

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

College of Law and Governance Studies

Center for Human Rights Studies

Self-Identification of Minorities and Quest for Right to Identity Recognition and Self-Administration: The case of Kemant people in Ethiopia

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June 2014

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Self-Identification of Minorities and Quest for Right
to Identity Recognition and Self-Administration:
The case of Kemant people in Ethiopia**

**Graduate Programs, College of Law and Governance Studies Centre for
Human Rights, Addis Ababa University**

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Graduate Programs of College of Law, Addis Ababa
University, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Human Rights**

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June 2014

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Declaration

I, Addisalem Bayeh do hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the work itself. I further declare that I have never before submitted this work for an award of a degree or diploma to any university.

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Abstract

The Kemant people in Ethiopia have claimed the right of identity recognition and self administration since the 1990s. However, they have not yet got positive response from the Ethiopian government by arguing that they are already assimilated and lost the distinct characteristics which make them unique from the other ethnic groups, especially from the Amhara. Due to that the concerned bodies see the quest of kemant people's identity recognition and self-administration as fabricated by few elites who have another aim other than question of identity.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the self-identification of Kemant people and its claim for the right to recognition and self-administration from the perspective of international minority right law and domestic legal order. The researcher used qualitative research approach. To collect research data, the researcher had employed in-depth interview with key informant, focus group discussions, and observation and documentary data collection techniques. The collected data would be analyzed using descriptive method of research.

The analysis of the study indicated that substantial number of Kemant people have supported the quest of right to have recognition as distinct ethno-linguistic group and to have self-administration. The 2007 national population and housing census of Ethiopia has contributed a lot in broadening the claim for recognition and self-rule into majority of Kemant people. This is because, it is officially denied and omitted the name of 'Kemant' from the list of nations, nationalities of Ethiopia and substitute it by 'others'. In relation to this the willingness of Kemant people to preserve their distinct characteristics indicated more of their primordial attachments for their ethnic identity and historical ancestor. But their support in the process of struggling to develop, preserve their language, culture and identity also mixed with the theory of constructive and instrumentalist point of view.

Finally, the study recommended that since the existence of Kemant people is factual they should have got right to identity recognition and political representation rights all at local, regional and federal government, particularly in the seat of house of federation as per article 61 sub article two of the Ethiopian Constitution. However, the claim of Kemant People to have self-administration is debatable due to unresolved dispute on the contiguousness of their territories.

Key Words: *Kemant People, Minority, identity, recognition, self-rule/ self- administration, self-identification, ethnicity.*

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List of Acronyms

ANRS- Amhara National Regional State

CUD -Coalition to Unity and Democracy

EC - Ethiopian Calendar

EPRDF -Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front

FDRE -Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

HoF-House of Federation

HPR- House of People’s Representatives

HRC -Human Rights Committee

ICCPR-International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR-International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

KDA- Kemant Development Association

KYA - Kemant Youth Association

LN- League of Nations

ND- No Date

NP-No Publisher

SES-Socio-Economic Status

TPLF- Tigray People’s Liberation Front

UDHR-Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN -United Nations

UNDM -United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

UNGA-United Nations General Assembly

WWI- World War I

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Ethiopia is a land of plenty with a long and noble history giving rise to ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity that located in the horn of Africa. It is the only African country never to have been colonized¹, and the home of mosaic of more than 80 Ethno-linguistic and cultural groups.

Historically, in its systems of political administration, it was quasi-federal forms of government. Thus, the regional and local lords enjoyed some level of autonomy as long as they recognized the authority of the emperor at the center.² The name of the emperor “the King of kings” also certifies this historical truth. It implies that there is one king at the center while many kings who empowered within their jurisdiction at sub- national and/or local level.

However, this trend was not continued after the second half of the 19th century. The centralization process had become more intensified during the half-century rule of Emperor. Instead of recognizing and appreciating diversity and its values, the state adopted the policy of “one religion, one language and one people.” As a result of this historical fact, the nation building project of the modern Ethiopia was not inclusive and compatible to multi ethno-linguistic diversity of the country. By this way of ruing, the imperial rule existed until the 1974, subsequently a military administration ruled until 1990. The military rule was not also inconformity with the nature of the society which highly advocates the idea of centralization by overlooking the fact of diversity.

To combat this historical injustice and to assure equality with in Ethno-linguistic and cultural diversified groups, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) had overthrown the military rule in May 1991, and since 1995 as it declared in article 1 of the new constitution, the Ethiopian state known as Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE).

¹Hashim Tewfik (2010), *Transition to Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience*, Forum of Federations, The Publication is Provided by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), p.3

² Bahru Zewde (2002), *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855–1991*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, p.1; Assefa Fisseha (2007), *Federalism and the Accommodation of Diversity in Ethiopia: A Comparative Study*, Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Publishers p.11-16

Unlike to the previous political administrative systems, the constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia advocates the construction of Ethiopian national identity based on the recognition of the ethno-linguistic and cultural diversity.³ The constitution intends to accommodate unity within diversity and self-rule with in a federal shared rule system.⁴

Moreover, the new constitution gives protection to individual and collective human rights and guarantees the implementation of international covenants and instruments on those rights that the country ratified. Among the collective rights, it gives the controversial right that ‘every nations, nationalities and peoples in Ethiopia has unconditional right to self-determination, and including secession.’⁵

Based on this fact, the existing political regime designs federalism as a mechanism which conceives and promotes diversity as a source of beauty, innovation and creativity. Ethnic entitlement has become a foundation in restructuring the state in Ethiopia.⁶ Hence, in addition to the central government, there are self-administered and autonomous national regional states which demarcated majorly based on ethno-linguistic lines of the people. This makes Ethiopian Federalism to be more of Ethno-linguistic federal system.

However, even though Ethiopian federal system tries to demarcate various ethnic groups in their territorial matrix, but the fact on the ground indicates us that it is difficult to create an ethnically homogenous sub-national unit rather, it is true that there are many ethnic minorities scattered in the midst of regional majorities.⁷

It means that nine autonomous national regional states with two municipal administrative bodies form the Ethiopian federation.⁸ But within these regional states, there are either recognized or non-recognized ethnic minority groups which claim they have distinct characteristics from the

³Christophe Van de Beken (2007), “Ethiopia: Constitutional Protection of Ethnic Minorities at the Regional Level”, Ghant University, *Afrika Focus*, Vol.20, Nr.1-2, 2007, pp.105-151, Belgium, p.106

⁴ Elazar, Daniel (1987), *Federalism as Grand Design: Political Philosophers and the Federal Principle*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America

⁵ FDRE Constitution (1995), Article 39 (1)

⁶Berhanu Gutema Balcha (2007), *Restructuring State and Society: Ethnic Federalism in Ethiopia*, SPIRIT PhD Series, Thesis no. 8, ISSN1903-7783, Aalborg University, Denmark, Published by SPIRIT and Department of Culture and Global Studies, p.5

⁷Yonatan Tesfaye Fesseha (2010), *Federalism and Intra-sub State Minorities: Constitutional Principles for Accommodating Intra- sub State Minorities*, University of the Western Cape, IACL World Congress Mexico p.1

⁸ FDRE constitution Article 47

mainstream ethnic groups, and live under the protectorate of the major ethnic groups of the country.

This infer us that all ethno-linguistic and cultural diversified groups of Ethiopia have not enjoyed rights such as right to be recognized, right to be represented in ethnic political representations and right to have self rule as per the spirit of Article 39 of FDRE Constitution. Moreover, behind fulfilling the constitutional requirements, might the political commitment and practical procedures doesn't conceive all ethnic groups in equal terms, while some entitle such rights others denied even their existence. In relation to this, the case of Kemant people which is the focus of this study might be good example.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Almost all countries in the world have religious or linguistic, cultural or ethnic minorities within their populations. Despite that fact, throughout history states have pursued a variety of policies to achieve the ideal of a homogenous polity and to endanger the physical existence of minorities.⁹ Some states despite the existence of minorities, they denied their existence, other minorities were coercively assimilated, or forced to adopt the language, religion, and customs of the majority and even others extinct through genocide or ethnic cleansing.¹⁰

Moreover, even now a day controversies involving language, culture, religion and identity rights of ethnic groups are often a source of problems in multi-national states. The extent to which issues of identity recognition, political representation and self-determination are in effect related to the accommodation of cultural diversity seems to be emphasized by the current expansion of such claims by different ethnic groups especially in a plural or multi-national state.¹¹

On the standing of human rights instruments on such claims, even the protection of minorities was for centuries an important challenge both for domestic and international law, since World War I (WWI), specific minority regimes of international law were implemented by the League of

⁹Will Kymlicka (1995), *Multicultural Citizenship, A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press, p.2

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹Kristin Henrard and Stefaan Smis (2000), *Recent Experiences in South Africa and Ethiopia to Accommodate Cultural Diversity: A Regained Interest in the Right of Self-Determination*. Cambridge University Press, p.17

Nations (LNs)¹². As a result, the international human rights law recognizes minorities should require sets of rights particularly designed to protect their interests from the task of recognizing their existence to protect and empower them through different affirmative action measures by stressing the government's role to do that.

However, even though international human rights law, conventions, declarations and the national constitutions say more on the rights of minority groups, most of the time states are reluctant to recognize and entitle a right to self-determination to a population groups within them, which can often be qualified as minorities.¹³ This reluctance is mainly related to their fear that such a grant might lead to the territorial breakup of the state.¹⁴ This is because, it would amount to right to secession for these groups, contrary to the right to territorial integrity and the mission of nation building project¹⁵ and this fact reflected in most African countries including Ethiopia.

In the present time, Ethiopia, as a federal state the nine national regional states which demarcated majorly based on ethno-linguistic background of the people with two municipal administrative bodies are the main constituent bodies of the federation. However, with in those major ethnic groups of the country there are also distinct minority groups which identified by the constitution as nations, nationalities and peoples of the country. Those minority groups live under the administration of those major ethnic groups. Since they identified them distinct from the major ethnic group, they claim a right to recognition and other supplementary rights to entitle right to minority groups.¹⁶

From those minority groups of the country the Kemant people can be taken as an example which lives under the protectorate of the Amhara national regional state. The Kemant people are groups of peoples who label them as distinct from the majority ethnic group, but never get due consideration both by the regional and federal constitution.

¹²Dieter Kugelmann (2007), *The Protection of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples Respecting Cultural Diversity*, printed in Netherlands, p. 235

¹³ Henrard and Smis, supra note 11, p.18

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵Christophe Van de Beken (ND), *Federalism and the Accommodation of Ethnic Diversity: The Case of Ethiopia*, Ghant University, p.1

¹⁶ Amhara National Regional State Constitution Article 36(6), Article 45(2)

The Kemant people as a minority group have their own historically distinct cultural, religious and linguistic values. They are distinct from the neighboring Amhara people in their race or identity.¹⁷ However, against with such distinct characteristics throughout the region the Kemant people were being the first to suffer from the identity conversion campaign starting from Solomonic Dynasty until 1974, and in both successive governments they are denied the recognition of themselves as a distinct people.¹⁸ In related with this, the only exception is the Derg Military regime that at least theoretically recognized the Kemant as distinct people by incorporating them in the list of nations and nationalities of the country.¹⁹

However, though the current Ethiopian government has adopted federal system and declares it to be the safe guarder of nation, nationalities and people, it seems not true the right and interest of Kemant people. This is because the discrimination and marginalization of Kemant people seem more worsen at this time than ever before. For example, in the 2007 population and Housing census the government completely denied the existence of distinct people who called as Kemant while they were numerically 169,169 in the 1984 Population and Housing Census²⁰, and 172,327 in 1994 Census.²¹ In both censuses among the twenty-seven ethnic groups of the country, the Kemant people have got eighteenth rank in their number of population.

As a result, particularly since 1991 the peoples of Kemant ethnic group officially requested and struggle to protect their right to identity recognition, political representation and self-administration. But still never get a positive response both from the regional and federal government for their persistent question. At the beginning, since the question is at hand concerned for the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS), the regional government presents different

¹⁷Zelalem Leyew (2002), *Socio-linguistic Survey Report of the Kemant (Qimant) Language of Ethiopia*, SIL International.

¹⁸Tinbitu Dersse (2013), *Ye'etyopia federal seraate ena ye'kemant bihereseb ye'ears astedader tiyake keyet wode yet?* Dire Printing Sh.Co. *Ethiopian Federal System and Kemant Nationality's Self-rule Question from Where to Where?* (My English version), p.50-63

¹⁹Ibid, In those successive periods the kemant people were not entitle the right to land and such right was conditional based on their comply to change their religion in to Christianity and their culture should also be similar with the neighboring Amhara people, however, in the Dergue period their right to land was protected and the kemant people listed as one distinct ethnic group in the list of nations and nationalities of Ethiopia.

²⁰Office of the Population and Housing Census Commission (1991), *Transitional Government of Ethiopia, The Population and Housing Census Analytical Report at National Level of 1984*, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, p. 46.

²¹Office of Population and Housing Census Commission (1998), *Central Statistical Agency, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, The 1994 Population and Housing Census, Results at the National Level, Volume1 Statistical Report*, Addis Ababa, p. 66.

reasons to reject the question. Among them as far as it denied for long period of time the existence of distinct Kemant people, it conceive the Kemant people's movement and struggle to protect their right as fabricated by few elites who need to fulfill their personal economic and political benefits, and having a contrary standing with the current political system. For its conception, the regional government claim that the Kemantney language is already in the verge of extinction and spoken by old age groups who are beyond 60s. Moreover, it argues that culturally they are assimilated with the Amhara people; and they are not live in contiguous territories.

This in turn led the regional government and other concerned bodies to assume that, the question of right to identity recognition and self-administration may not the question of general people. This is due to absence of objective characteristics of the Kemant people that make them unique from the neighboring Amhara people also the cause for their suspicion on the willingness and solidarity of the Kemant people for the quest of identity recognition and self-administration rights.

Accordingly, due to this the question of self-rule and recognition may seem the question of few individuals who have another mission other than protecting and preserving their unique characteristics. Thus, as the language being only used by old age groups particularly who are beyond 60s and non-contiguous of the territories, they also afraid to believe the question is the question of major Kemant people who have willingness to identify them as member of such ethnic group and part of such claims rather assume the question as only elite entrepreneur.

In light of this claim, the self-identification of Kemant people and the group right to recognition, representation and self-rule questions needs scientific investigation and the study therefore would strive to give academic insight on such issues.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the self -identification of Kemant people and its claim for the right to recognition and self-administration from the perspective of international minority right law and domestic legal order.

1.3.2 Specific Objective

The specific objectives are:

1. To assess the self- identification of Kemant people.
2. To indentify the manifestations of the people’s willingness to be part of the Kemant people’s identity and the ways of willingness to preserve their characteristics implied.
3. To assess the responsible factors for some division of interest among Kemant people for right to identity recognition and self-administration quest.
4. To examine the Kemant people’s ways of conceiving their ethnicity and ethnic identity, and the motives of their struggle to identity recognition and self-administration quests.
5. To examine the current major question of kemant people and their validity as per the FDRE constitution.

1.4. Research Questions

Based on the objectives made in the preceding paragraphs, the following research questions have been identified:

1. How do the Kemant People conceive their self- identification?
2. What are the manifestations of the people’s willingness to be part of the Kemant’s identity and the ways of willingness to preserve their characteristics implied?
3. What are the responsible factors for the existence of some divisions of attitude and interest within them for right to identity recognition and self-administration quest?
4. How the Kemant people see their identity and what are the motives behind their struggle to identity recognition and self-administration quest?
5. Does the Kemant People have the right to exercise the right of recognition and self-administration?

1.5. Significance of the study

In its academic significance, since there are several minority groups in the country who may claim such like questions as Kemants, its literature and finding may help other researchers to

recognize the objective and subjective elements of the concept minority and its equivalence with the language of FDRE as nations, nationalities and peoples.

Based on the aims of the research, its finding may enable the concerned bodies that have a mandate to determine the questions of minority ethnic groups, identify the current sentiment of Kemant people for such questions through avoiding illusion on the willingness of peoples to preserve their unique characteristics.

Since the case of Kemant people is not as such studied before, the finding and methodology of the research also may used as a back ground for further future studies.

The study also may used to teach the claimants experiencing and using rights language and using both national and international human right instruments in their question which have a potential to convince the concerned bodies in their question.

1.6. Delimitation / Scope of the Study

The study would be confined to the following delimitations:

The first is the fact that rights of minority groups incorporates various types of rights, from right to recognition (existence) to self- determination. But since the Kemant people entitle neither of such rights, the researcher tries to focus on the rights to identity recognition and self-administration which are the major questions of Kemant people. But it doesn't mean that other rights will not be touched as found necessary.

The other delimitation of the study was within the issue of Kemant people questions of self-administration and identity recognition, both the subjective and objective elements of a minority is the main constituent criteria for such questions. However, the researcher majorly focused on the subjective characteristic (which is called self-identification in international law and equivalent with common psychological make-up and belief in a common or related identity under the FDRE constitution) with few objective elements (such as the language and contiguousness of the territories), which have a link with the above focus area and response of the concerned bodies for the question of Kemant people.

Moreover, since it is difficult to cover all parts of the Kemant people and place of resident with the limited time and resource, the researcher confined to Lay Armacheho, Chilga, Metema Woredas, and Gondar town as representatives of the remaining Woredas. With regard peoples, the researcher selected individuals who assumed as clearly know the issue like political activists to the claim, some selected ordinary individuals both from the Kemant and neighboring Amhara ethnic group and the concerned officials on the issue.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

This research suffered for certain constraints. The first thing was related to research fund that may be the challenge of most researchers, hence distance of the case study with the academic center, and the case studies by itself being dispersed each other needs more financial costs. As a result, it affects both directly and indirectly the quality of research because of the budget is more invested for transportation than to implement the necessary elements for data collection purposes.

The second one is time constraint since a research to be more effective, enough time is one of the ingredients, but since the issue is more complex and considered as have wide context, it needs ample time to investigate the issue well.

Moreover, the researcher also may lacks technical knowledge to handle it effectively that can be done within the given time and resource. However, it doesn't mean that, due to these constraints the research cannot achieve the planned objectives rather as much as possible the researcher try to minimize and handle the constraints.

The other problem what the researcher encountered is during data collection periods because of some informants (both from the Kemant peoples and the concerned officials) hesitate the researcher as having another missions than the academic purpose and became back and forth to give the necessary information. But through the letter of certification which prepared by the center and by the cooperation of some individuals who know the background of the researcher the problem is resolved.

1.8. Methodology of the Study

1.8.1 Method of Research

The researcher used qualitative research approach. The reason for employing qualitative research approach is that first qualitative research approach would enable the researcher to analyze concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity starting from people's expressions and activities in their local contexts.

The other reason that the researcher only employed qualitative methods was that to become more familiar with the issue in detail. However, if the researcher employed quantitative method of research, it would be challenging to know the representative sample population while the number of self-declaring Kemant population were not clearly known.

1.8.2. Data sources

Based on the nature of research questions and objective of the study, the researcher employed both primary and secondary data sources. These data were collected by using a combination of different methods. Primary data were collected using both structured and unstructured in- depth interview, focus group discussion, and field observation. Interim committee letters to the federal and regional governments and the reply of the ANRS to the Kemant people's quest of identity recognition and self-administration also another data source of the study.

The secondary data were gathered from different sources that are related to the theme of the study such as videos of public meetings and awareness creation arenas, and demonstrations which indicates the movement and sentiment of the people for their question; published and unpublished books and journals, internet, and laws. As a result, using various sources and techniques of data collections enabled the researchers to triangulate and ensure the validity and reliability of the data and improve the quality of the research.

1.8.3. Tools of Data Collection Methods

1. Interview

The researcher conducted face-to-face both structured and non-structured in-depth interviews with twelve (12) key informants who are purposively selected. Among them, the interview conducted with two Kemant Woreda's coordinating committee members; three zonal interim coordinating committee members; three both the educated and uneducated self-declared Kemant

ordinary individuals, two of the neighboring Amhara peoples who co-exist with the Kemant people and two zonal concerned officials.

Moreover, the researcher also tried to interview randomly some neighboring Amhara peoples, the rural (uneducated) and educated self-declared Kemant peoples who are not considered as key informants.

The main objectives of the interviews were to gather information on the overall current situation of Kemant people, the content and development of right to identity recognition and self administration claim. Moreover, the interview aimed at to identify the sentiment of the general people on the above questions and the main activists and leaders of struggle and the main factors for the existence of some division of interest within them on such quests. And finally it used as a means to recognize indicators of people's willingness to preserve the distinct characteristics.

2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus Group Discussion was employed to derive group perspectives that could not be gained by in depth interview and field observation. Therefore, four FGDs were conducted with five to eight persons in Metema and Chilga Woreda, and Gondar town. From them, two FGDs were conducted with the coordinating committee members in Metema woreda and Gondar town, and one with the rural self-declared peoples in Chilga Woreda, and the remaining one is held with self-declaring ordinary Kemant individuals in Shehidi town (Metema Woreda).

