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Review

Therapeutic flora in Holy Quran

Ali Muhammad

Islamic Research Academy, Brakpora Anantnag Jammu and Kashmir 192201, India.

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Civilizations have a tendency to revolve around meaningful concepts of a theoretical nature which more than anything else gives them their distinctive character. Such concepts are to be found at the very beginning of a rising civilization or they may signalize, when they first make their appearance, an entirely new departure towards the eventual transformation of the environment generous to them. This signifies a fundamental change in the structure of the civilization in which it happens. They changed their structure, modified their social laws for the well being of coming human race. On scientific grounds modification and edification of old concepts according to Qur'anic teachings helped them to emerge as a true modern and civilized society. Among good number of scientific concepts, one is that related to the plants mentioned in the Holy Quran. The history of Islamic medicine started from 2nd century as applied science which provides ample information about the medicinal plants mentioned in the Quran. These medicinal plants continue to be extensively used as major source of drugs for the treatment of many ailments in medieval period. The present research work is a qualitative analysis one which helps to draw attention to the valuable contribution of divine message in the development of medicinal legacy. A comprehensive reform touches all intellectual fields and help in integration of knowledge which requires a combination of operations: the understanding of the text, the understanding of the context/reality, alongside the proper projection of the text on its relevant context.

Key words: Civilizations, Prophet Muhammad, Islamic medicine, Holy Quran.

INTRODUCTION

Healing of disease with medicinal plants is as old as mankind itself. The connection between man and God and his search for drugs in nature dates from the far past of which there is ample evidence from various sources of written documents, preserved monuments even original plant medicines and divine guidance. The works written on plants were of great importance because these provide rich information about the medicines extracted and used by Prophet Muhammad for Cure (Ghaznavi, 1987). The plants mentioned in the Holy Quran are arranged in an alphabetical order. They were given proper botanical names, family, gene and species names

along with local habitat to which they belong and their medicinal value is also highlighted which will prove helpful for further investigation.

The Arabic or Quranic name of Lentils is Adas which belongs to family leguminosea. Its botanical name is *Lens Culinaris Medic*. It is widely used as pulse having fine quantity of proteins. In the holy Quran the reference about the lentils is as;

"And remember ye said: "O Moses! We cannot endure one kind of food (always); so beseech thy Lord for us to produce for us of what the earth growth, -its pot-herbs,

E-mail: alimohd1265@gmail.com. Tel: +919859378709.

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and cucumbers, its garlic, lentils, and onions.....” (Baqarah: 61).

The scholars like Ibn al qayyim al-Jouzi provides detailed information about the use of the plants in his work Tibb – i- Nabavi with special references to Hadith of Prophet (Al Jouzi, nd).

Lentils are widely cultivated in Europe and Asia but its native habitat is uncertain. Moreover, four varieties of Lentils are cultivated in Egypt, Palestine and in the countries of Mediterranean. It is also commonly grown pulse in India called locally as MalkaMasoor meaning Queen of Lentils. Its seeds were used as food and for medicinal cure. It contains 12% of moisture, 60% carbohydrates half of which is starch and 25% good quality protein with small amount of phosphorus and Potassium. It is used to cure diseases like Maleness, measles, paralysis, common cold, parkensis, face clearance, eye infection and digestive diseases. It is also used to cure small and chicken pox.

Arak

Arak or Khmat is the Quranic name of the tooth brush tree but in Indian sub continent it is known as DarakhteMiswak. Its botanical name is *SalvadoraPersica* Linn and belongs to family Salvadoraceae. In the Holy Quran it is mentioned in verse 16 of Surah As-Sabah

“And we converted their two gardens into the gardens producing bitter fruit and Tamarisks and some few (Stunted) Lote-Trees.”

In hadith, as narrated by Jabir bin Abdullah, we were with Prophet (pbuh) collecting fruits of Arak trees. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said pick the black fruit, for it is the best. (Sahih, 1977).

The word Khmat is used in this verse which means Ark. In English translation it is called the tree of bitter fruits but in many Arabic Persian and Urdu translation it is also called Ark and its botanical name is *SalvadoraPersica*. In Arabic it is called Shajar al-Miswak. *It is found in the shrub form or small tree form in rocky slopes and sandy areas. It is almost found all the deserts of the world.* Its twigs and roots are used as tooth brush. Its extract is reported to contain lots of salts and resins which are responsible for cleaning and shining of the teeth Attar Z (1980). It is used in aperients and appetite promoter. It is a useful remedy for piles, affections of spleen, fever, juzam and worms. It is also used for arthritis headache, antidote and diabetes (Mushtaq, 2009).

Basal

Basal is Quranic name of onion and is used widely as aromatic flavor in different kinds of dishes. Its botanical name is *Allium Cepa* Linn and belongs to family

Liliaceae. With the group of other plants it is mentioned in surah al Baqara verse 61

“And remember ye said: O” Moses! We cannot endure one kind of food (always), so Beseech thy Nourishes for them to produce for us of what the earth grow, its pot herbs and cucumbers. Its garlic, lentils and onions.....”

More than sixty varieties of *Allium* are grown in Egypt and Arabia. Old Egyptian used it as food along with radish and a good amount of silver coins worth corers of rupees today were spent. In Asia and Africa eating onion is very common. In Asia mostly it is found in Pakistan, India and China. But there are good numbers of Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad in which the taste and Smell of onion is disliked but its eating is not prohibited.

*The Prophet said,” Whoever has eaten garlic or onion should keep away from us or should keep away from our mosque and should stay at home. IbnWahab said once a full plate of cooked food was brought to prophet at Badr. Detecting a bad smell from it, he asked about the dish and was informed about the kinds of vegetables it contained. He then said,” Bring it near,” and so it was brought near to one of his Companion who was with him. When Prophet saw it he disliked to eat it and said to his Companion, “Eat for I talk to secret to ones whom you do not talk to”.*¹

Although the Prophet disliked taking it as food due to its smell but as a matter of fact it is highly useful medicinally though having very repulsive odour. Its bulb leaves and seeds are used to cure Antidote (particularly for Tobacco poisoning), stomach diseases cholera, diarrhea, throat infection, common cold, cough, fever, influenza, ear pain, and appetizer. It is highly useful to cure face and skin spots, baldness, constipation menstruation and intestinal diseases. It is also useful in sperm production, piles, and Hepatitis diseases. Onions are important ingredients in many food preparations. Though it has bad odour, it is commonly eaten for its antiseptic value for the entire alimentary canal. It is stimulant, diuretic and a good expectorant (Blacow 1972)

Hina

Henna is a plant mentioned in holy Quran for its colouring/dying nature. It is known as Mehndi but its botanical name is *Lawsoniainermis* L and belongs to family Lythraceae. Holy Quran provides information about the kafur which is translated as Hina. It is a kind of reward for those who do righteous deeds. Allah will not waste their efforts which they did for the propagation of righteous deeds. Allah says,

“As to the righteous, they shall drink of a cup (of wine) mixed with Kafur”. (Muaida: 5)

Almost all the commentaries contain the translation of kafur as Camphor of plant origin but some commemorators like author of Tafseer-i Majidi say it is different from the Camphor of the earth and is without harmful effects (Daryabadi 1985).

It is a commonly grown plant of Arabia and from time immemorial the scent of Hinna obtained from the flower has been used as an important article of cosmetics. It may be that Allah in response to the cosmetic use of Hina may provide the better option to faithful or righteous one in Jannat. It is a perennial fragrant shrub which is widely cultivated. It is mostly found in Africa and most parts of the Asia. In Hadith literature it has much significance. According to Jhadhammah^(RA) That I saw Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) coming out of house after taking a bath and combing his hair. There were signs of Heena on his Mubarakh head.² Heena has cooling effect and it also used to cure headache and increase memory. It acts as stimulator and provides protection from skin rupture. It also works to soften skin, heals muscles, leucokoria, vaginal pain, baldness constipation and chicken pox.

Inab	
English Name:	Grapes
Urdu name:	Munaqqa
Qur'anic and Hadith Name:	Inab
Botanical name:	VitisVinifera L.
Family:	Vitaceae

In Arabic grapes are famous with the word Inab but its botanical name is Vitisvinifera L of family Vitaceae. In the Holy Quran elevensurahs contain information about Inab. Surah, 2:266,6:100, 13:4, 16:11 and 67,17:91, 18:32, 23:19, 36:34, 78:31-32 and Surah 80:28. In Surah Nabaa Allah says

"Verily for the righteous there will be a fulfilment of desires; gardens enclosed and grape vines." (Verse: 31-32)

Grape is the common name of an edible fruit in the vitaceae family. It is one of the delicious fruit and has been used as food by Europeans since prehistoric times. Several wild varieties of grapes have been found in different parts of the world. Distribution of seeds by birds, wind, and water carried the plant westward to the Asian shores of the Mediterranean. The European grape is now commercially cultivated in warmer regions all over the world, particularly in western Europe, the Balkans, California, Australia, South Africa, and parts of South America. It is very difficult to establish its correct nativity (Winker A, 1965). Grapes are eaten throughout the world but 80% of the total grape production is used for wine production and 7% of the production is used for making raisin (dried grapes called Zabib in Arabic and Kishmish in Urdu) and vinegar. The main producers of the grapes are Europe and America whereas Turkey, Iran Afghanistan, Greece and Australia are the main countries

producing raisin. In India its history of cultivation starts from Mughal emperor Akbar (Watt George, 1896).

It has a good medicinal value and its juice is used to protect from common cold, cough, liver and lung disorder and is considered good treatment for cancer diseases. It relaxes body and brain, muscles, stomach, kidney and urinary bladder pain. Medicinally raisins are more useful and are used for the treatment of fever, catarrh, jaundice and in sub acute cases of enlarged liver and spleen (Farooqi, 1993).

Kafoor

Indeed the virtuous will drink from a cup, containing a mixture of Kafoor. The Kafoor is a spring, from which the chosen bondmen of Allah will drink, causing it to flow wherever they wish inside their palaces (Dahr: 5-6).

Camphor is a volatile, white, crystalline compound. It belongs to family Lauraceae. Its botanical name is CinnamumCamphora L. Its main characteristic is its aromatic odour. Ordinary camphor is obtained from the camphor tree, Cinnamomumcamphora which grows in Asia and Brazil. The camphor is distilled by steaming chips of the root, stem, or bark. The leaves of certain plants, such as tansy and feverfew contain a second form of camphor, which is not used commercially. A raceme form is present in the oil of an Asian chrysanthemum and is also produced synthetically for most commercial uses. Camphor is used in the manufacture of celluloid and explosives and medicinally in liniments and other preparations for its mild antiseptic and anaesthetic qualities. It is poisonous if ingested in large amounts. Camphor is insoluble in water, soluble in organic solvents, and melts at 176° C (349° F) and boils at 209° C (405° F).

Um-i Atiyyah reported when Zainab the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) passed away: He said to us, wash her odd number of times and put camphor at the end on her body and after you have washed her inform me. So we inform him and he gave us his under garment saying, put it next to his body (Holy Quran). Hadrath Umar reported that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) used it as fumigate. It is an important constituent of many ointments for the external use as an analgesic and also helps in fibro-sites neuralgia. Its two main varieties are found in China and is used for medicinally purposes It is also found in Japan, Sir Lanka and India. The Malaysian Camphor is highly pungent in smell and taste (Blacow N 1972). It is also used as tetanus, hysteria and tuberculoses. Its branches and leaves are used as oral and teeth swelling, cholera, breast pain. It is also used as stimulant and muscle relaxant.

NAHAL

Nahal is the Arabic name of date palm; it belongs to

arecaceae. Its botanical name is *Phoenix dactylifera* L. A good number of surahsin holy Quran contain information about Date-palm; Surah Baqara:266; An'am:99- 141; Ra'd:4; Nahl:11.67; Bani Israil:91; Kahf: 32; Maryam:23.25; Ta-Ha:71, Muminun:19; Shu'araa: 148, Yasin: 34; Qaf: 10; Qamar: 20; Rahman: 11.68; Haqqa: 7; Abasa:29

And it is He who sends down rain from the sky, and We produce thereby the growth of all things. We produce from it greenery from which We produce grains arranged in layers. And from the palm trees - of its emerging fruit are clusters hanging low. And [We produce] gardens of grapevines and olives and pomegranates, similar yet varied. Look at [each of] its fruit when it yields and [at] its ripening. Indeed in that are signs for a people who believe. (al-an'am:99)

In the Holy Quran twenty times date-palm is mentioned in different surahs, eight times it has been mentioned separately and twelve times it has been mentioned with other fruits. It is said that the domestication and cultivation of date-palm started 6000 to 8000 years back in Mesopotamia. Most probably no other fruit plant was cultivated at that time in the Arab region. It is a multi advantageous plant and almost all its parts are useful in one way or other (Sabah, et al. 2007).

Date palm, common name for several related trees found in tropical regions. The common date palm is native to Middle East, northern Africa, southwest Asia, and India and is cultivated extensively in hot, dry regions throughout the world. The trunk is straight and rough and grows to a height of up to 18 m (up to 60 ft). Date palm is a dioeciously tree which means male and female occur separately. One male plant is enough for 100 female plants regarding pollination. They are reputed for the great medicinal value (Kamal Hassan 1975). It is a demulcent an emollient, a heat stimulant and helps in checking the loss of memory. It is also useful in respiratory disorders in general and asthma in particular. It is laxative, a diuretic and also acts as an aphrodisiac. It is also considered as the best health tonic In Tibb-e-Nabvi Dates have been given very important place from medicinal point of view. A good number of Hadith also bring to light importance of date palm. There are twenty ahadith in Bukhari related to date palm, its sale, agriculture, medicinal value etc.

Rehan

Sweet Basil is English name of Rehan and Naozab in Urdu. Its botanical name is *Ocimum basilicum* L and belongs to family Lamiaceae. The Holy Quran provides two references about sweet Basil one in Surah Rahman and other in Surah Waqia respectively.

"Also corn, with (its) leaves and stalk for fodder and sweet smelling plants."(55:12)

"(There is for him) rest and a garden of delight." (56:89)

In the above verses Allah has described the provisions of Rayhanas gift and satisfaction. It has been translated as material for food by most of the commentators of the Holy Quran. In flora Arabica (Blatter, 1919). Rayhan has been identified as *Ocimum Basilicum*. It is found in both wild and cultivated throughout Arabia in general and more particularly in Yemen. In India it is also found widely called Tulsi. It is declared as indigenous plant of the Kirman area of Iran. It is sometimes called Habaz-e-Kirman. Basil is the common name for any of a genus of plants of the mint family. Basil is a sweet herb used for fragrance and as a seasoning for food. Basil, or mountain mint, is also a common name for plants of a separate, North American genus of the mint family.³ The leaves contain an essential oil composed of L-Linalool, methyl cinnamon and trepinene. It is called best remedy for mild nervous or hysterical disorders. It is used to cure stomach ache and skin diseases. The seeds of the plant are useful in urinary disorders, such as gonorrhoea, scanty and scalding urine. It is also a good remedy for tuberculosis, throat infection, piles and germicide.

Rumman

English Name:	Pomegranate
Urdu name:	Anar
Arabic Name:	Rumman
Botanical name:	<i>Punicagranatum</i> L.
Family:	Punicaceae

Rumman an Arabic plant is praised in the Quran very much; a plant of family Punicaceae having botanical name *Punicagranatum* L. It is of very high nutritious value. In the Holy Quran Allah points out the significance of pomegranates of different kinds as;

"And pomegranates, each similar in kind yet different in variety. When they bear fruit, fast your eyes with the fruit and the ripeness thereof behold! In these things there are signs for people who believe." (Surah An 'am: 99)

There are three references regarding pomegranate in the holy Quran that highlight significance and the varieties of pomegranate: Surah An'am (V.99 and 141) Surah Rahman: (V.68)

Pomegranate is the native of Iran but its wild forms are also found in India (Himalayas), Syria and Afghanistan. It is a highly delicious and juicy fruit with great medicinal value. From time immemorial particularly from the time of Prophet Moses. High quality pomegranates were cultivated throughout Palestine Syrian and Lebanon. In this regard the City Rimmon was well known for its quality Rummon (Moldenke N and Moldenke L 1951). It is cultivated in the tropical and sub tropical climate zones. The calorific value of the pomegranate fruit is 65 and contains 15% invert Sugar. It is a rich source of sodium and also contains a good amount of riboflavin, thiamine,

niacin, vitamin C, calcium and phosphorous and its juice is easily digestible. Protein and fat content is almost negligible in it (Farooqi H 2008). Some of the benefits of the fruit include that it has antioxidant, antibacterial and antimicrobial properties. In alternative medicine, it has been used to treat diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Extract of pomegranate has been shown to fight against staph, salmonella and some kinds of strep bacteria. In the dental field, it has been found to inhibit the formation of the bacteria that causes plaque, aid in healing after periodontal procedures and reduce signs of chronic periodontitis. It is a very rich food and has high medicinal value. It serves as tonic for the heart patients, highly efficacious in the inflammation of the Stomach. It also helps to overcome liver, eye and dental problems. The decoction of the rot bark of pomegranate contains alkaloid pellatrine and tannic acid and is highly useful medicine for the expulsion of worms, including the tapeworm. It is also considered an effective medicine to cure tuberculosis of children (Chopra, et.al, 1956).

Anas bin Malik (Radhiyallahuanhu) narrated that Rasulullah (sallallahualaihiwassallam) said, "There is not a pomegranate which does not have a pip from one of the pomegranate of the Garden (of Jannah) in it." (Abu Nu'aim). Rasulullah (sallallahualaihiwassallam) said, "Pomegranate and its rind strengthen digestion (stomach)." (Narrated Ali (radhiyallahuanhu), Abu Nuaim, Al-Jozi)⁴

Soom

Garlic is wide known as Thum in Arabic language. Its botanical name is *Cassia acutifolia* and belongs to family Liliaceae. In the Holy Quran verse no. 61 contains information about the garlic. The Arabic word *Foomiha* has been used in the Holy Quran. Garlic is reported for its main constituent that is its volatile oil which is present in 0.1 to 0.3 percent in it. The bulbs also contain small quantities of starch, mucilage, protein and sugar. It is well known as theriac al-Fuqara as it is available easily and as remedy for many diseases.⁵

Garlic is the common name for several strongly scented herbs of the lily family, and the bulbs of these plants are used as flavouring. Garlic, like the related onion, has small, six-part, whitish flowers borne on umbels. The fruit is a capsule containing kidney-shaped seeds. Common garlic has been cultivated since ancient times. The bulb, which has a strong characteristic odour and taste, is covered with a papery skin and may be broken into constituent bulb-lets, called cloves. Garlic is used as a flavouring in cooking and pickling, sometimes in the form of whole or grated cloves and sometimes in the form of a cooked extract, as in sauces and dressings. In medicine, garlic is used as a digestive stimulant, diuretic, anti-allergic and antispasmodic (Lawson L. 1998). It is used as antidote and is useful for throat infection. It is a best agent to clear face and skin spots.

The other uses of garlic are under investigation. This vegetable has been studied not only for its benefits in controlling infection by bacteria, but also infection from other microbes including yeasts and fungi. Our red blood cells use molecules from garlic called polysulfide's to produce hydrogen sulfide gas (H₂S) (Woodward P, 1996). This in turn helps our blood vessels expand and keep our blood pressure in check. Other benefits from just one clove a day will top your body's supply of Vitamin C – for tissue growth and repair, Vitamin B6 – important for metabolism and immunity and Selenium, iron, calcium and manganese minerals. It is useful to cure headache, hepatitis, piles, constipation, common cold, cough, and influenza (Beck E and Grunwald J. 1993). It is found in Pakistan, India, China, America and European countries.

Figs

Fig belongs to family Moraceae having botanical name *Ficus Carica* L. In Arabic it is called Teen and having only one reference about in the holy Quran.

"By the fig and the olive" (Surah Teen: 01)

According to Maulana Usmanithat, *the Fig and Olive in the Holy Quran has great importance from medicinal point of view.*⁶

Grown primarily for its fruit, the fig tree is cultivated throughout subtropical and tropical regions with fertile, well-drained soils. The leaves bark and milk are used for medicinal purposes. Most commercial figs are marketed dried, canned, or candied. Figs constitute the genus *Ficus*, of the family Moraceae. The common commercial fig is classified as *Ficus carica*, the sycamore fig as *Ficus sycomorus*, and the pipal, or sacred fig, as *Ficus religiosa*. The common rubber plant is classified as *Ficus elastica*, and the banyan tree, or Indian fig, as *Ficus bengalensis*. The two figs natives to the subtropical United States are classified as *Ficus aurea* and *Ficus citrifolia*. *Ficus carica* is the native of Syria, Palestine and Egypt and is highly nutritious fruit. It is found in Mediterranean region, south west Asia: Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. Since it is free from any fibre, persons recovering from long illness are specially advised to take it. Fig is easily digestible and contains 60% of sugar. It contains good quantity of malic acid, citric acid and other inorganic salts (Wensinck A and Mensing J 1987). *Ficus carica* L. has high medicinal value and helps to remove kidney, urinary bladder stone and also helps to remove the obstruction of the liver and spleen in sub acute cases. It provides relief from intestinal pain, piles, anorexia and dyspepsia. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) advised patients suffering from piles to eat fig regularly.⁷ It reduces infections and is beneficial for all kinds of inflammations and infections. Famous recipe for "Safoof-e-Bars" (powder for Leprosy) contains figs as the main ingredient. The skin of fig is powdered in

a mortar with Rose Water, and then applied to leprosy scars. Patients are also advised to consume orally few grams of figs daily.

Yakteen, Daba
 English Name: Squash
 Urdu name: Kaddo
 Arabic Name: YakteenDaba
 Botanical name: *LangenariasucerariaStandl.*
 Family:

The gourd or squash also called vegetable marrow, pumpkin, **squash**, and winter **squash**, alludes to the recovery of a sick person. Its Arabic name is YakteenDaba having botanical name is *LangenariasucerariaStandl.* It belongs to family Cucurbitaceae with full medicinal value and represents the element of progeny and procreation.

"But We threw him onto the open shore while he was ill. And We caused to grow over him a gourd kind (SuraSaffat: 145-46)

The word Yaqteen has been translated by MoulanaFatehMuhmmadJalandari as Kaddu which in English mean squash equivalent to gourd. Almost all the prominent books of Hadith contain good number of Hadith related to Yaqteen (Gourd).

Several members of the genus are also called pumpkin. Squashes have been developed in many varieties and yield fruits of widely differing forms and sizes. Summer squash, including the summer crookneck, the white or yellow scallops, and the green zucchini, is harvested early, before the rind has begun to harden. The Hubbard, Boston, marrow, turban, and butternut squashes are winter varieties gathered in the autumn with hard shells when ripe. Winter squash may be stored much longer than summer squash. The bottle gourd, or calabash, is among the oldest of cultivated plants. The bottle gourd, or calabash, is classified as *Lagenaria siceraria* (Farooqi, MIH, 1993). The hard shells of the fruits are used as containers. Winter squashes were staples in the diets of the pre-Columbian civilizations of the western hemisphere. It is found almost every part of the world. Its leaves and fruits are used to cure arthritis, headache, fever lung infection, kidney and liver disorders and also for heart diseases. It is a rich source of pectin, Vitamin B and C, Calcium, Phosphorus, Iron, Potassium and Iodine. It is a diuretic and is useful to cure gout (Wang DC et al. 2007).

Zaitoon

The plant of olive goes up to the height of 3 metres and its leaves are bright green. The fruits are of bright bluish or violet colour, possesses a metallic taste. The English name of zaitoon is olive but its botanical name is

Olea europea L and belongs to family Oleaceae. Holy Quran has outstandingly praised the significance of olive. *"By the fig and by the Olive and Mount of Sinai"* (Surah Teen; V: 1-2).

There are seven references directly or indirectly about olive in the HolyQuran. It is cultivated in the countries of the Mediterranean region, but the main region of its cultivation is Sinai area, Spain, Italy, Turkey and Morocco. It is historically believed that it originated in Phoenicia and later on brought to the Europe, Africa and Central Asia. The fruit extraction is used for different purposes. It has a number of medicinal benefits and is used to strengthen body muscles, clear the blood, removes the measles spots, piles, tuberculosis, baldness, kidney pain, pancreas pain. It is highly useful for maleness, stomach and respiratory diseases.⁸ Olive oil has great medicinal value. When taken internally, it acts as a nutrient demulcent and a mild purgative. It is also a good massage⁹ and is an important ingredient of many ointments and plasters.

