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Puberty Rites for Girls (*Ke Gehaja*) among the Gumuz of
Northwestern Ethiopia: Practices, Developmental and
Psychosocial Contributions

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that **PUBERTY RITES FOR GIRLS (Ke Gehaja) AMONG THE GUMUZ OF NORTHWESTERN ETHIOPIA:PRACTICES, DEVELOPMENTAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of a complete reference and that this work has not been submitted for any degree at any institution.

Candidate's Name: _____

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Abstract

This study was an investigation of Girls' puberty rites (Ke Gehaja) of the Gumuz and explored its developmental and psychosocial contributions. The study was conducted in three selected sites of Dibate District of Metekel Zone by using ethnographic qualitative design and data were collected from fifty-five participants through in-depth interviews, focus groups and participant observation. Samples for the study were adolescent schoolgirls, mothers, elderly men and experts from Governmental and non-governmental Organizations. Participants for the study were selected by using non-probability sampling techniques and data were collected through thirty-two in-depth interviews and six focus group discussions. The following developmental and psychosocial themes emerged from data analysis: Ke Gehaja rite practices; phases of Ke Gehaja ;perceived meanings and contributions of Ke Gehaja rite; pubertal development and menarche; emotional reaction to menarche; stages in the Gumuz female life cycle; developmental cues for the transition from Didea to Daguna stage; developmental tasks of a pre-menarcheal Gumuz girl; purposes of Ke Gehaja; the development of identity and intimacy by a Gumuz female; psychosocial benefits of Ke Gehaja rite; lessons of morality, sexuality and life skills; menstrual hygiene and taboos; and future prospects of Ke Gehaja. In general, the study explored that Ke Gehaja is perceived to have positive developmental and psychosocial contributions by initiated girls and mothers. Nevertheless, non-initiated girls perceived the ritual as a harmful traditional practice. The findings of the study have implication for the development of identity, marriage and psychosocial wellbeing. It has also implication for the development of indigenous theories of development.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BGRS: Benishangul Gumuz Regional State

HIV: Human Immuno Deficiency Virus

BGRFSS: Benishangul Gumuz Region Food and Security Service

RPP: Ritual Process Paradigm

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

GLOSSARY OF GUMUZ TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

Andiha: Locally made apparatus used by Gumuz women and girls to carry wood and other things on their shoulders.

Danfega: Old men and women

Enga: Porridge

Chicha: Soft white material made from a tree root by girls as a sanitary pad during menstruation.

Daguna: an Adolescent girl

Dahabas: Granaries of the Gumuz

Dide'a: Child

Didea'tsia: *Infant*

Dibangua: Clan name for those Gumuz People living in Qido Kebelle

Dinga: Material in which Gumuz women distil kiya

Duminda: Clan name for those Gumuz people who live in Geerz kebele

Entase: Oval-shaped utensil made from clay for cooking

Ganza: Gumuz female in Middle adulthood stage

Gehaja: Menstruation

Geshera: an Adolescent boy

Gifqa: Homemade cosmetics made by mixing red soil and oily seeds

Jibita: a small hut that is used by girls during menstruation

'Kebelle': is an Amharic term referring to a political administration consisting of different villages

Ke gehaja: Ceremony prepared following menarche by pubertal girls

Kima: a type of sauce used for sweetening food by the Gumuz

Kiyaa: Locally brewed beer

Liba: Skirt-like clothing worn by Gumuz females

Machiquma : healing ritual in which members of a family pass through a hole

Siaya: traditional apparatus made up of wood and netted rope for carrying water and other liquids by females

Tiba: farming tool used by the Gumuz

Wobspega: young adulthood

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The history of puberty rites goes back to the ancient Romans and Greeks. For example, classical sources indicate that the Romans had several stages that characterize transition from childhood to adulthood over the course of which young men were considered to be in a marginalized state and perceived to be dangerous both to themselves and to the society and hence initiating them ritually was mandatory. The practices involved giving military training to young men and making them pass through different ordeals. In those days, boys were transformed to adulthood and reintegrated to the society (Reeve, 2008). But the drawback with classical literature is that it does not mention whether there were similar initiation rites for girls during those days.

In line with the above idea, Hill and Daniels (2008) indicate that rites of passage are universal in the sense that they exist in all societies around the world and throughout history. Similarly, Turner (1967) ensures that rites of passage are found in all societies but tend to reach their maximal expression in small-scale, relatively stable and cyclical societies with less technological innovations. Likewise, Schlegel and Barry (1980) underline that one finds adolescent initiation ceremonies are typical to primitive and small traditional societies than industrial societies. These authors surveyed distribution of adolescent initiation ceremonies by geographical locations and found that these practices were common in Africa, Circum Mediterranean, East Eurasia, Insular Pacific, North America and South America.

Regarding the prevalence, Erickson (2001) states that there are a variety of rites of passage around the world today than ever before. However, he argues that the problem with modern world rites is that they are less inclusive of the community. Erickson notes that without strongly dramatized public events whereby an individual or an entire age cohort moves from one stage to

the next , one cannot tell with certainty when a girl has become a woman or a boy has become a man.

In indigenous African societies, rites are designed to provide a cultural framework for dictating roles and responsibilities of adulthood that will benefit the individual and the sponsoring community (Adegoke, 2001). Among them are the Lebollo of South Africa, the Ndembu and Bemba of Zambia (Turner, 1967) the Kaguru of Tanzania, the Gisu of Uganda and the ‘Dipole’ among the Krobos of Ghana to mention a few (Boakye, 2010).

Through rites of passage set up by the African community, people undergo a series of transformative processes that will assist them in their development as human beings (Asante & Mazama, 2009). These writers further describe that life in the African context is a cycle marked by four critical moments: birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Similarly, Muzzangada, (2009) mentions that African indigenous societies employ rituals to move people smoothly through the lifespan and these rites are held during birth, childhood, puberty, marriage and death.

Davis (2011) notes that rites of passage play a central role in African socialization, for demarcating the different stages in an individual’s development as well as in guiding the person's relationships and roles to the broader community. He further elucidates that puberty rites are critical in identity formation and also link the individual to the community.

There had been initiation schools to teach about the traditions of the society to the young generation among many Southern African communities and Lesotho in that they provide the initiates with personality and character (Matobo, Makatsa & Obioha, 2009). These authors further argue that among the Africans in South Africa a male who is not initiated remains for the rest of his life a boy and a female remains a girl. As a result, he/she cannot attain certain privileges in the families and communities of the initiated.

Matobo et al (2009) underline the social significance of initiation rites in that unless a person is initiated, members of the communities including those who are younger than the non-initiated ones have no trust in such individuals for specific tasks. These authors conclude that both the African men and women in South Africa still adhere to cultural practices and go for initiation to attain respect and dignity from their fellows.

African societies developed organized systems of indigenous education, such as the rites of passage in much of Sub Saharan Africa to prepare the young (Uka 1966; Baguma & Aheisibwe, 2011; Pence & Nsamenang, 2008) for future adult roles and responsibilities. Similarly, Manabe (2010) explains that rites of passage practices are important for preparing the next generation for meaningful cultural life and to announce to the community that the initiated boys and girls are ready to be married.

Emphasizing on the multiple purposes of these transitional rituals, Markstrom (2008) indicates that puberty rites are embedded in broader belief systems of cosmological constructions, and have an impact on the initiates and on the whole group. Thus, not only is proper adherence to puberty customs believed to ensure the well-being and longevity of initiates, but those positive impacts are extended to the initiate's group.

African societies employ initiation rites to clearly mark life stage transition and help the young know his/her status, roles and responsibilities. As a result, the African youth appears to have been spared the agonies and fears that so often overshadow adolescence in Western cultures (Boatang, 1983). Boatang further contends that no amount of formal sex education today could be as effective as the initiation ceremonies and these practices are ways of helping the young to avoid the self-doubts that harass many adolescents and adults in the West. Similarly Ramokgopa (2001) contends that African culture regards initiation rites as part and parcel of the beginning and the end

of a particular developmental stage and the rituals serve to confirm the person's social position within the community.

Markstrom, Berman, Sabino and Turner (1998) state that young people experience an enormous amount of ambiguities during the teen years because few boundaries exist between adolescence and adulthood especially in their physical characteristics. To avoid such ambiguities, indigenous societies employ rites of passage. Meanwhile, Markstrom et al are concerned about the absence of ceremonial rites of passage in contemporary societies that mark transition from adolescence to adulthood. As a result, adolescents in these societies have to navigate through a long period of ambiguity in moratorium.

Puberty rite is an interdisciplinary issue and it is seen as fundamental to human growth and development. For example, researchers in the field of psychology and social anthropology explored the significances of this transitional ritual to the psychosocial development of the initiates. To cite evidence, Markstrom (2008) found that girls' puberty rites in North American Indian societies have multiple advantages. These include strengthening ethnic group identification, helping the young to be proud of their own culture, and promoting an understanding of traditions, beliefs, values and practices. Similarly, Boakye (2010) found that puberty rites have psychological and social contributions to the initiate as well as to the community. She indicates that these rites ensure a safe passage of the individual from the stage of childhood to adulthood and are important to his/her psychological well-being and to the structural and functional well-being of the family and the community as a whole.

Puberty rites have been used as organized educational approaches in preparing children for meaningful cultural life throughout Africa and still persist in some communities today (Nsamenang & Tchombe 2011; Kenyatta, 1961). But these scholars argue that following

colonialism, many indigenous African rituals have been distorted and misused. As a result, problems that are common in western cultures are now common among African people. In line with this, Sekyere and Nyamekyea (2012) underline that the indiscriminate borrowing of foreign lifestyles and cultural practices at the expense of the indigenous puberty rites customs have contributed towards sexual immorality among teenagers and the alarming rate of teenage pregnancy among the Akan girls of Ghana.

Grimes (2000) warns that the current lack of puberty rites is an urgent global problem and their absence leads to a serious breakdown in the process of maturing as a person. For example, adolescents of today face more social and psychological problems than their counterparts of past generations because of the disappearance of initiation rites. This author elaborates that in previous generations, society defined expectations and constructed events to promote individual development and culturally defined initiation rites and provided the social needs to adolescents. Therefore, transition from adolescence to adulthood was socially sanctioned and youth had to comply with the social and cultural expectations. In recent days, however, though indigenous people are committed to maintaining their rites of passage especially for adolescents, they face continuous challenges in practicing living traditions. This in turn may create generation gap and individual psychological and social crisis.

Despite the fact that puberty rites play a big role in socializing children based on the social and cultural expectations of a given community, the invasions of modern-style concepts and changes in the economic conditions, social organizations and family structure are in some instances replacing these practices (Adegoke, 2001). Hence, much of the substance of initiation ceremonies, which were closely linked to transition to adulthood have been prohibited by larger political bodies, protested by international human rights groups, or dissolved by the destabilizing forces of globalization (Shell-Duncan & Hernlund, cited in Halley, 2012)

The disappearance of puberty rites has multiple negative outcomes both individually and socially. For example, Bell (1997) warns that the lack of formal puberty rites is contributing to social ills in modern societies. He argues that in the absence of puberty rituals, young girls and boys will not be sufficiently informed about their changing sexuality and about the consequences and responsibilities associated with sexual activity. Similarly, Whiting, Burbank and Ratner (1986) substantiate that premarital pregnancy which was a rare occurrence in indigenous societies in Sub-Saharan Africa is becoming an increasingly common. Likewise, Keith (1964) notes that the increase in substance abuse and violent behavior among today's adolescents can be linked to societies' underutilization of rites of passage. Also, Scott (1998) indicates that because of the absence of puberty rites in modern societies, there is continued financial dependence, residing with parents long after puberty, and lack of significant communal responsibility by young people.

Nowadays, the disappearance of puberty rites has been a big concern not only in modern societies but also in traditional societies too. For example, Sackey (2001) indicates that in Ghana, puberty rites had been denounced earlier. However, in recent days, there has been a concerted public outcry by religious groups, chiefs, and public officials for the restoration of these rites arguing that the abolition of puberty rites has created a vacuum in the moral lives of the youth as manifested in sexual laxity and associated problems. This includes teenage pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

There are existing controversies on how puberty rites practices are perceived among different cultures. For example Santrock (2000) mentions that rites of passage practices have a positive contribution in educating youth in indigenous societies such as in Africa and the Middle East where formal education is not readily available. Conversely, these practices are viewed negatively in the Western culture. The West considers these practices as physically and psychologically harmful to the initiates (Delaney, 1995; Van Vuren & deJongh, 1999 cited in ,Van

Zanden, Crandel & Crandel, 2007). Meanwhile, admonishing the Western views of indigenous puberty rites, Rogoff (2003) argues that people often view the practices of other communities as barbaric and assume that their community's perspective of reality, customs, and conceptions of human nature are the only proper, sensible or civilized ones.

There are also gender biases in previous studies conducted in the area of girls' puberty rites (Kitahara 1984; Paige & Paige, 1981; Halley, 2012; Matobo, et al, 2009). These authors debate that in contrast to the popularity of male puberty rites in cross-cultural research, less attention has been devoted to female puberty rites. Similarly, Montgomery (1974) argues that there is considerably less data on female initiation rituals compared to males'. Likewise, Sasser-Coen (1996) corroborates that menarche which marks female initiation has psychosocial and cultural meanings. But it is pathologized and generally goes uncelebrated and unritualized as a rite of passage.

It is also important to note that there are several studies conducted on initiation rites but the issue has not been sufficiently explored from a psychological perspective. In relation to this Thorpe (1991) mentions that psychology has recently recognized the need of rituals in the lives of all people since these rituals are helpful means of transition from one status in the community to another and to avoid inner fears and confusions. Nonetheless, Best (2010) argues that initiation rite is an interdisciplinary issue commonly dealt across different disciplines including developmental psychology. However, the contribution of initiation rites to the development of an individual has been given less attention by previous researchers and the current study aims to fill this gap.

Ethiopia is a home for many indigenous societies that have various customs, values and child socialization practices. However, most of these practices have not been investigated thoroughly. In fact, some of the cultural practices are not well known and, if known at all, they have not been documented.

Initiation rites are common practices of marking life stage transitions among different societies of Ethiopia. For example, the age grade systems of the Borana Oromo that are enacted in eight year intervals to mark the transition from one age grade level to the next (Kassam, 1999; Hambley, 1937); the whipping contests among the Amhara boys in which they faced off and lacerated each other's faces and bodies (LeVine, 1972); the bull jumping ceremony in the Hamar of South Omo in which an adolescent boy has to perform while a girl is to be whipped with a stick before being permitted to marry; the Luwa cycle among the Sidama boys where the 'Jallas' (initiates) claim adulthood status after circumcision no matter what age group they may be (Hamer, 1996); and the stick fighting ceremony among the Surma young men where 'Tegay' (Young men) are to be transformed to 'Rora' (junior elders) are just a few to mention (Abink, 1998). However, these are mainly life stage transitions for males. But female initiation rites in Ethiopia have been given less attention by previous researchers. In relation to this Sasser-Coen (1996) argues that though menarcheal rite is a crucial juncture between childhood and womanhood and a time for growth and change, it is a relatively little-studied part of women's life-span development.

The Gumuz are one of the traditional people in Ethiopia who maintained their own identities values, customs and traditions for long (Gobana, 1996). Like other indigenous societies, the Gumuz people have sensitive periods across the lifespan development of an individual where rites are held to help the person move from one stage of development to the next. For example, they employ initiation rites to mark female life stage transitions at every critical stage of

development and one of these rites is locally known as *Ke Gehaja* through which a girl is initiated from childhood stage to adolescence following her menarche which in turn has far reaching developmental implication. Thus, the major objective of this research is exploring girls' puberty rites practices and how transition from childhood to adolescence by a pubertal girl is culturally marked and the developmental and social contributions of these rites.

1.2.Statement of the Problem

The first menstruation is a unique developmental event for girls in that it occurs suddenly. However, in contemporary societies, menarche is given little formal recognition or ritualization. Moreover, the meaning of initiation rites for identity development and as initiation into social roles and responsibilities goes unacknowledged in previous studies (Sasser-Coen, 1996). She argues that previous research on the experience of menarche is met with ambivalence and even trauma as a result of the absence of cultural recognition and well-defined rituals surrounding this developmental event. While there is a large body of literature about menarche and menstruation (e.g Delaney, Lupton & Toth 1988; Weideger, 1975), there is only a small research based information about the psychological meaning of menstruation in the lives of girls and women. Besides this, the researcher in the current study could not find similar studies conducted on how initiation rites are perceived among initiated and non-initiated girls.

There is a consensus among scholars that these days, changing economic and social forces have weakened family structures and communities in many indigenous societies. Among these forces, modern education is mentioned to be a major factor. For example, Groce, Mawar and Macnamara (2006) argue that the introduction of modern education into indigenous societies has led adolescents to be away from home and family and this in turn has negatively affected the time and attention given to the teaching of traditional values, practices and beliefs within the family and the community using initiation rites. Groce et al conclude that as a result of decrease of puberty rites ceremonies, there is lengthened 'adolescence' time and other social and psychological problems.

The Gumuz have been practicing girls' puberty rites for long for different psychosocial and spiritual reasons. However, recent changes in the region, including the construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam and the expansion of formal education as well as the influence of religion in their niche are reshaping the cultural environment of the Gumuz. One of the cultural events affected by the social changes is girls' puberty rites.

Informal education offered during girls' initiation rites by the Gumuz parents is believed to have contributions in preventing risks related to sex and delivery, and child care. However, a study conducted by Gobana (1996) on Gumuz people shows that in recent years, problems such as teenage and premarital pregnancies are becoming more common among the Gumuz girls compared to the past. These social problems are perceived to be due to the disappearance of indigenous child socialization practices among which girls' puberty rites (*Ke Gehaja*) is just one. Gobana points out that the disappearance of traditional child socialization practices including *Ke Gehaja* rites could be attributed to the influence of social factors which caused cultural disruption.

