

ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: THE CASE OF GICH COMMUNITY RESETTLEMENT, DEBARK/SEMIN MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK, ETHIOPIA

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Abstract

The study area being a resettled site for the people, does not have adequate information to survive in such different geographical conditions and lack of knowledge towards new form of businesses limit them to work out for the alternative sources of livelihood. These communities were previously depending upon agriculture for food, income and for their day today survival. The factors prevalent in this resettled site have compelled the community to get involved in unsustainable practices. So, the objective of the study is to look out for an alternative livelihood options for Gich local community of Semin Mountain National Parks (Newly resettled site of Debark). The study is descriptive in its nature and qualitative & quantitative research methodology was adopted. Data collection was done on the basis of personal interviews through questionnaire survey and Focus Group Discussions. Frequency, percentage, average mean, one way ANOVA, independent t-test, one sample test and paired correlation were employed. Local communities which have settled near and around the park have best possible livelihood opportunities such as off-farm activities (carpenter, masonry, house painting, timber house, mill, bakery etc.), small scale agro-based practices like (poultry, livestock rearing, dairy, fruit orchards etc.), tourism product development (handy crafts, traditional coffee, local beer, honey beer, traditional restaurants, traditional music house or "Azmari", and tourism sector related employment (souvenir shops, chefs, tour guides, guards of hotel, cleaners, housekeepers, porters and raw material suppliers to local restaurants). As stakeholders were not able to solve the resettlement issues of the residents, they were unable to have community associations, lack of electricity and transportation facilities in and around the site which makes local inhabitants dissatisfied about their resettlement.

Keywords: Livelihood, Unsustainable, Semin Mountain, Local Community, Debark, Resettlement

INTRODUCTION

The number of national parks and other protected areas in the world has gradually expanded since declared in legal basis. National parks currently serve as refuges for plants, animals, and other organism's species in the changing world landscape. National parks also serve as a center point for all the nature conservation efforts throughout the world Kuvan et. al (2010). According to Sandwith et. al (2001), a protected area safeguards biological and cultural diversity, helps to improve the livelihood of local communities, provides homelands to many indigenous people and brings countless benefits to the society in general. Yet, the principles concerning national parks are beneficial to every country around the world but the circumstances of administrating and the factors that are induced by the human pressures make it a difficult process to manage the national parks in every part of the world (Stern, 2008).

These problems prolonged the destruction of the national parks and its species over a decade in and around the world.

It especially true in the national parks which are found in many developing countries, particularly in Africa. Among the Sub-Sahara African countries, Ethiopia is one such example. Today, Ethiopia has more than 55 protected areas (including 21 national parks) to protect and conserve the natural ecosystems and wildlife heritage of the country conversely. However, since establishments of protected areas they are exposed to several pressures that threaten their existence and sustainability due to many anthropogenic effects. Whereas, poverty, population growth and livelihood issues were the root causes for the human pressures and threats in most of the national parks of Ethiopia. The Semin mountain national park is the one which is found in Amahara regional state and represents most bio-diversified natural area.

The Semin Mountain National Park (SMNP) is of international significance and has been declared as one of the first sites in whole of the world a "World Heritage Site" by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 1978. However, in 1996, the SMNP was inscribed on the list of world heritage that are on the edge of danger due to

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the evidence of recent deterioration of the population of Walialbex, due to agricultural encroachment in forest areas, loss of bio-diversity and impact of road developments. Since the establishment of Semin mountain as a national park has been intensively influenced by the inside settlers of Gich local community via agriculture practices, livestock grazing, fuel-wood, timber use, poaching and the construction of a new roads within the national park has led to a severe damage and decline to the natural resources.

