

Full Length Research Paper

Analysis of local institutions capacity to implement development plans and programs in Gamo Gofa Zone of Southern Ethiopia

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The study argues poverty in Ethiopia is the function of incapable local institutions. It measures the existing capacities and challenges of the local institutions to translate development plans to action in the study area. For data acquisition, pre-tested structured questionnaires were administered to 100 randomly selected civil servants in ten local institutions. The study has found that the local institutions had neither development plans which match with the local conditions nor the necessary human, financial, physical and technological capacities to execute the consecutive development plans. In addition, the development plans of the local institutions were not supported by the necessary modern technologies. Hence, the local institutions failed to translate the subsequent development plans to action keeping the country poor with sluggish micro development record. The study calls for the federal government and international agencies to strengthen the capacities of the institutions to stimulate the local economy.

Key words: Organization/institution, capacity, local government.

INTRODUCTION

Many development theorists argue that the structural poverty in Africa is the function of colonization. However, Ethiopia which had never been under the colony of any western countries is still one of the poorest African countries. Conversely, the country is one of the natural resources endowed African countries. It qualifies all the necessities of development and functions of production. It has a large number of working age population, adequate water resources and a sizable arable land that can support its ever increasing population. So why has Ethiopia been poor for centuries is a puzzling question for development theorists. Davis (2010) argues that the structural poverty in countries whose economic performance lagged behind is the function of institutional make up not natural resource endowment, climate change, and

genetic makeup of the society [The African Development Bank Group Chief Economist Complex, 2010]. This study hypothesizes poverty in Ethiopia is the function of incapable institutions that have little ability to implement subsequent development plans and programs. Like most African countries Ethiopia has a number of institutional constraints that slowdown the translation of the plans to action. The institutional synergy at system, entity and individual level is very poor and fragmented. In other words, there is weak synergy and coordination between the federal, regional and local institutions. The human, financial, material and technological capacity of the local institutions is poor (MOFED, 2010; Saasa, 2005). The human resource of most local organizations is either under-utilized or unutilized. There is national and local

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brain drain.

Saasa (2005) has shown that many of the African institutions lack data on training needs; organizational training guidelines or policies; inadequate linkages between training output and the labor market requirements; wastage and misplacement of personnel; and lack of monitoring mechanisms to determine the capacity and productivity of the trained personnel to contribute to national development in Africa which is common in Ethiopia. The civil servants in the managerial and professional scales have continued to suffer from poor job satisfaction and low morale, principally a function of being poorly paid and overburdened. Senior professionals in the civil service in Africa are also frustrated by the over-centralized decision making systems. Power and decision-making authority have generally been monopolized by those at the very top in the management hierarchy. Consequently, senior managers are often over-burdened while lower level managers remain largely under-utilized, a phenomenon that has resulted in severe frustration at both the senior and lower level ranks. Consequently, many professionals have opted to become part of the brain drain away from the public sector to either the private sector or abroad in search of green pastures. These all show the poor quality of government institutions at different levels.

Saasa (2005) argues that the institutional arrangements and processes in African are weak and not fully geared to the new challenges of development. Due to the lack of clear role definition between the different levels of government, ministers are often involved in matters of detail while senior administrators are reluctant to delegate responsibility to lower levels. These tendencies have contributed to centralization which has resulted in poor strategic thinking and problem-solving capacity. The weaknesses have created ethical irresponsibility including corrupt practices. The difference between budgeted and actual recurrent expenditure in some African countries can be as high as 30-50 percent. The poor budget forecasting indicates that the leadership cannot make the best decisions on how to spend public money (Zemelak, 2009) which is common in the local institutions (MOARD, 2010).

In developmental states like Ethiopia, there are two critical areas that call for institutional studies. The first and most important one is the national resource confined in the hands of the government. So in the absence of quality and capable government institutions, it is difficult otherwise impossible to transform the economy. The second area of interest is development partners want to ensure the capacity of the government institutions in order to work with and invest on the public sector. However, scanty institutional study has been made that confirms whether there are capable local institutions or not in the area. Therefore, the study intends to analyze the existing capacities and challenges of local institutions

to execute development plans and programs in Gam Gofa Zone of Southern Ethiopia. It focuses on local government institutions which are the most important local administrative under the Ethiopian governance system (Zemelak, 2009).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Unlike in most African countries where poverty is attached with colonization, poverty in Ethiopia is predominantly due to poor institutional capacity. Hence, the study intends to measure the existing capacities and challenges of local institutions to execute development plans and programs in Gam Gofa Zone of Southern Ethiopia. To achieve this objective, the study adopted mixed research approach where quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analyzed accordingly.

Sampling techniques

The subsequent national transformation plan execution of the country calls for the active involvement and participation of all development actors. However, this study was confined to local government institutions only. Probability and non-probability sampling techniques were applied to select sample districts and draw sample respondents. As such stratified random sampling, purposive sampling and systematic random sampling techniques were applied to select districts, sample institutions and draw respondents, respectively. Consequently, the districts of the zone were stratified into two clusters based on their agro-ecology and relative development performance appraisal; hence, Dita District from Gamo highlands and Mirab Abaya District from Gamo lowlands were selected as sample districts. Five key government development institutions namely Woreda Rural Development and Agriculture Office, Woreda Water, Mines and Energy Office, Woreda Health Office, Woreda Education Office, and Woreda Trade and Industry Office were selected purposively based on the priority area of the government in each district. Lastly, a total of 100 respondents (twenty civil servants from each institution) were drawn using systematic random sampling for data collection. Thus, the survey data were collected from 100 randomly selected civil servants affiliated to the sample institutions in two districts of Gamo Gofa zone of Southern Ethiopia.