This is important to obtain relevant information on the genesis of Kemant quest of identity recognition and self-rule and the overall spirit of the question, and the individuals standing on the quests and their willingness to preserve unique characteristics. In addition to this, it is also important to gather information on the nature of questions which makes them still unable to get a positive reply from regional and federal concerned officials, the current status of political movement and struggle on such quests, the structure and formation of coordinating committee members, and other related data.

3. Field Observation

The researcher also used field observation for 28 days in Chilga, Lay Armacheo, Metema Woreda and Gondar town to examine the sentiment of people on right to identity recognition and self-administration claims aimed to fill the information gap which is not obtained through interviews and FGD.

Based on this, the researcher can observed the Kemant people's standing on demonstrations and meetings and other common activities for their quest, the general sentiment of the people on the movement and struggle of Kemant peoples for right to identity and self-rule question. And it used to identify the implications of Kemant people's conception of their identity and ethnicity. It also helped the researcher to digest the elite's effort to aware the general Kemant people on peaceful ways of compliant expression and the way their movement and quest is presented.

1.8.4. Study Area

As far as eight Woredas with Gondar town and Gondar *Zuria* assumed as the residence of Kemant people in North Gondar Zonal administration, the researcher selected Chilga, Lay Armacheho and Metema Woredas and Gondar town as samples of the case study. The researcher draws this sample Woredas using purposive sampling method due to the following reasons;

The first is in Chilga and Lay Armachiho the Kemant people assumed as live contiguously in which major kebeles of these Woredas are the resident of Kemant people. This in turn helped the researcher to gather information in due time with much access of informants. Second, based on the statistics from the study of interim committee and North Gondar zone statistical office, it is assumed that majorities of the residents of these Woredas are Kemants and reveal themselves as part of the Kemant people.

Related with Metama Woreda, next to Lay Armacheho and Chilga Woredas, it is assumed that the residence of large number of self-declared Kemant people. Moreover, it is also identified as the center of hot political struggle for Kemant people's quest of identity recognition and self-administration claim as Chilga and Metema woredas.

Finally, reasons' of the researcher to take Gondar town as another sample is because it is the main center of the struggle and a place where office of the interim coordinating committee for

Kemant people quest for recognition and self-administration is located. As a result, all these enabled the researcher to collect the required data for the study.

1.8.5. Methods of Data Analysis and Processing

As it expressed in the above, the collected data using the above techniques will be processed and analyzed in light of research objectives and questions designed for the study. Those data that would be obtained from FGDs, field observations and interview of key informants, would be organized and discussed through qualitative description.

Secondary data that was gathered from different books, Journals, etc would be analyzed using documentary data analysis method.

1.9. Ethical Considerations

From the task of topic selection up to the end the study is going in confirmation with the Center of human rights study in Addis Ababa University. In this thesis the researcher is swearing that all of the information which collected from the informants are based on the free will of those individuals and the researcher is full of confidential on those issues which the informants do not want to exposed.

Moreover, the researcher also strive to be make the research relevant by minimizing the possibility of bias which can resulted due to the personal background of the researcher. As a result, the researcher is open to see the issue from different angles, such as from the claimants, neighboring Amhara peoples and the concerned body's perspective.

1.10. Organization of the study

This Research paper is organized in five chapters. Chapter one is an introductory part, which contains the background of the research, the research problem, objectives, research questions, limitation of the study, significance of the study, the methodology of the research and ethical considerations.

Chapter two reviewed the relevant literature and discussed the conceptual and theoretical framework pertaining to rights of minorities in international human rights law.

Chapter three discussed on the politics of self-identification with three major theories of ethnicity, and factors influencing the ethnic identity and self-identification of individuals in particular and minority groups in general.

Chapter four provided description of the Kemant people with their main distinguishing elements from the neighboring Amhara people such as language, religion, culture, history, ethnicity and its population. And the chapter also presented the historical genesis and development of Kemant people's identity recognition and self-administration claim since the 1990s.

And finally charter five focused on the analysis of the data collected on the Kemant people's quest for identity recognition and self-administration and the peoples willingness to identify themselves as member of the ethnic group and their implication to do so, and the main responsible factors for some divisions within them, and the current situation of the claim of identity recognition and self-administration claim. And the chapter also presented conclusion of the main findings of the research and forwarded its recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Conceptual Frameworks and Rights of Minority's under International Human Right Instruments

In this chapter the points which will assess are the conceptual definition of minorities under the perspective of international human rights law. From this conceptualization both the subjective and objective definitional elements of a minority will be discussed one by one.

Even though it is difficult to discern the different types of minorities, but the chapter tries to incorporate those minorities which existed in each respective territory by having the characteristics of either linguistic, religious, cultural, national/ethnic or with the combination of all the above forms will be also the focus of this chapter. Finally, the rights of minorities from the group rights perspective under the international human rights law also another focus area of the chapter.

2.1. Meaning of Minority

Several international human right regimes and different scholars on the area use the term 'minority', but they couldn't define it, and despite many references to minorities' there is no universally agreed, legally binding and all inclusive definition of the term. For this absence of agreed, legally binding and inadequate definition, many scholars suggest different reasons, that are state related, minorities' related, and the inherent imprecise and vague nature of the term.

On state related problems, from all corners of the world either Africa, the Americas and Asian continents, nation states prefer the definition to be too restrictive so that large trenches of their population do not fall within the definition and tries to obstruct the process of defining the scope of the term.²² This is because to avoid the responsibility for all of the burdens to protect and recognize minorities' which found in each respective territory due to their fear that recognizing such groups is antithesis to the nation building project.

²² Borhan Uddin Khan and Muhammed Mahbubur Rahman (July 2009), *Protection of Minorities: A South Asian Discourse*, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, p.1

There is also a problem which is more or less emanate from the minorities by themselves (even though there may be a push and pull factors for such conditions), it related with the variety of situations in which minorities live. That is some live together in well-defined areas and clearly separated from the dominant part of the population, in the contrary others are scattered throughout the country.²³ Some minorities have a strong sense of collective identity and recorded history; others retain only a fragmented notion of their common heritage and might haven't willingness to preserve their unique characteristics.²⁴

Other scholars suggest for the absence of agreed definition of the term, it is primarily because of a feeling that the concept of 'minority' is inherently vague and imprecise and that no proposed definition would ever be able to provide for the innumerable minority groups that could possibly exist.²⁵ It means that the term 'minority' is by itself an ambiguous term, potentially definable through an endless combination of interacting variables, like religion, language, ethnicity, race, culture, physical characteristics and a variety of other traits.²⁶

In addition, other writers on the area also suggest that the diverse contexts and existence of different groups claiming minority status and protection also make it challenging to formulate a precise definition of the term. For example, groups such as migrant workers, refugees, stateless persons and other non-nationals, who do not necessarily share certain ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics common to persons belonging to minorities, may find themselves in situations similar to those of minorities and claim the status of a minority group.²⁷

However, through several efforts to arriving at a universally acceptable definition, various characteristics of minorities have been identified, which cover most minority situations and facts. Among other things, the most commonly identified description of a minority can be characterized as a 'non-dominant group of individuals' who share certain national or ethnic, religious or

²³Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (ND): *Towards Developing Country Engagement Strategies on Minorities*, An Information Note for OHCHR Staff and Other Practitioners, p.2

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Javid Rehman (2000), *The Weaknesses in the International Protection of Minority Rights*, Kluwer Law International, Hague, p.14

²⁶ Javid Rehman (1995), *An Analysis of the Rights of Minorities in International Law*, Being A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the University of Hull, p.17

²⁷ Halida Nasic (2007), *Minority Rights Instruments and Mechanisms, Minority Protection along the Conflict Continuum MIRICO: Human and Minority Rights in the Life Cycle of Ethnic Conflicts*, p. 8

linguistic characteristics that are different from those of the majority population in a given nation state is one common identifying element.²⁸

The other distinguishing/ definitional element is the use of self-identification which connotes ‘a will on the part of the members of the group in question to preserve their own language, culture, and religion which makes them distinct from the mainstream society could provide a viable option for ongoing and everlasting controversy.’²⁹

In other words, most international legal human right instruments and the sovereign states often stressed that the existence of a minority is a question of fact and that any definition must include both objective factors such as the existence of a shared ethnicity, language or religion, and subjective factors that individuals must identify themselves as members of that minority group.³⁰

These the above definitional elements originates from the repeated and exhaustive attempts of different scholars to define it, and especially the definition which provided by Jules Deschenes (1985) and Francesco Capotorti (1991) have got international acceptance.

In fact the two scholars definition shares some element, but the most widely acknowledged definition, is the one formulated by Francesco Capotorti who is the former United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities defined with the application of Article 27 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), a minority group is:

*A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state and in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the state – possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.*³¹

On the above definition, even though there are still complications, there are certain important criteria and essential defining elements that should be consider;

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (2010), *Minority Rights: International Standards and Guidance for Implementation*. New York and Geneva, p.2

³¹ Francesco Capotorti (1991), *Study on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. U.N.Sales No. E. 91.XIV.2, p. 96

2.2. The Objective and Subjective Components of the Definition of Minority

A. Numerical Inferiority

When we use the word minority the first element that comes in our conceptualization is their numerical inferiority. Basically, the reference to the ‘rest of the population of the state’ indicates whether a minority can also be determined in comparison with the population of a region, a province or some other kind of internal political structure within a state.³² Even though Capotorti nothing says on the numerical strength and particular number of groups, but from the definition, numerical inferiority is to be determined by reference to the size of ‘the rest of the population of a state’ and it compares the number of groups of minority’s vis-à-vis the dominant group which only resides in one nation state.³³

However, there is a controversy that in most instances a minority group will be a numerical minority, but in others a numerical majority may also find itself in a minority or in non-dominant position in political, economic and social activities, such as Blacks under the apartheid regime in South Africa.³⁴

B. Non-dominant Position

The other important element what makes a certain group of people minority is not only a numerical phenomenon; rather it is a political and sociological reality. That is, a minority situation is based on the degree of political participation with the dominant group and social inclusion makes them dominant or non-dominant.³⁵ Not only political power relations in the State are at issue but also, the minority's economic, cultural or social status and exclusion from power also makes them minority and majority group.³⁶

³²Annika Akerberg (April 2001), *Linguistic Minorities- A Study on the Relation between People with Disabilities and Minority Rights under International Law*, p. 18

³³Uddin Khan and Mahbubur Rahman, supra note 22, p. 3

³⁴United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (2010), *Minority Rights: International Standards and Guidance for Implementation*. New York and Geneva, p.2-3

³⁵Uddin Khan and Mahbubur Rahman, supra note 22, p. 4

³⁶Javaid Rehman, supra note 25, p.16

As Javaid Rehman also cited in his thesis, according to professor Palley, a minority is ‘any racial, tribal, linguistic, religious caste or nationality group within a nation state and which is not control of the political machinery of the state’.³⁷

C. Nationals of the State

The definition of minorities as offered by both Capotorti and Deschenes maintains that a group to get the nomenclature of minority should be citizens of the state in their respective territory they live in, and it exclude refugees, foreigners and migrant workers who may be regarded as minorities.³⁸

However, non-nationals could form a significant proportion of a state's population, and even though the main thrust of the development of international law of human rights has devoted itself to a consideration of the issue of nationals within the State, but the rights of the non-nationals, as individuals is also becoming a concern of human rights law.³⁹

The only binding document on rights of minorities, Article 27 of the ICCPR also states that;

*In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.*⁴⁰

However, in its General Comment 23 on Article 27 of the Human Rights Committee (HRC), referring to Article 27 of the ICCPR, observed that ‘the individuals designed to be protected need not be citizens of the State party’.⁴¹

D. Distinguishing Ethnic, Linguistic and Religious Characteristics

Capotorti as well as Deschenes emphasizes distinguishing ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics of minorities as another component for the concept of minority. Groups of

³⁷ Javaid Rehman, supra note 26, p.21

³⁸ Uddin Khan and Mahbubur Rahman, supra note 22, p.5

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Human Rights Committee (1994), General Comment 23, The Rights of Minorities (Article27),U.N. Doc.HRI/GEN/1/Rev.1 at 52, as cited in Uddin Khan and Mahbubur Rahman , supra note 22, p.5

⁴¹ Ibid, p.52

minorities have their own distinct ethnic, linguistic and religious characteristics which makes them separate from the rest of the population of a given state.⁴²

From the writing of Manfred Nowak, groups within a population may be considered minorities only when they differ from the rest of the population of the state in which they exist by reference to ethnicity, religion or language.⁴³ So that, the above four elements of Capotorti's definition commonly expresses the objective characteristics of groups of minorities, and the remaining self-identification/ solidarity within minorities is identified as subjective element of the definition minority.⁴⁴

E. Self-identification/ Collective Will

From Capotorti's definition ...'show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language' indicates that the collective will of those groups to identify them as part of the group and their unreserved interest to preserve their distinct characteristics which makes them different from the rest of the population, and this obviously may contain subjective interest and disputed standing within the group. The concept is equivalent with the concept of common psychological make-up and belief in a common or related identity which stipulated in article 39(5) of the FDRE constitution.

The groups willingness to expose as a minority group is a question of self-identification, means that a group cannot be characterized or treated as a minority if it does not want to be defined as a minority; in addition, the individual person with in a group always has the possibility to make a choice if he or she wants to belong to a minority or not.⁴⁵

This subjective element, however, is not required to be overtly expressed, as Capotorti express it 'only implicitly'; rather it emerges from the fact that a given group has kept its distinctive characteristics (language, religion and culture) over a period of time shows their willingness to

⁴²Annika Akerberg, supra note 32, p.7

⁴³Uddin Khan and Mahbubur Rahman, supra note 22, p.5

⁴⁴Tim Potier (July, 2001), "Regionally non-dominant titular peoples: the next phase in minority rights?" *JEMIE (Journal on Ethno politics and Minority Issues in Europe)*, inter college, Cyprus, p.6

⁴⁵Uddin Khan and Mahbubur Rahman, supra note 22, p.7-10

preserve their distinct characteristics, and their self-identification as member of that minority group.⁴⁶

Despite this fact, Capotorti's definition could be challenged in its restrictiveness only minority by will and overlooking the situation of minorities by force- which are forced to assimilate without their consent.

As Annika Akerberg stated that the degree of importance attached to willingness to preserve their identity which represents a 'sense of solidarity' must be seen in different directions, hence, in many politically pressured situations, it would be impossible to ascertain the true extent of a minority group's collective solidarity or willingness to preserve their characteristics since the possibility of forced assimilation must always be borne in mind.⁴⁷ The distinction between forced and volunteer minorities is:

*Two fundamentally different attitudes are possible for a minority in its relationship with the majority: it may wish to be assimilated or it may refuse to be assimilated. The minority that desires assimilation but is barred is a minority by force. The minority that refuses assimilation is a minority by will.*⁴⁸

2.3. Types of Minorities under International Human Rights Law

In fact from the study of different scholars on the area and the strive of the international human rights instrument on the issue, it is very cumbersome to differentiate linguistic, ethnic and national minorities and these categories always do overlap, and as the definition of minority they haven't also agreed definition.

However, variety forms of international human rights instruments always refer national/ ethnic, religious and linguistic groups as the main reference for their list of minority groups. Such as, the 1948 Genocide Convention focuses on the protection of national, ethnical, racial or religious groups.

⁴⁶Uddin Khan and Mahbubur Rahman, supra note 22, p.7, as it quoted in Malcom N. Shaw (1992), *The Definition of Minorities in International Law*, in Yoram Dinstein and Mala Tabory (eds.), *The Protection of Minorities and Human Rights*, London, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, p.28.

⁴⁷ Annika Akerberg, supra note 32 , p.19

⁴⁸Javaid Rehman, supra note 26, p.23

The 1992 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (UNDM) (UN Minority's Declaration) also focuses upon the Rights of Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, and the same is true for ICCPR except it excludes national minorities.⁴⁹

As a result, from the declaration of different international human rights instruments and the finding of several scholars on the field, four minority groups are identified. Those minorities who lives in their respective territory may hold either of the ethnic/ national, linguistic, religious or all characteristics in combination.

2.3.1. Ethnic/ National Minority

No precise and adequate definition of the term 'ethnicity' is put by the international human rights law. But according to the scholar R. Burkey, as cited by Javiad Rehman,

*Ethnic groups may be defined as peoples who conceive of themselves as one kind by virtue of their common ancestry (real or imagined), who are united by emotional bonds, a common culture and by concern with preservation of their groups.*⁵⁰

Mostly the term ethnic and national minority groups are used as similar groups who can expressed by the above definitions, but there is a slight difference. As the name implies national minority groups are those groups who have been already in their historic home land and nationals of the state and ethnic minority may include both nationals and non-nationals of a certain state.⁵¹

2.3.2. Religious Minority

A religious minority can be defined as a minority in which the members are united by a common belief.⁵² A belief can be theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs. Basically, the concept belief in a religious sense is unclear; hence the uncertainty of the status of traditional and animistic belief systems, and the different denominators in a certain belief can be taken as an example which

⁴⁹ Annika Akerberg, supra note 32, p.7

⁵⁰ Javiad Rehman, supra note 26, p.26, also cited in R. Burkey (1970), *Discrimination and Racial Relations, Report on the International Research Conference on Race Relations*. Aspen: Colorado, p.62.

⁵¹ Belay Shibeshi Awoke (2010), *Minority Rights Protection in the Amhara National Regional State: The Case of the Kemant People in North Gondar Zone*, Addis Ababa Ethiopia, p. 26.

⁵² Annika Akerberg, supra note 32, p.14

makes the category complex.⁵³ For example, there are belief systems such like that rationalism, agnosticism (a belief system which skeptics on the everlasting life after death), etc in which religion could be described as an explanation of the meaning of life and signs of how one should live in accordance with that belief system.⁵⁴ But as a general term those groups who exposed themselves as united by a certain sort of belief with having other characteristics can be identified as religious minority.

2.3.3. Linguistic Minority

According to McDougal, Laswell and Chen's writing, 'language is broadly understood to include all the means (signs and symbols), phonetic and phonemic, by which people communicate with each other'.⁵⁵ M. Nowak defines linguistic minorities as it cited by Javaid Rehman:

*Linguistic minority are those groups of the population that use a language, both among themselves and in public that clearly differs from that used by the majority as well as from the state language. This need not be a written language. However, mere dialects that deviate slightly (in pronunciation) from the majority language do not establish the status of a minority.*⁵⁶

Therefore, those groups who identified by their language they speak, (if possible) write or use in their public relationship are linguistic groups. But practically speaking those ethnic minorities may found in the case of linguistic minorities and almost all minorities may have a language right claim. But the main difference between linguistic and ethnic/ national minorities is in case of linguistic minorities, especially in multi-national states, certain groups demand special treatment to retain their language using in both public and private affairs.⁵⁷ It means that they are identified on the basis of the language they speak, write or use in private and public affairs⁵⁸, and the main

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Benito, E.O. (1989), *Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief*, New York, United Nations, p. 75, as cited by Annika Akerberg, supra note 32, p.14

⁵⁵ Annika Akerberg, supra note 32, p.29-30 as it also cited in M. McDougal, H. Lasswell and L-C Chen (1976) *Freedom of discrimination in choice of Language and International human rights*, 1 SIULJ , p.151

⁵⁶Javaid Rehman, supra note 25, p.30 quoted from M. Nowak, United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, CCPR Commentary (Kehl am Rhein: Strasbourg), 1993, 491.

⁵⁷Tokuma Daba (January, 2010), *The Legal and Practical Protection of the Rights of Minorities in Self Administering Nations of Ethiopia: The Case of Oromia*, Addis Ababa university, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, p.29 as it cited in Aberra Dagafa (2000), "The Scope of Rights of National Minorities under the Constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia", *Series on Ethiopian Constitutional Law, vol. 1*, Addis AAU Printing Press, Addis Ababa University, p .1

⁵⁸ Ibid

focus of those groups is to preserve and promote their language with special focus on other characteristics.

2.3.4. Indigenous Peoples

In most instances when the cases of minority groups touched, it may also the issue of indigenous peoples. Thus, in many situations demands made by indigenous peoples incorporates the claim of minority groups and indigenous peoples asking for an entitlement of two set of rights, one as indigenous group and the other as minority.

