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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY STUDIES



Research Title: Challenges Affecting the Reintegration of war induced displaced returnees in the Case of Alamata city 04 kebele Tigray: Ethiopia.

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Mekelle, Ethiopia

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/GLOSSARY

AU	African union
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EDF	Eritrean DE fence Force
EHRC	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
ENDF	Ethiopian National DE fence Force
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
HoF	House of Federation
HoPR	House of Peoples’ Representative
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JIT	Joint Investigation Team
NDRMC	National Disaster and Risk Management Commission
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
EPP	Ethiopian prosperity party
PSNP	Productive Safety-Net Programmer
TPLF	Tigray People’s Liberation Front
TRJB	Tigray Regional Justice Bureau
TSF	Tigray Special Forces
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programmed

Abstract

This study investigates the profound problem of systemic reintegration failure among returning populations in Alamata, who confront a compounded crisis of economic devastation, social stigmatization, and psychological trauma. Situated within the context of post-conflict Northern Ethiopia, where political and ethnic strife cited by 86.6% of respondents precipitated mass displacement. The core purpose of this inquiry is to deconstruct the multifaceted challenges of reintegration and critically evaluate the efficacy of existing interventions. To this end, the study's objectives are threefold: to identify the socio-economic and psychological difficulties faced by returnees, to evaluate current reintegration programs and community-based initiatives, and to examine the modulating effects of ethnicity and gender. The research, delineated by its scope to the Alamata returnee community, adopts a mixed-method methodology, leveraging both descriptive and narrative approaches through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, FGDs, and field observations. The findings reveal a stark landscape: formal reintegration mechanisms are critically ineffective (mean score 1.64), economic reintegration is crippled by asset loss and aid dependency, and the nascent promise of community-led initiatives (mean score 2.56) is jeopardized by resource and institutional deficits, with vulnerabilities acutely exacerbated for single mothers and educated women. In response, the study culminates in targeted recommendations for policymakers, advocating for a coordinated, multi-sectorial framework that prioritizes sustainable livelihood programs, integrates psychosocial support and social reconciliation, and formally institutionalizes support for community-based structures and vulnerable groups to forge a path toward sustainable reintegration.

Keywords: *Challenges; Reintegration; War-Induced; Displaced Returnees; Post-Conflict Recovery.*

UNIT ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The study investigated the obstacles to the reintegration of returnees who were displaced by war. The term "displacement" describes the forcible removal of people or groups from their homes as a result of violence, conflict, or war. Conversely, those who had been displaced and had gone back to their home country were known as returnees [UNCHR, 2021]. One of the most significant human mobility experiences has been internal displacement, which has an effect on the displaced individuals as well as the host community they relocated to and even the local population (Ordain & Diamanté, 2021). By the end of 2019, there were about 45.7 million internally displaced people worldwide, according to a World Bank report from 2021.

Around 45.7 million people were internally displaced globally by the end of 2019 as a result of political, criminal, communal, and armed conflict violence. Armed conflicts, jihadist attacks, and intercommunal violence are the main causes of internal displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa, which has been one of the most affected regions (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center 2020).

Due to conflict and violence, Ethiopia saw 5.38 million forced internal displacements in 2021, "the highest figure ever for a single country" (IDMC, 2022a:1; 2022b:30), with women and children suffering the most. More than 4.6 million people were displaced by force in 2022 (IDMC and NRC, 2023). Additionally, there were "1.66 million IDP returnees."

in Ethiopia between march and April 2022, excluding the Tigray region (IOM, 2022a). (see Shine, 2021).

In 2021, war was the major driver of internal displacement in Ethiopia, uprooting more than 5.1 million people – 80% of the total number of IDPs (IDMC, 2022a). Historically, from the 1960s to the 1990s, Ethiopia witnessed large-scale conflicts and wars. Furthermore, numerous local conflicts, mostly over land and other natural resources, and low-intensity insurgencies (especially in Oromo and the Somali Region) have continued over most of the last three decades.

In November 2020, tensions between the federal government and the TPLF escalated into a full-scale war in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The war resulted in significant human suffering, with reports of widespread violence, displacement, and shortages of food, water, and medical supplies. The international community expressed deep concern over the situation and called for a peaceful resolution to the war

(EHRC report, 2021). The full-scale war between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has had a devastating impact on the people of Tigray, particularly in terms of economic, social, conditions. (Ibid)

Economic conditions: The conflict had disrupted trade and transportation networks, leading to shortages of essential goods and services in Tigray. Many businesses were forced to be closed, and infrastructure were damaged or destroyed, hindering economic activities. The war also led to a significant decline in agricultural production, which was the mainstay of the Tigray region's economy. This resulted in food insecurity and malnutrition among the population.

Social conditions: The war caused immense suffering among the people of Tigray, with reports of widespread war, displacement, and human rights abuses. Many families separated, and there were incidents of ethnic targeting and discrimination. The war also strained social cohesion and trust between different ethnic groups in the region.

Displacement conditions: The war led to a massive displacement of people, both within Tigray and across the border into neighboring Sudan. According to the United Nations, more than 2 million people displaced by the war with many facing dire conditions, including a lack of access to food, water, shelter, and healthcare. The displacement placed a significant strain on host communities in Sudan and exacerbated existing humanitarian challenges in the region.

November 2022 the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) signed a peace agreement in the South Africa city of Pretoria, facilitated by the African Union (AU). The peace agreement had several key provisions, including: Ceasefire, Withdrawal of forces, Political dialogue, and Humanitarian access for all people of the region and reintegration of the returnees IDPs.

The benefits of the peace agreement for the people of Tigray were significant. By ending the war, the agreement had the potential to bring an end to the suffering and displacement caused by the war.

After the peace agreement between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), facilitated by the African Union (AU), there had been efforts to re-displace people who were previously forced to flee their homes due to the conflict in Tigray.

The re-displacement process had several challenges, including Safety and security concerns, Access to basic services, infrastructure and housing, political and social tensions, the underlying political and social

tensions that led to the war in Tigray have not yet been fully resolved, which could make it difficult for people to return home and rebuild their lives in a safe and stable environment.

Despite these challenges, there had been some positive developments in the re-displacement process. The Ethiopian government and international organizations, such as the United Nations, had been working to provide support and assistance to displaced people, including food aid, shelter, and healthcare.

Additionally, there had been efforts to promote dialogue and reconciliation between different ethnic groups in Tigray, which could help to address the underlying political and social tensions that led to the conflict and make it easier for people to return home safely and securely.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

War-induced displacement has become a pervasive issue in many regions of the world, resulting in the displacement of millions of individuals from their homes and livelihoods (Mohamed. *et al.*, 2021). The ongoing conflicts in various parts of Ethiopia had led to the displacement of numerous individuals, resulting in significant socio-economic challenges for both the displaced populations and the host communities. Reintegrating these war-induced returnees into their home communities was crucial for sustainable peace and development. However, the process of reintegration often faced numerous obstacles, including limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient support from both government and non-governmental organizations (Vaughan & Misfit, 2020). The reintegration of the returned individuals as a result of a peace agreement was a crucial aspect of post-war reconstruction and reconciliation. It involved the process of reintegrating individuals who had been displaced or forced to leave their homes due to the war, and who returned as part of a peace agreement (Ibid)..

The reintegration process aimed to ensure that the returned individuals would be able to reintegrate into their communities and societies in a sustainable and peaceful manner. This process involved various aspects, including providing access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and employment opportunities, as well as addressing the psychosocial needs of the returned individuals. The reintegration process also aimed to promote social cohesion and reconciliation by fostering dialogue and understanding between the returned individuals and the host communities. This could be achieved through community-based initiatives, such as community meetings, cultural events, and joint projects (OUCHO, 1996).

The success of the reintegration process was crucial for the overall stability and peace building efforts in post-war societies. It was important for the peace agreement to include provisions for the reintegration of

the returned individuals, and for the relevant authorities to take concrete steps to implement these provisions. According to the above assumptions the researcher chose reintegration.

Alamata town, 04 kebele is located in the South Tigray Zone of Ethiopia, had been selected as the case study for this research due to several reasons. Firstly, Alamata is located in proximity to the researcher's home and was accessible to transportation to easily collect the necessary data. Additionally, the towns tended to be multi-lingual; multi-ethnic residents and Alamata is one of the elements which led to the war issue that was solved during the peace agreement in Pretoria. And it had the opportunity to collect data and assess the security conditions for both returnees and host communities (Ibid, 1996).

Furthermore, Alamata has four kebele (sub-districts), namely 01, 02, 03, and 04. Kebele 04 was specifically chosen as the focus of this study due to its large population size, ethnic and religious diversity and its status as a hub for various communities to organize actions and initiatives. By studying the reintegration process in Kebele 04, this research aimed to provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for successful reintegration in Alamata town and beyond.

This study addresses a critical research gap in understanding the unique reintegration challenges faced by war-displaced returnees specifically in Alamata's Kebele 04, Tigray. While existing studies have explored various dimensions of displacement and reintegration in Ethiopia, most of the research has primarily focused on development-induced displacement. For instance, Demeke Sultan (2019), Mitiku Gebrehiwot & Yusuf Bashan (2021) examined the socio-economic and cultural impacts of displacement resulting from infrastructure and industrial projects. This study emphasizes challenges such as land disposition, disrupted livelihoods, and weakened community ties. The above researchers and others mainly focused on development-induced internal displacement. However, Maru Gebreyohannes (2007) studied that inter-ethnic violence and armed conflict are the main drivers of internal displacement in Ethiopia, especially in the Gambela and Somalia regions. The government response has been inadequate due to the absence of clear national policy and weak institutional conditions. Similarly, Sarah (2003) found that Ethiopia's ethnic federalism system has intensified inter-ethnic tension, fueling political violence that contributed to internal displacement, especially in the southern nations, Oromia and Somalia regions. By politicizing ethnic identity and competition for local power and resources, Yanas (2022) finds that ethnic federalism and state fragility in Ethiopia have created a political economy that drives conflict and displacement, as competition over identity-based power and resources fuels instability and forced migration. The three researchers' cases mentioned in the preceding paragraph have similarities with this research, but the difference is that their studies were at a national level and on cases which had been happening for a long time and exacerbated gradually in the federal system, but this

study is focused on a small local community-Alamata 04 kebele, aimed to investigate how political problem and ethnic tension fractured the bond which held society together to live peacefully for ages. While broader studies exist on post-conflict reintegration in Tigray, three significant knowledge gaps remain unaddressed for this particular locale. First, the complex ethnic tensions between Amhara and Tigrians returnees in Kebele 04 was a latest phenomenon which has never happened and not been thoroughly examined, particularly regarding political dispute and the absence of effective conflict resolution mechanisms. Second, the devastating impact of the war on Kebele 04's social and economy matters lack detailed study, especially concerning returnees' access to land, long –term support, credit systems and sustainable livelihood opportunities. Therefore to fill the gap mentioned, this thesis focuses on localized that is on Alamata 04 kebele as a grassroots or model to overview the situation of the whole Alamata city than focusing on a national bases and it has focused on political and ethnic tension arises recently and which created socially fractured society and it has focus on ethnic tension arise recently and which created socially fractured society.

1.3. Research Objective

This research has both general and specific objectives

1.3.1. General objectives.

The general objective of this research was to analyze the challenges affecting the Reintegration of war induced displaced returnees in the Case of Alamata city 04 kebele Tigray: Ethiopia

1.3.2. Specific Objectives:

This research also had the following specific research objectives

1. To explore the displaced individual's choices of destination and the experiences they had during displacement.
2. To explore the potential of community approaches and the role of government and NGOs in supporting and facilitating the holistic reintegration process.
3. To analyze the specific political, economic, social, and psychological barriers that impede the sustainable reintegration of internally displaced persons and returnees in post-conflict settings.

1.4. Research questions

To meet the above objectives, this research also had the following specific research questions that must be answered

1. What were the primary factors influencing the displacement of returnees, their destination choices and the experiences they had during displacement?
2. What were the potential of community – approaches, and the role of government and NGOs in supporting and facilitating the holistic reintegration process?

3. What are the specific political, economic, social, and psychological barriers to reintegration?

1.5. Significance of the study

The significance of this study lied in its contribution to understanding the profound and multifaceted impacts of internal displacement in Ethiopia, a country that has experienced one of the highest rates of forced displacement in recent years. The consequences of internal displacement extended far beyond the immediate displacement of individuals; they rippled through affected communities, disrupted local economies, exacerbated political instability, and strained resources within host communities. With over 5.1 million Ethiopians forcibly displaced in 2021 alone, the urgency of addressing the root causes, current realities, and long-term effects of displacement had never been greater. This study offered vital insights into these dynamics, specifically within the context of Ethiopia's complex socio-political landscape and its historical experiences with war and conflict.

In Ethiopia, a country with a history of both large-scale wars and protracted local conflicts, the issue of internal displacement remains critical. Understanding the nature and extent of these displacements driven by factors such as war, armed conflict, political instability, and communal violence allowed for more effective policy responses. A clear understanding of displacement dynamics was essential for humanitarian agencies, national governments, and international organizations to design and implement more targeted interventions that address the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and their host communities. Furthermore, by identifying the particular vulnerabilities of women, children, and other marginalized groups, the study highlighted areas that require specific attention to reduce the gendered and age-specific consequences of displacement.

Moreover, this study was of paramount importance given the current and ongoing displacement in Ethiopia, particularly in light of the Tigray war, which displaced millions of people. This war continued to shape not only the displacement trends in the country but also the political, social, and economic landscape. By examining the interplay between war, ethnic tensions, and resource distribution in Ethiopia, this research helped inform war resolution and peace-building efforts aimed at mitigating further displacement.

In a broader sense, this study contributed to the growing body of literature on internal displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa. By focusing on Ethiopia, a country that sited at the intersection of political instability, economic challenges, and humanitarian crises, this research provided a unique case study that offered lessons for other countries in the region and beyond. The insights gained can serve as a foundation for future studies and policy advocacy to address the long-term impacts of internal displacement and provided pathways for durable solutions that would ensure the well-being and resilience of both displaced populations and host communities.

Ultimately, the significance of this study lied in its potential to inform the design of more inclusive, sustainable, and compassionate strategies for addressing internal displacement, fostering peaceful coexistence, and promoting human rights and dignity for all affected populations.

1.6. Scope of the Study:

This study focused on war-induced returnees in South Tigray Zone Alamata, Ethiopia. The research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, challenges, and perceptions of returnees regarding the reintegration process in this specific context.

The study did not attempt to cover the broader implications of war-induced displacement and reintegration in Ethiopia or other countries. The research was limited to the specific case study of South Tigray Zone Alamata and did not aim to make generalizable conclusions or recommendations for other contexts.

The study did not attempt to cover all aspects of the reintegration process, such as the psychological and emotional well-being of returnees or the role of international organizations in supporting reintegration efforts. The research focused on the practical challenges and opportunities faced by war-induced returnees in accessing basic services, livelihood opportunities, and social support networks in their home communities.

In the scope of my study, I took specific steps to address the challenges faced by war induced displaced returnees .I conducted thorough research and analyzed various factors affecting their reintegration My approach involved understanding the unique circumstances and needs of these individuals as well as the broader context of the city's situation. Specially, I examined the socio-economic conditions, available support systems, and community dynamics.

Additionally, I focused on kebele 04 as a model to illustrate the specific challenges and potential solutions in a particular community setting. By taking these steps, I examined to provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges and potential solutions for facilitating the successful reintegration of the Alamata war induced displaced returnees.

By focusing on the specific context of South Tigray Zone Alamata, this study provided valuable insights and recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working in the field of displacement and reintegration.

1.7. Limitation of the Study:

One notable limitation of this study was its reliance on self-reported data, which would be subjected to recall bias or social desirability bias, potentially affecting the accuracy and honesty of participant responses. Additionally, the sample size was relatively small and would not be representative of the broader population, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Selection bias could also be presented if participants who chose to take part in the study differ systematically from those who did not, further influencing the validity of the results.

During the process of collecting information and gathering data for the research on the challenges of war – induced displaced returnees, I encountered several issues. One significant problem was that some individuals were hesitant to share their experiences or opinions in the questionnaire or interviews. This reluctance could be due to fear of judgment privacy concern or potential repercussions from sharing sensitive information. To address this issue, I implemented several strategies .First; I assured the participants that their response would be anonymous and that their identities would be protected to encourage open and honest sharing of their experiences. Second, I emphasized the importance of confidentiality and explained that their responses would only be used for research purposes, ensuring that their privacy would be respected. Third, I took time to build trust with the participants by explaining the purpose of the research and how it would contribute to understanding and improving the reintegration process for war – induced displaced returnees Fourth, I made it clear that participation was voluntary and that they could choose not to answer any question they felt uncomfortable with,

Finally, I created a supportive and nonjudgmental environment during interviews, allowing participants to feel safe in expressing their thoughts and experiences .By implementing these strategies ,I was able to mitigate the issue of participants‘ reluctance to share their ideas and successfully collect valuable data for my research.

1.8. Organization of the paper

The thesis is organized into five chapters. The introductory part contains a general topical overview of the study and the problem needed to be added and the data gathering tools. Addressed and to be discussed and clarify what purpose imitated the research. Chapter two provided the review of related literatures and the theoretical frame work of challenges affecting the processes reintegration of returnees‘ .Chapter three provides the research methodology by outlining the description of the study area, research approaches and design and the data gathering tools. Chapter four is outlining the presentation and data interpretation part about the challenges affecting the reintegration of conflict induced displaced returnees. Returnees. The final chapter is chapter five, it finalizing the paper by forwarding conclusion and gusted recommendation.

UNIT -TWO

2. REVIEW RELATED CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL LITERATURE

2.1. CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK USED TO ANALYSE WAR INDUCED DISPLACED RETURNEES

2.1.1. TSF-ENDF war

On 3 November 2020, the Tigray Special Forces (TSF) and allied militia attacked the Northern Command of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) and to take control of the bases and the weaponry. On 4 November 2020, the federal government announced a military operation against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and its forces. The ENDF, the Amahara Special Forces (ASF) and allied militia, and the Eritrean defiance Forces (EDF) accordingly started a military offensive against the TSF and allied militia in Tigray. The violent conflict resulted in serious violations of international human rights law, humanitarian, and refugee law. (Pankhurst, A., Dessalegn, etal...)

2.1.2. Attack on civilians and civilian objects:

The ENDF, EDF, and TSF, carried out attacks on civilians resulting in the deaths of and injuries to men, women, boys, and girls. Civilian objects which enjoy special protection under international humanitarian law such as health facilities, schools, places of worship, and houses were indiscriminately attacked. Parties to the conflict failed to take sufficient precautions to protect civilians and civilian objects. ENDF and TSF occupied and used civilian infrastructure, such as schools and health facilities without appropriate justification for military usage. Twenty-nine civilians were killed in Mekele due to shelling by the ENDF on 28 November 2020; 15 civilians were killed between 9 and 11 November 2020 in Humeral due to artillery shells fired by the EDF and TSF; between 25 and 27 November 2020 an undisclosed number of civilians died in Work due to exchange of artillery fire between the ENDF and TSF, and several private and public property were damaged; a rocket fired by the TSF destroyed a farmer's home in the Amahara region 140 km from Gondar Airport (Danish Refugee report, 2020).

2.1.3. Forced displacement of the civilian population:

Hundreds of thousands of civilians fled their homes in Tigray, at different intervals. The Tigray population, in particular, was significantly affected by the forced displacement in Western Tigray. The forced displacement of ethnic Amaras from their homes by the Samir youth group with the support of the local administration in Maiandra in November 2020 was followed by widespread retaliatory forcible displacements of ethnic Tigrians mainly in Western Tigray by ASF, Amahara militia, and Fano. The forced displacements were committed on a broad scale and without lawful justification. The displacement caused

by different groups has also exacerbated the existing tensions between mainly Tigrians and Amaras in areas where they once lived together, and which might prove to be a challenge in efforts to return IDPs in safety to their previous residence (UNHCR, 2020).

