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IMPACTS OF ETHNIC FEDERALISM IN NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND PEACEBUILDING IN CONTEMPORARY ETHIOPIA: DYNAMICS OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS

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ABSTRACT

Following the adoption of ethnic-based political arrangements in 1991, inter-ethnic clashes, internal displacement, insecurity, and tensions have become protracted security and unity challenges in Ethiopia. Particularly, minorities are victims of ethnic politics, and their socio-economic insecurity and exclusion are increasing from time to time and becoming peace and security challenges. Furthermore, non-territorial minorities are invisible in the political process, particularly in most regional states. Thus, this article aims to examine the impacts of ethnic politics on national integration and peacebuilding, focusing on the dynamics and causes of ethnic inconsistency and conflicts. Based on this objective, qualitative method is employed, and both primary and secondary data sources are used from multi-sectors and multi-levels. Accordingly, the study's results indicated that ethnic politics, ethnic-based regional arrangement, and its poor implementation are identified as the main galvanizing sources of ethnic conflicts and ethnic intolerance. Factors like economic backwardness, youth unemployment, and others also contribute to social instability and insecurity. Since this condition is currently an impasse to peacebuilding and national integration in the country, Ethiopia needs urgent reconsideration before the situation worsens.

KEY WORDS

Ethnic Conflicts, Ethnic federalism, Nation Building, Peacebuilding



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1. Introduction

Historically, the Ethiopian state is one of the oldest polity or empire in the world that it endowed with a long history of statehood though its territorial boundary has been varied over the centuries of its existence. Ethiopia escaped European and non-European colonization (Birhane.et.al,2019) with great victory and has been the only independent country during the era of colonization of Africa and elsewhere. This long political history of state formation and decolonization had not been lay the genuine base for human rights values, rule of law, equality and equity of citizen, good governance and democratization.

Until 1960s, Ethiopia had been ruled under feudal political system which had been pronounced as attachment with Solomonic blood line. Afterwards, socialist government had been declared its power following the coup d'état of feudal regime. Succeeding the regime change, several political and socio-economic changes have been in Ethiopia. The socialist government attempted to introduce education policy which aimed at illiteracy eradication; returned back land to Ethiopian farmers that abolished peasantry and attempted to assure equality among all Ethiopian so that class dictum ended. However, the government denied accommodating diversity and closed the door for other political parties (see Andargachew, 1993; Bahru, 2002; Henze, 2000). Finally, the Socialist government has been collapsed due to internal and external pressures.

Following the fall down of socialist government (Derg) in 1991, another dynamic of political structure ensued. Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) come to power simultaneously political system shifted to ethnic based political paradigm and current political arrangement was forged. The coalition between TPLF and different ethnic based political parties from Amhara, Oromia and Southern Ethiopia taken place and formed the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front or EPRDF (see Asnake, 2014; Birhane.et.al,2019). EPRDF rule the country since 1991 arranging its political ideology and regions ethnically. Under EPRDF government, Ethiopian politics have showed a remarkable transformation and contradictions as well. Nonetheless, Ethiopia under this regime has become the fabric of power rivalry among ethnic groups, ethnic identity affiliated political elites, and countless identity focused and border disputes, inter-ethnic violence and internal displacement.

Following the resigning of former prime minister, Hailemariam deselegn and substitution of new prime minster in April 2018, Ethiopia has been attempted to bring highly praised peace know-how and diplomacy internally and with neighboring countries particularly the 'No war-No peace' state of relation with Eritrea came to an end with remarkable peaceful interaction which has been highly acknowledged at international level.

Internally, freedom of media and press raised, political parties get political freedom that many political prisoners released, expelled political groups welcomed to take part in their homeland's socio-economic and political affairs as well as non-affiliated political elites to ruling party have been appointed in spite of their political outlook which is stranger and never seen in political history of Ethiopia. Those modifications of central government boost the hopes and morale of many Ethiopians around the commencement moment but no longer.

Thus, the country has been experiencing a heavy course of violent conflicts which upshot to citizens' instability and insecurity, enormous internal displacements, murder and devastation of assets almost in all regions of the country simultaneous with above changes that newly appointed prime minister attempted to assure. Even, Ethnic conflicts are moving toward to the climax since 2018 though Ethiopia has been experienced many ethnic conflicts under the regime of EPRDF government since 1991.

Accordingly, the following successive parts will have discussion on state and nation building notions and process, causes of conflicts and its dynamics, current political arrangements and its impacts on social integrations, peaceful coexistences among different ethnic groups and peacebuilding.

