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Review

Can the centre hold for Arnstein's ladder of participation in Zimbabwe?

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One of the most contentious issues in Zimbabwe's post-colonial history has been the law and practice of democracy. Electoral processes as a tenets of democracy has continued to produce contested and disputed electoral results. Politically-motivated violence has also reared its ugly head on Zimbabwe's political landscape. The dictates of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation which presents a normative framework for effective citizen participation has been violated both in letter and in spirit. Consequently, good governance and democracy have been elusive elements of the country's political practice. At the same time, citizen participation and freedoms such as those of assembly, association and the right to participate in the governance of the country has equally been compromised. Through existing legislation and effecting amendments to existing legislation there has been brazenly violation of civil liberties, erode political space and limiting political activity.

Key words: Participation, democracy, socialism, civil liberties.

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen democratic practice has incited much scholarly debate. Political developments during the last three decades of Zimbabwe's post-colonial history have left a lasting impression on democracy human rights, civil liberties and citizen participation on the backdrop of a devastating economic environment. These processes have been put to the test as the country failed to live up to its liberation struggle promises of creating a democratic and egalitarian society, based on socialism. A plethora of legislative pieces of civil liberties have not lived up to the expectation of the general populace still smarting from the protracted liberation struggle that had

promised a horde of liberties. This paper deliberates on the different pieces legislation and how these compare with the dictates of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation. It has been argued that Zimbabwe's historiography contains all the ingredients for a democratic states. However the law and practice that have obtained in the country have left people guessing when the fruits of the liberation struggle would be enjoyed by all and sundry.

Despite the fact that the post-colonial dispensation undertook several reforms, the generality of the population does not have anything to show for it. The most outstanding reforms that have prevailed over the

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last few years include gender equity, constitutional reforms of 2013, the (in)famous fast track land reform programme as well as a litany of electoral reforms after a lot of disputed electoral results. It is worth noting that these reforms have not really responded to citizens' demands for an egalitarian society in the country. However, rampant corruption practices, arbitrary decisions by the bureaucracy as well as pockets of gross human rights violations resulted in gradual disconnect between the ruling elites and the general citizenry. From the early 1990s, increased demands for further reforms saw the emergence of a pro-democracy civil society groups that sought to engage the state towards the realization of and respect for civil liberties.

Most of Zimbabwe's political woes emanated from skewed policy implementation on the backdrop of numerous restrictive legislation some seeking to disenfranchise eligible members of society; curtail civil liberties and perpetuate gross human rights violations. However, despite operating in an unfriendly environment, civil society have sought to engage the state as well as mobilise the general citizenry towards the demand for an egalitarian society with enhanced service delivery. The Southern African Development Committee (SADC) ended up enacting legislation that compelled member states to conduct free, fair and transparent elections that would present the voice of citizens.

Citizen Participation and Democratic Practice

Available literature has shown that about 2500 years ago, before the internet age, Athenians had developed a system of self-government that they called democracy which basically relied on active citizen participation for both direction and decision-making. A few millennia later, the founding fathers of the United States built a country around the proposition that government must be responsive to the needs of its citizens. They envisaged that for democracy to flourish and thrive, citizens must take an active part in public life, sharing their ideas and opening their minds to the opinions of others, and taking ownership in the well-being of the country (Meskell, 2009:24). This is how citizen participation took root within the democratic discourse, with multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF adopting it among its array of conditionalities for aid to countries. Consequently, it has come to be accepted that citizen participation provides private individuals with an opportunity to influence public decisions and has long been a component of the democratic decision-making process (Cogan and Hertberg, 1986:283). Active participation has also been found to meaningfully tie programmes to people (Speigel, 1998:7). Consequently, despite the angle from which one looks at citizen participation, it all boils down to community involvement

in the decision-making processes.

The preparedness of citizens to participate in public projects can be used as a barometer to measure public opinion and responsiveness in policy formation for informing regulators of exactly where "...volatile public backlash is likely to occur and for winning the sympathies of a few influential citizens..." (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004:58). However, citizens do not participate just for the sake of participating in whatever programme or process.

Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

Arnstein's Ladder of Participation presents one of the most vivid practical examples of the different stages that governance can take place. It is common knowledge that while some states are die-hard dictatorships, others attempt to hoodwink their citizens as well as the international community that they are complying with democratic best practices and benchmarks by holding regular elections. The difference between genuine democracies and such states is that the prevailing political environment in such states is not conducive for holding free and fair elections. Such states present a token form of democracy. Then there are those states which genuine democracies which engage their citizens to contribute to policy formulation and implementation. Such states enable citizens to be actively participate the political processes. At institutional level, Arnstein presents a hierarchical structure portraying participation in three phases- *nonparticipation*, *tokenism* and *citizen power*. Arnstein argues that institutions can either make decisions without involving citizens, can consult citizens as a formality or can empower citizens to take control of all decision-making processes. Through the '*ladder of citizen participation*' Arnstein's (1969:34) presents citizen participation in hierarchical order and as existing in degrees of development as follows (Figure 1)::

Arnstein (1969:32) portrays participation as existing in three tiers. At the bottom of the ladder is *non-participation* where decisions are made from the top and handed down to citizens. On the second tier, herein viewed as representing a *degree of tokenism*, the quality of participation is through informing and consulting citizens without giving assurances that their contributions will be considered for decision-making purposes. This tier consists of merely *informing* citizens of decisions already made by the ruling elites; *consultation* as a formality without guaranteeing that the contribution of citizens will be taken into consideration; as well as *placating* involving mollifying, pacifying and appeasing citizens without due respect for their contribution in policy formulation in public affairs. As a result, merely informing (as a formality), consulting as well as placating citizens are gimmicks at the epi-centre of the degree of tokenism. The third tier consists of a degree of citizen power in which citizens

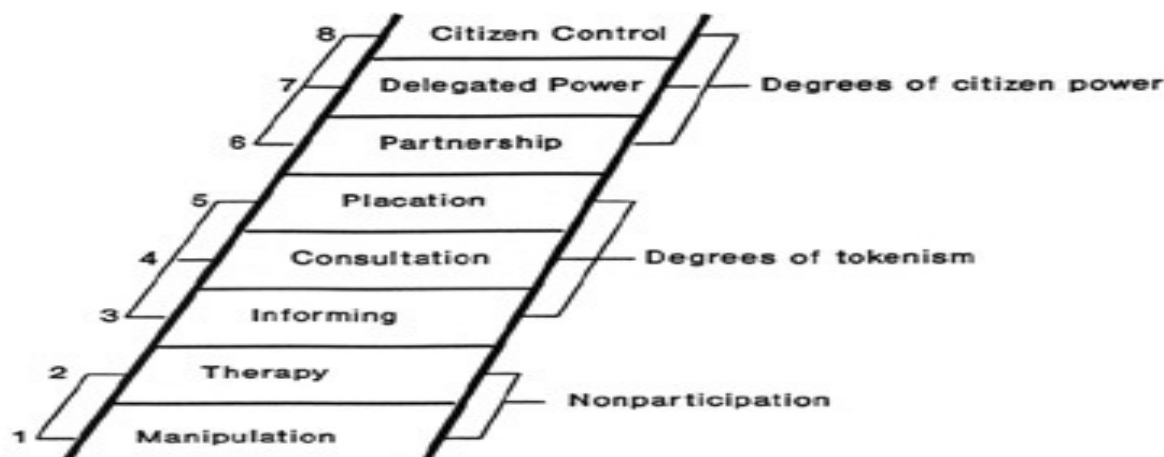


Figure 1. The ladder of citizen participation. Adopted from Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969).

play a role in decision-making processes. It should be noted that while citizens play a pivotal role in this level of participation, but the ruling elites have the final say, which makes this tier an enhanced form of tokenism, though citizens are portrayed as partners in making decisions though they cannot entirely influence policy formulation and implementation. Although citizens are portrayed as partners in decision-making processes, it is decisions palatable to the ruling elites which will be adopted as policy and eventually as law. Additionally, although there is an element of delegation of tasks to citizens, the ruling elites retain the mandate to deal with high profile issues. The bottom-line presented by the Arnstein's Ladder of Participation is that in a democracy, citizen participation is the prime political practice which every democratically-elected government should strive to achieve both in principle and in practice. The ladder put citizens at the epi-centre of decision making processes. On the contrary the failure by the state to give citizens the right to free political choices and decision making powers presents an unacceptable form of a governmental dispensation. Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation encompasses these arguments by consolidating the various arguments into three core values that inform citizen participation or lack of it thereof. According to the Arnstein (1969) in a political dispensation, there is no participation at all; participation comes in the form of tokenism or there is citizen power. Under non-participation, the political practice is characterised by manipulation of citizens by the ruling elites. Under the tokenism stage, citizens are merely informed by the government of what programmes the government intends to undertake without seeking public opinion. Under citizen power, communities are given the opportunity by legislation to contribute or influence decision-making processes.

All these governance processes exist within a legislative

context which provides for a regulatory frame work that govern citizens' behaviour. The legislative regime can either be restrictive and prohibitive or contribute to the creation of an enabling political environment.

This paper uses Arnstein's Ladder of Participation that presents a democratic best practice to establish the extent to which legislation in Zimbabwe has sought to promote or hinder civil liberties and enhance democratic practise. In addition, a plethora of existing legislation in Zimbabwe is presented to ascertain the extent to which these conform to the democratic best practices of governance, thereby putting the country's legislative regime to the test. The emphasis of this paper is on the extent to which the legislative regime allows for the dispensing of civil liberties, rights and freedoms to citizens to influence public decisions.

Preview of Constitutional and Legislative Framework Guiding Participation in Zimbabwe

Ordinarily, the constitution and the attendant pieces of legislation existing in a country should provide a framework for citizen entitlements, rights and freedoms. Clapham (1992:44) notes that "...the formal constitution of the state should in principle provide the ultimate legal framework through which rational-legal behaviour is defined". Proponents of constitutionalism concur with this notion by pointing out that "...constitutions lay down the overall nature and the characteristics of political institutions in elaborate detail, and hold promises of institutionally guaranteed civil liberties and political democracy" (Kamrava, 2000). Constitutional provisions include civil, natural and political rights, which all citizens are entitled to, irrespective of religion, colour or political affiliation. Through registering and allowing civil society

continued existence, the State is creating an avenue for civil society participation in national programmes that help in realizing societal objectives such as poverty alleviation, the observance of human rights, upholding of democratic principles and even environmental and HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. On the contrary, constitutions "...are tailor-made to fulfil specific political purposes and to present a mere cloak of legitimacy to norms and practices otherwise considered as unpopular and illegitimate" (Kamrava, 2000). In the Zimbabwean situation, one vivid example of this is the, Constitutional Amendment 17 of 2006 which authenticated the confiscation of formerly white-owned commercial farms, contrary to property rights that the former owners had over their properties. From then onwards, a plethora of the same nature and sophistication were enacted to fulfil specific political ambitions. From the content of the Constitution, there is very little evidence to suggest that it dispenses the privilege of citizens to participate in the administration of the country or to influence public policy. Most of the greater details for providing citizen entitlements are left to subsidiary legislation, such as the Electoral Act.

Consequently, the constitution and legislation should be there to regularize citizen participation among other things. In the case of Zimbabwe, the euphoria of attaining political independence and the commandist spirit that came with this euphoria resulted in the country not aligning itself to the Lancaster House Constitution which failed to provide for civil liberties as a constitutional provisions, but the ruling elites went a step further to promulgate a plethora of restrictive legislation that further eroded the little rights and freedoms that existed. Among the most outstanding of these restrictive pieces of legislation were the POSA and AIPPA, both of which sought to curtail citizens' right to information as well as the rights to assembly, association and expression (Mapuva and Muyengwa-Mapuva, 2012).

Repeated amendments of the Lancaster House Constitution, did not only signal that things were to align, but that self-interests prevailed over the concerns of the ordinary citizenry.. Eventually the constitution became a *patchwork of conflicting purposes, and not a* regulatory and legislative frameworks that should inform the socio-political interests of the majority of people and a conduit through which democracy is dispensed. In addition, the constitutional developments showed the extent to which the political dispensation strived for political survival on the backdrop of an increasingly restive population which responded to democratic decay that characterized political developments from the mid-1990s. The emergence of pro-democracy civil society movement in the country was a manifestation of a gap in the citizen participation continuum. The cross section of civil societies began to form but were strictly monitored by the state which "...signalled the eagerness to control the growing NGO

sector and, in particular, the funding being channelled into these organizations at a time when its political legitimacy was being undermined by a growing economic crisis" (Raftopoulos, 2000:36).

Factors Leading to the Changed State/Civil Society Interface

To understand why government have reneged on its wartime promises of creating a free society for its people, one needs to reflect on the recent developments, starting with the growing in prominence of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the subsequent formation of a broad-based opposition political party-the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The popularity of the MDC has been reflected by the fact that it commands a lot of support from almost the whole spectrum of civil society, ranging from labour and student movements, religious groups, and independent media houses (Sachikonye, 1995). Additionally, it has been able to amass the most electoral results since 2000 which has culminated in electoral disputes with other political parties. This explains the MDC's impressive performance in municipal and parliamentary elections at its inceptions and during its heydays. The success of civil society to convince citizen to refuse the endorsement of the government-sponsored Draft Constitutional in a referendum in 1999 dealt a heavy blow on the state because exposed the despotic nature that government had dealt with the issue of constitutional reforms. The results of the Referendum also indicated that civil society can at times have stronger voice than the state. The "farm invasions" that came hard on the heels of the formation of the MDC and the results of the Referendum were intended to punish the white commercial farmers who had bank-rolled the formation of the MDC and had also influenced farm workers in voting against government's intended endorsement of the Draft Constitution. The government began to perceive the white commercial farmers, civil society and the MDC as "enemies of the people". To the government, it has been alleged that Britain, the former colonial master, was behind the funding of various groups to effect regime change.

The unfolding of the above events led government to adopt a pessimistic view of civil society groups, Britain and its western allies as well as opposition political parties, especially the MDC. The pretext for the attempt to bringing civil societies into the sphere of the state is often given as their financial mismanagement, the lack of control with their funds (Raftopoulos and Phimister 1987). But the reality behind the attempts are linked to a fear by government of the potential NGOs have for organizing people outside the state structures, and secondly that NGOs with the change in donor policies with emphasis on building civil society institutions now receive funds

which earlier would go to government projects (World Bank Country Report, 2004). Thus, civil societies can be seen to be in direct competition with government over donor funds (*ibid*). New legislation and amendment to existing laws reflected vindictiveness on the part of government, for the laws were now geared at restricting citizen participation in governance and policy processes as well as downplaying their popularity. While laws are meant to protect the populace, the amendments to existing laws and the enactment of new laws provided government with a tool through which it could deal with the perceived “enemies of the state” and proponents of “regime change”. This paper will mainly deal with legal enactments and amendments that took effect soon after the formation of the MDC, a result of concerted effort by the generality of the Zimbabwean citizenry. This is so because the formation of the MDC reflected the extent of citizen participation and broad support enjoyed by this new political formation. The following are key legislative framework that this paper attempts to critique and how the content of these pieces of legislation influenced civil society involvement in public affairs.

At local level, local government, which had over the year had been centres for local participation, began to give in to the over-arching powers of central government. Contrary to the World Bank (2007:195)’s perception that “...local government has the power to manage its own fiscal revenues and expenditures, subject to national framework conditions”, events in Zimbabwe proved otherwise. Although ordinarily, local government institutions are supposed to represent “...a desired and natural outgrowth of trends towards fiscal decentralization, intended to reduce central [government] control in favour of local preferences that foster allocative efficiency” (Leach et al., 2007), the uncalled for interventions of the Executive in the affairs of local authorities tended to have a debilitating impact on the operations of such institutions.

Consequently, the State failed to establish a legal and policy framework consistent with decentralization and local autonomy (Leach, et al, (2007). However, there has been justification for the top-down approach being practiced by some governments, on the understanding that “...government officials are the ones who have the information on what resources the central government will make available for the implementation of development programmes and projects, so they are justified to make critical decisions regarding these programmes and projects if they are to be funded” (Hyden and Braton, 1993). Subsequently in Zimbabwe, the democratization of urban councils has been frustrated by “...the relatively stronger hand from central government which gives the Minister of Local Government and Urban Development] the right [and powers] to remove an elected [Urban] Council where it is felt that the elected officials are not in line with people’s wishes (MLGRUD, 1985).

Through an enabling Act of Parliament, ratepayers in

urban areas were empowered to form resident associations that would represent their interests. These residents’ associations have; in recent years, encouraged citizen participation and have even assumed political powers, which include fielding mayoral candidates, as well as showing direct interest in the running of city councils and rural district councils. In addition, such associations have been known to summon political leadership to discuss ratepayers concerns such as those pertaining to rates, and service delivery. However, through the Act, government has always retained much of the decision-making powers, with the Minister of Local Government having the power to decide on the suitability of an elected Mayor and to dismiss him/her as well as to appoint a Commission to run the affairs of a given Town or City. This has tended to discourage citizen participation because ratepayers’ choice of a Mayor should not necessarily be the one preferable to the Minister of Local Government. It can therefore be noted that the Urban Councils Act provided token participation as it did not require community participation to pass legislation, but only consults communities after the by-laws have been enacted. There is no guarantee that citizens’ input is ever considered or incorporated into the ensuing legislation.