Though the definition of indigenous peoples is, as minority groups, contentious, but from the definition of UNs study on indigenous population, indigenous peoples are:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.⁵⁹

Mostly some scholars hold that the definition of indigenous peoples is overlap with the definition of national minorities, but those indigenous groups are the original settlers of their land and wants to preserve their ancestral land, but alienated such rights by the new comers.⁶⁰

2.4. Scope of Minority Rights Protection under International Law

The international concern for the religious, civil, and political rights of minorities had been manifest as early as the sixteenth and more recently during the nineteenth centuries, however,

⁵⁹Dieter Kugelman (2007), *The Protection of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples Respecting Cultural Diversity*, printed in Netherlands,p.259-260, as it quoted in UN, United Nations Study on Indigenous Population, U.N. Sales No.E.86.XIV.3, P.50-51

⁶⁰ African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) (2006), *Indigenous Peoples in Africa: The Forgotten Peoples?* The African commission's work on Indigenous Peoples in Africa, Copenhagen, Denmark, p. 12

effective implementation of this concern by means of an international guarantee had been attempted by the peace settlements following World War I.⁶¹

Therefore, the League of Nations is the first international human right instrument which tries to protect the rights of racial, linguistic and religious minorities, even within the absence of actual definition of the word minority. In this respect, since minority rights have been accepted into the cannon of human rights as individual not collective or group rights, the League of Nation's focus was placed on protection of individual rights and the principle of non-discrimination.⁶²

So that it provided two categories of protections for minorities, such as protections which aimed at ensuring equality and the non-discrimination and special protection for minorities, since then these principles of the UN supported by establishing both conventional and extra- conventional instruments. In general, from the standing of those UN instruments and the suggestion of different writers on the area, rights of minorities incorporate the following elements;

2.4.1. Right to Recognition/ Existence

The first issue that should be deal for the rights of minority is their right to existence and survival; hence they claim other rights only when they exist. Protecting their existence or survival includes, as the UNMD (United Nation Minorities Declaration) declared, protecting them from forced expulsion, crimes against humanity and genocide.⁶³ As the Holocaust atrocity is one greater incidence; minorities are the frequent targets of genocide. As a result, behind other efforts the United Nations decided to establish the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to halt and eliminate such acts.

Moreover, the right to existence and recognition of minorities is ensuring by protecting them from the forceful cultural, religious and linguistic assimilation and which results to suppression by the mainstream population. It implies that protection of the existence of minorities not confined to protecting them from the intentional act of genocide and crimes against humanity, but it extending

⁶¹Mary Gardiner Jones (1948), *National Minorities: A Case Study in International Protection*, Yale university (Member of the New York bar), P. 604

⁶² Dragana Kovacevic (ND), *International Minority Protection System*, Ethnicity Research Center, Belgrade, P.1

⁶³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, supra note 23, p.5

far beyond protection of cultural or religious monuments which are important expressions of a minority's identity and helps them to preserve their characteristics.⁶⁴

However, lack of respect, protection and fulfillment of the right to existence/ recognition of minorities may be at least a contributing factor if not the primary cause of displacement and may in the worst cases even lead to the extinction of the distinct characteristics of such groups.⁶⁵

2.4.2. Right to Preserve Separate Identity

Promoting and protecting their identity may prevent forced assimilation and the loss of cultures, religions and languages. Non-assimilation requires acceptance and promotion of diversity and plural identities to be not only tolerated but protected and respected and if possible promoted. Therefore, positive action from the state is required to respect and promote cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, and acknowledge that minorities enrich society through this diversity and the minorities have internationally acknowledge right to promote and use their language, religion and culture.⁶⁶

2.4.2.1. Linguistic Rights

Even though, the desire and wish of minorities to preserve their identity by using their own language may sometimes endanger through the action of assimilation and other institutional obstacles, language represents one of the principal means by which minorities can sustain and preserve their identity. It also considered an important factor to evaluate the chances of survival of minorities and their separate identity because of the symbolic investment in a language by the group speaking and wanting to maintain it.⁶⁷

Despite the fact that, to preserve their language in particular and their continued existence in general, typical demands of minorities regarding with their language includes the use of their languages in the public media, the public education system and communications with public

⁶⁴ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, supra note 30, p.5

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 7

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.8

⁶⁷ Kristin Henrard (September 2001), "The Interrelationship between Individual Human Rights, Minority Rights and the Right to Self-Determination and Its Importance for the Adequate Protection of Linguistic Minorities", *The Global Review of Ethno politics Vol. 1, no. 1, September 2001, p. 41-61*, University of Groningen, The Netherlands, p.45

authorities and courts.⁶⁸ They may also use their own language in their relations with administrative authorities and shall have the right to acquire civil documents and certificates, both in the official and minority languages.⁶⁹

Therefore, the government not only protects them from the third parties interference which intends to endanger their right to use and develop their language rather shall have a positive obligation to promote their right to language. In the contrary, any act against the linguistic rights of minorities either through officialization of the majorities' language and try to suppress the language of minorities by different restrictions endangers both their religious, linguistic and cultural rights in particular and their existence in general.

2.4.2.2. Religious Right

Religion also one of the fundamental value of minorities and can be part of the cultural asset of them. Obviously, freedom of religion is distinguished as the rights of individuals, but persons either individually or in group can manifest, profess, follow or practice their religious beliefs.

For a group of minorities' since religion is one of the distinguishing characteristics of them, minorities have a right to profess and practice a belief of their choice either individually or collectively and the government required to fulfill their material and organizational need as it do the mainstream population, and the state should be protected against incursion from the dominant religion and the state.⁷⁰

2.4.2.3. Cultural Right

In addition to their religion and language, a minority group also needs protection to preserve their cultural expressions and the state required to accommodate cultural diversity and institutional foundations of cultural reproduction for minority groups.

The right of a minority group, both individually and collectively have a right to engage in the group's distinct cultural practices, the state shall be, inherent in the principles of non-assimilation,

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Halida Nasic, supra note 27, p.10

⁷⁰ Belay Shibeshi, supra note 51, p.28

shouldn't be interfere and protection from the interference of private parties in the minority's cultural practices, and must have the positive obligation to create the necessary conditions for such practices.⁷¹

2.4.3. Right to Participation

In addition to being a general human right, effective participation is also a right of minorities which can be making them part of the mainstream society, as it stipulated in the relevant international legal instruments.⁷²

The UNDM in article 2 and 3 states that 'persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life' and 'Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in decisions on the national, and where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live' respectively.⁷³

In general, right to participation of a minority group holds the idea that their right to get space in administrative, parliamentary and justice bodies in their country of resident. Moreover, it also touches the idea that they could have a right to special representation (affirmative action) in parliamentary and ministerial offices directly or through freely chosen representatives.⁷⁴ Thus, if minorities are effectively represented in public affairs, discriminatory standards and practices can be more readily eliminated, and it in turn helps them to rehabilitate and preserve their distinct identity.⁷⁵

2.4.4. Right to Equality and Non-discrimination

Minority groups have also internationally acknowledged right to equality and non- discrimination. The above right to effective participation in public life is to be enjoyed without discrimination

⁷¹Yousef T. Jabarseen (2008), "Toward Participatory Equality: Protecting Minority Rights under International Law" *ISR.L.REV.Vol.41 No.3*, p.665

⁷² Yash Ghai (2003), *Minority Rights Group International, Minority Rights and Public Participation*, p.2

⁷³The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (UN Minorities Declaration), adopted by consensus in 1992 (Resolution 47/135)

⁷⁴Andrew Reynolds (December, 2008), *promoting inclusive parliaments: The Representation of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Parliament*, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA, p.2

⁷⁵ Yash Ghai , supra note 72, p.4

both within horizontally, and minority groups with the mainstream population. The basic principle of prohibition of discrimination is articulated in a number of instruments, ranging from Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Articles 3 and 4 of the UNDM.

Moreover, Article 26 of ICCPR recognized ‘minority rights to equality and effective protection against any form of discrimination based on contingencies such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

2.4.5. Right to Self-determination

Even though the idea of self-determination is rooted in the Enlightenment period of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and there is much written on it, a precise definition remains elusive.⁷⁶

Several writers on the area agree that the objective of self-determination is the free determination of political status and pursuit of appropriate economic, social and cultural development of a given nation, group or other else. However, these entitlements are restricted to those defined narrowly as a ‘people’, severely restricting the scope of self-determination and confuses for whom this right is applicable.

Hence, although the scope of its specification is that all peoples have the right to self-determination, as is stipulated in article 1 of in both ICCPR and ICESCR (International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights) the distinction of a ‘people’ from that of ‘indigenous peoples’ and ‘minorities’ is within a recurrent controversy.⁷⁷

In addition to its elusiveness on where the line between people, and minority and indigenous peoples should be drawn, it is established in international law that the right to self-determination does not apply to minorities.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Joshua Castellino and Jeremie Gilbert (2003), “Self- determination, Indigenous Peoples and Minorities”, *Macquarie Law Journal* (2003), Vol. 3, p.156

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.161

⁷⁸ Maya Abdullah (May, 2006), *The Right to Self- determination in International Law, Scrutinizing the Colonial aspect of the Right to Self- determination*, University of Goteborg, p.12

However, obviously in respect of the self-determination of peoples always two aspects have to be distinguished, such as the right to self-determination of peoples has an internal aspect, which is the right of all peoples to pursue freely their economic, social and cultural development without outside interference.⁷⁹ In that respect it differs from the external aspect of self-determination that there exists a link with the right of every citizen to take part in the conduct of public affairs at any level and, which is applicable for the right to minority groups.⁸⁰

The usual manifestation of external self-determination is the colonization aspect, which is the aspiration to form an independent State vis-à-vis other States and the international community.⁸¹ Even though Article 27 of ICCPR aims at protecting the individual rights of members of a minority group, in its General Comment 23 on Article 27, the Human Rights Committee (HRC) has pointed out that self-determination is a collective right.⁸² As a result, the Human Rights Committee has argued that Article 1 of the ICCPR is still relevant in the context of 'internal' self-determination, even though it is still open to question.

Moreover, there is a view which inclined that self-determination in the post-colonial era is more relevant in the context of minorities or ethnic groups which claim the right to self-determination as a remedy for the denial of political, civil, cultural and other human rights and this is sometimes used as a justification for secession and it considered as the tool to redress the imbalance between majorities and minorities within a given state and promote the autonomous existence of minority groups.⁸³

As a result, despite the unresolved controversy on does right to self-determination deserves for minorities, it is possible to say that all of the international community accepts, at least principally, right to autonomy is a right which is concomitant with the situation of minority groups. This is because of right to autonomy considered as part and parcel of the right to self-determination, but not extreme, unlike to the right to self-determination, which mightn't lead to secession of those groups that can ultimately be the threat of national cohesion.

⁷⁹ Yichao CHEN (February, 2010), *The Right to Self-determination of the Indigenous Peoples- Illustrated by Arctic Indigenous Peoples*, University of Akureyri, p. 42

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Maya Abdullah, *supra* note 78, p.32

⁸² Human Rights Committee (1994), General Comment 23 on Article 27, Fiftieth session

⁸³ Maya Abdullah, *supra* note 78, p.41

2.4.6. Right to Autonomy

Despite the controversy on self-determination on minority groups, most writers on the area agree that the minority groups should enjoy the right to autonomy in some degrees even though the degree of autonomy by itself is imprecise and differs from state to state. Hence in some states the minority groups have full autonomy which is not overtaken by the whim of the central government and incorporates a vast amount of autonomy and guaranteed by a legal document (constitution).

Autonomy is therefore taken to mean as recognizing the right of minorities and indigenous communities to exercise meaningful internal self-determination (self rule) and control over their own affairs in a manner that is not inconsistent with State sovereignty.⁸⁴

The autonomy enables for those distinct groups who haven't a capacity for self-determination can determine their economic and political matters and it enables them to preserve their distinct characteristics either through zonal or district level administration.

Generally, to sum up the points which assessed in this chapter, as most social science terms, despite its variety applications, the term minority is subject to unresolved controversy due to the inherent vagueness of the term, the states' interest to make the definition restrictive, the nature of minority's existence and other related problems makes it difficult to put one agreed, legally binding definition.

However, even it can't be free from some flaws; the former United Nations Rapporteur Francesco Capotorti tries to put an internationally agreed definition which touches most minority situations and existence. From his definition, it contains both objective and subjective components, such as among the objective components, minority groups are, numerically inferior than the rest of the population of a given state, non-dominant both in economic and political positions of a certain country, nationals of the state (but they are neither refugees nor immigrants), having distinguished ethnic, linguistic and religious characteristics. Lastly, solidarity/collective will within them to preserve the distinct characteristics is considered as subjective components of the definition of

⁸⁴Javaid Rehman, supra note 26, p.173

minority as it needs the individual's willingness to declare themselves as member of the minority group and interested to preserve those unique characteristics.

The other major issue which covered by this chapter is when we say minorities, from the principle of international human rights law, they may be ethnic/ national, linguistic, religious (cultural) and indigenous peoples. Mostly it is illusive to differentiate the above minority types and may be ethnic/national minorities may be existed in the situation of linguistic minorities, as most minority types have linguistic characteristics. But those linguistic minorities are, among other characteristics, their major identifying element is claiming linguistic rights to preserve and use their language. Indigenous peoples also called as minorities, as the case of minority issues are the issue of indigenous peoples.

Finally, the chapter also assessed the rights of minorities from the group rights perspective which declared by the international human rights law. Such as the first element of rights of minority which can be said that the background for other supplementary rights is right to recognition/existence, but it doesn't mean that right to existence/ recognition never stands alone, and can't be said that it necessarily answers other rights. Minorities also have an internationally acknowledged right to preserve separate identity (such as linguistic rights, cultural right, religious right (even though it distinguished as right to individuals, minorities also have a right to get access to religious institutions, and monuments in which they practiced collectively, and the state must prohibited from the incursion of dominant religion against the minorities).

In addition to the above entitlements, minorities also can participate in the political, administrative and judicial affairs of their own country, and such participation must be implemented in the principle of equality and non-discrimination. The other rights of minorities which is debatable one is right to self-determination. Due to its confusing character regarding does the right deserves for 'peoples' or minorities and indigenous groups makes the right controversial. But most writers on the area and the international human rights law recommended that autonomy of minorities which is part of right to self-determination is the just right to minorities which haven't a character of secession and not against the state sovereignty.

CHAPTER THREE

3. The Politics of Ethnicity and Major Theories of Ethnicity

The major issues which will be touched in this chapter are the intermixed and sometimes independent conceptual definitions such as ethnicity, ethnic identity, and self-identification of individuals, ethnic groups and relative concepts. Related with these concepts, the three major theories of ethnicity also another contents of the chapter, and finally the chapter concluded by raising some potential factors which affects the ethnic identity and self-identification of minorities in particular and the whole ethnic self-identification of individuals and groups in general.

3.1. Meaning of Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Since the concept of ethnicity defined in many different ways across disciplines, no agreed definition is put among scholars on it; and because of the definitional problem, the relationship between ethnicity and other identity categories such as race, nation, and class remains poorly understood.⁸⁵ Moreover, especially in this particular study, when the issue of ethnicity touched, it also mixed with related concepts, such as ethnic identity, ethnic groups and minority's (ethnic) identity.

Some scholars on the area defines the concept of ethnicity as the sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group, and it implies the existence of an attitude in which group members feel themselves bound together by a common history, values, attitudes, and behaviors.⁸⁶ On the other hand in the present context some writers refer ethnicity as sub-groups within a larger context, such as a nation that claim a common ancestry and share one of the following elements; culture, religion, language, kinship and place of origin.⁸⁷

In light of this, the issue of ethnicity matters for individuals, groups and nations; it matters in terms of shaping individual identity, understanding inequalities and targeting policy across a wide

⁸⁵ Ashley J. Tellis, Thomas S. Szayna, and James A. Winnefeld, (ND), *The Process Model for Anticipating Ethnic Conflict*, p.17

⁸⁶ Petkou Chamba Lawrence (April, 2005), *The Development of Ethnic Minorities: A Case of West Africans in South Africa*. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, p.69

⁸⁷ Jean S. phinney, Gabriel Horenczyk, Karmela Liebkind and Paul Vedder (2001), "Ethnic Identity, Immigration and Well-Being: An Interactional Perspective", *Journal of Social Issues*, vol.57, No.3, 2001, p.493-510, California state university, Los Angeles, p.496

range of areas ,such as health, education and welfare, participation in political arenas and social justices.⁸⁸

Mostly the concept of ethnicity and ethnic identity is relative, but ethnic identity emerges from collective group consciousness that imparts a sense of belonging derived from membership in a community bound putatively by common descent and culture.⁸⁹ Ethnic identity as a subjective phenomenon, imparts to the individual a sense of belonging and to the community, and it is a sense of solidarity towards one's group.⁹⁰

In other words, ethnic identity is, in part, a way of answering the question;

*where do I come from?'; and the answers given are often expressed in reference to homeland, fatherland, mother tongue, blood ties with reference to a birth connection to nation and family or it may be to an imagined common origin or ancestry.*⁹¹

Although the term sometimes used to refer simply to one's self-label or group affiliation, ethnic identity generally seen as embracing various aspects including self identification, feelings of belongingness and commitment to a group, a sense of shared values and attitudes toward one's own ethnic group.⁹² These feelings of belongingness and commitment to a group, a sense of shared values and attitudes become visible and more salient for members of ethnic minority groups than for those who are members of the majority culture, unless the majority group members are in a setting where their ethnic group is not the numerical majority.⁹³

Accordingly, based on the above articulation, ethnic identity (ethnicity) is set of personal points of reference that involve ethnic distinctions between people which is called ethnic groups.⁹⁴ 'An "ethnic group" is thus a set of people who have common points of reference to these ethnic

⁸⁸Kristie N Carter, Michael Hayward, Tony Blakely and Caroline Shaw (July 2009), "How Much and For Whom Does Self-Identified Ethnicity Change Overtime in New Zealand? Results from a Longitudinal Study", *Social policy Journal of New Zealand, Issue 36*, University of Otago, p.32

⁸⁹Alicia Fedelina Chavez, Florence Guido-DiBrito (Winter, 1999), *Racial and Ethnic Identity and Development, New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* , no.84, Jossey-Bass Publishers, p.40

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Ruben G. Rumaut (1991-2001), *Acculturation Discrimination, and Ethnic Identity among Children of Immigrants*, p.12

⁹² Jean S. Phinney, Gabriel Horenczyk, Karmela Liebkind and Paul Vedder, supra note 88, p.496

⁹³Adriana J.umana-Taylor, Macelo Diversi and Mark A. Fine (May, 2002), "Ethnic Identity and Self- esteem of Latino Adolescents : Distinctions Among the Latino Populations", *Journal of Adolescent Research, vol.17 No.3, May 2002 303-327*, sage publications, p.304

⁹⁴ Henry E. Hale (May, 2004), "Explaining Ethnicity", *Comparative Political Studies, Vol.37 No.4 May 2004 458-485*, Indiana University, Sage Publications, p.473

dimensions of the social world and who perceive that they indeed have these things in common and that these similarities are captured by a label, the ethnic group's name.'⁹⁵

Moreover, ethnic identity related with ethnic groups play great importance particularly because of the direct impact that it is thought to have on identity formation; however, a number of researchers suggest that the process of identity development can be more challenging for members of ethnic minority groups than for members of majority groups.⁹⁶

Generally, the concept of ethnicity and ethnic identity can be changed due to situations, can be constructed, and remain fixed throughout the time; and it can be seen in three major theoretical dimensions.

3.2. Major Theories of Ethnicity

3.2.1. Primordialist Theory

The Primordialist approach on ethnicity is the oldest in sociological and anthropological literature.⁹⁷ It argues that ethnicity is something given, ascribed at birth, deriving from the kin-and-clan-structure of human society, and hence something more or less fixed and permanent.⁹⁸

This theory maintain that the importance human beings attribute to biological connection is neither unpredictable nor accidental, but is connected to unique and very close nurturing and relationships that make a bond from generation to generation with an experience of deeply rooted, intimate and eternal belonging.⁹⁹ In other words, primordialists believe that pre-modern attachments and historical memories are crucial in shaping and mobilizing groups and ethnic

⁹⁵ Ibid

⁹⁶ Ibid, as it also cited in other several related materials

⁹⁷Wsevolod W. Isajiw (1993), *Definition and Dimensions of Ethnicity: A Theoretical Framework*. University of Toronto , Government Printing Office, p.2

⁹⁸ Ibid, as quoted in Geertz Clifford (1963), *The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States" in Old Societies and New States*, C. Geertz, ed., New York: Free Press, p. 105-15, and from other sources

⁹⁹Birhanu Gutema, supra note 6, p.36-37 as it quoted in Grosby Steven (1994), "The Verdict of History: the inexpungeable inexpugnable tie of primordiality- a response to Eller and Coughlan" *Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol. 17 No. 1 January 1994*, p. 164- 171.

groups and nationalities exist because there are traditions of belief and action toward primordial objects such as biological features and especially territorial location.¹⁰⁰

In such a way argument they assert that human societies are in effect the assembly of tribes, thus the in-group and out-group of that tribal membership can always be clearly demarcated.¹⁰¹ And the primitive groupings exist a priori they define for their members critical existential distinctions centered on the dichotomy of us and them and they perform the crucial task of forming an individual's personal identity through a process of collective definition.¹⁰²

Despite the goal of economic and political gain, the primordialist theory of ethnicity suggests that;

*If you are born poor, you may die rich, but your ethnic group is fixed. According to it, each of us belongs to one and only one ethnic group that group membership remains fixed over a lifetime and it is passed down intact across generations and may wars begin and end, states grow and die, economies boom and crash, but ethnic groups and individuals self identification with a certain ethnic group is stay the same.*¹⁰³

Despite the above arguments, there is also internal diversity within the theory of primordialism, hence in such the above argument, which is more of classical one, failed in explaining both the nature of group solidarity and how collective-action problems are resolved.¹⁰⁴ For example, where some degree of egoist motivation is combined with the presence of instrumental rationality, the collective action problems inherent in any coordinated group action become more difficult to resolve and cannot be waved away by the simple unproblematic assertion of organic solidarity.¹⁰⁵ Accordingly, the idea of 'if wars are begin, economies are either boom or crash the ethnic identity of individuals become constant and unchangeable' is challenged by this modern forms of primordial argument.

