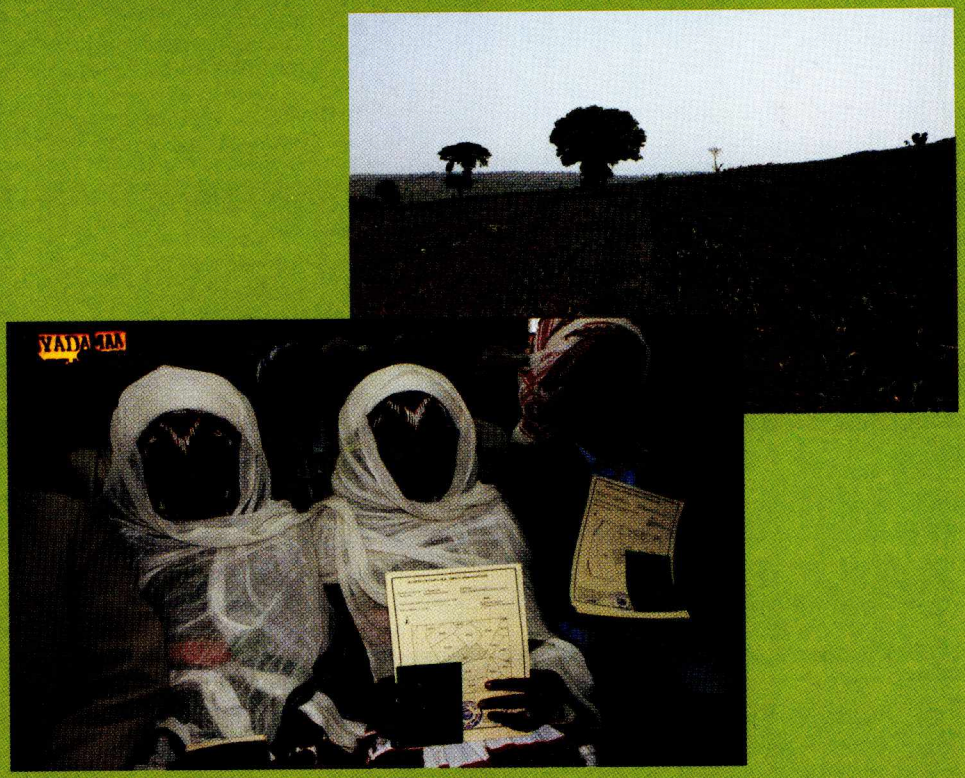
LAND, LANDLESSNESS AND POVERTY IN ETHIOPIA

Research Findings from Four National Regional States



Edited by

Dessalegn Rahmato

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LAND, LANDLESSNESS AND POVERTY IN ETHIOPIA
Research Findings from Four Regions

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Edited by
Dessalegn Rahmato

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Forum for Social Studies (FSS) Brief Institutional Profile

The Forum for Social Studies (FSS) is a non-government, non-profit institution engaged in conducting and sponsoring policy-oriented research and promoting informed public debate on a wide range of development issues. It was established in 1998 by a group of academics and CSO activists whose aim was to help deepen and broaden a democratic tradition of public debates. Its work is guided by the conviction that enhancing the public-decision-makers' interface on key social and economic issues can promote a transparent, participatory and all-inclusive policy-making and implementation process. In line with its mandate, FSS operates under four core programs: Policy Research, Public Dialogue, Publications and Media and Communication Outreach activities. These are employed as preferred vehicles aimed at attaining its mission and organizational objectives.

As part of its research activity, FSS has in the past successfully launched a number of major book projects, such as 'Reflections on Development in Ethiopia: New Trends, Sustainability and Challenges' and 'Food Security, Safety Nets and Social Protection in Ethiopia'. Since then it has published monographs and research reports on a wide range of development and policy issues, including, poverty and poverty reduction, natural resource management, decentralization, the quality of higher education, culture and development, and environment and climate change. Other social and economic issues it has examined include urban public services in Addis Ababa, the marketing and sale of Arake, the *Khat* conundrum, Labor migration to South Africa and the Middle East, etc. Its publications have been disseminated to decision makers, institutions of higher education, academics and researchers as well as non-government and international donor organisations to stimulate further discourse and reflection. This publication titled 'Land, Landlessness and Poverty in Ethiopia' is a continuation of that tradition, and is intended to examine the complex inter-relationship between land and increasing landlessness and poverty in Ethiopia. Given the current competition over land by different actors, viz. government demands for land to be used for development and infrastructure expansion, foreign and local investors requiring land for agri-businesses, and increasing appetite for land by a fast increasing rural population primarily fueled by a high rate of demographic expansion, this is a must read by policy makers and researchers to stimulate further discourse and design an appropriate policy framework to harmonize these competing demands.

Land, Landlessness, and Poverty Introduction and Context

Dessalegn Rahmato

Introduction

The contributions in this volume were first presented for discussion at a conference organized by the Forum for Social Studies (FSS) on 15 July 2016. The conference was meant to provide the opportunity for free and open debate and reflectionon the broad subject of rural land, poverty and the problem of landlessness, based onthe findings of four research projects, commissioned by FSS, with financial support from USAID, and undertaken in Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, and Tigray.A central aim was to underscore an important point, namely that the debate on land will be partial and inconclusive if it confines itself to matters having to do with tenure arrangements, administration, and the legal frameworks pertaining to these. The subject must also be examined in its broader settings, and should include demographic issues, environmental resources, family dynamics and household economy.

The main objective of the research project that was undertaken was to explore the extent to which land and poverty are inter-related, and the reduction of poverty depends on addressing the challenges faced by landholders and land users. The research was also meant to explore the state of landlessness at present in the study areas and what the complex causes and consequences that give rise to the problem are, and what has been the response of the landless themselves and of public authorities at the local and Regional levels. Moreover, it was considered important to examine whether and how land registration and certification has contributed to security of land rights and access, and if this has a bearing on poverty and livelihood dynamics.

Context

It has been a little over a decade since the Federal legislation governing rural land and its administration was issued. The laws in question, Proclamations No. 455 and 456, defined, in broad terms, rights of land use, of transfer, registration, compensation and other related responsibilities and obligations incumbent on both land holders and public authorities, leaving the specific modalities determining these rights and responsibilities to be determined by Regional laws and regulations. A decade in agrarian history is a relatively short period of time, nevertheless, a lot of change has taken place in this time impacting on land, natural resource use and the rural economy as a whole.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the country has undergone rapid socio-economic change with considerable economic growth and increased economic activity. Of particular importance are heavy public sector investments on basic infrastructure such as roads, railways, hydropower schemes, large-scale housing

programs and mega industrial projects, some of which involve river diversion, dams and irrigation. To attract private investment, particularly foreign capital, the Federal and Regional authorities have set aside land in the form of industrial and agricultural enterprise zones in various parts of the country. Moreover, there has been considerable private sector investment in commercial agriculture, manufacturing enterprises, real estate schemes and other economic projects. These public and private investments have one thing in common: they are all "land hungry": they all demand access to land and have encroached on peasant farms and pasture as well as pastoral rangelands.

It is clear that these developments and their impact on rural land tenure and natural resource use were not sufficiently anticipated a decade ago, and the land laws in force today are now unable to accommodate, much less facilitate, the changing dynamic.

In this country, land is a critical natural resource and the output from it provides the greater part of its GDP as well as of its export earnings. Moreover, Ethiopia is, and will continue to be for some time to come, a predominantly agrarian society in which smallholder and, in large part, subsistence agriculture, will remain prevalent. Consequently, rights of access to land, its utilization and management, and the sustainability of the ecosystem resources in question should be at the forefront of the debate on development.

The importance of property rights -rights in land in particular- for economic growth and *social and political stability* has been a major concern of development discourse as far back as the 1950s. What is new at present is that the focus of the debate has come to include considerations of how rights to land can enable countries to achieve the goals of poverty reduction, natural resource management and gender equality. This has led to discussions on such key issues as the policy and legal framework of rights to land, tenure systems and social inclusion, and the role of investors, the land market and commercialization.

One of the most important measures taken by the government with respect to rural land was the implementation of a program of land registration and certification. The program has several stages, but the first stage, namely the distribution of certificates of holding to land holders in all rural areas has by and large been completed. Certification has gone hand in hand with "registration" in the local *kebelle*, though, for the most part, the registers are in the form of logbooks and not easily updateable. The second stage involves handing out new certificates containingmaps of the parcels of the holders showing their location, size and physical identity. This is a more complex and more costly undertaking but a number of donor agencies have provided both financial and technical support and the program is underway in a number of Regions. While registration has been welcomed by most land holders in the countryside, there remain a number of challenges which need to be explored.

The literature on the subject is broadly supportive of land registration, arguing that it has many advantages and few drawbacks. Among the benefits cited frequently, the following are the most common: registration guarantees ownership and tenure security; there is a considerable reduction in land disputes and the number of land cases in courts is decreased; and it promotes increased access to credit for peasants

from financial institutions. But there is not much hard evidence that these benefits have actually been realized in many cases.

Land disputes are inevitable in all land systems, though their extent and frequency will vary from one system to another. In this country, disputes are common, they occur between one landholder and another, among members of the family, between landholders, on the one hand, and government or other third parties on the other. Land registration was supposed to minimize or bring to an end land disputes, but the evidence we have at present shows that there are more disputes now than before registration, although, the findings of the research in Tigray show that there are fewer disputes brought for arbitration at present. Different countries have adopted different institutional mechanisms for the formal settlement of land disputes: some have established special land tribunals at the local level (district or sub-district), others like Ethiopia have given responsibility to the regular courts to hear land cases. Whatever the options, peasant will have confidence in the institutions if they are easily accessible, if the expenses involved are modest, and if they are able to deliver decisions without undue delay.

Rural poverty, which is widespread not just in Ethiopia but also in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, is caused by the complex interplay of a multiplicity of factors, of which, for our purposes, access to, and security and sufficiency of land is the most central. What makes poverty and vulnerability especially acute in this country is the increasing shortage of arable land for most farming families and the growing sub-divisions of plots in response to growing population pressure. While the details may vary from one locality to another, the overall picture shows land holdings are getting smaller with each passing generation. According to CSA's land survey of 2014, over 36 percent of households hold land below 0.5ha, 60 percentbelow 1.0 ha, and 25 percent between 1.00 and 2.00 ha. While some off-farm employment opportunities have been opened up in rural areas, particularly in localities close to urban centers, they have not been sufficient to satisfy the growing demand for employment by those unable to live by farming.

Other important factors at play, which our research project was expected to investigate in depth in connection with rural poverty, included the following: a) population growth and demographic pressure: more people means less land to farm and hence less food production; more people means greater landlessness; b) factors having to do with environmental shocks (drought, rainfall variability, floods, etc) and the their long term impact. Demographic change will impact on environmental resources in one form or another. In our own case, high rates of rural population growth, and the lack of sufficient non-farm employment to absorb the excess population has led to the steady expansion of farm land over the years- expansion which has come at the expense of forestry, woodland, pasture and greenery. According to data provided by CSA, the country's cropland area was six million hectares in the mid-1980s, increased to 8.5 m in the mid 1990s, to 10.7 m in the mid-2000s, and is about 18 m ha at present (2015). Unless the root causes of the problem are addressed, the physical expansion of farm land will continue in the years ahead, leading to the depletion of essential environmental resources and eco-system services.

Environmental shocks have been a frequent occurrence in rural Ethiopia. The year 2015/16, for example, saw over ten million peasants and herders seriously affected by drought, requiring extensive support in the form of food aid, water, agricultural inputs, and health interventions from government and the international community. Such shocks often lead to the loss of household resources, to malnutrition, poor health and general loss of well-being lasting several years. In such situations, many rural households may be unable to farm their land, and thus are forced to rent it out instead to earn income.

A number of social protection programs to address poverty and to contribute to vulnerability reduction are under way in the rural areas, of which the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) is the most significant. This multi-donor and government financed program was launched in 2005, and up to 2012 there were, on average, seven million people covered by it. Under what is called PSNP 4, the program has been extended for a period of five and half years running from 2015 up to 2021, and designed to cover 10 million people in a total of 411 high risk *woredas*. PSNP involves the transfer of food or cash to targeted beneficiaries who are expected, in return, to engage in public works (a few receive direct transfers). The PSNP has become a key component of the government's food security strategy. Program beneficiaries are supposed to be the most vulnerable members in each *kebelle*, in many cases those with farm plots deemed to be too small, and the selection is made by the *kebelle* authorities.

Landlessness is an important subject for close examination because it is an overarching problem with implications for poverty, social stability and the environment. Despite this, however, it has not attracted serious investigation and there are not many in-depth analyses of the subject and its ramifications. The problem is in large measure a product ofdemographic pressure, land scarcity and the insufficiency of access to non-farm employment in the rural areas. Landlessness is now growing to be a significant problem, and, in some of the densely settled communities, it has reached crisis levels, causing serious concern among *kebelle* and *woreda* authorities. The problem is an indicator of poverty, and no program of poverty reduction can succeed without addressing it in a meaningful way.

There is a generational factor at work here: the tenure regime in place disadvantages young peasants who, by law, should have been provided farm plots by the *kebelles* concerned but are not because there is no arable land to distribute. This generational divide has the potential to erode social stability and cohesion. As is discussed by all the researchers in their work, the response of the young to landlessness has been varied but of particular significance has been the phenomenon of out-migration from the rural areas. Such migration may be to bigger urban centers in search of employment (this is evident in Addis Ababa), but the migration that has drawn public attention because of the dangers involved is the illegal migration to foreign countries such as the Middle East and South Africa and the victimization of would-be migrants by people smugglers and the human tragedy it has caused.

Peasant landholders are at present under increasing pressure regarding their rights to land, and apprehensive about the concomitant risks these pose to their livelihoods. Among the important pressures investigated by the research are the

following: a) growing demands for land by private and public investors; new investments for large, medium and small scale industrial projects, commercial agriculture (land grabbing), and real estate schemes have grown considerably since the land laws were issued ; b) pressure and risks due to the expansion of cities and towns into the surrounding countryside, appropriating many peasant operated farm lands; c) pressures from large and medium scale infrastructure, including roads, railways, hydropower dams, airports, etc, and finally, d) endogenous factors such as demographic change noted above, climate change and environmental shocks. It is worth noting that the severity of pressure is more pronounced in rural areas nearer to towns and cities than in more remote localities.

These pressures have not only brought about land-use and landscape change, but they have also been accompanied by wide-ranging changes in other aspect of farming life and social relations. The changes they have given rise to in farming practices and livestock management are particularly noteworthy. Inheritance practices have become more stressful, and there is growing dispute within the family. While land registration has provided a measure of assurance to peasants who wish to rent-out or rent-in land, land transactions have become more complex, and in some areas land is being sold and purchased contrary to the law. The legal framework provided for land transactions is thus proving inadequate to accommodate new demands and new developments.

A brief look at some of the research findings

The study was undertaken in a small number of selected *kebelles* in each of the four Regions and thus what we have are micro case studies rather than full scale Regional coverage. Case studies have certain drawbacks but they also have advantages in many respects; be that as it may, FSS had no better option at the time given the limited resources and time at its disposal. Each research team employed the methodology that best suited it but in all four casesinformation was collected by means of field surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews with key informants and public officials at the local level.

Despite considerable economic growth and poverty reduction in the last decade and half, there is widespread deprivation in the rural areas including those in the four Regions studied. The number of people living below the poverty line is higher in the study sites than the national level. In Tigray, for example, 50 percent of respondent families were found to be poor. Significantly, what comes out clearly in all the four studies is that land shortage is becoming increasingly acute and per capita holdings are growing smaller. Average size of holdings of respondent families in the study areas were below the national as well as Regional average, and a great majority of these households do not have enough farm land to meet their consumption needs. Land shortage is more severe in SNNPR where a great number of households operate micro-holdings measuring less than 0.5 ha. Moreover, grazing land is equally getting scarce, and in some areas common grazing land has almost disappeared. Thus, the key factor aggravating poverty is insufficiency of farm land and pasture. Other asset deprivations include lack of farm oxen and livestock (cattle as well as small ruminants). Add to this the fact that there are limited opportunities for non-farm

employment, as is the case in all the four Regions, one can understand why poverty, far from being tamed, as government reports suggest, is becoming virulent.

An important measure of rural poverty is the extent of food insecurity among households. Shortage of food is an endemic problem in all the research kebeles as wellas Regions. In some kebeles in Oromia, for example, food shortages affect more than two-thirds of allhouseholds. In SNNPR, nearly 60 percent of families experience food shortages during the year, while in one of the study kebeles the incidence of food scarcity was more than 83 percent. Respondents identified the following as the major causes of food shortages: lack of sufficient land to grow food for the family (here the landless are the most severely affected); land degradation and deterioration of soil fertility; rainfall variability and poor weather conditions; crop damage due to crop disease or other factors; and escalating food-price inflation.

Sub-division and fragmentation of land is an issue of serious concern in all the four Regions since, here as elsewhere in rural Ethiopia, demography, ecology and land access are closely intertwined. Given the shortage of land assets any change in population and asset quality will have an impact on the distribution of land. The rate of population growth in the rural areas is reported to have decreased slightly since the last census, however at just below 3 percent it is still unacceptably high. Needless to say, more population means less land available for farming, pasture and other basic activities. Moreover, land degradation continues to pose a danger, reducing, in some areas, the land available for farming.In all the four Regions, the main mechanism for getting access to land is inheritance, followed, at least in Oromia, by the marriage endowment.Land redistribution such as that which was undertaken in Amhara Region in 1997 is not under consideration anywhere else. But inheritance has a major downside: it often leads to the sub-division of the family holdings due in large part to rivalry among heirs. In an attempt to discourage damaging farm sub-divisions, Regions such as Oromia have issued regulations denying registration of plots below the minimum size established, but this has not deterred siblings inheriting the family land from sub-dividing it into tiny, unviable plots.

Landlessness is a serious and growing problem in all rural areas, and yet it has not been given the attention it deserves by local authorities. For the purposes of the study, the following definition of landlessness was adopted by the researchteams: any individual living in a rural community who has no rights to land registered in his or her name is considered landless. Having temporary access to land under a rental arrangement does not disqualify the person in question from being described as landless. In many cases, a landless person has no access to land of any kind, no employment and no income. The first point to bear in mind is that landlessness is at the heart of the generational fault-linefacing rural society. Invariably, those suffering from the misfortune of having no rights to land are the young, and young males appear in the picture more prominently than young females. The major factors that were found to be responsible for rising landlessness included demographic change and consequent land shortage; large-scale investments in commercial agriculture, manufacturing and infrastructure; land degradation; and the paucity of non-farm (or off-farm) employment opportunities.

The following figures indicate the extent of landlessness in the selected research sites in the four Region (except Tigray):

- *Amhara*: a total of 17, 114 individuals registered as landless in the four selected research woredas (the total households in these woredas is put at 135,462)
- *Oromia*: 38.3 percent were landless households in the three kebeles studied
- *SNNPR*: 25 percent landless households in the three research kebeles
- *Tigray*: a total of 229,445 rural landless youth in the Region as a whole.

Landlessness has harmful consequences but the harm it causes varies depending on the actors concerned. For the landless individuals themselves, the effect is frustration, demoralization and discontent. At the family level, landlessness threatens to tear the family apart. This is especially evident in Oromia. There is conflict here between siblings and parents, and among siblings themselves. Fathers refuse to rent their land to their sons, and sons often speak of their wish for their parents' early death. In SNNPR, families put immense pressure on siblings to migrate to South Africa thus pushing them into the arms of criminal people-smugglers. At the community level, informants speak of growing anti-social behavior and petty crime, both of which are attributed to the landless. In many areas, the landless show little respect for officialdom and state authority, posing a threat to public order.

What have been the responses of the landless, families, and public officials to the problem? All the studies emphasize that many landless individuals actively seek opportunities to earn income and to support their families. One common venture is renting land and engaging in farming. While land registration has not stemmed the rising tide of landlessness, it has created a better environment for land transactions, not least temporary land rentals. In some cases, enterprising landless individuals earn more income than the average household in the locality by renting-in land and operating a successful farm enterprise. Other employment opportunities sought include seeking alternative employment opportunities, casual work, petty trade, migration to urban areas and illegal migration to the Gulf countries and South Africa.

In SNNPR, specially, there is immense family and community pressure on young men to migrate to South Africa regardless of the dangers and high financial costs. Families and communities see such migration as the solution to all their problems, and a bright future for their sons. The SNNPR study estimates that migrants to South Africa from Kembatta and HadiyaZones alone reached 91,000 between 2000 and 2015. This massive flow of illegal migrants has enriched people-smugglers and criminal organizations. Public authorities' response to the problem of landlessness has been limited, and includes programs of livestock raising, quarry work,and creating opportunitiesin small and medium enterprises.

To sum up: landlessness is a corrosive problem, fuelled by land shortage, demographic pressure, limited livelihood diversification, pressure brought on by capitalist expansion, and other factors. It is, as we have emphasized, a generational problem and the young are the overwhelming victims. The extent of the problem is unacceptably high, but it would be even higher if we were to include the population of land holderswith "starvation plots". According CSA's surveys, over 36 percent of

rural land holders operate land measuring less than 0.5 hectares. Many of these are dependent on safety net programs.

In conclusion, the findings of the studies from the four Regions reveal the close linkage between land, poverty, and livelihood insecurity.While the broad array of changes that have occurred since the Federal land laws were enacted over a decade ago, and in particular the implementation of land certification and registration, have had some positive outcomes, there remains still a range ofrisks to rural land rights andlivelihoods, risks which are more severe for the poor than the well-to-do, for female-headed households than male headed ones. Moreover, rural vulnerability to poverty and food shortages remains unacceptably high.It is therefore imperative that there is wide, evidence-based public debate on the subject of rural land and livelihoods to understand the emerging economic, social and ecological dynamics shaping rural society at present. It is hoped that this volumewill be acontribution to that goal.

Land, Landlessness and Poverty in Amhara Region

***Tadesse Amsalu and Birhanu Gedif*[1]**

Introduction

Agriculture is the dominant economic sector supporting the livelihood of the Ethiopian people, and more than 80 percent of the country's 80 million labor force is engaged in farming. This makes land fundamental to the lives of poor rural people as it is their source of food, shelter, income and social identity. Secure access to land reduces vulnerability to hunger and poverty. Despite the fact that various environmental, socio-economic and political factors are attributed for food shortages in the country, the major cause is serious shortage of farmland and low productivity in rural areas (Teshome 2009).

The productivity of the agricultural sector is seriously eroded by unsustainable land management practices both on farm lands and grazing lands (Abate*et al*2012). Agricultural productivity on smallholder farms, in many countries in Africa, is further constrained by high dependence on rainfall and unpredictability of the rainfall pattern, declining per capita land holding due to population growth, fragmentation of land, all of which add up to increase vulnerability to shocks (AUC-ECA-AfDB Consortium 2010).

Without secure property rights, farmers will not have emotional attachment to the land they cultivate, do not invest in land development, and will not use inputs efficiently. Tenure insecurity and land redistribution in the past have been among the many factors inhibiting adoption of sustainable land management practices in Ethiopia. As a result, the land tenure issue has attracted widespread attention and debate among policy makers, government and non-government actors, the private sector, the donor community, researchers and the public at large. Lack of tenure security is thought to have aggravated land degradation as it discourages farmers to invest in measures preventing soil erosion. Shimeles*et al*(2009)have also shown that people who do not own or are ensured of the uninterrupted use right of the land they farm may not take care of the soil and are more likely to pump out all its worth in the short run.

A study by Berhanu et al. (2003) showed that landholding size is one of the factors that influence farm income and the level of household food security. As the size of the land declines, per capita food production and farm income also decline, indicating that extremely small-sized farms cannot be made productive even with improved technology and certainly not enough to address rural poverty issues by the extension programs that primarily focus on technology diffusion. Such farmers have

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little or no surplus for investment and for input purchase. Because of high vulnerability to food and income insecurity, farmers with relatively small farms turn frequently to trading crop residue and animal manure as a source of fuel, rather than applying them for soil fertility improvement.

As land is a key asset for the rural poor and provides an important foundation for economic andsocial development, sound property rights and equitable access to land has the potential to empower the poor (Deininger*et al* 2003). The 1975 land reform by the socialist Derg in Ethiopia being cognizant of the bitter landlord-tenant relationship was a radical measure that brought an end to the exploitative land tenure system and brought all land under state ownership (Samuel 2006). This noble political measure was however marred by inequitable access to land and severe lack of tenure security.

The EPRDF regime which overthrew the Derg in 1991 maintained rural and urban land under public ownership. The constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia states that the right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the state and in the peoples of Ethiopia (FDRE 1995, Art 1). Land is a common property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange. The constitution also has provisions indicating that any one 18 and above years old has the right to have access to land.

In the Amhara national regional state, where this study was undertaken land redistribution was carried out in 1997/98. The redistribution of the land was aimed to bring about equitable access to land for both women and men. Consequently, many women-headed households, and young people above 18 years of age, had access to land. However, over the last decade or so it is observed that many youth who reached the age of 18 and above could not get land due to land scarcity. Consequently different forms of land acquiring mechanisms such as leasing or renting of land, sharecropping, and inheritance of land from parents have become common forms of accessing land in many parts of the region.

Despite the opportunities created for women to have equal access right to land there is a notable difference in the manner of land-use between male-headed and female-headed households. The female-headed households face asset limitations to use or cultivate their land. Accordingly, it is common practice for female-headed households to enter into agreements for sharecropping or land rentals, which, in many cases has led to the loss of the economic advantage they had as landholders.

Land leasing (both renting-in and renting-out of land) takes different forms. It may take place with verbal or written agreements (Gezahegn and Tekalegn 2004). The absence of clear leasing-out procedure seems to have endangered the land tenure security of women-headed households as some incidents of land claims have been reported to land administration offices. Gaining access to land alone cannot give women equal control and management over the land similar to men. Security of tenure is highly influenced by access to male labour, and assets such as oxen. According to Mintwab and Stein (2010) plots owned by female-headed households are significantly less productive. It is argued that variables such as the mode of production, social and

economic status, and family support are determinants for tenure security of women (Askale 2005).

For households lacking adequate labor to cultivate their land, the common practice is share cropping, which involves the sharing of the harvest between the landholder and the operator of the land. This arrangement however being a temporary agreement does not motivate the land operator to give due attention to improving productivity. In this regard a study in Bangladesh revealed that net per acre output is highest in owner-cultivated farms and lowest in sharecropping farms (Hossain 1977). This indicates that female-headed households are unable to take full advantage of their land and signal the need for taking measures to women enable them to benefit fully from their land rights.

Ethiopia has implemented one of the largest, fastest and least expensive rural land registration and certification programs in Africa (Deininger *et al*. 2008). The country has developed an innovative approach to securing land rights since 1995, which is massive in scale, pace and cost effectiveness. The program has increased the willingness to invest in crops and soils, which is important for improving food security (Deininger *et.al* 2008). However, the first level certification had limitations with respect to the maintenance and updating of land registration records (Sosina and Holden 2014). The second level registration and certification in selected districts in the highland areas has already started. The new program involves registering the precise geographical locations and sizes of individual farm plots using technologies such as GPS, satellite imagery and aerial photography. The aim here is to enhance tenure security, the maintenance and updating of records, and land management (MOA 2013).

Land tenure security, for both women and men, is just one step on the road to reducing rural poverty (IFAD 2015). However, for many of therural poor in developing countries, access to land is becoming more tenuous than ever. Similar trends are being observed in the Amhara Region and elsewhere in Ethiopia. Although land redistribution was carried out in Amhara in 1997/98 to accommodate landless households including women, the newly emerging young population in rural areas has largely remained landless due to the absence of subsequent land redistribution. Although the problem is felt by political leaders at all levels, there are no visible solutions crafted to address the problem of rural landlessness. Lack of access to land means failure to produce, and this submerges the young and productive segment of the population in the poverty trap.

Problem statement

Rural agricultural land in the Amhara Region is becoming increasingly scarce for numerous reasons associated with rapid population growth, high population density in productive areas, degradation of agricultural lands, urbanization, and competing demands from different users, including investors. As there was no land redistribution in the last decade or so, parents have been forced to apportion small plots of landfrom their meagre holdings to their children, and this has led to further fragmentation of arable land. Currently in the Amhara Region and other parts of Ethiopia landlessness has become an important subject for close examination because it is an overarching

problem with implications for poverty, social stability and the environment. Despite this, however, it has not attracted serious investigation and there are hardly any in-depth analysis of the subject and its ramifications.

Landlessness is now growing to be a significant problem, and in some of the densely settled communities it has reached crisis levels, causing serious concern within government structures at different levels. Faced with the severity of the problem, some local authorities have been forced to distribute grazing land, and land on steep hillsides and fragile ecosystems, with serious risks of environmental degradation and soil erosion. In view of this, and taking into account the broad implications of landlessness on rural livelihoods and tenure security, this study will address the following research questions:

- How is the state of landlessness in Amhara Region? Is it increasing or decreasing?
- What are the causes of landlessness and what social, economic and environmental consequences are observed in the Region due to landlessness?
- What has been the response of public authorities to address the problem of landlessness? And, how do they monitor the status of landlessness?
- How do farmers perceive the importance of land certification in terms of assuring land holding security and carrying out investments on land resources?
- Has land certification improved land productivity and brought improvements on farmers' livelihoods?
- How do local communities describe the poverty situation after land certification?
- To what extent have women benefited from land certification?

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to explore the interplay between access to land, land tenure security, landlessness and poverty in rural Amhara. The specific objectives are;

- To assess perception of farm households on land certification and its implication on land tenure security and land management.
- To investigate the extent to which land certification in the Region has contributed to security of land rights and poverty reduction.
- To investigate livelihood improvements among women as a result of land certification.
- To assess the state and trend of landlessness in the Amhara Region.
- To investigate the causes for landlessness and the consequences on social and environmental stability.
- To assess the response of public authorities and the local community, and the institutional arrangements put in place to tackle landlessness.

Scope and significance of the study

Thestudy focuses principally on assessing theinter-linkage between access to land, on the one hand, and landlessness and poverty on the other. It will also attempt to show the trend of landlessness and the strategies followed by public authorities to address the problem. To this end, four rural districts (or *woredas)*, located in surplus producing as well as food insecure areas were selected for the study. The Amhara Region is huge in terms of area coverage (consisting of 131 rural woredas), and is characterized by diverse agro-ecologies and topographies ranging from very steep slopes to undulating, plain and flat areas. About 50 percent of the districts in the Region are identified as food insecure. The study however used only four sample districts assuming that the districts located in food insecure and surplus producing areas share common elements. Despite the smallness of the sample, interactions made with the respective Regional, Zonal and district offices and data collected from a cross section of the local community have made it possible to capture core elements of the research problem. As a result it is argued that the data collected is credible and has provided meaningful interpretations.

The study aims to explore the extent to which access to land and poverty are inter-related, the challenges faced by landholders and land users related to rights and the extent to which land registration and certification have contributed to security of land rights and the poverty situation. The research ultimately aims to establish empirical evidence on the extent of rural landlessness and its implication on sustainable socioeconomic development in the study areas. It is hoped that the findings of the study will generate serious debate and deliberation among policy makers, development practitioners, academia and the rural community.

Literature review

Land tenure in Ethiopia

Land is a major socioeconomic asset in Ethiopia and the way land rights are defined influences the use of land resources and economic growth. The struggle over who controls the land has played a significant role in the history of Ethiopia and it is likely that similar trends will continue. In relation to land policy and changes three periods are distinguished. These include the Imperial regime until 1974, the Dergue regime until 1991 and the EPDRF regime since 1991 (Berhanu and Feyera, 2005).

During the Imperial regime the country accommodated a land tenure system that was described by most scholars as one of the most complex compilations of differing tenure systems in Africa (Joireman, 2000). The commonly identified tenure regimes included the communal (*rist*), grant land (*gult*), freehold (sometimes referred to as private *gebbar tenure*), church (*semon*), and state (*maderia*, *mengist)* (Crewett, *at al.*, 2008)[2]. Before 1974, the *rist*system (in which all descendants of an individual

[2]For details see Hoben, 1973; Atakliti, 2004; Cohen and Weintraub, 1975; Pausewang, 1983; Bereket, 2002; Abera, 2000).

who owned the land were entitled to a share of family land) and *gult* (an ownership right acquired from the monarch or provincial rulers who were empowered to make land grants) were dominant in the Amhara Region.

The imperial land system was characterized by high tenure insecurity which prevented peasants and farmers from the full benefit of their labor. The system was finally abolished by the rural land proclamation of 1975 enacted by the Derg (Military) regime that overthrew the Imperial regime a year earlier. The Dergue regime put an end to private land ownership and declared land to be the collective property of the Ethiopian people, in which land could not be transferred by sale, lease, or mortgage. Although the land proclamation enabled a number of peasant farmers to have access to land, frequent land redistribution severely eroded sense tenure security and hampered intensive land management by land holders. Despite the regime's attempt to redistribute land to the landless, the demand for land far outweighed the supply and rural landlessness remained a growing problem (Dessalegn 1984).

In 1991 the Military government was overthrown by the present regime, and the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, in its declaration on economic policy of that year announced the continuation of the land policy of the Derg (Crewett *et al*., 2008). In 1995, the new constitution approved and confirmed state ownership of land: Article 40 of the constitution states '' the right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources is exclusively vested in the state and the peoples of Ethiopia. Land is a common property of the nations, nationalities and people's of Ethiopia''(Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1995).

Although the federal and Regional land proclamations ensure free access to agricultural land, severe land shortage has hampered government ambitions to provide land to the rural landless. In the current rural land proclamation, tenure security and proper land management seem to be core policy objectives of the government and efforts are being made to enhance a proper land administration and management system through rural land registration and certification.

Rural land registration and certification

Rural land registration and certification is a process of locating, measuring, recordings and documenting farm plots belonging to rural farm households with the purpose of certifying who possesses what, how much and where. It is one of the key strategic interventions or reform measures of the Ethiopian government with the aim to bring tenure security as a means to enhance productivity of the land and above all as means to transform the national economy. Land certification in the Ethiopian context involves providing a document to land holders which ensures proof of use rights; the holding and use right is recorded in a publicly recognized central land registry (Sosina and Holden 2014) .

Though there is an ongoing debate on the importance of registering land titles for improving smallholders' livelihoods, land registration and certification is believed to be important for land rentals, security of land tenure, reducing disputes over land, use of credit facilities from formal financial institutions and gender access and control over land (Mastewaland Snyder, 2015*)*. There has been land redistribution in Africa

since the colonial period. It was also common in Ethiopia during times of regime change. The redistribution of land in some cases is believed to erode tenure security, which prevented farmers from undertaking land-improvement investments (Benin and Pender 2001). Dessalegn (2004) on the other hand argued that tenure insecurity has been aggravated not just because of the threat of periodic redistribution, but also due to the following factors:

i. Increasing rural poverty and the fact that farm life is becoming unviable
ii. Growing population pressure and increasing land scarcity
iii. Interventionist measure es by government officials in the field leading to extra-legal decisions affecting land matters
iv. The lack of knowledge on the part of their rights and their inability to defend their rights
v. The lack of proper and accessible juridical body for land disputes.

Urban expansions and unfair compensation mechanisms are also considered to be a source of insecurity (Yigremew, 2007).

Land registration and formalization programs have led to the erosion of women's customary land rights, especially in Africa, when land is registered in the name of the male "head of household" (Lastarria-Corhniel, 1997). In Ethiopia however land certification procedures required that the names of both spouses (husband and wife) are registered and their photographs attached on the certificate. There is also a high percentage of land registered by women household heads. For land certification, the land administration committee in the country required the inclusion of at least one female member. This seems to have had a positive impact on women's security of tenure and involvement in decision making over the use of the land.

The modern system of land registration is not yet undertaken in most of the *kebeles* in Amhara Region. This system is being undertaken in pilot districts with the support from Responsible and Innovative Land Administration Program (REILA) and LIFT (Land Investment for Transformation Programme). Certification is of two types-first level and second level. The first level certification, which uses traditional methods of land measurement and registration, is already undertaken in all districts of the Region. The second level uses geospatial technologies. Data from the Regional land administration office indicates that first level land holding certificate is already provided to about 3.6 million households, which accounts for 99 percent of rural land holders.

After the registration of land in the districts, tenure security is said to have improved (Sida, 2010), but some scholars argue that tenure insecurity is still a challenge in most of the rural areas. As landlessness increases with population growth, farmers are not confident enough as the Regional land administration proclamation does have some gaps in this regard. If 80% of rural households agree on land redistribution, it is possible to carry out land redistribution.(ANRS Rural Land Proclamation No. 1336/2006).This is attributed as one of the factors for tenure insecurity.

Land tenure security and land management

Land tenure security exists when an individual or group is confident that they have rights to a piece of land on a long term basis, protected from denial, and with the ability to obtain the benefits of labor and capital invested on the land, whether through direct use or upon transfer to another holder.Secure land rights are a fundamental building block for agricultural productivity, as well as for economic and social empowerment of land holders. Smallholderfarmers who have secured property rights are more likely to make investments having the confidence to regain their investments over the medium and long term. Small agricultural land holders constitute a significant portion of the population in developing countries, who remain poor not simply because their holdings are small, but also their land rights are weak and insecure. The uncertainty they experience undermines their incentives to make long-term investments in their land or use it sustainably (Bruce, 2004).

Land degradation is a widespread problem across sub-Saharan African countries, which is triggered by the increasing population that has led to encroachment on marginal lands for crop production and livestock husbandry (ECA, 2004). Farmers in rural Ethiopia are generally aware of the severity of land degradation (Berhanu and Swinton, 2003), and the level of awareness tends to be high among farmers who live in areas with more degraded lands. Such a high level of perception is one of the reasons for more farmers applying indigenous conservation practices in degraded areas of Ethiopia **(**ibid). Such positive moves become more productive and sustainable when complemented by land certification.

A study in some Ethiopian villages has indicated that households with fully secure and transferable land rights are more likely to invest in land management than others who expect future redistribution (Deininger et al., 2003). An investigation by Holden et al., (2009) on investment and land productivity effects of land registration and certification in the Tigray Region reveals that there is a significant and positive investment in tree planting and the maintenance of soil conservation structures, and improvements in land productivity after land registration. Land registration ensures tenure security that promotes productive land use and investment in land resources for agricultural development, commercial and industrial enterprises (Marquardt, 2006). Similarly Berhanu et al. (2003***)*** argue that land titling and legal enforcement of title are considered fundamental for tenure security and more secure land tenure and land rights encourage farmers to make investment on the land. A further note by Ayele et al. (2015***)*** shows that the land registration and certification program among farmers in Menz Gera Midir district has ensured tenure security in which farmers gain confidence in their land holdings and are motivated to improve its productivity. The experience elsewhere, for example in India, also showed that greater tenure security enjoyed by tenants increased agricultural productivity by around 28 percent (Banerjee, et al., 2003).

It is land security which determines land holders long term investment on their land. One of the provisions of the Amhara revised land proclamation states that land holders have obligations to protect the land in their possession or land obtained by rent, to plant trees around their land and properly protect them to grow, to follow a

land management system that decreases soil erosion and collects water, employ favourable soil conservations practices especially on slope land (ANRS, 2006). Although these stipulations are meant to increase agricultural productivity Enyew et al., (2014) argue that land certification in Ethiopia is not accompanied by an increase in land productivity. The slight increase in crop productivity was rather a result of improved seeds and use of fertilizers than land certification.

The land rental market in rural Ethiopia

One basic feature of the Ethiopian rural land law is its contribution to the rural land market. Studies show that about a quarter of all rural families in Ethiopia (and nearly half in Tigray Region) are engaged in land rental transactions, the vast majority of which are informal sharecropping arrangements with neighbours, relatives or in-laws (Gebreselassie, 2006; McClung, 2012). Similarly, a study conducted by Deininger et al. (2012) in Amhara Region showed that sharecropping was the dominant type of contract (95 percent) where about 12 percent of the land owners participated in input sharing.

Land rentals can play an important role by allowing those farmers who are either landless or hold small land but have the necessary resources generate income by renting in land or practicing share cropping. Land markets also facilitate the exchange of land as the off-farm economy develops, and, where the conditions for doing so exist, provide a basis for the use of land as collateral in credit markets. The ability to transfer land also increases the incentives to undertake land-related investments (Deininger 2004). Households without adequate male labour or oxen often rent out a portion of their land to households with more resources out of necessity (Teklu, 2004). These resource-poor land owning households are often headed by women, comprised primarily of the elderly, or are too poor to access the resources needed to work their land using family labour (Holden et al., 2009). Female headed households in Ethiopia are particularly disadvantaged in farming because ox ploughing (the predominant mode of cultivation) is traditionally a male activity, making it difficult for women to acquire both the oxen and the male labour needed to cultivate effectively and efficiently (Deininger et al., 2009). For such households shared tenancy arrangements can provide a critical source of income to supplement subsistence farming activities (Holden, et al., 2009).

There is a common assertion that the rural land certification programme carried out in Ethiopia has increased the land tenure security of farmers including women. Despite the erratic incidents of loss of land reported in the rural land law implementation study in the Amhara Region, the evidence shows increased rentals by female-headed households because of better perceived tenure security has strengthened their position as land holders and also enhanced their negotiating position in the land rental market (Holden and Bezabih, 2009).

The current situation in the Ethiopia indicates that the land rental market is vibrant in most parts of the country and it seems that farmers with adequate farm resources but lacking farm land are interested to rent in more land than they are currently able to access in the market, indicating that the market may be constrained to

some degree (Deininger et al., 2009). This reality creates better opportunity for women and other vulnerable groups to get better land rental price or share cropping arrangements. However, most land leasing or share cropping transactions are informal and there is a tendency to influence women land holders and other vulnerable groups to enter share cropping or land renting with relatives and neighbours (Holden andBezabih, 2009). For women and other vulnerable groups to benefit from their land holdings the land rental system has to be transparent and formal and need to be supported by the land administration institutions at the grass root level.

Sharecropping arrangements create an opportunity for the landless or land-poor members of the household, particularly adult children without government allocated land to have access to land and generate income for their livelihoods (Segers et al., 2010). Although share cropping can be a beneficial strategy for households in Ethiopia, significant questions remain about whether share cropping as a contract choice has a dampening effect on agricultural productivity and efficiency (Deininger et al., 2011; Pender and Fafchamps, 2006; Segers et al., 2010).

Rural landlessness and unemployment in Ethiopia

Access to arable land in African has been in decline due to the pressure of growing population trends, worsening land degradation which is exacerbated by climate change (FAO 2010). The combination of rural economic "push" factors, such as unemployment and underemployment, shortage of farming land, and weakening livelihoods, and urban economic "pull" factors, particularly high wages in urban areas, ultimately leads to migration to urban areas (Rhoda, 1983). The current global youth unemployment rate is estimated at 12.6 percent (ILO 2013). In Ethiopia the figure for all age unemployment is about 17.6 percent (Figure 1) of which male unemployment is 11.6 percent and female are 23.7 percent; similar trends are observed in the Amhara Region (CSA, 2014).

Figure 1. Unemployment trends in Ethiopia

As indicated in Figure 1 unemployment in Ethiopia has been decreasing for the last 12 years and this is attributed to the country's fast economic growth. However,

the economic growth seems not adequately addressing rural landlessness partly because of rapid population growth and absence of land redistribution (Shumet, 2013)

Ethiopia's Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) strategy gives significant emphasis to the agricultural sector. But the available arable land is not able to provide sufficient livelihood for the growing rural population (Zemen, 2014). Although the rural youth (above 18 years old) have a constitutional right to have access to land, the current situation shows that it is only a small fraction of the rural youth that has got the opportunity to acquire agricultural land. As a result, most rural youth are looking for employment options other than agriculture.

Though there is a booming economic growth in Ethiopia, the country is facing growing youth landlessness in rural areas and insignificant rural job creation, potentially leading to an increase in migration to urban areas (World Bank, 2007). Women unemployment is thought to be greater than men as there are differences in educational attainment (Nzinga et al., 2012). Expansion of the service sector attracts rural landless towards urban areas. As a result, rural-urban migration has increased in the recent years. Despite the increasing job opportunities in urban areas, the urban economy is not able to absorb the new labor from rural areas. In this regard Sosina and Holden (2014) argue that the spontaneous rural-urban migration of the youth lacks publicly organized activities or policies.

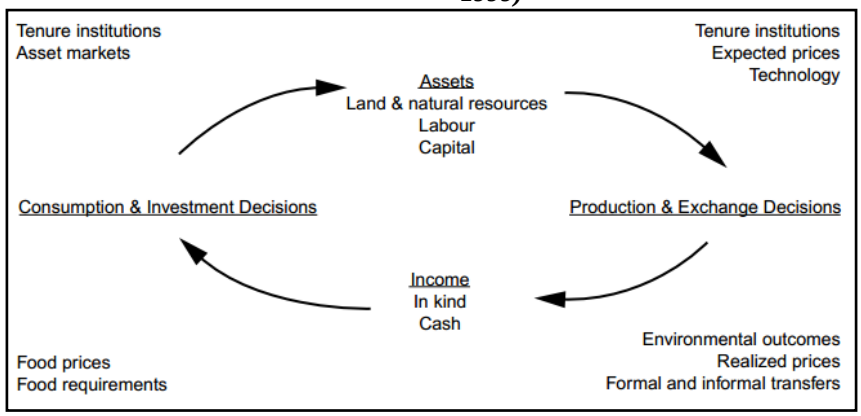
The rural land law in Ethiopia enshrines social equity in terms of access to land and protects the right of women, the youth and other vulnerable groups. Specifically the rural land law provides an opportunity for free access to rural land to all those who are willing to engage in agriculture. However, studies show that scarcity of arable land in most circumstances makes it difficult to put the law into practice. A study by Belay and Manig (2002) indicates the existence of severe shortage of land in the highlands of Ethiopia and the major source of land for the new generation is land received largely through gift or inheritance from parents. As the amount of land to be gained from parents is very small, the landless and others who wish to produce more acquire land through land rental and share cropping arrangements. A study conducted in Amhara Region by the Institute of Land Administration of Bahir Dar University (ILA, 2015) which covered 6 zones, 15 District and 30 Kebeles found that there are on average two young people within a sample household (whose family size is estimated to be between 4-6) who have no land of their own. Most of these people rely on family bequest and land rental from other fellow farmers. The overall scenario in the country indicates that access to rural land by the landless is a national challenge that demands a well-articulated policy intervention that could lead to on-farm and off-farm livelihood diversification.

Land tenure and food security

There is a clear link between land policies and food security (ECA, 2004). Access to land is a key determinant of food security and economic well-being for rural households (McClung, 2012). Formulation of food security and poverty reduction strategies and policies need prior understanding of the links between access to land and alternative livelihoods (Figure 2). Since land plays an important role in the livelihoods of the majority of Africans, food security and poverty reduction cannot be

achieved unless issues of access to land and security of tenure are properly addressed (ECA, 2004).

Figure 2. Links in land tenure and food security (Source: Maxwell and Weibe, 1999)



In its strategy of sustainable development and poverty reduction, the Ethiopian government attaches due emphasis toland certification that enhances land use and transfer rights to ensure tenure security that is a vital incentive for farmers to improve productivity. Tenure security has a marked effect on expectations of returns from an investment of both labour and capital, particularly in a rural setting (ECA, 2003). It is natural that without secured property rights farmers do not feel an emotional attachment to the land they cultivate, do not invest in land development and will not use inputs efficiently (Shimelles et al., 2009). This will have a repercussions on their food security.

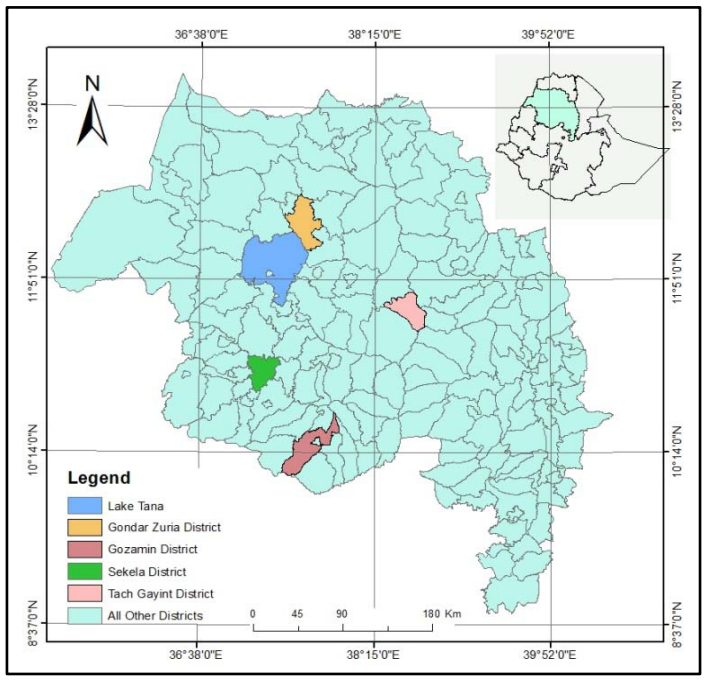
Lack of access to resources (particularly land) faced by rural women in the developing world is identified as one of major sources of their economic underperformance. The single most important economic factor affecting rural women's situations is the gender gap in command of arable land (Agrawal, 1994). One of the most serious obstacles to increasing the agricultural productivity and income of rural women is tenure insecurity. Security of tenure is the key to having control over major decisions, such as what crop to grow, what techniques to use, what to consume and what to sell (ECA, 2004).Though there are improvements regarding access to land by women, this alone cannot ensure household food security and eradicate poverty. It is necessary to have a reasonable size and quality of land as well as other resources like oxen, labor, credit and adequate agricultural inputs to increase food production **(**EASSI, 2003).

Description of the study areas

The study area

The Amhara Region is one of the largest Regions in Ethiopia. It covers a total area of 170,152 square kilometers. This is about 11 percent of Ethiopia's total area. The Region is divided into 11 administrative Zones, 131 rural woredas and 38 urban administrations. The Region has enacted rural land laws and laid the foundations for the institution of rural land administration. Currently the organizational set up for land administration is structured from Region down to kebele level, and efforts are being exerted to implement good governance in land administration though there are a number of irregularities and problems requiring investigation. The average rural land holding in the region is 1.43 ha. The total population of the region as projected for 2016 by CSA(2013)is 20,769,985 of which the rural population constitutes 17,278,000 (8,653,000 male and 8,625,000 women).

Figure 3. Map of the Amhara Region and the study woredas



The estimated livestock population of the region is 9.1 million cattle, 8.4 million sheep and goats, 1.6 million equines, and 8.5 million poultry. About 40 percent of the livestock population of the country is found in this Region. The huge livestock potential gives the Region ample opportunity for meat and milk production, food processing as well as leather and wool production http://www.ethiopia.gov.et/stateamhara).The land use and land cover of the

Region is changing dynamically. As the population increases, encroachments on communal lands increase. The total forest cover of the region (1,288,383 ha) is about 8.2 % of the total land area, where as including bush lands, natural dense forest, riverine forest and plantations it is about 13.85 % covering an estimated area of 2,178,295 ha or 21,783 km2 (Mulatie*et al*., 2016). The estimated area for production of grain crops in 2014 was about 4,404,711 ha (CSA, 2014).

The study areas

The study was undertaken in four selected woredas of the Region, namely Gozamin, Sekela, Tatch Gayint and Gondar Zuria. The particulars of each of these woredas is as follows.

i) Gozaminworeda is located in East Gojam Zone and has 25 rural kebeles and a total of 149,520 people. The total number of households is about 33,865 of which 82 percent are male headed households and 18 percent female headed. Gozamin is one of the surplus producing woredas in the Zone and has high market access. It has a total area of 121,806 ha, and, in terms of land use land cover, about 41.7 percent is arable land, 15 percent forest and woodland, 21 percent gazing land and the remaining is settlement, water bodies and others.

ii) Sekelaworedais located in west Gojam Zone and has a total of 27 rural kebeles and an estimated population of 150,855. The total number of households is in the order of 32,512.of which 78 percent are male headed and 22 percent female headed. The woreda covers an area of 77,442 ha that is characterized by steep slope and undulating topography and the arable land is highly degraded due to soil erosion. The land use land cover data shows that 50 percent is arable land,15 percent forest/woodland, 10 percent grazing land, and the remaining settlement area and rock out-crop land.Sekela is one of the few woredas where the rural youth frequently engages in seasonal migration to the nearby commercial farms and also to distant areas such as Addis Ababa, Oromiya and Sothern Regions. Crop productivity is low and the major crops cultivated are barley, potato and teff *(Eragrostisteff)*.

iii) TatchGayintworeda is located in South Gondar Zone. It covers an area of 82, 502 ha, has 15 rural kebeles containing a total of 197,437 people; there are about 24,928 households of which 23 percent are female headed and 77 percent male headed. About 36 percent of the woreda consists of arable land, 25 percent grazing land, and the remaining is made up of settlement and other uses. The woreda is one of the food insecure woredas in the Region, with frequent erratic rainfall and drought in some year, and benefits by the food security program. There is widespread rural youth migration to places outside the woreda.

iv) Gondar Zuriaworeda in North Gondar Zone covers an area of 114,612 ha and is divided into 35 rural kebeles. About 50 percent of the land area is cultivated land, 12 percent grazing land, 15 percent forest/woodland/bush land and the rest is made up of settlements and others uses . The estimated population of the woreda is s about 197,823, with a total household of 44,157, of which about 24 percent are female headed and 76 percent male headed. Because the woreda is located around Gondar

City and relatively close to many of the commercial farms nearby, rural youth and other resource poor farmers seasonally migrate to these areas.

The communality across the study woredas is that in all cases land holding is in general small, farmers practice subsistence farming, agricultural productivity per ha is low and much of the production is used for household subsistence needs, grazing and woodland resources have become drastically reduced and lack management inputs, water harvesting and irrigation agriculture is limited. The local governments in the woreda annually mobilize the rural community for natural resource development and efforts are being made to construct soil conservation and water harvesting structures to check soil loss and enhance ground water recharge.

Research methodology

This study aims to explore the extent to which access to land and poverty are inter-related, the challenges faced by landholders and land users relating to rights and access to land and the extent to which land registration and certification have contributed to access to land and security of land rights and ultimately assess implications on poverty from the rural households and government institutions perspective. The research ultimately aims to establish empirical evidences on the extent of rural landlessness, measures taken to tackle the problem and implication on sustainable socioeconomic development in the study region. To this effect, major variables such as access to land, size of land holding, crop production, trends in landlessness, livelihood activities of landless people, land certification and sense of land tenure security and agricultural productivity/land management, and women's benefit from rural land certification were investigated in the context of the research objectives.

The research is designed to generate primary data through data gathering from a wide sector involving rural households (having land and landless), kebele land administration committees, the kebele, woreda, Zonal and Regional land administration experts, the kebele leaderships, key informants, and women's groups. Secondary data was also generated from published and unpublished literature, policy documents and reports from government and non government sources. The data on landless people was compiled from kebele and woreda land administration offices, and data on agricultural productivity and land management was collected from agricultural development offices.

As the research examines the perceptions, values and attitude of the household, community groups and governmental institutions, a cross sectional research design was used to generate appropriate data. According to Bryman (2001) a cross sectional design requires the collection of data on many cases and at a single point in time in order to gather a body of quantitative data in connection with two or more variables, which are then examined to find out patterns or associations.

To enhance acquisition of valid data for analysis a research design must be complemented by appropriate research methods, that is techniques for data generation and collection (Bryman, 2001; Oppenhiem, 1992). Taking this into account and considering the nature of this research, broad based information was required to

address the stated objectives. To this end, multiple sources of evidence were used, such as survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews (group discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants), a survey of literature, and field observations (mainly on incidence of encroachments into grazing land, woodland and land improvement interventions, off farm enterprises of the landless).

Data acquisition in this study was strengthened through triangulation or the combination of methodologies including qualitative and quantitative approaches. Triangulation is a powerful solution to the problem of relying too much on any single data source or method, thereby undermining the validity and credibility of findings because of the weakness of any single method (Patton 1990). Similar issues were treated across data generation methods (*i.e.* questionnaire, semi structured interviews and group discussions) in the study to validate data gathered from different sources. The responses reflected in the different groups were cross checked for disparity or convergence of thoughts and observations.

Site selection

Amhara Region is divided into high potential and low potential zones. A high potential zone is characterized by productive ecosystems and surplus agricultural production while a low potential zone suffers from poor agricultural productivity and erratic rainfall as a result of which Productive Safety Net and other food security programs are being implemented to enable the rural poor to become food secure. The study was carried out in four woredas of which three are in the high potential and one in the low potential zone. The criteria used for selecting the study woredas included population density, degree of poverty, rate of landlessness, proximity to urban centers and commercial agricultural investment areas, logistics and representativeness. Based on these criteria, Sekela woreda in west Gojam, Gozamin in East Gojam, Gondar Zuria in North Gondar in the high potential zone on the one hand and Tatch Gayaint woreda in South Gondar in the low potential and food insecure zone were selected.

In each woreda one rural kebele administration was selected in consultation with the woreda land administration and agricultural development office experts. In the process those kebeles that have good data and that are easily accessible were given priority.

Selection of respondent households

The study focuses on rural households and the community as the primary and secondary units of analysis. Representative households were selected purposely from thelist of households in the kebele administration. Before the actual sample household selection, stratification of households in the selected *gotts* (hamlets) was carried out based on asset endowments using criteria adopted by the local people. In this regard Mikkelsen, (1995) underlines the need for acknowledging differences and inequalities among members of a community in their socioeconomic standing, access to resources, literacy level, etc. as all these variables are helpful in making comparisons and analysis of issues across the target community. Taking into account the

differences among households in asset endowments and the kind of livelihood options they adopt in the study area, and considering the stated objectives related to assessing perceptions on access to land, land tenure security, etc sample households were categorized into asset or wealth classes.

Experience in the Region suggests that endowment of land, livestock, household labor, and farm and non-farm income generating activities are associated with a household's capability to generate wealth. While not undermining the problems that may arise in using a single asset as a major criterion (Terefe, 2003), classification of the study subjects into socioeconomic categories was done on traditionally accepted classification norms established by the local community. To this effect, knowledgeable households, the kebele leadership, and agricultural development agents were consulted in each study kebele to set variables that can be used for the classification. The group identified variables such as livestock ownership, size of land holding, capacity to produce surplus, ownership of bee colonies, capability to employ labor, and use of improved agricultural inputs as indicators defining asset endowment. Using a combination of these variables and their actual knowledge on individual household's economic position the informants classified the households in the study kebele into rich, medium rich, poor and very poor categories. Assuming that the boundary between the poor and very poor may not be clearly visible they were categorized in one group as poor. The current kebele administrative structure contains many *gott*s comprising from 50 to 70 households. As it was difficult to reach sample households scattered across the kebele, sample *gott*s were first randomly selected in each study kebele. Based on the established criteria and considering the household population in the kebeles was on average 700 households, it was felt rational to pick 50 sample households from two hamlets proportional to the wealth category established for each kebele. The sample households were selected randomly.

Data collection tools

Household' questionnaire

To achieve the objectives of the study a questionnaire was designed to include a range of issues that could provide an insight into the socio-economic aspects of households, especially demographic and economic attributes such as land holding and livestock husbandry, and other income generating activities. Household and socioeconomic variables were used to make a descriptive assessment of how study households differ in terms of asset endowments, and also to evaluate perceptions on land tenure issues and livelihood strategies households have opted for.

The other issues addressed in the questionnaire are household perceptions on rights to land, rural landlessness, livelihood options considered by landless people, social, economic and environmental implication of landlessness, rural land registration and certification, land tenure security and poverty reduction, and institutional arrangements put in place to tackle landlessness issues. After setting the questionnaire, a formal pilot test was carried out on 20 households to check the ease with which respondents react to the questions, to make sure that the questions are relevant and easily understood by the interviewees and also to estimate the time it

requires for completion. Accordingly some difficult questions such as annual income of the household were removed and terminologies such as lease, mortgage, and differences between land registration and certification were clarified. Four data enumerators were recruited for data collection and they were given a one day training to enable them understand the questions and also to provide them the skill on how to approach individual households during the interview.The data collection was, most of the time, carried out in the places close to the respondent's residence and at the kebele land administration office.

Focus group discussions (FGD)

Gilham (2000) states that group discussions using semi structured questions allow researchers to look more deeply into issues and develop new lines of inquiry that arise during interviews. Group discussions compared with formal questionnaire interviews allow sensitive issues to be more freely discussed in groups when individuals would not wish to discuss them alone with a stranger (Krueger, 1994). Focus group discussions were therefore held to supplement and confirm information that was generated in the household questionnaire and in-depth interviews with key informants. In the group discussions individuals familiar with local socioeconomic conditions and development activities in the area and who could provide viable information on the study problem were included. Key issues that were raised in each group discussion were identified on the same day of the discussion and new ideas important for further discussion were incorporated in the subsequent group discussion.

Accordingly FGDs were carried out with woreda land experts, Youth Affairs staff at kebele level (5-7 experts) and at the Regional land administration bureau with heads of the land administration department and senior experts. At kebele level FGDs were carried out with land owning male and female household heads (10-15), and also the landless individuals (8 – 12 men and women). A separate discussion was carried out with the kebele land administration committees and the kebele leadership (5-7 individuals). In all cases, the focus of the discussion was largely on institutional matters to promote land tenure security and addressing the land demand of the landlessness and poverty reduction interventions. A checklist of semi structured questions addressing vital issues considered in the questionnaire were prepared and used in the focus group discussion.

Key informant interviews (KII)

According to Kumar, (1989) key informant interviews involve interviewing of knowledgeable individuals who are likely to provide the required information, ideas and insights on a particular subject. The key informants were therefore identified carefully in consultation with the agricultural development agents and kebele land administration experts. A total of 8 key informants (two per kebele) were interviewed using a check list of semi structured interview guides containing issues related to land access, land tenure security, landlessness, land use conflicts, institutional arrangements to handle land issues, and poverty alleviation.

Field observation

Field observation was conducted in the study kebeles to observe the geographic feature, land use land cover and land management practices (such as soil and water conservation, water harvesting, tree planting, grazing land development, woodland management, irrigation, and micro enterprises/off farm activities practiced by the rural youth) implemented in the kebele. This was purposely carried out to have an insight on the level of engagement of the rural landless in off-farm activities and what investments farmers have made on their individual farms and how the kebele community is trying to keep communal grazing and woodlands in a productive state.

Data analysis

In this study both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed using appropriate analysis techniques. The primary data collected from household surveys was coded and entered into the SPSS software. Descriptive statistics (mean, percentages, etc) were used to explain the different socio-economic characteristics of the sample households and their views on the variables.The results are presented in tables and figures to show trends.

Data collected from group discussions and key informants were summarized through discussion with the associate researcher. Prominent issues were screened by checking how many of the experts and which category of households had reiterated the same issue in the process of the discussion. Both diverging and converging ideas on particular issues were identified and used for analysis in line with the research objectives.

Results and discussions

In this section the demographic characteristics of the respondents are highlighted in the context of access to land, land tenure, and poverty. The socioeconomic variables discussed include age, sex, education, family size, marital status and education, access to infrastructure, asset endowment, exposure to extension support and gender. These variables have implications on household perceptions of land tenure security, rural landlessness, agricultural productivity, livelihood strategies followed, access to credit services and access to markets. The information obtained is used as background for initiating discussion on strategies to be followed in tackling the problem of landlessness and food security in the Region.

General characteristics respondent households

There were 200 sample households interviewed, and considering the criteria adopted for the selection of the study districts, they appear to be representative of the population of the Region. Of the total households interviewed 80 percent are male-headed households and the remaining 20 percent female headed. Classified by asset endowments using the local criteria, about 16 (8 percent) are rich, 120 (60 percent) are medium rich and 64 (32 percent) poor. The wealth category across kebeles shows

more resource poor farmers live in Sekela and Tach Gayint woredas than in the other two.

The family size of the respondents is generally high with an average of 4.7 persons. About 50 percent of respondent households have a family size between one and five, 35 percent have 5 to 8 and the remaining more than 5. The marital status of the respondent indicates that about 80 are married, 4 percent unmarried, 9 percent divorced, and 7 percent windowed.The age distribution ranges from 20 to 75 and the mean age is 47.65 with a standard deviation of 14.07, while about 50 percent of the respondents are below 46 (Table 1).

Table 1. Age distribution of survey household heads

Age category	Count	Percent
20-30	27	13.5
31- 40	48	24.0
41-50	47	23.5
52.60	34	17.0
62-75	44	22.0
Total	200	100

The age data shows that the majority of households (61 percent) are within are less than 50 years old, and it is likely that the fertility rate will be high as most of them already have many children. The preponderance of a young population in the study areas implies that population density will increase at a very fast rate and may pose stress on the available land resources. In a situation where land shortage is a severe problem, this is a big challenge that requires an aggressive population policy intervention that will slow down the fertility of women and also enhance push factors for migration to non- farming sectors to reduce the demand for land by the landless.

The literacy level across woredas is found to be similar though the better-off households are more literate than the resource ones (Table 2).

Table 2. Literacy levels across wealth status of respondent households

Wealth status	Literacy level of HHD head					Total
	Illiterate	Read and Write	Elementary	Secondary	College	
Rich	0	8	7	1	0	16
Medium Rich	42	50	25	3	0	120
Poor	36	14	13	1	0	64
Total	**78 (39%)**	**2(36%)**	**45 (22.5%)**	**5 (2.5%)**	**0**	**200**

Comparison of literacy levels across the study kebeles indicates that literacy in Gozamin is relatively higher followed by Gondar Zuria, TachGayint and Sekela

woredas (Table 3). The literacy level in general is low and during the focus group discussion it was reported that farmers are not supported by skill-based adult education that could help them to improve their livelihood activities.

Table 3. Literacy status of respondents in the study kebeles

Name of Kebele (District)	Literacy level of HHD head					Total
	Illiterate	Read and Write	Elementary	Secondary	College	
SawaGoder (Sekela)	28	15	6	1	0	50
Wonka (Gozamin)	10	21	17	2	0	50
SibhaGebriel (Gondar Zuria)	18	21	10	1	0	50
KebeleJaji (TatchGayint)	22	15	12	1	0	50
Total	**78**	**72**	**45**	**5**	**0**	**200**

The rural landless in most study kebeles are literate and many of them have attended formal education though the majority are school drop-outs. For example the data from Technical Vocational Enterprise Office of Tach Gayint indicates that from the total landless registered (1274), only 251 (19.7 percent) are illiterate. Likewise in Gonder Zuriya woreda: of the total landless registered (7,723), only 1252 (16.2 percent) are illiterate. Despite the claim of the landless that they have either completed elementary or secondary school none of them have skills related to intensive farming such as horticulture, livestock fattening, poultry, apiculture, or skills related to wood work, metal work, etc. In the absence of such qualities it is unlikely that they can become effective entrepreneurs.

Land tenure in the study areas

Land certification

Almost all respondents (97 percent) have first level land holding certificate, though their knowledge of the type of land holding certificate (whether it is fist Level or second Level) is negligible.Women are benefiting from land certification; during divorce, they have the right to claim for 50 percent of the family land so long as their names are registered on the certificate. It was also noted that women are given special support in the courts when they face unlawful claims on their holdings.

Despite the huge accomplishment of the first level land certification, there are a number of problems that affect tenure security. These include failure to register all parcels, illegal registration of other's holdings (grabbing of land of the voiceless and communal land), recording of false plot boundaries, and registration of land in the name of government employees in contravention to the rural land law.

Lack of transparency in the process of land registration and certification has affected the vulnerable segment of the society, including the landless. Since there were a number of problems in the first level land certification, currently the district land administration has started to refine the land holding data. For example, in Sekela woreda 98 households were identified as unlawfully grabbing farm lands and these lands were given back to the rightful holders. In TachGayint about 449 government employees were identified as holding land certificates and the land is now being distributed to the landless. Similar efforts are being made to maintain the original boundary of communal lands. For example in Sekela, boundary demarcations are made with permanent ground marks (Fig 4) and some 420 communal lands are certified in the name of the community.

The majority of the respondents (84 percent) claimed that land certification has contributed to land tenure security. Similarly, assessment of the collective views of respondents on management of land before and after land certification also indicated that about 81 percent recognized better management after certification, 15 percent stated no difference and 3.5 percent lack the information. There was also a claim by about 71.5 percent of respondents that crop productivity has increased as a result of better land management associated with tenure security. Land certification has enhanced the land market and resource poor farmers lacking other resources but having land are able to rent out or sharecrop their land without fear and they engage in off-farm activities to generate additional income. In general the tendency of many households to manage their land properly, as a result of tenure security, is considered by many of the FGD participants in all the study kebeles as a contributing factor for better crop productivity and poverty reduction.Evidence of better land management by respondent households was acknowledged during the FGDs; this included planting trees and fruit crops, constructing soil and water conservation structures, application of manure, proper construction of drainage systems, stall feeding of livestock in a cut and carry system, absence of forceful eviction from land holdings without compensation, and ability to transfer land holding to children. Despite these claims, a point of contention was raised ineach FGD discussion disclosing that the government is annually mobilizing the rural community for soil and waterconservation; hence, it is difficult to definitively associate better land management directly with landcertification. Someargued that per capita land holding is small and unless it is well maintained a household cannot secure its family food needs hence the problem itself tends to force each farmer to take proper care of his holdings. Crop productivity due to certification was contested by some respondents and FGD participants on the grounds that land certification has not been accompanied by land-use planning as stipulated in the rural land law.

