



ETHIOPIA'S GEOPOLITICS AND GREAT ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM (GERD) OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Water has become a major natural resource for countries around the world. In line with this, Ethiopia has been implementing different hydro-power projects, including the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), to produce energy. In fact, the GERD is a multipurpose infrastructure that can help transform Ethiopia's economy through the sustainable provision of cheap power, irrigation systems, and storage capacities to protect against floods and droughts while maintaining environmental regulation. The objective of the study was to explore the challenges and opportunities of the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam among the upstream and downstream Nile basin countries. Therefore, to achieve the aforementioned objective, the study used a descriptive research design as the nature of the study was to assess the state of affairs of the opportunities and challenges of integrating the Up and Down-stream Nile basin countries. Moreover, the study used both qualitative and quantitative research approaches coupled with cross-sectional primary data collected from 259 respondents using a self-administered questionnaire. To this end, a sample random sampling technique was used to select the respondents from three universities. In addition to this, the collected data was analyzed with descriptive analysis methods and SPSS version 25 was used to help with the analysis. The result of the study indicated that the majority of the respondents, i.e., 86.5% of them, believed GERD has a significant importance in balancing the use of water by downstream and upstream countries. Moreover, 81.9% of the respondents reported that the construction of GERD will foster economic integration in the downstream countries. In addition to the above results, the majority of the respondents, i.e. 95.4%, affirmed that the construction of the dam will foster market and trade integrity among the up and down-stream countries. Generally, most of the respondents reported their agreement that the construction of GERD would bring positive economic, political, trade, and regional integrity rather than bring chaos and violence if Egypt and Sudan could sit at tables to solve their problems with Ethiopia. Hence, the study recommends Ethiopia to pool its resources and efforts to complete the dam at its full potential and be open to discussion and negotiations with Egypt and Sudan over the GERD peacefully and arrive at a win-win situation.

Keywords: GERD, Geopolitics, East Africa, Upstream and Downstream.

1.0. Introduction



Ethiopia nowadays is increasingly described as an 'East African miracle under construction'. It is a miraculous achievement towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) quicker than any other country in Sub-Saharan Africa (African Economic Outlook, 2015).

The country is endowed with different natural resources, both nonrenewable and with high potential for renewable energy sources, such as hydropower, wind power, geothermal power, solar energy and biomass (Awulachew, 2017).

The country has been implementing different hydropower projects, including the grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), with the objective of producing energy for the country and neighboring downstream Nile basin countries. Moreover, the project GERD has a multifaceted infrastructure transformation of the country's economic development through sustainable provision of cheap power, irrigation systems, and storage capacities to protect against floods and droughts while maintaining environmental regulation (Tan, et al., 2017). The vision of constructing GERD was a long overdue issue that traced back to a century ago. However, due to different internal and external influences, the construction of the dam has been prolonged for a long time. The external pressures of Egypt and its allies, such as Sudan, and other countries and bodies, were the main reasons for the lion's share of the dam being prolonged.

The geopolitics of the Nile River in East Africa is the second-biggest regional issue in the Horn of Africa, which crosses different countries, namely Ethiopia, Sudan/Northern and Southern parts, Uganda, and other countries in the East Africa region. The region has been portrayed as a political marketplace treated by extreme Muslim terrorists such as Al-Shabab, causing unrest, terrorism and war in this region, right from the start of the US intervention in Somalia to date. Due to the Al-Shabab militants, the East Africa region has been suffering for nearly 3 decades. Somali "pirates" are gangsters who have been making worse and worse tensions in the region.

Hence, based on the above-mentioned political unrest, terrorism, internal conflict and inter-country conflicts coupled with secessionists Ethiopia was one of the leading countries fighting against terrorists in the Horn of Africa, Somalia and all, being surrounded by global terrorists but safe and protected countries in the region, safeguarding peace and security with North Sudan and South Sudan. However, in the last two years, this power has been lost as Ethiopia embraces an overhauled political change. As territorial and boundary conflicts, Kenya-Somalia; Ethiopia-Somalia; Eritrea-Ethiopia; Eritrea-Djibouti; Eritrea-Sudan; Kenya-Ethiopia; South Sudan-Ethiopia; South Sudan-Sudan; Somalia-Somaliland.

The GERD dispute is a trans-boundary water resource conflict between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan. The dispute over GERD is aggravated due to the fact that there is no clear and universally binding legal agreement among the Nile basin states. Egypt has a scarcity of water, fearing a temporary decrease in water availability due to the filling of the dam and a permanent reduction because of evaporation from the reservoir.

