

# **Resettlement Revisited: The Post-Resettlement Assessment in Biftu Jalala Resettlement Site**

**Shumete Gizaw\***

## **Abstract**

Ethiopia had been facing a series of food shortages in history. In addressing this problem, the country has developed and been exercising arrays of development policies and strategies, among which resettlement is one to be mentioned. Resettlement programmes undertaken by different regimes of Ethiopia, therefore, have a declared objective of improving the life of the rural people affected by drought-induced famines, land degradation, among others by taking them into unutilized but potentially productive and risk free lands. The general objective of this paper was to examine the post resettlement socio-economic and environmental situation at Biftu Jalala Settlement site. Mixed research methodology, with both primary and secondary data sources, was employed. The study brought to light that the resettlement site that was identified as idle and unutilized spot was found not to be as such and it has been used by small number of farmers who still are called the 'old settlers'. The promise to provide re-settlers with sufficient amount of cleared farmland was not realized because of the scarcity of farm land available at the destination. There were huge losses of forest and other natural resources compared with the pre resettlement time. The re-settlers were provided with no education and advice about environmental degradation. It was observed that collective facilities were put in place by the government for use by re-settlers but the majority was found with limited capacity. The shared agreement among all the respondents was that their current livelihood situation is by far better than the former one and they do not dream to return to their origin. It is recommended that where resettlement is inevitable, detailed research, imaginative planning, concerned institutional building, participation of re-settlers and receiving communities, and proper preparation should be made.

**Keywords:** post-resettlement, assessment, re-settlers, origin, destination, Biftu Jalala.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background and statement of the problem

Ethiopia is experiencing an unprecedented increase in population size as a consequence of which it is becoming increasingly vulnerable to all the problems associated with an imbalance between population growth and resources necessary to sustain it. This rapid population growth particularly in rural areas has decreased the size of land holding leading to landlessness and deterioration of the environment which were considered as causes of migration and resettlement (Dieci and Viezzoli, 1992; Kloos, 1989). Consequently, different Ethiopian regimes have declared resettlement programmes with the declared objective of improving the life of the rural people affected by drought-induced famines.

The history of the country is mostly related to migration and resettlement process for various reasons and resettlement, whether it is self-or government-sponsored, has started long ago. The first government sponsored resettlement took place during the imperial period. The second massive resettlement which was condemned by many authors, took place during the *Derg* regime. This resettlement was said to have claimed the life and desertion of thousands and was a dark spot in the settlement history of the country (Shiferaw, 1986; Tom, 1994; Kassahun, 2000). The current government started the third state-sponsored program. The program was covering the period 2003–2006 and planned to resettle about 2.2 million people from drought prone areas to areas of fertile soil and abundant rainfall (USAID, 2007). Many writers have also criticized this program and blamed the government for not learning from the past failures.

The resettlement plan aims to ensure and assist people to develop their social and economic potential in order to improve their incomes and living standards that are not worse off than they would have been without resettlement (Assefa Tolera, 2005). The major reason given for resettlement since the 1970s, irrespective of the change in government, is said to be the environmental deterioration in the drought-prone areas, which cannot support farming

activities. Of course, there is the eminent threat to natural resources degradation beyond its production capacity in many of the densely populated and famine affected areas. However, all preliminary evidence suggests resettlement within all regions misses the intended objective. There is a justifiable case on the part of the Government to create the necessary conditions such as infrastructure and eradicating diseases in the high potential areas to facilitate resettlement across regions, without directly being involved in a bureaucratic and heavy-handed way. However, the current ethnically based administrative regions severely limit resettlement from the drought-prone, say Amhara and Tigray regions, to the southwestern parts of the country (in the Oromia region) that are sparsely populated and with high potential agricultural land. Furthermore, many studies put serious doubt about the Government's claim on the presence of abundant unoccupied land suitable for cultivation in regions where the vulnerable groups are found. This further weakens the Government's claim that resettlement is the cheapest option in reducing natural resource degradation and attaining food self-sufficiency (USAID, 2007; Kuhlman, 1994; Relief web, 2004).

At the core of any resettlement programme is the need to undertake a more rigorous account of environmental, economic and social factors as well as alternative and promising land use potentials. Any resettlement plan should also simultaneously consider other economically profitable and sustainable land use options. Optimizing these alternatives land use potential would have been appropriate in terms of broad-based and sustainable development that could effectively contribute to food security and poverty reduction objectives. However, it is argued that the current resettlement policy is narrowly focused in moving around subsistence farmers (who are often dependent on food aid) to continue the same type of production in virgin lands thus presenting an ominous danger of recreating the catastrophic environmental conditions that have necessitated such measures in the first place (Dieci and Viezzoli, 1992; Kloos; 1989). Besides, it has been said that resettlement has always been driven by political consideration at a time when the country is facing a major drought and famine crisis. However, it is possible that resettlement can be facilitated even in normal years through various alternative livelihood

strategies outside smallholder farming, without the label and stigma attached to it as resettlement scheme. This would require a shift in approach in seeing resettlement as an ongoing activity while the government's role will be creating the supportive policy environment to facilitate it rather than using it as emergency response mechanism directed by the Government.

In times of resettlement what is always thought is the aftermath, and this is the central point of this study at Biftu Jalala resettlement site, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia. The initiatives, the process of resettlement, the hopes and aspirations that can be fulfilled, the promises and their accomplishments, the environmental impact, the security for the guests and the host, etc. are some of the important elements of post-resettlement issues.

## **1.2. Objectives of the study**

This study was undertaken with the objectives of:

- Assessing the socio-economic and infrastructural change that has been undertaken since the arrivals of settlers;
- Assessing the fulfilled and unfulfilled promises undertaken by the legal bodies in charge;
- Examining the damages exerted on the natural environment and the attempt to make settlers conscious about their physical environment;
- Identifying the overall success and limitations of the resettlement program at Biftu Jalala.