Figure 4. Ground marks used to demarcate communal boundaries (Photo taken in Sekelaworeda)

Although the rural land law provides a bundle of rights to land holders, knowledge of land rights is mixed. Accordingly, bout 65.5 percent of the respondents stated that they can rent out their land, 89.5 percent reported share cropping, some 53 percent the right to donate land, inheritance by about 63 percent and leasing up to 25 years by 40 percent of the respondents. Whereas the obligation of land holders are clearly stated on their book of land holdings and the rural land law, there was a tendency by most farmers to overlook the stipulation and most FGD participants considered paying government land tax is the principal obligation. Reluctance of farmers to sustain soil and water conservation structures and cases of deliberate destruction of soil conservation structures in TatchGayint district (as described by FGD participants), with the intention of securing external handouts, seem to be associated with weak institutional arrangements to create awareness on the real obligation of land users and failures to take measures on non performance of obligations.

Regarding farmers' awareness of land expropriation by the government in their localities: the majority of farmers are unaware as there was no significant expropriation and those who expressed having awareness indicated that land was expropriated for infrastructure development such as schools, roads, water points and health posts. Many have stressed that some were compensated by offers of land while others were given cash. Perception of respondents on level of satisfaction of expropriated farmers showed that those who got a replacement land were more satisfied compared to those given cash.

Land size and farming as a livelihood

Access to land is a key determinant of food security and economic well-being for rural households. Allocation of land is largely equitable in rural Ethiopia (Deininger et al.,2008), though several regions of the country (particularly the highlands) are characterized by small and fragmented farms, high population density, and a scarcity of available arable land (Gebreselassie, 2006). In a national survey, less than a quarter of rural households indicated they have enough land to feed their families without assistance, and nearly 40 percent consider the lack of available farm land to be the primary barrier to increasing agricultural productivity (Deininger and Jin, 2008). In

addition, market imperfections for agricultural production factors like oxen, labor and credit often make it difficult for farmers to purchase or rent what they need to plant and harvest their crops (Teklu and Lemi, 2004). These concerns are reflected in the study area.

The average land holding of respondent households is 0.96 ha, which is less than the Regional average (1.43 ha) (BoLAU, 2015); the minimum holding recorded is 0.13 ha and the maximum 3 ha. The overall distribution of land holdings in the study kebeles showed about 73 percent of the households have less than one hectare with only a few having more than 1.5 hectare (Table 4).

Table 4. Proportion of respondent households in land holding categories (n=200)

Land holding category (ha)	Number of farmers	Percent of farmers
< 0.5	70	35
> 0.5-1.0	76	38
>1.0-1.5	28	14.0
>1.5 -2.0	14	7.0
>2.0	12	6.0
Total	**200**	**100**

Land size differed significantly with respect to wealth categories as expected, with the rich and medium rich having more land than the poor. The mean land size of the poor, medium rich and rich is 0.74 ha, 1.07 ha, and 1.5 ha respectively. Most studies have shown that land size determines the type of crops grown and the amount of crops harvested. About 80 percent of the increase in agricultural output in Africa has been attained through the expansion of cultivated land (Tolessa, 1999). Therefore, land size is expected to influence the coping capacity of households who are engaged in subsistence agriculture. However, in the study areas, possibilities to increase land holdings are constrained by shortage of extra land, hence households must focus on increasing productivity per unit area and in this effort provision of strong extension support is crucial. Terefe (2003) also argues that discussions on land holding should not only consider land size but also land fertility and the capability to cultivate by own family labor.

The majority of households control relatively small agricultural plots, less than one hectare; these have low productivity which limits farmers' capacity to meet subsistence needs. As low per capita land ownership is a long standing problem in the Region, the problem is more severe for the poor and young farmers who have established families recently. The survey data shows that about 88.8 percent of respondents felt that they lacked adequate land to meet their subsistence requirements. When asked how they fulfill their need for additional land, most of the rich and medium farmers stated that they either rent-in or practice share cropping. On the other hand, some of those in the poor category pursue opportunities such as off-farm activities, wage labor, and others collect fuel wood and cow dung to generate income. Households practicing share cropping stated that the system is more beneficial to the land owners and a burden to the share cropper. The share croppers are forced to pay up to 50 percent of the produce to the land owner as well as the straw.

Communal land management

The communal lands in the study area include wood lands, grazing lands and wetlands. Responses on woodland ownership indicated a mixed perception where either the communities or the kebele administration were identified as owners; in some instances an absence of ownership was also recognized.Despite the claims that the community is the owner of most of the common woodlands, there are limitations in clearly demarcating the boundaries and it was not possible to access any woodland management plan in any of the woredas. Realizing that communal land resources are integral components of the ecosystem and the local economy, all the study kebele administrations are trying to organize traditional social institutions such as *idirs* to facilitate communal land management. Some of the institutions are operating as an important arm of the government and have facilitated grazing and wood land management. For example in Sekela woreda due to joint efforts made by the land administration authorities and local institutions, free grazing is being abandoned and some of the kebele communal lands are delineated and certificates are given to the respective communities.

The communal lands are used as a safety valve to respond to the high demand of land by the landless. However most respondents (77.8 percent) stated that there is serious encroachment on grazing lands and this is mostly done by those farmers having land adjacent to the communal lands. FGD participants also bitterly accused farmers having a leadership role in the kebele administration of being the principal actors in the encroachment. Currently, however, most of them have given back the land they have encroached. The FGD participants further mentioned that those who encroached on grazing and wood land in Wonka kebele (Gozamin woreda) and Sebha Gebriel (Gondar Zuria woreda) have made self-criticism and repented for their failure to be role models to others.

The allocation of part of the wood land to the rural landless organized to pursue either livestock fattening or apiculture is also indicated by the FGDs as a major cause of encroachment as in most cases the landless attempt to operate beyond the boundary designated for them. The overall scenario in all cases signals the prevalence of conflicting interests among the landless, the poor and the resource rich segment of the community and members of the kebele leadership. The absence of strong institutions operating at the local level to guide the use of wood land or the grazing land has made the communal land liable to sever damages. The reality on the ground therefore calls for erecting permanent posts (as it is done in Sekela woreda) and also digging trenches and planting trees and shrubs along the boundaries of the wood land and grazing land. It was also suggested by FGD participants that a list of legitimate right holders should be made known to the government and a joint land holding certificate, complemented by management plan, should be provided to the community.

Trends in landlessness and challenges encountered in the study areas

There is unanimity by respondents regarding the presence of landless people in all the study kebeles. About 94.1 percent feel that the number of landless people in rural areas is showing an increasing alarmingly. Data collected on the number of children

over 18 years and not having land in the study kebeles shows that there are a number of them staying with their family (Table 5).

Table 5. Landless above 18 years of age and living with parents

	Study Kebele	Number		
		Male	**Female**	**Total**
Wonka		4	8	12
	SawsaGodr	22	14	36
	Kebele 08	30	22	52
	SibhaGebriel	23	15	38
	Total	**79**	**59**	**138**

Source. Data compiled from respondent households

In terms of education, many of the landless living with their parents are literate. Accordingly 92 percent in Wonka, 72 percent in Jaji, 71 percent in Sebha Gebriel and 64 percent in Sawsa Godr kebeles are literate; most of them have attended formal school. Regarding marriage, only 17 percent are married; some are farming with their parents, and others practice share cropping and also seasonally migrate to generate additional income.

A summary of the data collected by the District Technical and Vocational Enterprise Development Office shows that there are about 17,114 landless people in the four woreda who are seeking access to land or other employment opportunities (Table 6). However, the figures are likely to be an underestimate as the registration of the landless takes place on a voluntary basis and some may not be registered

Table 6. Registered landless in study woredas

Study Woredas	Male	Female	Total
Gozamin	2729	1110	3839
Sekela	3346	932	4278
TachGayint	1077	203	1274
Gondar Zuria	6233	1490	7723
Total	**13385**	**3729**	**17,114**

Source. Woreda Technical and Vocational Enterprise offices

Multiple responses on perception of respondents on the reasons for the increasing number of landless people indicated lack of land (88 percent), lack of alternative employment opportunities (87 percent), unwillingness of parents to apportion part of their land (60 percent), unwillingness of the landless to get engaged in micro enterprises (58.5 percent), and failure of land administration offices to make available free land (49.5 percent). Although some of the respondents expressed willingness to give up part of their land, the amount of land that a household could afford ranges only from 0.12 ha to 0.35 ha. The time preferred by parents to give land

to their children was indicated to be when the children get married (49.7 percent) and when the parent gets old (40 percent). Respondents feel that the land they give to their children is quite small and doesn't enable them to produce enough for the family.

FGDs in all the study kebeles have underlined the shortage of land as a key problem followed by reluctance of the rural youth, particularly those who have attended school, to get engaged in farming. They however reiterated that for the rural landless to get engaged in any economic activity, they need to be provided with microenterprises that are well suited and potentially profitable and complemented by close technical support, provision of credit services and market connectivity. Key informants in all the study kebeles stressed that there should be model micro business activities in each kebele that could serve as a learning ground and motivate the landless youth to do the same. Incidents of repeated failures of youth groups working on crop production and livestock fattening in Wonka kebele, unsuccessful apiary and horticulture development interventions in Gondar Zuria wored, poor achievements of the landless on the agricultural investment land allocation scheme in the lowland areas of East Gojam (Gozamin and Debre Elias woredas) have become deterring factors for the rural landless to appreciate and wholeheartedly engage in alternative employment options provided to them by the government.

FGDs with the woreda and Zonal land experts and the Technical and Vocational Enterprises in charge of youth employment revealed limitations indicating that the employment options given to the landless lack proper business planning, communication with the rural and urban youth is inefficient and the follow up and provision of technical and financial inputs are inadequate. Despite these concerns there are successful landless people engaged in livestock fattening and apiculture. Although the success factors in this group are very much linked to dedication of the youth group, there is a need to compile and package all factors of success and the information should be disseminated to all groups planning to do the same.

Perception of respondent households on the motivation of landless youth to get engaged in farming showed that a few (22.9 percent) thought the landless are likely to get engaged in farming, whereas most (66 percent) did not see any visible interest among the landless to run agriculture as a business. During group discussions the landless underlined that for them to get engaged in farming, inputs such as oxen, fair land rental or share cropping, allocation of adequate land size for microenterprises, and provision of finance to buy improved seeds and chemical fertilizer must be made available. They stress that in a situation where resources are scarce for the landless, it is hard for them to pursue farming as source of livelihood. For example in Wonkakebele 1.5 ha of rain fed farm land was allotted to 15 landless youth, which is too small to make a living.

The Regional land administration bureau has allotted 113 ha to 244 landless youth from land designated for investment in the highlands which is far below the Regional average holding per household (1.43 ha). In an effort to create jobs for college graduates, the Regional government has allotted 1,860 ha of agricultural investment land to 620 organized unemployed graduates; that is 3 ha per head. This initiative is also confronted by a number of institutional problems encountered by other youth groups. The Bureau has also attempted to initiate tractor rental scheme for

commercial and small farmers in the lowlands of North Gondar to be operated by educated landless. Discussion with these groups indicated that the tractor rental arrangement is not profitable due to the seasonality of farm activities. Even some expressed their reluctant to work in a harsh environment.

In general, lack of feasible business plan, difficulty to access credit services due to high interest rate and collateral requirements, poor technical support and follow up, unnecessary tax levy and poor market linkages were reiterated as setbacks affecting full engagement of the landless in off-farm activities and small and micro enterprises.

The number of landless women is increasing, as discussants explained, except in Gozamin woreda, where women have the opportunity to migrate to the nearby cities as housemaids. Landless women stated that they face difficulties to engage in off -arm activities as most of the time membership in the associations are dominated by men and in some circumstances the location of the micro enterprises are not safe for women.

Landlessness and social and environmental problems

In the study kebeles there are some social and environmental malpractices that are very much connected with rural landlessness. About 60 percent of respondent households thought that theft (of livestock, and burglary) was the most prominent of the social problems created by the rural landless, followed by disturbing peace and security (59.5 percent), attempts to induce political instability (32 percent), and begging (24.5 percent). Likewise, among the environmental problems caused by the landless, 62 percent of respondents pointed to deforestation, 58 percent to encroachment on communal woodland, 62 percent to encroachment on grazing land. The summary of malpractices across study kebeles is shown in Table 7.

FGD participants have underlined that lack of alternative sources of income has tempted the landless to violate the local bylaws causing frequent conflict between landless youth and the kebele leadership. Livestock theft and burglary have become serious problems across the study areas. A fascinating incident disclosed by key informants and discussants in Gondar Zuria woreda was ‘’*Bere maser*’’ meaning “putting some one’s oxen under arrest’’. In this practice organized criminals, allegedly the landless youth, steal oxen and drive them to a distant place and send information to the villagers that their oxen are under arrest. The owners have to collect money and pay ransom to the thieves and get their oxen released. FGD participants have expressed their disappointment at the failure of the police and the courts to take firm action on the criminals.

Table 7. Summary of malpractices committed by the landless

Maksegnit	TachGayint	Sekela	Gozamin
• Drinking alcohol and creating chaos in towns and rural villages • Theft (livestock, burglary and forceful snatching of property) • Illegal cutting of trees • Unwillingness to participate in social development activities	• Illegal encroachment into communal lands • Theft (livestock, burglary and forceful snatching of property and harvested crop stockpiles) • Harassing the kebele leadership • Illegal cutting of trees • Discouraging youth organized in alternative income generating activities. • Rape	• Theft (livestock, burglary and forceful snatching of property) • Drinking alcohol and creating chaos in towns and rural villages • Illegal cutting of trees	• Drinking alcohol and creating chaos in towns and rural villages • Theft (livestock, burglary and forceful snatching of property) • Unwillingness to participate in social development activities

Land and Poverty in the study areas

Livelihoods in the study woredas

Respondent households are predominantly subsistence farmers engaged in crop production and livestock husbandry. However, depending on asset endowments and skills developed, a few households supplement their family income by engaging in off-farm activities such as petty trade, wage labor, handicrafts and seasonal migration (Table 8).

Table 8. Livelihood activities of respondent households (N=200)

Livelihood activity	Response %	Remark
Agriculture (crop production and livestock husbandry)	83.5	These group are totally dependent on agriculture
Petty trade	19.5	This group use petty trade to supplement their farm income (common in Tach Gaynt).
Wage labour	16.5	These groups of farmers including women are resource poor and they sell their labour within the village or elsewhere. (Common in Sekela)
Handicrafts	3.0	Some are involved in weaving, and wood work
Seasonal Migration	12	Farmers in Tach Gayint and in Sekela and that of Gondar Zuria migrate from one month to three months mainly to commercial farm areas

A close look at the off-farm activities revealed that very few respondents (three percent) are engaged in skill-based activities such as weaving, blacksmithing, wood work, and tannery. Petty trade activities are largely marketing of grain, livestock

and also retailing of consumer goods in rural markets. Engaging in wage labor is a common practice across the study kebeles though employment opportunities are rare in the villages. Most women respondents apart from are also engaged (apart from wage labor) in producing and selling local drinks to supplement their family income. It is evident that the role of off-farm activities in supplementing farm household income and reducing vulnerability to shocks is substantially high, however the general trend in the study kebeles shows limited activities are being practiced.

Regarding livelihood options for the landless, 62 percent of respondents thought migration to nearby and distant places to be important, followed by wage labor (17 percent), engaging in small and micro enterprises (11.5 percent), petty trade (6.5 percent), sharecropping (4 percent) and renting-in land (2.5 percent). A similar question was put to the landless during the FGDs and most were of the opinion that they prefer to migrate to other areas and engage in wage labour. Options such as renting-in land or sharecropping were considered as remote possibilities as they do not have the resources to operate the land

The rural landless engagement in off-farm activities specially in skill-based ones is strikingly low and at the same time they have little motivation to get engaged in farm activities. When asked whether they are willing to get engaged in weaving, tannery, pottery and blacksmithing many landless FGD participants in almost all the study kebeles, showed no interest. Some mentioned poor market as a pretext, though their reluctance seems to have emanated from the traditional taboo attached to such kind of skill-based activities. These cultural challenges require due consideration by the respective bodies. The summary of findings on livelihood options in the study woredas are indicated in Table 9

Table 9. Summary of livelihoods options for the landless

Maksegnit	**Tach Gayint**	**Sekela**	**Gozamin**
• Sand mining from rivers • Land rent-in, if their families have extra oxen • Temporary migration to Metema, Humera and Quara for daily laborer • Women move to urban areas as house maid. • Migration to Arab countries	Daily laborer, wage labour Temporary migration to Quara, Metema and Keffa, some to Arab countries Apiary	-Working on parents land being supplemented by remittance -Wage labor -Temporary migration to commercial agricultural investment sites (*Ayehu* and *Birsheleko* farms sites)	- Daily labour -Temporary migration to the nearby town and commercial farm sites -Land rent in -Organized engagement in crop production and quarrying)

Crop production and use of agricultural technologie

According to the survey, the major crops cultivated in the highland include barley, wheat, potato, beans(mainly in Sekela and TatchGayint) while teff, maize, barley and beans are the dominant crops cultivated in the mid altitude study kebeles of Gozamin and Gondar Zuria. The production of oil seeds has declined across the study kebeles and this is attributed to preference of land holders to cultivate more productive crops to feed their family as their land holding is small. With regard to the utilization of improved agricultural inputs FGD participants disclosed that the majority of households use chemical fertilizer and improved seeds on selected crops predominantly on maize, wheat and teff. A limited number of households use herbicides. The amount of fertilizer used per hectare as stated during the FGDs is below the recommended rate. A good beginning in Sekela and TachGayint is that some farmers have started to apply manure as organic fertilizer. This is a technology that is very suitable to areas with erratic rainfall.

Although farmers claim using improvised crop varieties and chemical fertilizers, crop productivity per hectare is far below from what is reported by agricultural research centers. For example, the potential yield for maize is 80 quintals per ha or more; FGD participants in Gozamin however reported a maximum of 35 to 40 quintals. Similar opinions were also reflected on teff, and wheat. It is evident that if farmers employed the full technological packages on each commodity and the weather condition is ambient, there is no reason why they could not achieve higher productivity. Land is a scarce resource and more production is needed to satisfy the household food needs and also to supply the domestic and export market. To this effect, the agricultural extension service has to be vigilant and motivate farmers to effectively apply improved technologies and the associated agronomic practices. Indeed sustaining market connectivity has its own part to encourage farmers to produce more.

Despite efforts to promote improved agricultural technologies, respondent households indicated that crop production in the study areas is constrained by a number of problems such as erratic rain fall, lack of plowing oxen, lack of money to buy agricultural inputs and to practice off-farm activities, lack of land and poor soil fertility (Table 10). All these added up and combined with problems stated in the previous sections are making many households liable to food insecurity. Hence, many resource poor farmers have to look for other off-farm activities to supplement their family needs. Involvement of the landless in crop production was indicated as low. It is only a tiny fraction of the landless attempting to rent-in land or practice share cropping.

Constraints to crop production across the study woredas are different, according to the respondents. Erratic rainfall (late onset, early cessation, intermittent rainfall, torrential rainfall) is a recurrent problem in Tach Gayint woreda, lack of plowing oxen has become a cross cutting problem as the price of an ox is sharply increasing, likewise the lack of money to buy agricultural inputs is also a problem to the poor in all the woredas. Small land holding though generally a serious problem, it is bitterly felt in TachGayint and poor soil fertility is a cross cutting problem in all

areas, but more severe in Sekela and TachGayint which are characterized by rugged and steep slope topography.

Table 10. Constraints to crop production across study kebeles as perceived by respondents

Constraints	Response of sample households in the Study Kebles recognizing the problem in Percent (N=50 households in each Kebele)				Remark
	Wonka	SawaGodr	Jaji	SibhaGebriel	Cumulative
Erratic rain fall	38	48	67	51	51
Lack of ploughing oxen	10	35	45	30	30
Lack of money to buy agricultural inputs	45	75	90	77	72
Small land holding and	84	89	92	95	91
Poor soil fertility.	78	85	90	87	85

Women's access to land and food security

It is evident that the rural land law provides women equal opportunities for access to land. Female headed households, which have adequate resources, cultivate their land using their family labor or hiring other labor and those lacking the resources practice sharecropping or rent out their land. The amount of sharecropping depends on the fertility of the land, and where the land is fertile the land owner claims up to 50 percent of the produce and the straw. If the tenant fails to properly cultivate the land women deny him the option to continue using the land, hence fearing loss of the land the tenant in most cases tries his best to maximize the productivity of the land.

In some of the kebeles, particularly Maksegnit and Gozamin woredas, farmers seeking farm land for sharecropping give extra incentive (*ejiimensha*) to land lords (women) to win their consent. Women's awareness of their land rights is in the process of improvement. In this regard during FGD women in Gondar Zurya woreda disclosed that there are women who handle land dispute issues and defend their rights by taking their cases to the courts.

Despite improvements on women's land rights, many women practicing share cropping or renting out land complained that they do not get adequate benefit from their holdings. This was largely attributed to the small size of land they own, usually not more than half a hectare, and the low productivity of land due to poor management by some share croppers. It was also indicated that absence of clear land market arrangements, tendency of some land holders to rent out their land for a fee far below the prevailing rental price in times of difficult circumstances are affecting the benefit of women. In extreme cases, thedisloyalty of share croppers has obliged particularity women households to opt for renting out their land for cash rather than sharecropping. This was a serious problem reflected in all the study woredas. There are also cases where landless husbands leave their wives behind and fail to support their families, and women face series problems to bring up their children.In this regard women

suggested that creating alternative livelihoods in the locality could have stopped their husbands from migrating.

The existence of land rental market was applauded by farmers having the resources to rent-in farm land or to practice share cropping. The big challenge however is that there is no any institutional arrangement to enhance the rental market. Therefore, to enable the vulnerable segment of the community to benefit from their holdings, discussants demanded the existing land administration institutions to give due consideration to land marketing issues.

Livestock production and grazing resources

Livestock play a crucial role in providing draught power for tillage, farmyard manure, fuel, dietary supplements and security against famine (Aleme and Lemma. 2015). This view is unanimously reflected by households during group discussions and in the survey questionnaire. The survey result shows that respondent households on average own 3 heads of livestock. And, the disaggregated figured indicated that about 20.5 percent of the households do not own a cow, about 24 percent lack an ox and about 31.5 percent have one ox, and some 34 percent have a pair of oxen. Just more than half of the respondents (51 percent) do not own small ruminants (sheep or goat) and even of those who claim to have goat/sheep, the majority has only two to four heads. Surprisingly the involvement of households in apiary is extremely low, only 3 percent reporting that they keep one to two colonies of bees. Likewise poultry husbandry is low where only 31.5 percent of the households stating they keep only few chicks (Table 11).

Table 11. Average heads of livestock holding per household across study kebeles

Livestock	**Average heads of livestock holding per household Across the study Kebeles**			
	Wonka	SawaGodr	Jaji	SibhaGebriel
Cows plus claves, young bulls and heifers	2.21	1.74	0.68	1.14
Oxen	2.24	0.92	0.6	1.22
Sheep/goat	1.52	2.2	0.76	0.68
Equine	1.14	0.34	0.32	0.28
Poultry	2.62	2.32	0.14	2.48
Apiary	0.31	0.34	0.46	0.48

As shown in Table 11 households in Gozamin tend to keep more livestock compared to Sekela and TacchGayint. This is largely due to better grazing resources and abundant crop residue, mainly teff straw. Households lacking plow oxen greatly debilitates their ability to produce adequate grain for the family as it makes difficult to get the land well prepared in time for sowing. This point is shared by focus group discussants indicating that shortage of oxen in many cases forces households to lease out their land. Where households opt for oxen rental arrangements or make labor exchange for oxen, late land preparation and planting are common features and this scenario impairs crop productivity. Though the oxen rental arrangements provide

opportunities to oxen-lacking households, it is unlikely that they can develop the capacity to generate more assets for further investment.

Since land is not private property in Ethiopia, livestock is taken as the single most important asset that households have complete command over. Taking note of this, most FGD participants expressed interest in keeping more livestock despite the severe feed shortage. Household's failure to get involved in traditional poultry farming seems a discouraging situation when analyzed in the context of the dire need for livelihood diversification and lack of resources to get engaged in other economic activities. In fact during the FGD it was pointed out that poultry disease and lack of feed were indicated as discouraging factors to keep more poultry. Almost all the livestock (more than 99 percent) reared by respondent households are local breeds. Despite the high demand for improved breeds the supply is limited. Although livestock is a vital component of the livelihood system of the respondent households, most FGD participants stressed that the number of livestock has been decreasing for some time due to feed shortage or lack of grazing.

In a Region where land resources are limited, engaging in small ruminant husbandry could help the landless to secure their livelihoods. The literature on the value of small ruminants to food security or income generation shows that small ruminants play a significant role in providing food and financial security for rural populations, especially in developing countries (Alhaji and Odetokun, 2012). The small size of sheep and goats has distinct economic, managerial, and biological advantages. Workneh (1999, cited in Alhaji and Odetokun, 2012***)*** has argued that small ruminants can be conveniently cared for by women and children. Sheep and goats need little housing space, consume low amounts of feed, and can supply both meat and milk in quantities suitable for immediate family consumption. In the same vein, Oluwatayo and Oluwatayo (2012) contend that the total income share of small ruminants tends to be inversely related to size of land-holding, suggesting that small ruminants are of particular importance for landless people especially women. Similarly the value of bee keeping is reported no less important for the landless and poor households. Despite these claims the data collected in the study areas indicates that many of the rural households are not engaged in raring small ruminants and poultry. As the socioeconomic importance of small ruminants, poultry and honey bees colonies is unequivocal there is an urgent need to improve livestock breeds and the production system. To this effect the respective institutions must make provisions to avail the technology, the feed needed, credit services and market for the products so that the landless and the poor could aggressively enter in the production system.

While equine are vital for transporting goods in rural areas where transportation facilities are limited, about 68 percent lack any equine, some 25 percent have one, 6 percent have two and one percent own three. During FGDs poor farmers stated that although they were interested to get engaged in grain and other consumer goods trading (i.e. buying from relatively cheap areas and selling to more expensive areas) lack of money to buy the equine and the commodities has hindered many of them from engaging in this activity.

Efforts made by the government to deal with landlessness

The Regional government has already established institutions such as Youth, Women and Children Affairs and Technical and Vocational Enterprise Development that are closely supported by District Cabinets to handle youth affairs. Task forces comprising of the above intuitions and the offices of Agriculture, Land Administration and Use, and some other sectors are established in all woredas of the Region to register, organize, train, identify alternative micro enterprises and deploy the landless to enable them generate income and improve their livelihoods.

Despite the efforts made at by the task forces, discussions with the respective institutions have revealed that the institutional coordination is weak to promote activities in an integrated manner. It was also realized that there are problems regarding ownership, follow up, technical support and evaluation of performances of the enterprises. The views of experts has indicated conflicts of interests between the offices for Youths, Women and Children Affairs and those of Technical and Vocational Enterprises Development due to the absence of defined terms of reference. Although this research expected that the land administration offices keep up-to-date record of the landless and initiate important policy directions on how to give access to land to the landless, none of them has the information. The experts in rural land offices argued that they are not mandated to deal with landless issues. The overall scenario in general shows there are no clear guidelines to be followed by each institution on how they should handle landless issues.

Success and failure observed on microenterprises across the study areas

The Amhara Region has been striving to organize the rural landless to get engaged in a number of small enterprises including on-farm and off-farm activities. As mentioned in the previous sections, many microenterprises are encountering a variety of obstacles and are in a state of collapse while some are registering encouraging success. Field observation made on microenterprises run by organized landless across the study kebeles has shown mixed results of both success and failure. The findings in the four study woredas are summarized in the following sections.

a) Gozaminworeda

Case study in Gozamin woreda

In an effort to relive the landlessness problem in the district, a group of organized youth in Wonkakebele, where this study was carried out, were allocated 1.5 ha of land, apportioned from the communal grazing land, for livestock fattening in 2012 by the kebele Land Administration Committee and community representatives. The total membership in the fattening association was 18 and the local government arranged a credit service for them and they bought few bulls. There was however no proper shelter constructed and other structures such as feeding and watering trough were absent. The Association was not provided with training on livestock fattening and the enterprise not

supported with solid business plan. As a result members of the Association were operating using their own local knowledge and did not have the information and skill on how to speed up the weight gain of the bulls. The Association instead of developing strong bylaws and technical skills, it was very much confronted with reluctance of the members to contribute their labour to look after the bulls. Gradually the cohesion of the Association became eroded and the members sold all the bulls and took their share without the knowledge of the local government which facilitated the credit access. The association was disbanded and some of the members migrated elsewhere and those in the village are being forced to pay back the loan they took while those who fled the village are being searched.

Despite the bad experience manifested by the landless and disappointment of the local authorities, another team was organized to pursue crop production with 15 members on the same plot of land. However, during the field visit to the site it was disclosed that 9 members have already left. According to the remaining members, the most important problems deterring the landless to pursue the farming was lack of oxen and absence of credit provisions for them to buy agricultural inputs and plowing oxen. Members stated that the Amhara Credit and Saving Institution (ACSI) has asked them to use the landholding certificate of their parents as collateral and none of the landless family was willing to do so, hence; the landless have to exchange their labour for oxen and this was a discouraging factor. Most have the intention to rent out the land and engaged in other opportunities.

Gozamin district land administration and youth affair offices stressed that engaging the rural landless in farm related activities is a serious challenge; first the problem arises from the fact that much of the land given to them is communal grazing land or woodland where there is no genuine agreement of the community; second even though the land size allotted is small the landless face difficulty to avail agricultural inputs ,and thirdly there are cases where the allocated land lies along disputed borders between Kebeles. In addition a land use conflict is often encountered between the landless and farmers using the common grazing land adjacent to land used by the landless. All these added up cause complexities in the whole process and affect the profitability and sustainability of efforts to enable the rural landless to create asset.

b). Gondar Zuria woreda

Case study: landless working on sand mining, horticulture and apiculture

Landless youths organized in sand mining in Sibha Gebriel kebele are generating substantial income annually. Apart from having some amount of savings they reported that

Figure 5. Rural road which has benefited from the contribution of the landless working on sand mining

their association has contributed 80,000.00 birr for the construction of access road in the kebele (Fig. 5). The woreda discussants explained that, these groups will be scaled up to a medium enterprise level and the license they were given for sand mining will be written off and given to other landless who are not yet getting support. On the contrary a group of landless organized to run apiculture in the Kebele have completely failed due to technical problems and lack of motivation on part of the landless. Likewise some groups engaged in vegetable and crop production are complaining that their enterprises are not profitable. Other landless groups who have formed associations are demanding the local authority to provide them working space to get engaged in small and medium enterprises, however; their requests are still pending due to lack of decision by the respective bodies. The weak institutional support in all cases seems to have damaged the moral of the landless who are very much keen to get out of poverty.

c). Tach Gayint woreda

Case study: landless working on apiary

A group of landless youth (13 male and female) in Jajikebele organized themselves in 2013 and formed in an association called ***Enadegalen*** *(meaning we shall grow).* The association got 16,800 birr on credit and started apiary development using six modern and 22 transition beehives on six hectares of area closure (Fig. 6a). In 2014 and 2015 the association earned about 10,000birr from honey sale. In addition, they generated 10,500 birr from hay that grows within the area closure designated for the association (Fig. 6b). In early 2015,the association has started sheep fattening and it is planning to grow cash crops. Currently the number of beehives they owned has reached to 73. The group has also benefited from Risk Financing Project in the district and also from the training given by Care Ethiopia (an NGO) to enhance their entrepreneurship capability. The association has well-articulated bylaw which governs member's activities.

Figure 6a. Apiary farm in the kebele by the landless

Figure 6b. Members of the association harvesting hay hayessHay harvesting for livestock feed in thee kebele

d) Sekelaworeda

Success and failure cases on livestock, and horticulture microenterprises in Sekela woreda

In Sekela district, SawsaGodrKebele 19 landless are organized and operating on 0.5 ha irrigable farm land and producing vegetables and grain. They are generating substantial income annually and currently they are planning to buy flourmill using their savings and they have applied to the local authorities to allocate them a plot of land to establish the flourmill. There is also another association with a total member of 45 landless engaged in livestock fattening and it has won award from the district administration for its exemplary and successful achievements.

Despite the success stories in the district, there are landless associations that have started apiary and livestock fattening that have completely failed due to a number of reasons. For example a group of landless in SausaGoderkebele, with a membership of 29 and organized in an association was provided with 40 modern beehives with the bee colonies. Unfortunately the bee colonies were bought from an agro ecological setting different from the site where the apiary was planned to be established. As a result the bee colonies absconded within a week time and the beehives are now stored in the kebele administrator's home.

In the same kebele another group of landless with 20 members (15 men and 5 women) organized in an association were given 70 sheep for fattening by the district administration. The district officials and experts however bought the sheep before construction of the sheep shelter and also carrying out thorough discussion with members and reaching at a common understanding. The association was forced to rent a single room house for sheltering the sheep. As there was no good preparation to handle the sheep, some were affected by disease and members decided to divide the sheep amongst themselves and the association was disbanded. The association members are now made legally accountable and are forced to pay back the money back. In general terms the cases presented in the four districts indicate that lack of proper planning and close follow has severely hampered the success of microenterprises.

Conclusions and issues for policy debate

Conclusions

The Amhara Region is characterized by diverse agro-ecologies and topographies that influence agricultural productivity. Although there are land resources which are highly productive, many parts of the Region are highly degraded and a large number of the population is subject to food insecurity, especially in times of erratic rainfall and drought. The problem is further aggravated by population growth, and hence rural landlessness, problems of access to land and of food security have become important challenges that require serious policy interventions. To this end, this study was carried

out to explore the interplay between access to land, land tenure security, landlessness and poverty in rural Amhara. Based on the findings and analysis presented in the preceding sections, the following conclusions are drawn.

As it is true in other parts of the country access to land and productive agricultural activities are critical factors to ensure food security. However, the reality on the ground indicates that households' per capita land holding is small, the average being not more than one hectare; productivity per unit area in most places is low due to lack of improved agricultural technologies, and there is growing landlessness in the Region. Despite these predicaments the agricultural sector has to feed the nation's population, supply domestic agro-processing industries and also generate foreign exchange.

As was discussed in the previous pages, there is a unanimous agreement among respondents in the study areas that the landless population is growing at an alarming rate. As there is no more land to distribute to the landless in the highland, there is a need to exploring options that will enable the rural landless to get engaged in off-farm activities and that require small plots of land. In this regard the Regional government has identified a number of off-farm activities in rural areas including livestock fattening, apiculture, sand mining, quarrying, petty trading, and wood work. Although these initiatives are commendable, there are shortcomings in the way they are planned and implemented: theylack a business plan, market connectivity, skill and technical support, andthere are difficulties in accessing credit. As a result, in many places, there is a tendency by the landless to abandon the work and look for other possibilities. Though out-migration may contribute in generating income, the landless are given little or no information on where to go and what to do and this makes their situation complicated.

The study has also revealed that the motivation of the landless, particularly those who are school drop-outs or with some education, to get engaged in agriculture is generally low. This is very much related to shortage of financial resources to buy agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and seed as well as plowing oxen. To make matters worse, land rental prices and share cropping arrangements are expensive for the landless. Many landless people are also required to produce collateral for activities such as fattening, purchasing of agricultural inputs or to start other businesses. Allocating farm land to the landless without adequate resources cannot be expected to enable them become self-sufficient, effective and productive farmers. The cumulative effect is therefore debilitating motivation and unwillingness to pursue farming as a source of livelihood.

The Regional government's initiative to allocate land designated for agricultural investment to the landless in the lowlands and to some extent in the highlands and the tractor rental scheme operated by educated landless themselves seems quite an innovative intervention. However, lack of credit services to buy the required inputs for the agricultural activity and the harsh climate seem to have discouraged them, and most are renting out their land and returning home to look for other options. Even those operating small plots in the highlands are inclined to rent out the land due to lack of resources. Regarding the tractor rental arrangement, the seasonality of farm activity is making the operators sit idle for most of the year. These

circumstances are therefore critical obstacles that will discourage the landless to lead a sustainable livelihood and stifle government initiatives to contain the problem of landlessness in the Region.

In theory it is asserted that land certification leads to tenure security and farmers will be motivated to manage their land and improve agricultural productivity. In addition, resource poor farmers such as women and the elderly feel confident to rent out their land or to enter into share cropping arrangements. In this regard the general trend in the study kebeles and woredas shows that land certification has largely helped land holders to benefit from their holdings, and also protect their land rights in case of disputes or claims by other parties.

On the question of whether rural land certification has led to poverty reduction, a majority (72 percent) of our respondents were of the opinion that land certification has brought about a reduction in poverty, particularly for women. The land certification has enhanced the land market and women are able to rent out or share crop their land without fear and they engage in off-farm activities to generate additional income. There is however no institutional arrangement to enhance the land rental market and this seems to have negatively affected the women and other vulnerable segments of the community.

Despite the clear stipulations on the land certificate that farmers are to operate their land as per the land-use plan approved by the land administration office, there is no land holder that has been given a land-use plan. Even the land-use plan at micro watershed level that is issued by the kebele land administration office is not made available. In a Region where land resources are at a premium, failure to initiate an innovative participatory land use planning weakens the value of land certification and efforts to improve agricultural productivity.

Due to the small holdings of parents, only a fraction of the rural landless has got land from parents. As part of the effort to solve rural landlessness, the local governments are allocating communal grazing land or woodland to the landless. In addition, quarry and sand mining sites are provided for the youth organized in associations. In the land allocation and organizing process, there are a number of actors involved, including the Youth, Women and Children affairs offices, the Technical and Vocational Enterprise Development office, the Kebele Administration, the Land Administration offices, the Agricultural Development offices, the Mine and Energy office, etc. Despite the good will reflected by these institutions the study has clearly demonstrated that there is lack of strong institutional coordination and clear guidelines showing the boundary of mandates and accountability. Such gaps seem to have impaired the effectiveness of the strategies designed by the government.

Proper registration of the rural landless is vital to make policy decisions on how to handle the problemacross years. Lack of a well organized data on landlessness hampers information exchange among stakeholders in charge of enabling the rural landless to have access to rural land or other livelihood options.

Rural women-headed households in the Region have in general benefited from their holdings through share cropping. However, there is no systematic registration of the rural landless by any of the government institutions. It is only the landless who are willing to form associations that are registered and this makes it difficult to exactly

know the number of landless and the trend of landlessness and renting out of their land. The current situation in the region indicates that the land rental market is vibrant and it seems that farmers with adequate farm resources but having limited land are interested to rent-in more land than they are currently farming. This reality creates better opportunity for women and other vulnerable groups to get better rental prices or share cropping arrangements. This will indeed be more facilitated if supported by the land administration institutions working at the grass roots level.

Issues for policy debate

Based on the research findings and conclusions made, the following issues are suggested for policy debate to address the problems identified: The study has indicated that rural landlessness is showing an increasing trend and access to land has become a remote possibility for most. Rural livelihood diversification is indeed one way out to tackle the problem. However, despite the efforts made by government institutions to improve the lives and livelihoods of the rural landless through on-farm and off-farm enterprises, many of the enterprises run by the landless have failed because of problems related to poor business planning, lack of monitoring and technical support. Therefore, technical support to the landless associations should be strengthened so that they could improve their living conditions and contribute to the national development efforts. In addition the market value chains should also be designed so that the products from the enterprises can be consumed in the market.

As part of the effort to enable the landless have access to land and other economic activities there are a number of actors involved including the Youth, Women and Children affairs offices, the Technical and Vocational Enterprise Development office, the Kebele Administration, the Land Administration offices, the Agricultural Development offices, the Mine and Energy office, etc. Despite the goodwill reflected by these institutions there is lack of strong institutional coordination and the landless are not provided efficient support. This has substantially contributed to failure of many of the microenterprises. It is therefore suggested that the role played by the current institutions has to be evaluated and institutional mandates have to be crafted with clear responsibility and accountability. More importantly, designating the lead and collaborating institutions from the outset and fully engaging the landless in the process of micro enterprise business plan helps to increase the success rate.

Although proper registration of the rural landless is vital to make policy decisions there is no systematic registration of the rural landless by any of the government institutions. To establish clear and credible data base and also to facilitate information exchange, it is suggested that institutions having a stake on rural landless have to carry out joint meetings to evaluate the current way of handling of the landless issue and designate a lead institution to keep up-to-data. This arrangement potentially helps to enhance information exchange and initiate policy options for the landless.

The efforts of landless to improve their livelihoods are partly constrained by poor access to credit, high interest rates and when credits are made available the lack of collateral is a big challenge. It is therefore suggested that special arrangements need to be designed to ease the problem and facilitate the landless enterprises.

The rural landholding certification has brought a significant improvement in land tenure security, and also reduced parcel boundary conflicts among farmers. However, as the land certification is not supported by land use planning, its impact towards increasing agricultural productivity, improved land management and food security is doubted by scholars and farmers. It is therefore suggested that innovative and participatory local level land use planning that is harmonized with the existing rural settlement should be initiated in conjunction with the use of improved farming technologies so that the stipulation indicated in the Regional State Rural Land Administration and Use proclamation could be realized.

It is evident that rural women have benefited from their land holding certificates through the land market. And some women having adequate labour and better land holding have shown interest to cultivate their land by themselves. However, most of them do not have the finance to buy oxen to plough their land and are forced to enter share cropping or rent out their land, which is almost a 50% loss. As part of the effort to build women's economic strength, exploring ways of enabling women to have to access to credit for buying oxen needs to be explored so that to women's benefits from their landholdings could be maximized.

The booming construction industry in urban areas is absorbing a huge labour force from the rural areas. Though most of the rural landless are literate, their technical skill is low. As a result the amount of money they earn from daily labour is not enough to support their life. It is therefore suggested that the multipurpose technical and vocational training centers already established in the region should provide market based skill training to the rural landless so that they could benefit from the growing urban and rural economy as well as from self-employment initiatives. In the wider context, the literacy level prevailing in the landless or other groups is not complemented by skills and attitudes related to farming and handicrafts as the national curriculum is weak in this regard. The national education system should therefore be revisited and tailored to produce skilled labour. Likewise the adult education program should give due consideration to functional literacy.

Most land rental transactions by women and the elderly are informal and largely influenced by relatives, neighbors and friends. It seems that the prevailing land value is not assessed in terms of productivity of the land and there is high probability that women and other vulnerable groups may fail to secure what they deserve. In addition, failure to make land marketing transactions legally recorded at local land administration offices and not having a tradition of keeping copies of the agreement paper by women may lead to disputes on land holding and share cropping benefits. Therefore, there should be a mechanism to address such issues in the land administration institutions.

Women practicing share cropping or renting out land remain idle if they do not engage themselves in productive economic activities. The current practice shows that some women sell their labour to generate income for their family; some are engaged in limited petty trade and brewing of local drinks. The general trend shows most women are economically weak. This reality on the ground calls for looking into alternative economic activities in which women could be involved and create substantial asset and improve their livelihoods.

Farmers have reiterated that the rural landless motivation is marred by the existence of failing microenterprises such as livestock raring and fattening, apiculture, and horticulture and cereal production. To inspire the rural youth it is recommended that model microenterprises should be established in the nearby areas so that they could see objective realities and endeavor to do the same. In addition the success stories of some of the off farm microenterprises run by the landless need to be compiled, packaged and scaled up in all appropriate intervention areas.

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Land, Landlessness and Rural PovertyIn Oromia

Fekadu Adugna[3]

Introduction

> *Lafttilafeeduddaqotebulaati. Ni jabeessas, Ni lamshessas* Land is the backbone of the farmers. It reinforces, [those who have it], it paralyzes' [those who do not]. *-A landless farmer in Limmu-Bilbilo, Arssi.*
>
> *Lafahinqabnnu, hojiihinqabnnu, abddihinqabnnu*We don't have land, we don't have work, we don't have hope. *-A displaced young farmer in Sululta, North Shewa.*

Land: a critical resource under pressure

The quotations above, extracted from interviews with landless famers in Arsi and North Shewa Zones of Oromia, emphasize the critical importance of land as a resource in countries such as Ethiopia where livelihoods are very much reliant on smallholder agriculture. Land is the most important, if not the only, means of livelihood for poor farmers. According to CSA's report (2007), land is the mainstay of 85 percent of Ethiopia's population of nearly 80 million. Agriculture contributes about 90 percent of the exports, produces 70 percent of the raw materials utilized by domestic industries, and, above all, employs 80 percent of the labor force (see also NBE 2015). Thus, in a context where a great mass of the people directly depend on agriculture andwhereindustry does not provide employment for a considerable part of the population, land is truly the backbone of the rural economy that either supports the livelihood of the people or, if not, paralyzes it.

Demographic growth coupled with a very sluggishrural transformation and the alarming pace of climate changeis causing insufficiency of holdings and landlessness. On the other hand, there are emerging and competing interests that are aggravating the pressure on farmland. These include large-scale agro-investments, small-scale intensive agri-businesses such as floricultures, investments in other sectors that need raw materials from agriculture (for instance, the flourishing breweries), industrial constructions and aggressively expanding cities and towns. Given the very weak and corrupt institutions of land governance and absence of genuine regulatory systemsin place, the consequences of these multiple pressures on farm households are immense.

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The unprecedented pressure on land is also causing over exploitation of the existing farmlands and the expansion of cultivation to the customarily uncultivated hillsides and marshlands, and this has resulted to the degradation of the environment. The consequence of this has not only led to the decline in productivity but has also left a significant amount of land out of production through degradation and landslides.

This study deals with the combined effects of these multiple pressures on rural land and the all-embracing problem of rural landlessness and near landlessness in Oromia which has a strong bearing on poverty, food insecurity, environmental degradation and land disputes which in turn pose great risks for socio-political stability.In Oromia, land redistribution has not taken place since the fall of the Derg, which meansfarming households established since then have not received land officially. Indeed, the 2007 amended Oromia Land Proclamation (No. 130/2007) clearly states that "Redistribution of peasant's or pastoralists' or semi pastoralist's land holding shall not be carried out in the region, except irrigation land" (Article 14/1). Indeed, there is no sufficient land justifying redistribution. This has resulted in the considerableincrease in the population of the landless whoseprospects of getting access to land in the future are gloomy. It is this circumstance and the resultant desperate situation of the energetic but landless people in the rural areas that this research tries to address.

Land governance has been very much contested in Ethiopia, and land tenure is one of the most persistently debated public political agenda. These debates have largely been revolving around public versus private land tenure options. The government argues in favor of state ownership stressing that land privatization would encourage land sale, which in turn will expose smallholder peasants and pastoralists to land speculation, land grabbing, and eventually to eviction. This in turn would lead to high numbers of unemployed and unemployable peasants and pastoralists. On the other hand, critics of the government's position argue that state ownership of land prevents the development of a land market and thereby holds down productivity (EEA 2002; Dessalegn 2004). While the former emphasizessocial justice such as fair distribution of land, the latter stresses economic development (improved production and productivity) through investment on land and environmental management (Crewett and Korf 2008).

Recently two developments that could undermine the significance of the above arguments have taken place in Ethiopia. First, ironically, the same government that claims to protect peasants from land grabbing by 'greedy' land speculators has been engaged in massive land leases to investors both in the rural and urban areas, reportedly displacing thousands of smallholders. The country has now become one of the "hot spots" for international commercial agro-investments (Lorenzo et al., 2009; Oakland Institute, 2010; Deiniger et al., 2011; Schoneveld, 2014). This is now putting pressure on farmland and aggravating land shortage and landlessness, without significant contribution to local livelihoods. Second, in response to both internal and external pressures, the government hasintroduced a land registration and certification program with a declared objective of easing tenure insecurity. The program entitles peasants to contract out land to those who invest on it but short of selling it (Deninger et al. 2008). Unfortunately, again, the registration and certification program that has

been praised for contributing to the enhancement of rural land dynamics (Deininger et al. 2009) has contributed little when it comes to providing opportunities for access to land by landless households or improving their livelihood. This study focuses on rural landlessness and its relation to rural poverty, a vital national and local problem that neither private or public ownership, nor the certification scheme seem able to solve.

The land factor in rural poverty

Though land tenure has attracted multi-disciplinary studies by-economists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists and even historians (EEA, 2005; Dessalegn, 2004; 2008; Yeraswork, 2000; Mamo, 2006; Hussein, 2001; Tesema, 2002;Crummey, 2000.), landlessness and its impact on rural poverty in Ethiopia has not gained the attention it deserves. As land is the source of wellbeing in agrarian society, most people without sufficient access to land are poor and are often unable to sustain their families (Dekker 2005:18). Land, in fact, both inits quality and size, is the key limiting factor in agriculture and food production, and hence becomesa major factor in poverty reduction. This study also argues that there is a strong relationship between access to land and rural poverty, and thus, meaningful discussions concerning strategies of rural poverty reduction should take into consideration the farming households' access to land, and the prevailing situation of landlessness.

Studies conducted in Asian countries with dominant agrarian economies, where land is a principal asset, clearly show the strong association between insecure access to land, landlessness, and poverty (Meinzen-Dick 2009). For instance, studies conducted in Pakistan(Anwar et al.2004) and Bangladesh (Chowdhury 2009) show a strong correlation between poverty and landlessness in which the incidence and level of poverty increases as one moves from holdings of large acres of land to totally landless farmers. In general, there is ample evidence that landlessness is highly correlated with high poverty incidence and severity (Lipton 1988).

The experience in rural Ethiopia is quite similar to the above mentioned Asian countries. In fact, high levels of landlessness, unemployment and widening rural poverty are eroding Ethiopian peasants' ability to withstand environmental stress and food shortages (Dessalegn, 1994:2). Teferi (1994) provides evidence from North Shewa that redistribution within the "family farm" has fragmented the land to the level it could not be divided anymore. Another insightful study (in the same area) is Aklilu and Tadesse's (1994) chapter on rapid population growth and access to farmland. They note that there is increasing fragmentation of farmland and landlessness, and for those who are lucky enough to access land, especially for newly formed households, holdings have reached what Dessalegn calls "starvation plots" (Dessalegn1994: 37). A recent study in Haromaya *Woreda*, Oromia, (Crewett and Korf, 2008) also reveals the inability of farmers to support their families by working on their plots due to the severe scarcity of land.

The consequences of landlessness have been reflected differently in different countries. For instance, in Uganda it has led to the conversion of woodland and grazing land to agricultural fields (Place and Otsuk 1997:33); in Nigeria, it caused extreme fragmentation of holdings and the emergence of quasi-individualization of

tenure (Oluwasanmi 1957:732); in Kenya, it led to reduced fallow cycle which in turn caused soil erosion and degradation, declining crop yields, breakdown of indigenous farming systems and increased use of marginal lands (Oguto 1993). In brief, the impact of landlessness is manifested in different forms ranging from the dearth of fallowing andland degradation to the deterioration of households' livelihood status and migrations. Access to land resources also determines food security in an agrarian economy. Maxwell and Wiebe(1999:830) note that, "[…] attempts to monitor food security in famine-prone areas recognize access to productive land as one of the most important factors in determining household or individual food security". In Ethiopia, as the majority of the farmers are subsistence producers, the close link between access to land, food production and problems of food insecurity is quite unambiguous.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to explorethe state of landlessness in rural highland farming areas of Oromia and examining the dynamic interplay between land, landlessness and rural poverty. Specifically, it was to examine:

- the state of landlessness at present in the study areas, and examine the causes and possible consequences.
- whether landlessness has been increasing or decreasing over time.
- the extent to which land registration and certification has contributed to security of land rights and its bearing on poverty dynamics. Or, on the contrary, if land registration and certification has contributed to landlessness.
- the gendered aspects of land and landlessness and its relation to rural poverty.
- the coping strategies of the landless population, including female headed households.
- the effects of multi-faceted competition for land resources (among smallholders, public and private entities and other interest groups).
- the response of public authorities (at local and region level) and local communities to landlessness.

Methodology

This study was designed to contribute to our knowledge of the subject, and to policy debates on it. Given the differences and similarities in rural farming in highland parts of Oromia and time and logistic constraints, we decided to select three woredas that we thought would to some extent exemplify the situation in rural areas of the Region. Our aim here was not to come up with *woredas* that represent the whole of rural Oromia.

The process of site selection

Woreda selection

Three *woredas*, namely Ada'a, Kuyu and Limu-Bilbilo, were identified systematically based on their population density, landlessness, land dynamics, poverty, and logistical

issues. Thus, while the *woredas* share similarities in fundamental elements such as high population density, prevalence of land shortage and landlessness, they also have differences in their local dynamics. The distinctive characteristics of each *woreda* are described below.

In the process of the *woreda* selection, we consulted with the Oromia Land Use and Administration Office, the Oromia Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) Coordination Office, and several relevant individuals. We have also reviewed relevant publications dealing with population density, land size, and rural poverty. The overall picture shows that almost all highland *woredas* in Oromia suffer from land shortage and landlessness, though the magnitude of the problem varies from one locality to another.

Once arrived at the identified *woredas* and secured research permit from the *woreda* administrations, we invited experts from the offices of Land Administration and Environmental Protection, Agriculture and Rural Development and other relevant officials for consultation. This gave usthe opportunity to re-examine our selection processes again with the experts. This was also the moment when wereaffirmed the importance of the research agenda – land, landlessness and poverty – as the experts are fully aware of the crucial problem of landlessness but feel helpless to deal with it.

Ada'aworeda, East Shewa Zone

Ada'a*woreda* is located 45 kilometers east of Addis Ababa. It is one of the areas highly affected by the expansion of urbanization and investments both of which have had a serious impact on farmers' holdings, and where the likelihood of furtherland expropriation and future displacements a distinct reality.

On the other hand, Ada'a is a famous *teff (Eragrostistef)* producing area in the country. Population pressure compounded with pressure from the new external actors has led to land shortage and landlessness and a tremendous increase in the value of land. Here we were interested in examining the impact of the external pressures (public and private investments) on top of the already evolving internal demographic pressures on land shortage and landlessness. On the other hand, while the evident pressure on land from multiple actors, has dramatically increased the value of land, and caused land scarcity and landlessness,landless households manage their livelihoods by diversifying their efforts. For example, one member of the household, usually the wife, may work in the enterprise set up by an investor, while the husband will look for better paying employment opportunities.

Kuyuworeda, North Shewa Zone

Kuyu is located 160 kilometers northwest of Addis Ababa on the main road to Gojjam. It is a typical farming area with a very limited off-farm employment. Population pressure, severe land degradation and consequent land shortages and landlessness has brought about economic stagnation. Youth out-migration to the nearby towns and Addis Ababa more or less on permanent bases, and seasonal migration to productive areas during harvest seasons in response to landlessness is common. The level of poverty is estimated to be very high and the woreda has been a

beneficiary of the PSNP. Here we were interested in examining how the PSNP supports landless people, and how it assists in curbing land degradation and youth out-migration.

Limu-Bilbiloworeda, Arsi Zone

Limu-Bilbiloworeda is located at about 220 kilometres southeast of Addis Ababa. It is another productive area with better moisture, less land degradation and good weather conditions. It is famous for its wheat and barley production. The woreda has both a highland and lowland agro-ecology. While the highland is characterized by high population density, land shortage and dynamic land use, the lowland is sparsely populated and characterized by relatively greater land availability.Recently, the productivity of the land attracted middle level foreign investors who acquired land either through formal investment proceduresor informal lease arrangements with farmers who pooled together their small holdings to rent it out on a long term basis (for instance15 years). Another more widely practiced dynamic surrounding land in Arsi is concerning production decision. Most beer factories in Ethiopia have arranged out-grower (contract farming) schemes for the production of malt. We have tried to investigate the participation of farmers in the process of land acquisition by the agri-businesses, and to find out farmers' decision-making process regarding land renting, changes in land use (e.g. from teff or wheat to barely), and how land shortage and landlessness plays out in this decision making?

Kebele selection

In all the three *woredas*, the *kebeles* were identified in consultation with the experts from relevant offices such as Land Administration and Environmental Protection, Agriculture and Rural Development and other *woreda* administration offices. While population density, and landlessness and land shortage were emphasized, poverty was less highlighted except in Kuyu. This is because, in Ada'a and Limu-Bilbilo, population density, landlessness and poverty do not correlate at *kebele* level. A few *kebeles* which are under early warning system and close follow-up by the administration are found in the lowland part of the *woredas* and they are agro-pastoral communities which rely more on livestock than farming, and landlessness is not an issue here. Thus, the *kebeles*we selected in Ada'a and Limu-Bilbilo are densely populated andcomparatively land scarce but less affected by poverty.The kebele selected in Kuyu fulfills all the three criteria: population density, landlessness and poverty.In addition, specific *woreda* criteria such as the existence of commercial investments (for Ada'a), contract farming and some middle level agro-investments (for Limu–Bilbilo) and PSNP (for Kuyu) were used as supplementary criteria to select the *kebeles*.

The selections of the *kebeles* were followed by discussion with *kebele* managers, chairpersons and Development Agents. The main aim of the discussions was to introduce ourselves, to collect some relevantdataregarding demographic issues, number of households, number of land tax payers, minimum and maximum

landholding, number of landless persons, number of "development teams" (*garee)*, major livelihood activities, and wealth ranking.

During these discussions it was difficult to obtain data about the landless from any government sources from *kebele*up to Regionallevel. Only in Wayu Gosekebele (Kuyuworeda) did the *kebele*have some incomplete list and a rough estimate of the landless farmers. Therefore, in order to estimate the proportion of landless households and persons from each *kebele*, we organized meetingswith leaders of each *garee* that are selected for the study with thepresence of the *kebele* chairman and listed down landless households in their specific *garee*.

Table 1. Basic data for each kebele

No	Types of Data	Name of Kebeles		
		Lemu-Dima (Limu-Bilbilowired)	Wayu Gose (Kuyuworeda)	Ude (Ada'aworeda)
1	Population	4984	7489	4412
2	Household	856	1534	534
3	Land tax payers	856	1210	534
4	Total *garee*	26	40	12
6	Selected *garee*	8	8	6

Table2. Land size and number of landholding households for each kebele

	Land size	Number of landholding households[4]		
		Limu-Dima	WayuGose	Ude
	Less than 0.5	45	139	12
2	0.5 to 0.99	121	178	19
3	1 to 1.99	95	321	253
4	2 to 2.99	405	256	229
5	3 to 3.99	119	171	19
6	4 to 4.99	42	88	0
7	5 to 5.99	19	57	2
8	6	10	0	0
	Total	**856**	**1210**	**534**

The research approach

Qualitative approach

The study also employed qualitative methods because they are appropriate to explore changes in relation to land tenure and livelihood across time and help us to understand

[4] Very interestingly, according to informants, the top 20 to 30 landholders in each kebele either served in "land committees" in their specific kebeles or in the kebeles leadership at a certain time, especially during the previous regime when land was relatively not scarce.

the society's interpretation of land, landlessness and poverty. The central themes of the study such as rights and access to land, land shortage and landlessness, land degradation, disputes over land, land registration and certification and its impact on land access and security and its bearing on poverty dynamics were examined qualitatively. The qualitative approach was also helpful to examine the internal dynamics of social institutions and land sharing arrangements, and people's coping mechanisms to landlessness and near landlessness.

The major research tools used for the qualitative data gathering were focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant in-depth interviews,observationsand collecting individual household stories. To this end, we organized 18 FGDS (5 in Ada'a, 6 in Kuyuand 7 inLimu-Bilbilo), 21 in-depth interviews (6 in Ada'a, 7 in Kuyu and 8 in Limu-Bilbilo); and collected 15 case histories (5 from each woreda). The case histories are presented in two ways: informants narrating experiences and stories directly themselves; andstories of individual households extracted by the researcher and presented where it is appropriate to explain a certain issue. The FGDs were held with elders, landless farmers, sharecroppers, female and male household heads. Besides, we had FGDs with*kebele* administration officials as well as experts in relevant w*oreda* sector offices. In identifying appropriate informants for key informant interviews, we used the snowball method, i.e, increasing the number of participants based on the information we gathered from our previous interviews based. In addition, we also reviewed available *kebele* and *woreda* documents to help us analyze the issues under study.

Quantitative approach

The study has also used structured survey questionnaires to collect other relevant data. The main aim of the quantitative data was to supplement and strengthen the qualitative information obtained from focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and case stories.

We selected the *woreda, kebele* and *garee* purposively based on the requirement of the research and the criteria set. Unlike the participants in the qualitative approach, we used a combination of stratification followed by simple random selection to choose the household participants in the survey.The stratification was designed to include all representatives of the different social groups in the study areas. The major social groups identified in each *kebele* were landless and landedgroups, men and women household heads as well as women-headed landless and landed groups. We took 100 sample households from each *kebele*, and lists of *garee* members were taken from the *kebele* administrations. The following were proportional samples, which were taken from each *garee*and social groups in each category for the three *kebeles*.

Table 3. Proportion of sample taken for Udekebele, Ada'a

No	Garee Name	No of households members in each	No of samples taken from each	Classification of sample into Social groups		
				Landless (M+F)	Landholders (F) only	Landholders (M) only

		garee	*garee*			
1	Dire Jitu	30	14	7	2	6
2	Dire Jila	48	23	11	5	5
3	CituBakanisa	33	15	6	3	5
4	TulluSirba	37	17	3	4	11
5	SafaraIddu	35	16	5	2	11
6	Odaa	32	15	6	1	5
	Total	**215**	**98**	**38**	**17**	**43**

Table 4. Proportion of sample taken for LimuDimakebele, Arsi

No.	Garee name	Households members in each *garee*	samples taken from each *garee*	Classification of sample into Social Groups		
				Landless (M+F)	Landholders(F) only	Landholders (M) only
1	Arba	44	17	5	3	9
2	Chala	27	10	3	2	5
3	Ejersa	24	11	3	1	7
4	Gudina	42	17	10	2	5
5	GunaDima	30	12	3	1	8
6	Jida	31	11	2	3	6
7	Kebena	27	11	6	1	4
8	Qeransa	30	11	1	2	8
Total		**255**	**100**	**33**	**15**	**52**

Table 5. Proportion of sample taken from WayuGosekebele, Kuyu

No	Garee name	No of house holds members in each *garee*	No of samples taken from each *gox*	Classification of sample into Social groups		
				Landless (M+F)	Landholders (F) only	Landholders (M) only
1.	BadaGoro	42	14	6		5
2.	Boqu	46	19	7	2	10
3.	Jijigo	29	9	3	1	5
4.	KiltuEnkayi	25		4	2	2
5.	Koftu	27	11	4	3	4
6.	Laga Bite	42	14	8	2	4
7.	Tirakosi	37	12	5	3	4
8.	Wayu	40	13	6	2	5
	Total	**288**	**100**	**43**	**18**	**39**

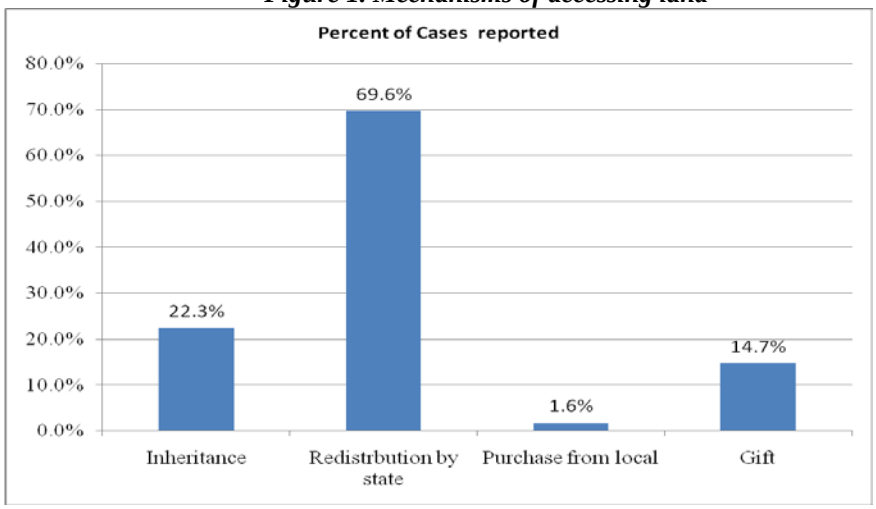
From each proportional sample, we identified the size of each social group with the technical assistance of kebele managers. The number of persons to be interviewed were determined based onproportional sampling procedure to ensure their representativeness for each social group. This means that the larger the size of the social group, the lager the size of the sample. Following the proportionally assigned

member, we stratified the members of *garee* into male and women headed landholding households, landless, landless women and men head households as indicated in the above table. The main objectives of such stratification were to see the extent to which land ownership and landlessness could be associated with poverty, gender, economic class and the like. After identification of the number of participants in each stratum, members of the same strata were selected by using random sampling procedures.

Mechanisms of holding land in Oromia

In this section, we will discuss how the current landholders managed to obtain the land they are holding and using[5]. This will help us understand the historical background of land holding as well as the current dynamics of land governance. Landholders in rural Oromia acquired the land they are currently holdingthrough land redistribution, landallocation, inheritance and gift[6]. The figure below shows the distribution of mechanisms of landholding in Oromia.

Figure 1. Mechanisms of accessing land



Land redistribution

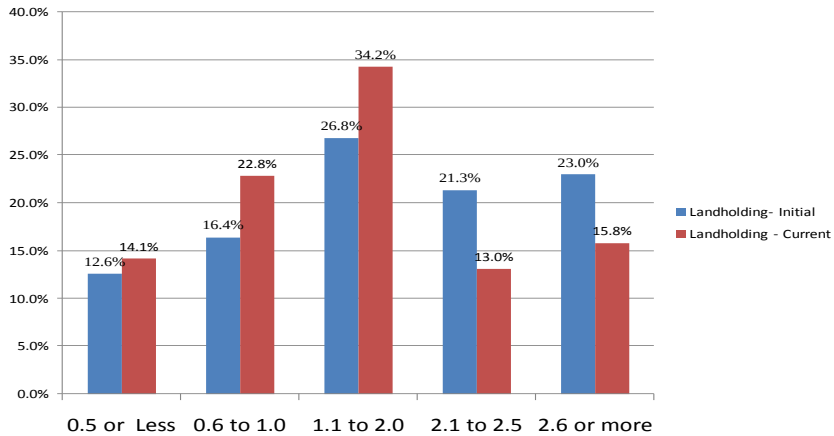
The general history of land redistribution is more or less similar in all the three research sites.All peasant here were subject to the feudal-tenant system prevalent during the imperial regime and benefited from the radical land reform of 1975.According to our survey,69 percent of the current landholders attribute either all

[5] Accessing and holding in this regard does not mean temporary accessing such as renting or sharecropping. Rather it is permanent holding.

[6] Purchasing might be another source of accessing land and there are some indications for that but it is insignificant and difficult to trace.

or part of their holding to land redistribution. This shows how much the land redistribution was important not only in liberating the tenants from the feudal landholding system but also in establishingfarmers' sustainable access to land. According to the surviving elders who were part of the local "land redistribution committee", the size of land households acquired at that time primarily depended on household size. The households who had between two and six children were given 2.5 hectares. Our own survey, in which we tried to reconstruct thehouseholds' memory of their initial holding size during the first redistribution, supports the information provided in the interview. The average holding has now been reduced from 1.99 to 1.73, and the mode has declined from 2.5 to 1.0.

Figure2. Comparison of the initial and current landholding

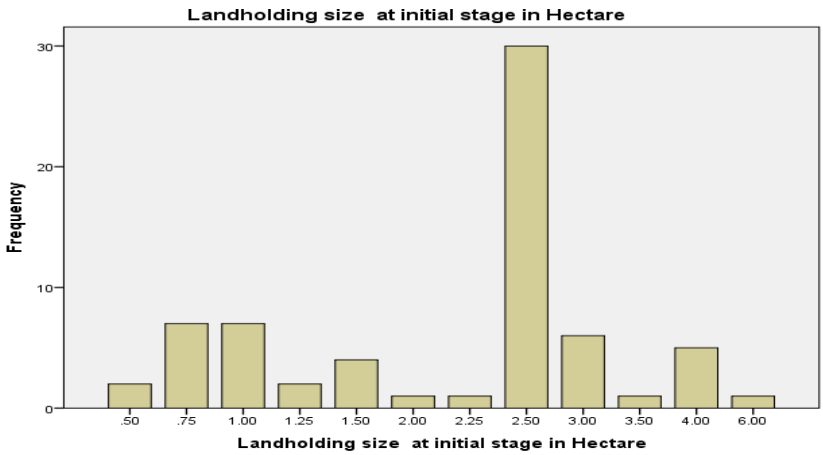


Even though the farmers remember the 1975 land redistribution as a turning point in the agrarian history of the country, the military regime (the Derg) subsequently made farmers' lives stressful by setting up Farmers Producers Cooperatives, which reduced the efficient use of the land they got as a result of the revolution. They were forced to pool their land and other productive resources together and work in common. They were not able to produce what they wanted on their land. A few people were forced to forfeit their land rights when they refused to join the cooperatives, while a very few others managed to get unproductive marginal land as replacement for the fertile land taken by the cooperatives. Membership in the cooperatives was dynamic: many young 'revolutionaries' were allowed to join, which allowed these young households, which were not part of the initialand redistribution, to acquire land. Thus, throughout the Derg period, there were occasional land redistributions as well as other means of getting access to land.