Generally, three arguments exist at the core of primordial theory. First ethnic identity is an ascribed identity or assigned status that is inherited from one's ancestors; secondly, ethnic identity

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Ashley J. Tellis, Thomas S. Szayna, and James A. Winnefeld, Supra note 85, p.18

¹⁰² Ibid, as it cited in H. Blumer and T. Duster (1980), *Theories of Race and Social Action, In Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism*. Paris: UNESCO, p. 220.

¹⁰³ Kanchan Chandra, ed(ND), *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics*, p.3

¹⁰⁴ Ashley J. Tellis, Thomas S. Szayna, and James A. Winnefeld, Supra note 85, p.20

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

is fixed and permanent; and thirdly, common descent and history provide the foundation for ethnic identity formation.¹⁰⁶

3.2.2. Instrumentalist Theory

As the name implies, the instrumentalist theory views ethnicity as an instrument or strategic tool to gain access to resources, services, and rewards that would be unobtainable if one did not claim a particular ethnic identity.¹⁰⁷

The theory conceives the ethnic identity as created and constructed by the ethnic elite, for the benefits of political, social and economic resources and status that they can enjoy, they used ethnic identity as means's.¹⁰⁸ Glazer and Moynihan (1975), pioneers of this theory, state that like class and nationality, ethnic identity can be used as a political mobilizing tool.¹⁰⁹

According to the theory of instrumentalism, ethnicity and nationhood are ideological modern era phenomenon; instrumentalists as nationalists they used ethnic identity as the manifestation of nationalism, and nationalism...invents nations”, and “nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist, and like nationalism, ethnicity is propagated and manipulated by elites aiming at either material advantages or power, or both.¹¹⁰

Moreover, Daniel Posner finds that the salience of ethnicity increases when it can be mobilized by elites to gain electoral support and the general public and the followers of those elites are becoming more sensitive for their ethnic identity.¹¹¹ Those historical and symbolic values such as the land, religion, language and culture have also a noticeable influence on the emotional side of

¹⁰⁶ Shirley S. Chiu (2003), *Ethnic Identity Formation: A Case Study of Caribbean and Indian Hakkas in Toronto*, York University, Toronto, Ontario, p.41

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.42

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, as it cited in Cornell, S. and D. Hartmann (1998), *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*, California: Pine Forge Press.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Nilufer Duygu Eriten and Jannifer Romine (ND), *Instrumental and Symbolic Sources of Ethnic Conflict: Application to the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey*, University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign, p.3-4

¹¹¹ Mona Lena and Diana Z. O' Brien (April, 2010), *The Politics of Group Representation Quotas for Women and Minorities Worldwide*, p.259, cited in Daniel N. Posner (November 2004), *The Political Salience of Cultural Difference*, American Political Science Review, 98; 529–45.

the group reaction, and these values created common emotional ethnic grievances among the ethnic groups.¹¹²

Even though the theory of instrumentalists argued in such a way, but it seems only one-dimensional and extreme in focusing on individual's apathetic standing for their primordial attachment, such like that common history, language and descent. Hence within a certain group it may not as such easy to abandon and overlook the historical ethnic identity for instrumentalist aspects unless some forceful and external factors pushed them.

But the instrumentalist's insistences as materialist aspects are causes for claiming group's ethnic identity seems far from some empirical coincidences, hence even though within a certain ethnic group some individuals have a character of calculating ethnic identity for the sake of material advantageous and power, but there could be also others who never relegates ethnic identity with the intention of access to services, rewards and political positions.

Moreover, their strict argument as ethnic identity is manipulated by elites other than other ordinary individuals also taken as other shortcoming which is inconsistent with some empirical experiences. Thus, related with the above position there could be individuals both from the elites and ordinary individuals who are attentive to their primordial ethnic identity, and never say back and forth for their common historical ancestors.

3.2.3. Constructivist Theory

The Constructionist theory gained prominence in the 1970s; it is the most recent of the three theories.¹¹³ Unlike the Primordial and Instrumentalist theories, for constructivist ethnic theory identity is not viewed as innate or instrumental, instead it views ethnicity as a multi-dimensional and dynamic identity, which is built and rebuilt, and sometimes dismantled over time.¹¹⁴

One of the proponents of this theory, Barth affirms that ethnic identity is fluid, situationally defined, produced and reproduced in the course of social transactions, and in relation to place,

¹¹² Duygu Eriten and Jannifer Romine, supra note 110, p.3

¹¹³ Shirley S. Chiu, supra note 94 , p.43

¹¹⁴ Ibid, as quoted in Cornell, S. and D. Hartmann (1998), *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*, California: Pine Forge Press.

time and others it can be constructed.¹¹⁵ This theory argues that ethnic boundaries are maintained when individuals maximize interactions with those within their ethnic group and minimize interactions with other ethnic groups.¹¹⁶

Constructivists also agree on the basic idea that individuals have multiple ethnic identities that can change endogenously to political and economic processes, but it doesn't mean that the aim of that change is for the mere sake of economic and political benefits.¹¹⁷ This theory focus on how ethnic identity is shaped by symbolism, discourse, group psychology and social boundaries, etc¹¹⁸ that leads individuals modify their identity based on the above values.

Moreover, this perspective on ethnicity denounces the idea that the mere consensus of traits (such as, adherence to a particular religion, or being born to parents who adhere to the religion) is sufficient to form an ethnic identity unless these traits are recognized as the basis for a coherent group in some social arena.¹¹⁹

However, opponents of the Constructionist theory argue that it tends to ignore ancestry, a crucial element without which individuals would not be able to claim certain ethnic identities.¹²⁰

3.3. Potential Factors Influencing the Ethnic Identity and Self-identification of Minorities

As it mentioned in chapter two, self-identification called self-definition or self-labeling refers to the ethnic label that one uses for oneself.¹²¹ It can be expressed as the group's solidarity and willingness to preserve their distinct characteristics such as culture, language and religion, and may it include their overt labeling as member of that ethnic group.

¹¹⁵Barth G. (1964), *Bitter Strength: A History of the Chinese in the United States 1850-1870*, Cambridge, Massachusetts , Harvard university press, p.12

¹¹⁶ Shirley S. Chiu, supra note 106, p.43

¹¹⁷ Kanchan Chandra, supra note 103, p.6

¹¹⁸Robert Koulis (2005), "Hungarian Roma attitudes on minority rights: the symbolic violence of ethnic identification", *EUROPE-ASIAN STUDIES*, Vol.57, No.2, March 2005, 311-326, university of Glasgow, p.312

¹¹⁹ Evan S. Lieberman and Gwyneth C.H. McClendon (ND), *Endogenous Ethnic Preferences*, Princeton university, p.5

¹²⁰ Shirley S. Chiu, supra note 94, p.45 as it cited in Yang, P. Q. (2000). *Ethnic Studies: Issues and Approaches*. New York: State of New York Press

¹²¹ Jean S. Phinney (1990), "Ethnic Identity in Adolescents and Adults: Review of Research, Psychological Bulletin", 1990, Vol.108, No.3, 499-514, California State University, Los Angeles, p.503

However, there are a number of variables that are theoretically and empirically linked to specific patterns of ethnic self-identification and the development and manner of ethnic identity. Among these factors are (parental) socio-economic sources, mental and psychological maturation, personal and professional situations, gender and educational background, acculturation and language, recurrent social discrimination, politico-economic oppressions and origin of family composition.

3.3.1. Gender and Ethnic Identity

Women have commonly been perceived as carriers of ethnic traditions and values; not only the biological bearers of (the ethnic) community's future generations, but their cultural insistence is also viewed as instrumental in preserving ethnic identity through ethnic rituals, values, language and/ or dialect.¹²² Terms such as mother tongue and motherland also clearly exemplify women as icons of ethnic and cultural identity¹²³, and most individuals want to cite their motherland as a reference for their origin and nationhood; however, a few empirical studies exist to support this notion.

For example, Ullah's (1985) research on Irish adolescents in England revealed that girls were more likely than boys to adopt an Irish identity; meanwhile, Ting-Tooney's (1981) research of Chinese-American college students displayed that women were more receptive towards their ancestral culture than men and other findings of scholarly studies reveal such like results.¹²⁴

On the other hand, despite the commonly held views and some empirical findings that suggest stronger articulation of ethnic identity among females than males, Phinney (1990), in her empirical study asserts that the relationship between ethnic identity and gender is limited and largely, contradictory and inconclusive¹²⁵, hence due to the variation of results in different studies

¹²²Pleck, E. H. (2000). *Celebrating the Family: Ethnicity, Consumer Cult Family Rituals*. New York: Columbia University Press

¹²³ Shirley S. Chiu, supra note, p.106 as it cited in Hedge, R. S. (1998), *A View from elsewhere: Locating difference and the politics of representation from a transnational feminist perspective*, *Communication Theory*, 8, 271-297, p. 281.

¹²⁴ Ibid as cited in Ullah, p.(1985), *Second Generation Irish Youth: Identity and Ethnicity*, *New Community*, 12, 310-320 and Ting Tooney, S.(1981), "Ethnic Identity and Close Friendship in Chinese- American College Students", *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 5, 192-203

¹²⁵Jean S. Phinney, supra note 121, p.509

on the area, concluding the correlation between gender, and ethnic identity and self identification can be a wrong conclusion.

However, she asserts that, most of the time women are subservient to the social oppressions and discriminations which have a direct relation with their apathetic behavior on their ethnic self-identification, and it develops the mistaken attitude that being activist for their ethnic identity as out of the societal norm.¹²⁶

3.3.2. Ethnic Identity and Socio-economic Status

The other sensitive issue is the relation between socio-economic status and ethnic identity (self-identification), and from the studies, ethnic identity and socio-economic status have been sparse and inconsistent.¹²⁷ Consequently, even though it is assumed that families with higher Socio-economic Status (SES) are more likely to be integrated into the dominant society and might thus, retain less attachment to their minority's ethnic identity, it is also perceived that these families are also more likely to have more resources to support ethnic schools and other institutions that promote ethnic retention.¹²⁸

Furthermore, Phinney (2000) study of 701 families from immigrant and non-immigrant groups, and her (1992) research of 553 high school and college participants not only demonstrated the absence of gender differences, but also virtually no effect of SES on ethnic identity.¹²⁹

But there is also an argument which holds that individuals who changed ethnicity were also more likely to be younger, to be born overseas, to live in a family with children, to belong to more deprived groups, and to have poorer self-rated health.¹³⁰

Moreover, growing in low level economy also highly related with the identification of one's ethnic identity, hence absence of any alternative income other than the monthly salary which comes from

¹²⁶ Ibid

¹²⁷ Shirley S. Chiu, supra note 106, p.47

¹²⁸ Ibid cited in Phinney, J. et al (2001), "The Role of Language, Parents, and Peers in Ethnic Identity Among Adolescents in Immigrant Families", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 30 (2), 135-53.

¹²⁹ Ibid, as cited in Phinney, J. (1992), *The Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure: A new scale for use with adolescents and young adolescent research*, 7, P.156-176

¹³⁰ Kristie N Carter, et.al, supra note 88, p.32

government's bureaucracy also leads individuals to sway in their ethnic identification and may be forced to completely deny their ethnic identity by being subservient to the mainstream society.¹³¹ The fact that most nation states in the world are hostile with the idea of minority protection, hence they assume that it is antithesis with the nation building project; as a result they identify themselves as member of the majority ethnic group to please and comply with the interest of the government which have a direct relation with their economic situations.

In the contrary, there are an argument which supports, the recurrent economic deprivation and behaviors of anti- minority ethnic groups' triggers the group for protection of their rights and becoming unanimous for the issue of their ethnic groups, and leads to identify themselves as part of the minority ethnic groups rather than the mainstream society . For example, the Roman peoples in Slovakia and Czech Republic, deteriorating economic conditions and the increase of anti-Romani behavior in the Czech and Slovak Republics have stimulated the increase of Romani movement activities for their issues.¹³²

In conclusion, these exploratory analyses have shown fluidity in the concept of self-identified ethnicity and ethnic identity related with SES.

3.3.3. Ethnic Identity and Age

Although insufficient empirical evidence exists to support the relationship between ethnic identity and age, some studies exhibit a developmental progression.¹³³ Thus, Phinney and Chavira's (1995) study of high school (younger) and college (older) students indicated ethnic identity achievement was higher among older students than younger students.¹³⁴

Research with children has been concerned largely with the extent to which children correctly label themselves that is, whether the label they choose corresponds to the ethnicity of their parents, but since conscious changes in ethnic self-identification may occur for any number of reasons, changes in ethnic identification may occur when children reach an age (when they are

¹³¹ Ibid, p.43

¹³² Peter Vermeersch (2003), "Ethnic Minority Identity and Movement Politics: The Case of the Roma in Czech Republic and Slovakia". *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol.26 No.5 September 2003 pp.879-901, p.882

¹³³ Shirley S. Chiu, supra note 106, p.48

¹³⁴ Ibid as cited in Phinney J., and V. Chavira (1995), "Parental Ethnic Socialization and Adolescent Coping with Ethnicity", *Journal of Research on Adolescents*,5, 13-53

becoming young, they try to define ethnicity for themselves rather than having it determined by a parent or guardian.¹³⁵

Young people from ethnic minority groups; therefore, face additional identity tasks, means that developing an understanding of the implication of ethnic group differences, figuring out how to relate to their own group and the larger society, establishing feelings of self worth in face of conflicting messages about their group, and developing ways to respond to prejudice are challenging tasks.¹³⁶

Furthermore, adolescence is a critical period for identity formation because it is not until this time that individuals have developed the necessary elements (such as physiological growth, mental maturation, and social responsibility) to examine their identity and develop sense of responsibility.¹³⁷

3.3.4. Political Oppression and Social Stigmatization

Institutional and discursive dimensions of politics do have a strong impact on the process of identity formation, and the task of self-identification.¹³⁸ Romans who live in Czech Republic and Slovakia are victims of human rights violation and discrimination, as a result they have forced to focus on their ethnicity and they have been unanimous on their self label as member of the Roman community.¹³⁹ Such like inhumane treatments and recurrent political oppressions against the ethnic minority groups arouse the minority groups to oppose the act.

Ruben G. Rumbaut in his study on the ethnic identity of foreigners in America asserts that, among the factors discrimination and racialization exert the strongest net effects on modes of ethnic self-identification.¹⁴⁰ Thus, youths who scored high on the discrimination index were strongly disposed to identify with a foreign national origin, without any American qualifier attached.¹⁴¹ As a result, such experiences and perceptions of exclusion and rejection on ascribed racial ethnic

¹³⁵ Kristie N Carter, Michael Hayward, Tony Blakely and Caroline Shaw, supra note 88, p.33

¹³⁶ Jean S. Phinney (2004), *Ethnic Identity: Developmental and Contextual Perspectives*. California State University, Los Angeles, Notre Dame University, p.1-2

¹³⁷ Adriana J. Umana-Taylor, Macelo Diversi and Mark A. Fine, supra note 93, p.304

¹³⁸ Peter Vermeersch, supra note 132, p.880

¹³⁹ Ibid

¹⁴⁰ Ruben G. Rumbaut, supra note 91, p.19

¹⁴¹ Ibid

grounds clearly undercut the prospect of identificational assimilation into the mainstream society.¹⁴²

On the other ground, people can have both positive and negative attitudes toward their own ethnic group. Positive attitudes include pride in and pleasure, satisfaction, and contentment with one's own group and self-label as member of that ethnic group.¹⁴³ They are assessed by items such as they would be proud to identify with their own group and consider their culture rich and precious.¹⁴⁴ The absence of positive attitudes, or the presence of actual negative attitudes, can be seen as a denial of one's ethnic identity, and it include displeasure, dissatisfaction, discontentment with one's ethnicity; feelings of inferiority; or a desire to hide one's cultural identity.¹⁴⁵

These negative attitudes emanates from the recurrent marginalization and discrimination which the dominant ethnic group gives the minority as they are not equal with the mainstream society. Once such kind of discrimination and defamation is given for (against) the minority group, members of the group opt to hide and even deny themselves as part of the minority groups. Once such kind attitudes developed it may needs longer period of time to shape and change the mindset of those minority groups which considered them as inferior, unequal with the majority ethnic group.

3.3.5. Family Composition

In reality an individual will identify with more than one ethnic group and/or may change their ethnic identity over time or in different environments and may encounter a difficulty to identify them as in which one of ethnic groups.¹⁴⁶ For this matter originating from parents who have different ethnic groups is one factor. Consequently the individuals may either identify themselves as member of the two ethnic groups, one of the two ethnic groups and may sway through time in which ethnic group they grouped under.

To conclude the chapter, the major central concepts which discussed under this chapter are the meanings of ethnicity, ethnic identity and ethnic groups and the major theories involved on such

¹⁴² Ibid

¹⁴³ Jean S. Phinney, supra note 121, p.504

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p.505

¹⁴⁶ Kristie N Carter, Michael Hayward, Tony Blakely and Caroline shaw, supra note 88, p.33 as it cited in Callister, P. R. Didham and A. Kivi (2008) *"Who are we?: The conceptualization and expression of ethnicity"* Official Statistics Research Series, 4:1–56.

concepts. As a result, the researcher tried to articulate the different argumentative positions of three theories, such as primordial, instrumentalist, and constructivist theories of ethnicity with their shortcomings in arguing on their positions.

Moreover, the chapter also assessed both the theoretical and empirical factors which are responsible to affect and sway the ethnic identity and self-identification of individuals and groups. Therefore, gender, socio-economic status, age, political oppression and social stigmatization, and family composition have either a direct or indirect influences on the ethnic identity and self-identification of groups and individuals, but as the empirical research on the area indicates it could be misleading to conclude those factors always have similar influences for different ethnic groups, rather the way they influences from one ethnic group from the other may be in contradicting or reverse one.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Describing Kemants and Identifying the Major Distinguishing Elements

The main points of the chapter is majorly describing the case study with particular focus on distinguishing the major identifying criteria of Kemant people, such as the people of Kemant and its location, language (Cushitic language family and current situation of the language), religion, population (current estimation and before 1994 population census), and history of Kemant people. Finally the chapter will also include a comprehensive historical development of Kemant people's quest of identity recognition and self-administration claim since the 1990s which the researcher intends to help its data analysis part.

4.1. The People and Location

Most writers agreed that the Kemant -Agaw people are considered as the original inhabitants of Central-Northern Ethiopia.¹⁴⁷ The Kemant people live in North Gondar Zonal administration particularly in Chilga, Metema, Lay Armacheho, Dembiya, Quara, and Wogera Woredas, in Gondar town and Gondar *Zuria*. Among such Woredas, Chilga and Lay Armacheho taken as the Kemant people live contiguously and majority of their Kebeles are the resident of them. In the remaining Woredas, in some kebeles the Kemant people found as numerical minority and in others they found in the position of numerical majority.¹⁴⁸

Basically the Kemant people are indistinguishable to the neighboring Amhara people in their livelihood, diet, wedding and mourning ceremonies.¹⁴⁹ As a result, there is a controversy on does Amhara's culture the original Kemant culture or the reverse is true. In other words, it is debatable to discern who acculturated by whom. But some Kemant members argue that the Amhara culture is the direct copy of the original Kemant culture. This is due to their assumption that the Kemant people are as part and remnant of Agaw people who are the founder of civilization in Ethiopia.

¹⁴⁷Olivier Tourny (2009), 'Kidassie'. *A Kemant (Ethiopia Agaw) Ritual*, In: Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, ed. By Svien Ege, Harald Aspen, Trondheim, P.1225, and James Quirin (1998), "Caste and Class in Historical North-West Ethiopia: The Beta Israel (Falasha) and Kemant, 1300- 1900", *journal of African history*, **39**(1998), pp. 195-220, Fisk University, Cambridge University Press, p.203

¹⁴⁸ Tinbitu Dersse , Supra note18, p.36

¹⁴⁹ Zelalem Leyew, Supra note 17, p.6

Since major means of livelihood of the Kemant people is agriculture, Professor F.C. Gamst, an anthropologist who conducted a very comprehensive study on Kemant peoples, called them 'Pagan-Hebraic Ethiopian farmer.'¹⁵⁰ Accordingly, majority of them live in rural areas, but those peoples who live in urban areas are government workers, traders and involve in other private activities. However, even agriculture is the major means of livelihood, but their existence seems like a mixed one with animal husbandry, especially in Metema and Lay Armacheho Woreda's, and partially in Chilga Woreda in addition to agriculture they also practice such activity. The places of Kemant peoples are characterized by cold, moderate and hot weather conditions which are conducive for agricultural activities.

