

**Community Self-help Development, Spaces for
Scaling Up:**

**A Case Study of Awura Amba Rural Self-help
Community in Northern Ethiopia**



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Abstract

By positioning within an alternative development and agency/actor-oriented perspectives, and by employing diverse qualitative research methods, this study examines the dynamics of community self-help development and scaling up. The study investigates the processes and factors that contribute to successful community self-help development that leads to community capacity and empowerment. The diverse processes, through which poor people, through their individual and collective agency, strategize their actions, resist and negotiate with other stakeholders is emphasised. Community's own mobilization for self-management, based on the networks of self-help groups; trusted leadership drawn from community members with excellent mobilization skill to spark community's own mobilization for empowerment; poor people's collective agency; trust that builds community and promotes collective actions; genuine participation within the community, which is realized because of planned and spontaneous interaction among intimate, small groups of people; and outside supports from government and NGOs, based on the bottom up proposals of communities are the main processes and elements of successful community self-help development. On the other hand, the study has shown that the scaling up of such successful community self-help development in Ethiopia is constrained by unfavourable institutional arrangements within the government structures, lack of capacity and power among local governments and inescapable nominal and instrumental participation, rather than genuine participation to build local people's capability. Methodological limitations and lack of awareness about the goal of scaling up within the existing replication efforts are other challenges of scaling up.

The researcher argues that the existing institutions and participatory practices may present opportunities for a gradual actualization of people's agency, because the poor are capable of formulating new ways of strategizing and combining available resources in a new manner to solve problems. Thus, by using the available, small opportunity and systematically combining with other grassroots development approaches, by emphasizing on small, intimate groups of people (community/village), alternative spaces of scaling up can be identified and used.

Key words: community, self-help, development, scaling up, agency/actor, Awura Amba community

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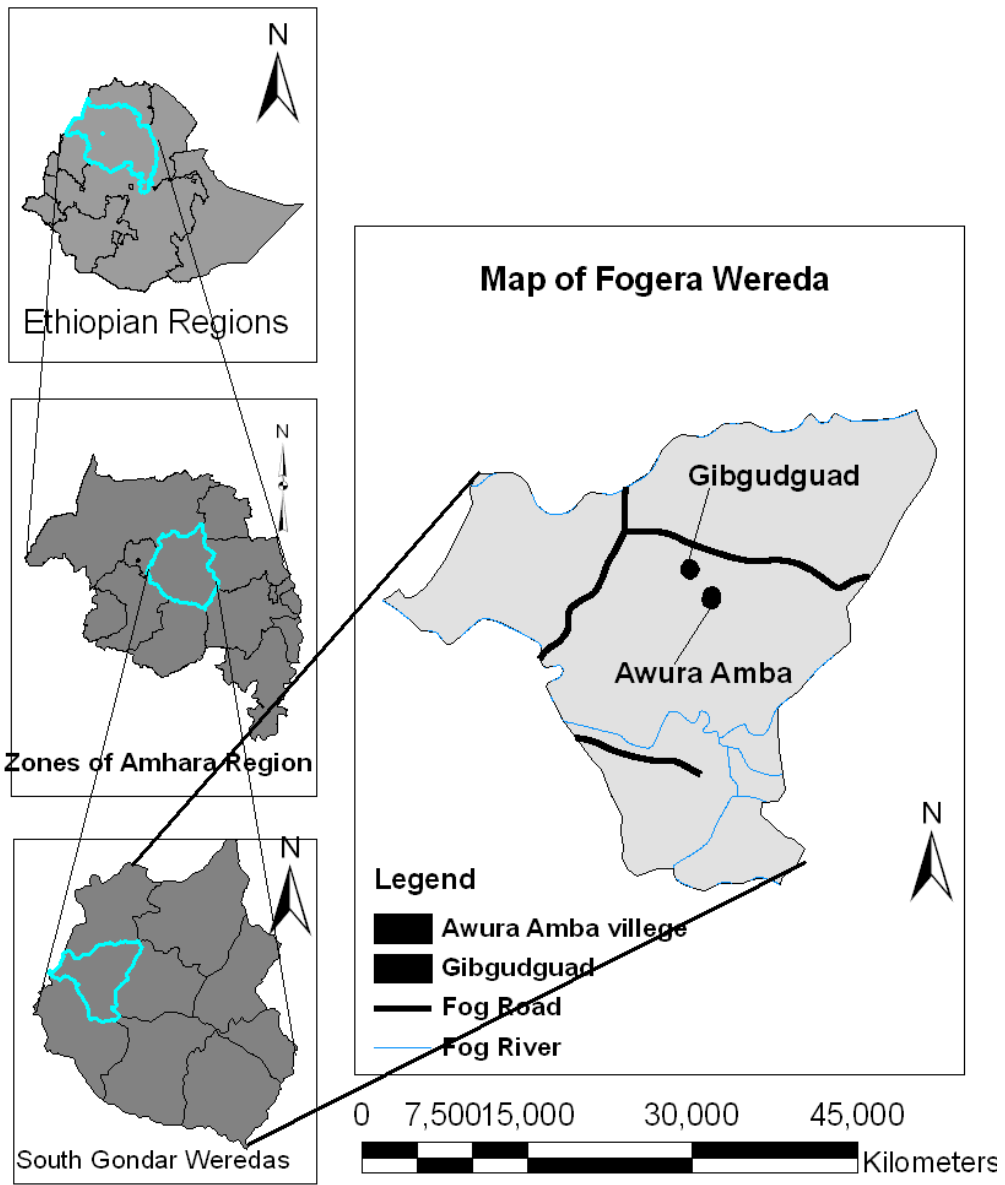


Figure 1: Location Map of the Study Area

Table of Contents

Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents	iv
List of figures	vii
List of Acronyms and non-English Terms	viii
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Rationale of the Study	3
1.1.1 Personal Goals	3
1.1.2. Societal Goals that Guided the Study	4
1.2 Understanding (Community) Self-help Development and Scaling Up	4
1.2.1 (Community) Self-help Development	4
1.2.2 Scaling Up	5
1.3 Research Objectives and Questions.....	7
1.3 Organization of the Thesis	8
2. Contextualizing the Study	9
2.1 State/Government Structure in Ethiopia.....	9
2.1.1 Socio-political Culture	10
2.1.2 Decentralization	10
2.2 Living in Rural Ethiopia.....	12
2.3 Development and Development Activities	13
2.4 The Experience of Civil Societies in Ethiopia.....	13
2.5 Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) and Fogera Woreda.....	14
2.5.1 Geographical Location	14
2.5.2 Rural Life and Economic Activity	14
2.5.3 Socio-political and Cultural Conditions.....	15
2.6 The Study Area: Awura Amba Community	15
2.6.1 Location	15
2.6.2 History: The Founder and Leader of the Community.....	15
2.6.3 Members: Community Membership vis-a-vis Union Membership	17
2.6.4 Socio-cultural Characteristics	18
2.6.4 Economic Activities and Socio- economic Infrastructures	18
2.6.5 Organizational Structure	19
2.7 Summary	19

3. Theoretical, Conceptual and Analytical Frameworks.....	20
3.1 The Structure-Agency Debate.....	20
3.1.1 (Social) Structures.....	21
3.1.2 Actors and Agency: An Actor-oriented Approach	22
3.2 Alternative Development Theory	24
3.2.1 Capacity building	24
3.2.2 Participation	26
3.2.3 Empowerment: Participation as End.....	29
3.3 Community Self-help Development and Scaling up	31
3.3.1 Community: A contested concept.....	31
3.3.2 Community Self-help (Development): Who Helps Whom?.....	32
3.3.3 Community Self-help Development in the Rural Context: Relevance.....	33
3.3.4 The Interplay of Capacity Building, Participation and Empowerment in Community Self-help Development.....	34
3.3.5 Scaling up of Grassroots Community Development: Scaling up of Approaches to Empowerment	35
3.3.6 Typology of Scaling up.....	36
3.4 Analytical Framework to Community Self-help Development and Scaling Up.....	37
3.4.1 Agency of Social actors.....	37
3.4.2 Capacity Building, Participation and Empowerment.....	37
3.5 Summary.....	38
4 Research Design and Methodology	40
4.1 Choice of the Study Area: Case Study Approach	40
4.2 Qualitative Methodology.....	42
4.2.1 Preparatory Phase	43
4.2.2 The Main Research Phase: Methods and Data Collection Process	44
4.2.3 Recording Interviews and Observation	52
4.2.4 Assessment of Secondary Sources	52
4.3 The Researcher's Reflexivity: Position and Personality	53
4.3.1 Ethical Considerations and Representation	53
4.3.2 Doing Trustworthy and Dependable Qualitative Research	54
4.3.3 Limitations in the Field	55
4.4 Processing and Analysis of Data	56
4.5 Summary.....	57
5. Community Self-help Development: Processes and Factors Contributing to Success.....	58
5.1 processes and Factors of Successful Community Self-help Development.....	58
5.1.1 Community's own mobilization for development from below	58
5.1.2 Leadership: People's own Leaders	61

5.1.3 “Poor” people’s collective agency: From absolute poverty to empowerment	64
5.1.4 Trust: Trust on leadership and among community members	66
5.1.5 Participation within Self-help Community as empowerment process	68
5.2.6 The Role of Outside Stakeholders: Governments and NGOs	73
5.3 Summary	78
6. Scaling Up of Successful Community Self-help Development	79
6.1 Barriers to Grassroots Development and Scaling Up	79
6.1.1 Institutional Arrangements and Capacity	79
6.1.2 Capacity, Power and Attitudes of (Local) Governments	82
6.1.3 The Politics of Local Participation	85
6.2 Methodological Limitations and Narrow Goals of Scaling Up	87
6.2.1 Inadequate Planning, Coordination and Research	87
6.2.2 Scaling Up without Empowerment	90
6.3 Agents of Scaling Up	91
6.3.1 The Roles and Limitations of Government Actors	92
6.3.2 The Roles and Limitations of NGOs	93
6.3.3 The Role of Successful Self-help Community: The Role and Limitations of Awura Amba Community	95
6.4 Spaces for Scaling Up	97
6.4.1 Lessons Learnt from Successful Community Self-help Development: Self-help as a Scaling Up Approach	98
6.4.2 Lessons Learnt from Scaling Up Story of Lulista Mariam	99
6.5 Summary	102
7. Conclusion	103
7.1 The Dynamics of Successful Community Self-help Development	103
7.2 Scaling Up of Successful Community Self-help Development in Ethiopia	104
References	107
Appendices	117
Appendix 1. Background Information on Research Participants (FGD)	117
A. FGD with Selected Members of Awura Amba Community (FGD1)	117
B. FGD with Selected Members of Gibgudguad, the neighbouring village (FGD2)	118
C. FGD with selected members of Lulista Mariam, the “other Awura Amba” (FGD3)	119
Appendix 2. Background information of Key Informants	120
Appendix 3. Interview Guides	122
A. FGD with Selected Members of Awura Amba Community	122
B. FGD with Selected Members of Gibgudguad	124
C. FGD with Selected Members of Lulista Mariam	125
D. Life History Interview Guide: Founder and Leader of Awramba Community	126

E. Key Informant Interview Guide: Representatives of NGO and Concerned Departments of Local/Regional Government	127
F. Observation Check List	127
Appendix 4: Field Photos	129

List of figures

Figure 1: Location Map of the Study Area.....	iii
Figure 2: Simplified State/Government Structure of FDRE and Tier of Governments by Name in which Awura Amba Community as a Village is found.....	12
Figure 3: Zumra, in the Middle with green hat, explaining how to proceed with the construction of the community's secondary school.....	64
Figure 4 (upper left): students and staff members from technical and vocational education training college are listening a lecture by Zumra.....	90
Figure 5 (upper right): farmers and some government employees are listening a lecture by a lady of Awura Amba community.....	90
Figure 6 (lower left): security officers from different zones and woredas of ANRS are buying weaving products after their discussion with the community members.....	90
Figure 7(lower right): those visiting community's social services after the lecture.....	90
Figure 8: Box showing scaling up story of Lulista Mariam	99

List of Acronyms and non-English Terms

ANRS	Amhara National Regional State
BoFED	Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (of ANRS)
CSA	Central Statistical Agency (of Ethiopia)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IIRR	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
Kebele	the 5 th level of government from the centre in organizational structure of the six levels of government in the FDRE
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (of Ethiopia)
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OED	Operations Evaluation Department (of World Bank)
ORAP	Organization of Rural Associations for Progress
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme
Woreda	the 4 th level of government from the centre in organizational structure of the six levels of government in the FDRE

1. Introduction

With a general shift towards alternative development paradigm since the 1970s, the concept of community driven (self-help) development has crept into the vocabulary of development discourses. Community driven and self-help development recognizes that poor people are not passive subjects; rather they are capable and prime actors in the development process. Individuals and communities take responsibility for their own development and “pull themselves up by their own bootstraps” (Cheshire 2006). On the other hand, conventional, top-down development policies and programmes fail to solve the real problems (poverty as disempowerment) of the poor in the global south. This is because of governments’ continued commitment to economic fundamentalism (Mowbray 2005) and condescending attitudes towards the poor (Uvin 1995). However, from an agency-oriented perspective, local people, individually and in a group, have the capacity to devise ways of coping with life, solve their own problems, and learn to intervene in the flow of social events, even within severely restricted social conditions (Long 2001). Burkey (1993) argues that rural, local development initiatives can certainly occur by persisted struggle of the active agency of the poor even if the macro-level policies and relationships are not conducive. “...with a creativist view, according to which people are the creative forces of development, the means as well as the end of development, for development is defined as people’s self-help development” (Rahman 1993 in Pieterse 2001: 82). From an alternative development perspective, all such people’s development processes take place at local levels where the poor live, work, and acquire their knowledge. According to Friedman (1992), community (or locality) is the primary and an immediate, open space to most people for the undertaking of their own development. Therefore, the community is the primary social actor to carry out and implement people’s self-help development.

With a rapid paradigm shift towards the bottom up and people’s self-help development, fairly ample empirical studies have been done on ‘self-help’ with various prefixes and suffixes; community *self-help* activities, rural *self-help* organizations, community *self-help* development. However, many of these studies have emphasized: First, on investigating the role of community self-help approach or organizations for mere economic and/or material progress (for example, Thomas 1985; Hill 1991; Madu & Umebali 1993). For example, most of them focus on the role of a self-help approach within social services facilities, such as building schools and clinics. Second, the role of community self-help within a conventional

development approach. For example, one of the recent studies that positioned itself in alternative development, by Berner & Phillips (2005: 17) has addressed this basic research question: “Does [community self-help approach] work for all urban poor communities, and critically for all people in such communities?” As such, the emphasis on self-help research is about whether (community) self-help improves people’s lives, rather than focusing on what conditions can make the former successful for the latter. However, I argue that studying factors of success for community self-help approach is the essence for studying scaling up of approaches of successful community self-help development. I believe that the existing studies overlook that aspect because their studies are not guided by a scaling up objective.

On the other hand, there are many examples of islands of successful grassroots level development in general and community self help development like Awura Amba community in particular in many developing countries. However, relative to the massive poverty and disempowerment of people throughout those countries like Ethiopia, these *islands of success* are like a mere drop in the bucket. This is the reason why the scaling up discourse entered into the development scholarship in the 1990s so as to address the issue of going to scale. The aim is to develop theoretical and practical approaches that could help reach the greatest possible number of poor communities to empower them.

Nevertheless, not enough attention is paid in the academic research frontier to scientific inquiry about scaling up (Gillespie 2004). Most studies, which are working papers (most of them are World Bank papers), address the issue of scaling up, not in the way that they could contribute to the consolidation of a distinctive theory or discourse of scaling up. Rather, they are project-oriented studies emphasizing on project evaluation for reporting to the concerned organizations; though Korten (1990) in Pieterse (2001: 82) notes that “it is impossible to be a true development agency without a theory that directs action to the underlying causes of underdevelopment”. Even, those very few scientific studies (for example, Uvin 1995; Uvin, et al 2000 published in World Development Journal) and existing literature is biased in addressing only successful scaling up projects (Hartmann & Linn 2008), which are mainly initiated by NGOs. Therefore, I believe that the knowledge that could be obtained from such studies is partial because of two reasons. First, they fail to construct knowledge from the perspective of unsuccessful scaling up endeavours. Second, by focusing exclusively on researching scaling up of successful NGOs’ projects, the knowledge that could be obtained from the scaling up process of community self-help development, which is initiated by communities themselves, is also missing. I argue that all these knowledge gaps have a severe

impact on the consolidation of the scaling up discourse. Therefore, having identified these gaps, this study has strived to address the issue of scaling up by focusing on communities' own initiated successful self-help development, and emphasizing on barriers and challenges for scaling up.

Turning to the Ethiopian context, scaling up studies are non-existent, though one of the Ethiopian government's slogan in the eve of new Ethiopian Millennium reads as "we will ensure Ethiopian renaissance by scaling up our best practices". Asked to explain why his *woreda* (the 4th level of government from the centre in organizational structure of the six levels of government in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE)-see figure 2) has failed to scale up the best practices of Awura Amba community, Jember, Head, Office of Consultancy for Population Mobilization of Fogera *Woreda*, responded that "because we have serious conceptual and attitudinal limitations regarding scaling up not only to scale up the practices of Awura Amba community, but also other best practices from other places". Concerning the existing research on Awura Amba community, on the other hand, there are a handful of studies on different issues, such as anthropological, educational, cooperatives and gender issues. But there is no study yet from the perspective of community (self-help) development and scaling up except this one. Moreover, I believe that the existing research fails to use an appropriate theoretical approach. I strongly argue that Awura Amba community is a practical version of an alternative development on the ground, so that an alternative development and/or agency-oriented theoretical approaches can better guide the studies about this community. But no other study employs these approaches.

Thus, by positioning myself within an alternative development and agency-oriented approach, this study aims to contribute in filling the aforementioned knowledge gaps in community self-help development and scaling up discourses.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

1.1.1 Personal Goals

My personal background, as one who grew up in a poor, rural female headed household and had experienced all forms of poverty, it is a great impetus to deal with the topic of this study. Apart from economic poverty, 'poverty as disempowerment' was part of my life. Generally speaking, as an ordinary member of Amhara society, all political and socio-cultural characteristics discussed in chapter two were applicable to me. Thus, studying successful

community self-help development and scaling up as a counter discourse to my personal background, is my basic personal goal that has guided this study.

In connection to the aforementioned personal goal, studying the theories of alternative development and agency, in which the agency of my family is implied has motivated me to focus on the topic of this study. The outlines of these theories can be confirmed by the story of my family. My mother, as the head of the household, had to represent the household to negotiate and interact with outside institutions, which is traditionally the role of male household head. She had to explore all sources of household livelihoods. I and my siblings, since our early childhood period, had to take part in a bitter struggle, under extremely difficult circumstances, to contribute to the household economy and for our better future. Indeed, thanks to the agency of my mother, my siblings and mine, we have made significant improvements in our lives. After all, I am able to attain my current status. Thus, the great conformity of my personal background with the study of the above theories of development (which have become my prime theoretical interests) guided the study of this thesis.

1.1.2. Societal Goals that Guided the Study

Given the fact that Awura Amba community is an island of success for community self-help development amid a society of pervasive poverty and disempowerment, the replication of the best practices of this community to reach and/or empower the greatest possible number of poor communities is a genuine rationale behind this study. Thus, exploring possibilities to use this community as a national (perhaps beyond that) workshop for community self-help development initiatives is a wider societal goal that guided this research. In effect, I believe that the findings of this study potentially have a tremendous impact on development policy and programmes in Ethiopia and beyond.

1.2 Understanding (Community) Self-help Development and Scaling Up

1.2.1 (Community) Self-help Development

Although it is not new in the development scholarship, the contemporary discourse of self-help (development) is distinguished from its earlier manifestations that urge the conceptualization of it in connection with the contemporary development theory. The discourse of people's self-help development is reintroduced in the development vocabulary in connection to the bottom up development approach. In the alternative development paradigm, people's self-help development is the development by the grassroots, in which community, as the leading actor, is implied. "In contrast to earlier, more centrally driven policies, community

development was predicated on the belief that raising the standard of living in local villages should be achieved through the self-help efforts of the resident population. ...however, this new paradigm of self-help was based upon the recognition that since entire groups or localities were experiencing disadvantage, community, rather than individual, solutions to the problem should be applied” (Cheshire 2006: 40). Self-help development is a collective endeavour. Thus, individualism is not a dominant discourse of the contemporary self-help development (ibid).

The most compelling point regarding community self-help development is the notion that it is a means for community empowerment, at the same time as it is an end by itself. Active participation of community members in self-help activities and their frequent involvement in mutual decision makings would enhance social learning at the individual and group levels that eventually lead to the development of community capability (Hailu 1995). Berner & Phillips (2005), on the other hand, argue that community self-help development is the ultimate goal of participatory, capacity building and empowerment activities. However, it should be noted that community self-help development does not mean that development without the participation of outsiders (state and NGOs). “...Relying completely on [poor people’s] own latent capacities, will likely prove to be just as futile” (ibid: 27).

Therefore, based on the aforementioned discussions, in this study, community self-help development is conceptualized as a development process that is initiated and sustained by the leading role of community members. It is primarily based on people’s latent capability and creativity; it is based on the mutual reciprocity of knowledge, skills and material assets to achieve common goals. As such self-help endeavours are implied by collective action. Capacity building, participation and empowerment are both means and ends of community self-help development.

1.2.2 Scaling Up

Scaling up is one of the most confusing concepts in the development literature. There are many terminologies related to it, for example, *scaling-out*, *going to scale*. There are numerous, (sometimes) overlapping dimensions and definitions of scaling up in the literature. The Philippine Workshop on ‘*Going to Scale*’ identified the vertical and horizontal dimensions as central to the strategies of going to scale (International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) 2000). The vertical dimension is institutional in nature and involves all stakeholders in all sectors in the process of expansion of successful practices from the

grassroots to the higher institutions of policy makers (ibid). It is, according to World Bank (2003), a means for changing institutions and policies directly or through advocacy for successful scaling up. This can be equated with Gaventa's (1998: 155) 'institutional change', which refers to "the shifts required in and among larger-scale institutions for scaling-out and scaling-up to occur effectively". The horizontal dimension of scaling up, on the other hand, refers to the geographical spread to cover more people and communities (IIRR 2000). Some others refer it as scaling out (for example, World Bank 2003).

According to IIRR (2000), scaling up can be conceptualized as a vertical and horizontal integration process within which people's empowerment is the critical dimension, if the overall context of scaling up is bringing development to the poor. This is because it is believed that "as one goes up higher the institutional levels (vertical scaling up), the greater the chances for horizontal spread; likewise, as one spreads farther geographically (horizontal scaling up), the greater the chances of influencing those at the higher levels" (IIRR 1999: 50). Dealing with scaling up of local and community driven development, Binswanger-Mkhize et al. (2009: 6) point out that "[s]caling up means more than *physical scaling up* (mass replication). It also means *social scaling up* (by increasing social inclusiveness) and *conceptual scaling up* (changing the mind-set and power relations)". This implies that scaling up is not limited to a mere horizontal replication of projects and programs or the vertical integration or mainstreaming of successful grassroots practices in larger-scale institutions. Rather, the success of scaling up must be measured by the extent to which it changes or can change power relations in favour of the poor and marginalized.

The main point that emerge from the above discussion is that, scaling up is multi-dimensional whereby, as I claim here, all the above dimensions of scaling up go together (IIRR 2000) to increase the impact of successful community self-help development to a large scale of coverage. Therefore, by arguing that the systematic integration of all those dimensions is what a successful scaling up process means, this study relies upon the following World Bank's definition of scaling up (of community driven development):

"By 'scaling up,' the aim is to reach the greatest possible number of poor people, and to motivate and empower the greatest number of communities to take control of their own development" (Gillespie 2004:2).

1.3 Research Objectives and Questions

Aiming to understand community self-help development and scaling up in general, the following research objectives and questions are addressed:

1. To understand the dynamics of successful community self-help development that leads to enhanced community capacity and empowerment.
 - What are factors (internal and external) that contribute to successful community self-help development and how do they enhance community capacity and empowerment?
 - How do poor people, through their individual and collective agency, strategize their actions, resist and negotiate with other stakeholders to attain successful community self-help development?
2. To investigate the ways on how the impacts of small scale success could go to larger scale, by exploring challenges and barriers for scaling up?
 - What barriers and challenges, and how do they limit the scaling up process of community self-help development?
 - Who are the main actors of the scaling up process, and what are their roles and limitations?
 - How would those barriers and challenges be resisted, and which alternative spaces of scaling up can be identified and how would they be used?

1.3 Organization of the Thesis

With the aim of giving contextual information about this study, **Chapter 2** highlights the unfavourable socio-political, structural situations of Ethiopia and the region, within which the study area is found, for grassroots development. It also shows the insignificant size and impacts of civil societies in the country to change such situations. As opposed to these situations, this chapter presents the accounts of active human agency of Awura Amba community, the study area.

Chapter 3 provides the theoretical, conceptual and analytical framework of the study. It highlights the interdependence of structure and agency by putting the latter at the centre to show how it creates and recreates social structures. This chapter also outlines alternative development theory by emphasizing on capacity building, participation and empowerment as the conceptual tools of this study. Finally, it provides an analytical framework to understand community self-help development and scaling up.

By introducing by a case study approach, **Chapter 4** presents FGDs, participant observation, life history and semi-structured in-depth (key informant) interviews as qualitative methods used in this study. These methods are supported by secondary sources. The chapter explains why and how these methods are used to keep the trustworthiness of the findings.

Chapter 5 discusses processes and factors of successful community self-help development that leads to community capacity and empowerment. It discusses internal factors by emphasizing the role of community (individually and collectively) as the leading actor. It also discusses the role of government and NGO actors as external factors or partners of the community.

Chapter 6 explores barriers for and limitations of the scaling up process. It also discusses the role and limitations of government, NGO and successful self-help community (Awura Amba community) in the scaling up process. Finally, the chapter identifies some alternative spaces for scaling up.

Chapter 7 sums up the findings of the study

2. Contextualizing the Study

This chapter highlights the overall national socio-political, structural context for studying community self-help development and scaling up. Emphasized in this chapter are the long existing hierarchically stratified social and political power relation, and then how this situation is integrated into the everyday lives of rural people at the local levels and in the designing and implementation of development policies and programmes. On the other hand, the chapter describes the study area, Awura Amba community as a model for successful development from below.

2.1 State/Government Structure in Ethiopia

The nature of state and/or government structure has a decisive impact on the distribution of decision-making power and popular participation in influencing public policies. While some political structures create spaces for empowerment of local communities, others establish exceptionally rigid top-down hierarchal structures which leave no room for people's voices. In many cases, the later form of political culture gradually integrates into socio-cultural life of societies, which in turn creates a persistent vertically stratified social structure that contributes for unfair distribution of power. This is the case in the history of socio-political culture of Ethiopia (Vaughan & Tronvoll 2003), the most populous and poverty stricken country in eastern Africa. Since the 1st half of 20thc, the country has hosted three different forms of governments: the first of these was monarchical government that ruled the country almost for half a century. During this period, because power was emanated from the emperor only, the state was highly centralized and absolute. Local people, therefore, had no spaces to articulate their interests in public policies. The 1974 revolution brought another centralized, but now secular, military socialist government. Like its predecessor, the structure of the socialist government was not convenient for people's engagement in issues that directly affect their life. Finally, since 1991 till today, Ethiopia has been hosting "ethno-linguistic" federal democratic government. Immediately, after it seized power, this government publicly announced devolution of power to local governments and people through the process of decentralization. Therefore, hereunder, I present the socio-political culture, and rhetoric and reality of decentralization in Ethiopia, as a context for understanding the relationship between the government and local people in terms of access to power and participation of the later in decision making processes on public issues.

