

**Full Length Research**

# DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE POST 1991 IN ETHIOPIA

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Accepted 20 April 2015

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The central objective of this study is to examine democratization process and evaluate the performance of good governance post 1991 in Ethiopia. To this end qualitative methodology was employed to gather data from different secondary sources. Based up on the data the study revealed that Ethiopia was experienced various forms of state building. Pre 1991 centuries of oppressive autocratic regimes have contributed to deeply rooted undemocratic political culture and generally submissive behavior of citizens vis-a vis the state. But, post 1991 FDRE Constitution, espouses parliamentary federalism, contains a bill of rights guarantying freedom, equality and social justice. So that the coming of EPRDF in to power in the country is a land mark for country`s transition to democracy and good governance though the problem of good governance is very rampant in the country. When the EPRDF regime took power in 1991, different legal reforms which are essential for the realization of democracy and good governance have been undertaken. Some of the initial measures undertaken include the participation of political parties in the political discourse, decentralization and adoption of federalism and parliamentary system. The FDRE constitution further provides for the protection of different democratic rights such as the right to hold opinion, thoughts and freedom of assembly, public demonstration and the right to petition etc. But, in the country democratic institution and governance performance cannot reach reliable stage of development. There is a problem of implementation on the ground from the formal rhetoric provided in the constitution. For example in light of major variables of good governance such as legitimacy, accountability, transparency of government activities, rule of law as well as competency of government, the Ethiopian governance performance proved to be one of the low performing systems in the world.

**Key words:** Democracy, Ethiopia, Good governance.

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**Cite This Article As:** Kebede SK (2015). DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE POST 1991 IN ETHIOPIA. Inter. J. Polit. Sci. Develop. 3(4): 174-182

## INTRODUCTION

Like many other social science terms governance in general and good governance in particular is different thing for different individuals. However, classically governance nowadays occupies a central stage in the development discourse but also considered as the crucial element to be incorporated in the development strategy.

To be sure if we talk about good governance in one way or the other, there should be democracy. This is because democracy and good governance share many values and principles in common. For example democratic governance fosters transparency, accountability, the rule of law, respect for human rights,

and civic participation all of which are not only necessary for securing economic productivity, equitable distribution and state legitimacy but also denote the existence of good governance. As it is mentioned above now a day's democracy and governance are leading items on the world development agenda which Ethiopia is not exceptional. To begin with the Emperor period, the rule of Emperor Haile Selassie dominated much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of the country. The imperial regime, whose structures failed to handle the increasing demands for change coming from the various corners of the country, was overthrown by a popular revolution in September 1974. This meant the end for the monarchy in Ethiopia and soon state power was assumed by a military committee which was inspired by Marxism-Leninism. But, from the beginning of its time in power, the military regime had to deal with the actions of armed resistance movements. After a long period civil war, the regime was finally defeated in May 1991 and EPRDF assumed power in May of the same year. After it assumed power the EPRDF government undertakes most striking reform in the country to ensure democracy and good governance. Soon the new government makes itself busy in the reconstructing the country. The July 1991 Peace and Democratic Conference, convened by the ERPDF brought together many political organizations. This conference adopted a Transitional Charter that incorporated the 1948 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR); promised multiparty democracy, freedom of association and speech; and incorporated the right of ethnic self-determination up to secession. Different legal reforms which are essential for the realization of good governance and democracy have been also undertaken. Some of the initial measures undertaken include the participation of political parties in the political discourse, decentralization and adoption of federal and parliamentary system. Hence, the article deals with critical analysis of democracy and good governance in Ethiopia. It also examines the factors for low achievements of good governance in the country and the changes that the FDRE constitution brings to the life's of Ethiopian people.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **DATA SOURCES**

This article has been worked out by gathering mainly qualitative data from literature. The study has relied completely on secondary sources. These sources were carefully gathered, evaluated and checked for their reliability and authenticity before their employment for this work.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **PRE 1991 ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS**

To discuss about post 1991 democratization in Ethiopia first it is important to briefly overview how modern state of Ethiopia is emerged and its pre 1991 reality. Ethiopia has a long history of statehood with the ancient civilizations of the Abyssinian, Axumite and Zagwe empires (Kidane, 1997). However, the borders of the present day Ethiopia were mainly demarcated by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Merera, 2006). The process of centralization of state power which began since the reign of Emperor Tewodros II in the 1850's marks the beginning of Ethiopia's nation building. The subsequent rulers of the country pursued the same path (Assefa, 2007).

