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BIRRITU

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Board Chairman:
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Members:

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Temesgen Zeleke

Deputy Editor in-chiefs

Bekalu Ayalew
Mulugeta Ayalew

Secretarial & Distribution Service:

Tigist Mitiku

Address:

Birritu Editorial Office
P.O.Box 5550 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. 251 11 553 00 40
251 11 551 17 25
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Birritu@ethionet.et

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OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN ARTICLES DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE POLICIES & STANDS OF THE NATIONAL BANK OF ETHIOPIA

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Editors' Note

This issue of Birritu No 108 publication includes Research and miscellany section. Hence, Response of Export to Exchange Rate Movement in Ethiopia, and Flower Exports in Ethiopia: Performance and Problems are presented respectively in the Research Column. The first paper highlights about exchange rate regimes and developments in Ethiopia, the structure and performance of export in Ethiopia, among others.

The second paper highlights on the previous and current status of floriculture which has been one of the booming sectors in Ethiopia. It emphasizes about the fundamental role that the sector plays in generating foreign currency to the country and the job opportunity it creates. A short story and an informative piece are also entertained in the miscellany section.

Have a pleasant reading!

ከብር የምንዛሪ ተመንን ማስተካከል ጋር በተያያዘ

የተዘጋጀ መግለጫ (ኢብባ)

1. ነሐሴ 26 ቀን 2002 ዓ.ም. የብር የምንዛሪ ተመን ማስተካከያ ማድረግ ይታወቃል። በዚህም መሠረት በባንክ ለባንክ የውጭ ምንዛሪ ገበያ ላይ ብር ከአሜሪካን ዶላር ጋር ያለው የምንዛሪ ተመን ከ13.6262 ወደ 16.3514 ዝቅ እንዲል (depreciate እንዲያደርግ) ተደርጓል።

የማስተካከያው ሶስት ዋነኛ ዓላማዎች፡

- 1/ የአገሪቱን የውጭ ንግድ ተወዳዳሪነት (External Competitiveness) የበለጠ በማጎልበት የውጪ ንግድን የበለጠ ለማሳደግ፤
- 2/ የአገር ውስጥ ኢንዱስትሪዎች በአገር ውስጥ ገበያ ያላቸውን ተወዳዳሪነት ለማሻሻል እና
- 3/ በሀዋላና በአገልግሎት ዘርፍ የሚገኘውን የውጭ ምንዛሪ ፍላጎት ለማጠናከር የሚሉት ናቸው።

2. እንደሚታወቀው ባለፉት ጥቂት ዓመታት በሀገር ውስጥ ከፍላጎትና አቅርቦት አለመጣጣም እና በአለም ዓቀፍ ገበያ የተፈጠረውን የምግብና ጥሬ ዕቃ ዋጋ ንረትን ተከትሎ በአገራችን በተከሰተው ከፍተኛ የዋጋ ንረት ሳቢያ የብር እውነተኛ የምንዛሪ ተመን (Real Exchange Rate) በጣም ከፍ ብሎ (appreciate አድርጎ) ነበር። ይህም ሁኔታ የአገሪቱን የወጪ ንግድ በዓለም ገበያ ተወዳዳሪነት (External Competitiveness) በጣም አዳክሞ እንደነበር ይታወቃል። በዚህም ምክንያት በ2001 የበጀት ዓመት የወጪ ንግድ ከ2000 የበጀት ዓመት ጋር ሲነፃፀር የ 1.2 በመቶ ቅናሽ አሳይቷል።

3. መንግሥት ይህንን ሁኔታ ለማስተካከልና የወጪ ንግድ ዕድገትን

ከቀውሱ በፊት ወደነበረበት ለመመለስ በወሰደው ቁርጥ አቋም በአለፉት ሁለት ዓመታት የአትዮጵያ ብሔራዊ ባንክ ተከታታይ የገንዘብ እና የውጭ ምንዛሪ ፖሊሲ ሲወስድ ቆይቷል። ከዋጋ ንረት አኳያ በተወሰዱ ተከታታይ የገንዘብ ፖሊሲ እርምጃዎች በ2001 ዓ.ም. 36.4 በመቶ ደርሶ የነበረውን አማካይ ዓመታዊ የዋጋ ንረት በ2002 የበጀት ዓመት መጨረሻ ላይ ወደ 2.8 በመቶ ዝቅ በማድረግ ትልቅ ድል ተመዝግቧል። ይህም በወጪ ንግድ ተወዳዳሪነት ላይ ተፈጥሮ የነበረውን ተከታታይ የተወዳዳሪነት ማሽቆልቆል እንዲገታ አድርጓል።

4. በሁለተኛ ደረጃ የሚጠበቅ ሥራ ይህን በዋጋ ንረት ምክንያት ያሽቆለቆለውን ተወዳዳሪነት መልሶ ወደነበረበት ደረጃ ማምጣት ብሎም የወጪ ንግድ የበለጠ ተወዳዳሪ የሚሆንበትን ሁኔታ መፍጠር ነው። ይህን አስመልክቶ ባለፉት ዓመታት እ.ኤ.አ. ከ2009 ጀምሮ የብር የምንዛሪ ተመን እንዲቀንስ (depreciate እንዲያደርግ) በማድረግ ረገድ ተከታታይ እርምጃ ሲወስድ ቆይቷል።

5. እነዚህ ሁለት ተደጋጋፊ እርምጃዎችም በ2002 የበጀት ዓመት የብር እውነተኛ የምንዛሪ ተመን (Real Exchange Rate) ወደ ትክክለኛው መጠን (Equilibrium level) እንዲጠጋ በማድረግ የአገሪቱ የውጭ ተወዳዳሪነት (External Competitiveness) ከፍተኛ መሻሻል እንዲያሳይ አድርጓል። ይህም አገሪቱ ከወጪ ንግድ የምታገኘው ገቢ በከፍተኛ ሁኔታ እንዲጨምር ረድቷል። በ2002 የበጀት ዓመት ከወጭ ንግድ የተገኘው ገቢ ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ ከ2 ቢሊዮን ዶላር በላይ የደረሰ ሲሆን ይህም በ2001 የበጀት ዓመት ከተገኘው ገቢ ጋር

- ሲነፃፀር በ38.3 በመቶ እድገት አሳይቷል።
6. ከዚህም በተጨማሪ የብር የምንዛሪ ተመን መስተካከሉ የገቢ ንግድን (Imports) ከሚፈለገው በላይ እንዳያድግ በማስቻሉ በ2002 የበጀት ዓመት ወደ አገር ውስጥ የገቡ ዕቃዎች ዕድገት 7 በመቶ ብቻ እንዲሆን አስተዋፅኦ አድርጓል። የወጪ ንግድ በከፍተኛ ሁኔታ መጨመር ከገቢ ንግድ ዕድገት መቀነስ ጋር ተዳብሎ ከዚህ በፊት ባሉት ዓመታት በከፍተኛ ሁኔታ እየጨመረ የነበረውን የአገሪቱ የንግድ ሚዛን ጉድለት (Trade deficit) መሻሻል እንዲያሳይ አድርጎታል። ከዚህም ሌላ፣ የምንዛሪ ማስተካከያ እርምጃዎች የገቢ ዕቃዎችን ዋጋ ከፍ በማድረግ የአገር ውስጥ ኢንዱስትሪዎች ተወዳዳሪነትን በማሻሻል በኩል አስተዋፅኦ እንዳደረጉ ይገመታል።
7. ይህ አሁን የተወሰደው እርምጃ የአገሪቱን የውጭ ተወዳዳሪነት የበለጠ እንደሚያጎለብትና የአገር ውስጥ ኢንዱስትሪዎች በአገር ውስጥ ገበያ የሚኖራቸውን ተወዳዳሪነት የበለጠ በማጠናከር የኢንዱስትሪው ክፍለ ኢኮኖሚን ዕድገት እንደሚያፋጥን ታምኖበታል።
8. አሁን የተወሰደው እርምጃ የዋጋ ንረትን ተመልሶ እንዲባባስ አያደርገውም ወይ? የሚለው ጥያቄ ሊነሳ ይችላል።

መልሱ አይችልም ነው። ምክንያቱም የውጭ ምንዛሪ ፖሊሲው በገንዘብና በበጀት ፖሊሲ የተደገፈ ነው።

9. በ2003 የበጀት ዓመት የሚወስዱ፣ በመወሰድ ላይ ያሉ የገንዘብና የበጀት ፖሊሲዎች በፍላጎት ምክንያት (demand pull) ከእቅድ በላይ የሚከሰት የዋጋ ንረት መፍጠር የሚያስችል ክፍተት (room) ያለው አይደለም። በተጨማሪ የ2003 የበጀት ዓመት የእህል ምርት ከፍተኛ እንደሚሆን ይጠበቃል። በዚህ ሳቢያ የአቅርቦቱ መጨመር አንደኛ ዋጋ

ንረት ዝቅተኛ እንዲሆን ይረዳል፤ ሁለተኛ የተወሰደው እርምጃ በገበያው ላይ ሊፈጠር የሚችለው ትርፍ የእህል ምርት ወደ ውጭ እንዲላክ ያበረታታል።

10. ነገር ግን በቀጥታ ከውጭ የሚገቡ (import) እና በሀገር ውስጥ መተኪያ የሌላቸው ዕቃዎች ዋጋ ላይ ቀጥተኛ ተፅዕኖው ስለሚኖር በእነዚህ ዕቃዎች ዋጋ መጠነኛ የሆነ ጭማሪ ማሳደሩ የሚቀር አይደለም። ነገር ግን ከአጠቃላይ የዋጋ ኢንዱክሱ ያላቸው ድርሻ ብዙ ስላይደለ በአጠቃላይ ዋጋ ንረት ላይ የሚያስከትለው ተፅዕኖ በጣም ውስን ነው።

11. በመጨረሻም የምናስተላልፈው ህብረተሰቡ በአለፉት ሁለት ዓመታት ገበያውን ለማረጋገጥ ሲወሰዱ ከነበሩት ማስተካከያዎች የተለየ እንዳልሆነ በማወቅ ለሌላ speculationና ውዥንብር ዠሮ ሳይሰጥ በተረጋጋ ሁኔታ ግብይቱን እንዲቀጥል ነው።

የኢትዮጵያ ብሔራዊ ባንክ

ነሐሴ 28 ቀን 2002 ዓ.ም.

አዲስ አበባ



RESPONSE OF EXPORT TO EXCHANGE RATE MOVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA

(by Desalgne Lencho, NBE)

Charter One

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Exchange rate movements affect exports in two ways. Its **depreciation** and its **volatility**. The two effects have received considerable attention, since the collapse of fixed exchange rate in the early 1970's (Mariana Colacelli, 2006).

Depreciation lowers the foreign currency price of exports and probably increases the quantity of exports and export revenue in domestic currency. Conditions may exist, however, where export revenue falls. **Highly inelastic foreign import demand** leads to falling export revenue. Ambiguity also arises if **export production incorporates high import content, since the domestic cost or price of exports rises** with depreciation. During periods of exchange rate appreciation, exporters might price to market, lowering their domestic currency price to maintain export market share. (<http://www.econ.conn.edu>).

Theory and empirical evidence exhibits ambiguity as to the effect of exchange rate on exports and export revenue. Junz and Rhomberg (1973) and Wilson and Takacs (1979) find that devaluation increases exports for developed countries and Kara (2003) find similar results with flexible rates. In contrast, Athukorala (1991), Athukorala and Menow (1994), Abeyasinghe & Yeok (1998), and Wilson and Tat (2001) find that appreciation does not lower exports in some countries. Given these controversial arguments this research paper examines how export responds to exchange rate movement in Ethiopia i.e. it answers the

question , ‘ If exchange rate depreciates or appreciates , what will be the response of export?’

Ethiopia, being one of the LDCs, faced various problems for the root causes of poor economic performance in the 1970's & 1980's. Among the factors that under lie the poor performance of the Ethiopian economy in general and that of the export sector in particular, the **over-valued exchange rate** of the Birr was considered to play a significant role (Gashaw, 1992, Asmerem 1994, Aowle 1994). Alem Abreha (1995) has also shown this using theoretical and empirical model. Over-valuation of the exchange rate causes misallocation of resources in production and promotes investment of resource in rent-seeking in the form of smuggling (illegal trading) and socially unproductive but privately profitable activities and hence, reduces the growth rate of output. In line with this argument, Stefan Dercon and Lulseged Ayelaw (1994) attested that over-valuation of Ethiopian Birr also reduced the competitiveness of legal exports and led to significant smuggling.

1. The Problem and Its Setting

Statement of the problem: Merchandise exports of goods and services are the main sources of foreign reserve for Ethiopia. There are different factors affecting export in the country. The researcher believes that, there is research gap which can answer how export responds to exchange rate movement in the country. Therefore, in this study besides exchange rate variable, the main macro determinants of exports are identified to fill the gap. As exchange rate fluctuation is one of the most significant variables affecting export; due attention is given to outlay the relationship between export and exchange rate movement in the short and long runs to fill the study gap regarding the topic under investigation. Overall, the study is to examine the response of export to exchange rate movement in Ethiopia.

Data and Its Treatment

Types of data used: The type of data used is secondary and mostly obtained from NBE, Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority and other compiled sources.

2. Methods of Data Analysis

The available data is analyzed using quantitative and descriptive types of data analysis, model as per the data, graphs and charts. Maximum effort is exerted to use Econometric model to see how export is responding to the ever fluctuating exchange rate in the country.

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this research paper is to add some value to the understanding of the response of export to exchange rate movement in Ethiopia. That is to say, to evaluate whether depreciation improves export performance in Ethiopia or not. More specifically, the study tries to consider the following specific objectives:

- To review theoretical & empirical literatures
- To briefly look at export performance in Ethiopia
- To briefly review different exchange rate regimes in Ethiopia
- To empirically assess the short and long run response of export to exchange rate movement in Ethiopia
- And finally to draw conclusions and policy recommendations to the government.

4. Definition of terms

The definitions of terms, which are most probably repeatedly used in this research paper, are given below.

Exchange rate: An exchange rate is the price of one nation's currency in terms of another nation's currency.

Devaluation/Depreciation: They are synonymous words to mean an increase in nominal or real exchange rate. Devaluation is

generally used for discrete change in the exchange rate brought about as a **matter of policy**, whereas depreciation occurs gradually through the working of the foreign exchange market

Revaluation/Appreciation: means decrease in nominal or real exchange rate and/or they are antonyms of devaluation and depreciation as defined above.

5. Significance of the Study

As Indicated in the problem of the statement, there are limited studies that have examined the Response of Export to Exchange Rate fluctuation. Therefore, the importance of this paper lies in contributing something new to the pre-existing literature on the understanding of how exports respond to exchange rate movements that could have large economic implication on export sector to improve the country's competitiveness in international market and to promote export. The research output can also be used as a reference material by both the domestic and international community as a secondary source for further understanding about the relationship between export and exchange rate movement in the country. Last but not least, the research output can also be used by policy makers as a bench mark to design an appropriate policy regarding the macro determinants of export sector.

6. Structure of the Paper

The paper will be organized in four chapters. The first chapter introduces the introductory part of the study. Chapter two deals in detail with the review of theoretical and empirical literature on the topic. Chapter three specifies the model to be used in the analysis and presents the empirical results of the study. The last chapter presents conclusion and policy implication.

Chapter Two

2. Review of the Literature

2.1 Review of Exchange Rate Theory

Foreign exchange rate affects every walk of life, not just financial markets. Exchange rate movement can be significant for companies engaged in international trade, exposed to revenues and costs in foreign currency, or competing with foreign firms. After years of a relatively fixed exchange rate regime where the government would centrally announce exchange rates daily, Asian countries, particularly Thailand, woke up one day and found their currency floating. (Hoontrakul, 1999)

An end to the fixed currency regime disrupted capital flow and put up local interest rate in short run leading to full blow of financial and economic crisis, not only to Thailand, but also spillover throughout the region. Most regions are deeply at the high volatility of floating exchange rates. The result was what began as turmoil in the currency market which has a serious impact on inflation, employment, investment and economic growth. (Victor Argey and Paul De GreayPongsak, 2000)

Economists have **long tried to explain the exchange rate movement** for centuries with little success. Despite its centuries old theory, purchasing power parity (PPP) remains controversial as ever on the validity of exchange rate bench mark. The causes of deviation from PPP are examined in terms of ‘**structural**’ as well as ‘**transitory**’ effects. Only relatively PPP seems to hold in the long run. Shifts in **technology, taste, commercial policies** or **labor force growth** will structurally change national ‘productivity’ and hence, will permanently change the real exchange rate. Thus, PPP is usually a benchmark currency valuation though it offers no explanation for short run exchange rate variation. The forces behind exchange rate movements are news-driven.

For instance the change in interest rate, changes in the perception of the growth path of the economies and the like are some of the factors that drive exchange rate in the short run.

The theory of exchange rates has evolved quite rapidly. At the beginning of the 1970s, most economists had accepted Milton Friedman’s conjecture that a system of flexible exchange rates would only be a system of unstable exchange rates if underlying economic conditions were unstable. According to this view, exchange rates would adjust to offset differences in national inflation rates, but these changes would be gradual and predictable. Even after accounting for the crisis leading to the break –down of the Bretton woods system and for the instability generated by higher oil prices, however, most economists by the mid 1970s agreed that exchange rates were more volatile than anticipated. (John F.O. Bilson and Richard C.Marston).

2.2 Exchange Rate Regimes and Developments in Ethiopia

Ethiopia’s trade policy, which became increasingly inconsistent with some of the macroeconomic policies especially during the derg regime, has long been characterized by **controlled foreign exchange allocation, import quotas, high tariffs, state owned marketing exports, export prohibitions, export subsidies** and **export taxes** (Naude and Abu Girma, 1994).

The currency proclamation of 1945, defined the monetary unit of the country as the Ethiopian dollar (hereafter Ethiopian birr as it replaced the Ethiopian dollar in September 1976) with a value of 0.355745 grams of fine gold. The linkage with the fine gold, which was in accord with Britton Woods’s agreement of 1944, automatically established the exchange rate between the national currency and other currencies with the same arrangement. Accordingly, the official exchange rate of Ethiopian currency with US dollar was created (with official exchange rate of 2.48 birr per USD) on July 23, 1945. After almost two decades, i.e. on

1 January 1964, the Ethiopian birr was slightly devalued to 2.50 birr per US dollar. (Deresse Degefa, 2000).

Following the collapse of the Britton Wood system in 1971, the birr was revalued to 2.30 birr per US dollar on 21 December 1971. The subsequent 10% devaluation of the US dollar had temporarily brought about under-valuation of birr. To realign the Ethiopian Birr, it was again revalued to 2.07 birr per the US dollar in February 1973. From then on, the Ethiopian currency was pegged to the US dollar at the rate of 2.07 birr per dollar until the **massive devaluation of October 1992**. This fixed official exchange rate was left unaltered for two decades despite the floating of the major world currencies including the US dollar. In effect the birr became over valued in terms of the US dollar as well as many other foreign currencies. (Befikudu 1991; Deresse, 2001).

