

Ethiopian Government Approach to Afar pastoralism; Between Theory and Reality

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Afar pastoralism at Glance	2
3. Afar pastoralism in Ethiopia.....	3
4. The Government's approach to Afar people; Discrepancy between Theory and Practice.....	5
5. Potential Values of Pastoralism Both to the community and the state at large.....	10
6. Challenges to Afar Pastoralism and for it's to national goods.....	13
7. Windows of opportunities.....	16
8. Conclusion.....	19

References

Abstract

The recent global trend has witnessed an increasing vulnerability of the local communal ways of life and their resources with the expansion of state projects into previously inaccessible areas. As states hand stretched to these areas a new dynamics of relation between the local community and state emerged. While the state's justification for its present in the area is mostly lay on developmental activities, the local community's right to use resources ultimately threatened by the state. Particularly, local community's ability to use land becomes curious along with state's allocation of land for huge development projects like commercial agricultural investment and industrial infrastructure development. The approach of Ethiopian state holds to Afar pastoralist community maintains the above patterns as part of global reality. Ethiopia is a very diverse country in many respects ranging from ethno-religious composition of its population up to ecological discrepancy across the country. For long part of its history the country had under strong centralized authoritarian regimes. In 1991 the country has undertook a political transition with new coalition EPRDF government. The new government adopted a federal state structure based on the idea of accommodating various groups in the country by granting them the right to administer their own affairs. Afar pastoralist community is one of identity group that has gained recognition of self-government under new government. Despite the formation of autonomous administrative region for Afar pastoralist community under the new constitution, the people could not manage their own affairs as it was promised. It is mainly due to the continuous economic encroachment and expropriation of pastoralist resources by the national government under the banner of development projects. This paper attempts to show how the local community's right to manage its economic resources compromised by centrally owned development policies.

1. Introduction

There are various debates about what role of the government should play in economic life of the society. Such debates are byproducts of the political ideology or principle followed by a particular discussant. In this regard we can find the people who mainly influenced by the western liberal tradition arguing that government should refrain from economic matters. These groups of people believe that the healthy economy can be achieved by free market principle. To justify their argument they mentioned the post-industrial and economically advanced states in the western world. On the other hand, plenty of scholars and policy makers argue that government's strong involvement in the economy is vital to bring economic and social development. The proponents of this idea are mainly from developing countries.

Ethiopia is a very diverse country both in socio economic and cultural, and ecological terms. The political economic history of the state demonstrates the win lose patterns of relations between various regimes and groups in the long history of the country. Since 1991 the country has adopted federal system of government and administrative structure that reassemble the country out of nine ethno linguistically divided regional states and two chartered cities. The idea behind the political transformation to ethnic based federalism was to grant different localities political autonomy to decide upon their matters and manage and utilize their economic resources.

Now a day, Ethiopia has several socio economic and political problems that negatively affect the life of individuals, vertical and horizontal relations between groups and between groups and government respectively. Among the other, this paper appraises the political transformation of ethnic federalism in reference to the lived realities of regional autonomy and economic empowerment of ethnic communities, by taking the national governments development strategies and activities towards the Afar pastoralist communities in Ethiopia. The focus of the direction here is that how the EPRDF has infringed upon regional autonomy and the mechanisms of exploiting the local economic source of the people through its development discourse, despite its declared commitment to regional autonomy equitable development.

The central argument in this paper is that the political transformation in Ethiopia since 1991 not only failed to address the key demand of pastoralist community but also serve as a legitimatizing tool of expropriation of local economic resources by the regime. The paper also argued that the developmental approaches and activities of the central government is in contrary to the basic values of democracy as it erodes the property rights(economic security) and societal security of

the pastoralist community. To justify this position the paper relied on the existing political, legal, semi-legal, institutional and normative references vis a vis the available works on the practical experience on the ground in relation to the rights and treatment of pastoralist community by the regime. The paper recommend that the real political transformation and community development can only be achieved by making Afar pastoralist part of policy articulation at the center. In other words, the development strategy of the government both at local and national level shroud is based on local economic, environment and societal contexts of Afar pastoralist community to be effective. The efforts to do so should start by the genuine political inclusion of Afar pastoralist community to have its own say in policy articulation process.

2. Pastoralism at a Glance

Pastoralism is a way of life for people who derive most of their income or survival from rearing and keeping domestic live stocks in arid and semi-arid climatic conditions. A range livestock species such as cattle, camels, donkeys, and shoats are raised for various purposes including milk and meat production, trade and transportation (Kelemework, 2012). Pastoralism has not only economic, but also socio-cultural and cosmological values (ibid). As a system of social organization pastoralism encompasses all socio cultural, economic, administrative, and environmental and resource management, conflict resolution systems in accordance of which pastoralist community lead their life. Beside inward contribution to the member of the society, Solomon (2006) argued that pastoralism also makes a very significant contribution to the national income, employment, agricultural production, and food supply at macroeconomic levels in several countries of the world.

Despite this reality, for long of its history a little have been said, acknowledged and documented about pastoralism the economic benefits of pastoralism either as social values or its contribution to national economy and foreign currency earnings in public policy orientations of many countries (Odhiambo, 2006). Also pastoralist communities are politically and economically marginalized sections of the society all over the world.