These practices had a negative impact on the national park by reducing the vegetation to grow in their primeval grandeur and show obvious loss of biomass and wildlife habitats (Walia Ibex and Semin Fox) and it is the evidence of over-exploitation of the natural resources. Sometimes government and stake holders throughout the countries of the world have taken measures to re-locate the original inhabitants by providing financial compensation to those who were being impacted due to the national parks re-composition and the development of eco-tourism activities. Even though, the relocation practices of the local community inhabitants through the provision of financial compensating them might have been formulated or completed but this does not bring sustainable livelihood opportunities for the resettled local community inhabitants. Re-settling practice of the local inhabitants from the national parks should be assured of their rehabilitation, conservation of bio-diversity and for the sustainable tourism development practices. Whereas, if livelihood options are being arranged for the local community inhabitants that will strengthen their ability to survive and improve their standard of living. But, if livelihood options are absent for the displaced local inhabitants that could diminish the situation for them and national parks could posture high conservation threats (UNESCO, 2001).

As it is known, the local inhabitants of SMNP are being relocated to the Debark town. Thus, the study is being focused extensively to pinpoint the current situations of the re-settled local community inhabitants of Semin mountain national park, about their alternative livelihood options and also studies about the short and long-term action plans being taken for them to adopt in a new location of the Debark town.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective is to assess alternative livelihood options for Gich Local community of Semin Mountain National Parks. In order to handle the research questions and realize the general objective stated earlier, the study tried to deal with the following three specific objectives:

1. To identify the livelihood options existed for the Gich communities.
2. To explore potential alternative livelihood options for Gichresettles.

3. To examine the major problems encountered by the resettledGich community.

Study Area & Methodology

Geographically, the Debark town is located between $39^{\circ} 28' 08''$ and $38^{\circ} 18' 12''$ longitudes and $12^{\circ} 14' 22''$ and $12^{\circ} 36' 32''$ latitude. The area receives sufficient rain varies from 1100 mm to 2400mm with a mean annual value of 1800mm. The mean monthly maximum and minimum temperature of the area is about 18°c and 6°C respectively. In order to apprehend the research and its objectives, the study of descriptive nature was performed within the study area as researcher had a prior knowledge about the problems those are to be addressed in comprehensive manner.

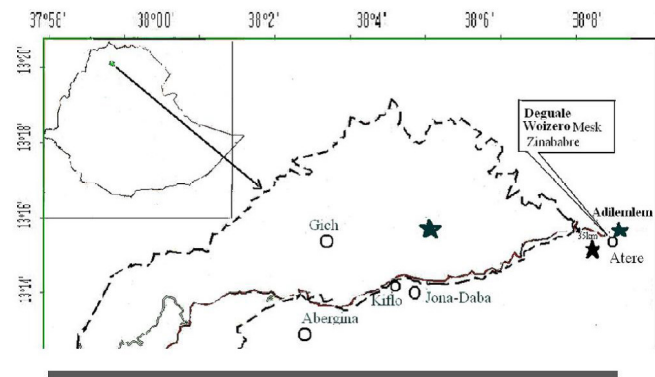


Fig. 1: Map of the Study Area

The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Cross-sectional survey was performed to collect the data through key informant interviews, focus group discussion, document analysis and questionnaires. Qualitative approach was utilized to collect information through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis, whereas, questionnaires were used for quantitative data. In this regard, five key informant interviews were selected from the sampled frame population of North Gondar Culture & Tourism office, Debark Worda Tourism office; resettle local community representative, Debark town Hotel Business and Gondar town Travel Agents. Two focus group discussions have been conducted at the new site of Gich. Whereas, quantitative data collected via structured and Semi-structured questionnaires.

The questionnaire was pretested before disseminating the final questionnaires. The study used both probability and non-probability sampling design. Since inference has to be drawn, the study used purposive sampling technique for qualitative data collection .Whereas, simple random and purposive sampling technique has been used for quantitative data collection and proper sample site selection respectively. Qualitative data were analyzed critically and skeptically through narrative and document analysis strategy. Whereas,

quantitative data were analyzed through the help of SPSS version 16.0. Hence, both inferential and descriptive statistics were used i.e. frequency, percentage and average mean, one way ANOVA, independent t-test, one sample test and paired co-relation were employed.