Menarche is believed to be an important event in the lifespan development of a Gumuz female. Accordingly the Gumuz initiate a pubertal girl to *Daguna* (adolescence) following this maturational biological event. In other words, menarche marks the girl's sexual maturity to become a woman (Wolde-Selassie, 2004) and this normative developmental event is celebrated ceremonially. The ritual is prepared following the first menstruation by a pubertal girl and it is perceived to be important not only for the initiate but also for the overall wellbeing of her family and the community. However, others consider these ritual practices as inhuman, backward, and harmful and a means of oppressing females. Thus, I believe that the issue has to be explored in detail as perceived by the Gumuz themselves by taking the living experience of women and girls.

Menstrual blood has been feared and considered to be dangerous among the Gumuz. Hence the society pursues a number of practices following the first menstruation by a girl. Some of these practices include making the girl to feed and live separately and not allowing her to enter to the main house until she becomes 'clean' because of the belief that the *missa* (god) of the house will feel angry and destroy the family (Zelalem, Biniyam & Abdissa, 2011). Hence, a menstruating girl is secluded in a separate hut, at least until the end of the menstrual flow. Besides the physical confinement, the menarcheal girl is abstained from touching any object nor will she be involved in daily routines. So, what are the developmental and psychosocial impacts of such beliefs and practices on the girl and why are such practices performed and what are the challenges to these practices today? Thus, I believe that these and other related questions could be answered by exploring the beliefs and practices related to Ke Gehaja from insiders' perspective.

The lack of previous research conducted on girls' puberty rites in Ethiopia as a socialization process and the existing controversies on the impacts of these practices on the normative developmental transition of a girl is one of the basic motivating forces that initiated me to conduct this study. For example, research findings on topics related to puberty rites by Markstrom (2008), Boakye (2010), Maluleke (2001) and Halley (2012) indicate the positive contributions of initiation rites to social identity formation, teaching roles and responsibilities, and serving as a buffer against risky behaviors like teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. To the contrary, Van Vurren & DeJongh cited in Van Zenden et al (2007) view puberty rites practices as harmful and backward ones that cause physical and psychological harm on the initiates. Therefore, I argue that it is essential to explore girls' puberty rites (Ke Gehaja) as perceived by the Gumuz themselves.

With regard to the issue of puberty rites and their developmental contributions in Ethiopia in general and the Gumuz society in particular, I could not find studies done so far. The few

existing studies conducted on Gumuz community deal with some other issues such as harmful traditional practices (Zelalem,Biniyam & Abdissa,2011) , marriage and family life (Kalkidan,2007; Gobana,1996); food and security (BGRFSS,2004), ethnic relations (Wolde-Selassie,2004); history of the Gumuz (Abdussamed ,1995); Gumuz Language (Ahland,2012) ; economic status and role of Gumuz women(Meron, 2010) and so on.

In short, I contend that the Gumuz customs of child socialization practices including girls' puberty rites have been understudied and judged based on others standards. For example, few studies were conducted on the Gumuz community to assess some of the cultural practices of this society. However, these studies have gaps in the sense that they were not context based and subjugated by western values and ideologies and emphasized pathologizing the Gumuz customs and practices of child socialization. For example, two of the research conducted in the area by BGRFSS (2004) and (Zelalem,Biniyam & Abdissa, 2011) categorized practices related to girls' initiation rites , delivery and menstrual customs in this society as harmful ones and should be discontinued .Moreover, these studies did not deeply explore the developmental, social and psychological importance of the practices and the reasons why the Gumuz hold these practices from emic perspective.

In General, I believe that Ke *Gehaja* should be explored based on the philosophies, customs, values, and beliefs of the culture sharing groups. Therefore, in this study I focus on exploring and discussing the developmental and psychosocial contributions of Ke *Gehaja* practices as perceived by girls and mothers, and culture-sharing groups who are involved in the process. Hence, I formulated the following central research questions and sub-questions in order to have a deeper understanding about the issue.

1. What is the Gumuz female life cycle?
 - What are the developmental stages within the Gumuz female life cycle?
 - Which stage of development is perceived to be critical within the life cycle?
 - What are the developmental tasks associated with each stage of development?
 - What are the rituals associated with the transition from one stage of development to the next within the life cycle?

2. What is *Ke Gehaja* to the Gumuz and the developmental cues employed for performing it?
 - What are the meanings and values associated with the ritual?
 - How do initiated and non-initiated girls and mothers perceive *Ke Gehaja*?
 - What are the beliefs, phases, practices and lessons associated with the ritual?
 - How do Gumuz parents know that a girl has to be initiated?
 - How do initiated and non-initiated girls describe their menarcheal experience?

3. What are the contributions of *Ke Gehaja* to a girl?
 - What are the perceived impacts of *Ke Gehaja* on the initiate's self-concept, self-image, and identity?
 - What developmental issues are communicated through this ritual?
 - What are the perceived psychosocial advantages and disadvantages of being initiated?
 - What are the psychosocial problems perceived to occur as a result of not being initiated?

4. How is girls' *Ke Gehaja* rite being impacted by the current social changes?
 - What are the current challenges of the ritual?
 - How are parents coping with these challenges?
 - What are the future prospects of the ritual?

5. What lessons could be drawn from *Ke Gehaja*?

1.3. Objectives

This study sought to explore girls' puberty rites (Ke Gehaja) among the Gumuz and the developmental and social contributions of the practices that accompany these rites. In specific terms, the study aims to:

- Explore perceived meanings of Ke Gehaja held by initiated and non-initiated women and girls
- Analyze the developmental contributions of the events and practices of Ke Gehaja.
- Identify the developmental markers employed by the Gumuz to initiate girls from Didea to Daguna.
- Identify critical stages of development within the female life cycle.
- Describe the processes and practices involved in Ke Gehaja ceremonies
- Explore developmental tasks of a Gumuz girl
- Identify the current challenges of Ke Gehaja practices among the Gumuz
- Explore developmental issues communicated through the ritual
- Investigate the contribution of ke Gehaja practices to the psychosocial development of young girls

1.4. Significance

There have been a number of studies under the topic of rites of passage. However, most of these studies were mainly limited to other disciplines than to the field of developmental psychology except a few such as the one done by Markstrom and Iborra (2003) and Markstrom (2008) on North American Indians. Hence, I believe that the current research will have significant contribution in exploring the developmental and social contribution of girls' puberty rites of the Gumuz (*Ke Gehaja*) as a process of developmental transition. Besides, the study will have

contribution in exploring how Gumuz parents help pubertal girls in achieving their culturally defined developmental tasks and responsibilities.

There have been changes and disappearances of traditional child socialization practices including *Ke Gehaja* among the Gumuz and thus I argue that this research provides a valuable record of these child socialization practices. The study will also have contribution in investigating girls' puberty rite practices, which are indigenous to the Gumuz. Moreover, the study will be useful in exploring how the Gumuz society is struggling to maintain its unique customs and practices of socializing girls against the ongoing social changes and transmit its values and traditions to the next generation as well as preserving them against the intrusion of non-indigenous customs.

Last but not least, the study will have some contribution to the formulation of possible future research questions on customs of child socialization practices among the Gumuz. Conducting this study will also contribute to the academic literature on puberty rites within the discipline of developmental psychology and other related fields that commonly deal with the issue.

1.5.Delimitation

Rite of passage is a broad term that marks transition from one stage of development to the next across the lifespan and the Gumuz have rituals done during birth, naming, puberty, marriage and death. But, dealing with all these rites of passage is beyond the scope of the current study. Hence, this study is delimited to exploring only girls' puberty rites of the Gumuz (*Ke Gehaja*) and the developmental and social contributions. The study is also delimited in place in the sense that it aims to investigate the issue in three purposefully selected rural and urban settings of Dibati District, that is Dibati town, Geerz and Qido 'Kebelles' in Metekel zone.

1.6. Definition of terms

Puberty rites refer to the culturally-endorsed and adult-supervised rituals designed to mark life stage transitions from childhood (*Didea*) to adolescence (*Daguna*) following the experience of menarche by pubertal girls.

Lifecycle in the context of this study refers to the different stages of development across the lifespan development of a Gumuz female. This includes, Dideatsia, Didea, Daguna, Gafa, Mitichipiga and Ganza stages.

Ke Gehaja is a Gumuz term referring to a ritual following menarche by a pubertal girl. The ritual marks the end of childhood and the beginning of adolescence in a Gumuz female.

Practices in this study refer to all the events and activities that are performed following the first menstruation by a pubertal girl. In other words, it refers to all the activities performed by the initiate and significant others from the beginning to the end of the ritual.

The term *initiate* in the context of the current research refers to a girl who is undergoing in the process of transformation from childhood to adolescence.

Developmental contribution in this context is defined as the contribution of girls' puberty rites practices on the development of the initiate's self-concept, self-esteem, self-confidence, pride, sexuality, life skills, and so on.

Psychosocial contribution refers to personal and communal benefits of girls' puberty rites ceremonies and may comprise of the significance of the ritual in facilitating social integration, moral development, marriage, social identity, forming relationships, and so on.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Rites of passage

Rite of passage refers to any ritual marking a transition in the life of an individual from one status to another (Manabe, 2010). Similarly, Boakye (2010) defines it as a set of rituals which marks the passing of one stage of life and entry into another one and includes birth, puberty, marriage, and death rites.

The term 'rite of passage' first emerged in social anthropology early in 1909 by Arnold Van Gennep to refer to the ritual process accompanying the movement of people from one social status to another, as from being a boy to a man or from being a girl to a mother (Davies, 1994). Gardiner and Kosmutzki (2002) also define rite of passage as a ceremony or ritual that recognizes an individual's movement from one status to another. Similarly, Groce, Mawar and, Macnamara (2006) state that rite of passage ceremony is strongly dramatized public event whereby an individual moves from one status to the next and held to demarcate major life events.

Groce et al mention the major rites of passage to be birth, marriage and puberty. In many cultures, rites of passage occur with entry into puberty, giving the young person new roles and new status within the community (Newman and Newman, 2012).

2.2. Puberty rites

Puberty rites are the most important of all transitions, providing the background and often the patterns for all later passages (Mahdi, 1996). Likewise, Reeve (2008) mentions that a Puberty rite is the life cycle ritual that marks the young person's transition to adulthood. The onset of the growth spurt, breast buds in females and pubic hair are relevant markers of the beginning of puberty while the offset is bounded by the end of secondary sexual characteristic development (Johnson, 1983). On the other hand, there are controversies about the meanings and timing of puberty rites. For example, the majority of the sources I reviewed define puberty rites as a transition ritual from childhood to adulthood. To the contrary, some writers such as Halley (2012) indicate that puberty rites are associated with the transition from childhood to adolescence. Halley argues that though puberty rites often occur around pubertal time, they primarily focus on social transition as opposed to biological one. Similarly, Genep (1960) and Kakungwe (2003) explain that though rites tend to occur around puberty, the physical changes of puberty are rarely the focus of the rites, because initiation rites may occur before or after puberty depending on the specific goals and meanings associated with this transition. In short, whether puberty rites occur during, before or after pubertal time and whether these rites demarcate transition from childhood to adolescence or childhood to adulthood is still open to discussion.

The period of transition from adolescence to young adulthood in indigenous societies is often accompanied by rites of passage (Paloutzian and Park, 2005). These societies are widely known to utilize rites of passage for transitioning girls and boys into adulthood. With regard to the prevalence, Schlegel and Barry (1980) made a global investigation in 182 societies worldwide, and found that 52% of them have initiation rites for boys, girls or both.

Weisfeld (1997) states that in numerous societies, adolescent rites of passage mark developmental transitions across the life cycle. He further elaborates that these rituals serve to remove the adolescent from his/her normal sphere in society, ingrain important cultural knowledge about adult roles and expectations, and then welcome him/her back with new status, identity, and responsibilities.

Rogoff (2003) indicates that puberty rites are more frequent in polygynous societies where the child's father frequently moves from one wife's house to another's. In these societies, households are formed of mothers and children and the father stays somewhere else. With regard to the effect, Scott (1998) notes that the process of initiation involves all members of the community and it is not only those who are being initiated are changed; rather, the entire community is affected. However, Scott does not mention in what ways these changes occur.

2.3. Puberty rites practices

Puberty rites practices differ from one culture to the other. For instance, Kenyatta (1965) and Mbiti (1988) mention that in many African societies, female puberty rites practices involve trimming of genitals or clitoridectomy and for the males circumcision is performed by cutting the foreskin. The above authors mention that the Kamba, Gikuyu, Luhya, and mostly Bantu groups in Kenya use the above practices during initiation. Other groups such as the Maasai of Kenya and the Ndembu of Zambia perform scarification on the face or other parts of the body in addition to circumcision (Nangoli, 1990). Meanwhile in Jewish culture, a girl is slapped on her face usually by her mother soon after she begins her first menstruation (Sasser-Coen, 1996; Houseman, 2007) as a symbol of congratulations.

Hambley (1937) points out some puberty rites practices in Africa. This includes isolating and sending girls in groups to a hidden place in the forest one or two years before their first menstruation is due. He notes that during isolation, there is enlargement of the vagina and labia minora, as a preparation for motherhood. Hambley confers that in these societies, there is a general belief that a girl who is not treated in this way will not make a successful marriage. In addition to the above practices, Hambley mentions scarification of the body, cicatrizing on the foreheads and boring of the ears, extraction of lower incisor and the lower canines to be operations commonly associated with puberty rites in order to give girls marriageable status. Meanwhile, Ogunbile (2004) notes that the performance of puberty rites involves elderly women to initiate young women and elderly men to initiate young men.

Markstrom (2008) found that girls' puberty rites practices in North American Indians include food restrictions; using special stick to scratch oneself during the transition time; not eating with others; social confinement; sleep restrictions, tattooing, fasting, instruction and supervision, dancing and so on. Likewise, in their cross cultural investigation, Schlgel and Barry (1980) found that puberty rites include practices such as genital operations, beating, tattooing, tooth extraction, massage, sweat bathes, body painting, teachings of sexual skills, secrets, and menstrual seclusion.

In addition to the above ones, puberty rites practices include specific rituals such as seclusion from society, instruction from elders, a transition ceremony, and a return to society with recognition of adult status (Delaney, 1995; Zenden and Crandel, 2007). According to these authors, the major practices include physical and spiritual cleansing, prayers and blessings, wearing traditional clothing, offering of traditional foods or fasting and traditional music. Similarly, Gardner and Kosmotzki (2002) state that puberty rites ceremonies involve practices like ritual change of hairstyle, clothing, tattoos, or even circumcision and these practices are done in

order to make the newly gained status visible to all. Likewise, Erickson (2001) describes that rites of initiation often entail circumcision of the genitals, tattooing or other visible physical alterations.

In general, different writers have mentioned several practices associated with puberty rites. However, the major gap in the current theoretical and empirical literature is that no attempt had been made to explore the psychological and developmental contributions of these practices which of course the current study is endeavoring.

2.4. Female puberty rites

Brown (1963) defines female puberty rite as a ritual consisting of one or more prescribed ceremonial events mandatory for all girls of a given society and celebrated between their eighth and twentieth years usually following menarche and brings with it certain new duties and/or privileges. Female puberty rites are also called first blood celebration, menarche rites; red parties; womanings; coming of age rituals, first moon celebration and so on (Houseman, 2007). Despite its developmental significance, little was done to investigate the link between menarche and psychosocial outcomes (Misaki, Leslie, and Mendle, 2010).

Compared to male puberty rites, less attention has been given to female puberty rites in cross-cultural research (Kitahara, 1984). Similarly, Feldman (2011) discusses that in most societies, males are the focus of coming of age ceremonies and he attributes that the reason why male puberty rites are more popular than females' is that in most cultures men traditionally have higher status than women do. Therefore, these cultures regard boys' transition to adulthood as more important. Moreover, Feldman hypothesizes that the fact that some cultures place greater emphasis on male initiation rites than females' is because in case of the later, the transition from childhood is marked by a definite biological event; that is, menstruation. For example, in traditional

societies of Zambia, teachings given by older women during female initiation rites is a means of combatting HIV/AIDS (Kapungwe, 2013).

While reviewing theoretical and empirical literature, I found that only few researchers on the area such as Markstrom (2008); Lafontaine (1972); Manabe (2010; Sasser-Coen (1996); Maluleke (2001) and Brown (1963) conducted a research on female puberty rites while several others dealt about males. On the contrary, Broude (1975) explains that initiation ceremonies are more common for girls than boys. This writer attributes that the first menstrual cycle is a clear indication of physical maturity for females as opposed to males.

There are a number of reasons why communities perform female initiations. For example, Paige and Paige (1981) conducted a global analysis of puberty rites and concluded their investigation by describing female puberty rites as mechanisms for initiating girls into adulthood. In the same way, Manabe (2010) indicates that the beginning of pubertal time in girls is marked through initiation rites in many cultures around the world and the ritual is regarded as significant for those girls who are moving into adulthood. Similarly, Grimes (2000) and Ottenberg cited in Rogoff, (2003) explain that initiation rites usually signify girls' eligibility for marriage and often symbolize fertility. Likewise, Paige and Paige state that menarche is mainly used as a convenient benchmark to indicate girl's readiness to enter social adulthood. To the contrary of the above authors, Johnson-Hanks, (2002) argues the first birth to be the major indicator of female transition to womanhood across the African continent. With regard to timing, Schlegel and Barry (1980), Rasing (2004) and Markstrom (2008) found that most of girls' initiation rites coincide with first menstruation and conclude that female puberty rites are more biological and physiological in nature and origin.

Female puberty rites comprise pro-social behaviors that build social relationships, understanding, empathy, civility and moral decision-making (Manabe, 2010). Similarly, Rasing (1995) substantiates that female puberty rites serve the purpose of building relationships and can be viewed as a major developmental task for a girl who is learning how to fit in and be accepted socially by her peers. Rasing further discusses that the goals of female puberty rites are very much related to their future roles and emphasize on girl's responsibility for her future marriage, her future husband and children, food taboos, domestic and agricultural duties. A study conducted in Zambia found that older women within the community are usually responsible to conduct girls' initiation ceremony (Kapungwe, 2003).

