

GUDDIFACHAA: ADOPTION PRACTICE IN
OROMO SOCIETY WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO THE BORANA OROMO

BY *AYALEW DURESSA*

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name Ayalew Duressa

Signature _____

Place _____

Date of Submission June, 2002.

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University Advisor.

Name Dr. Tadesse Berisso

Signature _____

Date _____

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GLOSSARY

Aadaa- culture
Aadaa-seeraa - culture and law, also used to mean custom and value system
Aana/ Aantii - close kin
Aannan dhangii'aa- milk given to adopted child by adoptive mother in lieu of breast milk
Aannan- milk
Abbaa - father, owner of something
Abbaa Bokkuu- holder of scepter
Abbaa Gadaa- president in *Gada* patri-class
Abbaa Warraa- head of family or homestead
Alkuma- marriage
Andhuura- umbilical cord, heifer given to children or adopted individuals in process of hair shaving
Balbala-literally means door, sub-sub-lineage
Barcuma- sitting stool with three legs
Boojuu- war captives
Buna- coffee, used as symbol of multitude
Buna qalaa - coffee bean roasted in butter for ritual purpose
Butumee- gate of enclosures or compounds
Buusaa- gonofaa- traditional social security system between *gosa* members for economic and other contingencies to redress or compensations
Caaccuu/saqaa- women's embroidery, usually used by mother of son for ritual purpose
Calanqaa- a tree planted on graveyard
Cophii- moss plant
Coqorsa- green grass used as symbol of peace and fertility
Daannisa - *Dombeya Schimperiana*
Daaraa dabarfannaa- maintaining continuity of one's lineage
Dallaa- enclosure, kraal
Daraara - tobacco used to signify flower
Deebanuu- to be multiplied, many people
Dhaala- inheritance, succession
Dhala-offspring (child) of man
Ela- well water
Ergarama- mistreated, affected (suppressed)
Gadaa- Oromo political system organized on the basis of patri-class
Galaa/ galtuu- the one who is admitted to clan or family by adoption
Gogeessa/miseensa- membership in *luba Gada* (*Gadaa* patriclass)
Gosa- clan
Gubbisa- elder son (first born son) naming ritual
Guddifachuu- to adopt, to bring up, rear, foster
Guutu- full, pure
Haadha- mother, female owner of something
Haaduu/qarabaa- knife
Halaala/halaalchu- to give or surrender irrevocably, valid and approved transfer
Hayyuu- knowledgeable person elected to lead each *gosa* for term of 8 years
Hayyuu miilo- knowledgeable person elected to lead close agnatic kins for term of 8 years
Hiiddii- Solonum Indicum

Hindheesa- Juniper Prolera
Horooro- men's ritual stick of double-edged bottom that signifies reproduction
Ilmma (Ilmee)- son /child
Ilmma angafaa- elder son
Ilmma galu- adopted child whose status doesn't change (foster like adoption)
Ilmma maandha - younger son
Ilmmaa gudeeda- thighs son
Ittile- hide made for sleeping on
Jaala jaalto- a lover to a married woman, friends in trade
Jaalaba- a person elected by kin groups to enforce decisions to follow day to day social life
Jaarsa- elder man
Jila- ritual, ceremony
Kallacha- conical brass used as insignia by secular and ritual leaders in Oromo communities
Kaloo - pasture area usually reserved enclosure
Kara gosa- clan assembly
Laaftoo - Acacia Albida
Lichoolallangaa- whip
Luba- generation set, membership in *gogeessa*
Lubaasa- to assign someone into generation set (*luba*), set free
Luka- thigh, to be on the side of someone, to side
Mana - literally house, sub-lineage
Marata- turban like piece of cloth used by married male Borana
Meedhicha- stripe of hide cut freshly from slaughtered bull
Miilo aanaa- close agnatic kins
Mijuu- milk jar (calabash)
Moggaasa- naming ritual
Muuda/muudu- anoint
Obboleessaa - sib, brother
Obboleeyyan- sons of paternal uncles
Odaa - Ficus Sycamorus
Ollaa- smallest unit of residential area of homesteads
Oromsuu/booransu- to make Oromo/Borana by integrative adoption
Qaalluu- spritual leader, ritual expert in spritual (worships) in *Waaqeffannaa*
Qahye- a man elected by *gosa* assembly, arrange the place where annual *gosa* get together and follow such affairs
Qanccarsaa- naturalize by means of neutralizing through generations
Qilxa/qilxuu- Oak wood (*Ficus Vasta*)
Qulqullu /ulfa/- the holy
Ruufa- piece of cloth used as a turban by a father of a son in Borana
Siiqee- ritual stick used by married woman
Sooddu- tree planted on graveyards of deceased parents by their sons
Tikaa -Obaa - manpower needed for herd-management
*Ulumaa-*seclusion period during child birth, seven times five seclusion days are used in Borana in form of maternity leave
Waaqeffannaa- original Oromo religion and means believing in or revering one God
Waraana- literally means spear, five spears used to symbolize the five *Gada* sets when adoption is validated
Xuuxii- literally means small red ants carrying flower, to signify infant child

OROMO TRANSCRIPTION

In order to facilitate typing and reading of phonetic transcriptions the following simplified phonetic consonants' and vowels' symbols will be used:

I. CONSONANTS

[C]	instead of IPA	[ts]
[j]	instead of IPA	[dz]
[ch]	instead of IPA	[ts]
[sh]	instead of IPA	[s]
[ny]	instead of IPA	[ŋ]
[ph, x, q]	instead of IPA	[p',t',k']
[dh]	instead of IPA	[ɕ]

II. VOWELS

i, ii	u, uu
e, ee	o, oo
a, aa	

Doubling of consonant & vowels in writing indicates gemination & lengthening of sounds respectively.

ABSTRACT

The evolution of adoption institution as aspect of social structure in the society can hardly be traced back to specific time and place with precision. But anthropological and historical accounts reveal that adoption was commonly practiced by many ancient societies. *Guddifachaa* the indigenous adoption practice has been known in Oromo society. However, adoption practices in African societies in general and that of Oromo people in particular were not scholarly studied and well documented. This thesis contribute to ethnographic works on adoption among the Oromo society.

The emergency of adoption practices are mainly associated with evolution of individualized family life, private property distinctive religion and social institutions such as kinship in the society. It is considered as a means by which fictive kinship is formed. In theoretical debates the development of these social institutions motivated the need to insure continuity of lineage, to get heir to property, successor to ancestral worships and support in social life. (Goody 1990, O' shaughnessy 1994) Adoption of child is also connected with biological desire of human species to replace himself or perpetuate his genes. In other word adoption of child provides a social progeny to infertile or childless couples in the society (Goody 1969).

Primarily *Guddifachaa*, the traditional adoption practice aims at securing family line getting heir to property and economic support during oldage or ill-health. *Guddifachaa* provides social progeny to childless couples in the same way adoption function in other societies. Besides these domestic functions, *guddifachaa* has been used at community and politico-Jural levels among Oromo society. It has been important social mechanism by which social integrations among Oromo and non-Oromo ethnic groups was achieved. This thesis, illuminates this important and salient feature of adoption practiced by Oromo society and the Borana in particular. The significance of *guddifachaa* in providing labor force in economic activities at household and community levels were highlighted. In this process the traditional social mechanism of wealth distribution by means of child adoption, system of mutual support in child rearing and orphans fosterage were elaborated. Traditionally, there have been different institutions with full power and authority in ratifying, monitoring, controlling and following enforcement of adoptions in Oromo society. The belief and value system of the society also provided moral and ideological base for effective implementation of *guddifachaa* practices. The *aada seera* Oromo has been customary legal base of adoption practices.

This thesis highlights that there has been different types of adoption institution among the Oromo people since ancient time. The institution has been used as an essential social strategy to resolve problems of foundlings or abandoned children, orphans and biologically infertile families. *Guddifachaa* practice contribute valuable institutional and value base in modern child adoption fostering and placement policy formulation, planning and implementations in the country.

PREFACE

Culturally and symbolically valuable traditional institutions of Oromo people are coming to light through different studies. Complex and mysteriously organized *Gadaa* political system, the *Waaqeffanna* religion, kinship structure, the adoption practices among others are the main focuses of recent academic and scholar discourses. In this thesis *guddifachaa* the native adoption practice among the Oromo in general and that of Borana in particular is dealt with. The paper inquires into different types of *guddifachaa* their functions and contributions at domestic and community levels.

Chapter one of the thesis deals with introductory aspects. This part consists of the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, different theoretical and practical issues in adoption practices. Chapter two of this paper focuses on the historical background of the Oromo people, more specifically that of the Borana. Geographical location, household and community structures, religion, political and economic life of the Borana are also briefly described. The evolution of *Guddifachaa* practices, their root causes and objectives are raised to arouse theoretical debate on this issue.

In Chapters three, four, and five variants of adoption practices, selection and validation process, rituals, legal issues and the role of traditional officials who involve in *guddifachaa* are provided and analyzed. Chapter six illuminates changes and continuity in *Guddifachaa*. Different social, economic, political and legal factors that have influences upon *guddifachaa* practices are also discussed. Finally chapter seven summarizes the findings and provides concluding remarks.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

“*Guddifachaa*’ a word derived from Oromo term ‘*guddisu*’, literally means ‘to bring up,’ foster, rear etc. It is equivalent to the English term adoption. ‘*Guddifachaa*’ is a known institution, which is practiced by the entire Oromo groups across the Oromo land (*Biyya Oromoo*).

Most of the Oromo cultural, socio-political structure, customary laws, norms, belief systems, social institutions etc. have been retained and are still being practiced by Borana Oromo (Asmarom 1973:9). The Borana Oromo lead a pastoral way of life with mixed agricultural activities. Because of conservation of most Oromo socio-political structures, customs, beliefs and value systems by the Borana, these people are central *loci* for the study of Oromo culture. Thus, the *guddifachaa* practice in Borana area is expected to facilitate understanding of adoption practices among other Oromo societies at large.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Adoption is a social mechanism widely used by most societies in the world. However, its functions, purposes and practices vary from culture to culture. *Guddifachaa* is an indigenous and generations old adoption institution in Oromo society. In most Oromo literature adoption practice was treated as passing remarks and less described ethnographically (Bekele 1958, Haberland 1963, Blackhurst 1994, 1996). Most scholars attributed adoption in Oromo to interests such as love of children, maintenance of family line, means of getting labor power and /or access to economic resource at both household and community levels. Some historians considered it as a mechanism used by the Oromo people to incorporate (assimilate) non-Oromo ethnic groups in the vicinity or a means of alliance creation for political reasons (Bequele 1971, Beckstrom 1972. Tesema 1980, Hultin 1984, Mohammed 1990, Triulzi 1996). In these and other studies of the Oromo culture, the impacts and influences of kinship, the economy of the people, family size, the household structure etc., on adoption practice or the effect adoption may have on these issues has been given little or no

attention at all. *Guddifachaa* is also not holistically studied and well documented with due consideration to its different functions, integrative roles, ceremonies, rituals, politico-jural effects, value and symbolic significance.

This research will explore the salient features of '*guddifachaa*' practice and attempts to fill the gap in the literature. It reviews relevant kinship and adoption theories, discusses the genesis or root causes, objective and functions of adoption in the study culture. The socio-economic, cultural, household structure, value system etc. that bear essential influence on '*guddifachaa*' in Oromo society in general and the Borana in particular will be explored. In addition, the study will give insight into types of '*guddifachaa*' such as child adoption because of biological infertility, individual *galaa*', captives, corporate ethnic or clan adoptions and fostering orphans. The issues of gender preference in '*guddifachaa*' practice is dealt with by linking it to the nature of lineage and socio-economic system of the society. Ethnographic description of '*guddifachaa*' procedures, ceremonies, rituals and symbolic significance will also be presented. Along with these descriptions, the role of Oromo *gosa* leaders, political and judicial officials (*hayyu*), elders, and other symbolically important objects such as spear, *kallacha* (conical piece of brass) *ulfa* (the holy) '*Meedhicha*' (*strips of hides*) etc. will be presented.

In this process the domestic and politico-jural effect, the influence of new religions, adoption law, social changes, etc., and dynamism in *guddifachaa* practice are elaborated. Efforts are made to dispel the prevailing theoretical and practical misconceptions regarding adoption in Oromo society. By way of conclusion the contribution of indigenous knowledge or wisdom of *guddifachaa* to prospective formulation of public policy that promotes the welfare and protects the interest of children, its symbolic significance and use as springboard to establish sound adoption policy in the country is suggested.

OBJECTIVES

The study has the following general and specific objectives.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

This study will in general explore and analyze the origin, purpose, (functions), principles, practices, types of, *guddifachaa*, its integrative role, contributions in promoting the welfare and protecting interests of children in Oromo society.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific purposes of this study are to

- collect, construct and document relevant ethnographic data on varieties of '*guddifachaa*' practices, assess, their nature, and functions.
- provide a brief account of Oromo kinship system, household structure, socio-economic, cultural, ecological and value systems that immensely influence '*guddifachaa*' institution.
- lighten '*guddifachaa*' process, ceremonies, rituals and interpret their symbolic meanings,
- illuminate the role of '*guddifachaa*' in providing social progeny for biological infertility, means of access to economic resource, social integration and achievement of status in the family and/or the community.
- elucidate dynamics in *guddifachaa* practice and the impact of social and economic changes, new religions, adoption law etc. upon customary practices.
- evaluate the prevailing attitudes or values and perceptions about '*guddifachaa*' institution vis-à-vis gender (male or female) preference,
- contribute to the study and preservation of the Oromo culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From biological viewpoint kinship is comprehended as biogenetic ties or bonds between human beings. Robert Parkin (1997:3) noted that kinship in biological term refers to genetic and physical connections between human species. In this biological sense, kinship structures derive from common genetic make-up, blood and other physical connections that exist between human beings.

Schneider (1980, 25) looks at kinship ties from viewpoint of physical connections and states that "... the blood relationship is thus, a relationship of substance, of shared biogenetic material." For

him the basic component of kinship is the biological substance and the relationship is the cultural interpretation of the material being. Following Schneider's approach Mondell (1994:3) states:

In Schneider's (1972:35-36) terms for instance adoption is not ruled outside the kinship system, but is understandable as a kind of kinship relationship precisely in terms of the fact that it is modeled after biological relationship.

She further argues that adoption not only mirrors biology, but also up holds a cultural interpretation of biological or genealogical kinship (Mondell: 1994:3). Their assumption is that adoption is culturally constructed relationship that reflects blood ties or it is a biological connection expressed in a different form. The authors consider adoption as a relationship created by law and adopted children are "as begotten" (biological) offspring.

Different from this assumption, most anthropologists argue that kinship derives from socially defined relations, interactions, behaviors, attitudes, networks of ties, etc. between human groups. Radcliffe-Brown (1950:4) for example states that 'kinship therefore, results from the recognition of social relationship, between parents and children which is not the same thing as the physical relations and may or may not coincide with it. In social anthropology, Parkin (1997:3-4) elaborates, besides biological connections, kinship refers to socially and culturally construct networks of relations among people. Most anthropological discourse on kinship looked at it as culturally constructed social structure.

Robin Fox (1984:16) asserts that before it came to the attention of anthropologists, the study of kinship as an aspect of social structure began by lawyers and students of jurisprudence for the purpose of determining inheritance, succession and marriage. Since then, it became one of the major themes in anthropological studies. In this process anthropologists have attempted to establish different means by which kinship is formed and the way it functions in the society. Accordingly, kinship relations are said to be formed in at least three ways. The two major ways are through blood ties (consanguinity) and marriage (affinal) relations (Morgan 1877:404-5, Fox 1984:35, Parkin 1997:40).

Kinship is also formed through varieties of fictive or artificial ways. Fictive kinship is formed, molded and shaped by beliefs, values, customs and other socio-cultural influences. Anthropological inquires show that depending on cultural variations fictive relations are established through rituals or spiritual parenthood (Parkin 1997), fosterage (Goody 1973: 182, 1975:137) and adoption (Maine, 1861:133, Morgan 1877:80, Lowie 1949:57-9, Fox 1984:34) among others.

In theoretical debates the studies of adoption as one of the basic components of fictive kinship go back to the second half of the nineteenth century anthropological inquiries. Henry Maine (1861:27) wrote that the fiction of adoption permitted the family ties to be artificially created and enabled the society to take first steps towards civilization. Referring to the practices of ancient Greece, Rome, Teutonic associations, Slavonic Russia and Poles, he elaborated that adoption permitted the incorporation of strangers as kin and progress from emphasis on bond of kinship to the ties of *contiguity* as basis for common political action (Maine 1861: 129). In primitive societies, he said, non-family members or alien groups were constantly adulterated to the group by adoption which enabled them to establish artificial family relations, to get access to common sacrifices (rituals), resources etc. (Maine 1861: 131-7). With him the word 'fictive', originally a technical legal term was introduced to anthropological studies of kinship.

At almost the same time, another lawyer, L.H. Morgan (1877), came up with the theory that complements the idea of Maine. Morgan said that in Iroquois society the strangers or war captives were admitted to the family members by adoption and this confers rights, nationality and creates relations of brothers or sisters as though born in that relation (Morgan 1877:80). Both Maine and Morgan were pioneers in the study of kinship and their assertion illuminates the evolutionary development of adoption institution in the society.

Robert Lowie (1949: 54) pointed out that biological relationships merely serve as starting point for the development of sociological conception of kinship. He considered adoption as one of the sociological means by which artificial bonds of kinship is created in the society and the adopted

child acquires all the rights of ordinary progeny (P.57). Robin Fox (1984:34) holds a similar view and argues that genetic connections need to be interpreted according to local definition of fictive relations. Although the adopted child is not related by blood to his parents and siblings etc. he can be fitted in to the niche of child and assume this role as though he were in fact the offspring of his legal parents (P.34). For both Lowie and Fox adoption is a social institution by which fictive kinship is created to fulfill biological and social purposes.

Goody (1969) looks at adoption in the context of quasi-kinship relations such as fostering, godparenthood, etc. In his analysis, Goody (1969:57) attempts to show cross-cultural differences in adoption practices of Eurasia and Africa. The functions of adoption in Western Europe, he says, are to provide homes for orphans, bastards, foundlings and children of impaired families; to provide childless couples with social progeny, and to provide individual couples with an heir to their property. Contrary to Eurasian adoption practices, Goody argues that there was no adoption practice in African societies. He says, in Africa, differences of status and wealth are small, and the nature of their property relation requires no great pressure to confine the transmission of basic resources. Besides, the lineage provides a long series of potential heirs (p.73) and in Africa adoption is rare, and fostering which involves no permanent change of identify is common. According to him, fosterage combined with polygyny and corporate inheritance substitute the function of adoption in Africa. He also indicates that continuity of individual family line is maintained by lineage members and the nature of kinship relations makes adoption of no use in Africa.

Goody's (1973, 1975) studies on child fostering and delegation of parental role among kins in West Africa, especially Ghana, and Shell-Duncan in her article 'Child Fostering Among Nomadic Turkana Pastoralists' (1994) also argue along the same line. Both authors argue that in many ethnic groups throughout sub-Saharan Africa, children reside in household other than in their

natal parents that is to say, they practice child fostering. The studies of these two authors corroborate the assumption that there are no adoption practices among African societies because of non-existence of status, wealth and private ownership of property and land. But, Forde's (1964:303-6) study on Yako people of South-Eastern Nigeria clearly indicates that there are both adoption and fostering practices even in West Africa. Similarly, different types of adoption that has been practiced by Oromo people of East Africa since early time is not considered by these anthropologists.

Studies made by Baker (1968) Wolf (1968) Watson (1975) et al on Chinese kinship indicate the special feature of adoption practices in the society in response to the absence of male child in the family. Male children are desired in Chinese society to perpetuate the patriline, to worship the ancestral spirits, and to inherit the property of the family (Baker 1968:4 Watson 1975:295). In order to get male heir, childless couples adopt a male child from their most immediate agnate group when ever possible and brothers are enjoined sharing extra-son with their sonless brothers (Baker 1968:4, Watson 1975:296). The other most important feature of adoption practice in Chinese society is their adoptions of son-in law to marry their daughter and adoption of "a-little girl" (future doughtier-in-law) (Wolf 1968:864).

Similarly, (Nakane 1967) argues that in rural Japan a son real or adopted succeeds headship in the household. When the head has no born child, adopted son is taken or when the head has a daughter but no son, adopted son-in-law is taken. Adopted son-in-law may also be taken when the head has no child. By adopting a daughter first and, later by her marriage the head obtains adopted son-in-law or if he has no child the head may adopt young married couples as "son-in-law" and "daughter-in-law" (Nakane 1967:1). The marriage between son-in-law or daughter-in-law with a family child in both countries raises the issue of incest taboo in connection with

kinship from the viewpoint of marriage prohibition rule and effect of adoption practices in other societies (See Wolf 1968:870).

Anthropological inquiries also show that various forms of adoption practiced by Oceanic societies have been documented and described. Monberg (1970) briefly describes the adoption and fostering practices in Bellona Islands. Here adoption is aimed at securing patrilineage, get heir to property and cooperation with other lineages (p:131). Monberg (1970:132) further argues that adoption on Bellona is used as conflict alleviating mechanism in this society.

Silk (1980) and Mandeville (1981) assess different types of adoption practice in Oceania. After reviewing altruistic behavior and theories of kin selection, Silk points out that genetic (biological) relation are a fundamental, albeit not necessarily conscious consideration in adoptive decisions and that details of adoptive behavior are uniformly consistent with sociobiological prediction (Silk 1980:801). According to Silk, genetic relatedness is a basic criterion in the selection of adopted children and the functions of adoption are to provide heir to childless couples, to make adjustment of family size, termination of investment in offspring by natural parent and initiation of investment by other adult (P.801). Unlike Lowie (1949:57) who emphasizes sociological aspect, Silk (1980) considers biological relation as a basic factor in adoption practices. Mandeville (1981) holds the same view with Silk and adds that the purposes of adoption in Oceania (Kamano) society emanate from fancy to a particular child, coping with orphans, affection to create friendship with an other family or providing heirs to childless families (Mandeville 1981:240).

In his article “Adoption Among the Oromo of ‘Sawa’ (1958) ,Bekele Nadi gives a short and brief description of ‘*guddifachaa*’ practice among Shawa Oromo. He asserts that the Oromo adopt children to get heir to property, secure the continuity of family line and for economic purpose, namely, support during old age. He mentions that a couple that fails to have a son or a wife

whose husband has died before begetting a son adopts a boy even if they have daughters. He elaborated more about the ceremony, procedures, and ritual process in adoption practices (P-83-91).

Haberland (1963) who holds a similar view explains in short the adoption and fostering practices among Borana (pp: 235-40) and Arsi Oromos (pp 483-4). As quoted by Blackhurst (1996), Haberland argues that the main reason for *guddifachaa* is to enable childless couples to have children and heirs (Blackhurst 1996:240). Haberland further elaborates that the purpose of adoption is not only limited to keeping continuity of family lineage and getting heir to property but it also includes other varieties of objectives.

Incorporation or assimilation of other ethnic groups through '*guddifachaa*' is another unique and significant cultural feature in Oromo society. Regarding ethnic or corporate adoption in Oromo society, recent works of Tesema (1980) Hultin (1984). Mohammed (1990) and Triulzi (1996), among others are worth mentioning. In his study of Wallaga Oromo, Tesema (1980:26) notes that the use of ancient mechanism of '*guddifachaa*' gave the Oromo an inexhaustible capacity to incorporate (assimilate) large numbers of non-Oromo communities. This in Tesema's opinion facilitated the rapid and dynamic expansion of the Oromo to Ethiopian plateau within short period of time. Similarly, Mohammed (1990:21) argues that '*guddifachaa*' an important Oromo institution seems to have facilitated the process of migration of the people. Both authors provided short ethnographic description of ceremonies and rituals conducted during adoption of ethnic groups, the way it is symbolized and valued to secure the ties or unity of the parties. They have also indicated that as a result of '*guddifachaa*' the adopted ethnic group or clan acquires the same rights, duties and privileges with the adopting clan (Tesema 1980:26 Mohammed 1990:21).

Tadesse (1988) on his part asserts that *guddifachaa* is an essentially important social mechanism during warfare. He argues that the Guji Oromo adopt war captives, integrate them into the society

and confer them equal rights and privileges. To secure the rights and privilege, the adopted captives were given ritual power such as representing cults, holding important position in certain ceremonies (p.32)

Blackhurst also has attempted to illuminate other important aspects of '*guddifachaa*' in Oromo society. In his article "Kinship, Fictive Kinship, Hierarchy and Community Among Shoan Oromo (1994)" he elaborated the way stranger children, laborers and migrants were incorporated into the household in Oromo community. He provides two cases that not only show different aspects of adoption but also the way non-family members are incorporated in to the household and get access to wealth, status, ritual etc. (Blackhurst 1994:32). In another article on adoption Blackhurst (1996) argues that the Oromo have at their disposal a number of cultural mechanisms for establishing relations with strangers or outsider. He argues that the Oromo used adoption mechanism for a political reason i.e. incorporation of non-Oromo ethnic groups during their expansion to Western part of Oromiya (Blackhurst 1996: 245).

In this research the general and peculiar features of '*guddifachaa*' practice in Oromo society is analyzed and presented partly within the framework of the aforementioned theories and practices of adoption in conjunction with the information obtained during my field research.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is essentially based on qualitative data consisting primary and secondary sources. Interviewing key informants is the basic research method used in data collection process. Observation, informal discussions, case studies etc. were used to ascertain the data collected through the interviews.

INTERVIEWING KEY INFORMANTS

In this research ethnographic information about '*guddifachaa*' practices among Borana Oromo is obtained through interviewing key informants. Individual informants of different status, sex, and

age were selected from the *ollaa* in the locality. The selection was made on the basis of their expert knowledge, past experience, degree of participation in *guddifachaa* practices and knowledge of the culture. Some traditional local officials such as *hayyuu*, *wayyuu*, *jaalabaa*, ex-*Gadaa* leaders, *ollaa* councils, adoptive parents and adopted individuals and government officials were also interviewed to ascertain the data collected through interviewing key informants. During the interview, the informants were asked, among others, about historical origin, functions (purposes), types, and perceptions etc. about adoption in the society. In this process the influence of kinship structure, nature of household composition, economy, political, cultural and value systems of the society were inquired. In addition proceeding in requests, receiving, selection criteria etc. in '*guddifachaa*' practices and accompanying rituals and the symbolic objects used in the process were inquired.

The interviews were conducted during my field stay from mid August 2001 to October 30, 2001 and from January to March 2002. There were about three weeks break for registration, and consultation with my supervisor at Addis Ababa. Although I was new to the locality, I speak the language, can understand their response, communicate and deal with the people. With my native Borana assistant, I got along easily with people in every '*ollaa*' and arranged interviews with knowledgeable persons. My assistant, though has no formal education, he has outstanding knowledge of oral history, *guddifachaa* and of many other cultural practices of the society. His knowledge about different types of *guddifachaa* and the accompanying rituals is remarkable. He has had participated in several *guddifachaa* rituals.

I have gathered opinions by interviewing individuals from different districts in Borana zone, such as Liban, Yaabaloo, Hakuuku (Hagara Mariyam). Furthermore, I have interviewed individuals from eastern *Maccaa* about *guddifachaa* practices for the purpose of comparison.

FIELD OBSERVATION

Participant observation is one of the best research method used in social anthropology. But in this research participant observation is not used as a principal research method. Primarily, '*guddifachaa*' is not practiced every day or frequently. In Borana most rituals, including those connected with '*guddifacha*', are performed during rainy seasons. Although I have been in the area initially during rainy season, because of previous severe three years drought in the zone, rituals of '*gubbisaa*' at which adoption of son is ratified were postponed. Thus I was unable to get an opportunity to participate in rituals of '*guddifachaa*'.

Thus my observation is limited to daily interactions with adoptive families. During my stay with the people, I was able to get into the people's insight, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and values regarding '*guddifachaa*'. Being in different *ollaa* in Dirree district, I have observed people's attitudes, about adoptive individuals, their feeling in sharing pastureland, water wells etc. with adoptees. I have been on several occasions at homes of adopted individual '*galaa*' families. I also observed the Dogodi Somali adopted to Borana in their residence *ollaa*. These observations enabled me to look at variations in integration among individual *galaa* and adopted group of people as well as the influences of new religions and other social changes.

CASE STUDIES AND LIFE HISTORIES

Different case studies were presented to highlight each type of *guddifachaa*. Individuals life histories are provided to further illustrate the subject. Both case studies and life histories show also the way different forms of *guddifachaa* are practiced and their consequences. The case studies are believed to demonstrate an on going process and future trends.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study of *guddifachaa* institution significantly contributes to the theoretical, conceptual and practical frame works. The finding of the study is therefore hoped to: -

- contribute in furthering the theory of adoption in general and salient features of *guddifachaa* practices among the Oromo people in particular.
- raise our understanding of the role *guddifachaa* played in creating a larger political entity and peaceful social integrations,
- provide important social and value base in future adoption policy planning and formulation in the country,
- contribute to child welfare promotion and interest protections among others.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

In this research process there have been a number of constraints and limitations. Most literatures on *guddifachaa* were written by historians in the form of passing over remarks, and many of them lack ethnographic descriptions. This largely limited thorough investigation and analysis about the origin, nature, and feature of *guddifachaa* practices.

There were also time and financial limits and constraints. When the study was being carried out severe drought that lasted three years was there in the region and because of that most traditional religious, secular and other rituals including those connected with *guddifachaa* were postponed. The time allocated to the research was limited to cover a wider area to ascertain data collected from a certain locality. In addition the climate is so hostile to move in the area, and the people live in a very dispersed *ollaa*. This has made it difficult to travel between different *ollaa* to collect data and include different variables related to *guddifachaa*. However, inspite of all these constraints great effort have been made to successfully cover essential issues, facts and figures related to *guddifachaa* practices in the area.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis has seven chapters and each chapter has different sections. Chapter One introduces the statement of the problem, objectives of the research, literature review, research methods, significance and limitation of the study. Chapter Two briefly describes the geographical location of the study area and introduces the Oromo people, specially the Borana, their social organization, religion, economy, political

structure, and the origin of *guddifachaa*. Chapters Three, Four, and Five deal with different forms of *guddifachaa*, and related procedures, process and effects. In Chapter Six changes and continuity in *guddifachaa* practices are presented. The last, i.e. Chapter Seven, summarizes the findings of the research and concludes the study.

CHAPTER TWO

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

This chapter introduces the origin of the Oromo people in general and the history, social organization and economy of Borana Oromo in particular. The chapter briefly describes the physical location, climate, indigenous and imposed territorial limits of Borana Zone within Ethiopian state administration.

2. 1. THE PEOPLE

2.1.1 THE OROMO NATION

The Oromo are one of the most numerous people inhabiting Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa at large. The people live in a territory that extends from the highlands of Ethiopia in the north, to the Ogaden and Somalia, in the East, to the Sudan border in the west and across the Kenyan border to the Tana River in the South (Baxter et al 1996:1, see map of Oromiya). Official population censuses by the Ethiopian government in 1984 and 1994 estimate the population of the Oromo people to be about thirteen and nineteen million, respectively. Other individuals estimate the population of the Oromo people in Ethiopia to be about 28 to 30 million. Gada Melba (1988:1) states that the Oromo are one of the most numerous nations in Africa who shares a common language, history, descent and once shared common political, religious and legal institutions. The people speak *afaan* Oromo, one of those languages that are usually referred to as eastern Cushitic languages.