According to some writers (Haile Kibret (1994), Asmarom Kidane (1994), all the relevant indicators of exchange misalignment, particularly the prevalence of **a significant parallel premium**, and the fact that the **real exchange rate is consistently higher than the nominal exchange rate**, suggest that the Ethiopian birr has been over-valued since the mid-1970s. The over-valuation of the birr may be portrayed by the continuous appreciation in real official exchange rate prior to huge devaluation of 1992. The extent of appreciation was higher during the 1980s than the 1970s.

Realizing the negative effect of an over-valuation of the birr on the country's export-import, the massive devaluation of **1992 took place** Following this devaluation, in an attempt to liberalize foreign exchange market, the National Bank has taken a number of initiatives. Accordingly, the fortnightly (produced every two weeks) auction market for foreign exchange was introduced on May 1, 1993 with two rates; namely the Dutch auction system (official

rate) & the marginal pricing auction systems (marginal rate). These two rates were unified in July 1995. In August 1996, the fortnightly auction market was changed to weekly to accommodate the growing demand for foreign exchange and Commercial Banks were allowed to open forex bureaus. In September 1998, the retail auction system was replaced by the whole system. In the same year, the inter-bank forex market was introduced and worked alongside the auction system (Deresse, 2001). In the present day, the official exchange rate is determined in the daily inter-bank foreign exchange market as the weighted average exchange rate prevailing on the preceding day

2.3 The Structure and Performance of Export in Ethiopia

The level of **development of the economy, resource endowments, policies and development strategies pursued** are some of the determining factors of the export structure of a country. Being under-developed economy that heavily depends on agriculture, the structure of Ethiopian export is dominated by agricultural products which used to account for more than 90% over a long period except the last few years when the export share of the industrial sector showed a relative increase. The share of export earnings generated by the industrials sector was **11.7%** in 1999/2000 and **11.3%** in 2000/01(International Trade Center, 2001).The share also went up to 12.8%, 13.9% and 13.9%, for the years of 2001/02, 2002/03, 2003/04 respectively. This is attributed to the improved industrial activities, besides the decline of world prices for primary commodities including coffee.

Just it becomes not uncommon language that Ethiopia's external trade is characterized by high sectoral (agriculture) and commodity concentration (coffee) dependence i.e. no commodity diversification on export side and also by high geographic concentration (to and from a particular destination and origin -no market diversification). There has been a

widely held view that such commodity and geographic concentration are the major causes for the instability of LDS's export earnings to which Ethiopia is not exceptional. This would make the country's economy vulnerable to external shocks. Factors such as bad weather conditions, production or marketing problems and international price shocks affecting one or two of these commodities can cause a huge swing in export volumes, values or both. This indicates the importance of diversification of both commodities and markets for the country.

It is obvious that, Ethiopia's export is dominated by only a few numbers of agricultural commodities such as coffee, hides & skins, chat, pulses,. In the 1980s, seven items (coffee, petroleum & petroleum products, hides & skins, chat, pulses, live animals and oil seeds in the order of their decreasing share of total export, have on average accounted for about 91% of all exports. For long period of time, there has been heavy reliance of export performance on coffee which on average accounted for USD 252 million (63%), USD 244 million (57%) and USD 214 million (39.9) % of export in 1980s, 1990s and the last five to six years respectively.

Table 1. Average Value of Export Earnings by Major Commodity Groups (in Millions of USD)

Period	19980/81- 1984/85	1985/86-1989/90	1990/91-1994/95	1995/96-1999/00	2000/01-2004/05	2005/06-2008/09
Coffee	247.07	265.99	149.8	318.21	214	174.4
Oil Seeds	10.31	5.69	3.58	26.26	59.22	39.9
Hides & Skins	44.21	59.74	38.88	44.87	58.24	50.6
Pulses	11.68	8.65	6.01	12.81	23.94	16.3
Meat & Meat Products	3.06	1.7	0.34	3.63	5.52	3.8
Fruits & Vegetables	2.21	4.22	2.73	5.16	10.65	7.4
Sugar	4.51	8.24	2.59	0.77	9.4	0
Live Animals	6.61	9.78	1.22	1.18	3.25	3.32
Chat	12.14	8.45	14.8	46.62	71.26	9.52
Petrol. & Pet. Products	32.72	14.75	11.41	4.81	0	0
Gold	n.a	n.a	27.44	25.99	41.34	24.4
Others	22.92	21.04	14.51	26.71	66.77	14.7
Grand Total	397.43	399.26	274.67	517	563.58	343.9
Percentage share of coffee in total export	62.14	63.81	53.41	61.41	37.57	50.7
Coffee in GDP**	4.58	3.57	2.41	4.98	2.9	2.3
Export in GDP**	7.36	5.52	4.34	8.08	7.7	4.8

Source: NBE and own computation

n.a = not available

** The revised GDP at market price of the 2005/06 constant producers' price has been used

From table1, we observe that the contribution of exchange rate fluctuations (Chowdhury, 1993; Manuelti, R, Peck (1990).

GDP in 1980s and 1990s and 2.6 % of GDP during

the last eight years (2000/01 – 2008/09). Existing empirical literatures show that the percentage share of coffee and non-coffee in the total export has been decreasing and movement on export. Sugman (2005) states that “Amongst 30 countries studied, Rose (1990; 271-3) finds that the impact of the relative increase in profit earnings from non-coffee exports and devaluation on trade balance specifically coffee exports.

Recently oil seeds became the most important and the second largest export after coffee, over taking hides and skins in 2005/06 – 2008/09 and accounting on average for about USD 49.6 million 28.8 % of exports during the last eight years. The shares of other commodities such as chat, pulses and live animals have also been increasing in the last eight years. Commodities like fruits and vegetables, meat and meat product, flowers, Gold and spices are among the products which have been showing a significant increase in the value of export. This implies that the endeavor of the country to bring to an end the “**single commodity dominance**”.

2.3.1 Empirical Literature

The applied multi country panel data regressions and econometric models signify how export responds to exchange rate movement or the sensitivity of export to

export is insignificant for 28 countries and one country shows negative impact. So, he concludes that devaluation does not necessarily lead to an increase in export. More recent work forwarded by Upadhyaya and Dhakal (1997; 343-5) also suggests that improvement in export, keeping other determinants of trade balance constant, is only found in one country out of eight countries studied. On the other hand, some individuals like Bahmani – Oskoe (1998; 143–68) and *Jacob A. Frenkel, (1998)* find trade balance improvement, (i.e. trade balance is the differential of export and import) following currency devaluation. “Since, change in trade balance (ΔTB) is equal to export (X) minus import (M), an improvement in TB indicates the improvement of export following devaluation, ceteris paribus.

Damoense and Agbola (2004) came with evidence that supports the view that devaluation of exchange rate worsens export. In their study of the impact of devaluation on

export and/or TB of South Africa, they found that in the long run, devaluation of exchange rate worsens export. Similarly, the empirical study by Agbola (2004), by using the Johansen

MLE multi-variate co-integration procedure and the stock-water dynamic OLS model (DOLS), reveals that devaluation does not improve trade balance of Ghana. On the contrary, Sugman's (2005) investigation of the effects of real exchange rate depreciation on the real trade balance of Indonesia revealed improvement in trade balance following depreciation.

The study by Rawlins and Praveen (2000) examined the sensitivity of export to exchange rate devaluation for a sample of 19 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa by specifying and estimating an Almon Distributed lag process of export trade using annual data. They found that in no case did real exchange rates revert to their pre-

devaluation levels and in seventeen of nineteen countries; real exchange rate depreciation did improve a country's export trade in the year of the devaluation. Onefowora (2003) also examined the short run and long run response of export to exchange rate movement for three Asian countries in their bilateral trade with Japan and USA and came up with the improvement of their trade (export) but with time lag. With regard to Ethiopia, the study by persons like Equar (1999) showed that real exchange rate depreciation improves trade balance. That is to say exchange rate depreciation encourages export and discourages import.

In this research paper, we will employ additional explanatory variables like foreign direct investment and gross domestic product besides exchange rate in order to test whether or not they have significant effect on the results obtained.

Chapter Three

3. Model Specification

3.1 Model Specification

In relation to approaches followed by other empirical works on export responses to exchange rate movement, in this research paper we regress the export to other explanatory variables. The empirical formulation of the model to be used in this study is

given by the following function: $Ext_t = F(FDI_t, GDP_t, REERI_t, DD)$EQ1

In log linear for the equation can be written as follows

$$LnExt_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LnFDI_t + \beta_2 LnGDP_t + \beta_3 REERI_t + DD + \varepsilon_t \text{-----EQ2}$$

Where Ln is natural logarithm, Ext_t is value of export at time t , FDI_t is foreign direct investment at time t , GDP_t is the real GDP of Ethiopia at time t , DD is dummy variable which takes the value 0 for the year before 1991/92 and 1 for the years after 1991/92, $REERI_t$ is Real Effective Exchange Rate effect index at time t , and ε_t refers to Error term at time t . β_0 is a constant term, β_1 through β_3 are coefficients of $LnFDI_t$, $LnGDP_t$, and $LnREERI_t$ respectively.

The prior theoretical expected sign of each explanatory variables coefficient is presented as:

FDI (+): export performance is likely to respond to FDI positively. This is not true in the case of Ethiopia for every period under consideration, especially from 1970/71 – 1991/92 because during those periods there was no good investment climate in the country. The experience in a number of countries suggests that FDI strongly contributes to the transformation of the composition of exports. For instance, it has been well documented that FDI inflows to Singapore or more recently China, have helped to increase significantly the technological content of exports by supporting strongly the development of export supply capacity.

GDP (+): Real GDP is expected to have a positive sign because low income of an exporting country discourages import and encourages export. Accordingly, as Ethiopia is one of the low income countries, GDP of Ethiopia is expected to affect performance positively.

REERI (-): In our study, the real effective exchange rate is defined as the units of foreign currency per a unit of the domestic currency taking accounts of trade partner countries trade weight and relative inflation, appreciation (an increase in REER) is expected to have a negative sign and discourages export. Real effective exchange rate is the most important variable of interest in this study because it is this variable

which is usually used to measure the degree of international competitiveness of the country in the involvement of both bilateral and multilateral trade with the rest of the world.

Equation (2) is basically a long run-relationship, to capture the short dynamics and the speed of adjustment, equation (2) should be complemented with an equation in first differences of the explanatory variables given in equation (2) and an error correction term (ECM-1). The coefficient of ECM-1 is expected to range between 0 and -1 assuming that the short run converges smoothly towards the long run path.

$$\Delta \text{LnExt}_{t-1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta \text{LnFDI}_{t-1} + \beta_2 \Delta \text{LnGDP}_{t-1} + \beta_3 \Delta \text{REERI}_{t-1} + DD + \psi \text{ECM}_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \text{---EQ 3}$$

Where Ψ is coefficient of error correction term

ECM_{t-1} Is the error correction term

Δ Is first difference

3.2 The Unit Root and Co-integration Tests

A unit root test is necessary for a variable to check whether the variable has a unit root (whether the variable is non-stationary) in order to avoid the problem of spurious regression, the case where the results of regression suggest that there are statistically significant long run relationship among the variables in the regression model when in fact contemporaneous correlation rather than momentous casual relation. In the language of time series, stationarity means the **mean**, **variance** and **auto-covariance** at various lags remain the same no matter at what time point they are measured ;they are time invariant (Gujurati, 2003). In this research paper, the presence of unit roots (non-stationarity) for each variable is tested using the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test procedure. All the variables are stationary at 1, 5 and 10 % significance levels in the first difference i.e. they are I (1).

Using the stationarity properties of the data series, tests for co-integration of the variables is also conducted because co-integration necessitates that all variables of a model must be integrated of the same order. A test for co-integration indicates stable long run relationships among non-stationary economic variables. Therefore, co-integration test is designed to check for the existence of co-integrating relationships between non-stationary variables. Just testing the stationarity of the residual term makes the test for the presence of co-integration. For example, if the variables are stationary at first difference; I (1), they are said to be co-integrated. The ADF test and the result are presented in the following table. It shows that all the variables are stationary at first difference.

Table 2: Result Of Unit Root Test For Residual Series

ADF Test Statistics	Optimum lag	Critical values	
-2.888078	1	1%	-2.4562
		5%	-2.5644
		10%	-2.8169

* McKinnon critical values for rejection of hypothesis of a unit root

As shown in table 2, the null hypothesis which states that there is unit root is rejected at 1, 5 and 10% significance levels indicating the existence of long run relationship among the economic variables in Eq(2).

3.3 Estimation of elasticity and their interpretation

The coefficient of those explanatory variables specified in logarithmic form in EQ2 can be interpreted as the degree of responsiveness of export to its determinants.

3.4.1 Long Run Elasticity

Table 3: the long run estimation of elasticity.

Explanatory Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LNFDI	0.193806	0.213026	0.909776	0.0561
LNGDP	0.744467	1.611783	0.46189	0.07723
LNREER	-0.448108	1.237388	-0.362141	0.0693
DD	0.32458	1.520566	0.21346	0.3045
C	6.025891	23.74259	0.253801	0.8098
R-squared	0.93628	Mean dependent var		7.77178
Adjusted R-squared	0.885304	S.D. dependent var		0.730268
S.E. of regression	0.247319	Akaike info criterion		0.350573
Sum squared resid	0.305832	Schwarz criterion		0.501866
Log likelihood	3.247134	F-statistic		48.36707
Durbin-Waston stat	1.693586	Prob (F-statistic)		0.003424

In the form of equation it can be specified as:

$$LnExt_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LnFDI_t + \beta_2 LnGDP_t + \beta_3 REERI_t + DD + \varepsilon_t$$

$$= 6.025 + 0.193LnFDI_t + 0.74LnGDP_t - 0.45REERI_t + 0.32DD + \varepsilon_t \dots\dots\dots EQ3$$

The coefficient of foreign direct investment is positive as per the theoretical expectation in the long run. When we look at the degree of responsiveness, if FDI at time t increases by 1%, export responds to it increasing by 0.194%. Foreign direct investment (FDI) is statistically significant at 10% significant level. A positive and significant relationship between export performance and FDI in Ethiopia indicating that the contribution of FDI to capital formation is found at all levels of export performance in Ethiopia in this analysis except 1970 – 1991 periods due to the absence of conducive investment climate in those periods in the country. The result also reveals that where FDI does contribute to the technological upgrading and structural evolution of the export sector, the structure of the sector is an important ingredient at any stage. Thus, export performance positively responds to FDI in the long run.

The coefficient of the real domestic income, GDP, unlike the prior expectation is positive and statistically significant at 10% significance level in the long run. It is obvious that high real domestic income encourages import and discourages export. (Mariana Colacelli, 2006). But, in the case of Ethiopia as revealed by the result, a 1% increase in Real GDP results in a 0.74% increase in export due to the fact that the country is one of the lower per capita income earning countries when compared with its trading partners. This result is consistent with (Athukorala and Riedel,

1996) which states that exports of developing countries have low-income elasticity.

The coefficient of REERI (Key variable in this research paper) to test the response of export to exchange rate movement in Ethiopia is negative which is consistent with our prior expectation and statistically significant at 10% level. This result supports the hypothesis that depreciation improves export. The estimation result for Ethiopia reveals that, a 1% appreciation in REER results in 0.448 % fall in export. The discrepancy between the two variables is widened specially in the case of Ethiopia mainly by the inflation differential between the country and its trading partners, which is a signal for the government to take policy measures.

3.4.2 Short Run Dynamics

Using the unit root test of the error term of the long run estimation, an error correction model (ECM) is build to capture the short run elasticity. The short run dynamics model provides information on how adjustments are taking place among the variables under study, in order to establish long run equilibrium in response to short run disturbances in the export performance of Ethiopia.

Table 5: the short run estimation of elasticity

Included observations: 8 after adjusting endpoints

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	-0.078137	0.208506	-0.374747	0.7439
D(LNFDI(2))	-0.274192	0.120645	-2.272707	0.1510
D(LNGDP(3))	5.093316	1.724640	2.953263	0.0981
D(LNREER(2))	-0.530825	0.831863	-0.638115	0.5887
ECM(1)	-0.513355	0.485452	-1.057478	0.0012
R-squared	0.874208	Mean dependent var		0.281460
Adjusted R-squared	0.559727	S.D. dependent var		0.331286
S.E. of regression	0.219818	Akaike info criterion		-0.078326
Sum squared resid	0.096640	Schwarz criterion		-0.018745
Log likelihood	6.313303	F-statistic		39.56845
Durbin-Watson stat	2.436740	Prob(F-statistic)		0.0285444

The coefficient of the error correction term is with its negative expected sign and statistically significant, estimated at around – 0.513. The size of the coefficient suggests that about 51.3% of the export disequilibria in Ethiopia will adjust towards the long run equilibrium in a given year.

Chapter Four

4. Conclusion and Policy Implications

In this study an effort was made to empirically estimate the response of export to exchange rate movement in Ethiopia using the **OLS estimation procedure**. As real effective exchange rate (best measure of international competitiveness) continues appreciating, export performance of the country negatively responds to it. An empirical investigation of the relationship between the two variables which is negative will help policy makers to undertake active decision making in their future endeavor to improve the export capacity of the country.

The Estimation result indicates that foreign direct investment in the country is an important factor in influencing the export performance in the long run. With regard to the magnitude of the effect, the result suggests that an increase by 1% of FDI can be expected to result in improving export performance by 0.194% of FDI.

Despite its statistical significance in the long run, GDP which is proxy for the real domestic income in Ethiopia supports export. This indicates that the export performance of the country is income inelastic.

An appreciation of the real effective exchange rate widened by the inflation deferential in the country deteriorates the export performance of the country.

The estimated coefficient of the error correction term was -0.51 , suggesting that about 51 percent of the export disequilibria will adjust towards the long run equilibrium in the country.