Female puberty rites are related to post marital residence of a female. For example, in her cross cultural study, Brown(1963) found that in societies where the wife normally goes to live with her husband's people following her marriage, there is less chance of having female puberty rites and removal of a girl from her parental home to her husband's sufficiently signals the status change from unmarried to married. To the contrary, Brown argues that in those societies in which the wife brings her husband to live with her in her parents' home following her marriage, there is more chance to hold female puberty rites. Similarly, Hoebel (1972) explains that female initiation rites help the personal identity transfer of a girl from her family to her husband and his family.

In general, cross cultural research findings I reviewed so far agree that female initiation rites are conducted following the sexual maturation of a young girl. But there is still a gap on the type of society and female initiation rites. For example, some writers argue that these initiation rites are common in matrilineal societies where a girl does not leave her birthplace due to marriage and it is aimed to announce her new identity to the society. Yet, others argue that these rites held to resolve sex identity crisis. Moreover, the majority of theoretical and empirical literatures reviewed

in this study have gaps because they focus on anthropological themes of puberty rites other than the individual psychological development. In addition to this, whether a girl is socially transformed either to adolescence or adulthood following her menarche is still open to exploration.

2.5. Developmental cues for female puberty rites

The onset of menses as opposed to less specific indicators of transition in boys is a clear indicator for girls' puberty rites (Markstrom, 2008). Similarly, Adegoke (2001) states that menarche or first menstruation is a unique and concrete event that has been used for centuries as the best single criterion of sexual maturity or puberty in girls. Likewise, Salamone (2004) Schlegel and Barry (1980) found that physiological changes, particularly the development of the breasts and menarche provide some basis for girls' puberty rites in most cultures. These authors also found that female adolescent initiation ceremonies occur more frequently at first menstruation in those societies in which there are extensive menstrual taboos. Similarly, Kakumasu (2012) agrees that for most societies, the sign indicating that a girl has reached puberty is the beginning of menstruation. Sasser-Coen (1996) states that mothers are the most common sources of information about menarche and puberty for their daughters. She further reminds that unless girls are prepared and provided with information prior to their menarche, they will be misled or confused at the time of first menstruation.

Menarche is the primary social marker of the beginning of female adolescence and instigates a shift from a relatively asexual gender system of childhood to a highly sexualized gender system of adulthood and precipitates a reorganization of self- and body-image (Sasser-Coen, 1996). Similarly, Manabe (2010) mentions that the first menstruation may be of importance because it represents a concrete symbol of a girl's transition to a mature female and is a clear and unambiguous mark of sexual maturity to establish an appropriate time for the female's transition to

adulthood. Meanwhile, Beidelman (1997) corroborates that menarche is one big first developmental phase for girls during puberty. This is because it is the most evident sign of sexual maturity and the beginning of reproductive capabilities by a girl.

In contrast to the above arguments, Bell (1997) points out that in some cultures, the social changes of moving from childhood to adulthood which are effected through formal initiation rituals, have little to do with the timing of the biological changes that accompany physical maturation. For example, among the Lumu of Zambia, girls are initiated in groups before their pubertal time (Kapungwe, 2003) and socially considered as adults.

Because menarche is unfamiliar experience, girls would show greater anxiety (Misaki, Leslie, and Mendle, 2010) and because the first menstruation is a stressful event to a girl, initiation rites are held to ease the stress. For example, Chang and Lin (2013) indicate that unlike traditional societies, there are no initiation rites in Western cultures following menarche and hence the first menstruation becomes more stressful event to a young girl in these societies.

In general, empirical literature indicates that there is overall consensus on menarche as the major and clear cue for initiating girls among different indigenous societies. Meanwhile, employing secondary sexual characteristics such as the development of breasts and body size as developmental cues is less obvious. In relation to this idea, Chasdi (1994) explains that in many societies menarche is celebrated by a public festival which marks status change and is often accompanied by a change of clothing or hairstyle. This author discusses that in societies that do not celebrate menarche, the appearance of secondary sex characteristics is often used as a marker for change of status. Meanwhile, in those societies in which adolescence is a social construction, initiating girls may take place even before menarche.

2.6. Theoretical explanations of menarcheal age

Menarche is a unique marker of female maturation representing the transition from childhood to womanhood and different studies reveal that most girls reach menarche at an average age of 12.0–13.4 years (Rembeek, 2008). There are several theories explaining about the age of menarche. These are paternal investment theory, psychosocial acceleration theory, the polygyny indication and child development theory (Nebrich, Penke, Lehnart, and Asendropf, 2010). These theories unanimously agree that the absence of a father figure in the family or single parenthood accelerates menarche.

Paternal investment theory explains that low parental investment, father's absence and the presence of a step father triggers accelerated menarche. Meanwhile the psychosocial acceleration theory explains that early menarche is associated with high levels of stress caused by parental marital discord, negative family relationships, single parenthood, unstable employment, the absence of a father figure and low parental socio-economic status.

Polygyny indication model states that early menarche occurs in the absence of a father figure during childhood. This model also explains that polygyny leads to a scarcity to available women of reproductive age. Similarly, child development theory agrees with the first three theories in that early menarche is associated with growing up with a mother and a stepfather or with the absence of a biological father. In addition to this, child development theory is similar to paternal investment theory for both of them stress on the role of low quality social and developmental childhood environments (Nebrich et al, 2010).

2.7. Transition to adolescence

There are some contradictions regarding whether puberty rites mark the transition from childhood to adolescence or childhood to adulthood. For example, Gavazzi, Alford and McKenry (1996); and Bosch (2007) state that puberty rites have historically been used by traditional societies to facilitate the transition from childhood to adulthood status. These writers further notice that in traditional societies, the ambiguous developmental stage of adolescence existing in contemporary societies was unknown. Instead, puberty rites were used to create a rapid and clearly defined transition from childhood into adulthood.

Some indigenous societies consider adolescence as a distinct stage of development across the lifespan. For example adolescence is a life stage among the Aboriginis of Mangrove in Australia (Burbank,1988). In this society, marriage and the birth of a child bring the end of adolescence both in males and females. On the other hand, Shaffer and Kipp (2010) mention that rites of passage mark one's transition either from childhood to adolescence or from adolescence to adulthood. In line with this, Schlegel and Barry (1980) conducted a global investigation on puberty rites and found that in a few communities regard adolescence as one stage of development and the passage from childhood to adolescence is marked by initiation ceremony.

Van Gennep himself was not rigid enough to conclude that puberty rites mark only transition from childhood to adulthood. Instead, he stated that initiation rites are social events that bring recognition to the transition from childhood to adolescence or adulthood (Barry& Schlegel, 1980).Therefore, whether puberty rites mark transition from childhood to adolescence or adulthood stages of development is still a controversial issue and depends on the social context.

2.8. Theoretical perspectives of initiation rites

In my attempt to find theories explaining initiation rites, I found that there are few ones that deal about the purposes of puberty rites especially in relation to the role of rites to individual psychological development and communal purposes. These theories have been summarized below.

2.8.1. Sociogenic theories

The Sociogenic approach defines initiation from the perspective of the society as a body of public rites and functions to perpetuate the individual by supervising the indoctrination of new members and instilling in them social responsibilities (Doherty, 1998). This approach is rooted in Van Gennep's classification of initiation in terms of social function. That is, to reduce the disruptive effects of change on society and the individual and its social goal is to facilitate change from one social group to another.

In Sociogenic perspective, initiation is meant to publicly incorporate the novice into society and granting the individual a social status. In general, the Sociogenic theory of initiation sees the rite as a social mechanism which serves to indoctrinate and register new members. However, Young (1965) argues that initiation does not function solely to society but it also promotes individual maturation.

2.8.2. Psychogenic theories

The Psychogenic approach in contrast focuses on individual psychological development to be both as a cause and effect of initiation. Proponents of this theory emphasize the pre-eminent function of initiation rite on the personal level and focus on self-evaluation and self-recognition as opposed to Sociogenic ones. Thus, the individual is encouraged to cultivate identity, assert his or her rights and develop all the aspects of the self in terms of the spiritual, sexual and cognitive

development (Hovert, 1990). For example in the Kikuyu and many other societies in which circumcision is part of the initiation ceremony, the boys are told that the prepuce is a female part and must be excised if true manhood is to be achieved and the tip of a girl's clitoris is removed because this is believed to be masculine (Chasdi, 1994).

2.8.3. Psychoanalytic theories

According to Brain (1977) psychoanalytic theory explains that the purpose of puberty rites is to establish sexual identity and the attempted resolution of each sex's envy of the other. In the views of Paige and Paige (1981) psychoanalytic thinkers believe that genital bleeding at menarche is interpreted as a narcissistic injury which consequently arouses anger and resentment toward men. Hence practices such as menarcheal seclusion, social segregation, and menstrual taboos are aspects of social control mechanisms to hold women's unconscious aggressive impulses in check.

Psychoanalytic theories explain the cultural presence of initiation rites and associate the purpose of initiation rites with resolution of oedipal complex and castration anxiety occurring in the phallic stage of psychosexual development (Brain, 1977). According to this author, initiation rites are held for psychological reasons and the rituals are intended to solve personal psychological problems of an individual. His argument implies that the cause of the rites in psychological terms is to satisfy male envy of female capabilities. Meanwhile, Munroe and Munroe (1973) provide psychological explanation about initiation rites. They argue that male initiation rites are common in exclusive mother-son sleeping arrangements in households of father absence. In their view, male initiation rites serve to remove feminine identification. However, these authors did not mention the psychological reasons for female initiation rites. Yet it appears that girls' initiation rites also serve similar purposes of removing masculine identification.

Bettelheim (1954) cited in Markstrom (2008) argues that from the psychoanalytic perspective, men are not afraid of castration but rather they envy the ability of women to bleed from their genitals. Accordingly, from a psychoanalytic perspective, the greater male fear of castration, the greater the menstrual restrictions imposed by a society (Markstrom, 2008).

2.8.4. Ritual-Transition theory

In contrast to psychoanalytic theory, ritual transition theory views female initiation rites as responses to the first appearance of menarche and it is intended to announce a woman's social maturity. Paige and Paige (1981) compare and contrast Van Gennep and Brown's theory of female initiation and conclude that Brown's theory of female initiation rites is similar to Van Gennep perspective in many aspects. For example, Brown accepts Van Gennep's theory that puberty ceremonies are mechanisms to initiate girls into adulthood but Brown argues that such a dramatic transition is necessary only among societies in which a woman lives her adult life among the same people with whom she has lived as a child. In other words, Brown explains that female initiation rites are more common in cultures practicing matrilineal residence because girls do not move away at marriage from their family residence. Thus, Brown claims that initiation ceremonies serve to approve the initiate as a full adult in the community (Halley, 2012). As a concluding remark, Halley mentions that early cross-cultural studies of initiation rites suffered from multiple flaws including their reliance on secondary data sources.

To summarize, there are disputes among theories about female initiation rites especially on the purposes. For example, psychoanalytic theories view female puberty rites practices as a means of resolving the conflict that a young girl may have with her mother. On the other hand, transition-rite theories argue that the ritual is held simply to announce change of status by a young girl.

Meanwhile, feminists argue female initiation rites are expressions of male dominance over females and men envy over female menstrual capabilities.

2.9. Erickson’s psychosocial stages and ego virtues

Some writers mention that psychosocial theory of Erickson is the most widely accepted theory for studying human development .For example Newman and Newman, (2012) explain that one of the qualities in Erickson’s theory is that it acknowledges the contribution of culture to individual growth and development. Erickson(1985) proposed that there are eight stages of development and each stage is characterized by psychosocial conflicts in which handling of these conflicts by an individual successfully will provide him/her a new sense of mastery of competence and the development of ego virtues. These stages are summarized in table 2:1.

Developmental stage	Psychosocial stage	Ego strength	Antipathy(Crisis)
Infancy	Basic Trust Versus Mistrust	Hope	Withdrawal
Babyhood	Autonomy versus shame	Will	Compulsion
Early childhood	Initiative versus Guilt	Purpose	inhibition
Late childhood	Industry versus Inferiority	Competence	Inertia
Puberty/Adolescence	Identity versus Role confusion	Fidelity	Role repudiation
Young adulthood	Intimacy versus Isolation	Love	exclusivity
Middle adulthood	Generativity versus stagnation	Care	rejectivity
Late adulthood	Ego integrity versus Despair	Wisdom	Disdain

Table 2.1. Erickson’s psychosocial stages ego virtues and crises

Erickson underlines that mastery of competences in each stage of development are guided by biological maturation and cultural expectation rather than strict chronological time frame. Accordingly, successful resolution of psychosocial conflicts at each stage of development leads to the emergence of important ego strengths. Thus, there are eight ego strengths

corresponding to each stage of development. These are *hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care* and *wisdom* (Markstrom, Sabino, Berman&Turner, 1998; Newman & Newman, 2012). Erickson (1985) reminds that there is a relationship among each ego strength in the sense that earlier ego strengths are reworked in the next stage. For example, the formation of hope, will, purpose, and competence will reinforce the formation of fidelity.

The fifth stage of Erickson's psychosocial stage illustrates the occurrence of contemporary rite of passage from puberty/adolescence to adulthood and the presence of fidelity is identified as evidence that the individual has successfully negotiated the transitional phase of adolescence and a positive resolution of identity crisis (Markstrom et al, 1998). Similarly, the formation of identity is a precondition for the achievement of ego virtue of love which again enhances the successful resolution of intimacy versus isolation.

Erickson (1968) recognizes the importance of rituals especially for identity formation during adolescence (Markstrom, 2008; Markstrom et al, 1998). These authors hypothesize that Erickson's approach to life course transitions is comparable to rites of passage because he recognized the role of society in psychological development and the resolution of psychosocial crises at each stage of development is comparable to life-crisis rites of Van Gennep. In his book entitled "Childhood and Society", Erickson states that in the Sioux of North American Indians rites are held during the transition of boys from adolescence to adulthood and he mentions puberty rites practices to include circumcision, removal of some teeth and so on. But Erickson does not mention how an adolescent girl is transformed to adulthood in these societies.

2.10. The development of identity and intimacy in females

Despite the fact that Erickson acknowledged the role of culture and society for individual development, there are many controversies regarding the universal applicability of his psychosocial theory and also in representing females and males especially on the development of identity, and intimacy. In relation to this, Kroger (2000) and Gilligan (2003) argue that there are contradictions of this theory on the developmental process of a woman's identity as opposed to that of a man's. According to Erickson, women face the problem of finding their identity until they find a suitable partner.

Feminists criticize Erickson's theory for its bias towards males. For example, Gilligan (2003) criticizes his fifth and sixth stages of development do not represent female lifespan development. For instance, Erickson states that women achieve their identity after marriage (intimacy). But Gilligan disputes that despite Erickson's claim that there are differences in the order of identity and intimacy in males and females, Erickson's chart of life cycle stages remains unchanged: that is identity precedes intimacy as male experience continues his life cycle conceptions. Besides this, Erickson studied the Sioux of Indian children in America, but he did not discuss about female puberty rites as opposed to male puberty rites. This implies that females are underrepresented in his study.

There are also other controversies regarding the application of Erickson's psychosocial theory to the indigenous African societies. For example, Ramkogpa (2001) found that Erickson's theory failed to address the importance of rituals and the psychological role they play in defining one's position among Africans. Ramkogpa criticizes that Erickson defines various stages of development in terms of age than readiness to accomplish culturally set developmental tasks and neglects rites of passage and their psychological benefit to indigenous African societies. Hence, his theory cannot be applicable to the African context. To the contrary, Newman and Newman (2012)

explain that biological readiness and cultural expectation are the components of psychosocial theory.

The current study also focuses on exploring girls' puberty rites of the Gumuz and the psychosocial contributions and comparing whether the stages of development of a Gumuz female fits to Erickson's psychosocial stages and crises.

2.11. Purposes of puberty rites

According to Newman and Newman (2012) societies employ rites to direct the rearing of children and assist individuals through key transitions. Puberty rites ceremonies along with the extensive time contributed by elders help many adolescents make a healthier transition to adult status (Delaney, 1995). Meanwhile, Richards (1956) points out the purposes for girls to attend puberty rites include cultural and peer pressures, material gains and to get social respect. Similarly, Maluleke (2001) found that girls attend puberty rites because the practice is viewed by the initiated as a distinct developmental stage. She conducted a study in one of the indigenous societies in South Africa and found that initiated women, girls and elders believe that non-initiated girls miss one stage of development because of not being initiated. Similarly, Skinner, Underwood, Schwandt and Magambo (2013) found that in Malawi, those who do not go for initiation are looked upon as outcasts and friends refuse to associate with them as they are still considered children.

Adegoke (2001) explains that traditional adolescent rites-of-passage in Africa are designed to provide a cultural framework for dictating roles and responsibilities of adulthood that will benefit the individual and the sponsoring community. In line with this Matobo, Makatsa, Obioha (2009) mention the significance of female initiation rites in many African societies in providing the basic informal education to girls about the roles of women in the families and communities, commitment and loyalty to their country, self-respect and self-discipline. During initiation, girls in

Malawi are taught about personal hygiene, showing respect for elders, taking care of the family, and pleasing their future husbands sexually (Skinner, Underwood, Schwandt & Magombo, 2012).

Brown (1963) writes that female initiation ceremonies are more common in cultures practicing matrilocal residence because girls do not move away at marriage and serve to mark a full adulthood status in the community where a girl has both grown up and will bear children. On the other hand, Richards (1956) associates female initiation with a matrilineal descent structure, suggesting that in these societies, girls' initiation ritual serves to publically dramatize their kinship ties.

Different societies practice puberty rites for different purposes. For example, in some societies, puberty rites promote developmental transitions of girls and boys and instruct status changes within the structure of the community (Rogoff, 2003). Besides this, they have the primary function to assign to the young person the appropriate social identity of the group (Markstrom & Ibora, 2003).

