ADDRESSING THE TRIPLE QUEST OF CONTEMPORARY ETHIOPIA: PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

It has been over two decades since Ethiopia adopted the current federal system of government. The FDRE Constitution was meant to enable the various nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia to live together in spite of their differences on the basis of equality and mutual respect. Nevertheless, it has not been easy to properly utilize the existing federal structure and Constitution in the manner it was designed for thereby ensuring the overall prosperity of the nation and one economic community. The country has suffered from ethnic and tribal conflicts, internal displacement of peoples, killing of innocents and lack of good governance. Consequently, there are emerging groups that attribute the aforementioned challenges to the current ethnic federalism claiming that the country would be better if built upon another basis. Against this backdrop, this study aims at investigating whether the existing federalism is a problem in itself or whether the country would be better off by introducing other systems. In so doing, it employs the qualitative doctrinal research methodology by making a content analysis of primary data from the FDRE Constitution and other legislations of the country and relevant international legal and political instruments. It also uses pertinent literatures to locate the prevailing state of knowledge on the subject matter as secondary sources of data. The study finds that the federal structure, in and of itself, has not been the primary source of problems in the country but it has been the failure to properly implement the existing system and the Constitution which resulted in the anomalies. It adds that the proper implementation and a modest constitutional reform would enable the country to ensure the triple quest of the country- peace, democracy and development.

Keywords

Constitution, Democracy, Development, Ethiopia, Federalism, Peace

INTRODUCTION

"Peace cannot exist without justice, justice cannot exist without fairness, fairness cannot exist without development, development cannot exist without democracy, and democracy cannot exist without respect for the identity and worth of cultures and peoples."

-Rigoberta Menchu

Every State has the duty to provide for the needs, promote the wellbeing, cater to the aspirations and safeguard the security of its people. Nowadays, particularly in socio-politically fragmented societies, democratic institutions serve to minimize the probability of civil strife, as well as the negative effects of such conflicts on economic growth. The high levels of social fragmentation, related in particular to ethnic diversity, the risks of political violence are, a priori, relatively high. However, the level of democracy seems to be the most stable determinant of violence. It is for that reason that democratic consolidation and participation are extremely important in order to reduce political violence and to provide the conditions for stable economic growth and development.

Contrary to the historical myth that Ethiopia was a great nation, the country has experienced centuries of fragility, insecurity, violence, dictatorial regimes and extreme poverty. The country has been ruled by dictators who always run after their own safety and prosperity at the expense of the life, human rights and economic wellness of the wider public. Ethiopia was once home to the supremacy of one language, one religion, culture and tradition. By then, only those loyal to the regimes, out of their willing or otherwise survived the government brutalities. The economy was also shaped in such a way that the public money was directed to fill the pockets of the few. The country's nations and nationalities were denied equality in all its forms- equality before the law and equal treatment. This led to decades of chaos and disorder including waging full scale war to overthrow dictatorial regimes. The war against the Derg regime by different political forces including the OLF, TPLF, EPLF etc would better fit into this category. After the aforementioned forces defeated and overthrew the Derg regime, the transition was hoped by the Ethiopian people for better. In fact, the transitional government established in 1991 went wrong for such forces as the OLF, which were forced out of the country's leadership.

In spite of the unjust exclusion of such forces as the OLF, the EPRDF assumed political power and established the current federal structure on the basis of ethnicity, language

and culture. Under the EPRDF, the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples are given bundle of group and individual rights in paper. The FDRE Constitution recognizes the right to self-determination up to secession, the right to form and join political parties and associations of one's own wish, freedom of reside and own property in all territories of the country, the right to elect and be elected, the right to promote one's own language, religion, culture, tradition, to mention few. This is in addition to the well-recognized right to life, physical integrity, freedom from torture, cruel and degrading and inhumane treatment, rights of suspected and arrested persons.

Of course, the country has witnessed a certain degree of progress under the FDRE System. The adoption of the ethnic federalism was a complete shift from the unitary structure to federalism and has introduced the practice, to a certain degree, of self-administration and other group rights. Although under the direct order and control of the small gigantic TPLF, the established regional States were given limited chance to administer themselves by persons who could better understood the people's language, culture and tradition. It has to be underscored that persons came to power only if they secure the blessing of TPLF. The TPLF must have trusted them in terms of continuing TPLF's control over the politics and economy.

