

**ETHNIC CONFLICT AND PEACE IN THE REPUBLIC OF  
DJIBOUTI (1977-2005)**

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**YUVRAJ**



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July 28, 2006

**DECLARATION**

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**ETHNIC CONFLICT AND PEACE IN THE REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI**”, submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is my own work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.

**CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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## PREFACE

Ethnic conflict in the postcolonial African states has been a rule rather than an exception. The Horn of Africa, for a long time, has been one of the most disturbed regions not only in Africa but also in the world and witnessed many conflicts on ethnic lines both inter-state and intra-state. Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea have remained in the grip of conflicts, whether inter-states or intra-state, for a long time which still threatens the prospects of peace in these countries. The Republic of Djibouti has remained oftenly peaceful, but peace of this period ended with the eruption of civil war along the ethnic lines, which formally ended in May 2001 with signing of Second Peace Accord between the Government and rebel forces.

The study of Djibouti is of immense importance because of two evident reasons. First, though many studies had been done on the Horn with Ethiopia and Somalia dominating the attention but Djibouti is not given the due attention. Secondly, the ethnic conflict in Djibouti presents a different case of ethnic conflict where not only ethnic boundaries are blurred but two dominant ethnic groups joined hands to challenge the authoritarian regime of Hassan Gouled Aptidon, while other conflicts in Africa presents a case based on the rigid ethnic boundaries which makes it an interesting case for investigation.

The peace initiatives in Djibouti had delivered the expected the results up to a great extent. It has solved the ethnic problem and brought the country back on the track of peace to some extent. Despite of these some problem still exist that constitutes a potential threat to the viability of peace. In fact, the peace process in Djibouti might be exemplary for the other states in the Horn which suggests that the inclusive approach of conflict resolution can be helpful in the solving of the problems of ethnic conflict in the multi-ethnic post-colonial states in Africa.

The objective of the study is to identify the causes of ethnic conflict and to analyze the peace process and its viability. Regarding the causes, I think the colonial legacies and socio-political dynamics of Djibouti are responsible for the ethnic conflict in Djibouti.



Regarding the viability of the peace process, it might be said that it has been successful up to great extent and presents an optimistic scenario for the sustainable peace in Djibouti.

My study is based on the following hypothesis, first regarding the causes of conflict I assert that the colonial legacies and socio-political dynamics of independent of Djibouti served as a long term and medium term factors respectively, while the authoritarian and partition regime of Hassan Gouled Aptidon served as an immediate factor for the conflict occurrence. Regarding the peace process, I identify it to be based on inclusive approach, which proved to have been successful for the conflict resolution in Djibouti.

The Dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 i.e. Introduction attempts to give a general background of Djibouti, its geographical location, society, economy, culture etc. Here, an attempt is also made to explain ethnicity, ethnic identity, ethnic groups and ethnic conflict to provide a background for further discussion. The Chapter 2 discusses the nature of conflict in Djibouti and find out if the conflict in Djibouti be termed as ethnic. It further tries to outline the factors responsible for ethnic conflict in Djibouti. Chapter 3 provides an analysis of history of conflict in Djibouti. This Chapter discusses the role of different groups involved in the conflict and the nature of conflict from 1977 to 2005. The Chapter 4 discusses the peacemaking process and its evaluation. This Chapter outlines the roles played by different groups i.e. government, France, UN and different socio- political groups of Djibouti in the peace making process. Finally, findings of the study with a few concluding remarks will be given in the Conclusion i.e. the Chapter 5.

It needs to be mentioned in the beginning itself that there is a paucity of source material available related with the area and field of research. Thus, this study has a limited nature and scope.

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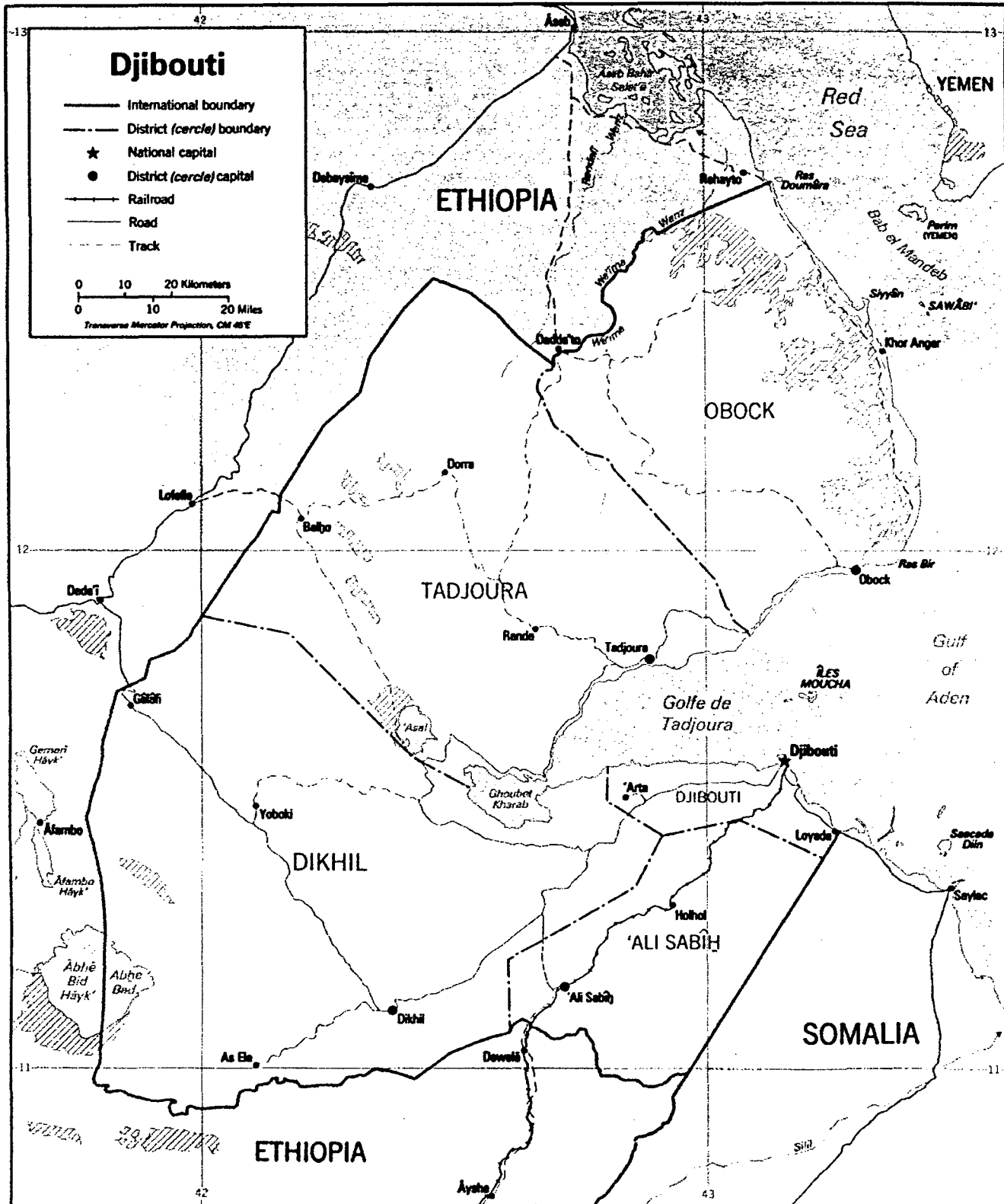
Date: July28, 2006.

Place: JNU, New Delhi

  
Signature  
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## List of Abbreviations

<b>ADDHL</b>	<i>Association pour la Defense des Drotis de l' Homme et de la liberete</i>
<b>ALF</b>	<i>Afar Liberation Front</i>
<b>AND</b>	<i>Djiboutian National Army</i>
<b>ARD</b>	<i>Republican Alliance For Development</i>
<b>AU</b>	<i>African Union</i>
<b>COD</b>	<i>Coordination of the Djiboutian Opposition</i>
<b>FDDL</b>	<i>Front democratique pour la liberation de Djibouti</i>
<b>FRUD</b>	<i>Front pour la restauration de l'unite' et de la democratie</i>
<b>FUOD</b>	<i>Front uni de l'oppoistion Djiboutienne</i>
<b>FUOD</b>	<i>United Front of Djiboutian Opposition</i>
<b>MNDID</b>	<i>Movement nationale djiboutien pour l'unite et de la democratie</i>
<b>MPL</b>	<i>Mouvement Populaire de Liberetion</i>
<b>MPR</b>	<i>Movement pour la paix et al Reconciliation</i>
<b>MUD</b>	<i>Movement pour l'Unite et la Democratique</i>
<b>OAU</b>	<i>Organization of African Unity</i>
<b>PND</b>	<i>Parti National Democratique</i>
<b>PPD</b>	<i>Parti Populaire Dgiboutian</i>
<b>RPP</b>	<i>Reassemblement populaire power le progress</i>
<b>SNM</b>	<i>Somali National Movement</i>
<b>UMD</b>	<i>Union des mouvements democratique</i>
<b>UNI</b>	<i>Union National Pour l' Independence</i>



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# CHAPTER-I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

#### 1.1.1 Physical Settings:

Djibouti is one of the most strategically located country in the North-East Africa which is popularly known as “Horn of Africa’.

Djibouti’s significance has all along stemmed from its geo-strategic location and its command of the crucial Bab-el-Mandeb at the mouth of the Red Sea.<sup>1</sup> The republic of Djibouti, lies between 11<sup>0</sup> 30’ N and 43<sup>0</sup> 00’ E. It is bounded in the North West by Eritrea, north east by Gulf of Aden, south east by Somalia and south west by Ethiopia. Djibouti covers an area of 2300 sq kms. Out of total area 22,980 sq kms. is covered by land and water body covers 20 sq kms. It had land boundary of 516 kms. out of which it has 109 kms, with Eritrea, 349 area km. with Ethiopia and 58 kms. with Somalia. Djibouti has coastline of 314 kms.<sup>2</sup> The soil is rocky and sandy and lies on volcanic layers. Climate is desert like, torrid and dry in which rainfall is very low. The vegetation consists mainly of desert shrubs and acacia trees. The Bay of Tadjoura cuts into the country from the Gulf of Aden. There is one active volcano. There is a seasonal stream that flows towards the sea or into the two salt lakes.

#### 1.1.2 Political Settings:

The Capital of the Republic of Djibouti is the Djibouti city, which is a large urban center. Apart from it, there are four administrative districts, Abi-Sabieh, Okhil, Obock and Tadjoura. From coming north to south, the sequence of the main cities in descending order is Obock, Tadjoura, Djibouti City, Dikhil and Ali Sabieh.

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<sup>1</sup> Bhardwaj, G. Raman (1979), *The Dilemma of the Horn of Africa*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Ltd., p.119.

<sup>2</sup> [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/dj/html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/dj/html).

### **1.1.3 Population:**

The Population was estimated in 2002 at 6,00,000 of which about half of the population was constituted by Somalis, 35% of total population was constituted by Afars and some European mainly French and Arab.<sup>3</sup> The U.N. gives projected population for 2010 7,73,000.<sup>4</sup> Population density as estimated in 2002 is 30 per sq km.<sup>5</sup>

## **1.2 SOCIETY:**

### **1.2.1 Social Composition:**

Djibouti is an ethnically diverse country. The Afars and Issas people comprised the two dominant ethnic groups, which historically inhabited the territory. The Issas constitutes the largest ethnic group and inhabit the southern one third of the country below the Gulf of Tadjoura and east of Djibouti Adis Ababa Railway.<sup>6</sup>

The remainder of Djibouti's population is divided among five major groups, which were not historically indigenous to the area. The Gadabaoursis and Issas, who are the sub-groupings of the Somali people, migrated from northern Somalia during the twentieth century. They were attracted by the work associated with the construction of Adis Ababa railway and the expansion of the port at the Djibouti city. Fourth group includes large number of French and other European nationals who works at nearly all administrative levels of Djiboutian government. Of particular significance are the large number of French troops and family members, maintained by French Government in Djiboutian territory since independence in 1977.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, fluctuating numbers of refugees from both Ethiopia and Somalia have periodically comprised of the country's population at any given time.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Schraeder, Peter J.(1993), "Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From Eye of the Hurricane to Boiling cauldron" *African Affair*,92, pp204-05.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.206.

### **1.2.2 Social Organization:**

The Issas maintain an especially egalitarian form of social organization based on clan membership in which all are considered equal and each has the right to voice his opinion about the affairs of the clan.

The Issas are divided into three major clan families, two of which are further divided in sub-clans. The Abgal clan family which accounts for three quarters of all Issas in the Horn of Africa and two third of those living in Djibouti includes the four sub-clans:-Yonis-Moussa, Saad-Moussa, Mamassan and Ourweine.<sup>8</sup>

The Palol clan family, which accounts for only one fourth of Issa family and roughly one third living in Djibouti is similarly divided in three sub-clans:- the Foulaba, Horrone, and Waladon. The Wardick constitutes the final Issa clan family represented in Djibouti and is believed to be the origin of joined Somali-Afar unions.<sup>9</sup>

Afars maintain a hierarchical form of social organization that derives from traditional chiefdoms and sultanate, such as still existing Tadjoura Sultanate. Decisions and debates among Afars are more reserved for the recognized leaders and heads of clans. Among the five major clans represented in Djibouti are the Adarassoul and the Debne, both of which are prevalent in the Dikhil region, the Adail and Badaita-Mela, located in the Obock region and Hassoba, which are representatives of the Tadjoura region.<sup>10</sup>

### **1.2.3 Status of women:**

By custom and law, men have more rights and higher status than women. Islam and traditional culture of Afars and Issas tend to support a pattern of gender roles that provide men's pre-dominance in public life, business and politics. Economic

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.208.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.210.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.214.

necessity, conflict and migration worked against the women making them the sole household head.<sup>11</sup>

Population of Djibouti as estimated in 2006 is 4, 86,530 out of which Somali constituted 60%, Afars 35% and, French, Arab, Ethiopian and Italian constituted 5%.<sup>12</sup>

#### **1.2.4 Religious and Linguistic Affiliation:**

The official national languages of the Republic of Djibouti are French, which is used in education and administration, Yemenis, and other Arab immigrants speak Arabic.<sup>13</sup>

The dominant religion of Djiboutians and Arabs is Islam, 96%<sup>14</sup> of total population follows Islam, European are Catholic Christians and Ethiopians are mostly orthodox Ethiopian Christian. Islamic beliefs are deeply rooted in Afar and Somali society. Sufi order is also prominent but Islam is never used for political purposes.

#### **1.2.5 Education:**

Adult Literary in 2001 was 65.5% (76.1% of men and 55.5% of women). In 2000-01 there were 42, 692 pupils and 1,999 teachers in primary schools and 18,808 pupils and 791 teachers in secondary schools. In 2000-01, those were 496 students at tertiary education institutions. In 1998-99, total expenditure on education was 3.4% of GNP.<sup>15</sup>

#### **1.2.6 Social Problems:**

Prostitution has caused major health problem, including the spread of HIV/AIDS. Total member of people living with HIV/AIDS, as estimated at 2003 is 9,100 and total member of deaths that occurred due to HIV/AIDS, as estimated in 2003, are

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.everyculture.com/cr/ga/Djibouti/html>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Turner, Barry(ed.)(2006),*The Statesmen's Year Book: Politics, Cultures and Economics of the World*, New York: Macmillan, pp.551-55.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, pp.551-55.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.553.



690<sup>16</sup>. Apart from this, decline of pastoral society, a lack of education and poverty are major social problems.

### **1.2.7 Food Habits:**

Traditional foods are dairy products and meat. Influence of European and Italian dishes is dominant in cities. Qat, which is a light narcotic leaf, imported from Ethiopia is the attracting feature of diet.

## **1.3 GOVERNMENT:**

### **1.3.1 Constitutions:**

A new constitution was approved by a national referendum on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1992 and entered into force on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1992. The constitution of the Djibouti guarantees the basic rights and freedom of citizens; the functions of the principle organs of the state are delineated in the constitution.<sup>17</sup>

### **1.3.2 Government:**

Since independence in 1977, there has been a presidential, republican system of government. There is a chamber of Deputies has sixty-five members and is elected through universal suffrage. Real power lies with the President and his inner circle, who is also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The Prime Minister, who is always an Afar, is relatively less powerful. The country effectively remained an authoritarian, the one party state until 1992, when Afar struggle for more power became a quest for inclusive democracy.

There are complex formal and informal rule for the division of power for the various ethnic communities: The President is an Issa, the prime minister is an Afar, and in the

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<sup>16</sup> [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/dj.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/dj.html).

<sup>17</sup> Schraeder, Peter. J.(1993), ““Ethnic Politics in Djibouti” ‘From Eye of the Hurricane to Boiling cauldron” *African Affair*, (92), pp204-05

council of ministers one seat each is reserved for the Arabs, Issak, Gadabursi while the Afar has one seat more than the Issa.<sup>18</sup>

### **1.3.3 Political Parties:**

The 1992 constitution provided for the establishment of four political parties. On 4 September 2002, however, this limit on the number of political party was revoked and at present, there are eight political parties in Djibouti.

Democratic National Party or PND, led by Aden Robeh Awaleh, Democratic Renewal Party or PRD, led by Adbillahi Hamariteh, Djibouti Development Party or PDD led by Mohammed Daoud Chehem, *Front Pour la Restauration de l' Unite Democratique* or FRUD led by Ali Mohammad Daoud, People's Progressive Assembly or RPP led by Ismail Omar Guelleh, People's Social Democratic Party or PPSD led by Moumin Bahdon Farah Republican Alliance for Democracy or ARD led by Ahmed dini Ahmed and lastly, Union for Democracy and Justice or UDJ.<sup>19</sup>

### **1.3.4 Political Pressure Groups:**

There are two main political pressure groups which are the result of the coalition of above political parties. One is Union for Presidential Majority (UMP) in which is the coalition of RPP, FRUD, PPSD, and PMD and other is Union for Democratic change over (UAD), which is the coalition of opposition parties which includes, ARD, MRDD, UDJ and PDD<sup>20</sup>.

### **1.3.5 Current Administration:**

President of the Republic of Djibouti is Ismail Omar Gulleh, leader of the RPP, who won presidential election of 8<sup>th</sup> April 2005 with 100% of the vote cast. Prime Minister of the Republic of Djibouti is Dilleita Mohammad Dilleita, who is from the UPP,

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.everyculture.com/cr/ga/Djibouti/html>.

<sup>19</sup> [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/dj.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/dj.html).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Union for Presidential Majority, which is a coalition of RPP, and FRUD, which won all 65 seats of the first free multi party elections since independence held on 10 Jan 2003<sup>21</sup>.

#### **1.4 ECONOMY:**

Djibouti is a very small country whose economy is based on its strategic location, its international port and the existence of a free zone with no import quotas or custom duties. Agriculture is difficult and there is little industry. However, Djibouti has growing industry in banking aided by a freely convertible currency and a liberal investment code. It had more than 80% unemployment in 1986 and 12% rise in inflation in 1985. It has poor agricultural resources. Railways and the communications are also the source of income<sup>22</sup>.

#### **1.5 NATURAL RESOURCES :**

##### **1.5.1 Agricultural Resources:**

Approximately 1.3 million hectare which were permanent pasture in 1994, there were 1000 hectare arable land in 2001. Production is dependent on irrigation, which in 2004 covered 1,000 ha<sup>23</sup>. Scanty rainfall limits crop production to fruits and vegetables and most food are to be imported. Vegetable production as estimated in 2000 was 24,000 tones<sup>24</sup>. The most common crops are tomatoes and dates.

Jojoba is the only industrial crop which cultivation began in the early in the 1980s but production stagnated before reaching a commercial scale<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Turner, Barry(ed.)(2006),*The Statesmen's Year Book: Politics, Cultures and Economics of the World*, New York: Macmillan, p.551.

<sup>22</sup> Malakar,S.N.(1994), *Emerging Paradigms of Social Conflict and Challenges to the States of the Horn of Africa: A Conceptual Analysis*, *New Occasional Paper Series*, Academy of Third World Studies, Serial No. 4, pp....