Because of scarcity of written record, information about the origin, material culture, social institutions and economic life of the Oromo in the past has been inadequate. Until recently, the written historical account of the people has been subject to controversy and polemics. Curious historians, anthropologists and nationalists trace back the history and origins of the Oromo people in the area to thousands of years. After summarizing historical and anthropological works of

different authors, Gada Melba (1988:57) noted that the Oromo have in fact lived in the northeastern part of Africa for over thousand years. A well-known Oromo historian Mohammed Hassen (1994:44) quotes Bates (1979:7) and states that:

The Oromo are the largest of the eastern Cushitic-speaking group of peoples who are known to have lived in the Ethiopian region for thousands of years. They are also one of the major African peoples. We do not know when the Oromo evolved their separate national identity and language but we know that they are one of the indigenous peoples of southern Ethiopia.

Furthermore by referring to essays and oral traditions Mohammed concluded the presence of the Oromo people with in medieval Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia (Abyssinia) before the sixteen century. Mohammed's conclusion indicates that relegating Oromo to as newcomer is basically erroneous and that the Oromo have been in the country even before the now politically dominant group emerged.

Generally speaking recent historical, linguistic and anthropological studies reveal that the Horn of Africa is the original homeland of the people and they have inhabited the area for millennia.

2.1.2 BORANA OROMO

The Borana are one of the major Oromo groups that live in southern part of Oromiya Regional State and Northern Kenya. Most of the Oromo in other areas trace back their ancestors to Borana. As mentioned above, written historical records about the origin of Oromo people and that of Borana Oromo hardly exist. Those scanty travelers and court historiographers accounts were mainly speculative and inaccurate. Most recent anthropological studies on Borana Oromo are based on oral traditions collected by researchers during their field works. These oral accounts relate the origin of the Borana to *Madda Walaabuu*, northeast of present Borana land (see Wilding 1985, Boku 2000). Wilding (1985:23) on the basis of oral information, writes

The origin of the Borana as a recognizable people can be first seen during this period of recoil the Awash. In the sense that a Borana is pastoralists uncommitted to settlement in the secondary area of Oromo occupation. Small Borana groups are said to have moved down through Arsi, and others down through the lake region, and thence down the Wabi Shebelle Valley to Bale. The Borana have moved from northern Bale, or in other versions from Liban.

Although, there are individual oral historians who attribute the origin of Borana Oromo to near *Bobaasa* (present Kenya port of Mombasa) or Somalia etc., most oral traditions confirm what Wilding asserted above. The people also believe that there have been clusters of Borana Oromo in present Borana land before Abbayii Baaboo who led the Borana Oromo to their present land chased out non-Oromo ethnic groups from the area and made Borana the owner of the land.

2.3. LOCATION AND PHYSICAL FEATURE OF BORANA LAND

The Borana land is located in the southern part of Oromiya Regional State and stretches down in to northern Kenya. Geographically Borana land is found between 36.43-42.40 east longitudes and between 3°36'-6°38' north latitude (Duba: 1998:3). The Borana land in Oromiya has a common boundary with Southern Ethiopia Peoples Regional State to the west and with the Somali Regional State to the east and on zonal boundary with Bale Zone in the northeast.

Physiographically the Borana Administrative Zone can be divided into two 'the highlands mainly found in the northern and spots in the south and, the low land hills located in most part of south and western Borana. The largest portion of the zone (a bout 62.5%) has an altitude below 1500m above sea level which is categorized as '*gammojii* (low land) with semi-arid climate and the highlands which rise to elevation of over 1500 meters above sea level known as *baddaa* (Duba: 1998:7). Vegetation and fertility of land vary based on elevation and climatic condition of localities. The people are engage in cattle herding pastoralism in semiarid area and in mixed agricultural activities in wet and highland parts.

The present Borana Zone includes the former Gujii (Jamjam) province and Borana proper. The zone is divided into 12 administrative districts, namely. *Adola-Wadara, Arero, Bore, Dirre, Galana Abaya, Hakuku (Hagara Mariyam), Liban, Moyale, Oddo Shakiso, Uraaga Taltele and Yaa Baloo*. The northern part of Borana zone is inhabited by agro-pastoralist Gujii Oromo and it is an area of relatively dense vegetation, varieties of wild animals (such as monkeys, columbus, varieties of birds) etc. The highland districts are known also for their endowment with diverse

minerals (Boku 2000:40). The southern six districts, mainly lowland with spots of small peaks, are the traditional home land of Borana Oromo. This area has got two rainy seasons *ganna*, which lasts from about March to May, and *Hagayya*, which lasts from September to October each year.

Traditionally, the Borana land is divided into two; Liban and Dirree regions as well as sub regions. The Liban region lies to the east and Dirree is found to the west of Dawaa River. This division was not based on clans' territorial limits since all Borana can live on both sides of the river. The division is based on physical location and environment. Boku (2000:42.45) a Borana himself, states that *Liban* region comprises *Golba Liban* the low land and *Gidaa* or *Guba Liban*, the *upland*, whereas *Dirree* is divided into *Wayyama*, *Goomolee*, *Dirree*, (the *tuulla* wells regions), *Malbee* and *Golboo* sub regions. Boku further elaborates that while Liban Region is crucial for Borana in symbolic and religious terms, the Dirree sub region with its wells is of paramount economic importance (Boku: 2000:44, *Helland (1977:58)*). As Helland (1997:58) aptly put it, *Dirree* is reasonably well watered, containing a number of springs and wells, including the nine well clusters known to Borana as the *tullaa saglaan*. According to present government administrative division, the capital of Dirre is *Tulluu Fardaa*, now renamed Megga. Megga town is found 665 km south of Finfinnee (Addis Ababa) on the main road that takes to Moyale (Ethio-Kenya border). The main focus of this field research is with in 30 km radius of Meggaa town-in Dirree district. (See Maps of Borana zone and Dirre district)

2.3 BORANA OROMO SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The Borana Oromo have varieties of social organizations. Some of these social organizations are briefly summarized and presented as follows to show their influence upon *guddifachaa* practices in Borana Oromo

2:3:1 KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

The Borana kinship is a system by which descent is reckoned through male links and the society is divided in to two intermarrying halves known as moieties (Asmarom. 1973: 37-9, Baxter: 1978: 151, Boku 2000:30)

Based on the moieties structure the Borana Oromo are divided into Sabbo and Goona and the two moieties are ‘*sodda*’ (affine groups) to each other. An individual male or female Borana belongs to either Sabbo or Goona moiety by birth, but females change to their husband’s moiety as soon as they get married. Sabbo and Goona moieties are not name of clans from which an individual is descended, but customarily constructed categorization of people into groups. The main moieties are further divided in to sub-moieties. The people believe and most oral historians say that the moiety system began when *Gadaa* system was reintroduced by the first *Abba Gadaa Gadayoo Galgaloo* ((1456-64). But it was reconsolidate and elaborated by thirty first *Abbaa Gadaa Daawwee Gobbu* who not only reinforced the previous laws such as inheritance to property and widow, marriage system, validating adoption (*halaalchuu*) etc. but he also enacted new laws, and regulations related to rituals, clan water wells (*elaa*) usages etc.

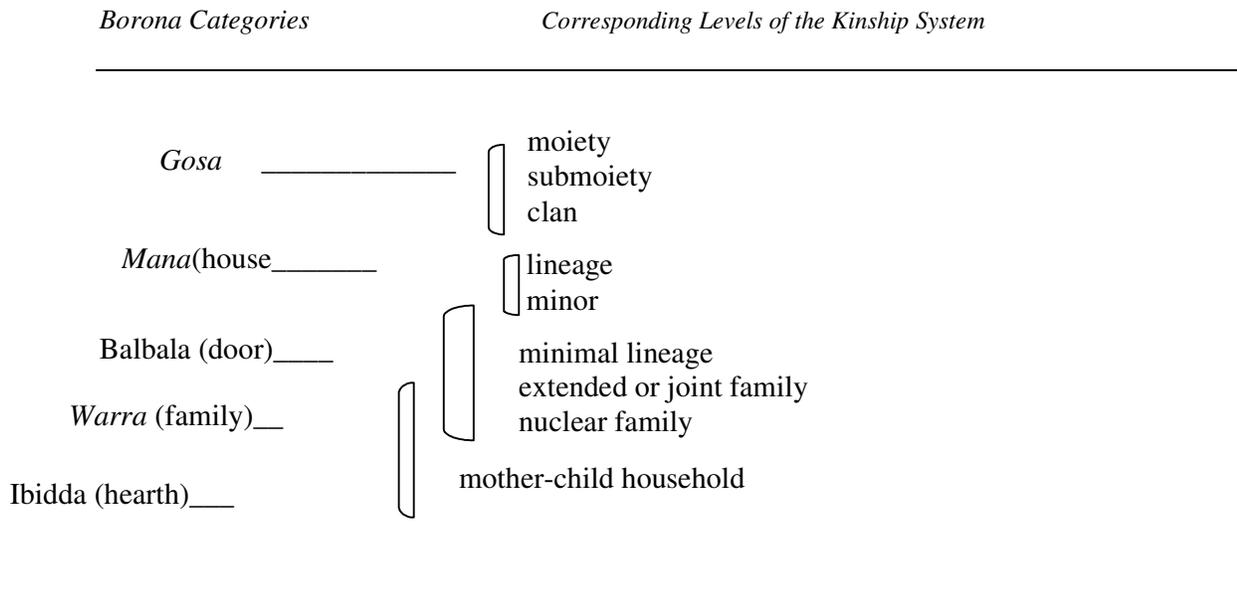
The Sabboo moiety is subdivided in to three sub moieties known as *Sabbo-sadeen* (*the three Sabboo*) and the Goonaa is divided into fourteen *gosaa* known also as *Goona Balaa*. Each submoiety is clustered in to lineage. The lineages Borana put in descending order are *gosa*, *mana* (lineage) *warra* (sub-lineage) *balbala* (Sub-Sub lineage) and *ibidda* (hearth) in descending order (Asmarom 1973:39-42).

The kinship in Borana Oromo is based on patrilineal system. An 'ego' is related more to his father and through his father to *obboleeyan* (male sibs / brothers) then to *miiloo aana* (close agnatic kins) and this goes on. This however does not mean that there is no relation on maternal line in social life. The 'ego' is also related to his maternal side such as mother's brother, sister and their children. The terms *abuyyaa*, *areera*, *durbii* (uncle, aunt, cross cousins respectively) show the relations. The paternal and maternal sides differentiation comes mainly on economic interests, ritual performance or matters of *gosa* concerns. The agnatic kins, sub lineages, lineages and *gosa* have corporate economic interest to be promoted. There are *hayyuu miiloo*, and *kora gosa* (council of agnatic and clan respectively) in each clan. The traditional social security system known as *buusa gonofaa* is between *gosa* members. If an individual or individuals in a clan are affected by cattle raids, or impoverished by death of cattle due to disease, drought (disaster) or any natural calamity, the *gosa* compensates almost the same amount of cattle to the victimized member. Primarily sibs (brothers) contribute cattle but these days it is possible to pay it in cash. If the brothers cannot afford to pay or have no enough wealth to do so, the *gosa* decides that the next agnatically related persons pay for the lose. This goes up to *gosa* level if the condition requires so. Similarly the *gosa* decides or resolves disputes of any civil or criminal nature that occur among the member, follows and controls inheritance rules, *guddifacha* of son... etc. Adoption of a son who is not male sib (brothers) is also determined by *kora gosa* (council of clan).

Although the kinship is based on patrilineal system, a male 'ego' cannot marry his maternal close kins' daughters. Marriage between *durbii* (cousins), *iddiinii* (children of cousins) and *hidda* (cousins children) even if they are from different moieties is all considered *haraamuu* (incest) among Borana Oromo. Prohibition of marriage is strictly enforced or abided by Borana Oromo society. Kinship system in other Oromo communities is organized in the same way as that of the Borana. But the moiety system nowadays cannot be distinguished clearly like the moiety of

Borana. Rather marriage between different clans or lineages is possible among other Oromo community. The traditional function of *gosa*, lineages and the like in Oromo is also being diminished and limited to rituals and some times to political aspirations.

Categories of Kinship
illustration 1



Source: Borana Categories of kinship Chart

prepared by Asmarom Legese (1973)

Subdivisions of Borana Moieties

illustration 2

Moiety	Submoiety	clan	Lineage
		Gobbu: Emmajii:	Nurtu, Titti, Udumtu, Walajjii, Dado Aru, Ilu, Molu
Sabbo	Digalu	electors	Dayyu
	Mattarri	Kallicha: Berre, Godi, Didimtu, Mante, Danka, Hiyeyye, Sib, Salalu, Bukko, Gambura, Dano-Wale Bokkicha: Gagurtu, Junno, Libano, wate, Walabu, Jarru, Wayyu, Maye, Umuri, Holle, Gaddu, Obole, Mulata, Kula-Kurme, Badi	
			Bido: Itu, Nonno, Rassa, Kojeja, Koddelle Gollo: Sunkanna, Abbole, Hajeji, Siba, Konsota, Uchota, Currota, Wamaji Kollitu
		Bokkicha: Kallicha:	Metta, Gadulla, Doranni, Mankata Karara, Kuku, Garjeda
Gona	Fullele	DaÇÇitu MaÇÇitu Galantu Sirayyu Oditu Konnitu Bachitu	electors

Source: *Subdivision of Borana moieties drawn by Asmarom Legese (1973)*

2.3.2. HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

The Borana Oromo community domestic life is based on households, which usually correspond to a unit of inhabitants' homesteads. The inhabitants of a house are composed of couples and their unmarried children of both sexes or they are mainly the household based on nuclear family. Cowives have their own separate house with their own children, the husband being the head for all his wives with separate houses. If the widow is not inherited or some times when the husband is prohibited from being head to his homestead by *gosa* because of his mismanagement of property, behavior and malpractice, women can be head to their houses (family).

Regarding division of labor, works such as cleaning, kraals (enclosures) building, watering the livestock such as sheep, goats etc. are performed by male or female members of the family. Cleaning houses and household utensils, fumigating guards of milk, fetching fire woods and water, preparing food, cutting trees and grasses, constructing houses, cooking and the like are performed by women. Men are mainly engaged in domestic works such as: constructing enclosures (*dallaa ijaarsa*), erecting poles and making roofs (*harroessa tolchuu*) during house construction for women. They also do non-domestic works such as searching for *sooda* (salt) for the cattle, taking away cattle to distant fertile pasture areas (*fora godaanuu*) etc. Men take part in war they hunt and participate in *Gadaa* rituals. But women's roles in these activities are limited to rendering support and advise (Asmarom 1973: 19-37). Daughters assist their mothers or grand mothers in cooking, cleaning houses, milking fetching water, etc. Boys on their part are mainly engage in cattle keeping; watering etc. (*tikka, obaa fi ergaa*) though this depends on their age. Although division of labor exists

based on age and sex, men also do domestic works such as fetching firewood and water. They also clean the house and look after the children.

Principally, the Borana Oromo practice *virilocal* residence. This means that married couples construct their house in residence area of the husband's family. But since some times the in-laws may be in neighbors (*ollaa*), or the family of the wife may demand support from them as part of bride price, they practice *uxurilocal* system. This is infrequently used as part of obligation to the bride price. Since it is not accepted by culture, the *Gadaa* leaders decided such obligation of service to be limited to one year at *Gummi Gaayyo* 1997. Because there is a culture of avoidance between mother-in-law and son-in-law a married daughter and her family cannot live in a single house or at least in *ollaa* for a long time. There is also a saying that "*soddaan olla taa'u walhinceeru*" (affines living in neighbors cannot respect each other) and the affines prefer to live far from each other.

Apart from this homestead life of family structure, the Borana Oromo have traditional social network that links *gosa* members and territorially divided structure. The *gosa* network structures connect members in each clan and deals with social, economic or development, welfare and well being of members. The network begins from individual member to close relatives (*miiloo aanaa*) following patrilineal lineage and goes up to a high-level clan under sub-moiety. Individual *gosa* member may live near to each other or far apart in Borana land but still there is a connection and they get together in annual *gosa* assembly. *Jaalabaa* and *hayyuu miiloo* whose duties are to follow affairs of the close kins and *qahye* who arrange annual *kora gosa* are elected by *gosa* members at local levels.

Each *gosa* can have a *hayyuu* or some times up to three *hayyuu gosa*. A *hayyuu* is nominated by annual *gosa* assembly and presented to *Abbaa Gadaa*. *Abbaa Gadaa* approves

and declares that a person is *hayyuu* of a *gosa*. The term of office of *hayyuu gosa* is also limited to 8 years term of office of the *Abbaa Gadaa* who approves this appointment. To be elected a *hayyuu* one has to possess high capacity in mobilizing people for development such as water wells maintenance, pasture land protection, defense etc. They also need to have good knowledge of *adda seera* Borana, keeps norms, values, etc. Since *Abbaa Gadaa* can refuse his nomination and disapprove the appointment, extreme care is taken during election of *hayyuu gosa*. The *hayyuu gosa* has a jurisdiction or power to settle disputes or conflicts of civil and criminal natures. If the dispute is of criminal nature such as quarrels between husband and wife, individuals etc. the power of *hayyuu* will not be restricted to his *gosa*, but also extends to other *gosa* members in near by locality. In case of dispute related to civil nature such as *buusa-gonofa*, *iyyeessu -irressa* (stocking for poor relatives) etc., the power of *hayyuu* is restricted to disputes that arise with in his *gosa* alone.

The other social organization is the structure, which is based on territorial limit that is different from lineage or clan relations. Individual householders join each other to form territorial or residential villages known as *ollaa*. Each *ollaa* is formed from about ten to forty homestead (Dahl 1977:140) and named after a senior man in the group or if the members of the *ollaa* are mainly children of the same person it is called by their father name. (See also Asmarom 1973:32 and Boku 2000:65).’ *Ollaa* is the lowest level residential location where individual members form their homestead, fence and cattle enclosure (*dallaa*.) They cooperate with each other in watering, cattle herding, digging or maintaining water wells, ponds and in defense against cattle raiders. Cattle management and other matters related to the welfare and well being of *ollaa* members are discussed and decided by *jaarsa ollaa* (Council of elders). About 4 to 10 *ollaa* join together and form the next territorially wider area called *ardaa*. (Dahl 1977: 14). It is led by *jaarsa ardaa* (council of

elders). The members of *jaarsa ardaa* are elected by the public based on their excellence in livestock management, decision-making, previous achievement (contribution) and seniority. Near by *arda* (5-10) join together and form the next territorial structure called *reeraa*. People in a *reeraa* have common grazing area known as '*kaloo* and watering ponds. They reach each other for burial and other minor social and ritual purposes.

Maddaa is the highest territorial structure composed of different *reeraa*, which is next to the main division of Borana land to Liban and Diree Regions. Permanent water wells (big *elaas*), important sacrificial ritual etc. as well as sites such as *Dubuluqi*, *Melbonaa*, *Gaayyoo* and the like are examples of *madaa* traditional territorial structures. *Kormaa-korbeessaa* sacrifices *kora madda* (annual assembly of *maddaa* residents) and other rituals are held at *madda* level. *Maddaa* is also led by elected and knowledgeable members of *jaarsa maddaa* (council of elders).

According to state territorial structures, Borana land is also divided in to localities by Ethiopian government. Accordingly *qabele* is the smallest and lowest territorial unit. The next higher units are districts, which consists of more and wider territories including different *madda*. The higher-level organ is zone. The government local administration structures are used for security and tax collection purposes. People use the traditional territorial structures in day-to-day activities and for the whole gamut of their economic and social lives.

2.3.3 POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The Oromo people were organized in a distinctively structured and differentiated political system called the *Gadaa* system. The *Gadaa* system is an indigenous political system

created and refined through time by Oromo people. It is this system that guided their religious, social political and economic life for many centuries.

Asmarom (1973:8) who thoroughly studied about Borana Oromo states that the *Gadaa* system is a system of classes (*luba*) that succeed each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political and ritual responsibilities. According to *Gada* political philosophy and principle, elected individuals can serve only for a specific term eight years of *Gadaa* period and be substituted by newly elected officials. In the *Gadaa* system one cannot be reelected as leader outside the prescribed period of service.

Each *Gadaa* period is led by successive generations elected from the public based on their *luba*. The number of officials elected and their functions slightly vary from locality to locality. But all have a supreme body known as *adulaa* in Borana, functional specializaations such as *Abbaa Gadaa* (*Abbaa Bokku* /the president/ *Abbaa Seera*/ head of judiciary) *Abbaa Duula* (Defense/ war leader), *Abba Herregaa* (responsible for cattle management) etc. Below this supreme body there are different organs (structures) and individuals responsible for undertaking every day economic and social life. They coordinate and mobilize (organize) the communities at local levels. Leaders at each level of this structure are elected on the basis of their achievements, merit and contributions. Kinship ties and seniority are kept only when it comes to ritual performances. The *Karrayyuu*, who inhabit around Fantaalee Hill, *Tuulama*, eastern *Maccaa*, *Bareentuma* and *Gujii* Oromo practice *Gadaa* political system and their social, economic and political life are largely influenced by it.

The *Gadaa* system in Borana is a complex organizational framework, which divides the population into generational classes known as *luba* and five patriclasses called *gogeessa*.

(Asmarom 1973:51 Helland 1977:121). The Borana Oromo believe that the *Gadaa* political system has been in operation for about thousand years. Oral historians say most of the present *Gadaa* structures and division of society in to age-set (classes) or *lubaa* and *gogessa* in Borana began during *Abbaa Gadaa* Galagaloo Gadayo (1456-64) and reinforced by the 31st *Abbaa Gadaa* Daawwee Gobbu (1696-1703). Borana Oromo *Gadaa* system has different structures such as *adulaa* (supreme leading council), *hayyuu garbaa*, *hayyu meedhicha*, judicially council etc. The *adulaa* consists of six individual members who are the supreme ruling body during specific *Gadaa* period. Below this supreme body there are different positions and individuals performing different tasks. The representatives of each 18 clans, (*hayyuu gosa*), *jaalabaa*, *qa'hyee* etc. have different roles. Similarly individuals with the same *gogessa* are assigned for ritual purpose based on their seniority, or primogeniture right (*angafa*) in the clan. With the exception of such position of ritual matter, other structures are filled by individuals elected on competitive base from each clan. Although being member of a *gogeesaa* is ascribed by birth, it is not based on kinship ties or lineages, *Gogeesa*, and for that matter most *Gada* structures, transcend kinship ties. Individual members of *gogessa* came from different clans and this makes them have allegiance not to their close kin but to the whole clans and the Borana at large. Each *gogeesaa* is a party like organization whose members come from each clan by classification. In this connection Bernardi (1985:81) comments that,

The importance that the Borana give to the patrilclass leads us to understand more precisely the importance that the age class system has assumed in Oromo social organization and to understand the difference between this system and the kinship system. It is the underlying principles that distinguish the two systems, descent in the kinship system, joint participation in the structural rites in the Gada system.

The *Gadaa* system is thus a traditional and indigenous political institution of the Oromo society. It survived the influence and domination of external and alien forces. The Borana

Oromo strongly withheld this indigenous political system, which has symbolic significance not only for the Oromo, but also for all African societies whose cultural heritages are destroyed by colonizers. The *Gadaa* political system directly influences economic and social structures of the Borana and that of the Oromo society at large. As a political structure, it involves in *Guddifachaa* practices either to approve or ensure its enforcement. The system is significant not only for its historical and cultural legacy but also for its contribution as a strong political philosophy in nation building and unity of the society in future.

2.3.4 RELIGION

Traditionally, the Oromo people believe in *Waaqa Tokkicha* (one God) and their religion is known as *Waaqeffanna*. The term *Waaqeffanna* is derived from the Oromo noun *Waaqa* that is equivalent to the word *God* and it means believing in God or being loyal to and showing reverence to God. Irrespective of geographical location, the Oromo who did not adopt either Christianity or Islam, adhere to the traditions of their forefathers i.e, they follow *Waaqeffanna* religion. Most anthropologists, who studied the religion of Oromo, argue that the concept and belief in *Waaqa Tokkicha* dominates the Oromo worldview. These anthropologists state that in the Oromo daily conversations songs, riddles, rituals, religion, cultural, political and economic activities, *Waaqa* directly or indirectly occupies a central place (Knutson 1967: 64, Bartels 1990:3, Van De Loo 1991: 284).

Sacrifices of animal offerings, prayers, invocations, blessings, salutations etc. are the major acts of worship in *Waaqeffanna*. During different rituals and ceremonies, the name of *Waaqa* is invoked; blessings conducted, and periodical thanks giving are performed. Worship or thanks giving ceremonies are conducted at places called *qulqulluu* (sacred) such

as High Mountain and hilltops, near riverbanks, under the shadow like big trees of *odaa*, *ejersa*, *dhadachaa* and fertile plain lands.

Most Borana and Gujii Oromo follow the traditional Oromo religion *Waaqeffanna*. With the exception of few individual converts to different sects of Christianity and Islam, the rest believe in *Waaqa Tokkichaa* (Supreme God). *Waaqeffanaa* religion persisted in its traditional form in Borana society. The spiritual and secular institutions distinctively operate. *Qaallu*, the priestly person performs spiritual and ritual affairs without involving in secular administration and social affairs. The role of *qaallu* is limited to blessing and conducting worship during different ceremonies. After the conquest of Borana by the Abyssinian force, the *qaallu* was erroneously considered as leader and given the status of chieftainship. But this artificial privilege is abolished after the overthrow of the imperial government of the emperor Haile Selasie and their functions are restricted once again to their traditional role of spiritual matters.

Waaqeffanna in Borana Oromo is known as *dhawa-dhibaayyu* and it is the most popular sacrifice and offering worshipping ceremony conducted at *Maddaa* level. *Dhawwa dhibaayyu* sacrifice and offerings is conducted once or twice a year. 'Adult men and women from *ollaa* gather under a certain *qilxaa* (*qilxuu*) (oak wood tree). *Kormaa-Korbeessaa* (bulls and he-goats) are slaughtered and some of the flesh is burned for sacrifices, milk and *bookaa* (*midaw honey*) are poured on earth surface etc. Each *abbaa warra* put their *marataa* on neck and put their trousers off when they take *mataa dhibaayyu* (the head of the animal killed).

All participants sing praising *Waaqa* (God) for his nurturance or sustenance, creation, providence, fertility, peace, happiness etc. that prevail among the society. After praising

God, the participants sing dance songs, play and make joy. It is like a parish in which different congregations participate in Christian Church worships.

This traditional *Waaqeffanna* practice has maintained the solidarity and unity of the people. It plays an essential role in shaping their worldview, ethics, values and norms. The *dhawaa dhibaayyuu* ceremony assists them in strengthening their solidarity. It enables the people to re-affirm their belongingness (family bonds), to create affections and moral obligation among them to use water resources and pasture land in the vicinity. It is also a moral and value base for different social institutions such as *guddifachaa*, inheritance, land and other property holdings, marriage etc.

2.4 ECONOMY

The Oromo people live widely spread over diverse climatic, physiographical and ecological settings. These have immensely influenced the activities and life styles of the people. Those who live in central, high land and wet middle areas are predominately engaged in sedentary farming with mixed agricultural activities. In most low lands, semi-arid or arid and peripheral areas the Oromo communities mainly pursue pastoral economic activities. The Borana Oromo are largely pastoralists of this category. In connection with this, Helland (2000:25) has the following to say:

The large majority of the people living in the Borana areas of Ethiopia are pastoralists, deriving their income and sustenance from rearing livestock. The pastoral economy is fundamental to the welfare of the population of Borana and problem in the pastoral economy quickly transtates into crises for the population as whole.

Inspite of recent introduction of cereal crops, vegetables and other food items, main source of food and protein in Borana are livestock products. Livestock products are used not only for sustenance but also for exchanges. Cereal energy is said to be obtained by exchanging

livestock products in market. Here again Helland (1997:63) who is knowledgeable about Borana society has this to say:

There are few families in Borana today who can actually subsist through out the year directly on the products of their herds. The food supply can be increased significantly, however, by exchanging valuable commodities like meat, milk and milk products for cheaper and more energy rich foods like grain.

Livestock products are used for purchase of cloth, household utensils, tea, sugar, various types of ornamentals, ritual goods etc. Oral tradition indicates that the Borana Oromo have been taking their cattle to *gaara* Konso and exchange them with *kalacha*, *coffee*, *tobacco*, *bullukoo* (cotton garment) and cereal crops. Among these articles coffee, tobacco and *kallachaa* are used for ritual purpose and not for consumption to survive (Helland 2000:24). The Borana who live near *mana Sooda*, *Magaado* and Diilo in Dirre district bring ‘*Soogdaa*’ (salt) to market. Salt trade is the only activity that one can observe as a tertiary activity in which the people of Borana in Dirree region are engaged.

Land and natural resources are owned by the society at large. A Borana man can get access to resources such as water, pasture land, mineral (salt) etc. Individual or group of Borana men can move and settle everywhere in Borana land. In major anthropological works, land is said to be held by lineage heads in Africa. Fortes (1945: 178) notes that all males of the lineages have the right to inherit lineage land, but at any given time control over it is vested in the head of the lineage, by right of seniority. Gluckman (1965:36) seems to share Fortes (1945) opinion when he says: - “when a particular group of kinsmen own land all the members of that kins group have claims to exercise certain right over that land”. Their assumption is that a clan or lineage owns land collectively and individuals only have the *uso-fruct* rights. Contrary to this widely held view of anthropologists, in Oromo society and among the Borana Oromo in particular traditionally land is owned not by *gosa* (lineage

groups) but by the society. Although there was cooperation in labor and sharing of products properties are held by individual household heads. As Boku (2000:53) correctly asserts there is no such thing as a territory of clan among the Borana.

Important and essential natural resources such as water ponds, mineral salt, and vegetations are protected by the supreme political authority (the *Gadaa*). Individual Borana member as a citizen has access to these resources to use pastoral lands and dwell everywhere in the territory. The only requirement during movement (*godaansa*) and settlement is not to construct huts or camps between *karaa obaa-tikaa* (the road to watering, pasture and residential area). In other words the land belongs to the society as a whole, no body can legitimately own the rangeland as a private property. In fact farm plots are not allowed to block the passage of the livestock to and from the grazing field etc. (Boku 2000. 68).

Regarding land tenure, the ancient regime and even today, land is not privatized in Borana. After conquest, the colonizers and their force settled in small garrison military camp areas. Starting from time of conquest by the Abyssinia king Menelike II in late nineteenth century, the land was proclaimed as pastoral area. Specially the 1950 Pastoral Land Tax Proclamation categorized the Borana land as livestock herder pastoralists and imposed taxes on the people based on each head and number of cattle. During the Italian Occupation (1936-1942) too, the same practice was implemented and thus no significant change was seen in this respect. However, there are some crop productions and a few sedentary farming practices near semi-urban villages like *Megga, Dubuluqi, Hodhodh, Melbana, Diid Megaa, Roomso* etc. A futile attempt was made by the defunct Dergue regime to settle the people in these areas. Some NGO's were also trying hard to introduce cereal crop and vegetable production. Both attempts were unsuccessful however.

The pastoral economy of livestock herding requires active young man's labor power. Watering herds from deep wells (*elaa*) needs a strong and young laborer. Taking livestock to *foraa* (fertile pasture area) also demand labor force. The economy and associated economic activities require labor power at homestead and community levels, *Guddifachaa* of children provides institutional base and indigenous source for such labor force requirement in the economy. Besides, by practicing varieties of *gudifachaa* the Borana Oromo distribute their wealth with in different bracket groups in the communities. Thus, pastoral economy and the environment also directly or indirectly have influence upon *guddifachaa*, the traditional adoption.

2.5 THE ORIGIN OF GUDDIFACHAA

The time, place and the way adoption practices began in the societies cannot be known with precision. But certainly it is one of the oldest institutions practiced by many societies across the world since antiquity. In anthropological discourses the evolution of adoption practices are associated among others with emergency of private property, family, inheritance systems, religion and politics. Schapiro (1956:14) argues that 'In ancient culture, in which the continuity of the male line was important, because of religious, political and economic factors, this continuity was created through adoption, if a male heir was unavailable by nature.'

