Chapter - Four

Independence of Eritrea and its Effects on Indo-Ethiopian Relations
CHAPTER- IV

INDEPENDENCE OF ERITREA AND ITS EFFECT ON INDO-
ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS

4.1. Introduction

Ethiopia is on the same road for democratic development in a pluralistic society that India has traversed. India became the largest investor in Ethiopia. Indian experience in almost every field of development in Ethiopia can be credited whether it is Ethiopia's development goals or the doubling of the capacity building programmes etc. There are different sectors and regions where Ethiopia has cooperated with India. The establishment of the India Business Forum was an effort to bring together India's private sector with the Embassy through public-private partnerships. High level visits by Prime Minister of Ethiopia three times in the last two years and the visits by many Cabinet Ministers and business delegations besides study missions have added new vigor and intensity to the relationship. The number of Ethiopians going to India for education, medical treatment and business has been steadily rising. It is not only Ethiopia and India who are co-operating each other constantly but Eritrea too after independence is getting a helping hand from Indian Government. The education sector of Eritrea has an excellent relation with India. India has been focusing on human resource development since independence. That is one of the main strengths of India, which, one hope would be rubbed off to Eritrea through this collaboration. In 2006, Minister of Eritrean Education Mr. Osman Saleh has visited India and makes agreements with the Indian government in human capacity building. The colonisers before its independence controlled the economy of Eritrea till 1991. Eritrea got Independence in1991 and gradually adopted market economy but interrupted due to the border conflict. (Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.org)

The area comprising Eritrea and Ethiopia has been in periodic conflict for decades and seems primary for resurgence due to drought conditions, economic issues and belligerent claims of land ownership. There are a number of areas along the border between these two states that are currently still at issue. The town of Badme is the critical point of contention since it is conflict in that border area that began the major conflict of 1998 – 2000. This town and others lie in the Tigray region which encompasses the origin of the founding Ethiopian empire, Aksum. The second main front on the border region is around Zalambessa further to the southeast of Badme.
There are very complex ethnicities, histories, and cultures that are in conflict in the region and these fundamental differences are the reason for continued border tensions. Dispute settlement in the region of Ethiopian and Eritrean is ongoing, despite international agreements that define the border. Most recently, the conflict is changing as Ethiopia and Eritrea shift their resources to conflict in Somalia and conduct their dispute by proxy. Current trends toward religious extremism and violence in Somalia are resulting in serious distraction from resolution of the border dispute at the heart of Ethiopian and Eritrean relations. The establishment and agreement of defined boundaries will be the only way for these countries to create a legitimate framework for continued conflict resolution and dissuasion. (Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.org)

Though both were ruled by the Abyssinian Empire, both the Eritrean and Ethiopian territories have varied and distinct histories. Ethiopia was never ruled by a colonial power and has always exercised a degree of self-determination in the region. Eritrea, however, has experienced a variety of occupations and subjugations over the centuries that have only, in the past decade, come to a close. It is important to address these different histories up to the 1950s, when colonial influence waned in Eritrea and the modern struggles began. (Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.org)

4.2. History of Eritrea

Eritrea is an ancient name, associated in the past with its Greek form Erythraia (Greek alphabet ?????a'??a), and its derived Latin form Erythraea. In the past, Eritrea had given its name to the Red Sea and then called the Erythraean Sea. Eritrea officially celebrated its independence on May 24, 1993. Prior to Italian colonization in 1885, what is now Eritrea had been ruled by the various local or international powers that successively dominated the Red Sea region? In 1896, the Italians used Eritrea as a springboard for their disastrous attempt to conquer Ethiopia. Eritrea was placed under British military administration after the Italian surrender in World War II. In 1952, a UN resolution federating Eritrea with Ethiopia went into effect. The resolution ignored Eritrean pleas for independence but guaranteed Eritreans some democratic rights and a measure of autonomy. Almost immediately after the federation went into effect, however, these rights began to be abridged or violated. (www.economicexpert.com)
In 1995 one of the oldest hominids, representing a possible link between Homo erectus and an archaic Homo sapiens was found in Buya, Eritrea by Italian scientists dated to over 1 million years old (the oldest of its kind), providing a link between hominids and the earliest humans. (McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology, 2002) It is also believed that Eritrea was on the route out of Africa that was used by early man to colonize the rest of the Old World. (Walter, Robert C.; Richard T. Buffler, J. Henrich Bruggemann, Mireille M. M. Guillaume, Seife M. Berhe, Berhane Negassi, Yoseph Libsekal, Hai Cheng11, R. Lawrence Edwards, Rudo von Cosel, Didier Néraudeau and Mario Gagnon, 2000-05-04: 60-69)

Furthermore, the Eritrean Research Project Team composed of Eritrean, Canadian, American, Dutch and French scientists, discovered in 1999 a site with stone and obsidian tools dated to over 125,000 years old (from the paleolithic) era near the Bay of Zula south of Massawa along the Red Sea coast. The tools are believed to have been used by early humans to harvest marine resources like clams and oysters. (http://exn.ca/hominids/outofafrica.cfm) Furthermore it is believed that the Eritrean section of the Denakil Depression was a major player in terms of human evolution and may "document the entire evolution of Homo erectus up to the transition to anatomically modern humans." (http://exn.ca/hominids/pleistocenepark.cfm)

Eritrean history is one of the oldest of Africa and even the world. Together with the western Red Sea coast of Sudan, it is considered the most likely location of the land known to the ancient Egyptians as Punt (or "Ta Netjeru," meaning land of the Gods), whose first mention dates to the 25th century BC. The earliest known reference to the Sea of Eritrea (referring to the Red Sea, "Eritrea" meaning "red") from which the modern state takes its name is from Aeschylus in which he refers to the "Mare Erythreum" ("Red Sea") as "the lake that is the jewel of Ethiopia" (though Ethiopia in this case most probably meant Nubia or Africa south of Egypt in general). (http://exn.ca/hominids/pleistocenepark.cfm)

Around the 5th century BC, a kingdom known as Aksum was established in northern Ethiopia and Eritrea, with its capital at Aksum. Its successor, the Kingdom of Aksum, emerged around the 1st century BC or 1st century AD and grew to be, according to Mani, one of the four greatest civilizations in the world, along with China, Persia, and Rome. Central areas of Eritrea and most tribes in today's northern Ethiopia share a common background and cultural heritage.
in the Kingdom of Aksum (and its successor dynasties) of the first millennium (as well as the first millennium BC kingdom of D'mt), and in its Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Church (today, with an autocephalous Eritrean branch), as well as in its Ge'ez language. Around 90 percent of today's Eritreans speak languages (Tigrinya and Tigre) that are closely related to the now-extinct Geez language - as do Tigrinya-speakers in northern Ethiopia and Amharic-speakers of Ethiopia, among others. (http://exn.ca/hominids/pleistocenepark.cfm)

Recent discoveries, in and around the area of Sembel, near the capital Asmara, show evidence of a society that predated Aksum. These permanent villages and towns predate those of southern Eritrea and northern Ethiopia suggesting, according to Peter Schmidt, "...it is they, not sites in Arabia that were the vital precursors to urban developments...likewise students of evolution and distribution of languages now believe that Semitic and Cushitic languages are of African origin." (Greenfield, R., 2001) With the rise of Islam in the 7th century the power of Aksum declined and the Kingdom became isolated, the Dahlak archipelago, northern and western Eritrea, came under increasing control of Islamic powers based in Yemen and Beja lands in Sudan. The Beja were often in alliance with the Umayyads of Arabia who themselves established footholds along stretches of the Eritrean coastline and the Dahlak archipelago while the Funj of Sudan exacted tribute from the adjacent western lowlands of Eritrea. (Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.org)

The culmination of Islamic dominance in the region occurred in 1557 when an Ottoman invasion during the time of Suleiman I and under Özdemir Pasha (who had declared the province of Habesh in 1555) took the port city of Massawa and the adjacent city of Arqiqo, even taking Debarwa, then capital of the local ruler Bahr negus Yeshaq (ruler of Midri Bahri). They administered this area as the province of Habesh. Yeshaq rallied his peasants and recaptured Debarwa, taking all the gold the invaders had piled within. In 1560 Yeshaq, disillusioned with the new Emperor of Ethiopia, revolted with Ottoman support but pledged his support again with the crowning of Emperor Sarasa Dengel. However, not long after, Yeshaq revolted once again with Ottoman support but was defeated once and for all in 1578, leaving the Ottomans with domain over Massawa, Arqiqo and some of the nearby coastal environs, which were soon transferred to the control of Beja Naibs (deputies). The Ottoman state-maintained control over much of the northern coastal areas for nearly three hundred years, leaving their possessions (the province of Habesh, to their
Egyptian heirs in 1865 before being given to the Italians in 1885. In the southeast of Eritrea, the Sultanate of Awsa, an Afar sultanate, came to dominate the coastline after its founding in 1577, becoming vassal to the Emperor of Ethiopia under the reign of Susenyos. (Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.org)

Meanwhile the central highlands of Eritrea preserved their Orthodox Christian Aksumite heritage. "There was no administration that connected Hamasin and Serai to the centre of the Ethiopian Kingdom. Indeed, there was little sense in which the Bahr Negash could be said to "control" the area. (Research and Information Centre on Eritrea, 1984) The parts of the region were under the domain of Bahr Negash ruled by the Bahr Negus. The region was first referred to as Ma'ikele Bahr ("between the seas/rivers," i.e. the land between the Red Sea and the Mereb river), (Taddesse T., 1972: 74), renamed under Emperor Zara Yaqob as the domain of the Bahr Negash, called Midri Bahri (Tigrinya: "Sea land," though it included some areas like Shire on the other side of the Mereb, today in Ethiopia) until the modern day, when its name was changed to Mereb Mellash (beyond the river Mereb) under the rule of Yohannes IV. The locals referred to this area as Midri Bahri (Land of the Sea) as well as Hamasien as it was almost entirely composed of a province with that name (the Hamasien province later shrunk in size during the 19th century to merely surround a 50 km radius around the colonial capital Asmara, with other areas becoming Akkele Guzay and Seraye). Medri Bahri was an area distinguished by a very weak feudal structure, with virtually no serfdom and a strong and democratic landowning peasantry unique for the entire region at this time. (Daniel K., 2005, 17- 18)

The boundaries of modern Eritrea and the entire region were established during the European colonial period between Italian, British and French colonialists as well as the lone landlocked African Empire of Ethiopia which found itself surrounded and its boundaries defined by said colonial powers. Ethiopia was, for a time until the Italian conquest of Ethiopia in 1935, the only independent country in Africa (with the exception of Liberia). The Kingdom of Italy created Eritrea at the end of the nineteenth century, using the classical name for the Red Sea. (Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.org) Until the late nineteenth century, the high plateau of present-day Eritrea was a part of the Ethiopian province of Tigray. Its inhabitants, racially, culturally, and linguistically Tigrayan, were subjects of the Ethiopian crown, whereas the surrounding lowlanders were for the most part independent. The boundaries of modern Eritrea were established during the period of Italian colonization that began in
the late 1800s. An Italian shipping company, Rubatinno Shipping, purchased the port of Assab from a local ruler. In turn, the Italian government took over the port in 1882, hoping to use Eritrea as a launching point for the colonization of Ethiopia. (Country Profile, 2005: 1-2)

The Italian presence in the Horn of Africa was formalized in 1889 with the signing of the Treaty of Wuchale with Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia (1889–1913), although Menelik would later renounce the agreement. For the next half-century, relations between Ethiopia and Italy, despite intermittent diplomatic agreements, were strained by repeated Italian efforts to expand their colonial base into Somali territory and Ethiopia, most notably in 1896, when Ethiopia defeated the Italian army in Tigray. Italian administration of Eritrea brought improvements in the medical and agricultural sectors of Eritrean society. Furthermore, the Italians employed many Eritreans in public service (in particular in the police and public works departments) and oversaw the provision of urban amenities in Asmara and Massawa. In a region marked by cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, a succession of Italian governors maintained a notable degree of unity and public order. Benito Mussolini’s rise to power in Italy in 1922 brought profound changes to the colonial government in Eritrea. The Fascists imposed harsh rule that stressed the political and racial superiority of Italians. Segregation was established, and Eritreans were demoted to menial positions in the public sector. Although Rome continued to implement agricultural reforms, these took place largely on farms owned by Italian colonists. The Fascist dictatorship regarded the colony as a strategic base for future aggrandizement and ruled accordingly. True to form, Italy used Eritrea as a base from which to launch its 1935–36 campaign to colonize Ethiopia. (Country Profile, 2005: 1-2)

