

Historical survey of social and ecological effects of state farms: The case of bebeka coffee plantation development, southwestern Ethiopia

Alemayehu Abraham

Senior Lecturer, Department of History and Heritage Management, Social Science and Humanities College, Mizan-Tepi University, Ethiopia

Abstract

This article examines the Socio-Economic and Environmental Impacts of Bebeka coffee plantation development since its foundation to the late 2011. The study largely depends on the critical analysis of archival sources and oral testimonies. The geographical location of Bebeka in the tropical regions of southwestern parts of Ethiopia and the growing of coffee trees naturally in its dense forest made the area to be one of the historical sites in which the modern system of coffee plantation and production was flourished. The socio-economic and administrative changes made by the socialist regime that nationalized the coffee farm following the 1974 revolution largely contributed for the social and ecological impacts in the area. The aim of this paper is, therefore, to survey the social and economic consequences Bebeka coffee plantation Development mainly following the establishment of the project by the socialist government in 1980.

Keywords: social, ecological, consequences, coffee plantation development, regime

Introduction

Geographical Settings of the Area

The introduction of state farm in Ethiopia dates back to the Imperial regime which ruled the country until the outbreak of 1974 revelation. However, it was during the socialist regime of Ethiopia that state owned farms were highly expanded in different parts of the country. Bebeka Coffee Plantation Development is one the largest and oldest state owned plantation located in south western parts of the Ethiopia in the former Kaffa province, Bench *Awraja* (sub province). Bench *awraja* was one of the *awrajas* of Kaffa province and divided into three *woredas* (districts), namely; Sheko, Temenjazyzie and Guraferda (bordered with Sudan). Bebeka was found in Temenjazyzie *woreda* until the downfall of socialist regime of Ethiopia^[1]. Thus, up to 1974 the Bench *awraja* was administered as part of Kaffa province. It was bordered Sudan on the south, Kaffa *awraja* on the north, Maji *awraja* on the southeast, and Illubabor (one of the province during feudal regime of Ethiopia and located in the current Oromia Regional State) on the west^[2]. According to the current administrative arrangement, the former two *awrajas* (Maji and Bench) were merged as Bench-Maji Zone, which is one of the thirteen Zones of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). According to the present administrative reform, the plantation site lays in Bench-Sheko Zone. Today, Bebeka Coffee Plantation Development is found in

Guraferda and Dehub Bench *woredas*^[3]. The plantation is surrounded by mountain with altitude of 1842 meters in the east, Sheko *woreda* in the west, Mizan-Aman town in the north, and Biftu town (the present administrative center of Guraferda *woreda*) in the south. Bebeka coffee plantation is located between 6° 51' 30" to 6° 59' 00" North Latitude and 35° 20' 3" to 35° 31' 00" East Longitudes. The farm is situated between the south west high lands and the low land Areas of Ethio-Sudanese borderlands^[4]. The Bebeka coffee industry is located 590 km away from Addis Ababa, about 257 km south west of Jimma (the former capital of Kaffa province) and is connected with Mizan-Teferi town (the capital of the former Bench *awraja* and the current Bench-Sheko Zone) by 32 km asphalted road. The plantation area lies at an altitude which ranges between 900 to 1200 meters above sea level. An average annual rainfall of the region is about 1960 mm and the amount of rainfall is high between April and September. In addition, the maximum and minimum annual average temperature of the area ranges respectively from 14°C to 16°C and from 26°C to 30°C^[5]. The area, before the coffee plantation development, was covered by dense forest and home for several wild animals. The area had a tropical high forest with different tree species in the past. Wild animals such as elephants, pigs, lions, tiger, dears, buffaloes, and the others were previously available in large number in the forests of Bebeka. But

¹ Wondyifraw Zewde, "History of Bench Nationality in Kaffa Region", (BA Thesis: Addis Ababa University, 1989), P. 1; Mäsfın G/Mariam, "An Economic Study of Coffee Plantation in Ethiopia: The Case of Bebeka Coffee Plantation (BA in Economics: Addis Ababa University, October, 1985), P. 16; Western Ethiopian Planning District, "Studies on Crop Farming and Coffee Producing *Woredas*", (Jimma: December 3, 1979 E.C), p.7; Tilahun Mamo, "Ye'Mizan Teferi Ye'fizikal, Ye'economina Ye'soshal Tinat" (The Physical, Economic and Social Studies about Mizan-Teferi town) (Mizan-Teferi: August, 1985, E.C.), p. 8.

