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Making Vacant Land Work: Assessment of Vacant Land Utilization in Wolayta Sodo Town, SNNPR, Ethiopia

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Abstract
Undeveloped vacant land is an asset, but unfortunately many people don't realize and they have not used it properly as a source of business. It is because they don't know about business opportunity which can be applied on the undeveloped vacant land. In the heart of the study town, it is used as solid waste disposal sites, unused, and neglected are commonly observed. It seems strange that land convenient to economically vibrant areas where many people work, land that should itself have great value, lies vacant and ignored. Hence, the purpose of the study is assessing the factors that contribute to the existence of vacant land in the town and its socio-economic effects as well as to evaluate the intervention made by the town administration. The research methodology mainly concentrates on survey strategy, explanatory and descriptive research type for qualitative and quantitative approaches based on probability and non-probability sampling specifically simple random and purposive sampling technique. To conduct the study both primary and secondary data were collected. The collected data was analyzed and presented with the help of tables, bar graphs, pie charts and pictures. Poor financial capacity of the owners, market instability, land speculation, property tax burden, urban decline, neighborhood change, poor provision of loan, bureaucracy and long procedure, weak legal enforcement & implementation of rules and regulations, and inadequate provision of infrastructure & services are the observed fact that causes the existence of undeveloped vacant land. In relation to that, lower revenue collection and low tax income, reduced infrastructure development, reduced employment opportunity, discouraged investment, disputes, social crime, human health problem, plan distortion, loss of aesthetic value, and urban sprawl are observed as a major effect that were caused by the existence of the undeveloped land in the town. Based up on the findings, the researcher put possible recommendations to come up to this obscurity. Finally, this study is the first of its kind that to open a gate for other researchers, to get baseline data of the study town and other stake holders to come up with new policy options, programs, and projects.
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I. Introduction

Land is a means of life on which human beings continued existence and progress depend. It is, in one way or another, the basic source of making the material wealth. Land is fixed and its availability is directly linked with the population on it (Dale and McLaughlin 1988). Land, as the "mother of all things on earth", is the foundation of human existence and development. In all natural resources, land resources will play an important and irreplaceable role in the economic and social development. However with the development of economy and society, the hastening of the urbanization process and the increasing population growth, the conflict between humans and the land is further intensified. Globally, as population becomes increasingly concentrated within urbanized areas, the space needed to accommodate this population and its ancillary work continues to mount. The limitation on utilization of vacant urban parcels is unstable or unsuitable subsurface conditions. Parcels that are unbuildable are of two basic subtypes, depending on whether the limitations on their development are natural or societal factors (Northam, 1971). Thus, we must seek a way to make full and rational use of the urban land and achieve sustainable development with economy, society, resources, and environment all in harmony. The assessment of the level of intensive or efficient use of urban land is good to arrange the state land use and management reasonably (Zhou, Song, and Chen 2011, p.235). Though, one of the city's asset is its available land resource for economic development, unfortunately, many cities in developing countries have land that are vacant, abandoned, undeveloped, or unused, with different factors and weak policies and regulations in place to convert them in to revenue generating and valuable lands. Actions should be taken by local governments in order to create more efficient and effective utilization system of resources especially land for competitive market development. Like in many countries, inefficient utilization of urban lands in Ethiopia take land by way of lease contract and keep it idle with no development on it. Even if there is an effort to satisfy the demand for land and to allocate land efficiently to residents, the government did not attempt to satisfy the socio-economic activities of the urban dwellers, because of inefficient utilization of urban land (Abay, 2005). Undeveloped vacant land or

unused land is an asset, but unfortunately it is not used properly as a source of income. In the case of Wolayta Sodo, there are several undeveloped vacant lots that are publically owned and privately held; such as the land provided for residential, commercial, and industrial and other social service use within the town.

II. Material And Methods

2.1. General Objective of the Study

The general objectives of the study is to assess the factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped vacant land and its socio-economic effects, and intervention made by town government as well as to recommend the possible strategies for town administration to mitigate the problem that related to the undeveloped vacant urban land.

2.1.1. Specific Objectives of the Study:

- To identify the factors contribute to the existence of vacant land in the town.
- To assess the socio-economic effects of vacant land in the town.
- To evaluate the intervention made by the town administration regarding vacant land.
- To suggest possible ways to utilize the urban space efficiently with regard to rules and regulations.

2.2. Research Questions

- What are the factors that contribute for the existence of vacant land in the study town?
- What are the socio-economic consequences of vacant land in the town?
- What intervention strategies are employed by the town administration?
- What types of strategies are thought to be appropriate to mitigate the problem related to vacant land?

2.3. Literature Reviewed

2.3.1. The nature of vacant land

All cities have vacant land, although the supply, kind, and conditions vary. In one city, vacant land may symbolize despair, representing how far the city has fallen from its glory days. In another city, vacant land may symbolize trust and confidence, providing the opportunity for expansion and restoration. In its own way, vacant land tells the story of the city, then, offers a fresh perspective on cities and on where they are headed. While vacant land is present throughout the world cites, the phenomenon has not been studied and explained comprehensively (Bowman and Pagano, 2004, p. 4). Therefore, the basic information about the vacant land and its characteristics are not easily reached in developing countries (Zhou, Song, and Chen, Vol. 4, No. 3; 2011, p.19). Due to its immobile, indestructible, and fixed supply nature, the value of land parcel is often determined by its location, condition, demand, access, restricted used (zoning), future plans, and social and economic values (Peirce, 1996).In New York City, for example; there are 29,782 publicly-owned and privately-owned vacant parcels designated by the city tax code as vacant within the city boundaries, from these more than 7,300 acres of land that could be providing important social and ecological benefits for urban residents and it could represent a sizable opportunity for urban improvement (Mc Phearson, 2012). *"Vacant land remains a key competitive asset for implementing a number of economic development strategies" (The Bookings Institution, Dec, 2000).* Thus, the nature and characteristics of undeveloped vacant land are different from country to country. In our country, the vacancy is recently observed phenomena and its productive potential is missed by many municipalities because land is the most important source of revenue for local government as well as for capital accumulation. So the study will characterize its nature by the economic resources of towns should have to implement and effectively use these resources.

2.3.2. Conceptual definition of vacant land

This part will briefly explain the concepts and perception of undeveloped vacant land with regard to the operational definition. The term "vacant land" is both broad and imprecise, covering various types of undeveloped and underutilized land which includes not only publicly-owned and privately-owned unused or abandoned land or land that once had structures on it, but also the land that supports structures that have been abandoned, derelict, boarded up, partially destroyed, raw dirt, land with recently razed buildings, perimeter agricultural land, contaminated land, and green fields. Thus, vacant land ranges from never developed parcels to the land that once had structures on it (Bowman and Pagano, 2004 p. 4). This definition allows for two fundamental distinctions in studying vacant land. One basic definition is the ownership of the land that is, whether it is publicly owned and privately held. Ownership affects management and outcomes. The other distinction is whether the land is developable, regardless of ownership. A host of factors influences developablity, including the physical features of the land, the presence (or absence) of legal or financial complications, the local real estate market, and the city or the county government's land use plan. The above two distinctions has much to do with bad images of the vacant land. In other case, land is being held for speculation may take on these characteristics, or it might be operational land, an unsightly or underutilized section of a current development. For example, an industrial plant might use a portion of its land for storage, and it might lease part of it for a

pasture. Operational land may in fact be corporate reserve land. These categorizations are inherently instrumental; the value of land is linked to its productivity, its use (Bowman and Pagano, 2004). Vacant land can be classified depending upon the forces that are behind it: structurally unemployed land, frictionally unemployed land and land held in reserve for the future (Schenk, 1978). Structurally unemployed land is the land for which the cost needed to make it productive is greater than the present value of the yield from any productive use. It is a consequence of, among other things, ownership problems, lack of utilities, strict regulation, expected flood hazard, slope or foundations problems, odd-sized or odd-shaped sites left over in neighborhoods where land was deeded in fixed sites sizes and small lots resulting. Northam (1971) classify vacant and abounded land in the United States cities as to the following types:

> *(1) remnant parcels that are typically small in size, often irregular in shape, and that have not been developed in the past; (2) parcels with physical limitations, such as steep slope or flood hazard, and thus unbuildable; (3) corporate reserve parcels held for future expansion or relocation; (4) parcels held for speculation, frequently found in transitional areas; and (5) institutional reserve parcels set aside by public or quasi-public entities for future development, given need and funding.*

However, the definition indicates the vacant land is temporarily obsolete and abandoned parcels with different factors which are undeveloped, it has three varieties: formerly productive and valued sites, such as factories, furniture plants, or warehouses that have since been abandoned by their owners; formerly productive but unwanted sites that housed less desirable activities, such as slaughterhouses, tanneries, and paper mills; and unused parcels of overgrown land that for various reasons have not been developed. This implies that there is no common definition about vacant land and different cities use different conceptual definitions to identify the vacant land. So that the most important things we should consider from the above definitions are; vacant land that are not necessarily damaged or derelict. It can simply be neglected land, that is, unused but capable of some beneficial use.

