ABSTRACT

In this case study we have attempted to investigate the impact or effects of the villagization programme in Ethiopia. The case study set out with three main objectives namely to identify and assess the impact of the villagization programme on: (a) agricultural activities, (b) homestead and housing conditions, and (c) access to services and infrastructure. The field research work was conducted in Alaba woreda located in South-central Ethiopia about 315 Kms. South of Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian Capital city. The study was based on a retrospective-comparative approach. In a pre-villagization-post-villagization design villagized sample respondents furnished data on relevant study variables with regard to conditions before and after villagization. In addition to the villagized sample the study also included a non-villagized sample for comparative purposes. A two-stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample of the study. In the first stage two peasant associations - one villagized and another one non-villagized - were randomly selected from all peasant association in Alaba Woreda. In the second stage 400 respondents 200 each from villagized and non-villagized sample peasant associations were randomly selected. The main method of data collection used for the study was household sample survey. The study has also benefitted from documentary sources, informal discussions and personal observations. The sample survey was based on interview schedules administered to villagized and non-villagized respondents separately but on related items. Data were collected and analyzed on the main areas of the objectives of the study indicated above as well as on the economic and demographic background characteristics of the respondents. Under the areas of the objectives of the study on the impact of villagization major variables were identified on which some hypotheses were formulated and tested. The major findings of the study as summarized under the main areas of the objectives of the study are given below:

Villagization and Agricultural Activities: In relation to agricultural/farming activities villagization was found out to have been associated with (a) a significant increase in homestead-farm (farmstead - field) distance of villagized households after villagization as compared to the pre-villagization and non-villagized conditions. This meant in turn a significant increase in the share of travel time in farm labour time of villagized households after villagization as compared to the previllagization and non-villagized conditions. (b) a significant decrease in the amount of perennial crops (t’chat as an indicator) owned by villagized households in the previllagization period compared to the pre-villagization and non-villagized conditions; (c) a significant decline in the application of animal manure (as a fertilizer) on farmland among villagized households as compared to the pre-villagization and non-villagized conditions; (d) an increase in the level of exposure and damage of field crops by wild animals due to the relocation of homesteads from formerly diverse locations in to one point and due to increased homestead-farm distance which together allowed wild animals to move around more easily and reduced protective measures.

Villagization and Homestead and Housing Conditions: In relation to homestead and housing conditions the findings of the study indicated that villagization has been associated with, (a) a significant decrease in the homestead/compound size of villagized households in the post-villagization period compared to the pre-villagization or non-villagized conditions. The smallness of the size as well as the arrangement of compounds in the village settlement as laid out on the basis of predetermined grid patterns was found to be rigid and inflexible. This imposed various constraints on important activities ordinarily carried out in the homestead such as livestock management, cultivation of garden crops, processing and storage of crop harvests as well as increased human and livestock disease and problems.
of holding public/social occasions; (b) a significant decrease in the size of house/ dwelling of villagized households in the post-villagization period compared to the pre-villagization and non-villagized conditions, (c) no tangible changes or improvements in household facilities and practices such as separate kitchen, pit latrine, improved stove etc., which were supposed to be promoted in conjunction with villagization to enhance sanitary living conditions among the target population. Villagization and Access to Services and Infrastructure The study found no tangible improvements in access to services and infrastructure among villagized households in post-villagization period compared to pre-villagization or non-villagized conditions. The idea of access to services and infrastructure in relation villagization is commonly associated with the provision of new and comparatively expensive facilities such as clinics, schools, road, electricity etc. It was rarely asked however, as to what happened following villagization in these important areas in the daily life of the target population such as already existing sources of fuel wood and water. It is precisely in these vital areas that the findings of the study indicated worsening conditions after villagization. It is significant that access even in the sense of travel distances could not be improved through villagization to some of the few facilities which already exist in rural areas (e.g. service cooperative centre) let alone the provision of expensive schemes. As clearly stated in our conclusion in Chapter 7, villagization is no longer an active state policy in Ethiopia. Given this condition we are not inclined to give detailed recommendations for policy makers. However, the general policy relevant conclusion we arrived at in this study is that conventional wisdom about the relationship between rural settlement patterns and rural development can be misleading and dangerous. Any future intervention in rural settlement patterns requires in depth prior studies on the relationship between rural settlement patterns and farming systems.