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Agricultural Change and Development in Wolaitta-Ethiopia, From 1960 –1970s

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Abstract--- *The Imperial government gave attention to agricultural transformation of the countryside since 1960s onwards by providing selected seed, extension services, fertilizers, market access, credit institutions and other modern agricultural inputs to achieve improvement in the agricultural output and yields in Ethiopia. As a result, Wolaitta experienced both large scale mechanized and small scale peasant agricultural changes. Therefore, the main purpose of this paper is to examine the development, success, challenge of mechanization of Bilate private farm, Bilate Tobacco state farm, Abaya agricultural enterprise and the development of Wolaitta Agricultural Development Unit (WADU) in Wolaitta Awrajja from 1960 to the end of 1970s. Then in 1975 the Bilate and Abaya private enterprises were nationalized and became state-owned farms, and WADU sustained its implementation under the new regime. The same thing happened for the previously Bilate state tobacco farm continued as it was. The people of Wolaitta benefited large from mechanization, commercialization and provision of agricultural inputs, farm implements, marketing cooperatives, and settlement schemes. As a result, infrastructures developed, cash crop yields increased, the landless peasants became change agents and price of agricultural output increased as well. In general, this study applied qualitative methodology and utilized both primary and secondary data by combining with oral data. Finally, this experience would be taken from Wolaitta mechanization and integrated package peasant agriculture for today and future development.*

Keywords--- *Agricultural Transformation, Marketing Cooperatives, Settlement Schemes.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Currently Wolaitta Zone is one of the sixteenth Zones in Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State of Ethiopia. Administratively, it is divided into fifteen rural *Woredas,* five city administration and five reformed towns. Astronomically, Wolaitta zone located at 6°40′–7°10′ North latitude and 37°40′–38°20′ East longitude. The zone is bounded in west by Dawro, in the east by Sidama zone, in the south by Gamo and Gofa zones, in the north east and south east by Oromia Region and in the north and northwest by Hadiya and Kembata Tembaro zone respectively. Based on the 2017 population estimation, the total inhabitants of the area is 2.4 million in Wolaitta Zone only (2.31%) and about 1 million in Oromia Regional State, makes the second home to Wolaitta in Ethiopia. Sodo city is found at 385 km south west of Addis Ababa (Imperial city) via Shashemene road, 290 and 329 km through Hulibareg and Hosanna respectively, and 170 km far from Hawassa (regional capital) (WZFEDD, 2014; Abesha Shirko, 2006).

Wolaitta has a total surface area of 4511.7 km² (451,170 hectares). Its topography consisting of plateaus, plains, rugged mountain and rolling hills. Wolaitta practices three agro-ecological zones such *Gezzia* (highland),

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Bargguwaa (mid-latitude) and *Garra* (lowland) that comprised of 9%, 56% and 35% respectively. Its elevation varied from its lowest point in the Bilate Tena (501m) reaches to highest peak at Damota Mountain (3000m) above sea level. Wolaitta receives rainfall from April to mid- October. It experiences highest rainfall in July month. The rainfall distribution ranges from 729.6mm in Bilate Tena extends to 1341.5mm at Sodo city. Wolaitta zone experienced the mean annual maximum temperature in between 17^0-32^0 c. As part of the Southern Rift Valley System, the area is stricken by steady and cold air that blown down clears the cloud and make dry the province from beginning of November to the end of January. (WZFEDD, 2014; Petros, 1973) As a result, December is the driest month in Wolaitta. While March is the hottest and July is the coldest.

The existence of diverse climate, landscape and soil composition endowed Wolaitta with rich natural vegetation and wild animals. Due to its good climatic conditions almost all types of tropical and temperate crops produce in the study area. In prior time, *Gezzia* and *Bargguwaa* parts of Wolaitta covered with dense forest resources. (WZFEDD, 2014). But from time to time the forest resources of the region had been depleted because of high deforestation for the sake of construction, furniture, agricultural land, fuel, timber, etc.

Agriculture is the predominant mode of Wolaitta economy. It has been subsidized by local manufacturing and petty trade. However, the practice of traditional farming made agriculture subsistence i.e. no surplus for market beyond home consumption. The development of *Awrajja* administration, during the Imperial regime had been connected with the nature of provincial administration and their ties with central government. In this regard, Wolaitta became a champion by having two extraordinary governors in the period under discussion. These were Germame Neway (r. 1957- 1959), who was the intellectual and reform minded, while lost his life in the 1960 coup against the old regime; and *Dejjazmach* Woldesemayat Gebrewolde (r. 1963-1973). (Guidi, 2013; Henok, 2012) They made remarkable change in the socio-economic realm and left their bold legacies on the society at large and among the intellectuals of Wolaitta. As a result of their grand contribution to the province the local people called them as beginner of development and change agent respectively.