² Wondyifraw, PP. 1 and 4; Mesfin, P. 16.

³ A short description on the facts of Bebeka Coffee Plantation, A Pamphlet Prepared for Dehub Bench wereda Income Generating Symposium, 1988); The 2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia, Results for Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region: Statistical Report on Population Size and Characteristics, (2007), pp. 118-119.

⁴ Negash Atnafu. "Coffee Production and Marketing in Bebeka State Farm, Kaffa Administrative Region." BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1990, PP. 5-6; Worku Eshetu, Girma Seifu and *et al*, "Ye Bebeka Buna Limat Project Achir Tarik" (A Short History of Bebeka Coffee Development), 1976 E.C.), P. 1.

⁵ Mesfin, P. 16; Ibid, pp. 17-19; Negash, pp. 5-6.

recently it is difficult to see a single of them except apes and monkeys in large number in the plantation ^[6].

The soil of the study area has been identified as red, well dried and rich in humus content. Thus, it is important soil type to prevent the soil from being taken by erosion during heavy rain. In fact, the scientific analysis of the soil indicates that there was some deficiency in the phosphorus content. But, as the source suggested, this problem is being minimized by the application of fertilizers and other agricultural inputs ^[7]. The population of Bebeke area consists of different ethnic groups. Before the conquest and control of the region by the Emperor Manlike's troops, the study area was predominantly settled by the Bench, Sheko and Mejaner ethnic groups. They are indigenous people who have been living in the area since the ancient times. The coming and settlement of Menelik's soldiers and high ranking officials was a historical event and turning point in the socio-economic and political life of the region ^[8]. However, the establishment of small coffee plantation farm under the private company during the Italian occupation and the subsequent expansion during the last decades of Emperor Haile Sellassie's (1930-1974) administration contributed for the growth of population in Bebeke. The foundation of state coffee plantation project following the revolution (1974) has attracted a sizeable number of peoples from different corners of the country. Those who are living in Bebeke, other than indigenous people, are come to the area during the military regime to serve the coffee plantation development ^[9].

Methodology

This research was conducted on the qualitative approach in which both primary and secondary sources of data are utilized. This includes oral testimonies collected from key informants, archival sources and literatures. To begin with, unstructured in-depth interviews were conducted so as to collect oral information about the historical foundation and development of the coffee plantation. The interview particularly targeted the plantation workers who had been living in the plantation site. In addition, managers and local governments at all level were interviewed. Furthermore, primary archival sources such as letters, reports, newspapers, minutes, and other secondary sources are consulted in relation to the study. Besides, the written documents are cross-checked against the oral testimonies and archival sources. Finally, the collected data are critically skeptically analyzed and interpreted.

Foundation and Growth of Bebeke Coffee Plantation

Historical sources indicate that Bebeke coffee plantation development was selected for coffee plantation during the

Italian occupation. With the expansion of cash crop production during a brief period of Italian occupation, the first coffee plantation development was begun in the area by the Greek man called Kuchira. He came to the area with other five Ethiopians and attempted coffee plantation for the first time on four hectares of land. Following the end of Italian occupation, however, the plantation was returned to the former owner of the land, *Kägnazmatch* (commander of the right) Filekomes ^[10]. Meanwhile, the feudal government of the area transferred the plantation to an Italian private investor called Signer Fezi, on thirty years lease agreement in 1952 ^[11]. In such way, Bebeke coffee plantation came under the private ownership to be under the concession of British owned Tana Company.³⁹The area under coffee development was expanded after the company's first germinated coffee seedling were matured in late 1954. Generally, the farm under coffee plantation reached about 860 hectares of land in 1970s ^[12]. The visit of Colonel Mengistu Hailémaryam (the former Ethiopian president of military regime) to Bebeke in 1979 was a turning point in the history of Bebeke coffee plantation. His visit contributed for the foundation of Bebeke Coffee Plantation Development Project (BCPDP) in 1980 ^[13]. Following the establishment of BCPDP, the total hectares of land occupied by the plantation was expanded. As far as the post-1991 expansion under EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) government was considered, the current total area under the plantation was reached about 10,000 hectares of land ^[14].