Closing Existing Political Space

The enactment of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act AIPPA in 2002 was a turning point in the democratic history of post-colonial Zimbabwe. The two pieces of legislation sought to curtail civil liberties

It has been argued that POSA was a reincarnation of colonial legislation, Law and order Maintenance Act (LOMA) of the 1960s which has sought to curtail the movement of the black population. Therefore it came as a surprise that a similar piece of legislation was enacted in a post-colonial dispensation. POSA comprises a number of sections, which prescribes certain expectations and compliances. Of note is Part 2 of POSA which enumerates what action can be viewed as ‘offences against constitutional government and public security’, which include sabotage, acts of terrorism, possession of dangerous weaponry as well as undermining the authority of or insulting the President. Under Part 2 of POSA publishing or communicating false statements prejudicial to the state constitutes an offence. Under Part 3, POSA calls for police clearance for any one or group that intends to hold a public gathering. Public gatherings under this Act include political, religious and social gatherings. In order to preserve public order, police are given the authority to change the venue or other logistical aspects of the meeting, prohibit the meeting entirely, or prohibit all public meetings in a particular police district for up to three months. These sections of POSA have

been used to decline or shut down several public meetings, including those held by civil society groups and elected political officials as they attempted to report to their constituencies. The police are not required to give reasons why meetings are considered threats to public order nor do they suggest conditions under which the meetings could be held. The Act gives the police arbitrary powers such as the authority to change the venue or other logistical aspects of a meeting, prohibit the meeting entirely, or prohibit all public meetings in a particular police district for up to three months.

In practice, police does not sanction any meeting presumed to threaten public order and this is referred to in Section 19, which discourages "gatherings conducive to riot, disorder or intolerance". Part 5 requires that people carry identity documents with them and empowers the police to cordon and search individuals and residences. Part 6 authorizes the Attorney-General to prosecute those suspected of having breached any section of POSA and calls upon the defence forces to assist the police when the need arises. It also gives the police powers of search, seizure and forfeiture. In the face of this legislation, many civic organizations and opposition political parties have found it very difficult to reach out to their constituencies without committing a breach of one of the sections of POSA. Freedoms of speech, movement and association have also been curtailed by sections of this legislation and this has made the work of much of civil society difficult. Some sections of civil society have regarded POSA as a draw back to their attempts to contribute to a democratic dispensation and to engage government on vital issues such as the cultivation of a democratic culture among the citizens and enlightening people of their rights as citizens, through outreach programmes. Consequently, POSA has shown the failure by the state, not only to stay away from colonial legislative practices, but to desist from rejuvenating colonial practice to deal with an increasingly restive population demanding the restoration of democracy. It has also shown that the post-colonial state has accepted that the most effective way of dealing with a restive population is through heavy-handedness.

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) sought to curtail information dissemination and access to information to the general public. It is generally accepted that access to information empowers citizens and enables them to make informed political decisions. Martin and Feldman (1998:1) note that countries "...which are committed to democratic good governance should adopt a legal regime that promotes access to information". They further maintain that access to information is "...the ability of the citizen to obtain information in the possession of the state" (1998:1). AIPPA is a legal instrument that enables the government to monitor and control the flow of information in the country. In enacting the legislation, the government argued that it wanted to

prevent the publication of information that is "...manufactured and can be manipulated into a lethal weapon for our downfall". Under Part V, sections 38, 39 and 42, the Act prohibited the publication of unverified stories. The Act was also empowered to register and deregister journalists or deny them a practicing licence without giving reasons. This implies that journalists can be co-opted or taken advantage of in order to retain their practicing licences, in contravention of ethics. These ethics were further compromised in that the government can determine what should be reported and what should not. Prohibitive punishment for breach of these laws saw many journalists getting arrested and independent newspapers closed down, like in the case of *The Daily News*, which was closed in 2004, after it was accused of reporting in favour of anti-government forces. The government has also taken advantage of AIPPA to deny prospective independent newspapers and radio stations practicing licenses, arguing "...the local media should not be owned by foreigners". This is in breach of citizens' right to information. AIPPA has also adversely affected relationships with other countries because it prohibits foreign diplomats from making speeches at their National Day events. Amendment to AIPPA makes the practice of journalism without accreditation a criminal offence punishable by up to two years in prison. Civic organizations were not allowed to be involved in politics of the country or to make political statements or to leak any information outside the country. Civic organizations were also not allowed to be involved in politics of the country, to make political statements, or to leak any information outside the country.

Under AIPPA, practising journalism was by registration under the Media and Information Council (MIC), which would give or deny practicing licences to both journalists and media stations alike. It also licensed or denied to license radio stations. Under MIC, many prospective radio stations were denied the chance to practice. Journalists operating without licenses were subjected to hefty fines and/or imprisonment. These restrictions on journalism also applied to non-journalists collecting information for other private purposes. From the content and practice of AIPPA, it can be inferred that it has been aimed to stifle debate and open discussion on political developments in the country as well as curtailing citizens from making informed political decisions.

ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL PROCESSES

Elections in Zimbabwe have set a very controversial precedence over the last two decades. L Successive disputed electoral results and the subsequent establishment of a Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2009, bears testimony to the nature and character of elections in the country in recent times. Elections are one of the

most vital tenets of democratic rule as they provide the much-needed opportunity for citizens to determine who should govern over public affairs. As a result, Zimbabwe has put in place legislation that governs the conduct of elections in the country. During the time, all elections were guided and informed by a set of legislation, notably the Electoral Act and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Act (ZECA). The Electoral Act was the overall law that governed the conduct of elections in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Act created the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), in charge of preparing for and conducting House of Assembly (formerly parliamentary), senatorial, presidential, council and referendums as provided for in the Electoral Act. The Zimbabwean Electoral Act has been at the centre of all the disputed elections over the years due to its partisan nature as it was crafted in such a way that it would not only allow the incumbent political party to militarise and politicise the electoral process, with such terms as 'electoral rigging', 'vote buying' and 'manipulation of the electorate through politicizing food aid to rural communities' being floated around. This has rendered the whole electoral process not only prone to manipulation but flawed, thereby eventually short-changing the electorate. The Zimbabwe Electoral Act (2004) is a constitutional provision that provides guidelines on the conduct of elections both at national, provincial and municipal levels. The Act provides for the creation of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission whose mandate is to conduct elections. This Act establishes an independent authority, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, to administer all elections and referenda in Zimbabwe. The Act empowers the State President to appoint members of the Commission. It administers Presidential, Parliamentary, Senatorial and municipal elections (Chapter 2:13, Act 25/2004).

The provisions gave the Commission far-reaching powers over voter education. The Act also barred all foreign support for voter education activities except through the Electoral Commission. Under the Act, the Commission would be empowered to require anyone, other than a political party, providing voter education to furnish it with detailed information, including funding sources. Failure to comply with any one of these laws would constitute a criminal offence, liable to a fine or to up to two years of imprisonment. Much of civil society and NGOs depend on foreign funding. Civil society has therefore tended to view this Bill as government attempts to flash them out of existence and to cause cash flow problems for civic groups. A free election is one in which voters can freely vote for the candidates of their choice. The electoral laws themselves must create a set of rules that allow all contesting parties to compete fairly in the elections and all eligible voters who wish to do so to exercise their right to vote. A fair election is one in which all the processes of the election are fairly and impartially

administered. These processes included the registration of voters and election candidates, the voting process and the counting of votes and the announcement of the results. Election candidates and parties contesting the election were required to be given a fair and substantially equal opportunity before the election to campaign and inform the electorate of their principles, policies and promises. This included equal opportunity for airtime on the electronic and print media the most worrisome aspect in the electoral legislation and practice is the role of the executive which plays a prominent role in the general administration of elections, despite the fact that during elections, the Executive will also be contesting the same elections which compromises its neutrality.

Recent political developments have put Zimbabwe on the world map once again as political parties accused each other of electoral irregularities, just as had happened in 2008. As the centre of the controversy was the way in which the Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC), the electoral regulatory body conducted the elections. Subsequently, the Zimbabwe Electoral Act was put to the test both prior to the Harmonised Elections. Despite the fact that the election results had been authenticated by observers, notably the *SADC Observer Mission, which not only certified the results as authentic but went on to congratulate President Mugabe for securing a resounding victory*. Politically-motivated violent acts were not common and peace seems to have prevailed prior, during and on the aftermath of the electoral process. However, some political parties alleged that they were denied access to use media (both print and electronic, as prescribed by electoral laws.

Recent Developments in Zimbabwe

Recent Development in Zimbabwe, especially from 2010, has seen the adoption of a new constitutional dispensation (2013) which seeks to liberalise the Zimbabwean citizenry by overturning the restrictive different pieces of legislation that violated various civil liberties over the years (Mapuva and Muyengwa-Mapuva, 2012). The new Constitutional dispensation of 2013 has been a landmark development in the constitutionalism discourse of the country because for the first time in the history of the country, civil liberties boast of constitutional protection. Over the years, since colonial days, political and civil as well as socio-economic rights (encompassing civil liberties) of citizens have been creatures of statutes and as such had no constitutional protection. With recent political developments, notably the constitutional reform processes culminating in the enactment of a 'people-driven' constitution after exhaustive public consultations, the country can now boast of a fairly comprehensive constitutional order. However, the challenge to the activation of the new constitution to full throttle has been

lack of political will to align, reconcile and harmonise the new constitution to existing legislation, most of which run *ultra vires* the dictates of the new constitutional dispensation. As such it is incumbent upon the establishment to ensure that the new supreme law of the land and the plethora of pieces of legislation are aligned so as to avoid dissonance and/or discord as well as double standards in the implementation of laws in the country.

Application of the Dictates of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation to the Zimbabwe State

Judging from the above discussion, access to information, enjoyment of rights and freedoms as well as the absence of a level political landscape have all failed to meet the requirements of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation. The main thrust of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation is that state parties can deal with participation differently. The Ladder presents participation as existing in categories ranging from non-participation, tokenism and citizen control (see Ladder of Participation above), with each category representing a specific political dispensation. Dictatorships are represented under the non-participation classification, tokenism represents those political leaders that masquerade as democracies, which citizen control represents those political dispensations where citizens contribute to the decision-making processes in the country.

Some states, mostly dictatorships view citizens as insignificant and with no capacity to contribute to policy formulation and the general administration of the country. Consequently such dictatorships consider citizens as mere recipients of regulations, which means that citizens are non-participants in the politics of the country or in decision-making processes. This befits Arnstein's **non-participation** stage. The different pieces of legislation in Zimbabwe have attempted to dodge this scenario by putting in place some semblance of seeking to empower citizens either through indirect participation or through consultation. This is a token form of participation with no guarantee that citizens' input would be incorporated into the resultant legislation or decisions. This practice befits Arnstein's **Tokenism** stage which is aimed at hoodwinking the public into thinking that they are participants and/or stakeholders in the administration of the country. In the Zimbabwean context, the character is Parliament was such that only ZANU PF had a majority and would pass laws that satisfied their political aspirations without due regard of the populace. While elections would have provided the opportunity for active participation, events on the ground such as politically-motivated violence and coercion as well as limiting political freedoms resulting in the inability of the general populace enjoying active participation. In other words, Arnstein's **Active Participation** stage has been reduced to tokenism as

people have not been free to engage in active political activity. Consequently, it can be argued that the **Active Participation** stage in Zimbabwe has failed to be fully utilised due to a menacingly political environment. It can therefore be concluded that democracy in Zimbabwe has been increasingly controversial as opposition political parties and civil society organisations have continued to question the way elections have been held over the years.

Conclusion

The increased political dynamics from the mid-1990s coupled with increased intolerance among different political players culminated in violence in some cases as well as indecisive elections and the government of national unity in 2009. Some would allege that elections have become a façade to hoodwink the international community into believing that there was active participation yet it was mostly tokenism. Even amendments to existing laws had been vindictive and tended to disempower citizens from partaking in matters of public interest. The employment of laws to vindicate against the citizenry has seen the government breaching and renege on its obligations of serving the populace. However, people of Zimbabwe have their hopes pinned on the new constitution whose provisions resonate with the democratic dictates of Arnstein's **Active Participation** level. It remains to be seen whether the implementation of the new constitution will be done in letter and spirit of democracy. It is also this author's conviction that political leaders will set aside their political differences to serve the interests of the generality of Zimbabwe. If current political mud-slinging and tug-of-war on the backdrop of endemic corruption are anything to go by, then the people of Zimbabwe have still a long way to go before democracy and democratic principles are complied with in the dispensing of good governance.

ABBREVIATIONS

POSA-Public Order and Security Act; **AIPPA**-Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act; **MDC**-Movement for Democratic Change; **ZANU PF**-Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front); **SADC**-Southern African Development Committee; **ZEC**-Zimbabwe Electoral Commission; **ZECA**- Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Act; **MLGRUD**-Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development; **PVO**-Private and Voluntary Organizations Act; **NANGO**-National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations; **MACRA**-Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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- Capital radio open to the public, but was later closed down by Government, citing it as a security threat to state security, on the basis that it would temper with frequencies.
- Legal Resources Foundation, *Paralegal Bulletin*, No.20, February, 2008.
- This was an argument put forward by The Belize Court of Appeal which argued that "Today television is the most powerful medium for communicating ideas and disseminating information. The enjoyment of freedom of expression therefore includes freedom to use such a medium"
- This was the argument put forward by the then Minister of Information Professor Jonathan Moyo in defence of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's monopoly of the airwaves and the need to deny other prospective broadcasters a broadcasting licences.
- Voters were required to bring serial numbers of ballot papers that they will have used during the election to the ZANU (PF) party structures in their locality for a possible follow-up to determine who they will have voted for.

Review

The ripple effects of electoral experience in a frontier community in Nigeria: A study of a micro revolution in Ilorin, 1955-1959

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The adoption of Arthur Richards Constitution in 1946 and its implementation from the 1st January, 1947 translated to different things in different parts of the present day parts of Nigerian. Being an imperial order that extended the electoral principle in Nigeria, beyond Lagos and Calabar that have been having elected representatives in the European dominated councils in their respective areas since 1922, it was bound to stimulate major changes in both the administrative structures and social relations in the new areas to be covered. In Ilorin Community for instance, the operation became a platform to vent the congested minds of the oppressed peoples through the combined traditional and colonial administrative policies in the area. Ilorin, like the other parts of the then Northern Nigeria, the electoral process began as an extension of powers of the Traditional Authorities that served the indirect rule policy of the colonial administration. By 1955 however, the combination of the traditional and colonial policies had become a heavy burden that the multicultural population in Ilorin were no longer ready to bear. The situation influenced the unity of the oppressed people to form the association, which in local parlance, referred to as "Ilorin Talaka Parapo". The ripple effects of the electoral process translated into a micro revolution.

Key words: Electoral principle, ripple effects, micro revolution, colonial administration.

INTRODUCTION

The period, 1955 to 1959 in Ilorin can simply be described as a revolutionary one in the history of the community. Both the administrative and structural changes witnessed within this period were so dramatic that Ilorin became the experimental ground for major changes that were introduced in the entire Northern Region.

Indeed, many factors were directly instrumental to that development and to the dramatic changes. The location of Ilorin, as the midway between the peoples of Northern

Nigeria and those of the Southwest, and its middleman role in the historical trade relations between these peoples are also important to illustrate the impact of long relations between the peoples. The multicultural setting of Ilorin community itself placed the community at an advantage to play multiple roles in the lives of the two major linguistic groups in Nigeria. While Ilorin community shared both historical and linguistic The period, 1955 to 1959 in Ilorin can simply be described as a revolutionary

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Indeed, many factors were directly instrumental to that development and to the dramatic changes. The location of Ilorin, as the midway between the peoples of Northern Nigeria and those of the Southwest, and its middleman role in the historical trade relations between these peoples are also important to illustrate the impact of long relations between the peoples. The multicultural setting of Ilorin community itself placed the community at an advantage to play multiple roles in the lives of the two major linguistic groups in Nigeria. While Ilorin community shared both historical and linguistic relations with the southwest, the religious belief (Islam) of the majority of its population and other cultural values are similar to those of Northern Nigerian peoples. Therefore, the increasing trend of nationalist activities in the southwestern Nigeria could not but infect Ilorin and subsequently transmitted to the other parts of Northern Region. The nationalist activities in the Southwest directly influenced the people of Ilorin who were under the heavy burden of colonial policies implemented through the indirect rule system (Baba, 1986). Consequently, the people reacted by mounting pressure for reforms on the process of selecting their representatives, both to the council of the Native Authority and Regional House of Assembly.

Despite the fact that the peoples' agitation for changes in the existing processes of representation were directed against colonial government's policies, the indigenous political institution and the agencies that came with colonial administration, the colonial government did not refuse the peoples' demand. The colonial government's program at the time was to gradually disengage from the colonized areas. As previously discussed, the modification of the electoral process to accommodate the common people of Ilorin, encouraged the people to exert more pressure for further reforms. For instance, between 1950 and 1955 a number of electoral changes, which ranged from improved Electoral College system to increased number of elected representatives, were adopted for Ilorin, while electoral reforms were gradual in the other parts of the Northern Region.

These electoral changes reduced the pervasive influence of the indigenous political institutions which had evolved the scheme of ensuring that its nominees occupied positions of peoples' representatives, at the level of the council of the Native Authority and at the Regional level. This was possible because the Colonial administration originally left the process of selecting peoples' representatives to the indigenous political institutions, which it also used for its indirect rule system. On the part of the common people of Ilorin, the electoral reforms introduced as a result of their agitations, encouraged frequent meetings of the people and these

were later transformed to an Association known as "Ilorin Talaka Parapo" (Ilorin Commoners' Union) (Saidu, 1986).