The past two and three decades has witnessed an increasing attention to the major pastoral development issues and a tendency of humanistic approaches by most scholarly works to pastoralism as one component of human kind with its complexities. Most contributors have recalled governments to reshuffle their policies to be pastoralism friendly and to move away from traditional understanding of the system as under civilization. Most problems that pastoralist

community in different countries face today like conflicts and insecurity, declining of livestock product, violation of land rights, insufficient provision of services and infrastructure, political and economic marginalization, drought and dependence on food aid are the byproducts of policy makers of misleading approach than the malfunctioning of pastoralism as social system (Eyasu & Feyera , 2010, Pavanello, 2009). Behnke and Kerven (2011) particularly argued that the single most critical obstacle to contemporary pastoral society is the erosion of its right to resource ownership or resource alienation. According to them pastoral land rights are at risk by state's land grabbing activities with introduction of large scale commercial agriculture and construction of hydropower projects to the pastoralist areas which the later commonly managed previously (Behnke and Kerven, 2011). This in turn affects the regular access to resources mainly river valley and lands up on which the entire economic performance of pastoralism, its capacity to support human populations and to maintain ecological balance relied on (Ibid).

Generally, pastoralism is the predominant production and livelihood system in the arid and semi-arid dry lands in various parts of the world. Yet its values to household means of livelihood and national economic development are hardly appreciated (Odhiambo, 2006). As pastoralism is a human culture in its complexities and its relationship with nature and as moral code of conduct is emerging out of the interplay with nature, dealing with pastoralism needs various considerations by policy makers.

3. Afar Pastoralism in Ethiopia

Located in the eastern horn of Africa, Ethiopia is home of about 1.4 million Afar pastoralist community and a little more than half (52 percent) of total surface area of the country falls in Afar Regional State (UNDP, 2014). As a result of 1991 political transformation, Afar people has gained their own administrative region out of nine administrative regions of Ethiopia. The Afar region is located in the north-eastern Ethiopian lowlands, outside bordering with Djibouti to the east, and Eritrea to the north and domestically with Amhara, Tigray, and Oromia regional states.

Historically Afar pastoralists have been the most marginalized groups in the policy arena and their development has never been part of the national development plan in Ethiopia (Bekele and Padmanabhan, 2008; Solomon, 2006). During the past regimes, pastoralists were considered to be wanderer who led a primitive way with wasteful natural resources usages (Bekele and Padmanabhan, 2008). It was to the influence elite's socio-cultural background from sedentary farming family not because of pastoralism's as ineffectiveness to support the human community

under it. This trend has continued in present relationship between Ethiopian government and Afar pastoralist community. The policy approaches of both the past and current regimes altogether aimed to alter the Afar pastoralist's modes of production (ways of life) into sedentary Agriculture (ibid). Bekele and Padmanabhan (2008) argued that the development activities and policy approach of Ethiopian state to Afar pastoralist aimed at gradual transformation of the later towards agro pastoralism and finally sedentary agriculture.

The recent shift in politics with declining role of the state based on federal political structure under ethnic federalism, the current government has claimed to give priority to neglected regions and groups including Afar pastoral community (Bekele and Padmanabhan, 2008). To that end the current government has made significant steps to include constitutional phrases that gave pastoral community a right to manage resources at their disposal. However, the policy approaches and activities of the current government in relation to the community on the ground have proved against the constitutional promise since political transformation. As a result there is a sort of grievances and irritations among Afar pastoralist community against the government's approach to them.

Over all the subsequent regimes, from the past to present, notions of development and policy instruments have not been pastoralism community friendly by any standards. Matt Bryden, United Nation Development Program, Emergency Unite for Ethiopia Consultant (1996) described the condition as follow;

“Visions of development expounded by others have been neither beneficial nor attractive to the Afar. The Afar region requires a different approach from other parts of Ethiopia: its climate, ecosystems, social and cultural norms, all point to the need for contextually appropriate, culturally relevant development strategies. The underdevelopment of the Afar region today is striking testimony to such policies. At least 80% of the Afar population relies on transhumant animal husbandry for subsistence, while a minority has settled along the banks of the Awash river, or have adopted a sedentary existence in communities along major transport routes. Sedentarisation, however, is not an option for the vast majority of the population. Like other nomadic communities, Afar pastoralism has evolved in response to hostile environmental conditions and the fragility of the local ecosystem, which renders other modes of existence impracticable, since they may disturb the environment's

delicate equilibrium. This fragility of arid and semi-arid ecosystems thus dictates a culturally and ecologically adapted approach to development”.

4. The Government’s approach to Afar people; Discrepancy between Theory and Practice

The government of Ethiopia has been insisting to transform the country both politically and economically through its commitment to three values: federalism, democracy and development under the banner of democratic developmental state. The regime also spread the imaginary discourse about itself as a guardian of those who have been underside of history. However, the existing realities evidenced that such a holistic approach to political and economic development has not as yet become ingrained in Ethiopia, particularly in the Afar region.

