



Rural Policies and Development Plans of the Imperial Regime in Ethiopia (1950s-1970s)

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ABSTRACT

Ethiopia has remained one of the poorest countries, with the worst cases of famine and poverty, largely attributable to policy failures. This paper evaluates Ethiopia's rural policies under the imperial regime (1950s-early1970s), highlighting key barriers to their success. The paper is based on a review of policy documents and the literature on Ethiopia's agricultural system during the imperial period. The review revealed that policies have been formulated and implemented without or with little consideration of relevant stakeholders and indigenous knowledge systems. Despite some benefits like agricultural mechanization and income growth in project areas, policy weaknesses persisted, notably in landholding systems. These flaws, including insecure land tenure, continue to hinder rural development efforts. The review also revealed that policies often lacked stakeholder input and ignored traditional knowledge systems. Moreover, the establishment of large-scale commercial farms and the production of cash crops were prioritized during the imperial regime in order to increase foreign exchange revenues, while subsistence farmers' production of cereals was neglected. Therefore, the policy shortcomings of the imperial regime account for a significant portion of the rural economy's poor performance. The primary takeaway from this review is that Ethiopia's landholding structure significantly hampered the achievement of rural development programs, plans, and strategies put in place during the imperial era which can be taken as a lesson to implement appropriate land tenure reforms, development policies and plans in such a way to empower smallholder farmers, alongside expanded mechanization, and inclusive agricultural projects across diverse ecological zones, with careful consideration of the people or local communities of the country.

Keywords: *Development, Ethiopia, Imperial regime, Review, Rural policies*

INTRODUCTION

Land is the most important economic base of Ethiopia. Its natural resources base is the milestone of any economic development, food security, and other necessities (Addis, 1985). Turning to the country's agricultural resource base, government officials and policymakers of the period (1920s-1960s) were eloquent about its immense potential and the vast resources that had yet to be utilized. It was not, however, true in every corner of the country. The agricultural resources in many of the highlands were fully utilized; lands that look underutilized were ones that could not be brought underutilized using the existing peasant technology

or required massive investment in infrastructure and social services (Gebriel Daniel, 1989). The agrarian regime was increasingly under pressure from resource scarcity and a rapidly growing population. As a result, competing land uses and farming systems have their own environmental and socio-economic ramifications (Abate and Teklu, 1979). In many cases, the emergence of commercial agriculture displaced peasants on a massive scale. Many studies (eg, Rahmato, 2004; Degefa, 2003b) have shown that ill-conceived policies under different regimes in Ethiopia have adversely affected people's livelihoods over several decades (Belete et al, 1991). Policies as government actions

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and economic processes as determinants of people's livelihood are interrelated and act as the link between government and public (Alemayehu, 2007).

The soundest evidence for the fragile nature of peasant agriculture has been the periodic food crises and famine that devastated the country, where farmers in large part were victimized. Ethiopia's earliest famine occurred in the 9th century (Haile, 1989). Studies on famine and poverty identified many factors that caused famine in Ethiopia (Rahmato, 2004). Famine and poverty are attributed to both political-economic- (such as improper landholding and tenure systems, inappropriate natural resources management, use of inappropriate technologies, poverty, diseases, conflict, etc) and physical factors (like topography, climate variability that caused drought and crop pests; and others (Pankhurst, 1972)

The occurrence of famine is a function of adaptive capacity, sensitivity, and resilience of the economic systems, which predominantly determined by the political-economic system of a country. This is a good example of how inappropriate development strategy marginalizes the poor (Degefa, 2003a).

Lack of good governance also contributes to the occurrence of famine. Dreze & Sen (1989: 6) argue that 'many famines in the world have arisen from and been sustained by inflexible government policies on natural resources that undermine the power of particular sections of the population to command food'. Governments contribute to the occurrence of famine in various ways: inappropriate policies (Sahelian famines); failure to intervene (the Chinese famine of 1958– 1961, the Bangladesh famine of 1974, and the Ethiopian famine of 1974 and 1984) (Alamgir, 1980; Devereux, 1993). In essence, peasant agriculture in Ethiopia was practised under multifaceted adversities compounded by state and property owner exactions.