Many anthropologists argue that child adoption began in the society with the emergence of agricultural practices, namely, farming, and animal husbandry. Implicit in this assumption is that in pre-agricultural societies such as band and hunter-gatherers distinctive families were not established and child labor was less required in production. Further, there was perhaps no elaborate religious practice in those days. O'shaughnessy (1994:60) explains

Gathering and hunting do not require large amounts of labour, an incentive for bearing children or acquiring them through adoption. Nor do gathering and hunting bands normally require large numbers of children for any of the specialized religious, inheritance or other purposes which later provided the social motivation for adoption. They have an incentive to keep numbers of dependents not producing food low, both for the sake of band mobility and to reduce the numbers of mouths to feed.

Accordingly adoption institution developed with in societies side by side with other social structures such as family, kinship, religions etc. and progress in economic activities and modes of production were essential conditions for evolution of such institutions.

Goody (1990:42) similarly argues that the development of the notion of specific line and individualized system of the cult of ancestors necessitated the continuity of household and worship by direct descendants rather than by lineage collaterals. This in turn forced individual household without male progeny to adopt a son.

Written accounts reveal that adoption practices existed in the society since about 4000 years. Historical documents unravel that ancient societies of Bibylon, China, Greek, Hindu-India, Rome and Near East, among others, were widely practicing adoption (Schapiro 1956:14, Ellison 1963:7, Adamec and Pierce 1991: xvii, O'shaughnessy 1994:59). These societies developed elaborate social structures, agricultural mode of production, ownership of private land, and distinctive religions (ancestral beliefs). Along with these, elites, states, private property, and patrilineal, patriarchal households emerged (O'shaughnessy 1994:59). It is believed that in connection with emergency of family and property the need for continuity of family line and heir to property evolved in these societies. Ancestral worship, which was mainly conducted by male heir led to wide practices of son adoption (Goody 1969: 1990, Shcapiro 1956, Adamec and Pierce 1990)

Adoption practice was said to be not known in African societies. Early anthropological works show that most African societies were organized along kinship ties and their mode of

life was based on communal ownership of property and corporate land holding system by clans or lineages (Fortes 1949, Gruckman 1965). According to this theory in corporate life kinship ties fulfill the economic and social motives for adoption (Goody 1969,1990, Goody 1973,1975, Shell-Duncan 1994). However, those mentioned theories cannot be taken as conclusive evidence for evolution of adoption in the society. Primarily ethnographic works on different hunters-gatherers accros the world indicate that there are forms of adoption and fostering. Williams (1968:127) mentioned that there exists adoption practice among Andamanese and Eskimo hunter-gatherers. Similarly Ingold (1980:191-3) provides ethnographic data that proves the existence of adoption practices depending on availability of land and resources among the hunters and pastoralists.

Besides, there was wrong perception and generalization about African societies as hogeneous group. The people of Africa, the Oromo in general and the Borana Oromo inparticular have developed long ago varities of modes of life, such as hunting-gathering, farming, animal husbandary, pastoralism etc depending on their local environments. Different social institutions and structures were also developed accompanying their economic life. Further more, there was misunderstandings about the forms of traditional property ownership, family life and land tenure system of the African societies.

As noted above, there have been private ownership of property and individualized family life among many African societies, such as the Oromo and other East African people. There was no clan land holding systems as it was wrongly holding systems as it was wrongly ceived by early anthropologists. Rather it was owned by the society as a whole. This mode of life and land tenure system were special features of traditional East African societies and that of the Oromo people at large. Nevertheles, there have been adoption practices since long time ago.

This indicates essential factors that led to the evolution of adoption practices are not necessarily limited to the emergency of individualized family life, private ownership of property and land. Depending on each circumstance a single or combinations of different factors such as demand for labor power need to get access to resources or politico-military alliances, belief and value systems may also necessitate motive for adoption. Here it must be noted that property, land individualized family life, distinctive religion also have influence and role on evolution of adoption. The misunderstanding lies in categorization of property relation, land tenure system, family life and social structures of traditional Africa and this led then to wrong conclusion that there was no adoption among African societies. But there have been different forms of adoption practices in Africa including varieties of *guddifachaa* among the Oromo people.

Guddifachaa is the customary adoption institution practiced by the Oromo society since ancient time. Although there is no adequate information when and how it emerged among the Oromo society, adoption has been one of the known institutions in Oromo culture.

Court historiographers associate the historical origin of *guddifachaa* with the so-called migration of Oromo after the sixteenth century. They argue that the Oromo adopted *guddifachaa* in the process of their expansion to central highland, northern, western and eastern part of Ethiopia to assimilate non-Oromo ethnic groups in the vicinity. Some even put clear-cut date, and attempt to argue that it began from about 1800 (Bequele 1971, Beckstrom 1972 Triulzi 1996). Most of these are hearsay and mere speculations. It is hardly possible for a society to develop such a meticulously designed social mechanism all of a sudden for mere purpose of assimilation. Adoption by its very nature is not superficial means used by society. It is based on customary rules connected with or deep rooted in the

belief, value and moral system of a society. Adoption confers privileges, rights and duties on the adoptee. It does not create loose alliances, assumed or real subordinate relations. This indicates that the Oromo used the institution of *guddifachaa* not by inventing it in battlefield or during encountering other ethnic groups. But as Tesema (1980:26) and Mohammed (1990:21) correctly put it, they used adoption mechanism, which they possessed in their stock long before the beginning of the infamous migration. Besides, if *guddifachaa* is agreed to have been invented in the 1800's, the Borana, Arsii and Gujii, Oromo who did not move much might have not known about *guddifachaa*. But these Oromo groups widely practice *guddifachaa* both at domestic and community levels. The notion of creating a new institution which is not engrained in the social value, economic and political system of a certain society and making effective use of it is, therefore, a groundless defamation.

On the other hand there are oral, anthropological and historical factors that suggest the emergency of *guddifachaa* practices in Oromo society. After examining and analyzing archaeological evidence and material culture of the Borana Oromo, Wilding (1985:3) states that people in the Horn of Africa, among whom the Oromo could be mentioned, developed agricultural production and pastoral mode of life about 6000 years ago. The implication is that as early as 6000 years ago the Oromo got engaged in animal husbandry, farming and related pastoral life depending on the suitability of the local ecology. As anthropological studies mentioned above evidenced in other societies, with the introduction of animal husbandry and agriculture mode of production, the Oromo might have developed adoption practices to meet labor requirement in the activity. Adoption might have evolved also as private ownership of livestock and family line emerged in this process. Wilding's study also gives clue that the present Oromo are mixture of different ethnic groups in the surrounding

since from about thousand years. This more precisely means, that the ‘original’ Oromo group intermingled with their neighboring ethnic group and formed the present major national group in the region. Such admixture is achieved peacefully, perhaps through adoption, which might have created peaceful and harmonious social integrations.

Oral tradition confirms that *guddifachaa* evolved in Oromo society along with the emergence of individualized household (family life), private property, need to succession and demand of labor for cattle management. The phrases *daaraa dabarfanna* and *dhaalaa* refer to securing family line and succession to property respectively. The words *tikaa-obaa* and *ergaa (gargaarsa)* also inherently express and are associated with labor demands. Similarly the saying *guddifachaan dhalaan walin uumamee* (adoption evolved along with child bearing) means adoption appeared as individualized family life began. The need for a son who plants a tree on the grave yard of parents, sacrificial offerings known as *dhibaayuu* (libation) (Haberland 1963: 235-40) were religious (spiritual) motivated rationale for adoption of sons. These all indicate that adoption practices among Oromo society developed in a similar way it evolved among the ancient societies mentioned above.

One may also assume that the practice of the *Gadaa* political system contributed to the emergence of *guddifachaa* practices. A junior *raaba* in the *Gadaa* grade can marry a wife but cannot retain his child. Rather such child was thrown away to death (*ni gatuu*) or given to *Waata* for fostering (Baxter 1978: 172). This practice arguably can be the root cause for the emergence of adoption as a social strategy to avoid frequent infanticide. The statement “*daballe raabi gate gadaan fuudhee guddifatee*” (a son thrown away to death by *raaba* is adopted by *Gadaa*) (Haberland 1963:390) confirm this assumption. Asmarom (1973: 168) also hinted the connection *guddifachaa* with *Gadaa* system by asserting that adoption

practice might have been an instrument to reduce the difference in age between fathers and sons. It means adoption of son served as a mechanism to keep generation order in the *Gadaa* system. The nature and the way this traditional Oromo political system (the *Gadaa*) operates might have influenced or necessitated adoption practices.

There is no historical evidence that adoption practice was introduced to Oromo society either by acculturation or diffusion from without for instance, from their neighbors. But still since there have been contacts, external force might have limited influences. However, it appears that the nature of social and economic structure of Oromo society had fundamental contribution to the evolution of adoption. Presumably *guddifachaa* practice is an indigenous adoption institution created a long time ago but has perhaps refined or adjusted to meet domestic and community needs. The ritual practices to validate or sanction *guddifachaa* mainly reflect or largely based on customary law of Oromo society. The beliefs and value systems connected with it, the political and economic nature of the Oromo society preponderantly indicate that *guddifachaa* originated from within internal social motives. As the Oromo people evolved to be a distinctive nation, the institution grew more and more complex.

As mentioned above the Oromo people marvelously developed different types of adoption system with multiplex of purposes. One of the major types of Oromo adoption is *ilmma-guddifachaa* (son adoption). A family may lack a child for different reasons or may have only female children. If either one or both of the spouses are infertile for biological reasons, they may not beget their own child. Natural organic defects, sterility, venereal diseases etc. are the main sources of biological deficiency in human reproduction. The death of children at infancy or later ages also leads to lack of children in a family.

Child adoption is used as a traditional social mechanism to resolve such biological deficiency in reproduction. In some partilineal societies, families without a male child adopt

a son from their kin or from different clans. In such societies, even if there are female children families search for a male child and adopt him.

For the Oromo society in general and the Borana Oromo in particular lack of a child due to biological infertility, disease, death of children at infancy or other causes is considered as a bad luck or adversity. It is believed that lack of a son in a family leads to '*badaa dhaamuu*' meaning complete ceasure of family line of the individual. Thinking of and experiencing a complete ceasure of family line has serious moral, psychological, material and spiritual implications upon individuals. Being without a child in general and sonless in particular, is considered as being without supporter in time of illness or old age and heirless to property of the family etc. It also entails stigma such as '*abaaramaa*' (cursedness) '*cubbamaa*' (sinfulness), '*muka gogaa*' (dryness) '*maseena*' (barenen) etc. in the society. In Borana the male's line is more emphasized and property and household belongings are inherited by sons. Infact it should be noted that the eldest son takes its most share. In the absence of a male heir, an elder brother or in the absence of elders the next younger brother inherits individual's property. Again if a man does not have brother(s) his property is transferred to '*miilo aanaa*' (close agnatic kin). Even if the man has a female child then they cannot inherit their father's property.

The Borana further believe that when a sonless man dies not only his line of decent halts to exist but also his graveyard remains with out *gaaddisaa* (*shadow*). This means that the man will not have any one who would plant *sooddu* tree on his graveyard. In other Oromo communities also it is believed that if a man who has no son or any other survivor dies, his spirit remain biting gravestone (*ekeraansaa dhagaa qoqoraa haftii*). This, it is believed, is

because there is no one in the family that would give offerings to the spirit of the dead person (see Haberland 1963: 235-40).

Hsu's (1967) statement as cited by Goody (1990: 42) and quoted below shows that there is a similar belief in Chinese society.

Without specific descendants the dead will remain hungry ghosts, with no one to offer them succor. The discomfort of an heirless person extends beyond his or her worldly existence. After death, his spirit will suffer the fate of a vagabond crushed by poverty and misery and will be entirely dependent upon charity.

For the Borana Oromo, no matter how much the wealth of a person possesses, the continuity of his family line is considered *as sin qua non* in social life. This concept of continuity of descent line is expressed by a phrase '*daaraa dabarfachuu*'. This literally means transferring of a fire actively to the successor, and the saying signifies continuity of generation from father to son. There is a belief that a man establishes "*daaraa*" (blaze of fire) with *sunsumaa* (hearth stone) as soon as he gets married. In other words he established individual family line. The continuity of blaze of fire is maintained by begetting son (substitute). The implication is that non-married man has no blaze of fire with *sunsumaa*. Thus, the customary rule and ethnic value prohibit him not to adopt. This idea is expressed as continuity of smoke by the Chinese society. In local and traditional Chinese usage male descendants ensure the continuation of smoke from the incense at ancestral shrines (Hsu 1967:75).

In addition to the main son adoption, the Oromo practice adoption of "*ilmee galuu*" (foster like adoption), orphan fostering, adoption of *galaa/galtuu*, low status groups and corporate adoption. In this paper each type of these adoptions are treated one by one with accompanying, request receipt procedures, rituals and validating mechanism.

CHAPTER THREE

CHILD ADOPTION AND FOSTERING AMONG BORANA OROMO

This Chapter deals with the process of requesting and receiving a child for adoption, types of child *guddifachaa* and fostering practiced among the Borana Oromo. Selection rules for adoption, influences of socio-cultural structures such as marriage system, lineage structure, inheritance rules etc. and gender preferences in *guddifachaa* process will also be explained in the chapter.

3.1 REQUEST AND RECEIPT OF INFANTS FOR *GUDDFACHAA*.

Guddifachaa practices undergo various stages and processes. Depending on the type and objectives of each *guddifachaa*, steps in the process have rigid or flexible formalities to be followed. The formalities are regulated and conducted according to customary law (*aadaa-seera*) and the formalities have a symbolic meaning and legal consequences upon the adoption. Traditionally *guddifachaa* process commences with request for a child for adoption. The mode of request varies from locality to locality and depends on the degree of relations between the two families. Request can be presented to the birth parents either before conception and/or during pregnancy of the mother or after the birth of the child. But common to all Oromo communities is that there are customary based modalities of request to adopt a child.

Among the Borana Oromo childless couple principally raises request of a child for *guddifachaa*. Brothers of the childless man can offer their sonless sib to adopt their children or may request a son for adoption on behalf of him from certain close agnatic kin (*miiloo*

aana). The *hayyuu miiloo* or *gosa* councils may also request a child for adoption to a sonless family. The *hayyuu* or *gosa* involves in the request when the sonless man asks them to give him a son “(*dhala naa tolchaa*)” or by their own initiation when it deems necessary. The request is primarily forwarded to immediate sibs (brother(s) of the sonless man. In searching for a son for adoption the *gosa* can force individuals to surrender their son for adoption. It is said, that there hardly exists resistance to the requests of *gosa*. But if it happens the *gosa* allows the sonless man to search for a child to be adopted from close agnatic kins.

Among the Gujji Oromo, the childless couple or the close agnatic kins of the husband ask for a child for adoption. They conduct prior negotiations with the birth parents to get their consent. The couple verifies whether the ‘would be born adoptive son’s mother is *dubartii garaa jiidha* (fecundity). When they secure the consent of the birth parents, the childless couple give to the natal family *erbee* (piece of cloth), *haaduu /qarabaa/* (knife), *itillee* (hide) *mashaaqulaa* (calabash guard) and other items that are necessary during childbirth. These items are given before the child is born and the childless couples wait until the birth of a child. The *qarabaa* is used to cut the umbilical cord from the womb of the mother during childbirth, the *erbee* to cloth the child, the *itillee* to sleep on by the natal mother and the child. The *mashaaqulaa* is filled with water when birth of the child gets close, and a cup of water is given to the child from it. It is believed that water is a source of life and the newly born child is given small amount of water.

When it is proved that the newly born child is male the would be adoptive parents give him *annan dhang’aa* (cow milk given in substitute of adoptive mother’s breast milk). The adoptive father slaughters a bull for sacrificial offerings connected with the birth of a male child and for *wallaansa* (feeding) of natal mother. The would be adoptive mother and father

remain in *ulumaa* (traditional seclusion celebrated for about nine days or more during the birth of a male child). All these activities are symbolic acts performed to show that the child is born to the adoptive family. Both the adoptive father and mother act as if they gave birth to a son. The birth parents on the contrary remain as if they did not get a new baby. The child remains with the natal mother until he stops breast feeding and then received by adoptive parents. Here after the adoptive father gives milk cow to supplement the breast-feeding. It should be noted that if the newly born child is female, she may or may not be adopted. The childless couple may adopt female, but they also need another son to secure their family line.

Request for a child for adoption among *Tulumaa and Maccaa* Oromo can be with or without prior negotiation. Bekele (1958: 87) describes this as follows:

When, they {childless couples} set out in the morning accompanied by some elderly neighbors to the parents of the child to request them to give them the child. If they feel that the parents would, resent and refuse, they will carry with them the 'holy' called 'ulfa', piece of conical brass {kallacha}

As soon as the party reaches the house, the future adoptive parents prostrate themselves before the parents of the child. The adoptive father to be says 'give me a successor!' and the rest of the party help him by repeating 'Give him successor!' if the father of the child agrees, he answers 'stand up I give you;

During this request process, ritual objects such as *kallachaa*, *caaccuu*, *coqorsa*, *siiqqee*, *bunaa* etc. are carried. '*Kallachaa*' is a conical brass used as ritual item, respected and considered to be *qulqullu* /holy/. It is carried by putting it on the forehead, as insignia of king and represents the power of '*Waaqa*' who created every thing. Besides, it symbolizes their wishes to the future adopted son to be a successor or be a head to the family. *Caaccuu* is used to indicate that the adoptive mother wants to be the mother of a 'son', since *caaccuu* is mainly worn by women who gave birth to a son. Besides it is decorated value signifies reproduction too. *Coqoorsaa* symbolizes peace and fertility whereas *bunaa* signifies a multitude of things. Both of these objects are used to show respect to the birth parents, as

well as wish of future fertility and peace for the would be adopted child. *Siiqee* is a ritual stick held in the hand as a means of support to walk and symbolizes power.

The adoptive parents sit on ground until the father of a child agrees them that he will give the son to be adopted. Usually the birth parents relinquish their child in fear of the ‘respected’ elders and public opinion. But if they refuse to surrender, the childless couple turns their stool up side down (*barcuma gombisu*) and put off their fire (*daaraa dhaamsu*). The elders curse them by saying *barbadaan keesan ha’dhaamui* (let your fire /lineage/ be put off forever!), and the *kallachaa* head is touched to the ground (*kallacha lafaan tuquu*). To avoid such a frightening and hostile action they comply with the request. It means the parents of the child are compelled morally and socially to surrender the son for adoption.

Other Oromo communities with minor local variations use such variant mode of request for a child for adoption. The request is followed by receiving process. The receiving process also follows rules set out by custom.

When they go to receive the adoptive child, the Borana Oromo carry *bunaa* (*kumaa*), *tambo* (*daraara*), and *anaan mijuutti* to the natal family of the infant. These items are coffee, tobacco (considered as flower) and a jar of milk to be given to the natal family. Based on their wealth, the adoptive parents may give a young bull (*dibbichaa*) or *raada* (heifer) as a present. When they arrive at the home of the natal family adoptive father gives coffee and *daraara* (tobacco) to the biological father, and the adoptive mother gives the same item to the mother. Entering the house the adoptive parents sit on ‘*gulantaa*’ (big trunk of wood put horizontally to demarcate bed room from living room) covered by ‘*rifanoo*’ (skin of a cow slaughtered by man). *Buna qalaa* and *daraara* are also given to the escorts, neighbors and the family members.

The hand over process in Borana takes place either in the house or near the gate of enclosure. When handing over of the child takes place in the house, the natal mother and father sit in *diinqaa* (sleeping room) near *gulantaa* and give the child to the adoptive father who sits on the outer side of *diinqa* 'near *gulantaa* with his wife. The natal father first carries the child on his *gudeeda* (thighs) and hand him over to the adoptive father. The natal parent altogether spitting milk upon the child and say:

<i>Hoo'u ilmma sii kenne!</i>	Here we give you a son, take him!
<i>Waaqi sii guddisinna!</i>	May God will make him grow up for you!

The adoptive father receives the child first puts him on his *gudeeda* and then gives him to the adoptive mother. If the handing over takes place out side of the house, the adoptive parent stands outside of the enclosure near *butumee* (gate), and the natal parents stay inside of the enclosure. Then they hand over the son by saying '*hoo'u ilmma siikenne*' *Waaq sii guddisinna!* At the end of the ceremony the adoptive parent takes the son to their home. Since the Borana take *ilmma guddifachaa* at infancy (*xuuxii*) they either return the child after a while for breast-feeding or keep him feeding cow milk. It is said that out of love for the child, some adoptive mothers feed their breast (*harma gogaa baastee hoosistee guddiftii*). When the child is returned for breast-feeding, the adoptive parents give milk cow for the mother of the child.

The adoption of an infant son known as *xuuxii guddifachaa* in *Borana Oromo* is considered as begetting a son. They say *ilmmatu dhalateefi* (they begot a son). According to my informants, the *Gujii Oromo* also hold a similar belief and they practice not adoption rituals but conduct rituals of a newly born son ceremony.

In Borana Oromo, as soon as they receive an infant son and arrive at home, a ritual of childbirth is performed. The ritual is simply conducted by preparing *buna-qalaa* distributing *daraaraa* and by

serving milk. Depending on the wealth of the adoptive parent, food may also be served. Close kins, other relatives and neighbors come to the adoptive parents home to felicitate them as if a son is born to the family. Those who come for *harka fuudha* (felicitate) will be served *buna-qalaa* and milk with *daraaraa*. They eat *buna- qala*, chew but not swallow *daraara* (tobacco) and drink milk. If the adoptive parent has enough wealth bull will be slaughtered for felicitators. On the occasion the elders recite prayer and blessing while the participant repeat it in chorus. The elders say:

<i>Warri nagaan!</i>	Is the family in peace?
<i>Warraa ollaan nagaan!</i>	Are the family and neighbors in peace?
<i>Halkannii-guyyaan nagaan!</i>	Is the day and night in peace?
<i>Baraa-Bariin nagaan!</i>	Are the year and morning in peace?
<i>Elemtuu-Gaadiin nagaan!</i>	Is the one who milk cow in peace?
<i>Tikksaa-uleen nagaan!</i>	Is the herder in peace?
<i>Maa'essii nagaan!</i>	Is the poor in peace?
<i>Sorressi nagaan!</i>	Is the rich in peace?
<i>Yaa'aa fi yubbi nagaan!</i>	Are <i>Yaa'a</i> and <i>Yubaa</i> in peace?
<i>Raabaa-Kuusi nagaan!</i>	Are <i>Raabaa</i> and <i>Kuusa</i> in peace?
<i>Ijoolee Kuuchuum nagaan!</i>	Are teenagers in peace?
<i>Gadaa sadeen nagaan!</i>	Are the three <i>Gadaa</i> in peace?
<i>Liiban latuun nagaan!</i>	Is the fertile Liban in peace?
<i>Lafti, sa'an namaan nagaan!</i>	Is the land with man and caw in peace?
<i>Dirren nagaan!</i>	Is the <i>Dirree</i> in peace?
<i>Areero Boroon nagaan!</i>	Is <i>Areero</i> in peace?
<i>Tuulaan Saglan nagaan!</i>	Are the nine wells in peace?
<i>Horaa! Bulaa! Deebanaa!</i>	Long live! Be multiplied!

Then the adoptive parent tastes *buna-qala*, the milk and the food. Next the elder tastes and passes it to others. All taste one by one in turn from the same vessel. They anoint their forehead, elbow and forelegs with butter of the *buna-qala*. The felicitators led by an elder or any knowledgeable man say in chorus.

<i>Ilmi yasii dhalate!</i>	It is good you got a son!
<i>Haati ya lallatte!</i>	Is the mother recovering well?
<i>Ilmi dhalate sii guddata!</i>	May the newborn son grow!
<i>Haadhaa fi abbaa bulfataa!</i>	He may support you!
<i>Eeyyee sii guddata!</i>	Yes he will grow!
<i>Maandhaa horataa!</i>	He may be followed by younger!
<i>Eeyyee sii guddata!</i>	Yes! Yes! Yes!
<i>Ya'a urгаа'a! ya'a urгаа'a!</i>	Let him smell pleasant and order grow.

The Borana Oromo finalize the *ilmmaa xuuxii guddifachaa* by such simple ritual. However, there will be arrangement of *gubbisa* for the adoptive son again within about three years.

In the process of receiving and validating of *ilmmaa guddifachaa*, varieties of symbolic objects are used. In Borana Oromo, the would be adoptive parent holds different ritual stick

and symbolic objects when they go to receive the child from his birth family. The would be adoptive father puts on his head *ruufaa* (turban), holds with the right hand *horooroo* (double edged bottom wood stick) and *lichoo* (whip). The adoptive mother puts on her wrist *saqaa*, carries *haanan* in *mijuu* (milking jar) on her back and hold *siiqqee* (wooden stick) in right hand. Either of them also carries *bunaa fi tambo* (coffee and tobacco respectively). Each of this material objects has different meanings.

The '*ruufa*' signifies the masculinity, wealth and status of a man in Borana Oromoo society. It is said that these material objects are identity marks of *Borananess* and especially when it is with braided shaving it shows that a man is pure Borana (*Borana guutu*) (see Gufuu Oba 1996). This assumption also extends to the newly born son or the adopted son. It is assumed that by substituting his father, the son dresses the *ruufaa* and holds the *horooroo*. In other words it means that the man has achieved the status of fatherhood (*abba ilmmaa*) and gets heir to his property, which includes ritual articles as well as position. The *lichoo* (whip) in Oromo society in general signifies law, order and justice. When law is enacted and verdict is given during adjudication by judges in Oromo society, *lichoo (alangaa)* is lashed to ensure its enforcement. Thus, during adoption the *lichoo* signifies not only justice entailed with it but also the enforcement or notification of the *guddifachaa* and violation will lead to punishment to enforce it.

Married woman also holds *siiqqee* (ritual stick). One of such rituals in which women hold *siiqqee* is celebrating the birth of a son. Thus, when a son is adopted, it is considered as if a son is born and the adoptive mother hold *siiqqee* in the right hand and decorates herself with *saqaa* when, she goes to receive the adoptive son. A woman who does not give birth to a son (*niitiin ilmma hindenye*) cannot decorate herself with *saqaa*. Here *saqaa* signifies that the

woman is *hadha ilmma* (mother of a son). *Horooro* and *siqqee* are ritual sticks held by men and women respectively. The sticks are held in the hand as a means of support while walking. Thus in *guddifachaa* ritual they signify that the adopted son (child) give support during old age or ill health for adoptive parent. *Daraara*, which literally means flower, indicates flourishing of the family. The assumption is that the flower is followed by fruit and the adopted son is considered as the flower of the man and the flower is hoped be followed by the desired fruit. The *buna-qala* (roasted coffee bean) is the symbol of multitude of things. The other name of *buna* is *kumaa*, literally thousand, and it means multiplicity. Besides this material objects, the adoptive parent remain in seclusion for some times like the birth parents, and this is a symbolic act. During this *ulumeefannaa* period, depending on the wealth of the individual, goat or bull is slaughtered and different offerings and sacrifices are given. It is also believed that the offerings will appease ‘fertility spirit’.

This request and receiving process is conducted for *ilmma guddifachaa* aimed at securing lineage continuity and getting male heir and the Boranaa call it *guddifachaa ilmee xuuxii*. When it is fostering (*Guddisa ilmee galuu*) such formality is not followed. If a daughter is adopted at infancy with in agnatically kin groups, the same request and receiving process is conducted. But if she is from non agnatic or lineage or from different moiety such process is not required. Receiving process for *ilmee galuu*” often takes place in an informal oral agreement reached between the parents.

Among the *Tuulama* and Eastern *Maccaa* Oromo receiving process takes place outside the home of natal parents. As soon as the parents express their consent the child is taken out, and is made to sit or sleep naked (*qullaa*) under *laaftoo mataa jiidha* (green acacia tree). Close kins put on the child *baala hiddii* (leaves of *salumnidicum*). The child is made naked

to show he /she is born naked or covered with leaves of *hiddii* like some one who died in a battlefield and be abandoned. Others also say that covering the child with leaves symbolizes that people wish the child will get many relatives like the fruits of *hiddi* plant. Then the adoptive parents come, take and carry him in their arms. Soon the adoptive mother put her breast nipples in the mouth of the child, given him/her *annan dhanggi'aa* (milk of cow in substitute of breast milk). Finally they take the child to their home. These symbolic activities are performed to show that the adoptive parent got an abandoned or newly born naked child. (See also Bekele (1958) and Hussen (1997)).

3.2. ILMMA-GUDDIFACHAA TO SECURE CONTINUITY OF LINEAGE

The term adoption is variably defined in sociological and legal contexts. In most legal literature it is used as a form of contracts between parties to establish relationship of parent and child. Sociologically it is defined as ‘institutional practice through which an individual belonging by birth to one kinship group acquires new kinship ties (The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences Volume I, 1968:96). One the main forms of these adoptions is son adoption by childless family and this is known as *ilmma guddifachaa* in Oromo society.

The Oromo in general and the Borana in particular have traditional mechanisms and strategies to tackle the problem of lack of child, especially male heir. Traditionally and still in the rural areas the Oromo are polygamous society. This tradition still continues and the Borana marry more than one wives. Although marrying more than one wife is not necessarily intended to get a child, it gives an opportunity to get a male child in the family. A man may get son(s) from either of his wives and this usually enables individuals ‘*daaraa dabarfachuu*’. Nevertheless, there are a number of polygyneous families who are still

without a son or a child. One of my key informants from *Hodhodh*, mentioned more than five men in near by ‘*ollaa*’ who have five wives each, but all ‘*gaantuu*’ /*baren*/. Instance of polygamists who do not have either female or male children have been mentioned by most of my informants. There are also cases where such families have female children only. In spite of such examples, many people believe that, marrying more than one wives gives opportunity to get a male children in the family.

The traditional social mechanism by which a man without a male heir gets a son is through “*ilmma guddifachaa*” (adoption of a son). This type of *guddifachaa* is popularly known and practiced by the entire Oromo community. *Ilmma guddifachaa* has been and still being practiced by Borana Oromo irrespective of their religious background. The main objectives of *ilmma guddifachaa* are to secure continuity of individual descent line (*daara dabarfachuu*), get heir to property and support during old age. There are also individuals who adopt sons to have more males in the family to get more labor force or enlarge their family size. Although the aims and practices of *ilmma guddifachaa* are similar in most cases, the ways or mode of conducts vary from locality to locality. These variations are seen mainly in the age of a child at which he is adopted, in taking a child from within or outside one’s clan, in the ceremonies conducted during or after adoption etc. In other Oromo community such as the *Tuulamaa* and *Maccaa*, a son can be adopted either from close agnatic kins, other Oromo clans, or even from non-Oromo ethnic groups in some circumstances. (See Bekele 1958). The main reasons of such variations seems to be the effect of social and economic changes, influences of frequent contact with neighbour ethnic groups, labor demands, availability of resources and consequent adjustments.

Unlike in other Oromo communities, '*ilmma guddifachaa*' is principally from within *gosa* members in Borana Oromo. A man without male heir primarily adopts his brother(s) son. If he does not have a brother or his brother does not have a son to be adopted, the *miiloo aana* /next of agnatic kin/ provides a son. If the council of *gosa* could not get a son for him from *miiloo aana* they go up to sub lineage, sub clan and clan members until they find one to be adopted. Brothers, agnatic kins, lineage and clan members are duty bound by custom to provide a son when requested by clan council members. This confirms to some extent the point raised by Silk (1980: 800) that individuals increase their inclusive fitness by being selectively altruistic towards relatives. Watson's (1975:296) study on San Tin Chinese Society also shows parallel adoption practice.