Although Italian colonization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gave Eritrea its boundaries, Eritrean separatism as a political goal had its roots in World War II. British forces defeated the Italian army in Eritrea in 1941 at the Battle of Keren and placed the colony under British military administration until Allied forces could determine its fate. Absent agreement among the Allies about the status of Eritrea, British administration continued for the remainder of World War II and into 1950. In the immediate postwar years, the British proposed that Eritrea be divided along religious lines and parceled off to Sudan and Ethiopia. The Soviet Union, anticipating a communist victory in the Italian polls, initially supported returning Eritrea to Italy under trusteeship or as a colony. Arab states, seeing Eritrea
and its large Muslim population as an extension of the Arab world, sought the establishment of an independent state. In the absence of Allied agreement, and in the face of Eritrean demands for self-determination, a United Nations (UN) commission was dispatched to the former colony in February 1950 in the hope of finding a solution. The commission proposed the establishment of some form of association with Ethiopia, and the UN General Assembly adopted that proposal along with a provision terminating British administration of Eritrea no later than September 15, 1952. The British, faced with a deadline for leaving, held elections on March 16, 1952, for a Representative Assembly of 68 members, evenly divided between Christians and Muslims. This body in turn accepted a draft constitution put forward by the UN commissioner on July 10. On September 11, 1952, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia (1930–74) ratified the constitution. The Representative Assembly subsequently became the Eritrean Assembly. (Country Profile, 2005: 2)

The details of Eritrea's association with Ethiopia were established by the UN General Assembly resolution of September 15, 1952. It called for Eritrea and Ethiopia to be linked through a loose federal structure under the sovereignty of the emperor. Eritrea was to have its own administrative and judicial structure, its own flag, and control over its domestic affairs, including police, local administration, and taxation. The federal government, which for all intents and purposes was the existing imperial government, was to control foreign affairs (including commerce), defense, finance, and transportation. As a result of exposure to Italian and especially British methods of governance and political life, Eritreans had developed a distinct sense of cultural identity and superiority vis-à-vis Ethiopians, and a desire for political freedoms alien to Ethiopian political tradition. From the start of the federation, however, Haile Selassie attempted to undercut Eritrea's independent status, a policy that alienated many Eritreans. The emperor pressured Eritrea's elected chief executive to resign, made Amharic the official language in place of Arabic and Tigrinya, terminated the use of the Eritrean flag, imposed censorship, and moved many businesses out of Eritrea. Finally, in 1962 Haile Selassie pressured the Eritrean Assembly to abolish the federation and return to the imperial Ethiopian fold, much to the dismay of those in Eritrea who favored a more liberal political order. (Habte Selassie, B., 1989)
4.3. The Armed Struggle for Independence

Militant opposition to the incorporation of Eritrea into Ethiopia had begun in 1958 with the founding of the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM), an organization made up mainly of students, intellectuals, and urban wage laborers. The ELM engaged in clandestine political activities intended to cultivate resistance to the centralizing policies of the imperial state. By 1962, however, the ELM had been discovered and destroyed by imperial authorities. (Country Profile, 2005: 3)

Emperor Haile Selassie unilaterally dissolved the Eritrean parliament and annexed the country in 1962. The war continued after Haile Sellassie was ousted in a coup in 1974. The Derg, the new Ethiopian government, was a Marxist military junta led by strongman Mengistu Haile Mariam. (Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.org)

Even as the ELM was being neutralized, a new organization of Eritrean nationalists was forming. In 1960 Eritrean exiles in Cairo founded the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). In contrast to the ELM, from the outset the ELF was bent on waging armed struggle on behalf of Eritrean independence. The ELF was composed mainly of Eritrean Muslims from the rural lowlands on the western edge of the territory. In 1961 the ELF's political character was vague, but radical Arab states such as Syria and Iraq sympathized with Eritrea as a predominantly Muslim region struggling to escape oppression and imperial domination. These two countries therefore supplied military and financial assistance to the ELF. (Country Profile, 2005: 3)

The ELF initiated military operations in 1961 and intensified its activities in response to the dissolution of the federation in 1962. By 1967 the ELF had gained considerable support among peasants, particularly in Eritrea's north and west, and around the port city of Massawa. Haile Selassie attempted to calm the growing unrest by visiting Eritrea and assuring its inhabitants that they would be treated as equals under the new arrangements. Although he doled out offices, money, and titles in early 1967 in the hope of co-opting would-be Eritrean opponents, the resistance persisted. By 1971 ELF activity had become enough of a threat that the emperor had declared martial law in Eritrea and had deployed roughly half his army to contain the struggle. Internal disputes over strategy and tactics, however, eventually led to the ELF's fragmentation and the founding in 1972 of another group, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). The leadership of this multiethnic movement came to be dominated by leftist, Christian dissidents who spoke Tigrinya, Eritrea's predominant

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language. Sporadic armed conflict ensued between the two groups from 1972 to 1974, even as they fought Ethiopian forces. (Country Profile, 2005: 3) By the late 1970s, the EPLF had become the dominant armed Eritrean group fighting against the Ethiopian Government, and Isaias Afewerki had emerged as its leader. Much of the material used to combat Ethiopia was captured from the army. (Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.org)

In September 1974, a group of Ethiopian military officers deposed the emperor and established a military government in Addis Ababa known as the Derg, which allied itself with the Soviet Union. The Derg immediately turned its attention to the Eritrean question. Some in its ranks pressed for a decisive military solution, while others favored a negotiated settlement. Influential Derg nationalists, like the imperial regime, endorsed the ideal of "Greater Ethiopia," that is, a unitary, multiethnic state, and eventually decided to continue to use force in dealing with Eritrean secessionists. In response, the ELF and EPLF maintained their struggle for Eritrean independence. (Country Profile, 2005: 3-4)

By 1977 the EPLF was poised to drive the Ethiopians out of Eritrea. However, that same year a massive airlift of Soviet arms to Ethiopia enabled the Ethiopian Army to regain the initiative and forced the EPLF to retreat to the bush. Between 1978 and 1986 the Derg launched eight unsuccessful major offensives against the independence movement. In 1988 the EPLF captured Afabet, headquarters of the Ethiopian Army in northeastern Eritrea, putting approximately a third of the Ethiopian Army out of action, prompting the Ethiopian Army to withdraw from its garrisons in Eritrea's western lowlands. EPLF fighters then moved into position around Keren, Eritrea's second-largest city. Meanwhile, other dissident movements were making headway throughout Ethiopia. At the end of the 1980s the Soviet Union informed Mengistu that it would not be renewing its defense and cooperation agreement. With the withdrawal of Soviet support and supplies, the Ethiopian Army's morale plummeted, and the EPLF, along with other Ethiopian rebel forces, began to advance on Ethiopian positions. In 1980 the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal determined that the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination does not represent a form of secession. (Research and Information Centre on Eritrea, 1984)

Armed conflict between the Derg and (mostly) the EPLF continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s, with neither side able to score a decisive victory. In particular, the EPLF stronghold of Nakfa in northern Eritrea withstood repeated assaults by the
Ethiopian army. Beginning in March 1988, however, a series of offensives against demoralized Ethiopian forces eventually led to EPLF control of all Eritrea by late May 1991. At the same time that the EPLF was defeating the Ethiopian army in Eritrea, Tigrayan and allied rebel forces took over northern Ethiopia and drove the Derg from power. (Country Profile, 2005: 4)

4.4. Response of India

Both India and Eritrea are developing countries. India as a leader of Third world made a huge stride in human resource development and agriculture development where as Eritrea, a young nation still striving hard to develop these areas and thus achieve self reliance. In line with this, Eritrea has been using Indian human resources, as part of its capacity building in education, agricultural and other related areas. An attempt is made in this article to compare Eritrean situation and with some of the Indian experiences and also provide some implications for the policy development in Eritrea. India is a developing country and focuses on area of human resource development and capacity building. Eritrea’s main aim is to achieve fast economic growth and self-reliance. India became self-sufficient in food in the late 70s. By the time India introduces reform in 1991, it had a huge pool of human resources. It is absolutely imperative to have the human resources in order to manage technology, agricultural machines, scientific applications etc. Even the use of foreign aid needs human resources. It is to be noted that within the developing world, India is a good model and many developing countries particularly from Africa can learn a lot to from its rich and varied experiences. India was agriculturally backward on the eve of independence.

The first five-year plan (1951-1956) of India was more focused on agriculture and power projects. The second five-year plan (1956-1961) laid great emphasis on industrialization (Ahluwalia, 1985). India wanted to be self-reliant, achieve rapid economic growth, and dispense social and economic justice to the people. The successive colonisers before its independence controlled the economy of Eritrea till 1991. Eritrea got Independence in 1991 and gradually adopted market economy but interrupted due to the border conflict (Rena, 2004). The fact is that Eritrea has the large population below poverty line. It was estimated that the level of poverty in rural Eritrea has increased as compare to India where the rate is less than 25 per cent. It is to note that the Ministry of Education, Eritrea is hiring a great number of professors,
associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers and teachers from India to teach at the colleges, institutions at tertiary level and schools. It is observed that more than 800 teachers are teaching at various colleges, vocational training centers and high schools in Eritrea. Surprisingly, about 80 percent of the faculty in the newly established Eritrea Institute of Technology is Indians. And there are agricultural scientists, and other technical experts in different domains have been working in Eritrea for many years. Further, there are some Eritrean students studying in India for their B.A., MA/MSc., Ph.D degrees. One feels that this helps a lot in human resource development of Eritrea. And, of course, many Indian teachers have been involved in Eritrea since the 1960s even before its independence. It is to be noted that Indian teachers have educated many leaders of Eritrea including the president Isaias Afwerki and some ministers. The education sector of Eritrea has an excellent relation with India. India has been focusing on human resource development since independence. That is one of the main strengths of India, which, one hope would be rubbed off to Eritrea through this collaboration. In 2006, Minister of Eritrean Education Mr. Osman Saleh has visited India and makes agreements with the Indian government in human capacity building. It is observed that the Indian community promotes goodwill and understanding among people in Eritrea. They are the bridge that makes the two countries come close together. The contribution for the Indian community is very important. The Indian community living here contributes a lot to the economy of the country. Large number of Eritrean is going to India for education, business, tourism etc. This contact between the two peoples is a great contribution for the enhancement of the relation between the two countries. India has managed to develop a modern agricultural sector within a short period of time after the advent of Green Revolution in mid 1960s. (Rena, Ravinder. 2006)

4.5. Eritrea as Sovereign State

Eritrea is located along the Red Sea, north of the Horn of Africa, between Djibouti and Sudan. Eritrea’s longest border is shared with Ethiopia to the south.
A former Italian colony, Eritrea was occupied by the British in 1941. In 1952 the United Nations resolved to establish it as an autonomous entity federated with Ethiopia as a compromise between Ethiopian claims for sovereignty and Eritrean aspirations for independence. However, 10 years later the Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie, decided to annex it, triggering a 32-year armed struggle. This culminated in independence after an alliance of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) and a coalition of Ethiopian resistance movements defeated Haile Selassie’s communist successor, Mengistu Haile Mariam. In 1993, in a referendum supported by Ethiopia, Eritreans voted almost unanimously for independence, leaving Ethiopia landlocked. The two countries hardly became good neighbours, with the issues of Ethiopian access to the Eritrean ports of Massawa and Assab and unequal trade terms souring relations. In 1998 border disputes around the town of Badme erupted into open hostilities. This conflict ended with a peace deal in June 2000, but not before leaving both sides with tens of thousands of soldiers dead. A security zone separates the two countries. The UN patrolled the zone at one time but pulled out, unable to fulfill its mandate. The unresolved border issue compounds other pressing problems. These include Eritrea’s inability to provide enough food; two thirds of the population receives food aid. Moreover, economic progress is hampered by the proportion of Eritreans who are in the army rather than the workforce.