Policy Implication

Based on the findings of the study the following policy recommendations are forwarded to improve the export performance of Ethiopia.

1. *The government has to control the up rising of domestic price (domestic inflation), which resulted in the appreciation of real effective exchange rate, to achieve equilibrium exchange rate.*
2. *The government should continue further nominal depreciation of local currency in order to encourage more export.*

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Abstract

The export structure of Ethiopia like most developing countries is dominated by few agricultural products which jeopardizes the export earning of the country. As such the country is diversifying its export to the newly emerging commodity, cut flower. The study attempted to identify the performance of the sector and its contribution to the export earnings of the country and the constraints it faced. It uses secondary data obtained from different institutions and world databases and applied descriptive methods of data analysis. The government policies, easy access to land, cheap labour, suitable agro-ecology and financial support are some of the major opportunities that open the road to investment in the sector. Infrastructural bottlenecks, shortage of agricultural inputs, narrow product range and absence of strong domestic market for flowers are the major perceived threats. Thus, the government needs to strengthen and extend infrastructure facilities beyond the capital and widening the product range to speed up the growing trend in the development of the floriculture industry in Ethiopia.



Flower Exports in Ethiopia: Performance and Problems.

(by Genet Abera, NBE)

Introduction

Export sector has huge impact on the economic growth and development of a country. Despite the country's huge effort made in developing and diversifying exportable products, the export sector has been dominated for several years by few agricultural products such as coffee, chat, oilseeds, pulses and leather and leather products. The country's dependence on export of these commodities with very limited exports of manufactured and semi finished goods could jeopardize its export earnings. As a result of this the national economic performance corresponds to the fluctuation of income earned from coffee exports. Therefore, launching new and profitable export products is one of the strategies that should be adopted so as to insure continuous economic development.

Among the most promising export products the country could supply to the global market is cut flower. The export oriented floriculture sector in Ethiopia is relatively new to export and has been growing rapidly and forms an important element in the country's efforts to expand and diversify the sector, raise export earnings and create employment. The amount of flower

products exported from Ethiopia is currently at a minimal with respect to the international market demand. However, the competitive edge gained by Ethiopian cut flowers especially roses in European markets has attracted several stakeholders.

Two decades have been elapsed since cut flower began to be produced in Ethiopia for commercial purposes but it is still facing a number of challenges starting from the production of cut flowers up to the logistics and marketing to the global market. Despite Ethiopia's endowment of enormous natural resources and other competitive advantages, floriculture was seen as one of the most underdeveloped sectors in Ethiopia and its contribution to the country's export earnings had been almost negligible. However, given the fact that the sectors expansion has gone so rapidly over the past few years its full potential has not been fully exploited partly because of poor transportation facilities, limited access to finance and technical assistance, absence of skilled labour force and low access to external market information.

Recently, the cut flower industry plays an important role in the economic development of the country, therefore, it would be necessary to assess the performance of the industry in light of the benefits it gives and the problems encountered the sector. Whilst

it is important to acknowledge the efforts and successes of the past, it is also important to assess how best to consolidate the recent achievements and strengthen the future position of the Ethiopian export oriented floriculture as a basis for further growth and development.

Thus, the study aims to assess the performance of the recent rise in flower export of Ethiopia in the world market and Ethiopia's share from total global flower trade. It also tries to identify the existing market opportunities for flower exports and the challenges and constraints facing the development of the sector in benefiting from these market opportunities.

Although it is unquestionable that it would have been very important to collect primary data from producers and exporters of flower to assess issues such as environmental and social impacts of developing the industry the study limits it self to secondary data obtained from world databases and publications of different governmental institutions.

The study is organized in five sections. The first section covers the introduction of the study followed by the review of the related literatures in the second section. Section three tries to discuss the world flower market. The fourth and the main body of the study presented the overview of the Ethiopian floriculture sector by discussing the performance of the industry, the major opportunities the sector enjoyed and the constraints and challenges facing the industry and the last section conclude.

I. Literature Review

Export trade helps countries achieve development by promoting and rewarding the sectors of the economy where individual countries possess a comparative advantage whether in terms of labour efficiency or factor endowments. The developing nations should secure sufficient export revenue in order to pay for their imports of industrial inputs like capital goods, raw materials and intermediate products. Floriculture is the new area of export which helps these countries to generate foreign exchange for their economic development and diversify their export. Researchers work has been done in different aspects of the newly emerged industry both in Ethiopia and other countries.

Wijnands (2005) explores the relation ship between economic performance of the flower industry in developing countries and the formal institutional environment (measured by the outcome of institutions). The study addresses how the institutional environment supports the development of an internationally oriented flower industry as institutions play a major role in enabling development. The empirical findings show a strong correlation between both the level and the growth of per capita GDP and institutions. Surprisingly, no relations are found between the growth of flower export and the same prevailing institutions. This may be due to the negligible domestic market of flowers in developing countries that fully depends on foreign markets and therefore only a selected group of entrepreneurs are involved. Moreover, flower growers in developing countries depend on foreign knowledge mainly from companies in Israel and Dutch that are the leading forces in the flower businesses and

these countries supply equipment, knowledge and marketing opportunities.

Hornberger.K.et al (2007) analyzes microeconomics of competitiveness of Kenya's cut flower cluster that emerged in the 1970s alongside the horticultural sub sector. The study shows Kenya's competitiveness is weak by global standards but relatively strong compared to its neighbors and has improved considerably. The global competitiveness index ranked Kenya 94th out of 125 countries in 2006. In terms of competitiveness in EU cut flower market, which accounts for 70 percent of world cut flowers import, Kenya dominates flower export to the EU market and has 38 percent market share. However, its regional competitiveness that is among other Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) was over 2.6 times greater than the combined exports of its competitors in SSA. The study also shows Ethiopia's flower exports have exhibited the fastest growth starting from 2001 indicating potential threats to Kenya's regional dominance.

Joosten F (2007) indicates development strategy for the export oriented horticulture sector in Ethiopia using porter's framework for competitive analysis. The export oriented horticulture sector in Ethiopia has been growing rapidly and forms an important element in the country's efforts to expand and diversify the economy, raise export earnings and create employment. The framework analyzes the sector's strengths and weaknesses by identifying fundamental competitive forces that determine the relative attractiveness of an industry. The study depicts the main competitive threat for the Ethiopian export floriculture is related to the fact that the global market is

characterized by fierce competition between fairly equally balanced competitors. Capacity building leading to further production improvements and improvements in logistics and finance to increase the development of specialized handling services is important to overcome challenges in handling the increasing volume of produce at competitive prices to give Ethiopian exports a price advantage. Moreover, developing research capacity of the sector and providing in service training for staff and management working in the sector helps to improve the competitive position of the country.

Amin (2006) also analyzes the determinants and the relative position of the cut flower industry in Ethiopia using Porter's competitive analysis framework and econometric analysis. The overall finding of the paper suggests that factors such as; proximity to European markets, favorable climate, cheap labour, easy access to land, enabling investment policies and incentive packages, improved provision of infrastructure (proxied by public investment to GDP ratio) are the major ones contributing to the success of the cut flower industry in Ethiopia. The researcher recommends undertaking an in-depth comparative advantage studies on various exportable commodities and inviting both domestic and foreign investors to exploit the potential to improve the competitive position of developing countries, like Ethiopia in exportable commodities is very important.

III. The World Flower Market

Flowers are grown for commercial purposes in many countries. People all over the world realize that flowers enhance the quality of life and influence human feelings more than words or other gifts. They buy flowers for a number of reasons: as a gift (for birth day or a special day such as Mother's Day, Valentine's Day and Thanks giving), for weddings and funerals, or for own use to brighten up the home. Of course, there are considerable differences between countries in the number and type of flowers that people buy depending up on geographical region and income strata.

The majority of cut flowers are produced in countries with dedicated infrastructure having facilities for airlifting to major distribution centers. According to the AIPH International statistics Flowers and Plants 2004/2005, the Asia/Pacific region leads in flower production with a total production area of 244,263 hectares followed by Europe (54,815); Central/South America (45,980); North America (26,135); Africa (5,697); and the Middle East (3,845) (Belwal, 2007). The AIPH report estimates a global area of 360,000 hectares dedicated to world flower and plant production involving USD 60 billion in value terms and 100,000 companies. In terms of area of production, Asia and Pacific cover nearly 60 percent of the total world area. The key

markets for flower are Western Europe, North America and Japan. The EU is the world's leading importer of flowers followed by USA and Switzerland.

According to Nico (1998) bulk flower production is intended primarily for export to the European market although there is increasing export to the Asian market as well. Africa used to produce primarily carnations, roses and summer flowers. Now a day, the growing of roses is increasing, because higher prices can be obtained on the export markets. The share of developing countries in the total trade is increasing as there is a growth in the number of producing countries particularly among the developing nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the African continent Kenya leads cut flower exports, expanding annually at 10 to 15 percent per year followed by Zimbabwe (Hamrick, 2004). Existing farms are being expanded and newer ones are being created in countries such as Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia and Namibia.

Some countries are both producers as well as consumers of cut flowers. In Israel, Africa and South and Central American countries cut flowers have been produced mainly for export with no thought of potential domestic market. On the other hand, in Asia cut flowers were initially produced for export but the market potential

has rapidly changed to include opportunities for supplying to local market as well. This unique development is on account of the rapid strengthening of economies in the region, high population densities and the changing consumers' perception towards the importance of flowers in their life style. Due to globalization and its effect on income development in different regions of the world we see a growing per capita consumption in most countries. Although Ethiopia has attracted several foreign investors in recent years, for exporting cut flowers mainly to European markets the domestic market is not yet matured and it is only recently that the mere concept of flowers as a gift emerged.

The Netherlands is the world's largest producer of cut flowers followed by Germany and Italy (Hamrick, 2004). In addition, the Netherlands plays the major role in setting the global standard for daily prices through auction system and acts as the logistical distribution center for Europe. South American countries Colombia and Ecuador as well as Israel are the major producers of Carnations and roses. Besides the traditional centers of production (USA, Japan, Italy, Netherlands, and Columbia) new production centers are developing. An increasing investment has also been witnessed in Latin America, Kenya and other African countries.

IV. Overview of the Ethiopian floriculture sector

4.1 Introduction

Although there is no sufficient evidence when horticulture started in Ethiopia available sources point out that the history of Ethiopian floriculture industry dates back to 1980 when state farms started to export flowers to Europe (EHPEA, 2005). Before 1992, there were only two private producers and two long established state owned enterprises operating in the floriculture industry. Even though state farms in the rift valley were engaged in the production of flowers on open plots, it could be said that this attempt was not successful because of the limited involvement of the private sector to promote the sector. Open field flowers of Allium and statice have dominated all these four companies production with a very small plot under green house at Meskel Flowers P.L.C (Sisay, 2001).

The floriculture sector is one among the most promising export industries witnessed in the last decade. Ethiopia's favorable climate, vast land, abundant water resources and cheap labor and its close proximity to the major flower markets in Europe and the Middle East coupled with the attractive government export policy and incentive are making the country a great investment destination in Africa (EEPA, 2006). In

addition, cut flower industry requires small area of land and irrigation water under green house and it provides employment opportunities especially for women as the major operations in floriculture farms are mainly performed by women workers.

4.2. Existing Status of the Floriculture Sector

4.2.1 Performance of Cut flower export

The sector, though infant, has considerable contribution to the export value of Ethiopia. The rapid growth of the sector is remarkable particularly when placed in a historic context. Table 4.1 reveals the steady increase in the performance of export during the past seven years. It shows that the total export value grew from USD 2.3 million in 2003/04 to USD 170.2 million in 2009/10. The unit value is also continuously rising on yearly basis reflecting its high quality except for the year 2008/09 and 2009/10 which is more or less the same.

Table 4.1: Cut Flower export for the past seven years.

(Value in million USD, volume in million KG and unit value in USD/KG)

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Value	2.3	7.8	21.8	63.6	111.8	130.7	170.2
Volume	0.9	2.5	6.3	13.6	22.4	29.2	36.0
Unit Value	2.5	3.2	3.5	4.7	5.0	4.9	4.7

Source: National Bank of Ethiopia

The cut flower export also contributes a lot to the export earnings of the country. Its share out of the total export is continuously rising from 0.4 percent in 2003/04 to 8.5 percent in 2009/10, showing the good performance of the commodity.

Table 4.2: Export Share of Cut Flower during 2003/04 – 2009/10

(In million USD)

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Flower	2.3	7.8	21.8	63.6	111.8	130.7	170.2
Total export	600.4	847.2	1000.3	1185.1	1465.7	1447.9	2003.1
Percentage Share	0.4	0.9	2.2	5.4	7.6	9.0	8.5

Source: Own computation from the data obtained from the NBE

Investment project on flower has been undertaken in almost all regions of the country. The following table provides the regional distribution and status of the projects approved on flower. Out of the 358 projects approved on flower 74 are under operation and 26 are currently under implementation. This shows only 21 percent of the total investment project is starting operation and when all these projects are reached operational stage the performance of the sector will dramatically rise. The rest 258 projects are at the pre-implementation stage. When we consider the regional distribution Oromia is the leading region by constituting 69 percent of investment projects in flower followed by Amhara region that constitutes 10 percent of the project.

Table 4.3: Regional Distribution and Status of Investment Projects

Approved on Flower from July 1992- September 30, 2009

Investment Status	Addis Ababa	Afar	Amhara	Benishangul Gumuz	Multiregional	Oromia	SNNPR	Tigray	Grand Total
Implementation					1	21	4		26
Operation	7	1				65	1		74
Pre-implementation	22		37	1	24	161	11	2	258
Total No of Projects	29	1	37	1	25	247	16	2	358
Percentage distribution	8.1	0.3	10.3	0.3	7.0	69.0	4.5	0.6	100.0

Source: Ethiopian Investment Agency

The cut flower industry is playing a major role in contributing to employment opportunities in the nation by creating job for a total of 418,103 workers of which 161,979 are permanent and 256,124 temporary workers.

Table: 4.4 Employments Engaged in the Production of Cut Flower by September 2009

Type of Employment	Addis Ababa	Afar	Amhara	Benishangul Gumuz	Multiregional	Oromia	SNNPR	Tigray	Grand Total
Permanent	1,385	88	15,785	20	87,687	53,368	2,432	1,214	161,979
Temporary	1,134	0	46,913	150	119,375	82,356	2,166	4,030	256,124
Total	2519	88	62698	170	207062	135724	4598	5244	418,103

Source: Ethiopian Investment Agency

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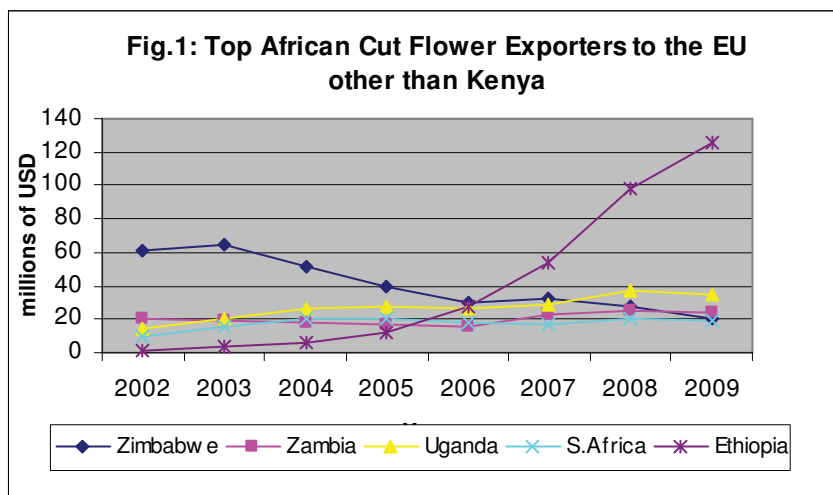
The EU market is the largest cut flower market in the world. It constitutes more than 70 percent of the world flower market and it is also the major market for African cut flower exporters. As observed from Table 4.5, Ethiopia's rank in the share of flower exports to EU market improved rapidly from 14th in 2003 to the 4th level in 2009. Kenya is the major exporter to the EU market and obtained the largest share and ranked at 1st throughout the specified year.

Table 4.5: Top 10 Cut Flower Exporters to the EU Market (2003-2009)

Country	2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		2009	
	Share of EU market	Rank	Share of EU market	Rank	Share of EU market	Rank	Share of EU market	Rank	Share of EU market	Rank	Share of EU market	Rank	Share of EU market	Rank
Kenya	32.0	1	36.3	1	38.3	1	40.4	1	38.7	1	40.1	1	38.6	1
Israel	14.1	2	13.1	2	11.7	4	10.1	4	9.2	4	7.1	5	7.5	5
Colombia	15.2	3	12.9	3	14.5	2	14.7	2	14.3	2	13.5	3	12.8	3
Ecuador	11.2	4	12.2	4	12.3	3	13.0	3	13.7	3	14.4	2	14.2	2
Zimbabwe	8.8	5	6.3	5	4.6	5	3.0	5	2.9	6	2.1	8	1.8	9
Thailand	2.6	6	2.6	7	2.6	7	2.6	8	2.6	7	2.5	7	2.4	7
Zambia	2.6	7	2.1	9	1.9	9	1.6	10	2.0	9	1.9	9	2.0	8
Uganda	2.7	8	3.2	6	3.2	6	2.6	7	2.6	8	2.8	6	2.9	6
S.Africa	2.0	9	2.5	8	2.4	8	1.8	9	1.5	10	1.6	10	1.6	10
Ethiopia	0.5	14	0.8	11	1.4	11	2.8	6	4.8	5	7.6	4	10.6	4

Source: UN-Comtrade

Fig. 1: Comparison with other African Exporters to the EU



Source: UN-Comtrade

Fig. 1 compares the major cut flower exporters of African nations to the EU market. It indicates the rapid growth of Ethiopian cut flower export over the period 2002 to 2009 as compared to other nations. The shares of other African countries cut flower exporters such as Zambia, Uganda and South Africa are almost at constant level over the period while that of Zimbabwe is continuously declining.