## **2. Review of conceptual framework and related literature**

### **2.1. Conceptual framework**

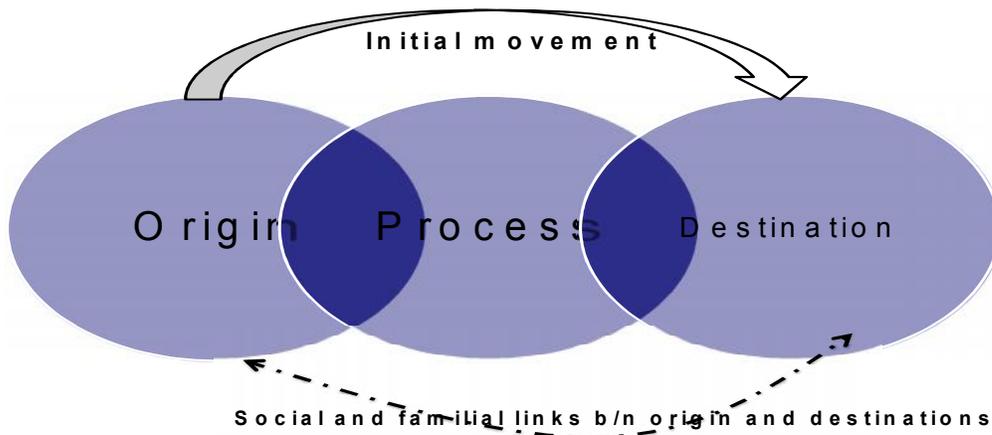
Resettlement refers to a planned or “spontaneous” phenomenon of population redistribution. The first term seems to be the more appropriate to the Ethiopian context, as it suggests the deliberate moving of people to areas other than their own localities (Dessalegn 2003). According to Chambers (1969:11) “resettlement is characterized by two main features: A movement of population; and an element of planning and control.” Resettlement can also be voluntary or forced. When people resettle in a new place under their own

initiative, this may be called ‘spontaneous resettlement’. If the resettlement is imposed on people by an external agent in a planned and controlled manner, it may be called ‘planned resettlement’ (Gebre, 2002). The case discussed in this paper may be described as ‘planned and controlled population movement under state control’.

Resettlement, particularly the planned resettlement cannot be just an event, rather it is a process. The initiatives, the negotiation process, the transportation from origin to resettlement site, the arrival, the social interactions with the host community, etc. The re-settlers might not be comfortable at the destination because of various social, economic, health, etc. factors. Besides, the re-settlers might be back to the original places for a while to visit relatives back home (see figure 1).

Some re-settlers might be back to their origin because of sickness due to the sudden shift from say a highland environment to a lowland one; many of them were exposed for the first time to health hazards caused by endemic diseases such as malaria, which is rampant in and around the resettlement areas. These fundamental changes posed challenges which many of the re-settlers found difficult or impossible to adapt to, at least during the first period of resettlement. This illustrates De Wet’s (2004) point that such varied natural and man-made circumstances make resettlement an inherently complex process, the negative consequences of which are often difficult to predict and avoid. One of the negative consequences can be the return of re-settlers back (DeWet, *ibid.*)

**Figure1: Resettlement as a process**



**Source: Author's construction, 2010**

This paper has approached resettlement as a process and a forward and some time a backward movement of vulnerable people. This article is therefore meant to assess the situations of post resettlement at Biftu Jalala resettlement site, Nono *Woreda*, West Shewa Zone, Oromia Regional State. This assessment is done based on the field work held in 2009.

## **2.2. An overview of the Ethiopian experience of resettlement**

### **2.2.1. Resettlement as of 1991**

Ethiopia had been facing series of food shortages traced back to 242 B.C (Webb, 1994). In addressing this problem, the country has developed and been exercising arrays of development polices and strategies, among which resettlement is one to be mentioned. Resettlement as a policy practice has been used to attain various objectives with different successes and bad stories.

The plan of voluntary resettlement went back to 1958, when the government established the first known planned resettlement in Sidamo. Shortly after the 1974 revolution, it became *Derg* policy to accelerate resettlement. Article 18 of

the 1975 Land Reform Proclamation stated that "the government shall have the responsibility to settle peasants or to establish cottage industries to accommodate those who, as a result of distribution of land . . . remain with little or no land." Accordingly, in 1975/76 there were eighty-eight settlement centers accommodating 38,818 households. The government conducted most of these resettlement programs under the auspices of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) and the Ministry of Agriculture (Alula, 2005). By 1982 there were 112 planned settlements populated by more than 120, 000 people. The settlements were concentrated mainly in the south and southwest. In 1984 the government announced its intention to resettle 1.5 million people from the drought-affected northern regions to the south and southwest, where arable land was plentiful. By 1986 the government had resettled more than 600,000 people to three settlement areas. More than 250,000 went to Wolega; about 150, 000 settled in the Gambela area of Ilubabor; and just over 100, 000 went to Pawe, the largest planned resettlement in Gojam and largely sustained by Italian financial support. In addition, another 78,000 went to Kefa, Shewa, and western Gonder (Alula, 2005, Alemneh, 1990).

In mid-1986 the government temporarily stopped the resettlement program, largely to fend off the negative reaction from the international community. But in November 1987 the government wanted to resume the program and in March 1988 the then president Mengistu Hailemariam spoke of the need to move at least 7 million people. He claimed resettlement would resolve the country's recurring drought problem and would ease population pressure from northern areas where the land had been badly overused. Western donors and governments, whom Addis Ababa expected to help with the program, remained apprehensive of the government's intentions, however (Kloos, 1989; Alemneh, 1990; Relief Web, 2004).

Although many of the charges and fears were valid, criticisms may have been unfounded. For instance, the claim that the resettlement was a ploy to depopulate the rebel areas may not have been valid, given that by 1986 only 15 of the 600,000 resettled peasants were from Tigray and none were from

Eritrea. More than 80% of those resettled were from Wello and Shewa (Alemneh 1990; Tenassie 1988).

In 1985 the government initiated a new relocation program known as villagization. The objectives of the program, which grouped scattered farming communities throughout the country into small village clusters, were to promote rational land use; conserve resources; provide access to clean water and to health and education services and strengthen security. Government guidelines stipulated that villages were to house 200 to 300 households, with 100-square-meter compounds for each family.

In 1985 the government established a national coordinating committee to oversee the villagization plan's implementation. By March 1986, about 4.6 million people in Shewa, Arsi, and Harerge had been relocated into more than 4,500 villages. Although the government had villagized about 13 million people by 1989, international criticism, deteriorating security conditions, and lack of resources doomed the plan to failure. Nevertheless, Mengistu remained committed to the villagization concept (Assefa, 2005).