Thedismantling of the cooperatives brought about some readjustments in farmers' holdings. In all the three sites, the disbanding of the producers cooperatives

in 1989 and the subsequent division of the land among members is considered the last land redistribution. This division of land was relatively smooth and approved in most partsof Oromia. However, exceptionally, in Limu-Dima*kebele* of Limu-Bilbilo*woreda* disagreement over the division of the cooperative land resulted in a new redistribution in 1992. Similar to the initial redistribution, they used family size as a major criterion to determine the size of the land a household got. Members having two children and above were again given two and half hectares. Households having less than two children got less than this, and a few households with very large families were given three hectares.[7]The following figure of the initial landholding in Limu-DimaKebele shows this reconstruction.

Figure 3. The 1992 land redistribution in Limu-Dima.



Another related institutional problem that undermined the farmers' livelihood in spite of the land reform of the revolution was a mandatory grain sale at a fixed price called the quota system. Each household was allocated a quota based on the size of its holdings. A few informants narrated to us how they were forced to forfeit their land rights when they failed to fulfill their quota. Statistically, from the current landless population who participated in our survey, less than two percent attributed the reason for their landlessness to dispossession due to different reasons such as resistance to membership in producer's cooperatives, failure to fulfill the quota and running away from National Military Service.

[7]Households in Limu-Dima remember the 1992 redistribution very well and it clearly shows that most households got 2.5 hectares. Interestingly, in all the sites members of the 'land committee' who were assigned to undertake the redistribution got larger land size as compared to the many.

Land allocation

Our informants recall that the Derg regimehad undertaken land allocation to landless individuals on several occasions.However, the major land allocation, according to our informants, took place in 1992 when all kebeles in Oromia distributed communal grazing lands to former members of the Derg army. The size depended on the amount of available communal land in the kebele. For instance, in Arsi each demobilized soldier got 0.75 hectare while inAda'aand Kuyu they secured around half a hectare. Some of the land distributed was marshland whichwas difficult to farm.

Inheritance (dhaala)

Inheritance has become the major means of transfer of land from deceased parents to children or other dependents. Upon the death of either one of the parents, the surviving ones divide up half of the family holding among their living children keeping the remaining for themselves. When both parents pass away the children partition all the land among themselves. This is in line with the Oromia Land Proclamation (No. 130/ 2007: 9/1), which states that "any peasant, pastoralist, or semipastoralist landholder shall have the right to transfer his land use right to his family members who have inheritance right according to the law". This gave inheritance a legal backing, which otherwise was undertaken according to local custom in the past. The proclamation set a priority among those eligible for inheritance.It states that priority should be given to those "(…) whose livelihood is entirely dependent on the income from that land, or [those who] have no other income (…)" (2007:9/2). Regardless of this provision, however, thedivision is often among all the living children including the sons and daughters, the unmarried and married, the landless and the landholder, the unemployed and employed. This article is, however, important as it is the main reference when claimants file a law suit in court.

Traditionally,daughters were often excluded from land inheritance. In this regard, the provision in the Oromia Land Proclamation (No. 130/ 2007: 5/2) that states "women have equal rights with men to possess, use and administer rural land" has a great bearing on women's right to inheritance. Now every woman without exception claims the right to inherit her deceased parents' land. This is also attributed to theincrease in the value of land and the ease of managing inherited land for married women who live far away from where the land is located. The formalization/legalization of renting out and sharecropping has made the management of the land easy. As a result of the combination of these factors,marrieddaughters living far from their parents' land, even if they have sufficient land for their livelihood, often claimtheir share of inheritance even if it is less than 0.25 hectare.

The landless youth complain that "no one shows mercy in land inheritance".[8]Parents even exaggerate theproblem saying that when one of the parents pass away, children quarrel with the surviving parent over dividing up the land before

[8] ….Limu-Dima…

a funeral service takes place for the deceased[9]. The landless youth, on the other hand, complain that "they are damned to wait for the death of their parents to acquire a plot of land". One of our informants in Limu-Bilbilo, Arsi, said, "Imagine this is a highland where people live beyond hundred years. Should I wait for that long to inherit that piece of land."[10]

The contribution of inheritance in accessing land and in the dynamics of rural landholding is also apparent in our survey. Among our landholding respondents,22.3 percents secured their entire holdings through inheritance. This makes inheritance thesecond most important means of acquiring land(second to redistribution). At woreda level,40.4,16.5and 11.7 percent of the landholding farmers in Kuyu,Limu-Bilbilo and Ada'arespectively got their current holdings through inheritance.Among those who have managed to obtain land through different ways, inheritance is again the most importance means of increasing one's holding. Out of those who claimed that their landholding has increased over time, 84.6 percent attributed it to inheritance.

The important role that inheritance plays implies two things. First, land is currently concentrated in the hands of older people, the first generation that benefited from land redistribution. As a result, inheritance continues to play important role in the dynamics we see around landholding as increasing number of children and dependents will benefit from inheritance in the years to come. Indeed, this is understandable as the major redistribution took place in1975. Our FGD participants in Kuyu told us that in one of their *garee* ("development group"), consisting of 29 households, 6 of them died of old age in the last two years and 10 of them are now too old to cultivate their holdings, showing how much inheritance continues to be important in transferring land. Second, even thoughinheritance transfers land to young energetic and efficient people, land fragmentation, as a result of inheritance, has become the major challenge. The death of parents usually results in the division of their land into several pieces. In several interviews and FGDs we heard about many households whose land had been divided upamong up to eight children on the death of the parents. This is not surprising given that the average household size is 5.1 (maximum 15 and minimum one).[11]One story we heard in Kuyu is revealing:

> NagassaDejene[12] and his wife passed away in 2014. They had six children and one hectare of land. All the six children claimed their share of the land including their sister who lives in Addis Ababa. Elders in the neighborhood who are familiar with the case initiated discussions on how to handle the inheritance. During the discussion, all the six children suggested dividingup the land among themselves. On the other hand, the elders told them that dividing up the land would make it literally valueless as the land would be fragmented into sixuncultivable small pieces, and rather suggested to keep it together and discuss

[9] Commonly, inheritance is discussed on the days following the fortieth day commemoration of the deceased parent/s.
[10] Informant…in Lemu-Dima….
[11] This is based on our own survey. The survey shows some disparity between the woredas. While Kuyu and Limu-Bilbilo have average household size of 5.8 in Ada'a it is 3.6.
[12] The name is a pseudonym.

> a mechanism of using it together. The childrenrefused the elders' suggestions and submitted application to the kebele administration which submitted their case and the processes of arbitration they had gone through to the Woreda Court. As their demand was clear, i.e., dividing upthe landamong themselves, the court ordered the Land Administration Office to cancel the holding certificate of the land and divide it up into six and register itunder the name of the heirs. The Land Administration Office registered the land under their name, but informed them that they will not be given land certificate as it is too small to do so[13].

This storymight be considered an extreme case not because of the claim and the number of the claimants, which is locally normal, rather due to the size of the land.Informants referred to this case as a good exampleof how much land fragmentation is becoming a problem, and how much it has become difficult for the elderly to arbitrate siblings during disputes over inheritance claims. The result of the partition made the land practically valueless as it was too small to cultivate.If, on the other hand,someone has a land registered under his/her name, regardless of its size, he/she will be subject to taxand other related levies[14].Interestingly, when we visited the area in February 2016, two years after dividing up the land, thesiblings had put the land back together under the guardianship of one of their brothers. They made a deal that this brother cultivates the land and the other five siblings cover the costs of inputs, and on harvest time, he takes half and the remaining five share the rest[15].

Thus, fragmentation of the family land into less than what Dessalegn (1994) called "starvation plot" due to inheritance is a major worry. The Land Administration Office is trying to discourage fragmentation by denying them land certificates, but those who obtain land less than 0.5 hectareswill be subject to taxation[16].

Gift (Kennaa)

Gift is a form of donating land by a living parent/s or relatives to an individual or a household. Among the rural Oromo it is customary for parents to give a piece of land to their sons upon their marriage at least forhouse construction. Parents declare this in public either in the evening of the marriage day or the following day. This type of gift, calleda marriage gift, in some areas, wasbinding in the past. It was part of a package that parents donate to their sons during their marriage to help them establish and manage a new family.

At present, customary land gift has been diminishing due to multiple factors. The ever worsening shortage of land and the increasing value of landcould be the

[13]This is in line with Oromia Land Proclamation (No. 130/ 2007 article 7, No. 1) that determines farm plot size, which states that "Maintaining the existing farm plot size as it is, the holding size for the future shall not be less than 0 .5 hectares for annual crops, and 0 .25 hectares for perennial crops" .

[14] In Oromia there are numerous types of levies including land tax, each zone has its own development duty, road fund, sport, red cross, insurance (not mandatory).It is more than 700 birr per household.

[15]Putting the land back together is also supported by the Oromia Land Proclamation (No. 130/ 2007, Article 9, No. 3).

[16] Discussion with Hirpha, KuyuWoreda Land Administration and Environmental Protection, February 2016.

underlying factors. But, the formalization of land gift[17] and the recent land certification scheme is said to have brought noticeable changes to this type of gift. Parents hesitate before donating land in a situation when the transfer is supported by legal provisions. Parents complain that customary land gift was a family matter and used to contribute to an extended family's relationship, while at present, their sons are so assertive that they immediately request their parents to formalize the customary gift before the law. Once they obtain the certificate, say the parents, their married sons feel like 'landlords' and never care about their parents. Therefore, instead of donating land, parents allow their married sons to construct their houses in the family's homesteads, keeping their sons relationship to the land dubious. In other words, they tell their sons to use the land but should not demand a certificate of holding. One observer drew analogy between the state's relation to the public and the parent's relation to their children. He said "similar to what the state does, the parents want to give only use right to their children, so that they can control them"[18].

This can also be seen from our survey. Only 27 landholding households (13 percent) out of the 184 landholding respondents attributed their source of holding to donation from their parents. Whereas, 67 (36.4 percent) landholding households claim that theirlandholdings have significantly diminished over time due to gift to their children.In other words, parents do give land to their married sons for different purposes, but they do not allow them to get certificate for the land. Thus the gift does not make them legal landholders, which means the parents reserve the power to take it away without any legal procedure whenever they want it or for other reasons. This has been one of the factors, during the implementation of land certification, for many parents to reclaim land they had previously donated (see below).Notwithstanding its positive contribution, the legalization of gift has created two major problems. First, it has alarmed parents who used to customarily donate land to their married sons, because it undermined the system that had served well in the smooth transfer of land from parents to landless sons. Second, it paved the way for illegal and fraudulent land sale especially in areas where the commercial demand for land is high. In this regard, in areas such as Ada'a, land donation has been formally stopped by a letter from the Oromia regional authorities sent out to all *woredas*. The reason was said to be that land donations was responsible for the widely criticized corruption inland acquisitions and land governance.

[17]The Oromia land Proclamation (2007, 9:5) states that "Any peasant or pastoralist or semi pastoralist shall have the right to transfer his land use right t o his family members or children whose livelihood depends on it, or have no other income, or to his children who have no other incomes or are landless as a gift".

[18] Personal communication with Melkamu… Ma student in the Department of Social Anthropology, AAU.

Landlessness in Oromia

Defining landlessness

The operational meanings of "landlessness" and "landless farmers"are ambiguous. Based on his Indian experience, Singi (no date, 381) gave three definitions of landless farmers which are mutually non-exclusive and overlapping: (a) those who *own* no land; (b) those who *operate* no land; and (c) those whose *major* source of income is wage employment.The landless farmer who does not own land may not operate land (due to lack of the capacity to rent-in for instance) and thus may live on wage labor. We suggest an operational definition which is based on the land tenure system and socio-political context of this country. Accordingly, our operational definition of a landless household is a household which resides in a rural kebele and which does not have right to land that is supported by a landholding certificate. This includes those who operate land through renting-in and sharecropping, and those who dwell in the rural kebele and live on off-farm employment. Landlessness is, thus, a state or a condition of lacking the right to hold land.

Most of the 'landless farmers' have got a small plot to build their own houses, by and large in their parents' homesteads or in the homestead of a close relative. The space often enables them to construct a house and helpsthem keep a cow and one or two oxen. But, they do not and cannot have a legal certificate over that space and can be dispossessed at anytime. In other words, the landholders reserve the right of legally holding the land for themselves. This help the landholders demand the loyalty of the landless that has been provided the small space,and in case the latters shows unacceptable behavior, the landholder can deny him/her[19] access to the land.Thus, our definition of landless farmers is based on landholding rather than the operation of land.

The extent of landlessness in Oromia

With the exception of Wayu-Gosekebele (Kuyuworeda),the kebele and woredaoffices do not have a list of landless households.In other words, landless households are not registered and documented in the government administrative structures. Membership of the kebeleis equivalent to tax-paying or landholding. Wayu-Gosekebele is a beneficiary of PSNP. As landlessness is one of the criteria in the selection of PSNP beneficiaries, 324 poorest landless households have been registered and known to the kebele. But, this is an incomplete list as many landless households who, for different reasons, were not selected to participate in the PSNP were not registered.

[19]Some parents note that the reasons given by the administration for not registering and providing certificates for land that is less than 0.5 hectares is meant to minimize land fragmentation. An exception to this is the land covered by perennial crops; registration for these can be allowed up to 0.25 hectares.

We therefore attempted to show the extent of landlessness in the three selected woredas by undertaking a survey of households. Based on the result of the survey, 38.3 percent of the rural households in the three kebeles are landless with fair variation between the three. Specifically, 43 percent inWayu-Gose, 37.8 percent in Ude and 33 percent in Limu-Dima kebeles are landless households. *Kebele* officials told us that the number would have increased significantly had we included unmarried youth above 18 years old in our sample, instead of taking a household[20]. Indeed, they have a point, as there are many landless unmarried youth in each *kebele,* and they put the blame for delaying their marriage on landlessness.

Table 6.*Landed and landless households in the three sample kebeles*

Do you have your own farm or grazing land?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	184	61.7	61.7	61.7
No	114	38.3	38.3	100.0
Total	298	100.0	100.0	

Besides the landless, asignificantnumber of households live in a near landlessness situation. We considered small holdings such as less than 0.5 hectare as near-landlessness. In fact, the government also does not issue certificate for holdings that are less than 0.5 hectares. In the *woreda* official documents from the three *kebeles,* 139 households in Wayu-Gose, 45 households in Limu-Dimaand 12 households in Udehave less than 0.5 hectaresof land registered under their name. This is 7.1 percent of the landholding households.If we add this up to the 38.3 percent landless households, we get 45.4 percent of the households living in landlessness and near-landlessness. Wayu-Gosekebele,with 43 percent landless and 12 percent near landless, is the worst performer. The number of households with small holdings will increase as more land fragmentation is expected due to transfers through inheritance. If we increase our cut off point to less than one hectare, 19.76 percent of the households in the three kebeles will be in what we called near landlessness (see the table below). Thus, one can ask: how can a country or Regional state manage to reduce poverty with close to half of its farming population living in a state of landlessness and near landlessness?

[20]Considering this criteria, in all the three sites informants including kebele officials exaggerate the number of the landless people in the Kebeles to more than 50%. In fact, they do have a point in their argument as landlessness has hard-pressed on the marriage interest of the youth. A common answer of the youth for a question, "why don't you marry?" is "where is the land to survive on". This shows the hopelessness one could observe in the life of the landless youth.

Table 7. Size of households' land in the three sample kebeles

	Land Size	Number and percent of Landholding Household					
		Limu-Dima		Wayu-Gose		Ude	
1	Less than 0.5	45	5.26 %	139	11.5%	12	2.2%
2	0.5 to 0.99	121	14.4%	178	14.7%	19	3.55%
3	1 to 1.99	95	11.10%	321	26.5%	253	47.3%
4	2 to 2.99	405	47.31%	256	21.1%	229	42.9%
5	3 to 3.99	119	13.9%	171	14.1%	19	3.55%
6	4 to 4.99	42	4.91%	88	7.2%	0	0
7	5 to 5.99	19	2.22%	57	4.7%	2	0.37%
8	6 and above	10	1.17%	0		0	0
	Total	**856**	**100%**	**1210**	**100%**	**534**	**100%**

Looking closely at how the landholding farmers use their land would help us understand the situation of near-landlessness. Households divide up their land into three parts: land for house construction, land for cultivation and land for livestock grazing. They plant eucalyptus trees near their houses basically for firewood and construction. In the past, people used to exploit communal lands for grazing, and use communal forests as sources of firewood and construction materials, and the household's landholding was solely meant for homestead and farmland. At present, there is no communal grazing and communal forest land. Thus, anindividual household has to maintain the balance between land for homestead, cultivation and livestock.Many of the landholding households have at least a pair of oxen to manage the family's subsistence agriculture and one or two cows for dairy products. Thus, one has to have one's own *kaloo* (enclosure) for grazing. Without one's own *kaloo*, the only alternatives arerentingland for grazing and purchasing of fodder, which are unaffordable unless the household generates additional income. Thus, the near landless households also have to rent in additional land or enter into sharecropping arrangement to help their families survive.

Plate 1. Livestock grazing on a rented in land. The household owning these livestock, a resident ofWayu-Gose, has 0.5 hectares of land that is uses as homestead and for farming. He rented in this plot which is 0.25 hectares for 1700 Birr between June and December to keep its pair of oxen, a cow and sheep on it. As the land was over used already in September, he was considering renting in one more plot.

Many landless households also have a pair of oxen so that they rent in land and/or engage in sharecropping, the two most important coping strategies of landlessness.Having oxen is a condition to negotiate a sharecropping arrangement, as the landholders will not rent their land to someone who does not have oxen. Having oxen does require a piece of land to keep them which makes the livelihood of the landless much more difficult.

Reasons for landlessness

Demographic factors

The single most important cause for landlessness is the demographic factor – population growth since the last land redistribution. Out of our 114 landless respondents, 100 (87.7 percent) were too young to benefit from the last land redistribution in their locality. In other words, one third of our 298 responding households were established after the land redistribution, i.e more than twenty seven years ago. Though the major land redistribution took place in 1975, there were smaller land allocations throughout the Derg period as we discussed above. For instance, communal land and land whose holders had passed away or left the kebele was reallocated to the newly established households several times until the end of the Derg regime. Since then, there has not been any land redistribution in the Region. Thus, households established since then have not acquired land from the state.

Other factors of landlessness such as absence from their locality during land redistribution and cases of forfeiting their holding rightsare quite insignificant. Only 10 of the landless households (8.8 percent) said that they were married but were not in their current *kebele* of residence when the re/distributions were made. Land degradation and investment are two emerging factors for landlessness and land shortage in Oromia that is worth detailed discussions.

Land degradation

There is an alarming increase in land degradation in Oromia. In fact, it has become one of the significant causes for land shortage, if not landlessness. Local residents attribute the major reason for this to the recent unprecedented expansion of farming,including in areas which were customarily not used for cultivation. Customarily, for instance, hillsides and marshlandswere reserved for forestry and grazing, respectively. Currently, due to severe shortage, any unused land available is subject to cultivation. Speaking about this issue, an elderly informant from Ada'a stated that "if you tell them that they can produce a glass of *teff*, the present generation would even tend to cultivate inside their houses".[21]Indeed, in Ada'a, according to informants, every piece of land including steep mountains such as Yerer has been cultivated[22].People complain it is even getting difficult to identify borders between individuals' plots as the traditional boundary markers are all removed through cultivation. The boundary markers were also used to help protect against soil erosions. n the past, it was also mandatory for farmers to leave trees such as acacia in the farmland which are rarely observable today as the picture below shows.

Reinforcing this argument, documents from the three woredas show that 57 percent of Kuyu, 60 percent of Ada'a and 48.6 percent of Limu-Bilbilo's is under cultivation. On the other hand, grazing land and forest land cover 14.7 and 11 percent respectively in Kuyu,[23] and 13.9 and 6.8 percent respectively in Limu-Bilbilo[24].Ada'a, with 2.6 percent grazing land and 8.7 percent forest land is the worst.[25]The remaining land is occupied by homesteads, road constructions, institutions, water bodies and degraded areas.

Though land degradation is observable across the Region, it has become a severe problem in North Shewa Zone. According to a study conducted about ten years ago for a project called Sustainable Land Management (SLM), degraded hillsidescover16 percent of the land (GIZ, 2006). According to this study, the extent of degraded hillsides grew from two percent in the 1970s to 16 percent in the 2000s and grazing land decreased from 27 percent to 5 percent in the same period (GIZ, 2006). This reveals the speedydegeneration of the landscape. The problem is even worse than

[21] Interview with Belay Shalama, W/Gose, September 2015.
[22] Discussion with experts in Ada'aWareda, August 2015.
[23]KuyuWoreda Land Administration Office document.
[24]Limu-BilbiloWoreda Land Administration Office document.
[25]Ada'aWoreda Land Administration Office document.

what the numbers show because what has beenreported as forest is privately owned in most cases and by and large does not qualify as forest.

Plate 2. A marshland in Kuyu, which was customarily forbidden to cultivate. But this time farmers divided it up into pieces and cultivate it (photo by Fekadu, February 2016).

The damaging impact of land degradation on productivity is already in full swing in Kuyu. For instance, asked if the productivity of their land has decreased or increased,in Ada'a 64.2 percent responded that their productivity has increased and 32.8 percent replied in the opposite. In Limu-Dima the number is even higher: 89 percent responded in the positive while only 11 percent said that the productivity of their land had declined. On the other hand, in Kuyu, only 27 percent responded that productivity has increased while the overwhelming majority said it was the opposite. The increase in productivity, of course, came with heavy investment in fertilizers, improved seeds and pesticides. However, in Kuyu, even with all these inputs added the productivity significantly declined primarily due to landdegradation.

In the last few years,the impact of land degradation inKuyuhas surpassed that of fertility decline. In the specific kebele of WuyeGose, hundreds of hectares of land have been put out of production due to land degradation, which is further aggravatingland shortage.For instance, in the last two years, 550 hectares of the land in thekebele has been put under area closure[26], which means it is taken out of production and put under close follow-up by the kebele administration and the public through two programs, PSNP and SLM. Landholders are told that they can neither cultivate nor graze their livestock on the land. They can only cut the grass and feed their livestock, if there is grass available. PSNP and SLM fund the program to salvage the land through the construction of terraces and the protection of the degraded land from damage by livestock.

[26] Discussion with the Wayu-Gose administration officials.

However, interestingly, regardless of the ultimate advantage one might presume from the area closure, the holders of this land complain that the administration has not secured their consent to put the land out of production for unspecified period of time. It is a basic right that the landholders are demanding. The response so far is that the land belongs to the state and the farmers do have the responsibility to regenerate the land as much as they have the right to use it[27].

Plate3Fencing degraded area taken out of production and put under closure (Photo byFekadu: February, 2016).

Furthermore, cultivation of degraded hillside is also resulting in catastrophic erosions that are causing landslides. Only last summer, more thantwo hundred households were displaced due to landslides in the kebele and are living on aid they receive from the Woreda Early WarningOffice28.According to our informants, some people left their degraded land and migrated to the nearby lowland areas. But, in the lowland they were exposed to erratic rainfall and a very fragile soil that could not support them for more than the first few years. Many of these people have permanently migrated to Wollega, Illu Ababa Bora, Bale, Arsi and Hararghe either within the government's resettlement program or spontaneously by themselves.29 Thus, land degradation in Kuyu is a major factor for land shortage, causing displacements and forcing farmers to migrateout of the woreda.

Investment

The impact of investment on rural landlessness, shortage of farmland and its impact on poverty may be relatively negligible. Nevertheless, understanding the practiceson the ground isimportant for policy making and in the construction of knowledge about the

[27]Discussions with official in KuyuWoreda Administration, February 2016.
[28]From FGD with experts from Land Administration, Agriculture and Environment, Office of the Woreda Administration, Kuyu September2015.
[29] Ibid

emerging dynamics around land. On top of that, this research was conducted at the time whenpublic demonstrations, dubbed as "Oromo protest", were taking place across Oromia. The protest has great relevance and implication for rural and peri-urban land. Hence, we tried to understand the nexus between the protest and land by interviewing a few participants of the protest in peri-urban Sululta on our way to and back from Kuyu, and did two days' fieldwork in there. We have also consulted some grey literature on the nexus between the protest in Oromia and land.

While Ude *kebele* of Ada'aworeda is the most investment affected area of our three sites, Wayu- Gose *kebele*, orthe rural part of Kuyu*woreda* in general, has been hardly touched by any form of investment except for individual households' sale of milk to dairy companies.[30]LimuDima*kebele* of Limmu-Bilbilo*woreda*, on the other hand, has been moderately affected.

Land and commercial investment in ruralAda'a

According to sources from Ada'aWoreda Investment Office and documents at Udekebele, 41.65 hectares of land has been given out for investment activities so far in the kebele. This is less than two percent of the cultivable land in the kebele. The type of commercial investments include two floricultures, one fuel station, horticulture, one furniture factory, one brick factory, one printing house, a paper factory and three hotels. There are many other investments in the neighboring *kebeles*, all of which are established on former farmlands. In fact, all the investments have been established on *koticha* (black soil) land, which is the most suitable soil for *teff*production, and Ada'a is the source of the best *teff* in Ethiopia.

However, the impact of landexpropriation on local farmers is not very severe as almost every household that benefited from land redistribution has farmlands in three places based on soil types. In Ada'a, everyone has land with the three soils types found in the woreda:*Koticha*, *Guburee* and *Caree*. This was a well-planned distribution as the three soil types are suitable for different types of crops and vary in productivity. *Koticha* is good for *teff*, *Guburee* for pulse and*caree* for wheat. The fact that landholding is partitioned in this way helped the farmers because they did not lose all their holdings to investment. Due to this, the farmers who lost land to investments often lost one third of their holdings. As a result, in rural Ada'a, expropriation of land for investment purposes resulted in reduction of holdings rather than total loss. In our survey,while there is no case of complete loss of holding, 7.1 percent of the 63 households whose land diminished attributed it to commercial investment, and all of them were from Ada'a.

The *Woreda* administration and investment officials claim that the processes of land acquisition have been transparent and conducted with the informed consent of the farmers concerned, and it has been subject to payment of compensation. Farmers also do not deny that they have been 'informed'. Of course, if there is one policy provision that every farmer in the *kebele* is very much familiar with is the fact

[30] The only big investment in Kuyu, a cement factory owned by Chinese investors suspended its activities after the main building where production takes place demolished causing casualties with many deaths.

that land belongs to the state, and that the government can take the land from the farmers with the payment of compensation. However, the process and implementation on the ground has two major problems. One, there is a limit to the so called informed consent. If the farmers' land is wanted for commercial investment or any public purpose, they know that there is no mechanism for them to resist the demands other than claimingcompensation however inadequate it might be. Farmers in Ude often say,*Laftti teenya hanga mootumman abba qabeenyan dhufutti*the land is ours only until the government comes up with a certain investor"). This illustrates that the people know that there is a limit to their basic tenure right. This is a reality and the farmers have convinced themselves to live with.

Two, the compensation farmers have been paid is too small to support their livelihood. The rate of compensation is set by a committee that consists of experts from Offices of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Land Administration and Environmental Protection. It is a fixed price on which farmers do not have the power to negotiate. On the other hand, the amount of money the government getsby leasing out the same land to investors is huge. The farmers argue that they could have fetched a lot of money from their land had it not been for the policy. The helpless farmers simply witness this irreconcilable development taking place in their area. For instance, one case our FGD participants discussed openly was the case of a farmer whose plot was wanted for a hotel investment. The farmer was dispossessed of 3000 m^2at a rate of 11 birr per square meter whereas the government fetched 200 birr per square meter when it leased out the same land to an investor. As shown below, the land, which is in a prime *teff* producing area, has been taken out of production for over five years and the hotel has been under construction all these years.People complain that the land is neither used for its 'conventional' purpose – cereal production – nor for the investments, which would at least create job opportunities for some people. Based on their experience, people suspect such investors to be land speculators who would sell that land at a certain stage and leave the area.

The job opportunities these investments have created in the kebele'sis not negligible. In terms of numbers, floriculture investments stand first. According to kebele sources, more than 200 women have been employed in floriculture alone. However, there are two major problems with the job opportunities in the floriculture industry. One, their payment rate of 20 birr per day is the least, even in by local standards[31]. Two, according to the employees, the safety standards of the flower farms are very pathetic exposing many employees to health risks.

The fact that the investments here require small spaces, as compared to large scale agro-investments and urban expansion, has made the impact of land expropriation in the *kebele* less agonizing. Indeed, the farmers in Ude are much less frustrated by the impact of investment than the people in the neighboring *kebele*, which have been informed of their incorporation into Bishoftu town. The *kebele* administration has also contributed in easing the distress by allowing people whose

[31]In Ginchi, Western Shewa, young protesters attacked an Indian-owned Suprafloritech, which pays1.27 USD per day during the recent mass protest in Oromia.

land has been identified for investment to exchange their land with those whose land is relatively remote from the investment area but would like to give away land and get compensation. These are often people who either have sufficient land for their households' food production and need the compensation money for different purposes, or they are young farmers who would like to diversify their livelihoods by giving away part of their land and getting the compensation money however little it is. Thus, farmers' interests are very much diverse and the environment is more complex than one would assume.

Land and investment in Limu-Bilbilo

In our study site in Limu-Bilbilo, we observedagricultural investmentsthat use two models: contract farming and a middle-level foreign agricultural investment, both quite interesting for understanding land and rural dynamism. We discuss both of them briefly focusing on how the issue of land plays out in the investment ventures.

Contract farming

The farmers in Arsi are familiar with contract farming. In Limu-DimaKebele,Solagrow P.L.C., an agri-business company, owned by Dutch investors, started contract farming in 2009. In the first year Solagrowengaged 60 selected farmers. It provided them with high quality potato planting variety and purchased their produce from them basically for seed purposes. This went on for about three years until it came to an end due to the failure of potato crops because of shortage of water and the subsequent loss of interest on the part of the farmers. According to the farmers we interviewed, the potato variety Solagrow introduced to the locality requires more water than the local variety. Challenged by the farmers' lack of interest in the potato variety, the company moved to the neighboring locality where it established other contract farming groups to grow potato.

In 2014 two breweries, namely Meta Abo and Heineken,started a similar contract farming scheme but with more official contracts and a more systematic approach than Solagrow. According to the arrangement,farmers who are able to allocate land of 0.5 hectares and above and willing to produce malt barely enter into contractual agreement with the companies. The farmers agree to maintain the quality standard of the company, while the companies agree to avail the necessary agricultural inputs such as selected seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticideson credit basis, as well as providing extension services. The farmers also agree not to sell the product to any other company, while the companies agree to buy the product at a price15-20percent higher than the market price. The Limu-Dima*Kebele* Farmers Union plays an intermediary role. It signs an agreement with the companies on behalf of the farmers and deals with the companies concerning the supply ofinputs and others services. Accordingly, Meta and Heineken entered contractual agreements with 152 and 182 farmers respectively in the kebele with 120 and 60 hectares of land allocated for malt barely respectively. Due to shortage of land, Heineken was forced to reduce the minimum limit of the land to allocate to malt barley production to a 0.25 hectare.At

the woreda level, Meta and Heineken have contractual agreements with 936 and 1272 households respectively. In terms of land allocation the households working with Meta allocated 770 hectares while those working with Heineken availed663 hectares in the agricultural season of 2015. Thus, last year,2,208 farmers allocated 1,433 hectares of theirland for malt barely in their agreement with the two breweries, which are energetically working to engage as many farmers as possible in the scheme[32]. For households with sufficient land,thisscheme has beenconsidered a good deal for three major reasons. First and most importantly, it does not incur lose of land and it is fully interest based. Second, the farmers get a good price for their products. Third, as the interests are mutual, the companies provide the inputs and extension services so that both sides get the maximum out of the venture.

However, being researchers working on land and landlessness, ourcentralinterest was the impact of this emerging model of investment in increasing the value of the land and the pressure thisputson farmland and food security. This intervention, which has a positive aspect in several ways, has taken over more than a thousand hectares from production of food crops to malt barley – a "new cash crop", as farmers called it. One may argue that even if it competes with food crops, the households can easily purchase food grain from the market since they get better price for theirmalt barley. However, the problem is when we consider the landless and the near landless category whose survival depends on the availability of land.This is, in fact, also the concern of the landless farmers who are facing double problems due to this venture. One, they are primarily affected by the pressure this creates on farmland as rent prices are hiked up and it worsens the difficulty of obtaining sharecropping land. Two, they are totally marginalized from the contract arrangements due to their landlessness.

Renting land for investment

The Oromia land proclamation allows renting land for a duration of up to fifteen years if the renter applies mechanized farming. Solagrow used this legal provision as an opportunity and rented in 101 hectares of contiguous land in Limmu-Bilbilo for investment purposes. The farmers who rented the land out were mostly war veterans who were given the land by the government when they were disbanded following the down fall of the military government in 1991. The land was a marshland that was not suitable for ox-plough agriculture and the farmers had been using it mostly for grazing. The company used mechanized farming and developed the land and used it as a testing ground for seeds coming from Holland and for production of vegetables; recently the company also started a dairy farm on the land. The manager of Solagrow, who did not want to acquire land by going through the "complex, painstaking and corrupt" government bureaucracy, signed a fifteen-year contract with the farmers at

[32]Asella Malt Factory, which does not operate in Limu-Dimakebele, is another stakeholder working with many farmers in the woreda in a similar arrangement.

afixed rate of 2000 birr per hectare per year. The payment was to be made in three installments – once every five years.

When the agreement was signed in 2011, 2000 birr per hectare per year was a fair price for grazing land. However, in 2015, when we did our fieldwork, the price of one hectare of prime grazing land in that area had already increased to more than six thousand birr. This posed challenges, as the farmers started to demand a price revision. The company insisted that both sides signed a contract that had been registered and approved by the Woreda Land Administration Office, in accordance with the Oromia Region's land law. While a few of the farmers argued that the deal concerning price was only made for the first five years, most of the farmers agreed that the contractual agreement between themselves and the company was made clear and accepted.Yet, they accused the company of exploiting their economic situation and lack of awareness. Whichever version of reasons we might consider genuine, a close look on the ground shows the vulnerability of the farmers due to the lack of a strong and genuine land governance system and institutions in place. This would pose challengesnot only to the livelihood of the farmers that are renting out their land, but also to the sustainability of the investment.

Land and investment in peri-urban Sululta

The situation in peri-urban areas is fundamentally different from both rural Ada'a and rural Limo-Bilbilo discussed above. Here, multiple investments compounded by the aggressively expanding towns have beenchanging the landscape by annexing surrounding farmlands. The process has led to total dispossession and displacement. There is little option for the farmers other than leaving agriculture and joining town life, an entirely new way of livelihood for which they are not prepared. Thus, most of those who were expropriated of their land ended up as daily laborers and security guards. One young informant who wasdisplaced from Sululta town, described his and his friends' situation by saying, *Lafahinqabnnu, hojiihinqabnnu, abddihinqabnnu* ('we don't have land, we don't job, we don't have hope')[33]. This grievance was clearly communicated during the demonstration that took place in Sulultain December 2015 where thousands of these "landless, jobless and hopeless" people come out to the street. They chanted: *Yaa Oromoo garaa qulqulluu, Qotee nyaata malee lafa hin gurguru* – "the sincere Oromo cultivate theirland, do not sell it". This was meant to disapprove of the administration's action of leasing out land to investors. The chant was supported and repeated in many other towns and rural areas in a few days.

Besides stopping by in Chancho during our travels to and from Kuyu,we did two days' fieldwork on 17 and 18 February 2016 to understand the relationship between the protests and the local grievances as a result of land alienation. We interviewed individuals who were active participants in the protest and gathered their

[33]A discussion with displaced young farmer from Sululta, interviewed in ChanchoWoreda, North Shewa, February 2016.

stories[34]. We present here a story of two 'activists'. The first one is IjaraGazu, a 62 year old former farmer and active participant in the protest. He hardly reads and writes but spoke Oromo and Amharic fluently. He is very articulate and the following narrative is his story:

> I used to have two hectares of land located in three places: one hectare black soil was used to cultivate teff; half a hectare was used for wheat cultivation and the remaining half hectare was used for keeping livestock and grazing. Sometimes I used to leave it open for two to three years when I feel it is tired [fallowing]. In 1999 [2006]my two halves located at separate places were taken away at the compensation rate of 0.60 birr per square meter. One half was given to a 'white woman' who was supposed to build a school for orphan children, as we were told at that time. To date, only a fence and structure of the house are in place and the guard hired to look after it is selling grass every year from the compound. This project, which is not realized even ten years after it was fenced off, took 5 hectares of land that belonged to six households including my own. My other half hectare was taken by a dairy farm named Prime Milk that was given seven hectares used to be held by another six households. All six of us went to Fiche and appealed to the North Shewa Zone High Court located in Fiche town .After several times travel to Fiche, we lost the case as the judge told us that the woreda has legal mandate to take the land for investment and other public purposes. We appealed to Oromia Supreme court, but we did not follow it up as we knew that it was a hopeless case.
>
> After keeping a number of cattle over the plot for few years, …probably not more than ten cattle…the 'investor' sold the land and left in December 2014. Reportedly, the investor sold the place for 7.5 million Birr [according to the victims]. When we heard this, [Ijara and others who lost their land] we rushed to the office of the municipality to report. The official, to our surprise, replied that "the investor sold his own property and you do not have the right to complain". We stopped being afraid of going to prison…
>
> The remaining one hectare was gone six years later [in 2012]. It was taken by the municipality at the compensation rate of 8 birr per square meter. From this Igot 80,000 birr for one hectare and at the same time they gave me 200 meter square for house construction. This time I decided to sell all my livestock….I used to have 3 oxen,4cows and six sheep... The money I got in the form of compensation was not sufficient to build the house on the space I was given. ..You can go and see it is still under construction…

The household lost all its holdings and the members were forced to change their way of life. This story tells the life of thousands of former farmers who were uprooted off their land and turned into the urban poor, living as daily laborers and security guards. He has seven children, and during our fieldwork, two of his children were hired as guards; two work in a nearby quarry, selling gravel and stones for construction; one works as a daily laborer in a water packing company. The remaining two do not have jobs. As a result, the household's status has completely changed from

[34]This was the most fieldwork I have ever done as everybody was scared to talk to a researcher whom they do not know before.

a better-off farming household to a destitute urban resident. Concerning the protest, Ijara claims that "I never participated in politics and I do not know politics. This time we got the opportunity to cry out. I tried to communicate my personal and my family's pain to the others by shouting loudly". Another story was that of Asratu Qajela, a 30 years old young man who also lost all his holdings to the urban expansion.

> My two siblings, brother and sister, and myself inherited 1.5 hectares of land from our parents when they passed away about fifteen years ago. My sister got married a few years following the death of our parents. Since then I have been living with my younger brother. In 2001 [2009] we lost all our land to the municipality, except for the 200m2, which they have given me for house construction. I was paid compensation at the rate of eight Birr per meter square. Three years ago I lost 50m2 due to the electricity line that passes by my house. My appeal to the municipality landed me in prison for three weeks accusing me of "opposing the government's development endeavors, being instigated by anti-peace elements".
>
> My landholding was reduced from 1.5 hectares to 150 meter square. I lost everything. Now, I live primarily on daily labor. A day after the protest I was taken by police and imprisoned in Addis Ababa. They accused me of organizing the riot in Sululta. We all joined the riot due to our personal grievances. There was no need for instigating people. The people who lost their land could even go to Ambo to join protests, let alone to wait for someone to call up on them for demonstrations.

The protest in Sululta was a protest of the dispossessed and the jobless, people ranging from jobless youth to the aged dispossessed[35]. The farmers assume themselves as victims of the policy that favors investors and urban elite entrepreneurs at their expense. Some of the "investors" have simply acquired land, kept it for sometimes, and sold it when the market price increased. The government's policy of keeping the land under state and public ownership is supposed to prevent land speculation. The governing elite support the same investors at the expense of the local farmers, and both of them accumulate wealth by dispossessing and displacing the farmers.[36]

Some grey literature,mostly media reports, have been produced about the protest. For instance, areporter from Christian Science Monitor interviewed a farmer in Sulultaand got the followingresponse: "the land was taken from the farmers and they benefited nothing."Another demonstrator in Wenchi, West Shewa, where Solagrow's farm was burnt down, told the same reporter that "villagers were angry because their grazing land had been taken away with no compensation". Interestingly, the manager ofSolagrow reacted to the report in an email to the newspaper saying, "that since no one owned the land no compensation had been paid, but that the Dutch company had worked peacefully for the past six years"(17 Jan. 2016). What he did not

[35] Interview with a young participant in the protest.

[36]There are ample literature on accumulation by displacement (ABD) and primitive accumulation by dispossession (see Hall, 2013 Glassman, 2006).

realize was that the protest truly presented a unique opportunity for the aggrieved to communicate their grievances. It was a moment for the powerless farmers and the jobless youth to challenge the powerful state and its partners, the aggressive private investors. Another foreign newspaper, The Guardian, reportingfrom the small town of Asgouri, 37 kms west of Addis Ababa, states that "locals attacked a commercial flower farm during the protests and destroyed the generators and refrigeration room. Some of the attackers included farmers, who said they had lost their land to the business and received inadequate compensation" (The Guardian 30. Dec. 2015).We cite these reports to show the relationship between the protest, investment and land. Thus land has become a critically important resource not only in the livelihood of the farmers but also the stability of the country.

Effects of landlessness

Troubled livelihood

> "We [the landless farmers] do know not only the effect of landlessness but also the critical importance of land better than the landholders, because they never lived as landless farmers".

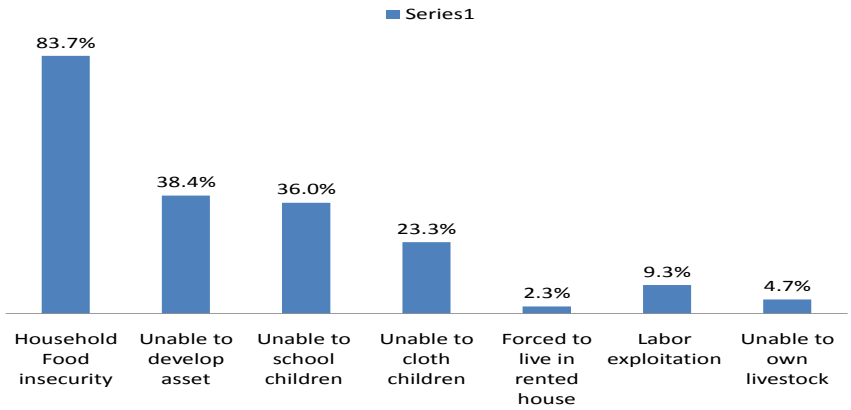
In this section, we discuss briefly the effects of landlessness on landless households. The above quotation was taken from an argument by our FGD participant in Limu-Bilbilo when he was annoyed by a weak explanation by a discussant about the effect of landlessness and the importance of land during a focus group discussion attended. He claims that no one knows the critical importance of land to the livelihood of rural farmers better than the landless. Hestated*lafttilafeeduddaqotebulaati. Ni jabeessas, Ni lamshessas.* Literally it means, ''land is the backbone of the farmers. It reinforces [those who have it], and paralyzes' [those who do not have it]".

He explained that if someone's backbone fails, he/she is paralyzed, and is thus not able to work and fulfill his/her basic needs. Rather he/she would depend on others. In the same way, he explains, "we are young, but depend on landholders to survive. For instance, we wait for the willingness of the landholders to get a sharecropping contract in order to sustain our family". He stressed that "the landholders never felt this as they never lived it". The explanation shows how the people who have no land conceptualize the impact of landlessness and the value of land.

Life as a landless farmer is hard. It is tough to live in a rural environment and lack the basic asset of land, the mainstay of livelihood. Let us discuss this in some detail from the standpoint of food security, difficulty of acquiring assets, sending children to school and buying clothing and other necessities for the family as points of focus. Out of the 87 households who are severely affected by landlessness,72 (82.8 percent)are food insecure, and 37 percent complained about the difficulty of leading their lifeproperly and having access to assets. They often complain that regardless of how hard they work it is difficult for them to acquire assets. They are often concerned with how to get land (sharecrop or renting) in the following season to subsist. 35.6and23 percent of the landless farmers, respectively, complained that they are even

unable to send their children to school and properly cloth them (the details of this is discussed further down).The following figure shows the major effects of landlessness for all the three *kebeles* calculated together.

Fig. 4: Effects of landlessness on the landless households



As can be observed in the table below, even though the impact of landlessness is somewhat common in all the three *woredas,* there are some differences in terms of the degree of the problems. For instance, family food insecurity is a serious concern for landless farmers in all the *woredas*, but it is severe in Kuyuwhere 94.9 percent are food insecureas compared to Ada'aand Limu-Bilbilo where 76and 72 percent of the landless, respectively, reported they face food shortages.Similarly, the difficulty of sending children to school has been reported in all *woredas*, but inKuyuthe problem is reported by almost half the landless. The children either join their parents and engage in daily labor or are given out to the better-off farmers as herders or sent to towns and urban centers to work as house maids and guards.

The following table shows the major effects of landlessness in the three woredas:

Table 8. Effects of landlessness by woreda

Major effects of landlessness by Woreda				
Woreda Name		Responses		Percent of Cases
		No	Percent	
Ada'a	Family Food insecurity	19	46.3	76.0
	Unable to develop asset	10	24.4	40.0
	Unable to send children to school	4	9.8	16.0
	Unable to cloth children properly	4	9.8	16.0
	Forced to live in rented house	1	2.4	4.0
	Labor exploitation and low living standard	3	7.3	12.0

		41	100	164.0
Limu-Bilbilo	Family Food insecurity	16	41.0	72.7
	Unable to develop asset	12	30.8	54.5
	Unable to send children to school	8	20.5	36.4
	Forced to live in rented house	1	2.6	4.5
	Labor exploitation and low livig standard	2	5.1	9.1
		39	100.0	177.3
Kuyu	Family Food insecurity	37	41.1	94.9
	Unable to develop asset	11	12.2	28.2
	Unable to send children to school	19	21.1	48.7
	Unable to cloth children properly	16	17.8	41.0
	Labor exploitation and low living standard	3	3.3	7.7
	Unable to raise/feed livestock	4	4.4	10.3
		90	100.0	230.8

Lack of land for home construction

The worst experience of landlessness is reported by thosewho were unable to get land for home construction. These are mostly people whose parents were landless for different reasons and thus inherited landlessness instead of land. As shown in the table above, their number is very small (only 2.3 percent of the landless) at present, but,the number is expected to rise very soon as children of many of landless households are approaching marriage age. In fact, many have told us that they could not marry due to landlessness, in spite of their age. The following family experience of AdugnaLami, a resident of Wayu-Gosekebele, Kuyu, is an insightful story.

> My father never held land. He was a traditional musician (*azmari*). My Mother had passed away when I was a small boy. My father left us [him and his brother] and went away. We were both forced to join different families serving them initially as herd-boys and later on as farmers. When I got married my cousin gave me a small space sufficient for putting my hut up. Last year, due to minor fall out my cousin asked to leave his land. I resisted. Actually, I do not have any place to go. He appealed to the kebele. The kebele chairman and the village elders pressured him to drop the appeal. They asked "How you dislodge him from where he lived for more than 26 years?" He was somewhat embarrassed and allowed me to continue living here.
>
> I have 10 children. Four of them dropped out of school and they are engaged in daily labor as you see us today.[37] They dropped out complaining that it was hard to go to school while starving and without proper clothes. One of them is taken by her grandmother. I gave away two of them: one is eight years old boy and the other ten years old to families who use them as herd-boys. They

[37] I found AdugnaLammi the first day while he and his four children were building terraces on daily labor to mitigate land degradation funded by SLM.

> allowed them to attend school half a day. They live there and they cover their school expenses and I receive 75 kg *teff* per year for each of them.
>
> As it is difficult to get share-cropping without oxen, my wife and myself often help our family through daily labor and selling firewood. Today she took firewood to the town and my four children and myself we are digging land here. For five years we benefitted from safety net program until we were dropped last year.

This story shows the vicious cycle of the effect of landlessness. His father did not have land, and he himself grew up as a poor herder serving other people. As a head of a household he spent his life doing daily labor. Now, two of his children repeated what he did as a boy – serving another family as herders. Another four children dropped out of school and are engaged in daily labor with him. His oldest son is twenty five years old. He has been doing daily labor now for several years helping his parents bring up his younger siblings. He could not sharecrop due to lack of oxen. This is a story of one household, but it tells the life experience of many landless households in Kuyu.

In rural Ethiopia wherethere is no experience of renting house andwhere there is no house to rent for that matter,the only option for someone who cannot not get a home plot from relatives, is to rent a small piece of land for building a house. As renting land is often for a short period of time, people in this situation have to dismantle their homes when asked by the land owner and look for another place or keep on paying the landholder extra money to get more time.They lead a life full of uncertainties. Some of them are forced to leave their villages and move to towns in search of house for rent and commute between the villages where they have rented land or sharecropped and the town where they are forced to reside. This is not a sustainable solution as it is tough to commute. Some of them purchase land under the guise of donation or 'renewable renting', both of which is not supported by the law, and thus end up in serious difficulties. The following story from Limu-Bilbilo is instructive:

> Lama and his wife live in Limu-Dimmakebele. They have two children. Lama's parents have1.5 hectares of land and ten children: five sons and five daughters. Lema is the youngest son. As his parent's holding diminished being given to his older brothers, Lama could not even get a proper space for house construction. Actually, the parents gave0.125 hectares of land to each of them including Lama, but the location was not hospitable as it is very far from the village and no other person resides in the vicinity. Lama opted for purchasing a small plot in a village where he would establish his homestead. Accordingly, Lama purchased 1000 square meter land for 5000 birr in 2009, which was soon after his marriage. An agreement was signed between the two pretending that the seller donated the land permanently to Lama. After three years the seller requested Lama either to pay more money or to leave his land. Some local elders who knew the deal intervened and with small additional payment the seller agreed not to raise the issue again. Unfortunately, the seller raised the issue again in less than two years and this time he took the case to the kebele. The kebele officials who knew the details supported Lama but could not supplement their support with legal

> provisions. Even worse, when the kebele deliberately delayed the case, the seller appealed to the woreda court. The case was proceeding for over a year...

Narratives of such informal and disguised purchases of small plots for building own residential houses, if not for cultivation,are prevalent in all our study sites. Even though such deals lead to conflict, sometimes even deadly ones, desperate newly-formedhouseholds consider this the only option to overcome their problem, at least in the short run. We often heard the proverb, *simbirren illee bariite bariitee lafa irra qubatti,* ("even birds fly but finally land on the ground")from landless youth in this situation. They often ask "how can a human being survive without a space to land on?"[38]

Lack of grazing land, woodland and woodland products

An emerging problem regarding land and rural livelihood in Oromia is the increasing shortage of communal grazing and forest land.In all the three sites we studied, there is a drastic change in this regard. In official woreda records, for instance, there is no single hectare ofcommunal grazing land in the three woredas[39]. The *woreda* agriculture offices train farmers to reduce the number of their livestock, 'modernize' and use their own private enclosure (*kaloo*). The development agents try to persuade farmers to start private enclosures where they do not exist.

The absence of communal grazing land and forestland has a tremendous impact on the landless and near landless population. Every piece of land in each kebele is owned by individuals. Every standing tree is also owned by individuals. This is what I call the tragedy of individualism. In Kuyu, for instance, in front of every house there are eucalyptus trees, which are used for house construction as well as a source of income as people sell them either locally or at the nearby town. But even more importantly, it has become the sole source of firewood for the rural population. Landless households not only have to purchase trees to construct their huts in the rural village, but also buy firewood for home use. A destitute landless person, who lives by selling firewood and charcoal, has first to buy a eucalyptus tree and turn it into firewood or charcoal. With that added value, he/she carries it to the nearby town for sale. One of the major sources of dispute in the rural villages today is over firewood collection from branches of trees owned by individual households. Individualism has done away with tolerance. The landless are accused of stealing leaves, branches of trees and wood from the land held by their neighbors.

[38]An old man historicized landlessness and compared the current landlessness with the tenancy during the Imperial era. The old man said, "Things now resemble the Imperial era. Look ,the number of the landless is out numbering the landed. Some landholders sit in the towns and give their land for sharecropping and the sharecroppers transport their produce up to their homes in the towns. But, the difference is that during the Imperial era the tenants live on the land and the lords demand one-fourth of the produce, while the current sharecroppers take half. .. "

[39] Documents from Woreda Land Use and Administration.

Marginalization in rural development initiatives

Another interesting feature of landless farmers is how they are being easily by-passed by programs designed to benefit 'farmers'. The major problem with agricultural policy interventions so far is that rural agents never considered the landless as worthy of attention. Thus, 'farmers', 'rural women' and 'rural poor' are regard as homogenous when in reality they are very much heterogeneous. As a result, some of the interventions, which are meant to increase farmers' benefits, actually negatively affect the landless section of the population. A good example is how interventions by two breweries (Meta and Heineken) in Limu-Bilbilo affected the landed and the landless population. These breweries are engaged in contract farming with the local landholders who can allocate at least 0.5 hectares of their land for malt production. Accordingly, Meta and Heineken have signed contractual agreements with hundreds of farmers who availed land. For the breweries and government officials, the intervention has been beneficial to the rural farmers. Indeed, as discussed above, the breweries give selected seeds, fertilizers, trainings etc and purchase the produce at a high price. Thus, it has been received positively by those who have sufficient land to allocate for malt barley and participate in the program. But, on the other hand, this initiative does not only marginalize the landless farmers who could not be part of it, but it also contributes to the increasing shortage of land and dramatic increase in the price of land. This harms the landless population whose livelihood depends on accessing land through renting and sharecropping.

Another example which informants mentioned is a government initiated farmers' training program that took place in 2011, which was meant to increase farmers' productivity. This was mainly in productive areas such as Arsi and targeted small farmers, who were shown how to improve their productivity by increasing their usage of inputs and extension services as well as intensifying land use. Experiences of 'model farmers' that make use of available extension programs and use 'full package' inputs were also discussed. According to our landless informants, this training, which was given only to landholders, not only marginalized the landless but also exaggerated the impact the training was expected to bring. The program created an artificial increase in the value of land and consequent hike in the price of land rent.

Thus, the interventions which are designed for only landholders marginalize the landless and negatively affect their livelihood. In fact, in most cases, the landless are not considered as citizens of the *kebeles* where they reside. They are not in the list of *kebele* inhabitants, often do not show up for any kind of public meetings. The list includes only the tax-paying landholders. According to the landless, the only time when the kebele administration "remembers" them is during mobilization for public works, which they have refused to participate in. They argue that for the landless, whose survival solely depends on their labor, there is no extra time to waste doing public works and attending public meetings. In Ada'a, we were told that landless individuals come to the village only for spending the night and it is difficult to trace their whereabouts during the day. This means, in other words, development interventions and public engagements (including discussions and public works) in the kebeles exclude more than one third of the population. On the other hand, most of the

landless in Kuyu are exceptions to this. They hardly miss public works; they try to be as visible as possible to kebele officials. This is because their contribution to public service counts in accessing some benefits such as selection for the PSNP.

Effects on female headed households

The differences in the experience of the landless are not only across *woredas*,but also within a given *woreda*. Within a*woreda*, landless experiences vary mainly between male and female headed households. The variation to a large extent lies in the differences of the difficulties of the coping mechanisms that make the effects of landlessness particularly tough for female headed households. The two relatively sustainable and preferred means of obtaining livelihood for the rural landless farmers are renting-in land and sharecropping. Both are less attainable by the female headed households as compared to male headed households. For female headed households renting land, for instance, does require employing more labor to cultivate the land, unless there is a grown-up son in the household. Employing labor isan additional expense for the householdthatis difficultto cover in addition to costs of renting and agricultural inputs.Sharecropping is even more difficult as thelandholders hesitate to give their land to a female headed household as they do not trust their ability to use the land effectively,.

Thus in most cases, female headed households are more severely impacted by landlessness than male headed households. The following story of a female headed household helps to show the different effect of landlessness on female headed households:

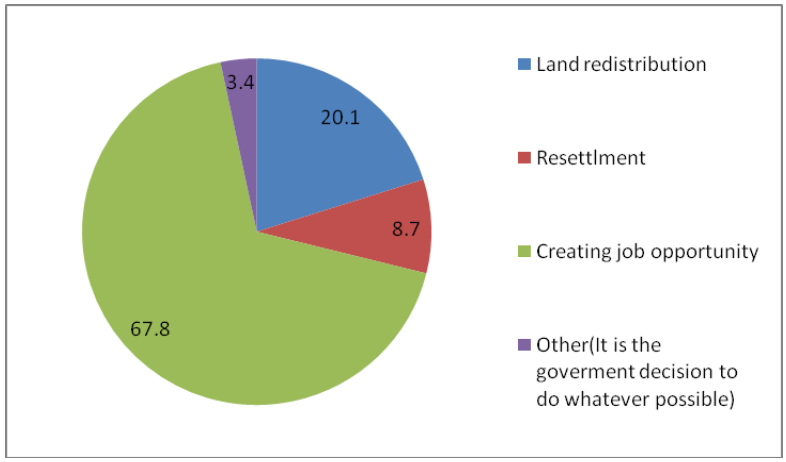
> Yeshi lives in Sirba village in UdeKebele,Ada'aworeda with her four children. She is forty years old. Her marriage consummated twenty four years ago ended in divorce more than a decade ago. She never had a land. Before divorce the household lived in the homestead of the husband's parents on sharecropping and daily labor. Following their separation her children followed her. When we met her she lives in her parent's homestead with her four children. She does not have land, labor and oxen – the three crucial items to engage in farming.
>
> To help her children subsist she engaged in a number of low paying but laborious jobs. First, she was joined an association called *Abdi Gari* established to work on sand and stone mining. As mining stone is physically demanding her role was transporting the mined stone a loading station and loading. She could not continue long in the business simply because it was too hard to manage. She asked us saying, "Could you imagine how tough it was for a woman who was working with empty belly?" She left and got employed in floriculture as daily laborer. She worked as weeder and care provider for flowers in the green houses for four years earning 8 birr/day. In the long run, however, she faced health problems which as she said were caused by the heavy temperature in the green house without the required safety materials. Still there are scars on her face that she attributes to that. The floriculture neither had medical facilities nor covers medical costs. Finally, she was forced to leave the floriculture based on the advice from her physician. Then, she was employed as a daily laborer in the Addis Ababa –Adama highway construction, which ended one year after she joined. Her duty was transporting stones and assisting the experts constructing

> ditches. Since then, she has been back at home preparing and selling local drinks and at the same time engaging in petty trade such as buying egg, onion and butter locally and supplying itto markets in Bishoftu. While she claims that her present work is better rewarding than her previous works she also complain that selling drinks also brought to her bad encounters such as violent conflicts with drunk men a number of times. … She complains, "Imagine if I had land I would have rented it out or sharecrop it, or even I would have fattened few sheep and sell them and support the subsistence of my family" ….

The story shows the multifaceted challenges of female headed households. The kind of work she has tried, such as quarrying, daily labor in floricultures and in road construction are the major livelihood strategieslandless men in and earn their subsistence. When it comes to women, the challenges start with physical and health setbacks, and followed by motherhood responsibility and social challenges.

Coping strategies of landless households

Landless households use diversified survival strategies. Among these, the most important are renting in land, share-cropping, daily labor (in local farms, in private investments and in nearby towns), and seasonal migration. The following figure shows the proportion of landless households' engagement in each of this.



Renting

Renting is the most important means of coping with landlessness and land shortage. Slightly more than half of the 114 landless households renting-in land as a livelihood strategy. At woreda level, 36.8 percent in Ada'a, 90.9 percent in Limu-Bilbilo and 34.9 percent in Kuyu claim that renting is their major means of livelihood. Renting has become important also because it serves different categories of people besides the landless and land deficient households. Better-off local landholding farmers, civil servants and urban dwellers also rent land. The better-off farmers rent in additional land to produce surplus which they sell at the market; there is an ever growing demand

for cereals in the area. Many civil servants and urban dwellers in the *woreda* towns supplement their livelihood by renting land. They either hire labor or employ close relatives. The wide use of modern agricultural machineries such as tractors and combine harvesters in Arsi, for instance, has made the management of rented land simpler and effective for civil servants and urban dwellers. It has radically reduced the time it takes for cultivation and harvesting. Thus, the absentee 'urban farmers' engage in a bidding for rented land by using their comparative advantage of access to cash.

The increasing value of land and perhaps the multiple interests in land can also be seen from the very dynamic price of land rent. In Ada'a,one *qarxi* (0.25 hectare of land) for rain-fed agriculture was rentedfor up to 4,000 birr per season in 2014. The same size of land has been rented in Limu-Bilbilo andKuyu for up-to 2000 and 1200 birr respectively. The price depends on the productivity of the land, the type of cereal they produce and the residents' income. In Ada'a, where the land is fertile black soil that is suitable for *teff* production, the price is very high. In Limu-Bilbilo where the land is again productive, but for wheat and barley, the renting price is medium. In Kuyu where land degradation is a critical challenge to productivity, the renting price is the lowest as compared to the other two. Ada'a*teff* is the best, and due to this as well as other factors, farmers in the area have much better income than Limu-Bilbilo and Kuyu farmers. The price increase is a recent phenomenon. The communities' reconstruction of the trends of price for 0.25 hectare of land in the years 2005, 2010 and 2014 are shown in the table below:

Table 9. Dynamics of the price of land rent

Years taken as a turning point	Ada'a	Limu-Bilbilo	Kuyu
2005	900	300	300
2010	2000	800	700
2014	4000	1500-2000	1200

The three years are taken as the turning point in landrentprice increase. According to the perceptions of the research participants in all the three sites, the campaign for the 2005 national election had a bearing on land related issues. The intense public debate in the mediaand the increasing shortage on the ground changed the perception of the people about the value of land. Thisserved as the first turning point in the price hike. Thus, the most significant land rent price increase was registered in the post 2005election period. The 2010 hike was associated with a training program given throughout Oromia on the system of farming, agricultural technologies andmodel farmers. The promise that the training and farming technologies would change the life of the farmers has been widely noted as a cause of the increase in the value of land and subsequent increase in price. In 2014, there was no special event, but, according to informants, perhaps the ever increasing price of cereal might have triggered the increase in land prices.

Renting in is considered more advantageous than share-cropping. It is only in cases where there is no land for rent or where the rent price is unaffordable that the

landless population turn to share-cropping instead of renting. While renting seems almost equally important in Ada'a and Limu-Bilbilo, it is less important in Kuyu. The number of landless people that afford to rent in land in a woreda shows their economic status. In Ada'a, landless people could generate income from multiple sources such as employment in private investments and nearby urban areas, income from the quarry work, etc, and use their money for renting in land. Thus, the number of landless renters is significantly higher than sharecroppers. On the other hand, in Kuyu, the number of the landless who can afford to rent land is small as compared to those who sharecrop and work as daily laborers. Most of the landless in Kuyu cannot afford to rent land and cover the cost of agricultural inputs. To make matters worse for the landless farmers in Kuyu, renting deals are often made in the months of September and October. These are months when many rural households face food shortages. These are also months when households send their children to school and thus incur more expenses. Economic distress forces landholders to rent out their land. While the landless in Ada'a who have multiple sources of income may afford it, it is quite hard for those in Kuyuto renting in land while at the same dealing with food shortages andcovering school expenses during these months. Thus, in Kuyu, most land renters are the better-off farmers, civil servants and urban dwellers.

In Limu-Bilbilo and Ada'a, households rent in land as small as 0.25 hectare. For renting land is not only of economic but also social importance. Households rent in land and plant maize, for instance, not only because of its economic value, but also because of the satisfaction it gives them when they harvest from 'their own field' in the same way their landholding neighbors do. Some households consider the benefit they obtain from the residues as more important than the crop. In fact, in Ada'a where the main crop is *teff*,the income from residue could cover the land rent.

An emerging development regarding renting is rentingof grazing land. This is going on mainly in Kuyu and Limu-Bilbilo but varies in its workings. In Kuyu, income from selling of milk has become very important. It has contributed to increasing the value of grazing land. Renting a grazing land is more expensive than farming land. For instance, 0.25 hectare of grazing land fetches up to 2000 birr while the same size of farming land isrented only for up to1200 birr. People who rent out land also prefer grazing to cultivation. This is not only due to the price difference but also because keeping the land out of cultivation for one year through renting it for grazing is considered as good as fallowing. In Limu-bilbilo, there are *kebeles* known for renting grazing land. These are kebeles with swampy areas and lowlands that is not suitable for farming. Farmers from neighbouring kebelestake their livestock to these areas, rent the land and stay there from July to December.

Interestingly, most of the renting deals are made in the presence of the village elders and sometimes the agreement is registered at the kebele. A few dealsfollow the proclamation that states "land renting shall be valid before the law, if and only if it is registered and approved by Oromia Agricultural and Rural development Bureau…"(Proclamation No. 130/ 2007, Article 10, No. 3).Currently, the task of register in is given to the woreda Land Administration and Environmental Protection Office. Fulfilling this requires travelling of at least the husband and the wife/wives who rent out their land, the man/woman who rent in the land and three witnesses. For

local people, this is quite costly, therefore, they make the deal and sign agreements locally, which might not be valid before the law. In Kuyu, in the past several years, not more than five cases have been signed in the woreda land office.

Share-cropping

Share-cropping is the second most important means of accessing land for the landless population. Half of the landless surveyed responded that sharecropping is their important strategy of accessing land and survival. Put in terms of districts,36.8, 54.5 and 72.1 percent, respectively, of the landless respondents in Ada'a, Limu-Bilbilo and Kuyuworedas claimed that they engage in sharecropping arrangements with landholders as a survival strategy. Sharecropping is considered more beneficial to the landholder than the sharecropper. Thus, less landless sharecroppers in Ada'a means the landless in the woreda have other options, such as land renting. The landless in Kuyu, on the other hand, do not have renting and other options.

Similar to renting, share-cropping arrangements are also quite dynamic. According to informants, during the Imperial era, tenants used to cultivate landlords' land in an arrangement called *erbo*. The tenants cultivated the land with their own labor and oxen, though some landlordsused to contribute half of the seed. The tenant provided to the land owner one fourth of the produce at harvest time. The landless lived on the same land with additional charges for grazing. That system was abolished by the revolution that ended the feudal-tenant land system in the country. Then, during the Derg period, share cropping became an informal practice as landholders were expected to cultivate the land themselves, and if not, had to forfeit their holding right. However, sharecropping, called *siso* (one-third),was widespread. Here, the landless and the landholder enter into an arrangement where the landless contributes labor and oxen and the landholder contributes land, and all the remaining inputs were shared equally. The term *siso* implies the mode of sharing of the harvest in whichthe landholder takes one-third and the sharecropper gets two-third. In Ada'a and Limu-Bilbilo*siso* survived until a few years back.

Currently, share-cropping called *qixxee* (equal) is prevalent, with a significant variations in the contributions of landholder and share-cropper. The variations are not uniform in all the three sites, indicating the evolution of the system and the differences in the economic value of land. In Ada'a, the landholder contributes only land and the landless contributes everything else (labor, oxen and inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, pesticides etc), but the modality of output sharing is on equal basis. The only extra benefit a share-cropper gets is crop residue for his/her oxen. In Limu-Bilbilo and Kuyu, the landholder contributes, besides land, half of the fertilizer and seed expenses, and the mode of sharing the produce is on equal basis. But, the disadvantage to the landless is that crop residue is also equally shared. Thus, the difference between the three sites in terms of net benefit is insignificant. The following table summarizes the changes in the mode of sharecropping.

Table 10: Summary of changes in the modes of sharecropping

No.	Name of /mode of sharecropping	Time	contributions	Mode of sharing
1	*Erbo*	Imperial era	The landlord contributes land and the tenant contributes all the remaining	The landlord obtain one-fourth and the sharecropper gets three-fourth
2	*Siso*	From 1974 to 2000s	Landholder contributes land and sharecropper contributes labor and oxen. Other inputs are common.	The landholder gets one-third and the sharecropper obtains two-third
3	*Qixxee*	At present	In Ada'a landholder contributes only land and sharecropper contributes all the remaining; In Kuyu and Limu-Bilbilo the landholder contributes land and the sharecropper contributes labor and oxen, the remaining inputs are common.	They share equally

The changes in the mode of sharecropping explain, principally, the ever increasing value of land, with adverse effects on landless households. As we discussed above, sharecropping arrangements favor the landholder at the expense of sharecroppers. Thus, it has been more accessiblethan renting. Now, however, the worry is accessing land even for sharecropping is getting tougher by the year. Recently, a new notion called *Jala Kenna* (giving in advance)has been invented. According to this system, the landholder demands a certain amount of money, in most cases 500 birr, from the sharecropper when they make the deal or sign a contract. Half of the money might be paid back when they share the produce based on their agreement.

