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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**PROFIT AT THE EXPENSE OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT:
A FIRM LEVEL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF BIRR FARM INVESTMENT ON
THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES, AMHARA REGION, ETHIOPIA**

BY:

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Sociology
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Sociology**

**Addis Ababa University
Addis Ababa
June 2019**

Declaration of Originality

I, Getahun Siraw, hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**Profit at the Expense of Local Communities and the Environment: A Firm Level Analysis of the Impact of Birr Farm Investment on the Local Communities, Amhara Region, Ethiopia**” is my original work and has never been presented or published in any other institution. I also declare that any information used in this thesis has been dully acknowledged.

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Getahun Siraw, entitled: Profit at the Expense of Local Communities and the Environment: A Firm Level Analysis of the Impact of Birr Farm Investment on the Local Communities, Amhara Region, Ethiopia and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Abstract

Significant increments of Large-Scale Agricultural Investments in Ethiopia were sparked in this past decade primarily ignited by the world food price crisis in 2007/8. Agricultural investments commenced following this year were hoped by both the government and investors to provide decent employment, transferring technology, food security and infrastructure development to the local communities. However, allocations have been subject to controversy in terms of negative impacts on rights and livelihoods of local communities as confirmed by most researchers interested on this.

Yet, while full effects of such investments may materialize many years after their establishment, there is a dearth of literature that examine the effects of long-established farm investments in Ethiopia. Given this and many other concerns, this study examined the impact of one of the long-established farm investments in Ethiopia, Birr Farm Investment. In so doing, the study has adopted sustainability as a theoretical framework and employed qualitative research approach. Data were collected from Federal level institutions, Woreda and communities in the vicinity of the farm using FGDs, interviews, and observations as principal data collection instruments. The study has also made use of secondary data that were crucial for this study.

The study found out that Birr farm investment has little meaningful effect in terms of employment, technology transfer and infrastructural development. Livelihoods of local communities are being jeopardized by the farm investment, at the same time; resistances from the local communities are adversely affecting the farm investment. Examination of working conditions and welfare system inside Birr farm also revealed that profit motive attitude of the investment has kept workers in the vicious cycle of poverty and the violation of basic human rights as well. Furthermore, massive impacts on the environment were also noted. Hardly any positive effects on the ground by Birr farm investment has been found in this study. From a sustainability perspective, this study underscores the need to take into account the impact of farm investments upon local communities rights, livelihoods and the environment. The need to tie down investors with contractual obligations to deliver social services and regular monitoring and evaluation of such investments to employ sustainable agricultural investing is also emphasized.

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I would like to thank the individuals and organizations who generously shared their time, views, experiences, and materials for the purposes of this study. This study would have never been possible without the collaboration of research participants in and outside organizations.

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List of Abbreviations

ADLI	Agricultural Development Led Industrialization
AISD	Agricultural Investment Support Directorate
CRS	Corporate Social Responsibility
EAILAA	Ethiopian Agricultural Investment and Land Administration Agency
EHAIA	Ethiopian Horticulture and Agriculture Investment Authority
EIA	Ethiopian Investment Agency
EPA	Ethiopian Privatization Authority
EPRDF	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GCC	Gulf Cooperative Council
Ha	Hectare
IAWAG	Inter Agency Working Group
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
LSAI	Large Scale Agricultural Investment
MOFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MORAD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
PRAI	Principle for Responsible Agricultural Investment
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty
UNCTD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Large Scale Agricultural Investments have long been existed in developing countries across the world. Its emergence in Ethiopia dates back to the times of the *Imperial* and the *Derge* regime. However, the revival and great expansion of this land acquisitions—some scholars call it ‘Land grab’—in the developing world have first sparked primarily by the food price crisis in 2007/2008, and now driven by a variety of factors, including increased demand for food and biofuels, carbon markets, and speculation (Dessalegn, 2011; Darryl Vhughen, 2013; Tsegaye, 2017). As these and other researches revealed, the huge price increase ignited the sudden increase in land acquisition. Nevertheless, while commodity prices have since fallen, the demand for land has remained extremely high. This reflects “the speculative dimension” of international investment, that new markets in land and water are “a promising way to secure assets” (De Schutter, 2011 cited in Mesfin, 2013). Large-scale Agricultural Investments are now remaking the face of agriculture and land use in the developing world. Consequently, due to the numerous economic, political, social and environmental implications of land acquisition, the acquisition of large-scale agricultural land by investors¹ has become an area of interest for many analysts, academicians, development agencies, NGO’s and the media (Saifullah Seyed, 2013; Borras & Franco, 2013)

Africa has experienced a significant increase in large-scale land acquisitions in the last decade. While there are varying statistics on the exact number of hectares that have been transferred—especially due to methodological differences provided by various stakeholders—there is a consensus that large-scale land acquisitions have increased over time and particularly so in Ethiopia (Mbaya, 2015; Azeb, 2017). For instance, Dessalegn, (2011) noted that around 1.2 million hectares of potential land has been made available for agriculture companies that meet Ethiopian government requirements. Dessalegn had suggested that by the end of 2015, a total land transferred to investors would measure nearly 7 million hectares, which is equal to about 38 percent of land utilized by smallholders during the time of his study. Similarly, according to a World Bank report, cited in (Darryl Vhughen, 2013; Keeley et., al 2014; Elias N. Stebek, 2011)

¹ In this thesis, the term ‘investor’ is used almost exclusively to refer to agricultural investors

406 commercial land investment projects over 500ha covering 1.9 million hectares were approved in Ethiopia between 2004 and 2008. Oakland Institute's report, on the other hand, points out that presently at least 3.6 million hectares of land have been transferred to domestic as well as foreign investors in Ethiopia (The Oakland Institute, 2011). More recently,² the head of Ethiopian Horticulture and Agriculture Investment Authority (EHAIA)³ explained that out of the total 3.1 million hectares of land identified by the Authority, 2 million hectares of land have been transferred to investors. Regardless of this contradicting information concerning the quantified area of land acquisitions, it is noteworthy that land investment undoubtedly does take place significantly.

Around the mid-1990s, the Ethiopian government's development strategy (Agricultural development led industrialization) was formulated, giving the smallholder cultivation and crop production a leading role and was expected to serve as the engine of growth for the development of the country as a whole (Mesfin, 2013). The strategy, leaning on the shoulders of smallholder farmers was expected to provide not only stimulus for development but also a surplus for food self-sufficiency. During this period, a great deal of support was provided to smallholder farmers through, domestic and donor assistance, resource management practices and improved farming, credit services, and different kinds of human capacity development programs. To some extent, new technology packages were also provided. At this time, the land system in practice was clearly biased in favor of smallholder farmers (Gebreselassie, 2006, cited in Mesfin, 2013). The beginning of the shift from this strategy was signaled in the document published by the government in 2001 with modified rural development policy and strategies (Dessaegn, 2011). Even though the critical role to be played by smallholder farmers was still there, the document introduced an important role for large-scale agricultural interposes and foreign investors.

The government's poverty reduction and development plan called "*Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP)*" which was enacted in 2005, also stated that one of the eight pillars of the government's development strategy is what it calls "a massive

² Evidence for this is found from a news paper article by The Ethiopian News Agency on May (2017), <https://www.ena.et/?p=3228> Accessed on 26 October, 2018.

³ EHAIA is established in 2017 with a mandate to study and identify agricultural investment lands suitable for the production of horticulture, commercial farms, livestock and commercial plantation forest facilitate supply of investment land and provide suitability documents, make those documents accessible to the users/investors and support transfer of land in collaboration with the Regional states.

push” for accelerated growth, which is grounded on two policy thrusts. They were the commercialization of agriculture and acceleration of private sector development (MOFED 2006; Dessalegn, 2011). This was a clear indication of the government’s shift from smallholder farmer cultivation to capitalist farming and was followed by the legislative instruments issued in 2002 and 2003 (Dessalegn, 2011).

Lavers, (2012) pointed two fundamental factors that compel the government to embrace LSAI policy. Firstly, large global financial institutions such as World Bank and International Monetary Fund have put more pressure on many developing countries to commercialize their agricultural sector. Secondly, the government faces difficulty in achieving food security through smallholder agriculture and forced to rely more on a trade-based approach. Yet, apart from the influence made by global financial institutions and the failure of smallholder agriculture to secure food security, this strategy was adopted to pay off the good deed rural farmers have done for the government in the process of seizing power.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that there was no LSAIs before the ruling party EPRDF have had committed to this policy. Because, the Derg had established big mechanized farms then called "State farms", by confiscating private farms and establishing new ones (Firew, 2015). However, right after the overthrow of the socialist regime in 1991, the transitional government of Ethiopia at the time announced a free market economy and initiated the privatization process in 1994 through the establishment of the Ethiopian Privatization Authority (EPA). As a result, long established State farms have been immediately transferred to private investors long before the current government has entered into a whole new level of transferring huge tracts of land to investors.

Various civil societies, researchers, academics, environmental and human rights activists have expressed their concerns regarding the adverse impact of large-scale farmland acquisitions in Ethiopia. Some of them argue that the Ethiopian government has developed large-scale agricultural investment policy on terms that are highly beneficial to ensure food security for the rural poor but practically so to the interests of those in power⁴. For instance, Daniel Medina⁵

⁴ This assumption has some element of truth when we think of the recently vanished 36 LSAIs in Gambella Region, as reported by the house of people’s representative and confirmed by interviews with Federal level authorities.

argues that foreign investment in Ethiopia is a fancy word for stealing land. Some others argue that the negative impacts of such investments outweigh possible positive impacts and question the usefulness of this policy. Among most studies conducted, a low wage for local communities, erosion of indigenous people's culture, eviction/relocation of the communities, and degradation of the environment are commonly cited as problems across literature on LSAI in Ethiopia.

By and large, the key challenge for Ethiopia and African States more broadly has been how to effectively harness the economic opportunities provided by large-scale agricultural investment while simultaneously mitigating risks posed to community livelihoods, biodiversity, and the ecosystem goods and services which the latter provides (Mbaya, 2015). To this end, such large-scale land grabbing can have a generally negative impact on livelihoods due to reduced access of local people to resources. The adversity of the impact can be even worse especially in countries where there is a lack of good governance and rule of law, lack of transparency and unclear land tenure rights (Saifullah Seyed, 2013). Most surprisingly, these land deals are involving countries with serious hunger problems and the majority of crops grown by those investors in developing countries are intended for export and food security of their home markets rather than feeding local people (Elias N. Stebek, 2011; Oxfam, 2012; Desalegn, 2013). Hence, as Ethiopia is home for a number of large-scale agricultural investments, and is still welcoming plenty of investors in LSAIs, the issue has become more complex and contested over time. As a result, various issues surrounding large-scale agricultural investments are worth studied.

More about the report can be found from an online Amharic newspaper here <https://ethio-online.com/archives/2114> Accessed on 28 March, 2019.

⁵ [Daniel A. Medina](https://qz.com/275489/in-ethiopia-foreign-investment-is-a-fancy-word-for-stealing-land/) (2014). "In Ethiopia, foreign investment is a fancy word for stealing land" Quartz. <https://qz.com/275489/in-ethiopia-foreign-investment-is-a-fancy-word-for-stealing-land/> Accessed on 19 December 2018.

1.1. Statement of The Problem

The issue of LSLA is an often-controversial topic, partly because of the existence of conflicting views on its impacts on host communities. Consequently, the topic is subject to ongoing debates not only among researchers but also among politicians and policymakers (Desalegn, 2013). Ethiopia is an important case in the international debate on large-scale land acquisitions. It is a case where land deals for plantation agriculture are central to government agricultural strategy, but also where allocations have been subject to controversy in terms of impacts on rights and livelihoods at the local level (Keeley et al., 2014).

In some cases, the legal basis, management, and frequency of monitoring of LSAIs could have the possibility of determining impacts on the local communities and the environment. In this respect, the constitution gives Regional states the power to administer land found within their region, consistent with the constitution and federal laws. Administration includes determining systems for expropriation and compensation, land rental, communal rights and land use planning. This vesting of powers at the regional level means there can be great diversity between regions in terms of rules, practices and incentives for different types of investment (Keeley et al., 2014). Beginning in 2010, however, the federal government has been delegated the power to administer plots of investment lands over 5,000 ha (Imeru, 2010; Dessalegn 2011; Maru, 2016; Teklemariam et al., 2016). This means that the federal government could fall short of effectively monitoring such investment lands, which is usually given for investors in remote areas.

In the course of assessing previously conducted studies, attempts were made by some researchers to understand the diverse issues of large-scale agricultural investments in Ethiopia. For instance, Dessalegn, (2011), and Desalegn, (2013) conducted a study to examine Large scale land transfers and associated impacts on the local communities. Likewise, a more recent attempt was made by Addisu, (2016) to understand the implication of local communities involvement in the initial stage of large-scale agricultural investments. Tsegaye, (2017) also conducted a study on the implications of land acquisitions on indigenous local communities, especially on customary land tenure system and other subsidiary activities, such as hunting, gathering, fishing, livestock raising, traditional alluvial gold mining, and honey production and collection. The Oakland Institute, (2011) also canvassed the nature of land deals in Ethiopia throughout some case studies of different Regional States. Researches like Keeley et al., (2014) assed how much land is

allocated for large-scale agriculture and features of investments in Ethiopia. Similarly Imeru, (2010) presented a paper at the World Bank Conference concerning large scale agricultural investments (an assessment of empirical evidences and gaps are provided in section 2.7). However, most of these researches interest have been driven largely by the rapid spread of land grabbing and its consequential impacts on the aftermath of 2007/2008 food crisis. As a result, researches that understood how the people-to-farm interaction is mediated in long-established farms like Birr farm investment and the various forms of impacts upon the community are almost non-existent in Ethiopia. This is to mean, most studies analyze recent investments, while the full effects may materialize many years after the investment has taken place. Over the long run, the outcomes of a project may change drastically.

Moreover, some of these researches are a detailed assessment of how much land is allocated for LSAI, and an evaluation of existing policy, legal and institutional framework regarding large- scale agricultural investments etc, without duly focusing on the voices of people from the field. Hence, local-level impacts of LSAI are not currently well documented in Ethiopia, partly due to the political sensitivities of carrying out this kind of research in many key land investment areas. While more research is done in the acquisition of large farmland, less attention has been given on the impacts that land deals have brought on the livelihood of the implemented area. Coupled with that, assessments of long-established farms have received little research focus. Even under conditions where there are researches, almost none of these previous researches' recommendations have been taken seriously by governments so far.

The gap in the spatial focus of most researches to date is also noteworthy here. As stated in Ethiopia's poverty reduction and development strategy plans, PASDEP, agricultural intensification is envisioned predominantly for the country's lowlands (less than approximately 1600 m) (Tsegaye, 2017; Nalepa, Gianotti, & Bauer, 2016). The Ethiopian government has long been eager to attract foreign farm investors by offering them what the government describes as 'virgin land', 'marginal', 'wasteland', 'barren', or 'unused'. Most of these lowlands are located in developing Regional States (Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella), or lowland parts of SNNPR (Keeley et al., 2014). As a result, majority of researches in LSAI in Ethiopia have focused on investments found in south and southwestern parts of the country leaving others uninvestigated.

Last, and most importantly, the growing public discontent on the spatial theme of this study is worth mentioning too. It suffices to say that among the many ways research ideas develop (like current debate in the academic world and funding) they may also arise out of a certain awareness of specific trends in society. Similarly, the impact of Birr Farm Investment to the local community has been an area of concern and debate among the surrounding people for over a decade, and unwaveringly beginning in 2016. Lately in summer 2018, people publicly began to ask the relevance of the farm to the local community. Consequently, the issue had grabbed the attention of the Regional media and people babbled out their complaints to them. As a result, it stepped up to the wider public discourse. I am well aware of this emerging trend and as Kalof, Dan, & Dietz, (2008) noted most of us in the social science have chosen fields and individual research topics because we care very deeply about the issues we study. Hence, given the scant research attention the issue has received, the spatial gap and the existing public debate surrounding Birr Farm Investment, the researcher is prompted to study its impact on the local community.

1.2. Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to assess the impact of Birr Farm Investment on the local community. More lucidly, the study intends to address the following objectives.

- ❖ Explore the interplay between legal and institutional arrangements and the effectiveness of investments in agriculture.
- ❖ Understand the socio-economic impacts of the farm investment towards the local community.
- ❖ Describe the environmental impacts of the investment at the local level and the broader biodiversity.

1.3. Scope of the Study

Given the breadth of the issues under LSAIs, defining the scope and focus of this study is of particular importance. This involves setting geographic and thematic boundaries and sharpening the focus within those. The impacts of large-scale land acquisition can be studied by looking at a range of factors such as the national economy, health or even on politics. However, the thematic

area of this research project is exclusively delimited to the institutional arrangements, socio-economic impacts and environmental impacts of the LSLA on local communities and their livelihood. Geographically, the study is limited to Birr Farm Investment found in Jabi Tehnan *Woreda* of West Gojjam zone, Amhara Region. Methodologically, the study has employed qualitative research approach (the rationality behind choosing this method is explained in chapter three).

1.4. Significance of The Study

Above all, this study could add up further ideas to our understanding of rural society particularly to the realities of life of rural community surrounding and within large-scale agricultural investments. Next, this research might serve as a stepping stone for policy-makers to look back and reevaluate the overall effects of the current large-scale agricultural investment policy in general and farm investments in particular, especially upon local communities, in light of these research findings. It might also serve as a rationale or reference for the investment to assess their overall interaction with the local community, conduct a social impact assessment and call for measures to reduce possible impacts upon the surrounding community. Moreover, the research could serve as a reference for any upcoming researchers interested in studying emerging trends in the phenomena of large-scale agricultural investments.

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

- **Impact:** In the context of this study, impact intends to designate the positive contribution of the farm to the local community and any other undesirable risk brought by the farm that threatens the socio-economic, cultural and livelihood strategies of the local communities. Hence, it implies the pros and cons of the investment to the local community.
- **Large-scale agricultural Investment:** Refers to any large-scale land acquisition by foreign or domestic investors or local government either through purchase or through lease for agricultural production. Land grabs and land acquisition are concepts that are usually mentioned in large-scale agriculture literatures. Both terms can be interchangeably used in this paper to refer to agricultural investments in huge tracts of land.

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- **Long-Established Farms:** Portrays those Large Scale Agricultural farms which were State owned long before the coming in to power of EPRDF but immediately transferred to private investors after EPRDF has control over the State apparatus.
 - **People to farm interaction:** Implies to the continual feedback and mutual interaction or the dialectical interplay between the farm and the local communities. These include but not limited to, helping each other, social service involvements, trainings and the like.
 - **Sustainability:** in this context is understood as the reconciliation of environmental conservation, social equity, and economic objectives in a manner that respects basic human rights.

1.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethics is an integral part of a research process in most social science researches. Even some writers argue that it is compulsory for a social researcher conducting research involving humans to apply for ethical clearance. Whatsoever, the following ethical considerations have been taken throughout the course of this study. First, without any deception or exaggeration about the aims and objectives of the research, full consent was obtained from the participants prior to the study. In all cases of data collection, it was made clear to participants that they would remain anonymous to ensure that they felt as comfortable as possible to openly express their experiences and views. In a few cases, people explicitly made clear that they were willing to be identified, but kept anonymous in this study. Hence, protection of research participants' privacy and adequate level of confidentiality of the research data was ensured. It will also continue to be ensured, to the maximum possible. Last, any type of misleading information, as well as misrepresentation of primary data findings is avoided.

1.7. Challenges/Limitations of the Study

Research has many challenges and perils from its very beginning up to its end. Among the many stages of the undertaking, the process of data collection has tremendous predicaments, especially in qualitative research designs. I can say that, of the challenges I have faced in this study, those that has happened during this stage had of a paramount difficulty. Conducting Focus Groups and interviews were stressful for me during collecting data because some participants were hesitant

to release information freely and elaborately given that rural people are a little reticent. Therefore, enticing the quiet participants during focus groups so that every participant gets the chance to contribute, and probing them to tell me more was a difficult and stressful task. While collecting data within the farm investment, I was also unable to interview workers who live in there. This is because officials in the farm investment did not show interest upon this. As a result, inside farm working condition and welfare systems were understood based on documentary analysis and some outside the farm interviews. However, I believe that it could have been better if data were obtained from them.

Furthermore, to make interviews at the Federal institutions it was required to go through various institutions, which put up other barriers. Especially, the convoluted bureaucratic system found at the level of the government is noteworthy here. I first went to the EHAIA and asked their cooperation to make an interview with them but told that I should get an approval from The Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resource. This has taken a day and when I return to EHAIA on another day, I was told that the director is not there. For the third time, I went to EHAIA but able to make interviews at that moment with the director of “Agricultural Investment Support Directorate”. Yet, the contract document was not there and I understood that it is found in Public Enterprises Holding and Administration Agency (PEHAA), the former Ethiopian Privatization Agency (EPA).

I went to the privatization directorate at PEHAA, told the director about my aim, and asked the contract document. However, he said, *“That’s interesting, but you’re not going to get any document about that farm investment because the Regional State [Amhara Region] and the Farm are in dispute and the case is in the court so that the issue is sensitive”*. I told him my goal is purely academic and showed my consent letter. After a stiff debate about this, he agreed to make an interview while the contract document is still in his hands.

Therefore, my aim to make a document analysis of the contract document was unsuccessful and changed straightaway to an interview. Nonetheless, it could have been better if I made a review of it since most of the activities of the farm investment are likely to be performed in line with the requirements put forwarded in the contract document. Probably the best lesson from this could be building rapport, staying firm, patient and optimistic all the way up data saturation is ensured.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section deals with literature related to this specific study. Definitions of Large Scale Agricultural Investments, empirical literature related to Large Scale Agricultural Investments, and those theories whose assumptions are used in the study, are presented. LSAI related studies in Ethiopia are also reviewed in order to identify gaps, which have not been filled by previously done researches. The theoretical and conceptual framework that shaped and guided this study is also presented under this section.

2.1. Large Scale Land Acquisitions: Differing Views and Interpretations

There is no consensus on a single definition, view or interpretation of land acquisition across literatures in large scale land acquisitions. This is because on global, national and local scale, various actors interpret land grabbing in their own way, and the processes of land deals usually occur within a multitude of conflicting and contrasting realities. Some critical scholars refer to the trends and processes involved with acquiring land on a large scale as “land grabbing”-which has a negative connotation implying that these land acquisitions have a negative effect on nature and societies. While some others refer this trend as “land deals” implying a more neutral stance. Whether viewed as “land grabbing”, “large scale land acquisition” or “agriculture investment for development”, this trajectory has seen vast tracks of land being outsourced for the production of agricultural commodities.

While consulting relevant literature, a common definition of land grabbing puts emphasis on the role of foreign investors who engage after the acquisition in the production of agricultural commodities. In reality, land grabbing is done by a range of actors, both foreign and domestic, and the land acquired is not solely used for the purpose of agricultural production. This common definition is as follows: “*large scale land acquisition, be it purchased or lease, for agricultural production by foreign investors*” (GRAIN 2008, Cotula et al., 2009, Daniel & Mittal 2009, quoted in Wulp, 2013). This rather general definition, however, does not pay attention to the complex nature of the different localities and actors that are involved with land acquisition. Land acquisition is about more than land, it has the potential to reorganize social structures because of

inequalities between investors and those that are displaced. The following definition tries to capture these social dimensions of land grabbing, and I highlight the important aspects of this definition:

“Contemporary land grabbing is the capturing and control of relatively vast tracts of land and other natural resources through a variety of mechanisms and forms that involve large scale capital that often shifts resource use orientation into extractive character whether for international or domestic purposes as capital’s response to the convergence of food, energy, financial crisis, climate change mitigation imperatives and demand for resources from newer hugs of global capital” (Borras and Franco et al. 2012 quoted in Wulp, 2013).

Simply put, the current wave of large-scale land deals is characterized by the widespread acquisition of land in developing countries by foreign or domestic investors for a variety of purposes including speculation, investment and the production of staple crops or biofuels—often for export. As noted above, it is difficult to succinctly define what qualifies as a large-scale land deal given the deals’ considerable diversity in scale and context. However, the later definition provided by Borras and Franco is used throughout this paper.

2.2. Policies that Promote FDI and the Emergence of LSAIs in Developing Countries

One of the enabling factors for Foreign LSAIs is the emphasis placed by host governments on attracting FDI as their strategy of choice for promoting economic growth (Hilhorst & Zoomers, 2011). The conditions and legal framework required for FDI to intensify have been prepared over at least a decade with the assistance of international organizations like the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the World Bank, as part of the ‘good governance’ agenda.⁶ Attracting FDI was accompanied by deregulation, including the abolition of restrictions on importing and exporting capital and tax exemptions for investors. At the international level, both legislation and investment treaties have strengthened the position of the corporate sector vis-à-vis national governments with regard to risk, expropriation, policy change, etc (Hilhorst & Zoomers, 2011).

⁶ See also the annual Doing Business Indicators published by IFC and the World Bank, available at: <http://www.doingbusiness.org/>.

Deregulation and measures to protect investors have created conditions that are more profitable and less risky for foreign investors than for domestic investors (Cotula, Vermeulen, & Leonard, 2009). Case studies in Ethiopia show that investments in land started in around 2005, after legislation more favorable to FDI had been approved (Dessalegn, 2011). In countries where transnational LSLA is taking place the host governments emphasize the importance of attracting investments in areas such as infrastructure (e.g. roads, irrigation), innovative farming practices, value-chain development, employment creation and obtaining foreign exchange (Hilhorst & Zoomers, 2011). Promises of associated investments in infrastructure – for instance, airports– are additional reasons for inviting investors to set up large-scale farming and mining enterprises. Moreover, host countries and even the African Union stated that they expect firms to invest in delivering basic services, such as healthcare, drinking water and primary education. Many companies promise to invest in these services for their employees and sometimes also for neighboring communities – actions that could be seen as a form of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

This offer to provide basic services explains why communities may welcome investors, especially those living in more remote areas that have received little government support. This approach to providing basic services, however, raises fundamental questions about equity and sustainability, as well as alignment with government policies (Hilhorst & Zoomers, 2011). One major problem is that the provision of basic services in a piecemeal fashion by individual foreign companies runs against progress in developing sectoral policies on water, primary health and education, and ensuring equitable access and sustainable services for all (Hilhorst & Zoomers, 2011). The question is whether and how these basic services will be connected to national higher education or health-referral systems, and whether they will be subject to government regulation and quality control.

2.3. The Revival of Large scale agricultural investment in contemporary Ethiopia

When assessing the causes and consequences of today’s large-scale land deals, it is useful to analyze the current trends in close relation to earlier policies in order to draw lessons from these experiences. Since the coming into power of the EPRDF- led government in Ethiopia in 1991, the main thrust of the agricultural policy of the country has been what is dubbed as the

Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI). The core pillar of ADLI⁷ is based on the premise that, in a capital starved country like Ethiopia, labor intensive agriculture is the engine of growth and a mechanism for reducing poverty in the country (Imeru, 2010). Ethiopian government uses agricultural investment as the most important and effective strategies for economic growth, food security and poverty reduction in the country. Thus, the government formulated a long-term economic development strategy called Agriculture development led industrialization (ADLI) and is the Government's overarching policy response to Ethiopia's food security and agricultural productivity challenge (Azeb, 2017). ADLI subscribes to the policy that the development of agriculture is considered as the main engine of industrialization by providing the raw material, capital base, surplus labor and capital accumulation (MoFED, 2002 cited in Imeru, 2010).

ADLI, leaning on the shoulders of smallholder farmers was expected to provide not only stimulus for development but also a surplus for food self-sufficiency. During this period, a great deal of support was provided to smallholder farmers through, domestic and donor assistance, resource management practices and improved farming, credit services, and different kinds of human capacity development programs (Mesfin 2013). To some extent, new technology packages were also provided. At this time, the land system in practice was clearly biased in favor of smallholder farmers (Gebreselassie, 2006, cited in Mesfin 2013). The beginning of the shift from this strategy was signaled in the document published by the government in 2001 with modified rural development policy and strategies (Dessalegn, 2011). Even though the critical role to be played by smallholder farmers was still there, the document introduced an important role for large-scale agricultural enterprises and foreign investors. A couple of paragraphs quoted in Mesfin, (2013) are picked from the document that confirms the shift of policy.

“Private investors are already making a significant contribution to agricultural development. Experiences of developed economies clearly show that as an economy grows there is a tendency for some small farmers to quit the sector and seek employment in other sectors, and there are others who accumulate enough capital to go big in the sector. This implies that there is a direct

⁷ The ADLI's distinctive features include: commercialization of smallholder agriculture through product diversification; a shift to higher-valued crops; promotion of niche high-value export crops; support for the development of large-scale commercial agriculture; effective integration of farmers with domestic and external markets; and tailoring interventions to address the specific needs of the country's varied agro-ecological zone

correlation between agricultural growth and the role of private investment in the sector. This in turn means that assuming the objective of accelerated agricultural development is achieved; it is likely that there will be a role change. The key actor in the sector's development will be relatively large-scale private investors and not the semi subsistence small farmers”

“There are two investment areas that seem to be particularly suited for foreign investment in the agricultural sector. The first is to develop here-to-for unutilized vast land with high irrigation possibility. ... The second investment opportunity is to produce high-value agricultural products (e.g. flowers, vegetables) where the scale of operation could be small or medium. The country's demand for participation in both areas is immense, and assurances are given that government institutions at all levels will do their level best to facilitate and assist foreign investor”. “While underlying the importance of encouraging domestic private investment through well conceived incentives, the focus of attention should be on attracting foreign investors. Historically, efforts made to attract foreign investment are almost exclusively directed towards non-agricultural sectors. This needs to change if Ethiopia is to achieve its agricultural objectives” (MoFED, 2003, Dessalegn, 2011, quoted in Mesfin, 2013. p, 30).