Sample Size Determination

According to (Bill Godden, 2004 & Yamane, 1967:886), as cited in Israel G. (1992) in most descriptive statistics, dealing with probability used the following formula:

(Sample Size of the infinite population, where the population is greater than 50,000) (Sample size of finite population, where the population is less than 50,000). It can be calculated taking into account the sample frame of the study area i.e. 146 and could be preceded as follows:

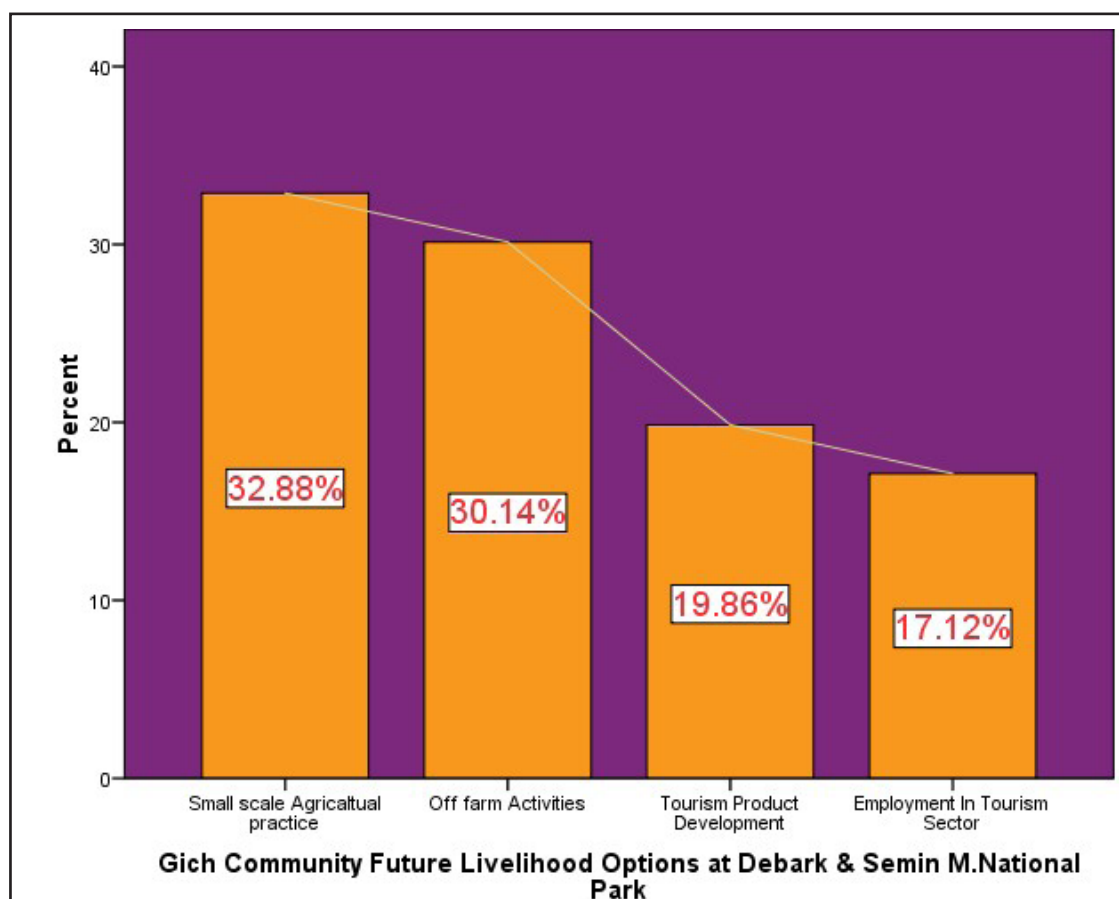
$$(1 + (SS(n) - 1)) / (1 + (196 - 1)) = (n) \approx 146;$$

