAP. The first phase was started with the four bigger or relatively advanced (Oromia, Amhara, SNNP and Tigray) regions in 2001/2002 followed by the remaining (Somali, Afar, Benshangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Harari) regions. The implementation of the DLDP is in its early stages and its outcome towards achieving its objective is yet to be seen.

2.4.1. A Brief Overview of Historical Background

2.4.1.1. The Imperial Regime

Previously, Ethiopia was a highly centralized unitary state because the politics of nation building has been anchored on a strong centralist state that jealously guarded its sacrosanct central power (Meheret, 2002). Emperor Menelik II was regarded as the founder of modern system of governance in the history of Ethiopia. He was a pioneer of central administration. The foundation for a modern local government system was laid by Emperor Haile Selassie I more than half a century ago (Meheret, 2007).

In the past, Ethiopia had made some preliminary attempts at decentralization. The Imperial Regime recognized provincial administration by creating a four-tier local government structure that included *teklay gizat*, *awraja*, *woreda* and *mekitil woreda* level administrations. The first comprehensive administrative decree No. 1 of 1942 defined the power and role of the Ministry of Interior as the principal central government department to supervise local government throughout the country. Governor Generals (*Enderasses*) for *teklay gizats* and Governors for *awraja*, *woreda* governments were appointed by the central government to act as the representatives of the Imperial throne in the periphery (Meheret, 2007).

The first move towards institutional decentralization in Ethiopia dates back to the Imperial era when the Haile Selassie I government submitted to the parliament, the *awraja* local self-administration No. 43 of 1966. The draft bill proposed to grant administrative autonomy to 50 *awraja* governments drawn from the majority of the country, 14 provinces on the basis of their potential to be self-sufficient. Despite strong resistance from parliament, the program was implemented in 17 selected *awrajas* on experimental basis (Meheret, 1998).

However, conservative members of parliament were not ready to devolve authority to local governments due to their doubt that this would in danger the unity of the country. They suspected that the decentralization process may encourage secession instead of modernizing the country (Meheret, 1998; Mohammed, 2006). Therefore, there is no real decentralization that was aimed at bringing about empowerment and participation of the people during the Emperor's Regime (Kassahun, 2000).

2.4.1.2. The Military (Derg) Regime

Following the collapse of Imperial rule, the Derg government assumed power in 1974. But, it too did not have a better record at decentralizing power from the center to the periphery than the Imperial regime (Meheret, 2007). The Provincial Military Administrative Council attempted to solve the problem of self-administration as reflected in its National Democratic Revolution (NDR) Program. The most significant part of this commitment towards decentralization was the establishment of lower level local government elected by the dwellers of their areas of jurisdiction. But later elected council members were member of the Worker's Party of Ethiopia and was accountable to the party than to the people. As a result, they were not serving the interest of the local people rather they were serving as policy implementers and defenders of the central government and they were acting as if they were appointed than elected (Fenta, 1998).

The Derg's plan was a response to political pressure intended to give some kind of autonomy to groups fiercely opposed to central rule. Hence, Derg established autonomous and administrative regions by proclamation No.14 of 1987. This proclamation was necessitated by increasing instability in some provinces of the country notably, Eritrea, Dire Dawa, Asseb, Tigray and Ogaden areas. These were the troubled areas where both ethnic/civil conflicts were raging and sentiments for separation were running high throughout most of the 19970s and 1980s. These regions were given autonomous status while the rest of the country was divided in to 25 *administrative regions*. The autonomous and administrative regions were further divided in to *awrajas* thus establishing three-tier divisions of *center, regions and awraja* (Meheret, 1998; Tegegne, 1998).

Then, the attempts of Derg decentralization policy was futile due to the fact that it is not basically designed to grant self-administration, secure the preservation of place and stability of the country (Fenta, 1998). With the failure of the half-hearted decentralization reform effort under the most authoritarian regime, the country was thrown into further turmoil that precipitated the collapse of the regime and its replacement by the EPRDF forces in May 1991 (Meheret, 1998).

2.4.1.3. The EPRDF Rule

Immediately after the EPRDF come into being, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) was established with a transitional period charter in which the rights of nations, nationalities and peoples are confirmed. Among the rights guaranteed to nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia by the new TGE and its charter (Chapter I, Article two, Sub-Article a, b, c) included that every nation or nationality has the right to (a) preserve its identity and promote its culture and history, use and develop its language; (b) administer its own affairs within its defined territory and effectively participate in the central government on the basis of freedom, fair and proper representation; (c) exercise its right to self determination of independence, when the concerned nation, nationality and people is convinced that the above right are denied, abridged or abrogated (TGE, 1991). This brought a new era in decentralization in the country.

Subsequently afterwards proclamation No.7/1992 has provided the legal basis for the establishment of regional governments which can also be considered as the beginning of the real implementation of the decentralization. Then come proclamation No.33/1992 which stipulated the sharing of revenue between the national and regional government; and proclamation No.41/1993 which defined the powers, duties and responsibilities of the national and regional executive organs. Up until 1995 when FDRE constitution comes into being in a full-fledged manner, the country was divided in to fourteen transitional regional governments. But, this was later reduced to nine regional states and two city administrations (Kassahun and Tegegne, 2004; Yigremew *et al*, 2005).

The 1995 federal constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia indicates that regions are formed on the basis of population, settlement, language and identity. The constitution also recognized nine regional states with equal powers and rights as member states of the Ethiopian Federation. The regions are divided into zones and the zones into woredas. However, zones were established by regions to coordinate and monitor administrative and development issue of *woredas* under their jurisdiction without clear reference to this by the constitution. The nine regions of Ethiopia are: Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Benshangul-Gumuz, SNNP, Gambella and Harari. All of the regional states can be considered to have semi-sovereign status because each has its own flag, a constitution, a government, defined territory and population (Meheret, 1998; Kassahun and Tegegne, 2004; Yigremew *et al*, 2005).

The decentralization process of Ethiopia has two phases. The first was practiced from 1991-2001 which was known as mid-level decentralization; and the second phase which has been practiced since 2001/2002, is the District-Level Decentralization Program (DLDP) to expand the process of decentralization to woreda level.

While the first wave of decentralization has registered some achievements in regional self-rule, it was not capable of bringing genuine self-rule particularly at district level of administration where governance and administration matter most. Though the constitution allows for the creation of woredas with their elected councils, the lack of power, resources and authorities has limited them to effectively engage in democratic self-rule. In addition, zonal and regional authorities had a controlling, checking and monitoring power over the activities of woreda governments. These circumstances prompted the Central Government to take an initiative to further devolve powers and responsibilities to the woredas in 2001 (Kassahun and Tegegne, 2004). The second wave of decentralization has been introduced in 2001, for deepening power to lower tiers of government to districts and urban administrations by rationalizing the powers earlier vested to Regional States.

2.4.2. District Level Decentralization in Ethiopia

Recently devolution of power to lower level units has become a vital concern in many developing countries. The task indeed has also become a complex process as it involves resource mobilization and service delivery. It has also become an issue of poverty reduction, good governance and capacity building (Litvack *et al*, 1998; Worku, 2005; Yigremew *et al*, 2005). Like any other country, empowerment, governance, capacity building, poverty reduction and sustainable development are interwoven aspects in the development of decentralization in Ethiopia.

The Federal constitution reveals a strong preference for activist welfare state oriented government that is heavily involved in providing social and economic infrastructure for development. At present, there are five levels of government in the Ethiopian Federal structure: the federal, regional, zonal, woreda and kebele levels of government. The functions assigned to the Federal Government are national in scope: monetary policy, foreign relations and defense. While regions are responsible for drawing and implementing budgets, providing public services such as primary and secondary education and health, carrying out socio-economic and infrastructure development at regional and local levels (Meheret, 2007).

The woredas are considered as the key level of local governments, centers of development and the governments at the regional and federal levels are trying to enable rural woredas play their important roles through coordinated capacity building measures. The woredas which are the lowest and basic units in the hierarchy of the government structure are also provided with more power than it had been before to play a much greater role. Within the framework of current state structure, woredas and kebeles are constitutionally recognized as lower tiers of local government. By law, these two levels of government have elected councils and executive committees that are responsible for local governance, provision of public services and socio economic development (Ibid).

DLDP is one of the 14 programs that have been undertaken by the Ministry of Capacity Building (MCB). It is one of the six sub-programs incorporated in the larger Public Sector Capacity Building Program (PSCAP) implemented by MCB-DLDP in the nine regional states (Worku, 2005). It was first launched in 2001/02 as an enabling measure to article 50(4) of the FDRE constitution, which declares, “adequate power shall be granted to the lowest units of the government to enable the people to participate directly in the administration of such units.”

DLDP encompasses all the three major aspects of decentralization namely political, administrative and fiscal. It is aimed at supporting the decentralization and democratization efforts of the government to alleviate poverty. The overall objective of DLDP is to enhance the institutions working systems and human capital in an integrated and coordinated manner at woreda and kebele levels to ensure democratization, empowerment and good governance (MCB, 2004).

The objective of DLDP is scaling up capacity of rural woredas. In other words, it aims at improving decentralized public service delivery (by deepening district-level decentralization), promoting good governance, enhancing organizational effectiveness, man power capability, institutionalizing decision making processes for participation at the grassroots level, and improving rural woreda working systems by way of contributing to Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development (Worku, 2005).

DLDP has been under implementation in Amhara, SNNPR, Oromia, and Tigray regions since 2001/2002, with a plan to start in the remaining five regions as of 2004. Its implementation was divided in to two phases of three and four years each by categorizing the activities under enabling, deepening and consolidating stages. The implementation of these stages varies in the nine regional governments.

Four regional governments, namely; Tigray, Oromia, Amhara, and SNNP concentrate on deepening and consolidating human capital, reinforcing grassroots participation and planning systems, and refining functional assignments and restructuring of some of the public institutions, etc. The other five regional governments, however, are still in the process of creating enabling environments in a credible way. They are assumed to begin establishing functional assignments, building-up institutions, creating financial management system and devolving decision-making on financial resources, etc (Worku, 2005).

First phase (2002-2004) comprised of initial intervention in 433 woredas. It will be in the four regional states and will be followed by 31 selected rural woredas in the five affirmative-seeking regional states. Second phase (2005-2008) was to focus on deepening and consolidating capacity building activities in the 443 woredas in the four regional states and continuing initial intervention as well as deepening and consolidating of 108 woredas in the remaining five regions (Ibid).

According to Taye and Tegegne (2007), for effective DLDP implementation, it was hoped that woreda governments would be enabled to implement their administrative and development plans without undue interference from higher tiers of authority. Accordingly, this creates and brings situations closer to genuine local self rule through block grants, redeployment of skilled and experienced personnel to serve in local government sector offices and woreda autonomy in activity and budgetary planning, expanded freedom of operation in terms of raising and putting to use resources originating from “own” revenue resources, hiring required staff, etc.

The policy of woreda decentralization has not fully achieved its target of democratic governance and participatory development. Insufficient administration and institutional capacity such as lack of well-trained local government personnel; top-down decision and authority structures afflicting the state system; absence of transparency and accountability at the local level. Limited political space for non-state actors and non-ruling party organizations to partake in governance and development and shortage of budgetary and financial resources frequently faced by woreda governments are often cited as major limitations for promoting effective decentralization (Worku, 2005; Meheret, 2007).

CHAPTER THREE

DECENTRALIZATION IN GAMBELLA REGIONAL STATE

3.1. Introduction

The Gambella Peoples National Regional State (GPNRS) is one of the nine federal states of the country that are provided with power of autonomy under the Federal Government of Ethiopia. The region is located in the Southwestern part of the country at $7^{\circ}5' - 8^{\circ}45' N$ Latitude and $33^{\circ}10' - 35^{\circ}15' E$ Longitude bordering with Benishangul-Gumuz and Oromia regions to the North, the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS) and the Sudan Republic to the South, Oromia and SNNPRS to the East and the Sudan Republic to the West. The regional state has a total land area of $34,063\text{km}^2$ with a total population of about 307,096. The distance of the region is 777 km away from Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. It is one of the regions with a very low population density of 9 people per square kilometers (Regional State Council, 2010).

Gambella is rich with various ethnic compositions. The indigenous nationalities include the Agnuak, Nuer, Mejenger, Oppo and Komo. Their location varies according to the ethnic group. Agnuak, Nuer and Mejenger languages are being used as medium of instruction in primary schools. Gambella is also a home for migrant people who come from different parts of the country at various times that belong to diversified ethnic groups mainly Oromo, Amhara, Tigray and SNNP. The migrants do not form an ethnic group per se. They are referred by the generic term Degegna ('Highlanders'), in reference to their place of origin that is the highland regions of the country (Tsegaye, 2008).

Although the GPNRS is well known for its desert climatic condition, it has a lot of green plants coverage, rainfall and underground water availability. The common produced cereals in the region are maize and sorghum and widely practiced by Agnuak people along the Baro, Gilo and Akobo rivers. Sesame, ground nut, rice, cotton, other oil seeds and different fruits and vegetations are also produced in the region. As the region is generally not cereal self-sufficient, alternative income sources such as fishing are important sources of food. Wild food consumption is part of the daily dietary intake given the still partly untouched bush land and natural forest resources. Most of the Nuer population reside along the Ethio-Sudanese border (Lare, Akobo and Jikawo woredas), where it is too dry for rain fed agriculture. Therefore, livestock constitutes the primary source of income (Abraham, 2002).

The GPNRS has a substantial and varied natural resource base. It has suitable agricultural land and a considerable number of livestock, which is not yet utilized to the expected level. The region also has vast water resources like rivers (Baro, Alwero, Akobo and Gilo rivers, which flow throughout the year), lakes and streams. Baro, the only navigable river in Ethiopia, is found in the region. Various types of minerals that could be used for industrial and construction purposes, gold and petroleum are also found in the region.

Gambella National Park is safari in the western savannah lowlands of Ethiopia which covers approximately 5061 square kilometers or 19.6% of the region's territory. The fauna of the region include Elephants, Buffaloes, Monkeys and Parrots. Hot spring and mineral waters, waterfalls, dense natural forests are among the few resources and tourist attractions of the region (Regional State Council, 2010).

Gambella has rich potential for the production of cotton, groundnut, sesame and other oil seeds. Fishing, mining gold and exploring petroleum, mineral water and construction materials are other important areas of investment in the region. Despite the presence of immense exploitable natural resources in the region, it has not been fully assessed and documented in a way to attract the potential investors. As a result of lack of information on the availability of resources and other factors the participation of private investment has not been encouraging (Ibid).

3.2. Physical and Socio-Economic Background of Gambella Region

3.2.1. Topography, Climate and Land Features

The Gambella Regional State is situated between altitude ranges of 3000-2300 meter above sea level and characterized by different topographic feature. The eastern part is characterized by high mountainous rugged terrain (about 10% of the area lies in the highlands at altitude of over 1500m). The upper reaches have peak mountains and steep slopes with the elevation of which is over 2000m. Most of flashing rivers and streams originates from these areas and move to western direction. These areas include the highland of Godere and Dimma woredas (Eastern part), East and Northern parts of Gambella woreda (Gambella Regional State Strategic Plan, 2006).

The central part of the region, which is estimated to cover about 44% of the total area, is characterized by an undulating plain, lies between elevations of 500-1000m. It includes most part of Gambella, Abobo, Etang, South Eastern parts of Godere, Eastern part of Jikawo and some part of Gog and Jor woredas. Low-lying flat plain land is found on the Western part and estimated to occupy some 48% of the total area. Here the elevation is between 300-500m. It is characterized by its seasonal or perennial swamps and flat to very flat. These different topographical features influence the climatic, vegetation cover, soil characteristics, etc. of the area.

The Gambella Peoples National Regional State is characterized by different climatic features. Accordingly, it is divided into three agro-climatic zones namely, Woina-dega, Kola and Bereha. Godere and part of Dimma woredas falls in Woina-dega zones while Gambella town, Abol, Abobo, Etang and Gog woredas falls in Kola zone. Jor, Lare, Jikawo and Akobo woredas are found in the Bereha climatic zones.

Regional mean temperature and rainfall decreases from East to West (mountainous to plain areas) depending on the agro-ecology of the area. Hence, the mean temperature of the region is between 27⁰c and 33⁰c. The highest monthly temperature is found in March reaches up to 45⁰c and the lowest temperature in August registered to 10.3⁰c. Rainfall in the region is available once in a year which cover from the end of April up to October in a large amount. The kola Zone areas lie between elevations of 400-500m and areas with an altitude of 500-2000m are expected to get rainfall from 900-500mm. The average annual rainfall is 2000mm-1000mm (from Dimma towards Akobo and Jikawo woredas) (Gambella Regional State Strategic Plan, 2006).

3.2.2. Administrative Structure

The Gambella Peoples National Regional State is one of the nine regions that are provided with power of autonomy under federal government of Ethiopia. The region is currently divided into three administrative zones, eleven woredas, one special woreda and one town administration. The three zones are the Agnuak zone which contains five woredas namely Gambella Zuria (Abol), Abobo, Gog, Jor and Dimma, the Nuer zone with four woredas that are called Lare, Jikawo, Wanthoa and Akobo and Mejenger zone encompassing two woredas of Godere and Mengeshi. The special woreda goes to Etang woreda because of its mingled settlement. Etang woreda is inhabited by the Nuer and Agnuak communities. The Gambella town falls to the category of city administration (Regional State Council, 2010).

At the regional level government powers are formally divided into three pillars of government bodies. The legislative organ that makes law is the highest body. The executive organ implements and enforces such laws and decisions and the judicial power is vested to the court that interprets law.

The flag of the region has four horizontal stripes of black, green, white and red with a black 5-pointed star in the center of the white stripe. Each color has its own meaning. The red color represents the heroes of the region, their sacrifice and struggle for freedom; the white color embraces peace which comes from the struggle and sacrifice; the black star represents brotherhood of the Gambella peoples with the rest of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia; the green color is to show the region's natural resource, plants availability and its future hopes; and finally the black color is related to color of five indigenous groups of Nilotes who form the GPNRS (Ibid).

3.2.3. Population Size, Structure and Characteristics

Data on population are very essential for socio-economic development planning. Population growth, its composition and distribution are among the important factors in determining the present and future development needs. The population and housing census is the main source of these data.

According to the 2007 census, the total population size of the Gambella region was 307,096 of which 77,925 (25.4%) lived in urban areas while the remaining 229,171 (74.6%) are found in rural areas. Sex composition of population in the region was 159,787 (52%) males and 147,309 (48%) females. For the entire region 65,904 households were counted, which results in an average for the region of 4.6 persons to a household, with urban households having on average 3.9 and rural households 5.0 people. The annual growth rate for the period 1994-2007 observed for Gambella Region is 4.1% which is the highest from other regions of the country.

From the age structure perspective, the proportion of the population aged 15-64 constitutes about 56.65% while the young age group (below 15 years) constitutes 41.85%. The old age group (above 64 years) constitutes 1.5% of the total population (CSA, 2007). The young dependency ratio of the region in the year 2007 was 74. The overall dependency ratio in the same year was 77. This indicates that every 100 person in the working age support 77 dependents.

Similarly, out of 217,904 persons with the age of 10 and above, 23.67% were economically inactive. 7,236 unemployed and 159,093 employed persons are found in the region. Due to this, the unemployment rate of the region is estimated to be 4.4. The literacy rates of population aged ten years and above by sex and region obtained in the 2007 census shows that nearly half (49.5%) of the population of the region were literate. The proportions of literate persons by sex show the existence of wider gap between sexes. Slightly more than half (56.4%) of males were literate while the proportion of literate females (42%) was far less than male counterparts.

Table 3.1: Population Distribution in GPNRS

Group	Urban	Percent	Rural	Percent	Total	Percent
“Indigenous” People						
Agnuak	20,092	25.8%	44,894	19.6%	64,986	21.2%
Nuer	25,950	33.3%	117,336	51.2%	143,286	46.7%
Mejenger	837	1%	11,443	5%	12,280	4%
Oppo and Komo	156	0.2%	1,072	0.5%	1,228	0.4%
People from Various Highland Areas of Ethiopia (Highlanders)						
Amharas	10,972	14%	14,890	6.5%	25,862	8.4%
Kefficho	1,203	1.54%	14,287	6.2%	15,490	5%
SNNPR	5,112	6.56%	9,936	4.3%	15,048	4.9%
Oromos	9,605	12.3%	5,228	2.3%	14,833	4.8%
Shekecho	244	0.3%	6,732	2.9%	6,976	2.3%
Tigrayans	2,194	3%	1,858	0.8%	4,052	1.3%
Others	1,560	2%	1,495	0.7%	3,055	1%
Total	77,925	100%	229,171	100%	307,096	100%

Source: Housing and Population Census, 2007

According to the 2007 census, the region’s population was estimated at 307,096. There are different groups of people who live in the Gambella region. The main nationalities of the region are Nuer, Agnuak, Mejenger, Oppo and Komo. Moreover, the Oromo, Amhara, Shekecho, Keffa, Tigray and other nations and nationalities live in the region. As can be seen from Table 3.1, of the total ethnic composition the Nuer consists 46.7%, the Agnuak (21.2%), Amhara (8.4%), Kefficho (5%), Oromo (4.8%), Mejenger (4%), Shakicho (2.3%), Tigray (1.3%), Oppo and Komo (0.4%) and other ethnic groups predominantly from Southern Ethiopia (4.9%). Amharic is the working language of the region. Regarding religion, Protestants constitute 70.1%, Orthodox Christians (16.8%), Muslims (4.9%), Traditional Religion (3.8%), Catholics (3.4%) and others (1.1%).

Regarding to the spatial distribution of the population by zones, we can see uneven distribution among the zones.

Table 3.2: Spatial Distribution of Population in GPNRS

Zone	Woreda	Total population	Percentage Share of Population		Share of Area Km ²		Population Density Persons/Km ²	
			Woreda	Zone	Woreda	Zone	Woreda	Zone
Agnuak	Gambella Zuria (Abol)	10,590	17.5%	19.7%	3,118.79	60.45%	3.40	4.83
	Abobo	15,741	26%		3,116.17		5.05	
	Gog	16,836	27.8%		3,250.25		5.18	
	Jor	9,366	15.5%		3,342.31		2.80	
	Dimma	8,001	13.2%		7,762.43		1.03	
-	Gambella Town	39,022	12.7%	-	-	-	-	
Nuer	Lare	31,406	27.9%	36.7%	685.17	13.9%	45.84	23.79
	Jikawo	35,556	11.59%		1,081.04		32.89	
	Wanthoa	20,970	31.6%		887.74		23.62	
	Akobo	24,674	21.9%		2,080.34		11.86	
Mejenger	Godere	38,781	65.46%	19.3%	592.75	6.62%	65.43	26.28
	Mengeshi	20,467	34.54%		1,661.90		17.62	
Etang	Etang Special Woreda	35,686	11.6%	-	2,188.34	6.42%	16.31	16.31

Source: Housing and Population Census, 2007

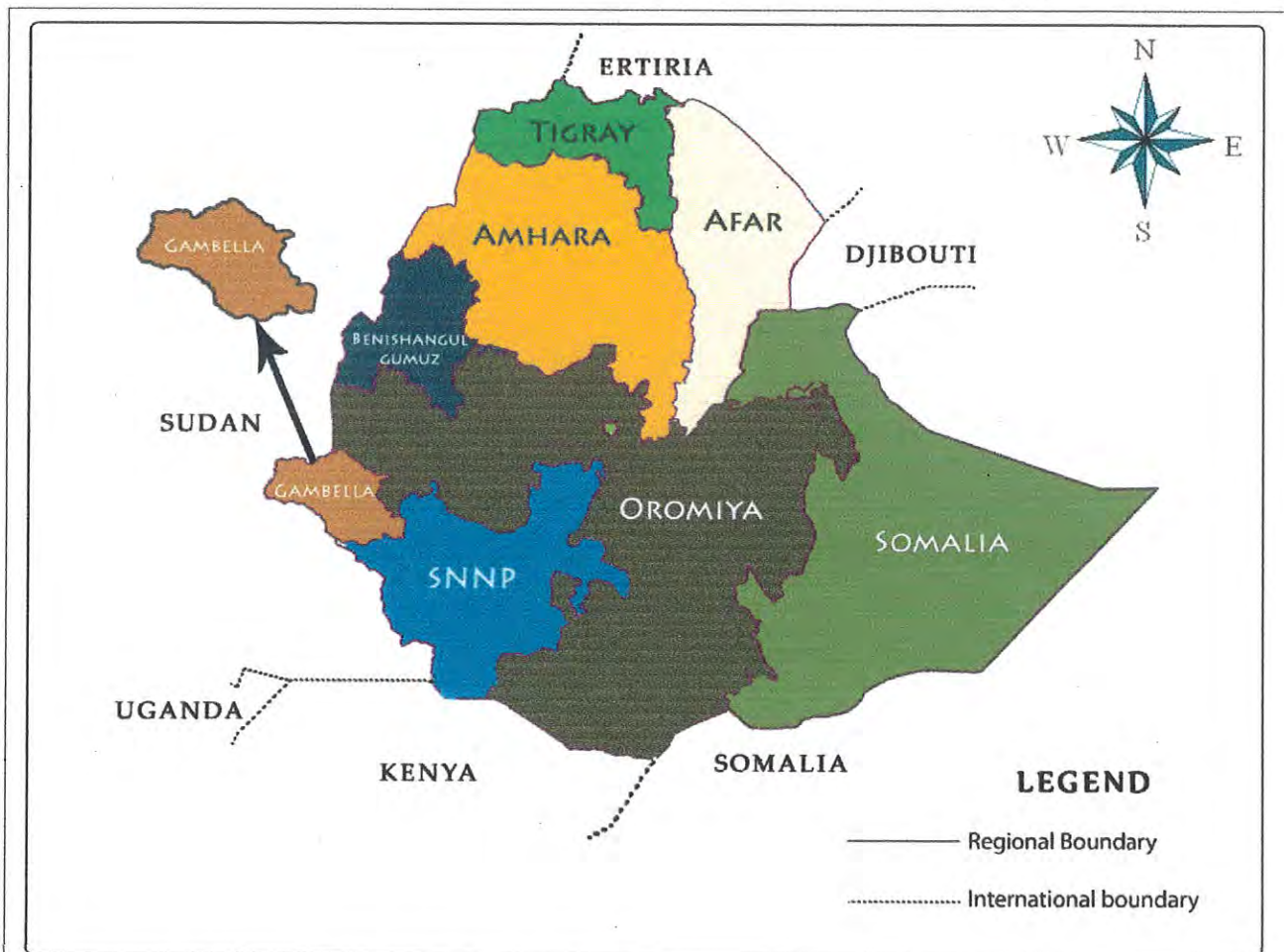
NB: Total Population=307,096 and Total Area=34,063 km²

The variation in the population density becomes even more acute if we divide the districts by ethnic group. Of the twelve districts, the Agnuak inhabits five; four by the Nuer, two by Mejenger and Etang is a mixed settlement area with a roughly equal population of Agnuak and Nuer groups.

