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Geography Note for Grade 12C

POPULATION POLICY OF ETHIOPIA

A **population policy** is a policy that is formulated and implemented by a government in order to plan and control population growth, based on the economic, social, cultural, political, and demographic conditions of the country. It is needed mainly to address population related problems in a country.

The population policies of countries can be broadly categorized into two groups as: anti-natalist and pro-natalist policies.

- A. Anti-natalist population policy seeks to lower fertility rates, in particular, and population growth rates, in general.
- B. Pro-natalist population policy seeks to increase fertility rates, in particular, and population growth rates, in general.

History of Population Policy in Ethiopia

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) adopted a national population policy in 1993. The policy was based on the awareness that large population size and continued rapid population growth in Ethiopia can be an enemy of development and can cause economic, social and environmental problems in the country.

Similar to most of the developing countries, the type of population policy used in Ethiopia is basically anti-natalist. Such policies promote lowered fertility rates, in particular, and lowered population growth rates, in general.

Goals and Strategies of Ethiopia's Population Policy

Ethiopia's anti-natal population policy formulates several goals and strategies to regulate population for the overall good of the country.

Ethiopia's Population-Policy Goals

Ethiopia's population policy has the following types of goals:

- A Broad
- B. General
- C. Specific

The broad goal of Ethiopia's population policy is to promote social welfare by harmonizing the rate of population growth and the country's capacity for socio-economic development and the rational utilization of natural resources. The policy expresses particular concern over the age structure of Ethiopia's population, which is greatly dominated by young people. The policy is also concerned with the large number of women in childbearing age, which is likely to result in continued rapid population growth.

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General objectives of Ethiopia's population policy include:

- ✘ *Closing the gap between high population growth and low economic productivity, through planned reduction of population growth and increasing economic returns;*
- ✘ *Expediting socio-economic development processes through holistically integrated development programs;*
- ✘ *Reducing the rate of rural-to-urban migration;*
- ✘ *Ensuring environmental protections;*
- ✘ *Reducing morbidity and mortality;*
- ✘ *Raising the economic and social status of women; and*
- ✘ *Improving the social and economic status of vulnerable groups, such as adolescents, children, and the elderly.*

Specific objectives of Ethiopia's population policy include:

- ✘ *Reducing the total fertility rate (TFR) of 7.7 children per woman in 1990 to 4.0 by the year 2015;*
- ✘ *Increasing the prevalence of contraceptive use from 4.0 percent in 1990 to 44 percent in 2015;*
- ✘ *Reducing maternal, infant, and child morbidity and mortality rates, as well as promoting the level of general welfare of the population;*
- ✘ *Significantly increasing female participation at all levels of the educational system;*
- ✘ *Removing all legal and customary practices that prevent women from the full enjoyment of economic and social rights, including the full enjoyment of property rights and access to gainful employment;*
- ✘ *Ensuring spatially balanced population distribution patterns, with a view to maintaining environmental security and extending the scope of development activities;*
- ✘ *Improving productivity in agricultural activities and introducing off farm and non-agricultural activities for the purpose of employment diversification; and*
- ✘ *Mounting effective country-wide population information and programs that address issues pertaining to small family size and its relationship to human welfare and environmental security.*

Ethiopia's Population-Policy Strategies

The strategies by which the goals and objectives of the population policy are to be attained include the following.

- ✚ *Expanding contraceptive distribution;*
- ✚ *Diversifying available contraceptive methods;*
- ✚ *Raising the minimum age of marriage for girls from 15 years to at least 18 years;*
- ✚ *Promoting breast-feeding as a means of birth-spacing;*
- ✚ *Implementing career counseling services in schools;*
- ✚ *Integrating women into the modern sector of the economy;*
- ✚ *Amending all laws "impeding, in any way, the access of women to all social, economic, and cultural resources";*

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- ✚ *Amending relevant articles and sections of the civil code to remove unnecessary restrictions to “advertisement, propagation and popularization of diverse contraceptive methods”;*
- ✚ *Establishing teenage and youth reproductive health counseling centers;*
- ✚ *Increasing research in reproductive health; and*
- ✚ *Promoting the involvement of males in family planning.*

Meaning of Urbanization

Urbanization is a broad term encompassing a wide spectrum of processes, activities and form of social organization. There is no single universally accepted definition to the term and concept of urbanization nor to the criterion that is used to distinguish urban areas from rural communities despite the fact that attempts have been made to standardize it.