Zanjibil

Ginger must be one of the oldest and most widely-known spices in the world, with references in the writings of Confucius. Known in Arabic as *zanjibil*, its botanical name is *Zingiber officinale* Rosc. and belongs to family Zingiberaceae. Ginger is also mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and is said to be one of the fruits found in heaven which await the righteous importance of the ginger and the people of high esteem as;

"And they will be given to drink there of a cup (of wine) mixed with zanjibil" (Dahr: 17)

Ginger is the common name for a plant family with about 50 genera and 1300 species. It is pan-tropical in distribution, although mostly in far Eastern countries. Its complicated, irregular flowers have one fertile stamen and a usually showy labellum, formed from two or three sterile staminodes. The family is cultivated widely in the tropics for its showy flowers and useful products, derived mostly from the rhizomes. It is found in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Yemen, Oman, Sri Lanka and India. It contains aromatic oil having a characteristic odour. The main ingredients of this oil are camphene, phellandrene, Zingiberine, Cineol and bornol (Thomas J, 1997). These products include the flavouring ginger; East Indian arrowroot, a food starch; and turmeric, an important ingredient in curry powder. Medically it is of high importance and is used to cure Anorexia, Intestinal Pain, headache, diarrhoea, constipations, intestinal swelling, and stomach disorder. It is highly digestive stimulant and has cooling effect on the body and is also used to increase urine production (Asako H, et al., 2003). Its medical importance is under consideration at present. Galen has recommended the use of Ginger in cases of

paralysis and all complaints arising from cold humours Afzal M, et al. (2001). There are several studies on the effect of ginger on Coronary Heart Disease (CHD). A study looked at the effects of ginger (and another substance known as fenugreek) consumption on blood lipids, blood sugar, and platelet aggregation in patients with CHD. Patients recruited for this study included healthy individuals, individuals with CHD, and patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) [with or without CHD]. Researchers found: No effects on platelet aggregation, blood lipids, or blood sugars in CHD patients when ginger was given at a low dose (4 g/day) for 3 months. However, when given a single large dose (10 g) of ginger, significant reductions in platelet aggregation were seen, indicating that large doses are necessary for the greatest benefit. A ginger preparation was administered to normal and cholesterol fed male rats in order to see if blood lipids would decrease. Ginger preparation, Trikatu, was a potent hypo-lipidic agent because of its ability to reduce triglycerides and LDL cholesterol and to increase HDL. Ginger's effectiveness for reducing blood pressure (BP) was assessed under varied dosages (Ghayur et al. 2005). A dose dependent (0.3-3 mg/kg) decrease was noted in arterial BP, which provides support for ginger's role in BP regulation. Ginger has been shown to possess anti-diabetic activity in a variety of animal studies. A study found that when rats were given ginger juice for 6 weeks, the risk for developing diabetes was reduced. The researchers found that treatment with ginger significantly increased insulin levels and decreased fasting glucose levels. Treatment with ginger also produced other favorable effects in diabetic rats, including decreases in serum cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood pressure.

The introduction of Islamic paradigms and concepts, in general, is to understand Islamic knowledge and as its relevance to medicine. Islamization of medical sciences is a challenge that does not aim at producing different knowledge but at producing medical and scientific knowledge within an ethical and moral context. Medicine is not a collection of sub-specialties but an integrated whole on multidisciplinary basis. Medicine as integrated with other disciplines is a multi-disciplinary approach in solving human problems. Disease and its treatment are seen from the context of the whole eco-system. New problems emerged due to disintegration of divine and ecosystem. Humans must know and understand the issues involved from Islamic and medical perspectives and guide the patients to the most appropriate choices. Medical students must look at the patient as a whole person living in a social and spiritual milieu and not just as a collection of symptoms and signs. In the development of modern sciences, Muslims need to redefine modern scientific approach and input Islamic Values in it. With the inclusion of Islamic values a holistic philosophy and reason can be restored in medicines and also help to overcome substandard productions which are hazardous to human health.

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Full Length Research Paper

An assessment of impact of neglect of history on political stability in African countries: The case of Cote d'Ivoire

Bassey, Joseph Robert

Department of History and International Studies, Akwa Ibom State University, (AKSU), Nigeria.

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African countries had been engulfed in political crises soon after they regained independence from their respective European colonial masters. Almost all the conflicts witnessed in post-independence Africa were blamed on the former colonial Powers. This article argued that rather than blaming the West for political instability, African political leaders should be blamed for neglecting the discipline of history that should have guided them to enact laws and formulate policies that would play down on negative ethnic differences. African countries went adrift because of neglect of history or refusal to learn from the lesson of history. The paper used Cote d'Ivoire as a case study. In order to go into the distant past, a descriptive historical analysis method was adopted to interrogate relevant sources of information about Cote d'Ivoire. The paper argued against the claim that France instigated the political crises in that country. Rather, the article submitted that the political crises originated from the claims by political leaders that some persons were "aborigines"/ "true Ivoirians", and others "settlers" or "non- citizens" of Ivory Coast. The article revealed that almost all the ethnic groups in Ivory Coast migrated from various parts of West Africa into the country. Using the case of Alassane Ouattara to illustrate the problem of national identity, the article submitted that people whose forebears had lived in the present-day Ivory Coast, since about 600 hundred years ago should not be denied the universally recognised political and nationality rights. The article finally called on African leaders to borrow a leaf from other countries of the world such as the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and Malaysia that had been managing their citizenship issue without fighting civil wars.

Key words: History, migration, settlement, citizenship, aborigines.

INTRODUCTION

A few years after independence, many African countries went through political turmoil that threatened their existence. There were sit- tight syndromes, coups and counter- coups. The continent did not only suffer political

instability, but also economic recession. Africans blamed their woes on the West, particularly the former European powers that colonised the continent. In this paper, it would be argued that African countries had the problem

E-mail: basseyjoseph62@yahoo.com. Tel: 08037626649.

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of political instability because the leaders did not make use of history in the judiciary, politics and governance of their respective countries. Ivory Coast otherwise referred to as Cote d'ivoire, was one of such countries. In recent times, Ivory Coast had been facing protracted political crises. It was a known fact that during the late President Felix Houphouët-Boigny's 33 years rule (1960-1993), Ivory Coast was the most stable polity in the West African sub-region. It had a robust economy based on agriculture. However, shortly after Houphouët-Boigny's death in 1993, the political and economic situations changed for the worse (*The Nation* April 12, 2011:3). The world cocoa producer fought civil war in 2002 to 2007. The country appeared to be virtually divided into two, based on ethnic line of north (Muslim) and south (Christian) (*Tell Magazine* December 27, 2010:20-26). It went through post-presidential election crisis in November 2010- April 2011. The main contenders were the opposition leader, Alassane Ouattara, a northern Muslim and the then incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo, a southern Christian. Although Alassane Ouattara had been recognized by the international community (*Daily Sun* December 8, 2010:15), Gbagbo refused to hand over power to Alassane Ouattara¹. Ivory Coast was one of the African States that experienced internal displacements that were primarily conflict-induced (Biegon and Swart 2009/2010:21).

Some Ivorian political leaders and youth activists blamed "foreign powers" (*Newswatch* January 17, 2005:23), particularly the French for the crises in Ivory Coast. The immediate past Prime Minister of Ivory Coast, Pascal Affi N'Guessan who was the President of Gbagbo's party, Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) and spokesperson to Gbagbo, told the Press in December 2010 that the real problem of this crisis was the desire of foreign powers, particularly France, to dominate Ivory Coast. They said France wanted to use Ouattara, as "a puppet in their hands" to continue to "manipulate the same policy" of domination (*Newswatch* January 17, 2005: 23).

This article would reject the claim that the political crises in Ivory Coast were caused chiefly by France or any foreign power. Such claim follows Rodney's thesis of *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Rodney 1972:7-316), which had become the traditional way of Africans blaming the West for their economic and political woes. This thesis was debunked by Igwe's (2010) *How Africa Underdeveloped Africa*. The central argument in the present Article would be that the neglect of history, especially by the southern Ivorian political leaders had misled them to introduce discriminatory terms and constitutionalised nationality clause that denied the northern Ivoirians the right to become the president of the country. It is believed that the 2010 political crisis came as a result of the nationality clause which was used against Alassane Ouattara, a northern Ivorian Muslim who won the 2010 presidential election but the then outgoing

President Gbagbo refused to hand over power to him, a situation that warranted the intervention of the international community. Ivorian political crises could be said to be based on the question of who was an aborigine/true Ivorian and who was not.

Split into ten sections, this article would first examine migrations and the peopling of Ivory Coast (section 1) immediately after discussing the concept of history upon which the study would be based. Section three to section eight would be discussing other factors that led to the political crisis. The travail Alassane Ouattara went through would be recounted as a case study of denial of political right in section nine, the paper ending with summary, conclusions and recommendations in section ten.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: USEFULNESS OF HISTORY

This article is built on the concept of history, its meaning, its usefulness and the likely consequences of ignoring it. According to Collingwood (1950: 9) history is a kind of research or inquiry. History is the science of *res gestae*: That is, a research or an inquiry into the actions of human beings that have been done in the past, the forms of thought whereby one asks questions and tries to answer them (Collingwood, 1950:9). However, history is not about the past alone, because according to Carr (1961:30), history is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past. To Croce (Cited in Carr, 1961: 21) history consists essentially in seeing the past through the eye of the present and in the light of its problem. The task of the historian is to not only record but also more importantly, to evaluate the past, comparing with the present and projecting into the future. No wonder Barraclough (1955:29-30) saw history as the attempt to discover on the basis of fragmentary evidence the significant things about the past. In this sense, history is "a series of accepted judgments." Thus, as the renowned German historian, Leopold Von Ranke puts it, "to history has been assigned the office of judging the past, of instructing the present for the benefit of future ages" (cited in Carr, 1961: 21).

In spite of "history being the supreme discipline that trains dynasties" (Carr, 1961: 10), some rulers and potential rulers in Europe treated history and historians with disdain. The Duke of Cumberland is reported to have accused historian Edward Gibbon of being "at the old trade again – scribble, scribble, scribble" (cited in Marwick, 1979: 10). To Philip Bagby, the writing of history is "a semi-rational activity" (cited in Marwick, 1979: 10). Henry Ford is quoted to have said, "history is bunk" (cited in Marwick, 1979:22), that is senseless or purposeless talk.

Despite the criticisms, the usefulness of history is overwhelming not only for an individual but also an

indispensable tool for nation building. It is only through the knowledge of history that a society can have knowledge of itself. As Professor Collingwood put in, "history is for human self-knowledge" (Collingwood, 1950:10). In the words of Arthur Marwick, "history is the necessary recollection (and evaluation) of the past activities of men and the society to orientate themselves amid the bewildering currents of human diversity." In his *The New Nature of History*, Marwick (2001: 31-32) asserted that history is a *necessity* and that "[i]ndividuals, communities, societies could scarcely exist if all knowledge of the past was wiped out." Marwick likened a community memory to that of an individual. As individuals without memory find great difficulty in relating to others, in finding their bearings, in taking intelligent decisions so is a society without history. History is for pleasure, for training the mind, and for practical guide to solving problems of human society. "It familiarizes us with variation in social forms, and cures us of a morbid dread of change" (Langlois and Seignobos, 1966, cited in Marwick, 1979:17).

If society needs to know and understand its past, it must certainly need history, so also must its leaders and administrators. Moreover, as Levi-Strauss (cited in Marwick, 1979:18) rightly observed, "[t]hose who ignore history condemn themselves to not knowing the present because historical developments alone permit us to weigh and to evacuate in their respective relation the element of the present."

The consequence of ignoring history would be disastrous. Any nation that ignored history certainly went adrift, because as Marwick (1979:13) rightly observed, "As a man without memory and self knowledge is a man adrift, so a society without memory and self knowledge would be a society adrift". In his *The New Nature of History*, Marwick (2001:32) re-emphasized the importance of history to human societies when he said, "[i]t is only through a sense of history that communities establish their identity, orientate themselves, understand their relationship to the past and to other communities and societies. Thus, [w]ithout history (*knowledge of the past*), we and our communities would be utterly adrift on an endless and featureless sea of time." History is indeed "a teacher of life", teaching those who cared to learn be he a king or subject, a nation or individual, rich or poor so that he/she or it would not remain a child forever. For as the Greek Philosopher, Cicero, once said, "Not to know what took place before you were born is to remain forever a child" (cited in Marwick, 1979:13). Evidence of a nation remaining a child would include political instability, discriminatory constitutional clauses, economic underdevelopment, religious strife and ethnic conflict, because the people of that nation had either forgotten their history or they had at all not learned from the lesson of history (including histories of migration and settlement, occupations, institutions, war, natural disaster, external influence, etc.).

Immigrations and the peopling of Ivory Coast

This section seeks to show the various groups, including Alassane Ouattara's ethnic group that migrated from their original homeland and settled in Ivory Coast. The groups to be discussed are the Akan and Gyaaman, Boule and Anyi, Kru and Bete, Kankan Senoufo, Mankono, Mossi, Macina, Malian and Burkinabes. Since about the 13th century people had been migrating from various parts of West Africa and settled in the present-day Ivory Coast (Trimingham, 1962:142). Historical notice must be taken of certain place-names and ancient kingdoms like Akan, Fante, Baoule, Anyi, Sanwi, Kru, and Kua-Kua, Bettie, Moronou, Senoufo, Mankono, Kadioha, Bong, Gyaaman, Kong, Mossi, Dafina, Bobo, Kankan, Gonja, Assinie, Dioula, and Macina. As will be shown in this section, these places are very important in this discussion, at least for two reasons: First, people migrated from some of the places into the present-day Ivory Coast since about five centuries ago. Second, some of the kingdoms and chiefdoms in Ivory Coast were founded by these immigrants. There is a need, therefore, to discuss some of these places with a view to linking them to their founders and people of modern Ivory Coast.

The Akan and Gyaaman

The Akan is one of the immigrant ethnic groups in Ivory Coast. It originated from Old Ghana, and spread to not only Ivory Coast, but also almost the entire West African sub-region (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akan-people>). With 20 million members, the Akan are one of the biggest ethnic groups in both Ghana and Ivory Coast. Historically, prior to its colonization by the French, Ivory Coast was home to several pre-colonial West African states, including Gyaaman, the Kong Empire, and the Booule, Anyi and Sanwi kingdoms (Muhammad, 1983:242-258). "Various West Africa empires occupied the present day Cote d'Ivoire before European colonization" (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast). Gyaaman, also spelt Jamang (1450-1895) was a medieval African state of Akan people, located in what is now Ghana and Ivory Coast. In the 19th century Gyaaman was subjugated by the Ashanti, though it briefly regained its independence following the Ashanti's defeat by the British (Muhammad 248).

Akan sub-groups include Ashanti, Akyem, Akwamu, Anyi, Baoule, Ndyuka people "and other peoples of both modern day Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire or of origin in these countries" (Muhammad, 248). In the region that is now Ivory Coast, the Akan did not form empires like the Asante of Ghana (Muhammad 248). On 6th March, 1957, by efforts of Kwame Nkrumah, Akan lands in West Africa including those in Ivory Coast, rejected British rule, and were joined with British Togoland to form the independent nation of Ghana. When Ghana became independent on

7th August, 1957, some of the Akan groups moved to join Ivory Coast (Muhammad 248). Ghana's *Origin of African Identity*² has through research on histories of ethnicities, forced and voluntary migrations, contemporary national politics, and culture revealed the connections between Ghana and other West African States in particular, and African Diasporas generally³.

The Baoule and Anyi

The Baoule and Anyi are Akan groups in Ivory Coast. Also spelt Bwule or Baule, the Baoule, is the largest Akan (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast). At the beginning of the 20th century, the French administrators Nebout and Delafosse described Baoule inhabitants as "a state of perfect anarchy adjusted by the traditions, the customs, and the common sense" (<http://www.african.cart.com/africanethnicgroup>).

The Akan people began to migrate to Ivory Coast, probably in the 18th century. They moved in order to escape the domination of Ashanti Confederacy. The Akan immigrants moved into hinterland where they founded the kingdoms of N'Denice, Bettie and Moronou and Baoule. Baoule was a fusion of two waves of emigrants from modern Ghana. Queen Abla Pokou played a legendary role in the foundation of Baoule. The Queen had a quarrel with Ashanti king, Opoku Ware and consequently led the Assabou group and migrated across the Comoe River in modern Cote d'Ivoire and found Baoule. In order to cross the Comoe River, Queen Abla Pokou had to sacrifice her child to the spirit of the river hence the origin of their name "Baoule", which means "the child is dead" (Uwechue, 1991: 779). This account did not specify the sex of the child that the powerful Queen sacrificed. However, in another account, which carried basically the same story, the sacrificial lamb was said to be a boy-child:

The Baule (Baoule) of which a million individuals at the beginning of the century were counted, is a member of the Akan group of Ivory Coast. In the course of the Century xv111, Queen Abla had to lead her town towards the west to the borders of the Comoe River, between the Senoufo. In order to cross the river she got to sacrifice her only son, a sacrifice that gave origin to the name Baule, because Baule means 'the boy is dead'. (<http://www.african.cart.com/africanethnicgroup>).

Although the Queen's "child" or "boy" "is dead", Baoule became an existing ethnic group in Southern Ivory Coast, producing eminent sons and daughters who had left their imprint on the sand of time as political leaders, diplomats, administrators, academics, doctors, farmers, etc., in the country. The first President of Ivory Coast, Felix Houphouët Boigny hailed from Baoule (Zollberg 1964:18).

As will be shown later, Baoule was one of the groups that gave the French the stiffest resistance, village by

village, during their initial penetration into Ivory Coast. Little wonder, therefore, that in Baoule power was inherited through matrilineal descent. The kingdoms of Baoule and Agni grew rich through trade with the European merchants at the Coast. Political authority was based on wealth, which was the monopoly of about ten extremely rich chiefs. Political organization was restricted to a single village or group of villages.

The Kru or Kua-Kua and Bete

The Kru people were probably the oldest ethnic group in Ivory Coast. The Kua-Kua or Jack-Jack people in Ivory Coast were fishermen and producers of salt. They acted as middlemen between the inhabitants of the interior and the European merchants who had established on the coast. The Kru or Kua-Kua did not constitute large states. Whereas the Kua-Kua was ethnically very diverse, the Akan group was very cohesive. The Akan group had a more structured organization. The Kru or Kua-Kua traced their relationship through the male forest forebears (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast). The largest Kru population is the Bete, who made up about 6 per cent of Ivory Coast population. The immediate past President, Lauernt Gbagbo does not only hail from Bete, but a paramount "chief of Bete" (*The Nation* April 17, 2011:3). These groups appeared to be the most indigenous groups in the Southern Ivory Coast.

The Senoufo, Mankono, and Mossi, Kankan, etc:

From the north of the Cote d'Ivoire came the large indigenous savanna group, called the Senoufo (Uwechue 779-80) who, because they did not form a strong centralized state, they fell prey to the slave traders and suffered plunder and massacre at the hands of Samory's troops. This further resulted in migrations into Ivory Coast. The Senoufo made up about 10 per cent of the total population of Ivory Coast in the 1980 census. "The Senoufo migrated to their present day location from north-east between the 16th and 19th centuries" (<http://country.studies.us/ivory>).

Macina and Kong

It has been documented that in the 18th century, Sekou Ouattara, a native of Macina founded the Dioula kingdom of Kong, which situated in the Savanna between the N'Zi and Comoe Rivers. The aim was to protect the trade routes of the region, which was frequented by the Doioula people. Kong was a great commercial and religious city. It made huge profits from the Camel Caravans which took kola nuts and gold from the forest south to the Sudan and returned with trade goods, e.g. salt, to the South. The city

was greatly influenced by Islam, as several small theocratic states grew up around it in the 19th century (Uwechue 780).

The Burkinabes

According to a source, the largest “non- Ivory Coast Africans” in Cote d’Ivoire were Muslim (70 per cent), speaking French and migrated from Burkina Faso (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast). As of the 1980s, there were about 5 million “non- Ivorian Africans”, approximately one third to one half of which was from Burkina Faso, whereas the remainder (30 percent) came from the other parts of the West African nations. Among the 30 percent were 60,000 Lebanese and 10,000 French nationals (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast). The Mande peoples including Malinke, Bambara, Juula and the smaller related groups made up about 17 per cent of the population of Ivory Coast (<http://countrystudies.us/ivorycoast/20.htm> Senoufo).

The Malians

The Malians, like the Burkinabes had, for economic reasons, migrated from the north and settled in Ivory Coast since about 300 to 600 years ago. Evidently, migration had always been southwards, across the border into Ivory Coast, where an estimated three million Malians had headed over the past few decades to find work and income they could send to their families back home (*BBC Focus on Africa* January-March 2003:16). Thus, as one authority had noted,

Cote d’Ivoire is populated by peoples who migrated from the savanna to the north and of forest peoples coming from the east and west. There is diversity of languages. The Ivoirians living on the Atlantic Coast and in the immediate hinterland comprise three groups, namely, the Kru (Krous), Kua-Kua, and the Akan group which includes the Agni, the Baoule, the Asante and Fante in modern Ghana (Uwechue 779).

A brief statistical analysis of ethnical religious composition of groups popularizing Ivory Coast is necessary. The ethnic composition by population in Ivory Coast shows that the Akan people constitute 42.1 per cent (comprising Baoule 24 per cent, Bete 18.1 per cent), the Krou 11.05 per cent, Senoufo 15 per cent, Malinke 11 per cent, Burkinabe and Malians, about 3 million), non-Africans 130,000 to 330,000 (comprising French 30,000 and Lebanese 100,000 to 300,000). The religious divide is as follows: Indigenous 25 per cent, Muslim 60 per cent, and Christian 12 per cent (Duodu, 2002:16). Most of these “Migrants” were in fact born and bred in the Ivory Coast. The major languages include Senoufo (13 per cent), Baoule (10 per cent), Bete (2 per cent); French being the official language (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast).

The numerical strength of the northern Ivorians and their contributions to the national economy could not be overlooked. It should be noted that out of the population of a little over 16 million, 6.4 million people have links to neighbouring countries bordering northern Ivory Coast (*News Africa* January 31, 2011:21). It is also instructive to note that about one-third Ivorian Coast’s population is made up of “migrant” workers from other West African nation, namely, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. It was their parents who had carried out the migrations at the time when Ivory Coast was more prosperous than many of its neighbours in the rest of West Africa. These migrants worked as labourers on the Ivorian cocoa, palm plantations, in the timber industry, at the docks and in the markets. Much of the prosperity of the Ivory Coast was due to their hard work; but because they were poorly paid, they lived in the slums of cities like Abidjan (Duodu, 2002:15). One may ask: what factors necessitated the movements of the culturally diverse peoples into the pre-modern Ivory Coast?

Factors that necessitated immigrations into Ivory Coast

As already hinted above, a number of factors motivated people to migrate to Ivory Coast. The factors included trade and trade routes, gold mines, wars, agricultural activities, Islam, European imperialism and availability of statesmen. Islam was an important factor in the migration and peopling of the pre-colonial Ivory Coast. According to Trimmingham, “a religious revolution during the fifteen and sixteenth centuries completely transformed the relationship of the Berbers of Western Sahara towards Islam... Islam had touched the cultivators but lightly. Pagan rulers were tolerant of Muslims in their midst. Their form of reaction was not persecution but neutralization...” (Trimingham 142-143). The Muslim clerical – trading class within the Negro world formed trading villages over a vast area. They were less attached to the land than other Negroes. Their agriculture being done by the slaves, their trading activities enabled them to purchase, and could make long expeditions or transfer their whole family with ease. Sometimes, they formed permanent settlements in various parts of West Africa, including Ivory Coast.