2.1.1 Socio-political Culture

Dominant socio-political culture in much of Ethiopia has historically been vertically stratified and rigidly hierarchal. As a result, it is often the case that processes of socialization from birth teach Ethiopians that people are not equal..... This contributes to a non-egalitarian distribution of power... (ibid: 11)

Thus, the representatives of the state at different levels in Ethiopia continue to exercise their unchallenged power over the people. Aspen (2002) has noted that there has been deep power imbalance between the powerful central government and its peasant subjects. “It is a relationship between a centre of power and poverty stricken population that periodically suffers from famine, and chronically from lack of social, economic and political power” (ibid: 66). This long existing top-down political culture of Ethiopia has already enshrined into the social relations of the society. That teaches the people that one social group or individual is granted power which cannot be challenged or shared by others.

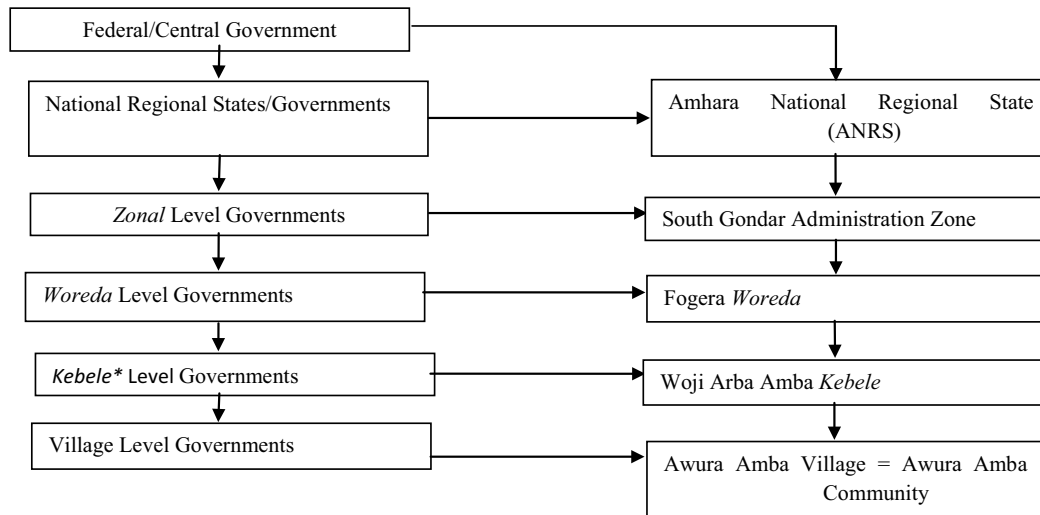
Vaughan & Tronvoll (2003) argue that empowering local poor people in Ethiopia, therefore, requires the transformation and democratization of the socio-economic and political relations at all levels of the collective. This implicitly suggests transformation from the grassroots level, though transformation at the macro level is also necessary to create an enabling environment for the grassroots level change to take place. This more or less conforms to the commitment of the existing government (at least on paper) to devolve power to the local people by its decentralization programme.

2.1.2 Decentralization

Empowering local governments and their constituent communities is the genuine objective of state decentralization. Administrative decentralization is “a de-concentrated form of administrative organization that involves delegation of responsibilities and functions by central headquarters to field offices” (Meheret 2002: 132). Political decentralization, on the other hand, aims at realizing complete devolution of political and socio-economic decision making power to the local governments and communities (ibid). On paper, Ethiopian state decentralization under the existing government is consistent with this form of decentralization. With publicly reported purpose of expanding popular access to decision-making and control over resources, the existing government of Ethiopia has started to show its commitment towards decentralization by creating “ethno-linguistic” federal government, which comprises nine “autonomous” regional states and two independent city administrations. According to article 52 of the constitution of FDRE (FDRE 1995), regional states are granted unconditional

self rule that includes “enacting and executing their own constitutions and to formulate and execute policies, strategies and plans for their economic and social development”. In 2001, the central government has further implemented *woreda* level decentralization program in four regional states, including Amhara National Regional State (ANRS). This program has been supposed to devolve decision-making powers from regional and *zonal* governments to the *woredas*. From the perspective of the government, *woreda* level decentralization aims at empowering the local governments by allowing them to formulate and implement their own development plans with greater participation of constituent communities at grassroots level (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) 2002).

However, many studies on Ethiopian state decentralization have critiqued that the decentralization policies and programmes are more often far from reality in practice. Meheret (2002) finds that the *woredas* tier of the Ethiopian government has no real political and economic decision making power. Therefore, the role of *woreda* level governments is limited to the implementation of top-down policies than making their own decisions based on community or locally determined priorities. Other commentators, for example, Vaughan & Tronvoll (2003) commented that Ethiopian state structure is a chain of top-down apparatus to follow up the implementation of government or party policies and programmes, and the collection of taxes instead of creating a room for the voices of the local population. Therefore, as it is evident in many studies, such as Tesfaye (2007) and Meheret (2002), decentralization in Ethiopia is far from achieving community empowerment and participatory development. Therefore, whereas state decentralization in Ethiopia is a political type in rhetoric, it is an administrative type in reality.



*kebele is the 5th level of government from the centre in organizational structure of the six levels of government in the FDRE

Figure 2: Simplified State/Government Structure of FDRE and Tier of Governments by Name in which Awura Amba Community as a Village is found

Source: Developed by the Researcher

2.2 Living in Rural Ethiopia

85% of Ethiopian population lives in the rural areas. According to International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (no date), 12 million Ethiopians, most of whom live in the rural areas, are chronically or at least periodically food insecure. The situation has been aggravated by a high rate of illiteracy in the country.

Vaughan & Tronvoll (2003) note that religious offices, traditional authority, age and gender are some socio-cultural factors at the local level in Ethiopia that determine power distribution. By virtue of being born and grown up in rural Amhara society, I observe that the head of the household (understandably the father) has absolute power of decision making about all household issues, and when we go one step up in the hierarchy, the priest/sheik in the village or some traditional leaders and older people, all of them men, have unchallenged power over the village.

Concerning state-peasant relationship, even today in the era of officially announced decentralization by Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), Meheret

(2002) has confirmed the presence of continued top-down flow of command in an “unbroken line” from the centre to the village. Aspen (2002:69) has confirmed that “*at present in Ethiopia, the most rational peasant strategy in their encounters with the state has not changed fundamentally-it is still to minimise the contact with the state by obeying only the inescapable demands it imposes on the peasantry and otherwise to ignore it....*” Thus, as there has been deepening power imbalance and exceptional distance between the state and rural communities, it seems that the latter relies on their social networks. Rural Ethiopians have a tradition of mutual aid at least within the realm of their community. It is mutual support and reciprocal benefit-not always and necessarily equally shared.

2.3 Development and Development Activities

Ethiopian government has formulated and implemented different national development policies and strategies to alleviate or at least to reduce poverty. It seems to have shown a strong commitment mainly to rural development. Ethiopian government is also committed, on the paper, about enhancing people’s participation so as to achieve “people-centred economic development” (MoFED 2006). However, there is little or no experience of actual involvement of the voices of local people and other stakeholders in the formulation of national development plans. As many commentators argue, even when there is a tendency to involve different stakeholders in the planning process, the participation is just nominal. For example, in its current national development plan, Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), which will run from 2010 to 2015, the government has held a series of public consultations, though as the Economic Intelligence Unit (www.eiu.com) assumes, the plan will probably not be changed from its current draft form in favour of the public views.

Nevertheless, it has been reported that Ethiopia has scored an average annual economic growth rate of 11.5% between 2003/04 and 2008/09 (www.mofed.gov.et), a figure which is controversial among many Ethiopian scholars and the general public and some other external bodies. In terms of Human Development Index (HDI), however, Ethiopia has not shown improvements over the same period. It is on 170th (2004-2006), 169th (2007/08) and 171th (2009) out of 177 countries (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr/>).

2.4 The Experience of Civil Societies in Ethiopia

Although until recently there has been considerable improvement in terms of working environment created by EPRDF, Desalegn (2008) has, however, commented that still there are limited opportunities for civil society works. Desalegn argues that Ethiopia still lags behind other African countries in terms of the number, strength, impact and genuine engagement of

civil societies in diverse development activities. Civil society activities in Ethiopia have significantly been curtailed by an unfavourable government legal and policy environment. There have been unfriendly relationships between the government and civil societies. The government is reluctant to consult or involve civil societies in the formulation of policies relevant to local communities (Desalegn 2002). Simultaneously, NGOs in Ethiopia have preferred to continue to work independent of the state as they have not taken part and made any attempt to influence the development debate at the local, provincial or national level (Tegegne 2003: 249). Civil societies are not keen to challenge the state on any issue or even to draw attention to the need for alternative approaches or reforms in public policy. In 2008, Ethiopian government enacted a new “repressive” law on civil societies named *Charities and Societies Proclamation No 00/2008*. The law imposes “strict government controls and harsh criminal penalties on NGOs” (Amnesty International 2009) that would be a significant challenge mainly for civil societies to come into being as well as operate freely.

Civil societies in Ethiopia have their own internal problems. Some NGOs (mainly national) are established, and work for their own organizational objectives, for example, to use their special rights of duty free import of equipments (Vaughan & Tronvoll 2003). Many others are concentrated only in urban and suburban areas than deploying their staffs and resources in the rural areas where the more disadvantaged and marginalized live (ibid).

2.5 Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) and Fogera Woreda

2.5.1 Geographical Location

ANRS is one of the nine “autonomous” regional states of FDRE. It is situated in northern Ethiopia between 8° & 45°N to 13° & 45°N latitudes. Fogera *woreda* within which Awura Amba community has settled is one of the other *woredas* of ANRS (See map 1).

2.5.2 Rural Life and Economic Activity

The rural population of ANRS depends on agriculture as the main source of livelihoods. The life of the rural people of the region has not changed for a long time. Rural peasants still practice rainfall dependent traditional form of farming with simple, traditional tools (www.everyculture.com/wc/Costa-rica-to-Georgia/Amhara.html). The region is lagging behind the national average in terms of some social and economic development indicators, such as per capita income, literacy rates and health services (Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (BoFED) 2006). From my knowledge of the region’s rural areas in general, rural life in the region is characterized by socio-economic and political impoverishment. Regarding

Fogera *woreda*, it shares almost similar socio-economic and political characteristics with the region in general.

2.5.3 Socio-political and Cultural Conditions

Hoben (1970) as quoted in Vaughan & Tronvoll (2003:32) claim that “[i]t is a fundamental postulate of Amhara culture...that social order, which is good, can be created and maintained only through hierarchical, legitimate control deriving from God.” Since the control of Ethiopian state for many centuries has historically been associated mainly with Amhara society (Vaughan & Tronvoll 2003), it is obvious that a political culture of top-down power relations would first and foremost be integrated into the socio-cultural interactions of Amhara society than any other society in the country. As such, the Amhara socio-cultural condition is characterized by a patriarchal and authoritarian system where, for example, men and older people are always superior in all affairs at different levels of social organizations.

2.6 The Study Area: Awura Amba Community

The presentation of sections below is based on information obtained from my field work.

2.6.1 Location

Awura Amba community has been living in a small, rural village, Awura Amba. The village is situated between 11⁰ 55’ 25’’ N and 11⁰ 56’ 07’’ N latitude in Foggera *woreda* of ANRS in north-western Ethiopia. It is about some 635kms and 68kms from Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar (city of ANRS) respectively (See map 1).

2.6.2 History: The Founder and Leader of the Community

The history of Awura Amba community is strongly attached to the history of the founder and leader of the community. Thus, I would present the history of the community through a quick overview of the history of the founder and leader of the community. The leader is 63 years old man, whose name is Zumra Nuru, who cannot write or read. He was born and grew up in Amhara society and family.

According to Zumra, his fundamental thoughts of equality, solidarity, and brotherhood among human beings date back to his early childhood. He claims that all of his philosophical thoughts came out from the situation of the society and family where he grew up. He grew up in a society where some people had special privileges only because of their sex, age, class, etc. He had an experience in his family that children, including him, were perceived as incapable of making the right decision for their life, and women were treated like subservients. Beyond his family, he was observing that local elites were exploiting the poor. As such, since he was

four, he began to challenge this unjust system, first by posing why questions to his family and later by criticizing the system in public. However, he faced social exclusion from the society and was labelled “mad”. When he was 13, by leaving his village and travelling across many areas within today’s ANRS, he tried to teach people about his philosophy of establishing a “just” society. Finally, in 1966 he found 66 households within the present day Awura Amba village who accepted his ideas. Then, from 1972 onwards, he started to live with these people, leaving his home village in the neighbouring *woreda*. In 1986, Zumra organized 19 willing households of the village, and established a “farmers’ association” to work together and share benefits.

Solomon (2005) in his anthropological study on Awura Amba community documents that, in 1966, Zumra met followers of the so-called ‘Alahim’ Muslim sect in a village near to Awura Amba. According to Solomon, “*Alahim believers advocate[d] the ideal principles, such as a man of truth, a brother to his fellows, ...kindness to parents next to worship of God, kind treatment and companionship to wives, women’s right...*” (p.30). Solomon added that Zumra was highly influenced by the leader and belief system of this religious group, and, therefore, had frequent contact with them. According to Solomon, after the death of the leader of the group, Zumra started “to organize his followers in the form of farmer’s producers cooperative”. However, Solomon has also documented how Zumra travelled in different areas within ANRS to teach people about his philosophical thoughts and help poor people before he met this religious group. Zumra on his part explains that:

“I met the so-called ‘Alahim’ Muslim religious sect while I was travelling to teach people. I found that they had strong brotherhood culture, though they spent much of their time for religious practices than for work. To my best knowledge, they were not different from all other neighbouring communities in terms of gender equality. Overall they were better than other communities I had met before; at least they respect and help each other. Thus, I thought that this group could understand and share my ideas. This is why I approached and frequently visited them. At the end of the day, some of the ‘Alahim’ believers became convinced by my new life style ideas and joined us when we established the farmers’ association in 1986”.

Since Zumra started to organize farmers of Awura Amba village in accordance with his new lifestyle principles, he and his fellows were regularly threatened and segregated by the neighbouring communities. They were seen as barbarians of local cultures and religions. Their new lifestyle was politicized as if they were supporting and spying for the then guerrilla fighters, today’s EPRDF, which was active in the area during that period. Thus, fearing persecution from the neighbouring communities and local cadres, between 1988 & 1990 the

community was displaced to Southern Ethiopia. In 1993, two years after the demise of socialist government by guerrilla fighters, the community returned back and settled in their previous village. However, when they returned back, they found that their land had already been confiscated by the neighbouring villagers and local cadres. They negotiated with those people and got extremely small plots of land (17.5 hectares) just for settlement. Although they are still requesting more land for agricultural investment, there is no positive response from government. According to Zumra, a group of journalists from ANRS Mass Media Agency visited the community in 2001 and a programme about the overall life style of the community was aired on the national television. For Zumra and many members of the community, this was a turning point for the recognition of the community that opened the door for better and more stabilized life. They believe that they were recognized as human beings for the first time that allow them to exert all of their efforts for the improvement of their community.

Zumra is highly respected by his community members. The members associate every success of the community with his wise leadership. Recently, he has also been become a prominent figure among the neighbouring villagers and beyond. On 13 May 2010, he was awarded Honorary Doctorate Degree in human letters by Jimma University of Ethiopia for his locally original community based development philosophy and his strong commitment and successful leadership in improving the life of his community at grassroots level.

2.6.3 Members: Community Membership vis-a-vis Union Membership

There are two types of membership in the community: community membership and union membership. According to Zumra, anyone who shares or supports the ideal principles and socio-cultural beliefs of the community qualifies for community membership regardless where he/she lives and his/her religion. However, not all community members can directly involve in the daily communal tasks or share the benefits. Those community members (who are not union members) living within the community have, however, the right and responsibility to participate in community activities, such as weekly community income generating activities, re-forestation, constructing roads and schools and cleaning the community environment. These members would be supported by the community when they need support. They can also make their own livelihoods within the community, for example, petty trade. On the other hand, union membership is limited only to those people living within the community and who directly involve in the productive communal tasks and share the benefits. All union members are automatically members of the community, but all community members are not members of the union. As such, while union membership is characterized by working together and sharing

benefits, community membership is more of sharing and enjoying social justice and ideal principles of the community, mainly by living within the community. Currently, the community comprises 119 households and 431 members. Out of these, approximately 15 households are not union members.

2.6.4 Socio-cultural Characteristics

Ethnically, all members of Awura Amba community are Amhara of ANRS. As my focus group discussants of the community confirmed, there is genuine gender equality not only in terms of avoiding division of labour based on sex but also in terms of active involvement of women in decision-making processes, both at the household and community levels. The views of children are respected, and no child labour abuse seems to exist.

With regard to religion, the community does not have any (institutional) religion or religious institutions and practices, though originally the majority of the members were Muslims while a few members were Orthodox Christians. For Awura Amba community, religion is *just believing by one God; respect and help each other; not to do on others what we do not want to be happening on us; support those who are in need; equal treatment of all people regardless colour, sex, race, age; etc.* Harmful traditional practices, such as early marriage, funeral ceremonies, and extravagant weddings, which are commonly practiced among the Amhara society and beyond, have no places in Awura Amba community.

2.6.4 Economic Activities and Socio- economic Infrastructures

Unlike many rural communities in Ethiopia, Awura Amba community has already diversified its livelihoods. As such, their economic activities include agriculture, cottage industry and service delivery. Regarding their economic status, they have a strong argument that “our achievement should be measured in terms of building a just community - our principle of *people first*”. According to focus group discussants, Awura Amba community meets all basic economic and social needs. They believe that they are economically in a better position than their neighbouring villagers.

Awura Amba community has all basic socio-economic infrastructures. The community has had its own library and kindergarten constructed by itself. The kindergarten is used for teaching children before joining public schools and adults by better educated (but not professionals) members of the community. The community has also constructed two km gravel road that connects their village to the main road. The government has provided electricity, safe drinking water, telephone, primary school. During my field work, the

community has been constructing 1st cycle secondary school by mobilizing the neighbouring villages.

2.6.5 Organizational Structure

Awura Amba community has formed its own organizational structure into the following 13 autonomous committees to perform its activities in a systematic manner: Development Committee (organizes and coordinates all other committees), Weekly Development, Legislation, Problem Identification, Job Assignment, Education, Elderly Care, Sanitation, Maternity & Patient Care, Appeal Hearing, Security, Lost & Found Property, and Reception Committees. Committee members are elected by a general assembly, the highest sovereign body consisting of all community members.

2.7 Summary

As a background to the study of community self-help development and scaling up in the rural context, this chapter highlights the overall nature of Ethiopian state/government structures, rural life, development and the experience of civil societies in Ethiopia. It has shown that the existing institutional and legal conditions are not suitable for grassroots level development. On the contrary, the chapter has also described the characteristics of the study area as a successful community self-help development under unfavourable national and local contexts, Awura Amba community. In effect, this chapter has partly informed the choice of relevant theoretical and conceptual framework of this study in the next chapter.

3. Theoretical, Conceptual and Analytical Frameworks

The development field has been preoccupied by a terrain of complex dimensions of development thinking with varying epistemological standpoints. Different hegemonic development theories have got prominence at different times to explain the *episteme* of the time. In theorizing community self-help development and scaling up, this study has adopted the structure-agency continuum and alternative development theory, with more emphasis on the latter to guide the theoretical and conceptual approach.

3.1 The Structure-Agency Debate

Over the past decades in social science, there have been divergent views on the processes, procedures and conditions through which social action is produced. Structurally oriented viewpoints emphasise the primacy of social structures, such as generational transmission of culture, institutions, gender, social hierarchy, class and ethnicity in explaining human conduct. Such perspectives tend to present people, particularly poor people in the global south, as victims and ‘prisoners’ of structural constraints (Rigg 2007). Such “[p]ure structural determinism, then, would mean that theoretically we could understand societies and history solely by reference to the pattern of social structure and without consideration of the specific interests and activities of the people within it; people would be considered as mere robots, programmed to conform to a structured pattern” (Hays 1994: 61). Agency-oriented perspectives, by contrast, emphasise the active role of agents in the production of social action. Such perspectives, as in hermeneutics and humanist approaches, underscore the primacy of agency as the focus of explanation for processes of social experiences and actions; as agents are unequivocally supposed to be capable of controlling the social world. Agents are capable of transforming social relations (Sewell 2010), or removing constraining social structures and replacing them by enabling ones (Hays 1994). This continuing tension and failures to reconcile the structure-agency dualism in social sciences have attributed to inappropriate treatments of the pairs as opposite natural kinds (Giddens 1984; Hays 1994; Fuchs 2001). However, following Giddens’s repeated conceptualization of structure as ‘duality’, many social scientists, such as Cohen (1989), Fuchs (2001), Rigg (2007) and Sewell (2010) have reaffirmed the mutual interdependence of structure and agency. All these social scientists, as I also claim, thus argue that although structures might constrain human action, agents could actively challenge constraints via the window of enabling side of the structures.

3.1.1 (Social) Structures

Giddens (1984: 185) has conceptualized *structures* as “[r]ule-resource sets, involved in the institutional articulation of social systems”. Hays (1994: 65), on the other hand, has conceived social structure as having two central interconnected elements: *systems of social relations*, as the first central element, which “consist of patterns of roles, relationships and forms of domination according to which one might place any given person at a point on a complex grid that specifies a set of categories running from class, gender, race, education, and religion, all the way to age, sexual preference, and position in the family”. *Systems of meaning or culture*, as the second element includes beliefs, and values of social groups, forms of knowledge, material products, interactional practices, rituals, and ways of life established by these (ibid).

Social structures, in the structuralist and functionalist perspectives, have been interpreted as external forces that set strict limits to what agents can achieve, which means that structure is just a constraint to human actions. Giddens (1984), however, theorizes structure as both constraining and enabling factor. “Capability and coupling constraints, within definite material settings, do indeed ‘screen’...the possible forms of activity in which human beings engage. But these phenomena are also at the same time enabling features of action” (ibid: 172-173). Our systems of meaning too not only limit the way we think and behave but also provide us with opportunities to think and behave in different ways that would enable us to deploy our agency so as to transform constraints (Hays 1994).

Such a conceptualization of structure implies its mutability over time. It is necessary at this juncture to recognize that “structure is both medium and outcome of [social] practices”, *duality of structure* (Giddens 1984), which is implicated in the reproduction of social systems across time and space. Structure should be understood as a process rather than a steady state, in which social actors collectively play important roles in transforming the very structures by deploying their ‘structurally informed’ capacities. Structural transformation is, therefore, generated by the internal operation of society (ibid). All forms of structures, of course, are not equally mutable. While some structures are easily altered, others are durable. The variation is attributed to the nature of structural configuration of resources and constraints (Hays 1994). In general, however, the operation and transformation of structures is implicated in human agency, because as Giddens (1984) has noted, structures does not exist independently of agency.

3.1.2 Actors and Agency: An Actor-oriented Approach

Since the last three decades, there has been a theoretical and methodological shift in favour of agency-oriented explanations of social processes and actions. In development studies, before the 1970s, the field was dominated by structural, ideological overtones, such as modernization and dependency theories (Pieterse 2001). Theoretically, these theories articulate the state as an exclusive agent of ('trickle-down') development (ibid). Post structuralism, by contrast, acknowledges the active, reflective character of agents in managing their own development agendas. Agency, which, according to Giddens, attributes to the individual actor, and is implied by the capacity to process social experiences and devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion (Giddens 1984). Agents know what to do and why to do it (ibid), and "[they] remain free to choose, decide and act, in any manner they consider appropriate for the situation confronting at the time...including the choice not to act" (Oakley 2002:3). "...to be an agent is to be able to deploy...a range of causal powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others...to make a difference to a pre-existing state of affairs..." (Giddens 1984:14).

More often and mistakenly, agency has been conceived as it solely resides in individual actors. However, it is collective, as well. "Yet, while the quintessence of human agency may seem to be embodied in the individual person, single individuals are not the only entities that reach decisions, act accordingly and monitor outcomes" (Long 2001:16). According to Long, instead, different agents or actors who share common interests, goals or values, coordinate each other and create a coalition of actors. Individual agency is "laden with collectively produced differences of power and implicated in collective struggles and resistances" (Sewell 2010: 117), so that the ability to challenge pre-existing structural constraints rests on the collective action of chains of agents each of whom translates it in accordance with his/her projects (Latour 1986 in Long 2001). Agency, through a network of collective actors, thus, stands out as powerful enough to create, recreate and transform social structures. While *structurally reproductive agency* explains the creation of structures, at the same time as structures create agency, *structurally transformative agency* explains the transformation of social structures (Hays 1994). The potential for such agency is inherent in all humans, though according to Sewell (2010: 115), we all are "born with a highly generalized capacity for [an] agency", which implies the presence of variations among actors in controlling their social world (ibid). These variations are due to unequal social, economic, political and cultural opportunities provided to actors by social structures over different temporal-spatial scales

(Wang 2008; Sewell 2010). Agency is also constituted differently in different structural and cultural circumstances, which underlies the importance of examining it accordingly (Long 2001).

Structural and colonial social approaches, which fell into the trap of universal and totalizing analysis of social practices, have failed to capture complete pictures about the production of social action based on the aforementioned characteristics of agency. Long (2001) thus has developed an actor-oriented approach as a counter thesis. Theoretically, based on the theory of agency, an actor-oriented approach recognizes agents as “active participants who process information and strategise in their dealing with various local actors as well as with outside institutions and personnel... [Thus,] so called ‘less powerful’ actors can make their voices heard and dramatically change the course of events...” (Long 2001:12-13). Because of actors’ differential response to (similar) structural conditions (ibid), an actor-oriented approach is based on the assumption that social processes and/or changes can better be highlighted through the analysis of lived experiences of social actors. This suggests the need for acknowledging actors’ differential response to structural conditions. Differences in terms of actors’ coping strategies and actualization of the agency are thus the underlying principle of an actor-oriented approach. Thus, an actor-oriented approach may highlight the structure-agency dynamics by providing detail accounts of agents’ everyday activities.

One of the critiques against the actor-oriented approach is its “methodological individualism”. According to this critique, empirical results guided by this approach have little implication for wider social phenomena. However, while Sewell (2010: 117) explains that “the extent of ...agency exercised by individual persons depends profoundly on their positions in collective organisations”, Long (2001: 15) has rejected this criticism by arguing that an actor-oriented approach strives “to find room for a multiplicity of rationalities, desires, capacities and practices.... [T]hese...ways of acting for shaping social arrangements and for bringing about change, can only be assessed contextually and will depend upon a host of interconnected social, cultural, technical and resource components”.