As can be seen from Table 3.2, Agnuak, Nuer and Mejenger zones constitute 19.7%, 36.7% and 19.3% of the total population with population density of 4.83, 23.79 and 26.28 persons per Km² respectively. Etang special woreda constitute 11.6% of the total population with a population density of 16.31 persons per Km². Gambella town also constitute 12.7% of the total population. The population density of the woredas is also significantly uneven. It ranges from 1.03 persons per square kilometers in Dimma woreda to 65.43 persons per square kilometers in Godere woreda. Godere woreda is the most densely populated woreda followed by Lare, Jikawo, Wanthoa and Mengeshi woredas. Dimma and Jor woredas are the least densely populated woredas in the region.

In terms of area, Agnuak zone is the largest zone constituting about 60.45% of the total area of the region. But it has a population density only of about 4.83 persons per square kilometers. Nuer zone also composed 13.9% of the total area with a population density of 23.79 persons per square kilometers. Mejenger zone, having 19.3% of regional population, constitutes only 6.62% of the total area. Etang special woreda constitutes about 6.42% of the total area. The rest of the region's area is covered by Gambella National Park. Then, as the region is sparsely populated, it will have negative impact on the provision of basic social services making it costly and difficult. It requires covering population within a distance of large radius. Reducing the radius of distance covered for the service will lead to serving few people and this in turn will lead to underutilization of the service.

Fig. 3.1: Map of Gambella Peoples National Regional State in National Setting



Source: <http://ochaonline.un.org/ethiopia/Maps/downloadables/ETHIOPIA.pdf>

3.2.4. Ethnic Composition and their Distinctive Livelihoods

Gambella is an interesting place where various ethnic groups live engaged in different livelihoods (Abraham, 2002).

The Agnuak: The Agnuak are believed to have come from the so-called 'Cradle Land of the Nilotes' or from further southeast near Lake Rudolf and Victoria in Kenya and Uganda (Omat, 1996 as cited in Abraham, 2002). They are mainly crop dependent people with fishing and hunting as their supplementary income sources. The Agnuak constitute around 21.2% of the total population of the region and live along the river banks. Most of the Agnuak are found in Abobo, Dimma and Gog woredas (Population and Housing Census, 2007).

The Nuer: The Nuer people are largely livestock dependent and are mostly found in Lare, Akobo, Jikawo and parts of Etang woredas. During rainy seasons, Akobo and Jikawo become flooded and the people therefore migrate to the highlands with their cattle until the river banks recede. The Nuers are the majority group, representing 46.7% of the population of the region (Population and Housing Census, 2007).

The Mejenger: The majority of the Mejenger live in Godere and Mengeshi woreda and in some pocket areas of Gambella and Abobo. While they are mostly dependant on beekeeping, they also practice some cultivation in settlement areas (Abraham, 2002). They represent 4% of the total population in the region.

Oppo and Komo represent minority ethnic groups. They represent 0.4% of the total population in the region (Population and Housing Census, 2007). As it will also help us to understand the dynamics of the ethnic composition in the region, it is important to mention here that there are three refugee camps in Gambella region under the protection of UNHCR. These are Bonga (in Gambella), Pugniwudo (in Gog) and Dimma (in Dimma). These refugees are largely Sudanese Agnuak in Pugniwudo (29%), Nuer in Pugniwudo and Dimma (57% and 79% respectively), Dinka, Shuluk and Uduk (Abraham, 2002).

Other groups: People from Amhara, Tigray and SNNPR (e.g. Wolayita) live in settlement areas in Abobo, Gambella and Etang woredas practice sedentary agriculture. However, many highlanders reside in town as businessmen and employee (Population and Housing Census, 2007).

3.2.5. Economic Activities

In Gambella region, 75% of the population is living in rural areas. Pastoralism is the leading preoccupation of the people. People are also engaged in the cultivation of sorghum, bean, sesame, mango, banana etc. for their livelihood. All the rural communities practice very small-scale rain fed agriculture. The community also practices livestock rearing. Hence, it would be very appropriate to consider the community as leading agro-pastoral mode of production. Very small number of people engaged in community practice, fishery business and almost all portion of the community members who have suitable conditions are also traditionally engage in beekeeping. Petty trade is also practiced in urban community (Gambella Regional State Strategic Plan, 2006).

Agriculture is the major economic activity in the region followed by petty trade. The rural population derives its livelihoods from mixed farming and non-farm activities such as trade, handicraft production. The region has great potential either of agricultural development on rain fed or on irrigation. It also has fertile land and water resources, which were suitable for agricultural production. The major agricultural activities include cereal, oil seeds, tobacco, horticulture production and animal husbandry.

Agricultural production is subsistence level and largely depends on traditional means of farming. Oxen plough, which mostly done by male, and traditional simple agricultural implements are the means for farming in the region. The use of low agricultural inputs, erratic and unreliable rainfall pattern and lack of adequate and efficient extension service contribute to the frequent drought and famine in most parts of the region. As a result, the productivity is low. The main actors both in traditional agriculture and off-farm activities in the region are females. Females mostly generate off-farm activities, which supplement rural households' incomes and make significant contribution to the maintenance of the rural people.

Though there is vast land suitable for agriculture, the average size of rural land holding by rural households is less than one hectare/household. The average yield from this holding is 10 quintals/hectare, hardly enough to feed the household until the next harvest. Agricultural production thus falls far short of ensuring food security in the region and leaves the population much to depend on food aid and specially the female and children more vulnerable.

The region is constrained by multidimensional social and economic problem. Weak public service capacity, high illiteracy rate, poor access to health services and absence of rural infrastructure to support rural households improve agricultural activities have posed tremendous development challenges to the regional government. As the result poverty is pervasive. According to the region's sustainable development and poverty reduction discussion report, in 2006/07 the per capita income of the region was 981.2 birr and half (50.5%) of the population expected to live in a state of absolute poverty. The illiteracy rate is very high for females compared to males. It is the female who suffer most because of lack of health facilities, poor infrastructure and harvest in the region.

3.3. Socio-Economic and Infrastructural Development in Gambella Region¹

The level of development of social and economic infrastructures (education, health, clean drinking water, rural road, agriculture and rural development, transport, electric power and communication system and financial institutions) is a major indicator of a country's or region's overall development level. Their availability in terms of quality and quantity is also a pre-requisite for growth and development. But, the state of socio-economic infrastructure in Gambella Region is very poor that in effect retarding the region's growth and development effort.

Various studies argued that one of the major reasons for the current low level of socio-economic infrastructural development is believed to be the past neglect of the region in development by the former leading rules. Some meaningful development efforts in the region have started following its establishment in 1992.

3.3.1. Education

The Gambella region has given priority in improving both the quality and coverage of education at all level. It had made a substantial progress in the educational sphere. With regards to expansion of educational sector in the region, the number of primary schools which were about 162 in 2004/05 has increased to 193 where 31 new schools being constructed by the end of 2009/10. Similarly the number of secondary schools which were only 2 by the year 2004/05 reached to 19 by 2009/10. There are also one TVET, one ATVET and one Teachers' Education and Health Science College in the region.

¹ The information are obtained from published document of regional state council, Gambella Regional State Strategic Plan, unpublished regional sector offices periodical report documents, interview with regional Sector offices officials and experts.

The net enrollment rate of primary school (1-8) increased from 53,865 by 2004/05 to 76,414 by the year 2009/10 which marked a difference of 22,549. In terms of gender variation boys count 56.7% while the percentage of girls reached to 43.3%. On the other hand, net enrollment rate of high school students also shows magnificent progress. By the year 2004/05 it was 4,460 and increased to 9,040 by 2009/10 in high school level the gender stat shows huge gap where the number of boys is about 72.8% and girls is only about 27.2%.

The region educational office has also given due attention for pastoralist community living around. The state has provided opportunity for women participation and has opened alternative means of providing education which reached to 82 by the year 2009/10. On the five year plan, the preparation of students and teachers text was also another important element. Even if it was intended to prepare 472,710 books, they were only successful in printing 27,096.

The number of first cycle teachers (1-4) during the year 2004/05 increased from 1,230 to 1,975 in 2009/10 and second cycle (5-8) teachers from 226 to 864. On the other hand the number of teachers in secondary school which was 36 (2004/05) reached to 253 (by 2009/10). Teachers' improvement on their qualification is very important to bring about quality of education. The region gave teachers in service training for 833 teachers at diploma level and 403 at degree level both in regular and summer program with different subject matters in different universities and colleges.

According to the interviewed officials, the common problems of education sector in the region includes the number of primary and secondary schools is very small and in most cases far from villages, making girl's education and enrollment difficult in the region; shortage of teachers, specially the role models, and necessary facilities are critical to schools; and inadequate budgetary support to expand and improve the quality and equity of education.

3.3.2. Health

The health status of the region's population is one of the lowest in the country. Infant and under-five mortality rates are much higher than the national average. The climate and topography of the region is favorable for tropical diseases. Malaria is one of the major causes for high mortality. Unsafe drinking water, poor hygiene, and nutrition are also in poor condition which exacerbating the situation.

Securing health condition in the region is one of the other important strategic in the five year plan. To this effect the total health coverage in the region which was 47% (2004/05) increased to 63% (2009/10). The federal ministry of health and the regional government in collaboration with the community has built 17 health centers and 22 health posts with adequate equipment and man power. Similarly within 5 years the region's teachers' education and health science college has graduated health extension officers and are now giving service in all rural areas of the community. In advancing basic health service, the human development is the basic thing. The region's Teachers' Education and Health Science College has put immense effort to promote and help the sector. 84 nurses and 19 laboratory technicians graduated from the college and are working in the region.

In order to cope up with the existing demand of man power, the region health bureau has sent 60 professionals for further training in degree programs. Out of these, 28 are graduated and started their work. In addition to this, 20 health officers who have entered into universities in 2008/09 will also contribute a lot for the demand of trained manpower problem when they finish their training. Generally, the number of health professionals which was only about 324 in 2004/05 has reached to 846 in 2009/10. Thus the ratio of health personnel to population for doctor, health officer, nurse, and health extension reached to 1:61,382, 1:6,530, 1:1,096 and 1:670 patients respectively.

In the strategic plan it was intended to decrease infant mortality rate by promoting child health and it reached from 80/1000 in 2004/05 to 77/1000 in 2009/10. The death of children under the age of five was 113/1000 in 2004/05 which doesn't have a significant change still now. Overall different measures have been taken to alleviate the number of mortality rate caused by different diseases and enhance the capacity of health sector in the region. Some of them are:

- Enabling children's to take vaccine,
- Increasing the distribution of Vitamin A,
- Improving child care and preventing women's death while giving birth,
- Educating the society about the importance of family planning,
- Reducing the number of people who died because of malaria infection by distributing nets, drugs and using different chemicals,
- Controlling the spread and effect of HIV/AIDS through opening different centers that could provide voluntary counseling and testing services and
- Prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS from mother to child.

According to the interviewed officials, the most common and inherent problems of health sector in the region include:

- Access to health service by the population is very weak due to poor infrastructure,
- Even the limited health institutions that are operating in the region are severely understaffed,
- High rate of HIV/AIDS prevalence and malaria, which claim the lives of many people, the most vulnerable of which are female, in the region,
- Inadequate budgetary support to health services, and
- Access to potable water by the population is poor. As a result the female in the region have to fetch water from long distances. This makes life very difficult for female and exposes population to water borne disease.

3.3.3. Clean Water Supply

Lack of personal and environmental hygiene & sanitation are considered to be the root causes of 80% of disease caused in Ethiopia. From this, lack of access to pure water supply plays a dominant role. Most disease called killer in the region is caused due to lack of pure water delivery and related problems. In spite of abundant water resources of the region, safe drinking water for the population is in short supply. By the year 2004/05 it was only 22% of total pure water coverage (which is 19.5% in rural and 31% in urban areas) in the region. But in 2009/10, it reached to 62.5% which is 58.5% in rural and 73.9% in urban areas. The supply is much poor in rural areas than in urban areas. Therefore, majority of the rural population have got drinking water from unsafe sources like rivers, ponds and canals.

Table 3.3: Coverage of Clean Water Supply in GPNRS (2004/05-2009/10)

Year	Achievement in Percentage		
	Rural	Urban	Region
2004/05	19.5	31	22
2005/06	25	37	27
2006/07	32.2	72.9	41.4
2007/08	39.6	74.5	47.5
2008/09	44.6	71.45	51.4
2009/10	58.5	73.9	62.5
Planned in 2009/10	85.7	100	88

Source: BoWMER (2010/11)

According to the interviewed officials, the regional government undertakes different levels of wells building project funded by both governmental, non-governmental and community participation. Water development agencies in the region give due regard and attention for water development through organizing special committee in zones and woredas of the region. The agency also took measure to alleviate existing skilled man power shortage. One important measure is training of local artisans and empowerment of women in planning, directing and controlling activities, which reached their participation to 40%. In general, we can say that efforts made in expansion of pure water coverage have shown great progress for the last five years.

3.3.4. Rural Road

The potential for development is hampered by the lack of roads. The under development and practically non-existence of good rural roads network is one of the development bottlenecks in the region. Due to shortage of the road network, potentially easy and short movements in the region are difficult and development efforts are hampered. Road network is not well developed in the region and the majority of the existing roads are not in a position to function in wet seasons.

Table 3.4: Road Achievement in GPNRS (2005/06-2009/10)

No	Name of Project	Planned in Km	Actual in Km	%age
1	New road construction by the authority	60	40	66.7
2	New road construction by the contractors	339.3	0	0
3	New road construction by the community	275	25	9
4	Road repaired by the authority	590.8	777	131.5
5	Road repaired by the community	91	0	0

Source: BoRRA (2010/11)

Of the stated objectives of five year plan, rural road development is one of it. The plan put forward the 60 km construction of new road by the authority, 339.3km by recognized contractors and 275 km by community participation. Out of it, it was only 40 km (66.7%) of rural road development undertaken by the authority and 25 km (9%) of rural road constructed through community participation was successful. Road which was undertaken by contractors could not succeed at all. In addition to new roads development, the authority also engaged in reparation rural road permanently. Though it was planned to repair 590.8 km and 91 km rural roads by the authority and through community participation respectively, 777 km (131.5%) of rural road was repaired by the authority which was above the planned. But road repaired by the community could not succeed at all.

Table 3.5: Repaired Roads by BoRRA in GPNRS (2005/06-2009/10)

No	Year of Road Reparation	Repaired Roads in Km	Amount of Budget in Birr
1	2005/06	134	4,600,000
2	2006/07	168	8,446,000
3	2007/08	181	2,901,000
4	2008/09	151	4,339,000
5	2009/10	143	8,184,000
	Total	777	28,470,000

Source: BoRRA (2010/11)

As we can see from the table, the Gambella rural road authority has been made significant road reparation within the five years. The authority repaired 134km roads in 2005/06 with 4.6 million birr budget. The repaired roads increased and reached to 143km in 2009/10. The amount of budget spent to fulfill the work was 8.184 million birr. The amount of budget for reparation is increased from year to year. This shows that the recognized authority gives a great attention for the development of rural roads in the region. In general, the authority has repaired 777km roads by allocating a budget of 28.47 million birr within the whole five strategic years.

Table 3.6: Roads Administered by ERA and the Region's BoRRA in GPNRS (2009/10)

No	Roads Administered by ERA			Roads Administered by RRA		
	Name of the Road	Distance (Km)	Road Type	Name of the Road	Distance (Km)	Road Type
1	Gore-Gambella	60	Asphalt	Gog-Pugniwudo-Puchalla	53	Gravel
2	Gambella-Etang-Jikawo	130	Asphalt	Abobo-Metti	72	Gravel
3	Gambella-Abobo	50	Gravel	Abobo- Pugniwudo	55	Gravel
4	Gambella-Elia-Adura	150	Gravel	Biftu-Dimma	25	Gravel
5	Adura-Akobo	120	Gravel	Dry Season Roads	464	Gravel
6	Shebel-Gambella	69	Gravel	Gambella Town	12	Asphalt
7	Dimma-Gog-Abobo	110	Gravel	-	-	-
	Total	689		Total	681	

Source: BoRRA (2010/11)

There are 689km main asphalt and gravel roads which administered and under construction by the Ethiopian Road Authority (ERA) found in the region. The region's rural road authority also administered 464km dry season roads, 231km all weather roads and 466km community roads. In general, there are a total of 1,850km roads are found in the region. Now a day, the total road coverage of the region reached to 0.5km/1000 people which were about 0.46km/1000 people by 2004/05.

There is no single road which connects the center directly with the three zones and twelve woredas of the region. Many woreda towns are not connected to each other and some of the woredas in the region can be reached from Gambella town, only via Oromia and SNNP regions. But currently efforts have been made to connect all woredas to the capital city of the region and the development of dry weather roads to asphalt level is being undertaken in most areas.

Both financial supports from regional and federal governments have helped the development of standards of rural road to a high level. Currently, Gore-Gambella and Gambella-Etang-Jikawo asphalt roads are under construction by the federal government program. The regional government also allocate budget for the study and design works of Abobo, Gog, Dimma, Godere, Metti, Gambella, Elia and Adura rural roads. In addition to this, the 12km asphalt roads are constructed in Gambella town. According to the interviewed official, the common problems facing the road sector of the region include shortage of budget, shortage of machineries and construction equipments, high turnover rate of man power and lack of strong rural road desks.

3.3.5. Transport, Telecommunication and Electric Power Supply

Transport and communication are very essential for the development of a country. A comprehensive network of transport and communication is indispensable for smooth flow of resources, goods and services from place to place and movement of people from place to place and smooth operation of business activity. Nevertheless, a transport and communication network in the region is very poor and remains to be the major constraint to the region's socio-economic development.

Baro is the only navigable river in Ethiopia. It connects the region with the Sudan. In the past five years, activities such as loading capacity and distribution control to 53 old boats, quality assurance to 38 new motor boats and technical assessment to 53 new and old motor boats have been conducted by the concerned authority. The transport office have also given 388 round port services to 40 human and freight motor boats that are moving from Gambella town to woreda towns of Etang, Methar and Tirgol and neighboring Sudan. Consequently, 116,000 quintals of freight and 58,200 people have got transport services.

Gambella region had been too far from ideas and facilities of modern communication for long as compared to the other regions of the country. This has resulted greatly causing barriers to the development of the region. The non-availability of telecommunication facilities hampers timely information required for decision making. Recently, due to immense effort exerted by the regional bureau in collaboration with Federal government Gambella town started to get access to fax, mobile, internet services, etc.

The introduction of modern communication facilities is not only confined to Gambella town, but also expanded to other 3 zones & 4 woreda towns of the region like Abobo, Meti, Pugniwudo and Lare get access to digital automatic telephone while Dimma, Bonga, Abol, Nigngnang, Etang and Methar have got visat services. There are also 17 Kebeles which are found in Mejenger zone use wireless telephone services. In general, currently there are about 9974 permanent customers of mobile, internet and fax services in the region. This has greatly contributed for the development and integration of the regional capital with the periphery there by enhancing overall economic, social and political development of the society.

For long, except for Gambella, the capital of the region the rest zones and woredas were deprived of getting access to electric power supply. But following the five years strategic plan special attention was given for expanding the electric power supply to the rest areas of the region. The power supply of the region is basically a hydro-electric power generated from Sore river and Gilgel Gibe power plant. Towns like Etang, Lare, Bonga, Abobo and Abol use 24 hours of electric service from Sore river power production while woredas like Godere, Mengeshi and Dimma have got the same service from Gilgel Gibe hydro electric power supply. Very minor woredas of the region which do not get access of it like Pugniwudo town also use diesel generator as alternative sources of power supply.

3.3.6. Agriculture and Rural Development

The majority of population in Gambella region is engaged in Agriculture. It is one of the very high potential sectors intended to bring about development to the region. In the past five strategic years, the agricultural sector has been assessing its strategic plan and pointing out basic problems in creating and implementing an action plan which contains the agricultural sub-sectors. Some of the agricultural and rural development policies and strategies which have been given attention to boost the agricultural development workers skill and give productive extension service are providing farmers with agricultural package that considered the environmental behavior and high result probability and overall extensive agricultural and technical trainings.

At the first year of the strategic plan 4,546 farmers have been trained on crop production extension and 2,069 farmers on cattle production. Though it was planned to participate 68,695 farmers and pastoralists in different extension packages, only 7,980 (11%) was achieved. It was also planned to participate 3,189 women, taking into account the enhancement of participation of women farmers and pastoralists in the sector, in the strategic years, only 1,200 has been achieved.

In the production year of 2006/07 of the extension program, 3,353.50 hectare of land has been cultivated and able to collect 37,088 quintals of production. 699 hectare of land also covered with seed and was able to collect 11,143 quintals of production in 2007/08. This covers an average production of 12 quintals per hectare. For both production years, 1119.2 quintals of seed were collected from the community and region's agricultural research institute. 34 training institutes have been built with the objective of augmenting the agro-pastoralists skills. Within the five strategic years, 165 additional development agent workers residence were constructed from 20, which was in 2004/05.

Table 3.7: Planned and Actual Land and Production Capacity in GPNRS (2005/06-2009/10)

Year	Planned		Actual		Actual %age share		Productivity
	Land	Production	Land	Production	Land	Production	
2005/06	20,244	189,445	19,830	189,506	98	100	9.6
2006/07	25,772	293,732	24,357	261,078	94.5	88.9	10.7
2007/08	29,341	355,133	20,806	192,153	70.9	54.1	9.2
2008/09	33,988	445,735	26,083	248,937	76.7	55.8	9.5
2009/10	40,408	610,298	12,601	111,534	31.2	18.3	8.9
Total	149,753	1,894,343	103,677	1,003,208	69.2	53	9.7

Source: BoARD (2010/11)

Note: Land by hectare and production by quintal

As we can see from the table, it was planned to cultivate 149,753 hectares of land and get 1,894,343 quintals of production for the whole years of the program using rainfall and it was achieved 103,677 and 1,003,208 respectively. When we see in detail, though it was planned to obtain 189,445, 293,732, 355,133, 445,735 and 610,298 quintals of food crop production within the years 2005/06-2009/10 by harvesting 20,244, 25,772, 29,341, 33,988 and 40,408 hectares of small scaled land respectively, only 189,506, 261,078, 192,153, 248,937 and 111,534 quintals of production has been obtained by covering 19,830, 24,357, 20,806, 26,083 and 12,601 hectares of land with seed respectively. In general, the actual percentage share of land and production achieved with in the whole five years are 69.2% and 53% respectively. The average actual productivity within the five years reached to 9.7.

Regarding coffee development, though it was planned to deliver 6,377 tons of quality coffee from the farmers coffee development, 12,644 tons of coffee including from government coffee development, has been delivered to the central market. Concerning crop protection works, pest assessment, anti-pest drug have been put in use side by side with the distribution of different pest control supplies and awareness creation clarification.

Different goals were set at all years of the program to enhance the region's effective use and handling of cattle resources. It was planned to attain 2,537 tons of meat, 4,842 tons of milk, 656 tons of egg, 380 tons of fish and 38 tons of honey productions. All have been successfully achieved except honey; with 257 (67%) execution. Hides and skins were also the other target products. As a result, 51,053 quality hides and skins have been sent to the central market.

Enhancing the livestock production sector in the region is one of the objectives in the five year strategic plan. There are 6,700, 181,000 and 375,000 cattle have been vaccinated in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 respectively with the aim of supporting the sub-sector's development. Regarding with livestock development, 5 abattoirs, 2 milk processing centers, 3 poultry farm and incubation centers, 2 honey processing centers, 15 sub-veterinary health posts, 31 cattle vaccination places and 3 cattle trafficking controlling centers have been included in the plan. As a result, including two main health posts which are under construction in Gog and Etang woredas and three completed in Gambella, Lare and Wanthoa districts, a total of five (33%) health posts have been built.

Different goals have been set with in the three strategic years in order to ensure the continuity of the region's development by taking care of its natural resources. Though it was planned to increment 16% forest coverage of the region's total land to 18% with one percent every year, different functions have been done to achieve the setting plans such as construction of nursery establishment centers, rehabilitation works, and approval of forest protection, development and usage proclamation and preparation of implementation manual.

In the past five years strategic plan, 2,376 hectare of land has been planned to be covered with forests. With the aid of different programs such as forest plants supply and improvement project and natural resource development program (NRDP), 1.655, 2.875 and 1.330 millions of different plantations have been prepared and planted on 1,944 hectares of land in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 respectively. In addition to this, 953 hectares of land has been weeded and a total area of 86km fire break is made. Teams were organized in 86 kebeles to manage and protect forests in the aforementioned period of years.

According to the interviewed officials, the most common and inherent problems of agriculture sector in the region include:

- Agriculture produces subsistence and depends on rain. Whenever the pattern of rainfall disrupts in certain seasons, the region faces critical food shortage,
- Extension service provided to farmers is weak,
- Absence of financial institutions in the region providing credit service to farmers to support them procure inputs and new technology,
- High post harvest loss due to lack of storage facility,
- Absence of viable rural infrastructure to support rural households market their produce,
- Lack of market outlet for agricultural products in the region (both rural and urban markets are found at rudimentary stage) and
- The weakness of veterinary service in the region leaves animal diseases uncontrolled which result in death of large stock of animals every year.

3.3.7. Financial Institutions

Despite the vital role of financial institutions in the development, one Commercial Bank of Ethiopia in Gambella Town limits the only governmental banking service in the region. There is only one private bank (Hibret Bank S.C.) in the region. Insurance services are limited in the region except non-resident agent service provided by Ethiopian Insurance Company and branch office of Niyala Insurance Company to only Gambella town occasionally.

