



## **Revitalizing Ethiopian Compassion for 2020 Election Instead of the Myth of the 'Troubled Sons of Solomon'**

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### **Abstract**

*The article explores about dangerous political culture of Amhara–Tigrean elite who claim lineage to King Solomon of Israel; but remain the worst enemy to each other. The purpose of this article has been to demonstrate how unfamiliar elite politics, which emerged as a competing force of African colonial power in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, persisted as defenders of liberalism and ethnic federalism in Ethiopia's historic election of the 2020. The article relied on consultation of various written documents, travel accounts, archival materials, journals, newspapers, together with oral sources collected from purposely selected five informants to declare that the 2020 election is going to be held in an environment where the hostility of Amhara and Tigrean elite reached climax and the function of Ethiopia's homegrown mechanism of accommodating diverse ideas neutralized. Therefore, based on comparative analysis of kindness of our people and renewal of northern imperial ambition, the researcher had proven that Ethiopia's survival and transition to modern democracy depends up on her hasty restoration of pre-colonial values and demarcation of a clear line which separates the Ethiopian politics from superiority agenda of the 'troubled sons of Solomon'. Finally, the article had also forwarded the importance of acquainting the youth with historically verified indigenous values that needed to build a distinguishable nation together with the moralities of good citizenship as a substitute*

*togenocide and hater propaganda ofelite currently endangeringthe welfare of our people and necessarily the forthcoming 2020Ethiopianelection.*

**Key Words:***Pre-colonial values, Amhara-Tigre elite politics, genocide, 2020 Ethiopian election*

## **I.Introduction**

Ethiopia, which represents the home place of more than eighty four ethnic groups, is located in north east Africa. Except Nilotic groups of Ethiopia-Sudanese borderland, the rest of Ethiopia speaks various types of Afro-Asiatic language family, which further subdivided into Semitic, Cushitic and Omotic languages. Among these, Cushites are the dominant followed by Semitic speakers (Adejumobi, 2007). Usually, Semitic speaking Amhara and Tigre also known as the North constitutes 34% of the country's total population whereas Cushites and several other Omotics were considered as the South. The existing literature depicts Semitic speaking Tigray and Amhara were the chosen people of the world who governed by kings elected by the God. The kings in northern Ethiopia were considered as descendants of king Solomon of Israel (Admasu, 2006; Haile Mariam, 1986). As antithesis to the northern tradition, southern political culture had been characterized by egalitarian values and democratic governance (Milkesa, 2014).

There had been long established tradition of movement of people among Northern and Southern Ethiopian region. Though the trekkers were either the entire clan members or a small group of fortune seekers, people in the region used to carry out seasonal or permanent movement.

The pre-colonial society of Ethiopia, which was characterized by north-south and south-north movement of the people, had also a well-organized tradition of mutual respect and mechanism of accommodating others. Through such institutions, some northerners who moved to the south were welcomed by the south and incorporated as clan. In some localities, these immigrants were also assigned to power based on their merit (Bureau, 1990). Similarly, some southern groups who penetrated into the northern territories were also easily integrated to the northern society. Due to their military might, some clan groups of the south also became the ruling dynasties of the north (Bairu, 1973). However, the pre-colonial culture such as free movement of people and

merit based assignment to power seems interrupted by the coming of new elite group who claim unique from the ordinary Ethiopian.

In a global setting, the term elite refers a small group of people who hold an unequal amount of political power, wealth and privilege in a given society. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2014) the elite are “those people or organizations that are considered the best or powerful compared to others of similar type”. In the context of Africa, the concept of elite had been directly associated with intellectuals who exercise both religious and political authority (Shillington, 1989). As anti-thesis to the indigenous African rhetoric, power elite in Ethiopia, which evolved against shared values of the Ethiopians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had been characterized by imposition of its political will up on other ethnic group, disrespect for other's values, torchers, humiliation, mass killings, hatred towards competitors, deliberate povertization, eviction and persistent attack of ethnics which they consider their enemy number one (Pawulos, 2009; Admasu, 2006; Abass, 1995). Meanwhile, the same literature failed to examine contradictions that had been provoked between elite politics of the north with non-racial, non-ethnic and religious free socio-political institutions of the south.