Germame Neway had harmonious relation with the society. He made reforms in the area of literacy, setup patrol station called *Santariya* in a strategic place on the gate of every village to control theft and abolished false witness. In 1958 to solve tenancy problem Germame introduced new settlement scheme at Abella and Bale lowlands. A very small number of landless peasants were settled. However, his settlement program was not succeeded because it separated tenants from landlords, led into conspires against him. Added with Germame's dissonant relation with the local officials and central government opened way to the Emperor to transferred Germame into Jigjig, designed to isolate him from the center. (Guidi, 2013; Henok 2012; Fikru, 1987). Despite the fact, in 1960 the two brilliant brothers Germame and Mengistu Neway (the leader of Imperial Body Guard) arranged the unsuccessful coup against Emperor Haile Selassie I culminated in the loss of their life. Nevertheless, the memory of Germame outshines among the young change minded Ethiopians in general and the generation of Wolaitta in particular.

Dejjach Woldesemayat's tenure demonstrated the establishment of mechanized agriculture of Bilate private farm, Bilate tobacco farm, Abaya individual farm enterprise and the introduction of Comprehensive Integrated Approach called WADU (Wolaitta Agricultural Development Union) in the early 1970s. Woldesemayat re-

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organized Wolaitta administration into seven woredas, constructed roads and bridges that connects provincial capital with Wolaitta *woredas* and neighboring Sidama and Kaffa regional administration. He restructured Sodo town, expanded socio- economic infrastructures like schools, clinics, water supplies, transportation services in seven woredas as well as in resettlement sites and built public library in Sodo. Woldesemayat also recommenced resettlement program at Abela and Bale, which was started during the era of Germame but interrupted under the govern ship of Kebede Desta (r. 1959-1962). (Henok, 2012; Fikru, 1987; Rahmato, 2007). Therefore, this paper generally tries to address the development, achievements and failure of agricultural mechanization and peasant agricultural package program in Wolaitta in the period between 1960 -1970s.

II. Evolution of Mechanization and Comprehensive Integrated Package Program in Wolaitta

Agriculture is the solid basis of the country's economy but historically little effort has been done to cheer its advancement. Since mid- 1960s under the third term economic plan (1968-1973), the Haile Selassie administration dedicated itself to transform the agricultural sector to provide sufficient food supply for growing urban population, inputs to local industries and intended to enlarge agricultural export in order to make equilibrium with the growing import. Accordingly, due consideration was given to expand mechanized agriculture and comprehensive package program in small scale peasant farm areas. Thus, Wolaitta became one of the priority area under such grand plan due to the following underlying parameters. These were firstly, the abundance of government land in Wolaitta.

Imperial government had owned land in both highland and lowland parts of the study area. All arable lands of the lowland Wolaitta belongs to the government. It was entirely measured about 24% of the *Awrajja* land. (Fikru, 1987, p. 3) Henceforth, segment of such land spent for state farm, private farm enterprises, resettlement scheme as well as provision in lieu of salary or pension for retiring government officials, soldiers, civil servants, etc. Secondly, the establishment of effective and efficient administration under Germame and *Dejjach* Woldesemayat took a lion share that laid foundation in the domain of infrastructure attract and capture the soul of the Emperor, international investors and donors to imprint their part in Wolaitta. Thirdly, in parallel with the role of provincial governors the good awareness, support, cooperation and full participation of local society in development efforts ranges from rendering free labor service, money and took part in the settlement scheme even by combining many northern Ethiopians (Wollo Amhara, Menze, Tigreans and Bete Israel from Gonder) added weight to the Imperial consideration. Besides, the high population concentration in the highland of Wolaitta i.e. less than 1.6 hectare holding having with many land less tenants made the area priority of the government. (Petros, 1973; Henok 2012; Rahmato, 2007) Based on this preconditions and by the request of *Dejjach* Woldesemayat, the Imperial government launched mechanized agriculture in the lowlands and package programs in entire Wolaitta in the mid of 1960s.

By the end of 1960s, mechanized agriculture had expanded in Ethiopia. Its basic features were engagement on wide-range lands, hired labor, large scale machine equipment, and market-oriented to fulfill industrial demand. At their initial phase, they expert in a few cash crop such as coffee, cotton, sugarcane but later on in the 1970s they incorporated the production of fruits, cereals, pepper, pulses, vegetables and sesame seed for both domestic and export purposes (Henok, 2012, p. 47).

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Wolaitta mechanized agriculture and package programs were a segment of the country's agricultural development. Accordingly, the Imperial Government of Ethiopia (IEG) established Bilate Tobacco state farm, Bilate and Abbaya private venture in the lowlands of Wolaitta in 1967 and executed package programs in the entire parts of Wolaitta since 1970 onwards. In the following section we will deeply scrutinize their development, triumph, shortcomings and future directions.