Data collection methods

For data acquisition, pre-tested structured questionnaires were administered to a total of 100 randomly selected respondents of the sample institutions. A series of discussions, key informant interviews and institutional analysis were held at the districts to extract the qualitative data of the study. The surveyed respondents were composed of district administrators, heads, experts and supportive staffs in the local institutions. From gender perspective, the sample was composed of male (82%) and female (18%) respondents. An exhaustive desk review was also made on the nature and structure of the institutions, human, financial, physical and technological resources of the institutions, government policies, past achievements and challenges from published and unpublished official documents.

Data analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from various

sources. The qualitative data gathered from various sources were first organized into themes, triangulated against one another to cross-check its reliability and validity, interpreted and narrated accordingly. The survey data were analyzed quantitatively using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 16) to substantiate the qualitative data of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The nature and features of local institutions

Vision and development plans

Vision and mission of an organization determines structure of the organization, resources flow, aspiration and final destination (UNDP, 1997). Organizations without clear vision and mission do not know where and how they go. They are like a man who prays to God without due effort. Correspondingly, over 90% of the surveyed civil servants agreed that the local organizations do have written vision and mission. However, the vision and mission of the organizations are vague, outdated and inconsistent with the current vision of the country. Majority (85%) of the respondents also failed to recall and write the vision and mission of their respective organizations. This shows that the civil servants of the local institutions did not embody the vision and mission, visualize the future and think strategically to uplift the organizations they are affiliated to. They all are tied-up by routine, urgent activities and emerging issues which have little contribution to the local economy.

Plans determine the organizational goals and the means to accomplish the objectives. They dictate the human, material, financial, infrastructure and technological requirements of an organization to achieve its intended goals. If an organization fails to plan, it means it plans to fail. The paper addresses whether the sample institutions had the contemporary national development plan (Five Year Growth and Transformation Plan or not in this case). Majority (66%) of the respondents revealed that the local organizations had the contemporary national development plan. However, data obtained from the discussants indicated that the plans were cascaded directly from the respective ministries without considering the local conditions and capacity of the institutions and hence they did not conceive the plan properly. Similarly, considerable (28%) number of the respondents reported that the local institutions had no strategic plans. They pointed out that the main reason behind the failure to formulate strategic plan is that the civil servants of the organizations are usually tied by urgent and unplanned activities of the organizations and emerging commands of the higher officials of the government. They further mentioned that the existing strategic plans of the local institutions were not on the bases of the current national development plans and direction. This implies that the

local institutions were running without plans or had outdated plans which are inconsistent with the contemporary development plans and direction of the country. The finding of this study supports the findings of Saasa (2005) who found the existence of poor institutional and human capacity across Africa; and Chanie (2001) as well as Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2010) who report the absence of capable institutions in the country especially at local level.

Furthermore, organizational plans and strategies should be consistent with the national and regional plans and local conditions. Paradoxical to this fact, about 70% of the sampled civil servants reported that the strategic plans and strategies of the local institutions are incompatible with the local conditions. They were not also cascaded to the development practitioners of the sectors. Such problems can be addressed by the full implementation and cascading of development tool like Business Score Card (BSC) to each civil servant. This development tool enables partners (the government and the civil servants in our case) to enter a contract agreement where salary or any other payment is made based on the quantity and quality of the job accomplished only.

Institutional structure and job-description

The structure of an organization directs where resource can flow and who does what to execute a particular plan in a given sector. So, the structure of the organizations should be well-articulated and show resource requirements, accountabilities, duties and responsibilities of each position in the structure in order to implement the development plans at grass-root level. Desk review and discussion made with participants revealed that the structure of the organizations and job description of the positions are well-articulated in accordance with Business Process Reengineering (BPR) documents and development directions of the country. However, the civil servants of the local organizations are not working in accordance to the job description of the positions they are assigned. There is a strong political imposition where the employees are determined to be accountable to their bosses not to their jobs. They give little attention to the development dimension of the plan of the government. The promotion and demotion of the workforce is influenced by political affiliation and accountability to the officials.

The frequent shift and fluctuation of government attention were affecting the stability and resources allocation in the institutions. The subsequent placement of government bureaucrats to different organizations has also been affecting their productivity and stability of the organizations. Moreover, the seasonal obligatory campaigns of the government enforce the experts to work out of their job description and expertise. The participants of the discussion unanimously disclosed that the seasonal

campaigns enforce the experts and officials to work out of their expertise. One can think over what will happen when a health expert from health sector or a geologist from water and energy sector coordinates and mobilizes watershed campaigns and/or demonstrating farmers about the advantage of fertilizer application, added the participants. This shows that the subsequent campaigns are wasting the scarce human and material resources of the local institutions. The result of this study is in line with the Economic Commission for Africa (2004) report on governance profile of Ethiopia where the local managers and administrators had neither the necessary capacity to administer the districts nor freed the experts of the local institutions. So, the government should rethink over the placement of skilled manpower and allocation of resources during such campaigns. Each campaign in each sector should be coordinated by the right personnel who have the expertise and leadership ability.

Work culture

National transformation requires good work culture without which change is impossible. It requires people who have extracurricular work culture. It does not happen because the citizenry needs it. Good work culture is a feature of modern society. Implementation of development plans like the on-going five year growth and transformation plan of the country require committed and motivated development practitioners who work beyond the formal work hours to attain the development goal of the country. Indeed, it is important to check whether there is good work culture (the length of time one spends at work, cohesive team spirit, good communication, friendly environment, positive competition, timely rewards, flat organizational structure, and the presence of hardworking individuals etc.) in the focal local institutions that can help them to realize their development vision.

