

Original article

## The influence of mechanized farming and industrialization on the Oromo people, their traditional livelihood strategies and their environment in Ethiopia

Lenin Kuto<sup>1\*</sup>, Ayehu Bacha<sup>1</sup>, Amanti Baru<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Oromo Folklore and Literature, Jimma University, Jimma, Ethiopia

<sup>2</sup>Department of Sociology, Jimma University, Ethiopia

E-mail address (\*corresponding author): leninkuto@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

This article discusses the influences of mechanized farming and industrialization on the Oromo traditional livelihood strategies and environment. Both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were employed for the study, specifically, observations, interviews, focus group discussions, case studies and surveys were used for data collection. The study revealed that, the traditional livelihood strategies of the Oromo and their environment are highly affected by mechanized farming and industrialization in the study area. These include the loss of crop land, the loss of pasture land, the loss of forest, the loss of water resources and other environmental damage. Moreover, it was found that people are not consulted in most cases about land expropriation for mechanized farming and industrialization; more often than not the community had no involvement at all. The whole process of land transfer was not disclosed to the local people and as a result, their traditional livelihood strategies were affected. The relationship between mechanized farming and industries, and local communities is not always harmonious. The community perceives industry and mechanized farming as their enemies. Consequently, mechanized farming and industries are kept safe by security forces. Correct environmental use by the local people in general and appropriate land use in particular is broken; fair water use is also ignored. Therefore, rather than favouring a few exploitative investors, the Government should empower the local community.

KEY WORDS: industrialization, mechanized farming, Oromo people, traditional livelihood

ARTICLE HISTORY: received 23 February 2018; received in revised form 25 May 2018; accepted 11 June 2018

### 1. Introduction

Indigenous people have managed to preserve a great deal of the world's linguistic, cultural and biological diversity, and their traditional knowledge has been and continues to be an invaluable resource that benefits all of mankind (UNITED NATIONS, 2009). Nevertheless, conventional growth centered development interventions in many developing countries have neglected diverse local livelihoods and indigenous knowledge systems that could contribute to the process of sustainable socio-economic growth and development (BARUA, 2010; KURANTIN, 2012). Consequently, indigenous people have been suffering from dispossession of their traditional lands, discrimination, marginalization, extreme poverty and conflict. Belief systems, cultures,

languages and ways of life of indigenous people continue to be threatened, sometimes even by extinction (UNITED NATIONS, 2009).

All over the world, there exist clashes between state and indigenous people's systems of livelihood (pastoralism, hunting and gathering, and shifting cultivation). The contradiction is between the desire of many indigenous people to live on traditional lands, and the general thrust of government policies aimed at using indigenous people's lands for other purposes (UNITED NATIONS, 2009). Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and the World Bank have played and continues to play an imperative role in the design and implementation of laws and policies that are leading to loss of lands by indigenous people in developing countries (BARUME, 2010). According to MA (2005), plantation forestry,

industrial agriculture, road and railway construction, urban development, mineral extraction and oil and gas pipelines are some of the causes of indigenous livelihood loss, and are also widely disrupting natural ecosystems, the services they deliver to people, the balance between resource harvesting and spiritual values.

Nevertheless, indigenous territories still constitute the best-preserved natural areas in many parts of the world despite centuries of displacements, discriminatory policies and devastations caused by colonial powers and governments on indigenous territories, and the expansion of agricultural frontiers. The conservation of these sites is a result of ethnic values evoking the spiritual relationship between indigenous people and nature, the humble lifestyles of indigenous people, and the sustainable use and management of their resources (UNESCO, 2003).

According to ASafa (2001), the relationship between society to nature and the existence of a Supreme Being, *Waaqa*, which regulates the connection between nature and society, is central to the Oromo cultural identity. Oromo religious and philosophical worldviews consider the spiritual, physical, and human worlds as interconnected phenomena and believe that *Waaqa*, the creator, regulates their existence and functions in balanced ways.

There are some studies which attempted to examine the impacts of different parks, commercial farms and other development induced projects. The works, *inter alia*, include bribing the land (TESEMA, 2002), socio-economic dimensions of development induced Impoverishment in Karrayu Oromo (BULI, 2001), pastoralism under pressure: land alienation and pastoral transformations among the Karrayu (AYALEW, 2001), deforestation and environmental degradation in Ethiopia (TADDESSE, 1995), contesting views on a protected area conservation and development in Ethiopia (ASEBE, 2012), pastoralism under stress: resources, institutions and poverty among the Borana Oromo (BOKU, 2008) and the utility of ethical dialogue for marginalized voices in Africa (WORKINEH, 2005).

