

Causes and Remedy of Squatting in Burayu Town, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The first dilemma that millions of poor in urban areas of the developing world face and which is likely to persist for a long period is the question of adequate housing. In this regard, 70 per cent of the urban population of Ethiopia is living in slums and squatter settlements. This article is on accessibility of land for residential purpose and existing squatter settlements in Burayu town in Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia. The population of Burayu town is 100,200 (2010) and the town is located about 15 kilo meters from the city limits of Addis Ababa metropolis, the capital of Ethiopia. The town is characterized by many land related problems like proliferation of squatter settlements, expansion of slums and other illegal land developments. This article tries to identify the root causes for squatting and assess the major local government responses in Burayu town. By the combination of random and purposive sampling method, 246 squatter households were selected from different sections of the town and quantitative data and qualitative information were collected from primary as well as secondary sources to analyze. The result shows that on the contrary to many studies conducted on similar areas, the root cause for development and expansion of squatter settlements in Burayu town is not economic poverty of the squatter households. Rather, the main reason found is cumbersome procedures and very poor performance of Land Development and Management Agency to deliver the land to the aspirants. Inability of the local government to cope up with the fast urbanization and increasing demand of land for housing is obvious.

Keywords: Squatter, Accessibility and Squatter Settlements

1. Introduction:

Ministry of Urban Development and Construction of Ethiopia (2011) reported that more than 40 per cent of urban population of Ethiopia lives within below poverty line which is characterized by problems related to shelter (homelessness, substandard housing including slum and squatter settlements). According to the Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency (2007), Oromia National Regional State is the largest region in Ethiopia and accounted for 41 per cent of urban centers in the country. Oromia Special Zone Surrounding Finfine is the name given to a zone which was established in August 2008 as one of the eighteen zones of Oromia National Regional State. This Zone is located in the central part of Oromia National Regional State and the administrative center of the zone is located in Addis Ababa city. Burayu town is one of the nine municipal town administrations in Oromia Special Zone Surrounding Finfine. It is located towards the North West on the way to Ambo, about 15 KM from the outside limits of Addis Ababa metropolis, the capital of Ethiopia (Fig 1).

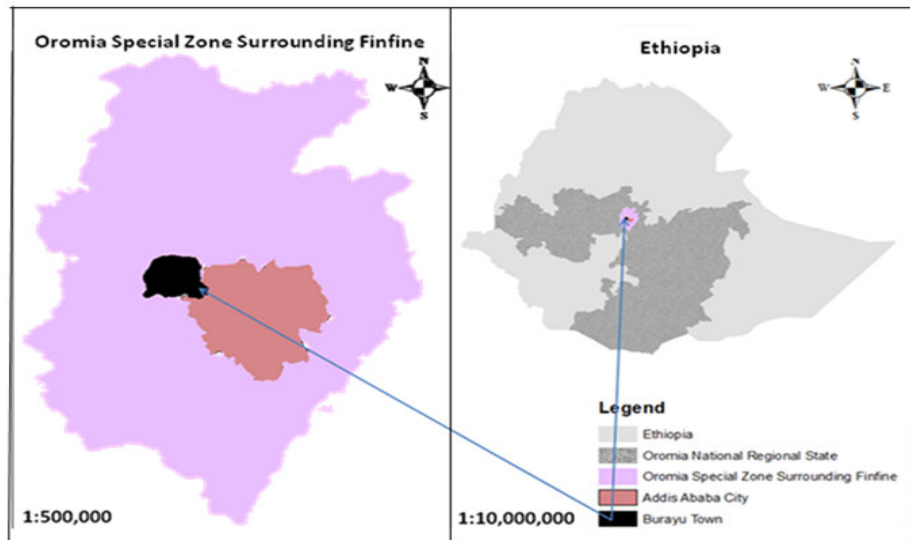


Fig 1 Geographic Location of Burayu Town in Ethiopia

Source: Based on Maps from Oromia National Regional State, Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, 2012

According to the rank given by Oromia National Regional State to all urban centers of the region, the town is the first grade town in the region. According to Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia 2007, Burayu is relatively the largest town with 100,200 populations in 2010 (estimated) in Oromia Special Zone Surrounding Finfine. In comparative to other urban centers in the zone, Burayu town is very proximate to Addis Ababa. Because of its proximity to the capital of the country, better infrastructure developments, relatively high cost and tedious procedures to get land for residence in Addis Ababa metropolis and other reasons, many people want to have their residence in Burayu town. Thus formal and informal land transactions in the town have been increasing. According to census, the population of the town was 4,138 in 1984; 10,027 in 1994, 63,873 in 2007 and 100,200 in 2010 (estimated), which shows that the town is growing very fast. There are six kebele administrative zones (an administrative unit of the town) under Burayu town administration and according to the estimate, the total number of residential houses in the town are 23,043 of which 12,572 (54.6 per cent) are informally developed houses (2012). According to the town administration, about 7,000 of these informally developed houses are squatters in Burayu town.

