

‘Developmental’ State as an Alternative Development Path in Ethiopia: Miracle or Mirage?

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Abstract

As an alternative development track, developmental state ideology has been openly introduced in the public policy makings of the Ethiopian state only after 2001. In essence, developmental state ideology could be understood as building the capacity of a state to address its diverse development challenges. As such, it is basically about creating enabling normative, structural, institutional, technical, and administrative environments in a given state to achieve its national development vision (Mkandawire, 2001). In this regard, there are five defining features to evaluate as to whether a given state is indeed developmental; democratic nation building practices with committed political leadership, autonomous and effective bureaucracy, coordinated national development planning, sound social policy, and institutional capacity (Edigheji, 2010; Mkandawire, 2001; Bagchi, 2004). In light of these conceptualizations and characterizations of the fundamentals of developmental state, the paper aims to contribute to our understanding of the actual state of developmental state ideology in Ethiopia by critically exploring and evaluating its actual performance. Accordingly, it reveals as to how and why Ethiopia fails to satisfy the basic standards of being a developmental state as it claims be.

Keywords: Ethiopia, Developmental State, Features of Developmental State.

Introduction

Critical intellectual security of the actual status of developmental state ideology in Ethiopia is a very difficult analytical endeavor. This is partly because, the ideals of developmental state ideology has been a very recent phenomenon in the Ethiopian development policy makings. Besides, the very dynamic global, regional and domestic socio-economic, political and security related environments, which have been directly or indirectly influencing Ethiopia's national developmental policy makings, complicate the task. Also, complex conceptualizations as well as components of developmental state ideology have been additional intellectual puzzles. To manage these