Daily labor

Daily labor is the least preferred livelihood strategy of the rural poor, but it is widely used and a crucial survival strategy. The varieties of daily labor include labor in local farms, in private investments and in nearby towns, and 40.4,43.9, and 13.2 percent of respondents, respectively, have engaged in one form of labor or the other. Daily labor is crucially important in that it also supports other livelihood strategies: households

engage in daily labor of some kind and use the income for renting land, purchasing inputs or even buying oxen, as well as covering the immediate subsistence needs of the family.

Coming to the disparities and similarities between the districts, daily labor is used as a survival strategy in Kuyu where 65.1 and 30.2 percent of the landless find employment on local farms and nearby towns respectively. In Limu-Bilbilo, 57.6 and three percent, respectively, are similarly engaged. In both cases, agricultural work ranges from land preparation to harvesting and threshing. In Limu-Bilbilo, harvesting potato and garlic has also become an important source of livelihood. In Ada'a, it is somewhat different from both districts; 60.5 percent of landless households said that they work in one of the private investments in the woreda, and only 15 and 10.5 percent work in nearby towns and local farms respectively. The overwhelming majority of laborers work in the flower farms where the payment is embarrassingly lowand there are multiple health risks. Nevertheless, for landless women in the village with their multiple household responsibilities, it is preferable to work in these farms instead of traveling to the nearby towns in search of daily work. Again different from the other two, in Ada'a working as daily laborer in agricultural farms is very unusual. It is a choice left for seasonal migrants and the very destitute.

Migration

Migration is also another important livelihood strategy of the landless, especially in Kuyu. Two kinds of migration are prevalent: seasonal and permanent. According to our survey, 30 percent of the landless in Kuyuengage in seasonal migration, but other sources of information indicate that the number is higher. Thousands of able bodied men, young and adults, landless and near landless, migrate every harvesting season – from October to the beginning of December. The usual destinations are the cereal productive areas of East Shewa and Arsi. Fortunate for them, the harvesting season starts in Kuyu only in December,when it ends in East Shewa and in much of Arsi. Most of our informants have experiences of seasonal migration at least once. For most of the landless and near landless that is the moment when they acquire money to cover their annual costs of agricultural inputs. Some even take loans from friends relying on income from that season[40].

Our informants also mentioned several cases of permanent voluntary migration. Addis Ababa, Bale, Arsi and West Hararghe are the major destinations of the permanent migrants. Such migrations were not new for landless farmers in North Shewa. During the Imperial regime, pressured by ruthless landlords, tens of thousands left for Arsi, Bale and Hararghe in search of land. Some of our informants in Limu-Bilbilo told us that they are sons and grandsons of the earlier migrants from North Shewa and if they are forced to migrate due to landlessness, they will become the second generation of migrants.

[40] An interesting disparity from other sites is "there is no free loan in Kuyu", which means there is interest rate for any loan. In other word loan in Kuyu is usury. The interest rate is in most cases 20%. This is another potential area of research.

Some of the seasonal migrants also fail to return home for several years leaving their family behind back home. Some of the cases are shocking. Sources in the Woreda Administration and Women's Affairs offices reveal cases of several wives coming to these offices with their kids to report the disappearance of their husbands after the usual seasonal migration. The offices were troubled because they were unable to support these households[41].

Support from local government

We have also tried to understand the state of support landless households have been receiving from local government, especially the woreda and kebele administrations. Of the 114 landless households in our survey, only 15 (13.2 percent) said they have received some kind of support from the local government. Out of these, eight were given priority in the PSNP (which exists only in Kuyu), five have benefited by being organized into small and micro enterprises (SMEs) and the remaining two have been given access to loans. Four out of the 5 who claimed to have benefited from SME are in Ada'a. Actually, in all the three sites, there are attempts to organize the landless and the unemployed in SMEs and arrange loans for them with micro-finance institutions. In Limmu-Dima and WoyuGosea small number of unemployed youthhave been given around5 and 3 hectares of land respectively where they have planted eucalyptus trees. They have been given the land for a period ofthree years with a possible extension for another three-year period, and other groups are waiting to take over when theirterm comes to an end. This is too small to support the numerous landless and jobless youth.

In UdeKebele, Ada'a, some attempts to team up the landless and help them start poultry farms in association with Oromia Credit and Saving Association failed due to the latter's high interest rate. However, the most successful SME is a quarry established in 2005 in Sirba village, Udekebele. Initially,68 landless and unemployed youths applied to the kebele administration to be given a quarry which had been founded during the Addis Ababa–Hawassa road construction. The application was accepted by the kebele administration and the woreda SME office. Its location,near to the main road and at a close distance to several towns, made it very productive for the participants. It has improved the lives of many landless youths. They use the money primarily for renting land, purchasing of oxen and agricultural inputs. Beyond that many of them have built their houses with corrugated iron roofs. Since then, based on the successes of the first group, three other SMEs constituting 154 landless and jobless youths have been established. Currently, the quarry covers six hectares of land and more than one hundred people are working in it.

[41] Discussion with official in Kuyuworeda administration in September 2015.

Table 11. UdeKebele quarry associations

S/N	Name of the Association	Year of establishment (E.C)	Members			Current active members
			M	F	Total	
1	GudatuSirba	2007	81	4	85	26
2	Gichi	1997	68	16	84	43
3	OdaSirba	2002	41	0	41	18
4	Sirba	1999	32	0	32	17

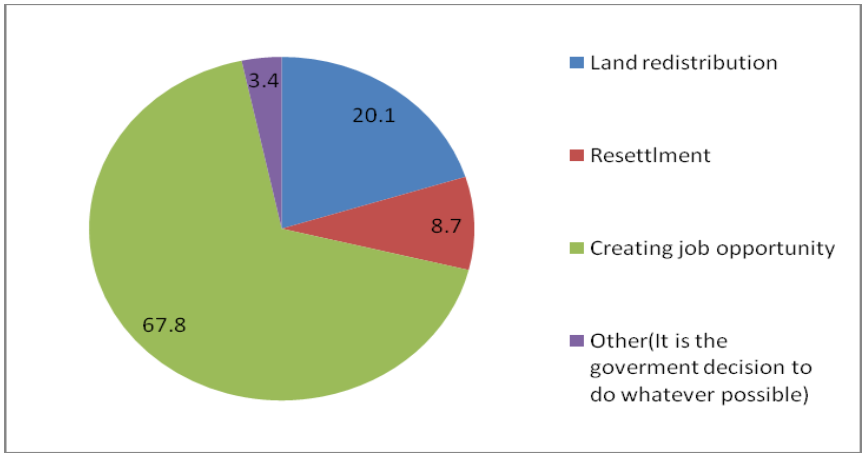
Generally, the woreda and the kebele administrations are faced with a predicament as to what can be done for the landless and near landless. In Kuyu, a woreda administration official plainly told us that wherever they travel inside the woreda, "the most repeatedly asked and most difficult question to address is the issue of landlessness". He further stated that the landless desperately ask:*maaltaanu? Dhalanneera. Ijoollegadhanneera. Nuttihimaaammamaaltaanu?*

(what shall we do? What have we been born for. We have got children. Tell us now, what shall we do?" These are the questions *woreda* officials are confronted with. It is indeed quite tough to address such questions when more than one third of the population is landless. While government actors were quite confused with the measures to be taken, we also asked the landless and the landed population to suggest a possible solution for dealing with landlessness.

Do the people have solutions to suggest?

Three solutions have been suggested by participants of our survey: creating more job opportunities in their localities, resettlement and land redistribution. The overwhelming majorities (67.8 percent) suggested that there is no option for the government other than creating jobs for landless farmers because they thought land shortage and landlessness will worsen in the future. The variation between the three districts (81 percent in Ada'a, 61 percent in Kuyu and 60 percent in Limu-Bilbilo) is not that much significant.

Fig 5. Survey participants suggested solutions for landlessness



Land redistribution was suggested in the survey by 20.1 percent of respondents (16.3 percent in Ada'a, 19 percent in Kuyu and 25 percent in LimuBilbilo). In all the sites, there is astrong perception that land has been concentrated in the hands of older people and that it should be redistributed to the young and energetic landless youth. In one very warm FGD in Limu-Bilbilo conducted with the landless farmers, one of them complained that the government is afraid of the political instabilities it may encounter if it engages in land redistribution, butnow "it is time for the government to move from its own safety tothat of thecitizens". On the other hand, others are opposed, saying that redistributing the land held by the old people would badly affect the landless whose livelihoods rely on renting or sharecropping the same land, while the effect of the redistribution will be practically insignificant. This shows the confusion and the difficult situation the landless farmers are in. The discussants finally agreed that the neighboring lowland *kebeles* are sparsely populated and they have ample land which can be redistributed to the landless.

Resettlement was the third option suggested by 8.7 percent of the respondents (14 percent in Limu-Bilbilo, 11 percent in Kuyu and only one percent in Ada'a). The Ada'a landless FGD participants teld us that there is no place suitable for them to resettle, while many landless in Kuyu and Limu-Bilbilo were determined to resettle anywhere if they get the opportunity. The *woreda* and *kebele* officials also confirm the repeated request for resettlement. In Kuyu, FGD participants told us that they do not know why the administration does not respond to their requests for resettlement as they "are being ruined by poverty". In Limu-Bilbilo, the chairman of Limu-Dima*kebele*told us that some 25 households appealed to the kebele to ask the *woreda*

administration on their behalf to arrange a resettlement program for them[42]. The officially arranged resettlement program that resettled thousands of households from North Shewa to East Wollega, Ilu Ababa Bora and Jima has been suspended. According to the Kuyu woreda administrator, the official stand at this time is to support the landless population in their place of residence. But, no one clearly knows what to do with the landless other than the usual rhetoric of teaming up them into SMEs and providing loans.

Disputes over land in Oromia

In their study, Deininger et al (2009) assert that the recent land certification has contributed in reducing disputes over land. However, contrary to their claim, our informants in all our study sites argue that disputes over land have actually worsened more than ever before. In Kuyu, the *woreda* court has made an assessment of the cases presented to the court, and found that 80 percent of the cases are land litigations[43]. In Ada'a and Limu-Bilbilo there is no such assessment, but they claim that the situation in both *woredas* are not less than what has been reported from Kuyu, if not more.[44] Even more striking is what a lawyer in Fiche told us: "In this Zone, court cases which are seemingly not litigation over land, whether criminal or civil, mostly have land based dispute as their background".[45] Based on this information, we talked to a judge at the Oromia Supreme Court and he had a similar observation[46]. The Oromia Supreme Court does not have an organized data on the matter. Besides, it has been difficult to sort out land litigation cases specifically, as land disputes come in different forms. Experts of Woreda Land Administration Offices in all the three *woredas* also complain that most of their official duty has been taken up by court cases. The court often orders the Land Administration Office to go to the disputed plots, examine and sort out the problems in coordination with the *kebele* officials and present it to the court. Asked about the land certification and land dispute, our informant at the Oromia Supreme Court responded, "the land certification scheme is part of the problem, not the solution".

Dispute over land as a family matter

The major change in land disputes that has recently taken place is the change from claims over plots boundaries to quarrels over inheritance, enclosure, and disagreements over renting and sharecropping contracts. After land registration and certification, disputes over the basic landholding right of a given plot have

[42] From FGD with Limu-DimaKebele officials in October 2015.
[43] Discussion with Kuyuworeda administrator in WarraJarsso September 2015.
[44] From discussion with the Land Administration officials in Ada'a and LemuBilbiloworedas October 2015.
[45] Discussion with a Lawyer in Fiche in February 2016.
[46] Discussion with a Judge at Oromia Supreme Court , Addis Ababa, November 2015.

significantly been reduced. However, inheritance and land donations complicate the situation, making the conflict a matter for the family and relatives. Currently, land disputes are mainly among siblings, between spouses, and between children and parents. The underlying causes might be the ever growing shortage of land as a result of population pressure, land use changes and increase in the value of land. But, the recent policy provisions, including land registration, have also contributed to intra-family disputes by obscuring the existing informal land transfers with the formal processes.[47]

Such disputes are damaging the social fabric of the community. Stories of fighting between siblings, sons beating their mothers and fathers, sons killing their fathers, and killings between in-laws are becoming common[48]. In the last three years, two homicide cases related to land disputes were reported from Woyu Gose kebele. One of them took place last year and the story was fresh during our fieldwork. It goes as follows:

> A father divided up their one hectare land into two following divorce. His only son, a young man in his late twenties, was married but forced to live with his parents because his parents did not give him a plot for house construction. Following a divorce, his father married another wife who lives in GarbaGuracha town and moved to the town. The son requested his father to give him his share of the land on a sharecropping arrangement and provide him a small space for house construction. The father refused his son's request and gave his land to another young man who lives in the village on a sharecropping arrangement. On the threshing day, when the father arrived at the farm to take his share, the son, who was waiting for that day, killed him with a shovel49.
>
> This shows how much the shortage of land and landlessness has damaged the relationship between landless children and parents. Homicide is a very desperate response by the landless to their livelihood distress. It is simply a result of hopelessness, which is widely observable among landless youth in Oromia. The landless youth complain that parents are not willing to give land to their own children even for sharecropping or rent. The growing shortage of land, even for sharecropping, is transforming the relationship between landholders and sharecroppers. For landholding parents, sharecropping and renting out to none-family individuals brings extra income and respect. While relatives, especially sons, act as de facto holders of the land. None-family sharecroppers pay jalakenna besides the normal share and rent prices. They are eager to be in good terms with the landholder, and are willing to pay the rent in advance if need be. Parents are reluctant to give land to their sons for sharecropping because of a lack of trust.

[47] Discussion with a judge in Oromia Supreme Court.

[48] We asked our informant in Kuyu to list down homicide cases he heard in the woreda, which are caused by dispute over land. He listed down six cases and four of them sons killed their fathers and two of them are between siblings and he suddenly stopped saying "no this is not our custom. Something bad is befalling on our society" it saying He started to list down of homicides in relation to land in most cases within close relatives is getting longer and longer.

[49] The story was narrated to me by the former neighbor of the deceased in February 2016.

Another major dispute is that between siblings. These disputes are often caused by disagreements over inheritances and gifts. There are two primary reasons for conflicts in this regard. One is the claim for land of the deceased parents made by married sisters; such claim, which is in line with the legal provision, often disappointsthe brothers. Brothers often accuse their married sisters of aggressively pursuing their parents land though they have sufficient land of their own through their marriage. This leads to disputes between the in-laws. The second is when the deceased parents give part of or all of the land to one or some of the siblings whom they favor without the consent of the others. Because the division of the land among many siblings fragments it into pieces too small to be useful, some of the 'smart' siblings try to win the favor of the parent/s and acquire more than the other siblings. To do this, he/she must control the parent/s' access to the other siblings. This is creating a new phenomenon that local informants call "stealing of aged parents". The following story illustrates this new development very well.

> HirphaGamada was a resident of W/GoseKebele. He had two hectares of land and seven children (two sons and five daughters), all of them married. He used to live under the custodian of his elder son who was also cultivating most of his land. This son denied his sisters an easy access to their father not to ask him for a donation of land, according to the sisters' complain. One day, on Saturday when his son went to market, one of the daughters, the youngest of all, came and 'stole' herfather. She took him to her home, which is about 20 kms away from her brothers' home. She gave him a very good care and on her part she also denied her brother access to his father. Soon she persuaded her father to give her one of the two hectares in a form of donation. She secured what she demanded, got it signed and submitted the document to the Woreda Justice Office[50]. [They call this *dhamojireenya* (declaration made while the person is alive)]. She did not disclose this until his death in fear of her brothers and sisters measures. When the father died and the sons and daughters wanted to divide up the land in the form of inheritance, the daughter claimed half, which she got in the form of donation. The Woreda Court approved her claim based on the document Justice Office and the Woreda Land Administration and Environmental Protection gave her certificate of holding. The remaining six siblings divided up the remaining one hectare. Her older brother who used to cultivate the land took the court at different levels: first he lost at woreda court. Then appealed to North Shewa Zone High Court where he lost again and finally appealed to Oromia Supreme Court. Unfortunately, he lost the case again[51].

This fascinating story is not unique to Kuyu. We heard similar complaints by siblings against each other in Limu-Bilbilo. Thisshows the level of desperation and competition over land within a family. The ever growing shortage of land on the one hand and the rising demand for land transactions such as renting or sharecropping has enormously contributed to the increase in the value of land. On the

[50] While documents confirming gift are submitted to the Woreda Land administration and Environmental Protection Office, the document of the declaration of gift that would be effective after the death of the giver - dhamojirenya – is submitted to the Woreda Justice Office.

[51] We heard quite similar story in Arssi where a daughter who live in Bokoji town 'stole' her mother from her brother's home and denied him access to his mother.

other hand, obtaining land is possible only through inheritance and gift, both of which are family matters. That is how dispute over land is tearing apart family relationships.

Emerging forms of land related violence

Emerging forms of violence following disputes over land include damaging crops by spraying dangerous chemicals on them, and by burning them. Such violent acts often occur when two individuals quarrel over land renting or sharecropping. Conflict also arises between two renters when landholders sometimes rent out the same land to two persons in the same season. The same also is true in sharecropping. Renters or sharecroppers who aspire to cultivate the land for several seasons invest on increasing the fertility of the land, and one way of doing this is planting beans, even if it is not economical. They know that the land they used forbeans this year will be very good for wheat the following year. Someone bidding for such land invites conflict. Obviously, going through the formal procedure and renting in for up to three years would have helped. Deliberately bidding for the land developed by someone else was customarily a taboo in the past. This explains how much competition for land is damaging the local social fabric that in the past helped smooth co-existence. Recently, in Limu-dima*kebele*, two individuals set fire to the crops of two households. In Ada'a, an aggrieved individual sprayed poisonous chemicals on the crops of another.

According to our informants, spraying poisonous chemicals on crops, arson and killing one's father due to dispute over a piece of land are strangeoffenses. "Even if individuals have a fight, it is not customary among the Oromo to set fire to crops"[52]. Such degeneration of social norms, informants pointed out, is a result of extreme frustration currently apparent among the landless.One informant who is trying to come to terms with what is going on expressed the state of hopelessness among the youth in this way:

Barataniihojiimootummaahinqabnne.
Qotuuflafahinqabnne.
Fudhuufilleelafamanaahinqabnne.
Egaa, egereemaalqabani? Ijoolleesammutixuqame, ganaa nu fixi…

[They learnt but there is no government job,
To farm there is no land,
To marry there is no space even for home construction,
So, what future do they have?
The children are losing their mind. They will finish us off …]

Land certification

The recent program of land registration and certification has been acclaimed for its cost effectiveness, the acceptance it has gotten from the farmers and its impact in improving tenure security, gender equality, investment and supply of land to the rental market(Deininger et al. 2009). However, it has encouraged encroachment on

[52] Interview with an elder in Limu-Dimakebele in September 2015.

communal lands by the relatively powerful members of society. While Deininger's study was conducted in Amahara Regional State, the result of land certification in Oromia is partly similar. For instance, its cost effectiveness, its local acceptance, andgender sensitiveness are well praised in Oromia as well.

In all our sites, initially there were suspicions about the registration program on the part of farmers. Many of them did not want to reveal to the Kebele Land Measurement Committee (LMC), as they are locally called, accurate information about the size of their holdings, and some even went to the extent of hiding information about some of their plots. There were rumors disseminated that land registration would be a first step to land redistribution or that it would be used for increasing taxation. Later on, as farmers learned that land certification was nothing but just confirmation of their holdings, those who previously hid plots appealed to the Land Administration Office to register and certify these too. In Ada'a, these farmers were made to pay an additional 200 birr per hectare as a fine, while the normal payment to register one's holding was only eight birr per household regardless of the size of its holding.

The significance of the landcertification program for tenure security is insignificant. Farmers are very clear that the land certificate they hold is only an evidence of holding rather than ownership. Land still remains public property. However the program has contributed in creating a sense of security over the land one holds. It is security from a competing neighbour, corrupt *kebele* official and contesting family members(mostly sons), but not from the powerful state and its close ally, the private investor. Interestingly, out of our three study sites, Ada'a is where land certification has been most enthusiastically received. That is not because it entails any tenure security, but because farmers are the most insecure landholders. They have been expecting to be expropriated any time either for public or private investment, or because of the program of expanding urbanization. As one of the aggressively expanding towns, Bishoftu has recently subsumed four rural *kebeles*. One of these is next to our study site, Ude. Thus, the lack of tenure security makes land certification very important. However, the land certificate is not a guarantee but rather a mere evidence of holding useful for claiming compensation in the event of expropriation. DuringtheFGD in Sirba village, Ada'a, a participant described the role of the farmers, even after certification, as ""*Nutiamma iyyuutiksee lafa mootummaati*". ("We are still custodians/keepers of the state's land").

As Deininger et al. (2009) also note, land certification helps those who rent in land in getting reliable information about the owners of the land. It also helps in increasing the confidence of those who rent out or sharecrop their land. In this regard, seasonal migrants and absentee landholders are the main beneficiaries as they can easily rent out their land and go wherever they want. There are many urban dwellers and individuals who live afar, even in another regional state and rent out or sharecrop their holding. The land certificate is considered as their guarantee.

The impact of land certification on the landless population is quite minimal. The only benefit they got is the increase in prices in land transactions, which we discussed above. Most of the landless farmers often say that certification is not meant for them and it has not contributed anything to their livelihood. They argue that they

have been renting land and sharecropping before the certification program just as they have been doing since then. On the contrary and strikingly, some complain that land certification has aggravated their problem primarily by making the informal land gift parents make to their children more complicated. We encountered several cases where parents reclaimed the land they donated to their children as registration and certification started. Parents might feel satisfied in giving a piece of land to their landless children, but they are not comfortable when he/she getsa certificate for that land. The following story from Kuyu is insightful:

> Dechassa Mulu lives in W/Gosekebele, Kuyu. He has three hectares of land and gave 0.25 hectares to each of his four married sons. They all built their house on that land. They also sharecropped their father's land. As land certification started he demanded three of them to leave his land, allowing only the youngest son to continue using the land with him. He asked them to demolish their huts and leave before the Land Measurement Committee arrives. The second youngest son who was shocked with what his father did left for Hararghe for good with his two kids and a wife. The second oldest son who shas six children appealed to the kebele administration for intervention. His oldest brother who has eight children warned that he would kill his father, but his aunt intervened and gave him a space for home construction. The kebele administration and the village elders convened six times to resolve the problem, the old father still refused.

Dechassa, who is very old, perhaps misunderstood the certification program, and suspected it would enable his sons to claim his land. We met one of the sons named Ararssa, who told us that land certification has added nothing to the life of the landless population, but rather has complicated their situation. The program, which was meant to improve security of holding and productivity, not only failed to consider the landless, but also aggravated their problem[53].

Land and gender

Gender is another important issue pertinent to our subject. A study conducted by ECA states that "African customs exclude women from ownership. Property is held in a man's name and passed patrilineally within the group" (ECA 2004:71). The economic status of women, the patrilineal nature of most societies, the division of labor, marital obligations, and change of residence after marriage, all have contributed to women's limited access to land (Mehra 1995;Gray and Kevane 1999, Verma 2001; ECA 2004). Thus, in gender relations, women's access to land is secondary to men. In most societies women have no customary right to inherit land from their family; and the control of land during marriage falls chiefly under the control of the husband (Hussein 2014). They access land only through their husband, son, or male relative (Verma 2001, Agarwal 2003; ECA 2004, Meinzen-Dick 2009). In the context of rural

[53]My MA student who used to work in the Office of Land Administration in Gurage Zone told me that a father killed his son in the Zone as a result of a disagreement that started over registration of a land the father donated to his land sometimes ago , but did not want to be registered under the name of the son. This shows the matter was prevalent in other parts of the country as well.

livelihood, tenure insecurity for women means that they are less privileged to control and manage land and its products. As a result, the majority of rural women are the primary victims of poverty. We tried to understand the impact of the government's gender related policies and actions on the dynamics taking place on the ground. We have explored the provisions in the Ethiopianconstitution, the impact of the land registration and certification program and the changes in the laws and policies of women's property rights (the 2005 FDRE proclamation and the 2007 Oromia Proclamation)[54].

In-depth interviews and FGD participants reveal that the rural population has familiarized itself with the basic rights of women related to land. According to both male and female informants, recent measures of treating men and women on equal legal basis by the land registration and certification program has made gender related policies more practical. In order to understand public opinion about the policies and whether they havecontributed to the improvement of the status of women, we conducted an opinion survey. According to the result of the survey, 93.6 percent of the respondents gave a positive opinion that the present policies have properly addressed women's right to land. More specifically, we tried to examine important variables related to household's decision-making over rights to land. We asked respondents: who makes decisions in the household with regard to making a land gift, renting in and rent out land, etc. The findings are summarized in the table below.

Table 12. Household's decision making in selected areas.

No.	Land rights	Total respondents	Decision maker					
			Joint		Husband		Wife	
			Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	Sharecropping	179	119	6.5	18	10.1	42	23.5
2.	Gift	177	119	7.2	16	9	42	23.7
3.	Rent-in	236	165	9.9	22	9.3	49	20.8
4.	Rent-out	174	113	4.9	17	9.8	44	25.3

As indicated in the table, in all land related cases, decisions are made jointly by husband and wife in all the three study sites. In the survey, the frequency and

[54]For instance, the 1995 FDRE Constitution in its article 35 gives importance to improve socio-economic situation of women. Specifically, the article declares that "women have the right to acquire, administer, control, use and transfer property. In particular, they have equal rights with men with respect to use, transfer, administration and control of land. They shall also enjoy equal treatment in the inheritance of property" (FDRE Constitution 1995 article 35).

percentage of the husband as sole decision maker is even less than the wife as sole decision maker. This might be due to the fact that women are the sole decision makers in women-headed households. The survey results have also been supported by in-depth interviews and FGDs. It was everyone's answer that "no husband could make decisions over land without the participation of the wife". In all the sites, informants have practical experiences that they cite, which might have helped the realization of the policies. The experiences revolve around unsuccessful contractual agreements exclusively signed by husbands and challenged by wives. Thus, renters and sharecroppers do not dare to engage in such deals without involving the wives. As there are many households that make joint decisions after genuine consultations, there are also some households where the wives' participation might not go beyond giving their signatures.

The other area where women's right in land has been realized is divorce. During divorce the wife gets equal share of all household assets including land. In this regard, land certification has given significant benefits to women. Previously, men could hide information about some of their holdings, but now the land certificate clearly shows the size of the land of the household with the husband's picture and names of the wife and the children. In fact, the men accuse the women of developing "marriage entrepreneurship", which means the women divorce several times to get shares of land from several men.

In Kuyu, we were informed that the change in the status of wives in relation to their rights to land has contributed to the fading away of a marriage institution called *qaxara*. *Qaxara* (literally means hiring) was a type of marriage where men sign a contractual agreement with a woman as a housemaid. However, in reality she serves as a wife. Mostly, aged men make such marriage to deny the woman any right to assets upon separation. When the status of the properly married women began to change in regard to their rights to assets, especially land, other women started rejecting the *qaxara* marriage. Women also have equal right to their deceased parents' asset through inheritance, which has also changed the gender dynamic on the ground. Now, whether married or not, close by or far away, daughters claim a share of their deceased parents' land.

Land and rural poverty

Is landlessness directly correlated with poverty?

According to InderjitNderjit (1979), the author of *Small Farmers and the Landless in South Asia,* landless farmers comprise a majority of the poor. His argument is simple: as land is the source of wellbeing in agrarian society, most people without sufficient access to land are poor and are often unable to sustain their families. Land, in fact, as we tried to show above, both its quality and quantity, is the key limiting factor in agriculture and food production, and hence it is a major indicator of poverty. In other

words, there is a strong relationship between access to land and rural poverty[55]. However, it is simplistic to draw a one to one correlation between landlessness and poverty. This section attempts to draw attention to the relationship between landlessness and rural poverty.

During the first FGD, participants often said that as long as the household head is in good health, landlessness does not cause poverty. They argued that he or she can work and feed his or her family. Especially, in Ada'a, at the beginning, it was not easy to see the correlation between the two. In each site, there are examples one can cite to disprove a one-to-one relationship between landlessness and poverty. Indeed, in all the three study sites, there are better-off landless farmers. In our survey, out of 114 landless households, 27 (23.8 percent) said that, by local standards, they lead a fairly good life. Of this number, 13 are from Ada'a, 10 from Limi-Bilbil and only 4 from Kuyu; the disparity may be attributed to the availability of off-farm job opportunities in the localities. Their food insecurity is not especially worse as compared to landholders in their neighborhood; they have oxen and cow/s and manage to send their children to school. Many of them have houses covered by corrugated iron roofs.

In Ada'a and Limu-Bilbilo where the land is very productive, young and vigorous landless households rent in land and/or sharecrop and produce what is sufficient for their family. A few of them produced *teff*, wheat, barley, potato and garlic for the market on the land they have rented. Young landless households are often very good in diversifying their income where it is possible. For instance, in Ada'a, while the husbands involve in daily labor in the nearby towns and work in a quarry, the wives often work in private investment companies, mostly in floriculture. They then use their combined income to purchase oxen and rent in land. In Limmu-Bilbilo, where land is also very fertile and productive, though there are fewer opportunities for multiple engagements than Ada'a, there are possibilities for the young landless farmers to be successful farmers. They usually try to be innovative and diversify their production on their rented land or engage in more than one sharecropping arrangement. Our young informant in Limu-Bilbilo told us that, in the last season, he planted potato on 1.25hectares of land (0.75 is rented and 0.5 is sharecropped), 0.5 hectare wheat and 1 hectare barley (0.5 of it is a new seed called traveler). Another informant told us how he cultivated his irrigated rented land three times in a year. In April he planted potato which was harvested in early July and immediately followed it up by barley to be harvested in late November, and in December he planted potato again. They overuse chemical fertilizers to gain as much as the land could give in the shortest possible time. This is an emerging mode of exploiting rented land by the dynamic and energetic young farmers where the land is productive and suitable. The landholders complain that this effectively kills the land.

The situation in Kuyu is different because the land is degraded and productivity has declined, There is little opportunity available as the type of land one

[55] Thus, meaningful discussions concerning rural poverty reduction/alleviation strategies should take into consideration the farming households' access to land and the prevailing situation of landlessness.

can rent or sharecrop does not allow improvements in living conditions. In fact, most of the landless households have no financial capacity to rent in land and cover the costs of agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and selected seeds.Thus they are forced to look for sharecropping, which is to the disadvantage of the landless. Therefore, here landlessness is a true indicator of poverty though it is not synonymous with it.

The extent to which landlessness and poverty are interrelated depends on a number of factors. The most important are the accessibility of land to rent or sharecrop; the productivity of the land; the availability of sufficient labor in the household and the existence of off-farm employment opportunities. Where land is accessible for renting or sharecropping and where the household has sufficient energetic labor, landlessness might not directly result in poverty. The availability of off-farm job opportunities supports the landless households in two ways: one, the income from the off-farm activities directly supports the household's subsistence needs, and two, the income generated from the off-farm activities could be used to buy oxen, to rent in land and to purchase agricultural inputs. The productivity of the land is crucial as it determines the persistence of a household as farmers through renting and sharecropping. One season's failure of production can disrupt the landless households' survival strategy. Factors such as climatic change affect the landless more than the landed. Thus, the correlation between landlessness and poverty varies between areas and households based on all these variables.

Landlessness in local poverty reduction interventions

In Ada'a, the major local intervention is quarrying,which we discussed above. When the quarry was established in 2005 with 84 individuals, all of the participants were landless farmers who appealed to the kebele administration on account of their landlessness. Later on, many near landless households and unemployed youth, including university graduates, formed similar quarry associations. In Udekebele, there is a list of the landholding farmers divided into three categories according to their wealth: better off /model farmers (*addaduree*) middle (*giddugaleessa*) and poor (*harkaqaleessa*). The last category includes only 12 names and when we checked their status in terms of landholding in the *kebele* documents, all of them have less than 0.5 hectares of land.

In Kuyu, WayuGose, the major poverty intervention strategy is the PSNP. The primary target group is the "poorest of the poor" – "*iyyeessa iyyeessan gadii*". These are people who do not have land, who do not have any domestic animals, whose life depends on daily labor. Currently, there are 192 beneficiaries and the *kebele* administration claims that all of them are landless, except a few who are sick and are direct beneficiaries who do not engage in public works[56]. However, land is not among

[56] Some landless respondents complain that few landholders managed to be recruited while they are not.

the criteria for graduation[57]. Our argument is that here regardless of a few landless households' success stories, landlessness and poverty are very much correlated.

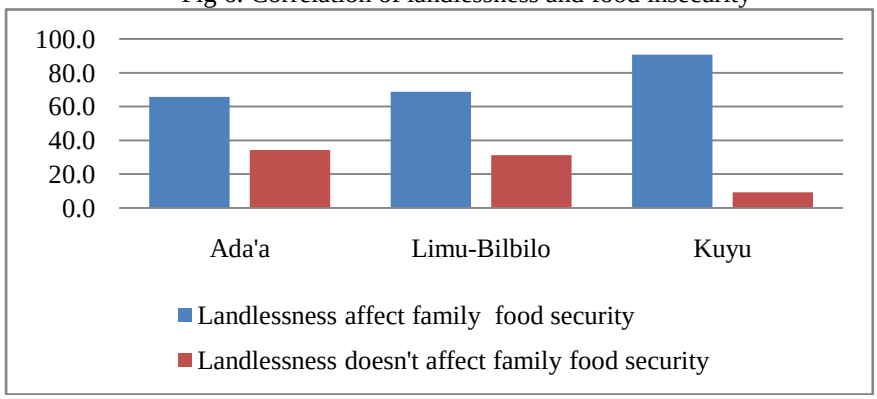
Land and food insecurity

Here we examine the impact of landlessness on food insecurity. Our data clearly shows that the landless are more food insecure than the landed. Out of our298 respondents, 122 (40.9 percent) reported that there were times when they did not have food to feed their households, while 176 (59.1 percent) responded that they never faced food shortages in their households. Many households face food shortages between June and November. The overwhelming majority (83.6 percent) of our respondents reported that they face food shortages between June and August, and 40.2 percent faced shortage between September and November. These are months that extend from planting time to the beginning of harvesting. During planting time, households encounter several expenses including costs of seeds and chemical fertilizers that affect their savings. Purchase of improved seeds joined the menu of household's expenses recently. Besides its costs, farmers' complain that the use of improved seeds has created a state of uncertainty about which variety to plant, as opposed to the past when households knew what seeds to savefor the following season. During these months, demands for daily labor also decreases as construction activities stop due to the heavy rains. Demand for daily labor employment in local farms are also less during cultivation than during harvesting. It is even worse in September and October than the preceding months. These are months that comeimmediately before the beginning of harvesting season when food stores are exhausted, when households send children to school, and when the New Year and *Meskel* celebrations approach.

We also explored the perception of the people concerning the correlation between landlessness and food insecurity. The responses of the survey participants are summarized below.

[57] Graduation from PSNP is also a very interesting issue to discuss, which is beyond the objectives of this research. In 2006 EC, an order came from the regional government to graduate 60% of the beneficiaries. As a result, 116 of them graduated in the same year. Unfortunately, perhaps very few of them fulfill the graduation criteria.

Fig 6. Correlation of landlessness and food insecurity



We further pursued our investigation of the correlation by looking at the comparison between the landed and the landless in the three *woredas*. Our question to the respondents was: "Have you ever faced a situation where you do not have enough food to feed your household?" In Ada'a and Limu-Bilbilo, only 28.6 and 21 percent respectively responded positively. On the other hand, in Kuyu, 73 percent replied in the positive, which means food shortage affects nearly two-thirds of the population. This significant difference between Kuyu on the one hand and Ada'a and Limu-Bilbilo on the other shows the contribution of other factors such as land degradation, which is consistent with our previous discussion. However, the data also clearly shows that landless households are more affected by food shortages as compared to the landed within each woreda. In Ada'a ,while only 18.3 percent of the landed faced food shortages,44.7 percent of the landless faced food shortages. In Limu-Bilbilo, where the state of food security is even better than Ada'a, the comparable figures are 17.9 and 27.3 percent, respectively. The number is much higher in Kuyu where 66.7 percent of the landed and 81.4 percent of the landless encountered food shortages.

In terms of factors of food insecurity, the majority of the respondents (69.7 percent) attributed food shortages to landlessness and near landlessness. Other factors such as crop damage (37.7 percent) poor rains (36.9 percent), skyrocketing food prices (34 percent) and the lack of agricultural inputs (22 percent) are also quite important. Another interesting feature is the reason given for food shortages by the landed and the landless and the difference across the woredas. Among landless respondents of Kuyu, 96 percent said that landlessness is the most important reason followed by increases in the price of crops in the market (56percent). For the landed food short households of Kuyu, the crucial factors are: poor rains (83.3 percent), crop damage (79.2 percent) and the smallness of the size of their land (62.5 percent). These show that in Kuyu,landlessness and land degradation are the two most important causesof food shortages. The increase in the price of food has worsened the problem.

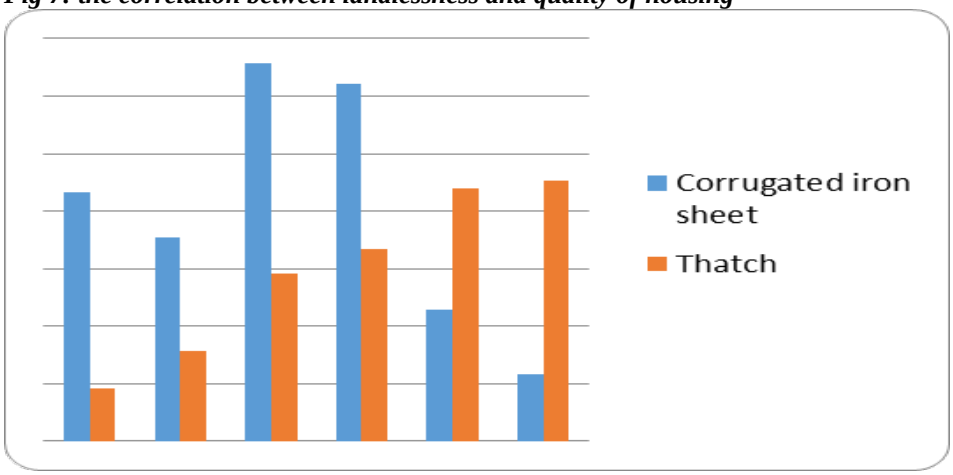
In Ada'a,73.3 percent of landless respondents attributed food shortages to landlessness and the increase in the price of food crops in the market. Among the landed in Ada'a,the smallness of their holdings and increase in food prices are

mentioned. In Limu-Bilbilo, landlessness and small land size are the major factors for food shortages among the landless and the landed respectively. In all the three districts, landlessness and the size of land are the major reasons for food shortages both among the landless and the landed. The difference between the districts is the crucial role the quality of the land plays besides the quantity of the land.

Land and the quality of housing

To understand the relationship between landlessness and poverty, we compared the quality of housing, mainly the roofing materials of the houses of the landed and the landless. According to our informants, in the past, houses roofed by corrugated iron sheets were a symbol of status and wealth. Currently, even though it is no more a status symbol, it still shows that the household is somewhat in a better economic situation. On the other hand, the recent unprecedented expansion of cultivation and land degradation has caused a shortage of grass for thatching. This makes corrugated iron sheets even more important than before, which means, only those households who cannot afford it are forced to live in thatch-roofed houses. As a result, we decided to compare the roofing material of the landless and the landed. According to our survey, in Ada'a 86.7 and 71.1 percent of the landed and landless respectively have houses roofed by corrugated iron sheets. In Kuyu, corrugated iron sheet houses are less visible among both the landed and the landless, and yet proportionally the number of the landless households having houses made of corrugated iron sheet is half of that of landed.

Fig 7: the correlation between landlessness and quality of housing

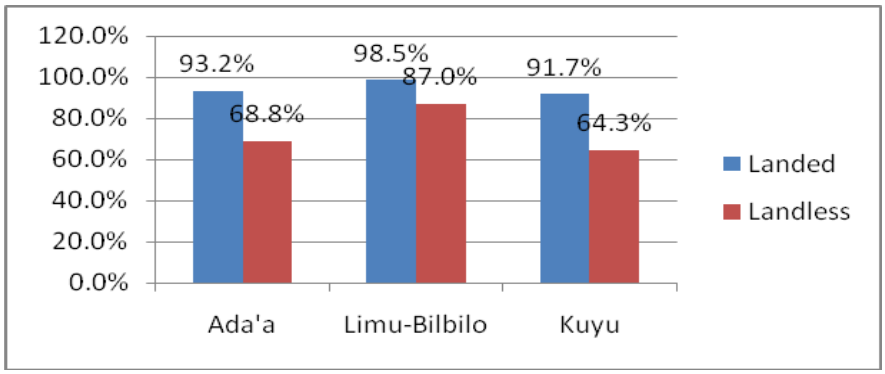


Land and school attendance

We have also tried to understand the link between landlessness and poverty through school attendance. There is a difference between the landless households and the landed in terms of sending school-age children to school. Of course, those who fail to send their children to school are destitute households. Similar to other aspects of

landlessness, this one also has disparity across the woredas. Out of 298 respondent households, 26 households (8.7 percent) responded that they have school-age children but are unable to send them to school. Out of this, 18 (69 percent) are landless households while the remaining 8 (31 percent) are landed. More than half of them are from Kuyu. The main reasons are inability to cover expenses related to schooling (clothing, feeding and exercise books), and the fact that the destitute families engage their children in work and get support through them. Many destitute families in Kuyu give away their children to better-off local farmers where they serve mostly as herders, or send them to the nearby townsor even Addis Ababa to work in people's houses. During one of the FGDs with landless household heads, one of the participants painfully said, *ijoollen durbaa keenya kushina Addisaba ti maaliif guutte beekttuu? Lafa waandhabnneef*, ("Do you know why our young girls crowd the kitchens in Addis Ababa? Because we do not have land"[58]). Many informants, including local officials, told us that many young girls and young boys leave Kuyu and the neighboring woredas to work as housemaids and security guards in Addis Ababa[59].

Fig 8. The correlation between landlessness and the household's ability to send children to school



Conclusion

Land is a critically important resource in countries such as Ethiopia where livelihoods are very much reliant on smallholder agriculture. In the rural context, indeed, it is the most important, if not the only, means of livelihood for poor farmers. This study tried to examine land, landlessness and poverty within the context of emergent multiple interests in land that has aggravated the pressure on farmland. These include large-scale agro-investments, small-scale intensive agri-businesses such as floricultures, investments in other sectors that depend on agriculture for their raw material (for instance the flourishing breweries), industrial constructions and aggressively

[58] FGD with landless heads of households in WayuGose October 2015.
[59] FGD with experts of relevant offices in GarbaGuracha town October 2015.

expanding cities and towns. On the other hand, demographic growth coupled with a very sluggish rural transformation and the alarming pace of climate change is causing insufficiency of holdings and landlessness.In Oromia land redistribution has not taken place since the fall of the Derg, which in other words, means farming households established since then have not received land officially. Therefore, the main means of land transfer are inheritance and gift. Inheritance has become an important means of land transfer due to two factors. Firstly, the increasing shortage of land has diminished the practice of land donations. Secondly, land is currently concentrated in the hands of older people who obtained the land in 1975. On the other hand, there are two unintended results of inheritance: land fragmentation and conflict within the family.

Landlessness and near landlessness have become the most serious problem in the rural areas. According to our survey, 38.3 percent of rural households in the three *kebeles* we studied are landless. Among those who are registered landholders in the three *kebeles*, 7.1 percent have less than 0.5 hectare and 19.76 percent have less than one hectare. Here what is fundamentally important is not only their number, but also the fact that the landless population constitutes the energetic youth. 87.7 percent of the landless households that participated in our survey in the three *kebeles* were formed since the fall the Derg and the coming to power of the present regime. One is tempted to ask, can poverty reduction strategies, or any other rural development interventions for that matter, succeed without meaningfully engaging more than one third of the rural population? The ramifications of this situation are actually far-reaching and worrying.

Unfortunately, most of the rural development intervention shave not recognized the challenge of landlessness much less meaningfully contributed to the improvement of the livelihood of landless households. The government administrative structures – from *Kebele* to the regional bureaus – do not have any systematically organized data about the landless population. Thus, landless farmers are easily by-passed by programs designed to benefit 'farmers'. Indeed, some of the interventions, which are supposed to increase farmers' benefits, negatively affect the landless section of the population.

Besides, demographic change, land degradation and public and private investments have triggered greater land shortage and landlessness in Oromia. Due to severe shortage of land, the people are cultivating any available land including customarily uncultivable fields. Customarily, for instance, hillsides and marshlands were reserved for forest and grazing land respectively. The result of this has been clearly seen in Kuyu where large areas have already been taken out of production due to severe degradation and landslides.

Investment per se is not a problem. Indeed, given the increasing land shortage and landlessness, investment is one of the solutions that would address the critical problem of landlessness and unemployment. However, the Regional state needs a competitive and transparent system in place that will help facilitate investment. The country needs investments that support the livelihoods of the rural poor, not ones that threaten their life. Investment should not be synonymous with dispossession and displacement. Identification of land for investment purposes should be very systematic and should involve the participation of local actors, including farmers. Given its

broader politico-economic and social importance, the impact of investment on the rural landless, pressure on farmland and its impact on poverty have to be studied in detail.

Landlessness and poverty are clearly correlated. The overwhelming majority of the landless households are food insecure. Most of them could not accumulate assets. They are always concerned with how to secure renting or sharecropping land, and, in the worst case scenario ,their daily needs. There is a clear difference between landholders and the landless in terms of their quality of houses and the ability to send their children to school.

Landless and the land poor households currently depend on several survival strategies. The four most important survival strategies are renting-in land, sharecropping, daily labor, and other forms of employment such as petty trade, and seasonal migration. Renting and sharecropping are very important coping strategies because they keep the landless households in farm activity. The income from daily labor is primarily used for renting land and the purchase of agricultural inputs, besides subsistence. The better-off farmers rent-in more land to produce a surplus for the market. Civil servants rent-in land to supplement their livelihood. Everybody's eyes are on land, and these have increased the value of land which is evidenced in the higher price of renting and the changes in the mode of sharecropping in the rural areas. Interestingly, even the government's intervention program to support the unemployed youth and the landless are also dependent on getting access to land.

The present problem of landless can only be solved by looking beyond land. The available land cannot accommodate all those interested in it. Policy makers need to think beyond land. The overwhelming majority of landless households have come to terms with the reality that there will not be sufficient land to meet everyone's needs. All stakeholders need to work on a safe transition of the skills, knowledge and practices of the farmers to other sectors based on local contexts.

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Land and Livelihood Security:

A Study of Selected Woredas in the Southern Region

Teketel Abebe and Melessaw Shanko[60]

Introduction: the problem

The rationale for this study, which is part of the broader exploration of land and rural livelihoods initiated by the Forum for Social Studies (FSS), is that policy oriented research and public dialogue on the subject is vital and urgent in the context of the country as a whole, but more so in the case of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR).This is due to a number of important and distinctive features, constraints and challenges associated with land and rural livelihoods in the Region.In order to clarify the nature of the research problem addressed in the study, we will briefly outline the key issues pertinent to our case, organized around three themes: population pressure and land scarcity, the *enset*-based agricultural system, and vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty.

Population pressure and land scarcity

The highland zones of SNNPR are the most densely populated areas in the country and are characterized by acute scarcity of land. The decline in the size of landholdings has reached such a critical stage that one of the key questions related to land and rural livelihoods is whether and to what extent secure livelihood would be attainable for the majority of households operating extremely small holdings, commonly characterized as "micro" holdings and "starvation plots"[61].

A related but separate challenge with even more serious implications is the issue of landlessness: in the densely populated and land scarce highland areas of SNNPR the land frontier has closed decades ago and it is now almost impossible to

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[60] Both authors are private consultants

[61] The term "micro holding" is coined in contrast to "small holding" to underscore the tiny plots of land on which millions of households survive especially in the enset-based livelihood areas in SNNPR (see, Dessalegn, 2004:14; 2008:139). Since there is no universally accepted minimum threshold on how small a smallholding should be, it is appropriate to raise the issue using such contrast. Indeed, one of the key issues associated with land and livelihoods is precisely the question of how small a smallholding should be in order to provide at least the basic needs of an average farming household. This is an important but often neglected question although size of holding is not the only determinant and other factors have to be taken into account including: the quality of land or soil fertility, type of crops grown and intensity of farming (irrigation, double or multiple cropping, type of technology and inputs applied), income opportunity from non-farm sources, etc.

establish long term access to viable plots. What makes the problem of landlessness more serious is the fact that one of its main features is what we may call a "generational divide": the main group suffering from landlessness is the rural youth or the younger generation. Although many factors influence youth motivation and interest in agriculture, the problem of access to land is the main cause which is pushingthe majority of young people in rural areas away from smallholder farming as a preferred livelihood option. It goes without saying that youth landlessness coupled with limited access to alternative non-agricultural employment opportunities creates conditions full of serious social, economic and political implications and consequences.

Land-related constraints to rural livelihood in SNNPR are not, of course, limited to size of holdings and landlessness but also include various other dimensions such as: land degradation and soil fertility decline, loss of common property resources and environmental deterioration, and weak land rights and tenure insecurity. This reminds us that there is no one single land issue or problem. It is also important to note that the various land-related constraints are not separate or isolated problems, but are interrelated and mutually reinforcing: for example population pressure and land scarcity aggravate land degradation, while weak land rights and tenure insecurity discourage sustainable land management which in turn contributes to land degradation; land and environmental degradation exacerbate vulnerability to shocks such as drought etc. which together create a vicious cycle of vulnerability and livelihood insecurity.

Such a broad and multidimensional perspective on population dynamics, land related constraints and rural livelihood has important implications for research and policy: for example much of the debate on land policy tends to focus on land tenure conceived narrowly in terms of public or state versus private freehold ownership of land. Although we do not consider the debate on ownership regime as less important than other dimensions, it was undoubtedly narrow in its scope and neglects equally serious aspects and problems. In a nutshell, a multidimensional perspective on land and rural livelihoods demands an equally broad and integrated approach in addressing the constraints.

The central research problem which we have attempted to investigate and document in this study is that land-related constraints in the broad and multidimensional sense noted above constitute the fundamental structural problems and challenges with direct and profound implications for livelihood security in SNNPR at present. However, these land-related constraints and challenges are not subjected to critical and systematic research and public policy dialogue which is a necessary pre-condition for evidence-based and participatory formulation and implementation of polices and strategies to address the problems in an effective and sustainable manner. There are many crucial questions related to population dynamics, access to land and rural livelihood which require urgent answers; the following are some of the main ones:

- How small is smallholding? What is the minimum size of holding required to meet the basic needs of an average rural agricultural household?

- What is the relationship between access to land and livelihood outcomes (production, income, food security, poverty, etc.)?
- To what extent are access to land and access to other key non-land productive resources (e.g. oxen/livestock) interrelated?
- In what ways and to what extent are the different aspects of land-related constraints interconnected (e.g. weak land rights and tenure insecurity on the one hand and sustainable land management on the other) and what are their combined impact on livelihood outcomes?
- Are land-related constraints the main structural causes of vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty? Is it possible to address chronic food insecurity and poverty in an effective and sustainable way without first addressing land-related constraints as the root-causes?
- What is the role and contribution of land tenure policy in the creation and aggravation of land-related constraints?
- To what extent are issues and problems associated with population dynamics, land and rural livelihoods seriously taken into account and incorporated into development policies in general and agricultural and rural development policies and strategies in particular?

It is impossible to cover all the dimensions and questions related to population, land and rural livelihoods in a comprehensive and detailed manner in any single study. Nor can research and policy analysis on such broad, complex and vital subject be a one-time effort: since the issues and challenges associated with population, land and livelihoods are variable and dynamic, research and policy analysis has to be continuous, integrated and multi-disciplinary in nature. Accordingly, the present study can only make a modest contribution mainly in terms of stimulating public dialogue rather than in terms of providing detailed prescription or blueprint for addressing the constraints to rural livelihoods.

Enset-based agricultural system: resilience and vulnerability

One of the distinctive features of livelihoods in the highland areas of SNNPR is the unique agricultural system based on ***enset***. The enset-based agricultural system is identified as one of the main agricultural systems in the country and it is found mainly, if not exclusively, in SNNPR. We do not attempt any comprehensive and detailed review of enset-based agriculture, which is neither necessary nor possible in the context of this study[62]. However, since the issues and problems associated with population dynamics, land and rural livelihood in SNNPR cannot be fully grasped

[62] For comprehensive reviews and studies of enset-based agricultural system see, Tsedeke et al, eds. (1996), Brandt, et al. (1997), and Admasu (2002).

without understanding the nature and role of enset-based agriculture, we will briefly outline the core issues of the system relevant to our research.

The most important question from the perspective of the present studyisthe following: is there a relationship between the enset-based agricultural system on the one hand and population dynamics, land and rural livelihood on the other? It is believed that there are many characteristic of enset as a crop and the farming system associated with it which are casually linked with population density, land use system and livelihoods in the Region: for example, enset is characterized as drought-resistant, relatively high yielding and versatile crop (i.e., multi-purpose crop as source of food and cash, but also source of fiber, fodder for livestock, etc.). It is recognized that there are many difficulties associated with the measurement and estimation of enset yield or productivity on the basis of which the population carrying capacity of enset-based farming systems can be directly compared with other agricultural systems. However, the strength of enset-based agriculture as a food supply system goes beyond productivity or yield and includes many features which give stability to food supply and reduce food shortages. As aptly summarized in one study:

> The presence of enset in the farming system contributes significantly to the stability of the food supply by several mechanisms. Enset can: 1) be stored for long periods; 2) be harvested at any time during the year; 3) be harvested at any stage over a several year period; and 4) survive stress years that reduce other food sources. It could even be argued that since enset requires from three to over ten years to mature, the frame of mind required to produce enset contributes to a general prepare-for the-future mentality, which has other behavioural consequences (Brandt et al., 1997: 44).

In a nutshell,it is believed that these and other characteristics has enabled the enset-based system to absorb and support a high and growing population pressure viewed in long term historical perspective. However, we have to reiterate that the role of enset cannot be assessed in isolation from the overall environment and agricultural system in which it is embedded. In this broader sense, we can identify the following strengths and advantages of the system which can be viewed as the main sources of resilience and livelihood security, at least in the past:

1. Agro-ecology and environment: e.g., relatively high rainfall, fertile soil, dense vegetation and longer growing season.
2. Bimodal rainfall and double cropping: many parts of the highland zones in SNNPR have two rainy seasons, namely ***meher***(main rainy season) and ***belg*** (short rainy season)[63]: although less important than meher, belg production plays a vital role in household food security in terms of bridging the seasonal

[63] According to CSA, any temporary crop harvested between the months of Meskerm (September) and Yekatit (February) is considered a meher season crop. On the other hand any temporary crop harvested between the months of Megabit (March) and Pagume (August) is considered to be a belg season crop.

hunger period, especially through the production of early-maturing and high-yielding root crops such as sweet potato and taro/godere. There is evidence that the role of belg production and hence double cropping has increased over time due to population pressure and land scarcity. However, the belg rains are less reliable than meher rains and have become increasingly erratic in recent years contributing to periodic shocks and emergencies.

3. Enset, root crops and cereals combination: the multiple-food crops regime provides a potentially more reliable or secure source of food. As noted above, not only enset but also other root crops are characterized by high productivity which to some extent compensates for land scarcity and small holdings and together with cereal and pulses form the basis for a potentially more reliable foods security regime.
4. Cash crops: main cash crops (such as coffee and chat) as well as more localized ones (such as ginger, red pepper, etc.) are the main sources of cash income for farming households in the Region: for example, according to a recent survey, on the average, 67.5 percent and 10.1 percent of revenue from crop sales in SNNPR were derived from coffee and chat respectively(IFPRI, 2013: 46).

The above are the main strengths of the enset-based agricultural system broadly conceived against which we have to compare and assess the limitations of the system and especially the erosion and decline of its resilience and increasing vulnerability in recent times.

Vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty

In the previous sub-section, we have attempted to outline the characteristics of the enset-based agricultural system and its linkage with population dynamics, land scarcity and livelihood in SNNPR. The various characteristics of the enset-based agricultural system were viewed as sources of resilience, and in comparative terms shielded the highland zones of the Region from major drought and famine crises which ravaged the northern parts of the country characterized by the cereal-based agricultural system. For this reason and in spite of high and growing population pressure it is commonly argued that highland enset-based livelihood zones and communities in the SNNPR are not as vulnerable to food insecurity and famine as compared to the northern highland areas of the country.

However, the conditions in the Region have been changing in a radical way in recent times: various powerful forces and pressures have been undermining the resilience of the livelihood system, leading to widespread vulnerability to food

insecurity and poverty[64].The available evidence indicates that not only food insecurity and poverty are widespread, but also vulnerability has been increasing in the Region as compared to other Regions in recent years. One of the interesting and spectacular illustrations of growing vulnerability is the paradoxical phenomenon of "green famine" which gripped many zones in the Region throughout the 2000s (Box 1.1 for the definition of green famine).

Box 1. What is green famine?

The term *green famine* refers to the occurrence and spread of food crises and resultant famines in the green and lush enset-dominant livelihood zones of southern Ethiopia, historically considered as relatively food-secure areas. Despite the existence of *green famine* in southern Ethiopia since at least the 1980s, it did not receive much attention and has failed to attract policy and research interest due to its geographic spread outside of 'the traditional famine zones' (northern and central highlands and lowlands) of the country … However, since the beginning of the new millennium it has received greater media attention, locally and internationally, as the crisis recurred in 2003, 2008 and affected more and larger areas (Mulugeta, 2014: 209).

While the phenomena of growing vulnerability to food insecurity and green famine have become more visible and publicized in recent years, there is less common understanding and researchon the causes of these phenomena. Why is vulnerability to food insecurity and famine increasing? What are the underlying causes and triggering factors associated with chronic food insecurity and periodic food crisis? A recent comprehensive empirical study of green famine in Kembata-Tembaro zone provides detailed analysis of the various issues associated with vulnerability to food insecurity and "green famine" in the Region which can serve as the basis for highlighting many of the key issues and problems which are also the central concerns of the present study (Mulugeta, 2014). The author argues that:

> Any discussion about the causes of famine in Ethiopia is usually incomplete without pointingculpability towards what I call 'the usual suspects and easy-to-blame factors'. As a result, associating the causes of famine with natural and demographic (neo-Malthusian) factors hasbeen a dominant assumption among all the actors involved in policy process, research andbureaucrats at different levels over time … In the same manner, the occurrence of *green famine* in southern Ethiopia in general and the study area in particular is seen as a result of these factors. However, I argue that, although these factors alone or in

[64] According to a recent comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis "SNNPR had the highest prevalence of households with starch-heavy diets and an extremely high (63%) of households consumed 'less than acceptable' diets compared with 27% nationally. Some 43% consumed three or fewer food groups over a seven day recall compared with 30% nationally" (WFP and CSA, 2014: 97).

> combination could play a part in one way or another in the occurrence of famine, they cannot fully explain its cause, and the underlying causes of *green famine* go beyond these generic explanations of rain failure, population pressure and resultant land shortages or drought, as explained below (Mulugeta, 2014: 55).

In spite of the criticism of the so-called neo-Malthusian perspective in the above quotation, data collected by the author on underlying causes of green famine as perceived by a range of stakeholders (government officials, academic researchers, UN agencies, and local and international food security experts) shows that population and land related constraint is identified as the top-ranking cause of green famine (see Box 1.2). For the purpose of the present study we can identify the following as useful points that emerge from the study under consideration: (i) the fact that land-related constraints are identified as the main perceived causes of vulnerability to green famine can be viewed as a positive finding which requires a systematic dialogue and articulation to have meaningful impact at the level of policy (ii) the tendency, however, to dismiss demographic and land related constraints as neo-Malthusian in spite of the fact that these are indeed the leading causes of vulnerability as perceived by stakeholders (iii) the issue of multi-causal analysis of vulnerability and the question of whether all factors and causes are of the same order of significance and how to differentiate between different causes and determinants according to their degree of explanatory significance (see below).

Box 2. Underlying causes of green famine as perceived by various stakeholders

Fragmented and small land size due to population pressure (32 percent)

(1) Dwindling enset production due to various shocks (over-reliance,
(2) disease outbreak) (24 percent)
(3) Policy failure (weak extension services, in arrears debt and high input
(4) prices) (22 percent)
(5) Reverse migration, restrictive labor movements, lack of local employment opportunities (17 percent)Recurrent shocks and resultant asset depletion (17 percent)Extinction of indigenous trees and expansion of Eucalyptus and its effect on soil (7 percent)
(6) Poor economic saving culture among the cash crop producing communities, particularly ginger and coffee communities (7 percent)Change of livelihoods from enset to cereal, and focus on cash crops (coffee and ginger) (7 percent)
(7) Lack of understanding of the livelihood context and misinterpretation of green surroundings (7 percent) (Source: Mulugeta, 2014: 56)

Another recent study which directly addresses the key research problem of the present study is the review and assessment of development interventions and their impact on livelihood in Wolayita (Dessalegn, 2007). Based on extensive review of development interventions implemented in the area in the period between the 1950s

and 2000s, the author argues that although the "the achievements are by no means insignificant", the development interventions have by and large failed to bring about secure livelihood for the majority of the population and in fact in the same period vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty have increased. The main explanation behind this apparently paradoxical outcome, according to the author, is the failure of development strategies and interventions to take into account and systematically incorporate the main causes of vulnerability to poverty and destitution. What are the neglected determinants or causes of food insecurity and poverty? Unlike the study on green famine in Kembata-Tembaro zone discussed above, demographic pressure and land scarcity are given more prominent place in this study which is clearly articulated as follows:

> The development interventions in the last four and half decades by the government, development partners and others have, by and large, failed to address the key determinants of poverty and destitution, though the failure is greater or lesser in degree depending on the problems and policy interventions concerned. These determinants are, in my view, demographic stress and land shortages, urbanization and commercialization and livelihood diversification. The issue of drought has also been included, but drought is a common hazard that has affected many parts of the country and is not specific to Wollaita. Because of this failure, the damaging impact of these factors is more pronounced today than before. The study suggests that a considerable policy shift is needed to put these determinants at center stage and to accelerate the pace of development (Dessalegn, 2007: viii-ix)

To sum up,the central point which emerges from our overview of the research problem in this section is that the characteristics of the enset-based agricultural and livelihood system which were the sources of its resilience and sustainability, and which in the past has enabled the system to absorb and sustain a high and growing population pressure, have been eroded or undermined over time resulting in increased vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty. From the perspective of the present study, the main sources of growing vulnerability are the population and land-use dynamics and the land-related constraints which the system has generated. As aptly expressed by Dessalegn, in the context of Wolayita:

> The "triumph" of enset cultivation can now be seen in the demographic mountain it has managed to throw up, and the systematic crisis it has, unwittingly, brought upon itself. Agricultural intensification, the primary response of peasants to resource scarcity and population pressure, has failed to arrest the intensification of competition for resources and the acceleration of demographic expansion. Moreover, while in the past population growth may have stimulated change and adaptability in the enset system, the immense demographic pressure on the land today is unlikely to induce technical progress, and may in fact drive the system toward regression(Dessalegn, 1996: 101).

The emphasis given to growing vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty as outlined above is not intended to deny or underestimate the significant achievements

recorded in SNNPR and in the country as whole in terms of development and poverty reduction in recent decades[65]. The main thesis which we are trying to emphasize is that many of the complex and dynamic linkages, problems and challenges associated with land and rural livelihoods in SNNPR are not well understood and there is very limited systematic and detailed empirical research and evidence-based public policy dialogue on these vital issues which directly affect the lives and livelihoods of millions of people in the Region. Indeed, we believe that the sustainability of past achievements as well the attainment of many of the development and poverty reduction goals set by the government in the future highly depend on addressing the land-related constraints in an effective and sustainable manner.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the research is to explore the extent to which land and rural livelihood security are inter-related and to assess to what extent improvement in livelihood security depends on addressing the constraints and challenges faced by landholders and land users relating to rights and access to land as well as other features of the land and livelihood system in the case study communities in SNNPR. A major aspect of the general objective of the study is the generation of high quality data and analysis based on robust evidence which will serve to stimulate debate and contribute ideas to policy interventions to enable farming household to employ sustainable land management practices which will help them to improve their income and ensure food security.The following are the specific objectives of the study:

(1) To investigate and assess the main characteristics, dynamics and constraints of the land systems in the case study sites including:

- Access to land and the role of different access mechanisms including administrative allocation, inheritance and informal land markets;
- Size-distribution of land holdings and the prevalence and characteristics of landlessness;
- Local perception of land rights, tenure security and land registration and certification

(2) To investigate and assess the linkages between access to land and various aspects of livelihoods including:

- The relationship between access to land and non-land assets;

[65] This is a vast and complex subject and it is beyond the scope of the present study to undertake a detailed review: however, we know for example that between 1995/96 and 2010/11 the prevalence of poverty (poverty headcount ratio) in SNNPR decreased from 55.8 % to 29.6 % (rural poverty from 56.5 % to 30 %), while at the national level in the same period the prevalence of poverty declined from 45.5 % to 29.6 % (rural poverty from 47.5 % to 30.4 %), see MoFED (2013, Table A5.3, p.86). For comprehensive and detailed review of economic growth, poverty reduction and welfare trends see also World Bank (2015) and UNDP (2015).

- The relationship between land and livelihood strategies including livelihood diversification (farm and non-farm income generating activities), rural out-migration, especially external/irregular migration from the case study areas;
- The relationship between land and livelihood security and wellbeing including access to basic needs such as food/food security and self-assessment of household livelihood situation.

(3) To generate quality data and analysis which will serve: (i) to stimulate debate and dialogue on land and livelihood related issues and constraints, and (ii) as input for policy re-thinking and re-orientation in order to promote more viable land holdings and more secure and transferable land rights which in turn will contribute to the reduction of vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty and promote more secure livelihood for farming households.

Research methods

Selection of case study areas

SNNPR is a large and diverse Region both in terms of land area and population, as well as in terms of the diversity of agro-ecologies, farming systems and livelihoods zones[66]. The Region is also well known for its ethnic and religious diversity. Due to these features and due to time and resource constraints, it was difficult to adopt a research design employing representative random sampling of research sites covering all areas of the Region. The approach adopted for the purpose of the present study is a *case study approach*: in this approach, the goal is not to attain representativeness in the statistical sense of random sampling covering the whole Region However, adopting a case study methodology does not imply arbitrary decision in the selection of sites and target groups. In a case study approach, *purposive* sampling is used in which study sites and target groups are selected based on a set of relevant criteria. When carefully applied the case study approach and purposive sampling can generate data and information which can reveal a good deal of comparability as well as relevance to the Region as whole.

We may start our brief description of the justification for selection of the case study areas by first noting that since the focus of the research was on densely populated and land scarce highland areas of the Region, pastoralist and agro-

[66] With an estimated land area of 105,887 sq. km and a population of about 17 million (in 2012), the share of SNNPR is less than 10 percent of the land area but about 20 percent of the population of the country. Administratively, the region is divided into 13 zones and 7 special woredas. The constituent zones of the region are: Gurage, Silte, Hadiya, Kembata-Tembaro, Wolayita, Dawro, GamoGofa, Sidama, Gedeo, South Omo, Kaffa, Sheka, and Bench-Maj; the special woredas are: Yem, Halaba, Basketo, Amaro, Burji, Derashe, and Konso. Due to frequent reorganizations the number of zones and special woredas can change. According to a regional livelihood profile, there are about 38 livelihood zones in the region (see, DPPC and FEWS-NET, 2006).

pastoralist areas in the lowlands were not included[67]. To select case study sites within the highland agricultural areas we used the following set of criteria: (1) population density and land scarcity, (2) agricultural systems and staple food crops, (3) poverty and food insecurity, (4) migration and livelihood diversification, (5) availability of previous studies, data and information, and (6) logistics and cost considerations. Based on these criteria the following three case study areas were selected:

1. Wolayita zone, Boloso-Sore *woreda*, Doge-Weyibo*kebele*
2. Kembata zone, Doyo-Gena*woreda*, Ancha-Sedicho*kebele*
3. Hadiya zone, Shashogo*woreda*, Shamsa-Misse*kebele*

Methods of data collection

We used a mixed method to collect data and information for the study. Within this broad mix, the specific methods of data collection we used can be classified into three categories: (i) quantitative method: household survey; (ii) qualitative methods: participatory rapid appraisal (PRA); and (iii) review of relevant literature and secondary sources, each of which is briefly outlined below.

Quantitative method: household survey

We used a small-scale household survey to collect primary data from sample households in the case study kebeles using a structured survey questionnaire administered by trained enumerators. The sample surveys were conducted as part of the fieldwork (i.e., simultaneously with the qualitative component of the study) under the direct supervision of the principal researchers in each site. The main features of the sample survey, namely sample size and sampling method as well as the topics included in the questionnaire are briefly described below.

Sample size and sampling method

We conducted household sample surveys at kebele level and 90 households were selected from each case study kebeleand a total sample size of 270 households for the three kebeles included in the study. The sample size constitutes about 11.3 percent of the total number of households in the three case study kebeles (ranging from 15.8 to 8.3 percent) (see Table 1). The sample size of 90 households per kebele was the minimum needed for the study because a research on land and livelihoods requires the use of the wealth status of households as a basic framework for data collection and analysis: hence the need for wealth ranking of the sample households in each site. According to a rule of thumb in social statistics we needed a minimum of 30 cases for a valid statistical analysis for three sub-samples (rich, medium, poor).