2.2. Internally displaced persons (IDPs):

IDPs have not been provided with adequate food, nutrition, water, healthcare, sanitation, and hygiene. In Mekele, the local community provided 70% of the food for IDPs due to the gap in food provision from the State and other actors. The shortage of food particularly in Gondar, Dab at, and Dansha was serious, resulting in the deaths of one lactating mother and three children due to malnutrition and lack of healthcare in a camp in Gondar. IDPs in Mekele remained in a situation of fear due to sudden raids and arrests by the ENDF, which occurred in Shire in May 2021. IDPs in Mekele, Gondar, and Dab at also did not have proper personal identification documents that would allow them to move freely or find work. (IOM, 2020).

2.2.1. Restrictions on freedom of movement:

The multiple roadblocks and check points and excessive measures taken by ENDF and EDF in enforcing the curfew that have in some instances resulted in the death of civilians and obstructed the movement of people and essential goods raises serious questions as to their justification and proportionality. The failure of government authorities to issue identification cards to IDPs and the refusal of security and immigration officials at Addis Ababa International Airport to allow some Tigrians to leave the country and in some instances the confiscation of their travel documents without any explanation, justification and due process also appears motivated by discrimination and is disproportionate and unjustified (Alexion, 2021)

2.2.2. Freedom of expression and access to information:

Civilians were unable to seek, receive and impart information because phones and internet communications were cut off in Tigray following the start of the conflict. The communication interruption may have been justified until the expiry of the state of emergency, but the continued disconnection is a violation of the right to freedom of expression and access to information. The killing of journalist Dewitt Kebele on 19 January 2021 by the ENDF in Mekele constitutes a violation of the right to freedom of expression and amounts to unlawful killing.(Muhammad, A. A., Sites, E., Alex ion, and etal...2021).

2.2.2.1. Denial of access to humanitarian relief:

Impediments or delays in humanitarian assistance were attributed to active conflict, lack of functional local administrative bodies for coordination, and lack of cooperation by ENDF and EDF at checkpoints including confiscation of medication. Tigray forces were also implicated in setting up road blockades delaying delivery of humanitarian relief. The conflict further had a direct bearing on the operations of humanitarian organizations following the killings of over 20 humanitarian workers. While the JIT could not confirm deliberate or willful denial of humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in Tigray or the use of starvation as a weapon of war, the JIT recognizes the need for further investigation on alleged violations related to denial of access to humanitarian relief and killings of humanitarian workers (OCHA report 2021).

2.2.2.2. Economic, social, and cultural rights:

The enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights including the rights to health, adequate food and water and sanitation, as well as access to basic services such as electricity and banking services, was seriously undermined as a direct result of the actions of the parties to the conflict or indirectly as a result of failures to take measures to mitigate the impact of the conflict on civilian services and objects. Looting and destruction of health facilities in all parts of Tigray by parties to the conflict had a direct impact on the right to health of the civilian population. The war resulted in damage to water, telecommunications, electricity, and banking infrastructure. (Pankhurst and Piquet, 2020)

2.2.2.3. Resettlement, Violence, and Re-Displacement

Resettlement has been pursued as state policy to mitigate drought, famine, food insecurity and capacitating household livelihoods in the country for nearly four decades (Vaughan and Mesfin, 2020). ‘

2.2.2.4. Integration, Relocation and Return

Beyond immediate humanitarian responses, as per the Kampala Convention, IDPs should be allowed _to make a free and informed choice‘ on the options that guarantee their safe return, their integration locally, or their relocation (African Union, 2009). According to Principle 6(3) of the UN Guiding Principles,

‘[displacement shall not last longer than required by the circumstances]’ (UNCHR, 1998). For instance, in most of the cases, IDPs are hosted in public buildings, mainly schools converted into IDP camps, which are unsuitable accommodations (Dessalegn, 2022) and negatively affect the host communities’ children’s access to educational services, as per the DSI expert interview.

Therefore, each of the three options for IDPs- to return to their place of origin, integrate locally or settle in inter-regional or intraregional state settlements - should be made available through identifying the right settlement areas, sustainable livelihood systems and ensuring peaceful coexistence with the host communities. Once displaced or re-displaced, IDPs tend to prefer to return to their place of origin. However, it may be difficult due to ‘livelihood loss, destruction of [productive] assets, or continuing insecurity’ (Muhammad et al., 2021). Furthermore, as Alex ion et al. argued ‘[when IDPs arrive at their destination, their previous livelihoods may now be much less feasible than before]’ (2021). For instance, for those Somali IDPs who were ‘displaced from highly fertile areas in Oromia region’, it would be difficult to get the same ecological setting in Somali region (Muhumed et al., 2021:2). In most cases, loss of income as a result of internal displacement occurs. IDPs may eventually be able to find new income-generating activities in their host area, but this takes time. A survey conducted with 156 IDPs in Liaanmo, Gode woreda of Somali region of Ethiopia in 2021 showed that while 42% were able to continue the same source of livelihood, 47% lost their earnings and became unemployed, and the remaining 11% were forced to change their source of earnings (Cazabat and Yasukawa, 2021:8). Durable solutions require household-based, tailored interventions to improve livelihoods. One pathway to a durable solution relies on local integration. In Ethiopia, depending on the regional states and the communities involved in hosting the IDPs, reactions to local integration vary. For instance, as documented in the Somali region, some host communities have been welcoming and have provided full support for people displaced from Oromia and Afar regions, as they shared their concerns, notwithstanding long-term local resource sharing challenges (Muhammad et al., 2021). Experts interviewed said the top priority of the Ethiopian government is return, though concerns have been raised by civil society organizations about the preconditions for facilitating such processes. Indeed, as mentioned at the beginning of this report based on IOM-Ethiopia’s

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) ‘there were an estimated 1.66 million returning IDPs (399,750 households)’ in Ethiopia-mainly to their places of origin (2022a).

Given the ceasefire agreement signed in Pretoria last November, IDPs in Tigray, Afar and Amahara regional states are expected to return to their pre-conflict homes. Despite the fact the IDPs need durable solutions; the government should ensure such places of return are safe and free from inter-ethnic conflicts.

In respect of the government's actions to date, policy has been least successful where it involved 'premature returns to areas where root causes of initial displacement are not addressed' (UNHCR et al., 2020). Despite the eminent life-threatening risk posed to IDPs, in some instances, government officials have used unnecessary pressure to return them to their places of origin, as confirmed by the key informants. As a consequence of such involuntary measures, 15,000 Gideon returnee IDPs fled West Guji, Oromia region again in December 2019 (Gardner, 2019). Furthermore, one interviewee suggested the government refrain from withdrawing humanitarian assistance for IDPs' involuntary returns.

As the review of Muhamud et al. in three locations in the Somali region-Tuliguled, Goljano and Adadle districts reveals, the main challenges of the DSI have been in providing adequate financial support and access to fertile arable land for IDPs to make.

2.3. Theoretical frame work used to analyze the challenges that affect re-integration

Theoretical frame work is a set of concepts that guide a research study. It provides a lens through which the researcher views the topic of study and helps to shape the research questions, methodology, and analysis. The importance of a theoretical frame work in the research ,it provides a foundation for research by offering perspective from which to view the topic of study[Kaplan and Manners,2016] Guiding the methodology[Creswell,2014] ,helping to interpret the result[Neuman,2011],providing a basis for comparison[Yin,2018],and enhancing the credibility of the research[Gibbs,2013]

With regard to this the researcher incorporated four theories in this study. These are internal displacement theory, social capital theory, and livelihood theory.

2.3.1. Internal displacement theory

Internal displacement theory refers to the forced displacement of people with in their own country due to armed conflict, violence, or persecution. This theory is based on the idea that people have the right to live in peace and security with in their own country ,and that they should not be forced to flee from their homes due to war, ,violence or persecution[UNHCR,2019] . The internal displacement theory is important because it recognizes that people who are not refugees, and they should be treated with dignity and respect, and should have access to the same rights and protections as other members of society IDP international, 2020:

Conflict-induced displacement refers to the forced or involuntary movement of individuals or groups from their homes of origin due to conflict or violence. Displacement can be caused by various factors such as armed conflict, political instability, ethnic or religious tensions, and natural disasters. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are over 26 million displaced persons

worldwide, with the majority being children (UNHCR, 2020). Displacement can have severe consequences on individuals and communities, including loss of livelihoods, social networks, and access to basic services such as education and healthcare.

Conflict:

Conflict refers to the use of force or violence to achieve political, economic, or social objectives. Conflict can take various forms, including interstate conflicts, intrastate conflicts, and non-state actor conflicts. Conflict can have devastating consequences on individuals and communities, including loss of lives, displacement, destruction of infrastructure, and disruption of social and economic systems. According to a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), conflict can also have long-term impacts on human development, including reduced access to education, healthcare, and basic services (UNDP, 2016).

Returnees

Returnees refer to individuals who have returned to their places of origin after being displaced due to conflict or violence. Returnees may face various challenges upon their return, including limited access to basic services, lack of employment opportunities, and social exclusion.

According to a study by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), effective reintegration programs can help reduce the risk of recidivism and promote social cohesion and stability in post-conflict societies (IRC, 2018).

Type of Returnees:

There are different types of returnees, including voluntary returnees, involuntary returnees, and spontaneous returnees. Voluntary returnees are those who choose to return to their places of origin out of their own free will, returnees are those who are forced to return due to external factors such as lack of legal alternatives. Spontaneous returnees are those who return to their places of origin without any external assistance or intervention. According to a study by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the needs and challenges faced by different types of returnees can vary significantly (MC, 2017).

Peace Agreement:

A peace agreement refers to a formal agreement between conflicting parties to end hostilities and establish a framework for peace and reconciliation. Peace agreements can include various provisions such as ceasefires, disarmament, power-sharing arrangements, and truth and reconciliation commissions. According to a study by the International Peace Institute (IPI), the success agreements depends on various factors such as the level of trust and cooperation between conflicting parties, the involvement of civil society, and the availability of resources for implementation and monitoring (IPI, 2019).

Peace building:

Peace building refers to the process of promoting and sustaining peace in post-conflict societies. Peace building can involve various activities such as conflict resolution and mediation,, social cohesion and reconciliation, and economic recovery and development. According to a report by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), peace building is essential for achieving sustainable development and ensuring lasting peace and stability in post-conflict societies (SDGs, 2019).

Social, Economic and Political Sustainability of the Returnees:

The social, economic, and political sustainability of conflict-induced returnees is crucial for their successful reintegration into their communities and societies. Social sustainability involves ensuring that returnees have access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and social protection. Economic sustainability involves creating employment opportunities and promoting entrepreneurship among returnees. Political sustainability involves ensuring that returnees have a voice in decision-making processes and are actively involved in the peace building and reconstruction efforts in their communities. According to a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO), sustainable reintegration programs can contribute to long-term peace and stability by promoting inclusive growth, social cohesion, and sustainable development (ILO, 2018).

2.3.2. Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework provides a holistic way of understanding how displaced populations and returnees rebuild their lives after war. It emphasizes access to five key forms of capital: human, social, natural, financial, and physical. In the context of war-induced displacement, returnees often lose access to these capitals. Reintegration, therefore, requires rebuilding livelihoods through access to land, employment, education, healthcare, and social networks. The SLF allows policymakers and

researchers to assess how returnees adapt, the constraints they face, and the types of interventions needed to support their long-term sustainability.[WFP2006]

2.3.3. Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory focuses on the value of social relationships, trust, and networks in enabling individuals to access resources and integrate into communities. For war-induced returnees, reintegration is often shaped by the presence or absence of social capital. If war has weakened or destroyed community trust, ethnic harmony, or traditional institutions, returnees may face exclusion or discrimination. This theory helps explain how the breakdown of social bonds during war impacts reintegration, and how rebuilding trust and cohesion is essential for long-term peace and coexistence. Putnam,[2000]

2.3.4. The Push-Pull-Mooring (PPM) Model

Originally developed to analyze migration decisions, the Push-Pull-Mooring Model can be adapted to explain war-induced displacement and return dynamics. Push factors include war, violence, and insecurity that force individuals to flee. Pull factors involve the perceived benefits of returning—such as land recovery, peace agreements, or economic opportunities. Mooring factors refer to the social, psychological, and logistical obstacles or supports that affect the decision to return or stay displaced. This framework is particularly useful in analyzing voluntary versus involuntary return and the effectiveness of reintegration programs in post-war settings [.Hilborn,2001]

2.4. Reintegration of war induced displaced returnees

War –induced displaced returnees refers to individuals who have been forced to flee their homes due to armed conflict or violence and subsequently return to their place of origin The reintegration of these returnees is a critical issue that requires careful planning and support to ensure their successful return and reestablishment in their communities UNHR,[2021] The concept of war induced displaced returnees and their reintegration involves several key aspects First ,it requires addressing the immediate needs of the returnees ,such as providing shelter ,food, and access to basic services . THIS is crucial to ensure their immediate safety and well-being upon their return [IOM, 2019]. Secondly ,it involves facilitating the physical and psychological recovery of the returnees, as they may have experienced trauma loss during their displacement, This may include providing access to mental health services , counseling and support networks{UNICEF,2018}.Another important aspect of the reintegration of war induced displaced returnees is the restoration of their livelihoods. This may involve providing access to employment opportunities

,vocational training, and resources to restart their businesses or ,agricultural activities [WORLD BANK 2017] Additionally, It is essential to address property or land issues that may have arisen during their displacement ,such as the loss or destruction of homes or assets{UNHCCR,2020}.Finally, the reintegration of war- induced displaced returnees requires a comprehensive approach that involves the active participation of the returnees themselves , as well as local communities, governments, and international organizations. This may include of the community-based reintegration programs, the provision of social services, and the development of policies and strategies that support the long –term integration of the returnees in to their communities [UNDP<2019] .By addressing these key aspects, the reintegration of war induced displaced returnees can be facilitated, ultimately contributing to the restoration of peace, stability, and sustainable development in the affected areas.

After the act of individual migrants return, the returnee begins the process of readjustment and reintegration in the country of origin begins. UNHCR defines reintegration as "equated with the achievement of a sustainable return - in other words the ability of returning migrants to secure the economic, social, and political conditions needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity" (UNHCR 2004). Further, "reintegration is a process that should result in the disappearance of differences in legal rights and duties between returnees and their compatriots and the equal access of returnees to services, productive assets and opportunities" (UNHCR 2004, cited from IOM, 2015, p.14).

Reintegration is a communal process that affects all members of the community as locals and returnees seek to reintegrate together. Moreover, the different aspects of reintegration require different processes and will occur over different periods of time, which makes the process of reintegration additionally difficult to guide and support. This leads to an important distinction between short-term and long-term reintegration. The reintegration process differs for each individual, but there is a large discrepancy between the short-term goals of meeting basic needs (food, water, shelter or clothing) and the longer-term goals of self-sufficiency, sustainable employment and community cohesion. Typically, reintegration assistance is provided for a maximum of up to three years, at which time returnee s are expected to be reintegrated into their communities (Rogge, 1994, p. 34).

In generally, reintegration of return migrants has been addressed by researchers in various disciplines, giving rise to a diversified and growing literature, especially since 2000 (Carling et al. 2011). Reintegration is a broad concept, made up of several dimensions. It can refer to economic, social and psychological aspects, and can be studied from the subjective point of view of returnees or through objective criteria. In this paper, the individual, community and structural factors that affecting reintegration of the returnees are

analyzed through their perception and based on dimensions of economic reintegration, social reintegration, and psychosocial reintegration about their situation of reintegration.

2.4.1. Categories of reintegration

Categories of reintegration have their implications on the result of successful or unsuccessful (returnees reintegration will sustainable or not). The reintegration process can be divided into four categories: economic, social, cultural, and political reintegration (Cassarino, 2007).

Economic reintegration: refers to the level of well-being perceived by individuals. This is assessed in financial terms, and refers to the sufficiency and stability of income, housing, access to employment and dependency vis-à-vis the family or other people.

Social reintegration: (IOM, 2011) defined as "the reinsertion of a migrant into the social structures of his or her country of origin. This includes on the one hand the development of a personal network (friends, relatives, neighbors) and on the other hand the development of civil society structures (associations, self-help groups and other organizations)" (IOM 2011, 82). That means the community of return (original community or new community); support structures available to returnee (both at the familial and the community levels); participation in local organizations or groups (such as church organizations, like Iqub, Iddir, Mahber, Youth Association, Women's Association, Tabya organizations, or returnee network supports etc); children's access to education; and cultural maintenance and acceptance.

Psychosocial reintegration: refers to psychological well-being, the way return migrants view the society of origin, how the population perceives them, and their access to social networks;

Cultural reintegration; the cultural aspect, in the context of return migration refers to the "re- adoption on the part of the sets the reintegration into three aspects, cultural, ecological and social returning migrant of the values, way of living, language, moral principles, ideology, and traditions of the country of origin's society" (IOM, 2011, p.82).

Political reintegration; refers to the establishment of citizenship (if citizenship would be changed) and rights in the country of return, including the ability to participate in local elections and judicial processes.

2.4.2. Access to livelihood and Reintegration

Livelihood refers to the means by which individuals or households earn a living and support themselves and their families. It comprises a range of activities and resources that provides the necessary income and subsistence for a decent standard of living [Chen, 1989]. Livelihood indicators are measures that help assess the well-being and stability of individuals or communities. These indicators can vary depending on the specific context and focus of the assessment, but some common indicators include income levels, employment status, access to basic services, and asset ownership. By examining these indicators, policy makers and organizations can better understand the livelihood challenges faced by different populations and development targeted interventions to improve their economic and social conditions.).

Table 1: Livelihood indicators on reintegration of war induced displaced returnees

Indicators	Description
Income	The amount of money earned by individual or house hold, typically measured on a monthly or annual basis
Employment	The type and stability of work. Including whether an individual is employed, self – employed, or unemployed.
Access to Basic services	Availability and affordability of essential services such as health care, education, and clean water.
Asset ownership	The ownership of valuable resources, such as land. property ,or financial asses that can provide long-term economic security
Food security	The ability to access sufficient, safe ,and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and maintain an active and healthy life
Social protection	The presence of social safety nets, such as unemployment benefits, pensions ,or health care coverage, that provide financial support during time if need
Education	The level of education attained by individuals ,which can impact their employment opportunities and earning potential
Housing	The quality and stability of living conditions, including access to adequate shelter and basic amenities

Source [own survey,2024]

2.5. Empirical Studies on Reintegration of war-induced returnees

War-induced displacement often results in significant challenges for returnees as they attempt to reintegrate into their communities. One of the primary obstacles is the destruction of infrastructure and livelihoods, which can leave returnees without access to basic services such as housing, health and education (UNHCR 2019). Additionally, the psychological trauma experienced during displacement can hinder integration, as returnees may struggle with anxiety, depression and a loss of identity (Bruce, 2016). These factors create a complex environment in which returnees must navigate physical and emotional barriers to build their lives.

Another major challenge is the lack of legal recognition and protection for returnees. Many war-induced displaced returnees face difficulties in reestablishing their legal status, which can prevent them from accessing essential services or participating in community activities (Harson 2017). This legal uncertainty can also lead to vulnerability as returnees may be at risk of re-displacement or exploitation by armed groups. Furthermore, the absence of clear policies and support systems can exacerbate the difficulties faced by returnees in reintegration into their communities.

The social and cultural aspects of reintegration also pose significant challenges. Returnees may find themselves isolated from their communities due to challenges in social structures, the presence of conflict-related trauma, or the stigma associated with being a returnee (Bryce, 2016). In some cases, returnees may face discrimination or exclusion from local institutions, which can further hinder their ability to rebuild their lives. This social barrier highlights the need for community-based approaches that promote inclusion and reconciliation.

To address these challenges, it is essential to develop comprehensive reintegration strategies that include both immediate relief and long-term development. Research emphasizes the importance of involving returnees in decision-making processes and providing them with access to education, employment opportunities, and psychological support (UNHCR, 2019).

By addressing the multifaceted challenges of reintegration, communities can support returnees in rebuilding their lives and contributing to the overall recovery of their places of origins.

Furthermore, one of the key challenges in the reintegration of war-induced returnees is the disruption of social networks and community ties during displacement. Returnees often lose contact with family, friends, and local institutions, which are crucial for social support and economic participation (Bryce, 2016). The absence of these networks can lead to feelings of isolation and marginalization, making it difficult for

returnees to rebuild their lives. Moreover, the trauma of conflict can create generational gaps, as younger returnees may struggle to reconnect with their elders or traditional community structures, further complicating the reintegration process.