For this thesis we should use the definition for the vacant land as the land which is privately-held and publicly-owned for different purposes, but undeveloped with regard to current economic development.

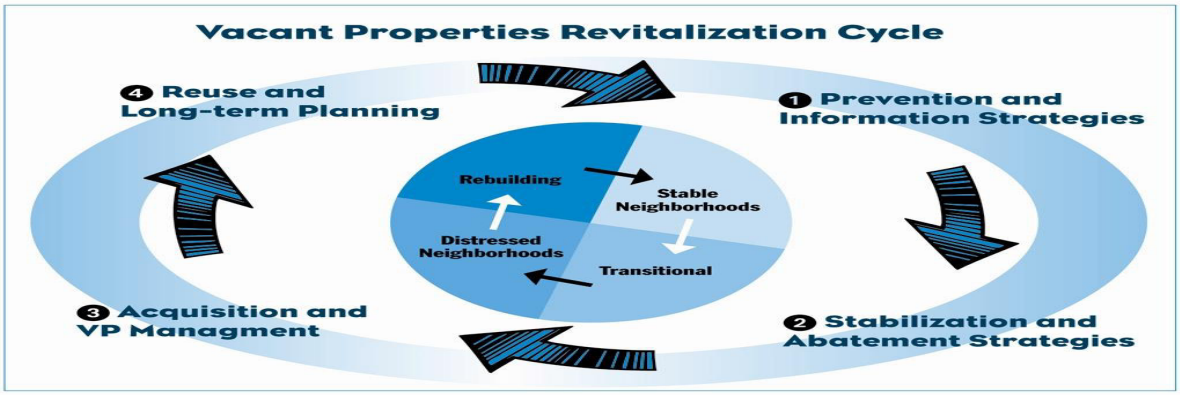
2.3.3. Efficient Utilization of Urban land in United States of American cities

*"One of a city's greatest assets is its available land for development. Unfortunately, many cities have land and properties that are vacant, abandoned, or under-used, with few policies and regulations in place to convert them into revenue-generating, valuable sites. Compiling an inventory of vacant parcels, planning for the assembly and reuse of land, and working to eliminate the many legal and administrative barriers to acquisition and development are just some of the actions the authors contend should be undertaken in order to create a more transparent, efficient, and effective system for private market land development" (The Brookings Institution, Oct, 2002, p. 1).*This brief outlines is the successful practices implemented in the states and localities of U.S. during the 1990s.Efficient utilization of urban land is a vital issue for urban development because the land is an asset of all towns. With regard to the intensive use of urban land, the Bookings Institution also identifies the ten key action steps that state and local governments can take to promote faster and better redevelopment of vacant and abandoned properties, and ultimately improve the quality of urban neighborhoods. The paper does not aim to suggest what the specific policies and practices should be in each city, but instead sets a basic framework for addressing this complex issue. To be effective, the reuse strategies must be tailored to each locality and to the individual markets within them. The ten steps are the following:

(1) Know Your Territory,
(2) Develop a Citywide Approach to Redevelopment,
(3) Implement Neighborhood Plans in Partnership with Community Stakeholders,
(4) Make Government Effective,
(5) Create a Legal Framework for Sound Redevelopment,
(6) Create Marketable Opportunities,
(7) Finance Redevelopment,
(8) Build on Natural and Historic Assets,
(9) Be Sensitive to Gentrification and Relocation Issues, and
(10) Organize for Success

Therefore, these ten steps given by the bookings institution are the critical steps that the local government of every county to realize their effective and efficient use of urban land for future development of the town as well as the action steps that state and local governments should follow to facilitate the development of urban land and buildings.

In other way, new thinking emerged in USA by 1990's, accordingly by setting agenda for Urban Land Reform about vacant land revitalization. The following is the vacant land revitalization cycle to reuse the resources in efficient manner.



Source: *Kildee and Hovey, 1999*

2.3.4. Managing vacant land in Philadelphia

According to *Final report of the Vacant land management study in Philadelphia (2000) ,* The Philadelphia city charter, which forms the foundation of the City's approach to the 'business' of governing, was adopted in the early 1950's in a climate of increasing population. Thus, the government that grew from the charter was designed to manage the city growth. As population fell, the city's approach to vacant land was developed through a series of iterative responses such as there is no one coordinating entity responsible for addressing the problem of vacant. In sum, the city's current approach to vacant land can be characterized as reactive, intermittent, and fragmented. Creating the system that both manages vacant lots and facilitates their transfer for reuse will open new possibilities for redevelopment of Philadelphia neighborhoods, which, in turn, will expand the potential for community groups to expand capacity, create job opportunities for residents, and shape the future of their neighborhoods. The basis of the system should be an Asset Management Approach to vacant land that is Comprehensive, strategic, and Ongoing. To implement the vacant lot management system, this document recommends the creation of an Office of Vacant Land Management within the Redevelopment Authority. The purpose of the Office of Vacant Land Management will be to stem blight, contribute to community revitalization, eliminate bureaucratic obstacles to reuse of vacant lots, and prepare the city and its neighborhoods to take advantage of the future development opportunities. The primary functions of the Office of Vacant Land Management will be to contract for clearing and maintenance of all lots, acquire title to all lots, retain title until/ if end user found, and transfer title for reuse and redevelopment. The core components of the vacant lot management system will be clean and lien, acquisition, maintenance, and disposition. Accordingly, the actions of the Office of Vacant Land Management as it implements the vacant lot management system will be guided by and supportive of the planning and policy decisions of the city government. These shows as, the establishment of the Office of Vacant Land Management and implementation through the above recommended approach is very significant to manage vacant land and use the urban resources in efficient manner, and also the organizational arrangement is a crucial to control the prevalence of undeveloped vacant land.

2.4. Undeveloped Vacant Land Management Practices in Ethiopia

Generally, when we compare undeveloped vacant land utilization system in Ethiopia with other countries that the literature reviewed, there is a great dissimilarity regarding efficient utilization of urban land especially undeveloped vacant land. Therefore, the above lessons drawn from the literature review are more essential for this study in order to make vacant land utilization efficient. The government of Ethiopia did the effort to satisfy the demand for land and to keep the price lower through mass allocation of land for residential housing to low income groups, land allocation for cooperative, lease holding by auction often by negotiation and issuance of different rules and regulations for effective use of land and stabilizing the price. Despite the effort by the government did not attempt to satisfy the socio-economic activities of the urban dwellers in the county. One of the major problems of the towns through the country is inefficient utilization of resources. This indicates that the system of land delivery, development and management as well as the rules and regulation to enhance effective land utilization are not able to prevent the prevalence of undeveloped vacant land in the urban centers in general. Like in many countries inefficient utilization of urban lands in Ethiopia take land by way of lease contract and keep it idle with noor little building on it and wait for future price rise to sub lease it. They acquire a plot of land either build a small house at their plot, or they keep the land idle for more than the period of time of building completion. There were also many who could not begin building their project even often they have been granted land through auction. According to Abay (2005), speculators take land by way of lease contract, and keep it idle with or little building on it and wait for price rise to sub lease it. Such rent collection by way of keeping land idle for speculation has been a way of abusing land use and profiting by taking advantage of land security. As farther mention in Abay`s (2005) paper, different acts of misusing land like keeping it idle, violating planning and