Population: 576

RESULTS

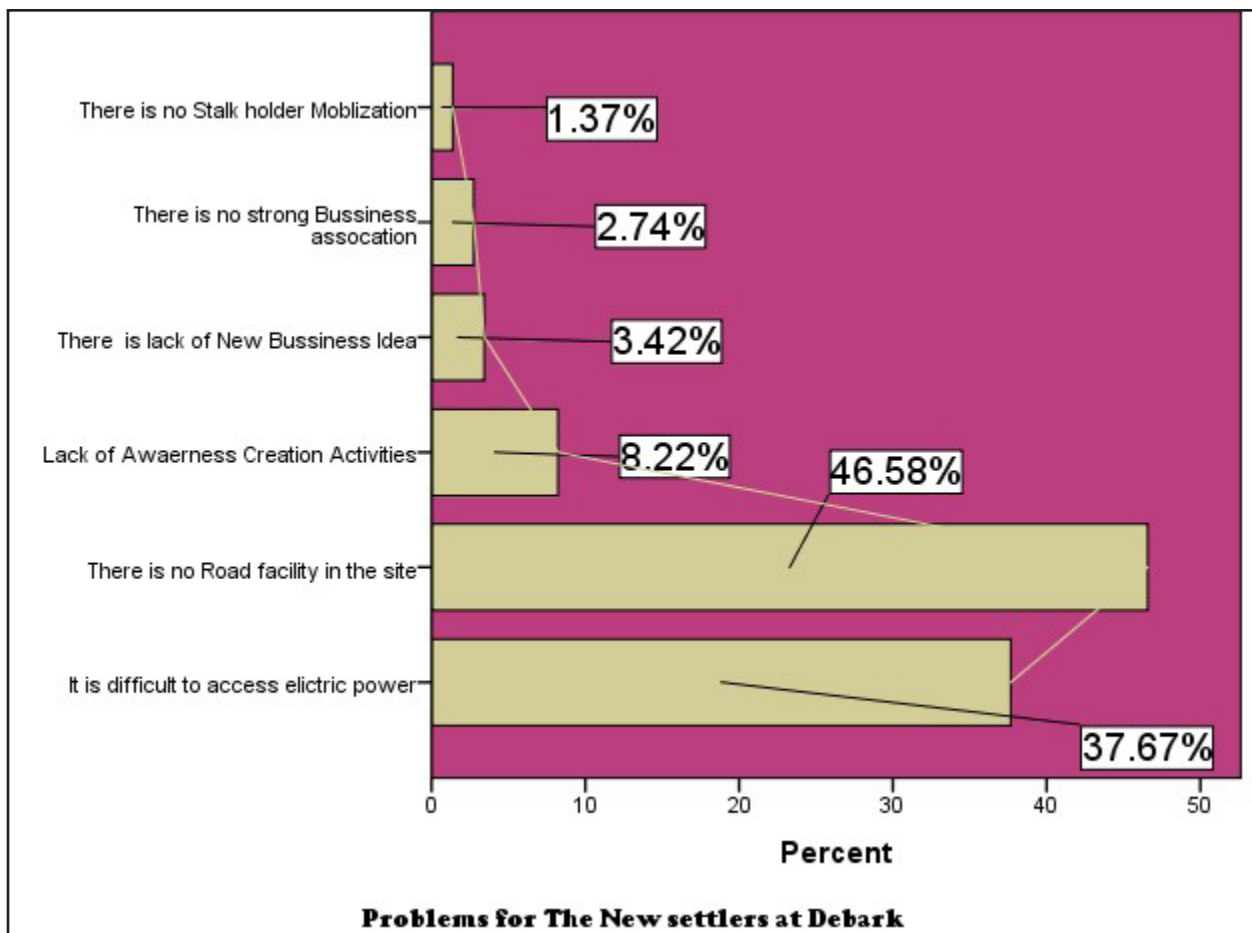
Mixed agricultural practices (livestock rearing and crop cultivation) were the major economic activities of people

those were living in the SMNP (Gich Community). The livestock kept by the community in the previous site were cattle's, sheep, goats, horses, and mules. In order to inference about the study further Gich local High school level, 3.42% certificate level, 2.74% and 4.79% were Diploma and Under Graduate level respectively community, North Gondar zone & Debarke district tourism experts, Semin mountain tour guides, Debarke town Hotel Business men and travel agents of Gondar were the subjects of the study. These were involved to make the detail analysis on livelihood options for Gich local community in the newly resettled site at the Debarke town. The respondents were 78% of Gich local community, 3% of North Gondar zone & of Debarke district tourism experts, 15% of Semin Mountain tour guides, 3% of Debarke town Hotel Business men and 1% of travel agent respondents were involved in questionnaire survey. Whereas, along with these respondents 89.70% and 10.30% were males and females respectively. In regards to the age composition of the respondents from the subjects of the study were 7.5% young, 3.4% adult, 60.3% were middle aged, 23.3% & 5.5% were old and elderly people respectively. In terms of educational level 64.38 were illiterate, 13% were educated till primary school level and 3.42% were of first class secondary school level, 3.22%.