Though the aforementioned fundamental rights and freedoms are safeguarded in black and white in the FDRE Constitution, the government also adopted subsidiary laws which chopped down all the rights. Accordingly, the system could not satisfy its commitment to protect, respect and fulfill the rights in reality. There had been times when thousands of innocent lives were brutally killed by government securities just because they peacefully demonstrated and protested against the unlawful acts of the government.

The popular protest was spread across the country and forced the EPRDF regime to make some reforms. One such reform was the coming to power of the current Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on 2nd April, 2018. Prime Minister Abiy took over a deeply divided coalition and a country facing myriad political, security and humanitarian crises. Exiled EPRDF opponents, hitherto proscribed as terrorists, were invited to return home and pursue peaceful political struggle. He quickly lifted the martial law, released political prisoners and apologised for the violence and excesses of the state. He managed ending a two-decades-long cloud of war and stalemate with neighbouring Eritrea.

His administration also took some economic reforms. He laid out plans to partially privatise key state-owned enterprises, including the Ethiopian Airlines, Ethiopian

Electric Power Corporation, and the sole telecom provider, Ethio Telecom. A range of midsized state enterprises, such as sugar plantations and industrial parks, were also slated to be fully privatised. His office is reviewing the ease of doing business index to improve Ethiopia's investment climate by streamlining regulation, making it easier to start a business.

Nevertheless, it has become hardly possible to ensure peace, democracy and development in the country. Most parts of the country are unstable and we are witnessing gross violations of human rights. It has been difficult in improving the productivity of various economic sectors including the agriculture, which remains the backbone of the country's economy. Not surprisingly, nearly ten million citizens are in need of food aid.

In any democracy, it is accepted and even encouraged that people speak their mind whenever there are issues that are basic in their day to day life. (The Ethiopian Herald, 2018) They ask their government and have the legitimate rights to do so, but this should be done in a peaceful and legal manner following the legitimate channels of democracy where there are institutions that are meant to address these issues.

Mass detentions and excessive use of force by security forces characterize Ethiopian democracy. Prominent opposition political party leaders including Jawar Mohammed, Colonel Gemechu Ayana, Bekele Garba, Iskindir Nega and many more have been detained without speedy trial. The war in Tigray and Oromia as well as the irregular conflicts that arise in other parts of the country are deteriorating peace and security.

Ensuring peace, democracy and development requires a concerted effort of governmental, non-governmental organizations and individuals. The role of civil society organizations (CSOs) as an intermediary between the state and its citizens is fundamental to democracy. Civil society was an active participant in pre-election and Election Day activities, facilitating debate and creating opportunities for civic and voter education and participation. However, post-election violence and the state's response have severely undermined impressive gains in civil-society participation in democratization processes. CSOs are deemed to be an important local component of peace building, and commits to the bottom-top approach, which takes into cognizance that peace should be driven by indigenous actors with the support of international actors. In Ethiopia, CSOs are playing minimal role in setting and implementing peace, democracy and development agendas across the country. In addition, political parties play an irreplaceable role. The future of electoral politics depends in no small measure on the continued participation of the opposition political

parties. In Ethiopia, the political parties are not contributing their part to the level needed.

The Horn of Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular is a politically unstable region that has experienced remarkable political experiments especially in the sphere of democratization, governance, economic reforms, and reforms of the legal system. The Horn, comprising Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan, has a wide diversity of peoples, climatic zones, economic infrastructures and political traditions. Variously shaped by colonial experiences and strong indigenous traditions of politics – e.g., imperial rule, sultanates, acephalous societies, local, clan-based chieftaincies – it has been volatile and conflict-prone, especially over the past century. Ethiopia's domestic politics have produced violence and continuing tension over the past two years. The deep shortcomings in the country's democratization and state building processes may remain unresolved as the worsening instability of the region takes precedence. (Smith, 2007) The main actors in Ethiopia's political economy need to invest on the objective of accomplishing two historical tasks: the tasks of creating a country that houses 'nations, nationalities and peoples' of equals and ending an authoritarian rule by democratizing the Ethiopian state and society as a whole, a precondition for peace and development. (Merera, 2001) The government and the wider population are entrusted with the aforementioned tasks to ensure peace, democracy and development in the country. So far, various attempts have been made by different stakeholders in order to build better Ethiopia that works for all on the basis of equality and fraternity.