### **2.2.2. Resettlement since 1991: Forces behind resettlement and basis for action**

Ethiopia faces both chronic and transitory food insecurity problems. The main factors contributing to food insecurity are: land degradation, drought, high population pressure, low input subsistence agriculture, small farm size and landlessness. Millions of farmers have faced serious food security problems within the past three to four decades because of reduced or complete failure of agricultural production as a result of the aforementioned constraints.

In 2002, failed *belg*, or secondary rains from March through May, combined with delayed and sporadic *meher*, or main rains from July through September, led to severe drought conditions and widespread food insecurity in Ethiopia throughout 2003 even in the traditionally known productive areas of south and south west.

In 2002/ 2003, the failure of rains in various areas of the country resulted in increased numbers of persons suffering from hunger. Anthropometric surveys showed a very serious situation, with high global and severe acute malnutrition rates of over 15 per cent and 3 per cent respectively in most drought affected areas. About 60,000 children under five-years of age were estimated at risk of severe acute malnutrition. On top of that, the quantity of food assistance and the quality of the food basket were fairly limited. Therefore, the inadequate quality of food provided, combined with already existing traditional cultural practices leading to poor diets lacking in crucial micronutrients and high rates of chronic malnutrition amongst children, made them particularly vulnerable. All the surveys together with field visits highlighted the urgent need to provide supplementary feeding for the moderately malnourished children and therapeutic feeding for the severely malnourished children (USAID, 2004; Alula, 2005).

Beginning in 2003, the Ethiopian government launched a large-scale resettlement program with the objective to enable 2.2 million chronically food insecure people attain food security. So far, over 180,000 households have been resettled in more than 100 villages. Official statements claim that the resettlement program is based on 4 pillars and 13 principles. The four pillars are voluntarism, availability of under-utilized land, consultation with host communities, and provision of minimum infrastructure (Relief Web, 2004). Partnership, community participation, transparency of program design, and development are some of the 13 principles. Authorities also argue that the New Coalition for Food Security in Ethiopia was developed in collaboration with partners (donors and NGOs) and based on inputs from communities in sending and receiving areas, a document was produced (Alula, 2005; Assefa, 2005).

In 2004 the Government continued to address food security through the Coalition for Food Security with water harvesting, resettlement and particularly, the establishment of the Productive Safety Nets Programme (USAID, 2004). The 2004 humanitarian situation in the country was one of the bases for action to apply resettlement and water harvesting. This was because

the 2004 humanitarian situation in Ethiopia, according to the information obtained from DPPC and USAID (2004) was rampant. Overall 7.8 million people were affected and vulnerable to the crisis (table 1).

**Table1. The 2004 humanitarian situation in Ethiopia**

Numbers at a Glance		Sources
Total affected population in 2004	7.8 million	DPPC, August 11, 2004
Total Food Aid Requirements in 2004	964, 690 metric tons (MT)	DPPC, August 11, 2004
Total FY USAID/OFDA assistance to Ethiopia	\$ 21, 168, 488	USAID, 2004
Total FY 2004 USG Humanitarian Assistance to Ethiopia	\$ 275, 127,396	USAID, 2004

In many areas of the country, from January 2005, more than 5 million chronically food insecure people were provided assistance in the form of cash or food for labor-intensive public works.

The resettlement programme was still controversial – in 2004 pilot project left children dying in poorly prepared resettlement camps in numbers that would have been declared an emergency in other circumstances. And aid agencies worry that few lessons have been learnt from last year's experience. Over the next years from 2004, Ethiopia planned to move more than two million people. And it is not hard to see why. The country faces enormous challenges: its central highlands have been over-worked for generations; its population has doubled since the great famine of 1974 (ibid).

### **2.2.3. Voluntary Resettlement Programme and Food Security**

Meeting the food necessity of the people at risk has been at the center of the resettlement program over the years. The objective of the programme was to resettle up to 440,000 chronically food insecure households from areas which are environmentally degraded, moisture deficit and with relatively high population pressure to productive areas of the country, thereby enabling them

attain food security by the end of the year 2006. So far over 123,000 households have been voluntarily resettled. Protection of forests, wildlife, and proper utilization of other national resources are among major components of the programme. It was said that extensive awareness raising activities were carried out before the resettlement, leaving the implementations and follow-ups aside. Moreover, subsequent training has been provided to the re-settlers on how to utilize the existing resources in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner. A number of nursery sites have been established. Community woodlots establishment was also on progress (USAID, 2007; Efrem, Bechere, 2006).

From the side of the government, the voluntary resettlement programme (VRP) has resulted in reduction of pressure on natural resources at the origin of the resettlers and consequently allowing the natural regeneration in these areas. It is also indicated that the revival of the direct and indirect ecosystems benefits is witnessed (Efrem Bechere, 2006; USAID, 2007).

Establishment of community infrastructure such as health centers, health posts, vet posts, water points, food warehouses, and availability of transportation, food rations, drugs, equipment, utensils, and waiting shelter as well as facilitation of settlement of households such as construction of shelter, provision of oxen and seed, awareness on HIV/AIDS, gender and epidemic diseases, preparation of agricultural land for production, and capacity building at all levels is envisaged to ensure the success of the resettlement programme (Efrem, 2006; Relief Web, 2004).

A significant departure was made in the food security budget line during the 2003/04-budget allocation. The food security budget from treasury, which was used to hover around 150 million annually during the years preceding 2003/04, increased to Birr 1 billion for the first time in 2003/04. The budget on food security from treasury doubled (Birr 2 Billion) during 2004/05. The funds are passed as grants to the Regions and *woredas* to support a combination of measures, including irrigation and water harvesting, promoting food security packages aimed at diversifying income through small-scale agricultural and

commercial activities, promotion of seeds and marketing for higher-valued crops, and voluntary resettlement from food insecure areas to more productive ones (Efrem Bechere, 2007; Relief web, 2004).

#### **2.2.4. Planning resettlement and the subsequent critics**

Resettlement in Ethiopia has been criticized for various environmental, social and political reasons. Laura (2008) indicated that Resettlement Programme in Ethiopia hides the Poorest of the Poor and is not all-inclusive and participatory. Some believed that the plan to resettle this large number of people was unrealistic, given the country's strained finances. Others argued that resettlement was a ploy to depopulate areas of resistance, weaken the guerrillas' support base, and deny them access to recruits, particularly in Eritrea and Tigray. Additional arguments against resettlement included charges of human rights violations, forced separations of families, and lack of medical attention in resettlement centers, which resulted in thousands of deaths from malaria and sleeping sickness (Kassahun 2000, Kloos 1989, Alula 2005).