Source: Field Survey, 2016

Fig. 2: Respondent's Attitude Towards Future Livelihood Options at Debarke and SMNP



Source: Field Survey, 2016

Fig. 2: Problems for the New Settlers

Table 1: Problems of New Settlement Site

| Variables | Mean | Std. Dev. | t-value | Df. | Test (2-tailed) | M.D |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------|---------|-----|-----------------|---------|
| Absence of electricity | 1.9452 | .22836 | 102.924 | 145 | .000 | 1.94521 |
| Absence of road | 1.9315 | .25346 | 92.080 | 145 | .000 | 1.93151 |
| Absence of awareness creation | 1.8014 | .40034 | 54.369 | 145 | .000 | 1.80137 |
| Community lack business idea | 1.658 | .4762 | 42.061 | 145 | .000 | 1.6575 |
| Lack of business Associations | 1.9178 | .27560 | 84.081 | 145 | .000 | 1.91781 |
| Absence of stakeholder Mobilization | 1.7329 | .44398 | 47.161 | 145 | .000 | 1.73288 |

Note: * One Sample Test, M= Mean, Std. = standard Deviation df =degree of freedom,

Sig=Significance level, MD= mean deviation

Source: Field Survey, 2016

DISCUSSION

Semin Mountains Background: The Semin mountains national park (SMNP) being inhabited for at least 2000 years, the population pressure on natural resources has been mounted for over several decades and threatened the livelihood options of local inhabitants and the bio-diversity of the park. The issues of the people living inside the park

dates back to the time of its creation. Gich local community used the park for livestock grazing; fire wood consumption, poaching and deforestation practices were being carried out for creating farm lands. Such practices led to the decline of biodiversity within the park and have hampered the ongoing efforts for the development and promotion of Eco-tourism. Along with this fact there were several other reports those were indicating about the pressure and threat to the ecological

sustainability of the Semin Mountains and have triggered the warnings from UNESCO from the World heritage site list as well.

Biodiversity of the park was the reason for attainment of its World heritage status but has been consequently declined and tourism activity deteriorated. Fortunately, resettlement of the Gich community to the new site was conducted in order to solve the issues of the people that were prevalent within the park, improving their way of life, enhancing conservation and creating livelihood opportunities for local communities in order to reduce pressure from within the park. Moreover, voluntary relocation of people from the park, new alignment of the road from Debarke to Chennek, extension of the Park in order to include Mesarerya, Lemalimo (if possible), RasDashen Wildlife Reserves and effecting conservation within the extended (proposed) National Park; such measures that were taken in Semin mountains national park; status of conservation of the biodiversity has augmented, so as to restore the status of the Park.

Relocation of Gich community

In and around the SMNP, overgrazing, using land for farming and deforestation had resulted in serious degradation of natural resources from the entire part of the national park. Cultivation inside the park has also been a serious concern where such form of land use was incompatible with conservation objectives and ecotourism development. Such reasons inclusive of growing interest for the development of eco-tourism at the site created a platform for relocation of Gich community to Debarke town.

The study insured about the presence of Gich community inside the park is a threat for conservation of biodiversity and ecotourism development. This fact was strengthened, as local community of Gich had a negative impact on the park and on its bio-diversity due to de-forestation, over grazing, forest fire by locals and poaching of wildlife. However, the levels of impact were different based on respondent's perception.

