



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**CENTER FOR AFRICAN AND ORIENTAL STUDIES**

**Relations Between Ethiopia and Iran Since 1950**

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**November , 2018**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**  
**Addis Ababa University**

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**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**Addis Ababa University**

## **Delearation**

I, the undersigned declare that this thesis is my Original work. Furthermore, all soruces of mateirals used for the thesis has been duly acknowledge.

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## Certification

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Binyam Biyadgilign, entitled “*The Relations Between Ethiopia and Iran Since 1950*” and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of Masters of Arts (Middle Eastern Studies) fulfills with the regulation of the University and meets the accepted standard with respect to originality and quality.

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## Acronyms

ADLI-----	Agriculture Development Leading Industrialization
ELF-----	Eritrean Liberation front
EPRDF-----	Ethiopian Peoples Republic Democratic Front
FDRE-----	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FDI-----	Foreign Direct Investment
MOU-----	Memorandum of Understanding
MNC-----	Multinational Corporation
NAM-----	Non Aligned Movement
OAU-----	Organization of African Union
PGS-----	Persian Gulf States
PLO-----	Palestinian Liberation Organization
UN-----	United Nation
USA-----	United States of America
USSR-----	Union of the Soviet and Socialist Republic

## ***Abstract***

*The main purpose of this paper is to describe and analyze relations between Ethiopia and Iran since 1950. Hence, this study employed the qualitative research approach with the thematic method of analysis. In this. The data was comprised of diplomats of the two countries, employees of FDRE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and scholars in the area. Both soft and hard documents from Ethiopian Investment Commission, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other published and unpublished materials from relevant institutions were used as secondary data. The findings of the study revealed that since the inception the relationship between Ethiopia and Iran have passed so many ups and downs and full of strengths and weaknesses. Although the relationship have shown considerable improvement since 1991, it was not as strong as expected due to the western campaign against Iran and lack of proper attention by decision makers. Generally, I recommend that, the two countries have to work more and more closer to further strengthen the currently existing amicable relations in different spheres of life as both countries are peace loving, indipendence and sovereign.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Ethiopia has established diplomatic relations with many countries of the world. One of these countries that had strong relations with Ethiopia is Iran. The relationship between Ethiopia and Iran have been started since the time of Aksum and Persian empire. According to ( Earlich, 1994:4), during the first century A.D., the Aksumite State and civilization evolved from the Da'amat State. With Aksum as its capital and Adulis as its main sea-port, the Aksumite Empire emerged as the mercantilist regional power to overshadow the kingdoms of Saba and Meroe on either side of the Red Sea. The Aksumite Empire traded far and wide close commercial and cultural contacts with the Greco-Roman world of the Mediterranean, Arabia, Persia and India (Ullendorf, E. 1960:50).

Aksum and Persia was in a similar historic period in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D (Taddesse, 1972:31). Adulis was a major outlet port of Aksum. Aksum's economy was built on both agriculture and trade. Hence, through exporting agricultural products, it sustained the governmental power on its place. Since they were agrarian society their foreign trade was of more imports than exports.

Aksum and Persia had strong economic and cultural ties since early period. Aksum had a commercial port of Adulis on the Red Sea coast and Persia was superpower and a monopoly of silk in the Middle East. There was exchange of goods between Aksum and Persia (Abir,

1980:75). Aksum's traders went by silk routes through central Asia that had an international importance of the incense roads of the Red Sea. Traders during the ancient times were seen as representatives of their country. Thus, cultural ideas, styles of arts or symbolic ornaments was exported from Aksum to Persia by these traders.

The Aksumites from present Eritrea and Tigre ruled over Yemen for seventy years during the second and third centuries BC while Ethiopia traded with Arabia and the Persian Empire. The Aksumite occupation of Yemen in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and the cathedral built at Sana to rival the Kaaba in Mecca show that both the Middle East and the Horn of Africa were close to each other culturally, economically and politically. In 570 AD the Aksumites attack against Mecca and the cathedral in relation against the alleged insult made to the cathedral in Sana was repelled. Then the Aksumite were defeated and Islam dominated the Arabian peninsula including the Yemen and Saudi Arabia. But the long-established relationship between the people of Horn Africa and the Middle East were intact (Taddesse,1972:35).

King Kaleb who was the last king of Aksum, conquered and expanded his territory to the other side of the Red Sea that enabled him to dominate large areas of Southern Arabia. He ruled through his victory until the second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. As the occupation forces were beaten by the force of Dhu Nuwas a ruler of Himyar (Yemen) and when Christians were massacred, the occupation did not last long. It is during this time that the Byzantine Emperor called Justin I wrote a letter to king Kaleb of Aksum to intervene (Munro-Hay, 1998:20).

King Kaleb soon sent an expeditionary force led by a general called Abraha in about 525 AD to rescue the Christians as well as to secure the international commercial route. The forces of Kaleb defeated the war successfully and thus Kaleb arose as champions of Christians. A Christians

Himayrite called Esimphaeous was appointed as a viceroy king of Himayar (Yemen). However, the occupation forces opposed the king and revolted against him and made their own general (Abraha) as their king. King Kaleb sent twice an expeditionary forces to depose the king but failed. Lastly, he recognized the power and suzerainty of Kaleb and paid him tribute (Marcus, 1994:6-7). The above history tells us how the relationship between Aksum (the horn of Africa) and the Middle East countries was historically strong and continuous.

The introduction of Christianity in to Aksum in the 4<sup>th</sup> century was a turning point in to Aksum in its Middle East relations. The conversion of Ezana to Christianity held out remarkable developments in Aksum. The motives which lead Ezana to adopt Christianity were unlikely to have been entirely religious rather his close friendship with the emperor at Constantinople. From this period onwards it was the beginning of Aksum's strong and independent political existence (Tadesse, 1972: 31).

The advent of Islam to the Red Sea in the 7<sup>th</sup> century was also one factor to the relations of Ethiopia with the Middle Eastern countries. Islam's first contact with Africa was through Ethiopia. (Sergiw Hable Silassei, 1972:181). The Islamic religion firstly started in Saudi Arabia and expanded to the Red Sea coastal area and completely changed the political and economic map of the area. Meanwhile, the Aksunites domination of the Red Sea began to decrease and lastly the Red Sea had become a Muslim channel and Adulis had been destroyed in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century AD (H. Marcus, 1994:13).

The rise of Islam was a turning point in the Middle East history. It deeply has influenced and radically transformed the political, religious and social structures of countries in the Middle East. As Ethiopia is geographically located near to the birthplace of Islam and its neighbour to Arabia,

it is important to know of the relationship to Islam expansion from its birthplace. (Sergiw, 1972:181).

When prophet Mohammed began his mission in Mecca in the very early days of Islam, he encountered many difficulties with the Quraysh who were responsible for the Kaba (holy shrine). The prophet and his followers suffered persecution at the hands of these people, and for this reason the prophet Mohammed advised his followers to go to Ethiopia by commanding; “where there was a king under whom none are persecuted. It is land of righteousness where God will give you relief from what you are suffering.”

According to his command, the first group of migrant started moving to Ethiopia. The first group consisted of twelve men and five women. Among them was Rukiya, the Prophet’s daughter and her husband Othman. According to Arab tradition, their leader was Utman b. Mazun. They completely left Mecca and secretly arrived in Ethiopia. There, they were well-received and protected by the Emperor in spite of strong representation by their adversaries (J.S. Trimingham, 1954:314).

After three months, the immigrants in Ethiopia heard that the Quraysh had stopped persecuting the Muslims in Arabia following an agreement between the former and Mohammed. But when they go back to Arabia and they arrived in Mecca, they found that the situation had changed again. After consulting with one another, they decided to enter the city and if conditions grew worse, to return to Ethiopia (Ibid, 333).

The favourable conditions under which the first immigrants lived in Aksum attracted more followers of Islam to Ethiopia (Muir W. 1923:28). The total number of the immigrants to Ethiopia was 107: eighty nine men and eighteen women. They were safely received there and were greatfull for the protection of the king and the king had shown them every hospitality (Muir W. 1923:28).

However, Tadesse (1972:31) wrote that, “the amicable relationship between the prophet and the kingdom of Aksum during the period of his flight which have been preserved in Muslim traditions were only short-lived, and hostilities seen to have already started before his death in 632. Many incidents of maritime conflict between Aksumites and the Muslims marked the whole of the seventh century.”

After the death of the prophet Mohammed in 632 E.C, the Muslim community deliberated over how to select the next leader. (Robinson, C. Cook, and M.2010:65). Eventually, one group supported succession by Ali, the Prophet Mohammed’s closest male family member. Those who trusted in Ali came to be known as Shia (a contraction of “Shiat Ali,” meaning “partisans of Ali”). Many of these believers would become modern day Shia Muslims. Currently shia Muslims lives in Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, and a plurality in Lebanon.

The other group supported succession of Abu Baker who was the prophet’s closest companions; a minority opted for his son-in-law and cousin. Subsequently, those Muslims who supported Abu Bakr came to be called Sunni (“those who follow the Sunna,” the sayings, deeds and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad). Today, Sunnis comprise about 80-90 percent of the global Muslim population.

Sunni and Shia Muslims have lived peacefully together for centuries. In many countries it has become common for members of the two sects to intermarry and pray at the same mosques. They share faith in the Quran and the Prophet Mohammed's sayings and perform similar prayers, although they differ in rituals and interpretation of Islamic law. Shias and Sunnis differ over prayer as well. All Sunni Muslims believe on that they are required to pray five times a day, but Shias can condense those into three (Robinson, C. Cook, and M.2010:65).

In Ethiopia there are followers of Shia Muslim sects around Addis Ababa, Jigjiga and Wollo. According to the secretary of the Cultural Center, Ethiopian Shia are very few in number and estimated to around 3,000 members. For that matter they haven't official Mosque to celebrate Islamic feasts. Because the dominant Sunni Islamic sect with diversified groups are spread all over the country (Muir W. 1923:28).

The fall of the strategic importance of the Red Sea isolated Aksum from its foreign trade and internal development (Bahru, 1991:125). The unfavorable external environment however deteriorated the domestic environment and lead to the rise of riots. Finally a riot led by a woman called Gudit brought an end to the Axumite dynasty and the establishment of the Zagwe dynasty.