Adoption rules in San Tin (most of which are unwritten) encourage a sonless individual to select an heir from the most immediate agnatic group whenever possible. Brothers are expected to share their sons with less fortunate siblings. If there are no extra heirs among brothers, the adopting father is encouraged to look within next highest agnatic group, which consists of the descendants of his grandfather. When these possibilities are exhausted, adoption is encouraged within ever-higher agnatic groups until all options are eliminated and the searcher reaches the kinship boundaries of his immediate localized lineages.

The Borana follow almost the same pattern in search for a suitable adoptable son. In Chinese society lineage rules stress that the eldest brother in any set of siblings has rights over sons of his younger brothers, because as the first-born, he is primarily responsible for maintaining the patriline (Baker 1968:49, Watson 1975:297). In Borana there is no such rule and privilege, but in exceptional cases out of respect for elder brother, younger brothers give their elder son for adoption. This is not a rule, but what individuals decide by themselves. Unlike the Chinese society, among the Borana, for that matter among the Oromo at large, the *angafaa* or the only son in the family is not given for adoption. However, if by incident the elder son is adopted and the birth parents could not get another son or all the non adopted son(s) die, the adopted son inherit both families. This is again almost similar with that of

Chinese practices (Watson 1975:297). Although not so frequent, there is a practice of '*ilma cinaacha guddisu*' (adopting son partially) when the brother of sonless man has only a son. In this case the adopted son gets married to two wives. The children of the wife whose bride price was paid by natal parent are made to take the line of natal parents. Children of the wife whose bride price was paid by the adoptive parent take the line of adoptive father. Although this is practiced among other Oromo communities it is unknown to Borana.

In exceptional and rare cases, when a sonless man cannot find a suitable son for adoption within *gosa*, *kora gosa* (council of clan) allows adoption out side the clan or even from nearby non-Oromo ethnic groups. The *gosa* council gives such permission after being sure that a man could not get a son from within and when the necessity of continuity of his descendant line is considered. If a sonless man wants a male child for adoption out side of *gosa* refusing to take one from with in or if it is proved that he had contributed directly or indirectly to his inability of getting a child from with in, he may be denied the right to search from other clan. For instance, if a sonless man previously refused to accept a son offered to him by brother(s) or if any of the *miiloo aana* or out of negligence he did not ask for a son for adoption, he may be denied the right to search for another.

On the other hand, if it is proved that a sonless man committed no mistake or manipulation or should or no negligence on his part previously, he will be allowed to search for a son from out side kin. For example, if the brothers and/or *miiloo anna* previously refused to provide their son for adoption or the clan council did not respond to his request for a son, on times he will be permitted to take a son for adoption from non-*gosa* and even other moiety. Occasionally, the *gosa* may allow a sonless person if he gets his own son from his *jaala*

jaalto or *garrayyuu* (lover). This should be proved by the community that a man and woman had love affairs and that the man is in fact a biological father for the child.

In a polygyneous family, the Borana Oromo also adopt one of their sons to a sonless wife. If the elder wife did not bear a child or is sonless, the first-born son (*angafaa*) from one of the co-wives will be given for adoption to the elder wife. If the elder wife has a son, but one of the co-wives does not have a son, she can take a son to adopt from other co-wives. But if she could not get a suitable son for adoption from the family, she has the right to search for a child to be adopted from brother(s) or close agnatic kins of her husband sons. In polygyneous family as a rule sonless principal wife has the right to take and adopt the first born son in the family. Co-wives cannot refuse to surrender their son. This I have confirmed in the process of my field research. Those who surrendered their son are mainly happy, because, the son becomes *ilmma angafaa* in the family and there is no harm in the adoption. Contrary the adoptive mother may not be happy, especially when she has daughters or if she gets a son of her own after she adopted. The adoptive mothers usually do not get happy when a man adopt a son of his lover. It is said there arise jealousy.

If a sonless married man dies, his widow has the right to adopt in posthumous a son on behalf of him. She adopts a son from one of her deceased husband's brothers or the close agnatic kins. However, alternatively, when the widow can give birth to child, a brother of the deceased man can inherit and beget a child for him. In Borana a child born after the death of a husband is usually named after the name of the deceased and is considered as his child. As described above, a sonless married man adopts a son to secure the continuity of his descent line and to get heir to his property. Even if there is a son in the family, a man may

adopt another son to have more sons, though this depends upon his wealth or number of heads of cattle he owns and capacity to bring up children.

The underlying cause for restriction of adoption within *gosa* by Borana Oromo is connected with property and access to resources. In Borana Oromo individuals, properties such as cattle, household tools and belongings are protected by *gosa*. Individual member's access to *gosa* pastureland, watering wells and other resources mutually affects the economy of the clan at large. If a sonless man dies his property is transferred to his sibs or the larger *gosa*. In order to protect such grand economic interest they restrict *ilmma guddifachaa* to narrow lineage ties. They also show flexibility to accommodate uncertain situations, which may prohibit individuals to get a son for adoptions, so the adoption rule is rigid but also flexible to meet uncertain situations.

The following child adoption cases illustrate current *guddifachaa* practices among Borana Oromo. (Note that in all case studies and life histories real names are not used).

A man called Liban Kulaa, about 60 years old, lives at Diree district, Dubuluqi in *Ollaa* named after him. His lineage is from Karrayyu *gosa*, the senior Borana clan. By rule of primogeniture, an *angafa* man from this lineage is a holder of *bokkuu* (scepter) in *Yaa'a Gadaa* (*Gadaa* assembly). Since Liban Kulaa was *angafaa* from his sub-lineage he was a holder of *bokkuu* from 1985-1993 *luba Gadaa*. He has two wives and two daughters but no son. According to tradition he would have given birth to a son while he was in *raaba gurgudda (doori)* (senior *raaba*) that comes before his assumption of power in his *luba Gadaa* mentioned. Unfortunately he could not. Thus his younger sib offered him to adopt his newly born son. Liban adopted his nephew in June 2001, three month before my arrival at the study area.

Traditional elder son *gubisaa* (naming ritual) was conducted and the child was given a name called Nuura. This name is related to a ritually important place in Liiban region. The adopted son is the sixth child in his biological family. But his adoptive father said, now the child is *angafa* substituting him and all his elder brothers are *maandhaa* (younger). This adopted child succeeds not only the property of Liban but also inherit his ritual position of holding *bokkuu* 40 years after to the adoptive father *Gadaa* period. Holding *bokkuu* is a position held by ascriptive way by *angafaa* man in the senior lineage. The second wife of Liban conceived after the child was adopted. Liban said, even if the conceived child is male; he will be *maandha* (younger) and cannot inherit the ritual position.

(Personal communication at Dubuluqi, October 2001).

Xaddachaa Alakee who has been living in Reera *Qarsaa Ya'a Obda* Dirre district adopted 5 years ago the son of his sib (Gurraachaa Alakee). Xaddachaa and his wife Xurii Xadaachaa have no biological child of their own. Xaddachaa died two years ago and the adopted son *Waaqo* is living with widow Xurii He is now about 6 years old.

Similarly Diid Waariyoo who lives in *Reera* Danbalaa Baddana, Dirre district adopted his sib's son 3 years ago. Again Diid died a year ago and the adopted son Waaqo lives with widow Saakee Diid. Saakee adopted also her niece (*adaada*) named Jiloo. Both of the adoptive mothers said, the adopted sons are their biological children because they are *dhiiga* (blood) of their husband and they secure the continuity of their family lines. Saakee also said the adopter niece cannot be *gosa* member to her husband lineage since she came from different moiety. The adopted daughter Jiilo goes back to her natal family to get married.

As mentioned above the name of the adopted sons are Waaqo. This indicates that the adopted sons are gift of God. Usually adopted children are given names related to gift of God, the names of the descent line folklore or names that are connected with multitude or many things such as *Deebano* to imply the adopted son is given by *gosa* approval.

Dabbasa Areero who has been living near Dhaas adopted his close agnatic kin son Mallichaa Goolo. He is now about 15 years old-Similarly Bilaalo Guyyo who has been living at Bokkuu Lubooma adopted *Jirmma'aa* an agnatically related at sublineage level (*miiloo balbalatti walitti duudu*).

Adopting a son to a principal wife or to one of the wives among Borana is also conducted in the same traditional way (see also Asmarom 1973).

A man called Murquu Jaarso who lives at Madhachoo has two wives. The principal wife has no child. Thus she adopted a niece of her husband called Jiloo Murquu, now about 5 years. But Murqu's second wife gave birth to a son 3 months ago. Murqu said his principal wife Tumme Murqu will adopt the newly born son and there will be *gubbisaa* ceremony during the rainy season next year. They have already decided the child will have a name Waaqo. (Personal communication, March 10, 2002, Madhachoo).

Nuura Adii who lives at Goorile has two wives. The second wife has no son. Thus she adopted the nephew of her husband Gufuu now about 30 years old. The adopted son is named not by '*gubbisaa*, but by *moggaasa* ceremony. The reason was that the adoptive father already had *angafaa* son from the principal wife and *gubbisaa* was conducted. Since *gubbisaa* cannot be conducted twice in a family, the adopted son was given name by *moggaasa* ceremony and he can inherit the property of his adoptive mother alone. Gufuu said his adoptive mother used ritual items such as *saqaa*, *siiqee*, *daannisa*, and *gorfoo* on the day of *moggaasa*. These ritual items symbolize that she is the mother of a son. (Personal communication October 2001, Meegga).

There are such types of *guddifachaa* in most *ollaa* in Borana Zone at large.

3.3. ADOPTION OF *ILMEE GALUU*

Guddifachaa ilmee galuu is one of the types of adoption practiced by Oromo society. The phrase *guddisa ilmee galuu* literally means bringing up a child who goes back to the natal family after he grows up. However, technically it means adoption of a child whose status does not change and relations with natal family remain intact. It is one of the traditional

adoption practices widely spread and even surpasses the main adoption, the *ilmma guddifachaa*. In this type of adoption both male and female infants are indiscriminately and equally adopted by individual householders. Unlike *ilmee guddifanna*, adoption of *ilmma galuu* mainly aims at fulfilling economic needs of either the adoptive families or that of children's nurturance and upbringing. This type of adoption is principally connected with different factors that necessitate each of them.

Families with less number of children of either or both sexes adopt a child to add labor force to the family. In Borana such a child is adopted for the purpose of 'ergaa' or get more laborer in *tikka-obaa*. In some instances even if the family has a fewer numbers of children to get more labor power in herd management or domestic works a child is adopted. Usually adult males in Borana are engaged in cattle keeping, watering, maintaining the existing *elaa* etc. They also participate in constructing cattle enclosures (*dallaa ijaaruu*), defending cattle from predatory, taking cattle to *foraa* (distant fertile and pasture areas). Adopted male children are required to perform these traditional jobs assigned to adult males. As far as they live with the adoptive family, the adopted children are considered as born child and assigned to do same jobs done by household members. The adoptive family feed, cloth, nurture and upbring the adopted children. They live under one roof, eat together, teach about norms and values, *aadaa seera Borana*, and are socialized as born children.

Adopted teenagers also involve in what children of their ages normally and traditionally do. They mainly look after lactating cows, sheep, goats and camels, which are kept near homesteads. Girls adopted in this form are mainly engaged in assisting housewives in domestic works. The domestic works traditionally performed by women at large and girls in particular include cooking, cleaning, milking cows, fumigating milking pots, collecting fire

wood, fetching water and collecting trees for house constructions. This, however, depends upon the ages of girls and other male teenagers. They are not required to work beyond their ability and/or age.

The adoption of *ilmee galuu* in Borana Oromo has both similar and different features with child fostering practices by some African societies. They resemble each other in that they result in no status change. The practices involve living and eating together, nurturance, socialization and education. Both fostering and adoption of *ilmee galuu* create mutual obligations and alliances, affective ties etc. On the other hand the two practices vary from each other in many ways. Some of the fostering practices in most African societies are what Goody (1975:237) calls rescue operation, namely, crisis fostering. Crisis fostering occurs when children are orphaned due to death of their parent or the family disintegrates due to divorce and other causes. Some fostering is also based on cultural practices of transfers of parental roles in some West African societies and western Indies (Goody 1975: 237). On the contrary child adoption for *ergaa or tika obaa* in Borana is not based on or influenced by crisis or traditional transfer of parental roles in the society. It is rather motivated by demand for labor force in domestic works in household and by the nature of herd management in pastoral Borana Oromo. The Borana adoption of child for *ergaa* is not limited to inter clan or kin groups alone, where as fostering practices in most African societies for instance, Gonja of Ghana are basically between kin groups such as maternal brothers, uncles, aunts, grand parents etc. (Goody 1973:182-8)

Adoption of a child is carried out by Borana Oromo to support birth families in rearing children. When the family of orientation is poor and cannot afford to rear their children, relatives, friends or any one of the Borana clan members adopts some of them. The family

may or may not possess sufficient resource to bring up their children but they may have a number of children. Again some of their children may be adopted by congenital kins or any Borana *gosa*-member. This adoption is directly related and connected with the value held by the Borana Oromo society. The Borana Oromo believe that children must be well treated and reared not only by individual family but also by the society at large. Children are considered as national asset to Borana and should be assisted by the community. The following assertion by Shell-Duncan (1994:137) indicates the common value held by East African societies in a similar way:

A key feature of child fostering in Africa is that it occurs primarily within the kinship framework. Child rearing is not ordinarily assumed to be the sole responsibility of the child's biological parents but rather is considered the duty of the kin group as a whole. In this system the rights and responsibilities of parenting belong to the extended family and children may be redistributed to non-maternal residences to accommodate differential resources availability or labor needs of members of the kin group.

As Shell-Duncan (1994) precisely put it, this form of adoption is a tacit way of traditional resource redistribution between different families. But still it differs from fostering in that it is not based on cultural practices of transfer of parental roles or sending children to kin groups for education and socialization of children. Such adoption of children in Borana, is principally necessitated by economic interest, namely source of labor force, support to poor families, and nurturance. But West African children are sent to kin groups as proxy or to take a place of parental role for educative and socialization purposes irrespective of economic position and number of children of the family (Goody 1975:137-40) The adoption of children to support birth parent also provides mutual benefits to adoptive families. The adopted children render services in *tikkaa obaa* or *erga* and contribute to both domestic works and herd management. There is also adoption of *ilmee galuu* by grand parents. Aged grand parents or those who have less number of family members conduct formal grand children adoption. In this form of adoption the number of adopted female children surpasses

that of males. One can observe several adopted granddaughters in most Borana *ollaa*. The reason is that daughters support their grandmothers in domestic works. These adopted children grow, live and eat with grandparents, get cloth, nurturance and socialization until they reach maturity or until the death of their grand parents.

Although the reasons and purposes of adoption of *ilmee galuu* widely vary, they have common features that make them one. Primarily, children adopted in these forms return to their natal parent when they grow mature just before or after marriage. If some of them remain with adoptive family their father's name is not changed, they cannot have the right to succession, be the member of the line of adoptive father or *gosa* member, cannot plant *sooddu* tree on the grave of adoptive parents like the biological child who can do it. On the other hand such adopted children are given cattle gifts, when they are supposed to depart or after marriage. The adoptive father pays for bride price of marriage and assists in ranges of social and economic fields and establishes him or her. Such adopted boys also can have the right to take away and move with their peer (age) group before or after they marry, the cattle they get in lieu of the service they rendered or are given during naming ceremony or on any other occasion. In a similar way, adopted daughters are given heifers for their services and they take with them when they get married. Girls adopted in this form some times go back to their family for marriage. This usually occurs when the girl's moiety is different from that of adoptive parents. They are also considered as a child born with in the family treated and nurtured until they get maturity and decide to depart or remain with adoptive families. This kind of adoption in fact, widens networks of social ties, creates mutual obligations between the parties, and over all provides access to economic resources for the children at large.

I have encountered a great number of adopted *ilmee galuu* both male and female at different *ollaa* around *Hodhodh, Dubuluqi, Melbana, Dolol Maakala*. Daughters of my key informants were adopted to their maternal grand parents. I have also observed about 10 children who are now at school at Bokkuu Luboomo and Melbana Elementary schools.

Haberland (1963:236) mistakenly considers this adoption of *ilmee galuu* as *ergifanna*. *Ergifanna* in Oromo means borrowing child. But practically there is no *ergifanna* (borrowing) child in Borana. People cooperate in looking after cattle, *elaa* maintenance or construction, defense or other wise. This however does not involve *ergifanna* (lending) children). Traditionally and even until now, the Borana contribute milk cow for a poor family so that children be fed and nurtured. It seems that Haberland extended the meaning of *ergaa* literally to mean sending to *ergifanna* (borrowing).

3:4. ELIGIBILITY FOR GUDDIFACHAA

Rules of child selection for adoption were divergent. Each society has its own principles and practices based on the objectives and types of adoptions. Selections were made mainly based on customary jural rules and principles of each society. These customary rules in turn were influenced by kinship system, traditional values, norms and belief systems of each society. Although the selection criteria used by the society vary from culture to culture, they have similar feature in preferring close kins (Silk 1980, Mandeville 1981) and flexibility to accommodate different situations.

Adoption rules in former Chinese society require from a sonless individual to select an heir from most immediate agnatic group whenever possible. If there is no extra-heir among brothers, the adopting father was encouraged to search from next highest agnatic group until he reaches non-localized higher order lineage (Watson 1975:296). If he could not get from

his agnatic lineage he will be allowed to find from out side clans. The Chinese also practice the adoption of son-in-law who will marry later on their daughter. Doing this they get a grand son who will be male heir to the family (Wolf 1968:865). This clearly indicates the principle of preference and rule of adoption in China was flexible to meet every situation.

A study by Mandeville (1981) on Kamano society shows that, adoption is conducted mainly between maternal kins. On the other hand, Silk (1980) discusses that adoption in Oceania is between kin groups of both sides (maternal and paternal). She argues people tend to prefer kin group to non-kin during adoption. By analyzing adoption of some Oceanic societies she concluded that adoption is primarily among related kin groups. (Silk 1980: 806)

Selection of a child for adoption in Oromo society also follows customary set of rules and principles. However the rules are not rigid to inhibit accommodations. In some circumstance they are fluid enough to accommodate local needs as well as maintaining the culture. Bekele (1958:84) forwarded four conditions of ineligibilities, namely children of slaves, crafts men, evil eyed (*budaa*) and leprous family. But with the exception of leprous child, the other are not publicly expressed rules. It is by tacit under-standing that they make preferences. Even though there is such understanding, children of crafts men or slaves have special mechanism to be adopted and thus the rule does not exclude them in totality.

The commonly accepted rule is that *ilmma guddifachaa* for securing family line needs to be from within Oromo kin groups. In most Oromo communities male heir is adopted either from the agnatic kin of husband or in few cases the wife and from both. *Maccaa* and *Tuulamma* Oromo accept and practice this rule widely. The Gujii Oromo takes sons for *ilmma guddifachaa* mainly from a lineage different to their own. They have a saying '*ilmmi*

obboleessaa hin booressu (an agnatic kin son can not serve the purpose of perpetuation of family line.)

When it comes to Borana Oromo there are set of rules for different types of *guddifachaa*. In Borana if a sonless man needs to adopt, the general rules are that:

- 6 the child must be a son from agnatic kin, primarily that of immediate brother if possible, in the absence of such possibility the adopter must search from that of *miiloo aana* (most agnatically related. (until higher lineage descendant (*gosa*))
- 7 the son must be taken by *guddifachaa* at infancy known as *xuuxii guddifachaa*, preferably at the age of less than a year.
- 8 The adoptive parents and child should not belong to the same genealogical order, (they have to be *muccaa* and '*abbaa*' (son and father) to each other by generation order)
- 9 must be before the son was given name, among other selection criteria.

These are the rules to be followed by individuals in son adoption for the purpose of *daaraa dabarfannaa*. When the purpose of *guddifachaa* is for of *ilmma dabalanna* (adding more son to the already existing one) or daughter adoption, the rule mentioned under (a) is not applicable. The reason is that the property of the person is assumed to be inherited not by the additionally adopted son or the daughter and the adoption is of individual concern. Unless the above-mentioned criteria are fulfilled, the adoption of a son will not be valid. *Guddisa halaaluu'* meaning valid or irrevocable transfer of child by adoption in Borana is when a son is adopted at infancy *xuuxii* and given name through *gubbisa* or *mogaasa* ceremony. If a child is surrendered at infancy (*xuuxii*), even daughters, it will be valid or *nihalaalaa*; *halaalchuu* means transferring or giving a child for adoption irrevocably.

Adoption of *ilmma galuu* however does not follow the rule mentioned above. Any child irrespective of sex, age and *gosa* can be adopted for *ergaa (tikkaa-obaa)*. The reason is such children can not inherit the property and their adoption is a *guddisa hinhalaalee dha'* (invalid transfer in adoption). In Borana, since *ilmme guddifacha* for *daaraa dabarfanna* is between brothers and agnatic kin, the ineligibility factors of leprous, slave or evil eye (a

budaa family) will not be an issue. But, normally non-Oromo or *gosa* member, aged and named sons are ineligible for son *guddifachaa*. As to the age and naming exceptions are accepted by *gosa* to accommodate contingencies.

If an adult son of a man dies after *gubbisaa* ceremony is conducted the man may be allowed to adopt an aged and named son. Such exceptions are accepted when the person is an old man or when he can't adopt and rear a *xuuxi* son. The case of late *Waariyoo Addi* illustrates this.

A man called *Waariyoo Addii* who lived near *Gaayyo* had only a son. This only son died at about the age of 20 before he got married. He had daughters but no sons. *Warriyoo Addii* was very aged when his only son died. Thus the *kora gosa* assembled and allowed him to adopt the son of *Qaancuree Addi* (his nephew). When this son was adopted ritual of naming (*gubbisaa*) was not conducted. Because the deceased son of the man has passed that ceremony and *gubbisaa* was not conducted twice in a family. The adopted son was about 10-13 ages at the time. He inherited all the utensils and ritual items of the deceased. He also inherited the property of *Waariyoo Adii* (*Jaatanee Nuura* November 2001, *Meggaa*)

In exceptional cases the *gosa* can also allow individuals to adopt son for *daaraa dabarfanna* with out adhering to the customary rules. My key informants cited two such cases as follows: -.

A man called *Heloo* from *Karrayyuu gosa* died having no son. But he had many heads of cattle and was famous. His widow requested the *gosa* to look for a son for adoption. The *gosa* could not find from within in *miiloo aana*, sub-lineage, lineage and the clan. Thus, they told her to search for a son for adoption from *Borana* or even from non-*Borana*. After a while the woman got an infant son from *Koonso* and brought to *gosa* for approval. The *gosa* approved (*halaalchaniii fudhatan*) the adoption. The descendants of this adopted son are many in number and live in and around *Tuluu Fardaa*. Some of them were elected *Hayyuu*, during recent *Luba Gadaa* periods. (Personal communication September, 2001 *Meegga*.)

A man called *Booruu* who was from *Karrayyuu gosa* had no son from his legal wife. He asked the *gosa* to allow him to adopt a son from *Digalu gosa*. After examining, and being convinced that *Booruu* has a son from his *jaalaa-Jaalto* (lover) the *gosa* accepted the request. *Booruu* adopted the son called *Waaqo* who lives now at *Melbana* and he is now about 60 years old man. Now he is a member of *Karrayyuu gosa* (Personal communication November 2001 *Melbana*)

It must be noted that the customary rule prohibit non-married man to adopt a son for purpose of “*daaraa dabarfanna*”. The reason is that he is considered to have no family to be maintained.

3.5 GENDER PREFERENCE IN GUDDIFACHAA

The way women and men are perceived and treated may vary from society to society. Besides the natural biological attributes to sexes, there exist socially and culturally constructed differences between both sexes.

Anthropological studies reveal that in most patrilineal societies males dominate the female in social life. In such societies women are usually subordinated to men, restricted from possessing properties, holding political power, and participating in some aspects of religious and ritual performances. Studies on Chinese society show that their basis of kinship was patrilineal and most important relationship was that of father and son. "Mourning and worship after the death of the parents are integral part of the son's responsibility (Hsu: 1949:56). Link to the ancestors and future generations or family continuum with numerous ancestors was through male line (Hsu. 240-1). In rural Japan, the rule is that rights of succession and inheritance in the household only goes along the line of father to son and not through another consanguine descent line or kinsman (Nakane 1967:5). Raymond Firth (1963:300) reported that a similar practice exists in Polynesia. He asserts that:

The influence of the patrilineal principle is extremely strong in the overt legal sphere of Tikopia social relations. Descent is patrilineal and under no circumstances can a person belong to the house of his mother as against that of his father. Succession is strictly in the male line.... The house goes to the farthest limits of male descent and explores the collaterals to the utmost to find heir to a chief or elder while all the time the immediate sister's son is never considered.

Contrary to this patrilineality there are matrilineal societies whose children belong to the kin group of the woman who bore them. Fortes (1969:158-9) describes that the Ashanti people of Ghana were matrilineal society. He further elaborates that membership in clan; the right to elect or be elected in political office, access to resources etc. is through maternal kin (Fortes 1969: 160). This indicates that the Akan people of Ashanti emphasize not only the female side but also in their cultural construction women were not treated as inferior or subordinate to males.

Ethnographic works and historical accounts on Oromo people indicate that they were patrilineal societies (Asmarom 1973 18:37). Males specially, first born son (*angafaa*), have every privilege to inherit properties of the family. Males participate in rituals, rite-de-passages; enter into political activities from early childhood. It is said that the differentiation between boys and girls commences from early childhood and the way they are brought up. Boys are inculcated to be strong, brave, to speak in public freely participate in political affairs, rituals and religious activities. They are also encouraged to do traditional out door sports such as horse riding, spearing circular woods (*geengoo/kolbool* jumping, hunting, *faccee* (combating), *walaanso* (wrestling) etc. which help them for physical build up as well as fitness. In contrast the girls are restricted not to get involved in some of these activities. Traditionally they are not encouraged to speak in public, attend assemblies (*koraa*) and are not given public authority in the *Gadaa* system.

The Borana Oromo still follow the traditional patrilineal system in which men and women are differentially treated. As to kinship ties, both men and women count their lineage from a common decent and they belong either to *Saboo* or *Goona*, the Borana moieties. However, men and women don't have equal privileges in access to economic resources, political activities and social life. The *aadaa-seera* Borana makes clear limitations and exclusions between males and females.

The women do not have their own initiation rites similar to that of males who have stages to attain and hold political power. This however, as Asmarom put it aptly, does not mean women do not participate in rituals and religious activities. The wives of *Abbaa Gadaa*, *Bokkuu*, *Hayyuu* etc. have special privileges ascribed to the office in all rituals, and religious

activities and even have special right to decide *godaanuu ya'aa Gadaa* (the *Gadaa* leader movements.)

Among Borana Oromo women have the right to use the products of cattle, the money obtained by cattle sale and household utensils. But they do not have the right to dispose or transfer property as far as they are in wedlock. They are given the right to administer, dispose and transfer cattle when, the *miilo anna* or *kora gosa* decides and confers on them such rights due to mismanagement by the husband. *By aadaa-seera* "Borana women can not inherit the property of their natal parents. This is strictly adhered to and it is a rule that inheritance to property goes through male line alone. Even if the family has only daughters and no son, the property is transferred to *miilo aana*" or at large to *gosa*. But this does not mean girls cannot get cattle from their natal family. Although not in form of inheritance they get numbers of cattle in the form of gift. Similarly the property of a husband is equally considered as property of the wife. The Borana society believes that the husband cannot have his own property by excluding his wife. The wife can and has the right to stop the sale or abuse to cattle or any property by her husband.

The ritual, spiritual or political positions of an individual is also inherited by a son, especially by principle of primogeniture rule, *angafaa*. Women cannot inherit such social status and the role of their father. Although girls acquire the *gogeessa* of their father as they are born, it is changed when they get married and they take the *gogeessa* of their husband. They are also called by their husband's name, substituting their father's name. The above-mentioned restrictions upon women have direct implications and repercussions on *guddifachaa* practices. The *guddifachaa* institution as part of social structure of the society, is directly or indirectly influenced by cultural norms and value systems held in the society.

As mentioned above, in Borana the main objectives of *guddifachaa* are to secure continuity of lineage to get heir to property, to get social and economic support during old age or ill health (invalidity). It also provides a substitute for political and ritual positions as well as worshipping, especially in traditional society where spiritual and ritual ceremonies are conducted by a son born or adopted to inherit the position of the father (Goody 1990:42).

In Oromo society at large and Borana in particular, it is believed that the continuity of lineage or family line is maintained through male line. Upon their marriage girls acquire new kinship by affinity. The male children maintain the continuity of lineage of the father's line and not their maternal line. This is especially important in patrilineal society and moiety system of Borana Oromo. Boys maintain the patriline and girls join new moiety either *Sabbo* or *Gonna*. This directly makes adoption of girls less important. In short since girls cannot inherit the property or position of individual and due to exogamous marriage they cannot maintain continuity of family line and male *guddifachaa* is preferred to females *guddifachaa*.

To put it in another way "*ilmma guddifachaa* as the phrase itself expresses is a male or son adoption for securing continuity of lineage or family line (*daaraa dabarfachuu*), get heir to property and position, it is a son who is solely eligible for *guddifachaa*. The assumption is that *daaraa dabarfanna* cannot be achieved by adopting girls. In general, it is the principle and customary rule of inheritance and exogamous marriage system that prohibit *guddifacha* of girls for the purpose of securing continuity of lineage or family line, to get heir to property and position. Since they join another family, it is supposed that they can't support their adoptive or natal family during old age. Although the assumption that girls cannot provide

support to their natal family during old age is being changed or eroded, male preference still prevails.

With the exception of *guddifachaa* for *daaraa dabarfanaa* for which girls are desired less, they can be adopted for all other types of *guddifachaa*. Girls are adopted for *ergaa* or *tikaa-obaoa*. They are also adopted to get *soddaa* (affines) and extend networks of ties in the society, get sister for a son or sons in the family etc. If a girl is from the same clan which does not affect her moiety and *lubaa* she can be adopted at infancy (*xuuxii*), given name through normal “*moggaassa*’ ceremony and her adoption may result in a complete transfer (*guddisa halaalu*) from natal to adoptive parents. In this case, the girl gets married from the adoptive parents home and the bride price is paid for them. The adoptive father also gives cattle or other gift as one does for his own biological daughter. She is infact considered as biological daughter (*intala gudeeda*) in the family and conferred with every privilege and rights.

Thus, in *guddifachaa* practices in Oromo at large and Borana Oromo in particular, there is gender preference. As noted by Baker (1968:50) such preclusion exists in patrilineal Chinese society. For Chinese daughters have no concern with descent and need not be entered in the genealogy (Baker 1968: 50). Nevertheless, there is girl adoption, which confers them with status of ‘as though born daughter’ among Borana and other Oromo communities.

Regarding girls adoption among Borana Oromo, the above-mentioned case of Murquu Jaarso clearly indicates girl’s adoption practice. Murquu adopted his niece, even, before he got a son. Similarly a man called Jaldeessa Duuba and his wife Jiloo Jaldeessa had their own daughter, but also adopted the niece of Jaldessa in addition. The adopted daughter Daabo is

now about three years old. Her *moggassa* ceremony has been conducted and they live at Melbana (Personal communication March 2002 Melbana and Madhachoo).

3.6 FOSTERING ORPHAN CHILDREN

Fostering refers to the process by which children are related to a family or persons other than natal parents to be reared, nurtured and educated with social and technical skills etc. The custom of allocating orphan children to relatives for fosterage is popularly known and practiced by some traditional societies. Goody (1975:137) who has extensively studied fostering in West Africa, says ‘the fostering of children by kin also provides proxy parents in the cases where the family of orientation has been scattered by death or divorce and she called this as crisis fostering or rescue operation to distinguish it from other forms of fostering.

Mandeville (1981:232) documents the existence of almost similar orphan fosterage system in Kamano: Eastern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea.