The regime introduced some constitutional phrases under the present constitution that recognizes the right and privileges to pastoralist people. The constitution in article 40(5) clearly stated that *“Ethiopian pastoralists have the right to free land for grazing and cultivation as well as the right not to be displaced from their own lands”*. Bekele Hundie and Padmanabhan, (2008), view the article as the current government’s commitment to grant constitutional and legal recognition of a common property for rangeland resources of pastoralist community. The government also incorporates a range of rights from traditional civil and political rights to socio-economic and group or solidarity rights that can serve as a reference to evaluate the approach of the government to pastoralist community. Under its part on the National Policy Principles and Objectives, article 89(5) the constitution appeals the government to respect both the social system and economic resources of the people in what referred as *“government has the duty to hold, on behalf of the People, land and other natural resources and to deploy them for their common benefit and development”*. Sub article 6 of the same also stated as *“government shall at all times promote the participation of the People in the formulation of national development policies and programs; it shall also have the duty to support the initiatives of the People in their development endeavors”*.

Since the 1991’s political transformation, the government of Ethiopia has also promised to give development priorities to historically neglected groups which largely comprise Afar pastoralist community in what the former referred as affirmative action in policy languages. Ethiopia is also part of international institutions and legal regimes that guarantee the range of rights and protections for the pastoralist people which maintain resemblance with the category of

indigenous community. Like for instance, the United Nations Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples under article 5 guaranteed pastoralist community to maintain their system stated as: *“Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State”*.

In political terms, the government frequently expressed its commitment to encourage pastoralist community in their political and economic life and presetting itself as their guardian by referring the bad treatment by previous regimes. Of course the government’s narrative is part of the whole discourse of development and good governance under the ideological umbrella of developmental state.

Against all the above political and legal promises of government to Afar pastoralist community the former still undertaking inimical activities in the region in the name of development projects. The majority of governments plan and strategies show its tendency to change pastoral resources, values and ways of life from above. The key pastoralist’s resource area in Afar region, *“particularly the Awash valley, has been a prime target for various government ‘development projects”* (Getachew 2001, Piguet 2007, Yasin, 2008). Likewise the imperial and the Derg regimes approach to Afar, the TPLF lead EPRDF governments has been undertaking various development interventions along the Awash valley of the Afar region. Plenty of scholars including Dereje, 2008, Behnke, And Kerven(2013) and humanitarian agencies like UNICEF agreed that net result of the government’s development interventions in the Afar region, is the dispossession of pastoralist resources like range lands, mineral(salt and potash) that ultimately lead to the political disempowerment of Afar pastoralist community both at local and national levels (Dereje, 2008). The central argument to be made here is that the political narrative of TPLF (EPRDF) to Afar pastoralist community as their guardian and protector provides only lip services to exploit the local people’s resources by elites in TPLF and its local agencies Afar National Democratic party.

The political promise of regional autonomy compromises by regime’s economic encroachment that put the pastoralist community alien to advantages of its resources. The government’s justification of its activities is to bring development that enhances the economic benefits to both local people and national earnings. The state by the power vested in it took the land to build large scale sugar factory and commercial plantation without consulting the pastoralists (Dereje, 2008).

Like their reaction to the previous regimes, the pastoralists expressed their dissatisfaction and opposition to the governments' expropriation of their lands and the implementation of the commercial farm schemes through damaging mature crops in the field (Bekele Hundie and Martina Padmanabhan, 2008).

The profile of major economic players and their respective power positions in the government's development projects such as in sugar factories, urban land, in production and distribution of salt and other minerals in the region proves the marginalization of the Afar pastoralism despite the rhetoric of self-determination in post-1991 Ethiopia (Dereje, 2008, Behnke, And Kerven, 2013).

The regional economy is dominated by Afar's powerful elites and the regime close Tigrean who are connected through ethnic solidarity, geographic closeness (Zone 2) and economic networks. There is also significant number of economic actors in the region from Amhara people at micro level. However, these groups did not backed by patrimonial politics as the Tigrian and that of Afar business men who only come from zone two, near Tigray regional state.

The conscious members of Afar community are aware of discriminatory political economic game in the region. For them the regime lacks political willingness to foster socio-economic justice in the region, despite the constitutional rhetoric of local empowerment and regional autonomy (Dereje, 2008). As the government sought to build the gigantic factory, and expand plantation agriculture associated with it, a lot of pastoralist community has displaced from their prime grazing land. What makes thing worse is that these development projects don't open an employment opportunities to the local community as one normally expected with the establishment of the new factory in the area. Rather the government brought a large number of Tigrians to what Dereje, (2008:15) referred as "*induce a massive influx of highlanders from Tigray region as laborers*".

This created a sense of alienation and deprivation among the pastoralist community. According to Dereje, (2008), the large scale expropriation their land which is the only sources of survival for Afar pastoralist, the replacement of cotton farms previously owned by local investors by the state owned sugar plantation vis-à-vis with increasing job opportunities for Tigreans, have created even ethnic threat among Afar pastoralist community. To its clearer visibility the economic domination and disposition by more powerful economic actors, viewed and felt by Afars as an absolute political disempowerment (ibid). This is due to the strong link between

political elites both at local and national and economic actors in the region. Over all political narratives of Afar pastoralist community largely lays on the sense of exclusion. In this regard, One senior Afar official quoted by Dereje (Dereje, 2008:17) as “*failure to reintegrate this disaffected group of people would create political instability in the region*”, uncovers the failure of federal government to respond to Afar pastoralist inclusionary demands both in political and economic terms. In a more generalized expression, the development plan and projects initiated and financed by the government “*couldn’t enhance the capabilities of pastoral households in a way that would enable them to derive full benefits from their land*”. (Bekele Hundie and Martina Padmanabhan, 2008:28). All this nullifies the political transition towards ethnic federalism which aimed at promoting political autonomy with the concomitant establishment of the Afar National Regional State. Hundie and Padmanabhan, 2008 argued that the economic encroachment of the regime in the Afar region annulled the political transformation by its own standards.