Apart from the Islamic factor, Samory’s political and military influence played a decisive role in the migration and settlement of the people in Ivory Coast. Samory fought many wars of conquest against his fellow African neighbours and also put up stout resistance against the French. In the 1890s the Mandinka trader, Almamy Samory carved out a new state for himself and moved it eastwards when the French attacked its original area and captured its capital, Bissandugu. In 1894, the state had been reorganised from a new capital at Dabakala. Samory’s state was very powerful; his troops used modern firearms, some of which were home made. With

these firearms, he conquered or raided many of the indigenous states in what is now Cote d'Ivoire. Successful French attacks on Samory's kingdom brought to it an end. The states of the Upper Senegal in the 1850's saw the French as potentially less oppressive alien rulers than Al Haji Umar of the Tokolor Empire. For example, Sikasso made alliance with the French against Samory, but clearly valued its own independence so greatly that when the French actually tried to assert the right they claimed to have gained by this alliance, it joined force with Samory against them.

Many groups preferred the apparently lighter burden of the French rule to that of Samory (Crowder 1968:72-3). In all, Samory fought thirteen major engagements with the French and moved his empire constantly eastwards. "Of course the peoples into whose lands he moved suffered terribly...." (Crowder 87-88). The combination of his strategic retreats to the east outside French control and his maintenance of supplies of modern weapons, were largely responsible for his ability to hold out against the French for so long and against his African rivalries (Crowder 87). Samory got his supplies of weapons mainly from French shops keepers in Free Town, Sierra Leone (Legossick, 1966:95-115). While the French had occupied the Tokolor Empire to the North, they harassed Samory from Ivory Coast (Crowder, 1968:88). By 1879, Samory Toure controlled an area from Sierra Leone in the West to Ivory Coast in the East, and from a point near Bamako in the north to the Liberian frontiers in the South (Omer-Cooper, 1968:171). This situation caused movements and intermingling of people, especially in Ivory Coast.

Similarly, gold mines and trade routes contributed to the migration of people to Ivory Coast. In the north-east, the Bouna kingdom occupied land originally cultivated by the Lorhron people. In early 18th century the Lorhron were invaded by their neighbours, the powerful Dagomba kingdom beyond the Volta River. The Dagomba colonised the Lorhron country, founded a kingdom and took the name Koulango which means "those who do not fear". It owed its wealth to the Lobi gold mines and the important Dioula trade route which linked the important commercial towns of the north to those of the south. Dagomba was one of the northern vassal states of Ashanti, conquered by the British in 1874 (Kimble, 1963:282). The entire area was occupied by France after it defeated Samory in September 1898.

Furthermore, early European imperialism and completion among the European nations had engendered migrations and settlements of people in the region. Early contacts with the Europeans began with the Portuguese navigators, who were the first Europeans to land on the Coast of Cote d'Ivoire in 1470. The area was rich in Ivory and pepper, hence the name "Ivory Coast" or "Tusks Coast" or "Malaguetta Coast" (Pepper Coast). Ivory and pepper formed exports which were greatly appreciated in Europe. The Portuguese erected no fort at the Tusks

Coast because it was inhospitable. Their principal landing base was Elmina, now in Ghana. It was trade in gold and slaves that attracted other European nations such as the Dutch, Britain and France, who fiercely competed among themselves for the goods. The British of the Royal African Company had frequent contact with the coastal peoples of Cote d'Ivoire in the 1750s. Frenchmen had been there and took two young Ivoirians back to Europe. One of two Ivoirians named Aniaba was presented to Louis XIV as the Crown Prince of the kingdom of Assinie. Although the French could not maintain relations with the kingdom of Assinie and evacuated the post in 1703 due to the wars of Louis XIV, the kingdom became the bridgehead of the French penetration into the interior of Cote d'Ivoire in the 19th century. The French began occupying and colonizing Cote d'Ivoire during the 1500s and officially established a colony in 1893 (<http://www.cumorah.com> Ivory Coast). It was Louise Gustave Binger (1856-1936) who seized Cote d'Ivoire as a colony for France. Indeed, the French occupation of the colonies of Western Sudan – Mali, Upper Volta, Niger, Mauritania and parts of Guinea – was primarily a military one and very little of it was acquired by treaty (Hargreaves, 1967:100-2). The French started signing treaties with Africans kings and chiefs there in 1843/4. According to Michael Crowder, "the military conquest of French West Africa was achieved at great expenditure of human life, the destruction of many towns and villages, the break-up of traditional systems of government, and the movement of populations, but most of all it was achieved against stubborn resistance of the Africans themselves, both those of the savanna and the forest" (Crowder 111). The entire area was occupied by France after it defeated Samory in September 1898. The French military conquest and subsequent colonial rule caused dispersal of peoples into Ivory Coast. Another set of people from Alassane Ouattara's ethnic group was no exception to the European-induced massive migrations and settlements. From the analysis under section one of this paper, it is believed that the groups from Northern Ivory Coast including Alassane Ouattara's had already settled in Ivory Coast before the arrival of the French and their subsequent colonization of the territory.

It had been reported that Southern Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, and Mauritania as well as South-eastern and the Plateau of Northern Nigeria were good examples of the nations that gave the Europeans stout, bitter, stiffest, and skillful resistance. "Not only was resistance bitter, it was often skilful... the peoples of the Southern Ivory Coast provided some of the stiffest resistance the colonial forces of occupation experience" (Crowder, 1978:1-2;4). Apart from the war that the French fought against Samory, the longest war fought by the Europeans in West Africa "was against the peoples of Southern Ivory Coast, in particular the Baoule, who resisted occupation village by village, using to maximum advantage, the dense forest of the area"⁴.

Unity and integration of Ivory Coast had commenced

early enough due to the French colonial rule. Like the Samory's military influence, the French military conquest engendered a southward movement of populations into Ivory Coast. Similarly, the French colonial rule consciously or unconsciously attempted integration of the various groups that had moved and settled in the country. For example, in 1932, two thirds of the Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) was joined to Cote d'Ivoire. The French used Africans to construct rail ways from Abidjan to Upper Volta. The white entrepreneurs also needed the colonial Ivoirians' labour for the construction of sea ports and for development of plantations in Ivory Coast. The capital was established at Abidjan in 1935 (Uwechue 782). Like the southern groups, Alassane Ouattara's ethnic group and other groups from the northern parts of Ivory Coast contributed to the colonial economic development in the country and there is no evidence to show that they were excluded or discriminated against by the French or by those who now claim to "aborigines" or "true Ivoirians."

GOVERNMENT'S OPEN ATTITUDE TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS

Undoubtedly, government's open attitude towards immigrants during the colonial rule and up to Boigny's regime (1960-1993) was a significant factor that encouraged influx of people from other parts of West Africa into Ivory Coast. During these periods, Ivory Coast economy had been opened to citizens of other West African countries. Ivory Coast had always claimed to be different from its neighbours in terms of providing employment opportunities to citizens of other ECOWAS members. Its claim might not be baseless because, it is on record that, After independence from France in 1960, it invited the citizens of its less fortunate neighbours to come and grow cocoa and coffee, or to work as domestic or security staff for the prosperous villas of Abidjan. It took in refugees from Liberia's civil war, and housed them in villages among its own people, not in camps (Griffiths, 2003:12).

One must be grateful to pioneer President of Ivory Coast for sustaining the age-long culture of unity and integration of the Ivorian people. However, it must be emphasized that Alassane Ouattara should not be seen as a beneficiary of President Boigny's generosity because it has been historically established that Ouattara and his forebears had occupied Ivory Coast from the time immemorial. Boigny's generosity to the immigrants was a recent event. Therefore, accepting that recent event means accepting the fact that Ouattara's grandparents or parents or Ouattara himself arrived Cote d'Ivoire some few years before independence in 1960, whereas as shown above, his forebears had already settled there even before the 18th century.

Immigrants, including both Christians and Muslims, were offered employment opportunities as farm-hands,

miners, clerks, domestic servants, and so on, because Ivory Coast had "an open attitude towards foreigners (which) made it a magnet for workers from neighbouring counties like Burkina Faso, Mali, and Ghana" (<http://beeafrika.com/pt/A-Brief-History-of-Ivory-Coast-crisis>), especially during days of late President Houphouet Boigny. However, things began to change to the disadvantage of the northerners/Muslims after the death of Houphouet Boigny in 1993. There were ethnic, political, administrative, and religious discriminations against the northerners/Muslims.

The pre-1990 Ivory Coast positive attitude towards immigrants appeared to have been influenced by its former colonial master, France. Like the Ivory Coast's natural resources, France's economic miracle of sustained growth and rapid modernization between 1945 and 1975 attracted immigrant labour from South Europe and former French colonies, in northern and sub-Saharan African to do the least skilled and most poorly paid work in industry, construction and agriculture⁵. Agricultural revolution was one of the chief factors that attracted people during the colonial times and immediately that period to that country. The French colonial government had encouraged the Ivoirians to take to agriculture. Consequently, Cote d'Ivoire became the world's largest producer and exporter of cocoa beans and a significant producer and exporter of coffee and palm oil. Until 2006, when oil and gas production became more important engines of economic activity than cocoa, agriculture and related activities engaged about 68% of the country's population. This explained in part why the government allowed nationals from other countries to come to Ivory Coast and work in the plantations. According to the IMF statistics, the earnings from oil and refined products were \$1.3 billion in 2006, while cocoa-related revenues were \$1 billion during the same period. The Ivorian oil and gas exploration provided sufficient natural gas to fuel electricity exports to Ghana, Togo, Benin, Mali and Burkina Faso. This arrangement further boosted international economic relations among these countries.

Cote d'Ivoire's agricultural and mineral sources of income had some disadvantages that accompanied the influx of immigrants. It was reported that due to the economic revolution Cote d'Ivoire became "a source, transit, and destination country for women and children trafficked for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation." It was also reported that trafficking within the country was more prevalent than international trafficking and that the majority of victims were children. Women and girls were trafficked from northern areas to southern cities to serve as domestic servants or serve in restaurants. Young girls were also brought in to serve as prostitutes. On the other hand, boys were trafficked internally for agricultural and service labor. The boys also served as forced labor in agriculture, mining, construction, and in the fishing industry. From Cote d'Ivoire,

women and young girls were trafficked to and from other West and Central African countries for domestic servitude and forced street venturing. Considering all this one could say that modern Ivory Coast was a loose society that was bound to generate social and security problems, especially as the Ivoirian law did not prohibit all forms of trafficking as it had not ratified the 2000 UNTIP Protocol (2008). The influx of people from Ivoirian northern neighbours swelled up the northern population and might have generated fear among the southern politicians that Alassane Ouattara being a northerner or any other northerner would win any presidential election in the country, hence the exclusionist citizenship clause in the constitution.

President Félix Boigny's Legacy

Some Ivoirians blamed the crisis on the legacy the pioneer President, Félix Boigny, had left. Tiemoko Coulibaly (Coulibaly <http://mondediplo>) wrote that "the figure of Félix Houphouët-Boigny still dominates the political landscape in Ivory Coast (and that) the cult of the former president is universal" (such that) even his old opponent, Laurent Gbagbo, claimed that his differences with the man he once called a dictator were not really that serious and were now best forgotten. Although Ivoirian including "any rising politician" had been making pilgrimage to Boigny's tomb in Yamoussoukro a sacred rite of passage, some said "Houphouët-Boigny's legacy is a major tragedy for Ivory Coast and that "the triumphant resurgence of Houphouët worship, accompanied by the rise of Ivoirian power signals the failure of a system that always relied on tribalism, xenophobia, corruption and prevarication" (Coulibaly <http://mondediplo.com>).

The political frustration of the northerners appeared to have started during the pioneer government of President of Boigny. There were reports that many northern Ivoirians were usually disenfranchised. They regularly complained that they could not obtain identity papers and that they were refused entry on the electoral register because their names were said to sound foreign. This had been a constant bone of contention between north and south, and it sharpened the northerners' painful sense of exclusion. "Their frustration is another poisoned legacy of Houphouët-Boigny and his discrimination against different religions: the Muslim majority felt frustrated by the preferential treatment given to Christians by the Father of the Nation." However, after Boigny and especially during Ouattara's presidential ambition, northern Muslim leaders openly accused the authorities of harassment and did not hesitate to join in the political debate, an attitude which was unthinkable during Boigny's government (Coulibaly <http://mondediplo.com>).

President of Boigny was also accused of instigating violence against Dahomey, the Ivoirian southern neighbour. Boigny was said to have done this by wiping the sentiment that the Ivoirian wealth was being exploited

by foreigners to the detriment of Ivorians was that year, orchestrated by, a Houphouët-Boigny was said to have used his henchman, Pepe Paul, "to fuel violent attacks against Dahomeyans (under) the pretext that Dahomeyans held the best teaching posts" in Ivory Coast (Coulibaly <http://mondediplo.com>).

President Boigny favoured the French citizens more than northerners and the Dahomeans in terms of appointments. As would be shown later, Boigny's favouritism to the French might have been one of the factors that contributed to the political problem Ouattara had faced because he married a French woman. Boigny's favoritism towards the French could be explained on two grounds. First, by favouring the French, Boigny equally attracted the much-needed support from the French government. Two, Boigny had nothing to worry politically about the French citizens because they would never contest any presidential election in Ivory Coast.

WEAK CONSTITUTION AND STRONG PRESIDENT

Up to the 2010 when another protracted political crisis broke out, Cote d'Ivoire has had only two constitutions in its history. These were the 1960 Independence Constitution and the Second Republic Constitution (2000). As the preamble of the 1960 Constitution could show, the Ivoirians sought to create a democratic state and so they based their independent construction on the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As approved by the National Assembly of France on August 26, 1789, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen was a product of the French Revolution (Anderson, 1908:59-61). Accordingly, the preamble of the 1960 Constitution proclaimed its dedication to liberal democratic principles and inalienable human rights as expressed in the two Human Rights Declarations. Articles 3 through 7 of the 1960 Constitution delineated the fundamental rights and principles pertaining to Ivoirian citizenship, universal suffrage, popular sovereignty, and equality before the law.

However, the Constitution made the legislature and judiciary subordinate to an individual. That one individual was the president of the country. The Constitution neither established nor protected the independence of the judiciary nor did it make provision for opposition. The Constitution did provide for the Supreme Court and a subordinate court system. It did not stipulate the exact structure of the judiciary but rather left such a task to be handled by the National Assembly. This constitutional lacuna made the National Assembly to approve simply whatever the President sent to them. As Handloff (1988) succinctly put it, [i]n fact, the assembly simply approved the president's plan... for most of Côte d'Ivoire's brief history as an independent republic, nearly all legislative programs have originated with the president and have

been rubber-stamped by the assembly.” Thus, the Ivorian independent Constitution *ab-initio* created a dictatorship, the president going with unchecked powers.

One would have expected the Second Republic Constitution to be departure from the independence Constitution by providing for democratic provisions and rule of law, including independence of the judiciary. But that was not the case. The Republic Constitution (2000) which was drafted following General Robert Guei's bloodless coup in 1999 provided for a strong presidency within the framework of separation of powers. The executive was personified in the president, elected for a 5-year term. Provision was made for establishment of an independent Constitutional Council with seven members. All the members were to be appointed by the president. Among other sensitive political duties, the Constitutional Council was responsible for the determination of eligibility of candidates in presidential and legislative elections; announcement of final election results; conduct of referendums; and determination of the constitutionality of legislation. The past presidents capitalized on the weakness of the constitution to manipulate presidential elections such that Ivory Coast was a one party state from 1960 to 1990. From 1990 to 1999, the country experienced restricted democratic practice and military regime from 1999-2000. While restricted one party system elections were held six times- 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980 and 1985, multi-party elections were held only in 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2010. The country held its first departmental elections in 2002 to select departmental councils⁶ to oversee local infrastructure development and maintenance as well as economic and social development plans and projects (African Elections Database, 2011).

Institutionalization of discriminatory terms

After Houphouet-Boigny discriminatory terms were introduced into the political lexicon of Ivory Coast. Unlike Houphouet-Boigny, his successor, Henry Bedie popularised the concept of “Ivoirite” or “Ivorianness” as a way of excluding potential opponents, such as Alassane Ouattara (Griffiths 2003:12). Ironically, “as a son of so-called immigrants, Ouattara prospered politically under the avuncular despot (Houphouet Boigny), rising to the top post of Prime Minister...” (*The Nation* April 17, 2011:3). Boigny's successor, President Henry Konan Bedie coined the term ‘Ivoirite’ or ‘true Ivorian. These discriminatory terms created ethnic tensions among a population that included many immigrants (<http://beeafrika.com/pt/>). Gbagbo, like his predecessors Bedie and Guei also wanted to “dis-Ivorianse” Ouattara by declaring his Ivorian nationality invalid, so as to prevent him from the presidency against them (*BBC Focus on Africa* January-March 2003:16). Ouattara's home was pillaged and later burned by gendarmes during the curfew hours (Griffiths, 2003:12). Constitutional

amendments were made requiring presidential candidates to have two Ivorian-born parents. Obviously, this had been a tall order in a country with a very high percentage of migrant-turned citizens. As *The Nation* (April 12, 2011:14) put it, “...nationality clause seeks to enforce an aborigine/settler dichotomy, thereby excluding rivals from political competition. Of course, whipping such bogey was intended to raise the bar against Alassane Ouattara whose parents are believed to be settlers in the north”.

Were all the Presidents of Cote d'Ivoire aborigines or autochthones of the country in the true meaning of the word? Henry Bedie, who succeeded Boigny usually emphasized his similar background to Boigny. Ironically, Laurent Gbagbo who went to jail in the 1980s for protesting against Houphouet-Boigny's government was himself having recourse to the promotion of “nationality clause” in the country's constitution to consolidate his political power. Interestingly, history has revealed that both Presidents Boigny and Bedie hailed from Baoule said to have originated from Akan cocoa planters in modern Ghana. Ralph Uwechue, one of African scholar-diplomats who studied Africa societies, wrote in his book titled *Africa Today* (Uwechue 1991) that,

“Cote d'Ivoire is populated by peoples who migrated from the savanna to the north and of forest peoples coming from the east and west. There is diversity of languages. The Ivoirians living on the Atlantic Coast and in the immediate hinterland comprise three groups, namely, the Kru (Krous), Kua-Kua, and the Akan group which includes the Agni, the Baoule, the Asante and Fante in modern Ghana”(779).

Nationality Clause or Citizenship Clause

Article 35 of the Ivorian Constitution (2000) introduced the discriminatory nationality clause or citizenship clause by providing for two conditions of eligibility pertaining to the citizenship of the candidate to presidential election. The two conditions a presidential candidate are that “He shall be Ivorian by birth, born of father and mother who are themselves Ivorians by birth.” The provision has an express meaning that candidate to the presidential election should: (i) be an Ivorian by birth; and (ii) have both his mother and father themselves being Ivorians by birth. The use of the conjunction “and” rather than “or” has made the Ivorian Constitution different from other African countries' constitutions. Some Ivoirians protested that they found it “...difficult to understand the criticisms to which Cote d'Ivoire has been subjected when one knows that condition of citizenship remains a major obstacle in most Constitutions around the world and Particularly those in Africa” (<http://faculty.george.town.edu>). The use of the conjunction “and” in the Ivorian Constitution seemed to have been deliberately inserted to target some ethnic groups in the country. To all intents

and purposes, this particular condition had made the Constitution discriminatory and exclusive. It created two classes of citizens in the country, to wit: first class citizens and second class citizens.

What were the reasons for discriminatory and exclusionist citizenship clause? Those Ivoirians who were trying to defend the discriminatory and exclusionist citizenship clause in the Constitution of their country explained the reasons for the clause and efforts that were made to expunge it from the Constitution. In an essay titled "The Political Situation in Cote D'Ivoire", they wrote: "In try(ing) to look for the causes likely to explain it", the Ivorian apologists mention "the desire to preserve the presidential post" as number one reason. According to them, ...the desire to preserve the presidential post is a reflection of a sentiment deeper than it appears. This sentiment is incontestably imposed by the people on their representatives. In fact, how can one explain it otherwise that the discriminating clause could survive the transition and then the Second Republic? Of course, the BEDIE Government was the initiator of the clause, but it so poorly handled it by diluting it with its theory of Ivoirite, and right from the very first debate at the Constitution subcommittee, the issue came up on the agenda and the discriminatory clause imposed itself with an overwhelming majority (<http://faculty.georgetown.edu>. Retrieved 10/8/14).

Reportedly, General Robert Guei, had made efforts to put an end to the discriminatory clause "by getting rid of it once and for all, (but he) had to quickly change his mind." In fact, the leader of the military junta had used his authority to substitute the 'AND' with 'OR' before undertaking a nationwide campaign to explain the draft Constitution to the Ivorian people". Surprisingly, out of the 18 regions visited, 16 called for the return of the 'AND' to the Constitution. This implied that majority of the Ivorian people finally made their decision to retain the clause in the Constitution. Therefore, "the first government of the Second Republic had no choice but to respect the wish of the people" (<http://faculty.georgetown.edu>. Retrieved 10/8/14).

Several other factors were said to have intermingled and combined to explain such a discriminatory attitude. The factors were listed to include the high rate of immigration and its attendant consequences, the political and economic crises that were going on in many other African countries. The southern Ivoirians justified their act of discrimination when they wrote: "These factors, undoubtedly led our country to a reflex of self-protection. It is clearly indicated that the singular post of President of the Republic must be protected by voting to it only the people with certain intrinsic qualities, of which citizenship is only one (important) element" (<http://faculty.georgetown.edu>. Retrieved 10/8/14).

Outtara's Personal Relationship with the French

Without ignoring the above reasons, is believed that

Outtara's cordial personal relationship with the French was a major reason the elite did not want him as the president of Ivory Coast. As hinted above, Boigny's legacy of favoritism to the French might have been worked against Outtara's presidential ambition. Outtara is related to the French by marriage. Since the days of the Boigny's government, many Ivoirian elite had been complaining bitterly about French domination of their economic life. They said the French were indirectly re-colonising the country through their economic domination. They therefore saw Outtara's success as President to be in support and in furtherance of the French re-colonisation agenda. The following quoted passages would give credence to the assertion the elite hated him because of his personal relationship with the French, his in-laws. The immediate past Prime Minister of Ivory Coast and head of Gbagbo's political party, Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) Pascal Affi N'Guessan spoke the minds of those opposed to Outtara when he said, The real problem of this crisis is the desire of the foreign Powers to dominate Ivory Coast... They want to ambush the emancipation of Ivory Coast... 50 years of independence and poverty has proven this and this is because African countries do not have the real independence, they are not the masters of their own destiny, their politics is controlled and imposed by foreign powers and they are not in tandem with reality or development. African states are used as markets for finished goods... The current President of Ivory Coast has decided to liberate Ivoirians and it is because of this the foreign powers are supporting Ouattara who is more like a puppet in their hands and who they can manipulate to continue the same policy...(Newswatch January 17, 2005:23).

Similarly, the youths' representative Abyou Elvis said in January 2005 that the French were going to re-colonise the Ivoirians by detecting the socio- economic and political policies of the country:

We are not going to allow the French to re-colonise us. We are against the French policies in Africa. The French are behind the rebels in many African countries. Look at Rwanda, Congo, Burundi and many others. The French are against any leader that opposes their policy of re-colonisation. That is why they staged the coup to remove Gbagbo. We elected him and we are going to fight to protect him and our motherland. Please help us tell the French to leave Africans alone to develop their countries. We are tired of their domination (Newswatch January 17, 2005:23).

Earlier in October 2004, the President of the Ivorian Parliament, Ibrahim Coulibaly had claimed that the French government was against the president Laurent Gbagbo government simply because he (Laurent Gbagbo) was against the French re-colonisation of Cote d'Ivoire. He further enthused: "If we want to enter into agreement to construct a road, the French government

wants us to ask for permission. If we want to privatise, you must ask the French for permission. For us, this is a new colonisation. This time of rebellion, France says we are too free and want to organise the state in a way that suits them. They say we are Francophone and Anglophone. This is our crime. We want to be free". (*Newswatch* January 17, 2005:23).