Attaining sustainable development needs back up from sub development program. Promotion of such institution faced financial constraints. To reveal existing problems, the regional government established one micro finance institution oriented towards provision of credit to and mobilization of savings from small-scale farms and micro enterprise owners in rural and urban areas of the region in 2008/09 and started its operation. The institution thereby is expected to meet the credit demand gap for micro financing that cannot be bridged by resort to formal banking system and traditional self-help organizations such as “Ikub” and “Idir”.

Cooperative associations also played a key role in promoting free market economic principle implemented in the region. The cooperative agency office planned to establish 344 new associations and strengthening 106 formerly established once and achieved by establishing 162 new associations (47%). There are 108 basic cooperative associations found in the region until the end of 2009/10.

3.4. The Process of Decentralization in Gambella Region

3.4.1. Background and Rationale

It is widely recognized that decentralization is one of the tools for good governance. There are some theoretical premises that this argument is based on. First and foremost, decentralized decision-making ensures the well being of all those who are likely to be affected by such decision. The rationale of this premise is derived from the political (democratic) imperative that all those whose interests are affected by decisions ought to take part in the decision making process. When everybody takes part in the decision making process, self interest is supposed to guide them to arrive at decisions that are consistent with every body's good.

Secondly, in the centralized system where there is not much scope for people's participation, the implementation of decisions taken at top government levels become weak as it does not inspire or motivate people to extend their cooperation. Implementation of decision and development plans is more likely to be effective under decentralized governance. This logic generally provides the theoretical basis for the evolution of decentralized political institutions, which are looked upon as institutions that promote decentralized decision-making.

Based on this premises, the constitution of the federal government of Ethiopia provides for decentralized system of governance to enhance democracy and improve participatory approach to development planning and programming. Accordingly the federal government delegated its authority to the regions to govern themselves. The regional governments have followed suit and decentralized power to woredas/districts.

DLDP as a sub-component of the PSCAP was first launched in 2001/02 and is referred to as the *second wave* of decentralization in Ethiopia, the first wave being the decentralization from the central government to regional governments since 1992. Its implementation started with the four (Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and SNNPR) relatively advanced regions and then followed by the four (Somali, Afar, Benshangul-Gumuz and Gambella) so called emerging regions. It (DLDP) was in a response to article 50(4) of the FDRE constitution which declares that "adequate powers shall be granted to the lowest units of the government to enable the people to participate directly in the administration of such units". The DLDP encompasses all the three major aspects of decentralization namely: political, administrative and fiscal (MCB, 2004).

The objective of the DLDP as enshrined in the program document, is (a) to deepen the devolution of power to the lower tiers of regional governments, (b) to institutionalize decision-making processes at the grassroots level with a view to enhance grassroots participation, (c) to promote good governance through inspiring transparency and accountability, and (d) to improve decentralized service delivery to the public and contribute to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Gambella is one of the least developed or emerging regions in Ethiopia. It lacks capacities in the planning, management and implementation of its various development activities while the demand is quite high. The Federal Government strategies and efforts of undertaking coordinated and streamlined capacity building activities throughout the country have created an opportunity for the region to initiate and undertake the stated program. The rationale to initiate, plan and implement the sub program is primary due to the Federal Government's initiative to create and improve the performance of service delivery in the region. To this regard, therefore, GPNRS, as one of the members of the FDRE embarked and has been implementing DLDP program since 1997 E.C or 2004/05 G.C.

Besides the above stated objectives mentioned in the PSCAP document and common assumptions that local governments are more closer and responsive to the people than national and regional governments, the driving force behind the implementation of DLDP in the Gambella region according to the concerned officials (of BoFED, CBCB, others) interviewed for this purpose forwarded the following: (a) implementation and fostering of the constitutional rights and obligations enshrined both in the national and regional constitutions, (b) implementation of MDGs and SDPRP goals on time, (c) because other regions of Ethiopia have already embarked on the program.

As to the timing of the program, the concerned officials contacted for this purpose replied infrastructure, human resource and ethnic conflict among the nations and nationalities of the region especially between Agnuak and Nuer as a result of disagreement with sharing of power on key political positions of executive offices and control of resources were the major impediments why the program was not implemented earlier. However, these same issues are still pending. The other observation is that the region was not aware of the DLDP program and its preparations at national level up until they were told to implement without prior knowledge and preparation.

3.5. Legal and Institutional Frameworks of Decentralization in Gambella Region

3.5.1. The Legal Framework

Any decentralization program to be successful requires a strong legal framework setting out the powers, rights and duties of local governments clearly. In the absence of such a framework, it is often impossible to know who is responsible for what. This allows central authorities to interfere easily with local affairs and leaves the local authorities with no possibility of stopping such interference (Mahat, 2007). Legal frameworks determine the very existence of woredas. This is the sources of their autonomy, powers and functions. It is important to assess the gaps between law and practice and to recommend appropriate solutions.

The first legal framework for a decentralized system of governance was the Charter which set up the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE, 1991). The Charter guaranteed the right of nations, nationalities and peoples to self determination; the right to administer own affairs within defined judiciary; meaningful participation and fair representation in the central government. The next significant legislative act was proclamation No. 7/1992 which provided for the setting up of national regional self governments (TGE, 1992). This law provided for a new administrative structure made up of a central government and regional states. It also defined the powers of three-tiered government-central, regional and woreda.

The FDRE constitution Article 50(2) divides powers and functions between the federal government and the states. With respect to the powers and responsibilities of local governments, the FDRE constitution Article 50(4) provides that adequate powers should be granted to the lowest unit of government to enable the people to participate directly in the administration of such units. This provision is the corner stone for the assignment of powers and functions to local governments in GPNRS. Thus, the FDRE constitution is also the other legal framework for the existence, power and function of woredas in GPNRS. However, this does not mean that the FDRE constitution has enabled woredas to be full partners in the governmental process.

To ensure direct participation of the people, in 2001 the government of Ethiopia reorganized its structure to deepen and broaden the decentralization process to woredas and kebeles by transferring a number of responsibilities including political power and fiscal empowerment from regional governments to woredas and kebeles. The recently amended constitutions of regional states have paved the ground to undertake the decentralization process at local level.

The legal framework should be established before embarking a decentralization program and should be fine-tuned during the implementation process. Apart from the FDRE (1995) and GPNRS revised (2002) constitutions which set the general legal foundation for the DLDP, there are no other legal or specific policy frameworks (such as local government acts, harmonization of sector legislations, etc) or even manual to direct the implementation of the DLDP in the Gambella region.

The program has been implemented without detailed legal base indicating the mandates, responsibilities and authority of the local governments, the relationship (supervision, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, etc) between local and regional governments, and relationship among local governments. Moreover, the region is not even in the process of preparing the legal frameworks required for the implementation of the program. However, an official in the CBCB and DLDP coordinator said that they are planning to adopt the legal and institutional framework of the SNNPR or from the federally prepared frameworks.

Even if there are the FDRE (1995) and GPNRS revised (2002) constitutions which set the general legal foundation for the DLDP, a few number of interviewees replied that they are familiar with some of the legal frameworks, and most of the interviewees replied that they do not know about most of the legal frameworks. The DLDP coordinator in the CBCB during an interview discloses the reason as:

..... once such laws are issued by the regional council that is the end of the process. They do not reach the woreda administration. If any at all reach the woreda administration, one cannot find them in government offices/shelves but in the hands/drawers of different individuals. When these individuals leave office for whatever reasons, they take these important documents with them, leaving nothing to their previous office. This is the big challenge that woredas are facing today.

The interviewees also stated that there is little or no understanding on the major issues, powers and functions covered in each legal framework mentioned in the constitutions. To this effect, therefore, the local governments in the region are so confused about their rights and responsibilities, which is hindering the implementation of the program and making them susceptible to unnecessary interference of the regional officials and organs; which is actually the case.

3.5.2. The Institutional Framework

When a policy or reform program such as decentralization is implemented, it creates, modifies and/or assigns institutions/organizations at different levels which have the mandate to plan, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the program. The establishment or assignment of such institutions and their mandates should be clearly stated by law (Mahat, 2007).

The institutions implementing DLDP in the Gambella region at regional and local levels are not clearly defined and their legal bases are almost non-existent and the author did not come across any official document let alone law describing the institutional settings of the DLDP in the region. The interview result obtained from the officials of regional capacity building coordinating bureau and the action plan is quite conflicting.

According to the action plan, the steering committee of RPSCAP, which is headed by the president of the region, is responsible for the overseeing of the DLDP while the vice president of the region chairs the technical committee. The members of these committees are drawn from all bureaus that are involved in the plan, design and implementation. The technical committee also has design and implementation roles. The CBCB of the region has the responsibility for coordinating and finalizing the implementation of the sub-program namely, DLDP. Other stakeholders identified as implementers in the action plan are: (a) woreda sector offices; (b) woreda administrators, and (c) other local stakeholders.

Despite the fact that different stakeholders have been identified as implementers of the program, however, interviewed regional CBCB and woreda officials and experts indicated that it is only the regional CBCB which has the overall responsibility for coordinating and implementing the program. In the action plan, woreda steering committee, woreda CBO and woreda sector offices have been included as implementers of DLDP. However, the interview conducted with heads and experts of woreda administrations and sector offices in two woredas, namely Abobo and Lare shows that they do have no awareness about the program.

Therefore, there is no any separate organizational unit responsible for the implementation of the program. This being the case, the institutions implementing the program are indicated only in the blue print which is in the action plan. Nevertheless, from observations of how things are being done in the region with regard to DLDP, one may deduce that, the institutional framework of the program follow from regional to zonal and to local (*woreda*) levels.

At regional level, there is the president office which is concerned with the political and administrative aspects and overall coordination of the program. Then come the BoFED, which is responsible for the planning and budgeting processes, financial issues, and overall coordination and monitoring of developmental issues of the DLDP. CBCB which is the presumed father of the program is concerned with the policy and capacity issues of the implementing organs at local level. The CSB, on the other hand, is concerned with manpower and staffing issues. These are the four major institutions with mandates and influences (though not clear) of the DLDP at local level in the Gambella region. However, other sectoral and line bureaus may have indirect relations and support packages with their respective offices at local level.

3.6. Powers and Functions among the Different Tiers of Government

Successful decentralization requires the central government to define duties and powers of each level of government and institution that are involved in decentralized activities, and determine the goods and services to be provided and the most effective level at which they could be provided better (Abebe, 2000: 13).

According to Article 52 (2) (b) of the federal constitution, “...*regional states shall have the power to enact and execute the state constitution and other laws*”. It is generally established that the function of regional constitution is a) to allocate power among different regional government tiers; b) to limit power among such tiers of government; c) to guarantee protections for rights of citizens and d) to regulate and guide the behaviors of governments.

The first constitution in GPNRS has been put into effect since 1995. The fact that the region had its constitution is not only in line with the principle of self rule, inherent in federalism, but also had a root in federal constitution itself which explicitly recognized the right of the regional state to make and implement its own constitution. It has also initiated steps to further devolve power, resources and functions to local governments. The region’s revised constitution, right to development with their own decision and participation in spite of their right to democracy imposes a duty on the regional state to promulgate legislation and to implement policies to ensure that this right is upheld. In the region, a number of steps have been taken to fulfill this right and ensure sustainable development through good governance, revising the constitution, reforming the existing government structure, adopting the federal capacity building strategy, and other policies.

The GPNRS has established a four tier administrative structure; region, nationality zones, administrative woredas and kebeles. However, the state council may establish other administrative hierarchies and there by determine by law their respective powers and duties as may find it necessary. Furthermore, the revised 2002 Constitution determines the structure, powers and functions to lower local governments. This give them empowered to manage development affairs in their own hand through participatory decision-making process.

The structures and powers of various organs (council, cabinet and courts) at regional, zonal, *woreda* and kebele levels are clearly stated in the revised 2002 constitution of the GPNRS. But the constitution has not mentioned clearly the functional responsibilities between the regional and *woreda* levels, and between the *woreda* and kebele levels. Moreover, there is no any other official document stating the functional assignment among levels of the regional governments. This implies that there is no clear demarcation of responsibilities among the tiers of the regional administrative units.

Now a day, the region is divided into three administrative zones, which are further divided into 11 woredas, 1 special woreda, 1 administrative town and 229 kebeles. The major administrative units for development planning and administration are the woredas; and kebeles are considered as the lower administrative units with all organs such as kebele council, cabinet and the social court. The region has zonal administrations as intermediate tiers of government between region and woreda. Zones are considered as coordinating and supervisory authorities over woreda administrations on behalf of the region.

3.6.1. Structure, Division of Power and Functions of the Regional State

According to the revised 2002 constitution of GPNRS, the structure of the organs of regional state includes:

- a) The Regional Council is the legislative body of the Regional State, it is the highest authority of the regional state and accountable to the people whom it represent;
- b) The Regional State Administrative Council is the highest executive organ and is accountable to the state council and
- c) The State Judicial Power is vested in the region Courts.

For a region to improve the welfare of its citizens, it must provide certain services assigned to it by the constitution of a country. In the same way, it must finance these services by levying tax on its citizens. The Ethiopian federal constitution determines the powers and responsibilities to regions. All powers and functions which are not provided to the federal government alone or joint to the federal government and the state government are reserved to the regional governments. This includes the GPNRS. The functions and responsibilities given to the GPNRS are stated below in box 3.1.

Box 3.1. Powers and Functions of the Regional State (Article 50)

1. All powers and functions, which are not given expressly to the Federal Government and the Federal and Regional Government jointly in accordance with the constitution of the FDRE, shall be vested in the Regional State.
2. Consistent with sub- article 1 of this article, the regional state shall:
 - 2.1 Formulate and execute the region's economic, social and development policies, strategies and plans;
 - 2.2 Enact and execute the state constitution and other regional laws;
 - 2.3 Administer land and other natural resources in accordance with federal laws;
 - 2.4 Establish a Regional State administration that best advances self- rule; build a democratic order where the supremacy of the law prevails, protect and defend the Federal and state council constitution and its constitution;
 - 2.5 Enact and enforce laws concerning on the state civil servants and their condition of work; in implementation of this responsibility it shall ensure that educational training and experience requirements for any job title or position approximate national standards;
 - 2.6 Establish and administer a state police force, and maintain public order and peace within the state;
 - 2.7 Levy taxes and collect duties on revenue sources granted to the regional state, and prepare, approve and administer the state budget;
 - 2.8 Levy and collect income taxes from the civil servants and employees of enterprises within the state;
 - 2.9 Determine and collect rural land user fees
 - 2.10 Levy and collect agricultural income tax;
 - 2.11 Levy and collect income taxes on income of house and other properties own by private, fix and collect rents on the income of houses and properties owned by the regional state;
 - 2.12 Levy and collect income profit, sales and excise taxes on enterprises owned by the regional state;
 - 2.13 Determine and collect payments on licenses and services approved by the state administrative organs;
 - 2.14 Jointly with the federal government:
 - a) In accordance with the law, share business profit, personal income taxes, sales and excise taxes generated from development enterprise jointly establish;
 - b) In accordance with the law, share taxes on the profits of companies and on dividends of shareholders;
 - c) In accordance with the law, share taxes on income derived from large-scale mining and all petroleum and gas operations and royalties on such operations.
 - 2.15 Fix and collect royalty for use of forest resources;
 - 2.16 Decree a state of emergency when any national disaster or epidemic occur and implement the same.

Source: The Revised 2002 GPNRS Constitution of Article 50

As it is indicated Article 50 sub Article (2.5), reads that the regional government shall enact and enforce laws that ensure educational training and experience requirements for any job, title or position in accordance with the national standard. However, the empirical findings of the study revealed that owing to the shortage of manpower in GPNRS that goes along with such provisions the regional government has hired professionals below this provisions.

3.6.2. The Structure, Powers and Functions of Nationality Zone Administrations

According to the revised 2002 constitution of GPNRS of article 77, in the national administration where the peoples of Anywaa, Nuer and Majangir have settled an administration of nationalities are established in accordance with sub-article 1 and 2 of Article 46 of the regional constitution. Each nationality zone administration shall have the following organs: a) Council of Nationality Zone, b) Nationality Zone Administration Council and c) Nationality Zone Administration Judicial organ.

Box 3.2. Powers and Functions of Council of Nationality Zone (Article 78)

1. Each Council of Nationality including members of the regional state council shall be established from among members of the woreda council who shall be elected under special condition in addition to those already elected for the membership of the regional council. Particulars shall determined by law.
2. The council of Nationality Zone shall be the supreme political power of their nationality zone.
3. Each council of nationality zone shall be accountable to the regional state council and shall have the following specific powers and functions:-
 - a. Determine the official language to be used by the nationality zone concerned;
 - b. Protect the rights of nationality to speak and write in its own language to develop, preserve, express, promote and expand its language as well as preserve its historical heritage;
 - c. Issue and implement directives which are consistent with regional laws, regulation and directives within its jurisdiction;
 - d. Draw up, analyses and approve its plan and budgets in accordance with the regional plan and budget approved by the regional council;
 - e. Elect a speaker, deputy speaker and chief administrator of the Nationality Zone Administration from among the member of the Nationality Zone Council;
 - f. Evaluate Zone and approve the appointment of a Deputy Administrator and other members of the Council of Nationality upon recommendation by the chief administrator;
 - g. Give its opinion to the State Council on the appointment of judges of the High Court and First-Instance Court of the Nationality Zone Administration; and
 - h. Call and question the officials of the Nationality Administration including the chief administrator and evaluate their performance.

Source: The Revised 2002 GPNRS Constitution of Article 78

The Gambella region has zonal administrations as intermediate tiers of government between region and woreda. Zones in the region do not have a legally recognized tier of government with constitutionally mandated powers and structure as self-governing entity. The regional state assigns the executive councils of the zonal administrations from among the representatives elected for regional state councils. The zone administration has a dual accountability both to its own executive council on the one hand, and to the council of the regional state on the other. They have coordinating and supervisory authorities over woreda administrations on behalf of the region. This implies that zones are considered as deconcentrated administrative units of the regional government. The zonal administration that are established for regional minority ethnic groups in Gambella though recognized as the highest political organ of the ethnic group concerned, have no clear competences, save determining the working language of the zone.

3.7. Fiscal Decentralization in Gambella Region

Fiscal decentralization is the life blood of decentralization without which other forms (political and administrative) of decentralization will be an empty rhetoric. It may seem, on the face value, the “easiest” dimension of decentralization because it involves assigning revenue capacities to sub-national governments. The reality, however, is more complex because even when an official decision is made to decentralize financial capacities to local authorities, reluctant central/regional agencies may be able to slow the process down (Mahat, 2007).

The Ethiopian decentralization has devolved resources and finance to lower levels of government. Proclamation No. 33/1992 is the most important legal instrument in the fiscal decentralization of Ethiopia. The proclamation defined the sharing of revenue between the central government and national/regional governments. The proclamation, among others, specified the basis for revenue sharing, expenditure and revenue assignment, subsidy (grants) and borrowing (TGE, 1992).

Regarding fiscal issues, the regional constitution is silent on the power assigned to lower government levels. The only statement in this regard is that the *woredas* have only power to collect agricultural income tax and land use rent, and indicate any potential revenue source, which is not captured by the Regional Government (Article 89, 2002). If the State Government could put this ‘formal’ separation of power at each level of government into practice, it seems to facilitate the decentralization process.

3.7.1. Expenditure Assignment

Scholars acknowledge that there is no universally acceptable formula in allocating functions between various levels of government, but each country has to tackle the issue based on its own individual circumstances (Eshetu, 1994). Expenditure assignment for the DLDP of Gambella region lacks clarity and formality. The regional revised constitution fails to clearly define the expenditure responsibilities of the lower level governments.

As a result, the regional level sector bureaus play a dominant role in the decision of expenditures. Particularly, almost all decisions on capital expenditures are under the domain of regional level sector bureaus. The only expenditure spent at *woreda* and zonal levels constitutes some portion of recurrent expenditure. The recent data on the share of expenditures spent by each levels of government in the region is summarized as follows.

Table 3.8: Share of Expenditures by Levels of Government (2007/08-2009/10) in Millions

Levels of Government	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total	Average
Total Regional Expenditure	260.733	359.439	315.782	935.954	311.99
Recurrent Expenditure	225.492	335.532	272.997	834.021	278.01
Capital Expenditure	35.241	23.907	42.785	101.933	33.98
Total Local Government Expenditure	130.668	250.157	158.61	539.435	179.82
Recurrent Expenditure	130.180	248.941	152.074	531.195	177.07
Capital Expenditure	0.488	1.216	6.536	8.24	2.75
Share of Local Governments (%)					
In Total Regional Expenditure	50.12	69.6	50.23	169.95	56.65
In Recurrent Expenditure	57.86	74.19	55.71	187.76	62.59
In Capital Expenditure	1.38	5.09	15.28	21.75	7.25

Source: BoFED (2010/11)

Note: - Local Government Expenditures include both spent by zones and *woredas* levels.

From the above table, we can see that all zones and *woredas* spend on average 56.65 percent of total regional expenditure while regional level sector bureaus spend 43.35 percent for the period of three years. When we see the economic allocation of expenditures among the levels of government, local level governments spend 62.59 percent of total recurrent expenditure and 7.25 percent of total capital expenditure. Almost, regional sector bureaus and offices spend 92.75 percent of capital expenditure.

This indicates greater control of capital expenditure at the regional level and the participation of local governments is very insignificant. The implication is thus, extensive centralization of power to decide on expenditures, particularly on capital expenditure, at the regional level. And although the regional government seems committed to decentralized decision, the practice still failed to fully decentralize it.

The failure to precisely define expenditure assignment between the regional and local level governments may have a negative impact on three important aspects (World Bank, 1998:25). First if the responsibilities are imprecise, the corresponding revenues will remain poorly defined. Second, without clear responsibilities, local governments might prefer to invest in populist projects, which benefit them in the short run rather than in projects with long run impact on region's economy. Third, there will be confusion whether sub-regional expenditures request local priorities or regionally determined programs.

In addition, the problem to decentralize expenditure may be due to lack of attention to implementation than to decentralizing inappropriate services. That is no matter what a constitution says; the regional agencies have proved not to decentralize the services they have been providing. The World Bank's possible explanations of this are loss of prestige and resources to these agencies and they perceive each other as competitors. Thus, they almost invariably try to slow down the process. Secondly, if too many sectors are decentralized too rapidly and local governments do not have capacity to handle these new responsibilities, they will perform poorly. If this happens, regional agencies become hostile to decentralization and can use poor local performance as an excuse for keeping the services centralized at the regional bureau levels (Ibid).

Therefore, the extensive centralization of expenditure responsibilities, particularly capital expenditures, in Gambella region is not much far from the above explanations. Given the very large distance between the local beneficiaries and regional capital, decisions made by the regional officials are unlikely to reflect the interest of the local people. As a result, unless decisions are made at the local level, the regional government's commitment to decentralization process may not be beyond simple and formal statements on the paper.

Table 3.9: Public Expenditure Trend in GPNRS (%)

Expenditure	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Average
Recurrent	89.88	86.13	85.81	93.35	86.45	88.3
Capital	10.12	13.87	14.19	6.65	13.55	11.7

Source: BoFED (2010/11) (Appendix II)

The actual expenditure is categorized into recurrent and capital. As can be seen from Table 3.9, recurrent expenditure took a share of more than 85 percent during 2005/06-2009/10. But the share of capital expenditure is below 15 percent. The share of recurrent expenditure has shown an increasing trend and reached at a maximum of 93.35 percent in 2008/09. The share of capital expenditure also increased, but it is insignificant. On average, the share of recurrent expenditure is 88.3 percent while the share of capital expenditure is 11.7 percent. In general, during the whole period of time under consideration (2005/06-2009/10), the share of recurrent expenditure is extremely higher than capital expenditure which is largely due to an increase in the salary and other allowance of civil servants. And the newly started government structure has increased the volume and scale of civil servants and their salary, particularly at the *woreda* level.

Table 3.10: Sectoral Allocation of Expenditure in GPNRS (%)

Sector	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Average
Administrative and General Sector	35.59	41.82	45.18	61.01	36.93	44.10
Economic Sector	21.27	17.43	17.26	10.74	19.94	17.32
Social Sector	43.14	40.75	36.78	28.25	43.13	38.41
Others	-	-	0.78	-	-	0.17

Source: BoFED (2010/11) (Appendix II)

When we see the sectoral allocation of expenditure (Table 3.10), the administrative and general sector took the highest share of the total expenditure during 2008/09, i.e., 61.01%, while the share of the economic sector and social sector was 10.74% and 28.25% respectively. When the share of administrative and general sector declined to 36.93%, then the share of economic and social sectors increased to 19.94% and 43.13% respectively. Other expenditures than the three constitute 0.78% of the total expenditure during 2007/08. This implies that the region gave emphasis on building construction for key regional sector bureaus like BoFED, regional council and administration bureaus and the like and fulfilling the necessary office accommodation. This leads to reducing the share of economic and social sectors but in recent years priority has given for economic and social services.

And also a further analysis and observations of the regional priority sectors (social and economic sectors) reflected high spending on economic infrastructures and social services particularly health and education.

Table 3.11: Share of Priority Sectors in Total Capital Expenditure in GPNRS (%)

Share in Total Capital Expenditure	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Average
General Development	11.37	28.89	53.19	64.18	33.3	38.2
Economic Development	53.92	43.87	42.82	21.04	29.4	38.2
Social Development	34.71	27.24	3.99	14.78	37.3	23.6

Source: BoFED (2010/11) (Appendix II)

When we see the share of priority sectors from the table, capital expenditure on economic and social development have shown a declining trend from 53.92% and 34.71% in 2005/06 to 21.04% and 14.78% in 2008/09 respectively. This is because the regional government gives more emphasis to general development which shows an increasing trend from 11.37% in 2005/06 to 64.18% in 2008/09.

The government officials of the region pointed out that, within the general development sector the initial priority was given on building construction for key sector offices like BOFED, regional council and administration bureaus and the like and fulfilling the necessary office accommodation. But after the accommodation needs have been relatively satisfied, priority has shifted to road construction, health and education leading to an increased share of economic and social development to 29.4% and 37.3% respectively in 2009/10 and a decline in the share of general development to 33.3% in the same period. Generally, during 2005/06-2009/10, the share of general, economic and social sectors expenditure averaged 38.2%, 38.2% and 23.6% of the total capital expenditure respectively.