**Full name:** The State of Eritrea  
**Area:** 124,320 sq km (including Dahlak archipelago)  
**Population:** 5.6 million (CIA, 2009 est)
Eritrea’s topography can be divided into three broad categories: the arid, narrow lowland strip along the Red Sea; the north-central region, which is an extension of the Ethiopian Plateau and is dissected by river valleys; and the western plain along the Sudanese border. The highest point is Emba Soira, southeast of Asmara, at 3,010 meters; the lowest is in the Denakil Depression along the Red Sea, which at places is 130 meters below sea level. The total area of Eritrea, including the Dahlak archipelago off Massawa, is 124,320 square kilometers. Eritrea shares a 1,626-kilometer border with three nations: Sudan to the north and west (605 kilometers), Ethiopia to the south (912 kilometers), and Djibouti to the southeast (109 kilometers). (Country Profile, 2005: 4)

Population:
According to the United Nations, in 2004 Eritrea’s population reached 4.3 million, with an annual growth rate of 2.6 percent. Twenty percent of Eritreans lived in urban areas, which experienced an average annual growth rate of 5.8 percent between 2000 and 2005. Population density was 36.7 persons per square kilometer, with the greatest concentration in the highlands and the lowest along the Red Sea littoral. At the end of 2004, nearly 120,000 Eritreans were refugees abroad, mostly in Sudan. (Country Profile, 2005: 6)
**Demography:**
In 2004, 44.8 percent of the population (male 998,404; female 993,349) was less than 15 years of age, 51.9 percent (male 1,140,892; female 1,166,481) was 15–64, and those aged 65 and older accounted for 3.3 percent of the population (male 72,776; female 75,405). In the overall population, there were 0.99 males for every female. The number of births per 1,000 population was 39; the number of deaths, 13.4. The infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births was 75.6. The total fertility rate was 5.7 children born per woman. Life expectancy at birth was estimated at 52.7 years (51.3 years for men, 54.1 years for women). (Country Profile, 2005: 6)

**Ethnic Groups:**
The Eritrean government recognizes nine major ethnic groups in Eritrea, although the ethnic and linguistic context is complex. The Tigray and Tigre-speakers (such as the Mensa, the Marya, and others) constitute 80 percent of the population. The other seven groups are the Afar (Denakil), Bilen, Beni Amir (Beja), Kunama, Nera (Nara, Barya), Rasha’ida, and Saho. (Country Profile, 2005: 6)

**Religion:**
No reliable figures on religious affiliation are available, but approximately half of the Eritrean population is Sunni Muslim, and some 40 percent, Orthodox Christian. The remainder includes Eastern Rite and Roman Catholics, Protestants, smaller numbers of Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses, and a few Baha'is. Approximately 2 percent of the population practices traditional indigenous religions. Muslims are the majority in the eastern and western lowlands, whereas Orthodox Christians predominate in the highlands. The government recognizes five religious groups—Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, and the Evangelical Church of Eritrea (affiliated with the Lutheran World Federation), and since May 2002 has attempted to proscribe all other forms of religious practice. (Country Profile, 2005: 7)

**Education and Literacy:**
Education in Eritrea is officially compulsory between seven and 13 years of age. However, the education infrastructure is inadequate to meet current needs. Statistics vary at the elementary level, suggesting that between 39 and 57 percent of school-aged children attend primary school; only 21 percent attend secondary school.
Student-teacher ratios are high: 45 to 1 at the elementary level and 54 to 1 at the secondary level. There are an average 63 students per classroom at the elementary level and 97 per classroom at the secondary level. Learning hours at school are often less than four hours per day. Skill shortages are present at all levels of the education system, and funding for and access to education varies significantly by gender (with dropout rates much higher for girls) and location. Illiteracy estimates for Eritrea range from around 40 percent to as high as 70 percent. (Country Profile, 2005: 7)

Health and Welfare:
Eritrea remains one of the poorest countries in the world. About one-third of the population lives in extreme poverty, and more than half survives on less than US$1 per day. Health care and welfare resources generally are believed to be poor, although reliable information about conditions is often difficult to obtain. In 2001, the most recent year for which figures are available, the Eritrean government spent 5.7 percent of gross domestic product on national health accounts. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that in 2004 there were only three physicians per 100,000 people in Eritrea. The two-year war with Ethiopia, coming on the heels of a 30-year struggle for independence, negatively affected the health sector and the general welfare. The rate of prevalence of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), although low by sub-Saharan African standards, was high enough at 2.7 percent in 2003 to be considered a generalized epidemic. In the decade since 1995, however, impressive results have been achieved in lowering maternal and child mortality rates and in immunizing children against childhood diseases. In 2003 average life expectancy was slightly less than 53 years, according to the WHO. (Country Profile, 2005: 7)

Economy Overview:
In the early 1950s, when Eritrea was awarded to Ethiopia, it possessed a far more sophisticated urban and industrial infrastructure than Ethiopia. Industrialization in the years since then focused on Ethiopia, however, at the expense of further development in Eritrea. By the time of its independence from Ethiopia in 1993, Eritrea’s economy had been destroyed by war and was dependent on income from ports and its small agricultural base. (Country Profile, 2005: 7- 8)

Since independence from Ethiopia on 24 May 1993, Eritrea has faced the economic problems of a small, desperately poor country. Like the economies of many
African nations, the economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture, with 80 percent of the population involved in farming and herding. The Ethiopian-Eritrea war in 1998-2000 severely hurt Eritrea's economy. GDP growth fell to zero in 1999 and to -12.1 percent in 2000. The May 2000 Ethiopian offensive into northern Eritrea caused some $600 million in property damage and loss. The attack prevented planting of crops in Eritrea's most productive region, causing food production to drop by 62 percent. Even during the war, Eritrea developed its transportation infrastructure, asphalting new roads, improving its ports, and repairing war damaged roads and bridges. Since the war ended, the government has maintained a firm grip on the economy, expanding the use of the military and party-owned businesses to complete Eritrea's development agenda. Erratic rainfall and the delayed demobilization of agriculturalists from the military kept cereal production well below normal, holding down growth in 2002-04. Eritrea's economic future depends upon its ability to master social problems such as illiteracy, unemployment, and low skills, and to open its economy to private enterprise so the diaspora's money and expertise can foster economic growth. (www.eritreaeconomy.com)

The onset of conflict with Ethiopia in 1998 halted all bilateral trade, severely reducing port activity and income in Eritrea. According to World Bank estimates, Eritrea lost US$225 million worth of livestock and 55,000 homes during the war. Damage to public buildings is estimated at US$24 million. The end of hostilities with Ethiopia was followed by consecutive years of drought, which together have crippled the agricultural base. The impact of these problems is softened only by remittances from abroad, which are estimated to account for 32 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). As of 2005, Eritrea is one of the poorest countries in the world. More than half of the population lives on less than US$1 per day, and about one-third lives in extreme poverty (defined as subsisting on less than 2,000 calories per day). Although the Eritrean government has stated its commitment to adoption of market-based economic policies in the long run, authorities are increasingly reliant on centrally planned economic management. In general, the government produces few consistent and reliable statistics on economic activity. (Country Profile, 2005: 7-8)

In 2003 GDP was estimated to have grown by 2 percent, a slight improvement over 2002, the last year for which firm figures are available, when GDP expanded by 1.8 percent in real terms to about US$600 million. Despite the growth, GDP per capita declined in 2003 by 10 percent in real terms, according to the International
Monetary Fund (IMF). Although in 2001 GDP grew by 10.2 percent, this increase came on the heels of 2000, when, as a consequence of war with Ethiopia, GDP contracted by a staggering 13.2 percent. Growth in 1999 was flat at 0.3 percent growth. Between 1994 and 1997, when relations with Ethiopia and the rest of the world were stable, GDP growth averaged 7 percent. In 2004, according to IMF estimates, GDP per capita in Eritrea was only US$130. Breakdowns of the Eritrean economy by sector are not readily available; however, according to some estimates, in 2003 services accounted for 62.4 percent of GDP, industry for 25.3 percent, and agriculture for the remaining 12.4 percent. (Country Profile, 2005: 8)

Figure 4.1

GDP Composition by sector (2004)

![GDP Composition by sector](image)

Source Author with the help of country Profile, 2005

4.10.8. Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing:
In 2003 agriculture employed nearly 80 percent of the population but accounted for only 12.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in Eritrea. The agricultural sector is hampered by the absence of modern farming equipment and techniques, erratic rainfall, exhausted soils, and lack of financial services and investment. Major agricultural products are barley, beans and lintels, dairy products, meat, millet, skins, sorghum, teff, and wheat. The displacement of 1 million Eritreans as a result of the war with Ethiopia, multi-year drought, and the widespread presence of land mines all have played a role in the declining productivity of the agricultural sector. Currently, almost a quarter of the country's most productive land remains unoccupied because of the lingering effects of the 1998–2000 war with Ethiopia. In 2005 domestic food production is expected to provide for less than 20 percent of domestic demand and
will leave between 1.7 and 2.2 million people dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet basic food needs. (Country Profile, 2005: 8-9)

Forestry is not a significant economic activity in Eritrea, and reliable figures on the extent and value of the fishing industry in Eritrea are difficult to obtain. However, Eritrea's long coastline clearly offers the opportunity for significant expansion of the fishing industry from its current, largely artisanal, stage. Eritrea exports fish and sea cucumbers from the Red Sea to markets in Europe and Asia, and there is hope that the construction of a new, jet-capable airport in Massawa, as well as rehabilitation of the port there, may support increased exports of high-value seafood. In 2002 exports were about 14,000 tons, but the maximum stable yield is thought to be nearly 80,000 tons. Italian and Dutch investors built a fish processing plant in 1998 that now exports 150 tons of frozen fish every month to markets in Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands. Tensions with Yemen over fishing rights in the Red Sea flared up in 1995 and again in 2002, and Eritrea's difficult relations with other nations could hamper further development of the industry. (Country Profile, 2005: 9)

Mining and Minerals:
Eritrea's substantial mineral deposits are largely unexplored as a consequence of the war with Ethiopia. According to the Eritrean government, artisanal mining in 1998 collected 573.4 kilograms of gold. Eritrea is estimated to have some 14,000 kilograms of total gold reserves. Western observers also have noted Eritrea's excellent potential for quarrying ornamental marble and granite. As of 2001, some 10 mining companies (including Canadian and South African firms) had obtained licenses to prospect for different minerals in Eritrea. The government of Eritrea reportedly is in the process of conducting a geological survey for use by potential investors in the mining sector. The presence of hundreds of thousands of land mines in Eritrea, particularly along the border with Ethiopia, presents a serious impediment to future development of the mining sector. (Country Profile, 2005: 9)

Industry and Manufacturing:
During the period of federation, industrial capacity largely shifted to Ethiopia, leaving the Eritrean industrial sector with outmoded capital equipment. In 2003 industry accounted for 25.3 percent of gross domestic product. Major products include processed food and dairy products, alcoholic beverages, glass, leather goods, marble, textiles, and salt. (Country Profile, 2005: 9)
Government and Politics Overview:

Eritrea is a one-party state. Elections have been postponed repeatedly, and reforms called for in the constitution, ratified in 1997, have yet to take place. In March 1994, the Provisional Government of Eritrea established a Constitutional Commission. The resulting constitution was introduced in 1997, one year later than planned. Although the constitution has been ratified, it has yet to be fully implemented, and general elections have not been held, despite the ratification of an election law in 2002. The Eritrean constitution calls for legislative, executive, and judicial branches. According to the constitution, a 150-seat unicameral legislature, the National Assembly, decides internal and external policy, approves the budget, and elects the president of the country. However, the National Assembly has not met since 2002, and many of its members are either in prison or have fled the country. Legislative as well as executive functions are now exercised by President Isaias Afwerki. The president's cabinet, the executive branch of the government, has 17 ministers, all appointed by the president. Civilian and military zonal administrators also are appointed by the president. The judiciary consists of three court systems: civilian, military, and special courts. Civilian courts include community courts, sub-regional courts, regional courts, and the High Court, which also serves as an appellate court. (Country Profile, 2005: 13)

Foreign Relations:

When Eritrea gained independence in 1993, it enjoyed good relations with its regional neighbors and the goodwill of the international community. A little more than a decade later, Eritrea is increasingly isolated from its neighbors and the international community. Eritrea’s relations with Ethiopia are strained by territorial disputes and relations with Sudan, by political problems. Relations with Yemen warmed considerably in 2004, when President Isaias visited Sana, and the two countries concluded agreements in areas such as cultural exchanges, security, and trade. Although relations with European nations, including Italy, Germany, Norway, and the Netherlands, have been close in the past, they have chilled in the wake of the Eritrean government’s crackdown on internal dissent in 2001 and the closure of the independent press. At present, relations with the United States focus on resolving the border dispute with Ethiopia and cooperation on counterterrorism. Relations with Ethiopia, once close and mutually beneficial, are extremely tense, as the border
The dispute between the two nations has yet to come to a full and peaceful resolution. (Country Profile, 2005: 14)

The Eritrean National Alliance (ENA) is a 3,000-strong organization of 10 opposition groups. It was established in Khartoum in 1999, in part as an attempt by Sudan to retaliate against Eritrean support for the National Democratic Alliance, a Sudanese opposition group. The following groups belong to the ENA: the Eritrean Liberation Front, the Eritrean People's Conference, the Eritrean Islamic Salvation Movement, the Eritrean Liberation Front-Revolutionary Council, the Eritrean Liberation Front-National Council, the Eritrean People's Democratic Liberation Front, the Eritrean Revolutionary Democratic Front, the Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Kunama/Eritrea, the Eritrean Democratic Resistance Movement Gash-Setit, and the Eritrean Initiative Group. These groups are a mix of liberation organizations marginalized during the struggle for independence, ethnically based groups, and the Sudan-sponsored Eritrean Islamic Salvation Movement (Eritrean Islamic Jihad). All are based in Sudan, from where some stage occasional and mostly ineffectual raids into western Eritrea. The strength of another group operating in Eritrea, the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization, currently is unknown. (Country Profile, 2005: 16)

According the U.S. State Department, Eritrea is a one-party state in which presidential and legislative elections have been repeatedly postponed, the judiciary is weak, and constitutional provisions for democratic freedoms have yet to be implemented. Western observers characterize the Eritrean government's human rights record as poor, and note that it continues to commit serious abuses. Security forces are responsible for unlawful killings, and there are persistent reports of torture and physical abuse of prisoners. Arbitrary arrests and detentions continue, and an unknown number of persons have been detained without charge for their political views. In general, freedom of speech and the press are severely constrained, and freedom of assembly, association, movement, and religion also are restricted. Discrimination and violence against women remain social problems, and the practice of female genital mutilation is widespread. Social discrimination against members of the Kunama group continues, as do government restrictions of workers' rights. (Country Profile, 2005: 16)
Capital City: Asmara
People: Tigrinya 50 percent, Tigre 35 percent, Afar 4 percent, Saho 3 percent, Kunama 3 percent
Main language(s): Tigrinya, Tigre, Arabic and English
Religion(s): 50 percent Christian (Coptic, Catholic and Protestant), 50 percent Muslim
Currency: Nakfa (replaced the Ethiopian Birr in 1997) fixed exchange rate 15 to 1 US$ (2009)
Main exports: Livestock, hides, sorghum, textiles, salt, and light manufactures
GNI per capita: US $300 (World Bank, 2008)
Life expectancy: 57 years (men), 62 years (women) (UN)
President: Isaias Afwerki
Foreign Minister: Mr Osman Saleh
Membership of international groupings/organisations: United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) (temporarily suspended), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). (Country Profile, 2008)

4.7. External Situation
The average value of the Nakfa vis-à-vis the US dollar in 2004 was 13.8. The country is a net importer and foreign exchange reserves in 2004 were USD 33 million, which is less than one month of import cover.