The Ethiopian Federal Civil Servants Proclamation No. 515/2007 stipulates equal pay for equal work and directs flat 8:00 work hour per day in any organization (Federal Negarit Gazeta of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2007). That means whatsoever the work efficiency is, two employees in the same position receives equal payment. This legal law by itself discourages those who make a difference in the organizations. It evaluates the work efficiency of the workforce based on the number of hours they spend in the office not based on what they achieved. In other words, efficient and inefficient people are paid equally.

Ironically, the Ethiopian Government has introduced a number of civil service reforms and tools like Business Process Reengineering (BPR) and Business Score Card (BSC) which stipulate that salaries and payments shall be made based on the work efficiency of the employees. That means the salary of the employees depends on the

number and quality of the work they accomplished in the given time. However, no local institution was applying the reforms and progressive payment law in the area. All of the sampled local organizations were applying the flat payment rate which contradicts with the civil service reforms of the country. This shows that the local institutions resist and are incapable to adopt the civil service reforms and development tools to foster the change. An observational study made by Chanie (2001) on the challenges of the civil service reform in Ethiopia asserts the subsequent failure of the civil service reforms in the country. Chanie (2001) mentioned out that the main reason behind the persistent civil service reforms failure in Ethiopia is that the reforms lack the contextualization to the local setting and absence of capable institutions which can execute the reforms across the country. Besides, when we look at the actual time one spends at work is discouraging. The study found that the actual average work hour in the local organization was about 6:00 per day. The analysis further showed that the work culture of the employees has a strong relationship with the payments, material and moral incentives made to them in the area. Hence, it is unlikely to execute the development plans at local level or trickledown the promising changes at macro-level with this work culture. The government has to invest on activities that can improve the work culture of the local institutions to impose change at local level.

Team spirit in the local Institutions

Development is the result of the cumulative effort of people. Development pioneers cannot bring change but can introduce and lead to change. That is development requires cohesive team spirit. Cohesive team spirit is also directly related to work efficiency. However, a discussion made in the districts to investigate whether there is a good team spirit in the local organizations or not revealed that there has been constant team stir and complaints resulted from improper promotions, demotions, incentives and partial treatment of workers. They emphasized that the promotions and incentives are not on the basis of work efficiency. They underlined that government officials and heads of the institutions give high grade to club relations, ethnic membership, religious and political affiliations. The information obtained from the survey data also substantiates the above idea where above average (51%) of the surveyed civil servants reported the high prevalence of partial treatment and discrimination of staff members on the basis of the aforementioned traditions in the local organizations.

Organizational communication

From system perspective, national development depends

on mutual interdependency, interaction and effective communication within and across the broader system, organizations and individual actors where all are integrated and the sum of the parts is equal to the whole does not work at all. This is very particular in transitional economies where resources are limited and a dollar matters. There should be a cohesive communication across the broader system, entities and the individual actors where a small resource deficiency and information distortion at any level can collapse the whole system. There must be well-established and clear line of communication within and across the institutions. One-line communication and accountability also fosters resources flow and integrity within and across the organizations.

The result of the discussion and document review revealed that there was sluggish interaction and delayed information flow, and ineffective government bureaucrats and bureaucracy. The vertical and horizontal communication across the organizations was not well-established. Usually, the information is disclosed when the deadline is approaching. It is also filled with sense of urgency. As a result, the employees are enforced to work on urgent and unplanned activities of the organizations. The chain of the communication is enormous. The organizations and the heads of the institutions are accountable to many bosses.

Work efficiency

Development is a function of efficient human resource utilization. In line with this fact, the paper investigated the level of work efficiency in the local institutions. The key informants reported that the work efficiency of the civil servants was poor. They mentioned that this poor work efficiency of the civil servants is the result of low payment, material and morale incentives and poor educational background. On the other hand, there shall be objective work efficiency evaluation criteria which are free from political fusion. However, there has not been apparent and consecutive work efficiency evaluation in the organizations. The officials carry out the evaluation when need arises instead of constant periodic evaluation to improve the performance of the workforce. The discussants revealed that the work efficiency evaluation criteria are a mixture of professional competence and political affiliation. They unanimously disclosed that the political criteria outweigh the professional competence criteria. When an individual draws the political attention of the officials, they give him a high grade and nominate him to certain positions and further training and education.

The existing capacity and challenges of the institutions

Human resource capacity

Capacity [Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development,

2010] is defined as the ability of individuals and organizations or organizational units to perform functions effectively, efficiently and sustainably (UNDP, 1997). Local institutions are the most important actors of development which are responsible to design new plans, restructure national plans to local conditions and execute the plan particularly in countries like Ethiopia where the central government plays little role in the local economy. According to UNDP (1997), human resource is the most valuable asset of an organization in which change, capacity and development primarily depend on. The sharp socio-economic and political differentiation among the world community largely depends on the extraction and application of fine human mind. Therefore, there must be adequate and capable manpower who qualify to the requirement of the organizations. The Business Processing Reengineering document of the country and sample institutions stipulates that any organization which has less than 75% of the required skilled manpower is unlikely to implement the development plans and initiatives of the country.

