

Dubiousness of Survival in Gidicho Island: Economic Livelihood Shift from Farming to Fishing

Mohammed Seid Mohammed¹, Teferi Hatuye Hilate²

Arba Minch University

Abstract: *The economic life of the inhabitants of Gidicho Island was full of glitches. Farming, as part of the livelihood of the people of the Island, was also crumbled from the subsistence economic system of the people due to the wraparound of farmlands by the continuously expanding water of Lake Abaya. This article intends to give some insights on the nature of the shabby economy of the inhabitants of the Island by explaining the major challenges that tempted to affect farming and the peoples' decision to shift their livelihood to fishing. It anticipates to precisely discuss the efforts exerted by the inhabitants of the Island to ensure their survival by meticulously finding solution to economic problems that encountered them in different periods. In the discussion, the article also discusses the eventual collapse of farming economy and the emergence of fishery by replacing it as part of solutions applied by the people of the Island to ensure their survival. The data used to write this article are gathered through fieldworks conducted from 2015 to 2017. The researchers collected sources in different form from Gidicho Island, Mirab Abaya, Hawassa and Addis Ababa. Both written and oral sources are gathered from the above regions and carefully analyzed to write an objective historical account on the issue. Sources collected from different contexts are cross-checked and meticulously analyzed to write this article.*

Keywords: Dubiousness; Farming; Fishing; Gidicho; Shift; Survival

1. Introduction

Islands have been used as a home of communities in different parts of the world. Lazrus states that islands are home to one-tenth of the global population and also cover one-six of the Earth's surface. Likewise, the author also lists those politically independent islands which have sovereign states that counts one-quarter of the world's sovereign states. [1] The Rift Valley lakes of Abaya and Chamo, which are found 500 kilo meters far from Addis Ababa to south, host both inhabited and uninhabited islands. Lake Abaya which is part of the largest lacustrine complex of the Ethiopian Rift Valley hosts about thirty islands. However, most of them are not inhabited by now. Among the islands of Lake Abaya, only Gidicho Island was inhabited by Baiso and Haro peoples during the researchers' fieldwork in 2015. Gidicho Island is the largest Island available within Lake Abaya. It extends about eight km north to south and three to four km from east to west. The Island has been served as a safe place to its inhabitants. [2]

However, islands and inhabitants of them did not get attention from social science studies in general and history in particular. The first note that gives some insights with regard to the existence of peoples in Gidicho Island was Lamberto Vannutelli and Carlo Citerni who visited the Island as a member of Bottego's pioneering expedition in southern Ethiopia in 1899. It is obvious that the first western scholars who mentioned the inhabitants of the Island were the members of the Second Bottego Exploration who came to the area around the turn of the nineteenth century. [3] Oscar Neuman who defined the inhabitants of the Island as "Somali like people" was the first traveler who mentioned Baiso language in his travel account based on his own personal observation which took place in 1902. He mentioned the linguistic and physical resemblance of Baiso and Somali peoples briefly. According to Oscar Neumann's sketch, the inhabitants of Gidicho had almost an identical expression with the people of Somalia. He also expressed his

admiration towards the boat technology that the inhabitants of Gidicho Island have made from a very light wood species of ambatch to float over Lake Abaya. [4] It is confirmed that Harold Fleming is the first author who drew the attention of linguists to the Baiso language. He made brief trips to Gidicho Island in 1958 and 1960 in order to determine the linguistic affiliation of the peoples of the Island. The pioneering descriptive work of Harold Fleming supports Neumann's impression of the Somali-like structure of Baiso. [5] Susanne Epple, who conducted ethnographic research among the Baiso people, carried out fieldwork in the years between 2012 and 2015 in four rounds. She documents aspects of Baiso culture which the author herself considered it as a kind of "salvage ethnography." This work gives important insights with regard to a history and origin, their indigenous religions and ritual life, livelihood strategies, and the complex relationship between the Baiso and Haro people of the Island. However, the question of survival that tempted the economic aspects of the inhabitants of the Island, and the way they could survive here by wrestling the problems were not briefly discussed by anyone of them. Thus, this manuscript intends to give brief account on the effort of the inhabitants of the Island to shift their livelihood from farming to fishing as a means to ensure their survival in Gidicho Island.