There has been a prevalence of foreign interest enhanced by the state's power between the land and peasants in Ethiopia during the imperial regime. This has been significantly responsible for the failure of agrarian progress in Ethiopia, which has ramifications for virulent famines and sufferings of the rural people (Hussein, 2002). Stakeholders and decision-makers need consolidated scientific evidence to design and implement successful rural policies for alleviating rural adversities in rural Ethiopia. One of the areas of knowledge which require scientific evidence is analysis of development policies previously implemented by governments of Ethiopia. Hence, an evaluation of the rural policies of the imperial regime in terms of their strengths, weaknesses and highlighting the

lessons taken in the political economy perspective in Ethiopia is a convincing scientific work.

Therefore, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive review of rural policies during the imperial regime of Ethiopia, with a specific focus on the 5-years consecutive rural development plans of the imperial regime during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The specific objectives of this study were (1) to characterize the implementation of the rural development plans and (2) to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of rural development plans in Ethiopia during the specified years.

METHODOLOGY

A semi-systematic review approach was employed for our review because this approach enables us to give historical summary of a topic. The semi-systematic review approach can be designed for topics that have been conceptualized differently and that hinder a full review process (Wong et al., 2013). It seeks to identify themes, theoretical perspectives, or common issues within a specific research discipline or methodology or for identifying components of a theoretical concept (Ward et al, 2009). A potential contribution could be, for example, the ability to map a field of research, synthesize the state of knowledge, and create an agenda for further research or the ability to provide an historical overview or timeline of a specific topic.

The semi-systematic review was employed to address the following two closed-frame study questions: (1) How were the rural policies and rural development plans of the imperial regime implemented? (2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the rural development plans of the imperial regimes of Ethiopia in the 1950s to the early 1970s? The strategies undertaken to conduct the review were as follows: (a) a literature search was conducted using web- and library-based search tools such as Google Scholar and articles and books published in peer reviewed literature using the key words 'rural policies of Ethiopia, Imperial regime, five-years plans'; (b) policy documents the imperial regime relevant to this study were considered; and (c) research conducted in rural economies of Ethiopia during the regime were also taken into account.

Theoretical perspectives: Political economy

'Political economy' emerged during the 18th century with its straightforward meaning of 'government policy'. Since the early 1980s, political economy has become more diffuse and more pervasive in geography. Recently, political economy thinking has been widely applied in 'structure and agency', 'realism', in the 'locality debates', and in 'cultural

landscape' analysis. The common thread that connects many of the uses of 'political economy' in geography is the belief that the political policies and the economic processes are irrevocably linked (Johnston, et al. 2000). Thus, its current application in geography seems to be captured by the comprehensive definition given by Webster's Encyclopaedic Dictionary (1989): 'a social science dealing with political policies and economic processes, their interrelations, and their influence on social institutions. 'Marginalization' and 'social differentiation' are the central concepts for the political economy perspective.

Marginalization of peasants refers to 'the compaction of peasants' livelihood in areas of low productivity, usually areas not yet experiencing agriculture'. Most notably, subsistence food crop producers, whereby their land is being encroached upon by plantation agriculture mainly producing cash crops, as well as by the establishment of national parks on arable lands. Various studies conducted in Western Africa (Niger) and Eastern Africa (Ethiopia and Sudan) have well-documented how the subsistence economies of both pastoralists and peasants are marginalized by the expansion of commercial farmers and other reasons (Degefa & Baudouin, 2004). Social differentiation, we mean growing inequality between pastoralists and other groups of regional and national economies, and among pastoralists themselves. Understanding this is important because who has access to production resources and who does not is largely determined either by social structure or by state bias in favouring a dominant and powerful group at the expense of the others.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Peasant and Rural Policies of the Imperial Regime

Policies, Plans, and Achievements

Policies as government instruments and economic processes are determinants of people's livelihood, and they act as the link between the government and the public (Alamgir 1980, Devereux 1993).

The history of agriculture during the imperial period in Ethiopia is in the midst of a scientific venture. This is, first, because the various farming systems in Ethiopia (e.g. the cereal growing areas of northern Ethiopia and the enset complex of the south) are characterized by agriculture went through a slow but steady process of decline so that peasant agriculture became the central point of state policy in the study period (1950s to 1970s, albeit most of the development policies and plans disfavoured the vast peasant part of the Ethiopian population because policies and plans were: foreign driven; not well

supported by scientific studies on the local natural condition of the country; and not backed by institutions and expertise equipped with local experience. In addition, attention of policies and development plans was skewed to large scale agriculture.