1.2.Statement of the problem and rationale for the study

Rivers are astonishing phenomena with physical, cultural, and psychological idioms in human societies; they could bring life and death, development and destruction, opportunity and threats.



Managing hydraulic infrastructure and international rivers effectively has always been a goal of human societies and nation states at large.

As energy is the most fundamental driver of global economic prosperity, and as Ethiopia continues to exploit the Nile as a source of hydropower, contending interests with Egypt may once again promote Hobbesian divisiveness (Swain and Chen, 2014).

The public has reservations about massive dams like the GERD. Countries pursue large dam projects as a means of advancing their economies and regions (WCD, 2000; UNEP, 2007). For many years, Egypt and Sudan have had a one-sided dominance over the Nile River. Egypt's dominance in the basin dates back to Ancient Egypt, but it was not until 1959 that Sudan and Egypt signed the "Nile Waters Agreement 1959," which divided the river into 18.5 and 55.5 billion m³ for each country (Nile Water Agreement 1959). Other downstream countries were barred from accessing the river as a result of this water deal. Sudan and Egypt both use the aforementioned amounts of water today, thanks to a network of huge water infrastructure established in the basin. The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) was created in 1999, and the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) was presented as a new water agreement that would allow all riparian countries to enjoy their rights to the Nile Basin waters (CFA, 2007).

Sudan and Egypt have so far refused to accept and sign the CFA (NBI, 2015). Furthermore, because the GERD was launched without previous consultation with Sudan and Egypt, both downstream countries were concerned that the dam would block water inflows, and thus initially opposed the project, which was also perceived as compromising regional peace and stability. Therefore, the greedy Egypt and Sudan to utilize the water and the undue interference of the USA by former president Donald Trump aggravated the conflict between Ethiopia and Egypt and Sudan.

1.3.Objective of the study

The general objective of the study is to analyze the situation and influence of the geopolitical advantage of Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa. In line with this, the specific objectives of the study were to investigate the situation of the Great Renaissance Ethiopian Dam (GERD) and its opportunities for the Nile basin downstream countries, and analyze the challenges of the GERD in the region.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1.Theoretical Frameworks

Geopolitics of the Horn of Africa is always seen as a political marketplace, where the challenges of this could begin to lead the region down a violent pathway.

East Africa and the Horn have always had to weather changes and have been affected by drought and famine in the international context, while also suffering from managing while also managing major political turbulence and economic crackdowns. Internal legitimacy deficits have a terrible legacy that coexists with an international framework that frequently inhibits the political development of local solutions. While regional integration has improved regional stability and reduced cross-border meddling, the future is uncertain as international, regional, and national factors put pressure on national and regional institutions' ability to control and manage nonviolent change.

2.2.Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) Overview

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), formerly known as the Millennium Dam, is the main idea and plan as well. The design was made remarkable by former Ethiopian prime minister Meles



Zenawi and is fully operated by Ethiopian Engineers and is under construction in the Benishangul-Gumuz region of Ethiopia, on the Blue Nile River, which is located about 40 km east of Sudan. The project is managed and owned by the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EEPCCO). It was back in April 2011, when the construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam started after the contract was awarded to Salini Costruttori. The Ethiopian government is funding the construction of the dam for the purpose of generating electricity for the country and also for neighboring countries. However, Sudan and Egypt largely rely on the Nile River for their freshwater resources and agriculture opposed the Ethiopian hydraulic construction on the Blue Nile. With the ongoing negotiations and threats from the two countries, Ethiopia celebrated and acknowledged the full completion of the first phase of the Renaissance Dam in July 2020.

The dam wall is 145 m high and 1,708 m wide. The previous plan was that its turbines could generate 6,000 MW of electricity and 15,692 GWh of energy per year (IPoE, 2013). According to IPoE (2013), this clean energy will help mitigate climate change and human impact in Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia.

As heard and seen in the media, some observers believe that GERD may lead to a direct and fierce war between Ethiopia and Egypt, or that Egypt may use Sudan to engage in proxy wars with Ethiopia and have border conflicts, just like the recent GERD. As you see, therefore, in the eyes of most Ethiopians, Sudan's invasion of Ethiopia's territory is not the root cause of the long-unresolved demarcation problem, but a signal of Egypt's conspiracy and proxy war against Ethiopia. However, according to (Abdelhady, et. al., 2015), other observers downplayed the potential war between Ethiopia and Egypt, arguing that the dam could promote greater cooperation. (Rahman, 2012). On the other hand, pointed out that despite the possibility of conflict or cooperation (hence before July 5, 2020) (Rahman, 2012). On the other hand, they noted that, despite the possibility of conflict or cooperation, such changes in the utilization of the Nile River resources are due to shifting relations and the need to deal with long-overdue inequitable and hegemonic approaches to trans-boundary resource sharing.