Methodology

Research method provides ways of approaching and hopefully answering our research questions and it is as the way to the goal (Kvale, 1996). The investigator has decided the types and combination of forms that best serves the goal of the study and which of these methods or techniques are relevant and/or not and what would they mean and indicate and why (Kothari, 2004). Based on the objectives of the study that delved the Impacts of ethnic federalism in national integration and peacebuilding in contemporary Ethiopia focusing on dynamics of Ethnic conflicts, qualitative research approach is employed. As Gay (2000) noted, qualitative research is relevant to probe deeply into the research setting, to acquire in-depth understanding about the way things are, why they are that way, and how the participants in that context perceive them. Moreover, Abdalla (2014) indicated that qualitative research gives more space to interviewees or members of focus groups to express themselves in their own words rather than to force on them a certain scheme of response such as a number scale. It can aim at making links between micro-processes, such as doctor–patient communication (Ibid).

In order to obtain relevant data, the researcher selected purposive multi-stage sampling technique under the domain of non-probability qualitative sampling. This approach is important to make primary data collection more manageable by dividing large clusters of population into smaller clusters in several stages. This is employed mainly to obtain data from national, sub-national and grass root levels or victim of ethnic conflicts' IDPs in Burayu those displaced from Ethnic conflict affected Somali regional states in 2018. Furthermore, holistic observation and personal experience of researchers are also considered as first-hand information.

Research participants were selected from the research population based on their work attachments; knowledge; experiences; affiliations; vulnerability and concern about specific issues. Procedurally, it is guided with the concern in comprehensive representations, involving stakeholders from both federal and regional governments and diverse segments of the society which considered as most appropriate for the study.

Both primary and secondary sources of data are used to obtain tangible information from multiple sources and levels considering that actors and stakeholders at the veers of political arrangements, inter-ethnic conflicts and peacebuilding are found at multiple levels, layers and domains. Accordingly, primary data were obtained from research participants namely victims of conflicts/internally displaced and resettled people in Burayu, concerned sectors of federal government, Politicians, ethnic and religious leaders and elders from Ethiopia Reconciliation Commission via various data collecting tools like: in-depth and key informant interview, empirical observation, telephone interview and focus group discussions.

Secondary sources of data are consistently employed. Accordingly, it reviewed from published and unpublished works of scholars such as dissertations, thesis, research reports, government policy documents, constitutions, publications, periodic and statistical reports, performance reports, annual plans, books, research papers, journals, documents of different peace conference reports, annual reports of peace ministry and other relevant materials. Thus, the data obtained from both sources are analyzed by using qualitative data analyzing techniques.

In this study, ethical consideration to protect research participants' anonymity and confidentiality is not compromised. The standard coding structure is derived from the interview and FGDs that the participants in interviews and focus group discussions are referred by their code names in the main body of the study's. For instance, Focus group discussion two FGDII-01 denotes a participant in a focus group discussion who is listed as number 01 in the profile of participants' list and who participated in group two. Furthermore, the acronyms KI-FGO for interviews from Federal governmental organization; PPN denotes political parties at national level from nationalist and federalist groups. FGDI, FGDII, FGDII, KI-FGO, KI-FNGO, KI-IDPS, are mainly stand for interviewee in Burayu city administration, Ministry of Peace, Commission of reconciliation, House of Federation, Ethiopian Human Rights Council, Federal police commission, relocated IDPs in Burayu and number 01, 02,03,04...etc are used to differentiate individual participant in each group and organization.

2. State Building and Nation Building Process and Contradictions

There is a consensus among scholars that Ethiopia is the oldest state of the world. Unsurprisingly, the historical foundation of the Ethiopian state goes back about three thousand years (see Alemayehu, 2009; Bahru 1991; Munro-Hay,1991; Tadesse, 1972; Teshale,1995; Yishak, 2008). On the other hand, there is a debate among historians look upon to the origin of its people. Some scholars consider that the ancestors of Ethiopian were migrated from Arabia to their present home (Abebe, et al., 1955). Nevertheless, scholars like Martin Bernal (1897); Hansberry (1981); Lapiso (1999) and many other contemporary investigators strongly argue this assumption based on the paleontology and the linguistic investigations and evidences.

Accordingly, Lapiso (1999) supposed that the people of Ethiopia were not migrated from either of the world areas but people were migrated and settled from Ethiopia to Europe and Asia across the red sea in the first time. From his investigations, the genealogy and/or family tree of European and Asian people were tracing back from Ethiopia. Correspondingly, other scholars (Bernal, 1897; Hansberry, 1981) assured from paleontological investigation that the Ethiopian people and their ancestors were not migrated from the Arabia, but they are native and indigenous; reasoning that Ethiopia is a cradle of human being.

Different findings of historical investigations indicated that the linguistic development in ancient (pre-historic) time attached its people together via social consensus, in which affiliated community harmonized and work together to achieve their goal that was best for their society, it is characterized by a concern for providing explanations of the status quo, social order, consensus, social integration, solidarity, need satisfaction and actuality (see, Burrell &Morgan,2005; Tekletsadik,1974). Different scholars reveal that the early power relation and its distribution were determined by the availability of water, fertile soil and advantageous climate these were all essential for the development of organized societies (Jonathan, 2018).