This was a clear indication of the government’s shift from smallholder farmer cultivation to capitalist farming and was followed by the legislative instruments issued in 2002 and 2003. Details of the legislation are presented in the forthcoming section (2.4.2)

Two reasons that force the government to embrace this policy were provided by Lavers, (2012). Firstly, large global financial institutions have put more pressure on many developing countries to commercialize their agricultural sector (Lavers, 2012). For instance, Commercialization of land and the shift to large scale agriculture as being an essential measure for agricultural modernization and to the improvement of production efficiency is adopted mainly by the influence of the World Bank (Dessalegn, 2011; Addisu, 2016). Secondly, the government faces difficulty in achieving food security through smallholder agriculture and forced to rely more on a trade-based approach (Lavers, 2012). Past policies have also not lead to significant increase in food security, supporting a continued dependency on food aid. The Ethiopian government is trying to reduce this dependency on food aid and the requirements to receive this aid, such as good governance (Abbink, 2011). However, it is important to note that these new development objectives are not the same within all Regions of Ethiopia. In the highlands, the goal is to attract

investments that are labor and capital intensive, while in the lowlands investments that are large-scale and mechanized are more dominant Makki 2012, cited (Wulp, 2013)

However, the policy has received many critics from various researchers and academicians. For instance CIRS, 2013; cited in Addisu, (2016) goes on to say that, the acquisition of agricultural land in developing countries like Ethiopia is a poor and risky strategy for the objective of securing food supplies for Gulf cooperative council (GCC) States. This is because such approaches, if not carefully managed and maintained, tend to dispossess, injure, or impoverish local communities, jeopardizing the viability of projects. Daniel Medina⁸ also argues that foreign investment in Ethiopia is a fancy word for stealing land rather than ensuring the promised Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and benefiting local communities.

2.4. Governance of LSAIs in Ethiopia

This part elaborates a review of literatures regarding the legal basis of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and the governance situation of large-scale agricultural investments highlighted in the foregoing discussion. The section is divided into two thematic areas, namely, land and Investment.

2.4.1. Land

2.4.1.1. Recognition of Land Rights and Legal basis for Land investment

As the supreme law of Ethiopia, the Constitution lays down the basic legal framework that determines land tenure rights of the country. According to the Constitution Proclamation No.1/1995, the right to ownership of land including other natural resources is exclusively vested in the State and the peoples of Ethiopia. Moreover, the Constitution provides that land is not subject to “sale or other means of exchange”, which clearly indicates that land cannot in any way be alienated and therefore precludes any form of private or communal “ownership” of land in the absolute sense of the term. Hence, all other subsidiary laws issued by both the Federal and Regional States recognize use rights either in the form of state, private or communal/group holdings. More specifically, both the and Regional Constitutions as well as the land administration laws issued by the Federal and Regional States provide that peasants and

⁸ See Page 3; Paragraph 3 of this research report.

pastoralists have the right to acquire use rights over rural land free of charge and without time limit including the protection against eviction from their land except for public purposes subject to the payment of advance compensation commensurate to the value of the property (Article 40(8) of the Constitution). Apart from this, any private individual or entity may have the right to acquire land based on payment and for a fixed period to be determined by Regional laws (Article 40(6) of the Constitution).

In regard to community landholdings in rural areas, both the Federal and existing Regional laws generally define communal holdings of rural land stating that the government may allocate rural land to communities for common grazing, forestry and other social services (Imeru, 2010). Moreover, the land administration law as well as the respective Regional laws provides that the government may reallocate communal holdings to private holdings as it sees fit which weakens much the tenure security of such rights (Imeru, 2010). Further the Ethiopian Constitution determines that the government has the right to expropriate private property for public purposes or if it considers that land will be contributing more to the common benefit and development if utilized by investors, cooperative societies and other public or private entities (FDRE Constitution, 1995; Dessalegn, 2011).

2.4.1.2. Public Land Management

According to the Constitution, the basic land policy and laws are set at the level and the mandate to administer land is given to the respective Regions in accordance with the policies and laws issued at the level. Accordingly, Regional States may issue their own land policies and implementation legislation and directives in line with those set at the Federal level. The administration of rural land, and more specifically, land allocation and transfer for large- scale agricultural investments, are handled by government institutions under the prevailing land tenure system in Ethiopia. However, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development have recently established an Agricultural Investment Support Directorate to administer the allocation of rural land for investment purposes above 5000 hectares (Imeru, 2010; Dessalegn 2011; Maru, 2016; Teklemariam et al., 2016). As a result, the administration of the study area, Birr Farm

Investment, falls under the scrutiny of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture since it constitutes over 5000⁹ hectares of land.

According to Imeru, (2010), this new arrangement, which has transferred the allocation of land above 5000 hectares to the Federal government, poses serious challenges at least on two major grounds. First, the Federal Constitution provides that the Federal government may delegate the mandates given to it under the Constitution to Regional States while there is no provision in the Constitution that specifically provides for upward delegation of the mandates given to the Regional States. In light of this, the current upward delegation by Regional States of their mandates to administer land to the Federal government stands on a shaky constitutional basis. Secondly, and at a more practical level, the relative responsibilities of the concerned Federal and Regional agencies in the process of allocating land to investors and subsequent follow-up and monitoring of such investments has yet to be clarified. At the Regional level, rural land allocations and transfers for investment purposes are usually undertaken by the respective investment authorities of the Regional States.

2.4.2. Investment

2.4.2.1. Investment Incentives and Opportunities

Investment proclamations and the regulations governing incentives provided to investors are particularly noteworthy here. The most significant initiatives to attract foreign investment and to encourage large-scale agriculture were the Investment Proclamation 280/2002¹⁰ and the Investment Regulation 84/2003¹¹. The Investment Proclamation 280/2002 states that the investment objective is to increase foreign exchange earnings by encouraging growth in export industries, transfer of technology and know-how and to "render foreign investment play its proper role in the country's economic development. The Investment Regulation 84/2003 further outlines exemptions from income tax and payment of customs duty provided to foreign investors. Based on the briefly illustrated legal basis for land investment and land tenure system, the Ethiopian government has created a very encouraging investment climate. Land rents are very

⁹ See chapter three "background of the study" area and chapter four "context to the farm"

¹⁰Investment Proclamation 280/2002 can be found here:- <https://wipolex.wipo.int/en/text/248270>

¹¹ Investment Regulation 84/2003 can be found here:- <http://www.erca.gov.et/index.php/regulation/domestic-tax-regulation/114-regulation-on-investment-incentives-and-investment-areas-reserved-for-domestic-investors-no-84-2003-pdf>

low as according to The Oakland Institute investors pay between USD 1.25 - 10 per ha per year (The Oakland Institute, 2011). Ethiopia further offers investors a wide range of opportunities. Low labor costs, relaxed regulations, ability to export, privileged access to other markets - like the EU and the US - as well as exceptional incentives of tax holidays and no duty amounts which all trigger the demand of foreign investors. In addition to it the Ethiopian government claims the availability of huge areas of “unused” land. Besides, the Ethiopian Investment Agency (EIA), responsible for coordinating and facilitating foreign investment, offers a one-stop-shop for foreign investors and therefore simplifies international land deal procedures enormously.

2.5. Perspectives on Land Acquisition in Ethiopia

2.5.1. A Governmental Perspective: Land Investment as Development Strategy

In order to counteract possible consequences of climate change, response to agricultural productivity challenges and to escape food insecurity the Ethiopian government enforced policies and strategies that are discussed under section (2.3), i.e. an Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) policy and consequent strategies of Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to end Poverty (PASDEP). Diversification and commercialization of the agricultural sector is sought to be achieved with the help of land investment as a central strategy to reduce poverty (MoFED, 2006) and to increase agricultural output. Thus, in other words, agriculture, defined as a source of employment, growth and revenue as well as more long-standing source of food security, is used as a weapon to fight poverty (Mekuriyaw, 2012; Cited in Posluschny-Treuner, 2012).

In this context, foreign investment is seen as capable of bringing new technologies, developing productive potential, facilitating infrastructure development, creating employment and supply of food to local markets. The Ethiopian government states that the country has plenty of “unused” land which can be operated efficiently by large-scale investors. Moreover, the private sector in Ethiopia is young, and entrepreneurs and enterprises are in a critical need of growth capital. In this regard various international private investors are involved in the effort to strengthen the financial base of the domestic private sector. Ultimately, the commercialization of land and the shift to large-scale agriculture is being presented by the Ethiopia government as an essential basis for agricultural modernization and the improvement of productive efficiency which shall lead to increased food production and economic growth (Dessalegn, 2011). Transforming

Ethiopian agriculture from its current subsistence state to market oriented production system forms the basis of agricultural development strategy of the government. For a more general overview of why large-scale land deals are taking place in Ethiopia, the perspective of investors has to be considered and will be outlined next.

2.5.2. Investor Perspective: Making profit

Due to the initially demonstrated global climate change impacts as well as food and energy, security issues governments, both from industrialized and emerging countries, enforced policies to increase agricultural investment. Therefore, guaranteed markets for agricultural products (whether biofuels or food crops) have been established. The increasing demand furthermore leads to a rise of agricultural commodity prices. Agricultural production and hence the acquisition of farmland appears as an increasingly attractive option to investors (Cotula, Sonja Vermeulen, & Leonard, 2009). By this means, those firm global markets for alternative energy and food trigger large-scale land investments. Interest in large-scale land investment is further motivated predominantly by the low costs of land and labor in rural Africa accompanied with the assumption of existing vast areas of unused or underutilized land (Cotula, Dyer, & Vermeulen, 2008). Particularly, rising land values and the rise in prices of agriculture-based commodities are key drivers for the engagement of the private sector in Ethiopian agriculture. Although Ethiopian land prices are rising, they are currently relatively low and therefore are causing high expectations of competitive returns from agricultural investment (Havnevik, 2011, Cited in Posluschny-Treuner, 2012). Thus, private sector involvement seems mainly be driven by expectations of competitive returns from agriculture. According to Posluschny-Treuner, (2012) Karuturi, the previously largest investor in Ethiopia, where its operation is cancelled now, states for 9 instance that the following aspects give a competitive advantage regarding land investment in Ethiopia.

- ❖ The abundance of land and water with immaculate weather conditions
- ❖ Cheap labor and easy land availability with low lease rentals
- ❖ Road freight to be competitive due to the proximity to COMESA¹²
- ❖ Markets and low air - freight to the European markets.

¹² COMESA (The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), is a preferential trading area with nineteen member states. For more information refer to <http://www.comesa.int>

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- ❖ Duty free import of inputs and equipment for companies
 - ❖ Regulations on investments are relaxed
 - ❖ No import duty levied on Ethiopian goods in other importing countries
 - ❖ Can compete with other African countries due to the Government's positive attitude to investments
 - ❖ Income tax exemption for five years

As land price is ridiculously low in Ethiopia investing in farmland promises significant returns and therefore attract speculative activity. Thus, investment funds or hedge funds might soon play an important role within land investment in Ethiopia. However, foreign land deals in Ethiopia under given conditions show several effects. The following chapter, therefore, highlights those impacts of international large-scale land acquisitions in Ethiopia.

2.6. The Impact of Large-Scale Agricultural Land Acquisitions in Ethiopia

Investments on agriculture should bring development benefits to the receiving country in terms of technology transfer, employment creation, increased foreign direct investment (FDI) upstream and downstream linkages and so on. In this way, these investments can have “win-win” relationship. New investments in agriculture sectors could facilitate the creation of preconditions for sustainable development (Klaus Deininger, & Derek Byerlee 2011). However, the performance of private commercial farms in Ethiopia is very slow because of labor shortage or a shortage of the investor's capital. Although large-scale agricultural land investment is strongly promoted by the Ethiopian government, administrative procedures for investors are very time-consuming and lack transparency (Posluschny-Treuner, 2012). Nonetheless, according to many findings international land deals in Ethiopia could cause high risks especially in terms of environmental and social aspects. This is mostly caused by poor planning and weak control of the investor's obligations (The Oakland Institute, 2011). Investors are for instance obliged to conduct an environmental impact assessment, which should be reported within three months to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MOARD), even though MOARD has not the technical and institutional capacity to carry out the duties involved (Dessalegn, 2011). More specific socioeconomic and environmental challenges will be emphasized by the following subchapters.

2.6.1. Socioeconomic Impacts

large-scale investments in farmland should be assessed not only based on their investment levels and contributions to GDP growth, exports and foreign exchange earnings, but also with regards to their effects on employment creation and food security in the areas in which they take place (Posluschny-Treuner, 2012). This is both since, by taking place in rural areas characterized by high levels of poverty, seasonal food insecurity and with a population which largely depends on natural resources and agricultural activity for its survival, these investments make use of land tracts which could be used for alternative purposes; and since such investments may have very direct effects on local communities. The effects can both be positive, when the projects create employment opportunities, construct infrastructure and contribute to local economic development; and negative, when the projects lead to loss of land and livelihoods, and limit local inhabitants' access to water, fire wood and other natural resources that are important for income generation and food security (Posluschny-Treuner, 2012).

2.6.1.1. Employment Opportunities

Obviously, one of the perceived benefits of large-scale commercial agriculture is the massive amount of wage employment that these operations will provide. The benefits of large scale agricultural investments to the public, particularly to local communities are often expected to accrue in terms of job opportunities, skills development and incidental benefits through the provision of locally produced inputs and services to the established entity (Imeru, 2010; The Oakland Institute, 2011).

Employment is one of the key ways in which large-scale land acquisitions can be translated into local benefits and broad-based, sustained and pro-poor growth (Aabø & Kring, 2012). Local people often identify jobs as the most important and immediate benefits of investments. Hence, Employment creation remained a principal benefit that communities perceived from the presence of an investor, especially in terms of income and food security aspects when compared with subsistence agriculture (The Oakland Institute, 2011). The creation of decent employment further increases local purchasing power, which is likely to create spillover (Klaus Deininger & Derek Byerlee, 2011; The Oakland Institute, 2011) effects when the salaries are used for consumption at the local market. Over time, the local economy also thrives, initially from an expansion in

small businesses— restaurants and other services—to, ultimately, bank branches, agricultural input suppliers, building suppliers and supermarkets. However, when jobs generated were lower than expected, community disappointment impacted negatively on the relationship with the investor. This underscores the importance of clear and open communication during the consultation process and management of community expectations, especially when companies face financial difficulties (The Oakland Institute, 2011).

Conceivably, the prospect of employment creation is one of the most commonly stated benefits of large-scale investments in farmland, both by the government, investors and the local communities. However, promises of job creation are seldom quantified and detailed in community consultations and legally enforceable investment contracts. In addition to questioning how many jobs that are created in comparison to the number of livelihoods lost and to the employment potential of alternative land uses, there is reason to examine what kind of jobs that are created, both in terms of working hours (full-time/part time), job security (temporary/permanent), decent working conditions and salary levels (Aabø & Kring, 2012). With this regard The Oakland Institute, (2011) reported that low wages are paid most often and employment is frequently seasonal or short-term in Ethiopia. In some cases large numbers of workers may be needed in the initial phases of land clearing and construction, whereas labor intensive agricultural production are replaced by capital intensive and mechanized modern techniques, reducing the need for employment in the long run (Waterhouse et al., 2010 Cited in Aabø & Kring, 2012).

Sadly, however, examination of the policy and legislative framework for agricultural investments, including investment laws, rural land administration laws, laws for the regulation of commercial enterprises, and model lease contracts (Imeru 2010; Teklemariam et al., 2016) reveals that there are no laws, regulations or directives in place that are clearly articulated to ensure benefit- sharing between the investor and the public in Ethiopia. The investors have no contractual obligations to invest in basic infrastructure, or to provide social services to the communities concerned in Ethiopia (Mesfin, 2013). Even in some cases governments are obliged to construct roads to be used by investors, let alone, investors themselves construct roads for the local communities.

Investors are thus under no legal obligation to share the benefits of accruing from their investments. Benefit sharing mechanisms are not envisaged to be incorporated in contractual agreements with investors engaged in large-scale agricultural investments but that such investors will be preferred if they voluntarily incorporate such arrangements in their investment proposals (Imeru, 2010). Even under conditions where employment creation is proposed, actual job creation is much lower than projected figures (Keeley et al., 2014). In fact, more evident benefits are expected to materialize through taxes and other income as well as foreign currency generated by such investments which may then be invested on basic services by the government rather than compelling investors to share their benefit to the local community.

2.6.1.2. Technology Transfer

Large-scale land-based investment in agriculture, if approached in an equitable and sustainable way, can hold unique benefits that complement smallholder agriculture: it can bring new technologies, crops and/or market opportunities to a region, and, through associated out-grower or contract farming schemes, to smallholder farmers within the region¹³. The result can be a mutually beneficial model where large investments create new opportunities for adjacent communities and farmers. Modern agricultural investments are especially expected to introduce peasants to improved technologies and create market access in rural areas. The impact of large-scale agricultural investment on rural communities through technology or skills transfer occurred primarily through training (Speller et al., 2016). Technology transfer from investors to the local farming community through training may include, sharing of farming techniques, provisions of inputs (such as seeds, agrochemicals or fertilizers that can raise the productivity of local farmers), and in limited cases through sharing of tools and machinery training (Speller et al., 2016).

Another type of technology transfer activities may include the provision of technical advice on growing practices and disease minimization; land preparation; demonstration plots; irrigation scheme development and maintenance; and provision of better yielding seed varieties. Some investors also provided business training to smallholders on, for example, how to budget and

¹³ Emily Weeks: <https://www.agrilinks.org/post/improving-large-scale-agriculture-investments> Accessed on 11/12/2018

manage cash flow (World Bank & UNCTAD, 2014). Speller et al., (2016) further noted that the impact was uneven, varying substantially from site to site, depending on the business model, crop and other factors. Investors could open up markets for local farmers by introducing mechanization, improving access to roads or providing finance. Employees who were also farmers could apply skills and capital (wages) gained from their job to their own farm. Knowledge transfer takes place through formal training of local farmers, on-the-job field training, informal meetings, or through visits to plantations. Under the best circumstances, the deployment by farmers of new technology introduced by investors could allow them over time to move from subsistence to commercial farming, generating funds that can be reinvested. But this is not always the case and, indeed, there can also be negative repercussions from technology transfer. For example, farmers might be confronted with increased costs in order to adapt to new or modified agricultural cultivation methods (Posluschny-Treuner, 2012; Speller et al., 2016). Cost impacts derive for example from machines, seeds, fertilizer and livestock.

2.6.1.3. Infrastructure Development

Additional spillovers occur when investors, sometimes in addition to government efforts, develop infrastructure around the investment. Notable improvements for the local community can arise from infrastructure development in and around the investment, particularly in remote areas. Infrastructure development associated with the investment, such as building of roads, expansion of telecommunications, access to electricity, building of a police station, or improving access to water supply generally has a positive impact on local communities (Speller et al., 2016). The benefits derived are most visible when the investor operates in remote, rural areas. According to World Bank & UNCTAD, (2014), although the nature and degree of support varies, education was the most frequently cited social benefit to local communities provided by investors. Measures taken include full-scale construction of schools; improving school infrastructure (providing electricity, water facilities, new desks, and so on); financial support to government run schools; provision of scholarships or bursaries for further education; supplementing local teachers' salaries; provision of transport to/from schools; and adult literacy programs.

In addition, investors play a key role in the development of rural and farming infrastructure, for their own benefit as well of those of surrounding communities. Such infrastructures in rural areas

may include development of roads, electricity, telecommunications, and other facilities that come to benefit the local community (World Bank & UNCTAD, 2014). The construction of roads in particular is seen as a key benefit in opening up areas and providing key development benefits through improved access to markets.

2.6.2. Large-Scale Agricultural Investments and the Natural Environment

Humans and the environment are so interdependent. Environment affects humans in the same way humans affect the environment. Shortly put, a dialectical interplay is existed between them. Given that, sociologists have begun to show interest in studying the environment and society in late 1970s under the spectrum of “environmental sociology”, in response to the emergence of widespread societal attention to environmental problems. Environmental crisis such as land degradation in its various forms, habitat conversion and loss, biodiversity loss, air and water pollutions, overexploitation of resources, global warming and greenhouse effect are one dimension of the basic characteristics of the contemporary world.

Since the industrial revolution, developments in technology throughout history have given people a better ability to use the environment and its resources for their own ends. However, the immense application of technological products has remained a dangerous threat for the world’s environment. Moreover, the emergence of free-market economy in which economic factors play a central role in the decision-making about production, consumption, use of resources and treatment of wastes are thought to contribute a lot for the demise of the environment. The commencements of large-scale agricultural investments and the consequent exploitation of the environment in the current world are in large part attributable to the free-market approaches of most governments. This does not mean, however, that such investments do not exist in other forms of economic approaches. Let’s now make a look at the treatment of LSAIs with regard to the environment among various literatures in Ethiopia.

One of the major environmental problems with regard to LSAIs in Ethiopia is lack of environmental impact assessments before their commencement. Keeley et al., (2014) argued that environmental impact assessments of land deals for agricultural investments to date have been weak or non-existent in Ethiopia. Environmental damage related to large-scale land investment

might occur directly because of agricultural intensification, forest degradation and the replacement of grasslands. This leads to significant biodiversity loss, soil erosion and infertile soil. However, most environmental consequences materialize gradually and may not be immediately obvious to surrounding communities. Two documented examples are land leases in the Region of Gambella and Oromia, which have been inside a national park and wildlife sanctuary (Dessalegn, 2011). Damaging impacts on land resources, wildlife and biodiversity can be expected. Directly affected by large-scale farming are further water resources. Due to the given right to investors to use water without restriction, (The Oakland Institute, 2011), land grabbing is simultaneously water grabbing. Foreign investors cultivating water-consuming agricultural crops, fruits or set up flower farms require an immense amount of water and thus have an impact on the water quantity available and on water systems in general. Additionally, the use of fertilizers harms the water quality enormously (The Oakland Institute, 2011). Moreover, the influx of large numbers of workers into an area further increases environmental stress due to increased deforestation, decline in fish stocks, wildlife and general influences on ecological systems (The Oakland Institute, 2011).

2.7. Empirical Evidences on Large Scale Agricultural investments in Ethiopia

The process of large-scale land acquisitions in Ethiopia has become a major topic of research among scholars who seek to examine the manner and context in which the land is obtained, the effects of such deals on the surrounding area, and the responses of local populations. Several of the studies have addressed the enormous scale and speed of expansion of land deals, and emphasized on its impact in changing agrarian structures, rural social relations and rural livelihoods. Yet, sufficient attention has not been given to the impact of investments on the local communities, given the significant number of deals taking place. This subsection, therefore, tries to display some of those studies.

Dessalegn Rahmato, (2011) conducted a study entitled “*Land to investors: Large-scale land transfers in Ethiopia*”. This study is based on a wide variety of source material, the most important of which include findings from field work in several communities affected by investor projects in Gambella and Oromia Regions, interviews with smallholders and others in the communities concerned, interviews with public officials at Federal, Regional and district levels, documents and data from Federal and Regional public agencies. Dessalegn came out with

reliable information that the government of Ethiopia has already transferred about 3.5 million hectares of land to investors. He was also critical of the government's measure to hand over huge tracts of land for foreigners to ensure the food security of their home country while Ethiopians are food insecure. Although most of the impacts associated with land transfers are well described in Dessalegn's study, it failed to come up with concrete suggestion how to overcome the problem.

Desalegn Keba, (2013) also conducted a thesis entitled "*The Socio-Economic and Environmental Impacts of Large Scale (Agricultural) Land Acquisition on Local Livelihoods*" This study was also based on field work in Bako Tibe *Woreda* communities of Oromia Region affected by agricultural investments.

Addisu, (2016) also conducted a thesis entitled "*Large-Scale Agricultural Investment and Its Impact on Local Communities: The Case of Guraferda Woreda, SNNPRS*". He conducted his study based on the argument that the level of involvement by the local communities in the process and implementation of large-scale agricultural investments determines the effects of the investment projects on the local communities. As a result, he tried to investigate the implication of local communities' involvement in the initial commencement stage of large-scale agricultural investments and its role in determining the consequential impacts of large-scale agricultural investments on the local communities. This study comes short of providing an implication for communities found near to long established State farms. Because such communities may not be there to involve in the decision making process since state farms during the preceding regime were established long time ago.

Likewise, Tsegaye Moreda, (2017) conducted a study entitled "*Large-scale land acquisitions, state authority and indigenous local communities: insights from Ethiopia*". Tsegaye's analysis draws on firsthand information collected during intensive fieldwork in the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State. Tsegaye concludes that the ongoing land allocation process overlooks the local communities' traditional land-use practices and social relations. He also found out that local communities have not only been dispossessed of their cultivated lands, but have also been displaced from their homes, often under the guise of villagization. Most significantly, forestlands have found haphazardly been allocated for commercial agricultural development, even when providing ecological services and traditional sources of livelihoods. Tsegaye further added that,

such acquisitions will undoubtedly generate gains for some local economic and political elites, as well as for the state; the Region's indigenous local communities, however, have noted little gain and possibly great loss. However, Tsegaye's paper still fails to pinpoint a single solution to overcome the observed problem.

By and large, the above mentioned studies were conducted through firsthand information in the field. Despite their own shortcomings, they gave emphasis to the voices of local communities. However, they were geographically delimited to the southwest part of the country, where there exists large number of investments leaving other areas uninvestigated. Moreover, coupled with their smallness in number, they fail to provide all-important recommendations. Cognizant of this, almost none of these previous researches' recommendations have been taken seriously by governments so far. Hence, more studies are still needed to figure out the socio-economic returns and possible negative impacts of large scale agricultural investments upon the local community. The forthcoming discussion shows studies on LSAI primarily conducted relying on secondary sources and document reviews analysis and interpretations.

Imeru (2010) also presented a paper entitled "*Governance of Large Scale Agricultural Investments in Africa: The Case of Ethiopia*" at The World Bank conference on Land Policy and Administration. The study was an evaluation of the current policy, legal and institutional framework regarding large- scale agricultural investments in Ethiopia through analysis of existing policy and legal documents and through convening panel of experts in a workshop to assess and rank the respective policy, legal and institutional dimensions.

Similarly, Elias N. Stebek's (2011) article on Mizan Law Review Journal entitled "*Between 'Land Grabs' and Agricultural Investment: Land Rent Contracts with Foreign Investors and Ethiopia's Normative Setting in Focus*" examines whether the land rent contracts and the Ethiopian legal framework on rural land use rights can assure win-win mutual benefits expected from large-scale land transfers to foreign investors. His article further examines the challenges in the realization of the *Seven Principles* for Responsible Agricultural Investments (one of those principles is presented in the forthcoming section as a model that could guide my study) prepared by FAO, IFAD, UNCTAD and the World Bank Group as a framework of standards for the current global dialogue on large-scale farmland acquisitions. However, although Imeru and Stebek provide a thorough assessment of the governance and the legal system of LSAIs in

Ethiopia, they failed to account the voices of local communities, since they heavily relied on secondary sources.

A study by Keely et al, (2014) entitled, “*Large-scale land deals in Ethiopia: Scale, trends, features and outcomes to date*” also provides a narrative description of key features of large-scale land deals in Ethiopia. They discussed the current situation regarding land deals, including the rationale and process for land allocation; the amount of land leased to investors; and features of allocations to date, including the profile of investors, terms of leases, status of implementation of investment agreements, employment creation, and social and environmental impacts. However, the study based primarily on sources from government authorities or from companies investing in land, as a result, they carried out a limited number of case studies of farm-level investments and communities.

Mesfin Araya, (2013) also conducted a thesis entitled “*Effects of Large-scale agricultural investments on smallholder farming in Sub-Saharan Africa (Case study: Ethiopia)*” Mesfin seemed to have been concerned with the growing interest in large scale agricultural investment in sub Saharan Africa that undermines the needs of small scale farming. Nonetheless, Mesfin made a review of secondary sources written in large-scale agricultural investments in Ethiopia instead of making use of primary data in some investment areas.

In sum, as it has been noted in the problem statement, most of the above mentioned researches interest have been driven largely by the rapid spread of land grabbing and its consequential impacts on the aftermath of 2007/2008 food crisis. As a result, researches that understood how the people-to-farm interaction is mediated in long-established farms like Birr farm investment and the various forms of impacts upon the community are almost non-existent in Ethiopia. Moreover, most researches in LSAI found in the literature are conducted many years back, largely instigated by the 2007/2008 food crisis and the consequent rush for large-scale acquisition of agricultural land. As a matter of this fact, the issue seemed to have received little attention these days.

2.8. Theories of Large Scale Agricultural Land Acquisition

2.8.1. The Globalization of Farmland: Theory and Empirical Evidence

There has been an increased interest in the direct acquisition of farmland in low income and middle-income countries by international investors in the last decade or so. Attempt to develop a theory that can explain this emerging trend have been non-existent until recently. However Rabah Arezki, Christian Bogmans, (2018) developed an empirical based theory that they called *“The first to provide both theoretical and empirical evidence of this new wave of investments, which marks a new trend towards the globalization of farmland whereby international investors directly acquire large tracts of agricultural land in other countries”*.

Based on their empirical finding they suggest that land investment is more appropriately characterized as food independence driven foreign direct investment than profit-seeking platform foreign direct investment. Host-country remoteness has also found to have significant effect on investment in agriculture. The high importance of host-country remoteness as a driver of bilateral investment suggests that demand for land may have been relatively large compared to the supply of land (investor-abundant, land-scarce). The reason for this according to them is that investors prefer to invest in remote countries in order to shield themselves from competing with other foreign investors.

This stands in stark contrast with the intuition formulated by Collier and Venables (2012); cited in Rabah Arezki, Christian Bogmans, (2018) who argued that host-countries found themselves in a situation with abundant land but investor scarcity. However, Rabah Arezki, Christian Bogmans, (2018) argued that while land in general may be abundant, what matters is the amount of suitable and available land, which is available in smaller quantities. Finally, they come up with what they call “a novel finding” depicting that host-country remoteness – a lack of host country access to agricultural consumer markets – has been a positive and sizeable determinant of large-scale bilateral land acquisitions, and international farmland investments are on the aggregate likely motivated by re-exports to investor countries rather than to world markets. This theory is actually not a fully developed one to explain investments in agriculture. In general, there is a dearth of explanatory theories in this subject matter.

2.8.2. The Optimistic and Pessimistic Perspective of Large Scale Land Acquisition

Proponents of land acquisition (like The World Bank, IMF and other global financial institution) argue that, the investment flow provides the desperately needed capital in agriculture sector in the developing world, which leads to infrastructures expansion, particularly health posts and schools; creates more jobs and skill, increases the domestic food supply, access to improved farming technologies and practices, increases access to market and foreign exchange reserve and these contributes to “sustained” and “broad based development”. Furthermore, state officials across the continent tend to share this optimism.

