DSpace Institution

DSpace Repository **http://dspace.org**

Land Administration Thesis and Dissertations

2026-01

The Effects of Rural Kebele Centers Establishment on Land Rights and Livelihood of Farmers: The Case of Basona Worana Woreda; Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia.

KASSAHUN, ZEREAY

http://ir.bdu.edu.et/handle/123456789/17490

Downloaded from DSpace Repository, DSpace Institution's institutional repository

BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF LAND ADMINISTRATION

Department of Land Administration and Surveying

Post Graduate Program

The Effects of Rural Kebele Centers Establishment on Land Rights and Livelihood of Farmers: The Case of Basona Worana Woreda; Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia.

By: Zereay Kassahun Emiru

January 2026

Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

©2026 Zereay Kassahun

BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF LAND ADMINISTRATION

Department of Land Administration and Surveying

The Effects of Rural Kebele Centers Establishment on Land Rights and Livelihood of Farmers: The Case of Basona Worana Woreda; Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia.

By:

Zereay Kassahun Emiru

A Thesis Submitted to The Institute of Land Administration, Bahir Dar University, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Science in Land Administration and Management

Advisors:

Principal Advisor: - Tadesse Amsalu (PhD, Professor)

Co-Advisor: Alelign Wondim (PhD)

Institute of Land Administration, Bahir Dar University

January 2026

Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

Bahir Dar University Institute of Land Administration Department of Land Administration and Surveying

DECLARATION

I, Zereay Kassahun Emiru, declared that this master's thesis entitled **"The Effects of Rural Kebele Centers Establishment on Land Rights and Livelihood of Farmers: The Case of Basona Worana Woreda; Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia'',** is my original research work and has not been submitted for the award of a degree at any other university or college. The assistance and help I received during the course of this investigation and all sources of material used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Zereay Kassahun Emiru		13/01/2026
Name of the Student	Signature	Date

BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY

Institute of Land Administration

Department of Land Administration and Surveying

Advisor Approval

We hereby certify that we have advised, read, and evaluated this thesis titled "**The Effects of Rural Kebele Centers Establishment on Land Rights and Livelihood of Farmers: The Case of Basona Worana Woreda; Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia''** by Zereay Kassahun Emiru, prepared under our advice. We approved the thesis for fulfilling the requirements for the award of the Degree of Masters of Science in Land Administration and Management.

Tadesse Amsalu (Professor)	_____	13/01/2026
Advisor	Signature	Date
Alelign Wondim (PhD) (Co-Advisor)	Signature	

BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY

Institute of Land Administration

Department of Land Administration and Surveying

THESIS APPROVAL

As members of the board of examiners, we examined this thesis titled "**The Effects of Rural Kebele Centers Establishment on Land Rights and Livelihood of Farmers: The Case of Basona Worana Woreda; Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia''** by Zereay Kassahun Emiru. We hereby certify that the thesis is accepted for fulfilling the requirements for the award of the Degree of Masters of Science in Land Administration and Management.

Board of Examiners

----------	----------	----------
Name of External Examiner	Signature	Date
----------	----------	----------
Name of Internal Examiner	Signature	Date
----------	----------	----------
Name of Chairman	Signature	Date

Acknowledgment

First and foremost, I extend my deepest gratitude to Almighty God for His guidance and support throughout the course of my studies and research. I am profoundly indebted to my advisors, Professor Tadesse Amsalu (PhD) and Alelign Wondim (PhD), for their invaluable guidance from the formulation of the research title to the final completion of this thesis. Their generous investment of time, energy, and expertise together with their encouragement, patience, and keen interest in the subject has been instrumental in the successful completion of this work.

My heartfelt thanks go to USAID–Tetra Tech for funding my education, and to the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Land Administration and Use Lead Executive Office (RLAULE) for granting me the opportunity to pursue my studies in Land Administration and Management at Bahir Dar University. I am also sincerely grateful to H.E. Eyasu Elias (PhD, Professor), State Minister for the Natural Resources Sector, for his special support.

I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Aynaadis Zeru, Engineer Silesh Bekele, Mr. Melkie Cherinet, and many others whose names are not listed here, for their encouragement and unwavering moral and technical assistance. My gratitude also goes to the officials and staff members of the Ministry of Agriculture for their continuous moral support during my studies.

In closing, I dedicate this thesis to my dear mother, Tsehaynesh Solomon. Her constant support and love have been a source of inspiration for me each day. I will always cherish her memory as a guiding light in my life. I also want to express my gratitude to my father, Basha Kassahun Emiru, my brother Daniel Kassahun, my sisters, other family members, and colleagues for their unwavering support and encouragement during this journey.

Abstract

This study examines the effects of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) on farmers' land rights and livelihoods in Basona Worana Woreda, Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia. The central research question that guides the study is: How does the establishment of Rural Kebele Centers affect land rights and livelihoods of rural households? A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining data from 255 household surveys with focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), and field observations. Descriptive statistics, multinomial logistic regression, and multiple regression were used to assess tenure security and livelihood outcomes, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed. Findings indicate that the establishment of RKCs was moderately participatory, with woreda and kebele officials leading the process and limited grassroots involvement. RKCs substantially improved land tenure security: 93.7% of respondents reported strengthened rights, 97.3% obtained legal documentation, and 72.1% perceived fewer disputes. Regression analyses revealed that household size, number of parcels, and gender significantly influenced perceptions of tenure security. Although land sizes did not increase, RKCs enhanced access to administrative services, streamlined land transactions, and clarified boundaries. Livelihood outcomes also improved: 57% of respondents reported higher household income, 70% noted new job opportunities, and all experienced better access to agricultural, education, and health services. However, linkages to markets, finance, and infrastructure remained weak. Multiple regression confirmed that tenure security and service access were significant predictors of livelihood outcomes. Qualitative evidence highlighted opportunities, such as increased transparency and technology adoption, alongside challenges, including service complexity and unequal access for women and youth. Overall, RKCs demonstrate strong potential to strengthen land rights and improve rural livelihoods, but their effectiveness depends on deeper community participation, streamlined services, and integration with broader infrastructure and market systems.

Keywords: Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs); Land Rights; Livelihoods; Tenure Security; Participatory Development; Decentralization; Sustainable Livelihoods.

Table of Contents

Pages

DECLARATION i

Advisor Approval ii

THESIS APPROVAL iii

Acknowledgment iv

Abstract v

List of Figures vi

List of tables vi

I. List of Acronyms and Abbreviations vii

CHAPTER ONE 8

1. Introduction 8

1.1 Background of the study 8

1.2 Statement of the problem 9

1.3 Objective of the study 11

1.3.1 *General* objective 11

1.3.2 Specific objectives 11

1.4 Research questions 11

1.5 Significance of the Study 12

1.6 Scope and limitation of the Study 12

1.7 Organization of the Study 13

CHAPTER TWO 14

2. LITERATURE REVIEW 14

2.1 Concepts and Definitions 14

2.1.1 Concepts 14

2.1.2 Definitions 15

2.1.3 Theoretical Foundations 16

2.2 Empirical Literature Review 18

2.2.1 Land Rights in Ethiopia 18

2.2.2 Effects of RKCs on Livelihoods 19

2.2.3 Global Experiences with Smart Villages and Rural Development 20

2.2.4 Villagization and Resettlement in Ethiopia 21

2.2.5 Major Prospects of RKC Establishment 22

2.2.6 Key Challenges and Actors in RKC Implementation 23
2.3 Conceptual Framework 24
Domains of Effect 24
Independent Variables 24
Intervening Variables 25
Dependent Variables 25
Dynamics of Influence 25
Analytical Relevance 25
CHAPTER THREE 27
3. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 27
3.1 Description of the study area 27
3.2. Research Methodology 28
3.2.1 Research Approach 29
3.2.2 Research Design 29
3.3 Selection of the study area 29
3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques 29
3.5. Source of Data and Data Collection Techniques 32
3.5.1 Primary Data Collection: 32
3.5.2 Field Observations and Informal Interactions: 34
3.5.3 Secondary Data Collection 34
3.6 Data Analysis 35
3.6.1 Qualitative Data Analysis: 35
3.6.2 Quantitative Data Analysis: 35
3.6.3 Model Specification 35
3.7. Ethical Considerations 36
CHAPTER FOUR 37
4. Results 37
4.1. Descriptive Analysis 37
4.1.1. Socio Demographic Characteristics 37
4.1.2. Participatory Processes (Income and access to services) 38
4.1.3. Land Tenure Security (Legal ownership, clarity, dispute resolution) 42

4.1.4. Access & Utilization of Land (Landholding size, land transaction, parceling, administrative access)....44
4.1.5. Livelihood effect (Income and access to services)....46
4.1.6. Challenges & Opportunities encountred in the establishment of Rural Kebele Centres....49
4.2 Regression Analysis Results....51
4.2.1 Multiple linear Regression model Results....51
4.2.2 Multinomial Logistic Regression Model Results....57
Interpretation....59
CHAPTER FIVE:....60
5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS....60
5.1 Participation in the Establishment of RKCs....60
5.2 Effect of RKCs on Land Tenure Security....60
5.3 Access to and Utilization of Land Resources....61
5.4 Influence of RKCs on Rural Livelihoods....61
5.5 Challenges and Opportunities of RKCs....62
5.6 Legal and Institutional Framework of RKC Establishment....62
5.7 Broader Implications....62
CHAPTER SIX....64
6. Conclusions and Recommendations....64
6.1 Conclusions....64
6.2 Recommendations....65
6.3 Future Research Directions....66
Reference....67
Appendix I: Letter of Ethical Clearance and Written Consent....73
Appendix II: Household Survey Questionnaire(HHQ)....74
Appendix III: Key Informant Interview Questionnaire (KIIQ)....78
Appendix IV: Focus group discussion (FGD)....80
A Questionnaire prepared for Rural Land Holders....80
Appendix V: Field Observation Checklist....81

List of Figures

Figure 3. 1:Location map of the study area 28

Figure 4. 1:The establishment of RKCs can be taken as a model to promote fairness and transparency..... 40
Figure 4. 2: Overall, RKCs have positively affected the quality of life 48

List of tables

Table 4. 1: Socio-Demographic characteristics of survey households 38
Table 4. 2:Summary Statistics for Household Size and Community Residence 38
Table 4. 3:Respondents' Perception that RKCs Could Have Reduced Inequality in Land Distribution (at RKC)..... 39
Table 4. 4:Land Ownership Status, Acquisition Methods, Disputes, and Perceived effect of RKCs on Land Rights..... 42
Table 4. 5:Perceived effect of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) on Land Ownership Clarity, Documentation, Tenure Security, and Dispute Reduction 43
Table 4. 6:Descriptive Statistics of FarmLand holding Characteristics 44
Table 4. 7:Perceptions of Respondents on the Role of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) in Improving Land-Related Services 45
Table 4. 8:Livelihood effect (Income and access to services) 46
Table 4. 9: RKCs improved access to different service provisions 47
Table 4. 10: Challenges encountred due to the establishment of Rural Kebele Centres 49
Table 4. 11:Opportunities in Service Delivery: Addressing Inequality, Navigating Complexity, and Leveraging Opportunities 50
Table 4. 12:Model Summary 52
Table 4. 13: ANOVAa 52
Table 4. 14:Residuals Statistics 53
Table 4. 15:Significant Predictors of the Perceived Positive effect of RKCs on Quality of Life ($p < .05$)..... 54
Table 4. 16: Non-Significant Predictors of the Perceived Positive effect of RKCs on Quality of Life ($p > .05$) 55
Table 4. 17:Model Fitting Information 57
Table 4. 18:Pseudo R-Square 57
Table 4. 19:Likelihood Ratio Tests 58
Table 4. 20:Chi-Square Test Results for Socio-Demographic and Landholding Characteristics..... 59

I. List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANRS	Amhara National Regional State
BDU	Bahir Dar University
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
HHQ	Household Survey Questionnaire
HHs	Households
ILA	Institute of Land Administration
KII	Key Informant Interview
KIIQ	Key Informant Interview Questionnaire
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoUI	Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
RKC	Rural Kebele Centers
RKCDPI	Rural Kebele Center Development Program Implementation
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Land in rural Ethiopia carries multifaceted significance: it serves not only as an economic asset but also as a symbol of identity and a foundation for social and political structures (Deininger et al., 2008; Rahmato, 2011). Given that agricultural production forms the backbone of the rural economy, secure access to land is crucial for household welfare, food security, and livelihood resilience. Since the nationalization of land in 1975, successive Ethiopian governments have introduced various land policies aimed at addressing inequality and promoting sustainable land use. A key legislative milestone in this regard is the Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation No. 456/2005, which was recently revised through Proclamation No. 1324/2024, the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) Revised Proclamation No.252/2017 of the Revised Rural Land Administration and Use Determination and revised Rural Land Administration and Use System Implementation Regulation (Regulation No. 159/2018) and ANRS Rural Kebele Center Development Program Implementation: Directive No. 14/2022 (FDRE, 2005; FDRE, 2024; ;ANRS, 2017; ANRS, 2018; ANRS, 2022).

Rural kebele center development program (RKCDP) is home grown self-initiated development intervention practiced to collect rural community into kebele centers for better life (Ayenalem, 2024). This implementation activity seeks to centralize public service delivery by establishing designated Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) as integrated service hubs. These centers are designed to rural service centers are some of the essential components which have been emphasized by government so as to enhance urban rural linkages in Ethiopia over the last decade, that provide coordinated access to land administration, healthcare, education, infrastructure, and market services (MoUDHC, 2014). In the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS), the RKCDPI also aims to address informal settlement challenges and foster spatially organized rural development (Adane, M. 2018).

Preliminary evidence shows that RKCDPI has yielded notable gains, such as improved access to basic services, employment creation, and institutional presence (Ayenalem, 2024). Nonetheless,

several unintended consequences have also emerged, including disruptions to traditional livelihoods, land tenure insecurity, and displacement (MoA, 2022; Ayenalem, 2024). Lessons from historical villagization policies (Pankhurst, 1992; Rahmato, 1984) caution against top-down approaches that overlook grassroots realities.

International experiences, such as India's Smart Villages initiative and the World Bank's rural development strategies, highlight the importance of inclusive planning, technological integration, and active community engagement (World Bank, 2015). These global lessons offer valuable insights for Ethiopia as it seeks to contextualize and adapt its rural development policies to local needs and conditions.

The establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) has been ongoing in Basona Woreda for some time. Among these, the RKCs in Angolela and Abamote kebeles present a particularly valuable case for assessing the effect of the Rural Kebele Center Development Program Implementation (RKCDPI) on land tenure security and rural livelihoods. This study seeks to fill existing empirical gaps by closely examining these dynamics at the community level and providing grounded insights into the practical implications and outcomes of the implementation.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Since the 1990s, the Ethiopian government has introduced a range of rural development interventions aimed at improving service delivery, strengthening land administration, and enhancing rural livelihoods. One of the most recent initiatives is the Rural Kebele Center Development Program Implementation (RKCDPI), which seeks to centralize key administrative and social services within designated Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs). The program is intended to promote efficient land administration, improve access to basic services, and support integrated rural development through organized settlement patterns.

In principle, the RKCDPI emphasizes participation, equity, and improved governance at the local level. However, evidence from practice suggests that the outcomes of RKC establishment have been mixed. While some communities have benefited from improved access to land administration services, education, health facilities, and employment opportunities, concerns have also emerged

regarding land tenure security, inclusiveness, and livelihood sustainability. In several cases, the process of establishing RKCs has been characterized by limited community participation, weak institutional coordination, and uneven distribution of benefits, raising questions about whether the program is achieving its intended objectives.