environmental laws to construct building are penalized severely indifferent countries like Finland and Sweden. The penalty includes levying fee or tax on idle land, demolishing building that violated city plan or environmental protections. Standard rules and norms are set and construction supervision under taken to assure conformity of leaseholder to the term of contracts to planning rules. Now, whoever asks for land by negotiation or auction is required to prove his or her ability to develop by providing proof of depositing 30% of the lease total price in the bank and credit worthiness recommendation from the bank. Moreover, project proposal is refereed at the inception level for contract agreement to lease a land. Time limit of starting the construction of the agreed building is required at least the completion of the foundation. But according to Abay (2005) all these are lenient: toothless measures that couldn't prevent speculation so far, hence stronger measures are being considered. The management practices of undeveloped vacant land in our country had not overseen. The land management and administration body had not given emphasis the undeveloped land within the country. The undeveloped vacant land is widely observed within different towns of the country specially the study area, and the undeveloped land causes different socio-economic problems from time to time. The management system is not well defined in the land policy and proclamation with regard to the rules and regulations to control the prevalence of undeveloped vacant land within the built town. According to FDRE Building Proclamation No. 624/2009(2009), the Validity Period of Plans is putted the following ways; in Article (10), sub-article (1), the validity of approved plans shall expire after six months from the date of issuance where construction work has not been started, in sub-article (2), The validity of approved plans with which construction work has been started within six months from the date of issuance shall expire after five years from the date of issuance, if the construction work has not been completed, and in sub-article (3), Upon expiry of the validity period as set out in sub-articles (1) or (2) of this Article an application for extension of the validity period of approved plans shall be submitted for re approval of plans in accordance with this Proclamation. In other way, according to Ministry of Urban Development and Construction of Ethiopia Building Directive 666 (2011), the building permission shall be disqualified for those who have any lease contract shall not commence construction within 6 months the date after the building permission given and also identified about the commencement of construction in Urban Land Lease Proclamation no.721/2012, in article (22), sub-article (1) as, any lease shall commence construction within the period specified in the lease contract. In addition to this, the Proclamation no.721/2012 identified that the completion of construction. The Completion of Construction for the lease holder should come with the following arguments; In Article (23), sub-article (1), any lease shall complete construction within the period specified in the lease contract following the provisions of sub-article (2), and (3) of this Article. In sub-article (2), the time for completion of construction shall be as follows:

a) Up to 24 months for small construction projects
b) Up to 36 months for medium construction projects
c) Up to 48 months for large construction projects,

However, according to sub-article (3), the classification of construction projects shall be determined by the regulations to be issued by regions and city administrations. Generally in sub-article (4), notwithstanding the provisions of sub-article (1) of this Article, the period of completion of construction may be extended depending on the complexity of the construction and in accordance with regulations to be issued by regions or city administrations; provided, however, that the total completion period may not exceed:

a) Two years and six months for small construction projects
b) Four years for medium construction projects, and
c) Five years for large construction projects

Where a lessee fails to complete construction within the time limit specified under sub-article (1) of this Article, the lease contract shall be terminated and the appropriate body shall take back the land (FDRE Urban Land Lease Proclamation no.721/2012, 2012).This implies that, however, the urban land lease policy and building proclamation of Ethiopia was the pre conditions about the development of urban land within the urban areas regarding the commencement and completion of the construction, but the problem regarding the prevalence of undeveloped vacant land were concerned within the study area.

2.5. Research Gap

Wolyata Sodo town is one of the rapidly growing and newly emerging towns in SNNPRS. Because of its strategic setting at cross road interconnecting different zones of the region, and rapid urbanization, there is high demand of residential, commercial and other use of land. Undeveloped vacant land shrinks the socio-economic development of the town beyond the productive value of the land. Unless avoided, it affects the overall development of the town. Most researches are not focused on issues related with undeveloped urban vacant land in our country especially in the study area and management strategies of undeveloped vacant land are not properly placed as well as in the study area there was no research conducted in this topic before. Therefore, this research will insight how the issues is very important for the development of town as well as the country with regard to efficient utilization of urban land. Finally, this research will give additional knowledge regarding

undeveloped vacant land and how we can use a scarce resource in an efficient manner as well as fills the gap mentioned above.

2.6. Methodology

2.6.1. Research Design

The descriptive and explanatory research types were used to assess the cause and consequences of undeveloped vacant land within the town study. The explanatory type was used to gather information on the fundamental factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped vacant land and its effects on the town development. By following the information identified by explanatory type; descriptive type was used to describe the existing situation of vacant lands in the town and strategies for improving the urban land utilization system and mitigating its negative impact on the overall town development. According to Owens (2002), using survey research strategies helps to gather information not available from other sources; representation of population of interest was unbiased; the same information was collected from every respondent; and the data was used to complement the existing. So that, for this study it was important to use the survey research strategy by using an interview to collect the accurate information. Cross-Sectional study design was employed. Data was collected at one point in time from a samples selected to represent a larger population because the purpose of this research is for academic knowledge and time limitation. Both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used for this study. According to Hall (1996), using both strategies is due to gradually agreed realization by social scientists to compensate the problems associated with both strategies by the strength of the other. The mixed research approach is useful to capture the best of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Thus, the study employed both quantitative and qualitative research approach of data collection and analysis to keep its validity and reliability. Quantitative aspects which focused upon the date with numeric nature was selected to address the research objective that aimed to assess the existing problems and qualitative type also in some extent helps to analyze and examine the quality nature of the exciting situation of the study.

2.6.2. Methods of Data Collection

The necessary information for the study was gathered through field survey interviewing, field observation, key informant interviewing, and reviewing secondary sources on issues directly or indirectly related to undeveloped vacant land in the study area. In addition to this, during the period of data collection; training for data collectors, continuous monitoring, and supervision (or follow up) was held by the researcher to ensure the quality of the data collected by those data collectors.

2.6.3. Sampling Technique

Based on the case of the study and to represent the total population, this research used both probability-sampling and non-probability sampling techniques. The probability sampling technique was utilized in selecting sample units to represent the total population and the way of selecting sample kebeles was simple random sampling and then the researcher used all undeveloped vacant land holders within the sampled kebele. In addition, this study also employing the purposive sampling methods of non-probability sampling techniques to draw the key informants who have closeness to work in order to obtain detailed information about the issue related to undeveloped vacant land.

2.6.4. Population or Universe

According to the municipal data, the universe of the study is**15, 457** land owners (plots of land). The target population of the study was the land owners (plots) living in 3 (three) selected kebeles are **3,695** from 3 (three) sub-cities**,** of these **708** from Selam, **1,261** from Gido and **1,726** from Fana Kebeles. These land delivered to the owners are classified in to different types of investments. To represent the total population and to realize the study, the kebeles are selected randomly based on the administrative arrangements.

2.6.5. Sampling Frame

Based on the administrative boundaries, the undeveloped land holders of three (3) kebeles; (Selam, Gido from and Fana) wereused as a sampling frame of the study.

2.6.6. Sampling Unit and Sample Size

The sample units of this study were undeveloped vacant land owners that are living in three (3) kebeles and key informants who have closeness to work, in order to collect sufficient information from existing situation.

The study used the entire (100%) undeveloped vacant land owners of three (3) kebeles of three (3) sub-cities as a sample size to take the appropriate and accurate data as well as to ensure the quality of data.

2.6.6.1. Sample

As stated above, the sample of the study was total undeveloped vacant land owners (plots) of the selected three (3) kebeles those are **98 plots of land,** which includes land under residential, commercial, and other social service use. Besides, **12** key informants of which **1** from SNNPR Urban Development and Construction Bureau Urban land development and management department, **1** from Investment Bureau, **1** from Business and Construction Bank, **1** from Commercial Bank, **8** from Wolayta Sodo town administration and Municipality officials was interviewed in order to harness in-depth information about the study.

2.6.7. Sources of Data

To get more specific information concerning undeveloped vacant land and problems related to vacant lands; both primary and secondary date source were used.

2.6.8. Primary Data Sources

The primary data were collected from the selected undeveloped land owners where the study takes place, as well as the key informants (officials) of the study. The questions were organized in open and close-ended form, and developed and pretested in Amharic Language especially for interviewing the undeveloped land owners to clarify the idea.

2.6.9. Secondary Data Sources

The secondary data was collected through extensive reviewing of literature from different sources which includes books, archives, published and unpublished documents, municipality documents, land policies and strategies, working papers, seminar papers, journals, articles, magazines, base map of the city, and others related to undeveloped vacant urban land.

2.6.10. Data Analysis and Interpretation

In analyzing data, both qualitative and quantitative way of data analysis was employed depending on the nature of the data collected. The quantitative data was analyzed and interpreted by using percentage, tables, graphs, maps, plans, and satellite image, and narrative discussions. Whereas qualitative data were analyzed and interpreted using texts and photographs (plates).After checking the data collected from the town municipality, respective organizations and sampled household respondents', data matrix and correlation was prepared, coded and filled in to excel software.