Most of the above studies endeavoured to see the impacts of development projects in terms of displacement, raising poverty, and environmental degradation in western, eastern and southern Ethiopia. The current research area, Adami Tullu district in the Great Rift Valley of Central Ethiopia, has not been previously studied. Thus, this research sets out to fill the knowledge gap that exists due to lack of scholarly studies on the devastating impacts of agricultural mechanization and industrialization

on the longstanding livelihood strategies of the Oromo in this highly vulnerable area.

Proximity to a central market, presence of an industry cluster (because of its topography/being located in central rift valley), presence of water bodies like Lake Dambal, Abjata, Shalla and Langanu and availability of infrastructure highly allured mechanized farming/industries. As a result, about thirteen large scale mechanized farming, two state owned large industries and one pesticide processing share company are found in the study area. In general, the following questions guided this study:

1) What are the effects of mechanized farming and industrialization on the traditional livelihood strategies of the Oromo in the study area?

2) What are the environmental impacts of mechanized farming and industrialization in the study area?

## 2. Material and methods

### 2.1. Study area

The study area is Adami Tullu, a district found in the central rift valley area of south central Ethiopia with 43 rural and 4 urban administrative villages. Agricultural activities characterized by crop farming and livestock rearing are dominantly practiced by the rural residents of the study area. Ecologically, the district is generally termed as mainly lowland with erratic rainfall conditions, which is bimodal in nature. The distribution pattern of rainfall is variable and the areas remain dry for most months of the year. All parts of the Adami Tullu district are within the sub-tropical climate zone. Average annual temperature and rainfall are 15-20°C and 800 mm respectively.

### 2.2. Methods of data collection

*Interviews.* In this study an interview was conducted with Gadaa leaders, knowledgeable persons (*hayyuus*), land and environmental protection officers, culture and tourism experts, experts from investment office and daily workers from industry (2 from each category). Thus, 12 key informants were selected purposefully based on their sex, age, social responsibility and knowledge about their culture and the environment.

*Observation.* Observation matters for social research because it is the most useful field technique when researchers want to know what is actually happening on the ground and to grasp how certain events or situations take their course or effect. It also provides a first-hand opportunity to address

and adjust their asymmetrical relation to authorial power. Therefore, to meet the objectives of this research, the researchers observed the mechanized farms and industries in the research area. Accordingly, most mechanized farming and industries in the study area were observed in February 2016.

*Focus group discussions.* Focus group discussions were organized to elicit further data on issues related to the topic of the research. In this research, two focus group discussions composed of 8 individuals were organized in order to know and cross-check the views of selected individuals on selected topics that demanded further elaboration. The focus group respondents were Gadaa leaders, local administrators (cultural and tourism experts, development agents, experts from land and environmental protection office, investment office and agriculture and rural development office). The researchers purposefully selected these focus group discussion participants to obtain diverse and intensive ideas.

*Case study.* The case study method was also used to investigate the impacts of mechanized farming and industrialization on the livelihood of the surrounding community. The researchers utilized this method to look into the actual conflicts/cases aroused between the local community and mechanized farming/industries both at individual and community level.

*Survey.* To collect quantitative data, the survey method was used. It is used to measure the prevalence and extent of positive or negative impacts on the traditional livelihood strategies of people due to mechanized farming and industrialization. Respondents for survey were recruited randomly from the study sites. Sampling frame of households was secured from the offices of three villages that are highly affected as a result of investment in the Adami Tullu district. There are 1851 households in the three selected villages.

The lists of these households were entered in to SPSS and random numbers were generated to select 5% of the households. Accordingly, 93 (5%) households whose house numbers corresponded with the random numbers were selected for this study. The survey was limited to 5% of the total households in the study area because of time and cost constraints. Additionally, since the study area is rural, we expected a high homogeneity of the population and the adequacy of 5% to provide generalizable information. The head of each sampled household was interviewed with the help of a structured questionnaire.