Puberty rites enhance socially desirable impacts on the development of initiates. They serve to strengthen ethnic group identification, advance pride in culture, foster feelings of belongingness and promote understanding of traditions, beliefs, values and practices (Markstrom, 2008). According to this author, in many traditional societies, the climax of the educational system is formed by initiation rites that take place ordinarily at or near puberty or adolescence whereby young girl is given intensive instruction in tribal usages, manners, laws, customs, taboos, and morality. She argues that initiates are given a fuller revelation of the tribe's religious beliefs, myths, and traditions, moral instruction, ethical order, obedience, courage, endurance, self-control, truthfulness, honesty, chastity and hospitality.

Different sources reveal that in some societies there are culturally set lessons given about menstruation either during or before pubertal time .For example, Kapungwe (2003) found that in Zambia the major themes emphasized at girls' initiation rites are menstrual hygiene, caring for, sexuality and respect. In contrast with this, a comparative study conducted in Ghana, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Cambodia by Sommer, Ackatia-Armah, Connally and Dana (2014) showed that there are no culturally appropriate menstrual guidelines for girls during their transitioning through puberty. Sommer et al also found that in the case of Ethiopia, that is in rural Amhara and Oromia regions, girls are mistreated by their fathers when experiencing menarche. According to these authors, absence of culturally set menstrual lessons were the major reasons that led girls to be worried and confused around menstruation and these negatively affected their ability to manage menses. Hence girls are confused when they experience their first menstruation. In line with the importance of menarcheal rituals, a study conducted in the United States by Sasser-Coen (1996) found that those women and girls who had no relevant prior information about menarche reported to be shocked and scared during their first menstruation.

Brown (1963) argues that puberty rites are equivalent to the schooling received by children in Western society. She indicates that a very large number of rites do indeed contain periods of instruction and/or tests of competence for the initiate.

Erickson (2001) clarifies that during puberty rites, the initiates acquire important knowledge relevant for adult life during the phase of transition, which transforms them into a new kind of social person. Similarly, Groce et al (2006) remind that puberty rites serve as a venue in the struggle against health problems such as HIV/AIDS. Likewise, Maluleke (2001),Mudhovozi' Ramarumo and Sodi (2012) found that the lessons given during puberty rites have the contribution in the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancies, and for teaching morally acceptable behaviors. Mudhovazi et al found that in parts of East and Central Africa, girls' puberty

rites are mechanisms for controlling sexual behavior. These authors conducted a national survey in Tanzania and came up with the finding that sex education was imparted during puberty rites for girls.

Asante and Mazama (2009) also note that African societies employ rites of passage to mark different life stages of development and educate the values of the society. These authors mention that in many African societies, one is not an adult until he/she has completed an initiatory rites-of-passage process supervised by the elders of the community. To the contrary, Crouch and Mckenze (2012) mention that girls' puberty rite do not entail radical transition to womanhood as they do in the case of boys and full adult status is very rarely conferred upon girls, at least not until well into maturity.

Schligel and Barry (1980) mention that a distinction can be made among rites of passage that focus on internal psychological changes in the initiate and those that focus on societal impacts. In respect to psychological changes, the emphasis is on the psychological effect the ceremony has on the initiate. Likewise, this study also focuses on exploring on the developmental and psychosocial contribution of initiation rites.

2.12. Puberty rites and psychosocial development

The practices that accompany puberty rituals have developmental and psychosocial contributions to the initiates. For example, Ashford, Lecroy and Lortie (2001) argue that ritualized recognition of adolescent boys and girls is beneficial in helping young persons' physical development. Supporting this argument, Markstrom (2008) suggests that puberty rites provide psychological comfort and reduction of anxiety at unstable transitional times of life as well as offering assurances for the unknown future. In the same way, Winer (2007) underlines initiation rites have positive contribution to the individual personality development. Likewise, Maluleke

(2001) found that puberty rites boost the self-esteem and self-confidence of the initiate. Besides these, Castro (2010) notes that because initiation rites often emphasize the gaining of wisdom or maturation from child to adult and these changes are accompanied by psychological transformation of an individual.

Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (1997) argue that rites have the social function of creating a new social equilibrium after the disruption of transition and may strengthen the social order with its roles and statuses. These authors mention that rituals strengthen families by bringing them together and providing enjoyable occasions and shared memories. From a psychological point of view, Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle suggest that rites of passage lead to high adolescent self-esteem and reduce anxiety by helping the individual through a difficult transition.

Daroch, Landry and Singh (2000) discuss about the role of rites in teaching young people about their physical and sexual development. Similarly, Halley (2012) indicates that the lessons and skills taught during puberty rites provide girls with the knowledge and skills they need to negotiate their new life stage, including the initiation of sexual relationships. Emphasizing on the positive contribution, Groce et al (2006) and Kapungwe(2003) discuss that puberty rites are just one of the protective factors for reducing risks related to sexuality of adolescents including HIV/AIDS. Meanwhile, these authors warn that little attention has been paid to incorporating HIV and AIDS-related messages into coming of age ceremonies as one way of reaching young people. Groce et al conclude their argument by recommending that public health advocates and AIDS educators should work in close cooperation with parents and elders to systematically incorporate AIDS messages into such rite of passage ceremonies.

Cultures practicing puberty rites have different social and developmental goals. For example, Basso (1970) found that puberty rites ceremonies for Native North American Indian girls have four critical goals: physical strength, even temperament, prosperity and healthy old age.

Likewise, Markstrom (2008) agrees with the fact that girls' puberty rites have contribution to the psychological and physical strengths of the initiates.

Salmone (2004) states the symbolic psychological importance of rites of passage. For example, he mentions the case of Apache of North American Indian girls' initiation ritual which is held to transform a girl and guide her to another stage in life and enhance health and long life through the stages of life.

Bell (1997) underlines the importance of Van Gennep's work about the role of rites of passage for the psychological development of initiates. Accordingly, Gennep acknowledged that rites of passage practices are important not only for the structural-functional well-being of the community but to the psychological well-being of individuals, too. Bell discusses that through puberty rites, physical and psychological qualities of initiates are thought to be shaped and proper adherence to rites of passage customs is assumed to ensure the well-being and longevity of initiates and to the group. Likewise, Keith (1964) found that these were perceived changes in girls' conceptions of themselves about home, opposite sex, status in their family and community, their potential for health, prosperity and their actual behavior after being initiated.

Cohen (1964) mentions the social and psychological effects of initiation rites. In his view, initiation rites involve separation of the initiates from the junior position to a senior one and this social transition implies the internal, psychological changes undergone by the initiate.

In line with the above argument, Markstrom and Iborra (2003) elaborate that puberty rites are tools employed by a cultural community in the socialization of the young. These authors also stress that puberty rites are ways of helping adolescents arrive at an understanding of their identity in traditional societies. Thus, achievement of identity by adolescents is less ambiguous in traditional, non-industrialized societies because adolescents know what is expected of them in order to be an adult (Gardiner&Kosmutzki, 2002; Newman &Newman, 2012). In the same way,

Rogoff (2003) notes that one of the reasons for this is that initiation rites create a sense of ethnic identity and/or of social solidarity.

The role of society and culture for the development of a child is highly regarded by Erickson (1964). For example, he regards puberty rites as important events in which societies help adolescents develop ego virtues in their transition to adulthood. Erickson argues that in the absence of rite of passage, adolescents may not be able to incorporate into society and may be caught in an elongated moratorium. His argument has the implication that rites of passage help adolescents to form fidelity and resolve their identity crises.

To sum up, initiation rites have contribution both to the individual psychological development and to the family and the sponsoring community in which the initiate belongs to. For example with regard to its individual psychological development, the ritual helps the initiate to achieve identity, improve his/her self-confidence and self-esteem, and reduce anxiety related to transition. As far as their social contribution is concerned, puberty rites are found to strengthen ties between family members and serve to inculcate the values and traditions of the society in the mind of young members of the society.

2.13. Menstrual taboos and psychosocial impacts

Reviewing theoretical and empirical literature related to menstruation and taboos and restrictions associated with it is a relevant point in this study because menarche is the major developmental indicator for a girl to be initiated in many indigenous societies. Thus the practices related to menstrual restrictions and taboos and the perceived reasons behind these restrictions as well as the psychosocial impacts have been discussed in this sub-section.

Margaret (1988) discusses that the first menstruation is both a time of happiness and embarrassment for girls and it is perceived by young girls as a sign of good health and growing up

to womanhood. Margaret strongly argues that menarche should be viewed positively because it is a developmental marker that signifies maturity. Meanwhile, research conducted in Nigeria by Monkola and Uzuegbu (2006) indicates that menarche is associated with both positive and negative emotions. For example, moodiness, tension and irritability were reported to be negative psychological experiences of pubertal girls during their first menses. In relation to this, Sasser-Coen (1996) indicates that girls' positive or negative views of menarche is shaped by the social and cultural views of menstruation. She explains that in societies that demand silence and concealment about the things women's bodies do, menstruation results in embarrassment, shame and anger.

Menstrual taboos and female puberty rites are inseparable issues. For example, Kitahara (1984) discusses that menstrual taboos and restrictions are more common in societies where there are female initiation rites. Meanwhile Paige and Paige (1981) write that despite the importance of menstruation as proof of a female's continued fertility, menstruating women are subject to numerous taboos and social restrictions.

Weidger (1980) mentions that menstrual taboos and restrictions in different societies include sending a woman to a menstrual hut; marking her shoulders with sacrificial incisions; or requiring her to fast. According to Weidger, menstrual taboos range widely from mild uneasiness and distrust of menstrual fluid to complete seclusion during menstrual period. For example in Nepal, girls are kept in a dark room for twelve days during their first menstruation (Padhye, Karki and Padhye 2003). In the study cited above, most girls reported being very embarrassed, feeling very isolated and sad during this period of seclusion.

Menstrual taboos stigmatize menstruation and menstruating women and they are just manifestations of jealousy (Montgomery, 1974). On the other hand, Weidger (1980) notes that menstrual taboos are viewed as an opportunity for the society to control the dangerous vapors and powers emanating from the menstruating woman.

In some cultures such as North American Indians, menstruating girls are prohibited from scratching and touching themselves because it is believed that menstruating girls could physically harm themselves with their own touch, hence necessitating the use of scratching stick (Basso, 1970). Similarly, Schlegel and Barry (1980), and Bolt, (1987) observed that different societies had various explanations for taboos against menstruating women in connection with male activities. For example, these societies believed that menstrual blood could interfere with the power men needed for successful hunting expeditions. Meanwhile, Martin (2001) explains that the belief about the perceived power of menstruation in these societies is so strong that a hunter is not even to walk near a menstruating woman or swim downstream from where she has bathed. Similarly, in the Khanty of Siberia, and among the Eskimos it is believed that contact with menstruating woman leads to bad luck in hunting (Delaney, Lupton & Toth, 1988).

In line with the above argument, Balzer (1981), indicates that menstrual taboos are frequent in those societies where , menstruation is believed to be a personal danger to men and to their ability to hunt. Balzer further states that these menstrual prohibitions fall into three interrelated categories: the threat to food procurement, the threat to social propriety (politeness), and the threat to spiritual life.

Markstrom (2008) found that in North American Indians, the most common menstrual taboo was seclusion of girls beginning at menarche and frequently continuing throughout all monthly cycles until menopause. She elaborates that physical seclusion of menstruating women and girls in these cultures ranges from living in a separate space in the home to the requirement that girls and women remove themselves to a menstrual hut placed at some distance from the group.

Delaney et al (1988) discuss that menstrual taboos are supposedly designed to protect women from their own evil powers as well as to shield the rest of the community from the bad luck associated to interacting with a menstruating female. For example, these authors mention the case of Maori society in New Zealand and the Tinne of Indians. The Maori, believe that contact with menstrual blood leads to death while the Tinne of Indians consider that menstrual blood contains femaleness and hence boys must be kept away to preserve their manhood.

Chung, Stratman, Cordova and Reynaga (2001) discuss that a common belief in many societies is that menstrual blood is dirty. Chung et al, further discuss that women in these societies avoid cooking for fear they will contaminate the food or they should refrain from touching plants so that they will not cause wilting of these plants. Similarly, Kalkidan (2007) indicates that in most societies of Ethiopia, menstrual blood is considered as a taboo and it is associated with pollution. Hence, menstruating women are not allowed to enter the church compound nor do they participate in religious festivities. She explains that in some societies of South and Southwest of Ethiopia, women in their menstruation time are segregated in separate huts and they are not also allowed to use household tools, shake a male's hand, and sleep on bed, wash hands or body in the house, grind grains and cook food.

There are different theories that explain menstrual taboos and restrictions. Two of them are the psychoanalytic and biological theories. Psychoanalytic theories of menstrual taboos stem from assumptions of varying degrees of castration anxiety in men or from hypothesized vaginal envy (Balzer,1981). According to Balzer, Psychoanalytic views of menstrual taboos and restrictions reflect underlying attitudes about menstrual fluids and the symbolic nature of menstruation.

Buckley and Gottlieb (1988) explain that biological theories give two different explanation regarding menstruation taboo. The first explanation has emerged for scientific reason and explains that menstrual blood is toxic and hence restrictions are done specifically to protect food and other substances from biological contamination. In line with this argument, Ford (1964) explains about the concrete dangers that menstrual fluid poses to those coming into contact with it since it is believed to have contained bacteria that may render infectious to an open wound.

In general, menstrual taboos and restrictions are associated with isolating a menstruating girl and depriving of her from certain activities and food items. For example, a study conducted by Malawi Human Rights Commission (n.d) indicates that initiated girls are advised not to eat eggs for fear of becoming barren. The reasons behind these taboos and restrictions range from hygienic to spiritual ones.

2.14. Puberty rites in modern societies

According to Erickson (2001) rites have a diminished importance in modern societies. Yet , he explains that these societies provide less obvious rites of passage such as the Jewish bar mitzvah, bas mitzvah, Christian confirmation, securing a driving license at age 16 and 17, voting at age 18, graduating from high school and college, or entering the military. Similarly, Gardiner and Kosmutzki (2002) write that the transition from adolescence to adulthood in the Western world is not marked by clearly defined rites of passage.

Because of the absence of adult sponsored puberty rites, self-initiation¹ is more common among the Western youth. This includes practices such as cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, sexual activity, and other antisocial behaviors and these changes occur among peers without adult presence (Van Zenden, Crandel & Crandel, 2007; Gardiner and Kosmutzki, 2002). A lack of

¹ If society ignores to initiate adolescents to adulthood, it is likely that they will initiate themselves with such acts like sexual intercourse and smoking.

community-sanctioned rites of passage means that the rites that exist are not constructive, but can often be destructive, especially for girls (Hentges, 2000). Markstrom et al, (1998) view that unlike in traditional societies, most young people in the modern societies are left to make or discover their own initiation rites.

Fasick (1988) attributes that one of the reasons for the absence of adolescent rites of passage in industrialized countries is due to the overwhelming emphasis on individuality over communal cooperation in mainstream social life and exposure to many different belief systems. Consequently, the young generation is left with resemblances of rites of passage, including high school or college graduation, obtaining a driver's license, and so on. Similarly, Sande (2002) agrees with Fasick's hypothesis that in the absence of any formalized ritual, adolescents may attempt to create their own ceremonies to announce their arrival in the adult social arena. This includes intoxication, body modification and gang initiation, to name a few. This implies that the absence of communal based and adult sponsored initiation rites leads youth to create their own negative initiation rites which are destructive both to the individual and to the community.

2.15. Puberty rites in Ethiopia

There is a scarcity of local literature about puberty rites in Ethiopia and this was one of the major challenges that I faced while reviewing literature. The few existing sources that I came across simply provide the highlights. Meanwhile, the shortage of local sources implies that much has to be done on this area in the future.

The few local sources indicate that there are initiation rites among different societies of Ethiopia. For example, among the Oromo, boys are subjected to age-grading which requires that initiatory rites shall be performed at the end of every seven-year period (Hambley, 1937; Kassam, 1999). Similarly, Levine (1972) mentions that among the Amhara of Ethiopia, boys were

forced to take part in whipping contests in which they faced off and lacerated each other's faces and bodies. Similarly, the bull jumping ritual of the Hammer (Hammer,1996) and the stick fighting ritual of the Surma (Abbink, 1998) in Southern Ethiopia are just a few of male initiation rites frequently mentioned as long as the issue of rites of passage is raised in Ethiopia.

According to Abink, among the Surma, social adulthood is not just there when people come of age, but must be achieved by showing valor and personal strength through initiation by elders. He explains that the Surma have an age-grade system for males with four ritually separated grades of which the third one called *rora* is transition to adulthood. The ritual is characterized by violent behavior in which adolescent males fight with a stick and winning the fight enables them to get the identity of other men who are the main decision-makers and authority figures. However, women are not separately initiated but they derive age-grade status from their husbands (Abbink, 1998).

Hammer (1996) discusses that the Sidama have lifecycles laid for boys and girls. Accordingly, lifecycles for boys are *childhood, initiation, the establishment of a household, elderhood, and responsibility for community offices*. Similarly, lifecycles for girls, are *childhood, courtship, marriage, the management of household production and reproduction*. Among the Sidama, young girls before puberty shave the forward half of the head and gradually let the hair grow again after puberty until it lengthens to a fringe extending nearly to the eyelids and this is a sign that they are ready for marriage and the reproduction of a household(Hammer,1996).

Kassam (1999) explains that the Borana Oromo practice male initiation rite at eight-year intervals within the gadaa politico-religious system. The rites mark three generation movements in the cyclical structure by which all the males in the society are classified. According to Kassam, as the generation of grandfathers makes the transition to the terminal sacred grade of religious elder hood (*gadaammojji*), they hand over their socio-economic responsibilities to

their biological and classificatory sons (raaba) and witness the incorporation of their grandsons (*dabballee*) into the generational cycle.

Kassam further explains that there are three levels of this ritual. At the first level, the rites demarcate the transition from secular to religious power in which the outgoing religious elder hands over his power to the incoming class. At a second level, the rites mark three stages in the life cycle of the individual: the transition from childhood (*dabballee*) to adolescence (*gamme*); and from adolescence to junior warrior hood (*kuusa*) and from partial retirement (*yuuba*) to religious elderhood (*gadaammojjii*). These three groups of individuals all undergo head shaving rites during the same period, known as the time of the three shavings. These shaving rites serve as an external marker of the new social status and roles acquired by the individuals as members of corporate groups within the system.