Pessimists on the other hand argue that there are the dangers associated with Large Scale Land Acquisition in developing countries such as, natural resource degradation, loss of indigenous farming practices and increasing food insecurity and conflict, rather than promoting rural development. Pessimists contended that the lack of formal legal ownership on the part of the land’s customary users has weakened the control local populations have over the land. In addition, dispossessed farmers are not adequately compensated for the resulting loss of income and land, as proposed benefits such as increased wage labor and improved irrigation are often not delivered or prove to be insufficient. In short, it neglects the local rights, exploits the natural resources of the host community and impoverishes farmers by not bringing about the promised benefits.

2.9. Theoretical Framework of the Study

Theoretical framework is largely used in theory driven research – typically quantitative – that is attempting to test the validity of existing theory. The framework may actually be a theory, but not necessarily (Lederman & Lederman, 2015). Hence, a theoretical framework is commonly not aligned with qualitative research paradigms that are attempting to develop theory, for example, grounded theory, or research falling into the categories of description and interpretation research (Peshkin, 1993; cited in Lederman & Lederman, 2015). However, this does not mean that qualitative research designs never use theoretical and conceptual frameworks. For instance, Kibur, (2013) in his qualitative thesis entitled “Factors and processes behind recidivism” have used theoretical and conceptual frameworks all together. Hence, I too found it very necessary to use a theoretical framework that could lay down the foundation of my study. It is worth noted,

however, that the theoretical framework in this study is used as a basis, foundation or groundwork for data collection and analysis rather than aimed to test the theory like quantitative researchers do.

2.9.1. The Sustainability Principle

Laedre et al., (2015) provided a splendid view of sustainability as follows:-

“A fundamental insight is that the economy, the society and the environment are interdependent. Rather than seeing them as being discrete, well-separated entities, the economy is understood as existing within a society and unable to develop in the long term without taking society’s needs into account. The society similarly exists within the boundaries of the environment; if environmental concerns are not addressed in a proper manner, society itself cannot exist in the long term. On the basis of such comprehension, it becomes clear that an assessment of the sustainability of any investment project ought to assess its impacts within all the three dimensions” (Laedre et al., 2015).

It is well known that the concept of sustainability is multifaceted, and that its use varies largely within different contexts. Gomis et al. 2011, cited in Laedre et al., (2015) refer specifically to the idea of ‘sustainable development’ when using the term ‘sustainability’, and point out that ‘sustainable business’, ‘sustainable technology’, ‘sustainable agriculture’, ‘sustainable economics’, etc., are all buzzwords of the literature today. In fact, the understanding of the concept varies even at the individual level; ‘the precise meaning of sustainable, and what it embraces, varies depending upon who is using it and in what context’ (Laedre et al., 2015).

In line with “sustainable agriculture”, as one response to both encouraging the necessary investment and addressing concerns of large scale agricultural investments, FAO, UNCTAD, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Bank have developed a set of seven Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investing (PRAI)¹⁴(World Bank & UNCTAD, 2014). The application of the PRAI to agricultural investments is intended to reduce the level of negative externalities and raise the likelihood of positive impacts (World Bank & UNCTAD, 2014).

¹⁴ <https://unctad.org/en/Pages/DIAE/G-20/PRAI.aspx> Accessed on 11/12/2018

The principle states that where rights are not well defined, governance is weak, or those affected lack voice, there is evidence that such investment can carry considerable risks of different types. Risks include displacement of local populations, undermining or negating of existing rights, increased corruption, reduced food security, environmental damage in the project area and beyond, loss of livelihoods or opportunity for land access by the vulnerable, nutritional deprivation, social polarization and political instability. As a result, to better spread the benefits and balance opportunities with risks in major investment programs, they developed the following seven principles.

- (1) Respecting land and resource rights
- (2) Ensuring food security
- (3) Ensuring transparency, good governance, and a proper enabling environment
- (4) Consultation and participation (of local communities)
- (5) Responsible agro-enterprise investing
- (6) Social sustainability
- (7) Environmental sustainability

In doing so, they sought for a responsible agricultural investment – which is an inclusive situation where the process of investment respects resource use rights of local communities, ensures local food security, is transparent, and encourages consultation and participation, investment viability, and environmental sustainability (FAO, et al. 2010).

As a matter of this fact, the data collection and analysis throughout this paper was informed with the sustainability principle presented in the forgoing discussion.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS AND MATERIALS

This section of the study presents actions that have been taken to investigate the research problem and the rationale for the application of specific procedures to understand the problem. In short, it shows how the data were collected and how it was analyzed.

3.1. Description of the Study Area, Birr Farm Investment.

The study area, Birr farm investment is located in Jabi Tehnan *Woreda* beginning from the outskirts of the small town of Mankussa elongated south to the Birr Sheleko military camp. It was formerly classified into two as 'Upper Birr Valley' and 'Lower Birr Valley' but now conjoined together. The major crops cultivated at the farms include maize, wheat, soybeans, pepper, chickpea, haricot beans, rapeseed and sesame¹⁵.

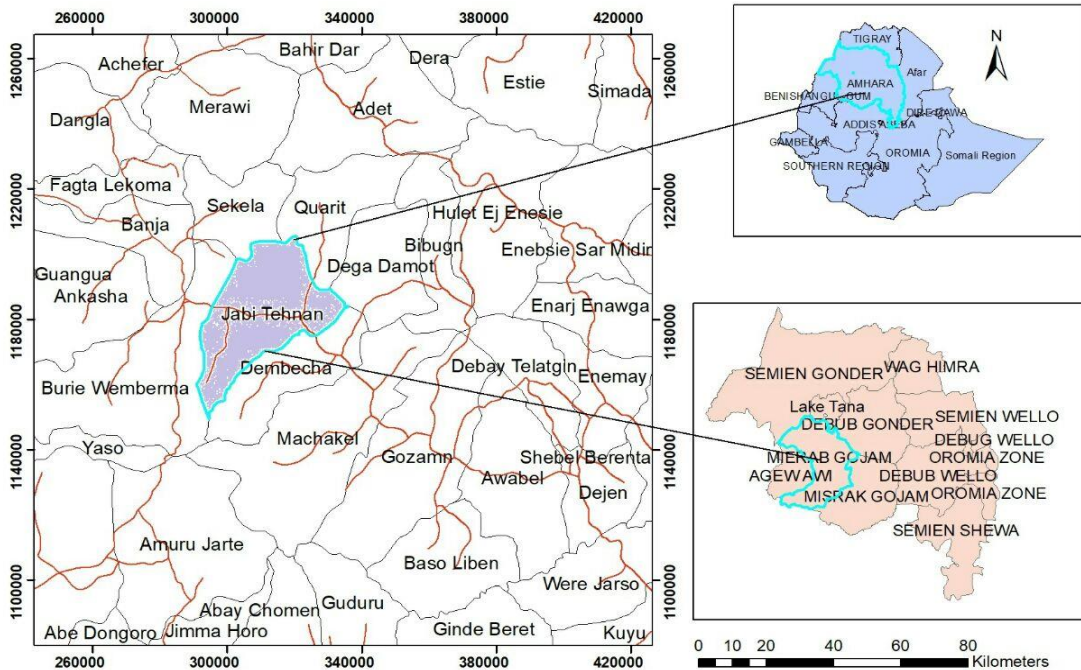


Fig. 1, Geographical map of the study area

¹⁵ Accessed from <https://www.2merkato.com/directory/15974-ethio-agri-ceft>; Accessed on 08/12/2018

Following the land proclamation of 1975 (This proclamation declared all rural land to be the property of the state) and acknowledging the importance of large-scale mechanization, the *Derg* established big mechanized farms then called "State farms", by confiscating private farms and establishing new ones (Firew, 2015). Together with the Awassa State farm, Adele State farm, Dedesa State farm, and many others, the Upper Birr Valley State Farm was established during this time and most of these farms were primarily established because of the pressing need for increased food crop production (Firew, 2015). However, right after the overthrow of the socialist regime in 1991, the transitional government of Ethiopia at the time announced a free market economy and initiated the privatization process in 1994 through the establishment of the Ethiopian Privatization Authority (EPA). As a result, a variety of legislation was enacted to privatize public enterprises and encourage private sector participation. Following this, in March 2001¹⁶ the Ethiopian Privatization Agency sold the previous "State-owned" Birr Farm to Ethio Agri-CEFT - one of the Sheik Mohammed H. Ali Al-Amoudi owned MIDROC Group Companies – engaged in agro-industry in Ethiopia (Yeshihasab, 2019). From that period onwards, the farm is exclusively owned by Ethio Agri-CEFT.

3.2. Research Approach

The main motivation of this research is to understand in depth about the impacts of Birr Farm investment on the local community and the environment, placing great emphasis on the perspectives of those rural communities in the vicinity of the farm investment, (and some administrative figures). The inside farm communities were also part of the investigation. Therefore, the research is informed with a qualitative research approach since it gives the researcher details in the research process. Qualitative research is usually concerned with development of concepts which help us to understand social phenomena in natural (rather than experimental) settings, giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences, and views of the participants (Pope & Mays, 1995). Due to the complex nature of the issue, significant number of stakeholder involved and low educational status of rural communities living near to such investments, I cling to qualitative research approach to better understand the phenomenon. Therefore, qualitative study design was used in this study with an intention to understand

¹⁶ Accessed from <https://www.2merkato.com/directory/15974-ethio-agri-ceft>; Accessed on 08/12/2018

meanings achieved by transforming information collected through semi-structured interview, key informant interview, documentary analysis and observations.

3.3. Research Design

In a bid to achieve the objective of this research, cross-sectional case study design was employed. Cross-sectional case study design connotes a spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time. Case study may be understood as the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on some class of cases (a population). Therefore, as the topic explicitly shows, this research is a firm level analysis that attempt to investigate the properties of a “single” phenomenon in a naturalistic or real life setting. Hence, the research was conducted taking Birr Farm Investment as a case in which data is collected at one point in time from local smallholders, farm manager, and key governmental bodies at different levels.

3.4. Data Sources

A combination of primary and secondary data sources was used to ensure triangulation of data sources and to collect robust information pertaining to the issue under investigation. Primary data constitutes the information that is collected personally by a researcher or assistants in any form for the purpose of the research at hand. On the other hand, secondary data indicates the data that originate from sources other than the projected research's own data collection activities. Thus, while primary data was collected from selected community members and administrative officials of the investment and government representatives at different levels, secondary data was collected from documentary materials, previous researches, official documents governing the institutional and legal frameworks of such investments, and other relevant published and unpublished materials related to the issue at hand. Consequently, a wealth of materials was generated through literature review – mainly based on empirically based literature on the research topic and various media reports.

3.5. Methods of Data Collection

In a bid to address the three objectives identified above, different data collection methods were used. The following subtopic presents the list and type of data collection tools used throughout this study.

3.5.1. Observation

This research has also used observation as a method of data collection. The position of a researcher in social science observational research may take various forms such as complete participant, Participant-as-observer, Observer-as-participant and Complete Observer. Among these forms, however, I adopted a role of “complete observer” in that the goal is to observe social phenomena without becoming part of it in anyway. Observation allowed me access to the context and meaning surrounding what people say and was so essential to collect relevant information that people were not willing to tell what they really think during an interview. Moreover, observation method of data collection was used hoping to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena by incorporating likely observable impacts of the investment on local communities and the environment. As a result, great deals of data including burning down trees and grasslands in the farm investment and mass revolt against the farm investment were collected during fieldwork using this method.

3.5.2. Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview is all about elicitation of research data through the questioning of respondents. It usually has a more informal, conversational character, being shaped partly by the interviewer's pre-existing topic guide and partly by concerns that are emergent in the interview. Hence, to elicit robust information from the concerned bodies, a semi-structured interview was used as an instrument of data collection. In so doing, five in-depth interviews with governmental bodies were conducted. While three of them were from the *Woreda* Environmental Protection case team, Soil and Natural Resource case team, Workers and Social Affairs office, the remaining two were Federal institutions namely, Ethiopian Horticulture and Agricultural Investment Agency (EHAIA) and Ethiopian Public Enterprises Holding and Administration Agency (EPEHAA). Moreover, a range of informal/accidental discussions and interviews were also held with people working in the areas and living around the farm investment.

3.5.3. Key Informant Interview

While Semi-structured interviews were conducted with governmental bodies at different levels, Key informant interviews were conducted from the communities in the vicinity. Key informant interview was conducted to triangulate data, and to complement the data obtained from

community members in Focus Group Discussion. Most of the informants (4) were elderly people in the villages and leaders of Eddir reached through recommendations of the local people. However, another youth individual who believed to know more about the farm investment and was active member of various demonstrations against the farm has been part of Key informants. In doing so a total of six key informant interviews including the farm manager that focus on the activities of the investment to provide job opportunities, technology transfer, infrastructure and the forms people-to Farm interaction have been made.

3.5.4. Focus Group Discussion

Discussions among participants were believed to provide better insight pertaining to the topic of study, so that the focus group discussion technique was used in this research. Focus group discussion is a method in which a number of people are asked to come together in order to discuss a certain issue for the purpose of the research. Due to this, I purposively formed three distinct groups of Focus Group Discussion participants, comprising six members each from the three villages found near to the investment. From the total seven villages/kebelles found near to the Farm investment, data were collected from three Villages found near to the farm. The three villages were *Mankussa Abdegoma, Guay Wonderit and Abassem Zeguay*.

3.5.5. Documentary analysis

Various documentary data including government regulations and proclamations on investment and land were used for this study. A range of secondary literature, including academic/think-tank reports, publications and journal articles looking at land investment in Ethiopia and more broadly were also reviewed. I also examined relevant articles in Ethiopian newspapers, especially the regionally produced '*Bekur*' Amharic newspaper. Moreover, a great deal of concern was given in analyzing the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (2018; see Annex III) report on Birr Farm investment and other formal letters to fully understand the working conditions and welfare systems in the farm. However, I was not able to access government monitoring reports and company documents, such as business plans, progress reports, and environmental and social impact assessment reports and license. Moreover, due to the limitation noted in 1.7, I was not able to view the contract document made between EPA and Ethio Agri-CEFT.

3.6. Method of Selecting Study Participants

As it has previously explained above (3.3), the research aims neither to be statistically representative nor to generalize findings to the total population. Instead, the goal is to have a detailed understanding of the impact that Birr farm investment has upon the local communities in the vicinity. As a result, study participants were selected through convenience non-probability sampling as they appear in the natural setting. Convenience sampling (also known as haphazard sampling or accidental sampling) is a type of non-probability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study.

3.7. Method of Data Analysis

The data analysis in this research has followed the qualitative research approach. The focus of qualitative analysis is meaning that is achieved by transforming information from observations, interviews, reports, and recording into data in the form of written words (text, conversation, documents). Open questions were posed to informants and some interviews from willing respondents were recorded using a mobile recorder and later transcribed. Transcripts and other information I wrote while interviewing those respondents who refused to be recorded were analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative method used for ‘identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This report is, therefore, structured in terms of the main themes which emerged from the interviews. However, one thing must be clear here, some studies grouped technology transfer from farm investments to local communities as an economic contribution while others like Desalgn, (2013) had blended it with the social one. As a result, although technology transfer can have economic contribution at the end of the day, the process of transfer has some sort of education, which is social. As a matter of fact, I grouped it under the social aspect.

Ultimately, the findings from the field are linked to relevant points in the literature to show the extent to which the findings in this study reflect, or differ from, findings elsewhere. However, it is worth mentioning here too that the data collection and analysis process were performed with a critical assessment of the issue under study. According to Taye Negussie, (2018) critical writing

devotes itself to the pursuit of truth with the ultimate aim of seeing the establishment of a rational, just and humane social system. Taye adds that a true essence of a phenomenon lies not in its outer part but deep into its inner part, and thus, it is up to the critical writer to uncover the true essence of a phenomenon through digging deep into it. As a result, critical writing was used to amply capture the impact of the investment on the local communities. Finally, taking strong account of the gained data on site, recommendations are worked out to mitigate potential negative effects of such investments on the local communities.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Agricultural investments by domestic and foreign investors can generate a wide range of benefits such as higher productivity, increased food availability, employment opportunities, poverty reduction, technology transfer and access to capital and markets. However, these benefits cannot be expected to arise automatically. They will depend to a large extent on a wide range of factors including the investment contract, the type of business model, the linkages with smallholders, and the institutional framework in place in the host country. Most studies on LSAIs in Ethiopia analyze recent investments, while the full effects may materialize many years after the investment has taken place. Over the long run, the outcomes of a project may change drastically. Considering this, I tried to assess the impacts of one of the long-established farm investment in Ethiopia (Birr Farm Investment) on the local community in terms of economic, social, environmental aspects together with the legal and institutional arrangements.

In order to analyze the effect of Birr Farm investment, multilevel exploration of qualitative data was required. Accordingly, this study has collected data at Federal, district, and village or farm levels. Rigorous archival review has been made too. Participatory field observation and key informant interviews were also held at Federal and local levels. Three focus group discussions comprising six individuals each at three villages and eleven in-depth interviews at different levels were made. Among the interviews two of them were from Federal-institutions (Ethiopian Horticulture and Agriculture Investment Authority (EHAIA), and a person from Investment Administration and Privatization Directorate found under the Ethiopian Public Enterprises Holding and Administration Agency), another three in district/*Woreda* levels (Environmental Protection case team, Soil and Natural Resource Protection case team, Workers and Social Affair case team), five key informants at the village level from the surrounding community and one interview with the farm manager. The following chapter therefore presents assessments of the impacts of Birr Farm investment based on my own field data collected at different levels with supplementary literature review.

4.1. An Overview of the Study Area, Birr Farm Investment

Private-owned capitalist farms that existed during the imperial period were confiscated during the Derge regime and a total of 75,000 ha (Maru, 2016) of land developed by private owners for large-scale farming were converted to State ownership. As discussed in chapter 3, Birr farm investment was a result of Derge's policy of collectivization of smallholder and private-owned capitalist farms into State-controlled producer cooperatives. The farm was first established in 1978 as a State-owned development company. However, the Derge regime has been abolished in 1991 and spearheaded by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF); a coalition of four ethnic-based resistance groups formed the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) that has ruled the country to date. EPRDF announced a free market economy by then and initiated the privatization process in 1994 through the establishment of the Ethiopian Privatization Authority (EPA). From 1994 up to 2000 the farm was administered through a "board" of the transitional government. Later in February 15/2001 EPA sold the farm investment for a 71 million Birr deal to one of the MIDROC investment group company- Ethio Agri-CEFT, which was founded in 1998 (Yeshihasab, 2019)¹⁷. But, two "general" controversies regarding the farm investment is evidently there. First, how much hectare of land the farm investment comprises is still contentious among the farm investment and key governmental bodies. According to interviews with the farm manager, the farm has a total of 8854 ha of land while in an explorative interview with the zone administrator, Yeshihasb confirmed that 8887 ha of land is currently existed under the scrutiny of the farm investment (specific problems resulted from controversies of size are discussed in section 4.4.2). Second, given the fact that land in Ethiopia is the property of the State and not subject to sale or any other means of exchange, land lease arrangement is in place than sale. However, Birr Farm's duration of lease is still largely unknown - "with no time limit"- according to Yeshihasab, (2019) by the surrounding community including key government officials.

In line with this, the Federal rural land administration and land use proclamation No. 456/2005¹⁸ provides the authority for Regional States to determine duration of lease. The proclamation has prescribed the following: *"The duration of rural land use right of other holders [those other than*

¹⁷ This source is taken from Yeshihasb Abera's (2019) article on "Bekur" Amharic newspaper. The original Amharic article is used here after it was transcribed into English without losing its content and manner.

¹⁸ The proclamation can be found here:- <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5a268b2b4.html>

Peasant farmers and Semi-pastoralists] shall be determined by the rural land administration laws of regions". Cognizant of this, the Amhara Regional State has issued a proclamation called Revised Rural Land Administration and Use of the Amhara National Regional State (Proclamation No. 133/2006)¹⁹ stating *"the right to use land or the duration to mortgage the resource developed on the land shall not exceed 25 years"*.

However, According to my interviewee from Ethiopian Public Enterprises Holding and Administration Agency the contract document does not include the duration of lease and the total area the farm investment encompasses for the following principal reasons. For one thing, the agency has sold only the assets found under the farm investment given the fact that land is not for sale based on the currently existing constitution. As a result, duration of the land lease is not made explicit. For another, the agency had sold Birr Farm investment together with other farms such as Ayo Farm investment with a broad name called "Gojjam-Gondar Farms". This condition also made the total area of each farm unknown. It can also be noted that the Amhara National Regional State rural land administration was issued five years after the farm investment was transferred to the private investor. Hence, there was no governing law that can set the maximum lease period at the time when the farm investment was transferred to the private investor.

By and large, the farm investment is currently producing a variety of crops including Maize, Sorghum, Soybeans, Sunflower and so forth. Further, it hosts 550 full time employees and an average of 3000 seasonal workers²⁰ by which the number varies depending on the agricultural season. Having this introductory remark, a detail account of the legal and institutional arrangements, economic, social and environmental impacts of the farm investment are discussed respectively in the forthcoming sections. However, it's worth mentioning here that those three villages considered in this paper are among the seven of villages going through similar experience.

¹⁹ The proclamation can be found here:- <https://landwise.resourceequity.org/record/393>

²⁰ This figure is reported in the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission review of Birr farm investment based on interviewing the farm manager. As a result, it may have a possibility to be exaggerated, since firms in some cases over represent positive things when they knew they are under investigation.

4.2. Legal and Institutional Frameworks

Technology transfer and infrastructure development, part and parcel of corporate social responsibility for investments, are seen by many developing countries as a prerequisite for adherence to treaties in large scale agricultural investments. However, investors have no contractual obligations to invest in basic infrastructure, or to provide social services to the communities concerned in Ethiopia (Mesfin, 2013). In contrary, the government is obliged to assure the provision of infrastructures to be used by investors. For instance, EHAIA has a mandate to organize “agricultural economy zone”, which is a land furnished with infrastructures necessary to create conducive atmosphere for investors. When I asked my interviewee from Agricultural Investment Support Directorate (AISD), found under Ethiopian Horticulture and Agriculture Investment Authority (EHAIA)²¹, about why these things are not part of contractual obligations he maintains the following:

“This sector has received less attention throughout history beginning from the imperial period up to now. During this period LSAI strategy was adopted to solve weighty problems, specifically to export goods for foreign currency earnings and to provide raw materials for domestic manufacturing industries, without much attention to social and environmental aspects at the local level. The problem is still alarming that it depends based on the free will of the investor to provide such responsibilities for the local people. But now the government has acknowledged this policy gap after conducting a national study, so that the problem is hoped to be solved in a near future” (Respondent #1: March 2019).

However, some investors normally include the expected social benefits (such as technology transfer, increased crop production, employment creation and infrastructure expansion) of the proposed projects in their applications for land (Desalegn, 2013).

Further, according to FAO, et al. (2010), social benefits arising from investments should be shared among all stakeholders without unfairly treating some specific groups. Notwithstanding to this, examination of the policy and legislative framework for agricultural investments, including investment laws, rural land administration laws, laws for the regulation of commercial enterprises, and model lease contracts reveals that there are no laws, regulations or directives in place that are clearly articulated to ensure benefit- sharing between the investor and the public in Ethiopia (Imeru, 2010; Teklemariam et al., 2016).

²¹ More about EAILAA, EHAIA and EAILAA is discussed in the forthcoming sub-topic.

The emphasis placed by host governments on attracting foreign direct investment as their strategy of choice for promoting economic growth is thought to contribute for the expansion of “foreign” investment in agriculture. In line with this, Ethiopia introduced two most important initiatives to attract foreign direct investment in agriculture (Investment Proclamation 280/2002 and the Investment Regulation 84/2003). Investment Proclamation 280/2002 states that the investment objective is to increase foreign exchange earnings by encouraging growth in export industries, transfer of technology and expertise and to "render foreign investment play its proper role in the country's economic development". The Investment Regulation 84/2003 further outlines exemptions from income tax and payment of customs duty provided to foreign investors. The Proclamation was further amended by Proclamation No. 769/2012²² still stating “the necessity to further increase the inflow of capital” and “to create ample employment opportunities for Ethiopians and to advance the transfer of technology required for the development of the country”. The Regulation was also later amended by Regulation No. 270/2012²³. This Regulation also outlines a variety of conditions that an investor can be exempted from income taxes and custom duty. For instance, additional income tax exemption can be provided for investors in the following condition:

“Any investor who exports or supplies to an exporter as production or service input, at least 60% of his products or services shall be entitled to income tax exemption for two years in addition to exemption provided for in the schedule attached hereto” (Regulation No. 270/2012).

In general, a number of investment incentive packages and attractive investment environments are now offered to investors to attract foreign investment by the Ethiopian government. This portrays the government’s emphasis to earn foreign currency from products and services produced by investors in Ethiopia and exported abroad. While technology transfer and other socio-economic advantages are hoped to accrue with the appearance of an investor, as the proclamation stated, evidences on the ground shows that such investments have little impact with this respect. Moreover, possible Corporate Social Responsibilities required from investors are

²² This Proclamation can be found here:- <https://chilot.me/2012/11/proclamation-no-7692012-investment-proclamation/>

²³ This regulation can be found here:- <http://www.mot.gov.et/-/regulation-no-270-2012-investment-incentives-and-investment-areas-reserved-for-domestic-investors-council-of-ministers-regulation?inheritRedirect=true>

not well documented in the contractual documents as they are stated in the proclamation (more about this is discussed in the next sections).

4.2.1. The Role of Federal Government in Large-scale Agricultural Investments

The contractual agreement for those companies who hold land on a large-scale basis (5000 ha and above) was not made between the Regional government and the company but with the Federal government and the company, beginning from 2010. This is because the Regions had “delegated their authority upwards” to the Federal Government (*i.e.*, Ministry of Agriculture), for leasing and administering adjoining farm land areas of above 5000 ha so as to expedite the development of large farm lands for export and industrial crops (Imeru, 2010 ; Dessalegn, 2011; Maru, 2016; Teklemariam et al., 2016). As a result, the government had established Ethiopian Agricultural Investment Land Administration Agency (EAILAA) in 2013 under Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resource with a mandate to administer agricultural investment lands entrusted to the Federal government based on power delegation obtained from Regional States. When I asked my informant about why doing this was necessary, he told me the following:

“For one thing, it was hoped that attracting foreign investors could be better and successful if it is managed by the Federal government. For another, Regional States did not have the capacity to administer such investments during the introduction of LSAIs in Ethiopia” (Respondent #1: March, 2019).

Later in 2017 this Agency had been merged with the former Ethiopian Horticulture development Agency through the Council of Ministers Regulation No. 396/2017 and formed “The Ethiopian Horticulture and Agricultural Investment Authority (EHAIA)” under Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resource.

Despite all the efforts to hasten the development of such investments, large-scale agricultural investments in Ethiopia are believed to forfeit the achievement of such expectations. Dissatisfied with the performance of the large-scale farms, the government has questioned its open-door approach to investors interested in acquiring land, which was prevailed in the mid-2000s. According to Maru, (2016) the EAILAA has now decided not to transfer land in excess of 5000 ha to an investor in a single deal, and future decisions to provide additional land will be decided based on the performance of the investor on the land acquired in the first phase.

However, contrary to Maru's finding and many others, I confirmed through interview that the EAILAA has been cancelled and even the newly emerged EHAIA has handed over its delegation to administer and transfer agricultural investment lands for Regional governments since 2015. Thus, the Federal government has now no power to transfer agricultural investment lands of whatever sizes. According to my interviewee, the Federal government during its delegation period have had transferred 172 large scale agricultural investment lands out of the total 5400 projects between 2010 and 2015.

The Federal Government has now only one directorate called "Agricultural Investment Support Directorate (AISD)" who provides support for investors such as capacity building trainings with regard to new technologies for workers of the investor, linking agricultural input providers and investors, monitoring farm performance of investors to enable them benefit from incentives and creating market link for products of investors. My interviewee stipulated the following rationality for giving back the authority of Regional States to transfer lands including over 500 hectares:

"Closely monitoring and evaluating the progress of agricultural investments is found to be performed better with Regional States, where projects are located than the faraway Federal Government. Moreover, the Regional States have now believed to develop the capacity to administer LSAIs. You know, Regional States have constitutional guarantee to transfer and administer lands found within their region" (Respondent #1: March 2019).

Nonetheless, in a recent interview (March, 2019) with the local radio station, Fana FM the current minister of Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resource, Mr Sani Redi has spoken his concern about the ineffectiveness of large scale agricultural investments who took large tracts of land. According to him, most large-scale agricultural investments throughout the country are not functional as they are supposed to be. He further made it clear that "a new study" is being underway by the ministry and upon the finding of the study; investment licenses of those ineffective investors will be dismissed.

4.2.2. Revenues from Large-scale Agricultural Investments

One argument in favor of land investment is that it has the potential to generate significant revenue for government from fees and taxes, which can be used to fund national and Regional development activities. The Regional state, where the farm investment is located, has a mandate to collect land lease price, income taxes and tax from salary of workers while the Federal government had only a mandate to administer large scale agricultural investments over 500 ha. Yet, revenue from rental fees is not high and these appear to have been set more to attract investors than to capture revenue from them (Keely et.al, 2014).

The price quoted for different types of land is not based on its true values and amenities. According to my interviewee from the Ethiopian Horticulture and Agriculture Investment Authority, land lease rental price is set based on distance from the capital, Addis Ababa. He pinpointed the following:

“The land lease rental price depends on the availability of infrastructural services. As distance from Addis Ababa increases, the lease prices will decrease as well. For instance, Agricultural investors around Alage²⁴ are required to pay 1800 Birr per hectare while investors in Gambella are required to pay 1111 Birr per hectare” (Respondent #1: March 2019).

This is also confirmed by other studies. The Federal government proposes the price of land simply on the basis of distance from the capital city to the location of the leased land and whether land is rainfed or irrigated (Keely et, al. 2014; Teklemariam et al., 2016). To put it briefly, the stated price of land does not reflect the real value of land and the prices are very low compared to local land rental prices. As mentioned earlier, foreign investors in Ethiopia are offered various incentives, in order to encourage investment. However, the country is not benefitting from the actual benefits of land because the value of land is not properly determined, which results in extremely low land lease prices for large-scale commercial farmlands compared to the local informal land market values.