On the death of parents, the orphaned young children are allocated to friends and relatives. However, only one class of relative, a father’s brother, can succeed to parenthood in the sense that he can oppose with the same force as a father any other transfer of the children and like a father can allocate them to guardians or adopters.

The Kamano practice indicates that the brother of a deceased man succeeds to the position of birth parent and rears orphan children. The successor becomes a foster father and takes or looks after the children. To succeed to this parental position he must get acknowledgment of his rights backed up by his strength and character (Mandeville. 1981:232). The allocation of orphan children to relatives for fosterage is a common practice in Oromo society. As soon as the parents die, if they are alive grand parents, and or brother(s) of the deceased parents resume parenting the orphans. If the brother(s)of the deceased parents are not capable

because of health or lack of wealth to take care of and rear the orphans, elders allocate them to close kins. Although this exercise is commonly known by the entire Oromo community, the Borana orphan children fostering practice excels. The traditionally strong social structure of Borana makes fostering system vital and fruitful.

The brother(s) of the deceased bears primarily the responsibility of rearing the young orphan children. In the absence of a brother the *miilo aana*” (next close agnatic kin) will overtake the responsibility. Again upon the absence of a close kin the next agnatically related man or men are selected from the lineage or the *gosa* at large assume the responsibility of fostering. The *hayyuu miiloo*, or *jaalabaa* decides whether the would be foster fathers take the children to his home or looks after them in their father’s home. If the number of the children is too many they are allocated among agnatic kin groups or reared in their father’s home. A brother of the deceased or an agnatically close kin assigned by ‘*jaarsa gosa*’ can’t refuse to accept the responsibility of fostering children. If he refuses to assume such responsibility the ‘*qahyee*’ or ‘*kora gosa*’ imposes penalty by taking numbers of milk cattles from him for the purpose of nurturance of the children.

The person assigned to foster the orphan children is required by custom to feed, provide cloth and nurturance. He is responsible also to maintain the health, welfare and interest of the orphans, manage their wealth, educate and socialize them in *aadaa seera* Borana. It is his full responsibility to insure the well being of the orphan children allocated to him, foster and manage their herd. The foster father rears the orphans with the wealth the children inherit from their deceased parents or with his own expense. If the foster father has no property or cattle at all the *gosa* specially *miiloo aana* contribute temporarily milk cows for purpose of up bringing the children.

Culturally and as a matter of customary rule, orphan children are taken care of by agnatic kins. But in some circumstances where there are sufficient and convincing reasons, the *gosa* may allow that the orphans be given to maternal kins. Leave alone other maternal kin, maternal grand parents, brothers and sisters need the permission of the *gosa* to foster the orphaned children in Borana. The *gosa* allows the maternal kin to succeed to parents and foster orphan children, after they are convinced that the maternal kins have enough wealth to bring up and keep the well being of the children. The other most important criterion is that the maternal kins should promise to return the children to their agnatic kin after they have grown up and assures that the children's membership in *buusa-gonofaa* in their *gosa* will remain intact. This is to say that even if the orphan children are being reared in the home of their maternal kin, membership of their parental *buss gonofaa* security will not be disrupted or discontinued. The children get the benefit they ought to get had it been in their paternal kin and by the same token will be liable to contribute to *buusaa-gonafaa* if they have the capacity to do so.

The customary law of orphan children fostering requires utmost trustworthiness of the foster father. Prior to allocating or giving the children, elders or the *gosa* consider the dependability and worthiness of the individual(s) foster. If it is believed or proved that a man is not trustworthy even if he is the immediate brother of the deceased man, he may be denied the right to be foster father. If he misappropriated the orphan's property or reduced or denied food he will be punished. This is strictly controlled and looked after by lineage members, *ollaa and jaalabaa*. The Borana have the maxim: -

*Daaimnii himachuu hin guutuu
abbaa na'eefu eega*

Minors can't protect their interest or right
but any concerned person protects them.

The maxim is based on the value held by the Borana Oromo towards orphans and indicates the concern and collective responsibility in fostering orphan children. They also believe that “*ilmee abbaan hinjirree kan isa jiruutii*” meaning orphans are the children of the living people. This expression also reflects the value held in the society to protect the interest, welfare and rights of orphan children during fosterage. Each member of the society has to put his eyes on orphaned children and follow their welfare and this is known as “*miidhaa ilmee eyyeesaa eeguu,*” and this is one of the major duties of *hayyuu miiloo*. Because of such counter check and control by the society, the entrusted foster father of orphans is required to treat and administer the orphan children like *bona paterfamilias* and he should treat the orphans like his own children, in feeding, socializing, educating, and providing cloth and nurturance.

If the foster father of orphan children is accused of breaking trust, abusing his power, mismanaging the property and administration of the children and brought before *hayyuu* or *kora gosa*, fast trial and verdict will be given. The custom requires that *dubbii ilmee xiqaa* (*iyyeessal* and *dubbii haadha hiyyeessa* (cases of orphans and widows respectively) needs speedy trial and decision. If the person is found to be guilty he will be fined. Normally, fines may be removed by pardon or may be reduced, but fines imposed because of mistrust in orphan children fostering will not be pardoned. It will be implemented soon, and other appropriate measure will be taken. If it is needed, the foster father will be removed ‘*ni buqaasama*’ and also fined in addition.

Although allocating orphan children to close kin relatives for fosterage exists and being practiced by the entire Oromo society, the people lack an institutional base, which enables them to control it. On the contrary, the Borana traditional *gosa* structure provides a strong

institutional base in protecting the interest and rights of orphans. It also enables the Borana to enforce rules and regulation enshrined in the custom and follows its implementation. The Borana orphans fostering system has also unique feature in that each *gosa* provides *horii aananii* (milk cow) to feed the orphan children when the foster father is in short of capacity to provide it due to cattle raid, drought or any contingency. Recent development also shows that Borana, even pay cost of living and school fee for orphan children in the *gosa* by collecting money through *buusa-gonafa*. The following two cases clearly exemplify the way orphan children are assisted in Borana;

A man called Galgaloo Booru and his spouse who had lived in *ollaa* near *Dubuluqi* died some years back. They were survived by six children. It was *Galgaloo*, the father who died first and then followed his wife. As soon as the wife died, the children became fully orphaned; the members of *kora gosa* assembled and allocated the children to *miiloo* (close kins) since the person did not have a brother. Some of the children are being fostered by close kins. Others are admitted to school to learn. The foster father to those at school is financially assisted by the *gosa* through *buusa gonofaa* to support the children in school. They are attending their school and given some amount of money by the *gosa* at the beginning of school semesters, (Borbor Bulee October 10,2001)

The second similar and impressive case is that of a person who has been a public servant.

The man was from *karrayyuu gosa*. He died some four years back. The wife, that is the mother of the children and sister of the informant died after. They had six children. The responsibility to rear the children falls upon the brothers or *miiloo aana* of the deceased man. But, since the children attend school, the *gosa* allowed the maternal uncle who is a public servant and lives in Meggaa to take care of the children, so that the children continue their education with him. The informant said, since I cannot afford to teach all these children, the *gosa* pays every semester some amount of money for the children to assist the foster maternal uncle (*abuuyaa*). The money is collected through *buusa-gonofaa gosa*. Thus, the children are being well nurtured, fed, and attending their school. The *gosa* always asks the foster uncle about the welfare and well being of the children. (Tewufiq Hassan. Megga, November 5, 2001).

This clearly shows the traditional social security institution the *buusa gonofaa* of Borana Oromo also extends to orphan fostering,

CHAPTER FOUR

OROMSUU /BOORANSUU/ ADOPTION

One of the most significant and salient features of *guddifachaa* practice is its integrative role in socio-political life of the people. The term “*Oromsuu/horomsuu*” derived from an Oromo word “*horuu*” meaning to have more number of men (children), being reach in property, resources (wealth). Similarly *Boransu* means to make pure Borana or add to Borana. This chapter deals with the types of *gudifachaa* by which individuals and non-Oromo ethnic groups are integrated into Oromo society.

4.1. ADOPTION OF *BOOJUU* (WAR CAPTIVES)

The way war captives are handled and held varies from society to society. Morgan (1877 80-81), a pioneer anthropologist explains what he observed in Iroquois: -

Captives taken in war were either put to death or adopted into some kins. Women and children taken prisoners usually experienced clemency in this form. Captives when adopted were often assigned in the family the places of deceased persons slain in battle in order to fill up the broken ranks of relatives

The Oromo people had a long tradition of treating *boojuu* (war captives) in humane manner. Traditionally war captives were not killed or enslaved by Oromo society. They were rather integrated by adoption or they return them by taking ransom. For the Oromo communities such as Borana, Guji and Karrayyuu of around Fantalee hill who adhere to the long-standing traditions and value system of their forefathers, killing *boojuu* or *ilmma waraana* is considered as *haluu* (taboo) or just killing *rakuu* (a person who is helpless/ worthless and empty handed). Killing a captive reduces heroic deeds of an individual and capturing in life makes prestigious and significant symbolic figure in the society (Tedecha 1988:130). These values have strong moral and social influence upon individual fighter.

Abbas Haji's (1982:15) assertion indicates the way war captives were handled among Arsi

Oromo:

First, a childless person could adopt a boy from his relatives (tribe) or outside his tribe. Secondly, the captives of war were also adopted by tribes, which captured them. In both cases the society as a whole take an oath in special *gudiffachaa* ceremony in the presence of *Abba Bokku* not to alienate or discriminate the new members socially, economically and politically. He who violated this would be punished seriously. The punishment was complete alienation from the community, which was intolerable to any individual, so the new members enjoyed every rights and privilege.

The Borana and Gujii Oromo say if individuals are captured amid fighting or if incapable individuals, young children, old men and women are found in the battlefield, they will not be killed. These are captured and made *boojuu*. The Gujii Oromo say that if someone is found *gurdaa baasee (buusee)* (unfasten his trouser's belt as a sign of giving up) even if they are in a tense fighting he will not be killed.

Gurdaa baasuu (unfastening belt) is a sign of giving up. Giving hand is also signified by throwing away *waraana* (weapon) by cutting grass and carrying it with soil (*marga kutanii biyyoo waliin baachuu*), and rising up hands (Hinnant 1972:42).

After the battle is over, the war captive (*boojuu*) is taken home and given milk by the capturer. This symbolizes that the captor becomes 'mother and father' for the captive. The Gujii call such captive person as *dhiira dhiirrii dhalee* (male begotten by male). The captor slaughters bull or cow depending on the sex of the *boojuu* anoints with blood and put on his/her wrist *meedhichaa* (strip of freshly cut hide) in front of *gosa* or *hayyuu* and give the captive *handhuura heifer*. Then the *hayyuu* declares to the clan that the adoption of the captive as *dhiira waraanan gale /boojuu gosoomee/* a war captive adopted to a clan and announces the captive is *ilmee eebaluu* (a son or daughter of so and so). Since it is a rule by custom to accept or admit captives as *gosa* member no one in lineage or *gosa* can refuse the admission of war captive by adoption. If the captive is adult and already had a name he/she

will be addressed by the same name or some times they change and rename him/her. They call the name given by adding the new father name. If the captive is young and has no name, he/she will be named. This ritual process is called *moggaasa*. If the captor has no son before that the captive becomes the eldest son (*angafaa*). When the captive becomes *angafaa* unless he is an adult person, *gubbisaa*, the naming ceremony of *ilmma angafa* will be conducted. At the time of *gubbisa*, or *moggasaa* the war captive will be given *andhuura* heifer.

Adult women captives were married to a captor in Borana Oromo. But the Gujii transfer and give to their friends. The Borana bring up the young captive girls either as future wife or a daughter. If the captive woman was a conceived one she will be made a wife and the child is considered as legitimate son or daughter of the captor. The mother of one of my informants who is now about 80 years old, was a war captive from *Burjii*. Another informant, who is a member of *Yaa'a Gadaa Gujii*, said his elder brother is a war captive from Gedi'oo. The captive was made *ilmma angafaa* and inherited major share from the property of the family.

In Both Borana and Gujii Oromo the captive's hair will not be shaved but given *andhuura* cow either by captor or by the *angafaa* of the *gosa* to which the captive will be allocated. A study made on *guddifachaa* by social work expert shows that *Karrayyuu* Oromo of around Fantalee hill also follow similar principle. At the end of war children or adult men caught in the war will be given to a man who caught them or one of the *angafa gosa* by assignment. Children will not be left for death or they will not be enslaved (Husen Dalecha 1997.27.) The Borana and Gujii Oromo assimilate adult war captives to the society by the *lallabaa* of *hayyuu* either by giving the captive new name or by his own name.

The captive will be allowed to settle or live with the captor or one of the *gosa*. If the captor is *angafaa* and has the right to perform ritual, the captive may acquire that right provided that he is *angafaa* (adopted as first born son) for the captor. The captives were conferred with equal rights and privileges, given ritual powers, like representing cults in their area or important positions in certain ceremonies, so that they may be respected and not attacked both verbally and physically (Taddesse 1988:32). The Gujii have also practices of returning the captives with exchange of certain amount of cattle in ransom (Tedecha 1988: 129, Taddesse 1988:33).

In Gujii Oromo, war captives even have more prestigious status since they are considered as “*ilmma dhirri dhalee*” (a son begotten by male). It is said the war captives in Gujii can even boast of *ilmma dhiirri dhalee maaltu nan qixaataa?* (A son of a male I am, who is to claim to be equal with me?). These attributes of privileged status make the captive feel proud in the society. The Borana also have different means of appeasing war captives. If the captive is an adult man they give him a number of heads of cattle, get him married to a beautiful girl, such as the daughters of *hayyuu* whose fathers have importance (fame) in the society. According to my informants every effort will be made to make the captive happy and mix with the society. They also have a saying “*ofii galee dhiiraan galee*” (he who came home, came with a male captive). If the war captive is proved to be intelligent and active enough, the Borana may even elect him *hayyuu*. For instance, a certain Waaqo Adii who was caught in war and an Arsii by birth became *hayyuu* after he was grown up. Another Arsii war captive in Borana-whose children (sons) became *hayyuu* and *adulaa* in *Gadaa* council were *Booruu Eloo, Calataa Dhugaa and Jaldeessa Kuulii*. Sons of Rendille (Kenyan) war captives *Haphitee Galgaloo* and the Liiban *Iyyo* (a Korre again Kenyan) became *hayyuu*.

4.2. GALAA ADOPTION

The movement of human being from place to place has been an enduring practice. They move within their ethnic territories or crossing national boundaries to pursue different objectives. The movement may be due to '*force majeure*' or different social, economic and political reasons. Under whatever circumstances they move, they need shelter, harbor, access to resource etc. at their destination. In most traditional and rural areas achieving such essential needs through peaceful means requires or depends upon the willingness of the receiving societies. Such willingness itself is determined mainly by the cultural value system and the social mechanism of the society and the availability of resource to accommodate the new comers.

Galaa system is one of the systems of *gudifachaa* practices by which the strangers are adopted to a family or to a society known as *gosa galaa* in Oromo culture to secure bonds, material resources status etc. The term *galaa/galtuu* is derived from Oromo word *galuu* literally meaning to join, to come in, or to enter. Technically however, it means the one who is admitted or accepted into the family or the society. When an individual comes home, the word *galuu* is used. But when it comes to adoption, the common usage of the word changes and the word takes the meaning of getting admittance upon request by stranger(s). The other feature of *galaa* adoption is that a man requests to take refuge in the family or the new residence because of social, economic and political factors that forced or compelled him to leave his own clan or ethnic group and place of origin. A child, specially teenagers and adult man of any age, may be adopted as *galaa* depending on different circumstances, objectives and other factors that compel the individual to request admittance. This type of adoption serves two purposes. It helps the *galtuu* to get access to material resources,

community life, ritual, political activities, marriage etc. It also enables communities or the *gosa* to get more members in sociological perspective. This is signified as *gosa galaa* ‘meaning the one who is admitted to clan or added into lineage.

These individual or group *galaa*, ethnic groups adoption and *Oromsiisu (lubbaasa)* require significant ritualization and publicity. The process begins with request by individual *galaa* for admission into a family or *gosa*. Before the individual adoption as *galtuu* is accepted the *gosa* or *hayyuu* may reject the request if they think or believe the person seems to be untrustworthy, inimical or may adversely affect the interest of Borana. If the request is accepted by the would be adoptive individual or *gosa* leader, the *gosa* members are informed on annual *kora gosa*. The adoptive man shaves the head (*mataa haada*), slaughters a bull, ties *meedhicha* on the wrist of the *galaa* or the *galaa* leader and gives *andhuura* heifer. The *galaa* is also anointed (*ni arrerata*) with the blood of the victim.

Then the *hayyuu* of the *gosa* or leader of *jaarsa gosa* declares the adoption by saying:

<i>Hay! Ha! Ha!</i>	Hi hi hi!
<i>Dhaga'aa! Dhaga'aa! Dhaga'aa!</i>	Listen! Listen! Listen!
<i>Eebalu gosa galeera!</i>	So and so is admitted to <i>gosa</i> !
<i>Hari'a kaasaa beeka</i>	As of today
<i>Elaa haratti gosa</i>	He has the right to get well water
<i>Buusa gonofaatti gosa</i>	He is a member in buusaa <i>gonfaa</i>
<i>Alkumatti gosa</i>	He is a member in marriage
<i>Yoo inni miidhame gosatu miidhame</i>	If he is attacked it is an attack on the entire <i>gosa</i>
<i>Yoo gosi miidhame innis bira hindarin</i>	He too shall not be indifferent to member <i>gosa</i>
<i>Lubaa Gadaatti gosa</i>	He is a member to <i>lubaa Gadaa</i>
<i>Lubaa eebaluuti, gosa eebaluuti</i>	He is <i>lubaa</i> and <i>gosa</i> of so and so

The adoptee also declares his allegiance and takes oath to be on side of *gosa*, support and ally with them, to die and fight enemy on the side of *gosa* etc. From that day onward all *gosa* members accept and treat him or them as their member/s.

Admitting an individual to a family or individuals and/or groups to clans (*gosa*) as ‘*galaa /galtuu/*’ is widely practiced by the entire Oromo society. The individual or a group *gosa* *galtuu* may be of Oromo or non-Oromo ethnic origin. Although group *galtuu* is rare now a

days the practices of *gosa* adopting individual in the form of *galaa* exists in rural areas where Oromo communities live. Tsiuumimay (1965: 23) reports that such *gosa galtuu* adoption is widely spread among eastern Oromo (*Afran Qaloo*). According to this report the *Afran Qaloo* Oromo also conduct ritual of hair shaving (*mataa haadu*), by giving *raada* and tying *meedhicha* on wrist of the *gosa galaa*. This ritual changes the status of the individual and confers him with a new membership in one of the Oromo clans there.

There are several Oromo and non-Oromo ethnic individuals who are adopted as *gosa galaa* by Borana Oromo. The Koonso ethnic group or individuals are frequently admitted or adopted as *gosa galaa* in Borana. The Borana and Koonso people live in adjacent geographical locations. Beginning long before the conquest, the Borana takes their cattle and *sooda* (salt) to *gaara* Koonso and exchange them for *bunaa* (coffee) *tambo* (tobacco), *bullukkoo* (cotton blanket), *kalachaa* different household and ritual items made by Koonso artisans. Because of their economic, cultural, social and ritual contacts there has been much influx of Koonso individuals to Borana. Since both group have friendly relation the Borana admitted many Koonso ethnic group and adopted them as *galaa*. There are also several number of Somali, Rendille, Hawasso etc ethnic origins adopted to Borana.

By performing *mataa haadu* (hair shaving), giving *andhuura* heifer, and declaring the admittance of the stranger to either individual's household or to one of the Borana *gosa*-lineage in public fictive kinship relationship is created. The *galaa* individual is conferred with rights and privileges the other Borana have. By admitting *galaa* into network of kinship by artificial and jural mechanism the individual stranger is conferred with the right of access to economic resources (cattle, water, use of pasture land etc.). Provided that the stranger fully assimilates himself and accepts the religion, *aada seera* Borana, the *galaa* gets

full right to participate in the *Gadaa* politics, rituals, *rites de passage*, *lubaa*, *gogeessa* etc. He can be elected or elect to such political position. If however the *galaa* resists or shows sign of resistance not to be fully assimilated his right and privileges are largely limited to access to economic benefits and marriage.

Some of the *galtuu* individuals have been elected as *hayyuu* or even as *adulaa* in *Gadaa* system. According to my informants, two men Tare, Booruu from Arsii and Gujii Oromo respectively were originally *galtuu* in Borana. But, because of their active participation in *raaba-gadaa* practices, achievement, contribution to Boranaa peace, development of *elaa haraa*, and protection of Borana interest they were elected *hayyuus*. Their children became well known *Abbaa Gadaa*. One of the retired *Abbaa Gadaa* who is now alive is a descendant of those mentioned persons. Similarly, Dergo Jiloo, Cirwaano Jiloo, Diid. Lammettaa, etc. were *galaa* from Koonso. Their children and grand children were elected *hayyuu*. It is said that the families of these people are nowadays pioneers in upholding *aadaa-seeraa* Borana. One of the early *Abbaa Gadaa* was originally from *Gabra* Oromo. His son becomes one of the known *hayyuus*. There are also individuals admitted to *gosa* by means of *galaa* adoption in recent times.

A certain Wandimuu Tesfayee an Amhara from north, went to Borana. About 60 years ago, it is said he left his community to escape arrest because of his criminal act. When he arrived at Borana, a man from Karrayyuu clan shaved his hair, gave him *andhuura*, slaughtered bull and put on his wrist a *meedhichaa*. The Karrayyuu *gosa* accepted him as *galaa*. He took Borana *Waaqeeffataa* religion, entered in to *luba* and *gogeessa* Borana and married to a woman from the opposite moiety. He was completely assimilated, strictly adhered to *aada-seera* Borana, named his children in *afaan-* Oromo, the first Booru by performing the traditional elder son *gubbisaa* ritual, named the rest according to tradition Duubaa, Malichaa and Taroo. He was a member in *buusaa-gonofa*, *elaa haraa* in *Dhanqaa* sub-lineage of Karrayyuu. He died very recently. His children are fully Borana; the boys follow the rules and act as any Borana young boys. The girls also make their hairstyle, dress behave and follow strictly the tradition. The elder son Booruu Wandimuu lives near Dubuluq village (I have seen him wearing traditional Borana cloth holding *horooro* or *surree marata* that Borana fathers usually have, speaks only *afaan-*Borana (Oromo) language) (Dubuluqi November 6, 2001).

A certain Adaane Haile who was born in Arba Minch came to Tullu Fardaa (Megaa) 50 year ago at about 10-15 ages. Booru a Borana from Qarcabduu *gosa* (Goonaa Moiety) shaved his hair, gave him

andhuura announced his acceptance as *galaa* to his family. Adaane Haile, himself told that, his father was an Amhara, while his mother was a Koonso. When his father died in Italo-Ethiopian war and mother followed he became orphan. In search of job and foster he went to Borana. He was accepted as *galaa*, which provided him protection, access to resources by moving freely and working in the locality. He grew up there employed as public servant, pensioned and still live in Megaa. He has children, four of them girls and a son. The son has two names, one in Amharic and another in Oromo. Adane said, although he is Christian, he is influenced by Borana religion, follows and adhere to their tradition. His wife is a Borana from different moiety. He also said that by virtue of his adoption to *gosa Qarccabduu*, he is a member to *buusa gonofaa*, pays dues to *Abbaa Gadaa* and participates in *kora gosa*. He has a plot of farmland at Roomso some 5 km away from town of Meggaa. A year before he was requested to slaughter a bull for annual *kora gosa* known as *areerachiissa koraa*. And he has done it. Booruu about 90 years old man, the adoptive father, said Adaane supports him as his son by giving clothes and even some times money, in cash. (Booruu September 15, 2001, Adaane October 20, 2001).

Addam Mitiku from Maccaa Oromo near Amboo town has been living in the former Jamjam province of Galaana Abayyaa. As a result of land proclamation 1975, by Dergue, he was expelled from the area. He went to Borana, Dubuluq village. Addam Mitikuu was accepted and admitted by a man called Alakee Ashanee, from Moccituu, Goonaa moiety. Addam said he refused to be shaved, because he claimed that he was born Oromo of Maccaa clan. The Borana accepted the claim and the shaving ceremony was waived, but he was given a *raada* (heifer) for *adhuura*, and declared *galtuu gosa*. Another Maccaa Oromoo Mulataa Raggaasaa was adopted as *galtu* by a man called *Gufuu Jaatanee* from *Dambituu Faaro-Goona* moiety. The adoptive father, *Gufuu Jaatanee*, also gave *Mulataa* cattle for bride price and milk cows for his children. Adam follows Christianity and *Mulataa* follows *Waaqefatna*. *Mulataa* is almost fully assimilated, but Addam is not socially and ritually integrated as such. (Addam Mitiku & Mulataa Raggaasa Oct. 15, 2001 Dubuluqi).

At almost about the same time a certain Solomon Bahiru from *Toore Galana Abayya* migrated to Borana in 1975. He said, because he is from Amhara of northern Shawa who settled as *nexfenya* in his place of living Geda'o when Dargue declared land proclamation, there was turmoil and in fear of death, he then fled Geda'o and went to Borana to find a means of living. As he arrived *Dubuluqi* a man called Waaqo Duuba from Digaluu of Sabboo moiety-adopted him as *galaa* by ritual of *mataa haada* and *raada kenna*. He is still living in Dubuluqi, a Christian, member in *buusa gonofaa gosa*. But not fully assimilated because of his religion (October 10, 2001 Meegga).

Besides those whose life histories are mentioned, there are several numbers of *gosa galaa* individuals in Borana rural areas and semi-urban villages such as Megga, Ya'aa-balloo, Negalee, Dubuluqi, etc. Some of the people are engaged in modern trade. In these semi-urban villages there are individuals adopted as *galaa* by one or the other Borana *gosa* members. After becoming *galaa* members they began trade and they have hotels, shops, and or other business in the town of Ya'aa-balloo. Most of those adopted *galaa* who live in towns and some of those new comers in rural area are not fully assimilated and do not adhere much to *aadaa-seera* Borana. Although they are members in *buusa-gonofaa* and have access to resources, they are not integrated fully with the society. Such nominal

assimilations are creating suspicions; mistrusts and people are refraining from accepting individual *galaa*. There are also suspicions that political agitation militates against such practices and integrative process.

Blackhurst (1994) reports similar practices of *galaa* adoption to individual households by Showa Oromo in Arsii. He presents cases of migrant laborers who were adopted into household structures. Based on his observation, he noted that migrants from Showa were admitted to household as laborer. The laborers became family members, lived and *eat en familiae* (Blackhurst 1994:33). Being admitted to a certain household, the individual migrant laborer gets not only home to live in but also access to resources, materials, be integrated to social life in the locality. When an individual *galaa* is fully adopted he may be required to change his father's name, religion etc. But when the adoption is of nominal type and aimed at harboring alone status change is not required. However, in both cases the laborer gets access to property, and is granted some national status (*gosooma*) in an ideological sense and in pragmatic sense it means that the person is part of a nexus of relations (Blackhurst 1994: 39) through *galaa* adoption, which creates fictive, or artificial kinship relations.

4.3. ADOPTION OF 'LOW' STATUS GROUPS

Social stratification was principally based on wealth, power, ethnicity, religion, and occupations etc. categorizations. Each of the stratum is associated with different qualities and attributes. People's status shows their relative position in economic, political, social or ritual life.

The Oromo *Gadaa* system is based on democratic principles in which all the members of the society have equal rights and privileges, political participation and access to economic resources, protection of individuals and collective interests. Peace and solidarity have been special tenets of the system. But there was a ‘caste-like’ practice of categorizing individuals and or groups in the society. The *Waata* /potters/, hunter-gatherers, *tumtuu* /smiths/, *duugdu* /tanners/ and *garbaa* /slaves/ were formerly looked down and were despised. They were considered to be people of ‘low’ status and inferior to the Borana *guutu* (the pure Oromo). The entire Oromo communities in different localities held this perception; safe that *gogaa duugduu* (tanner) is not as distinctively identified by Borana. In Borana tanning is usually done by women at household levels. However, such caste-like relation is being eliminated from the society.

Waata and *tumtuu* are ethnically Oromo, the “pure” Borana. Some people even believe that they were elders *langafaa* to Borana. Others say they are not *angafaa*, but Borana Oromo by blood. Despising these Oromo group as socially inferior group is attributed to mythical beliefs and/or ritual, taboo and other cases. The Borana attribute the origin of despising *Waata* to their competition with *Waaqa* (God). Others attribute the reason of despising *Waata* to their eating *midhaan fi foon bineensa lagu* (food and flesh of taboo animals). The oral tradition goes as follows.

A long time ago there was ‘*bara cinna*’ (great famine because of drought) During this time most of the wild and domestic animals died, plant and water dried. As a result all Borana Oromo including *Waata* and *tumtuu*, ate left over and what ever they found in the surrounding by getting permission from *hayyuu* and leaders. When rain came after seven years, the survived domestic and wild animals began to be multiplied. As their number increased and food supply became available the *hayyuu* and *Gadaa* leaders declared law regulating food items and animals whose flesh should be eaten by Borana Oromo. The *Waataa* and *tumtuu* continued to eat left over and all beast animals breaking the enacted law. Thus, the *hayyuu* and *Gadaa* leaders ordered those abided by the law to despise and consider them as of inferior, low status, and not to eat or drink with them. According to this oral tradition, the *waata* and *tumtuu* were condemned to be inferior because of their violation of laws and regulation. They were also barred from participating in political affairs and denied the right to lead rituals, access to marriage outside their group.

Regarding slaves, it is believed that ethnically they were different from Borana Oromo. They were brought by individual wealthy Borana by purchase from far away ethnic groups to get laborers. Despising for them basically emanates from ethnic difference and the way they come in to the society. As is mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, traditionally war captives were not made slaves. Raiding and enslaving the ethnically different neighbors and slave trade have emerged with development of feudal like system in Oromo society. But such practice did not exist in Borana area. The word slave also does not include the *Gabraa* Oromo who is not ethnically different from Borana Oromo.

As mentioned above, handicrafts men ‘*waata*’ and ‘*tumtuu*’ were not allowed to intermarry with Borana *guutuu*. Eating with them or in the item they eat was prohibited. Slaves were also seen and treated in a similar way. But the *waata* and *tumtuu* had significant role in different rituals and have better respect in the society. Because of their handicraft works that are used in every day life such as *haaduu*, (knife) *waraana* (spears), clothes etc. they were not left in total neglect. All of these low status groups have constant interactions with Borana Oromo in every day life. They participate in cattle or herd management, watering etc. but not in war and raids.