Most of the policies of the imperial regime were foreign driven in terms of fund as well in design and planning. As mentioned in (Rahmato, 2003), agricultural policies and development plans were heavily relied on the donor community's financial and technical support.

The diversity in its biophysical and socio-economic settings has been one of the challenges to studying peasant agriculture in Ethiopia. Regrettably, there was also scantiness of data pertinent to the diversified natural conditions of the country, which undergird the country's agricultural system.

Over the period, 1952 to 1960, almost all the efforts directed to develop secondary school and higher education facilities in agriculture and agricultural research capacity. A large part of resources directed towards agricultural education went through a technical assistance contract with Oklahoma State University. Initially, this included establishing an agricultural high school at Jimma (1952) and later developing an agricultural college at Alemaya (now Haramaya) in 1956. However, the authors attest that none of the teachers brought to either of the institutions had experience in tropical agriculture, which would have been more germane to Ethiopia.

The policies were lopsided in that they considered smallholder agriculture backward and couldnot be enlivened, while large-scale agriculture was seen as the only path of rural development in Ethiopia. In the wake of its outward orientation, the policy's aim, particularly in the 1950s and early 1960s, was to elevate agriculture's contribution to enhancing foreign earnings. The idea of using agricultural growth as a strategy to improve the rural population's standard of living emerged later. In connection to this, the goal of social equity by expanding employment and redistribution of wealth was set fully in the 1970s.

As a result of the aforementioned reasons, policies and development plans failed to consider the objective realities of the country and the farming systems in place. Moreover. All of the policy's flaws made it inconsistent and intentionally biased against the peasants. These policy flaws were demonstrated by the various Five-Year Development Plans that revealed the relationship between peasant and rural policy during the Imperial Regime.

The Five-Year Plans

The First Five-Year Plan (FFYP) 1957–1962

During the 1950s and 1960s, economic policies were implemented under three consecutive five-year development plans. The First Five Year Plan (1957-1962) concentrated on infrastructure development (roads and communications) to lay the base for industrialization. Evaluation of the achievements of the First Five Year Plan, as prerequisite, to design the second five-year plan indicated that its impact on the agricultural sector was negligible since emphasis during this plan period was on infrastructure and social transformation (raising the level of education and the training of technical personnel). For instance, while designing the second Five Year Plan, the evaluation of its antecedent has been spelt out in Amharic language as follows:

“...በመጀመሪያው የልማት ዕቅድ የኢኮኖሚን እድገት ለማፋጠን ተፈላጊ ለሆኑ ነገር ግን የቅርብ ውጤት ለማይሰጡ መሰረታዊ ለሆኑ ፕሮግራሞች ቅድሚያ ይሰጥ ነበር.....” (IGE,1962:42)

The FFYP was regarded as the remarkable beginning in the development of 'modern' economy in Ethiopia. The objectives of First Five-Year Plan were to develop a strong infrastructure (essentially transportation, construction, and communications) to connect remote regions; to establish skilled and semi-skilled personnel to work in processing industries; to help reduce Ethiopia's dependence on imports, and to accelerate agricultural development by promoting commercial agriculture. The largest share went to transport and communication, amounting birr 240 million (45%) of the overall investment (IEG, 1962: 33).

Despite the agricultural sector's overwhelming role in the country's economy, the plan neglected this sector, as witnessed by the size of investment allotted to it. Out of the total monetary investment of birr 534.6 million, agriculture received only birr 40.3 million (7.5%). Moreover, no attention was given to improving agriculture's extremely low productivity. The plan document states: 'To solve the problem of low productivity of labour in agriculture, there is no need to bring about fundamental changes in present methods of production' (IEG,1957: 21). The negligence of this important sub-sector had partly contributed to the food crop deficit the country experienced, and the demand was met, for instance, by importing about 45,000 metric tons of grain in 1960.

Overall, the imperial regime's first two Five-Year plans (1957-1962 and 1962-1967) heavily favoured large-scale commercial farms for augmenting agricultural production for export in tune with the modernization drive that gained momentum at that time. The first Ethiopian Five-Year Economic

Development Plan, covering 1957-62, stressed infrastructure and did little more than attempt to lay out a few general agricultural goals, thereby resulting in lopsided development. This plan encouraged the government to concentrate investments in areas which are believed to be promising from national development perspective. The idea of conflict between economic growth on one hand and distribution of scarce resources over wider area on the other hand was surfaced out.