Corresponding to this fact, an exhaustive review was made to investigate whether the local institutions have adequate and competitive technocrats and bureaucrats against the structure or not. The result of the review shows that the sample institutions have an acute shortage of skilled manpower where about 49% of the positions in the sampled organizations were vacant while it ranges 80% in some institutions (Table 1). Analysis of data obtained from focus group discussion also shows that shortage of skilled manpower is the most important challenge of the institutions to translate the development plans and programs to action at the local level. They added that most of the vacant positions in the organizations are meant for technocrat (experts). This means the local institutions are lacking the critical human resource capacity without which translation of development plans to action is impossible. The paper also investigated that only 58% of the existing civil servants qualify for the positions they filled in. The human resource shortage is further compounded by high experts dynamism and absence of engineers and medical doctors in the black market to fill some important positions.

In addition to the high unoccupied positions in the sampled organizations, the experts were not discharging their duties properly due to the high political imposition. One participant of discussion held in Mirab Abaya district has put the political imposition on the experts as:

“The local politicians are confusing us. They do not differentiate the political commitment for development and the role of professionals in development. They believe that agricultural production and productivity is the function of political commitment and indoctrination. They snatch the agricultural demonstration campaigns from the experts and try to demonstrate how farmers can step up the productivity of the sector without the necessary expertise.

Table 1. Human resource against the structure of the organizations.

Sample organizations	Dita District					Mirab Abaya District				
	Total position	Filled position	%	Vacant position	%	Total position	Filled position	%	Vacant position	%
Agriculture Office	95	38	40	57	60	87	65	74.7	22	25.3
Education Office	85	31	34.5	54	63.5	36	21	58.3	15	41.6
Health office	22	14	63.6	8	36.4	27	21	77.8	6	22.2
Water, Energy and Mining Office	40	15	37.5	25	62.5	21	12	57.2	9	42.8
Trade & industry office	20	4	20	16	80	20	10	50	10	50
Total	262	102	38.9	160	61.1	191	129	67.5	62	32.5
combined	Combined total positions = 453 total				Filled positions =231 (51%)			Total vacant positions = 222(49%)		

Source: District sampled institutions, 2012.

They rarely let the experts to demonstrate how agricultural productivity can increase in the local setting which reduced the contact between the experts and the farmers. These constant political interventions have slow-down the pace of the sector leaving majority of the farmers without the necessary knowledge on how to apply new agricultural technologies and practices to improve the productivity. As a result, the farmers are rejecting the new agricultural technologies that can maximize the productivity of their farms. So they have to resign from the expertise jurisdiction soon”.

This shows that the experts were not discharging the professional duties and responsibilities due to the political imposition on the key development institutions.

Recruitment and promotion of civil servants

According to the Ethiopian Civil Servants Proclamation No. 515/2007, civil servants recruitment shall be made based on the academic merit of the professionals. The proclamation stipulates that there shall be no discrimination among job seekers or civil servants on the basis of ethnicity, sex, religion or political affiliation. It publicizes promotion of civil servants shall also be undertaken on the basis of work performance efficiency and anticipation of aptitude for the new position and seniority (Federal Negarit Gazeta of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2007). Such academic merit and outstanding work based recruitment and promotion of civil servants promotes the quality and capability of the institutions. The study revealed that had the institutions been governed under such competitive academic merit and outstanding performance, the civil servants would develop trust and strive to be competitive enough and improve their performance. The institutions lack such work environment and the civil servants were uninterested in and looking for another job. The recruitment, placement and promotion of the civil servants were very

discriminatory. The key positions in the organizations were meant to members of certain ethnic groups and politically affiliated individuals. For example, headship of the organizations and some well-paid positions are completely political nominations based on accountability to the ruling class and the strong informal bond in the government hierarchies.

Local brain drain

Established institutional system is feature of quality and capable institutions and source of organizational reputation. In principle, senior staffs can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization. They increase the leadership quality, capability and reputation of the organization. The analysis of the data obtained from panel discussion revealed that there was high staff turnover within and across the local organizations in the area. The discussants mentioned that staff employment and turnover is a norm in the local institutions. Some civil servants left the local organizations in search of green pasture (high paying private and non-governmental organizations) at zonal and regional level while others are placed by the government. The turnover is aggravated by repetitive fluctuation of officials and heads of the organizations due to political promotion and demotion, and ethical irresponsibility including nepotism and corruption. Similarly, equal (66%) number of the surveyed employees reported that there was high turnover of experts and fluctuation of officials while the supportive staffs rarely leave the organizations.

These high human resources dynamism and fluctuation leads to unnecessary on job training expenditure to the new nominees of the vacant positions and create unoccupied positions for a long time in the organizations. It is also difficult to refill some positions once they are left vacant. On the other hand, retention of staffs reduces on-job training expenditure of an organization. It increases the stability of the organization. However, there were not

feasible retention mechanisms in the local institutions which further accelerate the skilled manpower dynamism.

The dilemma between development goal and political interest

Qualified and skillful civil servants are the engines of organizational change and national transformation. Whatsoever scale of development plans and programs we have can only be translated to actions if and only if there are technocrat and bureaucrat civil servants at local level. There should also be clear demarcation between development goal of a nation and political goal of an interest group. Politicians should play the political role and leave the expertise for experts in all hierarchical structure of the government. The key development institutions of the government should be free from political mix. Of course, one can argue that political will and commitment is a critical precondition for development. But the political will and commitment works only when it directs towards establishing autonomous institutions which have advanced auditing system.

