

An Assessment of Community Assets, and gaps in its utilizations, Assela city Administration

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Research Article

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ABSTRACT

This an assessment of the community is made /conducted on one of the kebeles in Asela city administration. The general objectives of this study is assessing the community assets and existing prospects in its utilization. The assessment result is believed to strengthens the community participation in decision making concerning the community development and promotes better use of resources by the community. Purposive sampling technique and a qualitative research design with a phenomenological study approach were used. The primary and secondary data were collected through interview, observation, FGD and document analysis. The study revealed that study area is endowed with various social, physical and other assets that helps in ensuring the well beings of a community. The primary resources, tertiary resources, and cultural assets of the community were identified. The study indicated that all policies, measures and decisions to be taken in relation to the development plan of a given society should primarily participate the communities and is most effective if it consider the social, cultural, economic and health conditions of a community members. The study recommends that bridging the gap and ultimately changing the life of the community to bring the well-being of the community needs the attentions of all concerned communities and government bodies..

INTRODUCTION

An overview of the Assessment

Now days there are complex social, economic and health related problems in all most all community of the developing country like our country Ethiopia. In the community there are assets that can be social, physical, and natural that plays major roles for the survival and the normal functioning of any community. There is the need to transform those potential resources to useable means in order to ensure the well-beings of local communities.

Community Assessment can mean a process by which community members, social worker and researchers gain an understanding of the health concerns and health care systems of the community by identifying, collecting, analyzing, and disseminating an information on community assets, strengths, resources and needs. Thus, an assessment of the community is made /conducted on one of the kebeles in Asela city administration. Assela, the Arsi administrative zone, located on 175 km from Finfine/Addis Abeba. The city has a latitude and longitude of 7057' N 390 7 E with an elevation of 2,430 meters.

According to the 2007 national census report, a total population of Asella city administration is 67,269 of whom 36,628 were men and 30,641 were women. The majority of the inhabitants are followers of Ethiopian orthodox Christianity with 67.43% of the population, while 22.65% of the population is Muslim and 9.92% of the populations are protestant Christian. Assela is categorized as having a sub-tropical high land climate. The monthly temperature variation is low, due to its elevation and closeness to the equator. The seasons are only distinguished by the intensity of rain, which is highest in August and lowest in December. The city administration has eight (8) kebeles among which Halila is one. The area up on which the community assessment was conducted is located along side of the tarmaic roads that runs to Bale zone and is surrounded by four other kebeles such as kombolcha to the North, Duna farmers Association to the south, chilalo to the North east and Burka chilalo in the east. According to the data obtained from the kebele administration, the total population of halila kebele is estimated to be 11000 from which 5960 were men and 5040 were women. In terms of religion, 51% of the populations are orthodox Christians, 27% are Muslims, 20% are protestant Christians and 2% are followers of other religious groups.

Thus, the researcher tried its best to go in to the community of study area and able to identify the resources, skills available

and how of using it and the health status of the community were assessed and the finding were organized and presented in this paper.

Definition of key terms

- Community; - all persons living in a certain region or group of people with common characteristics or interest.
- Assets; - skills, abilities, and resources of value to one's self and others.
- Assessment; - the process by which situation or characteristics, gifts and needs of clients, groups, communities, or situations are evaluated so they can be addressed.
- Capacities; - the abilities, resources, assets and strengths, that group or individuals have and use to deal with situations and meet their identified needs.
- Effective; - Service, interventions, or actions that achieve optimal results.

Objectives of the assessment

General Objectives

The general objectives of this study is assessing the community assets and existing prospects in its utilization.

Specific Objectives

The community assessment is primarily aimed to

- Identify the available community assets, health status and setting priorities based on the need.
- Indicating for intervention on how to improve the community well-being based on the available resources.
- To understand the determinants of a community health.
- Identify stakeholders and agencies that may help meet the needs of community.

Benefits of the Assessments

By identifying major community assets, resources and gabs, it helps to indicate directions for concerned body.

- It strengthens the community participation in decision making concerning the community development
- It promotes better use of resources by the community.
- The assessment is also pivotal in laying foundation for researchers.

Methods of data collection

Research Design

Research design refers the methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing the required data. In this study, qualitative research approaches were employed to assess community assets, existing challenges with regard to utilizations of these assets.

Sampling Strategies and Sample Size

In realizing the study objectives purposive sampling method was employed. To determine sample size of study population; convenience sampling techniques was used and the researcher has purposively selected eight/8 sites in the study area and 20 samples to conduct the study. Key informant interview and FGD discussants were included in the samples and great emphasis were given to researcher observation to the sites as the study was focused on assessments of the available community assets and existed challenges to utilize them in promoting the well-beings of community of the study area.