Pastoralism was identified as the earlier and their major economic activity for the people of the study area. The ancestors of the inhabitants of the Island were familiar with pastoral economic activity in the twelfth century when they were found in eastern Shewa. Available evidences point out that the ancestors of the inhabitants of Gidicho Island were living in plains of lower Awash in this period. Tamrat clearly states that people living in this region were familiar with pastoralism. [6] The region between lower Awash to Lake Abaya, through where they moved across until their arrival to the Island, is considered as the probable site that represents the first adoption of a pastoral economy in East Africa at least since the second Millennium BC. [7] Sava also set his assumption which argues that the ancestors of the

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inhabitants of present-day Gidicho Island were pastoralists before their movement to the Island. However, Sava is not in a position to indicate the evidence he used to reach to such conclusion. [8] Informants also confirm that pastoralism was a major economic activity of them until recently. They moved with their cattle along the shores of Lake Abaya. Particularly the regions found in the western shore of Lake Abaya, which now are the major settlement areas, were the main centers of animal rearing for them. Moreover, the Island is also stated as a healthy environment for animal rearing. That is why Mathias Brenzinger points out that the people of Guji sent their donkeys to the Island to recover from infirmity. Thus, the inhabitants of the Island have kept cattle, goat and donkey in the Island. [9] It is in recognition of the role of pastoralism to their economy that they rehearse the following poem in their poetry:

አ ለ ቴ ሚ ለ ጽ ጽ ለ ገ ጊ ጊ ፤ I am proud of being a milker
ጭ ራ ጋ ሎ ሀ ን ዶ ቴ ቴ ማዥ ፡ ፡ and we owe to a herd

This poem clearly indicates the role played by animal rearing in the economic history of them. Peoples who lived both on the Island and the western shoreline of Lake Abaya proudly remember their engagement in animal rearing by chanting such poems in their day to day speech.

Farming was another major economic activity of them until recently. It is, however, difficult to precisely indicate the exact period of the beginning of farming on the Island. There is also no concrete evidence that could prove their acquaintance with farming during their infiltration to the Island in the early sixteenth century. Some historical accounts narrate that the Cushitic people of the region disliked farming in the pre-sixteenth century southern Ethiopia. [10] However, Grottanelli, by referring the account of Eike Haberland which was purely an ethnographic note, states that there was an extensive cultivation in the regions between the basins of the Juba River and Lake Abaya prior to their contacts with the Sidama in southern Ethiopia. The region was also identified as fertile and well-watered region. [11]

Mohammed Hassen confirms that the Oromo, who were living in the lake's region before the sixteenth century, were engaged in mixed farming long before their movement to different parts of the country. [12] Moreover, it was in the eighth and ninth centuries that the Bantu agriculturalists moved up and arrived in the Juba River, which is a probable area where the present inhabitants of Gidicho moved across. Thus, the wide area from where most of the peoples of Gidicho Island descended to the Island was familiar with farming. [13]

Assefa and Bork who conducted research on Chench-Dorze Belle, the western escarpment of the Ethiopian Rift Valley, point out that the stonewalled indigenous terraces available in the region prove that agriculture has a long history in the region. Based on radiocarbon dating technique, they could prove that the terraces were built 800 years ago. [14] However, it is much difficult to present the positive correlation between the above agricultural experiences and the beginning of farming among the peoples of the Island. However, it has to be clear that the people of the wider region between Juba River and Omo River had frequent

contact among each other which apparently brought a platform for cultural exchange among each other, including farming.

Kuls who visited Gidicho Island in 1958 provides an account of the agricultural practices of the inhabitants of Gidicho Island. [15] Harold Fleming, who visited the Island in the same year, enumerates words in his description of the Baiso vocabulary to suggest their acquaintance with farming practices at least since his visit to the Island. He presents words like *hoke* (hoe), *badɣla* (maize), *masinjka* (sorghum) in the vocabulary aspect of them. It is based on such analysis that he, finally, suggests that they were once lived in the highland or mountainous regions, landscape mostly conducive for farming, before their spread to the Island. [16] Murdock also confirms that East Cushitic peoples, including the Baiso of Gidicho Island, were originally agriculturalists before their spread to the lowland. According to Murdock, the present-day southeastern Ethiopian lowlanders were living in the highland region where agriculture has been the major economic activity. [17]