One such task was the adoption of federal Constitution which was hoped to transform Ethiopia from chaos and disorder to democracy. Though the dream did not materialize on full scale, there are still hopes and rooms for reform. The federal Constitution ratified in 1995 defined the country's structure as a multi-cultural federation based on ethno-national representation. It has emphasis on building the reliable democracy and self-administration based on federal or decentralization system. In spite of all the weaknesses, the FDRE Constitution recognizes the right to self-administration of nations and nationalities. It protects fundamental rights and freedoms including individual and group rights. It aspires building one peaceful, democratic and prosperous economic community. More specifically, the Constitution provides framework for ensuring sustainable development. The federal system gives legal right for local or regional administration in Ethiopia based on the identity of the people in the country. The democratic federal constitution that Ethiopia adopted made it possible for the diverse peoples of the country to be on top of their own local affairs, to manage their local affairs in an autonomous

fashion. The constitution limits government power by law and gave more power for the public. The Ethiopian constitution also includes all the principles of democracy such as free and fair election, rule of law, separation of power and judicial independence, participation of the people, citizen right, equality, accountability, economic freedom and multiparty system. Different democratic institution such as National Election Board, Human Right Commission and Ombudsman were established in order to facilitate the democratization process. Democratization must include not only multiparty elections, but also protection of individual and community rights, a vibrant private press, and the freedom to form associations and advocacy and interest groups.

The Constitution of the FDRE is a manifestation of the covenant made among nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia. It aimed at building a unified economic society. It has been made constitutional to adopt decentralized government administrative system in order to be able to provide for the direct participation of the broader citizenry (devolution of sufficient powers to lower administrative levels) in the economic and social development of the country and in the building of democratic system of government. General policy directives of the country derive from the Constitution; the policies allow equal participation of the people at all levels and ensure economic and social development and eradication of poverty and the building of democratic systems. While remaining embraced under the national policy frameworks, regional states and city administrations are obliged to prepare and implement plans and programs that reflect their local objective realities. Indeed, they have been discharging such responsibilities.

Against this background, this paper presents the current challenges and prospects in ensuring democracy, peace and development in Ethiopia with a special emphasis on the reform and antireform scenarios in the country after the coming to power of the current Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study relies on the doctrinal research methodology. It uses both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data are collected from international and domestic laws. And secondary data are collected from pertinent literatures, organizational reports and the internet. The data are analyzed

qualitatively using content analysis and discourse analysis.

CONTEXTUALIZING DEMOCRACY, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Democracy

The definition of the term democracy can be approached from different perspectives. According to the minimalist procedural definition, a democratic system refers to 'that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.'(Menocal, 2007) In light of this definition, Dahl identified some key criteria that are essential for democracy. (Dahl, 1971) These include the control over governmental decisions about policy constitutionally vested in elected officials and relatively frequent, fair and free elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Included are also the freedom of expression and the right to run for public office as well as access to alternative sources of information that are not monopolized by either the government or any other single group and freedom of association. According to this definition, a formal democracy needs to constitute the basic civil liberties that should, in principle, guarantee that the democratic process is inclusive, free of repression and enables citizens to participate in an informed and autonomous manner. It is against these standards that any democratic system has to be measured.

Nowadays, democratization experts are resorting to the substantive definition of democracy which is constructed on the significant role and importance of accountability. This model of a liberal representative democracy which is based on a free and fair electoral process, the respect of basic civil and political rights, and the provision of accountability mechanisms essential to give democracy substance has gained growing international popularity over the past three decades. Accountability in this regard reflects three dimensions. (Menocal, 2007) These are (i) vertical accountability, which enables citizens to hold their political leaders to account through the electoral channel at specified points in time; (ii) horizontal accountability, which refers to accountability mechanisms that exist within the distinct bodies of

government itself, whereby state institutions are authorized and willing to oversee, control, redress and, if need be, sanction unlawful actions by other state institutions; and (iii) societal accountability, which refers to the (ongoing) watchdog functions of civic associations, other NGOs and an independent mass media over the actions of the state.