In summary, all people are born with a general potentiality for agency. However, potentiality is not to be equated with actuality. To quote Giddens (1984: 14) “[a]n agent ceases to be such if he or she loses the capability to ‘make a difference’, that is, to exercise some sort of power.” That means agency is the capability of doing things, not the potential or intention of acting. This implies that actors vary in the scope of their power to influence and transform

social relations, which depends on the constraining or empowering nature of the existing structural conditions. Thus, finally, I argue that the actualization of actors' agency depends on 'capacity building', 'participation' and 'empowerment' opportunities provided by both the 'internal' and 'external' social systems within which agents are positioned. This is the main endeavour of the next section.

3.2 Alternative Development Theory

Alternative development is the general theoretical underpinning which guides this study. Today in development studies, with the advance of post-structuralism, the alternative development paradigm has taken the hegemonic theoretical advantage over its predecessors for the explanation of the contemporary development discourses. As such, the current scholarships and research in development studies, including this one, position themselves in one or another aspect of alternative development. Alternative development is a development of and by the "third system" - the third system here refers to the local communities and civil societies, while the "first and second system" refer to the state and the market respectively (Pieterse 2001). What is commonly articulated among proponents of alternative development is the argument that development should begin from below (Friedman 1992; Pieterse 2001). With a general, gradual paradigm shift towards alternative development, some specific concepts and strategies have crept into the field of development studies. For the sake of empirical operability, this study has been guided by the following basic conceptual underpinnings that constitute alternative development theory.

3.2.1 Capacity building

Give a man fish and you will feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you will feed him for a life (Anonymous, in Cheshire 2006:40).

Capacity building is defined by Simpson et al (2003: 278) as "...the sets of assets or strengths that residents individually or collectively bring to the cause of improving local quality of life". The concept of capacity building has gotten prominence in the development field as a response to lack of sustainability of several development projects, which have been targeted at local poor communities. The failure of many development projects is attributed to the misconception of development professionals that their own 'scientific' expertise and/or capacity is exclusively enough for the success of their new form of 'top-down' development intervention (Pitcoff 2004). Understandably, development projects that do not have a capacity building role would not have any long term positive impacts on the quality of life of the people concerned. However, at the bottom of the development orthodoxy, all development

interventions should be tailored to the improvement of people's lives rather than profit maximization (Friedman 1992).

On top of all this, a question that might stand out is where to start the capacity building process. Traditionally, NGOs and development workers have offered standardized manuals based training and support for their client communities (Pitcoff 2004). However, in a bottom up development approach, poor people are not passive receipts of development, or they are not devoid of capacity. In this respect, Plummer & Remenyi (2004:335) claim that "local villagers have perspective[s] and...views on their own capacity in managing, planning, and administering local assets and resources". The process of capacity building among communities should, therefore, begin with the recognition of the capabilities that they already have (Chambers 1997). This of course requires attitudinal change among policy makers and development workers (Burkey 1993). The capacity building process should thus begin with building up on what already exists in the community.

Gillespie (2004:23) has defined community capacity development as "strengthening, enhancing, and nurturing a community's abilities to take control of its own destiny and to manage and direct its own development process..." Adams & Hence (2001) claim that community has its potential contribution with the dynamics of trust, the foci of equity and cohesion, and the tools of networks providing an altogether softer people centred approach than is possible under either state intervention or market realities. Without denying the advantage of promoting community capacity building, as Burkey (1993) argues, conceiving communities as homogeneous groups and promoting capacity building projects accordingly may mask individual differences and lead to elite capture. As such, there is a need to develop a consistent, successful formula for building the capacity of individuals in the way to articulate a collective community agenda (Pitcoff 2004). This balanced synergy between individual and collective capacity building would have a far reaching impact on community improvement, by allowing all respective members to participate in issues that affect their lives. As such, genuinely conceived capacity building strategies are crucial for real community participation (Gillespie 2004), at the same time, as participation in development objectives would further strengthen community capacity in terms of both skills and organization (Plummer & Taylor 2004).

3.2.2 Participation

Several forms of participation have been used in this study for the analysis of participatory activities. Different stakeholders and institutions conceptualize participation differently. While Chambers (2005) maintains that the concept of participation ‘has no final meaning’, (Mikkelsen 2005: 54) argues that “a precise, global definition may not emerge, nor may one even be desirable, development researchers or practitioners should rather define what they mean”. Thus, this study relies upon the following World Bank’s definition, which is

...a process through which [primary] stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (Chambers 2005: 103).

Perrons (2004:297) points out that “the growing social divisions, rising inequality and the apparent failure of the [top-down] development policies urge the international institutions, NGOs and governments to emphasise on participation from below in order to draw on local knowledge, to make plans more appropriate to local needs and to empower people by giving them some influence in the decisions affecting their future”. Very often participation is mistakenly conceived as a mere means for labour mobilization at particular or all moments in the project cycle. Theoretically, participation, however, goes beyond this to, genuinely, involve the marginalized poor to enable them to “[seize] power through organized groups and social movements, which have the awareness and the capacity, therefore, to articulate and negotiate their demands” (Gaventa 2006:55). To borrow Chambers’ phraseology, it is all about “putting people first”, whereby people themselves recognize or identify their situations including their capacities and challenges, analyse their realities and suggest their own solutions (Burkey 1993; Mikkelsen 2005). Chambers (2002b) in Mikkelsen (2005:54) confirms that “‘we’ [outsiders] participate in ‘their’ [local people] project not ‘they’ in ‘ours’”.

Once, at least theoretically, the panacea of participation has been recognized, the theoretical debate turns in to the ‘the means-end dichotomy’. In general terms while participation as means is conceived as an instrument for the realization of better development activities or better development projects, participation as end concern with the empowerment of people to take control over development processes that affect their lives (Burkey 1993; Cleaver 2002; Mikkelsen 2005). Participation as a means is equated with instrumental participation. For example, in China the purpose of participation in development projects is “to tackle the plight

of those marginalized from the benefits of economic growth [or] to improve the *efficiency* of investment in rural development...” (Plummer 2004: 16). However, the current scholarship in development favours the empowering aspect of participation. The ‘means-end dichotomy’ of participation can be more articulated in the following discussion on typology of participation developed by Nilsson & Woodford-Berger (2000) in Mikkelsen (2005:61), which constitutes *nominal*, *instrumental*, *representative* and *transformative* participation.

Nominal participation, which is at the lower end of the participation continuum, is only a legitimization to show that the implementing agencies are doing something to involve people in decision making endeavours (Mikkelsen 2005). It usually happens when participation is abused by political elites to cultivate support and action (Chambers 2005). This form of participation is mostly represented by rhetorical participation, which is merely documented in many government development policies. Under *instrumental participation*, the poor are asked to contribute their time and labour force for the cost effectiveness of development projects (Nilsson & Woodford-Berger 2000 in Mikkelsen 2005). Efficiency is the underpinning principle (Gaventa 2006; Chambers 2005). It is, therefore, project oriented participation rather than people oriented. As Nilsson & Woodford-Berger (2000) in Mikkelsen (2005), *representative participation* gives the opportunity for the poor a voice to decide on their own development. However, empirical evidences show that it usually raises social divisions and inequalities as it excludes the already marginalized poor groups while the already dominant powers come out as representatives of the former (Perrons 2004; Mikkelsen 2005). Finally, *transformative participation* represents the highest form of participation on the continuum. It is participation as end by itself (Mikkelsen 2005). Its purpose is to change underlying social and power relations in favour of the poor (Gaventa 2006). The role of local people is being analysts or actors (Chambers 2005). Through this form of participation, people would, therefore, be equipped with the necessary power to influence decisions that directly affect their lives.

‘Top-down’ participation, or in general the role of state in participatory development, is another focus of theoretical debate in the current development scholarship. With growing adherence to alternative development approaches, theoretically the state is conceived as enemy of the bottom-up development process. De Soto (2000) in Berner & Phillips (2005) portrays state action as a cause of poverty, and he acknowledges the importance of poor people’s struggle against ‘predatory’ governments. Nevertheless, other scholars including proponents of alternative development paradigm acknowledge the role of state for meaningful

local and community based development. Friedman (1992:7) argues that “although an alternative development must begin locally, it cannot end there. Like it or not, the state continues to be the major player.... Local empowering action requires strong state”. As such, the role of the state in participatory development must not be overlooked. In the late 1990’s wider attention has been given to mainstreaming participatory strategies and methods in governments development policies to facilitate the processes of implementing participatory development approaches at a larger scale (Hickey & Mohan 2004). It is the same as participating those on the ‘top’ for meaningful participation of those at the ‘bottom’. The “top-down capacity building in government [structures] is essential to take...bottom-up approaches [forward]” (Plummer & Remenyi 2004:309). Participation from above is not just policy statement, but institutional change, capacity building and attitudinal change (Gaventa 2006), or it is offering appropriate incentives for government officials to enable them to create enabling environments for participatory development from below (Plummer 2004). Therefore, it is possible to argue that true participation from ‘above’ can play a significant role for successful bottom up participatory development, and particularly for scaling up of successful bottom up development approaches to reach the greatest number of communities.

Nonetheless, many practical problems or to use Cooke & Kothari (2002)’s phrase ‘tyrannies of participation’ have made participatory development more problematic. The ‘tyranny’ of representation is one of the practical limitations of participatory approaches. According to Mikkelsen (2005), participation cannot be equated with representation. Understandably, representation as participatory tool might have been resulted from idealizing community as if it covers homogeneous social groups (Cooke & Kothari 2001; Mikkelsen 2005), while in reality community represents heterogeneous individuals and households with diverse and perhaps opposing interests (Burkey 1993). Thus, implementing participatory approaches through the already established agency structures would replicate the existing social divisions by empowering the most influential and well off elites at the expense of the marginalised (Chambers 2005; Mikkelsen 2005). That is the ‘tyranny’ of elite capture. Empirically, it is evident in China where “political power in villages lies with village committee, the village assembly, and the village party, the members of these organizations exercise substantial power and are able to strongly exercise both the forms and development of participation” (Plummer 2004: 8). The ‘tyranny’ of decision making and control is the other practical limitation of participation (Cooke & Kothari 2001). In poorly conceived participation, decisions are made from above and ‘imposed’ to the local people for legitimization or

decisions are overridden by powerful representatives at the local level. However, empirical evidence, for example, Nylen's study on participatory budget planning in Brazil has shown that appropriately implemented participatory strategies, and which are free from the above pitfalls, can empower the people (Perrons 2004). Properly conceived participatory approaches that involve various stakeholders both from above and below would thus change the lives of rural poor people by realizing their empowerment.

3.2.3 Empowerment: Participation as End

Empowerment, having a blurred boundary with participation, has become a dominant discourse in alternative development among NGOs and development professionals. More often, empowerment is equated with participation as an end. It is equivalent to transformative participation in Nilson & Woodford-Berger (2000)'s typology of participation. Friedman (1992: vii) points out that "[t]he empowerment approach, which is fundamental to an alternative development, places the emphasis on autonomy in the decision-making of territorially organized communities [and] local self-reliance...". Empowerment is "a sense of actual and perceived power in determining the course of one's life and community" (Simon 1990 in Lee 2001:30). It both "enhance[s] the possibilities for people to control their lives" (Rappaport 1981 in Hughes 1987:397), and enables people to "influence those people and organizations that affect their lives and the lives of those they care about" (Vanderslice 1984 in Hughes 1987:397). Empowerment is thus not limited to the material satisfaction of people, but it goes beyond that to control over the institutions and the general platform under which the everyday life experiences of the people are articulated.

Friedman (1992) identifies three kinds of power of households and their individual members whereby, according to him, the objective of the empowerment approach is strengthening the capacity of people in all of these three spheres: *social, political and psychological power*. *Social power* concerned with access to certain 'bases' of household production, such as information, knowledge and skills, participation in social organizations and financial resources, while *political power* concerns the access of individual household members to the process by which decisions, particularly those that affect their future are made (ibid: 33). *Psychological power*, on the other hand, described as an individual sense of potency, which is demonstrated in self-confidence behaviour (ibid: 33). Friedman maintains that all these forms of powers reinforce each other (ibid) whereby the achievement in one of them would have a remarkable impact on the other. Empowerment is a tool to deal with "poverty of participation and decision making" apart from economic poverty (ORAP 1993). Ultimately, empowerment

tends to be self-sufficiency tailored to *“the development of a more positive and potent sense of self, the construction of knowledge and capacity for a more critical comprehension of the web of social and political realities of one’s environment, and the cultivation of resources and strategies or more functional competence for attainment of personal and collective goals”* (Lee, 2001: 34).

People who are at the margin of the power structure are and should be the primary stakeholders in initiating and sustaining empowerment. Empowerment “...does not come from an expert’s hands but from the collaboration of people with peers and helpers in self-healing and self-empowering process[es]” (ibid: 31). Empowerment is sustainable when people link their efforts with those of others into a network of solidarity (Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) 1993). As such, the empowerment approach tends to be community oriented whereby individual members collaborate with each other in the process of changing pre-existing power distribution in favour of their own. Empowerment should thus be understood as multidimensional and involving the transformation of constraining social, economic, political, psychological and legal circumstances within which the disempowered live (Sandbrook 1993). “Transformation occurs as people are empowered through consciousness-raising to see alternatives” (Lee 2001: 34). The central processes of the empowerment approach in general are concerned with “developing individual potentialities and critical consciousness...strengthening individual capabilities, and problem-solving skills, building group, collectivity, and community, and taking action to change oppressive conditions (Lee 2001: 65-66)”. It is at this time the role of outside partners, most notably civil societies, is crucial in terms of either providing information for people for awareness creation or a negotiating role between the state and people so as to create enabling public structures for the empowerment activities of the latter (Halfani 1993; Sandbrook 1993).

As it is outlined in Hughes (1987: 397-8), different commentators suggest that the empowerment strategy should rest on the assumption that: all individuals, families, and communities have some strengths and/or competencies and as recipients of help are not totally dysfunctional (Rappaport 1981; Cochran 1986b); people have valid and valuable knowledge of their own needs, values, and goals that can be put into action (ibid); assistance for empowerment will be most effective when provided by small, intimate social institutions (Berger & Neuhaus 1977); and empowerment can take place at several levels ranging from an individual’s sense of well being to community action (Cochran 1986a). Finally, while people can empower themselves through their self-help activities and then can influence the societal

decisions that affect their lives through their enhanced capacity (Sandbrook 1993), leadership development and empowerment are crucial factors for tapping human resources adequately (Hughes 1987).

3.3 Community Self-help Development and Scaling up

Community self-help development discourse is a celebration of transition from recognizing and strengthening of people's capacity to giving space for the poor to become champions of their own development. Now a self-help community/man is thus fully able to fish, and it controls and has a reasonable access to water resources where to fish. Designing development policies from above that would facilitate self-help activities and programmes is crucial for this (Mandu & Umebali 1993). The central idea underpins self-help is the 'logical' rolling back of the state, so that individual citizens and the whole communities do not rely on governments for financial and other forms of support in leading their everyday activities (Cheshire 2006). Theoretically, self-help is the way through which local people mobilize themselves for managing their affairs. This ranges from being 'self-sufficient' in the delivery of key services to making political, economic and social decisions that directly affect their everyday lives.

However, more often, like the 'tyrannies' of participation, self-help is also presumed to be vulnerable to at least two basic, practical problems. First, states may incorporate 'self-help' agenda in their policy circles so as to shift burdens of service delivery to the local people and as a defence against the call for redistribution of wealth and provision of welfare (Berner & Phillips 2005; Cheshire 2006). Second, self-help becomes a mainstream project as the hands of governments are misleadingly encountering people's self-help development process. It is, according to Cheshire (2006:5), "...creat[ing] self-governing individuals and communities that 'freely' align their conduct with the socio-political objectives of the late capitalism". However, by recognizing local people's agency, it is possible to argue that, even under difficult circumstances, local people, through their self-help activities, can deploy collective action for improvements.

3.3.1 Community: A contested concept

Community remains as a highly contested concept. In the meantime, it is "a key sociological variable and one which adds an important dimension of the analysis of social relations in a variety of settings" (Crow & Allan 1994: xiii). As such, as the main unit of analysis in this study, it needs to have conceptual clarity. The debate on the concept goes between social scientists who define it geographically/spatially and those who conceive it in terms of (homogeneous) social structure. However, there is a gradual conceptual convergence that

community refers to both a small, spatial unit or locality and people having shared social characteristics and interests. According to Willmott (1986) in (Crow & Allan 1994), there is a strong possibility of coinciding among these three characteristics of community. Therefore, all such shared characteristics become a source of collaboration among people within a community to exert collective efforts to solve common problems. Thus, in this perspective, community is conceived as a vehicle for neighbouring solidarity and self-help.

However, in a more recent discourse, community reappears as the main social actor in development. “Community is about groups of people, who create relations based on trust and mutuality, within the idea of shared responsibility for wellbeing” (Adams & Hess 2001: 14). Conceiving it as locality, community has a better understanding to the local conditions and potentials than outsiders or governments do, which can be utilized for its own development, in which the notion of endogenous knowledge is implied. Conceiving it as groups of people having shared identity and common interests, community has the potential to contribute to development “...with the dynamics of trust, [reciprocity], the *focii* of equity and cohesion, and tools of networks providing an altogether softer more people-centred approach than is possible under either state intervention or market realities” (ibid: 20).

However, expecting complete homogeneity or absolute overlapping among the three characteristics within a community is likely proved to be just futile for implementing community based development. As much as there are many aspects of similarities, there may be differences within the same community, for example, there may be more powerful community members than others (Burkey 1993; Berner & Phillips 2005). Thus, finally, in that community, in this study, refers to groups of people who share at least a common local residence, in which this shared characteristics facilitate the other characteristics. This facilitates collective action among local people. That is the reason why community reappears as a primary, social actor in the alternative development paradigm.

3.3.2 Community Self-help (Development): Who Helps Whom?

According to Cheshire (2006), since members of poor communities have many problems in common, for example, access to key services, they can solve these by helping each other through the network of community self-help. That is mobilization of collective social action. Human agency through a network of different community actors enables community members to negotiate, struggle and create meanings of their individual and collective social actions (Long 2001). Traditional community organizations and other community-oriented

stakeholders, among other social actors, take the greatest share in “mobilizing the people of the community to promote their self-help, mutual assistance, and problem-solving capacities...” (Campfens 1997 in Mequanent 1998). Poor people thus help each other by establishing self-help organizations in order to either compensate the shorthand of governments to reach the poor; for instance, the case of rural self-help groups in Kenya (Chambers 2005) and Australia (Cheshire 2006), or to react to the futile top-down intervention of governments. Strong leadership in terms of individualistic notion of capacity is also important as a driving machine for community development. Leadership drawn from community members is crucial for the establishment and mobilization of community based organizations (Galvan 2006). Therefore, at this point, communities themselves, through their self-help networks and organizations, do help themselves. Once their capacities have been recognized and strengthened at an early stage, they would deploy their collective agency against structural constraints that might hamper their further progress.

It should be noted that external support is also beneficial for community self-help development initiatives to succeed, particularly in taking best practices to wider geographical areas. NGOs are essential partners in promoting capacity building, which in turn facilitate participation and empowerment of communities (Oakley 1995). Top-down state capacity building and participation is also important for successful self-help development. Empirical studies in Kenya confirm that favourable state policy response is a key factor for rural self-help groups to be successful (Barkan & Holmquist 1989).

3.3.3 Community Self-help Development in the Rural Context: Relevance

The theoretical and empirical evidences discussed above are directly applicable to the rural context. But the aim of this section is, more specifically, to figure out the relevance of self-help approaches to rural development. Mandu & Umebali (1993) have suggested two interpretations of self-help in the rural context. First, self help is rural people’s approach of organizing and providing themselves with necessary facilities collectively instead of waiting for their government’s slow or unrealistic responses. Second, self-help is rural people’s awareness about “what government is, government activities and programmes, and its limitations”. As empirical evidence show, rural self-help groups in Africa are evolved or rural communities rely on their self-help networks, so as to solve their problems by themselves when governments fail to do so (Mandu & Umebali 1993; Chambers 2005). To date, in theory, community self-help approaches have become the most favoured strategy for rural development, though to what extent they are successful invites rigorous empirical

investigations. For example, when population levels fall below critical mass, and when social services that are no longer deemed cost effective are downgraded, closed or centralized to the nearest regional centre (Cheshire 2006), self-help is a relevant development approach for the rural population of poor countries.

3.3.4 The Interplay of Capacity Building, Participation and Empowerment in Community Self-help Development

Self-help is an inclusive bottom up development approach that incorporates the theoretical concepts of capacity building, participation and empowerment. Both capacity building and participation are basic elements and tools of self-help development. ‘Self-help development is participation squared’ (Berner & Phillips 2005). Practically empowered self-help groups have “completed their journey from being recipients, via beneficiaries and stakeholders, to become champions of development” (ibid: 17). According to O’Malley (1996) in Cheshire (2006), this implies that first, individuals and communities are increasingly involved in governing social life by building their capacity through meaningful participation, and then simultaneously the government retreat as a ‘rule’ and participation and capacity building activities are carried out by the community itself.

Simultaneously, community self-help development is an important empowerment approach. It establishes networks of community members for self-initiating capacity building through active participation in different local development activities for the fulfilment of group goals. Participation in self-help activities provides participants with opportunities of knowledge and skill sharing among each other, acquisition and processing of information, communication and self-expression skills, and generally it provides social learning opportunities that eventually lead to the development of individual and community capability (Hailu 1995). This capability allows communities to acquire “better or increased awareness of existing community resources such as talents, skills, leadership, and financial and material resources, better knowledge and skills in how to mobilize local resources...[and] better knowledge and improved skills in self-management” that would lend confidence for communities in tackling common problems effectively (ibid: 15). Self-help is a means to attain political power so as to influence the power of the state at the centre. True self-help development is thus identified with true participation (Barkan & Holmquist 1989), and true empowerment i.e. self-help as side-by-side stance of an empowerment approach (Swenson 1995 in Lee 2001; Berner & Phillips 2005).

Therefore, capacity building and participation on one side and self-help development on the other side reinforce each other. Community capacity building, through active participation of constituent members, is an instrument for community self-help development at the same time as the latter is both an instrument for the former as well as an end by itself. The process is culminated with community empowerment, which is the ultimate goal of grassroots community development and scaling up.

3.3.5 Scaling up of Grassroots Community Development: Scaling up of Approaches to Empowerment

In an alternative development approach, grassroots development designates the empowerment of people at the local or community level as a result of which people would be able to manage their affairs. Scaling up of grassroots community development initiatives would, therefore, mean to expand the impact of such small scale success to larger scale with the aim of empowering greatest number of communities (Gillespie 2004). While according to IIRR (2000), scaling up in general is about people's empowerment, Gillespie (2004) observes that scaling up of community driven development is concerned with processes and approaches of community empowerment. Understandably, this implies that scaling up is not about replication of successful projects per se; rather it is about the expansion of factors or processes that make these projects successful. This requires an expansion process which is consistent with the socio-cultural, economic and political contexts of the receiving communities. Scaling up process is a subset of community driven development process that relates to all aspects of decision making, from process assessment and causal analysis to choice and implementation of relevant issues, including community decision making processes on initial priorities (ibid). Basic conceptual underpinnings that constitute bottom up development approaches, such as capacity building, participation and empowerment, are both means and ends of scaling up of grassroots community development initiatives. In this respect, IIRR (2000:13) summarizes that scaling up is "a process...such that people build capacities to make better decisions and/or influence decision making authorities...[and] it has a 'power' development dimension of contributing to social change and people empowerment". Capacity building and participation are thus the basic prerequisites of scaling up process (Gillespie 2004) and real participation is a core feature of local and community driven development to be scaled up (Binswanger-Mkhize et al 2009). Capacity building is required across a broad range of stakeholders from those supporting policy-making to implementation, from governance-related initiatives to a specific project endeavours (Plummer, 2004). Communities are needed to have not only the capacity to act but also the capacity to demand action (Gillespie 2004).

Finally, as a bottom up development approach celebrates the importance of locality and/or indigenous knowledge (Friedman 1992), a scaling up process should value diversity and contextual conditions. Scaling up is thus a bottom up empowerment approach to improve the lives of the greatest number of communities. The extent, to which this can be achieved, in part, depends on the use of the appropriate type or a combination of different types of scaling up in accordance with the existing conditions.

3.3.6 Typology of Scaling up

Although there are many typologies of scaling up, the one developed by Uvin (1995), which constitutes *quantitative, functional, political and organizational scaling up*, is used in much literature. *Quantitative scaling up* is a process by which a program or an organization expands its size by increasing its membership base, its working area, or its budgets. *Functional scaling up* takes place when new activities are added to the existing operational range of organizations. *Political scaling up*, on the other hand, aimed at empowerment of people by changing the “the structural causes of underdevelopment”. To this end, participatory organizations establish strong relationships with state so as to get space for institutional adjustment, so that it is possible to integrate successful grassroots programs in national institutions. Finally, *organizational scaling up* concerned with strengthening the organizational and institutional capacity of grassroots organizations and community based programs, so that it is possible to expand impacts sustainably by increasing efficiency.

Lateral Spread as Scaling Up

Chambers (2005) employed this term to explain the effective spread of participatory rural appraisal by local people themselves and their organizations. Local people and their organizations, through their active agency, would carry out participatory, community activities by learning from surrounding communities. In addition to ordinary community members, religious leaders, elders, and traditional community institutions mostly share experiences through reciprocal visits between communities (ibid). In this scaling up process, costs are lower and results are more rooted in local realities, resulting in more effective and more efficient use of all resources (Paul 2001 in Chambers 2005).

All of the aforementioned paths of scaling up are equally important, and they are interdependent (Uvin 1995). Any scaling up project, to be successful, should harmoniously integrate all these approaches. Indeed, community driven development projects that only scaled up in one or two dimensions are rare (Gillespie 2004). Therefore, all those paths of scaling up have been used in this study.

3.4 Analytical Framework to Community Self-help Development and Scaling Up

This section presents an analytical approach for studying community self-help development and scaling up.

3.4.1 Agency of Social actors

Agency implicated in the 'knowledgeability' and 'capability' of social actors to solve problems, learn how to intervene in the flow of social events, monitor their own actions, observing how others react to their behaviour and take note of the various contingent circumstances (Giddens 1984). This implies actors' continuous confrontation with structures, whereby the latter is conceived as both constraint and enablement. Social Structures, in this study, mainly refers to political/government structures and institutions. In doing so, this study illuminates how these structural characteristics constrain and/or enable communities' every day activities for power and self-management. However, the focus of analysis centred on social actors, which are capable of questioning the efficiency and legitimacy of those structural forms and practices, and of formulating new ways of strategizing and combining available resources in a new manner to solve problems.

The leading social actor which is identified in this study is community, though individual community members (mainly in terms of leadership) are also significant. Government and NGO actors are also considered as other stakeholders. Thus, centred on *community*, *NGOs* and *local governments* as units of analysis, an agency/actor-oriented approach provides a framework for analyzing how different actors of 'bottom up development approach' act, negotiate, and respond to the situation within which they operate. Centred on community (as principal unit of analysis), emphasis is on analyzing how community members (individually and collectively) strategise their actions and negotiate or influence the existing structural constraints, so that they can manage their affairs. Centred on NGOs as intermediary actors, it is emphasized on what and how they can contribute for people's agency in their struggle for self-reliance, and how they negotiate and struggle with structural factors to get spaces for scaling up of approaches of bottom up development initiatives. Regarding local governments, it is emphasized on their roles, capacity and power in deciding up on their local affairs and then to create an enabling environment for grassroots development and scaling up processes.