Nonetheless, the history of conflict is as long as the history of political and socio-economic development and livelihood of human society. In view of this, Jonathan (2018) point out that there were endemic warfare in early human history that could have been caused due to theft of livestock or crops, abduction of women or resources and status competition.

In fact, the political history of Ethiopia is mostly about the power rivalry, chaos, conflicts and the clashes of the states and the people (see Lapiso, 1999). Centuries of its history were marked by competition between Amhara and Tigray aristocratic dynasties and conflict with Muslim empires of the surrounding lowlands, as well as the Oromo migrations into the highlands (Henze,2000).

One of the early kingdoms of the Ethiopia (in territory) was the kingdom of Damot which was in 10th century B.C and having its capital at Yeha. The evidences from KebraNagast¹ indicated that Menelik I founded the Ethiopian empire in the 10th C B.C. In the 1st C A.D the Aksumite kingdom came to power in the Tigray region with its capital at Aksum and grew into a major power on the Red Sea (see Adekumobi, 2007). The followed political hub was the Zagwe dynasty. They claimed neither the King Solomon nor the Queen of Shebaline. Turndown in the Aksumite Empire paved the way to the Zagwe Dynasty. It established its new center/capital/ at Lalibela (See Adekumobi, 2007; Abebe Zegeye, et.al, 1999; Lapiso, 1999).

Despite the fact that, state building and nation building process in Ethiopia have been long last assignment and still not completed. The history of modern state and nation building of Ethiopia is mostly illustrated in three government systems subsequent to Zagwe Dynasty. The first phase was monarchical ruling system which had been since 1270 following the restoration of Solomonic Dynasty until the Ethiopian revolution of 1974. The second phase was the period of military regime or the socialist government (since 1974 to 1991) as well as the federal system (from 1991 to present).

During the former consecutive regimes, the governments were focused on nation building and state building under the motto of ‘one people’- ‘one country /destiny’ (Merera, 2006). But closed the eyes to diversity even if the political systems of two were completely different that the monarchical rule pursued up the line of royal family and its aim was preserving the privileges of the king while the Derg regime aimed to create equity, abolish class politics (feudalism) and build strong socialist state in Africa under the huge slogan of ‘Ethiopia First’.

Despite the fact that, the state building processes of Ethiopia was not influenced by external conquest. Divergent to all African states, the formation of modern Ethiopia was Ethiopian incorporation wars which aimed at ambitious orthodox religion expansions and state formation. The path of political history of different regimes (until 1974) indicated that state and religion were collaborative what we call it as Theocratic ruling system (See Lapiso, 1999).

In fact, the myth conferred upon the Ethiopian kings and emperors’ traditional authority of a ‘mandate from heaven’ and so strengthened and sustained the symbolic relationship between churches and state; the two pillars of state-led nationalism in Ethiopia until the 1974 revolution (see Temesgen, 2016; Adekumobi, 2007; Lapiso, 1999).

The second half of the 19th century was dominated by the making and remaking of modern Ethiopia (Temesgen, 2016). The creation of modern Ethiopia was started by Tewodros, incorporated by Johannes, consolidated by Menelik and completed by Haile Selassie (Bahru, 1991). Despite the fact that Tewodros laid undeniable base for the unification of Ethiopia though the mission of the state building throughout his reign was not successful (Ibid). It was short lived and none of his missions were accomplished but his legacy helped the creation of a far grandiose empire-state by his successors than what he dreamt. More paradoxically, his proto-Ethiopian nationalism never reconciled with the competing nationalism's of the various ethnic groups of Ethiopia nor could it defuse them, which a century later have produced an anti-thesis of the historical process initiated by Tewodros in 1850s (see Bahru, 1991; Marcus, 2002).

¹Kebra Nagas: Amharic words which mean the Glory of the Kings. Originally it bases on oral tradition that contains an account of how the Queen of Sheba (Queen Makeda of Ethiopia) met King Solomon and about how the Ark of the Covenant came from. Solomonic dynasty was laid in this oral tradition (this is what I heard from elders).

On the other hand, there have been contending views about the state formation and nation building process of modern Ethiopia. Some scholars like, Abebe (1994); Clapham (1974) argued that the expansion was accompanied by an assumption of Amhara supremacy and a policy of Amharisation. The reunification or expansion of Menelik brought together different ethnic groups that had their own identity, culture, and language. Abebe (1994) noted that via the schism of *Ethiopian unity*, there was an attempt to suppress all non-Amhara identities and political domination was aggravated by cultural domination and economic exploitations. Thus, to be within the state structure, all non-Amhara people were expected to speak Amharic language and adopt the culture and religion of the ruling class. This discriminatory policy resulted in an uneven representation of various ethnic groups in central government.