The actions of the government have neither felt by people nor democratic and developmental in practical sense. As a result pastoralists are concerned about the risk of expropriation and fear losing their land due to expropriation by the state. This is due to the coincidence of pastoralist migratory and herding economic system with government’s land expropriation for commercial purposes (Cotula & Vermeulen, 2009)

Democracy, development and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. However, the experience of Ethiopian government developmental activities in afar region proves in different direction. As the governmental policies and development project saw to violet the constitutional right of the pastoralist community, discriminate local community from employment opportunities and domination of local economy by external actors. In this regard, democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspect of their lives (UN, General Assembly, 1993). In this context of the position of Ethiopian government towards Afar pastoralist community is against the aforementioned rights though it ought to respect, promote and protect without attaching any conditions.

The only thing the government emphasizes in its political discourse is the nomination of officers in local legislative and bureaucracies. As the region can’t utilize its resources to generate its own

income due to misleading national government intervention in regions economy, the regional government for most of its part relied on the national government budget. This in turn weakens the regional officer's capacity to decide upon their own disposal. In other words, the economic vulnerability of the pastoralist community and their representatives in local administration compromises their civil and political rights and political autonomy respectively. In this regard, Democratic Socialist of America(2011) pointed out that "*Social and economic rights play a critical role in democratic societies because political and civil rights cannot be exercised effectively by citizens who lack jobs, economic security, good health and the opportunity to educate themselves and their children*".

As the move of the government is totally against the pastoralism not only as economic system but also socio-cultural and environmental management mechanism, it negatively affects the pastoral community in many ways. In first place, government's developmental project has created economic insecurity among local community. Economic security revolves around access to the resources, finance and market and necessary level of welfare to sustain (Buzan, 1983). Secondly the action of the government is against the societal security of the pastoralist community. According to Paul, (2008) societal security refers to the right and capability of the society to sustain and preserve the traditional patterns of tradition, culture, and custom. In this case the government's move to replace pastoralism with state owned sedentary agriculture can be considered as reshuffling pastoralist's social system.

The environmental dimension of security is also imperative to consider the case. Pastoralism is a way of managing resources in arid and semi-arid natural environments by mobile settlement of animal population on seasonal bases. Environmental security refers to "*the maintenance of the local and the planetary biosphere as the essential support system on which all other human enterprises depend*". In this context, it is arguable that governments action of replacing pastoral lands with sedentary agriculture against pastoralist's environmental security as the area after the establishment of the project cannot support pastoralism as human enterprise. These actions of the government are also in violation of its constitutional responsibilities stated under article 92 sub article 5 and 6 with the theme of environmental objectives as "*government shall endeavor to ensure that all Ethiopians live in a clean and healthy environment*" and "*the design and implementation of programs and projects of development shall not damage or destroy the environment*" respectively.

As the paper proposes local and people center development approach to the case it is important to give an insight on local economic development. The idea behind this is that the economic empowerment of Afar pastoralism will bring the genuine political transformation and constitutional autonomy. Moreover, the people centered local contextual development policies would create healthy development in which pastoralist economy can play positive role to benefit the pastoralist community and national development efforts.

According to Rodríguez-Pose (2002), local economic development refers to the development policy and strategies designed for specific territory, locally owned and managed with primary objective of increasing local employment and economic growth. Local oriented development programs are based on participation of local stockholders in an effort to utilize local resources and to contribute for one's future developments. In this regard, Canzanelli, (2001: 9) elaborated the concept of local economic development as *“a process where the local actors shape and share the future of their territory. We could define it as a participatory process that encourages and facilitates partnership between the local stakeholders, enabling the joint design and implementation of strategies, mainly based on the competitive use of the local resources, with the final aim of creating decent jobs and sustainable economic activities”*. Local economic development is also a private and community based affairs to what Zaaier and Sara, (1993: 129) referred it as *“is essentially a process in which local governments and/or community based groups manage their existing resources and enter into partnership arrangements with the private sector, or with each other, to create new jobs and stimulate economic activity in an economic area”*. What all the above definitions of local economic development share in common is that the formulation of development policies based on local concerns which ultimately cannot realized without political willingness at national level and parallel local political commitments.

5. Potential Values of Pastoralism Both to the community and the state at large.

Afar Pastoralism in Ethiopia makes an immense direct and indirect contribution for the national economy and the pastoralists themselves, in spite its existence in some of the harshest and drought prone parts of the country (Sahel Ethiopia, n.d; Solomon, 2006).