Opponents of resettlement argued that the scheme was disruptive to agricultural production because the government moved many farmers during the planting and harvesting seasons. There also was a concern that villagization could have a negative impact on fragile local resources, particularly on water and grazing land; accelerate the spread of communicable diseases; and increase problems with plant pests and diseases. In early 1990, the government essentially abandoned villagization following the announcement of free market economy.

In the year 2004, the EPRDF government continued to address food security through the Coalition for Food Security with water harvesting, resettlement and particularly, the establishment of the Productive Safety Nets Programme. The programme attempts to address the underlying causes of food insecurity through long-term programmes and activities to reduce the impact on affected populations by future droughts. The UNCT has provided support to the planning of the Productive Safety Nets Programme and had continued to support its implementation in 2005. Safety Net is expected to have a major

impact on the future beneficiaries of humanitarian appeals, which should be reduced significantly once the programme has reached its full implementation (Relief web, 2004).

Some still argue that the process by which the poorest of the poor in Ethiopia's food insecure regions are made invisible through their very participation in a programme whose explicit aim is to help deliver them from vulnerability. Those targeted for support progressively lose their status and agency as 'people of concern' to governmental welfare bodies as well as international humanitarian organizations as they are resettled in a scheme that renders many people more needy than they were before they left their areas of origin. Inadequate planning and of resettlement on a massive scale and rushed timeframe, blocking of NGO and other independent monitors' access, and careful control at the federal level resourcing over information relating to conditions in settlement areas make it possible for this space of invisibility to be created, into which an estimated one million people have already been moved since 2003. Invisibilization occurs through coinciding processes of forced recruitment and displacement as well as false and misleading representations of the resettlement programme, but also through a limited degree of voluntary engagement that enables government and international agencies to brand the operation voluntary—hence less a matter of concern—and thus to look away from a population that is far from self-sufficient (Laura 2008; Relief web, 2004; Alula, 2005). Based on fieldwork conducted in 2003 and 2004 in sending and receiving sites, Laura Hammound (2008) argues that invisibility is a function of governmentality in Ethiopia that has enabled inaction on the part of a wide range of stakeholders.

### **3. Methodology and the research locale**

#### **3.1. Methodology: Data sources and analysis**

As explained earlier, the core task of this assessment was to study the actual environmental and socio-economic outcomes of the settlers at this particular resettlement site. In this study both primary and secondary data sources are employed. It employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study

therefore utilizes descriptive survey method especially qualitative data collection and analysis based on the information obtained from randomly selected re-settlers.

Mixed research methodology is an emerging paradigm particularly in social science fields. Philosophically, mixed research takes an eclectic, pragmatic, and commonsense approach, suggesting that the researcher mixes the best of qualitative and quantitative data and triangulate information. It attempts to corroborate and complement findings, and takes a balanced approach to research. The proponents of mixed research methodology adhere to its *fundamental principle* which states that the resulting mixture or combination has complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses (Creswell, 2003; Nichols, 2000).

About 881 households were originally arrived at Biftu Jalala. Currently the number of households in Biftu Jalala has increased to about 1270 and these numbers include the late comers to the resettlement site either from Harar or somewhere else and emerging households who usually are the children of the settlers. Accordingly, by taking into account the resource available and the adequacy of the data required, about 12% (105) of the original settlers were selected by systematic random sampling.

Purposive sampling was also employed to select 20 respondents for interview from re-settlers, officials and key informants. So, the sources of information for this study include: interviewing re-settlers and visiting of the resettlement site/ farms, interviewing local officials and governmental higher officials (E.g. *Woreda* officials, etc)-focusing on demographic data, land use and management practices, human settlement, infrastructure, and other relevant information; field observation through taking pictures; and GPS, Maps, secondary sources and related survey information. The impacts of resettlement, success/bad stories, etc were also investigated qualitatively, in order to understand more precisely the realities of program and service delivery. The analysis was done by triangulating qualitative and quantitative data. Tabulations, percentages and ratios were done for the quantitative part, and

narratives, case studies and photo essays were done for the qualitative part of the data.

The study has tried to be as ethical as possible by employing two basic research ethics principles: confidentiality and the informed consent. During the course of all interviews, the researcher emphasized the neutrality of the study with regards to the resettlement issue, allowing respondents to freely interact and respond to the issues under discussion.

### **3.2. Background of the settlers and the resettlement locale**

Settlers from Biftu Jalala came in December 1996 E.C from 6 *Woredas* of Harar, Oromiya region and about 881 registered households arrived. The bases for action of resettlement were, according to the information obtained from Oromia food security regional office and the *Kebele* Council at Biftu Jalala, shortage of rain fall, flooding (in the case of Meta *Woreda*), large household size and shortage of arable land. Re-settlers at Biftu Jalala said that they had planned to go to Bale (Dolo Mena), as others did, if they had not been taken to their current place-Biftu Jalala.