[67] This is not because land and livelihood issues are not important in these areas, but rather the issues and dynamics surrounding land and livelihoods in pastoralist and agro-pastoralist areas are distinctive in nature and require their own separate and full study.

The main challenge we faced in relation to conducting the household sample surveys using the sampling method noted above was the problem of finding complete and up-to-date *sampling frames* in the study kebeles; such a frame is a requirement for the selection of a representative sample without which the results of the study will be biased. There were noup-to-data and complete lists of households; the available lists often consisted of land-holding and/or taxpaying households, beneficiaries of food aid, PSNP, etc., which are incomplete or include only a partial list of households in the kebeles; for example, landless households were rarely included in existing lists. Given the focus of our study on land and livelihoods, including landless households in the sample was of vital importance. Although a relatively time consuming exercise, the only remedy for this problem was compiling new lists of households using existing incomplete lists as a starting point in each site. Since kebeles are divided into smaller units (variously known as *gotts*, *ketenas*, zones etc.) we used the smaller units and key informants in each unit to update existing lists and ensure that all households are included in the sampling frame. Based on the updated lists, households were classified into three wealth groups (as identified by our key informants), and we randomly selected 30 households from each group (rich, medium and poor).

Table 1. Sample size as percent of number of households

Site	Total No of Households	Sample Size	Percent
Doge-Weyibo	569	90	15.8
Ancha-Sedicho	1088	90	8.3
Shamsa-Misse	707	90	12.7
Total	2364	270	11.4

Content of survey questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of the following four modules:

1. Demographic profile: basic demographic profile of households and household heads such age, sex, education, marital status, etc.
2. Access to land and related issues: ownership and access to land (including administrative allocation, informal land transaction, and inheritance and sub-division); perception of land rights and tenure security, and perception of land registration and certification
3. Livelihood strategies: household access to non-land assets (oxen/livestock, credit, participation in community organizations) and household participation in livelihood activities and income sources (farm, non-farm, migration);

4. Livelihood security and well-being: household access to basic needs (food/food security, health care, housing, etc.) and self-assessment of household livelihood conditions.

We note that the household survey did not include the collection of quantitative data on agricultural production, and income-consumption expenditure. This is not because we considered data on these areas less important or useful but because collecting full and accurate primary data on these subjects was considered a time-consuming and very difficult exercise, not least because of the limited time and financial resources at our disposal. The survey questionnaire was subjected to extensive joint review and revision with inputs from the FSS and translated into Amharic and local languages of the study areas and field-tested (pilot tested) before application.

Qualitative methods

Qualitative method was the second important component used to collect primary data for the study. More specifically, we used two types of participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) methods to collect qualitative data, namely: (i) key informant interviews (KIIs) and (ii) focus group discussions (FGDs). Before describing the methods, it is useful to indicate the following points about the conduct of the PRA.

1. The PAR activities were conducted only at woreda and kebele levels and did not include zonal and regional level stakeholders due time and resource constraints.
2. The topics and issues addressed in the qualitative interviews and discussions generally focused on land and livelihood related issues with some variations according to the type of target groups and stakeholders participating in the study. Due to space limitations, the themes and issues discussed will not be presented here in detail.
3. All of the interviews and discussions were conducted by the principal researchers, and the discussions were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Key informant interviews (KIIs)

KIIs refer to the interviews and discussions conducted with individuals and groups (elders, community leaders, kebele officials, committee members, DAs and experts) who have broad and deep knowledge about local land and livelihood issues and problems. The KIIs were conducted at woreda and kebele level as follows:

a. Woreda level: a total of six (6) KIIs were conducted at woreda level with staff and experts from woreda offices of agriculture, land use and administration, and food security. These are the most relevant offices and experts for the purpose of the study and the interviews and discussions focused on a range of

land and livelihood related issues and problems in the respective woredas including: population pressure on land and land scarcity, land use patterns, land related constraints to agricultural production, food security, land tenure and tenure security, and implementation and impact of land registration and certification program.

b. Kebele level: at the kebele level a total of twelve (12) KIIs (4 per site) were conducted with a focus on the following topics and types of informants: (i) Community wealth ranking: with elders and community leaders who are knowledgeable about households and groups in the community who participated in the process of compiling of household lists and in conducting the community wealth ranking exercise; (ii) Population and land-use dynamics: with elders and community leaders knowledgeable about local demographic trends, land use changes, land tenure history and land-related constraints (iii) Land registration and certification: with members of kebele Land Administration Committees (LACs) with a focus on the process of implementation and impact of land registration and certification program (iv) Livelihood diversification and migration: with elders, community leaders and other men and women knowledgeable about local livelihood strategies (livelihood diversification, migration, etc.), with a special focus on external/irregular migration in two of the study sites (Hadiya and Kembata).

Focus group discussions (FGDs)

FGDs were conducted at the grassroots (kebele) level with participants drawn from different groups in the case study communities. A total of nine (9) FGDs (3 per site) were conducted with: (i) groups of ordinary women, (ii) groups of ordinary men, and (c) groups of youth (young women and men). Although there was some overlapping with regard to the topics covered, the discussion with men tended to be more extensive (covering more topics and issues because as household heads they are expected to have more responsibility and knowledge about land and livelihood issues) while the discussion with women and youth focused more on specific women and youth related issues and problems associated with land and rural livelihoods.

In summary, under the qualitative component of the study we have conducted 18 KIIs and 9 FGDs - a total of 27 PRA activities - with different groups and stakeholders at kebele and woreda level. The approach we have adopted for conducting the PRA activities has enabled us to conduct the interviews and discussions with key social groups and stakeholders while adhering to the principle of conducting PRA activities with homogenous groups for free and open discussion, rather than mixing different groups in each site.

Review of literature and secondary sources

Review of the relevant literature and secondary sources was one of the main methods of data collection for the study: we say it is one of the main methods because its purpose went beyond using data from secondary sources only to highlight background conditions.The research project started with a careful and systematic identification and review of relevant literature and secondary source and data and information from these sources were used: (i) to formulate and refine the research problem, objectives and research questions of the study, and (ii) as direct input and an integral part of the empirical evidence used to address the objectives and research questions complementing the primary data collected for the study. The review of literature and secondary sources is not presented in a separate section in this report but rather integrated with the primary data and analysis in the various chapters and sections of the report as relevant.

Access to land and the dynamics of micro-holdings

Mechanisms of access to land

How do individuals and households get access to land in the case study areas? This is the question we attempt to answer in this section. One of the important criteria for assessing the nature of land tenure system is through the analysis of the extent to which it facilitates access to land. The analysis of mechanisms of access to land can shed light on issues related to land rights and land tenure. For this reason, the starting point for understanding the nature and dynamics of land systems at local level should be the empirical investigation of how individuals and households access land.

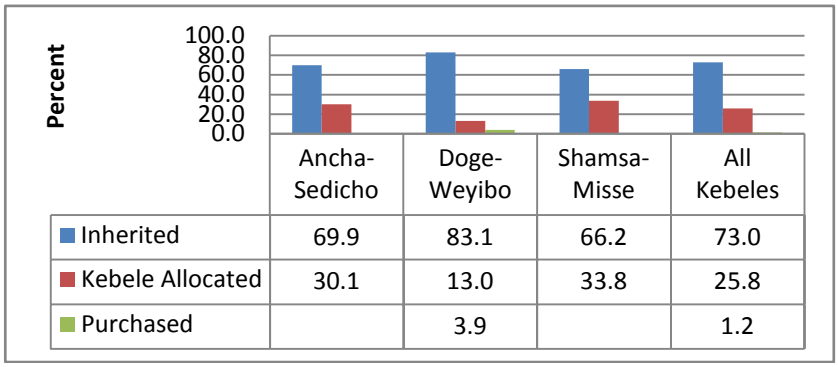
Accordingly, in the household survey we asked respondents to indicate how they acquired each plot of land they currently own and cultivate and the data is summarized in Figure1. Out of a total of 248 plots currently owned by landholding sample households, 73 percent of the plots was acquired through inheritance. On the other hand, about 26 percent and 1.2 percent of the plots were identified as "Kebele allocated" and purchased, respectively[68]. Whether inherited or kebele allocated, such land is often characterized as land "owned", i.e as formally recognized or registered right of "holding", conferring long term access, as distinct from land rented on a temporary basis[69]. Land rental constitutes the third important type of access: in our case study sites 13.3 percent of households have rented-in land. Land rental here refers to temporary and informal transactions involving various types of land contracts such as share-cropping, fixed cash rental and mortgage.

[68] We should note that the sale and mortgaging of land are prohibited by law.

[69] The term "owned", of course, does not imply private free hold ownership since land is owned by the state and farmers have only use or "holding" rights. For the purpose of consistency in this report we have used land "holding" instead of ownership.

At this juncture, it is important to note that the various access mechanisms identified above are not separate or independent forms of tenure as such: in legal terms administrative allocation is the primary form of access to land and all others are derived from it because all land is owned by the state and rural households have only use or holding right[70].However, in practice the other access mechanisms have emerged as the principal forms of access to land for reasons to be discussed below. In brief, the findings of the study indicate that the predominant mechanism of access to land in the case study areas has been inheritance; this, together with rentals constitute the main and *active* land transfer rights and access mechanisms. For this reason, the two access mechanisms are discussed in more detail below.

Figure 1: Distribution of plots owned by sample households by mechanism of access



	Ancha-Sedicho	Doge-Weyibo	Shamsa-Misse	All Kebeles
Inherited	69.9	83.1	66.2	73.0
Kebele Allocated	30.1	13.0	33.8	25.8
Purchased		3.9		1.2

Inheritance as access mechanism

Inheritance is a land right recognized by law at present which is an improvement when compared to the situation under the Derge regime. However, it is a restricted or conditional right in the sense that the land laws (federal and SNNPR) stipulate that land should be inherited only by "family members" (defined as members who live with the family and depend for their livelihood on the land). In other words, these are the same residential and occupational requirements which serve as the main conditions for official land holding rights prescribed by land policy.

Although, as we will show here, the role of inheritance as a mechanism of access to secure and viable landholding in the case study areas is problematic for various reasons, it is the only type of long-term access at present and will continue to be so for quite some time in the future. We believe that a more in-depth investigation and understanding of the nature and dynamics of access mechanisms, their weaknesses and strengths, and variation across space and time is important not only for understanding land rights and land tenure issues per se but also as input for land policy

[70] Administrative allocation refers to allocation of land by government (through the agency of its local organs known as Peasant Associations (PAs) or currently called rural Kebele Administrations; hence often referred to in the literature as PA or kebele allocated land.

and tenure reform in the future. For this reason, we will discuss inheritance as an access mechanism with some detail in this section with a focus on its positive and negative features compared to administrative allocation and the reasons for the gap between land policy and practice.

Inheritance versus administrative allocation: why the gap between policy and practice?

After the 1975 land reform, the state assumed a direct role in the allocation and administration of land. Under the current government access to land through administrative allocation remains the core feature of land policy and was even enshrined in the Constitution. However, our findings indicate that in practice inheritance has been the main mechanism of access to land. The main explanation behind this apparent gap between policy and practice is well-known and has been frequently raised in previous studies on the subject: the inability of kebele administrations to allocate land to new households due to the severe scarcity of land. This is especially the case in densely populated areas such as the highland and enset-farming zones of SNNPR.

In this context, administrative redistribution was used in an attempt to mitigate landlessness and land hunger. However, administrative redistribution became the most controversial feature of the land tenure system due to its dual negative effects: further subdivision and fragmentation of small holdings as well as tenure insecurity. In the context of high population growth, land scarcity and stagnant rural economy, the outcome of administrative redistribution of land only amounted to "redistribution of poverty," a kind of "zero-sum game". It did little to uplift the economic conditions of those who received tiny plots, but it undermined the livelihood of those from whom land was taken[71]. Due to this problem the application of administrative redistribution varied from place to place and in recent years it was discouraged although not legally abolished or banned. Inheritance has thus been apparently replacing administrative redistribution in the case study areas as a means of long term access to land.

Although many factors account for the variation in the role of different access mechanisms (administrative allocation, inheritance, informal land markets), we believe that the main factors are the level of population density, land scarcity and the type of farming system on the one hand, and the scope and frequency of past administrative land redistribution on the other. Where land is scarce and holdings are very small and the scope and frequency of administrative redistribution was limited, we can expect the role of inheritance to be much more significant compared to administrative allocation. Accordingly, for example, there is evidence from other

[71] A comprehensive and detailed study of the effects of administrative land redistribution is not available. However, for critical empirical investigation of the impact of the more recent large-scale and controversial land redistribution undertaken in Amhara region in 1996/97,seeYigremew (2002); Yared (2002); Ege (2002).

sources which shows that the role of inheritance tends to be very high in SNNPR compared to other main agricultural regions (namely Tigray, Amhara and Oromia). On the other hand, the role or prevalence of informal land transaction tends to be relatively lower in SNNPR compared to other Regions. Of course, variation in the role of access mechanisms can exist at sub-regional levels depending on the same factors noted above.

In order to put our data and interpretation in a broader context we have summarized in Table 2 data on access mechanisms from twolarge-scale surveys conducted in 2006 and 2013.The data from the two surveys reveal remarkably similar and high rates of prevalence of inheritance as access mechanism in SNNPR (73.3 and 78.5 percent) which are very close to our own data for the case study sites (73 percent). Needless to say, these are average figures which mask variation at sub-regional levels. Even within the limited scope of our case study sites, the data show variations (see Figure 2): the share of inheritance is highest (83 percent) in Doge-Weyibo (Boloso-Sore/Wolayita), compared to 70 percent in Ancha-Sedicho (Doyo-Gena /Kembata) and 66percent in Shamsa-Misse (Shashogo/Hadiya).

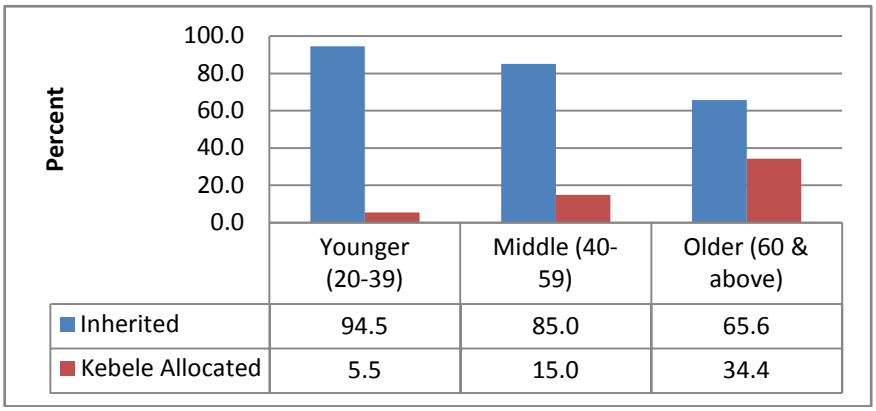
Table 2. Mode of acquisition of land by Region

Mode of Acquisition	Tigray	Amhara	Oromiya	SNNPR
(2013 Survey)				
Kebele Allocation	79	60.2	51.1	13.1
Inheritance	19	38.1	46.1	78.5
(2006 Survey)				
Kebele Allocation	88.4	58.8	61.5	20.6
Inheritance	10.0	39.8	35.6	73.3

Sources: Deininger, et al. (2007:24) and Ghebru, etal. (2016: 8).

In addition, the role of administrative allocation can be expected to decrease and that of inheritance to increase over time. This tendency can be seen from the relationship between access mechanisms and age of heads of households depicted in Figure 2: the data show that while 94.5 percent of the plots owned by the younger group of household heads (age: 20-39) is inherited, the figure drops to 65.6 percent for the older group (≥60), and the middle age group (40 to 59) falling in between. The relationship between age and access mechanisms tends to be even more pronounced according to data from one of the sources referred to above: for households headed by "mature" heads (≥35), 43 percent was allocated compared to 41.3 percent inherited. For the "young" age group (≤34) the proportion is 14 and 61.9 percent, respectively for administrative allocation and inheritance respectivelyIFPRI, 2013: 102).

Figure 2. Mechanisms of access to land by age group of land holders



Positive and negative features of inheritance

Inheritance as access mechanism is a key feature of what we have called the dynamics of micro-holdings in the case study areas. For this reason it is important to investigate and understand the nature and dynamics of inheritance and its positive and negative features, especially compared to administrative redistribution. The negative effects of administrative redistribution are generally well-known and include the two key constraints of the land tenure system, namely the sub-division and fragmentation of holdings and tenure insecurity. On the other hand, inheritance is a well-known and age-old mechanism of transferring property, especially land, from generation to generation in agrarian societies. Inheritance operates within the ambit of family and kinship networks based on customary rules and negotiations. It works imperceptibly and more or less smoothly without creating undue disruption to the livelihoods of successive generations.

Thus, compared to administrative redistribution, inheritance has many positive features and in the Ethiopian context, it can: (i) reduce disruptive and top-down state interference in land managementat the local level; and (ii) enhance land rights and reduce tenure insecurity. After all, the right to bequeath land to the next generation is an important incentive for farmers to invest in and properly manage land.

Inheritance and the sub-division of holdings

The main negative effect of inheritance is subdivision and fragmentation of holdings. In this regard, we can say that both inheritance and administrative redistribution tend to produce a similar outcome: namely the sub-division of land leading to the proliferation of unviable micro-holdings. In fact, we can argue that this is perhaps the most important land-related constraint to rural livelihoods at present in the study areas. The sub-division and fragmentation of holdings in the study areas has been aggravated by the traditional system of partible inheritance (a system whereby all male children inherit land) as well as lack of alternative employment opportunities.

There is a general awareness that the size of land holdings have been declining over time as a result of sub--division due to inheritance as well as administrative redistribution. However, there is little empirical time series data which can enable us to reconstruct the process in the past and precisely measure the extent of decline over time. In this study, we have attempted to collect some data on inheritance regarding its potential future momentum: sample households were asked to indicate whether they intend to bequeath land to their children (male and female) in the future and if so to how many children and how much land they intend to transfer. The following are the three main points which emerge from the data summarized in Table 3: first, amajority of landholding households intend to bequeath land to total of 230 children (171 male and 59 female). Out of the responding households concerned, 65 percent intend to transfer land to one or two children, 27.8 percent to three or four, and 7.4 percent to five or more children. The average number of potential inheritors per household is 2.5. Second, as we can see from Table 3, on the average each heir will inherit 0.15 hectare of land. This amounts to less than half the current average size of holdings in two of the three case study sites (Kembata-Tembaro and Wolayita) and may appear to be too small to ensure mere survival. However, we should note that a significant proportion of households in the case study areas subsist at present on more or less the same size of holdings (see further down for data on size-distribution of holdings).

Table 3. Land inheritance: to how many children and how much land?

Number ofChildren	Male (N=171)	Female(N=59)	Both (N=230)
One	29.2	42.4	32.6
Two	31.0	35.6	32.2
Three	18.7	8.5	16.1
Four	12.9	8.5	11.7
≥Five	13.6	4.4	7.4
Mean No of Children	2.5	2.0	2.4
Mean Land Size (ha/heir)	0.16	0.08	0.15

The third and final point relates to land inheritance by female siblings, a subject on which we want to dwell a little bit more. From the KIIs and FGDs conducted with women and other groups in the case study sites, we know that female children have no customary right to inherit land, save under rare circumstances such as when there is no male heir. We also know from the ethnological literature that the traditional kinship organization, marriage and inheritance rules and practices in the study areas were not favorable to women's land rights in general and to gender

equitable inheritance in particular[72]. According to the patrilineal kinship organization and "patrilocal" residence system, when girls are married they move to their husband's locality and hence will get access to land through their husbands[73]. This is the main justification or rationalization given when we ask the reason why daughters cannot inherit land.

In this regard the land policy itself sends a mixed message: on the one hand, land laws and policy statements emphasize gender equality and equal access to land including inheritance rights. Moreover, in the past land was allocated based on family size and in principle daughters have an implicit share from family land like other members. On the other hand however, the land policy makes residence in a kebele a condition for land holding right, which means women cannot have land rights in two locations simultaneously (one in their natal community inherited from their family of birth and another in their husband's locality)74. In addition to these problems, the general condition of acute land scarcity and growing competition and conflict over land is not an ideal environment for the protection and enhancement of women's land rights. In view of these practices, the response on inheritance we obtained in our survey is quite interesting: a considerable number of our sample respondents expressed their intention to bequeath land to their daughters. Is this an indication of changing attitudes? Although intention and practice are not the same thing, there is a lot of evidence showing growing awareness about women's land rights among both women and men in the study areas and the findings on inheritance can be part of the change in attitude if not in practice.

Inheritance and the "Generational Divide"

Sub-division and diminution of holdings is not the only problem associated with inheritance. Although we have argued that inheritance is a less disruptive mechanism of transferring land compared to administrative allocation, it does not mean that it is entirely free from problems and conflict. In the context of unabated population growth and growing land scarcity, competition and conflict over land tend to escalate and inheritance related conflict is the leading type of land-related dispute (see Box 3). In this regard, it is important to note that access to land has become an

[72] See, Bevan and Pankhurst (1996).

[73] Data from the Ethiopian Rural Household Survey (ERHS), which includes five sites from SNNPR, indicate that grooms bring ten times more assets than brides to newly formed families and "land and livestock that are inherited after marriage come primarily from the husband's family. Daughters hardly ever inherit anything from their parents", see, Fafchamps and Quisumbing (2004).

[74] However, we should not that in the SNNPR Land Law of 2007, it is stipulated that individuals or households can have landholdings in more than one kebele, although it was not explicitly stated as applying to the rights of married women holding land in two or more kebeles.

important generational issue. Due to the severe shortage of land in the study areas, it has become very difficult for the younger generation to access land whether through inheritance or administrative allocation.

Box 3. Inheritance-related dispute is the leading type of land-related dispute

"The mapping of disputes in the four study Regions has shown the following to bethe three major types of rural land-related disputes in order of their magnitude: (1)disputes caused by claims to land inheritance, (2) disputes emanating from landencroachments/border trespasses, and (3) disputes resulting from the breach ofrural land-related transactions/land exchange agreements. The dispute mapping has also indicated instances where local residents invade orencroach upon communal lands in a bid to annex portions of these lands to theirown. In a further move to legitimize their occupation and ensure possessory rights, they attempt to process and obtain holding certificates by registering theirplots including those which they have annexed as their own. Thus, they getinvolved in disputes with the community of users and *Kebele*Administratorsresponsible for the management of the communal land" (MoA and USAID, 2012: IV).

Unfortunately, land policy has been contributing to the "generational divide" and potential conflict. This is because land policy purports to provide access to land to every one free of charge, a right which is enshrined in the constitution but a policy which is near to impossible to put into practice. This state of affairs has been a source of confusion and conflicting expectations among different generations: from whom should young people expect land? What should be the attitude and behavior of parents? Of course, parents would have liked their sons to get land through kebele allocation. However, the fact that this option is closed in many areas and the fact that there is very limited alternative employment opportunities means that parents are obliged to divide and allocate land to their sons from their small holdings. It is in this lightthat we should interpret the meaning and significance of the data on inheritance presented in this section. The problem is especially acute for families with large numbers of male children and polygamous families which make inheritance and sub-division of holdings much more complex and difficult. In the case study areas, the common term used in local languages is "cutting" (*kenta* in Wolayita, *mure* in Kembata), indicating the pervasive phenomenon of sub-dividing land in order to provide some space for married sons at least for establishing ahomestead. A rapid inspection of the new list of households we compiled in each kebele with the assistance of *got* representatives and elders shows a series of names of brothers listed side-by-side and clearly identifiable by common paternal names, indicating the process of widespread sub-division of holdings in the study communities.

Finally, we should note that the term inheritances probably does not capture what is in reality a more complex process of formal and informal transfer and sharing

of land between generations.According to qualitative information from KIIs and FGDs, we learned that in the case study areas there prevails what we may call extensive "informal land sharing", namely transfer or sharing of land from parents to sons but which is not formalized or registered by the kebele. According to informants there are several reasons why such land is not formally transferred with separate title of holdings:

- The plots are mostly very small, not more than homestead plots
- Formal registration and titling of land transfer brings with it not only rights but also many obligations, obligations consisting of not only land-use tax but also many levies and contributions
- Parents are reluctant to formalize transfers for various reasons
- More recently, the minimum size of holding stipulated in SNNPR land law(0.5 ha), discourages formal registration of plots below this size

To sum up our discussion on land inheritance, we may ask: for how long will sub-division of holdings continue? Clearly, in the case study areas, the process has reached a crisis stage. As we have noted above, the sub-division and diminution of holdings is perhaps the most serious threat to any viable livelihood and the main if not the only cause of widespread vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty in the study areas. It is not that households and communities are not aware of the problem or are not concerned about it. In fact, as we found out in our KIIs and FGDs, the problem of land scarcity and declining size of holdings is the uppermost worry and concern of elders, community leaders and other groups in the localities concerned. In this regard, the findings from the case study areas confirm the finding and argument of the 2005 Ethiopian Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA):

> …the PPA reveals that land shortage is regarded by ordinary rural citizens as the most critical factor amongst all the constraints that they face. This shortage is manifested by land sharing, declining farm sizes, youth landlessness, shrinking common land, and lack of grazing. Nor is this a static situation which left to its own devices will correct itself in the long term. On the contrary, continued rural population growth combined with slow rural-urban transition, will ensure that the land squeeze becomes ever tighter with the passage of time. The present policy response to this – moving relatively small numbers of people from land scarce to land not-so- scarce areas – is a short term palliative that fails to address the severity of the underlying problem. In the end government will need to confront this issue seriously and adapt poverty reduction strategies towards a more rapidrural-urban transition in Ethiopia (MoFED, 2005: 69).

The unavoidable conclusion is that, strictly speaking there is no possibility of establishing secure and long term access to viable land holdings in the case study areas whether it is through administrative allocation or inheritance. This is the main implication of the data and analysis presented in this section, and we believe that its

policy implications for land and rural livelihoods is clear and profound: policies and strategies which tinker with the symptoms of the problem rather than addressing its root causes only prolong and deepen the crisis and postpone the challenge which has to be faced sooner or later.

Informal land transactions

What we are calling in this study informal land transaction is generally characterized as informal rural land markets (IRLMs) by researchers in the field and mainly includes temporary land leasing arrangements such as share-cropping, fixed cash rentals, and mortgages[75].Transfer rights are important aspects of land rights in general and land transaction whether formal or informal is part of the broader field of transfer rights (market and non-market transfer). At present, land rental is a legally recognized land right which is an important improvement in land rights compared to the situation under the Derg regime. However, it is a conditional right because federal and regional land laws impose many restrictions such as the amount of land to be rented out, duration of rental, approval and registration by kebele or woreda land administrations, and agreement by family members. To what extent these formal legal restrictions impinge upon informal land markets and their potential negative effects on land transfers are important issues in land tenure and policy analysis.

In recent years, informal land markets have received considerable attention from researchers, policy makers and donors. A great deal ofexpectation is attached to informal land markets as "evolving" alternative tenure systems and their potential role in improving access to land, efficiency in resource allocation and contribution to growth and equity. In addition, from the perspective of the present study, informal land transactions can be viewed as important aspects of the dynamics of micro-holdings at the local level. For all these reasons, research on land transaction should be viewed as an important component of policy research on land and rural livelihoods.

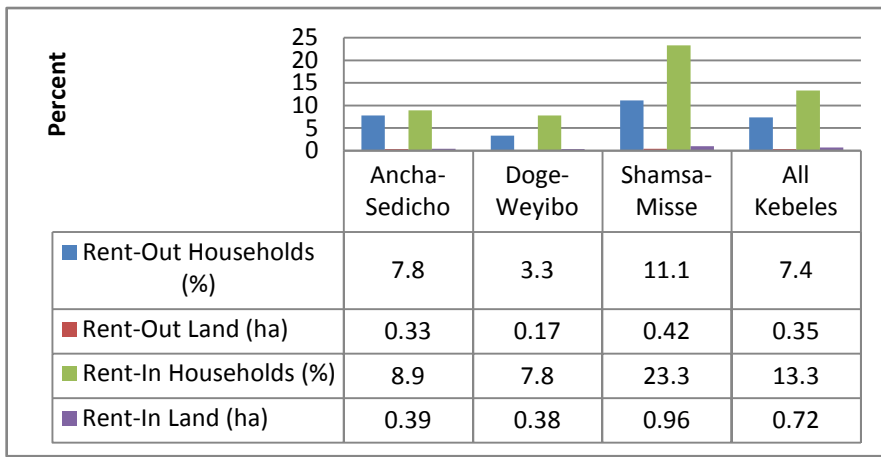
However, it is beyond the scope of the present study to undertake a comprehensive and in-depth investigation of land transaction in its own right. Our objective is limited and mainly relates to the role of informal land transaction as mechanism of access to land and their implication for rural livelihood and land policy. Accordingly, the findings of the study are presented in this section focusing on the following themes: the level of prevalence of land transaction in the case study areas, characteristics of land contracts, characteristics of participants in land transaction, and perception of productivity and income from land transaction. We will attempt to contextualize our data and findings by relating to other secondary sources on land transaction. In light of the findings of the study we will attempt to arrive at a balanced and realistic assessment of the role and contribution of informal land markets as mechanisms of access to land.

[75] The following are the main references on informal land markets in this section: Tesfaye (2003); EEA/EEPRI (2002); Deininger et al. (2003); Samuel (2006).

The prevalence of land transactions

One way of assessing the role and significance of land transactions is by investigating the level of participation and the amount of land exchanged in such transactions. There are two sets of actors in land transactions: those who transfer-out land (households renting-out land) and those who transfer-in land (households renting-in land). The participation rate has to take into account both of the actors. In the household survey we included questions intended to capture these indicators. The data on the proportion of households who reported participating in land transactions is summarized in Figure 3 together with the average size of land transacted on both sides: the average rate of participation is 7.4 percent for households renting-out land, and 13.3 percent for those renting-in land. The average size of land transacted was 0.35 ha for land rented-out and 0.72 for land rented-in76. When we compare the prevalence of informal land transactions by study site, we find the highest rate in Shamsa-Misse (23. 3 percent of households and 0.92 ha of land rented-in) and the lowest in Doge-Weyibo (7.8 percent of households and 0.38 ha rented-in on the average).

Figure 3. Prevalence of informal land transaction: proportion of sample households participating and amount of land exchanged



	Ancha-Sedicho	Doge-Weyibo	Shamsa-Misse	All Kebeles
Rent-Out Households (%)	7.8	3.3	11.1	7.4
Rent-Out Land (ha)	0.33	0.17	0.42	0.35
Rent-In Households (%)	8.9	7.8	23.3	13.3
Rent-In Land (ha)	0.39	0.38	0.96	0.72

How do we interpret or assess the significance of the data on land transactions in our case study sites? One way is through comparison with data from other sources and locations: for example, we have already hinted in the previous section that the level of prevalence of land transactions tends to be lower in SNNPR compared to

[76] The difference in the proportions between renting-out and renting-in can be explained at least partly by the fact that informal land transaction can take place between people in different kebeles: although most transaction occurs within kebeles (see below), households who rent-in land venture outside of their kebeles in search of land.

other comparable agricultural regions. The available sources are consistent in this regard. Data from a recent large-scale representative survey, summarized in Table 4, indicate that the participation rate is the lowest and the size of land rented the smallest in SNNPR compared to the national average: at national level 30.7 percent of households reported renting-in land, with the highest rate in Amhara (47.6 percent) and the lowest inSNNPR (17 percent). The corresponding average figures for size of rented-in land are 0.30 ha at the national level with the highest figure again inAmhara (0.50 ha) and the lowest for SNNPR (0.10 ha).

Table 4. Participation in land transactions by Region and sex of head (2011/12)

Region	Rented-In		Rented-Out
	Households%	Size (ha)	Households%
Tigray	34.4	0.20	6.7
Amhara	47.6	0.50	16.8
Oromiya	26.9	0.16	5.4
SNNPR	17.0	0.10	2.3
Total	30.7	0.30	7.8
Sex of Head			
Male-Headed	33.5	0.3	5.9
Female-Headed	18.2	0.1	16.7

Source:CSA and World Bank (2013: 35).

Average figures considered here tend to mask a great deal of variation within the Regions. Unfortunately however, up-to-date and representative data on various aspects of informal land transactions disaggregated at sub-Regional levels is difficult to get. Some data on land rental disaggregated at zonal level is collected by CSA under its Annual Agricultural Sample Survey. The data on land rental for the 2013/14 season including for the three zones where the case study sites are located (Wolayita, Kembata, and Hadiya) is summarized in Table 5 below.

The data confirm the overall pattern on land transaction presented above: the data show that the lowest rate still prevails in SNNPR and the highest in Amhara. More importantly, the data reveal that the prevalence of land rental is higher in the three zones compared to the average for SNNPR: the proportion of households who rented-in land is the highest in Kembata (25 percent), followed by Hadiya (19 percent) and Wolayita (18 percent). The figures for the three zones are higher than the average rates for our case study sites, except for the site in Shashogo (Hadiya): in interpreting these differences we have to take into account the fact that zones are still large entities and harbor significant variations at woreda and kebele levels. An additional set of data on a useful indicator of land transaction included in Table 4 show that the proportion for land rented-in tends to be significantly lower than the rate of household

participation: for example, at the national level the rate for participation is 25 percent but the proportion of rented-in land is less than 14 percent (land rented as the proportion of total land held by rural agricultural households). This can be taken as an indication of many households chasing after limited land supply in the informal land market.

Table 5. Participation in land rentals by Region and selected Zones (2013/14)

Region/Zone	Percent		
	Households	Land Area	Average Land (ha)
National	25.97	13.79	0.60
Tigray	33.51	19.63	0.58
Amhara	36.90	18.07	0.59
Oromia	28.39	13.11	0.68
SNNPR	10.87	5.23	0.31
Wolayia	17.87	6.24	0.21
Kembaa	24.80	8.63	0.20
Hadiya	19.13	8.38	0.35

Source: CSA (2014)

Finally, we should note that the factors which influence the prevalence of informal land transactions can be many, but we would like to emphasize the following two factors: (i) population density, land scarcity and size of holdings, and (ii) type of farming system, especially the relative predominance of annual versus perennial crops. The smaller size of land holdings and the predominance of perennial crops (enset, coffee, chat, etc.) in the densely populated highland areas of SNNPR explain the relatively lower rates of participation in land transactions. The demand is high but the supply is low, since households have very limited land to rent-out and part of their small holdings are planted with perennial crops.

Characteristics of land contracts

Data on selected characteristics of land contracts are summarized in Table 6. The first characteristic relates to types of land contracts: the data indicate that mortgage is the leading type of contract reported by the majority of both renting-out (50 percent) and renting-in (54percent) households, followed by sharecropping and fixed cash rental. Second, about half of the transactions had written contracts. Third, most of the contracts are of short duration: 60 percent for a period of one or two years, the remaining for a period ranging from three to five years.

Table 6. Selected characteristics of land contracts (percent)

Type of Contract	Rented-Out	Rented-In
Fixed Cash Rent	15	14
Mortgage	50	54
Sharecropping	25	31
Percent with Written Contract	55	44.4
Percent Kebele Registered	7.7	0
Duration of Contract (Year)		
One		22.7
Two		36.4
Three		18.2
Four		9.1
Five		13.6

One apparent anomaly in the data which has to be explained is the high rate of mortgage as a type of land contract, which does not square with existing evidence on informal land transactions in the country. It is a reflection of the aggregation of data from the three sites while in reality the practices is mainly confined to one of the sites, namely Shamsa-Misse (Shashogo, Hadiya). In this site, land transactions are generally higher compared to the other two sites and mortgage tends to be a more common type of contract. From KIIs and FGDs we have learned that this is a recent phenomenon even in this site and its emergence is explained by two factors: external migration to the Republic of South Africa and high inflation or the decline of the value of the *Birr*.

The important topic of migration from the two study sites (Kembata and Hadiya) is presented in further down in this study. Here, it suffices to note that irregular external migration is an expensive and high-risk venture and land mortgage is one of the means of raising the considerable amount of cash required to finance the migration. The distinctive features of mortgage in this context and as compared to sharecropping and fixed cash rental include: (i) greater amount of lump-sum cash, (ii) longer period of contract, (iii) non-interest bearing loan with land as collateral. The transaction does not involve interest payment because the lender uses the land until the borrower reclaims it after paying the loan in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract. Reflecting these features of the contract, a local terminology has been coined, namely *eskimele'se* which is a corrupted form of Amharic which means "until

returned": until the land owner repays the loan the land stays with the creditor. Basically, it is a credit arrangement using land as collateral[77].

Mortgage as a land transaction commonly involves written contract but is "informal" because it is not registered in the kebele or woreda administration (in this case partly because it is an "illegal" transaction). Obviously compared to fixed cash rental and sharecropping, mortgage is not only "illegal" but involves greater risk because the amount of money exchanged is larger, the risk of default greater and hence the potential for serious conflict and dispute very high. The main mitigating factor is the informal local "social sanction" behind the practice: as data presented below shows informal land transactions, including land mortgage, is a highly localized practice which takes place mainly between relatives, in-laws and neighbors. The contract is negotiated and concluded through the arbitration of local elders and relatives hence it has a lot of informal sanction behind it.

Finally, we would like to note that the forms of land transactions in the study areas tend to be more complex and varied than the three types noted above. From KIIs and FGDs we have learned that the forms vary depending on the specific mix of land, labor, oxen, input and output sharing arrangements, as well as the type of land. For example, sharecropping can involve payment of some cash in advance to the "landlord" which means such a contract becomes a hybrid between sharecropping and fixed cash rental. Occasionally, more than two actors can be involved each putting into the joint venture different types of inputs and sharing the output according to pre-determined proportions. The complexity of sharecropping is revealed by the fact that it can even take place within a household: for example young unmarried grown up sons entering into share-cropping or rental arrangements with their parents. However, the qualitative information also indicates that the general trend is towards "tightening" of the informal land market, for example in terms of a transition from share-cropping towards fixed cash rental and from short to long term contracts.

Characteristics of participants

Who are the participants in land transactions? Why do they engage in such transactions? How do they perceive their mutual economic conditions? We believe that the answers to these and other related questions can shed light not only on the nature of informal land markets, but also on land and non-land constraints which affect livelihoods more broadly and the role of land policy in creating and sustaining the constraints. We have summarized data on selected characteristics of households participating in land transaction in Table 7. The first important point to be noted is the difference in the possession of key productive resources: if we take land for example,

[77] Land mortgage is not a new phenomenon in the country, it was especially common during the time of the Imperial Regime before the 1975 land reform and was traditionally known as "***weled-agid***" (*weled*means interest in Amharic) and the term signifies the non-interest bearing nature of the loan with land as collateral.

the average size of landholding of households engaged in renting-out land is significantly larger than the land holding of households renting-in land (1.09 versus 0.66 ha respectively). The asymmetry in land holding is reversed when it comes to oxen and livestock ownership: on the average households renting-in land own more than twice the number of oxen owned by households renting-out land (1.08 and 0.47 respectively). The same disparity holds for total livestock ownership: measured in terms of standard TLUs, households renting-in land own 4.94 units compared to 1.97 for households renting-out land.

The second point relates to the gender dimension of land transaction: in proportional terms female-headed households are twice more likely to rent-out land (13 percent as compared to 6.7 percent for male -headed households) and twice less likely to rent-in land (5.6 versus 11.8 percent for female and male-headed households respectively). The third point relates to wealth status and status in land transaction: when we disaggregate data by wealth status, we find that poor households are relatively less likely to rent-in and more likely to rent-out land compared to better-off and middle status households: for example, while 72 percent of better-off households reported renting-in land the corresponding figure for poor households is 52 percent

Table 7. Land transaction status by selected indicators

Indicators		Land Transaction Status	
		Rent-Out	Rent-In
Land Owned (ha)		1.09	0.66
No of Oxen		0.47	1.08
Livestock Holding (TLU)		1.97	4.94
Sex of HH Head			
	Male	6.7	11.8
	Female	13.0	5.6
Wealth Status			
	Better-off	27.8	72.2
	Middle	46.2	68.4
	Poor	47.4	52.6

None of the above findings are new or exceptional. Overall they confirm the main findings of other studies, namely informal land transactions arise due to imbalance in resource endowments among households: accordingly, households renting-out land tend to be "land-abundant" relative to their labor and oxen endowments. The reverse tends to be the case for households renting-in land: they tend to be "land- constrained" relative to their labor and oxen endowments. These relative differences in resource endowments tend to overlap with household demographic and social characteristics: poor and vulnerable households including female-headed households and households headed by the elderly without support tend to be more represented among the category of households renting-out land. As a result,

renting-out land is commonly associated with vulnerability and a down-ward livelihood trajectory, while renting-in land is viewed as a sign of upward mobility.

However, we have to be careful not to over-simplify a more complex phenomenon: for example young people and newly formed households do participate in land transactions but their wealth status and livelihood situation is not so clear cut and fixed as it appears for older groups. This is because they are in the early stage of the household development cycle and their status and condition can change over time although land scarcity makes such an outcome increasingly complex and difficult. In addition, we should remember that the vast majority of households do not engage in land transaction. In order to avoid misconception, it is also important to note that we are talking about imbalance in resource endowments among small holder households and the differences are strictly relative. The relative differences exist in a general environment of severe resource scarcity for the majority of households and widespread exposure to shocks. For households renting-in land, informal land transaction is a coping mechanism to land shortage, while for households renting-out land it serves as a kind of "safety-net" or survival strategy. However, the important question is whether this is a viable safety net or a "poverty-trap" and what its policy implications are.

Data which shed additional light on the characteristics of participants in land transaction is summarized in Table 8. Why do households engage in land transactions? According to the responses of households renting-out land the two main reasons are: urgent need for money and renting-out is the only option (50 percent) and lack of oxen and labor to cultivate the land on their own (35 percent). On the other hand, the two main reasons for renting-in land are shortage of land (44 percent) and lack of land or landlessness (39 percent). As its name implies informal land transaction is a highly localized practice which mainly takes place between closely related people: 80 percent of households who rented-out land said they rented land to a relative or friend within the same kebele. The corresponding figure for households renting-in land is 64 percent. When we came to mutually perceived wealth or economic status, about 70 percent of respondents renting-in land believed that the economic condition or wealth status of their households is better than the households from whom they rented-in land. The comparable figure for households renting out-land is 40 percent: the mutual assessment of the actors in land transaction appears to corroborate the notion of"poor landlords" and "rich tenants" noted above.

More broadly, we have to note that this rather odd phenomenon of "poor landlords" and "rich tenants" is one of the peculiar features of the agrarian social order created by the 1975 Land Reform and preserved and reinforced by the current land policy regime. It is not the outcome of structural differentiation or inequality per se but the product of what Dessalegn has characterized as a process of "leveling-down" and "homogenization"78. It constitutes an ironic historical reversal because before the 1975 Land Reform, Ethiopia was known for its so-called "feudal" system, considered

[78] This theme has been investigated in greater detail and depth by Dessalegn (1984, 2006).

unique in Africa, with its hierarchical class structure consisting of genuinely big and rich land lords and millions of poor tenants. This digression is necessary to avoid misconceptions about relations of domination and exploitation which is commonly associated with tenancy and landlord-tenant relations in the classical or conventional sense.

Table 8. Reasons for land renting, relations between participants and mutually perceived economic conditions

Reason for Renting-Out Land		**Reason for Renting-in Land**	
	Percent		**Percent**
Lack of Labor	5	Have No Land	39
Lack of Labor & Oxen	35	Own Land Too Small	44
Lack of Agri. Inputs	5	Have Labor	3
Money Urgently Needed	50	Have Labor & Oxen	11
Other	5	Other	3
Relationship with "Tenant"		**Relationship with "Landlord"**	
	Percent		**Percent**
Relative/Friend - Same Kebele	80	Relative/Friend - Same Kebele	64
Non-relative - Same Kebele	10	Relative/Friend - Another Kebele	14
Non-relative - Other Kebele	5	Non-relative - Same Kebele	17
Investor - Urban-based	5	Non-relative - Another Kebele	3
		Other	3
Economic Status Compared to "Tenant"		**Economic Status Compared to "Landlord"**	
	Percent		**Percent**
Higher	40	Higher	69
Lower	45	Lower	22
Similar	15	Similar	8

Finally, there are a few important points which we have to mention briefly: first, nearly equal proportion of participants reported that they have encountered conflict or dispute in relation to land transactions: 21 percent of households renting-out land and 22 percent of households who rented-in land. Second, when asked whether they want to rent-out or rent-in more land in the future, only 14 percent of households renting-out land responded positively, while the comparable figure is 81 percent for households engaged in renting-in land. This shows the high level of demand compared to the meager supply of land. The third and final point relates to rules and regulations: in response to the question whether there are formal or

government rules and regulations which they think are making land transaction difficult, only10 percent of respondents under renting-out category said "yes", compared to 20 percent of respondents from renting-in category.

The main problems mentioned, especially by respondents who are engaged in renting-in land, include restrictions on the amount of land and time period of rental, the requirement for reporting and getting approval from authorities and the requirement for agreement of family members. These issues were also raised and confirmed as constraints to land transaction in KIIs and FGDs. This is not to say that the formal legal provisions are strictly followed by the actors in land transaction. Nor are the legal provisions on land rental are well known by all those who engage in land transaction. However, there is always the fear of losing land rights by engaging in transaction which can be interpreted as illegal and which can invite the unwelcomed intervention of local authorities. This shows that land transaction and tenure security or insecurity are closely related or inseparable phenomena and without secure land rights a robust land market is difficult to envisage.

Size-distribution of land holdings

In this section we present our findings on a key theme of the study which has vital implications for livelihoods, namely size distribution of landholdings. Size-distribution refers to the distribution of land among households who have formally recognized landholdings rights in the case study areas. Before presenting the data, we would like to note that the primary focus of the present study is on land-related constraints to rural livelihoods in densely populated highland areas of SNNPR characterized by land shortage and very small and declining size of holdings. However, as we have noted in the methodology section, we have included deliberately and for comparative purposes one site with a different profile namely Shamsa-Misse (in Shashogoworeda, Hadiya zone). We have to take this condition into account when we interpret data on size-distribution of holdings presented below.

The data on the size distribution of land holdings of sample households is summarized in Table 9.Land scarcity is reflected in the data for the two densely populated sites: in Doge-Weyibo (Boloso-Sore) the landholding of 67 percent of households is below 0.25 ha, and the landholding of nearly 90 percent of households is below 0.5 ha. In this site, the average size of holding is 0.32 ha. In Ancha-Sedicho (Doyo-Gena/Kembata), the size of land holdings of 44 percent of households is less than 0.25 ha and 83 percent of holdings are below 0.50 ha, with an average of 0.42 ha. As expected a different situation prevails in the third site, namely Shamsa-Misse: in this site all land holdings of the sample households are above 0.5 ha and the average size (1.42 ha) is more than four times the average for Doge-Weyibo and more than three times the average for Ancha-Sedicho.

Table 9. Percent distribution of sample households by size of land holding

Size of Holding (ha)	AnchaSedicho (N=75)	Doge-Weyibo (N=64)	Shamsa-Misse (N=69)	All Kebeles (N=208)
≤0.25	44	67.2	--	36.5
0.26-0.50	38.7	21.9	--	20.7
0.51-1.00	17.3	10.9	30.4	19.7
1.01-1.50	--	--	42.0	13.9
>1.50	--	--	27.5	9.1
Total	100	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean (ha/HH)	0.42	0.32	1.42	0.7

The distribution of households by size of holdings alone is not a sufficient parameter when examining size distribution of holdings. Since size of holding matters due to its implication for household production and income, it is necessary to look into distribution of land area and population by size of holdings. Data on these aspects of access to land summarized in Table 10 indicate a number of points: first, the share of land area by size of land holdings is not proportionate with the share of population: for example, households in the first size class (≤0.25) make up 34.3 percent of the total population of the sample households, but their share from the total land area is only 10.6 percent. Generally, with increasing size-class of holdings, the gap between share of population and area decreases and in the highest size classes it is reversed: for example, households in the top size class (≥1.5 ha) constitute only 10 percent of the population but control 26 percent of the land area. We have observed the existence of similar patterns or tendency in other data sets on size distribution of holdings, but the tendency appears to be high in the case of our sample.

Table 10. Distribution of population, land area and household size by size of holdings

Size of Holding	Percent			Average	Average Holding	
(ha)	Households	Population	Land Area	HH Size	Per Household	Per Capita
≤0.25	36.5	34.3	10.6	5.9	0.2	0.04
0.26-0.50	22.6	21.8	14.8	6.1	0.5	0.08
0.51-1.00	17.3	18.5	19.6	6.7	0.8	0.12
1.01-1.50	14.4	15.0	28.8	6.5	1.4	0.22
>1.50	9.1	10.5	26.3	7.3	2.1	0.29
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	6.3	0.7	0.11

Furthermore, the data in the Table show very small increases in average household size with increasing size of land holding, indicating weak association between the two variables. This finding may appear to diverge from the common assumption about the close relationship between family size and size of holdings and relatively egalitarian distribution of land. However, before jumping to any conclusion, we have to examine data from other sources to see broader patterns. What matters the most in livelihood terms is how much land households have at their disposal in order to meet their basic needs: if we take households within the smallest size-class of holdings (≤0.25), containing 33 percent of households and supporting 34 percent of the total population in our sample, we find that they subsist on average holdings as small as 0.2 ha per households and 0.04 ha per capita.

Table 11: Average farm and household size by Region and selected Zones (2013/14)

Region/Zone	Average	Size of Cultivated Land (ha)		
	Household Size	Per Household	Per Capita	Percent ≤0.5 ha
Country Total	5.13	0.95	0.18	35.35
Tigray	4.95	0.97	0.20	35.96
Amhara	4.63	1.08	0.23	27.79
Oromia	5.43	1.21	0.22	24.75
SNNPR	5.29	0.46	0.09	56.75
Wolayita	5.11	0.40	0.08	53.59
Kembata	5.65	0.43	0.08	56.13
Hadiya	5.83	0.60	0.10	39.86

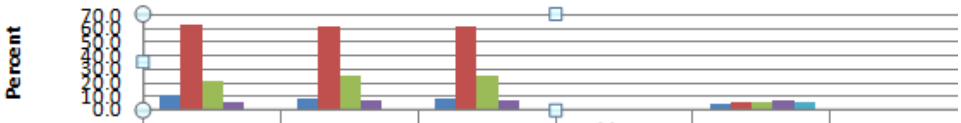
Source: CSA (2014).

In order to relate our findings to the broader patterns of size-distribution of holdings we have summarized data extracted from CSA agricultural sample survey for the 2013/14 season on average size of cultivated land holding by region and selected zones. The average cultivated land holding in SNNPR (0.46 ha per household and 0.09 ha per capita) is less than half of the national average (0.95 and 0.18 ha) and significantly smaller than the average holdings in the other three regions. The average holdings in the two more densely populated zones in our case study areas are smaller than the average for SNNPR: 0.40 per household and 0.08 ha per capita for Wolayita and 0.43 ha per household and 0.08 ha per capita for Kembata. We should also note that while the national average for the proportion of households with holdings less than 0.5 hectare is 35 percent, the corresponding figure for SNNPR is about 57 percent; the proportions for Wolayita and Kembata are close to the regional average.

We should note that even zones are large and diverse entities with significant variations at woreda and kebele levels. The only representative source we know which provides data on size distribution of holdings disaggregated at woreda level is the 2001/02 Agricultural Census Enumeration. Although out-dated, we use data from this source for Boloso-Sore woreda to illustrate our point. Boloso-Sore is one of the most densely populated woredas in SNNPR and Wolayita. As we can see from Figure 3.4, the average size of holdings for the woreda in 2001/02 was only 0.26 ha per household and 0.05 ha per capita. The proportion of households with holdings less than 0.5 ha is about 73 percent.These figures are lower than the data from our sample but also half the average for SNNPR and significantly lower than the average for Wolayita zone.

Another important pattern that emerges from the Boloso-Sore data relates to distribution of population and land area by size of holdings and the relationship between family size and size of landholdings. The skewed relationship between share of population and land area observed in our sample does not appear in theBoloso-Sore data (see Figure 4). Population and land area tend to be evenly or proportionately distributed by size of holdings: for example, the share of households in the lowest size-class (less than 0.10 ha) is 7.6 % for population and 7.7 % for land area. These households on the average support 3.4 persons with 0.15 ha of land per household and 0.04 ha per capita. The same relationship holds for the other class of holdings and the data show a more robust positive relationship between household size and size of holdings. Does this imply that the greater the level of land scarcity and the smaller the size of holdings the more egalitarian the size-distribution of holdings tend to be

Figure 4. Distribution of households, population and cultivated land by size of holdings in Boloso Sore woreda (2001/02)



	% Household	% Population	% Land Area	Mean Holding (ha/HH)	Household Size	Per Capita Holding
Under 0.10	10.2	7.6	7.7	0.15	3.6	0.04
0.10 – 0.50	62.9	60.4	60.8	0.26	4.6	0.06
0.51 – 1.0	21.3	24.2	24.4	0.27	5.4	0.05
1.01 – 2.0	5.2	7.1	7.1	0.39	6.5	0.06
Average				0.26	4.8	0.05

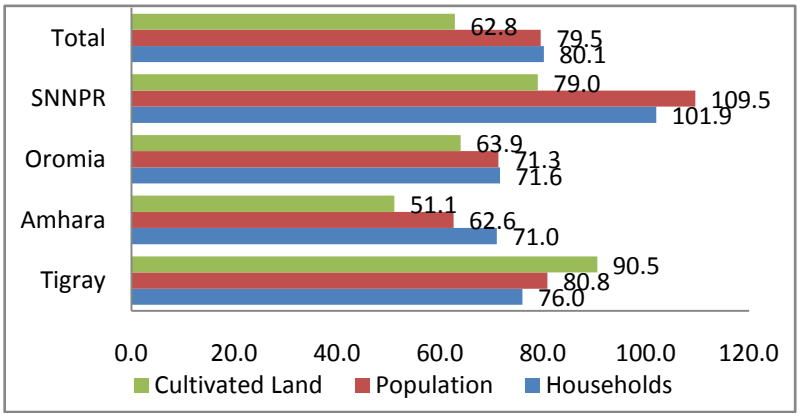
Source: Central Agricultural Census Commission (2003).

Although the issue of declining size and fragmentation of holdings is a critical concern, there is no time series empirical data to estimate the precise magnitude of the decline over time, especially at the local and regional level. There are some estimates at the national level which show significant decline in the average size of holdings: according to one source for example, the average per capita land holding declined from 0.501 ha in 1960-69 to 0.333 ha in 1980-89, and to0.218 ha in 2000-09[79]. The pattern of population growth, the proliferation of households and the sub-division of holdings is clearly discernible from more recent data as well: data from CSA agricultural sample surveys show that at the national level the number of rural agricultural households and the size of the total population increased by about 80 percent and the amount of cultivated land increased by nearly 63 percent in the period between 1995/96 and 2013/14 (see Figure 5).

What is remarkable about the Regional pattern of the data is that the change was significantly higher in SNNPR compared to other regions in spite of the fact that SNNPR is characterized by higher level of population density and land scarcity: in the period under consideration, the number of rural agricultural households and the size of the total population in SNNPR more than doubled (increasing by about 102 percent and 110 percent respectively) while the amount of land cultivated increased by 79 percent (Figure 5).

[79] These estimates are quoted from a comprehensive analysis of emerging land related constraints and issues in Africa and their policy implications, see Jayne et al. (2012).

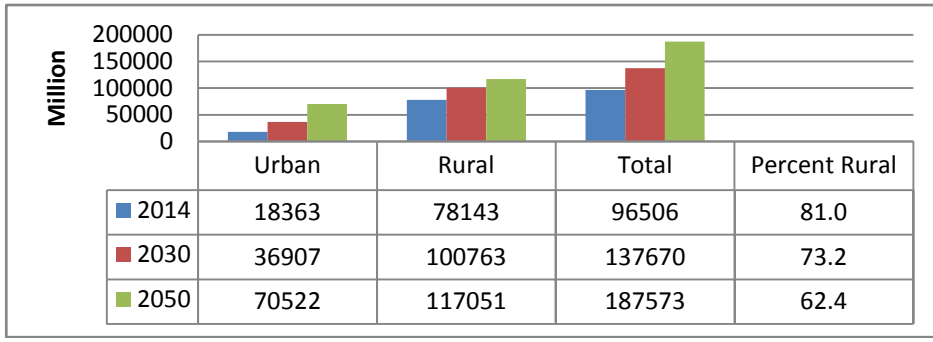
Figure 5: Percent change in the number of agricultural Hhds, population and cultivated land by Region between 1995/96 and 2013/14



Source: CSA (1996a, 2014).

When addressing the issue of demographic dynamics, access to land and rural livelihood, we have to take into account not only current conditions but also long term prospects. Due to the current demographic structure (characterized by predominantly young age of the population) and the persistence of high fertility, the rural population is expected to grow at a high rate quite for a long time in the future: for example according to the recent UN estimate, out of the top ten countries in the world with projected high rural population growth, Ethiopia is ranked second next to Nigeria. The rural population in Ethiopia will increase by nearly 50 percent from about 78 million in 2014 to more than 117 million in 2050 (see Figure 6). This is in spite of accelerated urbanization: in relative terms the proportion of the urban population will increase from 19 percent in 2014 to 37 percent in 2050. All in all however, Ethiopia will still remain the least urbanized and industrialized country in the world in 2050, which underscores the persistence of very high demographic pressure on land and other natural resources and the related challenges in the future.

Figure 6. Projected rural and urban population growth in Ethiopia (2014-2050)



	Urban	Rural	Total	Percent Rural
2014	18363	78143	96506	81.0
2030	36907	100763	137670	73.2
2050	70522	117051	187573	62.4

Source: United Nations (2015a).

Finally, we have to raise the most important question: to what extent has the challenge associated with population pressure on land and its implication for rural livelihood reflected in development policies and strategies? As it has been argued by Dessalegn, demographic dynamics and the structure of land holdings and their implications for rural livelihoods are not given sufficient attention in existing agricultural and rural development policies and strategies(Dessalegn, 2008: 138-140). Indeed, based on our findings and analysis, we argue that land-related constraints including small and declining size of holdings and landlessness (see the next section) should be the main starting points for re-orientation of agricultural and rural development policies and strategies within a broader framework of development policies which facilitate "structural transformation". The re-orientation of land tenure policy will have a key role in facilitating the process.

Landlessness and landless households

The following are the main research questions which we have attempted to answer in this section:

- Does landlessness exist in our study areas and more generally in rural Ethiopia at present?
- If yes, how do we define and measure it?
- What is the extent of landlessness and what are the main characteristics of landlessness and landless households?
- How much research and policy attention has been given to landlessness as an important issue or dimension of land and rural livelihoods?

It can be argued that at present landlessness tends to be a hidden, neglected and complex phenomenon. It has received very little research and policy attention as an important issue and challenge in its own right. This neglect partly emanates from a general tendency to assume that landlessness does not exist in the country or it is very rare. This in turn is attributed to the "egalitarian nature" of the land tenure system and to the nature of the land policy which is supposed to have ensured access to land for all. However, this assumption tends to mask the reality because, as we have shown in previous sections , in densely populated and land scarce areas where the current study was conducted, getting access to land has been very difficult whether it is through administrative redistribution or inheritance.Another reason why landlessness was not given serious attention is probably because it is a difficult subject to deal with. The difficulty starts from the question of how to define and measure landlessness. Since there is little empirical research on the subject, there is also no established or universally accepted methodology which can help guide research and analysis. For this reason, it will be useful if we briefly describe below the approach or method we used before presenting the findings on landlessness.

Defining and identifying landlessness

According to a working definition we adopted for the purpose of the study landless households in our study sites are those who have no formally recognized or registered landholding rights as distinct from households who have such rights[80]. An important aspect of this working definition is thedistinction between "ownership" (meaning formal landholding right) and "access" to land in general. Landless households as defined here can have access to land, for example through informal land transactions or the rental market as well as through borrowing or gift. These are all temporary and informal kinds of access while "ownership" entails relatively long term use or holding right.

Based on the above working definition, we used the community wealth ranking exercise and household listing conducted in each case study site for the actual identification of landless households. With the help of groups of key informants, consisting of *got or ketena* representatives and elders, we compiled a fresh list of all households in the respective kebeles. This was necessary because existing lists are not complete or up-to-date and tend to exclude landless households. On the other hand, in the process of compiling the complete list of households, the key informants identified for us the land holding status of each household in addition to ranking the households into wealth groups. Although it was a time consuming and relatively complex process, this approach worked well for us in identifying landless households based on our working definition. The landless here are mostly younger and more recently

[80] Land owning households pay land tax and tax payment receipts can be taken as a form of documentation of holding rights; more recently, landholding households have received a more formal documentation in the form of holding certificates as a result of the Land Registration and Certification Program implemented since in the mid-2000s.

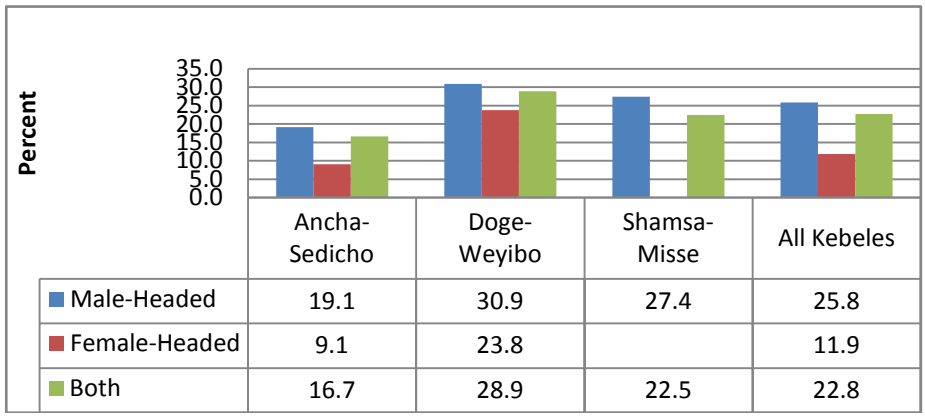
established households, who are commonly referred to in the study areas as "dependents": they are "dependent" on their parental households because they are often provided with some land, at least for building their own dwellings.

However, the land so transferred is not formally recognized and registered by the kebele administrations. This indicates the existence of extensive informal "land sharing" beyond land inherited but formally recognized and registered by kebele. From the KIIs and FGDs held in the case study sites, we have learned that there are two main reasons why such land is not formally transferred with separate title: (i) the plots are mostly very small, not more than housing or homestead plots, (ii) formal registration and titling of land transfer brings with it not only rights but also many obligations, obligations consisting of not only land-use tax but also many levies and contributions. Hence, considering the size of the plots, it is not worth the effort to incur the obligations by registering them separately.

Extent of landlessness

The outcome of the method described above was help us arrive at an estimate of the proportion of landless households in each site as summarized in Figure 7. On the average, about 23 percent of households are estimated to be landless in the three sites: the highest rate of landlessness was recorded in Doge-Weyibo(29 percent) in Bolos-Sore woreda and the lowest in Ancha-Sedicho (16.7 percent) and Shamsa-Misse (22.5 percent) in Doyo-Genaworeda, Kembata zone and Shashogoworeda, Hadiya zone respectively.

Figure 7. Proportion of landless households by gender of head and site



	Ancha-Sedicho	Doge-Weyibo	Shamsa-Misse	All Kebeles
Male-Headed	19.1	30.9	27.4	25.8
Female-Headed	9.1	23.8		11.9
Both	16.7	28.9	22.5	22.8

In all of the study sites, the scale of landlessness is significantly higher for male-headed households as compared to female-headed households. Landlessness for male-headed households (25.8 percent) was more than double that of female-headed

households. How do we interpret or understand this gender disparity? We have to recall that landlessness is mainly but not exclusively associated with male heads of younger or more recently established households. According to existing land inheritance or allocation practices in the study areas it is men who have formal rights. Women rarely inherit land from their parents or independently allocated land by the kebele. Since women move to the locality of their husbands when married it is assumed that they will get access to land through their husbands. It is mainly widows and to a lesser extent divorced women who commonly have formal landholding rights and are heads of independent households. Compared to men, it is more difficult or less common for landless women to establish independent households and continue to live in rural areas. They either migrate to urban areas or tend to be absorbed into other households as explained to us in KIIs and FGDs. These practices and processes tend to reduce the rate of landlessness among female headed households as compared to male-headed households.

As we have noted earlier there is very limited empirical research on landlessness and its characteristics which makes it difficult to contextualize or compare with our data. One source which provides data on landlessness disaggregated by Region is the large-scale or national survey on land tenure and agricultural production conducted by EEA/EEPRI in 2001/02. According to the findings of that survey the highest rate of landlessness prevailed in SNNPR (17.6 percent), against a national average of 10 percent (EEA/EEPRI, 2002:34). However, no information is provided on the method used to define and identify the landless. We are unable to locate any case studies conducted in SNNPR with data on landlessness. There are however, some case studies conducted in other Regions with estimates of landlessness. For example, according to the findings of a qualitative study conducted in three Kebeles/PAs in Adamitulu-JidoKombolchaworeda (in East Shewa zone of Oromia Region), 36 percent of households were landless in 1999, the proportion of landless households ranging between 44.8 percent and 21.2 percent in the three kebeles(Workneh, 2002: 143). The level of landlessness estimated for our case study area is lower than the level in this case study, although population density and land scarcity is higher in the former than the latter[81].

Characteristics of landless households

As we have indicated above, landlessness in the Ethiopian context tends to be an invisible and complex phenomenon. It is difficult not only to define and measure, but also to characterize and analyze in relation to other livelihood parameters such as food insecurity and poverty. The problem can be better illustrated if we use comparison: if we take for example the situation in some countries in South Asia (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) the so-called landless households tend to be clearly identifiable and distinct from land holding peasant or small holder farming households, landlords and

[81] For an overview of landlessness and other case study data see Dessalegn (2004: 14-16).

capitalist farmers. These households are not only landless but also rely almost exclusively on local or migrant farm and non-farm wage labor for their livelihood.

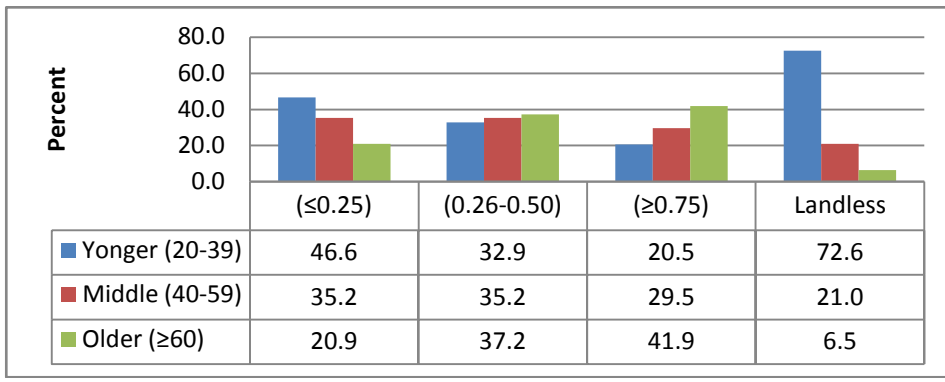
In contrast, landlessness in Ethiopia tends to be a more mixed and less differentiated phenomenon. The following are the main characteristics which are associated with landlessness and landless households in the case study areas:

(1) Generational divide. The issue of access to land and landlessness tends to have a generational dimension as already noted above. Landless households tend to be predominantly younger and more recently formed than landholding households. Empirically, the rate of landlessness tends to increase with decreasing age or vice versa as we can see from data depicted in Figure 8: for example, in our sample the rate of landlessness for the younger age group of household heads (≤39) is ten times higher than the rate for the older group (≥60).

(2) Informal access to land**.** As we havenoted earlier, landless households can and do get access to land through informal land sharing arrangements, as well as through informal land markets (sharecropping, cash rental), hence they engage in some farming activity.

(3) Non-farm livelihood activities. Landless households do participate in non-farm income generating activities like many other rural households, but they are more likely to rely on non-farm income sources than landholding households, precisely because of their limited land-based agricultural endeavors.

Figure 8. Distribution of sample households by age group, size of holding and landlessness



	(≤0.25)	(0.26-0.50)	(≥0.75)	Landless
Yonger (20-39)	46.6	32.9	20.5	72.6
Middle (40-59)	35.2	35.2	29.5	21.0
Older (≥60)	20.9	37.2	41.9	6.5

It is difficult to go beyond these general characteristics and identify clear and precise relationships between landlessness and other livelihood parameters and outcomes (e.g., access to non-land resources, income, food security, poverty, etc.), which have to be determined case by case, based on empirical evidence. As it is well-

known, many aspects of livelihoods have both objective and subjective dimensions, the latter relating to community perceptions and local understandings. Accordingly, for example in focus group discussions and wealth ranking exercises, local informants were reluctant to associate landlessness with poverty and food insecurity. The explanation for these reluctance are the same factors or characteristics identified above, namely the tendency for landless households to be younger, have informal access to land and engage in non-farm income generating activities. Apparently, it is difficult for people to view young and relatively better educated members of the community whose livelihood trajectories are not yet settled or completed as poor and vulnerable.