Figure 4.2: Eritrean Foreign Exchange Reserves
![Eritrean Nakfa Versus US Dollar](source: www.eritreaeconomy.com)
National Security Armed Forces Overview:
Following its independence from Ethiopia in 1993, the Eritrean government planned armed forces strength of around 30,000. By the late 1990s, the armed forces had grown to 50,000 troops, and with the start of hostilities with Ethiopia, the army expanded dramatically, to nearly 300,000. A demobilization of about 50,000 soldiers took place in 2003, although aggressive efforts to round up men aged 18 to 40 who were avoiding national service continued as lingering tensions with Ethiopia failed to reach a peaceful resolution. Eritrea still has the second largest army in Africa. According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, an estimated 1 million antipersonnel mines remain in Eritrea, approximately 400,000 of which were laid by Eritrean and Ethiopian forces during the 1998–2000 conflict. (Country Profile, 2005: 15)

Foreign Military Relations:
Eritrea’s government generally is not favorably disposed to multilateral institutions, and relations with neighboring Ethiopia and Sudan are poor. Eritrea has had a close security relationship with China since independence. In early 2005, security cooperation with Yemen began with the signing of a joint security agreement and the creation of a joint ministerial committee. U.S. military cooperation with Eritrea, suspended during the war with Ethiopia, has resumed on a modest basis. (Country Profile, 2005: 15)

4.8. Eritrea Ethiopia History up to Colonialism
The area comprising Eritrea and Ethiopia has been in periodic conflict for decades and seems prime for resurgence due to drought conditions, economic issues and belligerent claims of land ownership. There are a number of areas along the border between these two states that are currently still at issue. The town of Badme is the critical point of contention since it is conflict in that border area that began the major conflict of 1998 – 2000. (Michael J. Jacobs and Catherine A. Schloeder. 2001)

This town and others lie in the Tigray region which encompasses the origin of the founding Ethiopian empire, Aksum. The second main front on the border region is around Zalambessa further to the southeast of Badme. There are very complex ethnicities, histories, and cultures that are in conflict in the region and these fundamental differences are the reason for continued border tensions. Dispute settlement in the region of Ethiopian and Eritrean is ongoing, despite international
agreements that define the border. Most recently, the conflict is changing as Ethiopia and Eritrea shift their resources to conflict in Somalia and conduct their dispute by proxy. Current trends toward religious extremism and violence in Somalia are resulting in serious distraction from resolution of the border dispute at the heart of Ethiopian and Eritrean relations. The establishment and agreement of defined boundaries will be the only way for these countries to create a legitimate framework for continued conflict resolution and dissuasion. (Mebrat Ezehaie. "History of Eritrea")

Eritrea lies along the Red Sea in the northernmost area of the region known as the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia, however, is landlocked and has no direct access to any sea ports. As neighbors, they share some of the oldest archaeological discoveries in the world. These discoveries lie in the region of Tigray, now a province of Ethiopia, and historically a territory in both Eritrea and Ethiopia. The famed skeleton of Lucy, the Australopithecus Aferensis, was in fact found in this region. Influence over the region was directed from the Tigray capital of Axum and trade was conducted with the Arabian Peninsula by way of a port city, now called Zula, in Eritrea. In the 16th century, the Abyssinian Empire arose from Tigray and the whole of Eritrea and Ethiopia became subject to Abyssinian rule. Abyssinian rule of Eritrea was challenged at times, most notably by Ottoman and Egyptian powers, but generally speaking, Abyssinia ruled the whole of these regions for centuries. As indicated by this Rand McNally map from 1897, both Ethiopia and Eritrea were considered to be Abyssinian at the turn of the 20th century. (Wikipedia "History of Ethiopia")

During the long reign of Abyssinia, religion became an important influence and divided the empire. The Eritrean and Ethiopian cultures split into Semitic/Christian in Ethiopia and Muslim in Eritrea. These divisions should not be oversimplified and it must be understood that no two regions were then, or are now, exclusive in their religious composition. Broadly speaking, the highlands of Eritrea were occupied by the Christian elements while the lowlands where inhabited by the Muslim populations. Ethiopia, however, is one of the oldest Christian civilizations and to this day has one of the oldest Jewish communities. In order to understand the current conflicts and allegiances in the region today, the religious divide must be considered.
4.9. The Federation Era

After Ethiopia adopted Eritrea as a federated unit in 1952 with the support of the United Nations, Eritreans could not help being concerned with their new situation. Ethiopia had a long history of enslaving and abusing the populace of Eritrea and people did not see the new federation as a benevolent arrangement. The Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia ensured his tight control of the new federation by appointing relatives as the first three governors. A variety of oppression measures were taken in the federation. Eritrean political parties were banned, freedom of the
press was disallowed and teaching in indigenous languages was forbidden and replaced with the Amharic language of Ethiopia. In the face of protests and boycotts, the Ethiopian government dissolved the federation and annexed Eritrea, declaring it to be the 14th province of Ethiopia. (Mebrat E., 2003)

Maps of Disputed Border Region

Map: 4 Western Border Region

Eritrea indicating Green line
Ethiopia indicating Pink line
The battles between Ethiopia and Eritrea were thought to be over for nearly a decade when things took a turn for the worse. In May of 1998 Ethiopians moved into the Badme region on the border and evicted thousands of Eritreans from their settled lands. Eritrea responded by sending a small contingent of military officers to the region, unarmed, in order to discuss the situation. These soldiers were summarily shot and the war had begun. This conflict was much more severe and deadly than any of the previous conflict. This was due to many factors. (www.globalsecurity.org)

In May 1998 Eritrea moved its forces into territories previously administered by Ethiopia, thereby precipitating a border clash that rapidly escalated into a full-scale, brutally devastating war between the two countries. (Cornwell, R., 1998: 62-
Attempts to resolve the conflict and reinstate peace started the very same month with a four-point peace plan initiated by the governments of the United States and Rwanda. Although Ethiopia accepted the plan on 4 June 1998, Eritrea did not, disappointed by the request made in the peace plan for the withdrawal of its forces to their pre-May positions. The first peace effort therefore failed, and the war continued, unhindered, into the following months. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 1) The intensity of the war increased steeply following both countries’ decision to launch air raids. On 5 June 1998, Eritrea attacked Mekele (capital of the Regional State of by air with cluster bombs causing the death of 50 civilians, among them a number of school children. (www.dehai.org) Ethiopia retaliated by bombing the airport at Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, and on 11 June of the same year Eritrea bombed Adigrat. (www.metimes.com)

On 14 June 1998, the government of the United States finally persuaded the two belligerents to agree on a moratorium on air raids. (www.metimes.com) Brokered by President Bill Clinton and later accepted by the two sides, this moratorium required Ethiopia and Eritrea to “halt immediately the further use of air strikes and the threat of air strikes in their present conflict.” However, the advances of the Ethiopian forces in the February 1999 and later in the May 2000 offensives were greatly assisted by the use of air power, with devastating consequences. Had the air-strike moratorium been strictly adhered to in the subsequent fighting, it would have dramatically affected the course of the war. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 2)

In the following months, although fighting subsided and the peace effort continued, no agreement was reached. On 8th November 1998, during the “Ethiopia-Eritrea Peace Summit” that was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) adopted a proposal for a peaceful settlement of the dispute, requiring the withdrawal of forces from occupied territories. Ethiopia accepted the proposal while Eritrea requested clarification on certain matters. On 6 February 1999, fighting (including air raids) erupted at Badme and was subsequently extended to all three fronts. Later in the month Ethiopia recaptured Badme in what was dubbed “Operation Sunset”. The next day, Eritrea informed the United Nations (UN) Security Council that it had accepted the OAU peace plan. (www.metimes.com) Ethiopia later requested clarification on the seven-point “Modalities for the Implementation of the OAU Framework Agreement” adopted by the 35th Regular Session of OAU Heads of States and Governments in Algiers on 14 July 1999. After a 13 month lull, Ethiopia
launched a major offensive on 13 May 2000, in contravention of the peace efforts in which so many concerned parties (including the OAU, the US and the UN) had been engaged. In response, Eritrea attempted a “strategic retreat” from a number of occupied territories, later withdrawing altogether. This retreat ushered in another phase of the peace effort, with informal talks between the two sides beginning in Algiers. To add momentum to the peace talks, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi declared during the early stages of the talks (14 May 2000) the end of the Ethiopia-Eritrean war, though fighting in fact continued for ten more days inside Eritrea. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 2)

It was within this context that the OAU put forward its proposal on the cessation of hostilities on 9 June 2000. This was immediately accepted by Eritrea and somewhat later, on 14 June 2000, by Ethiopia. The two countries signed the OAU’s “Cessation of Hostilities Proposal” on 18 June 2000. This proposal called for the deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission (under the auspices of the OAU) along a 25 km temporary security zone (TSZ) and their pre-May 1998 positions. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 2)

This ceasefire marked the beginning of the end of the two-year border war and paved the way for a final and comprehensive agreement between the two sides. What was finally born out of this was the Algiers Peace Accord. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 2)

4.11. Prospects for Future

The end of the two-year Eritrea-Ethiopia war with the signing of the Algiers Accord was a cause for celebration among the people of the two countries. It brought hope that, with the settlement of the border issue, the relationship between them would once again normalise and take a peaceful path. This would involve the gradual resumption of diplomatic relations, communication, trade and the opening up of the border. For such normalisation to happen, continuous and genuine political dialogue and measures of trust building are essential. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 8)

Initially, there were signs of normalisation. Both countries released and repatriated prisoners of war under their control under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The number of land routes opened to facilitate movement in the disputed areas by members of the UN Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE) increased. The two sides also held a high-level military
coordination meeting in a gesture that was seen as a symbol of genuine commitment to peace. De-mining the border areas also went ahead, with fair cooperation between the two countries and few difficulties. Ethiopia even went so far as to commence demobilisation of its troops by sending off 400 veterans of the war to their homes on 31 December 2000, immediately following the Algiers Accord. But these developments have not been backed by other confidence building measures. Indeed, in some ways they are in stark contrast to other developments that negate the peace process. There is therefore also the other side of the balance sheet. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 8)

The media in both countries have not stopped beating the drums of war, and continue with their wartime propaganda. The “Voice of the Broad Masses”, Eritrea’s official radio, still attacks the government in Addis as if the war was still going on. It is also not uncommon to hear the Eritrean government referred to by the Ethiopian media as Shabia, a derogatory term that harks back to the times of the war of independence. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 8)

The word “enemy” has not been dropped from their language. The two governments are also engaged in a (more official) war of words, the one accusing the other of disturbing the peace process. Since the Algiers Accord in December 2000, the two governments have made no effort to initiate political dialogue, an important step for agreeing on constructive and lasting solutions. Three years after Algiers, relations between the two countries remain unimproved and are practically non existent. This leaves a sufficient gap for further disagreements. Legwaila, Head of UNMEE, has warned that “the status quo” (a reference to the stand-off between the two countries) “complicates the relation” because “when you don’t talk to each other, misunderstandings can lead to conflict.” (www.irinnews.org)