Land tenure security remains a particularly sensitive issue in rural Ethiopia, where land is the primary asset for livelihoods and social stability. Although Ethiopia has made progress through land certification and legal reforms, challenges persist due to administrative capacity gaps, gender inequality, and unclear implementation procedures during land reallocation and settlement planning. The establishment of RKCs intersects directly with these challenges, as it often involves land reorganization, redistribution, or changes in land use. Without careful implementation, such processes risk creating new forms of tenure insecurity, marginalization of vulnerable groups especially women and youth and disruption of existing livelihood systems.

Despite the growing importance of RKCs in Ethiopia's rural development agenda, empirical studies that systematically examine their effects on land rights and rural livelihoods remain limited. Existing research tends to focus either on land tenure or on service delivery and settlement planning, without adequately exploring how these dimensions interact in the context of RKC establishment. Moreover, there is a lack of localized, evidence-based studies that capture farmers' perceptions and experiences at the kebele level, particularly in the Amhara National Regional State.

In Basona Worana Woreda, Rural Kebele Centers have been established across all rural kebeles, including Angolela and Abamote. While the program has been operational for several years, there is limited documented evidence on how it has affected farmers' land tenure security, access to land-related services, and overall livelihoods. Understanding these effects is critical, as unresolved land-related concerns and weak livelihood outcomes can undermine trust in local institutions and threaten the sustainability of rural development initiatives.

Against this background, this study seeks to examine the effects of Rural Kebele Center establishment on farmers' land rights and livelihoods in Basona Worana Woreda. By generating empirical evidence from household surveys, qualitative interviews, and field observations, the

study aims to bridge the existing knowledge gap and provide insights that can inform more inclusive, participatory, and effective implementation of RKCs in Ethiopia.

1.3 Objective of the study

1.3.1 *General* objective

The main objective of this research is to analyze the effects of Rural Kebele Center establishment on land rights and the livelihoods of rural communities within BasonaWorana Woreda, Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To assess the processes followed to initiate the establishment of the RKCs.
- To investigate the effect of RKC establishment on land tenure security among rural households in Basona Worana Woreda.
- To evaluate the influence of RKCs on rural households' access to and utilization of land resources.
- To examine the effects of RKCs on rural household livelihoods, including income, and access to essential services.
- To identify challenges and opportunities related to RKC establishment concerning land rights and livelihoods.

1.4 Research questions

In order to achieve the general and specific objectives, the following research questions are designed for investigation:

1. How participatory were the processes followed to initiate the establishment of RKCs?
2. How has the establishment of Rural Kebele Centers affected land tenure security of farmers in Basona Worana Woreda?
3. What are the effects of Rural Kebele Centers on rural households' access to and utilization of land resources?

4. In what ways have Rural Kebele Centers influenced the livelihoods of rural households regarding income and access to essential services?
5. What are the key challenges and opportunities encountered, concerning land rights and livelihoods due to the Rural Kebele Centers establishment?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it contributes to the development of more informed and effective rural development policies and practices in Ethiopia. In the context of rapid socio-economic and spatial changes in rural areas, understanding the role of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) in shaping land rights and livelihoods is essential. The research aims to generate evidence-based insights that can guide land policy and governance reforms, particularly within frameworks of decentralization and local empowerment. These insights are not only relevant for Ethiopia but also for other Sub-Saharan African countries facing similar rural development challenges.

By exploring the relationship between land tenure security and livelihood strategies, the study can support policymakers and development practitioners in designing inclusive and sustainable interventions that empower rural households and enhance socio-economic well-being. Additionally, it will deepen the understanding of rural-urban linkages and their implications for land management. The research also addresses critical gaps in the existing literature by offering an integrated perspective on land rights, service delivery, and governance, thus providing a strong foundation for future studies and policy innovation in rural development.

1.6 Scope and limitation of the Study

This study was conducted in Basona Worana Woreda, Amhara National Regional State, with a focus on two Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs), Angolela and Abamote. It assessed the effects of RKCs on land rights and rural livelihoods, specifically addressing land tenure security, access to land, and socio-economic outcomes of farming households. The scope was geographically and thematically delimited, and findings should therefore be interpreted within this context, as variations in governance structures and land administration across Ethiopia may limit wider

generalization. Broader external factors such as national policy changes and climate variability were not included in the analysis.

The study faced several limitations. Security challenges in parts of the woreda restricted access to some kebeles, while budget constraints reduced the breadth of survey coverage and follow-up visits. Weak documentation and bureaucratic delays hindered access to complete secondary data. Some informants were reluctant to disclose sensitive information on land rights, which may have influenced the qualitative evidence. Time constraints, linked to seasonal farming activities and administrative procedures, also limited the depth of field engagement. Despite these challenges, the study provides important insights into the role of RKCs in strengthening land tenure security and improving rural livelihoods.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five interrelated chapters to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the role of Rural Kebele Centers in Basona Worana Woreda. Chapter 1 introduces the study by presenting the background, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance, scope, limitations, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of relevant literature on land tenure security, rural land governance, and rural-urban transformation, and outlines the theoretical frameworks guiding the research.

Chapter 3 explains the research methodology, including the research design, data collection methods, sampling procedures, and analytical approaches. Chapter 4 presents and analyzes the research findings, with a focus on changes in land rights, livelihood outcomes, and socio-economic challenges associated with the implementation of RKCs. Chapter 5 presents the discussion and implications by summarizing the key findings.

Finally, Chapter 6 provides conclusions and practical recommendations for stakeholders involved in rural land administration and governance. It also highlights areas for future research to further explore the complexities of rural development in Ethiopia. This chapter structure allows for a clear, systematic, and in-depth examination of the study's core issues.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concepts and Definitions

2.1.1 Concepts

Development has been defined as an inclusive process relating to structure, behavioral and socio-economic change aimed at reducing inequality and raising the quality of life (Paul et al., 2014). Development is about access to basic needs such as nutrition, education, health, and housing, with utmost concern to social justice and dignity (Pankhurst ,1992). Rural development, as included in broad development initiatives, seeks to enhance the living standards of rural people through utilizing local resource mobilization, provision of expanded infrastructure, and service delivery.

Effective rural development requires mutual involvement from both parties, namely, the public institutions, civil society, and private enterprises. Iatu et al. (2020) highlight the importance of local authorities in uniting public and private actors to improve employment generation and enterprise development. Moreover, Adamowicz (2018) argues that rural change is driven by endogenous factors (e.g., local institutions, culture, and skills) and exogenous factors (e.g., state policy and access to markets).

2.1.2 Definitions

Land Rights: Land rights refer to the rights individuals or groups hold over land, including rights to access, use, transfer, or deny others' access to the resource (FAO, 2002). The rights are either formal (officially registered) or customary and are at the core of rural livelihoods and tenure security, particularly in agrarian economies like Ethiopia (Deininger et al., 2008).

Rural Livelihoods: Rural livelihoods encompass the capabilities, assets (tangible and intangible), and activities required for rural living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can endure and recover from shocks and stresses; maintain or improve capabilities and assets; and generate an improved standard of living without harming the natural resource base (Scoones, 1998).

Rural Kebele Administration: The smallest administrative unit of the local government in Ethiopia, kebeles provide services, govern, and ensure contact between the public and the administration (Bekele, 2010).

RKCDPI (Rural Kebele Center Development Program Implementation):RKCDPI refers to the implementation of RKC policy in practice, involving the establishment of infrastructure, institutional transformation, and resettlement or regrouping of household. The program supports rural space under a bottom-up planning strategy (Ayenalem, 2024).

Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs): A rural kebele has a locality that delivers social services. Chosen by local residents and validated by woreda to promote livelihoods and governance (Agza et al.,2023). RKCs are designated administrative and service delivery centers applied at the kebele level in Ethiopia to decentralize administration and improve rural access to facilities, markets, and services. RKCs target improvement in the efficiency of land use, promoting settlement planning, and the initiation of rural transformation (MoA, 2022).

Smart Villages: The concept of a smart village promotes rural integrated development through technology, infrastructure, governance, and social innovation. It prioritizes better rural service delivery, participation, and digital connectivity as means to sustainable development (Misra, 2019; ENRD, 2018). It is a rural development strategy that utilizes digital technologies, new

infrastructure, and green approaches to better living conditions and discourage rural-urban migration (Górecka, et al., 2022).

Land Tenure Security: Land tenure security refers to individuals or families having confidence in their ability to use, control, and transfer land without undue external interference or risk of eviction. It has been associated with increased investment in land, productivity, and conflict mitigation (Holden and Ghebru, 2016; Place, 2009).

Villagization and Rural-Urban Transformation: Villagization refers to government-supported initiatives to bring dispersed rural communities together and settle them in concentrated village settlements, often for political or service delivery purposes. Villagization in Ethiopia has in the past been planned to enhance development but has also been protested at disrupting customary landholding systems and undermining local self-government (Pankhurst, 1992; Rahmato, 1984). Rural-urban transformation refers to structural changes where rural places acquire urban characteristics due to policy, migration, and infrastructure development (Tacoli, 2004).

2.1.3 Theoretical Foundations

This research is built on a rich blend of theories that help us understand the complex relationship between land certification and rural livelihoods. The following frameworks underpin the analysis and interpretation of findings:

2.1.3.1 Land Tenure Theory

Land tenure theory gives us valuable insights into how land rights are established, shared, and upheld. It includes several perspectives:

- **Neo-classical theory** suggests that when people have secure land tenure, they're more likely to invest in their land, which boosts agricultural productivity. The idea is that clearly defined property rights cut down on transaction costs and lead to better resource allocation (Feder and Feeny, 1991).
- On the flip side, **structuralist theory** points out the historical and socio-economic inequalities that are often part of land distribution systems. It argues that land reform and

redistribution are crucial to fixing the structural imbalances that prevent fair access to land and hinder rural development (Griffin, et al., 2002).

- **Institutional theory** looks at how both formal and informal institutions influence land tenure systems. It emphasizes how rules, norms, and enforcement mechanisms evolve over time, and how these factors affect tenure security, land use patterns, and access to justice in disputes over land (North, 1990; Platteau, 2000).

These perspectives give us a well-rounded view to evaluate how effective land certification programs are in addressing both efficiency and fairness in land management.

2.1.3.2 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) takes a holistic approach to understanding how rural households leverage different assets like natural, physical, human, financial, and social capital to create sustainable livelihoods. It highlights the vulnerability context, such as climate shocks and market fluctuations, and stresses the importance of institutional processes and policies in shaping livelihood strategies (DFID, 1999). When it comes to land certification, the SLF helps us examine how secure land tenure influences access to resources, decision-making power, and the resilience of rural households.

2.1.3.3 Decentralization and Local Governance Theories

Decentralization theories focus on shifting authority, responsibilities, and resources from central governments to local ones. The idea is that effective decentralization can enhance service delivery, accountability, and responsiveness to local needs (Ribot, 2002; Smoke, 2003). In land administration, local governance structures are crucial for implementing certification, resolving disputes, and ensuring community participation. This theory helps us analyze the institutional capacity, transparency, and inclusiveness of local land administration systems.

2.1.3.4 Participatory Development Theory

Participatory development theory champions the idea of involving local communities in decision-making processes. It emphasizes empowerment, local knowledge, and ownership. When applied to land certification, this theory highlights the importance of including landholders, especially

marginalized groups like women and youth in the design and execution of land programs. Participation not only boosts legitimacy and compliance but also paves the way for making land reforms more socially sustainable (Chambers and Conway, 1992; Cornwall, 2003).

Together, these theoretical foundations guide our exploration of how land certification influences livelihoods, shapes local governance dynamics, and promotes inclusive rural development.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

This section presents empirical evidence relevant to land rights and the implementation of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) in Ethiopia, as well as insights from international experiences with rural development and smart village initiatives. The review highlights key themes such as land tenure, decentralization, and the socio-economic effects of RKCs.

2.2.1 Land Rights in Ethiopia

State Ownership and Usufruct Rights: Land tenure in Ethiopia has seen significant changes over the years, shaped by different political regimes, and these changes have had a big impact on rural development. For instance, during the Imperial period (1950–1974), land was mostly in the hands of the monarchy and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, with very little private ownership (Clapham, 2019). Then came the Derg regime (1974–1991), which completely abolished private land ownership and shifted to a system of collectivization and state control over productive assets (Pankhurst, 1992). After 1991, under the EPRDF, land continued to be state-owned, but the government introduced market-friendly reforms aimed at boosting productivity while keeping ownership in state hands (Endale et al., 2019). These shifts have had lasting effects on how people access land, feel secure in their rights, and invest in rural areas.

In Ethiopia, the land tenure system is based on state ownership, meaning that rural landholders have usufruct rights. This gives them the right to use the land, but they can't sell or mortgage it (FDRE, 2005). While this system is designed to promote fair access to land, it's faced criticism for limiting investment incentives and long-term security (Deininger et al., 2008). Usufruct rights can be inherited and renewed, but their effectiveness really hinges on how well administrative processes are defined and enforced (Holden, Deininger, and Ghebru, 2009).

Certification Programs and Their Impacts: Ethiopia's first and second-level land certification programs have made a noticeable difference in terms of tenure security and agricultural productivity. Research indicates that these certification programs have encouraged more investment in land improvements, reduced conflicts, and enhanced tenure security, particularly for households led by women (Holden, Deininger and Ghebru, 2008; Ghebru and Holden, 2013). However, there are still hurdles to overcome, especially when it comes to updating land records and making sure that the land registration process is inclusive.

Gender and Customary Rights: Even with policies promoting gender equality, traditional customs often limit women's land rights, especially in patrilineal communities. Certification programs have tried to formalize joint landholding and safeguard women's rights, but there are still gaps in implementation (Yngstrom, 2010). In many regions, customary dispute resolution methods exist alongside formal legal systems, which can create both opportunities and tensions for marginalized groups trying to secure land.

Large-scale Land Acquisitions: The rise of both foreign and domestic investments in large-scale agriculture has sparked concerns about land dispossession and the displacement of smallholders. Studies have shown that many land leases were poorly negotiated and often lacked community consultation, which has led to significant losses in livelihoods (Rahmato, 2011; Oakland Institute, 2011). These situations underline the need for transparent governance and robust protections for smallholder land rights in rural development initiatives.

2.2.2 Effects of RKCs on Livelihoods

The establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) is a crucial step in Ethiopia's journey to revitalize rural areas, making essential services and infrastructure more accessible to everyone. According to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA, 2022), these centers play a key role in securing land tenure by streamlining land administration and bringing institutions closer to the kebele level.

Research indicates that the Rural Kebele Center Development Program implementation (RKCDPI) has had a mix of positive and negative effects on rural livelihoods. For example, in Guangua District, Ayenalem (2024) found that the program significantly improved access to essential services like healthcare, education, and justice. It also stimulated local economic growth and

created job opportunities, particularly in service industries. Thanks to this RKCs implementation, new income-generating activities have emerged, such as poultry farming, small retail businesses, and various service-oriented ventures. This has led to a more diverse income landscape and a broader range of employment options for the community (Ayenalem, 2024).

However, it's important to acknowledge the downsides as well. Ayenalem (2024) highlights that traditional livelihood, such as tanning and weaving, have faced a decline. Additionally, the program has unintentionally sparked some socio-cultural challenges, including a rise in early marriage practices and kin-based land allocation. This illustrates that while RKCDPI can boost economic opportunities, it can also create social tensions, emphasizing the need for policies that are both sensitive and inclusive.

