

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

**INDIGENOUS SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN THE FACE
OF FAMINE
THE CASE OF BOORANA OROMO, SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA**

**BY
GEMECHU TAYE**

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INDIGENOUS SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN THE FACE
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GEMECHU TAYE

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BY
GEMECHU TAYE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS:

Ayalew Gebre

ADVISOR

Amel J.

James C. McCann

EXAMINER

J. C. M.

Gefayehu Kassa

EXAMINER

G. Gebre

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ACRONYMS

AFD	Action For Development
BLPDP	Boorana Lowland Pastoral Development Programme
CARE	Co-operation for Relief Assistance Everywhere
GTZ	German Technical Co-operation
ILCA	International Livestock Center for Africa
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
PA	Peasant Association
SORDU	Southern Rangelands Development Unit
DPPC	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission

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Transliteration:

All words of Oromo origin are spelled according to the writing and reading system in Oromo alphabet, *Qubee*, to ease the problems of reading some words

Key to *Qubee* (Oromo Alphabet)

Oromo Vowels		English Equivalent	
Short	Long	Example	Long
a	aa	baala	a are
e	ee	beela	e: were
i	ii	mila	i: he
o	oo	moora	o: for
u	uu	quufuu	u: you

Source :

BOKKU (2000).

Consonants

Oromo consonants (phonemes) are stressed (geminated) by doubling the similar phonemes, and clustered by devoicing two different consonants. Doubled vowels represent a long sound as indicated above.

There are 5 paired phonemes that are formed by combining two different consonants. These are ch, dh, ny, ph, and sh. Of these, dh, ny and ph have different sounds from the English consonants.

dh : voiceless, dental, implosive, stop – as in 'dhadhaa' meaning 'butter'

ny : voiceless, palatal, nasal – as in 'nyaara' meaning 'eyebrow'

ph : voiceless, bilabial, ejective, stop – as in 'kophee' meaning 'shoe'

Also (c), (q) and (x) have different sounds from the English consonants.

c : voiceless, palatal, ejective – as in 'cabsuu' meaning 'to brake'

q : voiceless, velar, ejective, stop – as in 'qaataa' meaning 'trigger'

x : voiceless, dental, implosive, stop – as in 'xandhacha' meaning 'gland'

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is to investigate the indigenous survival strategies of Boorana in the face of famine. To this effect different research methods are employed. Some of these are participant observation, case studies, interviews and analysis of secondary of the data.

The results of the study show that though the Boorana experienced famine many years before and in the past few decades, they have been recurrently facing this crisis. It also shows that to cope with this crisis, the Boorana have developed their own mechanisms. These mechanisms are the development of indigenous (customary) resource management strategies, i.e. land, pasture, water successful herd management, cultural early warning system, food rationing, resorting to famine food, mobility strategies dependence on market and the like. It also shows that the households respond to famine differentially depending on their resources.

In addition, the Boorana have developed social institutions which have roles in resource mobilization, exchanges and upon which households rely during normal and crisis time. These social institutions are part and parcel of the *Gadaa* system. The study also found out that the Boorana try to involve themselves in non pastoral activities as a means to survive famine. Some of these strategies are recently introduced. This shows the aspects of change and continuity in their coping mechanisms.

Based on the result of the study it has been recommended that these indigenous knowledge has to be preserved and strengthened and be used in combination with external aid to overcome famine and to curb the food insecurity of the pastoralists in general and the Boorana in particular.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the Problem

Pastoralism is a mode of production that depends on natural forage. In arid and semi-arid regions, this requires constant or periodic movements in search of pasture, a factor that differentiates this form of livestock production from ranching and other forms of livestock husbandry (Markakis, 1993; Barfield, 1993).

Pastoralists in Ethiopia constitute about 5 million, people i.e 12 percent of the total population and occupy about 61% of the total land of the country. The Boorana and Karrayyuu Oromo, the Somali, Afar, Nuer, Arbore are some of pastoral groups in the country (Coppock,1994:17; Tafesse, 2000:35; Getachew,2001:66).

Some of the major pastoral problems in Ethiopia are the marginality of the area (arid and semi-arid) they occupy, unreliable rainfall, shortage of water, poor infrastructure, social service and market service. The appropriation of pastoral communal resources by the state, the expansion of protected areas, privatization of land, the encroachment of farming into grazing land, occurrence of drought and famine are also the problems of the pastoralists (Ayalew,2001).

Recently, pastoral production systems in the Horn, including that of the Boorana, have under pressure. According to Fratkin (1994); Manger (1996) and Egeimi (1996) the crisis

is caused by both internal (drought, climate, ecology, etc.) and external (integration into commercial economy, individualization, agricultural alienation of land for agriculture etc.) factors, where the latter factor is the first effecting pastoral economy.

Like other pastoralists in the Horn, the Boorana have repeatedly faced the tragedy of either short or prolonged famine. More recently, in the year 1999/2000 drought and famine resulted in livestock and human death. As a result, the number of people vulnerable to famine and who needed food assistance in Boorana zone was estimated to be about 800,000. The pastoralists in the zone in general and the Boorana in particular, constitute a good deal of this number and they have not recovered from the famine (Boorana Zone Disaster and Prevention Bureau(BZDPB), 2000; Boorana Zone Culture and Information Department(BZCID), 2000; Ethiopian Herald, February 20 ,2001; Helland, 2000).

The diversity of the environment within which people live requires an sets of adaptations. Peasant and pastoral households have long-standing indigenous strategies to cope with drought, seasonal food insecurity and severe food shortages. Some writers have perceived that pastoralism is inherently crisis ridden production system, backward-and traditional. Pastoralists are also viewed as people who manage their resources out of rationale economic principles, attach more cultural than economic value to their stock, ever wandering, causing desertification, exhibiting large herd size, lacking market orientation and disappearing in the face of drought and famine in the future.

However, recently many scholars have agreed that pastoralism is not a crisis ridden and the pastoralists devise environmentally suited adaptive strategies or cultural values intricately bound to the economic adaptation (Fratkin, 1994; Manger, 1996; Egeimi, 1996;). Accordingly, Pastoralism in East Africa in general and the Boorana in particular, constitutes an age-old tradition that historically proved capable of adaptation to arid and semi- arid region. Thus, the Boorana Oromo are not simple spectators in the face of this crisis. They have developed different types and forms of indigenous survival strategies to cope with famine. Among other things, the digging of deep water wells and the concomitant complex organization, especially the institutions of social security (cooperation and restocking) are worth mentioning (Asmarom, 1973; Bokku, 1996; Helland, 2000; Huqqa, 2000).

This research, therefore, attempts to examine closely the survival strategies of Boorana Oromo in the face of famine. Survival strategies in this research are defined as indigenous mechanisms developed by Boorana to cope with famine. The problem the research seeks to address is that the Boorana mobilize all resources of the community using their indigenous survival strategies as an important means to overcome famine. In other words, it is true that the continuation of relief aid is indispensable in saving lives. Equally, the Boorana have their indigenous ways of coping with famine. More specifically, varied strategies of resource management (livestock, land, water) are among the adaptive responses. Changing the pattern of mobility, engagement in non-pastoral activities such as trade are some of the adaptive responses. Moreover, the practice of asset disposal, changes in normal diet, division of labor, the use of environmental knowledge for early warning and the establishment and maintenance of

successful economic and social relationships both within and beyond the community are also the aspects of the surviving strategies that will be studied in this research .The study also seeks to establish whether community institutions (social security or insurance mechanism of restocking and feeding individuals or families) and social networks such as intra and inter-households, sub-lineage, clans and kinship structure with their culturally defined law and rule enacting body have roles and are the source of resource exchanges and mutual support in the process to survive at the time of famine. It also tries to find out the Boorana perceptions of drought and famine survival strategies. Along with this, the study also seeks to understand the role of variables like wealth, which results in differential effects of famine and responses as well as change and continuity in these strategies . In brief the study attempts to investigate the built-in indigenous survival strategies of the Boorana households.

Pastoralist response to famine is not a new subject, but it has not been given the importance it deserves in the literature on Ethiopian famine and seasonal food shortages. For example, researchers like Mesfin (1984), McCann (1984); Adhana (1987), Dessalegn (1987, 1991), webb et al (1994) have studied famine and or famine survival strategies. However, they have focused merely on peasants. Only few researchers like, Cossins (1972), Devitt (1977) and Toulmin (1985) have identified diversification of assets' disposal and raiding as critical survival mechanisms among pastoralists. Similarly, Seman and Holt (1979) dealt with nutritional status of the population of Eastern Ethiopia (Ogaden). In the case of the Boorana, Getachew (1995) and Almayehu (1998) have traced famine coping mechanisms. Bokku (1996) has also briefly discussed about the Boorana welfare institutions. In general, the same person

stated that the documents on pastoralist response to famine are not widely researched. Moreover, little or no attention is paid to indigenous pastoralist early warning practices, their famine perceptions, their views of famine survival strategies, social institutions and social networks like kinships which are embedded in the socio-economic system as a cultural knowledge. With this regard, how the Boorana perceive famine and famine survival strategies are not examined. Furthermore, the dynamism in these strategies both within and beyond the society resulting from socio-cultural relation is also often less treated. They also overlooked the differential response to food insecurity by communities, households and individuals. This research, therefore, tries to fill these gaps in dealing with and investigating the indigenous survival strategies of the Boorara in the face of famine.

In doing so, the research will contribute to anthropological knowledge by demonstrating the importance of understanding pastoralist knowledge and indigenous survival strategies and household dynamics in the process of coping with famine. With regard to Boorana, the research will help to understand the indispensability of their indigenous knowledge of coping with drought and famine and if these are improved, strengthened and extended they might form a viable and indigenous system of drought and famine survival to improve their food security.

The research will provide important information on policy implication in that one has to start from the existing knowledge and practices as a point of departure to improve the program of food security in the area in combining with external aid so as to overcome famine at local, regional and national levels.

2. OBJECTIVES

General Objectives

1. Examine the indigenous survival strategies of Boorana in the face of famine, especially at a time when there is no or limited external assistance.
2. Assess the role of Boorana value system in response to famine

Specific Objectives.

The specific objectives of the research are:

1. To identify different types, forms and phases of survival strategies developed by Boorana in response to famine.
2. To describe the role of Boorana social institutions and networks in famine response and the rules that regulate the functioning of the Boorana institutions and networks which have significant bearing on famine survival strategies.
3. To highlight Boorana perceptions of famine and famine survival strategies as well as the differential response of individuals, households and groups to famine.
4. To assess change and continuity in these strategies

3. Methods ,Fieldwork Experience and Limitation

The research was basically qualitative and was based on both primary and secondary data. Participant observation and in-depth interviews were the principal data collection method employed in the study. Other research methods like unstructured interviews, case-studies and focus group discussions were also used to supplement participant observation. I have also used secondary data collected from different organizations.

The fieldwork process was conducted in three successive phases. The first phase of this fieldwork began in August (3/8/2001) and lasted until September (24/9/2001). The second one was from October 2, 2001 to December 25 and the third was from March 4 to March 16, 2002.

During the first phase of the fieldwork, the first week was devoted to obtaining research permission letter from concerned organizations or from Boorana Zone and district offices. This was followed by surveying the field site or selecting the most useful site for the fieldwork. Then effort was made to familiarize myself or establish rapport with community members, especially Boorana elders. Since I had already good relation with the elders, key informants and other members of the community in my previous encounter I did not face problem in establishing rapport. The relation helped me to identify meetings of Boorana on social and economic issues. On these gatherings elders and my former friends introduced me with the people. Thus, I was fortunate to tell the people why I was there. Moreover, that opportunity helped me to identify more potential informants in addition to those I knew before.

After site selection and identification of knowledgeable informants, I spent some times with these people, posing few general questions to them and holding informal talks. In the last days of the first phase of my fieldwork, I started to participate and observe community activities. This helped me to devise the direction of the second phase of fieldwork.

After a few days break in September 2001 for consultation with my supervisor, I began the second phase full-time fieldwork using participant observation, which characterized my entire stay in the field. Participant observation was used in combination with in-depth interviews. These methods were aimed at collecting data on how the Boorana respond to famine or survival strategies i.e. crisis anticipation /early warning/, resource management strategies (and, water and grass use and livestock); the role of kinship and other social support networks, communal prayer, recovery and restocking process, social and territorial organizations. Participant observation and in-depth interviews were also used to show adjustment to food consumption, market dependence and non-herding strategies. To this effect, participation in and observation of the daily routine of community such as social, economic and cultural activities, meetings, assemblies dealing with resource use and management strategies, restocking through kinship and recovery processes were conducted. Moreover, the participation in and observation of social and political gatherings, clan and village meetings (pastoral meetings), religious ceremonies (communal praying) were carried out. Observation of relief distribution sharing and gifts was also conducted .

I also participated in different meetings and workshops on pastoral production and development activities organized by NGOs in which pastoral communities from Boorana Zone and Kenya (Ethio-Kenya cross- border workshop) took part. The issues raised on the workshops included drought, famine, market, and indigenous ways of drought and famine survival strategies. The third phase of the fieldwork focused on collecting data needed to enrich my study.

Unstructured interviews were systematically conducted with a number of selected Boorana elders (men and women), key informants, victims of famine, government and NGO staffs. The aim of conducting unstructured interviews with Boorana elders was to know the custom (*aadaa*) of the Boorana, especially the role of *Gadaa* System in general, and kinship and other social and economic support networks in particular, as strategy to cope with famine. Unstructured interviews were also conducted to know and reconstruct the practice of reduction of food consumption, asset disposal, exchanges, community cooperation and prayer, early warning, the shift to non-herding activities and resource management during the drought and famine. Moreover, unstructured interviews were held with selected men and women from the community and government and NGOs staffs to reconstruct history, causes, nature, impact of drought and famine.

Another method used for data collection was focus group discussion. This method was used to gather data on community level issues, which include people's interrelations, views, concepts about drought, famine survival strategies, causes of famine, the role of *Gadaa* system and other institutions as famine survival strategies. The group was composed of eight members among which three of them were women. The selection criteria were based on age, gender and wealth.

Case studies were conducted on individual households who were victims of famine restocked or rehabilitated. An attempt was made to generate data on Boorana *aadaa* (custom) linking with survival strategies, mutual assistance through kinship organization, other social support networks and recovery processes. Case studies also targeted to

show differential response to famine, resource disposal process, change in food habit and shift to non-herding activities.

The study also employed relevant archival and documentary sources, unpublished and published, found in different government and non-government organizations. Data were gathered from organizations such as Agriculture Bureau, Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Office, Economic Development and Planning Bureau, NGOs and SORDU. The data collected from these sources were used to look at the dimension and extent of famine in the historical perspective. Together with this literature other secondary data from different sources provided data on the history, culture, climate, demography, physical features, ecology, social and economic settings. The secondary data were also used to analyze causes of famine the forms of responses to famine by the community and government . Furthermore, academic and research literature were also used to supplement data from the above organizations.

Although the study has ostensibly achieved most of its objectives, it has also faced certain limitations. The first problem the researcher faced was related to the time the research was carried out and the nature of the research topic. As far as the time of the research is concerned, it was conducted during the recovery phase of the famine. Thus, such problems forced the researcher to stress reconstructing the nature, magnitude, impact and the forms of response during the drought and famine through interviews, case studies and other methods.

Apart from this, the researcher also encountered certain problems related to nature of topic. These include data on the number of people that died as a result of famine and

the impact of Ethio- Eritrea war on pastoralists in general, and the Boorana particular. Officials were usually reluctant to disclose the number of people that died as a result of famine and the impact of the war on relief aid. Hence, the problem was over come by spending more time with concerned persons and authorities to establish rapport and to make clear to them that my research has no any affiliation with any group. Moreover, attempt was made to informally converse with and interview members of the community who were eye witnesses the effects of drought and famine . Hence, invaluable data were obtained in this way, which could have been possible other wise. Further more, the dearth of secondary data on the subject i. e famine and survival strategies especially among the pastoralist were serious challenges. There are no systematically recorded data on famine. Besides this, during my fieldwork, I did not visit a few parts of Boorana land due to security problem. Furthermore, due to time factor, limited resource and scope of the paper, the study also did not raise certain issues like gender pertaining to Boorana survival strategies and famine, which were touched only in passing. Thus, further research is needed to clarify government early warning, the issue, of women (gender), relief aid, development issues, inter-ethnic relations.

Data collection was also focused on Yablloo district though other districts were occasionally visited. In spite of all these problems and limitations, the study has achieved its objectives,. I hope the study of survival strategies of the Boorana contributes to the already existing literature on pastoralists in general and Boorana, in particular in paving ways for those who are interested to carry out further research. The researcher being an Oromo, has no problem of communicating with his informants. This also helped the researcher to understand some of the cultural symbols, and values that

are embedded in the culture easily. Furthermore, being culturally an insider helped me to establish rapport and win the trust of the people very easily. This has also given me an opportunity to get access and observe and to some degree to participate in various socio-economic activities as well as ceremonies associated with the **Gadaa** system since 1994. In other words, the researcher got the opportunity to enquire about the community, its culture and social organization.

4. Rationale for the Selection of Research Topic and Site

My research interest in issues of Boorana survival strategies is to a large extent the reflections of my life experiences in Boorana since 1994. Due to my daily activities that are related to cultural study, I was variously involved in pastoral life style i.e. **Gadaa** System. Along this, since 1994 I have closely observed the impact of recurrent drought and famine in Boorana, and how the Boorana culturally respond to crisis. The pastoralist way of life and pastoral environment such as Boorana's complex water wells with its concomitant social organization of the **Gadaa** system stimulated my curiosity and interest in this topic . All these influenced me to embark on this study and to document some of the aspects of famine and its coping strategies.

As it was already stated in the statement of the problem Yaaballo was selected as a major research site. This is due to the fact that Yaaballo is one of the most drought and famine prone districts in the zone. In *Yaaballo* there were famine victim's who were settled in some Kebeles. Moreover, *Yaaballo* is where one can see the shift from

herding to other economic activities either to diversify their household economy or as a means of survival (eg. petty trade). *Yaaballo* also borders *Guji* land and other non - Oromo groups, and it is very important to see their economic and social relations. It is also one of the areas where one can observe Boorana culture as it are functions. Although *Yaaballo*, especially *Diid Hara Kebele* ,was selected as a main research site other famine affected *Kebeles* and districts were also visited.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

1. Literature Review

East Africa, with a large variety and number of pastoral societies, has historically been the focus of anthropological studies. There are various misunderstandings and explanations that have often been offered to the pastoral societies in general and East African pastoralists in particular. Some of the widely held views are the conceptions of the pastoralists as "traditional", stagnant, backward, and sticking to conservative social structures and anti- development. All these faulty assumptions in the literature affect the proper understanding of pastoral production systems, the complex processes of changes and mislead development programs (Barfield, 1993; Egeimi, 1996; Fratkin et. al, 1994). Pastoralists are not wandering; they are rational in their economic, social and political values and they know where and why they are going. Above all, these misconceptions about pastoralism and pastoralists affect the proper understanding of their indigenous survival strategies and coping mechanism that have developed over centuries.

In the history of anthropological studies of East African pastoralists, Herskovits (1926) in his popular thesis of the "Cattle Complex" marked the beginning of distorted images. Herskovits viewed East Africa as an area characterized by a unified cattle culture where prestige is associated with cattle ownership appeared to overshadow their economic value to the point of irrationality.

Few researches were conducted up to 1960. An example of these works were Evans - Prtichard on Nuer (1940), Baxter on Boorana (1954), Gulliver on Turkana and Jie (1955),

and Lewis on the Somali (1961). According to Fratkin et. al (1994) these researchers have put major emphasis on the unique fit between the pastoralist peoples and their arid lands, between their particular social organizations and the demands of mobile livestock production.

In the 1960s and 1970s, a new generation of anthropologists emerged with ample data on various aspects of East African pastoralism focusing on ecology, especially in studies about the regions experiencing extensive drought and famine. Among other things, the view of African pastoralist as ecologically insensitive as such gained prominence through the popular thesis of the "Tragedy of commons". The central contention of this view is that individual pastoralist seeks to maximize return from the commonly held resources by keeping as large a herd as possible without caring for the ecology. Thus, it causes desertification. The tragedy of the commons has been repeatedly under criticism for it is calling the individualization of the communally held resources and this limitation of the strategies for herd movement and efficient use of resources by denying the pastoralists the means to cope with risk and uncertainty (Lane and Moorehead, 1995; Lane, 1998; Buku, 2000). The critics of this view argue that pastoralism is an appropriate and efficient adaptations to pastoralist environment and they deploy elaborate ecological knowledge and herding strategies in management and utilization of scarce resources and also effective in desertification control. Herd mobility is also encouraged under communal system to cope with scarce resources (Abdel - Ghaffar, 1976; Oba, Baxter, 1990vi; 1994a,24; Manger, 1996: 24; Oba, 1997a; Fratkin, 1998: 123). Thus, individualization of the communal resources is detrimental to the indigenous survival

strategies and coping mechanisms which have a critical role in resource management during drought and famine.

In the 1980s, the discussion of the pastoral production has shifted to dealing with variations in social organizations and adaptations experienced by different pastoral populations including multi-resource exploitation and dependence on non-pastoral products (Fraktin, 1994). Since 1990s, new studies appeared linking anthropology, history, ecology and development. Some of these studies have focused on the Sahelian drought 1968- 1973 and the explanation of the deterioration of conditions of African pastoralists with Ethiopian famine (Johnson, and Anderson, 1988; Galaty and Johnson, 1990; Baxter and Hogg, 1990;).

There are different approaches to understand famine and its causes. In the modern Western discourse, famine is habitually referred to as disaster event focusing on a mass starvation unto death caused primarily by drought (Seyoum-Smith, 1986:126; De Waal, 1989: 5-6; Walker, 1989: 26-30; Keen, 1994:1). According to DeWaal (1989: 5-7; Walker, 1989: 26-30; Keen, 1994:1) such a simplistic view has led others to advocate the notion of food availability decline as a major cause of famine. This view assumes that inadequate food supply is arising from population increase and climatic or environmental factors.

The views of disaster and food supply are challenged by Sen's (1981) view of "entitlement theory". In this case it is argued that famines are not caused by shortages of food supply but due to individual failure to afford whatever food is available (Walker,

1989: 30; Keen, 1994: 4). This theory is criticized for ignoring the institutionally based entitlement (politics of famine), considering the victims as passive spectators and focusing on poverty and market forces. In other words, it ignores the institutions which expose these victims to famine

Out of these critics, another view which conceptualized famine not as a disastrous event but as a process with beneficiaries come out. Accordingly, famine results from a social, political, economic and process of changes. Amrita Rangasami (1985:1748) in Keen has suggested that the famine process can not be defined with reference to the victims of starvation alone. "It [famine] is a process in which benefits accrue to one section of the community while losses flow to the other." Famine as a process progressively depriving the victim community out of its assets including the ability to labour. For example, price movements during famine in Northern Nigeria in 1973-1974 were observed to have certain beneficiaries (Watts, 1983:440). Moreover, the acquisition of land by certain groups during famine has been observed in Rajasthan, India (Jodha, 1975:1616) and in Bangladesh (Hartmann and Boyce;1979:26). Contrary to Sen's view that famine necessarily involves mortality, others argue that famine may, but need not result in mortality (Seyoum-Smith, 1986; De Waal, 1989:5-6; Walker, 1989: 26-36; Keen, 1994: 5-6). Generally, the famine disaster approach is based on outsiders view while famine as a process is drawn on famine victims experience or local perceptions of famine (Walker, 1989: 33-39).

Very recently, however, researches like Egeimi and Manger (1996) have focused on broad themes i.e. resource management instead of crisis management which is narrow

developmental one. According to these scholars, drought and food shortages are not new to the desert edge. While the dimension of the tragedy are to some extent clear, its secrets and causes are not. This has been attributed to the failure of social science research to understand the political, economic and social determinants that cause the crisis while focusing on nature, population pressure, ignorance or irrational land use. They conclude that pastoralists are culturally adaptive agent to the limitations of nature. However, their basic relationship to nature has been negatively affected and eroded by the working of structural processes of marginalization. As a whole, in the view of political ecologists, vulnerability to famine is a structural historical process shaped by the effects of geographical, ecological, political and economic marginalizations. These variables influence the functioning and changes in famine survival strategies and expose people to famine. Thus, development and modernization has failed to solve the age old problem of subsistence crisis and even in some cases aggravated them(Egeimi, 1996:30-33).

Famine victims are the vulnerable groups in the society. The groups who lack material resources (land, food, shelter etc.), access to support structures (organizationally) and socio-intellectual entitlement supported by strong ideology (traditional wisdom or knowledge) are easily vulnerable to famine. The degree of vulnerability varies in terms of age, sex, wealth, household, village and region (Walker, 1989: 30-33).

During famine, basic food (grain) price increases while that of the value of the assets like livestock reduces. Thus, the rich get richer and poor get poorer is a theme common to all famines (Walker, 1989: 32-33, Keen, 1994).

Famine was not uncommon in many parts of the world including Africa in the remote past. Today, however, it dominates international images of the Third World, particularly Africa. There are few documents on the history and nature of famine in Africa before the 19th century. In available literature it has been depicted that in the 1880s, 1970s and 1980s peasants and pastoralists in Africa have faced severe famine. The pastoralist communities, especially those in Kenya, Sudan, Sahel and down through South Africa were affected by famine which resulted in human and animal death, and subsequently the breakdown of social fabric. Also, in the 1990s and the year 2000, some countries in the Horn of Africa also experienced acute shortages of food and it seems that famine is still on agenda (Seigel, 1975; Swift, 1977; Johnson and Anderson, 1988; Pankhurst and Johnson, 1988; De Waal, 1989; Rau, 1991; Webb et al. 1994; Keen, 1994; Egeimi, 1996).

More specifically, in Ethiopia famine has tormented many peasants and pastoralists during the 19th century. This does not mean that there was no famine before this period (Mesfin, 1984; Pankhurst and Johnson, 1988; Johnson and Anderson, 1988; Goyder and Hugh, 1988; Walker, 1989: 117; Jansson, et al, 1990; Webb et al, 1994). Although it is not well documented, during the largest famine of the 1980s only it is estimated that between the range of four hundred thousands to six hundred thousand people died (De Waal, Alex, 1997: 359-364).

In the past few years, it seems that the magnitude and the extent of famine is increasing among the pastoralists in the country. In the year 2000 famine, many pastoral households lost their livestock and it also left the livelihoods of several households in a

precarious situation where the vulnerable groups- children, women and elderly suffered considerably (Helland 2000). The Boorana society today, like other pastoralists in the Horn, has been caught in a protracted crisis. This crisis has its most dramatic manifestation, in frequent famines, the latest in early 2000. Various explanations have been offered regarding this crisis. The first groups are those who focused on internal factors while over glossing the external factor. Helland (1997, 1998), who belongs to this group, contends that the viability of Boorana pastoralism as such is disturbed by an increase in both human and livestock population. Having used ecological perspective and in adopting a Malthusian/ Spencerian view, Helland perceived drought and famine as a periodic natural adjustment means to curb the increased population densities which is beyond the carrying capacity of the land.

The advocator of another variant ecological perspective, Coppock (1994) also notes that Boorana pastoralism is in irreversible decline and alternative livelihoods need to be made available to pastoralists in the future. Both have negative views on the continuation of famine relief in Boorana. These scholars seem to have followed the Malthusian explanation of famine.

Out of these critics, the views of the predicament of Boorana pastoralism both from internal and external factors, but with emphasis on the latter one have got ground currently. According to Salaha (1999) and Bokkuu (1996, 2000), the proponents of this view, the crisis of Boorana pastoralism has to be seen in terms of origins and dynamics of the decline of partoral economy, vulnerability and consequences of erosion of traditional Boorana structure because of structure historical processes of

marginalization and faulty interventions. In short, it is not only attributed to drought or nature. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that Boorana is under the pressure of drought and famine.

Nevertheless, peasants and pastoralists are not passive victims of famine. They implement various coping strategies to avert risk against their livelihood system. (Dessaiegn (1987); De Waal 1989: 122-125; Campbell, 1990; Rau, 1991; Egeimi, 1996). has distinguished two forms of famine survival strategies: crisis anticipation and crisis survival strategies. The former is used during normal time while the latter is employed at a time of stress. Crisis anticipation is the basis of crisis survival strategies.

The purpose of the daily activities of rural communities is to ensure or protect the household's long viability through loss management. According to Corbett, household food shortage and the approach of famine are frequently anticipated well in advance and strategies are carefully planned to minimize the impact of the stress. Rural communities have "early warning" system or crisis anticipation mechanism which is analogous to government modern early warning system. In Wallo, northern Ethiopia, all the peasant's intellectual, social, religious and magico-mystical resources are used to anticipate and prepare for disaster based on information from weather and environmental change and rural market behaviors (Dessaiegn, 1987; 134-163; Walker, 1989: 39). Social insurance mechanisms and social networks have important role in preventing famine function situation, asset building and diversification in insuring food security. The section of the society affected by food shortages is helped by mobilizing resources. The Afar, for

example, have traditional institutionalized mutual aid associations (Jodha, 1978; Walker, 1989: 48-49; Ali Said, 1994: 195-205).

In the literature on famine responses carried out by peasants and pastoralists the following are some of the common types of the strategies people employ to cope with famine in India, Sudan, Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia. These are changing cropping and pasturing practices, rationing food, increased use of kinship transfer and loans, transactions with neighboring communities (exchange network, trade), diversification of income sources of the household assets, resorting to non-agricultural or herding activities, temporary migration in search of work, the sale of non essential possessions and excess animals. These are the strategies first used in response to famine. They explicitly or implicitly show that famine survival strategies are logical extensions of every day livelihood survival strategies (normal strategies) (Longhorst: 1986; Dessalegn, 1987: 167-170; Garine and Harrison 1988; Johnson and Anderson, 1988: 94-96; Walker, 1989: 48-52; Waller and Sobania, 1994: 61-63; Egeimi, 1996: 29-49; Yared, 1999;). Moreover, the strategies of delayed or reduced food consumption, reduction of expenditures, grain purchases, storing food, reliance on wild food, relaxing food taboo, fall back activities are documented among the Bengal (India), Karawaja and Sahelian herders. These do not affect their subsistence base (Horowitz, 1975: 215-216, 219-223, 387-389; Swift, 1977: 457-475; Scott and Gormley, 1980: 96-98; Garine and Harrison, 1988: 379-404; Walker, 1989; Keen, 1994: 122-128; Frank Muhereza, 1996: 98-99).

Furthermore, in India and Africa the selling of essential livestock, agriculture tools, borrowing money from outside kinship relations, land mortgaging or selling, resorting to distress migration and food aid are commonly recorded as crisis management strategies

if the stress is prolonged (Walker, 1989: 39-52). Finally, raiding, selling child labour, begging, theft, decoy, prostitution, taking refuge and the like are depicted in some cases as famine coping strategies (Adana, 1987; Garine and Harrison, 1988: 400-402; Walker, 1989: 48-52; Johnson and Anderson 1989, 94-96; Waller and Sobania, 1994: 61-63, 144-147, 150-154; Egeimi, 1996: 29-49). For example, in Kenya many Boorarna of Maarsabit District withdrew into Ethiopia though some returned when condition improved. The Maasai also took refuge among the Kikuyu during 1890s famine (Dahl and Hojor 1979; Waller and Sobania, 1994: 61-62).

In Ethiopia, the Afar pastoralists of Awash valley use the mechanism of changing herd composition, hunting and stock alliances between community members to cope with drought and famine (Walker, 1989; Ali Said, 1996: 195-205). Turton (1988) also studied the resilience and inventiveness of the Mursi of Southern Ethiopia who use migration to higher altitudes and shifts to sedentary activities as a response to famine. Among the pastoralist group of Oromo, the *Karrayu* of Upper Awash Valley migration to towns and the shift to non-herding income earning sources like selling fire wood and the like are recorded (Assefa, 2000; Ayalew, 2001).

There are different approaches to understand these peasant and pastoralists decisions and choices between various options in the face of seasonal food shortages and famine. One of these is the "sequencing approach". In this case, the victims first employ the strategies which are reversible. In other words, they sell non-essential possessions, which do not affect the basis of their potential economy. If the stress is prolonged they sell their essential (core) assets like land, livestock etc. Bringing together all the

examples of coping strategies from Africa and India the adherent of this model identified four common pattern of sequence stages through which famine victims pass. These are those strategies people would employ to cope with seasonal food shortage, crisis management, distress migration and the last stage is starvation and death (Walker, 1989: 49-52; Dessalegn, 1987: 167-170; Devereux, 1993).

On the other hand, there are researchers who have conceptualized coping strategies of famine victims contrary to the "sequencing approach". They argue that households are confronted with different constraints, options and possibilities at a given point in time. They also utilize different coping strategies simultaneously, pursue different strategies in different periods of the year and there are intra-and inter-community and household variations in types of strategies employed. For instance, vulnerability factors like wealth and flexible sources of incomes affects response to famine (Corbett, 1988; Walker, 1989; Shipton, 1990: 363-364; Adam, 1992: 203; Yared, 1999, 125, 144-145).

According to (Walker, 1989) famine is a process, the strategies are also evolving in process and for victims famine survival strategies are not developed over night. They are the logical extension of past experiences and daily activities. Generally, there are few studies which approach famine strategies from victims views as evolving process. This research, therefore, tries to fill this gap by addressing the issues already identified in the statement of the problem in investigating the indigenous survival strategies of Boorana in the face of famine.

CHAPTER THREE

Physical and Socio- economic Settings

1. LOCATION, PHYSICAL FEATURES AND CLIMATE

The Boorana inhabit parts of Southern Ethiopia and Northern Kenya. In Ethiopia, they live in Boorana zone of Oromia Regional State which comprises six *anaas* or districts (See Annex 4). These districts are *Liiban*, *Areeroo*, *Yaaballo*, *Taltallee*, *Dirre* and *Moyaale*. The asphalt road that connected Addis Ababa and *Moyaale* -Kenya passes through the Booranaland, particularly the region where the deep-water wells are concentrated. The Boorana Oromo are bounded by *Guji* and *Arsi Oromo* groups to the North and north east; groups in Southern Peoples Nation and Nationalities like , *Burji* and *Konso* to the west, the Somali to the east and Kenya in the south (Asmarom, 1973; ZABA,1998).

The physical features of Booranaland are highly variable. Topographically, most of the Boorana landscape is gently undulating across an elevation of 1,000 to 1,700 meters down South and southeast. However, there are occasional mountainous areas (mountain ranges, scattered volcanic cones and craters) rising to 2000 meters, particularly the *Yaaballo – Meggaa* and *Areeroo* plateau. The Boorana generally classify their land with reference to topographic features as *Gammojjii*, *Carii* and *Badda* referring respectively to the lowlands, middle range altitude and highland (Bokku, 2000: 46-48). Along the lower basin the *Daawwa* River flows southeast dividing Booranaland into two to join the *Gannale* River at the Ethio- Somalia border. The other two surface rivers ***Gannale*** and *Sagan* flow on the east and west of Booranaland to the South directions.

The origins of these three rivers are from highland areas bordering the Boorana in the north.

Volcanic crater lakes also form another interesting physical feature of Boorana land. These are mostly situated in western part of Boorana especially in Dirre Region. Example of these crater lakes from which salt is mined are *Booqee*, *Soodda* and *Magaadoo* (Bille, 1983; Coppock, 1994: 52-53; ZABA, 1998, *Huqqa*, 2000:1;). Although they are not natural physical features, the hand dug traditional Boorana Eela, literally subterranean deep-water wells are the "lifeline" of Boorana land and also creating an amazing features of human creativity.

There is scarce information on the soil types of the area. However, Coppock (1994) suggests that Quaternary deposit, basement complex formations and volcanics dominate the geology of the area. Some of soil types are *Orthic*, *Acrisols* and *Vertisols*. The former is limited in agricultural potential with low base saturation. *Vertisols* occur usually in valley bottoms and bottom lands of valleys and other sites with impeded drainage and may be expected to have greater fertility than soils on slope or hilltops. Overall, the rangelands of East Africa are low in fertility. Boorana is, therefore, not exceptional.

The Boorana plateau is rich in various types of minerals though not as rich as the highland districts. For example, the *Dirre* sub-region is known for salt mining from volcanic crater lakes, *Booqee*. The bars of white salt are mined from the *Soodda* crater lake for both human and livestock consumption. The purgative black salt is also mined

from *Diillo* and *Magadoo* crater lakes in addition to mineral water provision for human and livestock population. Recovering salt from these lakes is the source of employment near Mega. Salt water is also important feed intake for camels at *Diilloo*, *Goraye* to the southwest (Coppock, 1994;43-44; Bokku, 2000).

With regard to the types of vegetation growing in Boorana land, there are several native species of grasses and woody plants dominated by savanna vegetation containing mixtures of perennial herbaceous and woody vegetation. In other words, the area is covered with light vegetation of predominantly pod yielding acacia families and varieties of thorny bushes of low forage value. Previous reports indicate that the vegetation pattern of the Boorana region varies according to the moisture gradient, ecological zone and grazing intensity. Most of the feed that the Boorana livestock utilize predominantly originate from natural pasture, which comprised natural grasses, browse and bushes. In short, the Boorana Rangelands are the best grazing areas in Africa as the ecology favours pastoralism more than farming. Although they are disappearing varieties of wild animals such as tiger, field ass etc including birds are found abundantly (Corra 1993; Coppock, 1994; ZABA, 1998; Bokku, 2000).

Concerning the climate, the area is dominated by semi-arid weather conditions. Thus, characterized by this type of climate, the average temperature and rainfall vary from 19 to 25 and 450 to 700 millimeters respectively. Their rainfall pattern is bimodal with a long rainy season from March –May - *Ganna* and short rainy season from September-November, *Hagayya*, in the area.

Table. 1 **Seasonal Characteristics of a "normal year" according to the Boorana "Traditional" Calendar**

N o	Seasons (local name)	Conditions	Period
1	Ganna	Long/big rainy season	March to May
2	Adoolessa	Cool, humid air, small showery (<i>Sorroo</i>), and at the end dry	June to August
3	Hagayya	Small/ short rainy season	September –November
4	Bona	Dry season, very hot, windy and dusty	December to February

The long rainy season accounts for about 60% of the annual rainfall. In addition to its bi-modality, the rainfall pattern is unreliable, erratic and highly variable in amount, timing and distribution (Huqqa, 2000). During drought years, the amount of rainfall is less than the normal figure. The bi-modality of the rain and the prevailing high surface evaporation results in less efficient rainfall and more moisture deficiency. This in turn affects the availability of pasture and surface water resources. According to the data obtained from *Yaaballo* meteorological station, the total amount of rainfall for main rain season of the year (2001) was 215.1 milli metres, which is 53% less than the amount for normal year. This shows deviation from the normal amount of yearly rain

In Booranaland, a monthly rainfall under 60% results in very little or no grass growth. This has effect on length of growing season and or the process of any form of crop production (Bill, 1983). In the absence of adequate surface water resource, the major sources of water for Boorana are the *Eela*. According to my informant, Borbor Bulee, they are the most dependable water source upon which the Boorana rely, especially during dry seasons both for human and livestock consumption. Some of these *Eela* or wells are called *Tulaa*, literally meaning deep -water wells in terms of water yield volume

and reliability. The wells are important in economic and social life of Boorana around which the society is organized. There is also *kaa'ima*, meaning all the flood availed surface waters which are occasional sources. Examples of these are rock depression, *Maddo* (temporary oasis) and *Haroo*, pond water (Helland, 1977a; Coppock, 1994; Bokku, 2000).

2.THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

2.1 The Boorana Oromo, the Conquest and Its Results

According to Getachew (2001:66), in Ethiopia the pastoral areas cover about 61% of the total land and it is approximated to comprise 5 million people. The major pastoral groups are Afar, Isa, Somali, Arbore, Geleb, Hamar, Mursi, Karrayyu and Boorana (Kaarina and Tihut, 1999:1).

Among these pastoralists, the Boorana are one of the semi- nomadic groups of Oromo. They are the branch of the Oromo whose language belongs to the Cushitic sub- family common to most of northeastern Africa (Lewis, 1966; *Asmarom*, 1973). Melba (1990) referring to work of Bates (1979) suggests that the Oromo are very ancient race and indigenous stock in this part of East Africa. The name Boorana is derived from the noun *booroo*, and the people refer themselves to as 'Boorana *Booroo*' ' the people of *Boorna* (Informants, Borbor Bulee and Nuuraa Diida).

According to the 1994 Population and Housing Census, the total population of Boorana zone is 1,536, 054 with average density of 22 persons per km². Out of this figure, the Boorana account for over half a million (Huqqaa, 2000:1). The six lowland districts

inhabited by Boorana are the areas of sparse population settlement owing to the adverse effects of the physical environment on population settlement. Almost all the Boorana Oromo live in rural areas. The average household size of the zone is 5.36, a figure which the Boorana share too. Demographic studies on the Boorana plateau in the late 1980s estimated a net population growth rate of 2.5% (Coppock, 1994; ZABA, 1998). The livelihood of the people depends on pastoralism and limited crop production. Generally, being remote and sparsely populated, the Booranaland is poorly developed in infrastructure and other social services. There is no single industrial enterprise for wage labour employment.

Both oral data and scholars like Lewis (1966), Asmarom, (1973) and Bokku (2000), support the position that the Boorana Oromo have lived in their present land for many centuries. However, historically the population of the Boorana has not always been restricted to its present territory. They further suggest that it was extended over the regions presently occupied by the Somalis. For example, a major part of the area now occupied by the Somali (Region 5) was Boorana territory during the last few centuries. In the words my informant, Boruu Madhaa, the current administrative division has taken away a vast territory, including Boorana ceremonial sites that are now part of Somali Regional State.

According to the indigenous territorial divisions of the Gadaa administration, the Booranaland is divided in to *Liiban* and *Dirre* Regions, the land to the east and west of *Daawwaa* River respectively. The *Liiban* region is sub- divided into *Golba*, the lowland areas and *Diida* Liiban, the upland plain areas. This region has a unique place among

the Boorana because it is the religious region, *Lafajila*, where several sites, *ardajila* are located and the *Gadaa* in power is expected to perform ceremonial activities at each religious site. The *Dirre* region consists of sub- regions such as *Wayyaama*, *Goomolee*, *Dirre* with its *Tulaa*, deep wells, *Malbe* and *Golboo* (Bokku, 2000; informant Borbor Bulee).

The Oromo in general and Boorana in particular have developed the *Gadaa* system of administration which is central to their value system. The *Gadaa* governs and regulates all aspects of their life i.e. social, economic and political. Thus, the power to administer Boorana and their land is vested in *Gadaa* by law (*seera*). In this regard, the *Gadaa* system diffuses usufruct right among members by delegating authority to various geographical units and *gosa* organizations for the utilization and routine management of the resources. However, this has been made to fall under pressure since the 19th century.

According to Manger (1994) and Fratkin (1996), pastoralists are culturally adaptive agents to the limitation of nature through their indigenous systems. However, historical process of marginalization and imposition of alien structure have affected this. This is exactly what happened to the Oromo, particularly their pastoralist groups. Thus, the Boorana and their pastoral production system began to face problems beginning with the conquest of the then Abyssinian rulers in the last part of the 19th century. During the second half of 19th century, when Africans fall under the yoke of colonialism, northern part of present day Ethiopia, Abysinia (Donham, 1986) also expanded to become the Ethiopian Empire. This process did not surpass the Oromo and the Boorana who were

brought under Abyssinian rule. According to Markakis (1993 and Buli, 2001), this loss of autonomy by the pastoralists for the first time due to incorporation by the colonial power, including Ethiopia's marked the beginning of the long process of pastoral predicament. Now let us focus on the process of the conquest of Boorana and its results very briefly.

Booranaland was conquered and incorporated into Ethiopian Empire by the forces of Menelik II on the eve of 20th century. This was during the Gadaa office of *Liiban Jaldeessa* from 1888-1896 (Informants, Nuuraa Yaabichoo and Borbor Bulee). According to *Holcomb* and *Sisai* (1990) the conquest and incorporation was a part of the large process of inventing a dependent colonial powers in East Africa. AS corroborating with secondary source

Waaqoo Aboo says that the Abyssinian rulers were successful in the conquest of the Oromoland with the modern firearms received from the European powers. Not only this but also cattle disease and the subsequent famine had reduced many Boorana Oromo to destituting. This development had weakened the resistance of the community and *Menelik II* forces led by *Asfaw Darge* and later by *Fitawrarii Habte Georgis Dinagde* controlled Booranaland (See also Melba, 1988).

One of the results of this conquest was that the *Gadaa* system of administration, which survived intact until the late 19th century and early 20th century, has continued to be weakened by the pressure exerted on it from the Abyssinian control structure. A typical example of these structures is the introduction of the *Gabbar* system. After the physical occupation of the land, the conquerers imposed the *Gabbar* system of tenancy on the

indigenous land management. According to Helland (1996: 142-143) each "*naftagna*" (rifle men, soldier-settler) was allocated a number of Boorana families who were obliged to supply him with labor and material contribution like livestock, water, firewood, honey and dairy products" This was followed by consolidation of feudal structure and imposition of authority under *Haile Sellase*. As Borbor Bule suggests, for this purpose, the government bodies chose the *Qaalluu* institution, which is of hereditary feature to rule the Boorana indirectly. Accordingly, they appointed one *Qaalluu* from each moiety as *Balabbata*, as state agent for local administration and tax collection.

Moreover, the Abyssinian administration brought in thousands of people from outside the region and developed numerous garrison towns. On the other hand, thousands of people were removed from the region by the *gabbar* system while others took refuge in north Kenya. This created space for more settlers from outside the region and in such settlement areas the government established administrative centers and such settlers introduced cultivation of crops particularly at Iddilolaa, Megga, Yaaballoo etc. This had impact on delicate ecological environment of the Boorana pastoral production system and thereby the resource tenure of Boorana was changed . To elaborate this further, a

Significant part of the pastoral territory was taken over and communities of pastoralist were confined to certain areas which led to overgrazing and deterioration of the grazing land. In some cases, people began to use wet and dry seasons grazing areas permanently. Major water development and farming based on individual land right were developed. This is against the communal land tenure.

In 1975, the "Socialist" Ethiopia administration implemented a land reform policy which changed the feudal land tenure system. The *Derg*¹ regime established the peasant Association or *kebele* structure as the lowest administrative unit in the rural areas. This has further weakened the pastoral production system, as it limited pastoral mobility patterns and affected the indigenous pastoral territorial organization. Imposing a Peasant Association structure on pastoral communities brought about these impacts. This control structure effectively limited and restricted every small unit of pastoral communities into a specific area that made the pastoral production system weak. It is not only limitation in land use and the herding of stock but also affected the core of the pastoralists survival strategy. The effect was two folds. On the one hand the herding of stock is far more localized than it had ever been and, on the other hand, contact broke down even between the same pastoral groups. The PA had authority to collect tax and to fine. In other words, PA is tax collector, prosecutor, judge, police, decision-maker, resource mobilizing agent, conscriptor, land allocator, relief register and distributor etc. (see the imposed structures; kebele institutions).

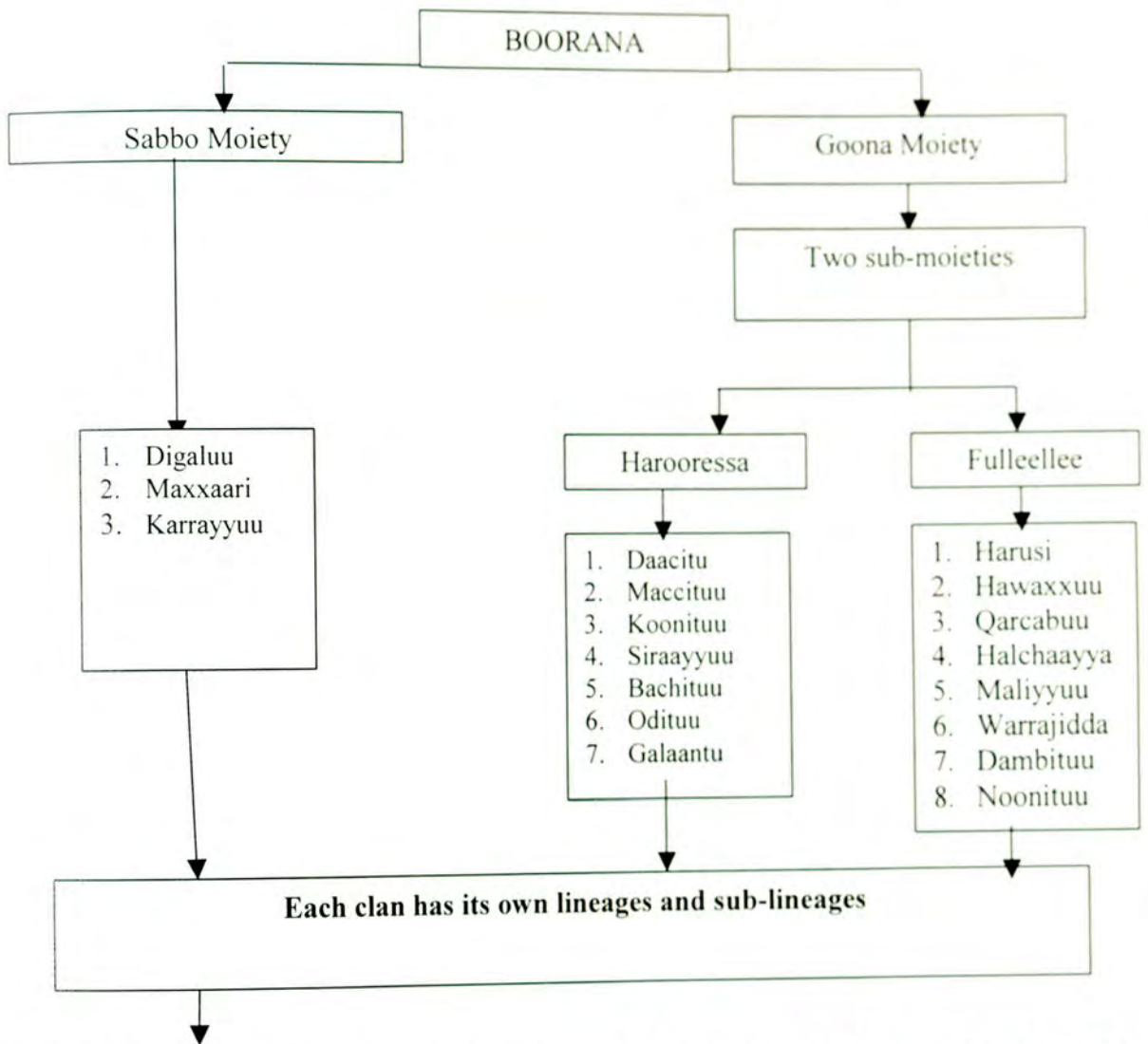
2.2 SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

2.2.1 The Moiety System and Marriage

Duality is one of the most important aspects of the Boorana Oromo Social organization. The Boorana Oromo are divided into two intermarrying dual organizations (moieties), *Sabbo* and *Goona*. *Sabbo* and *Goona*, in turn, are divided into three and fifteen *gosa*, clans, respectively.

¹ The committee of military junta that ruled Ethiopia from 1974-1991

Figure 1. Boorana Oromo Gosa (Clan), Organization



Each *gosa* (clan) is divided into further sub-units as *mana* and *balbala* "house" and "door" respectively.

Among Boorana Oromo, descent is reckoned only through the male line. Each clan constitutes a corporate group in that they share many collective rights and obligations. i.e. *gosa* members help each other and they have obligations in assisting the needy members. They also participate in ritual, maintenance and regulation of water sources and settle their disputes amicably at *Kora gosa*, the clan meeting, imposing fines on

wrong doers and seizing property. In general, a clan provides a wider network of mutual assistance than individual lineages and the moieties communally manage pasture and water resources as well as soci-economic activities (See Bokkuu, 2000).