In this part the paper is going to assess the possible contributions Afar pastoral economy can make to support Ethiopian national development efforts without either negatively affecting the values of pastoralist community or their economic right to possess land and utilize resources. For that end the paper relied on available data from secondary sources and existing literature and

project works in the area. The question here is how pastoralist's economy can be utilized for national development efforts without compromise itself? And how pastoralism can be integrated to national development endeavors? A lot of proposals have been forwarded by scholars, Policy makers and different agencies and stockholders working in pastoralist community development programs. Depending the position of particular advocator, various answers, perspectives, ideas and proposals have been forwarded by different entities in efforts to address pastoralists' problems.

On the side of policy makers usually there is a general perception that pastoralism as backward system with little potential for improvement, and pastoral lands are underused. Accordingly state's policy should work to change the system and its resources particularly to sedentary and plantation agriculture (Eyasu and Feyera, 2010; Rass n.d). Actually this is the reflection of Ethiopian political landscape which is dominated by elites mainly from agrarian background. Even in the contemporary political and constitutional discourse of democracy and federalism, pastoral communities have not been represented in EPRDF coalition government. As the position of pastoralist in national politics is submissive the decision to replace pastoralism with contextually unfitted sedentary farming is articulated by groups who are not free from old narratives of pastoralism as nomad and uncivilized way of life. The political supremacy with cultural misperceptions on the part of policy makers lead them to favor externally imposed development agenda which in turn resulted in political and economic marginalization of pastoral communities (Rass n.d).

More recently new perspectives have been emerged as scholars, nongovernmental and government agencies and researchers working in pastoral development start to rethink the other way round to that of state, politicians and policy makers. They come up with the idea the need to cognize the importance of pastoralism as a system and the capacities of the community to manage the resource and maintain the natural balance of the environment. Most works call for policy reshuffling in the way that development can be achieved by accepting pastoralism as one of various human existences and the need to support grass root pastoralist community's effort to manage their lives. Accordingly externally imposed development programs have negative implications for pastoralist degeneration (Bayer and Getachew, 2010).

The evaluation of pastoralism and its contribution to national economy should focus beyond economic terms. This means that Afar pastoralism and its economy should support Ethiopian

development efforts without doing otherwise for pastoralist community. This calculation rests on pastoralism as given normative values including the socio-cultural, economic and, environmental contexts of Afar pastoralist community.

Regarding environmental context, Afar pastoralist community lives in arid and semi-arid climatic conditions in Ethiopian north-East lowland region. The area remains dry and hot throughout the year. The pastoralist community relies on livestock production for its survival in economic terms (UNDP, 2014). However, animal husbandry is only one component of pastoralism. Pastoralism is a comprehensive system of life that includes economic, social and administrative, land and environmental management and cultural values. Their mobility is not random or arbitrary; rather it is based on calculation of climatic alterations from season to season. Afar pastoralism also contributed to maintain environmental balances. The traditional migratory lifestyle and knowledge of dry land resource management of Afar pastoralist enabled them to withstand drought and to maintain a healthy ecosystem in their communally managed rangelands (Solomon, 2006). In this way their contribution is to maintain natural environment or ecological balance.

As a social value pastoral society has their own social norms that regulate and govern the activities of the community in their daily lives. Economically, Afar pastoralist produce large amount of livestock population of the country which can enhance the national export if the government invest on it in steady belittling pastoral values. Domestically, pastoralism has supporting the sedentary agriculture in the highland like in providing an ox and camel with the highlander farmer is dependent for its productive activities (Sahel Ethiopia, n.d). In other words Afar livestock supply power for farming and transport that assist the highlanders to cultivate their farm land and transport their product. In this sense pastoralism has been playing complementary functions to sedentary productions. This also fosters the market interactions between central farming communities in the highland Ethiopia who provide cereal products for Afar pastoralists. Moreover, for Afar pastoralist in the lowlands of the country, livestock production is the major source of food (i.e. meat, milk) and non-food items such as transport services. Livestock is also the major sources of cash income from the sales of live animals and livestock products like milk, butter, hides, and skins for pastoralist community (ibid). Afar livestock production has an enormous contribution to Ethiopia's national economy and livelihoods of many Ethiopians, and still promising to give a hand for economic development of the country (Gezahegn, Birhanu, Nuru, 2015). Even without vital support, exports of livestock and their products are also the major sources of foreign currency for the Ethiopian economy (ibid; ICPALD, n.d)). Livestock products such as skins and hides have the largest share of exports followed by live animals (Ayele, Assegid, Jabbar, Ahmed , and Belachew, 2003). Afar pastoralism also has an economic importance of employment for the community

members. This is due to its totally labour intensive nature that seeks unskilled human power (Behnke and Kerven , 2011). Afar live stocks also serve as a measure of wealth and social status in pastoral communities which makes part of social identity (Sahel Ethiopia n.d). More generally being significant contributor to the country's livestock production, Afar livestock production serve a range of functions for Afar pastoralist community as well as for the national economy including providing food, input for crop production and soil fertility management, raw material for industry, cash income as well as in promoting saving, tourism economy ,social functions, employment, maintaining ecological balance, and earnings from foreign trade (Ayele , Assegid , Jabbar , Ahmed , and Belachew,2003: Solomon,2006:Sahel Ethiopia, n.d). However, such a huge multi-dimensional (social, economic, environmental as discussed above) values of Afar pastoralism has been undermined and underappreciated.