Data Collection Methods

For the purpose of assessing the community of the identified kebele (resources, assets, strength, health status, and gabs), data collection methods such as; -

- unstructured interviews,
- observation,
- FGD and

secondary data sources (document analysis) were employed.

Data Analysis Method

The qualitative data collected through interview, observation and Focus Group Discussion were analyzed using phenomenological analysis. Thus, data collected through interview, observation and FGD were analyzed being categorized in to different themes as primary resources, Secondary resource, tertiary resources, the culture assets, community engagement conditions and challenges existed were analyzed qualitatively.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical permission was obtained from concerned Kebele administration to collect data from respondents and through researcher observation only for study purpose. The confidentiality and privacy of information were assured. Thus, the study ensures information provided by each and every respondent was kept confidential.

Finding of the Assessment

The primary resources available in the community

The main resources available in the community includes; -

- Forests: - mainly eculaptus tree, Tid, zigba, wayra, pinnspachulla, and grass lands are found



Figure 1



Figure 2

- Wild Animals and bird species; - The Halila kebele is naturally endowed with different kinds of wild lives including variety of bird species such as 'Gureza', Apes, 'Dikula', 'Midakoa', 'Jigra', Eagle and Duck.
- Water resources; -
- Artificial lake (Ardu Gidib) and water treatment center

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Figure 3

- Farming: - The community of study area is known for growing cereal crops (wheat, barley, 'Bakela', Maiz, 'Bolloke', peans and garden plantation of different kinds and vegetables such as: -cabagge, spices carrot, 'Gesho', potato, and inset.

Cattle rearing: - Cattles, game animals (horse and donkey), sheep are common in the community of Halila. Similarly, Fattening, dairy farming and honey farming are also practiced.

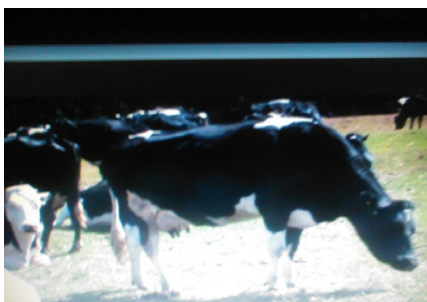


Figure 4

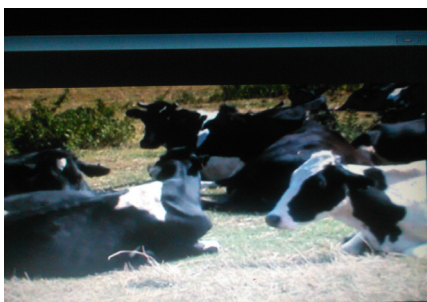


Figure 5

- Skill; - Black smith, petty trade such as Tela ('shameta', food selling), and selling of 'Derek injera'

Resources owned by others but exist within and serve the community/secondary resources

- Lodges, Hotel, Kindergarten, grinding meal.
- Recreation center and bio- farm



Figure 6

- Soap factory, flour factory, University, Sport Academy, Agriculture input service, police station and appropriate technology center are among secondary resources of the community of the kebele.

The potential building block assets/tertiary resources

These potential building block resources that are serving the community includes, hotels, hospitals, schools, colleges, bus station, banks, churches, mosques, malt- factory, 'tebel', sodare resort, stadium, are among the tertiary resources of the community.

The culture assets of the community

As observed during the assessment, the community members practice the culture of eating together during the holy day. There are also strong attachments especially when death occurs on the members of the kebele. In addition, there is traditional supporting system like: - 'Ekub, 'Edir', and mahiber.

Contributions of these resources for the health of the community

Diet style: - The existing resources such as garden plantation, vegetables and consumption of milks are what is customized by the community of the kebele as food style. Thus, this habit contributes to the health of the community by building their resistance capacity from disease thus maintain their healthy life. Besides, the farming of garden plantation and existence of forests resources contributes to the health of the community by keeping ecological balance of the area and even help them to breathe clean air which in its turn has a great role in promoting health life for the community.

The Health Related practices of the community and associated problems

Some of the practices by the community which can be related with their health problem that are identified through the assessments were presented here under.

First, because of absence of access to clean water, the community is forced to fetch water from the artificial lake in their kebele called "Ardu gidib" and uses it for home purpose. However, since the water is not clean it exposes the community to different kinds of diseases. In relation to this lake (Ardu gidib) it is creating problems on the people living a long side of the lake. Even some, fall in to it and dies because it has no fences and of weak security keeping.

Second, due to the absence of waste disposal system, member of the community throw/ put a solid waste near to their home and within their village. But, this practice will pollute the air and challenges the health and well-being of the dwellers particularly during the rainy seasons.

Third, it is identified that the donkey slaughtering which is newly operating and is about to start donkey meat processing will be another practices that have potential of seriously threatening the health of the community of Halila kebele.