On a positive note, the closer access to markets, schools, and healthcare facilities offered by RKCs has been linked to better livelihood outcomes, especially for households that were previously isolated or underserved (Ayenalem, 2024). RKCs have also made strides in improving local governance by promoting participatory planning and effective dispute resolution. However, the outcomes in terms of fairness and efficiency can be mixed, often depending on how well the implementation processes are managed and how inclusive they are (MoA, 2022).

2.2.3 Global Experiences with Smart Villages and Rural Development

Looking at global experiences in rural development, particularly through smart village initiatives, can offer valuable insights for Ethiopia as it strives to transform its rural areas. For instance, in India, the Smart Village movement aims to integrate information and communication technologies (ICT), decentralized governance, and community-driven planning to foster innovation and growth in rural settings (Misra, 2019).

The European Network for Rural Development highlights how rural communities in Europe employ digital and social innovations to enhance service delivery and overall quality of life(ENRD, 2018). The Smart Villages approach emphasizes local initiative, community empowerment, and context-specific solutions, integrating technologies and participatory planning to improve education, healthcare, transport, and governance. Its effectiveness depends on

supportive policies, adequate funding, and capacity-building, often provided through Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). By promoting inclusive, community-led planning, the model allows each village to adapt innovations to local needs, offering valuable lessons for designing rural development strategies in Ethiopia and comparable contexts.

Ayenalem (2024) notes how relevant these international experiences are for Ethiopia, emphasizing the need to adapt global smart village models to local contexts. For Ethiopia to achieve meaningful rural transformation, it's vital to be culturally sensitive, engage the community, and have a solid understanding of the indigenous socio-economic landscape.

In summary, these global examples reveal some key ingredients for success: strong community involvement, reliable infrastructure, and robust institutional support. These factors are essential to ensuring that smart village initiatives are not just about advanced technology but also about being inclusive and sustainable for the communities they serve.

2.2.4 Villagization and Resettlement in Ethiopia

Villagization and resettlement have played a complicated and often incompatible role in Ethiopia's path toward rural development. Back during the Derg regime, the government pushed for villagization as a means to encourage collective farming. Unfortunately, this approach led to social unrest, community resistance, and disruptions to traditional rural life (Pankhurst, 1992). These historical experiences serve as a reminder of the significant risks associated with imposing top-down policies aimed at transforming rural areas.

Ayenalem (2024) builds further on Pankhurst (1992) and Rahmato (1984) insight to highlight the reality that forced relocations, especially when nations are not genuinely involved, erode public trust in governmental institutions and destabilize local land tenure systems. While the Rural Kebele Center Development Program Implementation (RKCDPI) is designated in technical terms as voluntary in nature, Ayenalem (2024) finds that the majority of households experienced soft coercions to move and change their livelihood trends. This introduces red flags similar to issues arising from earlier villagization campaigns.

Later resettlement programs, touted as being voluntary, were also criticized for poor planning, lack of core services, and ongoing human rights violations (Rahmato, 2003). These early lessons are relevant in thinking about how to implement RKCs in our context. They remind us of participatory, rights-oriented practices based on respect for community consent, transparency, and local measures of planning. By doing so, we can avoid the pitfalls of the past and aim to achieve better and more respectful rural development.

2.2.5 Major Prospects of RKC Establishment

The establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) offers exciting opportunities for advancing rural development in Ethiopia. By bringing rural populations together, RKCs enhance access to essential services like education, healthcare, and local administration, while also fostering economic growth through the development of local markets and business clusters (Ayenalem, 2024). This spatial reorganization makes it easier to deliver infrastructure and services, helping to reduce rural-to-urban migration and promote more balanced regional development.

RKCs are also seen as key drivers of integrated rural development, aligning land administration, social services, and economic connections within a localized framework. When properly planned and executed, RKCs can strengthen land tenure security, encourage diverse livelihoods, and support sustainable development goals (MoA, 2022).

Ayenalem (2024) highlights several positive outcomes from the implementation of RKCDPI, such as a stronger local institutional presence, improved maternal and child health, enhanced kinship networks, and increased economic activities. These benefits align with the strategic objectives set out by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA, 2022), reinforcing the idea that inclusive and context-sensitive RKC development can significantly enhance rural livelihoods.

Additionally, RKCs provide a platform for building local governance capacity and strengthening rural institutions. By promoting participatory planning and integrating services, they can boost institutional responsiveness and empower communities to take an active role in their own development.

2.2.6 Key Challenges and Actors in RKC Implementation

The implementation of the Rural Kebele Center Development Program Implementation (RKCDPI) faces several challenges, including weak financial systems and limited economic resources among rural households, political interference, and insufficient environmental impact assessments, all of which hinder sustainable and inclusive development (Ayenalem, 2024).

Implementing the Rural Kebele Center Development Program implementation (RKCDPI) is no walk in the park. It faces a host of challenges, including unstable financial systems and limited economic resources for rural households. On top of that, political interference and a lack of thorough environmental impact assessments can really get in the way of achieving sustainable and inclusive development (Ayenalem, 2024).

When it comes to making this implementation work, several key players are involved. Local government authorities, microfinance institutions like the Amhara Credit and Saving Institution (ACSI), community elders, and religious organizations all play crucial roles. Their participation is essential for ensuring legitimacy, mobilizing resources effectively, and aligning the program with what the community truly needs.

Both Ayenalem (2024) and the MOA (2022) highlight that for the RKCDPI to succeed, we need strong coordination across different sectors, inclusive planning, clear definitions of roles, effective conflict resolution, and real community involvement. These elements are vital for turning policy into real-world impact.

But it's not just about building infrastructure and providing services. The success of the RKCDPI also hinges on the quality of governance, collaboration among institutions, and the ability to adapt the implementation to fit the local socio-economic and environmental context.

Looking at the bigger picture, rural development programs in Ethiopia face their own set of hurdles, including economic constraints, weak institutions, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-cultural challenges (OECD/PSI, 2020). For instance, the CADU program struggled due to complicated land tenure issues, elite control over local governance, corruption, and the exclusion of grassroots leaders, not to mention a lack of public awareness (Welteji, 2018). Other significant

challenges include poverty, inflation, weak legal frameworks, poor coordination, and the politicization of development efforts that often favor elites over the communities that need help the most (Ayenalem, 2024). Additionally, limited capital, underdeveloped financial systems, and insufficient engagement from the private sector further hinder progress (Gibiril, 2023).

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study adopts a conceptual framework that integrates land tenure security, sustainable livelihoods, and participatory rural governance to analyze how the establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) affects land rights and household livelihoods in **Basona Worana Woreda**.

Domains of Effect

1. **Land Rights and Tenure Security**
    - Recognition, stability, and protection of landholding arrangements.
    - Reduction of land disputes and assurance against dispossession.
2. **Household Livelihoods**
    - Income generation and diversification.
    - Access to essential services (health, education, extension, and markets).
    - Employment opportunities and sustainable land use practices.

Independent Variables

- **Legal and Policy Frameworks**: National and regional proclamations (e.g., FDRE Proclamation No. 456/2005 and revised Proc. No. 1324/2024; ANRS revised Proclamation No. 252/2017 of Rural Land Administration and Use Determination.
- **ANRS revised Proclamation No. 252/2017** of Rural Land Administration and Use Determination and Regulation No. 159/2018 ANRS Rural Kebele Center Development Program Implementation: Directive No. 14/2022) guiding land administration, certification, and redistribution.
- **Institutional Capacity**: Technical skills, infrastructure, and coordination at woreda–kebele levels in delivering RKC functions.

- **Access to Services**: Availability of social services, agricultural extension, and market facilities through RKCs.
- **Socio-economic and Gender Dimensions**: Household wealth, gendered land access, and disparities in resource control.
- **Planning and Implementation Quality**: Transparency in redistribution, site selection, and integration of local knowledge.

Intervening Variables

- **Community Participation and Local Governance**: Degree of grassroots involvement in planning, implementation, and monitoring of RKCs.
- **Customary Norms and Institutions**: Role of traditional tenure systems, dispute resolution mechanisms, and cultural authority structures in shaping acceptance and outcomes.

Dependent Variables

- **Land Rights and Tenure Security**: Indicators include perceived security of rights, legal documentation, frequency of disputes, and confidence against eviction.
- **Livelihood Outcomes**: Indicators include household income, service access, employment creation, and resilience through sustainable practices.

Dynamics of Influence

The framework posits those independent variables (policies, institutions, socio-economic conditions) shape outcomes indirectly and directly. Their effects are **mediated by community participation and customary systems**, which determine whether formal policies gain legitimacy and inclusiveness. The dependent outcomes (tenure security and livelihoods) are thus a result of both structural reforms and localized governance dynamics.

Analytical Relevance

This framework guided both the **quantitative analysis** (multinomial and multiple regression models assessing tenure security and livelihood indices) and the **qualitative exploration** (thematic

analysis of community experiences and governance dynamics). It captures the interconnections between legal structures, institutional performance, socio-economic realities, and local agency in determining the real effects of RKCs.

CHAPTER THREE

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Description of the study area

The study was conducted in Basona Worana Woreda, located in the North Shewa Zone of the Amhara Region, Ethiopia. Situated 130 km from Addis Ababa and 695 km from Bahir Dar, the woreda lies near the capital of the zone, Debrebirhan town. Based on the 2007 national census conducted by Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia(CSA), this woreda covers an area of 1,208.17 km², with a population of 140,386 (2018), of which 138,264 reside in rural areas and 2,122 in the urban center of Debrebirhan. The woreda shares borders with several other woredas, including TarmaBer and AngolelanaTera(Figure 3.1).

In terms of land holding distributions, Basona Worana is characterized by significant land ownership disparities. Notably, the Angolela and Abamote kebeles show contrasting figures in land distribution, with Angolela having more landholders and larger average landholdings than Abamote. However, both kebeles face substantial landlessness, with over 2,700 individuals in each community lacking land, posing challenges to sustainable livelihoods.

The socioeconomic profile of the woreda is dominated by agriculture, specifically mixed crop-livestock farming, as the primary livelihood. However, gender disparities persist, particularly in land ownership, education, and employment. Women's landholdings in the Amhara region are smaller than men's, with women in Basona Worana representing only 17% of landowners. These gender gaps in land access, along with the underrepresentation of women in education and employment, further exacerbate the challenges of securing sustainable livelihoods in the region.

The 2024 Basona Worana Wereda Land Office report make known that the woreda have 30 rural kebeles and all of them have established rural kebele centers.

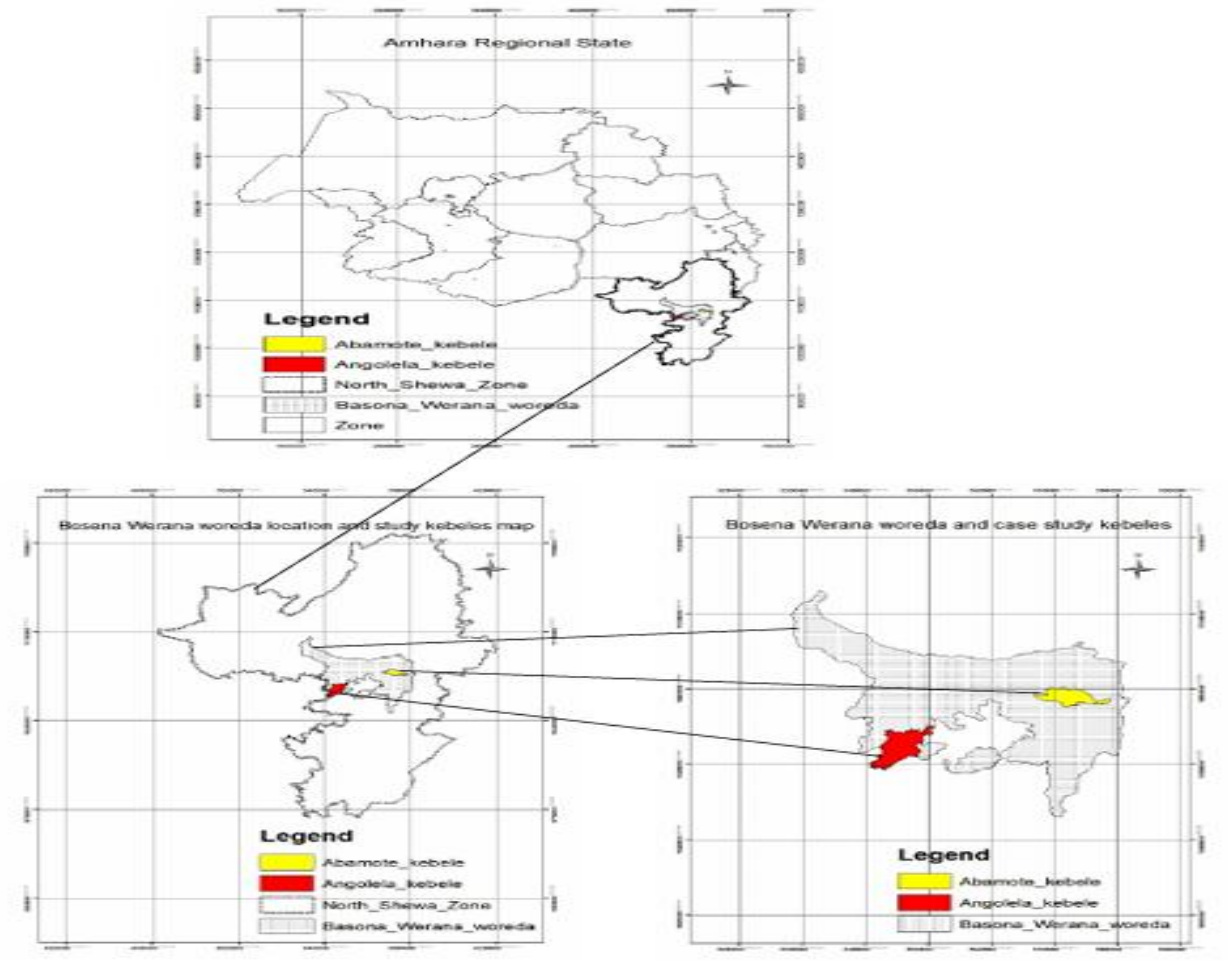

Figure 3. 1:Location map of the study area

3.2. Research Methodology

Research methodology, as defined by Kothari (2004), represents the systematic and theoretical exposition of the procedures applied to an area of investigation. It encompasses the principles for describing, explaining, and predicting phenomena to address specific research questions. Essentially, it details the strategies and techniques employed in conducting research. While not offering direct solutions, methodology provides the theoretical underpinning necessary to identify the most appropriate procedures for a given study. This includes considerations such as research design, target population, sampling methods, data collection instruments, and analysis protocols. This section outlines the methodological framework adopted for the current study

3.2.1 Research Approach

This study adopted a mixed-methods research approach, which strategically combined quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. This methodological selection aligns with Creswell's (2003) advocacy for mixed methods in providing a holistic comprehension of multifaceted societal challenges, particularly those involving governance, land rights, and socio-economic development. By harnessing the analytical power of statistical data alongside the richness of contextual qualitative insights, this approach was designed to elucidate the intricate ways in which Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) impact land tenure security, access to land, and the overall livelihoods of rural households. Furthermore, the inherent integration of these methods bolstered data triangulation, significantly strengthening the credibility and interpretive depth of the study's conclusions.

3.2.2 Research Design

The research design employed was primarily descriptive, chosen to systematically examine the current status and implementation of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) in Basona Worana Woreda. As articulated by Kothari (2004), a descriptive design is ideal for portraying existing phenomena without manipulating variables, making it suitable for understanding the institutional arrangements, land governance systems, and livelihood outcomes associated with RKCs. To execute this, the study utilized a combination of specific data collection techniques: qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with farmers, local administrators, and community leaders, alongside quantitative household surveys. This integration of methods allowed for the correlation of statistical patterns with rich contextual insights derived from the qualitative data.