The mean value of respondents perception on de-forestation ($M=1.7397$, $St.d=.64385$, $V=.415$) is higher than the mean value of overgrazing ($M=1.4795$, $St.d=.65621$, $V=.431$). But the mean value of impact level, based on perception of the respondents were less in forest fire ($M=2.7397$, $St.d=.49903$, $V=.249$) and in poaching of wildlife ($M=2.6027$, $St.d=.61565$, $V=.379$) in the park.

Thus, the outcome reflected the respondent's variability of perceptions; the prevalence is common in the highlands and in national parks of Ethiopia. Livestock grazing, deforestation, wildlife conflicts with humans in an around the park has resulted in serious degradation of natural resources (Kefialew, 2015).

The 'Pearson Chi Square' analysis shows that age, gender and attitude towards the impacts imposed by the community at Semin mountain national park and on its eco-tourism development programs have a statistical significance in community association ($\chi^2=M=34.405$, $F=1.364$, $df=146$, $p < 0.05$). So, as per the results, their understanding towards the influence in the national park was perceived equally. Even though, they knew the degree of their intervention in the national park ecosystem, in the beginning all the groups regardless of their gender perceived the condition of resettlement negatively.

The situation in Semin mountains was further made evident through the interrogations with Ato Teshome Mullu, coordinator of project sponsored by Austria for its sustainable development and formerly serving as SMNP Manager, 2016.

"As Gich local community has a high degree of intervention in core zone, there are communities engaged in deforestation, overgrazing, cultivation and poaching of wildlife. Local communities inhabitants of in an around the SMNP of the Debarke, Janamora and Aderkay Wordas are the ones with a minimum level of a negative impact on the park ecosystem. To optimize the situation stakeholders started certain programmes to help communities for creating an alternative off-farm livelihood options. Among them were weaving (sheama), pottery, carpentry, masonry, bread making, tenting, cookery, tour guiding, scout, mule rent, handy craft selling and being local vendors of eggs, hen, sheeps, vegetables. Where as, after a deal with Gich community they were evacuated to Debarke as government provided compensation in cash of about 8,00,000-1.7 million Ethiopian Birr and about 250 m² of land as per their wealth and size of the farm land they lost due to relocation. The facts being interrogated from different households within the park" (Interviewed, 2016).

Past Livelihood Options of Gich Community

Most of the residents of villages in an adjacent to the Semin mountain national park dominantly used mixed agricultural practices such as crop cultivation but productivity is too less, only 28% of residents harvest enough food from their farm lands. Rearing of livestock is another optional source of livelihood to the local residents but has certain limitation due to scarcity of grazing land due to protected area and only 18% of the land is left as zero level-grazing land within the study area (Evan Ludi, 2005). Small proportions of the Gich community are engaged in tourism activity's (guiding, mule renting, handy crafts, porters). Thus, tourism is used as an alternative livelihood option for the Gich community. As per Mulugata Astray (2015), the important aspect of tourism in SMNP is its capacity to create large number of employment

opportunities, especially in main camping sites and in the Debarik town. The mean value of the respondents also shows that out of the total respondent's majority of them scored agriculture was the dominant economic activity of the migrants of Gich community.

The results were backed by the researchers who are dominantly living in the highlands of Ethiopia in extricable dependent on the natural resources of the park to sustain their livelihood needs and requirements. Thus, agriculture (Crop cultivation & livestock rearing) being the main economic activity for the local communities.

Future Livelihood Options for Gich Community:

The resettled Gich community previously were tend to depend almost entirely on their natural resource base for food and income and overdependence, is largely due to limited alternative forms of livelihood, which may leads them to unsustainable utilization of the resource. However, following extensive effort local communities relocated at Debarik town after they received in kind land and birr (800,000 - 1.7 million) compensation. Thus, consolidate the local community involvement in alternative livelihood options is a pre requisite task at Debarik and Semin Mountain National park. And, it will be significant for either the National Park or their life. The study also found that, local communities who are settled near and around the park have best possible livelihood options i.e, off farm activities (Carpenter, Masonry, House painting, Timber House, Mill, Bakery), small scale agricultural practice (Poultry farming , Beef farming, Dairy farming, pig farming, Modernized Cattle farming and Fruit farming etc.).