The formation of the modern Ethiopian state can be described as involving three processes: the centralization of power, the territorial expansion of the Shewan rulers and the European expansion in pursuit of colonizing Africa (Teshale, 1995). The nation building strategy employed by many of the Ethiopian rulers was mainly concerned with centralizing state power and conquering and expanding territory which eventually gave the present day Ethiopia and its current geographic and demographic shape. Especially, the territorial expansion of Menelik II towards the south, east, and west transferred the relatively homogenous Abyssinian Empire into a mosaic of different ethno-linguistic groups and diversified culture (Beza, 2013).

Its transition to the present federal dispensation appears to be more or less a result of struggle by its people. To this fact it is widely known that this ancient African country did not fall under colonial rule, save a brief Italian occupation between 1936 and 1941. Some years before that, there were local initiatives towards modernizing the administration of the country. The first written constitution was drawn in 1931 following partly the older Japanese model which the imperial regime in Ethiopia seemed to perceive as a safer entry to start modernizing the country (Muhammad, 2010).

At the same time, measures were taken to introduce modern education in which some significant progress was made before the occupation. Unfortunately, the Italian administration did not allow the Ethiopian initiatives towards progress to continue and mature to fruition. In fact on the contrary, for example, according to John Markakis A particularly cruel blow was the loss of a portion of the miniscule group of educated Ethiopians and that all accounts agree that the Italian Fascists singled out this group for special savage treatment, as if to bolster their own claim of a civilizing mission by wiping out any proof to the contrary (Markakis, 2006).

The end of the occupation in 1941, therefore,

signified the beginning of a new era in which foundations were laid for the considerable portion of the achievements that the country could depend virtually until very recently. These were evident in the spheres of education, urbanization and related social and economic sectors. In the political sphere, there were more or less similar developments that demanded a more speedy progress towards reform. The incorporation of Eritrea in a way that accommodated its distinct colonial experience and the introduction of the Revised Constitution of 1955 were expected to create a more conducive environment towards a greater degree of open-mindedness and at least some measure of gradual democratization. But as subsequent events, including the aborted coup of 1960, seemed to indicate the pace at which the government was moving towards the desired political reform was much slower than what the circumstances seemed to demand at that time. For instance, it was only about a month before its end that the imperial regime showed readiness to introduce a more significant measure of constitutional reform (Muhammad, 2010).

By the time when the Military took over in September 1974, the situation had already deteriorated beyond what a gradualist reform process could do. Under such circumstances, the stage would usually be set for radicalism to flourish and take over the initiative. Thus, during the first two years after the end of imperial rule, the bulk of the political forces in the country were not ready to accept anything short of a fully fledged commitment to scientific socialism. At the initial stage, the Derg proclaimed Ethiopia a new socialist state with national progressive unity as its goal (Alemante, 1992).

Yet, that was not as far as sharing power with its political opponents who were largely left-oriented civilian political groups. In other words, the progress towards ideological 'solidarity' was not accompanied by political reconciliation. Of all the contentious issues, the political difference on the national question posed probably the toughest challenge to the government. For the imperial regime, it was virtually unthinkable to recognize the ethno-lingual and any other form of internal diversity as a political issue (Muhammad, 2010).