III. Results

3.1. Data Analysis and Interpretation

3.1.1. General characteristics of respondents

The data collection was done in three kebeles from eleven kebeles of Wolayta Sodo town, as well as from key informants. Based on the Municipality data, the total land owners within 11 (eleven) kebeles with regard to the plots delivered are **15,457**. From the above 11 (eleven) kebeles, 3 (three) kebeles (Selam from Arada, Gido from Mehal and Fana from Merkato Sub Cites) were selected by using simple random sampling techniques for this research to represent the total population. Out of the total plots of land delivered, **3,695** (of these 708 from Selam, 1,261 from Gido and 1,726 from Fana Kebeles) included in 3 (three) selected kebeles. The survey was conducted via field survey observation based on the secondary information from municipality about the undeveloped land within the town. The study was also pre-tested by taking sampling depending on the municipal data to test its quality.

3.1.2. Response Rate

To obtain data regarding undeveloped vacant land and its socio-economic effects, the researcher has included two categories of respondents, these are, undeveloped vacant land owners and key informants who have adequate information related to the study. In this regard, field survey observation with interview was conducted from **93** undeveloped vacant land owners (respondents). Additionally, **12** key informants were interviewed on issues of the factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped vacant land and its socio-economic effects on the development of the town, as well as urban related challenges of land management.

Table: 4.1*; Response rate of the study*

Sample Kebeles	Total no. of Land Owners (plots) of each kebele	Total number of undeveloped vacant land (Sample size) of each kebele	Number of undeveloped vacant land owners interviewed	Response Rate of the each kebele (in %)
Selam	708	26	25	96.1
Gido	1,261	27	26	96.3
Fana	1,726	45	42	93.3
Total	**3,695**	**98**	**93**	**95**

Source: *field survey, 2018*

Out of the total **98** undeveloped vacant land owners (respondents), **93** land owners (respondents) are responded the interview, **3** land owners (respondents) are not presented and the other **2** are on which the municipality took measurement and returns back to the land bank recently due to the vacancy. Regarding the key informants, out of the total 12 key informants, **1** from SNNPR Urban Development and Construction Bureau Urban land development and management department, **1** from Investment Bureau, **1** from Business and Construction Bank, **1** from Commercial Bank of W/Sodo Branch, and **8** from Wolayta Sodo town administration and Municipality officials (1 town manager, and 1 town mayor, 6 officials) was interviewed acutely. Therefore, the response rate of the study is good enough for this study to harness the information vis-à-vis the study problem, and answer the research questions.

3.1.3. Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents

The demographic data concerning sex and age level of unit of analysis were gathered from the surveyed, as well as the socio-economic data concerning the income level and employment statuses of the respondents were gathered. The table below shows that the land owner's in relation with Sex, Age, income level, and employment status of the respondents.

***Table: 4.2**; Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents*

No	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	**Sex of the respondents**		
	Male	78	83.9
	Female	15	16.1
	Total	**93**	**100**
2	**Age of respondents**		
	15-30 years	8	8.6
	31-45 years	70	75.3
	Above 46 years	15	16.1
	Total	**93**	**100**
3	**Employment status**		
	Unemployed	3	3.2
	Self employee	47	50.5
	Government employee	34	36.6
	NGO employee	9	9.7
	Others	-	-
	Total	**93**	**100**
4	**Income level**		
	○ ≤500 ETB	9	9.7
	○ 501-1500 ETB	22	23.7
	○ 1501-2000 ETB	27	29.0
	○ ≥2001 ETB	35	37.6
	Total	**93**	**100**

***Source:** field survey, 2018*

Out of the total undeveloped vacant land owners (respondents), 83% was males and the remaining 16.1% was females**.** This sex composition had a significant indirect role of the study problem. The opinions of individuals were different in both sexes regarding undeveloped vacant land and its effects. As observed from the information provided by the respondents, the female respondents were female households with low income to develop the land so that this leads to the land undeveloped. Age level of respondents is also important in examining individual's opinion of the factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped vacant land and its socio-economic effects. The above table indicates that 8.6 % of respondents aged between 15-30 years old. The remaining 75.3% and 16.1% of respondents aged between 31-45 and over 45 years old respectively. This implies that more of the respondents have ability and responsibility to develop the land delivered because they are either head of the household or the land owner. Under the variable of employment status, the respondent's employment condition was identified and measured to support the study. The employment condition of the respondent's is an important socio-economic parameter. In this study, it is considered as an indicator of household's capacity to develop the delivered land efficiently and effectively. Based on the data gathered, out of the total respondents, 3.2% have no work, 50.5% are self-employee (daily laborers and traders), 36.6% are government employee, and 9.7% are NGO employee, as well as there is no respondents under the question of others. According to the data collected, out of the total, more than half of the respondents are the self-employee (daily laborers), and the government employee with the low income. This shows that employment status of the respondents' were contribute to the existence of undeveloped vacant land within the study area. The income of studied target population is also another important factor for this research, because income is a monetary value that signals individual's capability to develop the land. In accordance with the data collected, out of the total respondents, 9.7% under the category of income level ≤500 ETB, 23.7% are between the income levels of 501-1500 ETB, 29.0% are also between the income level of 1501-2000 ETB, and the remaining 37.6% are under the income level of ≥2001 ETB.Based on the raw data collected from field survey revealed that from the total response, only 37.6% land owners have monthly income greater than or equal to 2002 ETB, i.e. the owners that hold the land for commercial and other social land uses and the remaining 62.4% were under low income level and of which more than 95% land owners are the residential land owners. This implies that the income level of the individuals contributes to the existence of undeveloped vacant land within the study area, for instance, during the

interview time; the respondents responded that their income level is insufficient to develop the land.

3.2. General characteristics of undeveloped vacant land in the study area

3.2.1. Identification of the undeveloped vacant land

The secondary data of municipality shows, the undeveloped vacant land owners in the study area was identified in last year. According to the secondary data shows that there are approximately **83** plots, which are totally undeveloped within the study area, of these **21** plots are in Selam kebele, **22** plots are in Gido kebele, and **40** plots are in Fana kebele. Based on this information given by municipality, the researcher was pre-test field survey observation by taking the sample information to improve the study and then study was conducted to realize these information and to identify the research problem. With contrary to the above information the accurate numbers of undeveloped vacant land holders with in the study area were different from the date given by the municipality. The following table shows the accurate number of undeveloped vacant land in the study area out of the total land delivered by the municipality.

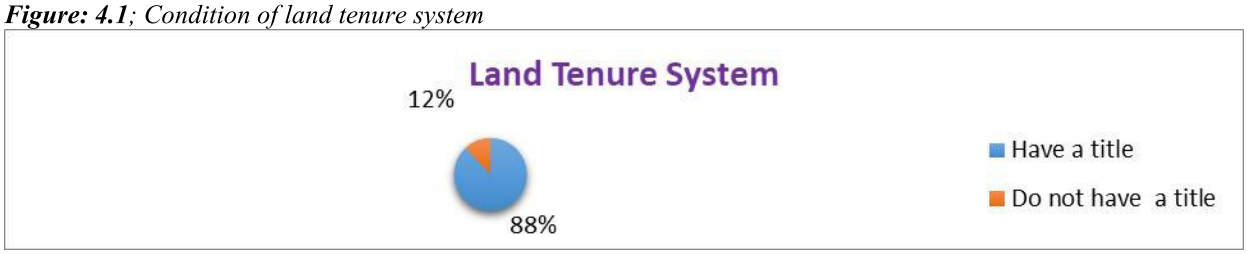
Table: 4.3*; Identification of undeveloped vacant land*

Sample Kebeles	Total no. of Land Owners (plots) of each kebele	Total number of undeveloped vacant land (Sample size) of each kebele
Selam	708	26
Gido	1,261	27
Wadu	1,726	45
Total	**3,695**	**98**

Source: *field survey, 2018*

According to the field survey, from the total land owners of the three kebeles (**3,695), 98** plots of lands (**26** plots from Selam Kebele, **27** plots from Gido kebele and the remaining **45** plots from Fana kebele) are assessed and identified as undeveloped vacant land within the study three kebeles. Therefore, the above figure shows from the total plots still delivered by the municipality, approximately 2.7% are undeveloped vacant land in the study area. This representation illustrates that there are also undeveloped vacant land exists within the other parts of the town. In other way, this implies that there is a great gap between the total plots identified by the municipality and the survey conducted by the researcher which was 15 plots of land and the government intervention regarding the issue is considered as at minimum level as well as, the municipality land information system is weak (there is no computerized land information system) to identify the exact number. In addition to that, the other most important thing that was considered by the researcher to assure the privately-owned and publically held undeveloped vacant land within the study area is the condition of land tenure. The following figure shows the condition of land tenure of the undeveloped land within the study area.