Marriage

All human societies have some forms of marriage. But the nature of marriage institutions varies. According to my informants, Borbor Bulee and Waariyoo Kaatoo, the most important aspect of Boorana marriage is that the Sabbo- Goona structure divides all the Boorana into two exogamous units or marriage relationships. This serves as a social control mechanism which promote strong social ties between members of the two moieties. For a man of the *Sabbo* moiety all *sabbo* women are said to be his "sisters" while the women of *Goona* are his in-laws (*sodda*).

The most common form of marriage among Boorana is *kadhaa*, which literally means marriage through the negotiations of both parents. The immediate parilineal kinsmen are consulted in the process of marriage negotiation and payment of bride wealth, which is paid in cattle. According to traditional marriage laws made by *Gumii- Gaayyoo* i.e pan-Boorana Assembly when a virgin gets married, the groom had to first sacrifice an animal of "*rakoo*" that is shedding blood of the sheep on threshold. The slaughtering of the animal of "*rakoo*" i.e. the sheep of blessing constitutes the legitimacy of marriage contract. The performance of this marriage ritual symbolically serves the bond between the girl given in marriage and her parent whilst at the same time establishes a new bond between the girl and her parents in laws.

Hence, after being married, the father is referred to as "Abba Warra", father of the homestead; and the head of the household while the mother is referred to as "Hadha warra", mother of the homestead. Both concepts show the legitimacy of marriage.

A wife is, therefore, desired to give birth to as many children as possible and male offsprings are preferred to females especially in the case of first born son. This is because, the *Hangafa* is expected to replace his father and becomes his legal heir. The Boorana law prohibits having a love affair with an unmarried girl as this is disgraceful (*koobuu, caban* and also marriage to relatives which is taboo (*haraamuu*). The Gumi Gaayyoo Assembly of 1997 stipulated that these resolutions be applicable to the Boorana who have been converted to Islam as well. The number of wives a man can have depends on his economic situation and labour power, which is the primary motive for polygamy among Boorana Oromo.

2.2.2 THE GADAA SYSTEM

Institutions are prerequisite for the functioning of any social system. *Gadaa* is a term employed throughout the Oromo nation in the Horn of Africa. Asmarom states:

Gadaa refers to the organization of the society into cyclical generation system or generation sets which succeed each other every eight years in assuming socio-political office or in sharing collective military, economic, political and social responsibilities. Each *Gadaa* class comes to power and ends with formal power transfer ceremony. The *Gadaa* classes or sets known as *Luba* are the group of people who share the same status and perform their rites of passage together. These groups pass through stages of development which are known as *Gadaa* grades i.e. a conceptual scheme that defines the kind of activities, rights and duties the groups assume successively throughout their active careers. At each stage of development the class holds a different set of corporate responsibilities, including the responsibility of offering political and military leadership to the society for a limited period of time during their progress through life (1973: 52-69).

In short, these different *Gadaa* grades are associated with different functions. Thus, the *Gadaa* grades as described by Asmarom (1973:52-69) and stated by Borbor Bulee are

Dabballe, Gammme, Kuusa, Raba Didiqqa (Junior Raba), Raaba Gugudda. (senior Raaba), Gadaa, Yuuba and Gada Moojji.

Dabballe: is the first grade, which includes all the sons of the *Gadaa* class (*Luba*) who are in power as leaders of Boorana society.

Gamme: are older boys between the ages 8 and 16. They are given the responsibility of looking after livestock. At senior *Gamme* stage they often take the family herds away from the parental settlements where they lead a life of adventure, *foora*,² when a young man take the family herds into untamed, river valleys for months or two or three years (Asmarom, 1973:57-58).

Kuusa: is the fourth grade after completing the *Gamme*. During the years of adolescence, the boys are initiated and elect their six leaders known as *Hayyuu*³ Councilors. The election of *Gadaa* councilors takes place at the same time as the transition rites of the class from *Gamme-Kussa* is preformed. All six officers, along with many others to be recruited later, bear the generic designation of *Hayyuu*, councilors. From then on, this council that they have formed governs the entire life of the grade (Asmarom , 1973:61-64; Gemechu, 2001).

The ***Raaba didiqqa*** (Junior Raaba): When the boys complete the 24th year of their life, they become junior warriors, and begin to take part in formal military campaigns. They do not lead the campaigns themselves but follow older generation sets who usually organize such campaigns (informants, Borbor Bulee, Boruu Madhaa, Dullacha Diida; see also Asmarom, 1973).

² *Foora* is the time when the young men take the family herds into the untamed river valleys. In other words, it is the practice of taking livestock to distant grazing areas or cattle camps by adolescent young men and men and women. Life away from the permanent settlement is also referred to as *Foora* (Asmarom, 1973: 57, 58).

³ *Hayyuu* is the generic name designated to all officers, elected during the transition rite from *Gamme* to *Kuusa Gadaa*, grades along many other to be recruited later (Asmarom, 1973:61-64; my personal communication with Diida Dullacha)

The Raaba Gurgudda (senior Raaba) is Gadaa grade which consists of senior warriors who devote most of their time to military activities. During this period, they also marry. Upon completion of the first part of the 5th grade on the fortieth year of the Gadaa cycle, they perform the *Dannisa* (fatherhood) ceremony. After this, they are allowed to start raising sons. It is these children that enter the first grade.

The Gadaa Grade: It is upon completion of the 5th grade that they now become Gadaa. The six *Hayyuu* councillors, previously elected in the *Kuusa* grade (grade 3) now assume power not only as the leaders of their own generation set but also as leaders of the entire society. The elected council at *Kussa* grade leads the activities of its own generation set for 21 years before it assumes responsibility of leadership for the entire society. In this 6th grade when its leaders are installed as the leaders of the entire Boorana society, the set (*Luba*) reaches the apex of its power. This governing class or *Luba* remains in power for a period of eight years and hands over power to the next *Luba* at a designated place called *Ardajilaa*, and a designated time in the Month of "Gurraandhala" (February). Time reckoning expert called *Ayyaantuu* plays a critical role in determining the time and the method of the handing over of power. The power hand over ceremony is known as the handing over of the *Baaallii* which means the transfer of political power.

The current *abba Gadaa* (head of the Gadaa) is *Liiban Jaldeessa*. After completing the eight-year term as leaders of the entire society, the class (*Luba*) goes into partial retirement and the leaders become *Yuuba*. This semi-retired *Luba* takes a center stage in the *Gumii Gaayyoo*, Pan-Boorana assembly or multitude assembly convention that takes place every eight years. The Gadaa system has legislative body for enacting law

and rules. This legislative body is known as, *Gumii Gaayyoo*, the Pan-Boorana Assembly that take place once in every eight years time. This assembly redefines the existing laws and makes new societal laws, and the law making and amending process has been constantly exercised by subsequent *Gumii Gayyoo* (Goollo, 1997). The 37th *Gumii Gayyoo* assembly in which I participated took place in 1997.

In general, the assembly sets rules and laws governing the whole life of Boorana Oromo i.e. economic, social and political aspects. For example, it sets rules for mutual assistance or *Buusaa – Gonofa*, which means sharing and restocking. Hence, the *Gumii Gaayyoo* is the final supreme authority in Booranalana.

According to Asmarom (1973), upon completion the first grade of partial retirement (grade 10) on the 80th year of the *Gada* cycle, the age grade (*Luba*) enters the final grade that is *Gadaa- Moojji*. It is a sacred grade and the people in this grade enjoy great respect as ritual leaders of the society. At the end of this sacred grade the *Luba* comes together for the final ceremony of their life that constitutes the formal end of the *Gadaa* life cycle. As Borbor Bulee and Jiloo Aagaa say, beyond this, the class becomes an embodiment of the societal value and strictly keeps the taboos and participates on ritual ceremonies to bless the land and the young. Another important institution is *Hariyya*. This is a group of people born in the same eight- years period that is an age set. The two groups (*Gadaa* class and age-set) are cross-linked, crosscutting, structural units that operate as complementary institutions. There are various rituals and ceremonies performed by the *Gadaa* classes and other members of the society at household and community level. Generally, hierarchy and balanced opposition are the

democratic ethos that form the basis of the *Gadaa* system in which power is checked through a balancing mechanism.

2.2.3 THE QAALLUU INSTITUTION

Almost all the Boorana are the followers of indigenous Oromo religion which is a belief in a single *Waaqaa*, God. The believers or the followers are known as *waaqeffataa* whereas the act of believing in a single supreme, *Waaqaa*, God is known as *Waaqeffanna*. *Waaqaa* is the creator of everything. There are various ritual and ceremonies associated with Oromo religion. These are *dhibaayyuu*, *Hulluqqoo*, etc. (For the detail see Bartles, 1990; Asmarom, 1973).

From the very beginning up until now, the *Qaalluu* institution is very complex and plays a central role in the Oromo socio-political system (Asmarom, 1973; Bartles, 1990). In fact, there are aspects of change and continuity. According to Diida Galgaloo, *Qaalluu* is an Oromo religious leader and he is believed to be sent by God as supreme spiritual leader who works for the peace of Boorana. He leads ritual performances and prayers and anoints the participants as a religious piety. He and his *gosa* members are believed to be the most senior men and "the purest" of all the Boorana. *Qaalluu* is of divine origin and hereditary and so is his office. The *Qaalluus* are also the leaders of the two Boorana moieties, *Sabbo* and *Goona*.

The *Qaalluu* and his councils perform several rites, rituals and ceremonies. The most important aspects of the *Qaalluu* institution and activities that impinge directly on the *Gadaa* are the *Muuda* Ceremony, performed by the *Gadaa* class in power to honor the

Qaalluu and the *Lallaba* ceremony in which the *Qaalluu* organizes and oversees the election of *Gadaa* leaders. The *Qaalluu* also presides over the resolution of conflict between families clans and moieties. So far we have seen how *Gadaa* classes (*Lubas*) successively follow one another in assuming political office and societal responsibilities. This is one of the principles that organizes society among the Boorana. The Boorana, however, is not only organized in time but also in space.

2.2.4 BOORANA TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

According to Boorana elders, Borbur Bulee and Nuraa Diida, the Boorana territorial units which have a link with *Gadaa* system and important in resource management, mobilization and other socio-cultural activities are the following. The primary /smallest/ territorial unit is *ibidda*, the hearth, which comprises a household or residential unit while family (*Warra*) is the second level of organization. The family among the Boorana Oromo usually consists of a male head, wife or wives, male and female offspring and other dependents. The male head is known as *Abba Warra*, father of the homestead, while the mother is referred to a *Hadha warra* "mother of the homestead". Wives are classified into senior wife (*Hangafa* or *Niitii Gamme*) and junior wives. All wives, apart from the first one, are referred to as second wives (*maandha*), whether they are third, fourth or fifth. The extended family keeps a common herd in which each wife, owns here own milk cows

The primary role of the family institution is to produce new members of the society and socialize them in such way that they are integrated to the society. Thus, socialization particularly early socialization is the most important role the family plays.

The third level of organization after the family in an ascending order is known as *shanacha* or *Mogga*. Members of adjacent common cattle kraal in a given village constitute a homestead (*Mogga*). This is also known by alternative name *Labata*. As Borbor Bulee says the Abba-Shanacha is responsible for managing the overall affairs of the unit ensuring its peace and security; allocating labor for different tasks; settling disputes between individuals and families and representing the overall interest of the unit at the level of the village (*Olla*), which is the next level of an organization in ascending order.

According to Abba Ollaa Dooyyoo Dullacha, several *shanacha* are organized into village (*Olla*) i.e minimum of five *shanacha* comes to form an *Olla*. An *Olla* is headed by *Abba Olla* who oversees the social, economic and ritual activities of *Olla* and maintains close links with other *Ollas* in the area based on the custom and law. He also handles cases which are beyond the authority of the heads of the *shanacha* under his leadership. People living in the same *Olla* are expected to share resources and cooperate in tasks of herding and watering livestock as well as participating in all other community affairs. In general, intra- village mutual support and association on social activities are its main occupations

Adjacent villages in a certain locality form a spatial unit called *Ardaa*. The *Ardaa* has council of elders, *Jaarsa Ardaa*. These elders deal mainly with the management of communal pasture (Baxter, 1970; Oba, 1998). They are entrusted with the responsibility of splitting of herds into dry sock (*loon fooraa*) and lactating stock (*loon warra*). The dry

stock usually moves and encamps at site distant mile from settled areas while the lactating stock are allowed to graze around the main settlement. The council also decides on allocation of the pasture around the main villages as a reserve for the weaker stock, especially calves.

There are various social, economic, political and religious ceremonies performed by the *Ardaa* members. Among these *Kormaa- Korbeessa Ardaa* is prominent. It is a ceremony which strengthens the solidarity among members of the *Ardaa*. A small bull (*korma* or *korbeessa*) is sacrificed by the *Ardaa* in order to pray for peace, fertility and wellbeing of the whole Boorana and the *Ardaa*. The the *Gadaa* councilor (*Hayyuu*) who resides in the *Ardaa* represents the *Ardaa* to the outside world and sometimes he delegates his authority to the elders (*Jaarsa ardaa.*) (informants, Sora Boruu, Moolu Qancooraa).

The same informants further state that a number of neighbouring *Ardaas* constitute *reera*. Physical features such as hills, mountain valleys demarcate two *reeras*. Headed by an *Abba-Reera*, the members of *reera* cooperate on mobilization of labour for joint use of pasture and ponds burial of the dead and associated ceremonies. A territorial unit or organization higher than *Reera* is *Madda*. A *Madda* consists of several *reera* and is commonly named after a permanent water point. According to Bokku (2000), the *Madda* has its own ceremonies such as the *Kormaa- Korbeessa Madda* and *Korma Madda* in which water well-related affairs are discussed and decisions are made.

As Borbor Bulee and Diida Dullacha describe, *Dheeda* is the highest unit of territorial organization in terms of resource management. It has its own head (*Abba- Dheeda*).

Dheeda refers to sub- regions within the two broader regions of *Liiban* and *Dirree*. The former has two *Dheedas*, and the latter five. The council of *Abba-Dheeda* represents all the grazing territories of the Boorana which are responsible for maintaining law and order and promoting peace and harmony (nagaa Boorana). The *Abba-Dheeda* has links with the *Gadaa officials*. Finally, the *Gadaa* assembly constitutes the most inclusive level of social, political and economic organization. According to *Borbor Bulee*, the well known authority on Boorana *Gadaa* system, "Everything that concerns the Boorana concerns the *Gadaa*".

Figure 2 Boorana Territorial Organization



Source: Adapted from Hogg, 1993.

⁵ Booranaland

2.2.5 THE IMPOSED STRUCTURES: *KEBELE* INSTITUTIONS

Kebele administration was formed during the *Derg* regime. The *kebeles* are the lowest hierarchal government administrative unit. They were established on the lower administrative political level to administer, distribute and redistribute land whenever necessary. Their structures still exist. These government administrative structures, which were imposed parallel to the territorial organization of the Boorana for tax collection and security purposes have more or less replaced traditional *Madda* structure. Initially, *Kebele* and *Madda* were spatially terminus. However, with the development activities, which involved the construction of large ponds, permanent settlements were established around ponds out of which some acquired *kebele* status. According to Bokku (2000) *Diida Haraa*, for example, has an independent *kebele* status though in Boorana traditional social structure it is only part of a larger *Madda*. Moreover, recently, another new government imposed structure *Qaxanaa*, is proliferating. It is a practice of replicating "Peasant Association" structures into several smaller units equivalent to the Boorana traditional *Ardaa*.

The *Kebele* as a unit of local administration space is subordinate to the decision of the district Administration and is entrusted with the translation of federal or regional policies and program into action. In short, PA is the government structure among the rural population that serves at the grass root level as tax collector, prosecutor, judge, police, decision-maker, and the like. The naming of grass root structure of the Boorana people as "peasant association" has been imposed on the pastoralist Boorana despite its irrelevance to their situations.

In addition to this grass root hierarchy, there are other institutions like agricultural office, Southern Rangelands Development unit (SORDU), Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC), Cooperative Promotion Offices and others who are working closely with *kebele* structures. Besides, there are non-governmental organizations of various origins: religious affiliated, international, and local ones. In general, they undertake relief and development-oriented programs in rural Boorana and all of them have their own impacts on the indigenous Boorana pastoral management and survival strategies.

3. ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

3.1 BOORANA ECONOMY: PASTORAL PRODUCTION SYSTEM

3.1.1 Livestock Production

Pastoralism forms the basis for Boorana economy and it constitutes the single most important economic enterprise of the household. In other words, the economic base of Boorana household is their livestock and livestock products. Thus, livestock rearing is the mainstay of their livelihood and they keep diversified herds of cattle, camels, small stocks and equines. However, cattle are the primary concern of Boorana household in livestock production. The size of camel and small stocks is on the increase. According to the reports of the Southern Rangelands Development Unit (SORDU) (1988), the total estimate of livestock population in six districts of Boorana areas was 3,227,952. This is shown in Table 2

Table 2. The total livestock population in six districts of Boorana pastoral areas

Name of the districts	Cattle	Goats	Sheep	Camels	Donkey	Horse	Mules	Total
Liiban	435,512	425,464	153,295	328,080	28,317	88	579	1,369,335
Yaaballo	219,060	65,993	15,660	11,660	3,434	346	975	361,504
Taltalle	171,214	68,195	39,384	39,384	3,181	-	46	282,960
Moyaale	130,943	49,615	17,771	17,771	3,556	79	2,366	264,090
Dirre	460,893	132,780	63,961	63,961	12,777	3,331	2,785	721,224
Areero	177,426	51,163	18,724	18,724	2,622	643	1,255	273,839
Total	1,592,948	793,210	308,795	308,795	53,887	4,487	8,006	3,227,952

Source: Southern Rangelands Development Unit (SORDU), 1988.

In spite of this large number of livestock population the major purpose of production is for subsistence. They derive their food directly in the form of milk, milk products, meat and blood. Milk is the main item in the Boorana diet and is consumed in different forms: Fresh milk (*aannanmi'ii*), Yoghurt (*Itittuu*). Subsistence food is also obtained indirectly in the form of purchased cereal, tea, sugar, coffee through the sale of animals and animal products like skin, hide, butter and milk. Coppock (1994) notes that wealthy households mostly sell butter while poor households bring fresh milk to the market in the peri-urban areas. Cattle are by far the dominant species marketed and the supply of animals is highly variable according to seasons of the year. During the drought years, the terms of trade are against Boorana because the price of animals is low. Varieties of products such as hide and skin are also used for making household materials such as containers, sleeping mats, leather clothes and ornaments.

3.1.2 Livestock Management and Resource Tenure System

The characteristics of Boorana livestock husbandry are similar to those in drylands or arid Africa. It is dominated by dual herding system where animals are divided into home based stock (*warra*) lactating stocks and satellite herds (*loonfoora*). The husbandry is also dominated by maintaining of female structure, milking management of cows, intensive hand rearing of nursing calves, sharing tasks according to gender and age (Coppock, 1994). The Boorana land use pattern is communal and any body has access right to resources. They divide the land into dry and wet grazing areas. The introduction of individual farming, cisterns and ranches result in changes in this communal tenure.

Among the Boorana, pastoralism not only serves as a source of food for households but it has important socio- cultural benefits. First, cattle ownership highly defines the identity of a Boorana. It is their culture and a central element of their social and political organizations (Bokku, 2000). Secondly, cattle play a paramount role in marriage as bridewealth, in establishing and maintaining relations and legitimization of clan leaders for *Gadaa* office, *hayyuu*. Thirdly, cattle are essential for several *Gadaa* ceremonies including the power transfer and also significant for ceremonies performed by the households such as childbirth, naming, burial etc.

In the Boorana economy in general, and livestock husbandry in particular, the household is the unit of production. Livestock production and management is often organized within household units headed by a man and wife or wives, children and other dependents. The Boorana household structure and composition also has women-

headed households, which are usually found in peri-urban locations. These women are poor who lost their cattle and moved to urban areas. Most of These women control and manage their livestock and resources as male heads of the household do. The average production unit or family may depend on some 15 cattle with 8 milking cows, 7 small ruminants, occasional equine or camel for transport and a few chickens (ibid). The members of household unit are the primary recipients of the products of livestock and share duties for family livestock and other resource.

As Borbor Bulee asserts, with regard to the labour allocation, the members of a household share responsibilities for livestock husbandry and management activities, particularly herding, watering and milking. Children or young men mostly do herding. Watering is a heavy duty and carried out cooperatively among herd owners. According to Helland (1980), most wells require 10-40 people to operate as the men form a line to pass the water up in small leather buckets from a deep well. Watering is carried out by the most able-bodied persons from the family, predominantly by the husband or young men but rarely done by a wife. Household with shortage of labour also recruits a human power from other households through "borrowing" or fostering of children from relatives.

Other important features of the Boorana economy that need to be mentioned are the resource tenure, the nature and form of resource holding. According to Gemechu (2001), the Boorana designate "property by the term "*hori*" and property ownership is termed as *qabeenya*" derived from the verb *qabacchuu*, meaning "to have or "own". Thus, in terms of traditional Boorara law, *qabeenya* refers to the relationship between the owner and everything that he owns. The three distinct forms of property ownership

among the Boorana are those collectively owned by the society, the ones owned by a group or a family and those which are privately owned.

As abba Duuba Waariyoo says, according to the traditional Boorana law (*seera*), land, water, pasture and all other natural resources are not individually owned. These are owned and protected by the law. The law recognizes that the Boorana land tenure system is communal and the land belongs to the entire Boorana. The law ensures that every Boorana has equal access rights to use resources i.e. land, water, pasture, tree etc. However, the law recognizes the rights of a group or clan to water wells. Livestock are individually owned by the nuclear family but managed and controlled by the male head of the household. But, there are livestock privately owned by individual. There are either given as gifts on different occasions. Example, andhuura, bridewaalth, etc.

Although all the households to a large degree depend on pastoral production, variations in wealth among the Boorana households have always prevailed. A survey of the Boorana household by Mulugeta (1990) reports 51% as poor 31% as middle and 18% as wealthy. Wealth is measured by the size of livestock herd a family owns. Recently, however, the average number of all livestock species owned by per household is decreasing because of recurrent droughts and famine.

Generally, in order to maintain a sustainable use of resources and management, the Boorana pastoralists have over many centuries built up wider social and territorial organization under which pasture land, including water, is governed. Thus, the

management of water (See Bokkuu, 2000 for details), pastureland and other resources is undertaken within a framework of the Boorana resource tenure system.

According to Baxter (1970), Asmarom (1973), Bokku (2000), the construction and utilization of well in Boorana are both arduous jobs requiring clan cooperation in terms of labour, tools and consumable resources such as milk and animals required to feed the workers. These demands are the main factors in the emergence of associate clan relations in clan well ownership. As Huqqaa Dhokii states, the clans maintain their own water wells and utilize them according to the rule about the water wells (*seera eela*). If the a person in charge of water wells management (*abba Herrega*) is found mismanaging, he is immediately dismissed from his responsibility. In the Boorana tradition, property rights in well is established by being either in the well owning clan or its associate clan. However, well sharing and using is possible by other clans. In contrast to clan based in water resource management system, pasture resource management system is based on territorial units. Pastoral production is, therefore, not open access grazing, but it is based on these local territorial units.

However, the Boorana have experienced far-reaching changes in resource tenure and management. According to Bokku (2000) varied external factors, notably the development intervention promoted by state policy through individualization of the pastureland in a form of farming, grazing or with private water cistern and commercialization of ranchers have contributed to their change.

3.2. Non-Pastoral Pursuits Among the Boorana: Crop Production

Traditionally, the Boorana were exclusively pastoralists. In the course of time, however, farming was introduced into Boorana rangelands and a few Boorana households mostly drought affected, were involved in limited crop production to supplement their pastoral production. According to *Oba* (1998), settler soldiers and immigrant farmers introduced farming and later expanded by resettlement strategy, which was the reestablishing of the destitute families. In 1994, it was estimated that upto 3.4% of the Booranalands were cultivated (Coppock, 1994). Today, the land under cultivation is increasing (Galgalo, 1997). Most of the cultivated lands are concentrated around towns and the size of the farms is small, most not exceeding a hectare.

Maize, sorghum, burely and legume plants are the major crops cultivated. Maize is mostly cultivated during long rainy season (*Ganna*) while drought tolerant crops like sorghum and legume are planted during short rainy season, (*Hagayya*). The production process is based on household labour and it is primarily to supplement livestock production. Draft oxen are usually used for ploughing. Recently, comel traction is introduced by NGO. The yield from crop production is very little and highly opportunistic. This is because of erratic rainfall and drought. In general, the Boorana have no confidence in farming and consider livestock production as an invaluable and honourable activity of their economy. Therefore, they are predominantly pastoralists and have very little crop production, trading and daily labour activities in and around towns (Coppock, 1994; Alamayehu, 1998). In a focus group discussion held with Boorana, they perceive them selves as pastoralists rather than as cultivators. They said, "We have begun farming (*obruu*) very recently."

CHAPTER FOUR

AN OVER VIEW OF THE HISTORY OF FAMINE IN BOORANA

1. Boorana Views of Famine: Concept and Causes

As scholars cited in (Sen, 1981:39-40; De Waal, 1989: 9-30;) have argued that famine is has been defined as a particularly virulent form of starvation causing a wide spread death. Contrary to this view, in Asia and Africa mortality is not a necessary condition of famine. In Bangladesh, the culture defines famine as scarcity, when times are bad and when alms are scarce and there is famine nationwide. The Sahelian herders use the concept famine for the crisis that involves death and the rise of the price of millet (DeWaal, 1989: 74-77) and in Sudan the Darfurian identify famine as that involves hunger, destitution, social breakdown and 'famines that kill' (ibid, 6-7).

Although there are localized aspects of understanding or conceptualizing famine, the central point of the concepts of famine in the Third World is the fact that it grows out of the actual experiences of victims. Especially, in Africa the words of "famine" are typically the same as the words for hunger. For example, in Swahili it is *njaa*, in Hausa, *Yunwa*, in Darfur, *ju'* (hunger) which is often substituted for *maja'a* (famine) which also involves the concept destitution and death, and in Amharic *rehab* all used for both 'hunger' and 'famine' (DeWaal, 1989).

Though the dilemma of what terms were to be used faced the writers of drought and famine and the debate is still going on, the starting point for the analysis of famine

should lie within the understanding of those who suffer famine themselves. Because the implication of the anthropological studies are that even when people are dying from starvation, the conceptual center of famine for both victims and people studying may not necessarily be the same as starvation (ibid). Similarly, this is what one can do to understand famine in Boorana and, hence, the Boorana concept is fundamentally more convincing when it comes to analyzing the nature of famine in this area than the English definition.

Thus, the Oromo in general, and the Boorana in particular use the word *beela* for famine. The term is derived from the verb *beela'uu*, meaning *be/go hungry*. Boorbor Bulee, says "famine (*beela*) does not necessarily involve mortality. The word *beela* is used for both hunger and famine. *Beela* (famine) it is used to refer to a community, country or village suffering from severe food shortage, inability to get access to food or buy because of destitution; the episode may or may not involve death associated with all manners of sufferings, social breakdown and dependency. In the context of this study, therefore, the word *Beela* is used as defined above. The Boorana have comprehensive knowledge of famine. They conceptualize it from their own experience and cultural context. For instance, famine names refer to and symbolize their experiences and their views. Famine names mark the *Gadaa* periods and the leaders of *Gadaa* in which they took place. They also tell us about the effects and diseases responsible for the death of animals and people. Moreover, famine names indicate organizations which donated food relief and imply the causes and responses of famine.

Several observers have noted that drought and famine are not new to the desert edge. However, while the dimensions of the tragedy are to some extent clear, its secrets and causes are not. According to Manger (1996) and Egeimi (1996), this has been attributed to the failure of social research to understand the economic, political and social determinates that cause the crisis, while focusing on nature, population pressure, ignorance and irrational land use. Famine, however, is caused by multiple factors. It has been argued that pastoral production systems and their social organizations were unable to cope with drought or crisis. This was as a result of the impact of structural process of marginalization which lead to the break down of these entities. The idea is that through this process the pastoralists are exposed to incorporation of pastoral economies into the market economy, alienation of land for farming, the general insecurity arising from civil wars and conflicts, misguided national and international policies as well as factors arising from climate and ecology (Manger, 1996: 10-12; Egeimi, 1996; 32-33; DeWaal, 1989; Watts, 1983: xxiii; Bokku, 2001 :1). Generally speaking, much research on famine in recent years as reviewed, for example, in Devereux (1999) has stressed the complexity of its causation and the inappropriateness of attributing it simply and solely to natural disasters such as drought (Sandford and Yohannes, 2000:4). The causes are natural, economic, political and social. The 2000 famine in Ethiopia's pastoral areas was caused by all these factors. Particularly, a lapse in the humanitarian attention to food needs led to shortage food availability for distribution to pastoral areas as early as in 2000. It was to some extent caused by diplomatic coolness (a political causes) between the Ethiopian government and its traditional Western food donors caused by different approaches to the Ethiopian-Eritrean dispute. Ethiopian's pastoralists are, therefore, paying the price of the lapse.

Like many other East African pastoralists, the Boorana Oromo are deeply affected by both internal and external factors which have caused transitory and severe food shortages or famine. However, the desire to construct a simple cause and effect relationship have led scholars to focus on internal factors such as drought, population and the like as the major causes of famine. Among others, Helland (1997, 1998, 2000) and Coppock (1994) have emphasized these factors. Especially, Helland considers vulnerability and famine as a periodic natural adjustment to curb the increased population and an animal density which is beyond the carrying capacity of the land.

Contrary to this view, other scholars like Salah (1993a, 1993b, Salah and Abdel Gaffar (1999) and Bokku (2000) contend that the causes of famine in Boorana are many and complex i.e external and internal. They argue that it is not so much the environmental processes which underlines the prevalence of famine, but the degree of vulnerability to the adverse results that does. Thus, the social nature and dynamics of vulnerability are emphasized. This means the rural pastoral economies are "traditionally" well adapted to withstand drought and famine. However, under the burden of external forces, they became rotten and succumb to famine when subjected to the adverse results of drought or environmental factors. Hence, drought is the last straw for the people whom political and economic process have already rendered marginal insecurity.

One of the causes of vulnerability and famine is inappropriate development policy. According to Watts (1983; xiii) development or commercialization affected remarkable resiliency of African communities to climatic stress and pharoic sequences of famine

have become common phenomena with the coming of colonial rule. In the late 1960s in several African countries large scale commercial ranches were initiated with the aim to modernize the pastoral groups and their mode of production. As a result of these imposed changes towards private holdings, communal property rights faced problem (Tilahun, et al, 1994; Sandford, 1983) and aggravated vulnerability to famine..

As one of the African pastoralist groups, the Boorana also faced inappropriate development policy interventions which affected their resource tenure and indigenous organizations. One of the most far-reaching imposed change began in the 1960s when the Southern Rangeland Development Project (SORDU) was launched. According to the discussion held with the heads of SORDU, the ranches were aimed at removing the unproductive immature cattle from the rangelands, encouraging the pastoralists to integrate livestock production into the market, introducing improved management techniques and providing sources of beef for export and the internal market. Recently, private ranches are expanding at expense of wider pasture area. For example, in Surupa *kebele* about 64,000 hectares of land enclose for this purpose by private investors which was primarily used by the pastoralists from Yaballo and Hagere Mariam. Moreover, farming and water development initiatives also contributed to individualization of communal tenure system. Individuals and group have begun to construct private cisterns, which were introduced by NGOs like CARE- Ethiopia.

According to Alake (2001), although the constitution of 1995⁶ and 1997⁷ ensure the tenure security of the peasant and the pastorlits to their land, the government

⁶ Proclamation of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Federal Negarit Gazeta, No.1, 21 August 1995, Addis Ababa Ethiopia

administrative officials allow private investors to establish private ranches on the community grazing land under the pretext that land is not utilized. However, the idea of unutilized land is against pastoral land use system. For the pastoralists, there is no land which is unused or unsettled(Informant, Borbor Bulee).

Land is used adaptively in response to erratic rainfall distribution and variations in the availability of pasture. In Dirre district, about 23km² of land in Dubluk Pastoralist Association has been encroached up on by two business men for private use (ibid). The area has traditionally been used as dry season grazing by three pastoralist associations. When such areas were encroached, community members were not consulted.

These developments have impacts on Boorana resource tenure (land, pasture and water). The most far-reaching consequences are individualization of the holdings which curtail community access to pasture land (Bokku, 2000). These consequences are expressed in the form of owning individual farm plots and cisterns. This in turn brought about fodder scarcity, constraint herd mobility, fierce competition over limited space and affect communal land tenure. Moreover, it results in continued overgrazing of the same area as opposed to traditional system of relieving the rangeland and consequently results in range degradation and decline in livestock productivity. Thus, he concluded that the current non-sustainable agricultural expansion has already exposed pastoralism to a consistent process of viability erosion with consequence of vulnerability exacerbation among the poorer sections of Boorana pastoralists. In short, the encroachment on the potential grazing areas by private investors will increase livestock

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vulnerability to drought and famine, which causes the mortality of livestock due to shortage of pasture and weakening of their survival strategies.

War and ethnic conflicts are also other contributing factors to famine in Boorana. According to Boorana elders , Waaqoo Aboo and Borbor Bulee, the Boorana had experienced different wars and ethnic conflicts in their history. To begin with, in the 19th century, the Boorana were conquered by Menelik II forces. This had impact on the Boorana household economy, which by then was not fully recovering from the severe famine of the century. This was followed by clashes with other ethnic groups mainly the Somali during the *Gadaa* office of *Bule Dabbasa* and the 1977- 1978 war between Ethiopia and Somalia, which again resulted in extensive cattle raiding whereby many Boorana households became destitute, dislocated and resettled in villages.

The frequent raids from competing groups, such as Somali continued. Since the coming to power of the incumbent government in 1991 the conflict has taken a new dimension. The Somali encroachment has become significant where under the new administrative division the Boorana were forced to abandon the well complexes on which they survived for centuries like *Ela Gof* and *Leh* to Region Five (Somail Region). Alake (2001) has noted that recently, the Somali pressure continued and they are currently pressing on through armed forces and political pressure to transfer the Boorana districts of *Liiban*, *Moyale*, parts of *Dirre* and *Areero* to Region Five (Somail Region). Meanwhile, the unhealthy relations between the Boorana and *Gari* frequently erupted into clashes and killing each other. The most recent ones took place in September 2000 and from August - November 2001. The latter happened when I was conducting the second phase of my

fieldwork. As a result of this ethnic conflict several people died and wounded, households were dislocated and assets such as livestock were raided from Boorana.

The Boorana accuse the government as the cause of this ethnic conflict. The petition they presented to The Federal of Ethiopian Government clearly shows this fact. One of these petitions was presented in 1997 at Gumii Gaayyoo, Pan Boorana assembly, in which I participated. Gollo (1997) states this as follows:

It is undeniable fact that after the demise of the previous [Derg] regime, there has been vital misunderstanding between the Boorana community and the present EPRDF regime. In our opinion, the root cause of conflicts was the government. Currently among many violations of our rights we think the major one is misappropriation of rights in certain districts of the Boorana territory. These are boundary shifting in some areas to Region 5, e.g. in Moyale warada, Moyale town, Goof, Lehi, Dhokisu etc. In *Areero warada, Uudat, Waleena, Dhedheertu* and the neighboring localities which are forcibly given over to region 5 In *Liiban Warada, Fiiltuu Uudat*, surrounding areas. We kindly request your excellency to re-examine these... and return our land to us immediately so that we may utilize it for ritual ceremonies, grazing and other economic purposes (Gollo, 1997: 28-29).

To sum up, the effects of this long-standing conflicts and war episodes are many. First, livestock have become less dependable as a sole source of food. Also, many of the different drought grazing reserves that have been traditionally used as fall-back areas for cattle have been lost due to demarcation based on the new administrative division. Moreover, the shrinking of grazing land and loss of water points are highly restricting the mobility strategy of the pastoralists which in turn results in poor economic base of Boorana households. This has made them unable to ride and buffer the effects of

successive disasters i.e. drought and conflicts. Put differently, the ability of Boorana households to handle one seasonal food shortages or famine is affected and they became vulnerable to recurrent famine as their survival strategies are undermined.

Another cause of famine in Boorana is recurrent drought. The Boorana Oromo term for drought is *oolaa*. It comes from the verb *ooluu*, meaning to be absent. *Oolaa*, literally means absence of rain when expected. The Boorana attribute the causes of the absence of rain when expected (*oolaa*) to their cosmological order. Accordingly, for them drought is sent by God to cause famine. Thus, in their view famine and drought are manifestation of the wrath of God and punishment for man's violation of *aadaa* (custom) which governs and maintains the relationship of human being with God and nature.

According to the focus group discussion held with Boorana elders and other members of the society, the relationship between drought and famine is complex and an interrelated chain of processes. Drought is caused by God, because it is God who has absolute power to bring rain. The absence of rain results in shortage of pasture and water which in turn brings about over grazing desertification and diseases affected livestock and their productivity. The effects of all these inter-related factors bring about famine. An increase in the number of population also has its share on environmental degradation. The cumulative effects of all these further affected the household food security over time.

Finally, the loss of livestock and livestock products to unfavorable terms of trade as well as the lack of adequate market access have affected the household food security and exposed people to vulnerability and famine. Thus, the present subsistence crisis of

Boorana is the total results of economic, political, social and natural factors or processes. Therefore, it is erroneous to assume that the current subsistence crisis in Boorana are simply the outcome of malevolent nature, population pressure or mal-adaptation. Many other scholars share this view. Among these, Salah (1999) and Bokku (2000) have shown explicitly the degree of social nature and dynamics of vulnerability to adverse results of environmental processes that underlie the prevalence of famine and are detrimental to its cause. In other words, economic, political, social factors have exposed the Boorana to adverse effects of environment.

Oral sources from victims of famine also substantiate this fact. According to my informants Nuuraa Diida and Guyyoo Liiban before the Boorana were incorporated into Ethiopian Empire in the 19th century, the land was fertile, productive, they were prosperous, lived a lavish life and drought and famine were rare. A key informant on Boorana history and culture, Borbor Bulee, describes this as follows:

Before the end of the 19th century, Boorana was favourable for life. There were relatively abundant grasses for animals and the rain condition was good. Land and livestock are productive: meat, butter and milk were excess. We were well off. Grazing areas were vast, animal diseases were less. Drought and famine, and conflict were not frequent. However, nowadays things have completely changed. Land and livestock are not productive, there is poor diet for both animals and humans. As a result of the introduction of farming, ranches and water development large potential dry and wet season grazing areas are taken over and our cattle lack adequate grazing areas. The number of people increased and towns established on water points. Demarcation of territory contributed to frequent conflict and new administrative structures arrived and individual land owning, cisterns and ranches were introduced. Above all, drought and famine have become recurrent and the Boorana way of life adhering to *Waaqa* (God) and the practice of rituals declined. At present, famine repeatedly happens and we are compelled to rely on the assistance from aid agencies. Most of the people are destitute even to the extent we can not help each other as we did in the past.

To sum up, the Boorana view famine as episode and a process where it has multiple causes and effects. In other words, famine has an initial phase when different factors putting pressure on their resources, the crisis phase and recovery phase.

2. Famine and Its Consequences: The Scene of 18th and 19th Centuries

The Boorana remember many famines and place them in historical context. According to oral and documentary data (Boku 1996), for the first time in their history, the Boorana experienced drought and famine during the *Gadaa* office of *Bulee Dhaddachaa* (1668-1776). This was followed by drought and famine of *Gadaa* office of *Saaqqoo Dhaddacha* (1808-816) who was the son of *Bulee* by *Gadaa* class (*luba*). The evidence of famines in these periods is scanty. However, the nature, magnitude and the dimension may be understood from Boorana wealth of literature, which have still survived. My informant Borbor Bulee puts it:

Oolaa Bulee Dhaddachaa:-

Oolaa Saaqqoo Dhaddacha

Oolaan Abbaafi Ilma

Dootii Haadhaafi Ilme

Which means

Drought during the *Gadaa* office of *Saaqqoo Dhaddacha*
Drought occurred during the *Gadaa* offices of both the
"father" and the "son"
When mother with her child died of famine.

The central point of this literature is that it indicates the tragedy of drought and famine in each *Gadaa* period, which in turn indiscriminately killed human and animals. They are "father" and the "son" in ***Gadaa*** classes.

Once again, the Boorana were affected by the episode of famine during the *Gadaa* offices of Diida Bittaattaa and Haroo Adii (1864 -1871). The former one was locally named as *agarri Gadaa Diida* (sever famine during the *Gadaa* office of Dida Bittaattaa). According to Boorana these droughts and famines also resulted in human and animal death associated with widespread diseases.

At the end of the 19th century, the Boorana had experienced severe droughts and famines twice. The first drought is locally known as *Oolaa Qollajjii* and it was referred to as drought period in the *Gadaa* office of *Guyyoo Boruu Ungulee* (1880-1888). *Oolaa* is drought while *Qollajjii* is an untanned dry cattle hides (Bokku, 1996). According to Boorana elders, during this time, drought and famine killed a considerable number of livestock. The people exchanged the hides of collapsed animals with crops such as maize and sorghum to Guji Oromo and Knoso, etc... Hence, the famine was named after the strategies people used to survive.

The second drought was locally known as *bara cinnaa* or *bara cinnaa Tittee Gurraachaa*. *Bara* literally means during, or period of time, while *cinnaa* refers to mean to vanish or discontinue. *Tittee Gurraachaa*, means 'black fly'. According to my informants *Borbor Bulee* and *Waaqoo Aboo* during this time drought and famine were associated with renderpest epidemics. . It was the worst of its kind and *Tittee*

Gurraacha, literally black-fly infestation of all orifices had caused a serious livestock loss. As a result, the Boorana lost almost all of their livestock; the number of population reduced dramatically, people ate carcasses and most of them became destitute (*Qollee*) and resorted to hunting and gathering. Lions and Hyenas attacked people, although carcasses were prevalent. Boorana came together and settled in large villages to defend themselves from animals. During this time, few livestock survived and the Boorana shared the remained ones. According to Gollo (1997) some of the survivors moved across the borders to the relatives and respective clans in order to request for a share of food. People like Baxter (1993: 152) has drawn parallelism of this crisis with the 14th century Black Death in England which claimed two thirds of the entire English people.

This was further exacerbated when Menelik II army conquered the society who have not yet covered from the effects of *Bara cinna*. Hence, the aftermath of the conquest and famine made the beginning of twentieth century a period of general crisis for the Boorana Oromo. In other words, the 20th century was characterized by recurrent famine which also continued in the twenty first century as we shall see below.

3. Famine and its Consequences in the 20th and 21st Centuries in Boorana

Although it is not unique, a devastating drought and famine occurred between 1973 to 1975 during the Gadaa office of *Gobba Bulee*. This famine has a special place among the Boorana at least for two reasons. First, ever since the famine conditions appear indistinctly and in a threatening way affecting the people frequently and widely. My informants Jaatanii Galgaloo and Nuuraa Yaabichoo underlined that before this time

famine rarely happened i.e. once in one *Gadaa*. The second reason is that food aid began in Boorana for the first time. This relief operation was organized by Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), under the leadership of Mr. Harald urolafson. Red maize, literally Baadalla diima, was distributed to drought-hit pastoralists. Among the Boorana this time is remembered as Bara Baadalla Haro or Bara baadalla Diimaa, literally the era of Haraldur's maize or the era of red corn (Bokku, 1996). Famine was, therefore, named after either the relief food distributed or the distributor whom the Boorana refer as Haroo. Thereafter, food aid to the Boorana became a regular feature until today.

The famine of the first half of 1970s was followed by the 1977 – 1978 Ethio- Somalia war. The consequences of this war were so great that it forced many Boorana households in a precarious economic situation and famine. As a result, the destitute households were made to move to resettlement camps or villages.

The last two decades of the 20th century were also period of chronic famine conditions. The Boorana witnessed recurring famines in 1983/1984, 1991/1992 and 1996/1997. According to Boorana elders Boruu Madhaa and Boruu Guyyoo, the 1983/1984, famine was the worst of its kind in the century. Although there are no systematic data on the figure of the loss of life, both in terms of livestock and human beings, this famine killed a great deal of livestock and several people died of hunger and hunger-related disease. It also displaced or dislocated many families and the destitute families were gathered at resettlement villages. Getachew (1995) has describes the drought and famine condition as follows: "rainfall over the last four years has been variable, and a poor year in 1983 has been followed by virtually rainless year in 1984". The study conducted by Coppck

(1994) indicated that the severe condition of drought has resulted in 60% decrease of cattle (mortality, slaughter, and sales), in the worst affected parts of Boorana.

The terms of trade between livestock and grain also significantly declined while sales of animals dramatically increased. The amount of grain purchased by selling animals was highly reduced. According to the same source, pastoralists terms of trade had been reduced by 90% (Coppck, 1994) . Pre-drought price of Ethiopian Birr 1.00 per kilogram of live weight for cattle declined to Ethiopian Birr 0.30 by 1984. This was mirrored by an increase in maize price from Ethiopian Birr 0.40 per kilogram to Ethiopian Birr 1.00 during the same period (ibid.).

Again, in 1991/1992, Boorana was hit by severe drought and famine that lasted for more than a year and half. The victims described it as one of the worst of its kind during the century. The impact of the extended drought and famine on livestock and human lives was immense as usually. The communities described it as situation where "Livestock mortality was widespread and carcasses were lying all over the place particularly at water points". Without sustained emergency relief measures, increasingly high rates of human mortality could have happened (Getachew, 1995: 252). According to Webb et al (1994:91) in 1992, there were about 200,000 pastoralist famine victims relying on relief aid in central Boorana. Though it is difficult to know the figure of livestock mortality, it was estimated that on average every Boorana household had lost 79 percent of its cattle, 95 percent of camels, 83 percent of equines and 60 percent sheep and goats (Alemayehu, 1998: 24; Getachew, 1995:252). According to Getachew (1995), a number of factors have triggered the 1991/1992 crisis in Boorana. These were the effects of

failure of rainfall in 1991 and its delay to rain on time, widespread livestock death associated with disease which affected foot and mouth of the livestock. There were also the depressing of livestock market, increase of the price of food grains, and poor nutritional status of population and ethnic conflict between the *Garri* and *Boorana*. All these exacerbated and worsened the situation. The livestock mortality was variable by locality and individual household. As a result of significant livestock losses many households became destitute and dropped out of the traditional pastoral sector and became farmers in pre-urban settlement.

In 1996/97 drought and famine continued to strike *Boorana*. According to the data obtained from *Boorana* households, the problem arose in the beginning of the year 1996. This was because of the inadequacy of short rains season in the previous year of 1995 and the delayed onset of long rains in 1996 and its low amount. This affected the condition of pasture, water and this condition forced the pastorlists to move earlier towards the dry grazing areas with their dry stock in search of water and pasture which result in overgrazing. According to livestock loss assessment conducted by Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC, 1997: 15), at the end of drought period the *Boorana* households were reported to have lost up to 85 percent of their livestock in *Dirre* and *Taltalle* districts only. The death of livestock caused significant deterioration of household economy and losses of human lives. It was observed that almost all classes of animals, even camels were found dead. All the earlier famines affected the *Boorana* households' food security and weakened their response during the years 1999/2000 drought and famine.

3.1. The 1999/ 2000 Drought and Famine

In the year 1999/2000 famine threatened many parts of Ethiopia's pastoral areas including Boorana. This famine has been said by the people as one of the most severe famines to have affected the area. According to the victims of famine, there was failure of rainfall during the years 1997, 1998 and 1999. Similarly, the quantitative data obtained from *Yaballo*, *Moyale* and *Taltalle* stations in these years indicate the cumulative deficit of rainfall below average (Sandford and Yohannes, 2000; PRFSATW, 1999). At the end of 1999, the record of cumulative deficit was by far worst in the short rainy season (*Hagayya*), and in 2000 there was no rainfall in long rainy season (*Ganna*) before the end of the first quarters.

The consequences of this problem on livestock economy of Boorana and people were great. There were no grass and water for the livestock and water and food for the people. Ponds dried up and wells sank so deep. As a result, animals and people were obliged to trek long distances to get access to daily food and water. As drought continued, the impact on human and livestock became alarming. According to *Alake* (2001), a total of 171 people died of hunger between September 1999 and May 2000 in *Yaballo* and *Dirre* districts alone. Most of these people were children and elderly. Besides, human morbidity (*bobbosuu*) was very high and poor nutritional condition was reported by the informants. My informants Jaarso Boruu and Inseene Gufuu who live in *Diida Hara* state about the drought and famine of 1999/ 2000 as follows:

There was no rain for four solid rainy seasons consequentially. There was little or erratic rain. It starts late or stops early. Especially the insufficient rain during 1997, 1998, repeated in the 1999 and worsened in 2000. As a result, pasture tended to decrease and ponds happened to dry from their source.

and wells decreased. To alleviate the water problem, aid agencies like CARE constructed about 30 cisterns which are water storage wells. Though we used the constructed cisterns wells, we could not get enough water and grass. As a result, some people moved to "traditional" wells and the Guji border. The rest people were provided water for their animal as well as for themselves through aid agencies. Yet, because of the over crowding of animals the land was overgrazed and degraded, especially around water wells. Because of the lack of pasture, animals grew thin, weak and fell down everywhere. The owners of animals themselves being weak like their animals have tried to raise the fallen down animals. To overcome this disaster, a household lended a hand to its neighbor in raising animals. Some animals died and were dragged out alternately. As the number of dead animals was very high the people started to leave them unskinned. As the drought grew worse and worse, the mass death of the animals increased. Even, the wild animals kept reserved from eating the carcasses which stench and later polluted the environment. To see this embarrassing scene, a group of journalist came and took a film and went back. As time went by, the people continued to die of the famine and the animals perished empty belly. The narrators continued to say that the amount of aid was limited to a few people. Those who have money can buy what to eat where as those who do not have money died of starvation. Later on, it was realized that all the members of the community become victims of the famine. As a result, the relief aid was distributed among all. Eating meat and butter, and drinking milk is the custom of Boorana. They rarely eat grain food. Due to the death of the large number of animals, the above-mentioned products became scarce. This largely affected old men and children who are mostly dependent on milk. There were people who died of famine in our Kebele. However, relief aid has saved many lives. Today, many people in our *kebele* do not have livestock and 300-400 people still depends on relief.

Thus, one can infer from the above statement that the effect of the drought on human and livestock was enormous. The most affected parts of Boorana (northern strip) have suffered catastrophic losses up to 80 percent, 50 sheep, 30 goats, 20 percent equines, 10 percent camels (Sandford and Yohannes, 2000: 8-9). Although the effects of the

drought were felt within a short time after the failure of short rain season in Hagayya in 1999, mortality was often at its highest in the first month after heavy rains in May 2000.

Like the previous droughts and famines, the 1999/2000 famine was associated with livestock diseases and tick infestation that exacerbated the drought problems. The 'black fly' locally known as Tiitte Gurraacha bite both humans and livestock. It particularly attacks weak domestic animals entering any orifice (mouth, nose and anus). The ethnic conflict between Garri and Boorana also had worsened the situation. Consequently, grazing areas, which could have reduced the impact of drought on livestock, were abandoned.

During the drought and famine the terms of trade between livestock and grain deteriorated badly. The price of food grains in all markets of Boorana increased significantly. As a result, the purchasing power of pastoral households was depressed. During the drought, livestock supply was high because pastoralists were exchanging large number of animals for cereals. Thus food insecurity occurred when there was no food shortage in local markets. After the drought the price of cattle rose gradually as usual.

The impact of drought, famine and disease have always fallen in different areas and on different household within the same community.