2.3.The Nile and Geopolitical Changes

More than any other factor and more than ever before, critical geopolitical and geo-economic developments have caused, triggered and brought about the current tensions among the Nile Basin countries. Internal conflicts have characterized the internal security dynamics of upstream countries like Ethiopia. However, many initiatives and negotiations have been made and tried out to bring about cooperation among the riparian states. It is almost impossible. Compared to previous decades, notably during the Cold War, the region has experienced more superior stability. In the past two and half decades, Ethiopia's influence on East Africa and globally (by extension, its global role) has increased considerably, so that it helped Ethiopia to become a vital partner of the great powers. The effect of the aforementioned changes brought an important shift in the vision of the international community, particularly with regard to global governance institutions and the emergence of China and other sources of developmental investment in a variety of critical projects such as infrastructure in the upstream countries. Hence, this cumulative effect has increased Ethiopia's assertiveness within the Nile basin countries has surged significantly. This assertiveness has created tensions over the Nile, which demands a more vigorous legal and institutional framework to oversee the diverse interests of riparian countries like Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan.



2.4. Opportunities and Challenges of GERD among the Nile Basin Countries

The upstream and downstream countries face both an opportunity and a challenge as a result of GERD. Through the coordination and management of equitable hydraulic infrastructure in the basin for an improved and fair hydraulic regulatory infrastructure regime, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) has the potential to foster cooperation by contributing to regional socio-economic benefits and integration. Furthermore, these advancements and collaborative frameworks may aid in tackling the tragedies that climate change may bring to the basin countries. Coordination of GERD operations may also serve as a catalyst for reciprocal benefits 'beyond water,' such as enhanced market and trade integration (Sadoff & Grey, 2002). However, determining and obtaining broader consensus on the most acceptable constitutional, political, and institutional arrangements to put in place among the states, in particular, is a significant challenge in attaining these benefits.

There are significant differences in the rights of the downstream and upstream banks to the waters of the Nile. Although downstream Egypt and Sudan rely on their historical use rights, upstream countries reject this claim because it violates the principles of fair and reasonable use and participation (Salmon, 2013). Therefore, it is not surprising that, until March 2015, the launch of GERD became a source of political tension between Ethiopia and Egypt. Egypt pointed out that this violated the British-Eneile Treaty of 1902, the framework cooperation instrument that entered into force between Egypt and Ethiopia in 1993, and the established principles of international water law-especially the obligation to prevent major damage and the obligation to support the ecosystem (Egyptian Diplomacy Department, 2014). Ethiopia further argues that GERD will bring shared socio-economic and environmental benefits to all three coastal countries, rather than harm the two downstream countries (Horn Affairs, 2014). Sudan supports Ethiopia's position. "The global response to the project ranges from opposing the environmental and governance issues of dams" (International Rivers, 2014) to expressly supporting it "based on socio-economic development and equity considerations" (MIT, 2014). Although the negotiations will inevitably have ups and downs, with the assistance of expert research and international expert groups, the coastal countries have successfully opened a path of cooperation aimed at reconciling their opposing interests (DoP, 2015; IPoE, 2013; Khartoum Document, December 2015, as cited by Salman). The willingness of coastal countries to cooperate is reflected in the Declaration of Principles (DoP) in March 2015, which clearly endorses the established principles of international water law, establishes cooperation mechanisms, and reaches agreement on how the benefits of the dam will function. Distribute and prevent any negative effects. It is worth noting that, although scholars often focus their attention on the views and relations between Egypt and Ethiopia, the project is extremely important to all countries along the Nile. Sudan has played a key role in the GERD trilateral negotiations from the beginning and provided official support for the project, while constantly emphasizing the downstream benefits of GERD (Cascão & Nicol, 2016).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Method

In order to address the aforementioned general and specific objectives, the study used a descriptive research design coupled with a mixed concurrent research approach where both quantitative and qualitative approaches were mingled to make analysis.

The justification behind using a descriptive research design is due to the fact that the nature of the study could not allow employing advanced research methodology. Moreover, the target populations of the study were university lectures working at three public universities, namely, Addis Ababa University, Kotebe Metropolitan University and Diredda University. The universities were purposively selected due



to the fact that both Addis Ababa and Kotebe Metropolitan Universities are located in the capital city and are assumed to maintain more political awareness as they are located in the home of the African Union, the center of a political melting point where different foreign and national political issues are entertained.