Another significant challenge is the lack of access to education and health care for returnees, particularly for children and women. In post-war settings, schools and health facilities may be damaged or underfunded, limiting the ability of returnees to access essential services (UNHCR, 2019). This not only affects the immediate well-being of returnees but also hinders long-term development and stability in their communities. Without proper education and health care, returnees may struggle to reintegrate into the formal economy or participate in community rebuilding efforts.

The economic challenges faced by returnees are also deeply intertwined with the broader economic context of their host communities. In many cases, returnees may find themselves competing with local populations for limited resources, leading to tensions and exclusions (Hassar, 2017). Additionally, the absence of formal employment opportunities or access to credit can prevent returnees from starting businesses or engaging in productive activities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and vulnerability. These economic barriers can make reintegration not just difficult, but nearly impossible for many returnees.

Finally, empirical studies on the challenges of political reintegration highlight the complex interplay of historical, social, economic, and institutional factors that hinder the process of restoring political unity among divided societies. Historical grievances, lack of trust between former adversaries, and disparities in economic development often exacerbate the difficulties of reintegration. [Smith, 2018] Additionally, the presence of entrenched political elites, weak institutional frameworks, and the legacy of conflict can further complicate efforts to establish inclusive political systems [Johnson and Lee, 2020]. These studies underscore the necessity of comprehensive strategies that address both the structural and cultural dimensions of reintegration, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, reconciliation, and inclusive governance in fostering long-term political cohesion [Brown, 2019].

Similarly, one of the most persistent challenges in the reintegration of returnees is the issue of trauma and mental health. Many returnees suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety due to their experiences in conflict zones (Bryce, 2016). These psychological effects can hinder their ability to engage in daily activities, build relationships, or participate in community life. Without access to mental health services, returnees may struggle to recover from the emotional scars of displacement, making reintegration a long and arduous process. This underscores the need for integrated mental health support systems in post-war recovery efforts.

Notably, another critical challenge is the lack of trust between returnees and local communities. In some cases returnees may be viewed with suspicion or hostility by the local population, especially if they are perceived as outsiders or a threat to local resources or stability (Hasson, 2017). This distrust or if their return is seen as a threat to local can lead to social exclusion, discrimination, or even violence against returnees, further complicating their reintegration. Building trust requires not only policy intervention but also grassroots efforts to promote reconciliation and mutual understanding between returnees and host communities.

Additionally, Empirical research on the reintegration of war induced displaced returnees has increasingly focused on the role of community-based intervention in facilitating successful reintegration. A study by Smith and colleagues [2018] conducted in post-conflict regions of Syria and Iraq found that community-led initiatives, such as local reconciliation programs and peer support groups significantly improve the psychological well-being and social integration of returnees. The study emphasized that when returnees are supported by their communities; they are more likely to rebuild their lives and contribute to local development. This highlights the importance of community engagement in reintegration efforts, as it fosters a sense of belonging and reduces stigma associated with returnees' status. Furthermore, a mixed methods study by Patel and colleagues [2020] examined the reintegration of returnees from the conflict in Myanmar and found that access to formal employment and vocational training was a crucial factor in long-term reintegration. The study revealed that returnees who have access to job training programs were more likely to find stable employment and reintegrate into the labor market. However, the study also noted that many returnees faced discrimination in the job market due to their past experiences in conflict zones. These findings underscore the need for targeted employment support and anti-discrimination policies to ensure that returnees can access economic opportunities and achieve long-term stability. Additionally, empirical research has also highlighted the role of gender in the reintegration of returnees, particularly in conflict-affected regions. A study by Johnson and colleagues [2019] in a post-conflict setting in South Sudan found that women returnees often face additional challenges, including gender-based violence, limited access to education and social exclusion. The study emphasized that gender-sensitive reintegration programs are essential to address the unique needs of women and ensure their full participation in community life. The findings suggest that reintegration strategies must be tailored to the specific needs of different gender groups to promote equitable and sustainable reintegration.

A recent empirical study by the International Rescue Committee [IRC], [2021] analyzed the reintegration of returnees from the conflict in Ukraine and found that access to mental health services was a key determinant of successful reintegration. The study revealed that returnees who had access to trauma –

informed and counseling were more likely to recover from conflict related trauma and reintegration in to their communities . The research also highlighted the importance of culturally sensitive mental health interventions as returnees from backgrounds may have varying needs and responses to trauma. These findings reinforce the need for integrated mental health support in reintegration programs to address the long- term psychological effects of war.

Another key challenges in the reintegration of returnees is the of cultural dislocation many returns come from communities that have been disrupted by war, and they may find themselves in environments that are un familiar, with different social norms languages, and economic systems (UNHCR, 2019). This cultural dislocation to feelings of alienation and difficulty in adopting to new social structures. In some cases, returns may struggle to find employment or access services because they lack the cultural capital or social connections needed to navigate the new environment

Addressing cultural dislocation requires not only language and education support but also efforts to preserve and promote the cultural identity of returns.

Furthermore the impact of displacement on children returnees is another critical area that needs attention. Many returns are children who have been deported from their families during displacement and their reintegration can be particularly challenging, these children may suffer from trauma, lack of education, or have difficulty forming relationships with peers (Harson, 2017) in some "Cases, returnees may not be able to return with their Children, leading to long-term deportation and emotional distress. Reintegration efforts must prioritize the need of children including access to education, psychological support, and family reunification programs.

Furthermore, one of the emerging challenges in the reintegration of returnees to the impact of misinformation and propaganda in post-war environment. In some places, returnees may be exposed to false narratives about their home communities leading to Stigma, discrimination, or even violence Misinformation can be spread by local authorities' media or ever return groups themselves, creating a cycle of distrust and fear (Bryce, 2016)

Addressing this requires media literacy programs. Fact-checking initiatives and community-based Communication strategies that promote accurate and inclusive narratives about returnees and their communities.

Another important Consideration in the role of economic instability in reintegration process many returns return to areas where the local economy has been severely disrupted. By war, leading unemployment, poverty, and limited access to basic services in some cases returns may find themselves in a situation where

they are unable to Support their families, leading to a cycle of poverty that hinders long-term reintegration (UNHCR, 2019) Economic development programs, microfinance Initiatives, and job training are essential to help returnees rebuild their livelihoods and contribute to the local economy.

Similarly, the role of education in the reintegration of returnees is another critical area of focus. Many returnees. Especially children may have been displaced before they completed their education, leading to gaps in learning and long-term disadvantages. In post-War Settings rebuilding schools, providing access to education, and offering vocational training are essential for ensuring that returnees can reintegrate into society and Contribute to the future of their communities (Hasson,2017) Education also plays a key role in promoting Social cohesion and reducing the risk of future Conflict

Additionally, one of the key factors in successful reintegration is the presence of community support system. Returnees often rely support of local communities to rebuild their lives, but in many post. War Settings, Communities may be hesitant or fear the returnees due to past experiences of violence or displacement,

Building trust between returnees and local communities is essential, and this can be achieved through community engagement programs, cultural exchange initiatives. And local leadership that includes reforms in decision-making processes (UNHCR, 2019) without this support returnees may struggle to find housing, employment, or social acceptance. In addition, long-term implication of reintegration on peace building and stability in post-War Societies. Cannot be ignored. Successful reintegration of returnees can contribute to social cohesion, economic development and long-term peace. However if reintegration is not managed effectively it can lead to renewed conflict. Marginalization or even the re-emergence of violence, therefore reintegration strategies must be part of a broader peace building agenda that includes dialog ng reconciliation. And inclusive governance. Ensuring that returnees are not only physically returned but also socially and politically integrated is the key to building lasting peace (UNHCR, 2019)

Lastly, the importance of legal and policy frame works in supporting returnees cannot be overstated. Many returns face legal barriers that prevent them from accessing land, housing or employment, In some cases, returnees may be denied the right to return due to legal restrictions or lack of documentation (Bryce, 2016) Strengthening legal frame works that protect the rights of returnees, ensuring access to justice and promoting inclusive policies are essential for creating an environment where returnees can thrive and Contributing to their communities

UNIT-THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Description of the Study area

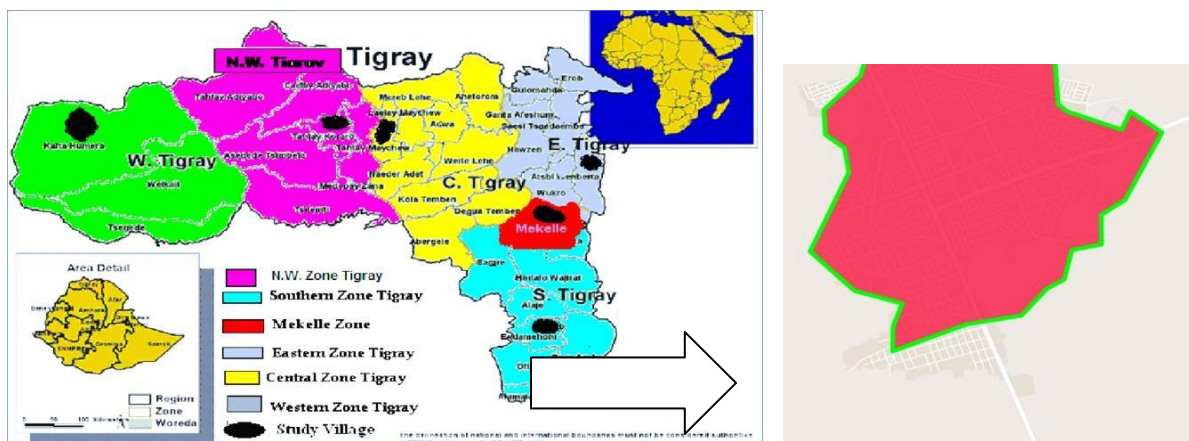
Alamata is a town located in the Southern Tigray region of Ethiopia, sitting at coordinates approximately 13.15° N latitude and 39.25° E longitude. It serves as the administrative center of the Alamata district and lies about 600 km north of Addis Ababa and 100 km south of Mekele, the capital of Tigray. The town is situated at an elevation of roughly 1,400 meters above sea level, surrounded by hilly and mountainous terrain. The landscape is characterized by dry riverbeds, rocky outcrops, and terraced hillsides that support agriculture. Alamata experiences a semi-arid climate, with hot, dry seasons from March to June and a rainy season from July to September. Based on population projection documents, the town's population is approximately 70,441 (male 35,737, female 34,704), predominantly from the Tigrians ethnic group, though there are also smaller communities of Amahara, Afar, and Oromo people. The primary language spoken is Tigrinya, while Amharic is also widely used. Alamata. (2025, April 5) population projection document.

The economy of Alamata is mainly agricultural, with the fertile land supporting to grow crops like teff, wheat, maize, sorghum, and vegetables. The town serves as a trade hub, with a local market attracting people from surrounding rural areas for the exchange of goods such as livestock, agricultural products, and crafts. While agriculture is the main source of livelihood, the region faces challenges such as water scarcity, soil erosion, and food insecurity, particularly during dry spells. Social infrastructure includes healthcare facilities like a primary hospital and local clinics, though healthcare access can be limited. Education is also an important aspect of community life, with primary and secondary schools available, though students seeking higher education often travel to larger cities like Mekele or Addis Ababa. Alamata's transportation system is well-connected by road, though rural areas can be difficult to access during the rainy season. Alamata. (2025, April 5) population projection document.

Alamata's people are primarily followers of Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, with the faith deeply embedded in the community's social and cultural practices. There are also small Muslim communities, though Orthodox Christianity remains the dominant religion. Environmental challenges such as deforestation, soil erosion, and the impacts of climate change have affected the area's agricultural productivity and overall sustainability. Despite these challenges, Alamata remains a hub of cultural and economic activity, with a strong sense of community that blends traditional practices with modern development needs. Understanding the topographical, social, and

economic conditions of Alamata offers

valuable insights into rural life in the Horn of Africa, especially in the context of climate change and regional development. Alamata. (2025, April 5) population projection document.



3.2. Research Design and approach

3.2.1. Research design

The researcher has used the cross-sectional survey design because of its simplicity to guide sample survey'. In cross-sectional survey design that involves collecting data from a sample of participants at a single point in time. This type of research is often used to examine the relationships between variables at particular point in time, and to identify patterns and trends within a population. Cross-sectional research can be conducted using a variety of data collection methods, including survey interview, and observation. One of the main advantages of cross-sectional research is its relative simplicity and cost effectiveness, as it does not require the researcher to follow participants over an extended period of time. However, cross-sectional research has some limitations as it does not allow for the examination of changes over time or the establishment of causal relationships. [Creswell, 2014, p. 45]

Notably, the researcher chose that sample survey [questionnaire] is helpful to understand the challenges affecting reintegration process of the war-induced displaced returnees of 04 kebele in Alamata, Tigray Ethiopia, with their families, neighbors, and with their communities.

On the other hand, the qualitative research allows the researcher for a more in-depth exploration of the topic or phenomenon, it involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data such as words and images and observations. This enables the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity and nuances of the subject which is being studied. In line to this, the researcher included the qualitative research to describe the opportunities and problems of the challenges affecting reintegration process.

through interpretation approaches.

3.2.2. Research Approach

This research employed a mixed-method combining both quantitative and qualitative data. The study was conducted in South Tigray Zone Alamata, Ethiopia, and involved the following methodology: Qualitative research provides detailed and nuanced insights into complex issues, capturing the richness of human experience and context. And it can be adapted to changing research needs and unforeseen developments during the study. Quantitative research method also can be applied to larger populations, making it possible to draw broad conclusions and make predictions and allows for the use of statistical methods to test hypotheses and identify patterns and relationships. Mixed methods can provide richer data analysis by combining numerical data with detailed contextual information. A mixed methods approach is more flexible and adaptable, allowing researchers to adjust their methods as the study progresses.

Researchers can iterate between data collection and analysis, refining their approach based on emerging insights. Mixed methods can be particularly useful in applied research settings where both practical implications and theoretical understanding are important.

Choosing a mixed methods approach allows for a more robust, flexible, and comprehensive investigation into research problems. By leveraging the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research designs, the researcher can gain deeper insights, enhance the validity of their findings, and provide more comprehensive and applicable results. This approach is particularly valuable in complex and multifaceted research contexts where a single method may fall short

Hence, the researcher used quantitative approaches to collect data from the war-induced displaced returnees through closed-ended questionnaires [sample survey]. Few open-ended questions are also included in the questionnaire

Additionally, to collect the qualitative data individual in-depth interview for the returnees, key informant interview, focus group discussion and personal observation of the researcher was implemented to gather information.

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3.3 Data sources and Data type

To generate appropriate data the researcher used almost only primary data. As for the secondary data source were not easily available because in the selected study area the government offices were not functioning. All sectors of the government offices their documents packed and the government authority were living in a camp. The researcher has tried to get documents but it was difficult to get and this was one

of the limitations and obstacles the researcher encountered during the field work. Primary data was collected from selected returnees through questionnaire, in-depth interview and focus group discussion And the researcher also collected primary data from some residents in kebele 04 of the community by using them as key informants and through the researchers' observation

3.4. Sample size and Sampling Techniques \ Methods

Based on the Alamata city's administration arrangements there are four kebele in Alamata city. Among those four kebele 04 kebele was selected as the study area for its proximity to the researcher's home. So the researcher decide to undertake the research on this 04 kebele .To determine the necessary sample size, the researcher first needed to obtain the total population of kebele 04. The former chairman of kebele 04 provided the total population of 04 kebele was approximately 20,000 among these population 6526 were displaced and 5396 were returned and 1330 have-not returned yet. The researcher sought to understand why these individuals had not returned, and the answer was that they feared the risks associated with the situation, driven by ethnic identity, even after the displacement. Then to get detailed understanding about how the returnees were reintegrated with their community and to identify the challenges that positively and /or negatively affecting reintegration process of war-induced displaced returnees with their families. Neighbors, friends and communities ,the researcher selected 300 returnees from the 6526 who were displaces population of the study area of 04 kebele

Those selected key informants were 1 from the Tigray regional state labour and social affairs office head and 1 from the Alamata city administrator, 1 from the southern zoba labour and social affairs office head 1from Alamata woreda labour and social office, 1 from the returnees who was a high school director and who used to give training for the returnees on trauma and peace building employed by the Ngos in his free time 1 from a resident from kebele 04.

For FGD the researcher selected 8 members , divided in two groups .In the first group 4 men and in the second 4 women The criteria for selection was sex status in order to avoid shame and frustration in group discussion The researcher observed both group while discussing and raised prob questions to make the discussion more interesting .

Generally, the re searchers' systems of sampling technique for the study was none probability sampling [convenience sampling] for gathering quantative data that is the quantative data were collected during the time of relief delivery time when the returnees were gathered together . and non-probability sampling [purposive and snowball sampling] for the qualitative data The target population for the study was expected around6526 returnees sample size of this study is determined by using the formula developed

by Taro Yamane (1967)

The Taro Yamane formula is used in determining the sample size this research.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = -6526$$

Where, n is the sample population

N is the population size

e is the level of precision or sampling error = (0.05)

$$\frac{6526}{1+6526(0.05)^2} = 363$$

Thus, sample size of 363 is selected from the population of 6526

Confidence level 95%

Margin of error 5%

Population size 6526

Summary Target population 6526

Sample size 363 confidence level 95%

Margin of error 5% It will give the exact sample size.

Note: the actual population size obtained by computing using the yomane's formula is 363. But the researcher doubted To this number and decided to reduce it 340 sample size was distributed to informants where 40 questionnaires were missed. Finally 300 returnees where employed in the actual data analysis.

3.5. Instruments Tools of Data Collections.

For the purpose of data collection, the researcher used different tools or instruments like questionnaire, guide for the in-depth interview, and guide for key informants interview and check list for focus group discussions.

Then on data collection time the questionnaire were translated in to Amharic language. The official language is Tigrigna, the purpose of papering the questionnaire in Amharic was ,the researcher believed

that in the study area everybody understands and speaks Amharic but there might be some residents in the study area who couldn't understand and couldn't speak Tigrigna ,It was on this assumption that the

Questionnaire was prepared in Amharic. Before starting the detail data gathering the researcher should be assured that the respondent can explain their ideas without any problem, so the researcher checked through pre-test on 15 randomly selected returnees [respondents] to the appropriateness of the questions and the questionnaire as well as data accuracy and validity

The quantitative data were collected by the two data collectors each was paid 3000 birr totally 6000 birr. The researcher visited the area three times. On the first, he aimed to assess whether the study could be conducted in the area, as there were frightening rumors circulating concerning security cases. For this reason the researcher made a pilot study with 10 returnees. Consequently, he distributed 10 questionnaires and assured that it was possible to embark on the study. In addition, the researcher tried to provide orientation to how to administer the questionnaires to the two data collectors. However, they were experienced and they showed a set of documents or certificates that they typically use for similar work. The researcher trusted them based on the documents and gave them 400 questionnaires, planning to distribute them during the time of relief or aid delivery to returnees. These data collectors told the researcher house to house to feel the questionnaire was difficult the only possibility was when the returnees gathered for food support delivery, it was then safe to distribute the questionnaire and we agreed on this and we decided the time of collecting the questionnaire filled and the researcher came home back from the field work. After three weeks the researcher travelled to the study area to collect the data and collected them.

3.6. Methods of Data collections

3.6.1. Sample Survey

A survey questionnaire was distributed to a 340 sample of war induced returnees in south Tigray zone Alamata 04 kebele the questionnaire collected data on the experiences, challenges and perceptions of returnees regarding the reintegration processes. The survey was conducted by the two data collectors in face to face format. The questionnaire was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data including closed ended questions, open –ended questions, and rating scales.

To Understand the opinions of the selected participants in the study regarding the challenges affecting the reintegration of war –affected returnees, the researcher conducted a survey. The survey aimed to gather the perspectives war displaced returnees on how they perceive the reintegration process within in their communities. It also sought to explore how they explain both the positive and negative challenges that impact their reintegration process. Through this survey process, the researcher intended to gain insight into the attitudes of returnees towards their communities and the specific challenges that hinder the

reintegration process, including those related to their families, neighbors, friends, and the communities of their place of origin.

3.6.2. Qualitative Data Collection Methods

In-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders including returnees, with some 04 kebele residents and government officials'. These interviews provided deeper understanding of the context and challenges influencing the reintegration process. The interviews were conducted in face to face format

In-depth interview is the data collection technique used to collect information from the study participants. The in-depth interviews were held with key informants of war displaced returnees and other concerned individuals'. So the researcher prepared in-depth interview check list based on the objective of the study.