European had viewed the people of Amhara and Tigray as the most civilized people who had state formation history that dated back to ancient times (Ullendorf, 1967). But they failed to discuss about southern civilizations such as Wolaita which had the supremacy over the North during king Motolomi in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Bouanga, 2014). Africanist had viewed Amhara and Tigray as liberators of the entire black race owning their contribution at the battle of Adwa in 1896. The pro-Africanist had never noticed the ambition of northern elite which got involved in colonization of other African kingdoms. However, the reality on the ground neither confirm with civilizing mission of Eurocentric scholars nor the sacred mission of emancipating the entire black race of Africa. It would rather be characterized by emergent racism, crime against humanity; marginalization, eviction and genocide that committed everywhere in the country. In today's Ethiopia, it could be too difficult to speak to each other concerning Ethiopia's national issues, flag, constitution and human right. Extreme hatred among northern elite remains the manifest destiny of northern Semitic speakers to the extent of destroying each other's very existence on this planet.

Therefore, the major concern of this article is to investigate the political impact of statistically minority but politically dominant elite groups of northern Ethiopia who came from Amhara - Tigray contradicting cultural values of their own people. In an attempt to examine the origin of Amhara-Tigrean elite political chauvinism and its effect in destabilizing the region violating indigenous institutions, the research work in this article was guided by the leading questions: What was the root cause for the Amhara-Tigrean elite conflict? How elite politics could contradict with indigenous values and socio-economic life of Amhara-Tigrean people and Ethiopia at large? What is the consequence of the emergent ethnic politics upon the elite political culture of the north and their respective population? How elite political culture could affect the 2020 Ethiopian election?

## **2. Research Methodology**

### **2.1. Sampling Technique, Data Collection and Data Analysis Methods**

The article explores about the menace of elitism which has gained momentum among Amhara and Tigrean population. The purpose of the research article is to show how smuggled policies are totally contradicting with social harmony and welfare that treasure indigenous African values. In order to convince the reader how much elitism of Amhara and Tigray could have a backlash effect on the Semitic north and other Ethiopians at large, primary sources from relevant travel accounts, field work, archival materials, journals, newspapers, together with oral records from purposively selected five informants were consulted. Moreover, various secondary sources had been also referred by the researcher. All the data are analyzed through historical data analysis method.

### **2.2. Objectives of the Study**

The major objective of this article is to reconstruct the history of Amhara - Tigray elite political culture and its drawback on indigenous values that maintain Ethiopia's survival and transition to democracy. The specific objectives are:

- to specify Ethiopia's indigenous system of integration with strange societies
- to identify the root cause for Amhara-Tigrean elite fight
- to show how ethnically motivated chauvinism and suppression driven elite politics has been contradicting with the indigenous values of Ethiopian society

- to recognize the effect of elite politics on socio-economic and political life of Amhara and Tigrean people
- to find solution for Ethiopia's current political and ethnic inconveniences.

### **3.Result and Discussion**

#### **3.1.Realities of Amhara and Tigray Prior to the Era of Colonialism**

The people of Tigray and Amhara, who proudly calling themselves *habasha* (Abyssinnia), are inhabiting in the northern part of Ethiopia. History tells us the land of Amhara and Tigray had been the most prosperous of all the Ethiopian regions. As a result of the abundance of natural resources and suitability of their land for the production of various types of crops, the pre-colonial societies of Tigray and Amhara were economically very rich. It had been believed that surplus production had transformed the people of Tigray and Amhara to be the major inventors of Aksumite civilization. Both Tigray and Amhara share a common history, language, religion and values than any other ethnic groups in Ethiopia. For example, the Geez language was used as an official language among Amhara and Tigrean society before the 1855. Owing to their similarity in major socio-cultural features of their life, some Omotic groups had acknowledged Tigrean as a variation of Amhara clan during the medieval period (YSOZBITO, 1991).

Politically, the existing literature depicts hierarchical social structure and authoritarian political system of Semitic World, including Habasha, has been antithesis of Cushitic egalitarian values and democratic governance. Milkesa (2014), had remarked that Northern political sovereignty resides in the hands of the king, who considers himself as a representative of the 'God' in this planet. The kings in northern Ethiopia were considered as descendants of king Solomon of Israel no matter their ethnic background was from Tigray or Amhara. The *Kibre Negest*, which was compiled to justify political and land related claims of Habasha kings, states the mystical Ethiopian empire had been the sovereign territory of a legendary king Menilik I, the son of

Solomon of Israel and queen Sheba, who ruled northern Ethiopia since the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC. This trend was ended during the period known as *ZemeneMesafint* in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The people of Tigray had respectable attitude towards their neighboring Amhara since ancient times. According to the 14<sup>th</sup> century hagiography of Filippus, as cited in Tadese(1972), “There came to us men(Amhara) with handsome looks, and they are finely dressed”(418). Likewise, the review of literatures that had been compiled by the people of Amhara characterized Tigreans as the most truthful people (Tadese, 1972; Sergewu, 1972). When Amhara land was invaded by the Muslim forces of Imam Ahmed Ibrahim ibn ElGhazi (1527-1543) in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it was only Tigreans who sided fellow Christian society of Amhara. In those hard times, the people of Tigray had determined to fight on the side of the people of Amhara to the extent they lost most of their dignitaries (Shihab al Din, 2003). In the same way, the people of Amhara were leagued with Tigreans against Turkish intrusion in to Tigre speaking region of northern Ethiopia (Tekletsadik, 1966).