4.2. Religion

As it is mentioned in the above, in their means of livelihood and customary practices the Kemant people are similar with the neighboring Amhara people, but their traditional religion and language makes them distinct from other ethnic groups. The Anthropologist F. Gamst considered that the Kemant people are Caucasoid people and their religion is the result of two different religious strata that is the Agaw and the Hebraic and he called them 'Pagan-Hebraic'.¹⁵¹ But most members of the Kemant people disappointed by the term 'pagan' because they claim that no time at all in history when the Kemant people being pagan rather 'we had (been) *Hege-Libona* forms of belief'.

In their religion they believe in one God which they call it '*Adara*' or '*Mezgana*', assisted by angels, heroes and holy figures; they also believe in souls, in good and evil, in judgment day and in everlasting life in heaven.¹⁵² But in all of their belief they do not have any written literature, as a result it can be said as '*Hege Lebona*' forms of belief.

Moreover, their religion comprised of animistic, many Hebraic and some Christian elements, and the traditional religious leaders through prayers and chant perform the ritual called *Kidassie*.¹⁵³ This *Kidassie* ritual system is not only conducted in the place or

¹⁵⁰ Frederick C. Gamst (1969), *The Qemant: A Pagan-Hebraic Peasantry of Ethiopia*, case study in Cultural Anthropology, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, P.Vii.

¹⁵² Olivier Tourny, supra note 147, P.1226

¹⁵³ Ibid, p.1225

residence of those priests, but other ordinary Kemant community who want conducted the ritual system get program with them and call those priests in their house by preparing all of the materials which used for doing so. Particularly the day of Thursday is called the day of '*Mezgana*' and '*Gebero*' which comes two times a month one by one in fifteen days gap and should respected, and considered as every Kemant community could be passed these days through rest as Sabbath day of Christianity.

The Womber (literally mean 'seat') Muluneh Mersha, who is both the religious and political leader of Kemants live in Chilga which far around 60 kilometers west of Gondar. All decisions regarding the religion and the Kemant community decisions needs the Womber's saying. In their religion, what makes similar the Womber and other Kemant priests with the Orthodox Church priests is they cover their heads with a white piece of cloth.

Those few Kemants still maintain their old religious traditions especially those Kemants who are living in the Chilga area (west of Gondar). However, they have been both progressively and massively Christianized and Amharized in the last subsequent decades.¹⁵⁴ In recent time only few are adhere the religion and through day to day the followers are baptized and changed to Christianity. Moreover, in the past few years, especially around Chilga Woreda, except those Kemant priests other ordinary Kemant peoples are seems to follow both orthodox Christianity and Kemant religion, but in recent time most people abandon the Kemant religion and only follow the orthodox Christianity.

4.3. Language

The other major distinguishing element for Kemant peoples is their Kemantney language, which until the present time used as means of communication by some individuals. The Kemant people speak a dialect of Agaw language, which is a Cushitic language family and almost all Agaw including kemant, they are bilingual in Amharic or Tigrigna.¹⁵⁵ It indicates that all kemantney speakers are also speakers of either Amharic or Tigrigna. As a result currently no monolingual speakers of Kemantney are there at all.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Olivier Tourny, supra note 147, P.1226.

¹⁵⁵ Frederick C. Gamst, supra note 150, P. Vii.

¹⁵⁶ Zelalem Leyew, supra note 17, p.10-11.

Only the *kidassie* ritual system is conducted by using the Kemantney language and sometimes those peoples if both of them know the language, they communicate every private matter including secrets, to condemn or praise other individuals, and in sarcastic speaking they use it. Otherwise since the speakers are very rare, they use Amharic in market, wedding and mourning ceremonies, and in other social relationships.

As Olivier Tournay written, less than one percent of the 170,000 Kemant people, (as he got from the 1998 census) have preserved their ancestral language and beliefs.¹⁵⁷

On the other hand, Zelalem Leyew also testify that even Kemantney certainly is one of the most ‘endangered’ languages in Ethiopia, already considered ‘dead’ by some linguists, but it was only recently that a linguistic survey team has reported its continued existence.¹⁵⁸ Generally, as Zelalem Leyew expressed the status of Kemantney language in his survey report:

*The Kemantney language is not widely used even among its speakers rather its functions are limited to purposes such as secret talking and praying. Even though there are speakers of the language fluently; almost all are elderly people who are beyond the age of sixty. The persons of Kemant descents were either Kemant-Amharic bilinguals or Amharic monolinguals. The young generation of the Kemant people does not know Kemantney.*¹⁵⁹

Various causes can be mentioned for the continuous decrease of the number of speakers of the Kemantney in favor of the neighboring Amharic language or Tigrigna, such as starting from the monarchical periods up to the current political regime primary schools were (are) run only in Amharic language.¹⁶⁰ Members of the Kemant people experienced recurrent marginalization from government work and different decision making activities due to their distinction in their language and religion. Moreover, during the monarchical period, to entitle the right to land the kemant people forced to assimilate with the neighboring Amhara people.¹⁶¹

Cultural contact with the neighboring Amhara people such as linguistic, religious, and social contacts and intermarriage, religious conversion, the spread of Christianity, the introduction of modern education, peaceful coexistence with the neighboring Amhara people and swallowed by

¹⁵⁷ Olivier Tournay, supra note 147, P.1225.

¹⁵⁸ Zelalem Leyew, supra note 17, p.4.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p.12-13

¹⁶⁰ Belay Shibeshi, supra note 51, p. 15.

¹⁶¹ Tinbitu Derese, supra note 18, p.50-63

the dominant language, culture and religion; and integration into the national identity also factors for the continuous decrease of the number of speakers.¹⁶²

However, in the last three or four years ago the situation of Kemantney language seems to change and go to the right track which can be said that the language is in the process of rehabilitation. For this situation, the language is in the process of returning from its confinement being spoken by the old age groups who are beyond 60 years to share by both the young and child age groups. This is supported by the people's willingness and interest to develop, speak, and preserve the language.

As a result, the numbers of speakers of the language seems to increase through time with the existence of some young and few child speakers. Moreover, in the current time, Kemantney language education is started in Chilga, Lay Armacheho and Quara Woredas, and the teachers of this program are fluent bilingual (Amharic and Kemantney) young speakers. Alphabets of the Kemantney language are started to publish, and it makes a good opportunity for those individuals who want to speak and use the language.

4.4. Population

According to F.C. Gamst estimation before forty-five years ago the total number of Kemant is 20,000 up to 25, 000.¹⁶³ In those monarchical periods no attempt were done for knowing and counting the number of Kemants, however, according to the 1984 Population and Housing Census, the total number of Kemant was 169,169¹⁶⁴, and in 1994 Census their number rose to 172, 327.¹⁶⁵ In both censuses among the twenty-seven ethnic groups the Kemant people have got eighteenth rank in their number of population.

After the demise of Derg regime the transitional charter at the first time pave the way for the ignorance of Kemant people as one ethnic group while it recognizes the existence of the major ethnic group Amhara, Agaw- Himra, Agaw- Awi and Oromo special nationality zone in Amhara

¹⁶² Zelalem Leyew Temesgen (October, 2000), *The Kemantney Language: A Socio-linguistic and Grammatical Study of Language Replacement*, Addis Ababa university, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, p. 32-53

¹⁶³ Frederick C. Gamst (1969), supra note 150, p.1

¹⁶⁴ Office of the Population and Housing Census Commission, supra note 20, p. 46

¹⁶⁵ Office of Population and Housing Census Commission, supra note 21, p. 66

national regional state administration¹⁶⁶, and the 2007 population and housing census explicitly denied the existence of an ethnic group who called as Kemant.¹⁶⁷

However, the recurrent resentment and claim of the Kemant people is, both the above censuses and Gamst's estimation was not really the representative of their number. Hence, now in addition to the existence of a general growth of the number of peoples as the general population increases daily, a strong process of Amharization seems to have made a strong impact on the size of the Kemant population.¹⁶⁸ Consciously or unconsciously there are peoples even their descent is from Kemant, but label them as Amhara, and those of Kemants who do not speak Kemantney language also identify them as Amhara.¹⁶⁹ As a result, according to the study of Kemant people's interim committee for identity recognition and self-administration and from the census of North Gondar Zone Finance and Economy Development Office the current number of Kemant population is beyond 933, 869.¹⁷⁰

4.5. History of Kemants

There is no definite agreement on the origin and history of Kemant peoples. For all of the writers their early history is obscure.¹⁷¹ But, according to the local legend, the origin of Kemant people is from Canaan (Middle East), the father of Kemants, Ayner, came Ethiopia through Egypt around 2795B.C. Ayner (Aneyer) who came to Ethiopia with his wife Entela because of the existence of famine in Canaan. As a result, Ayner is the grandson of Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, who is son of Noah.¹⁷²

The other suggestion is , may be the well known legend of Kemant people, Ayner, the father of the Kemants, migrated from Egypt to Ethiopia around 2410 B.C., fifteen years after King Hare of

¹⁶⁶ Proclamation No.7/1992, 51th Year, No. 2, the Transitional Charter of Ethiopia

¹⁶⁷ Population Census Commission (2008), Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Summary and Statistical Report of the 2007 Population and Housing Census, Addis Ababa, p. 86-87.

¹⁶⁸ Zelalem Leyew, supra note 17, p.7

¹⁶⁹ Ibid

¹⁷⁰ The study of 'Kemant Nationality's Quest for Recognition and self-rule Interim Committee' (2010/2011) with North Gondar Zone Finance and Economy Development Office

¹⁷¹ James Quirin, supra note 147 , p.203

¹⁷² Tinbitu Deresse, supra note 18, p.24-25

Egypt ascended to the throne, and Ayner left Egypt with his wife, Entela, at a time of prolonged famine there.¹⁷³

Some peoples also believed that the Kemants descended from those people who came from Israel with Minilik I (son of King Solomon and Queen Sheba) as servants of them.¹⁷⁴

Others argue that the Kemant origin is as other Ethiopians, in Ethiopia rather any other place else. According to the local legend, Aydarki, who is the founder of the Kemant community, was being continuously chased by the neighboring internal enemy and he first remained hidden in the forested areas of Kerker (Lay Armachiho), and then moved westward to Chilga in search of a peaceful place to establish settlement,¹⁷⁵ and most Kemant members including Womber Muluneh Mersha are in support of this claim.

Related with the above claim, Gamst also assert that the Kemant peoples are the remnants and part of the Agaw peoples who are the original settlers of Central-Northern Ethiopia, retreated to the South and settled in Gondar following the rise of Christianity in Northern Ethiopia.¹⁷⁶

4.6. Historical Genesis and Development of Kemant People Quest of Right to Identity Recognition and Self-administration

Historically, the quest of Kemant people for the right to preserve and develop their language, identity and other cultural values had been raised in the monarchical period.¹⁷⁷ For example, they experienced the oppression and institutional deprivation in the imperial regimes, and especially the period of Haileselassie I.¹⁷⁸ However, the peoples expressed their complaint when the system makes them landless and forced to baptize and abandon their language because of their distinction in culture, religion and language from the neighboring people.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³Getachew Mequanent (1998), *Capacity Building for Local Development: A Comparative Study of 'Formal' and 'Informal' Organizations in Gondar, Northern Ethiopia*, Carleton University, Canada, p.125-126

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p.126

¹⁷⁵ Ibid

¹⁷⁶ Frederick C. Gamst, *supra* note 150, p.1

¹⁷⁷ Tinbitu Dersse, *supra* note 18, p. 50-63

¹⁷⁸ Ibid

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, and Focus Group Discussion with the Kemant People's Claim for Identity and self-rule Coordinating Committee on 03 March 2014 at 4:00-5:30pm, Gondar

In the contrary of many forceful attempt of imperial regime to assimilate them, still they are preserving the distinct characteristics what makes them unique from the neighboring ethnic group. This in turn may be taken as one testimony for their opposition towards the above discriminatory acts.

However, their opposition and question of protection of their rights was not raised in well organized form. It didn't also arouse the sentiment of major Kemant peoples for their question. Rather, the question and disappointment was expressed through randomly and by few individuals. This is because first, any explicit opposition towards the act may result to the alienation of their right to land which is the major livelihood of them. Second due to undemocratic nature of the then monarchal system of government, it was not ready to accept and answer such like questions.¹⁸⁰

On the same manner, the Kemant people's oppression has been prolonged by the succeeding Derg regime.¹⁸¹ However, among other things the government had recognized the Kemant people as distinct people and put in the list of nations and nationalities of the country. Moreover, since the time was the time of melting pot which never promises for right to self-determination of groups, the Kemant people was not as such sensitive for their ethnic identity. Rather they focused on national integration. As a result, asking racial and ethnic questions was considered to be aggressive and hostile against the regime.

The Kemant people had struggle much with the proponents and heroes of current government (such as members of TPLF and EPRDF) for the demise of the military government which was dictator for all nations, nationalities and peoples in general and the rights of individuals in particular.¹⁸² Due to this, the expectation of the Kemant people in the morning of FDRE government is entirely positive.

Moreover, the current government introduced federal democratic system of government to the country which promised and explicitly put the declaration in article 39 of the new constitution about the self determination and protection of right of nations, nationalities and peoples of the country. Though the constitution assures self- determination rights of nation, nationalities and

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Mr. Nega Gete, the earlier political activists of Kemant people who write a book on Kemant peoples, on 02 March 2014 at 9: 30- 11:00 pm, Gondar

¹⁸¹ Tinbitu Deresse, supra note 18, p.56-57

¹⁸² Ibid

peoples, but it is not put in place in practice to the quest of Kemant people. This is because, the operation and institutional deprivation of Kemant people is worsening in current government which claims itself as government of nations, nationality and people.¹⁸³

Consequently, the recurrent and persistent institutional deprivation against the Kemant led to explicit dissatisfaction and grievance in the early 1990s. Accordingly, the second phase in the history of struggling of Kemant people for right to promote and preserve their own identity and to have recognition starts to early 1990's. This is because proclamation No. 7/1991 was not acknowledged Kemant as one distinct ethnic group. The proclamation denies the Kemant people as one and full-fledged ethnic group when it recognized Amhara ethnic group, Himra and Awi nationality and Oromo special zone administration in Amhara region. However, the Kemant people were counted as one distinct ethnic group until 1987 Population and Housing Census and numerically rank 18th stage among the hierarchy of the nations and nationalities and people of the country. As a result, the period of 1990s, more or less agitates the sentiment of some Kemant peoples. But majorly it was elite based struggle or movement.

In light of this, the constitutional quest for protecting their right and particularly the right to identity recognition is started before 20 years ago.¹⁸⁴

For example, one of the key informants from the political activist of Kemant people stated that:

I have struggle for the right of Kemant more than 20 years. I was struggle even when the time was very difficult to avail oneself as Kemant and absence of organized committee. In that time the mass Kemant people were not supported the movement. I have gone three times in Chenchock around 1992/3EC, a place found in Chilga Woreda and almost the entire resident of Chenchock is Kemant to aware the people. However, now a day I have tired and I have given the responsibility to others.¹⁸⁵

The third phase for Kemant peoples movement for the right to recognition and self-administration is started since the 2007 population and housing census. This is due to the fact that the 2007 population and housing census has explicitly omitted/erase the name of Kemant from the list of

¹⁸³ Ibid

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Nega Gete, supra note 180

¹⁸⁵ Ibid

nations, nationalities and peoples of the country, and the code which given for Kemant peoples in the former censuses and name of “Kemant” is substituted by “others”¹⁸⁶.

The Kemant people considered it as ‘silent identity genocide’¹⁸⁷, and it is the major turning point which provoked and aroused nearly all Kemant peoples whether educated, or uneducated, elite or ordinary, female or male. The question has been transformed into mass political mobilization. It can also be taken as an immediate cause to create mass self-declared Kemant individuals who are sensitive to their primordial attachments like history and common descent, and they stands to preserve their distinct characteristics which were/ are in the verge of extinction.

From these, we can understand that since the 2007 population and housing census, the questions of Kemant peoples broaden its content and hold another new form. It has been changed to become the issues of majority of Kemant people. In other words, since then the number of self-identified Kemant individuals increase dramatically while for decades the question was mainly manifested by few self-identified political activists. They have given focus for two questions, such as right to identity recognition and right to have self-rule/ self-administration. However, before this time their question was confined to right to identity recognition and never asks a question of either Woreda or zonal self-administration right.¹⁸⁸

Accordingly, the chapter concluded by summarizing the points as, even the Kemant people is indistinguishable to the neighboring Amhara people in their livelihood, diet, wedding and mourning ceremonies, but still they also have unique characteristics, such as language, descent, religion, and history. Moreover, not only they claim that they are unique from the neighboring people in such objective characteristics, but also in their descent or ‘*jins*’.¹⁸⁹

However, on the current situation of those distinct characteristics such as language and religion different writers and the concerned political bodies gives a conclusion that they are in the verge of

¹⁸⁶Interview with Kassie Mengistu who is the chairman of Kemant interim committee on ‘The Kemant People’s Claim for Identity and self-rule Coordinating Committee’, Interview made on 03 March 2014 at 2:40-4:00pm, at Gondar; Amhara National Regional State Constitution Article 36(6), Article 45(2)

¹⁸⁷Tinbitu Deresse, supra note 18, p.53

¹⁸⁸Yeshiwas Degu Belay (December, 2013), *From ‘Melting Pot’ to Quest for Recognition: The Kemant People in Ethiopia*, The Hague, The Netherlands, p. 20

¹⁸⁹Zelalem Leyew, supra note 17, p.7, Belay Shibeshi, supra note 51, the reply and argument of almost all self-declared Kemant peoples from the interview, focus group discussion and field observation. Hence, they argue that even we lost unique objective characteristics due to different push and pull factors, and historical injustices, but ‘we are distinct from the others in our descent’.

extinctions. But the case of Kemantney language seems to have a different tendency which is in the process of rehabilitation from its extinction.

The chapter also assessed that even the history of Kemant peoples is obscure; most members Kemant people claim that they are indigenous to Ethiopia as other Ethiopians. Finally the chapter discussed the historical development and genesis of Kemant people's identity recognition and self-administration claim which officially started in the 1990s and gaining substantial support by the majority Kemant people since the 2007 population and housing census.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Analyzing Individuals' Self-identification and Current Situation of Right to Recognition and Self-identification Quests of Kemant people

In this chapter the study tries to analyze questions of the study based on the data collected from informants and the secondary documents. In this case the chapter will involve with the aims of answering research questions and objectives of the study by assessing self-identification of Kemant people with the implications of individual's willingness to label themselves as member of the Kemant people and their unreserved interest to preserve the distinct characteristics.

The major causes for the existence of some divisions of interest within them and its consequences for right to identity recognition and self-administration quest also part of the analysis of the paper. And the current situation of Kemant people's right to identity recognition and self-administration by uncovering controversies on such claims also another focus area of the chapter. Finally the chapter tries to conclude the major findings and may forward recommendations for such issues.

5.1. Kemant people's Self-identification from the perspective of Theories of Ethnicity

Based on the raw data that the researcher collected from all sections of the Kemant people, most of them persistently used a thought which shows the position what they have for their solidarity to the quest of right to identity recognition and self-administration, and their standing for the ethnic identity as;

Identity as other ordinary matters can't be overlooked, since God created us as Kemant but not Amhara we never accept any other name; as a child is call in his/her father name, but not in others father, we should called in our name rather in any other else.¹⁹⁰

In this sense the claimants seem to focus on their primordial historical lineage and descent which is something given, ascribed at birth, deriving from the long historical genealogy of that group. And this sense of insistence on their ethnic identity is fixed and permanent throughout the

¹⁹⁰Interview with ordinary Kemant individuals on 21 February 2014 at 10:00-12:00am Shehidi towm (Metema woreda), and the reply of most ordinary people from the field observation

history which can't be sway by any material and ordinary/ unpredictable matters. It leads to them to make critical existential dichotomy of we (Kemant) who are different from the other one, i.e., Amhara and other neighboring peoples through a process of collective definition on their identity.