The downfall of the Aksumite kingdom has brought a radical change in the geopolitical settings of the country that had its own bearings on the foreign relations of its successor regimes. The capital of the Zagwe was Roha far from the strategic locations of the Red Sea, due to which "The Zagwe were not able to gain control of the coastal areas and their Kingdom was landlocked". A new Zagwe dynasty of the Agews emerged in the northern highlands of Lasta. The Agew State became the successor of the Axume State and took control of Ethiopia for roughly the next three centuries up to 1270 in the region between the Red Sea and the Abay River. The shift of political

center to the south further reduced the geopolitical importance of the Red Sea to the newly emerged political center and its relations with the surrounding civilizations (Bahru 1991 , 135).

The Zagwe dynasty fully endorsed the Church and this fact was reflected in the monumental rock-hewn Churches of Lalibela. During the Zagwe period bilateral relations with Persia was continued. According to (Sylvia, 1955:75), during this time traces of Persian and Central Asian carpets and symbolic pictures side by side with Ethiopia's native gold was found in the decoration of the monolithic Churches of Lalibela. Towards the end of the thirteenth century the political center of gravity of the State again shifts southwards, this time to Shewa. The Church, through the famous Abuna tekle haimanot, seems to have actively participated in the negotiation that went along with the transfer of power (Sylvia, 1955:75)

This transfer of power from Lasta to Shewa become known as the 'Restoration of the Solomonic Dynasty'. During this period the trade relation with Persia further continued. in Ethiopian history, Ethiopia was isolated from the rest of the world owing to the intervention of Catholic religion in the palace politics. This forced Fassiledes to pay attention to Arabia and Persia than the Europeans (Bahru, 1991:145).

During the period of Fasiledes, between 1642 and 1665 contacts were established with the Shah of Persia (Donzel, 1994). The king sent an Ethiopian envoy Khoja Murad to the court of Safavid Shah Abbas II (1642-1666) of Persia with "tree of gold two feet four inches high ( Donzel, 1994: 120). In the seventeen and eighteen centuries Iranian merchants had trade contacts with Ethiopia. According to (Sylvia, 1955), many common words of the Persian language could be found in the official and old aged language of Ethiopia, Amharic. Since the accent of the Persian

alphabet is somehow the same with the Arabic alphabet, it is expected that there will be common words in both languages (Sylvia, 1955:89).

There are also evidences of the presence of Iranians in the important cities of Ethiopia, like Harar, Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa which clearly show that there have been trade, and cultural exchanges between the two countries (Ibid,90).

During the time of Emperor Hailesilassie I, modern diplomatic relationship between Ethiopia and Iran started. In 1923 when Ethiopia applied membership to the League of Nation, Iran was the first country in the world that supported Ethiopia. This was one factor for the relations in modern time between Ethiopia and Persia in the 1920s (Hamid, 2008:23).

In the 1950 Iran's official diplomatic relation with Ethiopia started by opening the Embassy in Ethiopia Addis Ababa and Abbas Kahlili was the first Iranian Ambassador to Ethiopia. The relations between the two countries developed to its higher level of political and cultural officials. Because in both countries the rulers were monarchs. Emperor Haileselassie of Ethiopia and Mohammed Reza Shah of Iran were close friends and moreover both were allies to the USA. The establishment of permanent diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Iran takes place by mutual interest of the two states based on the Vienna convention of 1961(article 2) of diplomatic relations.This strong relation between the two states lasted up to the 1974 (Rouhoullah, 1966:43).

From 1975 to 1978, diplomatic ties between the two countries was strained because of the then global ideological difference.While Ethiopia was pro USSR which was following the Marxist Leninist ideology, Iran on the other hand was against both the West and East blocks.The recent foreign policy of Iran mainly after the Islamic Revolution of Iran has been guided by the Islamic

ideology. Ethiopian president Mengstu was also established official diplomatic ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since then the embassy of the Islamic republic of Iran started its cultural activity and is palying significant role in developing the relationship of both countries (Hamid, 2008:25).

After the overthrow of the Derg regime the relationship between Ethiopia and Iran has shown improvement to the extent of openinig embassies in both Addis Ababa and Tehran. Since then cooperation between both countries increases from time to time based on mutual interest. According to (Arka,2002:65) as the current Ethiopian foreign policy direction is focused on economic deplomacy, trade and investment relation between Ethiopia and Iran has been improved from time to time. Hence, the over all conducive condition in Ethiopia attracts Iranian investors to invest in different sectors in Ethiopia. Howeveer, one can understand that although the relationship between Ethiopia and Iran have started for so many years ago, it couldn't have been as strong as expected due to some factors. Therefore, to identify what factors have been and still are affecting the Ethio-Iran relationship is one objective of this study.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

Ethiopia and Iran had strong bilateral relations since the early period. The Muslim immigrants to Ethiopia based on the orders of the holy prophet of Islam and the dispatch of Jafar Ibn Abi Talib as were the first emissary of Islam suggest the long-standing cultural and political links between the world of Islam and the African continent and particularly horn of Africa and Ethiopia. (Erlich, 1994:19).

The relations between Ethiopia and Iran reached at its highest level during the period of Emperor Hilessilassei I and Mohammed Reza Shaha. They were in a good relationship until

the coming of military regime in Ethiopia. After the fall of the Dergue regime, Ethiopian relation with Iran continued.

As noted above, the relation between Ethiopia and Iran has a long history. But their relation is not as fully engaged as its longest history. Of course, there were internal and external factors for the dynamics of the relations between Ethiopia and Iran. Hence, this research is interested in examining and analyzing a forces or processes that change inside a system of relations since 1950. In this research the researcher would try to look in to the diplomatic, socio economic and political relations of the two countries since 1950.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1. Main Objective**

The main objective of this research is to examine the Ethio-Iran historical relations along with identifying and analyzing the challenges that affect the relation since 1950.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

- Describe the historical relations between the two countries since 1950.
- Analyze the factors that affect the current relations between Ethiopia and Iran
- Examine the major challenges of Ethio-Iran relation since 1950.

### **1.4. Research Question**

This research attempted to answer the following basic questions.

- What are the main challenges of Ethio-Iran relations since 1950?

- What are the main factors for the current socio-economic and political relations between Ethiopia and Iran?
- Why does Ethiopia refrain to have strong relations with Iran?

## **1.5. Research Methods**

The study used a qualitative method to analyze data from the literatures, observations, and interviews. Diplomats from the embassies of two countries, employees of foreign affairs, scholars, Ethiopian investment office and secondary materials from relevant institutions and unpublished data collected from the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both primary and secondary data source are used in this research.

## **1.6. Significance of the Study**

This study focuses on analyzing the long-standing relations between Ethiopia Iran and its developments vis-avis the core issues to the international relation. It also includes identifying and analyzing the potential and actual challenges and problems of the historical relations between Ethiopia and Iran. This, in turn, may help policy makers to identify what sort of plausible and timely measures could be designed so as to improve the relationship between Ethiopia and Iran. Besides to the above stated, it is hoped that the findings of this study will fill the knowledge gap on the subject area and planned to contribute to bridging the information gap and also will be very important for policy makers and for further knowledge.

Moreover, it is hoped that this study will invite and motivate other scholars of both countries interested in the topic for further assessment.

## **1.7. Limitation of the Study**

One of the major limitations of this study was resource constraints including; materials, time, and finance. There is limited materials for the study. Because Ethio-Iran relations has not been given sufficient attention by scholars of both countries. Another limitation is financial constraints in the process of searching the required data. Etho-Iran relations are very broad and include many aspects like economic, political, and social areas. However, this thesis because of its scope has been focused on the study of the historical relations between Ethiopia and Iran since 1950

## **1.8. Organization of the Study**

This study organized in five chapters. The first chapter is an introductory part, which gives a general background of the study. The second chapter is concerning with the review literature which provides conceptual frame works and definition of terms, foreign relation, and foreign policy. The third chapter is research methodology or design and chapter four deals with the data analysis and chapter five come up with conclusion and recommendation.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

#### **2.2. International Relations**

According to (Roaches 1985; 85), international relations are “the study of all human interactions across national borders and the factors that affect those interactions.” International relations can be an official political relation between governments acting on behalf of their states. International relations are a wider concept. A relationship exists only when a group of State or Government acts and reacts to each other. The core of international relation is action-reaction.

International relations are the study of an international system composed of territorial states which acknowledge no superior authority over matters which they consider of vital interest. It deals with the nature of the changing relations between states and with non-state actors. International relations studies about the functioning of the international system.

This brief introduction on international relation will seek to answer the big question in international relations and foreign policy. Why do States behave the way they do is the question that theories of international relations and theories of foreign policy are trying to answer. The fact that these are treated as separate bodies of the theory says more about political scientists than it does about the nature of State behavior. (Sorensen, 2007:45)

Historically the study of international relations has understandably focused on the matters of conflicts and cooperation's. And the study of international relations began as a theoretical

discipline (Renshon, 2008:96). Some emerge from within the discipline itself; others have been imported, in whole or in part, from disciplines such as economics or sociology. Indeed, few social scientific theories have not been applied to the study of relations amongst nations. Many theories of international relations are internally and externally contested, and few scholars believe only in one or another (Slaughte, 2011:74).

## **2.3. Foreign Policy**

Foreign policy and foreign relation are concepts interchangeably used in different literature. Therefore, it is important to understand a correct definition and meaning of the two. Foreign policy carries Principles of the national interest designed to be achieved in international relations. The fundamental mission of Foreign Policy is to achieve national objective. The national objective of Countries differs from each other. Therefore, all countries design their respect foreign Policies according to their capabilities and tailor to their size (Asghar, 2007:78). A Foreign relation on the other hand is a compound of the totality of relations among peoples and groups in the world. In other words, it can be official political relations between governments acting on behalf of their States.

### **2.3.1. Definition of Foreign Policy**

The term foreign policy, in general, is used to explain directions and guidelines that states create to use as guiding principles in their worldwide interactions with other states and international organizations. The term foreign policy is defined as follows by (Henderson, 1998:43), “Foreign policy is the underlying basic directions of a sovereign state in its interaction with othersovereign states typically manifested in peace, war, neutrality, and alliance or various combinations of or approaches to these”.