<sup>23</sup> Turner, Barry(ed.), (2006),*The Statesmen's Year Book: Politics, Cultures and Economics of the World*, New York: Macmillan, p.552.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.552.

<sup>25</sup> Djibouti(1989), "Economic Diversification Through Industrialization", *Industrial Development Review Series*, Regional and Country Studies Branch, UNIDO, p.76.

### **1.5.2 Live stock Resources:**

Livestock rearing suffers from the same environmental constraints as agriculture. Traditional practice of nomadic pastoralism followed by the bulk of population allow the country to support a herd of 500,000 goats 3,50,000 sheep, 5000 camels, 40,000 cattle and 65,000 donkeys, according to 1983 estimates<sup>26</sup>. These herds live under the constant threat of drought and diseases. Measures have been taken to mitigate these hazards by providing emergency feed concentrates through the animal feed factory, permanent watering points. Ministry of Agriculture also undertakes vaccination campaigns in co-ordination with neighboring Ethiopia and Somalia.

### **1.5.3 Forest Resources :**

Much of Djibouti has a sparse tree and bush cover, which is exploited as fuel, some of which is converted into charcoal, for domestic consumption. Only 6000, ha or 0.3% of the total land area is under forest cover<sup>27</sup>. This too is gradually being cut down for fuel wood, despite government protection. The introduction of alternative energy sources for the nomadic population and an efficient portable stove might help protect these precious reserves whilst presenting an opportunity for local artisans.

### **1.5.4 Mineral Resources:**

Djibouti lacks important mineral resources it has salt deposits at Lake Asal, situated at 153 meter below sea level, believed to be the lowest point in the continent. There are limestone deposits that could support cement production and perlite, an insulation material used in construction. Djibouti is a region of hot volcanoes and hot springs, and it is thought likely to have significant geo-thermal energy resources<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.76.

<sup>27</sup> Turner, Barry(ed.)(2006),*The Statesmen's Year Book: Politics, Cultures and Economics of the World*, New York: Macmillan, p.552.

<sup>28</sup> Markakis, John (1998), *Resource Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, New Delhi: Sage Publication, p. 81

Djibouti has large deposits of clays, formed by the decomposition of rhyolites and basalts are found in the region of Ali Sabeih, they are of suitable quality to be used in the production of bricks and tiles.

A deposit of gypsum anhydrite 20 to 30 meters thick had been found on the borders of Lake Asal<sup>29</sup>, which is useful for construction. Limestone deposits suitable for the manufacture of cement have been found at Baholaby near Ali -Sabeih. The reserves are thought to be sufficient to support a cement works producing 300 tones of cement per day for eighty years<sup>30</sup>.

Perlite, a natural gas formed by the rapid cooling of viscous lava is found in the volcanic massif if Egerleta near Goubet. It is a potential building material because of its insulating characteristics. Lake Asal has been exploited as a source of domestic salt for millennia. However, no attempt had been made to extract salt industrially<sup>31</sup>.

#### **1.5.5 Energy Resources:-**

Imported petroleum products are the source of almost all energy produced in Djibouti and accounted for almost 10 per cent of total imports in 1985<sup>32</sup>. Djibouti does not have oil resources and its oil consumption per day is 12,000 bbl, as estimated in 2003<sup>33</sup>. All the oil need in country is met through import only.

#### **1.5.6 Electricity:**

Electricity accounted for only 12 per cent of final energy use which increased to 16.7 percent according to a 1987 government estimate. The main producer of electricity is Electricity de Djibouti (EDD)<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Djibouti(1989), "Economic Diversification Through Industrialization", *Industrial Development Review Series*, Regional and Country Studies Branch, UNIDO, p.79.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.79.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p.79.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.79.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.81.

<sup>34</sup> [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/dj.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/dj.html)

## **1.6 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION:**

### **1.6.1 Roads:**

In mid 1986, Djibouti had 281 kms. of paved roads and 2,624 kms. of unpaved roads. The north of the country was isolated, the traffic having to pass by ferryboats from Djibouti city to Tadjoura and Obock. Djibouti completed a new road, “Unity Road” between Tadjoura and Djibouti city, which accelerated the communication<sup>35</sup>. According to a estimate, done in 1999 Djibouti has 2,890 kms. of roads of which 12.6% is hard surfaced<sup>36</sup>.

### **1.6.2 Railways:**

France constructed the railway line between Djibouti and Adis Ababa in 1917 which also lies in Djibouti. The slow movement of traffic along the line accounts for the declining use of the line in favour of the Adis Ababa road link.

### **1.6.3 Ports:**

The Republic of Djibouti benefits from its strategic location at the mouth of the Red Sea as an important chandling and bunkering station for military and commercial shipping and as an entrepot for Ethiopia.

### **1.6.4 Air:**

Djibouti is served by Ambouli International Airport that is five kms. from Djibouti city. There are landing strips of Obock and Tadjoura. Djibouti based carriers are Daallo Airlines and Djibouti Airlines<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> Djibouti(1989), “Economic Diversification Through Industrialization”, *Industrial Development Review Series*, Regional and Country Studies Branch, UNIDO, p. 79.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p.84.

<sup>37</sup> Turner, Barry (ed.) (2006), *The Statesmen’s Year Book: Politics, Cultures and Economics of the World*, New York: Macmillan, p.552.

### 1.6.5 Telecommunication:

A new international telephone exchange and radio telephone link with Saudi Arabia and Yemen Arab Republic were installed in 1985<sup>38</sup>. Djibouti now enjoys an efficient international telephone, telex, and telefax communications links with Europe are assured by submarine cable<sup>39</sup>.

There were 25,000 telephone subscribers in 2002 and 10,000 PCs in use. Public phone subscribers numbered 15,000 in 2002. There were 100 fax machine in 1999 in Djibouti and number of internet users was 45,000 in 2002<sup>40</sup>.

### 1.7 ARTS AND HUMANITIES:

There is little creative written literature (poetry, novels, drama) but oral poetry and rhetorics are well developed in Afar and Somali pastoral society. The Afars are familiar with the *ginnil*<sup>41</sup>, a kind of warrior poetry and diviner and have rich oral traditions of folk songs and folk stories. Among the Somali, poetic talent and verbal skills expressed in songs and epic stories are highly developed too. In recent years, there have been a growing number of politicians and intellectuals who wrote memories reflecting Djiboutian society and its problems, but virtually all of them are published in France. There are no major theatres or ploy wrights in Djibouti, although there are drama performances in the capital's center for culture and art.

The government has few financial institutional resources to support the arts, but in the capital, there is a 'people's palace', a national museum and a national center for the promotion of cultures and arts, where performances and festivals are held. The National Tourism Office has a section to promote interest in the traditional crafts in the country. *Connaissance de Djibouti* is a study association whose members are

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p.552.

<sup>39</sup> Djibouti(1989), "Economic Diversification Through Industrialization", *Industrial Development Review Series*, Regional and Country Studies Branch, UNIDO, p.85.

<sup>40</sup> Turner, Barry, (ed.), (2006), *The Statesmen's Year Book: Politics, Cultures and Economics of the World*, New York: Macmillan, p.552.

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.everyculture.com/cr/ga/Djibouti/html>

interested in retrieving knowledge of the cultures and customs of Djiboutian people. Djibouti maintains a cultural exchange and education program with France.

## 1.8 A BRIEF COLONIAL HISTORY OF DJIBOUTI:

The Republic of Djibouti gained its independence on July 27, 1977. It is the successor of the French Somaliland, created in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century because of the French interest in the Horn of Africa. In fact, it was Djibouti's geo-strategic location and its command of crucial Bab-el-Mandab at the mouth of Red Sea which attracted the French. Through a treaty with the Issa Sultan of the area in 1862, French had established a naval base at Obock; the base came to be known as French Somaliland after the confirmation of colonial partition at the Berlin Conference in 1885<sup>42</sup>. Thereafter, the French deepened the sea and constructed port at the present site of Djibouti city. A small town sprang up around the port that developed into the present day Djibouti city<sup>43</sup>.

Growing French interest in the area took place against a backdrop of British activity in Egypt and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. After an understanding with Ethiopian Emperor, the French constructed a railway line from Adis Ababa to Djibouti during 1899 – 1917. Following the independence of high burning Somalia in 1960s, the people of Djibouti pressed hard for freedom.

France renamed French Somaliland as French Territory of Afars and Issas (FIAT) emphasizing the existence of two separate population groups in Djibouti offering a good excuse to France for her continued presence<sup>44</sup>.

On July 22, 1957, the colony was re-organized to give the people considerable self – government. A territorial assembly elected eight of its members to an executive council, who were responsible for one or more of the territorial services and carried the title of

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<sup>42</sup> Bhardwaj, G. Raman, (1979), *The Dilemma of the Horn of Africa*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., p.119.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, p.120.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p.120.



Minister. The council advised the French appointed Governor General for the territory.

French Somaliland opted to join the French community as an overseas territory in a referendum held in September 1958. With this, territory became eligible to be represented by one deputy and by one Senator in the French Parliament, and the counselor in the French Union Assembly. First election to the territorial assembly was held, following proportional representation, on November 23, 1958. For the holding of proper election a new law was enacted for the last assembly election in 1963, for which proportional representation was abolished and the system of straight plurality vote based on list submitted by political parties in serve designated districts.

By this time, dissatisfaction of Issa community increased continuously caused by the French policy of favouring Afars. In fact, France favoured Issas initially but their support for creating a 'Greater Somaliland' to Somalia tilted pendulum in the favour of Afars. President Charles de Gaulle visited the territory in August 1966 and was met by a widespread opposition and public demonstrations demanding independence. Therefore, France announced to hold a referendum to determine whether the people of FIAT would remain with French republic or become independent. Interestingly in the Referendum held in March 1967, 60% of the population of the territories preferred to continue its association with France. One point must be noted here that Issas being the largest community would not garner enough support in their favor, it implies only two thing that, one, the dissatisfaction against France was not that much widespread and deeply felt by the inhabitants as was evident during de Gaulle's visiting in 1966 second, that references was not held accordingly in fair manner by France. After this referendum, France changed the name of the territory as French territory of Afars and Issas with this France introduced some changes in the governmental structure of the territory, making the senior French representative formerly the Governor General, a High Commissioner and re-designated the executive of government, with nine members.

Issa community continued to raise their voice for independence, while numbers of the French connection. Number of Issas rose dramatically during 1970s., because of immigration from Somalia. In 1975, French Government began to accommodate increasingly insistent demands for independence, which culminated in the change of

territory's Citizenship Law in June 1976, which was tilted in the favour of Afars previously. The objective of this revision of law was to reflect more closely the weight of Issa Somalia and shows the level of intensity of freedom struggle which was waged under a unified political movement for which a party – *the Ligue Populaire of Africaine Pour Independence* was formed. It is important to note that by this time France realized the widespread anger against her continued presence in Djibouti, realizing this fact French government announced to hold a referendum in which it was to be decided by the inhabitants of territory whether they wanted to remain with current arrangement. This referendum was held in May 1977 and following the outcome of referendum the Republic of Djibouti was born on 27 June in 1977.

## **2. Ethnic Conflict**

The importance of ethnic conflict, as a force shaping human affairs as a phenomena to be understood, as a threat to be controlled, can no longer be denied. By one reckoning, ethnic violence since World War II has claimed more than ten million lives<sup>45</sup>.

To have proper understanding of the concept of ethnic conflict, discussion of ethnicity becomes of immense importance. Simultaneously, a bit of conceptual understanding of conflict is also required. Therefore, both concepts will be discussed as following.

### **2.1 Ethnicity:**

Ethnicity seems to be a new term, in the sense in which we use it the character or quality of an ethnic group it does not appear in the 1933 edition of the Oxford English Dictionary. But it makes its appearance in the 1972, supplement, where first usage recorded is that of David Risemen in 1953. Ethnicity is a sense of ethnic identity, which was defined by Des Vos as consisting of the “subjective, symbolic or

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<sup>45</sup> Horowitz, L. Donald (1985), *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p.xi.

emblematic used by a group of people --of any aspect of culture, in order to differentiate themselves from other groups”<sup>46</sup>.

In political theory, “ethnicity” describes a group possessing some degree of coherence and solidarity, composed of people who are aware, perhaps only latently of having common origins and interest. In fact, ethnicity is a very complex term and there is no unanimity on this concept among the scholars. It becomes problematic when the question arises about its constituents like- do race, colour, language constitute it or not? Is it a permanent phenomenon for a person who belongs to some ethnic group or is there any scope of his free will to leave one ethnic group and join other?

Four major approaches have been suggested by Wrevolod W. Isajiw, in this regard, viz primordial approach, epiphenomenon approach, situational approach and subjective approach to ethnicity in his paper presented at joint Canada – United States conference on the represent of Ethnicity – in Canada or April 2, 1992<sup>47</sup>.

Primordialist approach comes from the sociological and anthropological literature, which maintains ethnicity as something more or less permanent, ascribed at the time of birth, deriving from the kind and clan structure of human society<sup>48</sup>.

Michael Hechter represents epiphenomenal approach, which divides the economic structure of society in two sectors i.e. center and periphery. The periphery consists of marginal jobs where products are not important to society, as for example agriculture work, but which offer little in the form of compensation as compared to the jobs in the center. It is in this peripheral labour sector that integrates concentrate, develop their own solidarity and maintain their culture. Ethnicity is this something created and maintained by an uneven economy, or a product of economic exploitation<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> Brass, R. Paul (1991), *Ethnicity and Nationalism Theory and Comparison*, New Delhi: Sage Publication, p.19.

<sup>47</sup> Isajiw, W. Usevolod (1992), “Definition and Dimension of Ethnicity: A Theoretical Framework, Challenges of measuring an ethnic World, Science , Politics and Reality”, *Proceedings of the Joint Canada – US Conference on the Measurement of Ethnicity*, April 1-3, 1992, Washington DC: Statistics Canada and US Bureau of Census, US Government Printing Office, pp.407-27.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.408

<sup>49</sup> Ibid,408

Situational approach is based rational choice theory which assumes ethnicity as something which may be relevant in some situations but not in others and individual choose to affiliate with other ethnic groups based on cost and benefit analysis<sup>50</sup>. Subjective approach views ethnicity as a social psychological reality or matters of perception of them and us in contradiction to looking at it as something given, which exists objectively as it were “out there”<sup>51</sup>.

Superficially, it seems that problem of ethnicity in Africa, can be dealt with only subjective approach but, we cannot overlook primordial, a phenomenon approach, is also of immense importance. Another important approach, the social construction approach has been about an African Camp Bill<sup>52</sup>. The first book about an African ethnic group written from the constructionist standpoint was published long ago in 1942. This school relies upon a radical interpretation of the notion that people are malleable.

Constructionists emphasize that ethnicity is not supra historical and quasi-natural membership in a group but rather a social identity constructed under specific historical political circumstances. They insist that researchers must not namely adopt the actors own discourse of ethnic identity, which typically claim hereditary membership is an ethnic group as a group overlapping and including the family, a common history and cultural similarity. Ethnic groups so as the basic assumption of the constructionist goes, exist only in the plural, in the relationship between others and us.

Ethnicity includes two aspects, objective as well subjective. Objective aspects are those which can be observed as facts in the existence of institutions including that of kinship and decent and in overt behavior patterns of individuals. The subjective

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid,409

<sup>51</sup> Ibid,410

<sup>52</sup> Campbell, Sidan (1997), “ Ethical Ethnicity: A Critique”, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Cambridge University Press, p.64.

dimensions refer to attitudes volumes and preconceptions whose meaning has to be interpreted in the content of the process of communication<sup>53</sup>.

### **2.2.2 Ethnic groups & Ethnic Identity:**

Ethnic groups is a group of people who share the same culture or refers to descendants of such people who may not share this culture but who identify themselves with these ancestral groups. These groups also have two dimensions objective and subjective. Objective dimension includes, organizations, forms of cultural behavior, manifested into overt behavior. Subjective dimension to ethnic groups refers to ethnic boundaries, which are of two types internal and external. Internal, within the ethnic group area of self-inclusion in the group and external, which are the peripheral of exclusion of membership. In this way, ethnicity becomes a matter of double boundary, a boundary from within and boundary from without<sup>54</sup>.

Ethnicity is a socio-psychological process, which gives an individual a sense of belonging and identity and individual goal. Ethnic identity is a manner in which a process, on account, of their ethnic origin locates themselves psychologically in relation to one or more social systems. The social systems may be ones ethnic community or society at large, or other ethnic communities and other societies or groups, or a combination of all these<sup>55</sup>. The concept of ethnic groups and ethnic boundaries has also been discussed by several scholars. Ethnic group is a group of people whose member belief that they are of a common decent but not unilateral<sup>56</sup>.

In fact, ethnic groups are not isolated, they can only know of their existence by being in contact with others. This point about intervention can be illustrated with an example of someone who comes across a person lying dead in the street after a shooting incident. The reaction of the onlooker becomes one of shock and sorrow;

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<sup>53</sup> Isajiw, W. Usevolod (1992), "Definition and Dimension of Ethnicity: A Theoretical Framework, Challenges of measuring an ethnic World, Science , Politics and Reality", *Proceedings of the Joint Canada – US Conference on the Measurement of Ethnicity*, April 1-3, 1992, Washington DC: Statistics Canada and US Bureau of Census, US Government Printing Office, p.411.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p.413.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p.413.

<sup>56</sup> Jenkins, R.C, (1997), *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*, London: Sage Publication, p.13

reason for his reaction is that he identifies himself with the dead person as other human beings. He sees his image in the body of that dead person and imagines that the same thing could have happened to him. The reality of his dependence on others' existence and being in contact with them strikes his mind. Similarly, as much as ethnic groups are different they need others so that they could have their own identity. It is not enough for a group to have certain common features to be identified as ethnic groups because it is the interaction of the various ethnic groups which creates ethnicity<sup>57</sup>. In fact, what to say about ethnic group, even an individual needs social interaction to recognize himself and realize his existence.

Ethnic boundaries are the result of social interactions this is an area within which people observe, learn and internalize rituals and habits of speedy disposition, dress of their bodies and modes of thought to the extent that they become entirely automatic<sup>58</sup>.

Thus it is evident, ethnicity has been a very contested concept, nonetheless, for our purpose, we can assume a general definition such as a form of cultural identity which operates at a deep and emotional level it is the sentiment of loyalty towards a distinctive population, cultural group or territorial area, and the members of one ethnic group always remain in interaction with other ethnic groups. In fact the concept of ethnicity derives and survives only through interaction among or between different groups between two different groups or among several/ many different groups.

### **2.2.3 Conflict:**

Unlike ethnicity is not much a contested term, though there are differences among scholars regarding the constituents of different kinds of the conflict, but largely there is unanimity regarding the basic elements of any conflict on basis of which a simple definition of conflict may be produced as following:

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<sup>57</sup> Eriksen, T.H. (1995), *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social Anthropology*, London: Pluto Press, p.251.

<sup>58</sup> Boonzaier, E. and J. Sharp (eds) (1988), *South Africa Keywords: The Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts*, Cape town :David Phillip Publication, p.80.

“Conflict is a situation in which more than two participants are involved who have incompatible interests and goals with full determination to achieve their respective goals”. Nature of the conflict is decided by two factors, one by the cause of conflict, social, political, economical or ethnic, one point must be kept in mind that the boundary line between these conflicts is very fragile and generally conflict is manifested in an overlapping manner having the colours of political, social, economical and ethnic as well. Secondly, the nature of the conflict depends on the behavior of parties, whether violent or non-violent. If conflicting parties adopt violent methods it becomes violent and if they adopt non-violent methods, nature of conflict remains non-violent.

Conflict may arise within the territory of a state or outside the territory of the state. Conflict arising in the territory of a state is termed as internal conflict and conflict arising outside the territory of the state is termed as external conflict. Internal conflict may be manifested into the following categories.