Where as in tourism product development ("Hand-craft, Coffee , Local Beer , Honey Beer, Traditional Restaurant, Traditional Music House or "Azmar" and Tourism Sector related employment Souvenir Shop keeper, Cooker, Tour Guide, Guard of Hotel, Cleaner, Bed making, Porter and Agricultural product raw material provider).

The study further tried to confirm whether the respondents have different understanding or not towards the livelihood options. The result reflected that statistically it is significant t-value (145, (5.154, 42.773, 43.735, 46.045) = $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the mean of respondent's perception is significantly different than the average population. The mean deviation also demonstrated that there is mean variation within the sample population over the understanding of livelihood availability at debarik town (M.D= 1.06164, 1.100959, 1.10274, 1.08904). With this regard, the mean deviation result of the entire result shows that, the mean in between them are approached to equal.

Other study also assured the benefit of the villagers adjacent to the park and living at Debarik can take part in Scouting, Guiding, Cooking, Mule-renting, Horse renting and Souvenir selling (Mulugeta Astray, 2015). It is adding value to locally-made souvenirs and articles that communities are producing to sell to tourist. The employment opportunities that local community are benefiting from the park are through scouting, guiding, cooking, mule and horse renting, souvenir sale and others. These, activities make local community strength their opportunity to strive live and improve their life.

The result also confirmed once more through FGD conducted at debarik town; Here we believed there is an alternative business opportunity local community they have perceived well and can be participated via small scale agricultural practice, off farm activities, Existed and new tourism product development and can be engaged themselves in the tourism related sector. However, the new settlers at Debarik were hindered via facility development like (electricity, road accessibility, tap water problem and lack of awareness how to run a new business) {FGD, 2016}.

The Problems Makes Local Community Dissatisfied at Debarik: The result shows that there are difficulties to access electric power (37.67%), road facility is lacking (46.58%), awareness about the activity to be engaged in any business is almost absent (8.22%), among majority of the people lack any business idea (3.8%), there was not any organized business association that is good enough for the mobilization of the local community (2.74%), and even the stakeholders seemed to undertake any mobilization activity (1.37%).

Whether the Site Problems and Satisfaction is Correlated or Not: The result here confirmed that, even though, there is negative correlation; it is significant $r (-183^*, 146), p < 0.01$). The result also supported that the availability of basic facilities and satisfaction of the local communities have a direct correlation in the eco-tourism development site. With the level of their understanding of the local communities should be aware of the problems in the site (Yemane, 2011). In order to make inferences whether the respondents have different understanding or not, towards the problems at the site.

Thus, the result confirmed that t-value is statistically significant (145, 5.154, 42.773, 43.735, 46.045) = $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the mean of respondent's perception is equal with average population. The mean deviation also confirmed that there is mean variation within the sample population over the understanding of problems availability at Debarik town (M.D = 1.94521, 1.93151, 1.80137, 1.6575, 1.91781 & 1.73288). However, the mean deviation result over lack of electricity, road facility, awareness, business association has almost equal result, whereas absence of community business idea and stake holder mobilization are similarly approached compared to the other result .

The result also evidenced via FGD off from the local community they were told that; “Off course there are a number of problems as of the majority, small are dissatisfied. Whereas, the majority who have an idea towards eco-tourism significance and national sense they are satisfied. But, still the stake holders should be starting their movement to be organized, to be mobilized and to be fulfilled the problems as well {FGD, 2016}.

Community Support of Eco tourism Development: The outcome here summarized that almost half of them said that they were strongly support ecotourism. Whereas, the percentage approached to half of the respondents said that, they were dissatisfied. The one way analysis of variance result showed that whether there is a significant difference between their age or attitude towards the support of an eco-tourism development in Semin Mountains or not. Therefore, the result shows that it is statistically significant between the age group, $F(6,139) = 2.479, p < 0.05$). The post hoc analysis of Tukey of homogeneity confirmed that the average mean of respondents were Adult ($M=1.800, St.d = .44721$) > Aged ($M =1.7500, St.d .46291$) > Middle ($M=1.500, St.d .67806$), > Elder ($M=1.1176, St.d=.32703$) > Young ($M=1.00, St.d = .00$)