Despite of fast expansion of squatter settlements in Burayu town, there is no scholastic or analytical research which has been undertaken on the squatter settlements in the town. Unless the root causes are thoroughly understood and the real challenges are addressed, interventions may lead to more problems than they actually solve. Especially among the towns in Oromia special zone surrounding Finfine, the problem in Burayu town is worst. The objectives of the article are: to explore the most significant factors that have been responsible for the fast growth of squatter settlements in Burayu town; and to find out the remedy that will work towards solving the problem. The primary data is based on 246 sample squatter households which were collected from different social segments of the town and the secondary data was taken from published or unpublished records of the town administration.

1.2 Housing as Human Right:

UN-HABITAT (2002) on United Nations Human Settlements Program (page 1) stated:

“To live in a place, and to have established one’s own personal habitat with peace, security and dignity, should be considered neither a luxury, a privilege nor purely the good fortune of those who can afford a decent home. Rather, the requisite imperative of housing for personal security, privacy, health, safety, protection from the elements and many other attributes of a shared humanity, has led the international community to recognize adequate housing as a basic and fundamental human right”.

According to article 25(1) of the universal declaration of human rights; article 11 of international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights; article 17 of the international covenant on civil and political rights; article 17 of universal declaration of human right; article 43 of international convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families; and article 21 of the international convention relating to the status of refugees, everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family.

Expansion of squatter settlements is the common problems of almost all urban centers in the world (UN-Habitat, 2007). They are known by different names in different countries. In Ethiopia, Minwuyelet (2005), presented as squatter settlements in Ethiopia have emerged during the mid of 1970s after the Dergue regime, government that

ruled Ethiopia from 1974-1991, nationalized all urban land and extra houses in 1975 by Proclamation No. 47/1975. In accordance with Minwuyelet (2005), in the pre-revolutionary land tenure system, the development of squatter settlements was highly deterred as the power of the property owners (individual ownership) was strong enough to discourage illegal occupation of land. Minwuyelet restated that, after the nationalization, the government could not effectively and efficiently manage the land and everyone has got the chance to squat on vacant government lands.

Identified causes for development and expansion of squatter settlements include poverty and underlying global and national macroeconomic factors; the nature and scope of government housing policies (Abiko, Cardoso, Rinaldelli and Riogi Haga, 2007); unrealistic urban planning regulations, and informal labor market (Hernando De Soto, 2000). In Lucknow, India, wrong policies of constructing the costly houses which could not fulfill the local demand resulted expansion of unauthorized colonies (Jafri, 2011). The causes for development and expansion of squatter settlements in urban centers of Ethiopia slightly vary from place to place. In Addis Ababa metropolis (Bole, Yeka and Kofle Keranio Sub Cities), unaffordable land values for the poor; in Adama city, limited capacity of local authorities to develop and deliver land to the poor; inefficient land delivery process and poor land administration; in Jimma city, high cost of building materials; poverty; corruption; and generally inefficient land administration process and in Bahir Dar city, unaffordable standards; low household income and inability of the poor to save were identified as the leading causes (Tendayi, 2010). Proclamation 574/2007 of Ethiopia provides “no development activity may be carried out in an urban center without a prior development authorization.” The urban land administration shall ensure that the land on which the building is going to be built must have been acquired through legal means and with the building permit (development authorization). This authorization is needed not only for the erecting of new buildings but also for modifying and demolishing them as well.

2. Causes of Squatting in Burayu Town:

2.1 Demand and Supply of Land for Housing in Burayu Town:

Urban land is said to be accessible for housing if the land is available with reasonable price and with security of tenure. In Burayu town, the land for residential purpose is physically available and there is no scarcity of land for housing. According to information from Land Development and Management Agency of Burayu town, 2014 from the total area of the town which is about 90,000,000 m² (9,000 hectare) of land only half of it is developed and the remaining 45,000,000 m² is vacant. The Land Development and Management Agency in all urban centers in Oromia National Regional State has explicitly and legally defined powers and functions in planning development and provision of land for any purpose. Previously (before two years ago), land for housing in the town was delivered by rent and currently it is being provided by lease. Since long ago, there was also a clear plan annually prepared to develop and deliver land for housing in the town. But, the implementation is very far lagging behind the plan and this is presented on table 1 below.