## 2.3. Data analysis

The researchers used descriptive and interpretative techniques to analyze the qualitative data. In order to analyze quantitative data, descriptive statistics were computed to provide summary information about the impacts of mechanized farming and industrialization on the traditional livelihood strategies and environment.

## 2. Results

### 3.1. Socio-demographic profile of respondents

Out of the total households involved in the study, 83.9% of them are headed by males and the remaining 16.1% are headed by females. In terms of marital status, the majority of the respondents (83.9%) are married, 12.9% are widowed, 2.2% were never married and 1.1% are divorced. The dominant religion among the study community is Islam (followed by 83.9% of respondents). 15.1% of the study respondents are *Waaqeffattoota* (followers of the Oromo traditional religion) and 1.1% are protestant (Table 1).

The dominant age group (36-50) comprised 41.9% of the respondents. The second most observed age of respondents (38.7%) fell within the age group of 20-35. The percentage of respondents in the age group from 51-65 was 14% and the remaining 3.2% were from the age group 66-80. Most respondents (55.9%) have a family size that ranges from 2-7. The study also found that about one third of the respondents (33.3%) have a family size of 8-13 while 7.5% have a family size of 14-19 and 2.2% have a family size of 20-25. Data on educational status of the respondents reveal that 14% have no formal education, 17.2% attained grade 1-4 (first cycle elementary school), 37.6% attained grade 5-8 (second cycle elementary school), 16.1% have high school education and 15.1% have different levels above high school education (Table 1).

### 3.2. Changes in the livelihood of people

The study has scrutinized the impacts (positive and negative) of mechanized farming and industries on the livelihood of local people. Accordingly, 94.6% of the respondents replied that their livelihood has been affected, whilst only 2.2% of respondents perceived their livelihood has escaped the impacts. The remaining 3.2% are not sure whether their livelihood has been affected by mechanized farming and rural industrialization (Table 2).

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of respondents (source: field survey, 2016)

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage	Summary of statistics
Sex of the head of household	Male	78	83.9	
	Female	15	16.1	
Marital status	Never married	2	2.2	
	Married	78	83.9	
	Divorced	1	1.1	
	Widowed	12	12.9	
Religion	<i>Waaqeffannaa</i>	14	15.1	
	Islam	78	83.9	
	Protestant	1	1.1	
Age**	20-35	36	38.7	Mean (39.68), std deviation (12.114), Range 50
	36-50	39	41.9	
	51-65	13	14.0	
	66-80	3	3.2	
Family Size*	2-7	52	55.9	Mean (7.58), std deviation (4.413), range 20
	8-13	31	33.3	
	14-19	7	7.5	
	20-25	2	2.2	
Education	No formal education	13	14.0	
	Grade 1-4	16	17.2	
	Grade 5-8	35	37.6	
	High school	15	16.1	
	Above high school	14	15.1	

\*One case is missing, \*\* two cases are missing

Table 2. Change in the livelihood because of mechanized farming/investment (source: field survey, 2016)

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	88	94.6
No	2	2.2
Not sure	3	3.2

Mechanized farming and rural industrialization has affected rural livelihood means like type of cereals, production level, type of livestock, number of livestock and honey production. The data presented in Table 3 reveals that types of cereals (96.8%), production level (95.7%), type of livestock (96.8%)

and number of livestock (94.8%) have decreased. On the other hand, only 2.2% of the respondents replied that the types of change which happened to their means of livelihood was positive (Table 3).

With regard to honey production, 29% of the respondents have stopped honey production whereas 55.9% indicated that honey production was decreased because of mechanized farming and rural industrialization. The study found that the question about changes in honey production is not applicable to 15.1% of the respondents since they were not producing honey before the investments (Table 3).

Table 3. Means of livelihood that have been affected (source: field survey, 2016)

Changed means of livelihood	Direction of change	Frequency	Percent
Type of cereals	Increased	2	2.2
	Decreased	90	96.8
	No change	1	1.1
Production level	Increased	2	2.2
	Decreased	89	95.7
	No change	2	2.2
Type of livestock	Increased	2	2.2
	Decreased	90	96.8
	No change	1	1.1
Number of livestock	Increased	2	2.2
	Decreased	88	94.6
	No change	3	3.2
Honey production	Decreased	52	55.9
	Stopped production	27	29.0
	Not applicable	14	15.1

### 3.3. Impacts related to land and water

Besides the impacts of rural investments on the means of traditional livelihoods, the study has also investigated its impacts on land and water. Concerning pasture land and farmland, 97.8% and 98.9% respectively responded that the size has decreased. The extent of impacts brought to the livelihood of the study people due to land dispossession can be understood through the following case of a displaced household by a flower farm around Batu town.