According to the above statement, states behave and act in their international interactions in accordance to the principles that they design to introduce their objectives in the international arena. The foreign policy of any country is determined by a number of elements. These elements may be broadly classified as objective and subjective. The objective factors determine the general framework within which the foreign policy is to operate. The subjective factors determine the specific response to a particular situation and indicate the direction of a Foreign policy (Henderson, 1998:54).

Spero, Joan (1997: 65), lists five elements that he believes are common objectives of a foreign policy of all nations: “maintaining the integrity of a state, promoting economic interest, providing for national security, providing for national prestige and developing national power, and maintaining world order.”

Foreign policy is subfield of international relations within the field of international relations. There are two main subfields; international politics and foreign policy. International politics deals with the structures and processes of the international system. Whereas, foreign policy According to (Modelski, 1962:45), Foreign policy is a strategy or planned course of action developed by the decision makers of a State with other States or international entities aimed at achieving specific goals defined in terms of national interest.

According to this definition foreign policy is a planned course of action or strategy designed to achieve specific goals and those goals have to be defined in terms of national interest. Whereas, a countries foreign policy is a set of goals that seeks to outline how that particular country will interact on an official basis with other countries of the world and, to a lesser extent, non-State actors take foreign policy as a set of goals to direct the action of State in their official interaction.

These two definitions differ from each other because of their primacy of goals and action. In the first definition, it is a planned course of action to achieve specific goals. But in the second one, the goals guide the actions (Modelski, G. 1962:52).

In addition to this, there are also other definitions which have common elements and different focal points at the same time. However, this study is concerned with the foreign policy definition provided by Modelskis.

In spite of the lack of a universally accepted definition for foreign policy, generally, it is the basic instrument of States to promote their national interest in day to day transaction. The Foreign policy of one State can be either initiated to pursue a particular interest or a reaction to policies planed by other States or desire to protect or promote one's national interest or national security or any objectives and values. To achieve this objective, States device different instrumental ranging from peaceful cooperation to war or exploitation through different means

### **2.3.2. Theories and Concepts of Foreign Policy**

Foreign policy is part of the national policy which states adopt in relation to other sovereign states. Foreign policy theory of international relations requires that something about social theory in general and international theory in particular. All states are the elements of the international system. They are sovereign and independent (Frankel, 1968:76). The first element is the sovereignty of the state which determines the principle of safeguarding the territorial integrity of the states. The element of interdependence necessitates the principle of bargaining in foreign policy as the states endeavor to achieve the maximum possible advantage under all circumstances. The third element, the domestic and international circumstances adds the factor of realism (Frankel, 1968:76).

According to (Hugh Gibson, 1944:76), foreign policy is the sum total of the principles, the interests and objectives which a state formulates in conducting its relations with other states. It consists of national interests that are to be furthered in relation to other states. All States determine the course of their foreign policies within the limits of their strengths and the realities of the external environment. Whether big or small, countries are dependent on one another for different reasons. May be this inter-dependence could be the result of conflict or cooperation.

Foreign policies' fundamental mission is to achieve national objectives. The national objectives of countries differ from each other. Therefore, all countries design their respective foreign policies according to their capabilities and their size. However, self-preservation, self-extension and self-abnegation are common foreign policy behaviors that belong to all countries irrespective of their size. Self-preservation of any state can be maintained when the sovereignty and sovereign equal of all member State of the world community is unviolated (Spero, Joan 1997:37).

It is the duty of all sovereign states to promote and introduce their national interests through their foreign policies. There may be a little bit of difference between the interests of one state with that of another as they naturally vary according to time, place and location, but the interests as self-preservation, security and well-being of its citizens are the common interests on the basis of which foreign policy is generally formulated.

So according to the above statement all States in general have three fundamental interests in common:

Ensuring the physical survival of the homeland which includes protecting the lives of its citizens

- Maintaining the territorial integrity of its broad.
- Promoting the economic and well-being of its people and preserving national self-determination regarding the nature of the country's governmental system and the conduct of its internal affairs.

These common interests are national core values that are to be central in the foreign policy formulation of every country (Ibid: 45).

According to many writers Foreign policy is the key element in the process by which a state translates its internationally conceived goals and interests into concrete course of action to attain its objectives and preserve interests.

### **2.3.3. Approaches of Foreign Policy**

There are so many approaches of foreign policy which are raised from different perspectives and ideologies of different periods. We have approaches basically influenced by liberalism, Marxism, pluralism and other theories. In this study the researcher is going to discuss the two dominant approaches (realism and idealism) which have their own elements and key variables that differ one from the other.

#### **2.3.3.1. Realism**

Realism is fundamental empirical and pragmatic based on the tenets of balance of power, nationalist and State centric ideas. Realism in its varying forms was indeed efficient in explaining how the Superpowers interacted in the Cold War era. Having different ideologies is

held as the ideal set up for reaching stability in terms of balance of power (Waltz, Kenneth, 2000:93). To realist, the key point in foreign policy is power.

For them it aims either to maximize or demonstrate power to pursue and achieve national interest. They believe the international system is insecure and it is “Darwinian system, country eat country world in which power is the key to national survival of the fittest” (T.Rourke, 1993:99). According to realistic perspective the international system is “self- help system.” In order to maximize or pursue your national interest it is advisable to advance your power, if one failed to achieve this, no one can help you rather than swallow and eat you for its own national progress.

According to John T. Rourke, for realist by any means there should be the balance of power in which you can safeguard your interest. This view is called the real politick.

“The principle of real politick further holds that countries should practice balance of power politics. This standard maintains that diplomats strike to achieve equilibrium of power in the world order to prevent any other country or coalition of countries form dominating the system. This can be done through variety of methods. Including building your own strength, allying yourself with others or dividing your opponents” (S.Goldstein, 1996:138).

Basically, realists perceive that the future is uncertain. They advise any State has to prepare itself for aggression or war. So at any cost States have to build their national power and intelligence in the way that enable them to survive or to achieve their proposed interest. They also argue power is important to preserve peace. Simply realist foreign policy calculation is based on power equation.

The core assumptions of realist can be summarized in the following manner. First they argue that international system is anarchic and is based on nation-States as the key actors. Their second argument is that international politics is essentially struggle for powers in anarchic setting in which nation-State inevitably rely on their own capabilities to ensure their survival. Thirdly they argue that States are unitary actors and that domestic politics can be separated from foreign policy. Therefore, according to Realist, States are rational actors characterized by a decision making process leading to choice based on maximizing the national interest. For them power is the most important concept in explaining as well as predicting State behavior (Bally & Smith, 1999:116).

### **2.3.3.2. Idealism**

Idealism dominated the study of international relations from the end of the First World War until the late 1930s. In fact, idealism is variant part of liberalism ideology (Smith, S.1995:45). Idealists are optimist in their foreign policy outlook. They advocate policy based on cooperation and ethical standard is possible and it is the best way. Idealists believe cooperation has mutual benefit for all States. Idealists believe that “foreign policies based on moral principles are more effective because they promote unity and cooperation among States rather than competition and conflict” (Polano and Oltan, 1934:7).

Idealists are not accepting that the global system is based on sovereignty of States. Instead, they deal with international authority to promote the common interest of all countries in general. (T. Rourke, 1993:97). Idealist perspective is explained clearly in the following manner:

*“The spread of nuclear weapons, increasing economic interdependence among countries, declining world resources, the daunting gap between rich and poor, and the mounting damage to our ecosphere mean that*

*humans must learn to cooperate more carefully because they are in grave danger of suffering and catastrophe of unparalleled properties”.*

In addition to this they are also optimist with human nature and they believe man can cooperate towards building of “global society.” Idealists also strongly argue that:

*“Moral power is more effective than physical power because it is more durable. In place of force and coercion, it involves wining over the minds and allegiance of people to accept principles that out to govern State conduct” (Polano and Oltan, 1984:7).*

Generally speaking, a central characteristic of idealism is the belief that what unites human beings is more important than what divides them. Idealists see values of human preference such as justice or desire for world peace as potentially decisive and capable in themselves of overcoming obstacles to realize a just and peaceful world. Idealist emphasize on the international law, morality and international organizations rather than power. Therefore, according to Idealism States must be part of international organizations, and be bound by its rules and norms (Baylis& Smith, 1999:114).

These and other theories have their contribution in understanding the nature and the principles that govern the application of IR. It is impossible to accept one theory as perfect and the other theory as impractical. All have their own strengths, weaknesses and constructive contribution to perceive International Relations in different sides. One theory may be found sensible in one occasion for a certain country while the other at another occasion due the various factors of relation and the dynamic nature of world’s sociopolitical and economic factors. Therefore, these theories can be taken as directives for a country to build relation with other country or countries in a given period of time.

However, the world history and the current global situation tell us that Realism is the most dominant theory of IR. The main cause of both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> World War was power competition among nations to achieve once interest at the expense of the other. During the Cold War era almost all States of the world were divided in to two camps (The East and the West). This depicts that weak State were in search of support and assistance from the powerful States so as to strengthen their power (Donzel, 1994: 120).

The current world situation is also not out of power competition. The “Might is Right” philosophy is still functioning in the world politics. Any action taken by the powerful State is considered as “democratic” action and/or given the name “Self Defense”. In contrast to this, any action taken by powerless or poor State, especially if it has some elements against the powerful States, it will be condemned by the international community and different names will be given to the event. Therefore States should be aware of this complicated situation in designing their policy so as to achieve their national interest (Baylis& Smith, 1999:114).

## **2.4. Theories of International Economic Relations**

According to Peter M. Lichtenstein (2016), international Political Economy is field of study that deals with the interaction of politics and economics among the world’s nations. The most important of this interactions concerns foreign trade. It is also important to realize that the international political economy also examine the politics of international financial relations, regional political and economic cooperation’s international environmental management, international investment patterns of multinational corporation (MNC), foreign aid, and relation between rich and poor regions of the world. In the era of Globalizations, the key issue for International Economic Relation is a structural system of political units based on territory is now

overlaid a global economy that takes away from individual and group of States. Like political theories of IR, there are also theories of international economic relations; Liberalism, Mercantilism and Marxism are among others (Peter M. Lichtenstein, 2016:22)

#### **2.4.1. Liberalism**

It advocates liberal policies in international economics support free economic markets and trade and oppose active legislative or regulatory intervention of government. A commitment to free trade is the foundation of comparative advantage, an idea developed by Scottish economist Adam Smith, and British economist David Ricardo, in the last 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to the idea of comparative advantage, a country can produce and export certain goods and services. Most efficiently than another country because it has a greater abundance of natural resources and labor skills need to produce these goods and services (Sherman, James 2016:86).