The result demonstrated us the respondents in different age groups they have common understanding about an eco-tourism significance and negative influence over the agricultural dependence people. The independent sample ‘t test’ to check the difference of sex and their attitude towards the benefit of tourism development and the results revealed that, it is statistically significant between the respondents’ sex status and attitudes towards tourism significance ($t(144)=2.239, p < 0.05$). The result also confirmed by the previous studies that sex deference has an effect on the attitude of the respondents (Akama et al, 1995). However, education and attitudes of the respondents towards Eco tourism development and its significance. The result shows that it has statistically significant correlation $r(3.019, 145), p < 0.01$, ($M =.61644, St.d 2.46705$). A detail interview was conducted with key informant from Debark Culture & Tourism office as follows;

“As we know very well, local communities who have an idea they were support an ecotourism development well. But, people did only for their interest they were not gave their support, because those people from the beginning stands to fulfill their interest than to expect out come from the eco-tourism development. The main obstacle of them were, the over dependency of agricultural activity, deforestation for their purpose, poaching and killing of animals for house hold consumption. However, either people have negative or positive perception towards an eco-tourism development, now following a great effort they are forced to resettled at Debark” {Interviewed, 2016}.

The above view further demonstrated that tourism industry used local resources but with little economic benefits for

the local people. consequent to this, the local community continues to distrust tourism activities and perceived ecotourism as just one more proposal to eliminate control over their land and communities future (UNEP, 2002) Nevertheless, ecotourism is claimed to be socially inclusive and ensure genuine communities participation. It has evolved as a promise to empower the local people to get control over the economic and social benefits and assorted in providing all sorts of benefits to the local people (Duff, 2002). For many local poor, ecotourism has believed to reinforce land claims, acknowledge cultural identity, land ownership and regain their access right of the resources. As cited in Zeppel’s work, for the local people, sustainable ecotourism development is based on ‘conservation of resources and empowerment of local people through direct benefits and controlover tourism activities’ (Zeppel, 2006).

CONCLUSION

The study assured that, people not having adequate knowledge of living in newly resettled site and any knowledge towards new business operation often limit their access to use any alternative livelihood options. Mixed Agricultural practice (livestock rearing and farming) were the major economic activities of people living in the SMNP (Gich Community). In and around the SMNP, overgrazing, using land for farming and deforestation had resulted in serious degradation of natural resources of the entire part of the National Park. Cultivation inside the park has also been a serious concern where such form of land use is known to be incompatible with conservation objectives and Ecotourism development. Because of these, and the growing interest of the site for Ecotourism development creating the platform for the relocate of the Gich community to Debark town. communities living near and around the semin mountain National park of Debark, Janamora and Aderkay districts they have least negative influence over the national park eco system. Thus, strive to consolidating the local community involvement in alternative livelihood options at debark and Semin Mountain National Park in a sustainable manner it is a significant element for either the national park conservation or their life be sustainable.

The study also found that, local communities who were settled near and around the park have best possible livelihood options i.e., off farm activities (Carpenter, Masonry, House painting, Timber House, Mill, Bakery, etc.), Small scale agricultural practice (Poultry farming, Beef farming, Dairy farming, Pig farming, Modernized Cattle farming and Fruit farming), Tourism product development (Hand Craft, Coffee, Local Beer, Honey Beer, Traditional Restaurant, Traditional Music House or “ Azmari”, and Tourism Sector related employment (Souvenir Shop keeper, Cooker, Tour Guide, Guard of Hotel, Cleaner, Bed making, Porter and Tourist food raw material provider .

The study also portrayed that there is no awareness creation activities, There are no mobilization activities of the resettles, There are no community association, lack of electricity and road facility around the site makes dissatisfied in the resettle community. Even though, majority of the resettle satisfied by the action, still the stake holder involvement needs remedies. Furthermore, the study confirmed that, local community has positive attitude towards the benefit of Eco tourism development. However, makes way to participating communities in the park should be designed as part of a broader strategy for an option for further economic development for the resettles.

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