3.7.2. Revenue Assignment

Following the decentralization policy of the country and based on Article 97 and 98 of the Federal Constitution, the GPNRS revised constitution has defined the revenue sources of the region. Accordingly, the region is empowered to levy and collect taxes and duties assigned to it (Article 97/2002). But the constitution fails to identify revenue sources that are further decentralized to lower level governments. The only fiscal power assigned to *woreda* level governments in the constitution is that the *woreda* administrative councils are empowered to collect agricultural income tax, land use rent and other revenues (Article 95/2002).

The *woreda* councils are empowered to ensure the timely collection of agricultural income tax, land use rent and other revenue sources (Article 89/2002). But this does not mean that *woredas* are empowered with fiscal decision-making responsibilities. The power to decide on the revenue sources of the region is assigned to the Regional Government. The region has power to levy taxes and duties assigned to it. However, the *woredas* do not have constitutional right to levy taxes on any item except the collection of the regionally decided taxes.

Though the regional constitution indicates that *woredas* have the power to collect revenue, there is no proclamation, regulation, decree or even semi-legal (manual) guiding the revenue sharing responsibilities and rights between regional and *woreda* level. The *woreda* government can only collect revenue for selected areas such as personal income from *woreda* employees and small traders, rural land use fee and agricultural income tax. It is only the authority of the regional government to decide on rates and bases in the region. The *woredas* cannot decide to raise revenue according to the development needs of the community by changing the tax rate and base. The major revenue collection sources for *woredas* are *payroll tax* from the employees and business taxes from traders. The share of agricultural income tax and rural land use rent are insignificant.

When it comes to revenue collection responsibilities between *woreda* and regional levels, revenue administration authority of the region assigns arbitrary percentage between *woreda* and regional levels and then among *woredas* without any base such as study of the potentiality of *woredas* base of revenue. The only base of regional bureau revenue collection assignment (as remarked by revenue collection department expert) is whether a main road passes a particular *woreda*. Table 3.12 shows revenue collection responsibility between regional and local levels for the last three years of DLDP implementation.

Table 3.12: Revenue Collection Responsibility between Regional and *Woreda* Levels in Million Birr

Planned Revenue Collection	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10	
	Amount	% share	Amount	% share	Amount	% share
Regional Level	7.83	40.61	18.0	49.99	19.54	50.05
Local (<i>woreda</i>) Level	11.5	59.39	18.02	50.01	19.5	49.95
Total	19.33	100	36.02	100	39.04	100

Source: BoRAA (2010/11)

The table clearly illustrates the responsibilities of revenue collection between the two levels of government in the region for the last three years of DLDP implementation. The share of the *woredas* is 59.39%, 50.01% and 49.95% in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 respectively, which is relatively higher than the share of the region.

The major problem is not in the assignment of revenue collection responsibilities between the two levels and which level collects what, but the problem stems from fact that the amount of revenue collected in the *woredas* is deducted in advance from the transferred budget of *woredas* by the regional government as revenue to be collected from *woredas* and it is up to the *woreda* to collect the revenue to fill the vacuum of the deducted budget. The deducted amount of revenue from the *woredas* budget is most of time more than the operating (petty cash) cost of most *woredas*. Even, the deducted amount of revenue may not be collected by the *woredas* at the budget year. Thus, the budget of *woredas* is not enough to accomplish the whole activities planned in the budget year. This would affect the development initiatives/activities of *woredas* as well as revenue mobilization at *woreda* level.

Theoretically, the level and composition of revenue sources in different regions may vary. Those, which have many industries, would be able to yield larger revenues by way of sales taxes, etc, while agrarian may not be fortunate. Similarly, the extent and intensity of trade, commerce and services differ from region to region. Bigger regions with relatively better commercial activities are obviously able to lay their hands on more revenues than backward areas (Bhatia, 1996 as cited in Melkamu, 2004). The composition and extent of revenue collection in GPNRS can be analyzed based on the above argument. Similar to other regions, the expenditure responsibilities of the region are far higher than its own revenue potential.

Table 3.13: Share of Own Revenue in Total Budgetary Revenues and Annual Budget Growth (%).

Source of Revenue	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Average
1. Share of Own Revenue	8.83	9.45	13.63	15.7	16.4	12.8
Tax Revenue	7.8	8.33	10.15	12.75	11.1	10.03
Direct Taxes	7.33	7.81	9.50	11.21	9.88	9.15
Indirect Taxes	0.47	0.52	0.65	1.54	1.22	0.8
Non-Tax Revenue	1.03	1.12	3.48	2.27	4.92	2.56
Others	0.004	0.0002	0.002	0.68	0.38	0.21
2. Share of Federal Subsidy	91.17	90.55	86.37	84.3	83.6	87.2
Annual Budget Growth (%)	-	29.53	0.22	20.06	29.97	15.96

Source: BoFED (2010/110) (Appendix I)

As we can see from Table 3.13, the proportion of own revenue to the total budgetary revenue is very small. On average, the share of own revenue to the total regional budgetary revenue is 12.8 percent for (2005/06-2009/10). That is, the overall envelop of the region's budgetary revenue indicates high dependence on federal subsidy. Over a period, however, the own revenue generating effort improved, rising from 8.83 percent in 2005/06 to 16.4 percent in 2009/10 (budget estimate). This rising trend is resulted from the increase in both direct taxes and non-tax revenues. But the share of indirect tax stagnated at below 3 percent (average) of the total own revenue.

Federal subsidy constitutes the bulk of the total revenue of the Gambella Region. However, the share of subsidy in the total budgetary revenue declined from 91.17 percent in 2005/06 to 83.6 percent in 2009/10. In general, the growth of the budget shows an increasing trend.

3.7.3. Intergovernmental Transfer

Intergovernmental transfers are the major source of revenue for local governments in Gambella region. That is, the region highly depends (see table 3.13) on transfer (subsidy) from federal government and *woredas* and zones in turn get most (see Appendix 3 & 4) of their budget from regional transfers. As we can see from table 3.13, it is clear that the region cannot do anything without the transfer (subsidy) from the federal government and the dependency rate on average reached 87.2 percent of the total budget of the region. Low fiscal autonomy of the regional state government may be an indication of the extent of its position reflecting high dependence on federal government subsidy. This implies that the region is virtually handicapped without the federal subsidy and hence the autonomy (in its all dimensions) and self-reliance of the region which are the essence of the decentralization policy is basically absent.

On the other hand, the dependency of *woredas* on regional transfer/subsidy is more or less the same as that of the region to the federal as shown in table 3.13.

As can be seen from table 3.14 below, the dependency (see also Annex 3 for specific *woredas*) of *woreda* governments on the regional transfer is high and ranges from 88.39 percent, 85.61 percent and 81.52 percent for the last three (2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10) years of DLDP implementation respectively. This implies that local governments cannot exist without the regional subsidy which in turn cannot exist without the federal subsidy. This leads us to the difficult question of how long can the federal government continue to provide subsidy to the regional and *woreda* governments to exist.

Table 3.14: Regional Transfers (Subsidy) to Woredas Vs Own Revenue Expected from Woredas

Local Budget Dependency	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10		Average %age Share
	Amount	% share	Amount	% share	Amount	% share	
Regional Transfer	109.228	88.39	97.806	85.61	130.346	81.52	85.17
Revenue Collection from Woredas	14.343	11.61	16.447	14.39	29.540	18.48	14.83
Total Woredas Budget	123.571	100	114.253	100	159.886	100	100

Source: BoFED (2010/11)

The table also clearly shows the relationship between the local expenditure needs and revenue at their disposal. Thus, of the total budget given for *woredas*, only 11.61%, 14.39% and 18.48% in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 respectively is from local source or own revenue of woreda governments. On average, the share of own revenue to the total woredas budget is 14.83% while the share of regional transfers to woredas budget is 85.17%. This indicates the vulnerability of local governments to the manipulation of the regional government.

Table 3.15: The Actual (Real) Share of Local Level Budget in the Total Budget of the GPNRS

Budget Year	Total Regional Budget	Regional Level Budget		Local Level Budget	
		Amount	% share	Amount	% share
2007/08	204.569	70.082	34.26	134.487	65.74
2008/09	245.613	120.913	49.23	124.7	50.77
2009/10	319.226	146.363	45.85	172.872	54.15
Total	769,408	337.358	43.85	432.059	56.15

Source: BoFED (2010/11)

Note: - Total Local level budget include both woredas and zones budget.

When we see table 3.15, the real share of local level budget (zones and *woredas*) in the grand budget of the region over the last three years without any deduction shows a decreasing trend. Thus, of the total regional budget, 65.74 percent, 50.77 percent and 54.15 percent in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 respectively is allocated to local governments. It shows an average of approximately 56 percent for local level (woredas and zones) while the remainder (44 percent) is for regional level.

3.7.3.1. The Grant Formula

Regional grant given by the federal government includes the grants that are given to the zones and woredas of the region. It may take the form of either block grant, which the woredas might allocate in a manner they see fit, or it may take the form of specific grant, which the region gives to woredas for specific purpose. In line with the federal policy of more autonomy to *woredas*, the core fiscal framework of the region is unconditional block grant to *woredas*. But the region has so far been dividing the *woreda* budget into three major parts of salary, petty cash and capital budgets on the pretext of lack of capacity by the *woreda* governments to do so by them. Grants given to the zones and woredas are allocated using grant formula.

The grant formula used for the division of budget among *woredas* by Gambella BoFED constitutes three parameters/variables namely; population, level of development and revenue raising capacity each having corresponding weight of 60%, 25% and 15% respectively. The grant given to region is further allocated among the region, zones and woredas. The percentage share of each parameter is usually given by the cabinet of the region on yearly basis. According to the interviewed officials of BoFED, the grant formula operated in the region is followed the formula that was used by the federal government in 2005/06. But the grant formula changed and only constitutes population and level of development with a weight of 55% and 45% respectively by removing revenue generating capacity since 2009/10. This is because woredas have not enough capacity to collect their own revenue and there was a different performance among woredas in collecting revenue.

3.8. Planning and Budgeting Process in Gambella Region

The budget formulation process in Gambella region follows the federal procedure. Budget estimates are prepared in accordance with the financial limits and formats prescribed by the BoFED based on annual budget call letters. When the regional BoFED receive the budget call from the Federal Government, it issue budget call letters to the sector bureaus, zones and woredas for recurrent and capital budgets respectively. Financial directives and regulations approved by the Federal Government and regional council are binding. The estimated tax yields based on yearly tax rates and the expected federal subsidy provide the basis for estimating the resources.

The institutions involved in the planning and budgeting process are BoFED at regional level and OFED and sector offices at *woreda* level. At the regional level, the various sector bureaus submit their consolidated budgets (recurrent and capital), incorporating submissions by the zonal and *woreda* administrations to the BoFED for evaluation and necessary revisions and discussions with heads of public bodies. BoFED presents the complied recurrent and capital budget estimates to the executive committee of the regional council for review and recommendation. The president then submits the budget estimate and recommendations of the executive committee to the regional council. After approval by the council, the budget estimates were published in the *Gambella Negarit Gazette* and notification was made on the approved estimates to the heads of public bodies. In allocating capital budget, priority was given to ongoing projects, and matching funds required for aid projects. In allocating recurrent budget, priority was given to salaries, wages and allowances, and operational and maintenance expenditure in the priority sectors: health, education and agriculture.

The planning and budgeting process of most *woredas* has so far been done in a semi top-down approach in three rounds: first, in a form of indicative plans from the region setting out priority areas to be dealt with by *woredas*; secondly, the block grant transferred to *woredas* are divided in three major parts of salary, petty cash and capital at regional level; finally planning and budgeting experts are sent from the region to help the *woredas* in the technicalities of planning and budgeting process within the priority area. The *woreda* executive (cabinet) committee and *woreda* council play the approving role after a series of meeting and discussions of priority and pressing issues.

Based on the above discussion, local governments are participated in providing input into the budget formulation and transfer process and in proposing project ideas in the planning process. Beyond this, however, they are not consulted in the budgetary decision making process and resource allocation that was done at the regional level. At the implementation stage, most of the capital budget is executed by the regional bureaus, but some limited amount of capital projects for example, rehabilitation of schools, digging wells or health centers were delegated to the zonal or *woreda* administrations to implement and report back to the sectoral bureaus.

The recurrent budget was also identified sectorally but resources go through the finance line to the sub-regional administrations. To the extent that the sub-regional structures participate only in input delivery (information provision) and were not actively involved in allocation of decision making and budget execution, have limited 'voice' in public expenditure decisions.

Therefore, the general commitment of the GPNRS government to decentralization does not guarantee its real application. The observation at the *woreda* level shows failure of real decentralization. The explanations for the failure, despite the government's commitment to implement the process, include: lack of adequate service and infrastructure and lack of adequate qualified personnel who are willing to work in places that are relatively less comfortable than the regional capital. According to the interview with the regional officials, even at the regional and zonal levels, keeping qualified government employees who reside in towns is proving to be a serious challenge. There is high rate of turnover of employees at the *woreda* level. As a result, there has not been effective devolution of power and responsibility from the regional level to lower levels of government.

On the other hand, civil society organizations (NGOs, CBOs, etc) and general public are not part and parcel of the planning and budgeting process of *woredas*. The reason is that community is not aware (due to lack of orientation and mobilization) of the planning and budgeting process of *woredas*, while civil society organizations does not exist in most *woredas*. Moreover, there is no any mechanism or modality in place or in process for civil organization and the community involvement in the planning and budgeting process of local governments in the region.

The reporting back of budget expenditure by *woredas* is weak and not established fully. So far, no *woreda* has reported back its financial (income and expenditure) undertakings for the last three years of DLDP implementation except two (Abobo and Godere) *woredas* which are supported by the World Bank programs. Though, there are standard forms for accounting back financial transactions, there is no established monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and system (other than unorganized periodic inspection) in place between *woredas* and regional levels.

CHAPTER FOUR

ASSESSMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF WOREDA DECENTRALIZATION IN GAMBELLA REGIONAL STATE WITH EMPHASIS TO ABOBO AND LARE WOREDAS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter makes an attempt to give a general qualitative description on the trends of DLDP implementation in the region in general and two study (Abobo and Lare) *woredas* in particular. This will be made by looking at the socio-economic background and analysis of some basic preliminary performance indications of the DLDP in the study *woredas* such as, powers and functions of *woreda* and kebele governments, local governance process, intergovernmental relations, revenue and expenditure trends, community participation, planning and budgeting process and basic service delivery trends.

The data and analysis of this chapter is based on the response to interviews and focus group discussions with planners and analysts of the program at regional level, elected and assigned officials at *woreda* levels and a sample of community members at *woreda* level. Besides, some hard data on basic service delivery trends retrieved from planning and budgeting documents and performance reports of sample *woredas* as well as the observation of the author plays a significant portion of the chapter. Much of the analysis depends on qualitative description sometimes with quantitative data of the prevailing general situation in the implementation of the program.

4.2. Background of the Study Woredas

This section gives an overview of the profiles of the two study *woredas*. It highlights the physical setting, socio-economic features and development opportunities of the local governments. This information helps planners and policy makers understand the challenges and development potential of the areas.

4.2.1. Abobo Woreda

4.2.1.1. Location, Demographic and Socio-Economic Features

Abobo is one of the 12 woredas in the Gambella region of Ethiopia. It is found in Agnuak zone. There are 5 woredas in Agnuak zone. It is located at 47 kilometers away from Gambella town (the regional capital city). Abobo is bordered on the southeast by the Mejenger zone, on the south by Gog woreda, on the southwest by Jor woreda, on the west by Godere woreda, on the northwest by Etang woreda, on the north by Gambella, and on the east by the Oromia region; part of its northern boundary is defined by the Alwero river. The major town in Abobo woreda is Abobo.

The terrain of Abobo is dominated by comparatively high ground extending on a southeast-northwest axis; the elevations range 400-600 meters above sea level. Major bodies of water in this woreda include Lake Alwero. According to the *Atlas of the Ethiopian Rural Economy* published by the Central Statistical Agency (CSA), around 20% of the woreda is forest. A notable landmark is the Gambella National Park, which occupies the land west of the Pugniwudo-Gambella road.

Based on the 2007 census conducted by the CSA, this woreda has a total population of 15,741, an increase of 12.65% over the 1994 census, of whom 8,184 are men and 7,557 women. With an area of 3,116.17 square kilometers, Abobo has a population density of 5.05, which is greater than the zone average of 4.83 persons per square kilometer. The census reported 4,090 (26%) are urban inhabitants while the remaining 11,651 (74%) are found in rural areas. A total of 3,867 households were counted in this woreda, which results in an average of 4.1 persons to a household, and 3,663 housing units. Abobo woreda is divided into 16 administrative kebeles and one town. Abobo town is the administrative center of the district/woreda. Estimated road density is reported to be between 5.1 and 10 kilometers per 1000 square kilometers.

According to the 1994 national census, the woreda's population was reported to be 13,973 in 3,597 households, of whom 7,223 were men and 6,750 women; 1,222 or 8.75% of the population were urban inhabitants. The five largest ethnic groups in Abobo were the Agnuak (44.05%), the Kambaata (20.1%), the Amhara (12.57%), the Oromo (6.31%), and the Mejenger (5.99%); all other ethnic groups made up 10.98% of the population.

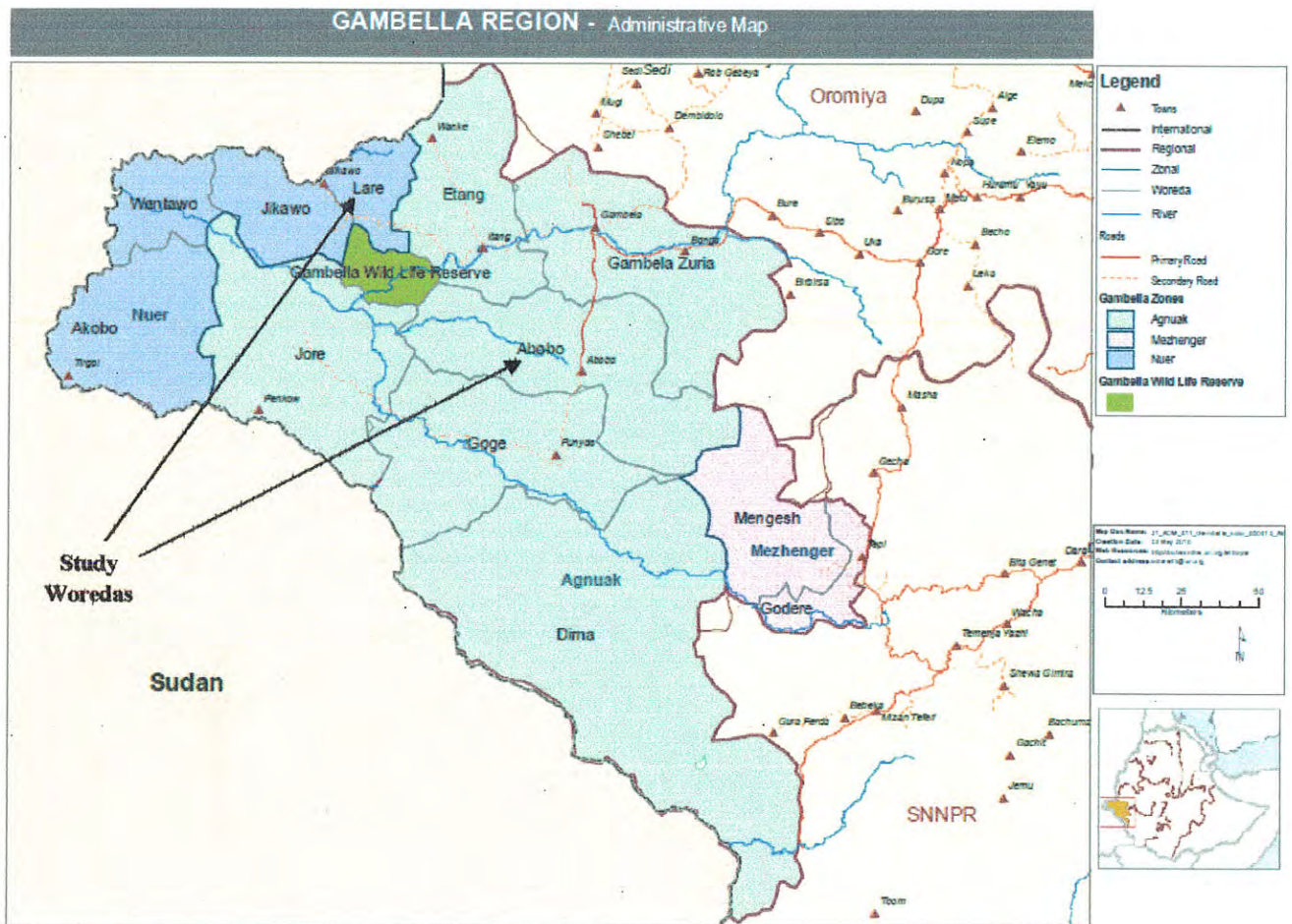
Agnuak is spoken as a first language by 44.08%, 20.45% speak Kambaata, 13.5% Amharic, 5.93% Majang, and 5.65% speak Oromiffa; the remaining 10.39% spoke all other primary languages reported. The largest group of the inhabitants said they were Protestant, with 32.2% of the population reporting they practiced that belief, while 29.66% professed Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, 16.01% practiced traditional religions, 13.71% were Muslim, and 6.46% were Catholic.

According to the information obtained from the education office of the woreda; there are 9 primary schools, 9 junior secondary schools (1-8), 1 senior secondary school (9-10) and 4 Alternative Basic Education Centers (Non-formal schools) in the woreda at the end of 2009/10. The GER of primary school in 2009/10 was 129.75 % while the NER (Net Enrollment Ratio) was 58.73 %. The energy sources in the district are firewood, charcoal, animal dung, crop residue, kerosene and hydroelectric power. The education coverage of the woreda was 68% but the quality is very low.

About 74% of the woreda population lives in rural areas with the major occupation of livestock breeding and farming in traditional way. The economy of Abobo is predominantly agricultural. Abobo is a better production area of crops like maize and sorghum in the region. These crops are better produced than other crops with small holding subsistence farming system in the woreda. The natives used to plough the land with hand that is called 'Shalla'. In this district, a large number of highlanders are living in the rural area. They came to the region during the Derg regime through the program of resettlement because of the drought, mainly from Wollo. These highlanders had better economic status when compared with the natives because they used farming with oxen and using extension packages.

Moreover, the woreda is suitable for animal rearing and agriculture through irrigation. Accordingly, it is possible to produce crops, cereals and fruits. It has high potential for cotton production and fishing. There is one state farm in the cotton production and recently different foreign investors started in crop production. There are many hectares of potential fertile for cultivated land.

Fig. 4.1: Administrative Map of Gambella Peoples National Regional State



Source: <http://ochaonline.un.org/ethiopia/Maps/downloadables/GAMBELLA.pdf>

4.2.2. Lare Woreda

4.2.2.1. Location, Demographic and Socio-Economic Features

Lare is one of the 12 woredas in the Gambella region of Ethiopia. It is found in Nuer zone. There are 4 woredas in Nuer zone. It is located at 85 kilometers away from Gambella town (the regional capital city). Part of the Nuer zone, Lare is bordered on the south and east by the Agnuak zone, on the west by the Baro river which separates it from Jikawo, and on the north by the Jikawo river which separates it from Sudan. The major town in Lare woreda is Korgang. At some point between 2001 and 2007, the eastern kebeles of Jikawo were split off to create Lare woreda.

The terrain in Lare consists of marshes and grasslands; elevations range from 300 to 400 meters above sea level. A notable landmark is Gambella National Park, which occupies part of the area south of the Baro. It falls under kola agro-climatic zone and expected to get an average annual rainfall from 900-1200mm. Hence, the mean temperature of the woreda is 31⁰c-35⁰c. The highest monthly temperature is found in March which reaches up to 45⁰c.

Based on the 2007 census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), Lare woreda has a total population of 31,406 of whom 16,145 are men and 15,261 women; with an area of 685.17 square kilometers, Lare has a population density of 45.84, which is greater than the Nuer zone average of 23.79 persons per square kilometer. 6,549 (20.85%) are urban inhabitants while the remaining 24,857 (79.15%) are found in rural areas. A further 156 or 0.50% are pastoralists. A total of 5,432 households were counted in this woreda, which results in an average of 5.8 persons to a household, and 5,217 housing units. Lare woreda is divided into 25 administrative rural kebeles and one town. Korgang town is the administrative center of the district/woreda.

According to the information obtained from the education office of the woreda; there are 7 first cycle (1-4) primary schools, 9 second cycle (5-8) primary schools, 1 senior secondary school (9-10) and 3 Alternative Basic Education Centers (Non-formal schools) in the woreda at the end of 2009/10. The GER of primary school in 2009/10 was 78.2 % while the NER (Net Enrollment Ratio) was 52.5 %. The education coverage of the woreda was 65% but the quality is very low.

The economy of the woreda is depending on agriculture and pastoralism is the leading preoccupation of the people. People are also engaged in the cultivation of maize, sorghum, bean, sesame, ground nut, etc. for their livelihood. The community also practices livestock rearing. Hence, it would be very appropriate to consider the community as leading agro-pastoral mode of production. 2% of the population makes living as government employee and engaged in petty trade.

4.3. Powers and Functions of Lower Levels of Government

The legal basis of woreda and kebele is laid down in the 2002 revised constitution of the GPNRS. In this regard, the Ethiopian legislative provision of powers and responsibilities to regions is given in article 52 of 1995 FDRE constitution. The constitution does not make a clear reference to the woreda administration structure in its articles. However, article 50(4) of the constitution in reference to the organizational structure; give the regional state the power to establish the local government and other necessary administrative levels. Adequate power shall be granted to the lowest unit of government to enable them participate directly in administration of such units.

4.3.1. Organization, Powers and Functions of the Woreda Administration

According to Article 87 of the revised 2002 GPNRS Constitution, the woreda administration shall comprise the following principal organs:

1. The Woreda Council to be established by the combination of popularly elected representatives of the kebeles organized under it;
2. The Woreda Administrative Council to be set up by the woreda Chief Administrative, himself designated by election from among members of the council here of; and
3. A first instance Court/Judicial body/ established pursuant to regional constitution.

Box 4.1. Power and Functions of the Woreda Administration (Article 88)

1. The woreda administration shall, within the territorial area of its organization, have all the powers enabling it to prepare and decide on the economic development and social service plans as well as to implement policies, laws, regulations and directives issued by the regional state organs.
2. Without prejudice to the rights and powers of each woreda to self-determination, to develop its woreda and determine its own internal affairs, it shall be subordinate to the zonal administration.