Based on the account of Eike Haberland, who visited the Island in 1950, Susanne Epple states that there was no farming practice in the Island during the visit of the former. [18] This thesis, however, is not confirmed by oral sources. The inhabitants of the Island bitterly expressed their anger of losing their farmland to the expansionist state which established cotton plantation since around the turn of the nineteenth century. [19] This depicts that there was farming practice at least as early as the turn of this century. It is also known that Italy expanded cotton plantation on the Island on the expense of the subsistence farming activity of them. [20] Thus, it is not meaningful to argue that there was no farming practice on the Island in 1950. Oral sources also narrate that there was a period when women had a responsibility of cultivating different crops by using digging stick. This period was commonly known as "*AkoMenewe*" by the peoples of the Island. In this period, men were highly engaged in hunting, which was believed to be a source of proud for those who were succeeded to kill wild animals in a field while women cultivated small plots of land near to their respective home by using digging stick. Graziano Sava confirms this thesis by enlightening that the inhabitants of the Island began to support their subsistence economy through small scale agriculture after moving to Gidicho Island. [21]

Their ritual practices and a long tradition of terracing, designate that crop cultivation had a long history. A ritual like *orono ta ogoro* was exercised by them at the beginning of the summer season so as to ask the blessing of their cult to make their harvest satisfactory and just after the harvesting period to forward their thanksgiving. [22] The intestine of the animal slaughtered to this ritual was put on a flat stone in the compound of the *wonnos* and was critically examined by experts. Experts who were well acquainted with the indigenous knowledge of reading the intestine did so to inform farmers about the nature of the coming harvest season. When they found the intestine normal, they suggest that the coming harvest season will become promising and productive. When they found something wrong in it, however, they enumerated factors that will make harvesting

on the Island difficult and/or impossible. [23] Since it was apparently one of the historic ceremonies of them, farming could also claim the same historic status in terms of its initiation.

Moreover, terraces which are still available on the Island are important evidences for at least to speculate the period in which farming began to subsidize the economy of them. [24]

There is an age-old terrace, which the researchers personally observed in the area between Haro and Shigmavillages (see photo 1 below). The people of Gidicho Island had a culture of preserving the fertility of their farmlands by making terrace. [25] Thus, contemplating farming as a recent phenomenal practice is not a justifiable notion.



Photo 7: Terracing Practice on Gidicho Island
Photo by the Researchers

Moreover, the inhabitants of the Island had extensive farmlands which are now totally covered by the continuously expanding Lake. Almost all scholars who wrote a speculative account of the farming practice of the people developed their suggestion about its history based on their observation of the recent status of the geographical setup of the Island. However, the people of the Island are well-remembering the notable fertile farmlands which were tilled by their forefathers and enumerate them precisely. Most of them were found on the southern part of the Island, around the village now known as Baiso. These farmlands include; Lalo, Rid, Elange, Odola, Bato, Mul'ata, Aka, Takare, Beleka, and Chewto. Among them, Lalo and Rid were relatively extensive and fertile. In the study conducted by the government of Ethiopia in 1987 E.C, 116 hectares land was used for cultivation from the total of 1600 hectare land. However, all of them are now covered by the Lake which forced them to look to the western shoreline of Lake Abaya for farming. [26]

After well-adapted to the lacustrine environment, they had cultivated sorghum, maize, and millet on the above farmlands. [27] It is known that the wild variety of sorghum (*S. aethiopicumRuper.*) was originated in Eritrea and Ethiopia. [28] This species and others, brought by the Muslim collaborators of Ahmed Ibrahim from India, become

the major crop items in the history of the farming of the Rift Valley regions. [29] As part of this region, the inhabitants of the Island adapted the production system of sorghum on the Island. Another notable crop item cultivated by them, maize (*zea mays*), is stated to be introduced to Ethiopia from America possibly through Portuguese contact after the sixteenth century. [30] Since its introduction, it becomes a major food item on the Island. It was the most extensively cultivated crop item until they lost their farmlands to the continuously expanding water of the Lake. [31] Finger Millet (*Eleusine Coracana*) has been also another domesticated crop item of the East African Highlands and has also been grown extensively in Uganda and Ethiopia. [32] It was cultivated on the Island as well and was the major crop for home consumption. [33]

Cotton, locally known as *futo*, was also emerged as a notable plant around the turn of the nineteenth century. [34] The people of the Island whispered that it was brought to the Island by the northerners who controlled the Island as part of the state formation project in the period. Plots of land which were formerly cultivated by the inhabitants of the Island through hoe technology became a land of cotton production due to the will of the *balabats* of the Island. [35] Cotton plantation was highly expanded during the period of Italian Occupation (1935-1941). [36] However, the inhabitants of

the Island got nothing from cotton production until 1941. After this period, it was mainly harvested for making cloth and blankets (*gashe*) to sell in the neighboring market centers. [37] That is why Jensen, who visited the regions around Lake Abaya in 1930s, states that weaving was the main source of income for the inhabitants. [38]