However, contrary with the above assertion, according to the informants, when the Kemant people asks a question of identity recognition and self-rule, some Amharas and the regional council officials considered it as the question of few individuals who aimed at to gain political status and economic benefits.¹⁹¹ Sometimes they relegated the movement of Kemant people with aims of political parties who are against with the current FDRE government such as member of Coalition to Unity and Democracy (CUD), the past military Derg regime, the new Blue party (*Semayawi parti*), and the question of some displeased pensioners.¹⁹²

Furthermore, some zonal and local political officials and individuals see the political activists of Kemant quest of right to recognition and self-rule as narrow nationalists who are against the culture and tradition of fraternity and cooperation with the neighboring people, and obstacles for development of the country.¹⁹³ In fact there are some individuals from Kemant community and committee members who were prison in 2005 Ethiopian national elections by the sense of they are members of other competitive political parties. That is one element the existing federal and regional political officials dislike the question of Kemant people and considered it as manipulated by those individuals. And they think that the majority people is aroused and instigated by those few individuals regardless of the Kemant people holds the distinct characteristics which enable to quest such rights.¹⁹⁴

In addition to the earlier point, the other cause of the regional government and other individual's hesitation on the motives of the Kemant people's quest of identity recognition and self-rule is, at the beginning when the question presents, the ANRS denies the existence of distinct group who called as Kemant. For several times it responds as they are already assimilated with the

¹⁹¹ Interview with Desse Mamo the political activist and chairman of Lay Armacheho woreda on kemant quest for identity recognition and self-rule on 27 February 2014 at 3:00-5:00pm, Tikil Dingay (Lay Armacheho Woreda) ,and Letter to the House of Federation on Announcing the Current Status of the Kemant People and Request to Identity Recognition and Self-rule Question (28/ 09/ 2013/14), p.1

¹⁹² Ibid

¹⁹³ Ibid, letter to the House of Federation on announcing the current status of the kemant people, supra note 191, p.1

¹⁹⁴ Interview with ordinary self-declared Kemant peoples on 29 February 2014 at 10:20- 11: 40am, Gondar

neighboring Amhara people.¹⁹⁵ As the theory of instrumentalist holds ‘ethnicity used as an instrument or strategic tool to gain access to resources, services, and rewards that would be unobtainable if one did not claim a particular ethnic identity, they see the question of identity recognition and self-rule as elite manipulation, but not the question of the mass public’.

As a result, those concerned bodies insist that because the Kemant people loses such objective unique characteristics (language, culture, and contiguousness of the territory) which makes it unique from the other ethnic groups of the country, they doesn’t also fulfill the subjective requirements such as self-identification of people (belief in a common and related identity/ common psychological make-up). Accordingly, they assume that the issue is only from those individuals who need political position and economic rewards with the pretext of identity right.

However, according to my key informant from the political activists of Kemant people;

*we haven’t a problem with the current political system and we are not opposition political parties and our question is not matters of politics, but we have struggle to protect our resource and distinct characteristics from extinction and save the people from prolonged frustration through regaining our identity and self-rule right.*¹⁹⁶

Hence, from his reply when other non-Kemant individuals/ especially officials are lived in Kemant districts, they haven’t a sense of attentiveness for the resources and staff materials, and never see the materials as theirs. Not only the resources and materials, but even the members of Kemant peoples haven’t been beneficial in job vacancies, updating status, increment of position and haven’t a power or mandate to order in their own country of origin. Lastly when those non-Kemant peoples leave the Kemant Woredas (offices), they have been harming those materials and make them useless; they don’t care for the materials and resources that they had been used.¹⁹⁷

As a result, the Kemant people requests right to identity recognition and self-rule right as the last resort to halt the discrimination which done against them and to be part of the economic, political and social benefits of their own districts.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, interview with Kassie Mengistu, supra note 186, Letter to the House of Federation (September 21/09/ 2013) on their Compliant on the Response of Amhara National Regional State, Gondar, p.12

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Kassie Mengistu, supra note 186

¹⁹⁷ Ibid

In fact, the above institutional and practical problems may be averted through citizenship rights and restructuring the institutional problems. But the existing political system by itself resolve such problems by demarcating the people based on its ethno-linguistic background of the people through deploying their own human resource in each respective territory. The same is true for the Kemant people who believes such like problems must resolved though having a self-rule environment.

Even though the kemant people loses some objective distinct characteristics, but Contrary with the regional governments and other individuals such perception on claimants, as the interview, empirical existing incidences and secondary documents reveal that the study uncover a different finding and fact which the question of right to identity recognition and self-rule/autonomy of Kemant people, especially the 2007 population and housing census, is the question of almost all Kemant peoples. Both groups of the people such as political elites, uneducated and educated ordinary individuals, female and male are part of the quest of identity recognition, political representation and self-administration claim. But the degree of political participation and movement for such questions display some disparities within such groups of peoples.

Related with the above point, J. Phinney wrote that one indicator of members of ethnic groups self-declaring is proud in their distinct characteristics and culture. Similarly, one writer wrote in 1958(1999) the Kemant people characterized as;

*“...who respect the God, peaceful with the government, truthful, non-mischievous, hospitable, innocent, want to eat together, strong worker, honest, who lives only in their own treasure’s ...”*¹⁹⁸

In light of this, substantial members of the Kemant people proud in their distinct quality and identity and interested to preserve and develop it. In their self-identification, they avail themselves as member of the Kemant people.

But in a general term, as the researcher observes, from deep interview and focus group discussion, there are empirical indicators of the people’s willingness for self-declaring as member of the Kemant ethnic group. It in turn indicates that questions of identity recognition and self-

¹⁹⁸ Leake Mariam(1952EC), Haile sellasie I, king of kings of Ethiopia

administration are the claims of majority of Kemant peoples but not manipulated and instigated by only few elites.

5.2. Manifestation of the People’s willingness to self-identification and their solidarity to the Quests

5.2.1. Eager to Learn, Speak and Preserve Kemantney Language

A minority group is a group ... ‘if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language’. Francesco Capotorti (1991).

Before 2002 Kemantney language is grouped by linguistics as endangered language and in verge of extinction. The speakers of the language were only those persons who attained sixty and above years old. As a result, from linguistics prove, if the children and adolescents do not speak the language of their parents, then it is unrealistic to expect the language to survive into the near future without the intervention of extraordinary circumstances.¹⁹⁹ And similar conclusion is given for Kemantney language.

However, the current situation of Kemantney language is seems slightly different from the situation of the last four or five years. This is because the researcher of this study observed in the field that there seems a tendency of both the young and child speakers of the language and the people’s effort and zeal to speak and develop the language is dramatically increased.

From the eight Woredas which the Kemant people inhabits, starting from 2012/2013, in Chilga, Lay Armacheho (Tikil Dingay), and Quara Woredas the Kemantney language is given through fee free education by the volunteer descendants of the Kemant people. The teachers of this program are young fluent speakers of Kemantney language. The one who is around 22 years old thought such language in Chilga. He also wrote one book called “Kemantney language” which contains unique Kemantney letters, the name of animals, idiomatic expressions. He has tried to translate the name of foods and drinks, name of weeks and dates, and other elements from Amharic to Kemantney.

¹⁹⁹ Zelalem Leyew, supra note 17, p.12-13

Almost all age groups are incorporated in students of Kemantney language. The researcher attends the education in Aykel (center of Chilga) in 25 and 26/02/ 2014. In the place, around 12 years old child communicate through the Kemantney language with the teacher of Kemantney. When the teacher enters to class, he started his salutation through Kemantney and the audiences (students) also respond in that language. Other than students, some also tried to learn the language in reading book. From example, Kassie Mengistu said that ‘I’m in the process of speaking the language and even I’m not as such fluent to speak it, but I have tried to speak in the coming recent time through reading books.’

Accordingly, as F. Capotorti defines among the indicators of solidarity within a minority group is their willingness to preserve language, religion, and culture; the Kemant people also unanimous to learn the language and interested to save it from extinction. Not only interested to protect it from extinction and death, but also since the concerned bodies used it as a pretext for ignoring their right to self-administration and recognition quests, the Kemant people used it as the main initiator to develop and preserve the language. Announcements to Kemant meetings, some tiny letters and slogans are writing by both Kemantney and Amharic language also contributed for its rehabilitation.

For the existence and increment of speakers, based on the survey of the Kemant Nationality’s Quest for identity Recognition and self-rule coordinating committee, from 126 kebeles of Kemant residence, in some of them 6645 individuals can speak the language.²⁰⁰ From all Kemant Woredas around 10, 000-15, 000 speakers are estimated.²⁰¹

In fact the information on the current number of speakers of the language may or may not be exaggerated as far as it estimated only by the claimants. But what is the undeniable fact is there is a general tendency of the increment of the speakers of the language and in the near future the language may have at least speak by the majority of Kemant peoples. If it is successful, the Kemantney language may be grouped as a language which rehabilitates due to an extraordinary circumstance. In conclusion, since they have willingness to speak and develop the language, the numbers of speakers seem to be increased through time. One fact that manifested this truth is that both the young and few children have tried to speak of the Kemantney language. This will help

²⁰⁰ Letter to the House of Federation, supra note 195, p.12

²⁰¹ Ibid

for the existence and rehabilitation of the language. Moreover, their enthusiastic to learn, especially the younger age group, indicates their solidarity and willingness to preserve their unique identity in particular and their cooperation for right to recognition and self-administration quest in general.

5.2.2. Financial Contribution and Participation in the Kemant Development Association

Kemant Development Association (KDA) was established in 1993 to contribute towards alleviating socio-economic problems of the people.²⁰² The association was non-governmental and non-profit making association, but the transitional government had been providing material support to it and it has its own chairperson who leads it.²⁰³

In the present time, however, the KDA has played a great role not only in development agenda of the Kemant people but it has also helped them in facilitating the struggle for recognition and self administration quest.

The contribution is mostly comes from members of the Kemant people particularly from government workers, merchants, and private workers.²⁰⁴ There is also a Kemant music band which contributes it by collecting money from the society, and non-educated individuals.²⁰⁵ Accordingly, the Kemant peoples contribute voluntarily, their self-labeling and cooperation to the quest of identity recognition and self-administration also manifested by it. From the ordinary self-declared Kemant individual, one respondent in Metema Woreda subscribes 50 birr per year. She said ‘I have been contributing to fulfill our common goal (to protect our right)’.

At the same time one individual from the self-declared Kemant people replied that;

I want to invest all things what I can for my identity, including financial contribution, and if possible I want to propose a last resort to protect and fulfill our right. As a result, as to my

²⁰² Yeshiwas Degu, supra note 188, p. 20, interview with Nega Gete, supra note 180

²⁰³ Ibid

²⁰⁴ Interview with Nega Gete, supra note 180, FGD with the coordinating committees on 21 February 2014 at 12:20: 2:00pm Shehidi town (Metema woreda)

²⁰⁵ From the field observation in Metema and Chilga Woredas, videos of the music band in those Woredas

*potential, I want to subscribe financially. To assure our quest all means's must initiate only from us which have a potential to solve our problem before it comes from any other else.*²⁰⁶

Therefore, while peoples ordered to contribute for other purposes they may do so because of it is an obligation, for instance paying tax. However, since the question of right to identity and self-rule/self-administration is their common and basic question what they want to answer, they contribute for it voluntarily. It in turn indicates the question is not the question of few individuals who have an interest to gain either a political or economic benefits, instead the question of major Kemant people.

5.2.3. People's Willingness to participate in Demonstrations and Meetings

As it stated in the above, since quest of recognition and self-administration within Kemant peoples lost beyond 20 years, and as it is a group right, initially it developed through dialogue, by getting together in meetings, sessions and other communicating means. Due to such activities the number of claimants increased through time. According to the observation of the researcher during field study, the Kemant people are eager to participate and large numbers of the people are taking part in such activities.

The meetings are held to discuss to consolidate and legalize their quest, such as how the claim should be going, and how to make the people aware on the way of legal claim. In addition to this, establishing the representative committee and KDA, and discussing on peaceful ways of compliant expression (demonstration) other than formal request, are causes for their recurrent meetings and dialogue. For example, they held three demonstrations in Chilga and Metema Woredas, and Gondar town in 2013/14.

In Chilga the demonstration was held in January 12/01/2014, the people expressed its disappointment to the government for their denial while it recognizes and protects other ethnic groups who are numerically not more than the Kemant people.

According to my key informant from the members of the interim committee;

In Chilga more than 65, 000 people are participated in January 12 demonstration. It was held in democratic and peaceful way. No piece of stone was throwing against the government officials,

²⁰⁶ Interview with an educated merchant on 25 February 2014 at 10:00- 11:15am, Aykel town

*individuals and institutions. During the demonstration religious leaders, Kemant peoples coordinating committees and individuals express their grievance on the system. All of women, men, child, young, adult and old age groups involved in the demonstration.*²⁰⁷

The second demonstration was held in Gondar town in 18/02/ 2014. Some commentators said it the first great incidence in the history of Gondar that much people is involved in demonstrations.²⁰⁸

It was held due to the delay of response from the House of federation on their claim. The people came to Gondar town, from Lay Armacheho, Chilga Woreda, Gondar *zuria* and from other remote areas, and 300, 000 people are participated. It was the major testimony which indicates the existence of huge Kemant people in Gondar town.²⁰⁹ The demonstration was also peaceful and has democratic form. According to one zonal official from the Amhara ethnic group;

*The demonstration was really peaceful, and we want to express our appreciation on their strive and achievement to make the demonstration peaceful by deploying their member in different aspects, such as from them some serve as police force, others as leaders of the line, etc. But the problem is related with the justifications of their claim and the people's rigidness by rejecting the factual situations and the study of zonal and regional officials which uncovered their claim (especially the claim of self-rule) does not have constitutional ground. This is because the claim of self-rule doesn't fulfill the criteria of article 39(5) and 39(7) of the federal and regional constitutions respectively.*²¹⁰

From this we can infer that, some members of the neighboring Amhara people and concerned zonal and local officials testify on the democratic nature of demonstrations and the involvement of large number of self-declared Kemant people on the demonstration. But their compliant is with the cause and justification of demonstration in particular and the quest of Kemant people right to identity recognition and self-administration claim in general. They condemn the quest as unconstitutional and haven't legal ground in the sense of which is not inconformity with FDRE constitution article 39(5) of the requirements of nations, nationalities and peoples. Related with this, in fact there are some members of the Amhara people who see the question positively and recognize that the claim of Kemant people right to identity recognition and self-administration never against with their political and economic interest. For example, one individual respond that

²⁰⁷ Interview with Kassie Mengistu, supra note 186

²⁰⁸ Interview with Nega Gete, supra note 180, and Kassie Mengistu, supra note 186

²⁰⁹ Interview with Desse Mamo, supra note 191, and Kassie Mengistu, supra note 186

²¹⁰ Interview with Melkamu who is an officer for N. Gondar Zone Justice and Social Affairs on 04 March 2014 at 9:20-10:40am, Gondar

‘I never want to condemn the Kemant people’s quest, and I will be pleased if they regain their recognition and self-administration rights’.²¹¹

However, some concerned officials and members of the neighboring Amhara people highly condemn the quest of self-rule than quest of right to identity recognition. This is due to their fair that the possibilities of demarcation of some critical places as part of the Kemant people. It means that there are debatable districts which both of the Amhara and Kemant peoples live together. In addition to this, particularly other than concerned local and zonal officials, some members of Amhara people considered it as against the culture of peaceful co-existence.

The third demonstration was held in Metema Woreda in Shehidi (Genda wuha) town in 07/03/20014. According to the information from the key informants more than 40, 000 people are involved in the demonstration.

From the key informants, there are great number of Kemant peoples in Metema Woreda, but some Amhara people and the concerned officials, as Metema town is the excellence of investments and major source of development, more than any other place they strongly oppose an argument of Metema Woreda is the resident of Kemant people.²¹² However, on the issue of Kemant people’s right to identity and self-rule question, huge numbers of people by themselves testify through actively participated in demonstrations, awareness creation arenas (Medereks), and in financial contributions and they exposed themselves as the residents of Metema Woreda and part of the movement for such quests.²¹³

From the above points, we can infer that demonstration as ways of compliant expression, the majority people involved on it as their matters/ issues which in turn indicates the people’s solidarity to the claims of identity recognition and self-administration. One interviewee said that;

More than any other things these demonstrations are the major message and indicator that really shows the solidarity of people for the quest of recognition and self-administration, and the claim is

²¹¹ Interview with Mr. Melese on 25 February 2014 at 06:00- 7:20am, Aykel town

²¹² Interview with Melaku Tesfa who is member of the coordinating committee on 22 February 2014 at 00:30-2:20Pm, Shehidi town (Metema Woreda)

²¹³ Ibid, and FGD with the self-declared kemant peoples on 21 February 2014 at 6:00-8:00am, Shehidi town

*not elite entrepreneur for the sake of their personal desire, instead purely the heartbeat of major Kemant people.*²¹⁴

Moreover, according to the member of coordinating committee members, since the peoples are disappointed due to unable to get an answer for its question and the question is the major question of the mass people, when the peoples are called for government sessions or meetings not more than 300 people are involved on it; however, when the meeting is for the case of Kemant's identity and self-rule question more than 25, 000 people are participated.²¹⁵

In addition, one informant from the Amhara ethnic group testifies on the number of Kemant people who participated in demonstrations;

*periods are passed when I hear the rumor of the peoples are divide by the sense of we are Kemant, Amhara or others in one Gondar in which we lived together, but I believe it when large number of peoples are expressed their compliant (through demonstration) in the sense of 'the constitutional principles must be implemented to protect and fulfill our right'.*²¹⁶

From this we can understand that, even though the quest of Kemant people right to identity recognition and self-administration legally and officially started before two decades ago but it was became a public/ exposed issue for majority of the neighboring Amhara people when large members of the Kemant people expressed their compliant through demonstration. The demonstration also is the cause for the disappointment of some neighboring Ahmara people by the quest of Kemant people right to identity and self-administration. This is because those Amhara people considered the quest as sense of narrowness and against the culture and tradition of peaceful co-existence as one *Gondarians*.

In conclusion, even though at the inception of their struggle it seem the aim of some extremists'; however, during the last five or six years the Kemant activists have managed to gain substantial support from the mass Kemant people. When the committee requested the House of Federation to reconsider their demand in July 2009, it has presented 18,584 public petitions and one Woreda and 10 kebele administrations official support letters to their quest.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Interview with Belay Shibeshi on 25 February at 5:30-7:00pm, Gondar

²¹⁵ Interview with Desse Mamo, supra note 191

²¹⁶ Interview with Mr. Teshome on 27 February 2014 at 7:30-8:30am, Tikil Dingay (Lay Armacheho Woreda)

²¹⁷ Letter to the House of Federation, supra note 195, p.3

This demonstrates that the movement for identity recognition and self-administration is becoming a more publicized issue with the backup of all sections of the Kemant society than ever before. The people actively participated in demonstrations and meetings without the third parties forceful order. This in turn indicates us that first it shows the sentiment of the people to identify themselves as Kemant. In other words, it indicates their willingness to declare themselves as member of that ethnic group. Second it also indicates us that the question for right to have recognition and self- administration is not only the issue of few elites but it also becomes the concern of the other Kemant people.

5.2.4. The Young Elites Firm to Make the People Cognizant on their Identity

Starting from the inception the struggle of Kemant people have two aims. First, get informed the Kemant people on their ethnic identity. Secondly, make cognizant the federal and the Amhara national regional state on the existence of a distinct and historical ethnic group who called as Kemant.

However, on the first aim it doesn't mean they do a persuasion to those who do declare themselves as Amhara to identify themselves as Kemant. Instead the aim of teaching the people is to change the perception of self-declared Kemant people that have a negative attitude to their identity. Hence, some Amhara people give a name for the Kemant as wood worshippers, wood's offspring, which dehumanizes them and might have led several people to deny their socio-cultural, religious and linguistic identity.²¹⁸ These expressions demonstrate that there are members of Kemant people who are not declare themselves as Kemant due to the stereotype developed from the other neighboring people.

Accordingly, making the people cognizant to their identity is a very challenging task. As Jean S. Phinney stated once the mindset of ethnic groups are filled by a derogatory name and experiencing discrimination, it may take longer period of time to change their attitude, and the same is true for Kemant people.

Therefore, particularly in Metema Woreda, when members of the Kemant people deploy each other to different remote and very warm weather conditions such as Metema and Quara Woredas,

²¹⁸ Interview with Nega Gete , supra note 180

who holds the aims of changing the attitude of frustrated individuals and aware the overall situation of Kemant quest for identity recognition and self-administration, they never think such challenging weather and socio-political conditions.

Moreover, as most of them are government workers who do it by arranging the time, there may be disagreement with the government officials and their bosses which may have its own risk to their ultimate life and job. However, they are firm in their aim and never say back and forth and hold a very intellectual plan with hope which all of these may be changed and come in the right track.

May all of these seem the effort of few front political activists who intention to gain their own rewards after the entitlement of their claim. But the cooperation of the general public with them and recurrent increment of self-declared Kemant peoples with the team of those young elites, who seems to have a primordial attachment to their identity can be a testimony for the claim have wide and the mass's willingness.

5.2.5. Selection of the Coordinating Committee by the Majority Kemant People

To run the quest of identity recognition and self-administration legally, in May 2009 the Kemant people established a political organization which identified as “*The Kemant People’s Claim for Identity and self-rule Coordinating Committee*” also known as the “*Interim Committee*”.²¹⁹ It is an ad hoc committee, and the sole political agent, primarily aims to coordinate activities and to present claims to the state in legal manner.²²⁰ It used as a bridge for the state and the people. It has a “council” or assembly with 120 members and who assumed as can represent the whole Kemant people. The council established nine men and three women Central Executive Committees.²²¹

From the activists’ perspective, the committee has represented the interests of the Kemant people as a whole, and its aim is legitimizing and consolidating their quest. It was also established in order to continue the political movement in a more coordinated and effective manner.²²²

²¹⁹Yeshiwas Degu, supra note 188, p. 22, Letter to the House of Federation, supra note 195, p.3.