Social and Ecological Effects of the Plantation

Social Consequences of the Plantation

The mobilization of thousands of laborers to the area following the establishment of Bebeke coffee plantation development project was one of the major factors for the growth of population in the region. As the number of workers and new comers increased from year to year, simultaneously the number of permanent workers increased. For instance, until 1980, the number of settled workers in the plantation was mainly 169 and this number sharply increased to 1623 in 1980 and four years later, it became 4878. Recently, there are about 3755 active and 999 non-productive retired settled workers in the plantation ^[15].

On the other hand, the mobilization of thousands of seasonal workers both from urban and rural areas of the country was another factor for the demographic growth of the region. As sources indicate, between 1980 and 1990, the government mobilized about seventy one thousand seasonal laborers to the region ^[16]. Most of these workers did not return to their homeland due the difficulty of transportation, distance and

⁶ Negash, P. 8; Worku and *et al*, P. 1; Kaffa Administrative Region Planning Office (KARPO), "The Study Conducted on Bābāqā Coffee Plantation, Wushwush Tea Plantation Development and Gojjēb Farms", (February, 1984), p. 51.

⁷ Mesfin, P.19; Negash, P. 12.

⁸ J. Abbink, "Violence and Crisis of Conciliation: Suri, Dize, and the State in Southwest Ethiopia", *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 70, 4 (2000), PP. 528-529; Tsehaye Mikre, "A Historical Survey of the Bēnč People from 1898-1974", (MA Thesis: Adama University, 2010), P. 102; Informants: Mesresha Woldémariyam, Tadesse Mekonnen, Adunga Ali, Fantahun Asefa, Şenne Bushintet.

⁹ Informants: Mersha Woldémariyam, Tadesse Mekonnen, Adunga Ali, Fantahun Asefa; File No hP1/26/81: A Letter Written from Colonel Gebretsadik Tiqiso, The first Manager of BCPDP, to the Reformation Birged for Bebeke Project on May 9,1972 E. C

¹⁰ Worku, and *et al*, P. 1; Informants: Bekele Alemayehu and Worqu Zewudé.

¹¹ Tsehay, P. 1; Worku and *et al*, P. 3.

¹² Worku and *et al*, pp. 2-3.

¹³ *Ibid*, P. 11.

¹⁴ *Eleni Araya*, "Horizon Takes Full Ownership of Bebeke Coffee, Horizon Addis Tyres ", *Published on Fortune News Paper*, vol. 14, no. 694, August 18, 2015.

¹⁵ KARPO, "Statistics Book", (Mizan-Teferi: 1991), p.7; KAROP, "The Study Conducted on Bebeke Coffee Plantation, Wushwush Tea Plantation Development and Gojjēb Farm", (Jimma: February, 1984), p. 27; Tilahun, p. 2; Worku and *et al*, p. 4; KARPO, "Forecasting the Population Growth of each *awrajja* in Kaffa Administrative Region (1989-1995)", pp.75 -77; KARPO, "Statistics Book", (1991), p.25; File No 1-25/92: A Letter Written from Sisay Astat to CPDE on 27/09/91 E.C Cited in Note 206.