The condition for southern part particularly for Muslim sultanate was worse than the expansion toward the south accompanied by the assertion of cultural superiority of the Orthodox Christian and the extraction of resources even if the brutality of appropriation and mode of domination differ from place to place due to the historical process and mode of incorporation into the Christian centralized state structure (see Abebe, 1994; Clapham, 2002; Donham, 2002; Messay, 1995; Teshale, 1995). Accordingly, Merere (2003) noticed the *outcome of territorial conquest* was far more brutal, devastating and dual oppression (both national and class) for the conquered peoples from the south, east and west that created the North-South dichotomy and one polity but two markedly different north-south systems.

During this period, main source of conflicts was power rivalry of center-region. Political struggle between regional and central force was expressed through continuous disputes between the central king or emperor and the regional lords and princes (Bahru, 2002). Power struggle later changed to struggle for territorial expansion and then class struggle but it was not assumed as accurate ethnic conflict (Ibid).

Hence, with the creation of a modern empire the domination of Amharic culture and language over the newly incorporated ethnic groups has become visible and the modern state formation of empire is described by political exclusion, economic exploitation, and cultural domination (see Merere, 2003; Abebe, 1994).

Despite its unique historical development from the other African states, Ethiopia faces similar problems of nation building and state-building in the same fashion with other post-colonial African states (Mengisteb, 2007). Moreover, Ethiopia has been and still is history's laboratory, the locus of on-going political experiments whose outcomes are still uncertain (ibid).

The second half of the 20th century has been shaped by struggles started by the Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM) which was a national class struggle. Subsequent ethno-nationalist forces intended to end the hegemonic project of building a nation-state that emerged after the formation of the modern state (see Temesgen, 2016). The 20thc Ethiopian elites participating in the All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (MEISON) and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) viewed the problems in Ethiopia as a result of class conflicts and not as an outcome of struggles between ethnic groups (Aalen, 2002).

However, among the members of the students' movement Tigrigna speakers were the most ethnically conscious students (Young, 2006). This is why the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) leaders acknowledged that the early 20th century students' movement was a struggle among ethnic based and the Tigrigna speakers who were ethnically conscious began to spread their particular xenophobia

claiming that the supposed class struggle was actually ethnic (ibid). After legal establish of TPLF, their manifesto issued in 1976 called for the establishment of an independent republic of Tigray but this was later modified to cultural and political autonomy for the region within a united Ethiopia (see Aalen, 2002).

Nonetheless, most scholars argued the contention of TPLF by assuring the students were targeted the ruling class against human exploitation irrespective of the rulers' ethnic background. Most student activists rejected the assertion that national divisions were designed to promote tribalism, and were comfortable with the regime's policy of avoiding references to ethnicity in any context (See Aalen, 2002; Bahru, 2002; Gebru,1977; Mesfin, 2012; Young, 2006).

Obviously, the country was applied centralized ruling systems for long period of time which were enormously aimed at strong state and nation building. However, state and nation building process of Ethiopia was marked with continuous warfare and not based on the will and harmony of different ethnic groups of the country. The nation building process of Ethiopia was mainly via forceful assimilation in religion and Amharic language. Fascinating such tyrannical process as magic formula, different modern rulers of Ethiopia were closed their eyes for multi-culturalism, democracy, human rights, equality and equity precise base for nation building.

Following the collapse of socialist government in 1991, Ethiopia is turned to new political phase. Finally, it is attractive to discuss power politics and nation and state building process undertone of EPRDF since 1991.

When the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) dominated EPRDF comes to power, Ethio-political system shifted to ethnic politics and current political arrangement is assumed by alliance of different political parties² that make up the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

Ethiopia under the ruling party of the EPRDF, established federal state structure that seemed accommodates diversity and remedy for national integration quest. The details will be discussed below

3. Ethnic conflicts and Peacebuilding challenges in Contemporary Ethiopia

Historically, Africa is a conflict prone nation compared with other regions of the world and the history of Africa is more or less the history of colonization, civil wars, and instabilities than socio-economic advancement, freedom and democratization. As Madhane (2003) noted Africa is continued to be a venue for a typical intricate story of regional conflicts, internal conflicts, environmental and political upheaval.

Among African countries some are more vulnerable to inter/intra ethnic conflicts and civil war than other. Particularly, the Horn is more susceptible for civil war, clan conflict/violence, in security, internal displacement, migration, drought and famine. Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) noted these conflicts (internal conflicts in Africa) have been proved to be among the bloodiest compared to similar occurrences in other continents of the World.

²Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front so called 'EPRDF' was combination of four political parties, from different regional states. Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) from Tigray Regional state, Amhara Democratic Party (ADP) from Amahara regional state, Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) from Oromia regional state and Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM) from Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples regional state (seeVaughan, S. 2003).

The prolonged civil war of Sudan which displaced many Suddenness as refugees to different parts of the World, caused many death, dehumanization and economic destruction particularly in Darfur; endless clan violence that resulted in mass displacement, death, famine and insecurity in Somalia; Ethio-Eritrean war that caused loss of many life and displacements and Ethiopian current protracted internal conflicts which causing massive IDPs and many death in most regions of the country are unsurpassed our lived example for. Nonetheless, Ethiopia is still facing peace and security challenges.

