

## Rule and Relation of Ethiopian Government to Political Parties: A Review

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### ABSTRACT

Rule by law is recognized worldwide as an essential component and precondition of good governance and sound and sustainable economic development. The rule by law is based on key democratic principles, such as equality before the law, accountability to the law, separation of powers and participation in decision making. The relationship between the ruling party and opposition parties raises the question and the current political setting, the meaningful participation of opposition political parties in the political process has become largely inadequate. The ruling party envisages itself 'as a vanguard political force, which is not inclined to compromise with opposition forces. Political parties are manifestations of citizens' right to politically associate. Democratic governance is dependent on well-functioning opposition political parties. But the Ethiopia rule and regulation of theoretical understanding and practice has been varied and controversial. The parties should be organized around political ideologies rather than ethnic, religious, or regional identities. The country's 'political organizations are still seeing each other antagonistically and as 'blood enemies' rather than as responsible political actors. The rule by law based relation of ruling party and opposition parties are the larger expression of political settlements and expression of elite interests. Therefore in order for the country to make progress towards a more deliberative relation to political parties, blending theoretical knowledge, empirical research, and practical experience of discussion potential has to be developed.

**Key words:** Ethiopia, Political parties, Rule by law

### INTRODUCTION

Rule by law is recognized worldwide as an essential component and precondition of good governance and sound and sustainable economic development [1]. Ethiopia introduced multi-party system following the 1991 regime change. Subsequently, dozens of political parties have been established. Little has been done with regard to the degree of programmability of Ethiopian political parties (EPPs) and the nature and the type of the party system they are operating [2]. A multiparty system accommodates political parties with different views, and it is more representative than other party systems [3]. Multiparty system allows multiple political parties to compete with their alternative policies in the interest of people. Political parties are manifestations of citizens' right to politically associate [4]. In Ethiopia, there is a vicious cycle that connects rule by law and one-party dominance-one makes the other possible and one-party dominance makes rule by law possible [5].

Ethiopia government embraced a multi-party system the political landscape was dominated by one party and characterized by authoritarianism and repression [6]. Eliminating the elite and weakening political parties was the political culture of Ethiopia unless changed for future. Democratic governance is dependent on well-functioning opposition political parties [7]. There is a nicely worded Federal Constitution in Ethiopia, but the government has difficulty in adhering to it. In the circumstances, parliament is an organ of government rather than an instrument of governance influencing and changing the course of public policy [8]. The government media (electronic and print) is a less popular to political parties in Ethiopia. Ethiopia government is the state monopoly of disseminating information continues to restrict Ethiopian citizen's ability to make informal decisions [9].

It is almost a decade and half since freedom of expression has been proclaimed as one of the fundamental rights and freedoms recognized in the FDRE Constitution. However, there is hardly

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any Ethiopian jurisprudence on freedom of expression to speak of at the moment [10]. Constitutions are hardly cited as sources of party regulation laws in the literature. The Ethiopian Constitution aims to build a political community founded on the rule of law and conditions the success of this laudable goal on the full respect of individual and people's fundamental freedoms and rights [5]. But in Ethiopia rule and regulation of theoretical understanding and practice has been varied and controversial. Because of political discourse in Ethiopia between the ruling party and the opposition is polemical, and significant grievances exist in sections of the population, there is an absence of objective, evidence-based sources of data [11]. It is important to note that indicators of democracy in Ethiopia - in the sense of representative, electable government and a competitive party system as well as an independent judiciary, a free press, the respect for human rights and habeas corpus, and a rule-of-law regime are quite critical, at least in the view of most independent observers [12, 13]. In Ethiopia, political parties are argued to have problems in their internal functioning: non adherence to party internal rules, dominance of party leaders, disengaging party member in party decision making and governance, little institutionalization of party functions and weak party organization [14]. Therefore, the primary objective of this paper is to reveal role of rule and relation of ruling party and opposition party in Ethiopia.

## Rule by law in Ethiopia

The rule by law is based on key democratic principles, such as equality before the law, accountability to the law, separation of powers and participation in decision making. Like democracy, the rule by law is a principle of governance anchored in participatory and consultative processes. To be legitimate, laws should be widely consulted and reflective of society's needs and values. A democratically elected parliament and a vibrant and strong civil society provide ideal mechanisms for achieving this [15]. The laws that fall under the law-making competence of the federal legislature are applied nationally: they apply throughout the territory and to all persons that happen to be within the territorial jurisdiction of Ethiopia [16]. Laws and regulations are often inconsistent or contradictory, and efforts to revise and update legislation are not being undertaken in a consolidated manner [17]. Access to justice is seriously undermined by the lack of awareness or knowledge about, the law or the formal legal system.