Farming technology of the inhabitants of the Island was also eventually transformed through time. They began to till their land by Hackley wood, locally known as *mata*. [39] There was evolutionary transformation in the farming techniques of the people of the region. It is known that the farming of Africa was a hoe and digging stick agriculture at the beginning. [40] As part of the communities of this continent, the inhabitants of Gidicho eventually shifted their farming technology from hoe to plough. They had made the latter from sharpened sticks and the laces extracted from the hippo leather. This farming tool was used by them till the introduction of iron ploughs. [41] It is difficult to precisely put the period when iron plough was introduced to the Island. Yamral Mekonen, who investigated a history of Burjiworeda in the period of post-Italian Occupation, one of the neighbouring peoples of the inhabitants of the Island, states that the settlers who came from northern Ethiopia played a great role in the introduction of ox-drawn plough agriculture since the late nineteenth century. [42] Thus, it was probably in the same period that the inhabitants of the Island made themselves familiar with iron plough like their neighbors, the Burji.

However, the subsistence economy of the inhabitants of Gidicho Island was not continued to be promising and productive. The Island is eventually emerged as a barren land characterized by the presence of low rainfall, infertile soil and seasonal flooding. The Island is prone to recurrent droughts that made living on it too difficult. [43] Moreover, the increment of the number of the population that coincides with shortage of rainfall made life on the Island so hard. There has been no rainfall on the Island in the summer season. Sometimes, rainfall was registered in April, May, and June. [44] Thus, the Island has been stroked by serious shortage of rainfall. That is why the people of the Island wrathfully expressed their upset to the rainfall that regularly falling in the neighboring highland regions through their proverb as:

Gaallata Kalliki Eddamo Galechoy Ubara [45]
(ጥህንጋና የ ሌላ ጡዝና ብቦ ማይረ ባቦ ታይዞ ን ባል) :

or Unappreciative rain is falling on a place where it could do nothing.

Moreover, most of the physical landscape of the Island is characterized by infertile soil. The soil is sandy and stony. Most of the upper layer of the land is covered by *Bolé* (local salt). The region as well is categorized under the lowland climatic zone. [46] According to the study conducted in 1987 E.C., the area of the Island is 40 *gasha*/1600 hectares. However, only 116 hectares land was reported to be a cultivable land. The remaining 1184 hectares land was identified as uncultivable which was covered by trees and shrubs of different kinds. Among the latter figure, 400 hectares of land was used to rear animals. Thus, some of the inhabitants of the Island went as far as Wolaita and Guji,

which are found in the western and eastern shore of the Lake respectively, to till plots of lands that were freely available there. [47]

The migration to the western shore of Lake Abaya was also triggered by the raising of the water level of the Lake that wrapped up the major part of the most fertile land, and the absence of rain that caused desertification on the Island. The extremely salty and unproductive soil failed to satisfy the economic curiosity of them. [48] The Island, which lost most of its farmlands to the continuously expanding Lake, is eventually become a barren Island where survival becomes very difficult. The people had lack food. Thus, the people began to push to migrate to the western shore of Lake Abaya to establish their permanent settlement, where they saw an untenanted land. [49] Both the peoples of Haro and Baiso have been settled in the mainland villages of Worbe (Yayqe), Chinle (Mul'ato), Jiges (Shinqiqo), Alge, and Wajifo (Wanke). [50] Graziano Sava estimates that the Island lies about twenty kilometers far from the western coast. [51] Moreover, the mainland in the western shoreline of Lake Abaya was not densely populated. Thus, the inhabitants of the Island had preferred to settle in this region. Graziano Sava argues that they began to migrate to the western shore of Lake Abaya since four/five generations ago. [52] Thus, survival in Gidicho Island continued to be questionable due to the everlasting impact of economic destitutions. Economic related problems, finally, forced the inhabitants of the Island to halt their food taboo of eating fish.