Some people use numerical criteria which are usually arbitrary posing difficulty in international comparison. For instance,

- In Japan the term ‘urban’ refers to cities with population of 50,000 or more
- In Ghana and Nigeria settlements with over 5000 inhabitants are defined as urban
- In USA places of 2500 people or more are considered urban
- Settlements with population size of 2000 or more are classified under urban areas in Ethiopia, Kenya and D.R. Congo
- The United Nation, however, use an index of 20,000 populations to differentiate urban areas from rural communities.

Generally, as we had seen it above there is no universal standard and, therefore, each country develops its own set of criteria for distinguishing “urban” areas from the rural communities.

A related problem to numerical criteria is that the demarcating value use is too low to differentiate accurately between rural and urban areas. There are many settlements with population of more than 2000 which are rural.

This fact led to consensus that in addition to population size qualitative factors such as occupations, the heterogeneity or homogeneity of the population, social stratification, behavior patterns and attitudes should be taken into account.

The term urban is generally defined as the concentration of dispersed populations that are primarily engaged in farming to settlements whose principal economic activities are more diversified and not-agricultural such as the services, commerce and manufacturing.

Historical Development

The history of urban development in Ethiopia can be divided into two distinctive developments that shaped the various socio-economic, political and cultural life of Ethiopian society.

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Historical evidences show that the long history of Ethiopia is not without some form of urban episodes, though the process of urban development has been marked by a great deal of discontinuity. Axum, Gondar, Lalibela and large number of others which vanished such as Yeha, Koleo, Matera and Adulis were some among the towns that flourished during the time of the Axumite civilization.

Much of the urban history of Ethiopia following the Axumite period was characterized by the absence of fixed urban centers resulting from the political nomadism that prevailed in the country until Addis Ababa was built as the permanent seat of government by Menelik II at the end of the 19th century.

A combination of factors of physical, socio-economic, political and economic origin have hampered the emergence, growth and development of urban centers in Ethiopia during the long history of the country until the last quarter of the 19th century.

Many factors have been in combination acted as forces of impediments in the lack of permanency and development of urban centers in pre-20th century Ethiopia. These are:

- ❖ The rugged topography which created obstacles to communication hindering easy contact between peoples, leading to regional isolation;
- ❖ Underdevelopment of occupations such craftsmanship which could have triggered large scale development of specialized skills and services;
- ❖ Internal conflicts and external aggression which were the characteristics of the country during much of the pre-20th century depriving the country peace and tranquility that are necessary for urban development; and
- ❖ Absence of centralized government that could bring national cohesion.

It was only at the turn of the 20th century that urbanization in its modern sense of the process began to take a new shape in contemporary Ethiopia.

Ethiopia entered the 20th century with an extremely poorly developed urban base. At the end of 19th century only three urban centers, namely, Addis Ababa, Harar and Mekele had population of more than 10,000 inhabitants.

Urban Center	Population
Debre Markos	2,000
Gondar	6,000
Debre Birhan	5,000
Harar	35,000
Debre Birhan	2,500
Ankober	6,000
Addis Ababa	30,000
Axum	3,000
Adwa	8,000
Mekele	15,000

Source: CSA (1984)

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Despite the smallness and weakly developed base, however, the major features of Ethiopia's modern urban structure had been laid down during this period. This new trend in the emergence of urban system in the country was facilitated by a number of factors that started to develop during this period. This were:

- ❖ The establishment of a central government that ensured national unity and political stability after years of civil war, particularly during the time of “Zemene Mesafint”;
- ❖ The introduction of modernization elements such as transport and communication networks, schools, hospitals and modern business, etc. the emergence and development of such towns as Dire Dawa, Nazareth, Mi'eso and similar others was the immediate results of the Addis Ababa – Djibouti railway line; and
- ❖ Ethiopia's exposure to the outside world which for centuries was closed to its own rational system.