Table 1 Performance of Burayu Town Land Administration and Management Agency on Land Delivery for Housing

Year	Plan for Land Delivery for Housing		Number of Applicants and Land Delivered (Performance)				
	Area to be delivered in m ²	Total No. of individuals to get land	No. of applicants registered to get land	Total area of land delivered in m ²	Percentage of land delivered out of plan	No. of applicants got land	Per cent of applicants got land out of plan
2007-08	246,000	1625	4,500	56,700	23.0	378	23.0
2008-09	258,000	2,000	5,025	58,800	22.8	420	22.8
2009-10	360,500	2,500	6,200	36,450	10.1	270	10.1
2010-11	400,000	2,857	7,574	11,475	2.9	85	2.9
2011-12	520,000	3,430	No data		No land was delivered		
2012-13	465,000	3,400	No data		No land was delivered		

Source: Based on Land Development and Management Agency Burayu Town, 2014

The maximum implementation period during the past six years in this regard is in 2007- 08 in which the performance was about 23 per cent. The performance ranges from 0 per cent in two years (2011-12 and 2012-13) to 10.8 per cent in 2009-10 which indicates least performance. The less supply and high demand of land for housing compelled many persons to find other options of which one is squatting.

The area that can be provided for a single person to be used for housing in the town ranges from 105m² up to 500

m². The maximum area (500 m²) is during legalizing of the earlier unplanned land developments like around the expansion of the urban centers where previously occupied by rural farmers. For this kind of 500 m², plan and building permit is given for the land holder and if the area is more than 500 m² the government (Land Development and Management Agency) takes over the land (add to its land bank) and pay compensation to the previous land user mainly the farmers. The compensation is very low which is 8 birr per m² for grazing land, 14 birr per m² for farm land and 17.50 birr for the land covered by eucalyptus tree. This means that the government pays the previous holder only 1,600 birr per 200 m² for grazing land, 2,800 birr per 200 m² for farm land and 3,500 birr per 200 m² for the land covered by eucalyptus tree. According to the town administration, this payment is based on proclamation No. 455/2005 (Expropriation of Landholdings for Public Purposes and Payment of Compensation) and Regulation No. 135/2007 (payment of compensation for property situated on landholdings expropriated for public purposes). According to this proclamation and regulation, a land holder whose holding has been expropriated shall be entitled to payment of compensation for his property situated on the land and for payment improvements he/she made to such land. About two years ago, to get land for residential purpose in Burayu town, one should pay a total of 4,154 birr (currently about 215 in U.S. dollars) which is all the same for 140 m², 160 m² and 200 m² and a total of 3,675 birr (about 190.5 U.S. dollars) to get 105 m². (At present, land in the town and in other big towns is delivered by lease which is different from the payment indicated).

According to the survey conducted by the author in 2014, out of the total of the sample 246 squatter households, 232 bought either from farmers or land dealers. From these 232 squatter households, 109 households (bought the vacant land) which is illegal according to the Ethiopian constitution, 96 households bought very small house which is only for purpose of symbol to call it house; 20 households bought good but not completed house and 2 squatter households bought completed house. Out of the total sample squatter households, the remaining 19 got the land/house as gift from the squatter family or from other relatives. The price by which these squatters bought from the farmers or land dealers is significantly higher than the amount the town administration pays to the farmers as the compensation indicated above. This means that the farmers want to illegally sell the vacant land to land dealers rather than forcibly agreeing with the government which pays less amount of money. This contradicts the finding of Minwuyelet (2005), which says the development of squatter settlements before the nationalization of urban land and extra houses in Ethiopia was highly deterred as the power of the property owners (individual ownership) was strong enough to discourage illegal occupation of land. According to Minwuyelet (2005), after the nationalization, the government could not effectively and efficiently manage the land and everyone has got the chance to squat on vacant government lands which is completely not true in case of Burayu town. On the other side, proclamation No. 455/2005 and related Regulation No. 135/2007 of Ethiopia have also opened some gap for development and expansion of squatter settlements in Burayu town.