*“Before the land was taken from us, we used to grow grains we like. At that time, the only commodity we buy from market was table salt. We were living a prosperous and confident life. Nowadays, we are living like urban people who buy and consume everything from market. We became people who are craving to plough land; this actually is a big shame for us. In short, if the land is taken away, nothing is left.*

*Everything is lavish. Land however is the backbone [Lafti Lafeedha, in Afaan Oromoo]. A human being cannot move when its backbone is broken. Now our backbone is broken and we are paralyzed people. There is no ploughing and animal herding; our life is empty. After we are evicted from our land, we failed to educate our children. Children quit schooling and dispersed to different areas to survive”.*

Rural agricultural and industrial investments have also decreased the irrigation practice of 58.1% of the households and forced 40.9% of the households to stop irrigation. Access to water for livestock (61.3%) and access to the forest (90.3%) for households have been decreased because of mechanized agriculture and rural industrialization. Furthermore, 38.7% and 8.6% of households, respectively, reported that their access to water for livestock and to the forest has been severed (Table 4).

Table 4. Land and water related changes (source: field survey, 2016)

Changes	Type of change	Frequency	Percent
Pasture land	Decreased	91	97.8
	Ceased to exist	2	2.2
Farmland	Decreased	92	98.9
Irrigation	Decreased	54	58.1
	Increased	1	1.1
	Ceased to exist	38	40.9
Access to water for livestock	Decreased	57	61.3
	Ceased to exist	36	38.7
Access to forest	Decreased	84	90.3
	I don't know	1	1.1
	Ceased to exist	8	8.6

Results from the qualitative study (interviews and focus group discussions) reveal that Oromo tradition is highly connected with livestock and their products. If there is no pastureland, there is no livestock. Lack of livestock causes dearth of *muuda* (ritual of anointment by butter), *dhibaayyuu* (libation) and *fala* (sacrifice) rituals. Nowadays, all these rituals are fading partly because of expansion of industries on ritual sites. Some of the lands occupied by mechanized farming were *lafa dheedaa* (pasture lands).

Flower farms are the most devastating, and risky to the local people and their livelihoods in Adami Tullu district. Most river fords of people and domestic animals like Lakole, Jawe, Garbi, Rophi, Tesso and Anano are closed or destroyed by this kind of mechanized farming. As a result, people are forced to go tens of kilometres for watering their domestic animals. The only available river fords for watering domestic animals are Batu

and Wafiqo which are found around Batu town. One of the mechanized farming is using the road to River Wafiqo as its main gate to the farm. Animals, workers, and its vehicles are using only this cramped road. There are often car accidents with both domestic animals and people on this road due to its narrowness.

According to our informants who work on one particular farm, hundreds of dangerous chemicals for the production of flowers are being used. After using these chemicals, the industry directly discharges chemicals to Lake Dambal. These toxic chemicals are affecting aquatic life, people and animals which are using the lake water (Fig. 1). Residents of Batu town are warned not to drink water from Lake Dambal, since this water source is contaminated by chemicals. The people are using water bought from neighbouring Bulbula town, whose water source is *Xuffaa* spring from Aluto Mountain. *Xuffaa* water is becoming popular in



and around Batu town for drinking. Twenty litres of *Xuffaa* water is being sold for 15-20 Ethiopian birr at a wholesale price whereas two litres of this water is sold for four Ethiopian birr at a retail price. This is consumed only by those people who can afford it. However, most people are using the noxious water because of their economic incapability. Stomach ache is becoming common to all people because of this contaminated water. People use a metaphor, “*Mana Seeraa dhaqee namni mataan*

*hin dhukkubsanne hin jiru; bishaan Baatuu dhugee namni garaan hin dhukkubsanne hin jiru*” to explain problems related to water to literally mean, “*no body come back without a headache from courts of law and nobody drinking water of Batu town is free from stomach-ache*”. Similarly, the households neighbouring Ziway Sher Ethiopia, Ziway Caustic Soda, Adami Tullu Pesticide and Abjata Soda Ash industries strongly complained about unpleasant and irritating smells.