Consolidation of the Revolutionary Group

By 1955, the Ilorin Talaka Parapo which began purely as a reactionary group to the heavy burden of oppression by the ruling class, was gradually transformed to a formidable group that did not only serve as opposition to the indigenous ruling class, their allies and representatives in the council of the Native Authority and Regional House of Assembly but had also become a reformist group (Saidu, 1986). It thus opened a new channel of intergroup relations amongst the people of Ilorin. Its membership cuts across the linguistic groups that constitute the population of the Emirate. Its criterion for membership was to belong to the poor class of the society, or be interested and committed to the cause of liberating the oppressed group of Ilorin community (Saidu, 1986). Prominent among members of the Talaka Parapo were Alhaji Olokooba Alanamu, Mallam Aliyu Bako and Mr. R. A. Akande whose ethnic origin cut across different groups in Ilorin. The popularity of the Association soon attracted other members of the wealthy class such as Alhaji Maito and elite such as Alhaji Ibrahim Laaro. The association benefited from the experiences and wealth of these individuals. As an opposition, the Ilorin Talaka Parapo became the watchdog of the oppressed over council of the Native Authority and conduct of Ilorin representatives in the Regional House of Assembly.

The Ilorin Talaka Parapo (ITP) demonstrated its commitment to protecting the welfare of the masses in 1956. In that year, the council of Ilorin Native Authority completed its water project and decided to fix a fee to be paid by the people to enjoy pipe borne water; Ilorin Talaka Parapo led the resistance against the payment. The association believed that such public utility was a social service, which should not require any payments from the poor people (Saidu, 1986). Consequently, it mobilized its members, both within and outside Ilorin Township, against the payment of water rate. At the association's meeting of February, 1956 members formally resolved not to pay the water rate to the Native Authority (Salau, 1987). As part of this struggle, the ITP decided to send representatives to the headquarters of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) at Kaduna, to report the incident of high handedness of the local administration. The representatives were to seek in addition a number of reforms in the operation of the ruling party (NPC) in Ilorin province, to accommodate the interest of the common people (Salau, 1987). The delegation led by Alhaji Suleiman Maito, the Chairman of the Union, had among other members, Alhaji Ibrahim Laaro, who later became the elected member to the Northern House of Assembly, to replace Alhaji Saadu

Alanamu (Salau, 1987).

On getting to Kaduna, the delegation of Ilorin Talaka Parapo (ITP) which arrived the Regional Headquarters of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) with high hopes and expected warm reception, were merely received by an administrative secretary, Malam Zakar. They were advised to return to Ilorin, and channel their complaints through the provincial branch of the party.

The unaccommodating manner in which the delegation of the Ilorin Talaka Parapo was received was not only disappointing to the delegation but was also considered hopeless because the association was directed to channel its complaints through the local executive of the NPC the same organ, it was complaining about. The situation indicated that the NPC Headquarters did not reckon with them as a group.

On the delegates return to Ilorin, another general meeting was held to report their encounter at Kaduna. The members were highly disappointed by the reported action of the officer at the Headquarters of the NPC. However rather than been totally discouraged, members of Ilorin Talaka Parapo resolved to continue with the struggle to emancipate the people of Ilorin from the yolk of oppression. Consequently, another delegation was raised to seek an alliance with the Action Group (AG), which was the ruling party in the Western Region (Salau, 1987).

As it was discussed earlier, the geographical location of Ilorin Community placed it at a dual advantage to relate with both the North and the Western regions. The decision of Ilorin Talaka Parapo to ally with the Action Group (AG), which was the ruling political party in the southwest, was to be able to sustain the struggle against the oppressors of the common people of Ilorin. On the part of the leadership of the Action Group (AG), the support towards the liberation of the downtrodden people of Ilorin was seen as an opportunity to bring all the Yoruba speaking peoples into one fold. This was in line with the party's original name of Egbe – Oduduwa. The party began as Egbe Omo Oduduwa in London (Babatunde, 1985). The indigenous ruling class in Ilorin was indeed not naïve to the new development as they rightly saw the activities of the Ilorin Talaka Parapo as directed towards their authority and privileges. Therefore, the *Emir*, the *Balogun* and the other Chiefs were united in organizing counter moves to confront the Talaka Parapo and its AG allies.

The coming together of the indigenous political elite in Ilorin, this time was under a totally different atmosphere. They jointly saw the working relations between the Ilorin Talaka Parapo and Action Group as a renewal of the threat to their respective and collective survival. This explains their collective commitment to frustrate the programs of the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* and the Action Group. The indigenous ruling class embarked on the mobilization of people by emphasizing on the hostile historical relations between the *Emirate* and the Yoruba.

The issue of the pollution of Islamic religion in Ilorin as a result of the actions of ITP was also employed to mobilize support for their own cause (Abdulfatai Bello 1987).

The impact of political alliance ITP and AG

A casual appraisal of the alliance between the revolutionary group in Ilorin, the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* (ITP) and the ruling political party in the Western Region, the Action Group (AG) cannot give the full impact of this development. The immediate situation, which brought about the struggle for freedom from the yolk of oppression, by the ITP gives the impression that the relationship was a normal and natural thing, dictated by the trend of political developments in Nigeria. However, a critical evaluation of the historical relations between the people of Ilorin and those of the kingdoms and chiefdoms that constituted the Western Region would indicate deep-rooted suspicion between the peoples.

Ilorin, having been part of the Old Oyo empire, before it was proclaimed an Emirate by the Fulani, who were generally regarded as aliens to the environment, was often hoped would be reclaimed by the Yoruba. The protracted wars of struggle for survival between Ilorin and the authority of the old Oyo Empire and later with various parts of Yoruba land, created the deep rooted rivalry and suspicions between the people of Ilorin and those of the areas that constituted the Western Region. The role of Ilorin in the fall of Old Oyo empire, its involvement in the 19th century wars in Yoruba land and its protracted rivalry with Ibadan, which was eventually settled by the colonial administration, kept the flame of distrust between the two groups alive until the advent of colonial rule. The alliance between the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* (ITP) and the Action Group (AG) of the Western Region unconsciously reopened the unfriendly relations between the indigenous ruling institutions in Ilorin and the Yoruba in general.

The *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* (ITP) alliance with the Action Group (AG) of the South West must have underestimated the impact of that historical relation between the peoples of Ilorin and the peoples of the South West. Members of *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* must have seen its alliance with Action Group purely from its immediate objectives, to emancipate the common people of Ilorin from heavy burden of the indigenous rulers.

Even though, membership of *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* transcended linguistic affinity and historical origin of the diverse peoples of Ilorin, the dominance of the Yoruba in the total population of Ilorin also accounted for the dominance of the Yoruba in the membership of *Ilorin Talaka Parapo*. For instance, majority of the members of the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* (ITP) hailed from the Alanamu and Ajikobi quarters in Ilorin, a dominant settlement of the Yoruba people. Perhaps, the dominance of the Yoruba in the membership of *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* (ITP) had encouraged the AG to give full support to the alliance

with the group.

The AG gave human and material support to the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* in its struggle for peoples' emancipation through electoral process. The ITP contested against candidates sponsored or supported by the indigenous ruling oligarchy. This provided unique opportunities for the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* to popularize its programs. This was at a time that the NPC was seen as a popular party in the Northern Region but was regarded as the symbol of oppression, deprivation and injustice by the ITP in Ilorin. The campaigns of the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* both within and outside Ilorin Township involved the amplification of the ills of NPC. The campaigns were so effective that the conservative nature of members of the NPC was painted as elements of oppression. The desire for change of the political situation in Ilorin, in which liberty, equality and justice would be guaranteed, was very strong.

Both the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* (ITP)/Action Group (AG) alliance and the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) saw the 1956/57 election into the councils of Ilorin Native Authority and the Regional House of Assembly, as the battle of survival. The *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* (ITP)/Action Group (AG) alliance concentrated its campaign on issues relating to the then contemporary administrative experiences of the people, which were characterized by heavy burden of oppressive policies and the high handedness of the local authority on the common peoples. The need for the people's solidarity and commitment to vote for the ITP/AG alliance was stressed. The NPC on the other hand based their own campaign on historical relations between the people of Ilorin and the Southwest (Abdulfatai, 1987). The local branch of the party, which was mainly represented by the Traditional Authorities in Ilorin and the elite group that dominated the Native Authority, concentrated its campaign on the primordial issues, sentiments and the consequence of the ITP/AG alliance on the population of Ilorin (Abdulfatai, 1987). The unfriendly historical relations between Ilorin and the people of the southwest were also amplified (Abdulfatai Bello 1987).

Despite the heavy presence of the Northern Regional Government, the Traditional Authorities and the agents of oppression in the Native Authority, the common people of Ilorin were resolute to use the electoral power to secure victory for the candidates of the ITP/AG alliance. The alliance scored fifty three per cent (53%) in June, 1956 election and four (4) out of six (6) seats for Ilorin in April / May election of 1957 (Parden, 1986). Indeed, the victory of most of the candidates sponsored by ITP/AG alliance over the candidates of the NPC clearly illustrated the supremacy of the people's will over the agents of oppression. Prominent among the contestants who lost at the polls were Alhaji Saadu Alanamu, who was then the Administrative Secretary of Ilorin Native Authority. He lost to Alhaji Ibrahim Laaro, who was from Baboko area of Ilorin (Kawu, 1983). Alhaji Sulu Karnani Gambari, who

was then a Court Registrar, before he became the *Emir* in 1959 also lost to one Mr. Ajayi from Lanwa District of Ilorin. Another prominent personality that was victorious at the election was Mallam Sulyman Maito, the Chairman of the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* (ITP).

The victory of majority of the candidates sponsored by ITP/AG alliance in the 1956/57 clearly illustrated the people's resentment against the autocratic rule. The losses at the polls by candidates who were members of the family of the Traditional ruling institutions, such as the *Emir*, *Balogun* and other chiefs illustrate that the pattern of voting was dictated by issues rather than linguistic or cultural differences of the people. This situation once again, demonstrated the integration of the culturally diverse population of Ilorin, to pursue common course of freedom for the common people.

The new socio-political order in Ilorin, 1957/58

The victory of members of *Ilorin Talaka Parapo*/Action Group Alliance in the 1956/57 polls led to different reactions. For the oppressed people of Ilorin, it was time to celebrate their freedom and map out strategies to prevent the repeat of their bad experiences. On the other hand, the ruling oligarchy and the elites in alliance with them saw it as the time for re-strategizing because they clearly foresaw dangers ahead of them if the revolutionary group was allowed to survive. Indeed, the respective reactions from the two groups resulted into a new phase of relations. Both sides were really prepared and were at their best to undermine one another. The victory was a powerful impetus for the ITP/AG alliance because it gave a clear signal to the anticipated changes of the social, political and economic structures in Ilorin Emirate. On the other hand, the indigenous ruling class, the elite that had been part of the Native Authority, the Northern Regional government and the NPC as a party saw the defeat at the 1956/57 polls as a big challenge to their collective survival. Therefore the Regional government came to the rescue of those who lost at the elections. This was done by appointing some of those who lost at the elections into the Regional office. Added to this, the Regional government collaborated with the remnant of the NA staff still loyal to the NPC to suffocate the ITP/AG led council of Ilorin Native Authority.

The Ilorin Native Authority staff that transferred their service to the Regional administration for the fear of being victimized by the new elected council of the Ilorin Native Authority continued to serve as the link between the NPC and those still under the employment of the Native Authority. However, the Regional administration seized the opportunity on the council's attempt to discipline disobedient staff to interfere in the matters. Native Authority tried to discipline the disobedient staff.

On assumption of office, the council of Ilorin Native Authority under the *Talaka Parapo*/Action Group alliance

approached the issues relating to the commoners' interest with the required dispatch. The water rate, which was the immediate or the last factor that set ITP/AG alliance in direct commotion with the NPC was the first to be abrogated. Similar policies that placed burden on the common people were either modified or completely removed. For instance, taxes on farm produce were removed. The forest guards, which the common people considered to be oppressive, were all modified in such a way that the people were relieved.

The traditional practices and institutions of oppression such as the *Onise Oba* (King's messenger) *Oloja* (Head of the Market) and *Baba Kekere* (the small father) who served as intermediary between the people and the judges of the Sharia Courts under the Alikali were outlawed and penalty fixed for anyone caught still playing such. These were done according to the original desire of the group, for the common people of Ilorin to live a better life of freedom. Other elements of oppression such as *Aroja* were also abrogated. The fact that these outlawed local agents of oppression represented either the *Emir* or the respective *Balogun*, they considered that their interests were directly challenged. This situation however explains their commitment to the scheme to terminate the new Native Authority council, dominated by candidates of ITP/AG Alliance.

With these reforms by the (council) under the alliance of *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* and Action Group, majority of the Native Authority staff, who were related to the indigenous political institutions were no longer feeling comfortable. The fears of the staff were that they would be the next targets of ITP/AG controlled council (Kawu, 1983).

Since the new leadership in the council could not dispense with all staff on the basis of being related with the indigenous political class, the council continued to accommodate some of them but it had to operate with caution and openness to avoid being misrepresented or sabotaged. On the part of the staff of the Native Authority, they were consciously on the watch for any form of humiliation of any of their respective mentors, who lost out in the elections against members of the new council (Kawu, 1983). The suspicious relations between the staff and the new council soon crystallized into open hostility. By August 1957 when the new council was barely three months old, the staff of Ilorin Native Authority petitioned the Regional Minister of Local Government, that their "... very instruments of living and liberties are being murdered" (NAK/ILO/PROF/445/5.5. Vol.I). The minister was therefore urged to deliver them from the horrors of the new council in the Ilorin Native Authority (NAK/ILO/PROF/445/5.5. Vol.I).

Given the understanding of the council, of the chain-of relations between the staff of the Native Authority, the indigenous political leaders and the regional government, the council formulated the policy that public servants should be totally insulated from partisan politics. This actually generated sharp reactions from both the Native

Authority staff and the indigenous political class. They both saw the new policy as another scheme of the new council to undermine their respective interests. Consequently both the Authority staff and their indigenous mentors decided to send a powerful delegation to the Regional government, on the implication of the new council's policy on staff participation in politics. Therefore, when the council recommendations on staff participation in politics reached the Regional government, it was not responded to. The Council eventually became impatient of the non-action or response of the Regional government on the matter and it therefore decided to operate the policy on its own (Kawu, 1983). This situation led to the suspension of the recalcitrant council staff and subsequent termination of appointment of some of them (Kawu, 1983). Judging by the way the council handled the situation relating to the recalcitrant staff, it had actually opened the channel of complicating relations between it, the staff and their mentors at the local level, on one hand and the Regional government on the other hand.

As should be expected, the action of the new council seriously affected the morale of a good number of staff of the Ilorin Native Authority. They no longer felt secured on their jobs because they were never too sure of what they could do to enjoy the confidence of their new employer (NAK/ILO/PROF/445/5.5. Vol.I.). However a few of the staff, fully backed by their traditional mentors, were ready to slog it out with the new council. They anticipated that unless something was done to save some of their mentors, who were traditional, titleholders in Ilorin could also be removed from office and their collective safety was in danger (Kawu, 1983).

It was under this climate of uncertainty that the category of staff of Ilorin Native Authority, who were members of the families of holders of traditional titles, decided to mobilize them-selves to challenge the NA elected council. The Ilorin Native Authority staff proclaimed itself a Workers Union (NAK/ILO/PROF/MLG/445/S.5 Vol.). Expectedly, the council totally refused to recognize the proclaimed Workers' Union. The council went further to formally ban the involvement of its employees in partisan politics (NAK/ILO/PROF/MLG/445/S.5 Vol). It spelt out the punishment for any of its employees found not doing the job for which he was employed (NAK/ILO/PROF/MLG/445/S.5 Vol. I). It was in response to the council decisions that the workers decided to send another petitions, to both the Regional government in Kaduna and the National government in Lagos on the insecurity of their jobs and even their lives under the council in Ilorin Native Authority (NAK/ILO/PROF/MLG/445/S.5 Vol. I).

The swiftness with which the National Government in Lagos responded to the petition sent by the workers actually indicated a form of connection between the N. A. Workers or its agents with the colonial government. A

Labour Officer was dispatched to Ilorin (NAK/ILO/PROF/MLG/445/S.5 Vol. I). Both oral and written evidences were obtained from the two sides reported to be in dispute, that is, the council and its workers.

The findings of the Labour Officer revealed that the Workers Union in Ilorin Native Authority was neither registered as such with the Regional government nor the National government (NAK/ILO/PROF/MLG/445/S.5 Vol. I). Further analysis of the situation at Ilorin at the time made the Labour Officer to classify the relations between the Ilorin NA council and its staff as political rather than having anything to do with Labour (NAK/ILO/PROF/MLG/445/S.5 Vol.).

Mallam A. K. Oba, who the Ilorin Native Authority Council recognized as the Worker's ring leader and said to have abandoned his employment in the Native Authority for Union's activities, was strongly advised by the Labour officer to take his job more seriously (NAK/ILO/PROF/MLG/445/S.5 Vol.). Even though the workers proclaimed in their presentation to the Labour Officer that he was their President and a dedicated worker of the Authority, there was no evidence to show to the Labour Officer, that he was actually dedicated to his duties. Also the evidence to show that the Labour union was actually registered and had the legal right to operate could also not be presented to the Labour office. Hence the union was considered non-existent.