In the case of Boorana, this is also true. In less affected areas mortality was: cattle 30 percent, sheep 20 percent, goats 20 percent, equines 10 percent and camel 10 percent (Sandford and Yohannes, 2000). To be specific, at district level, mortality was worst in

Yaballo, Dirre and Taltallee, with 76, 789; 87, 645; 75, 039 respectively in terms of number (BZDPPC³, 2000, Alake, 2001). My informant Dooyoo Dullacha states that the extent of livestock loss also vary at *kebele* level. For instance, in Yaballo, *kebeles* such as *Dhadim*, *Bildiim* and *Carri* were less affected as compared to *Diida Hara*, *Ela wayye*, *Diida Yaaballo*, *Harar Weeyyuu* and *Yaaballo*, *Adee*, *Hara weeyyuu* and *Adee Galchat*. Even within a given Kebele the effect was not uniform. For example, in Diida Harar, where the livestock death toll was reported as 24,853, part of the *Kebele* bordering the *Gujii* highland and belonging to *Goomolee* ecology was able to survive. According to my informant, Dooyoo Dullacha, the area has trees and grasses for livestock forage.

The differential impact was also witnessed at household level. According to my informants, Borbor Bulee and Guyyoo Boruu, it was reported that there are households who completely lost their livestock while others were left with a few heads. The factors that had contributed to these differential effects were the number of livestock, spatial and species diversity, household structure and management experience. The larger the number of livestock the household had the more it could survive. The more the livestock were dispersed into different ecological zones such as *Dida*, *Gonnlee*, etc with necessary labour power the more they survived. The diversity of the assets of the household was also very important. Households with more diversified livestock and/or cattle species had better chance of survival. For example, the death was less serious among sheep and goats, equines and camels in the worst and less affected areas compared with cattle. In terms of age, mortality was high for very old and very young immature animals. The structure and management experience had also affected the survival of livestock.

In other words, most of the time households with less labour supply and elderly and female heads were more affected during the crisis.

As we have already mentioned, famine is selective. Its victims are society's most vulnerable groups such as poor households, poor widows, old people and children (Walker, 1989). In Boorana too, the food insecure group of people or the victims are female headed households, those families who have lost their animals due to drought and ethnic conflicts and those households with large number of family but less number of livestock.

In general, as a result of recurrent drought and famine, the Boorana household economy is in a precarious situation. As a result of the impact of drought and famine, the number of pastoralists in need of relief aid increased. The reason was that income and food obtained from livestock has declined due to drought stress. Many cows died and the remaining milk-supplying animals dried up due to nutritional stress or the death of their calves, and cows which were pregnant mostly aborted.

The impact of drought and famine is not only economic but also social. One of the living memories of famine's social effect was the death of people. Some individuals who lost cattle during the course have been observed to have gone abnormal or insane and others committed suicide. For example, a pastoralist called *Waariyoo kaateeloo* who lived in *Romso* Kebele in *Dirre* district owned 400 cattle before the onset of 1999/2000 drought and famine. *Waariyoo* lost 360 head of cattle and he finally committed suicide (informant *Alake Bante*). In *Diida Hara* few people also got mad and survived with the

help of community. In some cases, famine resulted in family split. It also resulted in the postponing of ritual and ceremonies of marriage, naming, etc. This happened because the cattle and their products have great contribution to the performance of ceremonies. According to my informant Jiloo Aagaa when the postponing of some ceremonies are not possible, the people used Solanaceous fruit to liken it with the cattle to be slaughtered for the ritual and ceremonies. The Solanaceous fruit symbolizes the cattle. Some pre-famine rich people became middle or poor people. As a result, the over all member of poor people grew alarmingly. Most of these destitute people live in former resettlement villages such as Ade- Galchat, Hiddii lolaa etc. looking for relief aid from government and NGO's. Stealing, eating alone, raiding kin and neighbors were not reported during famine years.

3.2 The Recovery Process.

From the victims point view famine is seen as a process, not a one- time event. It evolves and is episodic in nature, having three distinct phases. Walker says:

An initial period of gestation in which a number of factors converge in attenuating food supplies; a period in which the inaccessibility of food reach critical dimensions in terms of human survival and creates modes of behaviour which diverge extensively from the accustomed routines; and a period of recovery (1989:35).

Among the Boorana too, famine has gestation, critical (crisis) and recovery phases. We have already seen the first two phases i.e. when food supplies affected by multiple factors and gave way to critical phase of human survival. Now we shall see the recovery phase taking an example of 1999/2000 drought and famine.

The Boorana are now in a recovery process from the famine of 1999/2000. In Boorana economy, drought and famine recovery is complex and dependent upon a number of processes. In the first place, the recovery phase involves that drought must end, sufficient rain must come to improve pastures and water availability, price recovery for livestock regain and effective purchasing power of the people restored. It is also based on recovery of Boorana household consumption patterns i.e milk and meat, and physical improvement of livestock as well as the recovery of the livestock reproductive cycle and restocking which takes a long time. Finally, the Boorana community has a built-in system for voluntary redistribution of their resources that serves as a mechanism for loss recovery.

The first process involves sufficient rain to improve pastures and water. According to *Yabballo* District Food Security Assessment, pastures and water condition for the rainy season of 2001 are found to be sufficient due to good germination of annual and perennial grasses. However, the concentration on potential grazing areas has caused a great pressure on existing pasture. This was due to the minimized potential and alternate grazing areas of the pastoral community. This forced the community to use enclosure (*kaloo*) which otherwise were reserved for dry period. *Kaloo* is reserved for dry period for home based herds. Hence, this put the quick recovery process in questions.

As far as livestock condition is concerned, due to high number of the death of cattle in the year 1999/2000, the average livestock possessed by households was at a bottom. (See annex 4). However, a few animals when survived have fully recovered due to

favorable rain situation. They are in good condition in their health status. But, the major source of food for pastoral community during this time has dropped very sharply because of significant losses of milking cows during the past drought.

With regard to crop production, recovery depends on climatic condition during a particular season of production when the rain is adequate to support plant growth and maturity. The interviewed household heads reported that the initial growth performance of crop was good and normal almost for all types of crops until the flowering stage. However, due to early cessation of this year, (2001) long rain and the prolonged dry spell has resulted in withering of several varieties of crops. Crop pest (army worms) observed on *teff* and wheat and grasshopper attacked haricot beans at succulent stage. There is also a lack of oxen. In order to support agricultural activities, several NGOs operating in Boorana have supplied short maturing varieties of crop like maize, sorghum, etc. Currently, early cessation of rainfall at flowering stage of crops has caused a significant production shortfall. For example, of the total population of Yaballo district about 35.7 % (32,679) people were found food insecure and need relief aid (YWFSA, 2001:10).

In terms of market conditions the price of livestock in different market centers has significantly improved compared to the past two to three years of this time of the year. The major reasons for this are, the improved body conformation of the livestock, because of improved rain condition, and increased terms of trade from the central part of the country has become high and contributed to remain in increased rate. But, in July (2001) cross border market has failed due to disagreement created between Ethiopian

Moyale and Kenya Moyale government officials. The issue was related to market center and the taxation of live animals. This situation resulted in a rapid price decline of these animals. This, in turn, affected the recovery process.

In almost all market centers, the current price of staple foods is lower than the same time of last year. The major reason is the increase in supply of cereal and poor purchasing power. The supply of haricot beans in the local market has also increased due to reasonable harvest of this year production and this has contributed to significant market price decline (0.50 Birr 1kg)

The numbers of relief dependent also show decline (see Annex 2) . For example, according to Boorana Zone DPPC in the year 2001 from the total population of the Yaballo district 31,000 people still survive on relief food through February to June 2001. This was 36% decrease from the figure of last year. However, the allocated resources have never met the total requirement. Therefore, the communities have shared the grain through traditional support system to save the lives of needy population. Different NGOs operating in the area and the government have supplied different types of livestock to the drought-affected households particularly pastoralists through restocking program (see Annex 3.) Thus, the Boorana are at recovery process using different strategies including food aid.

During my fieldwork, I witnessed that relief food were still distributed to the Boorana since they were not yet able to stand on their own feet or fully recovered. Even the

meeting of the Early Warning Department of *Yaballo* district in which I was a participant reported that there would be food shortages in this year (2001/2002) and a proposal for the continuation of relief aid. This was due to the less amount of rain in short rainy season at the end of the year 2001. In addition to its amount, the rain was not evenly distributed. I observed that there was little rain in *kebeles* like *Diida Hara*, one of the areas highly affected during the 1999/2000 drought. Most of the interviewed household herds in *Dambii* village (*Olla*) told me that they moved their cattle to west, northwest of *Yaballo* where there was a relative rainfall. However, in those less affected areas a smaller proportion of household was entirely dependent on relief aid. Totally, had it not been for the relief aid the death toll would have been incalculable.

Another process on which the Boorana economy depends to recover is mutual assistance system (*Buusa Gonofaa*), which provides assistance such as temporary lending of milk cows (*Dabaree*) gifts (*Kenna* or *Gumaata*) of animals and food for members of the community. However, the voluntary redistribution of resources has been weakened due to recurrent drought and the corresponding heavy losses of household resources. This does not mean it stop functioning. This has an impact on the system that plays major role in the recovery process, because of the expanding needs of the many households who lost their resources. Hence, there is continuity and changes in Boorana survival strategies.

CHAPTER FIVE

Survival Strategies to Famine: Boorana Views of Survival Strategies

1. Introduction: Boorana views of survival strategies

In chapter three, I tried to discuss the tragedy of short or prolonged drought and famine repeatedly facing the Boorana. In this and the consecutive two chapters, I focus on the most common indigenous survival strategies which have been and are still employed by the Boorana to cope with this crisis.

The Boorana have equivalent concepts for the terms survival and strategy. While they name survival as *dandammii*, they call 'strategy' as *mala*. When *mala* and *dandammii* are joined together and form *mala dandammii* these words can probably best replace /explain the phrase survival strategies.

Famine has been a recurrent feature of the Boorana lives life and these people have developed sophisticated cultural mechanisms that operate within the context of the *Gadaa* system to survive this crisis. Using these indigenous survival strategies and coping mechanisms as important means to overcome famine, the Boorana mobilize all resources of the community.

In Boorana views, these mechanisms are not developed overnight. They are the result of accumulated knowledge of resource management strategies and the process of responses to recurrent drought and famine. In other words, they believe that their

survival strategies are evolving in process over time or the strategies they use today emanate from their past experience. There is Boorana saying "*Nama oolaa darbee qaabatetu oolaa jalaa ba'a*" which can loosely be translated as "only those who experienced drought and famine previously can survive the present and future crisis". Hence, the Boorana view that survival strategies are process or logical extensions of the normal time as well as the hardships they went through during drought and famine. That is to say that adjustments are not picked off the shelf when threatened. Rather, they involve long-term strategies of resource management employed by households to mitigate the risk of losing assets and income. These long-term strategies are primarily aimed at preserving their economic basis so that they ensure survival whenever they face drought and famine and make quick recovery after the crisis. Some of these strategies are diversification of herds, economic activities, restocking, resource exchange etc.. To clarify more, the purposes of the daily activities of Boorana households are to ensure their long viability by maintaining long term strategies of resource management. In line with this, Corbett (1988:1107-1108; Walker, 1989) say that adjustment over time is a form of household response to crisis that is insurance stage (long term strategy), crisis stage and distress migration.

To sum up, in the case of Boorana there are strategies used before the crisis, during the crisis and after the crisis. Therefore, the ways the Boorana respond to drought and famine are characterized as chains of adjustment over time where the success of crisis survival and recovery strategies depends on the mechanisms that a household uses during normal times, particularly crisis anticipation or early warning system and resource management.

2. An Early Warning System or Crisis Anticipation

Crisis anticipation refers to all activities of a predicative and defensive nature employed to foresee the probable course of events in the immediate future and thereby helps a household to prepare alternative resource management strategies in order to minimize danger (Dessaegn, 1987).

The Boorana have developed a cultural system of disaster forecasting and preparedness based on their long-age experiences. This cultural early warning system is the most important aspect of Boorana survival strategies as it is concerned with anticipation of weather condition, livestock, grass, water, disease, market behavior, environmental changes and social affairs.

The Boorana households frequently anticipate crisis well in advance and plan strategies cautiously to mitigate its future impact. Anticipating the occurrence of drought and famine need sufficient preparation before their actual occurrence. For this purpose, they mobilize human resources and use accumulated knowledge in collaborative and cooperative ways. Comparable data can be presented from the research conducted in Walloo–Northern Ethiopia. According to Dessaegn (1987) all community intellectuals, social, religious and mystic resources are deployed to anticipate and prepare for disaster. Among the Boorana too, crisis anticipation is a collective effort where all human resources of varied knowledge and background are used in forecasting crisis and preparing for it.

It has been already mentioned that the purpose of early warning system is to collect information, on various aspects of Boorana life i.e. economic, social, political, cultural and natural conditions using different indices of measurements.

The first source of information for the Boorana cultural early warning is *Ayyaantuu*. As my informants, Borbor Bulee, Nuuraa Diida and Diida Qaraasaa told me *Ayyaantuu* is an expert in time reckoning who has knowledge of reading or observing the arrangements of celestial bodies by examining the relative positions of stars and the moon. He tells days, months, years and also forecasts how the relative positions of stars and the moon influence human affairs. This person knows when rain is to begin and stop depending on the relative position of the stars and the moon. The deviation of stars from their normal positions and the times they are expected to appear means crisis is imminent. For instance, if the *Bakkalchaa*, which is one of the stars needs to appear in conjunction with moon, is not visible, we anticipate drought and famine. My informants Diida Qaraarsaa and Borbor Bulee further say:

Changes in daily weather, the coming of drought and famine and other bad or good fortune can be predicted by observing different signs formed around the sun and moon. For instance, if pond (*Haroo*) like circle is formed around both the sun and moon, especially when they are overhead, it has a meaning in our culture. This situation symbolizes at least three things. These are rain, war and drought and famine, which are associated with specific signs that one can read or observe. In the first place, if the center of the pond-like circle is black and is surround by red color, it implies the coming of rain. In the second place, if the form or shape of pond is similar to cattle skin that is stretched and staked into the ground, the implication is inevitability of drought and famine. Specifically, it symbolizes the death of cattle. In the third place, if the shape or form of the pond is similar to cattle enclosure (*kraais*), it symbolizes war. Beyond that, bad or good fortune can be forecast by examining the color of cloud and the sun. If the color of cloud and the sun is abnormal, especially red in color, it indicates the changes in daily weather, the approach of drought and famine and other things related to bad fortunes. Moreover, the formation of *rainbow* (*sabbata waaqaa*) shows the disappearance of rain.

Thus, the reading of relative positions of stars and the moon and different signs of celestial bodies by the astrologist, *Ayyantu* plays an important role in the Boorana survival strategies, especially as an early warning system.

Another source of information for Boorana early warning system is *Uuchuu*. In the words Diida Qaraarsaa, who is *Uuchuu* himself, *Uuchuu* is a person who has knowledge of reading *Uusaa*, which literally refers to intestinal parts (*marrumaan*) of an animal including the fatty transparent (*mooraa*). The knowledge of *Uuchuu* is not hereditary but it is learned through transferring practice (*dabarsaa*). *Uuchuu* reads the *Uusaa* of a bull, goat and sheep slaughtered by individual households and community.

Though *Uusaa* of all these livestock is culturally valuable, that of the cattle is preferable. With regard to the importance of *Uusaa* as the source of information for early warning system, Diida Qaraarsaa, Alakee kateeloo and Godaanaa point out:

There is nothing impossible to be examined from *uusaa*. It shows all kinds of bad and good omens (*faroo*) facing an individual, household and community. More specifically, it predicts weather condition or the coming of rain, the approach of drought and famine as well as the appearance of war, disease etc. *Uusaa* also reveals what happened to a person or household particularly with cases associated to health and economic conditions.

To conclude *Uuchuu* is a futurologist, who is engaged in the practice of examining *uusaa*, which is one of the most important elements in the Boorana cultural value.

The persons known as *Raagaa* are also other sources of information in anticipating what happens in future. According to kateeloo Daboobessaa, who is *raagaa* himself, *raagaa*

are prophets who have a divine power and a great role in anticipating what will happen in the future. Such famous diviners are believed to have revelation message from God on social, political and economic events that are likely to happen. As observed during my field work, diviners are highly respected by the community and their spiritual guidance has a great role in Boorana culture. Some of the famous prophets of Boorana are Moroo Uchumaa, Areeroo Boosaroo, Boruu Mallee, Dhadacha Reeba, Goolisa Gobba, Ogaraji Doyyoo, Ammessa Baalaa and others. These people have knowledge of predicting the coming crisis such as drought and famine.

Animal behaviors are also other sources of information for Boorana cultural early warning system or crisis anticipation. Cattle react to their environment in different ways, and in Boorana view their reaction tells that something good or bad is going to happen. According to Jiloo Taadhii, Jaatanii Diida and Borbor Bulee, if cattle are willing to move to their *Kraals* at the sun set, if they are being satiated (*suga'uu*) or get saturated with a little feed, if they do not compete for grass greedily and provided that the cattle affectionately lick each other, these behaviors are considered as the signs of good omens (*faroo*) i.e rain is likely to come and there will be peace and stability.

According to Borbor Bulee, Diida Qaraasa and Jiloo Taadhii, , bad omens and the coming of drought and famine, on the other hand, are also implied when cattle empty their bowel or discharge their urine while lying down as well as when they resist to return to their *kraals* after being taken to watering point. It is also believed that similar misfortunes are likely to take place if cows refuse to join the calves and fail to respond to the call of their off-springs and their owners. Moreover, if cattle unusually become

aggressive or gluttonous (*sabdaa'uu*) and break their *kraals* to go out in search of grass at night, these also symbolize bad omens, especially the coming of drought and famine. These situations can happen while there is abundant food or when there is a strong desire for more than what is right and reasonable. These too, *forecast* (*dha'uu*) famine (Informants, Diida Qaraasa and Jiloo Taadhii). The Boorana households use these indices to anticipate future events and to make decisions on how to respond to these incidents.

Still there are futurologists who are involved in forecasting what will happen in the future from omens and natural indices. One of my field work interviewees, Qaraarsa Diida, states that these people are gifted with the knowledge of identifying various sounds and singings uttered by birds to predict about environment.

Moreover, these are men of knowledge who analyze environmental changes based on the signs and specific types of livestock disease especially that of cattle which occur during previous drought and famine. Furthermore, the decrease in levels of water and the condition of wind, which is unusually stormy and cold is believed to have been followed by crisis. This does not result from divine rather it is an outcome of empirical knowledge developed over time.

The various rituals, ceremonies performed and assemblies organized at different levels in the *Gadaa* system are also other sources of information on crisis anticipation. As Stated by Borbor Bulee, Guyyoo, Libban and Boruu Madhaa, the *Gadaa* in power performs various rituals, ceremonies and holds assemblies at different ceremonial

places in which members of the community are taking part every eight years. Besides, there are rituals and ceremonies performed and public meetings held at household, village, clan and community levels. These do not need wait for every year. In all such occasions, participants exchange their experience and information on livestock, water, grass, weather, market, crops, environmental conditions as well as other social, political and economic affairs.

My personal observation also indicated that the Boorana cultural greeting system, too is a source of information for early warning system. In Boorana culture, when people meet, they ask one another to know if they are at peace, if all the human beings and livestock are well. They also ask one another to know whether their country receives sufficient rain and conditions are good for grass and water. In this way, they exchange information about different ecological zones of Boorana territory, weather, rain, livestock production, disease, grass, market behavior and environmental changes. In general, they exchange information on social, economic and political issues.

The Boorana also consider the behaviors of both short and long rainy seasons to predict what may come later on. Informants Diima Jirmoo and Boruu Ganyaa told me that these situations include the coming of rain at right time, its irregularity and its amount. For example, if it starts late and stops early, they predict that it will affect grass and water condition. Hence, these force the households to devise alternative resource managements strategies such as grazing, watering, mobility and herding. They may decide to move early or late to dry season grazing or to save their grazing enclosure (*kaloo*) or to use it.

Assessment of market behaviors is still one of the built-in strategies of Boorana early warning system. As the Booranaa elders, Borbor Bulee and Jaarsoo Boruu assert, the Boorana closely follow up market behaviors in their locality and far away. The purpose is to know the price of livestock and to decide which livestock brings relatively a good price to sell and at which market they find things they buy with cheaper prices. This involves black market and internal market at different levels and areas. Since there is a direct relationship between the availability of grass and water, these situations affect the physical condition of cattle and in turn their price. The larger the supply of livestock which are not in good physical condition and are not usually marketable indicates the shortage of food and cattle products, and as a result, some households sell their basic assets. According to Abba Gaaloo, some other sell their cattle when price is good and buy more cattle or other species when price declines. Then, with the money they earn from selling, they deposit a certain amount at the bank anticipating the decline of price and the crisis. This informant said, " I my self sold 10 cattle of mine and deposited the money at bank." Accordingly, if there is a decline in price, it is an indication of unusual large supply of livestock whose physical conditions have deteriorated and this in turn shows that people are beginning to sell their assets because of shortage of cattle products.

Another point worth mentioning is the fact that the Boorana believe or anticipate recurrent happenings of drought and famine based on their past experience related to *maqabaasaa* of the Gadaa system. According to my key informants, the late Gobbaa Bulee, Agaa Adii, Boruu Madhaa and Borbor Bulee, *Maqabaasaa* is the seven recurring

cycles where each cycle is closely associated with certain natural occurrences giving rise to some events of drought and famine. Therefore, the Boorana elders anticipate the *Gadaa* cycles in which this crisis takes place.

This information on different social, economic and political aspects of the society as well as environmental conditions are disseminated to the community members through individuals, relatives or formally on rituals, ceremonies and assemblies organized at different levels. Thus, the Boorana have cultural early warning system dealing with social, political and economic conditions based on the collective effort of the society, particularly men of knowledge. The early warning system has an influence on household decisions as we shall see below.

3. A Customary Resource Management Strategy

The Boorana have developed efficient and successful customary resource management strategies which function in the framework of the *Gadaa* System. These customary resources management strategies are the result of centuries accumulated knowledge which are based on their ingenuity and strength of character. The three major resources which are critical and can be exploited according to these customary resource management strategies are land, pasture and water. In other words, these customary resource exploitation strategies are concerned with the three major resources.

3.1. Patterns of Land Use and Mobility Strategy in Boorana

Boorana land tenure is communal. This tenure system facilitates equal access to and the right to use the resources for all Boorana. Accordingly, every Boorana is entitled to the right of grazing his livestock to any areas he/she needs in Boorana land. This does not, however, mean the Boorana land use pattern is an open access grazing. There are customary rules and laws pertaining to land use pattern. As Soraa Boruu and Borbor Bulee assert, these rules and laws are concerned with settlement pattern, a flexible use of pastureland by dividing into wet season area, dry season grazing area and drought reserve area.

Under the customary land use pattern, the Boorana also have specific areas of the land preserved for the performance of various rituals and ceremonies. Recently, the cultivation of land has been introduced and the pattern to utilize the land is incorporated into their customary rules and laws.

To begin with, the Boorana land use pattern is concerned with their settlement pattern. Among the Boorana settlement is not arbitrary. The heads of village and *ardaa* are in charge of managing the settlement pattern. The purpose is to preserve vast land for grazing and watering. For example, settlement at *mataa tika* which implies the best grazing area kept for communal use of the area, is impossible. In addition, the customary land use pattern does not allow settlement between villages and water points as this blocks or intercepts the routes along which the communities take their cattle to watering. Thus, one is supposed to settle in the expected areas (villages). The Boorana

give due attention to cattle routes/ roads to water wells and grazing lands. This gives to cattle vast and flexible grazing land for normal and drought times.

Soraa Boruu and Borbor Bulee further state that the Boorana divide their land into wet – season area, dry-season grazing area and drought reserve area based on their customary rules. This systematic land use pattern is based on the mobility of herd and people between the wet and dry season grazing areas. This pattern of seasonal movement is governed by the availability of pasture and water. In fact, not only pasture and water are governing mobility of herds and people but also there are other reasons such as cattle disease, thick (tse tse fly), drought, ethnic-conflict, ritual – ceremonies and assemblies of the *Gadaa* system.

During the wet season which ranges between March to May, the Boorana households, move to wet grazing zones of up land areas (*Diida*). At this time, water and pasture are sufficiently available. It is astonishing to observe an abrupt changes in vegetation growth and to become green soon. In this period, or as this season sets in, the Boorana households and their herd move to wet grazing zones of upland where abundant and good quality of pasture, surface water, hand and machine-dug ponds (*Haroo*) are available for both human and livestock. The availability of these resources provides them with a breathing space as they are relieved of the burden of shortage of water and grass. As a result this is the time when the Boorana mostly perform ritual and ceremonies. Until they use the wet-grazing areas, the dry season grazing areas get replenished. This in turn avoids or minimizes rangeland degradation and enables them

to keep forage and water as a reserve for drought and famine. Abba Duuba Waariyoo contends the pattern of land use in the following way :

As the dry season sets in, our herds and we move to dry season grazing zones where dry pasture and permanent water wells exist. Until the beginning of rainy season we depend on these water wells and dry grass of this dry grazing zones. This is our regular land use pattern at normal times. Every year at the beginning of dry season, we, the Boorana, begin the utilization of well water after performing *dhibaayyuu* ceremony.

If the dry-season is prolonged and drought occurs the Boorana households change or adjust their resource management strategies and mobility patterns. They continue to depend on the permanent and deep wells and recently machine-dug large ponds until rain comes when they go back to their wet season grazing. Even some of them move to areas closer to highlands, valley bottoms, hills, river areas (*Sagan river*) and other areas they think have a little rain or grass in stead of moving to their wet grazing areas as there is no rain. In this case, they do not follow the seasonal mobility pattern to move to wet grazing area. Thus, to cope with drought and famine, they change their mobility time, pattern and directions. The strategy of communal land use makes possible of getting access to vast and varied grazing ground and through skillfull movements of households could minimize the worsening effects of drought and famine. Even if it is out of the regular mobility time, the Boorana move to drought grazing areas. These drought reserve areas include permanent deep wells, valley bottoms, up hills and areas closer to highland areas and regions receiving high amount of rainfall. At times of drought, the Boorana households intensively and carefully exploit such areas as they have grass and trees (branches with leaves) to be fed on by livestock. Hence, during drought and famine the Boorana households adjust their strategy; some households partially abandon their village and move in response to crisis. Moreover, they change their

herding practices by increasing the number of *foora* animals. Furthermore, they move early and change their routes of movement in search of grass and water and they travel a long distance for grazing areas and watering during the crisis than normal periods. One of my key informants illustrates his mobility pattern in response to the 2000 drought and famine as follows:

Case 1

Diida Qaraarsaa

I live in Yaaballo District, Dharriitoo Kebele in particular area known as Hara Weeyyuu. My livelihood depends on pastoralism. In 1999, when the *Ganna* season kept on decreasing, I decided to move to sufficient pasture area. I had 70 cattle of which I left 20 of them to my family. The rest 50 cattle, I took where I moved to. From Hara Weeyyuu I moved with my cattle to Qaancaroo and Diilloo of Dirree district where there are water wells. However, I faced shortage of grass there, too. Then, I moved to Goobso, where little Autumn rain (*Hagayya*) appeared. A few of my cattle died. Thus, I moved to Maagoolee. I stayed for three months nearby Maagoolee wells in Halchiisa area. The coming of big rain (*Ganna*) delayed and my cattle continued to die. Towards the middle of Ganna season of the year 2001, a little rain appeared. As a result, I went back to Qaancaaroo and Dharriitoo where my family dwells. Only one milk cow survived of these left behind while 23 survived of 70 cattle.

As the above case indicates, the most successful households are those who adopt mobility strategy to cope with drought and famine. This is because mobility enables them to exploit spatial variation in rainfall and the consequent growth of vegetation. Let us take another case for more clarification of mobility a strategy of coping with drought and famine.

Case 2

Abbaa Gaaloo

I reside in Yaballo district in Diida Haraa Kerbele, Dambala Abba Canaa village. I am a pastoralist. I had four wives and seventeen children. I experienced famine for four *Gadaas*. Particularly, the famine occurred in the year 2000, during the *Gadaa* office of Boruu Madhaa, was very much severe. On my part, I anticipated the coming of drought and famine and I got prepared earlier to move to where grass and water are available. As the rain season (*Ganna*) appeared to be short in the preceding year of 1999, I realized the coming of famine. Consequently, I sold 10 cattle of mine and deposited the money at bank. With some money I bought medicine and salt for the rest of my cattle. When the short rain was absent, I moved from Dambalaa Abba Canaa to Borbor. Later on, I was forced to leave Borbor and move to Wayyaama, the border of Region Five (Somali Region). Then, I went to Tamasa pond. Again, the area became overgrazed and drought grew severe and, as a result, cattle died. Thus, I moved to Hoggeellee where I thought is a little bit better. The 2001 *Ganna* rain has not yet come. Eventually, when the delayed rain appeared, I came back to my former *arda* or village. The cattle I took along with me almost survived. And today I have 80 cattle. Those who remained at Dambala Abba Canaa, my indigenous place, lost almost all of their cattle they possessed. For example, of the 60 cattle I gave to my brother for later return in a form *Dabaree*, only 10 cattle could survive. My son who did not go to famine unaffected areas also lost all his cattle. Hence, I sold some of my cattle and subsidized him. Apart from this, I offered him a bull for the ritual performance of naming his elder child. For other four persons, I lent 2 pairs of oxen. Those persons in return helped me in labour service. In such away I managed to survive the 2000 drought and famine.

The Boorana land use pattern also involves reserving of hilly or valley bottoms for the use of dry and drought periods. The reserved area is known as *Gaara or lafa seera* which means the hill area or land put under the custody of law and rule so as not to be used by anybody before the right time. If household is found violating this customary rule it will be penalized (Informant, Boruu Guyoo)

Mobility is also made for the performances of various rituals, ceremonies and administrative affairs of the *Gadaa* System. In Boorana land, there are ceremonial grounds (*arda jila*) preserved for the performance of ritual ceremonies. Hence, the customary land use pattern of Boorana also take into consideration that reservation and preservation of ritual lands and routes. The *Gadaa* in power follows an established

mobility routes to perform ritual ceremonies at each ritual sites. These are not settled by people except for temporary ceremonial performances. It is not also used for farming or cultivation though some are to day under pressure by external forces. According to my informant, *Nuraa Diida*, until the 19th century the *Gadaa* mobility routes used to cross the *Gannale river* every eight years. This has been curtailed by the government pressure since the time of the *Gadaa* office of *Saaqqoo Dhaddacha* .

The importance of this mobility by the *Gadaa* in power and the community is that the households or families move to perform these ritual and ceremonial activities taking some of their cattle with them while leaving behind some others at home. This makes the community households survive drought and famine as their livestock are dispersed into different ecological zones. Nowadays, the *Gadaa* in power and the *Raaba* move between Liiban and Dirree Regions to perform socio-economic activities. In fact the Boorana move to Liiban Region to cope with drought. Thus, it can be explained through their saying:-

Oolaa Liibanitti dheetu,
Jabaa Bonaa Ollaa dhiiraatti dheetu.

which means

A household moves to Liiban in time of drought and famine,
Refuge is taken among the successful households in herding during
a prolonged dry season.

Therefore, mobility is one of the strategies needed for successful herd management. Successful herd management also includes access to water, grass and labour of the household to cope with famine

Village or individual mobility is not a simple wondering. It is usually well planned and socially supervised. If decision is made by the household or village to move, they set out for scout to check the availability of grass, water and to assess the security of the areas for human and livestock. This ground reconnaissance is known as scout *habuuruu*. In Boorna saying:-

Dooyyaatu malee nyaaphii hinlolu,
Habuuruu malee warri hingodaanu.

which means

Enemy operates no war without advance spying,
Family never moves without scouting where to go.

Consultation with *ardaa* and village leaders to get their approval is also needed to settle in Boorana village. So, the scouting group consult with the village or *ardaa* heads. Moreover, it is not culturally acceptable for a person or household to depart from his/its former village without revealing to his neighbors. In Boorana culture, such persons or groups perform the ceremony of *Buna-qala* and thereby bless one another on the occasion. Mobility does not necessarily involve all members of the family. Though it varies from household to household, very often, old persons and under aged children and their mothers, together with their a few milk cows, are made to stay in the villages in the wet-season grazing areas.

A recent development in connection with land and pasture use is the strategy of reserving grazing enclosure (*Kaloo*) for dry and drought times. Enclosures are reserved mostly for calves, weak animals and lactating cows to be used during dry season. Moreover, my informants *Dooyoo Dullacha* and *Kateeloo Daboobessa* told me that they also used it in times of drought and famine for other categories of livestock. *Kaloo* is established at village or *ardaa* level and opened when it is necessary to be used and

managed by institutions. Nowadays, *kaloo* sites have become common and permanent grazing area in Boorana. In Diida Hara, which is one of the wet grazing areas, *kaloo* is mushrooming here and there. The main reason for the prevalence of *Kaloo* is the introduction of big machine dug ponds. In addition to *kaloo*, the Boorana households especially women collect and store forage (*hay*) during wet season to be used in times of drought and dry season (See Annex 5).

The collection of grass and tree branches from the nearby forest at valley bottoms and highlands are the most important strategies used by Boorana households where household members particularly women spend much of their time during drought and famine. During 2000 drought and famine, some NGOS operating in Boorana land and government organization such as agricultural office supplied grass that was brought from high land areas to Boorana.

Although the Boorana are predominantly livestock raisers, recently farming economy have been introduced as survival strategy in order to ameliorate the famine situation. The customary land use rule and law enacted by *Gumi-Gaayyo* assembly, however, decreed that farming should be done in localities of higher altitude where farming is suitable. This is also to save grazing lands for livestock and also to prevent the cultivation of ritual and sacred places as well as not to affect mobility pattern to which helps survive drought and famine.]

4. Water Use in Boorana

The development of complex water wells including other water resources like ponds and the communal management systems are also the most invaluable survival strategies for the Boorana in the face of drought and famine. The Boorana communally dig-wells and ponds or rehabilitate the old ones. These wells and ponds are the most important source of water upon which the Boorana depend for the consumption of human and livestock, particularly the big machine dug ponds and the permanent deep water wells are the life line of Boorana survival in the face of drought and famine.

The utilization of these water resources operates within the communal water resource management based on clan access rights. The Boorana thoughtfully and carefully manage their water and fairly distribute it. To this effect, the clans elect the *abba herrega* (the water usage regulator) a man in charge of water resource usage. Accordingly, when water is sufficient animals are allowed to consume to their full capacity. As the dry season begins, they provide their animals with water at different intervals to save this resource. Among the Boorana, the taking of animals to water every day is known as *oba* while the providing of cattle with water in an interval of a day is known *dhabsu*. As the availability of water decreases, the gap of providing water widens. Hence cattle are provided with water every three days which is known as *limaalimma* and every four days. In times of drought and famine, however, they are taken to sources of water at more restricted intervals so that water is economized to be used for a longer period. This time interval of getting water especially for cattle can last for seven days. Camels and goats withstand shortage of water more than cattle whereas horse mule and donkey are less resistant than cattle to shortage of water.

One thing to be mentioned regarding water resource management strategy is labour cooperation. Watering animals is the most back-breaking and arduous work and it needs cooperation at community, village and household levels. This labour cooperation becomes the most important survival strategy during drought and famine, the time when the Boorana resort to complex well systems and big machine dug ponds to collect water at the very deepest.

As the level of water decreases the labour input and the time invested increases. This in turn makes the task laborious. My informant *Lookoo Jiloo* says:

This makes the people wait till midnight. Cooperation is highly needed to water our animals and people as well as to maintain and rehabilitate water wells. Households coordinate their labour. Some draw out water from wells and some others bring cattle to drink and drive back. Still others clean animal manure and let animals drink water in a limited number. Thus, these all situations need cooperation and division of labour. The *Abba Herrega* is expected to accomplish his tasks of managing this resource. If he is found to be unfair and unable to manage the resource, the community immediately uproots him.

5. Diversification and Maximization of Herds

Another indigenous mechanism that the Boorana developed in the process to cope with drought and famine is herd diversification. Although cattle are highly valued among the Boorana, herd diversification is becoming increasingly important. Hence, from the mere rearing of cattle, they have been able to introduce the production of camels and small stocks, too. In words of Borbor Bule, nowadays, the composition of camels and small stocks is at an increasing rate as a coping mechanism. In the past, camel did not constitute part of the Boorana household livestock and was not used for diet. Camel rearing began during the *Gadaa* office of *Abbayyi Horoo*. (1560-1567) Moreover, the

remaining of other animals such as donkey and chicken are also recently at increasing rate. Herd diversification helps to maintain greater insurance, range of production and resilience of households.

First, households, who possess diversified herds, are more ensured than those who do not diversify their production of livestock. This is because camels, small ruminants and cattle are differentially withstanding the effect of drought and famine. For example, cattle may become vulnerable to the impact of drought and famine whereas camels and small ruminants survive as they are drought resistant.

Secondly, diversification helps to contribute to greater range of production. The more households are likely to diversify production of livestock is the more they are likely to get an optimum and even surplus production. For instance, households can increase their option by either consuming or selling their animals and their products. Thus, at a time when cattle like cows become without milk as a result of drought, households can use milk products of camels or small ruminants. They can also sell small ruminants for immediate needs instead of losing a cattle or camels which are highly valued for the household economy.

Thirdly, the importance of diversification for greater resilience is that households with different species of livestock recover quickly from the impact of drought and famine as compared to those with less diversified herds. This is because all species do not have the same recovery rate. For example, small ruminants have rapid recovery rates compared to other livestock like cattle. The reproduction of these small ruminant is

rapid and also their off-springs are more in number than that of cattle so that households depend on them as their subsistence life. As a result of their fast reproduction and recovery rates, they can be sold and re-invested to buy other cattle. Besides, camels play similar roles in that they can be sold and exchanged for other cattle which the households may have lost in the face of drought and famine. This does not mean that camel and small stocks are the only one to be sold for recovery. Cattle and other animals are also sold if they survive drought.

The fact that camels and small stock i.e. goats and sheep are browsers, which can feed on bushes and thorny leaves that are scarcely available during drought and famine, helps them to survive and to continue reproduction and to give dairy products. Thus, during drought their products (milk, meat etc) are used to supplement households diets and generate income which contribute to their survival. They can also attract good price when drought becomes heightened. Since they have good physical conditions relative to cattle, camels are also used for transporting water and fodder for animals during drought and famine. Donkeys are reared only for transportation purpose.

The case of one of the household-heads obtained from my field notes illustrates more about how the Boorana diversify their economy to cope with drought and famine.

Case 3

Boruu Guyyoo

I reside in Yaballo district and in Dharrriito Arda (kebele). I live on rearing livestock like cattle, camel, small, ruminants, donkey, hen. Besides, I am engaged in farming. Before the severe drought and famine of the year 2000, I had 500 cattle, 20 camels and 50 donkeys and also unspecified number of goats, sheep and chickens. At the end of the drought of 2000, 250 cattle 20 camels, 50 donkeys, small ruminants and chickens survived

for me. Especially, I used my pack animals to fetch water and fodder for my cattle during the crisis. This helped me to minimize the effect of drought and famine. Had I not used these pack animals, my livestock would have been totally lost. I also bought legumes and cereals when they were cheap and sufficiently available which I sold them at good prices when their supply decreased. When milk and milk products of livestock are abundant, I and my family depend on them by saving the yield I get from farming, especially maize for time of dry and drought periods. Finally, I managed to survive in such away the year 2000 drought and famine.

This case shows that during drought and famine households who have diversified their livestock holding have better chance of surviving.

Apart from diversification of species, pastoralists may follow a strategy of increasing herd size in seasons of good rains and grass availability in order to off set the decrease in herd size in the inevitable bad years with high mortality (Dahl and Hojort, 1976; *Odegi Awuoundo 1990*). In the case of Boorana, an accumulation of livestock in cattle, small stock, and camels are considered as shield for the household. In general, they believe that the larger the herd size is the better the chance of surviving through the frequent drought, disease and famine. At analytical level there are households with a large number of livestock lose more than those who have less number of live stock. As an example, my informant, Taadhicha Warriyoo, told me that of 300 cattle he had, only one cow survived while another informant of mine, Jaarsoo Guyyoo, said that of the 10 cattle he had, two of them survived during the year 2000 drought. So successful herd management som times dependes on chance (Gaaroo) through which God gives to some one. These are mostly those who herd a single type of livestock, especially cattle and those who have shortage of labour and are unable to separate their cattle into different ecologies. Generally, households with large herd size have more chance to

cope with famine. This mostly depends on successful herd management. (See the attached source).

The Boorana also have developed a successful herd management strategy which enables them to survive in the in face of drought and famine. Successful herd management (*Waraguu*) requires not only access to grazing and watering but also techniques of dispersing and segregating their livestock to different ecological zones.

The Boorana have songs in their literature to praise those who successfully manage their cattle and to blame those how mismanage their properties. For praising as an example, they say:- "*Abbaan ilmatti lakkise tolaan ilmaa abbaa jalaa hambise*" which is loosely translated as " Father left property to his son and his careful son managed it". Thus, cattle are lost only not because of absence of rain but also because of an un successful management.

The Boorana disperse their cattle from home-based herds to satellite herds in response to variations in rainfall. This division of herd into temporary dry stock (*foora*) and lactating stock (*warra*) helps as a strategy to avoid or to lessen the competition made for pasture and water in one area especially during drought. It also prevents land degradation as those taken to *foora* get an opportunity of grazing in inaccessible rangelands. Inaccessible is from settlement camps. In other words, it helps to exploit the underutilized range resources and avoids cattle raids by an enemy. Most of the time some of homestead stocks are made to join the *foora* when there is shortage of water

and grass during drought and when rainy season begins, they will be back to region the homestead (*warra*) livestock.

Most successful households cope with drought and famine by way of dispersing and segregating their livestock into different ecologies according to animal species. Mostly cattle, camel and small ruminants have specific or respective grazing areas while cattle are made to feed on grass (small ruminants and camels are made to feed on) forest or bush lands. Especially with regard to camel, the Boorana believe that camels damage the environment particularly with their hooves and pollute the environment with their urine and waste. Consequently, they prefer to graze cattle and camel at different ecologies. This enables them to exploit differences in micro-environments, i.e different patches of land are best suited to the needs of particular classes of stock depending on different species, different ages, and different production categories (dry or lactating cows). For example, small ruminants are mostly grazing at the Southwestern lowlands of the Boorana where bush and thorny leaves are available (Informants, Borbor Bulee and Boruu Guyyoo).

According to Dooyoo Dllacha, successful households who cope with drought and famine are also those who have sufficient access to labour. This is because successful herd management needs access to a labour resource. Accordingly, households with adequate productive labour forces have more possibilities than others who do not have adequate labour to split-up family's herd, especially during drought. Households use different strategies in order to get access to labour. In the first place, the household basically depends on the number of its children to meet all grazing and watering

problems. Access to labour can also be possible through child fostering where labour is exchanged for cattle. The cattle given to such person is known as *andhuura* literally umbilical cord, which implies cattle given for that individual in exchange for his labour. Moreover, access to labour can be possible through *baannata* literally a household in short of labour power can request labour from his neighbor for various purposes. On such occasion a household prepares food for the participants. Furthermore, marriage is also another means through which a household obtains access to labour. In a polygamous family, households split their cattle according to the number of wives they have. They might be situated in different ecologies. Very recently, these households are found to be placing one of their wives in towns. Beside pastoral activities, these women are involved in petty trade.

Chapter Six

The Role of Kinship and other Social support Networks as Famine Survival Strategies

Survival strategies include the establishment and maintenance of successful economic and social relationships, both within and beyond the community. These economic and social ties are reinforced and expressed or manifested in different types and forms of institutionalized coping mechanisms which operate within framework of the *Gadaa* System as a whole, economic and social networks of the community such as inter-households, lineages, clans, kinship in particular and otherwise.

Some of the various types and forms of these institutionalized indigenous coping mechanisms that the Boorana have developed and used are discussed as follows.

1. The *Dabaree* Institution

The term "*Dabaree*" is derived from the verb "*dabarsuu*" literally meaning pass on some thing to somebody. Depending on the context in which it is used the institution could be defined as an institutionalized practice where by a large herd owner loans different categories of stock to other members of the community based on the terms prescribed by the custom (*aadaa*) and law (*Seera*) such that the interests of the two parties is mutually served. Hence, *Dabaree* is a resource exchange or transaction institution. It is a loan of livestock for a house hold in short milk and breeding stock. This can be due to

war, drought, lack of grazing and the like. According to my informants, Borbor Bulee and Abbaa Gaaloo Waraabuu the transaction /loan/ of *dabaree* stock takes place among the households belonging to the same clan (*dabaree-gosaa*) or among different clans (*dabaree sabboo-gonaa / Jaalaa-Soddaa*) or close relatives (*firaa-fixaa*).

The close relatives include sister of one's mother (*Areeraa*) sister of one's father (*adaadaa*), brother of one's mother (*abuuyyaa*). The resource transfer (*dabaree* stock) is also possible between Boorana households and other households of other Oromo groups as well as other ethnic groups like Gabra etc.

According to the rules and laws prescribed by custom, a Boorana household in short of *dabaree* stock has a right to ask for *dabaree* stock his close relatives, clansmen or friends, but he/she does not force members out of one's other clan. In the transaction of the stock the "giver" of the *dabaree* stock makes the receiver pledge so that the receiver takes care of the cattle given to him as his own. This care includes, providing the cattle with sufficient pasture and water, protecting them from predatory animals, inspecting their health condition, etc. The "giver" of *dabaree* has a right of canceling out relation with the receiver in the event that the receiver fails to manage the cattle well. In the case of *dabaree gosa*, an approval of clan members is needed. This approval is based on the inspection of condition of cattle under the supervision of the *Hayyuu*.

As we have mentioned already the provision of assistance is built on the recognition of the mutual inter-dependence of the members of the community and on the need for reciprocity. Thus, the stock exchange or loan of *dabaree* stock depends on the interest of the two parties. The Oromo have a saying, "*Horiin duumessa /fixeensa*". It literally

means property is like "a passing cloud" or "*Pershing dew*". The implication is that the wealthy of today may become the poor of tomorrow. In order to survive, a person must, therefore, not only invest in material but also establish strong social relations that enable him stand in a good position in the event of crisis. Thus, cattle play great role in establishing relations. *Dabaree* also helps the survival of animals from epidemics and drought and thereby alleviates problems of overgrazing. Furthermore, *dabaree* avoids putting pressure on the water in the wells and alleviates shortage of manpower required to manage a large number of animals. The *dabaree* giver also gets social acknowledgements, prestige and status in the society, especially in leadership at political level. Beyond this, rich households loan livestock to poor households in exchange for herding labour. Hence, it is one way of getting access to labour and solving the acute problems of labour. The rich households exchange livestock to poor households in exchange for herding labour. Oba (1994:18) states this as an invisible investment.

In this institutionalized resource exchange or loan the *dabaree* receiver on his part gets benefits. The receiver of the *dabaree* stock has the right to use product of the cows, milk and butter and even can meet his household need by selling cattle, especially bulls upon the consent of the giver. Besides, he can be allowed by the owner to slaughter for household consumption and on certain ritual-ceremonies (informant Abbaa Gaaloo Waraabuu). Hence, *dabaree* form of relation is a means of redistributing wealth among the Boorana households and thereby solves their food insecurity. The most common types of *dabaree* are milk cows (*dabaree ameessa*) and breeding bull (*dabaree-kormaaa*). The milk-cows are transferred by the owner when the receiver

cows are dry or when the milk-cows are not sufficient. The duration might be for one lactating period or more depending on the owner's interest. The transfer of breeding stock takes place when a need arises for breeding purpose on temporary basis. This happens when the receiver has no breeding stock at all or when he is interested in a selected type of stock. The number of breeding stock is usually one whereas that of the milk-cow can be one and more. The recipient is also expected to reciprocate provided that he can do and when the "giver" is in need of *dabaree* stock. It is better to consider the following case to reveal the importance of *dabaree*.

Case 1

Guyyoo Daboobessa

He is a dweller of Diida Hara Kebele in Yabello district. He had 80 cattle before the 2000 year drought. When the drought occurred in 2000 year, 78 of his cattle died and only 2 survived. His clan loan him four *dabaree* cattle. Using these four cattle with his formerly survived two cattle, he led his family life up to now.

This case shows that the person is rich but due to condition beyond his capacity such as drought he lost almost all of his cattle. As a result, his clan members lend him *Dabaree* stock. In general, the *dabaree* form of economic relation as embedded in Boorana Gadaa system improves and builds up the resource base of the households at normal times and thereby serves as an insurance to cope with drought and famine. It is also indispensable for recovery phase of famine survival strategy.

2. The *Buusa* Institution

The term *Buusa* is derived from the verb *Buusuu* which means "to pour something". According to my informants, Alakee Diida and Borbor Bulee, *Buusa* Institution is the

type of voluntary contribution or sharing among the households or families. Thus, *Buusa* institution is one of the coping mechanisms that the Boorana have developed to cope with crisis and even when there is no severe stress.

Milk sharing (*buusa*) is an important aspect of this institution. The practice of milk sharing among the Boorana households by and large is a moral obligation. However, when it comes to households belonging to the same lineage or clan it is an obligatory one. As the same informants stated though milk sharing is a common practice during normal time, it becomes one of the most important survival mechanism during and after drought. One of my interviewees Jaatanii Gollicha said, "In our (Boorana) culture, sharing is one of the most important means of coping with drought and famine. Milk is one of the resources we share among households, villages and beyond." Hence, it often happens that in the village there may be households that have milk cows while others may be dependent on a very restricted number of lactating animals. The lack or shortage of milks is not only due to poverty in cattle but also a result of drought, under-delivery of cattle and other causes. As soon as the cows are milked, milk is poured into the milk container and placed outside the house of the needy households. According to Gemechu (2001) milk contribution is to protect human dignity built to the value system of Boorana Oromo. Thus, among the Boorana, begging is prohibited because it is viewed as the most dehumanizing thing in their culture.

Another item to be shared is meat. This is practiced, particularly, when some relatives or neighbors cannot offer animals for slaughter from their own herds. This sharing mechanism is very important during dry, drought and famine times when the poorer

Boorana get meat through this meat sharing (*Jifuu*). As Borbor Bulee and Alakee Diida said, during drought and famine the *Boorana* villages commonly decide among themselves that the rich households slaughter animals and those who do not have cattle to be slaughtered get a good share from each wealthy household in the village. Hence, sharing is common and people share with their neighbors, immediate relatives, close friends and clan members. During drought and famine sharing and assisting poor households increase greatly. In the words of my informant Inseene Gufuu, the *Boorana* households also share grain that they buy, get from limited yields and get as relief aid as one form of survival.

Gift (*Kenna*) is also another form in which economic ties and social support networks are expressed during normal time, drought and famine period. Gifts are offered in the form of food (milk, meat, grain) animals, livestock and especially on ceremonial days in the form of coffee, tobacco and livestock. Those gifts offered on ceremonial occasions are known by the generic name '*gumaata*'. These gifts create social ties on which individuals and households "fall-back on" as coping mechanisms during drought and famine. Gift is also an important coping strategy during recovery phase for households who lost their cattle.

Other forms of animal exchanges and social relationships are centered around marriage. The act of transferring bride-wealth creates new bonds with the wife's or wives' kinship groups. Wife's or kinship groups share herding labor, loans of animals, sharing food or cattle. Thus, the relation a person establishes through marriage services as a chain of assistance during drought and famine. In other words, animal

transactions, reciprocal exchanges of assistance, gifts, sharing resources and common ritual practices expressing their relation and ties, which in turn help as "fall-back" during drought and famine. Thus, elderly parents move into their son-in-laws, relatives who live outside famine strike area and are able to provide food and refuge. Households with wider kinship split their members to reduce the number of the households. So that they are made to depend on relatives and friends with less labour power but adequate food (Informant, Diida Qaraarsa).

Boorana households contract herding with kins and friends who live in towns where the Boorana can make use of milk and milk product. These economic and social ties are important, especially, during drought and famine as a mean of acquiring assistance for those households who have lost their cattle due to drought (Informant, Abba Duuba Waariyoo).