III. THE BILATE TOBACCO MONOPOLY FARM

In 1935 E.C (1942/43), the Imperial government established the National Tobacco and Matches Corporation, which was later renamed as 'National Tobacco Enterprises.' The corporation was given the mandate to organize tobacco production and processing in the whole country. Tobacco was grown for commercial purpose by state-owned farms and by farmers around these farms. The corporation produced tobacco in the region of Wolaitta, Awassa and Shewa Robit to supply its leaf processing plants and furnish the cigarette-making factory in Addis Ababa (Girma and Awulachew, 2007; Henok, 2012). The Bilate Tobacco Farm was one of the Virginia producing farms established under the monopoly of the National Tobacco and Matches Corporation. It was established in Wolaitta *awrajja* in the district of Damote Woyde in 1960 E.C (1967/68). In 1964 E.C (1971/72) the farm started planting tobacco on 2 hectares of land as *Serto Masaya* (demonstration center) (Henok, 2012, p. 48).

The aim of establishing the farm was to solve the shortage of Virginia supply and for export abroad. As result, the National Tobacco and Matches Corporation made investigation to find conducive fertile soil to expand the production of Virginia tobacco agriculture. In the meantime, they found the government land, which was not occupied by peasants in the Bilate Eta, a place in the low land of Damote Woyde. The governor of Wolaitta, *Dejjazmach* Wolde Semayat also welcomed the establishment of the factory. They were given 1200 hectares of land. The corporation agreed to pay 300 birr per *gasha* (40 hectare) for the Damote Woyde district administration. This was done in the year 1960 E.C (1967/68) (Makin et al, 1975; Henok, 2012).

From its establishment, the farm was owned by the state and was run by the Ministry of Finance. Later, the mandate to run the farm was given to the Ministry of Industry. Besides tobacco, the farm also cultivated cereal crops like wheat, maize, teff etc., to fulfill the needs of its workers. The plantation was irrigated by diverting the Bilate River.

In 1960 E.C (1967/68) when the corporation took this land, the area was heavily forested and uncultivated. In the years between 1962 and 1964 E.C (1969/70-1971/72), the corporation cleared the forest cover, prepared the land for cultivation, built roads and houses, a diversion weir and prepared other facilities by investing about 81 million birr. In 1965 E.C (1972/73) the farm started plantation of tobacco within 2 hectares of land. The total harvest produced were estimated 1500 kg, which mean that the land yielded 750kg of tobacco per hectare. As a result, the production continued (Makin et al, 1975; Henok, 2012).

The production of tobacco plant has been a long history in rural Wolaitta. *Argubiya* and *gaayiya* were the Middle East hookah like pipes that aided to smoke tobacco in traditional Wolaitta. Locally, tobacco had a central role in relaxing the smoker. The advent of Protestantism to the area since 1920s significantly undermined the habit of smoking, cultivating and processing of tobacco plant. Nevertheless, its production has been revitalized and

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commerciality enriched considerably since the inauguration of Bilate Tobacco Monopoly. As a result, farmers of the surrounding area has been harvesting tobacco and supply to the firm. (Girma and Awulachew, 2007; Paulos Balcha, 2016).

Corresponding to tobacco plantation, the Monopoly cultivated cereal crops specifically wheat and maize on 20 hectares of land and extended to cover 200 hectares of cultivated land. (Makin et al, 1975, p. 173) However, the amount of other cereal crops yield harvested was not recorded. Likewise, the number of human resource (permanent and temporary workers) who participated in the production practice was not mentioned. Therefore, in order to achieve better yield and sustainable production, the Monopoly should work hard by investing heavy machineries, well integrated irrigation scheme, thorough rotation of alternative cereals, adopt effective management and control system in the entire production process, and Soil alkalinity and water salinity content cross checked insistently. In the year 1973, the Monopoly cleared and irrigated about 1800 hectors. It planned to irrigate 1400 hectare additional farm. In the same period Bilate private farm irrigated about totally 1950 hectares of land. (Makin et al, 1975, pp. 161 & 173-174). Due to the erratic nature of rainfall there was water competition between the two firms.

IV. THE BILATE AND ABBAYA STATE FARM

It is difficult to reconstruct the full history of the Bilate and Abbaya state farms in Damote Woyde and Humbo district respectively in the pre-revolutionary Ethiopia. The reason for this was lack of documentation. Therefore, we had to depend on oral sources to fill the gap on the subject. The mechanized farm of Bilate was established in 1960 E.C (1967) and Abbaya enterprise in 1969 by a Belgian company. The founder and manager of the two farms was Mr. Franco Dennis. The farms were located in Bilate Tena and Abbaya area (Henok, 2012; Bisrat Lema, 2011; Abenet, 1987).