¹⁶ KARPO, "Statistics Book", (1991), p. 25.

checking points to control escaping workers.¹⁷ The other factor for the growth of population was the emergence of new birth rate. As early as 1980s, intermarriage among the workers and between workers and local peoples was becoming common. This in return contributed for the growth of families with not less than seven and eight in individual household. According to the existing sources, the total population of Bebeke was estimated to be 35,000 in 2001^[18]. The other impact of the establishment of Bebeke coffee industry was the socio-cultural and ethnic diversification of the area. The mobilization of laborers from different socio-cultural and ethnic background greatly contributed for the cultural interaction and ethnic diversification^[19]. The growth of population with the emerging new birth rate at the plantation created major social problems in the plantation instantly following the establishment of the project. Since the initial plan of the government did not take into consideration the necessity of adequate provision of social service, things become complicated within the plantation. In this regard, one of the studies conducted to investigate the ongoing progress of the plantation in 1984 explains the conditions as:

There were profound changes [in the project] as the workers who come from different parts [of the country] marry each other and form their own families. Meanwhile, it created big social problems with regard to shelter, food (diet), working conditions and keeping children. No plan yet designed to alleviate the problem. Regarding the burial place, so far no burial places established in the confines of the project. Of course, there was one burial place for the Christians around its surrounding, but it is located about 20 to 25 km away from the project. As a result, transporting the corps to such a long distance created further problem^[20].

The problem regarding to burial place continued until the establishment of different religious institutions in the late 1980s. Currently, there are three Orthodox and two protestant churches, and one Mosque in the plantation. The existence of these religious institutions contributed for the establishment of burial places in their respective compounds. Likewise, until 1987 social services such as medical centers, schools, clean water, electric powers and other social services were not sufficiently full filled. Moreover, the workers were not socially organized like in *idirs* (self-help social organization during hard time) to hold each other's problems^[21]. With regard to educational facilities, the government established nine teaching centers for basic literacy in different sites of the plantation during the military regime. According to the plan of the project, the teaching period of these centers was scheduled between 4

and 7pm from Monday to Friday. As the teaching period was after working hour workers were too tired to attend it. In addition, basic literacy centers faced shortage of teaching aids and chairs. As a result, the program was not succeeded^[22]. Regarding to formal education, until 1986 there was only one primary school in the plantation that located 15-17 km away from the workers residences. There was no learning chance for adults who completed primary school before they came to the area. Since there was no junior and secondary schools in nearby areas, except in Mizan town, 34km away from Bebeke, they lacked any chance to continue their education^[23]. The plan for the establishment of such schools was begun in the early 1986. Until 1991, three primary and one junior school were built at Biftu, Berhan and Gacheb villages of the plantation. The major development in the post 1991 period, with regard to education, was the establishment of Bebeke secondary school. Recently, there are four primary schools, one first and second cycle and one secondary school in Bebeke established for the families of the plantation workers and surrounding communities^[24]. The establishment of those schools was a direct impact of the plantation.

Provision of medical service was relatively better than other social services. For instance, until 1986 the project established seven clinics with one laboratory technician, one health officer, one nurse, ten health assistance and health supervisor and one ambulance. The project provided referral service for better treatment to Jimma hospital^[25]. Thus, until the establishment of Mizan-Aman hospital in 1977 patients with severe health problem were referred to Jimma. The foundation of Mizan-Aman hospital was one of the major developments in the region which had a direct attachment to the Bebeke coffee plantation development. Thus the establishment of Mizan-Aman hospital was initially planned to serve the workers and their families of the plantation and to minimize the growing number of patients who have been referring to Jimma hospital^[26].

The establishment of Bebeke project, in addition, contributed for the establishment of clean water and electric power services in the area. Indeed, like the other services of the plantation, provision of this service was not sufficient until 1991. The project introduced pipe water service with the establishment of the project and yet the number of villages which had clean water access was very few. It was in the post-1991 period that the construction and distribution of clean water for all villages of the plantation was realized^[27]. Likewise, the supply of electricity was a problem until 1991. The plantation suffered from a high cost of generators to carry out the development works. As a result, the supply of electricity was limited to a few villages. Planning to solve the shortage of electric power supply of the region in general and Bebeke in particular, the military government

¹⁷ Informants: Alemayehu Hayle, Nigusse Ketema, Asefa Gebire; KARPO, "The Study Conducted on Bebeke Coffee Plantation, Wushush Tea..." (1984), pp. 28-29.