4.2.2. Opportunities in Floriculture Sector

Ethiopia has great opportunity in the floriculture industry mainly because of its geographical and natural advantages. The following are the major opportunities the sector enjoys.

i. Availability of Land

The total land area of Ethiopia is 111.5 million hectares of which 66 percent (73.6 million hectares) is suitable for agriculture while only 22 percent (16.5 million) has been utilized for crop production (Ministry of Information, 2005-2006). Different sites for the development of floriculture and horticulture have been identified and made ready by the government for local and foreign investors around major cities. Pre-requisites for land acquisition are simple and requires project profile, bank letter, investment certificate (for foreigners or joint ventures), Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association for private limited companies (Belwal, 2007).

ii. Suitable Agro-Ecology

Ethiopia, endowed with diversified agro-ecology, offers an opportunity to produce

different ecological zones. It has various climatic zones, having a temperature of 0⁰ in the highlands to 45⁰ in the low lands, rainfall distribution of 100 mm to 2,800 mm and altitudes of 1,500-2,300 meter above sea level (EEPA, 2006). Most flower growers agree that the climate is suitable for producing high quality roses with less effort and cost than other countries. The growers unanimously admit that the Ethiopian rose has a quality consisting larger stem, longer vase life and larger bud sizes. However, associated with this advantage, there lies a threat of flower diseases in certain humid regions that are uncommon in certain competing countries having cold climatic conditions (Belwal, 2007).

iii. Availability of Cheap Labor Force

Ethiopia is one of the top three countries in Africa with the greatest population size. Large population size can not only be taken as source of manpower but also as a potential high domestic market for flowers in the future. Being a labour intensive industry, availability of unskilled labour in the country at relatively cheaper prices offers competitive advantages to the producers. Moreover, the cost of labour is

lower in Ethiopia as compared to other African countries such as Tunisia, Mauritius, Kenya, and etc.

iv. Proximity to Major Flower Markets

The geographical location of the country along with its proximity and fair transport cost to the Middle East and Europe gives Ethiopia a good marketing opportunity. Flowers are a fragile commodity and need to reach the market in good condition and at

the right time. The products can reach these markets in a relatively shorter period of time, having cheaper transportation costs than most other flower producing African and Latin American countries. As it can be observed from Table 4.5, the Netherlands, Germany and UK alone account for almost 90 percent of Ethiopia's flower export destination. Ethiopian flowers are also gaining access to far away destinations like the USA.

Table 4.6: Ethiopia's Flower Export by Destination

Country	Value in Millions of USD							
	2006/07	Percent Share	2007/08	Percent Share	2008/09	Percent Share	2009/10	Percent Share
Netherlands	38.27	60.16	85.08	76.13	106.19	81.25	143.27	84.18
Germany	14.05	22.09	12.28	10.99	12.56	9.61	12.94	7.60
USA	2.49	3.91	3.56	3.19	3.39	2.59	1.62	0.95
UK	2.51	3.95	2.42	2.17	0.85	0.65	0.79	0.46
Others	6.29	9.89	8.42	7.53	7.7	5.89	11.57	6.80
Total	63.61	100.00	111.76	100.00	130.69	100.00	170.19	100.00

Source: National Bank of Ethiopia

v. Financial Support

Ethiopia's industrial development strategy highly encourages investors engaged in the production and export of agricultural products. The government has allocated a substantial amount of finance for investors intending to export flowers. They can apply for loan up to 70 percent of their investment. However, to start with,

minimum initial capital of USD 100,000 is required from a foreign investor and USD 60,000 for joint projects (that have local investor as a partner) (Belwal, 2007). For further support, the special loan is provided through the Development Bank of Ethiopia at a favorable interest rate (7.5 percent) with a maximum repayment period of ten years supplemented by a grace period of three years.

vi. Incentives

Floriculture is one of the emerging sub sectors of agriculture in Ethiopia. The major incentives offered by the government of Ethiopia in support of this industry as stated by (EIA, 2006) are:

- 100 percent exemption in customs duties on floriculture related imports and transfer of such imports to another investor enjoying similar privileges.
- Duty free imports of inputs with provisional permission to import nationally unregistered inputs.
- Exemption from export tax and all other taxes levied on export products and services.
- Tax free remittances for a foreign investor, and an investment guarantee

vii. Potential domestic market

Although the absence of a strong domestic market can be considered as a barrier, the potential of realizing a good domestic market can be seen as an opportunity, particularly when the domestic flower market in Ethiopia is on the rise. Roses, Gypsophila and Nursery Stock are the major flowers having emerged in the domestic market. The growing culture of presenting flowers during occasions like wedding, child birth, and visits to sick, festivals like Christmas and Easter and the influence of Western culture like Valentine's Days are the primary reasons for increased domestic

consumption. Moreover, the demands from hotels and business sector are also on the rise in line with their expansion in Ethiopia.

4.2.3 Constraints and Challenges to Horticulture Development in Ethiopia

The Ethiopian economy is agricultural led economy highly dependent on rain fed agriculture. Since, the country has just started floriculture industry; some barriers are to be there at this stage. The major barriers witnessed as stated by (Belwal, 2007) will be discussed below.

i. Infrastructure Bottlenecks

Even though the government is making efforts to develop infrastructure throughout the country, still there are problems in acquiring such services in slightly remote areas. In some farms access to telephone line is limited to wireless phones, which impose severe restrictions in communication. The roads connecting the farms to the main roads are also not good. There is also repeated outage of electricity in farm sites that affects the cost of production, for they need to use generators. In general, the availability of infrastructure around the capital city forces investments to be cluttered in close proximity, which is not a good sign for the long-term growth.

ii. Shortage of agricultural inputs and green house equipments

Most planting materials, fertilizer mixers and green house equipment are mainly

imported from abroad and are quite expensive. Though the government allows producers to import the necessary fertilizers and chemicals individually and free of taxes, the producers find it difficult to import individually because of purchase costs, inventory and transportation reasons. The fact that Ethiopia is landlocked further aggravates the problem from an import perspective, though it does not have any major effect on export of flowers.

iii. Inaccessibility and shortage of water

Ethiopia is endowed with enormous and unexploited natural water resources. The country has nine major rivers and 12 major lakes. The amount of annual surface water flowing over the country is 123 billion m³ and the underground water is estimated to be 2.6 billion m³ (MOI, 2006). Despite this, most producers suffer from shortage of water, since flower production requires large amount of accessible water and fetching water from far off places and import of drip irrigation equipment makes the cost of production higher.

iv. Absence of strong domestic market for flowers

The domestic market is too small and negligible, as significant Ethiopian population is living subsistent life with underdeveloped flower consumption culture. However, this market has certain potential to be developed as an alternative

that could safeguard the risks arising from export fluctuations.

v. Small product range

The product range that producers export is very narrow. The dominant flower type produced in the floriculture industry is rose. This makes the possibility of risk diversification bleak and makes the industry highly vulnerable.

vii. Seasonality

Seasonality affects the production of flowers and the demand arising in importing countries as it makes problem to the floriculture industry in matching demand. Some flowers are not significantly influenced by seasonal changes, e.g. roses, marigold, chrysanthemum, etc and others like jasmine, dendrobium, orchids are greatly influenced by seasonal changes.

viii. Airfreight Cost

Cost of airfreight for the producers takes up major portion of the cost of producing and exporting flowers. The producers use mainly Ethiopian Airlines as a carrier of the flower exported to the world market. Other airlines such as Emirates, KLM and Lufthansa are offering small-scale transportation services. Ethio-Horti Share Company also charters a plane for its members to ship flowers abroad to the world flower market.

ix. Competition

The floriculture industry is very dynamic and seasonal in terms of variety and

production. Demands are high during Valentine's Day and Christmas when every single stem of roses produced is exported and sold in foreign markets. But there are slow seasons when the competition is fierce. Moreover, there will be intra-industry competition as experienced foreign companies from the Netherlands and Israel aim to set up their farms in Ethiopia.

V. Concluding Remarks

The success of Ethiopia in the cut flower exports has been remarkable especially with respect to African countries. A number of new investments in the sector have taken place in the short period of time followed by considerably good export performance. The country offers great opportunity to the investments coupled with the attention given by the government to the sector. The government policies, cheap labour, easy

access to land, suitable agro-ecology, potential domestic market and financial support are some of the major opportunities that open the road to investment. However, these opportunities are not without threats. Infrastructural bottlenecks, shortage of agricultural inputs and narrow product range are the major perceived threats.

Therefore, to make the development of the industry persistent and to exploit the potential in developing the industry the government needs to strengthen infrastructure facilities beyond the capital, arrange capacity building programs for the investors and continuously follow their progress, widen the product range to minimize risk and undertake further research in the area so that a strong foundation can be laid for the sector to grow.

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የሀብት ማሳወቅና ማስመዝገብ ሃገራዊ ፋይዳ

(በፌዴራል ሥነምግባርና የፀረ-መስና ኮሚሽን የተዘጋጀ)

የኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ ሪፑብሊክ መንግስት በሃገሪቱ ዘላቂ ልማትን ለማረጋገጥ ፤ መልካም አስተዳደርን ለማስፈን እንዲሁም ዲሞክራሲያዊ ሥርዓትን ለመገንባት ዘርፈ ብዙ ጥረቶችን በማድረግ ላይ ይገኛል። እነዚህን ዓላማዎች ለማሳካትም ሙስና እና ብልሹ አሰራርን በቁጥጥር ስር የማዋል አስፈላጊነትን ከግንዛቤ ውስጥ በማስገባት መንግስት በሙስና ላይ አገራዊ የሆነ ሁሉን አቀፍ ዘመቻ ከፍቷል።

ምንም እንኳን በኢትዮጵያ የፀረ-መስና ትግሉን ተቋማዊ በሆነ መልኩ ለማካሄድ ሙከራ የተጀመረው በቀድሞው ወታደራዊ አዛዝ 'የሥርቶ አደር ቁጥጥር ኮሚቴ' በመመስረት ቢሆንም ሥርዓቱ ይህ ነው የሚባል ለውጥ ሳያመጣ አልፏል። ከኢ.ፌ.ዲ.ሪ መንግስት ምስረታ በኋላ ግን የፀረ-መስና ትግሉ ውጤት በሚያመጣ መልኩ እየተከናወነ ይገኛል። ይህንን እንቅስቃሴ በህግ ማዕቀፍ ታግዞ እና በተደራጀ መንገድ ለመምራት እንዲረዳ የሥነምግባር እና የፀረ-መስና ኮሚሽኖች በፌዴራልና በክልል ደረጃ ተቋቁመው አበረታች ተግባራት በማከናወን ላይ ናቸው። የሲቪል ሰርቪስ ማሻሻያ ፕሮግራም ተቀርጾ ተግባራዊ መደረግ መጀመሩ፤ የሥነ ዜጋ እና የሥነምግባር ትምህርት በስርዓተ ትምህርቱ ውስጥ ተካትቶ መሰጠት መጀመሩና ሌሎችም መሰል ጥረቶች የፀረ-መስና ትግሉን በከፍተኛ ደረጃ እያገዙ ይገኛሉ።

በመልካም ሥነምግባር የታነሰ እና ሙስናን አምርሮ የሚታገል ህብረተሰብ ተፈጥሮ ሙስና የልማት እና የመልካም አስተዳደር እንቅፋት ከማይሆንበት ደረጃ መድረሱን የማየት ራዕይን አንግቦ የተነሳው የፌዴራል የሥነምግባር እና የፀረ-መስና ኮሚሽንም የዚሁ የፀረ-መስና ትግሉ ዋነኛ ተዋናይ በመሆን የተቋቋመበትን ዓላማ ከግብ ለማድረስ ያላለለ ጥረት በማድረግ ላይ ነው።

ኮሚሽኑ ዓላማውን ያሳካ ዘንድ በህግ የተሰጡት በርካታ ሥልጣንና ተግባራት ሲኖሩ ከእነዚህም መካከል የሀብት እና የገንዘብ ጥቅሞችን መዝግቦ የመያዝ ወይም ተመዝግቦ እንዲያዝ ማድረግ

አንዱና ዋነኛው ነው። ይህንንም መሠረት በማድረግ ኮሚሽኑ ያዘጋጀውን የሀብት ማሳወቅና ማስመዝገብ አዋጅ የሕዝብ ተወካዮች ምክር ቤት ሚያዝያ 4 ቀን 2002 ዓ.ም ባደረገው 23ኛ መደበኛ ስብሰባው አፅድቆታል።

አራት ክፍሎችና 25 አንቀጾችን የያዘው ይህ የሀብት ማሳወቂያና ማስመዝገቢያ አዋጅ በምዝገባ የሚካተተው ሀብት የትኛው ነው? ሀብቱን ማስመዝገብ ያለበት ማን ነው? የሀብት ምዝገባ ሥራን ማከናወን የሚገባው የትኛው የመንግስት አካል ነው? የተመዘገበው መረጃ ትክክለኛነት እንዴት ይረጋገጣል? ምዝገባው መቼና እንዴት ይከናወናል? የሀብት ምዝገባ መረጃ ተደራሽነት እስከምን ድረስ ይሆናል? ምዝገባ የሚመለከታቸው ሰዎች መንግስታዊ ኃላፊነታቸውን ከግል ሥራቸው/ጥቅማቸው በመለየት እንዴት ማከናወን ይጠበቅባቸዋል? የጥቅም ግጭት ሲፈጠር የሚወሰዱ እርምጃዎች ምንድን ናቸው? አዋጁን በመሃረር ትክክለኛ ያልሆነ መረጃ የሰጡ ሰዎችን ለሚጠቁሙ ሰዎች የሚደረግ ጥበቃና የተዘጋጀ ማበረታቻ እንዲሁም የአዋጁን ድንጋጌዎች በጣሱ ሰዎች ላይ የሚወሰድ ህጋዊ እርምጃ ምንድን ነው? የሚሉትን ጥያቄዎች እንዲመልስ ተደርጎ የተዘጋጀ ነው።

በአዋጁ መሠረት የሀብት ማሳወቅና ማስመዝገብ ግዴታ የሚኖርባቸው የፖለቲካ ተሟላዎች፤ የህዝብ ተመራጮችና የሚመለከታቸው የመንግስት ሠራተኞች ናቸው። በአዋጁ የተሟላዎችን፤ የህዝብ ተመራጮችንና የሚመለከታቸው የመንግስት ሠራተኞችን ሀብት የመመዝገብ ሥልጣን የተሰጠው የፌዴራል የሥነምግባር እና የፀረ-መስና ኮሚሽን ሲሆን በአዋጁ መመዝገብ አለባቸው ተብለው የተደነገጉት ደግሞ ተሟላው፤ ተመራጩ ወይም የመንግስት ሠራተኛው በራሱና በቤተሰቡ ባለቤትነት ወይም በይዞታነት የሚገኝ ማንኛውም የማይንቀሳቀስ፤ የሚንቀሳቀስ፤ ግዙፍነት ያለው ወይም የሌለውን፤ የመሬት ይዞታና ዕዳን ይጨምራል።

ከላይ የተዘረዘሩት ሀብቶች በአዋጁ መመዝገብ እንዳልባቸው ቢደነገግም በውርስ ተገኝቶ በጋራ የተያዘና ለወራሾች የግል አገልግሎት የሚውል ንብረት፣ የቤት ዕቃዎች፣ የግል መገልገያዎችና ከጡረታ የሚገኝ ገቢ ምዝገባ ውስጥ የማይካተቱ ሀብቶች እንደሆኑ በአዋጁ ተገልጿል። ሆኖም ግን በውርስ ተገኝቶ በጋራ የተያዘው ለወራሾች የግል አገልግሎት የሚውለውን ንብረት በወራሾች መካከል እንደተከፋፈለ ተሟሚው፣ ተመራጩ ወይም የሚመለከተው የመንግስት ሠራተኛው ድርሻውን አሳውቆ ማስመዝገብ አለበት።

ማንኛውም ተሟሚ፣ ተመራጭ ወይም የሚመለከተው የመንግስት ሠራተኛ አዋጁ ሥራ ላይ ከዋለበት ከስድስት ወር በኋላ ባለው ስድስት ወር ውስጥ ሀብቱን ማሳወቅና ማስመዝገብ እንዳለበት ተደንግጓል። እንዲሁም ሀብት የማስመዝገብ ግዴታ ያለባቸው ወገኖች የምዝገባው መረጃ ያልሆነ ወይም የሀሰት መረጃ የያዘ መሆኑን ለመጠርጠር በቂ ምክንያት ሲኖረው ወይም ሀብቱ በትክክል አልተመዘገበም በሚል ጥቆማ ሲቀርብ የምዝገባውን ትክክለኛነት የማጣራት ተግባር ያከናውናል።

በህጉ መሰረት በኮሚሽኑ እጅ የሚገኝ ማንኛውም ተመዝጋቢ የምዝገባ መረጃ ለህዝብ ክፍት ይሆናል። ይሁንና የቤተሰብ ሀብትን የሚመለከት የምዝገባ መረጃ ግን ለፍትህ ሥራ ወይም ኮሚሽኑ አስፈላጊ ነው ብሎ ለሚወሰነው ጉዳይ ካልሆነ በስተቀር በሚስጥር የሚያዝ ይሆናል። ከዚህም በተጨማሪ በህጉ በተደነገገው መሰረት ማንኛውም ሰው ይህንን አዋጅ ጥሷል በሚለው ተመዝጋቢ ላይ ማቅረብ ይችላል። በቀረበው ጥቆማ ላይ ተመስርቶ የሀብት መወረስ ውሳኔ ለማሰጠት ካስቻለ የተወረሰው ሀብት 25 በመቶ ለጠቋሚው ይከፈላል።

የሀብትና የገንዘብ ጥቅሞች ማሳወቂያና ማስመዝገቢያ ህግ በዓለም አቀፍ ደረጃ ተመሳሳይ ፅንሰ ሐሳብና ዓላማ ያለው ሲሆን በዋነኝነት ግን ሙስናና ብልሹ አሰራርን ለመዋጋትና ሕዝብ በመንግስት ላይ ያለውን አመኔታ ማጠናከርን ያለመ ነው። አዋጁ ለፀረ-ሙስና ትግሉ በከፍተኛ ሁኔታ አጋዥ ይሆናል፤ የመንግስት አሠራርን በግልጽነትና ተጠያቂነት ላይ ለመመሥረት ከመርዳቱም በተጨማሪ መልካም አስተዳደርን በማስፈን ረገድ ከፍተኛ ጠቀሜታ ይኖረዋል። ዜጎችንም ትኩረት

ለሰጧቸው ህዝባዊና መንግስታዊ ኃላፊዎችና ሠራተኞችን ሀብትና ንብረት በግልጽ በማወቃቸው በህዝባዊና መንግስታዊ አስተዳደሩ ላይ እምነት እንዲያዳብሩ ይረዳል።