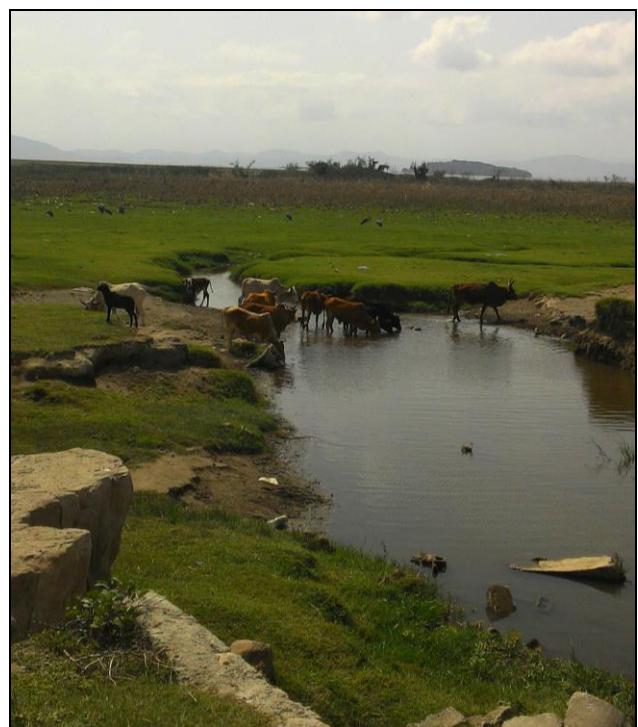


Fig. 1. Direct routes of contaminated water by chemicals to Dambal Lake from Ziway Sher-Ethiopia flower mechanized farming (Photo captured by researchers during data collection, February 2016)

Fishes in the lake are dying and floating on the lake. Some types of fish in the lake are decreasing, becoming very slim in size and some types are disappearing. This issue is seldom getting the concern of other stakeholders other than local people; when people raise these issues at different

meetings, the industry and local leaders defend themselves with political rhetoric. No one, including journalists, can capture photos and record videos of dead fish since industry guards and armed forces are reluctant to give permission. For instance, in 2012, journalists were beaten by federal militia

and their cameras were confiscated because of an attempt to record videos of dead fish floating on the lake.

When fish are dead and float on the lake, industry guards immediately inform the industry leaders. Leaders immediately assign loyal workers to collect and conceal these dead bodies of fish. Furthermore, toxic chemicals discharged from industries and mechanized farming have endangered grasses on the shore of the lakes which are very important for different type of rituals and animal consumption. There are about three main routes of poisonous water discharge to the lake which are visible to anybody visiting the area (Fig. 1).

Lands occupied by mechanized farming and industries were previously individual private farm land, communal grazing lands or ritual sites. Some of these lands are taken away through compensation of insufficient money. Some others are taken through a promise to provide social services, counterfeiting or frightening the community. The following case of an evicted household in the study area substantiates this scenario.

*"As you see, this place is swampy; it is not suitable for us and for our cattle. We are living in this marsh with mosquitos because we had no alternative. Before we were evicted we used to own many cattle. But later on, some of them died and others were sold off because of the lack of grazing land. We were compensated with nothing when we were evicted from our fertile land. We have no farmland now. We were ploughing a piece of land by leasing from private owners. It is very far from our home. Its cost also exceeds what we produce from it. Thus, we quit it".*

To further corroborate the above case, narration from another dispossessed household is presented as follows:

*"When the government evicted us from our ancestral land, all our neighbours left the place immediately fearing the government's warning. My household boldly resisted the eviction stating that we cannot live without our land. We asked them where to go. We had no alternative place and livelihood strategy. The next day, the investor came with local police and surrounded our compound early in the morning before we woke up. The excavators started digging the land and made a big hole by destroying trees. Then, one of the local police told us to leave the area immediately before the excavators destroy our house while we are in it. We tried to challenge them. But, they jailed some of our family members. The remaining family members escaped to this place and settled under this tree shade [by pointing to the tree around their house]. Many materials were left there and destroyed with our*

*house. We escaped only with our domestic animals and our clothes".*

According to all informants of this study, when mechanized farming and industries came to their society they promised to fulfil social services such as road, electricity, hospital, school, water supply and etc. They also assured them that job opportunities would be provided for the surrounding community who were owners of the land. However, mechanized farming and industries in the study area rarely kept their promise. The owners of mechanized farming deceived the community until they became established in the area.