It is again obvious that housing is one of the basic human right and for one who does not have house in the area he/she is living, to demand land for this purpose is reasonable. The sample heads of squatter households have responded the reasons for squatting outside the official procedures in Burayu town. According to the responses of 58.9 per cent of the heads of squatter households, the primary reason for squatting is the cumbersome procedures of Land Development and Management Agency to get land formally. The other significant reasons for squatting are location preference and need to have large plot size which accounted 17.5 per cent and 10.6 per cent respectively. Table 2 shows the major reasons for squatting as reported by sample squatter households in Burayu town.

Table 2 Major Reasons for Squatting in Burayu Town

Major Reasons for Squatting	No. of Sample Squatter Households	Per cent Respondents
Cumbersome procedures of Land Development and Management Agency to get land formally	145	59.0
Inability to afford the price of land in formal land market	21	8.5
Inability to afford the building standards of the town	5	2.0
Inability to deposit an estimated construction cost	4	1.6
Location preference	43	17.5
Need to have large size of plot	26	10.6
Motive for speculation	2	0.8
Total	246	100.0

Source: Based on Survey Conducted by the author in 2014

Only 8.5 per cent of the respondents reported their inability to afford the price of land in formal land market as the main reason for squatting. As indicated in the table above, need to have large size of plot is the other reason for squatting as reported by 10.6 per cent of head of squatter households. Area occupied by different sample squatter households is categorically indicated in table 3 below. Area of most of the squatters is from 201 m² up to 400 m² in which 66.6 per cent of the squatters are concentrated.

Table 3 Plot Size of the Sample Squatter Households in Burayu Town

Plot size in m ²	No. of Sample Squatter Households	Per cent
< 100	5	2.0
101-200	36	14.6
201- 300	98	39.9
301-400	66	26.8
401-500	31	12.6
501-750	8	3.3
> 751	2	0.8
Total	246	100.0

Source: Based on Survey Conducted by the Author in 2014

The sample squatter households occupying the plot size indicates that the very small and very large size holdings are comparatively less. There are only 16.6 per cent households who occupy for their squatter houses on an average less than 200 m² of land each and there are 16.7 per cent households who occupy on an average more than 400 m² of land each. Most of the households i.e, 67.6 per cent occupy the land for their squatter houses range between 201m² - 400 m². However, the highest proportions of squatters occupy on an average 201-300 m² each who are 39.8 per cent which indicates the optimum size range of plots for a household. Definitely the plot size of less than 100 m² is too small to live in as well as the plot size of more than 500 m² is too large to be allowed in a city

2.2 Social Variables as Factors for Squatting in Burayu Town:

Social variables may be health condition, family size and education level of the squatter households. According to Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Central Statistics Authority (2007), the number of total disabled persons in Burayu town was 557 or 0.87 per cent of the total population. Among the total population of 1016 sample squatter households there are 3 persons or 0.30 per cent who are disabled. This shows that physical disability is not the main reason for squatting in Burayu town. Out of the 246 sample head of squatter households, only 2.4 per cent of the head of squatter households reported they are terminally ill and the rest were reported healthy. Out of the head of sample squatter households, 7 are female headed. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Central Statistics Authority (2007) indicates that 26.3 per cent of residents in Burayu town are illiterate. Among heads of sample squatter households 4.1 per cent are illiterate. More than half of the head of squatter households are either diploma holders or grade 9-12 standard passed. Overall primary or lower level educated or illiterates among head of squatter households are about one fifth of the total sample households. It clearly indicates that the poor health and low education is not the reason of squatting and avoiding the government regulations. (See table 4)

Table 4 Educational Level of the Heads of Sample Squatter Households in Burayu Town

Education	No. of Sample Head of Households	Per cent
Masters degree & above	7	2.8
First Degree	30	12.2
Diploma	72	29.3
Certificate	12	4.9
Grade 9-12	64	26.0
Grade 1-8	40	16.3
Write & read	11	4.5
Illiterate	10	4.0
Total	246	100.0

Source: Surveyed by the author, 2014

2.3 Poverty and Squatting in Burayu Town:

Most of the heads of sample squatter households in Burayu town are within the productive age between 18-55 years who are 94 per cent. This means that most of these squatter households are neither too young nor too old to work hard to get their formal residential house. According to the World Bank in Ethiopia the poverty line is below 1.25 U.S. dollars per day. Based on this, as can also be seen on the next table, income of most of the head of sample squatter households in the town is not under this poverty line. About 89 per cent of the squatter households earn more than 1.7 U.S. dollars per day which is significantly higher.