3.4.2 Capacity Building, Participation and Empowerment

I argue that community empowerment through capacity building and participation is the way through which people's agency is actualized. These three concepts are interdependent.

Genuine participation facilitates capacity development, at the same time as capacity development facilitates the bargaining power of people in the participatory process or activities. At the end of the day, empowerment will be realized, in which capacity building and participatory activities are fully controlled by empowered people. All the three concepts are important tools for studying scaling up, as the goal of the later is empowering the greatest number of communities by expanding participation and capacity building approaches.

Capacity building, in this study, is the sets of assets or strengths that residents individually or collectively bring (Simpson et al 2003) for strengthening, enhancing, and nurturing a community's abilities to take control of its own destiny and to manage and direct its own development process (Gillespie 2004). Thus, it is used as an analytical tool to address; how and in what activities do community members engage in the network of their self-help movements, what opportunities and supports are provided to local communities and/or villages, or what roles are given to the poor and what is the importance of these roles to the outcomes sought.

Participation, by relying upon the World Bank's definition used for this study, is employed to capture both the rhetoric and reality of participation in the rural context. Understanding of this requires analyses of 'competent' communities and 'successful' participatory projects that focus on process, power dynamics, on patterns of inclusion and exclusion (Mikkelsen 2005). Thus, in analyzing participation within Awura Amba community (as competent one) and local participation beyond this community, the concept of participation as the analytical tool, it would throw more light on the issues of; who actually participates and for what purpose and/or what level of participation rural poor experience.

Finally, the concept **Empowerment** is used, in this study, to evaluate the extent to which the 'available' capacity building and participation strategies give power for the local people to control their own development mainly in terms of community self-help development.

3.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the structure-agency continuum and elements of alternative development theory as a framework to guide this study. Concerning the structure-agency continuum, it has been claimed that social structures may constrain human action. However, as it also constitutes enabling side, human agents are capable of creating and recreating social structures in their favour in which the agency of social actors is implied. Regarding alternative development theory, it has been argued that genuine capacity building and

participatory activities are beneficial to the empowerment of social actors to change constraining social structures from below. In general by positioning myself in an alternative development and agency-oriented perspectives and developing an analytical framework from them in this chapter, I choose theoretically informed research methods. Therefore, in the next chapter, qualitative research approaches have been chosen and discussed in the way which constructs knowledge from the lived experiences of the grassroots.

4 Research Design and Methodology

This study has adopted a case study approach and used qualitative methods to construct knowledge about community self-help development and scaling up. Aiming to understand the lived experiences of Awura Amba community, FGD, life history interview and participant observation have been employed. These primary sources of data have been supported by an assessment of secondary sources. Thus, by taking community as a leading social actor, different aspects of community self-help development and its implications for scaling up have been explored through these methods. With the aim of exploring barriers and challenges, as well as bottlenecks for scaling up, two FGDs have been conducted in another two villages. Semi-structured in-depth interviews with key informants have also been conducted to understand the role and limitations of government and NGO actors in community self-help development and scaling up. Finally, the use of different methods and the researcher's self-reflection are the strategies used to keep trustworthiness of findings in the study.

4.1 Choice of the Study Area: Case Study Approach

Having been guided by bottom up development and agency/actor oriented theoretical approaches; this study focuses on exploring basic processes underpinning community self-help development initiatives and challenges as well as bottlenecks for scaling up. While an actor-oriented approach acknowledges the role of individual and collective actors at the local level to manage their affairs (Long 2001), the community stands out as primary and open, immediate space to most people to the undertaking of their development processes (Friedman 1992). Therefore, by employing theoretically driven qualitative case study approach, it is important to identify appropriate case/s as a target through which the research questions and objectives of this study would be addressed.

A case study is a widely accepted qualitative strategy in social science research that allows in depth understanding of complex social phenomena. According to Yin (2003), a case study is a preferred method of inquiry that allows the researcher to investigate and understand the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events. More specifically, a case study approach is the preferred strategy for addressing "how", "why" and "what" (exploratory) research questions (ibid) so as to explain and/or justify the real life events in relation to a particular context. Again, a case study is the preferred approach in explaining contemporary events through direct observation of the events being studied and by interviewing the reasons embedded in the events (ibid). Thus, a case study approach is relevant for my study in

explaining and justifying the overall processes of community self-help development in Awura Amba community, in understanding the barriers and bottlenecks of scaling up of the best practices of Awura Amba community, and in evaluating the role of different actors in the scaling up process.

The most frequently heard criticism against a case study approach is that, case studies provide little basis for generalization out of their findings. However, Yin (2003:10) has discarded this criticism by arguing that “case studies like experiments are generalizable to *theoretical propositions* and not to populations or universes...and in doing a case study, your goal will be to expand and generalize theories (*analytical generalization*) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)”. Furthermore, the findings of a case study can be referred to make ‘*naturalistic generalization*’. That is when the readers of a case study reports determine whether the findings are applicable to other cases or not (Gomm, et al 2000). According to Lincoln and Guba (1989) in Gomm, et al. (2000:100), “...the original researcher is responsible for providing a description of the case(s) studied that is sufficiently ‘thick’ to allow users to assess the degree of similarity between the case(s) investigated and those to which the findings are to be applied”. To that end, I have described the overall context of this study in chapter two. Thus, I argue that by studying the chosen case/s in depth, this study would expand knowledge on community self-help development and scaling up through ‘*analytical generalization*’; and would contribute to policy making decisions through ‘*naturalistic generalization*’.

The following principal case and other two significant cases have been chosen for this study. It is worth noting that these cases do not all have to be studied in the same depth. As such, it is Awura Amba community as a principal case is investigated in depth. The depth of investigation reduces from Awura Amba community to Gibgudguad and then to Lulista Mariam.

Awura Amba Community: The Principal Case

The primary target of this study is Awura Amba self-help rural community. It is a unique rural, semi agrarian community as compared to other rural and agrarian communities of ANRS, and even in the country at large. It was established in 1972 with the outstanding leadership role of the “uneducated” Zumra Nuru. The community is also unique in managing its affairs, ranging from the provision of some basic social services by itself to making decisions on its own development agendas (see chapter two). These unique features of the

community make it stand out as a principal case of this study. In this regard, Bradshaw & Stratford (2005:70) note that “sometimes we find a case, and sometimes a case finds us”. In my case, I had theoretical interest, especially in a bottom up development approaches. Then, Awura Amba community is a unique self-help group in a country of poor community participation and empowerment, which also motivated me to choose this case.

Gibgudguad: The Neighbouring Village

One of the basic objectives of this study is identifying barriers as well as bottlenecks for scaling up of community self-help development initiatives. It is, therefore, found reasonable to identify one neighbouring village which has not shared the practices of Awura Amba community so as to substantiate the findings of this study. Accordingly, Gibgudguad, which comprises 39 households and is approximately situated one kilometre north of Awura Amba community, has been chosen as another case for this study. According to my field observation, this village and all other neighbouring villages do not have basic social service facilities those which are found in Awura Amba community. It should also be noted that all the neighbouring villages have not shared the practices of Awura Amba community. Its geographical proximity (accessibility) to the principal case for the researcher favours Gibgudguad to be chosen as a case.

Lulista Mariam: “The other Awura Amba?”

This is another small, rural village which comprises about 50 households and is found in Fageta Lokomo *woreda*, Agew Awi Administrative Zone, ANRS. It is located almost 150 kilometres away from Awura Amba community. The decision to add this village as another case has been made in the field based on the information obtained from my key informants. According to my initial information from my key informants from NGO, ANRS Culture & Tourism Bureau and a journalist, this village is relatively assumed to be successful in adopting the best practices of Awura Amba community and thus called as “the other Awura Amba”. Finally, with the intention to ensure the validity of this study by cross triangulation of various sources of information, this village has been included in this study.

4.2 Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative methodology, which explores the feelings, understandings, and pieces of knowledge of others through interviews, discussions, or participant observation, is used to study some of the complexities of everyday life in order to gain deeper insight into the processes shaping our social worlds (Kitchin & Tate 2000). Qualitative methodologies have become prominent tools of development research. With a gradual theoretical shift towards a

more bottom up development approach, post structural schools of thought have made the greatest contribution to answering qualitative research questions (Winchester 2005). As such, qualitative research explores individual experiences and meanings of events associated with a case (ibid). This involves giving meaningful explanation about “what actors do in a case, why they behave as they do, and what produces change both in actors and in the contexts in which they are located” (Bradshaw & Stratford 2005:67). This study employs qualitative methodologies so as to get deeper insight on basic elements and processes of community self-help development initiatives, dynamics of scaling up, and the role of different actors in each case. Qualitative research methods have spaces for capturing individual experiences and viewpoints in a specific context (Winchester 2005). This is consistent with the bottom up orthodoxy in development studies, which advocates that the voices of the poor should be taken for granted for decision making. Participatory, qualitative approaches (for example, FGD) are, therefore, both research and empowerment tools.

This study has relied on interviews that can provide rich sources of data on people’s experiences, opinions, aspirations and feelings. Participant observation has been used to understand more fully the meanings of place and the contexts of everyday life (Kearns 2005), or to appreciate indigenous knowledge in a globalizing world (Mikkelsen 2005). Secondary sources of data have also been assessed as they are useful for triangulation (Marshall & Rassman 1999).

4.2.1 Preparatory Phase

Adequate preparation is important for the success of field work in research projects. This includes the identification of relevant working methods and theories before going to the field, and sufficient preparation in the field prior to the actual data collection phase. Although the preparation for this study began with the development of project proposal with appropriate working methods and theories, this section presents the discussion on my preparations in the early stages of the fieldwork to get trust. Maintaining rapport and then developing trust among research participants is a critical stage of doing successful and trustworthy qualitative research. Getting early and well informed contacts and repeated preliminary meetings or visits to the place, community or people with whom the researcher works, are the best ways for fruitful fieldwork interaction (Dunn 2005; Crang & Cook 2007). Therefore, in order to enhance the main research phase, I employed two strategies of getting trust: *getting gatekeepers & using my own personal attributes*. In this study, I used the primary school director at Awura Amba community, who is a member of the community, as gatekeeper. In

my first meeting with the school director, I introduced myself and my research project. The next day, he introduced me to the founder and the leader of the community by explaining about why I am there. An undergraduate university student from Gibgudguad was my other gatekeeper. Following the same introductory discussion as I made with my first gatekeeper, this student showed his willingness to accompany me in every visit to his respective village. He also assisted me in recruiting appropriate research participants of FGD from the village by providing basic information about participants.

Apart from using gatekeepers, I used my own personal attributes to establish trust. I realized the importance of staying, for a reasonable time, in the village and interacting with the community members before the main research phase got started. Thus, I stayed at Awura Amba community for almost ten days eating their food, renting their traditional accommodation, and chatting with university students of the community who came back for summer vacation. Again, I had made clear about where I came from and for what purpose I conducted this study (Dunn 2005), and I emphasised the significance of my study for the society in every contact that I had.

4.2.2 The Main Research Phase: Methods and Data Collection Process

Life History Interviews

Life history interviews are an informal question- and- answer [process] with a person who has firsthand knowledge of a subject of interest (George & Stratford 2005). As a research method, it is getting popularity in human geography as a means of capturing what, why and how happened in the past, and what is the change through time as compared to the existing situation (ibid). Stories told by key people function as supplementary information or in-depth case studies (Mikkelsen 2005). Informants of life history interviews witness and participate in all changes (George & Stratford 2005). The founder and leader of Awura Amba community is, therefore, a key life history interviewee in this study, as he passed through trajectories of life history, including being marginalized (individually) even before the establishment of the community. Thus, this life history interview with him has been used as a source of in-depth information about the processes and situations that Awura Amba community as a self-help group has been experiencing since its inception. George & Stratford (2005) maintain that “oral history used for studying memories of disadvantaged people, minority groups, and others whose views have been ignored or whose lives pass quietly...” Awura Amba community has passed through many years of segregation and marginalization till very recent time, when it can realize better self-help community development. As a result, the use of life

history interview, in this study, has allowed a more thorough examination of the everyday life experience of people under severely restricted social and structural constraints, and their coping strategies to control their own development.

More specifically, this life history interview with the founder and leader of the community was made to learn from his personal narratives and construct knowledge on processes of rural community self-help development and the role of individual and collective people's agency in the process. It is also useful to explore experiences that might be learned about processes of scaling up of community self-help development initiatives.

Adequate background preparation on the part of the interviewer is a key factor for successful knowledge production out of life history interviews. The preparation phase includes establishing rapport with the participant through preliminary meetings. As such, once a reasonable rapport was established with my life history interviewee in the preparatory phase, I made ready myself to conduct this life history interview. The life history interview guideline has been prepared in such a way that it gives maximum freedom for my interviewee, so that he would be able to narrate his personal experiences in relation to the history of his respective community at ease. Accordingly, the interview guideline has been structured around three critical turning points of his personal life: his life experiences before, during and after the establishment of Awura Amba community.

Consequently, after introducing myself and the overall nature of my study, and explaining the purpose of this interview, I invited him to narrate the accounts of his personal life and experiences in the perspective of community self-help development. During the narration process, I attentively tracked the course of the narration using my specific and detailed questions prepared under each general discussion topics (see appendix 3.D). I thus, by using the detailed guide line at hand, constantly followed up if all specific and relevant issues were addressed or not. If not, I posed questions for clarifications before he immersed himself into the next general topic or aspect of his personal life. Moreover, the specific interview questions allowed me to relate the person's unfolding life story with the context of the community under study (Marshall & Rossman 1999). Apart from being the main source of information in its own sake, this life history interview, which was made at the beginning of the main research phase, has frequently been referred in conducting the remaining part of the study (ibid).

It is noteworthy to mention that, having many new questions emerged throughout the later stages of the research process, I returned to this key informant for further explanation on these

newly emerged questions. However, this time the interview was more of a semi-structured interview than a personal narration of a life story.

Participant Observation

“Observation allows the [researcher] to record the lives of people as they live it rather than asking them to reflect critically up on their actions in artificial social encounter such as interview” (Kitchin & Tate 2000: 220). The directness of observation “provides the degree of validity as it concentrates up on what people really do as opposed to what they say they will” (ibid). It is, therefore, becoming a crucial qualitative research technique, especially to complement the use of interviews.

Although there are different forms of observation, the participant type (the researcher as an observer), is a research method of understanding the contexts of everyday life through being part of the spontaneity of everyday interactions (Kearns 2005). It is argued that any observation in a social situation is participatory in one way or another (ibid). It is difficult to argue that an observer can observe and record social processes by detaching him/her self from that process. A researcher who involves in the activities of the researched will have significant opportunity to capture more information than while he/she becomes a detached observer (Kitchin & Tate 2000). Mikkelsen (2005) points out that the role of participant observation to appreciate indigenous knowledge in development research is evident in the shift from top-down to participatory development perspectives.

I have employed participant observation in this study for understanding the physical and social environments that either might not be uncovered through the use of interviews or that may be better understood through the use of observation. Attending and participating in various community meetings and activities was also part of my observation process. I observed the physical environment and the lives of the people in the real life context. The primary target of my observation was Awura Amba community. As such, more time was devoted in observing the physical environment and socio-economic institutions and situations of this community. My observation in Gibgudguad was limited to looking at the physical environment, particularly the availability of basic social service facilities.

The observation process went on throughout the whole research period since it can be undertaken parallel to other research activities, as other activities may not hinder us from observing. My main observation process began with making a tour visit to various social and economic institutions of the community. I got an explanation about all I visited from a young

woman tour guide of the community. In the consequent days, I as a participant observer spontaneously immersed myself into different community's day to day routines. I continuously attended 'lectures' by concerned members of the community to groups of tourists or people who came to share experiences from the community. I had also the opportunity to attend one official workshop, where members of the community were sharing their best practices of peace keeping and security to government officials from ANRS security bureau. However, the danger of attaching deeper meaning to overt behaviour may limit the use of observation and its trustworthiness unless the researcher becomes critical and self reflexive (Kitchin & Tate 2000). The solution for critical researcher is employing multiple techniques of inquiry, for instance interviews in the research of this study, so as to increase the trustworthiness of research results.

Semi-structured In-depth Interviews

The semi-structured interviews have widely been used in social science research. It is a less structured form of interview, in which the topic and issues to be addressed are predetermined in advance by the researcher (Kitchin & Tate 2000). The interviewer has the freedom and power to adjust the wording and sequences of the questions (ibid) and include unexpected relevant issues that emerge with further questions and probing (Mikkelsen 2005). On the other hand, the interviewee would have considerable freedom in the way he/she addresses the issues (Dunn 2005). Thus, adopting semi-structured in-depth interview would help the researcher to avoid the problem of domination of the interview by the researcher and the problem of little flexibility in relating the interviews to particular experiences and circumstances of the individuals which both are the shortcomings of structured interview (Kitchin & Tate 2000). On the other side, it potentially avoids organizational and analytical problems of huge layers of data produced through unstructured interview (ibid). Geertz (1973) and Heord (1993) in Bradsh & Stratford (2005) argue that semi-structured in-depth interview is the best methodological tool for deeper understanding of complicated and diverse issues from key informants. My key informant interviews thus aimed at exploring the experiences, roles and limitations of diverse actors in community self-help development and scaling up. Therefore, topics to be addressed through these interviews are structured in such a way that they can address this objective, though there is a modest variation across different key informants representing different organizations (see appendix 3.E).

In all my key informant interviews, I started with a short introduction of myself and my study, and getting their consent of using tape-recorder and name in my study. I have conducted the

interviews based on the interview guidelines. Questions were arranged carefully in advance in accordance with the nature of organizations from which the informants were drawn. However, fresh and unexpected but relevant issues that emerged from the ongoing conversations have been included for discussion (Mikkelsen 2005). In the process, when it was found necessary, new insights obtained from earlier key informant were introduced in conversation with the next key informant (Cameron 2005) for further clarifications or confirmation. Moreover, in order to avoid the risk of being misled by biased information of informants, which is the potential limitation of key informant interviews (Mikkelsen 2005), information obtained from one key informant has constantly been cross-checked with that of other key informants' and information produced from other methods.

Bradsh & Stratford (2005) argue that "in qualitative research, the number of people we interview, communities we observe, or texts we read is less important than the quality of who or what we involve in our research...". Therefore, doing qualitative research with people for the production of knowledge on the topic under investigation is a question of identifying 'key' people. Crang & Cook (2007:14) have discussed the importance of '*theoretical sampling*' for choosing appropriate informants for qualitative interview research by arguing: "[it is an] approach [of]...gaining selective access to appropriate group of people who may be concerned with, and/or involved in living through, the research problem and encouraging them to teach the researcher about it from their perspectives". According to Mikkelsen (2005), key informants are people who have particular and special knowledge about the topic under study, though they "are not necessarily professional specialists, the better educated, and those in power or the officials".

Thus, for this study, the following key informants, who are 'outsiders with inside knowledge', were selected: One key informant from NGO, who wants his name to be anonymous; Jember, Head, Consultancy Office for Public Mobilization of Fogera *woreda*, representing local government; and Wagaw, Head, Tourism Heritage Conservation, and Tourism Development Process owner of ANRS Culture and Tourism Bureau, representing the regional government. Furthermore, by using a snowball sampling approach, I was able to get two important key informants through other key informants. The first one is Mekecha from ANRS Mass Media Agency, who is a journalist by profession and who is the first to promote Awura Amba community in mass media. The other one is Workneh from Gender office of Fageta Lokomo *woreda*, Agew Awi Zone, ANRS, who is responsible in coordinating Lulista Mariam during the process of replicating the best practices of Awura Amba community (see appendix 2).

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGD helps to capture feelings, experiences and diverse perspectives of people through group interaction that might not have been articulated in the one-to-one interview (Kitchin & Tate 2000; Cameron 2005). While the role of the researcher is to introduce the topic or problem and moderate the discussion, the group comes out with new insights or solution to the problem under study. FGD is an interactive learning process on one hand between the researcher and the participants and on the other, among the participants themselves. For example, Cameron (2005) observes that it is a process through which people “explore different points of view, and formulate and reconsider their own ideas and understandings as they respond to each others’ contributions”. Knowledge is brought out as a result of intense group dynamics. Today, it is widely recognized that researchers employ FGD not just to gather raw data in the field and analyse in the office, but more importantly to analyse and solve the problem in the field by grand contribution of the participants.

Parallel to theoretical tilt towards participatory development perspective, participatory methods of enquiry that recognize the ability of the people to research and analyse their realities has gotten a common place in development research. This is particularly a leading justification for the development of PRA/PLA (Chambers 1997; 2005). Implicitly, FGD is one of those participatory, qualitative research techniques. As such, the role of the researcher is moderating and steering the group by posing discussion topics and tracking each response. Furthermore, Lunt and Livingstone (1996) in Cameron (2005) argue that FGDs ‘are...appropriate [tool] in amore theoretically driven research contexts’. FGDs are relevant for “exploring...discourses that shape practices of everyday life...” (Cameron 2005:119). Guided with a bottom up development and agency/actor-oriented theoretical framework, this study has employed three different FGDs to explore the places of participation, community capacity and empowerment as basic elements of community self-help development.

The purpose of the first FGD with selected “ordinary” members of Awura Amba community is to understand the extent to which the community manages its affairs, the level of members’ participation in this regard, and how all these processes contributed for the empowering and capacity building of “ordinary” community members. On the other hand, it is used to get insights on spaces of scaling up from the experiences of the community. Therefore, the interview guideline for this FGD was structured around three basic topics: community self-reliance; nature, objective and benefits of people’s involvement in the activities of their respective community; and views of community members regarding scaling up of their

practices. The second FGD with selected members of Gibgudguad aimed at exploring the places of participation, community capacity and empowerment as basic elements of community self-help development and their roles for scaling up, and/or identifying enabling and limiting factors of scaling up from people's perspectives. The purpose of the third FGD with selected members of Lulista Mariam is to learn about experiences of scaling up (see appendix 3. A, B & C for all FGD interview guides).

On the date of each FGD, prior to immersing into the main session, I introduced myself. I briefly introduced my study and what it can contribute for their respective society. Then after, I briefly explained about the FGD, including the rationale behind it and its purpose, what was expected from the participants, and my role in the process. It was emphasised that any idea is welcome, and the role of the group is to teach the researcher.

Unique from the other two FGDs was the introductory activity done with participants of FGD from Gibgudguad. Having gotten their consent, the participants were offered a short tour visit to various social and economic institutions of Awura Amba community with the guidance of a young woman tour guide of the community. The purpose was twofold: firstly, to empower the participants. Secondly, it was to help the participants to have background knowledge in relation to what they were going to discuss. Later, before the main session for this FGD was started, I made clear for the participants about the purpose of the tour that it was just for the sake of their information than convincing them that Awura Amba community is a good model for community self-help development or other. I emphasised that this is to be left for their judgement during the main session.

The main session of all FGDs were started with participants' presentation of themselves, including some background information from them. Following the introduction of each discussion topics during this session, strong group interactions were encouraged, and all responses, including disagreements were welcome. In case of disagreements, attentions were paid to understand in which aspect/s of the topic and between who the disagreements came out. Although some participants, mainly in the two FGDs other than in Awura Amba community, became reluctant to express their views, efforts were made to encourage them by calling their names to say their own ideas on the topic under discussion. However, sometimes it was also important to record silences – recording who was reluctant on which topic, etc. In every possible way, participants were encouraged to respond to each other's contribution, so that it was possible to make active group dynamics.

It is also important to accommodate the views of all participants for ensuring the trustworthiness of findings from each FGD. Moreover, to materialise trustworthiness, it was constantly checked that exhaustive information was obtained on a particular topic. To this end, I moved to the next topic when only I felt that the prior topic was sufficiently addressed. Many times, when I felt the topic was not sufficiently addressed, I posed the question in another way, and I encouraged the participants to discuss from the other angle. Finally, so long as the aims of all the three FGDs are interrelated in one way or another, new insights obtained from one FGD have been introduced in to the next FGD.

Recruiting Participants of FGDs

I used different approaches of recruiting research participants based on accessibility, available time and the purpose of each FGD. Here, participants are ‘ordinary’ people in the villages. Mikkelsen (2005) proposed the possibility of creating both homogeneous and mixed groups depending on the knowledge required. With the intention of getting the views of all forms of people, a group of mixed participants was established in each village. Each group is mixed in terms of age and sex while each of them is homogenous in terms of ethnicity and religion. A group of ten participants (five male and five female) has been established for each group. For all FGDs, not more than one participant was selected from the same household.

In Awura Amba community, after discussion and getting consent from concerned bodies of the community, I purposely chose people who are engaged in different community activities. I made efforts to include women, who are members of the community but not members of the union. I walked through different community working centres, and I recruited participants while they were on their working places. This recruiting process can be said ‘purposive’ sampling, deemed not only to realize representativeness but also to learn from the diverse perspectives of this mixed group. In Gibgudguad, I recruited participants in collaboration with my gatekeeper (the student) in the village. Because of the limited time, my involvement in the recruiting process of research participants from Lulista Mariam was too limited. If it was so, my role was only orienting the village leader, who was responsible for recruitment, about the purpose of this particular FGD and the criteria to be taken in to account during the recruiting process (see appendix 1 for detail background of participants of all FGDs).

Positioning Research Participants (of FGDs)

Research participants are placed at the centre of this study as it is their realities, experiences and meanings that are to be constructed as a source of knowledge for this study. It should also be noted that their perspectives and meanings are attached to their age, sex, social and

educational statuses, etc. I have realized that participants of different FGDs have a different position. In terms of age and sex, all three focus groups were composed of participants from different age groups and composed of equal combination of gender. But there is a difference across groups in other aspects.

The FGD from Awura Amba community is composed of research participants ranging from those who have no educational experiences (two women who joined the community recently, who are only community members-not union members) to Bachelor Degree graduates. All of them had no religion and any religious practices, though they believe in “one GOD” and “in doing good things”. They believe that their respective community is better than the neighbouring villages in many aspects, including in economic status. They also argue that their respective community can be a model for other communities and the world. The FGD from Gibgudguad is composed of participants, who do not have educational experiences except two; both of them suspended their education at grade 6 (six years of primary school). All of them are orthodox-Christians by religion. They believe that Awura Amba community is much better than their village in many aspects except in religion. During the FGD session, always the men were the first speakers. Even when I asked women to be the first, they gave first priority for men. All participants from Lulista Mariam are also orthodox - Christians by religion. In terms of education, the group composed of participants ranging from those who have no educational experiences to those who completed general secondary education.

4.2.3 Recording Interviews and Observation

Using audio recording is advantageous for capturing the fullest interview, though it is limited to capture the non verbal information, such as gestures. Its potential technical failure is also its limitation. On the other hand, note-taking is preferable in the sense that it can capture non verbal information, and it is free from technical failure. But busy note-taker researcher may fail to prepare him/her self to ask the next question in the flow of the interview (Dunn 2005). Therefore, a strategic combination of the two would help to capture all important information (ibid). Thus, a combination of these two strategies was used in all of my interviews except in one key informant interview, where the person did not allow me to use audio-recording. With regard to recording my observational information, I used my notebook.