1. First Category involves economic, social or political conflict that exists in almost every society.
2. second category involves three bricks of conflict:
  - a. Conflict between armed forces of the state and the dissident armed groups in the state, as happened in the case of Sudan.
  - b. Conflict in a state where the state government has collapsed and conflict carried out among the armed dissident groups as happened in Somalia.
  - c. Conflict among the dissident groups themselves without the involvement of states armed forces as happened in Ethiopia.
3. Third type of conflict arises when a conflict of social, cultural or political nature marks a radical transit to an armed confrontation because a distinct group of individuals is being aware of their domination, deprivation and inequalities challenges the status quo in the existing political regime, which further may lead to involvement of states' armed forces.

This distinct group forms an ethnic group, whose members share a common culture, values languages and history conflict, which arises because of above stated cause and involved district groups of individuals on the basis of culture history, language, is termed as ethnic conflict.



## CHAPTER-II

### NATURE AND CAUSES OF CONFLICT IN DJIBOUTI

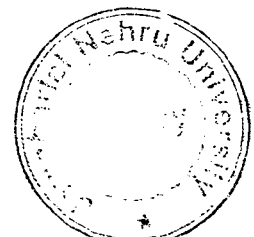
#### 2.1 NATURE OF CONFLICT IN DJIBOUTI

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The nature of any conflict is decided by two factors, first, what is the central point of a conflict, which might be, political, social and economic, resource conflict and ethnic conflict. Secondly, what is the pattern of occurrence of the conflict, whether it is occurring on a violent pattern or on a non-violent pattern. In fact, there is a very thin boundary which separates above said conflict. Any social conflict is bound to involve an element of political, economical conflict. Every political conflict has the elements of economic conflict. Only ethnic conflict differs from above said conflicts. Any conflict of political, social, economic nature becomes ethnic conflict when the contending parties, organize on the ethnic lines against each other. Social conflict is the product of a kind of state that acts not in accordance with democratic urge of the people. Contradictions originate in a society when the state adopts an uneven development pattern, which leads to the process of social groupings. The social groups are themselves contradictory in nature but at a certain phase of time they cross the intra-conflict boundary and appears to challenge the state authority. Thus, social conflict is the persistent historical reality, in an unequal society<sup>1</sup>.

Political conflict is a conflict in which the issue of conflict between the conflicting parties is to achieve political power. In this case, one social group monopolize political power and other tries to get it whether by violent or non-violent means. Social grouping is a consistent phenomenon due to the reorganization of everyday life; therefore, the groups are main actors in collective interest. Formation of social groupings are based on two paradigms; one is based on economic and other is based on non-economic paradigm.

<sup>1</sup> Malakar, S.N.(1994), *Emerging Paradigms of Social Conflict and Challenges to the States in the Horn of Africa: A Conceptual Analysis, New Occasional Paper Series*, New Delhi: Academy of Third World Studies, Jamia Milia Islamia,, p. 1.



Social groupings on economic paradigms are based on the productive forces in economic or productional activities while the second kind of group can be defined on the basis that groups bound together by primordial 'liemeinschaft, ties of language kinship, religion and common history, which can be in the form of ethnic, clan, tribe, caste and so on.<sup>2</sup> Economic conflict can be simply defined as a conflict regarding the economic issues which are raised by those who are economically backward because of the existing social inequalities. Ethnic conflict is a conflict in which a distinct social group, who shares a common language, a common history, a common culture and common values, being aware of their deprivation and marginalization by other ethnic group, wage a struggle against their deprivation and domination by the dominant ethnic group.

Conflict in Djibouti is social, political, economic and ethnic as well. This is social because it erupted when Djibouti's regime dominated by Issa members did not act in accordance with the wishes of democratic urge of the people. It is political, because the objective of conflicting parties is to secure political power through the introduction of multi-party system in Djibouti. Conflict in Djibouti also represents the economic element. In fact, the Afar's economic backwardness prompted them to achieve political power. In Djibouti, Issa and Afar conflict is reflecting the economic interests of both the communities with a utter hostile attitude.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it also represents the ethnic conflict because the conflicting parties are divided along the ethnic lines, Afars versus Issas. But, a remarkable feature of the conflict in Djibouti is the absence of rigid ethnic boundaries. In fact, ethnic boundaries has been blurred in the conflict dynamics of Djibouti and several times Afars and clans of Issa ethnic group come together to oppose authoritarian regime of President Hassan Gouled Aptidon. Djibouti's conflict is an ethnic conflict, which is derived from the ethnic roots of two major inhabitant of the territory. Regarding the violent or non-violent issues, Djibouti's conflict from the very beginning has been a violent conflict.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp.1-7,

<sup>3</sup> Ibid p.52.

## **2.2 CAUSES OF ETHNIC CONFLICT IN DJIBOUTI**

Having determined the nature of the conflict we can now turn to discuss the causes of ethnic conflict in Djibouti which has devastated the country for almost two and half decades, from 1977 to May 2001, when the second Peace–Accord between the radical wing of FRUD led by Ahmad Dini and the President of the Republic of Djibouti, Ismael Omar Gelleh was signed. Causes of this conflict in Djibouti could be traced as both external and internal. External causes included the colonial legacies, regional factors–role of Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and refugees. Internal causes were the socio-political and economic condition of Djibouti.

Even if, our focus is conflict in post – independent Djibouti but the causes can not be analyzed properly, without paying attention to colonial legacies as one of the external cause of ethnic conflict in Djibouti. Since colonial legacies are the out come of colonial policies therefore it becomes necessary to have a bird’s eye view of French colonial policies.

### **2.2 (a) COLONIAL POLICY OF FRANCE:**

French colonial policy incorporated the concepts of ‘assimilation’ and ‘association’. Assimilation pre-supposed the inherent superiority of French culture over all others, so that in practice the assimilation policy in the colonies meant extension of the French language, culture, institutions, laws and customs. In fact, the French approach to colonialism was based on the ideal of integrating its colonial subjects into a ‘Greater France’ through cultural assimilation and administrative centralization.<sup>4</sup> The policy of association also affirmed the superiority of the French culture in the colonies, but it entailed different institutions and system of laws for the colonizer and colonized, it implies that between conquerors and the conquered, i.e. between white and black people

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<sup>4</sup> Azam, Jean Paul (2001), “The Redistributive State and conflict in Africa”, *Journal of Peace Research*, London: Sage Publication, p.479.

relationship should be one of association not one of identity and merging. It emphasized co-operation between rulers and the ruled. Association was to be applied where it was not possible or rational to apply assimilation. While, adopting the policy of assimilation French had an idea in their mind to create a class of Africans who would learn the French language and imbibe French culture to the extent that these could be absorbed as equal both in France and in the colonies. These assimilated Africans would provide the locally manufactured staff to fill the lower grades of administration and to work as a safety valve in case trouble arises in the colony.

Regarding the administrative policy French view was influenced by European continental tradition of centralized administration. French were legal minded, bound to the continental tradition of centralized administration. The French thus based their government on centralized rule from Paris and on the same administrative concept that dominated their outlook at home <sup>5</sup>. Therefore, over concentration of power became marked feature in the governance of the French colony. In Paris, the Minister of Colonies had combined executive and legislative powers over the collection of African territories. Under him two Governor Generals administered the colonies in Africa. In each constituent territory, a Lieutenant Governor was responsible for the maintenance of order for the smooth functioning of the state. Below him at the level of district administration, the Commandant represented in person the mystique of imperial authority.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, the French had very diverse form of administration, but based on one principle, according to time and space. For example, they put Algeria under a Governor General whereas Tunisia was French Protectorate under a French Resident General with the Bay of Tunis the nominal head of the state. The federation of West Africa was under a Governor General so were Madagascar, Mayotee and the Comoros.

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<sup>5</sup> Gann, L.H. and Peter Buighanan (1968), *Burden of Empire: An Appraisal of Western Colonization in Africa South of Sahara*, London: Pall Mall Press, pp. 270-280.

<sup>6</sup> Gupta, Anirudh, *Government and Politics in Africa, A Comparative Survey of Political Process and Institution*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., p.17.

French Somaliland, now the Republic of Djibouti and Reunion were put under separate authority of Governor General. Formal authority to enact legislation for the colonies was vested with the government in Paris. However, in practice colonial law was usually a matter of presidential decree or ordinance enacted by the colonial Governor. French divided their local territories into circles, which were under the commandants and under him indigenous chiefs worked as an instrument. Highly centralized nature of administration is reflected in a directive issued by a French Governor General in 1917, stating that “there are not two authorities in a Circle (the unit of local administration), French and indigenous authority; there is only one. Along the circle, Commandant commands; alone he is responsible. The indigenous chief is only an instrument, an auxiliary”<sup>7</sup>.

Indeed, African chiefs were allowed to head only the lowest echelons of the administrative pyramid and even the concessions were allowed only so long as the particular chief remained subservient to French directives<sup>8</sup>. Thus it becomes clear that the French colonial policy of ‘Assimilation’ and ‘Association’ was more to suit French interest. The highly centralized nature of French administration replaced the traditional authorities and traditional institutions by bureaucratic agencies of colonial state. Both factors contributed to make post-colonial state and society in Africa, surely not excluding Djibouti, prone to violent ethnic conflict.

Now, having discussed French colonial policy in nutshell we can conveniently discuss the causes of conflict in Djibouti in the following categories:-

## **(A) EXTERNAL FACTORS**

### **2.2.1 Colonial Legacies:**

Colonial legacies have always been one of the reasons of conflict in post-colonial states in Africa and Djibouti is not an exception to the rule. Colonial policy adopted by France

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<sup>7</sup> Tate, H.R. (1940), “The French Colonial Empire”, *Journal of Royal African Society*, 39(157)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

resulted in the intra-community tension in Djibouti. Intra community tension in Djibouti was the result of the creation of ethnicity and arbitrary borders that were drawn during the Berlin Conference in 1885, which resulted in the 'Scramble for Africa'. With the inheritance of intra-community tension, the colonial rule also left the Djibouti as a failed state which made the eruption of ethnic conflict inevitable.

### **2.2.1 (a) Creation of Ethnicity:**

An influential trend in scholarly writing on Sub-Saharan Africa locates the origin of ethnicity in the colonial period. Jean Francis Bayart asserts that the precipitation of ethnic identities becomes incomprehensible if it is divorced from colonial rule<sup>9</sup>. Ethnicity as a relational concept was present in pre-colonial Africa but society was not composed of distinct boundaries rather than the dominant characteristics of pre-colonial societies were mobility, overlapping networks, multiple group membership and the flexible content dependent on drawing of boundaries. People were considered being composed of various elements traits and relations to other persons.

It was only under European colonial rule that new political institutions and administrative measures were introduced the concept of individual, personal identity, together with its collective counterparts, culturally and linguistically distinct tribes and nations. The social construction of modern form of ethnicity, differentiated from the form of pre-colonial Africa, is co-terminus with the development of the structure and culture of colonialism. The structural characteristic of the colonial state, one among others, was the apparatus of authoritarian bureaucratic control. Throughout the colonial Africa the European rulers were forced to make use of local chiefs and other traditional functionaries in administration<sup>10</sup>. With this, the strategic logic of political control in colonies rested on particular application of divide and rule<sup>11</sup>. The introduction of this authoritarian bureaucratic control in administration and its application according to the

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<sup>9</sup> Welsh, David (1996), " Ethnicity in sub-Saharan Africa", *International Affairs*, 73 (3), p.480

<sup>10</sup> Berman, J Bruce (1998), "Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism," *African Affairs*, 97 (386), p.312

<sup>11</sup> Welsh, David (1996), " Ethnicity in sub-Saharan Africa", *International Affairs*, 73 ( 3), p.479.

above stated strategic logic resulted into the material well being of a group at the cost of other's marginalization and deprivation which further led the development of ethnic categorization within the context of social inequality, as an instrument for the stabilization or re-establishment of this inequality. This inequality is not only found between two different groups but among the clans of a same group too. For example, in Djibouti, the clan of the ex-President Hassan Gouled Aptidon control of which becomes more evident in the election of new president Ismail Omar Gelleh who too belongs to Clan of Issa ethnic group. One thing must be borne in mind that above stated factor is one among others which led to the ethnic categorization in colonial Africa, others are colonial political economy based on Africa cash crops and wage labor in capitalist commodity and labor markets<sup>12</sup> but for our purpose only above, stated factor will be taken into account.

French adopted the policy of assimilation as the main plank of their colonial policy to create local African elites for the administrative purpose and for the safety valve purpose. These local leaders were not drawn from amongst the existing indigenous authorities. Instead, the French created new elite by conferring a French education on ambitious but co-operative locals. They were trained in French language and culture and in the administrative skills required to serve as effective agents of the colonial states. As the functionaries of the European administration, the newly assimilated elite also served as an indigenous counterweight to traditional indigenous elite, which created almost a permanent rift between two ethnic groups demarcating a rigid boundary departing from the pre-colonial conception of flexible and permeable boundary. In the case of Djibouti, demand for independence was initiated by Issa community but was not joined by Afar community. One of the reason among others of this was French changed attitudes towards the Issa community when they joined the movement for 'Greater Somalia' in the decade of 1960s France began to favour Afar community which resulted in the almost permanent boundary between Issa and Afar community which was exhibited during the French President Pompidou's visit in 1973, which was boycotted by the Hassan Gouled Aptidon who gave a boycott call against President's visit and demanded for restructuring

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<sup>12</sup> Berman, J Bruce (1998), "Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism," *African Affairs*, 97 (386), p.312

of relations but French Premier was given red carpet welcome by the territorial premier Ali Aref Buorhan, an Afar<sup>13</sup>. One point must be noted here that both these individuals were assimilated into French culture and were the representatives of 'assimilated elites' of their respective groups. But they differed in their opinion regarding French continued possession of the Djibouti, which was the result of, the degree of their assimilation. In fact, assimilation was never uniform across any given colony. Certain ethnic groups within the colony gained disproportionate access to French education and therefore disproportionate access to high posts in French colonial administration. Hassan Gouled and Ali Aref Bourhan, both were assimilated elites into French culture but during the time of the visit, Bourhan was the Premier of the territory and Mr. Gouled was leader of a political party, People's Africa League<sup>14</sup> that was demanding a restructuring of relations with France. The fall out of the policy of assimilation was more dangerous for the local people those elites of two different ethnic groups.

In fact, the French applied the doctrine of assimilation, in geographical sense, only to the extent where her material interest were to be found and safe guarded, which led to the development of one area of any particular territory and marginalization of another area. The ethnic groups who traditionally inhabited the administrative capital of the colony and its major commercial enclaves simply had greater access to French education and opportunities and the developmental activities undertaken by the French in the colony were restricted to those area only, which ensured the relative development, of the inhabitant of these areas and marginalization of the inhabitants of remote area, making the looser in this area who in turn being aware of their plight and falsely held the others ethnic group responsible for this.

In the case of Djibouti, from this view point, we can well apply the epiphenomenal approach of ethnicity which divides the economic structure of society into two sectors, centre and periphery. Periphery consists of marginal jobs whose products are not important to the society but it offers little in the form of compensation as compared to the

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<sup>13</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin* (1973), 10 (1,) p.2725.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p.2725.



jobs in the centre. The inhabitants of the periphery feel themselves marginalized and deprived as the recipient of the fruits of development process and they hold benefited ethnic group responsible for their status not the colonial power. The benefited group in turn begins to think themselves as superior and more compatible than the other who still were in the process of development. Moreover, the permeable boundary of ethnic identity becomes impermeable and hostility between two groups begins. In the case of Djibouti it was the Afar ethnic group which found itself deprived and marginalized as the inhabitants of northern part of the country.

French opportunism was another factor for creating impermeable ethnic boundaries in Djibouti, which might be considered as the culmination of that strategic logic of divide and rule which was one of the guiding star of colonial policies practiced by the European colonialist. The French opportunism is well reflected in adopting the policy of favoring one ethnic group or another according to time and space. It is but natural that unfavoured ethnic group grew a feeling of resentment towards favored ethnic group.

The initial name 'Colony of Obock' was supposed to reflect the conditions of 1862 treaty signed with Afar Sultan of Roheita, which marks the beginning of the French presence in the region. France claimed that it has sought the territory of Obock. But, this claim was contested by Sultan Dini Mohammed Bourhan who objected that property rights to the territory had not been ceded, because this is strictly impossible under Afar common law. Only use can be the subject of transaction; property can never change owner according to common law, even the Sultan cannot change this. From that point and onwards the French policy was to negate the existence of Afars, also called Danakils, at that time they were viewed as an obstacle to further colonial penetration. The second name chosen 'French Somali Coast' reflected this negation. In 1967, the need to combat Somali irredentism led to the adoption of Third Appellation, namely the Afar and Issa territory.<sup>15</sup> During this period French adopted the policy of appeasement toward Issas and latter on towards Afars.

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<sup>15</sup> Kadamy Mohamed (1996), "Djibouti Between war and Peace", *Review of African Political Economy*, (70), p.72.

Thus, it is evident that ethnicity which was the main reason of conflict, is the product of the colonial rule which means that this era was characterized by marginalization and deprivation of one community and well-off than other, aggravating the feeling of resentment and creating the rift between the two ethnic groups. Despite the policy of assimilation opportunities for assimilation were not available equally to different ethnic groups in the colony which set the stage for post-colonial stratification along the ethnic lines. The French administrative machinery of the post-colonial state remained largely unchanged during the transition to independence. In fact, machinery changed hands not the parts. By capturing control over the administrative machinery of the post-colonial state, the 'modernized elite' that the French had empowered remained in positions of authority, to the exclusion of other groups within the society. Therefore, ethnic groups that failed to assimilate in the colonial political order found themselves disadvantaged in the post-colonial political order too. Therefore, it is evident that the seeds of ethnic identities and ethnic conflict in the post-colonial state were sown during the colonial period. In Djibouti, it was the Afar community which found itself unable to be assimilated in the colonial order therefore in the post colonial state it found itself out of the political power which was captured and controlled by the Issa ethnic group, which further led the ethnic conflict in Djibouti.

### **2.2.1. (b) Arbitrary Border Regime :**

Like the creation and solidification of ethnicity, arbitrary borders imposed on African states is another colonial legacy which accelerated the intra-community tensions in post-colonial Africa and surely not excluding Djibouti. Arbitrary border regime in post-colonial Africa was the result of the 'Berlin Conference', which ensured the Scramble for Africa. Upholding the 'Hinterland Doctrine' and legitimized grabbing of territories for the imperialist power could claim sovereignty over the hinterland after a coastal settlement has been established.<sup>16</sup> During the partition, care was not taken to maintain

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<sup>16</sup> Bhardwaj, G. Raman (1979), *The Dilemma of the Horn of Africa*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., p.28.

ethnic homogeneity as far as possible. Interestingly this partition took place in Germany in 1885. Colonial masters partitioned Africa by just looking into the map and not taking into account the ground realities but accepting mountains, rivers etc as political boundary. During the transition to independence no efforts were made to correct it and it became international boundary of post-colonial states in Africa. The major fall out of this in the post-colonial Africa is the problem of nationalism and the inheritance of dual identity, which meant the recognition of one's to his own ethnic group more than the citizen of state itself which implies having loyalty towards the corresponding ethnic group in other state across the border.

Djibouti was the part of Somaliland which was divided by the colonial powers into five different regions (1) Italian Somaliland (2) British Somaliland (3) French Somaliland (4) parts of Somaliland ceded to Kenya and now claimed by Somalia (5) parts of Ogaden ceded to Ethiopia.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, Somaliland was partitioned among, France, Italy and Britain in 1885. Ethiopia made a case after its victory over Italy in Sudan in 1896, which compelled British and Italians to consider it prudent to reach a compromise with Ethiopia. The exigencies of the situation demanded the surrender Ogaden and other areas to Ethiopia in order to acquire a hold on the Horn of Africa by the Europeans<sup>18</sup>.