Urbanization in this country further accelerated during the Italians, in pursuit of strengthening their stronghold in the country, built a new type of economically oriented urban system superimposed on the traditional structure that led to the development of urban centers outside the feudal order. The building of road networks, therefore, stimulated the emergence of new towns and the diversification of existing ones in their functions. Kombalcha, Sendafa, Jimma, Bonga and Azezo were founded during this time.

The third phase of increased urbanization in Ethiopia was experienced during the end of the 1950s and 1960s. New towns such as Awasa, Arba Minch, Wonji, Dubti and few other were founded and others such as Bahir Dar, Asela, Nazareth and Dire Dawa expanded from small villages into major urban centers. These developments were related to the emergence of large numbers of import substitution industries in the 1960s, the development of mechanized farms especially in the rift valley as well as the general socio –economic environment that prevailed in the country during the late 1950s through the 1960s and early years of the 1970s.

Since the middle of the 1970s and up to the end of the 1980s, a trend of decline in urban growth is observed in Ethiopia, possibly as a result of the restrictive policies of the then government on the free movement of people.

Since 1996, due to the fast growing economy, various efforts to bring about development as well as the high natural increase observed in the country, there is various urban growth.

Levels and Distribution of Urbanization in Ethiopia

Estimated at only 17.3 percent in 2012, Ethiopia's urban population share is one of the lowest in the world, well below the Sub-Saharan Africa average of 37 percent.¹ But this is

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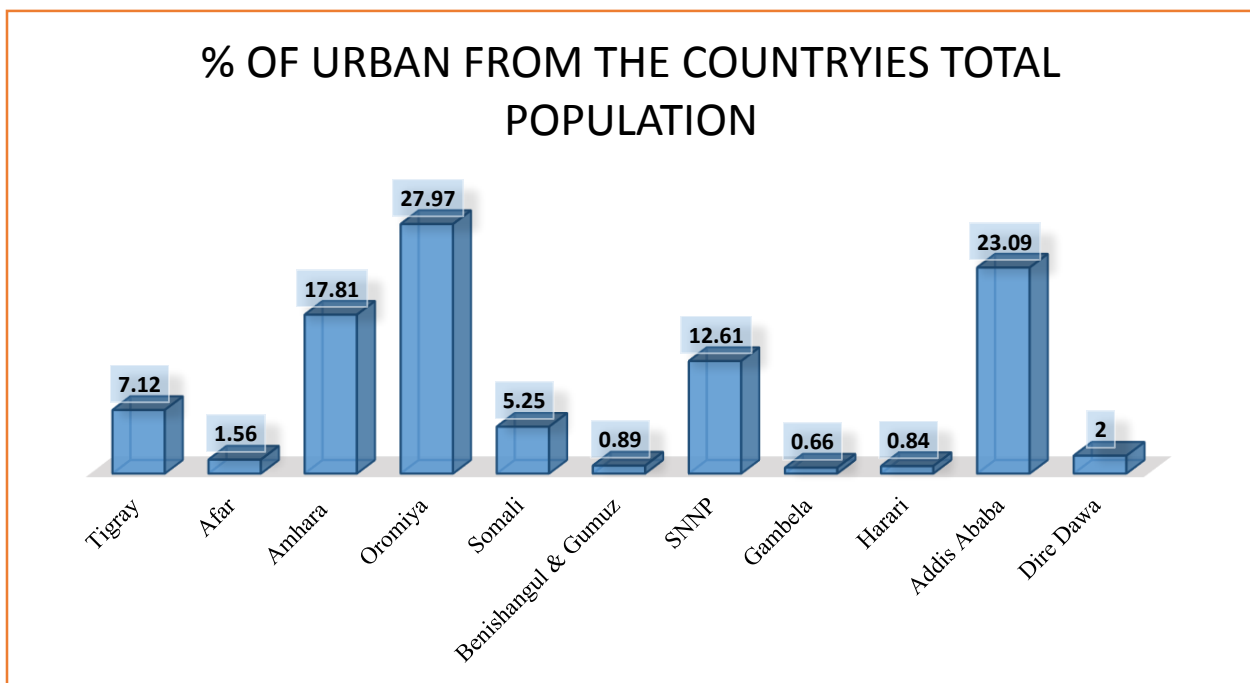
set to change dramatically. According to official figures from the Ethiopian Central Statistics Agency, the urban population is projected to nearly triple from 15.2 million in 2012 to 42.3 million in 2037, growing at 3.8 percent a year. Analysis for this report indicates that the rate of urbanization will be even faster, at about 5.4 percent a year. That would mean a tripling of the urban population even earlier—by 2034, with 30 percent of the country's people in urban areas by 2028.