In the processes of activities in social life, individuals from these low status groups show outstanding achievements or for example may accumulate wealth. Such achievements are evaluated from different angles. Their contribution to physical works such as constructing and maintaining *elaa* (water wells), protecting *kaloo* (pasture lands), defense of peace and tranquillity of Borana etc. were taken into consideration. The individuals behavior, values, norms, beliefs and adherence to *adaa-seera* Borana, keeping away from eating taboo fleshes

of animals and food etc. will give them recognition and social acceptance. If such contribution and achievement were already recorded by a father of an individual “low status” man, it will be accounted for him. An individual Borana or *gosa* leader presents the would be adopted ‘low’ status man to the place (court) of *Gadaa* leaders. The adopter explains or tells all the achievements, contribution and quality of the would be adopted. If the achievement mentioned is proved to be less significant the request for adoption will be disapproved or rejected. If these individuals' achievements and quality is proved to be true, the adoption is approved by *yaa’a Gadaa*. The *Abbaa Gadaa* makes a *lallaba* saying: -

Amma gummii baate dhaga’aa! ya’aa Oromsinaa! (Now therefore, the members of assembly listen), by identifying the name and status group (whether *waata*, *tumtuu* or *garbaa*)

<i>ammoo Oromo!</i>	Now hereby, The Oromo
<i>luba eebaluuti !</i>	He is a member in <i>luba</i> so and so
<i>Gogeessa eebaluuti!</i>	He is a member to <i>gogeessa</i> (generation class) of so and so.
<i>Gosa eebaluuti!</i>	He is the member of so and so <i>gosa</i>
<i>Miiloo eebaluutti!</i>	He is close agnatic kin of so and so
<i>Namni lameeso!</i>	Here after if some one calls him
<i>(tumtuu jedheen ykn !</i>	Smith! Or
<i>(Waata</i>	Potter! or
<i>(Garba</i>	Slave!
<i>Abaa Gadaatiin jedhee beekaa</i>	He is insulting <i>Abbaa Gadaa</i>
<i>Inni Amma alkumatti Oromo</i>	He is member in marriage
<i>inni amma duulee boojiiu Oromo</i>	He is a <i>gosa</i> hero if he gets war captive
<i>Aada Oromoon qabdu cufatti Oromo</i>	He is member in all <i>aadaa seera</i> and marriage
<i>Dhaga’aa! Dhagaa’aa dhaga’aa!</i>	Listen! Listen! /Listen (Beware!)

The adopted low status individual is usually assigned to a *luba* and *gogeessa Abbaa-Gadaa* (the *age set* and class of the *Abbaa Gadaa*). The adoption of low status groups to *gosa* must be approved by the then *Yaa’a Gadaa*. If it is not approved by *Gadaa* or approved by a man whose power is less than *Gadaa*, it will be invalid. It is the prerogative of *Gadaa* and unless

it is approved by *yaa'a Gadaa* it will not be enforced or it will not be accepted by the public at large.

Several numbers of *waata*, *tumtuu* and *garbaa* were adopted to Borana Oromo *gosa*. For instance *Liiban Garbaa*, *Huqaa Booru*, *Tarii jiloo* were adopted to *gosa* from *garba* (slaves). *Guuyyoo*, *Bonayyaa*, *Buuda*, *Diidaa* were from *waata* group adopted to Boranaa-clans. This adoption of 'low status' groups into *gosa* is called *Oromsu* or *Booransuu* in *Boranaa*. As it is mentioned above, here *Oromsuu* or *Booransuu* means bringing up the status of low status groups to that of Borana *guutu* or to be made pure Oromo (see also Gufu Oba 1996: 121).

The adoption of such low status groups or despised individuals is called *lubbasa* among Western (*Maccaa*) Oromo. Tsega (2000:6) defines the term '*Luba*' as freed, circumcised while the suffix *basa* means to set or to make free and defined the term *lubbasa* as setting free or making free. However, there is misinterpretation and perception about the term *lubbasa* here. Although the *lubbaasa* institution confers the adoptee with equal rights, privileges and marriage, participation in political and rituals, in social life and paves way to get access to resources by freeing individual from all forms of stigma, it is to mean assigning or allocating to one of the *luba* and *gogeessa* (age set and class). Here it needs to note that the compound word "*lubbaasa*" is also used for corporate adoption of non-Oromo ethnic groups. In every day usage this misunderstanding is frequently discerned and Tsega erroneously applied it to technical aspect as well. If an individual handicraft man, or slave origin is adopted by a certain family *gosa*, the process is called *lubbasa* to mean admitting and putting him in an adoptee's *luba* and *gogeessaa*. Assigning to a clan *luba* confers equal rights to participate in political and ritual system as well as equal status as though born in a family or a clan. If the individual is adopted into a family by means of *lubbasa*, then he will

be entitled to inheritance to the property of the head of the family with the biological children. If the adoptee is young his name is changed and given a new name under the adoptive father. In some Oromo communities adoption of *garba* (slave) does not automatically confer them with equal rights and privileges. They were adopted with some precondition that they will acquire equal status after long generations usually five to seven. The Gujii Oromo calls this *qancarsaa*, to mean to purify by neutralization (Tedacha 1988: 139). The reason is that most slaves are not from Oromo origin like *waata* or *tumtuu*. Among Maccaa Oromo the adoption of *garba* (man of slave origin) is conducted by cleansing ritual of washing him by *huraa* (mineral water), passing him around mountain (hills) and naming “*moggaasa*”. This cleansing ritual process is called “*agabaasa*”. *Aga* means an Oromo word to make good / better while *baasuu* means to set free. Thus, *agabaasu* in adoption means to put or make in better position, status, role, remove stigma, give better appellation (name) etc in the society. It is also believed the mineral water removes the stigmas. Passing behind hills (mountains) symbolizes extricates from despise as though born in that status.

The adoption of law status groups in Oromo society indicates the existence of upward mobility by achievement. *Guddifachaa* is thus used as a traditional mechanism of accommodating and formalizing changes in status and position alteration. It shows that the institution is highly flexible to change and/ or confirm to changes achieved by individual's effort rather than the rigid ascriptive prejudices. Wealth and achievement entitle these groups to ‘higher’ status, namely, partnership in *gosa* as well as equal access to resources, rituals and politics.

4.4. CORPORATE ADOPTION

Adoption also involves the whole ranges of social, economic and political life. Quoting Maine (1861) Goody (1969:67) elaborates the importance of adoption institution: -

And he {Maine} sees the fiction of adoption as one of the means whereby society took its first steps towards civilization because it permitted the incorporation of stranger as kin and thus progressed from emphasis on the bonds of kinship to the ties of *contiguity* as basis for common political action. This practice was important according to Maine, because it permitted family relations to be created artificially and by this means incoming groups could be grafted to native stock.

Maine's statement illuminated that adoption practices enabled societies to extricate themselves from narrow confinement of lineage or kinship ties to create larger political entities. Adoption paves ways for peaceful integration and intermingling of ethnically divergent societies, which eventually leads to the establishment of larger political entity. As Maine stated, adoption institution not only creates artificial or fictive ties but also it indicates the degree of accommodation and tolerance that prevail in the society. One of the glaring important aspects of *guddifachaa* system is the integrative instrumentality of corporate adoption of divergent non-Oromo ethnic group or individuals by Oromo communities in different localities. Historical accounts depict that the Oromo in different places have been constantly intermingled by mechanism of *guddifachaa* with non-Oromo ethnic groups living in their neighbors. It played conspicuous role in political integration and establishment of larger political community out side domestic life.

In Borana where most of the traditional social structures of Oromo people are still functional, there exists integrative adoption. According to the oral history of the people, the practice of adopting non-Borana Oromo began as they emerged as distinctive community to live in the area. The people believe that their forefathers who settled in Borana land adopted most of the aborigines who were already in the area. Those who were called '*heroo abbaa biyyaa* (aborigines) were mixed with different Borana clans and became fulfillaged Borana. Some of the *Waardaa* clans in Borana were the descendants of those adopted aboriginal

groups. Those of *Waardaa* people who refused or resisted the adoption were pushed to the south and they now live in Kenya and Uganda.

The Borana Oromo assimilated numbers of different ethnic groups such as Koonso, Rendille, Koree etc. en mass or individually at different times. Those adopted ethnic groups were completely integrated with Borana and cannot be identified as different groups. As most of my informants said this ethnic group adoption was widely practiced formerly, but now infrequently. The recent exception is that of group adoption of the Dogodii Somali in 1960s.

The case of Dogodii Somali is presented as follows: -

Due to the Ethio-Somali war in 1960s there was eminent danger for our life. We feared the killing by government as well as the people around. Our life was endangered by the war turmoil and turbulence at the time. We could not get access to water wells, pasture land and we were ordered to go to Somali area. This exacerbated our misery. The alternative we had was to ask Borana to admit us to their *gosa*. Thus, our elder man, called Dahii Ahmad requested the Hawwaxuu Borana clan (*gosa*) to accommodate us. *Godaana Daggalee* a man from Hawwaxuu *gosa* accepted our request. He took Dahii Ahmad to *Kora gosaa Hawwaxuu* (Hawwaxuu, clan council). He told the *gasa* council that this person (Dahi Ahmad and his Dogodii group) requested him to be integrated with us (*gosa galuu na gaafatani*) so the man is my friend, *hirriyaa kooti naa fudhaa (gosa galchaa)*! Please admit him to our *gosa*! Further, he said:

Seeran akka ilmmaa ykn obboleessa kiyyaatti naa fudhadhaa
(Please accept or admit him as my son or brother by law).

After examining the case the *gosa* approved our integration to Borana. *Goodana Dagalee* killed a bull for the ceremony and gave *andhuura* heifer to Dahi Ahmad on behalf of the *Dogodii*. Although not shaved in reality, the process of *mataa haaduu* was conducted and we were admitted to settle in Borana as *gosa* Hawwaxuu.

It was declared by the *gosa* council that we have the right in:

<i>buusaa gonofaa gosa</i>	member in <i>buusu-gonofaa gosa</i>
<i>haraa bishaan: walian</i>	member in water and pond use
<i>margaa elaa walian</i>	member in use of pastureland

Thus we settled in *Hawwaxuu gosaa* territory here in a place called *Ardaa Areerii* (near *Ardaa Jilaa west of Yaabaloo*). (Abdul Ali Oct. 16, 2001).

The above-mentioned Dogodii Somali were adopted to Borana some 35 year ago. The Dogodii live in an *ollaa*, which consists of about 45 homesteads (*manaa*). An average of 6-8 people live in each family homestead. All Dogodii are Muslims. They have equal rights and privileges with Borana in use of economic or material resources (pastureland, small farms

etc.) to water resources, participate in *kora gosa* (clan council), attend *Gumii Gaayyoo* (*Gadaa* Assembly) contribute their due to *Gadaa* officials etc. However because they are Muslims they do not attend different spiritual rituals, are not elected to take part in the *raaba Gadaa*, *hayyu* offices etc. But this does not make them refrain from participation in local matters as the above-mentioned informant himself is a *dabbalee* (cadre) in the peasant association.

As to the social life of the Dogodii group, they share every resource with Borana, pay or get *buusa gonofaa*, attend festivities and rituals, which involve no religion, cooperate in all spheres of social life. But their religion is hindrance for complete assimilation. They intermarry with Muslim Borana. *Dogodii* children and infants speak, learn and use *afaan* Oromo (Oromo language) and can hear hardly Somali language. Although this is not known by old men because of their strict adherence to Islam young girls and boys or adults usually interact in love affairs with Borana of their ages. Some of the adult men and women said that like other Borana Oromo, the young Dogodi even have, the *jalaa jaltoo* (special lovers) relations with the Borana. Although the old men have different views, the young and adult men said, they adhere to Borana exogamous marriage system and will not marry from the Hawwaxuu (the Gonaa moiety).

The Gujii Oromo also adopted from non-Oromo ethnic groups. Many Daraasa (Gedi'o,) Sidamo, and Burjii were adopted *incorpore* by Gujii Oromo. The Gujii Oromo say any non Oromo group who voluntarily request to be admitted (*tan galaaf gaafatee*) will be accepted, and be adopted to one of the seven Gujii *gosa*. Similar to that of Borana Oromo, the Gujii also declare that the adopted group will have access to *buusa-gonofa* and *elaa-haraa* (pasture land and water resources.) Once *hayyuu* or *Yaa'a Gadaa* conducts the adoption, it

will not be reversed unless it is found that the group is cooperating with or assisting enemies. If they are found being involved or collaborating with enemy they will be chased out (*ni ha'amuu*) with enemy, but this however hardly occurs.

Historians recorded that adoption of non-Oromo ethnic groups was conducted by *Abba Gadaa* in *Maccaa Oromoo*. Mohammed Hassan (1990:21) noted that non-Oromo adoption among *Maccaa Oromo* took place in such a way that:

Before adoption, animal(s) were slaughtered and a knife was dipped in the blood of the victim and planted in the assembly, composed of the elders of the *gosa* and the representatives of other *gosa*. Then the *Abba Gadaa* says a prayer blessing, the new member and the adopted individual or groups touched the knife planted in the assembly, repeating in chorus what *Abba Gada* had to say, " I hate what you hate, I like what you like. I fight whom you fight, I go where you go, I chase whom you chase etc. This oath was binding and unbreakable on both sides.

Tsega (2000:11) also wrote:

The symbolic rituals used to adopt the non-Oromo groups varied from place to place. In Wanbera the most common mechanism was to put a yoke on the neck of the representative of the group to be adopted. The yoke was prepared from plant called *keelo* (daisies) in Oromo. The group to be adopted should break the yoke, which symbolizes that their old identity was broken.

Further providing the oath taken at ritual, he said:

*Yoo isin ganne, dhalli keenya
akka qambarii kanaa haa cabu.
Dinnii keessan diina keenya
Kan issin jibbitan nus ni jibbina
Bakka issin deemtan nus ni deemna
Kan issin loitan nus ni lolla*

If we abandon you, let our descents be
broken like this yoke.
Your enemy is our enemy
We hate whom you hate
We go where you go
We fight whom you fight

Although not mentioned by Tsega, if it is an individual from 'low status', breaking yoke designates setting oneself free from despised class or slavery. The ritual of breaking yoke terminates or brings an end to old stigma, casting, being looked down on etc. The ritual is conducted in the presence of *Abba Gadaa* so that the enfranchisement will be sanctioned and enforced.

In this ritual process tying *meedhicha* indicates the assumption of being of the same flesh by the parties. *Areerachaa* of blood signifies unification by blood that creates fictive kinship relations. Breaking the yoke further symbolizes termination of old enmity, conflicts,

mistrusts or source of subordination and the beginning of integration by blood as well as in social and economic life. *Mataa haaduu* (hair shaving) denotes breaking the old ethnic difference and making son. A son is shaved and given *andhuura* heifer during naming ceremony. Thus shaving hair of '*galaa*' puts him on equal footing with kins and it is also a rite of passage that transforms the status of a person.

Anthropological and historical accounts on Maccaa Oromo also reveal that formerly integrative adoption was practiced intensively. According to these accounts the Oromo used their old adoption institution, the *guddifachaa* system for peaceful integration with non-Oromo individuals and ethnic groups in their vicinity. In this regard Hultin (1984:10) has the following to say,

Furthermore, individuals or groups could be adopted by a clan or lineage whose members incorporate became fathers of the new member or members who were called son of the lineage, *ilma gosa*. Besides this corporate adoption by the lineage, there was also individual adoption by an individual foster father or couple of foster parents, *guddifachaa*.

By this mechanism of individual or corporate groups adoption, *Tuulamaa* and *Maccaa* Oromo could establish large and stronger political entity. As Maine (1861) aptly put it, the *guddifachaa* system made the Oromo society to cross the limit of kinship ties and create a greater common wealth of polity based on *contiguity*. This integration with non-Oromo groups enabled them to get more manpower (*nama dabalchuu*) allied force against common enemy, strengthened their power for defense or offenses, create peaceful environment in their daily life. Hultin (1984:12) mentions how the integration took place:

From around 1600 the Macha established special relations with other groups who were adopted either incorporate or on individual basis and given the status of *gabaro*. As such they formed part of the Macha society, they were recognized as partners in marriage and they had recognized legal rights, and obligations. In contrast, the non-Oromo who were not made *gabaro* were by definition *diina*, enemies, they stood outside society.

However, in this and other studies Hultin attempted to show that, although non-Oromo groups were adopted, there exists a dichotomy between Borana Oromo and *gabaroo* Oromo.

He even asserted that “*the gabaro* was an adopted son or daughter and a social equal, on the other hand, he was a serf and social inferior, the difference being approximately the one between freedom and servitude” (p: 15). This conclusion seems to be the outcome of misunderstanding of the culture of Oromo under *Gadaa* system and post *Gadaa* era as well as the effects of *guddifachaa*. Under *Gadaa* system there was no domination and subordination to be equated with serfdom mode of life. Adoption was always coupled with conferring equal rights, privilege, status and role. The reality is that since the Oromo follow the principle of primogeniture system not only *gabaro*, but descendants of younger sons (all *ilmma jaarsa*) whether they are Borana or not have no equal access to political, ritual practices and to economic resources. The position of each *gabaroo* whether individual or groups is determined the way they were adopted. If the adoption gives the position of *angafaa* practically they will acquire the right and privilege by adoption. Sometimes also those adopted non-Oromo groups will be given time to be fully integrated, the time being counted by generations called *qancarsaa* system mentioned above. One undeniable fact is that it is said there was preference. Those ethnic groups related to Oromo such as, Sidama, Haadiya, Geeda’o and Kafaa people acquire automatically equal status as they were adopted. But others were given a sort of grace period, known as *qancarsaa* to be fully assimilated. The neutralizing period can be long or short based on socio-linguistic closeness of the adopted groups to Oromo. However there is no historical evidence that led to servitude and conflicts. Some of the *Gadaa* offices such as ‘*abbaa bokku*’ were reserved for *angafaa* lineages for purpose of ritual primacy. Since the Borana Oromo are considered as *angafaa* they hold important ritual and religious positions.

Thus, the Borana *gabaro* dichotomization was not related to their unequal partner, namely the dominant master-serf relationship. As Hultin himself notes it, the Borana hold primacy in ritual contexts and not in mode of economic relations and political affairs as such. The issue of serfdom, domination and subordination was the result of social change that occurred in Maccaa society beginning from late eighteenth century with emergence of feudal elements in some parts of the region. The very concept and principle of *guddifachaa* was to confer rights and duties but not to make dichotomy on the basis of ethnic origin.

Two Oromo historians Tesema (1980:26) and Mohammed (1990:21) attempted to explain succinctly the way Oromo adapted itself to new environment and coalesced with non-Oromo ethnic groups by means of their generation old *guddifachaa* institution. Tesema (1986:26) asserts that the Oromo used their old institution, the *guddifachaa* system, to incorporate different ethnic groups. He further elaborates that the adoption of non Oromo-ethnic groups enabled the Oromo expansion and occupation of the central and northern highland of Ethiopia in a short span of time. Mohammed (1990:21) who holds a similar view also states that:

The second form of adoption, which has special relevance to our subject, is known as *moggaasa*, adoption into clan or tribe. The adopted individual or group could be either Oromo or non-Oromo. The adoption was undertaken by the *Abbaa Gadaa* on behalf of his *gosa* (clan). Before adoption, animals were slaughtered and a knife was dipped in the blood of the victim and planted in the assembly composed of the elders of the *gosa* and the representatives of the other *gosa*.

Through such ritualized and solemnly celebrated adoption different non-Oromo individuals or ethnic groups were integrated in to the Oromo people. The adoption also has the role of strengthening and consolidating the unity of Oromo, when it was between or inter-Oromo *guddifachaa*. Some historians allegedly argue that demographic explosion compelled the Oromo people to migrate and hold large territory in the Horn. But such assertion lacks sociological and factual evidence. Had it been demographic explosion, which forced them to

expand their territory, their movements towards, Arsi, Bale, Borana and Gujii might have given them enough space to live in. Demographic explosion cannot be the factor that completed them to hold such expanses of land in the east, central northern and western part of present Ethiopia. Sociologically it is impossible for the people who were living in a small locality to occupy an area many fold larger than their original place in a short span of time. Rather integrative adoption was presumably one of the main factors that led to demographic explosion in Oromo society. It added many ethnically different groups, and as a result, the Oromo became numerically the most dominant group in the region (see Yilma 1966: 239). It was also this integration with non-Oromo groups through adoption that enlarged the territorial limits of Oromo, rather than the rhetoric of Oromo migration or expansion. It must be noted that linguistic relations with neighbouring ethnic groups facilitated corporate adoption which resulted in political and social integration, both population increase and expansion of territorial boundary.

Triulzi (1996) looks at this integrative adoption from its negative consequences. For him adoption deprived the non-Oromo ethnic groups of their economic access and put them in a politically subordinated position. The author questions not only the role of adoption in political integration but also emphasises the subordination of the adopted people as well as the conflict that followed the incorporation. But there is no evidence that conflict arose between the adopted groups and the Borana-Oromo. The conflict was rather between the Oromo and the neighboring ethnic groups who were not incorporated by adoption. The other important factor over looked by historians as well as anthropologists is that alienation in land use, subjugation and serfdom was the result of the later developed feudal type of relations. These feudal mode of life appeared with the decline in the *Gadaa* system on which most Oromo structures were based. As the base was threatened, the institutions formed on the basis of the value system and the rules attached to it were adversely affected. This however does not mean adoption ceased to function. The newly emerged feudal type of

rule gradually began to alter and substitute the existing relations. The ownership of land was changed; the war (defense) leaders (*abbaa duula*) became landlords. This affected both the Borana as well the *gabaro* commoners and reduced their status to serf or tenants. The conflicts mentioned by historians, arose from the change in the status of the society as a whole, not from the adopted *gabaro alone*. Overt and covert fighting was ensued between the emerging feudal elite, their supporters and those who maintained the *Gadaa* tradition as well those resisted to accept serfdom (Tesema 1980:20-30.) In those battles both *gabaro* the adopted as well commoner Borana fought side by side against the emerging feudal type domination of relations.

Contrary to the views held by Triulzi (1996), *guddifachaa* system conferred rights and privilege in all aspects of life, safe the ritual primacy of the Borana. Those Oromo who were classified as *gabaro* were assisted and protected by their adopting *gosa* or the Oromo at large. Tsega ((2001:8) who conducted field research in Metekel-Zone, Wanbera District wrote what he witnessed and by quoting Nagaso (1984: 78.)

Through the *lubbasa* system the adopted groups were given full rights to participate in the *Gadaa* system of the Oromo. They became equal to the Borana Oromo who had the right to lead the *Gadaa* practice. Such privileges seem to have brought about inner stability between the Oromo and adopted communities.....

This statement clearly shows the basic tenets of *guddifachaa* system in Oromo society. Once individuals or groups are fully adopted they are conferred with rights as though they were born (*dhalataa*). Group adoption was also an effective traditional mechanism for conflict resolution and Tsega (2000:8) wrote: -

Therefore the *lubbasa* institution is one of the traditional African principles of conflict resolutions. It avoided conflicts between the Oromo and the other groups both before adoption and after and also used with in the Oromo. It should be noted that it was the Borana clan which had the right to lead the *Gada* practices, and once the other Oromo groups were set free through this system (adoption) they would be given equal rights in the *Gada* practices. Thus the Oromo succeeded in establishing ethnic solidarity and an enduring friendships and gradually integration.

Thus, adoption has been used in varieties of forms to meet domestic affairs as well as the external politico-jurial spheres. Through this *Oromsuu /Boransuu* types of adoption non-Oromo ethnic groups and individuals massively and voluntarily joined the Oromo

communities living in different localities. It has been an effective peaceful mechanism and political means for integration of society. As opposed to a forceful assimilation, which has negative consequences such as hatred, animosity, convert or overt clashes etc., *guddifachaa* system provides arenas of gradual and peaceful way of integration. In recent history of humankind the Oromo people are among the few people to use the integrative adoption system, which enabled them to secure an all round internal, environmental peace as well as expand its boundary. Until it was intervened by alien force, which destroyed the cultural base of Oromo, the *Gadaa* system in most localities, *guddifachaa* has been effectively used as a mechanism of achieving integration and a means of creating calm atmosphere for interactions both with in and outsiders. The Borana and Gujii Oromo who still adhere to their fore father's traditions and follow *Gadaa* system practice integrative adoption.

CHAPTER FIVE

VALIDITY AND EFFECTS OF GUDDIFACHAA

In this chapter a traditional mechanism by which each *guddifachaa* type is validated in public, implication of naming ceremonies, the role of *jarsa gosa*, *hayyuu* and *Abba Gadaa* in approving and sanctioning *guddifacha* will be presented. In conjunction with these, effects of *guddifachaa* at domestic and *politico-jural* levels will be discussed.

5.1 VALIDATING PROCESS AND PUBLICITY

Each *guddifachaa* type mentioned earlier is validated at public rituals or assemblies held for different reasons. With the exception of *ilmmaa guddifachaa* the other adoptions are mainly conducted in conjunction with rituals, assemblies or ceremonies held by the society on different occasions.

The Borana believe that when the sonless man adopt the son of his brother or close agnatic kin there is no need of much publicity and ritual. This is because

- 6 the son has the right to inherit sonless deceased man by rule of *gosa* right to inherit sonless deceased:
- 7 the adopted infant son is considered as *ilmma gudeedaa* (be gotten son) and
- 8 the adoption is conducted with prior permission (consent) of either the brothers of the man or the *jaarsa gosa* of the agnatic kins.

This presumption seems to be based on legal principle of collateral succession rights to individuals' property in the absence of apparent heir. Besides, the *gubbisaa* (naming ceremony) gives legitimacy to the adoption and puts the son on equal status to a biological son.

Guddifachaa of *ilmee galuu* or that of daughters from different moiety is a mainly of concern to the adoptive families that do not require publicity. The transaction is mainly conducted by a mutual agreement reached between the natal and adoptive parents. However, if a daughter is adopted at infancy (*xuuxii*) it is believed that she should not go back to her natal family and *moggaasa* (naming) will be conducted. But still such naming process is conducted by giving her *andhuura* heifer with lesser or no ritual.

Regarding publicity of corporate adoption, if it is performed by *Abbaa Gadaa*, he declares (publicize) the *guddifachaa* and conduct *moggaasa* ceremony simultaneously. If the corporate adoption is conducted at *gosa* level, the publicity further requires informing *Yaa'a Gadaa* for further ratification. Such information is also required for further publicity as well as make the adoption get wider acceptance in the society. In Borana, once *Abba Gadaa* is informed, about non-Oromo ethnic group adoption they are treated as Borana Oromo in all social lives.

As it has been mentioned above son *guddifachaa* by itself does not necessarily involve rigorous ritual. But for purpose of validating the act, publicity rituals are performed at different levels and degrees. When the *guddifachaa* is from within lineage it needs less publicity. If the adoption is inter-clan more ritual publicity is required. The adoption of non-Oromo ethnic individuals or groups needs to be conducted in public to get recognition. Here the adoption is validated and publicized at a public ritual. This gives the adoption acceptance by traditional political leaders and the society at large. One of such public ritual is the *gubbisaa/moggaasa/* naming ceremony conducted in public. It is used as a means of legitimizing adoption. The tradition also empowers the *jaarsa gosa*, *hayyuu* and *Abba Gadaa* to decide and publicize adoption of non-Oromo individuals or groups. With waning

of powers of *hayyuu* and *Gadaa*, as Blackhurst (1996:248) correctly put it, the practice of adopting of non-Oromo ethnic groups is getting diminished. Once *guddifachaa* is validated by traditional authorities through the ritual held in public it would be enforced, respected and sanctioned by the society.

5.2 IMPLICATION OF GUBBISAA /MOGAASA/ IN GUDDIFACHAA

Attitudes, beliefs, values and attributes attached to names make every society have its own explicit rules, forms and rituals of giving names.

Giving name to a child has a symbolical connection of establishing close social ties between the child and the name giver (Monberg 1970: 107). The statement indicates that naming ceremony is used to publicize the identity and place of a newborn child in the society. The Oromo who follow their ancestor's religious beliefs and value systems still practice traditional naming system. The naming ceremony is different on the basis of local variation. Among *Maccaa Oromo*, naming ceremony is conducted by *hammachiisa* (embracing) ritual performed at home of *ayyantuu*. The traditional Arsi Oromo follow the naming ceremony called *moggaasa* (Huseen 200:65). Although the ceremony or ritual is differently labeled, the whole process is called *moggasa* by the entire Oromo communities.

The Oromo of Borana and Gujii have a remarkable and impressive naming system. They still follow their forefathers *Waaqeffannaa* religion and adhere to culturally held moral and value system. In Borana and Gujii Oromo *moggaasa* of *ilmma angafaa* (elder son) and

younger (*ilmma maandhaa*) differs from each other. The most celebrated, respected and ritualized naming of *ilmma angafaa* (elder son) is called *gubbisaa*. The naming of younger sons other than *angafaa* is called *moggaasa*. *Gubbisaa* naming is highly ritualized and conducted with great festivity, while *moggasa* is performed in simple way at household levels in Borana.

After the families get a son for the first time, they begin to prepare themselves for *gubbisaa* ceremony (*jila gubbisaa*). Fixing the date of *jila gubbisaa* the parents of the son begin to construct special *galma* (a hut for naming ceremony). The *galma* is constructed by women in cooperation to each other. Men participate in *galma* construction by erecting pillars and making the roof (*dareera*) of the hut. The construction is conducted in three days. The father of the son prepares a bull to be slaughtered. Seven men will be elected as council for the *jilaa* including the father of the son. Special milk and food will be prepared for them. Close kins also come with a cow (cattle) gift to the child. Others come to the *jilaa* with gifts of drinks and milk. The milk, drinks and all other items are called *gumaachaa*. *Gumaachuu* is an Oromo term, which means aid or support given by kins. On the day of *jilaa gubbisaa* (naming ceremony) all the invited and the seven councilors pass the night at the *galmaa*. They will be served with *buna-qalaa*, *daraara*, milk, drinks and food. The seven members and the child will not sleep the whole night. The participant women sing in chorus:

Yoo, Aliyoo simuuda!
Gurraacha yaayya
Diid munyuuxe
Moonaa curuxee
Daraaraa gurtee
Daraaraa margaa!
Waaq sifeesee!
Daraaraa ilmaa!
Waaq urgeesse-Simuuda

O! Aliyoo God appoint you!
 God of Yaayya appoints you!
 All have moved. God appoint you!
 They entered enclosure! God appointed you
 Collected flower! God appointed you
 Flower of grass!
 God made comfort
 A flower son
 God made you with pleasant odor etc.

They also sing songs that imply the adoption of the son is with consent of the *gosa*, such as

Hoo! molee Hoyyoyoo
Gadaa barrii deebitee
Guddoo guduruu galma
Guddoo guddis armaa
Gadayoo Gadaa kadhee
Deebanuu dibbee kadhee
Deebanuu gosa kadhee
Kadhadhee da'uu fedhee
Da'ee bulfachuu fedhee
Ammalee sibu kiyyuu
Sibuu muki daraara
Ardaan buqqee daraara
Daraari garbuu ta'ii
Bossonni odaa ta'ii
Misii bishingaa ta'ii

Ho! Mole *Hoyoyo*
The Gada is coming again
Your hair is like that of hut cover
You are grown up by breast-feeding
Asking Gadayyo for Gada
Asking people for drum
Asking gosa for a child
Praying for child birth
In need of rearing child
Again my *Sibuu*
Sibu flowered tree
Arda gives flower of calabash
Let you be like flower of barley
be like forest of ficus sycamouras
be fruitful like sorghum

In the evening, at about 1:00-2:00 pm, the parent of the child, his paternal grand mother, sit at a place allocated for them. The guests sit down on the ground. If the grand mother of the son is not alive, grandmother from agnatic side who is close to the father of the son will substitute her. After all get seated, the father of the son announces the name to the public. He repeats it three times by saying, for instance, the name of the child is *Liban Waariyoo*; he said *Liban Waariyoo Jedhaa!* (three times)

The audients reply in chorus:

Liban Waariyoo!
Waaq sii guddisinaa!
Hadhaa fi abbaa bulfataa!
(Three times)

May God make him grow!
May he support you!

Then the mother of the son says the name three times and the grand mother follows. Food and drinks will be served following the naming (*gubbisaa*) of the child. Blessing (*eebaa*) and prayer precede every ritual. At dawn, the father of the son would kill another bull. They cut the flesh into pieces and put it in the utensils of those who brought *gumaata*. The remaining will be eaten there and then. The *waata* will be given humerus bone and the *tumtuu* the thighbone with its flesh. The Borana believe *waata* and *tumtuu* have special role in every ritual and the rule is strictly respected.