This arbitrary demarcation of border proved fatal for the post-colonial state and emerged as one of the causes of conflict in states. The horn is the home to the largest remaining aggregation of traditional livestock producers in the world. Vast expanses of land in the arid zone, which makes the largest part of each state's territory- 52% in Ethiopia, 66% in Sudan, 70% in Eritrea, 72% in Kenya, 75% in Somalia and in Djibouti 100% are pastoralist habitat<sup>19</sup>. These pastoralists in the pre-colonial period were used to free movement in search of pastures. Most of them had no experience of the institution 'state'

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.29.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.30.

<sup>19</sup> Markakis, J.(1998), *Resource Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, New Delhi: Sage Publication Ltd., pp.41-42.

before the colonial penetration. The demarcated borders during the colonial period passed through the lowland pastoralists habitat which divided the many pastoralist ethnic groups among several states. In the worst instance the Somalis were partitioned among no less than five state units Ethiopia, French Djibouti, British Somaliland, Italian Somalia and British Kenya.

Their Afar neighbors were divided between Ethiopia, Italian Somalia and British Kenya. Their Afar neighbors were divided between Ethiopia, Italian Eritrea and French Djibouti<sup>20</sup>. There is hardly any major pastoral group which lies entirely within the boundaries of one state in the Horn of Africa but they are scattered in different countries. Though the state and political boundaries are present reality, pastoralists considered it non-existent because of the obvious reasons. Seasonality is the main determinant of pastoralist's livelihood in which seasonal movement through known migratory routes, established kinship networks and long standing traditional political alliance become the base for their way of life. This characteristic compels them to disobey the state boundaries and they do whenever they find it possible. Pastoralists believe that they have always existed within their own 'ethnic territory', which extends over the boundary of several of present states and nations<sup>21</sup>. During the drought and famine they try to cross the state boundary in search of pastures and are stopped by border security forces.

In fact, the recurrence of drought, famine and war has produced large movement of people seeking refuge across borders, whose presence is widely noted in border areas. Pastoralists on the borders exhibit all the features of marginalized nations, many of which have joined some kind of liberation movement seeking separation or greater autonomy from the centralized states of the Horn. Most border pastoralists have taken part in militant movements that challenged the authority of the state. The Afar in Ethiopia have their Afar Liberation Front (ALF). In addition, Front pour la restauration de l' unite et de la democratie).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.42.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.45.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, pp.45-46.

In fact, the arbitrary demarcation of borders by colonial masters disturbed the traditional values and livings and when they introduced market economy the traditional inhabitants found themselves in worst condition, in the post-colonial state when they find themselves deprived and unable to improve their condition because of the arbitrary border regime. The only way for them was to be involved in secessionist movements or raise an anti-government armed rebellion in their country, therefore the inherited colonial boundaries are the main contributing factors to the civil war in the Horn, and Djibouti lying in the Horn and being one of the product of arbitrary regime is not an exception to the rule. Afars and Issa, two major inhabitants of the country find themselves divided into other countries, and in their insurgent against government Afars were allegedly supported by Ethiopian based Afar insurgent group, Afar Liberation Front (ALF)<sup>23</sup>. Several allegations were made by FRUD against the government that the army which was used by government to suppress Afar rebellion was composed of militia constituted by Somalian Issas, thus, it is evident that arbitrary border regime played as a catalyst in Djibouti's ethnic conflict.

#### **2.2.1(c) Failed State:**

French colonial rule left a failed state in post independent Djibouti, French left Djibouti politically, socially and economically a failed state, which was not able to fulfill the demands of its citizens and to stop the eruption of civil strife. Politically they left behind administrative machinery, which was discriminatory in nature, and like their colonial centralized administration, it also had the characteristic of centralization of power. Socially, they created a society that was based on mutual agony and the relative deprivation, which was reflected in the political arrangement of that time, of one community. Having favored Afars, because of Somalian call of 'Greater Somaliland', they entered into an unwritten power sharing agreement prior to independence, which

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<sup>23</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin*

ensured that the office of the President was to be occupied by an Issa and the office of the Prime Minister was to be occupied by an Afar<sup>24</sup>.

During such an arrangement French were moved by the fact that Issa constituted the largest number of inhabitants in Djibouti therefore the apex post must be reserved for them, Afars who constituted second largest group were suited only for the post of Prime Minister. One can argue that this was the choice for that time only and future happenings were rested with Djibouti's population. However, this point could be countered easily, since this agreement was unwritten and there was no constitution in Djibouti until 1992, the regime of Hassan Gouled Aptidon made it a rule. Moreover the structure of the future state of Djibouti was established at a Round Table Conference held in Paris in March 1976, chaired by the Secretary of State for the Overseas Dominions and Overseas Territories which was boycotted by several political parties which means French did not take into account the wishes of every faction. By making the post of President to be occupied by Issa community, they reserved the apex post of the country for the Issa community only sowed the seeds of permanent dissatisfaction and deprivation of Afar community forever. About the round table conference and the settlements made in the conference Mohamed Adayata, Vice President of the Movement Populaire de Liberation (MPL), a pre-dominantly Afar opposition organization commented that,

“Every thing points to the fact that the purpose of this round table conference was to hurriedly form a government conforming to French wishes, to set up institutions which would consolidate the absolute power of a single party and thus to stop any public and democratic debate on the contents of independence before independence achieved.”<sup>25</sup>

Confirming the French wishes, Hassan Gouled Aptidon, the first President of the Republic of Djibouti banned MPL in 1977 along with other parties and in 1981 declared Djibouti, by making law, a single party state even if we accept that French reservation for

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<sup>24</sup> Schraeder, Peter. J.(1993), “Ethnic Politics in Djibouti From Eye of the Hurricane to Boiling cauldron” *African Affairs*,92, p.208.

<sup>25</sup> Kadamy Mohamed (1996), “Djibouti Between war and Peace”, *Review of African Political Economy*, (70), p.72.

the Issas to Presidential birth justified because of the logic of majority population, which cannot be justified at all, and Prime Ministerial birth for the Afar community they did not do anything to create at least some parity between the two posts and posts of President emerged as most powerful who was empowered to appoint and dismiss Prime Minister of the republic, which means a permanent subordination of Afar Prime Minister to Issa president, there were no provision of stopping President if he misuses his power to appoint and dismiss Prime Minister. It becomes evident that France left a political system which was discriminatory in nature and in due course of time proved to be one of the major cause of ethnic conflict in Djibouti.

Socially, they left a country in a social disequilibrium which was the result of their policy of switching their favour from one to another groups according to the time and space. Djibouti has been the country of pastoralists who were used to live within their ethnic boundaries; the introduction of centralized administration along with the policy of assimilation disturbed the social equilibrium. Centralized administration brought all ethnic groups under one local master and the policy of assimilation resulted in the well being of one ethnic community over another creating the rift between two communities. Pastoralists who were the inhabitant of the northern part found themselves deprived during the colonial era and in post-colonial era their deprivation and marginalization continued. In post-colonial state political power was captured by those who were more assimilated and more benefited during the colonial era, Issas, being the inhabitant of southern areas were more benefited than Afar pastoralist and found themselves in better position in post-colonial state which was evident by the reservation of the open post for the Issas, under the political arrangement of newly independent Djibouti. French colonial policies and their policy of giving undue favour to one community over another, which was guided by the exigencies of time, created the hatred and agony between the both major communities.

Economically, the colonial powers developed an infrastructure with a view to facilitate exploitation. Whatever economic infrastructure French developed in Djibouti, it was to suit their own interest. Two major infrastructure projects, which were under taken by

France, were the manufacturing of Djibouti Port and Djibouti-Adis Ababa Railway zone. France, except creating these two infrastructures did not create any other major infrastructure project. Constructing the Djibouti Port was a major step which still is the major source of income of Djibouti but the fruit of development, if any was there to be realized, became the monopoly of the indigenous people were localized in surrounding areas of Djibouti Port. Construction of the Adis Ababa-Djibouti Railway Line made both Djibouti and Ethiopia interdependent economically which was titled in the favour of Ethiopia as the major portion of railway line falls into Ethiopian side. These infrastructures were not able to absorb the whole working population. Along with it, French destroyed the traditional economic structure by the introduction of new economic structure whose nature was commercial and which worked on the basis of cost benefit analysis. Neither France did anything positive to improve the standard of people nor it took care about uniform development or at least maintaining some parity in development process between the regions of country which resulted in the emergence of centre and periphery like regions within the country, further creating rift among the ethnic communities in general and between two major communities in particular. Thus it's evident that while destroying the traditional economic structure of Djibouti, France introduced a system which could not provide Djibouti a successful alternate, even the Djibouti Port and Djibouti-Adis Ababa railway link did not culminate in the satisfactory development of the territory. Therefore, it can be said that France left Djibouti economically not in a good position.

In fact, colonial legacies played a role of catalyst in the ethnic conflict in Djibouti. It was the colonial rule which sow the seeds of mutual hatred, ethnic cleavages and underdevelopment. The long colonial rule left a weak economy as well as fragile social and administrative infrastructure which further caused the ethnic conflict and civil war in Djibouti.



### **2.2.2: Regional Factor:**

The historical links of Djibouti and its inhabitant, with her neighbouring state, makes Djibouti internal social and political dimension to be influenced by her neighbouring states. Historically, Djibouti was the part of Somalia and both countries have Issa population. Djibouti was never the part of Ethiopia but the second largest inhabitants of Djibouti Afars have their roots in Ethiopia, who had accepted the suzerainty of Haile Selassie<sup>26</sup>. In fact, the interest of Ethiopia in Djibouti as other reasons too. Internal socio-political dynamics in Djibouti, has always been influenced by its neighboring state's internal situation and by their mutual involvement too, for e.g, during the 1977-78 Ogaden war between Ethiopia and Somalia, regional conflict prompted Djiboutian nationals to take up arms against each other through clandestine movements supported by both Ethiopia and Somalia. Disturbance in the social harmony of neighbouring states influenced the social harmony of Djibouti. Newly independent Eritrea has not shown any particular interest in Djibouti's internal affairs but she is too concerned because inhabitants of Eritrea are mostly Afars.

#### **2.2.2 (a) Ethiopia:**

Ethiopia has natural interest in Djibouti's socio-political dynamics because of the following reasons:- Djibouti provides Ethiopia with its only rail link to the sea. If it were to loose Masawa and Assab to Eritrea (or even corridors of these ports were seriously threatened). Djibouti would become even more vital to Ethiopia<sup>27</sup>. This fear which was expressed by Collin Legum and Bill Lee came true with the independence of Eritrea in 1991 which made Ethiopia a land locked country and fully dependent on Djibouti's Port and railway link between Djibouti and Adis Ababa. Secondly, the fear of Somalia's domination over Djibouti or Djibouti's annexation to Somalia.

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<sup>26</sup> Bhardwaj, G. Raman (1979), *The Dilemma of the Horn of Africa*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. p.121.

<sup>27</sup> Legum Collin and Bill Lee (1977), *Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, London: Rev. Collins Ltd., p.29.

<sup>27</sup> Legum Collin and Bill Lee (1977), *Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, London: Rev. Collins Ltd., p.29.

The quest of “Greater Somaliland” worried Ethiopia, since the affinity of political regime in Djibouti has always remained tilted towards Somalia. Because the ex-President Hassan Goulde Aptidon and current head of state Ismail Omar Gelleh both belong to Issa community, therefore Djiboutian regime has always been remained within the close proximity of Somalia rather than Ethiopia, given economic interest vested in Djibouti Ethiopia cannot remain silent spectator in the whole process and it used its influence to get the things in Djibouti according to her. Thirdly the presence of Afar ethnic group in Djibouti who feel affinity towards the Afars of Ethiopia, made Djibouti a case of special concern for Ethiopia. Moreover, the entanglement between Ethiopia and Somalia have adverse effect for Djibouti’s peace and prosperity. The Ethio-Somalian conflict led to an abrupt stoppage of the Adis Ababa Djibouti railway section throwing the entire Djiboutian economy into disarray. When the railway line re-opened offer the Ethiopian victory, it was bombed the next day. The continuing activities of the Somalian guerillas in Ogaden and the war of liberation in Eritrea do not permit a normalization of the Djiboutian situation<sup>28</sup>. In the post-independent Djibouti, the Afar rebellion against Issa dominated government was supported by Ethiopia according to the belief of Djibouti’s government. During the Afar uprising in 1991 on November 12<sup>th</sup> when Afari forces of the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD) engaged the Djiboutian National Army (ADN) in the vicinity of Tadjourah.

The Foreign Minister of Djibouti Moumin Bahdon Farah claimed that the rebels were not members of the opposition but had invaded the country from within Ethiopia<sup>29</sup>. Not only at this time but at other occasion Djiboutian authority blamed Ethiopia for the civil strife in their country. In a statement on *Radio France Internationale*, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bahdon Farah, accused the rebels belonging to former Afar militia in Ethiopia created by Colonel Mengistu, “ who sought to realize their dream for an Afar state, uniting in one state the Afars of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti”<sup>30</sup>. These are the

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<sup>28</sup> Bhardwaj, G. Raman (1979), *The Dilemma of the Horn of Africa*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., p.125.

<sup>29</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin* (1991), 28 (11), p.10349.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p.10350.

allegations made by Issa dominated government whose credibility might be doubtful, as this regime was closer to Somalia.

But the Ethiopian interest involved Ethiopia in territory especially the fear of Somali to get more preferential treatment, suggest a possible involvement of Ethiopian element in Afar led insurgency in Djibouti. Nevertheless, the allegation of Ethiopian involvement in the ethnic struggle of Djibouti has been always been denied by FRUD members. It is interesting to note that not only the government but also FRUD itself blamed government's army to be constituted of Ethiopian element. Today the Djibouti army is little more than a rag tag, clan based militia strengthened by mercenaries from Somalia and Ethiopia constituted of members of Issa community, noted an observer. During the 1993 major offensive launched by government against Afar in the northern region.<sup>31</sup>

If we analyze the claim of the Djibouti's government about FRUD to be constituted of members from Ethiopia, we certainly find chinks in the government's logic. Afar Liberation Front (ALF) is an Ethiopia based Afar radical organization whose one of the stated goal is to create an independent 'Greater Afar' country out of portions of present day Djibouti, Ethiopia and Eritrea – is contradictory to the FRUD's stated goal of maintaining the territorial integrity of Djibouti. The Afar problem in Djibouti has always remained a different case from Ethiopian problem.

In Ethiopia, the aim and objective of ALF which is to create a 'Greater Afar land' puts it in the category of secessionist movement while the Afar rebels in Djibouti never declared in writing or practice the creation of greater Afar land as their objectives and maintaining the territorial integrity of Djibouti has always seen in their strategy. The bone of contention in Djibouti was to make political institutions more representative and equal representation of Afar ethnic group not only in government but also in civil services and army. The Afars main demands were ethnic parity in the army and the constitutional

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid (1993), 30 (11), p.11236.

revision to grant real powers to the Afar Prime Minister counterbalancing the Issa President<sup>32</sup>.

Therefore, the Afar movement in Djibouti and Afar movement in Ethiopia are both of different nature and struggling for different goal. Therefore, it becomes evident that AFL and FRUD are different organization with different aims. However, it does not mean that Ethiopia does not play any role in the ethnic conflict of Djibouti. Whenever there has been any problem, whether within Ethiopia or involving Ethiopia on regional level it always had some influence on ethnic conflict in Djibouti. For example, during the Somali – Ethiopian Conflict in 1976, Somali guerillas had attacked and heavily damaged a train of Franco- Ethiopian Railway Company near the town of the Dwelle on the Ethiopia- Djibouti border. The incident reportedly was the second within the month occurred on July 11<sup>th</sup>, three kms. From Dwelle inside Ethiopia<sup>33</sup>.By damaging this train guerillas damaged the Djibouti's economy which largely hovers around this service. Moreover, whenever there is any ethnic clash in Ethiopia, its echoes are heard in Djibouti also. Inter ethnic clash broke out in Djibouti in mid July 1991 which was ignited by a clash between an Issa waiving Djibouti's flag and an Oromo having affinity towards Afar community. The root cause of this ethnic clash was trouble between same ethnic groups in Ethiopia in the previous week<sup>34</sup>. In fact, the strategic location of Djibouti and Ethiopia's economic dependent on her compels Ethiopia to keep the pendulum in Djibouti in her favour, by hook or crook, and Somalia's quest for 'Greater Somaliland' added more dynamics and made Ethiopia more cautious and vigilant about the happenings in Djibouti.

### **2.2.2. (b) Somalia:**

Before the colonial intrusion in the Horn of Africa, the Republic of Djibouti was the part of Somalia which was carved out as French Somaliland which made Djibouti one of the territories involved in the dream of a 'Greater Somalia'<sup>35</sup>, which becomes more evident

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid (1978), 15 (5), p.4851.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid (1978), 15 (7), p.5643

<sup>34</sup> Ibid (1991), 27 (9), p. 6543

<sup>35</sup> Legum Collin and Bill Lee (1977), *Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, London: Rev. Collins Ltd. 1997, p.29

by the comment made on the occasions of independence day of Djibouti. It broadcasted that, "...the Somali nation has not forgotten the wounds inflicted on her by the colonialist, and the five parts into which she was divided. We all remember the various names given to the parts of the Somali territory such as the Somali coast of Djibouti and the reserved area and Haud and how some of them were given away by the colonialists as a gift<sup>36</sup>. In other words, Djibouti's independence today paves the way for the complete freedom of the Somali nation as a whole". It follows 26<sup>th</sup> June 1960, the day the northern region became independent and 1<sup>st</sup> July 1960, the independence day of the southern regions as well as union day of the two parts<sup>37</sup>. No brief description is appropriate to express the joy and jubilation with which the Somali people welcomed Djibouti's independence, for this is the end of one and a half centuries of painful colonial experience. This was the day the Somali people have awaited for a long time, whose delay created much unease and anxiety in every one<sup>38</sup>.

The above broadcast from Mogadishu Radio shows the intensity and genuineness of Somalia's older regime in their previous territories. In fact, if Ethiopia has long been one state with many people, Somalia has long been one people under many states<sup>39</sup> and the quest to bring many Somali people under one state culminated into the conception of 'Greater Somaliland' but interestingly the implementation of this concept was not to be forced, despite the fact that Somalis in Djibouti did not seek reunification with their neighbors. Somalia was the first state to recognize Djibouti and did not press its claims further. But despite of this state stated policy a clandestine movement was organized in Somalia for the independence of northern region by Somali National Movement (SNM) which succeeded in its objective in early 1990s.

Somali National Movement (SNM) found its supporters not only in Somalia but also in neighbouring country, which led tension in Somalia's- Djibouti relation. Relationship

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<sup>36</sup> Africa Research Bulletin (1977), 14 (6), p.4459.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*, p.4459.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, p.4459

<sup>39</sup> Lyons, Terrence (1994), "Crisis on Multiple Levels: Somalia and the Horn of Africa", in Samatar, Ahmed J. (ed), *The Somali Challenge : From Catastrophe to Renewal?*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.197.

between Djibouti and Somalia deteriorated rather suddenly in early May 1991, when the rebel forces of Somali National Movement (SNM) on the morning of May 5<sup>th</sup> attacked Somali government troops in Louyada, a small settlement on the border dividing Djibouti and Somalia. Somali authorities suspected that Djibouti's armed forces were involved in fighting on behalf of SNM and they registered their official protest via Mogadishu Radio, directed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Djibouti.

The Djiboutian Defence Minister Houssein Barkat Siraj denied that his armed forces had been in any way involved in the fighting in Loyada<sup>40</sup>. More than it as a repercussion of this incident, violent clashes broke out on tribal level between Issas and Gadabursis in Djibouti. According to an official communiqué issued by Djiboutian Minister for the Interior during the night of May 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> two people were killed and twenty three others were wounded in fighting at Balbala, in the suburbs of the capital. The Minister appealed to his fellow citizens to take the same neutral stands as the government regarding regional events. He was eluding the situation in the north of the Somalia. Nonetheless, fresh out break of fighting occurred on 6<sup>th</sup> May in Djibouti on Avenue 26, then on May 9<sup>th</sup> in Quarter 7 bis<sup>41</sup>.