Fourth, findings of the assessment indicate that, there are practices of over drinking of Alcohols (Tela, Areke, Beer and etc) by some dwellers of the kebele that have potential of harming their health.

Fifth; practices of chewing 'kchat' and smoking particularly by the young member of a society.

Community engagements in addressing health related problems.

In order to make their environment clean and a safe place for living, the community member involved in cleaning their own compound and nearby areas of their home. In addition, members of the community participate in cleaning campaign at village and kebele level. These practices will have direct relations with their health status.

The unsolved problems of the community

There are a lot of social, economic and health related problems which are identified by the study in the community of Halila and waiting for solution.

- Among these unsolved problems; -
- Problem of infrastructure: - what one can observe in the community leads to conclude that the Halila is a forgotten kebele as basic services such as electricity starting from the main road to the inner roads is totally absent. Roads connecting villages is non-existent and even the existing one is not maintained.
- There is no financial institution like Banks, credit and saving association and etc. in the kebele.
- There is no market place as the kebele is vast and far from the center of the town
- Attention was not given from the government to the investment works as the kebele has potential resources for investment. Even the existing investors in the kebele are not followed and supervised by the government.
- For instance: - some did not still enter in to their investment work beyond taking the land. Some are collecting money with what is naturally available without adding value or investing on it.
- Others are preparing themselves to pollute the area to exacerbate the existing situation.
- Problem of effective and appropriate use of forests and forest results. As we are able to observe, there were fallen woods and decaying here and there in the Kebele. Those woods can generate money for the kebele and benefits to the local community if sold at reasonable prices. However, there is problem of ineffective use of such resource
- Less emphasis given on preventive health care services. The community could not get training on how to protect their health and related issues.
- Social security systems are non-existence.
- Health facilities are less accessible for all members of the community. For example: - shortage of Ambulance in the case of emergency. Some villages are not accessible to get the services because, the roads are not paved well and villages are not easily penetrable.
- Industries/factories (such as flour factory and soap factories) found in the kebele are not in a position to properly dispose their wastes. The wastes from these factories added with animal wastes, clothes washed around the lake, all together enter in to the lakes and tend to harm the public health, since the surrounding community uses these spoiled water for home use purpose. This in its turn threatens health of the community. Thus, it needs great attention from all stakeholders such as, local dwellers, investors and government body to follow the issues.

Conclusions

The assessment result revealed that the study area endowed with various social, physical and other assets that helps in ensuring the well beings of a community where effectively utilized. The study identified the existences of primary resources, tertiary resources, and cultural assets of the community. It further explored the engagement conditions of the community of Halila kebele in properly utilizing at the existed assets in the community. The assessment result also showed different challenges in the community having potentials of harming community's well-being and thus seek attentions of concerned government body.

In general, the assessment indicated that all policies, measures and decisions to be taken in relation to the development plan of a given society should primarily participate the communities and is most effective if it consider the social, cultural, economic and health conditions of a community members.

Recommendations

To bridge the gap and ultimately change the life of the community and to ensure the well-being of the community of the kebele, all concerned bodies should give attention and contribute their parts. Thus, to solve these problems and bring betterment for the community the following recommendations were forwarded.

1. To solve the problems of infrastructure, government either should assign budget or mobilize the community to build new roads and maintain the existing one so that the community can get access to ambulance service and other health services in time of emergency.
2. The town administration being with the ELPA should provide the electricity services to the community.
3. Government must strengthen its control and supervision on the works of investors in the kebele.
4. Town administration should design alternative ways to waste disposal mechanism either to dig ditch or collect and dump at other areas prepared for this purpose.
5. The kebele administration being with the local elders should participate the community on how to care for the Ardu dam and effective uses in the way they have to use it.
6. Government should provide greater equality of opportunities for member of the community to compute as both providers and consumers of well fare.
7. To solve the problems of job lessons to equally ensure effective use of resources and to increase the incomes of community members, the city administration should organize the local community in to small enterprises on the forest resources.
8. Being with the community, government has to plan to solve major problems and gaps observed in the community in the long term. Thus
9. Little is done on preventive medical care. Therefore, great attention should be given for public health so as to improve their health condition.
10. Department/sector of Environment of local government should plan, organize and coordinate the community and other stakeholders to bring change in environmental protection and conservation. Thus the local government should react to bring changes by coordinating parts of the community such as youth, community at large, government institution (Arsi University, Appropriate technology office, Athlet Kenenisa Technical College and being with owner of factories) should come on consensus and work to promote the well-being of the community.
11. The city Administration collaborating with bank institution, should plan to expand Banking services and other credit and saving Association for the Halila kebele community.
12. The Assela city trade and market department in collaboration with the woreda and zonal office should facilitate a situation to establish a market place for community of the kebele.

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