In general, as one may notice from the above discussion that even the scanty sources related to initiation rites in Ethiopia mainly deal about male initiation despite the fact that rites of passage are also common practices of socializing girls to womanhood. Besides this, these sources have more of anthropological themes and do not indicate the contribution of the rites to individual psychological development. Thus, one of my objectives for conducting the research on female puberty rites is with the intention to fill the gap.

2.16. Future prospects of puberty rites

Different sources indicate that puberty rites have been around the world and they have been a means of transition for members of indigenous societies from one stage of development to the other. But these practices became controversial following the coming of missionaries and colonialists and were even labeled as heathen and superstitious (Matobo, Makatsa & Obioha, 2009). In other words, despite the multiple functions of puberty rites practices for indigenous

societies, impacts of forced acculturation have undermined their continuation. For example, Markstrom (2008) points out that among the traditional societies of Northern America, indigenous customs that occur at birth, puberty and menstruation are disappearing and being replaced by European customs. Similarly, Duran, Brave and Heart(1998) indicate that there has been a systematic destruction of the initiation ceremonies of many tribes .For example ,these authors mention that in the past, there were ceremonies for every step of child development among the Apache, but these rituals have been disappearing. Similarly, Mudhovozi et al (2012) argue that puberty rites have lost their significance in many cultures. As a result the transition from childhood to adulthood has been complicated by the developmental phase of adolescence. To the contrary, Kakungwe (2003) found that in Zambia, initiation rites are still prevalent in both rural areas and cities and towns including Lusaka.

Manabe (2010) argues that Western based formal educational practices and religious conversions are the major challenges that contributed to the disappearance of initiation rites. She elaborates that western based educational practices removed indigenous children from their rural community where knowledge about initiation rites is found. Besides this, Manabe mentions migration of the young generation to urban areas for education and viewing initiation rites as old fashioned as additional factors for the disappearance of puberty rites.In line with this Matobolo et al (2009) corroborate that with the coming of Western civilization, initiation rites were pushed aside as an educational institution.

Ogungbile (2004) has similar concern about the disappearance of puberty rites practices as a socialization practice. He states that practices associated with puberty rites have given way to modernity and many of these practices have been challenged on grounds of cruelty. Similarly, Sekyere and Nyamekye (2012) argue that in the past, teenage pregnancy was very rare among the traditional Akan people of Ghana .However it has currently reached an alarming stage because

the traditional rites that were effective in instituting measures that ensured chastity among the Akan teenagers are now replaced by foreign rites which are less effective.

Overall, from the literature reviews, I learned that the major reason for the declining of puberty rites among indigenous societies is due to forced acculturation and modernization. With regard to the later, much of puberty rites practices have been abandoned because they are considered to be less relevant to the new generation. On the other hand, much has been said about the negative consequence of abandoning these practices on the individual psychological development and social repercussions among which self-initiation, premarital pregnancies and drug use are just a few to mention.

2.17. Theoretical framework

The concept of puberty rites is an interdisciplinary issue which is commonly dealt within the disciplines of social anthropology and developmental psychology. Hence, in the current study, I employ two major theories from these two disciplines that guide the exploration of girls' puberty rites of the Gumuz. These are: (1) the transition rite theory primarily composed of van Gennep (1908) and Dunham, Kidwell, and Wilson (1986) and (2) Erickson's psychosocial theory of development. The reason behind employing multiple theories is that employing a single theory could not address the issue under investigation. In line with this Anfara and Mertz (2006) discuss that it is not uncommon for qualitative studies to be based on more than one theoretical framework as researchers often find that no single framework adequately explains all their data.

Each theory has its own application in the data analyses process. For example I used the ritual transition theory for analyzing data related to the processes, practices and phases of *Ke Gehaja* and Erickson's psychosocial theory was applied in analyzing data related to the contribution of *Ke Gehaja* for the individual's psychological and social development.

2.17.1. **Transition-Rite theory**

Paige and Paige (1981) indicate that transition rite theorists focus on the structure of ceremonies: separation, transition, and incorporation in ritual observances. Arnold Van Gennep was the first person to transition rite theory in 1908. Despite its early roots, transition-rite theory remains a valuable and relevant framework illuminating transitions across the life course (Draper, 2003). Similarly, Paige and Paige (1981) argue that, despite some limitations, Van Gennep's theory has provided the basis for most current cross-cultural research and the theory remains the most widely accepted explanation of female puberty rites. Supporting these authors' argument, Bell (1997) describes that psychologists have used the model of Van Gennep's three-stage process of initiation to analyze the process of human individuation that leads to the achievement of a mature sense of self and support the idea that rites of passage not only effect transitions in the social sphere but also in the psychological sphere.

According to Van Gennep (1908) rite of passage is composed of a pre-liminal phase in which the individual is removed from his/her previous role; a transitional or liminal phase in which he/she resides between roles and is temporarily devoid of a socially accepted identity and a post-liminal phase in which the individual is incorporated into the new role. These phases imply separation from the old status, transition to the new status, and finally the third phase incorporation involves the re-assimilation of the individual back into society along with his or her new roles and status (Castro, 2010; Markstrom, et al, 1998).

Another transitional theory employed in this study is the ritual process paradigm (RPP) developed by Dunham, Kidwel and Wilson (1986). As I explained above, this model or paradigm was defined by the classic model of Van Gennep's rites of passage and psychosocial conceptions (Markstrom, 2008). In short, the RPP is an expanded version of Van Gennep's tripartite model

(Markstrom and Ibora, 2003) but unlike the model of Van Gennep, RPP is a quadripartite; that is it has four phases instead of three: preparation, separation, transition and incorporation. The ritual process paradigm was employed by other researchers in studying ritual transitions. For example, Markstrom (2008) employed this theory in analyzing girls' initiation rites of the Apache of North American Indians.

The ritual process paradigm holds several concepts related to the preparation, separation, transition and reincorporation. These include the old and new support groups ,old and new identity, completion of old identity and the beginning of a new one and so on (Markstrom,2008).

According to Markstrom (2008) *preparation* consists of events leading to the actual rites. In other words, it includes the old support group, the old identity and the old identity completion. She explains that during the preparation phase, there are the old support groups who are composed of those who have played significant roles in the initiate's development. Meanwhile, the old identity refers to the social roles, personal traits, and affective or cognitive features that will be transformed (Markstrom & Ibora, 2003). On the other hand, the old identity completion refers to a set of signs that signify readiness for the rite of passage and this may include pubertal maturation, cognitive advancement and other aspects of development.

In Markstrom's view, the new support group includes role models and mentors who assist the initiate through exploration and mastery of the new role. Similarly, identity reinforcement consists of social reinforcers from the new support group, as well as intrinsic reinforces that serve to absorb the new identity into the self-concept (Markstrom & Ibora, 2003).

2.17.2. Psychosocial theory of Erickson

The transition from childhood to adolescence and in turn to adulthood has been explored by anthropologists and psychologists alike. This implies that there are parallels between anthropological conceptions of rites of passage and psychological approaches to the study of human development (Markstrom & Iborra, 2003). Particularly, Erickson's theory shares many commonalities with transition rites and their associated ceremonies. Therefore, I would first explain how these theories from the two interrelated disciplines have commonalities.

In transition-rite theories, there are stages, tasks and transitions and these are very much interrelated to Erickson's psychosocial stages. For example Erickson raises concepts of stages, developmental tasks and transitions. Besides, he explains development as discontinuous process and characterizes transitional periods from one stage of development to the next as unsettled, and times of crisis in which an individual will be in disequilibrium.

The majority of developmental theories commonly deal about aspects related to stages, transitions and tasks, but I employed Erickson's psychosocial theory for this particular study because it has more commonalities with transition rite theories and gives more regard to the role of society and culture on individual psychosocial development. Besides this, his theory of psychosocial stages of development and the crises and ego virtues associated with each transitional period have been clearly indicated.

According to Bell (1997) Erickson considered ritualization to have important function to the formation of ego by an individual. Thus, several rites are elaborated in eight successive stages of the life cycle to make the person a fully socialized human being. Bell further elaborates that in Erickson's view, the rituals help adolescents develop fidelity that links them to a group.

Erickson (1964) acknowledges that society plays important roles in young people's successful transition and provides them the ideological frameworks, assigned roles and tasks to which fidelity can be attached. In other words, fidelity can only develop through society's provision of sources to adolescents through rites of passage.

Erickson's notions about fidelity are also similar to transition rite theories in that fidelity serves both psychological needs of the individual and the needs of the broader society (Markstrom, et al, 1998). Erickson argues that during transition, individuals will first break from childhood and this process is comparable to the separation phase of rites of passage. Second, adolescents may explore various value systems and organizations and this is similar to transition phase. Finally, as young person acquires fidelity and tested to be loyal to selected beliefs and values, the society acknowledges him/her and the new commitments and this corresponds with the reincorporation phase of transition rite theory.

In the case of childhood to adulthood transition, the type of ego virtue to develop from identity versus role confusion is fidelity according to Erickson. But there are still controversies about the cross cultural validity of this theory. For example, theoretical literature, explain that Erickson's theory is a comprehensive one because it acknowledges the role of culture and society in socializing children (Markstrom et al, 1998). To the contrary, Ramokgopa (2001) disagrees with this and criticizes that Erickson's stages of development do not fit to the African philosophy of lifespan development and his theory does not take rites of passage into account in the process of transition.

Erickson's psychosocial theory of development and transition rite theories would be applied in investigating the developmental and psychosocial contributions of Ke Gehaja rite to Gumuz girls and explore Gumuz female lifespan development. Adequate exploration of Ke Gehaja rite requires the application of these two interrelated theories altogether. For example, ritual

transitional theory could not be ignored in this study because it is the grand theory about rites of passage. However, this theory is not comprehensive to be used exclusively in this particular study since it emphasizes more on anthropological themes of rites of passage than on individual psychological development. Meanwhile, employing Erickson's psychosocial theory is important because it is similar to ritual transition theory on the processes of life stage transition but unlike the former, the later emphasizes on the role of the ritual to the psychosocial development.

2.18. Conceptual model

As it is explained in the theoretical framework section, two major theories were employed to guide this study because the issue under investigation calls for an interdisciplinary perspective. These theories commonly address the role of society and culture in the transition of an individual from one stage of development to the next within the life cycle. The major concepts of transition rite theories are *separation*, *transition* and *reincorporation*. Feinberg, (2004) argues about the application of Van Gennep's three stage model of rites of passage. He states that the model has a wider application and proven to be a useful one and serves as a lens that can be applied to almost any social situation. For example, this model enables researchers to explore not only psychological issues, but also issues of gender, emotion, group identity, and cultural symbolism.

Meanwhile, developmental conceptions of rites of passage have notions of separation, transition and reincorporation and these concepts are related to Erickson's psychosocial theory of development (Markstrom and Ibora, 2003). For example, when a child masters the earlier developmental tasks, he/she enters to the transitional phase of adolescence. In this phase the individual has already left the old identity of childhood and he/she will be in identity confusion. If the adolescent is able to resolve the identity crisis successfully, he /she will achieve fidelity (Newman and Newman, 2012) which is the ego virtue or strength during adolescence. The

achievement of fidelity in turn will facilitate the achievement of identity and new developmental tasks. Thus, the following conceptual model was developed by taking similar concepts from anthropological and developmental theories of rites of passage.

Transition-Rite conceptions of rites of passage Erickson's conceptions of rites of passage

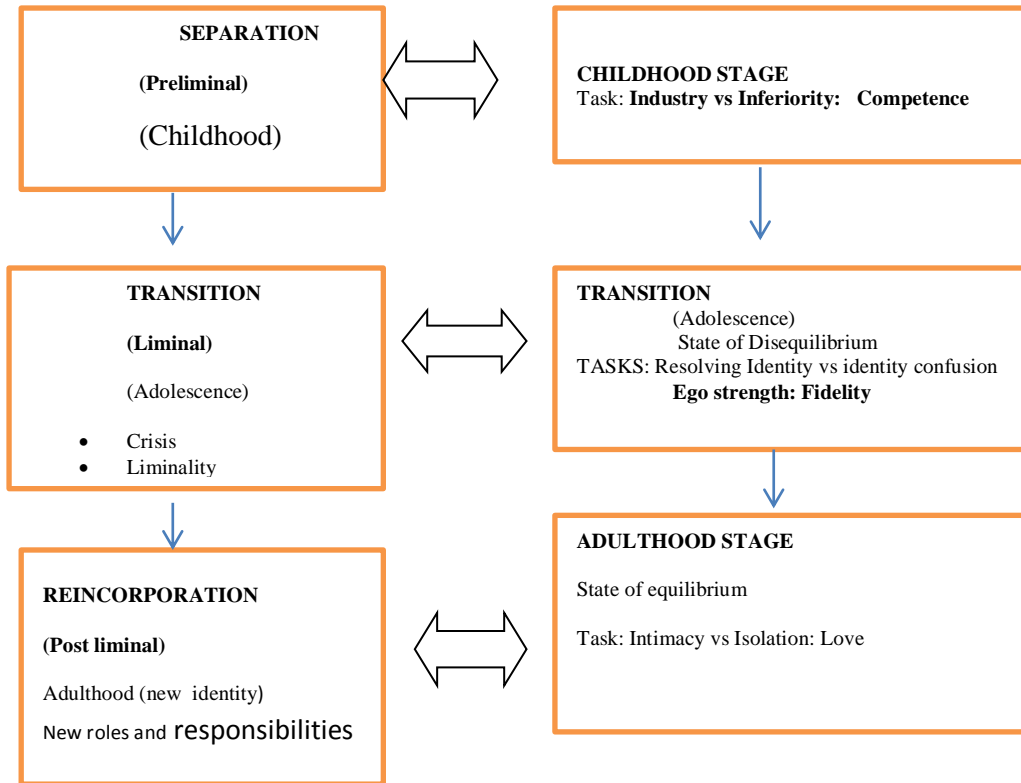


Figure 2.1: Conceptual model derived from Transition-Rite and Erickson's psychosocial theories

CHAPTER THREE: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH SITE, PEOPLE AND CULTURE

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In ethnography, the researcher provides a considerable description of the setting (Creswel, 2012). Since this study is an ethnographic qualitative design, my approach is holistic one in which a number of related aspects other than the major issue of investigation are raised because ethnography aspires a holistic explanation (Willig, 2013) which focuses on processes and relationships that lie behind the surface events. Girls' puberty rites of the Gumuz (*Ke Gehaja*) is interrelated to the living history, values and beliefs of the society. Thus I believe that description of these issues in detail would be relevant as it may serve as a basis for the major issue of investigation. In other words, Ke Gehaja as a child socialization practice is an expression of values and traditions of the Gumuz. Here, I want to note that this overview is based on previous written sources about Gumuz people and my own observation during the fieldwork.

3.2. Description of the Region and People

Benishangul Gumuz region is located in the western part of Ethiopia and it shares common borders with Oromiya regional state in the southwest and South, with Gambella regional state with the Southwest, and with the Amhara region in the North and with the Sudan and South Sudan in the West. It has a total border length of about 1872.29 km (about 459.15 km international borderlines with the Sudan and South Sudan) and about 1418.52 km with national borderlines that is, 904.62 km with Oromiya and 513.52 km with Amhara. The regional capital is Assossa and it is located at a distance of 687 kilo meters west of Addis Ababa (Government Communication Affairs Bureau of Benishangul Gumuz Region, 2013). The region was established in 1994 by the

new constitution of Ethiopia that created a Federal System of Governance. According to Abdussamad (1995) the region is hot lowland with undulating plains and a thick tropical forest that receives heavy rainfall.

Benishangul Gumuz Regional state is connected to Addis Ababa via two routes: The first one is from Assosa via Nelkemte-Ambo and the second one is via Gelgel Beles-Debre Markos.

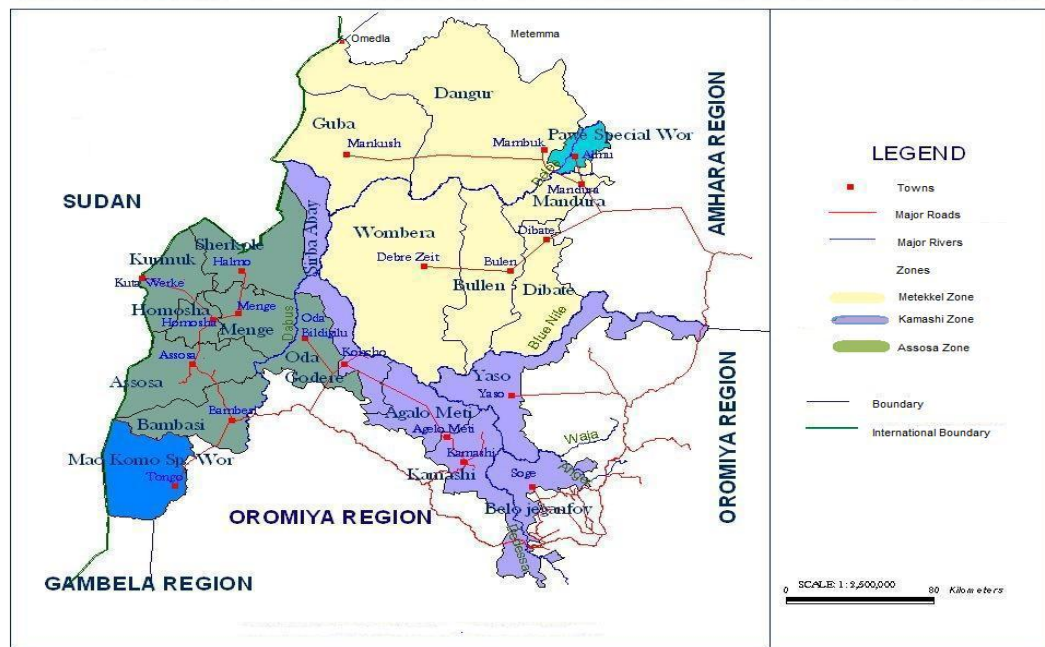


Fig 3.1: Map of Benishangul Gumuz Region

Benishangul Gumuz region is divided into three Administrative Zones, nineteen districts, one special woreda, one city administration and 475 ‘Kebelles’. Metekel is the largest zone with an area of 26,272 square kilometers followed by Assosa which is 14,166 square kilometers and Kamashi 8,850 square kilometers. Metekel zone is located in Northwestern Ethiopia and its recent capital is Gilgel Beles. Meanwhile, Gilgel Beles is located around 555 kilometers from Addis Ababa.