¹⁸ KARPO, "The Study Conducted on Bebeke Coffee Plantation, Wushush Tea..." (1984), p.27; Informants: Worqu Zewudé, Nigusse Ketema; Ye'guraférda *Wereda* Ye'hizib Bizat Megleçha (The Population Notification of Guraférda *Wereda*), (1993 E.C).

¹⁹ KARPO, "The Study Conducted on Bebeke Coffee Plantation, Wushush Tea..." p.27.

²⁰ *Ibid*, pp 27-28.

²¹ Informants: Marsha Woldemaryam, Worku Zewudé, Aduña Ali and Nigusse Ketema.; KARPO "Statistics Book", (1991), p. 25; Informants: Mitiku Mamo, Nigusse Mamo and Asefa Gebiré.

²² KARPO, "The Study Conducted on the Bebeke Coffee Plantation, Wushush Tea ..." (1984), pp.26-27.

²³ *Ibid*, p.27.

²⁴ No Folder, File No 1-25/92: A Letter Written from Abdulkadir Juhar, the delegated manager of BCPD, to the offices of Abies on 16/08/96 E.C; Informants: Shanko Gaknans, Marsha Woldemaryam, Worku Zewudé, wodimu Toma.

²⁵ KARPO, "The Study Conducted on Bebeke Coffee Plantation, Wushush Tea ..." (1984), p.26.

²⁶ Tilahun, pp. 89-90; KARPO, "Statistics Book", (1991), pp. 83-86; Informants: Worku Zewudé and Alemayehu Hayle.

²⁷ KARPO, "The study conducted on Bebeke coffee plantation, Wushush Tea..." (1984). Pp.24-25.

launched the construction of Denbi hydroelectric power supply project in 1986. Even though this project expected to produce 750kw (0.75 MW), it was not completed until 1991 due to the shortage of raw materials to supply for the contraction. The problem related to the shortage of power supply was resolved in the post-1991 period following the complete of Denbi project in 1995 [28]. The other most impact of the establishment of Bebeke plantation was the introduction of modern transportation service. Unlike other *weredas* of Kaffa administrative region, Bebeke was prior to use modern transportation service [29]. It was the establishment of coffee plantation project that contributed for the construction of all-weather roads between Jimma and Bebeke in 1980. With this development, the first country crossing bus was arrived at Mizan town in 1981. The modern transportation service was begun between Mizan-Aman town and Bebeke long before the establishment of such service to the administrative centers of surrounding *weredas*. The introduction of modern transportation service opened access to market centers for the farmers of the region to sale their agricultural products [30]. Generally, the changes on the population density and social services discussed above were the direct outcomes of Bebeke coffee plantation development. It was one of the major factors for the expansion of settlement and population growth in the region. More importantly, it changed the economic structure of the area and contributed for the technological transition as was discussed in the forthcoming section.

Ecological Consequences of the Plantation

Nowadays environmental issues became the concern of the public at the international, national and regional levels. Deforestation for a number of reasons has contributed for ecological disturbance and environmental degradation in different localities. There are a number of factors that are affecting the overall ecology of one's region [31]. Commercial logging, agricultural expansion, mining and drilling, fuel-wood collection and charcoal preparation, road and railway construction and population pressure are the major factors for the destruction of natural forests. This in return contributes for soil erosion, land degradation, climatic change and a number of related problems [32]. When we change our perspective from broad to the specific locality of Bebeke, the expansion of coffee plantation resulted in the environmental degradation in several aspects. The region's dense forests existed at an elevation of 1000 to 1300 meters