## Political parties law in Ethiopia

Party law refers to the body of state law concerning what parties must and must not do, what is legal and illegal in party politics. It sometimes used in references to internal rules, such as party charters or bylaws by which parties govern themselves. Generally it includes law concerning what constitutes a political party, the form of activity in which parties may engage, and what forms of party organization and behavior are appropriate [18]. The parties should be organized around political ideologies rather than ethnic, religious, or regional identities. Their ideological differences should be distinct but not too sharp; extreme ideologies are dangerous. The parties should not be personalistic

vehicles for the self-aggrandizement of charismatic leaders but organizations with democratic internal structures that seek a constituency among citizens and strive for openness, accountability, and lawful behavior. They should cultivate relations with other social and political organizations and be willing to work in coalitions when circumstances require [19]. The reluctance of Ethiopian government to accept genuine multi-party competition, political positions and parties result of a continuous polarization of national politics that has sharpened tensions between and within parties and ethnic groups since the mid-1990s [20].

The right to political participation, which is a fundamental human right, especially, as applied to citizens of a country, should be implemented by the electoral system of a country to assure the equitable representation of minority groups [21]. Article 56 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia [22] provides that "a Political Party or a Coalition of Political Parties that has the greatest number of seats in the House of People's Representatives [HoPR] shall form the executive and lead it". Article 54(2) of the Constitution further stipulates that members of the HoPR shall be elected from candidates in each electoral district by a plurality of the votes cast. This has further been corroborated by the amended Electoral Law of Ethiopia, which states that "a Candidate who received more votes than other Candidates within a Constituency shall be declared the winner" [23].

## Relation of Ethiopian ruling parties to political parties

Inter-party relations is conceptualized as the way political parties interact between and among themselves around issues of common interest, and how they work together and engage one another on national and public policy matters. In these relations, we used the term inter-party relations to represent the interrelationships between the ruling party and opposition parties on the one hand, and among opposition parties in the other. The country's 'political organizations are still seeing each other antagonistically and as 'blood enemies' rather than as responsible political actors and worthy partners in nation building who have equal rights to govern the country without any encumbrance from anybody or any organization' [24]. Democratic principles like political pluralism, accommodation of different ideas, and peaceful coexistence of political parties have no root. The ruling party envisages itself 'as a vanguard political force, which is not inclined to compromise with opposition forces because it is convinced that it has the solution for everything' [25]. The relationship between the ruling party and opposition parties raises the question and the current political setting, the meaningful participation of opposition political parties in the political process has become largely inadequate and it has greatly diluted the process of the Ethiopian democratization drive [7]. In 2017/2018 the revolution seriously irritating country wide and it was dangerously peoples were died everywhere; law have been destructed this is not because people are too much evil, but corruption, racism, economic deficiency, unemployment, inflation, lack of good governance and other economic, political

and social problems [26]. Are political parties really evil? A political solution to the conflicts between the legal, the external and armed opposition is not to be expected in the future as long as the government is unwilling to share power and the opposition parties remains fragmented due to mismanagement of government.

## Ethiopian constitution and its application

A Constitution is a legal document that establishes a political community or nation based on the rule of law in which basic rights and freedoms of the citizens are guaranteed. It sets out the responsibilities of the government to the people and the responsibilities of the people to the government and to other citizens. As defined above, party law consists of state-based regulations concerning the definition, composition, structure, and activities of political parties as organizations. This body of law can be distinguished from related bodies of electoral, campaign, and political finance law, which overlap with party law and often serve as sources of party law. Again, other sources of party law include legislative statutes, administrative rulings, court decisions, and national constitutions [17]. Incorporating party law into constitutions may be a consequence of the latest wave of democratization in developing states. Article 25 the FDRE Constitution clearly states that all persons are equal before the eyes of the law and these persons are entitled to equal protection of the law without any discrimination of any kind. Art. 13(1) of the FDRE Constitution reads: all organs of the government (the legislative, executive and judiciary) both at the federal and state levels have the constitutional duty and responsibility to respect and enforce this constitutional provision. The constitution was applauded for its commitment to liberal democracy and respect for political freedoms and human rights. But the government promises democracy, it has not accepted that the opposition is qualified to take power via the ballot box and tends to regard the expression of differing views and interests as a form of betrayal [19].

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The rule by law based relation of ruling party and opposition parties are the larger expression of political settlements and expression of elite interests. Ethiopian government should have to change grassroots structure and experiments are more important in a comparative study with political parties. In order for the country to make progress towards a more deliberative relation to political parties, blending theoretical knowledge, empirical research, and practical experience of discussion potential has to be developed. Institutions have to work on a function with relation of ruling parties and opposition parties.

The major driving of Ethiopian ethnic conflict political culture emphasizes a strict hierarchical understanding of one society (one nation) where each member's socio-political position and status of all society (nation nationalities) should clearly defined and understood. Government should open up the democratic principles like political pluralism, accommodation of different ideas and peaceful coexistence of political parties in Ethiopia. Unreasonable restrictions of constitutional rights of freedom of speech and peace and rule by law which used to further

criminalizing opposition parties and weaken opposition political parties that endangering democracy should be impede.

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