ከዚህም ባሻገር ሀብትን ማሳወቅና ማስመዝገብ የመንግስት የሥራ ሀላፊነትና የግል ጥቅም ሳይቀላቀሉ በየራሳቸው መንገድ የሚመሩበትን ግልጽ ሥርዓት በመዘርጋት ሊፈጠር የሚችለውን የጥቅም ግጭት ለማስወገድ እንደሚረዳም ታምኖበታል። የአዋጁ ፀድቆ ስራ ላይ መዋል በተቀዳሚነት ሙስናን ከመከላከል ተግባር ጎን ለጎን ኢትዮጵያ ያፀደቀቻቸውን የተባበሩት መንግስታት ድርጅት የፀረ-ሙስና ስምምነት እና የአፍሪካ ህብረት የፀረ-ሙስና መከላከል እና መዋጊያ ስምምነት ላይ የተቀበለችውን ግዴታ ለመወጣት ያስችላታል ተብሎም ይታመናል።

የሀብት ማሳወቅና ማስመዝገብ በዓለም አቀፍ ደረጃ ትኩረት የተቸረው ወቅታዊ ጉዳይ ሲሆን በዓለማችን ቁጥራቸው ከ148 በላይ የሆኑ ሃገራት የሀብት ማሳወቅና ምዝገባ ህግን የአጠቃላይ የሥነምግባርና የፀረ-ሙስና እንቅስቃሴ አንዱ አካል በማድረግ ሥራ ላይ አውለዋል። የዚህ ህግ ሥራ ላይ መዋል አስፈላጊነት በአብዛኛው ሃገራት ሙስናን አስቀድሞ በመከላከል፣ የሙስና ወንጀልን ምርመራ ማቀልጠፍ እንዲሁም የህዝብ አመኔታን በመፍጠርና በማጠናከር ዙሪያ የሚሸከረከሩ ሆነው እናገኛቸዋለን።

ለአብነት ያህልም ሁሉም የአውሮፓ ሃገራት ለማለት ይቻላል የመንግስት ኃላፊዎችና ሠራተኞች ሀብታቸውን የሚያሳውቁበትና የሚያስመዘግቡበት ሥርዓት አላቸው። የሰሜን እና የላቲን አሜሪካ ሃገራትን ልምድ በምንቃኝበት ጊዜ በካናዳ የመንግስት ኃላፊዎች የገንዘብ ሀብታቸውን የሚያሳውቁበት የጥቅም ግጭትን የተመለከተ የህግ ማዕቀፍ ወጥቷል። በአሜሪካም ወተር ጌት ተብሎ ከሚታወቀውና ከሌሎች የሙስና ቅሌቶች መከላከል በኋላና ይህን ተከትሎ ለተፈጠረው የህዝብ ቅሬታ ተገቢ ምላሽ ለመስጠት ምክር ቤቱ እ.ኤ.አ. በ1978 የሥነምግባር ህግን አውጥቷል። ይህ ህግ ከፍተኛ የመንግስት ኃላፊዎችና ከተወሰነ ደሞዝ በላይ የሚያገኙ የመንግስት ሠራተኞች የሀብት ማሳወቅና ምዝገባ በየዓመቱ እንዲያካሂዱ ያዛል።

ከላቲን አሜሪካ ዘጠኝ ሃገራት የመንግስት ክፍተኛ ኃላፊዎች ሙሉ ሀብታቸውን የማስመዝገብና ለህዝብ የማሳወቅ ህግን እየተገበሩ ይገኛሉ። በአስራ ሁለት ሃገራት ደግሞ ሀብታቸውን የሚያስመዘግቡ ኃላፊዎችና ሠራተኞች በራሳቸውና በቤተሰባቸው አባላት ሥም የሚገኝን ሀብት ጭምር ያስመዘግባሉ።

በተመሳሳይ በበርካታ የኢስያና የፓስፊክ ሃገራት ሀብት ማሳወቅና ምዝገባ ከሃገር ሃገር በመጠኑ የተለያየ ይሁን እንጂ በህግ የተደነገገና እየተተገበረ የሚገኝ ነው። ለምሳሌ አውስትራሊያና ኒውዚላንድ የፓርላማ አባላቶቻቸውንና የቤተሰቦቻቸውን ሀብትን ማሳወቅና ማስመዝገብ ሥራን እየተገበሩት ይገኛሉ። በታይላንድ፣ ደቡብ ኮሪያ፣ ፊሊፒንስ፣ ጃፓንና ህንድ ግን የፓርላማ አባላቶቻቸው ብቻ ሳይሆኑ በመንግስት የተመደቡ ኃላፊዎችና ሠራተኞችም ጭምር በራሳቸውና በቤተሰብ አባላቶቻቸው ሥም የሚገኝን ሀብትና ንብረት የማሳወቅና የማስመዝገብ ህግን ተግባራዊ አድርገዋል።

በቅርቡ የህዝባዊት ሪፑብሊክ ቻይና መንግስት የፀረ-ሙስና ተቋምም በክፍተኛ ሁኔታ እየተበራከተ የመጣውን የሙስና ወንጀል ለመግታት ጠበቅ ያለ አዲስ መመሪያ አውጥቷል። በአዲሱ መመሪያ መሰረት የመንግስት ባለስልጣናት እና በመንግስት ይዞታ ስር የሚገኙ ኩባንያዎች ኃላፊዎች የሃብታቸውን ዝርዝር ማሳወቅ ይጠበቅባቸዋል። አዲሱ መመሪያ በክፍተኛ የመንግስት ባለስልጣናት የግል ሕይወት ላይም ጠበቅ ያለ ክትትል እንዲደረግ ከመፍቀዱም በተጨማሪ መመሪያው ክፍተኛ ባለስልጣናት እና የገዢው የቻይና ኮሚዩኒስት ፓርቲ አባላት በቤተሰቦቻቸው ስም ህገወጥ ገንዘብ እና ንብረት እንዳይደብቁ ለማድረግ እንዲያስችል ተደርጎ የወጣ ነው።

ከዚህም ሌላ በአህጉራችን አፍሪካም ደቡብ አፍሪካ በህዝብ የተመረጡ ኃላፊዎችና በመንግስት የተመደቡ ኃላፊዎችና ሠራተኞች የራሳቸውንና የቤተሰቦቻቸውን ገቢ፣ ሀብትና ንብረት የማሳወቅና የማስመዝገብን ህግ በማውጣት መተግበር የጀመረች ሲሆን በኬንያና ማላዊም የጥቅም ግጭትን የተመለከቱ ህጎች ቢወጡም እንደ ደቡብ አፍሪካ

የተሟሉና አጥጋቢ በሆነ ሁኔታ እየተተገበሩ እንዳልሆነ ይታያል።

ከዚህ ጋር ተያይዞ ከአፍሪካውያን ባለስልጣናት መካከል የታንዛኒያው ጠቅላይ ሚኒስትር ሚዝንጎ ፒንጻ የግል ሀብታቸውን ለህዝብ በማሳወቅ በሃገሪቱ ባለስልጣናት ዘንድ በአርአያነት የሚጠቀስ ተግባር አከናውነዋል። በሩሲያም የአንዳንድ ባለሥልጣናት ንብረትና ገቢያቸው የማይመጣጠን መሆኑ በህዝቡ ዘንድ ቅሬታን እየፈጠረ በመምጣቱ ፕሬዚዳንት ዲሜትሪ ሜድቬዴቭ የመንግስት ባለሥልጣናት ገቢያቸውንና ንብረታቸውን እንዲያስመዘግቡ ጥሪ ማቅረባቸው ይታወሳል።

በኢትዮጵያ እየጎለበተ ከሚገኘው የዲሞክራሲ ስርዓት ግንባታ አንጻር የሀብት ማሳወቅና ማስመዝገብ ህግ መውጣት ቢዘገይም በተሞክሮ ከሌሎች ሃገራት የተገኙ መልካም አሰራሮችን ከሃገራችን ነባራዊ ሁኔታ ጋር አጣጥሞ በህግ ማዕቀፍ መልክ ለማውጣት የብዙ ዓመታት ጥናትና የፖለቲካ ቁርጠኝነት የታየበት ነው። የሀብት ማሳወቅና ማስመዝገብ ሥርዓትን ለመተግበር የሚደረገውን እንቅስቃሴ መመልከት የሚገባን በሀገራችን መገንባት ከሚጠበቅብን ጤናማ የሲቪል ሰርቪስ አገልግሎት ባህል እንጂ የመንግስት ተሟላታዊ፣ የህዝብ ተመራጮችና የመንግስት ሠራተኞች ላይ በጥቅሉ ሙሉ በሙሉ እምነት ከማጣት ወይም ግለሰቦችን ከማሳደድ አንፃር አለመሆኑ ሊሰመርበት ይገባል።

ይህንን መሠረት ባደረገ አግባብም ለአዋጁ በትክክል መተግበር የተለያዩ ባለድርሻ አካላት የማይናቅ አስተዋጽኦ ይኖራቸዋል። ተሟላታዊ፣ የህዝብ ተመራጮችና የመንግስት ሠራተኞች አዋጁን በማስፈፀም ረገድ መልካም ፈቃድና ተነሳሽነት በማሳየት በሀቅ ትክክለኛ ሀብታቸውን ማስመዝገብ ይጠበቅባቸዋል። የሀብት ማሳወቅና ማስመዝገብ ሥራ ውጤታማ ይሆን ዘንድ የህዝብ ድጋፍና ትብብር ክፍተኛ ሚና ስለሚኖረው ምዝገባው በህዳር ወር 2003 ዓ.ም ተግባራዊ መሆኑን ተከትሎ ህዝቡ ከምዝገባ ውጪ የሆኑና የሚታወቁ ሀብትና ንብረቶችን ለፌዴራል የሥነምግባር እና የፀረ-ሙስና ኮሚሽን በማሳወቅ የድርሻውን እንደሚወጣ ይታመናል።

ምርጫ ያጣች ፍቅር (7ጠመኛዊ ልብወለድ)

(በቀስ መንግሥት-ኢብባ)

አንድና አንድ

ተፈጥሮ ሕግጋቷን አባታቸውም፡፡ እንደጊዜ ትንሳኤ፡፡ እንደወንዝ ትፈሳሉ፡፡ ሕይወትም ሉዊቷን ቀጥላለች፡፡ ዘመንም ቀመረን ይዘግባል፡፡ መሸቶ ይነጋል፡፡ ነገቶ ይመሻል፡፡ አሁንም ስመምሸት ፀሐይ አሸቆቋቀላለች፡፡ ሰለተ ሰኝም ተግባሯን እያገባደደች ነው፡፡ ፍጡሮቿም መሰባሰቢያ ገጃቸውን በህሊና ቅኝት ያልማሉ፡፡

የቢሮ እድምተኞች ልባቸውም እግራቸውም ማቆብቆብ ጀምሯል - ወደየአስቸኳይነት፡፡ ከባለቤቱ ጋር ስሁስት ልጆቻችን የአዲስ ዓመት የበዓል ልብስ ስመግዛት ቀጠሮ የተያያዘንበትን ስልክ ገና መዘጋጅ ነበር፡፡ በዚያው ቅጽበት ሌላ ቀጥሮ በያዘኩት ተንቀሳቃሽ ስልክ ውስጥ ክላሲካል ዜማውን አሰማኝ፡፡

«ጤና ይስጥልኝ» አልኩኝ፡፡

«ጤና ይስጥልኝ» አሰኝ የሴት ድምፅ፡፡

«ማን ልበል የእኔ እመቤት?»

«አሳወቅኸኝም?»

«በደንብ መገንዘብ አልቻልኩም ማለቴ...» መልሱን ሳልጨርሰው፡፡

«ምህረት አይደለህም እንዴ?» ሀሳቤን አቋርጦ ጠየቀችኝ፡፡

«በሚገባ»

ዝም አለች፡፡

ግራ ገባኝና እኔም ዝም አልኩኝ፡፡

ደገመችና «ምህረት ዓሰሙ! ነህ አይደል?»

«አዎን የእኔ እህት! ምን ልታዘዝ» አልኳት፡፡

«ራሄል የምትባል የሄዋን ዘር ታውቃለህ?»

«ራሄል ዳግማዊ!» ሳይታወቅኝ ጮኩኝ፡፡

የዛሬ ሃያ አራት ዓመት ገደማ የተሰየኗት የልጅነት ፍቅረኛዬና እጮኛዬ ነበረች፡፡ አፈ ተሳሰረ፡፡ ቃላቶች ጠፋብኝ፡፡ ምን ብዬ ሳነጋግራት፡፡ አልፎ አልፎ ያደኛቸውን የነበሩ ስራሄል ይነግረኛል፡፡ ስለጤንነቷ እሰማለሁ፡፡ ከዚያ በተረፈ የእሷ ጉዳይ አንድ ጊዜ ከአጅ ጣት ላይ ወልቆ የጠፋ ቀለበት ነው፡፡ ምንም የምሰውና የማደርገው ነገር አልነበረም፡፡ ዳግም የማይታይ ህልም!

የትዝታ ማዕበል አናወጠኝ፡፡ የራቅ ናፍቆት አፈዘዘኝ፡፡ የመጀመሪያውና የልጅነቱ ድርጊትና ትዝታው ሰማንም አይረሳውም፡፡ በልቡ ፅላት ውስጥ ተፅፎ ይኖራል፡፡ በህሊናው ማንደር ተቀርፆ ይቀራል፡፡ ከሀሳቤ ተመሰሰኩና «ራሄል!» አልኳት፡፡ «አቤት» አልኩኝ፡፡ ስርቅርቅ የፍቅር ድምጻ ዛሬም የህብር ቅኝቱ አልተቀየረም፡፡

«አድራሻዬን ማን ነገረሽ?»

«የፍቅር አምሳክ!»

አሁንም ምንም መልስ አጣሁ ዝም አልኩ፡፡

«የት ሆነሽ ነው የምትደውደው?»

«ከዚሁ ከአዲስ አበባ»

«መቼ መጣሽ?»

«ዛሬ!»

ከአስር ዓመታት በፊት ወደምታስተምርበት ክልል በአጋጣሚ ስመንግሥት ሥራ ጉዳይ ሂጂ ነበር፡፡ ምክንያቱን በማሳውቀው ስበት ሁለት ቀናት ያህል ስልክ ደውዬላት ድምጿን ሰማሁት፡፡ ሰማነጋገር ግን ወኔው ስለከዳኝ ስልኩን ዘጋሁት፡፡ የተዳፈነ እሳት ሰብዙ ጊዜ አይጠፋም፡፡ በተሰይ የፍቅር ረመጥ፡፡

«የክብር እንግዳህ ስለሆንኩ ሳገኝህ እፈልጋለሁ»

«አሁን ዛሬ?»

«አዎን ዛሬ! ነገ ማንም የማንም እንግዳ ሳይሆን ይችላል»

ሐሳቤ እርስ በርስ ተምታታ፡፡ የልቤ ታምቡር በፍጥነት መታ፡፡

«እሺ» አልኳት

«የት እንገናኝ?» አለኩኝ፡፡ ጥያቄዋ ትፅዛዛዊ ነበር፡፡

«የፍቅር ካፌ» መሀል አራዳ መቼም እንደማይረሳሽ እርግጠኛ ነኝ»

«ሁልጊዜም የመጀመሪያው አይረሳም» አለኩኝ፡፡

ወዲያው ሰውድ ባለቤቱ ደግሟ ስልክ ደውልኩላት፡፡ አንዲት የቆየች ዓደኛዬ ሰብሮቱ ጉዳይ እንደምትፈልገኝ ነገርኳት፡፡ የማደርገውን ነገር ምን ጊዜም አልዋሻትም፡፡ የነበረንን ቀጠሮ አስፈቅጂ አሰረዝኳት፡፡

ቀድሞ በቦታው የተገኘሁት እኔ ነበርኩ፡፡ አካባቢውን ደጋግሜ ቃኝ ሁት፡፡ ክቅርብ ርቀት አይን ሰክደን ተጋጠን፡፡ ራሄል እንደነበረች ናት፡፡ መጥታ ተጠመጠመችብኝ፡፡ እኔም ተጠመጠምኩባት፡፡ አይኖቿን - ግንባሯን - ጉንጮቿን ደጋግሜ ሳምኳቸው፡፡

ቀና ሳደርጋት በጉንጮቿ ላይ እንባዋ ጣምራ ጣምራ እየሆነ ይወርዳል፡፡ የፍቅር ናፍቆት-የመውደድ ሰቀቀን ከውስጥ ይገነፍሳል፡፡ እኔም አገዝኳት፡፡ ሰው በምሽት የፍቅር መርዶ ያረዳል? የትዝታው አባዜ ትንሽ ገሰል አለሽ፡፡ አብረን ወደግራን ካፌው አመራን፡፡ ከሰው ባህር ውስጥ ተያይዘን ገባን፡፡

ከሚበላውም ከሚጠጣውም በመጠኑ ከቀማመስን በኋላ ጨዋታ ጀመርን፡፡ ሐሳቧን እንደወንዝ አፈሰሰችው፡፡

«ህይወት እንዴት ይዘሀለች?» አለኩኝ፡፡ የትዝታ ምንጫ መፍሰቅ ጀመረ!!

«እኔ አምሳክ ይመስገን፡፡ በአንቺ ሰውነት ላይ ደግሞ ምንም ዓይነት ሰውጥ የለም፡፡ ይቺኑ የልጅነትሽን ውበትና ፀዳል እንደተሳበሰሽ ነሽ» አልኳት፡፡ ፈገግታዋና ማራኪ ወዘናዋ ፍጹም አልተሰወጡም፡፡

«አስተማሪ አይረጅም፡፡ አለኩኝ፡፡

«እንዴት?»

«በሚተክላቸው ችግኞችና በሚያፈራቸው አበቦች እንዲሁም በልጆቹ ፍቅር ከማንኛውም ሰው በላይ ሲያብብ ይኖራል» የእኔ ህይወትም በጽናት እስክሁን የቆየው መምህር በመሆኔ ይመስለኛል»

«ልክ ነሽ። በነገራችን ላይ በምን ተዓምርና እንዲት ፈልገሽኝ መጣሽ?» ልቤ እየተግደረደረ ጠየቅኳት። አቀራረቧ ጠንከር አሰብኝ። ከራሽ ምዕተ ዓመት በኋላ ምን ተፈጠረ?!

«እሱ የራሱ ምክንያት ይኖረዋል። መገናኘታችንን ግን አንተ አትፈልገውም ነበር?»