As discussed above, state building and nation building process and regime changes in Ethiopia were not passed via smooth path rather than bloodshed. Ethiopia has experienced many conflicts however the dynamics, root causes and actors are vary from time to time; case to case and place to place. For instance, Ethio-Eritrean war, which was overwhelmingly serious and extended from Badumeas far as Bure in the southeast and caused many deaths, which is estimated between 50,000 and 100,000, soldiers was caused mainly territorial boundary of Badume (see Kornprobst, 2002). Whereas the recently breakdown conflict between Ethiopian and TPLF party is more of internal power politics upshot. Although the narration of conflicts in Ethiopia dated back to the early stage of state formation, prevalence of conflicts particularly ethnic conflict is escalated since 1991 particularly after 2018.

Then, the question is: *What makes post 1991 distinctive? Why the dynamics and magnitudes of (ethnic) conflicts escalated?*

In fact, the political culture of EPRDF is unique, very secretive and stubborn that reports of murder, ethnic conflict, and real causes of conflicts, ethnic cleansing, public dissatisfaction, famine and similar problems cannot be openly brought to the media. Since 1991, there have been many conflicts and simultaneous investigations of the causes of diverse inconsistency that rose among and/or between ethnic groups. So far, it is possible to broadly categorize causes of ethnic conflicts either of economic, political or socio-cultural.

In this regard, scholars identify different factors that make some area more conflict prone. According to Brown (2005), the factors can be either of structural (fragile or weak states, interstate security concerns, and ethnic geography), political, economic/social or cultural/perceptual factors. Robert and Rotblat (2003) notice that it is impossible to be righteous to the full complexity of such factors that leading to ethnic prejudice and violence. Likewise, a common thematic thread of scholarly investigations indicated that the structure of identity-based social conflicts is to be grasped in relation to and against particular historical structure and socio-political, economic, and policy conditions from which they arise (see Hussein, 2015; Clapham, 2009; Feyissa, 2010).

In addition to this, hate speech and propaganda that humiliate and disregard other ethnic group(s) and its history on the other hand, glorify and whitewash own/ others and vice versa. These could be one reason that escalates ethnic disrespects and confrontations which finally resulted in distortion of tolerance, integration, cooperation and trust. Even students in higher educations (Universities of Ethiopia) are victim of these and there is strong out group intolerance among students of different ethnic back ground in campuses. Accordingly, Brown (2005) indicated that hate propaganda has the potential in provoking intimidation once it grips the minds of the people. Similarly, it is also true that groups tend to whitewash and glorify their own histories, and they often demonize their neighbors, rivals, adversaries and stories that are passed down from generation to generations by words of mouth become part of a group's lore (ibid).

The following discussions and debates from research participants and scholars hopefully portray the major causes of ethnic conflicts since 1991 in details. At this point, investigator focuses on the political and socio-economic realities of country since 1991.

A. Identity Based Conflicts and Minority Insecurity

Identity based conflicts are complex. Various historical, political, socio-economic, and environmental factors delineate its complexity (Wolyie, 2016). Identity based conflicts in Ethiopia have become the source of violent conflicts since 1991 than ever pursued the recognition of primordial identity based political arrangement, what we call it *Ethnic federalism*. Identity based conflict has been the overriding and protracted challenges of peace and security of the Ethiopia. It becomes proliferated in post-1991 following ethnic based regional arrangement and acknowledgments self-governances of ethnic groups and ethnic identities become the dominant motivators of political aspect.

The chief triggering catalyst for inter-ethnic intolerance and violence's in Ethiopia is the institutionalization of ethnic identity as political structure and its poor implementation. Numerous Scholars investigations revealed how and why ethnic identity take a central role in catalyzing power relations between and within groups as well as the dynamics of identity politics and how the politics of primordialism come into play within the context of politicized identity based intergroup contestations (see Abbink's, 2009;Debelo's, 2012). Since the regional states are arranged on ethnic lines, they have legal right to include or exclude other ethnic group members from living and working in the tribal areas.

Furthermore, research participants from political party and Ethiopian human rights commission strongly agreed that ethnic based political arrangement is the main cause of ethnic intolerance and violent conflicts (KI-PPN-03; KI-PPN-01; KI-FGO-04).

Many ethnic based conflicts that have been erupted since 1991 are noticeably due to ethnic based political arrangement. Inter-group violent conflicts those are leveled as identity based conflicts in post-1991 in Ethiopia were the Silte-Gurage conflict, the Wagagoda language conflict, the Sheko-Megengir conflicts, the Anyuwaa-Nuer conflicts, the Berta-Gumuz conflicts, the Gedeo-Guji conflict, the Oromo-Amhara conflict, the Borana-Gerri conflict, the Oromo-Somali conflict, Anyuwaa and High lander conflict, Segenhizib conflicts, Gurage-Maraqo conflicts, Somali-Afar conflicts, Qimant-Amhara conflicts, Amahara-Gumuz...(see Dereje, 2010; Misganu, 2014; Tefere, 2015; Yacob,2020).