Nations should specialize in producing goods and services in which they have a comparative advantage, using the revenues gained to import other needed goods and services. Liberals argue that such practices maximize the creation of global wealth, increasing the fortunes of each individual country, although not necessarily equally. In general Liberalists argue that States are less concerned with the gains or advantages achieved by other States in cooperative arrangements. According to Liberalist the greatest obstacle to successful cooperation is non-compliance by States. They argue that cooperation is not without problem, but States will loyalty and mutually beneficial and if they provide States with increasing opportunities to secure their international interest (Richard Laurence, 2011:133).

### **2.4.2. Mercantilism**

Mercantilists advocate the use of protectionist policies-tariffs, subsidies, and other measures to protect domestic industries against foreign competitors. Mercantilists regard policies involving trade, money and business as a basis to strengthen the power position of a nation relative to others. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, for instance, monarchies controlled national economies in Europe. At that time government officials viewed a trade surplus (when a trade revenue exceed import costs) as a way to build a “war chest” of gold and silver that would be available for military needs in the event of war. Mercantilist concern themselves less than liberal with maximizing global wealth. They focus more up on the political and economic strength of their nations in relation to rival countries (Peter M. Lichtenstein, 2016:22)

Liberals tolerate temporary protection of domestic industry in selective cases, as when an automotive or steel industry in a country needs time to establish itself before competing in global markets. Policies may also focus on protecting industries considered essential security. “In the 1980s, for example, the U.S. government developed policies to protect the military strategic semiconductor industry from Japanese competitors” Specific industry and labor groups threatened by foreign competition often lobby government officials to gain protect in the markets for their products by raising tariffs or other barriers to trade.

### **2.4.3. Marxism**

It is the idea of 19<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher Karl Marx offers a third political approach toward understanding economic behavior and policies. Marxism focuses on the inequality of relationships between economic classes and the vulnerability of the poorest economic groups to exploitation from wealthier and more powerful groups. The Marxist approach has decline in

prominence since the last 1970s, especially with the collapse of socialism in the former Soviet bloc, and the movement towards capitalism in China. However, Marxist theories receive some attention from scholars, especially in the study of relations between the world's rich and poor nations (Seve, L. 1978:38).

#### **2.4.4. Dependency Theory**

Dependency theory is a theory of international economics development that addresses the problem of poverty and economic underdevelopment that theory argues that dependence upon the foreign capital technology and expertise impedes economic development in developing countries. According to dependency theories, the cause of underdevelopment is the dependence on industrialized countries. Therefore, based on this theory, global society has developed, unequal such that the main core of the industrialized world plays dominant role with the third world countries being dependent upon it. (Richard Laurence, 2011:133).

As politics and economics are extremely linked to each other, both theories of International Political Relations and International Economics Relations are seen as two faces of a coin. Thus, the political position of a nation or group of nations will be reflected directly on their economic position. These situations create difficulty for nations to determine what, how, from, whom, and when to build any economic integration with other country or group of countries. Therefore, any economic relation between countries should be studied carefully and should be designed wisely. All countries including Ethiopia and Iran should be flexible in designing their foreign policy. The contemporary global situation (ending of Mono Polarity and the emergence of Multi Polar system) has its advantage and must be exploited as much as possible. This situation can be taken as good opportunity for the powerless States. At this time there is a chance to maximize the

bargaining power of the poor nation by exploiting the contradiction among the powerful States (Dougherty, James E.2001:54).

## **2.5. Diplomacy**

### **2.5.1. Diplomatic History**

Diplomacy is practices and institutions by which nations conduct their relations with one another. The English term diplomacy being used in 1796 by British philosopher Edmund Burke to signify the body of ambassadors, envoys, and officials attached to foreign missions (Michalak, Stanley.2009:67).The main purpose of diplomacy in the pre-colonial era was to promote the countries influence in the frame work of power politics in Europe and the entire institution of diplomacy. After the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the First World War may broadly be regarded as one of the most significant periods of world history, the scope and purpose of diplomacy gradually changed.

Diplomacy is as old as history itself. A history record that in the earliest periods special missions were being exchanged between Greek City States, early Romans relations with some of their neighbor's recorded in 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. such special missions had become so frequent that something approaching our own system of regular diplomatic inter-course seemed to have been achieved.

Traditionally, diplomacy has chiefly consisted in relations between governments, rather than between peoples or societies. This conception of diplomatic activity, seems to be no longer sufficient for countries aiming not simply to maintain international relations, but also to positively act in the contemporary international system. Diplomacy, which has been defined in

1965 by American diplomat Edmund Gullion as the act of dealing with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies (Richard Laurence, 2011:122).

### **2.5.2. What is Diplomacy?**

Diplomacy is politics and a major ingredient of power by which national government employ to promote their foreign policy objectives through diplomatic and other agents. Diplomacy is as old as states. Its quality was raised in its process of development. Diplomacy is both science and art, individual and social. It is art of communication. Sir Ernest Sataw as quoted in (Regala, 1959, 24) said that diplomacy is the “application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relation between the governments of independent States.” Some writers also have defined diplomacy as “the conduct of the relations between the governments of States by officially accredited representatives.”

*“The Oxford Dictionary defines diplomacy “as the management of international relations by negotiation; the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys; the business or art of the diplomatist.”*

Diplomacy is different from foreign policy. Foreign policy is set of objectives and principles that governments seek to advance in international relation. Diplomacy is the means employed to achieve the foreign policy objectives and gain support of their principles. It is the political process by which government foreign policies are nurtured and then guided to their destination of influencing the politics and conducts of other governments. Diplomacy is the process by which the foreign policy is carried out and converted in to practice (Ramazani, 1996: 308).

Diplomatic relations are official relations, carried out between the states through qualified state agents – permanent representatives or so called career diplomats, who perform the greater part of

diplomatic activity, serving as a medium for the conduct of international relations. State agents may be heads of state, heads of government, ministers of foreign affairs, special representatives, representatives of international organizations and third parties.

### **2.5.3. History of Ethio-Iran Diplomatic Relations**

The historical relations of Persian with the horn of Africa is associated with the arrival of Shirazi Sultanate. According to Per O. Harnas, Tore Iversen (2002), there are two main ideas about the coming of the Shirazes people to the Horn of Africa. The first idea said that they migrated from Persia to the Horn of Africa and settled in area between Somalia (Mogadisho) and Kenya (Berbera) port cities. They settled in these coastal areas in the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Shiraz people intermarried with the local communities and extended their interaction with other social group in the Horn of Africa as far as Ethiopia (Spear, Thomas 1984:23).

During the 11<sup>th</sup> century there was a strong relation between Persian and Aksum civilization. When the Persian Shah celebrating 2500<sup>th</sup> year of Shah's dynasty, he invited great dynasties from the world are China, Russia, Greek and Ethiopia. During this ceremonies, there was exchange of gifts between the kings. The Ethiopian king gives live Tiger and others which is made of gold are gifted by Ethiopian king. This and other historical events recorded on the monuments which presented in Shiraz, the historical city of Iran. (Roland Oliver, 1975 :)

According to an informant there are peoples in Iran who claims their originality is from Ethiopia. He said that "As I have seen them they seems like the people of northern part of Ethiopia and currently they are lives in the historical city of Shiraz."

The above historical explanation indicates that there was unofficial relations between the two countries for a long time starting from Aksumite and Persian civilization. That means, in spite of

the fact that, the relation was not in a modern way and there was not exchange of diplomats and even there was not offices to provide diplomatic matters, there was not public ties between the two countries.

Iran's official diplomatic relations with the horn of Africa and particularly with Ethiopia started in 1950 by opening the Embassy in Ethiopia and by the dispatch of Iran's first ambassador to Addis Ababa. Iran Embassy was officially inaugurated in Addis Ababa and Abbas Kahlili became the first Iranian Ambassador to Ethiopia. The establishment of permanent diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Iran took place by mutual interest of the two states. During the 1960s the relations between the two countries developed to its higher level and official political and cultural relations were established. This strong diplomatic relation between the two States continued up to the 1974 (Mohsen M.1994, 131).

In 1974 with the downfall of emperor Haile Silassie's regime a new military government come to power. The new government in Ethiopia had strong relations with the socialist comp and this had affected the relations between Iran and Ethiopia. Hence, the dergue regime in Ethiopia cut diplomatic ties with Iran. There was some forms of support by Iran to TPLF revolutionary forces that were fighting the Dergue regime. This has affected the previouslyexisting friendly relations between the two countries (Ibid: 136).

In 1979 the Islamic Revolution overthrew the age old monarchical system of Iran (Dehghani Jalal, 2009:87), and the revolution had its own impacts on the bilateral relations between the two countries. As the Shah's regime supported the opposition group fighting the Dergue, the Dergue government in Ethiopia reciprocally recognized the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran

and colonel Mengistu was the first president to recognize officially Iran's new governmental system. In the period of Derg Iran remained one of Ethiopia's suppliers of military equipments.

In 1989 the first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Was signed between the two countries and the cultural section of the Embassy started its activities (Dehghani Jalal, 2009:87).

According to (Kinfе,2004), the relation between the two countries was significantly changed after 1991 with the coming of the new government in Ethiopia (EPRDF). When Ethiopia under the leadership of the EPRDF the foreign policy was focused on the aim of promoting friendly relations with all countries on the basis of mutual respect and interest.

As mentioned in strategic foreign policy of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2002:137); "There are possibilities to expand economic relations with Iran, and our policy should focus on that aspect of our relations."

Based on the above policy, bilateral trade relation between Iran and Ethiopia grew up between 2004 and 2007. In may 2008 Iranian foreign minister Manoucheher Mottaki said that "Iran was interested in increasing its investment in Ethiopia's private sector and the two countries joint cooperation in agriculture and natural resources. (Kinfе,2004:87), mentioned that the relation between the two countries is based on their common interests.