4.2.4 Assessment of Secondary Sources

Secondary sources of data are particularly useful for triangulation, so that they would raise the trustworthiness of research findings. However, every document or secondary source is produced for some specific purpose and to serve some specific audiences than those studies

being done (Yin 2003). Some others may suffer from personal and organizational biases or poor documentation. Therefore, the critical researcher should be aware of these limitations and be critical about who wrote those secondary sources than just studying the contents (Kitchin & Tate 2000). Moreover, these evidences should be crosschecked against information obtained from primary sources. In my study, I have collected and used academic studies on the same site (on Awura Amba community), government documents such as proposals and progress reports, and community records as secondary sources of data for analysis.

4.3 The Researcher's Reflexivity: Position and Personality

Doing qualitative research relies upon intensive interaction with people most commonly with whom they are situated in different social context, in relation to the researcher. This urges the researcher to be reflexive on his positionality and personality in the research process (Dowling 2005). As an Ethiopian young student researcher, my common language, ethnic origin, being grown up in agrarian family, and sharing basic cultural traits with the community and the other two villages being studied, have given me an insider privilege. Especially, as a researcher, who grew up in a rural poor and less empowered agrarian family and community gives me an insider privilege for the validity of collection and interpretation of information. Moreover, my current academic experience and my theoretical interest in a bottom up development approach provided an excellent mix for the validity of this study. However, I had to be aware that relatively my improved social status in relation to the community/villagers may have made me be perceived as “knowledgeable” and/or “powerful” outsider (Whitehead 1996 in Crang & Cook 2007). Having been aware about my position in terms of my academic and social status, I constantly presented myself as a person who wants to learn from the research participants in all my engagements.

According to Moser (2008), like positionality, personal characteristics of the researcher are also important. In this respect, I am shy, and I do not approach people easily. Although I am aware of the influence of this personality on the research process, my politeness, respect for everyone, patience, tolerate challenges and my personal interest in rural people, even approaching them in a rural mood, are my personal assets that contribute to the validity of this research.

4.3.1 Ethical Considerations and Representation

Ethical consideration is a question of being responsible and accountable to those involved in the research, including sponsors, the general public and most importantly, the subjects of the

research (O'Connell-Davidson & Layder 1994 in Bradshaw & Stratford 2005). The main ethical challenge in 'working' with "powerless" people is 'exploitative relationship' between 'powerful' researcher and 'powerless' researched (England 1994 in Dowling 2005). This is the problem of 'work on' poor people, not for the benefit of them. Having been guided by a societal goal of empowering the poor by scaling up approaches of empowerment, I have tried my best to make this study to be free from this ethical misconduct by reflecting on this purpose at every stage of the research process. The question of feeding research findings to the 'owners' or the researched communities is another ethical consideration. Howitt and Stevens (2005) argue that our work should be tested in terms of changing circumstances of the researched communities. As such, a maximum effort will be done to feed the result of this study for the improvement of the researched communities and wider society. I am also aware and have been keeping privacy, anonymity and confidentiality at every stage of the research process.

In connection with ethics, the other significant issue is representation. It is a sense of fairness in to the ways in which we represent the researched and their lives in our work (Crang & Cook 2007). As long as this approach has an empowering effect for the poor (ibid), the voices of research participants in this study will be portrayed appropriately. This may include acknowledging and recognizing the contribution of the participants for the success of this study in every possible way.

4.3.2 Doing Trustworthy and Dependable Qualitative Research

[T]he very important point that any method is, to a degree, valid when a knowledge that it constructs is considered by stakeholders to be an adequate interpretation of the social phenomena that it seeks to understand and explain.

(Evans, 1998 in Kearns 2005:205)

The ultimate goal of a research process is producing rigorous findings that can be trusted for policy decision and academic purpose. Trustworthiness, according to Lincoln & Goba (1985) in Bailey (2007:181), "requires conducting and presenting the research in such a way that the reader can believe, or trust the results and be convinced that the research is worthy of his or her attention". However, safeguarding trustworthiness does not mean that the reader necessarily has to agree with the researcher, rather it is helping the reader to see as how the researcher arrived at the conclusions that he/she made (Bailey 2007). There are some criteria or measures which are used to keep the trustworthiness and quality of the qualitative research.

Validity

Kitchin and Tate (2000) define validity as the measure of the soundness of research strategies used in the empirical investigations and then the truthfulness of the conclusions. While construct validity concerns to the soundness of data generation methods to measure phenomena that are supposed to be captured, analytical validity concerns the soundness of the analytical methods (ibid). Whilst Kitchin and Tate (2000) argue that validity should begin with keeping the integrity of theoretical underpinnings and ideas that would provide foundations for empirical investigation, Baily (2007) has emphasised the importance of connecting the current work to larger issues within the discipline as a strategy of achieving validity. Therefore, choosing relevant, justifiable and consistent methods of data collection and analysis, which are well informed by theoretical constructs, is a quick solution for ensuring validity. Moreover, as it has been discussed in the methodology part earlier in this chapter, I have used as multiple as possible methods of data generation for cross validation and to capture all phenomena to have a complete picture of the topic under investigation. Practical factors in the field also matter a lot. As such, establishing trust and rapport to take advantage of insider position, continual cross-checking of information across both different methods and different informants, and using strategic combination of data recording for ensuring accuracy of information were all my fieldwork strategies to increase the validity and trustworthiness of the conclusion that has been drawn from this work.

Reliability

Reliability is the consistency of findings with repeated observations using similar instrument under similar conditions (Kitchin and Tate 2000; Mikkelsen 2005). Nevertheless, because of the dynamic nature of social sciences, it is rare to get consistent findings (Kitchin and Tate 200). However, the researcher is expected to be critical and/or exert his/her maximum effort to come across with reliable findings, at least in a particular field setting. According to Bailey (2007), on the other hand, the researcher should provide the context to the reader for understanding the lack of reliability. In this study, by describing the context of the study area, by positioning the research participants and the researcher, or generally by describing the overall context under which this research is done, I have tried to show the reader that under which context this study is reliable and dependable and under what context it may not be.

4.3.3 Limitations in the Field

Several limitations challenged my field work. Limited time was my big challenge. I had to travel to different places to meet different key informants and visit one village, which is far

away from the main study area. Therefore, the granted fieldwork time was not enough. Because of time limitation, it was not possible to feed preliminary findings back to my research participants for confirmation. Again, given the nature of ‘family meeting’ at Awura Amba community (which is to be held only in every 15 days evening), I missed the first two ‘family meetings’ because of overlapping field work activities in another places. And because of limited time, I was not able to wait for another 15 days. Again, although it was initially planned to include the views of traditional community organizations in this study, unfortunately, my efforts to get such organizations in the neighbouring village was fruitless. Thus, the views of people from the perspective of their local organizations are missing. Regarding personal limitations, I had no prior experience in conducting qualitative field research that made my fieldwork challenging.

4.4 Processing and Analysis of Data

To give further meanings for field data, the researcher is expected to engage in rigorous analysis that leads to theoretical ideas. Mainly in qualitative research, the analysis phase starts early in the field (Mikkelsen 2005; Crang & Cook 2007). For example, Crang & Cook (2007) claim that by continuous reformulation of research aims and questions, choosing individuals or groups, and by identifying issues to be included on the interview or observation checklists, you have already started the analysis process. Many researchers (for example, Chambers 1997; 2005) argue that, in more participatory research methods, such as FGD, (preliminary) analysis is carried out by the research participants themselves by reaching common consensus. Therefore, the role of the researcher in the process of data analysis begins in the field as ‘partner’ of the research participants.

Now, the researcher enters into the conventional form of analysis which involves identifying themes (categorization), coding, deciding up on their relationships to each other and selecting important ones that lead to theoretical ideas (Kitchin & Tate 2000; Crang & Cook 2007). The analytical framework, which emerges from the theoretical framework of the study, has guided the analysis of this study. Therefore, the categorization and sub-categorization of the field data has been based on the underpinning theoretical concepts, which are delimited by the research questions and objectives. In so doing, basic elements of community self-help development, such as capacity building, participation and empowerment, which are also determinants of scaling up of community driven development, have been used as key analytical concepts. The concept of individual and collective agency and/or actors have also been employed to explain experiences, roles and limitations of diverse (local) actors both in

community self-help development and scaling up process. Finally, the rural context provides an overall framework through which all other analytical concepts viewed.

4.5 Summary

The methodology chapter has discussed qualitative approaches of this study. As such, FGDs, life history and key informant in-depth interviews, participant observation, and assessment of secondary sources are the main methods, which have been used to collect data. This chapter has outlined the strengths and limitations of each method to make prior arrangements to avoid or minimize problems that might arise from the weak side of a particular method. Triangulation of methods is one of the other strategies that are used to keep trustworthiness of research findings. Reflections have also been made about the fieldwork process including limitations. Finally, discussions and analysis of findings in the next two chapters is based on the data obtained through the methods and/or research process presented and discussed in this chapter.

5. Community Self-help Development: Processes and Factors Contributing to Success

Community self-help development, in this study, has been conceptualized as an end by itself and an approach of true participation and capacity building for empowerment. Simultaneously, I claim that such reinforcing processes are both effects of and reasons for the actualization of human agency in challenging constraining social structures for successful community self-help development. The main endeavour of this chapter is, therefore, to assess diverse processes and factors of community self-help development as an end, and as an approach to empowerment.

5.1 processes and Factors of Successful Community Self-help Development

Self-help is part of a movement for empowerment (Berner & Phillips 2005). However, many (community) self-help development studies, for example, Thomas (1985) and Hill (1991) emphasize on the economic benefits of self-help projects. In this study, on the contrary, the success of community self-help development is examined in terms of the extent of community and individual members' empowerment through participatory and capacity building activities. Thus, by emphasizing participation, capacity building and empowerment, the subsequent sections assess the dynamics of internal and external processes and factors that contribute to successful community self-help development. Emphasis has been given on the role of community (collectively and individually) as the prime social actor, while the role of government and NGO actors or as external partners to the community is also highlighted.

5.1.1 Community's own mobilization for development from below

As the life history interview with Zumra reveals, Awura Amba community has been established by him with the collaboration of other ordinary farmers, who accepted his idea about a new community life style. The aim is to solve micro structural problems, which have been embedded within the culture of the society and manifested in terms of unfair power relations based on sex, age and class. The community (with the collective efforts of its members) had to strategise its actions by itself about how to solve those problems, while its movement was sensitive and not acceptable among the local population and cadres, let alone to get support from external agencies. As such, the community had to rely exclusively on its own resources, skills and knowledge for its on struggle. That is mobilization from below by the community to address a big issue of unequal power relation, which is deeply rooted within

the cultural practices of the society. In this process, community self-help initiatives are implied.

Participants of FGD from Awura Amba community (hereafter FGD1) claim that all basic ideas and practices for which their respective community is known to be successful have been initiated and practiced by the community itself. Asked to identify those practices, they (divided into two groups for this purpose), in common, came out with: *gender equality, children right, elderly care, avoiding harmful traditional practices, helping with each other, and democratic principles of participation and discussion*. That means community members, collectively and individually, are the main actors in the face of non-existent support from the outside. Therefore, such community self-initiated programmes and activities provide an opportunity of involvement of all community members in all community activities. That requires regular interaction among community members to plan and decide as to how skills, knowledge, assets and responsibilities can be shared for a common goal that leads to group learning. These processes, in one way or another, initiate both planned and spontaneous participation that leads to capacity development, as Zumra notes that:

“It is our motivation and self-confidence to do things ourselves that contribute to our current achievements. We were the only running from below to plan and do things for which we are today known to be successful, while no body from outside to assist us. Of course, if you do not plan by yourself, it is like to travel on the road that you do not know.... If you ask me about where the plan comes, it is from the community. Plans for our activities are prepared by the participation and discussion of all community members.”

Because participation within community self-help activities involves the participants at all stages of community projects, starting from planning to implementation and evaluation, it can better promote the capacity and empowerment of the actors (community members) involved, rather than the conventional, mainstream participatory activities can do. For example, some of those practices identified by participants of FGD1, which are successfully initiated and practiced by their community itself are ideally congruent with the mainstreamed governmental and NGO development programmes, for example, gender equality. In the latter case, however, there is rhetorical commitment to involve local stakeholders only in the implementation phase. That means local people are called to participate in such programmes, which are already planned outside local communities. Participants of FGD from Gibgudguad (hereafter FGD2) assert that, they usually attend meetings, which are organized by local government representatives, to “discuss” and get directions about government programmes, which are to be implemented in their village or *kebele*. Nevertheless, the participants believe

that they cannot influence the nature of the programmes, which have already been decided from above. Eshetie, an old male participant, comments that “we are usually given commands in meetings to construct terraces, including the place where to construct and we do accordingly”. Similarly, Alamir, an adult male participant, states that:

“We did not have any knowledge about women’s right before the government has provided us with information about it. But after the information has reached us, we discuss on it in a meeting called by local government representatives and now days we recognized that women are the pillars of our development”.

Whereas Workie, a female participant, explains that “we usually go to gender related meetings, and we are informed that women should be owners of land and equal to men.... Then, we accept the information and agree to do accordingly” (see chapter six). This is a *nominal participation*, in which people are “involved” as passive information recipients, rather than decision makers that has no or little impact on the capacity and empowerment of the participants.

On the contrary, when development initiatives come from the community, the community members become the primary stakeholders to plan, decide, execute and evaluate about their actions. When participants of FGD1 were asked to comment their participation within their community activities in comparison with their participation within government initiated local development programmes (for example, in programmes within which participants of FGD2 are participated or which are common to all villages), Getie, a female participant, explains that:

“We all women and men actively participate in some kebele [government] development activities, like building terraces. But if you ask me that which participation gives me confidence, it is my participation within our community’s works, because my participation within our community is based on prior information about all activities, and it is also participation in terms of contributing ideas about projects to be done”.

Scholars (Chambers 200b in Mikkelsen, 2005) argue that community initiative in the form of self-help networks or other is a beneficial strategy for the effectiveness of development projects. This is because planning at the community level becomes well informed by community members’ own resources, needs and gaps. However, at the same time, community’s own mobilization for development from below (self-help initiatives) provides an

alternative space for direct participation of all community members at all phases of development projects. As such, in the face of unsuccessful mainstream participation by governments or NGOs, community initiated projects are sources of capacity development and empowerment through group learning. In order to organize and initiate community members for this purpose, there should be an initiator to take the lead, which is a community leader. That implies the role of individual actor/s for successful community self-help development.

5.1.2 Leadership: People's own Leaders

"In a meeting held on 05 January 2010, the academic commission of Jimma University [the leading university in Ethiopia in community based education] has unanimously decided to award Honorary Doctorate Degree in human letters for Zumra Nuru Mohamod for his community based development philosophy, strong commitment and successful leadership in improving the life of his community...." (A keynote address during the award)

Strong, visionary, and well trusted leadership is particularly crucial to initiate, organize and mobilize community self-help development activities. Closer examination of leadership role within Awura Amba community, confirms some case studies, which emphasize the role of vision, energy and steadfastness of one individual (see collections in Krishna et al 1997), as a progenitor of successful community development. When participants of FGD1 were asked to identify successful practices that Awura Amba community does by its own, Getie claims and make long debate with other participants to identify Zumra as one of those "successful" practices identified and presented in section 5.1.1 (her argument is based on the fact that Zumra is the progenitor for all success of the community). The debate led the group to conclude that, ideas about all of those "successful" practices are initially produced by Zumra, and all the success would not have been possible without his leadership role. Zumra, on his part, acknowledges his role in producing ideas of working together and establishing a 'just' community.

Effective community leaders, with individualistic notion of competent agency, are those who have better knowledge about the overall socio-cultural, economic and political situation within which their community is situated. This involves better understanding of constraining and enabling conditions for mobilizing people's collective agency for power. Zumra has had an extra-ordinary knowledge about the socio-cultural conditions that disempowered the majority of society members within which he grew up. He narrates about those conditions and his rationale to start the movement of establishing Awura Amba community as:

“I grew up by observing while women were working more than men. For instance, I was observing that my mother was working both in the farm and at home, while my father’s task ended in the farm. Children were forced to work beyond their capacity, and I was repeatedly hearing a saying that goes as ‘children should eat only what they are given and should do what they are just supposed to do’. It was only the role and decision of the husband [men] that count both in the household and village affairs. People were divided in terms of classes where the rich exploited the poor. It was this situation that motivated me to start the struggle against such inequalities.”

Effective leadership, in this instance, means the ability to learn from such structural constraints and then devise strategies of mobilizing the disempowered fellows for power from below. The successful leadership of Zumra, in this regard, has had three main qualities. First, the ability to start his struggle from below, with the less advantaged compatriots. Discussion with participants of FGD1 suggests that Zumra’s target at poor and helpless people as an object of his movement enabled him to get support from poor fellows. This seems to reflect Lee’s (2001) argument that the primary stakeholders in the struggle for power are the poor who are at the periphery in the power distribution. Zumra explains that while few ordinary farmers had joined his struggle, local government cadres and elites instigated the people against him and his followers. However, being a leader under such circumstances means the ability to devise and deploy appropriate strategies in collaboration with one’s fellows. The second quality is thus the ability to be aware that his struggle is questioning unfair power distribution, which is deeply rooted in the long-existing socio-cultural and political relations of the society (see chapter two). This would, in turn, mean a probable ‘loss’ of power for those at the top in the hierarchically structured power relations. Thus, Zumra had to have appropriate strategies in light of this. As such, Zumra explains that

“Our strategies were teaching people about equality and valuing people more than money.... In the process, we tolerated any form of criticisms and attacks from the neighbouring villagers and local cadres. We continued to teach and convince them until they know that our agenda is not problematic. It is these strategies which helped us to win finally and reach our current status”.

The third leadership quality of Zumra is related to the ability to create internal democratic structure that could empower community members as agents of change. More often, in many government and NGO initiated community based development projects, only a few community members (“leaders”) are empowered at the expense of the majority, which is in literature referred as ‘the tyranny of elite capture’. Upphoff (1998) has emphasized on the importance of few selected and accountable persons as leaders in rural, local development. Zumra has, however, emphasized on sharing leadership responsibilities and accountability to

community members. This is an acknowledgement of people's agency to lead their lives and contribute to the success of collective action. That reflects a counter discourse to the dominant and oppressive socio-cultural conditions against which Awura Amba community has been struggling. That is the creation of a structure through which community members could manoeuvre power by participating in different leadership roles. Asked to explain his responsibility within his community, Zumra explains that his main roles are communicating gusts and giving advice for children, while all other community activities have been undertaken through the cooperative actions of leaders and members of different committees. Participants of FGD1 note that all Awura Amba community activities get done through the directions and coordination of thirteen committees, each of which has its own mandates and responsibilities. Such community leadership structure can establish trust within community members by avoiding the probability of the tyranny of elite capture as Sani, a male participant, makes clear that "we dislike legitimizing one person as more knowledgeable than others and so allowing him/her to be the leader of everything".

Studies have shown that educational and training skills play an important role for the effectiveness of community leadership (Uphoff 1998; Galvan 2006). However, results in this study do not support this, as Zumra, as an effective leader in terms of different leadership qualities discussed above, is illiterate. In addition to educational skills, Galvan's (2006) study has shown that mobilization skill of leaders of self-help rural organizations is crucial, for successful community based development. He adds that when such leaders are drawn from community members, they can effectively use local cultural and social institutions as viable tools of social mobilization. Thus, based on findings in this study, I conclude that, an exceptional mobilization skill plus having shared identity and attachment with the community to be mobilized, rather than educational and/or training skills, are significant factors for effective community leadership in poor, rural countries like Ethiopia, where illiteracy rate is high.



Figure 3: Zumra, in the Middle with green hat, explaining how to proceed with the construction of the community's secondary school

Source: researcher's own photo

5.1.3 "Poor" people's collective agency: From absolute poverty to empowerment

Poverty ranges from a situation where people's consumption falls below some socially acceptable minimum standard to a situation where "poor household lack the social power to improve the conditions of their members' lives", that is poverty as disempowerment (Friedman 1992: 66). Awura Amba community had experienced both forms of poverty. All households in the community had faced absolute poverty. Zumra narrates the situation in his broken heart as:

"We suffered a lot during our displacement, and after we returned and settled here [Awura Amba village]. Upon our return, we had nothing to eat; we had nothing to feed our children and elderly. We had to cancel dinner or lunch to feed children. We had a time when we ate cottonseed [which is not socially acceptable to eat this in a normal time]".

There was a time of absolute poverty when the community did not meet basic human needs. Participants of FGD1 explain that apart from extreme shortage of food, community members did not have appropriate shelter. They used to live under a roof made of leaves. Asnakachew, a university, male student participant, explains that "let alone to rent house in the town where we studied upper primary and secondary schools, we did not have enough to eat...". Mekecha, a journalist who first visited the community, states his first experience as:

“When we visited the community first, I saw and heard from the community members what I did not expect at all in light of the information that I had before that, it is a unique community practicing modern and new lifestyle. They [community members] had suffered from hunger; they were eating by shift; and there was single kuraz [traditional lump] only in the house of Zumra. All infrastructures that you see today were not there, except their own kindergarten and small library both of them made of mud-brick wall and chairs, and grass roof”.

However, poverty is more than declining household economic income and/or declining household consumption. Friedman’s (1992) disempowerment model equates poverty with lack of social power that applies to Awura Amba community before it reaches its current status. Zumra states that he was imprisoned for six months in 1985 just because of his movement to establish the Farmers’ Association. Sani, on the other hand, explains that the community had faced all these challenges because of the negative attitude of the local population towards the community’s new life style. This is what is known as poverty as disempowerment, a consequence of disempowering social structures, as participants of FGD1 analyze that, the root cause of all challenges the community had faced, is the conservative culture of Amhara society.

However, “poor” people are not poor of knowledge about managing the situation of their poverty. They analyze their realities and learn how to cope with the structural causes of poverty. Community members, collectively, devise self-empowering strategies by mobilizing the available resources of different types. Under difficult economic and structural circumstances, Awura Amba community has devised collaborative both short-term and long-term self-empowering strategies. For instance, as a short term strategy of coping absolute poverty, the community’s response was diversifying livelihoods. Zumra explains that:

“The only livelihood option in response to loss of our land at that time [upon returning back from migration] was weaving. Only few members of the community, including me have had better skills and experiences of weaving. So, those of us prepared traditional weaving machines from locally available materials and we trained those community members who did not have weaving skills. Those who were trained first had to train others. It was through such process we started weaving, and we were, at least, able to get little income to feed children and the elderly, though it was not still enough to make us self-sufficient in food.”

Then, community members have realized the importance of working together to share scarce resources and skills in their struggle against poverty. As such, community members who have not enough skills and energy have been benefited from working together, as they are able to learn from those members who have better skills and knowledge through formal and informal interactions. Gradually collective spirit and actions have been consolidated that eventually led

the community to strategise actions for their better future. That is building assets and capabilities as long-term self-empowerment approach to deal with poverty of power. Amidst absolute poverty, Awura Amba community, collectively, had engaged in building kindergarten and library as community assets to promote community capabilities through self-initiated community based, non formal education. Mekecha, based on his observation during his first visit, has confirmed that these community assets were put in place, in addition to his experience, to observe well planned elderly caring system. Such investments in assets and capabilities are “poor” people’s long-term plans to escape from destitution in a sustainable manner. “Poor” people are thus visionary about their futures even at the time of crisis. To that end, according to participants of FGD1, saving is one of the default strategies available to the poor. They discussed an example of this strategy as:

“When we got training on modern weaving for the first time by Micro and Small Enterprises and Industry Bureau of ANRS, we were also paid per diem. At the end of the training, we agreed and saved our total per diem as community capital so as to buy modern weaving machine and other raw materials.

All the aforementioned Awura Amba community’s efforts of coping economic poverty and disempowerment are implicated in its collective agency. Community members, as having common problems of deprivation of social power and material well being, and as having a common goal of overcoming these problems, have contributed a successful collective action. For poor people, the capacity to organize and mobilize to solve problems is a critical, collective capability that helps them overcome problems of limited resources and marginalization in society. Zumra argues that “it is possible to learn about how to ‘develop’, starting from zero through cooperation, from Awura Amba community”. Finally, trust is a very important organizing element in pursuing successful collective action for empowerment. High levels of trust among Awura Amba community members and leadership have contributed to liable collective action in particular and community self-help development in general, to which I turn into the next section.

5.1.4 Trust: Trust on leadership and among community members

Newton (2001: 202) defines trust as “the actor’s belief that, at worst, others will not knowingly and willingly do harm, and at best, that they act in his interests”. In the case of group trust, every actor expects positive actions or responses from all other actors within the group and the agents acting on behalf of a group as a whole (Sztompka 1999). “Trust makes it possible to maintain peaceful and stable social relations that are the basis for collective behaviour and productive cooperation” (Newton 2001: 202).

For present purposes, the focus is to scrutinize the role of trust at the community level for self-empowerment process by raising the level of cooperation for collective action, at the same time as cooperation and collective action, facilitate trust building.

I would never worry about my little children's fate, if I die today or tomorrow. I have full confidence that the community will take care of them (Zumra).

Members of Awura Amba community trust their community as institution acting on their behalf in general and with each other in particular. Trust within the community is based on solidarity, cooperation and reciprocity aiming to achieve mutual goals. Community members trust each other in perusing their duties effectively, as they believe that their personal improvements depend on improvements in their community. This is trust based on the reciprocity of human actions that everybody expects the beneficial actions of other fellows. However, according to participants of FGD1, such reciprocity does not necessary imply equal contribution from all members; rather roles and duties are delegated based on ability. Moreover, there is also trust without reciprocity whereby community members who are not able to make any contribution because of age and health problems trust the community and/or its members for material and non material assistance.

There is also a vertical form of trust between the leadership or community institutions and community members, which has an indirect impact on horizontal trust system among the latter. According to participants of FGD1, community members feel that leaders of different committees are trustworthy to act in the interests of them. As such, internally, community members always show willingness to cooperate with, to take and implement any assignments from their leaders. Regarding the community's relationships with external institutions (governmental and NGOs), Melkamu, a young male participant, explains that "as far as we have mutually agreed community goals, and as far as we have elected our leaders, we trust them that they act in the interests of us, rather than in their own personal interests or the interests of the outsiders".

Such a reinforcing multidimensional trust, at the end of the day, produces what Sztompka (1999) called a "systematic trust", whereby we trust actions; and we expect beneficial actions from our fellow citizen as well as agents of various institutions that constitute our society. When participants of FGD1 were asked about when and why they join Awura Amba community, while Dalya, a female participant, who joined the community in 1991, responds that "because I want my children to be grown up by learning [good] disciplines of the

community”. Zibad, on the other hand, another female participant, who joined the community in 2005, responds that “because as a woman, I want my rights get protected”. Trust that initially developed among individuals is, therefore, gradually transformed into community level trust that produces peaceful, stable and democratic social relations. This situation attracts outside actors to join the community for mutual benefits. Therefore, trust encourages individual actors to engage in collective actions and productive cooperation, which eventually builds community as a collective actor. That is why (Luhman in Sztompka 1999: 103) concludes that trust “liberates and mobilizes human agency, [and] releases human creativity...”. This is evident in the history of Awura Amba community, as both community trust and cooperation reinforce each other for the realization of successful community self-help development.