The analysis of the data obtained from focus group discussion held in the districts revealed that the local government officials stir the work environment. They are in a constant conflict with the civil servants. The local government officials frequently fail to recognize the role of the professionals in the process of development. They rarely let the professionals to contribute professional expertise. When they go together, to the local community for example, the professionals do have little opportunity to communicate with the people. Much of the time is taken by the government officials (local politicians). As a result, the professionals in the local organizations are losing a trust by the wider community. So, the local politicians should relief the experts from constant political influence.

Ironically, the analysis of key informant interview made in the organizations indicated that the civil servants have little commitment to work their job effectively. The key informants reported that the civil servants work on the basis of give and take principle which shows the lack of commitment to serve the community and bring the desire change at local level. The civil servants request incentives for every job they do including the job they are recruited. This means there is antagonistic relationship between the experts and the government officials in the local institutions. So the government has to probe the relationship between the experts and the local governors so that both can contribute to the development endeavor of the local economy.

Training and training guidelines

Training is a form of adult learning where employees

receive work-oriented training to improve their performance. Before they run to training, organizations should evaluate the work performance and confirm that the gap between the standard and the actual performance of their employees can only be bridged by training. Since training requires a huge resource commitment, all other alternative means of improving job performance including reallocation and placement of all types of resources should be considered first. Thus, training is the last resort taken to improve the performance of the employees.

In line with this, the on job training and training guideline issues were addressed in the survey questionnaire and the discussion made with the participants in the districts. Majority (60%) of the surveyed civil servants reported that the local organizations had no training guidelines and training manuals (Table 2). The participants of the discussion and key informants also confirmed the absence of training guidelines and manuals in the organizations in the survey time. They mentioned that the organizations have not human and financial capacity to develop training guidelines and manuals and organize training by themselves. The provision of on job training to the workforce was encouraging in the area. Majority (59%) of the employees have taken different short term trainings while considerable (41%) number of them have not participated in any training since they joined the organizations. However, only 50.84% of the surveyed employees who took the training have felt that the trainings were based on training demand of the workforce and contributed to curve the skill and knowledge deficiency of the trainees while significant 28(47.47%) number of them were unhappy with the training they took.

According to the participants, unlike the short term non-degree trainings, the opportunity of further education is very minimal in the area. They revealed that they have limited opportunity to pursue further education in order to upgrade their expertise.

Job satisfaction

According to Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia, job satisfaction is simply how contented an individual is with his or her job. Scholars define job satisfaction differently. Affective theorists define job satisfaction as one-dimensional subjective construct representing an overall emotional feeling individuals have about their job as a whole. Hence, affective job satisfaction for individuals reflects the degree of pleasure or happiness their job in general induces. Cognitive job satisfaction is usually defined as being a more objective and logical evaluation of various facets of a job. It does not assess the degree of pleasure or happiness that arises from specific job facets, but rather gauges the extent to which those job facets are judged by the job holder to be satisfactory in comparison with objectives they themselves set or with

Table 2. Training and training guidelines.

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Are there training guidelines and training manuals in your organization?		
Yes	25	25.0
No	60	60.0
I do not know	15	15.0
Total	100	100.0
Have you taken any training so far?		
Yes	59	59.0
No	41	41.0
Total	100	100.0
Were the trainings based on need assessment that can fill knowledge, skill and attitude gaps of the employees?		
Yes	30	50.84
No	28	47.47
I do not know	1	1.69
Total	59	100.0
Were there clear criteria to select trainees for different types of trainings?		
Yes	45	45.0
No	53	53.0
I do not know	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Survey data, 2012

other jobs. Cognitive job satisfaction may induce affective job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is one of the well-studied areas of research in the profit making industries and business sectors. Unlike these sectors, job satisfaction in the civil service sectors is not studied. The strategies and remuneration measures taken to step up the job satisfaction of the employees in the profit making organizations are enormous while they are limited in the government civil service sectors, making them the last options of the civil servants. Job satisfaction affects the quality and capability of the institutions. Quality and capable institutions are also the center of productive workforce. Work productivity in turn is the function of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the function of satisfactory salary, job security, political intervention, career advancement and empowerment, team spirit, job fulfillment and productive working condition in the area.

The salary and incentives of the civil servants have a strong relationship with their productivity. They give due weight to the salary and incentives they reap to work more. Majority (60%) of the surveyed civil servants were satisfied with the salary they earn against the position they filled in while 62% of the respondents were dissatisfied by the incentives they reap relative to others.

The discussants also revealed that there has not been fair and equitable treatment and distribution of benefits and incentives in the organizations which usually stirs the team spirit and pose grievance among the staff members. Job security also affects the productivity and satisfaction of the civil servants. Hence, majority (64%) of the surveyed civil servants had secured job. This means the civil servants feel that whatsoever their performance, nobody fires them from their job. This secured tenure has two implications. The first and most important is the civil servants can dwell all their time on work and be productive forgetting to think what will happen if things change. The second and adverse effect of this feeling is whatsoever their productivity, they have the same fate and equal payment which might make them to be less productive.

Job empowerment concerns the opportunities and possibilities of career promotion and self-realization of the civil servants. However, the job empowerment satisfaction of the civil servants was discouraging. Likewise, the civil servants (64%) revealed that they had little opportunity to involve in decision making processes of their job and the organizations they are affiliated to. The participants of the discussion also reported that the civil servants had no opportunity to participate on decision

Table 3. Job satisfaction.