Moreover, the two universities have more intellectuals who offer ample experience and more chief educational qualifications, so that they were selected with a view to providing meaningful and informed information about the aforementioned study objective. On the other hand, Dire Dawa University was selected as the university is located in the East part of Ethiopia, so that those intellectuals and people in academia are assumed to recognize the geopolitical situations of the Eastern countries, like Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya, and Djibouti, as these countries are geographically nearby to the university.

So, based on the above justification, the universities were selected for the purpose of this study. Hence, 333 samples were selected from the three universities based on a proportional simple random sampling technique. Out of the 318 questionnaires distributed, only 259 were used for final analysis as 33 questionnaires were incomplete and the rest 26 were totally unfilled. Therefore, the response rate was 78%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). The response rate was sufficient for a survey questionnaire. The data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire from lecturers and a focus group discussion with some lecturers who have related fields of study in diplomacy, political science, and international relations.

4.0 Result and Discussion

This section this section discusses the results associated with the current situation of the GERD, its opportunities and challenges among the upstream and downstream countries.

Therefore, the objective of the study was to investigate the influence of the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on economic integration and political salability in the Nile based East African countries. Hence, the first question posed to the respondents was to elicit their opinion on whether the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) will balance equitable water utilization among the Nile basin countries.

Therefore, the result related to the question show that 121 (46.4%) of the selected respondents sincerely believe that GERD will balance fair water use among the Nile River Basin countries. Moreover, 110 (42.1%) of the selected respondents positively affirmed their strong agreement that the GERD expressed will bring about the right water use among the Nile Basin countries and proper management of hydraulic infrastructure. On the other hand, an insignificant number of the selected respondents that accounted for 11 and 9 (4.2% and 3.4%) of the selected respondents invariably replied with reasonable disagreement and deep disagreement respectively. On the other hand, 8 (3.1%) of the potential respondents were neutral in their immune response. Therefore, it is clear that most of the respondents i.e. 231 (86.5%) of the respondents, believe that the construction of the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in the Nile Basin countries has adequate water consumption. Therefore, the current water policy between Ethiopia, on the one hand, and Sudan and Egypt, on the other hand, is based on the remarkable fact that the construction of the dam will not bring inequality or drought to Sudan and Egypt, but it has a virtuous influence on the fact that Ethiopia does not utilize its water.

The direct result of the completed questionnaire was further triangulated with a Focus Group Discussion among 8 purposively selected scholars from both Addis Ababa and Kotebe Metropolitan Universities. Hence, the interviewees were typically asked about the valuable contribution of GERD to economic and



political integrity, water regulations, and over all regional peace and social security among the successful Nile Basin countries. The Respondent "reported:

" The construction of GERD will have a significant impact on the economic and political integrity of the downstream countries of the Nile Basin, therefore contributing to political stability and peace in the region. The respondents also broadly agreed that they believe that the dam is gaining a deep meaning in the integration of the downstream countries into trade and market development. The downstream Nile basin countries will be integrated economically, so politically they will be. Other respondents' "Z" included the economic development of GERD to maintain significant regional peace and security by promoting economic and political integration and fair water use in the upstream and downstream countries of the Nile. "

The other important issue pertaining to GERD and Ethiopia's judicial geo politics in the Horn of Africa was critically important to explore whether GERD will foster regional integrity among the Nile basin countries. In line with this specific question, the selected respondents adequately provided their private opinions. Therefore, 116 (44.4%) of those surveyed responded with their effective agreement that the construction of the GERD could ostensibly promote integrity between the countries of the Nile Basin so that all countries in the Nile Basin can enjoy all the benefits associated with the dam. In notable addition to this leading figure, 98 (37.5%) of the selected respondents also proved that they tacitly agree that GERD will enthusiastically promote regional integrity rather than economic chaos in the stable Nile Basin countries. The direct result indicated precisely that Ethiopia, as the possible source of the Nile River, should benefit tremendously from its precious water resources to generate electricity without undoubtedly affecting the Nile basin countries. Whereas, the other cohort of the selected respondents that accounted for 27 (10.3%) reported their profound disagreement that the completed construction of the dam could typically promote regional integrity among the Nile basin countries. This is commensurate with the fact that Egypt and Sudan formed a conspiracy against Ethiopia to not use its water even if the dam does not affect water supplies in the developed Nile Basin countries. Therefore, as it is evident today, a proxy war is being waged against Ethiopia by Egypt using Sudan as an artificial border clash. The willing other few sufficient numbers of the selected respondents that accounted for only 8 (3.1%) replied with their significant disagreement that the GERD necessary will not compromise integrity among the Nile basin countries. Therefore, the research results show that the considerable majority of interviewees, 214 (81.9%) of the interviewees, scarcely believe that the construction of GERD may bring about completeness, rather than chaos and conflicts among the countries of the Nile River Basin. This is typically required due to the remarkable fact that the GERD expressed will carefully foster regional political and economic integrity, trade and infrastructural development. However, the result also showed that the conspirators and the prevailing egocentric thinking of Egypt and Sudan to use the waters of the Nile could do nothing but promote integrity in the region if the countries of the Nile Basin did not positively endorse the construction of the dam of mutual benefit could pursue the region.