The people of Amhara and Tigray were in good terms with Cushitic and Omotic societies where popular sovereignty prevails. Since the Aksumite period, northern communities had been moving to the areas of Cushitic and Omotic south in search of farm land, preaching Christianity, trade, hunting purpose or any other reason. When the people of Amhara and Tigray travel deep southward in to African hinterland they easily integrated in to Omotic and Cushitic culture due to their sympathy and respect for every human being. This was partly because the Cushitic and Omotic societies, who gave priority to newcomers if they are not in odd to adopt their language, culture and social values, had some system of accommodating strangers and well organized technique of conflict management. For example, Arsi Oromo had adopted several non-Oromo groups including the medieval army contingent of Amhara known as *Chawa* through a system known as *Mogasa* (Fano, 2019). As a matter of fact, Oromo clans which were only nine in number had extended in to several clans and sub clans afterwards (Triulzi and Tesema, 1996; Mohamed, 1990). The development among the Omotic speaking south was also similar with that of Oromo. Originally Wolaita clans were only twelve in number, but the number had increased gradually to more than 200 clans due to the openness of the society to receive refugees and other fortune seekers as a clan (*malla*) in the realm of their culture (Zebdiwos, 2010). The history of

Wolaita reveals that individual immigrants from Tigray had been reported while their fate ended as ruling dynasties of the kingdom of Wolaita (Bureau, 1990)

Similarly, religious minded people of the north prefer to cooperate and intermarry with strangers who came to their land instead of their own fellow Amhara or Tigray. Attracted by their inclusive culture, a large number of North Showa and Gojjam Oromos were assimilated in to Amharanization. According to the research finding of Pauswang (2005); "Gojjam ... was Amharised by the rulers and their settlement of soldiers in the vicinity. In the same way, Shoa Amhara culture is ... a result of the expansionist policies of the Showa aristocracy, rather than a genuine development of an ethnic culture (pp.273-286). Yaju Oromos were moved northwards where they ascended in to the dynasty known as *Wara Shekor Mohamedoch* which ruled Amharaland before the era of colonialism (Fiquet, 2015; Alemayehu, et al., 2006). There were several Oromo groups who cut off from the main Oromo and moved in to Amhara inhabited land of the north. The best example of such case was the Ibido family from Macha clan of the Amuru Oromo who moved to Gojjam at about the 17<sup>th</sup> century and remained there as ruling family (Bairu, 1973). Therefore, the Movement was not only north to south but also northward as well. The above presented history reveals the reality of the Ethiopian society before the coming of Amhara-Tigrean elite political culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **3.2. The Root Case for Amhara-Tigrean Elite Hostility**

The elite political culture, which totally contradicts with the indigenous value of Amhara and Tigray society, was evolved in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It could be characterized as a sub culture within the broader Amhara and Tigrean culture which ended the use of common language and claim of Solomonic dynasty by people who had no lineage with the old Solomonic line. Since 1855, transgressors of the traditional law or *Atse begul betu* had started held power no matter their ethnic background was from Tigray, Amhara or Oromo. The proponents of the new philosophy had argued that colonization of the south and the subsequent civilizing mission was God given manifest destiny of the north (Getachew, 1997). Therefore, the new version of Solomonic dynasty with its agenda of imperialism had been an antithesis to pre-colonial social harmony of Ethiopians and distractor of the widespread north-south relation. (Pawulos, 2009; Admasu, 2006; Abass, 1995). To turn away such territory and resource related excitement, they began to attack Ethiopia's pre-colonial historical work through imperial philosophy; "Who

controls the present controls the past, and who controls the past controls the future” (Sharer and Ashmore, 2003, pp.602-603).