Despite the fact that politicized ethnic identity is become main challenges of peace in regional state. The issues of self-rule, autonomy,the quarries to use respective languages and power rivalries which is most likely deepen its roots in primordial identity is caused loss of many life and protracted displacements in the country starting from the initial set up of its arrangement in 1991.

On the other hand, symbolic intimidation over various symbolic values and goals are perceived as source of dispute and the violence's between/among ethnic groups. Both realistic and symbolic threats serve as a basis for diverse and self-perpetuating intergroup conflicts. In both cases, intergroup conflicts involve socio-cognitive and social psychological processes and dynamics that promote intergroup distrust, prejudices, and threats (see Hussein.et.al, 2015).

As the result of identity conflicts many citizens have been paid their life and many others also displaced from their dwellers. In September 2018, more than 90,000 IDPs were displaced in Amhara region due to long standing tensions and sporadic conflict between the Amhara and Qemant communities (DTM, 2019). Ethnicity is considered as an identity and moral referential to categorize

collective action and the social relations between individuals and groups as well as the ethnicization of land and social relationships is a pragmatic phenomenon of current political arrangements that almost all ethnic groups are victims of such displacement directly or indirectly. Of course, the investigation is highly emphasis in Ethnic politics and this part will be discussed in detail in chapter five of my dissertation under the title ‘ethnic federalism’.

B. Border and Resource Conflicts

Contrary to the constitutional principles, all regions in Ethiopia were selected and delimited by the TPLF without genuine and open public discussions (Mesfin,1999). The decision to determine a certain level of political or administrative status to nation, nationality and people solely rests upon the vanguard party, the EPRDF (ibid). Under ethnic federalism, the overlay of administrative boundaries onto a clan/tribal structure within a region can work against traditional systems of tolerance and mutual sharing of resources (Vaughan and Tronvoll, 2003).

Thus, research participants’ critics on ethnic conflicts and minority insecurity in Ethiopia are pointed towards the EPRDF government’s provincial structure (KII-IDP-04; FGDIII; KI-FNO-02; KI-FGO-02). Scholars also agreed that the phony structure design by the government (EPRDF) to *self-government and autonomy* had separated different ethnic groups, who were in the past living within the same administrative borders, into different regional states and limited their access to common resources (see Abdulahi, 2004).

For instance, the incorporation of Boran and Dogdi groups into Oromia and Somali regional states respectively is a root cause of their long lasting conflict. One of the most noticeable places of border conflict lies in the town of Moyale, on Ethio-Kenyan borders where both Oromia and Somali regional states claims are evident since the early 1990s(see Asnake, 2014). The dispute has brought severe challenges to Oromo and Somali groups with dual identities as ethnic identity at this place has become an instrument of inclusion and exclusion (ibid).The same is true for Guji and Gedeo ethnic groups’ conflict, which were included into Oromia and SNNPR respectively.

Regard to this, interviewees from politician strongly claimed that the current boundaries among ethnic regions are vague and do not consider the realities in local community that ethnic conflicts around boarders have become norm and should need fast solution to build lasting peace among ethnic groups.

This could be the least instance to show how and to what extent the current state structure (ethnic boundary) of Ethiopia is galvanizing inter-ethnic conflicts. But it is vital to think why the boundaries become the potential for ethnic conflicts since 1991 in Ethiopia? As scholars and research participants views, this is due to unhealthy competition among ethnic groups demanding to be strong and majority in number to control the land and its resources, and a strong physical presence, ensures political representation and power which in turn, allows for the power over resource allocation (see Vaughan and Tronvoll, 2003).

On the other hand, the ability to resolve boundary disputes is constitutionally hampered. Although the original creation of regional state borders was a federal decision, reshaping of the borders depends on agreement between regions and such agreement can be difficult to reach (ibid). In this regard research participant from administrative boundaries and identity issues commission revealed that the current federal and regional constitutions are undeniable source of border conflicts because the federal constitution stipulated the regional state to organize ethnically ignoring the variegated nature of the local community and presence of minorities in each area (KI-FGO-03).

The other roots of the present ethnic intolerance is competition over resources particularly, natural resources. Resource based communal conflict is manifested when membership to a certain ethnic group significantly overtake access to scarce resources (Cohen, 1978). Scholars agreed that communal conflicts that would likely rose between or among ethnic groups are most likely economic interest induced. Access to land and water resources are crucial for rural peoples' livelihood particular at local levels. It is known that above 80% of Ethiopian economy is based on Agriculture. Thus, Agriculture constitutes significant part of the gross national product in country.