Undoubtedly, due to Boigny's favorable attitude to the French, Ivorian sentiment against the French had been deep-seated. To the Ivorians, it was painful that under Boigny's government, most of the approximately 30,000 French workers were in the private sector in the late 1980s. The French citizens held the majority of all jobs requiring postsecondary education in Ivory Coast, while some also worked in middle-level white-collar and blue-collar jobs. There was evidence of French citizens working with lower qualifications than that held by the Ivorians but they received substantially higher salaries than the Ivorians with higher qualifications. The French men and women controlled the important aspects of the Ivorian economic sector and bureaucracy, such that "throughout the country there were French mechanics, foremen, plantation owners, storekeepers, clerical workers, and supervisors. French women filled many of the top secretarial positions and thus became special targets of nationalist resentment" (Votaw, 1988).

Even though Boigny's appointment of a French national named Antoine Cesareo to head the Directorate of Public Works in the 19180s had generated heated controversy, the President did nothing to indigenize such sensitive appointment. Antoine supervised virtually all government contracts and construction projects amounting to US\$3.3 billion as at 1987. Ivory Coast under Boigny was condemned by those in Ivorian political establishment as the only country in Africa to have accorded foreigners a stranglehold over sources of internal finances (Votaw, 1988). What irritated many Ivorians more was that, under Boigny's government some French workers were paid higher salaries than Ivorian cabinet ministers were. However, the Ivorian political elite usually demanded for replacement of French workers with Ivorians, a demand that became a political issue. Eszti Votaw (1988) reported that popular resentment of the French presence, particularly as the competence of Ivorians increased, emerged periodically in the form of student strikes and anonymous political tracts.

ATTEMPTS TO DIS-IVORIANISE ALASSANE OUATTARA

The use of Alassane Ouattara as a case study of victims of the discriminatory nationality clause could be justified by the fact that in spite of his contributions and that of his forebears to the development of Ivory Coast, he and his ethnic group were seen as non-Ivorians. For many times, Ouattara was denied the right to occupy the Presidential seat. The last attempt to deny Ouattara his political right

was in 2010 when he contested and clearly won the Presidential election but the outgoing President, Laurent Gbagbo adamantly refused to hand over power to him. It took the intervention of the international community to flush Gbagbo out of power and swear in Ouattara as President in April 2011. One commentator who erroneously wrote that "[Alassane] Ouattara whose roots are embedded in Burkina Faso" however admitted, rightly, that he (Ouattara) "had been done by an electoral system that disenfranchised Ouattara and other northerners (*News Africa* January 31, 2011:20)". The political discrimination suffered by the northern Ivorians could better be demonstrated by looking at what Ouattara⁷ went through to become the President of Ivory Coast.

Thus, the case of Alassane Dramane Ouattara, now the incumbent President of Ivory Coast, illustrated the political problems created by some southern political leaders who coined and used discriminatory terms such as "aborigines", "true Ivorians", "settlers" and "foreigners" against the northern Ivorians. Contrary to the claims by some Ivorian political leaders, Alassane Ouattara and his kinsmen were not "settlers" or "foreigners". As shown above, their forebears had been indigenized by permanently living there for more than five hundred years ago. According to Trimmingham (1962:142-3) by the 15th / 16th centuries, the Muslims had formed hundreds of settlements all over Western Guinea from The Gambia to Liberia. Their settlements in northern Ivory Coast included Kankan, Mankono, Kadioha, Bong, and Kong and in the Voltaic region (Mossi, Dafina, Bobo, Senoufo, and Gonja countries). They were accommodating Muslims. They adopted many customs and married wives from the local people. They did not regard themselves as living a particular life in a pagan environment but as sharing in its life (though they preserved Islamic characteristics and remained a distinct element). Thus, as it had also been reported, the Muslims were not a band of disturbing elements among their hosts in Ivory Coast (Trimingham 142-3). This implied that the Muslim groups including Alassane Ouattara's forebears had founded settlements in the present-day Ivory Coast as far back as more than 500 years ago. The name "Ouattara" is not a new name in African history. Ouattara is a root-name known to be not only one of the prominent founders of polities, but also an outstanding nation builder in pre-colonial Africa. Like other groups of people who migrated from elsewhere into the present day Ivory Coast, Ouattara's group had, for economic and religious reasons, moved further south, from Burkina Faso since about five centuries ago. Like other groups from north and south, Ouattara's groups had integrated with the groups through marriages, religion and trade relations.

The profile of Alassane Dramane Ouattara shows that before he became president, he had held top political and administrative offices nationally, regionally, and globally as a free citizen of Ivory Coast. He was a staff of International Monetary Fund (IMF). He was the Prime

Minister of Ivory Coast during the last regime of Houphouët Boigny (1990 – 1995). Being a reputable international financial manager, Alassane Ouattara was appointed by late President Boigny as Head of Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee for stabilization and economic recovery, a post that was created by the National Assembly on November 6, 1990. Alassane Ouattara was also appointed as Ivorian Governor of the Banque Centrale de États de l' Afrique L' Ouest (BCEAO)⁸ to work out new economic measures for the country.

In spite of these enviable positions, Alassane Ouattara was politically discriminated against by the politicians from the southern part of the country, including the immediate past President Laurent Gbagbo. The southern citizens saw the northern citizens as foreigners/ settlers who should not be allowed to hold important political and administrative offices in Ivory Coast. Ethnic politics was widened during the 1995, 1999, 2005, and 2010 presidential elections that were organised to return the country to a true democracy.

Both the discriminatory terms of "Ivoirite" / "Ivorianness" / arborigine and the nationality or citizenship clause were used against Ouattara. In order to dis-Ivorianise Ouattara and disqualify him from running against Robert Guei⁹, in the 1999 presidential election, the latter appointed a high-ranking member of his own party as the Judge, who, of course, solemnly ruled that Ouattara was not an Ivorian citizen at all but a Burkinabe (*Africa Today*, October 2002:15). Alassane Ouattara had been involved in the struggle for presidency in Ivory Coast for nearly two decades. He contested presidential election in 1995 and in 2000 as a nominee of Rally of a Republican opposition party. "But the new politician who was viewed as a technocrat and too western by critics, was disqualified both times (1999 and 2000) because of a ruling that the presidential candidate could not have a foreign parent. A court in 1995 had ruled that Ouattara's mother was from Burkina Faso..."¹⁰ Ouattara had denied the claim. At a point, he was even denied citizenship of Ivory Coast. Having narrowly escaped political assassination during the 2003 crisis, Ouattara whose wife is French had been sheltering at the French embassy on condition of silence. He was widely believed to have won the 2010 presidential elections, but again it was overturned. The UN, which had access to voting results, confirmed that Ouattara won the election. The European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as the United States, France and Britain were strongly in support of Ouattara. These international organizations and world leaders urged Gbagbo to step down and hand over power to Ouattara but he refused to yield. A report from *Reuter Africa* (16 October 2011) was apt when it said "Gbagbo refused to step down after losing a U.N.-certified election to Ouattara in November. He then used a force of soldiers, paramilitaries and youth militias to entrench his position and crush dissent, re-igniting civil war."

One cannot but agree with *The Nation* (April 17, 2011:14) that, "the obscure (nationality) clause was constitutional effort to prevent the so-called aliens from voting or being voted for... In post colonial Africa, this was clearly unprecedented; an act of civil and electoral genocide. Ouattara became a virtual unperson in his own country". One Ivorian political commentator rightly wrote that one of the consequences of the discriminatory and exclusionist constitutional provision was "tantamount to the pure and simple elimination of the 'most important', the 'most competent' of the candidates in the person of Mr. Alassane Dramane Ouattara from the presidential race" (<http://faculty.georgetown.edu>).

However, Ouattara himself might be blamed for the political crisis because he was part of constitution making process. As reported, the constitution was adopted by referendum, with over 86% support across all parties, including that of Ouattara, the main target of xenophobic attacks. Ouattara and his people were said to have backed up their support of the constitutional amendment on the ground that it represented some progress in electoral transparency, especially as it allowed Ivorians at the age of 18 to vote in elections. Ironically, "[h]istory plays funny tricks. These short-sighted politicians were to be the first victims of their own stupid and disgraceful conduct" (<http://mondediplo.com/2000/10/08ivorycoast> Retrieved 10/8/14).

However brief, it should be mentioned that the consequences of the attempts to deny Alassane Ouattara his right to occupy the presidential seat were enormous and disastrous. Apart from ruining the economy, rising death toll and refugee problems, the political crisis provoked tensions that went beyond Côte d'Ivoire itself to neighboring countries such as Burkina Faso and Mali where Ouattara had strong supporters. Ethnic affinity and irredentism¹¹ could be noticed amongst the northern Ivorians and citizens of Mali and Burkina Faso in favour of Ouattara during the nearly six months of (November, 2010 – April, 2011) power struggle between the President – elect Alassane Ouattara and the then incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo. In fact, the Rebel forces or New Forces that supported President Ouattara were largely made up of two ethnic groups - Dioulas and Senoufo – who were predominantly Muslim and had close ethnic ties with Mali and Burkina Faso. The two counties are lying to the north of Ivory Coast. In 2003, a group called Collective to Defend Malian Abroad in support of Alassane Ouattara staged a protest marched against the much criticised "Ivoirite" that excluded Ivorian opposition leader Alassane Ouattara from presidential elections. They believed they were being discriminated against in Ivorian politics. They wanted fair elections. The south of the country was considered more developed than the north. The predominantly southern region profited from the former boom times of the cocoa industry and generations of political patronage (<http://beeafrika.com/pt>, <http://cumorah.com>. Ivory Coast).

Many of the poor shacks and houses inhabited by

northern Muslim workers and traders in Abidjan's poor slums were looted, and burnt down and 1,700 of the northerners rendered homeless in just one day, shortly after the 2002 coup attempt had failed in Abidjan.

Following the attempt to deny Ouattara the presidential slot, there appeared to have been a very strong plan by the North to secede from the rest of the country. The northerners began to implement the secession bid when their Representatives, including the Prefects were reportedly trampled upon and chased out. It was reported that workers in public services were also ordered to leave certain localities, thus interrupting the smooth running of these services in the country. "This irredentist idea was scrupulously pushed to its logical end to the extent of hoisting the flag of a third country in the town of Kong, where Alassane Dramane Ouattara claims to be his native town" (<http://faculty.georgetown.edu>).

Former President and Professor of History, Laurent Gbagbo appeared to have found himself guilty. The point to demonstrate this assertion is that after being arrested and handed over to the internationally recognised President-elect Alassane Ouattara, Ex-President Gbagbo said "I want us to lay down arms and to enter the civilian part of the crisis, which should be completed rapidly for life in the country to resume" (*Daily Sun* April 12, 2011). This seems to be a mission statement that came too late to the suffering masses but certainly not useful to the massacred Ivoirians.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article traced the origins of the various ethnic groups in Ivory Coast and analyzed the factors that caused the dispersal of the people into the country making it a multi-cultural nation since the pre-colonial times up to the post-colonial period. The analysis proffered reasons for political instability in Ivory Coast. It explained why and how unsuccessful attempts were made by some Ivoirian political elite to deny Alassane Ouattara his right to become the president of that country, especially during the 2010 presidential election. Contrary to the popular opinion held by many who blamed the Ivoirians political crisis on France, this paper revealed that the sources of conflict originated from the Ivoirians themselves because the political leaders neglected the discipline of history and its lessons in politics and governance of the country. They forgot where they came from. Nevertheless, history could remind that since the 13th century, Ivory Coast had been receiving immigrants from other West African countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Togo, The Gambia, Liberia, Senegal, Niger, Mauritania, Guinea and Nigeria, thus gaining the status of "melting pot in West Africa." Socio-economic, religious, military, imperialist and colonial factors, openness of both colonial and post colonial governments to foreigners as

well as abundant opportunities in agriculture all combined to engender mass movements of peoples into the present-day Ivory Coast. Those who arrived early formed permanent settlements and intermingled. The Akan groups from modern Ghana and the Bete group to the south and the hard-working immigrants from the modern Burkina Faso, and Mali to the north have had the most tremendous impact on the socio-economic development of Ivory Coast. The Akan and the Bete ethnic groups appeared to have dominated the political life of the Ivoirians more than any other groups in the country. Almost all the past Presidents of Ivory Coast originated from the Akan and Bete ethnic groups. Late President Houphouet Boigny and his successor, Henry Bedie, hailed from Baoule founded by Queen Abla of the Akan/Ashanti ethnic group that originated from Old Ghana. The immediate past President Laurent Gbagbo originates from Bete, which though an indigenous group, had for centuries intermingled with the Akan and other groups.

Such a multi-cultural country would have needed the lesson of history to teach the principle of unity in diversity, respecting each other group's culture. The apparent neglect of history was a factor that led political instability in the country. The paper uncovered other factors that caused instability: Government's open attitude towards immigrants during both the colonial period and under Boigny's government, though helped to have supply of labour that worked in the plantations, industries, restaurants, hotels, etc., the open migration policy posed social, political and security problems. Political leaders often used new immigrants to balance ethnic population equation, especially during national elections. President Boigny's legacy of favouritism towards French was also a factor because it had laid a foundation for anti-French resentment that later threatened the presidential ambition of Alassane Ouattara who got married to a French woman. It is incorrect to say, as some writers had written, that there was no evidence of ethnic, political or religious discrimination during Boigny's government. The truth of the matter was that Boigny was able to manage emerging ethnic conflict successfully taking advantage of the French influence, the agrarian nature of the economy that engaged about 70 per cent of the population in agriculture, and the low literacy rate of the people. This implied that during Boigny's time majority of people had neither interest in politics nor could they question the government of their country.

Since the political leaders could not make use of history, they formulated discriminatory policies and enacted exclusive laws that sought to deny citizens from the northern part of the country some political rights, including the right to be president of the multi-cultural nation. Since independence in 1960, Cote d'Ivoire has had only two constitutions that were very weak but made provision for a powerful president who could manipulate the judiciary and the legislature to his advantage. Institutionalisation of discriminatory terms of "Ivoritness"/

“aborigine” and constitutionalisation of exclusive nationality clause combined to work against the presidential ambition of the northern Ivoirians, including Alassane Ouattara whose marital relationship with the French woman fueled and extended the anti-French sentiment to him.

Had the Ivoirian leaders studied the history of migrations and settlements of the peoples of their country, such a lesson would have informed them that those who had migrated and settled there for over 500 years ago had no other place to their home except Ivory Coast. An elementary knowledge of the pre-colonial history of West Africa would leave no one in doubt that it is an act of ignorance or selfishness and therefore useless to, in this 21st century, talk of “aborigine Ivoirians” or “true Ivoirians” in Ivory Coast, where the majority of the population had become immigrants-turned citizens. Therefore, the claim by some southern political leaders that Alassane Ouattara and other northerners were not “aborigines”/“true Ivoirians” or citizens of Ivory Coast was like “a pot calling kettle black”.

African political leaders should learn from history and borrow a leaf from other multi-ethnic countries such as America and Canada that had adopted the principle of *jus soli* (right of the soil) better known as birthright citizenship. A law similar to the 14th Amendment¹² of the U.S. Constitution stipulating that a person physically born in the U.S. or a U.S. territory was a citizen of the U.S. should be enacted and put use by African countries. Americans’ acceptance of a black American, Barack Obama as their President should serve as a good progressive example to other peoples of the world, particularly the Africans. Yet this was America where in 1857, its Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Dred Scott v. Sandford* that African-Americans were “beings of inferior order” (and as such) “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect” (Stengel, 2011:32). It is unfortunate that whereas a descendant of immigrant parents or liberated slaves could contest presidential elections and was allowed to take the highest political office in the world’s most powerful nation, but in Ivory Coast, a potential political opponent was labeled “foreigner” even when history had revealed that as far back as the 13th century people moved from various parts of West Africa into the country, now the world’s number one producer of cocoa. Indeed, like America and Canada, Ivory Coast should follow the birthright citizenship (*jus soli*) principle so that the Ivorian citizenship would be based on residency rather than place of birth or ethnic origin. This principle, coupled with equitable allocation of resources and enforcement of the rule of law, might promote cultural pluralism and co-existence thereby intensifying the process of nation building not only in Cote d’Ivoire but also the entire African continent.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

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Full Length Research Paper

Education nexus politics in Agame Awraja during the imperial regime

Atsbha Gebreigziabher Asmelash

History and Heritage Management, College of Social Science and Humanities Debre Markos University, Ethiopia.

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During the imperial regime of Emperor Haileslasie, there were only three secondary schools in Tigray Province. These were Atse Yohannis of Enderta, Nigiste Saba of Adwa and Agazi of Agame Awrajas. These secondary schools were centers of dissent. Linguistic oppression, maladministration and lack of adequate social institutions created very strong dissatisfaction among the people of Tigray Province. As what was happening in other parts of the province, there was very strong student anti-government political movement in Agazi Secondary School. Since the late 1960s, strike, demonstration, fighting against the police and breaking government vehicles became common political activities in the school. Both university and high school students of Agame Awraja arranged meetings, distributed several pamphlets and composed many revolutionary songs which agitated mass-based armed struggle against the imperial regime. Their strong determination to pay any form of sacrifice for the betterment of their society marked the end of the imperial regime in September 1974. This article is based on primary and secondary sources. The former includes numerous archival materials, information obtained from interviews of knowledgeable individuals, while the latter consists of books, articles and theses. These sources are critically examined and cross-checked for their reliability.

Key words: Students, boycott, demonstration, opposition, Agazi, Adigrat, Agame.

INTRODUCTION

Soon after the liberation of Ethiopia from the Italian occupation, the centralization policy of Emperor Haileslasie faced strong opposition from the people of Ethiopia in general and Tigray in particular. Several *awrajas* in Tigray strongly resented the imperial regime that suppressed their culture, language, history and identity and right to social services such as schools and health facilities. Even though the First Weyane Rebellion

of 1942/3 was suppressed by the use of British Royal aircraft, the people did not remain submissive to the regime. Rather, they waited for an appropriate time to organize themselves and fight against it. Between the 1940s and 1960s, there was no overt anti-government movement in different parts of the province. It was in the late 1960s that university and high school students of different *Awrajas* began to raise their voices against the

Email: atsbita12@gmail.com, atsbhagegziabher@yahoo.com. Tel: +251911183199, +251920658925.

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regime. In Agame *Awraja*, many students were engaged in anti-government political activities. They managed to dispatch revolutionary ideas through preparing different pamphlets, songs, poems and music that agitated mass-based armed struggle against the regime. They won many supporters who contributed a lot to topple the feudal regime in 1974 with a considerable sacrifice.

The establishment of Agazi elementary and secondary schools in Agame *Awraja*

In 1942, an elementary school was opened in Adigrat Town. Very few teachers namely *Ato* Zewengel Gebre Kidane, *Bashay* Sibhat Batita, Karl (Sudanese teacher) and *Haleqa* Gebremariam started the school, which was made up of wood. In the mean time, its name was Baraka, an Italian word to mean a house made up of wood. It was later renamed Agazi Elementary School. Here, it is necessary to discuss the historical genesis of the latter name of the school. Agazi represents "liberator". This name was not given without reason. It is stated that forefathers of Tigray had paid multifaceted sacrifices for their country since very ancient times. They managed to defend the dignity of their country at any cost. This was to remember their efforts, commitments and contributions that the school was named Agazi. Initially, the school ended in grade three. There was shortage of class rooms and other facilities. The imperial government was not happy with the name Agazi so it changed to Keyih Meseret. In 1958, the school got grade eight. Students who completed grade eight in Adigrat went to Mekele for higher education. Many students who had economic and other related problems withered their education.¹

This created great disappointment among the people of Agame *Awraja*. The people of *awraja* began to discuss how to solve the problem. Irrespective of several obstacles, they persistently requested the imperial government to open a secondary school in Adigrat Town.² Some committed individuals played a pivotal role in contributing money and raising the idea of establishing secondary school in Adigrat. These include Dr. Mengesha Gebre Hiwot, *Ato* Girmay Hagos, *Shum Agame* Kassa Gebre Mariam, *Aba* Kidane Gebray, *Barambaras* Hadgu Gebreyohannis, *Ato* Kahsay Gebre Hiwot, *Ato* Mehari Hagos, *Ato* Yohannis Gebre Mariam and teacher Sibhatu Bahire.³ In 1964, the first two persons went from Addis Ababa to Adigrat Town and met some elders and businessmen. They arranged meeting at Ethiopia Hotel, where many people participated and some promised to contribute their own share in the establishment of the school. This was a turning point in the history of Agazi Comprehensive Secondary School. During the meeting, ad hoc committee was established to facilitate the opening of the school. Unfortunately, in their return to Addis Ababa, *Ato* Girmay lost his life in a car accident that happened on 16 May, 1964 around Kobo.

Dr. Mengesha was also deposed from his position due to his failure to reach the capital city on time.⁴

Finally, they achieved their mission (Tables 1 and 2). A comprehensive high school was opened in the town in 1965, when grade nine was begun in the compound of

Table 1. Number of Agazi Comprehensive Secondary School Students between 1958 and 1974.

Year	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
1966	91	27	118
1967	97	23	120
1968	287	94	381
1969	336	48	384
1970	493	150	623
1971	610	206	816
1972	750	207	958
1973	826	208	1034
1974	877	270	1147

Source: Agazi Alumni Adigrat Branch Archives (A.A.A.B.A., 2012)⁶

Keyih Meseret. Students in Adigrat Town sat for leaving certificate examination in 1968 for the first time (Aregawi, 2004, 2008).⁵

The establishment of Agazi Alumni

Before 1972, university students arranged tutorial classes for secondary school students in Adigrat. This created good opportunity between them in the town and it eventually became fertile ground for the formation of Agazi Alumni, which was established on 2 January, 1972. Agazi Alumni was not opened without several impediments. Its conception was must to get recognition of the governor of Agame *Awraja*, *Ato* Seyum Yakob, and the governor general of Tigray province, *Leul Ras Mengesha* Seyum. It was after several critical evaluations of its major objectives that the alumni got recognition among the aforementioned officials (Agari, 2012).⁸

The extent to which *Leul Ras Mengesha* Seyum was seriously examining the request for the establishment of Agazi Alumni can be seen from a letter that he wrote and sent to the governor of Agame *Awraja*. The letter reads:

b>Ä!G%T yxG"z! TMHRT b@T yqDä t%¶ãC ¥HbR
 ¥ÌÌM _QMT 14 qN 1964 >.M bq\$ R 641¼7¼63¼
 yÉÛT tmLKcêlh#ÝÝ ¥Hb,, lxrG -",.Â lb S%
 mçn#N µmn#bTÂ bsbb# yEHL y±ltEu ZNÈl@
 XNÄÄSkTL ybk#Lä `SönT kwsÇ bhúb# ytS¥¥h#bT
 mçn@N xS-y"lh#ÝÝ⁹

I [the governor general] have already seen the letter, that was written on 22 October, 1973 with reference number 641/7/63, discussing on the establishment of Agazi Alumni. This is to inform you [Ato Seyum Yakob]my agreement on the formation of the alumni if you believe that the alumni is useful to the country and if you are going to be responsible for its involvement in political and cultural issues.

Table 2. Number of directors of Agazi Comprehensive high school during the imperial period.

No	Name	Year of employment
1	Yibeleh Negash	1957
2	Mesfin Belay	1958
3	Tomas Kanikadon	1959-1960
4	Alemu Ayana	1961
5	Desta Asayehegn	1962-1963
6	Zemenfes Qidus Ashebir	1964
7	Haileslasie Weldegerima	1965
8	Girmay Abera	1966-1967

Source: Agazi Alumni Adigrat Branch Archives (A.A.A.B.A.)⁷

Ato Seyum Yakob, on his part, wrote a letter to the students of Agazi Secondary School to inform them that the governor general, *Leul Ras Mengesha Seyum*, had considered their request and approved the formation of Agazi Alumni on 2 January 1972. The letter reads as follows:

YH yqDä yxGxz! TMHRT b@T t¥¶ãC ¥HbR ¥HbRnt\$ bãõšL XNÄ!fqD\$Ch# dUG¥Ch# b-y“Ch#T msrT yTGÊ -QSY g¢E L;#L %S mNgš S+M -Hús 24¥64 >.M bq\$ _R 3173¥5206¥49 btÉf dBÄb@ b¥Hb,, mÌÌM ytS¥ÑbT mçn#N...¹⁰

Based on your frequent appeals to get official recognition to the formation of Agazi Alumni, Leul Ras Mengesha Seyum, the governor of Tigray province, wrote a letter on 02 January 1972 having 3173/5206/49 reference number that shows his approval...