Amhara-Tigrean elite had fabricated a mystical ancient empire known as the ‘Greater Ethiopia’, whose territorial extent tends to be stretching from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean and Kilimanjaro area (Markakis, 1972). As noted by Abas (1995), northern elite imperial ideology, which is based on the myth of three thousand years of history, had argued that the present Ethiopia, including the whole of Eastern Africa, was always united, and the people who inhabited these lands were their subjects. In essence, the objectives of this mythology, was aimed at justifying Amhara-Tigray elite conquest and domination over other people. Based on such fabricated myths, scholars like Getachew (1997) and Tekletsadik (1966) confidently appreciated the conquest of Menilik II considering it as an act of liberating the mystical state of the ‘Greater Ethiopia’ whereas peoples like Pawulos (2011) keep in mind the conquest wars of Minilik II as ‘a holy crusade to restore Ethiopia to its historic grandeur.’

The Amhara and Tigrean elite, which emerged as a competing force of the Christian highland kingdom, had entered in to the era of colonial conquest of the south in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Though northern imperialism had religious dimension which required the tang of Wollo Muslims who refused to convert in to Christianity and life of Emperor Yohanes IV as a revenge by the Muslim, colonization of the south was for economic motive (Tekletsadik, 1952; Bahiru, 2002). The presence of Tigrean hunters –merchant group known as *Shubatiri* among the Dasnech and Lake Turkana area in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century expose the initiative of colonializing southern Ethiopia was taken by Tigrean elite (Almagor, 2002). In 1888 Emperor Yohannis IV had ordained Negus Tekle Haymanot as king of Gojjam and Kaffa (Bairu, 1973). The Tigrean nobility under Emperor Yohannis IV, had a protracted dream of creating an empire in the hinterland of Africa which extends from the Red Sea coast to the lower banks of river Omo and Lake Turkana. The imperial roadmap of Emperor Yohannis IV had also deserved the recognition of modern Tigrays such as TPLF who started posting a map known as Abay-Tigray Republic by traversing the Amhara country to get link with western territories of Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambela. To achieve their motive, TPLF elite had prepared a map which combined a larger portion of Gondar (Amhara province) with the region of Tigray and incorporated in to their curriculum (Tigray online, 2018).



On the other hand, the Showa Amhara force which emerged as a competing force Yohanes under King Menilik II also directed towards resource abundant southwest and south eastern parts of the present day Ethiopia. He mobilized the forces of Shawa together with the forces of Wollaga and the Gibe kingdom of Jimma. The Shawan forces were led by *Fitawurari* Habtegiorgis while the Gojjam forces were led by *Dejazmach* Dereso. At the battle of Embabo the forces of Gojjam were defeated and Menilik II became master of all the territories of the south west including Gojjam, Kafa and other Tigrean hunting grounds of Southern territories were failed in the hands of king Menilik II (Bahiru, 2002). This was the major case of Amharra- Tigrean elite. Since then Tigrean elite never stopped calling Showa domination illegitimate and offender of the Tigrean hegemony (Hagos, 2003). Both the Tigrean and Amhara elite domination had been precarious for destroying all kinds of indigenous Ethiopian values which were effective in preservation of social order during pre-colonial period.

### **3.3. Socio-economic and political Foundation of Amhara-Tigrean Power Elite**

Amhara- Tigrean elite political culture was characterized by annexation of others territories, socio-cultural chauvinism, deliberate povertization of rivals, racial supremacy and extreme power hunger, prioritizes individual interest instead of the nation. In order to achieve their extreme and grid political power ambition, both of them had appeared while collaborating with an external enemy force, which could be harmful to the sovereignty of the nation. For example, Tigrean hunters-merchant communities of the Omo valley, which had been cut off after the conquest of Gojjam and Kaffa and moved in to Ethio-Kenyan borderland, were indiscriminately hanged by the forces of Menilik to please colonial government of Great Britain (Hodson, 1927; Simpson, 1996). At the same time a notable Tigrean elite Haile Selassie Gugsu, who was bribed by the Italian during the colonial conquest, had betrayed Ethiopia and joined fascists calculating his fate in future Italian East Africa colony instead of independent Ethiopia (UNESCO Vol. 8, 1981).