However, in spite of the various complexities noted above, landlessness is a real and not an imaginary phenomenon. As we have been arguing throughout this study, in the case study areas, the land frontier closed long ago, and the sub-division and diminution of holdings has reached a terminal stage. There is very limited possibility of establishing long term and secure access to viable holdings whether through administrative redistribution or inheritance. Considering the fact that high population growth will continue for a long time in the future which will only aggravate land scarcity, landlessness is highly likely to increase and become more visible in the future.

Addressing the problem in a sustainable manner obviously requires radical and urgent measures to move a significant proportion of the labor force out of the rural and agricultural sector and into the urban and industrial sector. This in turn will require equally radical reorientation of existing development policies and strategies in general and land policy in particular. It is not a problem which can be effectively addressed by tinkering at the margins (e.g. allocating marginal or hillside conservation land or even through resettlement). Moreover, unlike the situation on the eve of the 1975 land reform, there is no way of tackling landlessness through a radical redistributive reform for the obvious reasons we have been discussing in this study.

In addition, it goes without saying that the problem of landlessness should be given more serious attention in policy research and public discussion. The importance of the issue and the gravity of the challenge becomes very apparent if we put it in a broader and long term perspective: landlessness is mainly if not exclusively the problem of the youth or the younger generation and as such is rife with many potentially serious and explosive political, social and economic implications unless it is managed with appropriate and timely policy measures and strategies. More recently, the issue of rural youth, land and livelihoods is receiving some research attention[82]: the overwhelming evidence emerging from the limited available research is that the vast majority of rural youth as well as their parents believe that smallholder farming is not a viable livelihood option and prefer non-agricultural and urban occupations. While there are many factors which account for this pervasive attitude, the main

[82] For general review and analysis of this important subject see, Ben White (2012), Jennifer Leavy and Naomi Hossain (2014)

reason is the problem of land scarcity and the growing problem of youth landlessness[83].

It is instructive to contrast the emerging evidence on this subject with the stated policy stance of the government: the goal of the government is to create an educated, skilled and market oriented class of smallholder farmers[84]. However, the question is how would it possible to nurture such a class of smallholder farmers on the basis of very small and declining size of holdings, micro-holdings with weak land rights and limited tenure security at that. It should be noted that the younger generation as a relatively better educated group and exposed to many new ideas, will have different and higher aspirations and is very unlikely to accept or be satisfied with eking bare subsistence from very small and fragmented holdings as the earlier generation of peasant farmers did. Indeed, the growing alienation from rural and agricultural life is being amply demonstrated by rural youth from many parts of the country, including from the case study areas, by their "feet" as it were, namely the rising exodus of youth from rural areas (rural-urban migration as well as external and irregular migration). Of course, this argument and its policy implication also apply to the large number of near-landless or land-hungry households in the study areas.

Land rights, tenure security and land certification

One of the main premises of the present study is that there is no one single land issue or problem. The land question in relation to rural livelihoods has multiple dimensions and challenges. All dimensions or aspects are important in different ways and to varying degrees. In the earlier section, we have presented the findings of the study on access to land (including administrative allocation, inheritance, and informal land transaction) as well as size-distribution of holdings and landlessness. In this section we turn our attention to the other important aspects of our investigation on land, namely, land rights, tenure security, and land registration and certification. These are interrelated themes and potentially broad topics which require separate studies on their own. Accordingly, it is beyond the scope of the present study to present a comprehensive and detailed investigation and analysis. Our main focus is on perception of landholders on issues related to land rights, land laws, tenure security and on the process of implementation and impact of land registration and certification program.

Perception of land rights and tenure security

For the purpose of the study, we collected perception data from sample respondents on a set of themes related to knowledge of and attitude towards land laws and perception of tenure security. The selected indicators included in the perception study are those

[83] The few studies on rural youth, land and livelihood in Ethiopia include: SosinaBezu and Stein Holden (2014a), GetnetTadele and AsratAyalew (2012), USAID/Ethiopia (2012)

[84] See, MoFED (2003).

which constitute the corner stone of existing land laws and land tenure system in the country, including, for example, the sale and mortgage of land, inheritance, land rental, as well as tenure security. The data on these selected indicators are summarized in Table 12 below. The following are the main findings pertaining to knowledge of key land rights and legal provisions:

- Mortgage and sale of land**.** The majority of respondents know that land laws prohibit the mortgage and sale of land. However, considering the fact that this is one of the pillars of the existing land tenure policy, it is interesting that 13 percent of respondents think that mortgage and sale of land is allowed by law.

- Land inheritance. Regarding inheritance rights, again the majority of respondents are aware that existing land laws do not permit the bequeathing of land to any persons of landholders choice. Both the federal and SNNPR land-use and administration proclamations stipulate that land should be passed on to family members (defined as those who are living with the family and depend on the land for their livelihood). In spite of this, it is interesting to note that a substantial minority (25.5 percent) think that the law allows landholders to bequeath their holdings to any person they want.

- Land rentals: Are rural landholders entitled by law to rent-out all of their land if they want and for any length of period they wish? Although the majority of households are aware that landholders are not entitled to do so, a substantial proportion (20.5 percent) of respondents think that landholders can rent their land without restriction (Table 12).

T***able 12. Land rights and laws: knowledge and attitude of respondents***

Item	Number	Agree	Disagree	DK	Total
Mortgage and sale of land allowed by law	263	12.9	82.5	4.6	100.0
Land law allows inheritance to any person	263	25.5	73.4	1.1	100.0
Land law allows renting all land for any length of time	263	20.5	76.0	3.4	100.0
The sale and mortgage of land should be prohibited	263	58.6	39.9	1.5	100.0
Land should be inherited only to family members	263	49.8	49.4	0.8	100.0
There should be no restriction on land renting	262	57.9	37.3	4.8	100

IDK=I Don't Know

While the data summarized above relate to knowledge of land rights and laws, the same indicators are presented in reverse form to assess the attitude of respondents towards the land laws. Data summarized in Table 13 show that while the majority of respondents (59 percent) agreed that land sales and mortgage should be prohibited, a substantial proportion (40 percent) disagree with this standpoint.. Respondents are divided into equal proportions on the question of whether or not land should be bequeathed only to family members who live with the family and depend on the land for their livelihood (49.8 percent agree versus 49.4 percent disagree).

With regard to land renting, the majority of respondents (58 percent) agree while a substantial minority of respondents (37 percent) disagree with the statement that "for effective utilization of rural land there should be no restriction on the amount of land to be rented or the duration of renting time". As we have discussed earlier, sub-division and fragmentation of holdings is a serious structural problem of the land system in the study areas for which no effective remedy has been found so far. Nearly 60 percent of respondents agreed that it is difficult to enforce a minimum size of holdings due to acute shortage of land and lack of alternative employment opportunities for young people.

In order to assess farmers' perception of tenure security or insecurity, we used a few selected proxy indicators, including expectations about administrative land redistribution, risk of losing land due to renting and migration. As we can see from the data summarized in Table 13, 43 percent of respondents think that land distribution is likely in their kebele in the future. Although not a majority, this is a substantial proportion and indicates that the perceived threat of administrative redistribution remains important in spite of the land registration and certification program. Many peasants are aware that having a land holding certificate is no guarantee against administrative redistribution of land.

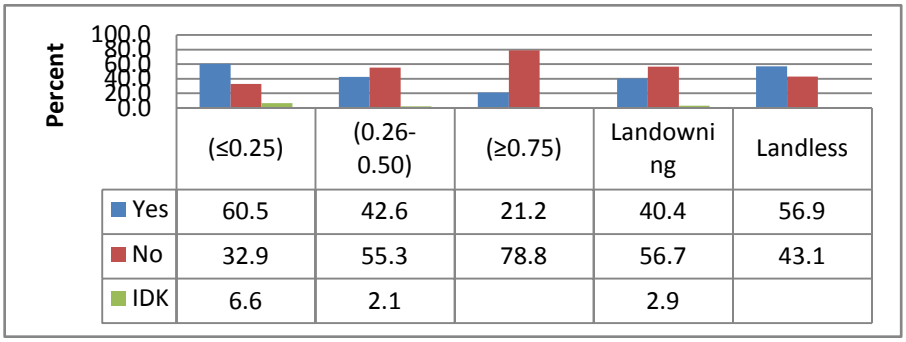
Table 13. Distribution of respondents by selected indicators of perception of tenure security (percent)

Item	Number	Agree	Disagree	IDK	Total
Land redistribution is likely in this kebele in the future	259	43.6	54.1	2.3	100.0
Legal minimum holding difficult to enforce	262	59.2	33.2	7.6	100.0
Fear of losing land preventing migration	263	28.5	70.7	0.8	100.0
Renting involves risk of losing land	259	23.9	75.7	0.4	100.0
Tenure security has improved	259	89.6	6.9	3.1	100.0

IDK=I Don't Know

Does perception of the likelihood of administrative redistribution vary by current landholding conditions of respondents? As we can see from Figure 9, the proportion of respondents who think that land redistribution is likely in the kebele decreases with size of holdings: for example, while 60 percent of respondents in the smallest size-class of holdings think that land redistribution will take place, only 21 percent do so in the largest size-class of holdings. Similarly, compared to landowning households, the majority of the landless think that redistribution is likely. How do we interpret this pattern: does it imply a mix of perception and wish along the line of potential losers and winners of administrative land redistribution? In the event of administrative redistribution it is households with relatively larger size of holdings who are more likely to be negatively affected while the landless and the land hungry are the potential beneficiaries.

Figure 9. Perception of land redistribution by landholding status



	(≤0.25)	(0.26-0.50)	(≥0.75)	Landowning	Landless
Yes	60.5	42.6	21.2	40.4	56.9
No	32.9	55.3	78.8	56.7	43.1
IDK	6.6	2.1		2.9	

IDK=I Don't Know

The two other main indicators of tenure security or insecurity relate to the potential risks associated with informal land transactions and migration: about 24 percent of respondents believe renting out involves the risk of losing the right to land. Similarly, 28.5 percent of respondents think that the fear of losing land rights is preventing people from migration. In both cases, the majority of respondents think otherwise, but the fact that tenure insecurity is a concern for a substantial minority should be taken as food for thought. Finally, we note that in spite of the sense of tenure insecurity noted by some, nearly 90 percent of respondents feel thattenure security has improved significantly in recent times.

Perception of land registration and certification

Processes of implementation

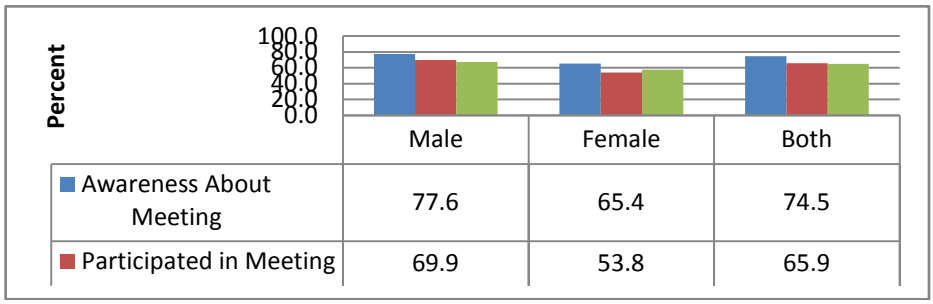
The land registration and certification program was implemented in two stages. In two of the case study sites (in Bolos-Sore Woreda, Wolayita zone and in ShashogoWoreda, Hadiya zone) the second level certification program is in the

process of implementation, while in the third site (Doyo-GenaWoreda, Kembata zone) only the first level certification was implemented. Although, in two of the sites the first stage was thus superseded by the implementation of the second, the brief discussion on implementation presented below covers both phases of the program. In all of the case study sites, the first stage of certification was implemented in the same period (2005/06), and followed more or less the same procedure, which we have summarized below under the following three headings: community consultation and participation; land demarcation and measurement; and registration and certification of holdings.

Community consultation and participation

The key actors in the implementation of the program at the local level were: woreda land administration staff, Development Agents (Das), kebele administrations, and elected kebele Land Administration Committees (LACs)[85]. Consultation meetings were held in each kebele and oral briefings about the objectives of the program, its benefits and procedures of implementation were given by woreda land administration staff together with DAs at the kebele level. Information from KIIs and FGDs indicate that 2 to 3 meetings were held at the kebele level. The data from the household survey indicate that 74.5 percent of respondents said they were aware that such meetings were held in their kebeles, about 66 percent reported that a member of the household (usually the head) attended at least one of the meetings, and 65 percent of the respondents said that they have received adequate information about the program (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Proportion of respondents aware about meetings, participated in meeting and received adequate information about the LRCP



[85] The exact title of the institutions of land administration at various levels (woreda, zone, region) have been changing due to frequent restructuring: at the time of the fieldwork (September-December, 2015) the full title of the institutions in the study woredas was **"Land Administration and Use and Environmental Protection Work Process"** under the Woreda Office of Agriculture. For the purpose of convenience we will use the title woreda land administration office.

According to information obtained from KIIs and FGDs, the following were given as the objectives of the land registration and certification program: (i) it will enhance land tenure security (ii) it will reduce conflict and litigation related to land, and (iii) it will facilitate modern land use planning and encourage investment and land conservation. However, it was also clear from the KIIs and FGDs that the program was believed to include two additional unofficial purposes or "hidden agendas": according to local rumor the program was said to be a prelude to new tax assessment as well as administrative redistribution of land. At first the rumor was believed not only by ordinary community members but also by kebele officials and members of the LACs, however, later the rumor was found to be untrue. Our household survey data indicate that the majority of respondents believe that the main purpose of the program was to promote tenure security.

The burden of implementing the program at the kebele level rested on the shoulder of the members of the LACs. In all of our study sites we were informed that LAC members were elected during the initial consultation meetings held in each kebele, they received training and were provided with technical support and guidance by woreda land administration office staff and DAs. In each study site, group interviews were held with members of LACs. In spite of turnovers, some members of LACs in the study kebeles have been serving from the start of the certification program. The LACs consist of five members (there is one unelected DA member) and women are not represented in any of them, although the SNNPR land law stipulates that at least one woman should be included.

Land demarcation and measurement

Land measurement for the first level certification was undertaken by LACs using ropes and tapes, and each land holder together with his or her neighbors had to be present during the demarcation and measurement. The basic data collected about the holder and the land was then recorded on a form prepared for the purpose. According to LAC members, the accuracy of the measurements and demarcation of boundaries using the "low-tech" tools was a concern at the time; these deficiencies or limitations are being remedied by the second level certification. However, in the Ethiopian context we should not assume that land registration had to start from scratch. Farming households have been holding and operating their land for decades and the communities and the kebele administrations have more or less accurate information and knowledge about the holdings of members of the community. The first stage of measurement and registration basically involved the confirmation of existing holdings more than anything else. However, this does not mean that the process was entirely smooth: according to members of LACs interviewed for the study there were some problems related to boundary disputes and encroachment of community land. There were also a few cases of malpractices associated with attempts to illegally register rented-in land in the names of tenants instead of the "landlords", the true holders.

Household survey data on some indicators of the "quality" of the land measurement and demarcation process is summarized in Table 14. The great majority of respondents (96 percent) believed that the borders of their plots were accurately

demarcated during the land registration process, and 89 percent said their neighbors were present as witnesses during the demarcation and measurement process. At the same time, however, a substantial proportion of our respondents (27.3 percent) said that they faced land related dispute during the registration and certification process.

Table 14: Perception of some indicators of quality of land registration process (% Yes)

Item	Ancha-Sedicho	OgeWeyibo	Shamsa-Misse	All Kebeles
Border accurately demarcated	95.1	100	93.8	96.3
Neighbors present during demarcation	83.6	90.6	92.2	889
Dispute during registration	19.7	31.7	30.5	27.3
Change in land holding after certification	11.5	9.5	27.7	16.4
If yes, change reported to kebele	14.3	0	29.0	23.8

Registration and certification of holdings

The first level land registration and certification process was completed when data was recorded in registry books and certificate were issued to households: data collected from the field were transferred to land registry books kept at woreda land administration offics as well as at kebele administrations: the woreda book of registry (known as *baher-mezgeb* in Amharic) is a bulky and unwieldy document in which a summary of the basic information of land holding households and their holdings is recorded for all kebeles in the respective woredas. The kebele land registry is a smaller version of the woreda land registry, and both lack space for updating information on changes in land holdings.

The certificate of holding given to households contains basic information about the landholder (name of head, spouse, list of household members), the holding (size, type of land use, boundary, location), and the rights and obligations of the landholder. In monogamous male-headed households, the name and photograph of both husband and wife appear on the same page of the certificate in all sites, which is commonly referred to in the literature as "joint certification". In the case of polygamous households, the names and photograph of the head and one of the wives appears on the certificate, while the names of the other wife/wives is simply listed along with other members of the household. Which of the wives is included as joint holder? We were told that it varied and depended on preference of the husband: it could be the senior wife or the favorite wife. Hence, a great deal of uncertainty and lack of clear guidelines prevails with regard to certification of holdings among polygamous households. The expenses of first level certificate covered by households included a fee of two Birr and the cost of the photographs.

When we come to the second level certification, the process of implementation is more advanced in Boloso-Sore woreda, and our case study kebele(Doge-Weyibo) is one of the seven kebeles in the woreda in which the process has been completed and households have received the new land certificate (see Box 4). On the other hand, in Shashogoworeda, only a land survey was undertaken in several kebeles including in our case study kebele (Shamsa-Misse); no certificate was issued at the time of the field work.

Box 4. Implementation of 2nd level land certification in Boloso-Sore woreda and Doge-Weyibokebele

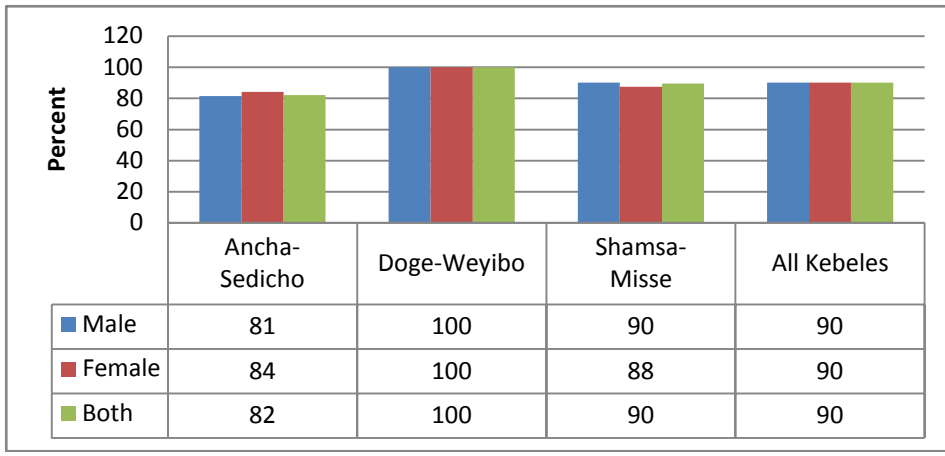
- Boloso-Sore is one of the three pilot woredas in Wolayita for the 2nd level LRCP
- Registration and certification underway in 21 kebeles out of 29 rural kebeles
- Out of the 21 kebeles, implementation completed in 7 kebeles, in the remaining only surveying and measurement undertaken and certificate will follow
- A total of 7,211 households (5264 male and 1947 female headed households) have received 2nd level certificate
- The land of 3425 households (2793 male and 632 female headed) surveyed and awaiting certificate
- As a pilot program, all households received the 2nd level certificate free of charge
- Doge-Weyibo (our case study kebele) is one of the seven kebeles in Boloso-Sore where the 2nd level land certification is completed
- In Doge-Weyibo 722 plots covering an area of 383.75 ha was surveyed and 540 households received the second level certificate

(Source: Land Administration and Use and Environmental Protection Work Process, Boloso-Sore Woreda Office of Agriculture)

Unlike the first stage, the implementation of the second stage is largely technical in nature, and did not require community meetings or consultation as such. However, information about the implementation process was transmitted to communities from woreda land administration offices through the LACs. Land surveyors employed on contract basis were deployed to undertake the GPS-based surveying and measurement in the respective kebeles. Data collected from the field was encoded into computers in woreda land administration offices and basic maps of plots and new landholding certificates are prepared and distributed to land holders free of charge. A sample of the second level certificate and a plot map from Boloso-Sore woreda Doge-Weyibokebele shows that the information included in the certificate are

the same as those in the first level certificate. The second level certification included not only individual or household land but also of community and government holdings.

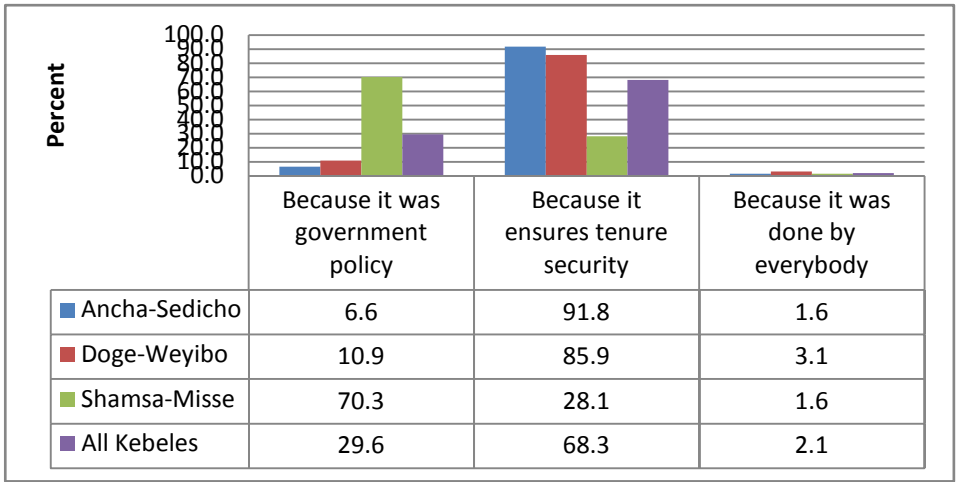
Figure 11. Proportion of sample households with holding certificate by sex of head



	Ancha-Sedicho	Doge-Weyibo	Shamsa-Misse	All Kebeles
Male	81	100	90	90
Female	84	100	88	90
Both	82	100	90	90

As we can see from data summarized in Figure 11, on the average 90 percent of households in the case study kebeles have received land holding certificates and the proportion is equal for both male and female-headed households. In the case of Doge-Weyibokebele (Boloso-Sore), the reference is to second level certificates while in the other two sites the data refer to first level certificates. Survey data depicted in Figure 12 indicate that the majority of respondents (68 percent) wanted or decided to get the land holding certificate because they believe that it will ensure tenure security and about 30 percent because it was government policy.

Figure 12. Why did you decide to get landholding certificate



	Because it was government policy	Because it ensures tenure security	Because it was done by everybody
Ancha-Sedicho	6.6	91.8	1.6
Doge-Weyibo	10.9	85.9	3.1
Shamsa-Misse	70.3	28.1	1.6
All Kebeles	29.6	68.3	2.1

Perception of impact

Eight items were included in the perception survey as indicators of the impact of the land registration program in the study areas and the data is summarized in Table 15 below. Overall, we can say that the program was favorably perceived by respondents with regard to most of the indicators. In terms of proportion of respondents, the highest favorable assessment is given to land-related conflict and land rights of women: 86 percent of respondents think that land-related conflict has decreased since the program was implemented in their kebeles. Similarly, 86 percent believe that the program has enhanced or improved the land rights of women.

Nearly 80 percent of respondents also think that farmers' knowledge about land laws has increased after the program. The majority (67.4 percent) of respondents believe that the fear of administrative land redistribution has decreased, while according to a substantial minority of respondents (20.2 percent) the risk has increased, and 8.8 percent see no change. The impact of the land certification program was also favorably perceived by the majority of farmers in relation to improved land conservation (74 percent), agricultural productivity (73.6 percent) and food security (64 percent). The only clear negative assessment of the effects of the program relates to land rental: 59 percent of respondents believed that land transactions has decreased since the implementation of the program in their kebeles[86].

[86] This finding on land rental is consistent with the finding of another survey conducted in southern Ethiopia (districts in Oromiyaand SNNPR), see Holden and Tewodros (2008: 6).

Table 15. Perception of the impact of land registration and certification

Impact Indicators	Responses(Percent)			
	Decreased	Increased	No Change	I Don't Know
Land-related conflict	86.5	4.7	7.8	1.0
Land transaction	59.1	20.2	17.1	3.6
Farmer's knowledge of land laws	13.0	79.8	4.7	2.6
Fear of redistribution of land	67.4	20.2	8.8	3.6
Improved management of land	19.7	74.1	5.2	1.0
Agricultural productivity	20.2	73.6	6.2	-
Food security	31.4	63.9	4.7	-
Land rights of women	5.2	86.0	7.3	1.6

To sum-up, the implementation of the land registration and certification program in Ethiopia was a massive operation conducted on a campaign basis with a mix of largely top-down planning but also local participation in implementation. In the literature, various euphemisms such as "systematic", "broad-scale", etc. are used to refer to this key feature of implementation of the program. If implementation was fast, low-cost and "participatory", that was because hundreds of thousands of LAC members worked long hours for months without payment. It is also in light of the key features of the program noted above that we should scrutinize many of the exaggerated claims about the accuracy, transparency, fairness (absence of "elite capture") etc. of the program in Ethiopia often made in comparison with experiences of land "registration and titling" programs in other African countries. The differences in the nature and context of the two type of exercises are often blithely ignored or understated: for example, the original land registration and titling programs in some African countries involved a radical change in the nature of land tenure itself (from customary communal to private free hold tenure and not simply confirming existing land use rights) and was undertaken on the basis of demand by landowners not as a massive campaign-based undertaking among other features.

Not surprisingly, in all of the case study areas the common problem identified by woreda land administration staff and kebele LACs was lack of adequate preparation, limited resources, heavy work load, etc. which affected the quality of

implementation. However, in spite of these limitations and the initial uncertainty and rumor about its "hidden agendas", the program was welcomed and eventually appreciated by the rural population. In addition, the limitations associated with the first stage are being rectified through the implementation of the second level[87]. Farmers have welcomed the second level certification precisely because it includes more accurate measurement and demarcation with maps of plots.

Although farmers in the case study areas have a generally favorable perception of the impact of the program, there remains the crucial question of the extent to which the program has enhanced tenure security which is the key objective of the program and which is the crucial element in the complex linkage from which the expected positive outcomes are expected to flow. Again, although most of the available studies have already reported findings showing the positive impact of land certification on tenure security and related outcomes, we believe that there are very important questions which have to be addressed[88]: for example, in spite of land certification, a substantial proportion of farmers in the case study areas believe that administrative land redistribution will take place in their communities in the future. It is to be recalled that administrative redistribution has been the main source of tenure insecurity. The fact that many farmers continue to believe that land certification does not protect them from enforced administrative redistribution requires a serious rethinking about the linkage between land certification and tenure security.Similarly, the majority of respondents believe that land registration and certification has negatively affected informal land transaction. These are key areas of land rights and tenure security where gaps are visible and which highlight the need for more work to be done rather than resting satisfied with the land registration and certification program as implemented so far.

Finally, we note that in spite of our skeptical remarks about the impact of land certification on tenure security and associated short term outcomes, we believe that the program can serve as a valuable foundation to strengthen land rights and promote more secure and transferable rights. In this regard, the program: (i) can discourage if not totally eliminate the threat of administrative land redistribution because much has been invested already in the implementation of the program which means that the resumption of any large-scale administrative land redistribution would mean a waste of all the efforts and investments made on the program[89] and (ii) can serve as a basis

[87] The weaknesses of the first stage land certification which are being rectified by the second level certification include: absence of plot maps, lack of space in the land registry books for updating changes in land holding (due to inheritance, divorce, etc.) and in general lack of system for proper storage, analysis and dissemination of data and information which a modern system of land administration requires, see Dessalegn (2009), Sosina and Holden (2014b).

[88] For a more balanced but critical analysis of the effect of land certification on tenure security based on empirical case studies in Northern and Southern part of the country, see Dessalegn (2009).

[89] See, Dessalegn (2009).

for creating a more modern, decentralized and effective land administration system, especially if more effort and investment is made in establishing and capacitating institutions of land administration at kebele and woreda levels[90].

Land and livelihoods: linkages and responses

The basic premise of the present study is that land is the most important asset on which the livelihood of rural agricultural households is based. However, land is not the only productive asset and cannot be effectively utilized without access to complementary resources. In addition, it should be noted that the challenges smallholder families face in their struggle to construct secure livelihood arise not only from land-related constraints but also from problems of access to other productive resources. Furthermore, the study of access to land and non-land assets is not an end by itself but a means for understanding the nature, dynamics and constraints associated with rural livelihoods. In brief, the empirical investigation of land and non-land resources will be incomplete without the exploration of their linkages with livelihood strategies and outcomes. Accordingly, in this section we present the findings of the study on the relationship between access to land and: (i) access to non-land resources, (ii) livelihood diversification, and (iii) livelihood security or wellbeing.

Land and access to non-land resources

We are not here attempting to undertake a comprehensive inventory of all types of assets or resources and analyze all aspects and mechanisms of access to them. The focus rather is on selected resources and on household ownership of these. Accordingly, we will briefly present the findings of the study on household ownership of livestock, access to credit and participation in community organizations, and explore the relationship between access to land and these resources. More attention is given to livestock for the obvious reason that livestock are, together with land, the most important livelihood asset of farming households.

Livestock holdings

All studies of agriculture and rural livelihoods in Ethiopia agree that livestock are one of the most important assets owned by farming households. In fact, sometimes it is argued that since land is state owned and subject to periodic redistribution, livestock has emerged as a more important asset than land. In any case, the important point which needs to be emphasized is the complementary nature of the role of land and livestock in smallholder mixed farming systems in which crop-livestock integration constitutes the foundation of livelihood. In such settings, the role of livestock is complex because different types of animals are raised for different purposes,

[90] For a comprehensive review and analysis of land administration issues and challenges in Ethiopia and strategies and investment need to strengthen the system, see World Bank (2012).

including: as a source of food and cash income, means of traction/plowing and transportation, source of manure for soil fertilization, as store of wealth and buffer against shocks, and as a basis for social prestige and wealth status. Indeed, due to this varied and complex nature of their role, it is difficult to accurately measure the contribution of livestock. It is often argued that the contribution of livestock tends to be underestimated and the sub-sector receives limited research and policy attention[91].

From the perspective of the present study, there are many crucial issues and questions about the role of livestock in rural livelihood including, for example:

- The complementarity and relative importance of land and livestock and the relationship between livestock and land holdings;
- Trends and variations in the size of livestock holdings and the specific characteristics and constraints associated with livestock management in enset-based farming systems;
- The role of population and land use dynamics in the evolution of farming systems including effects on livestock holdings and management: e.g., the expansion of cultivated land at the expense of grazing land, the decline and disappearance of common property resources and the impact of these processes on access to livestock feed;
- Constraints on livestock rearing and management and the relative importance of land-related constraints compared to other problems (e.g. shocks such as drought, disease, etc.) and responses and copping mechanism to these constraints.

These are broad and complex issues which cannot be fully addressed in the context of the present study. Our empirical investigation has a limited focus and we will first present below data on livestock holdings in the case study areas and then briefly explore the relationship between access to land and livestock holdings.

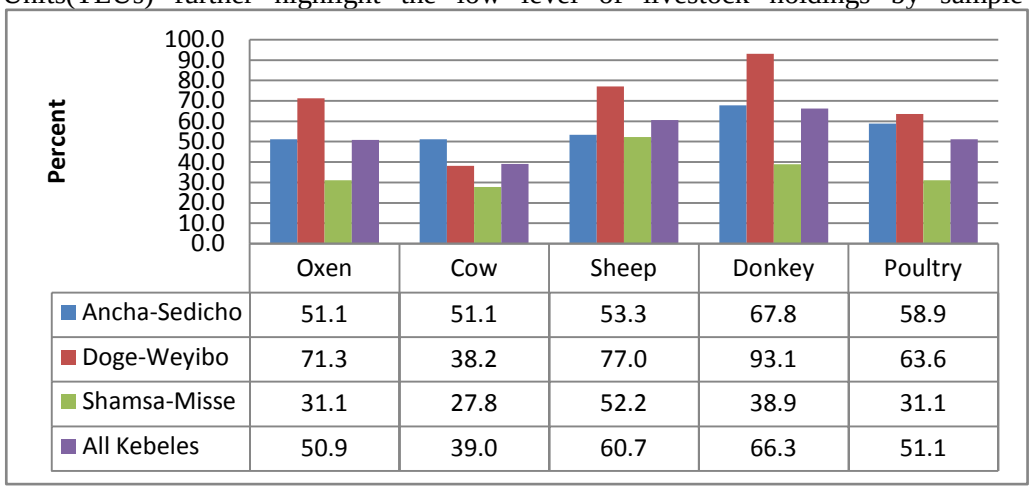
As we can see from data summarized in Figure 13, a significant proportion of sample households do not own livestock: for example, on the average 51 percent of sample households did not own oxen but the proportion varied by site from the highest (71.3 percent) in Doge-Weyibo, Boloso-Sore, Wolayita, to the lowest (31 percent) in Shamsa-Misse, Shashogo, Hadiya. Similarly, on the average 39 percent of households did not own cows, with the highest proportion (51.1 percent) in Ancha-Sedicho, Kembata, and the lowest proportion (27.8 percent) in Shamsa-Misse. With regard to other types of livestock, on the average 60.7, 66.3 and 51.1 percent of households did not own sheep, donkeys and poultry respectively.

[91] For comprehensive and detailed reviews of various aspects of the livestock sector in Ethiopia see, Behnke and Fitaweke (2011), Azage, et al.,(2010) and Sandford and Ashley (2008).

Overall, the data reveal that a large proportion of households do not own livestock although there are variations by site and type of livestock. With regard to variation by site, the highest level of shortage of livestock prevails in Doge-Weyibo, followed by Ancha-Sedicho and the lowest in Shamsa-Misse. This pattern corresponds to the differences in population pressure and land scarcity between the case study sites. As we have noted earlier,Shamsa-Misse differs from the other sites in that it is characterized by moderate level of population pressure and land scarcity and has a cereal-dominant agricultural system. These are the main factors which explain larger livestock holdings in Shamsa-Misse.

Figure 13. Percent households without livestock by site and type of livestock

Data on livestock holdings summarized in the form of Total Livestock Units(TLUs) further highlight the low level of livestock holdings by sample



	Oxen	Cow	Sheep	Donkey	Poultry
Ancha-Sedicho	51.1	51.1	53.3	67.8	58.9
Doge-Weyibo	71.3	38.2	77.0	93.1	63.6
Shamsa-Misse	31.1	27.8	52.2	38.9	31.1
All Kebeles	50.9	39.0	60.7	66.3	51.1

households in the case study areas (Table 16). On the average, 11 percent of households do not own any livestock, nearly 50 percent own 1 to 4 TLUs, and the average livestock holding is 2.7 TLUs per household. The data show that the highest livestock holding was found in Shamsa-Misse (4.1 TLUs) and the lowest in Doge-Weyibo (1.7 TLUs), Ancha-Sedicho falling in the middle (2.2 TLUs).

Table 16. Distribution of sample households (%) by size of livestock holdings

TLU	Ancha-	Doge-	Shamsa-	All Kebeles

	Sedicho	Weyibo	Misse		
00 (None)	11.1	14.4	7.8		11.1
<1.0	14.4	25.6	8.9		16.3
1.0-3.9	64.4	50.0	34.4		49.6
4.0-6.9	8.9	8.9	32.2		16.7
7.0-9.9	-	-	11.1	3.7	
10.0-12.99	1.1	1.1	4.4		2.2
≥13.0	-	-	1.1		0.4
Mean (TLU/HH)	2.2	1.7	4.1		2.7

Size of land and livestock holdings

Is there a relationship between size of livestock and land holdings? Is livestock holding independent from land holding? Data from the household survey summarized in Table 17 shows that there is a positive relationship between size of land and livestock holdings: on the average households with relatively large holdings (≥0.75 ha) own nearly three times more livestock (4.64 TLUs) than those with small holdings (≤0.25); medium households(holdings between 0.26 to 0.50 ha) falling in the middle (2.54 TLUs).

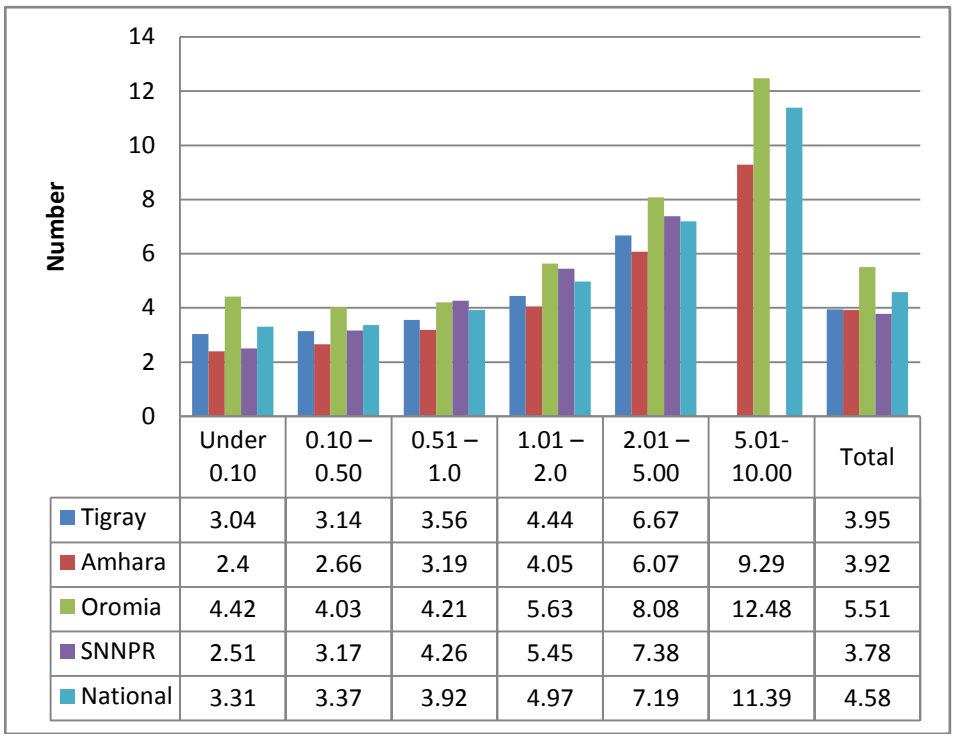
Table17. Average size of livestock holding (TLU) by size of land holding

Size of Holding (ha)	Total No of Livestock (TLU)	No of Households	Average Livestock Holding (TLU/HH)
Small (≤0.25)	131.22	76	1.73
Medium (0.26-0.75)	185.23	73	2.54
Large (>0.75)	273.85	59	4.64
Total	590.3	208	2.84

How widespread and consistent is the relationship between land size and livestock holdings shown in the data? It is difficult to answer this question because in spite of its importance, the relationship between land and livestock holdings is rarely explored in existing studies, and in the absence of recent and representative empirical data we cannot be certain how common the relationship is. However, we can briefly explore three observations on the relationship between land and livestock holdings and related issues: first, there is some evidence which shows that the positive relationship between land size and livestock holdings tends to apply more broadly. The only large-scale nationally representative survey which provides data on livestock holding disaggregated by size of land holding is the 1995/96 CSA Agricultural Sample Survey

on Livestock. Although dated, the CSA data summarized in Figure 14 clearly show that the average number of cattle owned per household consistently increases with size of land holding in all regions: for example, households in the land holding category of 2 to 5 hectares own more than double the number of cattle owned by households in the landholding category of 0.10 to 0.50 hectares.

Figure 14. Average Number of Cattled Per Household by Size of Land Holding and Region (1995/96



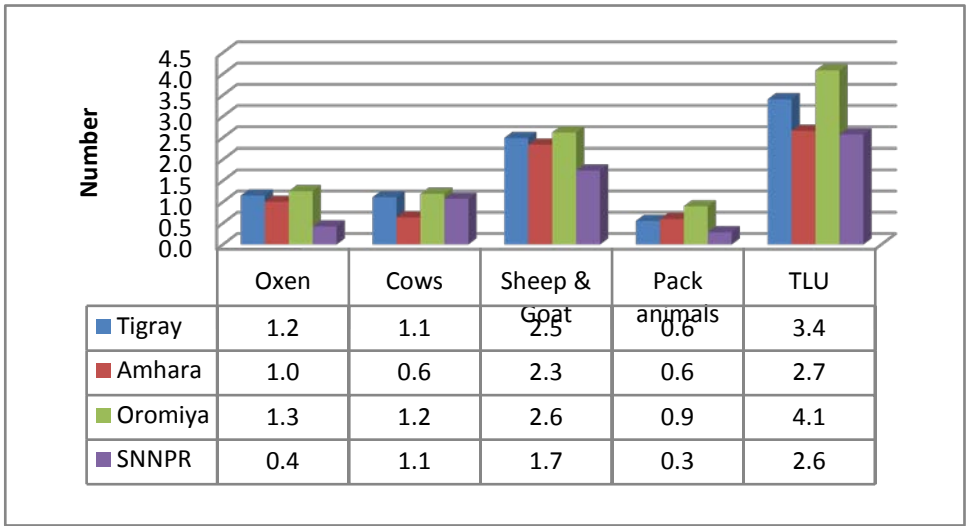
	Under 0.10	0.10 – 0.50	0.51 – 1.0	1.01 – 2.0	2.01 – 5.00	5.01- 10.00	Total
Tigray	3.04	3.14	3.56	4.44	6.67		3.95
Amhara	2.4	2.66	3.19	4.05	6.07	9.29	3.92
Oromia	4.42	4.03	4.21	5.63	8.08	12.48	5.51
SNNPR	2.51	3.17	4.26	5.45	7.38		3.78
National	3.31	3.37	3.92	4.97	7.19	11.39	4.58

Source: CSA (1996b)

Second, the available secondary sources consistently indicate that size of livestock holdings tend to be smaller in SNNPR than in other Regions. For example, data from a more recent large-scale survey conducted in the four major Regions shows that the average number of livestock owned by households tends to be lower in SNNPR for all types of livestock (except cows) as well as in terms of average livestock holdings as measured in TLU (see Figure 15). How do we explain this difference in livestock holdings? One factor can be the nature of the agricultural systems. The enset-based agricultural system dominant in SNNPR is characterized by a higher prevalence of perennial crops including enset which do not require as much plowing as cereal-based systems and this explains the significantly smaller number of

oxen in SNNPR: as we can see from Figure 15, the average number of oxen per household is only 0.4 in SNNPR compared to the national average of 1.1 and the figures for the other regions are more than twice that of SNNPR. However, we need a broader and dynamic perspective encompassing population and land-use dynamics and land scarcity in order to better understand the various patterns and trends associated with land and livestock outline above.

Figure 15. Average number of livestock owned by Region (2011



	Oxen	Cows	Sheep & Goat	Pack animals	TLU
Tigray	1.2	1.1	2.5	0.6	3.4
Amhara	1.0	0.6	2.3	0.6	2.7
Oromiya	1.3	1.2	2.6	0.9	4.1
SNNPR	0.4	1.1	1.7	0.3	2.6

Source: Based on IFPRI (2013:174).

The final and third point relates to trends in livestock holdings: although we do not have time series statistical data to accurately assess the trend, qualitative information from KIIs and FGDs conducted in the case study areas indicate that average size of livestock holding have been declining over time although the total numbers of livestock may have increased[92].

[92] Other qualitative studies also suggest similar trends: for example, according to one case study in Wolayita "Farmers commonly report that the household herd size has declined over time (from seven to eight cattle per household in the time of Emperor Haile Selassie to two to three animals per household in 1991), despite purchases from neighboringworedas" (FARM-Africa, 2006: 10). According to another source, in Sidama "What data are available suggest that a typical household kept seven to eight head of cattle, a number of small stock, and possibly a horse or two during Haile Selassie's time, while now the average household keeps two to three cattle, and maybe two or three sheep or goats. This negative downward cycle is a result of increased demands for cultivated land as a result of increasing population pressure. Changes in the system of land tenure also contribute to this trend" (see Brandt et al, 1997: 26).

Access to credit

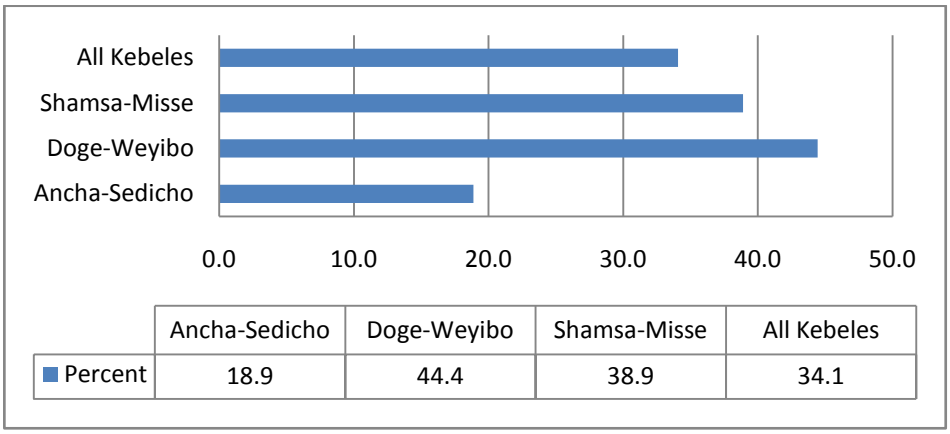
Although the system of smallholder agriculture is often characterized as subsistence in nature and although cash income is very low, farming households in the case study areas are enmeshed in the cash economy and highly dependent on the market for their livelihood. Cash is needed for various purposes, including purchase of basic consumer goods, agricultural inputs, payment of tax and contributions, etc. More importantly, a significant and increasing number of agricultural households are dependent on the market as net buyers of food[93]. This dispels the common view that since they are subsistence farmers, rural households depend on their own food production and are not exposed to the vagaries of the market. The dependence on the cash economy has compounded in recent years by the historically unprecedented inflation. As a result of these new inflationary trends, economic shocks has replaced drought as the leading type of shock reported by households.

For all of the above reasons, the issue of access to cash and credit is becoming increasingly important in the livelihood of rural households. Lack of access to credit was often identified as one of the main constraints to agricultural development, and households often depend on informal sources of credit such as money lenders and relatives. However, in recent years, the problem has been addressed to some extent by the emergence of micro-finance institutions (MFIs) and cooperatives as sources of credit for farming households.

We collected only limited empirical data on credit with a focus on household access and how access relates to other household characteristics, including access to land. As we can see from survey data depicted in Figure 16, on the average 34 percent of sample households had access to credit in the one year period preceding the survey: the level of access to credit varied by site ranging from about 19 percent in Ancha-Sedicho (Doyo-Gena, Kembata) to 44 percent in Doge-Weyibo (Boloso-Sore, Wolayita).

[93] According to one source: "Fifty-three percent of rural households are net buyers of grain, while only 38 percentage net sellers. Or, in 1996, an average production year, there were 15 percentage points more net cereal buyers in rural areas than there were net cereal sellers. The remaining eight percent of households were autarkic. This clearly goes against the prevailing belief that the majority of rural households are net cereal sellers" (World Bank, 2005: 136).

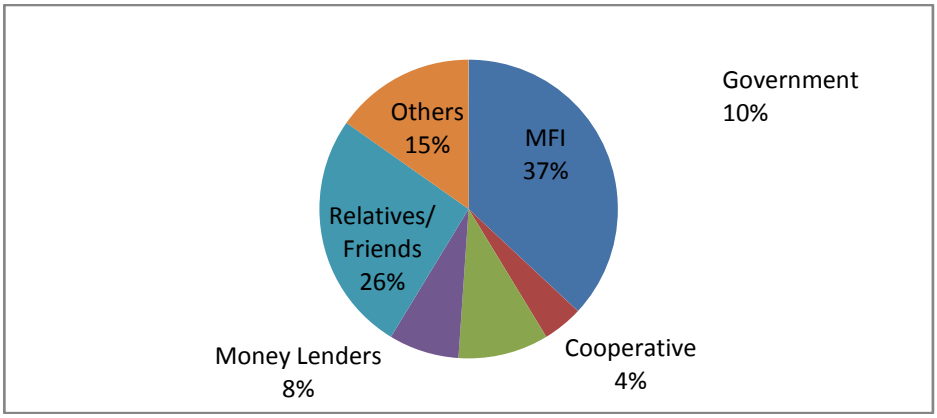
Figure 16. Proportion of sample households with access to credit



	Ancha-Sedicho	Doge-Weyibo	Shamsa-Misse	All Kebeles
Percent	18.9	44.4	38.9	34.1

Data on the source of credit summarized in Figure 17, show that households received credit from different sources: the two leading source of credit were MFIs (37 percent) and relatives/friends (26 percent). This confirms the rise of MFIs as sources of credit in rural areas. In the case study areas, the main MFI is OMO Microfinance which has region-wide operation in SNNPR and has branch offices at woreda level, and, more recently, has placed agents at kebele level.

Figure 17. Distribution of sample households by source of credit



The data in Table 18 show limited variation in access to credit by landholding status (land owning versus landless households) but significant differences by size of land holdings: a higher proportion of poor households (17 percent) in the small land size category had access to credit from MFI as compared to rich or better-off household (8.5 percent). The reverse is the case when it comes to credit from friends

and relatives: 18.6 percent of households with relatively large holdings compared to only 3.9 percent of households in the small land size category.

Access to credit appears to vary more significantly by sex of head and wealth status of households: significantly higher proportion of male-headed households (14.8 percent) had access to credit from MFI compared to female-headed households (5.1 percent). The data also indicate that access to credit varies significantly by household wealth status: relatively better-off households are more than twice as likely to have access to credit from MFI than poor households. However, the difference is small when it comes to credit from relatives or friends.

Table18.Access to credit by selected household characteristics

Characteristics		% Households with Access	
		MFI	Relatives/ Friends
Landholding	Landowning	13.0	8.3
	Landless	11.5	11.3
Size of Holding (ha)	Large (>0.75)	8.5	18.6
	Medium (0.26-0.75)	12.5	4.2
	Small (≤0.25)	17.1	3.9
Sex of Head	Male-Headed	14.8	9.6
	Female-Headed	5.1	6.8
Wealth Status	Better-off	19.1	7.5
	Middle	14.3	13.1
	Poor	7.8	6.9

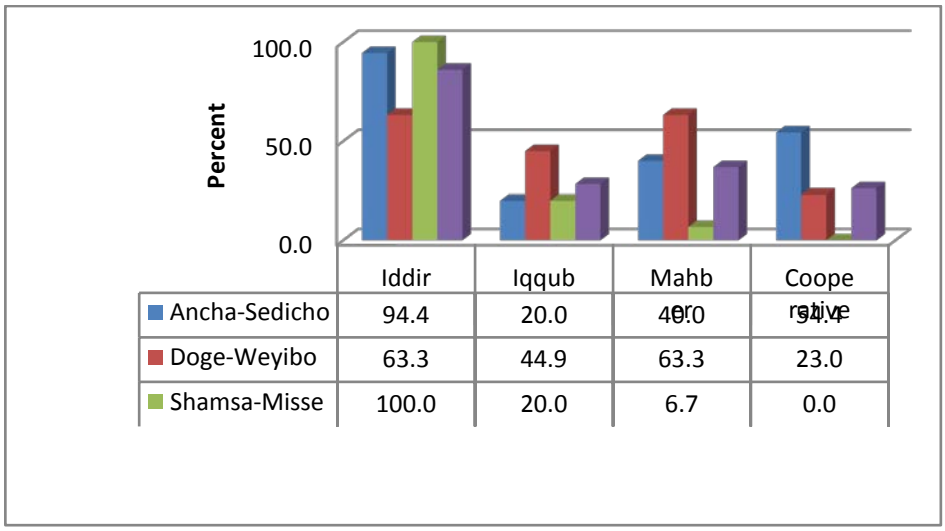
Participation in community organizations

Local community organizations constitute an integral part of economic and social life in the case study areas. Although characterized by different names and primary functions, the common or shared feature of the various local community organizations is that they are social networks which directly or indirectly facilitate access to and exchange of productive resources as well as being sources of informal social safety nets. In the livelihood approach, the role of such local community organizations is subsumed under the general notion of "social capital" and considered as one of five sets of livelihood assets. In this study we have not collected data on all types of local community organizations and our aim was not to investigate all aspects of the organizations. The data and description presented below highlights membership in selected local community organizations, namely *iddir*, *iqqub,mahber* and cooperatives, and briefly explores the relationship between membership in the local organizations and land and non-land indicators.

Data on membership of sample households in the local organizations is summarized in Figure 18 and the main findings are outlined below for each type of organization:

- *Iddir*, commonly known as "burial association", ranks as the most important local institution with the highest level of household membership. As we can see from Figure 18, on the average, 86 percent of households are members of i*ddir*. The level of membership varies by site, ranging from the highest (100 percent) in Shamsa-Misse to the lowest (63.3 percent) in Doge-Weyibo
- *Iqqub* can be characterized as an informal financial institution commonly called revolving saving and credit association (ROSCA). Only 28.3 percent of households were members of *iqqub*, with the highest rate of membership (45 percent) found in Doge-Weyibo and the lowest (20 percent) in the other two sites.
- *Mahber* is a "religious association" and on the average 36.8 percent of households were members of it, the highest membership occurring in Doge-Weyibo (63.3 percent) and the lowest in Shamsa-Misse (6.7 percent).
- *Cooperatives* differ from the others because they are "modern" and "formal" institutions compared to the others. The data show that cooperative membership is the lowest compared to the other organizations: on the average only 26.1 percent of households are members of cooperatives and membership levels vary from the highest (54.4 percent) in Ancha-Sedicho to none in Shamsa-Misse.

Figure 18. Distribution of sample households by participation in community organizations



Livelihood diversification

Livelihood diversification is one of the potential responses and coping mechanisms to population pressure and land scarcity along with such other responses and strategies as agricultural intensification and migration[94]. For this reason, livelihood diversification is directly relevant to the present study which is concerned with land and rural livelihood. A few introductory points are in order before we present our findings on the subject. First, rural livelihood diversification always implies the process of diversifying income generating activities away from and in addition to agriculture, and the agricultural household is often taken as the basic unit of analysis. In other words, agriculture is the benchmark in relation to which livelihood diversification occurs.

Second, livelihood diversification is an integral aspect of the livelihood approach which is based on a more holistic perspective transcending conventional spatial and sectoral divisions (such as urban versus rural and agricultural versus non-agricultural), and seeks rather to understand how rural agricultural households make a living by constructing a portfolio of diverse income generating activities. In recent years, livelihood diversification has become an important area of research, policy analysis and development intervention. However, there is very limited empirical and

[94] For a recent extensive review and re-examination of the various responses and coping mechanisms to population pressure and land scarcity in the African context, see Jayne et al. (2014).

policy oriented research on it in Ethiopia, although as we shall see below some progress has been made in recent years.

Third, it is important to note that livelihood diversification is a broad and complex subject and the data requirements to undertake comprehensive and detailed analyses of all its dimensions can be highly demanding[95].

It is important to note that the outcomes of the responses and strategies induced by population growth and land scarcity, including livelihood diversification, are not pre-determined. The process and outcomes of livelihood diversification (which can be positive or negative with regard to livelihood outcomes such as productivity, income, food security, poverty, and environmental sustainability) can vary depending on a host of contextual factors including the nature of policy and institutional context. We should also recognize that due to variations in methodology and context, the findings, conclusions and policy implications of different studies on livelihood diversification can be different and even contradictory.

Due to the complex and broad nature of the subject, it is necessary to be selective and focus on particular aspects which are relevant for the main objectives and research questions of a given study. In the context of the present study, the main focus is on the relationship between livelihood diversification and access to land. As noted above livelihood diversification is one of the main responses and coping mechanisms associated with population pressure and land scarcity and for this reason it is directly relevant to us. However, due to the broad scope of the study we collected very limited primary data[96]. In this regard, it is especially important to reiterate one limitation already indicated in the methodology chapter, namely the fact that we have not collected primary quantitative data on production and income. Accordingly, data and analysis presented below focus on the following areas:

1) Participation of households in different types of farm and non-farm livelihood activities;
2) Relationship between livelihood diversification and access to land and other household characteristics (such as gender and age of household heads and wealth status)
3) Brief recapitulation of issues related to population dynamics, land scarcity and livelihood diversification and related policy implications.

[95] For comprehensive and detailed review of the international literature on livelihood diversification and rural non-farm economy, see Ellis (2000) and Haggblade, et al. (2007).

[96] For comprehensive and detailed analysis of the rural non-farm economy in Ethiopia based on large-scale survey data, see World Bank (2009) and Loening et al. (2008). In addition, for data and comparative analysis of rural livelihood diversification in Ethiopia compared to selected African countries see Davis, et al. (2014).For case studies of livelihood diversification in SNNPR see, Carswell (2000) and Tegegne (2000).

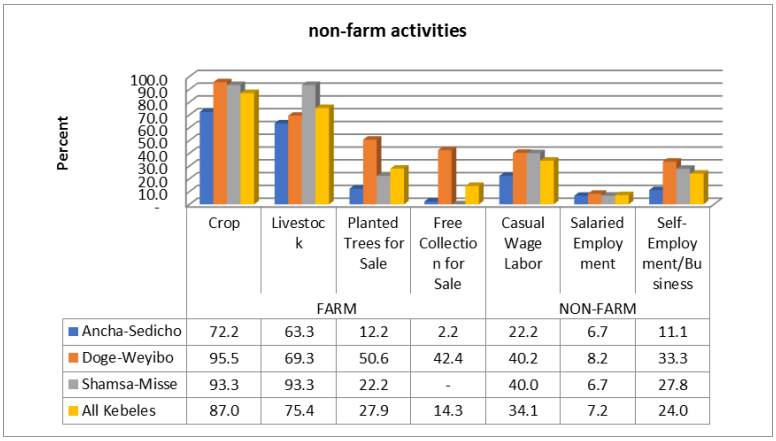
Participation in farm and non-farm activities

The distribution of sample households by type of different farm and non-farm income generating activities in which they engaged in the one year preceding the survey is summarized in Figure 19. The main findings are outlined below under farm and non-farm activities.

Farm activities

Not surprisingly, the majority of sample households were engaged in agricultural activities: as we can see from Figure 19, 87 percent and 75 percent of sample households were engaged in crop and livestock production activities respectively. We have also collected data on two activities which are related to agriculture or can be considered as land or natural resource-based activities. The first activity is planting trees for sale: it is interesting to note that about 28 percent of sample households have planted trees as a source of cash income: the proportion of households engaged in this activity was especially high in Doge-Weyibo (50.6 percent). We say this activity is interesting because it is rarely included and explicitly analyzed in existing surveys and studies inspite of the fact that planting trees (especially eucalyptus) by smallholder farmers has become an increasingly common activity in recent decades in various parts of the country including in our case study areas. The main reason for this trend is high demand for wood especially for eucalyptus pools due to the boom in urban construction activity. The fact that a substantial proportion of farming households in the study areas are engaging in this activity inspite of the acute scarcity of land indicates its profitability although it is not officially encouraged or provided with extension support. The second activity is the free collection and extraction of natural resources for sale or as source of cash income, including for example, grass, firewood, charcoal making, etc. This requires the existence of and access to local community or state land with such resources. Although, the case study areas at present are largely devoid of such land and resources, 14.3 percent of sample households said they have engaged in this type of activity in the period preceding the survey. While tree planting for sale depends on access to sizable land holding, free collection of natural resources is commonly viewed as a livelihood activity mainly engaged in by land-poor households with limited access to alternative sources of income.

Figure 19. Participation of sample households in farm and non-farm activities



	Crop	Livestock	Planted Trees for Sale	Free Collection for Sale	Casual Wage Labor	Salaried Employment	Self-Employment/Business
	FARM				NON-FARM		
Ancha-Sedicho	72.2	63.3	12.2	2.2	22.2	6.7	11.1
Doge-Weyibo	95.5	69.3	50.6	42.4	40.2	8.2	33.3
Shamsa-Misse	93.3	93.3	22.2	-	40.0	6.7	27.8
All Kebeles	87.0	75.4	27.9	14.3	34.1	7.2	24.0

Non-farm activities

Data on participation in non-farm activities are summarized under three sub-categories: casual wage labor and salaried employment on the one hand and non-farm self-employment/business activities on the other

Casual wage labor and salaried employment. On the average, 34 percent of sample households were engaged in casual wage labor (including both farm and non-farm hired labor) in the one year period preceding the survey. The rate of participation is higher in Doge-Weyibo and Shamsa-Misse (40 percent) and lower in Ancha-Sedicho (22.2 percent). On the other hand, only 7.2 percent of households reported a member in salaried employment. Generally, casual wage labor is considered a low-skill and low-return activity, engaged in by relatively poor households with limited opportunity for alternative farm and non-farm income while the opposite is true for regular salaried employment. Our data on participation in casual wage labor are fairly close to the findings from other surveys and case studies and highlight the increasing importance of wage labor as a livelihood strategy for land-poor households although in our case the data is presented in general terms (without distinction between migrant versus local, farm versus non-farm wage labor).

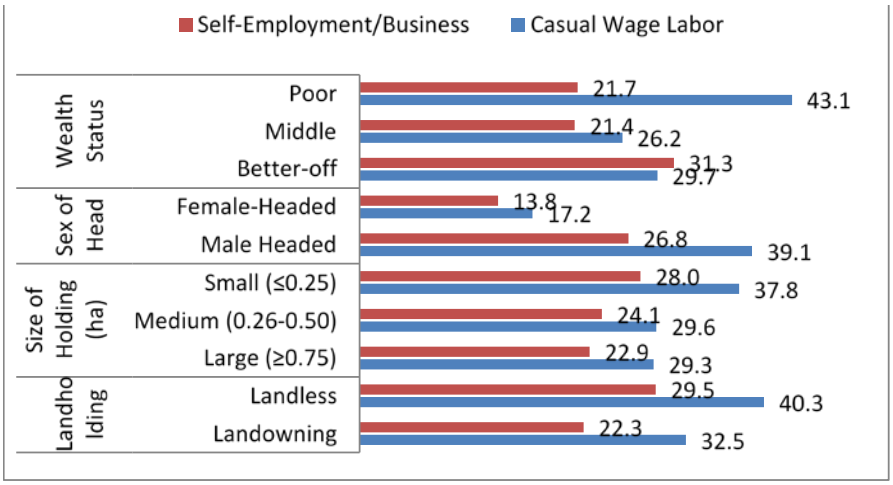
Non-farm self-employment/business. On the average, 24 percent of sample households have participated in non-farm self-employment or business activities. The highest participation rate (33.3 percent) was in Doge-Weyibo (Boloso-Sore, Wolayita) and the lowest (11.1 percent) in Ancha-Sedicho (Kembata). This category includes a wide range of non-farm income generating activities, commonly characterized as rural non-farm enterprises or household non-agricultural enterprises, and formally classified into three sub-categories: manufacturing, trade, and services. In reality petty-trade is the most widespread non-farm income generating activity, and it is important to note that trade in agricultural produce (crops, livestock and livestock by-products) forms the bulk of the trading activity. The next most common activity is the processing of food and brewing of local drinks, activities dominated by women. Artisanal or

handicraft activities (including pottery, basket and mat making, etc.), still survive and the products are visible in local markets. Another relatively new and emerging non-farm activity in the case study areas is transport service: including horse-drawn carts (*feres-gari*in Amharic) and motorbikes. This relatively new type of activity is dominated by young people based both in urban and rural areas and provide transport services for both rural and urban clients. For example, in Shamsa-Missekebele alone there were about 8 motorbikes which provide transport service between Bonosha (the woreda town) and the various rural kebeles. We were informed that, *feres-gari* started first and it is now being replaced by motorbikes as the preferred mode of transport. The same situation prevails in Boloso (Wolayita), although in this case the service providers are largely urban based (Areka, the woreda town and other small rural towns).

Variation in diversification and household characteristics

Data on household participation in non-farm activities disaggregated by indicators of access to land, sex of head and wealth status of sample households is summarized in Figure 20 and the main findings are the following. Participation non-farm activities shows some variation by indicators of access to land: accordingly, landless households have a higher participation rate in casual wage labor (40.3 percent) as compared to land owning households (32.5 percent). Similarly, the rate of participation of landless households in non-farm self-employment activities (29.5 percent) is higher than landowning households (22.3 percent). The data also show relatively significant differences in household participation in non-farm activities by size of landholding: for example, households with relatively smaller holdings ($\leq$0.25), have higher participation rate in casual wage labor (37.8 percent) compared to households with relatively large holdings ($\geq$0.75 ha) whose participation rate is 29.3 percent . Households with smaller land holdings also tend to have a relatively higher participation rate in non-farm self-employment activities.

Figure 20. Participation in non-farm activities by selected household characteristics (%)



Participation in non-farm activities also shows variations by gender and wealth status of sample households: as we can see from Figure 20,asignificantly higher proportion of male-headed households (39 percent) participate in casual wage labor as compared to female-headed households (17.2 percent). The rate of participation of male-headed households in self-employment activities (26.8 percent) is also higher than female-headed households (13.8 percent). Finally when we come to wealth status, the data indicate that poor households have higher participation rate in wage employment (43. 1 percent) compared to middle (26.2 percent) and rich households (29.7 percent). The pattern is reversed with regard to participation in self-employment activities in which case relatively rich households have higher participation rate (29.7 percent) as compared to poor households (21.7 percent).Most of the relationships between participation in non-farm activities and other household characteristics conform to expectations, for the obvious reason that households with limited access to land and low wealth status tend to compensate for limited income from agriculture by more participation in non-farm activities[97].

Population pressure, land Scarcity and livelihood diversification

Since the interest in livelihood diversification in this study emanates mainly from its potential relationship with access to land and land related constraints, it will be useful if we explore briefly the potential linkages separately. The potential linkages between population pressure and land scarcity on the one hand and livelihood diversification on the other can be viewed from two angles: the first one refers to the relationship between access to land and diversification at household level. At this level, decisions about livelihood diversification can be influenced by access to land in various ways: one pattern for example is that households facing more severe land constraints can be

[97]See for example, World Bank (2009) and Loening et al. (2008).

more motivated to engage in non-farm activities in order to compensate for limited income from agriculture. Certainly the empirical evidence from the present study and other sources indicate that access to land is one of the important determinants of variations in livelihood diversification among households. However, since livelihood diversification has many determinants and various dimensions, it is difficult to make universally applicable generalizations.

The second angle is variations in livelihood diversification between areas based on population pressure and land scarcity. The fact that livelihood diversification is often identified as one of the potential responses and coping mechanisms to growing population pressure and land scarcity implies among other things that higher levels of diversification can be expected in areas characterized by higher levels of population density and land scarcity. In this regard, one relevant question is, for example, can we attribute the higher level of household participation in non-farm activities in SNNPR compared to other Regions to higher population pressure and land scarcity in the Region? This is a difficult question to answer in any conclusive way because livelihood diversification is influenced by many factors other than population density and land scarcity. However, although more research and evidence is needed, we can argue that population pressure and land scarcity can be taken as one of the main factors driving the higher level of engagement in non-farm activities in SNNPR.

In any case, both at household and area level the relationship between land holding and livelihood diversification are not linear and tend to be complex. One aspect of the complexity is that land and wealth tend to be closely linked and hence variations in livelihood diversification tend to overlap with regard to indicators of access to land and wealth status. To grasp the complex nature of the relationships we have to note that there are two aspects to the determinants of livelihood diversification: (i) the "incentive to diversify" which refers to the motivations or reasons which lead households to diversify, and (ii) "capacity to diversify", namely the resource endowments (including land) required to engage in non-farm activities (Reardon et al, 2007: 125-139). Land holding is identified as "the example par excellence of a variable that potentially affects both incentives and capacity to undertake non-farm activity" and for this reason the relationship between land holding, wealth and livelihood diversification can be complex.

Accordingly, for example land-rich and wealthier households tend to have relatively lower incentive but better capacity to engage in non-farm activities. The reverse tends to apply to land-constrained and poor households (higher relative incentive but lower capacity). The variations in incentive and capacity are mainly explained by differences in resource endowments and income from agriculture: land-rich and wealthier households have less inventive because better access to land enables them to earn relatively higher income from agriculture. At the same time, the same condition of relatively better endowment of resources enables them to engage in relatively high-return non-farm activities. The cumulative effect is that different categories of households end up engaging in different types of non-farm activities. As noted by a leading researcher on the subject:

> Because of the differences in initial asset endowments, rich and poor households diversify differently. The rich typically engage in more capital-(including human] capital) intensive and more remunerative activities, leaving the poor confined to labor-intensive, highly contested niches with low barriers to entry and low returns. A series of African household diversification studies underlines this tendency, noting that wealthier households often mention "profit maximization" as their motive for entering into rural non-farm activities, whereas low-income households emphasize "risk minimization" and "income stabilization" (Reardon et al, 2007: 138- 139).