²⁴ Alage is situated at 217 km South West of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in the vicinity of lakes Abijata and Shalla. Gambella is located 724 Km far from Addis Ababa in Eastern Ethiopia.

4.3. The Economic, Social and Environmental Impacts of Birr Farm Investment

As the world population continues to grow, there is a growing demand for food. At the same time, arable land is decreasing as the world population becomes ever more urbanized. Therefore, investments in agriculture often follow the pattern of investing in increased capacity for food production, or in the services and technology that increase food production. On the other hand, investments in agriculture are becoming a new way of securing assets in contemporary world, moving out of the realm of producing just for food.

In any case, sustainable agricultural investments add to food security in a variety of ways: increased food availability leads to lower prices, contributing to food accessibility by consumers, who then supplement with greater variety and better nutrition. It further contributes to employment opportunities, technology transfer, and infrastructure construction, particularly in developing countries. However, not all agricultural investments are beneficial to communities; there are instead unique risks associated with it. Overexploitation of the natural environment, political risk if land ownership is under dispute, conflict over land with local communities and the investor are some among the many. This section, therefore, presents to us the treatment of Birr farm investment in terms of the economic, social and environmental impacts at the local level.

4.3.1 The Economic Impacts of Birr Farm Investment

Different economic benefits are anticipated from investment in large-scale farming by investment recipient communities. Anticipating possible flow of benefits that are untapped in previous forms of land uses, the Ethiopian government provided lucrative packages of incentives to attract investors to invest in large-scale farming. This includes granting land at attractive lease rates, tax holidays for the first five years and duty free imports of machinery and equipment. Yet, despite all the favorable conditions for large-scale agricultural investors to invest in Ethiopia, such investments have a tremendous negative impact at the local level. Let me now turn up to provide a detail assessment of the economic impacts of Birr farm investment on the local communities.

4.3.1.1. The Various Impacts of Flooding from Birr farm Investment on Local communities

Floods from Birr farm during the summer highly damages nearby smallholder farmers' crops due to lack of good land management – excessive fertilizer use and field burning of farm fields – and lack of construction of drainage channels such as cut-off drains. Floods in the end reduce farmer returns with record-high input costs. Based on the information I got from the *Woreda* Soil and Natural Resource Protection case team I asked FGD #2 discussants who were villagers living on the south side of the farm investment. Discussants revealed this as follows.

(Moderator) In what form does the flood affect your plot?

(Participant) “More often than not, floodwaters coming from the farm erase the soil from our plot, while sometimes crops may be simply flooded”.

(Moderator) So, does it have any impact upon your farm field? What type of...?

Another participant contends the economic types of impacts that massive floodwater from the farm investment could bring upon the smallholder farmers as follows:

“Yeah it has an impact. Considering the high cost of fertilizers these days, the flood usually creates a tremendous impact upon us since it takes fertilizers off the ground and leave fields bare. Even after floodwaters recede, crops [especially pepper] usually continue to suffer damage and resulting yield losses” (FGD #2: February 2019)

Other participants also nodded their head in approval of this. Then, I asked them what they feel if they lose crops due to flood and another participant disclosed some sort of psychosocial effects as follows:

“The loss of fertilizers and our crops is so stressful. Given that, you would not get peace of mind and adequate sleep. You know, we only produce crops once a year during the summer season to feed our family but if we lose this opportunity due to flood or lack of rain, we would always think of what we could feed our family members. Therefore, the impact is so deep” (FGD #2: February 2019).

Moreover, floodwaters can bring in new weed seeds to smallholder farms that could increase control costs and reduce yields in future years. According to my interviewee from the *Woreda* environment protection case team, the farm has also contributed to the expansion of an aggressive invasive alien weed called *Parthenium* – ‘famine weed’ to the surrounding community. He had to say the following:

“The farm has contributed to the spread of an invasive alien weed called Parthenium, especially to the nearby communities of “Woyynima”. This weed strongly associated with grain sorghum and easily transfer from the farm to the nearby smallholder farms. As a result, large tracts of farmland and pastures are infested by this invasive weed near the farm. We, as a responsible body, have consulted them in person and formal reports to aware them to take measures before it bears adverse impacts on the livelihood of nearby communities. But, no measure has been taken so far by the farm” (Respondent #3: February 2019).

Studies in agricultural science also indicate that *Parthenium* can affect the biodiversity, cereal-based agriculture, human and animal health (causing both skin and respiratory allergies) and the economic activities of society (Fite, Legesse, & Marga, 2017; Birhanu & Khan, 2018). There were even times when a project led by Virginia State University had released two bioagents (natural enemies) at several parthenium-infested sites around the town of Finote Selam in order to combat this weed²⁵. However, that was just the beginning of the effort to manage parthenium using natural enemies in Amhara and other regions of Ethiopia where this weed is inflicting damage to food crops and livestock. The study concluded that it would require releasing large number of adults of the bio-agents at multiple sites in different parts of the country over several years to reach the level of control achieved in Australia and India.

The above transcripts from FGDs with the local community and Interviews with the *Woreda* Environmental protection case team implies that the local communities are really experiencing the problem of flooding and its associated impacts emanating from Birr farm investment’s farm field. The problem on the local communities’ farm fields and crops located on the south side of the investment would be great since the extent of flooding could be high on the southward direction. The flow-on effects of reduced agricultural production can often impact well outside

²⁵ Report of the project can be found here: <https://iapps2010.me/2017/08/31/ethiopia-biological-control-of-the-famine-weed-parthenium-hysterophorus/> Accessed on 3/5/2019

the production area as food prices increase due to shortages in supply. Moreover, while the necessary recommendations have been provided to the farm investment by experts, the farm investment shows no commitment to ease the problem. This can also be attributed to the lack of monitoring of the farm investment beginning from its commencement. It can also be noted that the ineffective responses to stop this could have contributed to the current public discontent or loss of trust in the authorities. (More about this is discussed later).

4.3.1.2. Encroachment on Communal Grazing Land

As different literatures noted, while commercial investment in land has the potential to contribute to economic development opportunities, it is often a major source of controversy and conflict over land tenure. Especially in countries like Ethiopia, where livestock production is an integral part of farming system among many rural societies, smallholders are usually in desperate need of grazing land. Disagreements over such land are found to arise when investors seek to take grazing lands previously used by local communities. Data from FGD #3 and interviews has affirmed this.

A transcript of FGD #3 in “Guay village” has upholds this, and presented as follows:

“Not long ago, the farm was about to take our grazing land insisting that the land belongs to them. However, we were dissatisfied with that and a major controversy was begun thereafter” (FGD #3: February 2019).

(Moderator) What was your reaction to that back then? I asked another participant and after thinking a while, he recalled the situation and told me the following:

“Well ... we had resisted them collectively. Every individual in the village had come out of his home with guns and other instruments to prevent them because it was hard for us to keep quite when they are about to take away our very own grazing land. When we did this, they leave it straightaway and took the case to the court. Later the dispute has been settled over when the Woreda good governance committee has decided to keep the land for ourselves” (FGD #3: February 2019).

Another participant cleans his throat to talk, right after the previous one stopped speaking and I immediately gaze at him to give him attention, later he insisted the following:

“To your surprise, there was also a similar case around Mnkussa Abdegoma village, where the farm took full control over a previously grazing land. For all we know, the farm size was small. It becomes wide and wide year after year through incorporating grazing lands, grasslands and forest lands” (FGD #3: February 2019).

In an interview with the farm manger, in this regard, he has acknowledged it but noted that the land belongs to the farm investment. According to him, the land was idle for a relatively long period of time when the farm was so low in terms of production capacity. In the meantime, the local communities have been using it as a grazing land and source of firewood. Situations like this, according to Teklemariam et al., (2016), shows that the investors sometimes are not realistic when estimating their capabilities. Mesfin, (2013) on the other hand attributed this to the exceedingly low rental fees of land in Ethiopia. According to him, due to low rental fees of land investors were encouraged to request and acquire more land than they can actually manage, and as a result, a great deal of land has been left idle for years.

The local communities are now deprived of land to graze their herds, which in return force them to reduce the number of herds in a household. Guided with the information I got from FGD #3, I asked my key informant around *Mankussa Abdegoma* village and put the same question to FGD #1 about what happens after their grazing land is taken up by the investor. My informant made it clear that they are forced to lessen livestock due to lack of graze after the farm took the land. A short transcript is presented here under:

“..... We are now forced to lessen the number of livestock in our home due to lack of graze which we previously had a free access on it. Each individual had many livestock back then. ... We even used to make them spend the whole night enclosed in a corral far away from our home, since they were many. But now, you could find only a couple of oxen or one in most households and they live together with us” (Key informant Interview: #2).

Others (FGD #1) professed how rich the community had previously been with lots of cattle, sheep, and goats. Massive sale of cattle by some households due to lack of graze was also order of the day. As the above transcript divulged some families still have livestock, but only small herds. With the loss of huge tracts of land used for grazing animals, the impact on peasants' livelihood is clearly discernible.

As explained in section 4.1, the exact size of the farm investment is still debatable among the local community, the farm investment and key government officials. Prior to my fieldwork, a team from the Regional State were sent to the farm investment to measure the exact number of the farm holdings. When I asked my informants from governmental offices about how much land the farm currently holds based on the new measurement, I was told the result is not ready to be disseminated to the wider public. Recently, however, Yeshihasab in his article on *Bekur Amharic newspaper* asserted around 60 ha of additional land in which the farm pays no rental price has been found in the hands of the investment. This portrays that, communities grazing land is really incorporated into the farm investment, though the exact size could even be more than this. Moreover, as I understood from the farm manager there are many cases in court, such as dispute over border demarcation and grazing land with local community awaiting decisions.

4.3.1.3. Employment Opportunities

The prospect of employment creation is one of the most commonly stated benefits of large-scale investments in farmland, both by the government and investors. The benefits of large scale agricultural investments to the public, particularly to local communities are often expected to accrue in terms of job opportunities, skills development and incidental benefits through the provision of locally produced inputs and services to the established entity (Imeru, 2010; The Oakland Institute, 2011). Moreover, employment is one of the key ways in which large-scale land acquisitions can be translated into local benefits and broad-based, sustained and pro-poor growth (Aabø & Kring, 2012). The World Bank Report *Rising Global Interest in Farmland* also stated that large-scale agricultural investment could potentially contribute to poverty reduction through employment creation (Deininger et al. 2011).

While a number of studies document the negative impacts of large-scale land acquisition in developing countries, there is much less evidence of its benefits to the host country, especially in the short term and at local level. The main type of benefits appears to be the generation of employment, but there are questions as to the sustainability of the created jobs, quality of the created employment and who benefits (Saifullah Seyed, 2013; FAO, 2014). Aabø & Kring, (2012) further discussed that among the various issues to be studied concerning LSAI, there is a reason to examine the type of jobs created, in terms of working hours (full a time/part time), job security (temporary/permanent), decent working conditions and salary levels.

4.3.1.3.1. Low Wage and Seasonal Work Opportunities

Low wage

An empirical investigation in Mozambique by Cramer *et al.* 2008, cited in Maru, (2016) revealed that foreign-owned plantations paid relatively higher median wages compared to those enterprises and plantations owned by Mozambicans and when waged workers work for local farmers. However, data from interviews and the Ethiopian human rights commission report (2018; See Appendix) shows that jobs for the local communities in Birr farm investment are found to be less paying even in comparison with the amount of money local smallholders pay for a daily labour. Some transcripts are presented here under from FGD and key informant interviews:

(Moderator) Do people engage in employment opportunities available in the farm investment?

One of the participants expressed the following hesitantly:

“አይ እምብዛም ነው።” which reads as “No! Not that much.” I added another question *“Why do not they?”* And that man again responded the following:

“Most people in our village do not want to get employed because if they produce crops like pepper through sharecropping or renting someone else’s land they could easily make lots of money, which is way better than the amount of money the farm pays” (FGD #1: February 2019).

Another participant takes the chance when the one who was talking the above transcript began to tone down his voice and he said:

“You know what? ...The farm used to pay 24 birr per day even though I do not know how much do they pay currently, but this could not have a significant change to your life compared to doing your own work. Then, you could imagine how much a waste of time and energy that is” (FGD #1: February 2019).

Data from key informant interview has also maintained this.

“Even if we want to engage in daily labor, we would rather choose working with farmers. Because, the amount of money for a daily labor is much better in smallholders’ farm than this farm investment (Key informant #4: February 2019).”

The above reactions entail the low level of economic and/or livelihood contribution of the farm investment towards the local community. Data from key informant interview further revealed that only some youngsters (usually students) sometimes engage in temporary work activities – that usually take a half day – during the summer where schools are closed. Most of those students are usually in real financial need to cover school costs such as fees and costs for exercise books.

In this respect, this research disagrees with the finding of Cramer *et al.* 2008 that foreign owned plantations paid higher wages than waged workers working for local farmers. According to the Ethiopian human rights commission report (2018), Yeshihasab's article on *Bekur Amharic newspaper* and my key informants, smallholders found near the farm usually pay 100-120 birr for a daily labour while the farm investment was paying 24 birr until it recently rise up to 34 birr for the same job. This wage is very low by any standard, just ¼ of what daily labourers working in local smallholder farms are earning during peak season.

In line with this, researchers have documented, and have been critical of, the temporary nature of works available around large-scale agricultural farms (Keely, 2014; CRIS, 2013; Dessalegn 2011; The Oakland Institute 2011; Teklemariam et al., 2016). To mention a couple of examples out of many, The Oakland institute found out that low wages are paid most often and employment is frequently seasonal or short-term in Ethiopia (The Oakland Institute, 2011). Similarly, Dessalegn (2011) in his field work in Gambella found that even though almost all the unskilled manual and seasonal jobs were taken by local people, there is no job security or any training program for upgrading, and wages are low, between 17 to 23 Birr (USD 1:00) per day.

Temporary work opportunities

Coupled with low wage, I found out that the temporary nature of work available in the farm investment makes the local people less interested to engage in employment opportunities. In other words, activities that require the mass involvement of people take short duration and appear to be seasonal so that people refuse to hold such impermanent work opportunities. Data from key informant interviews proved this true.

“The temporal nature of job available in the farm is less satisfactory to stick with it. This is to mean, most of the activities in the farm is performed with cars, tractors, and combiners so

that the job available is only weeding out weeds, which takes a very short time It's better to look for other permanent jobs” (Key informant #4: February 2019).

In general, employment is highly insecure and seasonal, and wage rates are comparatively low, which limits the contributions made to local livelihoods. Job insecurity is the case elsewhere in the country, where casual workers are paid only daily wages (Dessalegn, 2011). As a result, such employment opportunities are neglected by local communities at large, as they are less productive and fruitless. Most workers usually come from neighboring highlands to work inside the farm since the surrounding community is relatively “rich”, according to the farm manager. Yet, although the farm investment has a little meaningful effects for nearby highlanders on employment, still such employees are used either for weeding or cultivation jobs that takes a short duration.

Apart from the limited engagement of local people in the much-anticipated employment, as mentioned by key informants, jobs are mostly menial in nature, proper hiring and firing procedures are absent, and formal binding contracts between the employees and the companies are completely absent. With the absence of formal contracts, wage payments are often late and sometimes refused, and wageworkers are fired for unfounded reasons. To that extreme, burned out second grade maize is most often provided for workers in response to their daily labour but, based on the willingness of workers.

In some cases, even temporary employment opportunities for nearby highlanders in large-scale agricultural investments are found to have other associated impacts. For instance, Teklemariam et al., (2016) argued that the temporary employment opportunities has benefited citizens, mainly for the influx of laborers from neighboring highlands in Benishangul Gumuz region. Azeb, (2017) has also found out the same in Gambella region. However, according to them, there is a case that some of the migrated laborers from the highlands shifted to encroach on “free” forested land and could “upgrade” themselves to the status of “investors”. As a result, those laborers employed in commercial farmlands who illegally invade “free” forestlands for their own business are just becoming a threat to local communities other than the State recognized commercial farms.

4.3.1.4. Destination of Products

Most studies in large-scale agricultural investments (Elias N. Stebek, 2011; Oxfam, 2012; Mesfin, 2013; Desalegn, 2013) seemed to be concerned with the exporting of foods/crops produced in the acquired land to other countries while the target countries exhibit high levels of malnourishment. These studies argue that if the food produced were used for domestic consumption, the crops harvested in the acquired land could ensure food security for the local populations. For instance, Mesfin puts this *“The contract documents do not demand heavy obligations on investors to supply the local or national market. Instead, they are encouraged to export as much as possible of their products. Here we see that the food security needs of the country are ignored in this all exercise”* (Mesfin, 2013).

The argument is that, large-scale agricultural enterprises represent one of many possible uses of the existing land and choices of production of food versus cash crops, production for the local market or for exports, as well as efforts to close yield gaps. Such choices could have significant positive or negative impacts for the local food security situation. In the short term, if at least part of the production is guaranteed for production of nutritious and healthy food for sale at the local market, food security may improve through increased availability of supply as well as lower food prices.

However, the case appears different in Birr farm investment. The farm manager pronounced to me the following when I asked him where they took products.

“We ourselves do not export crops produced over here and I do not think even 30% of our products are exportable. Some products such as maize are totally not exportable. We just sell crops for business firms and manufacturing enterprises” (Key Informant #6: February 2016).

Therefore, even when crops are meant to be distributed within a country they are not used to relieve local communities out of malnourishment and ensure food security. This is because most crops produced by the farm investment are non-exportable crops that can be directly sold to various business enterprises. Hence, just like Karl Marx’s conception of commodities in industrial society, crops produced by the farm investment enter into another form of exchange to make profit out of them. In the capitalist circuit, referred to by Marx as “buying in order to sell”, the individual actor buys a commodity with money and in turn exchanges the commodity for

presumably more money (Ritzer, 2011). On a similar fashion, crops produced by the farm investment are purchased by various firms in order to generate profit, not necessarily for use.

I then want to know the perspective of local communities about the products and I put the same question to focus group discussants in the local community. Some excerpts from FGD#2 are presented below.

(Moderator) What do you know about where crops are taken from here?

Some participants in the group are observed shrugging at this moment and I gave the opportunity for one of them to reflect on this, then he disclosed:

“We do not know where they took crops produced over here. We always see a long vehicle taking crops from the store but we have no idea on where it goes”

Another one added:

“It is like a tradition; we have never questioned about this. Some say they took it to Addis Ababa while others say it is going to Axum and Mekelle”

(Moderator) What do you think about this then? Is it right for the farm to take products out of this? and why is the transfer of such products sometimes banned?

Of course, that is right! However, the presence of the farm here around is hurting people day after day. Our relatives are suffering a lot in the desert land of Wollega²⁶ and Pawi, however it could have been better if they return them and settle over this farm land since all we got from here is problems” (FGD #2: February 2019).

Another participant further explicated the politicized aspect of stopping products from being taken away from the farm investment. According to him, people think that the farm is exclusively owned by some “political elites” and the products are taken to support “some specific” groups in the country. Of course, the State sometimes has invisible hands behind large-scale agricultural investments, as explained in the first chapter of this report, and questioning its overall impact upon the community might in some case be politically sensitive. So far, however, this is not in the evidence.

²⁶ **Wollega** and **Pawi** are nearby places found in Oromia and Benishangul Gumuz region of Ethiopia respectively.

Excerpts in this sub-section in general imply the twofold nature of problems from the farm investment. For one thing, the farm investment delivers very little return to the national economy since it does not export products to earn the much-anticipated foreign currency. For another, it is negatively affecting local communities. It is also clear that the Ethiopian government does not demonstrate the capacity to ensure that its people are not harmed by such agricultural investment projects as shown by many studies. Procedural mechanisms to protect local rights and take account of local interests are also lacking.

4.3.1.5. Infrastructure Development

Large-scale investments are supposed to help the development of infrastructure such as bridges and roads, irrigation, electrification, storage and processing facilities. Quality of life may be improved if large-scale investments contribute to reducing the agricultural sector's vulnerability to erratic weather patterns, as well as improving rural communities transport linkages (Aabø & Kring, 2012). However, this is the other way round in Birr Farm investment. To that extreme, according to data from key informant interview, local communities are prohibited even to pass across the main road lines inside the farm. My Key informant asserts this:

“Let alone the expansion of infrastructures, we are not even allowed to walk over inbuilt road lines found inside the farm, especially during summer season. Roads are designed only to make patrolling and the transportation of products convenient for themselves”
(Key informant #1: February 2019).

Inside farm roads are as important as roads that support a manufacturing plant, school, state highways or whatever, particularly to smallholder farmers who reach to their plots after crossing the farm investment. It is how the oxen, goods, and people move to and from their plots. However, the movement of people during summer season that usually cross the investment land is restricted by the farm investment.

During my fieldwork, I observed that local people had used the feeder roads for input-output marketing. The farm had not contributed any meaningful corporate social responsibility to the local population. There is clearly a miss-match between expectations and reality. Of course, one should note here that the divergence between expectations and actual experiences about the investment's contributions to community development could in some cases be due to the huge

and unrealistic expectations held by key government informants before the inception of the companies and/or lack of enforceable laws in the lease contract of investors (this is discussed in the first section of legal and institutional arrangements).

The only contribution the farm has in terms of providing infrastructure to the local community is a recently constructed high school in Birr-Sheleko/Lay birr/. Apart from that, the farm manager told me that they provide some financial assistance in widening two sandy dirt roads (from *Mankussa to Abdegoma and from Mankussa to Guay*) which could be extremely muddy and slippery when wet, and baked hard when dry. I understood that even the costs of these roads are not fully covered by the farm. Moreover, this type of road is likely to become impassable after rain.

As various literatures indicate agricultural investments can generate a wide range of developmental benefits, but these benefits cannot be expected to arise automatically, especially technology transfer and infrastructure development. However, given the long established nature of the farm under study, its contribution to the local community in terms of infrastructure construction is found to be minimal. One thing is certain here, infrastructure development to the nearby villages will depend to a large extent on a wide range of factors including the investment contract, legal and institutional arrangements. As discussed earlier, in some cases the government is obliged to construct roads to be used by investors, let alone investors themselves construct facilities for the local communities. That is why when I asked the farm manager about why the farm investment has low status in terms of infrastructure development he wholeheartedly responded me “*we do not have to pay for any public infrastructure, we are here just to make profit*” (Key informant #6: February 2019).

As I substantiated through interview with officials at EHAIA and according to Teklemariam et al., (2016) even though it is hoped that investors would construct infrastructures and transfer technology so as to benefit their host country, none of these are formal requirements expected from investors. The lower land lease prices are considered as a compensation for the State’s low infrastructure, bureaucratic land acquisition process, and challenging business operating environment.

4.3.2. The Social Impacts of Birr Farm investment

This section of the research is an account of how the interactions of the local people and the farm investment have been mediated in the past and changes these days. It further reveals the difficulties people are facing due to the appearance of the farm and try to discuss some points with regard to technology transfer aspects of the farm investment.

4.3.2.1. The People-to-Farm Interaction

According to Waterhouse et al., 2010 Cited in Aabø & Kring, (2012), large numbers of workers may be needed in the initial phases of land clearing and construction. When labor-intensive agricultural productions are replaced by capital intensive and mechanized modern techniques, the need for employment may be reduced in the long run.

This research report strongly supports the above assumption. Even though the case is not with *employment* this research has found out that a win-win relationship had existed between local communities and the farm investment before the farm investment has adopted a capital intensive agriculture.

One of my key informants recalled the situation of their engagement in earlier times as follows:

“Unlike these days, we used to get along with the farm investment. We have been so interdependent upon one another. They need to have our help, and we would get pastures for our herds in response to our help. (Key informant #3: February 2019).

I want to know more about this and put the same question to FGD #3. The process of their interaction is laid out in detail as follows:

(Moderator) How was your interaction with the farm in previous times?

One of the participants said:

“Whenever they need a certain task to be done, they used to inform the got leader [Ye Edir Sebsabi] to disseminate information for everybody about the task the farm wants to be handled by the community. Then the leader plays trumpet in the early morning to wake people up and go together. Afterwards, the entire household leaders [“Abawora”] used to go to the field and perform activities like sowing in wheat, maize and other seeds.

I gave the opportunity to another participant to add some and he insisted this:

“Together with what he has said [the former participant] once crops are grown, we also used to weed out weeds that crowd out cultivated crops, scattering fertilizers on grown crops and harvest crops that need harvesting. ... In response, they used to give us a very large grazing land for stray grazing and another land for cutting the grass off and take to home for our livestock to be used in the long run.

(Moderator) *How about now? Would you tell us some?* I asked another participant pointing to him and he divulged the following:

“Yeah! ... Things have changed these days and our involvement is now significantly limited because they brought in various cars and combiners who can do most of the activities we have been doing. Now, all we can do is buying grass lands in a price they set out” (FGD #3: February 2019).

Evidently, labor-intensive agricultural production has replaced by capital intensive and mechanized modern techniques. Further, this condition has dramatically reduced the involvement of local communities and their win-win relationship with the farm investment. In this essence, the introduction of modern agricultural equipments appears to have a bottleneck effect for local communities in terms of getting the much-needed grazing land for their herds.

4.3.2.2. Local communities’ Livestock and the Farm Investment

There is a well-known fact that rural livelihood, especially in Ethiopia, is predominantly relied on a combined use of agriculture and livestock production. This basis of livelihood on the other hand requires the movement of cattle over a large geographic area either for work or to seek grazes and water. In this process, animals may get into the farm investment so easily. In situations like this, the farm appears to create immense problems to the local community. The most attention grabbing issue is presented here under from one of my key informants.

“As you see right here, [pointing to the farm field] the farm has a very large size and width. It has not a fence to protect cattle from entering into it. It is just open and easily accessible to them. If there are no fences, you know that cow or oxen goes down and ruin harvests. Once our cattle goes down and destroy some crops, the penalty to the owner of the cattle is so worse and unaffordable. For example, we are obliged to pay 25 birr per maize the cattle ravaged- which is difficult to pay as the number of maize the cattle ravaged increases” (Key Informant #3: February 2019).

Obviously, standing crops like maize and sunflower are more likely to be ravaged by animals once animals get into it. Still the problem is not only geared up to local smallholder farmers

rather guards of the farm may sometimes be subject to such problems. According to my informant, there were times where guards were fined their monthly salary when large numbers of crops are found destroyed when no one else was noticing what cattle have done it.

Another informant applauded this view:

“Let alone in the summer where the farm is covered by crops, they would penalize us during the dry season [where crops are harvested, shipped out and the land is already plowed] if our cattle go down to the farm in search of food” (Key informant Interview #2: February 2019).

Perplexed with the information I got from the local people, I asked the farm manager for an explanation about why they did this and he alleged the following:

“In principle, farm land has to be free from animals. If animals step on it the land would become compacted, so that we do not want to see that happen. We fine the people just to teach them not to let their animals go [in to the farm] for next time. Of course we need to be feared among the people, we fine them during the dry season just to let them know that the penalty during summer would even be great” (Key Informant #6: February 2019).

Truly, the case would be the latter one, which is to inflict ‘fear’ among the local people. Because animals could not make the land that much compacted, even if they do, the farm investment is a capital intensive one which uses sophisticated machineries such as cutters, choppers and diggers and machines used to break a compacted soil after the land is ploughed. Instead, the rationality is that when summer season comes and the field is covered by crops, the local people would be so careful of letting their animals go to avoid being fined again. Literally, this seems like an irrational rationality, to borrow Max Weber’s term.

4.3.2.3. Technology Transfer

Another expected advantage of large-scale agricultural investment in developing countries is the transfer of technology. Proponents of LSAs are usually ambitious that investments may lead to technology transfer and increased productivity for smallholder farmers. There is obviously a time dimension in the assessment of this effect as for other outcomes of investment (FAO, 2014). Sometimes the investment may be too recent for the transfer of technology to have occurred or to be observed. Nevertheless, in situations where the investment has existed so long, such benefits are expected to accrue from any responsible agricultural investment.

As the Ethiopian investment proclamation 769/2012 clearly portrays the need to welcome investors in different investment sectors in Ethiopia is prompted mainly by the need to increase the inflow of capital and speed up the transfer of technology into the country. Similarly, other documents issued by public authorities frequently cite technology transfer, together with employment opportunities and infrastructure construction as expected benefits from promoting large-scale agricultural investments. However, the contracts signed between investors and the government does not expressly oblige investors, as noted earlier, to undertake social investments but the government expects that investors will do so because they will want local communities to see them in a favorable light. In an interview with my interviewee from Investment Administration and Privatization Director, I understood that the contract of sale does not oblige the investor to provide social responsibilities. When I asked him about why this is the case, he averred the following:

“The goal during that period was just to transfer the land to an investor. Social responsibilities are recent phenomena; therefore, they were not part of the contract document” (Respondent #2: March 2019).

Interviews with the same person further uncovered that the farm investment has not provided any business plan since the goal during that period was just to transfer the assets.

As Speller et al., (2016) noted the impact of large-scale agricultural investment on rural communities through technology or skills transfer occurred primarily through training. Technology transfer from investors to the local farming community through training may include, sharing of farming techniques, provisions of inputs (such as seeds, agrochemicals or fertilizers that can raise the productivity of local farmers), and in limited cases through sharing of tools and machinery training. I asked the farm manager if they have had any technology transfer initiatives or trainings and he revealed the following:

“We believe the local communities have learned so many agricultural technologies from us, like line sowing of seeds, fertilizer use and management, and use of pesticides. Of course we provide no specific training aimed at transferring technology for the local people but, we feel that the people around us have learned the use of new technologies in two ways. The first one is through observation of what we do, and the second one is through directly engaging in various work opportunities we have” (Key Informant #6: February 2019).

Facts on the ground show the local people are not interested to work in the farm due to factors discussed in the foregoing sub-section. The only thing could be through “observation”. However, it can be anticipated that observation alone could not have a significant contribution for the diffusion of technology into smallholder farmers. My key informant insisted the following when I asked him whether the farm investment has contributed its part in transferring technologies.

“Never. The farm has never done anything like that to the local communities. Even when we look at professionals, you [for example] would transfer the knowledge you developed from your profession for anybody who need it. However, you could not find this intent from the farm investment. They do not want to see the locality developed economically. They instead want to see the people being poorer and dependent upon the farm investment” (Key Informant Interview #5: February 2019).

Modern agricultural investments are especially expected to introduce peasants to improved technologies and create market access in rural areas. However, evidences on the ground show that Birr farm investment is way too far in providing such services. Obviously, just like infrastructure development, this too will depend largely on a wide range of factors including the investment contract, legal and institutional arrangements.