It was the first alumni in the country. It opened its main office in Adigrat and other branches in Asmara, Addis Ababa and other corners of the country including Begemidir, Bale, Sidamo and Arsi from where its members raised funds to consolidate the capacity of the alumni. For instance, on 2 July 1972, its branch office in Addis Ababa arranged fund raising program. *Tihilo*, the most preferable food of *Agametot* (the people of Agame), was prepared for invitation during which they collected Ethiopian birr 4967.85. The same was true in the other branches of the alumni irrespective of the difference in the amount of money collected.¹¹

The beginning and development of student movement in Agame Awraja

Agame *Awraja* was one of the three *Awrajas* of Tigray Province which have secondary school during the imperial regime. The people of Agame *Awraja* had got the opportunity to attend secondary education in Agazi Secondary School. Due to various social, economic,

political and other related problems, the people of the *Awarja* had no compassionate attitude towards the imperial government. Just like in other secondary schools of the province, there was strong student’s movement in Agazi Secondary School. Like their fellow Tegararu in Mekelle, Adwa, Axum, Shire, Maichew and other towns, the students in Adigrat were uncompromising in their struggle against the oppressive imperial rule of Emperor Haileslasie (Darch, 1976; Young J, 1997).¹²

The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed new breakthrough in the history of the students of Tigray. It was the time when Tigrean University started to provide tutorial classes to the young students. Adigrat was not an exception. University students played a pivotal role in shaping the political movement of high school students in Adigrat. They distributed various political pamphlets among the latter. Demonstration, strikes, fighting with the police and class boycotts were common in the town. This movement was intensified from time to time. They pronounced “xTnúM wY (2) yðWÁL SR>T xYb”HM wY”, which literally means, “Would you wake up to end the feudal rule” (Solomon I, 2007). Some Tegararu university students visited Adigrat during the vacation while others came to the town as national service teachers (Mulugéta D, 2010; Young J, 1997).¹³

Under the cover of providing supplementary education to secondary school students, mobilizing the masses to participate in planting different seeds and cleaning the town, these students involved in disseminating revolutionary political ideas among the young students. According to Samuel Kidane, this was clearly stated as follows:

“...ሥውር ዓላማው ግን ገዢው መደብ በማያውቀው ውስጣዊ ዘዴ የመሬት ላራሹን ምንነት በመጠኑም ቢሆን በተማሪዎች መንፈስ እንዲሰርፅና አብሮ ከልጆቹ አካላዊና አምሮአዊ ዕድገታቸው ጋር እንዲገለጽ ማድረግ ነበር።”
 --- its hidden objective was to implant the concept of land to the tiller among the students so that it will grow in parallel with their mental and physical growth. But this was in a way that the ruling government couldn’t notice it. (Samueal Kidane, 2010).¹⁴

Some of these university students who provided tutorial classes in the town include Ato Siyum Masfin, Ato Atsbha Asgadam, Ato Hadara Berhe, Ato Girmay Gebre Tsadik, Ato Gebre Hiwet Gazahagn, Ato Mangasha Kihishan and Ato Gebre Mikael Damoz. Like in other corners of Ethiopia, the summer school in Adigrat gave prior attention to political activities igniting mass-based opposition against the imperial regime. It is stated that the program was aimed at politicizing the young students with the ongoing political conditions of the country.¹⁵

Initially, the imperial government did not know the university students’ hidden agenda and no serious supervision was done on them. But, later, the former realized the challenge of the latter against it after which the number of police forces in the town was increased greatly. Despite the increment in the number of security

forces in the town, the university students did not hesitate to teach politics openly (Daniel Grey R.1970).¹⁶

Some activist students strongly challenged the imperial government by mobilizing majority of the students in the Haileslasie University. They established several clubs in which many political pamphlets were exchanged. Such activities shaped the political attitude of many university students towards the regime. The government retaliated against the revolutionary students. To this end, many Tegar University students, including Tilahun Gizaw and Sibhatu Wubneh, were killed. Their death highly shaped the nature of political movement among the high school students in Tigray in general and Adigrat in particular. This aggravated the situation in Adigrat Town, where the school was reported to have been closed for about a month. Many students stopped their education for one year while others did not return at all. The students of Agazi Secondary School arranged several meetings in which the life history of the dead Tegar was read for numerous audiences. They also celebrated “Zikre Tilahun ena Sibhatu” meaning “The memory of Tilahun and Sibhatu” every year.¹⁷

Students of the respective secondary school began to read poems criticizing Emperor Haileslasie in front of their parents. Until this time, parents did not feel happy with the political movement of their students. However, the death of the aforementioned and other Tegar university students stirred bad feeling among the parents of Agazi Secondary School students. This eventually increased the bond between the secondary school students and their parents whose union marked one step forward to begin armed struggle against the feudal regime. Teachers in Adigrat were also patrons of the political movement. Some informants recalled that Rezene Melese, Melese Tekle and Giday Gebrewahid were some of the teachers who contributed a lot in developing the political consciousness of their students and parents in Adigrat Town. Every Friday, students arranged debate, drama and poems in which several sensitive political issues were discussed among the Agazi Secondary School students.¹⁸

Archival sources revealed that on 9 March, 1972, the students of Agazi Secondary School arranged a peaceful demonstration. The reason for the arrangement of the demonstration against the imperial regime was the dismissal of considerable number of students from the respective school. This situation led to a confrontation between the students of the school and security forces in the town. In such confrontation, the students were reported to have stoned houses at Che’anadug. Due to this reason, about 24 (twenty four) students were captured and against whom the director of Agazi Secondary School, Ato Mengesha Yibrah developed accusation. It is stated that Belay Teklehaimanot and Yirga Alemayehu were disturbing their teachers for no less than one week. On the same day, at 2:00 PM, around several hundred students of Agazi Secondary

School met together and asked the return of the two suspended students unless they would not continue their education peacefully. The disagreement between the students and the security forces in Adigrat Town was intensified. This caused material destruction including windows, iron sheets and doors. The director of the school, Ato Mengesha Yibrah, states that the destruction was costly.¹⁹

The conflict between the security forces and students of the respective school continued in the following day, on 10 March 1972. At mid night, the students were reported to have killed a certain soldier, Gebre Mezgebo, whose military code was 271. He was found killed and thrown into a hole. The list of the 24 students who were captured and arrested is in Table 3.

According to oral sources, the immediate cause for the clash between Agazi Secondary School students and police forces in Che’anadug was not the dismissal of the students. Rather, they claimed, on 8 March, 1972, the students of Agazi Secondary School heard a rumor that security forces in Adwa killed one activist student. The students in Adigrat, particularly in Che’anadug were asked “CGR Ztf-r xB ጎDê NSáTk#M XN→Y ⇝YNk#M)” which literally means “The problem happened in Adwa, what is wrong with you?” Many police and mayor of the town went to Che’anadug to convince the students to give up their illegal political movement and to continue their education peacefully. However, such effort ended in vain. Even an attempt made to intimidate the students was futile. The students did not listen to the mayor and police. Instead, the students threw stones at the police after which the latter were reported to have fired their guns against the former.²¹

The skirmish between both parties wounded seven (7) students, including Araya Abrha and Gebremikael Seyum (Seyah). Since the rebelling students were large in number, the police forces ran away rather than confronting them. The students were believed to have captured two police men over whom minor damage was inflicted. Meresa Asefa, a police driver, was one of the captured and wounded police. Some students took the wounded students to hospital while others chased the retreating police forces. Students used the following song to show the weakness of the armed forces of the imperial government to suppress the student political strike in Che’anadug.

z#RÃ MŞ> _YT MN>R YzH

z#RÃ MŞ> _YT MN>R YzH

T¹ šlH x1# m æ xML x1HÝÝ²²

Having equipped with excess bullets of Minishir (weapon)

Having equipped with excess bullets of Minishir(weapon)

People blame you that you retreated, you have bad behavior.

For this reason, the escaped police forces asked

Table 3. List of students captured during the March 10, 1972 revolt.

No	Name	Grade Level	No	Name	Grade Level
1	Beyene Abrha	11 th	13	Belay Aregawi	9 th
2	Kedir Hassen	11 th	14	Usman Abubekir	12 th
3	Abrham Desta	9 th	15	Yemane Abrha	9 th
4	Dawit Tekle	10 th	16	Seid Musa	10 th
5	Gebre Hiwot Fiseha	11 th	17	Yohannis Berhe	11 th
6	Asgedom Mengistu	10 th	18	Girmay Debalma	11 th
7	Mezgebu G/hiwot	8 th	19	Alemayahu Gebremedhin	10 th
8	Tekle Mehari	7 th	20	Alem Hadgu	11 th
9	Mehari Mebrahtu	10 th	21	Hailemariam Kiros	11 th
10	Hailay Abay	9 th	22	Girmay Seyum	12 th
11	Redae Beraki	10 th	23	Brhane Araya	10 th
12	Atsbha G/slasie.	10 th	24	Markos Seyum	10 th

(Source: N.A.L.A.A Box No. 297/4, File No. 1504/144/25- መጋቢት/2/64 9.90) ²⁰

additional force to retaliate the students' action. The police force was ordered to hunt activist students and hand them over to the imperial government. Almost all but one police agreed to accomplish their mission. The exceptional one was *Ato* Gebre Mezgebe, from Sa'esi'e. He disagreed to fire off his gun against the "disturbing" students. He rather recommended punishment of such students using stick other than gun. Unlike the archival source, oral information reveals that the dead soldier was shot by his colleagues based on the order of the imperial government. It is stated that his refusal to accept the order brought him into conflict with his colleagues and urged him to pay its price. The imperial government was believed to have ordered a secret kill of *Ato* Gebre Mezgebe. As a result, he was assigned to spend the night watching the streets of the town after which he was shot by the government force. ²³

Archival materials evinced that on 18 March, 1972, a meeting was held in the school. Many parents, teachers and government employees of the *Awraja* attended the meeting. They agreed that each student had to bring his /her parent to sign, showing their readiness to take the responsibility of controlling the illegal political activities of their children.

But, this attempt was not achieved because grade seven (7) and eight (8) students of the respective school claimed that they were not participants of the aforementioned riot so that they would not bring their parents. Grade 9 (nine) to twelve (12) students, on their part, argued that they did nothing wrong and refused to bring their parents to sign. This created dissatisfaction not only among the government officials of the respective *Awraja* but also among the teachers of Agazi Secondary School. Due to this reason, the school was reported to have been closed for a month. ²⁴

Due to this, about twenty police officers left Adigrat and flocked to Mekelle to present their complaint to *Leul Ras* Mengesha, the governor general of Tigray province. Their

list is included in Table 4. When they were asked why they left Adigrat and marched to Mekelle Town, they mentioned the following reasons. First, due to the disturbance that was made by the students of Agazi Secondary School on 30 Feb 1972, five students were caught and put in prison. However, according to the security's view, one of the five arrested students was a son of the *Awraja* governor's sister due to which he was freed from prison. This created great disappointment among the security force. Second, on 8 March, 1972, the students of the respective secondary school were reported to have been involved in an illegal political opposition against the imperial regime. Many students were caught by the security force and imprisoned.

Unfortunately, the security officers claim that the *Awraja* governor freed the arrested students; the teachers and security force were blamed for the cause of the students' opposition in the town. Third, due to the confrontation between the students of Agazi Secondary School and security force on 10 March, 1972, Gebre Mezgebu was found dead and thrown into a hole. All these events discouraged the security forces and they left Adigrat and went to Mekelle Town. ²⁶

Leul Ras Mengesha ordered the formation of ad hoc committee to assess the situation in the town. To this end, the ad hoc committee began to examine the situation in *Awraja* and presented its findings to the *Leul Ras* on 24 March, 1972. According to the findings, the students of Agazi Secondary School caused costly material destruction. The conflict between both parties wounded two students: Gebreigziabher Demewez and Araya Abrha, who were taken into hospital for medical treatment. Other twenty four (24) students, most of them wounded, were arrested. The finding of the committee further claimed that the major cause for the conflict that took place between both parties on 10 March, 1972 was due to the dismissal of two activist students: Yirga Lema and Belay Tekle Haimanot. It is

Table 4. List of armed forces who moved from Addigrat to Mekele after the March 18, 1972 revolt.

No	Name	Title	No	Name	Title
1	Beyene Kidane	Deputy Commander of Hundred	11	Arafayne Mesfin	Soldier
2	Hiluf Asres	Soldier	12	Gebrehiwot Tesfay	Soldier
3	Fitsum Haileslasie	Soldier	13	Kalayu Alene	Soldier
4	Hadgu Gebrehiwot	Soldier	14	Abrha Tesfay	Soldier
5	Abay Berhe	Soldier	15	Brhanu Lakew	Commander of Ten
6	Abrha Tsegay	Soldier	16	Haileslasie Kidane	Soldier
7	Kindeya Gebru	Soldier	17	Mengesha Haile	Soldier
8	Tekleab Semon	Soldier	18	Niguse Berhe	Soldier
9	Belay Tesfaye	Soldier	19	Hailemikael Gebru	Soldier
10	Teka Gebre Tekle	Soldier	20	Mersa Asefa	Soldier

stated that in accordance with the rules and regulation of the Ministry of Education, confirmed by the governor of Agame *Awraja* and the head of police forces of the respective *awraja*, teachers and the director of Agazi Secondary School began to take measures against the agitating students of the school. Accordingly, the aforementioned students were dismissed from the school. The former students was grade 10 (ten) while the latter was grade 9 (nine).²⁷

Colonel Brhane Demewez, who was one of the assessing committee, stated that though the two students were punished for their leading role in provoking the majority students, there was still unstable situation in Adigrat Town that was common everywhere in the country including Addis Ababa. He also pointed out that the committee would continue assessing the situation in the town.²⁸

On 2 April, 1972, students of Agazi Secondary School posted several pamphlets on the walls of public halls and school compound at the night time. It is stated that this rumor was sent by *Barambaras* Gebreigzaibher Hailu, who was the secretariat of Tigray province. However, his letter did not get acceptance among the provincial and imperial state officials due to the nature of the relationship between the secretariat and the government officials both in Tigray Province and Addis Ababa. Their relationship was characterized by its hostile, or at least lack of trust nature. It is stated that *Barambaras* Gebreigziabher was removed from his post on 9 April, 1972. But, there were several letters dispatched by his address, stamp and signature until 24 April, 1972.²⁹

Even though he was summoned to the Imperial Government Ministry of Interior, he did not obey the request. The state officials claimed that every letter distributed in his name included groundless news so that they would not take it into consideration. They also stated that since he was not obedient to the imperial rules and regulation, he had to be subjected to a necessary punishment.³⁰

The students of Agazi Secondary School wrote an

impressive pamphlet calling the mass population of Agame *Awraja* for an armed struggle against the imperial regime. They stated that the *Awraja* lagged behind other *Awrajas* due to several reasons including the absence of twenty four (24) electricity services. It warned the people of the town that unless they raised their voices against the imperial regime, the government would give no attention to their problem. This pamphlet was found by the security forces on 03 April, 1972 posted on the churchyard of Medhane Alem Church of the town.³¹

The students of Agazi Secondary School were highly encouraged by the students of Atse Yohannis Secondary School. The latter ensured the former that they would be on their side for the sake bringing bright future for the people of Tigray. They stated, “እኛ የአፄ ዮሐንስ 2ኛ ደረጃ ት/ቤት ተማሪዎች በአናንተ ክኩል የደረሰው በደል ስለተመጣን የናንት የወንድሞቻችን ደጋፊዎች ሆነን ተነስተናል።” This literally means “We, the students of Atse Yohannis Secondary School, are your supporters since we have recognized the challenge that you face.” They, the students of Atse Yohannis Secondary School, mentioned some reasons why they decided to back up the students of Agazi Secondary School.

First, they stated that both were close kin. Second, the physical aggression under took by the security forces against the students of Agazi Secondary School alarmed the students of Atse Yohannis Secondary school to encourage the victims of the harsh measures to fight against the imperial regime to the end. For this reason, the students of Atse Yohannis Secondary School were urging the state to pay indemnity to the physically damaged students of Agazi Secondary School. This strengthened the unity between the students of both secondary schools.³²

They were requested to strength their cooperation until the materialization of their mission. This was proposed to be made without ignoring the form of sacrifice they were expected to pay. They underlined:

...አናንተ ተማሪዎች ሀሳባችሁን እንደብረት ምድሶ ከቆማችሁ ለተማሪ የማይቻለህ ሀይል የለምና ብትታሰሩም ብትሰቃዩም ጸንዶ ልብ ሆናችሁ

በሀብረት ለማሰፈታት በመምከር ሃሳቦችሁ ከግብ 1! ደርሰላችሁ ይችላል። እኛም እስከ መጨረሻ ድረስ ደብዳቤ እየተለወደን የትግራይን ስም ማሰባሰብና ሃሳብን ከግብ ለማድረስ መጣር እንጂ ሁሉ ግዜ እንደምታደርጉት ካለዉጤት ወጥቶ ተመልሶ መግባት ለታላቁ የአግኦኪ ትMHRፕ ቤት የሴትነት ስም ያሰጣል። አሁን እንደጀመራችሁት "አንበሳዉ አግኦኪ" የሚል ስም አስጥቶታል በጀመራችሁት ወኔ ወርታላ Xንዳታፈገፕፍ# አደራችሁን ጥብቅ ነዉ።³³

Dear students, you may be arrested or tormented. Be any, if you have firm stand which is as strong as metal pillar, there would not force that would dissolve your unity and materializing your mission would be inevitable. We [the students of Atse Yohannis Secondary School] would try our best to agitate the identity of Tegarū until the achievement of our objectives. Inconsistent movement and retreat would destroy the greatness of Agazi School. Your present progress deserves a title "The brave Agazi" and you have a moral obligation to keep up the progress ongoing.

The same source further evinced:

... የኛም የናንተም ትMHRፕ ቤት ለአንድ ዓመት ቢዘጋ ሌላሳባቸዉ ፅኑዋር እንጂ ትMHRፕ አይወዳም የሚል ያላዋቂነት ስም አያመጣም፤ ጀግናዉ ያገፎ ህዝብ ሃዳግማይ ወያኔ አትፍራ ምክንያቱም የጥንት አባቶቻችን በጀግንነት ያቆዩትን አገራችን ምንም ስንፈራ ወንድም ሆነ ሴት ለወገንህ ታማኝነት ሣትፈራ ጸዉነትን ተመርኩዘህ ተከራከር፤ አይወህ ጀግናዉ የአጋሜ ተማሪ በሙሉ ኢትዮጵያ ግዛቶች ስምህን አሰከብረህ ሣትናጊ በአደጊጋ ዓዲግራት ከተማህ ከየአዉራጃዉና ከየጠቅላይ ግዛቱ የመጡ ተማሪዎች የጠቅላላ ለኢትዮጵያ ወገኖቻችን መብት ተከራከሪዎች ለመሆናቸዉ ምስጢር የሚሆን በአቅራቢዎችን ያሉትን መብታቸዉ የተገፈፈባቸዉን መመልከት ነዉ።³⁴

If all of us [students of Agazi and Atse Yohannis secondary schools] close the school for a year, it would not be considered as our immaturity and lack of care to our education. Rather it would be a parameter of our determination to our cause. Dear our brave people, both males and females, you should take the responsibility of keeping our country, whose dignity was kept by our forefathers. You should argue based on faithfulness, honesty and courageous manner. Dear brave students of Agame, until your name become popular in different corners of Ethiopia, you have to continue looking at and advocating against the violation of human right in Adigrat, a developing town, where many students who came from different Awrajas are found.

The students of Atse Yohannis Secondary School went some way to raise other additional questions which were needed to be addressed by the imperial government. The following were some among the major ones. Where is the 25 million birr that was donated by the government of Italy to improve the monument of Axum? Why was the money collected from the people of Tigray used only for the development and expansion of Mekelle Town and not other towns of the province? Where was the 5 birr paid

by those who took private exam?

"ሁሉቀን ጅብ ከመሆን አንድ ቀን እንበሳ ሆኖ መሞት ይኛላል። ታዳጊዎ ትግራይ ከአናንተ እርዳታዎን ለማግኘት እፈቅድዎን ዘርግታ ዓይኖቿን ነፍሱን እርታዎን ታሰማለችና እንርጃት። ለራሱ ምታት ጭክብት ለሆድ ቁርጠት ብላበት" ይህ ማለት ተንፈሳ የሚያሰይ ተንኮል መልሰለት Negative x Negative = Positive ሃርጂላሃይ³⁵

It is better to live one day as a lion and die than living always as hyena. The developing Tigray is waiting your help by stretching her hands and opening its eyes. Act on the reverse against crooked situation, because the multiplication of two negative things is positive. This was a pamphlet that was found posed on the wall of Medhane Alem Church on 3 April, 1972. On the same day, on 3 April, 1972, the students posted a pamphlet on the wall of Medhane Alem Church of Adigrat. This pamphlet was entitled "ተማሪዎች ሆይ", meaning "Dear students". It informed the mass that student Yirga Alemayehu was arrested because he was suspected of motivating his friends to fight against the imperial regime. It also called the mass to raise their voice against the feudal government on behalf of the arrested student. This Written material states that sorrow was meaningless rather than helping the needy when they were alive. They also pasted an impressive poem,

18 xNqòC t¹ N XNdk#bT
t» ÆÄWQ nW XNJ tgðL y³ mBT
trú mslÿ êÄW >S≠CN
MN B1N tnún MNS msL xgßN
SUCN tqNî wDö wd g#DÜD
bMN MKNÄT nW lm≠R yMNFQD
x1h# x1h# B1N `S yMN-Í
MN 1!mÈBN µh#n# ykÍÝÝ³⁶

We are sold for 8 articles as compose
Students may not know but our right is violated
It seems as if our main objective is forgotten
What was our question and what about its response?
Our body is deteriorated and thrown to a hole
So why do we plan to learn
Our survival is uncertain
No more hardship worse than this.

At the mid night of April 12, 1972, the students of Agazi Secondary School posted a political pamphlet on the public hall of the town. The pamphlet was entitled with "yፕፕፕፕፕፕ DM}" meaning "The voice of students". It had two pages dealing with the dissatisfaction of the students on the imperial regime and their plan for armed struggle for the wellbeing of their community.³⁷

On 15 May, 1972, there was strong confrontation between the students of the school and their counterparts. According to a letter sent from Lt. Colonel Bekelle Balcha, head of the first battalion of cavalry to the governor of Agame Awraja, it is stated that the students

of Agazi Secondary School continued posting different pamphlets on areas accessible to the mass population of the town and even they were reported to have used different military weapons of their parents to intimidate their counterparts. The Lt. Colonel, on behalf of his companion, complained that they were backing up to eight (8) school children. He claimed that the opportunity for free education that was granted by the imperial government of country for their military service was deprived due to lack of stability in the school. He urged the removal of the disturbing students in the school so that children of the military personnel in the town would be able to attend school peacefully.³⁸

On 27 May, 1972, between 7:30 and 8:00 PM, the students of Agazi Secondary School were engaged in riots. They moved to some individual houses including that of Teacher Lemlem Hagos's house; where they stoned and posted a pamphlet. This created great confusion among the officials of the imperial government particularly the armed force of the regime who were ordered to tightly control the day-to-day activities of the students and to undertake necessary measures including physical punishment. The Ministry of Interior also assigned the provincial state officials to closely supervise the situation in the town and to send timely reports regarding what was happening in Agame Awraja in general and Adigrat Town in particular.³⁹

On 8 June, 1972, at 12:00 PM, a meeting was held in Adigrat Town. Many people including the governor of Agame Awraja, director of Agazi Secondary School and other 32 teachers of the school attended the meeting and they discussed how to maintain the peace and stability of the town. The meeting was extended up to 1:30 o'clock in the night.⁴⁰

Posting different political pamphlets became common in Adigrat Town. Many pamphlets were posted in different corners of the town at different times. Due to this reason, the security forces which were stationed in the town were urged to standby for the sake of close supervision of the illegal political movement of students. They were ordered to work day and night in order to control the wide spread of revolutionary ideas that were disseminated by the students of the school through writing impressive political pamphlets and posting them in areas where many people of the town could find them. The students of Agazi Secondary School were very active not only during their school life but also after their graduation and employment in different imperial offices. There were some key examples showing this fact. For instance, Ato Araya Gidey, who was employed in the Ministry of Finance after he completed his grade 12 education in Agazi Secondary School, was reported to have been engaged in distributing different political pamphlets. According to an archival source, he was found with five pages political pamphlet by security forces.⁴¹

The political consciousness of students in Adigrat Town was enhanced over time.