Moreover there are no organized scholarly studies done so far on Ethio-Iran relations. As indicated above, the two countries had a very long contact.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

The research methods which are used in conducting this study are described in this chapter. This includes Research design, data gathering instrument, the process of data collection, method of data analysis, the study setting and ethical considerations.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

According to qualitative research, the action of the researcher is taken as to be an observer in conducting the study. This research method comprises a form of significant matters which help the researcher to understand the appearance of the world by using different solid expression ways such as field notes, interviews, conversations, recording and memos to oneself.

#### **3.2. Data Gathering Instruments**

Data typically collected in the participant's setting. data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes. and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. The following data collection approaches were applied to the data Collection process.

### **3.2.1. Secondary Data Analysis**

Secondary materials were used as one of the sources for data collection. The researcher was supported by collecting, evaluating and investigating documents which are relevant to the research area. Documents including; books, academic journals, publications, newspapers, booklets, and websites were used as the source of data. The research has reviewed all relevant sources in search of reliable information and facts related to the historical relations between Ethiopia and Iran since 1950.

### **3.2.2. Primary Data Analysis**

Interview is an effective tool to extract a clear message of the participants' point of view on the research topic. To hold on the first-hand data regarding the research topic, the researcher has conducted interview with different bodies through recording. They were asked to share their knowledge experiences about Ethio-Iran relations. The study has undertaken an in-depth interview through recording. Interviewees were from different institutions including; employees of FDRE foreign affairs office, diplomats of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Ethiopia, and scholars from Addis Ababa University. They were asked to contribute their knowledge and experiences related to Ethio-Iran relations.

According to Zina O' Leary (2004), "interviewers generally start with some well-defined question and more conversational style of interview that may see questions answered in an order more natural to the flow of conversation."

English and Amharic language were used as the medium of communication during the interviews with the participants of the study.

### **3.3. The Process of Data Collection**

After the interview guide questions have developed and approved, the researcher has taken formal support letter from the department head. The process of data collection was started after rapport has been built between the researcher and the study participants. Both primary and secondary data were collected side by side.

### **3.4. Method of Data Analysis**

The researcher used a tape recorder in the process of collecting information. In order to avoid missing important information collected from participants, recording might be helpful. After gathering all relevant primary and secondary data through interview and from secondary documents, analysis was conducted thematically.

### **3.5. The Study Setting**

This study focuses on the diplomatic issues of international relation in general and historical relations between Ethiopia and Iran in particular. For this reason, the study took place at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs office and the embassy of Islamic Republic of Iran. Additionally, appropriate scholars and academicians were part of the study population.

### **3.6. Ethical Considerations**

While conducting this research and collecting data, the following basic research ethical considerations were given attention by the researcher. A letter from the Center for African Studies and Oriental Studies was given to the respondents and participants so as to get their full consent and confidence. Thus, all the respondents and participants in the research were involved

in the study voluntarily and with their full consent. The researcher notified the respondents that any response from them would be kept confidential, anonymous and respected. Hence, respondents were made clear to give their genuine and honest response to accomplish the study as desired.

The researcher informed all the participants about the purpose and the objective of the study and refrain from deceptive practices, giving false responses, or pretentious answers, which would violate the finding of the research. Finally, all literature sources used in the literature review are acknowledged.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1. Ethio-Iran Relations Since 1950**

Ethiopia had a unique history, culture, and identity as an independent and sovereign nation in the Horn of Africa. According to Heinz Kaufeler (1988), the Aksumite kingdom established in the north-eastern border area of the Ethiopian plateau, which flourished from the first to the sixth century A.D. and controlled a vast area from Nubiya to Yemen. Contacts with the Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds predate the Aksumite period (Heinz Kaufeler, 1988).

Since the introduction of Islam in the seventh century, Ethiopia has served as a model of peaceful and mutually respectful home for Christians and Muslims. In this part of the study, special attention has been taken to analyze the two countries' relations from the time of Emperor Hilesilassei I to the currently existing EPRDF's administration.

##### **4.1.1. Relations During the time of Emperor Hilesilassei I**

The principal international relationship of Ethiopia was with Britain due to their military help during the invasion of Italy over Ethiopia in 1936 (Heinz Kaufeler, 1988. 107). This was changed after two decades and Ethiopia became a main focus of American Military and economic aid and at the end of the 1960s sixty percent of all US military aid for Africa went to Ethiopia (Markakis 1974:258). In this regard, Ethiopia was one of the countries that signed a treaty with the US in

the Horn of Africa, and its foreign policy had been greatly influenced by the US. The participation of Ethiopia in the Korean and Congo crises had had much more correlation with the US national interests and the influence that the US foreign policy had exerted on the Ethiopian foreign policy. But this action of Ethiopia was not accepted by States which are on the way to start diplomacy relation with Ethiopia (Markakis 1974:259).

The political integration into the Western system, Emperor HaileSilassie was very active and played a great role in African politics. He managed to become some kind of father-figure of African independence and pan-Africanism. For its successful resistance to European colonialism, Ethiopia had become a symbol of African anti-colonialism, and the headquarters of the OAU were set up in Addis Ababa (Ibid, 230).

According to Sirvastava (2003:44), the Ethiopian foreign policy analysis during the time of Emperor Hilesilassei was not a policy formulated based on the basic interest of the country. It is basically based on the personality of the Emperor. The emperor personally took care of international relations and traveled frequently to all across of the globe. The image of Ethiopia in the outside world introduced and centered on the person of the emperor.

In the era of Emperor Hailesilassei I, there were some internal and external historical events that influence the bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Iran. Comparing to ancient relations, this period was the time of modern political system which leads to build relations in modern approach with Iran and other States (Negussay, 1978:53).

#### **4.1.2. Relations during the time of *Dergue* Regime**

The *Derg* came to adopt an increasingly radical socialist policy and ultimately subscribed to 'scientific socialism' and the creation of a 'Marxist-Leninist' single-party state

The revolution not only affected the fate of the alliance but also the bilateral relations between the two countries. The Shah government supported the counter-revolutionary forces that were fighting the Dergue regime. This has affected the previously existing amicable relations between the two countries (HenzKaufeler1988).

Colonel Mengistu was the first president to recognize officially Iran's new system. Both governments being revolutionaries fostered bilateral ties and opposed America's military aggression against Iran in 1979. Colonel Mengistu sent a telegraph of officially denouncing the U.S move. Similarly in the course of Iraq's war against Iran in September 1980, he overtly condemned the Ba'athist Iraqi regime and as a result, Iraq closed its embassy in Addis Ababa. In the period of *Dergue* Iran remained one of the suppliers of military armaments to Ethiopia (Ibid).

Before the Islamic Revolution of 1979, there were major steps that were taken by the military regime which have made the relations cool. The first was the adoption of Marxist philosophy by the Ethiopian military regime. This annoyed the Iranian monarchical government which was a strong ally of U.S. The second major step was its inclination towards the Soviet Union and withdrawal from the previous peripheral alliance. These measures by the military regime culminated with the Shah's backing of counter-revolutionary forces fighting the Dergue regime. Finally, the Shah's backing of Somalia in the Ogaden war of 1977-1978 soured bilateral relations. This state of relations and trend persisted until the culmination of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 (Mosa, 2010, 20).

#### **4.1.3. Relations Post 1991 Period**

The establishment of a new government in Ethiopia in 1991 based on constitutional orders facilitates Ethiopia's relation with other peace-loving countries like Iran. Ethiopia and Iran

established a strong diplomatic relation since 1950. However, the relation was limited to the political area of interest. The two governments gave much emphasis for their traditional political matters at the expense of people to people relations. During the imperial era, the traditional political diplomacy was topmost priority agenda and the cultural relation was secondary (Ibid, 22).

#### **4.1.3.1. Cultural Ties between the Two Countries**

In the wake of the period of early exercise of democracy, the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran stepped up its cultural activity through its cultural section office. With a very few staff, it has managed to accomplish quite rewarding and impressive works within a short period of time.

Ethiopia established its embassy in Tehran in 1992 and Tofik Abdullah became Ethiopian ambassador to Iran. Ethiopian officials had again understood the importance of establishing an Embassy in Tehran. In 1994, bilateral relation between Iran and Ethiopia entered a new Stage. A high-level delegation consisting of important ministers and economic section head led by the late Prime Minister Tamrat Layne paid a visit to Iran. A joint commission which was entrusted with the task of studying Ethio-Iranian relation was organized. Immediately industrial goods made in Iran was fixed at Addis Ababa Exhibition Center. Various items ranging from kitchen goods to a sophisticated industrial materials and machinery were displayed. For the first time, Ethiopian public was given an opportunity to know clearly the economically giant Iran (Meseret, 2010, 30).

With the visit of Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ato Syoum Mesfin to Iran in June 1999 the agreement on mutual affairs reached its pick. In the meantime, the officials of the two countries discussed on mutual affairs basically on economic, scientific and technical relations and bilateral standpoints on regional and international affairs. Based on these discussions

different memorandums of understanding have been signed in different years between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) (Ibid, 34).

The first session of the Ethio-Iran joint ministerial commission was held in Addis Ababa from February 15-18, 2000. In this joint ministerial commission, agreement was reached to establish mutually advantageous areas of cooperation in the field of agriculture, mining, energy, and water, chamber of commerce, trade and culture. According to the agreements reached at the end of the first joint ministerial commission, the second joint ministerial commission was held from December 23-28, 2001 in Tehran. The other three joint ministerial commission conferences were held in 2003, 2005, and 2006 respectively. Different scientific, cultural and educational agreements were signed in those conferences. During the Third Joint Economic Commission in October 2003 in Addis Ababa, the following areas of cooperation in cultural Spheres between the two countries were signed (Kidane, 2013, 13).

- Exchange of delegations in cultural, arts, tourism and sports.
- Organizing cultural and film festival, exchange of folkloric.
- Cooperation between Universities and scientific institutions as well as research, cultural and educational institution of the two countries.
- Exchange of professors, researchers, scientists, teachers and students in order to further promote educational cooperation.
- Exchange of information's with regard to the educational system of the two countries as well as regarding system for the evaluation of educational documents (Ibid, 16).

In accordance with the agreement outline above a memorandum of understanding was signed between Addis Ababa University and the Organization for the Islamic Guidance and Cooperation in March 2004 in the field of education and cultural cooperation. Ethio- Iran relations is long-standing and cooperation in different parts expanding from time to time. In this regard, his Excellency Ambassador Kiomars Fotouhi Ghiam of Iran to Ethiopia in his interview with Al-Alem correspondent in the occasion of the celebration of the Ethiopian Millennium said “both [Ethiopia and Iran] are ancient countries and they are similar in some cases since none of these two countries are under occupation of foreign countries. He expressed that Ethiopians are unique since they have their own language, alphabet and their own writing system as we have” (Abiy, 2011, 18).