4.3.3. Environmental Impacts of Birr Farm Investment

As a general rule, the underlying model of agriculture promoted by any investment must be environmentally sustainable. The global food system is both contributing to degradation of the natural resource base and being squeezed by competing demands on it. Yet, food production depends upon healthy ecosystems. Disregarding the health of the environment may produce short-term profits, but real gains will come from long-term environmental sustainability (Oxfam, 2012). Let me now turn up to the assessment of the farm investment in some environmental matters.

4.3.3.1. Environmental Impact Assessment

As stipulated in Article 92(2) of the national constitution of Ethiopia, the implementation of development programs and projects should not have damaging effects on the natural environment. Furthermore, according to the country's environmental impact assessment law (proclamation no. 299/2002)²⁷, it is mandatory to properly accomplish an assessment of environmental impacts of a development project before its implementation. As a result, investors should conduct Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) prior to approval since they directly engage with the physical environment. The land use agreement between the company and the government also specifies the need to carry out an environmental impact assessment within three months of signing the land use agreement (Keeley et. al., 2014; Mesfin, 2013). However, in practice, no environmental impact assessment reports are prepared as crosschecked through relevant interviews. The *Woreda* environmental protection officer goes on to say the following:

The farm was here long before our office started working on environmental protection matters in this Woreda. However, we understood that the investment has never conducted Environmental Impact Assessment, and still has no license on it. ... In principle, they should have conducted EIA before they got this large tract of land. ... We wrote letters many times to aware them to conduct EIA even after they began production, but they are reluctant to do so” (Respondent #3: February 2019).

²⁷ The proclamation can be found here:- <https://chilot.me/knowledge-base/proclamation-no-299-2002-environmental-impact-assessment/>

This may be because the farm investment has started functioning prior to the enactment of the environmental policy. Nevertheless, I understood that the investment was forced so many times by experts after that, to develop environmental impact assessment as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the investment. Yet, environmental impact assessment of the investment to date has been nonexistent. As a large firm that routinely interacts with the environment, an assessment when it comes to protecting the environment should have been done even after the policy was set out. Moreover, offices that could monitor environmental matters inside the farm investment should have been there too. Nonetheless, there is no social or environmental affairs office in the farm investment. This seems to be emanated from lack of frequent follow-up and monitoring of investments from the concerned body.

4.3.3.2. Deforestation

My interviewee from the *Woreda* environmental protection case team was with a great pleasure that he received me in his office. According to the information I got from him, the office provides environmental consultancy service and continual feedbacks to all (eleven) agricultural investments found in the *Woreda*. However, Birr farm investment is found to be reluctant to take corrective measures based on recommendations from the environmental protection office. He even urged me to dig deep into it since the farm shows less interest to work in collaboration with them, hoping to see some improvements after this research.

A large tract of relatively mountainous area around Woyshet, which were previously covered by a forest is now completely deforested and changed to a farm field. Previously, the forest was used to serve as a hunting field, source of firewood and silvopasture -managed grazing in woodlands- for the local community. We had a firm stance that the forest should not have been cleared, as a result, we provided environmental consulting services to them, but we have been told to stay away from it. ... Nobody here has the power to enforce them. The farm insists that a barren land found in other part of their holding is already planted and changed to a forest to substitute the loss of trees found there. ... surely, that does not equally substitute the loss of big long-lived trees” (Respondent #3: February 2019).

Proclamation No. 542/2007²⁸ on Forest Development also states that forests shall be protected from forest fire and deforestation activities. Moreover, under the seventh principle of FAO, et al. (2010) on the other hand, it is clearly stated that Investors and government need to ensure that *“preference be given to reclaiming or increasing productivity on areas already used rather than clear new land.... and negative impacts are addressed through regularly monitored environmental management plans and compensated where appropriate”*.

As Teklemariam et al. (2016) noted environmental damage associated with large-scale land investment might directly occur as a result of forest degradation. According to their observation, following deforestation, many of the commercial farms have started growing commercial crops, such as bio-fuel trees and edible crops, resulting in huge tracts of land converted from forest to commercial crop farms. As a result, there is a huge loss in biodiversity (both flora and fauna).

There is much deforestation on the ground by the investor in the study area but no action has been taken to counteract it for years. Land conversion from forests to “farm lands” has contributed to deforestation of the natural forest resource bases. Deforestation could further contribute to the expansion of deserts and alter the global agenda of decreasing global warming. As can be seen in the figure below, this clearly corresponds with the field observation I made in most fields of the farmland.



Fig. 2, *Picture showing chopped up and burned down trees in the farm investment.*

²⁸ The proclamation Document can be found here:- <https://chilot.me/knowledge-base/proclamation-no-542-2007-forest-development/>

According to Mesfin, (2013) one obligation on the investors that is found in almost all contracts is that all projects must plant native tree species that covers a minimum 2 percent of the project land. Keeley et al., (2014) on the other hand pointed out that regulations in Ethiopia specify that investors must leave 60-70 indigenous trees per ha and 100 on slopes. In addition, cultivation within 60 meters of a slope is prohibited. My informant from the *Woreda* environmental protection case team has also told me this requirement expected from large-scale agricultural investments. However, the farm investment did not comply with these regulations and as mentioned earlier continual deforestation is undertaken in the farm investment. As a result, only small numbers of trees are there along roadsides in the farm. Even the remaining trees are being continually chopped up and burned-over. My interviewee from the *Woreda* Soil and Natural Resource Protection office upholds this:

The farm produces sunflowers in a large tract of land and unfortunately, birds love to snack on sunflower seeds found over the large geographic area of the farm. To protect this damage caused by birds, they chopped up trees found near to sunflower fields that provide ready perches for feeding, mating, resting, and sleeping for birds (Respondent #4: February 2019).

The above narrative tells us that let alone purposively covering up 2 percent of the farm investment with tree species or leaving 60-70 indigenous trees per hectare; existing trees around farm fields are being irresponsibly chopped up. The problem seems to happen because of lack of regular monitoring and evaluation by government authorities (*Woreda* or Federal levels) which in turn emanated from inconsistencies and misunderstandings in administrative powers among the Federal and local administrators, and the farm investment. As discussed earlier, the Federal government gave the power to administer and transfer land for Regional States beginning in 2015, however, the farm manager thought that they are still under the scrutiny of the Federal government. Therefore, any intervention from the *Woreda* is not allowed by the farm investment.

Moreover, the currently existing document binding the agreement between Birr farm investment and the Government are only “a contract of sale” of the assets found inside the farm. Thus, the contract document waives specific requirements expected from the investor including sustainable use of agriculture, lease period, social responsibilities, progress reports, for whom shall the report be submitted and so forth. This condition has also contributed a lot for the irresponsible use of the social and environmental resources around the farm investment.

4.3.3.3. Excessive Use of Fertilizers

Ethiopian Investment Directives No. 13.2 and 13.4 states that an investor is required to:

“ensure proper use of technologies in order to prevent soil erosion and land slide in those areas that are marked by such conditions and to make properly and responsible use of chemicals that may be necessary for cultivation” (MoARD 2010, quoted in Maru, 2013)

However, results from the field indicated that the farm does not employ industry best practices and are not respecting the rule of law. My informant from soil and natural resource protection office had to say this:

“The farm uses an excessive amount of inorganic fertilizers and pesticide chemicals. The different acidic chemicals in the soil dissolve the soil crumbs that help to hold together the rock particles. This would make the soil easily erodible. If they manage soil properly [employ balanced use of fertilizers], it can absorb a lot of rainfall. Of course, they cannot completely prevent flooding but they can certainly inhibit flooding that goes to smallholder farmer’s field by good land management and the construction of drainage channels such as cut-off drains” (Respondent #4: February 2019).

According to Davis et al. (2015), cited in Teklemariam et al., (2016) the other environmental impacts of farmland acquisition include soil loss and compaction, elevated runoff and Green House Gas emissions from fertilizers, and increased competition for water resources. Soil health is negatively impacted by industrial agriculture practices like mono-cropping, chemical fertilizers, pesticides and many more. I understood that contacts between the soil conservation office and the farm has been made and letters have been exchanged to ease the problem of flooding the farm has brought to the nearby smallholder farms. Yet the problem is still persistent.

4.3.3.4. Field Burning as a Problem

Birr farm most often uses field burning in most of its high-yield fields. Seeds that produce far more crop residue and stalks [especially Maize] are more likely to be burned over. However, crop residue could have produced substantial long-term benefits which are likely to far outweigh any short-term savings accomplished by destroying residue, especially when the soil is naturally low in organic matter. As a result, burning residues and stalks could have profound effect on future productivity of the soil. The *Woreda* Environmentalist concurred with this:

“Burning crop residue eliminates a precious opportunity to improve soil organic matter content and potentially can lead to substantial nutrient loss. Because this massive burn out eliminates the micro-organisms beneficial to plant and soil health as they help to increase the plants' natural defenses against pests and diseases and maintain fertility of the soil.... Moreover, the smoke arising from the farm covers a very large area that could potentially pollute the environment and cause a health hazard for those who are breathing it during the many hours the fields are burning” (Respondent #3: February 2019).

In stark contrast to the above narrative, the manager of the farm holds a different perspective in this regard. He justified the following for my question of the necessity to burn down stalks:

“We only burn out maize stalks and residues for two main reasons. First, we burn it out to search for second grade maize, after the fire burns stalks and leaves. Second, this residue usually contains harmful insects, weeds and disease, which all have adverse effects on crops the following year” (Key informant #6: February 2019).

Local smallholder farmers on the other hand badly need the crop residues that are not harvested such as stalks, leaves and sheaves to graze their livestock because crop residues are major sources of animal feed in the highlands. Moreover, shortage of grazing land and pastures for smallholder farmers intensifies the need to have stalks in their store. According to the information, I got from my interviewee; local communities could easily collect stalks from the farm in previous times. However, after the farm become more and more capital intensive the involvement of local communities has dramatically decreased and collecting straws have become impossible. People think that the farm burns stalks just to prevent stray grazing on their land and to purposively restrict farmers from taking straws to their home.

“We need to have stalks since we have no adequate grazing land left in our community. Of course, we used to collect stalks in those good old days but now we are not allowed to take any kind of straws because after harvesting they would burn down the entire straw in the farm. They think that doing so would make the land productive but, unless that is churlishness, the fertilizer they add on the crops is more than enough to make the land productive” (Key informant #5: February 2019).

In sum, crop residues and higher soil organic matter could improve essentially all soil properties and ultimately enhance crop productivity. Thus, burning seems to be a bad habit that has been passed down from one generation to the next. Moreover, letting farmers take straws like before

could have a win-win relationship between investors and the local communities. Further, peoples' dissatisfaction could have decreased and the people-to farm interaction smoothens.



Fig. 3, Field burning of maize stalks in some farm fields of Birr Farm investment.

Officials interviewed in the *Woreda* environmental protection case team were very concerned at the effects of the farm investment on natural resources, particularly loss of high-value forests and the danger associated with chemicals, fertilizers and field burning. Monitoring of farm investments above 500 ha by the Federal government was not conducted regularly. According to my interviewee from EHAIHA, monitoring and evaluations by the Federal government were undertaken only through taking some samples. The above-mentioned types of irresponsible agricultural investing are thus the results of lack of rigorous monitoring. Moreover, the trustworthiness of progress reports, if any, should have been carefully examined. According to Keely et al., (2014) monitoring in many regions focuses primarily on whether the investor has started to farm or not, and whether the land is being used for the correct purpose. Assessments of employment, environmental and social impacts, and productivity are less likely to happen.

In general, as discussed earlier, the farm manager thought as if the farm investment is still under the supervision of the Federal government other than the *Woreda* under which the farm is located. As a result, they did not take the recommendations of the *Woreda* environmental office seriously. Hence, the power shift from 2015 onwards that gives full power for Regional States to administer LSAIs found within their own Region is not equally understood and being implemented by all stakeholders. Nonetheless, this might be happened not just through a knowledge gap rather it might also be due to deliberate ignorance of the case. Shortly put, changes in power and authorities between the Federal and Regional States are used as a scapegoat by the farm investment for their ill care of the environment.

4.4. Working Conditions and Welfare Systems Inside Birr Farm Investment Reviewed

In order to fully embrace, predict and make sense of the overall impacts of the farm investment towards the surrounding local communities and those within, understanding the inside functioning of the investment was necessary. This is because temporary and permanent work staffs inside the investment are most often constituted of such local communities even though there may be a case where some activities could be mainly taken up by non-locals, as FAO, (2014) noted. For another reason a due account of the inside farm functioning has received little attention, if any, in most studies interested in this matter. Hence, understanding the inside functioning was indispensable to come across with an all-round perspective of assessing the impact of the farm investment. As a result, some issues inside the farm investment are discussed here under largely drawing on the document analysis of the Ethiopian human rights commission report (2018; See Annex III) and to a lesser extent on newspaper articles and some interviews I made during my fieldwork. Its implication is provided later by a separate sub topic.

4.4.1. Tedious Job, but Low Pay

According to the information I got from various sources such as the *Woreda* workers and social affairs office, and documentary analysis of the Ethiopian human rights commission report on birr farm investment, the farm investment pays a very low wage for a daily labourer. While smallholders in the vicinity pay up to 120 birr for a daily labourer, the farm investment used to pay 24 birr per day until it recently grows up to 34 birr through the effort of the “workers’ union” inside the farm. Payment is made based on piece rate agreement, which is usually a daylong

undertaking. As a result, the salary the farm pays to its workers is not equivalent to the existing market value and even likely to go down if the investor wants to do so. Moreover, the farm distributes burned out second grade maize for workers in response to their work. The irony is that, even to get the second grade maize workers are coerced by the “collective agreement” to work 20 days per month. Furthermore, they are required to do 18 days to get a medical service as well. My interviewee from workers and social affairs office has also acknowledged this and he contended that the ups and downs in the price of daily labour is resulted from lack of binding rule in Ethiopia that set out the minimum wage of daily labour.

“Daily labourers usually work a day-long activity in a very low price. That is not even comparable to the amount of money nearby smallholders pay for a daily labourer. We requested them to make some positive change for that but they said that is not productive. ... Obviously, you know Ethiopia has no legal code that prescribe the minimum wage scale for daily labour, and this happens due to lack of such regulations” (Respondent #5: February 2019).

I then added another question for my interviewee about the reason for workers to work in the farm investment while wage in the farm is so low compared to the local market. He pointed out the following:

“They [the farm] consistently provide 50 kg of maize per month for workers with a half discount from the market value and this appears to be preferable than working with small holders which may be seasonal” (Respondent #5: February 2019).

As a general rule, work should provide an adequate income to cover the necessary living costs of a family. Yet, from the above response, a conclusion can be drawn that workers inside the farm could be in a dire struggle to lead life since wage to cover the costs of living is not guaranteed. With this low pay contrary to the existing local market, the problem upon workers with in the farm is clearly discernible. This is a somewhat surprising finding, at least at first glance, that investment in agriculture is hoped to provide decent employment better than the local subsistent agriculture. Moreover, low wage labour is further found to contribute in large part for child labour exploitation, which is discussed at the end of this section.

4.4.2. No Private Property

Temporary workers inside the farm investment are not allowed to engage in any form or type of work that could contribute to the earning of money either inside or outside of the farm in their free time. The denial of private property includes planting trees around residential huts and rearing house animals such as sheep, goat and so forth. This seems a clear and systematic denial of people's right to ownership of private property through the collective agreement. Moreover, this makes the farm investment seem highly interested in keeping the workers poor, while maximizing its profit (Ethiopian human rights commission, 2018). The commission report further recommends to set out an all agreed upon law based on the free will of workers instead of running the investment through keeping workers under the vicious circle of poverty.

4.4.3. Substandard Houses

Houses built for temporary workers and daily laborers inside the farm investment are old and debilitated. Most houses are built of mud and have tin roofs that leak underground water and rainwater at every corner of the house. Although the company was adamant that they would provide standardized houses in the collective agreement the fact on the ground shows that most workers, especially those in “*Bukay*” residential area, live in poorly built, dilapidated and cramped huts which lack the basic facilities, such as electric light, water and even toilets.

Moreover, according to my informant from the *Woreda* workers and social affairs office, those workers are not allowed to rebuild their traditional wooden houses if it is demolished. Therefore, it is fair to say that such houses could bring increased risk of disease and decreased mental health to the families and individuals who live in there. In general, accommodation and services for farm employees and their families are so poor.

4.4.4. Elderly People in the Farm Investment are abandoned

Large number of old aged and elderly people who were in the farm for so long are now abandoned and almost forgotten from getting the necessary care and support. According to the Ethiopian human rights commission report and my informant from the *Woreda* workers and social affairs office, twenty-five kg of maize per month is all what some elderly people have received from the farm investment. Although there exists a three hundred Birr support per

month for some elders from the zone social affairs office, there is still large numbers of old aged people who lead their life through collecting remnants of flour from a flourmill. To put it concisely, pension benefits for retired workers are not guaranteed. Further, the Ethiopian human rights commission report concluded that the farm investment has contributed in large part for the ill care of elderly people inside the farm. I raised a question for my respondent from the *Woreda* workers and social affairs office about the activities that the office is currently doing in this regard and he explained to me the following:

“Of course going to that farm investment is now hard than ever before [due to resistances against the farm investment]. But we are registering elders who served lifelong in the farm investment and get abandoned” (Respondent #5: February 2019).

As the above response implies the office has recently started registering elders based on findings by Ethiopian Human Rights Commission to make them receive benefits from the government.

4.4.5. Impractical Benefit Sharing Arrangements

Despite lack of enforceable laws for benefit-sharing arrangements between the investor and the public in Ethiopia, as mentioned earlier, benefit-sharing arrangements between the farm investment and permanent workers inside the farm investment has existed articulated by the collective agreement in the farm investment. This is welcomed by workers and is honestly a best practice to be backed up. Nonetheless, the farm investment has not lived up to its words because benefits are seldom distributed to the people concerned as per regulations of the collective agreement. My informant from workers and social affairs office recalled a recent phenomenon as follows:

“There are many questions from workers inside the farm. ... For instance, with respect to violation of the collective agreement, workers complained a recent case. The agreement compels the farm investment to distribute 10% of the profit to workers but the farm had denied the money saying that they spent it in corporate social responsibility. Workers then brought lawsuit against the farm investment and we travelled to there around five times with this case” (Respondent #5: February 2019).

This entails how the farm investment is misusing the collective agreement. When it comes to securing the interest of the farm investment, they singled out some sections of the agreement and try to show that they are right. However, when the matter is something to do with the interest of workers they fallaciously disregard it.

4.4.6. Child Labor Exploitation

Article 32 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1981), in which Ethiopia has become signatory to it in 1991, sets out the right:

"to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development."

Accordingly, article 36 (d) of the FDRE constitution proclaimed that every child has a right:

"not to be subject to exploitative practices, neither to be required nor permitted to perform work which may be hazardous or harmful to his or her education, health or well-being"

Article 32 of UNCRC further explained that governments must set a minimum age for children to work and ensure that work conditions are safe and appropriate. Because of this, the Ethiopian labor and employment proclamation 377/2003 Article 89 (2)²⁹ proclaimed, *"It is prohibited to employ persons under fourteen years of age"*.

Principle 5 of FAO et al., (2010) Responsible agricultural investment also specifies that First, responsible investors should respect human rights. It further specifies (1) businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and (2) businesses should make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses. Secondly, investors should respect worker rights. The principle highlights the importance of ILO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, specifically on abolition of Child Labor (conventions 138 and 182).

²⁹ The proclamation can be found here:- <https://chilot.me/2011/08/proclamation-no-3772003-labour-proclamation/> Accessed on 26/03/2019

Despite all the above international and national legislations, facts on the ground shows that children below the age of fourteen are put to work in way that drain childhood of all joy and crush the right to normal physical and mental development. The work is something that every young teen wants to avoid - which is most often dull, repetitive, and low-paid.

The main justification given for this by the farm manager is that workers (households) inside the farm coerce their children to work and make money for the family. He insisted the following:

“We give a half-day work for children above the age of fourteen in accordance with the law. Nevertheless, it does not mean there are no children below the age of fourteen and ten working here. Although we do not want them to work inside our farm, their family wants them to handle some activities to cover school costs. Even if we deny work opportunities for those children, their family will complain against us thinking that their child would spend his day in undesirable places if he does not work” (Key informant #6: February 2019).

On the other hand, my interviewee from the *Woreda* social affairs office contended that children are left with no option other than working so long as their family earns little wage. Underage children working in the farm means that their fundamental human right is being violated. Moreover, spending much of their time working for their family means that school enrolment rate would be low and dropout of those enrolled would be higher too.

Another key informant attributed this to hindering the educational policy of the country.

“At this point in time, we are witnessing when teachers are making a door-to-door awareness for people to send school aged children back to school. But, putting children of the farm under poverty and implicitly forcing them to spend their time working is contradicting the national education program as well, beyond violating their fundamental rights (Key informant #5: February 2019).

From the above narrative, one can understand that children are really engaging in works that exploits them. A discrepancy between children who desperately wanted to attend school and their inability to do so is clearly imaginable. While education is a fundamental right and a critical priority in overcoming poverty, enrolment to school is limited for too many children inside the farm. The right to be protected from hazardous jobs and their right to attend their education is

being violated in one way or another. The Ethiopian human rights commission report also concluded that child labour exploitation inside the farm is emanated from the low wage the farm pays to the “work aged” family members of those children.

Later, Ethio Agri-CEFT – the owner company of Birr farm investment – wrote a letter to Birr Farm Investment ordering farm officials to work with “work aged” children (See Annex IV). However, the structural problem – low wage of families – that forces young children to engage in exploitative work condition is yet to be resolved. Hence, it is safe to say that the problem will persist over again. On a similar note, it was also confirmed that Sheikh Mohammed Al-Amoudi’s Saudi Star³⁰ has been part of international discourse around ‘land grabbing’ and human rights (Keeley et al., 2014).

In what seems a capitalistic class process, workers in Birr farm investment are selling their labour to produce commodities for the owner that can further be exchanged to gain more profit. As we might all be well aware of, seeking profit at the expense of workers’ labour is at the heart of capitalistic production. This is evidently well articulated by one the most notable classical sociologists, Karl Marx. Therefore, capital seeks to maintain its hegemony over workers labour. To do this, businesses work to minimize wage labour and production costs and maximize the sale of their goods. That is why when I asked the farm manager about their view of the multitude of questions being raised by the farm community and the local people in the vicinity, he insisted the following:

“Our investment is established with the purpose of earning profit, seeking more revenue than expenses incurred. As a result, we will continue to ensure this. Yet, I believe that some questions are needed to be addressed, but not all of them” (Key informant #6: February 2019).

As part of the profit earning orientation of the farm investment, workers wage labour in the farm is made very little and accommodation services are poor. Multitudes of problems discussed above are a direct result of this gain-seeking orientation. As noted above, low wage labour in turn is contributing to the exploitation of children’s labour notwithstanding with the various

³⁰ Saudi Star is another Agriculture Development PLC, owned by Saudi-Ethiopian billionaire Mohammed Al-Amoudi, who acquired 10,000 hectares of land along the Alwero River in the Gambella region of Ethiopia.

proclamation and regulations restricting it. Hence, pre-market factors, such as workers' relation and humanistic motivational factors that make profits possible are neglected in a similar fashion with the behavior of most industrial companies during the industrial revolution.

4.5. Implications of inside farm operations to the people in the vicinity

From the above discussion of the inside farm working conditions and welfare system, one can easily see how the impact of the investment could be upon the communities in the vicinity and/or how well the farm investment committed itself in promoting sustainable agriculture. To put it concisely, a farm investment disregarding its own employees could not have a positive impact on the “outsider” local smallholder farmers. This is because the way in which the farm investment seeks to gain profit does not lead them to provide the level and kind of care that local communities should receive. Moreover, results from interviews with the local communities and key government officials had confirmed this. Hence, there is no wonder why local communities encounter staggering amounts of problems. Forty (40) years has passed since the farm investment has been commenced and 18 years has passed since Ethio Agri-CEFT has taken control over it. So far, there is little evidence that the objectives of decent employment creation, technology transfer and infrastructure have been met, while the damage done as a result of the project presence is piling up.

4.6. Governance and Resistance Against Large-Scale Agricultural Investments

While there is some emerging evidence of communities deriving financial benefits from their involvement in LSLA in developing countries, the greater body of evidence points to the fact that LSLAs have, to date, failed to deliver the anticipated financial and economic benefits and particularly so in Ethiopia. On the other hand, evidence points to the significant negative impacts of LSLA on livelihoods, biodiversity, nature conservation and ecosystem services including worsening pressure on fragile ecosystems and aggravating competition for access to water. In general, a worrying and unsustainable trend is observed in the form of excessive incentives granted to investors by governments.

4.6.1. Governance of Large-Scale Agricultural Investments

As discussed earlier, the Federal government in Ethiopia previously had the power to allocate 5000 and above hectares of land for investors based on the upward delegation by Regional States. In line with this, Imeru, (2010) mentioned two interesting points that this arrangement could pose serious challenges. First, the upward delegation by Regional states of their mandates to administer land to the Federal government stands on a shaky constitutional basis. Because the constitution only guaranteed Regional States to administer land, found under their Region. Secondly, and at a more practical level, the relative responsibilities of the concerned Federal and Regional agencies in the process of allocating land to investors and subsequent follow-up and monitoring of such investments has yet to be clarified. Despite the blurredness of responsibilities for Regional and Federal government in follow-up and monitoring of investments, as identified by Imeru, the Federal government has been engaged in the follow up and monitoring of such investments. As I confirmed through interview with an authority at EHAIA, the agency has been making a four times per year monitoring and evaluation of some sampled large-scale agricultural investments. Obviously, this was not enough by itself it rather leaves many large-scale agricultural investments unchecked.

However, although there are no brand new measures currently applied to ease the problem signaled in large-sale agricultural investments, giving back the full authority for Regional States to transfer and closely monitor every Farm investment found under their Region would enable them correct anomalies in the sector, at least easily correctable ones such as impacts on the environment. Moreover, if the government is really committed to tie down investors with

contractual obligations to provide better social services and follow up the effectiveness of it for the future, it can be hoped that majority of problems arising from large-scale agricultural investments will ease.

4.6.2. Resistance and Uprising Against Birr Farm Investment

In view of the risks associated with large-scale acquisition of land and a number of prominent project failures, there have been calls for the promotion of alternative business models that would involve the local community more actively. Development experts have argued that investment models that involve smallholders as equal business partners in production and other related activities have the potential to minimize the risks and maximize the benefits of agricultural investment. A study by FAO, (2014) lends support to this view. The study further suggests that investment projects which give local farmers an active role tend to have positive effects on local economic and social development. Successful projects combine the strengths of the investor (capital, technology and expertise in management and marketing) with those of local farmers (labor, land, traditional expertise and knowledge of the local conditions). This combination can provide the basis for win-win outcomes.

In contrary to this, when negative effects including the displacement of smallholder farmers, the loss of grazing land for pastoralists, the loss of incomes and livelihoods for rural people, the depletion of productive resources, and in general, negative impacts on local livelihoods due to reduced access to resources may lead to community grievances and resistance. Further, such investments can have adverse environmental impacts, in particular the degradation of natural resources such as land, water, forests and biodiversity. When such impacts arise they generate opposition to the project by local people, which at times translate in occupation of part of the land or hostile action such as damage to the company's property/Vandalism (Saifullah Seyed, 2013; FAO, 2014).

In this regard, James C. Scott In is influential book *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of resistance* (1985) looks at peasant and slave societies and their ways of responding to domination, with a focus not on observable acts of rebellion but on forms of cultural resistance and non-cooperation that are employed over time through the course of persistent servitude.

Therefore, the last questions I tried to answer here is what are the responses of the local people when their hopes are dashed and outcomes are contrary to earlier expectations? In addition, what form of resistance does peasants show in relation with James Scott's argument? Dissatisfied with the outcomes of large-scale farming, the local people who are living around Birr Farm Investment showed various forms of resistance in a bid to 'roll back' the land transferred to the investor. These include banning the transportation of goods out of the farm investment; attempt to set farms on fire and formal requests to government officials about taking land from the investment. I understood that large numbers of people have submitted their formal request to the zonal administration office in a bid to obtain land from the farm investment.

In line with this, looking at the various negative impacts of Birr farm investment together with resistances against the government, there were times when youths planned to burn down crops of the farm investment. One of my key informants recalled the 2016 incident in nearby towns:

"In the summer of 2008 [2016] there were a demonstration against the government in Mankussa, Finoteselam and other nearby small towns. Back then, youths planned to burn down the farm's crop when dry season comes but the plan was abated when a large number of military personnel began to patrol the land with military cars.... There are still various demonstrations from that onwards" (Key Informant #4: February 2019).

Recently, more than 400 farmers have attempted to grab land from the farm investment and settle over it by their own initiation. This is confirmed by Yeshihasb's article in *Bekur Amharic Newspaper* in an interview with the zone administrator. Moreover, the farm investment wrote a letter on 23/01/2019 for West Gojjam Zone stating the hindrance of selling of products due to blockages of roads by the local communities as to that newspaper.

4.6.3. The Incident in Mankussa, February 13-14/ 2019

What follows is a presentation of observational data by the researcher during the data collection stages of the research. This incident is well associated with the forgoing discussion of community's struggle against large-scale agricultural investments, and Birr farm investment in this context. Data from key informant interview is also included at the end of this sub-topic to develop a vigorous understanding of the issue.

On February 13, hundreds of youths from Mankussa and its surrounding area had filled streets with protest, as problems by the farm have intensified over time and the farm failed to provide any intended benefits to the local communities, according to them. Afterwards, security forces have halted protestors immediately appointing demonstrators to be there on the next day to resolve conflicts through meetings where local communities can air their grievances to administrators.

On the next day, February 14, local administrators have failed to attend the scheduled meeting and only security forces were there. Protestors felt betrayed by what the administrators have done and pressed security forces to look for other solutions. In the meantime, the unexpected thing, that shaped the story of the meeting, has happened. Two long vehicles carrying a total of 846³¹ *kuntals* of soybeans have come from Lay Birr and reached to Mankussa where protestors had sat in. Afterwards, the people have forced vehicles to stop, dropped off soybeans from the truck, and scattered it on the ground. Literally, I was a little bewildered by that but felt lucky to be there to make some interviews about why they did it. Some of the people I have interviewed responded me that they did it because they lost faith in the administrators as they have asked them to search solutions so many times before. According to them, local administrators have remained tacit many times. One of the many people who were there revealed the following when I asked him why they did it.