The Second Five Year Plan (SFYP) 1963–1968

The Second Five Year Plan (1963-1968) focused on developing manufacturing, power and improved infrastructures. The objectives of Second Five-Year Plan (1963-68) were diversification of production, introduction of modern processing methods, and expansion of the economy's productive capacity to increase the country's growth rate. This plan also proposed a larger investment to promote agricultural production than the FFYP. Among the principal development activities that were suggested to be undertaken by the agricultural sector were: 'improving the collection and analysis of agricultural data, building research stations, increasing field trials, strengthening the extension systems, expanding veterinary services, and establishing college level training programmes to provide specialists to support such expanded services' (IEG, 1962). Quantitative targets for producing agricultural marketable products like cereals, cotton, cattle, and coffee were set. The government had also introduced commercial farms on which more emphasis was placed (IGE,1962).

The other feature of the SFYP was that it facilitated restructuring the government ministries that had taken over the responsibilities rural policies. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration (MoLRA) and the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) had assumed the responsibilities of designing and implementing rural policies. The fact that some of the tasks of those ministries were overlapping had brought about inefficiency in resource utilization, and a degree of confusion was observed in policy implementations (Degefa, 2003b).

More importantly, the development policies of the plan relegated the peasant agricultural sector. For instance, during this plan, agriculture received only 6% of the total investment expenditure, and only 1% was earmarked for the peasant sector. Moreover, to accelerate agricultural production during the two Plans (1957 to 1967), the country trained a few extension workers, and these extension agents provided extension services only to commercial farms. One of the most important ideas we can spell out here is that both plans were led by sector-specific

policy and did not encourage any specific territorial regional development strategies, despite the diversity of Ethiopia in terms of natural resource base for agricultural development.

To sum up, the second Five-Year Plan (1963- 1967) implementation in agriculture focused on two types of activities: (1) increasing output through further encouragement of large-scale public, private, and cooperative farms, and (2) promotion of peasant agriculture through land reform, community development, extension, cooperatives, and credit. Over half of the proposed five-year investment budget was planned for large-scale farm activities.

Third Five Year Plan (TFYP) (1968–1973)

In response to weaknesses observed in planning and implementation of previous plans, the third Five-Year Development Plan (1968- 1973) was developed. This plan is different from its antecedents in that an attempt was made to develop a regional framework for planning and a proposal was made of areas which were related to resources in regions, river basins, depressed areas, and metropolitan areas. Some of the proposed planning regions were Northern Highlands Rehabilitation Zone, Western Lowland Commercial Agricultural Area, Central Highlands Initial Development Region, Lake Tana Region, Middle Abay Region, East Central Escarpment Development Region and Awash Valley Development Region (Rahmato,2003). Several criteria were taken into consideration when delimiting these development regions, of which, the main ones were: the natural factors; an assessment of the potentialities of the country; the concentration of investment in selected growth centres; the resettlement of people from overcrowded northern regions to the south and south-west; the promotion of development in areas that had already shown promising results (e.g. Awash Valley Region, the Chilalo, Walaita and Ada areas); and the development of resource-rich frontiers (e.g. Setit Humera, the Blue Nile Basin, Metekel, and Wabi Shebelle). The sectoral policy was designed to address problems facing both smallholder peasants and commercial farms. Nevertheless, there were clear indications that the planners continued to consider large-scale commercial farms as the key to agricultural progress and the national development at large. The bias the planners had in mind against smallholding farmers was clearly stated as:

“Because there is no quick solution to peasant problems and because only a modest growth of output from peasant agriculture can be expected in the five years ahead, there is a simultaneous need to develop modern commercial agriculture which provides considerable opportunity for

rapid production increase and immediate impact on the entire economy (IEG 1968: 190).”

The plan assumes that due to the difficulty of simultaneous modernization of peasant subsistence agriculture in all areas of the country, there should be a start in strategically selected areas where good returns can be seen. With this strategy, two main approaches for the development of Ethiopian agriculture were indicated in the third five-year plan.

During the Third Five Year Plan (1969-1973), an agricultural policy aimed at improving and expanding large commercial farms was significant for two main reasons. First, policy makers still considered large commercial farms the key to agricultural development. However, in previous plans, agriculture received the lowest investment allocation relative to other sectors; once again, within the agriculture itself it was in favour of commercial agriculture. Second, the plan indulged the peasant sector and approved extended support programs to smallholder production via different package programs like compressive package approach and minimum package service. Put it simply, the Third Five-Year Plan stressed concentration of activities for achieving output increase in agriculture. This included major emphasis on commercial agriculture, foreign capital, and private enterprise activities supporting government. To treat subsistence agriculture and commercial farms, a few strategically selected and area development projects were to receive a concentration of effort (Adams, 1970).