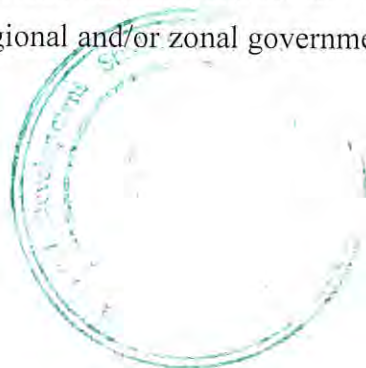
Source: The Revised 2002 GPNRS Constitution of Article 88

The woreda administration shall have the power to prepare and decide on economic development and social services, plans and implement policies and directives issued by the regional state and zone organs. The woreda council within the woreda of its establishment is the highest body of the state. In attempt to show the accountability of the woreda council, the constitution of the regional state indicate that without prejudice to its rights and powers to exercise self administration, develop its woreda and determine its own internal affairs. Woredas are responsible to regional government and zonal administration. The constitution also stated the woreda is subordinate to zonal administration.

According to the data from the field study, the principal organs of woreda governments comprise of the woreda council, the woreda administration and first instance court. The administration structures of woreda consist of an executive committee, an elected council and a pool of civil servants. The executive committee and the permanent assembly meet every three months to discuss and decide on the social and economic development plans of the district. The executive committees are fulltime employees. The woreda council has an authority to approve the woreda's budgets and review the work progress of the different sector offices and the executive committee.

A woreda is administered by an executive committee, it is also known as the cabinet. The chairman of the executive committee is the chief administrator of the woreda and the deputy usually serves as the vice administrator and the secretary of the cabinet. Most other members of the committee are heads of sectoral offices, such as education, health, agriculture and rural development, youth and social affairs, finance and economic development, etc. The council allocates block grants received from regional state whereas the main duty of the executive committee is to implement policies and decisions made by the council. Thus, the executive committee is drawn from the woreda council and is responsible for the day-to-day activities.

The authority of the woreda to carry out their functions has been further enhanced since 2004/05 woreda decentralization initiative in the region under study. Accordingly, they were given constitutionally such powers to approve of the woreda social service, economic development, and administrative plans and programs. However, as the response of the interviewee (26 January 2011) revealed, even though the powers and functions of the woreda administrations and woreda councils are clearly specified under the constitution, there is still regional and/or zonal government interference on the functions and powers of the woreda councils.



According to the interviewed woreda officials and experts, there are many problems to execute the powers and functions which the constitution provided to them (see box 4.2). For instance, they revealed that there exists typically a lack of clarity about the responsibilities of zonal governments and the woreda, and lack of skill and financial capacity to carry out their roles. In addition, there are often resource problems which are more pronounced in remote woredas that have little capacity to raise revenues but are expected to carry out an increased range of functions. The powers and functions of the woreda council are shown below in (box 4.2).

Box 4.2. Powers and Functions of the Woreda Council (Article 89)

1. The woreda council is the highest authority of the woreda and its accountability shall be either to the nationality zone or to the regional council, as the case may be appropriate.
2. The woreda council has the following powers and functions:-
 - a. Examine and approves the draft economic development, social services, along with administrative working plans and programs of the woreda concerned, and determine the division of budget to kebeles;
 - b. Follow up the basic agricultural development activities those are undertaken inconsistency with the appropriate season and task of development, conservation and care of natural resources is carried out with special attention given to it thereof;
 - c. Create a suitable conditions in which the resident public is massively inspired and mobilized to engage in development efforts;
 - d. Elect the speaker, deputy speaker and chief administrator from among the member of the council as well as considers and approves the appointment proposal of the deputy administrator and other members of the woreda administrative council to be submitted to it by the chief administrator thereof;
 - e. Issue directive regarding its own internal rules of procedure;
 - f. Ensures the timely collection of land use tax, agricultural income tax, sales tax and other taxes and payments. Detail shall be determined by law;
 - g. Point out income resources of the woreda other than those allocated and administered by the regional state;
 - h. Consistence with the Federal and Regional constitutions and other laws, issue detailed directives to ensure the peace and security of the woreda;
 - i. Calls the woreda's officials including the chief administrator for questioning and thereby enquires the working of the woreda offices.

Source: The Revised 2002 GPNRS Constitution of Article 89

As it can be observed from (box 4.2), the woreda council has constitutionally few powers/authority to make political, economic, social and administrative decisions concerning their specific woreda within the framework of the regional and federal constitutions, laws and policies. However, according to officials at woreda level contacted in an in-depth interview (January 20-30, 2011), responded the powers and functions of the woreda council that are specified in the regional constitution are good only in the constitutional document in the shelf except that the council members meet for approving the annual plans and budget.

According to officials at regional and *woreda* levels contacted in in-depth interview, most of the powers enshrined in the regional constitution are good only in the constitution document in the shelf. Most of *woreda* council and cabinet members including council speakers and *woreda* chairpersons have no knowledge of their rights and responsibilities enshrined in the constitution due to ignorance and/or lack of orientation.

As it can be observed from the *woreda* organizational structure (figure 4.1) and the regional constitution, the *woreda* administrative council (comprising the Chief and Deputy Administrators as well as heads of line sector offices) is accountable to the *woreda* council. However, interviewed councilors and higher officials of the surveyed *woredas* responded that appointments of the above positions are sometimes done through letters of the regional government. Sometimes this could also be made by the regional president. They further added that the person to be appointed even may not be a *woreda* council member. It is therefore, to this extent that the regionally delegated regional governments hold up over the powers of the *woreda* councils and even over the *woreda* government in general by violating the untouchable part of the regional constitution.

Furthermore, they also indicated that, as it is indicated in Article (89) (d) and (i) of the revised constitution of the region (see box 4.2), it is the *woreda* council that could appoint or question and evaluate the performance of the chairman, the deputy chairman and other cabinet members that are appointed as heads of the *woreda* administration and sector offices. However, practically it is the regional cabinet members that perform this function, which could be considered as a violation of the regional constitution.

On the other hand, the *woreda* administrative council of both Abobo and Lare *woredas* undertake the day-to-day operations of the *woreda* whether it is administrative, developmental, security and socio-political issues. In principle, the cabinet members have clear-cut collective roles and responsibilities (see box 4.3) at *woreda* level. Each cabinet member other than the chairperson and his/her deputy coordinates a number of line offices organized structurally under him/her. Then the *woreda* chairperson and his/her deputy oversee the overall activities of the cabinet and line offices.

Box 4.3. Powers and Functions of the Woreda Administrative Council (Article 95)

1. a) Implement policies, laws, regulations, directives, plans and programs initiated and formulated by the federal and regional states;
 - b) Coordinate, follow-up, and direct the activities of the executive organs of the woreda.
 - c) Collect, in accordance with law, rural land user fee, agricultural income tax and other revenue, study the possibility of finding additional source of revenue and there by submit recommendation materials for the woreda council;
 - d) Prepare the annual budget of the woreda, submit it to the woreda council for approval, and implement the same upon approval;
 - e) Safeguard peace and security of the habitants of the woreda, direct, coordinate and supervise the activities of the police and security forces;
 - f) Prepare and submit social, economic and administrative plans to the woreda council, and upon approval, implement them;
 - g) Mobilize the people for development efforts, facilitate rural development, preserve, protect and develop natural resources;
 - h) Follow-up closely to ensure that legacy or heritage in the woreda is given the necessary care and protection;
 - i) Perform such other functions/duties a may be assigned, delivered to it by the woreda council and the regional administrative council.
2. Members of the woreda administrative Council shall have collective responsibility with respect to the duties performed and decisions passed in common due to their official function (power).

Source: The Revised 2002 GPNRS Constitution of Article 95

4.3.2. Structure, Powers and Functions of the Kebele Administration

The kebele administration, while being the lowest administrative hierarchy of the regional state and accountable to its embracing urban and/or woreda administration as the case may require. The kebele administration shall have the following major organs: the kebele council, the kebele administrative council and the social court.

Box 4.4. Power and Functions of the Kebele Administration (Article 101)

1. The kebele administration shall have the power to issue economic and social plans and to prepare directive and implement the same in its kebele.
2. Every kebele administration shall have the right and powers to self rule, develop its kebele and decide on internal matters.

Source: The Revised 2002 GPNRS Constitution of Article 101

Although the regional constitution put the powers of the woreda and kebele administrations, findings of the study indicate that the authorities of both administration units do not enjoy their decision making power; because power is not devolved in the real sense. For instance, in GPNRS still woredas are accountable to zones. However, woredas report their activity performance or other issues to regional state. Due to this there is no good relationship between the woreda and zone. This indicates there are no clear inter-governmental relations between woreda and zones. This creates confusion of accountability.

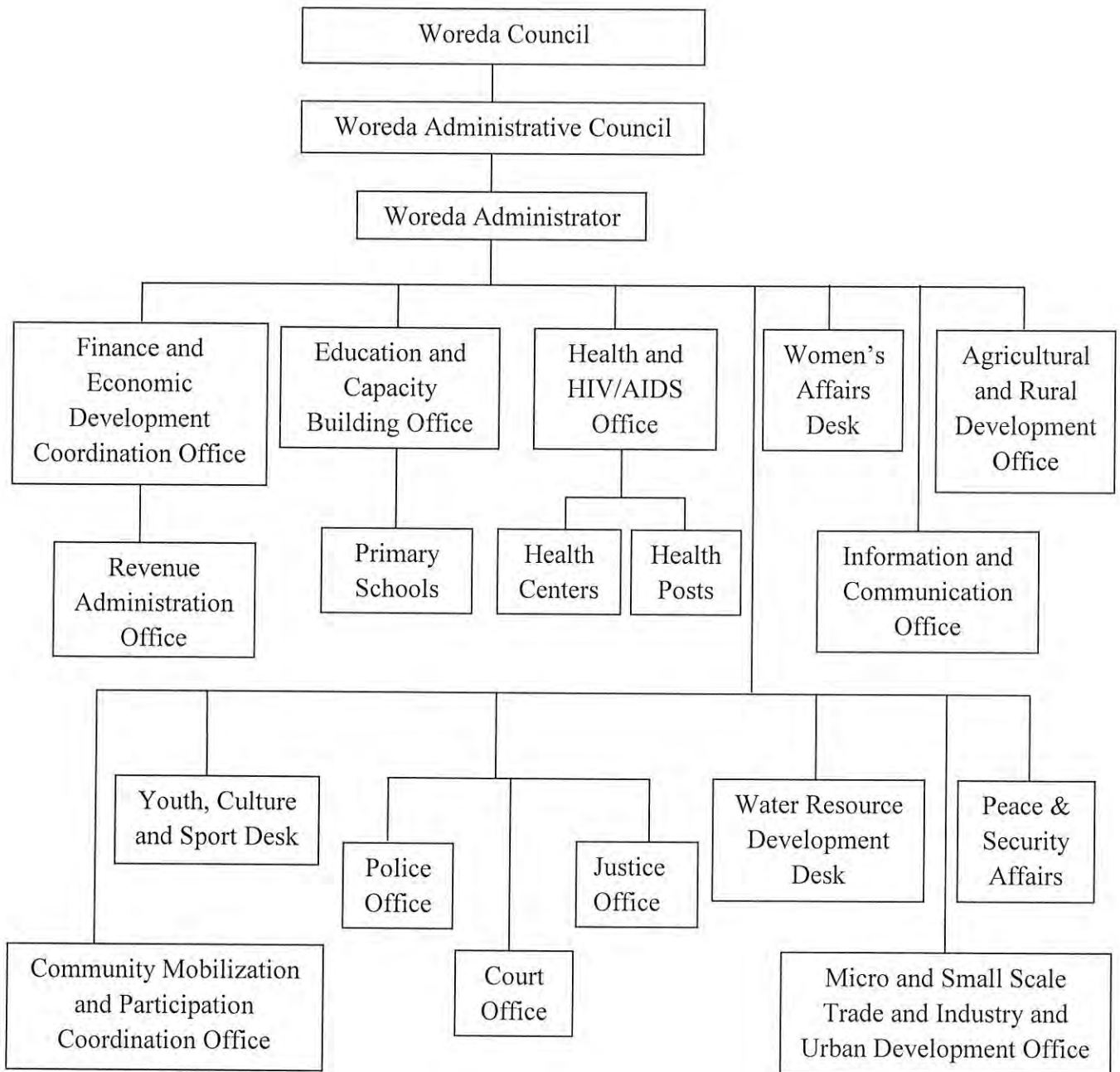
According to the law, woredas are formally declared to be independent local government authorities but in reality there is a great deal of supervision and control by regional governments over woredas affairs. In the study woredas, most capital projects (construction of schools, digging wells and health units) have been carried out by regional state. Regarding this, Meheret (2007) noted that in Ethiopian situation where local governments are heavily dependent on regional and central governments for budgets and single party dominance; the independence and autonomy of woreda governments as well as their accountability and responsiveness to local communities will be much to be desired.

In the discussion time woreda officials raised both zonal and regional administration interfered and ordered the woredas. It was also found that there was not enough decision-making power transferred to lower level governments. Studies showed that inspire of the existence of a system which aspires to decentralize power to democratically elected political executives at the district level, woredas were found acting as deconcentrated administrative units of regional and zonal sector bureaus and administrations. Woredas enjoyed little fiscal or administrative autonomy to respond to the local needs of their constituencies.

Interviewed kebele officials were also pointed out that most of the kebeles did not have office and archives, officials were neither permanently employed nor paid anything; they just give free service with their free time. There is no budget allocated to the kebeles nor they have revenue sources; some kebeles collect revenues but submitted all to the woredas. Kebeles were highly engaged in peace keeping and order and community mobilization for administrative and political purpose rather than mobilizing the community to participate in different development activities.

Hence, the field data revealed that power is deconcentrated not devolved fully on main issues like revenue generating, manpower recruitment, implementing capital projects and to fill the capacity gaps (woredas cannot give trainings for their employees).

Figure 4.2: The Current Organizational Structure of the Woreda Administration in Gambella Peoples National Regional State (Abobo and Lare – Similar)



Source: Author (2010/11)

Figure 4.1 above shows the general organizational structure adopted by the study woredas. The Coordinating main offices and other offices are directly accountable to the chief administrator who in turn is accountable both to the woreda council and regional president. The coordinating offices are led by members of the woreda council or cabinet members. The cabinet members are electorate from the woreda council.

The education office coordinates and implements primary educational services of the woreda in different kebeles. Similarly, the health office also coordinates and implements health care activities through health centers and health posts. By the same token, the structure of different sector offices has similar arrangements with the exception of some modification in restructuring or reorganizing the services of support staff in a pool system.

In the interviews, woreda officials explained that the pool system is a system or an arrangement to deploy staff at woreda levels to reduce the cost of decentralization and improve efficiency. Accordingly, administrative service is provided only with one pool system. The first pool for administrative service is located under the woreda administration office while the second is located under the Finance and Economic Development office. All administrative matters related to personnel administration is handled by these offices and all the woreda offices get services from the two main offices so that they don't have their own administrative section.

All sector offices in the woreda also have got financial, audit and inspection and procurement services under finance and economic development coordination office. The office deals with day-to-day activities of financial matters. Each office makes only payment requests as per its accounts within the office. This implies that personnel administration, procurements and other financial management activities are not dealt by each office contrary to the structures before decentralization. Though there are lots of complaints as to the efficiency and convenience of the pool system for the activities of different offices in the woreda, woreda administration officials mentioned that the pool system has some contributions to minimize the problem of coordination and manpower constraints.

4.3.3. Functional Activities Decentralized to the Woreda Governments

The question of which functional activities are to be decentralized from higher level to lower level of government entirely depend on the situation and purpose of decentralization (Mahat, 2007). The structures and powers of various organs (council, cabinet and courts) at regional, zonal, *woreda* and kebele levels are clearly stated in the revised 2002 constitution of the GPNRS. But the constitution has not mentioned clearly the functional responsibilities between the regional and *woreda* levels, zonal and *woreda* levels and between the *woreda* and kebele levels. Moreover, there is no any other official document stating the functional assignment among levels of the regional governments. This implies that there is no clear demarcation of responsibilities among the tiers of the regional administrative units.

Table 4.1: Functional Activities Decentralized to Woreda Levels

Functional Activities	Woreda Level
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand and promote expansion of educational coverage ▪ 1st and 2nd cycles of primary education, primary school management ▪ Ensuring all the schools in <i>woreda</i> get the necessary books, supplies and necessary facilities ▪ Supervising the quality of education at all levels hiring teachers for schools
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize, administer and controls health centers, clinics and health posts ▪ Coordinate the HIV/AIDS, prevention and control efforts ▪ Evaluate the performance of government and private health care service ▪ Implement national and regional family planning services
Agriculture and Rural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formulate strategy for the timely supply of agricultural inputs (fertilizers, selected seeds and loans) ▪ Coordinate and supervise small irrigation schemes ▪ Coordinate the management of natural resources ▪ Ensure food security and self sufficiency at an individual of family level ▪ Coordinates the construction of rural roads and other infrastructure activities
Planning and Financial Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparing annual <i>woreda</i> budget and short, medium and long term plans ▪ Managing <i>woreda</i> treasury ▪ Controls expenditures of sector offices
Water Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gather data about water resources ▪ Supervising water related construction works
Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rural travel and transport integrated development (rural road, pavement, etc)
Natural Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land use administration, natural resource protection and development
Revenue Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collect different types of taxes and administer government revenue as per tax laws ▪ Formulating strategies to expand tax bases ▪ Coordinating tax collectors at the different kebeles of the <i>woreda</i>

Source: CBCB, DLDP Training Assessment Document, 2006 with adjustment by the author.

According to response given by a number of concerned top officials interviewed, it appears that the region has just followed the models of other developed regions in assigning functional activities to *woredas*. Thus, table 4.1 shows the functional activities assigned to *woredas* in the Gambella region.

Heads of the study *woreda* administration offices revealed during an interview that the authority of the *woreda* to carry out their functions has been further enhanced since the 2004/05 *woreda* decentralization initiative in GPNRS. They further added that currently *woredas* are no longer required to submit their budget and expenditure plans for zonal approval. It is the *woreda* council, which makes budgetary decisions on the block grant it receives from the regional administration. Because of the substantial devolution of functions, the interviewed respondents indicated that the local governments have been so far attempting to do something on a variety of services such as; education, health, water, and agriculture as a priority of development at the local level. But, they have done little on revenue collection, finance, rural roads, natural resources and other related developmental issues.

Before the 2004/05 *woreda* decentralization in the region, most of these functions were controlled and supervised by regional and zonal governments. Despite the remarkable progress to devolve functions to *woreda* levels, public institutions still lack the availability of skilled and experienced personnel, existence of able and committed leadership, adequacy of logistical, administrative, financial and infrastructural amenities and prevalence of feasible and imaginative planning mechanisms and procedures, and weak and defective institutional arrangements. These could affect on the *woredas* autonomy and impede positive outcomes in the implementation of decentralization policies and programs.

4.4. Local Governance Process

Governance describes the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented. One of the major reasons for the implementation of decentralization programs such as district level decentralization is to promote good governance, through inspiring accountability and transparency and grass roots participation at *woreda* and *kebele* levels to ensure the efficient implementation of the democratization and democratic decision-making process and local self rule. This section tries to look at the local governance process by giving the overall picture of good governance status related to accountability, transparency and capacity issues in the Gambella region in general and the study *woredas* in particular, by describing in a qualitative approach.

4.4.1. Accountability

Accountability, one of the basic principle of good governance and rationale of decentralization is also at stake in the implementation of DLDP in the Gambella region. While in principle article 89(2) of the GPNRS 2002 revised constitution clearly states that woreda governments are accountable to woreda councils which are in turn accountable to people that elect them, but then in practice, there is a hardly accountability improvement of the woreda governments to the public, but rather there is an upward accountability of the woreda governments to regional level organs and officials.

The absence of accountability of woreda government is mainly due to the lack of awareness or orientation and indifference of the community over the operations of woreda governments. In other words, the community has not yet assumed the program as their own which undermines the sustainability of the program. The other reason for less accountability or rather upward accountability of woreda government is because of strong influence and interference from regional organs and officials to the extent of ousting the woreda governments or officials who resist against the will and command of the regional officials even if their will is against the established legal norms such as, autonomy of the local governments to operate in their own ways and discretion, and not to the dictations of the regional officials.

It seems the existing political structure at lower levels of government has become personalized rather than being institutional which promotes upward accountability. This applies to all woredas of the region implementing the DLDP. One of the key informants of woreda officials argued that:

A patron-client relationship has become the chief hallmark of the governance structure. Nepotism is the order of the day. Loyalty to the regional level higher officials is one of the criteria for getting the political positions in the woredas.

There is some evidence of elite capture: woreda cabinets: executives and other local elites control the resources of the woreda in a way that harms the community. This is the case because local people are not adequately empowered to hold these elites accountable for their actions. There is also little contact between the elected members and the people, in some instances the people have not even seen kebele leaders in their offices. The problem is however aggravated by poor resources base of the kebele leaders. With the absence of remuneration; the kebele councilors lack the resources for running their respective kebeles effectively.

Woredas are facing poor inspection and auditing service. This is due to the fact that these activities are not devolved to woredas; rather are retained at the regional level. It is the regional audit bureau which performs such functions throughout the region. In general, traditional instruments of ensuring accountability such as opposition parties, transparent and free regular elections, a wide ranging and accessible medias are inadequate in the region.

4.4.2. Transparency

In both woredas, the issue of transparency displayed mixed results. For instance in relation to the transparency of budgeting, the processes are generally done at woreda levels by the coordination of experts of sector offices with a technical assistance from committees (including experts of different regional bureaus). The budget is then forwarded to the woreda council for approval. The budget will be approved if the woreda council is satisfied with it, but if not satisfied it may empower the finance committee to make appropriate adjustments to the budget before it was implemented.

The satisfaction of the community on the woreda government's transparency in its planning process is limited. The result of the discussion with community shows that the community is unsatisfied about the transparency of planning process in both woredas. The people neither participate in the budgeting process nor have awareness about the allocation and execution of the budget. Though the people are the primary beneficiaries of the service provided by the woreda government, their awareness about how much and what proportion of the woreda resource is appropriated and executed is very low. On the contrary, heads of OFED in both woredas indicated during an interview (20-26 January 2011) that the planning and budgeting process is done in a participatory way. Finally after approval by the council the total approved budget is posted in different areas where the public can easily read and understand the woredas annual budget. As to field observation, the appropriation and quarterly and yearly budget execution has not been posted on the public notice boards.

In terms of transparency in decision making, it is problematic in that the decisions are made secretly by the woreda cabinet members. It is not open to the public and even the implementation of those decisions is not always transparent (discussion with the community, Feb 15, 2011). At local level, transparency is even more difficult as information flow is limited because most sector offices in both woredas have limited means of transportation and budget. There are no established controls and procedures for financial information, accountability and audits in relation to the other sector offices.

4.4.3. Capacity Issues

Local capacity is not an end in itself; it is rather a means and a tool that allows the pursuit and accomplishment of a goal such as good governance and better service delivery to the local community. Local capacity is one of the major challenges and impediments in the implementation of the DLDP in the GPNRS.

Local governments in the Gambella region suffer from capacity problems in all dimensions ranging resources (human, financial, material), administrative, technical, political and legal aspects. Shortage of skilled manpower is one of the most pronounced and frequently mentioned by regional as well as local governments' officials in the Gambella region. Thus, for instance, because of deficiency of skilled manpower, some of the schools and health posts built by woredas are not functioning and giving the needed services to the local community. This has been exacerbated by the fact that most of the devolved manpower returned back from woredas (due to reasons ranging from remoteness of the woreda, to hostile reception, to absence of work to do), and were reemployed by the regional bureaus at regional level while others joined NGOs and UN agencies working in the region. Yet others have been dismissed wrongly by woreda governments because of the devolved employee may be seen as an obstacle to the interests of the elected woreda cabinet and/or stakeholders at regional level.

Material and facilities such as vehicles and equipments are also far from adequate to cover the vast needs of the woredas which has hindered the day-to-day undertakings of woreda governments. For instance, both Abobo and Lare woredas officials complained shortage of vehicles to undertake field work to remote kebeles; the actual sites of the actual job of the woreda. This is again with the fact that, at regional level, there are many vehicles which are not giving productive service but used for leisure by the regional officials to shuttle between Gambella and Addis Ababa. The same is true for deficiency of equipments, for example, wells are dug or maintained (e.g. in Lare woreda) and yet not giving service to the community due to lack of water pumps/engines. The woredas cannot afford to purchase all of the materials and facilities (particularly vehicles) needed at once, among other things, due to budget inadequacy.

Financial incapacity is yet another pressing problem in the implementation of the DLDP in the Gambella region. This is because the grant/subsidy from the region to woredas is not enough and used properly, and poor own revenue base and sources at woreda level, with no observable development of woreda revenue potentialities in the near future if DLDP implementation trend continues this way.

Local governments suffer from administrative and technical capacity constraints due to the fact that, most (if not all in some woredas) of the woreda cabinet officials including the chairpersons are semi-illiterate who cannot understand the basics of their job let alone plan and implement the huge development needs of the local community. Thus, most of them do not know their political and legal rights and responsibilities which made them vulnerable to the interference and manipulation of the regional organs and officials.

Put together, except few woredas with little improvements, the capacity status of local governments in all dimensions (resources, administrative, technical) is not promising in most woredas. But, the study woredas (particularly Abobo) are relatively in better shape when compared to the majority of other woredas in the region. For instance, since it is relatively near (47 km) to Gambella town, there is low turnover of manpower from Abobo woreda. However, both Abobo and Lare woredas more-or-less share the same fate with other woredas with regard to other capacity issues.

4.4.3.1. Level of Education of Woreda Executive Committee Members

The availability of qualified human resources has direct impact on the implementation of woreda decentralization. Woreda executive committee members are key players in decision making and promoting decentralized service delivery and good governance at the local level. Several studies indicate that the acute shortage of personnel with sufficient educational qualifications, training and experience is a major capacity constraint in implementing the woreda decentralization agenda and provide quality public services.