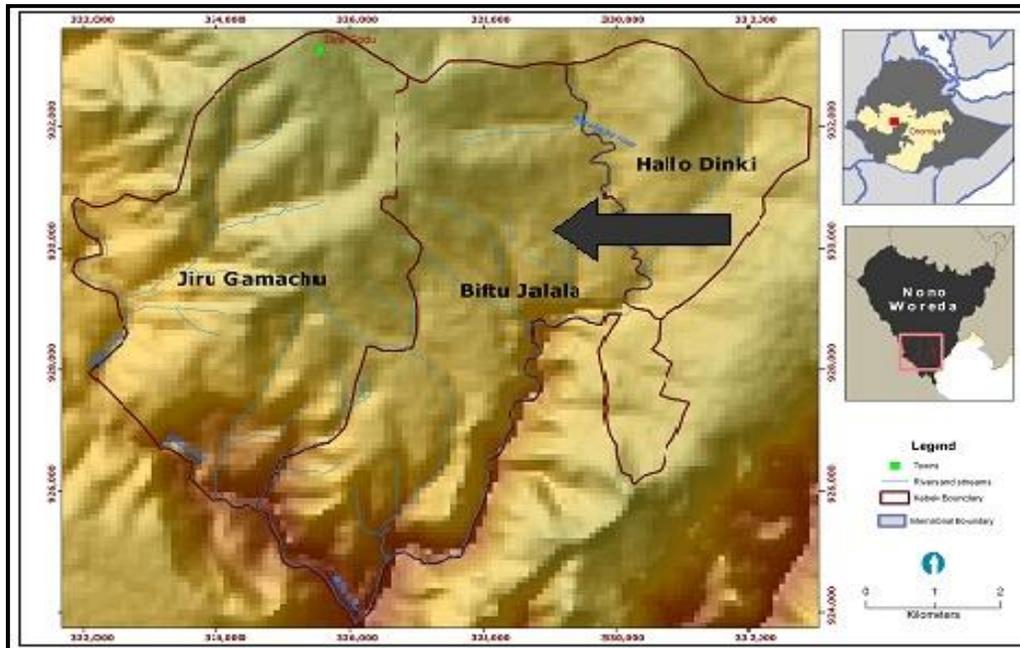


Figure 2: Location of resettlement sites

Source: Ethiopia Mapping Agency, 2009; Ethio-GIS, 2009

Biftu Jalala resettlement site is one of the sites selected in Oromiya Regional State (see figure 3). The area is situated in the Oromiya Region in Ethiopia and near the border of SNNPR, around Gibe River. The settlement site is situated at 57 KM from Wolqite, the nearby zonal town of Guraghe Land, SNNPR. Biftu Jalala has an average altitude of 1555 m.a.s.l. It is located at  $08^{\circ}26'36''$  N and  $037^{\circ}26'56''$  E. It is found in one of the recently established *woredas* in Oromiya Region, Nono *Woreda*, West Shewa Zone. The town of Nono *Woreda*, Silk Amba, is at 221 KMs from Addis Ababa and 96 KMs from Ambo town, the capital of the zone. The *woreda* has 33 *Kebeles*. The main ethnic group is Oromo, with minor representation of Amhara, Gurage and other smaller groups in their nearby villages. The majority are Afan Oromo speakers, although other languages are spoken too. The major religious affiliation is Islam.



social services (e.g. a clinic, elementary school, a community centre, veterinary clinic, etc.) with other two nearby resettlement sites.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1. Nono district before the arrival of re-settlers**

It was indicated by the host communities in Biftu Jalala resettlement site that the area is experiencing fast LU/LC changes. Enormous extent of vegetated land uses (woodland, shrub-grassland, and grassland) were converted to farmland. Significant successive modifications amongst the vegetated land uses were also evidenced from the satellite images. Moreover, the encroachment and establishment of settlement sites in vegetated areas is found to be another major LU/LC change in the district. The host community usually blames the re-settlers whom they call *Harars*.

One of the key respondents in Biftu Jalala said:

"...my parents were here and this is my birth place. The whole area of this district was covered by dense forests and coarse grasses. During my childhood it was difficult to enter into the forests because of dangerous wild animals including leopards. Giant trees and woody plants were plentiful in the area. Woodlands where hunting takes place have been severely deforested and converted into grazing, cultivated lands and in some cases into bare land. The depletion was done gradually since the arrival of *Harars* in 2004 ..."

Ato Lemma, Male, 79

### **4.2. Arrival at Biftu Jalala resettlement site**

The majority of interviewed re-settlers didn't refrain to thank the government because they have now survived; their children are alive, now they are somebody and their life is rescued. The government covers all the expenses from origin to destination. The journey took them about a week from Harar to Biftu Jalala. The original population welcomes them in huts and tents with

foods and boiled grains like wheat and beans, especially for the first 15 days but the current resettlers houses were constructed by the re-settlers themselves.

The re-settlers in Biftu Jalala resettlement site indicated that on the way to their current site from Harar, they were transported by ISUZU trucks like grain or other commodity stuff. The resettlers also indicate that they were promised by the officials more than 2 hectares of main crop land, 25 km.squ home garden, 25 Km.Squ. irrigable land, three consecutive years' food aid and provision of all other necessities. According to the respondents, they receive only about 1.65 hectares of land, seed was received for a year, and ploughing service is also given only for a year. Resettlers indicate that the promise for free seed and fertilizer was until they become self sufficient in food but they said that since 1997 E.C they are asked to pay back the price of the fertilizer.

Generally speaking, over the past thirty years, the government has shown considerable responsibility in resettling people, but there is much left to learn. In the past, authorities took only a short-term interest in the fate of resettlers. The approach was simple: Mobilize the masses with heavy doses of propaganda in support of the project; provide them with huge promises embezzled by local government officials before they ever reached to the new site and then resettle them. The officials generally believed that resettlement was executed efficiently. But it was not. By focusing on the short term, the long-term social and economic development of the resettlement areas was ignored. Moreover, the Resettlers had very little say about the resettlement process, such as conditions in the resettlement areas, how their basic needs should be met, or how resettlement should be financed and managed.

The Nono *Woreda* vice administrator indicated that the region as well as the *Woreda* has tried its best although it is not easy to fully respect the rights of the Resettlers and show a true sense of responsibility towards them.

#### **4.3. Economic practices of settlers after arrival at Biftu Jalala**

Crop production and animal husbandry are the major agricultural activities undertaken in the region. Major crops include maize, sorghum, potato, wheat,

teff, cotton and sesame in the area. Most of the resettlers occupy an average of 1.6 hectare of land. Small-scale subsistence cultivation is the dominant agricultural practice, and ancient methods of land preparation and harvesting continued to be applied. Absence of relevant agricultural technologies, combined with a low level of extension services, contribute toward low productivity and production levels. Fundamental needs such as food, fuels, building materials, fertilizers, raw materials and various types of grass for traditional crafts and occupations are all forms of the biomass, most of which are collected freely from the immediate environment.

Cattle, goats and chicken are the most important sources of traction power, meat, milk, skin and hides. Given the limited availability of communal grazing lands and prevalence of animal diseases in the region, however, the number of domestic animals per household is very small and diminishing from time to time. This has become a contributing factor for low productivity and production levels in the livestock sector. Respondents were also asked to rate the current production status of the land compared to the times of their arrival. The response of the average respondents view was recorded. The data in table 2, therefore, indicated that the overall trend of productivity of crops was not increasing except sesame. The major crop types (maize and Sorghum) were seen either stagnant or decreasing.