The third Five-Year Development Plan (1968- 1973) differed from its antecedents in that it came up with policies and programs specifically aimed at increasing access to modern inputs and extension services for the country's largely smallholder-based agricultural sector. Therefore, the regime underwent a policy change and sharpening of agricultural strategy, emphasizing the modernization of smallholder agriculture during the Third Five Year-Plan Period (1968-1973). This introduced the package project approach, which had two variants: the comprehensive integrated and the Minimum Package Programs focusing on improving agricultural production on farms of organized groups and individual households, respectively. Hence, intensifying agricultural development through package programs was one pathway to rural development.

The Comprehensive Package Program (CPP)

The comprehensive package approach represents large multi-purpose and integrated area development operations such as the Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU), the

Walaita Agricultural Development Unit (WADU), the Ada District Development Project (ADDP), the Tach Adyabo and Hadgiti Development Unit (TAH DU). In addition, the Southern Regional Development Project (SORADEP) and the Humera Agricultural Development Project were ventures in tune with the different objectives of agricultural development (Rahmato, 2004). The main objectives of these programs were providing peasant easy access to modern inputs, enhancing improved farming techniques organizing peasants into cooperative for better access to credits and extension services and then narrowing the prevailing income disparities in the rural areas. In addition, enhancing local participation in development and employment opportunities by way of building rural public works such as feeder roads, water projects environmental protection schemes were included in the programs. The CADU project was launched with substantial help from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and Ethiopian counterparts' funds. Under this project, an attempt was made to carry out various development activities. This involved the provision of transport, marketing services, credit, distribution of better seeds, dissemination of information and improved agricultural practices, and promotion of fertilizers. CADU (later the Arssi Rural Development Project/Bale-Arssi Rural Development Project (ARDU/BARDU)) was the only successful project of all Comprehensive Package Programs (CPPs) (Betru, 1975).

Various studies found that CADU had mixed impacts (both positive and negative) on the people of the project area. Regarding its success, two tracks of achievement can be traced out though lack of reliable data. As indicated by several studies, the most important success was the improvement of peasants' income in the project area. The number of overall beneficiaries increased significantly over the years and reached its peak in the mid-1970s, and then a sheer number of infrastructures were built in the area. Rahmato (2003) considered CADU as the most successful compressive program as compared to others, albeit several flaws. The well-recognized benefit introduced by CADU in Chilalo was the fact that it raised wheat yield from an average of 1330 kg to 2000 kg per hectare through its agronomic research efforts (Fasil, 1985).

Nevertheless, since CADU was orchestrated and staffed by individuals equipped with experiences from Southeast Asian countries it was designed and implemented without a close examination of the objective realities of Ethiopia. This reality is best explained by a statement quoted from..., *"the planners in fact did not know until the project document was completed where the project was to be located."* In essence, local development potentials and priorities, peasant experiences, and

agricultural needs of rural Ethiopia were not well assessed and documented. As the result, it has been noted that CADU failed to promote technology for effective farming practices. The project's most serious failure was around its activities' social ramifications. Although the main target of CADU was to transform the small peasant farms, the project unintentionally benefited big commercial farms.

Moreover, CADU was responsible for evading peasants from the land; the package was highly dependent on external motives and economies that resulted in the problem of sustainability. Landowners outside the target population soon captured the results of the Green Revolution, thus contributing to the expansion of large-scale mechanized farms in Chilalo, because of which c.5000 tenants were evicted between 1966 and 1972 (Fasil, 1985). Moreover, agricultural mechanization considerably reduced available grazing land, resulting in the shortage of oxen and considerable decrease in livestock population in Chilalo during the early 1970s (Cohen, 1987).

In general, the comprehensive Package Program's success was limited because of its high requirements in terms of modern agricultural inputs and skilled human power, unfavourable land tenure regime, and poor infrastructural and market development. In response, the first Minimum Package Program (1971–1979) attempted to expand access to modern inputs such as improved seed and fertilizer, while simultaneously reducing the level and cost of services provided to smallholders. A minimum package area comprised about 10,000 farm households residing along a main all-weather road for 50–75 km and away from the road for 5–10 km on both sides (Spielman, 2011). The Minimum Package Program too did not entail significant progress due to the in- congruency of the introduced farming system and the experiences of smallholders (Rahmato, 2000). On the ground implementation focused on promoting modern inputs, credit, extension services, and forming cooperative societies. While these programs helped to enhance Ethiopia's expertise in agricultural intensification, their scale was too small to boost output or productivity.