Almost all regions of the country are experiencing increasing demographic pressure generating negative impacts on natural resources. However, access to landed resources is not merely a matter of productive use of the ecological environment; it involves power and symbolic relations (KII-IDP-05; KI-FGO-02).

Conflict over resources particularly, natural resource is common in all regional states since 1991(KI-PPN-02).Competition over resources is the easiest tool to exacerbate conflicts between/among ethnic groups. Thus, activist and politician in most cases use this to easily mobilize ethnic groups to achieve their political interests using resources interest as tool.

Accordingly, various investigations of scholars in ethnic conflicts indicated that the inter-communal violent conflicts are predominantly caused due to resources competition like competition over grazing lands, communal land, water...etc (see Dereje, 2010; Habtamu,2013).

Many ethnic groups are experiencing this kind of conflicts and pastoral communities are more vulnerable and affected by natural resources based ethnic conflict. For instance, the Boran-Garre conflict in southern Ethiopia and the Afar-Issa conflict in eastern Ethiopia are typical examples of inter-group conflicts that arise from practical and perceived completions over highly scarce ethno-territorial resources (see Markakis, 2011).

C. Political Power Rivalry, Self –rule and Minority Insecurity

After 1991, power politics become the fundamental ethnic issues that can entirely causing ethnic intolerance and violence's. Ethnic politics of Ethiopia is manipulated via Primordial identity of ethnic groups which resulted in out-group and in-group category even within region.

Almost every regional state of Ethiopia in past three consecutive decades has been the site of at least one serious episode of violent conflict and followed by minority displacement. These conflicts are mainly rooted with power politics of ethnic groups' which motivated via ethnic politics mainly quest for identity recognition, self -rule, and power contention.

Consequently, minority insecurity is dramatically increasing from time to time and it becomes peace and security challenges of the new government. Furthermore, minorities are invisible in the political process at all levels of government institutions particularly, in regional states. As Kymlicka (2006) notes, the ethno–nationalist groups should not be allowed to govern their own regional states unless a clear guarantee for minority rights is stipulated and enforced. Moreover, both at national and sub-national levels, the process of empowering ethno - nationalist groups was conducted without putting relevant institutional and policy mechanisms to protect the rights of a subsumed minority group in regions (Assefa, 2012). That is why minorities are excluded from political power and legal ownership of land of their respective region akin to dominant settler of given region.

Further, ethnic rights to self-determination and autonomy are a pseudo rights as the EPRDF regime does not allow exercising these rights (Merera, 2007) though so called Sidama zone in 2020 'Sidama regional state' and Keffa Shako, Bench shako, Dawuro, West Omo and Konta special woredain 2021 got the right to organized in regional level 'South western Ethiopian national region state' after new prime minister come to power and EPRDF is transformed itself to PP (prosperity party).

The constitutional rights to be organized inregions and self-rule at any time have not been exercised. For instance, ethnic groups under ethnic Zones of SNNPR are declared still invisible from the political process at all levels of governments and denied the constitutional right to organized in region level (see Temesgen, 2016). That is why ethnic groups reflect their demand for separate self-governance via ethnic violence in the SNNPR. The 11:11:11 Sidama ethnic group movement against minority in Sidama zone is unforgettable example for.

D. Unemployment, Economic Disparity and Backwardness and Ethnic Conflicts

In some parts of the region, worsening climatic condition and resource scarcity, combined with profound poverty and under development, are clearly exacerbating ethnic conflict (see Nyaba and Otim, 2001). Rapid population growth, possible long-term climate change, increased alienation of land for irrigated farms or ranches, and disruptions of pastoral movements are among the many factors intensifying pastoral and agro-pastoral clashes (See Markakis, 1998).The more arid zones of the low lands suffer frequent and sometimes devastating droughts, and hence are prone to communal clashes over pasture and access to water (ibid).

Despite the fact that, the development of Ethiopia is characterized by a number of paradoxes that raise both challenging and interesting questions in respect of the country's future trajectory. Its economic performance is one such paradox (Erwin, 2016).While state-led growth averaged an impressive 10–11% per year over the period 2003-13(Wondifraw, A. et al, 2015).

Further, it is incontestable that economic issues are politicized and connected with ethnic groups and become contested issue in Ethiopia. Current Ethnic intolerances are also grounded in economic-clashes to control over economic resources. Research participant from federal governmental organization (FGO) said 'as country's economic activity is typically depended on primary economic activities particularly, agricultural land and land resources are basically required by all. That is why economic issues particularly competition over land and land resources are sensitively aggravated sense of out-group and in-group drive and become the easiest way for some political elites to mobilize people to strive to control it via sense of settler and native'(KI-FGO-02).

In this regard, insecurity and internal displacement of minority has become a norm in contemporary time in Ethiopia. From the reality what is in local level, it is undeniable that most regional governments look like merely accountable for dominant groups of their respective regions. Minorities, those are living in different regional states, are implicitly ignored from land ownerships, political powers and unsecured in all aspects. This is why the number and magnitude of IDPs in the country are becoming massive.