Table 5 Monthly Income of the Heads of Sample Squatter Households in Burayu Town

Income in Birr	Number of Households	Per cent
501– 1000	27	11.0
1001-1500	59	24.0
1501- 2000	67	27.2
2001-2500	46	18.7
2501- 3000	19	7.7
3001-3500	11	4.5
3501-4000	11	4.5
> 4000	6	2.4
Total	246	100.0

Source: Based on Survey Conducted by the Author in 2014 About 19.45 Birr = 1U.S. Dollar, current rate
 The mean monthly income of the sample squatter households in the town is 1874.65 birr (about 3.2 dollar per day) with standard error of the mean which is equal to 61.468 (table 6).

Table 6 Statistical Status of Monthly Income of the Head of Sample Squatter Households in Burayu Town

Statistical Level of Income	Value
Mean	1874.65
Median	1700.00
Mode	1550.00
Std. Deviation	964.09
Skewness	1.45
Kurtosis	4.85
Difference between the highest and the lowest value (Range)	7160.00
Minimum income	340.00
Maximum income	7500.00

Source: Computed by the Author from Table 5, 2014

The income distribution of the sample squatter households is not normal and has a skewness value of 1.448 with the standard error of skewness which is 0.155. This means that it is a significant positive value and the skewness has a long right tail indicating that very few numbers of the squatter households are getting relatively very high income per month and income of most heads of squatter households is concentrated on the left hand side. The next histogram with the normal distribution shows the area where monthly incomes of the squatter households are concentrated and the nature of the skewness.

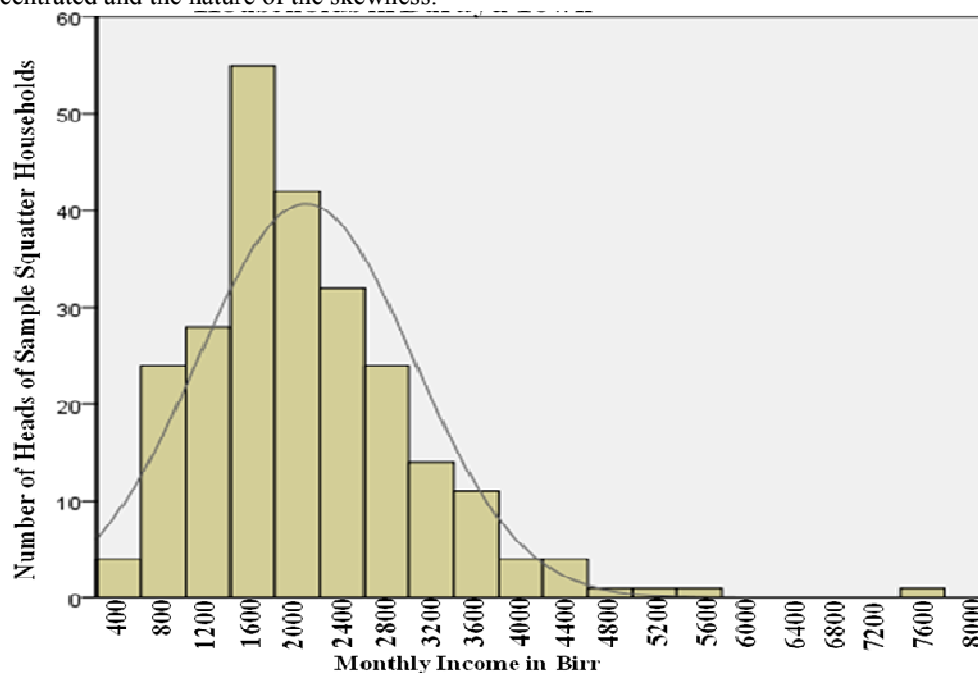


Figure 1 Income Distribution of Heads of the Sample Squatter Households in Burayu Town

Source: Computed by the author from table 5, 2014

Moreover, the value of the kurtosis statistic as can be seen on table 6 above is 4.847 with the standard error of the kurtosis which is 0.309. This indicates that, relative to a normal distribution, monthly incomes of the sample squatter households in Burayu town are more clustered about the center of the distribution that is around 2,000

birr per month (about 3.5 dollar per day) and as also indicated earlier, it has thinner tails until the extreme values of the distribution.