For instance, when Adami Tullu Pesticide industry was established, they came with their excavators and started destroying the forest and common grazing land without consulting the local people. Local people protested against the destruction of the pastureland and the forest, and they stopped the damage for a while. The owners of the industry and local governors discussed with the community, at which owners of the industry stated the following statements, "we came here to dig out underground water for you and for your domestic animals, for your own purpose; not for our own. If you refuse we can go to another place and you will be the losers". The people felt alright with their plan and agreed not to lose the opportunity. Some local people joined the activities through clearing the forest with the deep intent of getting access to water.

As promised, the industry cleared the forest and pumped out underground water using modern digging machines. The water covered a large area of land for three consecutive months. Local people were satisfied with the water, and were using the water for domestic purposes and watering their animals. After three months, however, the industry administration fenced the water source with metal cable to keep the local people away. Guards who were strangers to the local people were employed to keep the industry safe. The industry also announced that nobody can come within fifty meters of the industry's fence.

Likewise, Ziway Sher-Ethiopia flower industry and Castel Winery mechanized farms, completely closed access to cattle watering in river and ritual sites. In response to complaints from the community, they promised to build a big pond at a place convenient for the people. The pond was not built and people were at risk because of lack of water. The industries did not keep their promise. Ziway Sher-Ethiopia promised to build a hospital through placing a corner stone, but it did not fulfil the promise. Later the hospital was built using the government budget. Participants of the study claimed

that the industry built one healthcare centre in its compound to treat workers so that the severe impacts on workers of chemicals used in the factory would be concealed. Of the several promises made, only one school was established in Batu town by Sher-Ethiopia Flower industry.

Empirical data obtained from FGD reveal that, newly established mechanized farming around Adami Tullu town closed all routes and river fords which have been used by the local community for different rituals and as a source of drinking water for both domestic animals and people. It also blocked the flow of the river from Lake Dambal around Rophi river ford by making a dam. This dam was made by industry to provide abundant water only for its own industrial purpose. Because of this river blockage, the community living downstream of this dam are exposed to a very critical water shortage for human use and domestic animals. After the blockage of this river the lower basin of the river dried out up to Lake Abjata. As a result, a major part of the water inflow of Lake Abjata which originates from Lake Dambal through River Bulbula is also affected.

Community members living between Lake Dambal and Lake Abjata are forced to go far away to water their domestic animals. Consequently, after the flow of water through River Bulbula is blocked and prohibited by mechanized farming they are forced to use only these two lakes, Lake Dambal and Lake Abjata for themselves and for their domestic animals. Before the blockage of River Bulbula, Lake Abjata has also been affected by chemicals through River Bulbula which has a direct inflow from Lake Dambal.

Local people also stated that their traditional livelihoods are clouded with the dangers of displacement and the possibility of clashes with government and investors in an attempt to become secure. The following is a narration from one of the relocated households from the outskirts of Batu town.

*"Even today we are worrying about our life in this area. Local administrators are trying to evict us from this infertile land again. Three years, they came to discuss it with us. They told us their plan as follows: You and this land belong to the government. The government has planned to make this land a recreational area. The area is very important to attract tourists and generate income for the town. Therefore, you will be compensated for this house and we will give you money to build a house in some other place. Then we stated that*

*our past wound is not yet healed. We do not have any other alternative and we will not permit further discussion. We told them that they have power and money. Their power is producing money by depressing our lives and our future. We underlined that we are ready to die for this land. Without reluctance, we told them to establish their recreation area on our graves. After a very long time and a hot debate, they left us by warning us to think on the issue. They did not come back until today. We do not know what they think about us. Our life is full of tension and suspicion. If they evict us from this land, the only option we have is to sell all our livestock, stay for a while and start begging. [She kept silent for a while] Why do you provoke us! Please leave us alone!"*

Different data sources have shown the existence of such conflicts in the past. For instance, one flower farm around Adami Tullu town tried to grab the land by claiming that the land belongs to the government to justify the un-necessity of discussion with the local community about the land. Local people noticed about the schedule of displacement. Local governors also tried to displace them without any compensation. Later, the community protested against this imposition by deciding to die on their land. After these protests local administrators and investors were forced to discuss the issue with the local people. The farm owners corrupted community representatives, and local governors frightened and imprisoned some community members to get compliance from the rest of the community. Community alienated their land ownership as a result with insufficient money paid to them as compensation. Conflicts and physical confrontation between the local community and industry owners are always visible around the industry. For instance, the local community tried to burn down the flower farm in 2016.