On presentation of the Labour Officer's report to the National government, it was concluded that the reported case by the staff of Ilorin Native Authority against the council could not be treated within the Labour laws. The petition received from the staff of Ilorin Native Authority was therefore considered as a manifestation of unfriendly relations between the council and its staff. The Labour officer therefore cautioned that council staff should not be encouraged to take the challenging posture to their employer.

Despite the Labour Officer's unfavourable report on the worker's report against the Council, and the confirmation that the group of workers cannot be taken for a Labour Union, the group of workers were not discouraged to go ahead with its struggle against the Council. It went ahead to still refer to itself as a Workers Union and even engaged a Legal Practitioner, Chief Richard Akinjide, to write another petition on its behalf, to the Regional government on what was summed up as mal-administration in Ilorin Native Authority (NAK/ILO/PROF/MLG/445/S.5 Vol.). In their entreaty, the Workers' Union pleaded with the Northern Regional government to appoint an impartial commission to inquire into the activities and conduct of Ilorin Native Authority towards its staff.

Allegations ranging from victimization, discrimination, and insecurity of their jobs among many others were levied against the council (NAK/ILO/PROF/MLG/445/S.5 Vol.). Details of the examples of each of the cases cited

were given to impress the Regional Government to consider their case from a new perspective (NAK/ILO/PROF/MLG/445/S.5 Vol.). To further strengthen their case, a delegation of the workers was dispatched to Kaduna to submit the petition directly to the Premier (Oba, 1984). The delegation also visited a number of ministers to carry them along in their demand for a probe into the activities of the new council in Ilorin Native Authority.

The vigour with which the workers pursued their case against the Council and the extent they went was far beyond the ability and the capability of the individual N. A. Staff or their proclaimed Workers' Union. Rather, it clearly points to the fact the Council staff challenging the council of the Ilorin Native Authority was fully backed by some powerful authorities. For instance, the appointment of Chief Richard Akinjide as the solicitor of the Ilorin "Worker's Union" cannot be said to be an accident. Being a member of an opposition party to the Action Group (AG), which was already in alliance with the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo*, Chief Richard Akinjide's involvement in the case where AG's interest was visible, reveals that the rift between the Council and its staff in Ilorin had become a national one. It had actually become an inter political party affair. This meant therefore that the ITP/AG alliance Council in Ilorin was directly faced by NPC/NCNC alliance at the national level. The parties in alliance must have sensed the involvement of the Action Group (AG) in Ilorin council affairs as signal of danger to their interests in the area. Therefore, the engagement of Chief Richard Akinjide, a prominent member of the NCNC (an opposition to AG) to represent the Native Authority workers against the council, was the best it could do to face the Action Group (AG) which was the main backer of the revolutionary group in Ilorin (ITP).

The council was able to read ahead of the time and the situation. It saw the full involvement of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) in its local dispute with the workers as a strong signal of the scheme to suffocate it. Therefore, in one of the council's meetings, a motion was formally moved to merge Ilorin to the Western Region (Salau, 1984). The adoption of the motion by majority vote of the council opened a new flank of reactions both within the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* ITP itself and outside it.

Reactions to the proposed Ilorin/West Merger

The mobilization of the selected staff of the Ilorin Native Authority against its council, which was borne out of fears of uncertainty both by the workers and their mentors at the local level of administration was the first phase of the crisis facing the ITP/AG alliance council. The second phase of the crisis was the general reactions against the decision of the council to merge Ilorin with the Western Region. Apart from the fact that the Ilorin traditional political institutions saw the proposal as a direct betrayer

of their own traditional values, they also saw it as unacceptable subjugation to their age long enemies and rivals. Consequently, the Ilorin traditional political authorities embarked on the campaign to make the people see the dangers in the merger of Ilorin with the Western Region (Oba, 1984). There was also reaction from the Islamic clerics. On their own, they saw the proposed merger as a direct threat to the purity of the Islamic religion (Oba, 1984). The clerics went ahead to impress on their followers that the merger will freely allow the infiltration of Ilorin by idol worshipers. It was the combined campaigns by the Indigenous Political class in Ilorin, the Islamic Clerics and the elite opposed to the merger proposal, that gradually eroded the unity among members of *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* (ITP). For instance, a group led by Alhaji Ibrahim Laaro, who was one of the elected representatives on the platform of the ITP/AG Alliance, to the Northern House of Representatives, decided to form a faction of the Talaka Parapo that was opposed to the proposed merger of Ilorin to the Western Region (Salau, 1984). The group eventually returned to the fold of the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) (Oba, 1984).

This disunity thus marked the beginning of the weakening of the ITP. The joint spirit required by the council to meet the challenges posed by the workers and in other areas of administration became shattered. The tempo of reforms embarked upon by the council was badly affected and the situation became so bad that more members of the Ilorin Talaka Parapo withdrew their support for the council.

The Northern Regional government saw an advantage in the opposition facing the ITP council and tried to exploit it. Consequently, it handed down very strong warning to the council for deviating from what the government considered as the essential standards of sound local government (NAK/ILO/PROF/NAL/5/C. Vol.II 1958). To the Regional government, a sound local government must, among other things, retain the respect, if not the political support, of the great number of the people and in particular of the responsible leaders of the community; "that it should adequately discharge the duties and responsibilities assigned to it, and that it should maintain high standards of honesty, morality and impartiality" (NAK/ILO/PROF/NAL/5/C. Vol.II 1958).

In reaction, the ITP/AG Alliance protested that the warning was politically motivated and that it was targeted at discouraging the Ilorin-West merger resolution which the council passed with a majority vote (Abdulfatai, 1987). It was also claimed that the refusal of the Regional government to see anything good in the Ilorin NA council under the ITP/AG Alliance as also political (Abdulfatai, 1987).

It was an irony of events that up till the time the Northern Regional government had to issue a warning to the Council, the council was of the opinion that it was on course and it thought that the support of both the *Emirate*

council and its workers never mattered to its decisions. The issuance of the warning therefore shows the true position of things (Abdulfatai, 1987).

It is not surprising, therefore, that in May, 1958, a three man committee was constituted by the Regional government to inquire into the activities of the ITP/AG led council. Mr. R. O. Mart, the Acting Northern Permanent Secretary for Social welfare and cooperatives, headed the committee. The other two members were Mallam Musa Alkalin Bida, and Mallam Yusuf Aminu, a member of the *Emir* of Kano's Court (NAK/ILO/PROF/NAL/5/C.1. Vol.II 1958).

The Committee's terms of reference were;

"To inquire into allegation that the Ilorin Native Authority (INA) has so misconduct or neglected its affairs that a situation has been created prejudicial to the interest of the Ilorin *Emirate* or to the interests of the region as a whole (NAK/ILO/PROF/NAL/5/C. Vol.II 1958).

In a sharp reaction to this committee of enquiry, the ITP/AG councilors protested strongly against the intent of setting up the committee. This was done through a resolution passed by the General Purpose Committee of the council. The council further expressed its concern and suspicion of the motives of the Regional government for setting up the committee of inquiry. It therefore rejected the constitution of the committee (Abdulfatai, 1987).

In its further condemnation of the committee of inquiry, the ITP/AG Alliance identified Mallam Musa Yusuf Aminu as Committed NA staff from the stronghold of the NPC, controlled government (Abdulfatai, 1987). As for the Chairman of the Committee, the basis of ITP/AG protest was that, as a staff of the Regional government, he was serving in the position of an accuser and the judge in the same case (Abdulfatai, 1987). Another area of concern to the ITP/AG Alliance over the enquiry was the fact that the allegations against the council were made public but the inquiry was to be held in camera.

As a result of these objections, the ITP/AG Alliance members of the council decided to snub the probe panel. The position of the council notwithstanding, the Committee went ahead to take evidence from the NPC councilors and other interested parties, which included the leaders of the workers of the Native Authority (Abdulfatai, 1987). However, in order to make the report of the committee acceptable and devoid of bias, the committee resorted to cross checking with oral evidence information obtained from minutes of council meetings (NAK/ILO/PROF/NAL/504.1958). The Committee was able to complete its assignment within record time and it submitted a report to the Regional government less than two months after it was constituted.

Based on the committee's recommendations, the

Northern Regional Government found the under listed allegations proved against the ITP/AG led council:

- a. that it used its powers to intimidate and victimize the political opponents of the ITP/AG;
- b. that it so mishandled staff matters that the whole local government machine was in danger of disruption;
- c. that because of party preoccupation, it had governed with growing inefficiency and thereby harmed its people;
- d. that it has split the people into different camps by insults and injustices towards both traditional officials and political opponents so that law and order were endangered.
- e. that the council had proved by its attitude towards impartial government officials who attempted to give advice that its present leaders were unable or unable to learn from their errors and unlikely to improve in future (NAK/ILO/PROF/NAL/504 1958).

It was on the basis of these proven allegations that the Northern Regional government formally dissolved the council and replaced it with an appointed caretaker committee in June 1958.

The Return of the Council of Ilorin NA to NPC

The replacement of the NA council dominated by members of ITP/AG Alliance with the caretaker council appointed by the Northern Regional government directly signaled the return of the NPC influence in Ilorin. Since the leaders of the NPC controlled the Northern Regional government, members of the party at the local level, clearly saw the appointment of the Caretaker Committee as the return of the Council to them. To the members of *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* (ITP), it was an unjustified denial of the democratically elected council to function. The Council saw the action of the Regional government as unwarranted collaboration to deny the people of Ilorin the right to secure their freedom through democratic process.

On assumption of office, the caretaker council reconstituted the Ilorin Town Council (Ilorin Provincial Report, 1959). It reduced the number of the elected councilors from fifty one to 34 thirty four (Ilorin Provincial Report, 1959). At the same time, the traditional membership of the council was increased from six to eighteen. The caretaker council therefore following these changes, a fresh election into the NA Council was scheduled along with Federal elections of December 1959 (Ilorin Provincial Report, 1959).

In the December elections, NPC was able to secure thirty-four seats, while the ITP/AG Alliance won only thirteen (Ilorin Provincial Report, 1959). From this, it is clear that the fortune of the ITP/AG alliance had begun to fall drastically. Thus, the NPC regained its traditional popularity, status and control over Ilorin (Kawu, 1983).

The choice of a literate *Emir* for Ilorin in 1959 after the

death of *Emir* AbdulKadir (1919 – 1959) was a deliberate scheme by the Regional government to ensure a good challenge to the revolutionary group symbolized by ITP/AG alliance. With the full support of the Regional government, the new *Emir* in Ilorin, Sulu (1959 – 1992) who was a former Court Registrar, and who lost election to an ITP candidate in the 1956 NA Council elections began to commit leaders of the ITP in Ilorin to various terms of imprisonments over trumped up charges (Kawu, 1983).

Many of the original strong supporters of the ITP/AG alliance at the inception of the struggles had returned to the NPC fold for social and political reasons. While some of them changed on the basis of the proposed Ilorin-West merger, others were intimidated by their immediate families to change their course (Kawu, 1983).

The changes in Ilorin between 1955 and 1959, which began as a political movement of the oppressed against the oppressors, marked an important phase in the sociopolitical relations amongst the diverse population of Ilorin. The *Talaka Parapo*, which began as a revolutionary group to defend the rights and privileges of the poor masses of Ilorin, ended up being infiltrated by the members of indigenous ruling class to reposition themselves within the power politics of the Emirate's administration.

The alliances between the groups in Ilorin with the external groups, such as that between ITP and AG and the Traditional ruling institution and the NPC, fully opened a new course of appraising the sociopolitical relations between the peoples of Ilorin on one hand and the people of Ilorin and the people of Northern Nigeria and those from the Southwest on the other hand. The changes recorded through the alliances with people from both the Southwest and Northern Nigeria clearly explain the dynamics of the cultural composition of Ilorin. It provided the Community the unique opportunity to freely interact with the people of both Northern and Southwestern Nigeria.

A general evaluation of intergroup relations in Ilorin between 1955 and 1959 shows that it was a product of class struggle between the indigenous ruling elites and the subject class, who had been carrying the heavy burden of both the indigenous administrative expenses and the unfriendly policies of the colonial administration. The window of opportunity to the subject class in Ilorin was the colonial administrative reforms embarked upon towards the last decades of its rule in Nigeria. The establishment of representational council at the level of the Native Authority and the establishment of Regional Houses of Representatives and Chiefs were some of these major reforms. While the membership of both the council for the Native Authority and the Regional House of Representatives were to be selected through the democratic process, members of the House of Chiefs were constituted by the indigenous ruling class.

The empowerment of the indigenous political institutions

in Ilorin by the colonial administration actually accounted for the successes recorded in the operation of the indirect rule system in the Emirate. Even though autocratic power given to the *Emir* was actualized on his control of the other political institutions in the Emirate, the role of the other chiefs such as *Balogun*, the *Magaji Aare*, the *Magajin Gari* and the *Baba Isale* though subordinate gave the common people of Ilorin the impression that they were all agents of oppression. It is not surprising therefore that *Ilorin Talaka Parapo*, directed its struggle against the entire indigenous ruling class. The suffocation of the revolutionary group in Ilorin, represented by the ITP was an illustration of nature of inter-party politics in Nigeria. By 1961 Regional elections, the electoral fortune had fully changed against the ITP/AG alliance in Ilorin. For instance, only one seat was won by the ITP/AG alliance in Ilorin south constituency, while the other seats were captured by the NPC. The results attest to the vigour with which the NPC was determined to win popularity among the Yoruba majority in Ilorin Emirate.

The creation of autocratic rule in Ilorin Emirate naturally opened the subject class of heavy burden of taxation and other harsh conditions. This eventually mobilized the people to seize the advantage of the democratic principles introduced by the colonial administration. The evolution of the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo*, their mobilization and alliance with Action Group AG brought about the first political challenge experienced in the history of Ilorin, between the indigenous ruling elites and the subject class.

The victory of ITP/AG alliance in 1956 elections was a clear demonstration of democratic powers by which the common people of Ilorin was for once, able to secure a relief. The coalition of forces that eventually truncated the tenure of ITP/AG controlled council of Ilorin Native Authority, clearly illustrates the externalization of the political trends in Ilorin.

CONCLUSION

The death of *Emir* AbdulKadir (1919 – 1959) toward the end of 1959 and the enthronement of *Emir* Sulu Karnani Gambari (1959 – 1992) within the same year accelerated the scheme to suppress the revolutionary group, the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* that had been in alliance with the Action Group AG. The persecution of the leaders of the *Talaka parapo* was the final stage to complete the eradication of all forms of oppositions to the absolute control of the Traditional institutions in the Emirate.

The Choice of Sulu Karnani Gambari as the successor to *Emir* AbdulKadir was indeed deliberate. He was specifically chosen to meet the situation of the time. The tempo of the time was western literacy. A literate *Emir* in Ilorin was specifically required to meet the challenges posed to the traditional political institutions by the radical masses as epitomized by the members of ITP.

Emir Sulu Karnani Gambari, being one of the NPC candidates that lost to the candidate of *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* in the 1958/57 elections, appreciated the enormous support enjoyed by the ITP/AG alliance which made it win majority seat in the NA Council. He was therefore determined to prevent a repeat of such sad experience in the history of Ilorin Emirate.

With the full support of the Northern Regional Government the new *Emir* in Ilorin, Sulu Karnani Gambari, immediately swung into action. This he did, by incriminating leaders of the *Talaka Parapo*, one after the other. Each of them was hastily tried and sentenced to prison (Kawu, 1983). This created palpable fears in the majority of common people of Ilorin. On the other hand, the traditional ruling class in Ilorin who were sympathetic to the course of the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo* made up of the *Emir*, *Balogun* and other Chiefs, assumed the posture of absolute rulers (Kawu, 1983).

The *Emir*, appreciating the absolute status of his office, began to operate as law unto himself. For instance, he gave unilateral judgments in his court and he even operated court sessions at night (Kawu, 1983). The common men in Ilorin naturally became apprehensive of the consequences of the absolute powers exercised by the *Emir*. Therefore, most of them who saw the excesses of the *Emir* foresaw dangers in the absolute nature of the exercise of his powers. Therefore, they anticipated that it will be short lived (Kawu, 1983)

The climate of fears and uncertainty could be said to have pervaded Ilorin community before Nigeria's political independence in 1960. This, however, prepared ground for another phase of resistance against the *Emir's* powers in the post independence period.

The appointment of *Emir* Sulu Karnani Gambari in 1959, the enormous support he enjoyed from the Northern Regional government, the support of the NPC as a party and the exercise of the *Emir's* authoritarian powers, actually created new phases of intergroup relations in Ilorin. On one hand, it consolidated relations between the traditional ruling class made up of the *Emir* himself, the *Balogun*, the *Magajin Gari*, the *Magaji Aare*, the *Baba Isale* and the *Alanguwa* or the District Heads. On the other hand, the ruling class and majority of the Ilorin population were also united against the revolutionary group, represented by the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo*. Indeed, the proposal of the ITP/AG controlled Ilorin Native Authority Council between 1956/1957 accounted for the council losing some of its prominent members to the fold of the NPC and the traditional ruling class.