3. The Gonofa Institution

The Gonofa institution is one form of indigenous institution. The term is derived from the verb gonofuu, literally meaning "to force". It is an institution through which the law imposes obligatory contributions of animals, especially, cattle to rehabilitate custom re-establish those who have lost their properties due to drought, famine, war and other calamities. The law also obliges household to contribute or offer cattle to poor households when they are expected to perform ritual ceremonies. In other words, it is an institutionalized insurance or social security to fall back on during ritual ceremonies.

There are culturally defined rules and laws that govern and regulate the functioning of this institution in which they operate. The implementation of their rules and laws is supervised, evaluated and controlled through open and participatory discussion at different levels of community management groups, clan assembly, *Gadaa* official meetings, and the general and supreme assembly of Gumi-Gaayyoo, a legislative body to enact rules and laws. According to the laws and rules enacted by this legislative body:

First, it is the obligation of all Boorana clans to assist the impoverished. In other words, the custom of *aadaa* of the Boorana obliges every Boorana to restock those families who have been impoverished due to the drought, famine war, etc.

Secondly, the *Hayyuu* and *Abba Qa'ee* are responsible for supervising the implementation of the *Buusa - Gonofa* rules. *Abbaa Qa'ee* is one who is empowered by respective clans to organize and lead the *Buusa Gonofa* meeting and procedures. The *Hayyuu* and all other members of each clan have to be serious enough to listen to the plight of the poor.

Thirdly, the rule asserts that those who have lost their cattle as a result of mismanagement or negligence may not get contribution. They call such a person '*nama okkoteen fixe*', a person who lost his cattle by misusing and selling unnecessarily. As a result of this value which discourages mismanagement every household is careful.

Fourthly, if the impoverished person is entitled, according to the rules prescribed in customary law, he/she has the right to claim restocking. Fifthly, the law applies reinforcement measures (*Jinfessuu*) on those members of the clan who refuse to contribute. *Torban*, literally a group that has seven members, is ordered to enforce the laws of *Gumii-Gaayoo*. These seven men are sent to cattle enclosure (*moonaa*) of the person who refuses to contribute and seize the required cattle, some times, in excess of the original demand. Hence, to force (*Jinfessuu*).

Sixthly, the Boorana *Buusaa-Gonofaa* customary law states that the minimum numbers of livestock needed to keep the Boorana within the 'traditional' orbit are five cattle. The idea is that the number of cattle should at least be five to keep that household above the poverty line. The clan councilors, including the *abba Qa'ee*, know the wealth status of their clan members. The wealth status of an individual Boorana is very important in meeting the *Buusa-Gonofa* obligations. Thus, mutual, intra-clan interdependence mechanism is a useful cohesive tool to keep the Boorana together and it is a remarkable coping mechanism that encourages food security of the Boorana households so that they could easily withstand drought and famine. In such a way *Buusa-Gonofaa* is aimed at preserving the resource base of a household through rehabilitating and restocking. The practice usually happens as there is differential effects of calamities on clan wealth.

The customary law of *Buusaa-gonofaa* allows only cattle to be offered. Milk stock or Heifer is offered to a person who does not have even a single head. The meeting of *Buusaa gonofa (Kora gosaa)* is organized by the *Abba Qa'ee* who offers *sangaa gosaa* (a bull to be slaughtered) for the clan members and participants of the meetings. All

members of that clan are expected to participate at the meetings. For example, if the meeting is that of the *Daccituu* clan, all lineages should attend the meeting to discuss issues like pond and *ela* maintenance, conflict resolution, *Gadaa* affairs and others part from *Buusaa – gonofaa*. On such meetings, the clan investigates the causes of impoverished person, whether he/ she has lost his/ her cattle because of misfortune, drought, mismanagement or others causes. Having identified the impoverished individual to be entitled, the *Buusaa Gonofa* institution allows restocking to the person. Let us take an example of one clan to show the way *Buusa Gonofaa* functions. *Daacituu* clan as an example of *Buusa- Gonofaa* Association or Organization.

A. *Daccituu* clan lineages (*miiloos*)

1. Alchaayyaa
2. Daraartuu
3. Sooddituu
4. Luullituu
5. Liibanoo.

Each of these lineages (*Miiloos*) or house can further be subdivided into door (*balbala*). Within the *Daacituu* clan, lineages from 1-5 with their sub- lineages, have an obligation of restocking and rehabilitating each other by contributing cattle through the *Buusaa Gonofaa* institution. Members also have the right to be restocked or rehabilitated if they have fulfilled their obligations. If there is an impoverished individual in one of these lineages, all have to contribute though his immediate relatives are expected to help first. The clan also discusses issues of resource utilization, assisting the impoverished and other related matters of the *Gadaa*.

The Clan (*Dacituu*) members have restocked and rehabilitated different members of their clan at different times. One of these people is *Boruu Jaarsoo*. What my informant, *Boruu Jaarsoo*, told me can best clarify *Buusa-Gonfaa* institution as case material.

Case 2

Boruu Jaarsoo

Before Ethio- Somalia war I had 10 cattle. When the war took place during the *Gadaa* office of *Bulee Dabbasaa*, I lost my 10 cattle at a particular *Kebele* known as *Utaallo* in *Yaballo* district because of this war. My clan contributed nine cattle. In our culture, *Bussa-Gonofa* contribution is made to a person who has lost his/her livestock in drought, war, etc is known as *hirba*. Thus, I managed to recover from such a loss, due to *Buusaa-Gonofaa*. In our *adaa* (Custom), *Buusaa Gonofaa* is an insurance on which victims can rely! Today, I possess sufficient number of cattle.

Buusaa here refers to contribution of cattle. Let us take one more example to show how the *Buusaa Gonofaa* works by taking the Case of *Digaluu clan Buusaa Gonofaa* for the victims of 2000 famine. *Boruu Guyyoo*, (*abbaQa'ee*) who belongs to this clan explains the contribution *Buusaa Gonofaa* institution has for those who have lost their cattle due to drought and famine as follows.

Case 3

Boruu Guyyoo

I live in *Dharriitoo Kebele, Yaaballo*. I belong to *Digaluu* clan and *Nuurtuu* lineage. I was born during the *Gadaa* office of *Madha Galmaa*. As I grew up as a matured person to manhood, I was elected *Abbaa Qa'ee* by members of my clan. I organized the clan meeting to restock and rehabilitate our clan members who lost their cattle or livestock due to the 2000 drought and famine. I slaughtered one bull for the clan members who attended the meeting. The clan meeting spent and stayed about 15 days in our *olla*. At this time, 20 persons who needed help were assisted through the institution of *Buusa Gonofaa*. I myself gave one cattle to *Nuuraa Waaqoo* who was *Abba Bokkuu* during *Gadaa* office of *Boruu Madhaa*.

Let us take another case to explain more the organization and implementation of *Buusa Gonofaa*. *Annaa Duuloo*, who belongs to *Digaluu* clan, states his own case as follows:

Case 4

Annaa Duuloo

My name is *Annaa Duuloo*. I am from *Digaluu* clan, *Walaajjii* lineage. Because of repeated drought and famine in our area, the cattle I had were constantly dwindling, decreasing. During the severe drought of the year 2000, I lost all of my cattle. In accordance with our *aadaa* (culture) an assistance was made for me through *Buusaa – Gonofaa*. Accordingly, the clan I belong to offered me eight cattle. Among those who contributed are my cousin, *Golloo Jiloo*, gave me one heifer; my elder brother, *Diidaa Halakee*, offered me one cow and one heifer, totally two cattle; my brother's son contributed me one heifer and one ox; *Boonsoora Kushanoo* is a person from my own lineage; he gave me one heifer; and *Jaarsoo Diimaa*, from my sub lineages contributed one young-male calf. All of these are from *Digaluu* clan and *Walaajjii* lineage. The lineage members of our clan are *Tiittii*, *Walaajjii* and *Udumtuu*.

Hence, these cases show that the *Buusa-gonofa* is a very important institution, which the household depends on as coping mechanism to crisis, especially during recovery phase. Thus, the most successful households to cope with drought famine are those who rely on kinship and other social support networks.

3.1 The Institution of *Hirba*

It is one institution of restocking a household who lost his cattle due to war. This household is known as destitute (*Qollee*). In this case as soon as the household lost its livestock clan members contribute and give to the destituted ones see case 2 above.

4. The Jaalaa Institution

Another social security mechanism on which the *Boorana* households depend during famine is the 'Jaala' institution. The term *Jaala* is derived from the *Oromo* term '*Jaallachuu*' meaning to like or to be affectionate. It is a bond partnership creating a mechanism and network by which individuals needing assistance 'falls back on' during the crisis i.e famine and drought. The *Boorana* have such relation among themselves and with other people even beyond their community.

Marriage enables an individual household to establish economic and social relations with a particular group or groups of affines. These groups help each other. In this process, properties are transferred from one family to another in the form of bride wealth, particularly, animals forming the basis of these transactions. There are also reciprocal exchanges of assistance, gifts, and sharing of resources.

Apart from this relation, throughout his life an individual may deliberately create bond partnerships with other groups of people within the *Boorana* community and beyond to expand the networks. They exchange animals in the form of gifts, and also share and borrow resources. They also participate in each other's rituals and ceremonies.

As my informants Soraa Boruu and Borbor Bulee state, the *Boorana* also have such relation with other communities. For example, the *Boorana* have such relations with the *Guji Oromo*. The marginality of the ecology that the *Boorana*, *Gujji* and other pastoralists occupy results in an irregular food supply. This necessitates bond relationship that involves sharing of resources, loans of labour in the form of unmarried sons to assist in

herding and dispersing animals in the form of 'Dabaree'. Such a bond helps to create and promote a better management when gifts of animals take place in times of needs. Thus, these people are not isolated as self – sufficient societies. They are in a bond relationship. Reciprocal exchanges i.e. gifts, sharing, animal transactions and communal ritual practices create relations and reinforce the *Jaalaa* institution during normal time. Hence, through '*Jaala*' institution, the *Boorana* and *Gujji* households acquire valuable information and knowledge about environmental conditions, trading goods, craft production and experiences of other pastoral and agro-pastoral groups. This sharing of ideas and contacts has advantage during crises like drought, famine, war and raids. Such contacts and information- sharing become safety valve serving as a network of assistance. For instance, during the 19th century drought and famine, when rinderpest and small pox affected the region, such sharing of knowledge and information networks helped both communities. Those who lost their animals in the pastoral economy were forced to take refuge with their neighbors until they recovered from the disaster (Gemechu, 2001). The *Boorara* also took refuge among the *Boorana* Oromo in kenya during crisis.

As any other agriculturalists and pastoralists use each other's areas as place of refuge when their crops failed or their stock died, so do the *Boorana* and *Gujji*. They share grass, water, crop, stem and enclosure (*Kaloo*). Such mechanism is possible due to the existence of the '*Jaala*' institution and common ritual practices of the *Gadaa* system. One of my informants, *Waaqoo Godaanaa*, puts the importance of *Jaala* relation as follows:

Case 5

Waaqoo Godaanaa

My name is *Waaqoo Godaanaa*. I live in *Bildim Raasoo Kebele* in *Yaballo* District. I am from *Gujji Oromo*. We (*Boorana* and *Gujji*) have '*Jaala*' relations. It is mutual benefit for both of us. During the year 2000 drought and famine, the *Boorana* were seriously affected. There were many households from *Boorana* who took refuge among us, the *Gujji*. We also moved to the *Boorana* area whenever we faced drought and famine. Even at the normal times, very often, we move to the *Boorana* grazing areas known as *Goomoilee* where grass of good quality exists. This grass is believed to enable cattle to mate earlier the usual time. The *Boorana* allow us grass and water as well as bulls for our cows to have good breeding species. This is the result of our relation built-in the culture of *Jaalaa* and common cultural value, *the Gadaa System*.

Waaqoo Godaana further explains the importance of *Jaalaa* institution taking the case of Qixxee Ruufaa, one of his *Jaalas*.

Case 6

Qixxee Ruufaa

Qixxee Ruufaa is from *Boorana* and he lives in *Carii*, one of the *Kebeles* in *Yaballo* District. His *kebele* borders our land, *Gujji*. The *Boorana* and we have *Jaalaa* to each other. He is my *Jaalaa* from *Gujji*. *Jaalaas* assist each other during drought and famine. In the year 2000, drought and famine hit our land including that of the *Boorana*. But the *Gujji* land was not highly affected. It is *highland (baddaa)*. We, the *Gujji*, have cattle and agriculture. Drought and famine became serious in *Boorana* and then Qixxee moved along with his family and cattle to *Gujji* land. During this critical time stayed there and we shared grass, enclosure and water as well as food. We (*Gujji*) had *Warqee (falsebanana)* used for food). In this manner, he could save all of family and most of cattle, and later on, he returned to his former place, *Carii*, when the area got rain. Not only his household but also there were other households who survived as a result of *Jaalaa* relationship.

Still another person, *Bagaajaa Diidaa*, explains his own experience regarding the importance of *Jaalaa* institution as a coping mechanism to drought and famine.

Case 7

Bagaajaa Diida

I reside in *Areerii kebele*, *Yaballo* district. I belong to *karrayyu* clan. *Boorana* and *Gujji* are brothers. *Gujji* and we drink from the same *Burqaa Galgaloo Iyeessaa* (the spring of *Galgaloo Iyeessaa*), which is found in *Carii*. This sharing of the same spring water resulted from *Jaalaa*. The *Boorana* and *Gujji* are *Jaalaas* to each other. For instance, I have *Jaalaa* with *Alakee Badhachoo*, who lives in *Burqaa Arbichoo* in *H/Maariyam*

(Gujii Land). At a certain time in the past, I gave two cattle and 3 goats of mine to Alakee Badhachoo twice. Reciprocally, he gave me *Warqicha*, *Baddallaa* (maize), etc. as he possessed these food items. During the dry season, drought and famine times, we (the Boorana) move to the Gujii highlands. Particularly, at the critical moment of the drought, I moved to Alakee's area. As Alakee and my another Jaalaa, Dhugoo Sorsoo (Gujii), were engaged in farming apart from animal herding, they helped me during the Gadaa office of Gobbaa Bulee. Dhugoo Sorsoo, who now lives in Galaana Abayyaa (Gujii land), helped me also during the year 2000 drought.

Besides its economic functions, the institution serves as a process of creating a social integration and ties among individual groups within and from outside the community. Therefore, the bond relation among the *Boorana* and *Gujii* and other groups is an important survival strategy in the face of drought and famine. To sum up, the *Jaalaa* institution functions within the community and beyond, and it is an important form of social support network as coping mechanisms with drought and famine.

5. Communal Prayer and Cooperation

Cooperation and community prayer is one form of response to famine. The *Boorana* perform various religious rituals and ceremonies in cooperation as a response to anticipated crisis and after its actual occurrence. In *Oromo's* culture as whole and in their religion specifically, *Waaqa* is the creator and the supreme that is capable of doing every thing. It is believed that it rescues people from whatever calamities may face them. The leading actors, the *Qaalluu*, Gada officials and elderly persons are experts in ritual ceremonies.

According to my informant *Qaamphee Dabbasaa*, the *Boorana* perform communal prayers in which they express the faith they have in *Waaqaa* in time of good and bad. For instance, when they face drought and famine they perform various religious

practices at household, village and community levels. Among these religious performances the *Hulluuqqoo* and *dhibaayyuu* are worth mentioning. The term *hulluuqqoo* comes from the verb *hulluuquu*, literally meaning sleep through a narrow opening, bend and pass under. *Hulluuqqoo* is the ceremony performed by the *Boorana* community in reaction to drought and famine as well as any other problems so that they pass through and fortune comes. In this case, the narrow opening symbolizes drought and famine.

Dhibayyuu literally means libation. It is a religious ritual or ceremony that can convey a broader meaning than we can present it here. It is one of the *Oromo* religious ceremonies performed by the community. The procedures of the ceremony involve slaughtering of cattle, pouring of milk (*aannan*) on ground, under *odaa* (sacred tree under which they perform this practice), near wells etc. There they pray to God (*Waaqaa*) so that famine, drought and disease will be driven away, and rain and prosperity come to them.

For this communal prayer (*dhibaayyuu*) they slaughter *Goromtii-Roobaa* literally *goromtii* is female goat that has not yet given birth while *rooba* is simply rain. Thus, they have a perception that they get rain if they slaughter this female goat. The meat of animal slaughtered as a sacrifice is commonly blessed and eaten. On such occasions (*Dhibaayyuu*), in which I participated they sing a song with the expectation of good fortune, prosperity, peace (*Nagaa*) and rain to come. For instance, they say:

Hoo hinfooree:- Ho, there to come pouring.
Foroorsaan roobe:- That which pours rain,
Roobee laga Yaase:- Raining that results in springs,
that increase in volume,
Ilmee Laguu basse:-There to come times of getting,
enough milk,
Hoo Roobaan Siigale :- Ho comes heavy rain.

All members of the community participate in the ceremony led by the *Gada* officials, *Qaalluus* and elders versed in this particular performance. The participants are expected to dress in cultural clothes. In general, the *Boorara* consider this communal prayer as *faluu*, meaning to devise or plan, i.e. think about something in order to solve a problem. In the context of *Boorana Oromo*, this implies that to devise or plan to survive drought and famine by performing communal religious prayer in which members of the community participated cooperatively.

Chapter Seven

Adjustment to Food Consumption, Market Dependence and other strategies

1. Adjustment to Food Consumption

Household's means of subsistence grows worse as famine becomes critical. As a result it needs careful management of available food resources and adjustment to consumption. Careful resource management or adjustment involves different strategies. Some of the major strategies are curtailing the mixing of food items or varieties, quality, voluntarily and compulsorily cutting down of consumption, giving priority in food allocation, to children, elders, etc., reducing frequency and amount of food intake, adjustment to food budget and change in diet types especially gathering edible roots and fruits. Moreover, households store food for dry and drought periods.

Comparable data can be presented from other areas on rationing and substitution of food. Bollig and Gobel (1997) mentioned the existence of various reports about the rationing and substitution of food among pastoralists which have been important strategies to cope with drought. Dessalgne (1987) also reports adjustment by peasants to food consumption as a response to famine.

The major Boorana households diets are milk, blood and meat. On coffee ceremonies, beans are mixed with butter and milk. Adjustment to food consumption is made by Boorana households to cope with drought and famine. According to my informants,

konsolee Qabballe and Elemaa Liiban, at normal times a household uses a variety of food items whereas during drought and famine the variety of food items is almost reduced. As the food stock of the households is exhausted, the household is forced to depend on a limited variety. Unlike the normal times, the amount of grain to be used for Boorana diet surpasses the quantity of animal products when crisis becomes worsened. As a result of change of diets from animal products to grain, the pounded and boiled cereals mixed with small amount of milk and butter become important meals.

When drought and famine grow worse, the mixing of grain with small amount of milk and butter is curtailed. Rather, one kind of diet either milk or butter is used with grain. Moreover, gradually, cooking oil bought from market replaces animal products during famine. However, this adjustment depends on the resources of the households. In terms of differential responses, the wealthier families stand in a better position to cope with drought and famine.

As my informant, Borbor Bulee says, historically grain supplies i.e sorghum, maize, etc; came from Gujii Oromo and Konso. Later on, farming was introduced and a few Boorana households began to cultivate crops. As famine period advances, maize became the most important item of food and it is grounded, boiled and small amount is given to the members of the family. Hence, the resorting to grain takes place during drought time when cattle products exhausted and more income is allocated to food purchase by adjusting their budget i.e cereals, *warqicha* (false banana).

Another way of food rationing is to decrease the amount and frequency. The frequency of meal served is often only once a day and even the usual meal is absent at all. The amount served also decreases when supply of fresh milk declines. Priority and special attention is given in food allocation women, elderly persons particularly children and pregnant women. With regard to this Waankee Galgaloo, said: "*Ilmeen haftee an due'ee daaraa dabarfachuu wayya.*" Literally it is better if my children continue to survive despite my death. Thus, this is the reason why we give priority to our children. Even well into the famine, the quality of food taken decreases and households depend on roasted cereals or boiled grains.

Meat is another important food item for Boorana households. As the drought and famine become severe, the Boorana households have to feed on meat by slaughtering cattle. Slaughtering of animals for food is done on individual household or in group at village level as it is a common form of coping with drought and famine (Informants, Inseenee Gufuu and Boruu Guyyoo)

The storing of food is also one of the strategies that the Boorana households use to survive drought and famine. My informants Dooyyoo Dullacha and Alakee Diida Put this situation as follows:

Food can be stored in different forms. These are *Doolaa*, *Foon jajji* and *Itittuu*. *Doolaa* is a food type processed from ingredients of butter, fatty meat and butter spice (*Urgoo dhadhaa*) by melting or putting on fire. *Doolaa* is mostly prepared during the normal wet seasons when animal products are abundant and used in period of dry-seasons, drought and famine times. It lasts at least for a year. The role of women is critical in processing, storing and managing food. I also stored it in a form of *foon jajji*, literally meat cut into chain like strip and smoked by hanging above the fire in order to dry for preservation purpose. Besides, salt is added to help its preservation for a long time and to prevent it from rotting. *Itittuu*, literally yogurt can be stored for a month and used. However, *Doolaa* is the most important and commonly used diet.

Another survival strategy that the Boorana households employ is *iddanna* meaning letting cattle bleed while it is alive, especially during drought and famine for consumption. This kind of adjustment to food becomes important. When milk supply declines during dry season, drought and famine to compensate for the insufficiency of milk (food). The Boorana elders, Mohamed Daalacha and Borbor Bule state that goats and camels blood is also used though the latter one is a recent development in Boorana survival strategy. They do not always let out blood of herd milk. Especially, milk cows, breed bulls and immature and vulnerable livestock are usually spared. In this case blood is consumed in two ways i.e. boiled with water and milk as *laabee* or drunk mixed with milk. Though *iddanna* is frequently used during prolonged dry-season, drought and famine, it is also practiced at normal times for different reasons, especially, for sick persons.

Relaxing of food taboos is also one of the strategies used by *Boorana* households during the severe drought and famine years. For example, they have begun to adopt to previously and culturally unconsumed food types. These include chicken, Camel and their products. Even today a large number of *Boorana* community are not using chicken and its products. But, there are a few households who use chicken either as a diet or as a source of income. camel meat and its blood is not consumed by some people

including the *Qaalluu* and the *Gadaa* officials. They believe that they will suffer bad fortune if they consume it.

Still other strategies that the *Boorana* households depend on during famine are famine food. In other words, *Boorana* may also practice gathering of forest food like wild fruits and roots during the short dry season. As drought and famine advance, the *Boorana* depend more on roots. The *Boorana* households have ample knowledge of their environment and natural resources. This deep botanical knowledge helps them during such crisis (Informant, Borbor Bulee).

The major famine food that the *Boorana* households resorted to during drought and famine are wild fruits, roots, leafy plants and seeds. According to my informant *Borbor Bulee* and *Malluu Waariyoo*, the *Boorana* identify different types of edible plants used during drought and famine in their local names. Some of these are:

Table 3

Different Types of Edible Plants Used During Drought and Famine.

Fruits	Roots and Tubers
Urbuu	Kurtee
Hammeessa	Camee
Dheka	Gadara
Ogomdii	Burii
Ejersa	Hobbe
Waakkoo	Harkfato
Biqqaa	Miichu

Andaraka	Singo
Madhera	Gumbo
Dhagmasa	Raafuu (Shaana)
Garsee	

Some of these famine food is consumed, particularly by the youngsters at normal times. In the words of my informant, Inseenee Gufuee the bark is stripped and the inner softer part is boiled in water to take out the bitter cane of the plant and is or prepared as soup. *Raafuu (shanaa)* is a plant leaf and its stem is collected, from their environments cooked and consumed. Women have excellent botonilgical knowledge in this case and they prepare it. There is still another wild fruit used during drought and famine. To illustrate this, let us consider the following case:

Case 1

Mallu Waariyoo

Mallu and the Boorana were compelled to rely on fruits and roots of wild plants during famine. The wild plant fruits and roots are not very often available near by. People need to go a long distance in search of them. Of the useful fruits, *garsee*, which is picked off a tree, requires a long process to be eaten and it takes, in fact, about 9-10 hours to stay on fire. They add salt when boiling. The importance of boiling '*garsee*' fruits with salt is to get rid off its poison content. She further states that apart from such fruits there are also roots that are obtained by digging the ground deep as famine advances. Mostly, it is not possible for a single person to accomplish this task and as a result, cooperation is employed among household. After the roots are dug out they will be brought home to be scrapped off their sheath /peel/. Then, they are boiled with salt and eaten. Mallu states that when famine becomes serious, there are people who would feed on "unusual" plants. Consequently, those people could not get relief as they failed to get-rid-off excrement. These people who eat "unusual" plants dehydrate and will have difficulty in their bowel movements. So, boiling avoids this kind of problem.

Resorting to "famine food" is, therefore, one form of responding to famine. However, resorting to "famine food" depends on the resources and kinship relation of the households. This is because mostly poor households rely on such relations.

People also resort to hunting wild animals as drought and famine coping strategies. Traditionally hunting was widely practiced by *Boorana*. Some of the preferred game are Oryx, gazelle, giraffes and antelopes. Recently, however, hunting has declined in importance as a food source. This is because of intensified hunting due to the introduction of firearms and deforestation which have seemingly led to large-scale migration by wildlife to the parks in northern Kenya (Informant, Borbor Bulee)

2. The Role of Market Dependent Response to Famine

Asset disposal is one of the strategies households adopt during famine. Although the selling of livestock takes place both at normal and crisis time, the number of animals supplied to market during crisis increases. The *Boorana* households often sell their livestock during dry and drought period when they need to purchase cereals to supplement their diet. During this time, cattle are often in poor condition. Market supply of cattle is high as few buyers are available in the market. This reduces the price. On the other hand, grain price is high and this results in unfavorable condition in terms of trade for the *Boorana*. Sales decisions are made usually in the middle of drought i.e. when many households are supplying animals to market. As a result an excess supply, brings declining in sale value. Buyers mainly, traders, are from different ethnic groups and take the cattle either to border or to black markets in

Kenya as well as to the market in the highland. The Boorana sell their cattle at rural markets or take to major market like Haroo Bakkee, Dubuluqi, Elawyyee, Moyyaalee etc. The type of animals mostly sold are unproductive female cattle, aged animals and bulls. As Gryseels and Jutzi Holt, and Culter cited in Dessalegn (1987), argued asset disposal during crisis used by all households is sequential that households sell their smaller-stocks which include sheep, goats, often young calves and then followed by young cattle, cows and finally cows and oxen.

However, this finding concludes that the system of asset disposal varies from household to household. The fact that asset disposal is not uniform among households is the result of the fact that it depends on wealth, specific needs, arrangements made with other social networks (kins and friends), the demand and the behavior of market price also affect the nature of household disposal.

To elaborate further, the differential accesses to economic resources give rise to differential responses to drought and famine. The poorer Boorana households resort to the strategies such as selling of charcoal, firewood, local beer, selling forest product, migration for wage labour, severely reduced sales and expense, collecting wild foods and relying on kinship and social support. On the other hand, wealthier households are able to store food for use in times of drought as contingencies and have wider options to sell their livestock as they have diversified economies. Below are the cases of different persons to illustrate more about the adoption of various coping strategies which may not occur in a standard and universal sequence.

Case 2

Elema Luukuu.

Elema lives in Yaballoo district Diida Hara Kebele. She considers herself to be one of the poor households. Before the drought of year 2000, she had four cows. Because of the year 2000, two of her cows died and two other survived. She did not sell these two cows to survive the drought. Instead, she started making charcoal which she sold to urban dwellers. From the income she earned by selling charcoal (cilee), she managed to cover household expenditures such as buying coffee, tea, grain and clothes. The researcher asked why she embarked upon this non-pastoral activity as this does not constitute the Boorana's cultural value and she replied, "*Nama garaachaan / beelaan du'utu ceera malee nami cilee gurgurun ceera miti.*" It means no bad or shame in selling charcoal but starving to death by sitting idle is rather bad or shame (ceera). This was the reason why she is engaged in charcoal selling. Apart from this, she used to fetch water and sell. By doing so, she saved two of her cows through the drought time.

Case 3

Waankee Galgaloo

Waankee resides in Dharritoo Kebele. During the 2000 drought and famine, first he sold his bull and then went on selling his heifer followed by cows. He did not sell his two goats which are drought resistant. He says that he slaughtered these ruminants for household consumption during the drought and famine. In this ways, he managed to save two of his cattle and a donkey through the drought time.

Case 4

Qaamphee Kateeloo

Qaamphee lives in Diida Hara Kebele. He says that he sold his cattle which fetched him a good price during drought. With the cash he obtained, he bought heifers for cheap price. With the remaining money, he covered a household expenditure.

Case 5

Shakkannee Alakee

He inhabits in DiidaHara Kebele, Dambala abba Canaa village. He is engaged in pastoralism and limited farming. During the drought of 2000, he did not sell any of his livestock. He got good yields from his farms. Through the drought and famine time, he sold grains and cereals he stored to meet his household needs.

These show that households pursue different strategies to cope with famine. Even there are rich households who buy grain /cereals/ when the price falls down and sell when the price rises during drought and famine. Besides, they also sell bulls for good price and buy young bull, and heifers during the recovery stage (Informant, Guyyoo Boruu).

There are also households selling up to ten their cattle at once and deposit the money at Bank so that use it in the course of famine . They also use it to buy livestock to replace the lost assets, particularly during recovery proces (Informant, Abba Gaaloo Waraabuu). Still others, depend on clan or close relative gift, sharing and *dabaree* stock. They save their cattle by taking *dabaree* animals. (Informants, Areeroo Guyyoo)

Households who sell their utensils (household assets) such as milk containers (*cicoo*, *Sorooroo*), *Barcuma*, spear and jewelry are not reported. This is because the selling of household asset is considered as taboo or shameful, especially the selling of milk container is considered as bad fortune.

Survival strategy includes successful economic ties expressed in local and regional trade. According to my informant *Nuuraa Diida* and Borbor Bulee, trade with highland

and other neighboring people had a long history. They organize trading caravans who take untanned skin, cattle and salt to these areas, especially during drought and famine. They exchange these goods for different items. The Boorana began to sell skin (*gogaa*) during the *Gadaa* office of Guyyuuu Boruu, when they sold un tanned skin to Gujii, Konsoo and to other highland people in exchange of grain and false banana (*warqicha*) etc. (Informants, Liiban Golloo and Borbor Bulee). They also buy coffee, tobacco and the like either for household consumption or for ritual-ceremonies. With the money they obtain from the sell of cattle, they also buy materials like cloth and utensil. The Boorana also exchange cattle for *kallacha*, which is used by *Gadaa* class to come to power, with Konso. Thus, these economic ties are used as a means to rely on during the crisis.

2.1. Cross-Border Trade

In addition to the trade relation with the highland people (local trade), the Boorana have cross-border trade, particularly in livestock with Kenyan and Somali traders. This cross-boarder trade is not a new phenomena for the Boorana. Rather, it has been existing for centuries and serving as a major outlet for the Boorana livestock, and a means of earning better income. Thus, it is one important meanses of their livelihood strategies up on which they depend.

According to GTZ /BLPDP market survey (1998:52), the volume of livestock trade to Kenya in 1998 was estimated to be 35,000 - 50,000 cattle 100,000-110,100 sheep and goats and 9,000 - 10,000 Camels.

Unfavorable terms of trade with the internal market forced the Boorana and other pastoralist to be involved in cross - border trade. According to Getachew (2001:73), this unfavorable terms of trade for Boorana in the country's market and the higher prices for grain and other commodities have resulted in poverty.

Cattle /Livestock are bought at the primary collection markets such as Taitalle, Yaabello, Nagelle etc. and are taken to the secondary collection markets. The location of Moyalee on the Kenya border has important role for this cross-boarder trade where varieties of goods are exchanged for cattle/livestock. The interviewed households say that the internal livestock marketing has problems such as very lowprice, inadequate of market to accomodate high livestock supply, high taxation expense, government restriction and control of cross-border trade (Informants, Borbr Bulee, Qaraarsaa Diida Mohammed Daalachaa).

Since the political inclusion of the Oromo ingeneral and the Boorana in particular into the Ethiopian Empire, this cross-border trade has been considered as contraband where the government put strict control on it. New actors have been involved in this trade. But, for the Boorana it is an old age economic activity wich they do not consider as illegal activity. Thus, in practical sense, it is part of their normal livelihood strategies. Such restrictions have direct effect on Boorana food security and thereby weaken their livelihood strategies.

However, the connection Boorana have with the wider system of market in whtever form it is has been playing the major role in their coping mechanisms to recurrent drought and famine.

In general, animals are used to meet the needs of household consumptions. This sale of animals is one of the widely adopted practice during the critical time of famine used to buy food, especially by the poor households. However, deprive of livestocks at such critical times markedly declines. Hence, the Boorana households were in loss of basic assets. Market dependence is still one of the responses to crises though it varies among households resulting from diversity of their resources and the wider social support networks they have.

3. Other Strategies to Cope with Famine

Apart from the previously mentioned strategies in response to drought and famine, some Boorana households undertake non-pastoral activities (diversification of activities) as an important coping mechanism. This non-pastoral activity includes crop cultivation, selling charcoal and firewood, construction materials (*mologaa*), gum-Arabic collection, extraction of honey, wage and daily labour, self employment (petty trade), smuggling, moving to towns and the like.

Although agriculture involves high risk in the Boorana environment, some households especially those who lost totally their cattle during recurrent drought and famine cultivate crops as a coping mechanism. Those who obtain a good harvest complement their household food items though for a limited time. Hence, they do not go to buy grains and cereals early during famine as compared with those who do not engage in some kinds of agriculture. But, not only household, who lost Their cattle embark on limited cultivation. There are house households who involved in limited farming even if they have not totally lost their cattle.

Even there are a few households who do not buy grain throughout the drought and famine periods. Shaakkanee Boruu and Guyyoo Boruu told me that their households have never bought grain. Their households depend on milk and other livestock products during wet-season and save maize and other cereals they get from crop cultivation for dry, drought and famine.

However, they do not hesitate to disclose that crop production depends on climatic condition and livestock rearing is better than crop cultivation since it is possible to sell and escape away from the impact of the drought, which is impossible in the case of crop cultivation. Nevertheless, Boorana households attempt to diversity their economy though farming is an opportunistic game in the face of unreliable climate. There are households who lost all of their livestock and as a result could continue with farming and trade activities. Later on they were able to invest on pastoralism. A case in point is Galgaloo Jaarsoo, who at one point in his life lost all of his cattle moved to villagization or settlement in Areeroo and embarked on farming and again reinvested on pastoral sector. This dynamism is contrary to the established sedentarization scenario that households who lost their livestock completely turn to crop cultivation.

In Boorana culture, there is a strict rule against the practice of cutting of trees. Such activity is culturally unacceptable and a person who is found doing this is stigmatized and punished. Despite this strict customary law, some people are forced to engage in selling of fuel wood, charcoal and construction woods (*mologaa*) as a source of food security since recent times of drought and famine. Thus, following the serious crisis this practice has become the source of income for vulnerable households. Firewood is sold almost by women while males mostly sell construction wood. I observed and interviewed women who brought fuel wood and charcoal to sell in towns like Yaballoo, Dubuluqi etc. All of these people, Kanaa Jirmaa, Darmii Alakee and Elemaa Luukun, attribute the increasing sale of firewood to deep poverty, which results from loss of cattle.

As Sakkee Galgaloo said, firewood and charcoal sellers in Yaballo come from all the kebeles surrounding the town. For the convenience of selling days, these kebeles are divided into three zones where all of them sell firewood in turn in intervals of three days. In her words, they reached upon an agreement to prevent the decline in the price of the firewood. This woman could not wait for the day on which her zone has to sell. Then, she brought firewood and unfortunately members from other kebeles (zone) saw her and forced her not to sell and even took the firewood away. I asked her why she broke the agreement and she replied me in short; "I and my family do not have anything to eat". Hence charcoal and firewood selling has become survival mechanism in response to the impact of drought and famine. It shows the magnitude of poverty among the ones affluent Boorana pastoralists.

The victims are also used to selling wood and wood products such as *idda haadee* (the root of *haadee* tree) used as tooth brush, and ropes, mats, basket, curved milk container, etc. as coping strategy to famine. The selling of all these items increases during and after drought and famine. This self-employment in the form of retailing of items also involves the selling of incense (eg. *Qayya*) of different varieties, food stuffs i.e milk selling, sugar, tea, salt (both for people and livestock), cooking oil, maize, coffee as well as local beer, tobacco and other items. Households who lost their cattle, particularly female-headed households are involved in this petty trade as strategy to cope with famine either solely to rely on it or wisely to diversity their income sources. Some of them are successful in reinvesting on livestock from the profit they obtain (informants, Qaballee konsoolee, Xummee Boruu, Taadhii Gurraachaa, Qabballee Waariyoo).

Traditionally, the selling of milk is unacceptable. The Boorana believe that selling of milk brings about bad luck (faroo hamaa) which results in total losings of cattle. The rationale behind this cultural explanation is that at that time the Boorana live lavish life. But, as the food security or Boorana households worsened due to the impact of recurrent drought and famine, they began milk selling as a means of diversifying their income source, which they depend on. Milk selling is very important strategy during normal times, early part of drought and famine as well as during recovery phase. Especially, the Boorana women who are near to urban centers (most of them female household heads) participate in this petty trade. Some of them buy milk from distant rural villages an bring to urban market whereas other households sell milk from their own source. They use the money to buy items used for households' consumption. I observed and interviewed some Boorana households who sell milk and buy maize or other cheap grain in Yaballo market. They said that since milk is expensive than maize we sell and buy other food items so that it is enough for our family. So, Boorana women sell milk and buy grain in stead. They also sell haricot beans and buy maize sine the price of the latter one is cheap and large for that particular season. They also sell butter and fat processed from camel fat and meat to be used as cooking oil. By doing so, the Boorana women and households create such self-employment, as a response to famine. Women milk (milk products) traders also come as far as from Gujii to Yaballoo. According to Little (1994 : 165-170) in Fratkin, et al petty trading in milk became part of the survival strategies of many Somalis after drought, war or other hardship. The role of women in milk trade is important and it provides an important food to settled households, especially durring dry season.

Another important strategy employed by some Boorana households is participation in smuggling directly or indirectly. According to Xumme Diida and Diida Galgaloo this creates important income source. The composition of the participants includes women and men. Some of them act as *duddaan nyaatee*, literally go between for smugglers. Most of them are women and girls. I visited these people while they were engaged in this activity i.e waiting for goods from Moyalee and receiving from traders and passing it to town. In fact, this could not have been possible in the absence of one of my assistant and the trust ship I built with the people in the area. Those who have camels and donkeys are more benefiting by renting them out for the purpose.

There are also households who are engaged in *dallaalaa* (broker) in local and cross-boarder cattle trade. There are also some household who extract salt for human and cattle and sell at markets of Yaballoo, Dubuluqi, Meggaa and other towns. They also sell different colours of lime-stone for painting houses by extracting from the nearby village.

The extraction of honey from forest known a *soroobuu* is another component of income source. Those who have opportunity of getting honey sell it to meet their needs. This mostly takes place at the beginning of the crisis. However, my informant, Borbor Bulee says, in Boorana the production of honey becomes almost impossible because of frequent drought, lack of water and degradation of forest.

According to Qabballe Konsoolee and Waankee Galgaloo temporary wage labor or daily labor also serves as a means of survival. The Boorana people rarely engage in

temporary wage labor or daily labor during normal times. But, as a result of the impact of drought there are poor households who move to peri-urban and urban and are forced to engage themselves in daily labour, such as fetching water to semi-urban dwellers with payment or by selling water. Moreover, they load sands on trucks and pile sand along the road side. This selling of their labour might be in the form of transporting loads, splitting woods, fetching water for the town dwellers. Women are mostly engaged in fetching water. Some households send their girls (children) to town and make them dwell among the relative while living with their relatives they are expected to give services like fetching and selling water. There, from the income they earn from the selling, they send some amount to their parents as a remittance.

Furthermore, there are households who move to gold mining area (Burjuiii) centers like Shaakkisoo and Areeroo at normal times and during occurrence of famine, especially after they lost all of the livestock. The selling of labour in such mining areas highly increased during and after drought or famine. Concerning temporary migration to mining centers Xummee Mallacha says: "We move to Daawwaa mining center where we work as daily laborers to extract mines. This is because of deep poverty resulted from the loss of cattle due to drought." To sum up, change and continuity are aspects of Boorana survival strategies in the phase of famine.

4. RELIEF AID

Another strategy on which the pastoralists depend on to cope with famine is relief aid. As to the Boorana the first relief aid was organized by the local mission when it was funded from Norwegian Church Aid. Since then relief aid has become a common feature Boorana pastoralists. In this emergency interventions, governmental and non-

governmental organizations were involved. Some of the NGOs engaged in this emergency aid, particularly during 1999/2000 drought and famine were Action For Development (AFD), CARE, GTZ, SOS-SAHEL, GOAL, COOPI, SCF/USA, NCA/EECMY etc.

According to loss Assessment Report in Lowland districts of Boorana zone (2000) a total of 19642Metric tone of food aid has been distributed to 41128 beneficiaries during the first part of the year 2000 only. This relief aid performance has been carried out in a form of relief food provision, medical, fodder, and water supply and livestock (cattle, camel etc) restocking. The major food items distributed are maize, wheat, oil, pulses and other food items. Relief aid is given either directly or indirectly through EGS/Employment Generating scheme where the able bodied person in the community are made to involve to earn cash or food for work.

The relief provision donated during the past crises was not adequate as the Boorana view. Its arrival also delayed. Because of these reasons many households are exposed to asset loss and human death. However, they disclose that relief aid played a crucial role in saving lives of specially people.

As the Boorana suggest emergency intervention become more effective on condition that it arrives on time, is supplied adequately and aims at preserving their economic base. Had the previous relief been adequate and timely it could have saved more of both lives and livelihoods. Generally, relief aid is one of form of coping strategies with crisis. Hence, relief aid should aim at saving both lives and their economy i.e helps

reduce the loss of their assets in distress sale when price is too cheap. Thus, the continuation of relief aid is indispensable as it strengthens their indigenous coping mechanisms.

5. Aspects of Change and Countunity

The Gadaa system in general and the different institutions such as *Dabaree*, *Buusaa*, *Gonafaa* etc, which function within this system, have great roles as coping mechanisms for the Boorana. However, the status of these institutions are gradually weakening as a result of different factors. Some of the major ones are the role of super imposed structure, recurrent drought and famine.

The successive Ethiopian regimes have super imposed their respective administrative structures and systems of governance on the pastoralist (Ayalew, 2001). In the case of Boorana too, similar super imposed structures were imposed on their indigenous structures and systems. Examples of these super imposed structures are "Peasant Association", settlement schemes and ranch development aimed at modernizing their pastoral production system (see chapter 3). Such interventions weakened the links among the Boorana territorial, social organizations governed by the Gada system. According to Getachew (2001), there are political and administrative marginalization without any attempt to integrate the Boorana knowledge, institutions and without giving particular attention to them and their value. Thus, all these have been weakening the Boorana indigenous coping mechanisms.

As I have tried to show in chapter four, recurrent famine results in weakening of the Boorana economy. As a result of drought and famine, the average livestock individuals possess declined. This in turn brought about the increase of the number of poor households who need assistance. My informant, Borbor Bulee contends that the number of households who needed assistance or support was very few while the number of rich those who have ability to support the poor was larger in the past. But now the situation is being reversed. Consequently, the poorest of the poor are screened to be supported. Even those who are likely to assist the poor have no the same wealth

status as those ones in the past. In general, the number of those households who are able to support the poor households is highly decreasing.

Due to these mounting economic, political and natural pressures on the pastoral production system and social institutions, the Boorana have devised alternative coping mechanisms. To this effect, some household have been involved in non-pastoral activities such as combining limited farming along with the pastoralism, production of charcoal and firewood, fetching and selling water, moving to urban to seek jobs, wage labour, trade in cattle, grain, milk, tea, local beer, forest products like Qayya etc. (see chapter 7) Besides, diversification of livestock, change in food habit, depending on relief aid, educating their children and depending on them after they have been employed, are need worth mentioning. Moreover, there are changes introduced in resource use like *Kaloo*, individual cisterns, digging and rehabilitating ponds, *ee/aa*s using machine etc.

Development interventions promoting state policy and NGOs have roles in changes in Boorana traditional resource management systems. Water cisterns were introduced by ILCA. Currently, international live stock research institute ILRI and CARE-Cooperation for Assistance and Relief Every where. The function of the cisterns was to store water filled in the tank by flood during raining season. According to my informant Abbaa GaalooWaraabuu, cistern possession is highly privatized in most cases. Hence, individualization of communal resources like pasture, land use for cultivation and *Kaloo* cistern and cistern associated enclosures are profound change in Boorana indigenous coping mechanisms.

External interventions are also manifested in livestock development. A case in point is the Ethiopian government livestock development program geared to promoting commercial links between the low lands and highlands through the development of marketing, and infrastructure networks. According to Coppock (Coppock, 1999), the first project was First Livestock Development Project (1958-63)

Despite all these changes, pastoralism still continues to dominate the Boorana ways of life and as a result the Gada system is still intact.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Summary and Conclusion

This research aimed at examining the indigenous survival strategies of Boorana in the face of famine, especially at a time when there is no or limited external assistance. It also assesses the role of Boorana value system as a source of resource mobilization and exchange in response to famine.

Historically, the Boorana rangeland belongs to one of the pastoral areas assumed to be the most productive rangelands in Africa. However, low amount of rainfall and its spatial and seasonal variability coupled with human and other related factors have caused transitory and severe food shortages resulting in famine. Over the past decades, drought and famine have become common phenomena. In other words, though the Boorana experienced droughts many years before, they have repeatedly faced the tragedy of short and prolonged famine in recent decades. More recently, in the year 1999/2000 drought and famine resulted in loss of livestock and human death.

Famine, as an interrelated chains of processes has multiple causes and effects. It is the aggregated result of economic, political, social and natural processes. The Boorana have a comprehensive knowledge of drought and famine. In Boorana view famine has an initial phase when different factors put pressures on their resources, the crisis phase and recovery phase. The major causes of vulnerability and famine are inappropriate developments, land alienation, limitation of mobility, war and ethnic conflicts, recurrent

drought, loss of livestock and their products to unfavorable terms of trade, low and inadequate market access, population pressure, ecological degradation and the disruption of their "traditional" institutions.

The Boorana remember many famines and place them in a historical context. For the first time in their history, the Boorana experienced drought and famine during the Gadaa office of Bulee Dhaddacha (1668-1776). Since then have been recurrently hit by drought and famine. More recently, in the year 2000, the Boorana experienced one of the severe drought and famine. Based on the improvement of past ture, water and social network, the Boorana could recover from this crises.

The consequences of these drought and famine on Boorana economy, human life and social structure are, however, immense. These recurrent crises resulted in loss of livestock, human death, vulnerability to destitution, dropout of the "traditional" pastoral life style, food insecurity, dependency on relief aid and the weakening of the Boorana indigenous institutions. These effects, however, are differential among the Boorana households. Famine is viewed as a process where it has germination, crisis and recovery phases. Nowadays, the magnitude and recurrent nature of famine are increasing.

To cope with such crisis, they Boorana have developed an interacted social system that is interwoven with resource management for centuries. In the three consecutive chapters, (5,6 and 7), attempts have been made to discuss these survival strategies developed and used by the Boorana to cope with famine. In Boorana views, these

survival strategies have developed in the long process of resource management that operate within the *Gadaa* system. The most common strategies as discussed in this study are Boorana cultural early warning system, a customary resource management strategy, the role of kinship and other social support networks (the *dabaree*, the *Bussa-Gonofaa* and the *Jaala* institutions, communal prayer and cooperation), adjustment to food consumption, market dependency and other strategies.

Through their cultural early warning system, the Boorana anticipate crisis and plan strategies to respond to it. Among the Boorana, crisis anticipation is a collective effort where all human resources of varied knowledge and background are used in forecasting crisis and preparing for it. The sources of information for the Boorana are cultural early warning, an expert in time reckoning (*ayyaantuu*), prophets (*Raaga*), *uuchuu*, animal behaviors, weather conditions, market behaviors, omens and natural indices to predict about environment, ideas exchanged on rituals, ceremonies, assemblies and the culture of greeting system. Whether this indigenous early warning has its own weakness or strength, the people depend on it.

Under customary resource management strategy employed by Boorana, the patterns of land and pasture use as well as the mobility strategy, water use, diversification and maximization of herds and successful management have been discussed as the most important coping mechanisms.

The Boorana have developed a communal resource tenure management system. This communal resource tenure helps for a flexible use of pastureland by dividing into wet-

season areas, dry-season grazing area and drought reserve area. This systematic land and pasture use pattern is based on mobility, which is one of the strategies used for successful resource management. The Boorana customary land use pattern is also concerned with settlement pattern, the strategy of reserving grazing enclosure (*Kaloo*) for dry and drought times. In order to cope with drought and famine, the Boorana also introduced farming.

Moreover, the Boorana have developed complex water wells and other water resources like ponds and their communal resource management. These water resources are the most invaluable survival strategies. The utilization and exploitation there resources operates within the communal water resources management based on clan access rights. Furthermore, the most successful households in coping with drought and famine are those who have diversified their herds, increased their herd size, successfully managed their herds by dispersing into varied ecologies, splitting animals into satellite and lactating herds.

As indicated earlier, kinship and other social support networks have great roles in resource mobilization and exchange to cope with drought and famine. The various types and forms of these institutionalized indigenous coping mechanisms used as fall back are the *dabaree*, *buusaa*, *gonofa* the *jaalaa* institutions as well as the communal prayer and cooperation. These institutionalized coping mechanisms operate within the framework of the *Gadaa* system.

Dabaree is the provision of assistance built on the recognition of the mutual interdependence of the members of the community depending on the interests of the wealthy and poor households. It is the transfer of livestock to help a household in short of breeding and milk cow due to drought, famine war or other calamities. *Buusa* or sharing of resources is also one form of resource exchanges in the process to survive drought and famine. Thus, the sharing of resources (milk, meat, grain, etc.) is common and people share among themselves and even within households and beyond the community. Gifts, marriage relations and borrowing are other forms in which social support networks are expressed during famine.

The Boorana have developed the institution known as *gonofa* which is an intra-clan mutual dependence mechanism through which the law imposes obligatory contributions of animals, especially cattle to rehabilitate and reestablish those who have lost their properties due to drought, famine and war. Hence, *gonofa* is an institutionalized insurance mechanism for households to fall back on during drought and famine.

Another social security mechanism on which the Boorana households depend on during famine is the *jaalaa* institution. This bond partnership created among different Boorana households, within and beyond the community helps as a resource exchanges and as institutionalized alternatives during crisis.

Cooperation and community prayer too is one form of response to famine and drought. With regard to this, the Boorana perform various religious responses to the anticipated

crisis and after its actual occurrence. On such occasions, animals are slaughtered and those households in short of food depend on these resources.

The other strategies are involvements in non-herding activities which include extractive enterprise such as charcoal making, production of gum-Arabic, honey collection, crop cultivation, daily or wage labour, participation in petty trade, selling firewood, milk selling, smuggling, crop cultivation and the like.

Adjustment to food consumption, market dependency and involvement in non-herding activities are also other types and forms of survival strategies that the Boorana use to cope with famine. Some of these adjustment strategies are reducing the mixing of food items and qualities, cutting down consumption, reducing frequency of meals and amount of food, giving priority to food allocation to some members of the households, changing types of diets and storing food. The Boorana also depend on consumption of cattle blood, resorting to famine food obtained from their environment in the form of fruits, roots etc. Besides, they have adapted the previously and culturally unconsumed food types.

Moreover, the Boorana households often sell their livestock during dry and drought. They need to purchase grain to supplement their diets. The nature of asset disposal varies among households. Hence, asset disposals, especially cattle are strategies upon which the Boorana depend on to survive famine.

The central argument of this thesis is that the Boorana have developed survival strategies to cope with these recurrent famines. Thus, the research findings concluded that the Boorana have never been simple spectators in the face of famine. Accordingly, they have developed various types and forms of survival strategies in response to famine. They mobilize all resources of the community using these strategies to alleviate the impact of famine even when there is no or limited external assistance. In other words, though the continuation of relief aid is indispensable in saving lives, pastoral households have their own coping mechanism.