Therefore, the research results show that the necessary majority of interviewees, 214 (81.9%) of the interviewees, believe that the construction of GERD may bring about completeness, rather than chaos and conflicts among the countries of the Nile River Basin. This question was highlighted by selected respondents to request information as the Nile crosses diverse countries in Africa and most countries utilize water unfairly. This has been a source of conflict over the construction of the dam by Ethiopia. Therefore, the kind intention of this specific question was to adequately assess whether the completed construction of the dam will naturally bring about equitable utilization of allowed water and effective management of hydraulic infrastructure. Therefore, the selected respondents were cordially invited to



typically provide their mutual agreement and constructive disagreement over the prepared statement. About 118 (45.6%) of the selected respondents have therefore proven that the construction of the Nile Basin State, GERD, can bring about coordination and fair management of the infrastructure and water protection management so that the counties of the Nile basin can benefit from the Nile river equitably.

Moreover, conflicts and mutual misunderstandings will be properly resolved with the effective management of hydraulic infrastructure in the Nile basin countries. The other significant number of selected respondents that accounted for 80 (30.9%) also reported their effective agreement that the GERD could seem to represent the reason for reasonable, equitable, and proper management of hydraulic infrastructure in the Nile basin countries. However, the other cohort of respondents, representing 33 (12.7%) replied that the GERD expressed will not bring about the right water use between the Nile Basin countries and proper management of hydraulic infrastructure. In valuable addition to this, 19 (7.3%) of the respondents also affirmed their considerable disagreement with the aforementioned statement.

The use of water resources between downstream and upstream countries is actually fair, because Egypt is effectively using most of the allowed Nile water, followed by Sudan. Therefore, careful construction of GERD will normalize upstream and downstream countries. " Another selected interviewee also confirmed that Egypt and Sudan's conspiracy and greed to use the Nile River are absolutely unacceptable. The construction of this dam will definitely be fair to the region and water management will be effective. In addition, the most critical question related to Geopolitical Significance and Ethiopia was to investigate whether the dam could provide enough power for the Nile Basin countries that accept effective demand from the downstream countries. Obviously, the Nile basin countries, except Egypt, which properly maintains many completed dams and generously endows underground water, other basin countries experience an acute shortage of electricity. Hence, the specific objective of this fundamental question in common was to adequately explore the potential respondents' prevailing views that the dam typically has significant importance in overcoming the possible shortage of electricity demand. Therefore, the majority of the 134 likely respondents (51.7%) confirmed that the construction of the GERD would make a significant and invaluable contribution to addressing the unused electricity demand in the countries downstream of the Nile Basin. Moreover, a significant number of selected respondents, i.e. 108 (41.7%), smilingly replied their effective agreement that the dam could naturally bring about considerable relief in the downstream countries by adequately providing sufficient electricity. Whereas, an insignificant number of respondents, i.e. 3 (1.2%) and 14 (5.4%) of the respondents dutifully reported their considerable disagreement and neutral responses respectively. The specific table below clearly shows that almost all of the respondents, i.e. 242 (93.4%) of them, believe that the construction of the GERD will transfer a significant portion of the electricity solution to the downstream countries of the Nile Basin, and this, in turn, will lead to significant infrastructure development in the region, as electricity is the specific source of any development agenda. Hence, Ethiopia, with the economic development of the GERD, could change its geopolitics in the Horn of Africa and in the basin countries by being a sour of judicial power. Moreover, this economic data sufficiently showed that the conflict over equitable water use could be secured by the 1959 Nile water treaty between Sudan and Egypt, with the intention of allocating the continuous flow of the Nile between the two downstream states without considering the interests of upstream states, which violently rejected it. Therefore, the completed construction of GERD has significant geopolitical implications for Ethiopia and electricity supply for almost all of the basin. The practical reason why Egypt and Sudan inevitably oppose Ethiopia during different time contracts is because the completed dam will negatively or significantly reduce the adequate water supply to the countries. However, it is a colonial legacy and a