In fact, the situation between the two governments is worse than a simple absence of communications. There have been negative developments that inhibit the possibility of resuming the normalisation process. Ethiopia closed its embassy in Asmara in 2003. It is also well known that each government is supporting opposition groups that seek to oust the other’s regime. In July 2003 a foreign affairs and national security policy document debated by top government officials in Addis Ababa revealed that Ethiopia would follow a closed door policy towards Eritrea until there was a change of government and policy in that country. “From the Ethiopian side”, the document says, “it would not cause any considerable negative
impact on our principal aims, if the two countries manage to last for a long time without going to war and also without building any relations”. (www.irinnews.org)

Although some officials opposed this approach, it seems that this was the dominant view expressed in the document. (www.ethiopianreporter.com)

Eritrea responded with a warning. Information Minister Ali Abdu Ahmed was quoted as saying that “talk of regime change is tantamount to declaring aggression.” (www.irinnews.org) The two countries’ failure to normalise relations has had considerable consequences. Despite the claim that “it would not cause any considerable negative impact on our principal aims, if the two countries manage to last for a long time without going to war and also without building any relations,” observers affirm that Ethiopia’s cost of port service has increased tremendously since the border war, as the country lost its most direct and “historic” outlet to the sea. The conflict has also placed strain on Eritrea. An IMF report reveals that the border conflict with Ethiopia drastically affected the performance of the Eritrean economy, which lost Ethiopia as the largest destination for its exports and as its main source of earnings from its now idle ports. Moreover, the level of foreign currency reserves in the country is declining. (www.news.bbc.co.uk)

The continuing animosity between the two governments also has spill-over effects on the relationships between the people of the two countries. Obviously, it deepens the rift created by the bloodshed of the war. Families are still divided, with no certainty that they will meet again. People on both sides cannot visit, trade, telephone or communicate via the postal services. Their efforts to come to grips with their grief and pain are inhibited and their desire to live together in the future is being thwarted. This has increased people’s bitterness and hopelessness, particularly those whose families are divided, who have been forced to leave their homes or who depend on the relations of the two countries for their livelihood. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 9)

Furthermore, since the redeployment of UN forces along the 25 km buffer zone, there have been reports of incursions. The UN has revealed that there have been five shooting incidents involving the Ethiopian armed forces. (www.irinnews.org) Eritrea is no less guilty on this count. There have been shootings at different times involving Ethiopian herdsman and five Italians. Besides, both countries still maintain their troops along their common border. Some estimate that approximately 40,000 Eritrean soldiers and 35,000 Ethiopian soldiers are stationed along the northern and
southern boundaries of the TSZ. (www.news.bbc.co.uk) Incidentally, it is observed that Eritrea refrained from demobilizing its 300,000 soldiers in the wake of the border war. (www.news.bbc.co.uk)

It is not just the physical presence of the two sets of armed forces that highlights the risk of another conflict. The will to use these forces exists and both sides have constantly emphasised the need to be on guard. The foreign affairs and national security policy document discussed by the Ethiopian government in July 2003, while affirming the “considerable price paid by Ethiopia for the bitter conflict” emphasises that “Ethiopia should strengthen its standing and reserve army”. (www.irinnews.org) Eritrean President Isaias Afeworki has been no less threatening. In his Independence Day speech he said, “We find ourselves at a cross-road between a war that has come to an end, but that appears unfinished.” And he added, “We cannot afford to be caught off-guard again. We cannot be complacent and relax over vigilance”. (www.news.bbc.co.uk)

So far the presence of UN forces along the borders has prevented the two sides from finding pretexts for resorting to military engagement, but this will obviously not continue indefinitely. The mandate of the UNMEE will eventually come to a close, and by the time the UN withdraws from the borderlands, it is reasonably feared that, at the least, sporadic armed conflict will fill the gap. As the head of UNMEE has observed: Imagine the last (border demarcation) pillar is planted, the United Nations is withdrawn, the two parties are still polarised, they still don’t like each other, and they are still not talking to each other; that endangers peace between them. (www.un.org)

Part of the reason for this state of affairs is the pride or nationalism of the two governments. (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2004) This is apparent in the claim by the government in Addis Ababa that it will do no harm for Ethiopia to remain apart from Eritrea, and in Eritrea’s assertion that “Ethiopia does not exist in Eritrean government’s national economic development strategy.” (www.irinnews.org) Of course, this could also be a reflection of the pre-existing rivalry and antagonism between the EPLF and TPLF, the precursors of the regimes in Asmara and Addis Ababa respectively. (International Institute for Strategic Studies, Strategic Review 1998/1999: 243)
Some commentators prefer to explain what Kofi Annan recently called the “cold peace” between Ethiopia and Eritrea in terms of the familial nature of the relationship between the two countries. (www.irinnews.org)

Both sides feel that the conflict is a result of betrayal by the other, which is difficult to settle, particularly when it is between “family members”. Stein Villumstad, for example, says the following: family conflicts, emotions run high. In many ways the peoples of the two countries are one family, and they are very close. There is a combination of bitterness of why this has to happen, and towards the heavy burden the war has put on them as people – “why between brothers?” (www.irinnews.org)

A further dimension is that many Ethiopians feel that Ethiopia has born a greater burden as a result of the post-independence arrangements than Eritrea. Ethiopia has lost its outlet to the sea. Eritrea has been able to use Ethiopia’s currency, Birr, without an agreed monetary policy, and this has allowed each to employ differing exchange controls in which Ethiopia has come off worst. (Cornwell, 1998: 62-63) Then, too, Eritreans living in Ethiopia have enjoyed more privileges than the Ethiopian citizenry. People with Eritrean IDs were able to move in and out of Ethiopia freely, without being hampered by bureaucratic demands for visas applications and foreign currency payments. (Woreda, Irob, 2003: 671) For most Ethiopians this was far from a comfortable arrangement. When war finally broke out, most Ethiopians experienced a sense of betrayal. Eritrea, for its part, had its own disappointment when it introduced its national currency, Nakifa, and Ethiopia refused to allow Nakifa to be traded at parity with the Ethiopian Birr. (Cornwell, 1998: 63)

Yet it also seems that the two countries have not yet recovered from their “informally” settled divorce. As much as the conflict between the two countries was a result of issues left unsettled by the divorce, the ongoing friction in the aftermath of the bloody war can as readily be explained by it. (Gwexe, S. G., 2001: 2-5)

The importance of political dialogue cannot be over-emphasised. It is the only way for the parties to hammer out their differences and shape compromise. This is why the stand-off between the two countries is so disturbing. The silence between them is not just a “cold peace” but is a confrontational one. Alarmed by this confrontational silence, the Security Council has emphasised that “political dialogue between the two countries is crucial for the success of the peace process and the consolidation of progress made thus far.” But how to push the two countries towards
the path of political dialogue continues to challenge those involved. (www.irinnews.org)

Speaking at the signing ceremony of the Algiers Peace Accord, Madeline Albright, then the United States Secretary of State, said “those who lived through the ravages of war may once again reap the benefits of peace”, adding that “now it falls to us, the international community, to help them do so.” Now, after three years, reaping the “benefits of peace” seems illusory. The international community has focused on maintaining the ceasefire between the two governments and seems to believe that demarcation of the controversial borders will produce peace. This approach is manifested in Kofi Annan’s urging of the two countries “that they proceed with the expeditious demarcation of the border.” The bill backed by four US congressmen to cut development and military aid to the two countries as a penalty for failure to speed up the demarcation process is a further manifestation of this approach. (www.irinnews.org)

But there seems to be no attempt to establish whether such an approach is adequate to deliver the promised peace in the region. Clearly, speedy demarcation of the borders alone is not enough. No less important is the political atmosphere and the normalisation of relations. A sine qua non of easing the strained relations is political dialogue; and if there is anything to be learned from the three years since the end of the war, it is that the two sides are unlikely to resume talks on their own initiative. This is where the international community, and particularly the guarantors of the peace process, have utterly failed to deliver their promise. (International Institute for Strategic Studies, Strategic Review 1998/1999, p: 265) It is important that they should use the means at their disposal to push the two sides to talk. Indeed, creating a forum for the two countries to resume talks would be preferable to insisting on the physical demarcation of the borders as the next step. (www.news.bbc.co.uk)

The internal dynamics of the two countries also need to be looked into. There is much resistance and anger on the part of some sections of the Ethiopian population. This cannot and should not simply be ignored. It must be approached rationally and with caution, and assistance and encouragement by the international community are needed to help the government and other actors to deal with it. The role that civil societies and religious institutions in both countries could play in this regard should also be taken into account and promoted. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 11)
4.12. Restoring Peace

The peace effort aimed at ending the Ethiopian-Eritrean border war came to a successful conclusion when Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a comprehensive agreement in the Algerian capital on 12 December 2000. The official signature by the belligerents of the Algiers Peace Accord, was attended by prominent international diplomats and world leaders, including UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim, and US Secretary of State, Madeline Albright – a clear indication of the concern of members of the international community. The Algiers Accord was, in fact, a remarkable achievement. Many of the diplomats and world leaders who attended the ceremony expressed their appreciation and called the Accord a model treaty. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed his hope “that other leaders will look to this day and this agreement and find the wisdom to end their own wars”. (www.addistribune.com) The two-year war that it brought to an end had been enormously destructive: tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians lost their lives, caught in the heat of the battlefield fires. Even more people were forced to endure the misery of fleeing their homes. Hundreds of millions of dollars that could have been used to further the development endeavours of both countries were poured into the procurement and acquisition of high-tech weaponry. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 3)

Among other things, the accord provided for an investigation into the incidents of 6 May 1998 (and other incidents prior to that date), believed to have led to the conflict in the first place. (Article 5 of the Algiers Agreement) In addition, the accord provided for the establishment of two commissions: the Border Commission, which was charged with the task of demarcating the international border; (Article 4 of the Algiers Agreement) and the Claims Commission, which considered claims for damages suffered by both countries. (Article 5 of the Algiers Agreement) In view of current events, the clause stipulating the mandate of the Border Commission is particularly important. According to Article 4(2), the Border Commission was mandated to delimit and demarcate the contested borders based on pertinent colonial treaties (1900, 1902, and 1908) and applicable international law. However, by attaching primacy to these colonial treaties, this provision relegated other considerations of evidentiary value to a status of negligible importance. The stipulation under Article 4(15) that the border demarcation to be determined by the international Border Commission “shall be final and binding” is also significant. This
legally precludes resistance by either party to any possibly detrimental outcome of the Commission’s decisions. In fact, this put the government in Addis in a seemingly no-exit situation when the Border Commission decided to place the symbolic town of Badme – where the war first flared up – within the Eritrean border. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 3)

As a result, voices of scepticism and discord were heard well before the ink of the two leaders’ signatures was dry. The Eritrean Foreign Minister said, at the time, that the Ethiopian administration “should not be trusted”, having in the past “evaded its commitment to agreements”. Reflecting similar mistrust, the Ethiopian military was advised to “remain ever vigilant to safeguard a sovereign Ethiopia”. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 3) Statements such as these casts a shadow over the process of reconciliation that was expected to follow the Peace Accord. As Kofi Annan warned, “it is not enough to silence the guns, silencing the guns alone does not mean peace. As we embrace peace, build trust and work for reconciliation, we should remember that words can inflame or sooth. Our words and actions must, therefore, reinforce the peace agreement we signed today”. (www.addistribune.com)

The tragic and costly war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which was brought to an end by the Algiers Peace Accord, could well re-ignite unless there is some fairly deft diplomatic intervention by the international community. A return to the battlefield is in neither of these two states’ interests, objectively speaking, especially in the light of their current economic problems and the need to address one of the worst famines in years, but such considerations do not always carry the day. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 1)

At present, it seems unlikely that the task of demarcating the two countries’ mutual border, as delimited by an independent international commission, can proceed. Under present circumstances, Ethiopia’s government cannot go back on its rejection of the commission’s findings without being seen by an increasingly jingoist public as selling out on an issue of national and symbolic importance. The beleaguered government of Eritrea also sees in this matter a way of deflecting attention from its failure to open the domestic political space, and as a means to mobilise international opinion in its support. In such a situation wise counsels will be hard put to succeed in receiving a hearing, so emotionally loaded has the dispute become. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 1)
4.13. Demarcating the Borders