The reasons for this repercussion of regional event in Djibouti is same as was in the case of Ethiopia. Djibouti and Somalia inhabit the Issa ethnic communities, which constitute the largest population group in Djibouti and in Somali mostly the territory is inhabited by Issa ethnic community whose members are bounded by the bond of affection to their particular ethnic community and to particular clans too. Moreover, condition in Djibouti deteriorated by continuous support to Issa dominated regime in Djibouti from Somalian regime as alleged by FRUD and opposition members. It was also alleged that Hassan Gouled Aptidon, recruited Issa citizens from Somalia and used Somalian crisis in his repression of FRUD rebels. Therefore, it is evident that any event related to ethnic groups in Somalia has its effect and repercussions in Djibouti too.

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<sup>40</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin* (1990), 26 (5), p.9676.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p.9676.

### **2.2.2. (c) Eritrea:**

Eritrea became independent in 1991 and decided that her interest lies in cooperation with Djibouti's government regarding Djibouti's civil war. Mostly inhabited by Afar tribes Eritrea found its cultural interest with Djibouti in squashing any form of autonomy or sovereignty demanding movement on the part of Afars<sup>42</sup>. Eritrea became involved in the civil war in Djibouti. Having large Afar population within its borders it was surprised by initial success of FRUD, and went so far as to arrest the leading figures of FRUD in October 1991, which caused difficulty with Eritrea government itself, because some of its members were irritated by the action taken by the government against Afar. Eritrean Afars in general were very critical of their government's attitude and some Eritrean intellectuals thought it their duty to convey this feeling to President Isais Afwerki, which changed the Eritrean policy towards Djibouti. Eritrea from April 92 and onwards actively promoted a peaceful solution to the crisis. She asked FRUD and the government to find grounds for compromise, as the crisis could have repercussions for the stability of Eritrea itself. During an official visit to Djibouti on 18 December 1993, Isais Afwerki demanded the government to stop its repression of Afar civilians and advised to seek negotiations<sup>43</sup>.

### **2.2.2 (d) Refugees Problem :**

The Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) defines refugees as "every person who, owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reason of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as the result of such fears is unwilling to return to it". In a wider framework it also implies "to any person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either parts or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid (1991), 27 (12), p.10393.

<sup>43</sup> Kadamy Mohamed (1996), "Djibouti Between war and Peace", *Review of African Political Economy*, (70), p.520.

in other place outside his country of origin or nationality”<sup>44</sup>. This definition has been accepted by OAU member states. Countries in the Horn have embraced this principle faithfully. Djibouti is one of the Africa’s smallest countries; she at independence inherited a weak economy as well as fragile social and administrative infrastructure. Worse still, since independence it has suffered from the drought and has since had to bear a heavy burden of refugees, estimated at about 42000 persons or close to 13 percent of the total population.<sup>45</sup>

Refugee inflow in Djibouti has been always a problem, which aggravated the conflict already present there. Most of the refugee inflow in Djibouti comes from Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea. Refugees began to arrive in Large numbers in the region with the outbreak of the war in Ethiopia’s Ogaden region Between 1977 and 1978 and settled in camps, mainly in Ali Sabeih and Dikhil. There refugees made it difficult for the government to provide basic necessities to the refugees itself as government had already less resources at its disposal. Moreover, refugee coming from Ethiopia or Somalia belongs to one of the ethnic group whether Afars or Issas, which could be used by any party or they themselves take part in the conflict. In 1983, Djibouti was the home of some 12000 Ethiopian refugees.

In 1982 refugee population was estimated at 35000 half of them children under the age of 15 and most with pastoral background – which represented more than 10% of local population. In 1985, Djibouti witnessed a new influx of refugee, primarily drought victims from Ethiopia and Somalia, estimated at 15000 and representing nearly 5% of Djibouti’s total population. At the end of the 1985 these were still approximately 17000 refugees in Djibouti, mostly Ethiopians. In response to a 1991 General Assembly resolution the Secretary General submitted in August a report prepared by UNDP, containing information on special economic assistance to Djibouti.

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<sup>44</sup> Adepoju Aderauti (Spring –summer, 1952), “The Refugee Situation in the Horn of Africa, and Sudan” *A Journal of Opinion*, 12 (1-2), p. 29.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.29.



The situation, it noted in the Horn of Africa had resulted in an influx of over 100000 refugees and displaced persons into Djibouti swelling its population by 20% and exacerbating the already food shortage caused by drought<sup>46</sup>.

## **(B) Internal Causes for the ethnic conflict in Djibouti**

Since independence in 1977, President Hassan Gouled Aptidon appeared to consider it important that all groups be represented in the three branches of the government. However, ethnic affiliation and political loyalty appeared to be the most important qualification for office. Neither the legislature nor the judiciary was intended to provide a significant challenge to the power of the executive. The army and security forces acted to ensure the President's dictate was law. Civil war erupted in Djibouti in 1991, which was triggered by two main related conditions. Gouled decided to run in 1993 for what termed out to be his last term in office. First supported by his Issa clan, Gouled sought to isolate his opponents imprisoning some and forcing others into exile. Second, Gouled's government faced economic hardship forcing many Djiboutian who were not past of the ruling tribe to ask for reform.

### **2.3 Socio-political dynamics of Djibouti:**

Hassan Gouled Aptidon, a member of Issa ethnic group, became the President of independent Djibouti in 1977, and Ahmed Dini Ahmed was appointed as Prime Minister. Mr. Gouled was chosen as the president by the first National Assembly on June 24, 1977, three days before the territory became independent. Hassan Gouled Aptidon did not provide for any constitution nor he laid down universal human rights. Moreover, he started to monopolize political power for his ethnic group – Issa and particularly for his own clan Mamassan and started to crush the opposition movement, especially the Afars.

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<sup>46</sup> Year Book of United Nations 1992, Department of Public Information, United Nations. New York: UN Publications, 46, p. 579

The nature of his regime was the centralization of authority, in the absence of any constitution he governed the territory through decrees. His ethnic nepotism led to a widespread anger and frustration among the Afar community. Ahmed Dini Ahmed resigned from his post against the tribalism pursued by Gouled's regime and along with Abdallah Khamil formed a new opposition party, Djiboutian People's Party (PPD) which was immediately banned by Gouled's regime. On September 9, 1981, Djiboutian security police arrested 40 supporters of PPD, heads of the PPD were already arrested on September 7<sup>th</sup> 1981. The reason behind these arrests was Gouled's wish to ensure that no viable opposition would be represented in the election scheduled for Spring 1982.<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile in Presidential elections held on May 21<sup>st</sup> 1982, Aptidon was re-elected as the President of Djibouti, and again got re-elected in the election held on April 24 1987, by more than 90% of votes. It was during 1990s when Afar opposition to Gouled's regime became more radical. With the formation of FRUD in 1990s, Afar opposition got more radicalized. Meanwhile, Djiboutian security forces continued to launch their offensive against Afar members for one reason or another. But, the sinister design behind all these offensive was to prevent them to form a viable political opposition party which would be able of challenging Gouled's regime. In 1990 June, Djiboutian armed forces carried out raids on Afar opposition members in Tadjoura, Obock and Dikhil. The Indian Ocean Newsletter commented that the authorities seem to justify the raids particularly aimed at Afar opponents of the regime by saying that armed element are suspected of having infiltrated the territory, which was out rightly rejected by the opposition. By all these activities against Afars, Gouled prepared the ground for the further radicalization of young Afar members. In February 1991, another Afar leader M. Ali Aref Bourhan was charged with murder, attempted murder and undermining the state security. In recent years, Djibouti's small Afar community has been the target of government attacks, especially those who were seen as political opponents<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin*(1981), 18 ( 8), p.6177

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid* (1990), 27(6), p.9731.

Authoritarian wishes of President Gouled became more evident during the fifth party congress of RPP, which was chaired by the head of the state Hassan Gouled Aptidon, in which denying the multi party system, it was decided to keep RPP as the only forum in which all opinion to be freely expressed. It was decided that because of the specific requirements of the country it will remain one party state.<sup>49</sup> Regarding the atrocities by the government over Afar minorities Amnesty International reported that 300 people had been detained for a year without trial and are often being tortured.<sup>50</sup> In fact, the Gould's regime was determined for Issa dominance in the government institutions and was ready to overthrow any kind of opposition. Resignation of members of Issa ethnic group from RPP and government put the seal of tribalism on Gouled's regime, e.g. resignation of Djama Elabe, who belonged to Issa community resigned from the government. In the draft constitution which was to be submitted for referendum, Gouled introduced an element of his sinister design by incorporating the principle of one headed power which means centralization of power in the hand of president as against two headed power a powerful President and an authoritative Prime Minister. Gouled said that the division of power between President and Prime – Minister, will be against the national interest and would destabilize the country.

Atrocities against Afar ethnic group continued as was evident by Arhiba massaese in which police opened fire on the inhabitarts of Arhiba quarters (mainly populated by the Afars), who were peacefully demonstrating their support for Mr. Ali Aref.<sup>51</sup> Military pressure from FRUD and diplomatic pressure from France compelled Gouled to introduce multi-party system and in July 92 through a referendum which reliability is doubtful as reported by ADDHL. Meanwhile, atrocities against Afar rebels were continued which in many cases amounted to ethnic cleansing indeed.

The government installed in post independent period was authoritarian and anti-Afar minorities. Ethnic nepotism became the policy of Gouled's regime which led the frustration among the Afar minorities and in Issa ethnic group, except Mammasan clan,

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid (1990) (3), p10047.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid (1991), 28 (11), p.10349.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid (1992), 29 (7), p.10657.

to which president Hassan Gouled Himself was belonging. The objective of the opposition parties was to oust Gouled's regime and introduce multi-party system in Djibouti. Their struggle were jolted again by Gouled's decision of contesting election of 1993. Gouled's lust for power further deteriorated the condition in Djibouti. From the beginning of his first tenure in 1977, to the last Gouled's main thrust was on 'isolationist approach'. He adopted the policy of isolating his adversaries whether through conferring exile or putting them behind bar with this it also seems that he always believed in carrot and stick policy, which becomes evident by analyzing the number of persons accused and imprisoned by his regime and the number of amnesties he gave to his adversaries for example Aden Robleh Awaleh, who was sentenced on september 7, 1987 was pardoned by Aptidon on July 9<sup>th</sup> 1992. M. Robleh was accused of trying to destabilize the country and of attempted assassination after a bomb was placed in the head quarters of RPP in 1987 November.

The charge to attempt to destabilize country is not of light character, in fact equivalent to sedition. No body knows what led Gouled to pardon a present changed with such a serious nature of crimes.

Gouled regime continued its offensive against Afar ethnic groups. After the 1999 election in which Gouled didn't contest, Ismail Omar Gelleh became the new President. Guelleh's approach is better than that of Gouled, who initiated the peace process from new point. In fact the socio- political dynamic of independent Djibouti was characterized by one party authoritarian rule, Issas domination over political power and in civil services and military, relative deprivation of Afars in all fields, politics, civil services and in military.

Ethnic cleavages not only inter -ethnic but intra-ethnic too as was evident by Gouled's ethnic nepotism and widespread feeling of resentment and frustration among the Afar members, which was ignited by the tribalistic regime's isolationist approach which finally made the conflict inevitable.

## CHAPTER III

### HISTORY OF CONFLICT IN DJIBOUTI (1977-2005)

#### 3.1 GROUPS INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT:

##### 3.1 (a) **Reassemblement populaire pour la progress:- (RPP):**

It's the successor of Ligue Populaire Africaine pour l'Independence (LPAI), which was formed as a unified political movement in pre-independent period and was led by Hassan Gouled Aptidon, who renamed LPAI as RPP in March 1979. Gouled led the party, which has been ruling since independence. From independence to 1999, when Ismail Omar Guelleh became President. Presently, it is led by Ismail Omar Guelleh.

##### 3.1 (b) **Front democratique pour la liberation de Djibouti (FDLD):**

FDLD came into existence in 1979 by merger of Movement Populaire de liberation (MPL) and the Union National Pour l'Independence' (UMI). MPL a predominantly Afar organization, came into existence in 1977 under the leadership of Mohamed Adoyta, which was banned and dissolved in 1977 by Gouled Aptidon. The aim of FDL D was to overthrow the Gouled regime by force.

##### 3.1 (c) **Parti Populaire Djiboutien (PPD):**

PPD came into existence in 1981 whose founders were Ahmed Dini Ahmed, an Afar, who resigned from RPP because of authoritarian and partisan nature of regime, it was also quickly outlawed by Hassan Gouled Aptidon. Objective of PPD was to get multi-party system introduced in Djibouti.

##### 3.1 (d) **Movement nationale djiboutien pour l'unite et de la democratie (MNDID):**

MNDID was organised by M. Aden Robleh Awalleh, former leader of Somali Coast Liberation Front (FLCs), a pre-independent political party, with the state aim of getting multi-party system introduced in Djibouti.

### **3.1. (e) Front pour la restauration de l'unité et de la démocratie (FRUD):**

FRUD was created in August 1991 at Bahlo, it was the product of the fusion of three political movements: the Front populaire pour le restoration du loi et de l'Equilite (FRDE), the Front de la Residence Patriotique de Djibouti (FRPD) and the Action pour la revision de l'ordre a Djibouti (AROD). Mohammed Adoyta became the first president of FRUD. Later on, FRUD divided between two groups, one led by Ahmed Dini Ahmed (FRUD Arme) and other led by Kifle (FRUD Kifle). FRUD was organized as a military force whose stated objective was to bring democracy and multi-party system in Djibouti.

### **3.1 (f) Union des mouvements démocratique (UMD):**

UMD came into existence by the merging of FDL and MNDID in January 1990, whose declared aim was to unite all the ethnic groups and different political personalities and to resolve the chaotic situation existing in the country.

### **3.1 (g) Mouvement pour l'Unité et la Démocratie (MUD):**

MUD, organized by Mohamed Moussa Kahin, committed to the introduction of multi-party political system. His actions were significant as he was the first senior member of Gouled's own ethnic group to openly break from the government.<sup>1</sup>

### **3.1 (h) Mouvement pour la paix et la Réconciliation (MPR):**

MPR was founded by Djama Elabe in 1991 after the Arhiba massacre. MPR rejected both the Gouled's 'War logic' and FRUD's terrorist activities. MPR was renamed as 'Party for Democratic Renewal (PRD)'.

### **3.1 (i) Parti national démocratique (PND):**

PND was organized by Aden Robleh Awaleh to fight against the Gouled regime for the introduction of multi-party Democracy in Djibouti. He later reconstituted Djibouti National Movement and renamed it 'National Democratic Party' in 1992.

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<sup>1</sup> Schraeder, Peter. J.(1993), "Ethnic Politics in Djibouti: From Eye of the Hurricane to Boiling cauldron" *African Affairs*, (92), p.210

### **3.1 (j) Association pour la Defense des Drotis de l' Homme et de la liberete (ADDHL):**

Djibouti based human rights organization, which always kept an eye over Gouled's autocratic regime and criticized it for its human rights violation several times.

### **3.1 (k) Front uni de l'oppoistion Djiboutienne (FUOD):**

FUOD came into existence in 1992 as the result of a meeting participated by a variety of opposition figures in Paris from 20 to 24 June, 1992, to create an umbrella organization that could mount a trans-ethnic challenge to the Gouled's regime.

### **3.1 (l) Coordination of the Djiboutian Opposition (COD):**

COD came into existence on June 19<sup>th</sup>, as a unified opposition movement constituted by PMD, FUOD and a representative of the dissident faction of RPP who claims that although the armed conflict between armed groups and FRUD has ended but peace has not returned.

### **3.1 (m) Republican Alliance For Development (ARD):**

It was the result of the transformation of FRUD (Arme) into a political party led by Ahmed Dini Ahmed.

## **3.2 AN OVERVIEW OF CONFLICT IN DJIBOUTI [1977-2005]:-**

The violent ethnic conflict erupted in Djibouti, just after the independence, which initially was only inter-ethnic conflict. Later on, it also involved intra-ethnic groups. The bone of contention was the issue of monopolization of political power by Issa dominated RPP and marginalization of Afar ethnic group not only in political power but also in civil-services and military. Hassan Gouled Aptidon, the first President of the Republic of Djibouti and the leader of RPP, declared the Djibouti a one party state in 1981 illegalizing all other opposition parties which further added the fuel to fire and led a widespread feeling of resentment among

the Afar people. Violent incidents started taking place in Djibouti against this authoritarian rule of Hassan Gouled Aptidon which was first manifested in a grenade attack on a bar on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1977<sup>2</sup> which caused two deaths and wounded 31 people after which government suspecting the hand of MPL behind the incident arrested its leaders and dissolved the party.

In fact, the whole period of conflict is characterized by government's ruthless suppression and atrocities over Afar Minorities responding to which Afar themselves raised arms and started an armed rebellion in November 1991 in a systematic and well-planned way which differentiated it from the conflict pre-1991 phase. Government responded ruthlessly and declared the rebels to be constituted of outside militia, supported by Ethiopia and launched a widespread suppression movement, against the rebels. Blaming that the rebel were outsiders who have infiltrated into the country illegally, Hassan Gouled Aptidon asked France to invoke the treaty, worked out between France and Djibouti in pre-independent period according to which, in case of external attack France had to help Djibouti by deploying his army which has been stationed there since independence of Djibouti.

Meanwhile, ethnic nepotism was kept growing by Hassan Gouled Aptidon which became evident by the series of resignation submitted by 'Issa members, who belonged to clans other than 'Mamassan,' and joining hands with opposition and rebels in their struggle for democracy and introduction of multi-party politics in Djibouti. Finally, with the French effort a peace accord was signed between government and a fraction of FRUD while other faction continued fighting against the government, which finally agreed to come to peace table in May 2001 and signed another peace accord with Gelleh's government, theoretically stopping all the violence and rebellion against the government. Government on its part promised to make government institutions more representative accommodating Afar demands along with other clans of Issa ethnic group.

The whole process of conflict in post-independent Djibouti can be discussed conveniently by dividing whole process into following three phases viz. 1977-1990, 1990-2000 and 2000-2005 :-

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<sup>2</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin* ( 1977), 19 (10), p.4674.



### 3.2 (a) Ethnic Conflict in Djibouti (1977-1990)

This period is characterized by the Gouled's monopolization of political power and domination of political power by Issa ethnic group and growing dissatisfaction against the regime and carrying out violent incidents against government by Afars. Despite Gouled's conscious effort to maintain some degree of ethnic balance, Afars felt slighted by the regime in which the Issa's have dominated the civil service, the armed forces and the RPP, which was first manifested by a bomb explosion on the *le Premier En Zinc Bar*, which claimed five lives. President Hassan Gouled Aptidon, suspecting the hand of MPL behind the incident banned it and warned Ethiopia not to back criminal elements from the group. MPL is almost an Afar dominated organization. Confirming the ethnic nepotism pursued by President Hassan Gouled Aptidon, Premier Ahmed Dini, along with four other Ministers from the Afar communities, resigned on December 15, 1977 and in his resignation letter addressed to President Gouled he said that he preferred "to be a victim of tribal oppression than to sanction a government that practices it"<sup>3</sup>.

On May 7<sup>th</sup> 1978, a French national was taken hostage in Northern Djibouti. After this incident, which was also suspected to be the design of Afars, *Le Monde* observed that kidnapping probably indicates the growing impatience of the Afar tribes against Hassan Gouled regime. This incident of kidnapping also showed that Afars not finding any other way to get their demand of ethnic parity in the civil services, military and government institutions resorted to terrorist action. First Presidential election was held in Djibouti on June 12<sup>th</sup> 1981 which was won by Hassan Gouled Aptidon, as a sole candidate he secured 84 percent of total valid votes polled. He was chosen as the President by the first National Assembly on June 14<sup>th</sup> 1977, three days before the territory became independent, now elected through adult franchise. FDLI that was formed in 1979 by the coalition of 'Mouvement Populaire de Liberation' (MPL) and the 'Union National Pour l'Independence (UNI )'<sup>4</sup>, rejected the election results. Not paying any attention to Afar demands, Gouled in October 1981, declared Djibouti to be a single party

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<sup>3</sup> *Africa Diary*, XVIII (8), p.541.