At *gubbisaa* ceremony the mother of a child wears a *gorfoo*, *kalee* and put on *saqaa* made for the purpose of *gubbisaa*. The father puts a turban around his head (*ruufa marata*), holds

horooro and *lichoo*. This signifies that the family has a son. For the child they make future *horooro* (stick) made from *Daannisaa* tree. The father would give him *andhuuraa* heifer. Other close kins give him one or more cattle depending on their wealth and closeness. Regarding the younger sons (*ilmmaan maandhaa*), naming is conducted simply by a ceremony held at household level by giving *andhuuraa* heifer and by shaving hair. This is simply called *moggaasa* ceremony. The umbilical cord cut during the childbirth will be put on the back of *andhuuraa* heifer during *gubbisaa* or *moggaasa* ceremony. The cattle given to the child during this ritual is called *andhuuraa* after the Oromo term to mean umbilical cord.

Gubbisaa puts the adopted son in a position of a first-born natural son. The Borana Oromo strongly believe that there is no difference between biological and adopted sons. Thus if the son is adopted at infancy for the purpose of getting heir to property and securing family line, the child is given name by *gubbisaa* ceremony. Of course *gubbisaa* is not directly linked to adoption. But it is one of the mechanisms by which adopted son achieves *angafaa* or elder son-ship status in the family. If the adoption of the son is not to secure family line and get heir, but to add more son, the child will be given name in a simple *andhuuraa* giving *moggaasa* ceremony. The adopted son is given usually the name of ancestors just like as if the child is a biological son to the parents. In Borana the name given to the boy was usually the name of ancestor, as is often the case, the transition rite becomes an occasion for recounting family lore. The name is often a symbol of lineage tradition and the son is expected to uphold the lineage (*daara dabarsaa*) (See Asmarom 1973:56). In Borana names are also associated with clan members names, with particular type of a day, week, year, large animals... occasions etc. In a polygenous family the father can conduct only

one *gubbisaa*. The co-wives will not have ceremony, but they will have *saqaa* of their own, prepare food, drinks and give name to their elder son.

Among Arsii, Maccaa and Tulamaa Oromo, the adoptive parents prepare special naming ceremony popularly called *moggaasa*. After receiving the adopted son and taking him home *moggaasa* ceremony is conducted. Bekele Nadii in his short article, "Adoption Among the Oromo of Sawa (1958)" provides briefly the way *moggaasa* of adoption is conducted in the presence of the *hayyuu*, the *lubaa*, the adoptive parents, natal parents and their relatives. The naming or *moggaasa* ritual begins by prayer invoked and recited by *hayyuu*. He said, "the prayer and blessing has no direct connection with the adoption, but it is a necessary part of all Oromo ceremonial"(Bekele 1958:87). After the ceremony is opened by prayer and blessing, five spears (*waraana*) are laid down. Here the five spears indicate or represent the five *Gudaa* classes. The head of three of them are directed towards east, the remaining towards west. *Alangaa* (whip) was put on them. Bekele (1958:89) states then, the adoptive father dictated by one of the *lubootaa* says among others.

"20 {This is}my son who I got through *kaalachaa* and *cacu*

"21 whom I got through white haired *cifre*

"22 whom {his} brother has given me

"23 whom {his}uncle has given me

"24 whom {they} gave me according to law of *Gada* and the adoptive mother in turn ask him guided by her appointed *lubaa*

"26 Did you accept this son whom I begot from you according to the law?

"28 Do you accept according to tradition? etc.

After the adoptive parent declares that they have accepted the adopted child, the *guulaa* (elder man) announces solemnly:

<i>Waaqnii hayyudha</i>	God is almighty
<i>Lafti hayyuudha</i>	Earth is big
<i>Tulluun hayyuudha</i>	Mountain is higher
<i>Horri caalan bishaani hayyuudha</i>	Mineral water is more pure
<i>Tumee Seera</i>	I declare it is abiding law
<i>Guddifatee Seera</i>	She (adoptive mother) adopted
<i>Guddifatee Seeraa</i>	He adopted
<i>Seerri Seera Liban?</i>	This is the law of Liban
<i>Guumgumni hinjigsu!</i>	Complaint cannot remove it
<i>Kenni hinballeessu</i>	Gift cannot remove it
<i>Sammuun isaa sammuu warra kanaati</i>	His brain is the brain of the adoptive parents
<i>Mogoleen isaa mogolee warra kanaati</i>	His leg is the leg of the adoptive parents
<i>Warra kana luka malee warra dhale hinluku</i>	He sides the adoptive parents
<i>Waan warri kun dhihessan ni dhihessa</i>	He hates what they hate

The *moggaasa* of adopted sons among other Oromo communities follow nearly similar procedure. According to Huseen (2000:63) the Arsi Oromo conduct *moggaasa* by presenting the adopted son, *aannan mijuutti* (milk in jar), *bonjaa* (spears), *marga* (grass), *dhooqqee* (dung), *garbuu* (barley), *gaadii* (tying rope), *daaraa* (blaze of fire), *saree gurracha* (black dog) and other child to the public. Close kins of adoptive parents, natal family and knowledgeable persons gather together. Then it is declared, (Huseen 2000: 64) states

<i>Gad galoo diina muramte!</i>	It is decided he who goes away is enemy!
<i>Ol' galo Ambaa muramte!</i>	It is decided he who comes in is a member!
<i>Ilmi kan abbaa uumateeti muramte!</i>	It is decided the son is of the adoptive!
<i>Ibiddi kan abba fudhateeti muramte!</i>	It is decided the fire is that of the one who took it!
<i>Ilma dhalata muramte!</i>	The son is born!
<i>Ilmi dhalate kun warra kana himata muramte!</i>	The adopted son claims the adoptive family!
<i>Gumaa isaantu soqaa muramte!</i>	The adoptive parent is responsible for his <i>gumaa</i> .
<i>Gumaa isaani soqaa muramte!</i>	He is responsible for their <i>gumaa</i> !
<i>Aanticha, dhalaticha kana muramte!</i>	He is a kin, born, not alien
kkf.	etc.

Bekele Nadi raised one important issue regarding the term *moggaasa* and *guddifachaa*. In many historical accounts and ethnographic works the word *moggaasa* has been confused with *guddifachaa* and erroneously interpreted as adoption. Haberland (1963), Mohammed (1990), Hultin (1984), Truilizi (1996) and Blackhurst (1996) all used *moggaasa* as an alternative term to *guddifachaa* or

with adoption and *guddifachaa* as fostering (Blackhurst 1996:242). The two words have been confused semantically because of their interconnection during adoption process. Although the word *guddifachaa* has varieties of meaning in different cultural usage and contexts, the term adoption can be safely used in lieu of it in English equivalent. The noun *guddifachaa* in Oromo is a derivation from the verb *guddisuu* meaning to bring up, foster, rear, nurture, make big, glorify, adopt, etc. depending on the context in which it is used. When it is used *ilmma guddifatee*, means he adopted son or *niguddisee* it means he fostered him etc. Thus the phrase adoption of child should be understood as *guddifachaa* but not *moggaasa*.

Moggaassa literally means naming. In all types of *guddifachaa* practice there exists *moggaasa* in one way or the other. Adoption of a son involves *gubbissa* or *moggaasa* ceremony. Similarly when individual *galaa*, Oromo or non-Oromo ethnic groups adoption is conducted there is *moggaasa* ceremony. If a low status person is adopted, *moggaasa* is performed. The adoption of son naturally involves name and status changes since the son is given name by the adoptive parents. When the adoption is of *boojju*, *gosa galaa*, ethnic and low status individual adoption, here *moggaassa* ceremony is not necessarily to give them new name. But they are given new name of *luba goggeesa* (*miseensa*) *Gadaa*, lineage etc. This ceremony is again called *moggassa*. Thus as Bekele (1958:85) aptly put it, *moggaasa* is the whole procedure and the ritual process of naming during *guddifachaa* (adoption) practices. It is during *guddisa ilmma galu* (fostering child) that *moggaassa* is not required. *Moggaasa* ceremony is found in all types of *guddifachaa* (adoptions) with varying degrees. This has been the main source of confusion semantically between *guddifachaa* and *moggaassa*.

Nevertheless, *gubbisa* and/or *moggassa* ceremonies have been one of the public forums at which most *guddifachaa* practices were legitimized. Although ritual of naming (*moggaassa*) is not part of *guddifachaa*, the declaration or allocating of adopted individuals or groups necessarily needs *moggaassa* rituals.

5.3 THE ROLE OF GOSA ELDERS, HAYYUU & GADAA

The inherent nature of adoption requires publicity, legitimization and sanctions. Societies have different mechanisms of undertaking, controlling and enforcing adoption practices. Historical accounts reveal that in ancient Rome, under the reign of Byzantine Empire or Justin (A.D. 527-565) the adoptive parents, the person to be adopted and the head of the birth family all were required to formally appear before a magistrate in order for an adoption to be legally recognized (Adamec and Pierc 1991:xix). The Roman practice is said to be precursor of most west European present adoption laws. The Hindu-Indian adoption was conducted at religious rituals. In Hindu- India, Goody (1969:64) elaborates: -

The adoption is carried out by means of specific ceremony, which among Brahmas, includes a burnt offering (*data homam*). The essential element is the giving and receiving after religious services, the adopter asks the natural father. "Give me thy son;" and the other answers. ' I give him,' with these words I take thee to continue the line of ancestor.

This statement denotes that adoption in Hindu-India was performed at religious ritual in front of the priest or religious leaders (Brahmas). In case of ancient Rome it was conducted in front of the secular office, the magistrate. In Chinese society adoption from agnatic kin was based on the Confucian teachings. This all indicates that adoption practices were not conducted in arbitrary way. They follow specific rules (principles) linked to religious, legal, property ownership, inheritance, value systems and social structures.

Guddifachaa, the traditional adoption practices of the Oromo society, is directly linked to and influenced by socio economic system of the society. *Guddifachaa* has been used as an important mechanism in wealth distribution, maintenance of individual's family line, means of political alliance creation or integration etc. This directly connects the institution to the social structure of the society. Further more, it was practiced following strict set of customary rules, controlled and enforced by the society's social, political and legal

institutions such as, *hayyuu miiloo*, *kora gosa* (clan elders), *hayyuu* and *Gadaa*. Each of these structures has specific functions associated with their office.

As it is mentioned above, *ilmma guddifachaa* to secure family line and get heir is either requested by the childless man, *hayyuu miilo* or the *kora gosa* (*gosa* elders). In the absence of eligible brother's son for adoption, it is the *gosa* elders who decide the future *xuuxii* (infant) son for *guddifachaa* among the close agnatic kins or intra-clans. Bekele (1958: 85-87) explains that elders and the *luboota* play decisive role in a *guddifachaa* practice among Shawa Oromo. Similarly Huseen (2000:67) elaborate that it is in front of *Bokku* that *guddifachaa* is ratified and solemnly declared among Arsi Oromo. When there is a dispute of any sort arises regarding *guddifachaa* of son, it is primarily examined and decided by elders of clan. Adoption of a son, individual *galaa*, *boojju* (captive) needs to be acknowledged or known by *gosa*. Unless it is recognized by this body, the adoption will be of no effect. They control whether the transaction of request, receiving and adoption is in accordance with set of rules for each type of *guddifachaa* and confirms to the *aadaa seera* Oromo. The recognition of the *gosa* legitimizes each type of adoption. It is protected and enforced by *gosa* after it gets acceptance by elders.

It has been the prerogative of the *gosa* elders to ratify adoption of individual non-Oromo *galaa*. Before individual *galaa* is admitted to a family or to a *gosa*, the adopter has to present or take him to the council of *gosa*. The acceptance and adoption is declared to the public and ratified by the council of elders (*kora gosa*). It is also the *gosa* council who announces *boojju* (captives) incorporation into a family or the clan.

Next to the *jarsa gosa hayyuu* plays a decisive role in *guddifachaa* practices. As pointed above, the *hayyuu* has the power to deal with, adjudicate and decide issues of civil and

criminal nature within his clan. By virtue of this power, the *hayyuu* has got a decisive role in *guddifachaa* practices. When the *hayyuu* is within the riches the adoption of *galaa* or *boojuu* is ratified and announced by *hayyuu*. According to Bekele (1958), son adoption ceremony among Showa Oromo is led by *hayyuu*. Here, it is in front of *hayyuu* that natal and adoptive parents appear and the adopted son is given name. The adoption is solemnly declared to the public, and oath is taken just like what used to happen in ancient Rome. A *guddifachaa* ratified by *hayyuu* is always valid and enforceable. If disputes arise over a son or *galaa* adoption the *hayyuu* has the power to examine, adjudicate and give enforceable verdicts. Traditionally in *Maccaa* and *Tuulamaa* Oromo, when an adopted son is maltreated (*ergaramaa*) the *hayyuu* sees to it and settles the matter either by reconciling or deciding for redress.

In Borana, *hayyuu miilo*, the elders of *gosa* and *hayyuu gosa* play important role in ratification of *guddifachaa*, and fostering orphan children. They have the power to assign or allocate orphans among agnatic kins (*miiloo aanaa*), protect the welfare and interests of the children. If any dispute arises between the adoptive parent and the adoptive son or in taking the bride price of the adopted daughters the matter is referred to *gosa* elders or *hayyuu*. When there is a contention over individual *galaa* question for access to resources or protection, the *gosa* elders or *hayyuu* give a verdict.

As the ultimate political and judicial power, the *yaa'aa Gada* has every power to decide matters related to *guddifachaa*. Any dispute over the nature and legality of adoption is finally decided by *Gadaa*. Disputes related to the matter of adoption seen by *hayyuu* or elders of *gosa* at lower instances get final and conclusive decision by *yaa'aa Gadaa*.

Besides, the office of *Gadaa* has the authority to amend or alter the existing *guddifachaa* law. The *yaa'a Gada* has amended and adjusted several times the *guddifachaa* practices to meet local conditions. The Oromo oral historians witness this by citing the action of *Abba Gada's*. Frequent adoption of non-Oromo ethnic groups by *Maccaa* Oromo is said to be the flexibility and adjustment made by *Gadaa* leaders as a result of social change, contacts etc. (See Mohammed 1990, Tessema 1980, Tsega: 2000).

The *guddifachaa* or adoption of non-Oromo ethnic groups to any clan, individual or group *oromisiisuu (lubbaasa)* is ratified by *Abba Gada* alone. This is exclusive prerogative of *Abba Gada* in Borana or among other Oromo communities. At present in most part of Oromia where the *Gadaa* system is not functioning, for instance, *Maccaa*, northern *Tuulama* etc. there is no non-Oromo ethnic group adoption. Although, on individual base it is practiced everywhere among Oromo community, adopting non-Oromo ethnics as group ceased to exist as the power of *Gadaa* diminished. Blackhurst (1996:245) has correctly attempted to show the role of *Gada* political system and the officials as follows: -

As the previous discussion has shown, *moggaasa*, although ideologically equivalent to a domestic adoption, was in fact a political act. This was shown by the involvement of *Gada* officials in the main ceremony by which the act of adoption was achieved ... In other words, for *moggaasa* to be performed some overarching organization is necessary which, in the case of Oromo was *Gada*.

This statement indicates linkages between the political structure and adoption institution in Oromo society. In Borana, about 40 men of low status group were made Borana by means of *Oromsiisuu* in 1997 at *Gumii Gaayyo yaa'a Gadaa*. This action of *Gadaa* leaders is corollary to what Blackhurst argues. It is *Abbaa Gadaa*, the one with ultimate political power, who can confer filiations and citizenship on groups by adoptive or other means of peaceful incorporation. Thus, Blackhurst is correct when he says as the centralizing power of *Gadaa* waned, local groups were increasingly unable to make formal arrangements with

stranger groups and the political adoption was superseded by small private arrangements (Blackhurst 1996:246) in localities where the role of *Gadaa* system diminished. In all intent and purposes the *yaa'a Gadaa* has immense influence and power on *guddifachaa practices*. *Yaa'a Gadaa* got the power to determine the nature, validity, rules etc. that guide the institution, to ratify and give final verdicts over disputes that arise in *guddifachaa*.

Thus historical facts and the current adoption practices in Borana clearly indicate that the, *hayyuu miiloo*, clan elders (*jaarsa gosa*), the *hayyuu* and *yaa'a Gadaa* have decisive role in Oromo adoption practices. They get involved not only in *guddifachaa* request, in receiving and *moggaasa* process, but also in legitimizing, controlling, setting rules to sanction it and finally enforcing the transaction.

5.4. EFFECTS OF GUDDIFACHAA

Adoption transactions are followed by varieties of consequences depending upon the customary rules, value and legal systems. Usually valid adoption involves permanent alteration of status (Parkin 1997:30) and creates fictive kinship net works of social ties and confers privileges, rights and duties (Radcliffe-Brown 1950: 4, Fox 1967: 34). The adoptive child acquires all the rights, privileges and obligations of ordinary progeny (Lowie 1949:59). *Guddifachaa* practice also results in similar ranges of effects upon the adoptive parents and the adoptee.

The adopted son or child achieves the status of biological offspring. Customary rule, ethical and value system require from adoptive parents to consider the adopted son as *ilmma gudeeda* (son of thighs) or *ilmmee dhiibatani dhalanii* (child begotten). Thigh is believed to be the location where semen and ovum originate and it is the movement of this organ either during copulation or deliveries that results in coming out of a child. For childless or

sonless couple adopted son becomes *angafaa* (elder son). This confer him special privilege and creates obligations upon the adoptive couple and the adoptee. The adoptive couple is required to conduct ritual of *gubbisaa* (ceremony of naming first born son) among the Borana and Gujii Oromo. If the adoption of the son for purpose of child addition or the adopted is female by sex the adoptive parent is required to arrange *moggaasa* (naming ceremony).

Since *gubbisaa* is conducted once in life, the adoptive father cannot arrange *gubbisaa* ritual twice even if he gets his own son from a principal wife or one of the co-wives after he adopted a son. The adoptive parent are duty bound to feed, clothe, keep the sanitation of the adopted child nurture, socialize, educate (train), maintain the well being and interest of the adopted son or child. The adoptive couples are responsible for paying bride price for marriage of the adopted son. In the same way adopted daughters are entitled to get gift during marriage. If a son is adopted into a position of *angafaa* the adoptive parents are required to confer him with all privileges, rights and respects the first-born sons have in the society. Among the Oromo of *Maccaa* where name avoidance is practiced between in-laws, the adoptive parents give an avoidance name usually given to a wife of the elder son such as *Sooretti*, *Biiftuu* etc. to the spouse of the adopted son too. The adoptive father is called by technonym 'abbaa and adoptive mother by *haadha*, to mean the father and mother of adopted son.

Denying food, clothes, shelter, poor sanitation, disinheriting or other forms of maltreatment of adopted child are prohibited by *aadaa seera*. Maltreated adopted child is called *ergarmaa* and there is a rule that *ergaramaan kan abbaatii* (maltreated is allowed to return to his natal

family). If it is proved that the adopted son is *ergaramaa* in Borana, the *hayyuu miiloo or gosa* share the property (*qabeenyaa qooduuf*) and give it to the adopted child. If the adopted child is an *angafaa* he gets all items to be given to first-born son by custom, and he is given major share of cattle. But the adoption is not revoked. Among *Maccaa* and *Arsii Oromo* elders from different *luba* gather together and decide the due compensation for the adopted son (see Huseen Badhaaso 2000:66). They can also revoke or annul the adoption when the maltreatment seems to be grave.

Guddifachaa among the Oromo in general and the Borana in particular brings about numerous effects upon the adoptee both at domestic and politico-journal levels. With *ilmma Guddifachaa* (adoption of a son), the relationship between the natal parents changes and be substituted by adoptive parents as if begotten' (*ilmma dhalatee*). Model (1994:2) put it that the adopted sib is granted a new birth certificate with the names of his adoptive parents. Among Borana Oromo when a son is adopted at infancy and given name by *gubbisaa* ritual it is believed that his relationship with birth parents terminates and he acquires new paternal line.

The birth families relinquish their parental right and cannot reclaim him. The adopted son is identified by the name given to him by the adoptive parents or he takes the name of adoptive father as patronymic name. The adoption prohibits the son from having the right to claim relationship with natal parents. He cannot inherit their property and there will not be any kind of son-parent obligations. The only possible way to inherit the natal parents is when incidentally all the sons of biological family die and no one claims the property. This also depends up on the absence of close kins (*miiloo aana*) in the lineage or when his adoptive family is of nearest kin by principle of collaterally not as a son.

All the informants were unanimous in telling that a son adopted at infancy (*xuuxii*) and named by adoptive parent is considered as if begotten and he will be the elder son. The Gujii Oromo also believe and say that if a son is adopted at infancy by providing *haadu*, *ittlee* (*rifanoo*), other food and ritual items during seclusion of the mother of the child, he will be taken as biological son.

A son adopted to a childless or sonless family get entitlement to inherit all the properties and symbolic items or tools of the adoptive parents. If the adoptive father gets another biological son from the adoptive mother or from one of the co-wives after he adopted son, they are considered as younger sons. The adopted son gets the major share of the property and the younger sons get limited numbers of cattle with the heifer given to them during *moggaasa* ceremony. If the younger son(s) are from one of the co-wives other than the adoptive principal wife, they inherit the property of their mother alone and the remaining is taken by the adopted son. Whether there are younger sons or not, the symbolic items or tools such as *waraana* (*spear*), *ruufaa* (*turban*), *horooro/ dananisaa* stick, *barcuma* (sitting stool), *lichoo* (whips) etc. used by the adoptive *abbaa warraa* (headman) will be inherited by adoptive elder son. In Gujii Oromo the *waraana* (spear) and sitting stool (*barcumma*) of *abbaa waraa* will be inherited by the brother of the deceased and the rest important or symbolic tools and items are inherited by elder son born or adopted.

This inheritance is not limited to domestic property alone. It extends to *politico-jural* level, which, among other things, includes primacy in ritual practice, access to water and other material resources, holding political position acquired by hereditary. The adoptive son inherits social position such as primacy in blessing, to be served first, constructing house on the right hand side, and all other positions and status his adoptive father had in the lineage

and or the society. He substitutes the adoptive father at domestic or public level in religious or secular rituals and social interactions.

However, some of my informants said that if the adoptive father gets his own biological son after he adopted a son, the primacy of the adopted son will be restricted to inheritance of domestic property and all affairs linked to the adoptive father. They argue that, in this case the adoptive son cannot replace or hold primacy to *ilmma gudeeda* (biological son) in ritual, social and political positions associated with *gosa* or the society at large. But most elders do not agree with this information. They say right and privilege of the adopted son who precedes other biological sons is not limited to domestic affair alone. To disprove the assertion that the right and privileges of adopted son will be limited if subsequently the adoptive father gets his own *ilmma gudeeda*, they have shown me, and mentioned several individual names who inherited major share of property and social position of adoptive father in the lineage as well, though there were younger sons born after the adoption. In *Gadaa* council, the position of *Abbaa Bokkuu* (holder of scepter) is occupied by an individual who has the ritual primacy among the *adulaa* (members of supreme council). The primacy is based on primogenitures privilege of the clans. One of my informants whose case is mentioned above was the *Abbaa Bokku* in *Yaa'a Gadaa (1985-1993)*. He told me that his adopted son will hold the position of *Abbaa Bokkuu* 40 years later whether he gets another son or not. Nevertheless there is no agreement on this point and the practice varies from locality to locality. In some cases the privilege of adopted son is limited to domestic matters and occasionally extend to community affairs.

If the son is adopted to principal wife, he inherits all her share of property major share of the adoptive fathers property and symbolic tools and items. He becomes also *angafaa* to all

others born from co-wives. If the son is taken in *guddifachaa* by one of the co-wives other than the principal one, who does not have her own son, the adopted son gets the right to inherit her share of property and cattle alone but will not be considered as elder son.

The adopted son is also obliged to support the adoptive parents during their old age or in any contingency that may require assistance. If the adoptive parent die early leaving young survivors, the adoptive son bears the responsibility to foster, nurture and look after them. Because he gets major share of the property, if there arises request or need for a *buusa gonofaa* to member of *gosa*, as elder son it is the adopted son who contributes substituting the adoptive family. All the adopted sons can plant *callanqaa* (a kind of bamboo tree) and erect one curved stone on the grave of the deceased adoptive father and mother. If the adopted son is *angafaa*, when the adopted farther and mother are buried, he adds soil to the grave first, plant *sooduu* (*Callaanqaa* tree) and puts on curved stone on the right side of the grave. Other sons plant their *sooduu* and erect stone in their birth order. The girls plant *cophii* tree on the graveyard of the parents after the adopted sons. *Ilmmii guddisa galuu* (foster son) cannot plant *sooduu* and erect curved stone on graveyards of foster parents.

The adopted son is also required to reciprocate the affection, love, respect he gets in similar and appropriate manner to the adoptive parent as *warra dhalee* (birth parents). He is expected to show filial manners and behavior towards them. A war captive child adopted in to family is conferred similar rights and privilege with biological child. Although nowadays young war captive child can hardly be traced, traditionally, war captives were treated as born child. The descendants of former war captives' families live in Borana as though they are Borana Oromo. In Gujii Oromo area still there are a number of war captives adopted to the family. To protect the interest and rights of war captives, the *Gujii* Oromo some time confer

them with primacy in ritual or other social status by conferring or making them *angafaa* in the family and protect them from attack verbally or physically by community members (Tadesse 1988:32). Social acceptance and respect accorded to such person in Gujii Oromo put war captives in privileged and prestigious position.

The main purpose of *galaa* adoption is to confer the individual or the group with varieties of rights and privileges. The adoption serves as social ladder to share resources within the community and create networks of social relations in the society. Blackhurst (1994: 37-8) explains: -

If the adoptee is an adult, many of the educative and caring roles of the parent are irrelevant, but there is area like marriage, where assistance can and should be given. Such assistance would cover the pre-marriage negotiating; financing the various payment and feasts and giving material help toward the establishment of the new household.

A person adopted as *galaa* is incorporated into the society either through individual household or lineage and this results in share in ritual as well economic wealth (p: 39).

In the cases of integrative type of adoption of non-Oromo ethnic groups or low status groups, its typical feature is to confer the adoptee groups with equal rights and privileges. The Oromo or non-Oromo groups who were adopted gain material benefit protections and easy access to resources. Furthermore, the adoptees were given whatever available support, cattle, property or other material resource (Mohammed 1990:21). As member of the adoptive clan, they acquire the right to participate in political and ritual practices and get access to well water use in line with their new clan.

As mentioned above the practice of *Oromsuu (lubbaasu in Maccaa)* automatically confers the individual with equal status to the adoptive individual or the clan in Borana Oromo. The *yaa'a Gadaa* gives absolute freedom to the low status individual for marriage with Borana *gosa* of the opposite moiety to which he is adopted. By *Oromsuu* adoption the *Gadaa* also gives the privilege to elect, to be elected and participate in *Gadaa* political system, participate in rituals etc. The *Abbaa Gadaa* also confers citizenship right on individuals or non-Oromo ethnic groups adopted to Oromo clans by means of traditional naturalization. The adopted groups in turn, take oath to be faithful, be on the side of the

adoptive clan in fighting enemy, (Hultin 1984:12-15 Mohammed 1990:21). They accept allegiance and confirm to *aada-seera* Oromo and show their alliance with their new clan.

Creation of incest taboo (*haraamuu*) is one of the fundamental consequences of adoption in Oromo society. When a child is adopted to his agnatic relative in Borana Oromo there will not be new obligation of incest taboo. But when the adoption is done by prior permission of *gosa* council from opposite moiety, there will be incest taboo between him and the adoptive parent clan. Theoretically a son adopted to opposite moiety can marry from his birth parent moiety. In practice, however, such adoptee marries not his close agnatic kin of birth parent. I have encountered two individuals who were adopted to different clans. They married wives from their natal parent clans of distant descendants. They believe that there is incest taboo *haraamuu* between them and the daughters of their adoptive clan. The other Oromo communities also follow similar principle of incest taboo. Whether, the adopted son is from close kin or different clan or for that matter from non-Oromo group full and validated adoption results in marriage prohibition with adoptive clans. Adoption also results in prohibition of sexual intercourses of adoptive father and mother, their sibs, mother and father, aunts, uncles and between the adoptee. This prohibition is called the principle of “*kedu*” that is prohibition of sexual intercourse between genealogically different classes.

The establishment of valid adoption of *galaa* individual or low status group member by a certain family or clan and a non-Oromo to a certain clan also creates an obligation of marriage prohibition. The adoptee individual *galaa* or group cannot marry from the adoptive clan. The reason is that the *galaa* individuals or groups are considered as if they are of the same lineage members and cannot be simultaneously affine (*sodaa*) to the lineage in exogamous society. In general, unlike the Chinese or the Japanese practice of marrying between adopted son and the daughter of the adoptive parent or marriage between adopted *little-girl* with a son of adoptive parent in China, (Wolf: 1968) *guddifachaa* prohibits marriage and creates incest taboo in Oromo society and particularly in Borana.

Regarding psychological or emotional consequences, *guddifachaa* creates varieties of feelings. I observed that most adoptive families hold the view that they consider adopted son as their biological son. Some even say, the child inherits the property of the adoptive parents, he becomes *angafaa* and therefore they say they have no problem with adoption. This is specially the opinion that co-wives have regarding the adoption of the son by a principal wife.

Adopted sons also consider the adoptive parent as their natal family. It seems that this is due to their adoption at infancy. They grow at the home of their adoptive parent, and then affection is created. Those adoptee sons whom I found at elementary schools of Bokkuu Lubooma, and Melbana did not even know that they are adopted. Some of them resisted to talk about their adoption, while some said, they are not adopted because the parents treat them as if they begotten them. Contrary to the children adopted at infancy, those who were taken in *guddifachaa* after they become aware of themselves, feel emotionally attached to their natal family. This category includes mainly those who are adopted for *tikaa-obao*.

Each type of *guddifachaa* is announced and validated at rituals conducted in public. The rituals may or may not be necessarily connected with the adoption. For instance *gubbisaa/moggaasa* ceremony is conducted not necessarily for adopted, but for all children born or adopted. But this ceremony is used as a forum to publicize, legitimize and determining the position (status) of adopted child too. Annual *gosa* assemblies, secular or religious gatherings or any public meetings are also used to declare adoptions. Traditionally, elders, *hayyu gosa*, *Gada* leaders and knowledgeable persons play important role in adoption transactions by approving its validity (ratifying), publicity, conducting rituals, enforcing (sanctioning) follow up etc.

Once valid adoption is conducted it results in ranges of effects up on the parties. It involves changes in status, creates duties (obligations), rights, privileges, provides access to resources, rituals, status, role among others. Thus, each *guddifachaa* transaction involve valid transfer, legitimization, enforcement and ranges of effects.

CHAPTER SIX

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN *GUDDIFACHAA* PRACTICES

This chapter summarizes the influences of some aspects of social and economic changes, conquest, contacts and adoption law upon *guddifachaa* institution and its persistence.

6:1 SOME ASPECTS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES

Changes in the society are dynamic processes that occur in divergent forms in social life. Sociological inquiries on social changes reveal that material life, productive forces, ecology and societies are always in dynamic changes in every aspect at varying degrees. These lead to alterations in social relations, institutions, cultural symbols, belief and value systems in the society.

Oral traditions and the scanty written documents on Oromo history and culture give clue in changes that occurred in social and economic life of the people. The changes were mainly of internal dynamism in the society and influences impinged upon them at different times by external forces and natural environmental changes (see Asmarom 1973, Baxter and Almagor 1978: 28-9, Bernardi 1985).

The social, economic and politico-legal system of Borana Oromo is the natural milieu under which the *guddifachaa* system operates. Changes in these systems directly or substantially influence *guddifachaa* practices. As it has been mentioned above, *guddifachaa* practices have been inextricably connected with economic and social imperatives. One of the main purposes of *guddifachaa* is to get heir to properties of the families. *Guddifachaa* is also one of the social mechanisms by which the society obtains labor forces in pastoral or agricultural

economies. Through those mentioned types of adoption and fostering, wealth distribution is effected, networks of social ties and influences in the society expands. Individuals or groups are admitted to certain families and *gosa* respectively to get access to material resources, social acceptances, status etc. Ethnic groups adoption is basically connected with access to resources and political alliances. Thus changes in economic base because of environmental changes affects these practices too.