The successful isolation of the remaining members of the *Ilorin Talaka Parapo*, opened them up for direct persecution which was completed with the appointment of *Emir* Sulu Karnani Gambari. This phase of relations between the traditional ruling class, through which, the implementation of colonial policies, placed heavy burden on the poor masses of Ilorin and the majority of the poor

masses that formed the ITP was a new one in intergroup relations.

The persecution of members of the ITP which resulted in the arrest of its leaders, their summary court trials and sentence to terms of imprisonments marked the end of once powerful political revolutionary movement in Ilorin. Unconsciously, however, the *Emir* had become so powerful that he saw himself as the absolute authority in Ilorin.

The breakdown of relations between the NPC party leaders, led by Alhaji Buhari Edun and the *Emir*, resulting from the attempt of the party leaders to check the excesses of the *Emir*, was the last phase of relations on the eve of Nigeria independence.

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Full Length Research Paper

Socio-economic and family planning aspects of rural people in Bangladesh: A case study of Comilla District

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The main focus of this study is to investigate the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of some villages in a particular area of Bangladesh. Since Bangladesh is a rural based country, it is essential to study a village in particular to conclude on the socio-economic characteristics and family planning of Bangladesh as a whole. For this study, some villages have selected from Comilla District. Initially, the study was planned to cover all the rural families of villages. Our population is the total number of respondents of the villages in Comilla District and 500 respondents were taken as the sample. After collecting data, Information were arranged in different tables and analyzed. For the analysis, various tests were performed such as Chi square test, t-test, correlation test and logistic regression. This study shows the income and expenditure pattern of the respondents, literacy among the villagers, the nature of the households, family planning behavior of the study population, occupation of the householders and some others economic and demographic characteristics.

Key words: Socio-economic, family planning, rural area, Bangladesh.

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is one of the developing countries and also a poor country in the world. It is one of the largest and most densely populated countries of the world with an area of 147,570 square kilometers(56,977 square miles). It lies in the northeastern part of south Asia between 20°34' and 26°38' north latitude and 88°01' and 92°41' east longitude. Bangladesh enjoys generally a sub-tropical monsoon climate. The population of Bangladesh as of 15 March, 2011 is 142.3 million (Population Census Report of Bangladesh, 2011) much less than recent (2007–2010) estimates of Bangladesh's population

ranging from 150 to 170 million, and it is the 8th most populous nation in the world. In 1951, the population was 44 million. It is also the most densely populated large country in the world, and it ranks 11th in population density, when very small countries and city-states are included. The population of the country is growing at approximately the rate of 1.59 percent per annum The percentage of urban population is 27% while that of rural is 73%. Bangladesh's population growth rate was among the highest in the world in the 1960s and 1970s, when the country swelled from 65 to 110 million.

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With the promotion of birth control in the 1980s, the growth rate began to slow. The fertility rate now stands at 2.55, lower than India (2.58) and Pakistan (3.07). The population is relatively young, with 34% aged 15 or younger and 5% aged 65 or above. Life expectancy at birth is estimated to be 70 years for both males and females in 2012. Despite the rapid economic growth, about 26% of the country still lives below the international poverty line which means living on less than \$1.25 per day. The overwhelming majority of Bangladeshis are Bengali, constituting 98% of the population. The others are mostly Biharis and indigenous tribal groups. There is also a small but growing population of Rohingya refugees from Burma around Cox's Bazaar, which Bangladesh seeks to repatriate to Burma. The tribal peoples are concentrated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the southeast. There are 45 tribal groups located in this region, the largest being the Chakma. The Hill Tracts region has been a source of unrest and separatism since and before the inception of Bangladesh. Outside the Hill Tracts, the largest tribal groups are the Santhals and Garos (Achiks), while smaller groups include the Kaibarta, Meitei, Mundas, Oraons, and Zomi.

The literacy rate of the country is 59.82%, according to 2012 for population of five years and above. Bangladesh has a low literacy rate, estimated at 61.3% for males and 52.2% for females in 2010. The educational system in Bangladesh is three-tiered and highly subsidized. The Government of Bangladesh operates many schools in the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels. It also subsidizes parts of the funding for many private schools. In the tertiary education sector, the government also funds more than 15 state universities through the University Grants Commission. Islam is the largest religion of Bangladesh; Islam contributes 90.4% of population, Hinduism contributes 8.2% of the population, Buddhism contributes 0.7% of the population, Christianity, 0.6% and others, 0.1% of the population. The majority of Muslims are Sunni, roughly 4% are non-denominational Muslims and a small number are Shia. Bangladesh has the fourth largest Muslim population after Indonesia, Pakistan and India. Over-population along with poverty is a great problem in Bangladesh. The socio-economic status is declining with the increase of population. In fact, the socio-economic set-up is in bad shape especially in the rural areas. In the rural areas there are few facilities of proper education, doctors and medicine, public health, community development etc. Our Bangladesh is an overpopulated country of which maximum members are living in the village in poor condition. It is well-known that Bangladesh is a rural based country and more than 73% of the total population (about 14.5 million) live in the villages. Obviously, most of the villages are representing the whole country in economic, social, educational and all other areas. So it is apparent that the prosperity of the country completely depends on the development of

its villages. The normal income is also dependent on the economic development of the peoples living in the villages. So, to find out the socio-economic and demographic conditions of our country one should be interested to see the socio-economic and demographic conditions of the villages in Bangladesh. To carry on a worthwhile project report on socio-economic and demographic patterns, it is selected purposively some villages situated in District Comilla. It is easy to collect reliable and valid information from the selected villages. However, it is not possible to collect broad based socio-economic and demographic information of the number of villages due to short time and money constraints.

Comilla District (Chittagong Division) with an area of 3085.17 sq km, is bounded by Brammanbaria and Narayan Ganj districts on the north, Noakhali and Feni districts on the south, Tripura (state of India) on the east, MunshiGanj and Chandpur districts on the west. Annual average temperature is 34.3°C (maximum) and 12.7°C (minimum); annual rainfall is 2551 mm. The main rivers are Meghna, Gumti and Dakatia. Comilla (Town) stands on the bank of the Gumti River. It consists of 18 wards, 19 union parishads, 452 mouzas and 458 villages. It has an area of 11.47 sq km and a population of 168378: males, 52.56%; females, 47.44%. Literacy rate among the town people is 60.3%. In the suburb, there exists the Commonwealth War Cemetery Memorials, MuktaJuddha Museum at Mainamati Cantonment and Bangladesh academy for rural development, Mainamati Museum, Comilla Cadet College at Courtbari. Comilla Town is blessed with the memories of the national poet, KaziNazrul Islam. Nazrul Islam married twice in his life, one at Daulatpur of Muradnagarupazila of the district and the other at Comilla Town. Those places have been marked with memorial plates. Poet Rabindranath Tagore visited Comilla twice. Ustad Muhammad Hussain, FazleNizami and Kulendu Das have enriched the cultural heritage of the town. UstadAyete Ali Khan established a musical institute here. The Comilla region was once under ancient Samatata and was joined with Tripura State. This district came under the reign of the kings of the Harikela in the ninth century AD. LalmaiMainamati was ruled by Deva dynasty (eighth century AD) and Chandra dynasty (during tenth and mid eleventh century AD). It came under the rule of East India Company in 1765. This district was established as Tripura District in 1790. It was renamed Comilla in 1960. Chandpur and Brahmanbaria subdivisions of this district were transformed into districts in 1984. Comilla District has 5 municipalities, 54 wards, 148 mahallas, 12 upazilas, 1 Thana, 180 union parishads, 2704 mouzas and 3624 villages. The upazilas are comillasadar, barura, chandina, daudkandi, laksam, brahmanpara, burichang, chaddagram, debidwar, homna, muradnagar and nangalkot; the municipalities

are ComillaSadar, Barura, Chandina, Daudkandi and Laksham. The study village is densely populated, the people are very happy and has harmony atmosphere like many other parts of Bangladesh. The Muslims and the Hindus are living there. The main occupation of the villagers is rendering of service. Other occupations of the villagers are agriculture, trade and day labor and rickshaw-puller. Most of the people of this village have are primary and secondary education.

Adult children are considered to be the main source of security and economic support to their parents, particularly in the time of disaster, sickness and old age (Cain, 1986). As an Asian country, Bangladesh has a long cultural and religious tradition of looking after the elderly and it is expected that families and communities will care for their own elderly members. But rapid socio-economic and demographic transitions, mass poverty, changing social and religious values, influence of western culture and other factors, have broken down the traditional extended family and community care system. Most of the people in Bangladesh suffer from some basic human problems, such as poor financial support, senile diseases and absence of proper health and medicine facilities, exclusion and negligence, deprivation and socio-economic insecurity (Rhaman, 2000). Aging is one of the emerging problems in Bangladesh. This problem has been gradually increasing with its far reaching consequences. A clear indication of increasing Bangladesh demographic aging process has been found in the works of Nath and Nazrul (2009) and Islam and Nath (2010). The present study is done to gather overall information on socio-economic and family planning of the senior citizens in Bangladesh. This is motivated by the recognition that the best approach to enhance the aged people's welfare in Bangladesh is to increase their self-reliance and to provide them proper health care facilities so that they can contribute to their family as well as their society. Specifically, it tries to investigate the determinants that influence the socio-economic specially job status of the elderly people in Bangladesh.

Family planning refers to the use of modern contraception and other methods of birth control to regulate the number, timing, and spacing of human births. It allows parents, particularly mothers, to plan their lives without being overly subject to sexual and social imperatives. However, family planning is not seen by all as a humane or necessary intervention. It is an arena of contestation within broader social and political conflicts involving religious and cultural injunctions, patriarchal subordination of women, social-class formation, and global political and economic relations. Attempt to control human reproduction is not entirely a modern phenomenon. Throughout history, human beings have engaged in both pro-and antinatalist practices directed at enhancing social welfare. In many foraging and agricultural societies a variety of methods such as prolonged breast-feeding

were used to space births and maintain an equilibrium between resources and population size. But in hierarchical societies, population regulation practices did not bring equivalent or beneficial results to everyone. Anthropologists Marvin Harris and Eric Ross have shown that "As power differentials increase, the upper and lower strata may, in fact, develop different or even antagonistic systems of population regulation" (p. 19). Being uniquely endowed with the capacity for reproduction, women of course have borne the costs of pregnancy, birth, and lactation, as well as abortion and other stressful methods of reproductive regulation. Social-class dominance over reproduction often takes place through the control of lower-class women by upper-class men. The particular forms these controls take vary across historical periods and cultures. In feudal agricultural and "plantation economies" experiencing labor shortages and short life expectancies, for example, there has been great pressure on women to bear as many children as possible (Phillips et al., 1996). In the modern era of industrial capitalist development, conservative fundamentalist groups have tended to oppose abortion and reproductive choice for women on grounds of religion and tradition. They believe that abortion and contraception are inimical to the biological role of women as mothers and to the maintenance of male-dominant familial and community arrangements. In both the industrialized north and the poor countries of the south, religious fundamentalists oppose abortion and the expansion of reproductive choices for women, and sometimes they do so violently, as in the attacks in the United States against clinics and doctors providing legal abortions. The rapid spread of evangelical Christianity and militant Islam around the world further aggravate the situation (Hugo, 1991). Partly as a result of religious fundamentalist opposition, in the early twenty-first century abortion remains illegal in many countries. It is estimated that worldwide approximately 200,000 women die annually due to complications from illegal abortions. The actual figures may be higher, since only about half the countries in the world report maternal mortality statistics. Indeed, the unchallenged position of the Vatican against artificial conception and the U.S. government policy against funding for international abortions has led some to believe that illegal abortions and maternal mortality could further increase. Not only does the Bush administration refuse money for abortions, but it also prohibits medical professionals in international organizations such as International Planned Parenthood from talking about abortion if they receive U.S. government support. In the context of both the conservative religious backlash and the problems attributed to global population expansion, family planning seems an enlightened and progressive endeavor. Yet, the movement to provide modern contraception has been fraught with gender, race, and class inequalities and health and ethical problems from the outset. Efforts to reform and

democratize international family planning must necessarily grapple with these concerns (Bandarage, 2004).

Origin and evolution of family planning

The idea of modern population control is attributed to Thomas Malthus (1766–1834), who in 1798 articulated his doctrine attributing virtually all major social and environmental problems to population expansion associated with the industrial revolution. However, as a clergyman turned economist, Malthus was opposed to artificial methods of fertility control. He advocated abstinence and letting nature take its toll and allowing the poor to die. In contrast, birth control emerged as a radical social movement led by socialists and feminists in the early twentieth century in the United States. The anarchist Emma Goldman (1869–1940) promoted birth control not only as a woman's right and worker's right, but also as a means to sexual freedom outside of conventional marriage. But soon birth control became increasingly medicalized and associated with science and corporate control as well as with the control of reproduction within marriage and conventional family life. As the radicals lost their leadership of the birth control movement to professional experts, mostly male doctors, by the 1920s birth control, which refers to voluntary and individual choice in control of reproduction, became aligned with population control, that is, a political movement by dominant groups to control the reproduction of socially subordinate groups (Huq and Amin, 2001). During the influx of new immigrants in the 1920s and 1930s and during the depression, when the ranks of the unemployed were swelling, eugenicist (hereditary improvement) ideology and programs for immigration control and social engineering gained much ground in the United States (Adewale, 2005). Even the birth-control pioneer Margaret Sanger (1879–1966) and suffragists such as Julia Ward Howe (1819–1910) and Ida Husted Harper (1851–1931) surrendered to ruling-class interests and eugenics, calling for birth control among the poor, blacks, and immigrants as a means of counteracting the declining birth rates of native-born whites. Influenced by eugenicist thinking, twenty-six states in the United States passed compulsory sterilization laws, and thousands of persons—mostly poor and black—deemed "unfit" were prevented from reproducing. By the 1940s, eugenicist and birth-control interests in the United States were so thoroughly intertwined that they became virtually indistinguishable. In the post-World War II era, compulsory sterilization became widespread in the so-called Third World where the birth rates have been higher than in the industrialized countries (in 1995, fertility per woman was 1.9 in the more developed regions and 3.6 in the less developed regions) (Momodu, 2002). In the late twentieth century, the fear of demographic imbalance

again seemed to be producing differential family-planning policies for the global north and the south. This was evident in corporate-scientific development of stronger contraceptives largely for poor women of color in the south and new reproductive technologies for fertility enhancement largely for white upper-class women in the north (Spink et al., 2001). Some insurance companies in the United States continue to refuse to cover conception in the early twenty-first century. Countries concerned with population "implosion" in the north such as Sweden, France, and Japan are pursuing pronatalist policies encouraging women to have more children while at the same time pursuing antinatalist policies encouraging women in the south to have fewer children (Balk, 1997). The main view of the project work is to represent the actual condition of remarkable features of the villagers in a certain rural area of Bangladesh through which our planners will be able to have some ideas about the socio-economic and demographic infrastructure of the villagers. This is to promote proper future action to meet the millennium goal taken by the Government within the year 2020 and thereby, to contribute a lot to the overall development of the country (Abedin, 1996)

The main focus of this study was to investigate the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of some villages in a particular area of Bangladesh. Since Bangladesh is a rural based country, it is essential to study a village in particular to conclude on the socio economic characteristics and family planning condition of Bangladesh as a whole. To have a better understanding, the objectives were designed to know the nature of households residing in the study area, standard of literacy among the villagers of this area, income and expenditure pattern of the households, to highlight family planning behavior of the study population and to guess the main occupation of householders.

METHODOLOGY USED IN THE STUDY

The present study was conducted to find out the socio-economic and family planning aspects of the people of some villages in a particular area such as Comilla District of Bangladesh. There are 19 union parishads and 458 villages in Comilla District. Initially the study was planned to cover all the rural families of villages. This study was done by primary data. The data were collected from households, which were selected by two-stage random sampling. At the first stage, five unions were selected randomly and from among these, twenty percent villages were selected at random. The number of selected villages was twenty. All the households, numbering 500, from the selected villages were covered. General information relating to the socio-economic situation and family planning was collected from the households, and information on family planning practice was obtained from married couples of childbearing age that is with the wife aged below 50 years. Data were collected through a questionnaire designed for the purpose and by face-to-face conversations with the respondents. The questionnaire was distributed among the randomly selected households. They were given short time to fill in the

questionnaire after a short description of the purpose of the study. In all 500 people were interviewed. Thus, the present analysis is based on the information collected from 500 observations and concerns the socio-economic condition and their family planning behavior. Demographic and socio economic factors such as place of residence, age, religion, education, occupation; family size, income, expenditure, pattern of house, types of latrine, insurance policy, treatment, marital status, number of children in a family were considered independent and dependent variables for bivariate and multivariate analysis. After collecting data, Information was arranged in different tables and analyzed using SPSS software (version 16.0; SPSS Inc., Chizago, IL). Bivariate analyses were performed based on cross tabulations using Chi-square tests. Correlation test and t test were also performed to find out appropriate results. Finally, multivariate analyses were conducted in terms of binary logistic regression analysis (Fox, 1984). Here, 5 and 1% level of significance were considered for the test.