But for the Derg, it was already late not to give at least some measure of recognition to the issue. Therefore, the government had established the Institute of Nationalities with the mandate to study the situation of the nationality groups and recommend solutions. As a result, the Constitution which was introduced about four years before the end of the Derg regime had contained provisions that purport to address the national question. Once again, it appeared this too came very late. After all, the door was still closed against any move towards multiparty negotiation and the possibility of substituting the age old centralized rule by some sort of decentralization, if not a federal alternative. On the other

hand, by the time when the Derg regime introduced the new Constitution, the different liberation front's had already consolidated themselves into a significant political force. Consequently, the Derg regime came to an end when the liberation movements fighting for the rights of the different nationality groups took over in May 1991 (Paul, 2001).

With the demise of the Derg and the apparent end of the civil war that ravaged the country for over two decades, the call for "peace, democracy, and the rule of law" is on everyone's lips at home and abroad. Not uncommonly, after two decades of a cruel civil war and a brutal dictatorship, these ideals have captured the imagination of large numbers of people (Alemante, 1992).

Accordingly, on July 1, 1991, the EPRDF called a national conference that culminated in the adoption of a Transitional Period Charter to function as an interim constitution. Pursuant to the Charter, a Council of Representatives was set up to govern the nation until a permanent government could be elected (ibid). Then the TGE, manage the affairs of the country and prepare a new constitution. The Constituent Assembly debated on the draft Constitution which carried several new provisions, including the proposal to set up a federal form of government in a way that allows accommodation of the interests of the various nationality groups in the country. The Constitution came into force in 1995, inaugurating the existing federal arrangement (Inter Africa Group, 1994).

## **POST 1991 ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS**

For just over a decade the EPRDF government in Ethiopia has been attempting to implement a novel form of governance ethnic federalism. The government has been evolved in the process of administrative devolution. Power and authority in regional administrative matter had been devolved to regional state level. At the political level, Ethiopia does possess democratic forms and institution. The multi party election is periodically held. Also, there is evidence that gradually people at the woreda level and below is becoming more involved in making political and administrative decision that affect their daily lives (Edmond, 2003).

As one of important changes from the previous regime the FDRE Constitution provides for a federal government and nine regional states conferred with different sets of responsibilities relating to important political, economic and social matters. The government is also formed based on the parliamentary system whereby the political party or parties with the greatest number of seats form and lead the executive. The Parliament appoints the Prime Minister from the dominant party, and the Prime Minister in turn appoints the ministers and vice-ministers (Stephane, 2004).

The parliament is also composed of two different assemblies, namely the house of peoples' representatives and the house of Federation. Each differs from the other in their respective powers and functions except in those constitutionally-specified matters falling under their concurrent competence. For instance, both houses are required in a joint session to take appropriate measures when state authorities are unable to arrest violations of human rights within their jurisdiction (Hashim, 2010).

The constitution also equally recognizes the equality of each of the Ethiopian Nation, Nationality, People, language, religion etc without any sort of partiality. Hence, it closed all possible doors of mistrust, conflict and disagreement over the identity question. The fundamental question of all the Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples has been shifted from identity to development, peace, democratization, good governance. The constitutional right of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia to self-determination including the right to secession ensures that Ethiopia is their common country in which they live together under mutual understanding and cooperation. It further guaranteed them that any sort of violation of their constitutional rights would be automatically unacceptable and void. That is, Ethiopia has become equal home of all the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples in which they live under mutual cooperation to fulfill their common interest and collectively fight against their common enemy, poverty, thereby to ensure their renaissance through their joint efforts (Ethiopian Herald, 2015).

## **ETHNICITY IN ETHIOPIA**

Ethiopia has been considered as a country of ethnic diversity. This ethnic diversity was for the first time officially acknowledged in July 1991 during a transitional conference held by the forces of the Ethiopian People's Democratic Front (EPRDF) that drove Mengistu's military regime out of power in May of the same year (Marie, 2006). The EPRDF first try to present the public image that it had the political will to effectively address many of Ethiopian's past problems including the national questions. Its leaders moved quickly to fill power vacuum caused by the collapse of Mengistu regime, and within few weeks it had established transitional government. A national conference was convened for this purpose in July 1991. This resulted signing of transitional charter by the representatives of different political parties (Edmond, 2003).