Politically, both Amhara and Tigrean elite portrait themselves as a super hero which could not be withstand by any force on this planet earth. In reality, the Amhara elite power was maintained by the military and financial support of the British and USA respectively (UNESCO, Vol. 8, 1981). During the period Emperor Haile Selassie I, Ethiopia acquired 67% of the total US aid to Africa (Bahiru, 2002). Similarly, the TPLF came to power by the support of the western powers and

logistics provided by the Muslim Arab countries. For example, TPLF led government of Ethiopia got 2 billion dollar each year in the name of anti-terrorist alliance. In both cases, it reveals that Amhara-Tigrean elite domination had been imposed up on the Ethiopian society not because of their supremacy in human and material resources, but because of the financial sponsorship and armament provision of the western powers. Under Amhara-Tigrean elite domination, higher government posts had been totally controlled by their respective ethnic group. If someone from another ethnic group wanted to be assigned in administrative and military posts, loyalty to the ethnic Amhara or Tigray was mandatory instead of loyalty to the constitution. Before 1991, almost all key government and military posts were controlled by ethnic Amhara. For example, during the period of Derg, 75% of central committee members were from ethnic Amhara which constitutes 27% of the Ethiopian population (John, 2019). When the TPLF came to power, it increased the percentage to reach 100% (Freedom house, 2019).

Amhara and Tigrean elite had developed their own skewed imagination to portray others which was totally different from the general public. For example Amhara elite depicted Tigreans as thin and poor who always used to wear torn out cloths (shorts) and barefooted. Likewise, the people of Amhara had been depicted as if they were totally black in their color pigment among the Tigrean elite. Gradually, elite trend of associate Semitic Amhara with the black color becomes a common among Tigrean speaking peoples of Tigray and Eritrea. One of my informants had expressed to me about her first encounter with the people of Amhara at Addis Ababa. In her home town, she had been told that all Amharas are black in their body color appearance. When she came to Addis with her father she saw people which are almost similar with her Tigrigna speaking locality. And pointing her finger at the general public she asked; *Aboyka* (dad) are these Amhara? Her father responded; yes my daughter. Again she continued her question; Why Amhara soldiers that came to our region northern front) became black? That was not correct, because Ethiopian soldiers are not only composed of Amharas (Genet, 2018).

The preference to associate one's ethnic with white symbolism was a common phenomenon of elite nationalism that evolved among Amhara and Tigray society. Even though almost all pre-colonial societies of Africa such as Somalis, Oromo, Sudanese, Djiboutian and others used to wear cotton made white cloths, Amhara and Tigray elite had appeared while propagating as if white clothing tradition belongs only to their respective ethnic group only. White symbolism

philosophy of elites has also mechanisms which helped them torridicule the people whom they consider inferior to theirs. During the period of Emperor Haile Selassie and the military junta, Tigreans were publicly depicted among other Ethiopians as if all of them wearing torn out shorts whereas Amharas portrayed with white garments and *shama*. Similarly, after the coming of Tigrean elite to power, Tigrean had begun to appear with white cloths. Inversely Amharas were started to be represented with Green khaki shorts and shirts, which means you are farmers, but we are rulers of the land. White Symbolism among both elite represents becoming master of the land.

Amhara-Tigray elite domination had also cultural dimension aimed at discouraging morals of the society so as to make not to fight for their right and national pride. Logically, every society has its own way of expressing love, bravery, natural beauty, national pride etc. In the last days of the *Derg*, war encouraging songs of Tigreans were totally marginalized from the Amhara dominated media. In those days Tigrigna love songs such as *Saba* and *Anguafesis* were repeatedly heard whereas the people had obsessed of Amhara war songs known as *shillela* and *fukera*. After the 1991, the trend was immediately reversed in favor of Tigray. It was usual to hear Tigrean war songs such as *Ember Tegadalay*, *Fano*...etc almost for 27 years while Amhara war songs were totally excluded from the 'public media'. Songs which appreciate the necessity of dying for one's lover instead of the nation were repeatedly released by the 'public media' of the TPLF's Ethiopia.

Amhara-Tigrean elite had committed a crime of planned povertization against the ethnic group which they consider major foe of their presence at the court. Tigray and Amhara land had been the major producers and exporters of food crop in Ethiopia. Almost 40% of the total food crop needed in Ethiopian consumers comes from Wollo and Tigray alone before 1970's (Keller, 1992). In the last days of Emperor Haile Selassie, the history of Tigray's prosperity was reversed because of deliberate act of land snatching policy of the emperor. The most notable Oromo clan repeatedly mentioned in association with northern position of Oromo had been the Raya Oromo. Raya land, as stated by Russell (1858), had been part of the kingdom of Tigray in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Alemu Kasa and Sisay Mengiste, (2005) Raya land was annexed by Emperor Yohannis IV for the purpose of resettling Tigrean peasants. Later on Raya land was divided into Raya-Azebo of Tigray and Raya-Kobo of Wollo during Emperor Haile Selassie I. Similarly, the military regime had devastated Western Tigray, another surplus

producing part of Tigray. The major motive of the act of Amhara elite was to harm Tigray's food self-sufficiency. This had forced majority of Tigreans to flee to Sudan and elsewhere leaving their home behind. Likewise, when TPLF comes to power in 1991, it not only restored southern Tigray but also annexed Amhara lands from Gonder and Wollo. TPLF had also handed over several Amhara lands to Benishangul and Oromia without consent of the people (Yohanes, 2018).