6. Challenges to Afar Pastoralism

A lot of research works have identified several factors, ranging from harsh natural environment to cultural issues, for both declining contribution of pastoralism for local communities and its less utilization to national economy despite tis immense potentials. However, this paper argues that the main challenge that has caused other interconnected problems that Afar pastoralist community faced and its low contribution for national income attributed to political exclusion of Afar pastoralist both in historical and contemporary Ethiopian political dynamics. The political landscape of Ethiopian state revels about thin line between politics and economy. The exclusionary politics by highlander elites resulted in economic marginalization of Afar pastoralists. In the eyes of highlanders or political elites, who are mainly from agrarian background, pastoralism has been associated with nomadism or backwardness. Using their upper hand in the state politics the elites have intended to demolish pastoralism. All regimes from the past to present use the policy of development to justify their actions in pastoralist areas.

The actual use of development as a justification or instrument for state's economic encroachment to Afar's pastoralist land has started during the imperial era. Large scale state led development efforts were initiated in the Afar pastoralist areas in the mid-20th century and continued in socialist regime (Behnke and Kerven, 2011). The Imperial and the Dergue regime have communality for their exclusion of human element in the pastoral area development policies. Both of them have reduced pastoralism to a mere livestock production though pastoralism is far more than economic value (Solomon, 2006). To differentiate itself from its predecessors, the current government has taken steps to consider pastoralist community by introducing political and constitutional discourse of regional autonomy and the rights of pastoralist communities.

Recently, the government also established state institution that directly deals with pastoralist community named Ministry of Federal and Pastoralism development affairs. This the notable evidence of the regime's rhetoric approaches to pastoralist community, while the latter is not part of ruling coalition. Despite the constitutional promise for pastoralists the right to free land grazing and some steps took by the government to set up pastoralist development institutions and programs both at the national and regional levels, the Afar pastoralist still suffer from the government's misleading development projects in the area(Sahel Ethiopia n. d).

The aggregate effect of the government's approach to the Afar pastoralist community can best explain in the form of environmental security in reference to pastoralist community's ecological position in whole gamut of Ethiopian state. In this regard, the recurrent drought with its devastating effects on the rangelands, livestock, and the general livelihood of Afar pastoralists appeared to be the main area of concern that hunts the mind of various stakeholders working in the area (SOS Sahel Ethiopia, n. d). Most of the research works including Bekele and Padmanabhan, (2008), Behnke and Kerven, (2011) and Sahel Ethiopia, found that the reoccurrence of drought and famine in Afar region resulted from the change in natural environmental conditions due to misleading state intervention in Awash valley on which Afar pastoral livelihoods had established. Accordingly, the uncertainty in ecological conditions and insecurity of property rights has endangered the Afar Pastoralism system. Nodaway, when Ethiopian government frequently claims about the two digit development in the country's economy significant portion of Afar community are in hunger and starvation. The people of Afar, known for their milk and meat consumption, now look for foreign aids in the form of wheat and oil.

The degeneration of natural environment not only complicated the life of Afar pastoralist, but also its potential contribution to Ethiopian national economy. As argued above, the environmental crisis is caused by misinformed public policies of the central government. This in turn is the byproduct of political unwillingness of the regime to incorporate Afar pastoralist in the political center of Ethiopian state. The decisions only follows uni-linear top down instructions neither considering the particular context of the area and the people nor entertaining local communities. This emanates from fundamental misconceptions among policy makers about the pastoral production system as traditional and irrational and their lands as underused that seeks the task of development and modernization by state and its agencies (Eyasu and Feyera,

2010). As a result of these perceptions policies have favored externally-imposed development projects which in turn alienate and deprive pastoral resource rights. The state lead investment along the Awash valley resulted for every crisis Afar pastoralist face today. According to Behnke and Kerven , 2011 an access to resources mainly Awash river valley and lands are key determinants to economic performance of pastoralism, its capacity to support human populations and to maintain ecological balances. They further argued that large-scale irrigated cotton and sugar plantations in the Awash valley by Ethiopian government have resulted the alienation of valuable natural resources from Afar pastoralists communities, though the findings of their study revealed Afar pastoral livestock husbandry more profitable than cotton farming and sugar cane plantation.

This reveals that the government's development policy were inappropriate in the sense that it fails consider the cost and benefits these projects from the context of the community (i.e. mobility), environmental issues and the values of pastoralist economy to be loose of cotton and sugar cane. The reason for this only rests on exclusive decision making process at central government. If pastoralists had integrated in national development decision making process, they would have protected their community from pastoralist unfriendly development policies and projects and its results.

Beside the frequent drought and starvation, these state projects have been also contributing for several resource conflicts among pastoralist communities due to swift competition for grazing lands. Oxfam International, 2008 pointed out greater pressure on pastoralist grazing lands and water resources in favor of state use together with increasing pastoralist populations, competition over grazing land leads to conflict among pastoralist groups. The imposition of unfriendly policies from above and the informal appointment of local elites and weak governance from below endangered the health functioning of the pastoralism system to support its clients. Another yoke to utilize Afar pastoralist economy for the national purpose is inappropriate development policies adopted by the state (Oxfam International, 2008).