²²⁰ Ibid

²²¹ Ibid

²²² Interview with Mr. Kassie Mengistu, supra note 186

The committee has also its organizational structure which extended from zonal to Kebele level.²²³ This could help to bring the people closer to the committee. The zonal level structure gives weekly, monthly or annual tasks to those Woreda level hierarchies and it oversees their performance.²²⁴

For the assurance of the members of the interim committee as representatives of the people, during their persistent request of the House of Federation, the federation council requested them to present the representation letter which indicates the will of the people towards the claim. It also requested them whether the committees stands behalf of the people. As a result, the claim is accepted because of the HoF assured they are really the representatives of the people.²²⁵

From the earlier points, it is possible to argue that the Kemant people's right to identity recognition, political representation and self-rule questions especially since 2007 national population and housing census gets substantial number of Kemant people's backup. It clearly indicates the people's willingness to preserve their distinct characteristics and have more of primordial attachments for their ethnic identity and historical ancestor with some constructivist and instrumentalist character.

Constructivist character mean, obviously as different literatures and myths of the people states, before the period 1991 and the coming of federal democratic system, the people have been exist in 'melting pot' way with the neighboring Amhara and Falasha (Bête-Israel) people peacefully. However, since then a claim of identity recognition/protection and autonomous rule emerged as their main question. It demonstrates the construction and reconstruction of group identities during several hundred years extending into the twentieth century to cope up with the existing political system.

As James Quirin stated, 'these identities (identities of Kemant and Falasha) were contextual and fluctuating rather than simply primordial and they emerged out of a differential interaction with the Ethiopian state and dominant Abyssinian society.'²²⁶

²²³ Yeshiwas Degu, supra note 188, p.22

²²⁴ From the field observation, FGD with Metema Woreda committee members, supra note 204

²²⁵ Letter to the House of Federation, supra note 195, p.3, interview with Mr. Nega Gete, supra note 180

²²⁶ James Quirin, supra note 147, p. 195

Moreover, in the current time, there are also individuals who seem to be part of the claim and activist by calculating their future political and economic rewards and who erode by others' judgment. By thinking the negative potentialities against them after the Kemants right to identity recognition and self-administration claim is assured they seem to be part of the claim. For example, according to one informant, she tries to express her standing on the question of right to identity recognition and self- administration;

At the beginning I never want to involve in such complex matters (quests of identity recognition and self-administration), but through time several different factors forced me to be part of the claim. Hence, if the Kemant people entitle such rights I will be disadvantageous on the politico-economic benefits which comes with it, and I will be subservient with discriminations, but I don't have as such vigorous interest on the claim.²²⁷

From this explanation we can understand that there are some members of Kemant people who have instrumentalist's calculation in their support of the claim. From the field observation there are also individuals both in the activists and ordinary claimants who seem to strive for gaining political positions and economic advantages with the assertion of self-rule question.

Despite the above facts, obviously as the experience of other historical ethnic groups, in a certain ethnic group some members of the group claims for right to protection who believe they are oppressed. However, within them there may be also other individuals who are against with such the above standing. This indicates the presence of division of interest within the group on such claims. And for this division of interest and attitude factors such as, social, economic, historical and political may be responsible, and this fact also reflected in the current Kemant people's situation.

Hence, since 2007 population and housing census the movement and struggle of Kemant people's right to identity recognition, political representation and self-administration gains mass public support. However, from the interview, focus group discussion and the documents indicate there are also individuals who are afraid to identify themselves as Kemant and strongly condemn the movement of other Kemant peoples while in fact their ancestor is Kemant.

²²⁷ Interview with one female civil servant on 25 February 2014 at 9:00-10:00am Aykel, but not want to expose her name.

5.3. Factors Responsible for the Existence of some Disparities of Interest within Kemant People

1. Social Discrimination

The Kemant people live with and near the neighboring Amhara people. As their historical genesis indicates, at the beginning of their settlement due to the neighboring Amhara people forced them to live in the none-fertile area of the terrain, they live longer period of time within the juggle area of Chilga, and Kerker (Lay Armacheho). In addition to this, due to their associations as carriers of wood for Gonder town, and the historic practice of wearing wooden earrings amongst the women, throughout the time some neighboring Amhara people label them as the born of woods and wood worshippers.²²⁸ Almost all respondents underline this cause as the major reason which distorts the humanization, self-esteem, self- respect and self-confidence of some of the members of Kemant individuals.

The persistent poisoned propagation leads to distort the mind of individuals and forced them to hide their true self, as it a false fabrication given to Kemants to defame their identity and humanity, their deliberate and persistent discrimination frustrates some of Kemant peoples, particularly the uneducated Kemant individuals eroded by this name and have a shame on their true self. As a result, the movement/struggle of Kemant people aimed to change the mindset of those self-declared Kemant individuals.²²⁹ It means that there are individuals who want called by their name, but always frustrated by this demeaning name.

One informant explains the situation as; since he frustrated for longer period of time by the name given to Kemants as they are the ‘child of woods, and pagans’, he never want to expose his identity, rather identified himself as only Ethiopian, but not Amhara, Kemant or any other else.²³⁰

From the above information, there are individuals who hide their true self because of they experienced the social exclusion and derogatory name given by some neighboring peoples. This could be considered as one factor for the existence of divergence standing and opinion within the

²²⁸ James Quirin, supra note 147, p.217

²²⁹ Interview with Nega Gete, supra note 180

²³⁰ Interview with Tebebe on 10 March 2014 at 8: 30-10:00am, Addis Ababa

Kemant people for the right to identity recognition and self-administration quest and for the individual's difference for self-declaring as member of the Kemant people.

Related with the above points according to the informants,

I love and proud by my true self, as being Kemant is the manifestation of honest for peoples and the almighty God, but I always upset by the name given to us as Kemants are as 'beasts who have a tail, and child's of wood'. Especially, since the movement for identity recognition and self-rule question is uncovered, the marginalization and defamation by some Amhara people aggravate and touch all corners of Chilga Woreda. So, we try to hide ourselves as criminals.²³¹

It tells us that, for some Kemant individuals, since the movement and struggle for identity recognition and self-administration are being official, their frustration by the above demeaning name seems to reduce and the peoples are becoming aware for their true-self. But in the contrary, for others since this social discrimination is deliberate one to frustrate them, the discrimination and defamation disseminated and leads to aggravate the self-denial and frustration of Kemant peoples, especially the uneducated rural Kemants are more exposed to such problem.

2. Politico-Economic Influences

According to the informants, political oppressions against the Kemant people have a root from the monarchical period. During the that period, the Kemant people were subservient to the existing discriminatory system. They were explicitly forced to change their religion, language and culture to assimilate with the mainstream society. Moreover, in the present federal democratic system the Kemant people suffer by denial of their existence, while the system encourages ethnocentrism illness on the other group of the society.²³²

In the former political system, to escape from harassment and discriminations by the neighboring Amhara rulers, they marry with the ruling family and claim their ancestry as part of the ruling group. Consequently, they forget their origin, identity, language and culture. In the current political system also they are always subservient to the political and economic segregations in work places (employment) and political positions. The individuals forced to identify themselves

²³¹ Interview with Aregash Melese on 25 February 2014 at 8: 30- 9; 30am, Aykel, related idea is expressed in FGD with rural peoples on 19 February 2014 at 10:00-12:30am in Chenchock (Chilga Woreda)

²³² Tibitu Deresse, supra note 18, p.54

in line with the majority people's ethnic identity; they will be outcaste in employment, work place, political positions and leadership activities.²³³

Accordingly, even though the individuals clearly recognize they are Kemant, but to be part of such the above political activities they forced to label them as Amhara. Not only these but also, some administrators in some kebeles and Woredas terrorize the people by saying 'the government wouldn't access the infrastructures and other facilities for farmers, and they will be massacred by mass destruction materials if they are part of the movement of recognition and self-administration of Kemant people.'²³⁴

These interdependent politico-economic segregations against the Kemant people also the cause for the existence of some individuals who don't expose their identity and apathetic to the movement for the right identity recognition and self-administration.

3. Lack of Awareness

This is mainly resulted from wrong perception by some Kemant Peoples on quest of identity recognition and self-rule Claim. From the field study, particularly peoples who live in the rural part of such Kemant Woredas understand the claim of identity recognition and self-administration as being antithesis with the rules of the existing government system. Moreover, they consider it as being against the good spirit (they called it *wukabe marak*). They also believe that it may minimize the culture of cooperation and its common standing for the common enemy of one Gondar.

Such attitude also developed in some neighboring Amhara people as they see the Kemant quest of identity recognition and self-administration as question of secession, and against the culture of fraternity. According to the key informants from the Amhara ethnic group;

----within one Gondar we have lived together for long centuries, and we passed those periods by striving for the progress and development of one Amhara people in general and Gondarians in particular. However, within one historical and precious Gondar which known by others as the

²³³ interview with Nega Gete, supra note 180

²³⁴ Interview with rural peoples on 28 February 2014 at 7:30-8:30am, Tikil Dingay (Lay Armacheho Woreda)

*country of heroes and hospitable, proposing such the idea of one group as Kemant, and the other as Amhara may reduce or eliminate our best quality and sense of brotherhood.*²³⁵

From these, we can draw an idea that not only member of the Kemant people perceive the quest as antithesis with the culture and tradition of co-existence of the Kemant and Amhara people, but also member of the neighboring Amhara people also displeased by the Kemant movement as being narrow and attaching it with denying the original homeland.

Similarly, some Kemant individuals have considered the movement and struggle for identity recognition and self-administration as a crime which is being antithesis with the government policy. As result of these, they do not see it as a right. In addition, some peoples also pessimist and afraid that the claim may results conflict and develops hostility with the neighboring Amhara people.

However, it does not mean that all members of Kemant people are susceptible with the above attitude rather there are individuals who strongly argue their quest is legal and never contradict with the culture of fraternity and peaceful existence. The researcher of this study also had observed in the field that, the young intellectuals who are from high school up to college are very hot in their movement and even tries to establish Kemant Youth Association (KYA),²³⁶ and mightn't have as such like the above attitude in their claim. They strongly argue their claim is a just claim and a right which supported by the international human rights law and domestically has constitutional ground. However, uneducated individuals, especially females who live in rural parts of such Woredas condemn the claim as a crime.²³⁷

From the field observation and interviews, sometimes identifying oneself as Kemant and supporting the claim might not have similar standing within them. Hence, some identify themselves as Kemant, but they condemn the movement and claim of Kemant people's right to identity recognition and self-rule claim due to their position. This is due to their belief that the claim is antithesis with the culture of peaceful co-existence and fraternity. They considered it also

²³⁵ Interview with one informant (from Amhara ethnic group) on 25 February 2014 at 14:00-14:50pm Aykel (Chilga woreda). Moreover, when I interviewed other neighboring Amhara students in Aykel preparatory school and some educated individuals in Gondar city, they respond similar with the above claim which argues the claim of self-administration of kemant people as questions of secession which can disintegrate one Gondar.

²³⁶ Interview with Nege Gete, supra note 180

²³⁷ Interview with ordinary kemant individuals on 28 February 2014 at 10:00- 12:00am, Tikil Dingay, from the field observation of rural parts of Chilga and Lay Armacheho Woreda

the manifestation of narrow nationalism. However, others want to identify themselves from the place they live as one *Gondarians*. Therefore, from regional respective they identify themselves as member of the Amhara region rather attaching their identity from the mere ethnic blood and descent line. As a result, they neutralize themselves from the quests and reluctant to identify them as Kemant.

Moreover, inability to speak the Kemantney language can be another factor to identify them from the Amhara ethnic line or any other else. This is because of the belief that since the language is the major distinguishing element; they have to know the language to identify them as Kemant.

4. Mixed Marriage

Mixed marriage also has its own effect on individuals' ethnic self-identification, which may challenge individuals to decide and identify in one of the mixed ethnic group. Since the Kemant people are similar with the neighboring Amhara people in aspects of livelihood, diet, wedding and mourning ceremonies and general way of living (may be in culture), they live with the Amhara people in marriage, ceremonial activities and related social activities for long periods of time peacefully. As a result, might one of their parents, and from couples, one may be from Kemant and the other from Amhara. Consequently, they are either identifying themselves as Amhara, rarely Kemant or they don't bother about their ethnic origin. For example, according to one informant;

*In fact, I am from the two ethnic groups, but I never identify myself as Kemant. Since the recognized group is Amhara, I feel proud when I declare myself as Amhara, and since my father is from the Amhara I want to identify myself from part of the paternal ethnic group.*²³⁸

From this we can infer that mostly person who is from both Kemant and Amhara background opts to be part of the Amhara ethnic group. In fact, this mixed marriage has historical roots which deliberately the Kemant ethnic group opts as a last resort from the oppression and marginalization of the society and the political system since from the monarchical period. Hence, in the past monarchical system, to escape themselves from the socio-political and economic marginalization

²³⁸ Interview with Tezera on 03 march 2014 at 2:20-3:30pm, Gondar

and oppression, they opt to marry with the ruling family, and deny themselves as from the Kemant ethnic group. This mixed marriage is continued for the successive periods.²³⁹

To summarize the points, in addition to the above factors, there are also individuals who prefer to identify their identity from the place they originated and common history what they have passed together rather based on ethnic/ descent affiliation. Thus, as the data reveals it, some individuals identify their identity as one *Gondarians* instead of classifying as Kemant or Amhara. They also seem to have a strong sense of proud in their place of origin rather doesn't bother for any ethnic background or blood relationship. Such like behavior reflected both from neighboring Amhara and Kemant peoples who dislike and condemn the movement.

As one informant stated;

*---within one Gondarians to divide one group as Kemant and others as Amhara is the manifestation of narrowness and reduce sense of oneness, cooperation for the common goal, and it may pave the way for others offense.*²⁴⁰

From this reply, as far as they considered the claim as antithesis with the long existed common history and tradition of Amhara and Kemant people, they don't want to identify themselves from their blood line/ethnic affiliation. Instead they inclined to the place they originated and the common social, political and economic life which they passed together with the neighboring Amhara people.

5.4. Consequences of some Division of Interest within Kemant People

From the international human rights law perspective, numerical inferiority is one distinguishing and definitional element. However, no precise number is put in place for numerical inferiority. It is usually identified in line with the reference of numerical inferiority, and the comparison is with the dominant number of the people who live in a certain territory vis-a- vis the smaller number of distinct group who called as minority.

In light to this, those minority groups, if they claim the right to protection and promotion of their distinct characteristics, no matter the number (quantity) of claimants except if they fulfill other criteria which declared in the domestic legal order and international one. It implies that even

²³⁹ Interview with Nega Gete, supra note 180

²⁴⁰ Interview with Tebebe, supra note 229

though there are small numbers of individuals who do not identify themselves as member of the Kemant community, protecting the rights of those individuals who declare/ identify themselves as Kemant and who claims as their right is violated is the task of domestic state apparatus or local government as it recommended by the international human rights law.

Moreover, as it clearly discussed in chapter three, identity can be seen as part of an individual's concept of him/herself; however, it may also influenced by external push and pull factors. The research found that the nearly all Kemants have a strong level of self- identification. Since 2007 most young and adult educated individuals' self-identification grounded for the preservation and promotion of common ancestor, culture and history.

Therefore, even though some divergence of interest for the right to identity and self-administration within them displayed, it couldn't be said the sole cause for the delay and deny of their identity recognition and self-administration quest. If it said to have the cause for the delay of response from the government bodies, it was before 2007 population and housing census which seems only the entrepreneur and movement of small elites, but onwards to it, it have the majority's backing.

In fact, in the present time opposition by some members of the Kemant ethnic group for the question and struggle of identity recognition and self-administration may difficult to the concerned bodies and other third persons to determine the actors of the quest and the aim/mission of those active participants. This also can be the cause hesitation by the concerned bodies for the existence of that distinct group.

However, it is misleading to conclude that some divergence opinion within the Kemant people is the cause for the procrastination of the response from the concerned bodies to answer their claim rather, especially the recent responses given by the regional government is used language and non-contiguous living of the Kemant peoples as a cause to reject their quest.²⁴¹

According to one informant;

²⁴¹ Response of Office of the Speaker of the Amhara National Regional Council to the Kemant people's Right for Identity Recognition and Self-administration Quest, 2013, p.5

Even though there are few individuals who deny their identity and against the claim, but it is impossible to say they are the cause for deny of our right from the regional government rather it is the result of irresponsible political bureaucracy.²⁴²

Thus, the reluctance of the concerned bodies to implement the constitutional commitments is the main cause for the absence of a due response for their persistent claim, but existence of some individuals within Kemant people who condemn the question and dislike to identify them as Kemant haven't an overwhelming power for the absence of due response for their claim.

5.5. The Current Situation of Kemant people's Identity Recognition and Self-rule Quest

5.5.1. Question of Right to Identity Recognition

Misrepresentation shows lack of due respect. Due recognition is not just a courtesy to the people/minorities. It is the human need. Recognition is for front political issues particularly minorities. This is because there is a strong linkage between recognition and identities. This explains that recognition forges identity. One's identity is shaped by the recognition and its absence by misrepresentation by others. Equal recognition is essential for democratic culture.²⁴³

As it mentioned in the above, the current claims of Kemant people focus on identity recognition and self-rule claim. Before 1984 the Kemant people are constitutionally recognized group and considered as one distinct group from the groups of nations and nationalities of Ethiopia. Hence, in the 1990s, the prevailing political demand was regaining their recognition in which they entitle before this period. The claim was raised by some elites through individually and collectively. Means that, from the early 1990s up to 2006, the Kemant people had never claimed, or even never proposed to claim for questions of self-administration rather their main political demand was confined to right to recognition and respect for their identity. As a result, only since 2007 the right to self-administration is become another political agenda of Kemant people.

As a result, as long as more than 20 years have lost when the Kemant people asks a question of recognition and later the right to internal self-determination, but still neither recognized nor represented and never get promising response to their self-administration claim. However, one step what they have got is, the Amhara National Regional State lost many years when it explicitly

²⁴² Interview with Nega Gete, supra note 180

²⁴³ Charles Taylor (1994), *The Politics of Recognition* in Gutmann, Amy (ed.) *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

denies the existence of distinct group who called as Kemant, but on today it seems accept the existence of historical, distinct ethnic group-Kemant.

Consequently, after the long delayed response the regional government gives a confusing answer by saying ...“even though no one is deny the existence of Kemant ethnic group”...²⁴⁴. But the above confusing answer can't be said a response for their recurrent and long existed quest of recognition, and can't be said they are recognized group. Hence, the main indicator for their recognition is to regain the last omitted code which identifies them as one ethnic group among the list of nations and nationalities of Ethiopia. They can be said officially recognized group when they have their representative in the regional and federal ethnic representations.

This identity recognition paves the way to promote and at least preserve their language, history and culture, and it can be the first and the precondition for other rights, such as right to political representation and right to self-rule. But it doesn't mean that right to recognition necessarily leads to right to self-rule.

However, for some members of the Kemant people, the regional governments' response as '...even though no one is deny the existence of Kemant ethnic group...' considered as a sign of recognition, and claim that the remaining part is the right to self-administration. In addition to this, they strongly claim that identity recognition and self-administration are inseparable; hence right to identity recognition must also answer the right to self-administration.

But still the Kemant peoples coordinating committee for right to identity recognition and self-administration persistently claim a right to recognition and self-administration by recognizing the above confusing answer of the regional government can't be said a response on their question. Moreover, they strongly claim that identity is already given by nature but the present core issue and question of Kemant people is gaining a self-rule environment. Therefore, in the present situation, the Kemant people entitle neither a right to recognition nor a right to self-administration and political representation.

5.5.2 Question of Self-administration and the Controversy on the Contiguosness of Territories

²⁴⁴ Response of Office of the Speaker of the Amhara National Regional Council, supra note 241

From the law of international human rights principle, the right to existence or recognition of minorities is the first precondition and necessary element for other subsequent and supplementary rights of minority groups. But, right to recognition doesn't necessarily leads to right to self rule, but a certain group to get a seat in political representation and self-rule right, it must officially recognized at hand.

Thus, behind the subjective requirements of nations, nationalities and peoples/ minorities, such as individuals' self-identification as member of such ethnic group (common psychological make-up and belief in a common and related identities), the Kemant people argue that other objective requirements which listed in article 39(5) and article 39(7) of the federal and regional constitutions respectively fits with their real situation. i.e., "Nation, Nationalities and Peoples" as group of people who have or enjoy the following elements in common: culture, customs and tradition, language, belief in a common identity, common psychological make-up, and the people inhabit contiguous territory. In such away argument, they prove it through the coordinating committees' comprehensive study.²⁴⁵

Moreover, the other reference of the Kemant people on their contiguous territories is within each eight Woredas of Kemant residence by taking the number of kebeles which the Kemant people inhabit either mixed with the Amhara people or not, that indicates the ratios of Kemant and Amhara ethnic group in each Woredas.