“We asked them to give us solution but they keep silent and one day, like today, we ban all crops from being taken away from here. Then after, we put crops in a store with a great care. However, these administrators have secretly shipped them out when no one else was noticing.... And now we did this again if they understand our questions” (Accidental interview from demonstrators: February 2019)

³¹ This number is later confirmed by an informal interview with the toll-keeper of the farm investment.



Fig. 4, Picture showing soybean product of Birr Farm investment scattered on the ground by protestors. February 14, 2019.

Protestors were disbanded later when a highly armed Special Forces of the Regional State bottlenecked the small town of Mankussa. The Special Forces were there to safeguard the shipment of goods on days after that. Nevertheless, the question “how long do activities be performed in such a way?” is still unanswered.

Another key informant asserted the following when I asked him the motivation behind the people to ban crops in the preceding time, before this incident. He accused officials of the company for this mess.

“We started to ban the transportation of crops not just carelessly. At the time when people complain against the farm, we had formed a committee including members from the Woreda security forces to arrange a discussion with officials of Ethio-Agri CEFT. Afterwards officials had come in, but gone back without talking to us. In response to this, we ban the transportation of crops for the first time given that those officials did not want to hear people’s grievance. ... Again, we requested them for the second time. At is time; the finance official of Ethio-Agri CEFT had come in and discussed with us, but got no solution afterwards. The incident you saw in Mankussa has happened right after we went through this process” (Key informant #5: February 2019).

The above responses imply the gloomy outcome of Birr farm investment in the eyes of local communities. James Scott’s research finds that overt peasant rebellions are actually rather

uncommon, do not occur when and where expected, and often do not have much impact. However, unanswered repeated questions as to the sustainability of the farm investment by the local community coupled with accumulated dissatisfaction of the people upon officials for remaining tacit many times has led to an overt restriction of crops from being taken away to other destinations. Hence, in what seems contrary to Scott's finding, people in the vicinity have rebelled overtly against the farm investment several times. Yet, it is clear that these rebellions are less politically organized than that of the urban population as articulated by Scott. In sum, it is noteworthy that the farm investment is jeopardizing the livelihood of rural communities, at the same time, grievances and resistances by the local communities are further jeopardizing the farm investment as well.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Principal goal of this study was to assess the impact of Birr large-scale farm investment on the local community and the environment. More specifically, the study was intended to investigate the following specific objectives: to explore the interplay between legal and institutional arrangements and the effectiveness of investments in agriculture, understand the socio-economic impacts of the farm investment on the local community, and describe the environmental impacts of the investment on the local livelihoods and the broader biodiversity.

In doing so, the study has adopted a qualitative research approach and employed both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through key informant interview, semi-structured interview and FGD from rural communities found in the vicinity of the farm investment and governmental bodies at different levels. Data from the former was collected to learn from the voices of the people from the field while, data from the later was collected to acquire first-hand information from government bodies. Secondary data sources were also used in assessing working conditions and welfare system inside farm investment. Further, secondary data were also consulted to link some findings of this research with relevant points in the literature. Therefore, this section presents summary of the study's major findings and its conclusion.

There was a general expectation that large-scale farming will serve as a centre of modern technology generation and transfer and, consequently, smallholder farmers in the vicinity of such projects will be able to learn about best practices and acquire farm inputs that increase farm productivity. Eventually, this is expected to facilitate the transformation process of the traditional agricultural sector into a modern and sustainable sector, and an increase in food availability and the supply of raw materials to local industries that replace imports and generate the much-needed foreign currency through value-added exports is anticipated.

So far, hardly any positive effects on the ground by Birr farm investment have been found in this study. With regard to the economic aspect, floods emerging from the farm investment are found to have immense problems in jeopardizing the livelihood of local communities. For instance, smallholders are confronted with a yield loss and the expansion of expansive alien weeds-called Parthenium due to floods coming from the farm fields of the investment. The livelihood of local

communities has also been found to be negatively impacted due to reduced access of local people to their grazing land. Confusion regarding the exact number of the farm acquisition has been also found to contribute for conflicts and lawsuits among the local communities and the farm investment.

The study further uncovered some factors that appear to be associated with the impacts of such investments on employment, which were part of the original assumptions of the study emerging from its literature review and theoretical framework. Therefore, findings in this study shows the farm investment has little meaningful effect in terms of employment – the most commonly stated benefit expected to accrue from the existence of large-scale investments. Jobs for the local communities are found to be less paying even in comparison with the amount of money local smallholders pay for a daily labour. They are also found to be insecure and seasonal. Further, proper hiring and firing procedures are absent, and formal binding contracts between the employees and the companies are completely absent. With the absence of formal contracts, wage payments are often late and sometimes refused, and wageworkers are fired for unfounded reasons.

The study has also found some divergences from the original assumptions of the study emerging from its literature review and theoretical framework with regard to destination of products and food security. Literatures were critical of exporting of foods/crops produced in the acquired land to other countries while the target countries exhibit high levels of malnourishment. In this respect, most recent agricultural farms could have at least a meaningful effect for the country in terms of providing the intended FDI from the goods they export, despite massive negative impacts at the local level including food security. When such investments do not export goods, and at the same time never distribute products at the local level their positive impact could be negligible. The long established Birr Farm investment has found to have twofold problems in this regard. They neither provide decent benefits at the local level nor contribute to the FDI of the country by exporting their products.

This study has also revealed that the farm investment had not contributed to any meaningful corporate social responsibility to the local population. The contribution with respect to infrastructure construction and technology transfer for the local communities is found to be minimal given the fact that the farm investment has long existed there. Obviously, this is geared

towards the obligation put in the contract document, which is discussed at the end of this section. The study has also found out that a win-win relationship had existed between local communities and the farm investment before the farm investment has adopted a capital intensive agriculture in full scale. However, the introduction of modern mechanized farming has pushed local smallholders from engaging in the farm and consequent benefits they would incur. Another finding in line with this is a sore treatment of local communities found in the vicinity of the study area. This is to mean local communities would be fined a staggering amount of money with goofy reasons if animals get into the investment's farm field even during the dry season.

Findings of the study have also revealed that environmental impact assessments before the commencement of the farm investment has never been done. Subsequent assessment of the farm investment's environmental impact as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the investment was also absent. Moreover, much deforestation on the ground by the investor in the study area with no action taken to counteract it for years has also found in this study. Still the remaining trees along main roadsides inside the farm are being continually chopped up and burned-down for a minor reason. Together with this, excessive use of fertilizers and field burning of crop residue, which could contribute to massive erosion of farm fields and affect the soil fertility in the long run are also found to be performed by the farm investment.

The main factor for these mess are found to be inconsistencies and blurredness about who monitors the farm investment among different stakeholders involved. Moreover, the currently existing document binding the agreement between the investor and the government are only "a contract of sale" of the assets found inside the farm. Thus, the contact document waives specific requirements expected from the investor including sustainable use of agriculture, lease period, social responsibilities, progress reports, and for whom shall the report be submitted and so forth.

Another important finding that most researches has failed to give attention but has been dealt in this study was the working system and welfare conditions inside the farm. In so doing, the study has revealed that the profit motive attitude of the investment has put people in a disadvantageous position that extends from keeping people in the vicious cycle of poverty to the violation of basic human rights. To mention some, workers inside the farm performs a daylong activity but earns little money, accumulation of private property by workers in their free time is not allowed,

accommodation services for workers are so poor. A somewhat surprising finding from this research is that contrary to the many national and international laws children below the age of ten are put to work in a way that can drain their childhood of joy.

Further, I have witnessed the responses of local communities when their expectations to receive benefits turn the other way round and the farm investment continues to jeopardize their livelihood. Scholarly guesses by other studies that tend to argue the fact that when such effects intensify they may lead to community grievances and resistance is proved true through findings based on observation. Road blockages and banning the transporting of products of the farm investment has been performed by angry protestors during the times of data collection and even before.

Among the many factors that determine the impacts of such investments on the local economy and the environment, the domestic laws and institutions governing agricultural investment and land tenure are critical. Based on the findings of the study, majority of the problems identified are, in one way or another, attributed to the gaps in the institutional and legal settings. Such laws and institutional arrangements are found to be inadequate to ensure sustainable agricultural development, especially in terms of legal enforcement. The hopes of employment generation, technology transfer and infrastructure development stated in the proclamations and regulations are not formal requirements in the contract document expected to be handed by the investor. Activities about monitoring and evaluation of the project have also never been stated in the “contract of sale” document of Birr farm investment.

Moreover, the study has come across with updated findings with regard to the delegation given for the Federal Government by Regional States to administer LSAs over 500 ha in 2010. Similar with the findings in other researches consulted in the literature review, this arrangement is found to contribute a great part for the lack of close and frequent monitoring of such investments found dispersed across the country and, particularly so to Birr Farm investment. Yet, the power to administer every LSAs is found to be given back to Regional States in 2015 based on new interviews at the Federal level. Cognizant of this, however, the recent power shift has received unequal understanding among all concerned stakeholders. To this effect, the farm investment is using this as a scapegoat to prevent interventions from experts at the *Woreda* within which the farm is located.

Largely, investments in new technology, employment creation and income generated from leasing or selling of the land remain more or less theoretical or negligible if any. It can be of the opinion that the farm investment hardly benefits the local people; rather it threatens the livelihoods of the local rural population. Further, one can dare to say that, at least at first glance, negative impacts of long-established farm investments could even be greater than the recently established LSAs.

Suggestions for Action

Based on the findings of this investigation, the following measures are suggested to address identified gaps and problems. Therefore, acting on these recommendations would benefit local communities and the nation at large, the best out of Large-scale agricultural investments.

❖ Regular Monitoring and Evaluation Are Highly Required at the Local Level

Currently there is lack of regular and effective monitoring of the farm investment by the responsible government agencies. The lack of mechanisms to monitor the investments once land is allocated has led to misuse of natural resources and adverse environmental and social impacts. Inconsistencies of mandate to administer the farm investment had led to the fabrication of adverse problems at the local level. Majority of social and environmental problems identified in this study are attributed to lack of regular follow-up of the investment. Therefore, since the power to administer such investments is given back to Regional States, the *Woreda* within which the farm is located has a mandate to monitor such investments hereafter. Moreover, the Regional State has to make interventions to create awareness for the farm investment the fact that they are under the supervision of the Regional State. Furthermore, it is recommended that environmental and social affairs team be part of the farm investment to correct problems signaled in this spectrum based on researches.

❖ Putting Social Responsibilities Enforceable in the Contract Document

The government is hopeful that spillover effects from investment in agriculture will accrue from the existence of investors for the surrounding community. This is evidently mentioned in the proclamation and regulations of investment in agriculture. Yet, such responsibilities are not part of contractual obligations expected from investors. To make things worse, the profit oriented

business approaches of investors in agriculture are breaching various laws and regulations of the country such as environmental laws, instead of investing in social responsibilities that are not part of contractual obligations. Therefore, putting social responsibilities, such as infrastructure construction and technology transfer enforceable in the contract document would only make investors invest in basic infrastructure. Renegotiation of the currently existing contractual agreement on better terms that could benefit local communities is also highly advised.

❖ **Pay Rise and Better Accommodation for Workers inside the Farm and, in the Process, Prevent Child Labour Exploitation**

For the profitability of the farm, investment is in large part determined by the responsibilities shouldered by workers, payment that can move workers out of the scourge of in-work poverty should be made. Pay rise and free accommodation for permanent workers inside the farm could further help to cease exploitation of children's labour apart from its benefit to enable workers permanently escape from the prison of poverty.

❖ **Minimum Wage for Daily Labourers should be enforced by Law.**

The fluctuation of wage salary for daily labourers is evidently the problem signaled throughout the country. This condition puts daily workers in a disadvantageous position due to its dependability on the free will of workers. This is also found to be the case in Birr farm investment. Therefore, it is recommended that workers should be legally entitled to be paid the minimum wage per hour or any other arrangement for the work that they do.

❖ **Food Processing Agro-Industries near the Farm Investment Are Needed**

As discussed in this study, employment opportunities with decent salary at the farm level does not exist based on the findings. The locality of the farm investment is bumper production area and given the fact that products of the farm investment are still distributable within the country, establishing food-processing agro-industries around the farm would serve as a means to drive rural industrialization and creation of more effective job opportunities. Such industries will further provide modern infrastructure in and around the industries to enhance rural agricultural productivity, and support services to companies, as well as provide opportunities for skills development of students of various disciplines at universities.

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Annex (I) Interview guidelines and discussion points

1. Interview guidelines (Probing questions) for the farm manager

Hello, my name is Getahun Siraw. I am a graduate student at Addis Ababa University, Department of Sociology. I am currently conducting a research on the impacts of your company, Birr Farm Investment towards the local communities. Your genuine information are, therefore, very relevant for the success of this study and I would very much appreciate your participation in the study. Whatever information you provide would be kept strictly confidential and used for academic purpose only. Therefore, I request your kind cooperation to respond the questions frankly.

Thank You!

1. Let us begin with the profile of Birr farm investment (When and why was this farm investment commenced first? When was the farm transferred to your company? How large was the total area of land when it was purchased? And now? Over all changes after that?
2. Does the farm investment have offices working with the social and environmental matters?
3. Modern agricultural investments are most often expected to introduce peasants to improved technologies. Have you ever provided such services to the local communities? What specific activities have you ever done to transfer technology to the adjacent smallholders? In what for does it takes place?
4. Did you ever have constructed infrastructures for the local community as part of the company's corporate social responsibility? Where and how many so far?
5. What initiatives are in place to involve the local communities in the farm activity?
6. Employment is the most commonly stated benefit for the local people whenever any kind of investments are commenced. How effective and meaningful employment opportunity is created so far by birr farm investment? What types of jobs are created? Working

hours? What type of working condition and salary levels are there? Is salary equivalent to the job done? Some reports show that the farm investment is exploiting children's labour, what do you have to say about this?

7. Where do products produced over here by your farm investment go? Are they going to be exported?
8. Evidence from the local communities indicates that people would be fined money if they let their animals go in the farm, even during the dry season? How true is this? And why is doing so necessary?
9. Why are crop residues such as stalks and sheaves burned in the farm field? Does not it have a damaging effect upon the environment and the soils future fertility?
10. Evidences from the local people also show that there were disputes between the farm investment and the communities in the vicinity over a previously grazing land. What factors and rationalities have forced the farm investment to claim it?
11. What do you think of the multitude of questions and resistances being raised by the farm community and the local people in the vicinity? Why did such resistances happen in the first place? Are they proper questions? What are you going to do with this regard?

2. Interview guidelines (Probing questions) for the *Woreda* environmental protection case team

1. How can you treat the overall performance of the farm investment towards responsible use of the environment? What possible effects could burning stalks in the farm field have? How and what type of environmental consultancy services have you ever provided to Birr farm investment?
2. How committed is the farm investment in terms of working in line with your recommendations?
3. How about the performance of the farm investment with regard to deforestations? Had you believed the rationality provided by the farm investment to plant trees in other places while deforesting the existing, and approved it? Was it rational and equivalent?
4. How many plants should farm investments leave in farm fields and how can Birr farm investment be treated with this respect?

3. Interview guidelines (Probing questions) for *Woreda* Soil and Natural Resource protection case team

1. How can Birr farm investment be treated with respect to sustainable use of the soil natural resource? What problems are frequently signaled in line with this?
2. What measures have you taken so far to contribute your part in reducing the problem?
3. You as a concerned body, what do you think could have been done by the farm investment to prevent these mess before it has happened?

4. Interview guideline with the *Woreda* Workers and Social Affairs Office

1. What specific problems upon workers indie Birr farm investment are there?
2. Why are wages for workers inside Birr farm investment been made very low? How much do local smallholders pay for a daily labourer?
3. What do you think is the reason for under age children to engage in exploitative work condition inside Birr Farm Investment?
4. What specific recommendations have you provided for the Farm Investment to ease such problems?
5. What do you think is the reason for ups and downs of wages for daily labourers inside Birr Farm Investment?
6. What actions is your office currently doing to ease problems that need your intervention?

5. Interview guidelines (Probing questions) with a person at EHAIA

1. What was the reason for delegating the Federal government to transfer and administer LSAs over 500 ha in 2010?
2. What was the goal to establish an independent institution with in Ministry of Agriculture and Natural resource that can handle LSAIs?
3. What push factors were coercing the Federal government to return back the power for Regional States? Was not it successful?
4. How many land deals have you transferred during the delegation period?
5. How often did you conduct monitoring and evaluations of such land deals? Was it successful? What specific problems and challenges were there in this process?

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6. Investors in LSAIs are most often expected to transfer skills, improved technologies and provide infrastructural services. However, studies show the fact that these are not part of contractual obligations. Why are they waived from the contract document? If most of the products from LSAIs are encouraged to be exported, as stated in regulations and if providing social responsibilities at the local level are not formal requirements what specific benefits from LSAIs are anticipated then?
 7. How is land lease price of LSAIs determined?
 8. What do you think should be taken to reduce problems observed in this sector?

6. General discussion points for FGD

1. Employment opportunities availed by Birr farm investment and the local people's involvement with this.
2. The economic status of local communities before the farm investment has took control over their grazing land.
3. The ways in which flooding from Birr farm investment affects crops of the local smallholders
4. Destination of crops produced by the farm investment and their view regarding this
5. Conflict between local communities and the farm investment over a previously grazing land
6. The nature of people-to-farm interaction now and then

7. General Guidelines for Key Informant Interview

1. The economic status of local communities before the farm investment has took control over their grazing land.
2. The farm investment's contribution regarding constructing infrastructure and technology transfer for the local communities
3. Penalty upon local communities if animals of smallholders get down to the farm investment
4. Child labour exploitation inside Birr farm investment and its implication.
5. Resistances against Birr Farm Investment
6. The incident that has happened in the small town of Mankussa

Annex II: Lists of key informants, FGD and semi-structured interviewees

S.N	Research participants ID	Institution Or the whereabouts of participants
1	KI #1 - #4	4 selected knowledgeable elders from villages
2	KI # 5	One youth who is believed to know detail about the farm and one of those individuals who led various resistances against the farm
	Key Informant #6	The Farm Manager
3	FDG #1	Selected Community members from Mankussa Abdegoma Village
4	FDG #2	Selected Community members from Abassem Zeguay Village
5	FDG #3	Selected Community members from Guay Wonderit Village
6	Respondent #1	Agricultural Support Directorate Director from EHAIA
7	Respondent # 2	Investment Administration and Privatization Directorate Director from EPEHAA
8	Respondent #3	Jabi Jehnan <i>Woreda</i> Environmental Protection case team leader
9	Respondent #4	Jabi Tehnan <i>Woreda</i> Soil and Natural Resource Protection case team member
10	Respondent #5	Jabi Tehnan <i>Woreda</i> Workers and Social Affairs case team member

በአማራ ክልሉ ውስጥ የሥራ ተቋማት ማህበራዊ ጉዳይ ቢሮ

Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs

የምስራቅም ሆን ሠራተኛና ማህበራዊ ጉዳይ መምሪያ

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ቁጥር ሠ/ማ/ገ/71-ጠራ-47

ቀን/Date/ 08/02/2011 ዓ.ም

ለምስራቅም ሆን ዋና አስተዳደር

ለጃቢ ጠሀናን ወረዳ ዋና አስተዳደሪ

ለጃቢ ጠሀናን ሠራተኛና ማህበራዊ ጉዳይ ጸ/ቤት

ፍ/ሠላም//

ጉዳዩ:- የምርመራ ውጤት ስለማሳወቅ፤

የኢትዮጵያ ሰብአዊ መብት ኮሚሽን በአዋጅ ቁጥር 210/1992 ዓ.ም የተቋቋመ ብሔራዊ መንግስት ታዋቂ ተቋም ሲሆን ከተሰጠው ሰልጣኞች አንዱ የሰብአዊ መብት ጥሰት አቤቱታዎች ሲቀርቡለት ምርመራ በማጣራት የእርምጃ እንዲወስድ ማድረግ ነው።


ስለሆነም በአቤቱታ አቅራቢዎች በሆኑት በአን ሀሀይ አለምነህ በቁጥር 7 ሰዎች እና በተጠሪ በኢትዮ አግሪ ሴፍት ኃ.የተ.የግ.ማህበር ብር እርሻ ልማት መካከል በተረበው የሠራተኞች የመብት ጥሰት አቤቱታ አጣርተን የአጠናቀቅን በመሆኑ 16 ገጽ የምርመራ ውጤት ሪፖርት የላክንላችሁ ሲሆን ተጠሪ ተቋሙም በተሰጠው ምክራ-ሀሳብ በመፈፀም አፈፃፀሙን በጽሁፍ እንደታሰቀው የሚል በቁጥር አስመኮ/ቢቃ/ም/07/4373 በቀን 29/01/2011 በተፃፈ ደብዳቤ ደርሶናል።

ስለሆነም ለክትትል ያግዝ ዘንድ ትክክለኛ ቅጂን በዚህ ደብዳቤ አባሪነት የላክን መሆኑን እንገልጻለን።

ግልግጭ//

ለሥራ ስምሪት ሠላማዊ ኢንዱስትሪ ግንኙነት ቡድን

ፍ/ሠላም//

ፍ/ሠላም ታ.ጋራ

FACMASU WOL
ፍ/ሠላም

አመልካቾች ፡- እነ ፀሀይ አለምገባ በቁጥር 7 ሰዎች

አድራሻ፡ ጃቢጠህናን ወረዳ ብር እርሻ ልማት

ተጠሪ ፡- በኢትዮ ለግሪ ሴፍት ጋ/የተ/የግ/ማህበር የብር እርሻ ልማት የግብርና ኢንቨስትመንት

አድራሻ ፡- ጃቢጠህናን ወረዳ ብር እርሻ ልማት

የምርመራ ሰራውን ያከናወኑ ባለሙያዎች

1. አሰፋ ስንታየሁ

2. ክንዳይ ብርሃን

የአቤቱታው ይዘት

አመልካቾች ቤተሰቦቻቸው በብር እርሻ ልማት ድርጅት ውስጥ ለረጅም አመታት በቋሚነትና በጊዜያዊነት ተቀጥረው የሚሰሩ እና አንዳንዶቹ ደግሞ በድርጅቱ በቀን ሰራተኝነት ተቀጥረው የሚሰሩ ወጣቶች ሲሆኑ በቤተሰቦቻቸው እና በራሳቸው ላይ ደርሶብናል የሚሉትን የመብት ጥሰት ለቅርንጫፍ ጽ/ቤቱ በቀን 14/12/2010 ዓ.ም በቃል፣ በቀን 01/13/2010 ዓ.ም በተደረገ የቡድን ውይይት እና በቀን 02/13/2010 ዓ.ም ደግሞ በጽሁፍ እንደሚከተለው አቅርበዋል፡፡

የእርሻ ልማቱ በመንግስት ከተቋቋመ ከ40 ዓመት በላይ ያስቆጠረና ወደ ግል ይዞታነት ከተሸጋገረ በኋላ በቤተሰቦቻችን ላይ የሚደርሰውን በደል የሚመለከታቸው አካላት ሊያስተካክሉልን ባለመቻላቸው የመብት ጥሰቱ አሁንም ቀጥሏል፡፡ ስለሆነም የእርሻ ልማት ድርጅቱ፡-

1. በአካባቢው የሚገኙ አርሶ አደሮችና ኢንቨስተሮች ለቀን ስራ ክፍያ የሚከፍሉት የገንዘብ መጠን ከ120-150 ብር ሆኖ ሳለ የእርሻ ልማት ድርጅቱ የሚከፍለው ግን ክፍተኛው የክፍያ መጠን ብር 35 ብቻ በመሆኑ ቤተሰብ ለማስተዳደር በቂ ስላልሆነ ህይወታችን በከፋ ድህነት እንድንመራ ተገደናል፤
2. በደርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚገኙ ሰራተኞች በተመጣጠነ ዋጋ የሚያገኙት የ50 ኪ.ግ በቆሎ የጥራት ችግር ያለበት እና ደረጃ 2 ከመሆኑም በላይ አንድ ሰራተኛ የእድሉ

ተጠቃሚ ለመሆን ቢያንስ 20 ቀን መስራት ግዴታ መሆኑንና በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ከሚሰጠው የህክምና አገልግሎት ተጠቃሚ ለመሆን ቢያንስ 18 ቀን መስራት ግዴታ እንዳለባቸው፤

3. ወላጆች ከቀን ስራ የሚያገኙት ክፍያ በቂ አለመሆኑን ተከትሎ ቤተሰብ ማስተዳደር ባለመቻላቸው እድሜያቸው ለስራ ያልደረሱ ህጻናት ልጆቻቸውን በገብቶቻቸው ክፍያ የቀን ስራ እንዲሰሩ በማድረግ ለጉልበት ብዝበዛ እንዲዳረጉ ሁነዋል፤
4. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚሰሩ ቋሚ ያልሆኑ ሰራተኞች ኑሯቸውን ለመደገም በአካባቢው በሚገኙ የስራ ቦታዎች ላይ ተቀጥረው ለመስራት ቢፈልጉም እንኳን በድርጅቱ የተከለከለ ስለሆነ ድህነቱ በዘላቂነት እንዲቀጥል ተደርጓል፤
5. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚገኙ ሰራተኞች በተለይም ቋሚ ያልሆኑ ሰራተኞች በሚኖሩበት ቤት ውስጥ እና አካባቢ ማናቸውንም የግል ሃብት (ክብት፣ ፍየል፣ በግ፣ ዶሮ፣ የጓሮ አትክልት እና የመሳሰሉት እንዲሁም በንግድ ስራ) ማፍራት እንዳይችሉ በድርጅቱ በተጣለ ገደብ የማይቻል ስለሆነ ንብረት የማፍራት መብታቸው ተጥሏል፤
6. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ቋሚ ያልሆኑ ሰራተኞች የሚኖሩበት ቤት በተለይም ልዩ ስሙ በካይ/ብሎክ 9 አካባቢ ድርጅቱ ሲመሰረት የተሰሩ የሳር ክፍን ያላቸው ጎጆ ቤቶች እና ጣራቸው ከአፈር እና ከእንጨት የተሰሩ ደረጃቸውን ያልጠበቁና ምቹ ካለመሆናቸውም በላይ ያለድርጅቱ ፈቃድ ማደስ እና አዲስ መገንባት ስለማይቻል ቤቶቹ ጣራቸው ዝናብ የሚያስገባና ወለላቸው ደግሞ ውሃ የሚያመነጩ በመሆናቸው ምቹ የመኖሪያ አካባቢ አልተፈጠረላቸውም፤
7. እነዚህ ሰራተኞች የሚኖሩባቸው አካባቢዎች ምንም አይነት መሰረተ-ልማት የሌለው በተለይም ንጹህ የመጠጥ ውሃ እና መብራት የሌለው በመሆኑ ወራጅ ውሃ የሚጠቀሙና በኩራዝ የሚጠቀሙ በመሆኑ ለከፍተኛ የጤንነት ችግር ተዳርገዋል፤
8. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ በጊዜያዊ ስራ ለረጅም ጊዜ ሲያገለግሉ ቆይተው ጉልበታቸው ሲደክም ጧሪ እና ደጋፊ ስለሌላቸው በከፋ ችግር እና ድህነት ውስጥ ይገኛሉ፤
9. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚገኙ ቋሚ ሰራተኞች በጡረታ ሲገለሉ በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ቤት ሰርተው መኖር ስለማይችሉ ከድርጅቱ ክልል ስለሚሰናበቱ ወደ ከተማ በመሰደድ ለልመና የሚዳረጉ መኖራቸው፤
10. የእርሻ ልማት ድርጅቱ ከሰብል ልማት እና ከእንስሳት ማድለብ ውጭ የተሰሩ የአግሮ ፕሮሰሲንግ እና የቴክኖሎጂ ሽግግር ስላልፈጠረ ወጣቱ ተደራጅቶ ለመስራት የተፈጠረለት የስራ እድል የለም፤

11. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የመብት ጥያቄዎችን ስናቀርብ ህጋዊ እና ተገቢ ምላሽ ከመስጠት ይልቅ በሃይል ጥያቄዎችን በሚፈን በአቅራቢያው በሚገኝ ወታደራዊ ማሰልጠኛ እና በወረዳው የሀጥታ ሃይል ድብደባ እና እስራት የሚፈጸምብን መሆኑና የመሳሰሉት የመብት ጥሰቶች እየደረሰብን ስለሆነ ተገቢው ማጣራት ተደርጎ መፍትሄ ይሰጠን በማለት የቀረበ አቤቱታ ነው።

በተጠሪ ድርጅት/ተቋም የተሰጠ ምላሽ

በቀረበው አቤቱታ መነሻነት አቤቱታው የቀረበለት በኢትዮጵያ ሰብዓዊ መብት ኮሚሽን የባህር ዳር ቅርንጫፍ ጽ/ቤት ጉዳዩን ለማጣራት ከቀን 30/12/2010 ዓ.ም ጀምሮ የምርመራ ቡድን በማቋቋም ወደ ቦታው ልኳል። ስለሆነም በኢትዮ አገሪ ሴፍት ጋ.የተ.የግ.ማህበር የብር እርሻ ልማት ስራ አስኪያጅ ጋር በቀን 01/13/2010 ዓ.ም በተደረገ ውይይት እና በቁጥር ብአል/ሂ.ጠ-ዳ1/6694/10 በቀን 02/13/2010 ዓ.ም በተጻፈ ደብዳቤ መሰረት በእርሻ ልማቱ ውስጥ 550 ቋሚ ሰራተኞች እና እንደ ወቅቱ ተለዋዋጭነቱ እንደተጠበቀ ሆኖ በአማካኝ እስከ 3000 የሚደርሱ ጊዜያዊ እና የቀን ሰራተኞች እንደሚኖሩ ጠቅሰው ስለጉዳዩ አንድ ባንድ እንደሚከተለው ምላሽ ተሰጥቷል።

