

Review

Impact of productive safety net program in rural community of Ethiopia: A review study

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Ethiopia lunched Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) as social protection program since 2005 to tackle the causes of food insecurity. Even though, the country lunched the PSNP there are different challenges that hinder proper implementation of program for attaining intended impact on rural community. This paper seeks to review the impact of Ethiopia's PSNP and its implementation challenges through qualitative approach. Different literatures were reviewed on PSNP, which were done at national, regional and district level. The literatures were obtained through internet search from Google, Google scholar and database. Among 84 papers retrieved, only 28 of the published and unpublished organization reports, research reports and policy briefs were reviewed based on their relevance to the topic. According to the review, there are irreconcilable results regarding to the impacts of PSNP. Accordingly, PSNP has both positive and negative impact on beneficiaries' social, economic and environmental development. Thus, before implementation, the government should consider social, economic, environmental issues and available resources. Therefore, concerned bodies should consider impact of the PSNP and family support on the beneficiaries' livelihood, and they should depend on panel data.

Key words: Challenges, Ethiopia, impact, Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), social protection.

INTRODUCTION

Even if there is a success story in reduction of hunger and poverty in some countries of South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, the overall prevalence of hunger and poverty progress has fallen slowly. Most of the people in these countries live in rural areas and rely on agriculture as the source of their income. Due to the prevalence of hunger and poverty, they become chronically food insecure (FAO, 2015).

To reduce and/or prevent poverty and hunger, many countries in the developing world increasingly recognized that social protection measures have paramount role. Many studies also support that social protection programs have been successful in reducing hunger and poverty. Social protection program has positive impacts on local communities and economies to increase and diversify their food consumption, child and maternal

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welfare as well as fosters more investment in the education and health of children, and reduces child labor (FAO, 2015).

In the developing world, there are different challenges that face rural community to be food secure (Anderson and Elisabeth, 2015; Wiseman et al., 2010). For the chronically food insecure people, social protection programs appear as innovative and radical solutions, even though they vary from place to place (Food Sovereignty Brief, 2013). The Social Safety Net (SSN) programs which are well designed and operational responds to natural hazard (World Bank, 2013).

In Ethiopia “the Food Security Program was launched in 2003, and the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) was formally launched in 2005” to tackle food insecurity by government and fund providers. The PSNP is social protection, which makes household and community responses to shock and stress more resilient and improves food security through provision of financial, literacy training, technical and business advice, and linkages to credit or livelihood transfers, as well as follow-up support (Anderson and Elisabeth, 2015). It is the largest social protection program in the world particularly in sub-Saharan Africa to address food insecurity. In the developing world like Ethiopia, the PSNP as social protection program is the most ambitious and comprehensive program to tackle food insecurity in the rural poor. However, a number of challenges were facing the program to achieve its objectives (Brown and Teshome, 2007).

The Ethiopian climate is multifaceted variability of rainfall and temperature. As a result, the country has a long history of large-scale famines triggered by an extreme drought, most notably in 1973-1974 and 1984-1985. To tackle such issues in the community, government ratified and implemented a number of social protection programs like PSNP. Currently, the government implements the fourth; 2015-2020 phase of the rural PSNP 4 as one major component of the government's strategy to address climate vulnerability (MOA, 2014). The main function of the PSNP is to provide timely and predictable transfers to chronically food insecure households. Nevertheless, the amounts of the transfer vary from region to region (Maier, 2014). The transfer may be in the three forms: cash, food, or a combination of both. Combination of food and cash does not transfer on the same time rather, households receive food for some months of the year and cash for the rest of the months (Devereux et al., 2008; MOA, 2014).

To the best of author's knowledge, only a few empirical studies have been done so far regarding impact of PSNP in the Ethiopian context. Generally, empirical evidence related to the impact of program on rural community provides incompatible results. Some of the studies are based on data collected soon after the implementation of the program or based on cross sectional data, and some of empirical studies and evaluation reports have focused

on household-level investigation. Thus, the paper tried to review the different organizational reports and empirical studies to contribute knowledge on the challenges of PSNP's and its impact on rural community. The paper addresses the key questions like: What are the causes of food insecurity? What are the challenges that encounter PSNP implementations to attain intended objectives? What is impact of PSNP in Ethiopia? Therefore, the objectives of the review were to: (1) Identify the causes of food insecurity, (2) Review the impact of PSNP and, (3) Review the challenges that hinder PSNP implementation.