The Charter introduced the right to self determination prefiguring the reordering of the Ethiopian State along ethnic lines. This ethnic-based federalism was endorsed by a Constitution ratified in December 1994 that formalized the division of the country into 9 federal states

delimited on the basis of settlement patterns, identity, language and the consent of the people concerned and 2 special administrative zones which are Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa (Marie, 2006).

This constitution guarantees the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people. These include the right to life, liberty, privacy, and freedom of religion, the right of assembly, demonstration, and petition, freedom of association, freedom of movement, rights of women, rights of nations, nationalities, and peoples, and the rights to property and development, and a clean environment. The Constitution also provides for a multi-party electoral system to promote political choice and guarantee the democratic rights of the Ethiopian people (ADB, 2009).

## **POST 1991 ETHIOPIAN MULTI- PARTY POLITICS**

The Derg government was militarily overthrown in 1991 by the combined forces of many ethnic-based rebel fronts. The main ones were: the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF), the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). As soon as it assumed political power, the EPRDF made Ethiopia a federal state and reorganized the country in to largely ethnically-based regional states. After the coming to power of the EPRDF in 1991 a number of ethnic-based political parties mushroomed in Ethiopia. The EPRDF, as an ethnic-based party coalition, encouraged the formation of political parties along ethnic lines and tacitly discouraged non-ethnic parties or other pan Ethiopian parties (Wondwosen, 2009).

Thus, the year 1991 was the turning point in multi party politics of Ethiopia. After many years of centralized and one party rule, the country has started to follow multi party system by attempting to modernize Ethiopian multi ethnic society within the ethnic based government system and multi party democracy (Merara, 2003).

Having toppled down the military regime on May 28, 1991 the EPRDF has opened the country for multi party democracy by declaring that, every political group inside and outside the country is invited to come to the July Conference which was held in Addis Ababa (Pausewang and Tronvoll, 2000). The July Conferences come to found the Transitional Government by establishing the Transitional Charter as the supreme law of the Transitional period (Getachew, 1997).

This charter which later becomes constitution in 1994 has assured multi party politics in Ethiopia by declaring every Ethiopian has the right to engage in unrestricted political activities, and to organize political party for the purposes of achieving political power through peaceful means (Negarit Gazeta; No.1; FDRE Constitution 1994). This clearly shows that, multi party system has

been given form and Subsistence by the enactment of the political party's registration proclamation No.46/1993 which asserts that, citizens can form and join any political organization. This marked the emergence of new political parties to the scene by granting legal personality to operate in the country (Getachew, 1997).

So due to the introduction of multi-party politics after 1991 the ruling party opened the political space in the country allowing opposition parties to freely campaign and competes for political power. Thus, one of the most important developments in the post-1991 Ethiopian politics is the emergence of legally recognized political parties (Stéphane, 2004).

## DECENTRALIZATION IN ETHIOPIA

For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Ethiopia was ruled by highly centralized and undemocratic governments. Traditions of autocratic and hierarchical rule are long and deep rooted. Since the present government took power in 1991 it has taken significant steps to introduce elements of democratic accountability. It has also embarked on a process of decentralization that seeks to recognize the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of the people living within Ethiopia's borders and embodied this in its Constitution (World Bank, 2009).

In the last quarter century, many countries have engaged in the process of decentralization by transferring responsibilities of the state to lower tiers of government. Such transfer of power is believed to bring not only political stability and contribute to democratic governance, but also improve service delivery and attain equity. The 1991 government change in Ethiopia has ushered in a decentralized system of governance. This is a departure from the past political system which did not allow for self-rule and institutional development and harmony between the different ethnic groups. The 1994 Constitutional response involved the elaboration of a new institutional framework built around the formal devolution of hitherto highly centralized authority. The Government initiated successive rounds of deepening decentralization, devolving powers and mandates to Regional states, and then to Woredas or district authorities which is an outcome of the adoption of a federal system of government in Ethiopia. With the devolution of power to the regional governments, implementation of economic policies and development programs is shifting, to a large extent, from the center to the regions (MOFED, 2002).