The research also indicated that the secret of Boorana survival in the face of famine lies in their built-in mechanisms that underpin economic and social structures like cultural early warning system, customary resource management, social institutions and other social support networks as well as mobility strategies.

Moreover, the research findings showed that adjustment to food consumption, market dependence, engagement in non-herding activities are also important aspects of Boorana survival strategies in the face of famine.

Furthermore, the research findings demonstrated that the Boorana survival strategies are the result of long process of experiences they have developed in response to crises and managing the scarce resources. These strategies are adjustments overtime. Though there are changes and continuity in Boorana adaptive strategies, pastoralism still constitute important aspect of the life.

The study also examined the differential effects and responses to famine which depend on different variables like wealth, diversification of assets and it demonstrated that famine and its coping strategies have different phases. In other words, the research also concluded that the strategies used to cope with famine are not uniform. They vary among different households depending on their resources, social networks, success full management of herds, mobility and the like.

Finally, the research has shown that all major aspects of the Boorana survival strategies operate within the framework of the Boorana value system which are imbedded in their *Gadaa* institution. Thus, the *Gadaa* system with its operational social and territorial institutions is the core of Boorana meager resource management and pastoral adaptation.

It has already been mentioned that the Boorana survival strategies are indispensable to cope with famine. If they are improved, strengthened and used, they can form a basis for a sustainable food security of Boorana. Therefore, policy makers and development practitioners have to integrate this knowledge into their plans and actions so as to overcome famine, food insecurity and poverty at all levels. The Boorana should be represented in plaing and implementing famine allevation policy. As there are mounting pressures on these survival strategies, especially on *Gadaa*, attention is needed to preserve and use such accumulated knowledge.

In general, the nature and type of pressure on Boorana pastoralism is increasing. The Boorana adaptive strategies also underwent changes to cope with these multiple pressures. Thus, change and continuity are aspects of Boorana survival strategies.

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Annex 1 Wholesale market price of major food crops and livestock, Year 2000 and 2001.

Item	Year 2000			Year 2001		
	April	May	June	April	May	June
CROP						
Maize	172	162	162	70	66	82
Sorghum	223	162	158	90	145	60
Wheat	262	248	162	162	162	116
Barely	360	270	270	152	152	133
Teff	327	336	255	200	180	180
H/bean	287	248	244	165	125.4	102
LIVESTOCK						
Cow dry	55	215	316	520	695	668
Calf	85	108	143	300	297	382
Heifer	138	170	215	450	470	496
Ox (traction)				1100	1340	1040
Bull (fattening)				1250	1282	1101
Sheep (ewe)	53	57	53	80	86	68
Ram	60	64	62	65	60	82
Goat (kid)	47	47	48	55	54	57
Goat (nanny)	75	75	82	75	78	92
Goat (Billy)	88	90	91	120	122	138
Livestock product						
Cow milk (Lt)				2.0	1.9	1.8
Camel milk (Lt)	3	1.70	1.55	1.5	1.3	1.5
Butter (Kg)	30			27	25	22

Source:- CARE Boorana Care Ethiopia Food Information System in Yabello Woreda Food Security Assessment

Annex 2 Relief food distributions June 2000 and 2001

Year	Total Beneficiaries	Food type (Mt)		
		Grain (Wheat)	CSB	Oil
2000	49,497	618.71	74.245	24.748
2001	31,000	387.5	46.5	15.5

Data source: CARE-Boorana

Annex 3 Restocking

S.N	Type of Animal	Quantity	AFD		SOS-Sahel		Gov't	
			No. of Beneficiaries	of Beneficiaries	Quantity	No. of Ben.	Quantity	No. of Ben.
1	Goats	3789	6493	1853		504	126	
2	Heifers	1005	1005	127		-	-	
3	Camels	110	110	25		126	(126)	
	G. Total		7608			390	126	

Source: AFD


WDPPC


WDPPC


REGIONAL STATE OF OROMIYA ADMINISTRATIVE SUB-DIVISION


LEGEND


 International Boundary

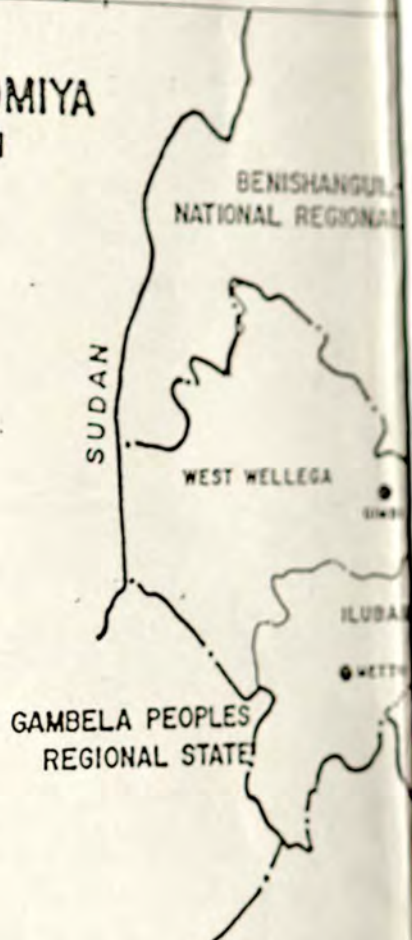
 Regional Boundary

 Zonal Boundary

 Capital City

 Zonal Capital

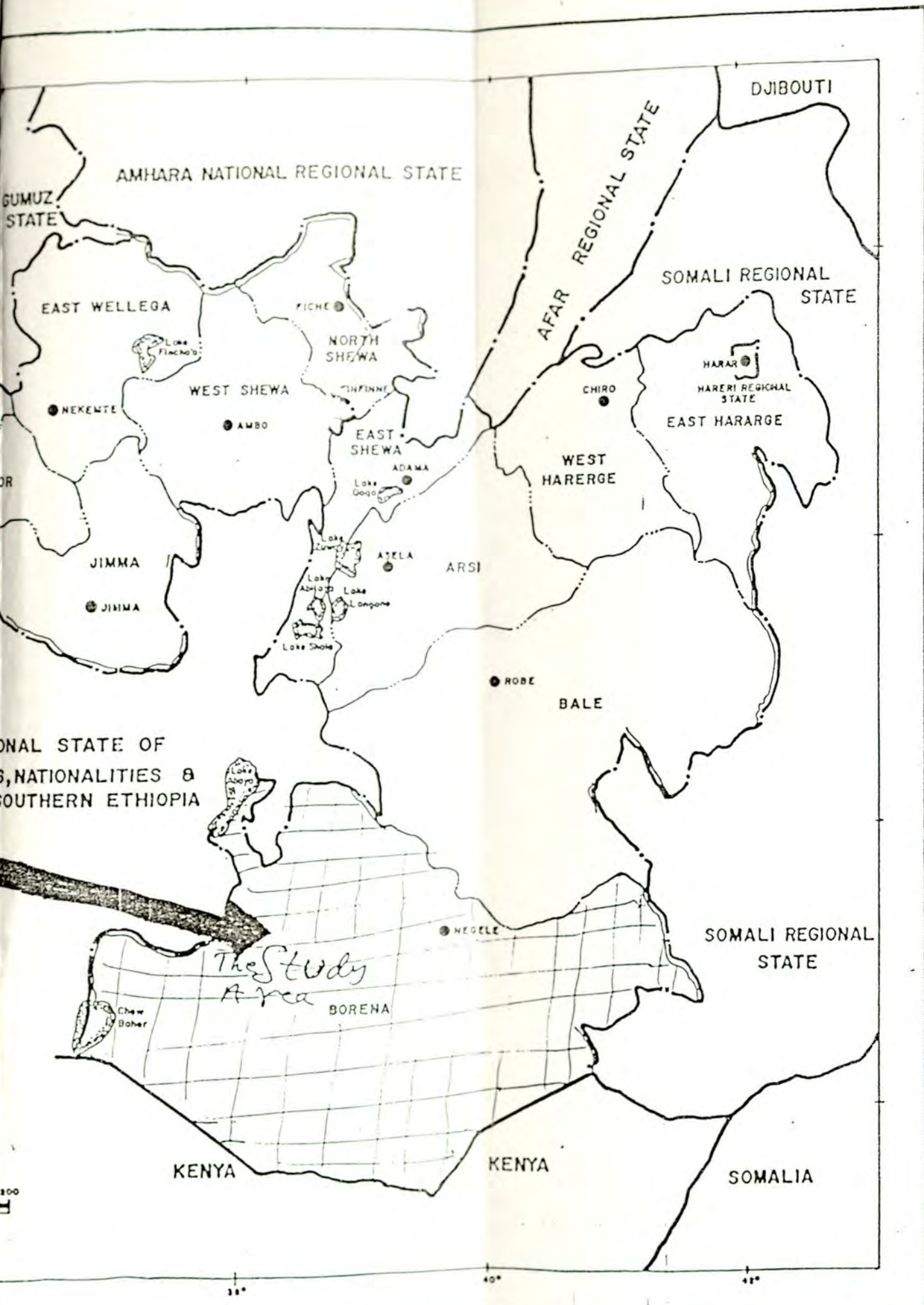
 *The Study area*



N.B:- The Delineation of the Regional and International Boundaries Shown on this and the Following Maps Must not be Considered Authoritative



Oromia Development and



NATIONAL STATE OF
S, NATIONALITIES &
SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

The Study Area



Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Department of Sociology

THE *BUDA*: BELIEF SYSTEM, MARGINALIZATION, AND TRADITIONAL
HEALING PRACTICES IN CENTRAL TIGRAY

By
Mulugeta Birhane

November, 2012
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Addis Ababa University
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A Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa
University in Partial Fulfillments for the Degree of Masters of Arts in
Sociology

By

Mulugeta Birhane

Advisor: P. Murugan (PHD)

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Department of Sociology

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By
Mulugeta Birhane

Approved by Board of Examiners

Names

Signatures

Date

P. Mulugeta

P. Mulugeta

12-11-12

Advisor Mamo Hebo

[Signature]

12/11/2012

External Examiner Yeraswork Admassie

[Signature]

12/11/2012

Internal Examiner Hans SERP

[Signature]

27/11/2012

Chari of Department of Graduate Program Coordinator

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ABSTRACT

Research studies have shown that many traditional beliefs have faded out in the face of modernity and science. Yet, Africa is still home of many strange beliefs. There are a lot of traditional beliefs like witchcraft, sorcery that seem to have stood the test of modernity. The belief in the evil eye is one of those beliefs. This study is about evil eye, locally called Buda or Tebib, belief among people of Central Tigray, Ethiopia.

This thesis discusses the current status of the Buda belief and its two major implications: the discrimination and marginalization of the alleged Budas, and the widespread application of traditional healing methods to combat Buda attack. The study employed qualitative research approach. The data is primarily collected using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

The study found that the Buda belief is deep-rooted and widespread in the study area. The society is rigidly divided in to honoured-agriculturalist-Chewas [clean boned] majority and despised-craftworking- non Chewa [impure boned] -Buda minority. The basic rationale behind the rigid and huge prestige gap between the Budas and the Chewas is the belief about evil eye [Buda]. Many misfortunes of life notably illnesses and deaths are believed to be caused by Buda attack. Even though the alleged Budas categorically dismissed these allegations, yet the reaction of the Chewas towards the Budas is a mix of fear and contempt. The study found that beautiful, wealthy, smart, and shy people are thought to be the most vulnerable people to Buda attack. Periods of multiplication and fecundity are believed to be the most dangerous times and hence children and women, notably pregnant women are believed to be most susceptible to attack

This study found that the Buda belief has two big implications; widespread application of traditional healing system and the marginalization of Budas by the mainstream community. In reaction to the evil deeds allegedly caused by Budas, the mainstream society has subjected them to various forms of discrimination and hence the Budas are marginalized people occupying the lowest social status in the societal hierarchy. This marginalization is a result of the protective and revenge measures taken by the Chewas and the coping mechanisms adopted by the Budas.

Another major finding of the study is the heavy reliance of the community on traditional healing methods to combat Buda attack. Making prayers, reciting sacred books, drinking and washing holy water, wearing amulets [kitab], avoiding personal contact with Budas are among the common preventive and curative measures against Buda attack. However, exorcism is by far the most widely used healing method. Furthermore, this research found that even though the healing practices applied by Muslims and Christians are faith- based, they are best characterized by symmetry than contradiction. Yet, the study found some contradiction between the basic principles of the faiths and some of the healing practices.

Key words: Buda, central Tigray, evil eye, traditional beliefs, traditional healing, Chewa, marginalization

Chapter one

Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Belief in the evil eye power, which is thought to date back to Eve and Adam, is one of the most powerful, pervasive and controversial beliefs in human history. It is a belief from which mankind has suffered great fears. Briefly stated the belief is that there are people with extraordinary spiritual and magical power who can cause disease or death simply by staring at others or by using other mystical techniques (Vecchiato 1993). These people which are commonly called evil eyed people are believed to have the power to communicate with the devils and other evil spirits, and can change themselves into hyena and change their victims into pots and donkeys (Reminick 1974; Amsalu 2000). The evil eyed people, which are thought to be found all over the world, are accused of many evil deeds like attacking people and causing illness and death upon people, and even attacking domestic animals and agricultural produces like crops (Reminick 1974; Damtew 2003).

Research findings show that a number of societies like Bedouins of Middle East and the Nuers of south Sudan believed that most, if not all, of diseases and deaths are caused by evil eyed people (Baroja 1964; Reminick 1974; Amsalu 2000). For example Bedouins believed that evil eye 'can bring the man into the grave and the camel into the cooking pot' (Abu-Rabia 2005). Accordingly, different societies have developed their own prevention, diagnosis and healing techniques. Apart from the widespread use of traditional medicine, the belief has resulted in the emergence and spread of hatred and discrimination against the alleged evil eyed people (Reminick 1974; Vecchiato 1993; Damtew 2003). In response to the alleged evil deeds of the evil eyed people, different societies like Amhara and Sidamo of Ethiopia, Bedouins of the Middle East, Nuers of South Sudan etc. have subjected those allegedly evil

eyed people to different forms of segregation, marginalization and even severe punishment (Reminick 1974; Vecchiato 1993; Damtew 2003). Therefore, the alleged evil eyed people are most feared and disguised segment of a society and are marginalized and relegated to the lowest stratum of societal hierarchy.

The belief in evil eye is so powerful and pervasive that it is found in all corners of the globe. It is found throughout the world; from South Africa to Australia, from India to Brazil, from US to Turkey, from Spain to Iran, from Israel to China (Vecchiato 1993). The evil eye is known as *Malaccino* in Italian, *Boser Blick* in German, *movies Oieil* in French, *Ayn* in Arabic, *Malde Ojo* in Latin America, and *Ok Ngan* in Chinese to mention a few (Vecchiato 1993). Presently, the belief is most widespread in sub-Saharan Africa. Even though it has relatively declined in the western world, in Africa "...still it is...spreading panic and death" (Parrinder 1963: 9). Research studies show that belief in magical power in general and evil eye power in particular is widespread in sub-Saharan countries like Sudan, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria and Ethiopia (Amsalu 2000; Pankhurst 2001; Damtew 2003). In ethnic communities like the Nuer of south Sudan, the Amhara of Ethiopia, the Kikiyu of Kenya and the Zulu of South Africa, belief in the evil eye is very widespread.

Like many other sub-Saharan countries, belief in the evil eye complex is pervasive throughout Ethiopia (Reminick 1974; Vecchiato 1993; Amsalu 2000; Finneran 2003). In Ethiopia, the belief in the evil eye power is commonly known as '*Buda*' (Reminick 1974; Finneran 2003). Various scholars have been defining *Buda* in different ways (Amsalu 2000; Finneran 2003). '*Buda*', according to Finneran (2003), is "*the power of the evil eye and the ability to change [by devil powered magic] into a hyena*". Similarly, for Reminick (1974) *Budas* are people with a special gift of glancing at others and attack. The *Buda* represents not only the spirit or the power but also the person who carries or possesses the spirit. In Ethiopia, it is widely believed that *Buda* people have extraordinary eye power and are possessed by

evil spirits that motivates and pushes them to commit many evil deeds out of envy or jealousy.

Like many other societies, Ethiopians associate many life misfortunes particularly health problems with *Buda* attack (Vecchiato 1993). Consequently, the belief about *Buda* has two interlinked consequences on the life of Ethiopians. These are the widespread use of traditional medicine to protect and cure *Buda* attack, and the discrimination and marginalization of the allegedly evil eyed [*Buda*] people by the mainstream society. In Ethiopia craft working is the typical occupation and means of livelihood of the *Budas* that sometimes the term *Buda* and craftwork are used interchangeably (Reminick 1974). As a result, craft work as an occupation and *Buda* as a social group are highly hated and disguised in Ethiopia (Reminick 1974; Pankhurst 2001).

In Tigray, like in many other parts of Ethiopia, the belief in evil eye is very common. The evil eye complex, which is commonly known as *Buda* or *Tebib* is a firmly established belief affecting the interpersonal and intergroup relationship between the *Budas* and non *Budas* in general and the social life of the *Budas* in particular. Furthermore, the belief has a paramount effect on the health seeking and illness behavior of the people. This study aims to assess peoples' perception of *Buda*, the effect of the belief on the life of the *Budas*, and the social relationships between *Buda* and non *Buda* inhabitants of Central Zone of Tigray. It also looks in to the traditional healing practices employed to prevent, diagnose and cure from *Buda* attack.

1.2 Problem statement

Since the belief in the evil eye is pervasive throughout the world a lot of studies have been done so far, mostly by anthropologists and ethnographers and to some degree by sociologists. The evil eye belief of the Basque of Spain (Baroja 1964), Sicily of Italy (Parrinder 1963),

Bedouins of Middle East (Abu-Rabia 2005), Jews of Israel (Arbu-Saad 2002), Iran (Donaldson 1981), and Christian Syrian-Lebanese (Naff 1965) has been studied and documented in detail. However, since belief in the evil eye power, like any other belief, is culture specific and time bounded, it is necessary to study evil eye in relation to the specific socio-cultural context it exists in.

Reminick (1974) is one of the first to undertake an in-depth exploration of the belief in *Buda* among the Amhara of Ethiopia. He described the depth and prevalence of the belief and the role of religion in the healing practices. Like Reminick, Young (1970) made a detailed account of the origin of the *Buda* with greater emphasis on the traditional indigenous healing practices employed by Amharas living in Begmdir. Both Reminick and Young pointed the origin of the *Buda* people to other non Amhara ethnic groups mainly the *Falasha (Bete-Israel)* people which are found around Gondar and Agaw. Vecchiato (1993) also discussed the ideological and interactional aspects of evil eye belief and its function in health maintenance and illness prevention behavior among the Sidama of South Ethiopia. However, we can hardly find research about evil eye belief in Tigray.

In Central Tigray the belief about evil eye, the traditional healing practices, and the social status of the *Budas* are highly and causally interconnected. The widely held belief that evil eyed people are responsible for many of the illnesses and deaths the community encounters have resulted in the widespread use of traditional medicine and the marginalization of the alleged *Budas*. The belief has pushed the community to develop a very complex traditional healing mechanism in order to prevent, diagnose and cure *Buda* caused illnesses. Moreover, due to the belief and hence their alleged evil deeds, the *Budas* in central Tigray are the highly hated, feared and despised segment of the community. They are economically marginalized, socially excluded, and religiously discriminated. They are pushed to the periphery and are not considered as members of the mainstream community and hold lowest social status.

Even though a considerable number of studies dealing with *Buda* and its origin have been done so far, due to various reasons, still there is a big gap in our understanding of *Buda*. The main reason is that most of the literature (Reminick 1974; Amsalu 2000) focus on the myths about the origin of the *Buda* and confine themselves to theological explanations. Some explanations (e.g. works by Finneran 2003; Amsalu 2000) are shallow in their depth of investigation and narrow in their dimensional analysis. Even those relatively deep digging researches by Young (1970) and Reminick (1974) dealt with limited dimensions, specifically the traditional healing practices employed by Orthodox Christian Amharas.

Accordingly, the social world of the *Buda*: their livelihood, social relationships and their networks with the wider community, and the people's perception of *Buda* were overlooked by prior researchers. They mainly focused on the negative attitude of the mainstream society towards craft workers and little attention was given to the actual consequence of the attitude. The various forms of discriminations, stereotypes, social exclusion, and marginalization the *Budas* are facing are not sufficiently investigated. The current status and trend of the *Buda* belief is not clearly known.

Besides, even though most of the studies conducted so far on evil eye were undertaken in northern Ethiopia, they covered only two ethnic groups namely Amhara and Qemant (Vecchiato 1993). Even in northern Ethiopia there are a number of societies that have not yet been studied sufficiently. Tigray, specifically central Tigray, where this study is all about, is almost obscured. Muslims were also overlooked in the previous studies. Therefore, this study enables us to get a clear picture of the northern Ethiopia so far as *Buda* belief is concerned. Thus, this study helps to make comparisons between the Amharas and Tigrayans, the Muslims and Christians thereby we can have a clearer understanding of *Buda* belief in northern Ethiopia in particular and Ethiopia in general.

In addition to that, up to date information is needed about the *Buda* belief for it, like any other belief, changes from time to time. The *Buda*'s social world, like that of any other social group, changes from one generation to the next. It is thought that the life of the *Budas* and the life of the surrounding community in which the *Budas* live is changing. In the last fifty years Ethiopia has undergone fundamental changes in social, economic, and political spheres (Damtew 2003; Dubale 2010). Therefore, given that most of the studies about *Buda* belief were conducted decades ago, it will be logical and necessary to see the present state of the belief and the changes it has undergone in the past. This study came as a response to Vecchiato's call that "*research is needed to [see] ...to what extent the belief persists in post revolutionary Ethiopia*" (Vecchiato 1993: 1036).

Besides, even though most of the previous studies were focused on Christian highlanders [note that central Tigray is also Christian dominated area with sizeable Muslims], it should be noted that there is no consistent Christian view of *Buda* and that the views or understanding of Christians at different periods and places has varied considerably [see and compare Amsalu (2000), Reminick (1974) and Finneran (2003)]. Hence, it should be noted that the Orthodox Christian Amhara of 1970's may not represent, and is likely to be different from, the Orthodox Christian Tigray of 2012. On top of that, this study has included Muslims, which were overlooked in the previous studies. In addition, the nature of intergroup and interpersonal relationship between the *Budas* and non *Budas* has been overlooked in previous studies.

Lastly, and most importantly, we know, unfortunately, less and little about what the *Budas* themselves believe than is believed about them. The perception of the *Budas* about the evil eye belief is almost undiscovered. It must be admitted that it is easier to find out what is said to have occurred than what really happened. Therefore, besides the perception of the non *Budas* about the *Budas* discussing what *Buda* is from the point of view of the *Budas*

themselves is another mission this research aims to achieve. The fact that some of the literature (Finneran 2003) we have about the *Buda* are accounts written by foreign travelers some of whom have a very shallow understanding of Ethiopia's culture, and history, hints that the 'real' *Buda* may be very different from the *Buda* who appears in the travelers' accounts. Taking into account the gap in the previous studies, this research, which is conducted in Central Zone of Tigray, deals with the people's [both *Budas* and non *Budas*] perception about *Buda*, the marginalization of the *Budas* from the mainstream society, and the traditional healing practices employed to combat *Buda* attack.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study has the following general and specific objectives.

1.3.1 General Objective

The study explores and describes people's perception of *Buda*, the traditional healing practice used to protect and cure *Buda* attack, and the form and extent of marginalization the *Budas* are subjected to and its consequences on their life.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

In dealing with the belief about *Buda*, other issues that have close link with the *Buda* belief will be investigated. In light of this, the study aims to:

- Investigate peoples' (the non *Budas* and the alleged *Budas*) perception of *Buda*
- Investigate the intergroup and interpersonal relationships between the *Budas* and the non *Budas*.
- Analyze the extent and form of marginalization of the *Budas* by the mainstream society
- Examine the traditional healing practices employed by the non *Budas* to deal with health problems that are allegedly caused by *Buda* attack.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study attempts to describe the belief about *Buda* and its negative implications on the life of the community: the marginalization and discrimination of alleged evil eyed people and the widespread use of traditional medicine at the expense of modern medicine. If the belief continues unaddressed it will have immense negative consequence on the inter group relation between the *Budas* and the non *Budas* in general and the social life of the *Budas* in particular. It is also negatively affecting the health seeking behavior of the people. Therefore, this study will contribute in informing the policy makers and academicians to foresee the current status of the belief about *Buda*, and the implication of the belief on the inter group relation between *Budas* and non *Budas*, the discrimination and marginalization of *Budas*, and the widespread application of traditional healing methods. It will help them to understand the roots and effects of the belief so that they can take appropriate measures to bring about behavioral change and integrate the marginalized group into the mainstream society.

Thus, this study provides a useful material to conceptualize the *Buda* belief, and the intergroup relation of the *Budas* with the mainstream society. It is an additional and more sociological contribution on the ethnography of marginalized people in Ethiopia in general and Tigray in particular. Furthermore, it may inspire and help to conduct further and deeper investigation about other traditional beliefs. It can also be used as preliminary information for further research about traditional medicine, traditional beliefs and its implication on the use of modern medicine. Most importantly, this research might be very useful for government and non-governmental organizations in designing and implementing intervention strategies aimed at promoting and improving the living conditions of the victims of traditional beliefs like *Budas* and other minority groups .

1.5 Organization of the Paper

The paper is organized in to five chapters. The first chapter is the introductory part which locates the research problem and describes the aim of the research. This chapter includes contextual background, statement of the problem, research objectives, and significance of the study. Chapter two presents the discussion on related literature and theoretical framework. In this section, some issues like the prevalence of the belief at global and national level, the marginalization of craft workers and the traditional healing methods used to combat *Buda* attack are discussed. The third chapter deals with the methodological application of the study, the reason behind the selection of the methodology and methods of data collection. It also presents a discussion about the socio-economic and demographic features of the study area.

In chapter four, empirical information obtained from the research subjects in the study area is presented, analyzed and discussed. This chapter is categorized into four broad sections. The first section discusses about the social stratification of Tigray society in general and people of central Tigray in particular. The second section discusses the main contents and aspects of the belief about *Buda*. In this section the *Buda* belief, the peoples' perception of *Buda*, the mechanisms of identifying the *Buda* and illness caused by *Buda*, and finally the targets, rationales and *modes operandi* of attack used by the *Buda* are presented and discussed in great detail. Section three presents the form and extent of marginalization and discrimination of *Buda* people by the mainstream society. In section four a detailed discussion of the traditional healing methods employed to combat *Buda* attack have been presented. Finally, the paper ends with summary and conclusion discussed in chapter five.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

In this section, studies both published and unpublished, obtained from various sources like books, reports, magazines, online publications and journals that are relevant to the issue under discussion have been reviewed. This chapter is structured in such a way that it has four sub sections, each of which matches to the objectives of the study. The first subsection is an overview of the evil eye belief. It deals with the nature, origin, coverage, and strength of the belief. The second subsection presents what the literature has to say about majority-minority relationships and the various theoretical models employed to deal with such type of intergroup relationship. Then, the origin and nature of marginalization of craft workers in Ethiopia has been discussed. Lastly, a brief overview of traditional healing in Ethiopia has been presented.

2.1 Overview of the Evil Eye Belief

Though its degree and form vary from society to society, belief in the evil eye complex is present in all corners of the world. Europe, Middle East, Asia, and Africa are familiar with the belief (Parrinder 1963; Baroja 1964; Abu Rabia 2005). Even though Baroja (1964) and Ambrom (1957) argued that the evil eye belief has originated from and is confined to the Mediterranean area, research findings indicate that the belief is universal throughout the world (Parrinder 1963). Like Parrinder, Vecchiato (1993) concluded that even though the belief might have got its start in the Mediterranean area, as Ambrom (1957) argued or ancient Sumer as Dundes (1967) said, various forms of the belief in the evil eye appear round the globe.

The pervasiveness of the belief can be verified by the fact that it is found in all of the five great religions of the world, namely Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and Buddhism (Baroja 1964; Damtew 2003). For example, in the Catholic Christian Basque of Spain, Baroja indicated, many people were convinced that there are men and women who could change themselves into animals, fly, and do other things which for want of a better name we generally call evil eye. In the Muslim world, it is widely believed that the prophet himself confirmed the evil eye (*ayn*) is *haq* (true) (Sahih Muslim cited in Damtew 2003).

Contrary to the optimism of the 17th century enlightenment thinkers and the 19th century positivists, expansion of education, modern medicine, science, and urbanization seems to have done little as yet to shake the belief (Parrinder 1963). Still many societies strongly believe that accidents, illnesses, and deaths are caused by evil eye. Not only tribal societies but also advanced societies are, to some degree, part to the belief.

Locating when, how, and where the belief about evil eye originated is so difficult. As a result, many explanations have been given about the origin of evil eye. One of the earliest and popular explanations is related to the devil of Christian theology which can be summarized as follows:

Eve had thirty children, and one day God asked Eve to show Him her children. Eve became suspicious and apprehensive and hid fifteen of them from the sight of God. As a result, God seeing her act of disobedience, declared the fifteen children she showed as His chosen children and cursed the fifteen she hid, declaring that they go henceforth into the world as devils and wretched creatures of the earth. He cursed and sent them away with the curse of being agents of devil. These human counterparts of the devil are thought to be the ancestors of the Buda people (Amsalu 2000: 7).

Different scholars have held different views about the alleged power of evil eye and the impacts of the belief. Accordingly, various explanations are given by different scholars. One of these explanations is given by psychiatrists (Messing 1978; Leach 1980) and is more of psychological in content. For some psychiatrists, the belief in the evil eye and the associated

rituals are something like a psychological pathology called 'mass hysteria' (Amsalu 2000). The psychiatrists' notion of mass hysteria seems to be similar to Marx's connotation of religion as '*opium of the people*' (Ritzer 2011: 70). For Marxist theorists like Finneran (2003), the evil eye notion is neither the result of God's curse as some theologians claim nor a psychological pathology as some psychiatrists assert, rather, a deliberate creation of upper class people to maintain their position and to halt upward mobility. It is a system meant for suppressing and downgrading lower class people. Following this, Finneran argued "*It is the social superiors who may create and perpetuate this myth of the evil eye ...as a means of social control ... [by] turning groups of Artisans in to untouchable pariahs*" (Finneran 2003: 4).

Contrary to Marxists, functionalist theorists notably Evans Pritchard (Pritchard cited in Parrinder 1963) came up with a typical functionalist view about the evil eye- circular in its reasoning and focusing on its function. Evans Pritchard argued "*such[evil eye] belief ... played a useful function in the society in giving the witch doctors knowledge of magic, strengthening kinship ties against enemies, enhancing the power of chiefs, and in conflict resolution*" (Pritchard cited in Parrinder 1963: 9). The hub of functionalists' argument is that the evil eye belief was created and persisted because it serves important functions for the society. Like their many other arguments, functionalist theorists failed to explain how it originated, how it expanded, what its dysfunctions are, and most importantly how it changed through time.

Another justification for the creation and spread of the evil eye belief is an economic one. This explanation attributes the roots of the belief to economic specialization and diversification. Scholars like Levine (2000) asserted that craft working and hence craft workers [who are supposed to be the bearers of evil eye] are simply the result of economic

specializations and diversification. However, Levine failed to adequately explain and justify as to why the notion of evil eye is closely associated with craftwork.

Concerning the truth or falseness of the alleged power of the evil eye, it is still debated hotly. Various conflicting explanations have been given about whether the evil eye power is a 'reality' or an 'illusion'. For prophet Mohamed, the power of the evil eye is real. The same is true for many followers of Islam. For others like Pritchard, the alleged power of the evil eye doesn't exist. It is rather an illusion. Evans Pritchard defined it as *'imaginary offence because it is impossible'* (Pritchard cited in Baroja 1964: 14). To him *"an evil eyed person or a witch cannot do what he is supposed to do and has, in fact, no real existence. He performs no rite, utters no spell and possesses no medicine"* (Baroja 1964: 14). Supporting Pritchard, though partially, Margaret Murray argued (Murray cited in Parrinder 1963: 16) *"... the belief in evil eye and witchcraft is a tragic error, a false explanation of ills of life ... that has only led to cruel and baseless oppression in which countless innocent people have suffered"*. So the debate about the alleged power of evil eye is between two extremes, ranging from 'real' to 'an impossible imaginary act'.

Summarizing the two extremely opposite views, Margaret Murray said *"...in the interpretation of evil eye, there have been and still are two main schools of thought. One class accepted all the evidence and placed upon it 'the unwarranted construction' that the evil eye's activities were due to supernatural power. The other class, 'taking the evidence on hearsay', comes to 'deny the facts in toto'"* (Murray cited in Parrinder 1963: 103). Moreover, she attempted to mediate the two extreme views and said *"they [evil eyed people] actually performed many of the deeds which were ascribed to them but not by supernatural power"* (Murray cited in Parrinder 1963: 103). Baroja attributed the controversy surrounding the alleged power of evil eye to the *"problem of distinguishing between objective and subjective reality"* (Baroja 1964: 58).

As Murray indicated, the controversy can be taken as part of the hot debate between modernists and postmodernists or positivism and social constructivism on the nature of reality. The debate whether the evil eye power exists or not may remind us what the famous French social thinker by the name Michel Foucault, upon taking LSD [Lyserg Saure Diathylanid: a hallucinogenic drug made from lysergic acid], said: "...the sky has exploded...and the stars are raining down upon me. I know this is not true. But it is the truth" (Foucault cited in Ritzer 2011: 612). The evil eye power seems to be more or less similar. It may not be true but it is truth just like the raining of the stars which was truth for Foucault but not true for his fellows beside him. The evil eye power is a reality for some people (for those who believe in its existence) and is an illusion for the non believers. Like many other social issues it is a subjective reality for subjective people living in a subjectively constructed world.

However, the presence of many societies who believe in the evil eye complex qualifies it for sociological inquiry because the belief has a paramount effect on the social life of both the believers and non believers. One of the obvious results of the belief is the widespread application of traditional medicine (Vecchiato 1993). Another result is marginalization of the allegedly evil eyed people by the mainstream society (Vecchiato 1993; Damtew 2003). The lower socioeconomic status of the evil eyed people may partially be attributed to the belief. Hence, the belief has resulted in minority – majority relationship between the evil eyed people and the mainstream society: the *Budas* as minority and the non *Budas* as majority/dominant group. In fact, not only the belief about evil eye but also, as Levine (2000), Finneran (2003) and other Marxists indicated, the presence of few different people, i.e craft workers, in an overwhelmingly homogenous agrarian society might have been seen, by the peasants, as strange and unwelcome and hence resulted in avoidance of the craft workers.

2.2 Minority -Majority Relations

Akalework (2011) reports that in contemporary societies a growing attempt is being directed to integrate the marginalized and disadvantaged groups of people into the mainstream community by giving due emphasis to economic and social inequality. Akalework is, to be fair, partially right and partially wrong. Because, there is equally sound argument the other way round. Some researches (Barron 1967; Harris 1975; Schaefer 1984; Pankhurst 2001) show that there are a host of marginalized minority groups around the globe and in some societies the degree of marginalization is even increasing. In Ethiopia, for instance, the *Hilancha* of Wolaitta (Akalework 2011), the *Nafura* of Gurage (Nahu 1998) the *Mena*, *Manja* and *Wagoche* of Dawro (Dubale 2010), the *Manja*, *K'emo* and *Fuga* of Kaffa and Hadiya (Pankhurst 2001), and the *Degela* of Konta, the *Tummano* of Kembatta, the *Yirfo* of Yem (Vecchiato 1993) are still highly marginalized. So whether the marginalized are getting integrated or being marginalized and pushed to the edge is very controversial. What is indisputable is that a host of minority and marginalized groups exist throughout the world.

The concept of minority groups is perceived differently by different scholars. As Harris (1975) and Pankhurst (2001: 14) indicated there is no universal definition of minorities that can be applied to the vast spectrum of stratified groups found in contemporary societies. Since every group has got its own unique history, culture and social environment it is very difficult to get an all-encompassing definition (Pankhurst 2001: 17). As a result, minorities have been variously defined depending on the nature of their marginalization, socio-cultural identity, occupation, or biological features (Damtew 2003: 11). Consequently, minorities are designated as “*caste or caste like groups, racial or ethnic minorities*” (Damtew 2003: 11). However, this doesn't mean that minority groups have nothing in common. Indeed, they have a number of common features and that is why they are put into the category of ‘minorities’.

One of the shared features of minority groups is their subordinate position (Seymour 1986). Seymour argues minority groups are not necessary numerical minorities. Instead, minority is determined by subordinate or marginal status rather than by numbers (Seymour 1986). Similar to Seymour, Barron (1967) said that what makes a section of society minority is not the size of its population but the subordinate position it occupies in the given social system. Schaefer (1984) also asserted that a social minority need not be a statistical one and being minority group has nothing to do with number but with control of power and resource. He defined minority group as: "... a subordinate group whose members have significantly less control or power over their own lives than the members of a dominant or majority group" Schaefer (1984: 5). However, Schaefer's definition has a serious flaw for it fails to consider/recognize the fact that what he called 'control of power' is relative. For instance, one can safely argue, though the peasantry of developing countries, late Ethiopia, or the working class of Developed countries, late United States of America, has 'less control of power over their own lives' than the dominant/ruling class, the political elites and the capitalists respectively, they are rarely, if ever, designated as minority group.

Some researchers (Barron 1967; Harris 1975; Zenden and Jamesh 1983; Schaefer 1984) agree on five important defining features of a minority group. First, minorities commonly experience discrimination, segregation, persecution etc, at the hands of the dominant group. Secondly, minority groups have cultural or physical marks like skin color or language which are shared by members and distinguish them from the majority. Thirdly, minorities are characterized by consciousness of kind. Fourthly, minority membership is birth ascribed. Fifthly, forced or involuntary in-group marriage (endogamy) is typical to them. In accordance with these features, Williams (1964) expressively defined minority groups as "...any culturally or physically distinctive and self-conscious social aggregates with hereditary membership and high degree of endogamy which are subject to political or economic or

social discrimination by a dominant segment of an environing political society" (Williams 1964: 121).

Complying with William's definition of minority groups, Ethiopia, like many other sub-Saharan countries, has a number of minority groups. Craft workers like weavers, ironworkers, blacksmiths, tanners, potters, and people of ex-slave ancestry are one of the most marginalized segments of the Ethiopian society. Yet, *Budas* are the most marginalized and despised people than any other craft working people (Vecchiato 1993). Not only the *Budas*, i.e. the people themselves, but also craft work, i.e. the occupation, which is the typical job of the *Budas*, is considered as despised work by the agrarian majority (Pankhurst 2001: 2).

2.3 Origin and Marginalization of Craft Workers (*Budas*) in Ethiopia

Even though Ethiopia has a host of marginalized groups there is only limited literature about them. Even the limited and scattered literature available is mostly about ethnic minorities found in southern Ethiopia (Damtew 2003: 20). Most of the literature (e.g. Hamer 1970; Vecchiato 1993; Nahu 1998; Dubale 2010; Akalework 2011) focused on southern Ethiopia. This may be due to ethnic and religious diversity found in southern Ethiopia and hence the availability of a number of minority groups compared to other parts of the country. Moreover, many researchers tried to discuss all minority groups in a single basket using a very broad level analysis (Damtew 2003; Dubale 2010). Thus, the literature we have about minorities has a number of limitations. First, it focuses on ethnic minorities and overlooks occupational minority groups like craft workers. Secondly, the tendency to treat all minority groups in a general or broader analytical context overlooks the specificities inherent in each group. Besides, the fact that considerable portion of the available literature is written by foreign travelers who lack in-depth understanding of the culture of Ethiopian society is sometimes leading to erroneous and biased conclusions.

Generally speaking, in Ethiopia craftsmen constitute a 'despised and feared' minority group. Categorically, artisans have been understood as despised castes, outcasts, pariah, or occupational castes (Todd 1977; Levine 2000; Damtew 2003). Lewis (1970: 183) concluded that virtually every Ethiopian, Cushitic or Semitic speaking, society contain at least one endogamous minority group of hereditary occupational specialties. Even though it may be premature to conclude that every Ethiopian society contains occupational minority, research findings show the majority does. Amharas, Oromos, Tigrayans, Wolaitta, Sidama are few of the ethnic groups with occupational minority groups inside them (Young 1970; Reminick 1974; Vecchiato 1993; Amsalu 2000; Akalework 2011).

In Ethiopia, socially excluded groups like craft workers are generally referred to by different pejorative terms like *Qetqach*, *Bale ej*, *Faqi*, *Zibie*, *Haguadi*, *Tebib* etc. The term '*Buda*' is one of these derogatory terms used to refer to craft workers in northern and central Ethiopia. Yet, this doesn't mean that all Craft workers are designated as *Budas* for, though rarely, some non *Budas* engage, for some reason late lack of land, in craftworks notably carpentry. However, due to the negative attitude of the peasant population towards craftwork and the presumed higher concentration of *Budas* in the sector, craftwork is closely associated with evil eye notion. They are considered by the majority as outcasts and people of low status. In this regard Dubale (2010: 20) argued that "... [They] are viewed by the dominant group as persons of low status who practice minimal [less relevant] occupations and possess some mystic powers that can endanger others". Furthermore, he concluded that most of the socially excluded groups of people are "occupationally specialized on different craftworks and as a result commonly referred to as 'occupational castes', 'artisans', or 'craftsmen' comprising of weavers, smiths, potters, tanners, wood workers, grinding stone producers, and hunters" (Dubale 2010: 21).

Identifying the origin and marginalization process of craft workers of Ethiopia is very difficult and controversial. It is difficult because such groups of people have, in most cases, no clear physical or linguistic distinction from the mainstream societies (Pankhurst 2001). Even though Todd (1977) and Levine (2000) claimed that craft workers have distinct physical appearance and psychological makeup and that they are more 'negroid type' than the mainstream society and are similar to 'negro Bantu' in their 'physical and psychic', no conclusive evidence have been presented so far by them or other writers to support the claim.

The origin and process of marginalization of craft workers should be analyzed and understood in relation to its historical and cultural context for every group has got its own unique history, culture, origin, and social environment (Pankhurst 2001; Dubale 2010; Akalework 2011). Since the root causes for the emergence of minority groups in Ethiopia and the nature of their marginalization are diverse, a relativist approach would be more helpful. In support of this, Pankhurst (2001) warns that, in the study of craft workers in Ethiopia the cultural dichotomy between south and north Ethiopia should be taken in to account. Even though handicraftsmen, Pankhurst said, are despised, stigmatized, and ostracized by the dominant majority, there is a prevailing difference in the historical process that led to the formation of stigmatized groups and in the form and degree of their marginalization within southern Ethiopia itself, let alone Ethiopia at large (Pankhurst 2001: 17).

In support of Pankhurst, Damtew (2003) clearly showed the differences in the roots/rationales of marginalization of minority groups by presenting the case of *Woyto* and *Falasha* of northern Ethiopia. While discussing the origin and marginalization of the *Woyto*, Damtew said:

The stigmatized position of the Woyto amidst the Amhara majority is explained by their former hunting way of life and peculiar dietary habits... The Woyto Artisan minority thus has a separate ethnic origin, but changed from an independent egalitarian hunting group to despised artisan minority historically submerged by the Amhara majority (Damtew 2003: 22).

Similarly the 'Falasha', sometimes called *Bete-Israel*, Damtew argued, is a distinct, well integrated, despised, endogamous group of craft workers. He said "*This [Falasha] group is ... ethnic 'Agaw Jews' in origin that was historically excluded from land ownership due to 'political- military defeat'*" (Damtew 2003: 22). Accordingly to Damtew, the *Falasha* were part of the majority until they were forced, as a result of the 'political-military' defeat, to depend on hand crafts as a means of subsistence. The dominant Christian majority imposed this change in the means of subsistence and social status turning the *Falasha* from an independent farming community to a despised craft working minority. So, according to Damtew, the Woyto were marginalized and despised due to their hunting way of life whereas the *Falasha's* marginalization can be attributed to politico-military defeat.

Another hub of debate between scholars is whether the situation of craft workers in Ethiopia can be designated as caste system or not. Some writers, notably Todd (1979) and Levine (2000) argued that the craft workers' relation with the mainstream society is similar to the caste system of India because it involves endogamy, ascribed membership, and occupational specialization which are considered to be the main features of the caste system of India. Opposing Todd and Levine, Pankhurst (1995: 19) said "*...to describe the artisans who have ambiguous status as a caste along the Asian model is too simplistic classification. One must resist the assumption that they (fuga, tanners, and smiths) are castes because they are engaged in these occupations.* Lewis (1970: 185), on the other hand, recommended that the phenomena of occupational caste in Ethiopia must be understood as a distinctive division of labor, a system for the production and distribution of goods and services which demand

special skills and training. However, neither Pankhurst nor Lewis gave a plausible explanation about why, when and how the evil eye notion was linked with craftwork.

The Role of Artisans (craft workers) in the Ethiopian society is frequently misunderstood by many people. Many assume that their role was less relevant and equivalent to their social status in the hierarchy of the society. Some studies (Nahu 1998; Dubale 2010; Akalework 2011) have pointed out that the status and role of artisans is, in fact, ambiguous. This ambiguous position can be considered as the most defining feature of artisans. The ambiguity is that, on the one hand, they are clearly despised and ostracized; on the other hand, they play a vital role to the society (Cerulli 1956; Pankhurst 1995; Nahu 1998). Pankhurst argued that they had benevolent acceptance by the kings and the nobility basically due to the demand of their skill. He said *"the existence of a highly evolved state with a large court and huge armies... constituted another major focus of demand for handicrafts"* (Pankhurst 1995: 101). Similarly, Cerulli (1956) described *"the essential social role and contribution of artisans, not only as crafts men but also as ritual experts in girl's puberty rites, deaths, funerals and other life cycle events"* (Cerulli 1956: 61).

Ironically enough, the social status of craft workers is far below to the essential role they have in the society. This incompatibility between the roles (function) played and the status attached to that particular role may remind the way George Ritzer (2011) expressively criticized structural functionalism by comparing the status of janitors in New York City with the status of advertisement executives in Hollywood. Even though, Ritzer asserted, the role of the janitors i.e. cleaning the city is by far more important for the American society than the advertisings of alcoholic drinks or luxurious cars, the status of janitors is far below to the advertising executives. As opposed to the structural functionalists and in-line to the Marxists claim, that role-played and the status-attached are ill fitted to each other. But why so?

Noticing the incompatibility between the role and status of crafts workers, Karsten (1972) concluded "... *the social status of smiths, often very low, has little to do with the type of work they do*" (Karsten 1972: 17). Furthermore, Karsten added "*a family whose clan had abandoned craftwork years ago, even generations before, might still be considered socially inferior. Similarly ordinary farmers might take up craftwork without affecting their social status*" (Karsten 1972: 17). This indicates that the lower status of craft workers emanates neither from the value of the role they play in the society nor from their occupation or means of livelihood, but from one's lineage/descent and the belief about *Buda*.

Contrary to the origin and history of craft workers, there is little disagreement among researchers about the lower social status and poor living conditions of craft workers. Hallpike (1968) argues that craft workers constitute subordinate social, economic, political, and cultural status in their respective societies and the occupations they practice are often despised and considered as disgraceful. Furthermore, they are characterized by poor living conditions emanating from their restricted access to resources like land and livestock (Hallpike 1968; Todd 1977; Levine 2000).

The 1974 Ethiopian revolution, which is considered a turning point in Ethiopia's history, had paved a new era in the history of minority groups (Vecchiato 1993; Damtew 2003). The revolution and the revolutionaries (*Derg* and other leftist groups) registered a considerable success in eradicating different types of 'harmful traditional practices' and in minimizing various forms of stigmatization and discrimination towards different social groups like artisans, and other minorities. The *Derg* has tried its best, with considerable success, in the form of proclamation and practical measures to eliminate different forms of discrimination, segregation and marginalization (Damtew 2003). Through the highly applauded 1975 land proclamation, it has redistributed land in a manner that assures all Ethiopians, including craft

workers [which were not allowed to possess land], would have equal opportunity and right to possess and use land (Damtew 2003; Dubale 2010).

Though the *Derg* must be praised for that, the tangible results obtained were below the expectations (Vecchiato 1993; Dubale 2010; Nahu 1998; Damtew 2003). Still, there remains a deep seated fear and contempt in the community towards artisans mainly *Buda* people (Vecchiato 1993). The *Hilancha* of Wolaitta (Akalework 2011), the *Yelma Gedam* of Menze (Damtew 2003), the *Manja* of Kaffa and Dawro (Pankhurst 2001) the *Tummano* of Kembatta, the *Yirfo* of Yem (Vecchiato 1993) are highly despised. Its efforts to eliminate the belief and discrimination against craft workers have not received enough public consent to offset the deep rooted beliefs and practices. Instead, it resulted in driving the belief and related practices notably *Buda* hunting underground (Damtew 2003). The belief is so deep, strong and interwoven it to the people's life philosophy. Even though their economic problems, the base, to use Marx's word, was resolved, to the dismay of the socialist *Derg* and Marxism at large, the superstructure i.e. beliefs and traditions never changed considerably and the social status and the overall living condition of the *Budas* have not shown significant improvement. Even in the 21st century, three and half decades after the revolution, craft workers are discriminated, stereotyped, ostracized to the extent that intermarriage, eating, drinking, cohabiting, or any other form of direct contact with 'polluting' people is considered to be contamination and hence people, implicitly or explicitly, try to avoid contact with craft workers (Damtew 2003; Dubale 2010). This can partially be attributed to the reversal or counter movements that took place soon after the revolution. That is, the atrocities and upheavals that followed the revolution added with the efforts of the reactionaries and anti-revolution forces like the remnants of the feudal system might have resulted in mixed feeling of sympathy, regret and resentment on part of many pro-revolution people and then nostalgia of the previous societal order, and hence revived the avoidance of craft workers.

2.4 Theoretical Models of Marginalization

Theoretical models are very helpful in order to grasp the cause and process of marginalization. So far, various models have been developed to explain the origin and the formation of minority groups and process of marginalization. No doubt that a single theory or model can not sufficiently grasp and explain every minority group for every group has its own unique history, culture and social environment. Yet, there are common features shared by many minority groups and hence by implication are considered to be the central elements of marginality. Accordingly, a number of models have been developed to explain the genesis of minority groups.

A. The 'Remnants' Model

According to the Remnants model, marginalized/minority groups are the outcome of the subjugation of the natives by an immigrating dominant group. Minority groups are, Huntigford (1976) and Huberland (1979), both cited in Dubale (2010) and Akalework (2011), asserted that, indigenous people who later become 'subjugated' or 'submerged' by a powerful immigrant population. Focusing on the language and physical features of marginalized groups, the model asserts, minority groups are formed due to the subjugation by a powerful immigrant population (external forces) who occupies the native's original area (Pankhurst 2001; Dubale 2010). As a result of this in-migration, the natives are marginalized. Another version of this model claims that the minority groups might have been brought with the immigrant conquerors (Pankhurst 2001; Dubale 2010). Even though Pankhurst (2001) argued that the model is 'largely discredited', it can be helpful in explaining the role of migration and colonialism in marginalizing indigenous people.

B. The 'Holistic Specialization' Model

This model is ecology based evolutionary scheme. For the Holistic specialization model *"ecological niches are the sources of stratification, and hence minority groups, by providing multiple opportunities and different mechanisms of adaptation"* (Dubale 2010: 16). In line to the model, Levine (2000) and Dubale (2010) argued that marginalization is the outcome of environmental or ecological forces and peoples way of adaptation to these forces. The occupation and status of minority groups is not the result of power relations like subjugation, but the result of the environment and the coping or adaptive strategy employed by the people. As its name implies, the model asserts that the patterns, which involve a certain amount of skill and training which are appropriate to a particular habitat or ecological niche, evolved are shared more or less equally by all members of the society (Levine 2000; Dubale 2010).