Percentage of urban population		
	2005	2010
Africa	37.9	39.9
Ethiopia	16.1	17.6
Kenya	20.7	22.2
Western Africa	41.7	44.6
Ghana	47.8	51.5

Source: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations

As it is stated in the above table the level of urbanization of Ethiopia is by far lower than the African standard. It is even lower than the neighboring country, Kenya (22.2%).

The variation in level of urbanization is also observable among the regional states of Ethiopia. The following table reveal this fact.



Graph 1. the percentage share of urban population of each region from the countries total population.

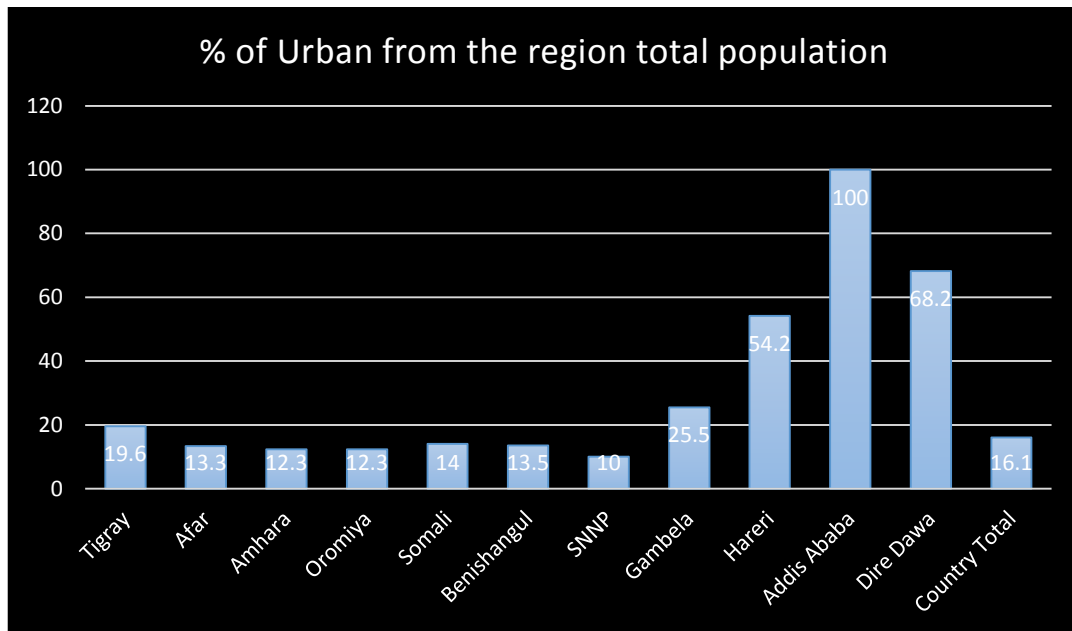
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Source: Ministry of Education Grade 12 text book

As it is stated in the above table, Oromia, Amhara and Addis Ababa take the three largest urban population from the country's total population while regional state of Gambela comprises the smallest share.

As it is illustrated in the bar graph below, there is also great discrepancy in the distribution of urban population among the national regions of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa and Hareri have large number of urban population in Ethiopia.



Graph 2. The distribution of Urban population from their total population

Source: Ministry of Education grade 12 text book

END OF UNIT 4

Worksheet will be provided next time and Unit 5 will be summarized and provided in one file.

Compiled by

Bayelign Debebe

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