grand conspiracy to use the Nile water between the countries. Convincing evidence of the mutual agreement endorsed between most of the downstream countries and Ethiopia, with the exception of Sudan and Egypt, is a direct indication of the greed of the two countries to use the water between Egypt and Sudan. The other necessary question posed to the selected respondents related to the GERD and Ethiopia's geopolitics was whether the construction of the GERD would help the Nile basin countries to progressively improve their economic growth and development. The specific objective of the key question in common was to adequately investigate the objective realities of completed GERD construction for downstream countries, especially in undoubtedly helping economic growth and economic development. The other necessary question posed to the selected respondents related to the GERD and Ethiopia's geopolitics was whether the construction of the GERD would help the Nile basin countries to progressively improve their economic growth and development. The specific objective of the key question in common was to adequately investigate the objective realities of completed GERD construction for downstream countries, especially in undoubtedly helping economic growth and economic development. Hence, respondents were asked to report their genuine opinions about the issue. Therefore, surprisingly, 124 (47.9%) of the respondents reported their agreement that they believe the construction of the dam has a lot to contribute to the downstream countries' economic growth and development, as electricity constitutes the source of any development and the major winch for economic growth. This is justified by the fact that, with better access to electricity from Ethiopia, downstream countries will facilitate development and growth in their economies and could even create inter-country economic integration among the basin countries through trade and market facilitation. Moreover, 99 (38.2%) of the respondents also confirmed a similar but strong agreement about the economic growth and development of Nile basin countries due to the construction of the dam. However, an insignificant number of respondents, i.e. 19 (7.3%) of the respondents, believed the construction of the dam could not bring about significant economic growth and development among the Nile basin countries. Therefore, it is surprising that 124 (47.9%) of the respondents said that they agree that the construction of dams has made a huge contribution to the economic growth and development of downstream countries, because electricity is the source of any development and the main source of economic growth. Therefore, it is surprising that 124 (47.9%) of the respondents said that they agree that the construction of dams has made a huge contribution to the economic growth and development of downstream countries, because electricity is the source of any development and the main source of economic growth. This is justified by the remarkable fact that, with better access to electricity from Ethiopia, downstream countries will facilitate development and growth in their economies and even create inter-country economic integration among the basin countries through trade and market facilitation. Moreover, 99 (38.2%) of the respondents also confirmed a similar but strong agreement about the economic growth and development of Nile basin countries due to the construction of the dam. However, an insignificant number of selected respondents, i.e. 19 (7.3%) of the respondents, believed the construction of the dam could not bring about significant economic growth and development among the Nile basin countries.

The direct result of the following figure clearly shows that a vast majority of the respondents that accounted for 223 (86.3%) believe the construction of the dam could facilitate economic integration among the basin countries and so that they can improve their living conditions in the region. Moreover, this belief among the respondents affirms that a positive outlook on the development of the dam is a clear indication of economic integration, trade facilitation, and creating a strong market link among the Nile basin countries, and this implies Ethiopia being a source of huge electricity to the Nile basin countries has paramount geopolitical importance in the region.



The other most important issue raised in this particular research objective was to analyze the importance of the GERD in instantly bringing political integrity and sustainable peace among the Nile Basin countries. The obvious intention of this fundamental question is that Horn Africa is instantly identified as a region of economic imbalance, restless conflict, and civil war. Therefore, we have to consider whether the end of the investigation into GERD could play an important role in bringing sustainable peace and political integrity to downstream countries, rather than becoming a source of ongoing disputes and conflicts among some river basin countries, such as Egypt and Sudan. With this in mind, respondents were asked whether the end of GERD development could bring political integrity and peace in the Down Stream basin countries, especially in Egypt and Sudan. Therefore, the majority of the respondents, i.e. 91 (35.1%) of the respondents, confirmed that the end of the development of the GERD could bring political integrity and sustainable peace among the downstream countries. This response was accompanied by 79 (30.5%) of respondents confirming that the end of GERD will bring political integrity among the Nile River Basin countries. On the other hand, 45 (17.4%) of the respondents believed the construction of the dam could not end the conflict and grievances among Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia.

Another group of interviewees, 14 (5.4%), also proved that their strong opposition to dam construction could bring political integrity and sustainable peace to the region. Moreover, a large majority of the respondents that accounted for 30 (11%) were neutral in their responses. The reason for the 49 (23.1%) of the respondents believing the construction of the GERD could not bring political integrity and peace in the region could be the long-lasting conspiracy between Egypt and Sudan over the ultimate use of the Nile water could bring them to the table. Moreover, the current situation in Ethiopia and the conflict in Sudan are proxy wars supported by Egypt, making Ethiopia a weak country that cannot restore domestic peace and security, thus preventing the construction of GERD.