The ambassador in his communication with the correspondent further added about the keen interest of his government to support the efforts of the FDRE’s government to attain a sustainable economic development. In this respect, he added that the two countries have established joint commissions that discuss the different areas of cooperation. As a result, two big Iranian companies are investing and operating in the agricultural sector in Ethiopia. The Ambassador also underlined that “the re-opening of the Embassy of Ethiopia in Iran will be a good opportunity for so many Iranians who request visas to enter Ethiopia since the visa offering facility will be able to invite more Iranian investors to Ethiopia” (Mekuriaw,2010,19).

Generally, since 1991 in order to initiate multi-development activities with the Iranian government, Ethiopia signed different mutual agreements with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Based on the above mentioned general agreements and memorandum of understandings the Cultural Section of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Ethiopia held different occasions and undergoing different activities in Addis and elsewhere in the country (Ibid).

**Some of the activities of the Cultural Section:**

1. Providing Islamic Correspondence Course.
2. Providing Persian language Course.
3. Providing the history of Iran Course.
4. Providing Art of photography Course.
5. Providing Computer Course.
6. Open up the library with up-to-date books and reading salon.
7. Screening every Saturday Iran made films.
8. Lending Iranian films for audiovisual members on request.
9. Translating all interesting articles into the Persian language.
10. Dispatching different Iranian publication and periodicals to different distinguished personality and organizations.
11. Translating or/ and sponsoring translated cultural books to be printed (Abiy, 2011, 25).

**Different events held by the Cultural Section:**

1. Mounting Art and Handicrafts Exhibition in Addis Ababa or somewhere out of Addis.
2. Staging every Iran Cultural week by different ceremonies.
3. Mounting Art Exhibition.
4. Organizing seminars on different topics like women's role and rights, tolerance, multiculturalism.

5. Marking Quds day by different ceremonies. Quds Day is an international day and it is a day devoted to the weak and the oppressed to confront the arrogant powers. The term Quds day was first proposed by the late Ayatollah Khomeini calling on all the Muslims of the world to designate the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan as Quds day and to hold demonstration in support of the Palestinian rights and freedoms against the Zionist atrocities. On the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan Al-Quds demonstration is held to support the Palestinian rights and here the Cultural Section of the embassy commemorate this day in organizing seminars every year (Ibid, 28).

According to Gholam Alaei, the Director of the Cultural Section of the Embassy, several students who came from different background are currently attending Persian language class. “This is one of the key areas in strengthening the cultural relation of the two countries.” The director says the cultural section is also providing Iranology course on three months base. Iranology is an introductory course regarding the ancient Persia and contemporary Iran (Kediro, 2010,19).

This course is delivered by a lecturer from Addis Ababa University (AAU) once in a week for 2 hours. Recently the cultural section graduated the batch of the course attendants. This course is very important to explain the real image of Iran to the Ethiopians. It is also crucial to critically assess the deep history of Iran in the areas of art, literature, economy, religion and politics. The cultural section is also organizing different seminars concerning various social, cultural, and political issues delivered by different scholars. This, in turn, strengthens the people to people relation between the two countries. The director mentioned in his conclusion the cultural section is planning different activities which can play an important role to introduce Persian culture to Ethiopia (Ibid,22).

The director pointed that to mention some of the seminars among others are the one which is conducted in Jimma town under the title '*multiculturalism and the need for tolerance*' which was very important and constructive event. This seminar was held with the collaboration of Jimma University. The other seminar which was held in Addis Ababa Hilton hotel under the title 'The role of women from divine religious point of view' was also very important for exchanging views and sharing different ideas (Kediro,2010,25).

According to reporter Journal (2010), Omer Hayamna Baba Tahir and other poetry books translated to Amharic language. Recently translated by Bereket Belayneh from Persian language to Amharic '*Yemenfes Kefita*' and the other translated by Sibhat Gebregziabiher '*Tikusat*' , '*Yemaleda Dibab*' by Bewketu Seyoum and '*Mechachal*' by Teshome Birhanu are very known works which shines the two countries' cultural relations. The Omer Hayamna Bar and Restaurant which presented around Piassa and currently out of service because of re-construction is one implementation to the long history of the two countries (Reporter Journal, 2010).

All the above activities indicate that strong effort is being made by the Iran side only. On the contrary, except signing on Agreements and Memorandum of understanding, there are no tangible actions taken by the Ethiopian side to improve the cultural relations between the two countries.

#### **4.1.3.2. The level of Current Economic Relations between the two Countries**

The major economic bases of Ethiopia are a land of variety characterized by the agrarian economy. The country is endowed with huge potential of manpower, livestock, water resource, fishery, forestry, minerals, energy etc. Moreover, the perpetuating ecosystems comprising various plants life has made Ethiopia a famous gene-center of grains such as wheat, barley,

millet, and others. Coffee a cash crop has its origin in Ethiopia. However, in spite of the huge potential of the nation, the poor performance of the economy is reflected in almost all sectors and one of the determinant factors for this was lack of effective economic policy. After realizing the objective economic condition of the country, the contemporary government designed a policy called Agriculture Development Leading Industrialization (ADLI) (Mekuriaw, 2010, 30).

One of the means to achieve the goal of Ethiopia's economic policy is foreign investment strategy. Ethiopia's investment policy is categorized into three sectors including areas of investment exclusively reserved for the government, areas reserved for joint-venture investment with the government, and areas of investment reserved for domestic investors. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005: 178)

Nevertheless, areas of foreign investment are as many as any foreign investor needs. Therefore in addition to the existing stability, there is a very wide area of opportunity of investment in Ethiopia not only for Iran but also for all Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) including Multinational Corporation (MNC) (Ibid, 180).

On the other hand, Iranian investors have advantages in transferring sophisticated technology and modern management system. They have also a great contribution to solving the capital limitation in Ethiopia. Thus, this situation can help to solve the capital problem and a worldwide market outlet. Therefore, unless Ethiopia could attract foreign investors, it is too difficult to solve the capital problem by local investors. Below is a table showing the level of Iranian investment in Ethiopia since 1992 (Rukia, 2010,13).

**Table 1: The following table shows the Summary of Iran Investment in Ethiopia Since 1992 GC**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Total No of Projects</b>
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	3
Construction	1
Manufacturing	12
Real estate, renting and business activities	2
Wholesale, retail trade & repair service	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>21</b>

Source: Ethiopia Investment Agency (2018)

The above table shows that in comparison with other countries the Iranian investment area in Ethiopia is so limited. The above table also depicts that the highest investment sector for Iranian in Ethiopia is manufacturing which is equal to 12 out of 21 or 57.1% of the total number of projects. This indicates that Ethiopia could benefit a lot from the technological development of Iran. The list sector of Iranian investment in Ethiopia is the construction which is 1 out of 21 or 4.7% of the total number of projects. The table also indicates that in 26 years the total number of Iranian projects in Ethiopia reaches only 21 which is a very small number. This in turn, shows that high effort should be exerted by both countries to improve the level of investment. It is clear that since the two countries have long-standing historical relations, there is a high opportunity to improve the economic integration between the two countries (Kidane, 2010, 16).

According to Tehran Time newspaper (2009) when Ethiopia expressed its interest in trade with Iran at the beginning of 1990, economic and commercial ties were quickly established. The strength of these new common interest led Iran's business community to exert pressure on the

government to strengthen ties with Ethiopia. The application of different agreements on economic cooperation and technical ties brought about a boom in the fields of agriculture and mining. With the growth of the volume of commercial transaction, many large Iranian companies opened offices in Ethiopia (Tehran Time newspaper, 2009).

On December 25, 1992, the two countries, to improve their relations in economic and technical ties signed a memorandum of understanding on technical cooperation in the field of construction. Since then the different memorandum of understanding was signed in order to further enhance their economic and technical ties (Meseret, 2012:18).

Ethiopia is investment attractive country in relevant to its Agriculture, agro-processing, manufacturing, textile and garment, leather and leather products, tourism, construction, Energy searching, mining, services and Information Communication Technology (ICT) etc. These sectors are calling for the investment of some hard thinking which has a potential entrepreneur should be made progressive investment in the country (Ibid,19).

The different trade agreements signed between the Ethiopian government and that of Iran encouraged Iranian companies to undertake joint venture projects with their Ethiopian counterparts in different trade fairs. Furthermore, different Iranian companies opened offices in Ethiopia and use these offices as a springboard to gain access to the markets of Africa in general and Ethiopian in particular. Generally, the outcome of the different trade agreements will be summarized in the following table that depicts the trade volume of imports and exports undertaken between the two countries for the last 21 years. (Ethiopian Ministry of Trade, may 2018).

**Table 2: The following table showing the volume of trade relations between Ethiopia and Iran from 1997-2017**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Export</b>	<b>Import</b>	<b>Trade volume</b>	<b>Balance</b>
1997	124	5,263,718.00	5,263,843.00	-5,263,593.00
1998	0	11,289,956.50	11,289,956.50	-11,289,956.50
1999	0	61,893,523.09	61,893,523.09	-61,893,956.50
2000	0	25,120,060.89	25,120,060.89	-25,120,060.09
2001	525.05	63,352,984.19	63,253,984.19	-63,252,459.14
2002	0	59,925,516.26	59,025,516.26	-59,925,516.26
2003	0	139,607,345.87	139,607,345.87	-139,607,345.87
2004	6,162,416.15	172,177,581.76	178,339,997.91	-166,015,165.61
2005	5,169,527.00	156,450,197.79	161,619,724.79	-151,280,670.79
2006	997,477.31	168,029,207.13	169,026,684.44	-167,031,729.82
2007	4,537,700.62	284,261,841.92	288,799,542.54	-279,724,141.31
2008	20,56,87.00	204,725.00	259,846,772	-26,82,37.24
2009	3082.10	474,489.33	66,996.79	-407,495.54
2010	9204.00	523,266.50	62,772.64	-460,493.86
2011	34,946.27	920,117.40	955,063.67	-885,171.13
2012	227,544.00	301,777.00	529,321.00	-742,33.00
2013	16,290.04	44,343.43	606,33.47	-280,53.39
2014	19,42.38	458,802.26	460,744.64	-456,859.88
2015	21,147.00	26,522,839.16	26,543,986.16	-26,501,692.16
2016	42,886.50	234,125.32	277,011.82	-191,238.82
2017	64,373.00	109,349.55	173,722.55	-449,76.55
Total	17,494,749.66	10,363,605,903.5	1,194,968,899.94	-1,481,483,512.14

**Source:- Ethiopian Ministry of Trade, may 2018**

As the above table shows, Ethiopia's total volume of export has reached to Birr 17,494,749.66 across the specified twenty-one years despite lack of regularity. On the other hand, Ethiopia imports Birr 10,363,605,903.5 from Iran in the specified period of time. As the table indicates sometimes Ethiopia's imports were more to the extent of zero export that made the negative trade balance for Ethiopia. In other words, it is sometimes high trade deficient in Ethiopian side. It is clear that in the last 21 years a great transaction disparity has been observed between the two sides. Ethiopia has recorded a negative trade balance of Birr (-1,481,483,512.14).