The reduction of number of cattle by drought, animal disease and natural calamity leads to famine, starvation and high infant mortality in Borana. Naturally, this attenuates the number of children available for adoption and demand for labor force in cattle management. Individuals were highly incapacitated to support each other in child rearing, to admit individual *galaa* to their family because of their distressed economic life. Most rituals are performed when the available economic capacity allows. The adoption of a son gets final validation publicity by *gubbisaa* (*naming ceremony*). The ceremony is conducted when milk is available in abundance and person is in a position to slaughter a bull for sacrifices (offerings) as well can make feast. Every adoption involves giving *andhuura* (heifer) and slaughtering bulls. When an individual is admitted by means of *galaa* adoption into family he is supported by providing cattle and other economic assistance until he establishes himself on firm economic position. Because of the economic crisis caused by drought, famine and hunger the rate of adoption among the Borana is said to be substantially reduced in the last few years. Most of informants say that there are a number of birth and adoptive parents who postponed *gubbisaa* ceremonies during the three severe drought years. Because of recurrent draught that stroke the region, the livestock based pastoral economy of the Borana Oromo is highly affected. Simultaneously it significantly reduced the traditional manpower (labor)

demand for child adoption. In other word the occurrence of ecological changes lead to diminish in economic and social motive for *guddifachaa*.

Demographic explosion in recent time is another factor that brought changes in the rate and intensity of *guddifachaa*. Almost all my informants said there is a high fertility rate these days in Borana society. The population census conducted, although not so reliable, confirms this assertion (EPHC 1994). The people believe that the number of barren (*gaantuu*) women in the society is highly reduced for unknown reasons and almost all give birth to children. Although not yet studied and confirmed, the causes for high fertility rate in the society may be attributed to introduction of health services, grain food supply etc.

Some of the people who live near or around semi-urban villages are being accustomed to using medicines. My informants say that there have been a number of individuals who were suffering from venereal diseases in the past. But now, there is a growing tendency of using medicine. Health officers are providing limited pre and post-natal maternal and child vaccinations in the rural Borana. Both male and female use medication going to the few health stations available in the area. This may be one of the factors that reduced infertility and increased childbirth. The introduction of grain food specially, the food support given by non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and to some extent by government might have reduced number of child mortality rate due to malnutrition. This also seems to have contributed to population increase. The prohibition of infanticide practiced by *raabaa* members and the reduction of traditional birth control mechanism might have contributed to demographic increase in the society. These all factors presumably reduced the number of *dhabaa* (a son less) families and by extension, attenuates son adoption for purpose of securing continuity of lineage. Although schools are expanding in the area, the impact of modern education upon

guddifachaa practices in the rural area is not yet much felt. But it will definitely reduce the number of children to be adopted. As the birth parents come to be aware of modern education, they incline not to adopt their children for *tikaa-obao*, but send them to school and this seems leads to the decline in the rates of *tikaa oboa* type of adoption in future.

Changes in intensity and rate of each type of *guddifachaa* are thus clearly seen in the society. There are several numbers of adopted adult men and women. This rate decreases as one looks at teenagers and young children in every *ollaa*. Of course the number of children adopted for the purpose of *tikaa-obao* (*ergaa*) surpasses the number of son adoption. However, it still diminishes in the long run because of expansion of schools, economic and social factors. One can also speculate that posthumous adoption may cease to be practiced among individuals converted to Christianity or Islam.

Women's claim to assert their right to inheritance to the property of their birth parent will be another factor that may challenge *guddifachaa* in the future, unless accommodative adjustment is made. Some of my educated female informants are of the opinion that with the out affecting son *guddifachaa*, women should be conferred with right to inheritance and privileges.

In short changes in social and economic life in Oromo society in general and in Borana Oromo in particular are affecting *guddifachaa* practices at different rates. There have been adjustment and modifications where enormous economic and social changes occurred. Variations in local ecologies, changes in land tenure systems and political structures, emergency of sedentary farm etc to adjustments and reformation of eligibility rules, selection criteria and ritual process in *guddifachaa* practices. Nevertheless, unlike in other places in

Oromo territory, in Borana, because of the nature of their economy and the stability of their traditional institution *guddifachaa* practices still have an essential force among the people.

6:2: THE IMPACTS OF CONQUEST AND CONTACTS UPON GUDDIFACHAA

The Oromo people have had an independent political entity, national identity and elaborate political system embedded in the *Gadaa* institution. Each of the major Oromo sub groups were organized into confederal local autonomies with common *Gadaa* system of rules, periodical ritual and other cultural contacts (Gada: 1988: 28) After centuries of independent existence, the Oromo were conquered and incorporated into the present Ethiopian empire by Menelik II in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. (Gada 1988: 50-62).

The effects and influences of this conquest can be discerned in different aspects of *guddifachaa* practices. Primarily, the fall of the *Gadaa* system into subordinate position weakened the political, legal and social bases of *guddifachaa* practices in Oromo society. Since *guddifachaa* is partly aimed at and involves economic imperatives, such as inheritance, access to resources, distribution of wealth, traditional mutual supports, rendering social securities etc., it is regulated, sanctioned and enforced by the customary law enacted by *Gadaa* leaders. It is the customary law of inheritance, property holding and resource utilization, which guides *guddifachaa*. *Guddifachaa* in Borana is a living example of interconnection that exists between the economy, political and legal system of the Oromo society. The suppression of the institution that controls validation, sanctions and insures enforcement of *guddifachaa* directly affects or threatens the very *raison d'être* of the practice.

Blackhurst (1996: 246) comments that:

A speculative history is that as the centralizing power of gada waned, local groups were increasingly unable to make formal arrangements with stronger groups and that the political

adoption, *moggaasa*, was superseded by smaller private arrangements akin to fostering or domestic adoption

As this statement indicates, the diminishing status and role of *Gadaa*, practically abolished inter ethnic and low status groups' adoption among most Oromo communities and substantially reduced the practice in Borana and Guji areas. In the same way *boojuu* (war captives) adoption was at least officially prohibited since the time of conquest.

Another effect of conquest upon *guddifachaa* is manifested in land alienation. As the Oromo people were conquered the land tenure system was changed and the government followed the policy of land alienation. This discouraged adoption among Oromo, who are engaged in sedentary farming. Since most Oromo were reduced to serfs, adopting children to tenant family was discouraged. Besides, private ownership of land and property opened ways for opposition of close kins to adoption of non-relatives or non-Oromo groups. The imposed land tenure and property relation paved ways claimants for inheritance by extending succession entitlements to cognatic relatives of individuals.

Because of the geographical location, the Oromo have contacts with several non-Oromo ethnic groups. These contacts have also positive and negative consequences. The contacts have contributed in developing material cultures, in acquiring innovative skills, ideas and institutions. On the contrary, the contacts adversely affected *guddifachaa* practices. For instance the adoption of Christianity or Islam religions by some Oromo, negatively influence *guddifachaa*. Primarily the religions undermined rituals of *guddifachaa* as heathen beliefs. Besides they became obstacles to full assimilation (integration) and destroyed symbolic and moral basis of *guddifachaa*. They become restraining factors in child adoption even among close relatives.

The intervention of some government forces also created suspicion between *galaa* individuals and the adoptive *gosa*. Because of political agitation non-Oromo ethnic *galaa* groups are becoming inimical to the interest of the adoptive clans by involving in sponage activities. This led not only to mutual suspicions but also undermined integrative aspects of the adoption. Urbanization is another social factor that has negatively influenced *guddifachaa*. Conquest was accompanied with formation of garrison towns (military colonies) (Hinnant 1978, Taddesse 1988). Negele, Meeggaa, Yaabaloo, Moyyaale etc. for instance, are typical garrison towns. These urbanization processes enabled migrants and small businessmen to settle in Borana land with permission from urban or town administrators. This reduced the traditional authority the *gosa* had in admitting individuals to Borana territory and directly affected *galaa* adoption practices and led to distinctive developments between the rural and urban people.

6:3. THE INFLUENCE OF ADOPTION LAW

The *guddifachaa* practices have been principally based on customary rules, regulations and principles. In each type of *gudifachaa* request, receiving and validating processes or rituals were conducted on the basis of set of rules expressed by custom or more precisely by *aadaa-seera* Oromo. The institution was based on customary practices maintained controlled, sanctioned or enforced by traditional community officials, the *gosa* elders, *hayyuu* and/or by *Gadaa (Bokkuu)* at each level.

The adoption law incorporated in the family law 1960 Civil Code was the first statutory law enacted to regulate contract of adoption in the country. This law is applicable only to child adoption and does not treat all the types of *guddifachaa* practices. The *galaa* and varieties of integrative *guddifachaa* practices were neither incorporated nor expressively prohibited by

the statutory adoption law. The reason for the discrepancy seems that the law was based on experiences, notion and child adoption practices in western world, notably that of the French practice (Beckstrom. 1972: 149).

This statutory adoption law has both positive and negative influences upon customary *guddifachaa* practices. In the Amharic version of the Civil Code, articles pertinent to adoption law, the Oromo term *guddifachaa* was used to denote the word adoption. This Oromo term was accepted by Ethiopian parliament because there was no Amharic word that correctly conveys the concept of adoption. Bequele (1971:3) wrote,

After the draft Civil Code of Ethiopia of 1960 was submitted to parliament, a long debate took place concerning the appropriateness of the term *guddifatcha* to denote adoption. During the discussion some members argued that since under the Ethiopian constitution (art. 125) the official language of the country is Amharic, the Galla {sic} word *guddifatcha* should not be used in the code. Still others suggested that instead of *guddifatcha* the Amharic word *madego* should be used in the code to denote adoption....

As this word does not convey the true sense of adoption, it was not accepted.... In end the Galla {sic} word *guddifacha* was fully accepted because as pointed out, the sense of adoption is most clearly conveyed by the word *guddifacha*.

Primarily the *guddifachaa* institution is not limited to the ‘child adoption’ anticipated in the adoption law. It encompasses individuals or groups incorporation (integration) in Oromo society with varieties of rights, privileges, and duties as well child adoption. Thus, the adoption incorporated in the code was an aspect or one of the components of *guddifachaa* practices. In other words, the adoption law legitimatizes only an element among larger components of *guddifachaa* in Oromo society and introduced it to Ethiopian societies at large.

The parliament members, who suggested using the term *guddifachaa*, were correct in that the word was linguistically and technically appropriate and capable to convey the notion of adoption. Technically and practically *guddifachaa* is more expressive and comprehensive word than ‘*madego*’, which refers to “fostering”. Further more, the institution and the term

guddifachaa was either introduced by means of acculturation or has had a substantial influence upon the Amhara and their language, which is also the official language (Baquele 1971:1). This indicates that the resistance must be out of unawareness about the concept of adoption or out of prejudice and apathy to recognize officially the institution and the term as well. It seems the resistance was rather the continuation of officially prevailing bias of the regime not to accept or accommodate the culturally invaluable practice and terms used by the politically peripheral and marginalized people even if it confirms to what was socially desired.

On the other hand, irrespective of resistance it encountered from some parliament members, the term *guddifachaa* and its institution was legally promoted to be national institution by adoption law. It is one of the Oromo indigenous institution and a technical term, if any, to be officially accepted and legitimatised by government. Initially it was used along the Amharic word '*madego*' in the adoption law incorporated in Amharic version of Civil Code of 1960. But, in the Revised Family Code proclamation number 1/2000, the word *madego* was removed and only *guddifachaa* is used. The amendment made to adoption law, thus again vigorously raised the importance of the institution.

Regarding the provisions of the enacted adoption law there are articles, which are ambiguous, but which can conform to the customary practices. Like in the customary practice, when a child is adopted, prior consent of the natural parent is required, (art-803), the adoption creates bonds of filiations (art. 796), prohibit intra-family marriage (art. 583), result in changes of status, for instance, the adopted child shall take the name of adopter father as a patronymic name among others. Beckstrom (1972: 150) says,

The central characteristic in customary and code adoption is the same; a child inherits from its adoptive parents as if it were natural-born. Also in the final version of the code, the child inherits

from ascendants and collaterally of the adoptive parents unless publicly recorded declaration to the contrary are made by those persons within one year from the effective date of the adoption.

Although some of the provisions of the code that are related to adoption, basically do not contradict the customary rule; there are provisions, which make the customary practice of no avail. The major difference between the civil code and the customary practice of adoption lies in the code's stipulation that no adoption contract is valid after the code's effective date unless the contract is approved by court (Beckstrom 1972: 152). This invalidates or makes void the customary adoption practices. The code also allows the adopted child to inherit natural parent (art: 559:1) as well as the adopter family contrary to the customary rule that terminates the relationship with natural parents. Unlike the customary practice the adoption provision in the code prohibit adoption of child for the interest of adoptive parents and emphasizes the interest of the child. Although it seems that there is no apparent contradiction in this respect, unlike the customary *guddifachaa* it prohibits adoption of a child to poor family.

Furthermore, the 1960 Civil Code in general and the provisions related to adoption in particular were intended to substitute the customary practice. Although it is not explicitly put the provisions related to adoption outlawed the customary practices as of the effective date of the Code. The customary practices of adoptions of *ilmee galuu*, war victims or foundling children, individuals and corporate *guddifachaa* and orphans fostering in the rural areas were not incorporated in the code. By implication all such adoption practices were made illegal and the traditional role of *guddifachaa* as integrative social mechanism lost its legitimacy in the society.

In its social setting the adoption law was not based on the moral and value systems held by the society. Since most of the provisions were based on western European view and practice

of adoption, the code undermined the customary practices. The adoption law could not promote local adoption and provide legal ground for the rural and customary *guddifachaa* as well as for different forms of adoptions. The desired social imperatives of adoption were not achieved. In most rural areas of the country at large and in Oromo society in particular, adoption is mainly conducted in traditional and customary ways. Although it is not accepted by court of law, many children are adopted still in traditional and customary ways in rural areas. In the case of Borana and Gujii Oromo the registration of adoption in court is unknown. Let alone *guddifachaa*, inheritance to property, marriage system, compensation to injuries and other many civil cases are performed largely by traditional *aadaa seera* practices. One of my informants says:

There were two cases in which individual Borana men adopted sons from non-kins to maintain family line and get heir to property. The individuals adopted sons from non-Oromo ethnic groups by registering in court. But when they died, the *gosa* rejected the adoption and took all the property the men had. The case was brought before court and when the judge decided the adoption was valid, there arose upheaval. Government removed the judge, and the *gosa* secured the property. One of the adoptive sons was given some compensation by *gosa* for his services to the deceased adoptive man. The other one was totally denied.

This clearly indicates that the provision of adoption law could not effectively replace the customary practice or transformed it. It also negatively affects the traditional privileges and rights adopted children had by imposing the requirement of registration for validation.

6.4 ENDURANCE IN GUDDIFACHAA PRACTICES

Social structures, institutions, beliefs and value systems of the Oromo society have been tremendously affected or influenced by internally and externally induced changes at different times. The changes and their influences can be conspicuously noticed in some aspects of *guddifachaa* practices. Nevertheless, the major types and the institution of *guddifachaa* continued to exist in varying degrees with minor alterations.

Adoption of a son to secure individual family line, get heir to property and support during invalidity to individual family line, is still being practiced in rural area, particularly among Borana Oromo. Here adoption of children for purposes of *tikaa-obao* (*ergaa*) is widely conducted and admitting individuals to families, or *gosa* by means of *galaa* adoption takes place occasionally. Though despising 'low' status groups is disappearing from the society, about 42 individuals were adopted by *Gadaa* assembly at *gumii Gaayyo* (1997) and were conferred with full-fledged rights and privileges as *gosa* members. A few children who were found abandoned in battlefield during Ethiopia-Somalia war of 1977 were adopted to Borana families. One such case is found at *Hidii Lolaa*, The adopted child grows up and has now become a schoolteacher. He knows that he is an adopted child. A girl found abandoned during the battle grown at individual home near *Yaabaloo*. Unlike the boy mentioned earlier this girl does not know that she is an adopted girl. In an *ollaa*, *reeraa* and *maddaa* one can observe several numbers of adopted adult men, teenagers and young children, either by sonless families or for the purpose of *tikaa-obao* and mutual support in rearing children. Although they do not perform the traditional rituals, both Christian and Islam convert families adopt children in the same old way. From among my informants a number of Muslims and Christians adopted sons or gave children for adoption. Both the Christians and Muslims conduct ritual of adoption on the basis of their religion without affecting the basic tenet in *guddifachaa* such as right to succession, marriage prohibition, access to resources etc. Adopting a son by widows in posthumous of their husband also exists in every *ollaa*.

Elemaa Jaarso, a widow living around Melbana adopted a son of her deceased husband's brother called *Waariyoo Jaarso*. The son was adopted in about 3 months after birth. He is now 8 years old. *Godaantuu Jiloo*, a widow living at Dololo Makalaa also adopted a son of her deceased husband's brother. When the child was born she used *uluumaa* (seven times seven days seclusion ritual) for the birth of a son in the family.

The widow *Elemoo* had given birth to many children, but non-survived. She said this is the reason for her adoption of a son. *Jiloo* has four daughters, but no son and she was compelled to adopt a son to get heir to property of her husband as well maintain continuity of the family line.

I have encountered numbers of posthumous adoption by widows at *Roomso*, *Hodhodh*, *Danbalaa Baddana*, *Dubuluqi* and *ollaa* near Meegga town. Two Muslim men one from *Diid Jaarsa*, and the other from *Diid Meegga* adopted recently their nephews. This exemplifies that religious change did not alter traditional *guddifachaa*. Few Borana Muslims think that *Quraan* prohibits adoption. But most Muslim Borana who are versed in *Quraan* do not agree with such a belief. They say *Quraan* does not prohibit adoption, but commands that the children be informed of the name of their natal parent although they take the patronymic name of their birth father. Adopted Muslim children still take the name of their adoptive father as patronymic name. But the Muslims conduct no *gubisaa* ceremony. By arranging feast and giving blessing according to *Quranic* law, they give name to the adopted son. The Muslims also do not follow the principle of infant son adoptions and daughters are entitled to inheritance. These are in fact significant deviation from the tradition of adoption. Different factors also contribute to the endurance of some types of *guddifachaa* in the society. One of the principal objectives of adoption in western world is said to be protection of child welfare, whereas traditionally it was motivated by parent welfare promotion (Goody 1969). But the modern adoption in the west is not radically different and a substitute to the traditional adoption practices. Families without children still need children for adoption. Biologically (physiologically) infertile or childless families for different reasons want to have children to fulfill their social, psychological (emotional) and economic needs. They also want to get social support and heir to their properties. Compelled by such motive they adopt children and this is aimed at parent welfare promotion, which is the same with traditional practices. In other words such type of adoption is by no means different from

parent welfare motivation. The difference may be observed in selection method, and absence of gender preference in modern adoption practices. Son adoption among the Oromo society persistently continued to exist since it provide social progeny for biological infertile families just like the modern adoption in the West.

People in the rural area still believe in maintaining continuity of family line, getting heir to property and support during old age or ill health. A Need for labor force, mutual support in child rearing, fostering orphans etc. still exist in the rural areas. Migrant laborers, destitute individuals, displaced men, orphan teenagers etc. need a peaceful way of integration into society. They also need a means of getting access to material resources and status. The Oromo traditional social mechanism to achieve these objectives was *guddifachaa* system. Those mentioned social and economic imperatives contributed to persistency and continuities of major types of *guddifachaa* practices.

Guddifachaa entitles adopted sons to inherit the property of adoptive families, it confers on them varieties of rights and privileges. It protects these rights, interests and promotes welfare of children. For instance adoptive parents are required to provide food, cloth and shelter, educate and socialize the adopted sons according to traditions. Mistreating, abusing, enslaving etc. are strictly forbidden. There is a rule that *ergaramaan kan abbaati* “meaning mistreated adopted son, has the right to go back to natal family. The rule revokes or invalidates the adoption with a maximum compensation in Borana. In this respect, rights (privileges) and duties (obligations) that the customary adoption creates between the adoptive parents and adoptees mainly conform to modern statutory based adoption regulations. The tradition provides the same or some times better benefits. It promotes and

protects the interests and welfare of children in almost equal footing. This enabled traditional *guddifachaa* to continue and be on a firm position.

It is true that non-recognition of customary based *guddifachaa* practices in adoption law adversely affects the institution in entitlements such as maintenance, pensions, and in other social security and fringe benefits that customary *guddifachaa* provides. When dispute arises over the customary adoption, the adoptive parents or the adopted children cannot assert their right to maintenance, pension or inheritance at court of law. Since some provisions of the adoption law make invalid the customary practices, welfare and interest of the adopted children are seriously affected. However, the effects are significant only in urban, suburbs and nearby localities. In other words most of the rural Oromo population follow the customary rule and disputes hardly arise over adoptions.

In Borana inheritance to property, lineage and family ties are regulated mainly by customary rules. The *aadaa-seera* Borana regulates most aspects of domestic and *politico-jural* domains. This also insured vitality and continuity of *guddifachaa*. Most *guddifachaa* practices are connected with inheritance, resource utilization, access to ritual and political life. Since, no significant alteration is seen in these fields, traditional *guddifachaa* practices among Borana Oromo is not much affected. Questions raised by local feminist activists are not a demand that require radical alternation in *guddifachaa*. Educated and feminist activists demand for modification in inheritance. They argue that women shall be entitled to inheritance to their natal parents with son born or adopted. This implies there is a demand for adjustment and continuity in *guddifachaa* practices.

Thus, partly because of the unawareness by rural people of the requirement of registration of adoption and resistance to the requirement, the customary *guddifachaa* (adoption) continued in the rural area at large. In fact it endured changes that took place.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The practices of adoption have been commonly known to many societies across the world since early time. Its historical origin is usually connected with the emergence of family, succession to property and ancestral beliefs among patrilineal societies. In anthropological discourses adoption is conceived as one of the variant means by which fictive kinship relations are created among human beings. The Oromo people practice since antiquity different types of adoption, known as *guddifachaa*, at domestic and community levels with different objectives.

Ilmma guddifachaa is one of the main forms of adoption practiced by the entire Oromo communities. A childless or sonless couple adopts a son for purposes of *daaraa dabarfanna* (maintaining continuity of family line), to get heir to property and support during ill health, old age or other invalidity situation. The Borana Oromo adopt a son of his paternal sib(s) or the close agnatic kins. The Borana Oromo hold the view that the children of their paternal sibs are considered as *ilmee gudeeda* (biological child). They also believe that if a sonless man adopts a son from different lineage or alien group, the property of the lineage of adoptive man will be transferred to other *gosa* or ethnic group. The Oromo in different localities also prefer to adopt sons of their sibs or close kins. But in the absence of available son for adoption from within close kins they adopt from other Oromo clans or even from non-Oromo ethnic groups living in their neighbors.

It appears that selection of a son for adoption among Borana Oromo for purposes of securing continuity of lineage follows the principle of kin selection theory. The practice seems to confirm the socio-biological prediction that adoption is a transaction, which occurs primarily

among kins for purpose of recruitment of heirs and redistribution of property (Silk 1980:801). Among other Oromo communities also there is a great tendency of preferring blood relatives for adoption. The Oromo maxim” *itti aantiin reeffatti aanti*’ (close kin escort coffin closely) reflects the value held by the society. The introduction of private ownership of land in some locality might have also augmented such beliefs among the Oromo.

But all types of son or child adoptions among Borana and other Oromo cannot be solely attributed to this biological nature and behavior of man. In Borana, although they may be related by blood a sonless man cannot adopt a son of his maternal cousin, son of his sister, or affines for purpose of *daara dabarfanna*. Adoption of additional son (*ilmma dabalanna*) or daughter adoption also does not follow the rule of kin selection. This implies *ilmma guddifachaa* involves a combination of biological, cultural and social factors depending on each circumstance. The adoption of ‘*ilme galuu*’ also mainly aims at economic consideration. When a child is adopted to a family for purpose of *tikkaa obaa* or for support of natal family in child rearing kin selection rule is not applied. Here the adoption revolves around economic imperatives such as labor demand, wealth distribution etc. and the value held by the society in child rearing.

The Borana and Oromo at large adopt children in addition to their own biological offspring. This again does not comport to the theory of kin selection in biology. It cannot be attributed to the egalitarian nature of Oromo society and communal ownership of property. Anthropological studies do not reveal that adoption is practiced by the so-called egalitarian societies alone, Goody (1969: 1990) argues contrary to such assumption and even connects adoption practices with development of ownership of private property, status, wealth, and unified religious practices in the society. *Guddifachaa* cannot also be attributed to mere love

for children as some writers speculate, that is to say, “the Oromo adopt children because they love children.” Such psychological (emotional) reductionist approach is erroneous because essentially human beings love children and this cannot be a unique nature of Oromo.

Rather child adoption practices can be attributed to combinations of different factors. Primarily *guddifachaa* provides social progeny for biologically infertile or deficient couples and or sonless families. This enables the childless or sonless families to maintain their lineage, get heir to property and support. This in turn fulfills their psychological (emotional) feelings. It builds up their social status and influences in the community life. Their ritual, political, and other social status is maintained by such *guddifachaa*. It is also a subtle way of adjustment to family size and wealth distribution in the society.

The Oromo phrases *dhala dabalanna*, *maati balifanna*, *soddaa horanna*, etc. in *guddifachaa* are sociological concepts in adoption. Adoption of children to a family in addition to biological one’s is some time motivated to expand net works of social ties and influences in the society. It also shows the prestigious position and wealth of individual. This enables individuals to win influences, get more allies (*gurmuu*) and there by strengthen political and economic position in the society. Although there is no such maintenance of ancestral beliefs among the Oromo, adopted sons are required to offer sacrifices (*dhibaayyu*) for adoptive parents after death. *Dhibaayyu* (libation) is offered after death to honor dead parents and appease their *ayyaana* known as *ekeraa*. This indicates *guddifachaa* involves and serves ranges of cultural, political, economic, ritual and religious purposes as well.

Galaa and integrative types of adoptions are other special features of adoption practices among Oromo society. Individual or group *galaa* adoption principally fulfills social and economic interests of adoptees. The adopted *galaa* gets access to material resources, status,

role, marriage, privilege and rights to participate in rituals, political and other activities in the community. The adoptive family or *gosa* also benefits by getting more manpower either for domestic works (household economy) or the community at large. Empirical instances of such practices are that of Borana Oromo. Individual teenager or adult adopted to a family or clan in Borana engage in *tikaa obaa* maintenance of *elaa*, cattle management, protection of pasture land etc. Watering cattle from *elaa* and taking them to '*foraa*' (fertile pasture) area essentially need young and adult manpower. Traditionally these needs are met partly by adopted individuals or groups.

The phrase '*gosa dabalanaa*' (*baayifanna*) also expresses the sociological concept and objective of *galaa* adoption. The objective of such adoption is mutual in that it increases the number of members in the community, strengthens their force for defenses or offence and provides the adoptee with a shelter and protection. Low status group were adopted to eliminate the existing social segregation (stigma and distinctions) to raise their status and there by bring social integration.

Adoption of non-Oromo ethnic groups or individuals mainly aims at political-cum social integration. Such adoption enables the adoptee to acquire nationality in Oromo society. It has been an essential mechanism to achieve political and military alliances, as source of manpower for defense and offense in warfare, a means of territorial expansion, and getting access to economically important and strategic geographical areas. It was also one of the main factors that increased the demography of Oromo people. Integrative adoption further enabled the Oromo people to form larger political entity with major ethnic group in the Horn of Africa.

Anthropologists and historians misapprehended such adoption as a simple form of fictive kinship creation methods in the so-called simple societies. But it has been a sophisticated political mechanism of naturalizing alien nationals, conferring nationality and a means of acquisition of land, (resources) and manpower by peaceful means. The term '*gosoomsuu*' in this integrative adoption clearly expresses the political concept making national and not just making simple clan member as some earlier writers misconceived it. This adoption was not aimed at creating of kinship relations between clans or was not derived from egalitarian nature of the Oromo society. Instead it was a sign of developed political culture and value system that transcend kinship and ethnic boundary to accommodate aliens by peaceful means. In both *galaa* and integrative adoption, domestic *guddifachaa* became *politico-jural* mechanism of legitimizing membership in the society. This important political adoption was made disfunctional with loss of sovereignty of the Oromo nation as a result of conquest and incorporation to Ethiopia.

Although not frequent, abandoned and foundling children were integrated into the Oromo community by *guddifachaa*. Such practice usually happens at localities where the Oromo share common boundaries with non-Oromo ethnic groups. As mentioned above, the Oromo also practice orphan fosterages. In Borana orphan fosterage is conducted by close kins or the *gosa* when the children became fully orphaned. Since there is no divorce in Borana, mere disturbance to family does not lead to deprivation of children and the need for fostering.

All the types of *guddifachaa* practices are legitimized and publicized at rite-de-passages, initiations, and public assemblies. Ritual of *gubbisaa (moggaasa)* is the main arena of ratifying child adoption in public. The rite of hair shaving (*mataa haadu*), giving *andhuura (heifer)* slaughtering bull(s) and blood anointing (*arreerachisa*), tying *meedhicha*, are

intended to publicize and ratify *galaa* and integrative adoption. These rituals are mainly conducted in the presence of traditional political leaders (*Gadaa*), *hayyuu*, *gosaa* elders or known and respected individuals. This legitimizes and widens social acceptances of each *guddifachaa* in the society. It also ensures enforcement of the contract of adoption practice to protect the interests and welfare of the parties in the adoption.

The adoption policy of the country is derived from western child adoption and fostering practices. Most provisions of adoption law are copied from western adoption provision, which primarily aim at protection and promotion of welfare (interests) of children. In the Draft Guide Line for Adoption prepared by the Ministry of Social and Labor Affairs (2000: 57) it is indicated that the Guideline is based on principles given in the Ethiopian Laws and various UN conventions on child adoption and fostering placement. The guideline reiterates that traditional fostering practice in the rural area shall be encouraged, but no specific means of attaining this goal is mentioned. The guideline does not refer to customary *guddifachaa* practice. Implicit in this guideline is that traditional adoption practice is not given recognition and support. This denies the adoption practice of the country moral and value bases. It also adversely affects the means of implementing monitoring, and evaluating current adoption services in the country. It appears that this might have prevented the expansion of adoption services and limited it to inter-country adoption. Most current fostering and placement works also deny the children familial environment and a means of integration to the community.

Although customary adoption practice is not given a legal recognition by the government, the practice of *guddifachaa* contributes to future adoption policy formulation. The Oromo

have had different means of controlling, monitoring and enforcing mechanism of adoption. Elders, individual community members, traditional leaders etc. follow the status of adopted child. They get up-to-date information about the well being and welfare of adopted child. They observe the way the adopted child, is socialized, trained, nurtured, educated, fed, etc. These enable them to search remedies for maltreatment of adoptive parents or misconducts of adopted child. The customary adoption has effective penal provisions to be imposed upon the transgressor of adoption rules. This traditional control mechanism contributes a lot to policy formation in adoption services.

The customary *guddifachaa* practice provides invaluable solution for foundling abandoned, orphaned (displaced) children. If such children are adopted to a society with such fertile ground of cultural and value system, they can easily be integrated into the community and get access to resources and status. Encouraging and expanding such local and traditional adoption enables monitoring and evaluation by concerned adoption agencies. It ensures enforcement of regulations, protection of welfare and interests of adopted children. Displaced children because of war, draught, natural calamities etc. also can easily get solution by promoting customary adoptions.

The *guddifachaa* is a generation old adoption practice developed by Oromo society. It has a symbolic cultural value and can be used as a fertile ground or springboard in the future adoption policy formulation.

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