Their voices against Tegar and non-Tegar feudal rulers, who owned large plots of land and led luxury lives at the expense of the masses, had got numerous supporters. According to informants, when the student movement was not strong enough, some activist students used some provoking songs that helped to develop uncompromising stand among the supporters of the movement in the respective schools. The following song is a good case in point,

Kz\$ YBlÖ Kz\$ YBlÖ f¶/# XMbR Kz\$ YBlÖÝÝ⁴²
With a considerable hesitation, they are trying to show their readiness to fight [against the imperial regime.]

It was common for the students to go to local beer houses where they met many elderly persons with whom they discussed the dismal lives of the people of Agame Awraja. They frequently visited Girazmach Berhe's mead house where agitating songs were sung. The following song was reported to have been one of them,

lMN TY³l> bTR ylWM bX°
 Xz! k#l# EHR² F ÂY mNÄNñ, D°ÝÝ⁴³
*Why do you say he did not have stick on his hand?
 Whose eucalyptus [weapon] are all of these?*

The student's movement in Adigrat was aggravated from time to time. On December, 1973, the students of Agazi Secondary School went to the head office of Agame Awraja police and presented some major problems that affected their teaching and learning process. They uncovered that the prevalent situation did not encourage them to continue their education peacefully. They found no one was responsible to address their questions due to which they were urged to involve in political activities against the imperial regime. According to an archival material, despite their financial problem, the students were asked to pay exam fee while taking grade twelve (12) examination. Majority of the students, who were incapable of paying the exam fee, had no option than to drop out of school. Since they lost a timely response for their request of exemption from exam fee payment, students of Agazi Secondary School underpinned that the major reason why they closed the school was due to financial constraint. Lt. Colonel Brhane Demewez wrote a letter to the head office of Tigray province. His letter recommended officials of the head office of Tigray province in Mekelle to discuss on the issue and to decide a necessary action unless the situation in Adigrat would develop to uncontrolled degree.⁴⁴

Students' refusal to pay exam fee became a bone of contention between the students of Agazi Secondary School and the school administrators. According to the letter sent to the Ministry of Interior, on 3 December, 1973, at 5:00 o'clock, grade 12 students of Agazi Secondary School stopped their education until their exemption from the payment of exam fee to take grade

twelve (12) leaving certificate examination. They expressed their complaint to the head of the police forces of Agame *Awraja* who eventually asked the office of Tigray Province and the Ministry of Interior to give decision on the student's question related to exam fee.⁴⁵

A day later, on 4 December, 1973, more than 1000 grade seven (7) to twelve (12) students of Agazi Secondary School held a meeting at a place called Wolwalo. Having discussed on their problem, they finally agreed that unless they were given a written letter from the Ministry of Education ensuring their exemption from exam fee payment they would not continue their education in the school. This created great confusion among the provincial and imperial government officials.⁴⁶

Through time, elementary school students of Adigrat began to involve in the students movement in the town. It is stated that on 18 December, 1973, elementary school students in the town boycotted class and joined the secondary school students in the struggle against the regime.⁴⁷

In the late 1973, students' opposition continued in Adigrat. Parents were compelled to be responsible for the illegal political activities of their children. For instance, on 10 April, 1973, students' strike in Agazi Secondary School forced about 32 teachers to stop their teaching and learning process. Two days later, on 12 April, 1973, Parent-Teachers Committee and parents were summoned to a meeting to discuss the issue. Parents were obliged to sign, showing their agreement to take the responsibility of stopping the students' movement in the school. The parents were given four days to convince their children to continue their education peacefully.⁴⁸

A written source revealed that on the eve of the outbreak of the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution, the political maturity of the students of Agazi High School had grown to high level. They predominantly engaged in covert and overt anti-government political movements. Some of these include demonstrations, distribution of anti-government pamphlets, reading politically oriented poems, sudden attack on vehicles that crossed the town, breaking the windows of governmental offices and taking part in clandestine anti-government activities.⁴⁹

As the 1974 revolution approached, the students' movement in Agame *Awraja* became intensive. On 23 April, 1974, at 3:00 Am in the morning, students of Agazi Secondary School met Lt. Colonel Addis Agelachew, head of the first battalion of artillery, and told him their dissatisfaction due to lack of timely response to their questions. They also presented some urgent questions which are discussed below. First, they called for the replacement of the old electric power generator by a new one. Second, they strongly opposed the attempt of transferring an Indian female physician (Dr). Third, they requested for the dismissal of all employees of Adigrat Town Municipality Office. Fourth, they requested the removal of *Fitawrari* Bezabih Gofu, who was the governor of Ganta Afeshum *Woreda*. Lt. Colonel Adisu

requested the students to continue their education peacefully until their questions were seen by concerned bodies. He also asked them to give him two days to discuss with other concerned bodies so as to come up with appropriate answers to their questions.⁵⁰

As the student anti-government movement was intensified across time, *Leul Ras* Mangesha established a special force, which was known as the "China-Group". The major objective of this special group was primarily to suppress the anti-government political involvement in Adigrat. Unfortunately, this objective was not materialized due to the fact that the government forces were persistently attacked by the "Anti- China Group" which was established by the revolutionary students.⁵¹ The need for a change in government through armed struggle became common among many people of Tigray in general and Agame *Awraja* in particular. For this reason, the people began to give good credit for military weapons. A commonly used song of the period expressed this fact as follows:

k 30 _© k 30 \$M

*MN>R YŠSL sE%M b!çNMÝÝ*⁵²

It is better to have a Minishir [a type of military weapon] even it is broken,

Rather than having 30 caves and cows

As the imperial government undertook a number of repressive measures against the people of Tigray, it is stated that the people of the province developed uncompromising stand to struggle against the regime. Many people began to believe that the most appropriate option to end the dismal life in Tigray was armed struggle. Some activist students and others used some provoking songs to agitate mass-based movement against the regime. The following was one of the most impressive songs of the time,

TG%Y >dY (2)

*xYTNB:lY xYTBkYly ^É!R MN>R bte d¯L SdDlyÝÝ*⁵³

Tigray, my homeland (2)

Do not cry, do not weep

Equip me with small minishir (weapon).

Informants claim that some of the major activist students in Adigrat were Mulugeta Gebreslasie (Wedi Hanta), Tekeste Asgedom, Alem Mesfin (who was member of Ethiopian People Revolutionary Party) and Alem Abadi. These student leaders later joined the armed struggle taking place in the rural Tigray. Tsegu Hadgu (son of *Barambaras* Hadgu) and Muluworq Gebreslasie (Wedi Aba Mengod) played significant role in composing many revolutionary songs.⁵⁴

Students were encouraged to read many history and fiction books. These include "How Japan Developed?," "Fikir Eske Mekabir," "Aleweledim," "Melike'a Seife

Nebelbal” and “The Savage Girl in Africa.” But, later, the imperial government issued a declaration prohibiting holding and reading such materials among the students. Those who failed to obey the declaration were subjected to imprisonment up to three years. The establishment of student council played its own role in strengthening the unity of students in the school.⁵⁵

As stated before, university students contributed a lot in the political movement among the students of Agazi Secondary School. Seyum Mesfin was the crucial ones. There was strong opposition of Agazi Secondary School students against different *wereda* governors. They used different impressive songs and poems to agitate mass-based opposition against several *wereda* governors. For instance, the following was one of the commonly used songs of that time,

wrÄ ¹#My lÖ,i Y?¹k#M lÖ,y
XN-Y K?¹Ä lÖ,XE gddÄy lÖ,yÝÝ⁵⁶
District governor! Is it today better to you?
No! today is painful for us!

Particularly, the opposition against *Fitawrari* Bezzabih Gofu was very strong. Students blocked the highway where his car passed. Using the names of his son, Kahsay, and his daughter, Mebrat, the people of Agame in general and students of Agazi Secondary School in particular expressed their contempt against *Fitawrari* Bezabih as follows:

xì µ?úYy lÖ,i Y^Y> êYêy½
xì mB%Ty lÖ,i Y^Y> xýÄTy½
XN-Y K?¹Ä lÖ,XE gddÄy lÖ,yÝÝ⁵⁷
Father of Kahsay! is it better now to shout?
Father of Mebrat! it is better now to cry?
No! now is worse for us

According to some informants, the opposition against the governor of Agame *Awraja*, *Fitawrari* Taye Gola, was not as strong as the *Wereda* rulers. Even though he was from Welqaita, the people of the *Awraja* did not blindly oppose him. As to informants, *Fitawrari* Taye, whose salary was Ethiopian birr 700, was good administrator. As the informants claimed, unlike *Fitawrari*, *Wereda* governors were corrupt and known for their maladministration.⁵⁸

Students continued to challenge the imperial administration in Agame *Awraja*. Agazi Secondary School students developed strong links both with university and secondary schools students, from whom they received political pamphlets. They also prepared their own pamphlets, which were distributed during the night times. They began to stone police stations in group and visited several *Weredas* such as Hawzen, Bizet, Zalambesa etc to provoke the masses for armed struggle to topple the feudal rule to the end.⁵⁹

In the late 1974, the people of Agame *Awraja* were aware of the fall of the imperial regime. The educated

men of the *Awraja* got many followers. Many military forces mostly police, teachers and peasants joined the revolution on the side of the intellectuals who were ready to pay any form of sacrifice so as to bring bright future to their society. The process of winning the support and developing the confidence of peasants was reported to have not been a challenging task for the university and high school students of the respective *Awraja*. Since the land case was a serious question and leading slogan of the time, the students managed to exploit this burning issue in order to secure popular acceptance among the peasants. It is said that the former used the following song to inform the latter that the end of the imperial regime would be followed by peasants' possession of their land.

Dá xYøá ?rSy
dg!Mì ¦YlSSs@ kYMLSyÝÝ⁶⁰
Dear poor [peasant]! Till your land without fear
Hailleslasie [the emperor] would never return back to power

Conclusion

This paper attempts to show the intellectuals of Agame *Awraja* between 1960s and 1974. Before the expansion of modern education to different provinces of Ethiopia, the number of educated persons in the country was very limited. During the former times of the imperial regime, there was no or little participation of intellectuals in political movement in Tigray against the government. We can take the case of the 1942/43 Weyane rebellion. It was a peasant rebellion against the imperial regime. After the government suppressed the rebellion, the nature of political movement in the province remained covert until the 1960s. As far as the beginning of politicization of Agazi Secondary school students is concerned, the period 1960s is a landmark. Unlike the pre-1960s situation in Agame *Awraja*, university and secondary school students of the respective *Awraja* became politically conscious and committed to the case of their community. They used different methods to agitate mass-based political opposition against the imperial government. They prepared political pamphlets, revolutionary songs, proverbs and poems that tarnish the image of the government in *Awraja*. Despite the severe measures undertaken by many police force, students were strongly determined to struggle against the feudal regime to the end. Their active participation provoked the local people for armed struggle not only against the feudal regime but also against the Derg regime as well.

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Full Length Research Paper

The Role of women in Tebhaga movement in Jalpaiguri District and to preserve their identity

Shyamal Chandra Sarkar

History, Prasannadeb Women's College, affiliated to North Bengal University, Jalpaiguri, Paschimbanga, India.
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The roots of the Indian women's movement go back to the 19th century male social reformers who took up issues concerning women and started women's organizations. Women started forming their own organization from the end of the nineteenth century first at the local and then at the national level. In 1946, the two main issues they took up were political rights and reform of personal laws. Women's participation in tebhaga movement broadened the base of the women's movement. Tebhaga movement was one of the great post war peasant agitations in Bengal. It was the most extensive of all the post war agrarian agitation. Women of Bengal played a rather significant role in this movement. After the end of the Second World War, there were a number of educated women who were participating in the various peasant rebellions that were springing up all over the country. The legacy of female nationalists, taking part in the Quit India Movement and accepting prison sentence for the nation, had ignited the flame of protest in the hearts of women. Thus there was seen the active participation of women on par with men in these movements and rebellions of which the Tebhaga movement was one. This movement erupted in 1946 in Bengal on the eve of the withdrawal of the British. Although the tide of Tebhaga receded as fast as it rose, the uprising stands out as one of the most important political events in twentieth century Bengal. Among the unique features of the movement is the large-scale participation of women on par with men. The landless and poor peasant women formed fighting troops called 'Nari Bahini' and took a front rank role in defending the gains of the movement and in countering the repression of the state. Women of Jalpaiguri District also played an active role in this movement. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the role of women in the Tebhaga movement under the leadership of Communists and seeks to throw light on fundamental questions such as why, despite women's demonstrated capacity to organize, struggle and lead progressive movements.

Key words: Tebhaga, exploitation, Nari Bahini, Jotedar, Zamindar, Krishak Sabha, sharecroppers, communist party, justice.

INTRODUCTION

Man and woman are all called men. One cannot run-fast without other. So any universal success depends on the

active role of men and women. The wheel of the civilization could not move continuously without women.

E-mail: shymalchhs@gmail.com. Tel: 09832353625.

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Swami Vivekananda says that – Civilization is like a bird; man and woman is the two wing of the bird. The bird could not fly easily if we cut her one wing. So women's participation is a key component of the civilization. The roots of the Indian women's movement go back to the nineteenth century male social reformers who took up issues concerning women and started women's organizations. Women started forming their own organization from the end of the nineteenth century first at the local and then at the national level. In 1946, the two main issues they took up were political rights and reform of personal laws. Women's participation in tebhaga movement broadened the base of the women's movement. Tebhaga movement was one of the great post war peasant agitations in Bengal. It was the most extensive of all the post war agrarian agitation. Women of Bengal played a rather significant role in this movement. After the end of the Second World War, there were a number of educated women who were participating in the various peasant rebellions that were springing up all over the country. The legacy of female nationalists, taking part in the Quit India Movement and accepting prison sentence for the nation, had ignited the flame of protest in the hearts of women. Thus there was seen the active participation of women on par with men in these movements and rebellions of which the Tebhaga movement was one. This movement erupted in 1946 in Bengal on the eve of the withdrawal of the British. Although the tide of Tebhaga receded as fast as it rose, the uprising stands out as one of the most important political events in twentieth century Bengal. Among the unique features of the movement is the large-scale participation of women on par with men. The landless and poor peasant women formed fighting troops called 'Nari Bahini' and took a front rank role in defending the gains of the movement and in countering the repression of the state. Women of Jalpaiguri district also played an active role in this movement. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the role of women in the Tebhaga movement under the leadership of Communists and seeks to throw light on fundamental questions such as why, despite women's demonstrated capacity to organize, struggle and lead progressive movements.

Origin of the movement

The Tebhaga movement was originated in the share cropping system that prevailed in Bengal. By this time a new class of rural exploiters, the jotedars, emerged. They rented out land to landless peasants on the basis of sharing the crops in equal halves. The Jotedars exacted illegally many other privileges. The condition of peasants worsened further by inflationary war time situation and famine. After the Bengal famine in 1943, the 'Bengal Provincial Kishan Sabha', which was guided by the Communist Party, called for a mass movement among sharecroppers in September of 1946 to keep 'Tebhaga'

(two-thirds) of the harvest. This demand had figured since the thirties in the programmed of the 'Kishan Sabha', and had also been recognized as just by a government commission which in 1939-1940 had reviewed the miserable state of Bengal's agriculture. Even this British appointed commission, the Floud Commission, had exposed the prevailing system which obliged sharecroppers to relinquish half of their harvest as rent, and on top of that to pay scores of illegal cesses. These sharecroppers were continuously drained of the wealth they produced. Young Communists went out to the countryside to organize peasants to take the harvested crop to their own threshing floor and make the two-thirds share a reality. The slogan, "Adhi noy, Tebhaga chai" (we want two-thirds share not 1/2) rent the sky.¹ They started taking harvested crops to their own yards. They offered only 1/3 crop share to jotedars. This led to innumerable clashes and subsequent arrest, lathi (stick) charges and firing.

The movement began in North Bengal and gradually spread throughout the rest of the Bengal province. It has a history of rural resistance, continuing throughout the whole period of British colonial rule. The Tebhaga uprising in many ways was the culminating point, spreading over large areas of the countryside and expressing the urge of labouring men and women to be liberated from exploitation. A reported 6,000,000 people participated in the Tebhaga movement at its peak.² The movement started during a crucial time of the year, in November, when the 'aman' paddy is harvested. After the staging of gatherings and demonstrations with sticks and red flags, to arouse mass enthusiasm, batches of 'Kishan Sabha' volunteers joined individual share-croppers to cut and stack the paddy crops on the peasants' threshing floors. A challenge thus was posed to the existing rule that all harvested paddy be delivered at the landlord's cutchery or granary. From pocket areas where people's consciousness was relatively high due to earlier campaigns by the 'Kishan Sabha', the Tebhaga movement in no time swept through the countryside like an avalanche, notably in northern Bengal.

During the second stage of the uprising, therefore, the experimental limits set by the leadership at the start were broken by the people themselves. Peasant men and women, many of them Muslims, attacked the granaries of local land-lords or jotedars, to recover stocks of paddy already stored there. The rural structure of oppression was truly shaking, as many landlords fled the villages, some of them disguised in women's clothes. Coinciding with the partially spontaneous nature of the uprising was the principal role that women played in it. Even in areas such as the interior villages of Nandigram, where women were not supposed to participate in cultivation in the field

¹ "Peoples age", August 1946.

² <http://www.manushi.in> Tebhaga Movement. Pdf 21.09.2011.

and where their agricultural tasks were largely “limited” to processing the harvested paddy, women had definite stakes in the success of the Tebhaga campaign. Even more so than their husbands, rural poor women had suffered heavily, inhumanly, from the recent manmade disaster, the Bengal famine of 1943. For these women, the storing of paddy in their own houses, for the first time in their lives, was a revolutionary event. It evoked a tremendous emotional response. It, therefore, is no accident that rural poor women in massive numbers came forward to defend the movement’s gains. From the forested area of Sunderbans in the South through the Norail subdivision in Jessore to Dinajpur in the north, village women spontaneously set up their ‘Nari Bahini’ or semi militia groups, facing rifles with brooms, pestles and knives. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to state that in this towering political event, rural poor women played the leading part.

Nature of the movement

Tebhaga movement was organized mainly by the communist cadres of the Bengal Provincial ‘Kishan Sabha’. Under their leadership the barga (sharecropping) peasants got themselves mobilized against the landlord class. But soon leadership also came from below. Tebhaga movement hit nineteen districts of Bengal. However, the movement was most intensely felt in the districts of Dinajpur, Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, Khulna, Mymensingh, Jessore and the 24-Parganas.

Rani Mitra Dasgupta, Manikuntala Sen, Renu Chakraborty and other women who had worked as active volunteers of the ‘Mahila Atmaraksha Samity’ (Women’s Self-Defense Organization) during the famine years wanted to bring rural women in to this movement. Although the party was lukewarm in its support for this idea and male peasants suspicious, they found rural women ready to work with them. At first women played a subsidiary role, helping harvest the crops, cooking food for the leaders, acting as lookouts and sounding the alarm to alert their colleagues to danger. As police repression became more brutal and the Communist Party, unprepared for armed struggle, withdrew from active leadership, women formed their own militia the ‘Nari Bahini’. Manikuntala Sen and Renu chakraborty told their leader women’s problem had to be addressed along with problems of economic exploitation and political oppression.³

First and foremost, meeting times had to be convenient for women.

Secondly, if women were going to play a prominent role in the movement, something had to be done to free them from household work.

Thirdly, something had to be done about the women’s complaints that their husbands beat them, drank too much and took away the money they earned through petty trade. It was clear, that the central idea of women’s welfare revolved round the attainment of fundamental rights, dignity and respect for women. But male Communist Party of India (CPI) leaders wanted peasant women to be “good comrades” and put the struggle above personal concerns. CPI women argued unsuccessfully for a program that that would encourage peasant women to defy their husband.

Bimala Maji, a widow from the Midnapur district, became a successful organizer of women. She had worked with Manikuntala Sen during the famine to encourage destitute women to form self-help committees. These women’s committees obtained paddy, on trust, from landlords, husked, sold it and keep the profits after repaying the landlords. During the Tebhaga campaign the Communist party sent Bimala Maji to nandigram to recruit women for the movement. At first women were reluctant to join but before long Bimala had mobilized women to demand Tebhaga and collect the harvest. Pursued by the police, Bimala went underground. As the police arrested Communist Party and ‘Kishan Sabha’ leaders, Bimala had to assume more and more responsibility. It was she who made the decision and led peasants to destroy the threshing floor of the jotedars (rich peasants) and sell the landlords share of the harvest. After an extensive search, the police captured her and keep her in a cage for a month until she was tried to 140 offences. She was detained in prison for two and a half years.⁴ Ila Mitra, a veteran communist leader, was popularly known as ‘Nacholer Rani’ played an active role in Tebhaga movement. She organized landless peasant and sandals women. It was her altruistic contribution to the Tebhaga movement. Sarala Devi was the famous leader of Narail. Broom batellion was formed under the leadership of Sarala Devi. Near about 250/300 poor women were associated with the organization.⁵

When the Dooars plantation area was going through a wave of labour agitation, a major peasant outburst took place in large parts of the Jalpaiguri district and also in adjoining areas of Dinajpur, Rangpur and Malda in North Bengal. With the call for Tebhaga, the district leadership of the CPI and ‘Krishak Samiti’ began active role for launching the movement. Krishna Binode Roy, the president of BPKS, came to the area in late November, 1946 had meetings with the DKS and union committees and addressed mass meeting in which the significance of the tebhaga call and its links with the solution of the food problem and also the broader struggle for freedom were explained.⁶ Area-wise allocation of work was made

³ http://www.indianetzone.com/7/women_tebhaga_movement.htm 24.9.11.

⁴ http://www.indianetzone.com/7/women_tebhaga_movement.htm 24.9.11.

⁵ *Tebhaga Sangram Rajat Jayanti Swarak Grantha*, p. 110.

⁶ See the report of a Panchagarh meeting addressed by K.B. Roy published in “Swadhinata”, 28 November, 1946.

among the leaders and activist like Charu Mazumdar, Biren Pal, Madhab Datta, Biren Neogy, Dipen Roy, Dulal Basu, Nripen Roy, Manoranjan Das Gupta, Hara Ghose, Gurudas Roy and Samar Ganguly. Group meetings, mass meeting, demonstrations, hat squads, peasant marches through the country side and other such forms of both propaganda and mobilization became regular features. Volunteers were recruited, trained and assigned with specific responsibilities and slogan like 'adhi nai tebhaga chai', 'nij kholane dhan tolo', 'jan debo to dhan debo na', 'patit jami dakhol karo', 'Inquilab Zindabad' etc. broke the silence of the winter night (Dasgupta, 1992).⁷ 'Ek bhai', 'ek taka', 'ek lathi' became a major rallying slogan. It signified militant peasant solidarity.⁸

In this time, women participant played an active role in this movement. 'Women Self-defense organization' tried to organized women to participate in the movement. The movement shaped a very strong in the month of March. The Polices tried to fire to control the agitation. So many men and women peasant workers died in Thumnia, Thakurgau of Jalpaiguri. A huge number of peasant of and workers of dooars participated in the peasant association in Domohoni on 3 March. The movement was spread in the 'Batabari', 'Pagla dewlia bari', 'Newra Majhiali' of Jalpaiguri. The first firing of the movement occurred at the field of Balgobind of 'Newra Majhiali'. The movement was organized under the leadership of Samar Ganguly, Patal Ghosh, Nani Bhowmick and tribal workers Lodhra Buro, Tunia, Funki Munda, Jagannath Oraon, Fagu Oroan, Orjun Oraon headed by. The most important fact is that the tribal women Peko Urain and others were actively participated in this movement.⁹

In the countryside of the dooars, basic production relation existed between jotedars and adhiars. Exploitation and oppression of the adhiars, overwhelmingly tribals – Oraons, Mundas, Santals, etc. – in large parts of the dooars, particularly the parts under mal and Metiali P.S., by the jotedars, mostly Muslims and Rajbansi Hindus but also some Marwaris and immigrant Bengalis knew no limits, and elements of peasant discontent had been accumulating in such areas for over a long time.