The most important component of the Algiers Peace Accord consisted in the demarcation of contested borders on the basis of colonial treaties. (International Institute for Strategic Studies, Strategic Review 1999/2000, p 258) The contested territories were Om Hager/Humera in the west; Badme and the Yirga Triangle around Sheraro, between the Mereb and the Tekeze Rivers; Tsorena and Zalambesa north of Adigrat; Alitena and Irob; Bada and the Northern Dankalia Depression; and Bore on the road to Assab. It was expected that the delimitation and subsequent demarcation of these borders would finally settle the disagreement between the two sides. The Boundary Commission comprised five members. It held a series of meetings and received testimony from both sides. The announcement of its decisions was postponed twice: it was originally to have been made in February, was postponed to March 16 and the findings were finally released on 13 April 2002 from The Hague, where it was situated. The 125 page document defined the 1000 km borders of the two countries afresh. There was much initial confusion about the results of the Commission’s rulings. At first, both countries claimed victory. The Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Seyoum Mesfin, announced at a press conference carried by Ethiopian Television that the disputed territories would remain part of Ethiopia. President Isaias Afeworki, for his part, said Badme would revert to Eritrea. Badme was mentioned by name only twice in the 125 pages of the “Regarding Delimitation of the Border” decision. Moreover, Badme did not feature on the new map, and instead a straight line was drawn from the confluence of the Setit and Tomsa Rivers to the confluence of the Mereb and Mai Ambessa Rivers. (www.news.bbc.co.uk) The BBC commented that “the legal ruling is sufficiently obscure to allow both countries to claim victory”. (www.addistribune.com) In fact, however, the ruling stated that the Commission did not find the evidence of administration of the area adduced by Ethiopia as “sufficiently clear in location, substantial in scope or extensive in time” to displace the Eritrean title over the territory. (www.news.bbc.co.uk)

Ethiopia lodged a request for “interpretation, correction and consultation” with the Border Commission on 13 May 2002. The request touched upon matters that went to the very essence of the decision. The Commission, therefore, observed in its decision of 24 June 2002 that “the Ethiopian request appears to be founded on a misapprehension regarding the scope and effects of Article 28 and 29 of the Commission’s Rules of Procedure. ... The concept of interpretation does not open up
the possibility of appeal against a decision or the reopening of matters clearly settled by a decision”. The Commission accordingly found the Ethiopian request inadmissible and ruled that no further action would be taken in response to it. Ethiopia has nevertheless continued to insist on the need to make changes to the border decision. Although it was agreed, as part of the Algiers Accord, that the decision of the Border Commission would be “final and binding”, Ethiopia’s opposition to the border ruling and its attempts to secure changes have intensified. Ethiopia is particularly disappointed with the decision to put the symbolic town of Badme within the Eritrea border. This flows partly from the conviction that the decision regarding Badme is erroneous and partly from the strong opposition to the decision on the part of different segments of the Ethiopian population. (Report on Eritrea-Ethiopian Boundary Commission Decision, 2002)

The Border Commission has felt it necessary to defend its decision as follows: Maps submitted by Ethiopia were inconsistent as to location of Badme village. Overall, the evidence was nothing like what might have been expected had Ethiopia’s presence there in the period before the case been as significant as Ethiopia now alleges. The Commission would note that what is relevant here is governmental and not private activity. The references to Ethiopian governmental control of Badme and its environs were insufficient to persuade the Commission that an Ethiopian presence west of the line from point 6 to 9 would support a departure from the line that had crystallised by 1935.

The border decision is only the first step in the delimitation and demarcation process. It will only be with the physical demarcation of the border that the process will actually end. So far, two commencement dates for demarcation (in May 2003 that was pushed forward to July 2003, and in October 2003) have passed without explanation or responsibility being attributed to either party. Many observers have in fact pondered whether any deadline will be met and, if so, whether the physical demarcation will proceed smoothly, with no serious difficulty. It had already been anticipated by the Border Commission that the process could face further delays: “This schedule is dependent on various critical factors being met on time to enable key milestones to be achieved”. (www.irinnews.org)

Taking into account Ethiopia’s seemingly intransient position against the border ruling, no one is prepared to say with certainty that any deadline will finally be met. Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, has branded the ruling “wrong and
unjust”. Ethiopia also feels that its request for change has fallen on deaf ears. Thus Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin has denounced the Commission for “belittling” Ethiopia’s call to amend the newly delimited 1000 km border between the two countries. (www.irinnews.org)

By September 2004, Meles Zenawi openly referred to the ruling as a “blatant miscarriage of justice”. Later, in a letter to the UN, Zenawi warned that “the Commission seems to continue its disastrous stance whatever the consequences to peace in the region”. As a result, the Commission announced that it was unable to demarcate the border under “current circumstances”. (www.irinnews.org)

Not surprisingly, the strongest opposition to the decision to place Badme within Eritrea comes from the Regional State of Tigray, which currently administers the town of Badme. The President of Tigray, in his annual report to the State’s Council in July 2003, has described the border ruling as “dangerous” and warned that trouble could flare up if the ruling is not changed. (www.irinnews.org)

This hard-line position against the ruling is apparent in the view of the Speaker of the Regional State, Dr Solomon Inqui, who is adamant that “they [officials from the independent Boundary Commission] cannot come. We will not let them. Nobody in their right mind will let them demarcate”. (www.irinnews.org)

Of course, as the Acting Information Minister of Eritrea has said, “it is with the Federal Republic of Ethiopia that the state of Eritrea signed the Algiers Agreement.” For legal purposes, what the officials of Tigray pronounce on the demarcation process does not count. The truth of this is undeniable, but it is also an oversimplification. The current government in Addis Ababa is dominated by the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), which has its origin and strongest base in Tigray. It cannot therefore be expected that the Federal Government’s position will not be influenced by the sentiments of the Tigray officials. The demarcation process faces opposition not just from the politicians. Members of the Badme community have vowed not to cede an inch of territory to Eritrea, (www.waltainfo.com) and the town’s administration goes even further, saying that it is willing to defy the Federal Government in order to retain Badme and other implicated territories. This position is further strengthened by the reconstruction work taking place, in which some $2 million has been invested. Two schools are under construction, water points are being installed and 400 new houses are to be built. These facts clearly threaten the demarcation process in general and its imminent commencement in particular. Of
course, if demarcation were to be forced under such circumstances, it would be naïve not to anticipate that Badme would ignite another clash between the two countries. (Dersso, Solomon A., 2004: 3)

Eritrea and Ethiopia both had large capacity to wage war due to the buildup of military assets over their previous conflicts and they brought all these assets to bear over the next two years. Military assets were not limited to military ground vehicles or shoulder fired missiles, but also included air forces on both sides. Even with some advanced material to wage the war, the conflict had a strong resemblance to WWI warfare. Trenches were dug for defensible positions and numerous regions along the 800 kilometer front experienced brutal conflict. There were approximately 300,000 troops involved in total and there was a huge displacement of civilians as the conflict raged. Hundred of thousands of Eritreans were displaced due to the insurgent movements of Ethiopia and many suffered death. It is estimated that over 100,000 Ethiopians and approximately 30,000 Eritreans died during this conflict. Due to the well trained forces of Eritrea from the previous conflicts, and familiarity with the territory, Ethiopia suffered a much higher rate of fatalities. Population displacement numbered in the hundreds of thousands and many are still displaced today. A peace agreement was reached in 2000 and the boundary commission completed a plan by 2002. Unfortunately, Ethiopia was not willing to abide by the boundary commission decisions. (www.globalsecurity.org)

Although the conflict is technically concluded, there are a variety of indications that this is not the case. There are still currently United Nations peacekeepers in the Badme region along the border zone. There were reports in late 2006 that Eritrean troops had made military moves into the contested border regions. Although there has been no response of international note, it is a bold move on behalf of the Eritrea. Even with these moves, however, the real threat is the proxy conflict that appears to be developing in the Somalia region. Somalia has long been an unstable region and is closely watched by the U.S. State Department because of ties to terrorist activities. A fundamentalist Islamic surge has pushed the moderate leadership to far western positions in Somalia and the predominantly Christian nation of Ethiopia has understandable concerns. Eritrea, however, welcomes the change toward Islamic leadership and is backing the power-grab of the fundamentalist factions. As both Eritrea and Ethiopia pour weapons and support into Somalia, so too do other nations such as Iran, Syria, Sudan, and other Islamic regimes. The conflict over the Eritrean
and Ethiopian border could wait in the wings until developments in Somalia create a more advantageous environment for aggression. (www.globalsecurity.org)

4.14. The Effects of Eritrea-Ethiopia on border dispute

It is very difficult as well as impossible for us to assess the effects of the border disputes. The loss of human lives, the displacement of a large number of people, and the impact on economies are the major effects which can be evaluated from the unsettled Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict – a most unfortunate war that is said to be a result of border dispute.

Map 6: Eastern Border Region

Eritrea: Green line
Ethiopia: Pink Line

An assessment and relatively balanced figures on the repercussions of the war, has been required through a proper and probably lengthy study, including access to government documents in both countries and the cooperation of officials. In general terms, however, it is clear that if it is allowed to continue the war then it will have a devastating effect on the people of the two countries. Based on the experience of the
past two years, one might also argue strongly that this unexpected war has deeply affected both day-to-day interactions and general social relationships between the people of two countries, so badly that deep seated hostility has reached a point that may be difficult, if not impossible, to reverse.

One cannot deny the existence of the tensions and resentments towards each other that have been present since the inception of the very idea of a separate state of Eritrea. During the 1980s - which marked the intensification of the armed struggle between EPLF/TPLF and the former dictatorial regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam - various hostile elements (including the distortion and misrepresentation of events and the history of Ethiopia, and quite disparaging statements directed at both Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian historians), were used as tools to gain sympathy and assistance from the international community with the overall goal of achieving an independent state of Eritrea and helping the TPLF to take power in Addis Ababa. In the same period, both EPLF and TPLF worked successfully to gain not only sympathy but also the financial, material and moral support they needed from the West. Later, the early 1990s, with “new leaders” in Ethiopia and Eritrea – at the time, regarded as role models for African leadership – marked a dramatic revival of diplomatic and economic relations with the west. (Gubena M., 2007: 1-2)

To lead a peaceful life it is important to plan thoughts for the future direction of the countries and people. That is, without developing the sort of vision that is an indispensable part of leadership, things cannot get settled down. There is no need to disclose to their public the animosity towards each other. They said they had taken power because they wanted to free their people from endless conflicts and from the yoke of military dictatorship; to bring an accelerated economic prosperity; and to make people in the region happy and proud of their countries and themselves.

Nevertheless, Ethiopians remain unconvinced. Instead, they resisted from the beginning, in an attempt to make their views clear to the international community. There was opposition to the arrangements and agreements between the two regimes in Asmara and Addis Ababa, as well as to the ethnic policies of the Ethiopian government. Since the change of power in Ethiopia that coincided with the independence of Eritrea, Ethiopians, especially the Amhara, have become outcasts, rarely given higher level governmental responsibilities and kept in the dark regarding arrangements between the two countries. In fact, little or no information was given to “outsiders”. Ethiopians who were worried about the new directions being taken in
Ethiopia were constantly accused by the regimes in Addis Ababa and Asmara, and also by donor countries and major NGO communities, of either being associated with Mengistu’s regime or of regretting the loss of power by the Amhara, who had been in power throughout most of Ethiopia’s history. (Gubena M., 2007: 2- 3)

After fighting as hand and glove with TPLF against Mengistu’s regime, Eritreans (living both in Ethiopia/Eritrea and abroad) had at least a brief period in which they could enjoy freedom of movement. Also they, rather than Ethiopians, held the highest governmental and non-governmental positions in Ethiopia. They also had the privilege of advising and helping the TPLF (then called the Ethiopian Transitional Government) to craft strategies and policies in an effort to keep Ethiopians out of Ethiopia’s national and international activities and affairs. As can be seen from speeches and papers presented by Eritreans at many conferences devoted exclusively to Ethiopia, as well to the media in Africa, Europe and the United States, Eritrean intellectuals and professionals indeed behaved as the uncontested official representatives of Ethiopia. Eritreans today probably regret the many roles they played on behalf of the government of Ethiopia during the early 1990s. It is becoming clear that their behavior was not based on a rational assessment and a responsible attitude towards the future wellbeing of the people of these two countries. (Gubena M., 2007: 2- 3)

Apart from protesting about human rights issues, Ethiopian intellectuals and professionals, on the other hand, produced little or no effective efforts to organize an effective, operational and respected voice capable of embracing Ethiopians and their issues. It is unfortunate that no effort was made to create and use such a vital and indispensable force, capable of linking the energy, knowledge, skills and expertise of Ethiopians living at home and throughout the international community. It is probably not wrong to see the past 15 or 20 years as a missed opportunity. The past two decades have been experienced by Ethiopians as a period of humiliation, characterized by a drastic reduction in the status of Ethiopia and Ethiopians in the international community - with increasing dependence on the outside world and external charities. Unfortunately many Ethiopians have spent this painful period mainly haggling with each other over largely irrelevant matters such as the future leadership of social and political groupings or organizations. (Gubena M., 2007: 4)