### 3.4. Emergent Ethnic Politics and the Ascendancy of Tigrean Elite to Power

The first solution that had been adopted by conflicting factions of northern elite was political marriage which they believed might be necessary to preserve loyalty of the other. The Tigrean elite had taken the lead to handle the issue through the political marriage with notable Amhara elite who were loyal to their hegemony. Accordingly, Princess Zewditu Menilik of Showa was married to *Ras Arayasilassie Yohanis* of Tigray. Subsequent Amhara dignitaries such as Emperor Haile Selassie were also tried to handle the issue through political marriage with the Tigrean nobility. The marriage arrangement between prince Zenebework Haile Selassie and the Tigrean prince *Dejazmach Haile Selassie Gugsu* was part of the project that aimed at neutralizing animosity among the belligerent groups (Bahiru, 2002; Waweru, 2018). In addition, the reign of Haile Selassie was criticized for deportation of educated Tigrean from the court to excommunicate from the general public. In this arrangement, people like *Aba Kidanemariam*, *Ato Teklay*, *Ato Hagos* and others were deported to *Gamo Gofa*, *Kiflrehager*, *Gelebena*, *Hamer Bako*, *Awuraja* or sub-province (Sode, 2019; Mola, 2019). On the other hand, when we evaluate the awakening of the ethnic nationalists among the Tigrean elite, it became clear that the political marriage and deportation of notables had been fruitless.

The events that happened in the years of 1960's were very crucial in the political history of Ethiopia. The escalation of radical student revolt together with the establishment of ethnic based political parties such as EPLF and TPLF among the Tigrigna speaking Northern provinces made the issue beyond the control of Amhara led government of Emperor Haile Selassie. The emergent Marxist-Leninist parties, who perceive ethnic question as a colonial question, had forced the government to change its outlook towards the bandits. At this point, the measures of Amhara

ruling elite had transformed into genocide. The most notable of such cases was the case of Hawzen; which led to the massacre of 1800 innocents by air attack of the *Derge* force (Aregawi, 2008). It was not confined only in Tigray, but also intensified throughout the country under the slogan of purging out Ethiopia from collaborators of *gentay/asgentay* (separatist) or *wonbede* (bandit) forces. For example, sixteen Tigreans were killed in Arba Minch town including my favorite mathematics teacher Goytom Mengisteab in 1990. However, the punitive actions of the *Derg* regime could not be able to stop advancement of rebel coalition known as EPRDF (Bahiru, 2002).

In May 1991 the TPLF was entered Addis Ababa by the support of the west and some Muslim Arab countries who were in odds with socialist government of Colonel Mengistu Hailemariam. Right after they took the power, the Tigrean elite had started to implement organized, planned and purposeful anti-Amhara political policies. For example, they created an ANDM for Amhara people; an organization which was led by non-Amhara. Amharas were systematically excluded from politics, businesses activities, ownership of property, drafting the new constitution and even representation in towns with overwhelming Amhara majority (Yohanis 2018). More than fifteen million Amharas, who had been in major urban centers such as Addis Ababa, Adama and others, were deprived of their right to self-rule and proportional representation at local and national level. Without the consent of the people, TPLF had managed to impose its party program upon the Amhara and others in the name of constitutionalism (Abinet, 2014).

Amhara and Tigrean elite had professed the expansion to the south as their God-given destiny no matter what the interest of the people in the south before the Second World War. Afterwards while the Amhara used to assign individuals who tied to the court by political marriage, the Tigrean had relayed up on party echelons from each ethnic group. Both Tigray and Amara had never been ready to recognize the right of Oromo on Oromia including Addis Ababa. In TPLF manifesto (1968) it has been clearly stated that Addis Ababa is a town of Amhara which they believe exploiter of Tigray. For the time being they showed solidarity with Oromo elite because they wanted to use them against the people of Amhara. In the last 27 years the fate of Ethiopians government was in the hands of Tigrean elite who came from 6% of the Ethiopian total population. Through democratic centralism, they controlled political power of other regions and federal government. Besides, more than 95% military leadership was in the

hands of TPLF. This helped Tigrean elite to build the most autocratic government in Africa who can evict, massacre, and harass other ethnic groups as well as opposing parties. Among these, the Amhara, which were mentioned as enemy number one on TPLF organizational manifesto of 1968, had been the most victimized (TPLF Manifesto, 1968).