C. The 'Internal Specialization' Model

This model focuses, as its name implies, on internal occupational differentiations and specialization within certain population. The proponents of Internal Specialization model, for instance Lewis (1970) and Ambrom (1989), assert that minority groups are the outcome of internal occupational differentiation and specialization. The process of marginalization is, the model asserts, an internal process taking place in the society as a result of specialization and occupational differentiation. That means, as the society develops occupational specialization and differentiation become mandatory to provide the goods and services needed by the society (Lewis 1970; Ambrom 1989). Accordingly, differentiation and specialization in one society resulted in class division. Levin (2000) and Akalework (2011) also indicated that the model attributes the emergence of ruling elites, minority groups and the hierarchical division of classes to the process of occupational specialization and differentiation taking place within the society. Simply put, according to the model, class hierarchy and occupational difference

is not an externally induced phenomena but the outcome of internal specialization and differentiation in the society.

D. Mixed Genesis Model

The mixed genesis model ignores any single and conclusive model or cause and recommends considering various alternative conceptual frameworks and synthesizing them. It argues that since minority groups are varied in their culture, origin, history, and the social context under which they live, they require multiple analytical models (Vecchiato 1993; Pankhurst 1995). According to the mixed genesis model, every minority group has got its own unique history, social circumstances and, therefore, should be understood in relation to its historical and cultural context (Pankhurst 2001). Not only the history and origin of the minority, but also the arrangement and structure of the envioning society has implication on the nature of marginalization of the group. Not one but many and diverse factors might have caused the emergence and marginalization of minority groups.

According to the Mixed genesis model migration, political changes, social movements, war and military defeat, ecology, occupational specialization, religion and belief systems, famine and other historical forces are some of the possible causes of marginalization and the emergence of minority groups (Damtew 2003). Even though minority groups share common features and are mostly despised and stigmatized by the dominant group, Pankhurst argued, there is a prevailing difference in the historical process that led to the formation of stigmatized groups and in the form and degree of their marginalization (Pankhurst 2001). Scholars like Pankhurst (2001), Vecchiato (1993), Damtew (2003) and Akalework (2011) applied the Mixed genesis model and recommended that its relative approach is better suited to study the diverse minority groups in Ethiopia.

In light of the aforementioned four models about the genesis of minority groups, situating the *Budas* of central Tigray is very important. The mixed genesis model would be more appropriate and helpful in understanding the *Buda* of central Tigray because the model is, as its name indicates, open and flexible enough to be applied to diverse causes of diverse minority groups found round the world. The lesson learnt from the inquiry about the genesis of minority groups was that every group has got its own unique history, culture, origin, and social environment and therefore, needs to be understood in relation to its historical and cultural context (Pankhurst 2001; Dubale 2010; Akalework 2011). Any attempt to come up with one, distinctive, all inclusive, and general model to explain all the diversified groups in a diversified Ethiopia would be a futile exercise.

Therefore, it appears that the relativist approach of mixed genesis model would be more helpful in the Ethiopian context. Even though craftsmen, Pankhurst argued, are despised, stigmatized, and ostracized by the dominant majority, there is a prevailing difference in the historical process that led to the formation of stigmatized groups and in the form and degree of their marginalization (Pankhurst 2001).

2.5 An Overview of Traditional Medicine in Ethiopia

Traditional medicine (also known as indigenous or folk medicine) refers to ways of protecting and restoring health that existed before the arrival of modern medicine (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009; WHO 2002). As the term implies, traditional medicine belongs to the traditions of each country and have been handed down from generation to generation. Historically, until the arrival of modern medicine, traditional medicines have had to meet the needs of the people for many centuries. The World health organization (WHO) defines traditional medicine as *"the health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and mineral-based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual*

techniques and exercises, applied singularly or in combination to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses or maintain well-being” (WHO 2002).

Traditional medicine covers a wide variety of therapies and practices which vary from country to country and region to region. Not only the practices and therapies but also the popularity of traditional medicine significantly varies from country to country. In some Asian and African countries, as opposed to western nations which dominantly rely on modern medicine, up to 80% of the population relies on traditional medicine (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009; WHO 2002). Recently, even in developed countries traditional medicine is becoming very popular. Herbal treatments, which are the most popular form of traditional medicine, are highly lucrative in the international marketplace. In 2004, annual revenues from herbal medicine reached 5 billion USD in Western Europe, 14 billion USD in China and 160 million USD in Brazil (WHO 2001; Yared 2011)

However, traditional medicines and practices are risky and can cause harmful and adverse effects. The WHO notes that inappropriate use of traditional medicines or practices can have negative or dangerous effects and that further research is needed to ascertain the efficiency and safety of several of the practices and medicinal plants used in traditional medicine (WHO 2001). One of the major problems associated with traditional medicine is its international diversity. Traditional medicine practices have been adopted in different cultures and regions without the parallel advance of international standards and methods for evaluation. Lack of guiding policy is also another major problem. Many countries have no national policies for traditional medicine (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009). Furthermore, scientific evidence from tests done to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of traditional medicine products and practices is limited. Lastly, the expanding herbal product market could drive over-harvesting of plants and threaten biodiversity (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009). Yet, despite of the risks and dangers

attached to traditional medicine, the majority populations of least developed countries like Ethiopia heavily rely on it. WHO recommends supporting and integrating traditional medicine into national health systems; ensuring the use of safe, effective and quality products and practices; acknowledging traditional medicine as part of primary health care; and ensuring patient safety by upgrading the skills and knowledge of traditional medicine providers as important directions to overcome the limitations inherent in traditional medicine (WHO 2001).

Traditional medicine has a very long history in Ethiopia (Yared 2011). Even though it is impossible to trace its birth, the fact that modern medicine entered in to Ethiopia just in the mid of 18th century (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009) indicates, Ethiopians had to solely rely on traditional medicine for centuries. In Ethiopia, spiritual healing, traditional midwifery, inoculation, massage, hydrotherapy and thermal water, bleeding and cupping, counter-irritation, surgery, dentistry, and bone-setting are among practices of traditional medicine that have been widely practiced ((Alevtina & Zerihun 2009; Yared 2011). Various types of medicines from plants, animals and mineral substances are utilized while practicing the traditional healing system (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009).

Even though modern medicine is becoming more widespread in Ethiopia, still most Ethiopians tend to rely more on traditional medicine (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009). Researches show that in Ethiopia more than 80% of the population depends on traditional medicine for its health needs (Fekadu 2007; Yared 2011). Cultural and religious acceptability of traditional healers and local pharmacopoeias, lack of access to modern health facilities and the low cost of traditional medicine has contributed for the widespread use of traditional medicine (Fekadu 2007; Yared 2011). Assefa (1992) added the 'inadequacy and incompetence' of modern medicine to deal with all type of illnesses as an additional contributing factor to the

popularity of traditional medicine. Assefa (1992) indicated that most psycho-social illnesses in Ethiopia couldn't be treated by modern medicine because they are thought to be caused by supernatural forces, and, as a result, it is believed that they should be dealt by traditional healers and supernatural forces.

Ethiopian traditional medicine is vastly complex and diverse and varies greatly among different ethnic groups. Yet, they share many things in common. For example, most Ethiopians rely on an explanation of disease that draws on both the "mystical" and "natural" causes of an illness (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009). Accordingly, there are two major types of traditional medicine practices in Ethiopia, namely secular or empirical healing and magico-religious healing practices (Pankhurst 1965; Alemayehu 1984; WHO 2001; Belachew 2008; Alevtina & Zerihun 2009). However, in practice, most Ethiopians employ a mix of these two healing methods (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009).

An understanding of the alleged or real source of knowledge of the traditional practitioners is an important issue in the understanding of beliefs and practices of traditional medicine. Generally speaking, there are two major ways of recruiting traditional healers in Ethiopia (Kebede et al 2006; Yared 2011). These are divine selection and apprenticeship. Yet, these two methods are not mutually exclusive. Because *"healers who claimed to have been 'elected' have also passed in the long way of apprenticeship and similarly healers who could be categorized as secular healers substantiate their healing practice by claiming of having supernatural support"* (Yared 2011: 7). Accordingly, since the average Ethiopian's perception of health involves peaceful relations with supernatural world as prerequisite for well-health, many people seek traditional, especially spiritual healers.

Chapter Three

Research Methods

The choice of a methodological approach, qualitative or quantitative, is closely linked to the nature of the research problem. In selecting methodological approach the issue of epistemology comes first. Regarding their epistemological position, on the one hand, positivists claim that we can conduct objective and unbiased observation free from our interpretations and interests. At the other extreme is the constructionists' stand that it is impossible to conduct objective investigation as the image of the external social world is the result of our constructions (Miller and Brewer 2003; Kalof, Dan & Dietz 2008). Yet, it is widely agreed that qualitative approach, which is commonly used by constructionists, is advantageous when the research problem is related to subjective thoughts, feelings, activities, experiences, traditions and beliefs. It enables to get valid information about subjective perceptions, thoughts and experiences of people. This study also focuses on the subjective thoughts and beliefs of people about *Buda*. It aims to uncover how the people make sense of the belief about *Buda* and its implication on their life. Therefore, this research employs a qualitative approach. Below is a detailed discussion of the research method beginning from description of the study area through data collection methods to ethical considerations.

3.1 Description of the Study Area

This study was conducted in Central Zone of the regional state of Tigray. Central Zone is one of the five administrative zones of the national regional state of Tigray. It is the largest of all the zones with 12 *Weredas* (districts). Historically important towns of Ethiopia like Yiha, Axum, Adwa, and monasteries like Debredamo, Abune Gerima, and Tsion Mariam are found in the zone. The Central Zone, referred to as *Maákelay Zoba* in Tigrigna, is bordered on the east by *Misraqawi* (Eastern), on the south by *Debubawi* (Southern), on the west by *Mirabawi* (Western) *zoba* (zone) and in the north by Eritrea. The capital of the zone is the historic town of Axum and is found 1024 km to the north of Addis Ababa.

According to the Central Statistical Agency estimate, Central Zone has an estimated total population of 1,245,824 of which 613,797 are males and 632,027 are females. Nearly 14.2% of its population is urban dweller. With an estimated area of 10,353.50 square kilometers, Central Zone has an estimated population density of 123.96 people per square kilometer. Looking at its ethnic composition, the Zone is predominantly inhabited by ethnic Tigrayans accounting for 99.6% of the population. Out of the remaining 0.4%, 0.11% are Agaw, 0.096% are Amhara, and all other ethnic groups comprise only 0.12%. Tigrinya is spoken as a first language by 99.67% of the inhabitants. The Zone is predominantly inhabited by Orthodox Christians that 1,218,635 (98.41%) of the population is Orthodox Christian, and 25,768 (1.55%) are Muslims. Protestants and Catholics account for less than 0.01% of the total population (CSA 2007).

Concerning education, 47% (54.7% male, 39.5% female) of the population are considered literate. 74% of all eligible children are enrolled in primary school, and 28% in secondary schools (CSA 2007). According to the CSA (2005) report, about 25% of the urban and 5.6% of all houses had access to safe drinking water and about 2.5% of the urban and 6% of the total had toilet facilities. The health coverage of the Zone is low. Nearly 78% of the Zone is exposed to malaria. About 13% of the inhabitants of Central Zone have access to electricity. This Zone has a road density of 29.0 kilometers per 1000 square kilometers. Like most part of Tigray Central Zone is characterized by shortage of arable land and erratic rainfall. The average rural household has 0.8 hectare of land which is significantly lower than the national average of 1.01 hectare per household (CSA 2005).

The climate of the study area ranges from *kola* (lowland) to *Dega* (highland) but 75% of the Zone is *Woinadega* (midland 1500-2500msl). Central Zone has four seasons named 'Qewie' - Spring (from September to November), 'Hagay' - Winter (from December to February),

'*Tsidiya*' - Autumn (from March to May), and '*Kiremti*' - Summer (from June to August). The landscape of the Zone is characterized by rugged topography, mountains and deep gorges. Even though the zone is characterized by scarcity of arable land and shortage of rainfall and hence one of the drought prone areas in Tigray, only 17% of the population is engaged in non-farm activities. About 83% of the inhabitants are farmers. *Taff*, wheat, corn, sorghum, barely, Niger seed, flaxseed and sesame are the main crops. Other agricultural produces include pulses, bean, lentils, onion, and potato. Handicraft (gold smith, weaving, painting and wood sculptures) and trading are another areas of activity observed in the towns of the study area (CSA 2007).

Administrative map of Tigray



3.2 Study Design

In order to meet the objectives outlined in chapter one, the study employed a qualitative approach. The study employed qualitative research methods because it deals with thoughts, beliefs, feelings, activities, and experiences which are difficult to quantify and measure. A cross sectional qualitative study was conducted to collect the necessary information on the research problem. Even though the study is basically cross sectional, a maximum effort was done to substantiate it with retrospective narrations by the informants and discussants about how the issue under discussion looked like in the past and how it changed through time to assume its current shape.

Thus, qualitative research methods were used to collect the necessary information about the people's (both *Budas* and *Chewas*) perception of *Buda*, the belief about alleged power of *Buda*, the impact of the belief on the intergroup and interpersonal relationships between the *Budas* and the *Chewas*, the social exclusion and marginalization the *Budas* are facing as a result of the belief, and the traditional healing practices applied by the community to combat the *Buda*'s attack. Maximum effort was made to collect information about how the people have made sense of their belief and practices about the *Buda*, from their perspectives.

3.3 Selection of Study Sites

The study is conducted in Central Zone of Tigray. Central zone was selected mainly due to the presumed relatively high concentration of alleged *Budas* as compared to other parts of Tigray. Finneran (2003) reported that the myths of Tigray people indicate Axum, the capital of the Zone, and its surrounding as the home place of the alleged *Budas*. The Zone is divided in to twelve administrative *Weredas*. From the twelve *Weredas* (districts) three (namely Adwa, Abiy Adi, and Axum) are towns commonly called, 'town [*Ketema*] *Weredas*' and the remaining nine are 'rural [*Geter*] *Weredas*' with small towns within them.

Considering the scope of the research and the available time and resource, the information was collected from three purposively selected *Weredas*: one town *Wereda* (Axum) and two rural *Weredas*, namely Ahferom and Werieleke. Both town *Weredas* and rural *Weredas* were included purposively in order to see if there is any variation across place of residence so far as the research problem is concerned. From the town *Weredas* found in the Zone, Axum was selected for it is thought to have a relatively higher concentration of *Budas* and is said to be the home town of the *Budas*. Similarly, the two rural *Weredas* (Ahferom and Werieleke) were selected for three reasons. First, it was found to be useful to include rural *Weredas* so as to make comparison with Axum town. And two *Weredas* were selected, not to claim representativeness, but for it was believed to be better to relay, in order to extract as diverse and reliable information as possible, on two than just one *Wereda*. Secondly, they were assumed to be representative of the zone in terms of religious composition of their population. Furthermore, the fact that the researcher was born and grown up and worked in the area is another reason for selecting them. The researcher was born and brought up in Ahferom *Wereda*, and worked for three years in Werieleke *Wereda*. Hence, his familiarity with the area was an added advantage and very helpful in making easy entry, smooth and fruitful communication with the people and thereby getting sufficient and valid information about the issue under investigation.

Finally, from the eighty two *Kebeles* found in these three *Weredas*, nine *Kebeles*, three *Kebeles* from each *Wereda* were selected. These *Kebeles* were selected randomly because there was no presumed difference among the *Kebeles* of the selected *Weredas* so far as the research problem is concerned.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

In order to generate detailed and valid information and to compensate the pitfalls inherent in each research method the study employed a combination of different data collection methods such as in-depth interview, focus group discussion, field observation and case study methods. However, the largest share of the information was gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGD).

3.4.1 In-Depth Interview: In-depth interview is an appropriate research method for collecting detailed and valid information on subjective experiences, perceptions, and thoughts of people (Miller and Brewer 2003). In in-depth interviews the interviewer can get very useful information by letting the interviewee to narrate his/her experiences and thoughts. In this study in-depth interviews with key informants and general informants were held to uncover subjects' experiences and thoughts related to the *Buda* belief, marginalization of the *Budas*, and the traditional healing methods used to combat *Buda* attack.

Before going in to data collection activities the researcher tried to identify the segment of population who are thought to be knowledgeable in the issue under discussion. Accordingly, elderly people, religious leaders, craft workers, and traditional healers were selected as key informants. The key informants were purposively selected by their seniority [wealth of knowledge and experience related to the belief]. In addition to the key informants, in-depth interview was also conducted with general informants (ordinary people) from both *Budas* and *Chewas*. These general informants were important source of information to see the current status of the belief and the changes it has undergone through time.

After the appropriate informants were selected the researcher interviewed them at their homes. On average one interview session took about two hours. The interviews were conducted from January to March 2012. All the interviews conducted with the general

informants and key informants were guided by unstructured questions and checklist. The information was collected by raising open-ended questions in thought provoking way and by making exhaustive discussion in the interviewing process. In the interviews a lot of effort has been exerted to obtain maximum data about the origin and prevalence of the belief, the overall status of the *Budas*, the people's perception of *Buda*, the social relationship between the *Budas* and *Chewas*, the form and extent of exclusion the *Budas* face, the coping mechanisms used by the *Budas* in order to overcome the exclusion, and the traditional healing practices employed to prevent and cure *Buda* attack. The interviews were exhaustive and very open because it was conducted in a permissive setting and the researcher had established a good rapport with the interviewees.

Selection and size of the in-depth interviewees: The size of the in-depth interview informants was not predetermined. Grounded in the principles of theoretical sampling, the researcher engaged in a continued process of interview with the research subjects until the data collected became sufficient to respond to the research objectives. As a result, a total of sixteen key informants of whom five were females were purposively selected and interviewed. Eleven of the sixteen key informants were *Chewas* and the remaining five were alleged *Budas*.

In addition to the sixteen key informants that participated in the in-depth interviews, twenty in-depth interviewees (general informants) were selected from various segments of the population in order to supplement the information obtained from key informants. Of these twenty in-depth interview informants, five were alleged *Budas* and the remaining fifteen were *Chewas*. From the twenty in-depth interview informants, eight were females and the remaining twelve were males. In order to obtain as maximum and as diverse data as possible, the interviewees were selected from diverse social categories on the bases of such social characteristics as gender, educational status, religion, age, and place of residence. Thus, a

total of thirty six interviewees, sixteen key informants (five females and eleven males) and twenty general informants (eight females and twelve males), were interviewed. Of these thirty six interviewees twenty six were *Chewas* and the remaining ten were from the *Budas*. (A detailed profile of the research participants is found in the appendix part).

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD): In this study focus group discussions were employed to complement the information obtained through in-depth interview. Focus group discussions are very useful in order to produce shared thoughts and experiences. Accordingly, FGDs were mainly used to collect group or community level information on the nature of the *Buda* belief, peoples' perception of *Buda* people, and the marginalization of the *Budas*. A series of group discussions with individuals selected from different social groups was held to explore and grasp commonly held thoughts and experiences about the belief and its impacts. Accordingly, a total of forty-eight discussants participated in the six focus group discussion, each group consisting eight participants. These six FGDs [1. Male Farmers 2. rural housewives 3. Urban residents of both sex 4. High school students of both sex 5. Muslims of both sex 6. Christians of both sexes] were held in six *Kebeles*, two *Kebeles* from each *Wereda*. The discussants constituted farmers, house wives, civil servants, traders and students of both sexes. In order to see the effect of religion, separate FGD sessions were held with Christians and with Muslims. However, all the FGDs were conducted with *Chewas* for the *Budas* weren't willing to gather and discuss on the issue. Provided the belief about *Buda* and the negative attitude of the society towards them, they might have considered gathering and discussing about *Buda* by itself tantamount to admitting or recognizing themselves as *Budas*, which is unacceptable and disgraceful to them. Fortunately, they were willing to be interviewed individually and ample information was collected through the in-depth interviews conducted with ten *Budas*.

To avoid the influence of some group members on other participants, members of focus groups were made relatively homogenous on the basis of key characteristics such as age, religion, level of education, socio-economic status, and participants' degree of intimacy to one another. This enabled participants to freely forward their ideas and feelings. In all discussions, effort was made to let ideas come out of group interactions rather than the influence of some members or the moderator. All group discussions were moderated by the researcher using a checklist and were conducted in a suitable setting [in place and time they selected and was accompanied by refreshments served by the researcher] in order to uncover opinions and share ideas and perceptions with the participants.

3.4.3 Case Study: Different cases were also selected and analyzed in order to generate detailed information on individual experiences. This was done with the aim of obtaining detailed data and substantiating the information obtained by other data collection methods. Accordingly, three cases, one about marriage ties between *Budas* and *Chewas* and two about traditional healing practices, have been presented and discussed.

3.4.4 Field Observation: In addition to the aforementioned sources, considerable proportion of supplementary information was obtained from personal observation. The researcher made observations mainly on craft work sites, churches, and residences where traditional healers rendered services. The daily life of the people, the interaction among them were carefully observed, assessed, and recorded. The fact that the researcher is familiar (native) to the area was an added advantage in making useful observation.

3.4.5 Secondary Sources: In addition to the primary data collected by the researcher from the research subjects using qualitative research methods, information obtained from different sources like books, journal articles, online publications, brochures, and magazines were used to complement the first hand information collected by the researcher.

Thus, the lion's share of the information used in this research was generated by the researcher using in-depth interview and focus group discussion and it was supplemented by personal observation, analysis of cases and data obtained from secondary sources. To compensate the weakness inherent in each data collection method, triangulation of data collection methods was applied systematically.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

Since most of the data collected for the purpose of this study is qualitative information generated using qualitative data collection methods, the data was analyzed manually by carefully recording, transcribing, organizing, and summarizing the data in to written form. Since the discussions and interviews were made in the local language, Tigrigna, the information collected was directly translated to English by the researcher. In order not to lose ideas and keep their originality, coherence and flow in-depth interviews were tape-recorded and field notes were taken on daily basis. All kinds of information were analyzed qualitatively, using thematic and comparative approaches, to produce qualitative information.

Both thematic and comparative methods of qualitative data analysis have been employed to analyze the qualitative data obtained using in-depth, focus group discussions, case histories and observation so that it will not lose its originality and logical flow. Thematic analysis was used in such a way that, after extensive readings of the related materials, major categories/themes on which the study will revolve was sketched. The themes were further elaborated on the course of data collection. After the data was collected the themes were revised, and developed. The themes matched with the objectives of the study and with the overall skeleton of the belief: its roots, history, content, coverage, strength, implication and finally the recent changes and future prospects. Then the data gathered from different sources using different techniques was analyzed based on the themes developed. In addition, the

comparative analysis was dealt by comparing and contrasting the information obtained from the informants of the study with the literature which were reviewed for the purpose of the study. Moreover the information given by the informants was compared and cross-checked with each other. The data analysis was accomplished by way of comparisons, for instance alleged *Budas* with the *Chewas*, the key informants with the General informants, the focus group discussants with the interviewees, the elderly informants with the younger ones, the Muslims with the Christians etc. The information obtained from in-depth interviews had to be compared and synchronized with the information collected using FGDs, case histories, and personal observation. Most of the analysis of the data was done simultaneously with data collection. This enabled the researcher to probe into other unrevealed ideas and raise further questions for detailed discussion. The data was further analyzed at the end of every interview and group discussion. The interpretation of the meaning of the information collected was performed with utmost care and attention so that it will not lose its originality and clarity.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Securing informed consent of research participants is among the binding ethical principles guiding the conduct of any research undertaking. To achieve this, the researcher followed the following steps. Firstly, in order to secure permission for undertaking the research, the researcher got letters of cooperation written from Addis Ababa University and the national regional state of Tigray to different concerned bodies and he briefed each regarding the purpose and objectives of the study. Then, a letter of cooperation from administration of the study area, *maekelay* [central] *zoba* [zone], was obtained. Since the researcher has worked for a couple of years in the study area, specifically *Werieleke Wereda*, approaching and obtaining the necessary facilities and permission letter from the zone and *Wereda* administrations was not difficult. Yet, in order to make acquaintances with the general public

and build trust the researcher made frequent site visits including visits to churches, meetings and other gatherings.

After making frequent field visits, the researcher informed research participants about the purpose of the study and showed the letters of cooperation written by the *Zoba Mimihidar* (zone administration). While introducing himself to the research participants, the researcher made to them clear that the study has no any other purpose but for academic end. To avoid the participants presumed fear of potential harm or legal action he assured them that he had no any contact with the government and the information they give will not be handed over to any third party. They were told that the information collected will be used solely for the research and their identity and the information they give will be kept confidential. This made participants drop their guards, feel secure, and willingly participate in the study.

Thus, it has to be noted that all the names used in the analysis and discussion are not the real names of informants. Since the right to privacy of informants needs to be protected, the names are pseudo names given by the researcher. Moreover, some of the interviews, especially the interviews conducted with the alleged *Budas* were not recorded for they were not willing to be recorded.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on the *Buda* belief, the marginalization of *Budas* and the traditional healing methods among people of central Tigray. Due to various reasons this study has a number of limitations. It is limited in its scope and coverage that it is confined to central zone of Tigray. Even though it would have been better had it covered the whole of Tigray, due to time and budget constraints it was confined to only one, but the largest, of the five administrative zones of the regional state. In addition, the study is limited to majority-minority relationship between the *Chewa* (majority) and *Buda* (minority) groups and hence it

doesn't give enough emphasis to minority-minority relationships; the relationship of the *Budas* with other minority social groups, like *Barya* (people of ex-slave ancestry) because it was found too broad to handle. Thus, other minority groups found in the zone were not part of the study. Accordingly, all the information was collected from the *Chewas* and the *Budas*.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter, where empirical information obtained from the research subjects in the study area are presented, analyzed and discussed, is divided, for the purpose of clarity and logical flow, into four broad sections. The first section deals with the social stratification of Tigray society in general and people of Central Tigray in particular. The huge prestige gap between the *Chewa* [pure boned] majority and the *Buda* minority, and the despised position of the *Budas* has been discussed in this section.

The second section discusses the main aspects of the *Buda* belief. It describes the roots of the belief, the controversies surrounding the alleged extraordinary power of the *Buda*, peoples' perception of *Buda*, the mechanisms of identifying the *Buda* person and illnesses caused by *Buda*, and finally the targets, rationales and *modes operandi* of *Buda* attack.

Section three presents the discrimination and marginalization of *Buda* people by the mainstream society. It discusses the coping and revenge measures taken by the majority (the non *Buda*) in response to the alleged evil deeds of the *Budas*, and its impact on the interpersonal relationships between *Budas* and *Chewas* in general and the social life of the *Budas* in particular. The extent and forms (dimensions) of discrimination and marginalization of the *Budas* in social, economic, political, and spiritual spheres of life have been analyzed. Furthermore, the recent decline in the prevalence and strength of the belief and the consequent trends in the integration of *Budas* to the mainstream society have been discussed in detail. In addition, a detailed analysis of the indigenous, mostly faith-based, preventive, diagnosis and curative techniques developed by the society in order to combat *Buda* attack have been presented. Lastly, a comparative analysis of the healing methods of Muslims and Christians has been made and the negative implications of the belief on the use of modern medicine have been discussed.

Note that the way the researcher presented/narrated the findings and the discussions about the belief in *Buda* may resemble/appear as if the existence of the '*Buda*' is confirmed or a proven fact, or as if the researcher believed the '*Buda* power, spirit, *Buda* people or the like', as perceived by the '*Chewa*' informants, exists. It is not. Neither is it confirmed/proven fact nor the researcher believed it exists. It is simply the reflection of the ethnographic style of writing the researcher employed. The researcher preferred, for the purpose of clarity, flow, originality and to uncover the insider's subjective perceptions, to approach and present/narrate the issue from the informants' point of view using their own words. Yet, researcher has made substantial interventions to, when deemed necessary, interpret what is being said.

4.1 An Overview of Social Stratification of Tigray Society

Universally, societies are stratified along various parameters. Income, religion, sex, belief, ethnicity are some of the variables along which societies are stratified (Damtew 2003). Tigray society, like any society, is a stratified society. It is a firmly stratified society with the *Chewas* [pure boned] occupying the highest position and non *Chewas* like *Barya* [people of ex-slave ancestry], *Budas* [evil eyed or craft workers], *Wata* [singer] *Hamyen* or *lalibela* [Agew] in the bottom of the hierarchy (Tigray Tourism 2011). The *Chewas* are the dominant social groups that comprise the majority of the population and enjoy an upper social status in the society. The non *Chewas* on the other hand, are subordinate group in the social strata and have been compelled to experience social exclusion and inequality. They are marginalized minority groups having the lowest social status in the society. Of all the non *Chewas*, the *Budas* are the most despised, hated, feared and marginalized people and occupy the lowest point in the social hierarchy (Tigray Tourism 2011).

The rationale behind the huge status gab between the *Chewas* and the *Budas* of Tigray is the belief about evil eye. The *Budas* are despised and marginalized because it is widely believed

that they are evil eyed people accountable for attacking or 'eating' people and causing illnesses and deaths (Tigray Tourism 2011). Thus, to properly grasp the stratification of Tigray society in general and the status of the *Budas* in particular, it is mandatory to review the belief about *Buda*. The perception of the people of central Tigray about the alleged *Buda* people is essential in order to understand the interpersonal and intergroup relations between the *Chewas* and *Budas*, the consequent marginalization and exclusion of the *Budas*, and the traditional healing practices aimed at combating the *Budas*.

4.2 The *Buda* Belief

4.2.1 The Roots of the Belief about *Buda*

Reminick (1974) indicated that the Amhara peasant's supernatural world includes both Christian and pagan elements. He indicated that although *Tewahdo* [Monophysite] Christianity is the 'legitimate' religion of the Amhara people, the pagan or 'non legitimate' system of belief also play an important role in the everyday routine of the people's social and cultural life. It is not surprising that the supernatural world of the people of Tigray is similar to its Amhara counterpart for the two ethnic groups share similar history, religion, culture, and geography (Reminick 1974; Amsalu 2000; Tigray Tourism 2011).

The supernatural world of Orthodox Christians of Tigray has essentially four separate realms (Reminick 1974; Amsalu 2000; Tigray Tourism 2011). First, there is the dominant Monophysite Christian religion involving the almighty God, the Devil, the virgin Marry, the Saints and Angels in Heaven. Second, there are the *Zar* and the *Adbar* spirits, "protectors" who extract tribute in return for physical and emotional security and who deal out punishments for failure to recognize them through the practice of the appropriate rituals. Third is the belief in the *Buda*, a class of people who exert a deadly power over the descendants of God's 'chosen children'. The fourth category of belief includes the *Zarti* locally called *Weyzerazir*, literally means beautiful ladies, and the *Devils* that prowl the

countryside creating danger to unsuspecting persons who cross their path (Amsalu 2000; Tigray Tourism 2011).

Therefore, although the society declares Orthodox *Tewahdo* as its 'official religion', traditional belief systems and customary practices are tolerated. Accordingly, ordinary people of Tigray attribute many diseases or illnesses to the various sorts of evil and protector spirits. From the tradition point of view, any illness is caused either by the *Buda* (evil eye) or some evil like *Aganiniti* (evil spirits), or guardian spirits such as *Zarti*, *Wuqabe* and *Adbar* (*Debri*). In common with the rest of Tigray, people of the study area believed that most deaths and illnesses were caused by super natural spirits. The informants and focus group discussants of this study disclosed that *Aganiniti*, Devil, and *Buda* are inherently evil spirits whose intention is to harm human beings. On the other hand, *Adbar*, *Zar*, and *Wuqabe* are protective or guardian spirits which are essentially good to human beings unless offended by them. Community, household and individual cults namely *Adbar*, *Wuqabe*, and *Zar* respectively are understood to be protectors for the services of which human beings must pay *Gibri* (tribute). Thus, unlike the evil powers like *Buda* and *Aganiniti*, protective spirit of the community (*Adbar*), protective spirit of the household (*Wuqabe*) and protective spirit of the individual (*Zar*) cause calamities, epidemics or illness only when they are mistreated and offended by the respective community, household or individual. The *Zar*, *Wuqabe*, and *Adbar* are guardian spirits which protect the people in return for appeasement and obedience (Reminick; 1974; Tigray Tourism 2011). Therefore, like the Amharas, people of Central Tigray believed that the *Adbar* protects the community, the *Wuqabe* protects the household and the *Zar* protects the individual person.

As opposed to the guardian spirits the research participants indicated, evil spirits are believed to cause illness and other calamities simply because they are inherently evil. Thus, while the guardian spirits are treated with obedience and appeasement, the evil spirits are dealt with

punishment. Accordingly, informants indicated that if the symptom of the disease is believed to indicate let *Likiefti* [unfortunate encounter with the *Aganints*] which is supposed to be caused by evil spirits especially *Aganinits*, then specialists are to drive out the evil spirits. Whereas illnesses supposedly induced by protective spirits, let *nay Geza Tata* [failure to appease and worship the cult of the household], it is to be dealt by healers who have the skill of persuasion and propitiating the spirit. If the signs indicate evil eye (*Buda*) attack, the exorcist commonly called *Buda Alkaki* is to apply his magical power in order to drive out the spirit. Christian People of Central Tigray, in similarity to the rest of Tigray society (Tigray Tourism 2011) and Amhara society (Reminick 1974), try their best to appease the guardian spirits and avoid and punish the evil spirits and the *Budas*.

Like their Christian counterparts, belief in the evil eye is an important part of the folk culture of Muslims of central Tigray. Muslim informants and discussants revealed that the belief in the *Buda* is constantly present in people's lives, alongside beliefs about spirits, *Jinns* (devils) and other demons, and it has big implications on their life. It serves as a crucial mechanism to explain social problems, envy, bad luck and misfortune in the uncertain conditions of life.

Before we get in to a discussion of the *Buda* belief it is necessary to differentiate *Buda* from *Ayini Seb*. Many people get difficulty to differentiate *Buda* from *Ayini Seb* [eye of people]. Nevertheless, the boundary seems clear. According to the interviewees, *Budas* are a separate group of people possessed by evil spirit and naturally determined to attack people by evil gaze or other magical means. *Ayini Seb*, on the other hand, is the power of the eye found in any person (*Chewa* or non *Chewa*). Even though the *Ayini Seb* can cause (due to envy or admiration) harm to people, cattle and grain, it is believed to be less dangerous compared to the damage caused by *Buda's* attack. Moreover, as opposed to the *Budas* who are supposed to attack people intentionally, the *Ayini Seb*, sometimes called *Nay Chewa Ayini*, is unintentional and cause harm without the envier's consciousness.

4.2.2 General Overview of the Belief about *Buda*

The *Budas*, who are also called *Tebib* are people which occupy the lowest ladder in the social hierarchy of the Tigray society for they are believed to be evil eyed people. The term *Buda* or *Tebib* is used to refer both to the evil eyed person (the bearer of the evil eye) and the spirit possessing the person. Majority of the people of Central Tigray believes in the power of *Buda*: the extraordinary evil power of the *Buda* to attack people (Tigray Tourism 2011: 137). The fact that the belief about evil eye is present in both Christianity and Islam, which more than 99.6% of the inhabitants of Central Tigray adhere to, reveals the pervasiveness of the belief.

Budas are, *Chewas* of Central Tigray believe, people with a special gift of glancing at others and attacking them. They are also believed to use magical powers and techniques to attack people. They are thought to be inherently envious and jealous people driven by evil spirit to attack others. *Chewa* key informants indicated that the *Budas* cause many problems to people, domestic animals, crops and other agricultural produces. Gebremeskel. 66, *Chewa* key informant indicated that *Budas* cause diseases like madness, anxiety, emotional instability, hearing impairment, visual impairment, fever, acute abdominal pain, sterility, disorder in menstruation, problems in pregnancy, child birth and breast milk, etc. Young, wealthy, beautiful and outstanding individuals are thought to be the most vulnerable people to *Buda* attack. Not only young, beautiful and rich but also shy people are highly vulnerable to *Buda* attack. In addition, it is widely believed that there are people who are naturally prone to *Buda* attack. Some people are believed to be naturally soft and easier to be pierced [*ziwiga'e*] by a *Buda*. The informants indicated that children and women are highly vulnerable. Individuals who have quarrel or special relation with *Buda* are also thought to be very susceptible to attack. Moreover a person is most vulnerable to attack or in danger of being 'eaten' by the *Buda* when the *Buda* sees fear or anxiety in his potential victim. Therefore,

maintaining one's composure when in the presence of a *Buda* and acting naturally or confidently as if the *Buda* did not matter at all is believed to be very helpful.

In Central Tigray considerable portion of illnesses, deaths and misfortunes are attributed to *Buda* attack. There are different symptoms that indicate the perceived illness is caused by *Buda* attack. For example, among the Amharas Reminick (1974) indicated that typical symptoms of being attacked or eaten by *Buda* are drowsiness, slight yawns, drooping eyelids, listlessness, fatigue, weariness, lack of concentration, restlessness, discomfort, anxiety, cramps, convulsions, headaches, hiccoughs, etc. In addition to the aforementioned symptoms, informants of this study enlisted instant crying, instant and sustained lounging, sudden collapse, acute abdominal pain, fretting, high temper, disagreement with family members as the most indicative symptoms of *Buda* attack.

Even though most people share common view about the main aspects of the belief notably the magical power of the *Budas* and their evil deeds, sometimes they hold different and conflicting ideas on some aspects of the belief. The source of the extraordinary mystical power of the *Buda* is one of these aspects on which the informants held conflicting view. According to some *Chewa* key informants, the ultimate source of the power of the *Buda* is the devil and other evil spirits. These informants indicated that devil gave a certain clan the extraordinary power which will be used for evil deeds against God's 'chosen children'. Thus, all descents of the clan are thought to have possessed *Buda* power. Even though the power is hereditary, the informants indicated, it is also necessary to be substantiated by training. As a result, while some aspect of the power (the evil spirit) is inherited the know-how about attacking people is learned from parents notably the father.

On the contrary, other key informants and in-depth interviewees attributed the source of the power of evil eye to king Solomon of Israel. They base their explanation on the Holy Bible

and other religious myths and argued that the evil eye power is inherited from king Solomon of Israel. Solomon is believed to be, as per the Holy Bible, the wisest man ever lived. He was gifted all the wisdom from God (Amsalu 2000; Damtew 2003; Tigray Tourism 2011). Some of the descendents of Solomon are also believed to have inherited the wisdom of their father and become *Tebib* (wise). However, the informants said, through time they used their wisdom for evil ends and ended up Buda.

Even though whether the ultimate source of the power of the *Buda* is the devil or king Solomon and by implication the Almighty God is very debatable, the people of Central Tigray believed that *Budas* are endowed with extraordinary evil power and are use this power for evil deeds. Most people are fearful of even mentioning the *Buda*, especially at night, because if they are overheard by a *Buda*, the *Buda* will become angry and may 'eat' them or their family members. As a result, *Budas* are highly feared, hated, despised, and marginalized. Gebremeskel, 66 said:

I am scared of them; I firmly believe that they eat people. They can attack, kill or disease me or my family members. Therefore, I always try to avoid contact with them. When contact is unavoidable as much as possible I try to appease them so that they will not attack me or my family. ... Since they eat people they are the most despised and feared ones. They are hated by everyone.

Region wise survey about peoples' perception of craft workers was conducted in 2010 by the Culture and Tourism Agency of the National Regional State of Tigray. The finding of the survey was consistent with Gebremeskel's view. Of the 220 respondents, which were selected from all zones in the regional state, 92% believed in the existence of the alleged mystical power of *Buda* to eat people (Tigray Tourism 2011). They believed that *Buda* people 'eat' and cause illness and death, and expressed their fear of being eaten. From the 57 respondents selected from Central Zone, all but two [one university lecturer and one district official] admitted that they are scared of being attacked by *Buda* and expressed their negative attitude

towards the *Budas*. All of them said that they don't want to establish any type of affinal (marriage) ties with *Buda* people.

Even though the belief about the power of *Buda* is almost universal in the study area, the number of alleged *Buda* people is very low. According to the information obtained from key informants, the proportion of *Budas* considerably varies from village to village. The researcher found that, with the help of key informants, the number of alleged *Buda* people in a village called *Feleg* is about 88 people which accounts for 13% of the total residents of the village. In another village called *Arena*, the number of alleged *Budas* is only 19, which is about 3% of the village. However, this data is not conclusive and guaranteed and hence further quantitative research is needed to get the precise proportion of the alleged *Budas*.

Yet, the alleged higher proportion of *Budas* in Axum town is an important point worth of discussion. Informants and discussants confirmed that they believe Axum has higher number of *Budas* than any place in the study area. Many people of Central Zone consider Axum as the home town of *Budas*. Accordingly, anyone who is known to be from Axum is highly suspected of being *Buda* and seen with contempt and fear. In this regard, a 58 years old female *Chewa* key informant, Askualu of *Feresmay* town, said "if I came to know that somebody is from Axum town or its vicinity, the first thing that comes to my mind is the *Buda* and then follows fear of being eaten. Then, I begin contemplating the possible ways of protecting myself and my family.

Another *Chewa* in-depth interviewee from Axum expressed:

Yes! We [residents of Axum] know very well that Axum is portrayed by other people as the town of Budas. As a result, being a person from Axum is a more than enough condition to raise suspicion. This is a very bad image for Axum and its residents. I feel discomfort because our image is being polluted mistakenly. The number of Budas in Axum is much lower than the assumption of outsiders. Yet, I can't deny I also agree that more Budas are found in Axum than other nearby towns. My point is that it is much lower than the rumors spread outside.

As indicated above, the information obtained from informants and focus group discussants confirms to the widespread allegation of the presence of higher proportion of alleged *Buda* people in Axum than other places in the study area. Moreover it is widely believed that Axum is the origin and center of *Budas* and most *Budas* in Tigray were dispersed from Axum. Some key informants indicated that The *Budas* found in Tigray were brought by the Axumite kings from places outside of the Axumite kingdom. They were brought to serve the kings and the kingdom in making palaces, obelisks, armaments, tools, handicrafts, ornaments and other craft works. Yet, a historical study needs to be carried out to investigate if the alleged *Budas* had, as the *Chewas* allege, a separate and a non Tigrayan origin. Moreover, the presumed linkage between Axum and *Buda* people need to be investigated. In fact, one can argue, the link between Axum and *Budas* is not a strange thing for handcraft workers congregate in cities and big temples and churches where there is high demand for their products, metal ceremonial and ritual objects, such as hand Crosses [*Meskel*], processional Crosses, *Tsenatsil* [*sistrum*], *Mequamiya* [*standing stick*] *Quachil* [spherical jingle], ceremonial cape or crown and other artifacts. Provided that Axum has been the most important city in the region, it may not be surprising that it was the center of craft workers and hence of center of *Budas* who might have moved later to other cities such as Asmara and Addis Ababa. Yet, a historical study is needed to dig out their pre-Axumite place/origin and also to discover if similar links exist with the kingdom centers that succeeded Axum. If such links are not found in centers like Lalibela, Gonder, Mekele, Ankober etc, the association between Axum and *Buda* need to be seen from different perspective. In previous studies, for instance Young (1970), Reminick (1974), Vecchiato (1993), Amsalu (2000) such links were not reported.

4.2.3 Perceived Methods of Attack Applied by the *Budas*

Concerning the *modes operandi* of attack, the *Chewa* key informants indicated, in agreement with the perception of *Rega (Chewa)* Amharas (Reminick 1974), that the *Budas* have three

techniques of attack. The simplest method of attack involves giving the evil eye gaze to the victim and then waiting for his death. The second, and perhaps the most common, technique of attack used by the *Buda* is twisting a mystical herb. This method of attack involves the evil eye person finding a victim, twisting the root of a certain unnamed herb, it is unnamed for no one claimed or admitted of knowing it, and forming a loop with this root as if one were tying a knot. The loop is then drawn smaller very slowly, and while this is being done, the victim dies.

Thirdly, *Buda* people can change into hyenas and roam the village at night. It is convenient for a *Buda* to attack (eat) victim in the form of a hyena in order to conceal his human identity (Reminick 1974; Tigray Tourism 20011). The *Buda* changes himself [I say 'himself' because Tigray society addresses the *Buda* in male sex] in to a hyena and then searches for a victim, and on finding one, attacks the unfortunate one. One mechanism of changing into hyena is using the herb (*Ets*) called *Etse Mesewer*. This *Ets* enables the *Buda* to change from one form to another and also to make himself invisible to others. It has to be noted that in central Tigray the *Budas* are highly associated with hyenas and insulted by the non *Budas* as *zibi'e* [hyena].

The *Chewas* perception is that *Buda* people assume the hyena form commonly in three situations. First, the *Buda* are supposed to mysteriously change themselves into hyena in order to exhume human bodies from graves either to eat them or to restore them to life and make them their house servants. Secondly, they are said to assume the hyena form in order to escape from danger in life threatening situations, like in case of attempt of revenge by the non *Budas*. Hyena is believed to be their favorite horse. Thirdly, the *Chewa* people believe, the *Budas* become hyena, especially in times of famine and drought in search of food. The informants indicated that even though the hyena is a naturally fearful animal, it is the most feared animal because of the symbolic attachment to the *Buda's* spirit.

4.2.4 The Presumed Rationale of the *Buda* to Attack People

The *Chewa* informants and discussants indicated that *Budas* attack people for various reasons. First, the *Budas* are believed to be naturally determined to eat people. They are thought to be inherently evil and want to see evil things happen to people. Secondly, they are assumed to be jealous and envious. Thirdly, their need of a house servant is presented as additional cause for attacking people. It is believed that after the attack is effectuated and the person is dead, the victim's corpse is taken from the grave by the *Buda* and transformed to a living person. I.e. after being exhumed, the corpse is taken to the house of the *Buda* where it is brought back to life in order to serve the *Buda*. But the slave is mute and unable to utter a sound. After seven solid years of service the victim is permanently released and leaving the *Buda* without a 'helper' and enforcing him to look for a substitute house servant.

It is widely believed that the *Budas* have two techniques or switches used to transform the house servant from one form to another. One switch is used to turn the servant in to a pot or a donkey when visitors come; and then when the outsiders leave; the other switch transforms the pot or donkey in to a slave/servant again. In this way outside interference is prevented. When the slave is treated cruelly it will shed silent tears, desperately trying to weep. After seven years, it is believed, the body begins to disintegrate, finally turning into ashes.

Related to this, the usual story in the study area is about dead persons being seen alive by someone. However, persons who are reported to have claimed encountering someone dead are not named. Rather, most people refer to 'someone' as having said that he had met a known *Buda* victim fetching firewood or at markets. This 'someone' is reported to have said that the victim disappeared or became invisible [*Tesewiru*] as the person tried to approach and talk to him. The story about "*Deqi Shekona Adgi*" which will be presented later is a good example to understand how the *Buda* makes the victim his servant.

4.2.5 Methods of identifying the alleged *Budas*

To the people of Central Tigray identifying what they call *Buda* is not easy though not impossible. They have different techniques of identifying *Buda* person. Of all techniques, tracing one's lineage is the common and preferred one. Since being a *Buda* is an ascribed status and hereditary one, a person born to *Buda* parent/s is by default a *Buda*. Therefore, tracing one's descent or lineage is the easiest and 'assured' way of identifying the *Buda*. In rural areas of central Tigray the *Budas* are easily identified for the villagers knew each other. The other technique of identifying the *Buda* is through identifying one's occupation. Since craftworks like goldsmith, black smith, pottery etc are thought to be the jobs of the *Budas*, people engaged in craft working are perceived as *Buda*. Though not warranted, the *Budas* can also be identified by their physical qualities. They may be thinner than usual. They may have an eye deformity or they may tend to look sidewise at people. In central Tigray, people with such physical features are thought to be *Buda* and hence are approached with utmost care and suspicion.

Interestingly enough, beauty is also used as an indicator to identify *Buda*. According to the informants and discussants, being very beautiful is thought to be another feature of *Buda* people. The people believed that individuals born from *Buda*, especially girls are sometimes exceptionally beautiful. All over the study area there is a popular proverb saying that '*Melkegnas Ya Aberegna*' [a beautiful is mysterious]. If a girl is so beautiful and matured but is not yet married, people (those who don't know her lineage) suspect that she must be *Buda*. That is why parents repeatedly warn or caution their sons not to rush to a beautiful lady unless they knew who she is and her background as well.

But the physical qualities discussed above are not, in themselves, sufficient to arouse suspicion. That is why identifying the *Buda* is sometimes difficult and misleading. Tracing lineage and occupation are the two most widely used mechanisms of identifying a *Buda*.

Since tracing one's lineage is easier in rural areas, for the people know each other, identifying *Buda* in a homogenous rural people is much easier than in the heterogeneous urban society. Besides, the different mechanisms of identifying the *Buda* are mutually reinforcing. If, for example, someone is engaged in craftwork, s/he is suspected of being *Buda* and this suspicion is finally verified by tracing his/her lineage.

4.2.6 Myths and Stories about *Buda* Attack

Apart from the responses given by the interviewees and discussants about their perception of *Budas*, rumors and myths are very helpful to grasp the overall picture of the belief about *Buda*. Even though it is difficult to verify them, there are a number of strange rumors and myths about *Buda* that are narrated and known by many people. These rumors show the depth of the belief. For example, in Axum, during night times, it is said that elderly people while going to church or other places communicate or talk with hyenas and ask them to give them a way to pass through. The elderly talk with the hyena because they knew them in daytimes as human beings. It is believed that the *Buda* people are changed into hyenas during night time. It is also said, though the writer couldn't meet one, some people have seen some people (*Budas*) riding a hyena during night times. Rumors like Mr. so and so was seen riding a hyena is common. To the extreme, it is rumored (and widely accepted) that Mr. x (a *Chewa*) and Mr. y (a *Buda*) were going together to somewhere and out of a sudden Mr. y changed himself into hyena and tried to eat Mr. x. But, praise to God, Mr. X ran and escaped. Such stories seem very funny, unrealistic, and unacceptable. However, they are widely shared and accepted by many people of central Tigray.

In this regard, a 43 years old *Chewa* key informant from Axum shared the following:

Last November, it was widely rumored in the town that one night a lady was going to her relatives in a nearby village. Her brother accompanied her half way and returned. After few minutes she called to her father cell phone and said 'father the hyenas are going to eat me. So do not attempt to search for me. They are about to eat me...' Then the call was interrupted. The next morning her family members went in search of her. The only remaining part of her body her family found was her skull and drops of blood. All her body below her neck was not found. The assumption of her relatives and those who heard the story is that Buda people waited her on her way and then stopped her and then changed themselves into hyena and ate her.

One of the most famous stories about *Buda* victim in central Tigray is the story of "*Deqi Shekona Adgi*". Gebremeskel, 66, narrated it as follows:

Once upon a time there was a beautiful girl. Then she was eaten by a Buda and 'died'. Three days after she was buried in a nearby church the Buda who attacked her exhumed the corpse and took it to his home. Then it was transformed or changed into a living person and was made a house servant. When visitors come to his home he, using his magical switch that looks like a stick, transforms her to a pot or a donkey. Mysteriously enough, she, even when she is in the form of a pot or donkey, always cried when she sees her relatives or when she is treated cruelly. One day the donkey went to her former house (where she lived before) and begun weeping. Then, her brothers understood that she is their sister and has become a servant for the Buda in their neighborhood. Then they took a gun and went to the Buda's house and tortured the accused one. They warned him at gun point to immediately release and cure their sister otherwise they should kill him. Then, upon fear of being killed, he agreed to their request and the donkey was gradually, beginning from her head, changing to a girl, exactly their sister. The donkey was assuming the shape of their sister. When half of the change was done her body above her chest was girl's and below was a donkey's. Her brothers were so eager to kill the Buda out of revenge that they killed him when he was about to finish. The only unchanged part of her body was her shekona (hoof). The girl became just the previous girl but with donkey's ankle. She, as normal girl but with donkey's ankle, lived till 93 year old and bore a number of children. Her descendants are commonly called/referred to as 'Deqi Shekona Adgi' (the sons of the woman with donkey's ankle).