The region has diverse population composition and consists of ethnic groups which can be categorized as indigenous and non-indigenous ones. The indigenous ethnic groups in their order of population number are Berta (26.7%), Gumuz (23.4%), Shinasha (7.0%), Mao (0.6%) and Komo (0.2%). Meanwhile, significant numbers of Amhara (22.2%), Oromo (12.8%), and others (7.1%) also reside in the region. The total population of the Gumuz ethnic group is 141,645 (Population and Housing Census, 2007). Thus, since my population of the study is the Gumuz, I would discuss about their history, settlement, belief systems and other related issues in subsequent sections.

3.3. History, settlement and living style

Historical accounts indicate that the Gumuz are Nilo-Saharan people who lived in different parts of Ethiopia in the past. According to Abdussamad (1995) the Gumuz lived in the lowlands of Western Ethiopia but originally, they occupied a much larger area of the highlands but they were progressively expelled from the highlands to the lowland river valleys by the more powerful neighbors, that is, the Amhara, Agaw and Oromo.

Other historical accounts indicate that the Gumuz were one of the earliest inhabitants of the north region of the Blue Nile River in Ethiopia and the areas of Gojjam and Metekkel as long ago as the 15th century (Ahland, 2012) and they have suffered a long history of slavery which has contributed to forced migrations. Meanwhile, Wolde-Selassie (2004) indicates that the Gumuz used to live in the highlands of the present central and southern Gojjam in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. But, they were exposed to intermittent slave raids which forced them to move down to the lowlands of Western periphery of Ethiopia looking for greater safety. Emphasizing on this fact, Abdussamad (1995) explains that the Gumuz were struggling to keep the most fertile and well-watered highland areas of Metekel, being driven to the hot valleys in the lowland periphery to struggle against Malaria and other diseases.

At present, the Gumuz live both in parts of Ethiopia and the Sudan. The Gumuz of Ethiopia live in the western fringes of Agaw Midir and in the lowland districts of Qwara up to Matamma-Gallabat on the Ethio-Sudanese border (Abdussamed, 1995). The Gumuz of Ethiopia are mainly incorporated in the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State and they predominantly live in two of the three zonal administrative divisions namely, Metekel and kamashi (Berihun, 2004) and the majority of them live in Metekel zone, particularly in Mandura, Dibati and some parts of Guangua.

Abdussamad (1995) explains that the Gumuz survived on the margins of two big states. These were the Christian empire of Ethiopia and Mahdist of Sudan. By virtue of their location, the Gumuz became the focal point for the propagation of Islam from the Sudan and Christianity from Ethiopia. Taressa (2011) states that the Gumuz people kept themselves alienated from any closer contact with other Semetic or Cushitic neighboring tribes because the Gumuz suspect that from past experiences, the Cushitic and Semitic could suddenly attack them at any time and that is why the Gumuz are strong in keeping their culture and identity unchanged. It is not only the native highland people that invade the Gumuz, but near the beginning of the twentieth century the Italian fascists also forced them to leave their land (Ahland, 2010).

Pertaining to their living arrangements, Simmons (1960) indicates that the Gumuz are organized in clans and each clan has its own delimited territory. This clan based settlement keeps them cohesive and people who belong to the same clan live in the same or nearby villages and perform all field cultivation activities together facilitated by elders.

Wolde-Selassie (2004) mentions that family is the most important social institution among the Gumuz. A typical Gumuz family consists of the husband, wife/wives and children. The Gumuz people live in small village houses built very close to one another based on kinship and each village is inhabited by less than two hundred people. Ruibal, Vila, and Aparcio (2006) state that

the Gumuz live in fenced compounds, consisting of the main house, one or more youngsters' houses; goat cages and granaries. The above authors also mention that a family among the Gumuz is characterized by extended members of multiple generations who live together or the nearby houses in the compound. Thus, a man along with his wife or wives lives in the main house and the secondary house is occupied by elder sons or by a young married son and his wife. Meanwhile, other close relatives live in nearby compounds.

The kin members residing in the same village form commune and different territories are assigned to members of different clans. People from the same clan reside in close villages. Thus, a clan consists of a number of neighborhood kin groups who belong to the same descent in the patrilineal line. Meron (2010) mentions that there are over one hundred Gumuz clans, each named after a tree which the clan founders sat under at the time of the dispersal of the Gumuz people long ago.

The Gumuz are semi-agriculturalists, hunters and gatherers. Hunting, breeding cattle and farming are the major activities of earning a living (Zelalem, 2011). They hunt wild animals by using bows and arrows and gather honey, fruits, roots and seeds. In addition to this, they breed cattle or farm for a living. Zelalem further describes that the Gumuz farm their lands together as a clan and during the harvest season, they build huts on the fringe of the farmland and live there. They grow millet, sorghum, onion, cotton, tobacco, mango, and various sauces.

Shifting cultivation is a common practice among the Gumuz and they are hoe cultivators. Thus, unlike their neighboring ethnic groups, they do not use cattle for farming. Instead, they use simple agricultural tools, and depend on hunting and fishing to supplement the wild berries and roots (Desalegn, 1988).

The Gumuz have their own feeding habits which is different from their neighboring settlers. For example, they are not accustomed to the use of milk and milk products as part of their diet but they raise cattle and goats as a source of meat and for ritual offering like puberty rites, death rites and other similar human and spiritual-godly relations (Berihun 2004). Hunting has been part of the Gumuz culture for at least two hundred years. For example, Salt cited in Ahland (2010) reported that the Gumuz hunted and used to eat elephant, rhinoceros, buffalo, deer, snake, rat, or whatever they could procure.

3.4. Religion

Unlike their neighboring settlers, most of the Gumuz people do not have religion but they believe in different spirits (Wolde-Selassie, 2004). Similarly, Gobana(1996) explains that the Gumuz cling to pre-modern customs and traditional religion characterized by a profusion of deities (*Missa*), and they visit ritual specialists (*Gafea*) who can cure several kinds of diseases .Likewise, Taressa (2011) and Meron (2010) explain that the Gumuz believe in different spirits. For example, they believe that there is a higher god (*Raba*) and *Missa*. The Gumuz believe that *Missa* dwells in almost everything and He is aggressive and can attack immediately if someone does wrong. Besides this, the majority of the Gumuz society believes in spirits of trees, rivers, mountains, hills, stars, rainbows, and of some animals (Gobana, 1996).

3.5. Social organization

Social organization among the Gumuz is egalitarian and elder men (*Gunza*) play major roles in maintaining law and order and in conflict resolution. Meron (2010) mentions additional roles of the *Gunza* which includes sharing their experiences in the task of production, selection of fields for production, informing the community about the benefit of working in groups and

advising them on effectively using resources and ways of conserving them. Psychologically speaking, elder men contribute to the young generation by sharing their wisdom which implies positive resolution of generativity versus stagnation crisis of Erickson's seventh stage.

According to Fekadu (1998) male elders are the living heritages who pass traditions and histories of the society to generations and would shape the youngsters' daily activities. For example, they play important role in ways of bringing up a new generation to be aware of his/her histories and traditions; call a meeting of communities to reconcile the conflicting groups. Besides this, Fekadu mentions that male elders take decisions in a collective way and the elders' councils have the authority to set out fines to be paid by the offender and to punish those who violate traditional customs.

Berihun (2004) mentions the responsibilities and obligations of members of a clan of the Gumuz among which exogamous marriage, accepting a clan member to settle in a place of his/her choice, providing support such as giving farmland and reciprocal labor, and obtaining a female clan member that a person can exchange for a wife are the major ones.

3.6. Feeding and sleeping habits

The most common and favorite food among the Gumuz is porridge locally known as 'enga' which is made from sorghum flour and *Kiya* is locally made brew. So one of the developmental tasks of a Gumuz adolescent girl is cooking *Enga* and making *Kiya* and feeding the family among other things.

The Gumuz of Geerz and Qido use different sauces such as 'kima' to add flavor and taste to the 'enga'. I observed that the Gumuz who live in these places do not make 'injera' that other highland settlers feed on. This was one of the challenges I faced during the first few days during

the field work. However, gradually, I was accustomed to feeding on the ‘chimbo’, ‘*enga*’ and ‘kiya’ and found these food items to be quite delicious.

The Gumuz have gender based feeding arrangements. Accordingly, males should eat first before females do. Moreover, males and females do not eat together and informants in Geerz and Qido explained to me that it is a taboo for the two sexes to have a meal in such a manner. Similarly, I witnessed that a Gumuz baby boy was eating ‘*enga*’ with his father while his mother was waiting till the father and son finish the meal. Psychologically speaking, gender segregated feeding habits and close physical and emotional proximities of children with their same sex parents implies that Gumuz children develop gender based parent-child attachment earlier in life.

There are also certain food items that a female is not supposed to eat especially during her reproductive ages. This include meat from wild animals, egg, milk and so on (Informants in Geerz; and key informant from CPAR) so that she would not face birth complications. This is also a common practice in other societies of Ethiopia too. For example, one local study found that sociocultural practices such as dietary restriction like intake of water and sugarcane, and performing prayers and rituals during antenatal periods were perceived to protect against supernatural attack and help safe delivery for residents in Butajira, Southern Ethiopia (Hanlon, Whitley, Dawit, Atalay, & Prince, 2010).

As far as sleeping is concerned, there is co-sleeping for mothers with infants, babies and small children. But, there are separate sleeping arrangements for adolescent boys and girls. Boys who have been initiated to adolescence through circumcision (*mitircha*) spend the night alone in the *Jibitas* as a symbol of new identity while pubertal girls sleep in separate beds (*jentra*) in the main house. I was informed that it is forbidden for adolescent male and female siblings to sleep in the same room and this is done to avoid the sexual desire and incest among sibling brothers and sisters.

3.7. Life transition rituals

The Gumuz have different rites observed at various developmental stages across the lifespan of an individual. Some of these rites include the rituals done during birth, naming, puberty, delivery, and death (Meron, 2005). Among these rituals, rites of passage held following pubertal development are the major ones.

Though the focus of this study is on girls' puberty rites, I believe that highlighting on boys' puberty rite would help the reader understand the nature of these rites. Boys' puberty rite (*Mitircha*) involves the removal of the foreskin by an expert and this symbolizes transition to adolescence. Teacher informants in Dibate mentioned that there is a long time of psychological preparation before the circumcision takes place. This includes activities such as separating the initiates from their family and teaching them about developmental tasks of an adult man. Of course, there are different activities performed before circumcision of boys takes place. For example, the initiates are made to play with bows and arrows and eat special food and wash their bodies. These activities make the initiates feel less anxious about the circumcision which is painful. A teacher informant in Dibate mentioned that the following activities are done during *mitircha*.

The circumcision mostly occurs in groups. Boys are first separated from their family and taken to the forest. They are made to play and feel easy. They also eat special food and wash their bodies. Then they are circumcised by an experienced man from the village.

The above informant also explained that the circumcision process is performed by an experienced adult man within the clan and parents of each initiate will provide locally made drinks such as kiya, chicken, money and arrows to the circumciser. After staying separated from their family and community, boys will be circumcised and they continue to stay separate from the whole

family until their wounds heal. Initiates are also not allowed to enter the main house before the wounds are healed for fear blood may drop and the *missa* may get angry and revenge.

The manner in which girls are initiated to adolescence is different from that of boys'. For example in the case of girls, the ceremony, which is locally known as 'Ke Gehaja', takes place following the occurrence of the first menstruation. But in the case of boys, there is no equivalent and clear biological marker that indicates their sexual maturation. Since girls' puberty rite is the major focus of this study, detailed description about it is given below.

3.7.1. Girls puberty rite (*Ke Gehaja*)

Ke Gehaja is characterized by several activities and practices and these activities are performed based on a given time frame. Accordingly, when a girl experiences her menarche, she will inform about the event to her closest friend. Her friend in turn will inform to the menstruating girl's mother and the mother will provide the menstruating girl a locally made menstrual pad (*chicha*) and orients the girl how to use it. Much care will be taken in order not to let menstrual blood drop in the main house. This perceived danger is avoided by taking away the menstruating girl from the main house and making her stay in the Jibita (small hut). While the menarcheal girl is in the Jibita, her mother would provide a separate cup and plate that the girl is going to use for eating and drinking with until the end of the menstrual flow. In addition to these, the menarcheal girl's closest friend (*Menza*) would serve the menstruating girl in handing over food, water and bringing leaf for sleeping.

The menstruating girl is strictly told not to engage in household chores or touch utensils that other family members use. She is also informed not to touch the *Enga* (porridge) with her own hands for fear she will be sick or die if she does. Rather, the *Menza* will hand over the food to the menarcheal girl with *Jinga* (spoon like wood).

The menstruating girl would remain in the Jibita for two weeks. Meanwhile, the news about the beginning of menarche by a Gumuz girl would reach to everyone in the village. Then adolescent girls and boys begin singing and dancing in the village yard and this will continue for two weeks. Similarly, an elderly woman relative would advise the girl about different matters of future life while the girl is in the Jibita.

At the end of the menstrual flow, the girl is made to go to the river along with her Menza and wash her body. Then, her hair will be shaved and she will paint Gifqa on her hands, face and head. Once these have been done, the elderly woman will give practical lessons to the girl among which grinding and cooking are the major ones.

By the time a girl is considered to be clean, the village people are invited and bring gifts to her parents. The festivity begins and everyone enjoys eating traditional food and drink. Adolescent girls and boys also continue singing and dancing in praising of the girl. Her father will slaughter a goat or an ox just before the girl is made to enter to the main house. On the other hand, blessings and prayers will be given to the girl by the elderly women and men in the village. Finally, the girl would enjoy the festivity and singing and dancing with adolescent boys and girls. But, at the culminating phase of the ritual, it is not only adolescent boys and girls but adults and even children are engaged.

3.8. Menstrual and delivery customs

The Gumuz have the belief that human blood has a curse attached to it. Thus, menstruating girl or one who is about to deliver has to isolate herself from the community during the event. Therefore, a woman or an adolescent girl is expected to go to the forest during her menstruation period to protect the family from evil (Wolde-Selassie, 2004; Kalkidan, 2007; Zelalem, Biniyam & Abdissa, 2011).

Besides living in isolation, a menstruating Gumuz female pursues a number of practices, which include separate feeding from any other person except with another one in the same condition, prohibition from entering into the family house and from making use of and touching the household utensils in the main house (Mulugeta, 2003). In case a menstruating girl comes across somebody to greet, she cannot shake with hands. Instead, she picks a small stick and shaking hands with each other takes place by handling the stick. Mulugeta also mentions that a Gumuz female in her menstrual period cannot cook food and fetch water for the use of other family members, particularly to men.

It is also important to note that Gumuz women and girls have positive traditional practices surrounding menstruation which could provide lessons to non-Gumuz ones. For example, a report by Water Aid Ethiopia in 2005 about sanitation in Benishangul Gumuz region mentions that Gumuz women use tree bark (Chicha) pounded until it becomes soft and this serves as disposable sanitary pad. This pad is a more hygienic practice than washing strips of cloth, as well as being environmentally friendly and free to use (Meron, 2011).

3.9. Marriage customs

The Gumuz practice exogamous and polygamous exchange marriage and residence for newly married couples is mostly patrilocal (Berihun, 2009). Marriage remains an important aspect of manhood and womanhood among the Gumuz. Therefore, a girl is made to get married usually with a form of sister exchange at an earlier age even before her pubertal time.

In Gumuz culture, an individual is not considered as a full person unless he/she forms intimacy through marriage (Gobana, 1996). Yet, a Gumuz man cannot marry because of his wealth but if and only if he has a 'sister' to be exchanged for a wife. As a result, sister exchange marriage (angiya) is the most elaborate form of marriage practiced among the clans. That is, any

man who wants to get married has to provide a female relative for the family from which he is obtaining a wife (Ruibal et al, 2006).Descent is normally patrilineal and a woman goes to live with her husband in the homestead occupied by either her husband or his father. If a husband dies, the widow is married to a brother or another male relative of the deceased husband.

James (1975) discusses that sister exchange marriage is considered as a symbol of Gumuz value as well as a means of their survival strategy used for preserving their identity from the penetration of the more powerful neighboring highlanders. In this type of marriage, a boy gives his sister or daughter of his close relative in exchange of a girl to be his wife from another clan (Kalkidan, 2007; Zelalem , Biniyam & Abdissa, 2011; Wolde-Selassie, 2004) and if divorce occurs ,either the wife given in exchange is returned upon demand or replacement is requested.

Hence, a female is highly valued among the Gumuz society and one of the main reasons for this is that she enables her brother/clan boy to get wife in exchange marriage. Besides this, she is the major actor in taking care of children, fetching water, carry firewood and grass and other farming and construction activities (zelalem, 2011; Wolde-Selassie, 2004).With regard to the economy, fathers exchange their daughters with money and send them to another clan to be wives and this would help the father to be in a better position in terms of wealth and social status.Moreover, the presence of more daughters in the family means that the father can exchange them with females from another clan and these females would be his wives.To the contrary, male children have less economic contribution to the family compared to females.