were cleared for coffee plantation development and construction of social services. This in turn contributed for the loss of vegetation species and several wild animals [33]. Even though we lack concrete evidences that indicates the exact density of the forest cover before and after the expansion of coffee plantation, it is possible to estimate the destruction of forests standing from the hectares of forestland cleared each year and the amount of tree stems used for timber production [34]. Until 1974 Ethiopian revolution about 860 hectares of forestland was (except the remaining of few trees for shading purpose) was cleared and replaced by coffee plantation. When the socialist government took power, still the region had large scale forests cover. Nonetheless, with the establishment of Bebeke coffee plantation development project the remaining forests were removed by the combination of dozers and tractors. Thus, until the downfall of military regime about 6531 hectares (including the pre-1974 figure indicated above) of forestland was cleared and replaced by coffee trees [35]. As one of the reports produced in 1991 indicates that mainly between 1985 and 1990 about 23,878.910 metric cub tree stems were supplied for timber production mainly from Bebeke [36]. Source indicates that about 522 hectares of forest removed for the construction of infrastructures and settlement sites. Thus, the total forest areas cleared for the constriction of villages, offices, market centers, institutions, pulping stations, and main and access roads was about 522 hectares [37]. The amounts of trees exported to the center (Addis Ababa) were not estimated. The study conducted in 2007 illustrates that the southwestern highland regions of Ethiopia lost about sixty percent of its thick forest covers between 1975 and 1997 due to investment expansion and population growth [38]. Even though we never deny the economic importance of coffee, many studies indicates that coffee plantation, particularly the modern pesticide system of coffee production, has adverse impacts on the natural environment. Thus modern coffee production causes species extinction, affects soil qualities, and contributes for global warming. For instance, pesticides used for the modern system of coffee cultivation would poison the soil, the local water supplies, and animal populations grazing in and around the plantation. In addition to the harmful effects on the environment caused by the use of chemical pesticides and herbicides, workers are also at risk of drinking contaminated water and being poisoned by pesticides. Besides, the process of coffee washing process results in seasonal water contamination and environmental degradation even though its effects are considered as minimal [39]. As studies indicate, ecologically the modern system of coffee production has negative effects on the environment than traditional system

²⁸ Tilahun, p.74; "Short Report about the Bebeke Coffee Farm Development", (September, 1980) p. 6 and 7; No Folder, File No. አዋ1/26/81: A Letter Written from Tadesse Abebe, the manager of the project, to the office of Ethiopian Workers' Party (EWP) of Bebeke on September 28, 1977 E.C.

²⁹ Worku and *et al*, p.2; Tilahun, p. 6; KARPO, "The Final Proposal for the Construction of New Roads in Kaffa Province", (Mizan-Teferi: February, 1991), Pp. 5 and 32.

³⁰ No Folder, File No 785/75: A Letter Written from Ethiopian Road Authority Kaffa and Illubabur Administrative Regions' Road Authority to Kassahun Tafässä, the member of the Standing Committee of the *Derg* and the senior Governor of Kaffa Administrative Region on May 29, 1975 E.C; KARPO, "The Draft Proposal for the Construction of new Roads in Kaffa Province", (Jimma: June, 1988), p.8; Tilahun, 61.

³¹ Arthur, H. Westing, "Environmental Security and its Relation to Ethiopia and Sudan" *Ambio Environmental security* 20, 5 (August, 1991), p. 170; Abebe H. Gebremariam and *et al*, "Small and Medium Forest Enterprise in Ethiopia", *Non-Timber Forest product Research and Development project southwest Ethiopia*, (International Institute for Environment and Development, 2009), pp. 3-4.

³² *Ibid*.

³³ Sylvain, Sylvain, G. Pierre "Ethiopian Coffee: It's Significance to World Coffee Problems." *Economic Botany* 12, 2, 1958, p.115, Worku and *et al*, p. 1.

³⁴ Worku and *et al*, p. 1. KARPO, "Statistics Book", (1991), p. 25.

³⁵ KARPO, "Statistics Book", p 36.

³⁶ *Ibid*.

³⁷ No Folder, File No 1-25/92: A Letter Written from Ephrem Mersha, the manager of the plantation, to MARD on 21/07/99 E.C.

³⁸ Till Stellmacher, *Governing the Ethiopia Forests: A Local level Institutional Analysis in Kaffa and Bale Mountains*, (2007), p. 2; KARPO, "Statistics Book", p. 14.