The story about *Deqi Shekona Adgi* and other similar rumors show the main and very strange aspects of the belief about *Buda*. It depicts the widely held thoughts about the magical power of the *Buda* to kill people, to transform the victim's corpse into a living servant, to change the servant from one state of being to another back and forth, the harsh treatment of the servant at

the hand of the attacker, and lastly the severe punishment or revenge taken by the victim's relatives on the alleged attacker.

4.2.7 The Perception of alleged *Budas* about the '*Buda*': the Insider's view

In the foregoing subtopics, the perceptions of the *Chewas* about *Budas* have been discussed. However, a perception of the *Chewas* about *Budas* is just one side of the reality. What the alleged *Budas* think about the *Buda* belief and the alleged *Buda* people is equally important aspect of the *Buda* complex. Even though a lot have been said and written about what the *Chewas* believed about the *Budas*, unfortunately little is known about what the *Budas* believe about themselves and their alleged power. It is always easy to get what is said to have happened than to actually dig out what has really occurred. Therefore, assessing the subjective and insider's view of the alleged *Buda* people themselves about the *Buda* is very crucial in understanding the nature of the belief.

Generally, most alleged *Budas* do not believe in the existence of the perceived magical power of *Buda*. They do not believe that they have extra ordinary power as they are accused by the *Chewas*. The majority of *Buda* interviewees categorically rejected all accusation of attacking people and causing illness and death. They believe that they are ordinary human being like their *Chewa* counter parts. Instead, they considered the belief as a traditional harmful practice that resulted from backwardness and miss interpretation of religious myths. Some other *Budas* believe, in agreement with Marxist theorists like Finneran's (2003), the belief has nothing to do with religion. They took it as a belief system intentionally fabricated, built and maintained by the *Chewas*' in order to control resource and to marginalize and subjugate *Budas*.

However, there are also few *Budas* who are convinced that they have extraordinary power in their eye. They believed/admitted that they have a super natural spirit that gave them extraordinary eye power so that they can make people feel ill or attacked when they stare at

them. Of those *Buda* people who believed/claimed to have extraordinary power, some believed that both the power and attack is unintentional and happens unconsciously. They believe that people may be attacked without the knowledge of the attacker.

Gebremeskel narrates the follows story:

Takele and me, being neighbors for longtime, are close to each other. I was preparing for the wedding of my first daughter. For some purpose, which I don't remember now, Takele and I went to my home together from church. My wife was serving us with breakfast. My daughter came to wash our hand. Then I warned Takele 'Hey Takele! Do not stare at my daughter. If you eat (attack) her I swear I will kill you'. Then I laughed. I was intentionally warning him but in a funny (humorous) way. He perfectly understood me and replied 'uhh... Gebremeskel! Come on! We [Buda people] do not eat human beings. People assume that we are always determined to eat human being. It is wrong. We do not eat our fellow human beings. How? Why should we? We are also humans just like you. It is our eye that attacks people. We do not voluntarily and intentionally attack people. But our eye is so powerful that people may feel ill without our knowledge and intention.

Ironically enough, there are also some allegedly *Buda* people who firmly believe or accuse that there are some *Buda* people who have not just 'a powerful eye' causing unintentional and unconsciously attack on others, but also have all the extraordinary magical powers the *Chewas* believed to be inherent in *Buda* person. They shared the perceptions of the *Chewas* and believed that some *Budas* have magical power (spirit) plus learned knowledge about herbs (*Ets*) that enable and force them to attack people, transform themselves and their victims from one state of being to another state of being back and forth. Aregawi's experience, one of the key informants from the *Budas*, is a good example in this case. Aregawi is a 56 years old tailor living in a small town called Nebelet. Aregawi's father is known to be a *Buda* by all the residents of the town. Hence all people born to Aregawi's father including Aregawi are by default *Buda* because being *Buda* it is hereditary ascribed one.

Aregawi was asked if he believed that the *Budas* have extraordinary power as they are accused by the community. He promptly said:

Definitely they have! [Note that he said 'they' not 'we']. Some are born with and possessed by magical evil spirit. They are also carefully trained about magic and traditional medicines made from Ets (herb) by their parents. As a result they use their power to attack other people. I firmly believe that some, not all, Budas are doing many evil deeds using their power. I hope you have been informed about my brothers. Even my brothers are doing very bad things on me using their Buda power. That is why I am suffering from frequent illness. I spent half of my age bedridden due to the attack of my brothers. They are so evil that they are cruel even to their brother.

According to the information obtained from Aregawi's neighbors, not only Aregawi but also most of his neighbors believed that his brothers who are hostile to him due to disagreements in the inheritance of their late father's property are attacking him. Most of them attributed Aregawi's frequent and sustained illness to his brothers. The neighbors of Aregawi believed that even though Aregawi is born to a *Buda* father and hence a *Buda*, yet he doesn't have the power to attack people. Instead, he is suffering from the attack of his fellow brothers. Tesfahuney, Aregawi's neighbor, expressed his views about Aregawi as follows: "*Aregawi is Buda but he doesn't attack or he does not have the ability (Kihiz Ayikilin). But his brothers did. They always attack him and he is spending his life in bed and is economically impoverished*". The difference between Aregawi and his brothers, takes us in to a very important point in the belief about *Buda*: the division between what I called 'real' and 'nominal' *Buda*. Aregawi's case shows *Budas* are varied in terms of their attacking power. The dominant perception of the people (both *Budas* and non *Budas*) is that from those hereditarily *Buda* people there are real *Buda* like Aregawi's brothers and nominal *Buda* like Aregawi which are just like the *Chewas* except being born to a *Buda* parent/s. Therefore, it can be said, *Budas* are of two types: nominal and real. Another lesson learned from Aregawi's case is that not only *Chewas* but also a nominal or less powerful *Buda* can be

attacked by real and more powerful *Buda*. The difference between the real and nominal *Buda* seems very difficult to justify. However, Gebremeskel indicated,

Apart from being born to a Buda parent/s you need to be trained about magic and shown by your parents or other Buda the specific Ets (herb) which is used to the attack. The knowledge is also transmitted from parents to offsprings. Therefore, your parents have to show you the herb (Ets) that is knot or twisted and tied. You also need to be possessed by the spirit. Otherwise you cannot attack. Eye power and a simple gaze may not be enough. In addition, you must be fully familiarized with the rituals, magic, the Ets and its modus operandi. The real Budas are those who have sufficiently learned all those stuffs. Those who have not acquired this training are just nominal Budas. The extent to which one has mastered this training shows the level of his power. Unfortunately, most of them have all that and are attacking us.

Another reason for the variation in the power of the *Buda* and the difference between real and nominal *Buda* is, informants indicated, the process of hybridization. The one who is born to a *Buda* father and *Buda* mother is thought to be more powerful *Buda* than a *Buda* person born to a *Buda* father and a *Chewa* mother, and yet much more powerful than the one born to a father born from a *Buda* father and *Chewa* mother, and a *Chewa* mother.

Despite of the assumed power difference from one *Buda* to another, most people fear and discriminate all alleged *Budas*. Since it is difficult, if not impossible, to know whether that particular *Buda* has the power to attack or not (whether s/he is nominal *Buda* or real *Buda*), any alleged *Buda* person is seen with contempt and is feared. If they trace someone's lineage and any of his or her ancestor/s is found to be *Buda*, no matter how distant it is and how decent person she/he is, she/he is thought to be *Buda* and hence feared, hated, and discriminated. The label, not the deed, matters most.

Yet, the researcher never met any alleged *Buda* interviewee admitting/claiming of having the alleged *Buda* power and having intentionally used that power to cause illness or death on people. Except Aregawi all of the informants from the alleged *Buda* group, categorically dismissed the accusations related to the magical switches, riding or transforming to hyenas, use of herbs, retrieving dead bodies, eating or killing people etc. They dismissed the accusations of having mystical switches or magic to transform themselves from man to hyena

or vice versa and victims from a dead being (corpse) in to a servant human being and then to pots and donkeys. Except Aregawi all the informants from the *Buda* group dismissed the allegations and the belief as irrational and backward. Even Aregawi, opposed to his neighbors, did not consider himself as *Buda* for he believed that it is the deed not the lineage that matters. Moreover he couldn't explain from where the *Budas* got the power and how (*modus operandi*) and why (rationale) they attack people. This indicates that there is a reasonable ground to suspect that even Aregawi may not believe in *Buda*. He might be pretending and using the belief as a cover ■ simply to accuse, whilst declaring himself innocent, and attack/revenge his brothers, who are in stiff conflict with him due to the disagreement in the inheritance of their late father's property.

The alleged *Budas* believed that due to backwardness of the community and due to the harmful and irrational belief about the *Buda* power they have suffered from different problems like beating, insulting, gossip, prejudice, discrimination, torture, and killing. They argued that, like Pritchard (cited in Baroja 1964), *Buda*'s attack is an imaginary psychic act. When Welday, a 67 years old key informant from the *Buda* group, was asked to express his view about the alleged power of the *Buda*, he seemed uncomfortable with the question and replied [a little bit aggressively]; "*I am a human being just like you [the interviewer/researcher]. Look at me from my hair to my nail. Did you find anything that is not human? anything different from yours? We are all God's creatures. Equal and only equal. I wonder how and why people get so foolish and irrational enough to accept such a nonsense myth*".

No *Buda* interviewee admitted of intentionally attacking people. What the researcher found was *Chewas* and Aregawi (nominal *Buda*) blaming or accusing other people of being *Buda* and attacking people. There appears a big gap between what is said to have happened and what really occurred. There is a big difference between what the *Chewas* believed about the *Budas* and what the *Budas* believed about themselves. Yet, the *Chewas*' view is by far the

dominant view for they are by far the dominant majority in the society. It is in such instances that social construction theory and its main argument or tenet that reality is a social construct (Ritzer 2011) makes a perfect sense. It is in such instances that one is convinced to accept that reality is subjective. It is in such circumstances that the essence of the famous quote of the prominent French post positivist by the name Michel Foucault 'if truth has history, history is not true' is perfectly correct. Power defines what the truth is. The *Chewas*, the powerful, has defined that *Buda* power is truth. Hence, even though it may not be true, in Central Tigray *Buda* power is a reality or a truth.

4.2.8 Introduction of Evil Eye Belief to Ethiopia

In the foregoing topics we have discussed the origin and the main aspects of the belief. It has been indicated that some informants asserted that both the evil eyed people and the belief about evil eye had their roots outside of Tigrayan and Ethiopian. One of the most controversial issues concerning the *Buda* people and the belief about *Buda* is where it originated and how it entered into Ethiopia. Various explanations have been given by the informants about where the *Buda* came from, when and how they entered into the study area. But the widely shared assumption of the people of central Tigray is that the *Budas* descended from king Solomon of Israel. Basing on the myths found in an ancient book called *Kibrenegest* [glory of the kings] and the Holy Bible and the Holy *Qura'an* some *Chewa* informants linked the origin of *Buda* to King Solomon and his Ethiopian descendants commonly called *Falashas*.

According to the myth, queen Sheba of Ethiopia and her female servant visited king Solomon of Israel. In one night, the King, using his world famous wisdom, deceived and made sexual intercourse with the queen and her chamber maid. Consequently, they both got pregnant from him. The queen bore a child later named and crowned as Minilik I. the servant bore Zagwe.

The point is that, following this myth, it is widely believed that the *Chewas* and the kings with their royal family descended from Minilik I and the *Budas* are thought to have descended from Zagwe. Even though both Minilik I and Zagwe were born to King Solomon, the descendants of Zagwe are seen as *Budas* whereas the descendants of Minilik are royal families or *Chewas* at the minimum. However the informants were unable to justify or to explain why descendants of Zagwe are labeled as *Budas* and the descendants of Minilik as *Chewas*. May be, just maybe, the difference is the fact that Minilik was born to a queen mother and Zagwe was born to a servant mother. Consistent to the myth, the dominant view in the study area is that the descendants of Zagwe, sometimes called *Falashas* or *Bête Israel*, or *Agew* are *Buda* people and all *Budas* in Ethiopia descended from them. In support of this, many researchers including Damtew (2003) concluded that all *Buda* people in Ethiopia descended (originated) from the *Falashas*. However there is no conclusive evidence that confirms the supposed linkage between Zagwe and the notion of *Buda* and sound justification to clarify why the descendants of Zagwe are considered *Budas* while descendants of Minilik I are believed to be *Chewas*.

Though the myth about King Solomon and the *Falashas* is the most widely held view about the origin of the *Budas*, there are also competing explanations. Other informants categorically dismissed the myth as 'untrue' and said the belief came to Ethiopia during the Crusade war. They accused external forces notably Turkey, Egypt and other Muslim nations for 'fabricating and preaching' the *Buda* complex to weaken the then Christian Ethiopia. They saw the *Buda* belief as the result of the sustained efforts of external forces to undermine Ethiopia's prospects of industrialization.

Kahsay, aged 66, a *Chewa* key informant, who seemed to be a determined Marxist and nationalist, asserted:

The belief about evil eye is a fabrication of the invading Turks in the red sea. The Turkish soldiers came to Ethiopia to support Ahmed Gragh [the Imam of the sultanate of Harar] in his fight to topple the Christian emperor and his kingdom and replace it with Islamist dynasty. The Christian highland kingdom of Ethiopia was supported by the Portuguese [Christian] government and the Imam and his sultanate was backed by the Turks [Muslims]. Both external powers were fighting in Ethiopia not only to support the contending powers of Ethiopia but also as part of their power rivalry to maintain their global hegemony in political, commercial and religious spheres. Understanding the contribution of craft working to the development of industry, and being jealous of Ethiopia's development the Muslims [Turks] in collaboration with the Egyptians began an orchestrated effort to demoralize and eliminate craftwork and craft workers. As a result they came up with the evil eye notion and preached, via their missionaries and bishops, the people 'craft workers are evil eyed people of inherently inferior beings than you [the agriculturalists and nobles]. They are those who are causing illness, death, and other calamities on your life and property'. They preached agriculture as the only honorable job. Crippled by the plot of Turks and Egyptians to weaken and demoralize craftwork and craft workers and thereby halt Ethiopia's prospects of industrialization, Christian agriculturalists accepted the preaching and began to hate, despise and marginalize craft workers. The high regard given by Ethiopians to foreigners in general and missionaries in particular have contributed to the rapid acceptance and expansion of the Buda belief.

However, only few people of the study area knew Kahsay's explanation and only fewer people accepted it. Yet, the explanation may be an important clue or input to make a historical research for history confirms a number of ill wills and invasions of the then Egypt and Turkey against Ethiopia. Another version of the story about the origin of the *Budas* is related to the need for huge labor force and craft skill on the part of Axumite kings to run their expanding kingdom. Some key informants indicated that The *Budas* found in Tigray are not ethnic Tigrians and they were brought, as captives of war or as daily laborers, by the Axumite kings from places outside of the Axumite kingdom. They were brought to serve the kings and the kingdom in making palaces, obelisks, armaments, tools, handicrafts, ornaments and other craft works.

To summarize, in central Tigray, the belief about *Buda* is old and pervasive. Irrespective of gender, age, and faith difference, most people of central Tigray strongly believed the existence alleged extraordinary power of *Budas* and their evil deeds. Thus, they lived with a constant fear of being 'eaten' by a *Buda*. Even 'nominal' *Budas* like Aregawi of *Nebelet* town believed that the magical power of *Buda* is 'real' and is given by the evil spirits. Even though the alleged *Budas* categorically dismissed the entire allegation and labeled the belief as 'irrational and backward', it is still a strong and widespread belief that the *Budas* are highly feared, hated, despised, discriminated and marginalized.

4.3 Marginalization and Discrimination of *Budas*

People of central Tigray, like the rest of Tigray, are hierarchically stratified along gender, income, ethnicity, occupation and other parameters. The belief about *Buda* is also one of those parameters based on which people of central Tigray are stratified. The people are categorized in to two: *Chewa* and non *Chewa*.

The *Chewa* are, like the *Rega* of Amhara (Reminick 1974) *Tsiruy Atsimi* [pure boned] people and unblemished by social stigma, ritual pollution, or bodily catastrophes such as leprosy. On the other hand, the non *Chewas* which include *Barya*, *Qomata*, *Hamyen*, *Wata*, and *Buda* are believed to have impure bone in their line of descent. The *Budas* are thought to have inherited, due to their impure bone, the lowest status known to the Tigray and Amhara society (Tigray Tourism 2011; Reminick 1974). In Tigray, a person inherits status through both his mother's and father's line. Thus, since being *Chewa* or *Buda* is a hereditarily ascribed status, it can't be avoided. Rather, it is one's destiny to be born into *Buda* or *Chewa*.

The rationale for the long distance in social prestige between the *Chewas* and the *Budas* is the dominant belief that hereditarily *Buda* are evil eyed people, thus dangerous to interact with. The *Budas* are believed to be by their very nature determined to eat others. Due to this belief the *Budas* are disadvantaged and marginalized by the mainstream society. They suffer from

segregation, political disempowerment, social exclusion, economic inequality, discrimination, torture, killing, stereotype and discouragement from their involvement in different societal events. Historically, one of the apparent discriminatory measures taken by the mainstream society against *Budas* was residential segregation.

4.3.1 Residential Segregation

The *Budas*, until mid 1970's, were highly segregated to the extent that they were forced to live in separate quarters or compounds (Vecchiato 1993; Damtew 2003). Unlike the *Chewas*, where every nuclear family had separate residence quarter, the *Budas*' were forced to adopt extended family structure and lived in a single compound. While every nuclear family of the *Chewas* had separate residence, the *Budas*' extended family had only one living quarter. Tideg 42, of Agazina village, a key informant from the *Buda* group, said

"We used to live in a single compound found at the extreme periphery of the village. I remember that in our compound there were six households [nuclear family]. My grand parents, all my cousins with their respective families, a total of 25 individuals, used to live in a single compound. Almost every other [Chewa] household has its own separate house. But we were forced to live in single compound for two reasons: first, to defend ourselves from potential attack from the Chewas, second, to escape from the avoidance and stereotype. In fact they [Chewas] don't want us and do not feel comfort to live in close proximity with us".

In addition, the fact that the *Budas* did not have any land to cultivate, for they were not allowed to own land, has contributed for such type of residential segregation. This is because, unlike the *Chewa* farmers, they need not reside adjacent to their farmland. Instead, they resided in a single compound and make living from iron making. Besides, the *Budas* had to live in groups in one compound to defend themselves from revenge attack by the *Chewas*. Moreover, the *Chewas* were not willing to share neighborhood with them or to live in their vicinity. Hence they discouraged and forced the *Budas* to live in segregated manner. Even in towns like Axum until today there are separate neighborhoods which are supposed to be dominated by *Budas* and hence *Chewa* people do not want to reside there. In-depth interview informants of both *Buda* and *Chewa* group from Axum town said that the oldest

neighborhoods of the town namely *Daeroilla*, *Maykeho*, *Adi Kilde*, *Geza Akuay*, and *Haweltti* (a place where the world famous Obelisks are found) are thought to be full of *Budas* and many people do not prefer, in comparison to other parts of the town, to build or rent house there. The informants said that these old neighborhoods are the city sections where cheap rent houses are available because many people, especially those who have children, do not prefer it.

With regard to ghetto like urban enclaves, may be *Kechene* of Addis Ababa is the largest craft workers' quarter (Damtew 2003). It is a common knowledge that, Damtew asserts, many people associate the place name *Kechene* with the notion of evil eye (Damtew 2003: 80). *Daeroilla*, *Hawelti*, *Adi kilte*, *Maykeho* of Axum seems similar with *Kechene* of Addis Ababa. Various studies (Damtew 2003; Dubale 2010; Akalework 2011) reveal that spatial segregation, urban or rural, forced or voluntary, collective or private quarters, reinforce stigmatization of and prejudice against the group.

However, nowadays, residential segregation mainly in rural areas of central Tigray seems to have significantly lowered. Only its legacy remains. Political, social, legal, and economic changes that took place since mid 1970's [the decline of the feudal system] have made apparent residential segregation of any minority group including *Buda* almost impossible. But in Axum town, informants agreed, there is a tacit measure taken by the *Chewas* to escape or avoid residing in the aforementioned neighborhoods.

4.3.2 Economic Alienation

Like the Wolaitta of southern Ethiopia (Akalework 2011), the saying that 'a pot-maker serves her food with broken one' is very popular in central Tigray. The proverb is meant to indicate that craft workers' specialized labor is primarily to serve or satisfy the need of others. Historically, *Buda* people as marginalized minorities had been economically disadvantaged since they were excluded from inheritable land use right (Reminick 1974; Vecchiato 1993;

Pankhurst 2001). They were not allowed to own land. They were assigned land only for residence purpose and on the condition that they should provide craft services to the 'host' society. The relationship was a patron-client type that the community provides them with security and means of subsistence in return for their craft services. The males were engaged in iron making and the females supported the household income by making pottery. Thus, *Budas* as a group were servants of the community among whom they were allowed to settle in. The exchange of craft services for the means of subsistence was said to have been accomplished in different ways. Tesfay, aged 71, a *Chewa* key informant, said

They [Budas] were not allowed to own land because the land belongs to the Deqiabats [founding fathers]. The established view of the time was that the 'Deqiabats' and their descendants [Chewas] are the natives and hence owned the whole land in the village. The Budas and Barayas are not members of our community but incomers that we hosted. As a result, the Baryas lived as servants and the Budas made their living from ironworking.

Gebremeskel, another *Chewa* key informant, expressed the historic economic alienation of the *Budas* as follows;

For centuries the land tenure system was 'Rist' system. In Rist system land is inherited from parents. The Rist system does not allow land to be possessed by outsiders like Budas. The land belongs to those who are native to the land. Therefore the Budas were not allowed to own land.

In this regard, Gebray, a 76 years old *Buda* informant shared his experience as:

I was born in this village, in this house. Even my father was born in this house. However, I was not able to get land until 1976. Till then, my father, my brothers, and I lived in this single compound and we made our living by craftwork. We made agricultural tools for the villagers and in return they gave us grain. Each household of the village is obliged to give us Enqea'a [around 5 kilo gram] Ekli [grain] every year. In return, we are responsible for every villager so far as iron working is concerned. Our main job is to make and sharpen agricultural tools like axe, sickle, plow etc.

As the informants indicated the *Budas* relied on income (grain) they get from ironworking. Iron making (most of them agricultural tools) was the main job of the men and pottery (used for domestic house) was the typical job of the *Buda* women. They were paid in kind.

Informants and discussants indicated that bartering was the common form of exchange between farmers and craft men. Grain was used as a means of payments for the craft services. Until today, grain remains the preferred form of payment. The *Budas* had to collect, mostly during harvest time, *Enqea Ekli* [5 kg grain] from each household in the village. However, most of the time, the farmers delivered the grain to the home of the iron worker. In case, when any farmer fails to give the grain the *Budas* had a full right to deny him their service. Both *Buda* and *Chewa* informants agreed that almost every villager paid the grain on time. The farmers firmly believed that the *Budas* need to be paid for the crucial service they are delivering to the community. Nevertheless, informants admitted, fear of attack and denial of craft services was also additional reason that forced or motivated the farmers to pay on time.

Currently, the economic status of the *Budas* has significantly improved. Through time their income has increased massively that nowadays there is no notable difference between the *Chewa* and *Buda* so far as property ownership is concerned. Interestingly, in towns those engaged in craft working, most of them alleged *Budas*, lead a better life than most residents. This study, in agreement with Finneran's (2003), found that in towns notably Axum, where there are considerable number of foreign tourists and hence increased demand for artifacts, craftsmen are by far richer than other residents. Tekle, a 67 years old goldsmith in Axum, confirmed

Most smiths are rich. You know that the price and demand of our products like gold, silver, jewelers, and ornament is increasing rapidly. Frankly speaking our job is one of the most profitable and we lead better life than most of the residents of the town. I was born and lived in a nearby rural village until I was 40. We [my family] did not have land and we lived in poverty. Then I came here and opened a small artifacts shop. Now, after 27 years, I own a jewelry shop, houses, car and other assets worth of 1.4 million birr. My brothers are still in the village. They have land, just like any ordinary villager. Today their life is far better than it used to be some decades ago. Their income is similar to their 'Chewa' counterparts. But it is far below to mine and other goldsmiths in the town. I help them financially and I am planning to bring my nephew to work with me.

The turning point in the economic status of the *Buda* was, most *Buda* and *Chewa* informants agreed, the 1974 revolution. Nationally, the group's historical alienation from land rights, which has been an important source of economic marginalization, has been successfully answered by the much applauded *Derg's* 1975 land proclamation. The proclamation made all land a public property and that every Ethiopian, irrespective of ethnic, religious or occupational difference, would have equal right of possessing land. The *Budas* of central Tigray are thankful to TPLF also for redistributing land on equal basis to all residents of the area. According to the informants and discussants, even though the *Derg* proclaimed the 1975 land proclamation and implemented it in most parts of the country, it was the TPLF, the then guerrilla group who was in control of most of rural areas of central and western Tigray, which redistributed land in most parts of the study area. They thought that the essence and supposed end result of *Derg's* proclamation and the TPLF's redistribution were basically the same and hence, they believe, had the TPLF was not there, the *Derg* would have redistributed the land as it did in other parts of Ethiopia. Generally, the *Budas* are thankful to the 1974 revolution, because they believed that both *Derg* and TPLF are the 'fruits' of the revolution.

Until the land redistribution, economic alienation has played an important role in maintaining and reinforcing socio cultural exclusion and political disempowerment of *Budas*. Land alienation was one of the key factors behind the lowest socioeconomic status of the *Budas*. Since land is the most important asset of rural people, denial of access to land was tantamount to forcing the *Budas* to serfdom. Gebray, 76, a *Buda* key informant, while comparing life before and after the land redistribution, said "*In rural village, leading a family without land is very difficult. Land is the means of livelihood. Before the land distribution we lead very difficult life. It was challenging to feed my six children and wife from the small income I get from iron work. Now my children and I are living a better life than we used to live before the land redistribution*".

Thanks to the 1974 revolution and its outcomes, economic alienation of *Budas* is now a history. Most *Budas* have switched to farming and today the number of rural *Budas* engaged in ironwork has drastically decreased. Even those who still practice iron work have a farm land and hence they consider iron work as, at worst, a supplementary/secondary source of income, or, at best, a good-will role or a favor to the community.

4.3.3 Religious Avoidance

Religious discrimination was one of the most conspicuous forms of institutionalized social exclusion imposed against *Buda*. The local Orthodox Church doesn't appreciate *Buda* people to see or share its secrets since they are suspected impure and accused of worshipping the devils, an accusation the *Budas* categorically dismissed. As a result, a *Buda* may attain church education up to a certain level, but he will never become deacon, let alone priest. A priest informant said "*they [Budas] are not real Orthodox... I see them just as agents of the devil. I believe that they are not pure enough to share the sacred secrets of our church*".

Gebremedhin, 81 years old priest who holds a highly valued honorary title known as *ReiseDebri* [chief of Church] is one of those who strongly oppose the *Budas* from assuming positions in the church. When he was asked to share his view, *Riesedebri* Gebremdihin replied;

My son! How come an agent of the devil, a traitor to Jesus, an evil spirited person be allowed or be ordained to be a priest! How can he be a religious leader! A gospel preacher! A follower of Jesus! They are the one who denied and betrayed Jesus, our savior! How can they follow and preach his gospel? Who allows them? Of course, they know their identity very well that they do not dare that much. They don't attempt to be a priest...but recently they are infiltrating to the inner of 'our' church. The time is theirs. They are about to climb to our heads [about to be our superiors]. I had lived up to the principles of 'Betekirstianey' [my church] and 'Abotatey' [forefathers] and now I am almost going [dying]. I am sorry for my sons, for you, for the coming generation.

The justification for the objection is the myth about the *Budas* as anti-Jesus and his 'chosen children'. In Tigray, the Christians' culture differentiates craft workers in terms of religious

and social status as deniers of Jesus Christ. *Riesedebri Gebremedhin* presents the main justification of the *Chewas* for discriminating the *Budas*; "Craft workers collaborated with enemies of Jesus to crucify him. The craft workers used their skills against Christ and they have facilitated both his arrest and crucifixion by providing the tongs to pull him out of a crevice and finally the nail to crucify him with".

Denial of access to the clergy, which is one of the most important sources of social prestige among people of Tigray, has paramount effect on the life of the *Budas*. They are subjugated to institutionalized discrimination in the realm of religion. In Tigray society, a society which attaches high value to spiritual life, any form of discrimination and avoidance in religious sphere is very painful to the *Budas*. An 83 years old *Buda* informant explains the pains:

It is painful to be denied from worshipping and serving the church. They [Chewas] are hindering not only our life here on earth but also attempting to block our way to heaven. However, faith is not based in rituals and priesthood. It resides in our soul. We worship and salute our holy savior, Jesus Christ and the almighty God! We are not welcomed to be priests. But nobody can stop us from becoming Christians. Hence, like everyone in the village, we are Orthodox Christians. Contrary to that, Riesedebri Gebremedhin argues; "priesthood is a sacred role. Priests are the representatives of Jesus on earth. Therefore priesthood is allowed only to his 'chosen children', not to impure people and agents of the devil".

Accordingly, the *Budas* are not welcome to church related activities and positions. The presence of *Budas* in church prayers and religious ceremonies is systematically, both explicitly and implicitly, discouraged rather than forbidden. They are, directly or indirectly, discouraged from participation in spiritual events, observances, and practices for two reasons. First, they are believed impure and traitors of Jesus. Secondly, since eye contact is believed to be the common means for the *Buda* to 'eat' someone, the *Chewas* discourage interpersonal relationships and maintains social distance against physical contact with members of the *Buda*. As a result, the community tried to discourage the *Budas* from participating in any public gatherings including religious events for the *Budas* can use that opportunity to attack people. The discouragement forces the *Budas* to distance themselves from active involvement

in spiritual activities and events. However, Reisedebri Gebremedhin said, "*in Qebri [funeral] there is no difference. There is no differential treatment in Hazen or Qebri and related events*". Other than *Qebri* and *Hazen* slight and implicit discouragement of *Budas* is still there.

Excluded from one of the most important socializing agents of society, the group has been partially denied access to the mainstream social and cultural life. However, the discrimination is lenient in worshipping and prayers and relatively strict in assuming spiritual positions like priesthood. However, both the *Buda* and *Chewa* informants and discussants agreed that through time, there is some progress and currently there is only meager discouragement. They regularly participate, just like the *Chewas*, in spiritual activities and rituals and even some, though few, *Budas* are assuming leadership positions in the church. However the progress is not mainly based on the free will or attitudinal change of the *Chewas* towards the *Budas*. Rather it seems to be involuntary or imposed change brought about by the political and legal changes that took place in the past decades.

Ironically, not only traditional [church] education, even modern [formal] schools are not free from discrimination and prejudice. Sometimes, those students who are known to be born to *Buda* parent/s face social avoidance. Even teachers were not free of such negative attitudes.

Mizan, 35, seventh grade biology teacher exposed his own feeling:

Sometimes, I am wondering as to how and why I feel discomfort to deal with my students who are thought to be Buda. I know that Buda belief has no scientific bases and its existence is not verified scientifically. I know the belief is contradictory to the principles of Biology, the subject I teach. Yet, I do not feel at ease with alleged Buda students.

Mizan's attitude shows the extent of discrimination and avoidance against *Budas* by fellow students and teachers. It has been reported that in response to such negative attitudes *Buda* parents have been keeping their children away from school. The constant fear of being accused of 'eating' someone or being insulted is also a powerful reminder to stay out of such

social situations. Thus, both in church and school, students born to *Buda* parent/s are treated differently. Even though there is considerable progress, still the *Budas* seem to be slightly disadvantaged, compared to the *Chewas*, in the realms of religion and education.

Fortunately, as opposed to the Christians, we don't see religious discrimination among Muslims of central Tigray, for it is believed that there is no Muslim *Buda* in the study area. Even though it is rumored that in areas outside of Central Zone, especially Shire, some female Muslims buy the art of the *Buda* and attack people, such cases were not reported to have occurred in the study area. Rather, the Muslims believed that the Christian *Budas* are attacking them. Thus, among Muslims, there is no religious discrimination against *Budas*. It is only found among Christians.

4.3.4 Political Status and Participation

Political disempowerment is another problem the *Budas* are facing. *Budas* are not able to participate in the political activities on equal ground with their *Chewa* counterparts. Their participation is highly circumscribed by the negative attitude of the community towards them. Like any other public gatherings, *Budas* are not welcomed or encouraged to participate and involve in political gatherings and related events. Compared to the *Chewas*, assuming political post is difficult for the *Budas*. Masho's, 32 years old *Buda* from Agamo village, case is a very good example in this regard. Masho states;

In 1998, I was nominated by the party [TPLF] representatives of the kebele to be the chair person of the youth league of the Kebele. Since I was named by the party no one could openly object. But many people were not happy with my nomination. Because they believed I am, being a son of a 'QetQati' [Iron worker], unqualified for the position. They felt discomfort as if they were insulted [zetedeferu]. I knew their feeling but I thought I can cope up and in the long run change this backward and harmful belief. One day I called a meeting of all the youths in the Kebele to discuss on party affairs. In the meeting some people, most of which I had personal quarrel, were gossiping and backbiting me in couples saying how she dare to chair us? Sometimes they see me and laugh, some were showing me gestures about hyena [to imply that I am hyena or Buda]. It was very irritating. Then, I decided to resign from the position. Later on another Chewa was substituted in my place. Though it is slowly improving, still there is some hidden, tacit stereotype and discrimination against us.

Participants of the study revealed that there is implicit discouragement of *Budas* from political roles. Even though, officially or legally, they are free to participate in meetings and assume leadership roles like any other ordinary person, the *Chewas* consider them inferior and are not interested to be chaired by them. They are not willing to accept the legitimacy of their authority. As a result they show different reactions of disapproval against the elected person. The disapproval reaction is so powerful that most *Budas*, anticipating the reaction, do not want to assume political posts and intentionally, but tacitly, distance themselves. One *Buda* informant shared his idea as follows;

I do not want to be a focal person because it allows people to talk about me. Because I know their attitude towards me is all in all negative. I do not want to be gossiped and laughed. So I do not want to assume any sort of leadership position. I do not want even to speak in meeting. I just attend quietly and listen.

The previous discussions show that *Budas* have been and still are, but in lesser degree, discriminated in residence, property ownership, religious involvement, education and political arenas. Unfortunately, the realm of life where the exclusion is most severe and apparent is yet to come. It is social exclusion. In Tigray society, *Budas* are said to be experiencing different forms of exclusion, maltreatment of which social exclusion, specifically avoidance in marriage ties, is the most apparent and severe one.

4.3.5 Social Exclusion

The *Buda* belief have created and regulated the social boundary between the *Chewa* majority and the *Buda* (craft workers) minority in the study society. In most hierarchically stratified societies, endogamy is believed to be one of the most important mechanisms by which social and genetic segregation is maintained. In central Tigray too, *Budas* are not accepted by the *Chewas* as marriage partners. The *Chewa* has to select mate from the fellow *Chewas*. So did the *Budas*. Marrying to a *Buda* is, the *Chewa* informants and discussants indicated, the most disgusting and shameful act for a *Chewa*. In return any attempt on the part of the *Buda* to marry a *Chewa* is considered as an outright offence to the *Chewa*'s family.

Gebremeskel, a *Chewa* informant, said;

Look! You [Chewa] cannot marry a Buda. The first criterion of mate selection of a Chewa person is that to identify whether he/she [the potential spouse] is Chewa. You have to trace his/her Tiwilidi [lineage]. If he is not Chewa he/she will not be accepted to marry a Chewa person. Any 'healthy' Chewa will not prefer to get married or let his relative especially sons and daughters marry a Buda person. The Budas also know their status /identity and do not usually ask a person from Chewa family for marriage. If any Buda asks to marry my daughter I will consider it as impudence [Difiret] and lack of respect. I am likely to turn to quarrel with him.

Another female informant from the *Chewas* added;

The first and nonnegotiable principle of marriage for a Chewa person is that s/he should marry only his type, a Chewa one. Otherwise s/he will pollute himself/herself and his/her descendants' pureness, and the reputation of his/her parents. Marriage [Mewsibo] should be between equals or types [Mis Zmesleka]. The Chewa should marry a Chewa, the Buda should marry a Buda and the Barya should marry a Barya. That is what justice and fairness is to me.

For people of central Tigray, Marriage, locally called *Mewsibo*, is not just the association of two individuals, the bride and the groom. Rather it is the association of the respective *Alet* or *Weledegn* (kin groups) or at minimum the *Beteseb* (family) and hence it is the family's and the Kin group's issue. Therefore, it is decided collectively. Every member of the *Alet* [kin group] is highly concerned for his and his *Alet's* reputation. Hence, any *Chewa* will not appreciate or encourage marrying to a *Buda*. If any *Chewa* dare, for whatsoever reason, to marry a person who is not *Chewa* s/he will be despised, hated and excluded by his/her relatives. The reaction is so clear and strong that its consequence is very severe, if not unbearable. Therefore the *Chewas* abide by their relatives' decision and marry 'their type'.

I asked one of my informants if he would allow his daughter or son to marry a *Buda* person. His response was straight forward: "I will never ever let my daughter or son to marry a *Buda*! Oh My God! It is humiliating. How can I go to church or other gatherings and stand with my fellows on equal ground. It is a humiliation for me to give my son or daughter to *Buda*, or even to *Barya*".

The following case is a good illustration to grasp the extent to which people exclude *Budas* in mate selection.

Case history: Araya, a 32 years old mechanic, shares what he experienced:

When I was in Axum for about three years studying auto mechanics, I fell in love with a girl from Axum by the name Frehiwot. She was a high school student. I decided to marry her. I later came to know that she is a Buda. I felt very sad. I regretted that I rushed in to a relationship before knowing her back ground. But I loved her very much that I decided to continue with her. We had a very interesting love. After we stayed two years she got pregnant. Then we decided to get married as soon as possible before her pregnancy becomes visible. I took her to my home to introduce her with my family. She was good looking girl that everybody was happy because I am going to have a beautiful woman. Since they were nagging me day and night to get married, they quickly began the preparation for the wedding. Meanwhile, my father sent a person, his young brother, to go to Axum and trace her background [Tiwilidi] and to formally ask and consult her parents about the marriage. Upon his return, my uncle came with a bad news. He told my father that Frehiwot's father is a Buda and hence not fit to marry me. They immediately called off all the preparation for the wedding. My father called me and said 'My son I am very sorry! You cannot marry her. She is not your type. She is a Buda. She has deceived you. You should have known her thoroughly before you get involved in such shameful act...'. I, somehow ashamedly, dared to say 'father! I knew that. But I love her so much. So I have decided to marry her. On top of that she is pregnant. My son is in her womb. So...'. 'What'? He shouted! 'Sidi [stupid]! What an impudent person you are!' 'You wanted to humiliate yourself and me.' And he left me. Then I decided to call off the wedding because it was too costly to get in to irreconcilable quarrel with my family. After a year, I married another girl which I am not in love with. Still we are together. We have one child but our relationship is far from good. Still I have affair with Frehiwot. We frequently meet, have sex and enjoy together. I still love her. One day I may get back to Frehiwot.

The case history presented above is not an exception, but one of the many. Many *Budas* have faced similar problem to what Frehiwot has encountered.

Here is what 35 years old blacksmith experienced:

I fell in love with Asqual, my neighbor. She was calm and beautiful that I love her very much she was also interested in me that we established love relationship. However, her brother warned me to immediately stop my relationship with Asqual. He also severely beat Asqual and ordered her to stop any contact with me. However we loved each other and couldn't stop. We kept on meeting but secretly. But her brother discovered us. Then he, with his friends, tortured and bit me very severely. I was severely beaten that I was not able to walk for weeks. Finally her parents forcefully married Asqual to another guy. The marriage was meant just to breakup our relationship. After a year she gave birth from that guy. Unfortunately, she divorced and now she is living alone.

Kahsa, aged 66, a key informant from the *Buda* group, expressively described the discrimination against *Budas* in mate selection as follows:

They [the Chewa] are not willing to marry with us. We know that. Therefore, we marry 'our types'. Since our number is few our choice is limited. Sometimes we marry a Barya. Sometimes we got to go faraway villages in search of a mate. That is why if a Chewa person selected a mate from a far village he will be commented as 'why do you go that far like a Buda'. If a woman (a bride) is married to a person from a distant place, she will be insulted as 'it is because you are Buda that you traveled long distance to get married. Because in your village no one is willing to marry you'.... For any girl to get married to a man from her village is a great pride.

Informants revealed that when a *Buda* person is highly in love with a *Chewa* girl and if her parents or are not willing to give their daughter to him, or if the girl is not willing to marry him, he mostly resort to abduction. Besides, if the couples are highly in love and if they knew that their parents, mostly the *Chewa's* parents, will oppose their marriage they may decide to immigrate to distant town and live together.

However, there are exceptional cases where *Budas* and *Chewas* are married and living together. Even though they are few in number, there are some 'lucky' *Budas* who are married to a *Chewa* and led successful life. Some *Chewas* willfully married a *Buda* person and have successfully stood their relatives' apposition. One *Chewa* informant who married to a *Buda* girl expressed his experience as follows: "*At first everybody [my relatives] excluded me. I was isolated. However, I decide to live with her. Now we have three beautiful kids. I have a happy family. Even my parents' attitude is changing. They have good relation with my wife. They regret what they did before. In the future, I hope such type of harmful backward beliefs will totally disappear.*"

However, such types of success stories are rare in the study area. Under normal circumstance, few, if any, *Chewas* are willing to marry *Buda* person. Only few *Chewas*, most of them due to some compelling circumstances like pre-marriage pregnancy, have married *Budas*. Even these few people have encountered some pressure and disapproval from their relatives. As a

result some have regretted their decision and divorced while some others are still struggling hard to save their marriage and family.

To wrap up, selecting a mate, deciding who to marry, with whom you are going to live the rest of your life, is one of the most important decisions in life. In central Tigray, while selecting a mate, the *Buda* is the least preferred. One of the most important criteria in selecting mate is avoiding the *Buda*. Even the 'slaves', let alone *Chewas*, are not willing to marry a *Buda*. *Chewas* try to avoid marriage with *Buda*. Today, mate selection represents the realm of life where exclusion of the *Buda* is most apparent and painful.

Endogamy, on the part of the *Chewa* majority, is a mixed reaction of contempt and fear against the *Buda* people. For the *Buda* minority it is an important categorical barrier against integration to mainstream society. Harris (1975: 23) argued "*where endogamy prevails, either by choice of the minority or by imposition of the majority, a pluralistic condition may endure for centuries or even millennia*". In central Tigray endogamy, as a means of segregation and social exclusion against *Budas*, have endured for millennia and seems to endure for a considerable period of time.

4.3.6 Restrictions in Daily Intercourse

The *Chewa* people of central Tigray are differential in the formation of neighborhood relationship, social ties and networks. Intergroup and interpersonal intercourses are discriminatory against *Budas*. Even the seemingly free and loose association of friendship is not free from exclusion and discrimination. The interpersonal relationships between *Budas* and *Chewas* are mostly artificial and vulnerable. Their relations are in status quo, being neither overly peaceful nor overly combative. They mix with each other easily, as in court, in the shops, and in market places without repercussions, as long as their social relations are on a superficial basis.

The *Chewas* do not want to get closely associated with them. A *Buda* informant shared:

Sometime before, I had a friend whom I trusted very much. As close friends, I thought, we were loyal to each other. But finally my assumption was proved wrong. One day as we two sat in a tea room, one of his friends joined us. After sometime he wanted to know about our relation, and asked my friend: 'you two seem so close, is he your kin'? My friend was so angry and humiliated that he was not even able to respond: he simply asked his friend 'what do you mean? How could he be my relative'? I was shocked and felt ashamed. I wished he could have told his friend that we were not relatives but simply friends. That would have been enough. Rather, my friend betrayed me to protect his pride. We know they despise us, they never give us their hearts.

What Asefach and her seven years old kid experienced is a good illustration to see the degree of the effect of the belief on the interpersonal life of *Buda* people. Asefach narrates:

One day my 7 years old son come to me and asked me 'Mama Buda Malet Entay Malet Eyu [Mom! What is Buda]?' I was shocked! I wanted to know how he heard about Buda. Why he become too eager to know it? I asked him why he asked me. He replied 'when I was coming from school, Tesfay [his neighbor and class mate] and I quarreled while playing soccer and he insulted me 'Wediza Buda' [son of a Buda] and everyone who heard that laughed at me. Please! tell me what Buda is?' I was heartbroken! I cursed myself! I even cursed the day I get married with Teklebrahan [my husband and my son's father]. There was a lot of pressure and objection on me from my relatives and neighbors not to marry him, because he is a 'Buda'. But since I loved Tekelebrahan very much I was determined to marry him and face any consequence. I thought that through time the belief and gossip will fade and my kids and I will live peacefully like any ordinary person. I was wrong! Let alone to fade out, the problem has even reached my son! He is being insulted 'Wedi Buda'. And this may cause psychological problem and possibly a dangerous feeling of revenge on my child. Now I am thinking that my decision to marry Teklebrhan was wrong. He was not the right type of person, or though he is a fellow human being, the time and place we are in, has made him wrong choice.

However, though few, there is also some peaceful enduring friendships between *Chewas* and

Budas. One *Buda* student expressed his relationship with his friends as follows

I have many friends from this village. We play soccer together, we go school together, and we hung up together. We are very close and intimate friends. We respect each other. Nobody has ever shown me any sign of disapproval. We are educated youth. Our personality and behavior matters most. We are not part to such type of backward belief. We know that we are equal. All people are equal. The belief about Buda does not work. It is an illusion of backward and illiterate people. So it does not have any effect in our friendship. I am pretty comfortable with them.

The reality is, however, the majority of *Chewas* tend, at least seem to prefer, to avoid interpersonal intercourses with *Buda* people. The *Chewas* justify maintenance of social

distance as of necessity in order to prevent *Buda* attack and to avoid 'pollution' or 'contamination' with 'impure-boned people'. Even though the current political atmosphere has made apparent discrimination and harassment of *Budas* or other minority group almost impossible and very dangerous, there is still a tacit avoidance of *Budas*. The slow attitudinal change seems to be half voluntary and half imposed. Though, in principle, most *Chewas* of the study area seem to prefer to live, had it been possible, in *Buda* free society, time has made it clear that change is too powerful to resist and that peaceful coexistence is the only option. And, people of central Tigray are with considerable success, exercising it and are on their way to full integration.

4.3.7 Recent Improvements in the Life of *Buda* People

The worst days of the allegedly *Buda* people of central Tigray seems to have passed. Their identity and their main occupation (craft working) seem to be getting respect and dignity as time goes on. The economic status of the *Budas* has significantly improved and the belief in the evil eye power has slightly decreased. Several factors have contributed to these developments. Of all, discussants and informants agreed, the 1974 revolution receives the highest credit. Life for minority groups, be it ethnic, occupational, religious minority, has significantly improved beginning from the eve of the 1974 Ethiopian revolution.

The revolution was more of socialist in nature and attempted to transfer Ethiopia from feudo-capitalist state to a socialist (*Hibretesebawit*) Ethiopia (Vecchiato 1993). The *Derg*, and other most active political groups of the time were radical Marxists (Vecchiato 1993). So the preaching of the day, in line with socialist doctrine, was that people are born equal. Traditional beliefs like magic, sorcery, evil eye (*Buda*) were labeled as harmful beliefs imposed by imperialists and higher class people to maintain their position. The overall socialist atmosphere of the time has contributed for the weakening of the traditional harmful

practices and beliefs like evil eye. As a result, the research participants revealed that the then minority groups were the prime proponents and supporters of the revolution.

More than the propaganda of the socialists, however, it is the fall of feudalism and the abolition of land lord-tenant relationship and the subsequent land redistribution that had a major impact on the socio economic life of the *Budas*. This is because *Budas* have been allocated land in the same manner with the *Chewas*. The land redistribution has dismantled the root of exploitation and marginalization of the *Budas*; alienation from land right. As a result of the redistribution of land they began a new way of life as agriculturalists. The *Buda* informants indicated that the revolution, through its propaganda and land redistribution, changed the *Budas* from land less crafts people to land holding agriculturalists with additional craft working skill. Consequently, their status begun to rise and they began to be treated on equal ground with their fellows.

One *Buda* informant explained the contribution of the 1974 revolution and the socialist political groups of the time as follows: "*it is the revolution which brought as back to life as human beings. Life before the revolution was a misery.*"

In addition to land redistribution, expansion of science and education has also contributed a lot. Modern education and modern medicine are expanding at a faster rate. Modern education is inculcating the youth about the biochemistry of human body and the cause of diseases. Modern medicine is providing the society with remedies to most of the health problems which were once believed to be caused by supernatural powers and evil spirits like *Buda*. Therefore, they have begun resorting to modern medicine. The number of people who believe that the alleged power of the *Buda* really exists and *Buda* can cause illness or death is decreasing slowly. Though it needs to be substantiated and verified by quantitative research, this study found that strength and pervasiveness of the belief was found to be higher in the

illiterate segments of the population notably housewives and elderly people. The information collected from the research participants indicates that the belief in the evil eye is decreasing among the youth and educated segment of the society.

Beside the expansion of education and modern medicine, high rate of urbanization and consequent heterogeneity of residents has also made tracing one's lineage very difficult and hence identifying the *Buda* difficult and misleading. We are witnessing a growing heterogeneity and anonymity of urban dwellers in central Tigray. The social relation of urban residents is generally less intimate that little attention is paid to screen out every one's background. Urban residents are, as compared to rural people, anonymous/strangers to each other. That is why the belief about *Buda* and the subsequent exclusion of *Budas* was found to be much lower in urban centers than rural areas. In the FGDs it has been clearly observed that urban residents are lenient than their rural counterparts. With regard to urban anonymity and its impact on the belief one youth informant from Axum said:

I have many friends. Most of them are immigrants from other surrounding Weredas. I do not know and of course I do not care whether they are Buda or not. What matters for me is their behavior and personality not their family background or their Tiwilidi (lineage). In fact I do not believe in the presence of what is called Buda. I don't think that there is such extraordinary power that enables to change someone in to hyena and to human being or vice versa, to kill people by staring at them or by twisting a herb, to retrieve corpse and transform it to living organism etc. As to me the belief about Buda is nonsense. I don't accept the Chewa-Buda dictum. For me all people are equal.

The above example indicates that change is taking place and the trend and direction is positive. Even people from Axum who were once considered by default as *Buda* due to the higher proportion of *Budas* in the town are now, at least, not openly insulted, harassed and despised. This is because the town has become too large and heterogeneous that it is difficult to identify who is *Buda* and who is not.

To sum up, socio-political changes following the 1974 revolution most notably the fall of the feudal system with its lord-tenant relationship, and its replacement with the socialist political

setup and subsequent 1974 land proclamation, added with the hegemony of Marxist-Leninist ideology in the propaganda sphere has improved the status of the *Budas*. Moreover, participants of the study indicated, the expansion of modern education, science, technology, modern medicine, rapid urbanization and heterogeneity of dwellers and continuous movement of people has decreased the plausibility and acceptance of the belief about *Buda*.

Yet, this doesn't mean that the belief about *Buda* is all dead. Indeed, the belief is present and the *Budas* are discriminated and excluded in different spheres of social life. Rather, it is to mean that the extent and form of exclusion the *Budas* are subjected to, and the strength of the belief has decreased compared to pre-revolution Tigray. The life of the *Budas* seems to have changed from the worst to worse. Still, as compared to the *Chewas*, the *Budas* remain politically, socially, spiritually, culturally marginalized and discriminated. Their role, status, and participation in different spheres of life, though improving, lag behind the *Chewas*. Yet, one can safely conclude, they are living in much better, more tolerant, more respectful Central Tigray compared to the pre-revolution Tigray. The rate of decline of the beliefs seems to be much higher in urban than rural areas. Accordingly, the degree of social exclusion is much lesser in towns. Most research participants agreed that even though the trend is positive and progressing, still life, mainly social life is by far very difficult for the *Budas* than other social groups. Currently, *Mewsibo* (marriage) and religion remain to be the two spheres of life where the *Budas* are suffering from apparent and painful exclusion and discrimination.