The basic reason for this wide negative trade balance is due to the fact that unfinished and semi-finished agricultural products dominated Ethiopia's export item. To the contrary, Iran's export to Ethiopia is finished and manufactured items with the great price difference. This underlined that attention should be given to improving the balance of trade.

In the area of investment, from July 1992 to December 2008, using the favorable condition created by the Ethiopian government, out of the registered Iranian private and share companies, 63 of them have got the license from the Ethiopian investment agency. Agriculture and mining are the major areas of investment to Iranian business community in Ethiopia. The following table from the Ethiopian Investment Agency can show the number of licensed Iranian investors in Ethiopia in the past 21 years (Ethiopian Ministry of Trade, may 2018).

**Table 3: List of Iranian Investment Projects**

<b>Item no</b>	<b>Investment activity</b>	<b>Capital In '000' Birr</b>	<b>Region</b>
1	Bitumen Packing Bituminous Products Processing	10,973	Addis Ababa
2	LPG Refilling & Distribution	30,388	Oromia
3	Aluminum Profile Production Plant	29,691	Addis Ababa
4	Melamie, PVC and Plastic Products Manufacturing	14,297	Oromia
5	Abattoir	39,587	Oromia
6	Cereal Farming	13,332	Oromia
7	Mixed Farming Related Food Processing	4,000	Multiregional
8	Detergent Sanitary, Paint, Cosmetics, and Manufacturing Plant	32,316	Multiregional
9	Cotton Plantation	4,500	Afar
10	Production of Wheat, Cotton, Animal Feed, Maize&Sesame	3,000	Multiregional
11	LPG Import & Distribution	30,734	Tigray
12	Aluminum Profile Manufacturing	48,700	Oromia
13	Cotton, Sorghum, and Sesame Farming	3,000	multiregional
14	Food Processing Factory	3,000	Oromia
15	Farming and Processing of Ginger (Washing, Drying, Powdering) and Coffee (Washing, Rusting and Grinding)	2,424	SNNPR
16	Engineering Consulting	3,000	Addis Ababa
17	Plastic Products of Manufacture	6,100	Oromia
18	Bituminous Products Processing	41,938	Oromia
19	Bituminous Products Processing	71,000	Oromia

20	Cattle Raising, Fattening and Processing of Meat For Export	3,000	Oromia
21	Ostrich Farming	60,000	Oromia
22	Construction Machinery Rental	4,000	Addis Ababa
23	Construction Machinery Rental	2,000	Addis Ababa
24	Poultry Farm	6,900	Oromia
25	International Standard Iranian Specialized Restaurant	1,100	Addis Ababa
26	LPG Refilling & Distribution	17,000	Oromia
27	Biscuit & Cookies Factory	30,210	Multiregional
28	Production of Electrical Materials & Electrical Equipments	9,250	Oromia
29	Cattle Fattening and Meat Processing	5,500	Oromia
30	Processing, Packing, and Distribution of Bitumes and LPG	20,000	Oromia
31	Engineering Consultancy Designing and Projects Management Service	1,800	Addis Ababa
32	Tour Operation	4,800	Addis Ababa
33	Oil Seed Farming and Processing (Oil Production)	82,000	B.Gumz
34	Farming of Wheat, Corn, Cotton and Oil Seeds	121,850	Afar
35	Stainless Steel Scourer Manufacturing	4,008	Oromia
36	Modern Slaughter House and Meat Export	51,639	Dire Dawa
37	Construction Works Consultancy	1,020	Addis Ababa

**Source:- Ethiopian Investment Agency, May 2018**

The above table shows the total number of investment sectors owned by Iranian in Ethiopia reached 37 during the past 21 years. The Oromia regional State has the biggest recipient of Iranian Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Ethiopia. Afar was the 2<sup>nd</sup> prime destination of Iranian licensed investors. Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa were the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> largest recipients of

Iranian FDI. Tigray and South Ethiopia peoples State stood 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> places receiving the balance. However, there is no Iranian investment in Amhara and Somalia regional State.

Generally, the different mutual agreements have persuaded the Iranian to penetrate their investment in Ethiopia. Since 1991 in order to initiate mutual multi-development activities with the Iranian government, the Ethiopian government signed different economic agreements with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thus, all the above investment projects are the fruits and sign of the diplomatic relations. However, the level of economic relation indicates that both countries couldn't exploit as much as the available opportunities and capabilities. There are still many untouched areas of economic sectors that could benefit both countries. Hence, the condition needs revision and reassessment of the current economic relations based on scientific research so as to change the weak sides (Kinfe, 2004).

## **4.2. Historical Factors for the Relations between Ethiopia and Iran**

The Relations between Ethiopia and Iran during the time of Hailesilassei and Mohammed Reza Shah was very strong. Both Mohammed Reza Shah and Emperor Hailesillassie were monarchs. Other than the diplomatic relations between the two countries, the political system that exists in both countries become one of the center of attraction. (Bahru, 1992:203).

According to Mossa (2008), the issue of Eretria in the 1960s was one major area and also factor for good relations between Ethiopia and Iran. Iran was one of the countries who support the idea of federation with Ethiopia. After the independence of Eretria from Italian colonial rule in 1961, the Eritrean fate was not decided. Unable to resolve the Eritrean question, the four powers Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States finally passed the issue to the United Nation in 1948. The UN appointed a commission of five men, respectively from Burma,

Guatemala, Norway, Pakistan and South Africa, to ascertain the wishes of the Eritrean people. Iran was among the countries propounding federation with Ethiopia. Therefore, Hailesilassei's rule marked the flourishing of joint Ethio- Iranian relation (Ibid: 28).

Another important historical factor which contributes to the relation of the two countries in the 1960s was the foundation of Organization of African Union (OAU) with the head office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This situation creates strategic importance to Ethiopia to expand its relations with many countries. Haileselassie's activity in the international arena made him the renowned person and open way to extend Ethiopia's relation with many countries in the world including Iran (Ibid: 24).

These and other important historical factors made the Ethio-Iran relation very strong. Based on the above historical factors, a visit was made by each other; the Iranian Shah visited Ethiopia in 1956 and the Emperor of Ethiopia reciprocated. Iran's support to Ethiopia was not limited only to simple diplomacy but also to the extent of being sided to Ethiopia during critical times. When report leaks between the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) emerged many Arab countries were against Ethiopia while Iran was one of the allied countries which stand against the Eritrean movement. This strong relationship between the two countries continued up to recent time (Kediro, 2010, 17).

However, in comparison to its relationship with other countries, Ethiopia's attention towards Iran was not strong. In the Ethiopian Foreign policy document, very few points within a short paragraph are stated as factors of Ethio-Iran relations. Only two issues are mentioned in the document. One is the large population of Iran and the other is the advanced economy of Iran. It is true that these two issues are among the factors and opportunities of the relations. But we can

mention so many areas where the two countries can work together to fulfill their mutual interest. As indicated above these two countries have so many historical factors in common. The commonalities are basic grounds for constructing better relations. Nevertheless, the strive to make the most of the historical and other common elements to their advantages is so weak on both sides (Ibid, 19).

### **4.3. Challenges of the Relations between Ethiopia and Iran**

Ethiopia's policy towards Iran was taken equally and as part of the relations with other Middle East countries. Therefore, even though most of the Middle East countries have similarity in culture and religion, it is impossible to specify them as one category in designing foreign policy. This type of generalization may create both short term and long term difficulties in the relation of the country. All Middle East countries couldn't have similar National interest and they don't have an equal impact on Ethiopia. Therefore, detail analysis should be made for each and every Middle East country so as to design effective foreign policy. Otherwise, if Ethio-Iran relations are seen in the context Ethiopia's generalized position in relation with the Middle East and the issue of global security, it may affect and create a burden to have a constructive relationship between the two countries (Kinfe, 2004,67).

Globally we can see extremism as challenges to relations between the two countries. Many peoples of Muslim countries have misconceptions regarding Ethiopia's position towards Muslim. However, because of the historical facts, by any means, Ethiopia couldn't be the target of Muslim extremism. Rather, its relation should have to be strong ties by showing the truth and convincing the misled people. Simply the historical evidence alone can prove the real Ethiopia's position on Islam. Not only historical but also the contemporary government of Ethiopia follows

secular system. Therefore, at this time there is no any ground to raise religious issue in Ethiopia. So, Ethiopian government has to focus on the positive side of the relation so as to strengthen its ties with Iran. Thus, the direction of the relation should emphasize the opportunities so as to tackle the minor challenges. However, the Ethiopian government was much concerned on the issue of extremism by relating it to Iran's religion. In this regard identifying the internal and external challenges and constraints for the relationship has to be the first task of policymakers of both countries. Feasible Solutions and strategies must be designed in order to develop the proper relationship between Ethiopia and Iran. (Mossa, 2008:18),

#### **4.4. Why Ethiopia Closed its Embassy in Tehran in 1998**

The countries cooperation in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) fostered an intent cordial relation and ultimately led to the establishment of Ethiopia's Embassy in Tehran in 1992 and Tewfik Abdullah Ahmed was the first Ethiopian Ambassador to Iran. The priority given to an Embassy in Tehran was reflected in the fact that the Ethiopian government had to close down its Embassies in Prague, Athens, and Nairobi to be able to remark the needed budget for its Tehran Embassy. Nevertheless, the Embassy was closed in 1998 due to financial reason. (Kidane, 2013:16).