In addition, the other 30 (11.6%) of the interviewees were also indifferent to their answers. This may be because the current situation and trials and initiatives have made Egypt and Sudan and Ethiopia and the African Union and Washington agreements fail to bring any significant results. As a result, the interviewees were indifferent to political integrity.

However, a majority of the respondents that accounted for 170 (65.6%) have a positive belief that the construction of the dam could end the tensions between Sudan, Egypt, and Ethiopia and bring them on board to discuss future initiatives on how to work collaboratively to come to an agreement on how to equitably utilize the Nile River without adversely affecting the benefit of one another. Moreover, in the Nile Basin there are many problems and common challenges that most countries share in common, such as drought, terrorism, internal conflicts, and low economic development. Therefore, these countries should work together to use each other's GERD and other resources so that their political integrity may be of great significance to overcoming drought and restoring peace.

According to GERD Development, another important question asked by interviewees is whether the construction of dams will bring drought to the Nile River Basin countries by reducing water flow.

These questions were raised by the respondents due to the fact that, in different international agreements and forums, the Egyptians are falsifying and appealing to the international community that GERD will significantly affect the volume of water as it will be stored in the reservoir, so that drought will be the apparent result. Hence, the respondents were asked to report their views about whether the aforementioned statements the Egyptians are propagating are true. Therefore, it can be seen from the



table below that 73 (28.2%) of the interviewees strongly disagree with Egypt's fabricated lie, which may cause the evaporation of water storage and reduce the amount of water. In addition, 106 (40.9%) of the respondents indicated that they disagreed that the scarcity narrative of the Egyptians is unacceptable by any standard in order to reduce the amount of water and bring drought to the country. Whereas a few groups of respondents, i.e., 34 (13.1%), agreed that the construction of the dam could reduce the water volume flowing to the downstream countries as Ethiopia fills the reservoir and some amount of water could be evaporated as a result. The rest 20 (7.7%) also affirmed their strong agreement that the construction of the GERD could reduce the volume of water and drought may be caused.

The general reality behind the boycott of Egypt's and Sudan's agreement on Ethiopia's efforts to build a dam on the Nile is not due to droughts caused by water reduction and evaporation. The colonial legacy of the Anglo-Ethiopia treaty in 1902 between the UK and the UK colonies, among which Egypt was one, was that Ethiopia agreed not to arrest or totally block the flow of the Nile. Therefore, Egypt believes Ethiopia's current internal peace restoration and law enforcement could stop the GERD. That is why it revolves the agreement around the world, appealing to the international community, more sleepless in proxy wars helping Sudan cross Ethiopian borders. However, this is really a foolish and desperate act to stop the construction of the GERD. Therefore, the majority of the respondents believed Sudan's and Egypt's falsification of drought due to the construction of the GERD was a layman's shout to confuse the world community and international organizations such as the AU, EU, and UN, which never stopped the Ethiopians from building their dam with all their resources.

The third objective of the study was to address Ethiopian geopolitics and its military intervention in Somalia, and between the South Sudan and Sudan peace keeping strategy. The main intention of the study was to analyze the strategic importance and Ethiopia's geopolitical advantage of its military intervention in the aforementioned regions. Obviously, East Africa is characterized by an acute peace problem, internal conflict, and terrorism. Hence, Ethiopia's effort to peace keep guard in Somalia to mitigate the Al-shabaab terrorist group in Somalia and the neighboring countries is important because of its strategic geopolitical role in the Horn of Africa. The general reality behind resisting the agreement between Egypt and Sudan over Ethiopia's effort to develop its dam over the Nile River is not due to the fact that reduction and evaporation of the water would cause drought. The first question asked of respondents was to explore whether Ethiopia played a significant role in the Horn of Africa peace keeping mission before the political change in the country. Therefore, Egypt believes that Ethiopia's current domestic peace restoration and law enforcement agencies may stop building GERD, which is why it appeals to the international community around the agreement around the world and has insomnia in the proxy war to help Sudan cross the Ethiopian border. In addition, interviewees believed that Ethiopia's diplomatic and military intervention in peacekeeping between Sudan and South Sudan has brought significant positive results today. Therefore, the majority of the respondents believed Sudan's and Egypt's falsification of drought due to the construction of the GERD was a layman's shout to confuse the world community and international organizations such as the AU, EU, and UN, which never stopped the Ethiopians from building their dam with all their resources.