The Minimum Package Program (MPP)

Towards the beginning of 1970s, it was realized that the CPPs were found too costly to be duplicated in other parts of the country. Thus, the Minimum Package Program (MPP) was designed with the intention of reaching substantial number of peasants to achieve agricultural transformation. It was envisaged to reduce the cost of developing the agricultural sector that, compared to the CPP, a much wider coverage could be attained. Like the

compressive package program, it was donor-driven and then the donors were able to refute the compressive packages, as they were costly to stretch out onto the mass of the peasantry. In response to this, by providing peasants innovations like fertilizers and high-yielding seeds, it was believed that a genuine agricultural transformation would be possible within the framework of smallholder production at a modest and affordable cost to the country.

Being administered through EPID, a unit within MoA, the minimum package program employed several methods, which were rather conventional and infused from the Asian experience, to disseminate the innovations under consideration. EPID and integrated programmes scored considerable successes in terms of output and productivity. Moreover, peasants developed a dependency syndrome emanating from the input approach of the programmes. In short, most of the support was a kind of 'firefighting' activities instead of pathways of bringing about radical change in the adverse life of the Ethiopian peasants (Teshome,2013).

More profoundly, the most considerable limitation of the package programs was the innovations delivered to the peasant were unfit to the biophysical and socio-economic context of the country. Moreover, due to shortages of manpower, improved seeds and fertilizers, the MPP was not able to achieve its objective of coverage of wider areas, and the cost of the MPP was not as low as it was envisaged for the landless and semi-landless rural population. High-yielding seeds and fertilizers require a dependable water supply through rainfall or irrigation. Nevertheless, Ethiopia has been stricken by recurrent drought and remains water-deficient due to natural and human factors (Wood,983). With all these limitations, the MPP could not achieve its objective of coverage of wider areas, and the cost of the MPP was not as low as it envisaged. Consequently, agricultural production did not increase as anticipated, and the majority of peasants' standard of living did not improve.

Discussion

During the 'Imperial Regime,' Ethiopian agricultural policy witnessed several changes in focus and major goals during the past several decades (Cohen, 1987). In all cases, its central objective remained to improve agricultural performance by creating an enlivening environment that could endorse the drives of the successive regimes that pursued different objectives for furthering their legitimacy (Merera, 2003). The goal of converting the agricultural economy for subsistence into an agro-industrial economy was established in the early

1900s. The nation needed to build infrastructure to increase and enhance health, education, communication, and other critical services that efficiently use resources and improve living conditions to achieve this goal. Subsequent five-year development plans were created to achieve this goal. The imperial regime's first two Five-Year plans (1957–1962 and 1962–1967) strongly favored large-scale commercial farms for increasing agricultural production for export. This plan encouraged the government to focus its investments on areas deemed promising from the standpoint of national development. There has been discussion of the potential conflict between the distribution of limited resources over a larger area and economic growth. In relation to this, lopsided development was the outcome of economic policies that were designed to maximize growth and capital accumulation.

Regarding the second Five-Year Plan (1963–1967), it focused on two main agricultural activities and attempted to implement some of them: (1) boosting output by supporting large-scale public, private, and cooperative farms more, and (2) promoting peasant agriculture through land reform, cooperatives, community development, extension, and credit. The proposed five-year investment budget was essentially allocated more than half to large-scale farming operations. The plan also gave attention to institutional development, technician training, credit for large farmers, and research.

The semi-systematic review synthesizes that the agricultural sector received the least investment in all three plans as compared to other major sectors. In the First plan, it received 8 percent, in the Second 17 percent, and in the Third 11 percent of total investment allocations. The lion share in all cases went to transport, communications, energy, and utilities. The manufacturing sector fared much better in relative terms, receiving investment allocation of 11, 22, and 20 percent respectively in each of the plans.