The information of the paper may be significant for the government, policy makers, donor organizations and researchers. The paper may help the government to take corrective measures and considerations for implementation of PSNP and give insight to recognize the gap of the policy and strategies on PSNP. Further, the review will be significant for policy makers to settle successful PSNP and food security enhancement practices. Besides, the result of the review will benefit fund providers that operate in the field of PSNP generally food security program by revealing the existing situation in the country. Lastly, the review paper may be important for researchers to indicate gaps that should be filled in future through their investigation.

METHODOLOGY

For this review, secondary information and study findings were utilized involving qualitative approach through narration. Secondary data were obtained through internet search from Google and Google scholar. The author search papers by providing directly the name of the title and with other related terms. Totally, 84 papers were obtained from Google and Google scholar. In addition to Google and Google scholar, the author also searches databases (Science direct, Scopus and Pubmed), but there are no additional literatures relevant to the topic. Subsequently, the author read the literatures collected from different sources. After thorough reading of the papers, only 28 of the published and unpublished organization reports, research reports and policy briefs were screened based on their relevance to review topic. Out of 28 papers, 9 of them were written before 2013 year, but the rest of them were written within 2013 year and after. Almost all papers were recent within five years later. The review study was made based on review of empirical studies and reports, which are done through analysis of cross sectional, panel and time series data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Causes of food insecurity in Ethiopia

Most people who live in rural areas and depend on agriculture as income generating activity were faced by food insecurity (FAO, 2015). Agriculture is the source of food and income for over 85% of the Ethiopian population, but drought becomes the main cause of livelihood crisis particularly for the rural community. As a result, most people are chronically food insecure and

around 10 million people, who are chronically food-insecure, are targeted to PSNP (FSIN, 2017). Failure to invest on the sufficient local food production and the collapse of pastoral livelihoods are the current food security crisis in Ethiopia. Some places of the Oromia, South Nations Nationalities and People and Somali regions have been threatened by the drought (FAO, 2017).

Even if the level of food-insecurity varies from one region to the other (Sewnet, 2015; FAO, 2017; FSIN, 2017), different scholars and organizations identify many causes of food insecurity which retard the development of the community in the rural area. The major causes of the food insecurity in Ethiopia are drought, volatile and record-high prices, population displacement, flood and localized insecurity (FSIN, 2017). According to Sewnet (2015), the major causes of food insecurity in Ethiopia are natural disasters (drought and climate change), population growth, land fragmentation and degradation and lack of infrastructure. The major causes of the food security according to the Welteji et al. (2017), are low rate of agricultural production, low access to food, the limited capacity of infrastructures and local markets, HIV/AIDS, investment power, finance gap, poor health, shortage of water and poor sanitation, environmental degradation, climate change and natural disasters, conflict and persecution.

The Ethiopia PSNP as social protection program

Social protection is a program with provision of cash or in-kind transfers to the poor as means of reducing poverty and economic and social vulnerability (FAO, 2015). In general, social protection has three components such as social assistance, social insurance and labor market protection. Social assistance programs are cash or in-kind transfers or public works programs. Programs that provide cover for designated contingencies affecting household welfare or income are called social insurance programs. However, labor market programs offer unemployment benefits to the workers through building skills. Hence, it increases workers' productivity and employability (FAO, 2015). The government of the Ethiopia implements the social protection program, that is, cash or in-kind transfers or public works programs for chronically food insecure community (Care, 2014). Such type of social protection program in Ethiopia is known as PSNP. It was launched 2005 to smooth consumption of chronically food insecure households by providing transfers of cash and/or food during lean months to address both the immediate and underlying causes of food insecurity (Brown and Teshome, 2007; Care, 2014). Like other world countries, Ethiopia is under taking PSNP to meet the need of vulnerable households and communities' to address food insecurity. The program provides cash or food for work and it benefits more than

seven million people (Care, 2014). The PSNP aims are to reduce household vulnerability, protect household assets, improve household resilience and provide labor to create community assets (e.g. check dams and roads). In general, the target of the program is for graduate participants from food insecurity into sustainable food secure (Brown and Teshome, 2007).