1. የቀን እና ጊዜያዊ ሰራተኛ ክፍያን በተመለከተ ድርጅቱ አትራፊ ድርጅት በመሆኑ ከሰራተኛ ጋር የሚያዘው የስራ ውል የቀን ውሉን መሰረት ያደረገ ሳይሆን የተለካ ስራን /piece rate/ መሰረት ያደረገ በመሆኑ ሰራተኞች በሰራት የስራ መጠን ይከፈላቸዋል። በመሆኑም በአሁኑ ሰዓት እንደ ስራው ክብደት እና ቅለት መነሻ 35 ብር ሆኖ እስከ 60 ብር ድርስ ለአንድ የተለካ ስራ ይከፈላል። በዚህም መሰረት ጠንክራ ሰራተኛ በቀን ከአንድ በላይ የስራ ልኬት ከሰራ ክፍያውም በዚያው መጠን ይጨምራል። ከዚህ በተጨማሪ ሰራተኞች ለቀለብ በየወሩ 50 ኪ.ግ በቆሎ በ100 ብር ሂሳብ የሚያገኙ እና ህክምና በተመጣጣኝ ክፍያ በተቋሙ ውስጥ በሚገኘው መካከለኛ ክሊኒክ እንዲያገኙ ይደረጋል። ስለሆነም ድርጅታችን የተለያዩ ወጭዎች ስላሉበት እና አትራፊ ድርጅት በመሆኑ ክፍያ የሚፈጽመው ከአርሶ እደሮች ጋር በመነጻጸር ሳይሆን ትርፍና ኪሳራውን መሰረት በማድረግ ስለሆነ ተመጣጣኝ ነው የሚል ምላሽ ሰጥተዋል። ከዚህ በተጨማሪም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ለቀለብ በተመጣጣኝ ዋጋ የሚቀርብ በቆሎ ጥራት በተመለከተ 2ኛ ደረጃ በቆሎ ሲሆን የጥራት ችግር የሌለበት መሆኑ ተገልጿል።

2. የእርሻ ልማቱ የኢንቨስትመንት ስፋቱ 7800 ሄክታር ስፋት ያለው ቢሆንም የግል ሃብት ማፍራትን በተመለከተ የእርሻ ልማቱ በሊዝ አዋጅ መሰረት ከመንግስት

የተላለፈልን የኢንቨስትመንት ቦታ በመሆኑ እና በድርጅቱ እና ሰራተኞች መሰረታዊ ማህበር የህብረት ስምምነት መሰረት ከድርጅቱ ክልል ውጭ የግል ሃብት የማፍራት መብት እንደተጠበቀ ሆኑ በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ግን ከእርሻ ልማቱ ስራ ውጭ የግል ስራ መስራት የማይቻል በመሆኑ የተከለከለ ነው። በዚህም መሰረት በህብረት ስምምነቱ ላይ የተመለከተውን ግዴታ ተላልፎ የተገኘ ሰራተኛ በዲ.ሲ.ፒ.ሲ.ን ከጽሁፍ ማስጠንቀቂያ እስከ ስንብት የሚደርስ ቅጣት እንደሚያስቀጣ ተገልጿል።

3. የህጻናትን የጉልበት ብዝበዛን በተመለከተ ድርጅቱ የስራ ማስታወቂያ በሚያወጣበት ጊዜ ከ18 ዓመት በላይ የሚጠይቅ ቢሆንም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚገኙ እና የአካባቢው አርሶ አደር ወላጆች ለተለያዩ ወጭዎች እንዲያገኙ በሚል ጥያቄ እና ቅሬታ ስለሚያቀረቡ ከ14 ዓመት በላይ ያሉ ህጻናት በአጭር የስራ ሰዓት የሚጠናቀቅ ስራ የሚሰሩ መሆኑን የአካባቢው ማህበረሰብ ከፈቀደ ከ18 ዓመት በታች የሆኑ የህጻናት ስራ ሊቆም እንደሚችል ገልጸዋል።

4. በተቋሙ ውስጥ የሚገኙ መኖሪያ ቤቶችን በተመለከተ ለቋሚ ሰራተኞች እንደየ ሃላፊነት ደረጃቸው ንጽህናቸውን ጠብቀው የተገነቡ ቤቶች ሲኖሩ የቀን ሰራተኞችን መኖሪያ በተመለከተ ግን ከሳር ክፍን እና ከእንጨትና አፈር ክፍን የተሰሩ ቤቶች ሆነው ድርጅቱን በማስፈቀድ በራሳቸው መጠን እንደሚችሉ ተገልጿል። ይሁን እንጂ ቤቶቹ ደረጃቸውን የጠበቁ ባለመሆናቸው ደረጃቸውን የጠበቁ የቆርቆሮ ክፍን ያላቸው ቤቶች ስርቶ ለማኖር ታቅዶ እየተሰሩ ሲሆን በታች ብር በሆረሰቃ ካምፕ ተጀምሯል።

5. አረጋዊያንን በተመለከተ ቋሚ ሰራተኞች በጠረታ ሲገለሉ ከተቋሙ የሚወጡ ሲሆን ጊዜያዊ ሰራተኞች ሆነው ጉልበታቸው የደከሙ አረጋዊያን በቁጥር 50 /7ቱ በተለያዩ ምክንያት የሌሉ/ ያህሉ እስከ ህይወት ፍጻሜ ወይም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ እስካሉ ድረስ በየወሩ 25 ኪ.ግ በቆሎ ይሰጣቸዋል። ሌሎች 195 አረጋውያን በአድስ ተለይተው ከአለፉት 2 ወር ጀምሮ ለአንድ ዓመት ያክል በየወሩ 25 ኪ.ግ በቆሎ ድጋፍ እንዲደረግላቸው ተወስኖ ወደ ስራ ተገብቷል። እንዲሁም ቁጥራቸው ከ80 በላይ የሆኑ አረጋዊያን በምዕ/ኅጃም ሰራተኛና ማህበራዊ መምሪያ በኩል በየወሩ ለእያንዳንዳቸው ብር 300 ይከፈላቸዋል። ከዚህ በተጨማሪም በበዓላት ወቅት የበራ አርድ በማካሄድ በዓል በጋራ እንዲውሉ ይደረጋል።

የተሰበሰቡ ማስረጃዎች

ምርመራውን ለማጣራት ከሰራተኛ ማህበሩ አመራሮች ጋር ውይይት ያደረገን እና በጸሁፍ ምላሽ እንዲሰጡ የተደረገ ሲሆን በካይ/ባለ-ክ 9/ የሚገኙ መኖሪያ ቤቶችንና አረጋጊያን ያሉበትን ሁኔታ የሚያሳይ እካላዊ ምልክታ፣ የደሞዝ መክፈያ ፔርል ምልክታ እንዲሁም ስራ ላይ የነበሩ ጎጃምና በማሳላይ በልኬት ለሰራተኞች የሚሰጥን የስራ ቦታ /የሱፍ ሰብል አረም / መሰረት በማድረግ አስፈላጊ ማስረጃዎች ተሰበስበዋል። ከዚህ በተጨማሪም ከምዕራብ ጎጃም ዞን ሰራተኛና ማህበራዊ ጉዳይ ምምሪያ ተ/ኃላፊ ቃለ -መጠይቅ ተደርጓል። ስለሆነም የተሰበሰቡት ማስረጃዎች እንደሚከተለው ተዳሰዋል።

ከመሰረታዊ ሰራተኞች ማህበር የተገኙ፡-

የመሰረታዊ ሰራተኛ ማህበሩ አመራሮች ጋር በቀን 01/13/2010 ዓ.ም በተደረገ ውይይትና በቁጥር ብእል መ/ስ/ማ/234/10 በቀን 02/13/2010 ዓ.ም በተጻፈ ደብዳቤ በሰጡት ምላሽ መሰረት በሰራተኞች ማህበር እና በአሰሪ ድርጅቱ መካከል የተደረገው የህብረት ስምምነት ውል ለሦስት ዓመት የሚያገለግል ለአምስተኛ ጊዜ ግንቦት 2008 ዓ.ም የተሸሻለ እና ከጥቅምት 2011 ዓ.ም ጀምሮ ድርድር በማድረግ ግንቦት 2011 ዓ.ም ስድስተኛው የህብረት ስምምነት ጸድቆ ወደ ስራ እንደሚገባ ገልጸው የቀረበውን አቤቱታ በተመለከተ ዝርዝር ምላሽ ሰጥተዋል።

❖ የቀን ሰራተኞችን የስራ ክፍያ በተመለከተ በድርጅቱ የሚፈጸመው ክፍያ እነስተኛ እና የአካባቢውን አርሶ አደር የቀን ስራ ክፍያ ያላገናዘበ በመሆኑ የማህበሩም ጥያቄ ነው። የክፍያ መጠኑ ከብር 24 ወደ ብር 35 እንዲያድግ የተደረገው በቅርብ ጊዜ በሰራተኛ ማህበሩ ጥያቄ መሆኑን ገልጸዋል። አሁንም ቢሆን ክፍያው በጣም እነስተኛ እና ወቅታዊ የጉልበት ዋጋን ያላገናዘበ በመሆኑ ለአንድ ፒስ ሬት ወደ ብር 80 ከፍ እንዲል ለደርጅቱ ጥያቄ አቅርበው ያልተፈጸመ መሆኑን ጨምረው ገልጸዋል። ሰራተኛ ማህበሩ አሰሪውን ድርጅት አሳምኖ ክፍያውን እንዲሻሻል ያልተደረገበት ዋናው ምክንያት መንግስት ገዢዎች የቀን ስራ ክፍያ መጠን/ገዢዎች የደመወዝ መጠን/ ያልደነገገ በመሆኑ ምክንያት የተከሰተ መሆኑን ጠቅሰዋል።

❖ በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚኖሩ ሰራተኞች ኑሯቸውን ለመደገም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የግል ገቢ ማስገኛ ስራዎችን ለምሳሌ፣ እንስሳት ማድለብና ማርባት፣ የአትክልት ልማት እና መሰል የገቢ ማስገኛ ስራዎችን መስራት የተከለከለ መሆኑት በህብረ ስምምነት የተገደበ በመሆኑ የተከለከለ እና የሚያስቀጣ ተግባር ነው። ይሁን እንጂ የደርጅቱን

ጥቅም በማይጎዳ መልኩ በጊቤ ውስጥ የሚኖሩ ሰራተኞች ተጨማሪ የገቢ ማስገኛ ስራዎች ላይ እንዲሰማሩ እንዲፈቀድላቸው ሰራተኛ ማህበሩ ጥያቄ መሆኑን ገልጸዋል። በሌላ በኩል የድርጅቱ ሰራተኞች የተሻለ ገቢ ለማግኘት ከድርጅቱ ጊቤ ውጭ ወጥተው ስራ እንዲሰሩ የማይፈቀድላቸው የነበረ ሲሆን ድርጅቱ በምክንያትነት የሚያቀርበው የድርጅቱ ሰራተኞች ወደ ውጭ ወጥተው እንዲሰሩ ከተፈቀደላቸው የሰራተኛ እጥረት ያጋጥማል ከሚል ተገቢ ያልሆነ አስተሳሰብ ሲሆን ከቅርብ ጊዜ ወዲህ በትርፍ ጊዜያቸው መስራት ሲፈልጉ እንዲሰሩ በአሰሪው ድርጅት እና በሰራተኛ ማህበሩ ውይይት ተፈቀደላቸዋል ብለዋል።

❖ ቋሚ ሰራተኞች በጠረታ ከድርጅቱ በሚሰናበቱበት ጊዜ ከድርጅቱ ጊቤ እንደሚለቁና ቤት የመስራት አቅም ያላቸው በጃቢጠህናን ወረዳ ማንኩሳ ከተማ ቦታ እየተሰጣቸው ሰርተው እንደሚኖሩ ጠቅሰው ቤት ለመስራት አቅም የሌላቸው ሰራተኞች ግን ለችግር የተጋለጡና አንዳንዶቹ ለልመና ስራ የተጋለጡ እንዳሉ ጠቅሰዋል። በሌላ በኩል የድርጅቱ ጊዜያዊ እና የቀን ሰራተኞች ጠረታ የማያገኙና የመኖሪያ ቤት ቦታም የማያገኙ ስለሆነ እስከ እለተ ሞታቸው ድረስ በድርጅቱ ውስጥ በሚገኙ ጎጆ ቤቶች እንዲኖሩ ይደረጋል ብለዋል። በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የቀን ሰራተኞች የሚኖሩበት መኖሪያ ቤት ለኑሮ እጅግ አስቸጋሪ እና ምንም አይነት የመብራትና ውሃ አገልግሎት እንደማያገኙ ገልጸዋል። መኖሪያ ቤቶቹ የቆርቆሮ ክፍን የሌላቸው እና ለጥገና የሚሆን ቁሳቁስ ችግር በመኖሩ በክረምት ወቅት ከላይ ዝናብ የሚያፈሱ ከታች የሚመነጨ በመሆናቸው ለኑሮ ከባድ መሆኑን ጨምረው ገልጸዋል። ይሁን እንጂ በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የቆርቆሮ ቤቶችን ገንብቶ ለተጠቃሚው እንዲከፋፈሉ ለማድረግ በእቅድ ተይዟል።

❖ የህጻናትን ጉልበት ብዝበዛ በተመለከተ ድርጅቱ ህጻናትን ቀጥሮ የማሰራት ፍላጎት ባይኖረውም በወላጆች ፍላጎትና ግፊት በአቅማቸው እንዲሰሩ በማድረግ የአዋቂ ሰራተኞችን ግማሽ በቀን 25 ብር እየተከፈላቸው የሚሰሩ መሆኑን ጠቅሰው ከግማሽ ቀን የስራ ሰዓት የበለጠ እንደማይሰሩ አረጋግተዋል። በህጻናት የስራ ቅጥር ላይ ድርጅቱ ከ14 ዓመት በላይ ያሉትን የሚቀጥር ቢሆንም ጎጂና በማጭበርበር ያለ እድሜያቸው ስራ ሊሰሩ የሚችሉበት እድል እንደሚያጋጥም ገልጸዋል።

❖ ለሰራተኞች የሚቀርብ የበቆሎ ጥራትን በተመለከተ ደርጅቱ 15 ደረጃውን ለሽያጭ የሚያቀርብ ሲሆን 2ኛ ደረጃ በቆሎ በዝቅተኛ ዋጋ ለሰራተኞች የሚያቀርብ ሲሆን ህክምናን በተመለከተ በተመጣጣኝ ዋጋ ሰራተኛው በተቋሙ ውስጥ በሚገኘው ከሊኒክ ተጠቃሚ እንደሚደረጉ ገልጸዋል። ይሁን እንጂ በሀብረት ስምምነቱ

በተገለጸው መሰረት በቆሎ ለማግኘት በአንድ ወር ውስጥ ቢያንስ 20 ቀን የጉልበት ስራ እገልግሎት መስጠት እንዲሁም ህክምና ለማግኘት በድርጅቱ ውስጥ በወር 18 ቀን መስራት ግዴታ የተጣለባቸው መሆኑን ገልጸዋል።

❖ የስራ እድል ፈጠራን በተመለከተ ድርጅቱ ከሰብል ልማት እና ከእንስሳት ማድለብ ውጭ የሚሰራው የማኑፋክቸሪንግና የአግሮፕሮሰሲንግ ስራ ስለሌለ ለወጣቱ ከቀን የጉልበት ስራ ውጭ የተፈጠረ የስራ እድልም ይሁን የቴክኖሎጂ ሽግግር አለመኖሩን ገልጸዋል። ከዚህ በተጨማሪም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ በድርጅቱ ባለሀብት ተሰራ የተባለው ሁለተኛ ደረጃ ትምህርት ቤት በህዝብ ተሳትፎ የተሰራ መሆኑን አመልክተዋል።

❖ አረጋውያንን በተመለከተ በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ይሰሩ የነበሩ እና አሁን ለመስራት አቅም የሌላቸው ለፋሲካ እና ለአዲስ ዓመት ዘመን መለወጫ የበሬ እርድ እንደሚደረግላቸው መሆኑን እንዲሁም በቁጥር 87 አረጋዊያን በሰራተኛና ማህበራዊ ጉዳይ መምሪያ በኩል ለእያንዳንዳቸው በየወሩ ብር 300 ፣ 50 አረጋውያንን በድርጅቱ በቋሚነት የ25ኪ.ግ በቆሎ እና 195 አረጋውያን ለአንድ ዓመት ያክል 25 ኪ.ግ በቆሎ የሚሰጣቸው ቢሆንም በቂ አለመሆኑ ጨምረው ገልጸዋል።

❖ በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የመሰረታዊ ሰራተኛ ማህበሩ አመራሮችን ጨምሮ የሙብት ጥያቄ የሚያነሱ ግለሰቦች በአቅራቢያ በሚገኝ የብርሸለቆ ወታደሮች ድብደባ እና አፈና ይፈጸም የነበረ መሆኑን ነገር ግን ከ2010 ዓ.ም ሃገራዊ ለውጥ በኋላ የቆመ መሆኑን ገልጸዋል።

ከምዕ/ጎጃም ዞን ሰራተኛና ማህበራዊ ጉዳይ መምሪያ የተገኘ መረጃ

በእርሻ ልማቱ ውስጥ የሚገኙ ሰራተኞች ያነሱት የሙብት ጥያቄ በመምሪያው በኩል ለረጅም ጊዜ የሚታወቅና መፍትሄ ለማፈላለግም ከአሰሪ ድርጅቱና ከሚመለከታቸው አካላት ጋር ተደጋጋሚ ውይይት ቢደረግበትም ዘላቂ መፍትሄ ሊያገኝ አልቻለም። በተለይም የቀን ሰራተኛ ክፍያን በተመለከተ መንግስት ዝቅተኛ የቀን ስራ ክፍያ የሚደነግግ ህግ ባለመውጣቱ ክፍያው በድርጅቱ ፍላጎት ላይ ብቻ የተመሰረተ ሆኗል። ወቅታዊው የአካባቢ የቀን ስራ ክፍያ በጥናት የተለየ ባይሆንም ስራ በሚበዛበት ወቅት በእርሻ ስራ እስከ 100 ብር፣ በከተማ የቀን ስራ ከ70-90 ብር እንዲሁም ኢንቨስትመንት ባለበት አካባቢ እስከ 120 ብር ድረስ የቀን ውሎ ክፍያ እንደሚፈጸም ተገልጿል። ስለሆነም በብር እርሻ ልማት ድርጅት ውስጥ የሚፈጸም ክፍያ የአካባቢውን ዋጋ ያላጋናዘበ መሆኑ ዝቅተኛ ነው ብለዋል።

በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሀጻናትን ጉልበት ብዝበዛ በተመለከተ በወላጆች ግራትና በሀጻናቶች ፍላጎት ከሌላ ወረዳም ጭምር በስፋት ተቀጥረው የሚሰሩበት ሁኔታ ሲኖር የድርጅቱ ብቸኛ ችግር አለመሆኑን ገልጸዋል። በሌላ በኩል በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ሲመሰረት ጀምሮ የነበሩና የመጡበትን አካባቢ የማያውቁ አረጋውያን በርካታ ሲሆኑ የመስራት አቅማቸው ሲዳከም ያለጡረታ በመሰናበታቸው መኖሪያ ቤት የሌላቸው በመሆኑ በከፍተኛ ድህነት ውስጥ እየኖሩ ይገኛሉ ብለዋል። ይሁን እንጂ የእነዚህን አረጋውያን ችግር ለመቅረፍ በሰራተኛ ማህበሩ አመራሮች ለአረጋውያን የሚደረገውን ድጋፍ አስመልክቶ የሰጡትን ምላሽ ይጋራሉ። ነገር ግን ከክልሉ አረጋውያንን ማህበር ለዘነ የሚሰጠውን ድጋፍ ከፍተኛውን መጠን በእርሻ ልማቱ ውስጥ ለሚገኙ አረጋውያን የተሰጠ ቢሆንም ድጋፉ በቂ አልነበረም። ስለሆነም የአብክመ ሰራተኛና ማህበራዊ ጉዳይ ቢሮ ተጨማሪ አረጋውያንን ለመርዳት የሞከረ ቢሆንም ችግሩ አላሳቢ ስለሆነ አጥንቶ ለክልሉ መንግስት ለማቅረብ በዝግጅት ላይ እንደሚገኝ ገልጸዋል። በአጠቃላይ በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ለሚገኙ አረጋውያን በድርጅቱና በአረጋውያን ማህበር የሚደረገው ድጋፍ በቂ ባለመሆኑ ከወፍጮ ቤት ዱቄት እየተሰበሰባቸው እርዳታ የሚደረግላቸው አረጋውያን ዛሬም እንዳሉ ገልጸዋል። ከዚህ በተጨማሪም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ በቋሚነት ተቀጥረው የሚያገለግሉ ሰራተኞች በአንጻራዊነት የተሸለ መኖሪያ ቤት ያላቸው ሲሆን ነገር ግን ጊዜያዊ ሰራተኞች በተለይም አረጋውያን የሚኖሩባቸው ቤቶች ለመኖሪያነት ያልተመቹ ናቸው።

የድርጅቱ ሰራተኞች በድርጅቱ ክልል ውስጥ ምንም ዓይነት የግል ሃብት እንዳያፈሩ የእርሻ ልማቱ ጠንካራ አቋም ስላለው የተከለከለ ነው። ከዚህ በተጨማሪም ድርጅቱ አትራፊ በሆነ መጠን ለሰራተኞች የሚሰጥ ድጎማ ስላለ ምርትን ያለጫራታ የሚሸጥበት ሁኔታ ስላለ በሰራተኛው በኩል ቅሬታዎች ያስከትላል።

በምልከታ የተገኙ ማስረጃዎች

የምርመራ ቡድኑ የቀረቡ አንዳንድ ጉዳዮችን በምልከታ ለማረጋገጥ ጥረት ያደረገ ሲሆን በዚህም መሰረት፡-

- ❖ የሰራተኞችን የክፍያ መጠን ለማረጋገጥ በተደረገው ጥረት የዘመቻ/የቀን ሰራተኞች በየ15 ቀኑ የስራ ግብር ተቆርጦ እንደሚከፈላቸው እና በየወሩ የሚከፈላቸው ሰራተኞች ደግሞ የስራ ግብር፣ ለመዋለ-ሀጻናት፣ ለቅጣት/ላለ/፣ የህክምና፣ የስፖርት፣ የሰራተኛ ማህበር/አባል ከሆነ/፣ የጡረታ መዋጮ/ በጡረታ የሚሸፈን

ከሆነ/ እና የቡቆሎ ግዢ ክፍያ ተቆርጦባቸው ደመወዝ እንደሚሰጡ ከድርጅቱ የሂሳብ ክፍል ለማረጋገጥ ችለናል።

❖ በድርጅቱ ከቅርብ ርቀት ከሚገኘው ፍፍተ-ሠላም ከተማ የውሃና ፍሳሽ አገልግሎት ጽ/ቤት በቁጥር ቅጥ/01/249/10 በቀን 01/13/2010 ዓ.ም የወጣ የቅጥር ማስታወቂያ የቁፋሮ ጉልበት ስራተኛ በቀን 75 ብር ለመክፈል የቅጥር ማስታወቂያ እንደወጣ ለመመልከት ችለናል።

❖ ለደመወዝ ክፍያ ከተሰጠው ጎጂናት መካከል የተወሰኑትን በመምረጥ እድሜያቸውን ጠይቀን ለማረጋገጥ እንደቻልነው ከ10-12 ዓመት የሚሆናቸው ጎጂናት እንዳሉ የሚሰሩትም ለማግኘት ቀን ሆኖ ከ1:00 ሰዓት-6:00 ሰዓት ባለው ጊዜ ውስጥ እንደሆነ እና በፍላጎታቸው መሰረት ስራ የሚሰሩ መሆኑን አረጋግጠናል።

❖ ለአንድ የቀን ስራተኛ ተለክቶ የሚሰጥ ስራ/ፕሮጀክት/ መጠን ለመመልከት ከአንድ የእርሻ ልማቱ ንዑስ የእርሻ ልማት ተቆጣጣሪ የግብርና ባለሙያ በመያዝ የሱፍ ሰብል በምልከታ ለማረጋገጥ ጥረት ያደረግን ሲሆን በወቅቱ አንድ ፕሮጀክት የሚባለው በአንድ መስመር የተዘራ 700 ሜትር ርዝመት ያለው የሱፍ ሰብል በብር 50 እንደሚታረም እና የፕሮጀክቱ ርዝመት እየጨመረ በሄደ ቁጥር የሚከፈለው ክፍያ በዚያው ልክ እንደሚጨምር ሲቀንስም በዚያው ስራ ስራውን እንደሚቀንስ አብራርተውልናል። በተጨማሪም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ እንደ የስራው አይነትና ክብደት ክፍያው ከፍ እና ዝቅ ሊል እንደሚችል ገልጿል።

❖ የአረጋውያንን እና የጊዜያዊ ስራተኞችን መኖሪያ በተመለከተ ጉብኝት በተደረገበት ወቅት በተለይም በካይ/በሎክ9/ የተባለው የስራተኞች መኖሪያ ከሳር ክፍን የተሰሩ ጎጂ ቤቶች እና ጣሪያቸው ከእንጨትና ከጭቃ የተሰሩ ሳር የበቀለባቸው አልፎ አልፎ ዝናብ የሚያፈሉ ቤቶች መኖራቸውን አረጋግጠናል። በመኖሪያ ሰፈሮች አካባቢ ምንም አይነት የመብራትና የውሃ አገልግሎት ባለመኖሩ በኩራዝ እና ወራጅ ውሃ የሚጠቀሙበት ሁኔታ መኖሩን ለማረጋገጥ ችለናል። ስለሆነም ቤቶቹ ለረጅም ጊዜ ያገለገሉ ከመሆናቸውም በላይ ደረጃቸውን ያልጠበቁ ለሰው ልጅ መኖሪያነት የማይመቹ መሆኑን ተመልክተናል። በሌላ በኩል በዚህ አካባቢ የሚኖሩ አረጋውያን፣ በሽተኞች እና የአካል ጉዳተኞች በተጎሳቆላ ህይወት ውስጥ እንደሚኖሩ እና የሚተኙበትም ወለል ላይ ቅጠል እንጥፈው ያየን ሲሆን በድርጅቱ የተረሱ የማህበረሰብ ክፍሎች መሆናቸውን ለማረጋገጥ ችለናል። በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ከአረጋውያን መካከል ተረስተው ምንም አይነት ድጋፍ የማይደረግላቸው እንዳሉም ለመታዘብ ተችሏል። በበካይ አካባቢ የሚኖሩ ቤቶች ቁጥር ከ 800 በላይ

እንደሚሆኑ በምልክታው ወቅት የመሰረታዊ የሥራተኛ ማህበሩ ሊቀመንበር ገልጸዋል።

የሰነድ ማስረጃዎች

- ✓ በቱጥር ብሌጥ/ሂ.ጠ-ደ1/6694/10 በቀን 02/13/2010 ዓ.ም ከኢትዮ አግሪ ሴፍት ጋ.የተ.የግ.ማህበር የብር እርሻ ልማት በጽሁፍ የተሰጠ ምላሽ፤
- ✓ በቱጥር ብሌጥ መ/ሰ/ማ/234/10 በቀን 02/13/2010 ዓ.ም ከእርሻ ልማቱ መሰረታዊ ሥራተኛ ማህበር በጽሁፍ የተሰጠ ማስረጃ ፤

የተያዙ ጭብጦች

የምርመራ ቡድኑ ምርመራ ባካሄደበት በኢትዮ አግሪ ሴፍት ጋ.የተ.የግ.ማህበር የብር እርሻ ልማት ድርጅት ላይ የቀረበውን የሰብአዊ መብት አያያዝ ምን ይመስል እንደነበር ሊያስረዱ የሚችሉ መረጃዎችን በአካል በመመልከት፣ በቃለ መጠይቅ፣ በቡድን ውይይት፣ ከአካባቢ መረጃ፣ ከሰነድ ማስረጃ፣ ከፎቶ ማስረጃ እና ሌሎች መረጃውን ተዓማኒ የሚያደርጉ ስልቶችን ተጠቅሞ ሰብስቧል። የሰበሰበውን መረጃ በተገቢው ሁኔታ በማደራጀት ያገኛቸውን ጭብጦች እንደሚከተለው ለይቷል።

1. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚፈጸመው የጉልበት ዋጋ ክፍያ አካባቢያዊ የገበያ ዋጋን ታላቢ ያደረገ ነበር ወይስ አልነበረም?
2. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚሰሩ ኅጻናት የጉልበት ብገበዛ ደርሶባቸዋል ወይስ አልደረሰባቸውም?
3. ጊዜያዊ የቀን ሰራተኞች በትርፍ ጊዜያቸው ከድርጅቱ ውጭ የቀን ስራ እንዲሰሩ እንዲሁም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ በመኖሪያ ቤታቸው አካባቢ በገቢ ማስገኛና በግል ሃብት ማፍራት ስራዎች ላይ እንዲሰማሩ ይፈቀዳል/አይፈቀድም?
4. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚኖሩ ጊዜያዊና የቀን ሰራተኞች መኖሪያ ቤትን ጨምሮ ምቹ የስራ አካባቢ ተፈጥሮላቸዋል/አልተፈጠረላቸውም?
5. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚኖሩ አረጋዊያንን የሚደረግላቸው ድጋፍ ችግር ፈች ነበር/አልነበረም?

6. የእርሻ ልማት ድርጅቱ በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ትርፍ እና ምርታማነትን ከማሳደግ ባለፈ የእውተት ሽግግር በማድረግ የአካባቢውን ማህበረሰብ በዘላቂነት ተጠቃሚ እድርገል/አላደረገም?
7. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚገኙት ሰራተኞች የሚያነሱት የመብት ጥያቄ በህግ አግባብ ይፈታል/አይፈታም?