For instance, the 2019 Global report of internal displacement monitoring center on internal displacement (GRID) show that Ethiopia recorded the third highest number of new displacements worldwide, with 3,191,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 2018. A significant portion of these displacements are ethnic conflict-induced, largely related to ethnic and border-based disputes. Competition over natural resources has become the source of insecurity of citizen particularly minorities in given regional areas. For instance, OCHA's report of 2018 indicated that due to conflict

which was aggravated by competition over land and resources broke out between Gedeo and Guji Oromo tribes in west Guji displaced about 748,499 IDPs from the Gedeo-West Guji by August, 2018. Furthermore, the inter-communal violence in Jijiga in the same month resulted in the displacement of approximately 141,410 IDPs from the Somali regional capital (Ibid). Simultaneously, conflict in Benishangul Gumuz region and the East and West Wellega zones of Oromia displaced an estimated 191,995 IDPs.

Moreover, the DTM July, 2019 data indicated that 1,642,458 individuals (321,537 households) are internally displaced across 1,163 sites in Ethiopia of which 66% is ethnic conflict induced IDPs and the primary region of origin of IDPs at national level is Somali region as well as Amhara region is the primary region of destination for newly displaced individuals. From March to April 2019 total displacement captured by DTM is 3.04 million IDPs at nation level which showed significant change from August, 2018, DTM's estimated figure of IDPs which is about 2.78 million IDPs nation wide succeeding the displaced from the Gedeo and West Guji ethnic conflict.

March 5 report of OCHA on Ethiopia humanitarian needs overview 2021 indicated that of an estimated 2.7 million people currently internally displaced in Ethiopia, 1 million of which occurred in 2020, approximately 68 per cent were displaced by conflict, underlining the rapidly evolving protection crisis in Ethiopia. Again the report of OCHA which released on Jan 9, 2020 indicated that about 8.4 million people at national level are estimated to have humanitarian needs in 2020, the majority of whom are in Oromia (3.3 million; 9 per cent of the region population), followed by Somali (2.4 million; 39 per cent of population) and Amhara (1.0 million; 4 per cent of population) regions.

In general, 23.5 million people are reported to need urgent humanitarian assistance in the first three months of 2021, yet another increase from 19 million at the end of 2020 (OCHA, 2021). Furthermore, while ongoing insecurity both in and beyond Tigray will continue to severely undermine the availability and access to food and other basic goods and services, the desert locust upsurge is most likely to persist into 2021 with incidences of swarms causing damage to crops and pasture despite concerted control efforts (see OCHA report of 2021).

Many scholars supposed that interest of Power at central level and internal armed struggle are reason for backwardness. Moreover, unemployed, under developments as well as economic disparities including political arrangements are cause of ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia. Actually, this is correct argument. I think under developed nation is more conflict prone than that of developed. Inter-ethnic relations in such nation might be more conflictual due to scarce resources which could be grazing land, water, farmland or other natural resources. Most probably, the economic development of a nation might be connected with socio-economic policy, political order, level of stability or fragility of the state...etc. In one or other way these all need strong and democratic polity and responsible state-society relation. The most responsible body for is the state.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Ethnic conflicts which have been resulting in prolonged instability, loss of life and property, massive internal displacement of minority in particular have emerged as one of the greatest human tragedies and peacebuilding challenges of the country. Its severity hits the highest point in Ethiopia nowadays than ever before. Political instability, weakness of national and local governmental institutions in response and protection, the issues of self-rule and identity recognition, power rivalry among ethnic groups, resource competition and backwardness & unemployment are some of the catalysis's that aggravating ethnic intolerances, violence's, and displacement.

Consequently, instability & security challenges of citizen, tensions among different ethnic groups and internal displacement of people have been increasing from time to time due to rampant ethnic conflicts. The queries and interests of political autonomy, self-rule, questions for recognition of identity and the concern for being region/regional states are further turning out to be limitless and unmanaged security challenges to the current government of Ethiopia that peacebuilding in country is highly challenged. Thus, to overcome this:-

1. The government should prioritize human security in general and minority security in particular.
2. The government should open the door for national dialogues and consensus so as to develop trust and integration among ethnic groups.
3. The government should develop other political paradigm, legal and institutional frameworks that pave the way for national unity, human security, equity, democratization and socio-economic advancements.
4. The government should include peace education in school curriculums starting from elementary level.
5. The government should change the current constitution and develop constitution that equally recognizes human and democratic rights of all citizens regardless of their ethnic backgrounds.
6. The government should alter the current ethnic or/and language fevered boundary with geographical juxtaposition administrative borders.

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⁵In this work,we cited Ethiopian and Eritrean authors with their first name, as it is a custom in the two countries that names are not based on family or surnames, and authors are often cited and referenced by their given name followed by their father's.

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