Table 4.2: Educational Level of Woreda Executive Committee Members in the Study Woredas

No	Woreda	1 st Degree	College Diploma/ Certificate	High School Diploma	Below High School	Sex		Total
						M	F	
1	Abobo	-	8	3	2	12	1	13
2	Lare	-	7	2	3	12	1	13

Source: Field Data (2010/11)

As can be observed in table 4.2, the majority of the cabinet members of the woreda hold diploma and certificate qualifications. It was also revealed that most of the cabinet members were former elementary and secondary school teachers with little or no formal training in the critical areas of public service delivery, good governance and local economic development. This may also show the lack of capacity among the executive (cabinet) members of the woredas to shoulder the responsibilities vested on them. It is very difficult for both local governments to plan, implement and manage appropriate social and economic development projects in their respective areas. Consequently, it is challenging to expect from these officials to effectively and efficiently implement and manage development projects and basic public services in their locality.

One can easily see the difficulty for decentralization programs and policies to be properly implemented in the woreda. As it mentioned in the literature part genuine decentralization has to be institutionalized and integrating their own organization policies in to practice. The nature and capacity of that agency determine the outcome of decentralization policy. The idea of bringing service closer to the client is appealing but it has been found that local governments lack skilled manpower for managing and implementing different public services. It is also challenging to bring about effective devolution of responsibilities has been the limited administrative and resource capacity of woreda governments.

Moreover, the proportion of women in the woreda executive committee is insignificant. There were only two women in the two woredas. It is; therefore, possible to conclude that males dominate the leadership position of government offices in both woredas. Equity is one of main concern of decentralization policy.

Planning, implementing and evaluating various development and public service projects have a positive correlation with the skilled and experienced manpower. Mobilizing, coordinating and empowering the community for participation in development projects is also highly depend on the skill and the number of manpower of the local governments. This was missed in the study areas due to the capacity problem. Then, the executive committee could not carry out the duties and responsibilities given by the regional constitution.

4.5. Inter-Governmental Relations (Relations between Regional and Local Governments)

As was explained in the literature, currently Ethiopia has a 5-tier system of government: federal, regional, zonal, woreda and kebele levels of administration. The powers, duties and responsibilities of each tier are defined by law. According to the federal constitution, local government is responsible to regional governments, which determine the power, authority and functions of any sub-national governments like woreda and kebele administrations (Meheret, 2007).

During the field study it was observed that although the constitutions and law stated the accountability of each tiers on paper, the actual practice in inter-governmental relation is not clear in GPNRS. The lines of authority and accountability between woreda, zone and regional government is not clearly defined. For instance, in the revised regional constitution woredas defined as are subordinate to zonal administration but in practice woredas have direct communication with the regional state in different aspects like planning, budgeting and reporting.

The relation between zonal and woreda governments remains unclear. This has created tension in many cases. For instance, the division of responsibilities between zones and woredas is unclear, allowing woredas to disregard the activities of zonal government in many cases. In addition, according to the response obtained from the interviews of top officials in the CBCB, the government sector offices in the region have been constrained by legislative shortcomings and absence of clearly defined functional assignments as well as absence of region specific policy guidelines.

Due to this, there is an authority and accountability claims between woreda and zonal administrations. It created a confusion of accountability and lack of transparency between the tiers. Much of the functional and authority relationships are largely governed by political considerations rather than by clearly defined set of authority and accountability parameters at each level of government. From this we can infer, though the law recognizes the formal independence of each tier of government, the governmental structure is generally characterized by the top-down modes of control and supervision.

The relationship and roles between the region and local governments is not clear according to most of the interviewed officials of the study (Abobo and Lare) woredas. So far, the existing relationship between local and regional governments includes periodic transfer of block grants (fiscal relations) to woredas, budget preparations support, training programs, and periodic reporting and ad-hoc supervisory inspections.

The transfer of grant to woredas is not smooth and predictable. For instance, the (semi) block grant disbursements to both Abobo and Lare woredas come too late to the extent that, employees in both woredas get their salary after one-two months most probably due to bureaucratic formalities and various virtual road blocks. However, the grant transfer is relatively better in Abobo woreda according to OFED officials interviewed because of close location proximity and better qualified manpower enjoyed than other woredas. Moreover, the grant transfer to remote woredas are accumulated and released periodically which creates unnecessary delay.

Likewise, the regional government offers various training programs to woreda officials and employees. However, the training programs offered by the region are not based on the request of woreda governments or need assessment conducted by the region. Moreover, they are not organized and integrated. It is given by different regional bureaus to different woreda line offices some time even without the knowledge of the woreda administration. That is, regional line bureaus at regional level directly contact with their respective line offices at woreda level without informing woreda administrations.

Similarly, BoFED has been sending technical experts to help woredas to prepare their budgets and action plans since the implementation of the program. Despite the fact that, the role of the experts are mainly advisory in principle, in practice however, they are the real decision makers on what to do and what not to do due to limited capacity of most local staff concerned with the budgeting task as per the comments of the BoFED planning and budgeting head.

On the other hand, the woreda council has no significant relationship with regional council even to extent the woreda administration has with the regional government except one training program given to speakers of woreda councils before the devolution. In short, the woreda-regional relationship in general and among the different woredas in particular (in terms of administration, political, technical and fiscal dimensions) is not smooth and most of the time exists with no end in sight for its improvement in the near future if the currently existing woreda-region relationship trend remains this way.

4.6. The Budget and Expenditure Trends and Administration

In this section an attempt is made to see budget of the two *woredas* from three perspectives. First, the composition of the budget in terms of salary, petty cash and capital or more precisely in terms of recurrent and capital budgets. Secondly, the sectoral allocation of the budget by selecting major service giving offices such as education, health, water supply, and agriculture and rural development. Finally, the revenue generating capacity and intergovernmental transfers from the regional government to the study *woredas* will be assessed.

In most developing countries, the highest proportion of local government budget is taken by recurrent expenditures. However, capital expenditure gets the least share of the budget. In Ethiopia, block grants are the principal means by which regional governments transfer resources to *woreda* governments, and as such, constitute the lion's share of *woreda* budgets. The regional governments allocate the yearly budget of the *woredas* in the form of recurrent and capital budgets. The recurrent budgets composed of salary and petty cash, which are mostly used for administrative and operational expenditures.

Table 4.3: Budget Composition of the Study *Woredas* (2007/08-2009/10)

Abobo Woreda	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Salary	13.66	97.94	12.78	96	13.78	97.8
Petty Cash	0.09	0.61	0.18	1.32	0.31	2.2
Capital	0.20	1.45	0.36	2.68	-	-
Total	13.95	100	13.32	100	14.09	100
Lare Woreda	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Salary	12.42	96.85	10.53	97.68	13.05	90.01
Petty cash	0.13	0.98	0.25	2.32	0.5	3.43
Capital	0.28	2.17	-	-	0.95	6.56
Total	12.83	100	10.78	100	14.5	100

Source: *Woredas OFED* (2010/11)

Table 4.3 presents the budget trend of the two study *woredas* for 3 years covering the period 2007/08 to 2009/10. The table clearly demonstrates that, the proportion of the capital budget is insignificant while the recurrent budget, particularly the salary contribute the largest portion of the total annual budget of *woredas*. The percentage share of salary from the total annual budget of Abobo *woreda* constitutes 97.94%, 96% and 97.8% while the proportions of salary of Lare *woreda* are 96.85%, 97.68% and 90% in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 respectively.

We can understand from this is that the overall amount of annual budget is allocated to the recurrent budget especially for salary. The amount of the development (capital) budget in both woredas is extremely lower and insignificant. In addition to this, the total amount of budget is allocated to the recurrent budget in Lare and Abobo woredas in 2007/08 and 2009/10 respectively.

The reason attributable to the larger proportion of recurrent budget in general and the salary portion in particular of the overall budget is mainly due to unnecessary and untimely staffing and filling of woreda structure by the regional civil service bureau without the consultation of the concerned woreda officials. This has created redundancy of support staffs that consume a significant amount of the budget in a form of salary but give little or no service to *woredas*. During interview with officials in both Abobo and Lare woredas, it was revealed that the largest amount of this expenditure went to salaries for teachers, health workers and personnel working in woreda administrative offices.

Local governments can address the real problem of their community (poverty) and recognize the government policy through their budget allocation. In the allocation process, those areas which have got priority will be allocated with much proportion of the woreda budget. In order to check how much the key socio-economic sectors are recognized by the woreda budget allocations, we have taken the amount of budget allocated to four selected sectors namely: education, health, water supply and agriculture and rural development which can also be categorized in to economic development and social service development. The data is taken from three years of budget allocation from 2007/08 to 2009/10.

As can be seen in table 4.4 below, the shares of the selected sectors budget on the total budget of public expenditure have shown an increasing trend in Abobo woreda. Education takes the lion share of the budget with a slight increase in three years. That is 42.85%, 42.46% and 43.67% of the total public expenditure during 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 respectively. Health also shows an increasing trend with a maximum of 10.26% in 2009/10. Agriculture and rural development also takes 13.23%, 14.76% and 18.94% of the total public expenditure in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 respectively. Water supply sector constitute the smallest share of the selected sectors. It takes only 2.73% of the total public expenditure in 2009/10.

Table 4.4: Sectoral Allocation of Public Expenditure in the Study Woredas in Million Birr

Abobo Woreda	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Education	5.98	42.85	5.65	42.46	6.15	43.67
Health	0.94	6.77	1.15	8.61	1.45	10.26
Water Supply	0.38	2.72	0.4	2.97	0.38	2.73
Agriculture	1.85	13.23	1.97	14.76	2.67	18.94
Total Woreda Public Exp.	13.95		13.32		14.09	
Lare Woreda	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Education	4.66	36.35	4.30	39.93	5.07	35
Health	1.17	9.14	1.18	10.96	1.91	13.16
Water Supply	0.25	1.96	0.31	2.88	0.46	3.19
Agriculture	1.54	12.03	1.76	16.32	1.45	9.97
Total Woreda Public Exp.	12.83		10.78		14.5	

Source: Woredas OFED (2010/11)

When we see the trends of sectors budget in Lare woreda, it is almost similar to that of Abobo woreda. Education takes the highest share with consistent proportion except some decline in the year 2009/10. but the share of education in Abobo woreda is higher than Lare woreda. This is because Abobo was in a better position in education services than Lare woreda before the embarking of the DLDP. That is, while Abobo was having around 8 primary schools before the DLDP, there were 6 primary schools in Lare woreda. Water supply takes the lowest portion of the budget in Lare woreda which is 3.19% in 2009/10; but it is greater than that of Abobo woreda (2.73%). Agriculture and rural development also takes 12.03%, 16.32% and 9.97% of the total public expenditure in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 respectively.

Hence, woredas budget allocation lacks equity in terms of fairness. There are great variations in the allocation of budget for different economic and social sectors of the economy. In general, it is possible to comment that the allocation of budget in the woreda recognizes the poverty reduction sectors, but enough consideration should be given for the water sector in order to increase the clean water coverage of the two woredas.

4.6.1. Local Revenue Collection Capacity

Although in most developing countries sub-national governments are responsible for funding at least a portion of the services that they deliver through their own tax revenues, it generally remains necessary for central governments to distribute some financial resources to sub-national governments. In similar way this has been happening in the regions of Ethiopia except Addis Ababa City Administration that depend on its own revenue, the other regions rely on federal financial support to deliver public services to their communities (MoFED, 2007).

The main source of revenue for GPNRS is federal grant. Woredas in turn receive most of their block grants from the regional government after the regional block grant notification from MoFED is declared. The assignment of revenue collection responsibilities to *woreda* is done by the regional bureau of Revenue Administration Authority without prior study in revenue potentials and capacity to collect the assigned revenue of woredas or even without consultation with the concerned woreda officials. It is based on arbitrary guess and is more or less transfer of revenue collection burden to woredas. This is because the assigned revenue will be deducted in advance from the *woreda* budget and it is up to the *woreda* to collect the revenue to fill the vacuum of the deducted budget.

According to the interviewed officials, the main sources of revenue for woredas in Gambella region include: employment tax from employees of woreda administration and other government offices whose salary is paid from the budget of the woreda; agricultural income tax, and business taxes from traders (interview with woreda revenue officials on 20-26 Jan 2011). There is no any specific proclamation or decree that can indicate or guide the revenue sharing responsibilities and rights between regional, zonal and woreda governments. Furthermore, revenue offices in the woredas do not know the bases and rates of taxes they are supposed to collect.

Table 4.5: Revenue Collection Responsibility in the Study Woredas in Million Birr (2007/08-2009/10)

Woreda	Budget Year		
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Abobo	1.62	2.39	3.40
Lare	1.00	0.87	1.34

Source: BoRAA (2010/11)

The table demonstrates the revenue collection responsibilities of the study woredas for the last three years of DLDP implementation. The capacity of both woredas to collect their own revenue increases in the three consecutive years. An amounts of birr 1.62, 2.39 and 3.4 are collected in Abobo woreda while 1.0, 0.87 and 1.34 in Lare woreda in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 years respectively. These amounts of collected revenues are deducted from the total budget of the two woredas. Abobo woreda collect higher amount of revenue than Lare woreda. This is because of the huge investment flows in the woreda over the last few years.²

4.6.2. Intergovernmental Transfers

Intergovernmental transfers are the major source of revenue for local governments in Gambella region. That is, the region highly depends on transfer (subsidy) from federal government and zones and woredas in turn get most of their budget from regional government after the regional block grant notification from MoFED is declared. According to BoFED for 2010/11 55% and 45% weights are given to population and level of development respectively as a grant formula for allocating transfers to woredas. With regards to dependency of woredas on regional block grant transfers, the trend is more or less similar as that of the federal to the region for the woredas.

Table 4.6: Revenue Collection Vs Regional Transfers (Subsidy) in Million Birr in Study Woredas

Abobo Woreda	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10	
	Amount	% share	Amount	% share	Amount	% share
Own Revenue	1.62	11.5	2.39	17	3.39	26.34
Subsidy Transfer from BoFED	12.47	88.5	11.67	83	9.48	73.66
Total Revenue	14.09	100	14.06	100	12.87	100
Lare Woreda	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10	
	Amount	% share	Amount	% share	Amount	% share
Own Revenue	1.00	7.42	0.87	6.85	1.34	8.11
Subsidy Transfer from BoFED	12.48	92.58	11.84	93.15	15.18	91.89
Total Revenue	13.48	100	12.71	100	16.52	100

Source: Field Data from Abobo and Lare Woredas OFED (2010/11)

² For instance, Saudi Star Agricultural Development, a commercial rise farm has received 500,000 hectares of land in Abobo woreda and already harvested its first produced. The owner of the company, Ethiopian born Saudi billionaire Mohammed Al-Amoudi personally delivered the harvest to the leader of the sole benefactor-cum-dependent nation on the project, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia (Reporter Newsletter, March 2011).

With regard to woredas revenue generating powers and their dependency on regional transfers as it can be observed on table 4.6, there is a substantial difference between the two woredas. For instance, in Abobo woreda 11.5%, 17% and 26.34% of their annual budget in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 is covered by their own revenues respectively. The rest 88.5%, 83% and 76.66% represent the woredas dependency on regional subsidies for the years 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 respectively. Thus in Abobo woreda, as the annual budget decreases their dependency on regional transfers also decreases and their own revenue increases.

In Lare woreda as it can be seen (on table 4.6), 7.42%, 6.85% and 8.11% of the total annual budget in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 respectively is own revenue. Whereas 92.58%, 93.15% and 91.89% of the woreda annual budget in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 respectively is dependent upon the regional subsidy transfer. Thus, to this extent local woredas in Gambella Region are highly dependent on regional transfers for their annual budgets. As it has been indicated in the background section of this chapter the economic activities of the rural woredas in the region is agriculture. And also income generating activities are insignificant in the study woredas. Hence, the rural woredas of the region are challenged by weak revenue generating powers and low tax bases.

4.7. Planning and Budgeting Process

In Gambella regional state, planning and budgeting activities have been constitutionally devolved to woreda levels. The woreda OFED is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the planning and budgeting process. The overall planning process of all *woredas* is more or less the same in principle as discussed in section 3.8 of chapter three. That is, the preparation of a woreda level plan is based on the budget ceiling information issued by the regional BoFED.

First, the budget calling process is exercised by giving a ceiling for each sector offices. All sector offices plan and prepare their activities and budget requirement by setting out their priority areas based on the amount of the block grant which is transferred from region to woreda by dividing into three major sectors such as social, economic and administrative and general services and submit it to *woreda* OFED which consolidate the plan of all offices and in turn submit it to the *woreda* cabinet which discuss the draft plan and after adjustments in both physical and financial plans submit it to the *woreda* council. Then the *woreda* council approves the plan and budget after adjustments.

After the *woreda* council approves the plan and the budget which then in principle goes into implementation phase as per the action plan but in practice based on when the budget is released and transferred from the regional treasury to the *woreda* bank account. This is usually too late for both the study *woredas* (Lare and Abobo *woreda*) and other *woredas* to implement planned projects on time.

It has also been indicated during an interview conducted with *woreda* experts that the preparation of budget in the study *woredas* is not systematic. The low capacity of heads of the offices and inadequate supporting staff, ill prepared and inadequate distribution of budget guidelines and narrow time provided for budget preparation have contributed for less serious and systematic preparation of the budget. There is no development coordination team/section at *woreda* level. However, only the *woreda* OFED is currently performing finance functions with little consideration for economic development. These offices in both *woredas* have no vehicles and are not well equipped with the necessary facilities. Hence, they lack capacity to provide technical assistance and conduct site visits to coordinate activities in the *woredas*. Besides, they face similar problems while consolidating the annual work plan of the sector bureaus and *woreda* offices.

There is passive participation of stakeholders in identifying problems and prioritizing needs in planning and budgeting process in the study *woredas*. The interview conducted with *woreda* experts and officials confirm the finding of the community forums, namely that participation of NGOs, donors, women, kebele leaders and the public in *woreda* planning and budgeting, monitoring and evaluation processes of local development is virtually absent. There is also absence of budgeting process at kebele levels.

According to focus group discussants, even though some consultations with the community particularly in service delivery take place, the consultation is not aimed at identifying the problems faced by communities and prioritizing them but rather community members are asked to list their wishes. Planning and budgeting is conducted usually at the level of *woreda* executive committee or cabinets and sometimes sector offices are included. Measures to improve the involvement of community members in planning and budgeting development activities are not given much attention.

4.8. Community Participation

Participation according to Jacob (2005 cited in Mahat, 2007) may be defined as: the capacity and the ability of the community to contribute, to share in and benefit from diverse social, economic, political or other processes of the society. Participation in development is an indicator of decentralization and involves in the first place the local community. Participation is therefore a continuum, a permanent state which can only be achieved through providing the means for effective involvement of people in all facets of the society and actively promoting this as a matter of policy and practice.

The contributions of a given community include, among others, planning and designing, prioritizing, funding (financing), implementing, monitoring and evaluating of their development programs. In realizing these community contributions, the commitments of both government and local society are inevitable. The government should design community-based national policy and open its door to community to involve in their own issues starting from planning to final evaluation.

While it is clear that decentralization theoretically provides opportunities for greater participation, these opportunities for greater participation have not been realized in most cases. In the study woredas, participation is more associated with development projects. Community participation at kebele levels is perceived as a contribution of materials and labor to development projects when either a higher authority or influential kebele officials demand such tasks for local development projects. The kebele performs only coordinating the community to support developmental projects in terms of free labor and local materials such as collection of sand, stones and poles; in short, anything that can be found locally, which also includes money and free labor.

Respondents in both woredas indicated that the level of involvement of the larger community in identifying and setting priorities was too weak or almost nil. During the discussion, discussants revealed that there was no trend of involving the community to participate in planning and prioritizing their needs and deciding on different public sector delivery activities. Usually the community called for discussions and meetings for political and security agendas not for development. For instance, in education sector, the community was involved in some activities such as construction of teachers' house and caring school materials from town to rural schools. Hence, the community involvement is only limited in contribution of labor and local materials insignificantly in a very rear times. Local communities were not involved in the management of schools to ensure that schools provide appropriate education to children.

Like education sector the community participation in health sector is inadequate or almost none. According to the information obtained from woreda health officials, in both woredas there was no even single health project that was implemented by involving the community. All health centers and health posts were constructed by the government. All construction projects were implemented and supervised by the regional health bureau like that of the education sector.

Officials in the *woreda* recognise the importance of community participation in the local development process. However, so far, there are no clear and established modalities of involving the community in the process of local development. This is with knowledge that there is a coordinating office for community mobilization and participation in the structure of all *woredas*. But, according to the heads of the office in both Abobo and Lare *woredas*, the office does not have the slightest idea of how to involve the community in the planning and implementing development projects among other things, due to financial, human capacity constraints as well as lack of commitment to the principles of community participation by local officials.

Moreover, the major job done so far by the community mobilization and participation office is that of peace and security monitoring of kebeles as other cabinet members. Thus, community participation in the planning, budgeting and operations of the *woreda* government is weak and community members do not have access to the operations and undertakings of the *woreda* governments. However, sometimes, projects formulated and planned by *woreda* cabinet are ratified (sometimes with adjustments) by the community at implementation stage and they are told to contribute certain proportion of the cost of the project through free labor and local materials.

Thus, the community has very low awareness in participating in different development and service activities. In the study areas also we see that very little effort is made from the local authority, to mobilize and coordinate the community to enhance their role in different development activities. The establishment of the system (like establishing each kebele community health committee, PTAs) to address and mobilize was also realized recently. According to interviewed officials, factors as barriers for the community participation in service delivery in the study woredas include lack of awareness, lack of systems to participate in the community, lack of capacity and experience for mobilizing the community, provide more attention for political issues, weak administrative structure at kebele level, lack of strong association or forums at community level and budget constraint to empower the community (at least representative of the community).

Therefore, the scope of local community participation in the region in general and local level in particular is limited and sometimes missing. The absence of comprehensive legal and political frameworks and the weak organizational capacity at the grassroots level are affecting negatively the community participation in the process of local planning, budgeting, decision-making and service delivery activities in the region.

4.9. Trends of Service Delivery

One of the potential impacts of decentralization is improved basic service delivery. Because theoretically, it is assumed that, (a) local governments know better about their citizens' needs and preferences (b) local governments are better prepared to meet their needs (c) local people might be more willing to pay taxes for services provided in accordance with their needs by their local authorities. However, local governments can only be efficient to provide required basic services if (a) responsibilities are assigned with clarity (b) revenues are sufficiently available to them to fulfill their mandates (c) there are appropriate incentives to improve accountability in service provision (d) local government have the administrative, technical and legal capacity and means to do so. These are conditions which are more or less absent in most of time in the implementation of decentralization programs of developing countries in general and DLDP in Gambella region in particular.

This section portrays the trend of basic service (education, health, agriculture, water, rural road, etc) delivery of the study *woredas*. Despite considerable effort exerted to obtain concrete (hard) data to substantiate the analysis, it was not easy because of absence of data base system in the region in general and subject matter in particular. Since the program implementation is in its early stages, it is not easy to get organized data and this study is the first of its kind so far conducted in the region in this particular subject.

To start with, despite capacity (administrative and technical) and resource limitations, the overall basic service delivery is increasing in terms of quantity and coverage in the study (Abobo and Lare) *woredas*. In this regard therefore, table 4.7 shows the trend of service delivery in Abobo and Lare *woredas* for the last five years (2005/06-2009/10) of DLDP execution. The table depicts the basic service status before the implementation of *woreda* decentralization and the changes after the embarking of the program. The face value changes are encouraging in that, although far from adequate but almost all basic services are showing improvements in terms of number.

Table 4.7: Trends of Service Delivery in the Study *Woredas* (2005/06-2009/10)

Changes in Service Delivery	Lare Woreda		Abobo Woreda	
	Up to 2005/06	End of 2009/10	Up to 2005/06	End of 2009/10
Primary Education				
Number of Primary Schools	6	19	8	22
• Formal Government Primary Schools	5	16	6	18
• Informal ABE Schools	1	3	2	4
GER of Primary Schools (%)	35.6	78.2	45.8	112.4
NER of Primary Schools (%)	15.6	52.5	24.2	58.73
Numbers of qualified teachers paid by the <i>woreda</i>	72	325	65	299
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	50	40	45	30
Pupil-Textbook Ratio	6	3	5	3
Number of Pupils enrolled	4639	11,801	2835	4970
Education Coverage in terms of enrollment (%)	24	65	32	68
Health				
Number of Health Centers	1	3	2	4
Number of Health Posts	7	12	8	15
Number of Health Professionals	31	65	43	95
Health Coverage (%)	22	48	26	55
Agriculture and Rural Development				
Number of development agents and vets	19	60	22	61
Number of farmers training centers	2	5	4	9
Volume of fertilizers distributed to farmers (quintals)	-	120	-	446
Volume of seeds distributed to farmers (quintals)	-	98	-	142
Number of farming HH supported by extension services	120	280	180	340
Animal health/post clinics constructed	-	2	-	1
Animal crush/dip constructed	1	4	-	2
Number of houses for development agents	-	7	-	8
Agriculture Coverage (%)	-	-	-	27
Water, Rural Roads, Telecommunication				
Number of medium deep wells	21	51	25	57
Number of Hand-dug (shallow) wells	17	32	15	30
Number of motor pump wells	1	3	2	5
Number of HH with access to safe water	-	-	-	-
Interconnecting rural roads constructed in km	75	115	82	172
Telecommunication service connection by <i>Kebeles</i>	-	2	-	3
Access to mobile telephone service in the <i>woreda</i> town	-	1	-	1
Water Coverage (%)	15	49	22	58

Source: Field Data from Abobo and Lare Woreda Administrations (2010/11)

As it can be seen from the table, the number of primary schools in Lare *woreda* have gone up from 6 in pre-decentralization to 19 (3 are ABE schools) schools after the implementation of *woreda* decentralization, while the gross enrollment ratio increased from mere 35.6% to around 78.2% in which the number of enrolled students in the *woreda* reached from 4639 to 11,801 that makes the education coverage in terms of enrollment to 65% from 24% before the program.

There are also some improvements in the health service delivery in that, the number of health centers and posts which were only 1 and 7 respectively before the DLDP have been increased to 3 and 12 respectively in the last five years. This makes the health coverage of the *woreda* to nearly 48 percent from around 22 percent before the DLDP. Moreover, there also some value additions in agriculture both in livestock and crop development main branches. This is in terms of construction of facilities (e.g. vet clinics and crushes) and distribution of seeds and fertilizers to farmers. The number of development agents and the construction of their houses also increased after the implementation of *woreda* decentralization. The number of farmers training centers also increased from 2 to 5.