At the center, job loss and mass killings of innocent had been targeted Amhara intellectuals. In Addis Ababa University alone forty three professors were evicted from their jobs. Among these, some professors such as Mindaralewu Zewude had been lowered to the status of local peasant (Borkena, 2019). In Ethiopian airline too large number of pilots were abandoned their job in order to escape harassment made by the TPLF officials. For example Yalewulet Fanta had left his job and exiled to USA where as people like Yohanis Tesfaye prefer to be a peasant instead of tolerating ethnic harassment (Borkena, 2018). Several others such as Professor Asrat Woldeyes and Doctor Fikru Maru were put in to a jail. Job insecurity, torcher, to be raped and jailed, murder and insult by ethnic Tigray was the common phenomenon of the Amhara intellectual's everyday life during the TPLF period (Arefeayne, 2018).

One of the major concerns of Tigrean elite was the apparent numerical imbalance between Amhara and Tigray. In order to solve or minimize the problem which they perceive as a great problem for Tigrean hegemony, they had started to apply several corrective measures which parallel the act of fascists. The first measure was killing and evicting Amharas in mass from northern border areas of Wolkait, Tsegede and Raya so as to replace them with ethnic Tigray which was expected to be the majority in these districts. The second measure was sterilizing Amhara women so as not to give birth completely whereas third solution was decreasing the number of population in Amhara region through a fake population census in order to decrease the total amount of budget that was allocated to the region every year based on its total population. The report made to TPLF parliament had made known that more than 2.4 million Amharas were disappeared in the population of 2007 (Kaleab, 2018). As TPLF had deliberately neutralized the role of the church, civic organizations and elders, they keep silence instead of denouncing these inhuman tragedies; an act which decrease the status of these institutions (Aregawi, 2003).

The act of TPLF, which was aimed at decreasing the total number of Amharas in order to decrease the amount of the regions yearly budget, parallels the crime that had been committed against the

humanity. It had been identified that the project of reducing the total budget of the region has direct implication on the development of the region. When the amount of allocated budget decreases, the equivalent would be low schools, no potable water and no fertilizer supply and road construction network. Finally as stated by Aljazera(2014) Amhara region became not only poorest in Ethiopia but also the place where the poorest society in the world found. The report of World Bank (2017) had characterized the Amhara region with high degree of poverty, higher rate of male nutrition, lesser rate of economic and infrastructural development. This could happen to Amhara people not because of the laziness of its people but because of planned government scheme of povertization of a region which they consider enemy number one.

Everywhere throughout the country killing and eviction of Amharas was intensified. Mainly Amharas eviction from Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nation, Nationalities, Peoples, regional state, and the regional state of Oromia had been very intensive. Obang(2012) had estimated that 78,000 ethnic based deportations had been on Amhara from these areas before 2012. Similarly, John, (2019) had stated 8,000 Amharas were forcefully deported from their homes. Both writers also confirmed that every evicted Amharas were beaten, raped or looted by police who need to be protecting citizen including Amhara. As the Tigrean elite had categorized Amharas under Naftagna (Minilik's conquering army), most people began to associate the Tigreans with TPLF. During the 2017/18 mass uprising, the Amharas cleanse whatever Tigray from Amhara region considering them collaborators of TPLF party. The Amhara also refused to trade with TPLF companies and export agricultural product to Tigray, which provided support to dying TPLF. In response, beating of Amharas soccer teams and students who were attending in the Universities of Tigray had been very common in those days. There is a symptom of transition of elite hater to ethnic hater as the elite came in the name of innocent Amhara and Tigray. In Amhara region, it also created trauma of associating everything with Tigrean conspiracy. The Best example which verifies the degree of Amhara trauma against TPLF was the killing of two PhD candidates, Wossen Tefera and Mandefro Abi, considering them they were sent by TPLF to sterilize school girls (Dawit, 2018). At this terrible moment, where indigenous mechanism of peace management systems had been disregarded, Ethiopians are preparing for general election which will be held in August 2020 without healing psychological wound of the people.