The same pattern tends to apply to areas: low potential and poor areas and areas characterized by sever land scarcity but limited access to infrastructure and markets tend to have greater need for livelihood diversification, but low capacity for diversification especially in high-return non-farm activities. The researchers quoted above characterize the miss-match between incentive and capacity as paradoxes of livelihood diversification:

> Thus arise two important paradoxes. The first, a "meso paradox," arises in resource-poor areas where households have a high incentive but a low capacity to diversify. That is, they face a greater need to diversify into RNFE to compensate for their poor agricultural base…Yet these poor regions have a lower capacity than well-endowed areas to generate rural nonfarm activity, especially of the nonrefuge variety…The second, or "micro paradox," emerges at the household level. Poorer households have a high incentive but a low capacity to diversify successfully, even if in some cases they rely more on farm activity in percentage terms. The poorer households typically remain relegated to low-paying, low-productivity, risky jobs in the rural non-farm sector – the equivalent of subsistence farming, which offers no path out of poverty, just a means of bare survival. The poor face significantly higher incentives to earn RNFY, but they have lower capacity to succeed. In order to confront these two dilemmas, the empirical evidence reviewed here suggests several key directions for policy intervention (Reardon et al, 2007: 139).

The relationships between land, agriculture and livelihood diversification noted above suggest that secure access to economically viable land holding and hence better conditions of agricultural production tend to go together with engagement in more remunerative or in relatively high return non-farm activities, and engagements in more "accumulation" than "survival" oriented diversification. The key implication is that livelihood diversification is not independent of land and agricultural livelihood. And it goes without saying that any policies and strategies designed to promote livelihood diversification have to take into account the realities of access to land and land-related constraints and their linkages with agricultural livelihoods.

The close and multifaceted linkages between land, on the one hand, and farm and non-farm livelihood activities on the other can be a source of strength or weakness depending on the context in which livelihood diversification occurs. In the context of a dynamic agricultural sector the interactions tend to produce positive outcomes in a virtuous cycle of production and consumption linkages: high and sustainable

agricultural growth generating demand for consumer goods, farm inputs and services which stimulates the expansion of rural non-farm economy. The latter in turn generates increasing demand for farm produce including food and raw materials for processing.

On the other hand, diversification occurring in the context of a stagnant agricultural sector tends to produce negative livelihood outcomes, in a kind of vicious cycle of linkages as it were. In such context, diversification for most households tends to be "survival-oriented" and is motivated by the weaknesses and vulnerability of agricultural livelihood. This kind of linkage often tends to be associated with underlying vulnerability factors (including growing population pressure, land scarcity, environmental degradation, conflict, etc.) and aggravated or induced in the first place by poor policy and institutional environment. This is the context which is mostly associated with and generates widespread livelihood insecurity in general and pervasive and deep-rooted food insecurity and poverty in particular. In short, a weak and vulnerable agricultural sector tends to generate an equally weak and vulnerable rural non-farm economy. Of course, we recognize that the two scenarios sketched here refer to general tendencies and always contain variations and diversity of experiences and outcomes, including variations between households in a given locality and between localities in a region and between regions in a given country.

Which of the two scenarios outlined above fits the nature of livelihood diversification in the case study areas? There is no doubt that the process of livelihood diversification here (and in the country at large) in the last four or five decades resembles the second scenario: survival oriented diversification in the context of stagnant agriculture occurring in the context of growing population pressure and land scarcity, widespread land and environmental degradation. Nor can the policy and institutional environments be characterized as favorable to the robust and positive process and outcomes of livelihood diversification.

What about the implication of the recent historically unprecedented growth spurt in agriculture as well as in other sectors of the economy? Does it imply a breakdown of the vicious cycle of stagnant agriculture linked with survival-oriented diversification? These are important questions which require serious empirical research and policy analysis but given the recent nature of the experiences we can say that the jury is still out. Any assertion of a radical and irreversible breakthrough is confronted by the even more recent and massive food crisis which has exposed nearly 10 to 15 million rural people to food shortages, a crisis which is characterized as unprecedented since the 1984/85 great famine[98].

Land and livelihood security

In this sectionwe will briefly explore the relationship between access to land and livelihood security. The concepts of poverty-wealth, wellbeing-ill being, and

[98] For an overview of this recent major crisis, see USAID/FEWS-NET (2015).

livelihood security-insecurity are unlikely to be equivalent concepts although they can have some similarity or overlapping depending on the way they are conceptualized. The main controversy in this field relates to the narrow income-based or "money-metric" approach to poverty. However, poverty can also be conceptualized in a broad and multidimensional way including aspects such as meeting basic human needs, access to basic services, and participation and voice. We should also note that the common tendency for people and informants in defining poverty-wealth in rural Ethiopia is also to adopt a broad and multidimensional view with an emphasis on assets (land, livestock, labor etc.) and basic needs (food/food security, health, education, water, housing etc.) than income per se, because the latter is, in any case, viewed as means to an end and not an end in itself. These perspectives on wealth-poverty are likely to overlap with the notions of livelihood security/insecurity and wellbeing/ill-being.

However, none of the above arguments imply that income is excluded from concepts such as poverty and livelihood security/insecurity: it rather becomes an element of a broader and multidimensional perspective. In fact, in formal livelihood approaches, livelihood security is defined "as containing some combinations of attributes related to income level, income stability, reduction in adverse seasonal effects, and reduction in the overall risk profile of the income portfolio. This in turn leads to people becoming less vulnerable or more vulnerable in terms of their capability to manage adverse trends and cope with shocks" (Ellis, 2000: 42). Livelihood security can also be related to the concept of sustainable livelihood: the emphasis in the latter is on the capacity of individuals and households to cope with and recover from shocks without causing severe damage on assets (including the environment and natural resources) on which the livelihood of the current and future generations depends on. The study and analysis of livelihood security in all its dimensions and complexity is a very difficult task due to the massive nature of the empirical data requires. In this study, the focus is on two aspects: food security and self-assessment of livelihood situation.

Access to land and food security

Although, the formal definition of the concept of food security is broad and multidimensional, for the purpose of the present study we used simple indicators to collect limited empirical data, and the findings and analysis presented below focus on the following areas: (i) incidence and duration of food shortage, (ii) the relationship between incidence of food shortage and access to land and other household characteristics, and (iii) broader patterns of food security and access to land.

Incidence of food shortage

The survey data on incidence of food shortage is summarized in Figure 21. On the average, about 58 percent of households said that they have faced food shortages in the one year period preceding the survey. The reported incidence of food shortage is the highest (83.3 percent) in Doge-Weyibo (Boloso-Sore, Wolayita) and the lowest

(28.9 percent) in Ancha-Sedicho (Doyo-Gena, Kembata). The average number of months of food shortage for all kebeles is 3.1, ranging from the highest (3.9 months) in Doge-Weyibo to the lowest (2.3 months) in Shamsa-Misse.

Figure 21. Proportion of samples households who faced food shortage and average number of months of shortage by site

	Ancha Sedicho	Doge-Weyibo	Shamsa Misse	All Kebeles
Average No of Months	3.3	3.9	2.3	3.1
Percent Households	28.9	83.3	62.2	58.1

Food shortage and household characteristics

Data on incidence of food shortage disaggregated by indicators of access to land and other household characteristics is summarized in Figure 22 and the main points can be summarized as follows:

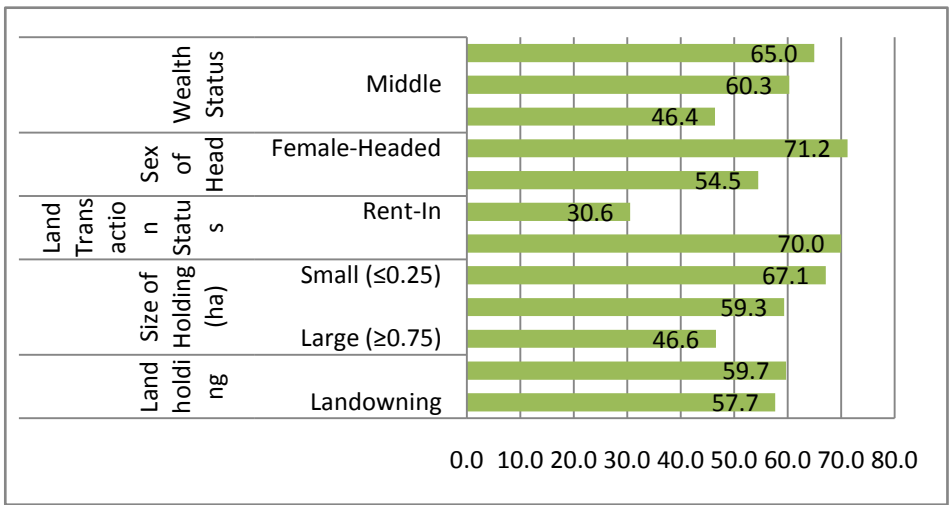
- Access to Land. As we can see from Figure 22, access to land is represented by three indicators: first incidence of food shortage does not show significant variation between landless (59.7 percent), and landowning (57.7 percent) households[99]. On the other hand, incidence of food shortage appears to vary significantly by size of land holding: households with relatively lager holdings (>0.75) tend to experience lower incidence of food shortage (46.6 percent) compared to households with medium size of holdings (59.3 percent), and households with relatively small land holdings (67.1 percent). The third indicator relates to land transactions: households who rent-out land experience significantly higher level of food shortage (70 percent) compared to households who rent-in land (30. 6 percent)[100].

[99] This finding might not be very surprising when viewed in relation to the characteristics of landlessness and landless households discussed in detail in chapter 3.

[100] This finding should be interpreted in relation to the characteristics of households participating in land transaction discussed in chapter 3 where we have emphasized that households who rent-out land tend to be significantly poorer ("poor land lords") compared to households who rent-in land ("rich tenants").

- Sex of head and wealth status. The incidence of food shortage appears to vary by sex of heads of households and wealth status: on the average, male-headed households experience relatively lower incidence of food shortage (54.5 percent) compared to female-headed households (71.2 percent). Similarly, data disaggregated by wealth status (based on community wealth ranking), show that the incidence of food shortage is lower among rich or better-off households (46.6 percent) compared to middle (60.3 percent) and poor households (65 percent).

Figure 22. Sample households with food shortage by selected characteristics (%)



Land and food security in broader perspective

The brief discussion below aims to put the data and findings on land and food security outlined above into broader context by drawing on other surveys and secondary sources. We should note first that the relationship between access to land and livelihood outcomes including food security is rarely explored in existing surveys and studies. Although dated, the study which does provide relevant data is the Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA) survey on land tenure and agricultural production conducted in 2001/02. We have summarized in the Table below the data on land and labor productivity, food production, and farm and total household income disaggregated by farm size and the key points are outlined below.

Land and labor productivity. The data on productivity clearly show that while land productivity is inversely related with size of farm, labor productivity is positively related with size of farm. For example, the smallest farm size category (≤0.50 ha) has the highest value for land productivity (2022 Birr per ha) and the highest farm size category (>2 ha) shows the lowest performance in land productivity (852 Birr per ha). The relationship is completely reversed when it comes to labor productivity: labor productivity consistently but moderately increases with farm size but leaps in the largest farm size category (>2 ha); labor productivity in the largest farm size category (934 Birr per male equivalent per annum) is almost five times higher than labor productivity in the smallest farm size category (191 Birr). What is the implication of the divergent relationship of land and labor productivity with size of farm? The relationship confirms the well-known and famous inverse size-productivity relationship, the explanation being households facing land constraints attempt to compensate through higher input of labor and raise yield from their smaller holdings. But the question is how far this compensation mechanism goes in terms of total output and income that can be generated by households with the smallest class of farm size? The answer to this question comes from data on food production and income disaggregated by farm size.

Food production and income. The data clearly show that food production, net farm income and total household income increase with farm size: for example, while the estimated average amount of food production was 168 Kg, households in the largest farm size category (>2 ha) produce on the average 391 Kg which is nearly five times higher than the average for the smallest category of farm size (≤0.50 ha). The gaps in net farm income tend to be even wider: households in the largest farm size category earn nearly six times more net farm income than households with the smallest class of farm size. The gap narrows with regard to total household income (farm, non-farm and other income sources) in which case the ratio of the largest-to-smallest farm size categories declines to 3.9[101].

[101] The positive relationship between farm size and income is apparently a widespread phenomenon: for example, according to the findings of a comparative study of four African countries, while in Kenya a "40 percent increase in per capita income when household per capita land size increases from zero to 0.25 hectares. The same increase in land holdings (from zero to 0.25 hectares) increases per capita income by more than 40 percent in Rwanda, just less than 40 percent in Mozambique, and about 30 percent in Ethiopia" (Jayne, et al., 2012: 16).

Table19. Production and income by size of farm

Performance	Farm Size (ha)						
Indicators	≤0.50	0.51-0.75	0.76-1.00	1.01-1.50	1.51-2.00	>2.00	Total
NOT USING IMPROVED INPUTS							
Land Productivity (Birr/Ha)	2022	1121	783	908	609	852	1327
Labor Productivity (Birr/ME/Year)	191	284	270	407	453	934	365
Per Capita Food Production (Kg/AE)	84	140	152	154	162	391	168
Net Farm Income (Birr/HH)	420	687	678	1098	1080	2497	904
Total HH Income (Birr)	761	1145	1136	1536	1492	3000	1321
USING IMPROVED INPUTS							
Land Productivity (Birr/Ha)	2533	1483	1174	1231	1067	1172	1567
Labor Productivity (Birr/ME/Year)	263	334	358	557	625	1073	516
Per Capita Food Production (Kg/AE)	154	206	224	341	380	433	275
Net Farm Income (Birr/HH)	654	930	1018	1490	1836	3216	1475
Total HH Income (Birr)	1004	1235	1351	1842	2166	3642	1854

Source: EEA/EEPRI (2002: 63).

Note: ME=Male Equivalent, AE=Adult Equivalent (standardized units of labor and consumption based on household age and sex composition)

Non-farm income**.** Based on the differences between farm income and total household income, we can also explore the role of non-farm activities and how non-farm income relates to size of farm. The key patterns that emerge from the data can be summarized as follows. The level of non-farm income (in absolute terms) shows a tendency to increase with farm size: hence on the average, households in the smallest farm size category earned 341 Birr, while those in the largest farm size category earned 503 Birr. However, the pattern is reversed when it comes to relative share of non-farm income in total household income meaning the proportion of income earned from non-farm sources tended to decrease with farm size. While households in the smallest farm size category derived 45 percent of their total income from non-farm sources, households in the largest farm size category derived only 16.8 percent of their income from non-farm sources. These differing patterns are explained by the role of

land and agriculture: on the one hand, households who are land-rich tend to engage in relatively high-return or more profitable non-farm activities which explains the higher income (in absolute terms) earned by such households from non-farm activities. On the other hand, precisely due to the fact that they have better access to land, households in larger farm size category tend to earn, in relative terms, alower proportion of their income from non-farm activities, or they derive higher proportion of income from agricultural activities. The reverse applies to land-poor households. Here again, we see households facing greater land constraints attempting to compensate by generating relatively higher income from non-farm sources. However, although this shows the importance of non-farm sources of income for land-poor households, non-farm sources cannot close the wide gap in total household income arising from the differences in access to land.

Use of improved inputs**.** How much difference does the use of improved inputs (commercial fertilizer and improved seeds) makes to the amount of production and income that can be generated by different class of size of farms? The data summarized in the lower segment of Table 19 provides some answers: the use of improved inputs makes a significant difference in production and income within the same farm size categories (comparing those applying and not applying improved inputs) as well as reducing the gap in production and income between different farm size categories. Within the smallest farm size category (≤0.50 ha), the use of improved inputs increases food production by 84 percent and net farm income by 56 percent. Similarly, in the largest farm size category (>2 ha), the use of improved input s increases food production and net farm income by 11 percent and 29 percent respectively. Furthermore the gap in production and income between different farm size categories tends to decrease: for example the gap in food production and net farm income between the largest and smallest farm size categories decreases from a ratio of 4.7 and 5.9 (for those not using improved inputs) to 2.8 and 4.9 respectively (for those using improved inputs). This indicates that the use of improved inputs not only increases production and income but provides some compensation for households with more severe land constraints. However, the intensification strategy can only make a modest contribution and the gap in production and income created by differences in access to land remains wide. After all, net farm income and total household income of households in the largest farm size category are still nearly five and four times higher than the income of households in the smallest farm size category

Production and income in SNNPR compared to other Regions. Evidence from various large-scale surveys consistently shows that agricultural production and rural household income tend to be lower in SNNPR compared to other Regions. Especially striking in this regard is the big difference in land and labor productivity. In SNNPR, land productivity tends to be very high while labor productivity is very low in comparative terms (see Table 20). Is this related to land constraints affecting land and labor productivity in different ways which we observed above at household level? Is the extremely low level of labor productivity in contrast the high land productivity in SNNPR a reflection of a tendency towards a "sponge" effect or "agricultural involution" arising from high population pressure and acute land-scarcity leading to

the application of more and more labor into limited amount of land along side with declining return to labor? Clearly, this glaring difference requires explanation and population pressure and land scarcity must have a significant contribution to the pattern observed. We should also note how average income is very low in SNNPR compared to other Regions which is most likely to be closely associated with very low level of labor productivity in the Region.

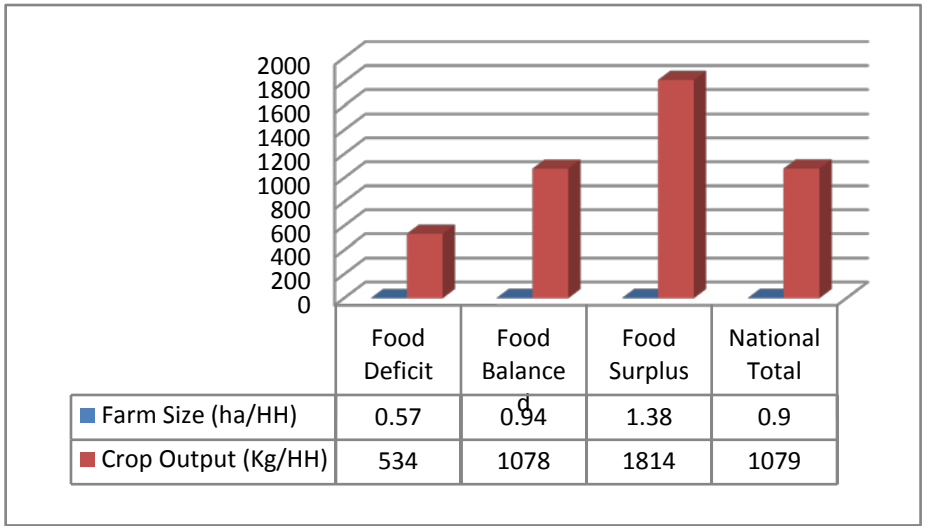
Table 20. Productivity and income by Region

Region	Land Productivity	Labor Productivity	NetFarm Income	HH Income	Per Capita
	(Birr/Ha)	(Birr/ME)	(Birr/HH	(Birr/HH)	Income (Birr)
Tigray	2845	434	1193	1871	431
Amhara	2622	501	1272	1578	384
Oromiya	1426	467	1362	1783	366
SNNPR	3507	171	512	801	158
Country Total	2314	413	1163	1549	333

Source: EEA/EEPRI (2002: 54-57).

Finally, data summarized in Figure 23 compare average farm size and crop output for areas classified into three categories: food-deficit, food-balance and food-surplus areas. The average size of land holding in food-surplus areas (1.38 ha) is two and half times larger than the average in food-deficit areas (0.57 ha). Similarly, average crop out-put in food-surplus areas (1814 Kg per household) is more than three and half times the average output in food-deficit areas (534 kg per household). Clearly, while land does not explain everything, land related constraints are one of the most important determinants of food security across not only households but also areas and regions.

Figure 23. Farm size and crop output in food deficit, food balance and food surplus areas



Source: Diao (2010: 37).

Self-assessment of livelihood situation

Livelihood security or insecurity and related concepts such as poverty and wellbeing have both objective and subjective dimensions. The objective dimension is usually represented by quantitative indicators such as income, consumption, assets, etc. The subjective dimension (with which we are concerned in this section) relates to how individuals and households in a community perceive their livelihood conditions and how they are perceived by others. Community wealth ranking pertains to the latter and the self-assessment of households of their own livelihood conditions or status relates to the former. For the purpose of subjective self-assessment, we have adopted the system of classification developed for the Save the Children-UK Ethiopia destitution study in Amhara region (North and South Wello) conducted in 2001/02[102]. In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the status of their households in terms of the four categories of "doing well", "doing O.K", "struggling" and "unable to meet household needs with own effort" as defined below:

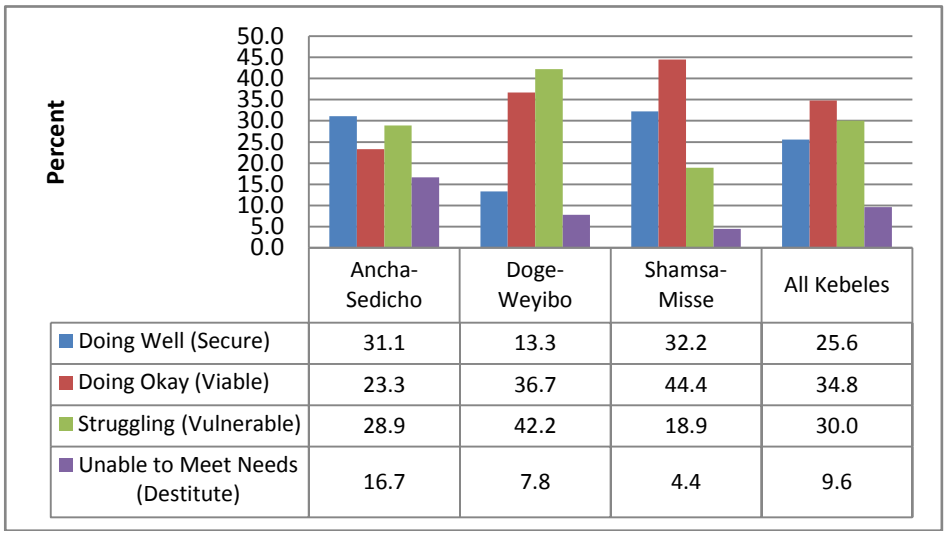
(1) Doing well (sustainable/secure). Able to meet household needs by own efforts, and making some extra for savings and investments (e.g. buying livestock or other assets, improving farmland, improving housing, etc.);

[102] See, Sharp, Devereux and Yared (2003)..

(2) Doing O.K (viable). Able to meet household needs but with nothing extra to save or invest;
(3) Struggling (vulnerable). Managing to meet household needs, but by depleting productive assets and / or sometimes receiving support from community or government;
(4) Unable to meet needs (destitute). Dependent on support from community or government.

As shown Figure 24, 25.6 and 34.8 percent of households in our study sites said they are "doing well" and "doing O.K" respectively, hence can be classified as "secure" and "viable" respectively. On the other hand, 30 and 9.6 percent of households defined their current situation as "struggling" and "unable to meet household needs" respectively, which is equivalent to the livelihood status of the vulnerable and destitute. When we disaggregate the data by site, we find that 32.2 and 34.8 percent of households in Shamsa-Misse (Shashogo, Hadiya) said that they are "doing well" and "doing O.K" respectively. We should recall that in relative terms this case study site has better land and livestock holdings than the other sites. Doge-Weyibo (Boloso-Sore, Wolayita) has the highest proportion of households who said that they are "struggling" (42 percent), although the proportion of households who said that they are "unable to meet needs" was the highest (16.7 percent) in Ancha-Sedicho (Doyo-Gena, Kembata).

Figure 24. Distribution of sample households by self-assesment of livelihood/wellbeing condition



	Ancha-Sedicho	Doge-Weyibo	Shamsa-Misse	All Kebeles
Doing Well (Secure)	31.1	13.3	32.2	25.6
Doing Okay (Viable)	23.3	36.7	44.4	34.8
Struggling (Vulnerable)	28.9	42.2	18.9	30.0
Unable to Meet Needs (Destitute)	16.7	7.8	4.4	9.6

Data on self-assessment of livelihood status disaggregated by selected household characteristics is summarized in Table 21. Landholding status appears to have a limited effect on variation in self-assessment although a higher proportion of

landowning households (27.4 percent) said they were doing well compared to landless households (19.4 percent). Similarly, a higher proportion of landless households said they were unable to meet needs (11.3 percent) compared to land owning households (9.1 percent). On the other hand, self-assessment appears to show greater variation by size of land holding: for example, only 1.7 and 20.3 percent of households with relatively large land holdings (>0.75) said they were unable to meet their needs and struggling respectively. The corresponding proportion for households with small land holdings (≤0.25) is 11.8 percent (unable to meet needs) and 38.2 percent (struggling). The relationship between self-assessment of livelihood situation and status of households in informal land transaction appears to be in expected direction: greater proportion of households renting-out land said they were struggling and unable to meet needs (20.3 and 20 percent respectively) compared to households who rented-in land (13.9 and 2.8 percent).

Finally, when we examine the relationship between self-assessment of livelihood situation and community wealth ranking the match is not perfect. However, community wealth ranking and self-assessment of livelihood situation tend to correspond especially when it comes to vulnerable and destitute groups: about 70 percent of households who were characterized as poor in the community wealth ranking identified themselves as destitute. In addition, if we merge the two categories of self-assessment (struggling and unable to meet needs) and compare the result with community wealth ranking we find very close correspondence between the two approaches:

- Community wealth ranking: Rich/Better-off (2.5 percent), Middle (31.2 percent), and Poor (43.5 percent)
- Self-Assessment: Doing well (25.6 percent), Doing OK (34.8 percent) and Vulnerable (39.6 percent)

Table 21. Self-assessment of livelihood situation by selected household characteristics

Characteristics		Doing Well	Doing ok	Struggling	Unable to meet needs
		(Secure)	(Viable)	(Vulnerable)	(Destitute)
Landholding	Landowning	27.4	32.2	31.3	9.1
	Landless	19.4	43.5	25.8	11.3
Size of Holding (ha)	Large (≥0.75)	35.6	42.4	20.3	1.7
	Medium (0.26-0.50)	30.1	24.7	32.9	12.3
	Small (≤0.25)	18.4	31.6	38.2	11.8
Land Transaction Status	Rent-Out	20.0	40.0	20.0	20.0
	Rent-In	44.4	38.9	13.9	2.8
Sex of Head	Male Headed	27.0	35.1	29.4	8.5

	Female-Headed	20.3	33.9	32.2	13.6
Wealth Status	Better-off	42.0	23.4	18.8	7.7
	Middle	36.2	37.2	22.5	23.1
	Poor	21.7	39.4	58.8	69.2

Case study of external migration

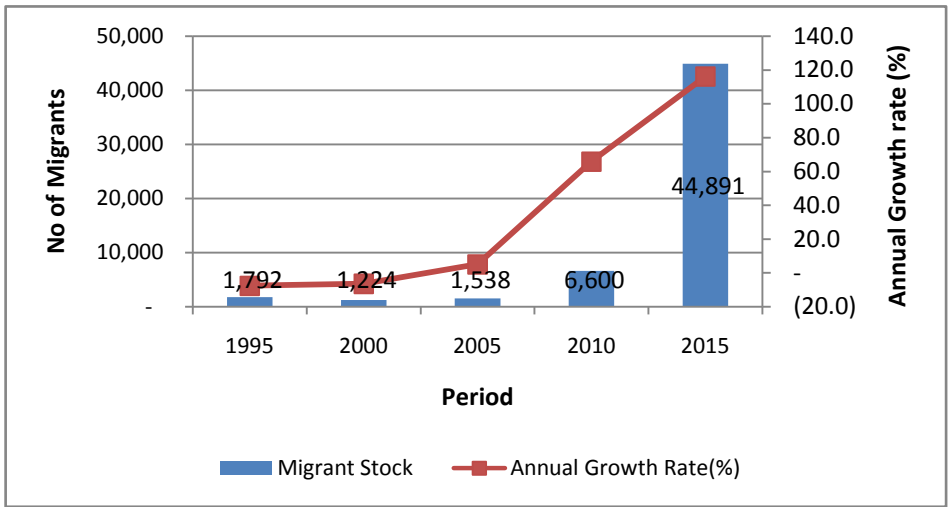
Background

It is generally acknowledged that migration is one of the main responses and coping mechanisms to population pressure and land scarcity. However, migration is a complex phenomenon consisting of many types and patterns. It is beyond the scope of the present study to undertake a comprehensive empirical investigation of migration in all its complexities and dimensions. The focus of the study is only on one type of migration, namely, external irregular or undocumented migration. The study team took advantage of the opportunity of field work in two of the case study sites to collect some data on the migration of young men to the Republic South Africa (RSA) and make some contribution on this timely and hotly debated subject matter.

Migration to the RSA is a relatively new trend in external migration which emerged during the past one and a half decades or so. While North America, Western Europe and the Middle East continue to be prime destinations for Ethiopian migrants at the national level (the Middle East primarily for female domestic workers), more recently, the RSA has emerged as a major destination for male migrants particularly from Kambata-Tembaro and Hadiya Zones.

It was unlikely for Ethiopians to migrate to the RSA during the apartheid regime. Even after the demise of the apartheid, the number of Ethiopian migrants to the RSA remained a little over one thousand until 2005. However, according to the UN, the number of migrants increased by nearly thirty-fold between 2005 and 2015, reaching an unprecedented level of 45,000 in 2015 (see Figure 25). It is estimated that at least 95 percent of the migrants originated from the two zones (Kembata-Tembaro and Hadiya). The official UN estimates are far less than unofficial estimates by other sources which put the number at least twice as high.

Figure 25. Estimated number of Ethiopian migrants in the Republic of South Africa between 1990 and 2015



Source: United Nations (2015b).

Characteristics of external migrants in the two case study sites

The discussion below on external migration in the two case study woredas is based on data collected both in the woredas and kebele concerned.

Migrants from Doyo-Genaworeda,Kembata-Tembaro Zone

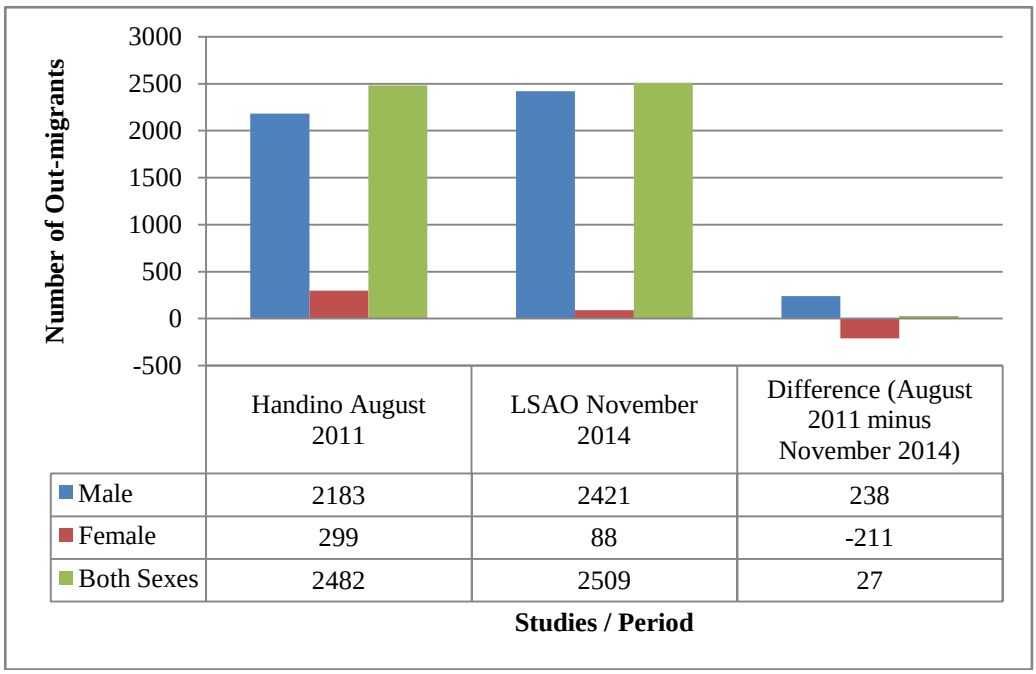
Doyo-Genaworeda is both the origin and the epicenter of external migration of rural youth during the past one decade or so. According to a study conducted in 2014 by the Woreda Labor and Social Affairs Office (LSAO), as of November 2014, a total of 2,509 persons (96.5 percent male) have migrated out of Doyo-Genaworeda to various destinations. On the basis of this study, the number of external migrants is equivalent to about 13percent of the population of the woreda. In spite of the fact that outflow of migrants has continued ever since, no external migration data is available for the year 2015. Moreover, according to participants of focus group discussions (FGDs) as well as experts who were directly involved in the 2014 migration survey, the number migrants from the woreda is considerably underestimated, mainly because owing to the clandestine nature of irregular migration, households were reluctant to report the actual number of migrants for fear of possible legal action against them. For example, based on a complete census registration of migrants, another study conducted in 2011

provided compelling evidence that the results of the 2014 LSAO migration study grossly underestimated the number of migrants from Doyo-Gena(see Figure 26).

Comparing results of the two surveys shown in Figure 26,the most important points can summarized as follows:

- The number of male migrants has increased by 238 persons during the three years that elapsed between the two studies.
- The number of female migrants which stood at 299 in 2011 was underreported as being only 88 persons in 2014.
- Both studies indicated that an average of about 250 were migrating out of the woreda each year.
- The number of migrants grew by 27 persons (net increase) during the three year period between August 2011 and November 2014.

Figure 26. Comparison of results of two studies on the number of migrants from Doyogena Woreda



Source:MulugetaHandino (2014) and LSAO(2014).

Discussions with local officials and participants of the FGDs indicated that the volume of migration may have gone down in recent years due partly to a crack-down on illegal traffickers in the home front and increasingly life-threatening travel ordeals en-route and xenophobia in destination countries, RSA in particular. However, the reductions are far too little to justify the enormous decrease in annual out-migration from about 250 persons to less than 10 persons per year as implied by the LSAO 2014

study. In conclusion, therefore, results of the 2014 LSAO study are not only inconsistent but are also highly likely to have underestimated the number of persons who have out-migrated from Doyo-Genaworeda.

Shashogoworeda - Hadiya Zone

Shashogo is one of the ten woredas in Hadiya zone. Shashogo, which forms part of the south western Rift Valley, was part of Lemo woreda until the early 2000s. There are 34 rural and two urban Kebeles in the woreda. The Woreda has an estimated area of about 323.2 km^2, current population of 130,375 and a population density of about 403 persons per km^2. Most parts of the woreda can be characterized as lowland with an average annual rainfall of less than 1,000 mm, and average monthly temperature in the range of 25 and 35 ^{0}C.

The research team in collaboration with the woredaLabor and Social Affairs staff conducted a census of external migrants from all kebeles of the woreda. According to the results of the census, a total of 5,304 persons (79.3 percent male and 20.4 percent female) were found to have migrated to other countries between 2002 and mid November 2015. In other words, there are migrants in 20.3 percent of the 26,075 households in the woreda, or one out of every five household has at least one family member who has permanently migrated outside the country. Basic demographic and socio-economic characteristics of migrants from Shashogo woreda are presented in Table 22, which can be summarized in terms of the following points:

- Although the number of female migrants is considerable and growing, irregular migration in the woreda is a male-dominated venture
- With about two-thirds (64 percent) of migrants reported to be under the age of 30 (at the time of migration), external migration in the woreda is dominated by youth, particularly in the age range of 25 to 29 years
- While almost all external migrants had attained some level of education, the highest proportion (44 percent) of migrants have had “second cycle” (Grade 5 to 8) level of education; this is followed by migrants (27 percent) with secondary education (Grade 9 to 10)
- Although the proportion of external migrants who were married at the time of migration is considerably high (28 percent), migrants, who were "single" at the time of their travel (66 percent) were in the majority
- It is not only that the whole business of external migration is highly gendered, but the destinations are too. With the Republic of South Africa taking the lead as a destination country (67 percent), the Middle East and Gulf Countries are the second major destinations,hosting a little over 29 percent of migrants from the woreda. A key gender aspect of the destination countries is that while the RSA is a destination for male migrants almost exclusively, the Middle East and Gulf Countries are so for female migrants,

- External migration was started around 2003/04 in Shashogoworeda and it reached its peak (55 percent) between the years 2008/09 and 2012/13. Despite a number of unfavorable conditions both at home, en-route and also at destination countries in recent years, external migration has continued to take place in the woreda, albeit at a much lower rates than before.

Table 22. Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of migrants in shashogoworeda

Sex	Male	4313	79.3
	Female	1083	20.4
	Missing	8	0.2
Age Group	Below 18	14	0.3
	18-24	1516	28.6
	25-29	1880	35.4
	30-34	825	15.6
	35-39	318	6.0
	40-44	60	1.1
	45 & Older	21	0.4
	Missing	670	12.6
Level of Education	Illiterate	21	0.4
	First Cycle (1 to 4)	767	14.5
	Second Cycle (5 to 8)	2343	44.2
	Secondary (9 to 10)	1425	26.9
	Preparatory (11 to 12)	65	1.2
	College & Above	44	0.8
	Missing	639	12.0
Marital Status	Single	3500	66.0
	Married	1469	27.7
	Missing	335	6.3
Destination Countries	Republic of South Africa	3567	67.3
	Middle East	1551	29.2
	Missing	186	3.5
Year (Period) of Migration	Before 2003/2004	9	0.2
	2003/04 to 2007/08	487	9.2
	2008/09 to 2012/13	2902	54.7
	2013/14 to Nov. 2015	1245	23.5
	Missing	661	12.5

With the exception of perhaps few thousands of regular or documented migrants who used air travel to reach South Africa during the first few years, restrictions on entry visa came into force around the mid- 2000s marking the beginning of irregular migration. As a clandestine activity ever since, a range of human trafficking and smuggling networks and new routes were created, and the mode of transport diversified including air, land and sea.

As a predominantly illicit activity, obtaining accurate numbers of people who have migrated from the two case study areas to the RSA is very difficult. Based on results of actual census enumeration of migrants conducted specifically for the current study in ShashogoWoreda, it is estimated that at least 91,000[103] people have migrated from various woredas and kebeles of Kembata-Tembaro and Hadiya zones between 2000/01 and 2015. This is equivalent to about four percent of the current population of the two zones. It is believed that South Africa hosted an estimated 95 percent of the migrants.

Demographic profile of migrants in the two case study kebeles

Information on external migration in the two case study kebeles of AnchaSedicho and Shamsa-Misse was collected in two ways. The first was the census registration of all households in the two kebeles. In the household census registration, respondents were asked only two questions related to external migration: whether or not there are external migrants in the household and if there are, how many members of the household have actually migrated outside the country. According to results of the survey (summarized in Table 23), there were a total of 524 external migrants in a total of 334 migrant-sending households in the two case study kebeles. Out of a total of 1,795 households (1,088 in AnchaSedicho and 707 in Shamsa-Misse), about 19 percent reported to have sent at least one family member outside the country. With male migrants constituting close to 82 percent, the survey confirmed that external migration is a male dominated enterprise. It is also interesting to note that ten percent of the households in the two kebeles have sent three to five members of their families abroad

[103] According to some estimates, the number of people migrating from Ethiopia to the Republic of South Africa is much higher. For example, IOM in its study conducted in 2013 stated that "..... there are reliable reports in Malawi that approximately 500 irregular migrants from Ethiopia come through Dzaleka refugee camp per month. In Mozambique, approximately 16,000 “illegal migrants” were reportedly repatriated in 2012, but only to the point of entry instead of the country of origin. This suggests that actual numbers may be quite significant, considering the unknown number of successful transits" (IOM, 2013: 7).

Table 23. External migrants and migrant sending households by sex and number of migrants sent(%)

No. of Migrants Per Household	Number of Households			Number of Migrants		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes
No. of HHs With Migrants	265	69	334	428	96	524
One	56.2	71.0	59.3	34.8	51.0	37.8
Two	29.8	20.3	27.8	36.9	29.2	35.5
Three	10.6	7.2	9.9	19.6	15.6	18.9
Four	3.0	1.4	2.7	7.5	4.2	6.9
Five	0.4	-	0.3	1.2	-	1.0
HHs with Migrants as Percent of All (N = 1,795)	14.8	3.8	18.6			
Percent of Migrants				81.7	18.3	100.0

The second and more detailed source for migration data is a census enumeration of all external migrants in the two kebeles including their demographic and socio-economic characteristics, which are summarized in Table 24. It should be noted from the outset that the number ofexternal migrants in the household census registration is higher (524 migrants, see above) thanthat of census enumeration of migrants themselves (446, see Table 24). The discrepancy in numbers of migrants is mainly due to data collection error in the latter survey.

Not surprisingly, results of the census enumeration of external migrants conducted at the level of the two case study kebeles, closely follow and indicate patterns that are similar to those that were obtained at the woreda level.

Table 24. Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of migrants from Ancha-SedichoKebele (Doyo-Genaworeda) and Shamsa-Missekebele (Shashogoworeda)

Characteristics of Migrants	Description	Number	Percent (N = 446)
Case Study Kebeles	Ancha-Sedicho	262	58.7
	Shamsa-Misse	184	41.3
Gender	Male	352	78.9
	Female	94	21.1
Age Groups	Younger (18 to 29)	298	66.8
	Middle (30 to 39)	139	31.2
	Older (40 & Older)	9	2.0
Marital Status	Single	353	79.1
	Married	93	20.9
Level of Education	Primary First Cycle (1 to 4)	47	10.5
	Primary Second Cycle (5 to 8)	235	52.7
	Secondary (9 to 10)	132	29.6
	Preparatory (11 to 12)	16	3.6

	College & Above	16	3.6
	Student	105	23.5
	Business Person	33	7.4
Occupation	Farmer	25	5.6
	Unemployed	92	20.6
	Missing	191	42.8
	Before 2003/04	4	0.9
	2003/04 to 2007/08	84	18.8
Year (Period) of Migration	2008/09 to 2012/13	240	53.8
	2013/14 to End October 2015	108	24.2
	Missing	10	2.2
Destination Countries	Republic of South Africa	428	96.0
	Middle East (incl.Sudan)	18	4.0

Characteristics of migrant sending households

Historically, rural households in the Kembata highlands and the study area in particular are said to have been known for the resilience of their livelihoods. Since the past few decades, however, the hitherto resilient enset-based livelihood system started to lose its resilience. A host of interrelated factors including, natural, demographic and policy-related factors are among the main causes that led to loss of resilience and hence the onset of livelihood crises in the study area (Mulugeta, 2014). Such a loss of resilience, in turn, has led to increased risks and vulnerability to shocks, ultimately allowing poverty to set in and accelerate its downward spiral among rural families.

On the other hand, it should be noted that such growing vulnerabilities of livelihoods among people in the study area should not in any way imply that people affected by them are simply passive spectators and helpless victims. Smallholder farm households in the study area deploy a range of responses to minimize risks and protect their livelihoods from shocks and maintain or enhance their resilience. Protecting livelihood and maintaining its resilience is commonly achieved through livelihood diversification. Migration in its diverse forms is one diversification strategy. In addition to mixed farming, ie. crop production and animal rearing, other livelihood diversification strategies practiced by households include on-farm and off-farm activities, casual labor, petty trade, cash crops production, and leasing-in and leasing-out land. While each one of these strategies is very important in the context of the study area,the focus of our discussion here is external migration. Who are migrant sending households? Do they differ from non-sending households in terms of their demographic and socio-economic characteristics? Based on data from a combination of household sample survey and census enumeration of external migrants in the two case study sites, the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of households with and without migrants are summarized in Table 25.

Table 25. Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of households (HHs) with and without migrants by number of migrants sent in sigrant sending HHs

Household Characteristics	Description	Number of HHs Surveyed	All HHs	% Migrant Sending HHs (M=27, F=15)	No of Migrants Sent Per Sending Household			
					One	Two	≥Three	Total
Gender	Male	142	78.9	19.0	13	11	5	29
	Female	38	21.1	39.5	7	6	0	13
	Both Sexes	180	100.0	23.3	20	17	5	42
Age Groups	Younger(<= 39)	80	44.4	11.3	6	2	1	9
	Medium (40 to 60)	75	41.7	33.3	11	11	3	25
	Older (61 & Older)	24	13.3	33.3	1	4	3	8
	All Groups	179	99.4	23.5	18	17	7	42
Family Size	Small (1 to 4)	54	30.0	24.1	5	6	2	13
	Medium (5 to 8)	98	54.4	20.4	9	6	5	20
	Large (9 & More)	28	15.6	32.1	4	5	0	9
	All	180	100.0	23.3	18	17	7	42
Wealth Status	Better-off	33	18.3	54.6	7	7	4	18
	Medium	57	31.7	24.6	8	6	0	14
	Poor	90	50.0	11.1	3	4	3	10
	All	180	100.0	23.3	18	17	7	42
Land Holding	Land Holding	144	80.0	27.8	17	16	7	40

Status	Landless	36	20.0	5.6	1	1	0	2
	All	180	100.0	23.3	18	17	7	42
Size of Landholding (Ha)	Landless	36	20.0	5.6	1	1	0	2
	Small (<= 0.25)	33	18.3	18.2	1	5	0	6
	Medium (0.26 to 0.75)	53	29.4	18.9	4	4	2	10
	Large (0.76 & More)	58	32.2	41.4	12	7	5	24
	All	180	100.0	23.3	18	17	7	42
Livestock Ownership Status	Livestock Owning	163	90.6	25.8	18	17	7	42
	None Livestock Owning	17	9.4	-	-	-	-	-
	All	180	100.0	23.3	18	17	7	42
Number of TLUs Owned	None (Zero TLUs)	17	9.4	-	-	-	-	-
	Small (<= 3.0)	86	47.8	16.3	7	5	2	14
	Medium (3.1 to 5.0)	39	21.7	41.0	6	8	2	16
	Large (5.1 & More)	38	21.1	31.6	5	4	3	12
	All	180	100.0	23.3	18	17	7	42

The household sample survey covered 180 households in the two case study kebeles:Ancha-Sedicho (90 HHs) and Shamsa-Misse (90 HHs). The results of the survey can be summarized as follows:

(1) Male heads of households constituted overwhelming majority (79 percent) of the survey households, but the proportion of migrants from female-headed households is disproportionately high. In fact, the proportion of external migrants from such households is twice as much. But, the reasons for such enormous disparities are not immediately clear.

(2) Overall, external migrants were registered nearly in a quarter (23.3percent) of the survey households, which is slightly higher than the estimates of 19 percent obtained from the census survey

(3) Unlike migrants who dominate the younger age group (under the age of 39 years), migrant sending households dominate medium and older age groups which together constitute a little over two-thirds of all migrant sending households.

(4) In terms of family size, results of the survey indicated that the number of migrants is disproportionately low for small-size families (1 to 4 members) and medium (5 to 8 members) family sizes. Conversely, there are disproportionately high number of migrants - twice as much - in households with large (9 and more members) family sizes. This could be due to the fact that households with larger family sizes and the right age group have wider selection of members to choose from and participate in external migration.

(5) Wealth status of the household is among key determinants of the decision to migrate or not to migrate. In line with this, results of the survey clearly indicated that the relationship between households' wealth status and their tendencies to participate in external migration is positive and strong. For example, while better-off households constituted only about 18 percent of all households, the proportion of migrants from those households is disproportionate– 55 percent of all migrants. On the contrary, poor households who constituted exactly half (50 percent) of all households, sent only about 11 percent of migrants - a classic example of mismatch between poor households' need for external migration and their incapacities to finance such travel and related expenses.

(6) Just like wealth status, both land holding status and size of land owned are positively and strongly associated with households' propensity to send migrants. For example, landless households constituted about 20 percent of all households. But, these households contributed less than six percent of all migrants. Following similar patterns, households with large landholdings

(0.76 & more ha), who constituted less 32 percent of all households, sent disproportionate number of migrants - over 41 percent of total external migrants.

(7) The relationship between households' livestock ownership and their tendencies to send migrants are even more absolute, because all external migrants came from households who own livestock and none from those who do not own. In terms of TLUs owned, the relationship is clearly positive and strong. For instance, while households owning 3.1 and more TLUs constitute 43 percent of the survey households, they constituted nearly three-quarters (73 percent) the total number of external migrants.

External migration: the 'Southern dream'[104]

External migration of youth was first started in the early 2000s in Doyo-Gena and rapidly expanded to adjacent Woredas in Kembata and Hadiya zones. Interestingly, migration to RSA was started almost by accident, and South Africa became a Dream-land for almost every single person old and young, men and women, poor and non-poor in the two zones. Migrating to South Africa is the daily dream of people under the age of 40, as well as among parents who are in constant and painful anxiety until they see their children off to the "Dream-land". Almost everyone in these two zones either says something about South Africa or at least listens something being said about it almost on a daily basis. This is so because everyone knows someone (a sibling, a relative or a friend) who lives in South Africa. This study estimated that about 90,000 people have migrated to RSA from the two zones which is equivalent to about four-percent of the entire population of the two zones.

It has been about a decade and half since the "Southern Dream" was started, but it does not show any signs of fading away after all these years. Some of the expressions we extracted in FGDs and key informant interviews presented below are classic examples of how the "Southern Dream" is deeply engrained in the psyche of youth and the entire population in the two case study sites. For example, a parent who already has two of his sons in South Africa and is preparing to send a third one, expressed the 'southern dream' in terms of the following question which his ten years old son asked him:

"Dad, will the South Africa migration route remain open until I grow up and become old-enough to migrate?"(Key Informant, Shamsa-Misse kebele).

Another FGD participant expressed the importance of the Southern Dream as follows:

[104] The phrase "Southern Dream" was first used by the IOM in its migration study entitled "**In Pursuit of the "Southern Dream**: Victims of Necessity, Assessment of the Irregular Movement of Men East Africa and the Horn to South Africa" which was conducted in 2009.

"Opening of the Southern route is God's blessing for us [Parents]. Had the South Africa Route not been opened (and diffused the population pressure in Kembata), you would not have found some of us here today". (FGD participant, Ancha-Sedichokebele).

According to IOM (2009), irregular migrants from Ethiopia to Southern Africa used a variety of routes to cross transit countries in 2009. Starting their journey from Moyale (Ethiopia),migrants from the case study areas cross six countries, namely Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique to get to South Africa. As clearly noted by the two IOM studies (IOM, 2009 and 2013), several new routes have opened up to supplement existing routes or to circumvent routes that have become more difficult to transit due to new legislation that allows imprisonment of people using these routes and the threat posed by immigration patrols. The main routes that were identified as being used by Ethiopian migrants (almost one-hundred percent of migrants coming from the two case study areas) were the following:

- 1st route: Moyale (by road) – Nairobi (Kenya by road) - to Mombasa, (by road)- to Tanga or by dhow to Bagamoyo and then Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) by road – Mbeya – by road to Malawi,
- 2nd route: Moyale by road to Nairobi by road to Namanga-Arusha-Mbeya-Malawi,
- 3rd route: Moyale –Nairobi to Mombasa by road to Taveta— on foot to Mwanga district or SanyaJuu in Hai District in Kilimanjaro- by road to Mbeya- Malawi,
- 4th route: Moyale / Nairobi/Mombasa/Namanga/Dar es Salaam/Mtwara,
- 5th route: Moyale/Nairobi/Sirari/Mwanza/Tabora/Sikonge/Mbeya-Malawi,
- 6th route: Moyale /Nairobi/Mombasa by boat/ dhow to Mtwara,
- 7th route: Moyale /Nairobi/Mombasa by boat to Mozambique and then return by road to Mtwara where they later travel by road to Malawi

Unemployment and lack of opportunity on the one hand, and availability of 'greener pastures' in South Africa on the other are the main reasons for migration. There are networks of facilitators, smugglers and human traffickers who organize the transit of irregular migrants. The 2009 IOM study found that Ethiopian and Somali migrants were paying US $ 1,750 to 2,000 for the route to South Africa. In another study conducted also by IOM in 2013 it was reported that migrants were paying as much as US $ 5,000 for the route through Zambia and Mozambique. Today (mid 2016), with increasingly stringent border controls and unfavorable migration policies in all five countries en-route, irregular migration has become increasingly difficult and hence expensive. According to a migrant who was deported from Maputo, Mozambique recently, but is trying to go back again, for those who can afford to pay up to US $ 10,00, a new route is opened via the Middle East (e.g. United Arab Emirates and Qatar) and, in mid February 2016, he was anxiously counting down his departure date.

Today, the Southern Dream has come true for over 90,000 migrants from Kembata and Hadiya zones. But the point is how that dream is defined. Is it just a matter of reaching and entering RSAor the realization of the so much talked-about opportunities that RSA offers, or both? Of course, therealization of the latter (better livelihood opportunities) depends on the successful completion of the former (travel and entry into the country). Obviously, this study did not conduct interviews with migrants who have successfully reached and are currently residing in South Africa, and as such, it does not claim to have made a comprehensive assessment of costs and benefits of the Southern Dream. However, attempts were made to obtain some information from migrant-sending parents and community members on whether the Southern Dream is worth the trouble and risks involved including death of loved ones en-route to or inside South Africa. The results suggest that both migrants and migrant-sending households are benefiting from remittances sent from the country.

As some key informants suggested, two 'classes' are being created in towns such as Doyo-Gena and Hosaena - the newly created rich class of families with migrants in South Africa and those without. Large sums of money are being remitted to these two case study zones every month. In fact, reflecting the scale of the operation of remittances, secondary financial networks are created who receive remitted money from local banks and distribute it to the families and friends of migrants concerned. One of the most important economic benefits are that a good number of migrants are buying urban land and houses which they would have never dreamt of if they had not migrated to RSA. There are also some who have invested earnings in public transport vehicles, grain mills, and shops. Still others, particular returnee migrants, although very few in number, have opened up considerably large businesses such hotels and restaurants in their native urban settlements.

- The first and most frequently mentioned benefit is that parents and remaining family members have maintained the land that would otherwise have been subdivided and fragmented
- The other benefit is that migrant sending families enjoy a high probability of sending one or more members to RSA thanks to the frequent provision of information about opportunities in RSA and above all capacity and willingness to finance migration of their siblings. This is an additional bonus for the families as they can avoid fragmentation of their land and keep it in their possession.
- Still other benefits include remittances sent to cover the expenses for Meskel holidays. Culturally, like many other communities in the south-western highlands (between Guraghe in the north and Gofa in the south), Meskel is a hugely important in the study area. Meskel holidays, which take place each year around the end of the month of September, bring with them a sense of euphoria and optimism among people. Because Meskel festivities take place at an important junction of the seasonal calendar where the rainy, gloomy, food-short, winter season (June to August) gives way to the colorful and lush green spring season (September to November) with plenty of food to feast, but also hope to cherish with family members and fellow citizens at large. In the case study area, each

family or at least a group of two to four families kill an ox for Meskel festivities. Unfortunately, however, Meskel, comes at a time when the majority of rural households have no or very little cash to meet the expensive demands the of festivities. If a family is unable to raise cash needed purchase an ox, then the head of the household has to either buy the beast on credit or borrow money to buy one - in both cases the interest rates are extremely high. According to FGD participants, financial constraints related to Meskel have now become a thing of the past for almost all migrant sending households - thanks to the remittances they receive from RSA.

- Besides, migrants also send cash to meet some of the important needs of their parents (or family members they left behind) such as agricultural implements and inputs, wedding parties, funeral ceremonies, etc. Above all, migrants are viewed by members of sending communities as guarantor or security against idiosyncratic and other types of shocks sending households may encounter.

According to many migrant sending families, remittances have declined to the lowest at the moment, and migrants are not investing or saving for themselves as they used. They further pointed out that there is something wrong with the economy of South Africa in recent years. Participants further noted that South African nationals are also murdering our boys in a cold blood and robbing their property. With regard to irregular migrants' risks of robbery and death which are often unaccounted for, a middle-aged man, whose two sons were living in one of the townships around Johannesburg at the time of our field work asked members of the study team to convey the following emotional message to Ethiopian leaders and policy makers:

> *"*It is an open secret that many migrants die on their way to South Africaandthe where-about of some migrants remains unknown even after several years after their departure. It is only lucky ones who successfully reach South Africa and establish their small businesses. Even after the difficult journey to South Africa, our boys continue to live in total insecurity and fear of death, and subjected to day-light robbery which has become almost a daily reality for them. Our boys are not criminals; they are hard-working and law-abiding citizens, they are only fleeing from poverty; they don't deserve to die in the hands of criminal mobs in South Africa. They are too young to die. They are not taking the jobs of South Africans as some South African nationals claim... our boys are engaged in low-grade jobs that the citizens of South Africa do not want to engage in. Therefore, we parents and community members appeal to our own government in Addis Ababa to discuss the matter with its South African counterpart and provide some kind of protection and security to our boys living and working in South Africa*"*. (KeyInformant, Ancha- Sedichokebele).

Like many other irregular migration operations which are based on a chain of illicit or clandestine actors and activities, irregular migration to the RSA from the study areas has been and still is characterized by very high costs, including the death of hundreds of migrants en-route to and within South Africa (the latter due to xenophobic attacks). Despite the difficult and life-threatening journeys and a host of other unfavorable conditions both in the home front as well as in destination countries, irregular migration of youth from Kembata and Hadiya zones continues to this day.

Conclusions and policy implications

In order to put the policy implications outlined in this section in a proper perspective, we would like to note that the topic of land and rural livelihood is a potentially vast and complex field of investigation and policy analysis. For this reason, the study cannot be expected to provide a blue-print for policy intervention or provide detailed recommendations for each and every issue or problem related to land and rural livelihood. As much as possible, we have attempted to relate the policy implications to the findings and conclusions of the study and highlight the synergy between the policy implications of different themes of the study. For the purpose of orderly presentation and consistency, the policy implications are outlined under three themes: (i) promoting a more economically viable landholding system, (ii) strengthening land rights and promoting tenure security and (iii) land and livelihood security: policy synergy. From these themes, it is clear that what ties together the various policy ideas and suggestions outlined below is the general policy direction or goal of promoting more economically viable landholding system and more secure and transferable land rights.

Promoting economically viable land holding system

The key constraints or challenges to be addressed are small and declining size of landholdings or the proliferation of economically unviable micro holdings on the one hand and landlessness on the other. What kind of land holding system do we want to see twenty five and fifty years from now? What are the policy re-orientations and strategies we have to adopt now in order to realize the vision tomorrow? These are the kind of questions which we need to ask in order to lay the foundation for creating an economically viable farm structure and smallholder agricultural system for secure livelihood. The overall policy direction to be followed to address these challenges appears to be simple and clear, namely promoting more viable land holding system. On the other hand, the strategic implications of the general policy direction include: (i) reducing population pressure on land, (ii) halting and reversing the prevailing rampant process of sub-division and fragmentation of holdings, and (iii) in the in the long run, the enlargement and consolidation of smallholder farms. These are interrelated and mutually reinforcing processes when they are successfully put in motion. However, the problem is finding concrete and feasible set of strategies and interventions which can bring about the desired outcomes. We have identified three strategic areas of interventions outlined below supported by brief elaborations with regard to their feasibility and amenability to policy influence based on the findings of the study.

(1) Promoting alternative non-agricultural livelihoods. Reducing population pressure on land by creating alternative non-agricultural employment opportunities for the land hungry and landless
(2) Promoting land markets. Enhancing access to land and enlarging operational holdings by lifting legal restrictions on land rentals, and

(3) Administrative redistribution. Addressing lingering concerns about administrative redistribution which in the past was one of the causes of sub-division and fragmentation of holdings.

To be effective, strategies and interventions have to be aligned with the problems or constraints they are intended to address. It is also important to ascertain whether and to what extent factors and constraints under consideration are amenable to policy influence: in this regard, the findings of the study on the immediate and underlying driving factors responsible for the sub-division and fragmentation of holdings suggest that some are less amenable for policy influence than others. For example, inheritance is difficult to control or influence through official or legal interventions (such as for example legislating minimum size of holding below which land cannot be sub-divided). This is because the ultimate or underlying factors behind the proliferation of micro-holdings through inheritance are high population pressure and land scarcity on the one hand and lack of alternative non-farm employment opportunities on the other.

On the other hand, administrative redistribution which was the other major cause of sub-division and diminution of holdings is a policy factor and hence amenable to policy influence. In this case, we are dealing with a "double-edged sword" as it were, because administrative redistribution has also been one of the major causes of tenure insecurity and hence pertinent to issues of land rights and tenure security dealt with separately below. The same applies to informal land transactions and the legal restrictions on land rentals which are both amenable to policy influence as well as pertain to issues of land rights and tenure security. In other words, restrictions on land transactions affect not only land rights but also access to land, since as the findings of the study indicated, informal land markets are one of the important and growing mechanisms of access to land.

While interventions in the above areas can make some contribution for addressing the problems of access to land and the sub-division of holdings, there remains the broader and underlying challenge associated with population dynamics, pressure on land and land scarcity. This broad area is directly connected with the issue of reducing population pressure on land without which it will be difficult to effectively address the driving factors behind the proliferation of micro-holdings or attain the over-all long term goal of promoting viable land holdings. For example, the only way to address the proliferation of micro holdings due to inheritance in an effective and sustainable manner is by reducing the demand for land by successive generations due to lack of alternative livelihood or employment opportunities. It implies no less than a relatively massive shift of the labor force out of agriculture into alternative potentially more viable livelihood systems consisting of two broad pathways: (i) the promotion of rural livelihood diversification or development of the rural non-farm economy, and (ii) accelerated rural out-migration, urbanization and industrialization. Since this is a broad and complex area any attempt on our part to go into details would be futile because it relates to almost all areas of development policy and strategy (e.g. industrial

policy, urban development policy, population policy, etc.). This is an area which overlaps with the third theme discussed below, namely, the linkages between land and livelihood security and the policy synergy where more will be said.

Strengthening land rights and promoting tenure security

The overall problem or challenge under this theme relates to weak land rights and tenure insecurity, and the main policy direction goal should be strengthening land rights and promoting tenure security. More specifically, the following are the main constraints associated with land rights and tenure security highlighted by the findings of the study:

(1) Continued prevalence of tenure insecurity in spite of land certification (as indicated by future expectations of land redistribution, risk of losing land right due to renting-out land and migration);
(2) Restrictions on land transfers, including rentals and inheritance;
(3) Significant gaps in knowledge and awareness of land laws and rights at grass roots level; and
(4) Divergent perceptions and views on existing land laws and tenure policy

In addition, the review of relevant secondary sources and studies indicate the following problems and challenges associated with land rights and tenure security:

(1) Loopholes, inconsistencies and lack of clarity in existing land laws

(2) Growing competition, conflict and litigation as source of tenure insecurity

(3) Problems associated with expropriation of land for public purposes

(4) Weak land administration and land dispute resolution systems

We have identified the following as strategic areas of intervention to strengthen land rights and tenure security:

(1) Addressing tenure insecurity arising from the threat of administrative redistribution and expropriation for public purposes

(2) Addressing legal restrictions on land transfer rights, including rental and inheritance

(3) Promoting knowledge and awareness of land rights and laws at grass roots level

(4) Streamlining and harmonizing land laws: removing gaps, loopholes, and ambiguities

(5) Strengthening and reforming systems of land administration and dispute resolution

(6) Protecting the land rights of vulnerable groups including women and the poor.

Multiple sources of tenure insecurity and multiple arenas of intervention. There is no one single measure or intervention for strengthening land rights and promoting tenure security. One obvious reason for this is that there is no single cause or source of tenure insecurity or violation of land rights: the sources of tenure insecurity can be many (both state and private) and can vary from place to place and time to time. If in this study the emphasis has been on administrative redistribution as the main sources of tenure insecurity it is because of the land tenure regime established since the 1975 Land Reform which established state or public ownership of land and gave the state enormous power to intervene in land matters. Although it was not addressed in this study, administrative redistribution is not the only source of tenure insecurity which can be attributed to the state domain: expropriation of land for public purposes is another increasingly important source of tenure insecurity. Such expropriation has been due to accelerated growth and expansion of urbanization, private and public investment in development projectsand infrastructure which lead to the displacement of landholders and farmers. Both administrative redistribution and expropriation for public purposes as sources of tenure insecurity are policy factors and hence amenable for policy influence. On the other hand, growing population pressure and land scarcity is leading to increasing competition, conflict and land litigation between private parties. In practice this can be a much more widespread source of tenure insecurity with no less negative impact on welfare due to the time and resources wasted in lengthy litigations. This is why efficient and transparent systems of land administration and conflict resolution mechanisms are important for the protection of land rights and promotion of tenure security.

Objective and subjective dimensions of land rights and tenure security. Land rights and tenure security have both objective and subjective dimensions. The subjective aspect (which concerns the perception and attitude of landholders and farmers) is as important as the objective one in its implications: for example, even if land redistribution is not undertaken in practice, the perception that administrative redistribution can take place continues to be an important and lingering source of tenure insecurity which directly and indirectly influences the motivations and incentives of farmers. It is for this reason that as it is often said, tenure security is not about the issuing of a piece of paper but about building the confidence and trust of land holders and farmers through various other measures and interventions including the legal protection of land rights from administrative redistribution, streamlining and harmonizing land laws (removing gaps, loopholes, inconsistencies, restrictions, etc.). Public education and awareness creation about land rights and laws at grass roots level should be part of this overall agenda because in the final analysis the best means for sustainable protection of land rights and promotion of tenure security should come from local social forces and not from external agencies.

*Policy research and public debate on land tenure policy***.** Land tenure policy has to be flexible and dynamic; it has to be responsive to the changing and diverse needs of different categories of farmers and farming households, and the changing

economic, social and political environment. In this regard, we believe that it will be difficult to achieve many of the development goals of the government in an effective and sustainable manner without addressing the serious challenges associated with population dynamics and land related constraints on rural livelihood. For example, one of the strategic goals of government agricultural and rural development policy is to create an educated, skilled and market-oriented class of smallholder farmers. However, it is difficult to envisage how the goal of nurturing an educated and market-oriented class of smallholder farmers can be achieved on the basis of very small and declining size of holdings, micro-holdings with weak land rights and limited tenure security at that. The same applies to the goal of attaining a middle-income country status in a short period of time which implies a significant level of structural transformation from a predominantly rural and agricultural mode of livelihood to an urban and industrial employment pattern. For these and various other reasons many of the key issues and problems associated with land tenure policy are not and should not be considered as "settled matters" or "dead issues". As the findings of the study indicated, there are divergent perceptions and views on many land policy issues and challenges, not only among the elite but also among rural land holders and farmers themselves. The implication of this is that continued policy research and open public dialogue on land tenure policy is necessary and useful. It is necessary because land tenure policy is not a dogma, but an instrument to facilitate positive economic and social change to promote livelihood security. That is why we say that since land and rural livelihood systems are dynamic, land tenure policy should be flexible and evolve together with the changing needs and priorities of different categories of rural households.

Land and livelihood security: policy synergy

To what extent improving livelihood security is dependent upon access to land and addressing land-related constraints in the case study areas? The findings of the study (which included both objective and subjective aspects and indicators) clearly show that access to land and livelihood security are very closely and strongly interrelated and livelihood insecurity cannot be addressed effectively and in a sustainable manner without tackling land-related constraints.

The available evidence also shows that households facing greater land constraints attempt to compensate through various coping mechanisms including: raising yield through greater application of labor, adoption of improved inputs, and engaging in non-farm activities. However, while these coping mechanisms make positive contributions, they cannot close the substantial gap in production and income arising from differences in access to land.

The policy implication of the findings on the linkage between access to land livelihood outcomes appear to be simple and straightforward at first sight: what we need to do is just improving access to land or giving land to the landless and increasing the landholdings of the land hungry! In other words, it implies the so-called "extensification" strategy, namely, bringing more land under the plough and

expanding and entrenching land-based agricultural livelihoods. However, this assumes the availability of extra land which means it overlooks the reason why there is landlessness and land hunger in the first place, namely, high population pressure and land scarcity.

The findings and conclusions of the study presented throughout the report suggest the opposite as the main policy implication: what we have to do is to move a significant proportion of the landless and the land hungry out of agriculture into alternative and more viable non-agricultural livelihood systems. Viewed from this perspective, agricultural growth and rural livelihood diversification definitely have important contributions to make in addressing the severe land-related constraints to rural livelihood but *cannot be the leading strategies***.** The key point which should be noted is that, in the final analysis, the relationship between land and livelihood outcomes at household level is determined not by levels of productivity per unit of land or aggregate rates of agricultural growth but by the quantity and quality of land under the disposal of farming households and how much output and income they can generate from the land. In other words, the real question should be: to what extent is it possible to ensure food security and long term viable livelihoods for households with micro-holdings even if productivity can be increased significantly? In other words, our argument is that aggregate figures derived from abstract models or general assertions about the role of agricultural growth in promoting food security and rural poverty alleviation (which do not take into account demographic dynamics and the sever land-related constrains) cannot serve as realistic basis for the formulation of policies and strategies to tackle chronic food insecurity and poverty in a sustainable manner.

The general policy direction suggested above does not implyneglecting agricultural development. On the contrary it synergizes with and requires a re-vitalized and more robust agricultural sector and rural non-farm economy: an accelerated shift of population out of agriculture and rural livelihood by reducing pressure on land, will contribute to addressing one of the major land-related constraints at present, namely, the sub-division of holdings and the proliferation of micro-holdings. This will in turn contribute to the emergence of a more viable land holding system which will serve as a foundation for a more robust smallholder farming and more viable rural livelihoods.