Still the rural infrastructure (water, rural roads and telecommunication) basic service is in better shape than before the implementation of *woreda* decentralization in that, 30 medium deep wells, 15 hand-dug wells and 2 motor pump wells have been constructed. In addition to this, 115km interconnecting rural road has been constructed which has helped the easy traveling between kebeles. But this road used only in dry season. Weak performance achieved by Lare *woreda* is in the area of telecommunication service to kebeles. Only 2 out 26 kebeles in the *woreda* have been connected to modern telecommunication services which have impeded the easy access of information far from remote rural kebeles.

Likewise, Abobo *woreda* statistics of basic service delivery trends show a better improvement than Lare *woreda* or even any other *woreda* in the region. This is because Abobo was in a better position than all other *woredas* before the implementation of *woreda* decentralization. Most of basic service constructed before the DLDP are concentrated in and around Gambella, the capital city of the region and Abobo *woreda* more than other *woredas* as well as other zonal headquarters. Table 4.7 also illustrates the trend of basic service delivery in the *woreda*.

When we see the service delivery trend of Abobo woreda, the number of primary schools has significantly increased from 8 to 22 schools in the last five years of DLDP implementation. From this, the ABE schools increased from two to four. The number of teachers and gross enrollments has also increased (see table 4.7) modestly. The number of enrolled students in the woreda enhanced from 2835 to 4970. This leads to the increment of education coverage from 32% to 68%.

Moreover, the health service in Abobo *woreda* is doing relatively well in terms of construction and also service giving. Health posts have increased from 8 in the base year to 15 in 2009/10, while health centers are improved from two to four. The number of health professionals from 43 in the base year also increased to 95 in 2009/10; while the coverage according to *woreda* health office have increased from 26% in 2005/06 to 55% at the end of last year. There are also modest improvements in agricultural crop development section in terms of fertilizers and seeds distributed to farmers as well as in livestock development in terms of construction of animal clinics, dips and crushes (see table 4.7) and development agents houses. Lare woreda have shown higher performance regarding with the construction of animal clinics, dips and crushes than Abobo woreda as a result of higher potential in cattle production in which large number of the population in the woreda are pastoralists.

In the area of basic rural infrastructure development, Abobo was having a good base than Lare and the other *woredas*. Thus, the number of hand dug wells has increased from 15 in the base year to 30 wells; while the number of medium deep wells increased from 25 in 2005/06 to 57 currently. Three motor pump wells also constructed. These put together have increased the water coverage of Abobo from 22% in the base year to 58% in the year 2009/10. On the other hand, there is also much done in the subsection of rural roads in which an additional of 90km gravel road has been constructed in the last five years.

Moreover, there are also improvements in the area of connecting modern digital telecommunication services to the rural kebeles but not satisfactory. That is, before the DLDP, only Abobo town have got the access to digital automatic telephone. But, now a day three rural kebeles have got modern telecommunication services. The urban administrative towns of both woredas (Abobo town in Abobo woreda and Korgang town in Lare woreda) also have got access to mobile telephone service.

From the above discussion, it can be revealed that there are some improvements in the basic service delivery of both two study *woredas* from the perspective of quantity, coverage and beneficiary access at construction level. However, there are many problems in terms of service giving and quality of the basic services constructed. That is more than half of schools, health posts, animal clinic and crushes, hand-dug wells and motor pumps constructed in both *woredas* are not giving the critically needed services to the community because of poor quality of construction that has led to the collapse of the building shortly after its completion and the absence of material and manpower required for the operation and functioning of the projects. There are limited number of teachers and health workers for the schools and health posts constructed respectively, and the very few available are not willing to go to remote kebeles. On the other hand, there are shortage of facilities and equipments for the finished projects to operate. For instance, many wells and health posts are not functioning barely because of lack of water pumps/engines and health equipments/facilities respectively.

Generally, the basic service delivery has relatively increased nominally after the DLDP implementation in the region. However, in real terms the real contribution of the woreda administration and the community for the improvements is very limited. What is more, most of the basic service facilities constructed such as primary schools, health posts, vet clinics, shallow wells and ABE schools in the study *woredas* are built by different organizations such as Emerging Regions Development Programme (ERDP) which is supported by UNDP, Pact Ethiopia and semi-governmental organization funded by the World Bank, UNICEF, etc. The facilities which are constructed by the budget of the *woredas* and through community participation are small in numbers.

Though some improvements were witnessed after decentralization, it is difficult to conclude that this has brought significant changes in the major sectors of public service delivery. When overall performance is measured by including the inputs of the regional, zonal and other actors such as NGOs, some improvements have been witnessed. However, when the inputs of actors outside the woreda institutions and other contributing factors or variables are disregarded, performance in the post-decentralization years in the *woredas* has not been impressive. Financial and skilled human power constraints and problems of coordination and participation of the people have contributed to the low performance of the *woredas*.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONSTRAINTS AND PROSPECTS OF WOREDA DECENTRALIZATION IN GAMBELL REGIONAL STATE

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, an attempt is made to illustrate the major critical problems and challenges facing the implementation of woreda decentralization in the Gambella region. Interviews (in-depth interview) with higher regional and woreda officials and experts, program planners; focus group discussion with the community members; secondary data as well as the observation of the researcher are used as the major source of information for problem identification. Moreover, the constraints discussed in this chapter are applicable to all *woredas* in the region including the study *woredas*.

5.2. Constraints in the Implementation of Woreda Decentralization

1. Inadequate Devolution of Power, Limited Decision-Making Authority and Autonomy

Woredas and kebeles are the lowest governments in the state structure which are very close to the people. As such, they should be provided with sufficient decision-making autonomy, administrative competencies and adequate resources to address the demands and concerns of the community. Although the regional constitution put the powers of the woreda and kebele administrations, findings of the study indicate that the powers of both administration units do not enjoy their decision making power; because power is not devolved in the real sense.

It was observed that sufficient decision-making authority, responsibilities and resources were not given for woreda level administrations to empower them to live up to the expectations of the people for more and improved services. In addition to this, there was no further devolution to kebele level or involvement of the community in the planning and implementation process of local development. In reality, kebeles most often operated as recipients and implementers of decisions and orders from the woredas rather than semi-institutions of self-government and empowerment at the grassroots level. Power is deconcentrated not devolved fully on main issues like revenue generating, manpower recruitment and implementing capital projects. The local planning and budgeting is still under the auspices of regional BoFED experts. Thus, beside this incomplete devolvement of power to the local government, they could not even practice the level of power already devolved due to capacity constraints.

Decision-making power in many cases in personnel, finance and developmental projects is made at regional level is justified by lack of capacity by woredas. The study shows that many important decisions are directly or indirectly made at the regional level. While regional constitutions provide power to woredas to plan and approve their own budget in the study woredas, it was found that the budget is determined and allocated by the regional government. Woreda officials complained that they are not even consulted and the formula used was not appropriate. Woredas also formally declared to be independent local authorities, but in reality there is a great deal of supervision and control by regional government over their affairs. In the study woredas, most of capital projects such as construction of schools, digging wells and health units have been carried out by the regional sector bureaus.

Decision making powers on human resources also highly centralized to regional offices. Interviewed woreda officials disclosed that the existing civil service system was strictly guided by regional civil service bureau. There is a limit of salary scale/positions that could be decided by the woreda. Woredas have a power to employ only supporting staffs those whose salary ceiling is 445 birr and below. So, higher positions recruitment is decided at regional level. Additionally, even regarding with those positions decided at woreda level, it was found that all recruitment decisions have to be approved by the regional CSB.

In general, it was found from the field study that there is limited decisions-making power transferred to local governments. Local governments don't have adequate autonomy to make political, administrative, fiscal, legal and developmental decisions that affect them. Therefore, there is a mismatch between legal and political pronouncement and actual practice in study areas.

2. Absence of Political Commitment

Many factors can influence the outcome of a decentralization process. Among these factors a strong political commitment to decentralize at all levels, is certainly an indispensable aspect for successful decentralization. To this end, according to the interviewed officials and experts the regional government has devolved some functional activities which are routine. The responses of the interviewed woreda cabinet members and experts revealed that there is an absence of political commitment among the regional government to decentralize political power to lower levels such as woredas and kebeles. This is reflected by the fact that woredas in the region depend on regional governments for making political decisions.

3. Lack of Legal and Institutional Framework

Apart from the FDRE (1995) and GPNRS revised (2002) constitutions which set the general legal foundation for the DLDP, there are no other legal or specific policy frameworks (such as local government acts, proclamations and regulations, etc) or even manual to direct the operations and undertakings of the *woreda* governments. The *woreda* decentralization has been implemented without detailed legal base indicating the mandates, responsibilities and authority of the local governments, the relationship (supervision, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, etc) between local and regional governments, and relationship among local governments. There are no even manuals and guidelines to support the fiscal, administrative and political processes of the program.

The institutions implementing DLDP at regional and local levels are not clearly defined and their legal bases are almost non-existent in the Gambella region. The structure, interrelationship and specific roles of institutions lack clarity and formality. The existing situation shows that most district level offices do not have workable legal bases and manuals which would be used to guide them perform their duties and responsibility whole heartedly. In general, there is no any separate organizational unit responsible for the implementation of the program. There is no specific office (e.g. Bureau of local government) or a body (DLDP secretariat) at regional level to oversee and coordinate the implementation of DLDP at *woreda* level.

4. Capacity Constraints

Local governments in the GPNRS face serious capacity problems in terms of administrative, technical as well as resources (manpower and material) to plan and implement their responsibilities to the satisfaction of the community. With regard to human resource, the region as a whole does not have adequate skilled manpower. The sector bureaus are persistently constrained by shortage of skilled manpower. Besides, at *woreda* level there is lack of skilled personnel, high turnover of experienced and skilled staffs and inappropriate placement of manpower. Since all *woredas* in the region lack infrastructure services such as potable water, electricity, road, telecommunication, etc., they do not create enabling environment to attract new employees. The poor leadership and limited staff motivation from higher regional officials to handle the qualified staffs and the presence of political instability in the region are the main reasons for such high turnover of skilled man power.

On the other hand, the woreda administration's capacity problem is also serious in its highest political organs, the woreda council and the cabinet. In this regard, the interviewees stated that study woredas have capacity constraints in fully discharging the power and functions assigned to them by the constitution and by other laws of the GPNRS. Most of *woreda* cabinet and council members have limited skills to plan, implement and manage appropriate social and economic development projects in their respective areas. This has been exacerbated by fact that the little manpower devolved from the region have returned or dismissed from *woredas*. Material resources and facilities such as vehicles and office equipments are also far from adequate to cover the vast needs of the woredas which has hindered the day-to-day undertakings of woreda governments.

5. Financial Constraints

Financial incapacity is yet another pressing problem in the implementation of the DLDP in the Gambella region. Woredas are highly dependent on regional transfers for their annual budgets. The block grants that woredas received from regional governments and allocated among various budget items are inadequate to meet the increasing service demands and vast needs of the local community. The income generating capacity is poor in the study woredas. Hence, the rural woredas are challenged by weak revenue generating powers and low tax bases. Disproportionate share of salaries and other administrative expenditures is a big challenge to the woredas. Salaries and other operating costs constituted more than 95% of the total budget in almost all the service sectors. This had left woredas with little for capital/development projects and expansion of services. Woreda budget allocation also lacks equity in terms of fairness. There are great variations in the allocation of budget for different sectors.

6. Lack of Clear Inter-Governmental Relations and Weak Coordination

The revised GPNRS Constitution indicates four administrative tiers of government in the region (Regional state, zone, woreda, and kebele levels). Although the constitutions and law stated the accountability of each tiers on paper, the actual practice in inter-governmental relation is not clear. The lines of authority and accountability between woreda, zone and regional government is not clearly defined. There is no legal or semi-legal document guiding the relationship between the regional and local governments, *woreda* and zonal administrations as well as among *woreda* governments. This created a confusion of accountability and lack of transparency and interference between the tiers. Officials who are at higher political positions of regional and zonal governments interfere in the powers of woredas. This has affected the autonomy of local governments.

There is also weak coordination and participation of different actors in the provision of public services. Although there are shared functions and services that require close intergovernmental cooperation between the regional and local levels of government for efficient implementation of functions and services, there is no clearly institutionalized structure for this coordination and participation between both levels of government.

7. Low Level of Community Participation

One of the basic aims of woreda level decentralization is to serve as a means of empowering local communities. One of the mechanisms for the involvement of the community is through participation of different sectors at the stage of problem identification, prioritization of needs, implementation and reporting, and planning and budgeting processes. However, field observation and information from interviews and focus group discussion in the study woredas revealed that there was no trend of involving the community to participate in such areas and deciding on different public sector delivery activities. One of the participants of the community during FGD responded by saying:

..... we are asked to list our wishes rather than determining the major priorities. Officials do not have the willingness to participate the community through its representatives in the planning and budgeting activities and other developmental aspects. What is being done is only involving elders in settling disputes when disagreements arise.

The role of the community is limited to contribution of labor and money for regional and nation wise development efforts. The community participation was low due the inadequate capacity of the woredas and kebeles administrations and professionals to mobilize and coordinate the resources of the community in different public services like health and education sectors. Measures to improve the involvement of community members in planning and budgeting development activities are not given much attention.

In general, it is possible to conclude that popular participation in planning and budgeting development activities in the study woredas is very limited and involvement is confined to labor and financial contributions. Each office prepares its annual plan without need assessment in consultation with the community. There was no well established system and clear guidelines to enhance the community participation in both woredas. Community participation in policy formulation, initiating development projects and programs and implementation in the region is very poor.

8. Weak Public Sector Service Deliveries

Woreda-level decentralization has given rise to increased demands for more social and economic services, such as education, health, clean water, rural road, etc. The public sector of the region is weak in basic economic and social service delivery, inefficient in creating equity of opportunity for communities to access these services at grass-root level, as well as unable in creating sense of ownership through the participation of community and civil society organizations in the development process. The delivery of services at all levels of the region is neither effective nor efficient. However, it becomes worse at woreda and kebele levels in the region. Most of the existing economic and social service centers are not in a position to deliver adequate services. The inability of woredas to meet the expectations of the community due to inadequate finances and shortage of skilled personnel and professionals capable of delivering efficient services aggravates the weakness of the sector.

9. Infrastructural Problems

Infrastructure is the backbone and determining factor of development in general and local development in particular. Infrastructural development is a cornerstone and spring-board for other development processes at any level. Weak infrastructural base is one of the major problems facing the DLDP implementation in the region. Most of the transport roads in the region are dry weather roads which are not passable during the rainy seasons, while there are no telecommunication and electricity services in most rural *woredas* and kebeles. Only Gambella town have banking service, and *woredas* have their bank account in the capital city. This enforces the woredas to incur costs when they want to withdraw money from such far bank accounts. Infrastructure risks mainly comprise lack of power supply, telecommunication service, office space, residential and transport facilities. Failure to put in place these infrastructure facilities at woreda level would be challenging for the implementation of woreda decentralization.

10. Unfavorable Weather Condition

As climatic condition of the region is desert, the working places are not suitable in most offices which do not create enabling environment to attract new employees. High malaria prevalence rate has also negative impact on service delivery. Both inappropriate working places and malaria prevalence would have a negative impact on the implementation of woreda decentralization in the region.

11. Political Instability and Ethnic Conflicts in the Region

Political instability of a region play big role in its economic development. Gambella region is internally well known for its frequent ethnic clashes since the beginning of TGE. Some of these conflicts are Agnuak-Mejenger, Nuer-Agnuak, Agnuak-Highlanders and intra-clan conflicts of the Nuer. These ethnic conflicts have created political instability in the region and made people not to move freely from one woreda to another.

The political stability of the region is also something that bothers the development process. Conflict among the various ethnics that occasionally flares up is a stumbling block in the implementation of development programs. Therefore, to resolve conflicts among the various ethnics and ensure peace and stability for the development process, accelerate the decentralization process for creation of good governance and democracy at woreda level will be very vital in this case.

5.3. Prospects of Woreda Decentralization in the Gambella Region

It is not easy to judge and project at this early stage, the prospects of success or failure of woreda decentralization in the region. However, based on its current status and implementation trends, the program is not properly contributing to its predetermined goals because of limited authority/power and functions to woredas and public sector offices, lack of legal and institutional framework, absence of political commitment, lack of clear inter-governmental relation and weak coordination, shortage of skilled personnel, budget constraint, heavy financial dependency on the regional and federal government, low level of community participation and limited networks within different public sectors and other stakeholders, weak public sector service deliveries, and misconception towards the program both by the local government and the community.

It follows then that though, the program has brought some positive contributions as already indicated the prospect of the implementation of woreda decentralization would seem to depend primarily on the will to address and implement such concerns by different stakeholders at various levels.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Summary

Decentralization as a political reform and local development policy had been on the agenda for quite some time both in developing and developed countries. There is presently worldwide recognition of the significance of decentralization for promoting participation of people at grass root levels, for better provision of services and also for economic development. Even if specific reasons for decentralization vary from one country to the other, countries pursue policies of decentralization for economic and political reasons. In the area of economic development, decentralization is hoped to bring efficiency, local participation, and local ownership of development projects. On the other hand, the political aspect of decentralization is intertwined with ways of sharing state powers and responsibilities between the centre, regional and sub regional governments.

After decades of highly centralized and unitary political system and administrative setup, Ethiopia has been following federal system of government and decentralization policy immediately after the downfall of the military regime in 1991. The country is engaged in the process of decentralizing substantial authority to lower levels of government particularly to woredas since the year 2001/02. DLDP from regions to woredas took place in two major phases based probably on regions' level of development and political maturity. Relatively the four developed regions embarked the program first and then followed by the so called emerging regions. Hence, this research was designed with the objectives of assessing the implementation of woreda decentralization in GPNRS by selecting two local governments, i.e., Lare and Abobo woredas.

Following the promulgation of the transitional period charter, that delivered the right to administer its own affairs within its owned defined territory, the GPNRS was established in 1992. DLDP has been implemented in GPNRS since 2004/05 to deepen the devolution of power to the lower tiers of regional governments, to institutionalize decision-making processes at the grassroots level with a view to enhance grassroots participation, to promote good governance through inspiring transparency, accountability, and to improve decentralized service delivery to the public and contribute to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

However, the region was not aware of the DLDP program and its preparations at national level up until they were told to implement without prior knowledge and preparation. The program has been implemented without detailed legal base indicating the mandates, responsibilities and authority of the local governments, the relationship (supervision, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, etc) between local and regional governments, and relationship among local governments. Thus, the program is under implementation in the region without having decentralization strategy, region specific legal framework and with weak institutional capacity. There is ineffective or no working group is established for implementing the program. It has also been found that there is no any organizational unit at zonal and woreda levels that are responsible for executing the program. In relation to the awareness of the program at woreda and kebele levels, the study found that there is limited awareness about the program in general.

There has been little effort made to achieve a genuine decentralization aimed at devolving power/authority and resources to local governments. Although powers and functions of different government tiers are specified in the revised GPNRS Constitution, it has not mentioned clearly the functional responsibilities among the different tiers of governments. Moreover, there is no any other official document stating the functional assignment among levels of the regional governments. This implies that there is no clear demarcation of responsibilities among the tiers of the regional administrative units. In addition, what is being transferred to the local level governments is institutional control mechanism rather than true devolution of power.

The study found out that despite woreda governments have some powers/authority to make political, economic, social, administrative and fiscal decisions have been given. Constitutionally, some of these powers are still centralized at regional and zonal levels. There is an interference of regional and zonal governments over the powers of woreda governments. The power to question and evaluate the performance of woreda administrators, executive members, which is the mandate of the woreda council, has been done by the regional cabinet members. However, interviewed councilors and higher officials of the surveyed woredas responded that appointments of the woreda administrative council (comprising the Chief and Deputy Administrators as well as heads of line sector offices) is accountable to the woreda council are sometimes done through letters of the regional government. Sometimes appointments of the above positions could also be made by the regional president. This could be considered as a violation of the federal as well as the regional constitution.

The regional constitution mandates the regional government a burden of responsibilities in contrast with its low level of economic and human resource development. And the regional state government is trying to facilitate and encourage a decentralized process in all dimensions. The weak administrative and personnel capacity of the region in general and woredas in particular is explained as a cause to centralize expenditure and revenue responsibilities.

The expenditure assignment for the DLDP of Gambella region lacks clarity and formality. The regional revised constitution fails to clearly define the expenditure responsibilities of the lower level governments. As a result, they play a limited role while the regional level sector bureaus play a significant role in fiscal matters. For example, local level governments spend 62.59 percent of total recurrent expenditure and 7.25 percent of total capital expenditure in the region. Almost, regional sector bureaus and offices spend 92.75 percent of capital expenditure. This shows that decisions on most of capital expenditures are made at the regional levels. The only expenditure responsibilities of the zone and woreda level administrations are limited to some portion of recurrent expenditures.

Revenue based indicators show the heavy dependence of the Gambella region on the federal subsidy. The proportion of own revenue to the total budgetary revenue is very small. During the last five years, the regional government has covered on average less than 13% of its expenditure from its own revenue collections. That is, the overall envelop of the region's budgetary revenue indicates high dependence on federal subsidy. The relatively underdeveloped socio-economic condition of the region and limited capacity to mobilize adequate resources are seen among the causes of low revenue decentralization ratio. However, the share of subsidy in the total budgetary revenue shows a declining trend.

Formally, the woreda level administration is legally independent local government. The practice, however, does not exercise sufficient autonomy to decide on fiscal matters. The regional constitution fails to define the power of local governments to decide on revenue sources. The woredas do not have constitutional right to levy taxes on any item except the collection of the regionally decided taxes. They cannot generate adequate revenue from their sources. The dependency of *woredas* on regional transfer/subsidy is more or less the same as that of the region to the federal. The share of own revenue to the total woredas budget is 14.83% while the share of regional transfers to woredas budget is 85.17%. This indicates the vulnerability of local governments to the manipulation of regional government. The main reasons for weak fiscal position of woredas is scarcity of revenue sources or their narrow tax base as a result, they covered only smaller portion of their expenditure.

Regions transfer subsidies to local governments to enable the latter to effectively pursue local policy and service delivery. The Gambella region allocated unconditional block grant to *woredas* on the basis of grant formula. The formula used for the division of budget constitutes three parameters namely; population, level of development and revenue raising capacity each having their weight. But the grant formula changed and only constitutes population and level of development with a weight of 55% and 45% respectively by removing revenue generating capacity since 2009/10.

The study portrays with facts that the impacts of decentralization efforts have on good governance in GPNRS is poor. There is absence of accountability of woreda government. There exists upward accountability of woreda government because of strong influence and interference from regional organs and officials. The existing political structure at different levels of government has become personalized rather than being institutional which promotes upward accountability. There is also lack of awareness or orientation and indifference of the community over the operations of woreda governments. Central tradition, the political culture i.e. the culture of silence among the people on political issues and the culture of unaccountability among the officials and ethnicity greatly influences people's perception and behavior in the region.

Transparency and accountability are intertwined concepts. There is lack of transparency in the activities of lower level governments. The community is unsatisfied about the transparency of planning process in both woredas. The people neither participate in the budgeting process nor have awareness about the allocation and execution of the budget. In terms of transparency in decision making, it is problematic in that the decisions are made secretly by the woreda cabinet members. It is not open to the public and even the implementation of those decisions is not always transparent.

The decentralization process in the region have been challenged by serious capacity problems in terms of administrative, technical as well as resources (financial, manpower and material) to plan and implement their responsibilities to the satisfaction of the community. The region as a whole does not have adequate skilled manpower. The sector bureaus are persistently constrained by shortage of skilled manpower. Besides, at woreda level there is lack of skilled manpower, high turnover of experienced and skilled staffs and inappropriate placement of manpower. There is also lack of qualification among the executive (cabinet) members of the woredas to plan, implement and manage appropriate social and economic development projects and basic public services in their locality.

In relation to participation, it has been found that community participation relates to involvement of people in development projects through the contribution of labor and materials. But there is a problem in addressing the priority needs of the community. Community inputs or its role in planning and budgeting is very low or non-existent. Administratively, in decision making the participation of the community is limited and politically, participation is by way of elections. The role of people in the woredas in the process of decision making and provision of public services thereof is minimal at best.

The study also found out that there are some improvements in the basic service delivery of both two study *woredas* from the perspective of quantity, coverage and beneficiary access at construction level. However, there are many problems in term of service giving and quality of the basic services constructed. *Woredas* are not giving the critically needed services to the community because of poor quality of construction that has led to the collapse of the building shortly after its completion and the absence of material and manpower required for the operation and functioning of the projects.

Finally, limited authority or devolution of power and functions to woredas and public sectors, lack of legal and institutional framework, absence of political commitment, lack of clear inter-governmental relation and weak coordination, shortage of skilled man power, budget constraint, heavy financial dependency on the regional and federal government, low level of community participation and limited networks within different public sectors and other stakeholders, weak public sector service deliveries, infrastructural problems, unfavorable weather condition and political instability and ethnic conflicts are the main constraints to materialize DLDP as expected in the region in general and the study woredas in particular.

6.2. Conclusion

It is important to note here that generalizing about a given region from specific findings of two woredas is difficult. It is generally observed that the process of consolidating decentralization is an on-going process. Both government and people prefer decentralization as a political structural arrangement for their empowerment. It also promises a lot on the fronts of democratization, people empowerment, and poverty reduction through the betterment of different public sectors which are goals that are pertinent to the goals of DLDP in Ethiopia.

Decentralization needs full autonomy to be effective and attain its objectives otherwise it will be something beautiful on the paper. The findings of the present study show that there is limited decision-making power transferred to lower level local governments. Woredas enjoyed little administrative autonomy to respond to the local needs of their constituencies. It was observed that sufficient decision-making authority, responsibilities and resources were not given for woreda level administrations to empower them to live up to the expectations of the people for more and improved services. Even though, the positive political legal pronouncements, decentralization in the form of devolution of power to local governments and the people is yet to be realized in the study areas. There is a disparity between legal and political pronouncement and actual practices.