In the imperial period, large numbers of laborers were recruited from the whole of Wolaitta and the surrounding areas like Gamo, Gedeo, Konso, Sidama, Amhara, Kambata, Oromo, Basketos, Hadya, and so on. However, later the farms came to depend primarily on the workers from Damote Woyde and Humbo districts only. In the early years of its establishment, the farms begun to produce maize and haricot bean. Later they diversified their production by introducing cotton, sorghum, pepper sugar cane, bananas, citrus, etc (Makin et al, 1975; Henok, 2012).

According to sources, in 1962 E.C Emperor Haile Selassie visited the Bilate state farm. During his visit an air crash was occurred. Nevertheless, the Emperor was not injured. At the time of his tour, the emperor provided financial support and awards for both the manager and the workers (Henok, 2012, p. 50). During 1974 revolution, Franco Dennis left the area and went back to Europe. The military government then nationalized the farm. According to informants, the workers lived in camps. They suffered from lack of clean water and very low wages. Besides, they suffered from malaria and diarrhea throughout the period under discussion. This problem continued to plague the plantation throughout the *Derg* period (Bisrat Lema,2011; Henok, 2012).

Bilate and Abbaya farms laid on a plane surface a slightly slope place. Topographically, the areas are very comfortable for irrigation and mechanization. Their altitude ranges from 1000-1450m above sea level. Both farms possessed air strip (accessible to light plane) built by Franco Dennis to export fresh vegetables and fruit. Each farm

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kept a clinic and later elementary school (1-4). They had radio telegram but no telephone services and consumed the *Awrajja* (Sodo) and regional (Awassa) postal services. In line with this, the road infrastructure of the farms were poor and not all weather roads for all types of cars. Only tractors and four wheel drivers used during the dry season and there was no transportation service from farms to *Woredas* or *Awrajja* capitals (Henok, 2012; Abenet, 1987).

In post 1974 period, Bilate –Abbaya state farms owned totally about 5580 hectare under the two firms. Out of this 3580 hectare belongs to Bilate whereas the remaining 2000 hectare had been held by Abaya state farm. From this total land, in 1980/81 immediately after its integration under one general manager, the Bilate and Abbaya farms operated in 1577 and 1380 hectares respectively. While the rest of the lands categorized as forest, barren and unusable lands (Bisrat, 2011; Makin et al, 1975; Abenet, 1987).

The rainfall patterns of the study areas demonstrated that there was erratic rainfall distribution that disrupt agricultural performance. Thus, the scarce and unpredictable patterns of rainfall proves that irrigated agriculture is mandatory to the area. Similarly, the study areas experienced about 22^0 c average temperature and highest mean maximum temperature from March to April (30-32^0 c). While 14^0 c (lowest mean temperature) was recorded in between December and February. Thus, the overall ecology of the area reveals that the Bilate and Abbaya area shares similar conditions in many instances (Girma and Awulachew, 2007; Abenet, 1987).

The soil composition of Bilate and Abaya ranges from gray brown to dark gray brown and silt loam to clay loam that made from volcano-alluvial deposit. Their organic substance is low or medium and have poor structural development. Both farms greatly spoiled by salinization problem but when we came to the extent Abbaya farm affected most. (Abenet, 1987, pp. 70 & 73). Due to this fact, the farm lost some hectares of arable land. Hence, it is justifiable to protect the farm soil continuously from salinization.

The Bilate river drainage system became the soul of Bilate and Abbaya irrigated agriculture. As we have recommended in the above session of our discussions, due to the erratic patterns of rainfall, irrigational agricultural system is a necessities in the study areas. Nevertheless, any kind of influence (whether natural or man-made) on the Bilate river would affect the mechanized farm of Wolaitta. As far as the physical properties concerned, the farms had been poor in quality and under bad circumstances. The soil structure was weak and its composition had low. Similarly, the water impermeability and infiltration rates are very low since the soil had poor structure. The pan nature of soil after 30 cm depth totally blocked cotton plantation in both farms (Makin et al, 1975; Abenet, 1987).

Furthermore, the poor quality and the high salinity content of water hampers the irrigated agriculture in the study areas. The Bilate river amount fluctuates during the dry season due to it cross longest journey from northwest Gurage (the foot Hill of Mugo Mountain, 3600m) to Abbaya makes its discharge rate high. And the high sediment deposition in the course of the river led into the depth of ground water ranges in between 35-40m at Bilate.