Several industries were established around Adami Tullu and Bulbula towns on the community's common pasture land. People protested against the takeover of the pasture land and the destruction of the natural environment. The federal government settled a large military force around the industries to control the community. Some representatives of the community were imprisoned and the industries continued with their plan. They cleared forests, grabbed pasture lands and destroyed cultural values connected with the environments since there were ritual sites in the area (Fig. 2).





Fig. 2. Newly established Sher Project around Adami Tullu town (Photo captured by researchers during data collection, February 2016)

#### 4. Discussion

Development efforts in different countries that ignored indigenous knowledge and the local environment have failed to achieve their desired objectives (KURANTIN, 2012). Similarly, this study revealed that mechanized farming and industrialization processes in Adami Tullu district have generally overlooked and negatively affected traditional livelihoods, environment and culture. Type of cereals and production level, type and number of livestock, and honey production have been reported almost anonymously by study participants as either decreased or ceased altogether. It was found that mechanized farming and industrialization is having a negative implication for the livelihood of the local people, food security,

and quality of life at large. This scenario is contrary to the Ethiopian government's rationale of promoting agricultural investment as one of the effective strategies to promote economic growth, food security and poverty reduction in the country (AZEBA & MAUSER, 2017). Many studies on large-scale land investments, mainly between government and investors, in rural Ethiopia disclosed their negative consequences. Similarly, media reports hardly reflect any positive effects of large-scale agricultural investment and industrialization in Ethiopia (POSLUSCHNY-TREUNER, 2012).

The global south is often portrayed as a reservoir of arable land capable of satisfying the needs of large-scale mechanized farming and industrialization due to the perceived low population density and cheap land (SEO & RODRIGUEZ, 2012).

However, land transferred to investors had often been used by the local population for some purpose and that land transfer could lead to substantial displacement for the local people (AABØ & KRING, 2012). Land used for mechanized farming and industries in the study area had been used by local communities for farming, ritual, grazing or settlement purposes. The assertion that investment lands were previously idle is also inappropriate as land in many cases could be temporarily left for various purposes, such as shifting cultivation or bush fallowing by local users. As a result, it is feared that the government's agricultural land investment policy could marginalize the rural population by depriving them of a crucial asset for their livelihoods. Local communities were also usually given meagre compensation and promises of social services provision to soothe them for their displacement. These promises are never fulfilled in most cases and found to intensify local people's grievances against investors and government. GEZMU (2013) confirms this evidence. According to him, local people evicted from their land were first enticed by subsequently unfulfilled promises given to them by the government and flower growers: fair monetary compensation, school for their children, establishment of clinics, clean water, sanitation, infrastructure, and better social amenities and services.

## 5. Conclusion

Oromo people invariably demonstrate a deep and intimate bond with their territory of origin. In Oromo world-views, land cannot be separated from livelihood, culture and identity. For the Oromo, the environment in general and land in particular is not simply an economic resource to manipulate capital on it. It is closely associated with the livelihood and identity of people with the past and with the future. Contrary to this, in most cases people in the study area were not consulted during the land transfer process. The whole process of land transmission was not disclosed to the local people. Therefore, there was no consensus with the people about the mechanized farming and industries. As a result, the relationship between mechanized farming and industries, and local communities is not always harmonious; contention is always here and there. The wider community in general and the labourers in particular perceive industries and mechanized farming as their enemies. Consequently, they are kept safe by security forces. The correct environmental use by local people in general and land use rights in particular are broken; fair water use is also ignored. However,

the constitution of Ethiopia states that the right to ownership of land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the State and in the people of Ethiopia. In general, if immediate measures are not taken, the people in the study area are going to lose their traditional livelihoods, culture, values and identity because of the expansion of mechanized farming and industries. Therefore, rather than acting in favour of a few exploitative investors, government should empower the local community.