Figure: 4.1*; Condition of land tenure system*



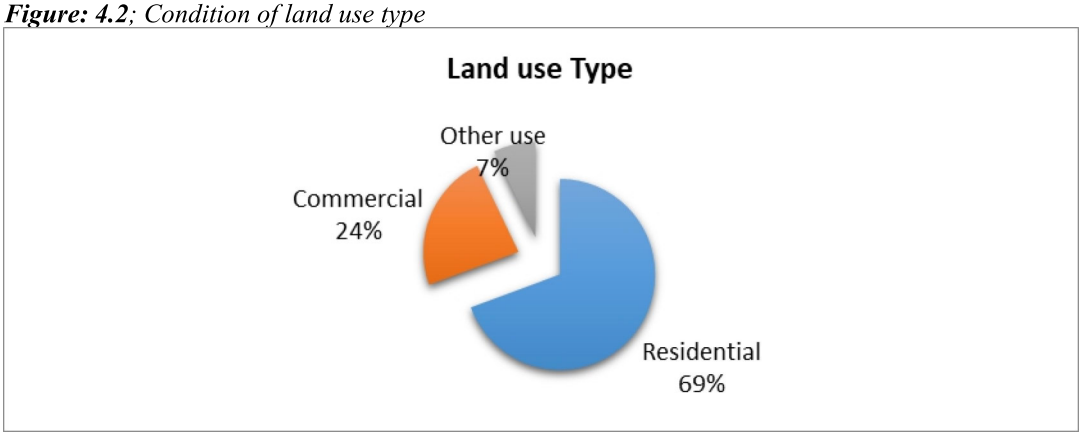
Source: *field survey, 2018*

According to the field survey, as shown in the above figure from the total undeveloped vacant land owners 82 (88.2%) undeveloped land holders have the title deed and the remaining 11 (11.8%) undeveloped land owners do not have title deed for their property, because of the following reason; such as the problem of building permit, municipality problem with regard to building permit, financial problems of the land owners and other problems. Therefore, this realizes the idea that the undeveloped vacant lands existing in the town are privately owned and public owned, which is provided by the municipality to be developed (82.2%), this means that the land owners have a right and responsibility to develop the land with regard to rules and regulations. The remaining plots those have no title deed and also the undeveloped vacant land in terms of the perception of land speculation.

3.2.2. Land use type and acquisition

The condition of the land use type is one of the most significant things to identify the factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped land and its socio-economic effects. The following figure show that the land use type of the undeveloped land within the study area.

***Figure: 4.2**; Condition of land use type*



***Source:** field survey, 2018*

According to the field survey, the total area of the these undeveloped plots under the study area is approximately about 43,400 m^2, out of the total undeveloped vacant 69% (68 plots) are the plots under residential use, 24% (23 plots) are plots under commercial use, and 7% (7plots) are plots that are under other social uses (the land under office use, the land under school use, and the land under other social use like Tele and youth center). This implies that there are different land use types of undeveloped vacant land within the town. Therefore, the study declares that more undeveloped vacant land within the study area is the land acquired for the residential purposes. The following plates shows that the undeveloped vacant land within the study area with respect to their land use type.

***Plate: 4.1**; Undeveloped residential land in the study area*

***Source:** field survey, 2018*

***Plate: 4.2**; Undeveloped commercial land in the study area*

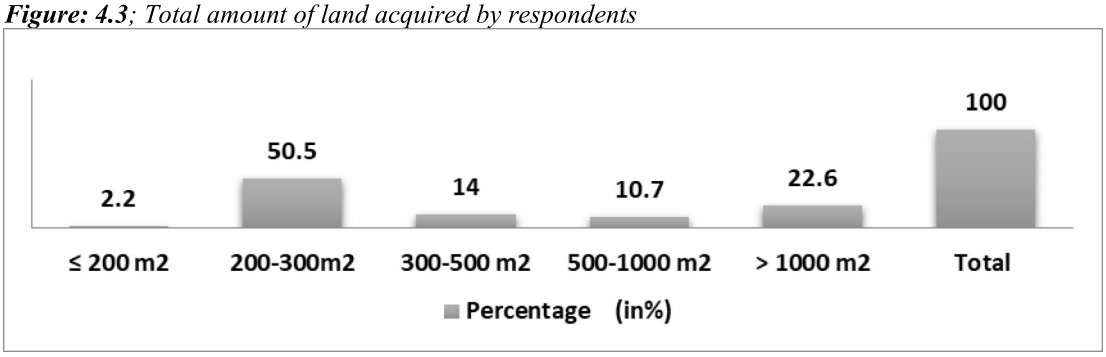
***Source:** field survey, 2018*

***Plate**: **4.3**; Undeveloped land for office and other social use*

***Source:** field survey, 2018*

The other most important things considered in this study was the total amount of land in m^2acquired by the respondents and the total amount used from totally delivered land, as well as the period of time acquired. Based on the data collected from the secondary source and the field survey information, the following figure provides the information about the total amount of land acquired by owners within the study area.

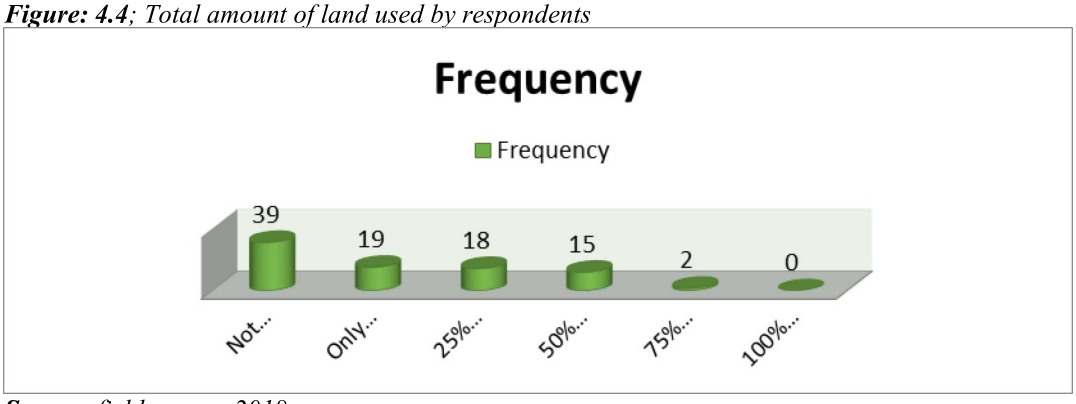
***Figure: 4.3**; Total amount of land acquired by respondents*



***Source:** field survey, 2018*

According to the data collected, 2.2 % (2) plots are ≤ 200 m^2 , 50.5% (47) plots are 200-300m^2, 14.0% (13) plots are 300-500 m^2, 10.7% (10) plots are 500-1000 m^2 and 22.6% (21) plots are > 1000 m^2out of the total plots respectively. This shows that most undeveloped plots were under small plot size holders. The finding reveled that different amounts of land considered as undeveloped vacant land within the town which has effects on the socio-economic development of the town with regard to the land development. This shows as the total area of land acquired by the respondents is approximately about 43,400 m^2. In relation to the total amount of land acquired by respondents, the total amount used by the undeveloped vacant lands owners is identified. In this regard, there are different categories of land acquisition within the study area out of the total land delivered. The following amounts of land identified by the field survey observation with surveyor and with respect to the municipality land use plan.