According to the key informant who was former Ethiopian diplomat to Iran, there were two reasons to closure of Ethiopian embassy in Iran. The first reason was, Ethiopia's interest to introduce its agricultural products and to facilitate import and export exchanges. However, there were so many problems to do so. The other things which mentioned as reason to close the embassy is financial reasen (Ibid, 20).

In December 2007, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister on Arab and African Affairs Reza Baqari met with the late Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to discuss the re-opening of Ethiopia's embassy in Tehran. Additionally, in a note to Ethiopian President Girma Woldegiorgis in May 2008, Iranian President Mahamoud Ahmadinejad expressed hope that their countries bilateral relations would be strengthened in the future and they discussed about re-opening of Ethiopian embassy. But practically the embassy is still closed (Arka,2010 33).

Our informants also added that there were so many political and economic problems behind closing the Ethiopian embassy in Tehran. According to his perspective, the main reason behind the re-opening of the embassy is related to the current global political situation. The ideological conflicts between Iran and the west especially the USA, and Iran and Saudi Arabia is one of the hidden reasons which can influence relations of the two countries. But as mentioned in Ethiopian foreign policy, there is no any security problem and challenges coming from Iran which could affect the existing relations. He also stressed that based on the current Ethiopian foreign policy and since Iran has an embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia has to open embassy in Tehran to improve the bilateral relation (Kinfel,2004,68).

Opening and closing of embassies between countries should be based on justifiable reasons. However, according to the above discussion, the closing of the Ethiopian Embassy in Tehran is based on rootless reasons. The condition at the time when the Embassy was closed and the current national, regional, and international conditions are far apart. Hence, the absence of proper attention for the issue could be taken as the main reason for not reopen the Embassy in Tehran.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1. Conclusion

Today our world is in the process of change and there are many global developments which demand cooperation than conflict for suitable solutions. Ethiopia and Iran have many things to work together for the promotion of their national interests. To this end, Ethiopia and Iran started official diplomatic relations since the 1950 with the coming of Iran's ambassador to Ethiopia. These longtime relations passed through many ups and dawn. In the imperial period, the two countries were close allies in different regional and international arena. They were active members of the Non Allied Movement. Similarly in the 1970s revolution took place in both and destroyed the monarchical system.

With the abolition of the military regime, the two States show a similar approach in the international politics. After 1991 the long existing relations entered into a new path which is full of cooperation and mutual assistance. The long aged Ethio-Iran relation witness how foreign policy varies from time to time with the changes of political systems in both countries.

The historical ups and downs of the bilateral relation between the two countries showed strengths and weaknesses at different stages. However, the relation between Ethiopia and Iran is significantly improved after 1991. During the past twenty years, Ethio-Iran bilateral economic and cultural relations have shown considerable progress. Different agreements and Memorandums of Understanding regarding economic and people to people relations have been taken by delegates of both countries.

The agreements were focusing on mutual advantages in the sectors of trade, agriculture, industry, mining and cultural relations between people. As a result, some achievements are recorded including investment and cultural activities. It is also encouraging that Iran has begun to express interest in business delegations in 1998 and the visit of Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 2002. Accordingly, the trade and investment relation of Ethiopia and Iran in the past 20 years showed great improvement.

However, because of the lack of proper attention by decision makers and international influence against Iran, the level of the relation couldn't be as strong as expected. The trade and investment relationship is also not fast growing rather it is too slow and insignificant. Though the capacity of Iranian investors is very big, the level of Iranian investment in Ethiopia is very weak. The trade exchange is few in type and volume as well. Moreover, there is no Ethiopian Embassy in Iran. In this regard whatever justification is given, its negative impact on the bilateral relationship is significant. Therefore, both countries should work hard to overcome the problems that hinder the economic relation from being effective. Therefore, this situation must be changed as soon as possible.

Since 1991 the Cultural Section of the Embassy of Islamic Republic of Iran officially commenced its activities. For the past seventeen years, it has the undergone different activities to foster cultural relations and managed to accomplish remarkable tasks. In the economic and investment spare, currently, more than 50 Iranian companies got license from the Ethiopian investment agency to operate in Ethiopia in different sectors of the economy. However, with regard to trade between the two States, trade imbalance is getting higher with deficit to the Ethiopian side. A great disparity has been observed in the transaction and this needs attention to balance the trade relation

Generally, different agreements and memorandum of understanding have been signed between the two governments which proved the commitment and aspirations of the two States in the way to development and improvement of the relationship. Thus, the two countries are expected to utilize all existing opportunities effectively and efficiently to transform threats into opportunities.

## **5.2. Recommendation**

The trade relations and economic ties between Ethiopia and Iran are based on mutual benefit and it is therefore important for both parties to continue and further develop their ties for economic development. Nevertheless both countries do not interact in all sectors at their level best and couldn't gain the maximum benefit from each other. This situation must be changed by talking diplomatic measures.

Despite the fact that the sanction against Iran has great influence in relation, countries like Ethiopia should focus on finding systematic means to maximize their national interest by strengthening their relationship with countries like Iran. Iran on the other hand should expand its relation with African countries so as to gain diplomatic support in any issue concerning Iran. The trade exchange between Iran and Ethiopia should increase to the maximum level. Iran's products must be supplied to countries based on scientific market segregation. The purchasing power of a country that would import Iran's commodity should be taken in to consideration by Iranian producers. Thus, Iran's production can penetrate the market competition in Ethiopia.

Iran has been a victim of numerous types sanction with different content ranging from military export to shipping minor commodities. This sanction has been imposing by nations and multinational entities. Including; USA, UNSC, EU, and other States. This global issue makes not only Ethiopia but also many countries and international companies became reluctant to do

business with Iran for fear of losing access to larger western markets. In spite of the fact, that Iran has developed experience to tackle the sanction, the social and economic effects of the sanction been sever and shouldn't be undermined. Iran should show others its loyalty by exposing the main reason for the sanction and other oppositions. Therefore, a diplomatic solution must be taken as a means of long-lasting solution in expanding its relation with other States so as to minimize the impact of the sanction. At this point, Iran must be flexible enough to increase its friends and minimize hostility from others.

Generally, there are some problems and challenges that hinders Ethio-Iran relations from being stronger than it is. However, the situation is optimistic and hopefully it will be changed in the very recent time. If proper attention is paid by both parties in solving the problems, nothing is beyond their capacity and the relation will be improved.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **Chronological orders for the relations between Ethiopia and Iran**

1950----The countries started official diplomatic relation

1961----Iran opened an embassy in Ethiopia

1962----Iran closed its embassy in Ethiopia for financial reasons

1964----Iran re-opened its embassy in Ethiopia

1992----Ethiopia opened its embassy in Iran

1998----Ethiopia closed its embassy in Iran

#### **VIP Visits**

##### **From Ethiopia to Iran**

1992----His Excellency. Ato Hasan Abdullahi, Minister of State for coffee

1992----H.E Ato. Yosef Kumalo, Minister of Trade

1992----H.E Ato Tamirat Layne, Prime Minister of transitional government

1999----H.E Ato Seyoum Mesfin, Foreign Affairs Minister

2000----H.E Ato Fantaye Biftu, Head of Export Promotion Agency

2001----H.E Ato Sufian Ahmed, Minister of Finance and Economic Development

## **From Iranto Ethiopia**

1998----H.E Mr. Safollah Vahid Dest Jerdi, vice resident

1998----H.E Mr. Hoseinefar, Deputy Minister of Agriculture

1999----H.E Mr. Isaa Kalantari, Minister of Agriculture

2000----H.E Mr Dr. Seyed Mohammed Sadr, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

2000----H.E Dr. Isaa Kalantary Minister of Agriculture

2002----H.E Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, Minister of Foreign Affairs

2008----H.E Dr Manouchher Motaki, Minister of Foreign Affairs

## APPENDIX B

**Dear Madam/ Sir**

My name is Binyam Biyadgilign. I am a graduate student in Addis Ababa University, College of Social Science, and Center for African Studies and Oriental Studies. The objective of this interview is to gather primary data for the topic titled “*Historical Relations between Ethiopia and Iran since 1950.*” I kindly request that you to answer these questions honestly. Any information that you provide will be kept confidential and used only for academic purpose mentioned above. The interview questions listed below are guiding questions. There will be probing questions based on the answers that would be provided by the interviewee to get more information associated with the study.

Binyam Biyagilign

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Email address---- binibiyad@gmail.com

## APPENDIX C

### Interview guide questions for participants

#### I. General information

**Profession -----**

**Current position-----**

**Work experience in the current or related occupation-----**

**-----**

#### II. Interview Questions to the staff of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Middle East Director, diplomats, professionals and analysts) and to the staff of the Embassy of Islamic Republic of Iran

1. What is the historical background of the Ethio-Iran diplomatic relations?
2. What are the common grounds for the current Ethio-Iran diplomatic relations?
3. What factors are determinants for the change and continuity of Ethio-Iran Diplomatic relations?
4. Do you think there are challenges which face the Ethio-Iran relations?
5. As all knows, Iran has Embassy in Addis Ababa, while Ethiopia has closed its Embassy in Tehran in 1998. What reasons do you think are behind these two different actions?
6. What suggestions do you propose to improve the bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Iran?

7. The overall relations of these two countries are not strong as expected can you tell me the reason behind this?

## APPENDIX D

### Profile of Study Participants (Key Informants)

#### Primary:Source

Name of Interviewee	Date of Interview	Place of interview	Remark
Ato Tomas G/ Mariam	May 11/05/2018	Ethiopian Foreign Affairs strategic studies institute	Ethiopian Foreign Affairs strategic studies institute advisor to the director/ late 1 <sup>st</sup> secretary to Ethiopian embassy in Iran
Mr Abdi Abebe	May 10/05/2018	Cultural center of Islamic State of Iran	Main secretary of the Cultural Center
H.E Mr. Behzad K hakpour	May 19/05/2018	Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran	Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Mr. Seyed Hassan Heydari	May 26/05/2018	Cultural center of Islamic State of Iran	Cultural Counsellor of embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Arka Abota (Phd)	May 27/05/2018	Addis Ababa University	Instructor at Addis Ababa University