The CPP aimed at achieving maximum results by focusing on specific high-potential areas such as Chilalo, Wollaita, Ada District, Tahtay Adyabo, Hadegeti, and Humera, and established agricultural development units for each of them (Spielman et al., 2011). This program had the following objectives: to increase the income of smallholder farmers and tenants and narrow the prevailing income disparities in the rural areas; achieve economic and social development; enhance local participation in development; increase employment opportunities; and stress research, training, and transferability. However, the comprehensive package projects were found to be too costly to be duplicated in other parts of the country (EEA, 2005).

It was thus decided to launch a scheme which was thought to be less costly per farmer. Thus, in 1972 the minimum package program (MPP) involving only those minimum services considered critical for rural development (mainly fertilizer and credit) started to be implemented along all-weather roads. The MPP was envisaged to reduce the cost of developing the agricultural sector that in comparison to the CPP a much wider coverage could be attained (Kidanu and Rahmato, 2000; Alemayehu, 1990). For the implementation of MPP, the Extension and Project Implementation Department (EPID) was established. To achieve the objectives, the diffusion of a few proved methods and innovations including improved seeds, fertilizers and farm implements as widely as possible was envisaged to reach the small farmers in various parts of the country.

It has been distilled from the review that the structure of landholding impeded the successful implementation of the three plans. Concisely, the development planning efforts of the imperial regime could not materialize its prime objective (i.e. the transformation of subsistence agrarian economy) and improve the living standards of the masses. Some factors that contributed to the failure were the government's lack of administrative and technical capabilities to implement a national development plan and staffing problems in the planning agency (Kidanu and Rahmato 2000). Many project managers failed to achieve plan objectives because they neglected to identify the resources (personnel, equipment, and funds) and to establish the organizational structures necessary to facilitate large-scale economic development. In addition, lack of informed debate among the various stakeholders to inform policymaking and weak networking among the stakeholders are the root causes of policy failures. Moreover, it has been outrageously indicated that there was a very limited policy space-opportunities and pathways through which citizens can act to influence policies, discourse and decisions- in the imperial regime.

CONCLUSIONS

Ethiopia is one of the few countries known for a long history with continuity of government systems for more than three thousand years. However, Ethiopia could not eradicate poverty and famine in its long history. This indicates that the governments administering the country at various times could not find solutions or strategies that were capable of reducing poverty and avoiding famine, which persisted for a long period. The country remained one of the poorest nations in the world with famine, drought, and man-made problems such as conflicts and degradation of natural resources. In response to these socio-economic situations, various development policies and strategies have been brought into practice by the successive governments

that ruled the country, which had in most cases ended up futile in alleviating the prevailed development bottlenecks of the country.

The evidence synthesized in this review demonstrates that state policy and policy faultiness had their ramifications for peasants and the entire economy during the imperial regime of Ethiopia. The findings highlight that all those policies had a very limited impact on agricultural development in Ethiopia and blamed for wrong perception and actions on the peasant economy. It has also been revealed that development plans were dictated by the foreign planners who did not address the objective realities of the rural economy. As a result, there were wrong basis of policies taken from outside the country and imposed on Ethiopia.

This semi-systematic review also found that the development planning efforts of the imperial regime could not materialize its prime objective (i.e. the transformation of subsistence rural economy) and improve the living standards of the masses. Some factors that contributed to the failure were the government's lack of administrative and technical capabilities to implement a national development plan and staffing problems in the planning agency. Many efforts of development failed to achieve plan objectives because they neglected to identify the resources (personnel, equipment, and funds) and to establish the organizational structures necessary to facilitate large-scale economic development. Above all, the political institutional structure (system) was the major obstacle to transforming the economy and achieving sustainable economic growth.

In conclusion, this review demonstrates that, regardless of its limited impact on the development of the nation's economy, there was the introduction of components of rural policies and development plans, such as the package projects that acquainted Ethiopian farmers in the project areas and their vicinities with some technological farm inputs. However, the main bottlenecks of peasant agriculture remained unaddressed. Moreover, there was a clear contradiction between the objective of the development packages, i.e., improving the living conditions of smallholder poor peasants and the then-existing land tenure system. Furthermore, little attention was placed on improving traditional farm practices of the poor smallholder peasants and implementing agricultural projects inclusive of diverse agro-ecologies. The primary lesson of this review is that political, economic, and policy drawbacks are significant factors affecting the rural livelihoods in Ethiopia. Finally, these findings underscore further research on agricultural development policies, plans, and strategies implemented by the subsequent governments of

Ethiopia to design and implement viable rural policies and development plans that can improve the livelihood of the rural poor in Ethiopia.

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