***Figure: 4.4**; Total amount of land used by respondents*



***Source:** field survey, 2018*

Regarding the above data, out of the total identified plots of undeveloped vacant land within the study area, 39 plots are not constructed at all, 19 plots have only fence, 18 plots of land owners are used only 25%, 12 plots of land owners used only 50%, and 2 plots of land owners used only 75% out of their total area. There is no plots of land owners used 100% of their land out of the total area of land within the study area with respect to the land use plan. As the response reveled from the municipality officials regarding the built-up area to plot ratio, there is

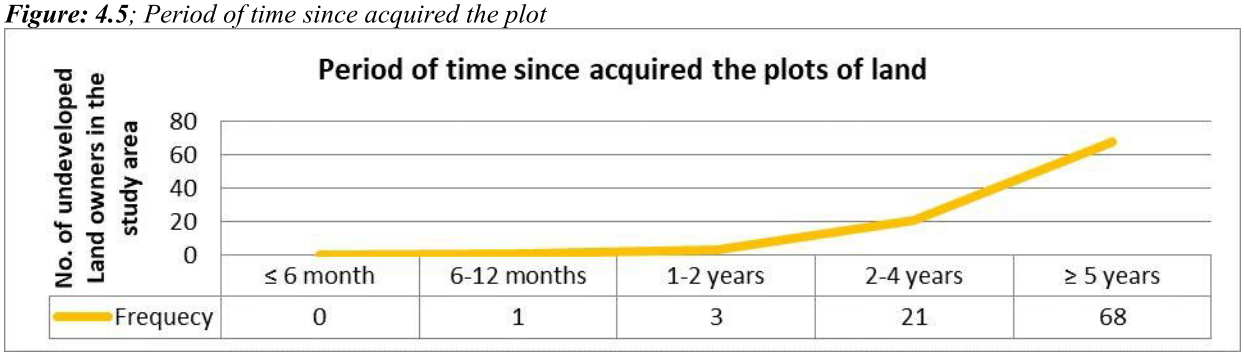
no standards of BAR, the building permit department use local trends as for residential plot about 60 % built-up area to plot ratio and the other land uses are as they like. From this analysis it can be summarized that almost all of them have not develop their plots and they kept the land idle without development. As we have seen in figure before, 82.2% of the land owners have a title deed and have tenure security to develop the land delivered. When we come to the condition of land acquisition, there is no plot of land utilized by the owner efficiently and effectively.In addition to that, according to the FDRE Urban Land Lease Proclamation no.721/2012 about the commencement and completion of construction of projects, the plots out of this proclamation (rules and regulation) are considered as the undeveloped vacant land and should returned back to the government. Therefore, these circumstances realize the existence of undeveloped vacant land within the study town. The following plates further illustrate the undeveloped vacant land that is not developed at all within the study area.

***Plate: 4.4**; Undeveloped vacant land not developed at all within the study area*

***Source:** field survey, 2018*

In addition to this, the period of time since acquiring the land delivered is significant to identify the undeveloped vacant land within the area. The following figure also describes that the period of time since acquired the land.

***Figure: 4.5**; Period of time since acquired the plot*



***Source:** field survey, 2018*

According to the secondary data and field survey study, the period of time since acquiring the land identified as, 73% (68 plots) of the total undeveloped plots of land hold for more than 5 (five years), and the remaining 22.6% (21 plots), 3.2% (3), and 1.1% (1) plots of undeveloped land held for 2-4 years, 1-2 years, and 6-12 months respectively. There is no plots of land held below 6 (six) months. This implies that the number of plots undeveloped for greater than 5 years are 68 plots and the others 25 plots are the plots undeveloped for less than or equal to 5 years. According to the FDRE Urban Land Lease Proclamation no.721/2012 about the completion of construction after the commencement described in Article (23) sub-article (4) as, generally that the total completion period may not exceed: two years and six months for small construction projects, four years for medium construction projects, and five years for large construction projects; where a lessee fails to complete construction within the time limit specified in the Article, the lease contract shall be terminated and the appropriate body shall take back the land. In addition to this, the building permit ordinances put the other advantages, i.e. even if, when the problems occur during the construction of projects regarding the completion of construction, the lessee should renew the building permit to finish the construction. Even though, as the findings shows that the data collected from the municipality, there was no questions raised by the undeveloped land holders regarding renew of building permit. In general, the maximum number of undeveloped land owners which is 73% in the study area were those the undeveloped land owners hold the plots of land for greater than 5 (five) years without development with contrary to above proclamation and building ordinances. The plate below shows that, the land stayed idle without development for more than 10 years and used as dumping site for the solid waste.

***Plate: 4.5**; Land used for solid waste within the study area*

***Source:** field survey, 2018*

IV. Conclusion

4.1. Findings and discussion

4.1.1. Factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped vacant land

As shown in this study review literature, different scholars noted that there are different factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped vacant land within the urban centers are; economic, social, regulatory or institutional, cultural, and but in some cases, neighborhood change, and changing preferences of residents. According to Goldstein, Jensen, and Reiskin (2001), the property values in the neighborhood change determined by the neighborhood decline. In some cases, property values fall so low and neighborhoods become so undesirable, that rental properties do not generate enough income for the owners to properly maintain them and cover their costs, let alone make a profit, thereby contributing to the further degeneration of the neighborhood in a various cycle of decline. Another contributor to land vacancy and abandonment in towns is relatively high property tax burden urban residents and businesses face. For instance, according to the WSTM report 2012, the unit of tax that the property owner pays for 1st grade residential area in m^2 is approximately equal to 0.97 birr. In this situation, the tax burden on the low income group contributes to leave vacant in relation with their income. Speculators buy land because they expect the price to go up in the future and wait the situation by holding land idle or with little development (Abay, 2005). In addition to that, scholars noted that the urban spaces is affected by government policies and regulations and by the actions of developers, financers, and other organizations and individuals who make up the real estate development (JAI Press INC, 2000). In other ways, weak implementation of the rules and regulations plays important role in the prevalence of undeveloped land (Goldstein, Jensen, and Reiskin, 2001).These the above factors are the major underlined factors in literature review. Therefore, the study was carried out to assure the idea that placed on the literature review in relation with the existing. According to the data collected, rather than the income level and employment status of the respondents, there are also other factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped vacant land in the study area. The following table shows that the major factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped land within the study tow.

***Table: 4.4**; Factors/causes of undeveloped vacant land*

Factors	Specific factors	Frequency	Percentage
Socio-economic factor	Poor financial capacity of the owners (low income group)	22	23.7
	Market instability (prices increase time to time about construction materials)	17	18.3
	Land reserved for future construction (land speculation)	13	14.0
	Property tax burden	10	10.7
	Urban decline and neighborhood change	3	3.2
	Poor provision of loan	6	6.5
Institutional factor	Bureaucracy and long procedure	5	5.4
	Weak legal enforcement of rules & weak implementation of rules and regulations	8	8.6
	Inadequate provision of infrastructure & services	4	4.3
	Zoning restrictions (land use plan change by government)	2	2.1
	Weak land registration and management system, land delivered without clearance, and one plot of land given for two persons	3	3.2
Total		93	100

***Source:** field survey, 2018*

Based on the data collected from the field survey, the followings are the major factors that cause the existence of undeveloped land on their plots of land. Out of the total respondents, 76.4% undeveloped land owners said that

the factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped vacant land in the study area is socio-economic factor including, inadequate financial capacity to develop the plots of land, reserve the land for future construction (land speculation), market instability regarding construction materials, property tax burden, urban decline and poor provision of loans. The remaining 23.6% responded that the institutional factor that contributes the existence of undeveloped vacant land within the study area such as; bureaucracy and long procedure of municipality in relation with building permission, inadequate provision of loans, zoning restrictions, weak legal enforcement and implementation of rules and regulations, and also others like land delivered without clearance and the site used as a garbage without land use plan. The plate below shows that the residential land reserved for the future construction and currently used as a local farm land within the urban center.

Plate: 4.6*; Land reserved for future construction within the study area*

Source*: field survey, 2018*

In general, the socio-economic and institutional causes are the major factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped land. Thus, the above findings pointed out the major factor which contributes to the undeveloped land within the town. Additionally, as the data obtained from the municipal officials' and other key informants, more than 81% of the respondents said that the perceptions of future price of land value increase (speculative perception), wants to transfer without development, financial capacity of the developer especially the low income group (people wants to held land without financial capacity), market instability with regard to construction materials are reveled as a socio-economic factor. In other way, the remaining 19% said that the institutional problems like; lack of strong rules and regulations with regard to building ordinances weak legal enforcement (weak follow up and monitoring mechanisms) by the building permit department, shortage of skilled man power and turnover of employees, inadequate provision of infrastructure and services (poor financial capacity of the municipality), poor integration with the providers of infrastructure and services like EEPCO and Tele, as well as with lower level implementers, poor land information and registration system, and, poor attitudes of the community about undeveloped vacant land towards the urban plan, allotment of provision of plots without infrastructure and services, disputes with the ex-owner of the provided land, preferences of the land by the community (as a source of wealth/income), and not cleared land was delivered to the investors are the most mentioned factors that observed by them. Accordingly, these factors are commonly observed both by the officials and the land owners. Therefore, the literature reviewed has a great correlation (strongly agreed) with the findings of the study regarding the factor that contributes the existence of undeveloped land in the study area. So that the finding realizes the literature reviewed and that was the main factors for the existence of undeveloped land in the study area.