Decentralization in Ethiopia is hoped to bring about harmony and cooperation between different groups and promote local self-rule. The decentralization drive in Ethiopia has proceeded in two phases. The first wave of decentralization (1991-2001) was centered on creating and empowering National/Regional Governments and

hence was termed as mid-level decentralization (Taye and Tegegne, 2007). During this period, National/Regional State Governments were established with changes in the local and central government system (Yigremew, 2001).

The National/Regional Governments were entrusted with legislative, executive and judicial powers in respect of all matters within their areas, and with the exception of those that fall under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government (defense, foreign affairs, economic policy, etc.) (Kasshun and Tegegne, 2004).

In particular, they are empowered, among others, to issue regional constitutions and other laws, plan and execute social and economic development. Fiscal decentralization which elaborated the sharing of revenue between regions and central governments, and introduced transfers and subsidies, was part of the decentralization process. Fiscal decentralization was intended to assist Regional Governments by boosting their capacity for developing their localities through self-initiative. It is also meant to narrow the existing gaps in economic growth and development among regions (Kasshaun and Tegegne, 2004).

Despite this, fiscal imbalances between regions and heavy dependence of the Regional Governments on the Federal Government's transfer and subsidies have persisted. While the first wave of decentralization has registered significant achievements in local governance and regional self-rule, it was not capable of bringing genuine self-rule particularly at lower levels of administration where governance and decentralization matter most. Though the Constitution allows for the creation of woredas with their elected councils, the lack of power, resources and authorities has limited them to effectively engage in democratic self-rule. In addition, Zonal and Regional authorities had a controlling, checking and monitoring power over the activities of Woreda Governments. These circumstances prompted the Central Government to take an initiative to further devolve powers and responsibilities to the woredas in 2001.

This was achieved through the District Level Decentralization Program (DLDP) and Urban Management Program (UMP). The DLDP calls for the concerted effort of all tiers of government, from federal to Kebeles. It also deals with democracy and decentralization as it is read in policy and strategy framework documents (Mulugeta D, 2012).

Unlike the first wave of decentralization, which has a simultaneous country-wide coverage, the second wave was initially limited to the four Regional States, namely, Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region. The process entailed enabling legislation for local governments, fiscal reform, institutional restructuring, and capacity development and intended to empower the local government sphere

comprising woredas and municipalities to deliver the bulk of basic services in a responsive manner, as well as promote democratization and local economic development. The primary fiscal instrument that regions used to ensure rapid decentralization of delivery responsibilities to woredas was a formula-driven, equity-oriented block grant. Implemented for the first time in the 2001-2002 fiscal years, this transfer was expected to empower local authorities and their kebeles to make critical allocative decisions and in the process, enhance the responsiveness of service delivery as well as downward accountability. In addition, regions streamlined, and in some cases, eliminated intermediate administrative layers between bureaus and woredas, that is, zonal sections. Regional and zonal staffs were rapidly redeployed into administrative pools, accountable to local executives (Taye and Tegegne, 2007).

Thus, the deepening and broadening the decentralization process paved the way to strengthen districts (Woredas) the center socio-economic development. By way of ensuring local autonomy on resources, Government planned to effect block grants directly to districts (Woredas). This will provide a basis for a meaningful participation by the people in local development programs. (MOFED, 2002).

In its 1999 report World Bank also optimistically commented:

Ethiopia has embarked on a bold and thoughtful process of decentralization, which has been supported by widely shared consensus over both development strategy and objectives, and very large transfer of untied resources from the federal government to regions.

## **GOOD GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL STABILITY IN ETHIOPIA**

The deep rooted desire for unity and development will be best served by good governance, manifested through the promotion of democratic principles, popular participation, human and people's rights and the rule of law. The concept of good governance was once defined by a number of international institutions, including World Bank, IMF, United Nations Development Programme as the capacity of a country to establish a "framework of order and stability, formulate and implement effective policies and create an environment durable for economic and social development" (Hilal, 2014).