አፌ ምራቁ ደረቀና ምሳሌ ተያዘ። ፍቅርና ጥርጣሬ! በህሲናዬ ሽው አሰኝ።

ቀጠለች «ለማንኛውም መንገድና ዘመን ጊዜውን ጠብቆ ሰውን ያገኛል። ሰው ደግሞ ካልሞተ በስተቀር ወይ በሃሳብ አሰባስቧልም በአካል ዞሮ ይገኛል። እኔም እንተን የመጀመሪያው አበባዬን በአካል በማግኘቴ በጣም ደስ ብሎኛል» አሰኝኝ። ቀና ብላ በአይኖቿ ችቦ አደመቀችኝ።

ከመቀመጫዬ ብድግ ብዬ ግንባሯን ሳምኳት። ምሳሌን ሰጠችኝ። የሁለታችንም ልብ የፍቅር በራን ዳግም ወሰል አድርጌ ከፈተው። በጣም ደስ ይላል። ፍቅርና ሰላም እንደገና ሲያብብ ይበጥል ይደምቃል።

«ታዲያ እንዲህ ስንዋደድ ይህን ያህል ጊዜያት ለመገናኘት የከሰከሰን ነገር ምንድነው?» ጠየቅኳት።

«ምናልባት እንዳች ምትሀታዊ ሀይል ወይም የህሲና ሜጋግ ሸፍኖን ሲሆን ይችላል። ለማንኛውም ጊዜ ፈታው። ልቦች ተፈላገው ተገኙና።» አሰኝኝ። እኔም በልቤ አሜን አልኳት።

«እሺ ሁሉም ይሁን ራሄልዬ እንዲያው ምን ብብድልሽ ነው? ያንን የመሰለ የልጅነት ጮርቃ ፍቅራችንን ውርሞ ያስመታሽው? እንዳያፈራ ያደረግሽውና ጥሰሽኝ የጠፋሽው?»

«ጥዬህ አልጠፋሁም። እርማት ይደረግበት» ፊቷ መደመን ጀመረ። አይኖቿ እንባ አጋቱ።

«ምክንያቱ ምንድነው? እንዲት የዚህን ያህል ዓመታት ልብሽ ሲጨክን ቻለ?»

«ምህረት! ልቤ በአንተ አልጨክነም። መጨክንም አይችልም። ሁልጊዜ በመንፈስ አብረኩኝ ነህ። ነገር ግን ከልጅነቴ ጀምሮ እስካሁን ድረስ ህሲናዬ በነፃነት እያሰበ አይደለም። ብዙ የሕይወት ቀስሎች ስላሉብኝ በጣም ባትጫነኝ እመርጣለሁ» አይኖቿ አዘነቡ። «ደልቶኝ አሳደግሁም . . . ተመቶችኝ አልኖርኩም . . . ህይወት ስትፈትነኝ ስወድቅ ስነሳ ነው ከዚህ የደረሰኩት . . .» የፊቷ ሰማያት በጉም ተሸፈኑ።

«ይቅርታ የእኔ ቅንጾ ያንን የመሰለ መውደድ ምን ዓይነት ንፋስ ገባበት? ፍቅራችንን በጅምር ምን አስቀረው ብዬ ነው። እንቺን ለማሳዘን ያመጣሁት ሃሳብ ግን አይደለም» ሀዘና ተጋባብኝ።

«ከአንደኛው ሁለት ሦስት ጊዜ ከአሰበበት ቦታ መጥቼ ፈልጊሽ ልጠይቅሽ ሞክርኩ። በወቅቱ በአካል እንዳገኝሽ ግን ፈቃደኛ አልሆንሽልኝም ነበር። ነገሩ ሁሉ ሾላ በድፍን ሆነብኝ» አልኳት

«ምን ሳድርግ ችግር አሰቸግሮኝ ነው» አሰኝኝ።

«እንዲት?»

«ምን መሰለህ ምህረት! የችግራን ሀረግ ከስሩ ብመዝልህ ወይንም ብጀምርልህ ትረዳኝ ይሆናል። በልጅነቴ ገጠር ከእናቴ ጋር ነበር የምኖረው። አንተ የኋላ ታሪኬን በደንብ አታውቀውም። የከብቶች

ሞራ ተከትሎ ነበር ያደግሁት። ትንሽ እንገቱን ብቅ አደረግሁኝ። አደግሁ ማለት ነው። ከአሰታት እንደ ቀን እናቴ «አደራ ልሰጥሽ» አሰቤ ነበር አሰኝኝ-ኑሮ ከብዱት ይሆን ምክንያቱን በወቅቱ አሳውቅሁትም።

«ለማን?» ብዬ ጠየኳት።

«ለማማ አደራ» ገረቤታችን ናቸው።

«አንቺ እናቴ እያሰሸ የሰው እናት ምን ያደርግልኛል» አልኳት።

«በመካከሉ ከተማ በመንፈሳዊ አገልግሎት ሥራ ላይ የነበረ አባቴን ለመጠየቅ አሰበኝ። በሶና በርበሬ አዘጋጅታ ለመውሰድ ገንበስ ቀና ስትል ሰነበተች። ምች እንደዲት ኖሮ አልጋ በያዘች በሦስተኛው ቀን አባቴም ጋ ሳትሄድ እኔንም ለእማማ አደራ አደራ ሳትሰጠኝ አለምን ተሰናበተች። አደራ ልሰጥሽ ነበር ያሰቸው ምን ታይቷት ይሆን? የብቸኝነትና የሐዘን ደመና አጠላብኝ።

«በነገራችን ላይ በኋላ ነፍስ ሳውቅ ነው ጉዳዩን የተረዳሁት። በዚያ በጮርቃ እድሜዬ አደራ እንድሰጥ የተፈለገበት ዋናው ምክንያት ሰውንድ ልጃቸው ልዳር ታስቤ ነበር ያስአቅሜ - ያስሰደማዬ - ያስፍላገቱ። ያም አሰፈ።

«በዚህ ሁኔታ ላይ ሳሁ አባቴ ለእናቴ ለቅሶ ደረሰና እኔንም ወደከተማ ይዞኝ መጣ። ትምህርት ቤት ገባሁኝ። የከተማው ሕይወት ደግሞ ለእኔ አስቸጋሪ ነበር። አባቴ በሚሠራበት አዳሪ ትምህርት ቤት አብረው እውሳሰሁ። ለመኝታ ግን የዘመድ - ዘመድ - ዘመድ ተፈልጎ ማታ ማታ እየሄድኩ ሲሉቱን አሳልፋለሁ። ሆኖም እዚያም ሌላው ፈተና ያለበት ቦታ ነበር። እንዳንድ ቀን ጀንበሯን «ምናሰበት ባትመሽ» እያልኩ እማፀናታለሁ። በዚህ ሁኔታ ላይ እያሰሁ ከአንተ ጋር የፊደልና የፍቅር ህ ሁ መቀጠር ጀመርኩ።

«በኋላ አንተም እንደምታስታውሰው በትምህርቴ ትንሽ የምፍጨረጨር ነበርኩኝ። 12ተኛ ክፍል ማትረክን እኔም አስተማሪዎቼም ጓደኞቼም ለተሻሰ ነጥብ ብዙ ጓጉተን ነበር። ውጤቱ ግን የተገላበጠሽ ሆኖ መጣ። ተስፋ አስቅራሜ ክስተት ነበር። በዚያን የወጣትነት ዘመኔ ውስጥ የመጀመሪያዋ ኮከቤ መጨሰም ጀመረች። የምኞቴ ጤዛ በጠዋት እረገፈች።

«በአንድ በኩል ያንተ ፍቅር እንዳልሰይህ አሰረኝ። በሌላ በኩል ደግሞ ከዚያ በኋላ የአባቴ ሽክም መሆኔና ሲመሽ ዞሮ መግቢያ ቤት እንኳን ስላልነበረን ሀሳቤ መዋዘቅ ጀመረ። በህይወቴ ለመሆን የምመኝውና በጣም የማደንቀው የመምህርነት ሙያ ነበር። ሰዎችን አጠያይቂ መረጃ አገኘሁ።

«በመጨረሻ «ቲ.ቲ.አይ» ተመዝግቤ ራሴን ደብቄ ልቤ ጨክን አልኩት። እንተንም አባቴንም ትቼ ለመሄድ ወሰንኩኝ። የአስተማሪነት ኮርስ ለመውሰድ ወደ ክልል መምህራን ማሰልጠኛ ተቋም ተጓዝኩኝ። ሀሳቤ ግን አሁንም እንደውህ ሳይ ኩበት ይዋልል ነበር።

«የአንድ ዓመት ትምህርቴን ከጨረስኩ በኋላ ተመልሼ አዲስ አበባ ለመምጣት አስቤም ነበር። ነገር ግን ሥራ ለሰማይገኝ እንደ ሁለት ዓመት ያህል ማስተማር ነበረብኝ። በመሆኔም የሥራ ልምድ ልያዝ ብዬ ወደ እምመደብበት የአንደኛ ደረጃ የገጠር ት/ቤት ለመሄድ ቀረጥኩ።»

«ከዚህ ላይ ሳይኖር ምን ያህል ችግር በላይኛ ላይ ሲያንዝብ ሰዎች አትነግሯቸው ነበር። ቢያንስ በህሳብ ደረጃ እንወያይበትና አንድ መፍትሄ እናገኛለን ነበር» አልኧት

«ምህረት! በወቅቱ ችግሮቼን ብንገርህ በጣም ትጨነቃለህ። ከትምህርትህ እንዳትዘናጋ በማሰብ እራሴው ልወጣው ብዬ ስራሴው ተወኩት። አንዳንድ ጊዜ የመክራ ሽክም ሲበዛብህ የምታደርገውን ታጣለህ። የምትወሰነውን ድርጊት አታመዛዝንም። ትክክለኛው የሕይወት መንገድ አይታይህም። በጭፍን ዝም ብለህ ትንዛለህ። ጨለማና ብርሃኑን አትለየውም።

«በዚህ ላይ ልጅነትና የአእምሮ ጨቅሳነት አለ። እኔ ደግሞ በተፈጥሮ ጭምት ነኝ። ለተለያዩ ሰዎች ችግራን የማዋየት ደካማነት አለብኝ። ምናልባት ዛሬ ህይወት አስተምራኝ መክራ መክራኝ አስተሳሰቤን በመጠኑ ለውጩ ሲሆን ይችላል። በመሆኑም የአስተማሪነትን ሥራ ለመጀመር የምድብ ቦታዬን እየተጠባበኩ ...» ትዘታዋን አልጨረሰችውም።

በመካከሉ ተንቀሳቃሽ ስልክ የጥሪውን ዜማ አሰማ። ባለቤቱ ነበረች። በስልኩ ውስጥ በቀልምጫ «አ...ባ...ቢ!» አሰችኝ።

«አቤት» አልኳት።

«ልጆቼ አባታችን ካልመጣ አንተኛም ብለው እየጠበቁህ ነው» አሰችኝ።

«እሺ የእኔ እመቤት መጣሁ» አልኳት። በእርግጥም ምሽቱ ገፍቷል። በሰልኩ ረቡዕ አሰት ከራሷ ጋር ደገመን ለመገናኘት ቀጠሮ ያዘን። በኮንትራት ታክሲ ወደ ማረፊያዋ ቤት ሸኝቷና እኔም ወደ ቤቱ አቀናቡ።

ሁለትና ሁለት

በአራዳ ሰማይ ላይ ፀሐይና ደመና ድብብቆሽ ይጫወታሉ። አንድ ጊዜ ፀሐይ ስትሰቅ፣ ሌላ ጊዜ ደግሞ ደመና ሲያኩረፍ ይታያሉ። ሁለቱም በአዳገነት አደባባይ በፈረቃ አንድ ጊዜ ብርሀናቸውን ደግሞ ቆየት ብለው ጥላቸውን ያሳርፋሉ። በፍጡራን ላይ ይፈራረቃሉ።

አጠገቧ ከመድረሱ ራሷ እንደልጅ እቅፋ አድርጋ ሳመች። በሰው አደባባይ በከንፈሯ ተቀበለች። ሰዎች እንደአዲስ ፍቅረኛ እፍ እልም ማለት እንዳበዛን አልተገለፀንም። ሁለታችንም በአእምሯችን እናዘበትም ነበር። እንስሳዊ ሰው የሆንን መሰለን። ፍቅርና ጥላቻ፣ በሽታና ዘመቻ እንደገና ከአገራችን መመለሻ የላቸውም ሲባል ሰምቻለሁ። እናም በእኔም ላይ ደረሰብኝ ልበል! ዛሬ ሁለተኛው የቀጠሯችን ቀን ነው።

ምላችንን በእሷ ጋባዝነት እየተገራረስን በላን። የሀገራችንን ልዩ ወይን ጠጅ ለፍቅራችን ብላ ለሁለታችንም ቀዳች። ፊት ለፊቱ ተቀምጣ አይን አይኔን እያየችን የሕሊታ ታሪኳን ቀጠለች።

«የትዘታ ፍቅር አይጣል ነው» አልኳት።

«ማን ነበር ትዘታ አያረጅም ያለው? ብላ በዚያው ጀመረች። «...ወቅቱ የመሰከረም ወር ነበር። ቦታው ከኢ.አ በ360 ኪ.ሜ ርቀት ላይ ይገኛል። አቅጣጫውን ሰማወቅ በህሳብህ ራስክን በእንጉህ ላይ አሸከርክረው» አሰችኝ።

«አንገትና ራስ የተፈጠረው ለመሸከርከር ሳይሆን አዙሮ ለማየት ነው» አልኳት።

«ቀልዱን ተወውና አንድ ቦታ ወይንም ነጥብ ላይ በህሳብህ እረፍ። ይህኛ ነጥብ የክልል ዋና ከተማ ናት። የመምህርነት ሙያ የሰለጠንኩላት ማዕከል ነች። ከዚያም 50 ኪ.ሜ ወደ ዞን ከተማ ዝቅ በል። ቀጥልና በግምት 30 ኪ.ሜ ወደወረዳ ከተማ ጉዞ አድርግ። ለተወሰነ ሰዓታት አሁንም በእግርህ ተራመድ። ውብ ለምሳሌ ዛፍችና የአበባ ምርጥ ሽታዎች ... በመዓዛቸው እያወዱ ይቀበሉህ።»

«እናም አነስተኛ የገጠር መንደር በምናብህ አፈላልግ። መድረሻዬ ያኛ ነጥብ ነበረች። ይህንን ሁሉ እርቀት የተጓዘኩት ለአንደኛ ደረጃ መምህርነት ከተመረቅሁ በኋላ በወጣልኝ የምድብ እጣ መሠረት ነበር።

«እኔ ከዚያ ከመድረሴ በፊት ግን አዲስ የተመደበች ሔዋን መምጣቷን የሚገልጽ ወራ ከሣምንት በፊት ቀድሞኝ ከቦታው ደርሷል። የሴት አስተማሪ የመመደብ ጉጉት የተጠሙ አዳሞች ጥቂት አልነበሩም። በመጨረሻም በመኪናም በፈረስም በእግራም ብዬ ከብዙ ድካም በኋላ ከተመደብኩበት አነስተኛ የገጠር ት/ቤት ደረሰኩ። ተፈጥሮ በሰዎች ውበቷ አስተናገደችኝ።

«ባያውቁኝም ባሳውቃቸውም መድረሴን በተስፋ የሚጠባበቁ ወገኖች እንደቅርጫ ሥጋ እጣ ተጣጥሰው ጠበቁኝ። በሌሊቱበት ለአንዱ መምህር ባለው «ሲኒየራቲ» እጣው ወጥቶ ለተሰጥቻለሁ። ሁለት አዳሞች ሚዚዎች መሸራትን አጅቦው ተቀበሉኝ። ለእኔ ባይገልፁኝም አንዱ ባል አንዱ ደንገጦር መሆናቸው ነው። በአንድ የገጠር ጠባብ ቤት ውስጥ እኔም ሦስተኛ ደባል ሆኜ ተጨመርኩ ወይንም ተመደብኩ። ይኸ የደባልነት ሕይወቴም ወደፊት ይቀጥላል።

«ከቤት ወጥታ ሰማታውቅና ከተማ ሰኖረች ሴት ልጅ ግን ሁኔታው አስቸጋሪ ነው። በህሳቤ ሰማይ ተደፋብኝ። ምድር ከዳችኝ። ሁሉ ነገር ዙሪያው ገደል ሆነብኝ። ባለሁለትም ለመኖር እንዴት? ወደኋላም ለመመለስ እንዴት? ሁለቱም አይቻሉም። ከዚያ ምንድነው የምሆነው ብዬ ራሴን ጠየቅሁት። መልስ አላገኘሁም። በጭንቀት መዋሰልና የሴስ ጉም መጨበጥ ብቻ ሆነብኝ።

«ሰባት ሲሲት ሙሉ አይኔ እንቅልፍን አባሮ እንደገና አፍጥሞ አደረ። ሁኔታዎችን ሳጤናቸው አልተመቻችንም። ከቀን ወደቀን ጭንቀቱ ጨመረ። በደንገጦርነት የሚንከባከበኝ ሰውዬ በውድቀት ይነሳል። ሲሲት በአሥርና በአሥራ አንድ ሰዓት ላይ ይነሳል። ስፖርት እየራሰቡ እያሰ እኔን ከሲኒየራ መምህር ጋር ከቤት ትቶን በራን ከውጭ ዘግቶ ይወጣል።

«አዲሷ ድራማ ተጀመረች ማለት ነው። አንድ ይሁዳ አመቻችና አሳልፎ ሰጠኝ። ከሰዎችተኛው ቀን በኋላ አካሌም አእምሮም አይኔም ድካም ተሰማቸው። ሰውነቴን ተጫጫኝ። እንቅልፍ አሸለብኝ። የቅዠት ሰመመን ወሰደኝ። የሆነ እባብ መሰል አውራ አንገቴ ላይ ተጠምጥሞብኝ ሲታገለግላኝ ባንንኩ።

«እናም ውድ ምህረት! ቀጣይዋ የተስፋዬ ኮከብ በዚያች በደረቅ ውድቀት ተሰበረች።የሕይወቴ ቁስል ከጉያዬ አህዱ ብላ

ፈነዳች::አካሊ የደም ጭዳ አፈሰሰች:: የደም ግብር ከፈሰች:: በመሆኑም የወደፊት ጠባላዋን አስቀመጠች::