The first report on enforcement of tebhaga in Jalpaiguri district came in late November from a village under Panchagarh thana.¹⁰ Thereafter it began to spread to newer and newer areas. An attempt was made to enforce tebhaga on the land of Digen Roy, a big jotedar in Sundardighi Union under Debiganj P.S. on 20 December.

But the jotedar was forewarned. Madhab Datta, Vidya Barman, Chaitu and few other peasant cadres were assaulted by the jotedar's men and arrested by the

police. Local peasants were somewhat taken back by the incident. Next day a cadre meeting attended by Sachin Das Gupta and Biren Neogy, the DKS Secretary, was held. A peasant woman activist stood up and declared that 'there was no going back'. She asserted that 'the tebhaga has to be enforced on the land of this particular jotedar (Dasgupta, 1992)'.¹¹ This roused the morale of the peasant, particularly of the poor peasant and adhiars. Renewed preparations were made on 22 December more than 200 volunteers, both men and women, carrying lathis and red flags with them assembled, collectively harvested the paddy grown on that jotedar's land and carried it from the field not to the latter's kholan but to a place chosen by the peasants for the purpose of threshing. At this time there was no any resistance from the jotedar's side.¹² This was a great victory by the peasant agitations and the movement spread rapidly from one village to another village under Debiganj, Panchagarh, Boda and parts of Kotwali and Rajganj thanas of Jalpaiguri district. Charu Majumdar was one of the great leaders of this movement. Paddy was harvested collectively. After stacking it in the adhiar's place or a common place, the jotedar was asked to come there and receive his one-third share of the crop. The police was also informed. But neither the jotedars nor the police turned up. According to a report submitted by the Sadar Sub-Divisional Officer A.M.S. Mahmood in March 1947, the movement was organized by educated Communist workers of town and outside agitators. Without them there would be no movement in the sub division.¹³

Though the Statesman correspondent covering the movement reported, the peasants were 'moving with a momentum that does not need any aid from outside'. The SDO of Jalpaiguri himself stated that, during the harvest season Communist volunteers in batches visited different localities, established camp in the interior, enlisted local support and they helped the selected adhiars to cut and take away the entire produce from their lands and stack these in places suitable for the purpose of the Communists. One major indicator of the broad peasant awakening was the participation of Rajbansi peasant and adhiar women activist like Sagari Barmani, Purneswari (Buri Ma), wives of peasant cadres of Debiganj area and Tilak Tarini Nandi, Sikha Nandi and a host of militant peasant women activists of Pachagarh area (Dasgupta, 1992).¹⁴ They took part in meetings, processions, paddy harvesting and threshing and even resistance to the police. Once when police came to arrest Biren paul, the DKS Assistant Secretary and some other leaders staying at one place, Tilak Tarini stood on guard with a 'banti'

⁷ Dasgupta, Ranajit (1992). *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal: Jalpaiguri 1869 – 1947*, Oxford University Press, p. 225.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Chattopadhyay, Kunal, *Tebhaga Andoloner Itihas*, Progressive Publishers, Kolkata, p. 50.

¹⁰ "Swadinata", 29 November, 1946.

¹¹ Dasgupta, Ranajit (1992). *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal: Jalpaiguri 1869 – 1947*, Oxford University Press, p. 225.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ WBSA Land Revenue Department. Land Revenue Branch. File No. 6M-38/47 B of December -/48 15-107 of which 105 para 4(b).

¹⁴ Dasgupta, Ranajit (1992). *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal: Jalpaiguri 1869 – 1947*, Oxford University Press, p. 227.

(large fish-cutting curved knife) while the leaders slipped away. In Kharija Berubari under Kotwali thana and several other places militant peasant women chased away armed police with broomsticks, scythes and bantis in their hands.¹⁵

From late November to earlier February the peasants and adhiars in particular remained on the offensive. In the face of unity, sweep and organizational strength of the tebhaga movement many jotedars made a retreat and arrived at compromise. Some jotedars fled to the town. According to the SDO's report, 'the jotedars were on many occasions kept confined in their houses under threat of assault and violence.'¹⁶ For two months or so administrative control over these area was virtually non-existent and the provincial government expressed its serious worry over the 'parallel government' run by the Communists in Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur, Rangpur and some other parts of the province. The spread of the movement was such that in some localities even elements known as dacoits gave up dacoity and joined the movement. The jotedars sought police help. But for several weeks the police did not dare to enter the strongholds of the tebhaga movement. With the help of children, young Boys and girls and women an elaborate forewarning arrangement was organized.

The jotedars, however, were only binding their time and carried on the conspiracy to smash the movement. Many of the big jotedars in Pachagarh were Muslim and they tried to divide the peasantry along communal line and rouse communal passions. Though they failed to create any communal clash, they succeeded to a certain extent in keeping the Muslim peasants away from the movement. They held confabulations among themselves, raised funds and put increasing pressure on the district administrative officials and the Muslim League government in Bengal for police intervention. But soon an opportunity was provided by a new turn of the movement which, once begun, tended to generate its own momentum that was not anticipated by the leadership. In villages and areas where the Krishak Samity had no previous base or strong organization, the adhiars had stored the paddy in the 'jotedar's kholan' (threshing place). But the success of the movement in the organized areas and also the publication of the Bargadar Bill in January 1947 gave a new impetus to the tebhaga struggle. The adhiars in the organized areas such as parts Kharija Berubari Union under Sadar P.S. and certain areas under Debiganj, Pachagarh and Boda P.S. too, previously untouched by the movement, now on their own and without any directive from the hKishan Sabhah leadership, started what came to be known as the 'Kholan Bhanga andolon'.¹⁷

By late February the situation began to change and the police force was then strengthened. On 1 March, 1947 at Neoramajhilai near Baradighi under Mal P.S. a large number of peasants and tea garden workers carrying lathi, bows and arrows, spears etc. raided the paddy stocks stored in a jotedar's granary. An armed police force was already posted there. A scuffle took place and the peasants snatched away some guns from the police. Thereafter, the police opened fire and killed 5 peasants including one woman.¹⁸ The leadership was taken aback by this incident and displayed utter confusion. Samar Ganguly himself was present at a place very close to the spot where the firing took place. He went to mal which was a few miles away.¹⁹ On that day a huge meeting organized by the Rail Union was being held at Domohoni where many district leaders and also Jyoti Basu, the main speaker at the meeting, were present. Ganguly sent couriers to Domohani seeking advice and instruction from the District leadership. When several leaders along with a large number of rail Union activists and railway workers rushed of Mal and made arrangements for immediate relief and also for carrying the wounded and the dead to Jalpaiguri hospital and thus showed exemplary fraternity, the advice sent by the leadership was two-fold – throw away the snatched guns in wells and Ganguly was to evade arrest.²⁰ The peasant did not expect this brutal attack. But they were not demoralized. In fact, they were incensed and shouted for retaliation.

Another major incident of indiscriminate firing by a police party led by the Sadar SDO himself on a group of peasants and tea garden workers took place on 4th April, 1947 at village Mahabari situated near Mangalbari hat (chalsa area) under Matiali P.S.. Nine persons including one thirteen year old boy were killed and a few others were seriously injured. One of them died the next day. Among those killed and injured, – jitia Oraon and Natai Nagesia were workers of Odlabari tea garden and thus a new kind of workers-peasant alliance was forged in blood.

Name of the peasant and workers killed in police firing:

Police firing at Mathachukla (Neora Majhiali near Baradighi) under Mal P.S. on 1 March, 1947.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Maharani Oraon | (Peasant woman) |
| 2. Sukhu Oraon | |
| 3. Bacchu Oraon | Two brothers |
| 4. Budhu Oraon | |
| 5. One Santal | Name not known |

Police firing at Mahabari (near Mangalbari Hat, Chalsa)

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ WBSA Land Revenue Department. Land Revenue Branch. File No. 6M-38/47 B of December -/48 15-107 of which 105 para 4(e).

¹⁷ Dasgupta, Ranajit (1992). *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal: Jalpaiguri 1869 – 1947*, Oxford University Press, p. 228.

¹⁸ "The statesman", 3 March, 1947; People's Age, 23 March 1947; Swadhinata, 7 March 1947; Nationalist, 3 March, 1947.

¹⁹ Dasgupta, Ranajit (1992). *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal: Jalpaiguri 1869 – 1947*, Oxford University Press, p. 235.

²⁰ Dasgupta, Ranajit (1992). *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal: Jalpaiguri 1869 – 1947*, Oxford University Press, p. 235.

under Matiali P.S. on 4 April 1947.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. One local peasant woman | Name not known |
| 2. Murla Oraon | |
| 3. Jitita Oraon | Worker, Oodlabari T.E. |
| 4. Lachu Oraon | |
| 5. Natai Oraon | Worker, Oodlabari T.E. |
| 6. Chama Oraon | Owner of 5 acres of land |
| 7. Pola Oraon | |
| 8. Era Patras(Turi) | |
| 9. Bhulu Oraon | |
| 10. Name not known ²¹ | |

Following this incident the police repression which had earlier been unleashed was intensified. By late February, 1947 Section 144 had been in force in as many as eleven police stations – Kotwali (Sadar), Pachagarh, Boda, Debiganj, Rajganj, Tetulia, Mainaguri, Patgram, Mal, Matiali and Nagrakata.²² By the end of April criminal cases were lodged against more than 1,000 persons, more than 200 leaders and peasant and workers including D.P. Ghosh, the Secretary of the 'Cha bagan Mazdur Union' were in jail and arrest warrants were issued against 250 leaders and activists.²³ Here it deserves mention that though the town middle class people were by and large apathetic to the tebhaga struggle and some even overly hostile to it, at least sections of them reacted against the brutality of police repression. It was also possible to organize a successful students' strike and hold a students' demonstration in Jalpaiguri town in protest against the police firing. Even Forward Blocist student leaders like Sm. Aruna Sanyal paid homage to the peasant and worker martyrs.²⁴ A Civil Liberties Committee was formed with Subodh Sen as a leading organizer.

Despite all these, the tebhaga movement in general and the peasant-worker upsurge amounting to a rebellion in the Oodlabari-Damdim-Chalsa area received a most serious set-back. Massive state repression was certainly a major factor. But explanation of the set-back in terms of repression and terror alone is not adequate. That the movement, even at its height, remained in a state of isolation from most of the rural areas in the district and from Rajbanshi Hindu and Muslim peasants in the Dooars as well as from the masses of urban population, was much more important. But no less important was the

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOVEMENT

The movement reflected the development of the political

consciousness of the poor peasants and tribal sharecroppers and it may safely be opined that it marked a turning point in the history of agrarian movements in India. In some places the Tebhaga movement made such headway that the peasants declared their zone as tebhaga elaka or liberated area and 'tebhaga committees' were set up for the governance of the area locally. Under the tebhaga pressure many of the landholders withdrew their litigation filed against the tebhaga activists and came to terms with them. Such tebhaga areas were established in Jessore, Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri. Extensive tebhaga areas were established later in Midnapur and 24-Parganas. All these developments led the government to initiate a bill in the Legislative Assembly in early 1947. The bill intended to reform the barga system in the country in the light of the latest agrarian unrest. But other political developments handicapped the government to get the 'Barga Bill' enacted into a law. The partition of Bengal and the promises of the new government led to the suspension of the movement. The Tebhaga struggle was successful in so far as it has been estimated that about 40% of the sharecropping peasants got Tebhaga right granted willingly by the landholders.²⁵ The struggle also led to the abolition or reduction of unjust and illegal exaction in the name of 'abwabs'. But the movement had limited success in East Bengal districts. There was another spate of tebhaga movement in these districts in 1948-50. The government attributed the movement to the Indian agents, an allegation, which the general people tended to believe and thus refrained themselves from participating in the movement. But the movement had definitely influenced the passage of the EAST bengal state acquisition and tenancy act of 1950. Though the struggle did not achieve immediate success so long as success is measured by the actual implementation of tebhaga of the gross produce as rent but what looks like a failure in the eyes of one spectator may well take on appearance of the redeeming sacrifice of pioneers who laid the foundation for a better tomorrow.

Conclusion

The history of the Tebhaga movement is especially important for a history of women in the district. The Communist cadres and 'Kishan Sabha' were content to have women play a secondary role in the movement. They helped harvest the paddy, carried it to the threshing floor, and sounded the alarm when enemies approached. As the movement became more militant and police repression more violent, the leaders of the movement lagged behind their followers. This was when peasant women stepped forward to play a significant role and formed the 'naribahini'. Thus there was a strong connection between the increasingly spontaneous

²¹ Dasgupta, Ranajit (1992). *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal: Jalpaiguri 1869 – 1947*, Oxford University Press, p. 248

²² "The Statesman", 3 March 1947.

²³ "Swadhinata", 1 and 2 May 1947.

²⁴ Dasgupta, Ranajit (1992). *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal: Jalpaiguri 1869 – 1947*, Oxford University Press, p. 236.

²⁵ http://www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/T_0103.HTM 22.9.11.



Figure 1. New light is entering through the opening door.

character of the uprising and the more and more prominent role played by women.

The participation of women in Tebhaga movement in all regions of Bengal was the glorious achievements in the history of women empowerment. Not only that, they also tried to fight against Patriarchy society for establish equality in society. A G.B, meeting of party members, was held at the party office of Atwari of West Thakur gaun in 1944. When the District Secretary delivering his speech at this meeting, a woman (who was wife of a L.C. member) stood-up and asked him –“Comrade! Gharer loktake marar rine (Ine) achhe ki partyte? Hamar gharer Comrade ta hamak maribe kyan? Bichar chai”. (Comrade! there was any law in party to beat the house wife? Why my husband flog me? Want to justice). As a result, an ordinance was issued in Party law and declares that ‘it will be prohibiting to beating the wife’.²⁶ Local Women Self-Defense Organization demanded the equal education facilities for their children’s and ‘teaching of fried-rice making’ for self-reliant (Chattopadhyay, 2006).²⁷

Women bear almost all responsibility for meeting basic

needs of the family, yet are systematically denied the resources, information and freedom of action they need to fulfill this responsibility. The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. From equal status with men in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers. In modern India, women have adorned high offices in India including that of the President, Prime minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of Opposition, etc. The current President of India and Prime Minister of Paschimbangas is women.

Women empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities. Education is a potent tool in the emancipation and empowerment of women. The greatest single factor which can incredibly improve the status of women in any society is education. It is indispensable that education enables women not only to gain more knowledge about the world outside of her hearth and home but helps her to get status, positive self esteem, and self confidence , necessary courage and inner strength to face challenges in life. Apparently it also facilitates them to procure a job and supplement the income of family and achieve social status.

Now the time is change. Every-one can take the education. Higher education is open for all. But poverty and social superstition are the most obstacles for women to take higher education. So there is need for helping hand from the Government, Social reformers and kind men. But the attitude, aims and Self-determination is the most important factor to taking the higher education for increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. R. N. Tagore says that –

Stand the out-side from the own self. Could get response in heart from the world humanity.

So it is necessary to opening door of mind for entering the new knowledge. The following picture shows that the new light is entering house through the opening door to make lighting the gloomy house (Figure 1). There is an imperative need for education among women. The day will come when men would recognize woman. Then, and not until then, will there be the perfect ‘comradeship’, the ideal union between the sexes that shall result in the highest development of the race.

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²⁶ Tebhaga Sangramer Rajat Jayanti Swarak Grantha, p. 109.

²⁷ Chattopadhyay, Kunal, (2006). *Tebhaga Andoloner Itihas*, Kolkata: Progressive Publishers.

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Full Length Research Paper

Land reform and deforestation in the Gish Abbay Area: A historical perspective

Birtukan Atinkut Asmare

Department of History, Faculty of Social Sciences, Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia.

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The Gish Abbay area is among one of the environmentally most affected areas where environmental deterioration has prevailed. A lot of factors have contributed to this negative development. The major ones are rapid population growth, poverty and inappropriate forest and land related laws and legislations. The forest coverage of the area was reduced from 6.7 to 3.8 percent between 1957 and 1984. Among others, this paper discussed how government land policy over many years was responsible for deforestation in the area. The two consecutive regimes, the imperial and the Derg regime attempted to introduce several land reforms that led to deforestation. For instance, with the restoration of the imperial regime to power in 1941, land was frequently allocated to the patriots and other individuals that rendered services to the government. The frequent allocation of land, as a reward, was made at the expense of forests. Moreover, in the mid 1960s, the imperial regime claimed all forest resources as state property, a policy that contradicted previous tree tenure system. Thus, in order to deny the claim of the government over communal forest resources, the peasants cleared forests and plough it. The coming of a new government, that succeeded the imperial regime in 1974, brought about a new land reform that nationalized land and all natural resources. The regime made frequent and periodic re-distribution of land within even 4-5 years interval in order to satisfy the growing demands of the local population. Thus, the redistribution of land, the introduction of cooperative farming and villagisation programme were undertaken at the expense of forests. Therefore, this research attempted to shed light on both continuity and change in the process of land reform and its implications to deforestation, throughout a series of regimes: the imperial and the military. Therefore, it provided readers with land reform issues and its implication to deforestation from a historical point of view. In this research, in depth interview and focus group discussion were utilized in addition to the results of the research undertaken by other scholars. The study referred data analysis from other disciplines such as the Geographic Information System (GIS) to see the forest coverage of the area during the two regimes.

Key words: Deforestation, causes, land reform, Gish Abbay, forest legislation.

INTRODUCTION

Geographical setting and general background

Ethiopia's land reform as an issue has attracted the attention of many scholars. But most land reform studies

on Ethiopia deal with how the land reform of the state brought about tenure insecurity, land degradation and under-development. But this paper will make a historical investigation on the land reform of the two consecutive

E-mail: brtknst197@yahoo.com.

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regimes and its impacts on deforestation by taking the Gish Abbay area as an example.

Gish Abbay watershed is located in West Gojjam Zone in the Amhara region. Gish-Abbay watershed lies partly on seven rural and one urban kebles namely *Abay Sangeb, Koleli na Licha, Surba befeta, kebesa kirachi, Gumbilal Abo, Gitem Terara, Sawsa gend atemem* and *Gish-Abbay* town. Blue Nile, which contributes about 86% to the Nile, is part of the study area. Its absolute location extends between the coordinates of 370 05'-370 15' E longitudes and 100 55'-110 05' N latitude. Gish-Abbay watershed covers about 159.19 km². The rural people, as the rest of Ethiopia, depend on agriculture which includes crop farming and livestock production and the total crop land-covers about 21424 ha. According to the Central Statistical Agency (CSA), as cited in Getachew (2005)¹, the area had an estimated population of 174,752 out of which the rural population constituted 171,193 (97.96%) (Solomon, 2005).²

The Gish Abbay area, in Sakala District, as stated by Teferi (2004)³, had been visited by several European travellers and missionaries since the early 17th century. Missionaries, travellers and the local people considered the Gish Abbay as the source of the Blue Nile while hydrologists or water engineers consider Lake Tana as the source of the river. From those missionaries and travellers, the Portuguese catholic priest, Pedro Paez and Portuguese traveller Manuel de Almeida visited the Sakala district in the early 17th century.

The Scottish traveller, James Bruce, visited the source of the Blue Nile, and produced an account, entitled: *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile in the Years 1768-1773*. In 1838 Antoine Thompson D' Abbadie, the French traveller, was there discovering the source of the river. In the 1920s, Major Robert Chessman, a British Consul at Dangila, North-western Ethiopia, from 1925-34 made the first recorded trip along the full course of the Blue Nile River, on foot and mule.⁴

All these travellers and missionaries produced their own accounts and provided a description about the source of the river and its natural resources. James Bruce, in his book, witnessed that the Gish Abbay area was covered with dense forests such as timber trees, acacia, thick woodlands, bamboos, yellow rose, cusso

trees and others (Bruce 1840).⁵ Robert Chessman in his account entitled: *Lake Tana and the Blue Nile*, witnessed that the area was one of the most forested area in the 1920s (Chessman, 1936).⁶ However, the forest coverage of the area was reduced due to a combination of factors. Among these, the land reform of the two consecutive regimes was the major ones.

In the 1940s and 1960s the imperial regime made a firm control over the forest resources, which was owned and managed by the community prior to this period. This period also witnessed the allocation of land for individuals by the state. The government's failure to avoid or minimize the inconsistent land tenure system accompanied by other factors led for the overthrow of the regime in a military coup that brought an end to the complex land tenure system. The overthrow of the emperor in 1974 was followed by a series of measures that changed the land tenure system of the previous regime. The 1975 land reform made periodic and frequent distributions and re-distributions of land depending on the increasing demand of the population. In 1980, the government issued a forest management law which deprived the society to use forests for fuel wood, construction and other purposes. Moreover, the regime introduced both the cooperative farming and villagisation programme in the 1980s.⁷ Thus, how these types of land reform could be a cause for deforestation will be discussed in detail because the study of deforestation has its own contribution to the Gish Abbay area since the area is located in the source basin of the Upper Blue Nile Basin.

METHODS OF STUDY

Data collection

For the purpose of this study, both quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches were used. In order to explore peoples' values, beliefs, attitudes, human experiences and behaviours qualitative method of study was used. It was used to collect data through interviewing key informants and focus group discussion with previous local administrators, since these people played a great role in implementing the land tenure policies at grass root level. The study was also carried out using image analysis and GIS technologies to see the land-cover change that took place in the area between 1957 and 1984 as a result of the land reform or other factors. Moreover, in order to substantiate the data, secondary sources were also gathered from books, journals, published and unpublished research papers, historical documents and academic literatures. Finally, the data collected through key depth interview, focus group discussion, field observation and remote sensing were examined, cross-checked, analysed and interpreted in order to reconstruct the history of land reform and its implications to deforestation in the study area.

¹Getachew A, "Determinants of Land Degradation in the Lake Tana Basin and its Implications for Sustainable Land Management: A case of Angereb and Gish-Abbay Watersheds," (Master's Thesis, Alemaya University, 2005).

²Solomon A, "Land Use Land Cover Change in the Headstream of Abbay Watershed, Blue Nile Basin, Ethiopia," (MSc Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 2005).

³Teferi Mekonon, "The Blue Nile Issue: A History of Hydro-politics, 1884-1974," (Master's Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 2004); Informants: Tarekegn Sitotaw and Misganaw Alefe, interview with the author, 21 January 2013, Sekela.

⁴Ibid; Informants: Hilime Lake, interview with the author, 22 January 2013, Sekela.

⁵James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile in the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772 and 1773* (Edinburgh: London, 1840).

⁶Robert Chessman, *Lake Tana and the Blue Nile-an Abyssinian Quest* (Macmillan Co. London, 1936).

⁷Informants: Gedif Kefale and Hiwot Alemu, interview with the author, 22 January 2013, Sekela.

THE LAND REFORM AND ITS IMPLICATION TO DEFORESTATION

Land reform during the Imperial era (r.1930-1974)

The early years of the imperial regime were witnessed with the existence of dense forests in the country in general and the study area in particular. In this period, communal ownership of trees was one of the characterizing features of the land tenure system of the regime. When shortages of wood occurred, the imperial regime used to encourage the local population to plant trees for fuel wood, construction and as sources of income. Due to this, many individuals grew trees around their homesteads and farms. The area, as witnessed by local elders, was covered with indigenous trees mainly *Juniperus* (Tid), *Ricinus communis* (Koba), *Arundinaria* (Kerkeha), *Murus mesozyoia* (Injori), *Olea* forests (Weira), *Euphorbia abyssinica* (Kulkual), *Hagenia* forests (Kosso), *Dombeya torrida* (Welkefa), *Erythrina Abyssinia* (Korchi), *Emberia schimperi* (Enkoko), and *Eucalyptus globulus* (Nechi Bahirzaf).⁸

Since the restoration period, however, the study area which was once covered with dense forests has experienced massive deforestation, land degradation and loss of biodiversity. Indigenous natural forests, except in churchyards and along rivers, have disappeared and replaced by recently introduced trees. This was partly attributed to the state's inconsistent natural resource policy (Dessalegn 2001).⁹ In the post-liberation period, for instance, all forest resources came under the control of the Ministry of Interior. But in the 1950s, the Ministry of Agriculture particularly its forestry department came to assume responsibility to preserve forest resources in the country in general (Bahiru, 2008)¹⁰ and in the study area in particular.¹¹

Despite the attempt of the government to protect the forests, the government frequently attacked the forests for various purposes. For instance, the government frequently allocated land as a reward to patriots, who defended their country from Fascist Italian invasion and for those individuals who rendered other services. This type of allocation was made at the expense of forests.¹¹ Moreover, the mid 1960s witnessed the establishment of forest legislation which recognized three forms of forests namely; state forest, private forest and protected forest).