The researcher prepared four types of interview guides, The first, guide was for the in-depth interview -- war induced displaced returnees, The second for the selected residents of the study area [04 kebele]. The third was for the key informants who were selected from the displaced returnees and including government officials whose jobs were related with the situation of displaced returnees. The fourth and the last was the check list for FGDs

All the questionnaires and the checked lists were prepared in English and then translated into Amharic. The in-depth interview check list was open-ended to give free space for the perspective of the participants. This method of data collection was mainly helped the researcher to understand about the challenges affecting the reintegration of war induced displaced returnees of Alamata 04 kebele Tigray, Ethiopia

Key informants are people who had experiences and expertise knowledge about displaced people affairs. And had willing to share their experiences and expertise knowledge with the researcher. In key informant interview the informant talk with the researcher for relatively longer hours about the issue. Then the researcher employed this method to get deeper understanding about the challenges affecting reintegration of returnees with their community of origin. The key informants were selected from the displaced returnees and resident in 04 kebele, community, governmental and religious bodies of the study area. Focus group discussions useful important component to get certain types of information when circumstances would make it difficult to collect information using other methods of data collection focus group. The participants should be homogenous to understand the views of a specific issue [Yeraswork, 2010 cited In Haile kiros Zenebe.2020]. Then, the researcher formed two focused groups each group contain four members.

Field observation is also play crucial part in enriching the information gathered through the FGD, key informants, and interview and survey methods. Then the researcher was actively participated on the field work and he\she was observed several things and gathered different information through his \ her personal observation capacity

3.7. Methods and tools of Data analysis.

3.7.1. Data Analysis

The data collected from the survey questionnaire and in-depth interviews was analyzed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The survey data was analyzed using statistical software, SPSS the analysis focused on descriptive statistics as the data was primarily explanatory in nature there for as the spss is the soft ware used and that descriptive sstastics were the primary anlttical tool employed inthis research, to identify patterns, trends, and associations. The qualitative data from the in-depth interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. The findings from the quantitative and qualitative data were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by war-induced returnees in South Tigray Zone Alamatkebele.04

The SPSS software is chosen because of its importance in analyzing quantative data quality easiness to create different figures and diagrams. Description models, the description includes frequency , percentages as well as cross tabulations. This helps to see the relationships the dependent variable which is reintegration status , as measured by the economic ,social and psychological reintegration of the war induced displaced returnees and independent variables[age ,marital status ,occupation and income religion and education level etc.]

The data gathered through in-depth interviewe , key informants ,interviewe ,and focus group discussion[FGD} with the returnees, local residents, and concerned government organ were analyzed in the present study by description , narration as well as cross- checking their validity and reliability with the quantative data .Summarization and looking their similarity and\or difference among each responses is also part of analyzing of qualitative data.

3.7.2 Ethical Considerations:

This research was adhered to ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study. Participants were provided with a detailed information sheet explaining the purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits of the study. Participants were asked to provide written informed consent before participating in the study. All data collected were stored securely and were

anonymized to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. The research was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines provided by the relevant institutional review board or ethics committee.

Internal and external Validity of this study

Internal validity

The internal validity of this research is strengthened by the use of triangulating the methodology –the quantitative and qualitative method [mixed methods]

Similarly, by triangulating the methods or techniques –such as distributing questionnaire, conducting interviews, with key informants, performing in-depth interviews, and facilitating focus group discussions, the researcher has gained a comprehensive approach that captures multiple perspectives. This mixed methods design allows for cross verification of data, reducing the potential for biased or misinterpretation. The combination of numerical data from the questionnaire with rich, contextual insights from interviews and focus group discussions ensures that this research is internally consistent and logically sound, thereby supporting the validity of the researcher's conclusions.

External validity

The external validity of this research is further strengthened by the opportunity to have this research work reviewed and critiqued by researchers in the field. The researcher incorporates the comments received from those researchers. This external validation process adds up an additional layer of credibility, as experts' feedback can help identify potential limitations, biases, or gaps in the research study's generalizability. By incorporating experts' insight the researcher enhances the robustness of his research findings and ensures that his conclusions are not only internally consistent but also applicable to broader contexts. This peer review process also supports the external validity of this research, as it demonstrates that this study has been evaluated by experts who can assess its relevance, reliability, and applicability to real world situations.

CHAPTER FOUR

Discussion and Analysis and findings

4.1 Exploring the situation and condition of IDPs

This chapter presented the findings of the research that gathered through different data collection techniques. So the main target of the research was to identify the challenges affecting reintegration of the war induced displaced returnees after their return to their place of origin; the researcher also explored the reintegration process stories of returnees. Hence the findings' presented the following major parts ; the demographic profile of the respondents , the displacement and return experiences of the displaced returnees in the study area, the experiences of reintegration processes in economic, social and psychological domains, The contribution of the community government ,none governmental organization and the attitude of the community towards the returnees, livelihood status and future plan of the returnees.

The findings were based on the responses of those selected participants of the study with the help of questionnaire, in-depth interview, key informants, focus group discussion and observation of the researcher. 340 questionnaires were distributed and 300 were returned from the respondents and [40] questionnaires' were not returned. There for, data were analyzed based on the data collected using 12 in-depth interviewee, 6

key informant interviewee 8 group discussion [FGD] , observation of the researcher and questionnaires' from 300 respondents and the researcher started on to describe the demographic profiles of the research participants.

4.1.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The dataset contains responses from a total of 340 individuals, out of which 300 provided valid responses for each variable, while 40 responses were missing per variable. This indicates a high response rate of approximately 88% across the dataset. The data captures a range of demographic and displacement-related information. Specifically, it included variables such as age, gender, education level, occupation prior to displacement, religion, duration of displacement, marital status before and after displacement, and about children both before and after returning. Additionally, it covered whether the respondent had family members under their care other than their children, and details regarding their housing situation prior to displacement and after their return.

Each of these variables provided insight into how displacement had affected individuals' lived in terms of family structure, employment, housing, and social roles. For example, comparisons between marital status

before and after displacement or the number of children at different times might reveal changes brought on

by displacement. Similarly, questions regarding occupation, housing, and care responsibilities helped in understanding the socioeconomic impact of displacement. Overall, the dataset was a valuable source for analyzing the long-term effects of displacement on individuals and households

Table 4.1 Age Composition of respondents

Frequency Table

Age		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	19-24	18	6.0	6.0
	25-34	53	17.7	23.7
	35-44	139	46.3	70.0
	>=45	90	30.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

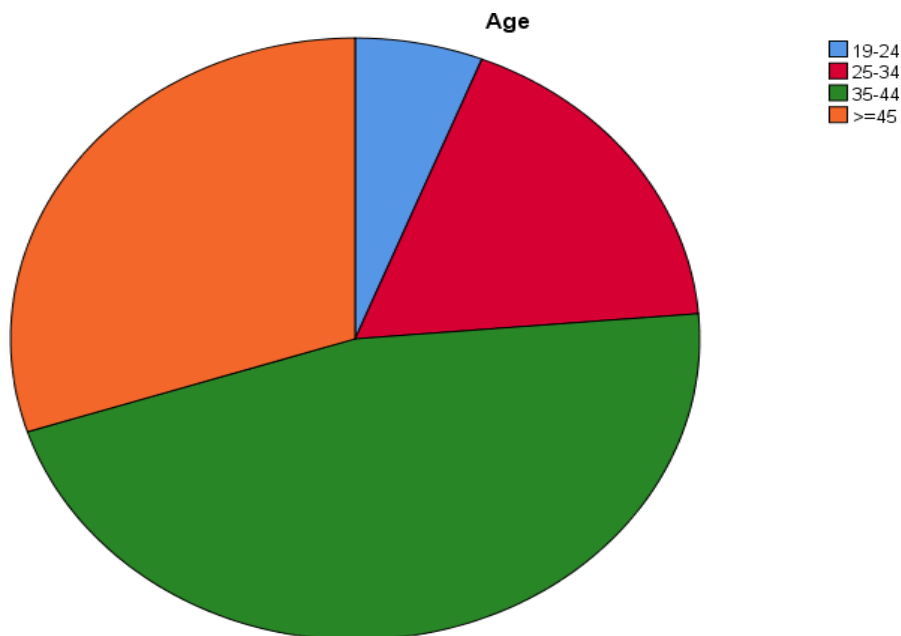


Figure: 1

Source: Own Survey, 20 24

The frequency distribution of respondents' ages revealed that the majority fall within the middle-aged category. Out of the 300 valid responses, the largest age group is 35–44 years, which comprises 139 individuals, representing 46.3% of valid responses and 40.9% of the total sample. The next most common age group is 45 years and above, accounting for 90 individuals or 30.0% of valid responses (26.5% of the total). Respondents aged 25–34 years make up 17.7% of valid responses (53 individuals), while those aged 19–24 years are the least represented group, with only 18 individuals, or 6.0% of the valid responses.

This age distribution suggested that the surveyed population were predominantly adults in their prime working and family-building years (35 and above), with relatively few younger adults aged 19–24. Additionally, there were 40 missing responses, accounting for 11.8% of the total dataset. These missing values could affect the interpretation of age-related trends if not addressed or accounted for in analysis. Overall, this data implied that displacement had primarily affected adults between 35 and 44 years old in this population

Table 4.2 Gender Composition of respondents

Gender				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	180	60.0	60.0
	Female	120	40.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

Source: Own Survey, 20 24

The gender distribution of the respondents shows that among the 300 valid responses, **180 individuals (60.0%)** identified as **male**, while **120 individuals (40.0%)** identified as **female**. This indicates a **gender imbalance**, with **males making up a clear majority** of the sample. When viewed as a percentage of the total dataset of 340 individuals, males represent **52.9%** and females **35.3%**. This distribution suggested that the displaced population represented in the dataset might have been more heavily male, or that males were more likely to respond to the survey. The gender composition could have implications for understanding the different ways displacement might affect men and women, particularly in terms of roles, responsibilities, and access to resources

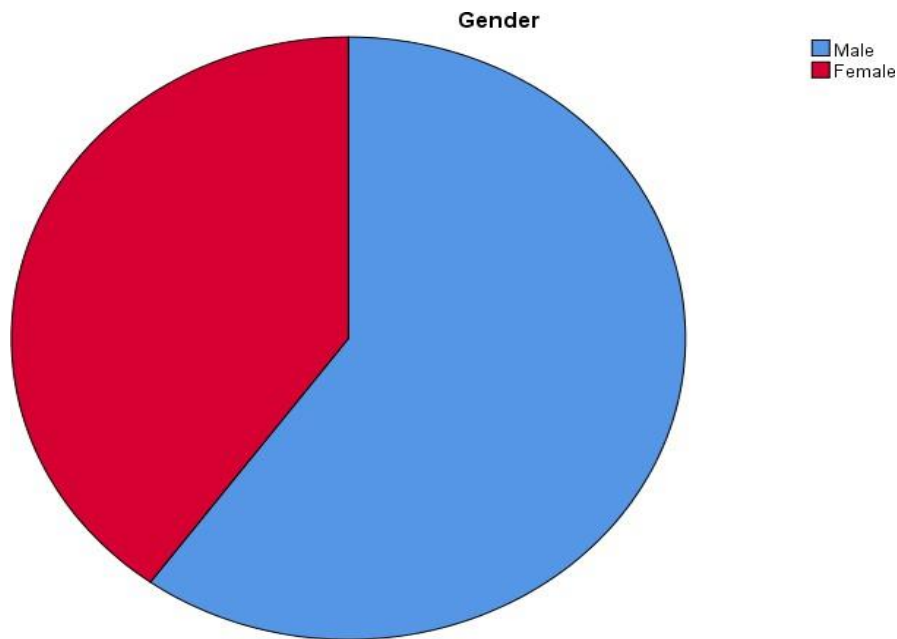


Figure: 2

Table 4.3 Educational Status of respondents

Education Level		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<Primary Education	60	20.0	20.0
	Primary Education	90	30.0	50.0
	Secondary Education	60	20.0	70.0
	Degree Level	30	10.0	80.0
	Master & above	60	20.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

Source: Own Survey, 20 24

The distribution of education levels among respondents showed a diverse range of educational attainment. Out of the 300 valid responses, the largest group had completed **Primary Education**, with **90 individuals (30.0%)**. This was followed by three equally represented groups: **Less than Primary Education**, **Secondary Education**, and **Master’s degree or above**, each with **60 individuals (20.0%)**. Respondents who had completed a **Degree level education** made up the smallest group, with **30 individuals (10.0%)**.

The cumulative percentages indicated that **half of the respondents (50.0%)** had at most a primary education, suggesting limited formal education for a significant portion of the sample. Conversely, **30.0%** had attained a degree or higher,

reflecting a considerable segment with advanced education. Overall, the data suggested a mixed educational background among the displaced population, with a notable portion having low levels of formal education, which could impact their opportunities for employment and integration after displacement.

4.4 Occupation Prior to Displacement

Occupation Prior to Displacement		
Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
60	20.0	20.0
120	40.0	60.0
60	20.0	80.0
30	10.0	90.0
30	10.0	100.0
300	100.0	

Source: Own Survey, 20 24

The pre-displacement occupational structure shows an economy of concentrated vulnerability based on the percentage distribution. A fragile, undiversified local economy was indicated by the fact that a sizable 40% of the workforce was dependent on a single dominant sector, most likely skilled trades or agriculture. A total of 80% of the population relied on informal, location-specific livelihoods that were totally disrupted upon displacement, as evidenced by this core group, 20% in small business, and an additional 20% in primary sectors. Just 20% of people had formal jobs that could be more secure. As a result, in addition to causing a housing crisis, the displacement event caused the economic foundation of the vast majority to completely collapse, ruining their means of subsistence and underscoring the urgent need for extensive livelihood rehabilitation.

4.5 Religion

Religion				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Christian	210	70.0	70.0
	Islam	90	30.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

Source: Own Survey, 20 24

The religion data shows that out of 300 valid responses, **210 individuals (70.0%)** belong to one religious group, while **90 individuals (30.0%)** belong to another. This indicates that the majority religion in the sample was represented by 70% of respondents, with a significant minority making up the remaining 30%. The cumulative percentages confirmed that the dataset was split between these

two religious groups. This distribution suggests a clear religious composition within the displaced population, which might influence social dynamics, cultural practices, and support systems during and after displacement. If you provide the specific religion categories (e.g., Muslim, Christian, etc.), I could give a more detailed interpretation

The religion data shows that out of 300 valid responses, 210 individuals (70.0%) belong to one religious group, while 90 individuals (30.0%) belong to another. This indicates that the majority religion in the sample was represented by 70% of respondents, with a significant minority making up the remaining 30%. The total valid responses cover 88.2% of the total sample of 340, with 40 missing responses (11.8%).

The cumulative percentages confirmed that the dataset was split between these two religious groups. This distribution suggests a clear religious composition within the displaced population, which might influence social dynamics, cultural practices, and support systems during and after displacement.

If you provide the specific religion categories (e.g., Muslim, Christian, etc.), I could give a more detailed interpretation

Marital Status Before Displacement and After Return				
Marital Status	Frequency (Before)	Valid Percent (Before)	Frequency (After)	Valid Percent (After)
Married	90	30.0%	101	33.7%
Single	81	27.0%	75	25.0%
Divorced	60	20.0%	85	28.3%
Widowed	60	20.0%	68	22.7%
Total Valid	300	100.0%	300	100.0%

4.6 Marital Status Before Displacement and After Return

The data on marital status before displacement and after return reveals significant shifts in the social fabric of the affected population. Before displacement, the marital composition was 30.0% married, 27.0% single, 20.0% divorced, and 20.0% widowed. Following return, notable changes occurred: the married proportion increased to 33.7%, while the single population decreased to 25.0%. Most strikingly, the divorce rate saw a substantial increase from 20.0% to 28.3%, and the widowed population also rose to 22.7%. These changes suggest that the experience of displacement and return has profoundly impacted social relationships, potentially strengthening some bonds through marriage while placing severe strain on others, as evidenced by the sharp increase in marital dissolution. The data underscores how humanitarian crises can reshape fundamental social structures, with implications for both social support systems and future recovery planning.

Table: 4.7

Do You Have Children Prior to Displacement				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	210	70.0	70.0
	No	90	30.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

Source: Own Survey, 20 24

The data reveals that, prior to displacement, the majority of the surveyed population had children 300 provided valid responses to this question. Among these respondents, a significant 70% (210 people) reported having children before they were displaced, while 30% (90 people) did not. This high percentage of individuals with children is a critical demographic factor, as it suggests that the experience of displacement and the subsequent challenges in post-return life such as access to education, healthcare, and child protection services would have directly impacted a large number of dependents, compounding the social and humanitarian crisis.

Table: 4.8

Do You Have Children After You Return				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	90	30.0	30.0
	No	210	70.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

Source: Own Survey, 20 24

The data regarding childbearing after return reveals a dramatic demographic shift 300 provided valid responses. Among these, only 30% (90 people) reported having children after their return, while a striking 70% (210 people) indicated they had no children during this period. This represents a sharp reversal from the pre-displacement period, where 70% of the population had children. This dramatic decline suggests a profound disruption in family formation and reproductive patterns following displacement. Potential explanations for this trend could include the severe psychological and physical stress of the displacement experience, the loss of spouses, the breakdown of marriages, ongoing economic instability that makes supporting a family untenable, or a conscious decision to delay childbearing due to pervasive uncertainty about the future. This statistic points to a potential "demographic scar" left by the conflict and displacement, with significant long-term implications for population recovery and age structure in the affected community.

HowManyChildrenDouHavePriortoDisplacment			
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	210	70.0	70.0
Two	90	30.0	100.0
Total	300	100.0	

Table: 4.9

Source: Own Survey, 20 24

The data on childbearing prior to displacement reveals a distinct family structure among the surveyed population. Based on 300 valid responses, the majority, 70% (210 people), reported having no children before they were displaced. Among those who did have children, the data indicates that the most common family size was two children, reported by the remaining 30% (90 people) of the respondents. This distribution suggests that a significant portion of the population was either in the early stages of family formation or was composed of individuals without children at the time of the crisis. The fact that no other family sizes (such as one, three, or more children) are recorded in the valid responses indicates that "two children" was the typical family size for those who were parents, painting a picture of a predominantly childless or small-family community prior to the disruptive event of displacement.

Table: 4.10

HowManyChildrenDouHaveAfterYouRetern				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	240	80.0	80.0
	One	60	20.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

Source: Own Survey, 20 24

The data on childbearing after return reveals a profound and concerning demographic trend. Out of 300 valid responses, an overwhelming majority 80% (240 individuals) reported having no children in the post-return period. Among those who did have children, the data indicates that the typical family size was just one child, reported by the remaining 20% (60

individuals) of respondents. This represents a significant shift from the pre-displacement period, where 30% of the population had two children. The near-total absence of families with two or more children after return points to a severe disruption in family formation and reproductive health. This dramatic decline can likely be attributed to the compounded effects of displacement, including profound psychological trauma, the breakdown of marriages, economic destitution that makes raising children untenable, and the loss of spouses. This pattern suggests a potential "demographic collapse" in the affected community, with serious long-term implications for its future recovery and stability.

Table: 4.11

Is There Family Member Under Your Care Other Than Your Children				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	120	40.0	40.0
	No	180	60.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

Source: Own Survey, 20 24

- While 60% of respondents are free from caregiving duties beyond their children, a substantial 40% carry the responsibility for other family members, revealing a major divide in care burdens.
- The population is nearly evenly divided, with 60% focused on child-rearing or independent family units, while the other 40% manage the complex role of supporting additional dependents.
- A 60% majority reports no extra-familial care duties, starkly contrasting with the 40% who shoulder this often-invisible workload, highlighting a critical demographic facing unique pressures.

In essence, the 40% represents a core group experiencing the challenges and responsibilities of multi-generational care.

Table: 4.12

Concerning Housing Prior To Your Displacement				
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	In my own house	120	40.0	40.0
	In rental house	180	60.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	

Source: Own Survey, 20 24

Based on the housing data, a clear division emerges: **60% of the displaced population were renters**, while **40% were homeowners**. This 60/40 split highlights that the displacement event disproportionately impacted those in the more vulnerable rental sector, suggesting that tenants faced significantly less housing security than homeowners prior to being displaced. The data reveals that housing tenure played a critical role in the displacement dynamic.