3.3 Selection of the study area

Basona Worana Woreda was selected purposively for this study because Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) have already been established and are functioning across the woreda. This provided a real and practical setting to examine how RKCs influence land rights and the livelihoods of rural households. The woreda also represents a typical rural area in the Amhara Region, where agriculture is the main source of livelihood and land tenure issues are central to everyday life.

Two kebeles, Angolela and Abamote, were chosen for detailed study. Both have operational RKCs, but they differ in population size, landholding conditions, and the scale of implementation. This difference helped capture varied local experiences while keeping the fieldwork manageable and secure.

Households were selected using a stratified random sampling approach to ensure that key groups were adequately represented. Stratification was based on landholding status (long-term landholders and newly allocated beneficiaries) and gender of household head. These factors were considered important because access to land and experiences with RKC services often differ by land history and gender. A total of 255 households were surveyed, which was sufficient for analysis and feasible within the study's time and resource limits.

This sampling approach allowed the study to reflect both community-level conditions and household-level differences in a realistic and balanced manner.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

According to the 2024 North Shewa Zone report of the Amhara National Regional State, the selected Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs), Angolela (502 households) and Abamote (200 households), provided the sampling frame, based on official land registration documents. To obtain representation of the variability of the population in terms of RKC establishment, a stratified random sampling technique was employed. Stratification on the grounds of two variables; landholding status (Previous landholders and new allocated beneficiaries in the established RKCs) and gender of household head (male-headed and female-headed households) was identified to be influential in shaping household experiences of land rights and livelihood changes.

These strata were selected based on available evidence (e.g., Deininger et al., 2008; Holden and Ghebru, 2016) of the paramount impact of land access, income, and gender on rural households' perception of land tenure security, access to services, and economic opportunities, particularly in view of rural development and land reform policies.

However, combining two strata (landholding status and genders wise possible combinations) risked yielding very small respondent numbers in some strata, thus weakening the power of

stratum-level analysis. Therefore, the study did not aim for equal-sized strata or full cross-tabulation; instead, the strata guided representation and diversity, rather than strict proportional allocation across all combinations.

Where necessary, closely related categories were merged during analysis to ensure robustness and interpretability. Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1967) was used to determine the overall sample size, assuming a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, a 5% non-response rate, and P = 0.5 to maximize variability **$(n = N/ (1 + N(e)^2))$.**

Applying this formula to the combined population of Angolela RKC (N = 502) and Abamote RKC (N = 200), totaling 702 households.

A total sample size of 255 respondents was determined for the household survey. Of these 182 were 73 from Abamote RKC. The Details of the sample households(HHs) are indicated in Table 3.1.

Table 3. 1:Sample households distribution and attributes in Angolela and Abamote RKCs

S/No	Rural Kebele Centre	Sampling Frame (HHs)	Sample HHs	Male HHs	Female HHs	Number of households living in the KC and having land	New Beneficiaries allocated land in the KC
1	Angolela	502	182	111	71	Male=11 Female=7	Male=100 Female=64
2	Abamote	200	73	52	21	Male=6 Female=4	Male=46 Female=17
Total		702	255	163	92		

This sample size was deemed both statistically reliable and practically manageable, enabling meaningful comparisons while capturing variation across age, gender and land holdings. This balanced approach ensured that the findings represented the broader community without overstretching the data across too many subgroups.

3.5. Source of Data and Data Collection Techniques

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the effects of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) on land rights and farmers' livelihoods, this study drew on both primary and secondary data sources. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches ensured that the research captured not only measurable trends but also the lived experiences, perceptions, and voices of those most directly affected.

3.5.1 Primary Data Collection:

Primary data were collected directly from individuals and relevant institutions through questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), field observations, and informal conversations. This combination of methods enabled the study to address both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the influence of RKCs on land rights and rural livelihoods.

a) Qualitative Data Collection

To explore in depth how rural households perceived and experienced the establishment of RKCs, qualitative methods were employed. These approaches were particularly suited to uncovering people's lived realities, their views on shifts in land governance, and the broader implications for livelihoods and community relations.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Two FGDs were conducted in the selected kebeles where functional RKCs had been established. Each group consisted of six purposively selected participants (Male headed households 3, Female headed household 1, Kebele Land Administration expert 1, youth representative 1, and 2 kebele leaders) ensuring diversity in social perspectives. Discussions were guided by a structured checklist (see Appendix 3) to maintain thematic consistency while allowing space for open dialogue. The sessions were facilitated by the researcher, with trained note-takers documenting key insights and contextual details. These FGDs generated rich information on community-level experiences, perceptions of land tenure security, access to services, and the wider socio-economic effects of RKCs.

Semi-Structured Interviews: Sixteen in-depth interviews (i.e eight in each Rural Kebele Center RKC) were carried. Interviewees included woreda and kebele officials, zonal, woreda and kebele land administration and use experts, surveyors, as well as rural households directly involved in or affected by RKC activities. The semi-structured format allowed respondents to articulate their perspectives freely, providing detailed accounts of how RKCs operated in practice, the extent of land resource accessibility, and the strategies households adopted to sustain or improve their livelihoods. These interviews complemented the FGDs by capturing individual narratives, technical expertise, and institutional experiences that were not easily obtained through group discussions or surveys.

b) **Household questionnaire**

To collect primary data from rural landholders, a questionnaire with both closed- and open-ended questions was used. Survey questionnaire administration represents a relatively cost-effective means of collecting data from a large sample in a short period of time (King, 2001). The household questionnaire was designed in line with stated objectives and research questions. Hence it included diverse issues that could provide an understanding of the socio economic attributes of the study households and their perception of the importance of the Rural Kebele Centres establishment, livelihood options created, land right issues, etc (Appendix I). Before setting the questions, an extensive reading was made on literature related to the preparation of survey questions (Gillham, 2000). After setting the questionnaire a pilot test was carried out on 15 households who live in the Rural Kebele Centres to check the ease with which respondent households could answer the questions, and to make sure that the questions are meaningful. In this exercise important feedbacks were collected on clarity of expressions in some of the questions and in adjusting the order of questions.

The household survey was collected by employing 3 data collectors being supervised by the researcher. Data collegctors were selected based on their experience in similar practices and knowledge of the study area. The data enumerators were given short practical training on how to administer and complete questionnaire. The researcher checked the completed questionnaires to make sure that the data is correctly recorded.

Data Measurement : The research instrument, designed to gather quantifiable information, had predominantly closed questions. It measured perceived land tenure security through ratings using the Likert scale, access to diversified resources, and important livelihood indicators. The livelihood indicators comprised income at the household level, farm production, and engagement in off-farm economic activities.

3.5.2 Field Observations and Informal Interactions:

In addition to the formal data collection methods, time was spent in the field observing local conditions and engaging in informal interactions with farmers involved in the KCs

These unstructured exchanges offered insights into everyday experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to land administration and livelihood activities, enriching the overall interpretation of the study's findings.

A further observation was conducted to familiarize the researcher with the physical landscape, the range of available services, and the presence of land administration institutions within the study sites. Visits were also made to local offices particularly those dealing with land and agriculture to assess the practical implementation of RKCs and their integration into local governance structures.

3.5.3 Secondary Data Collection

To provide depth and corroboration for the field findings, secondary data were systematically collected. These data furnished crucial background, context, and opportunities for comparison.

The secondary sources comprised both published and unpublished documents. Specifically, this included government reports, legal instruments (proclamations and directives), operational manuals, academic publications, journals, relevant websites, and prior research studies.

Significant attention was directed towards documents pertaining to land and development plans. These were retrieved from land administration bodies and accessible online repositories. Such materials were instrumental in cross-checking the primary data and in establishing a wider policy context.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Qualitative Data Analysis:

The qualitative data obtained from focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews with key informants were subjected to thematic analysis. This method facilitated the identification of consistent patterns and insights concerning land tenure, livelihoods, and governance. To enhance the analysis, the qualitative data were converted into numerical formats for coding, allowing us to systematically categorize and organize the information into significant themes. This structured approach ensured a comprehensive examination of the data.

3.6.2 Quantitative Data Analysis:

Quantitative data were coded using SPSS software and examined using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages to present a clear picture of land tenure and livelihood outcomes within the study sample. To explore relationships between categorical variables, chi-square tests were applied. In addition, regression analysis was employed to assess the influence of Rural Kebele Centers on access to land and livelihoods, while accounting for socio-economic and demographic factors.

3.6.3 Model Specification

To address the research objectives, two econometric models were specified to examine the determinants of land tenure security and livelihood outcomes among rural households in Basona Worana Woreda. The first model employs a multinomial logistic regression to identify factors influencing the likelihood that households perceive their land tenure security as improved, unchanged, or worsened after the establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs). The dependent variable is categorical with three mutually exclusive outcomes. The general form of the multinomial logistic model is:

$$\ln [P(Y_i = j)/P(Y_i = base)] = \alpha_j + \Sigma \beta_{jk} X_{ik} \quad (j = 1,2)$$

where Y_i denotes the tenure security category of household i; P(Y_i=j) is the probability that household i is in category j; X_ik represents the kth explanatory variable (household size, number

of parcels, gender of household head, participation in RKC activities, etc.); α_j is the intercept; and β_jk are the coefficients to be estimated relative to the base category.

The second model uses multiple linear regression to examine the effect of tenure security and access to services on the composite livelihood index constructed from income, and access to basic services. The general specification is:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \ldots + \beta_k X_{ki} + \varepsilon_i$$

where Y_i is the livelihood index for household i; X_1i, X_2i, …, X_ki are explanatory variables including tenure security status, access to land-related services, demographic characteristics, and asset ownership; β_0 is the intercept; β_k are parameters to be estimated; and ε_i is the random error term assumed to be normally distributed with mean zero and constant variance.

Both models were estimated using STATA version 16, and diagnostic tests (multicollinearity, goodness-of-fit, and significance tests) were conducted to ensure the validity of the results. This dual-model approach enables a rigorous analysis of the relationships between RKC establishment, land rights, and livelihood outcomes.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

Ensuring research integrity required close attention to ethical standards. As noted by Creswell and Plano (2018), ethical considerations are essential in all research. Before beginning this study, a support letter was obtained from Bahir Dar University, and written consent was secured from the Basona Worana Woreda Administration Office. Participants were clearly informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and possible risks, and their voluntary written consent was obtained.

Confidentiality was strictly maintained by assigning codes instead of real names, storing data on a password-protected computer, and keeping hard copies in a secure location. Participants were free to withdraw at any stage of the study, and sensitive topics such as land rights and livelihoods were addressed with care to prevent any harm. All secondary sources were properly acknowledged in accordance with the APA 7th edition referencing style.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

4.1.1. Socio Demographic Characteristics

The study included 255 participants, with a majority being male (63.9%, n=163) and 36.1% (n=92) being female. Age of participants was primarily distributed between 36 and 50 years (51.8%, n=132), while participants aged 18 to 35 and those older than 50 accounted for 19.6% (n=50) and 28.6% (n=73) respectively. Educational level among participants was low, with nearly half having no formal education (47.5%, n=121) and a similar proportion having completed primary education (48.2%, n=123). A small fraction had secondary (3.5%, n=9) or higher education (0.8%, n=2). The primary occupation of most participants was farming (83.5%, n=213). A small number of participants were business owners (9.4%, n=24), government employees (3.5%, n=9), or held other occupations (3.5%, n=9) (Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic characterstics of survey households).

Table 4. 1: Socio-Demographic characteristics of survey households

S/No	Characteristics	Category	Count (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Sex	Male	163	63.9
		Female	92	36.1
2	Age (in Years)	18 – 35	50	19.6
		36 – 50	132	51.8
		Above 50	73	28.6
3	Education Level	No formal education	121	47.5
		Primary education	123	48.2
		Secondary education	9	3.5
		Higher education	2	0.8
4	Occupation category	Farmer	213	83.5
		Government employee	9	3.5
		Business owner	24	9.4
		Other	9	3.5

The average household size among participants was 4.8, with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 10 members per household, indicating relatively small household sizes. Participants had lived in the community for an average of 2.54 years, with durations ranging from 1 to 3 years (Table 4. 2).

Table 4. 2:Summary Statistics for Household Size and Community Residence

S/No	Characteristics	Minimum	Maximum	Average
1	Household size	1	10	4.8
2	Number of years lived in the community	1	3	2.54

4.1.2. Participatory Processes (Income and access to services)

As shown in Table 4.3, most respondents agreed that the establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) has played a role in reducing inequality in land distribution at the kebele level. Nearly half of the respondents (49.0%) agreed and 15.7% strongly agreed that RKCs have contributed to fairer land allocation among community members. About 22.7% of respondents remained neutral, which may suggest that some people have not directly experienced the change or still have mixed views about the process, while only 12.5% disagreed. Overall, around two-thirds (64.7%) of respondents

believed that RKCs have promoted greater fairness and equality in access to land, indicating that these centers have had a generally positive influence on local land administration practices.

Table 4. 3:Respondents' Perception that RKCs Could Have Reduced Inequality in Land Distribution (at RKC)

S/No	Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Disagree	32	12.5	12.5	12.5
2	Neutral	58	22.7	22.7	35.3
3	Agree	125	49.0	49.0	84.3
4	Strongly Agree	40	15.7	15.7	100.0
Total		**255**	**100.0**	**100.0**	—

As shown below in Figure 4.1, the majority of respondents viewed the establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) as a model for promoting fairness and transparency in local governance and service delivery. About 39.6% of respondents agreed and 14.1% strongly agreed with the statement, while 33.7% remained neutral and only 12.5% disagreed. These results suggest that more than half of the respondents (53.7%) believe that RKCs have contributed positively to ensuring equitable and transparent service delivery at the community level. The relatively high proportion of neutral responses, however, indicates that some community members may still have limited awareness or mixed experiences regarding the fairness and transparency of RKC operations, highlighting the need for further efforts to strengthen community participation and confidence in the system.