The inhabitants of different Islands of Lake Abaya did not effectively exploit the fish resource of the lake. [53] Eating meat of animals other than cattle, goats, and sheep was not common among the inhabitants of Gidicho Island. Eating fish meat was perceived as impure. Eating meats of wild game was believed to be harmful. [54] Moreover, prestige in much of east Africa was highly associated with cattle-rearing, and later on farming. Being dependent on the aquatic animals was commonly perceived as 'backward' and intellectually 'stagnant.' Moreover, consuming aquatic animals, including fish, was perceived as an archaic life. East African communities who succeeded in their pastoral life viewed fish as uncouth and unclean. The first pastoralists of this region identified themselves as a community with a taboo against fish. [55] Studies conducted on the views of the peoples of Ethiopian Rift Valley regions with regard to fishery reveals that fish was identified as a worm and snake which should never be touched at all. [56] Informants unanimously disclose that eating of fish was perceived to be resulted in dental caries. They also strongly argue that their custom did not allow them to eat fish. [57] Eating fish, antelope, deer, and hippo meat was a taboo among the Baiso people of the Island. [58] Arnold Hodson wonderfully expressed the region's canopy to fish eating in 1916 as "I was amazed to find that the natives refuse to eat fish." [59] When he amazed by the native's snub to eat fish, the natives, on the other hand, were highly astounded by his audacity to eat fish, which was a taboo.

There is also a very important point that has to be clear here in line with the tarry of fishery in Gidicho Island. Needless to say, there was no coercionary situation that forced the

inhabitants of Gidicho Island to break their food habit, which considered fish as taboo, to diversify their economic activity before 1960s. Oral sources point out that the people of the Island could properly satisfy their basic economic curiosities through animal-rearing, farming, trade and other economic activities before 1960s. Therefore, it was not obligatory for them to look to fishery, which was not accustomed by their ancestors, so long as the above listed economic activities could satisfy their economic curiosity.

However, the inhabitants of Gidicho Island began to engage in fishery economy at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century due to lack of farmland in the Island. Epple states that fish has become part of the diet of the people since the last twenty years. [60] The Ethiopian Herald written on March 25, 1969, also states that they did not eat fish in 1960s. [61] Oral sources, on the other hand, confirm that it was started a little bit before the time indicated by Epple. Thus, it is likely to state that the beginning of fishing on Lake Abaya was started in the years between 1960s and 1970s. [62] However, it is still possible to state that the use of aquatic resources of Lake Abaya is a recent development. The peoples of Gidicho Island did not properly utilize the abundant fish resources of the lake for subsidizing their economy before five to six decades ago. [63]

As is already indicated above, the beginning of angling on Lake Abaya was associated with the coming of foreign visitors [64]. Signor Picardo personally hooked fish from Lake Abaya. Signor Picardo was the founder of the fiber factory, found in the eastern shoreline of Lake Abaya at a place called Buchisi, to produce sansevieria fiber from wild growing aloe. Moreover, Signor Picardo and a representative of Arba Minch Fisher's Corporation convinced the inhabitants of the Island to start fishing in order to earn income to survive. [65] Arnold Hodson, liaison officer of Britain at Mega, also personally enter into Lake Abaya by using *wollabo*, local boat made and used by the people of Gidicho, to hook fish in 1916. [66]

Some anglers of the Island learned the techniques of fishing while they were working with the foreigners who hunted crocodiles. [67] There were French investors who were much interested in crocodile hunting. Some inhabitants of the Island were hired to work for them. They had learnt much about the techniques of fishing from them. The youth who had worked with the investors preferred to work independently after they proved that the salary paid to them was too low. The youth who adopted the fishing techniques from foreign investors continued to work independently to earn income. [68] Thus, fishery has become a major source of income for the youths to lead their live in the Island. It became the alternative solution for them to get relief from starvation. It becomes the main source of income by replacing the terminated farming in the Island. [69]

However, the production level of the fish, which was characterized as an artisanal economic activity until the second half of the 1990s, was small. Fishers engaged in fishery as a part-time work in the country level. [70] Absence of legislation and the deep rooted influence of Cushitic food taboo, which directly collaborated with the

absence of efforts to create awareness among them about the invaluable role of fishery in improving food subsistence, interdicted the people from fishery until four decades ago. [71] Thus, fish production has been remained far below the estimated potential yield of the water bodies of the country even though the country has substantial fishery resources. [72]

Of course, modern fishing techniques were introduced in the 1980s and 1990s with the resurgence of development programs of fisheries. [73] It is obvious that the Interchurch Foundation Ethiopia (ISE) and the Interchurch Organization for Development Co-Operation (ICCO) had plaid a mass role in developing fisheries all over the world. Both of them are non-Governmental Organizations. [74] Likewise, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and EEC were devoted much to develop and finance the project of fishery in the region. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church-Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC/DICAC) and the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches provided inputs and transfer technologies of fishing in the Rift Valley lakes. [75]