It is revealed that successful decentralization would depend on the regional government's commitment to devolve political, administrative and fiscal powers to local governments such as woredas and the woreda government's commitment to devolve such powers to local institutions and kebeles. Further, successful decentralization will depend on the local governments institutional, technical and managerial capacities to perform their various tasks of raising revenues and providing public services. However, the reality in GPNRS does not fit into this observation because decentralization efforts are being undertaken in the region in the absence of such capacities and considerations.

Decentralization requires an appropriate legislative framework which clearly defines responsibilities and powers of sub-national governments as well as the expected relationship between central and lower levels of government. Although powers and functions of different government tiers are specified in the revised GPNRS Constitution, there exist unclear responsibility relationships between zone-woreda governments. This created a confusion of accountability and lack of transparency and interference between the different tiers of governments.

Local government finance is the key to a successful decentralization program. In general, the more financial autonomy a local government unit has, the greater its decision making authority to focus on local concerns and priorities. The Gambella region reality does not fit in this observation because woreda governments are heavily dependent on the regional government for budgets, which come in the form of block grants using a set of criteria. Although woreda councils have the formal legal authority to allocate block grants amongst different sectoral programs, the actual disbursement of the resources and important decisions on allocations are greatly influenced by directives that originate from the regional and federal governments.

Though the woredas were given autonomy in planning, administering, and managing public services, it has been restricted in terms of fully exercising its devolved powers particularly in personnel administration due to the actions of zonal and regional bodies as well as the local challenges facing the woredas. Inconsistency of rules and regulations originating from regional bodies as regards to planning and personnel administration are some of the impediments that inhibited the exercise of devolved powers. For example, local revenue collection is based on regional plan whereas employment, transfer and promotion of staff are controlled by the regional bodies. These are compounded by budgetary, skilled man power and resource constraints as well as limited and/or lack of leadership and planning institutions at local levels. Therefore, it is difficult to make the woreda accountable for its low performance in the absence of full autonomy in exercising its powers.

The introduction of decentralization policies aims at, among other things, providing a structural arrangement and encouraging practices that support the participation of the people in the planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of local development. Nevertheless, though better than prior to woreda decentralization, community participatory development activities (in both financial and non-financial contributions) are at its infant stage in the woredas under consideration. The practice of involving the larger community in identifying problems and overall planning activities is almost nonexistent. There is no significant effort in adjusting priorities according to local needs. This shows that there is a lot more that needs to be done to exploit communities' contribution.

The common purpose of decentralization in many developing countries is to improve service delivery by empowering local communities to decide on their fates. The present study shows the basic service delivery has relatively increased nominally after the DLDP implementation in the region. However, it is difficult to conclude that this has brought significant changes in the major sectors of public service delivery. In real terms the contribution of the woreda administration and the community for the improvements is very limited. The inputs of the regional, zonal and other actors such as NGOs have significantly contributed for the improvements. When the inputs of actors outside the woreda institutions and other contributing factors or variables are disregarded, performance in the post-decentralization years in the woredas has not been impressive. Financial and skilled human power constraints and problems of coordination and participation of the people have contributed to the low performance of the woredas in providing effective public services.

6.3. Recommendations

Based on the above discussions and findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded to have policy implications.

- In Ethiopia, the federal and regions' constitutions have assigned powers and responsibilities to each level. But the practice in GPNRS shows little devolution of authority to woreda levels. Woreda should have sufficient decision-making power and serve as autonomous units and manage the service provisions in their areas so as to maximize their benefits.
- The local governments should be given full autonomy in the planning and budgeting of their activities, especially in apportioning the budget into recurrent and capital portions according to their needs. Moreover, they should have the authority and autonomy to recruit, hire, appoint, transfer or dismiss local manpower which should be governed by local laws. Both the above issues are currently done at regional level at the disadvantage of local governments.
- For successful implementation of decentralization, the regional government in collaboration with local governments should formulate a strong legal framework setting out the powers, rights and duties of different government tiers in the region. Without such a framework, it is often impossible to know who is responsible for what. This allows zonal and regional governments to interfere easily with local affairs and leaves woreda and kebele authorities with no possibility of stopping such interferences. Thus, legal norms must be adapted to local needs and to the circumstances of the local area.
- To ensure the successful and sustainable implementation of woreda decentralization in GPNRS, there should be strong political commitment, leadership and dedication from the relevant government institutions and personnel, and other stakeholders as well as support from top level management, both politically and in the allocation of the necessary human, material and financial resources. In addition, the regional government in collaboration with MCB should have to establish institutions at woreda levels that are responsible for the implementation of DLDP.
- For making regional, local governments and their members accountable and transparent to the people; citizens should elect those who rule them and have the possibility to assess their performance. This requires transparency of government actions and the possibility to have access to relevant information such as budgets, accounts and plans. Citizens who are found in the region should know the office-bearer such that violated the law will be punished.

- Accountability to several authorities might create confusion and insecurity at lower levels that would be detrimental to the idea of efficient administration. Thus, well defined responsibilities provide for the degree of transparency and security needed by authorities at lower levels who have to make certain decisions on their own. Therefore, a high degree of transparency in the relations between different regional governments, i.e., region-woreda, zone-woreda, woreda-kebele and with the community have to be established to encourage discussion and exchange of ideas.
- Among the problems facing the region and *woreda* administrations, shortage of trained human resource is crucial. Therefore, the decentralization effort should first capacitate the region and local *woredas* with resources (human and material), administrative and technical capacities to help them evolve as viable and autonomous units of self ruled administrations. In addition, in order to minimize high staff turnover, the regional government should introduce positive and staff motivating incentive mechanisms so that employees should be dedicated to the job for which they are assigned.
- Effective decentralization requires adequate financial strength. But the GPNRS is financially constrained due to its low revenue generating and low administrative capacities. As such the region cannot generate sufficient revenues from its own sources. Therefore, measures to increase the revenue base should be seriously emphasized by the regional government.
- The practice of involving the community in identifying problems and prioritizing their needs, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of local development activities is crucial for true empowerment and accomplishment of desirable changes that satisfy the public and justify the program. So, the regional and local governments should make an effort to practically involve the community at all levels of decision making process.
- The political stability of the region is also something that bothers the development process. Conflict among the various ethnics that occasionally flares up is a stumbling block in the implementation of development programs. Therefore, to resolve conflicts among the various ethnics and ensure peace and stability for the development process, accelerate the decentralization process for creation of good governance and democracy at woreda level will be very vital in this case.
- Finally, the author recommends further complementary studies be conducted in the region on the subject matter in order to provide more conclusive findings over the direction and impact of the program in the region using the preliminary findings of this study as a springboard and stepping stone.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Budgetary Revenue Trend in Gambella Region in Million Birr (2005/06 – 2009/10)

Description	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
1. Own Revenue Total	13.919	19.291	27.888	38.564	52.365
2. Tax Revenue	12.294	16.997	20.762	31.314	35.443
Direct Taxes	11.557	15.936	19.427	27.532	31.539
Indirect Taxes	0.737	1.061	1.335	3.782	3.904
3. Non-Tax Revenue	1.618	2.294	7.122	5.564	15.692
4. Others	0.007	0.0004	0.004	1.686	1.23
5. Federal Subsidy	143.654	184.821	176.681	207.050	266.861
Total Budgetary Revenue	157.573	204.112	204.569	245.613	319.226
Annual Budget Growth (%)	-	29.53	0.22	20.06	29.97

Source: BoFED (2010/11)

Appendix II: Expenditure Trend in Gambella Region in Million Birr (2005/06 – 2009/10)

Description	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
1. Recurrent Expenditure	131.534	166.5	225.493	335.532	272.997
Administration and General Services	50.395	73.107	99.980	203.956	102.368
Economic Services	23.142	21.930	30.266	33.575	50.389
Social Services	57.997	71.463	95.247	98.001	120.240
2. Capital Expenditure	14.811	26.821	35.241	23.907	42.785
Administrative and General Development	1.684	7.749	18.744	15.343	14.248
Economic Development	7.986	11.765	15.089	5.031	12.579
Social Development	5.141	7.307	1.408	3.533	15.958
3. Assistance Expenditure	-	-	2.051	-	-
Total Expenditure	146.345	193.321	262.785	359.439	315.782

Source: BoFED (2010/11)

Appendix III: Woreda Government Budget and Level of Dependence in GPNRS (2007/08-2009/10)

No	Woreda	2007/08			2008/09			2009/10		
		Total budget	Own Revenue	Dependence (%)	Total budget	Own Revenue	Dependence %	Total budget	Own Revenue	Dependence %
1	Gambella Zuria	10,148,892.94	979,629.94	90.35	10,176,943.77	1,524,461.77	85.02	10,577,069.76	2,233,055.76	78.89
2	Abobo	14,090,007.69	1,616,968.39	88.52	14,059,369.80	2,386,116.07	83.03	12,869,733.93	3,394,924.93	73.62
3	Gog	11,393,192.42	1,278,806.32	88.78	10,908,958.62	1,484,856.62	86.39	13,977,372.72	4,678,602.72	66.53
4	Dimma	7,859,157.45	1,848,202.74	76.48	8,680,905.69	1,917,905.69	77.91	10,476,232.53	3,453,240.53	67.04
5	Jor	5,751,613.60	445,089.60	92.26	5,848,024.00	472,069.00	91.93	6,852,873.40	478,008.40	93.02
6	Wantuwa	8,477,539.75	669,630.50	92.10	7,522,754.24	792,876.24	89.46	9,153,513.51	1,801,940.51	80.31
7	Lare	13,477,211.03	1,000,898.88	92.57	12,707,981.09	868,941.09	93.16	16,519,250.48	1,342,580.48	91.87
8	Jikawo	7,830,685.01	606,259.71	92.26	7,802,854.72	659,654.72	91.55	13,841,404.33	777,577.33	94.38
9	Akobo	5,985,377.71	357,346.71	94.03	6,325,811.48	392,898.48	93.79	8,548,783.65	398,551.65	95.34
10	Godere	11,702,045.16	1,814,918.16	84.49	10,571,859.37	1,999,748.37	81.08	16,589,229.83	3,024,959.83	81.77
11	Mengeshi	4,946,077.10	784,274.58	84.14	5,641,101.85	988,990.95	82.47	7,923,911.56	1,096,898.56	86.16
12	Itang special	11,000,314.55	1,272,027.55	88.44	12,557,785.75	1,193,974.75	90.49	17,753,544.22	4,519,018.22	74.55
13	Gambella Town	10,908,519.93	1,668,651.19	84.70	12,020,195.35	1,764,472.35	85.32	14,802,823.82	2,340,784.82	84.19
Total		123,570,634.34	14,342,704.27		114,252,686.36	16,446,966.10		159,885,743.74	29,540,143.74	
Average		9,505,433.41	1,103,284.94	88.39	8,788,668.18	1,265,151.24	85.61	12,298,903.36	2,272,318.75	81.52

Source: BoFED (2010/11)

Appendix IV: Zone Government Budget and Level of Dependence in GPNRS (2007/08-2009/10)

No	Zone	2007/08			2008/09			2009/10		
		Total budget	Own Revenue	Dependence (%)	Total budget	Own Revenue	Dependence (%)	Total budget	Own Revenue	Dependence (%)
1	Agnuak	4,373,618.95	324,185.95	92.59	3,747,091.94	296,327.94	92.09	4,741,163.52	356,811.52	92.47
2	Nuer	3,461,040.99	259,980.89	92.49	3,384,472.33	310,990.33	90.81	4,443,458.25	296,098.25	93.34
3	Mejenger	3,081,931.29	340,080.89	88.97	3,316,147.25	514,643.25	84.48	3,801,431.63	483,543.63	87.28
Total		10,916,591.23	924,247.73		10,447,711.52	1,121,961.52		12,986,053.40	1,136,453.40	
Average		3,638,863.74	308,082.58	91.53	3,482,570.51	373,987.17	89.26	4,328,684.47	378,817.80	91.25

Source: BoFED (2010/11)

Appendix V: Checklist for the Field Work of Study

A. Questions Addressed to Key Informants (Top Officials and Experts) at Regional Level Bureaus for Getting General Facts

1. What are the objectives and driving forces of the DLDP in Gambella Region?
2. How was the program designed?
 - Do the goals driving the program understood?
 - Is simple, clear and realistic plan for implementing the program developed?
 - Do organizational and management analysis conducted early in the process?
 - How was the authority transfer mechanism?
 - Is the long term vision of the program understood?
3. Implementation modalities and phases
 - Policy formulation and enactment
 - Transfer of responsibility and resources
 - Organization and human resource adjustments
 - Improving capacity and resources for service delivery
 - Assessing the current situation
 - Planning of how to achieve the vision
 - Program evaluation by seeing results, assessing news media and citizen reactions.
 - Act the results: actions taken in response to results and reactions to date (like include other stake holders or revise goals and/or strategies).
4. The institutional and legal frameworks of the decentralization process setting out the following:
 - Structure
 - Rights and responsibilities
 - Powers and duties
 - List administrative tiers of government
5. To what level the following functional activities are decentralized?
 - Education (Up to what level)
 - Finance and Economic Development (to what extent)
 - Health (Up to what level)
 - Drinking Water Supply (to what extent)
 - Agriculture (to what extent)
 - Others
- 5.1. At which level that these functions are concentrated?
Regional Zone Woreda Kebele

6. The authority/powers decentralized?

- The power to create rules or modify old ones (Legislative)
- The power to make about how a particular resource or opportunity is to be used: (Executive)
- The power to implement and ensure compliance to the new or altered rules: (Executive)
- The power to adjudicate disputes that arise in the effort to create rules and ensure compliance (Judicial)
- Financial powers (revenue and expenditure assignment)
- Powers over personnel matters (recruitment, appointment, transfers, supervision and discipline, etc).

6.1. The level and to whom which powers/authority is decentralized to:

- Woreda level only
- To woreda up to kebeles
- Retained in the region

7. Fiscal decentralization

- Expenditure assignment
- Intergovernmental transfers
- Revenue assignment
- Grant formula

8. Planning and budgeting processes, systems and relationships

9. What are the conditions and factors affecting the implementation of decentralization in the region?

- How is the political commitments and administrative support in the region?
- Are attitudinal, behavioral, and cultural conditions conducive to decentralization in the region?
- Is there effective design and organization of decentralization program in the region?
- Is there adequate financial, human and physical resource in the region?

B. Questions Addressed to Key Informants (like Top Officials, Analysts and Observers) through In-depth Interview at Regional Level Bureaus for Stimulation of different View Points

1. Generally, how do you see the decentralization process and its implementation in the region?

- Was the program planned prior to its implementation at the regional level? How/Why not?
- Does the region have enough capacity (financial, human and other resources) when the program was implemented?
- What has been done for increasing local government accountability and transparency?
- In improving service delivery (citizen participation, service quality and equitable access)?

2. Are all of stakeholders involved and empowered from the inception to the implementation of the program (DLDP); if yes, how; and if no why not?
3. Is there regional sector policy on decentralization that defines the roles and responsibilities of woreda level sector offices?
4. What are the powers and functions actually devolved to the woreda sector offices as per the legal framework?
5. Fiscal decentralization
 - Is there a clear assignment of expenditure functions to each level of government (Regions, zone, woreda, and kebele)?
 - List the functions assigned to each level of government
 - Are intergovernmental transfers stable and predictable? (How are they distributed?)
 - Are transfers reduced if local governments increase revenues? Explain.
 - Is there a clear assignment of revenues to each level of regional government?
6. How are the planning process undertaken at woreda level and what institutional arrangements are used?
7. Do the main woreda office sectors like education, health, agriculture, water supply, etc know the resource envelop while preparing sector plans?
8. How are priorities set at woreda level and how often they are changed at the higher level? Why?
9. Is there any strategy to enhance woredas' capacity?
10. Is there any possibility that the regional bureau interface woredas? Why? To what extent?
11. What are the major inherent, critical and encountered problems/challenges for implementing woreda decentralization in the region? What are the achievements and prospects?
12. What are prospects of success or/and failure of the DLDP?
 - Is the program in the right direction (track so far)?
 - Is it contributing to the predetermined goals (local development)?
 - Will the program be sustainable politically, socially, economically, etc?
13. Recommendations and suggestions towards the implementation of the program

C. Points Addressed with the Woreda Officials and Experts (Woreda Administrators/ Cabinet Members/Sector Office Heads and Experts)

1. General situation of the woreda in terms of

- Socio-economic background and development and major positive indication of changes since the implementation of woreda decentralization

2. Political and administrative decentralization

- Is there any regional policy on decentralization that defines the roles and responsibility of local government?
- What are the powers and functions actually devolved to the local woreda authorities as to legal framework?
- What are the powers and functions actually devolved to woreda level from regional level?
- Is there any clear rules and regulations that delineate the powers, functions and responsibilities between tiers of government?
- Woreda level functioning
 - A) Inter-governmental relationship among different levels of government
 - B) Human resource conditions
 - C) Capacity issues (managerial, technical, etc) of the woreda government
- How zonal and regional council do interfere in your activities?
- How were the administrative capacity, accountability and transparency of woreda officials to citizens (top-down accountability) and (bottom-up accountability), to zones and regions?
- Is there woreda level strategy to empower kebeles and communities to identify their needs and priorities?
- Does the woreda council has authority to flexibly a. redefine priorities b. Reallocate budgetary resources spending c. set condition of employment?
- Is there a clear allocation of tasks among the different administrative labels of the woreda government?
- Is DLDP implemented in the woreda adequately? What are the successes? What are the problems/challenges?

3. Increasing local governmental /Woreda & Kebele/ accountability

- What is the role of the woreda carbine members in resource mobilization for local development activities?
- How is the money transferred to the woreda and mobilized by it accounted for?
- Is there adequate transparency in administrative system to monitor how resources are used?
- To what extent do all levels of government regularly disseminate information to citizens and other levels of government?
- To what extent does the public have free access to public meetings and records?
- To what extent do local government procedures allow citizens to provide input before decisions are made about resource allocation?
- To what extent are the results of government decisions disseminated to citizens?
- To what extent is information about government performance readily available?

4. Woreda planning and budgeting process

- How and when?
- Institutions and individuals involved
- Is there any guide line to prepare plans/project at woreda/kebele level?
- Do you participate at zonal and regional planning process? In what way?
- In what way the needs and priorities of community are reflected in the plan?
- How are priorities set at woreda level?
- The reporting system at woreda and regional levels

5. Fiscal decentralization

- Existence of legislative authority to collect local taxes and fees for use locally.
- What share of general government spending is incurred at the woreda level (amount of yearly expenditure by woreda)?
- What are the main sources of finance for the woreda to deliver public services and projects?
- Is the woreda mandated to collect revenue and retain it? What are the revenue sources?
- What share of general revenue is raised and retained at the woreda level?
- What are the criteria for woreda level fiscal grant or transfer?
- What percentage (amount) of woreda expenditure is financed by local revenue?
- What percentage or amount of woreda expenditure is financed by grants from the region?

6. Community Participation

- How was community participation?
- Recognition of the importance of community participation by woreda officials?
- To what extent are woreda and kebele officially responsive to the local community?
- Do citizens participate in planning and budgeting activities?
- How are community involved in the whole process of planning, implementation, operation and management of public services like in education and health?
- How do woreda officials identify the needs and problems of the community?
- Are there woreda level programs or projects targeted to enhance the capacity and participation of community, CBOs and civic associations?
- To what extent local capacity reduces participation?
- What is the role of woreda council/cabinet members in empowering the grass roots?

7. Improving quality of service delivery

- Are citizens consulted or do they have a mechanism to express their satisfaction/priorities for services?
- Do the woreda officials provide information to citizens about how to access their services?
- Does the local economic condition improved?
- Are there NGOs that are working in service delivery in different sectors?
- In which sectors CBOs/NGOs recognized as playing a role in the management operation and maintenance of basic services? What are their major roles?
- How looks like the public sector services like education and health in the woredas (access and coverage in relation with decentralization)?
- Is there any monitoring and evaluation of government services or projects conducted at the woreda level? How often evaluation of service delivery performance is conducted?
- What are the major problems to provide quality services in the woreda?
- What are the solutions to ease problems?
- How do you perceive decentralization at woreda/local level? What is its significance in general and in particular on service delivery?

D. Points Addressed with the Kebele Administrators/Officials

1. The general situation of the kebele in terms of socio-economic background and development.
 - Are you aware of DLDP?
 - How do you see DLDP?
2. What are the major roles of the kebele administration for the socio-economic development?
3. Have the kebele a power to pass decision in different issues?
4. Do you have your own budget?
5. Were you involved in planning, designing and implementation process of the program, DLDP?
6. What does the participation of the community looks like in your kebele?
7. What is your role in mobilizing the community? How can you influence the woreda administrators and officials to consider the need and priorities of the community?
8. Is the implementation of the DLDP program benefit the community in your woreda and kebele so far? How? Why if it is not contributing?
9. Do you have any development plan? How do you plan that? Who participate in planning?
10. What looks like the relationship between the kebele and woreda administrative?
11. How the kebeles participate in public service development like in education and health?
12. What looks like the public sector service delivery like in education and health services in the kebele regarding with coverage, access, quality, and enrollment?
13. What are the major constraints in the kebele? What do you think are the best solutions for the constraints?

E. Points Addressed in the Focus Group Discussion with Community Representatives

1. How do the communities participate in different development activities in the woredas?
2. Community access to information such as budgets, reports, resources (Tax) mobilization and assessment, service delivery; and agendas and decisions of the woreda council
3. Do the community needs and priorities match/mismatch with government initiatives and operations?
4. What are the community expectations from the local government?
5. How do you see woreda government accountability and transparency to the community?
6. How do you evaluate the role of community participation in planning, budgeting and reviewing the performance and effectiveness of woreda government and service delivery in public sectors?

7. How do you participate in public sector delivery like health and education services? At what stage do the communities participate in (planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating)? How?
8. In what way the communities exchange information with woreda officials, kebeles administrators and civil servants?
9. Is the existing public service delivery adequate? How? Why?
10. On which issues/activities have the community powers to decide?
11. What are the roles of the community in the construction of schools, health posts and ground water holes?
12. What are the obstacles for community participation in different development activities in the woredas? What are solutions?

F. Summary of Points that are used to Collect Secondary Data (Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile of the Region and Woredas)

1. Organizational structure of woreda and sector offices
2. Budget of the woreda, with major public sectors (consecutive years)
3. Manpower of the woreda administration with their educational level
4. Guidelines and policies of the woreda and region
5. Distribution and coverage of the public sector services such as education, health, clean water supply, agriculture, etc.
6. Number of population and kebeles of the woredas
7. Number of schools and health units in the woredas
8. Performance reports of different regional sector bureaus and woreda sector offices

Appendix VI: Some of the Consulted Institutions, Groups and Individuals

A. Regional Institutions, Officials and Experts (Interview)		
Region	Institution	Individual/Group
Gambella Peoples National Regional State (GPNRS)	CBCB	- DLDP Coordinator, Ato Tibebe - Human Resource Planning and Development Expert, Ato Addisu - Expert, Ato Beyene
	BoFED	- Bureau Head, Ato Tesfaye - Planning and Budget Department Head, Ato Kebede - Treasury Department Head, Ato Melaku - Data Administrator, Ato Michael
	Regional State Council Bureau	- Legal Adviser to the President, Ato Ochan - Capacity Building Adviser, Ato Biel - Public Relation Expert, Ato Mulugeta
	BoE	- Planning and Programming Head, Ato Zegeye - Data Administrator, W/o Tsega
	BoH	- Planning and Programming Head, Ato Alemu
	BoRRA	- Bureau Head, Ato Demelash
	CSB	- Planning and Programming Head, Ato Alemayehu
	BoRAA	- Tax Auditor, Ato Bizuneh - Expert, W/t Genet
	BoARD	- Planning and Programming Head, Ato Olwero - Expert, Ato Teshome
	BoWMER	- Planning and Programming Head, Ato Ayele
	BoJ	- Bureau Head, Ato Obong

B. Zone and Woreda Offices, Officials and Experts (Interview)

Zone	Institution	Individual/Group
Agnuak Zone	Zone OFED	- OFED Head, Ato Mack - Budget and Plan Desk Head, Ato Kokebe
	Zone Adm.	- Head of Zone Adm. Office and Cabinet Affairs, Ato Oman
Woreda	Institution	Individual/Group
Abobo	WAO	- Office Head, Ato Oudul - Plan and Program Head, Ato Agenew
	ECBO	- Office Head, Ato Amino - Education Team Leader, Ato Ojulu - Expert, Ato Mekonnen
	OFED	- A/Office Head, Ato Cham - Budgeting and Planning Head, Ato Ketema - Expert, Ato Henok
	OARD	- Office Head, Ato Owar - Expert, W/t Mitin
	HO	- Office Head (Acting) and HIV/AIDS Prevention and Protection Desk Head, Ato Balcha
	WRDO	- Office V/head, Ato Obang
	Revenue Office	- Expert, Ato Mengesha
Lare	WAO	- Office Head, Ato Cheing - Plan and Program Head, Ato Benti
	OFED	- Office Head, Ato James - Budgeting and Planning Head, Ato Alemu - Accountant, Ato Wondwosen
	ECBO	- Office Head, Ato James - Education Head, Ato Galwak - Experts, Ato Kuot
	OARD	- A/Office Head, Ato Reis Madong - Plan and Program Head, Ato Melaku
	HO	- Office Head, Ato Ougat
	Revenue Office	- Revenue Team Leader, Ato Alemu (acting)
	WRDO	- Office Head, Ato Bol

C. Kebele Administration/Chairman (Interview)

Kebele	Institution	Individual/Group
Abobo	Kebele Administration	- Chairman of Abobo Kebele, Ato Okello - Chairman of Chembo (Village 8 & 9) Kebele, Ato Omod
Lare	Kebele Administration	- Chairman of Kuergeng Kebele, Ato Peter - Chairman of Teluth Kebele, Ato Tong

D. Focus Group Discussants From the Community

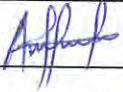
Abobo	Community Representatives	- Five Community Representatives (Male) Group
		- Five Community Representatives (Female) Group
Lare	Community Representatives	- Five Community Representatives (Male) Group
		- Five Community Representatives (Female) Group

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis entitled “Assessment on the Implementation of Woreda Decentralization in Gambella Regional State: The Case of Abobo and Lare Woredas”, is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or organization, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Declared by:

Name: Abrham G/Selassie G/Yes

Signature: 


Place: Addis Ababa University

Date: July 2011

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor of the candidate.

Approved by:

Name: Professor Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher

Signature: 

Date: July 2011