In other word, salinization of water, poor root developments, shortage of water for irrigation, weak structure of soils and erosion could be measure as natural factors that limit the mechanization of farm in Wolaitta in the period under discussion (Makin et al, 1975; Abenet, 1987). The Bilate and Abbaya state farm employed different means of productions such as land, labor force, farm equipment and machineries, varies types of supplies including fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, fuel, oil and loans from Agriculture and Industrial Development Bank

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(AIDB). The farms had no problem of machineries and equipment's. The Agricultural Equipment Corporation under Ministry of State Farm Development (MSFD) supplied farm equipments, machineries and spare parts as well. During the 1975 nationalization policy, the previous machineries and equipments were nationalized and continued to serve its function. These machineries and equipments were tractors, slasher, ridger, harrow, plow, leveler, ditcher, planter, sub-spoiler, sprayer, trailer, sprider (fertilizer), and haban thresher (Abenet, 1987, pp. 85-90).

The source of loans for the Bilate and Abbaya state farm was AIDB under the supervision of MSFD. Based on its requirement AIDB granted about 21 million birr from 1975-1980. When we recap the total revenue and expense of the two state farms in the period between 1975 and 1980 summarized as 12, 637,674.01 revenue and 19, 238, 456.66 expense. While when observe the cost benefit analysis of 5 years the two farms exhibited 6.6 million net loss (Shahidur et al, 2007; Abenet, 1987).

In their previous organizational setup, in both farms all necessary decisions were passed by the manager, who control and supervise the entire aspects of the enterprises. Like other Ethiopian state farms they supply the permanent employees with free but limited medication, residence, elementary school (1-4) to the children of society as well as the services of food items on credit bases. However, seasonal laborers allowed house and medication with charge. In short, the welfare facilities at the state farms were at low standard. The clinics were built by Franco Denis but at the time suffered from no medicine even for malaria and diarrhea sickness that constantly affected the workers. Thus, the precondition for labor productivity was not fulfilled (Bisrat, 2011; Abenet, 1987; Henok, 2012).

The Bilate-Abbaya farms employed causal and permanent workers. The causal workers were periodic, demanded during the peak season of cotton harvesting for weeding, planting, cultivation, irrigation, harvest and cotton picking and support permanent employees. They had paid only 1.99 birr per day with specified duties to accomplish. The permanent employers include operators, mechanics, accountants, clerics, drivers, managers and other supportive staffs such as time keepers or formen. Regarding their educational background, whether seasonal or permanent workers were limited access to agricultural education and trainings. Surplus permanent and causal unskilled power greatly affected the productivity of the state farms particularly after nationalization in the first 5 consecutive years demonstrated loses (Abenet, 1987, pp. 97-105).

In the year 1979/80, the MSF had passed decision to integrate the 2 state farms of Wolaitta under one management system. The aim of the decision was to solve the limited skilled human power and the shortest distance between them (27 km) stimulated the hope that if the 2 farms integrated it would bring effective resource management. In the meantime Bilate-Abbaya farms were integrated into one managerial system in the year 1972/73 E.C (Bisrat 2011; Abenet, 1987; Henok, 2012).

The newly integrated Bilate-Abbaya state farm organization contained the following structure from top to bottom. General Manager coached the two firms from one center. Under him administrative unit (accounting, clinics, store and personnel section), the field work activities supervision and coordination team (data collection, research and crop protection) and technical department (care for machinery and production issues) placed. Beginning from its integration to the end of military rule, the Bilate-Abaya state farm was led by the following general managers. These were Haile Mariyam, Demeke Gechamo, Mulugeta Atnafu, and Birhanu Ayele ruled one

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after the other consecutively (Bisrat 2011; Abenet, 1987; Henok, 2012). The *Derg* government after land nationalization, pursued PA (peasant associations), producer and service cooperatives, state farms, and villigization program. Despite the fact, as far as its mechanization concerned, the productivity of Bilate-Abbaya state farms had limited success. When we conclude, whatever of its constraint the period from 1960- 1970s witnessed agricultural mechanization and commercialization at country level in general and Wolaitta in particular (Ibid).

In general, the Bilate-Abbaya farms experienced a bad development trend. To discuss a little the financial state of the firms were in worse situation after nationalization for five successive years. It is a disgrace that kind of large enterprise deprived of ending. But the reason behind the inefficiency of the company was the level of yearly cash was high, low level of production and sales gained from the firms and the existence of excess unskilled workers resulted in the depletion of government revenue and production practices (Shadur et al, 2007; Abenet, 1987).

To sum up, the main challenges that crippled the Bilate-Abbbay state farm were cultural, natural and managerial. The major problems in association with cultural practices include ploughing, planting, disking, crop rotation, weeding, spacing, thinning, cultivation, land planning, fertilizer application, harvesting, etc. The poor organic nutrient and structure less development of soil in relation to salinization and alkalization, poor quality of irrigation water because of high salinity from its tributaries, shortage of water for irrigation that is dependent on season (and even there was direct irrigation water competition with Bilate Monopoly) and low infiltration rate associated with weak soil structure were entangled the farm naturally (Makin et al, 1975; Abenet, 1987).