Table: 4.13

Housing Situation Before Displacement and After Return				
Housing Situation	Frequency (Before)	Valid Percent (Before)	Frequency (After)	Valid Percent (After)
In my own house	120	40.0%	0	0.0%
In rental house	180	60.0%	90	30.0%
With rehabilitation company	0	0.0%	210	70.0%
Total Valid	300	100.0%	300	100.0%

Source: Own Survey, 2024

Displacement could have both positive and negative impacts experiences have its positive and/or negative impact on the reintegration processes of individual with the residence of his community’s place of origin.

The data reveals a catastrophic collapse of housing autonomy following a displacement event. The situation has shifted from a mixed tenure system (40% homeowners, 60% renters) to one of almost universal dependency, with 70% of the population now housed by a rehabilitation company. This indicates a systemic housing failure and a severe loss of personal and economic independence.

4.1.2 The Main Reason for Displacement

At the level of individual or group there are a number of reasons why people flee from their homes voluntarily or forcibly. Various international organizations reported factors that lead to displacement, for example the international organization for migration /IOM/ discussed those various factors that leads to displacement, including conflict, and violence, natural disasters, economic hardships and persecution [iom,2019]

1. In addition to this, the journal of migration and human security under the topic _displacement and forced migration explored the various reasons for displacement. Including war, conflict, and violence, natural disasters, economic hardship and persecution. Journal of migration and human security,[2020]

Furthermore, by the journal of humanitarian Assistane, under its topic _the causes of displacement a comparative study of refugees and internally displaced persons was discussed the various reasons for displacement. including conflict and violence, natural disasters, economic hardship, and persecution, [journal of humanitarian Assistane.2018] Similarly this issue was discussed by the united Nations High commissioner for refugees provided an over view on the topic _ displacement and forced migration A global overview noted the various reasons for displacement, including conflict and violence, natural disasters. Economic hardship and persecution [UNHCR,[2020]

The comprehensive overview of the various reasons for displacement noted by the mentioned international organizations initiated the researcher to assess the reasons led to the displacement the returnees being studied. On this purpose the researcher included an open-ended question to be filled by the questionnaire respondents and similar questions for the in-depth interviewees, and questions to be discussed in the focus group [FGD].

From in-depth interviewee 3, A middle-aged woman shared her experience, saying, "I am illiterate, and I don't know much about politics. However, I heard about ethnic divisions and rumors involving armed forces, murder, and killings at the begging I had no intention to leave and migrate. Bad propagandas were sweeping through the societies those ethnic tensions instilled fear in my mind and I had prime concern for my children's safety became unstable. Finally when I saw people marching to Mohoni I joined them and flee." [In-depth interviewee 3]. Her account reflects the deep sense of fear and uncertainty that surrounded her community during the conflict. Despite her limited formal education, her observations highlight the widespread impact of violence and the psychological burden carried by civilians, especially women, who often face the consequences of such unrest in silence.

In addition, a participant in the in-depth interviewee 4 who is a resident of Alamata,04 kebele shared his experience,, stating, "I was working as a guard in a big hotel. I am Amhara, but my wife is Tigrian, and we have four children. In my work I used to keep the cars of authorities who used to come to the hotel for entertainment. They were giving me trivial incentives for my service and had good relationships. Apart from this I never received any special favor. I believe in Ethiopianism and unity, love my family and Alamata, but at the last hour due to the spread of propaganda and rising tensions, I was forced to flee alone to the Amahara region leaving my families behind." [in-depth interviewee 4] . .This story illustrates how individuals and families with mixed ethnic backgrounds were deeply affected by the war,, often caught between identities and targeted by political narratives beyond their control.

Similarly, both participants in group one and group two of the FGD discussion shared similar ideas about the preceding paragraph stories in –depth interviewee three and four .However ,two male participants were indifferent to the others . Their reasons for displacement were economic. They were skilled in construction work and moved to seek better job opportunities .Unfortunately, they didn't find the construction industry thriving .Consequently, they returned with other returnees to their place of origin, because they could not afford the rental house.

Additionally, the result obtained from the questionnaire respondents summarized as follows. Among the 300 questionnaire respondent 260 [86.6, percent]of them responded as political tension and ethnicity problems were as their main cause for their displacement ,the remaining 40 [13,3 percent] they displaced for economic reason ,that was for displaced persons (IDPs), while the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2020) provided a global overview reinforcing the same causes.

Motivated by these findings, the researcher sought to assess the specific reasons behind the displacement of the returnees in Alamata. An open-ended questionnaire was administered, complemented by in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), to gather comprehensive insights.

A middle-aged woman, interviewed in-depth, described the atmosphere of fear in her community:

"I am illiterate, and I don't know much about politics. However, I heard about ethnic divisions and rumors involving armed forces, murder, and killings."

Her testimony highlights how even individuals without formal education perceived the profound impact of ethnic conflict and violence.

In FGD 1, a male participant shared a deeply personal experience of displacement rooted in ethnic tensions:

"I was working as a guard at a hotel. I am Amhara, but my wife is Tigrayan. Due to rising propaganda and ethnic tension, I was forced to flee alone to the Amhara region, leaving my family behind."

Such narratives reflect the complexity of displacement for ethnically mixed families, who found themselves caught between conflicting identities during the war.

According to the survey results, out of 300 respondents, 260 (86.6%) identified political tensions and ethnic problems as their primary reasons for displacement. The remaining 40 respondents (13.3%) cited economic hardship, such as the search for employment. These quantitative findings were corroborated by the qualitative data obtained from interviews and FGDs.

4.1.3 The choices of directions and destination of the returnees

Displacement concerning the choices of directions and destinations of returnee's displacement, an open-ended question was included to the questionnaire respondent returnees, in-depth interviewees almost all their choice were resulted from the long standing political and ethnic tension which gradually created discrimination and grievance. Accordingly, those who are Tigrians favored to flee towards Mohoni and Mekele and those who have Amahara ethnicity notion chose to run towards the amahara region

In addition, from in-depth interviewee, 5

Participant who was a teacher explained her idea concerning choice of destination during displacement as follows. —I am a teacher who was born in Chercher, but from grade eight onward, I lived and studied here until I completed grade twelve. I later finished my teacher training at a college in Dessie town. I had a sister and a brother and many school friends. It was better if I should have gone to Dessie, but due to the then ethnic tension I unconsciously decided to migrate to Mekele. In addition I had been actively involved in various associations, women, youth and had also participated as a political woman. As a Tigrian and the then ethnicity identity being propagating, fearing the risk I ran to Mekele. Throughout my life here, I never witnessed division based on ethnicity' she concluded. [in-depth interviewee 5]

In addition, the two focus group discussion anonymously confirmed the idea stated by interviewee 5 on the preceding paragraph. Notably, one of the participants from focus group one emphasized the situation that he used to work in the health office as a finance expert, but now he lives only on pension. He had children in Woldiya and Dessie as well as in Addis Ababa. Before the war his children got employment in Dessie in one of the NGOs. When the war broke out he should have gone to his children. However, because of ethnic tension, he preferred to migrate to Mekele where he did not have any one he could support him, This was fearing the risk of going to Amhara region, and he found it reasonable to flee to Mekele.

From the two informants stories in the preceding paragraphs, it is true that fear for one's safety and life is a common reason for choosing displacement destination especially in situations of political and ethnic tension. It is important to recognize that displacement is a complex issue and that individuals or groups may have different reasons for choosing their displacement destination based on their unique circumstances and needs.

4.1.4 Displacement experience of the returnees

The displacement experience of conflict induced displaced returnees could be both traumatic and challenging. The individuals often faced a range of obstacles during their return journey, including physical dangers, loss of property, and the disruption of social and economic ties. Its psychological impact could also be significant with many returnees experiencing feeling of loss, grief, and anxiety. According to the internal displacement Monitoring center [IOMCC] the displacement experience could lead to long term consequence, such as the loss of livelihoods, access to education and health care [IOM, 2018]. Additionally, the world Bank highlighted that the displacement experience can exacerbate that existing social and economic inequalities further complicating the reintegration process [world Bank, 2020]. Accordingly, understanding the displacement experiences were crucial for developing effective reintegration strategies to address the unique needs of conflict induced displaced returnees.

From in depth interview 6 a graduate job less girl expressed her life in the rehabilitation as follows

During the period of displacement we, displaced people faced numerous challenges, including a severe shortage of support and basic services. Many of us suffered from diseases due to poor living conditions and lack of medical care. In addition, floods worsened the situation, destroying temporary shelters and belongings. The scarcity of food led to hunger and malnutrition, and tragically, some individuals lost their

lives as a result of these harsh conditions [in-depth interviewee 6] . Similarly, from in depth interview 7 a woman explained her life in the rehabilitation Centre as follows:

In my human experience I faced a challenging situation during my time in the rehabilitation center .The facility accommodates both men and women in the same Hall, especially, at the beginning of our arrival .And there was often shouting in the middle of the night .This lack of ethical behavior and disregard for individual privacy created a stress full and uncomfortable environment. Furthermore, during my time in the rehabilitation camp , I lived with my four children whose their father left me behind alone and joined to the rebellions .When food assistance was delayed , I was forced to sell my jewelry to provide my family with food After , finishing selling my properties , I found myself exposed to hanger and my children's unlimited demands In general, as a displaced individual, in the rehabilitation center ,there were times when I felt overwhelmed and contemplated suicide. [in-depth interviewee7] As the informants stated in the previous paragraphs, it is important to recognize that displacement and living in a rehabilitation camp can be difficult and challenging experience. People who have been displaced may face a variety of hardship, including lack of access to basic services, such as health care and education, as well as social isolation and discrimination.

4.2 the reintegration process

4.2.1 Perception of returnees regarding Support from Government and NGOs in the integration process

The study's finding that respondents perceive support from government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as limited and coordination as ineffective (mean score ≈ 1.64) aligns with existing scholarly and institutional reports. For example, Kibreab (2009) highlights that in many conflict-affected regions; the lack of strategic coordination among aid agencies hampers the delivery of comprehensive support services to returnees. Similarly, Betts et al. (2011) argued that fragmented efforts and insufficient resource allocation often result in unmet needs, impeding successful reintegration. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2014) further emphasizes that without proper coordination and accountability among stakeholders, reintegration programs are less effective, leading to dissatisfaction among returnees. These findings underscore the persistent challenge of aligning efforts across agencies and suggest that improving organizational collaboration could significantly enhance reintegration outcomes in Alamata.

Similarly perceptions of government and non-governmental organization can vary significantly depending on cultural ,political and social contexts. Generally governments are perceived as entities responsible for maintaining order providing public service in protecting citizens' rights(smith ,2018). They play a crucial role in shaping policy implementing laws that govern a society. On the other hand, NGOs are often seen as independent organization that wards various social environmental and humanitarian goals (Johnson, 2020). They typically operate outside the consent government and can focus on specific issues such as human rights, health, education and environmental conservation. While both governments and NGOs aimed to improve societal well-being, their methods, structures, and interactions with the public could lead to differing perceptions and levels of trust (William, 2019).

In view of the above evidence, this study attempted to assess the willingness motivation and ability of the government to provide assistance and support to the war displaced returnees ,on one hand the researcher was motivated to assess the effeteness the governments _ policy and programs used in relation to providing assistance and support to returnees

Accordingly the focus was to assess overall performance and abilities of the government to promote responsive measures to wards the various needs of the returnees It also intended to evaluate the satisfaction and confidence of returnees towards delivering this assistances and support

Accordingly,

in relation to the perception of the government and NGOs literature stated on the preceding paragraph the actual situation was described by the participants of this study Key informant I A vice head of the Tigray regional state labor and social affairs office stated as follows‘

In the first place there was not structured and organized governmental body that was responsible to flow up and sees the day today condition of the returnees. The government civil servants of the different sector were in active to perform their responsibility as the area was not stable .The civil servants working in the different sectors didn‘t have their separate offices and residence in the city. They were camped to gather .so, it seemed difficult

To give details about the war induced displaced returnees of Alamata city in such situation,|| he concluded [key informat1]

The same to this from the in-depth interviewees --8--- A 04 kebele resident and who were a former kebele 04 workers and a returnee himself expressed his idea as follows —*In Alamata city, if someone committed a crime he would be taken to the police station and receive corporal punishment. However, after a few days, he would be released. It became clear that there was not legal procedure in place, as the court was not functioning properly In some cases, people were even kidnapped and killed in the outskirts of the city. This lack of proper legal procedures and the presence of extrajudicial killings created a dangerous and unstable environment in the city.*‘ He said [in-depth interviewee8]

Similarly, both in the two focus group discussion [FGD] discussed on the perception of support from the government and NGOs and both groups agreed that when they returned they had expected that the government would support them with financial assistance to restelled and to start small business and to provide them with agricultural equipment to start their previous farming activities, However ,aside from these occasional food support from the government little has done for them They explained that life in the displacement camps was better in many ways They are now ,that is after they returned they struggle to pay house rent without stable income , the government has not fulfilled its responsibilities, Yet ,they said the NGOs they have been more helpful in providing medicine , trauma healing training support, peace building initiatives and some other training programs They conclude that training alone was not enough to bring real change to their real situation.

Based in this situation the mean score of 1.64, it can be interpreted that the perception of support from both the government and NGOs towards war-induced displaced returnees in Alamata was generally low, indicating that such support was limited and largely ineffective. This low score reflected dissatisfaction among returnees regarding the nature, scope, and consistency of assistance they had received.

From the informants' narratives in the preceding paragraphs, it indicated that the perception of support government and NGOs was low among war- induced displaced returnees of Alamata ,This was supported by the responses of the interviewees and questionnaire respondents .This suggested that the displaced returnees felt that they were not receiving adequate assistance from these organizations, which implied for their ability to reintegrate in to their communities and rebuild their live after the trauma of war was weak .It might indicate a lack of resources or capacity on the part of the government and NGOs to effectively support these returnees

Additionally, this low perception of support could be due to a variety of factors, such as communication barriers, lack of awareness about availability resources.

The findings suggested that the interventions provided by these entities whether in the form of food aid, shelter, psychosocial support, reintegration programs, or livelihood restoration may not adequately addressed the actual needs and priorities of displaced individuals. Many returnees likely feel abandoned or overlooked, especially if the support lacked coordination, is short-term, or fails to consider the complex challenges they faced, such as trauma, unemployment, loss of property, and social exclusion.

Moreover, the low perception score could be influenced by the absence of inclusive planning processes, limited access to information, and weak communication between service providers and beneficiaries. If returnees feel that their voices are not heard or their circumstances were misunderstood, even well-intentioned support might not have the intended impact. This underlines the importance of needs-based, participatory, and sustainable support systems that are responsive to both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term recovery goals

Hence, it was important for the government and NGOs to address issues and work towards improving their support for war –induced displaced returnees in order to help them successfully reintegrated in to their communities and lead productive lives.

4.3 Supports from Government and NGO in the integration process

Support from the government and NGOs is crucial in addressing the various challenges faced by individuals who have been displaced due to war or conflict. This support can take the form of financial assistance, housing, health care, education and employment opportunities. By providing these resources, governments and NGOs can help war-induced displaced returnees to rebuild their lives and reintegrate into their communities. This support can also help to address broad issues such as social cohesion and reconciliation, which are essential for long-term stability and development of affected areas.

In connection to this, the mean score for the role of government and NGOs was 1.64 (on a scale where 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree), indicating a generally negative perception regarding active support and coordination. This suggests that respondents perceive limited support and ineffective coordination among organizations. Similar studies have shown that inadequate collaboration hampers successful reintegration. The low score underscores the need for improved government and NGO engagement. Of war-induced displaced returnees can be both traumatic and challenges.

In relation to the result obtained from the questionnaire, respondents' studies reveal that support from government and NGOs was for addressing the challenges faced by war-affected displaced persons and Government play a vital role in providing essential services such as shelter, health care to those who had been displaced due to war or conflict. [IDMC,2020]

Additionally, NGOs work alongside governments to offer support and resources to help individuals rebuild lives and reintegration communities. According to the internal displacement monitoring center [IDMC], effective collaboration between government and NGOs was essential for providing comprehensive support to displaced returnees and facilitating their safe return [IDMC,2020] by working together governments and NGOs could address the complex needs of war-affected returnees and contribute to their successful reintegration.

Concerning the support offered by the government and NGOs indicated by the mean score of the challenge affecting the reintegration of war-induced displaced returnees is 1.64. This suggests that the questionnaire respondents generally perceive that the challenges were very significant. This is further supported by key informant interviewee 2, the head of the southern Zoba Labour and social Affairs office expressed his idea as follows:

:

_The food supplies were unpredictable, delayed and they were irregular. During distribution favoritism and discrimination were evident .No priority was given to the poor, those with no income other than these assistances and everyone who has salary or other income competed for aid in the name of returnee ,The most vulnerable often murmured Those who have relation with those who distribute get more advantage. '[Key informant2]]

In addition to the idea expressed in the preceding paragraph a participant of the [in-depth interviewee9] A farmer who was a resident in 04 kebele expressed his experience as follows.

I was economically self-sufficient before the war broke out. I was living with ten families here in the outskirts of 04 in my own wooden made hut. In summer I used to work in my small plot land and sometimes I rent a plot of land from those who had land to increase my harvest and this was sufficient for a yearly budget with ten family _ I had two oxen and a cow .In winter, I was working in private construction sectors as I was a carpenter. Additionally, my wife had a small business selling food items like onion .potatoes fruits in the market ...She had some income to support our livelihood and our four children were at school and life in general was fulfilled. Never the less, after we returned from our displacement life became hard . My wife stop going to the market because of finance problems, I sometimes work as a daily laborer. I didn't go to the farm as my animal were looted our house furniture and my construction equipment were robbed .In short husband and wife we are sitting in an empty house without work waiting for the food supplies offered by the government and NGOs

When we arrived from displacement life we expected long term assistance such as finance support. We expect the government will, arrange and facilitate sources of loans, so as to begin small business yet, such support were not given. In addition _I couldn't start agriculture as my animals were robbed. I sat in hunger and sufferings', he said [in-depth interviewee9]

Both the key informant2 and in-depth interviewee 9 highlighted the issue of insufficient support for war induced displaced returnees.

Additionally, a key informant 3 from Alamata woreda labor and social affairs who was returnee himself stated his idea as follows It was known that the returnees returned empty handed, many of them have no proper accommodations some became dependent with their family others live in campus. Similarly we civil servants we live in a camp<we had no private residences of ours. since we didn't have trust in the existing situation we live in a camp, How come then any one expect offering services of all sorts for the returnees, consequently the returnee were faced many hardships. Since we were not stable and fully secured we didn't offer services to the society specially to the returnees, I believe that the government specially my office as it is much concerned and responsible could have taken several initiatives to help

these returnees returned without subsidiary income .The government could have helped a lot for the reintegration to be accomplished in short time successfully. The government could have design some workable projects that promote vocational skill development training. In short the government could have made some adjustment in which the reintegration process meets its ends. Nevertheless the government itself feared security cases.[key informant 3] In view of this returnees have no choice but to rely on what little help they could find from family or local communities. However, this too was not sufficient as returturnees facing many economic hardships poor living conditions and limited prospect for a future. The in ability to find adequate housing or employment further aggravated the situation of Alamata displaced returnees _[source own ,survey,2024]In the focus group discussion [FGD] one widowed participant of FGD describe in what situation Alamata returnees were in including herself. As soon as the war broke out she was displaced with her two children and her husband. However her husband left her behind with her two daughters and joined to TDF rebellions. She was fresh graduate in accounting, but no job, no income except her husband’s salary. Then she went to live in the rehabilitation camp because she couldn’t afford the house rent. Finally .after two years she returned home, .At the beginning her family were happy. But gradually her families’ attitude changed .Her father stopped speaking to her and her brothers ignored her. She was no longer welcomed eventually. She felt depressed that she returned with two half orphan children. This was clear to her after they herd the death of her husband. She finally flees from home 04 kebele to kebele 03 and rent a small house, she was a fresh graduate in accounting when the war broke out still no job opportunity. Meanwhile she started a job as a part-time cook in two bachelor gays to prepare food. They paid her 1500 each these men were considerate enough to her .In addition to her salary they contributed 6000 birr and advised her to start small business and she started to sell dry injera. She found it relatively better to start small business with small amount of money rather than sitting and waiting to the occasional food supplies offered by the government and aids from other stake holders.’