⁸Informants: Gedif Kefale and Hiwot Alemu, interview with the author, 21 January 2013, Sekela.

⁹Dessalegn Rahamato, *Environmental Change and State Policy in Ethiopia: Lessons from Past Experience* (Addis Ababa, 2001); Informants: Gedif Kefale and Hiwot Alemu, interview with the author, 21 January 2013, Sekela.

¹⁰Bahiru Zewude, *Society, State and History: Selected Essays* (Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa University Press, 2008); Informants: Gedif Kefale and Hiwot Alemu, interview with the author, 21 January 2013, Sekela.

¹¹Informants: Fisseha Awoke and Dagne Mihiretu, interview with the author, 23 January 2013, Sekela.

The legislation had three proclamations namely No. 225, No. 226 and No. 227. The proclamation No. 225 recognized state forests and No. 226 and No. 227 recognized private and protected forests respectively (Lemma, 1997).¹² The legislation claimed all forests, lakes and river systems to be a state property (Desalegn, 2001).¹³

The legislation discouraged communal ownership of forest resources which had been a common practice prior to the 1960s. The claim over forests represented one of the major antagonisms between the government and the local population in the area. As a result, an extensive deforestation took place following the promulgation of forest legislation because the legislation placed all large forests under state ownership, and put severe restrictions on the use and management of private forests. The local population started to assume that the forests belong to the state not for them. Thus, to deny the state rights over natural resources, individuals cleared large tracts of forestland, vegetation and pastureland and converted to cultivated land which led to massive deforestation. Moreover, they totally abandoned tree planting around homesteads and farms, due to the government's failure to guarantee continues ownership.¹⁴ This deforestation caused as a result of the forest decree was the major factor for the disappearance of various indigenous plants and animals.

Land reform and deforestation during the Derg Regime (r.1974-1991)

Following the end of the rule of the imperial regime, the public ownership of rural land proclamation No. 31/1975 was issued. The proclamation stated that "*as of effective date of this proclamation, all lands shall be the collective property of the Ethiopian people.*" The military government abolished the traditional forms of land tenure system that had been practiced in the pre-revolution period. Proclamation No. 31/1975, for instance, clearly mentioned that large holdings were controlled by the few while the masses were living in a bad condition. Since the Ethiopian farmers are dependent on agriculture, the redistribution of land was the only measure to avoid or at least minimize the increasing number of the landless (Proclamation No.31/1975).¹⁵ Compared with the previous regime, however, the 1975 land reform brought about some changes. For instance, the landless peasants including the Muslims, who did not own land in the

¹²Lemma Eshetu, "Fuel Wood and Environmental Impact in Ethiopia," Paper Presented for the Seminar on Energy Policy and Environment, 1997.

¹³Dessalegn Rahamato, 2001; Informants: Gedif Kefale and Hiwot Alemu, interview with the author, 21 January 2013, Sekela.

¹⁴Informants: Tiruneh Wubetu and Alemu Getu, interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

¹⁵Federal Negarit Gazeta, *The Public Ownership of Rural Lands Proclamation No. 31/1975*. (Addis Ababa, 1975);

pre-revolutionary period, were allowed to take part of their shares. It ended land-lord tenant relationship, even though tenancy was less in the area. The reform made the peasants free from the exploitation of their labour by the land holders (Temesgen, 2013).¹⁶ Moreover, the 1975 land reform encouraged married couples to form their own families.¹⁷ Despite its merit, it should, however, be noted that the reform resulted in inappropriate land use practices, massive deforestation and land degradation. For instance, in the northern part of Ethiopia including Gojjam, in which the study area forms apart, the new land reform dismantled the *rist* arrangement (Temesgen, 2013; Stefan and Daniel, 2007).¹⁸

The pre-dominant land tenure system prior to 1975 in the area was *rist*, which allows families to have a group right for the land they acquired through birth for indefinite period of time. In this case, about 80% of the peasants in the area owned large tracts of land including forests. But, when this new land reform introduced, the peasants felt that the government was threatening their *rist* rights. As a result, the land reform was not welcomed by the local population, that entirely dependent on agriculture.¹⁹

The grievance of the peasants against the central government was aggravated when the government declared a new law on forest and wildlife conservation in 1980. The proclamation No.192/1980 blamed the previous regime for the inappropriate use of forest resources due to “the selfish interest of the aristocracy and the nobility” (Sisay, 2008).²⁰ Thus, the only way to preserve the remaining forests was keeping the forests away from the community. As a result, the Derg prohibited the society from using forests either for fuel wood or construction purpose and they all became under the control of the state. Therefore, the local population responded by converting protected forests into agricultural fields.²¹

Having this, the regime also wanted to restore the degraded environment by introducing the soil conservation and afforestation program in the 1980s. As historical records witnessed, afforestation for the first time in Ethiopian history started in the early 15th century by the order of King Zera-Yakob (r.1434-1468). However, modern tree planting started during the reign of Emperor

Menilik II (r.1889-1913) to solve the shortage of firewood in the capital, Addis Ababa. During the Derg regime (r.1974-1991), large scale afforestation and soil conservation on farms and community lands took place in the country in general (Yitebitu *et al.*, 2010) and the study area in particular.²²

The program was assisted by both national and international organizations. The Community Forestry and Soil Conservation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture took responsibility in the planning and implementation of soil conservation measures and afforestation programs. The main objectives of these activities were to solve the shortage of wood for fuel wood and construction materials, to reduce soil degradation and improve the productivity of lands and to reduce the pressure from the remaining natural forests and conserve biodiversity. It was also aimed to increase the sources of income for the community particularly from trees planted outside forests. The program mainly involved three major activities; farm forestry, community forestry and soil conservation. Farmers were encouraged to plant trees around homesteads and on community lands. In response for their work, peasants were provided with grain and vegetable oil. About 181,000 hectares of land was afforested by the Community Forestry Program throughout the country (Badge 2001)²³ including the study area.²⁴

However, as it was witnessed by the local elders, forests and soil conservation measures took place on peasant holdings and grazing lands. The peasants were even not allowed to graze their animals around the planted forests. Moreover, there was no clear policy whether the community would own community forests. Therefore, the afforestation program was a threat to many peasants because the government frequently attacked and confiscated their land. Moreover, the farmers did not perceive these programs as something that brings long term development rather they were looking for an immediate return. Due to this, the afforestation activities were declined through time and encroachment on forests was continued throughout the reign of the military government.²⁵

In general, in the history of the Derg regime, there were four periods in which massive deforestation was present in the area. Firstly, the first massive deforestation occurred in 1975 when the government re-distributed land for all landless peasants based on their household sizes. Frequent reallocation of cultivated land within 4-5

¹⁶Temesgen Gebeyehu. Peasants, Land Reform and Property Right in Ethiopia: The Experience of Gojjam Province, 1974 to 1997. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, (South Africa, 2013); Informants: Tiruneh Wubetu and Alemu Getu, interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

¹⁷Informants: Tiruneh Wubetu, interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

¹⁸Temesgen, 2013; Stefan Daniel, Land Rights, Power and Trees in Rural Ethiopia. (University of Oxford, 2007).

¹⁹Informants: Workeneh Temesgen and Wubetu Desalegn, interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

²⁰Sisay N, “Ethiopian Government Efforts to Increase Forest Cover: A Policy Oriented Discussion Paper,” (Addis Ababa, 2008).

²¹Informants: Workeneh Temesgen, interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

²²Informants: Tessema Kassa , interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

²³Badage Bishaw, Deforestation and Land Degradation on the Ethiopian Highlands: Strategy for Physical Recovery. *Northeast African Studies*; 8(1):2001, 7-26.

²⁴Informants: Workeneh Temesgen and Tadele Derse, interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

²⁵Informants: Abebe Alemu and Tarekegn Hunegnaw, interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

year intervals was common to satisfy the newly formed households. In this redistribution, ten hectares was allocated to landless peasants. For this purpose, forests and bush lands were cleared and grazing lands were converted to agricultural fields without even thinking about the damage to the forests caused by the frequent allocation of cultivated lands.²⁶

Secondly, in 1980, when the government re-allocated land for the expansion of cooperative farming to increase agricultural production, the other deforestation occurred in the area. For this purpose, the government took more fertile land from the communal forests, grazing lands and private protected areas. Moreover, the cooperative farming was not welcomed by the peasants because the military government gave less attention for peasant agriculture which led to the decline of agricultural productivity. Therefore, the decline of agricultural production forced the peasants to resort to cutting down trees for selling to the nearby markets.²⁷

Thirdly, the villagisation programme, which was introduced in the second half of the 1980s, was also responsible for the destruction of forests in the area. The program was carried out on a large scale which was accompanied by extensive deforestation while constructing new villages.²⁸

Fourthly, in 1991, when Derg regime lost power, a serious of deforestation which had never been seen before occurred due to absence of incentives, tenure insecurity and memories of oppressive government. Moreover, the communal nature of the tenure made the forests to be exposed to encroachment. It was the responsibility of everybody to preserve forests as it was a communal right but everybody became against the forests particularly in a time of political instability as it was the case in 1991.²⁹

Compared with the deforestation caused as a result of the decree in the 1960s, the one after the 1975 land reform was very sever. This was because, following the overthrow of the regime, natural forests and trees planted around farms and homesteads were cleared by the local communities as a response of the reform. The local community felt mistreated by the government and since the community was entirely dependent on the land they had, they responded by cutting trees indiscriminately. This action since the introduction of the first forest legislation until 1991 had contributed a lot to the deterioration of the environment.³⁰

²⁶Informants: Workeneh Temesgen and Tadele Derse, interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

²⁷Informants: Abebe Alemu and Tarekegn Hunegnaw, interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

²⁸Ibid

²⁹Informants: Workeneh Temesgen and Tadele Derse, interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

³⁰Informants: Abebe Alemu and Tarekegn Hunegnaw, interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

LAND USE LAND COVER CHANGE

As the researcher tried to mention above, deforestation in the area was caused by factors such as population pressure, lack of alternative sources of income and energy, land reform and inappropriate land use practices. Deforestation caused by land reform is already discussed above, but how frequent distribution of land for cultivated land, cooperative farming and villagisation affected the forest resources will be discussed below by applying geographic information system using the 1957 and 1984 aerial photographs.³¹

In order to see the land use land cover change of the area since 1957, the researcher used the 1957 aerial photograph acquired from the Ethiopian Mapping Agency (EMP) (Figure 1).³²

The aerial photograph clearly shows the land use land cover change of the area during the Derg regime (Figure 2).³³

The aerial photo shows the difference between the land use land cover change between 1957 and 1984 (Figure 3). For more information about the land use land cover change between 1957 and 1984, see Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, of the total catchment area, in 1957 the dominant land cover type which constituted about 716.16 hectares (35.4 percent) was crop land. The water body was also the second largest land cover type which constituted 482.73 hectares (23.9 percent) followed by grassland covered with 312.55 hectares (15.5 percent). The other land cover type was settlements which represented 245.21 hectares (12.1 percent) of the area. The forest resources of the area were about 135.15 hectares (6.7 percent) followed by swampy land covered 116.14 hectares (5.7 percent) in 1957. In 1984, for instance, with the exception of cultivated land and settlement areas, all land cover types showed a marked decline. Crop-land, for example, continued to be the dominant land cover type in the area which covers 1045.08 hectares (51.7 percent) followed by settlement about 415.04 hectares (20.5 percent). Whereas, the other forms of land cover types showed a decline in the same year. For example, the water body decreased from 482.73 hectares (23.9 percent) to 274.11 hectares (13.6 percent), grassland declined from 312.55 (15.5 percent) to 135.78 hectares (6.7 percent), forested land was also

³¹The 1957 and 1984 aerial photographs that are acquired from the Ethiopian Mapping Agency are the most important part of this research to see how the land reform had an impact on the land use land cover change of the area particularly during the imperial and the Derg regime.

³²For the classification of land cover types, primary sources were collected through in-depth interview and focus group discussion so as to know whether the area was covered with forests, cropland, water body, settlements and other types particularly in the mid and late twentieth century.

³³Based on the data collected from key informants, six major land-cover types were identified in the study area such as settlement, forest, grassland, crop-land, water body, and swampland.

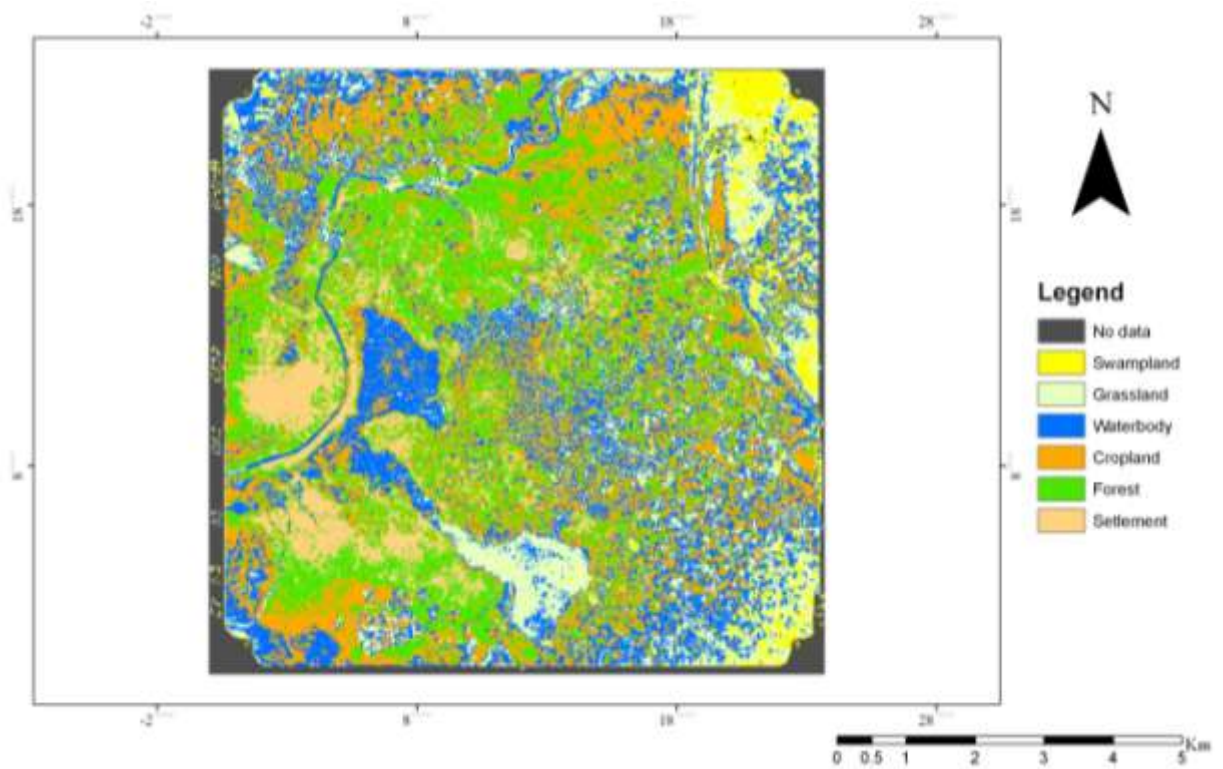


Figure 1. Land use land cover change of the area since 1957.

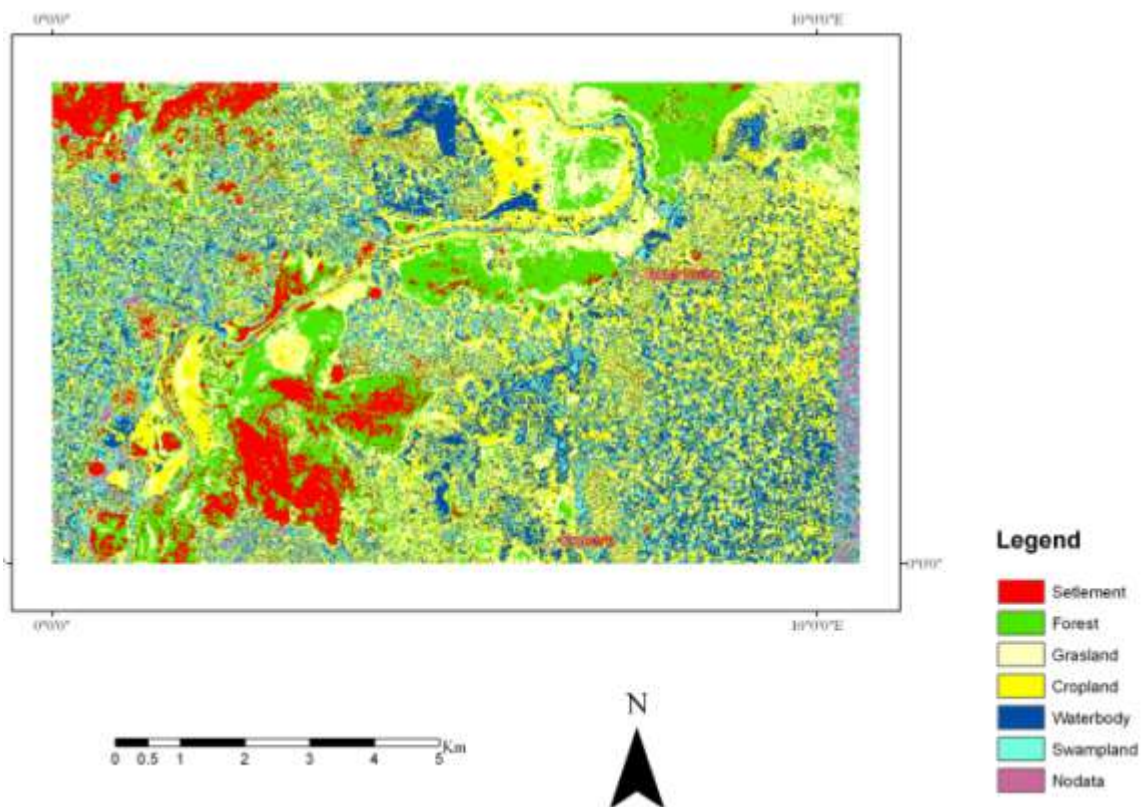
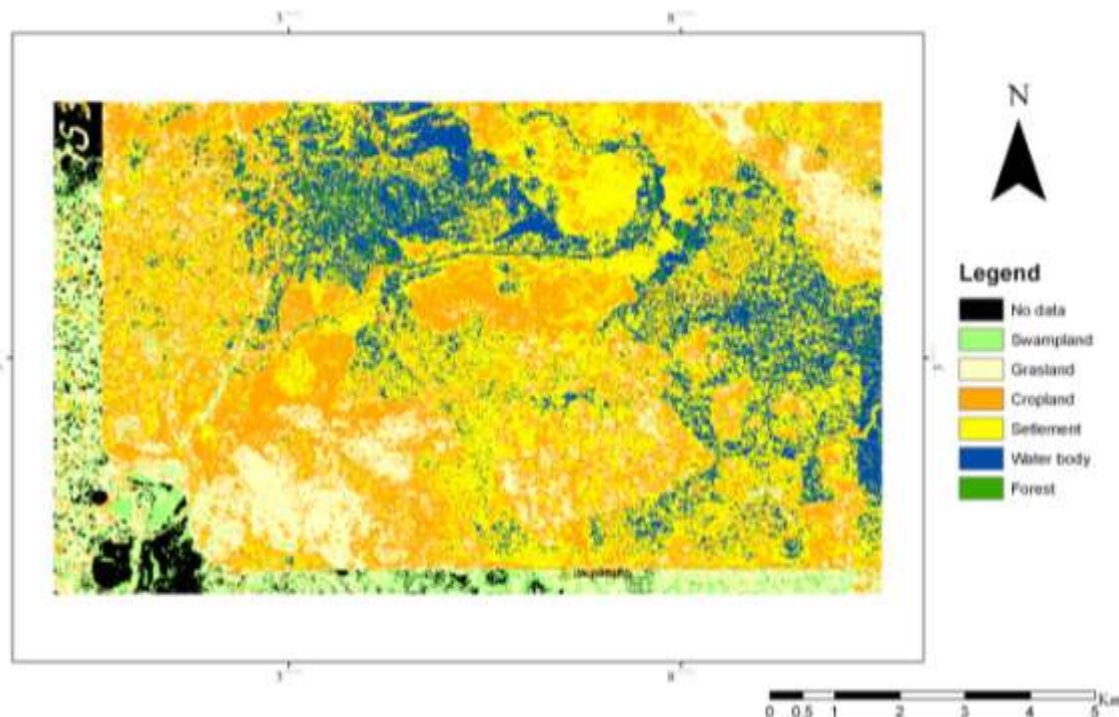


Figure 2. The land use land cover change of the area during the Derg regime.

Table 1. The land cover changes in percentage between 1957 and 1984.

Year	Measured variable	Crop land	Grassland	Settlement	Forest	Water body	Swampland
1957	Land area, ha ²	716.16	312.55	245.21	135.15	482.73	116.14
	Percent (%)	35.4	15.5	12.1	6.7	23.9	5.7
1984	Land area, ha ²	1040.12	135.78	415.04	76.25	274.11	66.12
	Percent (%)	51.7	6.7	20.5	3.8	13.6	3.3
1957 to 1984	Relative % Change	16.3	-8.8	8.4	-2.9	-10.3	-2.5

**Figure 3.** The difference between the land use land cover change between 1957 and 1984.

reduced from 135.15 hectares (6.7 percent) to 76.25 hectares (3.8 percent) and swampy land from 116 hectares (5.7 percent) to 66.12 hectares (3.3 percent) out of the total area.³⁴

From Table 1 we can infer that, there has been an increase in crop land from 35.4 percent in 1957 to 51.7 percent in 1984 at the expense of forests, grasslands and water bodies. This was probably the product of the frequent and periodic distribution of land for the landless peasants within 4-5 years interval since 1975 until the removal of the Derg regime. Moreover, as it was mentioned earlier, the government expanded cooperative farming in 1980 which in turn led to the destruction of forests. As a result, the forest coverage of the area was reduced from 6.7 percent forests in 1957 to 3.8 percent in 1984. This means that within 27 years, the forest

coverage was reduced by almost half. Here, it should not be forgotten that settlement areas have been increased from 12.2 in 1957 to 20.5 percent in 1984. The expansion of settlement in the area was the result of the government's villagisation programme of the early 1980s.³⁵

Conclusion

The Gish Abbay area had been known for its natural resource endowment particularly prior to the early twentieth century. However, the natural resources of the area have declined through time due to the inappropriate land tenure system, poverty and rapid population growth. The land tenure system of the two consecutive regimes contributed a lot for massive deforestation in the area.

³⁴The land cover types with its percentage between 1957 and 1984 are clearly identified.

³⁵The impact of land reform that was introduced during the two regimes is clearly stated here.

The claim of the government over forest resources, nationalization of land, frequent and period redistribution of land, cooperative farming and villagisation reduced the forest coverage of the area from 6.7 to 3.8 percent between 1957 and 1984. At the same time, crop land was increased from 35.4 to 51.7 percent between 1957 and 1984 which was the result of frequent and periodic redistribution of land.

Thus, it is to conclude that the land policy of the regime and regular interventions contributed a lot for erosion of the rights of individuals and communities to use and manage their own resources. Therefore, it is worth to mention that the land reform and policy of the government should be designed in a way that it would enhance the participation of the community from the beginning to the end as far as the objective of the intervention was to prevent or restore the degradation of the environment and to improve the livelihood of local community. Forest resource management should be accompanied by the free consent and participation of the community; otherwise, it would end up with negative consequences.

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