Ethiopian Evangelical Churches had financed Lake Fisheries Development Project (LFDP) since 1980s. [76] The first phase of the Lake Fisheries Development Project was initiated in the 1980s as a turning point in the development of fishing. [77] Likewise, the second phase of the Lake Fisheries Development Project started in 1992. The second phase of the project concentrates on the Rift Valley Lakes region to shift fishery from subsistence economy to market economy. It was after the beginning of the implementation of these projects that fishers have changed dramatically from hooks, and small gill nets to the use of larger gill nets. Extension services have been given to fishers in net making and mending, fish processing and co-operative organization. Furthermore, fish processing and storage center was established in Arba Minch during the first phase of the Lake Fisheries Development Project. [78]

The other occasion that transformed fisheries in Ethiopia in general and the Rift valley lakes region in particular was the issuance of national fisheries policy or fisheries legislation in 1997. The conference held in Addis Ababa on 4-5 November 1997 was sponsored by the Fisheries Management and Law Advisory Program of the government of Norway. This program of the Norwegian government had provided assistance to governments around the world to the management and sustainable development of inland, coastal and deep-sea zones fisheries as well as aquaculture. [79]

Both provincial and *awrajja* officials unwaveringly engaged to help the peoples of Gidicho Island to properly exploit fish resources found in the lake to ensure their survival. The notable example that has to be mentioned here is what Anebo Gurtumo, the *balabat* of the Island in 1973, did to improve the technology of fishing in Lake Abaya by establishing effective communication with *awrajja* officials. Anebo received around 1000 hooks from the office of the *Awrajja* in Dilla. Barbless hook baited with ox flesh was used to catch fish from Lake Abaya. [80] Nets have been also used to catch up fish from the same lake. [81] Fishing cooperatives as well were established in compliance with the law on cooperative development since 1974. [82] The youth

of the Island established an association known as *Ye-Gidicho Asa Asgariwoc HbretSra Mahber* (Lake Abaya fishermen's cooperative) to get a license for fishing and fishery in 2003. The cooperative was founded by the support of officials of the district and non-Governmental Organizations. Thus, the foundation of the cooperative has intensified and somewhat professionalized fishing in Lake Abaya. [83]

However, following the youth's rigorous engagement in fishing, fish became scarce aquatic animal particularly around the coastline of the Island. This forced them to look to the fishing grounds alongside the Guji territory in the eastern shoreline of the lake. This region is known by its abundant fish resource availability. This part of the lake, therefore, has been used as a main source of fish in the last two decades. [84]

However, Fishing and Fishery in Lake Abaya have blithering challenges. One of the challenges of angling in Lake Abaya is the development of an overlapping interest between the inhabitants of the Island and the people of Guji. The section of the lake which is already identified with abundant availability of fish has been claimed by both of them. The people of Guji refused to authorize the association established by the former to freely angling on the eastern shoreline. [85] It is not entirely clear whether any part of the lake is actually part of Guji or whether the shoreline itself marks the boundary between the two regions, that is, the Gidicho Island and Guji. This matter obviously needs to be clarified by the Regional States of Southern Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State and Oromia Regional State. The problem, however, is that Water Resources Utilizations Proclamation and the Provisions of the Constitution on the Administration of Water Resources argues that administration of an inter-regional fishery would be a responsibility of the Federal government. [86] Thus, the issue continued to be a source of contention among fisheries of the two peoples which hamper the development of fishery in Lake Abaya.

The other problem is lack of transport. Fishermen have supplied fish to urban restaurants and local markets that are found in the western shore of lake Abaya as far as Arba Minch Town. However, there was no motor boat that could be used by them to easily transport fish to the mainland where markets are available. [87] The Addis Ababa-Arba Minch Highway is too far from the coast of Lake Abaya. Thus, distributing fish to different markets of the shorelines is too painstaking. Therefore, fishery still has many difficulties to properly exploit the aquatic resource. Recently, however, Arba Minch University provides the only motor boat which is still working on Lake Abaya. It has provided services for the Island communities to transport different materials and baggage, and fishermen. It is the only motor boat that floats on Lake Abaya. However, transporting fish from the coastline to the main route in the western shore of Lake Abaya by using this boat is not an easy task. [88] The people who have no alternative for survival, however, are continuing to engage in fishing. Thus, Fish is used both as a major part of their diet and source of cash.

Notes

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