4.1.2. Socio-economic effects of vacant land in the town

As discussed in the related review literature of this study different scholars agreed that the existence of undeveloped vacant land within the town has great effects on socio-economic development of cities and towns. Ogedngbe 2004, argued that government revenue is affected by non-development of such allocated plots of land owners of such vacant plots do not pay ground rent and Local governments too are deprived of tenement rates and later land use charge as economic effect. In addition to that, National Vacant Properties Campaign (2005), vacant properties reduce city tax revenues in three ways: they are often tax delinquent; their low value means they generate little in taxes; and they depress property values across an entire neighborhood. In addition, as a real estate values in a neighborhood drop, property owners become less willing and less able to maintain their property. As a neighborhood declines, rents inevitably drop as the neighborhood becomes less desirable (Goldstein, Jensen, and Reiskin, 2001). Properties generate less income, which makes it more difficult for land owners to maintain buildings and still make profit. Ogedngbe 2004 also argued the undeveloped plots of land usually serve as hideouts and unsightly scenes for hoodlums and criminals to perpetrate their nefarious activities and directly or indirectly affects the surrounding environment. In addition to that, vacant and abandoned property may attract the attention of neighborhood children, who may decide to use them as play areas, even though they are poorly maintained and may be unsafe. In this case, it may affect their health condition indirectly (Goldstein,

Jensen, and Reiskin, 2001). Based on these, the study was conducted in relation to the socio-economic effect that was come up with the existence of undeveloped land in the town. As the data collected from the respondents, the following effects are happened due to the existence of unutilized vacant land within the study area.

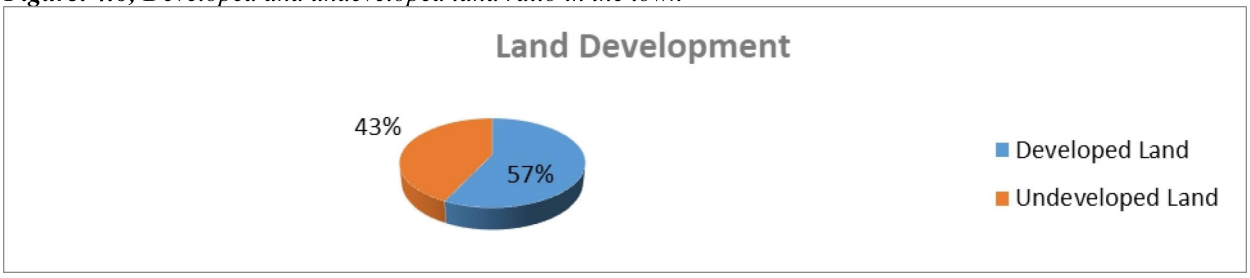
***Table: 4.5**; Socio-economic effects of undeveloped vacant land*

Effects	Specific effects	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Economic	Reduces revenue collection and reduces tax income	31	33.3
	Reduces infrastructure development	13	13.9
	Discourages the investments of town	11	11.8
	Reduces employment opportunity	8	8.6
	Reduce property value	4	4.3
Social	Conflict or boundary disputes	7	7.5
	Social crime(criminal activities like gangs and property criminals)	3	3.2
Environmental	Plan distortion	6	6.4
	Problems on human health	5	5.3
	Loss of aesthetic value of the town	3	3.2
	Sub urban sprawl (migration from the core and create informal settlement around the periphery)	2	2.1
Total		**93**	**100**

***Source:** field survey, 2018*

Generally, as shown in the table above, almost 72% of the respondents believed that the existence of undeveloped land in the study area affects the economic development of the town such as,it decreases the revenue of the town and lower the tax incomes of the town, reduces infrastructure development of the town, discourages the investments of the town, reduces the employment opportunity of the residents, reduces the property value of the plot as well as the near neighboring. Therefore, existence of undeveloped land in the town has a great effect on the economic development of the town. In other way, out of the total municipal officials, 75% believe that low revenue generation and collection has been seen as a result of undeveloped land. The evidences obtained from field observation and raw data taken from Report and Record Office of Wolayta Sodo Municipality and Revenue Office indicated that, from the year 2006 - 2010 plan to generate and collect revenue from the property tax was birr 43,342,982, while total revenue collected was 84.3%and revenue lost was 15.7% because of undeveloped land. In addition to that, the data gathered from the Wolayta Sodo Revenue Office indicated that, from the total plan in 2012 to collect the building property tax was birr 526, 655 and the total collected which is about 7.2% (37, 717). The condition is presented in the following figure.

***Figure: 4.6;** Developed and undeveloped land ratio in the town*



***Source:** WSTM Record and Report Office, 2002*

As indicated in the above figure, out of the total plots of land delivered by the municipality (43%) was not developed due to different reasons, it results low revenue generated from undeveloped sites as well as it has effects on socio-economic development of the town. Other than the economic effect, out of the total respondents, 11 % concluded that, the existence of undeveloped land within the study area affects the society including social crime boundary conflicts and other social conflicts like the center of gangs and property criminals as well as the living condition of the land owners and the community as a whole. Based on the data collected, from the total respondents, almost 17% revealed that the plan distortion, loss of aesthetic value of the town, urban sprawl and problems on human health are effects that has been happening due to the existence of undeveloped vacant land in the surrounding environment. Thus, the land used as a solid and liquid waste site and garbage dumped on it affects the health of the town dwellers especially children and elders. The following plate shows that the undeveloped vacant land around the residence area used for solid waste (garbage site).

Plate: 4.7*; Undeveloped vacant land within the study area affects the human health*

Source: *field survey, 2018*

Therefore, from this situation one can conclude that the existence of undeveloped land has effects on socio-economic and environmental development of the town directly or indirectly. The findings on the socio-economic effects of undeveloped vacant land in the town have a great correlation with the reviewed literature. Finally, the existence of undeveloped vacant land in the town affects the socio-economic development of the town.

4.1.3. Intervention made by the town administration or municipality

All the local governments needed to raise revenue from their resources and provide services for their community. If there is a vacant land within the town jurisdictions, the town government lost their income or revenue from that vacant land and also its value is affected by its availability, condition, demand, use potential (zoning), government subsidy, access, plans, and visions, prestige, symbolism, and social value. Therefore, the local government should give attention to manage their jurisdictions (Bowman and Pagano, 2004).According to the data collected from undeveloped land owners; more than 67% said that the intervention mechanisms were applied by the local government regarding their undeveloped plots of land and to develop it effectively. The intervention practiced by the town administration was giving warning letter to develop undeveloped land, supervision and monitoring sometimes on site, initiation, and provision of infrastructure and services and generally there is a progress to control the situation within the study area. In addition to the response collected from the land owners, the following information are provided by the municipal officials and other key informants, which includes timely monitoring and follow up mechanisms up to taking action by the government are somehow exercised, for instance, the local government had take action on two commercial undeveloped land owners up to retuned back to the municipality. The identification of undeveloped land owners and undeveloped land registration somehow exercised within the department of Cadastre work process and the land information system implementation process is on the way. The following plate show that the commercial site returned back to municipality (the intervention made by the municipality) due to the delay of development. The right side plate is the site in front of Wolayta Sodo secondary and preparatory school and the left one is the site around Wolayta Sodo University.