Sztompka (1999) identifies two fundamental situations that enhance trust at the community level. First, trust is enhanced within intimate, small communities where members are mutually visible, which motivates them towards conformity independently of any agencies of accountability. Second, trust is enhanced by high density and intimacy of relationships, infused with intense emotions, a high degree of interdependence, and continuing, long-lasting existence. Both situations are valid with respect to high level of trust within Awura Amba community. But it is possible to add one more related source of trust in connection to the history of Awura Amba community. That is, experiencing common problems for a long time, which is a long time oppression by “dominant” culture, and persistent struggle against such problems collectively, produces solidarity and cooperation among the oppressed. Then, it is appealing to see here that all these sources of trust, directly or indirectly, represent the main characteristics of community discussed in chapter three. As such, whether these sources of trust or those characteristics of community, initiate collective action or build community as the leading social actor of community self-help development. Finally, as participants of FGD1 argue, trust towards their community and among community members increases with increasing participation in community affairs.

5.1.5 Participation within Self-help Community as empowerment process

Assuming competent self-help community as an autonomous policy and decision making entity, participation, in this context, would mean a process whereby community members involve in all community affairs, ranging from planning to execution of various activities. Thus, community empowerment and capacity can be evaluated in terms of the extent to which all community members participate in the policy and decision makings of their respective

community. This is an alternative approach to the failed mainstream participatory activities in government and NGO policy circles. Such participation process within Awura Amba community can be viewed at two mutually reinforced levels: participation within the household and participation at community level.

Participation within the Household

Participation within the household is an important way of attaining Friedman's (1992) social, political and psychological power of household members. Household capability in terms of all these three spheres of power is a precondition for community self-empowerment and capacity building, at the same time as community based empowerment and capacity building activities are the mechanisms through which household members exercise their power at wider social organizations. Within Awura Amba community, the participation process starts from the household. Household members discuss, negotiate and prepare plans for their daily activities and long term household issues. Participation within the household is an immediate, open space, mainly for those household members (children), who are not "eligible" to participate in community meetings directly, to influence community activities indirectly. Zumra notes that

"Children involve in informal, household discussions every evening and in a formal family meeting held every 15 days. For example, my 3rd years old daughter is encouraged to participate in all our household discussions. We give her the chance to reflect her interests.... This is the way we teach children about participation".

Every household holds a family meeting every 15 days. All household members attend this meeting to evaluate the household performance over the past 15 days and plan for the next 15 days. Household members share their information and experiences about the internal and external socio-political and economic situations as a basis for strategizing actions. Participants of FGD1 argue that household discussions in formal and informal family meetings increase their daily household performance by raising household access to knowledge from the experiences of all members. On the other hand, Engida, male participant, explains that, household members show a strong commitment in perusing their responsibilities when they directly participate in decisions made by the household. Thus, it is arguable that such direct participatory control over household decision making would empower the participants.

However, while Vincent (2004: 112) argues that "...transformation needs to take place 'upwards' before those at the 'bottom' can have any reason to believe that they can have an effect on the wider origins of their concern", Friedman (1992: 32-33) notes that as "producing

and proactive units, [households] need the cooperative actions of others, community relations of households". Within Awura Amba community, participation within the household culminates with direct participation of all community members in all community endeavours. For example, both conflicts and agreements over household decisions are reflected in the general assembly of the community as a contribution or for resolution. Having been portrayed as a single productive unit, where (union) members work together and share products, participation at community level is an important social space through which empowerment of community members can be achieved.

Participation at Community Level

Participation process within Awura Amba community is different from project based and mainstream participation from NGOs or government development agencies. It is initiated and sustained from below or within the community. The community has created participatory spaces, in which all members articulate their perspectives and experiences. "Every member has the right to participate in all community activities and meetings; elect and be elected for leadership in different committees; and look at and suggest ideas on community records, minutes and financial documents" (charter of Awura Amba community, here after charter). Such participation within the community implies popular mobilization from below.

Participants of FGD1 define their participation in terms of active involvement in the daily socio-economic activities of the community, community planning and 'community politics' or the politics of election and evaluation of community leadership. Asked to evaluate the extent of their involvement in carrying out successful community practices, which have been identified by themselves as being done by their community itself (which are presented in section 5.2.1), participants put their comments as:

"Once we discuss and agree upon those practices, as pillars of our development, and once we elect and delegate power for our leaders to organize us for the implementation of those activities, why not we show great commitment in the implementation phases."

From this assertion, it has been revealed that the participation process within the community begins with programme design and decision making. Participation of community members in decision making can be attested by the rights and roles that each member can exercise in the general assembly. According to the charter, the general assembly is authorized to do the following activities among others. The general assembly has ultimate power and gives final and binding decision on any community issues; evaluates and approves annual budget plan; elects and/or demolishes members of the executive committee; and evaluates and approves

annual community performance and audit reports. According to this document, every member has the right and “obligation” to participate in the general assembly meetings so as to articulate his/her own views and to influence the decisions or plans to be made. On the other hand, the participation process has been explained in Zumra’s narration as follows:

“There is equal participation in our community. There are different committees whose members are elected in the community meeting [general assembly]. These committees provide their plans for the community members in the meetings for discussion and approval. At the end of the day, only those plans, which are approved and reflect the views of the majority, would be taken for implementation.”

All those said in the aforementioned discussions, the process of participation within Awura Amba community can be break down into four interrelated themes which may reflect the success of participation as an empowerment tool as compared to mainstreamed or institutionalized participation within government or NGO development policy circles. The first theme is the question of ‘*who (should) participate?*’ The discourse of participation should be theorized and practiced in the way to acknowledge people’s agency. Thus, participation should be inclusive to provide opportunities of direct involvement of all citizens in making collective decisions on their destiny. As such, to make participation more effective, there should be democratic structures at the community level, like what is discussed above within Awura Amba community, as an immediate social organization where local people interact with each other. This suggests the advantage of community based direct participatory ‘democracy’ that could accommodate the perspectives of all community members, instead of favouring the already powerful few elites in the name of representative participation. Thus, this avoids the ‘tyranny’ of elite capture what many scholars (for example, Cooke & Kothari 2001; Perrons 2004; Chambers 2005; Mikkelsen 2005) associate with the mainstreamed or institutionalized form of participation. For participants of FGD1, participation, in which they are engaging in is a means of avoiding legitimization of a few community members as more ‘knowledgeable’ and sole decision makers on behalf of the majority. They believe that the participation of all community members is the only mechanism through which “we can get fascinating ideas from people who may wrongly be labelled as not ‘knowledgeable’”.

Nevertheless, sole participation of all is not the ultimate goal or not a guarantee for achieving empowerment to influence the course of actions. Operations Evaluation Department’s (OED 2000) of the World Bank assessment of participatory projects financed by the Bank (Perrons 2004) has shown that there has been an increasing turnout or participation of local people. However, according to OED itself, the impact on empowerment was insignificant. Similarly,

as participants of FGD2 explain, all village members are invited or “obliged” for “direct” participation in government initiated participatory projects, though their role is mainly receiving information about how to implement and contribute labour (see chapter six). This problematic participation thus leads us to the second theme. That is *questioning the nature of activities, in which people are invited to participate*. “Although there are different ways in which rural people can participate in their own development, the process best begins with decision making, which is the essence of empowerment” (Uphoff et al 1998: 76). Participation, which is initiated and sustained within the community, as it is evident from Awura Amba community, can achieve this. Participants of FGD1 interpret their participation in terms of influencing, or to use their language *contribute* to plans made at the community level through their direct involvement in the general assembly. Such participation becomes free from Cooke & Kothari (2001)’s tyranny of decision making and control.

The third theme that may reflect the success of participation within the community is, related to *the method*. That is *direct participation* of all community members in dealing with critical issues that affect their lives. This form of participation empowers participants by avoiding the tyranny of representation. Representative participation is favoured, because direct participation may be seen as problematic by the poor, who “want” to give the right for others to represent them at higher levels (Mitlin 2004). So, participation, at higher levels, “...that much of what is considered as participatory is more a process whereby large numbers of people are represented by a relatively small group of people” (Hickey & Mohan 2004: 19). These arguments seem to be true in the sense that it is not realistic to involve every citizen directly at higher, let say national, level decision making processes. However, such arguments may potentially obscure the meaning of direct participation, which means involving the views of all people at ever smaller community levels. Then after, such inclusive views can be represented by representatives, who have been elected through direct participation of all community members. Therefore, as Hickey & Mohan, (2004: 20) claim “...a more adequate theory of representation, and/or of alternative ways of conceptualizing the ways in which popular agency is legitimately conferred to higher level of agents is required”. According to participants of FGD1, direct participation at community level can avoid the pitfalls of representation. They argue that, common consensus on basic community development priorities and election and delegation of power to community leaders by their direct participation establishes a framework for community’s relationship with external agencies.

The final theme is about *the benefits that participation within community offers*. Participants of FGD1 value their direct participation in many ways. First, it can be seen as an opportunity to actualize their agency, based on the notion that everyone has the potential to articulate his/her own realities and significantly contribute to the improvement of one's own community. This is evident in the views of the following two participants. Engida says that "in the processes of our participation, we do not accept any idea automatically because it is just from an elderly or educated one; rather it is the strength of the idea that matters". Sani added that "...for example, because of their participation in our meetings, we are able to get interesting ideas from women. If they do not get the opportunity of participation, we will lose those fascinating ideas". The second value is widening spaces to accommodate diverse perspectives from all community members to make sound plans or decisions. This is consistent with the recently flourishing literature on the discourse of participation, (for example, Uphoff et al 1998, Perrons 2004), which apprehend that the purpose of true participation is to appreciate local or indigenous knowledge and local needs to inform development plans and decisions. Finally, as it is strongly argued in this study, the success of participation (participatory development) is measured in terms of its impact on empowerment of the primary stakeholders. It is widely recognized that participation in decision making and planning are essences of empowerment (Uphoff 1998; Perrons 2004). Therefore, on the basis of the aforementioned discussions, I conclude that participation process within Awura Amba community might have empowered community members as the following comment from a participant of FGD1 testifies that

"In addition to acquiring diverse views to make better decisions for our overall] development, my participation gives me confidence and courage. For example, previously, I restrained from forwarding ideas in meetings, because I feared that I might not make a good argument, but now I have developed self confidence to reflect my perspectives in meetings" (Amanuel, young male participant).

5.2.6 The Role of Outside Stakeholders: Governments and NGOs

There is a substantial improvement in our lives because of supports we got from government and NGOs. Therefore, these days we are able to escape from all past sufferings of absolute poverty and eviction. You know all our ideology and working principles have not changed, but if there is a change it is the assistance we got from our partners that has helped us to change our lives (Engida).

“Although they [Awura Amba community] were working hard, they were not able to achieve significant change. They have shown dramatic improvements after they got external assistance, especially after they got flour mill” (Alamir).

Various government and NGO actors, independently and collaboratively, have provided different forms of supports to Awura Amba community. These actors have contributed to asset and capability development of the community. They have participated in building different assets, which sustain the productivity of the community. These assets include school, library, electricity, telephone, potable water, flour mill, weaving machines and rooms. Regarding building the capability of community members, both government and NGO actors have provided different forms of training at different times, such as basic computer, modern weaving, leadership, driving and other technical trainings. As it has been argued by participants of FGD1, all these supports have a significant impact on the human wellbeing of community members. While asset building increases the material production of community, capability building enables community members to use those assets in the most effective and sustainable manner.

Nevertheless, analyzing the way those supports are provided is more powerful, especially to understand the impacts of outside support for the capacity and empowerment of the community. That is the dynamics of the “lowers-uppers” relation in Chambers’ (1997) phraseology. Both government and NGO actors assist the self-help initiatives of the community, rather than these actors themselves plan and implement development projects within the community. There is no more focused NGO or government intervention in connection to the community’s self-help development activities. The role of these actors is just to facilitate the implementation of the community’s own plans or projects by providing material or some other capacity building supports like those described above. It is possible to say that while the community plans, the outside stakeholders participate or contribute their part in the implementation of planned projects. There are two forms of participation by outside stakeholders in the development activities of Awura Amba community. First, different government offices (of mainly ANRS) and different NGOs, individually and independently, assist the community’s development initiatives. Second, different government and NGO stakeholders make partnership so as to provide joint and well synchronized assistance to the community. Both forms of outsiders’ involvements are evident in the consequent discussions about the way that all outside supports are provided and have an impact on the capacity and empowerment of the community. As such, the focus, hereunder, is

the nature of the relationship between the “lowers” (here Awura Amba community) as a recipient of outside assistance and the “uppers” (here government and NGO actors) as supporters of the development initiatives of the former.

As the following quotes confirm, outside stakeholders participate within the framework of the community’s development priorities and preferences.

“After officials of regional government [ANRS] visited our community and socio-economic institutions, they were inspired by our initiatives and asked us what assistance we need. Thus, according to our response, they promised to build school, provide potable water and upgrade our road. We got potable water immediately; the school is built recently but relatively late; and we are waiting for the road” (Zumra).

Again, after the community has started weaving as its main source of livelihood, because of shortage of land, Micro and Small Enterprises and Industry Bureau of ANRS had offered training for community members on modern weaving. Enumerating the assistance of outside stakeholders to their community, Participants of FGD1 note that

“After we got the training on modern weaving, Action Aid Ethiopia [NGO] has given us five modern weaving machines. We started to build weaving room with initial financial support from The Netherlands Embassy. Later on, the embassy asked us if we want its assistance to complete the room or buy us weaving machine. We proposed to buy us the machine, so that we can finance the construction of the room with our revenue from the weaving industry. Therefore, we got more machines from the embassy. Later on, we got another financial support from another NGO [cannot remember its name at that moment] for the completion of the room”.

Asked to explain his organization’s relation with Awura Amba community, my informant from NGO responds that

“Our relation is based on our interest to support the development initiatives of the community by providing production tools, for example, tailor machine [which is now used to produce readymade clothes from the community’s semi-finished weaving products]. We also facilitated, financially, for community members to share experiences of weaving from Shiromeda weaving community [the largest, modern weaving industry in Addis Ababa].”

It has been shown that the aforementioned community activities are initiated by Awura Amba community itself, and then government and NGO actors supported the initiatives. Such uppers-lowers engagement supports basic underpinning principles of genuine capacity building and empowerment, in community based development discourse. This means that the uppers should acknowledge that, community capacity resides within a set of assets and strengths that community members individually and collectively bring to the cause of improving the quality of life (Simpson et al 2003). The role of outside stakeholders should be forming solidarity so as to contribute to the effectiveness of community's struggle against poverty and disempowerment. Interview with Wagaw reveals one example of such solidarity. The contribution of his department to the development of Awura Amba community is facilitating conditions to make the community as a tourist destination. That is promoting the qualities and extraordinary performance of the community to the outside world to widen the direct and indirect sources of income for the community. ANRS Culture and Tourism Bureau's activity report to Action Aid Ethiopia (government-NGO partnership to assist Awura Amba community) has documented the following:

“Using your financial support, our bureau carried out [the following] destination development, and promotional and related activities: the exhibition hall was constructed and furnished with appropriate furniture and equipment; documentary film which reflects the lifestyle and working culture of the community [was] produced and duplicated and given to the community to be sold for tourists; ...entrance fee tickets were prepared to collect money from tourists; ...series of promotional programmes were done to familiarize the site; [and] tourism education and awareness programmes were conducted in Awura Amba community”.

In all those outside supports to the community, community's initiatives have been taken as a benchmark to guide the interventions. That is the most favoured strategy of sustainable community development and empowerment in the alternative development literature. For such fair interaction between the lowers and uppers to be realized, there should be competent community to defend its interest in the interaction. Such communities can do this by preparing bottom up proposals that could guide outside agencies in the development initiatives of the former. Commenting on their community's relationship with outside agencies, this is how participants of FGD1 explain it:

“Our community has been established, and it works, as our institution, based on agreed principles of all of us. Our relationship with outside agencies [those agencies which support the community] is, therefore, guided by these principles and the relationship that is made through our representatives, should be in the way that it does not affect our interests. For example, there are some agencies which come to our community to promote their own agenda. But all outsiders’ support is evaluated against our goal before the support is accepted”.

A *woreda* government expert, an informant in Solomon’s (2005) study on Awura Amba community, complained about his unfriendly relationship with Awura Amba community in his attempt to implement ‘*Wuha Makore*’ program (rain water harvest program of the government that overwhelmed many rural parts of Ethiopia some years ago, which, unfortunately failed) as:

“I repeatedly advised Awura Amba community to dig a water harvest hole; I have tried to encourage them to participate in ‘Wuha Makore’ program, but they could not realize it. They are resistant to expert advice. As a result, there is a misunderstanding between Zumra and me. So, I gave up going there.” (p. 56)

The advantage of such lower-upper relation is twofold. Primarily, it is a source of empowerment as the lowers are able to control the terms and directions of interactions with their upper partners. That is the ability of the community to determine the course of actions that directly affect the lives of its members. The second advantage, in connection to the first one, is ensuring the sustainability of the development impacts of external “interventions”, because the interventions are informed by the preferences and priorities of local people. FGD1 confirms this by arguing that the existing external support contributes to the improvement of their life not only in terms of material wellbeing but in terms of improvements in skills, knowledge, and instruments of work and livelihoods, which are bases of social power.

Finally, a strong lesson learnt from the successful participation of external stakeholders into the development of Awura Amba community are the synergies among pluralistic actors, and the synchronized involvement of diverse actors across sectors. I strongly argue that this has been possible to happen because outsiders’ intervention has been guided by the community’s development priorities.

5.3 Summary

This chapter has analyzed processes and factors which contribute to successful Awura Amba community's self-help development. It has demonstrated that development processes rooting from community initiatives, local knowledge and skills, which eventually attract outside stakeholders and/or partners is the right path to success. While within the community, poor people's persistent struggle according to the theory of collective agency, trust, strong leadership that mobilizes community for social transformation and genuine participatory practices are the key factors contributing to success, on the part of outside agencies, commitment to participate according to the development priorities and interests of the community is beneficial. Thus, on the basis of findings in this chapter, the next chapter emphasises on scaling up of successful community self-help development.

6. Scaling Up of Successful Community Self-help Development

Successful scaling up of community self-help development is implicated by the spread of factors that contribute to success for community self-help development. That is, according to Gillespie (2004), the spread of approaches to empowerment to motivate the greatest number of communities to take control of their own development. In this study, community level direct participation of all people in all issues that directly affect their lives and capacity building are found to be factors for successful community self-help development. Thus, I claim that the empowerment impact of the scaling up process can be predicted by the nature of participation and capacity building activities within the target population, and the power and capacity of local governments to allow autonomous decisions in local affairs.

6.1 Barriers to Grassroots Development and Scaling Up

Participation and capacity building are essential (pre)conditions of effective scaling up since the aim is to empower the greatest number of communities. This requires the commitment of governments to create favourable institutional space and promote real decentralization. Creating enabling institutional arrangements in relation to the configuration of CBOs, civil society organizations and NGOs, and in relation to the principles of bottom up development widens spaces for scaling up (Gillespie 2004). Although there are rhetorical participatory policy statements in the decentralization policies and programmes of Ethiopia, lack of favourable and genuine institutional arrangements negatively affect the capacity, power and attitude of local governments, and so the politics of local participation.

6.1.1 Institutional Arrangements and Capacity

The most severe critiques against participatory development include narrow project based and overemphasized localized approaches to participation. This is because, in both cases, the wider structural and institutional factors that determine power relations are overlooked. This suggests that “the locus of transformation must go beyond the individual and local, and involve multi-scaled strategies that encompass the institutional and structural (Hicky & Mohan 2004: 12)... In this vein, the transformative potential of localized participatory approaches is reliant on broader political change” (p.14). For effective scaling up of community level “islands of success”, there should be supportive institutions at all levels of government organizations (Blackburn & Toma 1998; Gaventa 1998; Thompson 1998; Chambers 2005). For Gaventa, institutional change is one dimension of scaling up.

Institutional change, a third dimension next to scaling out and scaling up in Gaventa's categorization (see p. 155) refers to

“the shifts required in and among larger-scale institutions for scaling out and scaling up to occur effectively. More specifically, it refers to the ways in which larger-scale institutions in government or the civil society will interact with smaller-scale organizations or communities in the participatory development process.... [Thus,] in order to increase the types and quality of participation with more people and places, significant institutional change will be required” (Gaventa 1998: 155-56).

As such, the institutions' working rules and procedures, attitudes, norms and skills must be reoriented from standardized and more bureaucratic ones into a more people-centred, to encourage and support local communities and their institutions to transform themselves from mere implementers to decision makers (Gaventa 1998; Thompson 1998; Chambers 2005). On the personal side, this means that “those in ‘upper’ roles, to whom ‘lowers’ are accountable, have to transform their behaviour, attitudes and roles from dominators to enablers, from controllers to coaches, and from instructors to facilitators” (Chambers 2005: 212).

Although I agree with many contributors in Blackburn & Holland (1998)'s collection, about the importance of institutional, political, and officials' personal attitude and behavioural changes for effective scaling up of participatory approaches, I do not argue for institutionalizing participatory approaches within larger-scale government. These contributors advocate institutional change for institutionalization of participatory approaches, and scaling up has been taken as a means to achieve the latter. However, in this study, the central question is to examine the extent to which the existing institutional and organizational structures promote or allow the practice of grassroots participatory development. That is the critical issue in scaling up.

Turning into the Ethiopian context, hereunder, I would highlight the institutional arrangements, and personal attitudes and behaviours within the government structures to examine the scaling up challenges. As it has been stated in chapter two, decentralization of Ethiopian government has officially been announced to create institutional spaces for local governments and their constituents for manoeuvring power. To that end, the decentralization process was followed by institutional changes (Tegegne & Kassahun 2007; Kumera 2007; Muhammed 2007). Institutions and organizations are restructured at different levels of governments. These include vertical and horizontal separation and/or devolution of power;

establishment of new offices, for example, office of capacity building from the federal to the *woreda* level; personnel deployment from regional and zonal governments to *woredas*; institutional capacity building training; and the likes.

However, as many studies (Tegegne & Kassahun 2007; Mheret 2007) have confirmed, of course all those arrangements are ideal conditions, not the reality encountered on the ground. Rather, the subsequent institutional arrangements seem to target at realizing mere administrative decentralization. That is to increase the efficiency of a top-down administration control for tax collection, service delivery, information dissemination and even for political control. A study by Maconachie, R., et al. (2008) has shown that a decentralization policy in Ethiopia strengthens government position at the local level. All these pitfalls of decentralization and associated limitations of institutional setups constrain grassroots activities in general and scaling up of practices of competent self-help community in particular.

Although decentralization at *woreda* level itself is not satisfactory for institutional independence and empowerment, associations of grassroots communities below *woreda* (*kebeles* and villages) are not reached by devolution of power. They do not have sufficient decision making authority and responsibilities on important issues within their jurisdiction (Meheret 2007; Tegegne & Kassahun 2007). This situation constrains the capacity of local institutions and so people's empowerment as these tiers of government are very close to people. The other main problem is incompatibility between institutional change and personal change. As it is emphasized by Chambers (2005), institutional change alone is not a guarantee for scaling down of power, unless it is compatible with attitude and behavioural change of persons working in those institutions. My interviews with both Wagaw and Jember reveal incompatible attitudes and behaviours with officially announced goals of institutional changes. Wagaw believes that the regional government or his own department is better equipped to assist grassroots development (here the development of Awura Amba community) than the parallel department in Fogera *woreda*. Jember's response, on the other hand, confirms that the attitude of officials in local governments has been shaped by a philosophical framework of top-down hierarchical power relation. He argues that all "government [development] policies and activities are driven by the ideology of the ruling party, so that we all operate within that framework". Such attitudes and behaviours dictate local level participation as it will be shown in section 6.1.3. Therefore, the long-existing vertically stratified socio-political culture of Ethiopia, discussed in chapter two, has still not

changed. Its legacy is prevalent within the current government institutional and personnel structures.

The other main constraint to the functioning of (rhetoric) institutional change is political. Politics have influenced the established institutional structures, or the very establishment itself is politically motivated to expand effective political domination from the centre. Thus, the existing institutional arrangement is politically tamed, so that it disempowers the local population, opposed to its aim on paper that is empowering local governments and their constituent population by scaling down power from the centre. In the words of Jember:

“By the way, government policies and programmes are driven by the ideology of the ruling party. We have both government and party [ruling party] structures to kebele and village levels to implement these policies and programmes. So, local people participate, discuss and decide on development and political [politics of the ruling party] activities. We have also local cells for political activities”.

Meheret (2007) has observed that the local government scene in Ethiopia is dominated by the ruling party. Meheret added that being a member of the ruling party is the only criteria to assume a leadership position in the *woreda* governance system. This results in the exclusion of some segments of the local population from bargaining power, by maintaining unequal horizontal power relations. This also has the danger of “encouraging upward accountability to regional and federal politics at the cost of community needs and concerns” (ibid: 89). On the other hand, Vaughan & Tronvoll (2003: 40-41) have confirmed that “the administrative and political structures in Ethiopia overlap and interweave in such a way that, in practice, the local administrative units...are infrequently politically neutral or independent”. Maconachie, et al. (2008) find out that decentralization in Ethiopia has, in fact, restricted the development of mature local institutional arrangements, due to its intrinsically political interventionist nature.

6.1.2 Capacity, Power and Attitudes of (Local) Governments

Local governments in this study refers to those government structures/institutions and actors at and below *woreda* level. Because they are in close proximity to the people, local governments' capacity development and empowerment are fundamental aspects of local and community driven development. For successful bottom up development to take place, there should be scaling down of power through true decentralization programmes. This means that “each level empowers the level ‘below’ it” (Chambers 2005: 151). When the central and/or regional governments empower local governments, the local governments can, in turn,

empower their subordinates (local people and their organizations). Thus, strong political commitment to local empowerment and decentralization is vital to scaling up.

On the contrary, absolute centralization of power or poorly conceived decentralization, would not offer incentives for community based empowerment. In effect, unfavourable attitude, behaviours and philosophy of people in government institutions constrain the scaling up process (ibid). Several existing literature on Ethiopian decentralization (Meheret 2002; 2007 Tesfaye 2007; Tegegne & Kassahun 2007) have confirmed the failure of the current Ethiopian decentralization to empower and build the capacity of local governments. Local level administrations and grassroots actors in Ethiopia have limited capacity and power to make decisions on their own local affairs. This is illustrated by a World Bank's study that has shown that planning and budget processes is often subordinated to national and regional sector plans thereby diminishing the extent of effectiveness of citizen voice (Tegegne & Kassahun 2007). According to a survey conducted by MoFED (2005), "*woredas* do not plan their budget and simply wait for the actual release of disbursement. The act of depriving local governments' discretionary powers is manifested in the form of consultations that often assume postures of providing guidelines and instructions" (ibid: 44). On the other hand, Meheret (2007) has observed that because the Ethiopian decentralization policy is implemented only to *woreda* level, *kebeles* do not have decision making power. Rather, they are recipients and implementers of what have been decided at the *woreda* levels.