«ከአንድ ወር በኋላ ልቤን እደቅለሽሽኝ ተቸግረ ስለንዲት ባልቴት አማክርኳቸው:: ማርገዜ እውን መሆኑን ነገረች:: ሕይወቴ አስጠሳችኝ:: እራሴን ለማጥፋትም አሰብኩ:: ወደ አንዲት አነስተኛ ከተማ ከሰዎች ጋር ሂጂ ለማስወረድም ሞክርኩ:: ፈራሁና ተውኩት::

«ሁሉም አቅጣጫ እንደ እሾህ የሚዋጋ የጭሰማ መንገድ ሆነብኝ:: አንዳንድ ጊዜ ብልጣብልጥ መሆንና እንደጭስ መውጫ መፈሰግ የብልህነት መንገድ ነበር:: ስእኔ ግን አስታዩኝም ወይምም አስተገለጠልኝም:: በፍጡራን ላይ አስተዳደግ ተፅዕኖ ያለው መሆኑን የተረዳሁት በዚያን ወቅት ነበር::

«በመካከሉ ድምዳሜ አድራሻዬ ቢጠፋበት አባቴ እያጠያየቀ ከምኖርበት አካባቢ መጣ:: ጊዜው የዝናብ ወቅት ነበር:: በራሱ ላይ የኮባ ቅጠል እንደ ጃንጥላ ይዞ ዶፍ እየወረደበት ያሰቡበትን ፈልጎ አገኘኝ:: ድካሙና ልፋቱ አሳዘነኝ:: ዓይኑን ማየት ግን አልደፈርኩም:: በራሴ ሁኔታ ተሸማቀቅሁ::

«አባቴ ሲያየኝ በጣም ተገላቋይሰሁ:: «እኔን አፈር ይብላኝ!» እያሰ ሀዘን እንዳረዱት ስቅስቃ ብሎ ማዕቀስ ጀመረ:: ክስተቱን የተመሰከቱ መምህራን አባብለውት ትንሽ አደብ ገዛ:: እውነትም በሆነ ምክንያት ሰውነቴ ከመገላቆልም አልፎ እክክ ወርሶኛል:: ሰብዙ ጊዜ ከእህል የራቀ በሽተኛ አስመስሎኛል:: ሰካሪ የሰው ልጅ ደስታ ሲርቀው ሐዘን መዝራትና በሽታ ማብቀል ይጀምራል::

«በማግኘቱ የመጣበትን ዋና ምክንያት በአጭረ ነገረኝ:: «እኔ አዲስ አበባ ሥራ አግኝቼልሁ:: የትምህርት መረጃሽን ይዘሽ እንሂድና እንድትጀምሩ ሁሉን ነገር ጨርሼ ነው የመጣሁት» አሰኝ::

«መ/ቤታችን የትምህርት መረጃችንን ዋናውን ወስዶታል:: አሁን አይሰጠንም» ብዬ ዋሽሁት::

«ስምን ዋሽሻቸው?»አልኳት::

«አንደኛ በአምሳክ ስም ለአንተ የገባሁትን የፍቅር እምነት ቃል በክህደት አፈረሰኩት:: በመሆኑም ዳግም አደንህን ሳለማየት ወሰኔ ነበር:: ሁለተኛ እርጉዝ ሆኖ ዲቃሳዋን ይዛ መጣች መባልን ህሊናዬ አምርሮ ስለተጠየፈው አባቴን እምቢ አልኩት:: እሱም አዝና እያስቀሰ ተመለሰ:: አንዳንድ ጊዜ የግንዛቤ ጠባብነት የሕይወትህን ተስፋ ያጨመዋል:: አባቴን እምቢ ማለት አልነበረብኝም:: ግን ምን ታደርገዋለህ አምሳክ ሁን ያለው ሆነ::

«ከተወሰነ ወራት በኋላ ትንሽ አእምሮዬ መረጋጋት ጀመረ::የአውራ ግዳጅ የፈጸመብኝንና ክብራን የገሰሰውን ሰው ስምን ያን በደል እንዳደረሰብኝ በእርጋታ ጠየቅሁት:: በግልጽ መልስ ነገረኝ «አንደኛ ሚስት በማግኘቴ ብቸኝነቴን አስወግድበታለሁ:: ሁለተኛ የሁሉን አስተማሪዎች ደመወዛችንን «አጋጭተን» ያስቸገር ኑሮዬን እገፋበታለሁ::» አሰኝ::

«በጣም አዘንኩኝ:: ሰዜጐች የሚያስቡ ምርጥ ምርጥ መምህራን በበቀሉበት ምድር!! እንደእህትና ወንድም የሚንከባከቡ ፅኑዎች ባሉበት አገር! አርአያነታቸው ሰዓሰም የሚያበራ ከስመጥር የመምህራን መንደር! አጋጣሚው እኔን ከሰው እንስሳ ላይ ጣሰኝና የመከራ ሱተሪ ወጣልኝ:: በነገራችን ላይ ሰውን አትጠላም መጥፎ ድርጊቱ ግን ያስጠላህል::

«ጊዜ ጉዞውን ቀጥሏል:: በአንድ ጥላ ሥር መቀመጥ የግድ ሆነ:: መቼም መኖር የሚቻለው አካባቢህን መስለህ ነው:: እየገመዘዘኝም ቢሆን ኑሮን ተያያዘኩት:: በማክታተል ሁሉን ልጆች ከአብራካችን ተፈጠረ:: ተጣጥሞ መኖር ግን የማይነካ የእሳት ፍም ነው:: በጣም ይፋጃል:: ምክንያቱም መጀመሪያውኑ ሦስቱ ጉልቶች በግዳጅ ነው የተመሠረቱት::

«አስገደዶ በመድፈር - አስገደዶ በማግባት - አስገደዶ ማስወሰድ - አስገደዶ አገልጋይ ማድረግ - ከፍላጎቴ ውጭ የወሲብ ተግባር ማካሄድ:: በፍቅር አልባ የሕይወት ባህር ውስጥ መዋኘት:: ተስፋ የለሽ ኑሮን እንደተራራ መግፋት:: በማይነጋ ሲሲት ውስጥ መተኛ ት:: ፍች የሲሲው ህልም ማለም::

«የሲት ልጅ ፈተና ከራስ ፀጉሯ እስከ እግር ጥፍሯ ድረስ ነው ብዬህ የሰ? የፈተናዬን ብዛት ገና አስቆጥርህለሁ:: ፈተና በበዛ ቁጥር ደግሞ ያደነዘዛል እንጂ የጥንካሬ ምልክት አይሆንም:: «ስምን?» አልኳት

«ምህረት! ሳታፈቅር ያለውስጣዊ ስሜትህ በግዳጅ የሚፈጸምብህ ወሲብ እንደ አባ ጨንፈ ይኮሰኩሳል:: እንደአስብላቢት ቅጠል ይሰበልባል:: ያ ሰው ደግሞ እንደእቃ ሲያይህ ከምንም በላይ አንተነትህ ያስጠላህል:: አእምሮህን ያሳምምህል:: በአጠቃላይ የሕይወት ጣዕሙ ይጠፋህል::

«የሕሊና እሥረኛ የአካል ግዞተኛ ሆኖ መኖር:: ይኸው ነው አበቃ:: በነገራችን ላይ ራት ቀምሰህ ታወቃለህ? እኔ ከኑሮ ዛፍ ላይ እየቀረጥኩ ደጋግሜ አጣጥሜዋለሁ:: ከመምረር አልፎ እየገመዘዘኝ - እያንገሸገሽኝ - እያንገፈገፈኝ ይገኛል:: ከዚያ ምን ታስባለህ መስለህ? ሕይወት ቢሻት ትጣፍጥ:: ቢሻት ትምረር:: በቃ ለአንተ ምናም አይታወቅህም::

«ስምን ራስሽን ከዚያ የምታወግበት መንገድ አትፈልገም ነበር? ወይም ሥራውን አትተይውም ነበር?» ጠየቅኳት::

«የሞተ አህዶ ጅብ አይፈራም የሚል ብሂል ታወቃለህ? ሕይወት ድንገዝገዝ ስትልብኝ ጊዜ ሁሉንም ተወኩት!! ሥራዬን በተመሰከተ ግን አንድ ነገር ልንገርህ:: የመምህርነት ተግባራን እጅግ በጣም እወደዋለሁ:: ለሙያዬ ያሰኝን ክብርና ፍቅር ልገሰጽልህና ወደ ሴላው ሀሳቤ ልግባ፤

- «የእውቀት መሰላል - ያገር አሰኝታ
- የእድገት መሠረት - የጥበብ ዋልታ
- የህይወት ችቦ - ተስፋን አብርታ
- አስም ደመቀች - መምህር አግኝታ»

«የእኔ በግዳጅ ሚስት መሆኔ ብቻ አይደለም የሚደንቀው ይልቅ ሌላውን የሴት ልጅ ሕይወትና የትዳር ፈተና ሳውጋህ፡- የኑሮዬም ግጥምጥሞሽ ይገርምህል-ምናልባትም ያሳዘንህልም፡፡»

በመሆኑም «ባለቤቱ» ባለመጣጣማችን ሳይ ሲሳ አለመጣጣም ጨመረበት፡፡ ከሰለታት አንድ ቀን ከሠራተኛችን ጋር በገዛ ቤቱ ሲልከሰከስ አገኘሁት፡፡ ይህን ቃል በመናገሪያ ወይም በመጠቀሚያ አዘናብሁ፡፡ እኔ ስለእሱ በጣም አፈርኩኝ፡፡ እሱ ግን ማንን ፈርቶ፡፡ በዚያው ቀጠለበት፡፡ አሁም ዲቃሳዋን ይዛ ወደመጣችበት ተሸኘች፡፡

«ቆይቼ ደግሞ ከአስተማሪነት ሥራ ጋር የቤቱ ሀሳፊነት ከበደኝና የአክሱቲን ልጅ አምጥቼ እያስተማርኳት ትረዳን ጀመር፡፡ አንዳንድ ጊዜ እንሰላላለን ባህሪ በሰውነት ውስጥ ስለሰር ይገባል፡፡ ከዚያ ከሰው ሳይሆን ከእንሰላላው በታች እንደታሰብና ሰዋዊ ነውረኛ ድርጊቶችን እንድትፈጽም ያደርግህል፡፡ የአክሱቲን ልጅ በሳይ ሳይ ሁለተኛዋ ሚስቱ አድርገ በገዛ ቤቱ አስቀመጣት፡፡ ተረት ነው እንዳትሰኝ፡፡ ውሸት ነው እንዳትሰኝ፡፡ የሰው ልጅ ድብቅ ባህሪያት የሚገለጹበት የራሳቸው ወቅት አላቸው፡፡» አሰኝኝ

«እኔ ግን በፍጹም አሳምንም ሲሆንም አይቻልም» አልኳት፡፡ «አንድን ነገር ባትቀበሉም በሁኔታዎች አስገዳጅነት እንድታምን ትገደዳለህ!» ብላኝ ትረከዋን ቀጠለች፡፡ ፊቷም ንግግሯም የምራትና የብሶት እሳት የሚንቀሳቀስበት ይመስላል፡፡ የራሄል እንባ ይዘንባል፡፡

«በመካከሉ በወረዳው ትምህርት ቢሮ አማካኝነት በክረምት በክረምት የዲግሪ መርሀግብር እንድማር ተፈቀደልኝ፡፡ ከብዙ ውጣ ውረድ ችግርና መከራ በኋላ ተምራ ተመረቅሁ፡፡ ከሰርተፊኬት - ወደ ዲፕሎማ - ከዲፕሎማ - ወደ ዲግሪ ራሴን ለመሰወጥ ጣርኩኝ፡፡ በመቀጠልም የሁለተኛ ደረጃ መምህር ሆኑኩኝ፡፡ በፊት ከማስተምርበትም ቦታ ወደ አውራጃ ከተማ ከፍ አልኩኝ፡፡

«አሁንም «ባለቤቱ» ግን ይበልጥ እሳት ሆነ፡፡ የክፋት መርዘን መርጠት ቀጠለ፡፡ እንዲት ትበልጭኛለሽ ብሎ ቃላት ሲገልጹት የማይቻሉትን ድርጊቶች ይፈጽምብኝ ጀመር፡፡ «የሴት ልጅ ፈተና በቀመቷ ልክ ነው ብዬህ የለም?»

ይባለ ብሎ ደመወዙን ከልጆቹ አፍ እየነጠቀ ለመጠጥና ለጫት ወርሀዊ ወጪ መደብ፡፡ የእኔ ደመወዝ ከፊሱ ስገዛሁት ቤት ተከፋይ ነበር፡፡ ልጆቹ መራብና መራቅት ጀመሩ፡፡ በደሴን ለልጆቹ አወረሰኳቸው፡፡ ብን ብዬ እንዳልጠፋ ልጆቹ እትብት አሰረኝ፡፡ የልጆቹ ነገር ሲት ተቀን ያባንኛል፡፡ እንዲት አድርጌ ጥያቄው ልሂድ!

«የደባልነት ኑሮአችን በፊት የተሰወሰ ሆነ፡፡ በተራ ቃላት እንኳን ልንገባባ አልቻልንም፡፡ ሰላም በቤታችን ታጣ፡፡ በመጠጥና በጫት ኃይል ሰውነቱ እየተዳከመ መጣ፡፡ አልጋ ሳይ አንጣጣምም፡፡ አካሉ አይታዘዝለትም፡፡ ይህም በመሀሳችን መራራቅንና ጥሳቻን ጨመረ፡፡ አልጋ ሰየን ደባል ሆንን፡፡ የቤት ኪራይ አይከፍልም እንጂ! በቃ የልዩነታችን መጠን በጣም አጅግ እየሰፋ ሄደ፡፡

«በነገራችን ሳይ ባለቤትሽ የራሱ የሆነ የሰነልበናም ሆነ የኑሮ ችግር ሲኖርበት ይቻል ይሆናል፡፡ አንቺ በትግስት ልትመክረውና ልታስመክረው አልቻልሽም ነበር? አልኳት

«ብዙ ሞክረዋለሁ ግን እንደአበደ በራ ምላሽ አይሰጥህም የአህያ ውሀ አጣጧ ነው!»

«ዘወትር የትም አምሸችና ጠጥቶ ለሰሚመጣ ስእኔ ክብር ለልጆቹ ፍቅር አይሰጠንም፡፡ ከዚያ በኋላ የመሰደደው ክር እየተበጠሰ መቋጠር ጀመረ፡፡ በተሰደደ ወቅት ሰዎስት ጊዜያት ያህል ተፋተን ከቤት ወጣሁ፡፡ ተመልሼ ግን በሕይወት አዙሪት አማካኝነት እንደገና እገባለሁ፡፡ በማትፈልገው ገመድ ታስሮ መኖር፡፡ መወሰን ወይም ገመዱን መበጠስ አለመቻል፡፡

«በመጀመሪያ ስንሰደድ በንደኞቹ ከፍተኛ ግፊት ከአራት ወራት በኋላ እንደገና ገባሁ፡፡ ገሽ ለልጄ ስትል ተወጋች አሉ፡፡ እኔም ለልጆቹ ስል ህሲናዬ እየደማ ተመሰስኩ፡፡ ከማትወደው ሰው ጋር በጥላቻ አብረህ ከምትኖር ይልቅ አፍቅረህ ብትሞት የተሻለ ይመስለኛል፡፡

«ምናልባት ኑሮን በዚህ መልኩ ትንሽም ቢሆን በማንኪያ ጨፍፎ መገምዘዚንና አስቸጋሪነቷን የቀመሳትና ያጣጣማት የበለጠ ሲረዳኝ ይቻላል፡፡ አለበለዚያ ግን ህይወቴ የልብወለድ ንባብ ይመስላል፡፡ እናም አንዳንድ ጊዜም ሰሰው ልጅ ሳይችሰው አይሰጠውም የሚባለው ብሂል ሰካሰ እውነታ አሰው ያስብላል፡፡

«ዘመን ጉዞውን ቢቀጥልም አሁንም ልንገባባ አልቻልንም፡፡ እሳትና ሞድ ሆንን፡፡ ለሁለተኛ ጊዜ ደግሞን ተሰደዋን፡፡ በአካባቢያችን ለሰማይና ለምድር የከበዱ ሁለት ገረቤቶቻችን መሰሊም እናቶች ካሳሁበት ድረስ መጥተው ከደጃፊ ቆሙ፡፡ መቅረሚያቸውን ከበራፌ ሳይ አንጥፈው በአሳህ ስም ለመጥኝ ተማጸኑኝ፡፡ ክብር ስነሱ ይሁን እሺ ብዬ ገባሁኝ፡፡ የሕይወት አዙሪት እየሳበችኝ፡፡

«አሁንም ሰዎስተኛ ጊዜ ፍቺ ቀጠለ፡፡ መሰደደት ሞት ሳይሆን ፋሽን ሆነ፡፡ አንድ ዓመት ከአራት ወራት ተቆጠረ፡፡ ሰተወሰነ ጊዜ ትንሽ እፍይ አልኩኝ፡፡ ነገር ግን ልጆቹ ደግሞ ሰላም ነሱኝ፡፡ «አባታችን አይመጣም እንዴ? ሰምን ከአባታችን ተሰደተን ተቀመጥን? ወደቤታችን ውሰድን እንጂ! ሰምን አንቺና አባታችን ተሰደዋችሁ? ጥያቄዎችን መመሰስ ይከብደኛል፡፡

«ሞንቅሳታቸው ሁሉን ነገር የሚቀርጽበት ወቅት ነበር፡፡ አሥርና አሥራ አምስት ዓመታቸው ነው፡፡ ልጅንም ያስአባት ማሳደግ ይከብዳል፡፡ በአንዲት አነስተኛ ከተማ ውስጥ እናት ከዚህ፣ አባት ከዚያ፣ ልጆች ደግሞ ከዚያና እዚህ፡፡ ምን ዓይነት ሥርዓትና እውቀት ይዘው እንደሚያድጉ ለህሲና ፍርድ ያስቸግራል፡፡ ልጆቹ በቀንበጥ እድሜያቸው መልካም ነገር ቀስመው ማደግ አስባቸው፡፡

«ምናልባት ይህን ሁሉ የምዘረዝርልህ እኔን ከገጠሙኝ የህይወት መሰናክሎችና ራስንም በችግራ አረንቁዋ ውስጥ የመዝፈቅ አባዜ ሴቶች ይማረባሉ ይሆናል ብዬ አስባለሁ» - እንባዎቻዋ በፊትዋ ሳይ ጣምራ ቦይ ሰራ፡፡ ሆኖ ሆድ ባለው፡፡ ብሶቷ ሞልቶ ገነፈለ፡፡ የፊቷ ደመና እንባ አዘነበ!! አዘነበ!! አዘነበ!!

