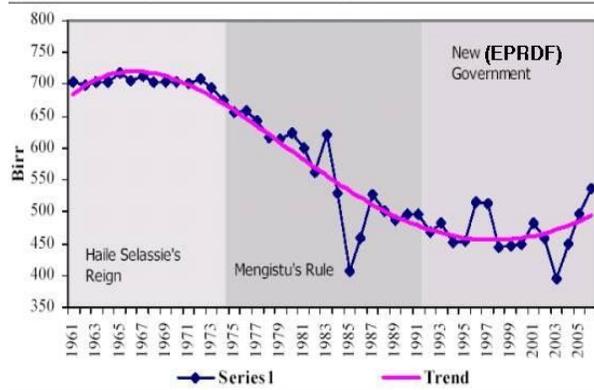


Is it half full or half empty? It all depends!

Zeru Hagos Jan 31, 2009

Cynic will see the graph below otherwise but the optimist will see hope and light at the end of the tunnel. However I am not even sure people who deny Ethiopia's economic growth are cynics! Let me elaborate!

Figure i.1. Real Agriculture GDP Per Capita, 1962-2006



Source: World Bank (2006c).

draught it has managed a double-digit growth ever since.

For the glass is half full person, the graph shows growth, although the country is poor and the agricultural growth has not kept in par with the booming population growth. GDP as we all know is heavily dependent on the number of people living in a country. With Ethiopia's population growing from 50+ million to over 70+ million over the years it is no brainier that agricultural real GDP growth will not be in par with GDP 40 years ago when the population was 30 million! I am skipping the obvious that Ethiopia has been ruined by two successive regimes with civil war and mismanagement which the graph shows clearly and that EPRDF inherited a country with no economy to speak of! I also know the glass is half empty person wants to hear none of that!

The cynics should also know Ethiopia's economy is not 100% dependent on agricultural productivity any more. Though small, unlike the Derge and Atse era, today's Ethiopia has other industries that are contributing to its growth. There are other people that are engaged outside the agriculture which agricultural GDP calculation will not take in to account. And they are significant in number!

It is mind-boggling why any one does not want to see Ethiopia economic growth and the productivity increase of its farmers since EPRDF came to power. If we add this year's growth of 9.5 to the graph, the graph will show 5 years of double-digit growth! Yet people have hard time seeing this as success? Why? Why?

Ethiopia's agriculture productivity after showing an extended decline for the past 40 years is on the rebound thanks to the EPRDF government. The graph shows the EPRDF government successfully halted the negative growth during the 1990's and after successfully overcoming the negative effect of the 2002/3

I know, I think such people are not cynics they are haters! Hate is really a very bad sickness. Hitler's hate towards successful European Jewish business community caused him to order the killing of millions of innocent Jews. And it will be sad and equally costly if we do not tame such folks blinded by hate to cloud our judgment and allow them to be our political leaders and educators. Time to wake up.

Ethiopia is poor but over the last few years it has slashed its poverty index by double digit. It has now sizable middle-income earners. The EPRDF government is showing remarkable success in guiding the economy out of the abyss. This is too obvious to deny unless hate clouds one's judgment. Haters ought to be identified and cast away before they do damage. Yes, the glass is half full!