**Table 2. Major crops and estimates of their production rates**

<b>Type of crop Grown</b>	<b>Average Production in Quintals/Hectares</b>	<b>The overall trend of production year after year (respondents' view)</b>
<b>Maize</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Decreasing</b>
<b>Sorghum</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>The same</b>
<b>Teff</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Decreasing</b>
<b>Sesame</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Increasing</b>
<b>Pepper</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>The same</b>

Source: Estimate based on the information obtained from Respondents, 2009.

#### **4.4. Social services and education**

- **Housing situation**

It was indicated by the re-settlers that the quality of housing is very poor and contrary to what was promised during the negotiation process. It was also observed that the majority of settlers live in wood and mud houses with thatched roofs. Houses tend to give shelter to both people and their livestock. Moreover, the houses were built so close together that peasants had little room to grow vegetables, which possibly provided valuable income, although they have separate cropping grounds.

- **Education**

Education is a key element that people should be provided with. An attempt has been made to provide settlers' children with primary education. The elementary school situated in the middle of Jiru Gemechu and Biftu Jalala resettlement site is only from grades 1-4. It is found in long distance from the resettlement sites and children usually are tired of it especially during rainy season. Children are unable to walk on the sticky mud of vertisol. Besides, classrooms are not enough and books are very few. In general, the problems observed in the education sector in the resettlement site include: late entry to schools (prevalent in rural areas), low efficiency and quality of teaching, high drop-out and repetition rates, low enrolment of females, student congestion at school, text book distribution is unevenly managed with a low ratio of text book to student, scarcity of teachers, lack of financial and physical resources and lack of direction and measures.

**Picture1. Nono primary school**



Source: Field photo, 2009

- **Health**

Health is an important social indicator that has enormous human development implications. The regional food security officer indicated that the Regional government especially the sector that is responsible for resettlement program is attempting to develop primary healthcare services, paying particular attention to the prevention of communicable diseases such as malaria and other vector borne diseases. However, many people remain underserved by existing health institutions in the resettlement site. There is a lack of trained healthcare personnel. To date, there is one clinic which they share with other neighboring resettlement sites.

The information obtained from the clinic was that the most prevalent diseases in Biftu Jalala resettlement area are malaria, acute respiratory infections, skin infections, intestinal parasites, rheumatism, sexually transmitted diseases, diarrhea, gastritis and anemia. It was also indicated that Malaria was one of the major health problems in the settlement area. According to information obtained from the head of the clinic, plasmodium *vivax* and *P.falciparum* are

the commonly occurring malarial parasites. Malaria cases are common throughout the year although it tends to peak during the months of October and November.

**Picture.2: A clinic with limited facilities**



Source: Filed visit, 2009.

As is the case in most areas of Ethiopia, communicable diseases and nutritional deficiencies are the major health problems experienced in the area. Poor environmental conditions and sanitation, and low health coverage contribute, among other issues, to high morbidity and mortality of the population and health coverage is particularly weak. Moreover, vaccine preventable infections are responsible for a high incidence of morbidity, mortality and disability amongst children and pregnant women. This is in part due to the lack of cold chains or refrigeration facilities for safe transportation and storage of vaccines, and to a weak health delivery system. The low capacity of the clinic to deal with the crisis and the weakest health infrastructure in the resettlement sites seem to provide legal ground for infectious diseases to widespread.

- **Water and sanitation**

As with related social services infrastructures, the provision of domestic services such as water and sanitation in the area is very low. Problems related with scarcity of drinking water supply and adequate sanitation services prevail. The problems related with water were raised repeatedly by the respondents.

They complain about the inadequacy of water, a long distance walk to fetch it, the poorest quality of the well water and poor maintenance service of the machine that helps them fetch the well water. They said that the majority of the pumps are not working. Out of 9 pumps only 3 are functional and the rest are abandoned. Besides, it is far from the residence quarter and children and women walk long distances. Besides the long distance walk, one has to wait for the queue and probably about 3 hours is spent in order to fetch 50 liters of water. It is a full day task. The problem with the long distance is that it is difficult to do it by humans and animal transport, especially donkeys are needed.

**Picture 3 (left): Multiple roles-Washing clothes, fetching water, keeping cattle (of women)**



**Picture 4 (right): the long distance walk for fetching water**

Source: Filed visit, 2009.

Basic facilities for both solid and liquid waste disposal are almost entirely lacking. Many houses are without appropriate sanitation facilities and even no public toilets and it is clear that poor sanitation has adverse effects on community health. In this regard many respondents indicated that almost no change has been made as promised.

- **Electricity, access to road and transportation**

The *Woreda* officials indicate that the settlers have service of electric lighting but only some houses along the road side and houses of well to do people have electricity. It is observed that most of the houses are of poor quality and use of electricity in those kinds of houses is risky. The settlers use the all weather gravel road to travel to *Silk Amba* (*Woreda* town), Ambo (Zonal town), Wolqite (nearby city in SNNPR) and Woliso. It seems that they are advantageous because they only travel 35 KMs to reach the main Asphalt road that passes through the Guraghe land towards Jimma. But still settlers complain that they have problems of transportation especially during emergency cases of women, children, and even in times of funerals in their original place-Harar. They said public transportation is occasional and irregular. The common cars are Isuzu but Isuzu cars are not comfortable for pregnant women and children.

- **Women and children**

A good start has been seen in Biftu Jalala that a woman representative was a member of the *Kebele* council during the field visit. Some women have also started kinds of petty trade activities alongside the road (see picture 9). But it seems that due to cultural factors, the economic, social and political status of women in the area is very weak. Women are largely confined to household management and agricultural production. The majority of women are economically dependent on their husbands who tend to make the decision as to how many children the family should have.

In the resettlement area, it is observed and also explained by some respondents that women are burdened by back-breaking work. In addition to all food preparation, child rearing and domestic chores, they also participate in land preparation, planting and weeding. Women are also the principal collectors of water and firewood, and in some instances, they have to walk long distances to acquire these resources for drinking and cooking (see picture 3). It is also observed that women's access to health care services is highly inadequate (see picture 2).