Moreover, poor management system accompanied by high cost of surplus unskilled manpower irrespective of their work load, problem with maintenance, repair and spare parts of machineries and farm implements, lack of organized record and archival system, transportation problem i.e. due to under developed infrastructure there was lack of public transportation, access to graveled roads that connect to *Awrajja* capital resulted inaccessible market beyond the less product comes from the sector (Bisrat 2011; Abenet, 1987).

The Bilate- Abbaya farm had sufficient farm implements and machineries but the problem of trained operator and the deployment of old model machineries who had no spare parts greatly undermined the productivity of the farm. Like the other state farms of Ethiopia, Bilate-Abbaya farms intended to bring surplus food and raw material for the growing domestic industries. Equally, the government spent greater agricultural expenditure in the farms but unlike other country's state farm the Bilate- Abbaya farm futile to bring what desired from the sector because of the above mention different constraints (Bisrat, 2011, p. 46).

The farms produced major cereal crops (such as wheat, maize, haricot beans, cotton, sorghum), vegetables (tomatoes, pepper), orchard or fruit farm (orange, sisal, banana, citrus,) etc. Besides there was livestock productions like fattening and dairy. During the imperial period both farms export fruits and vegetables to Europe and Middle East. In the post revolution era the Bilate- Abaya farm showed some transformation in the area of livestock production. However, orchard and vegetables were not in apposition of export in the period under discussion. At the same time from 1975-1980 the farms experienced 6.6 million birr net loss. In short, the Bilate-Abbaya farms faced cultural, natural and managerial challenges that to be solved (Shadur, et al 2007; Abenet, 1987; Rahmato, 2007). On the other hand, the horizontal expansion of the farm was encouraging. It expanded the cultivated land from 1541

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hectares in 1980 to 4,662 hectares in 1986. However, the capacity of water for irrigation and improvement of yield per hectare had not gained special care. In addition, both cultivated and uncultivated land areas of Bilate-Abbaya affected by lack of soil management and water conservation mechanisms, lack of adequate drainage system, etc. (Bisrat, 2011, p. 45).

V. COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATED PACKAGE PROGRAM IN WOLAITTA

As we have mentioned in the introductory section, under the second economic plan IEG decided to commence package program in Arsi, Wolaitta and Ada *Awrajjas*. Accordingly, launched the Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU in 1967), the [Wolaitta] Agricultural Development Unit (WADU in 1970) and the Ada District Development Project (ADDP in 1972). On November 26, 1969 IEG made development credit agreement with IDA (International Development Associations). Based on this arrangements, 12.64 million USD (equivalent to Ethiopian birr) fund raised. More than 70% of the program budget expenditure was allocated by IDA and WFP whereas the rest was by the Imperial regime (28%) (Tesfaye, 1975; World Bank, 1977; Petros, 1973; Fikru, 1987; Tadele, 1988).

The main goal of WADU project was to improve the socio- economic situation of the peasantry, promote and accelerate agricultural development by allocating improved seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, farm implements, equipments, credit and provide training on new techniques and better management. Under this grand plan, the project seeks to elevate the annual incomes of the poor peasants and embrace them in the national development endeavors. And also geared to establish Belle and Abella settlement scheme with the aim of providing relief and to liberate landless tenants from the bondage of landlords (Petros, 1973; Makin et al, 1975; Tewelde, 1973; Rahmato, 2007).

In order to obtain its settled goals WADU employed two strategic approaches. These were transformation approach, aimed to change lowlanders by applying settlement scheme, extension, malaria control, marketing, land development and so on. Improvement approach had been applied in highlands to overcome the socio-economic and infrastructural developments. It alleviated the problem of water supply, roads, institutionalized markets and credits to facilitate commercialization, extension services and the inception of new agricultural techniques. The strategy initiated re-structuring the highland population to settle in the lowland Abella and Bale. So that the lowland part was prepared for settlement with the minimum requirement of water supplies, clinics, soil conservation, market and credit institutions, roads, extension workers, etc. (Tewelde, 1973, pp. 39-41).

WADU was a comprehensive and integrated package program strive for to convey progress in peasant agriculture of Wolaitta. The anticipated package had two operational phases having 6 years period each. The first WADU package program (1970-1975) applied in two densely populated highland woredas of Wolaitta (Bolosso and Sodo Zuriya) and the settlement scheme held in the lowland parts of Abella (Humbo) and Belle (Kindo Koysha) districts. But later on under the second phase of the program (July 1974- 1979) the entire Wolaitta farmers (120, 000 households) were included (Tewelde, 1973; Fikru, 1987; Rahmato, 2007).