The above informants emphasized that the lack of intervention of the government and other stakeholders hampered the integration processes of the study areas.

The researcher included the widowed story of one member of the focus group discussion [FGD] as exemplary lesson for readers and other returnees who faced the same situation

This story highlights the importance of resilience and resourcefulness in the face of adversity. Despite facing significant challenges, the widowed returnee was able to turn her situation around and find new opportunities for herself and her children. By starting her own small business, she was able to provide for her family and give them a better life this story also emphasizes the importance of community support and

the power of collaboration. The widowed returnee was able to find support from two bachelors gay men she met at her work who offered to contribute to her business and provide her with the encouragement she need to start her own venture.

IN conclusion, the story of the windowed returnee is a power full example of how one person can overcome adversity and find new opportunities for themselves and their beloved ones. By starting her own small business, she was able to provide for her family, and give them a better life.

The above qualitative result mentioned on the preceding paragraph could be supported and strengthened by the idea in the following paragraph which was obtained from questionnaire respondents as follows. .

The study revealed a low level of agreement indicating widespread dissatisfaction with the level and coordination of support provided by the government and NGOs. This finding aligns with literature that highlights systemic weaknesses in post-conflict reintegration efforts. Kibreab (2009) notes that poor inter-agency coordination often leads to fragmented support, while Betts et al. (2011) assert that the absence of strategic planning and resource alignment undermines reintegration outcomes. Similarly, UNHCR (2014) stresses the importance of accountability and multi-stakeholder coordination to avoid redundancy and gaps in service delivery.

Key informant interviews reinforced these insights. One official from the **Alamata Labour and Social Affairs Office** commented:

These quantitative findings were reinforced by qualitative data collected from key informants and returnee testimonies. Informant interviewee 2, the head of the Southern Zoba Labour and Social Affairs Office, expressed the following:

The food supplies were unpredictable and irregular. During distribution, favoritism and discrimination were evident. No priority was given to the poor or those with no income. Everyone competed for aid, and the most vulnerable often left dissatisfied.¶

This sentiment of systemic failure was echoed by Interviewee 9a formerly self-sufficient farmer and carpenter, who described his drastic decline in living conditions after displacement:

Before the war, I supported a family of ten through farming and construction. After displacement, I lost everything my animals, tools, and furniture. My wife sopped trading because of lack of money .I stopped thinking about farming as I didn't have oxen and money in my hand. . We now survive waiting for

occasional food aid. No financial or agricultural support was provided, despite our expectations. It was more painful by the lack of meaningful and sustainable support systems.

Similarly, Informant 3, a key official from the Alamata Woreda Labour and Social Affairs Office, candidly acknowledged institutional shortcomings:

Returnees came back with nothing. Many lacked housing and depended on relatives. Even civil servants like us lived in camps without stable conditions. In such an unstable environment, it was difficult to provide comprehensive services. The government could have initiated vocational training and livelihood projects, but even we were paralyzed by insecurity.

This testimony reflects broader structural and operational limitations within government systems, which hindered proactive planning and implementation of reintegration strategies. As the literature suggests, weak institutional capacity and a lack of coordinated frameworks often prevent governments and NGOs from delivering timely and relevant support (Betts et al., 2011; UNHCR, 2014).

These institutional gaps left many returnees to rely on minimal support from their families or local communities. However, this informal support network was also strained, as described by a widowed participant in an FGD:

When she returned with her two daughters after her husband joined the TDF and later died, her family's attitude changed. Her father stopped speaking to her, and her brothers ignored her. She was no longer welcomed. Eventually, she rented a small house in another kebele and started working as a cook. Two men she worked for were kind they paid her and gave her 6,000 birr to start a small injera business. This was better than waiting for unguaranteed food aid from the government or NGOs.

In light of the quantitative findings obtained by using the SPSS software as well as the informant 2 who was head of southern zebu labour and social affairs office provided valuable insights and information for this research, he stated his idea concerning the support offered by the government as follows

The above three informants emphasized that the lack of intervention of the government and other stakeholders hampered the integration processes of the study areas and the situation of these returnees remained unaddressed in all aspects

The results indicate low support, it can be interpreted that the perception of support from both the government and NGOs towards war-induced displaced returnees in Alamata is generally low, indicating that such support is limited and largely ineffective. This low score reflects dissatisfaction among returnees regarding the nature, scope, and consistency of assistance they have received.

The findings suggest that the interventions provided by these entities—whether in the form of food aid, shelter, psychosocial support, reintegration programs, or livelihood restoration—may not adequately address the actual needs and priorities of displaced individuals. Many returnees likely feel abandoned or overlooked, especially if the support lacks coordination, is short-term, or fails to consider the complex challenges they face, such as trauma, unemployment, loss of property, and social exclusion.

Moreover, the low perception score could be influenced by the absence of inclusive planning processes, limited access to information, and weak communication between service providers and beneficiaries. If returnees feel that their voices are not heard or their circumstances are misunderstood, even well-intentioned support may not have the intended impact. This underlines the importance of needs-based, participatory, and sustainable support systems that are responsive to both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term recovery goals

Expanding further on the above points, the mean score of 1.64 not only signals dissatisfaction but also reflects a deeper disconnect between the support systems in place and the lived realities of war-induced displaced returnees in Alamata. This dissatisfaction may stem from the perception that support is symbolic rather than transformative focusing on temporary relief rather than addressing root causes or enabling self-reliance.

One of the core issues is the *inadequate planning and targeting* of assistance. Many returnees have diverse needs based on their experiences, losses, and current conditions. A one-size-fits-all approach fails to consider vulnerable groups such as female-headed households, children, the elderly, and those with disabilities. Additionally, the lack of long-term strategies makes returnees feel uncertain about their future, increasing their dependency on inconsistent aid and limiting their ability to rebuild their lives.

Limited coordination and communication among stakeholders further aggravate the problem. In the absence of a unified and comprehensive framework, resources may be wasted, critical needs may be unmet, and duplication of efforts may occur. NGOs and government offices sometimes operate in silos, without shared data, joint monitoring, or integrated programming, weakening the overall impact.

Moreover, the *absence of psychosocial support* is a significant gap. Many returnees have experienced deep trauma, loss, and displacement, yet mental health and social healing services remain underprovided. Without addressing these emotional and psychological wounds, other forms of support—such as economic or housing assistance may not fully succeed in restoring stability and resilience.

To improve the level of support, a shift toward *community-based and participatory planning* is essential. Returnees should be seen not only as beneficiaries but as active stakeholders in designing, implementing, and evaluating programs. Local institutions need to be strengthened, both in terms of capacity and resources, so they can effectively coordinate with NGOs and provide consistent, locally grounded services. It is also vital to invest in *monitoring and evaluation systems* to track the impact of interventions and ensure that they evolve to meet changing needs.

In conclusion, improving support for Alamata’s displaced returnees requires more than just increased funding. It demands strategic, inclusive, and sustainable approaches that combine humanitarian assistance with long-term development and peace building efforts. Only then can the returnees begin to rebuild their lives with dignity, security, and hope for the future.

4.4 Potential of Community-Based Approaches in the integration process

The reintegration of war induced displaced returnees presents a significant challenge for communities worldwide. The potential of community- based approach in addressing this issue has gained attention as a promising strategy. By engaging local communities in the planning and implementation of reintegration programs .Inline to this questionnaire was distributed and the result of these respondents indicated in the subsequent paragraph.

The moderate mean score (≈ 2.56) for community-led approaches indicate that respondents see some value in community participation but remain somewhat cautious about their current effectiveness. Literature by Matsutani (2018) and Shaw (2010) emphasizes that community-based initiatives are vital for fostering social cohesion, rebuilding trust, and providing culturally appropriate support. Their studies demonstrate that community involvement enhances the sustainability of reintegration by leveraging local resources, norms, and social networks. However, the neutral stance observed in these findings suggests that community-led programs may not yet be fully implemented or effective in the context of Alamata. This resonates with Hovil et al. (2014), who argue that community participation requires capacity building, awareness, and sustained engagement to realize its full potential. Therefore, strengthening community-led

initiatives, through training and awareness campaigns, could be a promising avenue to improve reintegration.

The potential of community base approaches in addressing the challenges faced by war displaced returnees during their reintegration process has gained significant attention in the recent years. Community-based approaches emphasized the active involvement of local communities in providing support and resources to returning individuals, there by fostering a sense of belongings and facilitating their successful reintegration. Research has shown that community-based interventions can be effective in promoting the well-being and resilience of war displaced returnees.[Johnson and William,2018; Thompson,2020] By leveraging the strengths and, resources of local communities, these approaches can help address the unique needs of returnees provides them with necessary support to rebuild their lives amidst the aftermath of war or conflict.

Community-based approaches are increasingly recognized as essential for the effective reintegration of war-induced displaced persons. These strategies emphasize the engagement of local communities in supporting returnees, fostering social cohesion, and rebuilding trust. Matsutani (2018) and Shaw (2010) argue that community-led initiatives are vital because they provide culturally appropriate support and draw on local knowledge and networks, thereby enhancing the sustainability of reintegration efforts. Similarly, Johnson and William (2018) and Thompson (2020) highlight that community involvement promotes resilience among displaced populations by aligning reintegration efforts with the lived realities of returnees. Despite this promising potential, the quantitative findings from the Alamata case study reveal a **moderate level of agreement was observed** suggesting that while respondents acknowledge the importance of community participation, they remain uncertain about its current effectiveness.

This ambivalence is echoed in the voices of community members and returnees' themselves.in-depth interviewee 10, a former worker of Kebele 04, explained his experience as follows.

Soon after the returnees came back to their community, individually or in groups, we took several initiatives to welcome and assist them. We collected house equipment, kitchen utensils, and simple furniture such as chairs and stools from the community and offered these to the returnees to help them begin a new life. Additionally, we collected grains and food items and gave them to the returnees. However, he also noted that this initial support waned over time: Gradually, our motivation and inspiration towards helping the returnees declined because of a lack of coordination and proper guidance on how we could proceed further. The government representatives, who were themselves isolated and

living in a camp, did not engage in service delivery. The ongoing political ambiguity in the city, especially the insecurity that affected both the local residents and the returnees, discouraged us from continuing our support.[in-depth interviewee 10]

In addition to the idea expressed in the preceding paragraph a participant in the in-depth interviewee 11 who was a retired teacher and a resident of kebele 04 who was not displaced explained his idea as follows

The main reason for the struggle returnees faced is the lack of adequate support during their time of return. These returnees lacked access to job training, housing. The necessary political education which will help the society to think for the common good and live in harmony irrespective of differences in political ideology. The government should have worked to retain the social network which was disrupted during the war. And provide psychological support the returnees felt isolated un able to engage meaning fully in their community life the lack of proper reintegration programs and the government full intervention has left them in precarious situation , making it difficult for them to rebuild their lives[in-depth interviewee11]

This sentiment was reinforced by returnee's participant from Focus Group Discussion 2, who expressed their witness

At the beginning, Kebele 04 residents welcomed the returnees happily. They even prepared a welcoming party a joyous day. Seeing that they returned empty-handed, people, individually or in groups, identified their immediate needs. They contributed household items and distributed them to them. They happily started a new life. But gradually, the intrinsic motivation of the community to help the returnees weakened. This happened because of a lack of guidance and cooperation. The government intervention to help the returnees re-establish their lives was weak. Eventually, the community felt bored and withdrew their involvement in the returnee's cases.

These narratives support the argument by Hovil et al. (2014), who assert that community participation cannot be sustained without adequate capacity building, coordination, and long-term planning. The informants' experiences demonstrate that initial goodwill from the community can quickly dissipate in the absence of structured support and leadership. Moreover, the insecurity in Alamata further undermined efforts to sustain community engagement, leaving returnees in a vulnerable state.

The moderate perception score, alongside these qualitative insights, indicates a gap between the theoretical potential of community-based approaches and their practical implementation in Alamata. While community members expressed willingness to support returnees, their efforts were hampered by weak institutional backing, political instability, and lack of technical or logistical guidance. This situation reinforces the need for a strategic framework that empowers communities through training, resources, and formal partnerships. Community members should not be passive bystanders or temporary supporters; rather, they should be recognized as active stakeholders in the reintegration process.

In conclusion, the Alamata case illustrates that while community-based approaches hold significant promise; their success depends on sustained coordination, government facilitation, and targeted capacity building. The quotes from key informants and returnees reveal that the absence of structured support has led to disillusionment among community members and left returnees struggling to rebuild their lives. Future reintegration efforts must bridge this gap by integrating community-driven efforts into broader institutional strategies that are participatory, inclusive, and sustainable.

To effectively, address the challenge of war – induced returnees in Alamata city it was important to consider both the potential of community based approaches and the specific needs and concerns of the community members. By doing so, the community could work towards improving overall satisfaction and fostering a more engaged and active community.

4.5 Political Reintegration Challenges

Political reintegration challenges refer to the difficulties faced by individuals groups who have been marginalized or excluded from the political process, and the efforts to bring them back into the political mainstream In relation to this the Alamata 04 kebele war induced displaced returnee, the political reintegration is described in the next paragraphs

The strong disagreement with statements suggesting minimal political barriers (mean ≈ 1.42) reflects a widespread perception that political instability, discrimination, and marginalization are significant obstacles to reintegration. This is consistent with studies by Harild et al. (2014) and Betts & Collier (2017), who identify political conflict, ethnic tensions, and governance issues as primary barriers to stable reintegration in post-conflict settings. In Ethiopia, recent reports by FAO (2022) highlight that ongoing political tensions, especially in regions like Tigray, continue to impede access to basic services and social stability for returnees. These political challenges often exacerbate economic and social vulnerabilities, making reintegration efforts more complex and requiring targeted political solutions alongside social and economic interventions.

The statistical result obtained from the questionnaires' filled by the returnees indicates that political issue as one of the obstacles which hinders the ongoing reintegration processes resulted in instability and security tension. Similarly this is highlighted by

The in-depth interviewee 1 who was a high school teacher said —*There is a clear political divide in Alamata city. On one hand the Tigray ethnic group who claims Alamata city as part of Tigray Administration region. On the other hand the Amhara ethnic group claims that Alamata belongs to Amhara regional state and the third group who calls himself _Raya Rayuma believes that Alamata is neither belongs to Tigray regional state nor to Amhara regional state it belongs to the Raya Rayuma. He emphasized that It is in this deep political division with ethnic faction at the core of tension I myself always feel in secured.* He concluded [in-dept interviewee1]

In addition to this in-depth interviewee 1— A key informant 1 who was a vice head in the lab our and social affairs regional office , he was asked to describe about the situation of the returnees in Alamata city and whether the existing political atmosphere is conducive for the ongoing reintegration processes before the researcher embark on the field work , He noted that _*There was not well organized administrative body .There was not law and order The court did not start its work. Infact there were armed forces the TDF force. The federal army force and the federal police who were in charge of the command post. These forces were limited to keep the safety of the society by moving throughout the night by patrol In case they find some irregularities .They use military corporal punishment, they don't take any one who did wrong to the police station as there was no court .The federal police did not get into the peoples' day to day affairs to in force law and order. In short there were not administrative services.* [key informant 1]

Additionally, a former kebele administration worker key informant 4 and who was a resident of kebele 04, although the normal activities of the kebele have not fully resumed due to the war. He has taken the initiative to work on some community issues voluntarily within his capacity, when he was asked about the then current situation of Alamata particularly 04 Kebele's, political and security situation, he stated *'In our kebele there was a relatively better situation when it compared with the other kebele the reason was the TDF force camp was in our kebele, in addition there were many citizens who were affiliated to TDF army. Likewise, the government civil servants of various sectors were camped here in our kebele However, still crimes was increased. The morally depressed young returnees they drunk, gambled .and they were addicted individuals, they sometimes they quarreled and knifed each other, and disturb the community.*

Furthermore, there were occasions in which people were kidnapped and killed in outskirts of the city. ' [key informant 4]

Notably. A wealthy merchant who was a resident of 04 kebele [interviewee 1] who was not displaced stated the current state of the city he said, " Sadly we, are witnessing increasing division among people based on politics and ethnicity. The people used to live together in love despite their differences in their political and religious beliefs, but now, are deeply divided There's no mutual trust among people, even among the returnees themselves. Those who went to Tigray direction and those who were displaced to the Amhara region are not on good terms → currently this situation can undermine reintegration efforts by affecting mental health, access to resources, and community acceptance. "(interviewee1)

As it was observed during the field survey the government didn't work much on the politics to help the war induced displaced returnees to change their attitude and feeling they had during the war

Key [informant interviewee 3-] - a resident of 04 kebele explain-the then political situation was unhealthy, he noted that

People who used to live in kebele 04 on rental houses were leaving and relocating to other kebele, specifically to 02 kebele which was dominated by Amhara residents. This showed that ethnic and identity problems, were still escalating after returning from displacement, politically .nothing significant was done by the government to address or stop such situation of political tensions || he concluded[key informant3]

Furthermore,

Key informant 5. Addinisteror described the lack of peace and security as follows, " our situation here was very hard. We especially from Tigray we faced many problems we didn't have our own houses in the community we didn't have office in the community .Fearing the situation we live and worked in the camp. This alone demonstrated that there was a serious security issue 'he concluded (key informant5)

According to ,in-depth interviewee 2 who was a priest and a servant in the Endayosuss church 04 kebele he was not a displaced returnees himself', was asked a question about the peace and stability of the city after the two year protracted war. He responded as follows,

In the present time ,My sons May our creator send his mercy so that peace ,love and stability may reign, No one was genuinely working with the intension of bringing peace and reconciliation to the people .We people who lived together throughout our life did not trust each other now a days one sees the other negatively, with suspicion We religious fathers teach the necessity of peace and harmony for our people

to understand and internalized it in their day to day life . Yet it didn't bring much change .May the mercy of our creator descend upon us ' he said with deep concern [in-depth interviewee2]

In view of the above evidences the political reintegration challenges of war induced displaced returnees in Alamata city were significant and complex

*Similarly two teachers from in-depth interviewee1 and in-depth interviewee12 who were engaged in their part time work employed by the Ngos were asked how they felt about peace building and social cohesion and how their views were shaped by their past as they were displaced returnees ,experiences with displacement They explained _'that peace building and reconciliation had not been implemented **effectively**, one of these informant stated that The NGOs did some efforts on this issues ,the government had not significantly contribute to the work of reintegration. '[in-depth interviewee and 12]*

Informant from in-depth interview 1 a high school director , said that , 'people generally want to live together in peace as a community ,but politicians seemed not to desire this they prefer conflict as they find political gain in it.' He continued that apolitical leader who saw me working with the NGOs and he discouraged me by saying that look, ' If there is peace our revolution would weakened.' He said, and I realized that these politicians they did not heartily support the reason I guess, _the reason was that the benefits of war outweigh the potential for peace. '[in-depth interviewee1]

The mean score of 1.42 obtained from the questionnaire suggested low level of satisfaction engagement among respondents regarding political reintegration process This indicated that there might be a lack of trust or confidence in the government ability to effectively address the need and concerns of the returnees

The information gathered from the key informants regarding peace and stability in Alamata was generally negative based on the situation analysis This suggested that there might be ongoing instability in the city which could further complicated the reintegration for the returnees.

The findings of this study highlight that political instability, ethnic division, and poor governance have significantly hindered the reintegration of war-induced displaced returnees in Alamata city. The responses strongly indicate that political reintegration remains a significant challenge.. This aligns with the conclusions of Harild et al. (2014) and Betts and Collier (2017), who noted that unresolved political conflict, governance vacuums, and ethnic marginalization are key barriers to sustainable post-conflict recovery. Similarly, a 2022 FAO report pointed out that persistent political tensions in Ethiopia, particularly in Tigray and surrounding regions, continue to

obstruct the return and reintegration process by undermining access to basic services, security, and social cohesion.