Plate: 4.8*; Undeveloped vacant land retuned back to municipality*

Source: *field survey, 2018*

Contrary to the above intervention made by the town government, there is a weakness of municipality such as; less attention was given by the municipality and town administration regarding undeveloped vacant land, weak land registration and management system, unwillingness to take the risk and poor structure to control and monitor the situation. Concluding that, the intervention made by the town government to control the prevalence of undeveloped vacant land within the study area is insufficient and still stand. Therefore, the local government and concerned body need to give attention to control and monitor the prevalence of undeveloped vacant land within study area.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

Urban land is crucial for sustainable development and modernization of the town. Therefore, it needs effective and efficient utilization. This study has discussed about the factor that contributes the existence of vacant land and its effects on socio-economic development of Wolayta Sodo town, as well as the government intervention regarding the efficient utilization of urban land. The data analyzed indicates the main factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped land in the study area characterized by socio-economic and institutional factors including poor financial capacity of the owners and the organization, inadequate provision of infrastructure and services by the municipality, market instability (prices increase time to time about construction materials),burden of property tax, land reserved for the future construction (land speculation), poor provision of loans, urban decline, weak legal enforcement as well as weak implementation of rules and regulations, boundary dispute, bureaucracy and long procedure of municipality with regard to building procedure and others. Due to the existence of undeveloped land within the town, there were effects on socio-economic and environmental development of the town such as, reduces infrastructure development, low revenue generation and collection, reduces the tax incomes, reduces property value, reduces employment opportunity of the town dwellers, disputes with the neighboring land holder, social crime, plan distortion, loss of aesthetic value of the area and health problems on town dwellers especially children and elders and finally reduces the overall socio-economic development of the town. In fact, in addition to the factors that contribute to the existence of undeveloped land and its socio-economic effects on the town development, the government intervention to control the situation was another important issue for urban development. According to the study, the intervention had been practiced by the town administration such as, by giving the warning letter to develop undeveloped land, by advising and initiating the developer, and provision of infrastructure and services, monitoring and follow up mechanisms up to taking action by the government are somehow exercised, for instance, the local government had taken action on two commercial undeveloped land owners up to retuned back the land to the municipality. The identification of undeveloped land owners and undeveloped land registration system, land banking and other systems are on the progress. Some of the respondents mentioned as, attention given by the municipality were less to take measurement, and unwillingness to take the risk and poor structure to control and monitor the situation as a whole. Therefore, in order to make urban land utilization efficient and effective, as well as to overcome undeveloped vacant land problems that have effect on socio-economic and environmental development of the town, it is suggested by the researcher that the town government should implement the following recommendations.

5.2. Recommendations

Vacant land is an integral element for town development and has great potential for large-scale developments that could result in improved conditions for urban areas, as well as reduced social polarization and greater equity for their populations. The reuse and use of undeveloped vacant land is a great government role in land markets in combination with institution-building and capacity-building among involved actors (Land Lines 2002). In relation with that, in most of developing countries talk about the vacant land and its characteristics are not easily reached. Based on conclusions drawn from the finding and results of the study, the existence of undeveloped vacant land within the town has a great socio-economic and environmental impact on the study town. In fact, the prevalence of undeveloped vacant land needs to be controlled by the participation of local government and community. Therefore, it is necessary to forward studious recommendations for mitigations and minimizations of the serious multiple impact of unutilized land in context of the town. In these regards, Wolayta Sodo town administration and key stakeholders required to consider points recommended as means of dealing with the undeveloped vacant land impacts to maintain the social, economic, and environmental development of the town and the wellbeing of the town dwellers through attainment of sustainable economic development in sustainable urbanization of the town. In general, the local government needs to apply and implement rules and regulations with regard to undeveloped vacant land that was identified in Ethiopian Building proclamation No 624/2009.Finally, based on the findings and literature reviewed, the researcher has come up with the following recommendations, and each point is addressed by recommended interventions below. The possible interventions recommended by the researcher to ensure an efficient use of urban land in the study area are:

5.2.1. Improving Land Information and registration system

Even if land information management is an integral part for urban development in the town, there was no clear land information system that helps to identify the number and sites of land that are delivered to different individuals for different purposes. Due to financial and technical constrains many records exist about land and property rights are often stored manually in file. This institutional deficiency has created a ground to hold land idle for a longer period of time without development. By so doing, the multiple ripple effects such as increase in revenue generation, effective and efficient utilization of land were not applied; and for-gone and increasing land holding without development were practiced. Therefore, the town administration advised to establish an efficient

and effective land information system by using modern technologies to tackle the problems. In other words, without a proper updated cadastral maps and land registry system, it is difficult to have clear picture about land development in the town. The local government needed to assess the existing system, improve the institutional set up to carry out land registration in collaboration with the community, and develop an efficient land registration. The recording system has to be up dated regularly. Secondly, there must be a clear identification and delimitation of land parcels, complete and accurate cadastral maps that shows boundaries, areas, and other relevant data. Thus, it is advised to be an efficient system of land registration and titling system in a way that it supports land and property taxation, provides security of credit, reduces land speculation and disputes, increases infrastructure development and finally utilize urban land in efficient manner.

5.2.2. Increases the sources of income and provision of loans

Low level of income of the residents is the major factor to contribute the existence of undeveloped vacant land in the town, thus, the local government needed to improve the sources of income of land holders especially low income groups by exercising saving strategy in relation to develop land. The local government and credit providers needed to provide the loan to develop the land and expand the involvement of private sectors and financial institutions such as Banks and other financial institutions as well as neighborhood organizations.

5.2.3. Improve infrastructure development

The infrastructure and services is a significant ingredient to develop urban land within their jurisdiction. Roads, electricity, water, telephone services and other services are supposed to provide by the government and community and the local government needs to provide infrastructure and services before the delivery of land to develop. Local government should provide the developed land for developers.

5.2.4. Legal enforcement

The local government should apply rules and regulations regarding the construction of buildings, close loopholes to those speculators such as brokers, speculative investors, and officials. Since, undeveloped lands have negative impacts on the town development; the municipal land administration department should control the expansion and take corrective action on existing undeveloped land holders. Combat illegal grabbing of land, levy tax on vacant land that are not developed, and enforce laws, rules, and regulation to control the situation. Furthermore, financial institutions that provide loan to different land developers need to be consulted and made development partners in financing developmental entrepreneurs instead of idle speculators that try to accumulate wealth by dispossession rather than production. The actions should be taken by the government on the land holder those holds land undeveloped.

5.2.5. Continuous monitoring and evaluation

As we have seen the findings, there is weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and activities practiced by the municipality regarding the situation. Because of unstructured standards and weak structures to control the situation, there is difficult to monitor and follow up the prevalence of undeveloped vacant land in the town. Therefore, after the agreement that has made between government and developers to develop the land, there should be continuous monitoring and evaluation activities by setting standards and identifying developed and undeveloped land. The concerned department within the municipality should follow up and supervise the situation to control.

5.2.6. Infill development and undeveloped vacant land surveyor inventory

Infill development is the important mechanism to utilize the undeveloped vacant land in the town through developing as it is. As observed in the field survey, most land owners have outsized undeveloped vacant land within town limits, which, for various reasons, has been concerned in the normal course of urbanization, and also underutilized land within the built up areas of existing communities, where infrastructure is already in place. Thus, local government is advised to implement infill development strategy by identifying a number of parcels that are either undeveloped or underutilized land and then create filled parcels as well as improving the access to the infrastructure and services on the site. To do this, government needed to set the basic guidelines to help direct public policy regarding infill development. So, the researcher recommends that infill development is the important strategy to develop undeveloped vacant land within the built urban centers to use their resource efficiently. In relation to infill development, the vacant land survey and inventory is also important preconditions to develop undeveloped vacant land.

5.2.7. Levying Tax on Vacant Land

Taxes on undeveloped or underutilized vacant land are a potentially strong and direct instrument to discourage land holding and speculation, especially if rated accordingly to the data of acquisition and the degree of underutilization. Sufficient revenue capacity helps department to recruit professionals and skilled manpower, to have required materials like computers and GPS. Therefore, the Municipality should find different revenue sources through increasing the revenue from the lands and property like rental fee, annual tax, building tax, vacant land tax, and regular collection of revenue through creating awareness in the community. This mechanism is good to control the prevalence of undeveloped vacant land within the town.

5.2.8. Developing Innovative Implementation Strategy

Even if the lease policy allows individuals to secure as much land as their investment requires, the strategic objective of effectively curbing land speculation has not been attained. This is presumed to have adversely eroded the effectiveness of urban land policy. Therefore, the Federal, Regional, and local government land development and management sector have to design, develop and execute an innovative implementation strategy to control the prevalence of undeveloped land. The sector needed to give on job training to strengthen the technical and managerial skill of land administration officers and create awareness through media and other systems regarding the urban land and land related issues for the community. Finally, the local government needed to strictly implement the planning tools those are exercised in the study area like master plan (structural plan) and local development plan to eradicate the miss utilization of urban land. Conclusively the above recommendation are not expected to be implemented by a single sector or organization alone, it requires pulling of resources and active participation of quite a lot of organizations from the government, private sectors, NGO's and other stakeholders who have stake in the promotion of urban good governance and capacity buildings and special focus for urban development in particular.

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