4.4 Traditional Healing Practices Applied to Combat *Buda* Attack

In Central Tigray, like the rest of Tigray, the issue of health is seen holistically and not separated into physical health and mental health. Spiritual wellbeing is also an important aspect of health. Health is seen as a 'gift of God' or 'the will of God' and many people, both

Muslim and Christians, generally believe that their Almighty God helps keep them healthy. These perceptions are based on the belief that supernatural forces are involved in causing disease as well as in their treatment. For instance, while the devil is considered to be the cause of a number of illnesses, God is believed to provide the healing. Both Christian and Islamic teachings encourage their followers to seek treatment when they fall sick. Accordingly, people of central Tigray have developed different treatment options. In case of illness they resort, contextually, to modern medicine and traditional medicine. Generally speaking, if they recognize an illness as having purely natural causes, most of the time they apply modern medicine. When supernatural causes are suspected, they prefer traditional healing practices. Informants indicated that illnesses supposedly caused by supernatural forces are combated by the use of traditional medicine, such as invocations, exorcism, holy water, prayers, charms and amulets.

In central Tigray the traditional healing system applied by Christians and Muslims is very similar. Though there is a slight difference, most healing practices applied by the Christians are also used by the Muslims. The best example of this similarity is the staunch belief on super natural powers in causation and healing of illnesses. They both use religion as a basis for their healing practices. Particularly in towns, where there is a conglomeration of many religious groups, one can see the interchanging and blending of belief and healing systems among these population groups. Yet, there is some difference in their healing system and hence they will be discussed separately.

4.4.1 Preventative Practices among Christians

Christian people of the study area have a complex traditional medicine which includes several elements of disease prevention. In the past, the spread of diseases such as smallpox was prevented by deserting places where the epidemics occurred (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009). Sweeping or covering floors with particular plants is another traditionally practiced disease

preventive measure. Other methods of disease prevention include isolating people with contagious diseases, prohibition or controlling movement of people to inflicted places or individuals, and taking children away from the affected areas (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009; Yared 2011).

Since *Buda* attack is believed to be one of the most serious health problems confronting the people of central Tigray they have developed different preventive methods. Wearing *kitab* [amulets containing a written spiritual script] is one of these methods. Informants indicated that *kitab*s are worn by most people, especially children and women, for the purpose of protecting an individual from attack by *Buda* and other evil spirits. The *kitab* is made by a *Debtera*, a clergyman who usually looks upon mental disorders as possession by evil spirits.

Making prayer is, the research participants indicated, another prevention mechanism against *Buda* attack. Besides prayers, victory and thanksgiving songs are sung emphasizing that Christ and the accompanying angels, saints, and virgin Mary are victorious over all kinds of evil spirits. The prayers and the songs focus on rebuking of the evil spirits. It is widely held belief that making prayers help a lot in protecting the praying people from *Buda* attack.

In addition to making prayer and wearing *kitab*, cultural rituals and sacrifices are commonly employed. Costumes such as arm rings, hair styles and eye make-up (*mascara* or *kool*) are also supposed to protect people from attack by evil spirits including *Buda*. Apart from carrying amulets and using invocations, the young people will have their whole or half head shave tonsured. The custom of shaving the heads of children, leaving only a tuft of hair over the former fontanel of the boys and a ring of hair around the heads of the girls is believed to provide protection against attack by an envious *Buda* and *Ayniseb*.

Addressing a child in the gender opposite to the child's actual sex is also said to be helpful in protecting the child from *Buda*. It is believed to be helpful in warding off the attention of the

Buda. As a result, some key informants revealed, some parents give masculine proper name to their daughters and feminine name to their sons. They also dress them opposite to their actual sex. Such dressing and hair shaving customs are also aimed at minimizing the attractiveness of the child for good looking people are thought to be most vulnerable. Another precaution taken by the people against the possibility of attack is to be silent and guarded so that s/he will not attract the attention of the *Buda* and consequently its evil gaze. Avoiding any form of contact or encounters with *Buda* people is considered to be helpful.

4.4.2 Prevention Techniques employed by Muslims

Like Christianity, Islam encourages Muslims to seek treatment when they feel ill. Muslims encourage seeking treatment, because they believe that *Allaah* did not send down a sickness but has sent down a medication. Accordingly, informants indicated, there is nothing wrong with taking precautions against the *Buda* attack before it happens, and this does not contradict the idea of *Tawakkul* [putting one's trust in *Allaah*]. In fact, Muslim key Informants said, it is *Tawakkul*, because *Tawakkul* means putting one's trust in *Allaah* whilst also implementing the means that have been permitted or enjoined by him. In terms of treatment options, Muslim patients resort, in accordance with the presumed cause of the illness, to modern medicine or traditional medicine.

In dealing with *Buda* attack, Muslims employ both preventive and curative methods. But most of their traditional healing methods are faith based and spiritual healing is by far the most popular healing method. Research participants revealed that Muslims use different preventive mechanisms such as tying amulets and charms on the body, taking vows, visiting the *Mesjid*, and carefully following rules of behavior, religion and hygiene. It also includes recitation of verses of the holly *Qur'aan* and specific Prophetic supplications. Reciting

Qur'aan is commonly used for it is believed of having great effect in removing (the effects of) *Buda* attack.

In addition, the drinking and showering of a holy water called *Zamzam*, which is obtained from the well in the Holy Mosque, located in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, is also widely practiced by many Muslims to protect themselves from *Buda* attack and other evil spirits. Another defense mechanism against *Buda* attack is uttering *Ma Sha Allaah* [That which *Allaah* wills! There is no power but with *Allaah*]. Provided that *Budas* attack people mainly because they are envious, attributing interesting things to *Allaah* is believed to prevent *Buda* attack. Therefore, when Muslims like something or are attracted to something, let to a beautiful baby, most Muslims say '*Ma sha Allaah*'. In addition, wearing *Hijab* [the Islamic practice of dressing modesty in clothing that covers most of the body but eyes, for she must look], is recommended for females to protect themselves from *Buda* attack and *Ayniseb*. Hajji Kemal, a 55 years old key informant from Edaga Arbi town, said:

Whoever sees something that he likes, and says, 'Ma sha Allaah laa quwwata illa Billaah' [That which Allaah wills! There is no power but with Allaah], the evil eye will not affect him. Dressing Hijab is also helpful in protecting females from attack by way of covering the beauty of the woman.

Another popular, yet controversial, preventive mechanism is wearing amulets. Even though some key informants said that it is forbidden by the *Sunnah* [a Spiritual book based on Mohammed's words and deeds which serves as the basic source of Islamic law], the use of amulets is still common among Muslims of central Tigray. Some research participants indicated that there is a clear contradiction between the principles of Islam and the actual practice of the Muslims of central Tigray so far as wearing amulets is concerned. As per the doctrines of Islam, some informants and discussants admitted, wearing amulets and seashells is forbidden. It is considered as disobedience to the will of *Allaah* and hence *Allaah* will not protect the person. Accordingly, anyone who wears an amulet is guilty of *shirks* [violation of

Islamic principles]. An elderly Muslim informant said "...wearing amulets is, as per the doctrine of Islam, shirk and hence unacceptable. ...Mohammed (peace be upon him) has said 'Whoever wears an amulet, may Allaah not fulfill his need and not protect him.'" However, in practice, many Muslims, including religious leaders, practice it to protect their children and women from evil eye attack. One informant said;

Yes! I hear some Muslims, mostly visitors, saying that wearing amulet is contradictory to Islam. I am not sure about that. I do not know whether it is an Islamic practice or cultural ritual. ... What I know is that many Muslim children, including my three, wear amulets because the danger of Buda attack is ever present.

Accordingly, some Muslims, especially women and children, wear amulet and seashells to protect themselves from *Buda* attack. For instance, in a village called *Mayagam*, the researcher witnessed many Muslim kids wearing amulets. Among the Christians too, some informants indicated, wearing *kitab* is contradictory to the principles of the church. Yet wearing *Kitab* is very common in the study area, especially among the Christians.

Nevertheless, the most important means of warding off the danger of *Buda* attack before it happens is seeking protection through making *Du'aa'* [reciting prayers] and seeking refuge in almighty *Allaah*. In this regard a participant of FGD said "...they [*Buda*] cannot harm anyone except by *Allaah's* leave. We [Muslims] should seek refuge in *Allaah*". The aforementioned techniques of prevention especially wearing *Hijab*, tying amulet, making *Dua'a* are targeted not only at *Buda* but also at protecting *Ayni Seb* or simply *Ayn*. However, since *Ayni Seb* is relatively less dangerous and hence less feared than *Buda* attack, they are mainly meant to prevent *Buda* attack.

4.4.3 Curative Techniques against *Buda* Attack

Although it is highly stressed that prevention is better than cure, it is not always successful. Thus, when the prevention techniques fail, different curative mechanisms are put in place.

Despite of the considerable efforts made to prevent *Buda's* attack, many people, especially women and children, are thought to be 'eaten' by *Budas*. Accordingly, the community employs a wide range of curative mechanisms to counter the attack.

Illnesses are not haphazardly attributed to *Buda* attack. Before taking any curative measure the people try its best to pinpoint the cause of the illness. Wasting sickness, domestic accidents, infertility, mental deficiency, deafness, mutism, blindness and plain bad luck have been variously reported by the informants and discussants as indicative symptoms of being eaten by a *Buda*. However, biting own lips, instant laughing and crying, sudden collapse, loosing of consciousness, sudden and acute abdominal pain, sudden behavioral change like lack of respect and open insulting of parents and elderly people, emotional instability are thought to be the guaranteed and typical symptoms of being attacked by a *Buda*. Apart from the symptoms, the situation under which the patient is in also gives very important clue to identify the cause of the illness. Meal times, illness, and pregnancy are thought to be the most important times for *Buda* attack. Especially, periods associated with fecundity and multiplication is believed to be so dangerous. That is why pregnant woman is thought to be most vulnerable and hence she is guarded and kept at home. Therefore, if the person is believed to be vulnerable (let beautiful or rich) and the situation is thought to be conducive for *Buda* attack (let pregnancy), and if s/he shows some of the aforementioned symptoms then the illness is attributed to *Buda* attack and hence they resort to curative measures.

4.4.4 Curative Methods Applied by Christians to Combat *Buda* Attack

Christian people of central Tigray have developed many avenues to heal illnesses caused by *Buda* attack. The in-depth interviewees and key informants especially traditional healers enlisted a number of curative techniques employed in healing patients allegedly attacked by a *Buda*. Based on the nature and overall process of healing, notably the materials used, the

type of healers involved, and the rituals practiced, the healing methods can be categorized in to five.

1. **The *Debtera* and his *Digam*:** Since central Tigray is overwhelmingly (98.4%) Orthodox Christian area (CSA 2007), we find a greater reliance upon the power of the church and its clergy so far as treating patients is concerned. Particularly the *Debtera* plays a crucial role in healing illnesses. *Debteras* are priests who have lost their ordination because they are no longer ritually pure, or individuals who have chosen not to enter the priesthood (Reminick 1974). They are itinerant figures who make a living-apart from ecclesiastical activities-by providing traditional medicine, charms, amulets and magic designed to ward off satanic creatures. The Christian informants indicated that the *Debteras* are renowned for their special prayer which is known as *Digam*. The *Debtera* performs the *Digam* on behalf of clients. When a case of the *Buda* caused illness is reported the *Debtera* will offer prayers and make *Kitab* [amulet] to counteract *Buda* attack. The *Debtera* performs a quite intricate and complex set of anti-magic invocations, prayers and exorcisms to cure the afflicted.

Briefly stated the process of the healing practice goes as follows. When the symptoms of the illness indicate an attack by a *Buda*, the victim/patient is taken to a *Debtera* [but most of the time the *Debtera* is brought to the home of the patient]. Then, for a modest fee or sometimes for free, he performs a rite over holy water and invocation locally called *Digam*. The rite over the holy water and the prayer are performed by pronouncing words in the ancient language of Geez, a liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. After the invocation is over the patient drinks the holy water locally called *May Digam*. Soon the patient recovers. Beside the *May Digam*, informants said, the *Debtera* may also find the diagnostic answer in his magic book and applies it to cure the patient.

2. **The Wizard [*Bale Wuqabe*] or [*Tenquali*]:** Another rarely used alternative healing method practiced in central Tigray is to bring the patient to a wizard [*ba'al wuqabe*] or *Tenquali*, one who has got wizardly powers gained through agents of the devil, to communicate with and drive out the evil spirits possessing the victim. The Wizard or *Tenquali* is thought to have, using different witchcraft techniques, the magical ability to identify the attacker and cure the patient. According to the informants, the process goes as follows: the victim or his/her relative or both will go to the *Tenquali's* house, mostly in the morning, and simply stand in the gate and wait for a permission of entrance. When they are allowed to enter, they will get in and seat calmly. They need not explain their cause and why they came for the *Tenquali* [*being a witch or wizard*] had already known their cause.

They simply wait until he speaks to them. Then the *Tenquali* goes in to trance, seeking possession by spirits who reveal the attacker and the appropriate cure for the illness, and then begins to speak. They have to carefully listen to his words. He tells them what he claims to have been revealed to him by the spirits. He tells them the problem they have, why they visited him, who the attacker is, why, when and how he attacked the victim etc... and finally orders the cure. They can respond to or talk with the *Tenquali* only upon his/her request, for instance if they are enquired to give information or when they are asked to confirm or reflect on what he is telling them.

3. ***Buda Milkak* or *Milifilaf* [exorcism]:** the third method of healing, which is the most frequently applied method of all, requires no special herbalist or clergyman but an elderly person and animal dung fire. This type of exorcism [*Buda Milkak*] sometimes called *Milifilaf* or *Mietan* does not involve the use of specialists outside of an elder member of the family or neighbors who knows the procedures and whose age gives him a bit better judgment. So, this elder person can perform the role of *Buda Alekaki* [exorcist]. If the symptoms signal that s/he has been attacked by the *Buda*, relatives will first tie the victim's left thumb with string. Then

the victim will be made to breathe the smoke from the dung fire. After taking in dung smoke, the victim gains the power to speak in the spirit and voice of his attacker. The victim begins recounting the chain of event that led to the confrontation and the attack. Then the exorcist asks the possessed victim what form of compensation should be given to counter act the attack. The victim, speaking in the voice of the attacker, demands some filthy matter such as ashes, a dead rat, or animal's especially hen's excrement. Even if it doesn't demand it is mandatory to force him consume one of those things.

It is said that the *Buda* victim eats these very dirty and inedible things without any sign of dislike in the same manner as ordinary food is eaten by ordinary person. The victim eats this and soon cries "I've left him! I've left my victim!" or something of this order. Then the family knows that the *Buda* has left the body, and the stricken person may now recover. This curing technique involves active vocal participation of the exorcist and the attacker who speaks via the victim. If the victim cannot speak, it is believed, he will surely die. Compared to other healing methods, exorcising through the smoke of dung fire is the most common for it is believed to be the easiest and most effective method. The following case history illustrates the overall process of exorcism

Case history: Girmay, kebele Hinzat of Wereda Werieleke, narrated the following case history:

My father is a priest and is usually called for help if any problem related to Buda is created in the neighborhood. Once a time our neighbor, Almaz, 21, was struck by Buda and my father was called by her parents to help them in curing Almaz. Then he picked up a Miran or Mechagna [rope or thread made from animal skin] and went to the victim's house. I followed him because I wanted to know what they are going to do. Then he put the Miran on the gate of their house and entered to the house. There Almaz was shouting, insulting people, and crying. Out of a sudden, she stopped crying and began laughing so loudly. She constantly attempted to escape and run from the house. Four guys were holding her tightly but she fought so hard and was about to escape. Surprisingly she was so powerful, [this power or strength is assumed to be the power of the Buda or believed that she is empowered by the Buda], and challenged them and they called for more help. Then other two guys were called and joined the four guys and hold her hands and legs tightly. Then my father asked the parents to get out any metal in the house. Then he ordered them to bring a string or rope, fire, hair of a donkey, some leaves and tire. Since her parents knew the healing system and the necessary materials they had already prepared and made ready all the material my father asked them to bring. He tightly tied Almaz's left thumb using a string. Then he put those materials to the fire and it began to create a smoke with powerful but unpleasant smell or bad odor. Then Almaz was pushed towards the smoke and was forced to smell or breathe it. She was forced to

such suffering because it is believed that she is under full control of the Buda and hence it is considered as if the Buda, not Almaz, is suffering via the victim. They consider as if they are dealing directly with the Buda. The purpose of the smelling is to force the Buda confess and reveal himself [remember that the Buda is treated in male sex] and why he attacked her and ultimately expel him from the victim. Then my father began talking with the Buda and asked him 'who are you? Speak up! Who are you? Why you caught her?' But he did not speak anything rather 'he'. [I said he because now we are talking about the Buda not Almaz because it is the Buda and his spirit that has controlled and replaced Almaz and her humane spirit], was laughing and struggling hard to escape. Then my father burnt him in his face using a hot iron and asked him again 'who are you?' This time since he has suffered a lot from the bad smell coming from the smoke and the burning he began confessing. The Buda began speaking [it is Almaz's speech considered as if the Buda is speaking]. He revealed himself. He said 'I am Gebrehiwot...I caught her [Almaz] because her mother is always against me and she has insulted me many times...'. We all knew Gebrehiwot. He was our neighbor and in fact he has repeated quarrel with Almaz's mother. Then my father ordered him to leave her and to swear or promise (oath) not to inflict or struck her again. He immediately complied and said 'I will leave her. I will never strike her again. I swear I will not. Please release me now. I am suffering. I am burned-out. I will not repeat it. Please.'. Immediately Almaz said 'uff!' showing that she has got relief, she has got rid of the Buda. She lost all that power that challenged the four guys and become weak but normal. She began to talk normally and asked us to rest her in the bed. Then she was untied, taken to the bed to sleep. After around 10 minutes she woke up. She was tired but normal. She remembered nothing about what was going on. She was cured.

Similar to the case history presented above, a 43 years old man from Ahferom Wereda, said;

Exorcising through the smoke of dung fire is most common in our culture. If a person is recognized as being attacked by Buda, the relatives tie the victim's left thumb with string. Then the patient will be made to breathe the smoke of dung fire that enables him or her to speak in the name of his attacker. The attacker asks for compensation and leaves shouting that he has left when he gets it. In such a way the family is able to exorcise the Buda and the patient recovers.

4. Spitting on, or touching the victim and eating food: Unlike the previous case of exorcism, there is also a form of exorcising that needs the presence of the attacker. This method of diagnosis and counter-action involves the Buda in a more direct way. For instance when the victim begins to bite his lip and to act strangely, or if s/he appears to go into a daze and begin to jump and shout, a relative must try to get the victim to utter the name of his attacker. Then, if they recognized who the attacker is, they call both the attacker [Buda] and the patient to one place and ask them to spit saliva on glowing axes, sickle, knife, blade or any other metal. Soon after the victim will get relief and be cured. If neither of these tactics is successful, or if they couldn't identify the attacker, they have other indication. I, e if the victim begins crying suddenly, it is a sign that the attacker is in close proximity and that the

relatives must scout the area and seize the *Buda* person they come across. If the suspect is found, he is brought to the bed side of the victim, by gunpoint if needed. Then the *Buda* is made to spit on, or touch the victim or eat some food in the victim's house. The victim recovers soon after the *Buda* ate food or spited on, or touched him/her. Sometimes, in seeking out the attacker a very hot fire is made in the hearth and a piece of metal is put into the flames and heated until glowing. The hot metal is applied to the patient's face, making a small pattern of burns. As the wounds heal, it is believed, the scars will be transferred on to the face of the attacker in the same place and with the same pattern. The family must then seek out the guilty party, the person who is found to have scars of same pattern and compel, voluntarily or involuntarily, the *Buda* to release the victim.

5. Tselot [prayer] and Tsebel [Holy water]: Making prayers and the use of holy water is also another important healing method used by many people of central Tigray. Samuel's, 26 years old sister was attacked by a *Buda* who claimed to have loved her. He frequently asked her, but unsuccessfully, to be his girl friend or fiancée. Then he went on to formally request her parents to marry her. Her parents were upset by his request for he was not 'her type' [*Mewasib'ta*] and immediately turned down his request. Then the person 'ate' her. Samuel describes in his own words what happened then after.

Case history, Samuel

My sister was taken to S t. Michel's Tsebel (holy water) and she attended the Tsebel for Seleste Shewate [three sevens or three weeks]. During these three weeks my sister tried a lot of time to run or escape from the Tsebel and run away but we were alert and she did not succeed. Then one morning one Qeshi [priest] made a lot of prayers and readings of religious books and then approached my sister with Tsebel [holy water] and the Meskel [cross]. Then he put the cross in her forehead and began to spray the holy water powerfully in to her face and uttered 'in the name of holy trinity get out! In the name of the wholly savior get out!' He continued ordering the evil spirit or the Buda spirit in the name of the holly divine sprits. Then the Buda began confessing and admitted to get out of the victim. He assured that he has left her and the Qeshi [priest] made some prayers and blessings to my sister. By this time my sister became normal and after two days we went back to our home.

As shown in the cases discussed above the diagnosis and healing methods require some sort of exorcism. Exorcism is widely practiced and traditionally accepted norm to get rid of evil spirits including *Buda*. In the exorcism process the struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of the spiritual forces or evil spirits possessing the patient. In these complex traditions, we can see the operation of evil spirits, both as possessor and exorcist. One kind of evil spirit affects the exorcisms of less powerful spirits. The evil spirits demonize people and enable them to hurt others and other spirits drive out the evil spirits and the victim recovers.

4.4.5 Curative Systems Applied by Muslims

Since they share many cultural elements in common there is no marked difference in the traditional healing methods of the Christians and the Muslims. Most of the healing practices used by the Christians are also used by the Muslims. However, there is a slight difference in their spiritual (faith based) healing methods for they differ in religion. Some of the Islam specific or faith based healing methods used by Muslims of central Tigray include: reciting *Ruqyah*, pouring water on the victim, taking *Zamzam* or *Tsebel*, and making *Dua'a*.

Reciting *Ruqyah* is one of the most common healing methods used by Muslims of central Tigray. *Ruqyah* is a section found in the holy *Qura'an* and is recited in order to protect or cure the patient suffering from any type of illness including *Buda* attack. Some informants indicated that Prophet Mohamed have said performing *Ruqyah* protects people from any harm including envious eye and the Prophet had performed *Ruqyah*, in the name of *Allaah*, for his people. Accordingly, Muslim informants and discussants indicated, reciting *Qur'aan* and more specifically performing *Ruqyah* is widely used to cure the victim.

Asking the alleged attacker to wash the victim is also believed to effect cure. That is, if the person who attacked him is known, he may be asked to pour/spray water on the victim. Shiek Berihi, a 76 years old Muslim key informant from Axum, said "as the Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded... once the attacker is identified by using different methods he is made to wash the victim. The attacker should pour water over the one who has been afflicted. "

The washing of the victim/patient by the attacker appears symmetrical to the Christians method of *Buda* spitting of saliva in to the face of the patient. Of course, this is not the only symmetry in the healing methods of the two religious groups. Apart from this, reciting holy *Quraan*, drinking *Zemzem*, *Dua'a* [prayers] is symmetrical with reciting the *Metsihaf Qidus* [Holy Bible], drinking *Tsebel*, and *Tselot* respectively.

Surprisingly enough, Muslims consult *Debteras* and go to *Tsebel* to get rid of evil spirits like *Buda*. The two famous *Tsebels* in central Tigray which are used by both Christians and Muslims are *Endabahadera* of Temben and *May Shigurto* of Adwa. *Endabahadera* is a Christian *Tsebel* found near a church. The researcher found many Christians and Muslims attending in the *Tsebel*. Fatima was one of them. Fatima, a 43 years old Muslim housewife from Enticho town, said:

It has been two months since I come here. I came here because many people including my mother were cured here. It is very popular and mysterious Tsebel. I had acute pain in my stomach. I don't know the cause of my illness but I was getting thinner and weaker. I came with the help of my brother because I was too weak to walk by myself. I drink and shower the Tsebel three times a day. For the first two weeks there was no progress. But through time I am getting better. Now I feel good. I am almost cured. This is a miracle. It is miracle of the Tsebel of Endabahadera. I strongly believe in the power of Tsebel. So do most Muslims of Tigray. I am Muslim but I do not think attending Tsebel contradicts Islam. I believe that it is through Allaah's permission that I came here and got cured. Tsebel is nothing but holy water.

Another important point related to traditional healing employed by Muslims is the apparent objection of exorcists. According to Islam, the informants and discussants said, any practitioner of magic is a person who uses the *Shayaateen* (devils). Such a person is a *Kaafir* [unbeliever or betrayer], because he worships both *Allaah* and the *Shaytaan* (devil). As a

result. from spiritual point of view, a *Buda* is not a Muslim but a *Kaafir*. In fact, Muslims of central Tigray believed that there was no Muslim *Buda* in the study area. Even the exorcist whose healing technique is thought to be based on magic is by definition a *Kaafir*. *Shiek Mohammed*. A religious leader from *Neblet*, said "they [*Witches, Budas and exorcists*] followed what the *Shayaateen (devils)* gave out in the lifetime of *Sulaymaan (Solomon)*."

When we compare the traditional healing mechanisms, both preventive and curative, used by Muslims and Christians we can learn many important lessons. For example, even though the evil eye belief in central Tigray seems to have its roots in religion, some aspects of the belief notably the healing system used to combat evil eye attack exhibits both symmetry and deviation from the principles of the official religion. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church condemns every kind of spirit outside the realm of its teaching as Satanic. The church does not officially recognize the *Zar* spirits. As a result they are grossly condemned as *Aganinti* (Satanic) and hence liable to be exorcised in the church. Furthermore, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church does not recognize traditional healing other than its own which involves exorcism with *Tsebel* (holy water) and prayer.

Like Christianity, Islam clearly condemns any form of exorcism and magic except prayer [*Du'a*], *Zemzem*, *Ruqiyah* and reciting the holy *Qur'aan*. Like their Christian counterparts most Muslims applied a number of preventive and curative methods that are supposed to be contrary to the official religion they claim to adhere. Similar to Christians, the Muslims' curative methods used to treat patients supposedly suffering from *Buda* attack are not purely spiritual but a hybrid of religion and tradition. As a result, some of the tradition-based healing practices are against the principles of the official religion they claim to follow. Moreover, since both Christians and Muslims of central Tigray share more or less common culture, history, tradition, and social circumstances, they applied similar and sometimes identical

healing method. Even the slight difference in the religion based /spiritual/ healing system is best characterized by symmetry than contradiction.

This similarity and symmetry of the healing methods used by Muslims and Christians is not an exception but a manifestation of the overall similarity of the living style of the two religious groups. It shows the power of cultural diffusion and tradition. It also indicates the closeness, acquaintance, and harmonized coexistence of Muslims and Christians. Haji kemal, expressively said:

We [Christians and Muslims] share common history, tradition, and culture. The way we lead our life and the way we attribute and handle the challenges and misfortunes of life are almost identical. We are brothers and sisters. Though we follow different faiths, it has minimal impact on our inter group social intercourse. The religious difference is nominal. In practice it is difficult to differentiate Muslims and Christians for their way of life is so similar and they are closely acquainted to each other. I can say that we are half Muslim-half Christian. This is in fact a peculiar feature of our society. So never get surprised when you see similarity in our traditional healing practices for we share common perception about the causation of illness and its treatment. Never get surprised when you get Muslims in Christian Tsebel or in the Debtera house. Never get surprised when you get Christians taking medicine from a Muslim Fuqra. Never get surprised when my neighbor Christian comes to rescue my child, by exorcism and prayer, who is suffering from Buda attack. Never get surprised that my trusted friend is a Christian. I do not think that I am contradicting my religion. Instead I firmly believe that I am exercising one of the crucial principles of Islam, the religion of peace, by peacefully coexisting with my fellow Christians.

No one can agree more than this. That elderly person seems to have sufficiently justified why the healing practices used by the two religious groups are best characterized by similarity and symmetry.

Note that the aforementioned traditional preventive and curative techniques directed at *Buda* are not always successful. The *nay Buda Meklakeli* [anti evil eye] and *Nay Buda Medhanits* [*Buda* medicine] is not sufficient and a lot of people supposed to be eaten by *Buda* have died. Moreover, it has to be noted that it is not rarely that biological diseases are wrongly attributed to *Buda*. A couple of years ago, Asfaw, now a university instructor, got sick due to malaria. However, his parents suspected that he is eaten by a *Buda*. Then a *Debtera* was called to

perform exorcism to drive out the *Buda*. However there was no improvement. Latter, as per the pressure of his friends, class mates and teachers he was taken to a nearby health center. Then the physician told them that he was suffering from powerful malaria and was on the verge of death. Thanks to the effort of the physicians he survived. (Surprisingly, Asfaw told me that he strongly believes in the power of the *Buda* and has broken up a relationship with his girl friend from Axum because he was, in the mean while, informed that she is *Buda*).

Research participants indicated that it is totally forbidden to apply modern medicine in treating an illness supposedly caused by *Buda* attack. Informants of this study indicated that many, though quantitative study is needed to get the accurate percentage or number, people, both Christians and Muslims, of central Tigray firmly believed that modern medicine like tablets, surgeries, injections etc don't help but can only worsen the illness. Therefore, if the illness is believed to be caused by a *Buda*, no one dares to go or to take the patient to health center or hospital. An in-depth interviewee, said:

If a person is eaten by a Buda s/he should never be taken to modern medicine. The Buda spirit is antagonistic to modern medicine and hence will immediately punish the victim by killing him. Especially syringe injection is devastating. If a Buda victim is taken to hospital and given syringe injection, you have to be sure that s/he will die immediately. To my knowledge almost all Buda victims who have been mistakenly admitted to modern medicine have died. So applying modern medicine is not an option in treating Buda induced illness. Modern medicine cannot prevent or heal such type of illness that are caused by supernatural spirits. Of course everyone knows that.

Concerning the effect of *Buda* belief in the people's attitude towards modern medicine,

Solomon, a health officer and manager of a health center in Werieleke *Wereda*, explained

According to the people's perception about Buda, Buda attack can only be treated by traditional and spiritual method. It is widely believed that if a Buda victim took a modern medicine, especially in the form of syringe injection, s/he will immediately die. As a result, if the illness is attributed to Buda attack, the patient will never be taken to hospital. Instead they apply traditional medicine. Due to this reason many people suffering from bodily or natural diseases are being kept at home. There are a lot of diseases where the symptoms are similar to the supposed symptoms of what they call Buda attack. After all there is no Buda.

The information collected from nurses working in the health center indicated that so many people suffering from different biological diseases are kept at home and treated traditionally and spiritually, most of the time unsuccessfully. Even though there is gradual change, the belief is so strong and deep rooted and the people are so rigid to ignore the tradition and hence the rate of progress is slow. Even though the small and slow attitudinal changes among the youth and educated segments of the population that can partially be attributed to expansion of education, modern medicine, urbanization should be acknowledged and appreciated, it should not be exaggerated. The fact on the ground is that the majority of the population of the study area is illiterate peasants and hence the belief is still widespread and the rate of progress is slow and unsatisfactory.

Chapter Five

Summary

Peoples' life and their relationships with each other are affected by many factors. Belief system is one of those factors that have a paramount effect on peoples' life. Belief in the evil eye complex is one of the beliefs which shapes many peoples' social life and their health seeking behavior. Researches indicate that even though evil eye belief is present in all parts of the world, it is most widespread in sub Saharan Africa. Ethiopia is one of the countries where belief in the evil eye complex, commonly called *Buda*, is pervasive. This study aimed at discussing the *Buda* belief and its implication on the life of the people of central Tigray. It discussed the *Buda* and its two important implications: the widespread use of traditional healing methods, and the marginalization of the alleged *Budas*.

Tigray society is rigidly divided into *Chewas* [Pure boned people] who occupy the highest social position and the non *Chewas* [Impure boned people] which include *Barya*[slave], *Buda*[evil eyed], *Hamyen* [lalibela], *Wata* [Singer], and *Qomata* [Leper] who occupy the bottom one. Among the non *Chewas*, the *Budas* are the most despised, hated, feared and marginalized people and they occupy the lowest position/status in the community. The belief on *Buda* is the main, though not the only, reason behind the rigid boundary between the honored-agriculturalist-*Chewa* majority and the despised-craft working-*Buda* minority. It is the central ideology behind the lowest status and prestige of the *Budas* in central Tigray.

The belief about *Buda* is very old in its history, pervasive in its coverage, and far-reaching in its implication. *Budas* are believed to be naturally evil and envious people. They are thought to have been empowered by evil spirits and determined to 'eat' or attack people. The *Budas* are believed to have supernatural power and conceived of using evil spirits against other people. The *Buda* is said to cause many problems on people, domestic animals, crops and other agricultural products. *Budas* are thought to cause many illnesses and deaths using

different mystical techniques. The techniques of attack require the magical use of gaze, herbs and animals notably hyena. They are thought to have a special gift of glancing at others and attacking. It is widely believed that *Budas* cause illnesses like madness, anxiety, mutism, visual impairment, impotence, sterility, disorder in menstruation, problems in pregnancy and child birth, deficient breast milk, etc. Young, wealthy, beautiful, shy, and brilliant individuals are thought to be the most vulnerable to *Buda* attack. People who have quarrel or special relation with *Buda* are also thought to be very susceptible to attack. A person is highly likely to be 'eaten' by a *Buda* when the *Buda* sees fear, worry, or anxiety in his potential victim. In addition, there are people who are easily pierced by evil eye [*Biayni Seb Ziwgai*].

For the people of central Tigray, identifying the allegedly *Buda* person is not too difficult. It is not too difficult because the area is predominantly rural and every villager knows each other very much. Since being *Buda* is a hereditarily ascribed quality, it is not difficult to identify *Buda* people just by tracing their lineage. Occupation is also used to identify the *Buda*. Historically, for various reasons, craft working was exclusively engaged by *Buda* people. Accordingly, by common sense craft work people (artisans) are believed to be *Budas*. In addition to lineage and occupation, *Budas* can be identified by their presumed peculiar physical features.

Various points have been forwarded by the *Chewas* as the main reasons of the *Budas* to attack other people. Feeling of jealousy or envy and the need for domestic servant added with the inherently evil nature (being agents of devil) of the *Budas* is considered to be the main rationale behind the *Budas*' determined pulse to attack or 'eat' people.

The study found that the *Chewas* believed the *Budas* have different methods of attack. One method of attack is, the *Buda* person finding a victim, twisting the root of a certain plant or herb and forming a loop with this root until the victim dies. The second, probably the most

common, method of attack involves giving the evil eye gaze to the victim and then waiting for his death. Thirdly, the *Buda* people can change themselves, with the help of a mystical herb, in to hyenas and roam the village at night and 'eat' people. As to the destiny of dead person allegedly eaten by *Buda*, it is believed that the attacker would mysteriously reincarnate the victim by taking the dead body out of grave. After reincarnated the victim is said to be subjected to hard labor for seven solid years, after which the soul is formally released and the body disintegrates. *Buda* attack is the most feared sickness in the society not only as a deadly disease but as an expected burden/slavery/ after death.

People of central Tigray have developed different preventive and curative techniques of combating the *Buda*. These include making prayers, using holy water [*Tsebel* among the Christians and *Zamzam* among the Muslims], reciting spiritual scriptures like the *Qura'an* and the Holy Bible, visiting the tombs of saints, wearing *Kitabs*, etc. Cultural rituals like shaving half head, wearing *Hijaab*, avoiding physical encounter with *Budas* etc are also some of the preventive measures taken by the people. Traditional medicines locally called *Nay Buda Mekelakeli* and *Nay Buda Medhanit* [medicine against *Buda*], and traditional healers like *Debteras*, *Tenquali* and other exorcists play a crucial role in the healing process. This research found that of all the traditional healing methods *Buda Milkak* /exorcism/ is the most commonly used curative measure while wearing *Kitab* and making prayer are the most popular preventive techniques.

In central Tigray, exorcism as traditional method of dealing with *Buda* attack has had a far-reaching consequence upon the life of *Budas*. Apart from healing the victims it has a big implication in the life of the *Budas* in general and the relationship between the *Chewas* and *Budas* in particular. It is a cultural practice by which the bearer of the evil eye or *Buda* is said to be identified and the spirit driven out. It is a process through which name of the suspect is

revealed and hence could result in physical torture and killing of the suspects. It is known that each town or village with *Buda* population usually singles out some individuals to identify them as most dangerous *Buda*. These are so categorized when different victims repeatedly mention their names in the exorcism process. Once identified such person as *Wana Belaieti* [chief eaters], they are always in fear of physical torture, humiliation and even being killed.

Even though it is known that the *Budas* are despised social category, whether these people were originally part of the majority or migrants who live as 'guests' among the 'host' society needs further studies. However, from the majority's point of view '*Buda*' people were not ethnically part of Tigray society. The dominant belief is that *Budas* were different in creation and origin and have non Tigrayan origin. Apart from their separate origin and their alleged evil deeds, the myth about their being cursed as traitors and betrayers of Jesus Christ has highly contributed to their marginalized and despised position. Regarding the peoples' perception of craft workers in general and *Budas* in particular, they are mystified to appear secretive, magical, envious, and evil.

However, the *Budas* view themselves as ordinary human beings. *Budas* reject the dominant view of categorical difference between themselves and the *Chewa* people. Rather they consider themselves ethnically, religiously, and socially part of Tigray society. They seem to believe that group boundaries maintained by the dominant group were artificially created against them. In practice, however, they seem to have developed, though loose, a sort of group belongingness that might have been reinforced by the feeling of rejection by the mainstream society. Yet, most of the alleged *Budas* declare the beliefs, myths and stories maintained against them as false and ill will that resulted from backwardness and illiteracy of the society. However, contrary to their will and claim, the *Budas* are despised, hated, discriminated, stereotyped, excluded and marginalized.

The majority group avoids or tries to avoid, implicitly and explicitly, physical contact with the *Buda* people. Accordingly, the belief system is regulating the category based relationship for the threat of *Buda* attack is ever present possibility. Therefore, the *Chewas* claim it is logical and practical that they were not accepted as part of the majority nor were they allowed to participate in mainstream social life. Social interaction has been restricted, in terms of mixed marriage, friendship, neighborhood ties, residential integration etc. The *Chewa* people reject friendship bonds with *Budas* since they believe that evil eye bearers may eat them. Thus, in whatever form, social attachment with *Buda* people has been avoided as much as possible.

This study found that intermarriage is the most restricted social tie between members of the *Buda* and *Chewa* categories. Two forces seem to have been in action against cross marriage: fear of *Buda* attack and huge gap in social status. Keeping the pureness of one's descent by means of avoiding marriage ties with such 'contaminating' people is highly emphasized. Moreover, hereditary craft persons are not welcome at social events, personal and public ceremonies. The *Budas* are not welcomed in the formation of social ties, friendship, *Aliginet* [God father / mother bond], *Tub mitbab* [sucking from the breast], *Mewsibo* [affinal tie] etc. Apparently, they may not need all these as individuals for they know that they may not be accepted by the *Chewas* and hence *Budas* are forced to exclude themselves from such type of intergroup relationships.

Furthermore, members of the *Buda* people are not welcomed or encouraged to assume political position in administrative institutions. Since, in central Tigray, access to political power highly depends on social status determined by birth, *Budas* who occupy the lowest status are politically disempowered. Even though the 1974 revolution contributed a lot in upgrading the political role and participation of the *Budas* and other minorities, yet it remains far behind the *Chewas*'. They encounter many obstacles. Assuming political offices and other

related leadership positions is very difficult for them. Though fear of legal repercussion has halted the open opposition of the *Chewa's* against the *Budas*, there is still implicit discouragement that pushes the *Budas* to withdraw themselves from leadership roles.

Religiously, the Christian *Budas* are also excluded from free spiritual involvement and participation. Like other social events and gatherings, they are not welcomed in prayers and other religious ceremonies. They are not allowed to assume position in the hierarchy of the church. Irrespective of the religious knowledge they have, *Budas* are not encouraged to be priests for they are believed to be impure and traitors of Jesus Christ. Even though one's position in the political and church apparatus are the two very important sources of prestige, *Budas* have been highly excluded from both spheres. However, unlike Christians, there is no religious discrimination of *Budas* among Muslims, for the Muslim community of the study area believed there was no *Buda* Muslim.

In terms of economy, the 1974 land reform established equality regarding access to land. The land reform has significantly improved the economic life of *Budas* and there is no significant difference in the income of the *Budas* and the non *Budas*. As a result of the redistribution of land, most *Budas* have abandoned their former means of livelihood. Consequently, the number of crafter workers has considerably decreased in rural areas. Yet, the *Budas* are viewed in such a way that they are branded with various sorts of foul languages and constitute the lower social stratum. The inferior status of *Budas* could be attributed to historical and social constructionist underpinnings that were designed to maintain manipulative relationship in the whole society.

To sum up, the socio-cultural and religious aspects have been the most persuasive means of ensuring exclusion of *Budas* by the *Chewas*. It is found that some of the restrictions like marriage are still as defiantly established as they were a couple of decades ago. Their

marginalization is justified and supported by folktales, myths, proverbs and songs. Derogatory, pejorative terms and phrases that express contempt and hatred are common in the vocabulary of prejudice against this class of people. Various pejorative terms like *Buda*, *Tebib*, *Haguadi*, *ketkati*, hyena, potter, are commonly used to refer to *Buda* people. Even though their economic situation has significantly risen, social prestige and respect seems to be very far from the reach of the *Budas*. All in all, the *Budas* have been, and still are but to a lesser degree, spatially segregated, economically disadvantaged, politically disempowered, socially excluded and culturally subordinated.

Yet, certain improvements, as compared to the past, have been materialized in the lives of *Budas*. The expansions of modern education, modern medicine and the legal and political reforms have contributed their part to the recent decline of the belief and consequent improvement in the socio- cultural status of the *Budas*. Especially in the towns, growing urbanization and increased movement of people and hence anonymity and heterogeneity of urban dwellers added with decreased religiosity of urban people, as compared to rural people, has slightly weakened the belief. The political and legal reforms has also changed in favor the alleged *Budas* and other marginalized groups that outright and overt discrimination has been outlawed. As a result, the *Budas* of central Tigray are leading by far better life than they used to lead half a century back. The belief is fading out gradually and the alleged *Budas* are getting, though slowly, integrated into the mainstream society. Thanks to the land reform, the *Budas* have changed from craft workers to land owning farmers with additional craft skills.

As craft worker-farmers the traditional interdependence with the dominant group has changed from craft service-subsistence exchange to commodity exchange relationship. Unlike in the past, craft workers come to the market as independent commodity producers and with better bargaining power. This despised occupational group is abandoning craftwork and is losing one of its important distinctive features that separate it from the farming majority. Thus, in

terms of economic behavior the craft working community seems to be in a process of 'melting' into the majority peasantry. In urban areas, due to the growing expansion of micro and small scale enterprises like ironworking, garage, wood work etc, the traditional craft work is being absorbed rapidly.

Whether economic independence and the change in occupational status from craftwork to farming could totally remove the group boundary to the extent of total integration remains speculative until further research is done. This study has shown that craftwork was the most defining occupational mark of the *Budas*. Moreover, economic alienation, notably land alienation was also a contributing factor, though only secondary to the belief, for the *Budas'* lower socio economic status. Thus, the actual impact of the recent occupational change in the integration of *Budas* needs to be studied in depth. However, it is possible to conclude, based on the findings of this study, the role of craftwork as an important mark of difference is diminishing. So if they continue to abandon the profession, one source of stigma is going to be eliminated leading to better degree of integration of craft workers to the mainstream society. In fact, the *Budas* of contemporary central Tigray, if not honored, are not as despised and hated as they used to be few decades back. Even though it seems to take considerable period of time, the recent changes are promising that the future of this despised and marginalized group looks bright.

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Interview Guide and Focus group discussion checklist

I. Interview Guide for *Chewa* key informants

Section One

Demographic Information of informants

1. Name (fictitious) -----
2. Sex -----
3. Age -----
4. Family size -----
5. Religion -----
6. Marital status -----
7. Educational Status -----
8. Occupation -----

Section two

Origin of the *Buda*, the *Buda* belief, and community's perception of *Buda*

- What life looks like in the community
- Historical origin of the belief and the *Buda* people: where, how, when, why it emerged
- Who are *Budas* and how they are identified: peculiar characteristics of *Budas*
- The depth(strength) and magnitude of the belief
- The Community's perception about the *Buda*: attitude towards *Budas*
- Trend of the belief and attitude towards *Budas*: past, present, and future prospects
- The factors that contributed for the spread and pervasiveness of the belief
- The alleged extraordinary powers of the *Buda*: how it is acquired and transmitted
- The evil deeds that are allegedly caused by the *Buda*

Section three

The social life of the *Budas*: extent and form of discrimination and marginalization

- The nature of social relationship between *Budas*(minority) and non *Budas*(majority)
- The *Budas* involvement in different social events and organizations
- Community's reaction towards their involvement
- Extent and form of marginalization and exclusion against the *Budas*: the trend of exclusion from past to present and its future prospects
- The status of the *Budas* in the community
- The derogatory terms used to refer to *Buda* people
- Areas of life where the discrimination and exclusion is very high and apparent
- The *Budas* participation in spiritual activities and affinal (marriage) ties
- The community's marriage(mate selection) system Vis a Vis the *Budas*
- Rationales behind the exclusion and marginalization of the *Budas*
- The effect of exclusion and discrimination on the life of the *Budas* and on the life of the *Chewas*
- The coping mechanisms adopted by *Budas* to overcome the effects of exclusion

Section four

Traditional healing practices employed to deal with *Buda* caused illnesses

- List the problems allegedly caused by the *Buda*: especially health problems
- The target, rationale and *Mounds opprundi* of *Buda*'s attack: Why the *Budas* attack people?
How and when they do it?
- Who are the most vulnerable to be attacked by *Buda*? Why they are vulnerable
- Informant symptoms of being attacked(diseased) by *Buda*
- The materials, procedures, rituals, and personnel involved in the healing practice
- *Buda* induced illness vis a vis modern medicine

II. Guideline for In-depth interview with *Chewa* general informants

Section One: Demographic Information of in-depth interview informants

1. Name (fictitious) -----
2. Sex -----
3. Age -----
4. Family size -----
5. Religion -----
6. Marital status -----
7. Educational Status -----
8. Occupation -----

Section two: *Buda* belief, inter group and interpersonal relationship between *Budas* and *Chewas*, and exclusion of *Budas*

- How life seems to appear in your village?
- How do you see the relationship of different social groups (*Chewas*, non *Chewas* etc) in your neighborhood?
- What is your perception of *Buda*? Do you believe in *Buda*?
- How do you see the implication of the *Buda* belief on your way of life?
- Do you think the *Buda* have extraordinary power and ability to attack people?
- Do you think that the *Budas* have the power to cause the problems they are accused of?
- How, where, why, and when did the *Buda* emerge?
- How do you identify the *Buda*? Do they have peculiar features? If yes, please discuss

- Would you explain some of the evil deeds of *Budas*?
- Whom do you think are the most vulnerable to be attacked by *Buda*?
- Do you have friends from the *Budas*?
- How do people (family or relatives) from the dominant group say as a result of the relationship?
- How do you perceive the attitude of the non *Budas* towards the *Budas*?
- What is the outlook of people in your neighborhood about the *Budas*?
- What do you think is the impact of the belief on the life and social relationships between *Budas* and non *Budas*?
- To what extent do you think the *Budas* are stigmatized and marginalized?
- What are the possible reasons for their marginalization?
- What are the areas of life where the marginalization is high and most apparent?
- Would you please discuss some of the derogatory terms used to refer *Buda* people?
- How do you think these offensive terms affect their social relationship?
- What would you suggest to improve the attitude of the *Chewas* towards the *Budas*?

III. Interview guide for In-depth interview (general and key informants) with *Budas* (minority group)

Section One: Demographic Information of *Buda* in-depth interview informants

1. Name (fictitious) -----
2. Sex -----
3. Age -----
4. Family size -----
5. Religion -----
6. Marital status -----
7. Educational Status -----
8. Occupation -----

Section two

Buda belief, inter group and interpersonal relationship between *Budas* and *Chewas*, and exclusion of *Budas*

- How is life going in your village?
- How do you make a living?
- How do you explain family relationships inside and with surrounding neighborhood?
- What is your perception of *Buda*?
- Would you explain people's belief about the *Buda*?
- Do you think the *Buda* have extraordinary power peculiar to them?
- Do you think that the *Budas* have the power to cause the problems they are accused of?
- How do you see the implication of the belief on your way of life?

- What do you think is the impact of the belief on the life and social relationships between *Budas* and *Chewas*?
- Do you have friends from the dominant/*Chewa*/ group?
- How do you explain your relation with them?
- How do people react to your relation with the *Chewas*?
- Do you have *Edir*, *Ekub*, *Mahiber* and the like with the *Chewas*?
- How do you see the outlook of members of these institutions towards you?
- Do you participate in funerals, weddings, and other social events with those dominant groups? If yes how do you get their reaction to your participation?
- To what extent do you consider that you are in activities that your friends from other groups are engaged in?
- How do you explain your status in relation to the existing stratification in your community?
- Do you think that you experience stigma and discrimination as a result of your identity/by being *Buda*?
- Would you explain the extent and form of the stigma and discrimination?
- Would you explain please, in which areas of life is the stigma and discrimination very high and apparent?
- What are the factors that contribute for the low status and prestige of *Budas* in the community?
- How do you explain the marriage system of *Budas* in comparison to other social groups?
- Do you see any distinct traditional religion and ritual of the *Budas* as distinct from other groups?
- What should be done to increase participation in social activities and improve the status of *Budas* in the society?

IV. Focus group discussion checklist

Focus group discussion with *Chewas* (majority group)

Section One: Demographic Information of discussants

1. Name (fictitious) -----
2. Sex -----
3. Age -----
3. Family size -----
4. Religion -----
5. Marital status -----
6. Educational Status -----
7. Occupation -----

Section two: peoples' perception of *Budas* and their marginalization

- The Community's perception about *Buda*
- The depth and magnitude of the belief
- The evil deeds the *Budas* are accused of doing
- The social relationship between *Budas* and *Chewas*
- The *Budas*' social network with the different social groups
- *Budas* involvement in social events and institutions
- The form and extent of marginalization and discrimination the *Budas* face: trend of exclusion from past to present and its future prospect
- The areas of life where the exclusion is very high: mate selection and spiritual life
- The impact of the exclusion on the life of the *Buda*
- The coping mechanisms adopted by *Budas* to overcome the exclusion
- Curative and protective measures/ healing practices employed to challenge the *Buda*
- Recommendations to improve the participation and status of *Budas* in the community

Profile of interviewees

	Male	Female	Total	<i>Buda</i>	<i>Chewa</i>	Total
Key informants	11	5	16	5	11	16
General informants	12	8	20	5	15	20
Total	23	13	36	10	26	36

List of Key informants

No	Name	Age	Sex
1	Gebremeskel	66	M
2	Asqualu	58	F
3	Aregawi	56	M
4	Wolday	67	M
5	Kahsay	66	M
6	Tideg	42	F
7	Tesfay	71	M
8	Gebray	66	M
9	Tekle	67	M
10	Gebre-medhin	81	M
11	Hailu	93	M
12	Measho	32	F
13	Kahsa	60	F
14	Assefach	47	F
15	Kemal	55	M
16	Berihu	76	M

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, it has not been presented in any form in any other universities and that all sources the materials used in this thesis have been dully acknowledged.

Declared by:



26 Nov. 2012

Mulugeta Birhane

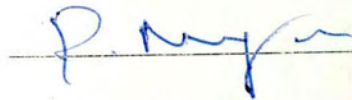
Signature

Date

Signature Date

The candidate

Confirmed by:



12-11-12

P. Murugan (PHD)

Signature

Date

Advisor