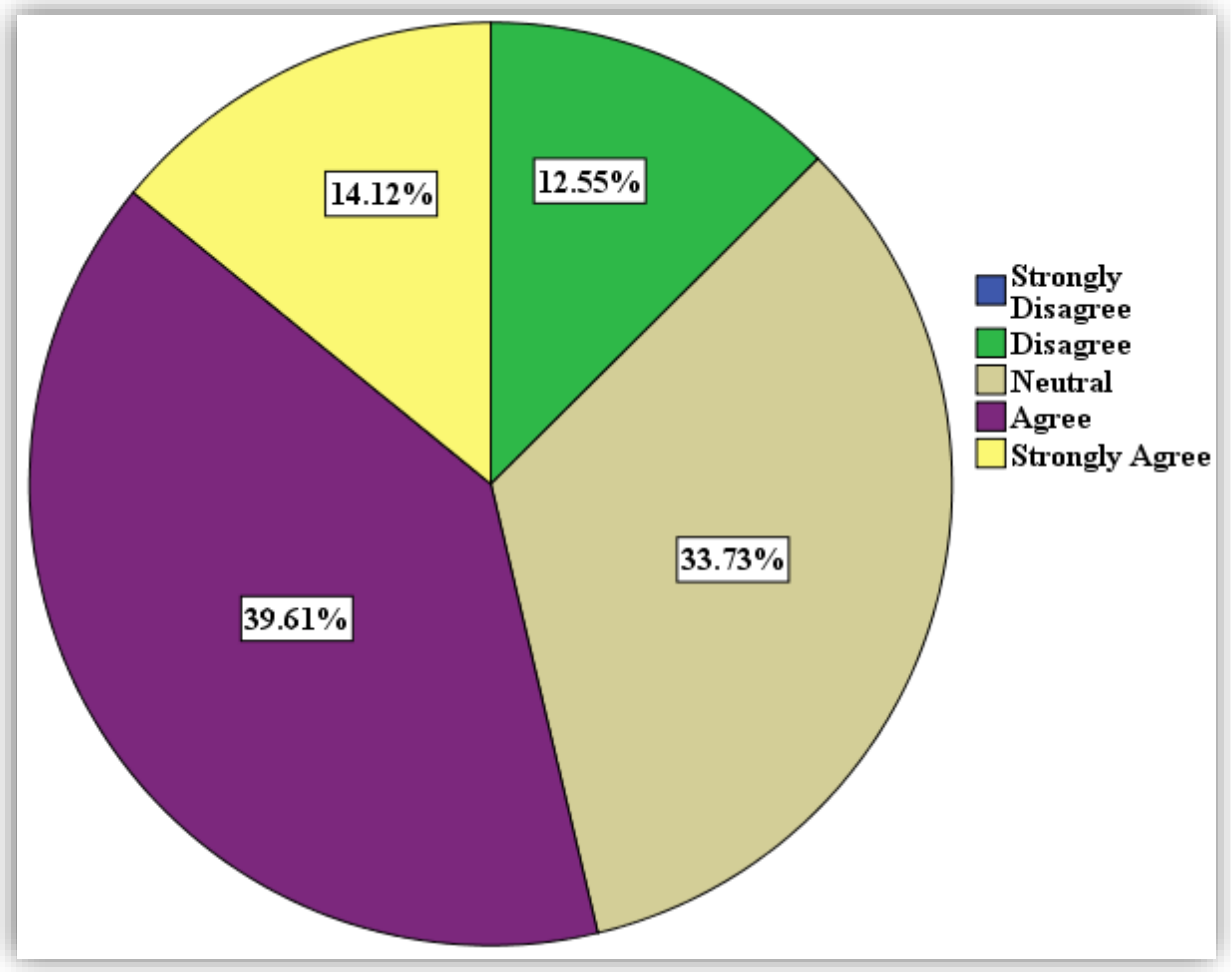

Figure 4. 1:The establishment of RKCs can be taken as a model to promote fairness and transparency

The initiation of RKCs in Basona Worana Woreda engaged multiple stakeholders, particularly at woreda and kebele levels. When establishing rural centers, a request based on the needs of the community should be initiated. At the woreda and kebele level, a kebele center technical committee will be formed.

At the woreda level, the kebele center technical committee will include representatives such as an urban planner, an architect, a civil engineer, a design organizer, GIS specialists, land use and land management professionals, and it is essential that they are members of the committee.

At the kebele level, the kebele center technical committee will consist of land administration and use professionals with expertise in community service; it will also include the kebele's agricultural office head, the kebele's administrative secretary, the kebele's job supervisor, and a member from the land administration and use committee.

Additionally, two representatives from the kebele's residents elected by the people will also be part of the committee, along with members from the kebele police.

Respondents from technical teams emphasized that they were actively involved in planning and decision-making processes:

- *"Yes, we participated as members of the woreda technical team."*
- *"The process primarily involved kebele technical members and woreda experts."*

Despite these accounts, several participants highlighted that broader community participation was limited. While local officials and technical personnel played central roles, the involvement of ordinary farmers and grassroots groups was less pronounced:

- *The kebele technical committee team responded that "Although I participated, meaningful involvement from the wider community was lacking."*

The overall scenario indicates that the establishment process was moderately participatory, i.e., heavily reliant on officials and technical staff, with minimal engagement of the wider rural population.

The establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) in the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) is supported by key legislative instruments, including the Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation No. 456/2005, its revision under Proclamation No. 1324/2024, the ANRS Revised proclamation No.252/2017, Implementation Regulation No. 159/2018 and ANRS Rural Kebele Center Development Program Implementation: Directive No. 14/2022 (FDRE, 2005; FDRE, 2024; ANRS, 2017; ANRS, 2018; ANRS, 2022). These laws aim to promote organized settlement, efficient land use, and improved service delivery. However, the study findings indicate that implementation has faced several challenges, such as limited community participation, policy

inconsistencies, unequal benefits, weak institutional coordination, and poor enforcement of land use plans. Despite a strong legal foundation, these shortcomings have constrained the effectiveness of RKCs in achieving their intended goals of equitable and integrated rural development.

4.1.3. Land Tenure Security (Legal ownership, clarity, dispute resolution)

The results in Table 4.4 show that most of the surveyed households (**78.8%**) own farmland, whereas about one-fifth (**21.2%**) do not, reflecting that agriculture remains the primary livelihood activity in the area. Among those who own land, a higher proportion (**59.6%**) obtained it through government allocation, while the remaining (**40.4%**) inherited their plots from family members. This distribution indicates that both formal land redistribution programs and traditional inheritance practices continue to shape land ownership patterns in the community. Regarding disputes, a small share (**21.2%**) of respondents reported having faced challenges related to land rights, while the majority (**78.8%**) did not experience such problems, suggesting a relatively stable land tenure situation. Notably, nearly all respondents (**93.7%**) agreed that the establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) has contributed to stronger land rights and greater security of tenure within their locality, with only (**6.3%**) expressing disagreement. This broad consensus reflects the growing trust in RKCs as institutions that promote fair and transparent land administration, support proper documentation, and help reduce conflicts over land ownership.

Table 4. 4:Land Ownership Status, Acquisition Methods, Disputes, and Perceived effect of RKCs on Land Rights

S/No	Characteristics	Category	Count (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Own Farmland	Yes	201	78.8
		No	54	21.2
2	How is land possessed (among land owners)	Inherited	82	40.4
		From Government	121	59.6
3	Have you encountered any disputes or challenges regarding land ownership	Yes	54	21.2
		No	201	78.8
4	RKCs have strengthened land rights and security within your community	Yes	239	93.7
		No	16	6.3

The result presented in Table 4.5 indicates that the establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) has had a strong and positive influence on land administration and tenure security in the study area. About **70.9%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that RKCs have helped clarify their land ownership rights, suggesting that these centers have improved understanding and recognition of property boundaries. In terms of legal documentation, an overwhelming **97.3%** of respondents acknowledged that RKCs have facilitated access to formal land certificates and related records, a critical factor in strengthening tenure security. Similarly, around **87%** of participants agreed or strongly agreed that support from RKCs has increased their confidence in land tenure, showing that the centers have contributed to a greater sense of stability and assurance among landholders. Moreover, **72.1%** of the respondents indicated that RKCs have reduced disputes over land ownership within their communities, reflecting their role in promoting fairness, transparency, and proper record-keeping in land governance. Overall, the results demonstrate that RKCs have become effective local institutions for clarifying land rights, providing legal documentation, enhancing community confidence in tenure systems, and minimizing land-related conflicts.

Table 4. 5:Perceived effect of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) on Land Ownership Clarity, Documentation, Tenure Security, and Dispute Reduction

S/No	The establishment of rural Kebele Center (RKC)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Clarified your land ownership right	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	74 (29.0)	119 (46.7)	62 (24.3)
2	Provided you with legal documentation	0 (0.0)	3 (1.2)	4 (1.6)	95 (37.3)	153 (60.0)
3	Support created more confidence about your land tenure	0 (0.0)	4 (1.6)	29 (11.4)	72 (28.2)	150 (58.8)
4	Reduced disputes over land ownership among your community	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	71 (27.8)	84 (32.9)	100 (39.2)

A strong and consistent theme across the KIIs was the perceived improvement in land tenure security following the creation of RKCs and the rollout of land certification. Participants reported

greater clarity regarding landholding rights, which contributed to fewer disputes and encouraged longer-term investments.

RKCs were viewed as administrative hubs, managing land information, issuing certificates, and serving as points for dispute resolution.

The overall circumstances indicate that Rural Knowledge Centers (RKCs) have bolstered land tenure security by formalizing property ownership, increasing trust among landowners, and minimizing disputes related to land rights.

4.1.4. Access & Utilization of Land (Landholding size, land transaction, parceling, administrative access)

As shown in Table 4.6, the size of farmland holdings among respondents ranged from 1 to 3 hectares, with an average of 2.06 hectares and a median of 2 hectares, indicating that most households owned moderately sized farms typical of smallholder agriculture. The number of farmland parcels varied from 1 to 12, with an average of 4.09 and a median of 3 parcels, suggesting that while some farmers managed several fragmented plots, most held a moderate number. Overall, the results show that landholdings in the study area are generally small and somewhat fragmented, reflecting common rural patterns influenced by inheritance and population pressure on available land.

Table 4. 6:Descriptive Statistics of FarmLand holding Characteristics

S/No	Characteristics	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median
1	Size of your farm landholding(ha)	1	3	2.06	2
2	Number of farmland parcels do you have	1	12	4.09	3

The majority of respondents agreed that the establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) has improved access to land-related administrative services, with 83.1% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Similarly, 83.5% believed that RKCs provide effective administrative support in resolving land disputes. Around 83.1% also felt that RKCs have simplified the process of land-related transactions. A small portion of respondents (about 17%) remained neutral on all three

statements. Notably, none of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the statements, showing strong overall support for the role of RKCs in land administration (Table 4.7).

Table 4. 7:Perceptions of Respondents on the Role of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) in Improving Land-Related Services

S/No	Perceptions of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The establishment of RKCs have made easier to access land-related administrative services	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	43 (16.9)	136 (53.3)	76 (29.8)
2	Administrative support offered from RKC could easily solve land related disputes	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	42 (16.5)	127 (49.8)	86 (33.7)
3	The establishment of RKCs could have simplified the process of land related transactions	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	43 (16.9)	127 (49.8)	85 (33.3)

Although respondents did not provide direct evidence of expanded access to land, they consistently emphasized indirect benefits. Improved documentation, clearer demarcation of boundaries, and more efficient service delivery were identified as key contributions of RKCs:

- *"RKCs provide accessible services that help households manage their land."*
- *"Clear boundaries and formal recognition through the RKC have improved utilization."*

However, challenges such as land scarcity, weak coordination, and lack of communal land remained significant concerns:

- *"Challenges included lack of communal land, weak coordination, and limited awareness."*

The overall scenario indictes that RKCs have improved the utilization of land for households with existing holdings. Yet, their impact on land access for landless or marginalized groups remains unclear and uneven across locations.

4.1.5. Livelihood effect (Income and access to services)

A significant number of participants (48.2%) agreed that the establishment of Rural and Kebele Centers (RKCs) helped them increase their household income, with an additional 9.2% strongly agreeing. The majority of community members believed that the RKCs had a positive effect on employment, with a combined 70.2% (46.7% agreeing and 23.5% strongly agreeing) reporting that the centers opened new job opportunities(including private clinics, local transport services, , small market centers, and various petty trades like tea rooms, restaurants, grocery stores,shops, and the sale of firewood, timber, charcoal, and vegetables). More than half of the participants (54.5%) were neutral on the statement that RKCs agglomerated service-rendering institutions and had a positive effect on agricultural production and productivity. Only 5.5% of respondents disagreed that the establishment of RKCs helped them increase their household income. No participants disagreed that the establishment of RKCs opened new job opportunities for the community (Table 4.8).

Table 4. 8:Livelihood effect (Income and access to services)

S/No	Livelihood effect	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The establishment of RKCs helped me to increase my household income	0 (0.0)	14 (5.5)	94 (36.9)	123 (48.2)	24 (9.2)
2	The establishment of RKCs have opened new job opportunities to the community	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	76 (29.8)	119 (46.7)	60 (23.5)
3	The establishment of RKCs agglomerated services rendering institutions and positive effect on agricultural production and productivity	0 (0.0)	14 (5.5)	139 (54.5)	64 (25.1)	38 (14.9)

As shown in Table 4.9, all participants (100%) reported that the RKCs improved access to agricultural support services, education, and healthcare. However, fewer participants reported improvements in access to market services, electricity, and other services (each at 28.6%), as well as roads (36.1%). Access to financial services showed the least improvement, with only 19.6% indicating better access through RKCs.

Table 4. 9: RKCs improved access to different service provisions

S/No	RKCs improved access to	Yes	No
1	Agricultural support services	255 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
2	Education	255 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
3	Healthcare	255 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
4	Market services	73 (28.6)	182 (71.4)
5	Electricity	73 (28.6)	182 (71.4)
6	Roads	92 (36.1)	163 (63.9)
7	Financial services	50 (19.6)	205 (80.4)
8	Other services	73 (28.6)	182 (71.4)

As shown in Figure 4.2, most respondents felt that the establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) had a positive effect on their overall quality of life(housing quality, access to services and infrastructure,acess to digital tools and technology i.e television and phones, new job opportunities and livelihood diversification). About 58.8% agreed and 28.6% strongly agreed with the statement, showing that a large majority (87.45%) believed RKCs contributed to improving their living conditions. Only 7.06% of respondents remained neutral, and 5.49% disagreed. This indicates that RKCs have generally enhanced people's access to basic services, livelihood opportunities, and local governance, thereby contributing to better living standards and community wellbeing.

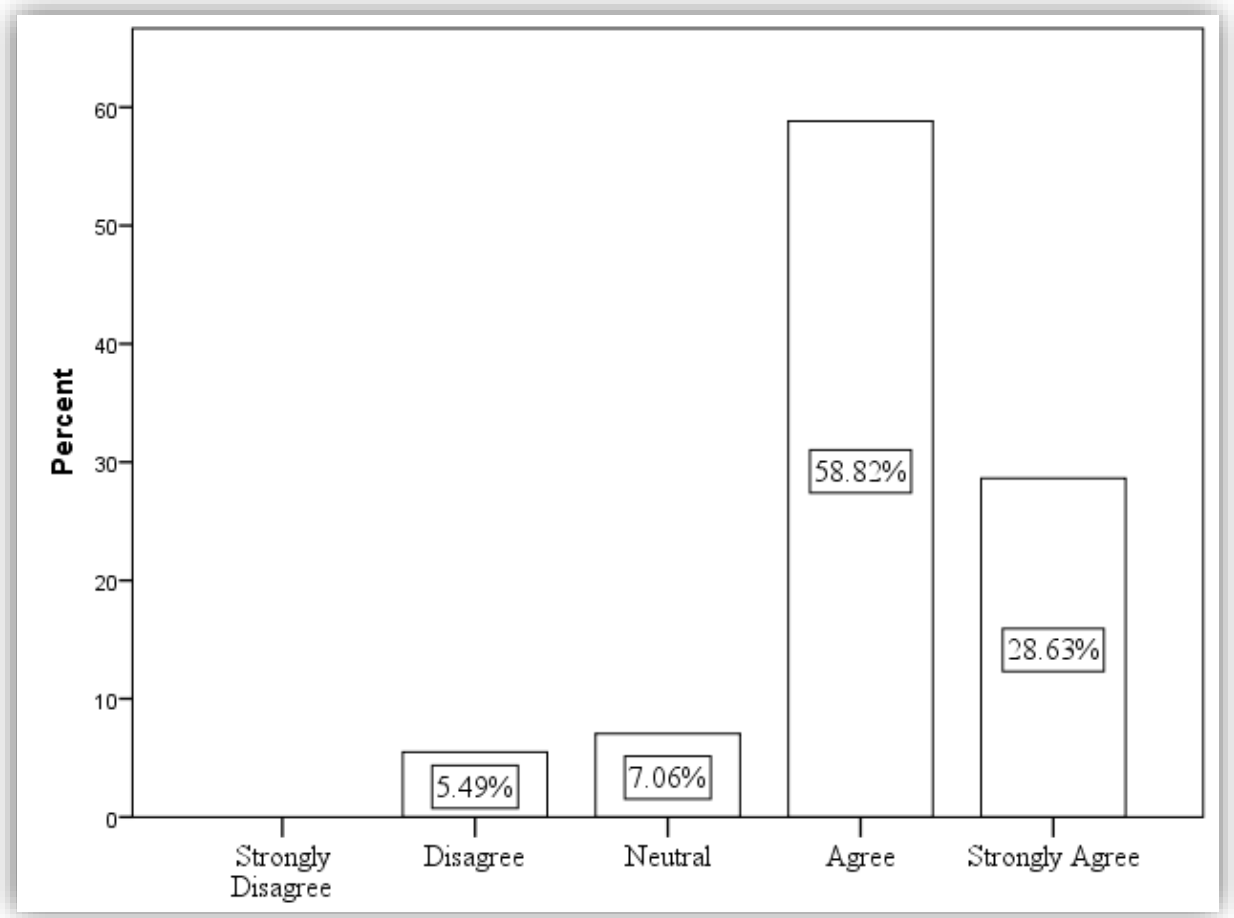

Figure 4. 2: Overall, RKCs have positively affected the quality of life

Participants described RKCs as centers that improved administrative efficiency and service delivery. By strengthening land tenure security, they indirectly encouraged agricultural investments and more secure livelihoods:

- *"RKCs are essential for improving service delivery and land administration."*
- *"They help prevent illegal settlements and promote organized development."*
- *"Following certification, households are more confident to invest in their land."*

Although direct evidence of improved income was not provided, respondents implied that enhanced land security and access to services likely contribute to better livelihood outcomes.