<sup>4</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin* (1978), 15 (5), p.4850

state. Ahmed Dini, former Premier along with Abdallah Khamil founded Djiboutian People Party (PPD), which was immediately banned by President Gouled on August 15, 1981, top leaders were arrested on September 7<sup>th</sup> accusing them of distribution of leaflets and undermining national and popular unity. Abdullah Mohammed Khamil was released in the following month, after completely dismantling the PPD.

Meanwhile, leader of the banned organization MPL, the main opposition movement of minority Afars, M. Shehem Daoud expressed his willingness to join the forces with the regime of President Hassan Gouled<sup>5</sup>. In 1982, Gouled gave amnesty to the members of MPL and UNI, which were living in Ethiopia. Gouled's government arrested nine people from Afar tribes in August 1983 for undermining the state authority and security, who were all implicated in crimes committed in the period following independence between 1977 and 1979 in the north of the country at Khor Angara Randa (Centre) and Galafi (South West). M. Aden Robleh, the main accused of a bomb blast in the headquarters of RPP was sentenced for seven-year life imprisonment *in absentia*, but he refuted the accusations against him and blamed President Gouled that he got sentence conferred on him to eliminate him from the forthcoming presidential election which was scheduled to be in June 1987. He also announced the imminent formation of 'National Djiboutian Movement' to install democracy. M. Aden Robleh was the former leader of the Somali Coast Liberation Front (FLCS), a pre-independence political party that aimed to achieve independence. He, until the verdict came against him, was the best candidate to succeed President Hassan Goude Aptidon, which provides a justification to his accusation against Gouled.

Second Presidential election in Djibouti was held in 1987, which was won by Hassan Goude Aptidon who secured more than 90 percent of votes polled. However, some doubts were raised on the fairness of election, 'National Movement for Restoration of Democracy', a Paris based opposition movement condemned it as 'rigged election'<sup>6</sup>. In the new administration installed after this election, Barkat Gourad Mamadou, retained his premiership. Meanwhile, Aden

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid (1981), 18 (11), p.624.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid (1984), 2 (11), p.8462.

Robleh Awalleh, announced the formation of a new opposition group 'Mouvement National Djiboutien pour l' instauration de la democratie' (MNDID), with the stated aim of introducing multi-party system in Djibouti.. During this period, in fact, no unified movement could emerge against the Gouled's regime. Only one important organization Movement Populaire de Liberation (MPL) emerged in 1975, which later merged with Union National pour l' Independance (UNI) and created Front Democratique de Liberation de Djibouti(FDL) in 1979. MPL became a grass root organization based in capital and organized the Dockers, and in interior regions it worked among the nomadic Afars who were famous for their aggressiveness. Political structure of MPL was based on the principle of 'democratic centralism' and in its early days, it was much influenced by the Vietnamese struggle and the African liberation movements in Portuguese colonies. Only because of these characteristics, it did not disappeared even after the ban was imposed on it and accusing it to be responsible for the bombing at the Palmier en Zinc Café in December. Even after being dissolved by the President Gouled, it only was weakened in capital but it was still capable to enlarge its political base and was benefited from the anti-Afar activities of government. MPL joining hands with UNI organized FDL with the sole aim to fight against any form of authoritarianism, favoritism and ethnic nepotism.

If we analyze government's response to the rebels, it seems that Hassan Gouled Aptidon was more interested to carry on his agenda of monopolization of political power for the Issas. By dismantling Afar radical organizations Gouled further created a rift between Afars and his regime. Instead of paying heed to their problems, he met them with tough stance. Resignation of Ahmed Dini Ahmed, ex Premier, put a stamp on the tribalism of the regime. Bomb explosion in the French Café also showed the increasing resentment among Afars young men. Another fatal mistake committed by Gouled's regime was that, the members of dismantled and illegalized FDL were not integrated into mainstream politics. They were denied recruitment into the armed forces and civilian policy and were not employed in state-owned companies and as the fall out of this imprudent action taken by, Gouled's regime; these young Afars became the spearhead of the new wave of opposition.

### **3.2 (b) Ethnic Conflict in Djibouti (1991-2000)**

This was the period in which Afar opposition movement transformed into organized armed rebellion, which culminated into civil war in 1991. The period is characterized by the emergence of FRUD, which was comprised of three militant Afar groups. From the view point of ethnic conflict this period is of very much importance, which indeed determined the nature of future political activity in Djibouti. Government on its part did not leave any stone unturned to crush the rebellion but could not prevent the success of FRUD and came under the tremendous pressure from France. Hassan Gouled Aptidon recognized the multi party system and in a new Constitution, he introduced multi-party system in Djibouti. With the French help Djibouti's army launched fresh attacks on FRUD rebels and cut off their food supply in those areas which were under direct control of FRUD rebels, which added the hardships to the citizens of those areas who were already living with severe constraints. This resulted in the division within the FRUD ranks and one fraction of FRUD signed Peace Accord with the government while another continued the armed struggle against government, which finally came to peace table in 2000 and signed Second Peace Accord with the government, ending the armed rebellion theoretically. Dynamics of conflict during this period can be discussed systematically as following:-

After a ban imposed by the government one part of FDLI and some of its leaders, including its President Mohammed Adoyta, continued their political activities underground and their activities against the authoritarian government of President Hassan Gouled Aptidon. They were joined by local personalities in Djibouti and intellectuals in France who strove to establish a new opposition and wide social base for it. Union des Mouvements Democratique (UMD) emerged as the stage of coordination among them in March 1990. Moreover, some Issa members and Gadabursis joined this movement against government.

In September 1990, a grenade was thrown on a crowded cafe in Djibouti aimed at off duty French troops, which like all the attacks carried out earlier was an expression of internal problem of Djibouti than an act of international terrorism,

as claimed by Djibouti's authority earlier<sup>7</sup>. This grenade attack provided an opportunity to the President Hassan Gouled Aptidon to crush the emerging opposition movement against his regime. Prior to this grenade attack, a bomb was exploded in May 1990 at the generator in Yoboki which resulted in anti-Afar raids by Djiboutian Armed Forces (AND) who raided Afar opposition members in Tadjoura, Obock and Dikhil. The Indian Ocean New letter, reported that several dozen people, mainly Afars, have been arrested and said that authorities seem to justify the raids particularly aimed at Afar opponents of the regime by saying that foreign armed forces infiltrated Djiboutian territory.<sup>8</sup>

By using the grenade attack of September 1990, regime accused the Afars of plotting against the state and imprisoned prominent personalities, cadres and members of the FDLI in January 1991. Several of them were illegally detained in secret places for several days before being allowed to meet the Parisian lawyer, Amnesty International made a conditional report on the punishment inflicted on the detainees. It mentioned that the "swing", where a prisoner was beaten while being tied by wrists and ankles to a horizontal bar and the procedure by which a prisoner was forced to swallow soapy water, a bottle was inserted in his anus, and he was forced to undergo a mock execution.<sup>9</sup> Such government atrocities against the members of Afar community provided more reasons to the young generation of Afar community to raise an armed rebellion against the government.

Another opponent of the regime of President Hassan Gouled Aptidon, M. Mohammed Moussa Kahin was arrested on April 9<sup>th</sup> 1991, who allegedly attempted to open an office to represent the clandestine organization that he led, the Movement for Unity and Democracy (MUD), in spite of the ban from the Ministry of Interior. In March, during the Fifth Party Congress of the People's Assembly for Progress Party (RPP), chaired by Hassan Gouled Aptidon, party adopted several resolutions. In one of which, it denied the multi-party system in Djibouti and declared that RPP will remain only legally reorganized political party in Djibouti. Mohamed Ahmed Issa "Cheiko", put forward the motion in favour of multi-partyism which was rejected by the members of RPP. All these

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid (1990), 27 ( 9), p.9835

<sup>8</sup> Ibid (1990), 27 (5), p.9731.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid (1991),28 ( 9), p.10054.

developments led to the widespread frustration among the Afar communities, who were fighting for the introduction of multi-partyism in Djibouti, which culminated into the creation FRUD that was created in August 1991 at Bahlo in Northern Djibouti near the Ethiopian frontier. It was the product of the fusion of the three political movements the Front Populaire pour le Restauration du Loi et de l' Equalite (FRDE), the Front de la Resistance Patriotique de Djibouti (FRPD) and the Action pour la Revision de l'Ordre a Djibouti (AROD).

AROD, which means progress or development in Afar, was organized in April 1991 with three aims, radical change through an ethnical balance in the leadership of the country, an autonomous Afar region or pure and simple partition. Three of its leaders Ougre Kifle, Iwaad Hassan Moussa and Mohamed Hado sent a letter in mid-March to President Hassan Gouled Aptidon in which they demanded political change through negotiation. Many of the AROD members belonged to Issa community. Alarmed by this rising opposition against Mamassan clan with in the Issa community; high ranking Mamassan members of the regime met in early April and decided to accelerate recruitment of Mamassan members to the government army. From here and onwards it became evident that the clans other than Mamassan of Issa ethnic group decided to hold ground against the authoritarian government of Hassan Gouled Aptidon and determined to get multi party system introduced in Djibouti.

On its part government, which rejected the principle of multi-party politics, as it considers this would create ethnic rifts, in fact decided to widen the already existing rift between Afars and Issa and also among the clans of Issa ethnic community. All three wings of the FRUD, which was the creation of FDL with the aim to mobilize the people in various social sectors against the authoritarian government of Aptidon, met and elected Mohamed Adoyta, the President of FDL as the President of FRUD who was to play a major role in maintaining cohesion and unity. FRUD established a military force in the north and south-West region where Afars live and initially intended to exert political pressure whilst avoiding the bloodshed.

In fact, FRUD was the historical continuation of the MPL and FDL movements and inherited the ideas and activists who have figured in the political history of

Djibouti since the independence, veteran political personalities brought their experience with them, Ahmed Dini, ex- Premier of the territory acted as a spokesperson of FRUD and in 1992, became its President. He helped FRUD to achieve diplomatic success and to create a synthesis between the fighting force and its civilian supporters.<sup>10</sup>

In August 1991, FRUD announced that its political platform was based on the principle of 'Democracy, Equality and Justice'. FRUD elaborated the concept of democracy little more: "Democracy is not the ersatz presented by the Gouled dictatorship, but real participation by the citizens in the life of the nation via competitive expression of points of view which will necessarily be plural (above all when there is multi-ethnic society). Equality consists in not considering the different sector of the administration as a series of profit centers reserved for different clans. Justice must allow the great majority of the national territory to profit from development"<sup>11</sup>.

Armed by this development Hassan Gouled and his circle called on all Somalis to confront the danger of Afar menace. Non-Issa Somalis did not supported government on this issue and Hassan Gouled taking another imprudent measure started to recruit Somalian Issas and Ethiopian Issas under the pretext of Somali solidarity and offered material advantages and acquisition of Djibouti nationality. Article 13 of Law 200 voted by the National Assembly on 24 October 1991, provides for automatic acquisition of Djibouti nationality by any foreigner recruited into the army or the security force<sup>12</sup>.

One point which became crystal clear by these activities of Djiboutian regime that, it was dying hard to maintain its monopoly over political power and government institutions, even if, for this it had to include foreigners in its army. Above initiative of government did not leave any room for the Afars but to resort only armed struggle, which was started by FRUD rebels in November 1991. On November 12<sup>th</sup> 1991, FRUD rebels engaged the Djibouti National Army (ADN) in the vicinity of Tadjourah .Early reports claimed that 3,000, well trained

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<sup>10</sup> Kadamy, Mohamed (1996), "Djibouti: Between War and Peace", *Review of African Political Economy*, (70), p.516

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.516.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.517

guerrillas had captured a number of towns and villages whilst government troops, numbering approximately 2,500 held the cities of Obock, Tadjoura and Yoboki, although they too were under siege.

Interviewed by Radio France international on November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Moumin Bahdon Farah, claimed that the rebels were not the members of the opposition, but had invaded the country from Ethiopia, which was immediately denied by opposition leader, Mr. Abdullah Mohamed Kamil, who maintained that the guerrillas were the members of the FRUD and were fighting for a more democratic regime. Indeed the denial of recognition of opposition forces served two purposes, first with this claim that opposition forces were external elements, Djibouti government could ask France to invoke the treaty, carried out in 1977, according to which France had to help Djibouti by deploying its forces, whenever Djibouti was attacked and second by refusing to recognize the opposition forces it denied of any existing problem of political nature in the country. But this strategy did not yield any benefit as France, initially, denied to deploy her forces saying that current crisis was the internal matter of Djibouti and instead of recognizing it as external aggression France offered to mediate between government and warring forces.<sup>13</sup>

On December 18, 1991 Djibouti armed forces committed a massacre in the Arhiba district of Djibouti city. This massacre had two political fall outs , first in less than twenty four hours after it occurred , Gouled for the first time announced his willingness to entertain the idea of establishing some sort of multi-party political system and for this purpose he appointed, on January 21<sup>st</sup> a 14 member committee, including the Parliamentary Speaker, the Justice Minister and other officials, to draft a constitution which will led the emergence of multi-party system in the country,<sup>14</sup> and announced that a referendum to be held as to get approval for this. This constitution second major outcome of Arhiba massacre was the growing dissension at the highest level of the Gouled regime which was manifested in resignation of Minister of Health, Mohammed Djama Elabe, who accused the Gouled's government of being incapable of solving the country's

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<sup>13</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin* (1991), 28 (11), p.10350.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid* (1992), 29 (1), p.10408.



problems and denounced the war logic which seemed to prevail at the highest levels of the Gould's regime.

He subsequently formed a political organization, the Mouvement pour la paix et al reconciliation (MPR) that rejected the militancy of Gould's regime and as well as of FRUD's and instead of it sought to build a trans-ethnic opposition coalition. He belonged to Furlaba sub clan of the Issa ethnic group and also was well respected among Afars and therefore was in position to build a coalition that could transcend ethnic lines. FRUD reacted with satisfaction to the Minister's resignation and in a communiqué, it said that "this gesture strengthens the field of democracy and peace"<sup>15</sup>, it also added that FRUD would spare no effort to find a political and peaceful solution to the conflict with the government adding that national unity of the people of Djibouti must be preserved. By January 1992, FRUD was advancing southward, to the capital. They controlled the three quarter of the northern part of the country and several frontier posts with Eritrea and Ethiopia including the Galafi post, where 'Qat' supply transits on their overland route.

Meanwhile, following the resignation of Djama Elabe, Souleiman Farah Lodon, the Minister of the Public Service also resigned and in his resignation letter to the president Gouled on Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> he suggested that a way to save the country from the Somali type chaos, to which the country was heading, might be to introduce multi-party democracy and to form a government of national unity and to give amnesty to all political prisoners<sup>16</sup>. Following these resignations two more parliamentary representatives belonging to Issa-Furlaba clan, Aden Guedi Dideh and Idriss Hassan Akadir resigned from the government in Djibouti on February 1<sup>st</sup> opposing the government's war logic.

FRUD continued to move ahead during this period and it was reported that rebels seems to be pushing southward along three major routes in the east along the coast, the rebels had not made any headway, but they were reinforcing their forces in the Hemet hills, 52 Km from Djibouti city. In the centre, they were operating into Gaggade area and were reported to be moving closer to Mouloud, the water source

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid , p.10427.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid (1992), 30 (1), p.10428.

of Ali-Sabeih. In the West, the rebels have allegedly gone beyond Yoboki and were heading to Gorabous, about twenty km from Dikhil. Fighting was reported around Gorabus and tension was running high in Dikhil region<sup>17</sup>.

Being surprised by this success of FRUD, France on February 25<sup>th</sup> mobilised her troops to save the southern Djibouti to slip it in the hands of the rebels and tried to end peacefully the 15 week armed rebellion. On February 25<sup>th</sup>, 250 soldiers of ADN moved towards Afar rebel's positions in the Dikhil region, accompanied by liaison officers from the French army. Paul Dijoud, the French emissary to Djibouti, said that French troops were not deployed in combat mission but, on a peacemaking operation<sup>18</sup>. With the involvement of French forces pendulum swung in the favour of Djibouti National Army (AND) and they started to regain the areas which they lost to FRUD. FRUD announced a unilateral ceasefire on February 28, which was the result of French effort.

Being under the military pressure from the FRUD, political pressure from the civilian opposition and diplomatic pressure from the France Gouled responded to the declaration of unilateral cease-fire by FRUD he partially lifted an economic blockade to the north, as witnessed by the re-establishment of sea transport connecting Djibouti city with Obock and Tadjoura. Now, Gouled could not overlook the demand of inclusive democracy and on April 14<sup>th</sup> he presented the main point of draft constitution to be submitted to referendum and opened the doors for multi-party system.<sup>19</sup>

The plan stated that the President of the Republic would retain the executive power, assuming the duties of both Head of the State and Prime Minister. Mr. Gouled said, that a "two headed" power including the head of state and a prime minister would destabilize the country. Interestingly, by this declaration, Gouled expressed his wish to provide more centralized administration. FRUD termed it as "poisoned gift." Djama Elabe, one of the leader of the moderate opposition, criticized the constitution plan on April 6<sup>th</sup> and said, "President Hassan is trying to make democracy his way, ensuring that his friends will be saved at the ballot box,

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid (1992), 30 (2), p.10466

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.10466.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.10507.

whatever the price paid by the people". On 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1992 Gouled announced that date of referendum to be September 4<sup>th</sup> which will be followed by the legislating of political parties, given two weeks to submit their registration application. Legislative elections were to take place on November 20<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Mohammed Ahmed Issa 'Cheiko' said that "democratic openness" coming from the lips of President Gouled was a delusion – "the intransigence of the head of state had led him to "reject any idea of dialogue."<sup>20</sup>

Regarding the proposed constitution, the opposition was particularly concerned that the executive branch of government remained far too strong. Specifically, neither the office of the prime minister nor the legislature were endowed with any special powers, such as oversight of the presidential appointments at the cabinet level allowing them to significantly question or oversee executive branch policies. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, being dissatisfied with Gouled's effort to introduce multiparty system FRUD announced that it will recommence combat very soon and requested French troops to give FRUD's troops free passage. FRUD had ended the ceasefire on March 27<sup>th</sup>. On July 12<sup>th</sup> 1992, Mr. Ali Aref Bourhan, along with his co-defendants, who were charged with plotting against regime, were sentenced 10 years of imprisonment.

Before this verdict against Mr. Ali Aref Bourhan, President Gouled pardoned one of his leading opponents Aden Robleh Awaleh, who in France formed the Djibouti National Movement, which was renamed as National Democratic Party in 1992. On July 19<sup>th</sup> rebels opened fire on Djibouti's army position near the northern town of Obock, breaking ceasefire. Gouled adopted tough stance against rebels and said that he would have resources to a definite military option while dealing with FRUD<sup>21</sup>.

On September 4<sup>th</sup> a referendum was held for the adoption of new constitution which opened the way to multiparty system. Observers from the Arab League, the OAU, the France and the UN were invited to inspect the process of the referendum. FRUD along with seven other opposition parties, those grouped with FRUD as the United Opposition Front, gave a boycott call to the civilians. FRUD

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.10547

<sup>21</sup> Ibid (1992), 30 (9), p.10718

argued that since the constitution was drafted by the authorities without any real consultation with opposing parties. Referendum received a yes vote.

During the 'Paris Accord' meeting in June 1992, opposition parties outlined a variety of demands that seriously questioned the reform process initiated by Gouled's regime. Most significantly, the accord called for the creation of a transnational government that would be led by the Prime Minister chosen from the ranks of the opposition. This demand was immediately dismissed by Gouled.