These broader patterns are reflected in the lived experiences of local residents and returnees in Alamata. **Key informant interviewee 1**, a high school teacher, illustrated the deep political and ethnic divisions in the city:

"There is a clear political divide in Alamata city. On one hand, the Tigray ethnic group claims Alamata as part of the Tigray administration. On the other hand, the Amhara group claims it belongs to the Amhara regional state. A third group, the _Raya Rayuma,‘ believes Alamata belongs to neither but should be recognized as its own administrative identity. I myself always feel insecure in this deep political division with ethnic factionalism at its core."

These tensions not only reflect historical grievances but also result in ongoing distrust and fear, further complicating the reintegration of displaced individuals. **Interviewee 2**, a vice head at the regional labor and social affairs office, described the administrative breakdown during the post-conflict period:

There was no well-organized administrative body. No law and order. The courts were not functioning. Armed groups like the TDF, the federal army, and the federal police were patrolling the city. The federal police did not involve themselves in day-to-day civil affairs, and instead, corporal punishments were used for enforcing order. In short, there was no administrative service.¶

Similarly ,in focus group discussion explained on the ongoing instability within Alamata city ,primarily due to political and security tensions The Tigray fighters including those affiliated with the TPLF, were still active the city There was a clear political divide with Amahara supporters influencing the city stability The government did not get involved resolving the dispute with returnees and those who remained in the city

Similarly In the second focus group discussion in Alamata city, 04 kebele the political situation was described as a fear example of a political paradox Participants anonymously pointed out that there is no responsible government body that is accountable for any events or decisions. In short, the people Alamata are livening a political paradox despite some political engagement in the past; the population has lost faith in the political and administrative system this loss of trust is due to the lack of political clarity and support from the government.

Such an absence of governance structures corroborates findings by Betts and Collier (2017), who assert that in post-conflict areas lacking rule of law, reintegration processes are often ineffective or entirely absent.

A former kebele administrator reinforced this account by highlighting the breakdown in social order and increased criminality: This group discussion expressed the weak governmental response to the social welfare and security challenges. They noted that the government had minimal influence in ensuring peace and that there were lacks of effective governance to mediate disputes

In our kebele, there was relatively better security compared to others due to the TDF camp presence and many affiliated civilians. Still, crimes increased. The morally depressed youth many of them returnees—became addicted to substances, quarreled, and sometimes stabbed each other. There were even kidnappings and killings on the outskirts of the city.¶

This rise in crime and social instability among young returnees' points to what Harild et al. (2014) describe as the failure of reintegration efforts in politically insecure environments, especially when ex-combatants and displaced youth lack livelihood opportunities and psychosocial support.

Interviewee 1, a wealthy merchant from Kebele 04, observed the societal consequences of ethnic polarization:

Sadly, we are witnessing increasing divisions based on politics and ethnicity. People who used to live together in peace are now deeply divided. There is no mutual trust, even among returnees. Those who returned from Tigray and those displaced to Amhara do not get along.¶

Such erosion of social trust underscores the point made by Betts and Collier (2017), who argue that the success of reintegration depends heavily on local perceptions of fairness, inclusion, and shared identity elements that are severely lacking in Alamata.

Interviewee 3, another local official, added that displacement had deepened mistrust and ethnic segregation:

People who used to live in Kebele 04 on rental houses were relocating to Kebele 02, which was dominated by the Amhara population. This indicates that ethnic and identity-based divisions have

escalated even after the displacement. Politically, nothing significant was done to address or stop such developments.¶

The situation was even more dire for civil servants from Tigray, such as **Interviewee 4**, who explained:

We didn't have our own houses in the community. We were forced to live and work in a camp, fearing the local situation. This alone shows how serious the security issue was.¶

Religious leaders also voiced concern over the breakdown of communal harmony. **Interviewee 1**, a respected priest from Kebele 04, remarked:

We people who lived together our entire lives do not trust each other anymore. One sees the other with suspicion. We preach peace and reconciliation, but it has not brought much change. May the mercy of our Creator be upon us.

¶*My sons may our creator send his mercy. —This is a quote from the priest interviewee who is deeply concerned about the challenges of reintegrating war-affected returnees. The statement reflects a deep sense of sorrow and frustration regarding the difficulties faced in the reintegration of war affected returnees. The speaker expresses a profound concern that peace, love, and stability are not being achieved because no one is genuinely working with the intention of bringing peace and reconciliation to the people.*

The phrase My, sons May our creator send his mercy,¶ suggests a prayer or heart felt wish for divine intervention or guidance. It conveys a belief that only through the mercy and grace of a higher power achieved. The speaker is likely coming from a place of hope, but also of despaired , as he feels that the effort of people are not aligned with the true goals of peace and healing.

The line,¶ No one was genuinely working with the intention of bringing peace and reconciliation to the people.¶ Indicates a belief that the current efforts are not sincere or effective. The speaker may feel that the political social, or economic systems in place are not truly committed to the well-being of the returnees, and that the process of reintegration is being hindered by a lack of genuine intent.

The final line, May the mercy of our creator descends upon us¶ is a plea for divine intervention, recognition that human efforts alone are insufficient to achieve the desired outcomes. It reflects a belief in the power of faith and spiritual guidance in overcoming the challenges of war and its aftermath.

The above quoted statement of the priest statement can be interpreted as a reflection of the challenges faced in the reintegration of war – affected returnees. It highlights the emotional and spiritual toll of war, the difficulty of rebuilding trust and stability in a fractured society, and the hope that divine intervention or a higher purpose can guide the process of reconciliation. It also underscores the importance of genuine, sincere efforts in the reintegration process. The speaker is likely calling for a more holistic, compassionate, and long-term approach to helping returnees reintegrate into society, and one that is not driven by political or economic interests, but by true desire for peace and healing.

Furthermore, two local teachers who were also returnees and temporarily employed by NGOs emphasized the lack of genuine government involvement in peace building. One teacher noted:

The NGOs tried to work on reconciliation, but the government did not contribute significantly to reintegration.¶

Another added:

People want to live in peace, but politicians don't. A political leader once told me, 'If there is peace, our revolution will weaken.' That's when I understood that some leaders benefit more from war than peace.¶

These candid remarks point to a disturbing trend identified by scholars such as Betts and Collier (2017), where political elites in fragile states often exploit conflict for personal or political gain, thereby obstructing meaningful reconciliation.

Taken together, the **low score** coupled with these narratives, demonstrates that political reintegration in Alamata is not only lagging but is actively undermined by structural instability, ethnic division, and weak political will. The insights from key informants clearly show that the returnees' reintegration is jeopardized by unresolved political grievances, the absence of credible governance, and a lack of coordinated peace building efforts. Without targeted interventions that address these root causes including justice reform, inclusive dialogue, and community reconciliation reintegration efforts are likely to remain stalled and fragile.

4.6 Economic and Livelihood Outcomes

In analyzing the economic and livelihood aspects of a society, it is essential to consider the interplay between economic systems, resource distribution, and the well-being of the individuals. Economic factors such as employment, income levels and access to services directly influence the quality of life and overall development [Smith, 2018]. Livelihood, in this context, refers to the means by which people sustain themselves, encouraging not only economic activities but also social, cultural, and environmental dimensions [World Bank, 2020]. Understanding these elements requires a comprehensive approach that draws on economic theories, empirical data, and sociological insights. In relation to this

The SPSS results revealed a low mean score for the statement assessing the sufficiency of economic support and livelihood opportunities for returnees. This suggests a strong consensus among respondents that their economic conditions post-return remain precarious and unsupported. The data supports the conclusion that war-induced displaced returnees in Alamata face significant economic hardships, with very limited access to employment, entrepreneurship, or financial support services.

This finding is consistent with existing literature. According to the **UNHCR (2018)**, economic reintegration is often obstructed by the loss of productive assets such as land, livestock, or business infrastructure. Similarly, **ILO (2019)** explains that displacement disrupts traditional income sources and severs economic networks, reducing displaced individuals' ability to resume economic activities. **The World Bank (2018)** also emphasizes that large-scale displacement can depress local economies due to reduced productivity, loss of investment, and strained public

services. Concerning, support interviewee who was a farmer and used to live in 04 kebele explained as follows,

When the government relocated us from the places where we were displaced we had high expectations that we would receive financial support, seeds fertilizers, and land to help restart our farming activities. For instance, I was a farmer and had a small plot of land before I was forced to leave due to the war I had invested years into cultivating that land, building up my resources and developing my skills as a farmer. However, now that I have returned have found that there is no support available, and I am struggling to begin farming business again without the necessary resources. The lack of support has left me feeling defeated and uncertain about my future, as I am unable to provide for my family or to continue the work that I had spent so many years building. (Interviewee interviewee9)

These theoretical insights were directly echoed by **Key Informant 2**, the zoba head of the Labor and Social Affairs Office, who described the returnees' economic struggles:

Regarding the economic life of the returnees in the post-war period, significant tensions had arisen between the returnees and those who remained behind. Many returnees reported that their personal belongings kitchen items, furniture, beds, wardrobes, and even some animals were looted or taken during their absence. Some who entrusted property to neighbors or friends were denied it upon return. This situation led to widespread resentment and conflict, even among close friends and relatives. The government didn't help in the restoration of the properties of the returnees. However community mediators helped a lot .Hence some returnees got their lost properties yet many of them haven't got yet.(interviewee of key informant 2)

This testimonial illustrates how **economic loss is compounded by social fragmentation**, aligning with **ILO (2018)**, which underscores the role of social exclusion in amplifying economic vulnerabilities. The key informant continued:

Returnees struggled to rebuild their lives without sufficient income, stable employment, or meaningful support. As a result, many lived in frustration and instability and some were drawn into disputes, theft, or criminal activity due to lack of alternatives. This economic hardship deeply fractured the social fabric.¶(Key informant 2)

Such outcomes also reflect **UNHCR's (2018)** conclusion that prolonged economic marginalization not only endangers the returnees' well-being but may also contribute to rising crime and instability in post-conflict regions. **ILO (2019)** highlights that without government-led vocational training, access to credit, and structured employment schemes, economic reintegration remains elusive.

This sentiment was reinforced by the same official, who criticized the minimal governmental response:

The government should not be confined to trivial support that doesn't address the real economic needs of returnees. Rather, it should launch projects like vocational skills development training and facilitate loans that help returnees become self-supportive and successfully reintegrate into the community.¶

In addition to economic loss, displacement caused a disruption in career trajectories and job placements. This was evident in the remarks of a returnee teacher interviewed during the in-depth interviews:

When we were displaced, we had many advantages we were employed in private schools in Mekelle. Here, we have no supplemental income other than our salary. Our relationships with colleagues are not the same, especially with those who have returned from the Amhara region. We are not on good terms.(Interviewee 2)

This aligns with **ILO's (2018)** assertion that reintegration is not merely about returning physically to one's home region, but also reestablishing social networks and workplace belonging, which are often eroded during displacement. Economic frustrations were also exacerbated by the absence of political and ideological support, as the same informant noted: Further the idea in the preceding paragraph reinforced by the focus group discussion 1 who explained the situation that

Both the community and government failed to provide us with political or ideological education after displacement. We returned not because we had strong support, but because we had no legal alternative. Reintegration has not been supported effectively, and we feel it every day.

This underscores the argument by UNHCR (2018) and Betts & Collier (2017) that effective reintegration requires not only economic assistance but also political stability, inclusion, and psychosocial reintegration strategies.

4.7 Social Reintegration Challenges

Social integration refers to the process by which individuals reintegrate into society after experiencing periods of exclusion, such as displacement mental health issues or economic hardships (Smith& Jonnos,2021),This process is often complicated by social stigma, limited access to resources, and systemic barriers that hinder full participation in community life .Effective reitgration requires not only individual effort but also supportive policies and community initiatives that address the root causes of exclusion and promote inclusivity (Brown,2020). Understanding these challenges is essential for creating environments that foster resilience and long –term social cohesion in regard to this,

The SPSS results yielded a mean score of 1.26, indicating strong disagreement with the idea that social discrimination is minimal. This low score reflects the returnees' widespread experience of exclusion, marginalization, and broken social ties, and reveals that reintegration efforts have not sufficiently addressed the social dimensions of recovery in Alamata city. Respondents clearly expressed that social tensions,

property disputes, mistrust, and isolation have persisted or worsened since their return, despite some informal reconciliation attempts at the local level.

This aligns with global findings on post-conflict reintegration. According to UNHCR (2018) and the International Rescue Committee (2018), displaced populations often encounter substantial barriers to reintegration due to eroded trust, loss of social capital, and stigmatization. The Save the Children (2018) report further highlights that these barriers can result in prolonged psychosocial distress, deteriorated community relations, and weakened access to essential services.

In-depth interviewee 2 vividly described the **social isolation resulting from economic hardship**, stating:

Although traditional community like ikub(rotating saving groups) , Iddir and weddings still occurred, my current economic situation didn't allow me to participate. I didn't have a stable income or permanent job. I was almost neglected in weddings and festivals. I spent my time ensuring I had an income to support my livelihood. In short, the deep social bond in our community has significantly weakened.¶(In-depth interviewee2)

This comment illustrates the intersection between economic exclusion and social alienation, confirming Johnson (2019) and Smith (2020), who note that disrupted livelihoods often lead to decreased participation in community life, thereby reinforcing marginalization. Williams (2021) also emphasizes that returnees may struggle with cultural and linguistic reintegration, especially when displacement has caused shifts in norms and identities.

One in-depth interviewee, a farmer who lived in kebele 04, expressed deep frustration:

I was born and raised in kebele 04. Before the war, I owned farmland, oxen, cows, sheep, and donkeys. I entrusted some animals to a friend when I was displaced. When I returned, not only were my house and belongings gone, but my animals were also denied. That I became now dependent on aids. I started to hate everyone. I lost trust in everyone in the place I've lived for 48 years.¶

This statement reflects Brown (2022), who argues that the loss of property, betrayal of trust, and lack of restitution mechanisms can lead to lasting emotional trauma and damage social cohesion. As seen in Alamata, property-related conflicts between returnees and residents who stayed behind were widespread.

Key Informant Interviewee 3, head of the Labor and Social Affairs Office of Alamata, confirmed this trend:

After returnees came back, many misunderstandings arose. Property looting during displacement caused resentment. Although some belongings were returned in kebele 04 due to community elders and religious

leaders, in other kebeles returnees are still in conflict with residents who remained behind. Relationships between close friends and families have been disrupted. (Key informant interviewee3)

This shows how the absence of formal conflict resolution mechanisms has pushed communities to rely on informal structures, which, while helpful in some cases, are inadequate in others—further complicating reintegration.

Moreover, as voiced by a middle-aged Muslim woman who was not displaced in-depth interviewee 4 that children's education was politicized and disrupted, contributing to parental distress and social division,

We faced problems these days on education. Sometimes classes were taught in Amharic, then suddenly Tigrigna was imposed without any standardized curriculum. This confusion caused distress. Many of us preferred to keep our children out of school due to the lack of consistent policy. There was no authority to resolve these issues. (in-depth interviewee4)

Both returnees and those who stayed in their home face shared social problems that is in both focus group discussion (FGD) that even after returning from displacement, education was not functioning properly. Disputes over the language of instruction—whether it should be in Amharic or Tigrigna, have caused inconsistency and confusion in schools. At one point, classes were held in Amharic for a month, in another in Tigrigna, but with no standardized curriculum and alternating languages, children have become distressed and many remain out of school. There is no clear decision making authority to resolve these issues, leaving families frustrated uncertain about their children's education.

This supports Smith (2020) and Brown (2022), who stress the need for stable and depoliticized social institutions like schools to serve as points of reconnection and integration, not division.

The overall mean score of 1.26 underscores the profound dissatisfaction among respondents with current social reintegration efforts. Qualitative findings further illuminate systemic and interpersonal challenges, including disrupted relationships, eroded trust, unresolved property disputes, instability in the education system, and the absence of government-led reconciliation initiatives. One participant in FGD 1 poignantly captured this reality: *Our properties were looted. Some neighbors whom we trusted denied us. The government did not help us restore them. Only in our kebele, through elders, did some of us get back items. In other areas, there was no restitution. People now live side by side, not together. We cannot live in peace and harmony in the place we were born.* This testimony reflects a broader pattern of coexistence without meaningful reconciliation, where structural failures and broken social bonds perpetuate division rather than healing. *Our properties were looted. Some neighbors whom we trusted denied us. The government did not help us restore them. Only in our kebele, through elders, did some of us get back items. In other areas, there was no restitution. People now live side by side, not together. We cannot live in peace and harmony in the place we were born*

4.8 Psychological Reintegration Needs and Support

Psychological reintegration refers to the process of restoring an individual's mental, emotional, and social well-being after experiencing trauma, stress or significant life changes. This process is essential for individuals to regain a sense of stability, purpose, and connection with their environment. Support systems, including family, friends, mental health professionals and community resources, play a crucial role in facilitating this reintegration. Research highlights the importance of a holistic approach that addresses both the psychological and social dimensions of recovery. For instance, a study by Smith and Jones (2021) emphasizes that effective psychological reintegration requires not only individual resilience but also a

supportive ecosystem that fosters healing and growth understanding these needs and supports is fundamental to developing effective interventions and policies that promote long-term mental health and well-being.

Accordingly, the study revealed a mean score of 4.56, indicating a very high acknowledgment of psychological needs among returnees. This suggests that participants strongly recognize the importance of addressing mental health as part of the reintegration process. Furthermore, there is a clear perception that support mechanisms for mental health are both available and effective. These findings align with existing literature, which underscores the crucial role of psychological well-being in facilitating successful reintegration. The strong recognition of mental health challenges highlights a growing awareness and responsiveness to the emotional and psychological dimensions faced by returnees.

Psychological reintegration is a crucial component of post-displacement recovery, yet it remains significantly under-addressed in the context of conflict-induced returnees in Alamata. Many returnees reported experiencing emotional and psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, grief, and trauma-related symptoms stemming from the violence, displacement, and loss they endured. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2018), psychological trauma is one of the most persistent and damaging effects of forced displacement, often leading to long-term mental health issues if left untreated. Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2017) emphasizes that mental health support is essential in post-conflict recovery, noting that untreated psychological conditions can hinder individuals' ability to reintegrate socially and economically.

In this study, respondents from interviews and focus group discussions consistently highlighted the absence of mental health services or psychosocial support from both government and NGOs. Some participants expressed feelings of abandonment and isolation, indicating that they had no safe space to express their emotions or seek healing. This lack of support not only prolongs individual suffering but also weakens community cohesion and delays the reintegration process (UNHCR, 2020). Psychological recovery is foundational to rebuilding lives, restoring dignity, and ensuring long-term stability. Therefore, the integration of community-based mental health services, trauma counseling, and psychosocial support programs is urgently needed to facilitate effective and sustainable reintegration (IOM, 2019; Smith & Jones, 2015).

An informant 3 from the head of the Labour and Social Affairs Office of Alamata city explained the situation in 04 kebele in Alamata city a densely populated kebele when compared with the other kebeles in Alamata city as follows

That there were serious psychological problems among returnees, including distress expressed through reliance on subsistence living, substance addiction, violent behavior, the spread of diseases, and exposure to unsafe environments. Many individuals were also labeled as thieves and gradually became neglected by the community. (interviewee informant 3), Similarly, a high school director shared his idea during an interview, “ noting that NGOs such as OSSHD (Organization for Social Services for Health and Development) and SYLA (Somali Youth Learners Association) have provided valuable training programs in trauma healing, peace building, conflict resolution, social cohesion, and stress management. These initiatives have significantly enhanced the skills of returnees and the broader community, equipping them with tools to navigate post-conflict challenges. However, despite these positive contributions, the overall impact has been limited, indicating a need for more sustained support and expanded outreach to effectively address the deep-rooted challenges faced by affected individuals. While OSSHD, SYLA, and other organizations have played a crucial role in improving community skills, longer-term interventions and broader engagement are essential to achieve lasting change in the region. (in-depth interviewee 1)

Furthermore, a participant of this study from interviewee 1 he was asked that what lesson returnees learned from the Alamata displaced returnees what lesson did others learn The Alamata reasons for displacement differs from other displacement because it was political as well as ethnic and a question of identity .Once displacement rose by ethnic cause it would continue from (generation to generation .It would none stop. (In-depth interviewee 1)

The section on psychological reintegration provides a critical analysis of an often neglected dimension of post-conflict recovery: the mental and emotional well-being of returnees. While much attention is typically given to physical reintegration such as housing, employment, and basic services this section rightly emphasizes that psychological healing is equally important for sustainable reintegration. Drawing on both primary data (interviews and FGDs with returnees) and secondary sources (e.g., IDMC, WHO, UNHCR, IOM), the section effectively triangulates data to validate its claims.