### **Discussions on Legacies of Elite political culture and the 2020 Ethiopian Election**

Amhara and Tigray elite are no more play a dominant role in determining socio-economic and political fate of Ethiopians, but their political legacy has been long lasting. Thanks to the 1991 and 2018 popular revolution, Amhara and Tigrean elite political culture had been gone for good. However, as both acted in the name of their ethnic group, they also inherited their enmity with other Ethiopians as well. Amhara and Tigrean elite struggle for hegemony had brought not only enemies, but also attracted large number supporters among social groups which they propagated for along period of time for the sake of alliance creation. This in turn evolved into belligerent political camps which can be clearly expressed as liberal and federalist forces. The Amhara elite, who had succeeded to beat Italian at Adwa and creating Amharic speaking national technocrats, had been in a good position to present itself as guardian of liberalism and national unity even if their idea was not incorporated in Ethiopian constitution. The liberalism, which evolved from the offshoots of *Ityopyawinet* (Ethiopianess) or national unity, had sounding supporters among northern Ethiopians who consider themselves *Habasha*, Ethiopian Orthodox Church, moderate Muslims and Protestants, urban population, unionist parties, families of the pre-1991 officials, including members of the disbanded Ethiopian defense army. The Tigrean elite, whose programs succeeded to attain the constitutional recognition, had designated itself as defender of ethnic federalism and constitutionalism. The Tigrean elite, which converted from vanguard of the Tigrean nation to vanguard of federalism, has also the support of huge ethno nationalist parties across the country, rural areas, radical Muslims and protestants, the political cadres of the former EPRDF, corrupted officials, TPLF veterans, wealthy smugglers and those engaged in money laundering and so forth.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Historic Ethiopia has been the home place for people who speak Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic and Nilotic languages. Habitually, the area of Semitic speakers was known as the North whereas the rest categorized under the South. Since ancient times, people from the north moves to the south and people from the south also move northwards. Before the colonial era, each ethnic group had mechanisms to incorporate individual coming from other society's socio-economic and political environment. As societies prioritize merit and efficiency, the least criteria for the stranger was embracing socio-cultural values of their society to hold administrative and military posts. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century new form power elite, which was totally different from indigenous



politico-religious context of African elitism and the old hereditary nature of northern kingship, had been emerged among Amhara and Tigrean society. As their claim for lands increased, they interred in to troublesomeness with indigenous people of the south leading to the destruction of pre-colonial social harmony of Ethiopians and end of north-south relation.

The imperial minded Amhara-Tigrean elite, which remained the worst enemy to each other, had ruled Ethiopia for almost more than a century. When Amhara came to power, the fate of Tigrean had been poverty and eviction. Similarly, as a result of Tigrean ascendancy, the people of Amhara were immediately converted in to one of the poorest in the world. The root cause for Ethiopia's socio-economic and political problem could be not loss of natural resource or laziness of its citizen but directly related with deliberate act of the elite politics which presents loyalty as prerequisite to get job opportunity, movement of the people, and property ownership totally violating indigenous value of Ethiopian. In the present day once more the troubled 'sons of Solomon' and their supporters had determined to take part in 2020 Ethiopian election as Liberal or Federalist Party with complete predetermined confidence of winning the election contest. The most pressing concern should be not the development of Amhara and Tigrean elite political culture in to Liberal or Federalists political parties like the Republican and Democrat of the USA but the problem lays up on the way they wanted to come to power which could be expressed by mixing of a democratic election process and the old protracted hatred of the northern elite.

The above paragraph discusses how much the 2020 Ethiopian election is going to be held in dangerous situation where elite hostility reached the climax and indigenous peace management techniques overlooked. Therefore, the government and the general public something needs to do something before thinking about the schedule of the Ethiopian 2020 election. First of all, the society as well as the local government needs to work on youth awareness creation about the consequence of century old hatred propaganda in relation to its significance for their future carrier. It could be helpful for youngsters to restrain themselves from becoming a victim of elite political agenda. The second measure is renovating traditionally demonstrated Ethiopian shared values and indigenous mechanisms of accommodation, peacemaking and reconciliation instead of forceful actions that could activate the old lingering hatred among northern elite and supporters of their idea. It could effectively bridge the gap between liberals and federalists increasing the confidence of the general public to choose a progressive party which could lead this country

properly. The use of indigenous conflict management techniques minimizes pre and post-election irregularities by means of neutralizing troubles that might be backed by Amhara and Tigre elite. Likewise the prevalence of pre-colonial indigenous values are very essential to secure Ethiopia's survival and to say no for extremists who had no concern for social welfare and survival of the country targeting only winning seats in forthcoming election.

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### **Conflicts of Interest**

The author of this article assures everyone that there is no conflict of interest

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