Parameters of job satisfaction	Level of satisfaction						Total
	Satisfied	%	Neutral	%	Dissatisfied	%	
Salary against job -description	60	60.0	34	34.0	6	6.0	100.0
Incentives relative to others	19	19.0	19	19.0	62	62.0	100.0
Job tenure security	64	64.0	26	26.0	10	10.0	100.0
Employees placement	46	46.0	37	37.0	17	17.0	100.0
Career promotion	8	8.0	22	22.0	70	70.0	100.0
Involvement in decision making	12	12.0	24	24.0	64	64.0	100.0
Access to and flow of information from officials	24	24.0	31	31.0	45	45.0	100.0
Competence (use of skills & abilities)	25	25.0	36	36.0	39	39.0	100.0
Sense of personal accomplishment	42	42.0	8	8.0	50	50.0	100.0
Achievement of targets and plans to meet organizational vision	24	24.0	30	30.0	46	46.0	100.0
Quality of work done by team	30	30.0	21	21.0	49	49.0	100.0
Cooperation and positive competitiveness among colleagues	28	28.0	27	27.0	45	45.0	100.0
Conducive work environment (Sanitation)	5	5.0	5	5.0	90	90.0	100.0
Access to and use of physical infrastructure to accomplish the job	16	16.0	36	36.0	48	48.0	100.0

Source: Survey data, 2012

making. Decision making is purely a political fiction even it requires experts judgment. This indicates that the civil servants are not part and parcel of the decision making process in the local institutions.

Job fulfillment is a professional accomplishment and rewarding feeling of experts to push it up. It is a mental sensational feeling which cannot be substituted by cash or kind reward. Job fulfillment encompasses professional competence, personal accomplishment and achievement. However, about 39, 50 and 46% of the studied employees were dissatisfied with the application of their competence, professional accomplishment and the achievement of the institutions respectively (Table 3). This shows that the organizations were not achieving their development plans and targets which is the function of low implementation capacity of the local institutions. Similarly, team spirit affects the job satisfaction of the employees of an organization. Cohesive and competitive team spirit improves the productivity and satisfaction of the civil servants. Whatsoever the scale of the competence of individuals, it is unlikely to attain the vision and development goal of the organizations without positive team spirit. It is also difficult to stay at office and work together if you do not understand each other. About half of the studied civil servants were dissatisfied by the quality of team work. This implies that about half of the civil servants in the local organizations were dissatisfied by the team spirit which might affect their productivity and lower the implementation capacity of the institutions.

Work environment in this study encompasses the physical environment (sanitation) of the office and access to and use of physical infrastructure to accomplish the job. Organizations need to have neat and furnished offices and satisfy the physical infrastructure (office

facilities and furniture, transportation and media) necessary to accomplish the job. However, 90 and 48% number of the studied employees was dissatisfied by the physical environment (sanitation) and availability and use of office facilities and furniture, transportation and communication media. The participants of the discussion held in the districts also substantiated the problem where the offices are very few and unclear. They added that some staff members share with the stores which are pungent to health. The availability and use of office furniture, transportation vehicles, stationeries and other office necessities is also discouraging. It means that the development plans and programs were not supported by the necessary material and technological requirements which retard the execution ability of the organizations.

The cumulative effect of the low job satisfaction of the civil servants leads to low productivity and high staff turnover which indicates the poor quality and capacity of the institutions. The participants of the discussion were unhappy with their affiliation to the local organizations. They stated that working here is our last resort; we are ready to leave the organizations if we get another option to work on. It is by far better to work in the cobblestone package.

Financial resources capacity

Financial capital is the motor engine to execute the development plans and programs of a nation or an organization. Development plans without adequate financial capital commitment is like a gun without bullet. They are paper based promises which cannot be realized at grass root level. Transparency and accountability of the

government bureaucrats who have the authority to order the financial resources also matters. On the other hand, developmental states and organizations in transitional economies face capital deficiency due to the limited capacity of their economy. For instance, majority of Ethiopian population live at about one dollar a day. This means any misuse or abuse of a dollar due to over or under estimation of financial budget plans of development programs leads to one live loss. So organizations should plan and secure financial capital which exactly meets the financial requirement of their development plans.

A comprehensive discussion held with the officials and experts regarding the financial resource requirement, commitment and utilization revealed that the institutions do not know the amount of the budget they will secure nor get the budget they estimate. The annual budget of the organizations is always breaking news coming at the end of the day. They blindly formulate their annual development plans. Consequently, the financial budget requirement of the institutions and the budget commitment are always incomparable leading them to poor implementation of their plans. Similarly, the discussants reported that the government does not allocate capital budget to the local institutions. The capital budget rationing is very centralized and trickle down from the central and regional government. Majority (86%) of the surveyed employees also reported that the difference between capital budget requirement and the actual capital budget the institutions secure to run capital intensive development interventions was quite high. This means the local organizations cannot have development plans that require capital investment. This might be due to the suspicious nature of the government to decentralize resources or the limited capacity of the institutions to govern the local economy and local investment.

According to the discussants, the government allocates the salary of the employees and limited operational budget that cannot cover beyond the second quarter of the fiscal plan of the organizations. From the second quarter onwards, the organizations left without operational budget to follow and monitor their development programs. Similarly, 74% of the studied employees confirmed that the operational budget allocated to the sampled institutions against their requirement was low while about 78% of the respondents recalled the prevalence of recurrent budget deficiency in the local institutions. The result of this study goes in line with the finding of Saasa (2005) and Zemelak (2009) who ascertained the poor budget estimation and utilization across Africa and Ethiopia.

It is also unethical and immoral to misuse a dollar in countries whose significant number of citizenry lives under pocket poverty. Whatsoever size of budget is allocated, the local institutions must have transparent budget utilization and well-established auditing system.