Chi-square test

A chi-square test is a statistical test commonly used for testing independence and goodness of fit. Testing independence determines whether two or more observations across two populations are dependent on each other (that is, whether one variable helps to estimate the other). Testing for goodness of fit determines if an observed frequency distribution matches a theoretical frequency distribution. In both cases the equation to calculate the chi-square statistic is,

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

The effect of Yates' correction is to prevent overestimation of statistical significance when at least one cell of the table has an expected count smaller than 5. The following is Yates' corrected version of Pearson's chi-squared statistic:

$$\chi_{Yates}^2 = \sum_{i=1}^N \frac{(|O_i - E_i| - 0.5)^2}{E_i}$$

Correlation test and t test

Correlation coefficients are used in statistics to measure how strong a relationship is between two variables. The quantity r, called the linear correlation coefficient, measures the strength and the direction of a linear relationship between two variables.

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2} \sqrt{n(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2}}$$

Where, n is the number of pairs of data. The simplest formula for computing the appropriate t value to test significance of a correlation coefficient employs the t distribution:

$$t = \frac{r\sqrt{(n-2)}}{\sqrt{(1-r^2)}} \text{ With } (n-2) \text{ degrees of freedom;}$$

where, r is the correlation coefficient. The method for comparing two sample means is very similar. The only two differences are the equation used to compute the t

statistic, and the degrees of freedom for choosing the tabulate t-value. The formula is given by unequal sample size and equal variances:

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{S(1/n_1 + 1/n_2)^{1/2}} \text{ With } (n_1 + n_2 - 2) \text{ d.f}$$

$$S_1^2 = \frac{1}{(n_1 - 1)} \sum f_{1i} (x_{1i} - \bar{x}_1)^2$$

$$S_2^2 = \frac{1}{(n_2 - 1)} \sum f_{2i} (x_{2i} - \bar{x}_2)^2 \quad S^2 = \frac{(n_1 - 1)S_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)S_2^2}{(n_1 + n_2 - 2)}$$

Where, \bar{x}_1 = sample mean of the 1st sample, \bar{x}_2 = sample mean of the 2nd sample, s is the sample standard deviation of the sample and n_1, n_2 is the 1st and 2nd sample size.

Linear Logistic regression model

Linear Logistic regression model is useful to find the best fitting and most parsimonious, yet biologically reasonable model to describe the relationship between an outcome (dependent or response variable) and a set of independent (predictor or explanatory) variables. This is a multivariate technique for estimating the probability that an event occur. In a linear logistic regression model, dependent variable is a dichotomous one. The independent variable may be either dummy or categorical.

For a single variable, the logistic regression model is of the form

$$\text{Prop (event)} = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x)}}$$

Where β_0 and β_1 are the regression co-efficient estimated from the data, x is the independent variable and e the base of natural logarithm.

For more than one independent variable, the model assumes the form

$$\text{Prop (event)} = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-z}}$$

$$\text{Where, } Z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_p X_p$$

The model is to be written in terms of the log odds of event occurring. This is called logit;

$$\ln \left(\frac{\text{prob(event)}}{\text{prob(noevent)}} \right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_p X_p$$

$$\frac{\text{prob(event)}}{\text{prob(noevent)}} = e^{\beta_0} e^{\beta_1 X_1} \dots e^{\beta_p X_p}$$

Then e raised to the power β_i is the factor by which the odds changes when the ith independent variable increases by one-unit. If β_i is positive, this factor will be greater than 1, which means that the odds are increased. If β_i is negative, this will be less than 1 which means that the odds are decreased. When is 0, the factor equals and odds remains unchanged.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Simple frequency tables are mostly used here to identify the nature and pattern of various Socio- economic and demographic characteristics along with background characteristics of the study area. In this section some tables and graphs are made from the different questions of the questionnaire from where we can get a distinct picture of socioeconomic and demographic structure of the rural people.

From Table 1, we see that most of the head of the households in the study area lies between the age group 31-60 years.

Of them 41-50 years aged are highest (31.0 %) and 70+ is the lowest (5.0%), which means that the influence of this aged people is dominant on this area. The reason behind this lies on the socio economic structure of our country.

From Figure 1, it is found that 83% households are Muslim and 14% are Hindu. Except Muslim and Hindu there is 3% of other religious community in the area under study.

From Table 2, it is evident that the largest numbers of respondents are those with secondary education (36.2%) and the least number of respondents have bachelor and higher degrees (5.6%).

Illiterate respondents are 6.2%. So, the literacy rate of the study area is $(100-6.2=93.8\%)$ which is much close to our national literacy rate.

From Figure 2, it is found that 84.4% head of the households belong to the single family and 15.6% belongs to the joint family. In the study it is evident that the tendency of single family is increasing day by day in the area under study like Bangladesh.

From Table 3, it is found that maximum number of respondents is taking agriculture (63.4%) as a profession and 22.4% of the respondents choose business as a profession which is second. So we can say that, the agriculture sector as a profession is first choice in rural area like Bangladesh.

From Figure 3, we see that 28.4% head of the households have at most Below 15000 monthly income and 2.2% have Tk.45000-Tk.55000 monthly income. If we consider monthly income of households below 15000 as lower class, from Tk.15000-Tk.35000 as middle class and from Tk35000-Tk55000 as upper class, then the respective percentage will be 28.4, 65.2 and 6.4%. Thus it is evident that the standard of income of the households is middle class.

From Table 4, we see that 36.2% households have at most Tk.7000 monthly expenditure and 1.6% have above Tk.22000 monthly expenditure.

If we consider the households having expenditure (monthly) at most Tk.7000 as lower class, from Tk.7000-Tk.17000 as middle class and above Tk.17000 as upper class, then the respective percentage will be 36.2,

Table 1. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to their age group.

Age interval of the respondent (in year)	F	%
Below-30	57	11.4
31-40	99	19.8
41-50	155	31.0
51-60	101	20.2
61-70	63	12.6
70+	25	5.0
Total	500	100.0

Religion of the respondents

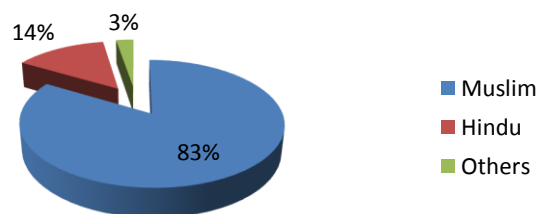


Figure 1. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to their major religious.

Table 2. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to their educational qualification.

Educational status	Frequency	%
Illiterate	31	6.2
Primary	152	30.4
Secondary	181	36.2
Higher secondary	108	21.6
Bachelor and above	28	5.6
Total	500	100.0

Family pattern of the respondents

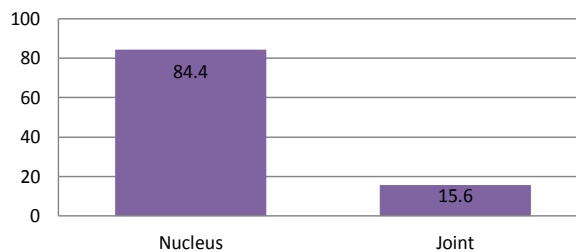
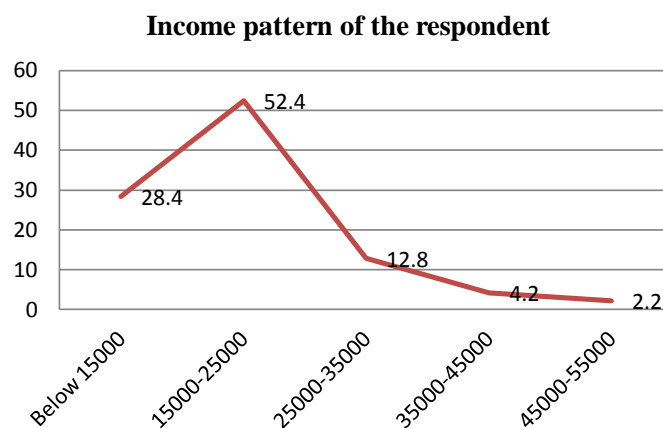


Figure 2. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to their family pattern.

Table 3. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to their professions.

Profession of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agriculture	317	63.4
Govt. service	13	2.6
Business	112	22.4
Private service	47	9.4
Others	11	2.2
Total	500	100.0

**Figure 3.** Percentage distribution of the respondents having monthly income.**Table 4.** Percentage distribution of the respondents having monthly expenditure.

Expenditure level	Frequency	%
Below-7000	181	36.2
7000-12000	223	44.6
12000-17000	74	14.8
17000-22000	14	2.8
22000-27000	8	1.6
Total	500	100.0

59.4 and 4.4%. It is clear that the standard of expenditure of the households is middle class.

From Table 5, it is found that the maximum 59.6% households have tin-shaded dwelling house and buildings are so few (5.8%).

Semi building house are 27.4%. It is evident that the dwelling-standard of the households in the area under study is middle-class and dominated by traditional system (i.e. Tin shade) of life-style as generally formed among most villagers.

Table 5. Percentage distribution of the respondents having the pattern of dwelling houses.

Pattern of house	Frequency	Percentage
Building	29	5.8
Semi-building	137	27.4
Tin Shade	298	59.6
Straw Hut	36	7.2
Total	500	100.0

From Table 6, it is observed that the maximum (93.6%) households use PHE type latrine and very few use open type (6.4%).

It is a picture of healthy social environment. It is the only reason that the sanitation program was driven in the area in 2004.

Facility of drinking water supply

In the interview, all the 500 households said they use tube-

Table 6. Percentage distribution of the respondents using different types of latrine.

Types of Latrine	Frequency	%
PHE Type	468	93.6
Open Toilet	32	6.4
Total	500	100.0

well for drinking purpose. Although, every household has no personal tube-well; they use tube-well water which they usually carry from other people's personal or common tube-well. Hence, it is evident that the water which they use for drinking purpose in the area is healthy. From the above two aspects, it can be safely concluded that health facility awareness is very much encouraging among the study population.

From Figure 4, it is found that the highest problem of the households is economic (65.4%). The second is medical treatment (19.6%). There is 3.0% residential, 12.0% educational and no electricity problem in the village. Proper medical treatment and economic problem solution steps should be taken to save the study area from the above problem and should be special care given to improve education.

From Table 7, it is found that 72.2% households have insurance or policy and 27.8% households have no any insurance or policy.

This result shows that the tendency of savings of the households is high in the study area.

From Table 8 it is found that 79.4% households take Alopethic treatment and 20.6% households take Homeopathic and other (Kabiraji and Fakirali) treatment. So we can say that Homeopathic and other (Kabiraji and Fakirali) treatments are not popular to the people in the area under study. This indicates modern health facilities are more satisfactory.

From Figure 5 we see that, most of the heads of the households are married (90%) and only 10% head of the households are unmarried; which shows that the head of the households must be married, making it different from the city.

Here, it is observed that, the mean age of the head of the households being married is 24 which is very close to our national mean age (23) of first marriage (Table 9).

From Table 10 we see that, the mean age of first marriage of the respondent (Female) is 18.5 which is very close to our national mean age (18) of first marriage.

From Table 11 it is found that the maximum heads of the households have 3 children (38.6%) and 49.0% have 1 and 2 children Which implies that most of the households have standard family but there 12.4% households have four & more children which indicate that, they are not conscious about their family planning.

Main problem of the respondents

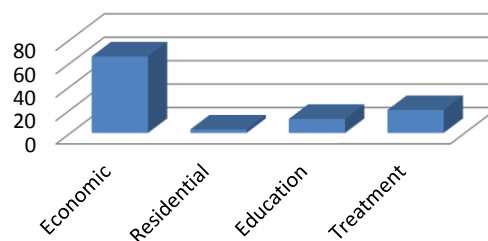


Figure 4. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to their main problems.

Table 7. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to their propensity to savings.

Do you have any insurance or policy?	Frequency	%
Yes	361	72.2
No	139	27.8
Total	500	100.0

Table 8. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to their types of treatment.

Treatment system	Frequency	%
Alopethic	397	79.4
Homeopathic	91	18.2
Others	12	2.4
Total	500	100

Marital status of the respondent

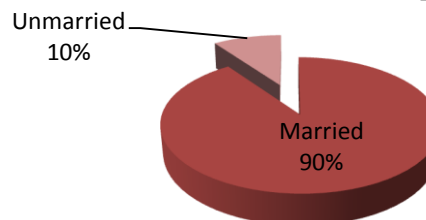


Figure 5. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to their marital status

From Figure 6 we observed that 75.6% households adopted family planning procedures and 24.4% do not practice it. Hence it is evident that the attraction of adopting family planning procedures is growing day by day to the households in the area.

Table 9. The mean age of first marriage of the respondents (Male).

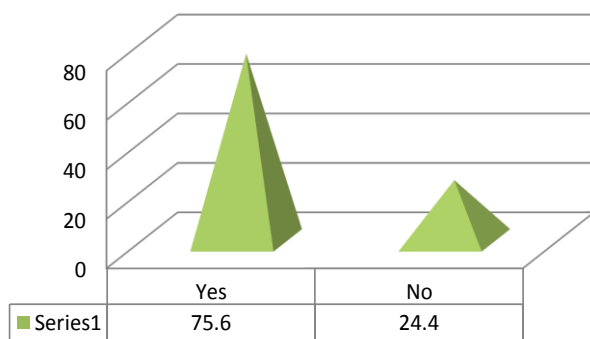
No of respondents	Minimum Age	Maximum Age	Mean Age
500	18	30	24

Table 10. The mean age of first marriage of the respondents (Female).

No of respondents	Minimum Age	Maximum Age	Mean Age
500	15	22	18.5

Table 11. Percentage distribution of the respondents according to their number of children.

No of children	No of head of the households	Percentage (%)
One	84	16.8
Two	161	32.2
Three	193	38.6
Four and above	62	12.4
Total	500	100.0

**Figure 6.** Percentage distribution of the respondents adopting family planning procedures.

Now we are to test,

H_0 : There is no association between educational qualification and profession of the respondents.

H_1 : There is a significance association between educational qualification and profession of the respondents.

Here, p value is less than 0.01 (at 1% level of significance) with 16 d.f, so we may reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. i.e., there is high association between education and

profession of the respondents (Tables 12 and 13).
Let us consider the following hypotheses:

H_0 : There is no association between income and education of the respondents.

H_1 : There is association between Income and education of the respondents.

Since, p value is .000, so it is highly significant .i.e. there is association between education and family income of the respondents (Tables 14 and 15).

Now we are to test,

H_0 : There is no association between education and family planning procedure.

H_1 : There is a significance association between education and family planning procedure.

Here p value is less than 0.01 (at 1% level of significance) with 1 d.f, so we may reject the null hypothesis. Hence we conclude that, there is high association between education and family planning method adoption of the respondents (Tables 16 and 17).

The correlation co-efficient between income and expenditure of the respondents is $r = 0.739$ (By using SPSS).

H_0 : There is no correlation between income and expenditure.

H_1 : There is correlation between income and expenditure

Table 12. Cross tabulation and chi Square test for association between education and Profession.

Educational status	Profession					Total
	Agriculture	Govt. Service	Business	Private job	Others	
Illiterate	27	0	3	0	1	31
Primary	127	0	15	7	3	152
Secondary	110	1	50	15	5	181
Higher secondary	52	4	31	19	2	108
Bachelor & Above	1	8	13	6	0	28
Total	317	13	112	47	11	500

Table 13. Chi Square test.

Chi Square (χ^2)	d.f	p-value
4.43	16	0.004

Table 17. Chi Square test.

Chi Square (χ^2)	d.f	p-value
8.91	1	.001

Table 14. Cross tabulation and chi Square test for association between education and Income.

Income group	Educational status		Total
	Illiterate	Literate	
Lower class(below 15000)	21	121	142
Middle Class 15000-35000	8	318	326
Upper class(35000-55000)	2	30	32
Total	31	469	500

Table 15. Chi Square test.

Chi Square (χ^2)	d.f	p-value
9.549	2	.000

Table 16. Cross tabulation and chi Square test between education and family planning adoption of the respondents.

Family planning procedure	Educational status		Total
	Illiterate	Literate	
Adopter	10	368	378
No adopter	21	101	122
Total	31	469	500

Since, p value < α (at 5% level of significance) with 3d.f, we reject the null hypothesis, i.e., there is correlation between income and expenditure of the respondents (Tables 18 and 19).

We consider the following hypotheses,

Ho: $\mu = \mu_1$ (μ_1 = Population mean income of literate person)
 Hi: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$ (μ_2 = Population mean income of illiterate person)

From this result we clearly say that it is highly significant with 5d.f at 1% level of significance (P = 0.000). That means, income of literate and illiterate persons is not equal (Tables 20 and 21).

From Table 22, it is found that the respondents who have primary education are .611 times less likely than the illiterate respondents to have more than 3 children. The respondents with secondary level of education are .708 times less likely, the respondents with higher secondary level of education are .844 times less likely, the respondents with Bachelor and Above level of education are .966 times less likely than the illiterate respondents to have more than 3 children.

From Table 23, it is observed that the monthly income of Tk45000-Tk55000 for the respondents who are primary educated is 0.375 times more than that of the illiterate respondents. Similarly, the monthly income of the respondents who have secondary education is 0.842 times more than that of the illiterate respondents; that of higher secondary education is 1.256 times more than that of the illiterate respondents and that of the respondents with Bachelor and above education is 1.661 times more than that of the illiterate respondents.

From Table 24, it is observed that the respondents who use family planning methods are 0.985 times less likely to have more than 3 children than those who do not use family planning methods.