³⁹ Monica Martinez, and Crystal Mount, "Coffee from Cradle to Grave", *Urban studies program*, (2002), pp.24-27; Robert A. Rice, "A place Unbecoming: The Coffee Farm of Northern Latin America" *Geographical Review* 89, 4 (October, 1999), p. 558.

of coffee production ^[40]. Even though traditional coffee production, by no means meet the requirements as natural forest, most of the time it feels like a forest and acts positively with the ecological services compared to modern system of coffee production ^[41]. In this regard, Robert Rice states “---traditional coffee, with its mix of shade-tree species and its structural diversity, looks very much like a natural forest from above or afar.” than modern coffee plantation system ^[42]. Furthermore, the growth of population following the establishment of the project was resulted in the elimination of the remnant forests located in the surrounding mountains of the plantation. Population pressure is so far identified as one of the major factors of deforestation and the exploitation of natural resource at the national and international level ^[43]. Due to fuel-wood collection and charcoal preparation, the area looks like as “forest-barren” highlands ^[44]. The existing conditions might left the region without forest cover in the near future unless controlling and conservation efforts made by the concern bodies. With the regard to loss of wild animals, the effect was more sever. Hunting wild animals such as elephants for ivory and tigers for skin was begun during the imperial period. As has been discussed somewhere in this paper, the mangers of the plantation during the imperial period benefited more from secret ivory trade ^[45]. Wild animals lacked forests that they had been used as home to hide themselves with the growing decline of forest cover following the establishment of Bebeke project. As a result, large numbers of wild animals, particularly elephants and buffaloes were fled further to Sudan and Kenya ^[46]. This drew me to argue that elephants recently found in the parks of Kenya and Sudan might be trekked from the Bebeke region since the area very near to the borderlands of these countries. In spite of the environmental degradation, attentions given for the conservation effort were not adequate. Furthermore, most of the shade trees that left during the pre-1991 period being dried up and some others fall over the ground in the middle of the plantation due to getting old. In fact, planting new shade trees and forest development have been taking place since 1991, but it was not sufficient. Worsen; the recent expansion of rubber tree plantation development created a great fear among environmental concerns ^[47]. Generally, the expansion of coffee plantation brought adverse effects on the ecological setting of the region. On the other hand, the rehabilitation actions that staged in the recent period are not much active. The region might be expose to more environmental disturbance in long term unless more emphasis given from all the concerned bodies. Therefore, the development of coffee plantation and production should be along the sustainable coffee development system through environmental protection.

⁴⁰ Rice, p-566.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, pp. 554 and 555.

⁴² *Ibid*, p.555.

⁴³ Melke’amaryam Genet, “Environmental Degradation along the Southern Shores of Lake Tana in the Twentieth Century”, (MA Thesis: Bahir Dar University, 2011), p.22.

⁴⁴ Informants; Shanko Gaknans, Alemayéhu Aybera, Gezahagné Bahiru, Gorfu Melke, Wondimu Toma, Worku Zewdeé.

⁴⁵ Worku and *et al* pp. 1 and 7; Informants: Worku Zewdeé and Shanko Gaknans.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

⁴⁷ No Folder, File No. 1-25/92: A Letter Written from Ephrem Mersha to MARD, Cited in Note 47; “Bebeke Coffee Plantation 2000/2001 E.C Budget Year”, Planning and Information service, July, 2000 E.C, pp. 2-4.

Conclusion

Ethiopia is one of the countries in Africa which experienced the expansion of the state owned plantations particularly during the socialist regime (1974-1991). Bebeke Coffee Plantation Development is one of the oldest and largest state farms in the country located in the southwestern parts of the Ethiopia. Even though the aim of the establishment of such a largest coffee plantation was mainly to insure the national economic development of the country, the expansion of plantation during the military regime and in the subsequent period resulted in several effects in the region. Among others, the plantation is contributed for social and ecological consequences in both negative and positive aspects.

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