Nevertheless, data obtained from the panelists show that there was not transparent budget utilization in the sampled institutions. The participants revealed that in the beginning of the budget year the administrators publicize the aggregate budget of the districts. Later on, there is no clear budget allocation and utilization within and across the sectors. It is very centralized and secrete. Likewise, considerable (45%) number of the sampled workforce reported the absence of transparent budget utilization. The study further revealed that there were not clear budget allocation criteria to the competing institutions in the area. They mentioned that budget allocation is neither based on the budget plan and requirement of the institutions nor the priority area of the government. About 65% of the studied employees also mentioned that the number of employees in the sector is the only criterion they knew.

Physical infrastructure capacity

A district administration encompasses many government institutions which are responsible to run and monitor the local development activities. The efficiency of the government is measured by the quality and capability of these institutions. Thus, the local institutions need to have the necessary physical infrastructure like furnished offices and transportation system to outreach and deliver efficient service to the wider community. A comprehensive discussion and review made to evaluate the structure based physical infrastructure demand of the surveyed institutions shows that about 86% of the required vehicles were not deployed to the local institutions. That is they had acute shortage of vehicles to transport various inputs and services to the farm gate which might lower the service delivery to the beneficiaries. The key informants also revealed that shortage of vehicles in the local institutions was very hard in that it has been impossible to transport different supplies and services to the beneficiaries on time. This has been delaying the provision of time sensitive agricultural inputs like fertilizer and improved varieties and other social services to the target population in the districts. Similarly, motorcycle plays a pivotal role in Ethiopia where majority of the population live in rural areas. It is impossible to supervise the frontline development practitioners and provide technical support to farmers at farm and household level without motorcycle. However, majority of the institutions lacked (68%) the necessary number of Motorcycles (Table 4).

Access to and application of modern technologies

The 21st century is the age of information society. The subsequent government development plans and reforms are subject to the application of modern technologies

Table 4. Availability of transportation services in the institutions in 2012/13.

District	Sector	Vehicle					Motorcycle					Remark
		Require	Available	%	Gap	%	Require	Available	%	Gap	%	
Dita	Agriculture	3	1	33.3	2	66.7	24	6	25	18	75	*5 dysfunctional
	Health	4	1	25	3	75	9	5	55.5	2	44.5	*4 dysfunctional
	Education	2	-	0	2	100	10	1	10	9	90	Dysfunctional
	Water and energy	4	-	0	4	100	7	2	28.6	5	71.4	
	Trade and industry	2	-	0	2	100	6	-	100	6	100	
Mirab Abaya	Agriculture	3	1	33.3	2	66.7	24	11	45.8	13	54.2	
	Health	4	1 ambulance	25	3	75	9	2	22.2	7	77.8	Mandatory
	Education	2	-	0	2	100	7	3	42.9	4	57.1	
	Water & energy	2	-	0	2	100	8	4	50	4	50	
	Trade and industry	2	-	0	2	100	6	1	16.7	5	83.3	
Total		28	4	14.3	24	85.7	110	35	31.8	75	68.2	

Source: District sampled institutions, 2012.

without which little can be achieved. The government organizations at any level are restructured in such a way that the availability and application of modern technologies like computers, access to internet, fax, electronic communication, and so on are compulsory to foster the development process. Look at the banking system today, e-commerce, e-learning, tax collection system and so on. They significantly reduced the time and resource required to accomplish a particular activity. Information reaches to the receiver in a matter of micro seconds. For instance, a secretary is not required to stand from her seat to communicate with her boss. Everything is online. It is also boring to live in and work without access to such technologies.

Indeed, development plans and initiatives must be supported by the necessary technologies. Government technocrats and bureaucrats; and civil servants at any level must have access to and ability to operate the technologies. In other words, lack of access to modern technologies and technological inefficiency is a syndrome of development. A comprehensive review and discussion made to evaluate the availability and application of modern technologies in the local institutions based the minimum requirements shows that the institutions had limited modern communication technologies. As such the principle of one computer to one man was completely violated. Only 40% of the compulsory computer requirements of the institutions were satisfied (Table 5). As a result, only the officials and secretaries of the sampled institutions had access to these few computers. Similarly, merely 11, 27.3 and 46.1% of the fixed phone and photocopy machine and fax requirements of the institutions were fulfilled, respectively. Moreover, none of the civil servants had access to internet in the local institutions. This means the civil servants had had to use

modern communication technologies that foster the translation of development plans and programs to action at local level. This means the development plans and programs were not supported by the modern technologies and hence the civil servants were working manually.

Likewise, the participants of the discussions mentioned that the local institutions had acute shortage of technologies like computers, access to internet, fax, and photocopy machine and communication networks. The availability of the technologies is by far below the required pushing the civil servants to work manually. As a result, the studied civil servants had technology syndrome. The syndrome leads to suspension of information and compromising the work of the civil servants in the organizations. Such lack of access to modern technologies in the institutions might pose low job satisfaction of the civil servants. Thus, the basic modern communication technologies should be deployed to the local institutions and the civil servants.

Concluding remarks

The study hypothesizes poverty in Ethiopia is the function of incapable local institutions. Indeed, it intends to measure the existing capacities and challenges of the local institutions to translate development plans and programs to action in Gamo Gofa Zone of Southern Ethiopia. As such it has shown that the sampled key local development institutions have neither well-articulated development plan that matches with the local condition nor the necessary human, financial, physical and technological capacities to execute the consecutive national development plans. Vision and mission of an organization determine its future fate and potential. Irrespective of

Table 5. Availability of modern communication technologies in 2012/13.