Conclusion: RKCs play an indirect but important role in supporting rural livelihoods through improved land administration and service access, though their measurable effects on income require further household-level analysis.

4.1.6. Challenges & Opportunities encountred in the establishment of Rural Kebele Centres

As shown in Table 4.10, the majority of respondents (**71.4%**) reported that they had **not** faced any challenges related to the establishment of RKCs, indicating a generally positive perception of these centers. However, about **28.6%** of participants indicated that they had encountered some difficulties, which may include administrative hurdles, delays in service delivery, or challenges in understanding new procedures introduced by the RKCs. The relatively low proportion of respondents reporting problems suggests that while the RKCs have largely been effective in improving local governance and service delivery, there is still a small segment of the community that experiences obstacles. These findings highlight the importance of continuous monitoring, community engagement, and capacity-building to ensure that all residents benefit fully from the services provided by RKCs.

Table 4. 10: Challenges encountred due to the establishment of Rural Kebele Centres

S/No	Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Yes	73	28.6	28.6	28.6
2	No	182	71.4	71.4	100.0
Total		255	100.0	100.0	

As indicated in Table 4.11, respondents generally perceived that the establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) has created valuable opportunities in service delivery. Around **64.7%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that RKCs have the potential to reduce inequality and promote more equitable access to land, while **72.1%** reported that all farmers in the vicinity of RKCs are given equal opportunity to possess land through these centers, reflecting their role in fostering fairness in land administration. The introduction of digital tools was seen as particularly beneficial, with **87.1%** of respondents acknowledging that RKCs have facilitated engagement with modern technology, which can improve administrative efficiency and service delivery. In addition,

approximately **63.5%** of participants indicated that RKCs have enhanced access to community services, showing that these centers function as accessible hubs for local governance and public service provision. Collectively, these findings suggest that RKCs contribute significantly to reducing inequalities, promoting inclusivity, leveraging technology, and improving overall access to community services, thereby strengthening governance and encouraging active participation among community members.

Table 4. 11:Opportunities in Service Delivery: Addressing Inequality, Navigating Complexity, and Leveraging Opportunities

S/No	Opportunities in Service Delivery	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The RKCs could have reduced inequality in land distribution(Giving equal opportunity to access land in RKCs to be established)	0 (0.0)	32 (12.5)	58 (22.7)	125 (49.0)	40 (15.7)
2	All groups of the community could have equal opportunity to possess land at RKCs(all residences in the kebele with minimum of 2 years and age of 18year and above)	0 (0.0)	18 (7.1)	53 (20.8)	113 (44.3)	71 (27.8)
3	The establishment of RKCs have created a good opportunity to use Digital tools/technology	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	33 (12.9)	158 (62.0)	64 (25.1)
4	The establishment of RKCs have created a better access to reach at community	1 (0.4)	23 (9.0)	69 (27.1)	127 (49.8)	35 (13.7)

The challenges surrounding land tenure security are multifaceted and interconnected, primarily stemming from persistent disputes arising from unclear or overlapping land boundaries, which are exacerbated by outdated maps and inadequate enforcement of land administration policies. Additionally, logistical constraints, such as poor road access and limited infrastructure, hinder effective management of land rights. Communities often face resistance to change, compounded by a scarcity of communal land, making it increasingly difficult to navigate overlapping claims

and establish clear property ownership. Overall, these issues create significant barriers to resolving land disputes and achieving effective land management.

RKCs offer significant opportunities for enhancing land governance and improving rural livelihoods by serving as structured and transparent platforms for land administration. They promote planned settlements and reduce informal land transactions, thereby fostering enhanced legitimacy and trust in formal land governance. Furthermore, RKCs play a crucial role in preventing illegal settlements and encouraging organized development within communities.

Despite facing institutional, logistical, and infrastructural challenges, the potential benefits of RKCs can be realized through sustained investment in capacity building, regular updates of land records, and proactive community engagement and sensitization efforts.

4.2 Regression Analysis Results

This section presents the econometric analysis conducted to examine the effect of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) on households' land tenure security and livelihood outcomes**.** Two separate models were employed:

1. **Multiple regression** for the livelihood index, constructed from household income, and access to services.
2. **Multinomial logistic regression** for land tenure security, categorized into very secure (reference group), moderately secure, and not secure.

Both models included control variables: gender, age, education, landholding size, and participation in RKC planning. These controls were selected based on prior studies highlighting their influence on rural livelihoods and land tenure outcomes.

4.2.1 Multiple linear Regression model Results

The multiple linear regression model was estimated to examine the overall positive effect of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) on respondents' quality of life. The model incorporated socio-demographic factors (gender, age, role in the community), access to services (farmland, natural

resources, financial institutions, road infrastructure, electricity), livelihood opportunities (household income, job creation, agricultural productivity, use of digital tools, and economic initiatives), as well as perceived land tenure security.

4.2.1.1 Findings

a) Model Model Fit

The regression model was found to be statistically significant, $F(15, 239) = 35.983$, $p < .001$. This indicates that the set of predictors jointly explained variation in respondents' perceptions of quality of life. The model yielded an R^2 of .693 and an adjusted R^2 of .674, suggesting that approximately 67% of the variance in quality of life is accounted for by the included variables. This is a relatively high explanatory power for this research, providing strong evidence that the establishment of RKCs has a measurable effect on improving community well-being (Table 4.12).

Table 4. 12:Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.833[a]	.693	.674	.430	.693	35.983	15	239	.000	2.426

As indicated in Table 4.13 AOVAa table , the Regression is **highly significant**, meaning the set of predictors reliably predicts the dependent variable and the Residual MS shows the average variance not explained by the model.

Table 4. 13: ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	99.904	15	6.660	35.983	.000[b]
	Residual	44.237	239	.185		
	Total	144.141	254			

The Residual Statistics(Table 4.14) show that , Residuals have mean ≈ 0 and SD close to 1 for standardized residuals, indicating good model assumptions. No extreme outliers or skewness are evident in residuals.

Table 4. 14:Residuals Statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	2.42	5.61	4.11	.627	255
Residual	-1.902	1.074	.000	.417	255
Std. Predicted Value	-2.688	2.403	.000	1.000	255
Std. Residual	-4.422	2.497	.000	.970	255

b) Significant Predictors (p < .05):

The analysis presents the significant predictors of the perceived positive effect of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) on respondents' quality of life based on multinomial regression analysis. The results show that gender influenced perceptions, with male and female respondents reporting slightly different experiences. Access factors such as the proximity of RKCs to farmland and road infrastructure, as well as availability of natural resources like water, significantly shaped how respondents viewed the benefits of RKCs. Economic and livelihood-related variables; including new job opportunities, agricultural productivity gains, use of digital tools, and the role of RKCs in supporting economic initiatives also had a strong positive effect. Perceived landholding security further reinforced the positive effect, while the perceived ability to fully use land for farming showed a slight negative influence, suggesting some constraints remain in land utilization. Overall, these findings indicate that the benefits of RKCs on quality of life are influenced by a mix of demographic, infrastructural, and economic factors, highlighting the centers' important and multifaceted role in improving rural livelihoods(Table 4.15).

Table 4. 15:Significant Predictors of the Perceived Positive effect of RKCs on Quality of Life (p < .05)

S/ No	Independent Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig. (p)
1	Gender of respondents	0.332	0.091	0.212	3.667	0.000
2	RKCs near and access to farmlands	–0.363	0.153	–0.240	–2.373	0.018
3	Access to natural resources (e.g., water)	0.223	0.112	0.127	1.986	0.048
4	Access to road infrastructure	0.514	0.134	0.328	3.837	0.000
5	New job opportunities	0.196	0.097	0.190	2.020	0.044
6	Agricultural productivity gains	0.349	0.080	0.377	4.361	0.000
7	Digital tools/technology usage	0.136	0.044	0.151	3.088	0.002
8	Economic initiative's role of RKCs	0.629	0.081	0.522	7.722	0.000
9	Perceived ability to use land for farming	–0.247	0.122	–0.164	–2.020	0.044
10	Perceived landholding security	0.348	0.085	0.188	4.089	0.000

c) Non-Significant Predictors (p > .05):

The Non-Significant Predictors shows the variables that did not significantly predict the perceived positive effect of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) on respondents' quality of life. Age, access to financial institutions, electricity, and market services, as well as household income increase, were all found to have no statistically significant effect. This indicates that, in the context of this study, these factors did not strongly influence how community members perceived the benefits of RKCs. While they may still play a role in overall livelihoods, the findings suggest that other demographic, infrastructural, and economic factors were more important in shaping perceptions of the centers' contribution to improving quality of life(Table 4.16).

Table 4. 16: Non-Significant Predictors of the Perceived Positive effect of RKCs on Quality of Life (p > .05)

S/No	Independent Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig. (p)
1	Age of respondents	–0.024	0.057	–0.030	–0.426	0.671
2	Access to financial institutions	0.086	0.098	0.056	0.880	0.380
3	Access to electricity services	0.095	0.117	0.059	0.811	0.418
4	Access to market services	0.101	0.112	0.071	0.902	0.368
5	Household income increase	0.142	0.092	0.091	1.543	0.124

4.2.1.2 Interpretation

The analysis reveals that RKCs have a highly significant and explainable impact on the perceived quality of life, with specific factors driving this perception.

a. Overall Model Strength:

The high Adjusted R^2 (.674) signifies that the model is very effective in capturing the factors influencing people's perception of improved quality of life due to RKCs. This indicates that the chosen predictors are relevant and collectively contribute to understanding the phenomenon.

b. Key Positive Drivers of Perceived Quality of Life:

The results showed that several factors significantly influenced how respondents perceived improvements in their quality of life due to the presence of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs). The economic initiatives promoted by RKCs were the strongest driver ($B = 0.629$, $\beta = 0.522$, $p = 0.000$), reflecting their vital role in supporting local businesses and income-generating activities. Agricultural productivity gains ($B = 0.349$, $\beta = 0.377$, $p = 0.000$) and the use of digital tools and technology ($B = 0.136$, $\beta = 0.151$, $p = 0.002$) also had strong positive effects, helping farmers improve production efficiency and access relevant information. Gender differences ($B = 0.332$, $\beta = 0.212$, $p = 0.000$) were significant, showing that men and women experienced the benefits of RKCs differently. Access to natural resources such as water ($B = 0.223$, $\beta = 0.127$, $p = 0.048$) contributed to better livelihood outcomes, while new job opportunities created through the centers ($B = 0.196$, $\beta = 0.190$, $p = 0.044$) enhanced income and wellbeing. Perceived landholding security

(B = 0.348, β = 0.188, p = 0.000) also had a notable positive influence, strengthening community confidence, while the perceived ability to use land for farming showed a slight negative effect (B = –0.247, β = –0.164, p = 0.044), indicating that some challenges remain in land utilization. Overall, these findings suggest that RKCs have improved rural livelihoods through their economic, infrastructural, and social contributions, reinforcing their importance in enhancing community wellbeing(Table 4.14).

c. Counter-Intuitive or Negative Relationship:

As shown in Table 4.16, some factors did not show a significant relationship with the perceived positive impact of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) on quality of life. Age (B = –0.024, β = –0.030, p = 0.671) had a weak negative relationship, suggesting that perceptions of RKCs' benefits were fairly consistent across different age groups. Access to financial institutions (B = 0.086, β = 0.056, p = 0.380), electricity services (B = 0.095, β = 0.059, p = 0.418), and market services (B = 0.101, β = 0.071, p = 0.368) were also found to be statistically insignificant, indicating that these factors did not strongly shape respondents' views of the centers' contributions. Similarly, household income increase (B = 0.142, β = 0.091, p = 0.124) was not a significant predictor, implying that although RKCs may have improved access to services and local opportunities, their direct influence on income growth remains limited. Overall, these findings suggest that demographic characteristics and some service access variables did not play a major role in shaping perceptions of RKCs' positive effects on quality of life.

d. Non-Significant Factors:

It's important to note that Age, Access to electricity services, Household income improvement, Access to financial institutions, and Community role participation did not significantly predict the perceived positive effects on quality of life within this model. This does not necessarily mean they are unimportant for quality of life generally, but rather that their variation in this sample, or their direct relationship, was not statistically significant in explaining the specific perceived impact of RKCs. For example, income improvement might be a result of many factors, and its direct link to perceived RKC effect might be indirect or weak compared to other strong drivers. Similarly,

electricity access might be a baseline in many areas, or its benefits are already factored into other variables.

4.2.2 Multinomial Logistic Regression Model Results

The multinomial logistic regression analysis examined the influence of household and demographic characteristics on perceived land ownership security. The dependent variable, perceived land security, was categorized as very secure (reference group), moderately secur**e**, and not secure.