According to Wolde-Selassie (2004) Polygamy is quite common among the Gumuz. Thus, a man can have more than one wife and hence there could be senior and junior wives in a family. According to this author, the junior wives are considered instrumental in strengthening the family labor. This is similar to Gusii society in Kenya where women marry in their teens, reside with their husbands' parents, and become co-wives in polygynous unions (Levine, et al, 1994) .In the case of

Gumuz, co-wives usually share the same house but the husband builds a separate house for the junior wife when she gives birth or in case there is a disagreement among these co-wives. In general, women's junior or subordinate status is implied from the practice of polygyny.

Kalkidan (2007) mentions that the number of wives that a man would marry dependent upon the number of daughters. For example, if a man has many daughters, he may be able to marry more wives by giving those daughters in exchange. According to Kalkidan, it is common for a woman to share a husband with one or more other wives and this is openly acknowledged. Kalkidan further notes that if a woman is engaged in such an act, it is shameful and dangerous for her life and she will be labeled as a traitor and will be sent back to her parents.

I was informed during the field work that polygyny is quite common among the Gumuz men. For example, from an in-depth interview with two adult male informants, I was told that a Gumuz man can marry more than one wife usually up to three. Being married to more than one wife by a man mainly depends on two conditions: One is the absence of 'matured' girls at home who can contribute labor for the family. The other one is when the first wife is getting older and physically weaker or reaches menopause and not efficient in terms of doing household chores and other wifely duties. In case the second problem occurs, the man will marry an extra junior wife who is young and energetic as a coping strategy.

A typical Gumuz family consists of a man, his wife (or wives), and their unmarried children. Two male informants in Geertz described that if the marriage is monogamous, all members of the family inhabit one house but if the man has polygamous marriage, each wife will have a hut where she lives with her children, and receives her husband on his periodical visits.

Marriage for a girl depends upon two main conditions: one is the developmental condition of brothers or male clan members and the marital condition of the father. For instance, a girl may get married at an earlier age if her elder brother wants to get married or her father needs an

additional wife. In such cases, the young girl will leave her family and move to the house of her husband's family from another clan. Despite the rite of marriage, however, the pre-pubertal girl would continue to be considered as a *Didea* (child) until she reaches menarche. In other words, her social status and responsibilities would be the same with those unmarried girls of her age. Therefore, she would continue to do the type of activities that she used to do in her parents' home.

Informal conversations that I held with Gumuz men in Geerz imply that marriage, specially the one which is based on sister exchange, does not necessarily indicate transition to early adulthood (*Gafa*). In this type of marriage, girls get married almost at any stage of development. However, the cultural definition of young womanhood (*Gafa*) among the Gumuz requires that a female must get married, live independently and give birth (Mother informants in Geerz). In short, the birth of the first child is predominantly more important developmental task to have the socially ascribed identity of womanhood than marriage alone.

The rite of marriage at an early age implies that social and biological puberty does not necessarily coincide in guiding the rite of marriage. Pre-pubertal marriage is especially common in families that practice sister exchange and in such cases, age cohort or being in the same developmental stage between the would be husband and wife is not compulsory. For example the husband may be in *Didea* (childhood) stage while the wife might be in a *Daguna* (adolescence), a *Mitichpega* (middle aged woman) or a widow and viceversa (Male key informants in Geerz).

From the majority of discussions I had with different participants, I understood that the fertility of a girl is the most important component of stable marital life. Thus, failure to give birth by a female is really a bad news for the couples and believed to be a great misfortune and may ultimately lead to divorce. In case of exchange marriage, the girl would be sent back to her family if she is not fertile and a replacement with a fertile one is requested. Similarly, if a woman dies before giving birth, the family has to give another one as substitute.

3.10. Roles and responsibilities of a Gumuz girl

A Gumuz girl lives in her parents' home until she gets married and goes to another clan's village and she has several responsibilities both inside and outside the home. For example, either she spends the day collecting firewood and carrying it to home or to the market for selling; cooking, taking care of smaller siblings, grinding, fetching water and other related tasks. For example, I observed that Gumuz girls were engaged in several household chores such as fetching water, taking care of younger siblings carrying firewood, washing, cooking and so on.



Figure 3.2: a pre-pubertal Gumuz girl in Geerz 'Kebelle' carrying water with 'Andiha'

I asked one of the Gumuz male informants in Geerz site to explain more about what I have observed. He explained about the daily routines of a certain 'matured' girl as follows:

She wakes up at midnight and grinds millet for 'enga' and when day time begins; she will go to the river and fetches water with her 'siaya'. Then, she cleans the house and

makes fire, and prepares 'enga' for the family. After feeding the family, she will go to the forest to collect firewood.

A Gumuz girl's interaction is mainly with her mother and other females in the homestead. She is involved in assisting her mother in all household chores. This is how any girl learns developmentally appropriate tasks and future roles and responsibilities of womanhood. It is not only adolescent girls who are involved in different household chores. For example, I observed that even those little ones who are around six years old (Didea), fetch water with their small 'siayas'. This implies that gender role development begins early in life among the Gumuz girls. Traditional utensils used by a Gumuz girl while performing her daily activities include 'andiha', 'siaya', 'faga'², 'entase'³ and 'chinka'⁴.

3.11. Play and work

It is not common to see a Gumuz girl sitting idle or engaging in some form of playing around the hamlets. To the contrary, a boy spends his time by engaging in different group and individual games in his surrounding environment. One of the dominant playing activities of a Gumuz boy that I witnessed was shooting with bows and arrows. For example, I observed that boys in Qido and Geerz sites were moving from place to place within their village and shooting at birds over a large tree with bows and arrows.

² Faga refers to equipment for pouring kiya from one container to the other.

³ Entasse refers to locally cooking material made from clay.

⁴ Refers to wooden made material *for preparing kiya*



Figure 3.4: A Gumuz baby boy playing with bows and arrows in Geerz

Every Gumuz boy carries his own bows and arrows when he goes out of home. Thus, it is through engaging in such activities that children learn culturally defined and age and gender appropriate developmental tasks by imitating role models such as peers, adolescent boys and men in the community. Even, a baby boy is culturally motivated to learn using bows and arrows from the beginning by his parents and this may contribute to his psychomotor development. In general, Gumuz parents encourage boys to develop a sense of autonomy in learning future gender roles and developmental expectations.

As opposed to boys, girls are involved in doing household chores. One of the mothers in Geerz told me that girls would be relatively free from work in the evening. In such occasions, they enjoy by singing and dancing with their age mates (girls). Meanwhile, I had an informal discussion with one Gumuz mother in Geerz site in her home about the kind of play activities that girls engage. She explained that girls are busy doing household chores. She replies:

Women and girls are engaged in every activity from morning to night. For example, they fetch water, collect firewood, grind corn, and cook *enga*, and so on. For example, as you can see them here (pointing to some girls leaving the village), they are just going to the forest now. They do everything... they are busy of doing household chores, but they enjoy by singing and dancing at night.



Figure 3.5: Gumuz pre-pubertal girls (Didea) washing clothes in the nearby river in Komed Basin village, Geerz.

3.12. Formal versus informal learning

Gumuz children learn culturally and developmentally appropriate gender roles informally with the guidance of their respective parents. The major developmental task of a pre-pubertal girl is to learn future roles of womanhood. The mothers (co-wives) play a central role in providing support to the young girl to master these tasks. This is done by making the girl engage in

household chores and supervising her. But with the advent of modern education in recent years, Gumuz boys and girls are also engaged in formal schooling. Regarding this, I tried to assess the enrolment rate of boys and girls in formal education. Accordingly, teachers in Dibati and Geerz primary schools informed me that in the first cycle, the number of boys and girls are almost similar. However, in higher grades, the number of girls in each classroom decreases because they are forced to get married.

I also witnessed the fact that the number of girls enrolled in formal education is less than that of boys. One of the major reasons for this is that school age corresponds with pubertal development and a girl is forced to abandon her education due to marriage which is more valued than formal schooling by parents. A young girl whom I interviewed in Geerz informed me that she just dropped out of school because she had to be exchanged with a girl from another clan to be a wife for her brother. Some Gumuz parents have also misconceptions about girls' education. For example, one key informant from the Women, Children and Youths' Affairs Office told me that parents have the belief that if a girl advances in her education, she would turn to be a prostitute and after all it would be enough if a girl is able to read and write her name.

The interview I had with one of the mothers in Geerz is also similar to what has been stated above. She was walking around the village with her two sons and a daughter who are between 4 and 7 years old and I asked her about the future roles of these children. She replied that boys will go to school while the girl will follow the footsteps of her mother, that is, she will get married.

Lessons about childcare and other household chores begin early in life for girls. For example, in Komed Basin village at Geerz site, I noticed an adolescent girl carrying her baby brother at her back, and two bundles of firewood with *andiha* on her shoulders.

3.13. Symbols of identity

A typical adolescent Gumuz girl has her own identity which is different from other neighboring non-Gumuz settlers. This unique identity could be inferred from her clothing and other ornaments. For instance, she puts on the *Chicha*, *Gifqa*, *Liba*, *Gitsa* and other bracelet-like ornaments as a symbol of expressing her unique identity. Meanwhile, there are scarifications made at both sides of her face during her initiation through Ke Gehaja which symbolizes her beauty, sexual maturation and readiness for marriage.

Chicha is a material made from fibers of 'faqa' tree. The process of making *chicha* involves cutting the roots of a 'faqa' tree, pounding it with a stone, washing and drying. *Chicha* is mainly used as a sanitary pad by those females who have achieved sexual maturity and those who are in the reproductive age. Besides this, it can be worn around the neck as an ornament by both adolescent girls and women. A Gumuz woman in Geerz who was wearing *chicha* around her neck while I had an informal discussion at that moment told me that the *chicha* could be used as an ornament besides its main purpose as a sanitary pad.

Gifqa is also another locally made cosmetics proceed by combining red-soil with some oily plants and it is painted on hair. I learned that this substance is more popular among young girls than women are. *Gifqa* has spiritual values besides its major purpose as cosmetics. For example, the Gumuz believe that painting *gifqa* on one's body or hair symbolizes beauty. In other words, a young girl uses it to adorn her hair and other body parts. Besides this, it is believed that using *gifqa* is associated with spirituality and psychological wellbeing against bad spirits. Thus, it is applied on the body of young girls and women after the end of each menstrual cycle and delivery process. This is because it is culturally presumed that this substance has the power to keep the female away from bad spirits.

3.14. Cultural healing (Machiquma)

The Gumuz have also indigenous healing systems to protect children from disease and make them psychologically and spiritually healthy. For example, while I was conducting observation with one of my research assistants around the village yard in Geerz, we watched a healing ritual being performed by one of the family members in that village. Family members including, the father, mother and children were gathered in a bush and they were digging a tunnel under the termite's accumulated soil. The tunnel has two openings for entrance and exit. We observed the ritual attentively and asked several questions to family members about it.

After the digging process was completed, every child entered through one opening of the tunnel and emerged through its exit by creeping. Then, the mother cut the head of the chicken with her teeth and hence fresh blood continued to flow on the hole. Having done this, she handed over the killed chicken to her husband. He in turn swayed the dead chicken on the head of each child coming out of the tunnel. Finally, he sprinkled the blood on the tunnel and put a droplet on the forehead of each child. Finally, the dead chicken was buried in that tunnel and this was the conclusion of the healing ritual.

At the end of the ritual process, I asked the husband and wife why they were doing it and they explained to me that the ritual helps to protect children from different illnesses caused by bad spirits. According to their perception, this ritual has the power to prevent several illnesses, which cannot be treated with modern medication. The ritual is locally known as *machiquma* which literally means 'to let a person enter to one opening of the tunnel and exit to the other opening'. The ritual is a cure to ailments of the eye, headache and performing the ritual also gives them psychological and spiritual comfort.



Figure 3.6. *Cultural healing practice (Machiquuma) taking place in Komed Basin village.*

In my view, this ritual implies the cultural construction of disease and healing which in turn affects how parents should do to prevent illness. In other words, this ritual is held to ensure that the lives of children will not be exposed to illnesses and evil spirits and this seems to create psychological sense of security among parents and children.

3.15. Parental beliefs about children

One of the primary goals of child development by the Gumuz is that, the child should be psychologically strong to withstand the physical challenges of life. This can be inferred from the activities that children are engaged in. For example, both boys and girls learn gender specific adulthood skills and responsibilities starting from their earlier ages with close supervision of parents.

Cultural values and beliefs about males and females in this society and associated gender roles and stereotypes is the major motive behind how Gumuz parents rear their sons and daughters. Hence, parental ethnotheories guide gender based socialization and dictate the developmental tasks of female and male children.

Gumuz parents have the belief that children have to learn appropriate gender roles based on the developmental goals set by the society. For instance, parents expect that a girl shall spend time with her mother and learn to perform activities that her mother does through observation. For example, in one of the FGDs with mothers in Geerz, informants explained that a female child is socialized to be a good wife, a good cook, a good house keeper, cleaner, and one who is able to prepare good *kiya*. In addition to these, parents have the expectation that a girl should be strong, polite, nurturing and respectful of elders.



Figure: 3.7 A Gumuz adolescent girl (right) assisting her mother to grind a corn

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodology and techniques that were used in the study are discussed in detail. Primarily, issues such as the study design, research paradigm, procedures, population and participants, sampling techniques, and methods of data collection and analysis are presented one by one. Besides these, ethical considerations and some other related issues are discussed.

I want to note that before the main study was conducted preliminary observation and Pilot testing was carried out to know the feasibility of the study in terms of site selection, population and also to check whether interview and FGD guide questions work as intended or not. Accordingly, some revisions were made on interview and FGD protocols and on research questions prior to their implementation to the main study.

4.1. Epistemological Approach

There are different paradigms within qualitative research among which social constructivism is one (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and a researcher who employs social constructivism is interested in the views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies of individuals than in gathering facts (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, having understood the meanings and applications of social constructivism as a research paradigm, This approach was preferred from other competing paradigms because it is more appropriate in shaping the design and the methods of data collection and analysis. Thus, guided by this paradigm, multiple meanings and perceptions of *Ke Gehaja* were identified from different groups of participants during data analysis.

4.2. Research Approach

In this study, I employed qualitative ethnographic qualitative approach because I thought that puberty rite is a cultural issue which could be explored more appropriately by this method. Moreover, ethnographic approach offers richly descriptive reports of participants' perceptions, beliefs, views and feelings, as well as the meanings and interpretations of *Ke Gehaja*. The rationale for applying ethnographic approach is that culture is the central concept in investigating issue at hand and secondly, the study was conducted in the natural setting of participants.

4.3. Procedures

This study was conducted in three phases. First preliminary observation of potential sites was conducted in May 2012 for two weeks. Second, the pilot study was conducted from March 23 to April 28, 2013. Finally, data collection for the main study was done from February 12 to April 21, 2014.

For the pilot and the main study, I followed a series of procedures such as arranging preconditions for data collection, revising interview and FGD protocols preparing audio and video recorders, spending more time in the study sites with gate keepers and research assistants.

4.3.1. Preliminary observation

I made preliminary observation on potential sites in Metekel Zone prior to conducting the pilot and main studies so as to make the research process more conducive and practical. Thus, I tried to accomplish some activities that would enable me to conduct a feasible study. Hence, I first made a visit to Government and Communication office in Metekel zone to seek information about those districts where *Ke Gehaja* is practiced and this was done in May 2012 with one of my colleagues in the Department of Folklore in Addis Ababa University.

One of the most important advantages of the preliminary observation was that it gave me the opportunity to be acquainted with gatekeepers, translators and key informants such as elder men and teachers who belong to the Gumuz ethnic group. Besides these, I contacted male and female school teachers, principals, personnel from Culture and Tourism offices of Metekel zone during the preliminary observation.

The preliminary observation was the first step towards getting access to the study sites. Hence, permission to conduct the study was obtained ahead of time from Metekel Zone Culture and Tourism Department. Experts from Culture and Tourism Office in the zone informed me that the places where Ke Gehaja rites are practiced are in Mandura and Dibati districts. Besides I was also told that Dibati is more accessible site in terms of security, transportation, proximity and accommodations and thus, I decided to conduct my study there.

4.3.2. Accessing the field

Access to the field and participants was not possible automatically and hence I had to go through several procedures. Accordingly, I began the long process by looking for gate keepers with the help of persons well known to me. Thus, first, I was introduced to one key informant in Dibate town through one of my classmates in the undergraduate program. This key informant in turn introduced me to gatekeepers in Qido and Geerz 'kebelles'.

Next, I had to get the consent from the Government Communication Office in Dibate district before starting my main job in the area and it was after securing permission from the office that I went ahead to the main field work. The district personnel were very helpful in providing me information about the names and residence of key informants and 'Kebelles' where *Ke Gehaja* rites are common within the district.

After having permission for accessing the field, I began the data collection process by negotiating with participants with the help of gatekeepers. This includes explaining to the participants about the study and convincing them that all the information they provide is confidential. Meanwhile, to make the participants more confident, oral informed consent was employed. Accordingly, mothers and school girls were more convinced to participate in the study when they were provided with the oral consent by the female research assistant.

Accessing data was more difficult in Geerz site than Dibate and Qido because participants were busy doing household chores and hence I had to reschedule the interview session time and again. But in Dibate and Qido sites, access to participants was much easier, because I have already had an acquaintance with the school director and many of the teachers during the preliminary observation phase of this study. Thus, both the director and the teachers assisted me in selecting participants and arranging places for FGDs with Gumuz girls. What is more is that participants showed their willingness to engage in the study when they were asked by gate keepers and research assistants than by me.

4.3.3. Study Site

Dibate is one of the 20 woredas, or districts, in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region of Ethiopia. Part of the Metekel Zone, it is bordered by Mandura on the north, by the Dura River on the east which separates it from the Amhara Region; by the Abay River on the south which separates it from the Kamashi Zone, and by Bulen on the west and it has an estimated area of 2,425.32 square kilometers. This woreda is named for its largest town, Dibate. Dibate district is divided into 29 ‘Kebelles’(Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Government Communication Office, 2013).