One of the frustrating factors that contributed greatly to the inability of opposing Ethiopian groups to form and shape a united force capable of challenging
the regimes in Addis Ababa and Asmara has been the open handed support provided by western countries to both Ethiopia and Eritrea, while little or no attention was given to Ethiopians with opposing views. Western governments were eager to assist the two leaderships because they were convinced they could do business with them. Long-term political stability in Ethiopia and Eritrea was expected. The presence and the active involvement of the United States were more obvious than that of other countries and its financial assistance, especially to Ethiopia, was said to be quite substantial. US–Ethiopia relations, however, were not limited to diplomatic relations and economic assistance. The United States was actively and publicly engaged in strengthening and shaping a combined regional force involving Uganda and the two countries that were now in conflict with each other. This was aimed at weakening and replacing the Islamic government of Sudan with “moderate” individuals or groups willing to work cooperatively with the west and embrace its economic models. It is also believed that, despite internal tensions and human rights violations, the IMF and the World Bank were and probably still are more open to lending large amounts to the Ethiopian government than to other governments in the region. Yet despite the involvement of donor countries and the provision of substantial financial and military support, and the wide-spread presence of western institutions and NGOs (the latter were largely in Ethiopia), it would be wrong to assume that donor countries were interested in the general well-being of the people, the issues facing rural people and the urban poor of the two countries. In fact it was evident that foreign powers had little or no interest in helping to craft a reliable framework or final agreements regarding Eritrean independence that would have been conducive to a lasting peace. There was also little interest in the many other issues related to future relations and cooperation between the two countries. Since the change of power in May 1991, as far as one can recall, no single western country or department official has shown any concern for human rights violations in either country. No concern was shown when thousands of Ethiopians were forced into exile; when those few Ethiopian public figures who managed to escape Mengistu’s seventeen years of terror were forced to languish (some have already lost their lives) in prison because their views differ from those in power. To convince the world, government officials call their victims criminals. They say these people have been jailed because of criminal activities. Government officials display weapons (secretly placed by government representatives in the backyard or house of a political opponent of the regime) to journalists and the
media. Meanwhile Ethiopians have continuously attempted to make the international community aware of Ethiopians who have been killed or jailed and kidnapped or are victims of political repression by the governments in Addis Ababa and Asmara. Multiple sorts of evidence, including lists of names of victims of human rights violations, have periodically been presented to various western ministerial departments and concerned major western institutions and NGOs by national and international human rights organizations. The leaders of donor countries, however, remain reluctant to become involved; they have kept a deaf ear to the daily cries of Ethiopians. (Gubena M., 2007: 4-5)

Despite the persistent outcry of Ethiopians regarding massive human rights violations, the present leaders seem to have had the power to convince both diplomats and the rest of the international community, saying it was their predecessors who committed inhuman acts; but they themselves claim to be the backbone of human rights organizations. And despite what must have been longstanding and growing animosity, both leaders were also capable of creating the impression for the outside world that their mutual friendship and cooperation would last for generations. Just three weeks before the official outbreak of war, when foreign journalists asked if he were aware of tensions and anxieties between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, indicated that he saw such rumors and gossip as the talk and dreams of enemies, of those who have nothing better to do than spread rumors. He said they were jealous of Ethiopia–Eritrea, and their strong and immovable friendship built on the basis of brotherhood and respect for each other. But this wasn’t true. The two leaders were engaged in making fools of us. The deep-seated animosity that had existed for many years became too much to cover up. It exploded in May 1998, spreading throughout the two countries in a highly accelerated fashion. Many friendly donor counties reacted to this news with surprise and disbelief. For the United States, the outbreak of the war was more than disappointing—it was a slap in the face. But for the INF government in Khartoum, the news was received with relief; it expressed its joy by simply saying “you see, Allah is always with us.” Inside sources stated that, because the hate and hostile attitudes towards each other were so strong and had built up over many years, the war between the two leaders will not come to a peaceful end. They added that a peaceful resolution of the conflict would definitely affect the existing power structure and in fact the very chance of survival of
each leadership. Thus, the two leaders must insist on maintaining the current course, at least their war of words. (Gubena M., 2007: 5-6)

Looking at the overall outcome and the painful conditions and experiences that the people of the now two countries have lived through in the last three decades, one tends to conclude that we are all the losers, with little or no prospect of future recovery. The goals that were said to be expected to come from war did not materialize. The obvious results of these years are instead the continuation of the war itself, the loss of more and more human lives, and the production and dissemination of elements that help the leaders to increase the animosity among the people, to help perpetuate their own power. And people listen to the leaders; they are used as instruments. What has been more surprising, depressing and even shocking in recent times, however, is the instrumentality of intellectuals in the production and distribution of material that has helped to worsen the already existing animosities among the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea. The irrational approach of Ethiopian and Eritrean intellectuals and professionals to the complex and longstanding issues that face us, as well as the people at large, strongly indicates our willingness and readiness to be used as followers and tools of those in power who are interested in keeping people in conflict. We also seem to be incapable and/or unwilling to engage with each other and to look for ways to discuss our problems rationally and constructively. The continuation of the war at home and the increasing animosity towards each other has greatly contributed to the breakup of many marriages (even among those living abroad); many people who used to be good friends do not see each other anymore. But is this the best way to influence people? Is this what we want? In the search for possible strategies to peace and future relations between the people of the two countries, the education we received both at home and abroad (some of us with advanced degrees) seems in some cases more a detriment both to us and the people at large than a force that delivers the anticipated positive contribution. (Gubena M., 2007: 6)

Of course people are being killed and others are suffering as a result of the endless conflict, but again, the loss of so many lives, the painful experiences and events are a clear result of lack of good governance, deeds and hostile attitudes towards each other. At present it is necessary to achieve certain goals, spurred on by the force of emotion, to maintain peace, which is essential for both the countries as well as the people living there.
4.15. Current Relation between Ethiopia and Eritrea

Ethiopia's relations with Eritrea remained tense and unresolved. Following a brutal 1998-2000 border war in which tens of thousands died on both sides, the two countries signed a peace agreement in December 2000. A five-member independent international commission—the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC)—issued a decision in April 2002 delimiting the border. In November 2007 the EEBC issued a decision that the border was demarcated based on map coordinates (usual demarcation based on pillars on the ground had not yet occurred due to disagreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea) and disbanded. Ethiopia does not consider the border to be demarcated, though Eritrea does. In March 2008 the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) peacekeeping mission began withdrawing from Eritrea because Eritrea refused to allow UNMEE to secure fuel supplies for its operations. Both countries have stationed approximately 100,000 troops along the border, which has become more dangerous due to the departure of UNMEE. Both countries insist they will not instigate fighting, but both also remain prepared for any eventuality. Regarding its neighbor Somalia, the weakness of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and factional fighting in Somalia contributes to tensions along the boundaries of the two countries. Ethiopia has recently entered into a loose tripartite (nonmilitary) cooperation with Sudan and Yemen. The irredentist claims of the extremist-controlled Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) in Somalia in 2006 posed a legitimate security threat to Ethiopia and to the TFG of Somalia. In December 2006, the TFG requested the assistance of the Ethiopian military to respond to the CIC's aggression. Within a few weeks, the joint Ethiopian-TFG forces routed the CIC from Somalia. Subsequently, Ethiopia stationed troops in Somalia (largely around Mogadishu), awaiting full deployment of the African Union's Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). However, the buildup of AMISOM troop levels has been very slow; by December 2008 only 3,500 AMISOM soldiers had arrived in Mogadishu, less than half the number of soldiers pledged 18 months earlier. Running out of patience with the slow pace of deployments, in December the Ethiopian Government announced its army would withdraw from the country in a matter of weeks. By the end of January 2009, all of its 3,000-4,000 troops had left the country. (http://www.state.gov,)
4.16. Impact of Eritrean Independence on Indo-Ethiopian Relationship

India is one of the old friends of Ethiopia in African content. But there are no any implications on Indo-Ethiopian relations after independence of Eritrea. It can be stated with abundant historical corroboration that the myriad peoples of Africa and Asia, establishment first contacts by the pioneering links forged in ancient times between the peoples of Ethiopia and India. Till date both the countries have good relationship with each other in almost all the sector, like: agriculture, trade, tourism, power sector, pharmaceuticals etc. To know the impact of Eritrean independence on Indo- Ethiopian relationship, it is important to know the relationship of India with both the countries.

4.17. Impact on Diplomatic and Political Relation

Eritrea’s Government faced formidable challenges following independence. With no constitution, no judicial system, and an education system in shambles, the Eritrean Government was required to build institutions of government from scratch. Currently, the Government of Eritrea exercises strict control of political, social, and economic systems, with nearly no civil liberties allowed. On May 19, 1993, the PGE issued a proclamation regarding the reorganization of the government. The government was reorganized, and after a national, freely contested election, the Transitional National Assembly, which chose Isaias as President of the PGE, was expanded to include both EPLF and non-EPLF members.

The EPLF established itself as a political party, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ). The PGE declared that during a 4-year transition period it would draft and ratify a constitution, draft a law on political parties, draft a press law, and carry out elections for a constitutional government. In March 1994, the PGE created a constitutional commission charged with drafting a constitution flexible enough to meet the current needs of a population suffering from 30 years of civil war as well as those of the future, when prospective stability and prosperity would change the political landscape. Commission members traveled throughout the country and to Eritrean communities abroad holding meetings to explain constitutional options to the people and to solicit their input. A new constitution was ratified in 1997 but has not been implemented, and general elections have not been held. The government had announced that Transitional National Assembly elections would take place in December 2001, but those were postponed and new elections have not been
rescheduled. The present government structure includes legislative, executive, and judicial bodies. The legislature, the Transitional National Assembly, comprises 75 members of the PFDJ and 75 additional popularly elected members. The Transitional National Assembly is the highest legal power in the government until the establishment of a democratic, constitutional government. The legislature sets the internal and external policies of the government, regulates implementation of those policies, approves the budget, and elects the president of the country. The president nominates individuals to head the various ministries, authorities, commissions, and offices, and the Transitional National Assembly ratifies those nominations. (en.wikipedia.org)

The cabinet is the country’s executive branch. It is composed of 17 ministers and chaired by the president. It implements policies, regulations, and laws and is accountable to the Transitional National Assembly. The ministries are agriculture; defense; education; energy and mines; finance; fisheries; foreign affairs; health; information; labor and human welfare; land, water, and environment; local governments; justice; public works; trade and industry; transportation and communication; and tourism. Nominally, the judiciary operates independently of both the legislative and executive bodies, with a court system that extends from the village through to the district, provincial, and national levels. In practice, however, the independence of the judiciary is limited. In 2001, for example, the president of the High Court was detained after criticizing the government for judicial interference. In September 2001, after several months in which a number of prominent PFDJ party members had publicly aired grievances against the government and in which they called for implementation of the constitution and the holding of elections, the government instituted a crackdown. Eleven prominent dissidents, members of what had come to be known as the Group of 15, were arrested and held without charge in an unknown location. At the same time, the government shut down the independent press and arrested its reporters and editors, holding them incommunicado and without charge. In subsequent weeks, the government arrested other individuals, including two Eritrean employees of the U.S. Embassy. (www.eastafricaforum.net)

Eritrea is a member of the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the African Union (AU), but does not participate actively in the AU. Eritrea maintains diplomatic relations with the United States, Italy, and several other European nations, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, and the
Netherlands. Relations with these countries became strained as a result of the 2001 government crackdown against political dissidents and others, the closure of the independent press, and limits on civil liberties. Eritrea's relations with its neighbors are strained. Eritrea and Djibouti had a military confrontation in June 2008 along their border. In January 2009, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution calling for Eritrea to withdraw to positions of the status quo ante, acknowledge its border dispute with Djibouti, engage actively in dialogue to defuse the tension, and engage in diplomatic efforts leading to a mutually acceptable settlement of the border issue. Eritrea has not complied with the UN resolution. The situation remains unresolved. Although a territorial dispute with Yemen over the Haynish Islands was settled by international arbitration, tensions over traditional fishing rights with Yemen resurfaced in 2002. The relationship to date remains cordial. Relations with Sudan also were colored by occasional incidents involving the extremist group, Eritrean Islamic Jihad (EIJ)--which the Eritrean Government believes is supported by the National Islamic Front government in Khartoum--and by continued Eritrean support for the Sudanese opposition coalition, the National Democratic Alliance. Eritrea normalized relations with Sudan in 2006. (World Bank Document, 1994)