Most of the head of squatter households are employed and they have their own income. Only 7.7 per cent of all the respondents are not employed and this means that prevailing of squatting activity in Burayu town is not because of lack of employment opportunities.

Table 7 Employment among the Heads of the Squatter Households in Burayu Town

Type of employment	Number of squatter households	Per cent
Not Employed	19	7.7
Government employed	69	28.1
Employed by NGO	26	10.6
Private or self employed	129	52.4
Pensioner	3	1.2
Total	246	100.0

Source: Based on Survey Conducted by the author in 2014

About 38.7 per cent of head of squatter households are employed by government and NGOs, however, 52.4 per cent head of squatter households are engaged in private or self employment activities (table 8).

Table 8 Number of Persons Employed in Sample Squatter Households in Burayu Town

Sample Households	Number of Persons Employed				Total Sample Households
	No Person Employed	One Person Employed	Two Persons Employed	Three Persons Employed	
Number of Households	8	183	50	5	246
Per cent of Households	3.3	74.4	20.3	2.0	100.0

Source: Based on Survey Conducted by the author in 2014

Out of 59 sample heads of squatter households, all persons above the age of 18 years are employed. This is also the other clue that unemployment is not the main cause of expansion of squatter settlements in Burayu town.

3. Town Administration about the Expansion of Squatter Settlements:

Responses from officials and experts of Land Development and Management Agency and the town administration, 2014 indicate that as there is great numbers of squatter settlements in the town and since squatters have enormous contribution in solving the existing housing problem in the town, most of the squatters were tolerated and no serious action was taken since long ago. Besides, according to these officials and experts, it was very difficult even to identify who is squatter and who is not squatter in the town. This is because most households have some written documents which indicate as they purchased the house (not the vacant land) from someone else which is also legally acceptable. Still, the respondents seriously pointed as this kind of land development is becoming great annoyance to their offices and has many negative impacts on their town's overall development. This contradicts the findings of Hardoy and Satterthwaite (1989) on page 8, who stated:

"Illegal settlements can be viewed as the development of cities which are more appropriate to the local culture, climate and conditions than new urban planning scheme inherited from Western societies and the plans produced by the governments of the same cities"

Currently, the town administration is registering some of the squatter households and other households who constructed their houses in informal way based on Proclamation No. 721/2004 (a Proclamation to Provide for Lease Holding of Urban Lands). Article 5 sub article 4 of this proclamation states that informal settlements that have been regularized in pursuant to the regulations of regions and urban administrations shall be administered as leasehold tenures on the basis of their conformity with the urban plans and parceling standards. According to Burayu town administration, based on regulation 115/2005 and directive 9/2005 of Oromia National Regional State, this regularization of informal settlements by lease hold system concerns only those informal residential houses constructed before February 1st 2013. Squatter houses which were constructed after this day were being demolished in different parts of the town. The most frequent response of the town administration to this development and expansion of squatter settlements in Burayu town is demolition and eviction without any compensation and other treatments. Only in this year, more than 1,000 houses were demolished in Burayu town. The following photograph was taken during that demolition campaign:



Figure 3: Demolition Campaign in Different Parts of Burayu Town

Source: Photographs are taken by the author during the demolishing campaign by the town administration, 2014

4. Conclusion and Suggestion:

Residents especially in urban centers of developing countries always raise the question of adequate housing. Especially in poorer countries like Ethiopia, urban housing has dual purpose like to live in and as a place to work and earn in. For this basic and fundamental human right, land should be accessible in urban centers. Accessibility of urban land is described by the availability of the land itself, reasonable price to get this land, and security of tenure. Burayu town is one of the biggest town in Oromia National Regional State and very proximate to Addis Ababa metropolis, capital of Ethiopia. Because of its proximity to the capital city, many people want to have their residence in this town. Even though the number of residential houses in the town is growing rapidly, more than 54 per cent of the total residential houses in the town are squatter houses which are becoming headache for the town administration and other concerned bodies. The finding indicates that the most significant cause for development and expansion of squatter settlements in Burayu town is not economic poverty or problem of affordability. It is rather the very poor supply of land which is the problem of land accessibility. So, the local government /Burayu town administration is better to look into its work process and perform reasonably to increase the supply of land and to cope up with the increasing demand. The town administration should also focus on preventing expansion of squatter settlements rather than demolishing after construction. Officials of other similar towns in Oromia National Regional State and even Ethiopia can learn a lesson from Burayu's mismanagement of land and scarcity of formal housing which lead to squatters.

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