The first phase of project was officially inaugurated on April 30, 1970. WADU achieved its aim 2 years before the prescribed schedule. The reason for the success was the active participation of peasantry, local officials, central government and the donors, loss of funds through the devaluation of IDA credit, solid due for the project services,

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project expenses are not anticipated by workers and the well-organized execution of project than planned (Tewelde, 1973, p. 63). The Wolaitta people lacked words to praise the unreserved, dedicated and compassionate leader *Dejjach* Woldesemayat Gebrewolde, the first director of WADU and *Awrajja* governor of the then period.

WADU phase II project was a continuation of the first phase. It geared to bring integrated farming system i.e. crop production with animal husbandry by way of conservation practices. Transforming peasant agriculture by spread over cross-breeding and animal health to advance livestock economy, conserving soil, conducting research and experiments in crop varieties, providing farm inputs and implements to improve crop production, as well as water supply and road constructions have got concern. 35.85 million USD expenditure was estimated.

From this total cost 58% was covered by IDA and Bi-lateral assistance (UK and WFP), 22% by IEG and the rest 20% source was from AID Bank. The second phase had been extended 2 years because of the outbreak of social revolution of 1974 that dismantled the Imperial throne for once and ever then formed socialist Ethiopia (World Bank, 1977; MAPS: WADU, 1980).

Administratively, WADU had General Director at the top of the project that headed the project and in support of him there were Deputy Director and PEBCU (Planning, Evaluation and Budget Controlling Unit). For the sake of administrative convenience, the project undertakings classified into six as Project Direction, Development, Finance and Workshop Division, Marketing, Credit and Cooperatives (MCC), Training and Trial Division as well (Petros, 1973, p. 28).

WADU program discovered a remarkable achievement in the socio-economic life of Wolaitta society. It transformed the rural peasant agriculture in both settlement and highland sites. There had been visible progress in the quality and volume of production in terms of both crop and livestock sectors. It accomplished modest wide-ranging infrastructures like water development, soil and water conservation, delivery of market and credit facilities for producers, road constructions, etc. Such developments led Wolaitta into food exporting area, even though limited statistical data to attest the statement. The project had been meet most of its ambitions. To mention some of the projects success area as follows:-

Before WADU's initiative in settlement, Germame in 1959 and Woldesemayat in the 1960s commenced the Abella and Belle settlement scheme. They had been cleared totally about 2500 hectares of land. From this cleared land 1700 and 800 were at Abella and Belle respectively. Then 3,700 land less interested peasantry were permanently settled and allotted 5 hectares of land at household level. WADU phase I program projected to allow 7,750 agriculturalists to produce quality product and make advanced returns (Tesfaye, 1975; Makin et al, 1975).

WADU introduced the project area with credit, market, agricultural inputs such as selected seeds, chemical fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides, etc. As a result, project succeeded in increasing crop production. The second important achievement was cross breeding cattle species transformed livestock productions. To bring such change focus had been given to the feeding methods, better breeding system and capacity of milk production.

Moreover, the role of veterinary medicine alleviated the difficulty of animal diseases such as trypanosomasis, anthrax and rinderpest. The overall improvement in the sector, changed the low lactation of indigenous cattle

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through producing cross breed cattle. The society gained more income from both fattening of cattle and dairy product (Tesfaye, 1975, MAPS: WADU, 1980; Rahmato, 2007).

Another area was the development of water resource for human and animal as well. In two phases 20 spring heads protected, 3 stock-ponds and 13 bore holes were built. In order to preserve natural resources, soil and water conservation undertaken. The conservation scheme protected the grazing and cultivation of land, control erosion, increase forest production to reduce deforestation and protect wild life. Thus, there had been planting of trees for fruit, gums, shed, etc. (Petros, 1973; Fikru, 1987; MAPS: WADU, 1980).

The other essential realizations of WADU was the formation of Marketing, Credit and Cooperatives (MCC) in 1971. The establishment of MCC was foundation for WADU's success and revolutionized the project enactment in every aspect. MCC set standard of weight and measurement of products to protect farmers from merchants' exploitation. Advancement had been done on delivery, processing, marketing and payment for the farmers. The creation of credit institution with the assistance of agricultural service agents laid fertile ground for farmers to expand their agricultural productivity. Agricultural cooperatives extend services to member farmers. They provide new inputs, practical and technical information to the producers. Besides, they implement duties like harvesting, processing, storing, distributing farm product at safe market price. Marketing agency played significant role in designing proper marketing system without the intermediary role of brokers. Marketing cooperatives transformed the life of its members. It set the principle of fairness, profit maximization and encourage small shareholder under joint labor. In short, MCC opened market for products, supply credit or agricultural inputs as well as formed producer cooperatives. By doing so, they maximized WADU's proficiency (Tesfaye, 1975; Petros, 1973; Tadele, 1988).