The model fit statistics indicated strong explanatory power. The final model produced a significant chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 100.822$, df = 20, $p < 0.001$) compared to the intercept-only model, confirming that the predictors jointly improve model fit. Pseudo R^2 values further supported this, with Cox & Snell $R^2 = 0.391$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.587$, and McFadden $R^2 = 0.452$, suggesting a moderate-to-strong model performance.(Table 4.17: Model Fitting Information,Table 4.18:Pseudo R-Square and Table 4.19:Likelihood Ratio Tests)

Table 4. 17:Model Fitting Information

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	355.319			
Final	160.639	194.680	20	.000

Table 4. 18:Pseudo R-Square

Measure	Value
Cox and Snell	0.391
Nagelkerke	0.587
McFadden	0.452

Table 4. 19:Likelihood Ratio Tests

S/No	Effect	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
		-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
1	**Intercept**	160.639[a]	.000	0	.
2	**HH_size**	174.969	14.330	2	.001
3	**LH_size**	186.557	25.919	2	.000
4	**No_of_parcels**	169.558	8.919	2	.012
5	**Gender**	162.253	1.614	2	.446
6	**Role**	196.109	35.470	8	.000
7	**Age**	210.885	50.246	4	.000

As indicated in Table 4.20, the chi-square test results show that certain demographic and land-related factors significantly influenced how respondents perceived the role of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs). Specifically, landholding size ($\chi^2 = 16.605$, $p = 0.000$), number of land parcels ($\chi^2 = 24.785$, $p = 0.000$), respondents' roles in the community ($\chi^2 = 27.356$, $p = 0.001$), and age ($\chi^2 = 10.034$, $p = 0.040$) were found to have a meaningful relationship with their perception of RKCs' impact. These results suggest that individuals with larger landholdings, multiple parcels, or leadership roles tended to view the centers more positively, likely due to their closer engagement with land-related services. On the other hand, household size ($\chi^2 = 5.546$, $p = 0.062$) and gender ($\chi^2 = 5.754$, $p = 0.056$) did not show significant differences, implying that the benefits of RKCs were perceived fairly equally across families of different sizes and between men and women. Overall, the findings highlight that land-based and participatory factors play a stronger role than basic demographic characteristics in shaping how people view the contribution of RKCs to their livelihoods and community well-being.

The likelihood ratio test results revealed that four independent variables significantly influenced perceived land ownership security at the 5% level. Specifically:

Table 4. 20:Chi-Square Test Results for Socio-Demographic and Landholding Characteristics

S/No	Variable	Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Decision
1	HH size	5.546	2	0.062	Not significant
2	Landholding size	16.605	2	0.000	Significant
3	Number of parcels	24.785	2	0.000	Significant
4	Gender	5.754	2	0.056	Not significant
5	Role	27.356	8	0.001	Significant
6	Age	10.034	4	0.040	Significant

Interpretation

The findings reveal that perceptions of land security are not uniform across the community but are strongly shaped by household structure, land characteristics, and social roles. Larger households are more likely to perceive moderate security, possibly reflecting their reliance on diversified land use and greater involvement in land management. The positive effect of parcel number suggests that fragmented holdings provide a form of tenure insurance, where loss of one plot does not equate to total landlessness.

In contrast, larger overall landholding size was associated with *lower* perceptions of security. This may reflect heightened exposure to land disputes or greater visibility to local authorities, making larger landowners more concerned about tenure challenges. Social position also plays a role: those engaged in land administration or governance are more aware of disputes, overlapping claims, and policy enforcement, which may shape more cautious views of security.

CHAPTER FIVE:

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter discusses and interprets the findings of the study in light of the research objectives and questions. It integrates evidence from descriptive analysis, thematic analysis of qualitative data from FGDs and KIIs, and results of both the multinomial logistic regression (land tenure security) and multiple regression (livelihood index). It also compares these findings with literature and theory and outlines their implications for policy, practice, and future research.

5.1 Participation in the Establishment of RKCs

Descriptive analysis revealed that most respondents (76.1%) were community members, with only a small share being local administrators or officials. Thematic evidence from FGDs and KIIs showed that woreda and kebele technical teams played central roles in planning and decision-making, while wider community participation was limited. This partly explains why some households felt excluded from planning processes. Such findings echo Ayenalem (2024) and Abbink (2018), who caution that limited grassroots participation undermines ownership and sustainability of rural development initiatives. Participatory Development Theory (Chambers and Conway, 1992) underscores the need for inclusive engagement to ensure that interventions reflect local priorities and build legitimacy.

5.2 Effect of RKCs on Land Tenure Security

Both descriptive and regression analyses confirmed that RKCs have strengthened land tenure security. A large majority (93.7%) agreed that RKCs improved land rights and security. Table 4.5 showed that 97.3% received legal documentation, 71% felt clearer ownership rights, and 72.1% saw reduced disputes. The multinomial logistic regression further indicated that household size, number of parcels, and gender of the household head were significant predictors of perceived tenure security, highlighting how socio-economic characteristics shape outcomes. This aligns with land tenure theory, which links secure, clear property rights to increased confidence and reduced transaction costs (Feder and Feeny, 1991).

It also resonates with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (Scoones, 1998), which sees secure access to assets as central to building resilience. However, larger landholders reported more disputes, suggesting that policy and administrative scrutiny affects them differently and calls for differentiated support mechanisms.

5.3 Access to and Utilization of Land Resources

Descriptive results showed a mean farmland holding size of 2.06ha and an average of 4.09 parcels, indicating a moderate distribution of land resources (Table 4.5). Qualitative findings revealed that while the size of landholdings did not increase, access to land-related administrative services became easier (83.1% agreed or strongly agreed), disputes were more efficiently handled (83.5%), and transactions were simplified (83.1%) (Table 4.6). These outcomes confirm that RKCs are functioning as administrative hubs. Empirical studies by Deininger et al. (2008) also show that efficient land administration increases investment and improves land use. Institutional theory suggests that strong local institutions can reduce uncertainty,encourage better land use decisions, and strengthen rights over time (North, 1990).

5.4 Influence of RKCs on Rural Livelihoods

Descriptive evidence indicated that 57.4% of respondents reported higher household income due to RKCs and 70.2% observed new job opportunities (Table 4.8). All respondents reported improved access to agricultural support, education, and health services, although market, electricity, road, and financial services lagged behind. The multiple regression analysis on the livelihood index showed that tenure security, access to services, and household characteristics significantly influenced livelihood outcomes. Qualitative data corro]borated these patterns, with participants citing improved education and health facilities but limited financial services and market linkages. These mixed results parallel global smart village experiences (Misra, 2019; ENRD, 2018), which show that infrastructure and market integration must complement social service delivery to achieve comprehensive rural transformation.

5.5 Challenges and Opportunities of RKCs

Although 71% of respondents reported no direct challenges, Table 4.10 showed that 86.7% found services complicated and time-consuming, reflecting administrative bottlenecks. FGDs highlighted concerns over unequal access to land and underrepresentation of women and youth in land allocations. Conversely, respondents strongly agreed that RKCs promoted transparency, digital tool use (87.1%), and fairer land distribution (64.7%). These dual perspectives reflect the transitional nature of RKCs. Without continued capacity-building, updating of land records, and community sensitization, the risk is that initial gains may not translate into sustainable, inclusive development.

5.6 Legal and Institutional Framework of RKC Establishment

The establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) in the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) is supported by key legislative instruments, including the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation No. 456/2005, its revision under Proclamation No. 1324/2024, the ANRS Revised Proclamation No. 252/2017, Implementation Regulation No. 159/2018 and ANRS Rural Kebele Center Development Program Implementation: Directive No. 14/2022 (FDRE, 2005; FDRE, 2024; ANRS, 2017; ANRS, 2018; ANRS, 2022). These laws aim to promote organized rural settlement, efficient land use, and improved service delivery. However, the study revealed that despite a strong legal foundation, implementation has been challenged by limited community participation, policy inconsistencies, unequal benefit distribution, weak institutional coordination, and poor enforcement of land use plans. These issues have hindered the full realization of RKCs' intended goals of equitable and integrated rural development.

5.7 Broader Implications

Overall, the findings confirm that RKCs in Basona Worana Woreda have moved towards the program's intended goals that strengthening tenure security, improving livelihoods, and centralizing services ,but unevenly. Participation gaps, service complexity, and weak infrastructure constrain full impact. These outcomes support Decentralization and Local Governance Theories

(Ribot, 2002), which stress that effective devolved institutions require capacity, transparency, and inclusive participation.

They also reinforce the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, showing that secure rights combined with diversified services and infrastructure enhance household resilience. For Ethiopia's broader rural transformation agenda, this means RKCs must evolve from service delivery nodes into fully integrated rural development hubs.

CHAPTER SIX

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

The Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) in the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) were established under FDRE Proclamations No. 456/2005 and recently updated 1324/2024,ANRS revised proclamation 252/2017, Regulation No. 159/2018 and RKCDPI Directive No. 14/2022, with the goal of promoting organized rural settlement and better land management. In practice, however, their impact has been constrained by limited community engagement, weak coordination among institutions, and inconsistent implementation of policies. To fully realize the benefits of RKCs, it is crucial to build institutional capacity, foster meaningful participation from local communities, and ensure that policies are applied consistently, thereby supporting more equitable and sustainable rural development.

The study reveals that the establishment of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) in Basona Worana Woreda was moderately participatory, with the process largely guided by woreda and kebele officials rather than by ordinary farmers. Despite this limited grassroots involvement, RKCs have had a notable impact on land tenure security. Farmers reported clearer land documentation, reduced disputes, and increased confidence in their rights, although larger landholders experienced comparatively greater insecurity.

In addition to strengthening tenure security, RKCs have made access to land administration services more efficient. This has enabled farmers to better utilize their existing holdings, even though it did not result in expansion of land size. Improved service delivery has contributed to enhanced livelihood outcomes, including higher household income, increased employment opportunities, and better access to agricultural support, education, and health services. However, linkages to markets, financial services, and infrastructure remain underdeveloped, limiting the full potential of these gains.

Overall, RKCs present both opportunities and challenges. They have demonstrated substantial promise in promoting land rights and improving rural livelihoods, yet their effectiveness depends on continued investment, simplification of service delivery, and equitable inclusion of all community members. Addressing these challenges will be essential to ensure that the benefits of RKCs are accessible to women, youth, and smaller landholders, thereby fostering more sustainable and inclusive rural development.

6.2 Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness and impact of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs), a set of integrated policy and practical measures is recommended. First, community participation should be strengthened through institutionalized consultation mechanisms, ensuring that farmers are actively involved at all stages of RKC planning, implementation, and service delivery. Tailored approaches are also needed to address the diverse needs of larger landholders and vulnerable groups, promoting equitable perceptions of tenure security and access to benefits.

Effective sectoral integration among institutions mandated to support RKCs is essential to improve coordination, streamline services, and reduce administrative inefficiencies. Complementing administrative functions with market access, financial services, and infrastructural development will help maximize the developmental potential of RKCs and enhance rural livelihoods.

Practical measures to support these goals include simplifying and digitalizing service delivery to reduce delays and bureaucratic hurdles, as well as regularly updating land records and maps to prevent overlapping claims. RKCs should be established and periodically revised in alignment with local land use plans, accompanied by continuous community sensitization on rights, procedures, and available opportunities. Regular updates to RKC sketch plans, expansion of existing centers, establishment of sub-rural centers, and the development of comprehensive guidelines for RKC establishment and management will further ensure the sustainability, efficiency, and inclusiveness of these centers.

By implementing these integrated policy and practical recommendations, RKCs can more effectively strengthen land tenure security, improve rural livelihoods, and contribute to equitable and sustainable rural development.

6.3 Future Research Directions

Future research should explore the broader applicability and long-term impacts of Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs). Comparative studies across multiple regions would help assess the replicability of RKC outcomes and identify context-specific factors that influence their effectiveness. Longitudinal research is also needed to measure the sustainability of livelihood improvements over time and to track how changes in land tenure security evolve. Additionally, focused analyses on gender and youth perspectives are essential to understand how RKCs affect different demographic groups and to ensure that the benefits of these centers are equitably distributed. Such research will provide critical insights for refining RKC design, enhancing policy interventions, and promoting inclusive and sustainable rural development.

Reference

Books and Monographs

Bekele, S. (2010). Local government in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa University Press.

Clapham, C. (2019). The political economy of Ethiopia: Past, present and prospects. Cambridge University Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Designing and conducting mixed methods research (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Gillham, B., (2000). *Case Study Research Methods*. Continuum Research Methods: Real World Research. Illustrated reprint ed. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Iatu, M.F. (2020). Sustainable rural development under Agenda 2030: Sustainability assessment of the 21st century.

Kothari, C. R. (2004). Research methodology: Methods and techniques. New Age International.

North, D.C. (1990). Institutions, institutional change and economic performance. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

OECD/PSI (2020). Rural development strategy review of Ethiopia: Reaping the benefits of urbanisation. OECD Development Pathways. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Pankhurst, A. (1992). Resettlement and famine in Ethiopia: The villagers' experience. Manchester University Press.

Platteau, J-P. (2000). Institutions, social norms and economic development. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis group.

Rahmato, D. (1984). Agrarian reform in Ethiopia. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.

Rahmato, D. (ed.) (2003). Resettlement in Ethiopia: The tragedy of population relocation in the 1980s. Discussion Paper No. 11. Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies.

Rahmato, D. (2011). Land to investors: Large-scale land transfers in Ethiopia. Forum for Social Studies.

Yamane, T. (1967). Statistics: An introductory analysis (2nd ed.). Harper & Row.

Journal Articles

Abbink, J. (2018). Land disputes and local governance in Ethiopia: Institutional disconnections, cultural logic, and the role of state and non-state actors. Journal of Eastern African Studies, 12(3), 430–451.

Adamowicz, M. (2018). New ideas for rural development in European Union strategies and policies. Economic and Regional Research, 11(2), 7–31.

Agza, M., Alamirew, B., & Shibru, A. (2023). Determinants of rural–urban migration and its impact on migrant-sending households' livelihood security in Gurage Zone, Ethiopia. Cogent Social Sciences, 9(1).

Cornwall, A. (2003). Whose voices? Whose choices? Reflections on gender and participatory development. World Development, 31(8), 1325–1342.

Deininger, K., Ali, D. A., Holden, S., & Zevenbergen, J. (2008). Rural land certification in Ethiopia: Process, initial impact, and implications for other African countries. World Development, 36(10), 1786–1812.

Feder, G., & Feeny, D. (1991). Land tenure and property rights: Theory and implications for development policy. The World Bank Economic Review, 5(1), 135–153.Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Górecka, A., Jezic, Z. and Kardum, B. (2022). 'Smart villages and rural development', Acta Scientiarum Polonorum. Oeconomia, 20(2), pp. 39–46.

Griffin, K., Khan, A.R. and Ickowitz, A. (2002). 'Poverty and the distribution of land', Journal of Agrarian Change, 2(3), pp. 279–330.

Holden, S. and Ghebru, H. (2016). 'Land tenure reforms, tenure security, and food security in poor agrarian economies: Causal linkages and research gaps', Global Food Security, 10, pp. 21–28.

Misra, R. (2019). 'Smart villages in India: Empowering people through digital and sustainable transformation', Journal of Rural Development, 38(2), pp. 145–160.

Place, F. (2009). 'Land tenure and agricultural productivity in Africa: A comparative analysis of the economics literature and recent policy strategies and reforms', World Development.

Smoke, P. (2003). Decentralisation in Africa: Goals, dimensions, myths and challenges. Public Administration and Development, 23(1), 7–16.

Welteji, D. (2018). A critical review of rural development policy of Ethiopia: Access, utilization, and coverage. Journal of Agriculture and Food Security, 7(1).

Yngstrom, I. (2010). 'Women, wives, and land rights in Africa: Situating gender beyond the household in the debate over land policy and changing tenure systems'.

Theses and Dissertations

Ayenalem, A. (2024). The socio-economic impact of the Rural Kebele Center Development Program on rural households: The case of Guangua District (Unpublished master's thesis). Bahir Dar University.

Gibiril, K. (2023). Socio-economic impact of the Agricultural Growth Program on rural households. Unpublished MSc Thesis.

Government Laws, Directives, and Regulations

Amhara National Regional State (ANRS)(2017). The Revised Proclamation No.252/2017 of Rural Land Administration and Use Determination

Amhara National Regional State (ANRS). (2018). Revised rural land administration and use system implementation regulation (Regulation No. 159/2018).

Amhara National Regional State (ANRS). (2022). Rural Kebele Center Development Program implementation directive (Directive No. 14).