4.18. Impact on Economic Relations

Ethiopia- India relation is extent of Indo-Ethiopia ties that Indian history recalls several kings and royal houses in various parts of the sub-continent, who claimed to have been descended from far of Abyssinia- present day Ethiopia. This people to people bridge figuratively spanning the vast blueness of the Indian Ocean has not weakened with the passage of millennia and in fact, has gone from milestone to milestone - from the medieval ages, through the years up to and after Indian independence and also through the often turbulent last four decades of Ethiopian history. Currently the relationship is at record high intensity. The soon to be superpower and an Ethiopia bent whole heartedly on rapid development, are today enjoying a compatibility of characteristics that has propelled India and Ethiopia as not only partners in the geo-political arena, but also in a renewed impetus of development cooperation. India has become Ethiopia's second largest source of foreign investment and all signs indicate that the USD 3.5 billion currently invested will expand exponentially. (Statement of the State Minister of India, 2008)
However, in the course of the last couple of years, the economic dimension of this strong relationship began to blossom and flower. Indian companies have increased exports to Ethiopia. Currently, this has crossed 400 million dollars annually and we are now the second largest foreign investor in Ethiopia. This is accelerating as a large number of Indian companies are arriving in order to utilize Ethiopia as a base for activity in areas such as agriculture - including floriculture, minerals power and many other spheres. So there is a growing economic partnership between the two countries. In the last few years, Ethiopia has become the fastest growing non-oil economy in Africa. (Statement of the State Minister of India, 2008)

Ethiopia faces many challenges, it is a poor country, it faces also problems with Eritrea, Somalia, etc, but the state is wholly geared to development and economic progress. Like in India, inflation is also high in Ethiopia. Both nations have high growth - high inflation. Inflation is ultimately a tax on the poor since it affects the poor much more than it does the middle classes. Therefore, it can be called a poverty tax. There is no reason why Ethiopia should not be the breadbasket of this region. This nation should not be importing food grains. Ethiopia is today where India was 40 years ago. A single minded focus on agriculture will give Ethiopia self-confidence. No country that imports food items can have self-confidence and dignity. That is what India realized forty years ago when it was importing food grains - it could not have an independent foreign policy, even it could not look at the world through its own eyes. Today however, India can stand on its own feet because it is now self-sufficient in agriculture. (Statement of the State Minister of India, 2008)

So, to come to the level of India, Ethiopia has to manage high inflation. It is a country of great potential and surely, in the future the economy of the country can move ahead and much faster. The value of Ethiopia has been started noticing by other countries and many companies will be coming in to invest in textiles, floriculture, mining, manufacturing and other sectors. For instance, India itself is expecting a notable Indian entrepreneur who is about to arrive with the intention of setting up a very large integrated textile complex. This is going to be on a huge scale. They are talking about 300,000 spindles. This entrepreneur has done remarkable work in Uzbekistan and is one of the biggest investors in that nation. India has already, in Ethiopia an investor who is a major exporter of Ethiopia roses. In fact, this entrepreneur ranks as the world's top exporter of roses and this based now in Ethiopia. (Statement of the State Minister of India, 2008)
Another area of interest to Indian investors is mining, especially of potash, since India is the world's largest importer of the mineral. In this regard, an Indian firm has arrived to develop deposits found adjacent to the Eritrean border. It is believed, in the next two to three years that, if India has a few good success stories of Indo-Ethiopian partnership, many more Indian investors will be drawn to Ethiopia. Indian companies too engage widely in the fields of leather, hotels and tourism. For tourism in Ethiopia to blossom, it requires good interconnecting infrastructure. In this respect Indian companies are well suited to upgrade Ethiopia's tourism capacity. (Statement of the State Minister of India, 2008)

As it is stated the framework and foundation of the relationship of both the countries are very strong. It is based on history and culture, a commonality of linguistics and of shared social customs. And given the economic partnership which has come into strong play over recent years, these two countries can look forward to a highly proactive and mutually beneficial future for their historic relationship. The biggest objective is the challenge of increasing Ethiopian exports to Indian. Currently this stands at only $14 million. In contrast, Indian exports to Ethiopia stand at some $430 million dollars. (Statement of the State Minister of India, 2008)

4.19. The Trade Agreement with India

Both the countries have shown the possibilities of partnership in the power sector. This envisions setting up a 38 megawatt hydropower project. Also deliberated upon was a scheme to partner on connecting the regional electricity grid between the various countries in the region. Both sides have agreed to conduct this agreement in order to facilitate trade, to examine on how to reduce duties on some items of export interest to Ethiopia; cooperation in standards and quality control, the leather sector, power, medium and small scale enterprises and other areas of bilateral interest.

Tata has made a commitment here. Over the next 12 months (August '08 to Aug'09), Tata will export 1 million dollars worth of crushed leather from Ethiopia. This will increase to about five million dollars in the succeeding three to five years. After establishing the crushed leather operation, Tata will then move up in to the manufacture of footwear. India is an ancient civilisation, bound by links that are ancient as well as modern. Both the countries are engaged in the vital task of development and the eradication of poverty in a democratic framework. This is no small task. Indeed, it is a matter of pride that India and Ethiopia, who are neighbours
across the Indian Ocean, share so much not only in the past, but also in the present, and certainly in the future. Ethiopia is widely known in India as a close friend on the eastern coast of Africa, with whom India has a long history and tradition of friendly relations, based on people-to-people contacts and trade. These have given our country the momentum and heritage to build on. Ethiopia is well known for being a country in Africa that was never colonised. The strong desire for autonomy in decision-making and in choosing a path of development that suits Ethiopia’s own requirements. India and Ethiopia are fellow travellers on a road towards the upliftment of their peoples, accepting equally the challenge of poverty elimination in an increasingly globalising world. Both are bound by a common desire to work together for a peaceful and prosperous world. They equally share cultural, religious and ethnic diversity in each other’s countries. (http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov/) The trade relations between these countries are very old. Historically, there were strong trade ties during the Axumite kingdom. Agriculture is very important in both these countries. It is to be noted that more than 70 percent Eritreans and 60 percent Indians depend on agriculture as their mainstay and hence there is a need to re-focus on agriculture. Both the countries have resources, good climate, and water resources. The concentration on agriculture along with industries requires a sustainable policy in Eritrea. Agriculture was focused through five-year plans in India. Even after 15 years of Independence, Eritrea did not adopt five year plan strategies, therefore it can learn Indian experience. Naturally, the state has to play an important role to protect Eritrean industries from foreign competitions as there were so many imported goods have become a threat to the domestic industries (Rena, 2006: 130)

It is to be noted that, after liberalisation policies in 1991, the private sector had emerged as an important force to drive the economy and become the backbone of Indian economy that accounts 70 percent of the GDP. Agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, sea food industries, agro industries, agro-based industries and food industries are in the private sector that includes small and large scale industries. India has almost 3.57 million units in the small-scale sector. They employ more than 20 million people and contribute USD 165 billion to the Indian economy. The role of private sector is substantial in the growth of sustainable economic development in India. Eritrea also experience the same situation with the small scale industries but could not contribute more to the national economy due to the competition from the
large industries within the country and other competition from foreign trade. (Rena, R., 2006: 3)

Table 4.1: Indo- Eritrea Trade Relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2001-02</th>
<th>2002-03</th>
<th>2003-04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exports from India (Rs mn)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>493.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports to India (Rs mn)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Balance (Rs mn)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>483.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov/)

Table 4.2: India’s main items of Import and Export 2003-04

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Items of Imports from India in 2003-04 (Rs mn)</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary and semi finished iron and steel</td>
<td>66.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs, pharmaceuticals and fine chemicals</td>
<td>52.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber manufactured products except footwear</td>
<td>35.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Items of Exports to India in 2003-04 (Rs mn)</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalifiers, ores and metal scrap</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron and steel</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic chemicals</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov/)

The trade relation between India and Eritrea is growing gradually since Eritrea’s independence. Thus, Eritrea appointed its first Ambassador to India in 2003. Although, the trade balance is in India's favour, there is a lot of emphasis on the promotion of trade relations recognizes the potential of both countries. (Rena, R., 2006: 3)

4.20. Impact on Indo-Eritrea Agricultural Relations

Ethiopians (85 percent) and Indian (70 percent) population are related to agriculture and there is a need to re-focus on agriculture. Both the countries have rich resources, good climate, water resources and Ethiopia is naturally known as the water tower of Africa. The concentration on agriculture along with industries requires a sustainable
policy in Ethiopia. Mrs. Jordana Diengdoh-Pavel, the current Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia said, “Agriculture is very important for developing countries. In this country 85 percent of the people depend on agriculture and is the backbone of the economy. Agriculture was focused through five-year plan in India. Naturally, the state has to play an important role to protect industries from foreign competitions.

With a view to significantly enhance India’s trade with Eritrea, the Government of India launched an integrated programme “Focus Africa” in the year 2002-03. The main objective of the programme is to increase interactions between the two regions by identifying the areas of bilateral trade and investment. The “Focus Africa” programme emphasized on major trading partners of the region, namely Eritrea Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, Mauritius, Kenya, Tanzania and Ghana, which together account for around 69 percent of India's total bilateral trade with the sub-Saharan Africa region. (CII India-Africa Project Partnership, 2005: 22-26) Confederation of Indian Industries’ (CII) Africa Committee has the mandate to further business co-operation that helps establish a symbiotic relationship between India and emerging African economies. The Committee through wide ranging activities, like:

1. Develop strategies to enhance economic, industrial and trade relations,
2. Identifies areas of mutual co-operation,
3. Highlights issues of concern and evolves suitable policy recommendations,
4. Frames guidelines and checklists for different forms of industrial co-operation, and
5. Represents industry sectors seeking greater mutual co-operation. (CII India-Africa Project Partnership, 2005: 11)

CII has Institutional Agreements with 32 counterpart organizations in 18 African countries including Eritrea with the objective of facilitating exchange of information and promoting business interests of Indian and African Industry. The Committee pursues a three point agenda like:

1. Focus on core issues to industry,
2. Interaction with African Missions in India and Indian Missions in Africa, and
3. Partner and assist the Govt. of India in its specific Africa related initiatives.

(CII India-Africa Project Partnership, 2005: 24-25)

CII has developed an integrated strategy for promoting Indian exports into Africa, to supplement “Focus Africa” programme of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India that involves:
1. Identifying focus markets in Africa,
2. Identifying products with potential for export to focus markets,
3. Seminars/ workshops of Export Opportunities,
4. Trade delegations to focus countries
5. Participation in sector specific fairs in focus countries,
6. Made in India/ Enterprise Shows. (CII India-Africa Project Partnership, 2005: 26)

4.21. Role of India in Eritrean development

Soon after the independence, India has been playing significant role in the socio-economic development of Eritrea. It is to note that the Ministry of Education, Eritrea is hiring a great number of professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers and teachers from India to teach at the colleges, institutions at tertiary level and schools. It is observed that more than 800 teachers are teaching at various colleges, vocational training centers and high schools in Eritrea. Surprisingly, about 80 percent of the faculty in the newly established Eritrea Institute of Technology is Indians. And there are agricultural scientists, and other technical experts in different domains have been working in Eritrea for many years. Further, there are some Eritrean students studying in India for their B.A., MA/MSc., Ph.D degrees. One feels that this helps a lot in human resource development of Eritrea. And, of course, many Indian teachers have been involved in Eritrea since the 1960s even before its independence. It is to be noted that Indian teachers have educated many leaders of Eritrea including the president Isaias Afwerki and some ministers. The education sector of Eritrea has an excellent relation with India. India has been focusing on human resource development since independence. That is one of the main strengths of India, which, one hope would be rubbed off to Eritrea through this collaboration. In 2006, Minister of Eritrean Education Mr. Osman Saleh has visited India and makes agreements with the Indian government in human capacity building. (Rena, 2006: 6)

From the above points it is clear that the Indian community promotes goodwill and understanding among people in Eritrea. They built themselves as a bridge which makes the two countries come close together. The contribution for the Indian community in Eritrea is very important and has also been important ever. For an example: the Indian community living in Eritrea contributes a lot to the economy of the country whether it is trade or agriculture. India has managed to develop a modern
agricultural sector within a short period of time after the advent of Green Revolution in mid 1960s. Large number of Eritrean is going to India for education, business, tourism etc. This contact between the two peoples is a great contribution for the enhancement of the relation between the two countries.

4.22. Conclusion
Both India and Eritrea are developing countries. Eretria and Ethiopia is good friend of India in the African continent. They have common interests such as political cooperation on international arena and economic cooperation for fulfill their interests. India as a leader of Third world made a huge stride in human resource development and agriculture development where as Eritrea, a young nation still striving hard to develop these areas and thus achieve self reliance. In line with this, Eritrea has been using Indian human resources, as part of its capacity building in education, agricultural and other related areas. An attempt is made in this chapter to compare Eritrean situation and with some of the Indian experiences and also provide some implications for the policy development in Eritrea. Eritrea’s main aim is to achieve fast economic growth and self reliance. The successive colonisers before its independence controlled the economy of Eritrea till 1991. Eritrea got Independence in1991 and gradually adopted market economy but interrupted due to the border conflict. The fact is that Eritrea has the large population below poverty line. It was estimated that the level of poverty in rural Eritrea has increased as compare to India where the rate is less than 25 per cent.