The aforementioned discussion reflects the prevalence of a significant power gap among different levels of government, from the regional to the *kebele* and village levels. My interviews with key informants from regional government and local (*woreda*) government confirm this capacity gap. Asked about which level of government (regional or *woreda*) has more participated in assisting Awura Amba community, Jember responds that it is the regional government. According to him, this is because the regional government is more capable in terms of financial budget. Responding to the same question, Wagaw explains that the regional government, mainly his department, has assisted the development of Awura Amba community than Fogera *Woreda*. According to him lack of appropriate human resource (in terms of educational training and skills) and shortage of financial budget constrain local governments to support community level development initiatives like Awura Amba community. This supports recent studies, which state that lack of competent, trained and skilled personnel constrain the success of Ethiopia's *woreda* level decentralization for the empowerment of local governments and local communities (Meheret 2007; Muhammed

2007). Wagaw believes that, as long as the region is carrying out the above responsibility, lack or inability of Fogera Woreda's involvement would not have a negative impact on the development process of Awura Amba community. However, such attitude and behaviours of government officials and/or such power configuration have negative impacts on empowerment at the grassroots level in general and on scaling up in particular. This negative impact can be interpreted from two interrelated perspectives. First, it may degrade the sense of power within the local governments; the power that could emanate from handling all forms of decisions or activities made within their territorial jurisdiction. Second, it constrains scaling up process to wider, perhaps socially and culturally diverse communities. This is because the regional or central governments will face contextual problems to reach every local community from the centre. Of course, it might be easier to succeed if (at least from the perspectives of the above two informants) direct engagement between regional government and one competent community, here Awura Amba community, is established. But this is an unrealistic approach amid greatest numbers of impoverished communities unless local governments are empowered to handle all affairs within their territorial jurisdiction.

This distorted attitude about the importance of local level empowerment is also reflected within the local government. The local government seems to have recognized the existing configuration of power relations between it and the regional government. Jember believes that ANRS rather than his *woreda* can better and effectively work for the replication of the practices of Awura Amba community. This is because, according to him, the regional government "has wider territorial base [jurisdiction power] and all necessary capacities though ours and neighbouring *woredas* may also contribute".

On the other hand, local governments' understanding and awareness on the meaning and scope of people's empowerment is minimal. Jember explains the experience of his *woreda* in expanding best practices as: "Rather than trying to expand the practices of Awura Amba community, we do more on expanding successful individual projects from other villages, for example, irrigation." This view reflects the common pitfalls of many community based development projects, which emphasize on mere material investment as a solution to wider socio-political structural problems. Such problems within the local government structures of Ethiopia result from narrow understanding of the correct meaning and scope of empowerment (Tegegne & Kassahun 2007). My key informant from the NGO confirms that the main challenge to work with local governments is that

“officials within local governments are reluctant to cooperate with us in activities aimed at the empowerment of the local population, for example, poor people’s leadership development. Rather, they need to see only investments in asset building, such as construction of schools and roads. They believe that our investment in empowerment activities is just a waste of time and resources”.

In general, real top-down participation and capacity building within the structures of Ethiopian government, which have been conceptualized in this study as capacity, power and attitudes of local governments, are not practically realized. Thus, according to the existing literature on decentralization of power in Ethiopia and the empirical findings of this study, the prevailing conditions within the country present challenges for political and organizational scaling (Uvin 1995).

6.1.3 The Politics of Local Participation

The aim of this section is to examine the extent to which the existing participatory system in Ethiopia can facilitate or constrain the scaling up of approaches to community self-help development. “Ethiopia...faces a serious challenge in order to incorporate broader shares of its population into decision-making processes" (Vaughan & Tronvoll 2003: 45). In the words of Getaneh, a man participant of FGD2,

“We regularly are called to attend kebele meetings about different activities to be done in our villages [or kebele]. For example, we regularly attend meetings chaired by kebele or woreda agricultural experts to get information about agricultural extension programmes. Me, when I do not understand something, I ask for clarification so as to implement according to the directions.”

All other participants confirm that village members attend (which is mandatory) meetings about different issues, such as women’s right, health extensions and security. Villagers participate in order to get information about government programmes and plans. This information is delivered to the participants either by experts or *kebele* cadres who chair the meetings. For participants of FGD2, their participation has two purposes: first, it is to know about what has been decided from above. This is because villagers are aware that these decisions affect their lives or they cannot escape from them. Second, villagers see their participation as an opportunity to present their priorities to be addressed by the government, though villagers’ bottom-up proposals do not get positive responses. Alamir notes:

“We have so many times, in kebele and village meetings, proposed to our government to provide us with irrigation schemes, since our kebele has ample surface and underground water resource. Unfortunately, we did not get any response yet except unending promises”.

In this regard, local participation falls into the trap of a nominal form of participation as people have only the opportunity to present their views, while those who are in the ‘uppers’ are reluctant to use these views as inputs for planning so as to respond to people’s proposals. In effect, villagers believe that they cannot influence the course of participation and/or the decisions that have already been made outside and channelled to their village just for implementation.

On the other hand, as my interview with Jember reveals, participation at the local level or within the local government structure has narrowly been understood as a means of raising the efficiency of top-down government projects with overall reduced costs. It is also a tool for effective implementation of ruling party activities, as Vaughn & Tronvoll (2003) have noted that the boundary between Ethiopian government and the ruling party is blurred. Jember confirms that local people participate both in government and party (ruling party) activities.

Local people participate only at implementation phases. As such, this participation, ‘*participation as a means*’, is less likely to build the capacity of the participants because the purpose is to reduce costs of implementation by transferring the burden to the poor, who have to contribute with their labour, money and time. It is marked by Jember that

“...obviously, the implementation of government and party activities requires the participation of people. Thus, in our woreda, people participate in constructing schools and roads, natural resource management, health extension programmes, local security and good governance. People participate by contributing their labour and money, and when labour and money are not required, for example, in local security, people’s contribution is attitude change.

This is an *instrumental form of participation* in Nilson & Woodford-Berger’s (2000) participation continuum, whereby project efficiency is the underpinning principle rather than strengthening the bargaining power of the poor. In such circumstances, participation, as a common practice within the African context, forms an element of local citizenship obligation, which is imposed on the local population as inescapable routine (Henry 2004). This is an

explicit critique against the mainstreaming participatory development, whereby participation treated by some government and NGO agents as “a technical method of project work rather than as a political methodology of empowerment” (Hicky & Mohan 2004).

From the perspective of many participants of FGD2, empowerment at village level is understood as the capacity to draft administrative rules and regulations through which village problems can be solved, based on local cultural practices without the intervention of external bodies. One female participant, Workie, however, defines empowerment in terms of the village’s ability to take and implement all forms of top-down government programmes. The prevailing ‘politics of local participation’ is thus far from achieving the above aspiration of many participants. This is because “for most mainstream interventions, it is unrealistic to expect participatory projects to transform existing patterns of power relations” (Kumar & Corbridge 2002 in Hicky & Mohan 2004: 13). Such participatory practices, which fail to transform unfavourable institutional practices and address capacity gaps, create an unfavourable environment for scaling up. Quantitative scaling up is thus limited by narrowing spaces to expand best practices of Awura Amba community to the greatest number of communities. Or, the sustainability of scaling up efforts is diminished because of weak organizational and institutional capacities of the receiving communities, which do not facilitate organizational scaling up.

6.2 Methodological Limitations and Narrow Goals of Scaling Up

For scaling up initiatives to be successful, it is important to adopt a broader framework that could address diverse factors, such as different actors, institutions, structural and historical conditions. This requires adequate preparations in terms of choosing appropriate methodological approaches and defining broader goals. Based on discussions made in section 6.1, one can predict that efforts to scale up the practices of Awura Amba community may be limited by inappropriate methods and guided by short-sighted goals. It is argued that there are clear limitations in the methods used and the goals defined in light of bottom up development approaches. These limitations are highlighted hereunder.

6.2.1 Inadequate Planning, Coordination and Research

Despite the fact that the existing political, institutional and structural conditions are not supportive for scaling up, many efforts have been made to replicate the practices of Awura Amba community by some local government and NGO actors. However, close examination

of these efforts reveal that all the processes underway are lacking adequate planning, coordination and research in light of the principles and theory of scaling up. Most of these efforts are spontaneously initiated without adequate planning and involvement of all concerned stakeholders. During my field work, almost every day, I had the opportunity to observe and talk with different groups of people, who came to Awura Amba community to take best experiences of the community. Some were government officials; some were farmers; and some others were students. All coordinators of such groups, with whom I talked, told me that the idea of sharing the experiences of Awura Amba community was initiated spontaneously in workshops or training in which they participated. A man from the ANRS Security Bureau, who was coordinating his group, explained that

“the group constitutes zonal and woreda security officers. We had a workshop on local peace and security management in our regional city. At the end of our workshop, the idea of visiting Awura Amba community to share the community’s self-initiated security management practices was raised, and that is why we are here now”.

Asked if there were any preparations or plans about replicating this community’s practice in his department and in *woredas* or zones from which the participants came, he responded no. He added that their visit was sudden decision and the purpose of the workshop was not about replication. Other persons from this group, with whom I talked, confirmed the response of their coordinator, and noted that they had learnt much from their visit and wanted to try to implement same in their *woredas/zones*. I learnt a similar story from another group who came another day. The exception was this group constituted farmers and some government employees, who came from women’s rights workshop in a particular *woreda* to share Awura Amba community’s experiences on gender equality. When asked how they are going to use the experiences they got from the visit, some of the participants did not exactly know what could do with it.

Such stories reveal that the efforts of “scaling up” are based on a narrow understanding of scaling up processes. They are not planned activities and not supported by appropriately designed programmes within the organizations from which the visitors came. My key informant from the NGO confirmed that all replication efforts mainly by different sectors of local governments faced similar limitations. As such, these replication processes could not have a significant impact as they lack what Binswanger-Mkhize et al. (2009), call “effective

local-level preparation”, which includes defining all potential local actors, functions and responsibilities, objectives, and facilitation of participatory planning.

In effect, there have been coordination problems among different actors at the local levels that undermine the benefits of collective action for effective grassroots development and scaling up. Arguably, scaling up of approaches to empowerment is not a sector specific undertaking, both in terms of expected goal and the required activities or strategies. The goal is people’s empowerment and strategies are capacity building and participation. Once people are empowered, they can be active participants of the development process in whatever sector they engage. However, because of capacity and knowledge gap about this underpinning principle of scaling up, some government and NGO agents are more committed to the replication of a particular practice that seems, for them, directly relevant to their own specific sector. That is like scaling up of successful projects rather than reasons for success. Therefore, the replication processes discussed above have poor coordination, as different sectors within local or regional government structure have tried to replicate their own sector specific best practices from Awura Amba community. Lack of research about what elements of Awura Amba community’s development, and how they should best be scaled up is implicated in all the above limitations of scaling up.





Figure 4 (upper left): students and staff members from technical and vocational education training college are listening a lecture by Zumra

Figure 5 (upper right): farmers and some government employees are listening a lecture by a lady of Awura Amba community

Figure 6 (lower left): security officers from different zones and woredas of ANRS are buying weaving products after their discussion with the community members

Figure 7 (lower right): those visiting community's social services after the lecture

Source: Researcher's own photo

6.2.2 Scaling Up without Empowerment

It is, in this study, argued that for scaling up of practices of a competent community (here Awura Amba community), and to have a significant impact on the receiving communities, especial emphasis should be given for the history of success: factors and processes that underpin successful community self-help development. Those which contribute to community self-empowerment, as discussed in chapter five, are (a) collective action based on well established trust system; (b) true participatory practices within community; (c) capacity building activates made by the community itself and provided by outside stakeholders; and (d) other characteristics of community action in light of alternative development. However, scaling up efforts and interests, as revealed from my formal and informal conversations, are far from the reality of the history of Awura Amba community. This is because those who try to replicate the practices of Awura Amba community give emphasis to one particularly visible

community action rather than to the internal dynamics, which contribute for successful community practices. For example, among other successful results of Awura Amba community's self-help development process, gender equality has been emphasized by many actors for replication. For these actors, insignificant division of labour based on sex, within Awura Amba community, is the measure of gender equality that they want to replicate. However, for participants of FGD1, this is the result and/or manifestation of persistent and active involvement of women in all decision making processes, both at the household and community level.

At the micro-scale level, (dis)-empowerment is embedded in the overall social practices and/or institutions of a community. This implies the need for transforming the disempowering practices and institutions to achieve better community development that is also the goal of scaling up. From lessons learnt in the development processes of Awura Amba community, true community level participation and capacity building are found to be the reasons for success. As such, the success of scaling up depends on the consideration of these reasons both as means and ends rather than mere replication of any particularly visible results of these reasons. In this regard, the existing efforts by some government and NGO actors mainly within ANRS have clear shortcomings.

6.3 Agents of Scaling Up

Agents of scaling up are, in one way or another, also actors of alternative development. In defining actors of alternative development, Nerfin (1977) in Pieterse (2001: 75) argues that alternative development is “the terrain of ‘Third System’..., the importance of which is apparent in view of the failed development efforts of government...and economic power...”. That means an alternative development must as much as possible, proceed outside and perhaps even against the state (Sanyal (no date) in Friedman 1992). However, it gradually seems to be clear that people's self-development cannot fully be achieved without genuine participation of the state. Especially, as I claim here, this is a critical factor for scaling up of successful grassroots development. Thus, to borrow Pieterse's (2001) concept, a “new kind of political ‘unity’”, which is the synergies among diverse actors of government, NGOs and communities (that is evident from the success of Awura Amba community), is beneficial for successful scaling up. Failure of one of these actors to conform to the practice of genuine bottom up development approaches complicates, even constrains the scaling up process.

6.3.1 The Roles and Limitations of Government Actors

Today, the role of the state in people-centred development has been recognized in the development scholarship. It becomes clear that grassroots development and/or community empowerment is implicated in state's commitment to delegate power to the grassroots. This means that government actors' active participation is crucial for the realization of the transformative participation of local people that widens spaces for the bargaining power of the local people in their all form of encounters with the state. There are enough examples; of small scale community level, basic needs improvements through alternative projects implemented by NGOs with little or no involvement of government actors. Nevertheless, such development projects fail to address political and economic empowerment, the inclusion of the excluded (Friedman 1992). This urges the need to acknowledge the role of the state, as the main facilitator of the activities of the third system, in tackling the structural causes of underdevelopment by scaling up of the best practices of grassroots development.

The underpinning principle is that state agencies should prepare themselves to create the capability of responding to local initiatives rather than impose dramatic initiatives of their own (Freidman 1992). That is part and aim of the scaling up endeavour. All the aforementioned roles of government actors are crucial factors for going to scale, quantitative scaling up by creating favourable political conditions. This is particularly a necessary step for scaling up in countries like Ethiopia where the role of government agencies (of course in negative way) is tremendously influential in the lives of people and their organizations and where the growth and size of civil societies is seriously limited.

Emphasizing on the role of government actors for successful scaling up, on the other hand, implies that these actors' action in contrary to the aforementioned principles significantly narrows spaces of scaling up. As such, there are many limitations of government actors to support scaling up programmes. Primarily, government actors traditionally underestimate the capacity of the grassroots as agents of social change and become reluctant to learn from the success of the lowers. That is a common problem of "rigidly hierarchical and risk-averse management structures that exist within institutions" (Blackburn & Holland 1998). On the other hand, governments are reluctant towards widespread local empowerment through scaling up, because they may feel that their established political positions are threatened (Binswanger- Mkhize et al 2009). Even a politically progressive state will do poorly if it undertakes direct-action projects of its own replacing the organized community working hand in hand with other grassroots organizations (Freidman 1992). These limitations apply to

Ethiopian government though some attempts have been done to devolve power from the centre to the lower tiers of governments. The introduction of the decentralization programme by EPRDF can be viewed as a promising political move. It has even been believed that the programme is effective in devolving power at least to the regional level though it has serious theoretical and practical limitations at the grassroots levels (see chapter two and six). The main limitation of the Ethiopian government is its dominant and excessive role, opposed to the principle of bottom up development in the grassroots activities. Interviews with FGD2 and Jember suggest that the government control all grassroots activities from above rather than enabling and encouraging the grassroots to handle their affairs.

6.3.2 The Roles and Limitations of NGOs

When the main role of government actors is to create enabling political environment, the role of NGOs is to initiate and assist local self-empowerment and facilitate the expansion of successful approaches of empowerment. Taking intermediary position between the state and the local people, the role of NGOs is highly emphasized in the scaling up of successful local practices. Interview with my informant from the NGO suggests that scaling up can better be undertaken by NGOs than government actors. Scaling up efforts made by this NGO reflects the use of relatively better methodological approach, and it is guided by well defined goal of scaling up. This NGO has tried to scale up the practices of Awura Amba community to the *woreda* where it is working for poor people's livelihood improvement and empowerment. This suggests the presence of enough preparation such as capacity building activities which are necessary for scaling up. According to my informant, these preparations, as the overall mission of his organization include:

“Our mission is empowering the poor and marginalized people to be agents of change for their own development. We encourage the poor to organize themselves and establish their own organizations to help themselves. We give them different forms of training like leadership skill training. Thus, through this approach, we encourage them to manage their livelihood improvement with financial and some technical assistance from our organization”.

This coincides with the principles of bottom up development in general, and the self-help development history of Awura Amba community in particular, that creates fertile ground for successful scaling up of approaches to empowerment. More specifically, the informant explains about the overall process and goal of the scaling up efforts as:

“Our goal is helping the receiving communities to be the owner of their own development. Thus, primarily we have tried to expand Awura Amba community’s self-reliance strategies. Then, we have also tried to integrate the community’s best practices in gender equality (insignificant difference in terms of gender based division of labour) and hard-working habit. To make our replication efforts effective, initially we gave capacity training for the receiving communities and then we took selected members to Awura Amba community for practical experience sharing. After the visit, we encouraged the visitors to discuss among themselves about what they learnt from the visit, how they understood and will implement”.

NGOs’ role in scaling up is, therefore, beneficial in filling methodological gaps and addressing the problem of narrowly conceived goals of scaling up among government actors, which are discussed under section 6.2. However, the impacts of NGOs in scaling up become minimal if the replication efforts are limited to smaller local communities where there are only active projects of those NGOs. The success of an NGO, as agent of scaling up, must be judged not only in terms of effective small scale scaling up by its direct involvement, but also in terms of the extent to which it enables other actors, mainly government ones, to facilitate or participate in the scaling up process, so that the greatest number of communities can be empowered. Especially, this must be an important scaling up strategy in Ethiopia where there are minimum government commitments for grassroots development, weak local governments and popular organizations. For the effectiveness of such scaling up strategy, NGOs should work in close relation with government actors. This should include NGOs’ commitments to influence and lobby government agents for policy changes or effective implementation of the existing policy in support of scaling up. That is a necessary step for achieving political scaling up through impacts of NGOs. However, as the interview with my informant from the NGO reveals, there is little or no engagement in such activities, both in implementing its overall projects and scaling up endeavour. In this regard, my informant notes that:

“In the first place, as an NGO, we are not able to challenge the government. We should work within the government policy framework. But we have been trying to challenge indirectly by helping people to struggle for their rights. We have also been trying to be a role model by our activities, for government actors rather than directly challenging for policy changes”.

Therefore, the existing overall NGOs' activities or scaling up efforts in Ethiopia are not enough to fill the institutional, capacity and power gaps observed within the government structures in section 6.1.

6.3.3 The Role of Successful Self-

help Community: The Role and Limitations of Awura Amba Community

A successful self-help community can play an important role both as a centre of excellence and as an active agent of scaling up. Awura Amba community, as a centre of excellence for successful community self-help development, can provide ample experiences for government and NGO actors who want to change the lives of rural poor people. As long as this community had similar development challenges of many rural communities of Ethiopia, all the strategies employed, what and how different actors have involved, or the overall history of Awura Amba community are all necessary lessons to be learnt for scaling up of community empowerment activities to wider geographical areas. The history of Awura Amba community can provide essential pilot phase information. According to Gillespie (2004) Binswanger-Mkhize (2009), this phase is an important precondition for any successful scaling up endeavour so as to define actors, methods and other important issues.

On the other hand, a successful self-help community can directly participate in the scaling up of its best practices. When community projects are initiated and succeeded with the primary role of the self-help networks of community members, like Awura Amba community, the role of such community, as agent of scaling up, must be emphasized. Active involvement of such actors will provide direct bottom up experiences as an input to the planning and main phases of scaling up. This is the best option to replicate the internal dynamics of success or the underlying factors contributing to successful community development, as it is implied by the following quote:

"...the government should act as an intermediary between us and Awura Amba community, so that Awura Amba community can teach us the internal development process of their community. As neighbours, we always observe what they do from outside, but that is not enough; we want to know the internal aspects of their development" (Alamir).

Participants of FGD1 and Zumra argue that replication of their practices throughout the country is one of the main goals of their community, and they believe that they are responsible to achieve that. On the other hand, participants of FGD2 have explained that they are interested in replicating the practices of Awura Amba community in their village (in the

way that it does not affect their religion). They believe that Awura Amba community, with the assistance of government actors, is responsible to help them in taking the community's best practices. Therefore, this circumstance could initiate what Chambers (2005) calls '*lateral spread*', a scaling up approach in which the successful community and receiving community collaborate to carry out the replication of best practices of the former. So long as it is in a better position, the successful or lead community should take the initiative to facilitate and encourage the neighbouring communities for replication exercises. The lead community can play an important role in carrying out training, sharing of leadership skills and facilitation of community based planning in the neighbouring communities. According to participants of FGD2, the lead community can invite the neighbouring communities to attend its participatory activities or decision making processes, for example, community meetings. As such, the latter would have the opportunity to learn the root factors of community empowerment and/or development from the live experiences of the lead community. Participants of FGD1, on the other hand, have emphasized the role of spontaneous interactions (that reflects the principle of social learning theory) between them and the neighbouring communities for lateral spread of their practices. They argue that they can contribute to the spread by sharing ideas about their community to everybody they contact in their daily routines. For example, Sani notes that:

“As cereal dealer, I meet many people from neighbouring villages every day. Therefore, I sell/buy not only goods but I also sell our best practices. I usually make fruitful discussions with such people”.

This lateral spread or scaling up by a community-to-community partnership is the most cost effective scaling up strategy where results are more rooted in local realities (ibid). Furthermore, active participation of the local people (as primary stakeholders) in this process of scaling up would facilitate the empowerment and capacity building of the receiving communities, which is the desired goal of scaling up.

In spite of good potential for lateral spread of the best practices of Awura Amba community to the neighbouring communities, it is not yet initiated based on the theory and practice of genuine scaling up. That is attributed to some limitations on the part of Awura Amba community (as a lead community). The main limitation is the community's overemphasized upward relationship with regional government, universities and other public and private organizations in big cities than establishing strong horizontal relationships with the local, rural

communities. Zumra and some other top leaders of the community repeatedly travel to the major cities of the country to share their experiences, for example, to the students and staff of universities. It is true that such relationship can facilitate the recognition of the community and flow of more external assistances, and of course facilitate the spread of the community's best practices, at the information level. However, I believe that this relationship dramatically reduces the probability of creating strong horizontal partnership with the local, disempowered communities. This limitation may reflect the common criticism of NGOs that their unprecedented upward relationship with donors and governments significantly reduces their grassroots accountability (Sachedina 2010). Here is what Alamir comments about this limitation:

“All practices, except religion [non-religiousness] of Awura Amba community are very important for us, and we can learn a lot from them. But their limitation is the failure to organize and train us and other local people. It is meaningless to improve only themselves and be known in the country or the world. To make their development meaningful, they have to train us about solving problems, solidarity and working together”.

Therefore, I argue that while the existing conditions invite for lateral spread, Awura Amba community's reluctance or lack of awareness to take the initiative for strong and genuine community-to-community extension, limits the replication of its best practices in neighbouring villages and beyond. I also believe that, in the absence of promising government institutional spaces, the upward partnership of Awura Amba community could not contribute much for the scaling up of its best practices. Rather, the lateral spread or horizontal approach of scaling up is inevitable. To that end, the existing circumstances, as discussed above, suggest the necessity of triggers, be NGOs or local people's organizations, to ignite the latent community capacities for replication.

6.4 Spaces for Scaling Up

The aforementioned discussions in this chapter tend to be pessimistic regarding scaling up of successful community self-help development in Ethiopia. The main obstacles are structural, rooted in the government political institutions. There are also problems within the existing scaling up attempts such as the use of inappropriate methods, lack of awareness about the goals of scaling up and other limitations of agents of scaling up. Of course, many of these are also indirect effects of the structural problems. Thus, this section, based on lessons learnt from

the success of Awura Amba community and scaling up story of Lulista Mariam, briefly highlights alternative spaces to scaling up.

6.4.1 Lessons Learnt from Successful Community Self-help Development: Self-help as a Scaling Up Approach

In chapter three, it has generally been argued that a self-help approach is an alternative strategy of the poor to compensate the failure of the state to reach the rural, poor communities. Thus, self-help could be understood as an alternative approach of grassroots development and/or scaling up when institutional and interrelated barriers in the government structures are not conducive. This can be testified by the development and self-empowerment history of Awura Amba community.

Referring back in chapter two and five, it is recalled that Awura Amba community, as a self-help group, has evolved under extremely constraining macro and micro structural circumstances. Although political commitment of state actors is beneficial for successful community self-help development (Cheshire 2006), the self-help and empowerment initiatives of Awura Amba community were not supported by conducive local, regional and national political and social institutions. The community has adopted its own transformative participatory approach to deal with community issues when there were no real participatory programmes implemented by the state (see chapter five). When there was no capacity building opportunity from outside stakeholders, the community had developed a self-collective capacity building programmes. The better equipped or skilled members capacitate their unskilled fellows by a well organized training system. Non formal education and initial training on weaving organized by the community itself are some examples of capacity building and self-empowerment strategies.

Such self-help activities towards capacity building and empowerment can be connected to the theory of agency, which suggests the possibility of social changes from below, even under the most extreme structural barriers. Of course, the success depends on the extent to which all individual actors, who have similar or related challenges, but diverse skills and capacities, are able to establish a strong association to work collectively toward a common goal. This allows each member to bring his/her unique capacity to exchange with other members for the common advantage. At the end of the day, a strong collective action would be real to negotiate with outside agencies, and so a community culture is implied. The history of Awura Amba self-help community exemplifies all these issues. Therefore, this history suggests that self-help approach, based on the theory of community, is an alternative strategy of scaling up,

i.e. initiating and encouraging self-help groups can be considered as an alternative space of scaling up when other options are minimal.

6.4.2 Lessons Learnt from Scaling Up Story of Lulista Mariam

Figure 8: Box showing scaling up story of Lulista Mariam

In 2006, Gender Office in collaboration with the Office of Social and Labour Affairs of Agew Awi Administrative Zone had offered training on gender issues for selected experts at woreda level (to be facilitators for practical implementation of outputs of the training in their respective woreda) and some rural households of different woredas in the zone. Fageta Lokomo was one of those woredas. From this woreda, 20 partners (husband and wife), 5 female household heads, and selected experts from gender office were participated. Of these, three partners represented Lulista Mariam. The training focused on avoiding harmful traditional practices that directly affect the lives of females, such as early marriage, division of labour based on sex, female genital mutilation and raising women's decision power. The training was supported with stories of bad and good experiences in the country. The practices of Awura Amba community were portrayed as best experience. "After the training, we decided to start practical implementation and follow up from a single kebele so as to make our activity manageable. Then, we selected the most accessible kebele [within which Lulista Mariam is found], and we selected the administrator [male] and representative of women's affairs [female] of the kebele to go to Awura Amba community with me to share experiences" (Workeneh, Coordinator, Gender Equality Work Process of Fagta Lokomo Woreda). After the visit, those two members of the kebele who visited Awura Amba community have shared what they got from their visit to other members of the kebele and coordinated the implementation process. Finally, one village, Lulista Mariam has shown success and is provided with electricity and continuous visit by regional and zonal government officials as a reward, according to Workeneh and participants of FGD from this village (here after FGD3).