Analysis of challenges of PSNP implementation

The government of Ethiopia and the donors were involved for the success of the program to attain its objectives. However, some factors affect the implementation of the program. The factors that hampered the program were capacity, ideologies of graduation and dependency and timeliness of transfers and donor funding (Brown and Teshome, 2007). The other problem or challenge that faces implantation of the program was inadequate financial resources. As result, a small number of beneficiaries were allowed to participate in the program (Fisseha, 2014). According to Mohamed (2017), accessibility of assets has influence on the government strategies to be under taken. Besides, study results indicate that geographical location, administrative (selection mechanism used for eligible household), and exclusion of poor with inclusion of rich, weak institutional linkages and lack of active community participation in the decision making process were the challenges for the program (Fekadu and Ignatius, 2009).

According to the Teshome (2013), some of the challenges of the program were targeting of beneficiaries and inability to distinguish between acute and chronic food insecurity at grassroots level, application of single wage rate at national level, lack of the capacity to manage, unprecedented amount of cash flowing into the district and linkage problem at grassroots level. The challenges that face PSNP implementation were inclusion and exclusion of beneficiaries, poor conservation, and limitation of awareness of beneficiaries, linkage problem of officials, lack of manpower in remote areas, lack of monitoring and evaluation of locally constructed infrastructures for their sustainability (Welteji et al., 2017).

Analysis of impacts of PSNP on rural community

A number of studies conducted show that PSNP has a positive impact on the rural community (Andersson et al., 2011; Debela and Holden, 2014; Gebresilassie, 2014; Mohamed, 2017; Welteji et al., 2017; Zoellick, 2014). According to Debela and Holden (2014), the PSNP has positive effect on children through providing short-term nutritional benefits. The finding of Zoellick (2014) indicates that PSNP has positive impact through preventing households from selling productive assets; facilitating

new investment, income increase, reductions in stunting and an increase in household food provisions, infrastructure as well as food security for households. Hence, it has improved food security, use of educational and health services and agricultural productivity. PSNP has positive effect on consumption, livestock holdings and productive assets of the household as indicated by Gebresilassie (2014). The participation of household in PSNP has positive and statistically significant effect on food consumption and on their livelihood (Mohamed, 2017). The PSNP has positive effect on the participant household. Therefore, that it helps beneficiaries for consumption smoothing and asset accumulation (Welteji et al., 2017).

However, some scholars conclude that PSNP has negative impact on the rural community (Mamo, 2011; Hayalu, 2014; Beshir, 2011; Gilligan et al., 2009; Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, 2010; Adimassu and Kessler, 2013). Some of the negative consequences of the PSNP program were developing sense of dependency syndrome (Hayalu, 2014). According to Mamo (2011), household failed to enhance asset accumulation if they are incorporated under PSNP. According to the earlier researchers (Beshir, 2011; Gilligan et al., 2009; Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, 2010), PSNP has negative effect on welfare/asset building and consumption. Adimassu and Kessler (2013) reported that PSNP has also negative effect on soil erosion control measures.

Conclusion

The causes of the rural community for the food insecurity are many and varied. Some of the major causes of the food insecurity are low level of agricultural production, drought, environmental degradation, limited capacity of infrastructures and disease. Different scholars have come up with different challenges that face rural community. The challenges that face implementation of the PSNP were different in different places. In Ethiopia, different empirical studies have been conducted in different parts of the country and impacts of the PSNP vary according to the study area. Some of the studies have shown that PSNP has been enhancing infrastructure, increased asset creation, environmental transformation, increased utilization of education and health services and improved agricultural productivity. However, some studies show that PSNP has negative impact on beneficiaries such as developing sense of dependency syndrome, consumption smoothing, asset accumulation and soil erosion control measures. Impacts of PSNP implementation were indicated to be multi-dimensional, which vary from place to place. The studies conducted have also their own limitations such as being area and variable specific, depending only on cross sectional data and unable to show presence or absence of family support to examine impact of program. Therefore, the government and other

concerned bodies like researchers have to conduct researches that consider social, economic, environmental issues and resource availability of the beneficiaries in each region, that enable them to obtain baseline information regarding the root cause of their food security, before further PSNP implementation in Ethiopia. Researchers should consider overall impact of the PSNP and family support on the beneficiaries' livelihood, and they should depend on panel data to investigate the impact of PSNP at national level.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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ABBREVIATIONS

PSNP, Productive Safety Net Program; **FAO**, Food and Agriculture Organization; **SSN**, Social Safety Net; **MOA**, Ministry of Agriculture; **FSIN**, Food Security Information Network; **HIV**, Human Immune Deficiency Virus; **AIDS**, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

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