Understanding Peace

An Oromo saying goes "bakka dhugaan hin jirre nagaan hin jiru" equivalent for "there is no peace in the absence of truth." Plenty of resources are invested on explaining the concept of peace. The concept does not merely connote the absence of war or violent conflict stemming from ethnic, cultural, religious, or political differences but the simultaneous presence of social justice, harmony, and equity. (Oshewolo and Fashagba, 2014) While the former represents negative peace, the latter implies positive peace. With respect to the relationship between peace and democracy, there are two lines of arguments. Some scholars believe that the presence of peace creates the enabling environment for good governance to thrive while others overwhelmingly assert the natural peace-inducing potentials of democracy. (Oshewolo and Fashagba, 2014) This paper underlines that the existence of peace does not naturally translate into democracy. It only creates the enabling environment or opportunities for democracy and good governance.

Development

One of the simplest definitions of development can be considered as the objective of moving towards a state relatively better than what previously existed. (Chambers, 1997) In this regard, development could mean any positive change in life. Based on this definition, the term "development" can also be regarded as relative, since its meaning differs from one person to another. This paper argues that once people start to acquire higher levels of economic development and social maturity, they will begin to seek more accountability from their governments, thus achieving better democracy. In other ways, an educated and growing middle class is more likely to demand an active role in the running of their country, to the extent that even repressive governments will have but little option to resist such demands and become more democratic.

INTERNATIONAL LAWS, POLICIES AND APPROACHES ON DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

The UN's essential understanding of democracy is laid down in the UN Charter (1945) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Accordingly, the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures. (UDHR, Art. 21(3)) There is a quite limited emphasis on free and fair elections from today's perspective. Democratic norms are also specified in core international human rights treaties, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), which lays down the conditions for the enjoyment of individual democratic freedoms.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of 1993, a product of the Vienna Conference on Human Rights, was a watershed event in the development of the UN's work on human rights and democracy and led to the establishment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Reflecting the fall of the Communist bloc and also of military dictatorships in many third world countries, the international community is here invited to 'support the strengthening and promoting of democracy […] particularly in new and emerging democracies and countries in transition to democracy'. This is, in reality, the basis for wider democracy assistance to be offered through the UN system as an aspect of its overall development aid.

The Vienna Declaration states that the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at national and international levels should be universal, with no conditionality attached. Every state was invited to formulate a national human rights action plan in order to provide an effective framework of remedies to redress human rights grievances or violations. The international community was called on to offer increased levels of both technical and financial assistance at the request of governments. Among the priority areas for assistance are: administration of justice, including law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies; building and strengthening national human rights institutions; strengthening pluralistic civil society as well as the media; protection of groups that have been rendered vulnerable; and assistance in the conduct of free and fair elections, including human rights and public information aspects.

The Vienna Declaration was also the launching point of OHCHR, whose mandate includes: the right to development; increasing recognition of economic, social and cultural rights; improving monitoring of human rights treaties and 'special procedures' systems; helping states implement human rights plans of action at national level; designing preventive strategies; integrating rights of women and children into the UN system; developing effective measures to combat racism; and conducting education and public information programs.

PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT: THE MISSING LINK

The quest for peace, democracy and development are closely related. Conflict resolution and peace building processes are important in solving problems of conflicts to pave way for development. (Mackatiani, 2014) In order to better understand the values of, and the interaction among, peace, democracy and development, it is critical to clarify the impacts of conflicts on each of the segments. The African Union Commission summarized the costs of conflicts as follows: (African Union Commission , 2008) i) The direct costs (resulting directly from violence and involving direct expenses such as military and medical expenses as well as destruction of infrastructures and costs related to the protection of refugees and displaced persons.) ii) The indirect costs like high inflation rate and increasing indebtedness, decrease in foreign and local investments, unemployment and deterioration of public services and iii) The invisible costs (costs that are difficult to quantify but affect the life of the peoples and their development capacity such as break in family and social ties, psychological costs such as trauma and spread of a culture of violence particularly among the youths).

There are four imperatives for sustainable peace and democracy. (Trevino, 2007) The first one is to transform the zero-sum paradigm to induce the possibility of collaboration whereas the second one is to restore trust and to build relations among fractured groups. The third is to build a new consensus on the rules of the game; and finally, to strengthen the participants' communication and negotiation skills.