7. Windows of opportunities.

As stated above pastoralism as a system has economic, resource administration, socio-cultural, functions. An important point this paper want to forward is that the political authorization and integration pastoralist community in the policy articulation process should preceded any efforts to improve the life of afar community. Genuine political representations of Afar community at

national level enable the national policies to design locally compatible development policies vis-a-vis effective local institutions and participation from below.

The political integration should emanate from attitude change from dominant political elites who have been viewed pastoralism as uncivilized and underdeveloped that await for their medication. To that end development policies should be initiated and substantiated by research works. Of course, there are plenty of works by individual scholars, and non-governmental organization, supporting the idea of local and pastoralist contextual economic developments ever since states encroachment to the area. However, there has been little political willingness and to consider the findings and recommendations from intellectual contributions.

As part of notable advice, this paper argues that the planet earth is so large enough to fit the variety of humankind and their activities so that each part of the system has its value for well-functioning of whole. Likewise Afar pastoralism has its value and natural beauty with its socio-economic and environmental values to the whole system (Ethiopia). So efforts at any level should to maintain and utilize this system than to degenerate it. One's tradition and civilization (Highlander's sedentary agriculture, in this case) should not be taken as a standard to evaluate others in the sense that every community with its own level of advancement is capable of maintaining itself. In this regard, pastoralism as an organization of human society provide the community member with means of living and norms to live accordingly. This follows that Afar pastoralism is part of various agro-ecological, socio-cultural and human value resources that Ethiopian state endowed.

The immediate and inevitable question will be how Afar pastoralism and its economy can be used for national development without compromising its value?

Development is a very vast and complex phenomenon consisting of human up to material values like societal security, political participation of the grass root community member on their own affairs, the availability of socio-economic choices and many more. A single development demand and efforts by any means should not be against other values of development. In this context, the integration and utilization of Afar pastoralism to Ethiopian national economy mean an effort to address dual questions of political aggregation of the pastoralist in the upper politics of the state and socio-economic and administrative empowerment of the community from below. This enables the development policy and decision makers at national level to discharge their functions in pastoralism friendly ways and utilize pastoral economy for national development in

a best ways. Apart from political representation and power sharing of Afar pastoralist at every level in Ethiopian polity, this paper recommends the following windows of opportunities to address the key economic demand of Afar people.

Local development initiatives; for development to take root and has sustainable effects it should evolve on local derive development initiatives than external players and executing agencies. Scholars in the field of public policy usually agreed on the fact that every problems to better defined and potentially solved by the victims themselves than someone else. In this case, the primary role of the government and other agencies will to initiate, guide, and support the community based development, rather than down warding unfamiliar development policies and projects. In this regard what I observe is that most developmental activities in that area are centrally planned and those at local level are carried out by office affiliated individuals.

Initiating and facilitating investment on pastoralism to utilize its potentials. A lot of governmental, international non-governmental organizations and foreign aid agencies claim and engage in the so called pastoralist community development activities. There tasks mainly focus on providing food stuffs, medical materials and the so called capacity building training. However, this kind of support couldn't solve the pastoralist community development problems. Rather it negatively affects the societal moral of the community as reliant on aids whose survival fails at the good will of others. In this regard Solomon, 2006 argued that the short and medium development policies of the current government focus to improve the food security situation of pastoralists, but in the long run the policy advocates for sedenterization of pastoralists based on development of irrigation agriculture. All supportive activities both by the government and foreign aid entities couldn't address the key demand of the people. Despite the operation of many NGOs and governmental projects under the banner of Afar pastoral community development and their discourses of sustainable development the life of the community gets worse and worse in reality. So the genuine capacity building activities in relation to pastoralist community should be in a direction creating enabling environment. In this sense investment on pastoralism includes the introduction modern technologies(veterinary services), expanding health and school (mobile), road infrastructures that help the people to access the local and international market, creating awareness on environment and resources management, respecting the people's land rights than aspiring to transform pastoralism into sedentary farming.

Fostering two ways communication between the local community and the people; the existing political reality reveals that the rule of the game in the region has been functioned between symbiotic relation between the elites at the center and their client at regional level. The bureaucratic position at local level is filled by local elites based on the good consent of the dominant TPLF elites than their administrative qualities and grass root popular support. The political economic ties between elites create a barrier between local people and government. Hence an attempt to advance Afar pastoral economy and utility for both the community and national goal should start by creating transparent two ways of local-center communication. It is because peoples understanding and attitude towards governmental policies and actions has its own effect on effective implementations of development policies and programs. The case in afar region demonstrates that the communication mostly occurs between government officials and local elites than the broader members of the community. As a result majority of the people have perceived the activities and projects in the area as something to exploit their resources for the benefit of government officials. This in turn makes the people to feel insecurity, government as a threat for their security which defies the very purpose of the government.

Last but not least, development plans should be relied on intensive researches and link to practical problems. For instance, according to Behnke and Kerven, (2011), Awash valley constituted only about 4-5% of potential lands that can be used for cultivation agriculture. However, the Afar pastoralist community has been entirely dependent on the river basin. If there had political willingness on the side of the government to consult with experts, it would have look for other areas with less opportunity costs and saved the Afar pastoralists from the crisis they face now and then.