The evidence indicates that trauma, grief, and mental distress are widespread among returnees, yet institutional responses have been minimal or absent. This gap reflects a broader pattern noted in global displacement literature, where mental health is underfunded and under prioritized (WHO, 2017). The use of

citations from reputable international organizations lends credibility and global context to the local findings, showing that this is not only a local problem but part of a larger structural issue in post-conflict recovery efforts.

Furthermore, the section critiques the lack of psychosocial infrastructure and points out the consequences: prolonged suffering, weakened community ties, and hindered reintegration. These insights underscore the idea that reintegration is not merely logistical but deeply human, requiring emotional and psychological support as much as material aid.

In summary, this analysis shows that for reintegration to be truly holistic and successful, policies and programs must include mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services. The section provides a strong argument for integrating trauma-informed care into displacement response strategies and presents a compelling case for urgent intervention by both government and NGOs in the psychological domain.

Notably, Psychological reintegration is a critical aspect of the overall reintegration process for individuals returning to their communities after experiencing displacement due to war or other forms of conflict. The psychological needs of these individuals can be complex and multifaceted, requiring a range of support services to address. Research has shown that psychological trauma can have a significant impact on the ability of individuals to reintegrate into their communities and rebuild their lives. [e.g. Kirmayer, 2000]. Therefore, it is essential to understand the psychological needs of war displaced returnees and the types of support services that can be provided to help them achieve successful reintegration.

In addition to the psychological needs of war displaced returnees, it is also important to consider the broader social and economic factors that can impact their reintegration. For example, research has shown that social support networks can play a critical role in the reintegration process [e.g. Norris 2009] therefore, it is essential to consider the types of social support services that can be provided to help war displaced returnees rebuild their social networks and reconnect with their communities.

Overall, the psychological, social and economic needs of war displaced returnees are complex and multifaceted, requiring a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to address. By understanding the needs of these individuals and providing appropriate support services, it is possible to help them achieve successful reintegration and build their lives in the aftermath.

Concerning psychological needs and support the findings demonstrated a very high acknowledgement of psychological needs (mean=4.56), showing that returnees recognize mental health as a major post conflict concern.

This echoes Kirmayer et al (2011) and Eisenbruch(1991)who argue that unresolved trauma and emotional distress are central barriers to successful reintegration.UNHCR(2014)also emphasizes the integration of psychological support into reintegration programs as a critical component of restoring dignity and resilience.

An official from the Labour and social Affairs office provided a detailed account of these issues. Many returnees are suffering silently. Their trauma is visible-addiction, aggression, despair. The lack of structured psychological support makes it worse. Some have been criminalized or socially excluded because their suffering was misunderstood.‘

Similarly, a school director highlighted the limited yet meaning full impact of NGO efforts. NGOs like OSSHD and SYLA delivered trainings in trauma healing and peace building. Conflict resolution, and stress management. These helped build skills ,but the coverage was limited The efforts were not enough for the deep rooted trauma we live with they said This align with literature from IRC (2018)and Save the children(2018) which stress that short term NGO interventions are insufficient Unless part of broader, long-term frameworks.

Another informant, interviewee1, reflected on the broader political and ethnic implications of the trauma;

Alamata’s displacement wasn’t only due to war-it was political and ethnic, tied to identity. And once displacement and conflict is rooted in ethnicity, it continues from generation to generation.‘

In summary, the high SPSS mean score9(s indicates strong acknowledgment of psychological needs among returnees. however 4.56) key informants accounts contract the notion that mental health services are sufficiently available or effective. The dissonance between quantitative optimism and qualitative reality reveals that returnees may be aware of the importance of mental health, yet lack real access to institutional long-term psychological cares

Both the literature and informant narratives call for scaling up community- based mental health services, trauma counseling, and inclusive peace building programs. Unless these psychological dimensions are addressed, reintegration efforts are likely to remain incomplete and unsustainable.

CHAPTER -5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion and Implications

The low SPSS mean score (1.26) and corroborating interview responses paint a clear picture of widespread and unresolved social reintegration issues among war-displaced returnees in Alamata. These issues are not merely remnants of conflict they are active obstacles to peace building, local development, and social cohesion. Literature by Brown (2022), Johnson (2019), and UNHCR (2018) confirms that such challenges are predictable in post-conflict contexts and require intentional, inclusive, and community-driven solutions.

Thus, for reintegration to be successful, policy interventions must include:

To support the successful reintegration of war-displaced returnees, a multifaceted approach is essential. This includes the establishment of formal mechanisms for property dispute resolution to address lingering conflicts over looted or lost belongings. Community reconciliation programs should be implemented to rebuild trust and restore broken social ties. Additionally, culturally appropriate mental health support is crucial to help individuals cope with trauma and emotional distress. The development of inclusive, depoliticized educational environments can ensure stable learning conditions for children and reduce identity-based tensions. Finally, economic support that promotes social participation, such as vocational training and access to small business loans, can help returnees regain stability and reintegrate meaningfully into community life *the community and government failed to provide us with political or ideological education after displacement. We returned not because we had strong support, but because we had no legal alternative. Reintegration has not been supported effectively, and we feel it every day.*¶

This underscores the argument by UNHCR (2018) and Betts & Collier (2017) that effective reintegration requires not only economic assistance but also political stability, inclusion, and psychosocial reintegration strategies.

5.2 Recommendations for Improving Reintegration

Respondents' strong agreement (mean ≈ 4.16) that tailored support, increased community participation, and stakeholder collaboration are necessary mirrors global best practices. Harild et al. (2014) argue that sustainable reintegration depends on coordinated efforts that are context-specific and culturally sensitive. Similarly, Shaw (2010) emphasizes the importance of participatory approaches involving returnees, local communities, and government agencies. The literature suggests that multi-stakeholder platforms, policy reforms, and community engagement are essential ingredients for successful reintegration, which the data substantiate as priorities.

5.3 Reliability of the Instrument

Cronbach's alpha was 0.767, indicating acceptable internal consistency. The instrument is reliable for measuring perceptions across the various dimensions of reintegration.

Significantly to the successful of the program. This involvement and social support individual to Alamata war displaced reintegrating but also facilitated the development of a strong of community and belonging. The active participation of communities in the early stages of reintegration laid a solid foundation for the continued success of program, highlighting the importance of community-based approaches in addressing challenges related to Alamata city war displaced returnees' reintegration.

5.4 Summary of Triangulation

Overall, the findings are strongly supported by existing literature, which collectively emphasizes that reintegration is a multifaceted process influenced by political stability, economic opportunities, social cohesion, and mental health. The consistency across the data and scholarly reports underscores that challenges such as inadequate organizational support, social discrimination, political conflict, and economic hardship are common barriers faced by returnees in Ethiopia and similar contexts. Furthermore, the identified need for strengthened community participation, stakeholder collaboration, and tailored interventions echoes global best practices and offers clear directions for policymakers and practitioners.

5.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that the primary reason for the displacement of individuals in Alamata city was political and ethnic conflict, as reported by 86.6% of respondents. Only a minority (13.3%) indicated economic hardship as the main cause. These findings were consistent across interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant responses. Ethnic identity significantly influenced the direction of displacement, with Tigrayans seeking refuge in areas like Mohoni and Mekele, while Amhara individuals fled to the Amhara region. The displacement experience itself was traumatic and challenging, involving loss of

property, physical danger, and psychological distress. Many returnees, particularly women and single mothers, experienced social rejection upon returning, often being stigmatized or abandoned by their families.

In terms of support, both government and NGOs were perceived as largely ineffective. A mean score of 1.64 indicated a negative perception of their roles, characterized by irregular and insufficient food aid, poor coordination, and lack of follow-up. Many civil servants had themselves been displaced and were not in a position to provide services, exacerbating the problem. Furthermore, aid distribution was seen as discriminatory and mismanaged, with no systematic approach to identify and prioritize the most vulnerable returnees.

Economically, returnees faced significant reintegration challenges. Many lost their livelihoods, assets, and jobs due to looting and the destruction of property during displacement. Previously self-sufficient individuals became dependent on aid or resorted to underpaid informal work. Educated returnees, particularly women, also struggled with joblessness and financial insecurity. Community-based approaches were viewed with moderate optimism, with a mean score of 2.56, suggesting that while there was initial enthusiasm and effort from local communities to support returnees, this support declined over time due to lack of government coordination, political instability, and limited resources.

The study also found significant institutional gaps. There was no clear government body tasked with managing reintegration, and service delivery was hindered by insecurity and lack of trust among civil servants. Returnees felt abandoned and neglected, especially in areas like housing, employment, and psychological support. Many expressed dissatisfaction with both the quantity and quality of assistance they received. Focus group discussions further emphasized these challenges, highlighting instances of family

rejection, social isolation, and deteriorating mental health among returnees, particularly women left widowed or with children.

Overall, the findings underline the urgent need for a comprehensive reintegration strategy that includes stronger government leadership, improved coordination with NGOs, the introduction of sustainable livelihood programs, and the mobilization of community-based initiatives. Addressing the unique social, economic, and psychological needs of returnees will be critical for rebuilding stable and inclusive communities in post-conflict Alamata.

5.6 Discussion of Findings in Relation to Theoretical and Literature Frameworks

The study on displacement and reintegration challenges in Alamata city closely aligns with established theories on forced migration and post-conflict recovery. The main cause of displacement stems from political and ethnic conflict, as reported by 86.6% of respondents. This supports the Internal Displacement Theory, which states that violence and persecution force people to flee within their own country (UNHCR, 2019). The ethnic aspects of displacement, where Tigrayans and Amharas sought refuge within their ethnic groups, show how conflict divides communities along identity lines, a trend noted in conflict literature (IDMC, 2017). Returnees reported traumatic experiences, including loss of property, physical danger, and psychological distress. These experiences reflect broader findings about the complex effects of forced migration documented by UNHCR (2020) and the International Rescue Committee (2018).

The economic hardships faced by returnees highlight the importance of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework in post-conflict situations. The near-total collapse of income sources, from looted businesses to destroyed farms, shows the significant depletion of all five types of capital identified in the SLF. The study found that educated women encounter specific barriers to employment, underscoring the impact of gender on human capital loss. Additionally, the reported aid mismanagement (mean score: 1.64) indicates institutional failures in restoring financial and physical resources. These findings reinforce DFID's (1999) assertion that recovery must consider all livelihood aspects at the same time. Moderate optimism surrounding community-based approaches (mean score: 2.56) initially supports the SLF's focus on local solutions. However, the decline in support due to lack of resources shows the framework's warning against relying too much on informal systems without proper structures.

Social Capital Theory is particularly useful in understanding the study's findings about reintegration hurdles. The ethnic patterns of displacement routes highlight the strong bonding social capital within communities. However, the stigmatization of returnees, especially single mothers, shows a severe breakdown of bridging capital between groups. This supports Putnam's (2000) argument about the contradictory nature of social capital in divided societies. The community's initial welcome, followed by rising hostility, echoes Colletta and Cullen's (2000) insights about the limitations of goodwill in post-conflict environments. Strained resources and unresolved trauma gradually weaken temporary solidarity. The study documents that women face additional exclusion, rejected both as returnees and as female heads of households, offering a vital intersectional perspective often overlooked in standard social capital analyses.

The Push-Pull-Mooring Model helps analyze the return dynamics in Alamata. The strong push factor of ethnic violence aligns with Böcker's (1994) findings that conflict is the leading cause of displacement. Ethnic homelands serve as pull destinations, demonstrating that the need for safety outweighs economic factors during the early post-conflict period. The mooring factors, particularly the weak institutional support and ongoing community tensions, clarify why many returns remain unstable. This aligns with recent IOM (2019) research on "fragile returns." The reported discrimination in aid acts as a significant obstacle, worsening return challenges and emphasizing the model's focus on institutional factors for successful reintegration.

The reintegration challenges in Alamata reflect the complex nature of return outlined by UNHCR (2004) and IOM (2015). Returnees face economic struggles, from relying on aid to losing skills, mirroring Rogge's (1994) concept of the "reintegration gap" between immediate survival and long-term sustainability. The social rejection experienced by returnees, particularly women, supports UNDP's (2019) concerns about the "social limbo" faced by returning populations. Reports of psychological distress validate World Bank (2017) research on the unseen wounds of displacement. The most troubling finding in the study is the lack of institutional reintegration frameworks, echoing IPI's (2019) critiques of makeshift approaches to post-conflict recovery. The difference between initial community support and later withdrawal highlights the "temporal mismatch" problem noted by ILO (2018), where humanitarian efforts seldom match real recovery needs.

Ultimately, the study advocates for integrated, theory-based approaches to reintegration. The alignment of evidence across various frameworks suggests that effective responses must address livelihood restoration (as per SLF), social reconciliation (according to Social Capital Theory), institutional reform (based on the

PPM Model), and psychological healing (as discussed in reintegration literature) at the same time. The unique vulnerabilities of women and single mothers call for gender-sensitive adjustments in all these approaches. By showing how these theories play out in Alamata's context, the study validates these academic frameworks and illustrates their practical relevance for policymakers facing similar post-conflict issues elsewhere.

5.7 Conclusions

The findings highlight that the reintegration process in Alamata faces complex challenges spanning political, economic, social, and psychological domains. Addressing these issues requires a holistic, coordinated approach that involves government agencies, NGOs, communities, and returnees themselves. It is evident that current support mechanisms are insufficient, and efforts should be intensified to create enabling environments for sustainable reintegration.

5.8 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and supported by relevant literature, the following recommendations are proposed:

- First, enhancing stakeholder coordination is essential. A centralized coordination platform involving government agencies, NGOs, community leaders, and returnees should be established to streamline efforts, share resources, and ensure accountability in reintegration programs (UNHCR, 2014; Kibreab, 2009). Equally important is the promotion of community-led initiatives. Encouraging active community participation in designing and implementing reintegration activities fosters local ownership and sustainability. Capacity-building programs can empower local actors and strengthen social cohesion (Matsuyama, 2018; Shaw, 2010).
- Addressing political barriers is another key component. Advocating for political stability and inclusive governance can help reduce marginalization and discrimination against returnees. This requires the active engagement of local authorities and policymakers to create a supportive environment for reintegration (Harild et al., 2014; Betts & Collier, 2017). Furthermore, economic independence is vital for successful reintegration. Tailored livelihood programs should be implemented to provide skills training, access to microcredit, and support in market linkages, enabling returnees to rebuild their lives economically (Fikre et al., 2018; Betts et al., 2011).

- In parallel, combating social discrimination is crucial to reintegration success. Awareness campaigns and community dialogues should be launched to reduce stigmatization and promote the social acceptance of returnees, thus fostering both social cohesion and mental well-being (UNHCR, 2020; Matsuyama, 2018). To address the psychological effects of displacement, psychosocial support services must be integrated into reintegration programs. Accessible mental health care, trauma recovery, and community-based support systems are essential for holistic recovery (Kirmayer et al., 2011; Eisenbruch, 1991).
- Finally, robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are necessary to assess the effectiveness of reintegration interventions. These systems enable timely adjustments and support evidence-based decision-making, ensuring that programs remain responsive and impactful over time. In addition to the above recommendation supported by the relevant literature, it is recommended that policy makers, development agencies, and local communities should adopt a multi-faceted coordinated and sustainable approach to support the reintegration of returnees in post-displacement context.
- It is recommended that future interventions should focus on strengthening community-based support systems through capacity building, resource allocation and long-term planning.
- Enhancing government coordination to ensure consistent and effective support for returnees.
- Promoting economic opportunities for returnees particularly women and educated individuals through job creation, vocational training, and access to financial services.
- Addressing the root causes of displacement and post-displacement challenges – including political instability and resources scarcity.
- A dedicated government agencies or task force should be established to oversee the reintegration of returnees, with clear mandates, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms.
- Inter-agency coordination should be established and strengthened to ensure that all relevant government departments, including those responsible for housing, employment, and social services, work in a unified and coordinated manner to support returnees.

- Capacity – building programs should be implemented for civil servants and local officials to improve their understanding of returnees needs, build trust, and enhance their ability to deliver effective services.
- The significant role of political and ethnic tensions in causing displacement should be taken into consideration and it is essential to address these underlying causes through political education ,political dialogue, conflict resolution and inclusive government mechanisms and policies that promote social cohesion and reduces inter-ethnic divisions.

5.9 Limitations of the study and areas for future researches

The purpose of this research is to understand the challenges affecting the reintegration process of the war in-duce displaced returnees of Alamata city 04 kebele with their families, friends, neighbors, associates, community. In order to proceed with the task of the reintegration process the researcher prepared survey questionnaire in-depth interview questions key informant interview questions to collect information and discussed with focused groups of the study area .This research has also incorporated empirical evidence from researched areas to comprehend the challenges .However, it is not without limitations, and the following limitations are areas for future research.

In order to identify the challenges affecting rein integration of the war induced returnees this study has collected information mostly from the returnees and very few from residents who were not displaced. However gathering information from diverse groups of informants, including those residents who were not displaced, as well as from other kebele, is also crucial for obtaining comprehensive insight into the challenges impacting the reintegration process of war –induced displaced returnees.

Another limitation of this study is that it is confide to a single kebele Alamata among the four kebele with a limited number of participants due to financial , time constraints and the then security case which doesn't let anyone to move freely around ,Because of the above reasons of security the researcher decided to begin with the grass roots population of the kebele 04 .This decision was made to manage time , security case and money constraints and to provide an overview of the entire city. However, it is important to note that larger area coverage would allow for a more diverse range of participants and a more comprehensive understanding of the situation in future research with consequences and solutions of these challenges affecting reintegration of war induced displaced returnees of Alamata city 04 kebele.

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Appendix

No	Structured questionnaire using the Likert scale	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1	Role of Government and Non-Governmental Organizations					
2	Government and non-governmental organizations actively support the reintegration of returnees in Alamata.					
2	Returnees are aware of the support services provided by government and NGOs.					
3	The support provided by organizations is adequate to meet the needs of returnees.					
4	Coordination between government and NGOs is effective in facilitating reintegration.					
5	Returnees feel that organizations genuinely understand their challenges.					
	Potential of Community-Based Approaches					
1	Community-based approaches are effective in supporting the					

	reintegration of returnees.					
2	Local community members are willing to assist returnees in their reintegration process.					
3	Community-led initiatives address the specific needs of returnees better than external programs.					
4	Involving community members improves the success of reintegration efforts.					
5	Returnees feel welcomed and supported by the local community.					
	Political Reintegration Challenges					
1	Returnees face significant political barriers to reintegration in Alamata.					
2	Political instability affects the reintegration process of returnees.					
3	Returnees experience discrimination or marginalization due to political reasons.					
4	The government provides sufficient political support for returnees.					
5	Political conflicts hinder access to basic services for returnees.					

	Economic and Livelihood Reintegration Outcomes					
1	Returnees have access to livelihood opportunities upon return.					
2	The economic support provided is sufficient for sustainable livelihoods.					
3	Returnees face difficulties in finding employment or starting businesses.					
4	Skills training programs help improve the economic situation of returnees.					
5	Financial assistance from organizations is adequate to support reintegration.					
	Social Reintegration Challenges					
1	Returnees face social discrimination within their communities.					
2	Families and communities are supportive of returnees' reintegration.					
3	Returnees experience difficulty reconnecting with their social networks.					

4	Cultural or social norms hinder the reintegration process.					
5	Social support services are available and accessible to returnees.					
	Psychological Reintegration Needs and Support					
1	Returnees have significant psychological or mental health needs.					
2	Available support mechanisms effectively address the psychological needs of returnees.					
3	Returnees feel comfortable accessing mental health or counseling services.					
4	Psychological support improves the overall reintegration of returnees.					
5	There is sufficient awareness of mental health issues among returnees.					
	Recommendations for Improving Reintegration					
1	The current reintegration programs are effective and need no major changes.					

2	More tailored support is necessary to address specific needs of returnees.					
3	Community participation should be increased in reintegration efforts.					
4	Policy changes are needed to improve the reintegration process.					
5	Collaboration among government, NGOs, and communities can enhance reintegration outcomes.					