According to a representative of women and a key respondent during the field work in Biftu Jalala resettlement site, women face problems during pregnancy and delivery. They are expected to walk long distances on foot on the difficult muddy road for checkups and medication. She was also asked if they are using family planning in the area and replied that although the teaching is sometimes given by health extension workers, its applicability is questionable. The problem about family planning is that it mainly depends on contraceptives like pills and injection. It needs balanced diet and rest and it has its own consequences otherwise. She said that they are not in a position to afford the situation that the medicine demands.

Children are the most vulnerable members of the population to the effects of drought, famine, and related displacement, and to the disintegration of families by poverty. Children have problem of nutritious food during infancy. Vaccination is given irregularly. A high percentage of children in Biftu Jalala have little access to formal education and children are subject to various forms of child labour, namely agricultural and domestic work (see picture 6).

**Picture 6: Children keeping cattle and some other activities**



Source: Filed visit, 2009

It is explained by one of the health workers in the resettlement site that infant mortality is high (under the age of 5 years) and most children lack access to good nutrition and basic health services.

#### 4.5. Resettlement and environmental degradation



**Picture 7(a): Unlimited cutting of trees (both man-made and natural trees)**

**Picture 7(b): The consequence of deforestation**

Source: Field Visit, 2009.

Resettlement is an environmental issue. The success or failure of the resettlement program will be determined not only by whether settlers have food, clothes, shelter, and employment, but also by whether the environment can sustain the incoming population, and whether there are adequate resources available for economic development. If the settler population strains or surpasses the region's environmental capacity, the local environment will deteriorate, natural resources will dwindle, and the standard of living of settlers will fall. The fact is that the environmental capacity of the Biftu Jalala area is already strained and the resettlement of resettlers in the region will only make the situation worse (see pictures 7a and 7b). Some serious concerns include population pressures and consequent over plowing, deforestation and soil erosion.

The analysis of land use or land cover changes indicated that shrub-grassland diminished by 15.91 percent, with the average diminishing rate of 1.06 percent per year, within 15 years (1984 to 1999). Contrarily, grassland stretched

extensively by 29.95 percent (with the annual average expansion rate of 2.0 percent) over the same period of time.

**Table 3: Land use/Land cover changes from 1984 to 2007**

LU/LC category	1984-1999			1999-2007		
	Change in km <sup>2</sup>	% change	Average annual rate of change (%/year)	Change in km <sup>2</sup>	% change	Average annual rate of change (% per year)
Shrub-grassland	-6.57	- <i>15.91</i>	-1.06	<i>-19.64</i>	-56.57	-7.07
Grassland	5.46	<i>29.95</i>	2.00	6.4	27.02	3.38
Cultivated land	1.08	<i>46.15</i>	3.07	<i>11.3</i>	330.41	41.30
Towns	0.03	<i>60.00</i>	4.00	<i>0.07</i>	87.50	10.94
Settlement	0	<i>0.00</i>	0.00	<i>1.69</i>	---	---

Source: Computations from satellite image of 1984, 1999 and 2007

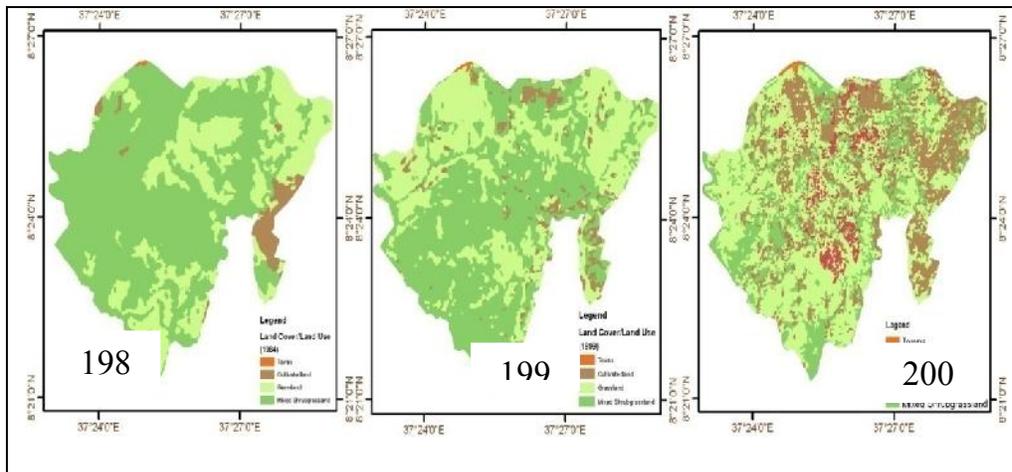
The conversion of vegetated spatial coverage (24%) into cultivated land within 8 years period (1999 to 2007) by the average annual conversion rate of over 41.30% is enormous. Uniquely, those areas contiguous to the resettlement sites are intensively converted to farmlands (Figure 3). This is a dreadful and devastating episode that may result in irreversible environmental degradation and humanitarian disaster unless appropriate actions are designed and implemented soon. This may end up in a 'vicious circle of resettlement'

In the absence of systematically generated data, it is difficult to comment on the scale of erosion, land degradation and soil fertility loss experienced by the resettlement areas. However, as can be explained by the resettlers and observed during the field visit, the different cultural practices of the resettlers in dealing with land and forest resources, and the fragility of the ecosystem of the resettlement area, one can safely argue that the future threat is eminent.

It seems that the adverse consequences of the resettlement are the results of lack of proper preparation, detailed research and imaginative planning. The institutional weaknesses of environmental protection and family planning to

control deforestation and population explosion are also other contributory factors affecting the success of the resettlement.

**Figure 4: Land use/Land cover types of the district of *Nonno* in 1984, 1999 and 2007**



Source: Ethiopian Mapping Agency, 2008; Ethio-GIS, 2009.

#### 4.6. Settler-local integration and the host communities

As can be indicated above, the host communities warmly welcomed the resettlers and there are no open problems revealed so far due to the arrival of the newcomers. As Ato Jemal put: “...*they welcomed us warmly and even helped us to construct the temporary shelter upon our arrival...*” However, social tensions have arisen between the host and resettler communities due to the competition over resources like farmland, grazing land and forest. This situation had caused the new site environment to be affected in terms of loss of forests. Moreover, it was observed that original settlers seem unhappy for more attention is given to resettlers than the natives. The former grazing land, farm land, woodlots, etc of original settlers is now given to the newcomers. The good thing observed here is that both re-settlers and receiving communities are Oromos and they share common culture and speak the same language. It seems this has helped to strengthen the social capital of the settlers. This is may be one of the advantages of intra-regional resettlement as compared to the Derg period inter-regional resettlement.