In Ethiopia also after a long period of civil war and suppression, political stability started to evolve in 1991. Since then, a federal democratic constitution provides the framework for equal access to political and economic resources for all parts of the society. The government has established democratic structures with

free and fair elections being held every five years on all levels of government. Within a parliamentary system, the government is accountable to the parliament and the parliament to the people. Enormous efforts in providing not only voter but also constant citizen education with regard to their rights are being undertaken. These results in an environment where the vast majority identifies with Ethiopia and appreciates the efforts undertaken and the results achieved (Kassa, 2011). But, despite political instabilities in the horn of Africa, Ethiopia is managing to maintain political stabilities though certain neighboring governments attempted to disturb peace and stability of the country (Teshome, 2011).

In its Five-Year Plan the government has also emphasized on the promotion of improved democratic governance, decentralization and reform of the justice system. The first Human Rights Action Plan has been developed and launched as part of the National Mobilization for Good Governance (Husnia, 2014). Cognizant of the urgent need to address the wide array of capacity constraints that hindered the performance of public institutions in Ethiopia, the Government embarked on a comprehensive Civil Service Reform Program (CSRP) in 1996. Indicative of Ethiopia's "first generation" capacity building efforts, the CSRP sought to build a fair, transparent, efficient, effective, and ethical civil service primarily by focusing on strengthening core technocratic systems within the public sector (MOFED, 2002).

## **GOOD GOVERNANCE ON THE GROUND IN ETHIOPIA**

The concept good governance appeared into development agenda by World Bank twenty years ago. In the 1989 World Bank Study "Sub-Saharan Africa from Crisis to Sustainable Growth", good governance is indicated as a public service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable, and an administration that is accountable to the public (World Bank, 1989). In the 1992 report entitled "Governance and Development", the World Bank defined good governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (Fikadu, 2014).

Further in the 1994, the "Governance: The World Bank's Experience" report identified four elements of good governance: Public-sector management, Accountability, Legal framework for development, and Transparency and information (WB, 1994). The African Development Bank and African Development Fund on their part came with Accountability, Transparency, Combating corruption, Participation Legal and judicial reform in support of good governance in the continent (ADB and ADFB, 1999).

UNDP's policy document, "Governance for Sustainable

Human Development” listed Participation, Rule of law, Transparency, Consensus orientation, Equity, Effectiveness and efficiency, Accountability and Strategic vision as essential characteristics of good governance (UNDP, 1997).

The Twelve Ethical principles in Ethiopian civil Service have stemmed from the aforementioned lists of good governance constituents. Decentralization, public-private partnership, and other change management models have been echoed for years. A decade has passed echoing and posting these principles. But, they have not standards to measure the degree of transparency or honesty etc. However, the practice on the ground remains an area of scrutiny (Fekadu, 2014).

When we look at the quality of governance in Ethiopia in the light of five major parameters: voice and accountability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption, it is listed among the countries of poor governance quality in the world according to 1996 to 2008 governance quality measurement. Low percentage of each of the indicators means low governance quality while high percentage of each of the indicators shows good governance quality of a country. In most cases the governance quality of Ethiopia is below 25 % (Kaufmann et.al. 2009). According to the 2010 Ibrahim index Ethiopia's governance was ranked 35<sup>th</sup> out of 53 African nations, 17<sup>th</sup> in environmental and rural policy, 16<sup>th</sup> in public management and 40 in human rights (Alan, 2011).

But, Worldwide Governance Indicators shows that in 2006, Ethiopia's performance in government effectiveness was relatively better than the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa and Ethiopia's percentile ranking on voice and accountability and regulatory quality, however, was lower (ADB, 2009). Whatever it is below as why low achievement of good governance in our country is examined critically.