Source: field data

Three important lessons for scaling up can be learnt from the above story: capacity building is a precondition, leadership and the use of the existing institutional arrangement represents opportunities. I briefly discuss hereunder these lessons to explore potential and/or alternative spaces for scaling up of successful community self-help development.

Capacity building as a precondition and means of scaling up

The training stated above, and consequent activities are supposed to build the capacity of village members. The training itself and participation through their representatives in this training have, to some extent, provided an opportunity of initiation among village members.

“We got important ideas and were motivated by the training. Those of us who participated in this training on behalf of our village arranged consecutive meetings for one month to discuss with the village members about the contents of our training and implement practically. After one month of such practices, we were asked to nominate one man and one woman to go to Awura Amba community for experience sharing by the woreda gender office. Thus, we nominated and sent them [those who are explained in the story box]” (Addis, priest, participant of FGD3).

Such prerequisite activities of scaling up enable the receiving communities to define actors, priorities, responsibilities and functions of each member in the process. This would, in turn, allow the development of intra-community interaction skills for collective action. At the same time it creates a fertile ground for adapting participatory skills. These preliminary capacity building measures would facilitate the scaling up process. Facilitators from outside (here experts from the woreda) play a crucial role to instigate the process and provide necessary assistance, such as arranging visits for experience sharing. In this regard, the role of experts who took the same training with the village members, from the *woreda* gender office is beneficial.

Leadership

Confirming the existing literature on the role of leadership drawn from community members in community based development in general (Uphoff et al 1998; Galvan 2006), findings in chapter five have shown that leaders who can easily get recognition from their fellows as a leader to organize all community members for collective action is critical for successful community self-help development. The most crucial leaders' trait is the ability to win people's collaboration. Obviously, this has a direct implication for scaling up. The analysis of scaling up story of Lulista Mariam confirms the role of local leadership for scaling up.

Asked to discuss reasons which contribute to successful implementation (their own evaluation) of the best practices of Awura Amba community in their village while other villages within the same kebele do not succeed, Addis responds that “because always our village is characterized by a strong cooperation”. All other participants of FGD3 unanimously explain that:

“It is because of strong leadership of Addisie [a name they used for Addis to show their respect for him, commonly used by Ethiopians to express one's respect for a person he/she

is calling by name]. He has initiated and organized us to work hard. Of course, when he has encouraged us, we are active to follow him”.

However, when Workeneh was asked to confirm this, he had to say:

“I do not believe that is the reason. If we say that the reason is leadership, we have one person in another village of the same kebele who has very good leadership skill in terms of organizing the whole kebele and in changing the life of his own household. Therefore, if the factor is leadership, his village must perform better than Lulista Mariam. By the way, there are other, many scattered good performances at a household level, but what is unique in Lulista Mariam, it is a change at a village level”.

However, the quality of leadership in scaling up should be measured not just in terms of individual success to be a model but in terms of the ability to change individual success into group success. It needs to establish community culture, which is initiating individual members to bring their unique skills together for the achievement of a common goal (Cheshire 2006). Leadership in this sense is, therefore, the ability to convince each member to create a network of collective actors, in which the role of community approach is implied. Therefore, confirming the above quotation of participants of FGD3 about the role of leadership, I believe that Addis as a priest has contributed to the success (good start) by providing effective leadership. This is because, as it is discussed in chapter two, religious persons in rural Ethiopia, particularly in Amhara society are highly respected by their fellows and have unchallenged power over village members (of course, I discussed there as constraining social structure). But in the village of Lulista Mariam, that social structure has been changed into an enabling one that indicates what social structures can be used as enabling factors for scaling up; Giddens’ ‘duality of social structure is implied.

Using the existing institutional arrangements as an opportunity

It has been discussed earlier in this chapter that the existing institutions within the Ethiopian government structure are patterned in such a way that they ensure effective top-down political control rather than they facilitate bottom up development practices. The existing local participatory practices do not have a different goal as they are implemented within such institutional frameworks. So, what options can be used for scaling up of approaches to empowerment? Hartman & Linn (2008) suggest the establishment of parallel institutions while Cornwall (2004) argues that “spaces produced by hegemonic authorities can be filled with those with alternative visions, whose involvement transforms their possibilities. Spaces

created with one purpose in mind may be used by those who engage in them for something quite different”. While establishing parallel, genuine participatory institutions or structures is constrained by lack of political commitment by state actors and weak civil societies, primary data from scaling up story of Lulista Mariam supports Cornwall’s argument. In the scaling up process, village members used the existing government institutional structures: they used the village administration system and different committees as a means of organizing themselves for scaling up activity, for example, women of the village have used the kebele women’s affairs committee to organize themselves; governmental meetings at a village and *kebele* level were used to undertake parallel meetings for scaling up issues. Addis has asserted that

“Whenever we have village and kebele meetings [governmental], we have the opportunity to get together. After the government meetings finished, we hold another meeting to discuss and evaluate the implementation of best practices we adopt from Awura Amba community. Sometimes we even do this side by side with government meetings, especially when the meeting is at the village level”.

Finally, although the scaling up process within Lulista Mariam still has some limitations particularly in terms of identifying the underlying factors that contribute to the success of Awura Amba community such as genuine participation within a community, the village has shown a good start. Of course, participation is also being practiced in the implementation process, though it is not possible to say whether it is satisfactory.

6.5 Summary

This chapter has problematized barriers and limitations of the scaling up process. It is argued that lack of genuine top-down participation and capacity building in (local) government, poorly conceived and practiced local participation, and lack of adequate planning, coordination and research are the main challenges for scaling up of community self-help development. Simultaneously, it has addressed the roles and limitations of government actors, NGOs and owners of successful community self-help development in the scaling up process. Based on lessons from successful community self-help development (of Awura Amba community) and the scaling up story of Lulista Mariam, this chapter has identified self-help approaches, capacity building within the target population, leadership and the use of the existing government institutional arrangements as alternative spaces for scaling up.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The Dynamics of Successful Community Self-help Development

Successful community self-help development is a bottom up development process, which is initiated, attained and sustained by individual (especially in terms of leadership) and collective action of community members. Success is implicated in the collective agency of the networks of a self-help group, which mobilizes the existing scarce community resources by employing institutions of mutual support, sharing knowledge, skills and even risks under adverse macro and micro-structural circumstances. Successful community self-help development is the result of effective synchronization of latent capacities, skills, knowledge and assets which reside in each community member. Direct participation and mutual decisions by community members are default strategies for the success of such synchronization. All these self-help group learning processes eventually lead to self-empowerment and capacity development at both the individual and community levels.

The success of Awura Amba self-help community confirms the assumption that the potential for social change reside within the poor people themselves. Poor people who have common problems and interests establish associations of mutual support through which they organize themselves to share costs of asset and capability building to escape from poverty by self-empowerment. Therefore, poor people's collective agency, which is exercised in terms of community self-help activities, is an important and initial step in transforming poor communities towards empowerment. This praises communities' own mobilization for development from below that acknowledges the role of community, as both primary institution/actor and an immediate, open space for the poor to unfold their collective agency for social change. Generating development ideas and operations within the community is beneficial in many regards. First, community problems and development priorities for solution can easily be identified by those who directly experience those problems. Second, existing individual and collective capacities and skills can effectively be employed according to local contexts, which are usually missing or misused in the conventional top-down development interventions. Finally, all these processes encourage direct participation that leads to capacity building and empowerment as both goals and reasons for successful community self-help development.

Trust among members of Awura Amba community is an essential factor that brings them together for collective action and so facilitates group learning that contributes to all the

initiatives discussed above. Then, it has been observed in this study that all self-help activities in connection to the aforementioned issues, within Awura Amba community, initiate both planned and spontaneous participation within the community as a means to successful community self-help development. This participation, which is tailored to the local contexts is transformative in nature that leads to empowerment; participation as end.

From an agency-oriented perspective all poor people have latent capacities and skills to effect social change from below, or to perform all the aforementioned activities effectively both individually and collectively. What is needed for the actualization of these capacities and skills, especially in converting into actual collective capacity is sparks. In the case of Awura Amba community, that is charismatic local leader, Zumra.

Finally, successful self-help community, as it is evident from Awura Amba community, means the one which can actively influence the terms and direction of its relations with outside stakeholders and/or partners. Awura Amba community is capable of doing this, in which community capacity and empowerment is implied. Then, the reasonable question arising at this stage is; how this island of success amid widespread poverty and disempowerment can be scaled up to benefit the greatest possible number of community? This suggests the need to assess the existing barriers/challenges as well as bottlenecks of scaling up.

7.2 Scaling Up of Successful Community Self-help Development in Ethiopia

Findings in this study have shown that there are no conducive situations in Ethiopia for meaningful grassroots level participation and empowerment, and so for scaling up of approaches to empowerment. These situations limit the replication of the practices of Awura Amba community to wider geographical areas. Lack of political commitment to create favourable institutional space and promote real decentralization in relation to the configuration of CBOs, civil society organizations and NGOs, and in relation to the principles of bottom up development; plus unfavourable attitude, behaviours and philosophy of people in government institutions constrain political scaling up. In effect, lack of institutional and organizational capacity for grassroots movements and their organizations constrain political and organizational scaling up. Understandably, restricted spaces for both forms of scaling up, in turn, constrain all other forms of scaling up.

As such, the existing replication attempts by some local governments, NGOs and local people (without a significant top-down commitment) are constrained by lack of appropriately designed methods and well defined goals in light of the theory and practice of scaling up. The methods are characterized by inadequate planning, coordination and researches which do not fit into community based approach of empowerment. As it has been revealed in chapter two, the disempowering characteristics of Ethiopian (especially Amhara) society is manifested in terms of social relations among different sex, ages, classes, religious status and others at local levels. It is, therefore, argued that such disempowering social relations can be reversed into empowering ones by encouraging cooperative actions of all actors involved in the relation. Nevertheless, the methods, which are being employed in the existing replication efforts, are far from a community-oriented approach. My informal conversations with different groups of visitors who came to Awura Amba community at different times to learn lessons from the community confirm this: first, the composition of many groups does not support community approach as a strategy for scaling up. Some groups constituted government officials representing different *woredas* or zones, while some others constituted college students who came from different parts of the country. Second, their views about implementing the lessons learnt from their visit do not reflect collective goals. Most of them interpret their visit in terms of personal benefits, hence such efforts have limitations in organizing and creating community and ensuring a collective approach to scaling up. Concerning goals of replication, the existing efforts are constrained by narrowly defined goals of scaling up. All groups of visitors, with whom I talked and all my key informants except one (from NGO), are trying or will try to replicate particularly visible characteristics of Awura Amba community. However, all these actors have not shown commitment to scale up participatory and capacity building activities, which are indispensable tools for community empowerment, as both means and ends of scaling up endeavours.

Finally, I argue that all those methodological limitations and narrow conception about the goal of scaling up are the results of dysfunctional institutions, unfavourable attitudes of personnel in the government structures. That has, in turn, resulted in lack of capacity and power of local governments to support grassroots level development in general and scaling up in particular. That is the limitations of government actors as agents of scaling up, while at the same time, the scaling up efforts of NGOs is also not satisfactory to change or compensate these limitations by influencing government policy directly or through indirect impacts. On the other hand, the impact of Awura Amba community, as another agent of scaling up, has

become minimal because of lack of commitment to establish planned and strong horizontal relationship with other rural communities. This is especially interesting as its history has shown that a strong self-help network of local people has become the main source of success than its strong upward relation with higher government institutions. However, as it is observed from the scaling up story of Lulista Mariam, I am optimistic that the existing rhetorical institutional arrangements and participation may provide a small opportunity for the grassroots to use it as a bottleneck for scaling up with the assistance of some other civil society organizations, for example, NGOs, though it will be challenging and time consuming endeavour.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Background Information on Research Participants (FGD)

A. FGD with Selected Members of Awura Amba Community (FGD1)

Name	Age	sex	Educational status	Responsibility within the community	Time and reason of joining the community
Getie Ahmed	48	Female	Grade 4 (non formal education-NFE)	Union member, weaving	Born within the community
Amanuel Chekole	30	Male	Grade 5 (NFE)	Union member, weaving	Born within the community
Zibad Amid	35	Female	No education	Community member, petty trading	Joined in 2005, (“because, as a woman, I want my rights get protected”)
Daleya Gehoar	..... .....	Female	Basic education	Community member, petty trading	Joined in 1991 (“because I want my children to be grown up by learning [good] disciplines of the community”)
Melkamu Yesuf	22	Male	Bachelor Degree	Community member (seeking job), tutoring community members	Born within the community
Mulunesh Seid	32	Female	Grade 4 (NFE)	Union member, waiter in the community cafeteria	Born within the community
Engedaw Agez	35	Male	Grade 5 (NFE)	Union member, weaving	Born within the community
Zeyineba Adem	21	Female	2 nd year bachelor degree student	Community member (student), tutoring community members	Born within the community
Asnakachew	21	Male	2 nd year bachelor degree student	Community member (student), tutoring community members	Born within the community
Sani Sidike	36	Male	Grade 4 (NFE)	Union member, shop keeping and cereal dealer	Born within the community

B. FGD with Selected Members of Gibgudguad, the neighbouring village (FGD2)

Name	Age	sex	Educational status	Current Responsibility within the village
Eshetie Kebede	67	Male	No education	No (but kebele administrator during the previous government)
Serkie Amera	55	Female	No education	No
Getaneh	32	Male	Grade 6 (suspended)	No (but vice kebele administrator for 9 years in the existing government)
Bayush	20	Female	No education	No
Debre Alamire	.....	Female	No education	No
Alamir Dantie	47	Male	Basic education	No
Workie Baye	38	Female	Basic education	No
Ashagrie Wassie	22	Male	No education	No
Demeke Baye	23	Male	Grade 6 (suspended)	No
Zewdie Tegegne	43	Female	No education	No

C. FGD with selected members of Lulista Mariam, the “other Awura Amba” (FGD3)

Name	Age	Sex	Educational status	Current Responsibility within the village
Addis Belay	33	Male	Grade 4	House of speaker of kebele, and priest in the village
Getaw Walle	.....	Male	Basic education	No
Agedew Taye	30	Male	Grade 7	Leader of village cell
Simegn Asres	32	Female	No education	Member of kebele social court
Amarch Mulu	45	Female	No education	No
Melaku Yirdaw	35	Male	Grade 8	Secretor of kebele social court
Bossena Amare	28	Female	No education	No
Mulat Beyene	37	Male	Basic education	Kebele militia
Yeshiwork Shibeshi	30	Female	Grade 3	No
Awelew Fentie	25	Male	Grade 7	No
Woinitu Yirdaw	32	Female	Grade 2	No
Habtamu Yirdaw	.....	Male	Grade 10 (completion of general secondary education)	No

Appendix 2. Background information of Key Informants

A. Life History Interviewee

Zumra Nuru:

Age- 63

Sex- male

Educational status- no education

Position/Responsibility- founder and leader of Awura Amba community

B. Government

Jember Guade:

Age- 36

Sex- male

Educational status- Diploma¹

Position/Responsibility- Head, Consultancy Office for Public Mobilization, Fogera *woreda*

Wagaw Hailu:

Age- 49

Sex- male

Educational status- Masters Degree

Position/Responsibility- Head, Department of Heritage Conservation and Tourism Development Work Process, ANRS Culture and Tourism Bureau

Workneh Tsega:

Age-

Sex- male

Educational status- Bachelor Degree

Position/Responsibility- Coordinator, Gender Equality Work Process, Fagta Lokomo Woreda

Mekcha Engdayehu:

Age- 45

Sex- male

Educational status- Bachelor Degree

Position/Responsibility- Head, Department of Entertainment Work Process, ANRS Mass
media Agency

NGO:

Name: Anonymous (upon request)

Age- 50

Sex- male

Educational status- Master Degree

Position/Responsibility- anonymous

Appendix 3. Interview Guides

A. FGD with Selected Members of Awura Amba Community

Description: the purpose of this Focus Group Discussion is to assess:

- The extent to which local people (Awura Amba Community) as a self help group mobilize themselves for managing their affairs
- The extent to which the capacity of local people (Awura Amba Community) is strengthened and the degree of their empowerment through active involvement/participation in community affairs
- Limiting and enabling factors for scaling up processes of community driven development from the perspective of owners of best community development practices.

After introducing themselves and dealing with one introduction question, the participants will be divided in to two groups comprising five members each. Then each group will be provided with one preliminary question to be discussed by each group before the groups reunited for further discussion and common consensus. In each stage relevant specific questions will be presented for the general group for further discussion on the issue.

Stage one: ask the participants to introduce themselves to the group , including their age, educational status, responsibility in the household, responsibility in the community, the time when join the community and their reason for joining the community.

Stage two: divide the participants in to two groups based on the information obtained in stage one; and ask each group to discuss and identify five most important activities that Awura Amba Community does by its own initiation for the improvement of the community and its members (without top-down influence by the government or other external bodies).

After discussion in small groups, the groups will be asked to reunite together in larger group to discuss, agree on and to add extra activities (if any).

Then, the following relevant and specific questions will be provided for the larger group for further discussion on the issue:

- 2.1. Do you think that your community is successful in doing those activities that you have already identified? If yes, would you please explain about what does it mean success and what are the indicators from your perspective?
- 2.2. Who contributes for this success?
- 2.3. As a member of the community, do you believe that you have a role or contribution for this success? If yes, would you please discuss about your contribution?

- 2.4. Do you know any supports given to your community by government or NGOs? If yes, what are these supports and do these supports have impact on your community in general and on your life in particular? If yes, discuss that in what ways they impacted?
- 2.5. Would you please identify the ways and processes through which your community interacts with external bodies, for example with government and NGOs?
- 2.6. For what purpose your community make relationship with government and NGOs?
- 2.7. Do you think that the relationship and the ways your community makes relationship with government and NGOs satisfy your interest? If yes, in what ways? If no, would you please discuss why and identify the ways that your community should make relationship with government and NGOs?
- 2.8. Is there any particular period/time when your community shows impressive progress? If yes, when?
- 2.9. What factors do you think contribute for this impressive progress?
- 2.10. Do you think that there is improvement in your personal quality of life since that period? If yes, in what ways?
- 2.11. Would you please identify some challenges and discuss as how affect the further development of your community in general and your personal life in particular? Why it becomes difficult to overcome those challenges?

Stage three: the participants will be divided again in to two smaller groups and each group will be asked to list and discuss on at least three ways or processes in which they involve in the activities that Awura Amba Community does by its own initiation as identified and discussed by the participants in stage two.

After discussion in small groups, the groups will be asked to reunite together in larger group to discuss; to add extra ways of involvement (if any) and then to prioritize their ways of involvement according to the most common ways of involvement.

Then the participants will be asked to further discuss on the following specific and relevant questions with reference to the first four important ways of involvement according to their prioritization.

- 3.1. Would you please explain about the nature/objectives of community activities in which you mostly involved?
- 3.2. As a member of the community, what are your responsibilities/roles in the community activities you mostly involved? Who gives you these responsibilities?
- 3.3. What is the purpose of your involvement?
- 3.4. Do you think that you are personally benefited from your involvement? If yes, please explain as how you are benefited?

3.5. How would you compare your involvement in community activities within Awura Amba Community with your involvement in *kebele* (the lowest structure in government administration structure next to district) activities?

Stage four: the participants will be divided again in to two smaller groups and each group will be asked to identify three important ways that their community is different from the surrounding villages.

After discussion in small groups, the groups will be asked to reunite together in larger group to discuss and agree on the lists and on the basis for differences.

Then, the following specific and relevant questions will be provided for the larger group for further discussions.

- 4.1. Do you think that your community is better than the neighbouring villages? If yes, please discuss the ways in which your community is better?
- 4.2. Would you please identify things that you think the neighbouring villages lack as compared to your community?
- 4.3. What do you feel if the best practices of your community expand to neighbouring villages and beyond?
- 4.4. Do you think that you have a responsibility to expand the best practices of your community to neighbouring villages and beyond? If yes, in what ways you can contribute?
- 4.5. Who is responsible to expand the best practices of your community to neighbouring villages and beyond apart from your community? What do you think their responsibilities/roles?

B. FGD with Selected Members of Gibgudguad

Stage One:

Ask the participants to introduce themselves to the group; including their age, educational status, economic background, responsibility in the household (household head: male/female head; child head or other responsibility) and responsibility in the village (if any).

Stage two: discussion on issues in relation to capacity, participation and empowerment

1. Discuss about what does it mean by empowerment or being self-reliant from your perspective?
2. Identify and discuss basic elements of being self-reliant or empowered both individually and at village level?
3. Do you believe that you and your village are capable of achieving these basic elements of being self reliant/empowered? If yes, in what ways?
4. If no, what you lack to achieve those basic components of being self reliant/empowered?

5. Have you ever participated in meetings or other events related to your village affairs? If yes, would you please explain ways of your involvement?
6. Identify and discuss ways that you think important for you and your village empowerment
7. What do you think about your own role and contribution in this regard?
8. Do you think that your participation (if any) in your village affairs benefits you and your village? If yes, in what ways? If no, what was your expectation?

Stage three: adopting best practices of Awramba community

1. Would you please forward and discuss about your general opinion or perception on Awramba community including your visit of the community before (if any)?
2. What makes Awramba community different from your village?
3. Do you believe that Awramba community is better than your village? If yes, in what ways and what factors do you think contribute for the betterment of Awramba community as compared to your village?
4. Do you believe that practices of Awramba community are important for you and your village? If yes, in what ways? If no, why?
5. Which best practices of Awramba community are important for you and your village?
6. Do you know any attempts or programmes before in your village to adopt the best practices of Awramba community?
7. If yes, what was your role in the process?
8. Do you think that the programme is successful? If yes, in what ways? If no, what do you think the reasons?
9. Would you please identify and discuss strategies/ways that you think important for successful adoption of best practices of Awramba community?

Stage four: summary

Present the major findings of the focus group discussion for the same group, so that it is possible to:

- Confirm that the findings represent the views of the group
- Get final comments if there is something to be added

C. FGD with Selected Members of Lulista Mariam

1. Would you please start by introducing yourself?
2. How and when did you know Awura Amba community?
3. Which practices of Awura Amba community are relevant for your village and what practices of Awura Amba community you are replicating now?
4. Would you please explain the general process of the replication?
5. Discuss about the ultimate goals of the replication process?

6. To what extent your village becomes successful in the replication process, and how do you evaluate your success?
7. Do you believe that you (individually and collectively) are benefited from the replication? If yes, in what ways?
8. What challenges you have been facing during the replication process?

D. Life History Interview Guide: Founder and Leader of Awramba Community

1. Life experience before the establishment of Awramba community

1.1 Would you please start by telling me about the situation of the society/community where you grown up? In terms of:

- The interaction among different classes of people, age, sex, social status, etc
- The level of involvement/participation of all people in the village/community affairs...
- Your role/involvement a child and/or adolescent
- Whose role counts in the planning and decision making of household issues and village affairs?

1.2 What was your feeling about that situation?

1.3 Do you think that it was problematic? If yes, how?

2. Life experiences during the process of establishing the Awramba community

2.1 When you started the movement to establish Awramba community?

2.2 How and why did you start the movement of establishing Awramba community?

2.3 What were the challenges you and your fellows faced in the process of establishing Awramba community?

- Village level
- Beyond the village

2.4 Who supports and who opposes your movement? What do you think the reason for opposition?

2.5 What strategies you and your fellows used in the process of establishing Awramba community?

3. Experiences after the establishment of Awramba community?

3.1 How would you compare the situation of Awramba community today with the community /society in which you grown up (in terms of the situations raised above in 1.1)?

3.2 What improvements realized and to what extent the objectives of your movement are met?

3.3 What factors do you think contribute for the success and/or improvement of Awramba community?

3.4 Do you think that the strategies you used in the process of establishing Awramba community are effective? If yes, in what ways? If no, why? What are the shortcomings?

3.5 Do some other stakeholders (for example, NGOs and local governments help your community and contribute for the current success)?

- If yes, in terms of what and to what extent the support is significant for the success of the community?
 - If no, why?
- 3.6 Do you think that there are still challenges that hinder the process of further development of Awramba community? If yes, what are they?
- 3.7 Why it becomes difficult to overcome these challenges?
- 3.8 Would you please explain the nature of relationship between your community and the government (both central and local) in terms of:
- Community service provisions
 - Community development activities
 - Planning and policy priorities (that affect local communities/your community)?
- 3.9 To what extent your community interacts with the neighbouring villages to share best practices of your community?
- 3.10 What do you think that the neighbouring villages lack as compared to your community to achieve successful self-help development?

E. Key Informant Interview Guide: Representatives of NGO and Concerned Departments of Local/Regional Government

1. Would you please start by explaining the mission and/or role of your organization/department in relation to community and local based development activities?
2. What is your and your organization/department's relation or experience with Awramba community?
3. For what purpose your organization/department works with Awramba community?
4. Has your organization/department ever tried to expand the best practices of Awramba community to the neighbouring villages and beyond? If yes, what best practices to be expanded?
5. When it is started, and what is the status of the spreading process?
6. What is the ultimate objective of expanding the best practices of Awramba community?
7. Would you please explain the general nature of the spreading process including the strategies used?
8. How the local people and their organizations are involved in the process?
9. How the receiving communities/villages responded to the spreading process?
10. Do you think that the spreading process is successful? If yes, in what ways?
11. What are the overall challenges that you face in the spreading process?
12. What roles your organization/department has played or can play to overcome these challenges?

F. Observation Check List

Observation in Awramba community

1. Direct observation of physical environment
 - Availability and quality of social service facilities

- Observation of social and economic events/activities
 - Observation of social interactions among different age and sex groups
 - Management of social services or community resources: who manages or cares them (women, men, young or old members of the community)?
 - Who works in the field and who works at home?
2. Observation by participation
 - participating in community works
 - Attending community meetings
 - Listening what issues are raised in the meetings and understanding the purpose of meetings
 - Who attends the meetings?
 - The participation of the attendants
 - Who says what?
 - As a participant observer, asking and responding in the meetings
 3. Observing the neighbouring village based on the same and relevant check list above in number 1 & 2 for comparison.
 4. photos

Appendix 4: Field Photos



A. Community members at weekly income generating programme for community saving



B. Community members with neighbouring villagers at secondary school construction



C. Community members at weaving activity



D. Community members at farm work



E. Community's old library



F. Community's old school (kindergarten)



G. Community's new library



H. Some community members at basic computer training



. Community's children playing with their ball



J. Old woman at the community's elderly care centre



K. Children in the neighbouring village keeping cattle



L. Old woman from the neighbouring village who came with her wood on her back to sell to Awura Amba community/the nearest town