ትንታኔ

የእ.ተ.ዮ. አገሪ ሴፍት ጋ.የተ.የግ.ማህበር በሃገር አቀፍ ደረጃ በግብርና የእርሻ ልማት ላይ በሰራው ተሰማርቶ ትርፋማነቱን በዘላቂነት እያረጋገጠ ያለ የቤ.ስነስ ተቋም ነው። በዚህም መሰረት የብር የእርሻ ልማት ኢንቨስትመንት በሚከናወንበት አካባቢ የሚገኙ ሰራተኞች መብቶቻቸውን ከኢ.ፌ.ዲ.ሪ ህገ-መንግስት፣ ከአለም አቀፍ የሰብዓዊ መብት ቃል ኪዳን ድንጋጌዎች፣ ከፌዴራል ኢንቨስትመንት አዋጅ፣ ከአሰሪና ሰራተኛ አዋጅ፣ ከግል ድርጅት ጠረታ አዋጅ /ማሻሻያ/ እንዲሁም የህብረት ስምምነታቸውን መሰረት በማድረግ በጭብጥነት በተያዙ ነጥቦች ላይ እንደሚከተለው ተተንትነዋል።

1. በድርጅቱ የሚከፈል የጉልበት ዋጋን በተመለከተ አካባቢያዊ ክፍያ ታሳቢ ያደረገ ነበር ወይስ አልነበረም የሚለውን በተመለከተ በኢ.ፌ.ዲ.ሪ ህገ-መንግስት አንቀጽ 9/4/ መሰረት የሃገራችን የህግ አካል ተደርገው የተቀበልናቸው አለም አቀፍ ስምምነቶች የስራ ላይ ክፍያን በተመለከተ ሰፊ ባለ መልኩ ያስቀምጣሉ። በዚህም መሰረት በሁሉን አቀፍ የሰብዓዊ መብት መግለጫ አንቀጽ 23 (2) (3) እንዲሁም በኢኮኖሚ፣ ማህበራዊና ባህላዊ መብቶች አለም አቀፍ ቃልኪዳን ስምምነት አንቀጽ 7/ሀ/1/ እና ንዑስ አንቀጽ (ለ) ቃል በቃል እንደሚያትቱት “ማንም ሰው ያለምንም ልዩነት ለተመሳሳይ ስራ ተመሳሳይ ክፍያ የማግኘት መብት እንዳለው እንዲሁም በስራ ላይ ለሰራተኞች የሚሰጥ ክፍያ እኩል ዋጋ ላለው ስራ ተገቢ እና እኩል ክፍያ ሊፈጸም እንደሚገባ በተጠቀሱት ስምምነቶች ላይ ተመላክቷል። በጭብጥነት ወደ ተያዘው ጉዳይ ሲገባ ግን የብር የእርሻ ልማት ድርጅት ለአንድ ሰራተኛ የተመጠነ ስራ ተለክቶ በመስጠት ለአንድ ስራ 35 ብር እንደሚከፍልና እንደ ሰራተኛው ትጋት ከተመጠነው ስራ በላይ የሚሰራ ደግሞ ክፍያው በዚያው ልክ እንደሚጨመር የገለጸ ቢሆንም የድርጅቱ ሰራተኞች ተመጥኖ የተሰጠ ነው የሚባለው ስራ አንድ ሰራተኛ ከአንድ ምጣኔ በላይ ሊሰራ የማይችልበትና አድካሚ በመሆኑ የቀን ስራ ክፍያቸው ብቻውን መወጣት ለሚችል ጠንካራ ሰራተኛ 35 ብር እንዲሁም አንድ ምጣኔን ለሁለት የሚሰሩ ሰራተኞች ደግሞ 17.50 ብር የቀን ክፍያቸው መሆኑን የገለጹ ሲሆን ከድርጅቱ ውጭ ለተመሳሳይ ስራ የሚከፈለው የጉልበት ዋጋ ክፍያ ከብር 100-120 የሚደርስ ሲሆን ከተማ

ላይ የሚከፈለው የተን ዋጋ ክፍያ ደግሞ 70-90 ብር መሆኑን ለማረጋገጥ ችለናል። በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የጉልበት ዋጋ ክፍያ መጠን የሚወሰነው በድርጅቱ ፍላጎት ላይ ብቻ የተመሰረተ ሲሆን በአለም የስራ ድርጅት አንድ ሃገር ዝቅተኛ የቀን የጉልበት ዋጋ ክፍያ መጠንን በህግ እንዲወሰን የሚያስገድድ ቢሆንም በሃገራችን ደረጃ ዝቅተኛው የጉልበት ዋጋ አልተደነገገም። ስለሆነም የእርሻ ልማት ድርጅቱ ለስራተኞች በእርሻ ስራ ላይ የሚከፍለው ክፍያ እካባቢያዊ ጉልበት ክፍያ ዋጋንና ወቅታዊ የገበያ ሁኔታውን ያላገናዘበ እና አነስተኛ ከመሆኑ ጋር በተያያዘ በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚሰሩ ቋሚ ያልሆኑ ሰራተኞች ኑሯቸውን በአስከሬ ድህነት ውስጥ እንዲመሩ የተገደዱ መሆኑን የምርመራ ቡድኑ ያረጋገጠ በመሆኑ በእርሻ ልማት ድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚከፈለው የጉልበት ዋጋ ክፍያ እካባቢያዊ የገበያ ዋጋን ግንዛቤ ውስጥ ያላስገባና አነስተኛ መሆኑን ከድምጻችን ላይ ለመድረስ ተችሏል። ከዚህም በተጨማሪም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ አንድ ሰራተኛ በዝቅተኛ ዋጋ 2ኛ ደረጃ በቆሎ ለማግኘት 20 ቀን በወር ውስጥ መስራት እንዳለበት በህብረት ስምምነታቸው ግዴታ የሚጥል ሲሆን የህክምና አገልግሎት ለማግኘት ደግሞ 18 ቀን የግድ መስራት እንዳለበት የተቀመጠው ገደብ የዜጎችን የመኖር ህልውና የሚፈታተን ችግር መሆኑን በተደረገው ማጣራት ለማረጋገጥ ተችሏል።

2. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚሰሩ ህጻናትን የጉልበት ብገበዛ በተመለከተ በኢ.ፌ.ዲ.ሪ ህገ-መንግስትም ይሁን በተሸሻለው የአብዛኛ ህገ-መንግስት አንቀጽ 36/1/መ/፣ በአለም አቀፍ የህጻናት መብት ስምምነት አንቀጽ 32(1) እና(2)/ሀ/እና/ለ/፣ በአፍሪካ ህጻናትና ደህንነት ቻርተር አንቀጽ 15(1) እና (2/ሀ) እንዲሁም በአሰሪና ሰራተኛ አዋጅ 377/96 አንቀጽ 89/2/ መሰረት ህጻናትን የሚመለከቱ የተመረጡ ድንጋጌዎች ናቸው። ስለሆነም በህገ-መንግስቱ መሰረት ጎጂና ጉልበታቸውን ከሚበዘብዝ ልማዳዊ አሰራር የመጠበቅ እንዲሁም በጤናቸው እና በደህንነታቸው ላይ አደጋ ሊያደርስ ከሚችል ስራ የመጠበቅ መብት እንዳላቸው የተደነገገ ሲሆን በሌላ በኩል በአፍሪካ ህጻናትና ደህንነት ቻርተር ማናቸውም ህጻናት እካሉንና አዕምሮን ሊጉዳ ከሚችል ኢኮኖሚያዊ የጉልበት ብገበዛ የመጠበቅ መብት እንዳለው በግልጽ የሚያመለክት ቢሆንም በእርሻ ልማት ድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚሰሩ ጎጂና በቤተሰብ ጫና ጭምር የሚከናወን ቢሆንም ድርጅቱ እድሜያቸው ከ14 ዓመት በታች የሆኑ ጎጂና በስራ ላይ እንደማያሳትፍ የገለጸ ሲሆን ለህጻናት የጉልበት ስራ እንዲያከናውኑ ዋናው ምክንያት ለቤተሰቦቻቸው በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚከፈለው አነስተኛ የጉልበት ዋጋ መሆኑን ከድርጅቱ፣ ከሰራተኞችና ከመሰረታዊ ሰራተኛ ማህበሩ ለመረዳት ተችሏል። በሌላ በኩል በድርጅቱ በኩል የስራ የእድሜ ገደብ እንዳለ የተመለከተ ቢሆንም የምርመራ ቡድኑ ስራውን በሚያከናውንበት ወቅት የጉልበት ዋጋ ክፍያ ለመቀበል በተሰጣበት ወቅት

ጎጃናትን የተወሰኑትን መርጦ ባንጋገረበት ጊዜ እድሜያቸው 10 ዓመት እና 12 ዓመት የሆኑት ጎጃናት በጉልበት ስራ ላይ የተሳተፉ መሆኑን ለማረጋገጥ የቻለ ሲሆን ህጻናትን በጉልበት ስራ እንዲሰማሩ በማድረግ በኩል የወላጆች ተጽዕኖ ጭምር መኖሩንም ለማረጋገጥ ተችሏል።

3. ጊዜያዊ የቀን ሰራተኞች በትርፍ ጊዜያቸው ክድርጅቱ ውጭ የቀን ስራ እንዲሰሩ እንዲሁም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ በመኖሪያ ቤታቸው አካባቢ በገቢ ማስገኛ ስራ መስራትንና የግል ሃብት ማፍራትን በተመለከተ በኢ.ፌ.ዲ.ሪ ህገ መንግስት አንቀጽ 40፣ በኢ.ኮ.ኖ.ሚ፣ ማህበራዊ ባህላዊ መብቶች ቃል ኪዳን ስምምነት አንቀጽ 6/1፣ በሁሉን አቀፍ የሰብአዊ መብት መግለጫ አንቀጽ 17 እንዲሁም በኢንቨስትመንት አዋጅ 769/2004 አንቀጽ 5 ላይ እንደተመለከተው ዜጎች የግል ንብረት ባለቤት የመሆን እና የማፍራት መብት እንዳላቸው ተደንገገው ይገኛሉ። በኢንቨስትመንት ዘርፍ ላይ የሚሰማሩ ባለሃብቶች በስራቸው ላሉ ሰራተኞች ቀጣይነት ያለው የኢ.ኮ.ኖ.ሚያዊ እና ማህበራዊ ልማት እንዲሰፋሩ በማድረግ የህዝቦችን የኑሮ ደረጃ ማሻሻል እንዳለበት መሰረት የሚጥል እንደሆነ ከአላማዎች መካከል የሚጠቀስ ነው። ሆኖም ግን የብር እርሻ ልማት ድርጅት በስራ ያሉ ሰራተኞች ህይወታቸውን ሊደገሙበት የሚችል የግል ስራ መስራት እንደማይቻል በህብረት ስምምነት ህግ ሆኖ እንዲወጣ በማድረግ በግል ስራ ላይ ተሰማርቶ የሚገኝ አስተዳደራዊ እርምጃ እንደሚወሰድበት ተመለክቷል። በዚህም መሰረት የድርጅቱ ዋና አላማው ሰራተኛው የጎንዮሽ ጥቅም እያገኘ እንዲያደግ ከማድረግ ይልቅ ሰራተኛውን ደሃ አድርጎ ትርፍ የሚሰበስብ የንግድ ደርጅት አስመስሎታል። ስለሆነም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚገኝ ሰራተኛ ወደ ውጭ ወጥቶ ስራ እንዳይሰራ የሚገድብና በድርጅቱ ውስጥም የሚኖርበት አካባቢ በገቢ ማስገኛ ዘርፎች ላይ እንዳይሰማሩ የሚከለክል ድርጅት መሆኑን ለማረጋገጥ ችለናል።

4. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚኖሩ ጊዜያዊ እና የቀን ሰራተኞች የመኖሪያ አካባቢን ጨምሮ ምቹ የስራ አካባቢ መፍጠርን በተመለከተ በሁሉን አቀፍ የሰብአዊ መብት መግለጫ አንቀጽ 25/1፣ በኢ.ኮ.ኖ.ሚ፣ ማህበራዊ እና ባህላዊ መብቶች ቃል ኪዳን ስምምነት አንቀጽ 11/1/ እንዲሁም በህብረት ስምምነታቸው አንቀጽ 40 እና ተከታዮቹ ሰራተኞች መኖሪያ ቤትን ጨምሮ ለራሱ እና ለቤተሰቡ በቂ በሆነ የኑሮ ደረጃ ለማኖር እንዲሁም የኑሮ ደረጃውን ለማሻሻል የሚያስችል አሰራር ሊዘረጋ እንደሚገባው በአለም አቀፍ ስምምነቶች ላይ የተመለከተበት ሁኔታ ያለ ሲሆን በብር እርሻ ልማት ድርጅት እና በሰራተኛ ማህበሩ መካከል በተደረገው ህብረት ስምምነት ሰራተኞች የመኖሪያ ቤት፣ መብራትና ውሃ እንዲሁም ለድርጅቱ ስራ አስፈላጊ ቁሳቁሶች ሊሟሉ እንደሚገባ ስምምነት ላይ የተደረሰ መሆኑን ከላይ በተጠቀሰው አንቀጽ ተመለክቷል። ሆኖም ግን በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ቋሚ በሆኑ

ሰራተኞች እና ቋሚ ባልሆኑ ሰራተኞች መካከል ከመሰረተ-ልማት ማሟላት ጀምሮ እስከ ሚኖሩበት ቤት ድረስ የሚዘልቅ ልዩነት ያለው አሰራር መኖሩን ለመገንዘብ ችለናል። ይኸውም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ቋሚ ሰራተኞች የሚኖሩበት ቤት ቋሚ ካልሆኑት የተሸለ ሲሆን የመብራትና የውሃ አገልግሎት ተጠቃሚ ሲሆኑ በሌላ በኩል ቋሚ ያልሆኑ ሰራተኞች የሚኖሩበት ቡካይ/ዞን 9 ተብሎ የሚጠራው አካባቢ ምንም አይነት የመሰረተ-ልማት/ውሃና መብራት/ የሌለው ከመሆኑም በተጨማሪ ቤቶቹ ለመኖር በጣም አስቸጋሪ የሳር ክፍያ እና የፈራረሱ ሲሆን ከላይ ዝናብ እንዲሁም ከመሬት ምንጭ ያለባቸው ለመኖር አስቸጋሪ ከመሆናቸውም ባሻገር ቋሚ እና ቋሚ ባልሆኑ ሰራተኞች መካከል በግልጽ የሚታይ ልዩነት ያለ መሆኑን ለማረጋገጥ ችለናል።

5. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚኖሩ አረጋውያንን ድጋፍ በተመለከተ እነዚህ አረጋውያን ድርጅቱ በመንግስት ይዞታነት ውስጥ አያለ ከምስረታ ጀምሮ ለድርጅቱ እድገት የማይናቅ ሚና የነበራቸው ሲሆን በህግ ያላቸውን መብት አስመልክቶ በኢ.ፌ.ዲ.ሪ ህገ-መንግስት አንቀጽ 41/5/ መሰረት አረጋውያንን መንግስት አቅም በፈቀደ መጠን የመንከባከብ ግዴታ እንዳለበት ይደነግጋል። ይሁን እንጅ በብር እርሻ ልማት ድርጅት ውስጥ ከ350 ያላነሱ መስራት የማይችሉ አረጋውያን የሚገኙ ሲሆን የሚሰጣቸው ድጎማም ለ50 አረጋውያን ወርሃዊ ቀለብ ከድርጅቱ 25 ኪ.ግ በቆሎ እስከ ህይወታቸው ፍጻሜ፣ 87 አረጋውያን ደግሞ በሰራተኛና ማህበራዊ ጉዳይ መምሪያ በኩል 300 ብር ወርሃዊ ክፍያ ከአረጋውያን ማህበር የሚሰጣቸው፣ 195 አረጋውያን ደግሞ ከቅርብ ጊዜ ጀምሮ ለ19መት በየወሩ 25 ኪ.ግ በቆሎ የሚደገፍ እንዲሁም ቀሪ አረጋውያን ተረስተው በድርጅቱም ሆነ በመንግስት ድጋፍ እየተደረገላቸው ባለመሆናቸው ከወፍጮ ቤት ዱቄት እየተለመኑላቸው የሚኖሩ መሆኑን ለማረጋገጥ የቻልን ሲሆን የእርሻ ልማት ድርጅቱ እነዚህ አረጋውያን ለዚህ ችግር መዳረግ ትልቅ አስተዋጽኦ የነበረው መሆኑን ለማረጋገጥ ተችሏል። ከላይ በድርጅቱ እና በአረጋውያን ማህበር የሚደረገው ድጋፍም በቂ አለመሆኑን ለመገንዘብ ተችሏል።

6. የእርሻ ልማት ድርጅቱ ትርፍን ከማሳደግ ባለፈ አካባቢያዊ የእውቀት ሽግግርን በማስፋፋት ያበረከተው አስተዋጽኦ በተመለከተ በኢንቨስትመንት አዋጁ 769/2004 አንቀጽ 5 ከዋና ዋና ዓላማዎች መካከል ወደ ስራ የሚሰማራ ኢንቨስተር ለኢትዮጵያውያን ሰፊ የስራ እድል በመፍጠር ለአገሪቱ እድገት የሚያስፈልገውን የቴክኖሎጂ ሽግግር እንዲስፋፋ በማድረግ የምርትና ምርታማነትን ማስፋፋት እንዳለበት በግልጽ ያመለክታል። ይሁን እንጅ የብር እርሻ ልማት ደርጅት በእርሻ ስራ ኢንቨስትመንት ላይ ተሰማርቶ የሚገኝ ደርጅት ቢሆንም የሚያመርታቸውን ጥሬ እቃዎች በማቀነባበር ተጨማሪ የስራ እድል መፍጠር እና የቴክኖሎጂ ሽግግር ማድረግ እየቻለ እንዲሁም ካለው ልምድ በመነሳት በአካባቢው የሚገኙ

በተመሳሳይ ዘርፍ ላይ የተሰማሩ ግለሰቦችን ማስተሳሰር አቅም ቢኖረውም ከሰብል እና እንስሳት ከማድለብ ውጭ የተፈጠረ ሰፊ የሥራ እድልም ሆነ የእውቀት ሽግግር አለመኖሩን ለመገንዘብ ችለናል።

7. በድርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚነሱ የሙብት ጥያቄዎች ምላሽ የሚያገኝበትን አግባብ በተመለከተ በኢ.ፌ.ዲ.ሪ ህገ መንግስት አንቀጽ 42/1/ሀ/ እና በአሰሪና ሰራተኛ አዋጅ 377/96 መሰረት ሰራተኞች ከአሰሪዎችና ጥቅማቸውን ከሚነኩ ሌሎች ድርጅቶች ጋር የመደራደር መብት እንዳላቸው መነሻ በማድረግ በመሰረታዊ የሰራተኛ ማህበር እና በአሰሪ ድርጅት /አግሪ ሴፍት ብር እርሻ ልማት/ መካካል ለ5ኛ ጊዜ የተደረገ ህብረት ስምምነት መፈረሙን ለማረጋገጥ ችለናል። የዚህ ህብረት ስምምነት ዋና አላማም እርሻ ልማቱ የሰው ሃይሉ በእርሻ ልማቱ አካባቢ ወጥ የሆነ አሰራር እንዲኖር፣ ብቃት፣ ጥራትና ተነሳሽነት ያለው የሰው ሃይል ለመፍጠር፣ ለማሰማራት እንዲሁም ለማቆየት በሚያስችል ሁኔታ ውስጥ ወሳኝ ሚና መጫወት መሆኑ ተመላክቷል። ሆኖም ግን የሰራተኛው ጥያቄዎች በህብረት ስምምነት ምላሽ በማይሰጥበት ወቅት የሚነሱ ጥያቄዎች በህግ አግባብ የሰራተኛውን መብት በማይገድብ መልኩ ምላሽ መስጠት ሲገባ ሰብዓዊ መብትን በሚያጣብብ እንዲሁም በድርጅቱ ላይ ቅሬታ ሊያስነሳ የሚያስችል ተገቢነት የሌላቸው ተግባራት ይፈጸሙ የነበረ መሆኑን አረጋግጠናል።

ምክረ-ሃሳቦች

1ኛ. የኢትዮ አግሪ ሴፍት የብር እርሻ ልማት ድርጅት ወቅታዊ የአካባቢውን የገበያ ዋጋ ግምት ውስጥ ያስገባ ክፍያ በመክፈል የሰራተኛውን ኢኮኖሚያዊ ተጠቃሚነት አብሮ ከድርጅቱ ትርፋማነት ጋር አጣጥሞ ሊሰራ ይገባል። መንግስትም የሰራተኞችን መብት ሀጋዊ ዋስትና እንዲያገኝ ዝቅተኛ የቀን የጉልበት ዋጋ ክፍያ መጠንን በህግ ሊወስን ይገባል።

2ኛ. የእርሻ ልማት ድርጅቱ የህጻናት የጉልበት ስራ ምንጩ በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ከሚከፈለው ዝቅተኛ ክፍያ ጋር በተያያዘ ወላጆች ቤተሰብ ለማስተዳደር ባለመቻላቸው እየተፈጠረ ያለ ችግር በመሆኑ የወላጆቻቸውን ክፍያ ተመጣጣኝ በማድረግ ሊቀርፈው ይገባል።

3ኛ. ድርጅቱ እስካሁን እየሄደበት ያለው ሰራተኞችን አደህይቶ የመያዝ አሰራር ሊቀየር ግድ ይላል። ሰራተኛው በስራው አምኖበት እንዲሁም ረክቶ እንጂ በኢኮኖሚያዊ ችግር ውስጥ በማስገባት ሰራተኛን መያዝ ይቻላል የሚለው አስተሳሰብ ሊቀየር ይገባል። ድርጅቱ ከሚያተርፈው ትርፋማነት አኳያ ሲታይ ለሰራተኞች እያደረገ ያለው ስራ በቂ ነው ተብሎ ሊወሰድ የማይችል ስለሆነም የግል ጋብትና ንብረት የማፍራትና የመስራት ህገ-መንግስታዊ

መብታቸው ሊከበርላቸው ይገባል። በመሆኑም የግል ሃብትና ንብርት የማፍራት መብትን የሚገድበው የህብረት ስምምነት ተፈጻሚነት እንዲቀር ወይም እንዲሻሻል ሊደረግ ይገባል።

4. ድርጅቱ ቋሚ በሆኑና ባልሆኑ ሰራተኞች መካከል እየፈጠረ ያለውን ሰፊ ልዩነት ሊፈታ ይገባል፤ ይኸውም በካይ ተብሎ በሚጠራው አካባቢ የሚኖረውን የሰራተኛ አኗኗር ወርዶ ሊያየው የሚገባ ሲሆን መብራት እና የወራጅ ውሃ የሚጠቀሙ ግለሰቦች ችግር ፈጣን ምላሽ ሊሰጠው ይገባል። በተጨማሪም በዚህ አካባቢ ለሚገኙ ሰራተኞች መኖሪያ በቶቻቸው ለኑሮ ምቹ እንዲሆኑ በቆርቆሮ ክፍን ሊገነቡላቸው ይገባል።

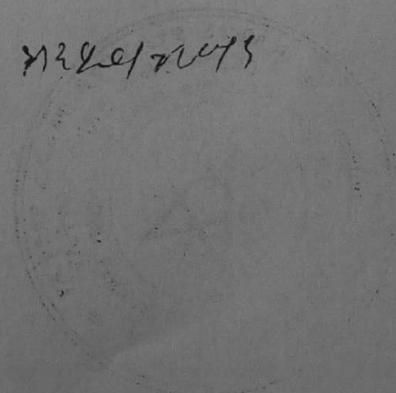
5. አረጋውያንን የመደገፉ ስራ የተጀመረ ቢሆንም በቂ ነው ተብሎ አይወሰድም። ስለሆነም በድርጅቱ ውስጥ ለችግር ድርብ ተጋላጭ የሆኑ የማህበረሰብ ክፍሎች መኖራቸውን በጉብኝት ወቅት ለማረጋገጥ የተቻለ በመሆኑ ድጋፍ የሚያስፈልጋቸውን አረጋውያን የመለየት ስራ በመስራት ከኑሮው ውድነት ጋር የተጣጣመ ድጋፍ ሊደረግላቸው ይገባል። የክልሉ ሰራተኛና ማህበራዊ ጉዳይ ቢሮም አረጋውያንን በመጎብኘትና በጥናት በማስደገፍ ተገቢው ድጋፍ እንዲደረግላቸው ጥረት ሊያደርግ ይገባል።

6. ድርጅቱ ግዙፍ የኢንቨስትመንት ስራ የሚያከናውን እንደመሆኑ መጠን አዳዲስ የእውቀት ሽግግር በማድረግ ከድርጅቱ ሰራተኞች አልፎ የአካባቢውን ማህበረሰብ ተጠቃሚ የሚያደርግና በአካባቢው ማህበረሰብ በማይከናወኑ ተግባራት ላይ ለምሳሌ የግብርና ምርት ማቀናበሪያ ላይ በማተኮር ሰፊ የስራ እድል ለመፍጠር የሚያስችለውን የአሰራር ስርዓት ሊያዳብር ይገባል። መንግስትም የኢንቨስትመንት ስራውን በቅርብ በመከታተልና በመደገፍ የእርሻ ልማቱ ለአካባቢው ማህበረሰብ የእውቀት ሽግግር እንዲፈጥር ተገቢውን ጥረት ማድረግ ይጠበቅበታል።

7. በደርጅቱ ውስጥ የሚነሱ የመብት ጥያቄዎች ዲሞክራሲያዊ እና በሰላጠና አግባብ የሚፈቱበት እንዲሁም የሃይል አማራጭ የችግር መፍቻ ተደርጎ ሊወሰድ አይገባም። ስለሆነም በሰራተኛውም ሆነ በሰራተኛ ማህበሩ የሚነሱ የመብት ጥያቄዎች በውይይት እና በድርድር ሊፈቱ ይገባል።

ሥራ ስንደርግ

የሥራ ስንደርግ



ለብር እርሻ ልማት ብር

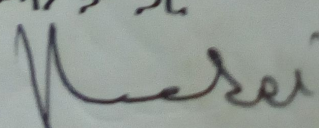
ጉዳዩ፡- የስራ ስምሪትን ይመለከታል!

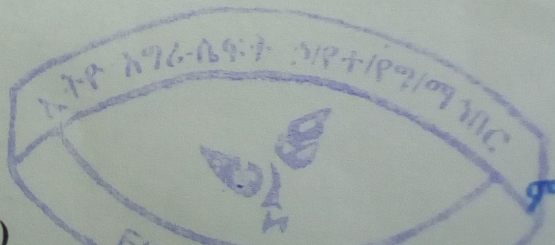
ከባንያችን በወቅታዊ የመስክ ስራዎች ላይ ለመሰማራት የሚፈልጉ ማናቸውም የአካባቢው ነዋሪዎችም ይሁኑ በዘመቻ መልክ ከክልሉ የተለያዩ ዞንና ወረዳዎች እንዲሁም አጎራባች ክልሎች ለሚመጡ ስራ ፈላጊዎች ሙሉ ጤነኛ እና ዕድሜያቸው 18 እና ከዚያ በላይ የሆኑትንና ስራውን በራሳቸው ለማከናወን ሙሉ ፍላጎት ያላቸው መሆኑን በማረጋገጥ ለረጅም ዓመት በስራ ላይ ሲያስማሩ ቆይቷል።

ይህ በእንዲህ እንዳለ በልማቱ ውስጥ ያሉ ቋሚና ጊዜያዊ ሠራተኞች ልጆቻቸው በትምህርት የዕረፍት ጊዜያቸው ለራሳቸው ተጨማሪ ፍላጎት ማሟያ ይሆናቸዋል በሚል በየጊዜው በሚያቀርቡት ጥያቄ ተዕዕኖ ምክንያትና የዞንና የወረዳ ስራ አስፈጻሚዎች በተለይም የሠራተኛና ማጎበራዊ ጉዳይ ቢሮ አመራሮች ዕውቅና ታክሎብት ዕድሜያቸው 14 እና ከዚያ በላይ የሆናቸው ታዳጊ ወጣት ስራ ፈላጊዎችም የስራ ዕድሉ ተጠቃሚ እንዲሆኑ ሲደረግ ቆይቷል።

ሆኖም ይህ አሰራር በተለይም የኢትዮጵያ ሰብዓዊ መብቶች ኮምሽን ባህርዳር ቅርንጫፍ ጽ/ቤት በመስክ ምልክታ ያረጋገጥኩት ነው በማለት በቁጥር ኢስመኮ/በቅ/ም/07/4337 መስከረም 23 ቀን 2011 ዓ.ም. ባወጣው ሪፖርት ዕድሜያቸው ከ10 - 12 ዓመት የሆናቸው ህፃናት በስራ ላይ ተሰማርተው መገኘታቸውን በመጥቀስ ተገቢ ያልሆነ አሰራር መሆኑን አመለክቷል።

ከባንያችን በዚህ ረገድ በየትኛውም መልኩ የማይሸራረፍ አቋም ያለው ሲሆን አሁንም ይህ ደብዳቤ ወጭ ከተደረገበት ቀን ጀምሮ በየትኛውም ወቅታዊ የመስክ ስራ ላይ የሚሰማሩ ስራ ፈላጊዎች ዕድሜያቸው 18 እና ከዚያ በላይ ብቻ የሆናቸው መሆኑ እንዲረጋገጥ ከዚህ በፊት በቃልና ህዳር 15 ቀን 2008 ዓ.ም. በቁጥር ኢ.አ.ሴ./አስ-144/2008 ዓ.ም. በተፃፈ ደብዳቤ መመሪያ የተሰጠበትን አሁንም ይህ ጥብቅ መመሪያ የተላለፈ መሆኑን እያስታወቅን፤ ይህ ሳይሆን ቀርቶ በየትኛውም አግባብ ከተጠቀሰው ዕድሜ በታች ቅጥር ተፈፅሞ ህፃናት ወደ ስራ ተሰማርተው በተገኙበት ልማት የልማቱ ሥራ አስኪያጅ፣ የአስተዳደርና ሠራተኛ ግንኙነት ዋና ክፍል ኃላፊ፣ የእርሻ ዋና ክፍል ኃላፊና የን/አ/ኃላፊዎች ላይ የማያዳግም አስተዳደራዊ ዕርምጃ ለመውሰድ ከባንያው የሚገደደ መሆኑን እናስታውቃለን።

ከሠላምታ ጋር




- ግልባጭ፣**
- ለዋና ሥራ አስኪያጅ
 - ለም/ዋና ሥራ አስኪያጅ (አ.አ.አ. ዘርፍ)
 - ለኃላፊ/ኃ/ልማት

ምክር ደገቢ
ም/ዋና ሥራ አስኪያጅ
አፕሪል 2011 ዓ.ም.