Electoral violence, corruption, regionalization and ethnicity illustrate further threat to peace. Peace is a cumulative effect of the actions of different members of the society. Government and non-government organizations, groups and individuals play pivotal role in building and ensuring a lasting peace. Johan Galtung developed five core peace building concepts. (Mackatiani, 2014) Negative peace refers to the cessation and/or absence of violence. Positive peace, on the other hand, is characterized by not only the absence of structural violence but also the presence of social justice and the conditions that eliminate the causes of violence. The other important concept is indirect violence. It is a violence that shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances. Structural violence refers to a violence that is built into structures which accompanies, and is an

underlying cause of, direct violence. It is characterized by manifestations of cultural violence, among others.

In the light of Africa's recent history, respect for human rights has to be accorded an importance and urgency all of its own. One of the tests by which the quality of a democracy is judged is the protection it provides for each individual citizen. (NEPAD Declaration, Art. 10) The development of Africa is ultimately the responsibility of Africans themselves and the continent's development begins with the quality of its human resources. (NEPAD Declaration, Art. 21)

Cognizant of this, the Ethiopian government attempted to recognize these questions although it failed to devise proper policies and strategies to realize them. Development, democracy and peace are interdependent to each other in the sense that one can't exist with the absence of the other. Sustainability of equitable development is closely bound up with democracy and peace. This symbiotic linkage maintains that genuine democracy, characterized by the rule of law, respect for human rights and recognition of the intrinsic dignity of all human beings, freedom of expression, access to use new technologies and information.

It is important to note that there has been a variety of development experiences among democracies and autocracies. Economic development is the multidimensional process that includes the reorientation and reorganization of the entire economic system to improve the living standard of the people. (Teshome, 2016) Economic development includes higher productivity, social and economic equalization, modern knowledge and change in institution and attitude. Democracy includes: 1) a political system of competition of power that is based on free election- such that those in authority are selected, monitored, and replaced, 2) the active participation of the people, as citizens, in political and civic life, 3) consensus-oriented decision making process, 4) accountability and transparency, 5) the tenets of human rights principles, and 6) the existence of a rule of law that applies equally to all citizens. (Teshome, 2016)

Ethiopia cannot survive only by democracy which may not provide direct improvement in social and economy. Excluding economic development from the democratization process of the country undermines the structural transformation. There is no clear understanding between Ethiopian scholar regarding economic development and democratization process in the country. Such lack of clear understanding about economic development and democracy in the country hindered to see the broad performances and challenges of economic development and democracy in Ethiopia.

The nature of democratic process that cannot improve the rule and regulation in the economy affects the productivity and market competition, which directly affect fast economic development. Even some time unmanageable democracy can case macroeconomic and political instability that affect economic development. The economic development would be affected by political disorder that influences the transitional democracy.

CONCLUSION

Economic development and democracy have strong linkage. The development of democracy in the given country speeds up the economic development. In the same way the economic development in the given country facilitate for building reliable democracy. But due to lack of understanding in the nature and characteristics of economic development and democracy in the country context many undermined the performances of democracy in the country. The recent crisis in some part of the country in the name of democracy and freedom would damage the broad based social and economic development in the country. To consolidate democracy and enhance inclusive economic development the country has to use the exited legal framework and institutional structure. Incremental change or transformation is the only option for maintain political stability and fast economic development.

Everyone should work for maximal democracy that provides the freedom to get the basic goods, infrastructure and social transformation. Democracy and economic development should be the priority of any Ethiopian to build common political and economic nation.

There are three common preconditions for the development of both democracy and economic development. The first is the emergence of a politically powerful commercial and industrial development. This enables the people to involve actively in political and social development. The second precondition is mass participation of public in social and economic development. In this regard the country should set various accountabilities that enhance public participation. The most important way for public participation is societal accountability. In this regard the government encourages or facilitates legal civic organization including all segments of the population.

In conclusion, political violence does affect general equilibrium growth and development. Coups, violent riots, and civil wars serve as the instruments for organized political violence. Risks of violent rioting and ethnic tensions reduce economic growth. Moreover, there is an important relationship between violence and the level of democracy. Indeed, violence is likely in a partial democracy, but unlikely in a strong autocracy. However, very strong autocracies increase the risks of civil war. The level of democracy seems to be the most stable determinant of violence. This means that it is very important for democracy to be consolidated. We cannot expect socially fractionalized societies to pursue a stable growth process as long as they are open to high political violence and are non-democratic. Even once they become democratic, consolidation and participation are extremely important.

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