## Acknowledgements

*This research was funded by Jimma University. Therefore, we acknowledge the University for its support that greatly contributed towards the realization of this study. We are also indebted to all our informants who gave us valuable information for our study.*

## References

- Aabø E., Kring T. 2012. *The Political Economy of Large-Scale Agricultural Land Acquisitions: Implications for Food Security and Livelihoods/Employment Creation in Rural Mozambique*. Maputo, Mozambique. United Nations Development Program. Retrieved from [www.undp.org/content/dam/rba/docs/Agriculture%20Rural%20Mozambique.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/rba/docs/Agriculture%20Rural%20Mozambique.pdf).
- Asafa J. 2001. *Fighting against the injustice of the state and globalization: comparing the African American and Oromo movements*. PALGRAVE, New York.
- Asebe R. 2012. Contesting Views on a Protected Area Conservation and Development in Ethiopia. *Social Science*, 1: 24–46. doi:10.3390/socsci1010024.
- Ayalew G. 2001. *Pastoralism under Pressure: Land Alienation and Pastoral Transformations among the Karrayu of Eastern Ethiopia, 1941 to Present*. Shaker Publishing, Maastricht.
- Azeb W., Mauser W. 2017. Socio-economic and Environmental Impacts of Large-Scale Agricultural Investment in Gambella Region, Ethiopia. *Journal of US-China Public Administration*, 14, 4: 183–197. doi:10.17265/1548-6591/2017.04.001.
- Barua B. 2010. Development Intervention and Ethnic Communities in Bangladesh and Thailand: A Critique. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*, 2, Special Issue 1: 372–400. Retrieved from [www.japss.org/upload/13-%20JAPSS%20Barua.pdf](http://www.japss.org/upload/13-%20JAPSS%20Barua.pdf).
- Barume A. 2010. *Land Rights of Indigenous People in Africa: with Special Reference on Central, Eastern and Southern Africa*. Denmark: IWGIA.
- Boku T. 2008. *Pastoralism under Stress: Resources, Institutions and Poverty among the Borana Oromo in Southern Ethiopia*. Environment and Development Studies, Noragric, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Norway (PhD thesis).
- Buli E. 2001. *The Socio-Economic Dimensions of Development induced Impoverishment: The Case of the Karrayu Oromo of the Upper Awash Valley*. Addis Ababa University.
- Gezmu A.B. 2013. *The human impacts of flower farm development in the Ethiopian Rift Valley region*. University College Cork.
- Kurant N. 2012. *Indigenous Knowledge, Industrialization and Resource Management in the face of Globalization*. doi: 10.7763/IPEDR. 2012. V54. 48.
- MA. 2005. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Synthesis*. Washington DC, Island Press.

- Posluschny-Treuner M. 2012. *International Large-Scale Land Acquisitions in Ethiopia: The Key to Trigger Agricultural Modernization, Development and Poverty Reduction?* Paper presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> ECPR Graduate Conference, Jacobs University, Bremen. Retrieved from <https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/188c56b8-10a2-4a9d-8706-12bbe0ace6fc.pdf>.
- Seo K., Rodriguez N. 2012. Land grab, food security and climate change: a vicious circle in the global South. [in:] Chhetri, N. (ed.) *Human and Social Dimensions of Climate Change*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/50876>.
- Taddesse B. 1995. Deforestation and Environmental Degradation in Ethiopia: The Case of Jam Jam Province in Northeast African Studies, *New Series*, 2, 2: 139–155. Michigan State University Press.
- Tesema T. 2002. *Bribing the Land: An Appraisal of the Farming Systems of the Maccaa Oromo in Wallagga in Northeast African Studies, New Series*, 9, 3: 97–113, Special Issue: The Oromo in Ethiopian Studies: Confronting Challenges to Politically Engaged Scholarship, Michigan State University Press.
- UNESCO. 2003. *International Workshop on the Importance of Sacred Natural Sites for Biodiversity Conservation*. Kunming and Xishuangbanna Biosphere Reserve, People's Republic of China. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001333/133358e.pdf>.
- United Nations 2009. *The State of the World's Indigenous People, Economic and Social Affairs*. New York. Retrieved from [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP/en/SOWIP\\_web.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP/en/SOWIP_web.pdf)
- Workineh K. 2005. *The Utility of Ethical dialogue for marginalized voices in Africa*. Addis Ababa University.