From Table 25, it is found that the respondents who have primary education are 0.757 times more likely than the illiterate respondents to marry after age 20. The

Table 18. Cross tabulation between income and expenditure of the respondent.

Income	Expenditure					Total
	Below 7000	7000-12000	12000-17000	17000-22000	22000-27000	
Below 15000	74	67	1	0	0	142
15000-25000	101	137	23	1	0	262
25000-35000	6	17	38	2	1	64
35000-45000	0	2	11	5	3	21
45000-55000	0	0	1	6	4	11
Total	181	223	74	14	8	500

Table 19. The correlation co-efficient.

t- test	d.f	p-value
11.33	3	.013

Table 20. Test for equality of income of literate and illiterate persons.

Monthly income Level (in Tk.)	Mid value	No of households		Total
		Literate (f_{1i})	Illiterate (f_{2i})	
Below-15000	10000	128	14	142
15000-25000	20000	253	9	262
25000-35000	30000	59	5	64
35000-45000	40000	19	2	21
45000-55000	50000	10	1	11
Total		469	31	500

Table 21. The correlation co-efficient.

t- test	d.f	p-value
2.21	5	.000

Table 22. Factors influencing the number of children of the respondents.

Education	B	Standard Error	Sig.	Odds Ratio [Exp(β)]
Illiterate (RC)	-	-	0.043	1.00
Primary	.709	.807	0.001	.389
Secondary	.118	.798	0.000	.292
Higher secondary	-1.034	.968	0.121	.156
Bachelor and Above	.470	.851	0.042	.034

N.B: Here is coded, more than three children (Four and above) as 1 and Others (One, Two and Three children) as 0.

respondents with secondary education are 0.998 times more likely than the illiterate respondents to marry after age 20. The respondents with higher secondary level of

education are 1.448 times more likely than the illiterate respondents to marry after age 20. The respondents with Bachelor and above level of education are 2.864 times

Table 23. Factors influencing the income of the respondents.

Educational	B	Standard Error	Sig.	Odds Ratio[Exp(β)]
Illiterate (RC)	-	-	0.097	1.00
Primary	.629	.438	0.623	0.375
Secondary	.213	.113	0.000	0.842
Higher secondary	.781	.457	0.001	1.256
Bachelor & Above	-.579	.341	0.721	1.661

N.B: Here is coded the monthly income Tk45000-Tk55000 as 1 and other income as 0.

Table 24. Factors influencing the total number of children of respondents.

Ever use family planning method?	B	Standard Error	Sig.	Odds Ratio [Exp(β)]
No (RC)	-	-	0.001	1.00
Yes	-4.179	1.104	0.021	0.015

N.B: More than three children (Four and above) coded as 1 and Others (One, Two and Three children) as 0.

Table 25. Factors influencing the age at first marriage of the respondents (both male and female).

Education	B	Standard Error	Sig.	Exp (B)
Illiterate (RC)			.718	1.00
Primary	.769	.710	.001	0.757
Secondary	.981	.695	.000	0.998
Higher secondary	2.099	1.662	.304	1.448
Bachelor & Above	1.231	1.012	.121	2.864
Constant	-1.897	.619	.002	0.350

N.B: Consider marriage after age 20 as coded 1 and others age as 0.

Table 26. Factors influencing the savings of the respondents.

Family status	B	Standard Error	Sig.	Odds Ratio [Exp(β)]
Lower class (RC) (Below-15000)	-	-	.195	1.00
Middle class (15000-35000)	.629	.838	.020	1.875
Upper class (35000+)	.497	.568	.001	2.213

N.B: Consider Lower class to save money as coded 1 and others to save money coded as 0.

more likely than the illiterate respondents to marry after age 20.

From Table 26, it is found that the respondents who are in middle class are 1.875 times more likely than the

respondents who are in lower class to save money. The respondents who are in upper class are 2.213 times more likely than the respondents who are in lower class to save money.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study have clear policy implications. This study is an attempt to obtain a better understanding about socio-economic and family planning aspects of rural people in Bangladesh. Various socio-economic and demographic characteristics that are related to the rural people have been studied. From this study, it is found that profession, family planning procedure, monthly income are statistically significant with their educational status. For the betterment of the socio-economic status of the people, some initiatives should be started. Firstly, to ensure the financial solvency of the people, proper regulations should be developed to encourage their offspring so that they could help their parents much more. Employment opportunity should be made for the people according to their physical and mental fitness, educational qualification, needs and preferences. People mostly suffer from some physical illness and they need comprehensive medical care services. Poor people should be involved in the development and implementation of programs and policies according to their minimum needs.

The achievement of the desired level of fertility may be best judged by the extent to which family planning has found its place as a way of life in society. Of course, family planning involves both a decisions about the desired family size and the effective limitation of fertility once that size has been reached. In these matters, social factors play a significant role. Among the social factors, education provides opportunities to a person to be well placed in society. This study throws some light on the acceptance of family planning by couples who are educated and well -placed in society. The respondents who use family planning methods are 0.985 times less likely to have more than 3 children than those who do not use family planning methods. It concludes that every couple in the rural area is aware of family planning, but very few practice it. Most adopter couples were socially well placed. The rate of adoption was higher among couples from higher (secondary or higher) educated females. Thus, upward social mobility in respect of education of both parents and offspring was significant and family planning practice was significantly positively correlated with it. The acceptance of family planning among illiterate respondents also increased with an increase in the educational levels.

Education provides opportunities to be well placed in the society, as educated families tend to be engaged in more socially respected occupations or professions. The respondents with Bachelor and above level of education are 2.864 times more likely than the illiterate respondents to marry after age 20. Thus, with a change in the educational levels of the parents, the occupational pattern of the offspring also changes. It was observed that overtime; most of the families have made substantial

changes in society in respect of their profession. This upward social mobility in respect of occupations had a significant positive effect upon family planning adoptions which was observed to be significantly higher among couples who were engaged in service or business as opposed to those engaged in agriculture or other occupations. Also, upward social mobility of the women makes them more incline to adopt family planning. Finally, we, the people and the government should be aware about the danger of all kinds of socio-economic and demographic conditions of the rural people in Bangladesh.

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Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Full Length Research Paper

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

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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. Among others, however, this paper attempted to highlight how government land policy over many years was responsible for deforestation in the area. It has been argued that the land reforms that were introduced during the two consecutive Ethiopian regimes, the imperial and the Derg, had an impact on the forest coverage of the area. Among these reforms, the frequent allocation of land to the patriots and other individuals that rendered services to the government, particularly in the post-liberation period, can be cited as one example of the reform. The frequent allocation of land, as a reward, was made at the expense of forests. The introduction of the first forest legislation in the mid 1960s by the state had been considered as a turning point in the use of forests communally. The regime had often claimed all forests as state property, a policy that challenged the previous tree tenure system. Thus, in order to show their hostility against the government, the peasants cleared forests and converted to cultivated land. The seizure of power by a new government, that succeeded the imperial regime in 1974, brought about a new land reform that nationalized all natural resources including land. The regime made frequent and periodic re-distribution of land within some years interval in order to satisfy the growing demand of the local population. Accordingly, the distribution and redistribution of land, the introduction of cooperative farming, the villagisation programme and the formulation of forest laws and legislations were undertaken throughout the reign of the military government. These all government reforms had its own contribution for the massive deforestation of the period. Thus, this research attempted to shed light on both continuity and change in the process of land reform and its implications to deforestation, throughout the two successive regimes; the imperial and the military. In order to achieve the research objectives, 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 changes in the forest coverage of the area during the two consecutive regimes.

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

INTRODUCTION

Geographical setting and general background

Numerous researchers from different disciplines have produced literatures on Ethiopian land reform, giving due

emphasis to the impact of land tenure system on tenure insecurity and land degradation. However, this paper will make a historical investigation on the impact of land reform on deforestation by taking the Gish Abbay area

as an example.

Gish Abbay watershed is located in West Gojjam Administrative Zone in Sekela district in the Amhara Region. It covers about 159.19 km². Agriculture is the main economic activity of the area. In 2004, Woreda had an estimated population of 174,752, out of which the rural population constituted about 171,193. The dominant ethnic group and religion in the area were the Amhara and Orthodox Christianity (Getachew, 2005; Solomon, 2005).

The Gish Abbay area, as noted by Teferi (2004), had attracted the attention of many travellers and missionaries since the early 17th century. The area is believed to be the source of the Blue Nile. Among those missionaries and travellers, the Portuguese catholic priest Pedro Paez, visited the Gish Abbay area with Emperor Susenyos in 1613 (Teferi, 2004). The ambition of Portuguese catholic priests such as Pedro Paez, Manuel de Almeida and Jeronimo Lobo, who visited the Gish Abbay area in the early 17th century, was not to discover the source of the Nile, rather they had the ambition to dismantle the well entrenched Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity that became an official religion since the first half of the 4th century AD. In any case, most scholars regarded Pedro Paez as the first European to reach the area. The other Portuguese Jesuit missionary, who visited Ethiopia in the early 17th century, was Manuel de Almeida. He visited the entire Gojjam during the reign of Susenyos.

The Scottish explorer, James Bruce was also in the area and produced a five volume account, entitled: *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile in the Years 1768-1773*. James Bruce was notably the second European traveller who came into Ethiopia after the adoption of a close door policy. Since the seizure of power by Emperor Fasiledos in the 17th century until the mid 19th century, the country isolated itself from any contacts with anything European. In spite of this, the two exceptional figures who came into Ethiopia during this period were Poncet and James Bruce. The former came to Ethiopia by the order of Emperor Iyasu I (r.1682-1706) to cure his skin disease while the later arrived in the country in 1769, having the ambition to discover the source of the Nile. James Bruce made two attempts to discover the source of the Blue Nile, however, it was during his second attempt during which he taught he succeeded in discovering the source.

In the early twentieth century, Major Robert Chessman, a British Consul at Dangila (North-western Ethiopia), "made the first recorded trip along the full course of the Blue Nile River, on foot and mule." His travel to Gish Abbay is stated as: "*from Dangila to the spring at Gish Abbai, if a traveller is moving slowly, is a*

four-days' journey by mule (Chessman, 1936)."

Soon after his visit, Chessman produced two accounts; entitled the *Upper Waters of the Blue Nile, Lake Tana and the Blue Nile*, dealing with the geographical description of the Gish Abbay area. All these travellers and missionaries produced their own accounts and provided a description about the source of the river and its natural resources. Soon after, these missionaries and travellers declared the Gish Abbay area as the source of the Blue Nile, a river that contributes 86% of its water to the Nile (the longest river in the world) while hydrologists quote Lake Tana as a source of the Blue Nile.

These activities had not been limited to the introduction of the river and its history to the outside world but they also testified that the area was endowed with abundant and remarkable natural resources. Manuel de Almeida, for instance, witnessed the existence of dense forests in Gojjam in comparison with other parts of Ethiopia. He stated as follows;

Generally speaking, there is not much woodland in Ethiopia. In some parts, especially in Gojjam, there are forests of trees of various kinds, like wild Cedars (Junipers procera); Anza (wanza)(cordial Africana) is a good timber...The whole of this country is well supplied with thorn bushes and the trees are so tall that where there are many of them together they seem to be groves of pines rather than thorn bushes; they are used for fire wood. There are many tall thickets of bamboo (Manuel de Almeda, 1954).

James Bruce in his book, among others, 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 in the period under question (Bruce, 1840). Robert Chessman (1936), who went to the area in the 1920s, testified that the area was one of the most forested area in the country, noted "*for most of the way the land is covered by forest, no views are obtained.*"

However, the forest coverage, which was once dense, has disappeared from the surface of the earth attributed to economical, social, political and cultural factors. Among those factors, this paper specifically deals with how land reform could have been a cause for the destruction of forests in the area. This paper argues that the land reforms that were introduced since the post-liberation period until the overthrow of the military government in 1991 were responsible for the massive deforestation in the area. Since the restoration period, the government made frequent allocation of land to the individuals and made a firm control over communal forests, which were owned and managed by the

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community prior to the mid 1960s. It became apparent that the government's failure to avoid the inconsistent land tenure system accompanied by other factors led to the overthrow of the regime. The overthrow of the emperor in 1974 was followed by a series of measures that changed the complex land tenure system of the regime.

It is interesting to note that, however, one year later after the seizure of power by the Derg, the nationalization of both urban and rural lands came to exist. Soon after, periodic and frequent distribution and re-distribution of land happened to be the characterizing features of the land reform. In 1980, the government issued a forest management law which deprived the local people to use forests for fuel wood or construction purposes. As will become evident in the next section, the 1980s cooperative farming and villagisation programme were also parts of the land reform, which had been a factor for massive deforestation in the area. Thus, how governments land policy over many years had been a factor for deforestation will be discussed in detail because the study of deforestation has its own contribution since the Gish Abbay area is located in the source basin of the Blue Nile Basin.

METHODS OF STUDY

For the purpose of this study, both primary and secondary sources were used. Primary data were collected through interviewing key informants and focus group discussion. The researcher used purposive sampling which constitutes the best research design for this qualitative study, since it was the researcher that chose those informants who could have been a source of information. Interview and focus group discussion were made with purposely selected elders, peasants who participated in the cooperative farming of the 1980s and peasant associations, who are believed to have deep knowledge about the issue under discussion.

Moreover, interview was also made with local administrators of the imperial and the Derg regime, since these people had played a great role in the implementation of land tenure policies of the regimes at grass root level. In order to get detail information on people's experience, feelings and attitudes during the implementation of the land reforms of regimes, open-ended questions were prepared. For the un-structured interview two focus group discussions with eight participants and twelve key informants were selected.

The study was also carried out by employing image analysis and GIS technologies to generate data on the land use land cover change that took place in the area during the two successive regimes. For this purpose, the 1957 and 1984 aerial photographs, obtained from the Ethiopian Mapping Authority (EMA), were employed.

This method was useful to make comparison between the forest coverage of the area of 1957 and 1984. In this

case, the study used a mixed approach, comprising both qualitative and quantitative methods, despite the fact that the former took the lion's share of the study. Moreover, in order to substantiate the data, secondary sources were also gathered from research papers and historical documents. Finally, the data collected through key depth interview, focus group discussion and remote sensing were examined, analyzed and interpreted in order to reconstruct the history of land reform and its implications to deforestation in the Gish Abbay area.

Land reform and deforestation

The imperial era (r.1930-1974)

Many have argued that the early years of the imperial regime were witnessed with the existence of dense forests in the country. In this period, communal ownership of trees was one of the characterizing features of the land tenure system of the regime. The study area, as witnessed by local elders, traveller accounts and other researchers, was covered with indi-genous trees mainly *Juniperus* (tid), *Ricinus communis* (koba), *Arundinaria* (kerkeha), *Murus mesozyoia* (injori), *Olea* forests (weira), *Euphorbia abyssinica* (kulkual), *Hagenia* forests (kosso), *Dombeya torrid* (welkefa), *Erythrina Abyssinia* (korchi), *Emberia schimperi* (enkoko), and *Eucalyptus globules* (nechi Bahirzaf) (Solomon, 2005).

Since the restoration period (Solomon, 2005), however, the study area which was once covered with dense forests has experienced massive deforestation, land degradation and loss of biodiversity.

It is worth to mention that indigenous natural forests "except in churchyards and along rivers" have disappeared and replaced by recently introduced trees (Solomon, 2005). This was partly attributed to the state's inconsistent natural resource policy (Dessalegn, 2001). In this period all forest resources came under the control of the Ministry of Interior. However, 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).

Regardless of the attempt of the government to protect the forests, the state frequently attacked the forests for various purposes. The government repeatedly allocated land as a reward to patriots, who defended their country from Fascist Italian invasion (1936-1941) and for those individuals who rendered military and religious services. As a result, forested lands, bushlands and grazing lands were converted to agricultural fields which in turn contributed to deforestation.

Likewise, the mid 1960s was also witnessed with the establishment of forest legislation in the country which recognized three forms of forests namely; state, private and protected forest. The legislation had, specifically, three proclamations No.225, No.226 and No.227 Proclamation No. 225 recognized state forests and No.

226 and No. 227 recognized private and protected forests respectively (Lemma 1997).

Dessalegn (2001) described the situation as: “*the legislation placed all large forests under state ownership, and put sever restrictions on the use and management of private forests.*” The legislation claimed all forests, lakes and river systems to be a state property. It is quite evident that the legislation discouraged communal ownership of forests which had been a common practice prior to the 1960s. The claim over forests represented one of the major antagonisms between the central government and the peasants (Dessalegn, 2001). This was particularly true in the study area, though the problem was not as serious as that of Wollo, as the study of Dessalegn (2001) explicitly noted. The government appointed guards (*chika shums*) to protect forests from illegal cutting. When such type of protection was made the local population started to assume that the forests belong to the state. Thus, in order to show their discontent against the government, individuals cleared large tracts of forestland, vegetation and pastureland and converted to cultivated land. Soon after, the regime was forced to give up its claim over forests, due to the seriousness of the opposition.

The Derg Period (r.1974-1991)

Following the overthrow 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. The significance of the land reform, particularly for the poor who were deprived of their rights due to the imperial regime’s land tenure system is clearly stated in the proclamation No. 31/1975, as if large holdings were controlled and misused by the few. The government argued that the redistribution of land was the only measure to avoid or at least minimize the increasing number of the landless (Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1975), whose survival cannot be guaranteed without land.