Dita district	Computer		Photocopy		Fax		Access to internet		Fixed telephone	
	Needed	Available	Needed	Available	Needed	Available	Needed	Available	Needed	Available
Agriculture	20	9	5	2	1	0	95	0	13	1
Health	10	6	2	1	2	1	22	0	5	1
Education	14	3	10	1	1	0	85	0	14	0
Water and energy	7	3	5	1	2	0	40	0	6	0
Trade and industry	7	0	1	0	2	0	20	0	5	0
M/Abaya										
Agriculture	13	7	5	0	1	1	87	0	13	3
Health	8	4	2	1	1	1	27	0	7	1
Education	7	3	1	1	1	1	36	0	7	1
Water and energy	8	3	1	1	1	1	21	0	5	1
Trade and industry	6	2	1	1	1	1	20	0	7	1
Total	100	40 (40%)	33	9 (27.3%)	13	6 (46.1%)	453	0	82	9(11%)

Source: District sampled institutions, 2012.

their presence, the vision and mission of the local institutions are vague, outdated and inconsistent with the current development vision of the country. The civil servants of the local institutions did not embody the vision and mission, visualize the future and think strategically to uplift the organizations they are affiliated to. They all are tied-up by routine, urgent activities and emerging commands of the higher government officials which have little contribution to local economic development.

Similarly, majority of the surveyed local institutions were running without plans while some had seasonal and outdated plans which are inconsistent with the local conditions and development plans of the country. The frequent shift and fluctuation of government attention has been affecting the stability and resources allocation across the institutions. The seasonal obligatory campaigns of the government have also enforced the experts to work out of their job description and lower their productivity. There has been bitter political fusion where the local officials influence the civil servants and destabilize the institutions. Hence, the government has to launch strategic development plan training centers to empower development planners at local level.

Local transformation requires good work culture and cumulative effort of people without which change is impossible. It does not happen because the citizenry needs it. However, poor work culture and inefficiency, flat salary, multi-chain communication and delayed information flow, lack of moral and material incentives and antagonistic team spirit resulted from partial treatment; unfair promotion and demotion of civil servants halt the translation of the plans and programs to action in the local institutions.

Human resource is the most valuable asset of a nation or an organization in which change, capacity and

development primarily depend on. The sharp socio-economic and political differentiation among the world community largely depends on the extraction and application of fine human mind. However, availability of skilled manpower in the local institutions is discouraging where about 49% of the positions in the sampled institutions were vacant while it ranges by 80% in some institutions. The lack of skilled manpower was compounded by high local brain drain, poor job satisfaction and poor working environment.

Financial capital is the motor engine to execute the development plans and programs of a nation or an organization. Development plan without adequate financial capital commitment is like a gun without bullet. However, the local institutions did not know the amount of the budget they secure nor got the budget they estimate. The financial budget requirement of the organizations and the budget commitment are always incomparable, leading them to poor implementation of development plans. The government allocates operational budget that goes to the salary of the employees and negligible amount of money that cannot cover beyond the second quarter of the fiscal plan of the organizations. The local institutions usually have no capital budget which means they cannot have development plans that require capital investment. The budget allocation is also neither based on the budget plan and requirement of the institutions nor the priority area of the government. So it is advisable to recruit skilled manpower who qualifies for the vacant positions in the local institutions and deliver periodic training to empower them.

Local institutions are the most important actors of development which are responsible to design new plans, restructure national plans to local conditions and execute the interventions. Thus, the local institutions need to have

the necessary physical infrastructure like furnished offices and transportation system to outreach and deliver efficient service to the wider community. However, the local institutions had acute shortage of vehicles (86%) to transport various inputs and services to the farm gate which might stop the service delivery to the beneficiaries. The subsequent government development plans are subject to the application of modern technologies without which little can be achieved. Government institutions at any level are restructured in such a way that the availability and application of modern technologies are compulsory to foster the development process. However, only the local officials and secretaries had access to modern technologies while no one had access to internet in the local institutions. This means the development plans in the local institutions were not supported by modern technologies. So it is recommended to strengthen the institutions in terms of office facilities and transportation facilities and back up the development plans by modern technologies.

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Notes

[1] We illustrated institutions and organizations as a football game where the field (stadium), the ball, the players and other physical structures are considered as organizations while the rules and regulations of the game and the tactics applied to win the game are taken as institutions. Thus, institutions and organizations cannot stand alone. Thus, the structural poverty in Ethiopia is the function of these institutions not the endowment of natural resource, climate change, and genetic makeup of the society (Davis, 2010).

[2] The Ethiopian local institutions lack the necessary human, financial, material and technological capacities to translate the consecutive development plans to action (MOARD, 2010; Saasa, 2005). They lack organizational training guidelines and policies and have inadequate linkages between training output and the labor market requirements.

[3] The study focuses on local government institutions where local development largely depends on under the Ethiopian governance system (Zemelak, 2009).

[4] Vision and mission of an organization determines structure of the organization, resources flow, aspiration and final destination (UNDP, 1997). We argue that

organizations without clear vision and mission do not know where and how they go. They are like a man who prays to God without due effort.

[5] Capacity is defined as the ability of individuals and organizations or organizational units to perform functions effectively, efficiently and sustainably (UNDP, 1997). We took the organizational structure and short and long-term plan based resources demand of the institutions as a benchmark to evaluate the capacities of the local institutions.

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