Furthermore, WADU made great efforts to increase the awareness of Wolaitta people. It enhanced training of personnel, effectively consumed Geneme's radio program, deliver education seminars and undertook literacy (adult) program. It contributed knowledge on nutrition, family planning (mother and child care) and rural health in general. Agricultural services provided extension program since 1969. (MAPS: WADU, 1980; Tadele, 1988). Likewise, the construction of 553 kilometers of track roads and 741 kilometers of feeder roads encouraged farmers to supply agricultural products to the market centers. The last contribution of the program was the expansion of Sodo town, increment of town population, accessed employment opportunities, etc (Abesha Shirko, 2011; Yehualashat, 2019; Fikru, 1987).

As far as its triumphs concerned, WADU project experienced failure in certain areas and faced administrative and organizational challenges. Some of these were the issue of land tenure was not solved. WADU as accredited organization to implement the settlement scheme desired uncultivated extra land and frequently requested the MLRA (Ministry of Land Reform and Administration). Nevertheless, MLRA failed to respond the demand promptly led to frustration and delayed the expansion of the venture. On the other hand, indigenous equipments were used in cultivating land reduced farmers efficiency and restricted farmers from requesting arable land for further production (Petros, 1973; Tewelde, 1973, p. 63). The other critical problem of WADU was recruitment and development of technical personnel. High turnover of skilled staff due to promotion and transfer. As a result, the technical and senior

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administrative positions were occupied by unqualified personnel. This incident greatly affected the steadiness and performance of the program. It displace money in some instances by paying salaries for former assigned officials' elsewhere (MAPS: WADU, 1980; Fikru, 1987).

The unbalanced growth of permanent workers on WADU's payroll from 540 in 1975 to 1083 in 1980 resulted in high cost but with little work. Disciplinary problem of the staff owing to lack of supervision from the project director particularly regarding time punctuality. The staff members were late comers and early leavers. Besides, absenteeism was the common fault, due to WADU's employees' involvement in various mass association (MAPS: WADU, 1980; Fikru, 1987).

By far WADU was the biggest state organization having skilled manpower, many vehicles, equipment's and other facilities called to render services outside and inside the province. WADU resources intensively utilized by the Gamo Gofa, Kembata, Hadiya and Sidama *Awrajjas*. Moreover, the maintenance cost of the used machineries were very high and there was lack of spare parts. Correspondingly, field works hampered due to transportation shortage and the extension program suffered a lot i.e. soil conservation, road maintains, water development, breeding and animal husbandry neglected. Thus, it greatly undermined the efficiency of WADU (MAPS: WADU, 1980; Fikru, 1987).

Additionally, WADU encountered budget problems. The main funding agents (IDA and Ethiopian government) failed to provide their total promised finance to run the project that is about 6.75 million birr. In line with this, why the financial sector failed due to the Deputy Director position was removed during the second phase and it was covered by the PEBCU (Planning, Evaluation and Budget Controlling Unit). However, PEBCU by itself had suffered from high turnover of skilled staff and lack of experience by some staff members. So that instead of performing their program of planning and evaluation, they immersed with routine reports and budget activities. In addition, the activities of WADU have never been reviewed and its objectives were not redefined based on its success and shortcoming. Henceforth, the failure of WADU's organized means of evaluation, resulted in the loss of some of its purposes (Tesfaye, 1975; MAPS: WADU, 1980; Fikru, 1987; Rahmato, 2007).

In general, with all its limitation, WADU proved its success in rising the quality and quantity of agricultural and livestock products, improved and diversified the livelihood of the society and introduce modern agricultural inputs. However, WADU did not bring any change to the indigenous agricultural equipment's (still Ox-drawn plough and hoe working). The lesson that government of Ethiopia learned from CIPP was too expensive (both financially and experts) to extend the Program to the entire country. As a result, the Minimum Package Program was designed to cover the majority of rural Ethiopian peasants. In this regard, CIPP marked as a laboratory for new innovations (Rahmato, 2007; Tesfaye, 1975).

To sum up, Ethiopian economy is predominately agriculture. It has been performing the two key classifications of agriculture i.e. mechanized commercial farm and peasant agriculture. Both Imperial and Socialist regimes delivered different agricultural policies to diversify and change the economic source of the country. They established mechanized commercial farm that partly share the burdens of domestic industry but failed to fulfill food stuff demand.

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VI. CONCLUSION

Agriculture is the bedrock of Wolaitta's economy. Though, the practice of old-fashioned farming made agriculture subsistence. In the mid-1960s, the Imperial government effected mechanized agriculture and comprehensive package program in Wolaitta. It brought a remarkable achievement in the socio-economic life of rural peasants. But, the programs experienced failure due to cultural, natural, administrative (managerial) and organizational challenges. In general, as far as its limitation concerned, it's plausible to argue that the program transformed the rural peasant agriculture and conveyed visible progress in terms of quality and quantity in both sectors of crop and livestock production.

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