«አንድ ቀን «ሳሴም» የምትባለው ትንሽዋ ልጄ ናፍቆኛልና አባቴ ጋ ውሰዷኝ አሉኝ። እንጂቴ ተንቦጫቦጪ። ከተከራየሁበት ቤት አቃዬን ሰብስቤ ተመልሼ ልጆቼን ይዜ 7ባሁኝ። አባታቸው ከቤት ሲያገኘን ምን እንዳሉን ልንገርህ «ሚስት ደስ የምትሰው በሂደቶብት እግሯ ተመልሳ ስትመጣ ነው» ብሎ አሾፈብኝ... የራሄል ስልክ አቃጠሉ። አነሳችው።

- ሰው ይናፍቃል አይባልም እንዲ...? አሳት - የወንድ ድምፅ።

- በሥራ ጉዳይ ነው...» ብላ መሰሰችበት።

«ባለቤትሽ ነው?» አልኳት።

«አይ ሲሳ ሰው ነው...» አሉኝ።

«ሲሳ ሰው ማለት?» ደግሟ ጠየቅኳት

«አሱ ሲሳ የታሪክ ምዕራፍ አለው» ብላ በሽፍንፍን መሰሰችበት።

«ቅናቴን አመጣሽው - በጣም አወደሻለሁ - እጅግ አፈቅርሻለሁ።» ቃላቶች ተረጩ። ስምን አቀናሰሁ ዝብርቅርቅ ያለ ፍቅር።

«ከልብህ እንዴት እንደምታፈቅረኝ በሚቀጥሰው ጊዜ ስንገናኝ አውነቱን ትነግረኛለህ። አሁን መሸቷል እንሂድ» አሉኝ። መሰደዩን ባንፈልገውም ጊዜ ገደቡን አስቀመጠብን። የአዲስ ፍቅር ዋዜማ!

«አልጋ ይዘን ነው የምነግርሽ?» አልኳት

«ከፈለግህ ዙፋንም ያዝ!» አሉኝና ተሳስመን ተሰደየን።

ሦስትና ሦስት

የምሽቷ ጨረቃ የመስከቱን መስተዋት አልፋ ገብታለች። ለክፍሉ ተጨማሪ ድምቀት ሰጥተዋለች። በራሂል ፊት ላይ የጨረቃና የመብራት ህብር ውበት ይረጫል።ጨረቃና ውበት ምሽትና ህይወት።

ራሂል ፍጹም የፍቅር ሰው ነች። መውደዷን አትሸገግም ህይወቷን አትደብቅም - ኑሮ በአዲስ መልክ በሚገባ ቀርጻታለች። እስተ ዓርብ ሰዎስተኛ ጊዜ አገናኝቶናል።

አሁን በምርጥ ሆቴል ውስጥ በፍቅር ማዕድ ላይ ነች። በያዝነው ክፍል ውስጥ የትዝታ ምንጭ ይቀዳል። የፍቅራችን ወንዝ ይፈሳል። ከንፈሮቿን ደጋግሟ ሳምኳቸው አሳም ትስመኛለች። በመካከሉ የፍቅር ሽሚያ ጨዋታው ጋብ አለ።

«ይልቅስ ሲሳኛውን የሕይወቴን ምዕራፍ ሳጫውትህ» አሉኝ።

«አጫውችኝ የእኔ ፍቅር» አልኳት።

«የእኔ የሚሰውን ቃል አስተካክለው» «ነበርኩ በል» አሉኝ

«አሁንስ?»

«የሁሉም! የማንም!»

«በእውነተኛ መልኩ ግን የእኔ ፍቅረኛ ነሽ»

«እውን እንደዳርጮ ከልብህ አሁንም ታፈቅረኛለህ?»

«በሚገባ አፈቅርሻለሁ። እንዲያውም ከበሬቱ የሚበልጥ ይመስለኛል» ብርቱካን ከንፈሯን ደጋግሟ መጠጥኩት። ድንገት የህሊና ሙገት መጣብኝ «ግን ስምን ይህን ጭፍን ተግባር አፈጽማለሁ። ውብ ፀባይና ምግባር ያላት ባለቤት እያሉኝ? እያልኩ ራሴን ጠየቅሁት።

«እንግዲያውስ አንድ ፈተና ሳቅርብህ። እኔ ግን ለአንተ አልሆንኃም» ስትል ከሀሳቤ መሰሰች።

«ፈትኝኝ» አልኳት። እውነተኛ ፈተና ነበር። በፅናት ፈተናን መቀበል እያስተማረችኝ ነው።

ፀጥ አሉኝ።

«ንገረኝ እንዲ!»

እንባዋ መርገፍ ጀመረ። የራሂል እንባ የብሶቷ መተንፈሻ ነው።

«ታዲያ በዝምታና በሰቅሶ ምን የሚገኝ ነገር አለ? እባክሽ የእኔ ፍቅር አታስጨንቂኝ።» አልኳት። የሰሜቷ አሳተገሞራ ሲፈነዳ ምንም አልቀረውም።

ድንገት «ለአንተ የማልሆንበትን ምክንያት ልንገርህ። በጎደኛ ወይንም በኢድስ አስበስዚያም በሁለቱም ተደዣለሁ» አሉኝ። ሰሜቷ ከአንባዋ ጋር በሀይለኛው ፈነዳ። የአንበዋ ሰማያት ተከፈቱ።

«በትዳርሽና በልጆችሽ ሳይ!» በጣም ደነገጥኩ። ግን ምን አስደነገጠኝ እኔስ ምን እያደረግሁ ነው?

«ሲያመጣው ልክ የሰውም። አያደርስ ነው። ምን ታደርገላለህ» አሉኝ

«እኔ ግን በምንም መልኩ አሳምንም። እንደዚያ ታደርጊያለሽ ብዬም አልገምትም»

«የሰው ልጅ ጭንቅሳት በአንድ ወይንም በሲሳ መልኩ በሁኔታዎች አስገዳጅነት ባያምንበትም እንኳ እንዲያምን ይገደዳል።» ብየህ የሰ። ደጋግማ የምትናገረው አባባል ነው።

ልቤን በርታ አልኩት። ጥያቄዋን መመለስ መቻል አለብኝ። የምትነግረኝ ደግሞ ህሊና የማይቀበለው ነገር ነው። እንዳንድ ጊዜ የድርጊቶችን መሆን ወይንም አስመሆን እጅግ ያስቸግራል።

«በሁለቱም ብትያዥ የዘላለም አፍቃሪሽ ነኝ። ምን ጊዜም ከገንሽ አልሰደም» አልኳት።

«የመጀመሪያውን ፈተና አልፈህል። ከኢድስ ሙሉ በሙሉ ነፃ ነኝ ብዬ መናገር ባልቻልኩም ለጊዜው የሰብኝም። ጎደኛ ግን አለኝ» አሉኝና አሁንም እንባዋን አዝረከረከችው። የአይኗ ኳሶች አሸበሸቡ

«በትዳርሽ ሳይ?! እኔ ግን አሁንም አሳምንም።» አልኳት። ሁኔታው እንቅስቃሴ ሆነብኝ።

«አንዳንድ ጊዜ ሕይወት ራሷ ከወጥመድ ውስጥ ትከትሀለች። ሲሳ ጊዜ ደግሞ የሰው ልጅ ራሱ ወጥመድ ይሰራና በሠራው ወጥመድ ውስጥ ራሱን ይከታል። እኔ ከዚህኛው ገራ ነኝ» አሉኝና ራሂል በፀፀት። የሰው ልጅ በሴሎች በደል ሲደርስበት ይኮንናቸዋል። በራሱ ጥፋትስ ማንን ይጠይቃል!?

«እንዴት?» አልኳት።

«በማስተምርበት ት/ቤት ከአንድ በኃላፊነት ደረጃ ሳይ ካስ ሰው ጋር ሥራ አገናኝ። መልካም ሰው ነው። ችግሩን ከልቡ ተረድቶ ውስጤን አነበበልኝ። የሀሳቤ ተካፋይ ሆነኝ። በአልጠበቅኩት መንገድ ግን መቀራረብ ጀመርኩ። በወቅቱ ልቤን አልሰጠሁትም ቅሬጥ ነበርኩ። ዓመታት ተቆጠራ። በመጨረሻም ከቤት ያለው አሳት ሲፈጅህ ከውጭ ማብረጃ ውሀ በአንድ ወይንም በሲሳ አጋጣሚ ትፈልጋለህ። አስበስዚያም ሳታስበው ደጋግምህል። ወይንም የሆነ ተፈጥሯዊ ሀይል ይስብሀል። ያለ መንገድህ እንድትሄድ ቦይ ይቀድልህል። የሰው ልጅ ጠንካራ ጉኑ የሚፈተንበት ሁፈታ ይጋጥማህል።

«በመሆኑም ልቤ ሸፈተ፡፡ ከቤቴ ውስጥ የሚወጋኝ ቀጋ ሰውጭ አልጋ ዳረገኝ፡፡ ዓይኔን ጨፍኜ ገባሁበት፡፡ ባስትዳርና ሁለት ልጆች ያለውን ጉብፅ ዓደኝነት ያዘኩ፡፡ አልፎ አልፎም ቢሆን በድብቅ አብረው መውጣት ጀመርኩ፡፡ ከድጡ ወደ ማጡ ገባሁበት፡፡ እምነቴን፣ ህሊናዬን፣ አምሳኪንና የሕብረተሰቡን መልካም እሴት ዋጋ አሳጣሁት፡፡ በቃ እነነቴን ካድኩት ተውኩት፡፡

«አንዳንድ ጊዜ በሌላ ሰውም አልፈርድም፡፡ እራሴም የሰህተቱ ተዋናይ ሆኛለሁ፡፡ የምፈጽመውም ተግባር በባል ተብዬው ሳይ ሰበቀልና ስተንኩል ብዬም አልነበር፡፡ ውስጥህ ባዶነት ሲሰማው መጀመሪያ ከራስህ ጋር ትጣሳለህ፡፡ ከአካባቢህ ማንበረሰብም ጋር ትኳረፋለህ፡፡ የምታደርገውን ነገር አታወቅም፡፡ ዝም ብሎ የሆነ ሐይል ያቅበዘብዝባል፡፡ ጥፋትህም ሆነ ልማትህ አይታይህም፡፡

«አይ ህይወት... የመጀመሪያው ፍቅረኛዬን ሳልጨብጥህ እንደጉም በነንክብኝ፡፡ ከማልረሳው ትዝታህ ጋር ስ24 ዓመታት እየናፈቅኩኝ በልቤ ውስጥ የፍቅር እሳት አዳፈንክብኝ፡፡ አውቄም ደሁን ሳሳውቅ ተሰደኩኝ፡፡ አስገደድ ካገባኝ ጋር 18 ዓመታት አስመዘገብኩ፡፡ ከስርቆስ ፍቅረኛዬ ጋር ደግሞ 12 ዓመታት ተያያዘኩት፡፡ በሂሣብ ስሴት ስድስት ስድስት እየቀነሰክ ቀምር፡፡ ከዚያስ ከዚያማ ሕይወት ምን መጨረሻ አሳት፡፡ የምትሠራውን ዝም ብዬ በትዝብት መመልከት ብቻ ነው ብላ ካለሁበት ትታኝ ከሀሳብዋ ጋር ርቃ ሂደች፡፡

«በእናትሽ አንድ ጊዜ እንኳን ሳቂልኝ፡፡ ክፍሉን የሀዘን ቤት አስመሰልኸው» ከሀሣብዋ መሰለኝ፡፡

«የሰው ልጅ የሚሰቀው እኮ ሦስት ነገሮች ሲያጋጥሙት ነው፡፡ ወደ ሲደሰት ወደ ሲያዝን አስበስዚያም ሲነካው፡፡»

«ምኑን?»

«ህሊናውን! እኔ ግን ከሦስቱም የሰሁበት»

አሁንም ደግሞ «አባክሽ ሳቂልኝ እንደሰት አልኳት፡፡» ከንፈሯን ሳምኳት የግብረሥጋ ግንኙነት እንድናደርገው ጠየቅኳት፡፡ ራሷ ግን በሀሳብ የደነዘዘች በድን አካል ሆነችብኝ፡፡ ስሜትና ሙቀት አልባ፡፡

«ውሳኔው የራስህ ነው» አሰኝኝ፡፡

«እንዴት?» አልኳት፡፡

«አሁን ባለሁበት ሁኔታ ጤነኛ ነኝ ብዬ አስባለሁ፡፡ ነገር ግን እውነቱን ስመግለፅ የኢድስ ቫይረስ ይኑርብኝ አይኑርብኝ በእርግጠኝ ነት መናገር አልችልም፡፡ ትናንት ተመርምረህ ጤነኛ ነኝ ልትል ትችላለህ፡፡ ጥንቃቄው ከሌለህ ግን ዛሬ በሽታው ሲሰፍርብህ ይችላል፡፡ መንገደኛና ኢድስ አይተማመኑም ይባል የሰ፡፡

«በሌላ መልኩ አንተ ለዘላለም የማረሳህ የመጀመሪያውና የልጅነት ፍቅረኛዬ ነህ፡፡ በመሆኑም ሥጋዬን ቅርጠህ ብትዘለዝለኝ ደስተኛና ፍቃደኛ ነኝ፡፡ ሆኖም ግንኙነት ባናደርግ እመርጣለሁ፡፡ እጅግ ስለምወደህ በጤንነት የነገዋን ፀሐይ እንድትሞቅልኝ እመኛለሁ፡፡ እኔ እንደ ነገር ብሆን እንኳ በምደር በአደራ የምስጥህን ልጆቼን በሰማይ እቀበልሁለሁ» ብላኝ በተኛችበት አልጋ ላይ እጆቿንም እግሮቿንም በየአቅጣጫው ዘረጋቻቸው፡፡

ለእኔ እውነተኛው የፈተና ሰዓት ነበር፡፡ ፈጣሪ ይመስለኝ በልናት ወሲብን ታቀብኳት፡፡ ራሷ ስለደኛችን ከኮርኒሎ ሳይ ሰክታ ቀረች፡፡

እኔንና አካሏን ከአልጋው ሳይ ጥላን ሂደች፡፡ ዳግም ከሀሳብዋ ጋር ምናብዋ ወደፈጠረው ዓለም ተጓዘች፡፡ ምን እያደረገች ይሆን?

ከቆይታ በኋላ ደረቷን በእጁ ነካ ነካ አደረግኳት፡፡ ከቀን ሕልሚ ባነነች፡፡ አንድ ነገር ልንገርሽ አልኳት ነገርኳት፡፡ ዘመን ቢያሰደየንም ከልቤ አፈቅራታለሁ፡፡ ወደፊትም መውደዱ ይቀጥላል «እኔን የመጀመሪያው እጩኛሽንም፣ አጋጣሚዎች ያገናኙሽን የልጆቻሽን አባትም እንዲሁም የስርቆስ ዓደኛሽንም እርግፍ አድርገሽ ተይን፡፡ በመጀመሪያ ራስሽን ሁኝ፡፡ ወደ አንቺነትሽ ተመሰሽ አልኳት፡፡» በህይወት ባህር ውስጥ እንደ ደረቀ ኩበት ስትንሳፈፍ ታየችኝ!!

«ከልጅነታችን ጀምረህ እንደምታስብልኝ አውቃለሁ፡፡ ግን ማንን እንዴት ሳፍቅር?» አሰኝኝ፡፡

«ራስሽን አፍቅሪ የሰው ልጅ ራሱን ሳያፈቅርና ከራሱ ጋር ሳይታረቅ ስሌሎች ሲያስብ አይችልም» አልኳት፡፡

ስራሄል ከፍቅሪ ባሻገር ልቤም አዘነሳት፡፡ ዓይኔም አነባሳት፡፡ እጆቿን ይዜ ከተኛችበት ሳይ አነሳኳት፡፡ ልብሶቿን ሰባብላ ቆመች፡፡ ረጋ ብላ አየር ወሰደችና፡- ሌላ ያልጠበቅሁት ቃል ከአንደበቷ ወጣ! «በነገራችን ሳይ ወደ አዲስ አበባ የመጣሁት በአንድ ወይንም በሁለት ምክንያቶች ነው፡፡ መቼም የሰው ልጅ ሕይወትና ተስፋ ሲበጠሱ ሲሞክሩ አምሳክ መርፌና ክር ይልክሳቸዋል ይባላል፡፡

«በማስተምርበት አካባቢ አንድ የውጭ ድርጅት በትምህርት ጥራት ሳይ ጥናት ያካሂዳል፡፡ በዚህ አጋጣሚ ከሀገራ የኒቨርሲቴ ጋር ይዳዳልኝ ነበር፡፡ በማስተማር ብቃትና በትምህርቱ ውጤት ጥረነት የመመረጥ እድል ገጥሞኛል፡፡ ስለዚህም የማስትራት ዲግሪ እንድንታተል ሁኔታዎችን አመቻችታልናል፡፡ እንደገና ፊቷ እንደፀደደ አበባ መፍካት ጀመረ፡፡

«አንደኛውም ወደ አንተ ጋ አመጣጤ የሁልጊዜ አሳቢዬ በመሆኔህ ደስታዬን ሳካፍልህ በማሰብ ነው፡፡ ሰሞኑን የጤንነት ምርመራዬን ጨርሻለሁ፡፡ የፓስፖርት ቪዛዬን አስመትቼ የአውሮፕላን ትኬት ቆርጫለሁ፡፡ በመሆኑም የፊታችን እዜድ ወደ ውጭ ሀገር ስትምህርት በረራ አድርጋለሁ... ወዲያውም ከአይን የራቀ ከልብ ደርቃልና ከምስቅልቅሱ ህይወቴ እወጣ ይሆናል፡፡ ልጆቼን ግን አደራ! - - - » ብላ ዝብርቅርቅ ያሰ ደስታና ሀዘን አብሥራ አረዳችኝ፡፡ በአውሮፕላን ወደ ሰማይ ሰማያት ስታርግ በሀሳቤ ታየችኝ፡፡

(መስከረም 2002 ዓ.ም.)