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). (2005). Rural land administration and land use proclamation (Proclamation No. 456/2005). Federal Negarit Gazeta.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). (2024). A proclamation to provide for the administration and use of rural land (Proclamation No. 1324/2024). Federal Negarit Gazeta.

Government and Institutional Reports

Basona Worana Woreda Land Office. (2024). Annual report of Basona Worana Woreda Land Office.

Basona Worana Woreda Public Communication Office. (2024). Annual report: Fiscal year 2024.

Endale, K., Pick, A and Woldehanna, T. (2019). Financing social protection in Ethiopia: Long-term perspective. OECD. OECD Development Policy Papers No. 15, Paris

MoA (2022). Rural Kebele Centers establishment best practice report. Addis Ababa: Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). Unpublished.

Oakland Institute (2011). Understanding land investment deals in Africa – Country report: Ethiopia. Oakland: The Oakland Institute.

MoUDHC (Ministry of Urban Development, Housing & Construction) (2014). Rural housing development strategy. Addis Ababa: MoUDHC.

World Bank. (2015). Ethiopia urbanization review: Urban institutions for a middle-income Ethiopia. World Bank.

Working Papers, Discussion Papers, and Grey Literature

Adane, M. (2018). *Land administration system building in Amhara Region* [PowerPoint presentation]. Third Annual Land Conference 2018, May 15–16, Institute of Land Administration, Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia.

Bell, C. (2009). *Urbanization and land access in Ethiopia* (World Bank Policy Brief). World Bank.

Chambers, R., & Conway, G. (1992). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21st century* (IDS Discussion Paper No. 296). Institute of Development Studies.

Deininger, K., Alemu, T., & Ali, D. A. (2008). *Impacts of land certification on tenure security, investment, and land markets* (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 4764). World Bank.

DFID. (1999). *Sustainable livelihoods guidance sheets*. Department for International Development.

ENRD. (2018). *Smart villages: Revitalising rural services*. European Network for Rural Development.

FAO. (2002). *Land tenure and rural development* (FAO Land Tenure Studies No. 3). Food and Agriculture Organization.

Ghebru, H. and Holden, S. (2013). Links between tenure security and food security: Evidence from Ethiopia. Centre for Land Tenure Studies Working Paper No. 02/13. Ås: Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU).

King, G., (2001). *Quantitative Social Science Methods (Gov 2001)*. Harvard University, Department of Government. [Lecture notes].

Pierri, F.M., Anseeuw, W. and Campolina, A. (2025). 'Land tenure for resilient and inclusive rural transformation', Global Food Security.

Ribot, J. C. (2002). *Democratic decentralization of natural resources: Institutionalizing popular participation*. World Resources Institute.

Scoones, I. (1998). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: A framework for analysis* (IDS Working Paper No. 72). Institute of Development Studies.

Tacoli, C. (2004). *Rural–urban linkages and pro-poor agricultural growth: An overview* (AgREN Network Paper No. 135). Overseas Development Institute.

World Bank (2015). Ethiopia urbanization review: Urban institutions for a middle-income Ethiopia. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Appendix I: Letter of Ethical Clearance and Written Consent



BAHIRDAR UNIVERSITY
Department of Land Administration and Surveying

ባህር ዳር ዩኒቨርሲቲ
የመሬት አስተዳደርና ቅየሳ ትምህርት ክፍል

ISO 9001 ☎ (058) 320 17 04

Ref.No.- LAS /37/2016

Date: 07 /08/2024

ለሚመለከተው ሁሉ

ጉዳዩ፡- ትብብር እንዲደረግላቸው ስለመጠየቅ

ተማሪ ዘርዓይ ካሳሁን እምሩ በባህርዳር ዩኒቨርሲቲ፡ በመሬት አስተዳደር ኢንስቲትዩት የሁለተኛ ዲግሪ (Land Admininistration and Management) ተማሪ ሲሆን " **The effect of Rural Kebele Centres Establishment on the Land Rights and Livelihood of the Rural Community and Case of Basona Worana Woreda, Amhara Region, Ethiopia"** በሚል ርዕስ የመመረቂያ ፅሁፋቸውን ስለሚያዘጋጁ በእናንተ በኩል አስፈላጊዉን ትብብር ታደርጉላቸው ዘንድ እንጠይቃለን።

Department of Land Admin.& Surveying LAS
Bahir Dar University Institute of Land Administration

ከሰላምታ ጋር

ዝናቡ ጌታሁን
የመሬት አስተዳደርና ቅየሳ ትምህርት ክፍል ኃላፊ
Zinabu Getahun
Head Department of Land Administration and Surveying

መልሱን ሲጽፉ የኛን ቁጥር ይጥቀሱ። In replying please quote our ref.no.

Appendix II: Household Survey Questionnaire(HHQ)

Dear Respondents,

I am Zereay Kassahun, an MSc student at Bahir Dar University, conducting my MSc thesis with the title of " The Effects of Rural Kebele Centers Establishment on Land Rights and Livelihood of Farmers: The Case of Basona Worana Woreda; Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia" Your response is very important for my research, and I thank you for being willing to participate. Please be confident that all information will be treated in confidentiality and solely used for study purposes. Your response represents many households with the same conditions and will be very valuable for this research

HHQ : Understanding the effects of Rural Kebele Centers on Land Rights and Livelihoods

Demographic Information

Name (optional): _____

Q1. Age:

(2) Under 18 (2) 18-35 (2) 36-50 (3) 51 and above

Q2. Gender:

(1) Male (2) Female

Q3. Educational Level:

(1) No formal education (2) Primary education (3) Secondary education (4) Higher education

Q4. Occupation:

(1) Farmer (2) Government employee (3) Business owner (4) Other (Please specify):_

Q5. What is your role in the community?

(1) community member (2) Rural land administration committee member (3) Government official (4) Religious leader (5) Elder

Q6. Household Size:

(1) 1-3 members (2) 4-6 members (3) More than 6 members

Q7. How long have you lived in this community?

(1) less than 2 years (2) 2-4 years (3) More than 4 years

1. Land Tenure Security

Q8. Do you own Farmland?

(1) Yes (2) No

Q9. If yes, how did you Possess the land?

(1) Inheritance (2) Purchase (3) Government allocation (4) Other (Please specify): __

10. What's the size of your landholding?

(1) Less than 0.5 hectares (2) 0.5–1 hectare (3) More than 1 hectare

11. How many parcels do you have? Please Specify it (number of parcels):_____

12. What's the size of your landholding at the kebele center?

(1) less than 250m2 (2) 250m2 (3) 250-500m2 (4) More than 500m2

13. How do you feel land ownership security?

(1) Very secure (2) Moderately secure (3) Not secure

14. Have you encountered any disputes or challenges regarding land ownership?

(1) Yes (2) No If yes/no, please explain: _____

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Q15. The Establishment of rural Kebele Center clarified your land ownership right

Q16. The Establishment of rural Kebele Center provided you with legal documentation that secures your land use rights

Q17. The support you get from RKC have created more confidence about your land tenure

Q18. The establishment of RKC have reduced disputes over land ownership among your community

Q19. The establishment of RKCs have made easier to access land-related administrative services

Q20. Administrative support offered from RKC could easily solve land related disputes

Q21. The establishment of RKCs could have simplified the process of land related transactions

Q22. All groups of the community could have equal opportunity to possess land at RKCs

Q23. The RKCs could have reduced inequality in land distribution (i.e, at KC) among community members

Q24. The establishment of RKCs can be taken as a model to promote fairness and transparency in land administration and use.

1. **Overall effect on Land Rights**

Q25. Have RKCs positively affected your ability to use your land for farming or other economic activities?

(1) Yes (2) No If yes/no, please explain: _____

Q26. Does RKCs have strengthened land rights and security within your community?

(1) Yes (2) No If yes/no, please explain: _____

3. Access to and Utilization of Land Resources

Q27. Does RKCs have been established where you can easily access your farm lands?

(1) Yes (2) No If yes/no, please explain: _____

Q28. Has the establishment of RKCs improved your access to natural resources, like water and grazing land?

(1) Yes (2) No If yes/no, please explain: _____

Q29. Do you feel that RKCs have supported sustainable land management practices in your community?

(1) Yes (2) No If yes/no, please explain: _____

4. Effects on Livelihoods

Q30. Have Rural Kebele Centers (RKCs) improved your access to any of the following services?

• Education: (1) Yes (2) No

• Healthcare: (1) Yes (2) No

• Agricultural support: (1) Yes (2) No

• Market access: (1) Yes (2) No

• Electricity: (1) Yes (2) No

• Road Infrastructure: (1) Yes (2) No

• Financial services: (1) Yes (2) No

• Other services: (1) Yes (2) No

Q31. How did the establishment of RKCs affect your livelihood?

Q32. Had you have faced any challenge because of the establishment of RKCs?

(1) Yes (2) No If yes, please describe: _____

Q33. Have you been involved in the process of determining RKC development?

(1) Yes (2) No If yes, please describe: _____

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Q34. The establishment of RKCs helped me to increase my household income.

Q35. The establishment of RKCs have opened new job opportunities to the community.

Q36. The establishment of RKCs agglomerated services rendering institutions; and this has a positive effect on agricultural production and productivity.

Q37. RKCs have created better access to get services like healthcare and education.

4. Gaps, Challenges, and Opportunities

Q38. What do you feel as a gap in the process of the establishment of RKCs?

Q39. What challenges do you face because of the establishment of RKCs?

Q40. What opportunities does RKC bring in the livelihood of the rural community?

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Q41. Accessing services at the RKC is complicated and takes too much time.

Q42. The establishment of RKCs have created better access to reach the community.

Q43. The establishment of RKCs have created a good opportunity to use digital tools and technology.

Q44. Overall, RKCs have positively affected my quality of life.

Q45. RKCs play a significant role in enhancing rural livelihoods through various economic initiatives.

Thank you for taking the time to share your insights with us!

Appendix III: Key Informant Interview Questionnaire (KIIQ)

I. Key Informant Interview Questionnaire (KIIQ) 1:

Dear Respondents,

I am Zereay Kassahun, an MSc student at Bahir Dar University, conducting my MSc thesis with the title of " The Effects of Rural Kebele Centers Establishment on Land Rights and Livelihood of Farmers: The Case of Basona Worana Woreda; Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia" Your response is very important for my research, and I thank you for being willing to participate. Please be confident that all information will be treated in confidentiality and solely used for study purposes. Your response represents many households with the same conditions and will be very valuable for this research

This questionnaire is designed to include the observation of Woreda Land Office Head on the establishment of RKC and its effects on the livelihoods of the local community: A Case at Angolela and Abamote Rural Kebele center.

Section A: Background Information

1. Name (optional): _____
2. Your Position/Title: _____
3. Organization/Institution: _____
4. How long have you been working in the woreda/Region? _____

Section B: Specific questions

- Total Number of kebeles in the woreda: ……
- How many kebeles have established RKC?.....

Section C: General questions

Q1. What are the effects of rural land certification in your woreda?

Q2. Have you participated in the process of identifying and establishing of RKC?

Q3. Who have participated in the process of identifying and establishing of RKC?

Q4. What problems have you faced in the process of identifying and establishing of RKC?

Q5. What challenges have you encountered in managing land rights following the development of the RKC?

Q6. What do you suggest about the importance of RKC?

II. Key Informant Interview Questionnaire (KIIQ) 2: Prepared for Rural Land Holders

A Rural Kebele Centers can be established at communal lands however in a Kebele where there is no communal land it could be established at a place where it is an ideal location to provide services for the kebele community. So, in the process of identifying RKC the community and other stakeholders should have to participate, and all members have to know the advantages of establishing a kebele center.

Therefore; this group interview questionnaire is designed to tap information from the community members on the establishment of kebele center; A Case at Angolela/Abamote Rural Kebele center.

Section A: Background Information

No.	Name of the group member	How long have you lived in this kebele center	Position in the kebele	Remark
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

B. Group discussion questions

Q1. Do you all have rural land use right certificate/s in kebele?

Q2. Are you clear with the aim of establishing kebele center and its significance? Can you tell us something about its significances?

Q3. Have you participated in the process of identifying and establishing of RKC?

Q4. Do you have any reservation on the importance of establishing a kebele center?

Q5. What challenges have you encountered because of the establishment of RKC?

Q6. What advantages do you get because of the establishment of RKC?

Appendix IV: Focus group discussion (FGD)

A Questionnaire prepared for Rural Land Holders

Dear FGD members,

I am Zereay Kassahun, an MSc student at Bahir Dar University, conducting my MSc thesis with the title of " The Effects of Rural Kebele Centers Establishment on Land Rights and Livelihood of Farmers: The Case of Basona Worana Woreda; Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia" Your response is very important for my research, and I thank you for being willing to participate. Please be confident that all information will be treated in confidentiality and solely used for study purposes. Your response represents many households with the same conditions and will be very valuable for this research

A Rural Kebele Centers can be established at communal lands however in a Kebele where there is no communal land it could be established at a place where it is an ideal location to provide services for the kebele community. So, in the process of identifying RKC the community and other stake holders should have to participate, and all members have to know the advantages of establishing a kebele center. Therefore; this Focus group discussion questionnaire is designed to tap information from the community members on the establishment of kebele center; A Case at Angolela/Abamote Rural Kebele Center.

Section A: Background Information

B. Group discussion questions

Q1. Do you all have rural land use right certificate/s in kebele?
Q2. Are you clear with the aim of establishing kebele center and its significance? Can you tell us something about its significances?
Q3. Have you participated in the process of identifying and establishing of RKC?
Q4. Do you have any reservation on the importance of establishing a kebele center?
Q5. What challenges have you encountered because of the establishment of RKC?
Q6. What advantages do you get because of the establishment of RKC?

Appendix V: Field Observation Checklist

(The Effects of Rural Kebele Centers Establishment on Land Rights and Livelihoods)

A. Physical Environment & Infrastructure

- ☐ Condition of roads and transport access to RKC
- ☐ Availability of electricity and water supply
- ☐ Presence and quality of public buildings (schools, health posts, markets)
- ☐ Land use patterns around RKC (farmland, communal land, settlement)
- ☐ Evidence of new housing or resettlement linked to RKC

B. Land Administration Services

- ☐ Functionality of land administration office at the RKC
- ☐ Presence of cadastral maps, land registration books, or digital tools
- ☐ Number of community members accessing land certification services
- ☐ Cases of land dispute resolution observed/handled at the center
- ☐ Accessibility of services to women, youth, and marginalized groups

C. Livelihood Activities

- ☐ Presence of markets, shops, or small businesses near the RKC
- ☐ Agricultural inputs/services available (extension, veterinary, cooperatives)
- ☐ Employment opportunities generated by the RKC (formal/informal)
- ☐ Evidence of improved access to healthcare and education services
- ☐ Observed participation of women/youth in economic activities

D. Community Participation & Governance

- ☐ Community gatherings/meetings held at RKC
- ☐ Notice boards, posted information, or public announcements
- ☐ Visible signs of local participation in planning or service delivery
- ☐ Inclusiveness of decision-making (gender, age, landholding status)

- ☐ Informal conversations: local perceptions about RKC benefits/challenges

E. Challenges & Opportunities

- ☐ Visible overcrowding, disputes, or conflicts during service access
- ☐ Gaps in infrastructure (e.g., unfinished buildings, lack of offices)
- ☐ Observed inequality in access to services (e.g., favoring elites/men)
- ☐ Evidence of opportunities (new technology, cooperative initiatives, improved networks)
- ☐ Any unintended effects (land scarcity, displacement, environmental stress)

Observation Recording Table

Date	Location	Checklist Item	Observation Notes