It has often been argued that unlike the pre-revolution period, the 1975 land reform brought about some changes. The landless peasants including the Muslims, who did not own land in the 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 (Temesgen, 2013). The reform made the peasants free from the exploitation of their labour by the land holders. Moreover, the 1975 land reform encouraged married couples to own land.ⁱ But for the northern part of Ethiopia, the new land reform did have its own implication for the peasants, whose privilege over lands was intact.

Despite its merit, it should, however, be noted that the reform resulted in inappropriate land use practices, massive deforestation and land degradation. In the northern part of Ethiopia including Gojjam, in which the study area forms apart, the new land reform dismantled the *rist* arrangement. The predominant land tenure system prior to 1975 in the area was *rist*, which allows families to have a group right to use land for indefinite period of time. The land had been acquired through birth. In this case, almost all peasants, with the exception of few owned large tracts of land. This means that there was no land lord-tenant relationship as far as every peasant did have the right to own land based on their ancestors. Nevertheless, when this new land reform had been introduced by the regime, the peasants felt that the government was intimidating their rights over lands. Thus, the land reform for the majority of the peasants was very serious. As a result, the land reform was not welcomed by the local population (Temesgen, 2013), whose attachment to their land is inviolable. Therefore, the central government faced a firm opposition from the peasants of Gojjam. Here, it is worth mentioning that the study area was not an exception.

The grievance of the peasants against the central government was aggravated, as local elders witnessed, when the government declared a new law on forest and wildlife conservation in 1980. The proclamation No.192/1980, as cited in Sisay (2008), blamed the imperial regime for the inappropriate use of forest resources as if “the selfish interest of the aristocracy and the nobility” led to the worsening condition of the environment.ⁱⁱ Hence, the only way to preserve the remaining forests was by keeping the forests away from the community. Subsequently, the military government prohibited the society from touching a single forest including private trees, planted around farms and homesteads. Sooner, they all became under the jurisdiction of the state. For that reason, as usual, the local population responded by converting protected forests into agricultural fields, as a response to their antagonism.ⁱⁱⁱ

The protection of natural forests by the government was followed by the state’s intervention in soil conservation and afforestation programs. The regime seems to be aware that the environment could not be restored unless soil conservation and afforestation programs were undertaken. As historical records witnessed, afforestation for the first time in the history of Ethiopia 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 and the study area in particular (Amogne 2013).

Some sources have further argued that 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 fire 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 protected areas. The program was mainly involved in three major activities; farm forestry, community forestry and soil conservation. Farmers were encouraged to plant trees around homesteads and on community lands. In response to 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 including the study area particularly at *Gunedel kebele* (Badege 2001).

While significant success had been recorded, it was not without negative outcomes. In the first place, 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 trees. 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, the immediate return of the program was perceived as an important part of incentives. In this case, the government did not succeed to obtain community support (Badege, 2001). Owing to this, the afforestation activities had been declined through time and encroachment on forests was continued throughout the reign of the military government. Having this in mind, it may be pertinent to raise questions whether the program have succeeded in achieving its expected objectives.

Thus, it is acceptable to argue that government's land policy was responsible for the degradation of the environment in the area. Desalegn (2001) in his study argued that *"the worst enemy of environmental protection programs in this country was not peasant agriculture, nor population pressure, but the government itself."*

Most significantly, throughout the reign of the military government, many of the local elders remembered those periods in which massive deforestation was present in the area. To begin with, the first massive deforestation occurred in 1975 when the government distributed and re-distributed land for landless peasants based on their household sizes. Since 1975, frequent reallocation of cultivated land within some years interval was commonly practiced to satisfy the newly formed households. In this distribution, ten hectares were declared to be the

maximum amount to be allocated to landless peasants. But, there were some exceptions in which strong farmers could receive more than ten hectares, through an assessment of the potential of a farmer to plough and produce more. 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.^{iv}

Secondly, the other massive deforestation occurred in 1980 when the government re-allocated land for the expansion of cooperative farming to increase agricultural production. In order to achieve its plans, the government took more fertile land from the communal forests, grazing lands and private protected areas, which in turn led to deforestation.^v Nonetheless, the cooperative farming was not welcomed by the peasants because the military government gave less attention to peasant agriculture which led to the decline of agricultural productivity.^{vi} As a matter of fact, the decline of agricultural production forced the peasants to search for alternative sources of income like cutting down trees for selling to the nearby markets. 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 de-forestation during the construction of new villages. It is equally interesting that in 1991, when the Derg regime lost its power, a serious deforestation which had never been seen before occurred due to absence of incentives, tenure insecurity and memories of oppressive government.^{vii}

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 imperial regime, natural forests and trees planted around farms and homesteads were cleared by the local communities as a response to 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. Thus, environmental degradation became more sever during the Derg regime. However, it has been impossible to say deforestation was only the product of land reform.

As was discussed earlier, deforestation in the area has been 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 of the area will be discussed below by applying geographic information system employing the 1957 and 1984 aerial photographs (Table 1 and Figures 1, 2 and 3).

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

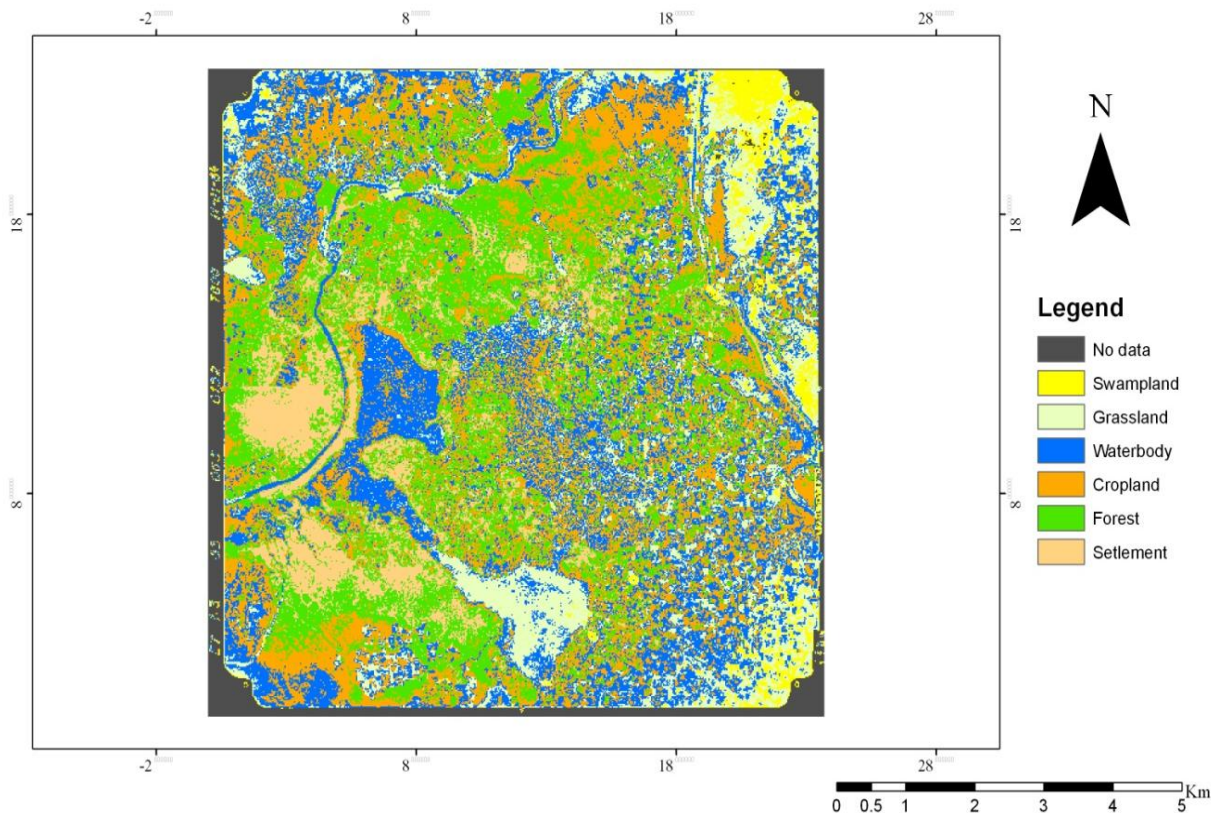


Figure 1. Land use land cover change of the area since 1957.

Based on the data, six major land-cover types were identified in the study area such as settlement, forest (includes natural forest, plantations, riverine trees and bush lands), grassland, crop-land, water body, and swampland. As shown above, of the total catchment area (15362 ha) in 1957, the dominant land cover type which constituted about 4049.32 ha (26.52%) was crop land. The forest coverage was also the second largest land cover type which constituted 3663.19 ha (23.99%) followed by grassland covered with 3039.55 hectares (19.90%). During the period in question, the water body represented about 2810.59ha (18.41%) of the area followed by settlements which represented about 1448.21 ha (9.48%) of the total area. The least is the swampy

land which covered about 259.14 ha (1.70%).

It is interesting to note that 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 7734.45 ha (50.65%) followed by settlement which was increased to 2237.61ha (14.65%) in 1984. Whereas, the other forms of land cover types showed a decline in the same year. For example, the water body decreased to 1394.08 ha (9.13%), grassland declined to 1245.78 (8.6%), forested land was also reduced to 2549.32ha (16.70) and swampy land declined to 0.71%, out of the total area.

From the Table 1, we can infer that, there has been an

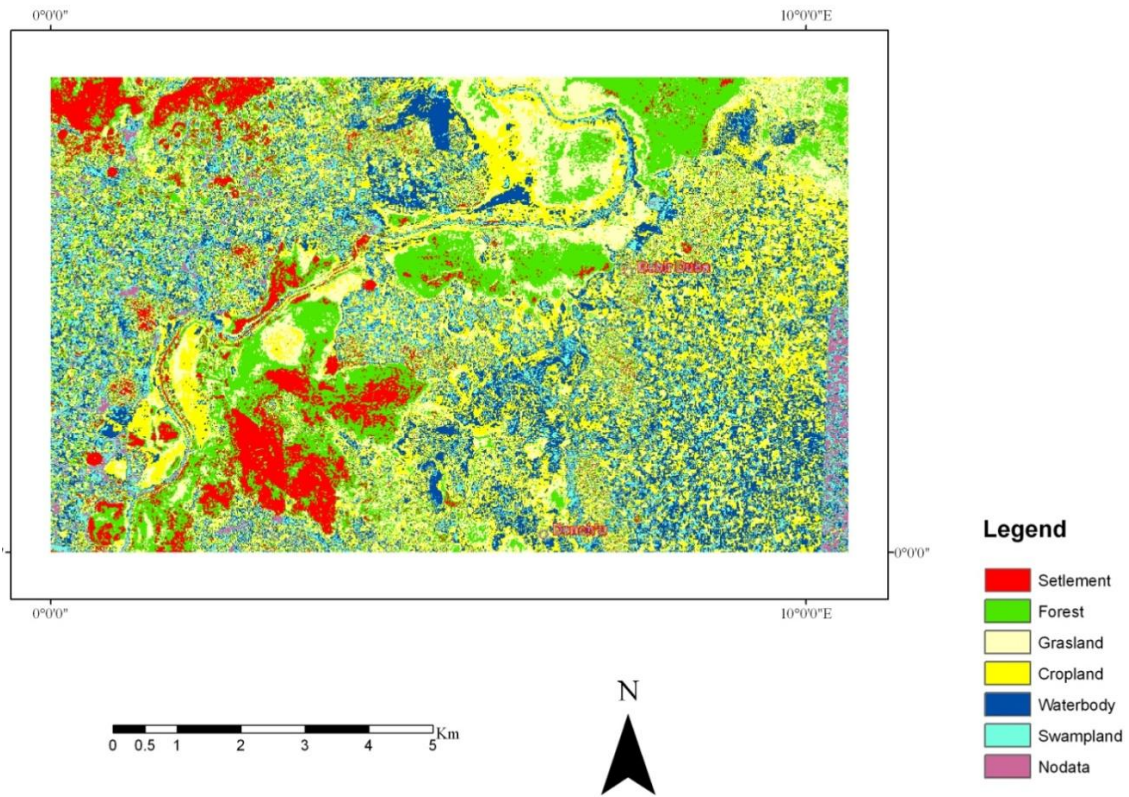


Figure 2. The land use land cover change of the area during the Derg regime.

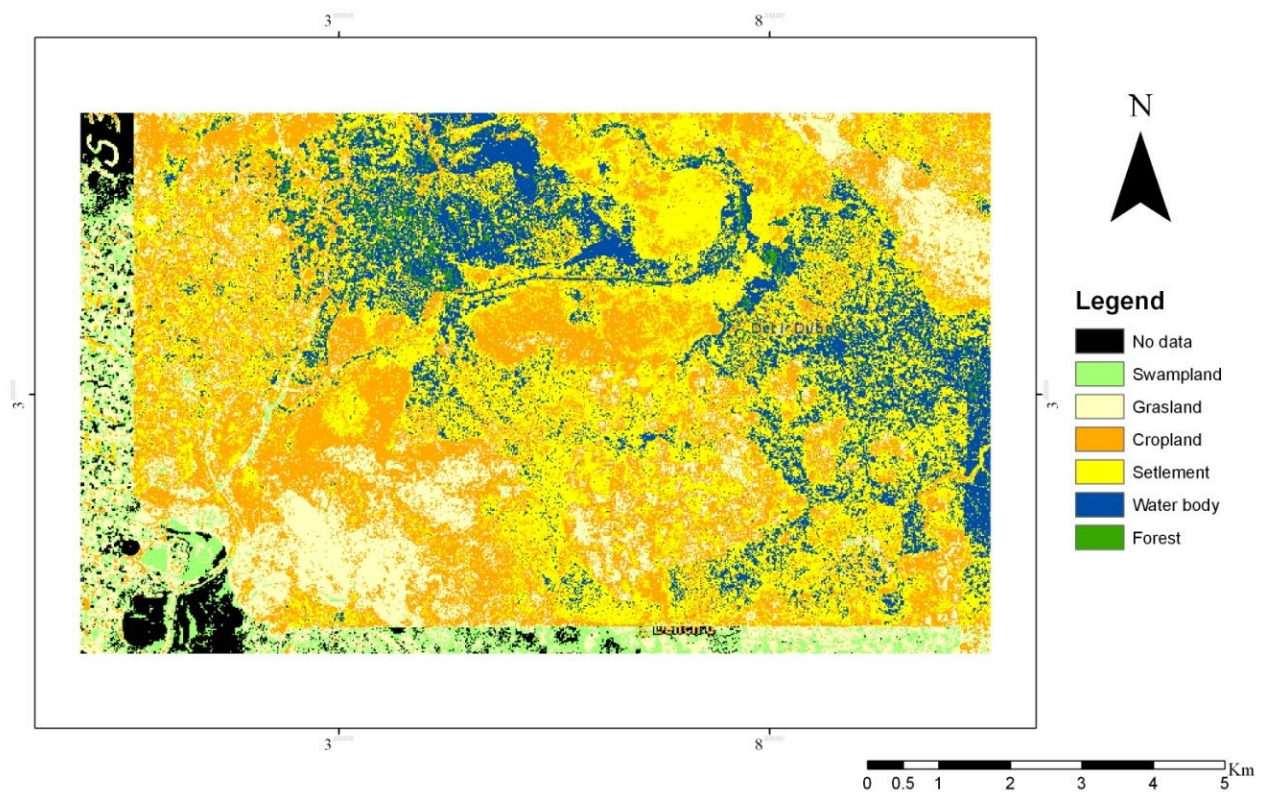


Figure 3. Land use land cover change between 1975 and 1984.

increase in crop land from 26.52% in 1957 to 50.65% in 1984. This expansion could only have taken place 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 overthrow of the regime. Moreover, the expansion of cooperative farming might have its own contribution for the expansion of agricultural fields.

On the other hand, the disappearance of indigenous forests in the area might be the product of the 1975 land reform when private ownership of natural resources was prohibited which discouraged peasants to make investments in their land like tree planting, which was commonly practiced prior to the early years of the imperial regime. Moreover, as it was noted earlier, the 1980s cooperative farming was also responsible for the destruction of forests, because the program took place by clearing forests.

Here, it should not be forgotten that settlement areas increased from 9% in 1957 to 14% in 1984. The expansion of settlement in the area, as it is clearly seen in the map, could have been the result of the government's villagisation programme of the early 1980s. In this program, many new villages were built, at the expense of forests.

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. 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 24% in 1957 to 16% in 1984. At the same time, crop land was increased from 26 to 50% between 1957 and 1984 which was the result of frequent and periodic re-distribution of land.

Thus, it is to conclude that the land policy of the regime and regular interventions contributed a lot for undermining the rights of individuals and communities to use and manage their own resources. Therefore, it is worth mentioning 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.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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ⁱ Informants: Tiruneh Wubetu, interview with the author, 24 January 2012, Sekela.

ⁱⁱ Sisay N, "Ethiopian Government Efforts to Increase Forest Cover: A Policy Oriented Discussion Paper," (Addis Ababa, 2008); Informants: Workeneh Temesgen, interview with the author, 24 January 2013, Sekela.

ⁱⁱⁱ Informants: Workeneh Temesgen, interview with the author, 24 January 2012, Sekela.

^{iv} Informants: Worku Alemayehu, Hiwot Abebaw, Setegn Tadele, Alemitu Workineh, Sitotaw Amare and Tadele Derse, interview with the author, 24 January 2012, Sekela.

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