The first question asked of respondents was to explore whether Ethiopia played a significant role in the Horn of Africa peace keeping mission before the political change in the country. Therefore, as it can be seen from the following figure, the result associated with the aforementioned question revealed that 112 (43.2%) of the respondents affirmed their strong agreement that Ethiopia's diplomacy and its military intervention in Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan had a visible and significant impact on peace and security. In particular, the effort has brought relative peace in Somalia and neighboring countries by



demolishing the Al-shabab terrorist group. Moreover, respondents believed that the diplomacy and military intervention of Ethiopia between Sudan and South Sudan peace keeping had brought a significant positive result today.

In addition, a considerable number of diplomats, who accounted for 96 (37.1%), also expressed support and military achievements that have brought significant results for the interests of Sudan and neighboring countries.

The respondents believed the effort had brought about an indispensable result in bringing Sudan and South Sudan to the table by stopping internal wars. Moreover, the military intervention in Somalia to fight the terrorist group "Al-shabaab" also had a significant impact on the region in bringing relative peace.

However, the other few cohorts of the respondents that accounted for 26 (10%) and 11 (4.2%) reported disagreement and strong disagreement respectively. Hence, the study revealed that about 14% of these respondents believed that military intervention and Ethiopia's diplomatic relations in the region had not brought the desired result.

5.0, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

The general objective of the study was to explore the situation of GERD, its opportunities and challenges for downstream and upstream countries, and Ethiopia's geopolitical advantage. Hence, many issues were posed related to the objective. Therefore, the overall result of the questionnaire from the respondents revealed that the majority of the respondents affirmed that the development of GERD will have a significant effect on economic integration as electricity is the source of all economic growth and development. Moreover, the majority of the respondents also confirmed that the development of GERD will have a paramount effect on peace and security in the region if the downstream countries critically and positively analyze the development of the dam. They believed the dam would integrate the downstream and upstream countries rather than be a source of conflict.

The other significant numbers of respondents were also in favor of the construction of the dam to bring about equitable water utilization among the up and down stream countries by devising a water regulation in the region. Moreover, respondents also believed that the development of the region should not be a source of conflict and the act of Egypt and Sudan propagating a war drum is not acceptable in any way. Their agenda is ego centric and uses the Nile River between the two countries without caring about the interests of other up and down-stream countries. Furthermore, respondents also confirmed that the aggression by Egypt and Sudan did not result from the evaporation and reduction of the Nile water in the downstream when it was reserved; rather, the false narration of scarcity stemmed from the gut-feeling of the two countries to use the Lion's share of the Nile River. On the other hand, a significant number of respondents also believed the development of the dam didn't bring political integrity among the up and downstream Nile River countries due to the fact that the agenda of Egypt and Sudan is different from the water scarcity narration. The two countries are working together in a conspiracy against the development of Ethiopia. On the other hand, the Ethiopian government has chosen the US government to mediate the problems around the Nile Dam, which has angered the Sudanese government, which has led Sudan to oppose the dam. Former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has a strong diplomatic relationship with the Nile Basin countries. The Sudanese government has provided financial and



material support for the Nile Dam. Historically, there has been positive technical support from Egyptian scholars. With the above, the US government has not only aggravated the problem but has not solved it.

5.2. Recommendations

From the above results and discussion, it is evident that most of the respondents reported that the development of GERD has paramount importance for economic integrity, political collaboration, peace and security, water regulation, and fair utilization of the Nile River among the beneficiaries of the Nile River. Hence, the following recommendations are provided.

Ethiopia should still strive to use its main resource, the Nile River, to promote economic development by strengthening diplomacy with China, Russia, and other true partner countries.

Ethiopia should still actively use its human resources and available funds and other resources to accelerate the development and progress of GERD without ignoring the health diplomacy of the GERD agreement.

The country should not sit back and watch as negotiators with mediators, such as the United States and the European Union, use Egypt as a tool to control the Arab world because they have their own hidden agenda and favor Egypt.

Ethiopia should also appeal to the international community and international institutions regarding Sudan and Sudan's war aggression against its sovereign territory.

Ethiopia must continue to spread the concept of mutual benefit and win-win development GERD to downstream countries. It must always adhere to peace negotiations and take the opportunity of the upcoming rainy season to fill the Nile for the second time.

Ethiopia must bring lasting peace, security, and conflict resolution for the successful development of GERD. As the current situation shows, civil war, national instability, displacements, border conflicts, and general diplomatic crises are all need t be solved.

Last but not least, all Ethiopians should work hand in hand in all areas of life, work hard to achieve GERD construction, use their professions, labor, knowledge, and money together to avoid war, and give more money for peace than for weapons.

Ethiopia is currently facing an international diplomatic crisis. The Tigray War and other internal conflicts have an impact on overall development. In this case, internal conflicts should resolve political reforms and come up with a correct and stable situation to deal with the overall problem.

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