Conclusion

The 1991 political transition from old aged centralized authoritarian to democratic federalism in Ethiopia severed from socio economic reforms. Despite the governments' political rhetoric of empowering the historically marginalized Afar pastoralist community through Affirmative actions, the formers approach to later on the ground has witnessed in different directions. Although economic upper hand and control of the ruling elites manifests in every section of the society, the Afar region is discernible testament to what happens when economic infringement is sustained in the name of political transformation to federalism and regional autonomy. The people in the regional state rely on pastoralism with socio-economic and administrative functionalities like as a social bond, means of livelihood and symbolic values identity groups. For most its history this social system was viewed as rearward that nullifies its various meanings and role for pastoralist community and the greater polity at large. The recent political transition and reform of state structure had promised the freezing out of the community as an attempt to inculcate various values of Afar pastoralist communities to the development agendas. However the practical political economic game in the region demolishes the hope as exclusionary and discriminatory policies of the past in all its form sustained by the current regime. As a result, the community faced a range of problems or challenges that threatened their survival as a community with its natural variety in Ethiopian polity. This in turn hurts the immense potential of Afar pastoralist community to Ethiopian national development. In general, Ethiopian the government as a primary state agency and actor to deal with pastoralist problems has created multifaceted problems for Afar pastoralist community using the political rhetoric of affirmative action and self-autonomy. This is mainly done in the name of development projects which actually have been strategies of dispossession the pastoralist community from their resources. The development efforts by the government contested with the health nexus of development and justice. So development in the Afar community should be approached from people's perspectives to avoid discordant which defy the meaning of development. The very begging must lay on political willingness to make pastoralist community part of decision making process at all levels so that they can articulate their own development agendas.

References

- Ayele ,S, Assegid ,W, Jabbar M.A, Ahmed M.M. and Belachew,2003. Livestock marketing in Ethiopia: A review of structure, performance and development initiatives. Socio-economic and Policy Research Working Paper 52. ILRI (International Livestock Research Institute), Nairobi, Kenya. 35 pp.
- Development(ICPALD), I. C. (2009). The Contribution of Livestock to The Ethiopian Economy.
- Ethiopia, S. S. (N.D). Pastoralism In Ethiopia: Its Total Economic Values And Development Challenges.
- [Democratic Socialists of America](http://www.dsausa.org/a_social_and_economic_bill_of_rights)(2011). A social and Economic Bill of Rights. Accessed from < http://www.dsausa.org/a_social_and_economic_bill_of_rights >
- Gebru, A. W.-B. (2010). Case study on pastoralist development in Ethiopia and Cordaid's contribution.
- Birhanu Hailu, Gezahign Alemayehu, Nuru Seid, Economic Importance and Control Techniques of Lumpy Skin Diseases, Animal and Veterinary Sciences. Vol. 3, No. 2, 2015, pp. 58-66. doi: 10.11648/j.avs.20150302.15
- Hundie, B. Property Rights among Afar Pastoralists of Northeastern Ethiopia: Forms, Changes and conflicts.
- International, O. (2008). Survival of the fittest Pastoralism and climate change in East Africa.
- Behnke, R. And Kerven, C. (2013). Counting The Costs: Replacing Pastoralism With Irrigated Agriculture In The Awash Valley, North-Eastern Ethiopia IIED Climate Change Working Paper No. 4, March 2013
- Padmanabhan, B. H. (2008). The Transformation Of The Afar Commons In Ethiopia State Coercion, Diversification, And Property Rights Change Among Pastoralists.
- Pavanello, S. (2006, April 9). Pastoralists' Vulnerability in the Horn of Africa: Exploring Political Marginalization, Donors' Policies, and Cross-Border Issues. Literature review. Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) .
- Rettberg, S. (2010). Contested narratives of pastoral vulnerability and risk in Ethiopia's Afar region. (Vol. 1). Practical Action Publishing.

Solomon, D. Pastoralism And Development In Ethiopia. The Vision 2020 Forum Conducted On 07 July 2006. 9. Ethiopian Economic Association.

Kelemwork,F. (2012). Pastoralism at Crossroads: Changing Features of Climate, Livelihood and Social Organization in East Africa. Global Journal of HUMAN SOCIAL SCIENCE Sociology, Economics & Political Science , 12 (9).

UNDP. (2014). Unlocking the Development Potential of Drylands:Lessons from Ethiopia and Uganda. South Africa: Seriti Printing. UN, General assembly, Vienna declaration and program of action, 14-25 June 1993A/CONF.157/23,Point 8.

Canzanelli, Giancarlo (2001) from community development to sustainable island socio-economic development Documentation.

Anand, S. and M. Ravallion (1993). "Human Development in Poor Countries: On the Role of Private Incomes and Public Services." Journal of Economic Perspectives 7(1): 133-150.

Dereje Feyissa (2011) The political economy of salt in the Afar Regional State in northeast Ethiopia, Review of African Political Economy, 38:127, 7-21, DOI: 10.1080/03056244.2011.552596

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia constitution 1995

UN (2007).The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

UNDP/EUE: Matt Bryden, A Proposed Strategy for UNICEF Engagement in Ethiopia's Afar Region, January1996.