#### **4.7. Successes and limitations of resettlement at Biftu Jalala**

Both successes and limitations of the resettlement program at Biftu Jalala resettlement site were assessed and identified. The respondents indicated that the willingness and acceptance of the programme by the resettlers was largely because they were promised access to larger size of fertile farmland and conducive farming climate. The majority of resettlers became food self-reliant because of free provision of fertilizers, improved seeds, social services and food rations by the government at the early stage of the resettlement. The overall successes of the resettlement program, according to the information obtained from the respondents include: rescuing human life, ensuring food security among majority of the settlers, risk distribution among regions, a change in demographic profile at the origin and destination and increased social capital.

The limitations of the resettlement program were also examined. Social services are below the expectations of the newcomers. In addition to this, they are suffering from lack of non-farm and off-farm activities, and supplementary food for which particularly women and children are in serious problems.

The fear is if weak undertaking of resettlement programmes repeats, the same problems of other areas of overcrowded population and degraded environment can occur. This is why rehabilitating the target population at their area of origin is recommended as a priority approach to ensure food security in drought prone areas.

Poor preparation had been one of the major factors that led to the failure of resettlement programs and poor performances of many resettlement schemes around the world. Due to this, many resettlement researchers stress the importance of adequate preparation if the implementation of resettlement programs is an unavoidable necessity. When we speak of preparation, it may include different activities that are required to be performed before moving the resettlers to the resettlement sites. Such activities as infrastructures and basic necessities, consultation with the local population in the area should be included in the preparation stage. Serious preparations at this stage can

influence the aftermath of resettlement conditions which are characterized by a number of complications.

The construction in picture 9 belongs to one of the members of resettlement sites who came from Harar. Although the researcher was unable to find the individual in person, other respondents indicated that this person even received a reward from the government and became one of the heroes of the millennium in 2008. Some others have also managed to own flour mills, more cattle than others, small kiosks alongside the road, etc. besides the farming activity. For instance, the non-farm activity of a hair dressing shop indicated above belongs to a woman whose husband is also a farmer. This is a sign of diversifying livelihood strategies.

**Picture 9: Example of success stories**



Source: Filed Photo, 2009.

Preparations in the case of the Biftu Jalala resettlement seem to have been inadequate and the program was implemented in a hasty manner. The programme was constrained by the lack of financial, material and skilled human resources. The inadequate preparation revealed the complicated and

unpredictable nature of resettlement. The regional office of food security indicated that preparations to implement the intra-zonal resettlement began by establishing committees at different levels of administration, i.e. from zone to the *Kebele* (local administration), with the assignment of different activities. Those who were at the zonal level were responsible for feasibility studies, site selection and resources allocation. However, the committee members at different stages lacked experiences in resettlement dynamics. Moreover, the committee failed to include professionals (geologists, sanitary engineers, environmentalists, health professionals and sociologists or anthropologists) whose expertise is crucial in the process of preparation for resettlement.

Reviewing cases shows that the more successful households are the male-headed ones. This is because they produce more with a wider range of crops and a greater involvement in cash-cropping, the sale of which is converted into livestock and improved living conditions. Those who are able to purchase a second ox can guarantee greater independence, and many have other livestock, including sheep, goats, chickens, and bee-hives, and donkeys for carrying water and items of trade. Some re-settlers have been able to become very successful in a short period of time. Some became more productive and wealthy obtaining more land through share-cropping, hiring labour, producing cash crops and involvement in trade. Some have been able to construct houses with iron roofs and have purchased more and better household and consumer goods. They have also built shops and tea rooms along the road (see picture 9) and have even hired tractor services and bought grinding mills. Many of the more successful ones are characterised by better social capital, taking on leadership positions, and creating good relations with the *Woreda* administration, local people, etc. Therefore, avenues to success include not just agriculture with a focus on cash crops and irrigation, but also others like trade.

Cases of failure often exhibited the opposite attributes of the more successful. They produced much less, were food insecure, had few or no livestock and poor social capital and had ill health. They included or involved female-headed households, the elderly, the weak, the disabled, those suffering from malaria

and other lowland diseases, those who had habits of drinking, those who were characterised as “lazy” by other resettlers or “not cooperative” by the leadership, and also included those who were not motivated to stay in resettlement areas, and those who were unable to get access to education or jobs.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1. Conclusion**

The above positive aspects of resettlement show that the scheme could have had better prospects if it had been supported by proper feasibility studies, practically observed criteria for selection of resettlers, sound planning and adequate inputs. In actual fact, however, similar to past resettlement experiences in the country, the scheme seemed suffering from a rushed feasibility study, poorly observed selection criteria, unfulfilled promises, unsound planning and inadequate inputs. As a result, lack of basic social services is critical and environmental degradation is becoming severe. Regarding the implementation on the ground, the study found out that gaps existed in prior preparations, commitments to the host community and consistency with the pillars and key principles and approaches set in the UNEP document.

From the profiles of successful settlers, the study has drawn that most have good working habits and dedication to improve their livelihoods. They have good relations with administrators and the local people, the old settlers. Nevertheless, the study indicated that there were failed settlers and those failed settlers seem to participate in the program due to greater expectations in the new area and lack of proper orientation. People in sending areas were presented with the settlement site in idyllic terms as having virgin plots of land, good infrastructure and services. Furthermore, potential resettlers or at least their representatives were not sent to visit the site prior to settling in order to have clear information about the area. They simply believed what is told by the government officials and the success stories conveyed through mass media. This led to some disappointment and was a major factor for the departure of some resettlers from the site immediately after arrival.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

The paper recommends that attention be given to those factors that led to the failures of the previous schemes, that due consideration be given to the consistent implementation of the current program documents, that active participation of the target group be fostered and that consultation with a wide range of stakeholders be undertaken. Though resettlement programs could be undertaken to achieve food security, because state-sponsored programmes are complex in their nature, they should not be considered as the last resort. However, where resettlement is inevitable, detailed research, imaginative planning, concerned institutional building, participation of resettlers and host communities, and proper preparation should be made. Moreover, to make approaches (resettlement and/or rehabilitation) effective, resettlement scholars, policy makers, funding agencies and implementers should cooperate and work together.

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