The introduction to the new constitution sets out its commitments to the principles of democracy and human rights, recognized the role of political parties and established a state of law guaranteeing the full individual and collective liberties. Article 21, as for the attribution of the head of state, states that the executive power lies with the president of the Republic, who is also the head of the government. The President embodies national unity and ensures the continuity of the state. He is elected for six years by direct universal suffrage, in a two round majority vote and one person can be re-elected only once.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, another Afar minister, Mr. Helaf Orbis Ali, the Minister of Labour and Social Security, sent his resignation on August 25<sup>th</sup> to the Head of the State.

Meanwhile, French government arranged a meeting between FRUD leaders and Hassan Gouled Aptidon who boycotted it. On December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1992 three and half months after the adoption of a Constitution by referendum, first multiparty election held in which Djibouti's electorals were called on to elect their deputies. Two parties contested for the "Assembly for the People", the RPP, led by Hassan Gouled Aptidon and the Party for Democratic Renewal (PRD) led by the former Minister Mr. Mohamed Djama Elabe. The FRUD called for a boycott of these elections which they termed "masquerade", and untenable because they coincided with the anniversary of Arhiba massacre. The National Democratic Party (PND) led by Mr. Aden Robleh Awaleh, decided not to take part in the election because of the "lack of openness" in the election and government's refusal to set up a "sovereign national commission" to organize it<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid (1992), 30 (7), p.10711

<sup>23</sup> Ibid (1992), 30 (12), p.10815.

Interestingly, during this election, two third of the national territory, particularly the north and the north-west have been under the control of Afar fighters. PRD accused the government that it had sent refugees to Obock to make it appear that the people had participated in the elections and filled the ballot box. PRD based its campaign on the need to “return to peace”, “equity among citizens” and an “end to privilege”, which was able to present its program on national radio and television, hoped to obtain the votes of all those dissatisfied with the present system.<sup>24</sup>

Official election results were announced on December 31 by the constitutional committee, according to which RPP won the election 74.59% and PRD received 25.41% of valid votes polled.<sup>25</sup> Critics argued that the Gouled regime was merely using the fig leaf of multiparty rule to intensify a military campaign against the FRUD, most notably in terms of a military offensive that allegedly was being planned for the beginning of 1993, condemning the victory claimed by RPP.

In the beginning of the 1993, having conducted multi party election and getting French support and appreciation Gouled adopted tougher stance for rebellions. Government forces launched a massive attack against FRUD rebels and pushed them beyond PK-9 a strategic crossroad that opens the main road to the main town in the north Tadjoura. By Februray 15<sup>th</sup> government forces took control of the Doudaouia border post in Dikhil district, 150 Kms from the capital. Military sources claimed that most of the rebels are now concentrated in the Tadjoura district between Randa and Assa-Guelyla, at the base of FRUD leaders close to Ethiopian borders. The Djibouti’s army, supported by France, started winning back the grounds that it lost to FRUD rebels. Army had cut off all resources channels of FRUD and prevented FRUD from launching an attack from the sea on Djibouti port. FRUD rebels, on March 10<sup>th</sup>, attacked an autonomous part of Djibouti and said that this act was “double warning” to the war lords who orders crime against civilian populations from their air-conditioned rooms” and to boats which delivers arms to the bloody regime”.<sup>26</sup> Lacking the means to lead a frontal

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, p.10815.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid* (1993), 31(10), p.11725.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid* (1992), 31 (4), p.10933.

attack, FRUD started playing cat and mouse game, while waiting to find the chink in government's army.

Meanwhile, Hassan Gouled Aptidon was re-elected in first multi-party presidential election that was held on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1993, he obtained 60.71% of the total valid votes. The election was nevertheless boycotted by several non-legalized movements including FRUD, which were demanding the restoration of peace as the condition of the electoral process. Government forces began to kill Afars indiscriminately which amounted to nothing but ethnic cleansing.

Djibouti based human rights organization, Association pour la defense des Droits de l' Homme et de la Liberte (ADDHL) broke the news on September 14<sup>th</sup>, that ethnic cleansing was being carried out in almost the areas inhabited by the Afars with out making any difference between combat and non combatants<sup>27</sup>, which contributed to nothing but further radicalizing the Afars along the ethnic lines. The vice-president of the ADDHL, Mr. Abdillahi Elim Senghor, stated that government forces had "forcibly displaced and regrouped civilians who had escaped earlier slaughter into deportation camps situated in military zones. This atrocity against the Afar community went on through out the year.

France accelerated its peace efforts, which culminated into some positive developments such as the exchange of prisoners of war, which were exchanged on December 1<sup>st</sup> between government and FRUD rebels. The United Front of the Djiboutian opposition (FUOD), which is a group of six movements, commented on this exchange as the first step on the road to true peace by pacifying means.<sup>28</sup> This was the result of an announcement, which FRUD made along with RPP on October 19<sup>th</sup> accepting bilateral ceasefire between the Afar guerrillas movements and Djibouti's government, the unconditional freeing of all political prisoners and military personnel held by either party and the opening of talks with the government with a view of setting up a transitional government. Government, in fact, adopted the carrot and stick policy to Afar rebels. On the one hand they showed their willingness for peace talks and on the other army kept on their mission against Afar rebels.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid (1993), 31 (5), p.11254.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.11271

Brutality and magnitude of atrocities of Djiboutian National army, supported by French troops, that led the division within the FRUD, main reason for this division in FRUD was the cutting of food supplies to the areas controlled by FRUD which deteriorated the conditions of civilians and one faction of FRUD moved by the plight of civilians advocated the peace talk with government which led to the internal fighting within FRUD over the issue of peace negotiation with government. Mr. Ougoureh Kifle Ahmed announced in a handwritten communiqué on March 7<sup>th</sup> the dissolution of the polit bureau led by Mr. Ahmed Dini Ahmed and the formation of a new executive council, with him as leader. Gould invited the new executive council of the FRUD, which represented the moderate wing of the Afar guerillas, to start dialogue, as soon as possible with the government in order to store the peace and national reconciliation.

Following the carrot and stick policy, army launched seeks and destroy operation against the members of radical wings of FRUD. On June 12<sup>th</sup>, government and Afar rebels, headed by Kifle, said that they were willing to end the war, they confirmed their attachment to the democratic institutional framework of the Republic of Djibouti and their joint wish to end the war. Mr. Kifle wanted to continue negotiations with the government, with a new round of talks which ended on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July (6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> July), with the announcement of the opening date of the official negotiations in Djibouti town in the presence of observers from diplomatic missions and internal organizations in Djibouti. Mr. Ali Mohamed Daoud who was elected new President of the FRUD rejected all the rumors of a split within the FRUD<sup>29</sup> for the time being. But, which was not true, in an statement FUOD said that they will recognize only the legitimate FRUD which was, in their opinion, headed by the by Ahmed Dini Ahmed, who also opposed the negotiations.

An agreement was signed between Ougoureh Kifle Ahmed and the Interior Minister, Idris Harbi Farah on December 26<sup>th</sup> according to which RPP had to include on or two members of FRUD (Kifle) members into the government and to reform the electoral lists before the next general elections<sup>30</sup> Gouled on June 8<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid (1994), 32 (7), p.11517

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.11679.

1995 inducted two main leaders of FRUD, Ougoureh Kifleh Ahmed and Messr Ali Mohammed Daoud. In November 1995, Government arrested Mr. Aden Roleh Awalleh and several leaders of his movements for organizing an illegal demonstration against the regime.

In 1996, FRUD led by Kifleh became a political party and was legalized by the Interior Ministry, which has become fourth legalized political party in Djibouti along with RPP, PRD and PND. Ahmed Dini, condemned the legalization of the FRUD (Kifleh). Meanwhile, several opposition leaders have allied to form “Coordination of the Djiboutian Opposition” (COD) on June 19<sup>th</sup>, constituting elements were PND, FUOD (unrecognized) and a representative of the dissident faction of RPP. They claimed, “Although the armed conflict between the FRUD and government troops has ended, peace has not returned.”<sup>31</sup>

Government increased its atrocities over citizens and banned free circulation of people in Djibouti from October 21<sup>st</sup> 1998 as informed by Ahmed Dini.<sup>32</sup> In January 1999, FRUD rebels attacked a special unit of government forces in Obock district and claimed that they attacked the unit because as usual it was extorting the rural population. In the presidential election, Ismael Omar Gelleh won the presidential post who was the joint candidate of a coalition constituted by RPP and FRUD.<sup>33</sup> A grenade was exploded on May 25<sup>th</sup> 1999 in the centre of Djibouti (wounding one person) near the home of a former deputy and the president of the Djibouti League of Human Rights, Jean Paul Abdi Noel. On February 7<sup>th</sup> 2000 negotiations began between the government and armed FRUD which culminated in the signing of seven-point program for reform and civil concord, including the rehabilitation and re-integration of the rebel fighters, decentralization of political power and strengthening the peace process.

### **3.2 (C) Ethnic Conflict in Djibouti (2001-2005)**

By October 2000, negotiations between the government and anti-government FRUD faction got accomplished little, as neither was prepared to compromise on a range of issues including the reduction and the redefinition of presidential

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid (1996), 34 (6), p.12300.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid (1998), 35, (10), p.1330

<sup>33</sup> Ibid (1999), 36 (3) , p.13470



powers, the guaranteeing of independence for the magistrature, the future size of the armed forces, the ethnic rebalancing of the civil services, holding on an objective census and the opening of the political system to all parties.

However, in May 2001, it was announced that the government and the FRUD had signed an agreement, which officially brought an end to hostilities. According to the reports government pledged to establish a number of more representative local bodies and promised to introduce an 'unrestricted multi-party system' by September 2002. In June 2001, FRUD handed over its weapons for destruction to the government and by March 2002, 1074 former FRUD combatants had been disbanded, of which 300 had been integrated into the country's security process.

FRUD, led by Ahmed Dini Ahmed has transformed into a political party. It submitted its dossier to the Interior Ministry and changed its name; Republican Alliances for Development (ARD), this official transformation into a political party comes a month after multi party system was introduced in the political system of Djibouti. On September 4<sup>th</sup> multi-party system came into force at the end of a 10 year transitional period, which limited the number of political parties to four. ARD will fight peacefully for democratic change and to meet the aspiration of Djiboutian people towards change, it will demand respect for the republican rule of law in management of public affairs<sup>34</sup> declared by the ARD at the occasion of introduction of multi party system in Djibouti.

As the sign of the creating amicable political atmosphere for the smooth working of multi party system, the Interior Ministry of Djibouti has approved the formation of People's Social Democratic Party (PDD) and declared that it was in the process of being legalized. Moumin Bahdon Farah became the leader of PPSD. PDD was led by Mohamed Daoud Chechem. The PDD will fight peacefully as a member of Djibouti's United Opposition for free and fair, political change.<sup>35</sup> Legislative elections were due to held in January 2003, of which the most remarkable feature was entrance of women first time to National Assembly because of the reservation for women was provided for this election.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin* (2003), (9), p.1541.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid* (2002), 38 (9), p.15078.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p.15042.

## CHAPTER IV

### PEACE MAKING PROCESS IN DJIBOUTI

This chapter will analyze the process of peace making in post-Independent Djibouti. In the peace making process of Djibouti, we find mainly two factors involved: internal and external. Before discussing the peace making process we will discuss some peace making approaches in multi-ethnic societies.

#### 4.1 PEACE- MAKING APPROACHES IN MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY:

**4.1(a):** First approach which can be discussed is 'inclusive approach' means the inclusion of deprived ethnic groups not only in political arrangement but also in economic endeavors. Leaders dedicated to inclusive policies and to the broadest participation in the political process among other things will probably avoid the horrors of civil war<sup>1</sup>. Inclusive approach advocates inclusion of dissatisfied and deprived ethnic group into political arrangement which in turn provides the included participant a sense of satisfaction and inculcates a feeling of trust between two hostile ethnic group. It means multi-ethnic participation at all the levels of society as a means of minimizing ethnic conflict rooted in alienation or rejection of central authority by non-dominant ethnic segment of society. Its value lies in the fact that it provides a sense of satisfaction and is useful for inculcation of feeling of trust.

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<sup>1</sup> Ali, M. Taisier and Robert O. Mathwes (1999), *Civil Wars in Africa: Roots and Resolution*, Montreal and Kingston: The Mc Gill-Queen's University Press, p.292

**4.1(b):** Second important approach is ‘power-sharing approach’, which is the key to conflict resolution in multi-ethnic African states.<sup>2</sup> Power sharing is an important avenue to successful conflict management in Africa. Power sharing allows a confidence building mechanisms that allow both political elites and cultural/ethnic communities to feel that “they have influence in the decisions of the state... and their rights are protected”.<sup>3</sup> Power sharing also allows for a better and wider distribution of resources, which is perhaps the central problem in conflict management in Africa. And, it has the effect of committing all parties to resolving difficult issues, which emerges in process of structural adjustment. But the most compelling reason for the acceptance of this approach is that there is no apparent alternative approach. Democracy and power sharing remain the only reasonable options for governance in deeply divided African societies.

Prima facie, it may seem that ‘inclusive approach’ and ‘power-sharing approach’ are identical but this is not the case. Both approaches have some resemblance but they are not identical. Power-sharing implies wherein political power is distributed among contending parties on an uniform basis, even equally, which practically can not be true. Most important political posts can not be divided equally between or among the disputing parties. Moreover, power sharing results in weak government because it lacks an effective opposition, government activities cannot be carefully scrutinized and criticized

**4.1(c):** Third approach concerns probably the most deep-rooted issues of inter-ethnic relation, reducing inequality and ethno-social disparities. In the multi-ethnic societies these always exist along ethnic lines. Different forms of economic inequality, even when equal opportunity and justice are well established by legislation or by states and community politics. Along with the process of development and re-distribution of political power, special measures should be undertaken in the economic field, including

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<sup>2</sup> Sisk, D. Timothy and Andrew Reynolds (1988), *Elections and Conflict Management in Africa*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, p.29

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p 29

the widening of participation in highly skilled jobs for representatives of underprivileged groups.

**4.1(d):** Fourth approach prescribes special measures and inducements to stimulate inter-ethnic political co-operation. Where ethnicity has been central to the formation of political coalitions and for mobilizing those directly affected by crises and attracted to totalitarian solutions, attempts should be made to entrench the practice of inter-ethnic, cultural and political coalitions legally and constitutionally.

Now in the case of Djibouti, power-sharing agreement could not be helpful, because of the provision that only Issa member is qualified for presidential post, moreover power-sharing agreement could not be applied exclusively because important posts can not be divided. Third approach might be beneficial but for the proper equation of this approach political power must represent the balanced representation of all their groups or State must have will to implement the measures, which was completely missing in Djibouti's regime under the leadership of President Hassan Gouled Aptidon. As is with the third approach so the case is with fourth one. Now the only approach remains inclusive approach, which advocates inclusion of deprived ethnic groups that only in political arrangement but also in social and economic endeavors taken by the government. In fact the peace process in Djibouti was based an inclusive approach. Opting for an inclusive approach to tacking political differences seems to have helped in ending the Djibouti civil war<sup>4</sup>. The opening up of political participation to all the Djiboutian opposition groups has facilitated dialogues and communication between the opposition group and the ruling party.

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<sup>4</sup> Yoh, John G. Nyuot (2003), " Peace Process and Conflict Resolution in the Horn of Africa", *African Security Review*, 12 (3), p.86

**4.2** Having discussed some of approaches regarding peace making in multi-ethnic societies ridden by civil war, we can now conveniently discuss the peace-making process in Djibouti. Main problem involved in peace-making is perceived in compatibility of interests between the conflicting parties, and success of the whole process is dependent on the finding a solution to make these incompatible interest, compatible, if not completely at least partially, which was done in Djibouti. Peace making process in Djibouti can be disused under following heads:-

- Official Conflict Management,
- French Mediation,
- Role of NGOs.

**4.2 (a) Official Conflict Management:**

Conflict in Djibouti starts with the installation of government under President Hassan Gould Aptidon in 1977. Several Afar leaders raised their voice against the tribalism, which was pursued by Gouled's regime. During this, being not confronted with any serious threat, Gouled carried and his agenda of monopolizing the political power for his ethnic group and particularly for his clan. During initial period, Gouled adopted tough state against the Afar leaders and against those who opposed his regime. For example, the punishment conferred on Aden Robleh, seven years life imprisonment was a tactics to remove him from the ground of Presidential election which were scheduled to be held in June 1987.<sup>5</sup>

Gouled's regime being seriously threatened by armed Afar rebellion in November 1991, when the FRUD military force of approximately 3,000 guerilla fighters primarily from

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<sup>5</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin* (1987), 24,( 9), p. 8230.

the Afar ethnic groups, launched a sustained military offensive that eventually captured all the major areas in the north except Tadjoura and Obock. Gouled terming it as external aggression demanded from France to apply Franco-Djiboutian treaty signed in 1977, which was rejected by Paris. Gouled adopted harsh policies towards rebels and sought to eradicate them by deploying Djiboutian National Army (AND). Critical demands of opposition as well as the growing opinion of French specialists increasingly weary with corrupt and authoritarian practices of Gouled regime. With the French efforts, FRUD announced a unilateral ceasefire on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1992.

The combination of military pressure from the FRUD, political pressure from the civilian population and diplomatic pressure from the France led the Gouled regime to undertake process of political reform designed to seek an accommodation with the Afar opposition. In April 1992, he provided a draft constitution that further led the frustration among Afars, and jolted the peace process. Draft bill was justified by the situation in the north of the country<sup>6</sup>, and FRUD announced to recommence combat against the government.

During this time, accompanied by French army services, AND launched a massive attack against FRUD rebels. They stopped the supply of food and other essential services to those areas that were captured by FRUD rebels that led the division within the FRUD. In fact, in this period Government did not had any will to sign any peace accord, and this accord was not signed as the result of debates and discussion but one faction of FRUD collapsed under the inhuman treatment of its people by the government. Government did not take any effective and constructive approach and was hoping another faction to will be wiped out by use of sheer force. Government intensified its campaign against armed FRUD and started killing Afars indiscriminately<sup>7</sup>. Stoppage of the food supply and other essential things to the northern region that were under the FRUD control, led the division within the FRUD. On June 12th, 1994, government and Afar rebels said that they were willing to end the civil war that has been going on for two and half years<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid (4), p. 10535.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, (1), p. 11304.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, (6), p. 11478.

One point must be noted that, in this process, government, except French mediation took the help of sheer force and this faction led by Ougoureh Kifley Ahmed came to the peace table, expecting some ministerial portfolio in the government. Peace negotiation started on the government side led by Prime Minister and by the interior minister from the Government's side publicly but privately by Ismail Omar Guelleh, *chief de cabinet* to Head of State Gouled, and on behalf of FRUD, it was headed by Kifley<sup>9</sup>. As the result of these negotiations a peace agreement was signed between FRUD (Kifleh) and Govt. of Djibouti. The main points of the agreements were as following:

1. FRUD will have to end the armed struggle.
2. An alliance with FRUD (Kifleh) and ruling party RPP, which means that RPP will include one or two members of the FRUD (Kifleh) faction in government.
3. To reform the electoral list before the next general election.<sup>10</sup>

Following the terms of Peace Accord President Hassan Gouled Aptidon on 8th June reshuffled his government and appointed the two main leaders of FRUD (Kifley), which reached a peace agreement in December 1994. Messr Ali Mohammad Daoud and Ongoureh Kifleh Ahmed. The former became Minister for Public Health and latter was given Ministry of Agriculture. Strengthening the peace process, FRUD (Kifley) decided to transform itself into a political party, because in their opinion most of the clauses of Peace Accord of 1994, including FRUD's participation in the government and the integration of Afar rebels into the army have been respected. Moreover, 15 former leaders in FRUD are due to be appointed as officers and NCOs. Finally, about 100 people were integrated into civil services.<sup>11</sup>

In a positive sign towards peace process, government legalized the FRUD (Kifley) as a political party. The peace process in Djibouti on the government's part was characterized by 'carrot and stick' policy. While treating well the FRUD (Kifley) it continued a severe

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 31 ( 9), p. 11587.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid (1994), (12), p.11676.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid (1981), 14 (9), p.8230.

repression against FRUD (Arme). By this time, supported by France and her army, Djiboutian government launched a massive strike against FRUD (Arme). The main argument of FRUD (Arme) to continue her struggle was that it was dissatisfied with the Peace Accord that, in their opinion, did nothing to the clan-based militia recruited by the government and that the multi-party system was subjected to some people and only some were in position to be benefited from it.