In this way, synergy and harmonization will be created between land policy on the one hand and agricultural and rural development policy and strategies on the other, which in turn will be linked with broader policies and strategies to promote long term structural transformation. While we cannot say that they are totally neglected, the issues and challenges associated with demographic dynamics and the structure of land holdings and their implications for rural livelihoods are not given sufficient attention in existing development policies and strategies. That is why population pressure and related constraints should be taken as one of the main vantage points for the re-orientation of agricultural and rural development policies and strategies within a broader framework of development policies and strategies which facilitate “structural transformation”. The re-orientation of land tenure policy will have a key role in facilitating these processes.

We believe that this is the only way policy can move away from the path of "trapping" people into livelihood activities and sectors in which they are highly unlikely to construct viable livelihoods, which is counter-productive to say the least and often ends up being a "poverty trap". The role of policy should be to facilitate exit to alternative, and better or more viable livelihoods and for this reason land tenure policy has to be flexible and evolve together with the changing needs and priorities of different categories of rural households.

At this juncture, we have to reiterate that the challenges associated with creating alternative employment opportunities on a large scale and managing mass rural-urban migration are well known and do not require detailed elaboration on our part. However, the challenges should not obscure the main policy direction required to address the growing problem of land huger and landlessness and the timely interventions needed to lay the foundation for alternative and more viable livelihoods for the majority of the currently landless and land hungry including the youth now and in the future.

Finally, it should be noted that arguments in support of the suggested overall policy direction are based on more solid grounds pertaining to the fundamental structural conditions and challenges which prevail in the study areas and in the country as a whole, including: (i) demographic dynamics and high level of dependence on land-based agricultural livelihood, (ii) low level of rural livelihood diversification, and (iii) low level of urbanization and industrialization. If there is any assumption that existing policies and strategies are already moving in the same direction and producing similar outcomes, the following evidence should serve as food for thought: in the period between 1999 and 2013, the share of agriculture in total GDP declined from 55.1 to 41.8 percent. However, in the same period the share of agricultural employment in total employment declined by two percentage points only, from 79.8 to 77.3 percent (World Bank, 2015b: 12-13). Is this a case of high growth without structural transformation? It is important to note that the period under consideration includes the "golden" years of historically unprecedented economic growth in general and agricultural growth in particular[105]

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[105] For a comprehensive analysis of agricultural growth in the past decade, see FantuNisraneBachewe et al. (2015).

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Land, Rural Poverty and Landlessness in Tigray

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and
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Introduction

Land is the most critical asset for the livelihood of millions of rural households in developing countries. Institutions[106] and incentives that govern its efficient use determine its sustainability as an essential resource. Historically, tenure rights to land in Ethiopia have been vested in either the rist (communal) system, the gult system (private land holding), or the church (Gebreegziabher et al, 2012). The rist[107]system was the dominant type in the northern half of the country while the gult system was dominant in the southern half before the 1975 land reform (Hoben, 1973; Bruce et al, 1994; Kebede, 2002). Under this system, an individual had usufruct rights to land in a given community only if one was able to establish a direct line of descent from the recognized original holder of the land. Nevertheless, the individual's usufruct rights to land were not transferable to others through sale or mortgage. Thus, rist is a variant of communal land tenure in Ethiopia (Crewett et al. 2008).

Moreover, as the right to land under the *rist* system didn't imply a right to any specific parcel, land redistribution was undertaken periodically to ensure that new family members were granted access. Moreover, the fact that anybody's land parcels might be reallocated to distant kinsmen/women and that no one could sell them for a profit nor leave it to a heir reduced a farmer's incentive to invest in long-term land improvements and, hence, resulted in land quality deterioration (Hoben, 1995).

The Marxist regime that took power in 1975 transferred ownership of all rural lands to the state and with the 1975 land reform (Proclamation No. 31), the previous

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[106] Institutions can be in place in the absence of markets. Through shaping the behavior of people with respect to each other and their belongings, possessions, and property; institutions provide assurance by setting the 'rules of the game'. These rules, hence, affect the welfare of agents through their effect on the rate of resource use and the distribution of returns. By coordinating behavior and reducing uncertainty in the realm of human interaction, they increase the value of a stream of benefits associated with economic activity. (Runge, 1984; Gebreegziabher*et al*, 2012)

[107]As was the case in the rest of Africa (Besley, 1995), *rist*system/ communal land tenure may be regarded as egalitarian in the sense that the distribution was based on the principle of equality, with the land allocated by lottery after being divided into parcels according to quality.

systems of tenancy were abolished (Nickola, 1988). The Marxist regime also established peasant associations at the village level to carry this radical land reform and embarked on massive collectivization. As explained earlier, prior to 1975, land in Ethiopia was concentrated in the hands of few absentee landlords. This high inequality of land ownership not only reduced productivity and investment but also led to political grievances and eventually resulted in the overthrow of the imperial regime. Moreover, tenure was highly insecure and arbitrary evictions were common. This meant widespread sense of tenure insecurity and lack of incentives for investment for sustainable land management. This, together with lack of public investment, led to rapid declines in productivity which, with a rapidly growing population, caused widespread soil degradation and erosion (Kebede, 2002). Following the overthrow of the Marxist regime in 1990, intentions to move towards a system of private ownership particularly as it relates to land did not fully materialize.[108]

In general, the issue of land has a strong bearing on a wide range of issues and policy concerns, including food security, poverty reduction and sustainable land management including ecosystem services provision (Feder and Nishio, 1999; Rahmato, 2003; Deininger and Chamorro, 2004).

In the Ethiopian context, while there is still policy debate specifically on the choice of ownership, there has been a policy initiative to provide rural land users title of 'ownership', by registering and issuing user certificatesto the land they received during the last land redistribution or through inheritance from their close kin. The titling of land or registration and certification is widely believed to improve efficiency of land use and agricultural production by increasing farmers' incentives to adopt new technology, on-farm investment, and sustainable management of land (Feder and Nishio, 1999; Rahmato, 2004). The government's initiative seems to have been motivated from this imperative: boosting farmers' sense of security, which in turn, is expected to encourage investment on erosion-reducing and land quality enhancing technologies (FDRE, 2005).

The Tigray regional state has developed a rural land administration and use law in 1997 based on the context of the national constitution. Proper governance and management of land has been one of the major initiatives that underpin the five year development plans. Due to multiple problems, key components embedded in the federal and regional rural land administration and use laws were not effective due to resource constraints and lack of institutional capacity. The major contents in the regional rural land administration and use laws include:

- Implementation of the second level certification
- Preparation and implementation of land use plan

[108] According to the Ethiopian Constitution land is declared the property of the state; hence, it may not be sold or mortgaged. Formal land sales have been prohibited during the last three decades or more and peasants and pastoralists have only user rights (Rahmato, 1992; FDRE, 1995; Joireman, 2001).

- Establishment of Rural Land Administration and Information Systems (RLAISs)
- Generating new policy ideas based on evaluation of implemented tasks

The implementation of the laws has been undertaken at pilot level with financial and technical support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). These have resulted in a remarkable achievement in registration and certification of rural lands in six pilot *Woredas* during the first ELTAP project period and in two pilot *Woredas* during the second ELAP project period. Currently, the first level certification was issued to about 99 percent of the rural households in *Tigray*. During the implementation of the first level land certification, a number of impediments have been accounted which include the following:

- Lack of a realistic and achievable Road Map/Strategic Action Plan, which sets out key strategies, activities, institutional capacity building and resource requirements bounded with time frames
- Lack of a strong and stable Rural Land Administration and Use Agency (RLAUAs) at Region and *Woreda* levels
- Lack of supportive legislation framework which are necessary for effective
- Implementation of the regional rural land administration and use laws

The full scale implementation of the regional laws including the issuance of the second level certificate requires the preparation of a "Strategic Road Map" (SRM) for regional Rural Land Administration and Land Use System in order to realistically program and sequence activities, define the cost and financial and technological needs, along with capacity building and resource mobilization. The SRM is expected to provide a framework for successful implementation of the laws by setting out strategies, key activities, and institutional requirements in a comprehensive manner. With the efforts being made since 1997, this study aims at systematically analyzing the extent and present situation with regard to land, landlessness and poverty in *Tigray*.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the research is to explore the extent to which land, landlessness and poverty are inter-related, and the reduction of poverty depends on addressing the challenges faced by landholders and land users relating to rights and access to land. The specific objectives are as follows:

- To explore the role of land registration and certification on security of land rights and access in *Tigray*

- To determine the contributory factors for landlessness and its effects in general since the start of implementation of the rural land utilization proclamation and regulations in the study areas in *Tigray*
- To determine the present state of landlessness and its relation to rural poverty in the study areas in *Tigray*
- To understand the response of public institutions both at regional levels and local communitiesto resolve problems associated to prevailing landlessness and rural poverty in the study area in *Tigray*
- To evaluate the impacts of SLM and poverty reduction strategies being implemented in terms of improving income and food security in the study areas of *Tigray*

The setting

Among the northern Ethiopian regions, *Tigray* covers a total area of 53 638 km^2 situated between 12°15' and 14°57' N and 36°27' and 39°59' E (BoPED, 1998). It is bordered by Eritrea to the North, the Sudan to the west, and with the Afar and Amhara regional states of Ethiopia to its east and south, respectively.

The total population is estimated at 4,316,988 (2,126,465 male and 1,190,523 female) of which about 81 percent is living in rural areas (CSA, 2004). The agro-climatic zones of *Tigray* can be categorized into the lowland below 1500 m a.s.l. (traditionally called *Kolla*), midland between 1500-2400 m a.s.l. (*Weina Dega*) and highland above 2400 m a.s.l. (*Dega*). The midlands have been cultivated for millennia (TewoldeBerhan, 2006). The highlands cover the high mountainous areas in the southern, eastern and western parts of the region. Smallholder crop-livestock mixed farming is the dominant type of farming system.

Climate

Most parts of *Tigray* receive a mono-modal type of rainfall which varies from 600 to 1200 mm per year distributed between May and October (WBISPP, 2001). The annual amount of rainfall for most of the highlands ranges from 700-1200 mm but areas such as the north eastern lowlands often receive less than 600 mm. The rainfall generally decreases from south to north and west to east in the region. The temperature is inversely related to altitude, with a mean annual temperature of 22 to 27°C in the lowlands and 10 to 22°C in the highlands.

According to FAO (1998), four types of length of growing period can be identified in *Tigray*. First, the foot of the eastern escarpment (eastern lowlands) has a length of growing period of 61 days with small rains commencing in July and often stopping early in September resulting in frequent crop failures. Second, the northern part of the western lowlands has a length of growing period of 56 days with the onset of rains in June. The southern part of the western lowlands receives rains starting in June and has a length of growing period varying from 90 to 120

days. Third, a long narrow belt stretching north-south in the highlands has a length of growing period of 119 days and receives a relatively reliable rainfall which commences in June. Finally, the outlier highland (part of the Semien Massif) in western *Tigray* receives the highest amount of rainfall starting in May and has a length of growing period of 144 days.

Land use/cover and farming systems

Given the dominance of settled agriculture for several thousands of years, the original land cover and natural vegetation has been reduced significantly. The present land cover comprises a mosaic of cultivated, grazing and shrub lands in the highlands (Friis, 1992) and extensive woodlands in the lowlands with mosaics of shifting cultivation. The rare relict patch of remnant natural vegetation relates to the amount of rainfall and temperature with local variations due to soil and drainage factors.

The population density varying from 13 to 104 persons/km^2. The arable land (considering areas with <30% slope) varies from 0.69 to 3.36 ha/capita (WBISPP, 2001). The lowlands are less suitable for humans and as a consequence have a low population density mainly due to prevalence of malaria.Some areas such as *Alage, Adwa,Tahtay Machew* and*Ganta Afeshum* have a very high population density and intensive land use. The smallholders' mixed crop-livestock production system constitutes the entire rural land use systems in Tigray.

Land degradation

The main causes of land degradation in *Tigray* are removal of vegetation, soil erosion and soil nutrient depletion. Most soils are deficient in Nitrogen and Phosphorus (TRBIDMPP, 1997a). Removal of the vegetation and burning of dung and crop residues which are sources of soil humus and fertility have brought about a progressive decline in land quality and agricultural productivity. The burning of dung and crop residues for fuel purposes accounts for about 10% losses of the annual agricultural productivity (TFAP, 1996a &BoANR, 2003). WBISPP (2001) estimated the annual loss of nutrients due to burning of dung and crop residues as equivalent to ca. 3039 tons Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) and 10 541 tons Urea which approximately worth to $ 0.9 and $ 22.93 million, respectively.

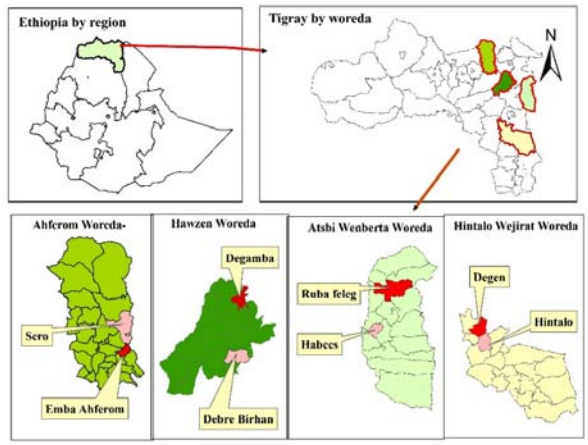
Methodology

The study area

Four *Woredas* among those selected for productive safety net programs (PSNP) and food security projects (FSP) in *Tigray*, (namely, Ahferom, Hawzen, AtsbiWomberta and HintaloWajerat, Figure 1) and two representative *Tabias* from

each *Woreda* were selected based on agro-climatic zones (from mid-land and highland) and extent of landlessness.

Figure 1. Location of the study areas



Data collection

Quantitative and qualitative data have been collected at community, household and individual levels on landlessness and poverty for each of the study components. The respondent households have been grouped into wealth categories as follows.

Wealth categories	Definition
Very Poor	Don't own a house (rent), landless, food secure only one month per year, one set of clothing purchased per year, fully dependent on food forwork activities
Poor	Own a house, have land, food secure for at least three months, daily paid labor is required for survival
Medium	Own house, own one-two oxen, have land, food secure for at least five months
Better off	Own more than two oxen or two oxen and a cow, have land, food secure for above nine months, good overall income

The issue of access to natural resources is framed within the larger context of common property regime (CPR) management. It acknowledges the existence of different sets of rules relating to different natural resources (e.g. land) in different landscapes (e.g. open woodlands, grazing lands, hillside exclosures, agricultural fields, homesteads), and is intended to analyze how rights and duties are distributed among groups within the community in accordance with their characteristics, e.g. age, sex, wealth, occupation, household size, etc. Following Kundhlande and Luckert (1998), property rights definitions have two components: 1) a use of a good or provision of a service, and 2) social conditions that restrict or promote its

use. Thus, access to land was studied in line with the framework for natural resources tenure.

Review of secondary documentation

The study team reviewed relevant available information and reports providing background and baseline information on the study areas. For instance, among the reviewed documents were national and regional policies and strategies on land administration, natural resources management, growth and transformation plan (GTP) documents, and guidelines and manuals on sustainable land management program. *Woreda* administration, Agriculture, and Justice Offices were the main sources of secondary information.

Focus group discussion (FGD)

This survey has mainly used FGD to cross check primary data collected from the respondents. The study has captured views and perception of specific groups using prepared check lists. In order to know the existing situation more realistically and to understand women's perception on social, cultural and economic issues and relate them to key dimensions of empowerment, the numbers of women participants were increased.

Key informant interviews (KII)

To gather comprehensive baseline information relevant to the study was considered essential to interview those who are thought to have knowledge on various issues of land administration and management. A checklist specifically focused on the study objectives and indicators for the KII.

Sampling and primary data collection

All exiting secondary data pertinent to the study areas in *Tigray* region were gathered and reviewed before starting the field work. Key reviewed information was further clarified and validated through discussion with the key informants from those various institutions having roles with the topic of this study at regional and *Woreda* levels. The study *Woredas* and villages for the field survey and respondents for the FGD and individual interviewees were selected following stratified random sampling technique.

Four *Woredas* among those selected for the productive safety net programs (PSNP) and food security projects (FSP) and two representative *Tabias* from each *Woreda* were selected, one from the mid-land and the other highland based on the agro-ecological zones, and extent of landlessness problems. The list of households and landless young girls and boys was obtained from the *Tabia* administrators and from the list of participants in the implementation of PSNP and FSP activities. Checklist was prepared for key informant interview, and community level FGD. A

structured questionnaire was developed for landholder households and individual landless interviews.

The research has employed various tools/techniques to generate data at three levels of inquiry: community-level, household level, and landless individual level. Community-level analyses were based on four FGDs that include 6 people representing all gender, different ages, wealth categories, etc. The individual household level data collection involved 8 landholder household heads and 6 landless youth making a total of 160 participants for the primary data collection during the field survey.Among the respondents, 3.7% were single, 62 percent married, 4.3% widowed, and 30 percent were divorced. The married respondents consist of both female (27 percent) and male (73 percent), and were higher than the other categories. The proportion of divorced respondents was higher in females (94 percent) than in the males (6 percent).From the total respondents, 26.5%, 53 percent and 20.5% were the age ranges from 20 - 35, 36 - 50 and 51 - 75, respectively. The survey result indicates that the age range of 20 - 35 were higher in female (81%) than the male (19%) category. The age ranges from 36 - 50 and 51 - 75 of the male respondent were (52% and 85%) were higher in proportion than that of the female's age category (48% and 15%).

The educational level of respondents showed that about 16% of the total were illiterate, 55% completed grades 1 - 4, 22.5% grades 5 - 8, 5.5% grades 9 - 10, and 1% were preparatory (grade 11 - 12) in that order. The illiteracy level shows that about 40% the female category were illiterate while 60% of them completed grade 1 - 4 better than the male category in this level of education. About 33% of the females were grade 5 - 8 far lower than the male in this level of education. Also, about 56% of the female completed grade 9 - 10 while those respondents who did preparatory (grade 11 - 12) were all from the male category in the educational status. The general trend in education level indicates, most respondents (female and male) have completed 1 - 4 and 5 - 8 grade category levels.

The family size of the respondent households goes up to 11. The percentage of households with family members of 5 was 21.3%; the percentage of households with a total family size of 7 was 16.3%. About 12.5% of households had a total family size of 4. The survey also showed that most of the respondents reported to have a family size of five to seven members in their family.

Data analysis and interpretation

Primary data collected from the different respondents were input into STATA (version 12) software. Various indices were used to explore the relationships among the components of the study variables pertinent to land, landlessness and poverty. Secondary data collected from region and district offices as well as information gathered through KII and FGD were also analyzed. The results of the analysis are compared to the findings of the studies done in the past notably those that were done during the early 1990s to indicate whether landlessness and poverty problems are decreasing or increasing in the highlands of *Tigray*. Furthermore, the

existing Rural Land Utilization Proclamation and other similar policies operating at national and regional levels were reviewed and analyzed in order to prepare brief reports for policy debate on the issue of land administration.

Results and discussion

Land and land tenure

Land legislation and policy in Tigray

In Ethiopia, land is a crucial asset and an essential input in the agricultural sector which has been the mainstay of the economy that accounts for about 40 percent of GDP and is still source of livelihoods for more than 75 percent of the country's population (MoARD, 2010).

The 1975 radical land reformof the Derg regime (i.e., Proclamation no. 31/1975) abolished any freehold system in the country (Nickola, 1988). The proclamation nationalized all rural lands, making it public property, and land was to be distributed to farmers only on usufruct basis, i.e., only as a use right which cannot be sold or mortgaged. The land reform also entailed frequent land allocation and redistribution as its main agenda in an attempt to maintain egalitarian land distribution (Holden and Yohannes,2002).Redistribution used the number of family members as the main criterion with less emphasis given to other factors such as size of family workforce and ownership of other farm assets (Rahmato, 1984).

Following the fall of the Derg regime and the enactment of the new Constitution of The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), land still remained public property. However, the Rural Land Administration Proclamation, i.e., Proclamation No. 89/1997 devolved the power of land administration to regional governments (FDRE, 1997). The proclamation also bestowed the regions the power for implementationof participatory land certification program which was widely viewed as a real signal or intent by the government in its attempt to enhance agricultural productivity and economic growth.

In *Tigray* region, the last land redistribution was implemented in 1990. The *Tigray* State issued Rural Land Usage Proclamation in 1997 (TNRS, 1997). The proclamation prohibits any future large-scale land redistribution to provide more tenure security. Subsequent regional land proclamations of *Tigray* have reconfirmed this stance against future redistribution (TRNS, 2006; 2007), but they allow farmers to lease out not more than half of their allotted land for a maximum of three years.

The latest land policy also outlines obligations of land users that include not cutting trees on farm, protecting plot boundaries, and undertaking soil and water conservation measures and planting trees. It also emphasizes that failure to meet these obligations could leadto the loss of holding rights by the landholder (TNRS, 2007). The policy also provides guarantees to land users against expropriation

without proper compensation. This, in turn, is expected to enhance tenure security and incentivize farmers to make land related long-term investments.

Land registration and certification

The *Tigray* national regional state became the first region to implement a land certification process in 1998–99 using simple traditional methods following the 1997 devolution of power over land from federal to regional governments (FDRE 1997). The right to land is dependent on residency in a rural area and engagement in agricultural activities and any person that meets these requirements shall be given a land holding certificate. The certificate specifies that the holder has the right to use the land but can also bequeath it to her/his dependants and rent it out for a maximum of 25 years which is renewable after the completion of the rental agreement period. The regional law also stipulates that any land rent agreement for a period of more than 3 years must be made in writing. It also states that the lessee shall not, partially or fully, re-rent the land to a third party, unless otherwise it is clearly specified that she/he has right to do so in the rental contract.

Land registration and certification in the region involved two levels, i.e., first-level certification and second-level certification.Broadly speaking, the first-level land registration and certification involved the registration and demarcation of land plots using simple local technologies thatrequire little training, andwithout any surveying/geo-referencing of the land parcels. In fact the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) clearly puts the first-level and certification process as a way of granting farmers simple temporary certificates of landholdings with no geo-referencing and mapping of the land parcels involved (MoA 2013).First, identification, adjudication and registration of land holding rights is carried out at the *tabia* level without any surveying of the land parcels involved. Then, theissuing of temporary certificates of holdings to the holders is handled at *woreda* level. These first-level certificates are also offered at the household level instead of at the parcel level.Registration and certification was done manually with rudimentary measuring instruments such as tapes and ropes used to measure the farm plots. As there was no surveying/geo-referencing of the land parcels involved, the main basis for determining plot boundaries were field markings such as stones or pegs in conjunction with the testimony of neighboring farmers whoshare the same boundaries of the plot in question.

It is well celebrated that Ethiopia has implemented one of the largest, fastest, simplest and least expensive land registration and certification reforms in Africa (e.g. Deininger et al, 2008) with approximately 1 US$ or less per farm plot of initial cost. Moreover, its impact in improving tenure security has been significant, as evidenced by increased investment, decrease land related disputes, increase land productivity and land rental market activity (e.g. Deininger et al., 2011; Holden et al., 2009, 2011).

The first-stage certification had limitations with respect to the maintenance and updating of land registration records. The second-level registration and

certification system involves registering the precise geographical locations and sizes of individual farm plots using technologies such as GPS, aerial photograph, satellite imagery or orthophotographs. Farmers receive plot-level certificates with maps rather than a household-level certificate. The aim is that the second-level land registration and certification effort will enhance tenure security, the maintenance and updating of records, and land management (MOA, 2013).The second-level land registration and certification was likely to be substantially more costly than the first-stage certification and will also require much longer time. It is believed that the primary purpose of the second-level certificate is to increase tenure security for farmers.

In Tigray, it is estimated that about 1.5 million households have registered their holdings and about 97 percent have completed first level certification. About 52 percent of land holdings are registered in the name of both spouses, 27 percent are registered by women and 21 percent by men. The computerization of land records is considered as part of second-level registration which indicated that each rural household hold on average about four parcels of land.

All Tabias in Tigray were involved in the registration and certification program which was essentially implemented at the grassroots level. First, a meeting of all residents of Tabia is held to explain the program, following which a Land Administration Committee(LAC) is elected by vote and assumes responsibility for the implementation of the program. The regulations that are in place specify the term of the LAC for 2 or 3 years and require inclusion of at least one female member. The registration and certification is a labor-intensive and field-based process. The LAC is required to register plots in a public process with neighbors present to ensure transparency and reduce scope for errors or manipulation. However, this also involves a heavy workload on the LAC members. In addition, though there are few formal requirements for doing so, households receive a preliminary registration certificate identifying their holdings, once registration has been completed and results have been discussed in public. Then, an official registration certificate is given once all the information for a Tabia has been entered into the registry book.

The registration and certification process has ensured the achievement of the program aims of reclamation of degraded lands in Tigray, turning abandoned waste lands into useful ones. Thus, the size of land entering into production in general is on the increase. However, the availability of land versus the increasing demand for it in general leads to either much smaller land size at present or seldom of no change compared to the land size when the last redistribution was undertaken. Some parcels of land at times are given to children. Reallocation of a given land to many landless users results in smaller holdings according to respondents included in this study. Portions of landespecially of female headed households are also rented out to others for better productivity. Farmers usually rent out land when they have no oxen and labour, need money to pay loans, for purchasing fertilizer and household consumables. This indicates that the issue of landlessness and its

solutions has been a concern of individual households and communities at the grass roots level.

Institutionally, problems related to landlessness are being resolved by allocating partly communal grazing lands to landless youth, and by giving out the land of a person absent from the village due to migration for a long period of time. Moreover, resources such as sand mines, irrigable valleys, and developed hillsides are also allocated to landless youth. The landless when organized in groups also have received priority to get credit and invest in development activities.

Though there are early signs that the formalization of land rights through providing user certificates that are inheritable have a positive role especially in enhancing market-based land rental transactions(Deininger et al. 2008), a recently enacted law that decrees leasing out more than half of one's holding as an illegal act subject to confiscation has raised concerns that such policy measures might undermine the sense of tenure security of landholders that have been built on so far.

Land resource attributes and risks of losing land

The type of land resource attributes include usufruct (reported by 60% of the respondents), lease (5%), rent out (6%), combinations of usufruct, lease, and rent out (25%), and usufruct and rent out (3%). All the respondents indicate that there are benefits accrued from these resource attributes.The perception of the risk of losing land indicates some variation of responses from the respondents. About 16% of the households indicated that there is much greater risk of losing land now than before. About 12% indicated somehow greater risk now while 33% of the respondents said there is no change in risks from what they were before. About 10% of the respondents indicated that there is somewhat less risk of land and even 29% of the respondents indicated that there is much less risk of losing land now than before.

Land resources use and regulatory mechanisms

About 38% of the respondents indicated that there are some restrictions that limit the type of activities to be done on their land holding. The rest, 62%,thought there is no restriction of activities on their holdings. The restrictions include house building (as indicated by 8% of the respondents), planting of eucalyptus and cactus tress (24%), cutting down forest trees (8%), encroachment on other households' land (4%), excess encroachment on communal lands (4%),eucalyptus planting in outfield crop lands (4%), free animal grazing and movement (4%), and destroying boundaries to plant trees on farm borders (4%).

The minimum duration of the restrictions is one year, but restrictions have been in place for the last 13 - 19 years (ranges made by the respondents in various areas of the study) and for most of the respondents for the last 25 years. Some restrictions are based on customary rules and have been around for the last 40

years. About 12% of the respondents do not know the duration of some of the restricted activities.

Areas over which a household possesses specified rights for the use of the natural resource on land are well known as confirmed in the responses of 98% of the respondents.About 92% of the respondents are resource users that must adhere to certain regulations during the use of the asset in question. The regulation mechanisms are community by-laws or 'Sirit' for 50% of the respondents, laws stipulated at the level of social courts (44%), and other mechanisms (5%).However, about 2% of the households indicate no resource rights at all because they own no land.

In the process of land certification, individual households are given the following user rights and obligations: the right to use, bequeath, inherit, rent out and invest on the their holdings; no right to sell the land; responsibility for land conservation; restrictions on migration and on duration of rental contracts; restriction that only a maximum of 50% of holdings can be rented out; and obligation to use the land (Deininger, et al 2006). In fact, the latter obligations may pose a threat to tenure security of poor households especially female-headed and elderly households that lack the necessary non-land resources to use their land efficiently. It is argued that lifting this policy restriction could improve from efficiency and equity.

Land acquisition and land holding size

The land holding size of the households in the study area varies from a maximum of 2.25 hectare to a least of 0.25 hectares (Table 1) for cultivated land, the average being 0.98 ha. The majority of the sampled households (39%) have land holding size ranging from 0.25 to 0.50 ha, 28% of the respondents possess land ranging from 0.51 to 0.75 ha. Only 3%of the households have above 2 ha.

Table 1. Landholding size of respondents

Land size (ha)	Respondents	Percent
0.25-0.50	62	39
0.51-0.75	45	28
0.76-1.0	10	6
1.1-1.25	19	11
1.26-1.50	9	6
1.51-2	11	7
>2	4	3

Table 1. Means of land acquisition

Means of acquisition	Respondents	Percent
Distribution	91	57
Redistribution	41	26
Inheritance	21	13
Gift from relatives	7	4

Households with large family size received bigger tracts of land during the land redistribution, and this largely explains the variation in size of holdings among households in region. Most households (57%) got their land in 1990 (Table 2 above), i.e., during the last land redistribution made in the study *Tabias*, and the remaining during redistribution (26%) and through inheritance (13%) within the *Tabias* studied. Redistribution and inheritance of land are increasing since the start of land certification indicating the registry and land records are becoming clear and improved during the processes of land administration over the years. In addition, the construction of irrigation infrastructure such as dams also contributed to this.

Land rights of women

It is well known that women are the most vulnerable group in land related disputes with the most insecurity rights to land. In our survey, the respondents were asked whether women's land rights are secured after certification and whether there was discrimination between men and women in access to land (Table 3).

Table 3. Land use rights of women

Women and men equally access land	1st level		2nd level	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
Yes	112	70	158	98
No	48	30	2	2

The Table shows that 70% of respondents for first level, and 98% for second level certification reported that women land rights are secured equally with that of men. This appears to be improving as both the name of husband and wife are indicated on the second level land certificate which have built more on the confidence of women on their landholding and use.

Land related disputes and resolution

State and nature of land related disputes

It has been noticed that in many countries disputes over land are common and gives rise to expensive court cases and all too often lead to a breakdown in law. Much time is also taken up by the courts in resolving these disputes. Delays are common in resolving land disputes, especially when the land administration system is not functioning well to safeguard land rights (ECA, 2004).

Taking the first level land certification as baseline, land disputes are decreasing to-date. The survey results show that land disputes decreased from 37% as a baseline to 19% when this survey was underway. This finding is similar with those of previous studies conducted in *Tigray* and *Amhara* regions. For instance in *Tigray* regional state 66% reported that land related dispute decrease after certification (Deininger et al. 2007). Similarly, the studies made in Amhara region indicates that in areas where land registration and certification took place the number of land related dispute have been reduced by 31% (Belay, 2010). Although it is difficult to eliminate land related disputes, issuance of land certificates to users and continued improved governance helps in reducing land disputes. Some of the causes of land disputes in the studied *Woredas* are: border conflicts, land grabbing, inheritance, divorce, and compensation issues (Table 4).

Table 4. Nature and causes of land related disputes

Types of disputes	Respondents	Percent	Ranking for land certification	
			1st level	2nd level
Border	67	42	1	3
Inheritance	38	23	2	1
Divorce	12	8	3	5
Land grabbing	34	21	4	2
Compensation	9	6	5	4

The survey result showed that there is a variation in the nature of land related disputes between the *Tabias* which issued the second level certificates compared to situations that have been there during the baseline. About 42% of the respondents faced border, 23% inheritance disputes, while 21% faced disputes related to land grabbing during the baseline. The survey findings indicate there is a reduction in border disputes but disputes related to inheritance and land grabbing are increasing at present. This indicates that redistribution and ownership will continue to pose land administration problems in line with growing landlessness and consequent demands for cultivated land in *Tigray* regional state.

Satisfaction and time taken in land related disputes resolution

Table 5 shows that about 61% of respondents were satisfied with the decisions taken to resolve disputes and this was gradually improving compared to that recorded for the baseline (42% satisfaction).

Table 5. Satisfaction of dispute resolution

Resolution status	Respondents	Percent
Satisfied	98	61
Not Satisfied	62	39

Table 6. Time taken in dispute resolution

Time taken	Respondents	Percent
<=1 Month	39	24
2-6 Months	77	48
7-12 Months	6	4
12 Months	27	17
>12 Months	11	7

The time taken for dispute resolution is also improving. Most respondents (72%) reported that their disputes were resolved in less than six months (Table 6 above). But if dispute cases have complications it often takes more than six months to resolve them. There are still a remarkable numbers of households (24%) which complain that their cases have remained with no decision for more than a year. Most of the land dispute resolution decisions (>64%, Table 7) have been made at the *Tabia* level when the first land certification was undertaken.

Table 7. Avenues for dispute resolution

Dispute settlers	Respondents	Percent
Tabia Social Court	45	28
Tabia Land Administration Committee (LAC)	41	26
Woreda Land Administration Office (LAO)	37	23
Woreda Court	21	13
Village Elders	16	10

However, there are some restrictions being introduced due to the shift from dominantly border disputes during the first land certification to the inheritance and land grabbing related land disputes owing to increasing landlessness. The survey results indicate that such land disputes are resolved more at *Woreda* Land

Administration office and *Woreda* Court resulting in additional cost and time for the households.

Trends in land related disputes

Land related disputes were increasing earlier but showed little change afterwardswhen the land registration project was started two decades ago. Our survey results show that disputes have decreased by about 86%, about a two-fold reduction as compared to disputes during the first level certification (Table 8).

Table 8. Trend of land related disputes

	1st level		2nd level	
Trend	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
Increase	7	4	0	0
Decrease	78	49	137	86
No change	75	47	23	14

About 14% of the respondents reported that there is no change with regards to reducing land related disputes, i.e., in reference to the baseline, which is a result correlated to the landless respondents.

Table 9. Land related disputes and resolution by year and household

Complaints entertained	2008	2009	2010
Region level	1500	1566	1304
Woreda and *Tabia* level	32276	34111	37653
Tabia Jurisdiction Committee	19815	28507	21321

Incentive to land security and investment on land improvement

Private investments on land specifically practiced at farmers' plots include: soil band terracing, deep trench, application of inorganic fertilizer and organic manure and compost, construction of ponds, borehole drilling for irrigation, tree plantation, crop rotation and intercropping. The issuance of certificates has more value (77%, Table 10) in tenure security followed by tree planting (13%) and soil and water conservation (SWC) (6%) in that order. One of the main motives of providing certificates is to increase land related investments and ensure sustainable land management (Deininger*et al,* 2009).

Table 10. Mechanisms and household practices for enhancing tenure security

Means of securing land	1st level		2nd level		Total	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
Obtaining certificate	112	70	132	83	123	77
Planting trees	27	17	18	11	21	13
Doing SWC Measures	14	9	5	3	10	6
Fencing (live fence)	7	4	5	3	6	4

They believe that investing on their land, like tree planting, SWC and fencing help to strengthen tenure security in addition to the holding certificate; they argue that a certificate is simply a piece of paper that can easily be damaged, lost or exposed to cheating. Thus, households are involved in increasing tree planting from that reported by 5% as of the first land certification to 22% (Table 11), and SWC/terracing (39%). Manure/compost, fencing, pond, and fodder planting are also being practiced. This indicates the willingness of farmers to invest and improve the condition of their land resulting in increased land productivity in addition to strengthening their tenure security.

Table 11. Type of investments improving farm land quality

Type of investment made after certificate	1st level		2nd level	
	Respondents	Percent	Respondents	Percent
SWC/terrace	52	33	63	39
Manure/Compost	41	26	29	18
Fencing	39	23	12	8
Pond	17	11	19	12
Plant tree	8	5	35	22
Fodder tree	3	2	2	1

The findings are similar with the results by Ayalew*et al*. (2008) and Belay (2010) which found that certification encourages landholders to invest in soil and water conservation works and planting trees. Land certification has also a positive effect on land related investments in the region. About 44% of the respondents confirmed that the productivity of their farm is increasing. Those respondents who sensed a decrease of yield on their farms after first land certification are on the decline to about 21%. However, one should note that yield is affected more by several simultaneously interacting biotic and abiotic factors, notably moisture stress and pests.

Training on land governance

Among the various measures undertaken to improve rural land governance in the region is training / orientation on land legislations, activity planning and evaluation given to *Woreda* level professionals, local leaders, farmers and ordinary people (see Table 12). The training participants include zonal and *Woreda* executive bodies, *Woreda* EPLAUA desk workers and judges, *Woreda* leaders and council/house of representatives members, *Tabia (Kebele)* land administration and tribunal committees, *kushet* land administration committees, *Tabia* and *Kushet* administrators and house of representatives, model farmers and development group members. Such training and orientation have been given to over two hundred thousand participants each year during the years 2008 to 2010. However, there seems to be a need to carefully assess whether the trainings have met their intended goals and had the desired impact. The fact that many participants are involved might go against the intended message and impact.

Table 12. Training/orientation on proclamation and activity planning and evaluation to Woreda level professionals, local leaders and people

Trainees	2008	2009	2010
*Woreda*desk and executive bodies and judges	529	102	174
Western zone executive bodies	332		
Woreda leaders and house of representatives			348
Tabia (Kebele) land administration and tribunal committee		4169	5704
*Kushet*land administration committee	18250		11970
Tabia and *Kushet* administrators and house of representatives		921	175402
Model farmers and development group members	198811	179367	264074
Local people	800759	900221	1146536

Source: EPLAUA, NRST

Landlessness, its characteristics and challenges

In this subsection we examine and analyze the extent of landlessness, drivers or causes of landlessness and remedial measures taken or mechanisms pursued to coping with the problem.

Landless rural youth in Tigray

The term landless rural youth refers to an unemployed but potentially productive population group ranging in age between 15-35 years living in the rural areas. In Tigray landless rural youth make up a total of about 229,445, of which 48.8% are female (Table 13). In terms of educational level, nearly three-fourth are school dropouts, with ~24% having completed grades 10 & 12 complete, and about 20% illiterate(Table 14). There are also unemployed graduates who received their training in public and private colleges (~2.5%) and technical and vocational training schools (~2.8%). Among the *Woredas* selected for this study, about 2.44%

of the region's total are in Atsbi Wenberta, 1.46% in Ahferom, 1.32% in Hintalowajerat and 1.27 % in Hawzen. The unemployed female graduates in the studied *Woredas* make up about half of their male counterparts contrary to the regional figure which shows slightly higher for rural female youth who graduated from the technical and vocational training schools compared to that from the public and private colleges.

Table 2. Landless rural youth (by sex)

	Landless rural youth			
Woreda	Male	Female	Total	Percent
AtsbiWenberta	2000	3588	5588	3.2
Ahferom	2067	1273	3340	1.9
Hawzen	1398	1526	2924	1.7
Hintalowajirat	1891	1147	3038	1.7
Region	117476	111969	229445	

Table 3. Landless rural youth (by educational level)

Woreda	College	TVET	Grade 10&12	Dropouts	Illiterate
Atsbi Wenberta	39	21	2564	2014	650
Ahferom	70	5	1764	77	1354
Hawzen	40	9	2709	126	340
Hintalowajirat	41	437	267	230	2063
Region	5642	6427	5679	113644	46933

Drivers or causes of landlessness

In addition to demographic changes and land degradation, various factors, both legal and illegal, have contributed to increasing landlessness (as well as declining farm size) in the region. Among the latter factors are illegal land grabbing for settlement, farmland, and other land use, as well as absentee ownership. For example, reports indicate that during the years 2009 and 2010, these illegal land grabbing activities claimed over ten thousand hectares of land (see Table 15).

Regarding the legal ones, increasing demand for land by investors, the expansion of towns and cities as well as the land demand for other development work such as infrastructure(which includes roads, dams, etc) are the main drivers to growing landlessness and declining farm size in the region (see Table 16). Especially in relation to the legal ones, some of the persons affected have got replacement land; some have received compensation and others not. Of course, there are grievances that the compensation payments are very small and do not cover the real value of the land and the property on it.

Table 4. Illegally held land for various purposes retaken for redistribution

Woreda	College	TVET	Grade 10&12	Dropouts	Illiterate
Atsbi					
Wenberta	39	321	2564	2014	650
Ahferom	70	75	1764	77	1354
Hawzen	40	9	2709	126	340
Hintalowajirat	41	437	267	230	2063
Region	5642	6427	5679	113644	46933

Table 5. Land for urban area expansion and other development works

Illegally acquired/held land by purpose	2008	2009	2010	Total
	(No. of persons involved)			
Settlement land	2582	5517		8097
Farm lands	6907	14444	11765	33116
Other lands		108	3068	3,176
Land held by absentee for above two years	5235	8013	6097	19,345
Land held by traders/merchants				155
Total land (ha)		7651	2978	

Landlessness and coping mechanisms

Most of the landless in our survey reported that they are not doing well at present due to the fact that they did not complete school because of early marriage, of death of parents and other problems in the household. If support was provided by the government many would have embarked on business: about 38% of landless respondents said they would have engaged in livestock fattening, 23% share-cropping with irrigation, 13% poultry farming, and 8% beekeeping (Table 17) .

Table 6 Activities landless would like to do if supported

Activity	Respondents	Percent
Fattening	18	38
Share cropping/irrigated	11	23
Poultry farm	6	13
Beekeeping	4	8
Shop, hotel	3	6
Beauty salon/hair do	3	6
Blockette production	1	2
Migrating	1	2
Employee in government office	1	2

Some landless youth have been offered small plots of irrigated land by their parents and produced onion for the market. Renting in land is another opportunity for the

landless to stay in farming. Individuals who are landless have rented in tracts of irrigated land and were also able to smoothly operate with irrigation water management committees for accessing the irrigation land rental market. This also seems to have benefited both sides, i.e., the landlord and the tenant. For example, Holden *et al.* (2010) found that land certification encouraged landholders (especially female headed households) to rent out their land and renting in land was also easier. However, as also indicated earlier, the restrictions on the size of land that households can lease out poses a problem, with negative effects on the landless and their coping mechanisms.

Institutional arrangements for reducing landlessness

Migration is one of the strategies adopted by landless individuals and households to cope and improve their livelihoods. Migrants aim to secure better employment and adequate access to food in the face of low productivity of agriculture on the highly degraded drylands in their residency. Domestic migrants go to areas within the *Tigray* region (e.g. Humera, Mekelle, etc) and outside the region to other regions in Ethiopia (e.g. Addis Ababa) to earn income through off-farm wage employment or petty trading. Illegal migration to Saudi-Arabia, Sudan and other countries by young boys and girls has also been common.

The regional government of *Tigray* has also been trying to address the issue of landlessness in various ways. One effort has been to create on-farm job opportunities for landless youth in local communities through allocation of rehabilitated hillsides and gullies. Table 18 shows the number of beneficiaries and total area of land allocated to landless for various purposes during the past decade or so. As can be seen from the Table, a total of ten to thirty five thousand hectares of land of different types have been allocated to the landless in the region.

However, this seems far from sufficient and further steps are needed given the extent of landlessness in the region.

Table 18. Land allocation and number of landless beneficiaries

Allocated landless by purpose	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
	(Number of beneficiaries)						
Settlement	8981	4441	7155	5729	5675	20700	31773
Cultivated	8385	3788	7956	28596	26295	21816	30561
Hillside	649	140	611	11623	81450	32842	36831
Rehabilitated gully	441	2763	2988	1788	1004	1974	4885
Irrigated		1177	4083				
Total beneficiaries	79456	66309	48793	57736	114424	77332	104050
Total area of land (ha)		**7635**		18335	42964	23770	34501

There are also efforts being made at local levels through encouraging entrepreneurship such as beekeeping, farming on irrigated land, fattening and dairy production,and mining and cobblestone making. In line with the agricultural and natural resource development schemes, concerned institutions foresee creating employment opportunities in GTP II in relation to expansion of the manufacturing industries and other projects.

Poverty and land

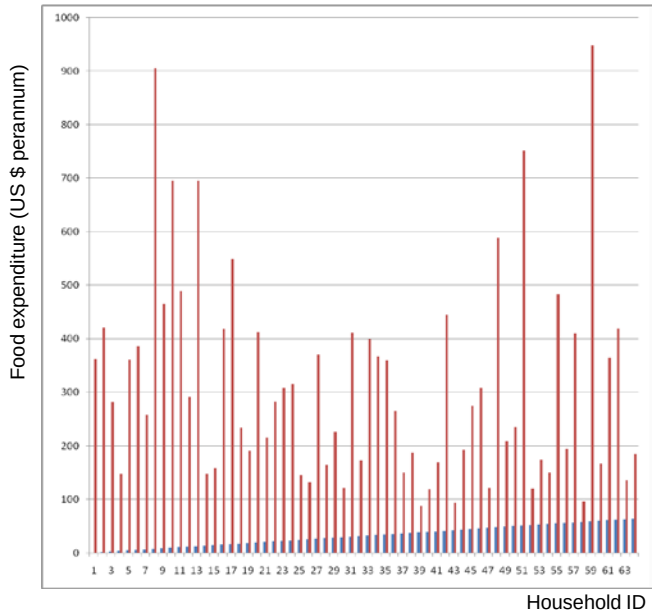
Rural poverty in Tigray

We also analyze the poverty among survey households in the study areas. In this regard, the literature often distinguishes between absolute or relative poverty.

Absolute poverty refers to a set standard which is consistent over time and between countries. An example of an absolute measurement would be the percentage of the population eating less food than is required to sustain the human health (approximately 2000-2500 calorie per day) (Reyes, 2007). Relative poverty, in contrast, views poverty as socially defined and dependent on social context. One relative measurement would be to compare the total wealth of the poorest one-third of the population with the total wealth of richest 1% of the population (Ibid). Note that both absolute and relative poverty measures are usually based on a person's yearly income and frequently take inno account total wealth. We consider food expenditure as a reasonable proxy for poverty analysis. The World Bank defines poverty in absolute terms and we use this notion in our analysis. The bank defines extreme poverty as living on less than US$ 1 per day (PPP), and moderate povertyas less than US$2 a day (World Bank, 1990; Chen and Ravallion, 2001). In Ethiopia the national poverty line is defined as living on less than US$0.6 per day (World Bank, 2012). In addition, the literature also distinguishes among various poverty indices (Foster et al., 1984; World Bank, 2005). We use headcount (incidence of poverty) index which shows the share of the population whose income or consumption is below the poverty line. That is, the proportion of the population that cannot afford to buy a basic basket of food.

The result of our analysis is presented in Figure 2 below. As is clear from the figure, our data shows that about 34% of the survey households have expenditures above the international poverty line. This is an improvement compared to about 14% when land certification was started (Gebreegziabher, 2007).

Figure 2. Poverty status of survey households



In terms of the descriptive statistics, the average food consumption expenditure per annum is about US$ 311.31. And it ranges from a minimum of US$ 87.80 to a maximum of US$ 948. 60. Food consumption expenditures of study households was converted to US$ (exchange rate is estimated at 1US$=20 Ethiopian Birr).

Taking 365 days in a year, the per capita food consumption expenditure per day ranged from a minimum of US$ 0.007 to a maximum of US$ 0.095. The mean food consumption expenditures per capita per day is found to be about US$ 0.041.

The food consumption expenditures range from a minimum of US$2.72 to a maximum of US$34.76, the mean being US$ 303.04 per year.

In this connection we also analyze asset ownership of households. Specifically, we assess ownership of livestock and livestock shelter, ownership of basic farm implements, ownership of house and housing conditions, as well as ownership of household assets such as radio, TV and jewelry.

Regarding ownership livestock and livestock shelters, about 45% have no cattle, 55% have one cattle, 82% have cattle shed. The wall is constructed with wood (6%), earthen bricks (72%) and stone and mud (22%). Such livestock shed cost between 3000 - 5000 birr. In addition to this, about 62% of the respondents have no sheep and goats. About 87% of the respondents owning shoats have built shelter for them using earthen bricks (88%), and stone and mud 8%. The cost of such structure ranged 300 - 1000 birr.

A few respondents (about 5%) also bought mules at a price of 1000 - 1600. About 3% of the respondents owned horses through purchase at a price of 1000 - 5000

birr. There is no respondent who has a bicycle.Concerning ownership of basic farm implements, about 33% of the respondents owned one hoe, 23% owned two hoes, 8% owned three hoes, and 3% of the respondents owned four hoes. About 80% of the respondents bought hoes, 9% of the respondents got hoes as gift from friends. About 5% said they have hoes inherited from parents. About 13% of the respondents spent 30 birr, 11% spent 50 birr and another 11% spent 80 birr for hoes. A few respondents (3%) reported to have paid 150-450 birr for the hoes.
Farmers normally possess ploughing implements for their farming activities.

However, about 33% of the respondents owned no sets of ploughing implements. About 36% of the respondents owned one set, and 23% owned two sets of ploughing implements. About 6% owned 3 sets and 2% owned 5 sets of ploughing implements. About 74% of the respondents bought their own ploughing implements, 2% received them as gift from friends and 5% were obtained from other sources. About 17% reported to have inherited the ploughing implements from parents. About 16% of the respondents bought their own plowing implements for 150 birr, 12% for 200 birr, and 19% for 300 birr.

About 6% of the respondents have no sickle. About 17% of them owned one sickle, 23% owned two, 18% owned three, and 12% owned four sickles. Few households (3%) obtained sickles through inheritance from parents while about 97% of the respondents have bought their own. About 10% reported to have bought it for 25 birr, 28% bought it for 30 birr, and 8% of the respondents bought the sickles for 40 birr each.

About 24% of the respondents have no axe. 33% have one, 22% have two and 12% of the respondents have three axes. About 5% of the respondents have four to seven axes. About 10% have inherited axes from parents, while 90% of the respondents have bought their own axes. The price paid for an axe ranged from 10 - 240 birr depending on the axe sizes and quality. About 16% of the respondents have paid 20 birr, 6% paid 25birr and 8% paid 30 birr and another groups of the households (24%) paid 50 - 60 birr per unit.

About 54% of the respondents have no radio, 44% have one, and 2% have two radios. 86% are bought for 300 - 800 birr and the rest are inherited from parents. About 97% do not own TV, 3% have one TV bought for 3500 - 8000 birr. About 65% of the respondents have no jewelry, 22% have one item of jewelry while 5% have two. About 92% of the respondents have wrist watch, 60% of which are parents' gifts, the rest reported they bought their own for about 500 birr.
As regards to house ownership and housing conditions, about 98% of the respondents own their own houses. About 45% of the respondents have houses with one bed room, 38% with two bed rooms, 10% with three and 5% with four bed rooms. About 44% of the respondents have houses with mud roofs, and 56% of the respondents reported to have also corrugated iron roof houses. The materials from which the walls of the houses are constructed include wood (2%), cement (2%), fired bricks (2%), earthen bricks (78%), and stone and mud (22%). About 92% of the respondents reported to have earth floor bed rooms, 5% have cement

floor bed rooms. Bedroom costs range from 400 - 10000 birr. About 10% reported bedroom costs of 3000 - 5000 birr, and 21% percent of the households reported 10000 birr. About 72% of the respondents have kitchen separate from the dwelling area, the rest 28% have no separate kitchen.

About 70% of the respondents have no grain store, 27% have one store for grain. 12% have corrugated iron roof store and the rest are mud houses. The wall is constructed using fired brick (5%), earthen bricks (59%), and of stone and mud (29%). About 94% is earthen floor grain store. The cost of building most of the grain stores ranges between 3000 - 5000 birr.

The per capita income level of *Tigray* region indicates improvements over the years from 2011 to 2015 (Table 19). For instance, per capita income level (at constant prices) has grown from about 314 USD in 2011 to 442 USD in 2015. According to MoFED (2012), rural poverty in *Tigray* has declined from about 52% in 1999/2000 to about 40%.

Table 19. Per capita income in Tigray in US Dollars

Method	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
At constant price*	314	339	368	401	442
At current price	314	379	441	4934	706

Source: BoPF (2016); *-exchange rate is estimated at 1US$=20 Ethiopian Birr

The poverty survey results in *Tigray* generally indicate that 50% of the rural households are poor in terms of food consumption, combining assets accrued especially from livestock holding.However, our result is far lower than this and shows some discrepancy. We suspect that this might be due to low consumption or some under reporting associated with last year's drought. The lack of adequate access to land, tenure insecurity, and landlessness have been among the major reasons for food insecurity and rural poverty in the country (Hoben 2000; Holden and Yohannes 2002; Haile et al. 2005).

Food Security in Tigray

Ethiopia is one of the most famine-prone countries with a long history of famines and food insecurity (Webb and von Braun 1994;Devereux 2000; Adnew 2004). Millions of people still live in dire conditions of chronic hunger with a low average energy supply. Tigray is one of the regions of Ethiopia most affected by recurrent drought and food insecurity problems. For example, the droughts of 1973 and 1984 that claimed many lives are the most recent cases in point. TewoldeBerhan (2006) argues poverty and food insecurity particularly in the drylands of Ethiopia are

caused by environmental problems as land degradation that amplifies the negative impacts of droughts. But lack of household assets such as oxen (Aune et al. 2001) and faulty government policy of past regimes (Downing 1995) also contributed to the problem (Holden and Shiferaw (2004) also argue that lowland degradation, agricultural productivity, food insecurity, and poverty are interconnected and pervasive problems in the Ethiopian highlands.

The Government of Ethiopia (GoE) formulated a long-term economic development strategy, i.e., the agricultural development-led industrialization (ADLI) strategy (FDRE 1994) which considers agriculture as its point of departure and growth engine to reverse the dire situation of the country and eventually alleviate its food insecurity problem. The country's food security strategy is also one of the core pillars of the ADLI strategy. The initial version of the country's food security strategy was issued in 1996. However, this was revised in 2002 highlighting the GoE's commitment to address the root causes and effects of food insecurity in the country (FDRE 2001). Following the national ADLI strategy, the Tigray State also designed a conservation-based agricultural development policy in which food security strategy forms its major components. That is, cognizant of the peculiarities of the problems in the region, the Tigray State opted that the agriculture development of the region be primarily based on the rehabilitation, conservation, and development of its natural resources which also came to be known as 'the conservation-based agricultural development policy'.

Obviously, agricultural growth is seen as a guarantee against food insecurity, in the country in general and Tigray State in particular. The food security strategy of Ethiopia is based on three important pillars: i) increasing food and agricultural production; ii) improving food entitlement; and, ii) strengthening capacity to manage food crises. Concerning increasing food and agricultural production a major emphasis is given to enhancing productivity of the smallholder farmers through the diffusion of improved farming technologies. In the case of improving food entitlement, the focus is on reducing vulnerability to shocks in drought prone areas through a safety net program. In this regards, the strategy also emphasizes strengthening emergency capabilities, maintaining emergency food reserves, putting in place an effective early warning system, and holding strategic seed reserves. In addition, the food security strategy also emphasizes promoting and strengthening micro- and small-scale enterprise development, improving food marketing system, promoting and strengthening supplementary employment opportunities and income generating schemes, and provision of credit services to address the demand side problems.

In what follows we discuss in detail various interventions carried out by the regional government to tackle the problems of food insecurity in the region.

Intervention to enhance food availability/supply

Following the region's the conservation-based agricultural development policy, several interventions were carried out to raise agricultural production and enhance food availability in the region. Utmost attention was given to expansion of agricultural extension services in which use of fertilizers and improved seeds are the major components. In this regards, among the means that have been pursued by the regional government to expedite enhanced availability of enough food in the region is increasing use of fertilizers by smallholder farmers. The extension services also focused on introducing better and improved agricultural practices.

Moreover, several concomitant measures have also been taken to facilitate uptake and access of smallholder farmers' to rural credit to enable them to purchase fertilizer, improved seeds and other agricultural inputs. For example, the regional government, Dedebit Credit and Saving Enterprise (DECSE), and regional cooperative associations have been involved in providing credit for such purposes. In addition, extension agents were recruited, trained and assigned in each *tabia* to educate farmers and demonstrate the benefits of adopting/using better and improved agricultural practices. Moreover, concomitant development of infrastructures that enables smallholder farmers to sell their products and buy farm inputs more easily but also connect them to off-farm self and wage employment opportunities.

Second, another measure that the Tigray State gave special emphasis to enhance agricultural production and food availability in the region is the promotion of small-scale irrigation. This included construction of several micro-dams and river diversion schemes and use of ground water through digging of water wells. Consequently, the amount of arable land under irrigation in the region has increased from 4773 hectares in 2000 to 29,734.6 hectares in 2008 (van der Veen and Gebrehiwot 2011).

Third, dryspells during critical crop growing periods, especially during the main season is a major bottleneck for the rain-fed production systems in the semi-arid highlands in addition to the erratic nature of the rainfall. Hence, the Tigray State has introduced a wider scale of water harvesting technologies to supplement rain-fed agriculture and mitigate the moisture stress during critical crop growth stage as well as to increase opportunities for irrigated horticultural production (Tesfay 2011). Specifically, on-farm level household ponds, larger communal ponds, and a series of ponds were the three important types of water harvesting technologies promoted in the region since 2002/2003. Accordingly, tens of thousands of ponds were constructed in different parts of the region during the period 2002-2005.

Fourth, the Tigray State also introduced a massive mass-mobilization based natural resources management (NRM)scheme especially treating arable lands and hillsides with different soil and water conservation structures to enhance agricultural productivity.

Interventions at household level (household asset building)

In addition to the interventions related to enhancing food availability, another intervention, i.e., the integrated household level extension package known as the food security package (FSP) was also implemented to fight food insecurity at the household level, with overall aim of building assets, generating and diversifying rural employment and income that can eventually reduce vulnerability to risks of the chronically food insecure households. Under this package, a household can obtain finance for a range of activities as a package and the loans are disbursed on individual basis. The basic components of the package for which loans are granted constitute livestock, i.e., oxen and cows; small animals, i.e., sheep and goats, poultry, beehives; seeds, and fertilizer although these may vary from area to area to suit agroecological and other needs. As a result, the number of beneficiaries, i.e., chronically food insecure households covered by the package increased from 49,427 in 2003 to 629,328 in 2008 (van der Veen and Gebrehiwot 2011).

Van der Veen and Gebrehiwot (2011) investigate the effectiveness of government policy interventions at different scales that are intended to improve food security in the region. Specifically, they examine food security both at the regional and district level through deriving food balance sheets for the period 2000-2008. They also empirically analyze household level food security status based on sample households drawn from KilteAwlaelo and Enderta districts of Tigray. Their results reveal that government policy interventions such as water harvesting schemes, employment generation schemes, and promotion of technology adoption significantly contribute to a higher likelihood of household food security status. Their findings indicate that the region has made some impressive gains in improving regional food self-sufficiencyat the regional level as a result of the interventions.

Gebrehiwotand van der Veen (2014) examine the main household demographics and economic factors associated with food insecurity and coping behavior of rural households in northern Ethiopia. They estimated the food poverty line using a cost-of-basic-needs approach. Their findings revealed that household size, size of farm land, livestock ownership, frequency of extension services, and proximity to basic infrastructures are associated with the food security status of farming households in the study area. Gebrehiwot et al (2015) also look into the role and extent to which small-scale irrigation practices determine the level of food production and the state of the food security in Tigray. They find that, small-scale irrigation schemes could significantly improve agricultural production and the status of food security.

Moreover, Tesfay (2011) evaluates the implementation of the program and its impacts thus far, and to identify the major technical and socio-economic constraints to the wider utilization of water harvesting technologies especially the on-farm level household ponds. He found that the on-farm household ponds are not well adapted to the socio-economic environment and the utilization level of the ponds

for the planned objectives in the region was limited. The implementation process was found deficient in popularizing the pond technologies among farmers and many technical problems were found to limit the wider utilization of the household ponds. He argues that although, some model farmers were able to utilize the ponds in a beneficial wayandthat acceptable economic returns are possible from pond technologies given that farmers are able to follow appropriate cropping patterns and irrigation techniques to improve water use efficiency, the lack of experience of majority of farmers in irrigated farming, particularly with such small-scale water harvesting structures has been a serious impediment. In addition, farmers were found to have attitude problems in accepting the technologies. He recommends that these technologies should be disseminated in the region with a limited dependence of external support and in a more farmer participatory approach. The technology options should also be widened and these require more research for the generation of alternative technologies.

Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP)

PSNP including a Risk Financing mechanism is another intervention implemented to address the food insecurity problem in the region. PSNP in Tigray has been implemented since 2005 currently covering 5 zones, 31woredas,and 641kebelles of the region. It is a government food security program that aims to help chronically food insecure rural households by providing essential needs to eligible households with support from various donors. For example, USAID via REST (Relief Society of Tigray) is involved in one-third of the PSNP districts. The PSNP is now in the 4th phase running from January 2016 to December 2020. The previous three phases were: Phas1 January 2005 to December 2006; Phase 2 January 2006 to December 2009; and, Phase 3: January 2010 to December 2015. The objectives of the program are: to assure food consumption and prevent asset depletion for food insecure households in chronically food insecure woredas, while at the same time rehabilitating and enhancing the natural environment, improving access to services and natural resources, and stimulating markets; and, to diversify income source and improve productivity of CFI (chronically food insecure) households. Ehui and Pender (2005) argue that food-for-work and cash-for-work projects are main sources of nonfarm income in Tigrai. EspeciallyPSNP4 contributes to four key policies of GoE's GTP: i) The Social Protection Policy, ii) The Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Policy, iii) The National Nutrition Programme (NNP), and the Climate Resilient Green Economy Policy (CRGE).

Public works are labour intensive community-based activities which are designed to provide employment for chronically food insecure people who have "able-bodied" labour and accounts for nearly 80 % of the caseload. The direct support is meant for needy people who do not have "able-bodied" labour. The public works program aims to address the underlying causes of food insecurity especially severe environmental degradation and limited access to infrastructurein PSNP districts. The major projects implemented under the program include: soil

and water conservation; gully treatments; plantations and other vegetative measures; small scale irrigation; community road construction and rehabilitation; and, social infrastructure; i.e., building additional class rooms in schools, health posts, and farmers training centers.

Table 20. PSNP beneficiaries in Tigrai by year

	Year		
	2005	2010	2015
Public works (PWs)	811,111	1,259,342	463,042
Direct support (DS)	100,340	194,365	193,140
Total	911,451	1,453,707	656,182

Table 20 presents PSNP beneficiaries in Tigrai by year. At the beginning of the program there were about 1 million beneficiaries. This increased to about 1.5 in 2010 and in 2015 the case load was reduced considerably due to graduation. For example, since the start of the program 70% of the total public works beneficiaries were graduated. However, it appears that the number of beneficiaries increased again to about 1 million in 2016 due the 2015 drought.Realizing this, the region has made a lot of efforts linking PSNP beneficiaries with household asset building packages.Above 75% of the PSNP public work clients have been participating in household asset building packages.

The ultimate goal of PSNP is to reduce the number of chronically food insecure beneficiaries through graduation (for those who attain food self sufficiency). There are two types of PSNP graduation, selfgraduation and benchmark assessment.A household has graduated when, in the absence of receiving PSNP transfers, it can meet its food needs for all 12 months and is able to withstand modest shocks.A household is supposed to graduate if the household owns productive assets which have a sum value of ETB 5600 or more per person. This is the regional graduation benchmark. In this case the targeted household for graduation remain in the PSNP for one year, and will then leave the PSNP. Table 21 provides summary of PSNP graduation in Tigrai.

Table 7. Summary of PSNP graduation in Tigrai (cumulative by year)

Beneficiaries	No of PSNP beneficiaries graduated (cumulative/year)	
	2009-2010	2011-2014
Male	39,619	391,977
Female	34,176	421,753
Total	73,795	813,730

In terms of key achievements and impacts, the PSNP public works have played a great role in rehabilitating the degraded natural environment, creating water access for irrigation expansion, created land access to landless youths from the treated/ reclaimed gullies and hillsides. For example, a total of 91,661 landless youthsbenefited of which about one-third are female; 40,829 ha reclaimed gullies and hillsides lands have been redistributed under the program. Enclosed treated watersheds have been a good source of grass for livestock and the community has benefited by a cut and carry system. Enclosed watersheds are also used for honey production. The main impacts are building drought resilience and continued regional GDP growth especially regional agriculture GDP. The major implementation challenges have been dependency syndrome, staff turnover, shortage of field vehicles and motor cycle, low attention and weak collaboration among stakeholders, problems of lack of good governance, and quality problems of public works assets.

Voluntary resettlement

The Tigray State also embarked on a voluntary resettlement program of drought-affected families in the western part of the region - a surplus producing area rich with natural resources. The western zone is also the destination of manyseasonal labor migration. Initially about 200 people were moved from central Tigray, from the districts of Abergele, Naider, Adet and Woreilehe, in May 2002, under a pilot project as part of the government's new drive to tackle food insecurity in the country. The resettled families were given seeds, three hectares of land and oxen on credit to help them start farming. They also had the option to return to their original homes after the harvest in September.A study was also undertaken which looked at the potential total number of people to be resettled and whether the land can sustain them. Districts in the western zone where large number of resettlement had been undertaken are KaftaHumer and Tsegede. Thus, prior to 2003, 11 *tabias* have been involved. Since then the tabias where resettlement took place increased to 20 because of the arrival of many new resettlers into the woredas. A total of about 50,000 people were resettled in these districts until October 2005. However, this was disbanded soon because of various problems.

Based on sample households from two settlement tabias of Kafta Humera district, Ebuy (2010) analyzed the resettlers' food security status using the food poverty line of 2200 kcal as a yardstick and employing aggregate household food security index (AHFSI). He found that around 68 % of the study households were food secure while the remaining 32% were insecure. Moreover, his empirical results revealed that farm size, initial income, use of irrigation and age of household heads are significant determinants of household food security. Tihune (2005) examined the implementation of voluntary resettlement program based on a case study of Idris settlement site, Qafta Humera woreda. He found gaps and inconsistencies with the pillars and key principles and approaches set in the program document especially in site selection, recruitment of proper

target groups, prior preparation, and commitments to the host community. The study emphasizes that active participation of the target group be fostered and that consultation with a wide range of stakeholders be undertaken. Rahmato (2003b) argues settler candidates should be directly involved in the planning and preparation of resettlement schemes. Specifically, that voluntary participation of the peasantry is of paramount importance and that implementing agencies should convince the prospective candidates of the benefits of resettlement.

Conclusion and recommendations

Overall, the land as a major livelihood resource of the increasing population in *Tigray* Region has long been under severe pressure and improper use resulting in very high degree of land degradation, food insecurity and poverty. Based on the study the analysis presented above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

First, in *Tigray* region, the last land redistribution was implemented in 1990. The region issued Rural Land Usage Proclamation in 1997 that prohibits any future large-scale land redistribution to provide more tenure security. The *Tigray* national regional state also became the first region to implement a land certification program in 1998–99 in which over 80% of the region's faming population received first level land certificates. There is also a second level land certification and digitization of rural land holdings currently going on in the region. There are already some early signs that the formalization of land rights through providing landholders with user certificates that are inheritable have had a positive impact especially in enhancing market-based land rental transactions in the region. Our findings show women land rights are secured equally to that of men and that land disputes are decreasing. Although it is difficult to eliminate land related disputes, providing land certificates to users and continued improvement in governance have helped in reducing land disputes in the *Tigray*. However, a recently enacted law that decrees leasing out more than half of one's own holding as an illegal, subject to confiscation have raised concerns that such measures might undermine the sense of tenure security of landholders that have been built on so far.

Second, since the start of the regulatory efforts of the land administration system about two decades ago, alarming growth in the extent of landlessness in the rural areas are now considered to be a major challenge. Our results indicate that 50% of the study households are found to be poor in terms of food consumption combined with assets especially livestock holding and that rural poverty in the region is linked to landlessness. Though we expect some under reporting of food consumption because of the drought, the previous year has been a difficult time for the landless. The demand for cultivated lands for the growing number of landless youth in the rural areas is causing increasing land related disputes. The unavailability of farm lands for the rural youth disables their active engagement in agricultural production and this directly adds to growing poverty.

Third, as has been the case elsewhere in the country, increasing landlessness and declining farm size have been typical manifestations intheregion.In addition to

demographic changes and land degradation, various factors, both legal and illegal that compete for land, also contributed to increasing landlessness in the region. Among the illegal ones are illegal land grabbing for settlement, farmland and other land uses, and absentee owners. Increasing demand for lands by investors, the expansion of towns and cities as well as land needed for other development work such as infrastructure are the main factors that have contributed to landlessnessin the region.

Fourth, the regional government has been trying to address the issue of landlessness in its various dimensions. That is, the region has been making some efforts to create on-farm employment opportunities for the landless youth in local communities through allocation of rehabilitated hillside lands and gullies. However, further steps are needed given the extent of landlessness in the region.

Fifth, land certification has also a positive impact on land related investments in the region. About 44% of the respondents confirmed that the productivity of their farm land is increasing. Those respondents who sensed a decrease of yield on their farms after first land certification are on the decline to about 21%. However, one should consider that yields are affected also by several simultaneously interacting biotic and abiotic factors, notably moisture stress and pests.

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