### **IMPEDIMENTS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN ETHIOPIA**

There are different factors that contributed for the inhibition of advancement of good governance in the country. The factors that have halted development of good governance in the country are both structural and ideologically motivated government policies that encourage patronage rather than merited principles. One of the major structural problems that seem to have prevented realization of good governance in the country is the absence of democratic culture in the country's long history (Fekadu, 2013).

The country had undergone considerable part of its history under traditional feudal rule that was characterized by absolute loyalty that legitimizes the exploitation of the poor. Under the feudal system, Ethiopian social fabric was characterized by

gross inequality between the largely aristocratic elite consisting of landowners, lords, nobles, the royal family, government officials, and elements of the clergy and the impoverished peasantry. There was pattern of social interaction that sustains a strictly hierarchical stratification of society, where one is constrained by a large, invisible, but rigid system of collective sanctions, to obey the 'orders from above (Semahagn, 2014).

The other major challenge for realization of good governance is poverty and high rate of illiteracy. Poverty affects society in many ways including the undermining of democracy. Democracy can hardly work in conditions where the people are poor and ignorant because the poor and illiterate may be influenced to sell their votes for a mere pittance. Apart from the subversion of the independence of the voter, poverty and ignorance do not provide a fertile ground for advocacy and the promotion of rights. The people are either too concerned with the practical details of where the next meal would come from, or are steeped in apathy. This works against the emergence of a robust and proactive civil society that would work for the consolidation of democracy (Hilal, 2014).

According to recent Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index, 90% of Ethiopians are poor. Due to high rate of poverty and illiteracy Ethiopian social structure is characterized by lack of a strong and economically rooted middle class that may burden the transition to democracy and good governance as noted by Tekola.

Corruption is also another important impediment of good governance in the country. By its very nature, corruption is an abuse to all internationally acknowledged human rights. It creates a vicious circle where human rights awareness is constantly paired with and undermined by harsh realities of poor economic and political performance. Corruption is both the cause and the consequence of political turbulence, human rights abuses and underdevelopment. Corruption is a challenge to everyone, and therefore action must be taken in various areas of society. The role of hard working pressure groups, such as civil society, and vigilant individuals cannot be emphasized enough (Hilal, 2014).

Despite promising trends of democratization in the country, corruption remains a serious barrier to development. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of Transparency International, a non-governmental organization fighting corruption and trying to raise awareness of it, ranked Ethiopia 120<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in 2009. This indicates the seriousness of the problem of corruption in Ethiopia, which is well understood by policymakers (Tsfaye, 2015).

### **CONCLUSION**

For centuries, Ethiopia was governed by a highly

centralized monarch. The last monarch was Emperor Haile Selassie who accessed to the throne in 1931. After a popular uprising in 1974 which left a political vacuum, a provisional administrative council, known locally as the Derg, was set up but collapsed in May 1991. The Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) took over the capital, Addis Ababa. The EPRDF assumed governance responsibilities and convened a National Peace Conference in Addis Ababa which adopted a Transitional Charter and formed a transitional government. This paved the way for the installation of an elected government under a pluralist political system which in turn leads the country to practice of good governance and democracy. Thus, the coming of EPDRF government is a landmark for the introduction of democracy and good governance in the country though; the problem of good governance is still prevalent in the country. So that still now governance performance and democratic system cannot reach a reliable stage of development in the country. There are dozens of reasons for low achievement of good governance in the country like poverty and high rate of illiteracy, absence of effective check and balances and the absence of democratic culture in the country's long history etc. Despite the problems of good governance in the country enormous efforts has been done by the government to ensure practice of democracy and implementation of good governance. For example since 1996 the government has embarked on a comprehensive civil service reform programme designed to improve performance and strengthen accountability and transparency. Decentralization was also initiated as part of broad based efforts to improve the effectiveness of the state in public service delivery and advance the democratization process.

## ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADF	African Development Fund
CPI	The Corruption Perception Index
CSRP	Civil Service Reform Program
DLDP	District Level Decentralization Program
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MOFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
UMP	Urban Management Program
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
WB	World Bank

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