After the April 1999, Presidential elections, Chairman of the FRUD armed faction stated that "as long as there are no negotiations, there is no way of putting armed struggle to an end," indicating his willingness to have a dialogue with the new strong man, Ismail Omar Guelleh, who invited the Ahmed Dini Ahmed who was the President of FRUD (Arme) for peace negotiations and in 2000 an agreement was reached which was finalized on 14 May 2001.

The Djiboutian government and the radical wing of the FRUD signed a peace agreement on Saturday 12th May, which observer says aimed to put an end to the uneasy aftermath of the Afar insurgency in Northern and South Western Djibouti. The agreement was signed by Djibouti Interior Minister Abdallah Abdillahi Migvil and FRUD leader Ahmed Dini. In a speech delivered at the signing ceremony of the Djibouti Conference Centre, Dini said that the accord was to enshrine peace in our political environment. Later on, Dini informed that peace accord was centered on decentralization. He disclosed the government's intention of setting up of more representative local bodies and that it had promised to introduce an unrestricted multi-party system by September. Parts of the deal involve the reconstruction and rehabilitation of areas and population affected by the conflict and the demobilization of the FRUD fighters. Peace agreement between the government of Djibouti and FRUD (Arme) was the result of 15 months long secret talks, which were a follow up to an earlier peace deal signed by the Djiboutian government and Ahmed Dini's FRUD in Paris on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2000.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/33/032/html>.



If we analyze this peace process we see that initially, under the leadership of Hassan Gouled Aptidon, the regime of Djibouti, adopted an isolationist approach, which was guided by Gouled's personal interest more than any other thing else. French rejection to intervene in conflict and unexpected initial success of FRUD led the Gouled to soften his stand and he allowed for a constitutional referendum. Seeing Gouled's this initiative, a right step into the direction of democracy, French deployed her troops, but the deployment was more because of Afar's approaching to Capital and worsening relation of France with Djibouti because of not deploying her army against FRUD rebels. Once supported by French Army, AND started to regain lost grounds from FRUD rebels and this culminated into First Peace Accord. With Gouled's departure, the FRUD (Arme) saw another opportunity for peace negotiations with the Government. With Gulleh's constructive approach, Second Peace Accord was signed in May 2001.

#### **4.2.(b) French Mediation :**

French role in the peace process is peculiar, which was guided by more of her own interests rather than by any other concern. When demanded by the Gouled's regime to invoke the Franco-Djiboutian treaty signed in 1977 that provided for French aid in the event that Djibouti was threatened with external aggression, France denied any help to Djibouti's regime terming crisis as internal one and not an armed attack. It was the latter interpretation of the civil war which initially guided French foreign policy towards the Gouled regime and created somewhat a crisis for Franco-Djiboutian relations.

Therefore, following the promises of political openness made by President Gouled Aptidon on December 19th, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicated that Djibouti could count on French support to bring current developments to a satisfactory conclusion. The French government condemned all violence that could endanger the democratic process<sup>13</sup>. The unexpected advancement of FRUD rebels during February 1992, cautioned the France, who were approaching to Djibouti city. French troops left their barracks to take up the positions in the south of the state to try to end peacefully the

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<sup>13</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin* (1991), 28 (11), p. 10392.

15 week armed rebellion by Afar tribes men. The soldiers were sent to Dikhil area near the border with Ethiopia. On February 25th Mr. Paul Dijoud clarified the position of French troops saying that 250 soldiers of an infantry regiment and light armored regiment were moving towards Afar rebel positions in the Dikhil region accompanied by liaison officers from the Djiboutian army. Mr. Dijoud said that troops were on the peace mission.<sup>14</sup> French army units were deployed along with Djibouti soldiers on March 16th 1992, at various locations across Djibouti with the task assigned to distribute food and medical aid to displaced people.

Meanwhile, FRUD leader Mohamed Adayata met with French emissary Paul Dijod and on February 28th FRUD had proclaimed a unilateral ceasefire and expressed their confidence in French mediation effort. Paul Dijoud again visited Djibouti in 1992, because Gouled suspected that France used this period of unrest against his regime, and did not provide him financial aid that his country generally received every year. He was also reproachful of the French military for having assisted the civilians living in the FRUD controlled zones, beyond humanitarian duty.<sup>15</sup> However, the Vice-President of the Afar group, Mohamed Adayata, reaffirmed on May 11<sup>th</sup> that this movement will never negotiate with the President in Djibouti but only in a neutral country. France could still have a role as mediator, in spite of the failure of the previous attempt of negotiation in November 1992.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee in the French National Assembly announced on June 11th that the French Cooperation Minister, Mr. Michel Roussin was taking official measures to obtain the relief of former President of the post-colonial council of the Afar and Issa territory, Mr. Ali Aref Bourhan from the Djiboutian authorities. After a meeting on June 5th President Hassan Gouled Aptidon and French Defense Minister Francois Leofard, Mr. Leofard told the radio that France fully supports the Djibouti government and would implement and respect agreements made.<sup>17</sup> Later on FRUD

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid (1992), 29 (2) p. 10466.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, (7), p.10718.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, (4), p.11001.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid (1993), 30( 5), p. 1154.

President Ahmed Dini made a visit to France where he met foreign ministry officials. On October 19, Gouled announced that he was ready for dialogue with the opposition but ruled out foreign intervention.

In fact, it was the French mediation, which provided the rebels a sense of satisfaction and trust while dealing with Gouled Aptidon. Had these been not the French mediation, fate of the Djibouti during the civil war would have been different.

On 7th June 1994 French Spokesman, for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Richard Dugue had expressed his country's strong concern about the intervention by the Forces of Order at the demonstration, in which about 20 people were wounded by gunfire in clash which took place on June 5th between the Forces of Order and demonstrators in the mainly Afar-Arhiba quarter in Djibouti. Afar Circles and the United Front of Djiboutian Opposition (FUOD) said four people were killed. It was the participation of French army with ADN against guerilla forces that led the division within FRUD, and brought one of its factions to peace negotiation, which culminated in the Peace Accord of 26th December 1994. Similarly, French mediation also played an important role in the signing of Second Peace Accord.

#### **4.2 (c) Roles of the NGOs:**

Civil society has been very weak in Djibouti. A UNDP report for the year 1995 concluded that the local NGOs played a marginal role in the socio-economic development of country. Nevertheless, Djibouti based human rights organization, Djiboutian Association of Human Rights and Freedom (ADDHL), played an important role, continuously pressurizing the government for its atrocities and human rights violations, along with Amnesty International.

##### **4.2.1(c): Association of Human Rights and Freedom (ADDHL):**

This local human rights non-governmental organization always put the government under pressure disclosing atrocities and human rights violations committed by government and

letting the international pressure come on it. It reported in July 1992 about a police firing on the inhabitants of the Arhiba quarters mainly populated by Afars, who were demonstrating their support for Mr. Ali Aref. In this firing, it added further that 13 people were wounded.<sup>18</sup> During the referendum, regarding adoption of new constitution, where on the one hand Interior Ministry claimed that the participation rate was 75.16% of registered voters and out of which 96.84% voters voted in the favour of referendum. ADDHL, contesting this claim reported that more than half of the population boycotted the referendum<sup>19</sup>.

ADDHL claim seems more convincing because at the time of the referendum major opposition parties gave a call for boycotting the referendum. ADDHL said that contrary to the untruthful claims by the Interior Ministry the people in the North, Centre and South West of the country under FRUD control did not go to the towns to vote at all. It was the rising popularity and reliability of ADDHL, which prompted the government to arrest the President of ADDHL, Mr. Mohammed Houmed Soyle on September 18<sup>th</sup> 1993 on the charge of the defamation. On Mr. Houmed's arrival at the *Palais de Justice* demonstrators waved placards denouncing the 'ethnic cleansing' being carried out on the Afar population of the north of the country. The Afar said the demonstrators were placed in "concentration" camps.<sup>20</sup>

#### **4.3 AN EVALUATION OF PEACE PROCESS IN DJIBOUTI:**

In order to evaluate the peace process in the Horn of Africa a model has been provided by John G Nyuot Yoh, according to which following questions will be asked and applied to Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia in process to evaluate peace process of their respective countries-

What are the peace and was issues involved in each country?

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<sup>18</sup> *Africa Research Bulletin* (1992), 29( 7), p.10686.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid* p.1071.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid* (1993), 30 (5), p.1154.

- How could the useful peace agreement in each country shall be made more workable? What are the problems that the parties involved in the peace process now face? How could these problems would be overcome? How can these arguments be maintained?
- What are the peace initiatives already underway?
- What are the apparent reasons that prevented previous attempts at a peaceful resolution? How could they be overcome?

Now, we will analyze the viability of Djibouti's peace process on above grounds. Regarding the peace and war issues we can identify, decentralization of political power and introduction of unrestricted multiparty system. In fact, these were the issues which destabilized the country for a long time.

Afars, being excluded from the political power organized a movement against partisan regime of Hassan Gouled Aptidon. Gouled initially adopted an isolationist approach to deal with growing Afar dissatisfaction and their demand and launched a military offensive against Afar rebels. Later on under the changed socio-political conditions he introduced a new constitution and multi-party system in Djibouti, which proved nothing but another product of his sinister design. Being harassed by the partisan regime of Hassan Gouled Aptidon many members of his own ethnic group joined the opposition movement either by joining hands with opposition leaders or by creating a new organization, to attack authoritarianism of regime latter on. It was only with the help of French army that Gouled Regime secured a division within FRUD and signed a Peace Accord with one group, while other faction vowed to continue fighting against the government. It must be noted that rebels were not demanding their due share only in political power but also in civil services, army and in other government institutions. Along with it, another, conflict issues could be recognized as resource scarcity and uneven development of territory in the favor of Issas.

Djibouti traditionally is a pastoral country largely constituted by nomadic populations. The only commercial activities are centered around Djibouti Port and Adis-Ababa

Railway zone. The northern part of the country is largely remained undeveloped, which in due course of time could be a potential threat to the sustainability of peace.

Current peace agreement in Djibouti is based on the government's pledge to introduce a number of more representative local bodies and promise to introduce a unrestricted multi-party system. The main problem faced by the government after the signing of peace accord in May 2001 is to rehabilitate the demobilized soldiers. On June 2001 FRUD rebel fighters handed over their weapons of destruction to the government and by March 2002, 1074 former FRUD combatants had been disbanded of which 300 had been integrated into the country's security forces. Natural question arises about is the fate of 774 disbanded members. Will they adopt illegal actions for their livelihood or does the government command enough resources at its disposal to integrate all the disbanded soldiers into government institutions. Simple answer is no Djibouti, do not enough resources to integrate all the disbanded members of ex-rebel group. Now what could be the solution for this problem? Solution is the active collaboration and participation of international organizations with Djibouti's government in her endeavor to integrate the dissatisfied rebels into national life.

United Nation recognized this fact during the first Peace Accord signed by FRUD (Kifile) and Aptidon regime. Moreover, the situation in neighbouring countries and harsh climatic conditions may pose a threat to the peace process. UN reported that the situation in Djibouti has been adversely affected by recent events in neighbouring countries the uncertain and often highly destructive climatic conditions and the limited financial capacity of the country to implement economic and social reconstruction and development programs. The government had stated that it confronts the needs of ten of thousands of internally displaced persons and illegal immigrants in addition to as many as 1,20,000 soldiers who must be demobilized and reintegrated into civil society following the civil war. Despite of the United Nation's cooperation other international organizations must cooperate with Djibouti in its endeavor to peace.

If we analyze the apparent reason that prevented previous attempts of a peaceful resolution, we find the most important constraint was the lack of will on the part of government to conclude a Peace Accord, which was evident in the in the way of Gouled regime of dealing with rebels in initial period. Gouled did not leave any stone unturned to suppress the Afar movement by force. It seems that he was more interested to see his stake served rather than a peaceful Djibouti.

Atrocities against Afars during his regime did nothing to strengthen the disturbed country but it provided more justified reasons for the young Afars to join the militant group against his oppressive regime. Not only, his way of dealing with rebels added fuel to power but also his political style set the platform for the rebels. During the peace negotiation he always tried to impose his hidden agenda for e.g. if we can assume the adoption of a new constitution as a part of to facilitate peace process by showing serious concern about the demands of rebels then we find it as a document which provided further reason to rebels to continue their struggle against the regime. In the constitution, which was adopted by referendum, he included a clause that denied the bifurcation of apex power and ensured the concentration of executive power in one centre, which was the President, in turn, Hassan Gouled Aptidon at that time. This clause became the main source of dissatisfaction among the rebel groups and FRUD termed it as 'poisoned gift'. Had there been any seriousness on the part of president to restore peace and order in the country he surely would not have included such kind of imprudent clause, which irritated the opposition members and provided them another reason for not believing the Gouled as a fellow seriously concerned about the welfare of every section of society.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Horn of Africa being, the hotbed of conflict has always been an attracting region for the scholars, interested in conflict and conflict resolution mechanism. Every country in the Horn is facing one or another kind of conflict, Djibouti; however, being the smallest country in the Horn is not an exception to the rule. Djibouti is facing the ethnic conflict since its independence in 1977 from France roots of which is to be found in the colonial period and socio-political dynamics of post- independent Djibouti. Nature of the conflict in Djibouti is ethnic and the aim of conflict was to transition into a society organized on the basis of democratic values.

Colonialist France, sow the seed of intra-community tension by solidifying the ethnic identities in rigid manner. Moreover, she inherited a centralized administrative structure which was not fit for multi-cultural society inhabited two or more than two ethnic groups. Centralization of power in one centre made the regime authoritative in nature and almost turned it into dictatorship. In fact, absolute power, inherited by French colonial administration to Djibouti's post-colonial state machinery corrupted the new power centre in the post-independent Djibouti absolutely, leading it towards ethnic nepotism which led the feeling of frustration not only among the Afar members but also, among the member of Issa ethnic group, to which President Hassan Gouled Aptidon himself belonged.

There had been a persistent armed struggle against the authoritarian nature of Hassan regime which manifested into the bomb explosion on the French installation, which reached its peak when a bomb was placed in the headquarter of RPP, the ruling party, authoritarian regime met this armed movement in authoritarian manner, it crushed the opposition parties, arrested the leaders of those parties, accused them of plotting against regime and undermining of state's security, poisoned some of them and exiled others. But it could not break the opposition movements against it in the country. Opposition parties



were demanding, mainly Afar opposition parties, ouster of President Gouled, introduction of multi-party system instead of one party rule which haunted the Djibouti since her independence.

Afar rebel groups were demanding the ethnic parity not only in the government but also in civil services and military, which was rejected by Hassan. The decade of 90s proved to be most crucial period in the history of post-independent Djibouti which witnessed the emergence of Afar's most radical group FRUD. Civil war and two historic Peace Accord which put the civil war an end. FRUD's emergence was the most radical response of Afar to the authoritarian regime of Hassan Gouled Aptidon. FRUD emerged as an armed rebellion against the government in 1991.

Being surprised by this development and FRUD's initial success Hassan asked France to apply Franco-Djibouti defense treaty that was worked out in 1997 which stated that in case of external aggression France will defend Djibouti, Gouled termed FRUD's rebellion as external aggression and asked France to deploy its armed forces in favour of government but France rejected Gouled's demand and said that the present crisis is the internal matter of a sovereign country. FRUD rebel forces continued to advance towards south and threatened Djibouti city itself. By the time it became evident that AND was not able to fight FRUD forces. Now when FRUD directly threatened the Djibouti city France under the new condition decided to intervene in Djibouti, but as a mediator. France decide to deploy her armed forces for humanitarian purpose not for taking part in the armed campaign against FRUD, but it was done only in theory.

In fact, with deployment of French troops AND started to regain the lost ground and surprised FRUD by its newly added attacking capacity, probably because of the involvement of French troops or something else. Meanwhile, the activities of government of Djibouti came under the attack of human rights organization which blamed the government of violating human rights on large measure. ADDHL reported about Arhiba massacre in which government troops killed the Afars indiscriminately in Arhiba district. Amnesty International repeatedly reported about the grave human rights violation

on the part of government. Supported by French army AND stopped the supply of food and other essential service to the towns which were under the FRUD control.

Which led the division within FRUD, while other version of division is that, some of the FRUD members, taking desire to secure some seats in government setup, started the peace negotiation with government was led by Kifle and known as FRUD (Kifle) another faction which opposed the talks and was led by Ahmed Dini , and came to known as FRUD (Dini) or FRUD(arme). Peace negotiations were led by Kifle on the behalf of FRUD and on the behalf of government, it was led by interior minister publicly and by Ismael Omar Gulleh privately.

This peace process resulted into a peace accord signed between government and FRUD (Kifle), in 1994. After which FRUD (Kifle) joined the government and was designated Mr.Kifle as minister along with his ally Ali Mohammed Daoud. After this agreement government launched a massive attack against FRUD (arme) and once again came under attack of human rights organization ADDHL and Amnesty International who accused the government to cross all the limits and resorted to an action in Afar quarters which amounted to nothing less than 'ethnic cleansing' by the government against Afar ethnic groups.

Meanwhile, France kept on her mediation between government and FRUD; in fact, the peace accord was initiated by serious effort of French emissary, Paul Dijoud. But, many times it seemed that France had lost legitimacy as a neutral mediator, when Djibouti authorities declared French peace mission as a failure. But rebels always had their faith in French mission and the unilateral ceasefire which was the result of French effort was announced by the rebels who said that they had full faith in French mediation effort. But one question can be raised against the impartiality of French role, which was deployment of French forces when fall of Djibouti city seemed imminent.

In fact, the French peace effort was more guided by her interest rather than any other thing. An important turn came when the Gouled announce that he will not contest the

presidential election, which was to be held in April 1999. In this election, another Issa who had worked with Hassan Gouled Aptidon Ismail Omar Gulleh became the President of The Republic of Djibouti . Being impressed by his seriousness regarding the peace process Ahmed Dini, leader of FRUD's radical wing showed his willingness to end the civil war in Djibouti which by this time almost devastated the country's infrastructure and caused much causality, out of which many were young Afars After the secret round of negotiations a peace was finalized in 2000 which was officially signed in May 2001 between FRUD (Arme) and the government of Djibouti.

According to the accord, government had promised to introduce local representative bodies and unrestricted multi party system in country. Now the sustainability of peace depends on the government's determination to fulfill the promises made in 2001 Peace Accord. The problem on the part of the government is that it does not has the enough resources for the rehabilitation of disbanded FRUD rebels which was among the promises made in peace accord. It must be helped by the United Nations and other international organizations in her endeavor to resolve the ethnic problem and in the rehabilitation of disbanded FRUD members.

Djibouti has emerged as the only country in the 'Horn' who has been success in resolving her ethnic conflict up to a great extent. The most remarkable feature of the peace process was the willingness of both parties-government and FRUD (Arme) to solve the crisis and to restore the peace in the country. Financial constraints may create some hurdles in peace making process on the part of government but with the help of U.N and other multi-lateral organizations this hurdle may be overcome. Another untouched area which constitutes a potential threat to peace process is the status of women which has been affected badly by the civil war. An important effort has been made by the government and other political parties by providing reservation to women in the Legislative Assembly. Another important impediment which might threat the successful concluding of peace process is the scarcity of resources in Djibouti to support massive welfare program on behalf of the government for ex-combatants and this impediment can be overcome by the will power of government and other political groups.

In fact, conflict in Djibouti presents a different case so does the peace process. Ethnic conflict in Djibouti is of different nature from other conflicts which occurs in Africa and peace process is also presents a different case which has been successfully resolved the conflict up to great extent and presents a healthy scenario for lasting peace in Djibouti.

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