²⁴⁵ Letter to the House of Federation, supra note 195, p.9-10

Woredas	Number of kebeles			
	Only kemant Peoples inhabit	Majority of kemants inhabit	Half of kemants inhabit	kemants inhabit below half
Wogera	3	1	-	2
Lay Armacheho	25	-	5	-
Gondar town	4	1	1	-
Gondar <i>zuria</i>	1	1	1	1
Dembia	-	1	1	3
Chilga	17	8	11	-
Metema	3	2	7	7
Quara	-	3	2	1
Total	53	17	28	14

Table1: Woredas and kebele administrations of which the kemant resides, but it doesn't include kebeles of the towms²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ Tinbitu Deresse, supra note 18, p.36 as it cited in the coordinating committees study to prove the contiguousness of territories which submitted for the ANRS

As a result as the table indicates, in Lay Armacheho and Chilga Woredas the people live contiguously in which majority of the peoples are Kemants with compared to the neighboring Amhara people. In the remaining Woredas the Kemant people lives in some kebeles predominantly, in others half with the Amhara people and in some Kebeles the Amhara people greater in number than the Kemant people. But since self-rule question needs geography or Woredas contiguosity by itself, it never indicates the contiguosity of Woredas.

But more than this, the Kemant coordinating committee in 2013/ 2014 proves, by using a map which indicates the Woredas contiguosity, they argued it fulfill all of the requirements which stipulated under the constitution. However, contrary to the Interim Committee's assertion, the regional government replay that, among the requirements first, the only Kemant who speak the Kemantney language are very few individuals aged 60 and above who live in non-contiguous Woredas.²⁴⁷ Secondly, those peoples and Woredas are lived in non-contiguous territories.

In addition to this , the other issue what makes the question complex and unresolved is among the eight Woredas which identified as the Kemant residents, the two that is, Gondar town and Metema Woreda are the very controversial places which are the excellence of developments and center of investments.

Due to this the two ethnic groups (Amhara and Kemant) at the same time raised a question of ownership of the two places. The Kemant people claimed Gondar town as their resident and considered as some parts of Gondar must be part of the administration of Kemant people, and at the same time the Amhara people strongly oppose such argument. The same is true for Metema Woreda which is the major source of development to the region and center of several investments, and the Kemant people claim this Woreda as part and the residence of themselves. That is why while the case of other ethnic groups resolved without such procrastination and delay, the Kemant case takes more than 20 years which assumed to have political conspiracy.

²⁴⁷ Response of Office of the Speaker of the Amhara National Regional Council, supra note 241, p.5

Therefore, even the current hot issue of Kemant people is entitling a right to relative autonomous rule, but it is unresolved and contentious one which needs further investigation and experts on the area.

The Kemant people disappointed by the procrastinated regional governments' response, and leave the regional government as a body which doesn't concern their matter and requested the House of Federation (HoF) in September in 2013/ 14. But as the same time the HoF also never answer in due time, as a result the people expresses their grievance through peaceful demonstrations especially the demonstration in 18/02/ 2014 in Gondar town stir members of HoF. Around two weeks later the federation council deploy a mission to assess the overall condition of Kemant people and consult with the N. Gondar administrator, members of the interim committee of Kemant people's right to identity recognition and self- administration in Gondar and they tried to assess Woredas. Now the issue is in the hand of HoF.

However, after the study of the mission of HoF since no response or reply is given, still the struggle of Kemant people is continued. Unfortunately, which is worsen from the former discriminations and oppressions, the coordinating committees, other activists, the innocent teachers, old age groups who speaks the language and other Kemant individuals in Chilga and Metema Woredas are prison as a criminal. Consequently, the students and other individuals expressed their grievance through demonstration against such act.

But through a time those prison individuals are leaved and the people continued claiming their quest peacefully, and in the current time the issue of Kemant peoples is in the hand of HoF, and the people anticipated its response by requesting the right to identity recognition, political representation and self-rule questions.

5.6. Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of the study, it is possible to provide the following points as summary of findings:

First, as several literatures on the area and empirical facts on the ground reveal that there is historically distinct Kemant people who have their own language, history, common descent and culture.

Second, among the unique characteristics of Kemant people, the Kemantney language which grouped by linguistics as endangered language, it has been in the trend of rehabilitation. This is due to the existence and increment of child and young speakers of the language.

Third, to regain their identity, and to promote and preserve their unique characteristics the Kemant people officially raised a question of protection of their right to identity in the 1990s and broaden it to the quest of self-rule since the 2007 population and housing census.

Forth, though at the beginning of their movement the question of Kemant people's right to identity recognition and self-administration seem the question of few elites who intention to gain economic or political advantageous. The concerned bodies considered it also as the fabrication of those few individuals who are against the existing political system. However, since the 2007 population and housing census the quest of identity recognition and right to self-rule can gain substantial public support from the Kemant people. Now, it has become the quest of nearly all Kemant people. It means the Kemant people fulfill the subjective requirement of article 39(5) nation, nationality and people.

Fifth, most Kemant members have struggled for the protection of right to identity recognition and self-administration and identify themselves as member of the Kemant ethnic group with the center of attention to their primordial attachments to common history, language and descent, with some constructivist and instrumentalist character.

Sixth, there is also some sort of division of interest within Kemant peoples for right to identity recognition and self-administration quest. This is because there are some individuals who are not part of the claim and reluctant to identify themselves as Kemant. For this fact, the influences of historical and recurrent politico-economic oppressions, social discriminations, lack of awareness, mixed marriage, and individual's attention on their place of origin and common history rather than ethnic/descent background can be responsible factors.

Seventh, even though more than 20 years taken when the quest of Kemant people right to identity recognition and later self-administration officially requested, still they entitle neither right to recognition nor political representation. Since they are distinct ethnic group, non due recognition and misrepresentation of their existence is against the principles and values of international law and domestic legal order.

Eighth, in addition to right to recognition, the current major question of Kemant people is gaining a self-rule environment, but never gains a promising response from the concerned bodies for this question. This is because the controversy and contradicting argument or prove between the ‘Kemant Nationality’s Quest for Recognition and self-rule Interim Committee’ with the regional government regarding to the requirements which stipulated under article 39(5) of the FDRE and 39(7) of the regional government, particularly language and contiguousness of the territories.

5.7. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.7.1. Conclusion

Depending on the data presented and analyzed in the analysis part, it is possible to draw the following points as conclusions:

The focus of this study is to examine the self-identification of Kemant people and its claim for the right to recognition and self-administration from the perspective of international minority right law and domestic legal order.

The study also tries to conceptualized quest of Kemant people to preserve and develop their identity, language, and culture, and to have right of recognition and self-administration from the international human rights law perspective.

Moreover, the study also assessed theoretical and practical perspectives on ethnicity and ethnic identity to cope up with the issue of Kemant people as one distinct ethnic group.

Therefore, from the findings, at the beginning despite the long existed denial by the ANRS on the existence of distinct group who called as Kemant, the study proves and concluded that there is distinct ethnic group who have their own language, culture, history, and descent.

With the recurrent and persistent assimilation project by different and several political regimes against the Kemant language, culture, religion and identity, they have maintain and hold the distinct characteristics which makes them unique from the neighboring peoples.

In light of this, in the present political system, the Kemant ethnic group neither has recognition nor entitles the right to be represented. It has not yet self rule. But rather it has lived within the protectorate of ‘others’.

Consequently, since the disappointments and ‘why not us’ questions are inevitable while others entitle such rights, the Kemant people persistently ask a question of recognition in the 1990s. Their question has been increased to the question of self-rule with mass public support since and immediately the 2007 population and housing census. This is because, it is officially denied and omitted the name of ‘Kemant’ from the list of nations, nationalities of Ethiopia and substitute it by ‘others’.

Despite this fact, the regional government and some members of neighboring individuals had been a position of the Kemant people is assimilated with the neighboring Amhara people and culturally they are not different from those peoples. As a result, as long as the Kemant people lost those distinct characteristics which make them unique from the neighboring Amhara people, they see the claimants as they used right to identity and its recognition as strategic tool to gain access to resources, services, and rewards. In other words, they assume that absence of these objective characteristics also have consequences for the subjective characteristics of the Kemant people.

Accordingly, to delegitimize the question they see those elites who lead the question as individuals who have a contrary position with the existing political administrative system. It means that those concerned bodies hesitated on the willingness of the Kemant people to be declare themselves as member of that ethnic group in general and its position on the questions of right to identity recognition and self-administration in particular.

However, the study finds that at the beginning of the movement it was led by few elites who have the aims of making cognizant the self declared Kemant people on their identity. Since the 1990s the elites strive to gain the general population backup in their quest and to preserve and protect

their identity. The 2007 population and housing census which is responsible to stir the attention of mass Kemant people helps those elites able to gain the support of large number of Kemant people.

All the ordinary peoples, the educated young and adult groups, except some few individuals, identify themselves as member of the Kemant identity group and part of the right to identity recognition and self-administration quest. Accordingly, it is possible to conclude that the 2007 national population and housing census of Ethiopia has contributed a lot in broadening the claim for recognition and self- rule into all sections of Kemant people.

In such a way argument, there are several and factual indicators which indicated the willingness of the Kemant people to declare themselves as Kemant and its solidarity to preserve those distinct characteristics which makes them unique from other ethnic groups of the country. This in turn indicates the question of identity recognition and self-administration is not only the question of few elites rather questions of general Kemant people.

- The first indicator is as solidarity within the group implied by their implicit willingness to preserve their language, culture, religion, and traditions, the Kemant people also unanimous to preserve those distinct characteristics. From such characteristics, the Kemantney language that grouped by some linguistics as ‘endangered’ language is in the process of recovering and rehabilitation. This is because of their effort to preserve and use the language through giving the language education in different Woredas. As a result, the language recovering from its confinement spoken by old age groups who are beyond 60s to use by adult and child age groups.
- The other implication is their willingness to participate and subscribe in the Kemant Development Association (KDA) which helps them to run the program of fulfilling the quest of recognition and self administration claim.
- The people’s willingness also implied by their participation in demonstrations, meetings and other coordinated activities. Since this is observable and factual, some commentators and neighboring Amhara peoples testify on the questions mass public content and the question is not the question of politics rather matter of identity.

- The young and educated elite's effort to activate the issue by being the bridge of the people and the state, and able to produce mass self-declared Kemant people can be also another testimony.
- Finally, for the majority's willingness to the question and their solidarity to identify themselves as member of the Kemant people also assured by the appointment of coordinating committee members by the majority Kemant peoples who are supposed to represent the Kemant people.

Related with the above points, most members of Kemant people struggle for the right to identity recognition and self-administration claim with the attentiveness of their primordial attachments, such as common history, language, culture, and descent.

Accordingly, from theoretical perspectives, the primordial ethnic theory much worked for the current Kemant people to their struggle to identity recognition and self-administration with some instrumentalist and constructivist character.

Thus, there are also individuals both from the activists and ordinary claimants or supporters of the quest, who strives for only the instrumentalist goal; i.e., who intention to gain both political positions and economic benefits with the assertion of self-rule question.

Within them there are also individuals who change their ethnic identity based on situations, and constructs and reconstructs it. Hence, before 2007 population census they identify themselves as Amhara and since then changed their ethnic identity as Kemant to be seem similar with the majority's' position and discourse. But it is impossible to clearly identify the intention of those individuals who change their ethnic identity based on situations. It clashed with their intention to gain both political and economic statuses and advantages (instrumentalist calculation).

The other issue which assessed by the study is the concept of division of interest within Kemant peoples for right to identity recognition and self-administration. As there are individuals who strive to regain the Kemant identity recognition and self-administration right, there are also some individuals who never want to expose themselves as Kemant and hates/ condemn the above quests. However, for such prove, political, social, economic and historical factors can be responsible;

- From social factor the Kemant people experienced the demeaning name which given by some neighboring Amhara peoples by the labeling of Kemants are wood worshipers, Childs of wood and other derogatory name. This is the one which the researcher found as the major responsible factor for those individuals who frustrated and reluctant to identify themselves as member of the Kemant people.
- The second one is the protracted and persistent politico-economic oppressions which forced the Kemant people to deny their identity. Those political and economic factors which have been a root from the monarchical period and stretched to the present one makes the Kemant people subservient with the political systems which forced them to comply with the interest and whim of subsequent political regimes which are against their right to preserve and promote unique characteristics.
- Wrong perception by some members of the Kemant people on the right to identity recognition and self-administration which relegated such questions as questions of secession and against the culture of co-existence and fraternity with the neighboring Amhara people also another factor which forced some members of the Kemant people indifferent to their identity and the quest.
- The researcher also found mixed marriage as another cause for such division of interest and attitude within Kemant people. The long co-existence of Kemant people with the neighboring Amhara people through marriage and other social relationships which have historical roots, the cause for challenging some individuals in their ethnic identification.
- At the last, some individuals also have a strong sense of attachment for their original homeland rather than focusing on mere ethnic affiliations in their identity and self-identification. It means that some members of the Kemant people prefer to identify in their origin from Gondarians rather than mere insistence on having a blood relationship with the Kemant people. Those individuals also interested to strengthen century's co-existence with the neighboring Amhara people and see the quest of identity recognition and self-administration of Kemant people as against that culture.

On the current situation of Kemant peoples, even though they strive more than 20 years for their identity recognition and later self-administration, but except the regional government seems to

accept the existence of Kemant ethnic group, the quests are still never get a positive response both from the regional and the federal government.

Now the HoF is in the process of investigation the issue of Kemant people's right to identity recognition and self-administration claim.

5.7.2. Recommendation

Since several literatures, historical testimonies, the factual distinct characteristics indicates, there have been historical distinct ethnic group who called as Kemant. Accordingly, denying at least the right to identity recognition by wavering on their existence resulted to unfair deprivation of their right to recognition which is against the international human rights law and domestic legal and political commitment of the constitution. Therefore, the HoF which is in the process of investigation of the Kemant case have to give due response for their identity recognition quest.

Moreover, as long as the language, culture, and history of the diversified groups considered as a wealth and resource of a country and sources of innovation, beauty and creativity, both the regional and federal government must facilitate the necessary financial, intuitional and other conducive environments to promote, preserve, and develop the Kemantney language and other distinct characteristics. As article 39(2) states 'Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and to develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history', local, regional and federal government with the cooperation of the claimnats have to implement the constitutional commitment.

Moreover, as other distinct ethnic groups of Ethiopia, since ethnic groups must have a representative and a seat in the federation and regional council, as they are distinct ethnic groups, it also really the just claim of Kemant peoples which needs a response from the HoF.

Both the neighboring Amhara and Kemant peoples claims the two places (Gondar town and Metema Woreda) must belonging to them at the same time and it develops a sense of hostility and unnecessary competition between the two ethnic groups. As a result, if such case doesn't resolved by the concerned bodies in due time may leads to intense conflict and hostility which may resulted lost of individuals' lives and materials destruction, and this is ultimately may a

danger for the building and strength of the federal system in general. The HoF which presently the concerned body on the issue and potentially have a task of resolving issues of neighboring ethnic groups of the country must be umpire the two groups compliant in due time before it escalates.

The other issue which is related with the above concept is within a certain country to make one group as inferior and the other as superior with respect to protection of their rights, creates a sentiment of one group as citizen and the other as groups who seems never follow by the government. Accordingly the government must follow similar standing in implementing the constitutional commitment for the issues of citizens/ groups of a country. Hence, since the constitution of FDRE promises for all nations, nationalities and peoples of the country to promote, preserve and protect unique characteristics of those groups, both the Amhara national regional state and HoF must also protect the rights of Kemant peoples who were eighteenth in the hierarchy of nations and nationalities of the country in 1987 population and housing census.

In the present principle and practice of globalization and liberal democracy the issue of claimants including minorities must be resolved in a democratic and peaceful way, but using other methods other than peaceful dialogue, criminalizes them and using other forceful mechanisms cannot be the last resort for any problem. Hence, at least even the Kemant people without exhaustiveness asks a question of regaining recognition and self-administration more than 20 years and no positive response is rendered by both the regional and federal government, but they must not be prison, harassed and being jobless from their livelihood due to their constitutional and legal claim. In this case the local, zonal and regional governments which are responsible to such faults have to be strategic and subtle in resolving such cases.

From the claimants, the Kemant people can ask their quest of identity recognition and self-administration through legal and constitutional means without exhaustiveness, but using other methods such as riots, destruction of government institutions and other materials may not be the best means to gain a positive reply to their question. In this case both the interim committee and Woreda coordinating committees, front political activists of the quest have a great task in directing the people in the right track and teaching the legal means of requesting.

Furthermore, the Kemant people have to recognize the quest of identity recognition and self-administration is not against the culture and tradition of peaceful co-existence with the

neighboring Amhara people and it never be antithesis with preformed mixed marriage from both the Kemant and Amhara ethnic group. But due to the Kemant people's right to identity recognition and self-administration claim, making a divorce against such mixed marriage and perceiving such quest develops hostility with the neighboring Amhara people disorders the whole social life of individuals in particular, the country's overall development in general. As a result, actors of the quest (committees and active participants), ordinary claimants, religious leaders, and the neighboring Amhara people have to recognize such acts.

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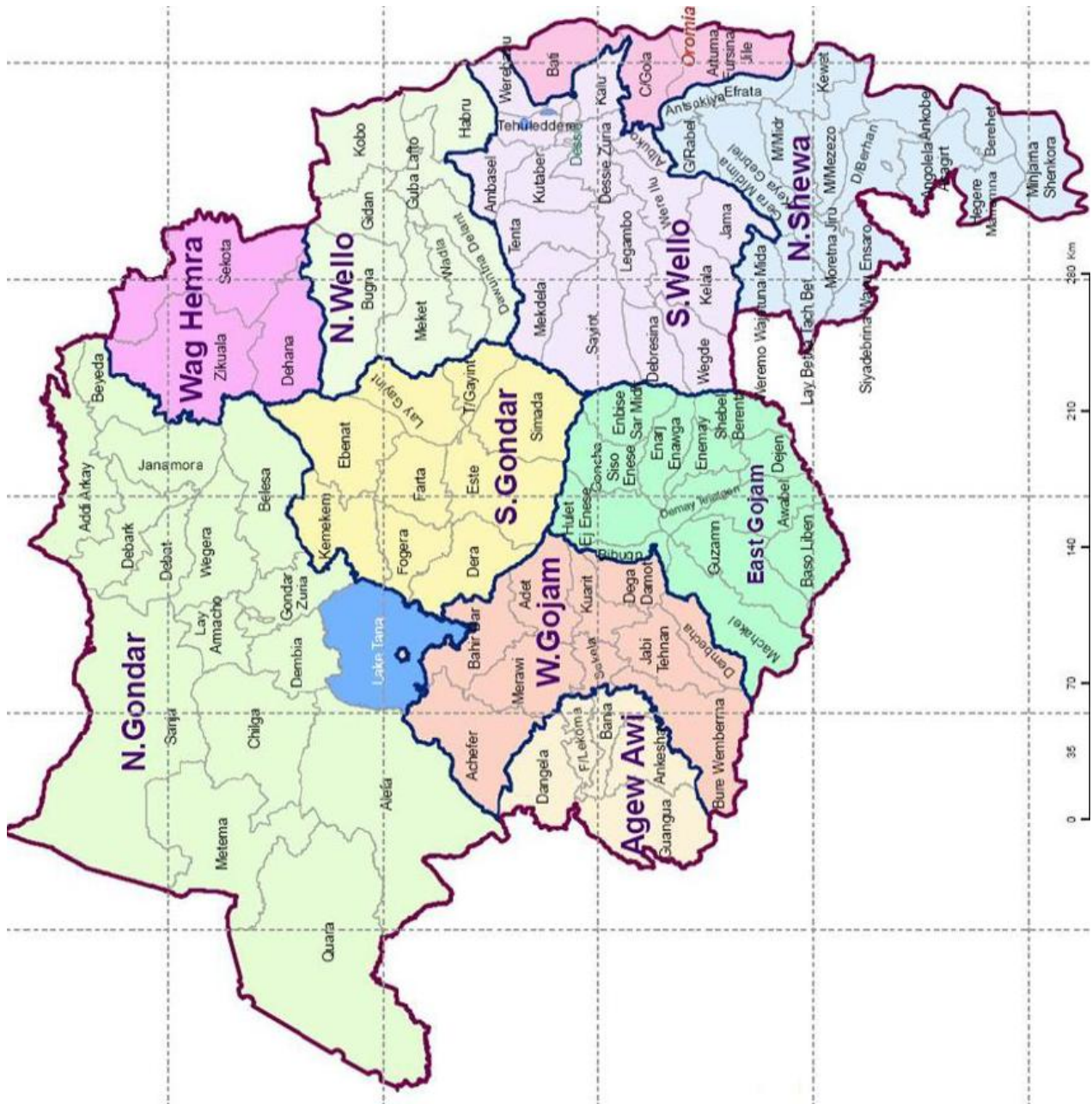
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Appendices 1, Map of the Amhara National Regional State

Source, www.ethiodemographyandhealth.org

Appendices 2, Map of the Current Settlement of Kemant People

Source, the Interim Committee Survey (2004EC)