As I explained above, this study was conducted in three selected sites (Kebelles) of Dibati district: Dibati town, Geerz and Qido ‘kebelles’. Dibati is one of the seven districts of Metekel

Zone. I selected this district for the reasons mentioned before. Besides, Dibate district is one of the places in Benishangul Gumuz Region mainly inhabited by the Gumuz people. Another rationale for choosing this district is that I have good acquaintance with some gatekeepers who were born and grown in that area and who would be involved in facilitating my field work in one way or another.

Ethnographers usually study a small number of settings (Hamresley and Atkinson, 2007) and sometimes these places are geographically close to one another. For example, Qido is located about 20 kilometers from Dibati town to the west whereas Geerz is located about 27 kilometers from Southwest of Dibati. Meanwhile, the distance between Qido and Geerz is about 6 kilometres. According to the 2007 National Census report, the total population of Dibati District is 33,452. Among this total population, the percentage of the Gumuz is 30.6%. The five largest ethnic groups reported in Dibate were the Gumuz (30.6%), the Amhara (26.3%), the Oromo (24%), the Shinasha (16.5%) and the Awi (2%) a subgroup of the Agaw (Source: 2007 Population and Housing Census).

Geerz is one of the ‘kebelles’ in Dibati district which is located west of Dibati town. This ‘Kebelle’ is inhabited mainly by the Gumuz, Shinasha and other highland re-settlers such as the Amhara and the Agaw. Gumuz settlement is based on clan and hence members of the same clan live in one village. For example, one of the male informants explained to me that all the Gumuz residents who live in Geerz belong to one clan called ‘duminda’ while those who live in Qido belong to another clan known as ‘*Dibangua*’.

4.3.4. Recruiting and training of research assistants

Before I began collecting data, I recruited two male and one female research assistants who were born and grown in the same residential areas with the help of gate keepers. The research

assistants were familiar with the selected research sites. In other words, they were insiders to the Gumuz community and have deep understanding about the culture and tradition. One of the male assistants was a 37-year old man who was born and grown in Geerz 'kebele' which is mainly inhabited by one of the clans of the Gumuz known as *Dubinda*. He is an officer at the Government Communication Office in Dibati District. With regard to his educational background, he has Bachelor Degree in Foreign Language and Literature. He is multilingual and is perfect in Amharic, English, Gumuz and Shinasha languages.

The second research assistant was 34-years old man who was born and grown in Qido *Kebelle*. He is an elementary school teacher in Qido primary school and is a diploma holder in teaching. He belongs to one of the clans of the Gumuz in Qido site known as *Dibangua*. Concerning his language ability, he is also multilingual and speaks Gumuz, Shinasha and Amharic languages. I was introduced to this person through the school director of Qido elementary school.

The third research assistant was a 28-year old young Gumuz woman working as an officer in Dibate District Culture and Tourism Office. She was born and grown around Sirba Abay near the construction site of The Great Renaissance Dam.

The next activity that I did was giving one day training to the research assistants on the data collection process. The training focused on interviewing procedures, using probes for eliciting more information after each interview question and on writing field notes. The training was conducted in Dibate elementary school.

The research assistants had different roles during the field work including being involved in the selection of participants; translating data, clarifying ideas that need more explanation based on my request and so on. The first research assistant had an additional role in arranging accommodations for me, especially in Geerz and Dibati sites. The fact that the research assistants were insiders and multi-linguals was a good opportunity for me and minimized my worries about

accessing data. When I went back to the field for the main study, I was acquainted with several people from Governmental organizations and gatekeepers. This in turn reduced the obstacles related to accessing the field. Meanwhile the female research assistant contributed a lot for this study in convincing participants, and translating during interview and FGD sessions especially with schoolgirls and mothers. Here, it is also essential to note that besides the three persons who were formally recruited as research assistants, there were also other Gumuz and non-Gumuz women and men (especially in Geerz and Dibati sites) who helped me in the process of arranging FGDs and in-depth interviews with participants and translating informal discussions and interviews.

4.3.5. Participants

The major participants of the study were primarily adolescent schoolgirls, mothers, elderly men, teachers and experts from Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations.



Figure 4.1: FGD with mothers in Komed basin village, Geerz 'Kebelle'.

Even though the issue is primarily investigating girls' puberty rites (Ke Gehaja), it was indispensable to get useful data related to the issue from members of the community. Therefore, I had formal and informal discussions with different age groups during the field work. The focus of the interviews and discussions was mainly on the role of Ke Gehaja rite as an indigenous

socialization practice marking of developmental transition of pubertal girls; gender role socialization in which *Ke Gehaja* is also a part, feeding habits, marriage, life cycles, and belief systems.

Table 4.1 Demographic characteristics of all participants

No	Site	Adolescent Girls		Teachers			Experts		Total	
		Initiated	Non-initiated	Mothers	Male	Female	Elderly men	Male		Female
1	Dibati	2	8	6	2	-	1	2	1	22
2	Qido	4	4	10	1	-	1	-	-	20
3	Geerz	2	2	8	-	-	1	-	-	13
Total		8	14	24	3	0	3	2	1	55

Since the objective of this study was exploring the different meanings ascribed to *Ke Gehaja* rite, the major participants of the study were both initiated and non-initiated girls. The reason for including non-initiated girls in the study was to learn about their views and beliefs about the practice in contrast with those who have been initiated. In addition to this, mothers were included as participants of the study for two main reasons. The first reason is to compare how *Ke Gehaja rite* as a mark of developmental transitions within the female life cycle is perceived by different generations. Second, menarcheal experience at puberty is believed to have long lasting impact upon how a woman defines menstruation (Sasser-Coen, 1996). Besides, girls and mothers, elderly men were also selected as key informants of the study because I thought that they have deep knowledge about this indigenous child socialization practice.

In general, a total of fifty five participants out of which eight initiated and fourteen non-initiated girls; twenty four mothers all of whom were initiated through *Ke Gehaja* rite except one; three male teachers, three elderly men, and three experts were formally selected for the

study. Experts were selected from two Governmental and Non-Governmental Organization in Dibate district. Accordingly, one expert was interviewed from each organization. These organizations were Culture and Tourism Office; Women’s Children and Youth Affairs Office and the Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR), Dibate Center.

Prior to the field work, I had a plan to include Gumuz female teachers to be participants of the study, but while I had been in the field during the pilot testing, I learned that there was no any Gumuz female teacher in selected sites. Consequently, I used male teachers as informants of the study.

Table 4.2 Demographic characteristics of school girls

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pseydonym</i>	<i>Current Age</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Age at menarche</i>	<i>Condition of initiation</i>
Dibate	Ayalnesh	16	7	15	Initiated
	Mirtzer	15	6	13	Not initiated
	Ebuke	14	6	15	Initiated
	Yezbayush	15	7	15	Not initiated
	Zinash	15	5	14	Not initiated
	Alemnesh	18	8	15	Not initiated
	Emanji	19	8	15	Not initiated
	Eshegawo	17	7	12	Not initiated
	Ebuk	14	7	13	Not initiated
	Elfenesh	16	5	13	Not initiated
Qido	Yibas	16	4	14	Initiated
	Eshu	17	6	15	Not initiated
	Meseret	17	6	15	Not initiated
	Tsehaynesh	18	4	16	Initiated
	Yesebed	17	3	15	Initiated
	Mintwab	16	3	14	initiated
	Agalu	15	4	15	Not initiated
	Saku	18	4	15	Not initiated
Geerz	Asasu	17	5	15	Not initiated
	Edhas	18	7	15	initiated
	Yampu	20	7	15	not initiated
	Laway	16	5	14	Initiated

As indicated in table 4.2, a total of twenty two school girls were selected from the three sites and the age of these girls ranges from 14 to 20. Meanwhile, among the total number, eight of them reported that they had participated in *Ke Gehaja* rite following their menarche while the rest were not. It is evident from table 4.2 that when the three sites are compared, proportionally, more girls in the rural areas (Qido and Geerz) were initiated through *Ke Gehaja* rite than those in Dibate town. This implies that *ke Gehaja* rite is more common and relevant in rural than urban settings.

Table: 4.3: Demographic characteristics of mothers

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Current Age</i>	<i>Age at menarche</i>	<i>Condition of initiation</i>
<i>Dibate</i>	Eshu	45	15	Initiated
	Yampu	Unknown	13	Not initiated
	Eka	Unknown	unknown	Initiated
	Gamatu	36	unknown	Initiated
	Mercho	unknown	unknown	Initiated
	Leyitu	unknown	unknown	Initiated
<i>Qido</i>	Ema chacha	46	15	Initiated
	Galem	Unknown	13	Initiated
	Chiwa	Unknown	14	Initiated
	Michu	Unknown	unknown	Initiated
	Siyu	Unknown	unknown	Initiated
	Gete	Unknown	unknown	Initiated
	Emush	unknown	unknown	initiated
	Tayu	Unknown	unknown	initiated
	Geneti	Unknown	unknown	Initiated
Edhani	Unknown	15	Initiated	
<i>Geerz</i>	Yabas	Unknown	12	Initiated
	Gashwo	Unknown	unknown	Initiated
	Gafdi	Unknown	15	Initiated
	Zewdie	Unknown	13	Initiated
	Eshegawo	unknown	15	Initiated
	Belaynesh	43	15	Initiated
	Zeneb	Unknown	unknown	Initiated
	Shashitu	unknown	unknown	Initiated

In general a total of twenty four mothers were involved in this study in the three sites for in-depth interviews and focus groups. In other words, in-depth interviews were done only with six

of the mothers while each mother participated in the focus group discussions conducted in the respective sites. Demographic data from table 4.3 indicates that all of these mothers had been initiated through Ke Gehaja rite following their menarche except one. Regarding age at menarche, some of the mother participants were able to remember the age and events of the first menstruation. To the contrary, many of them failed to tell their current age even if they were able to inform me the life cycle in which they are found at the time of the interview based on the conceptions of Gumuz female life cycle.

Table: 4.4 Demographic characteristics of key informants

No	Name	sex	Age	Ethnic group	Remark
1	Endalkachew kebede	M	32	Non-Gumuz	Expert at Culture and Tourism office
2	Geneme Burko	F	26	Gumuz	Head of women, children and youth office
3	Deribe	M	36	Non-Gumuz	Community Converstiaon Team leader of CPAR ⁵ .
4	Yeshiwas	M	32	Gumuz	Teacher at Dibate Primary school
5	Wompris	M	34	Gumuz	Teacher at Qido Elementary school
6	Tesfaye	M	26	Gumuz	Teacher at Geerz elementary school
7	Bogale	M	41	Gumuz	Elderly man in Komed Village, Geerz
8	Aba Flate	M	61	Non-Gumuz	Elderly man at Dibate town
9	Balcha	M	58	Gumuz	Elderly man at Qido

As it is shown in table 4.4 ,nine key informants were involved in this study and the majority of them belonged to the Gumuz ethnic group. But I want to note that some non-Gumuz informants included in this study are those who lived together with the Gumuz people for a long time and have deep knowledge about Gumuz values and traditions in that area. For example, one

⁵ Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief

of these is a very known elderly Shinasha man who knows the language , culture and values of Gumuz ,Oromo, Agaw and Amhara.

4.3.6. Sampling

In this study, sampling was done based on the relevance of cases to the problem under investigation instead of their representativeness. Accordingly, the study employed different types of non-probability sampling techniques to select participants among which available and snowball sampling were the major ones. The rationale for employing purposive sampling was that this technique would help me select potential research informants for the study based on knowledge and experience of what is being studied. Hence, postmenarcheal girls, mothers, elderly men who were involved in mentoring, teachers, and experts from Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations were selected using purposive sampling techniques.

Thus, fifty-five informants, excluding those who were informally interviewed during participant observation were selected by using non-probability sampling techniques. I employed snowball-sampling technique particularly for selecting elder men and mothers who have deep knowledge about Gumuz culture in all the three sites. On the other hand, I applied available sampling techniques to select Gumuz schoolgirls and teachers.

As I stated above, initiated and non-initiated school girls were selected with the help of teachers in each respective school while the selection of mother participants was done using snowball sampling techniques. Gate keepers in each site played a key role in locating those mother participants in each village.

With regard to the procedures of sampling in school girls, I purposefully selected those girls who are more than twelve years old because cross-cultural studies on menarcheal age indicate that girls experience menarche at twelve years old and above (Markstrom, 2008; Sasser-Coen,

1996). The selection was done with the help of research assistants and school teachers. Once selection had been done, each girl was asked whether she has experienced menarche or not. Next, only those girls who have already begun menstruating were included in the study. Then, each girl was asked if there was a Ke Gehaja ceremony prepared following her menarche or not and this was done to identify initiated girls from non-initiated ones. Finally, based on the self-report, the selected girls were categorized into initiated and non-initiated groups.

In general, data was obtained through thirty two in-depth interviews and six focus groups. In other words, in-depth interviews were held with fourteen school girls; six mothers; three school teachers, three experts and three elderly men in all the three sites. Likewise, a total of nine focus group discussions were held with all the twenty two school girls and mothers; that is two focus groups were held in each site.

With regard to deciding on the sample size, I continued to sample and code data till I reach the point of data saturation. Accordingly, data analysis from the fifty five participants revealed the same category of themes regarding the issue of exploration and hence no more new category of themes were emerged. At this point, I understood that data has been saturated and further sampling and coding is not needed.

4.3.7. Data collection methods

The primary methods that I employed for collecting data were semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. First, protocols for semi-structured interviews and FGDs were prepared based on the objectives of the study. These protocols were first prepared in English based on reviews made on some related empirical and theoretical literature and then translated to Amharic. Next, the translated interview and FGD protocols were checked for their cultural sensitivity and appropriateness by two experts from Culture and Tourism Office of Dibate district.

Based on this, some of the items in the FGD and interview protocols were revised to fit to the context of the culture of participants before they were applied for data collection. Finally, two bilinguals who are fluent both in Gumuz and in Amharic languages translated these interview protocols into the Gumuz language.

In-depth interviews and FGDs were conducted with the help of multilingual translators. That is, each interview and FGD protocols had two versions: the Amharic and Gumuz version. Therefore, data collection was done in the following procedures. First, I asked questions using the Amharic version. Next, the translator read the same question using local language of participants (Gumuz language) and discussions continued. Finally, the translator listened to participants' response to each question and translated back to me using Amharic. But, the majority of participants could understand Amharic very well besides Gumuz language. In such occasions, the discussions were done using both Gumuz and Amharic.

Interviews with initiated girls, non-initiated girls, mothers and Key informants were conducted by using separate protocols. Similarly, the FGD protocols for mothers and adolescent girls were separate ones. Each FGD session for school girls consisted of members of both initiated and non-initiated girls. This was done for two main reasons. The first reason is that the number of initiated girls in Dibate and Geerz sites is below four which is the minimal standard for conducting FGDs (Bernard, 2006). Second, I eventually learned that conducting FGD sessions with heterogeneous groups of members (initiated and non-initiated girls) in the same session is more advantageous because it helps to construct meanings (Flick, 2009) related to Ke Gehaja rite by the two groups.

Each interview and FGD protocols originally had more items but these items were revised from one site to the other and there were instances in which related issues were discussed when one issue was raised. Moreover, there were occasions in which the discussions were guided based

on new emerging issues from the participants themselves instead of the pre-set interview and FGD protocols.

Throughout the data collection process, in each session, I followed some basic procedures such as establishing rapport and steering conversation away from evaluative or highly sensitive topics, substituting some key terms with local words so that originality of meaning would be obtained and so on. Questions which I thought would affect inner feelings of participants were not used until intimacy was established with participants. It was also after some frequent meetings that I probed more deeply into the issue of investigation except for those informants whom I had no chance to meet for the second time such as in the case of key informants at CPAR. The protocols consisted of topics that were considered relevant to a given interview and some brief probes followed each topic.

I addressed the following major issues during the in-depth interviews: age of menarche , physical and psychological changes noticed by girls during pubertal time, the perceived psychological and social contributions and challenges of the ritual and the processes (steps) that initiates went through during the ritual; the perceived psychological and social outcomes believed to be gained as a result of participating in Ke Gehaja ceremony ; practices and activities of the ritual; roles and expectations of newly initiated girls and the lessons that can be drawn from this practice for non-initiated girls and about Gumuz female life cycle. Similarly, by using these interview protocols, I tried to explore about the phases of the initiation rituals and the symbols that implicate the separation of the initiates from childhood (Didea), the transition to adolescence (Daguna) and the reintegration of the initiated girls to the family/society and the developmental and social contribution of each phase to the initiate.

Focus group discussions with school girls and mothers were done to learn about the views and meanings that different group of participants have about *Ke Gehaja* rite. Besides this, the

FGDs were important in learning how meanings related to *Ke Gehaja* are constructed by different groups of participants and across different generations.



Figure 4.2. FGD with school girls at Dibate

Regarding the number of participants in each FGD session, there were a total of eight girls in Qido site, four in Geerz and ten in Dibate. In other words, all the girls who participated in the in-depth interviews were also involved in the focus group discussion sessions. Meanwhile, the number of mothers involved in this study was twenty four. Out of this, those who were involved in the FGD session at Dibate, Qido and Geerz sites was six, ten and eight respectively. Each FGD was conducted in the natural settings of participants. For example, in Geerz site, it was conducted in the village yard. On the other hand, FGDs with school girls took place in the school compounds of Qido, Geerz and Dibate primary schools.

The minimum time taken for each session was about forty-five minutes and the maximum was about an hour. Regarding the data collection method, each FGD session was audio-taped so that I could fully concentrate on the discussion. Meanwhile, each in-depth interview took more than an hour and half.

Concerning the time sequence of data collection, first I conducted key informant interviews. Next, I held in-depth interviews with initiated and non-initiated girls and mothers. Then FGDs with initiated and non-initiated girls were conducted and finally, FGDs were held with mothers. In all data collection sessions, I used digital audio recordings and field notes. Image and video data were also collected specially during observation and all these recordings were done after full consent of participants was obtained. Video and image data were mainly collected during observation of girls and women's daily activities, and ritual healings and demonstrations of Ke Gehaja rite practices.

Besides interview and FGDs, I employed participant observation and field notes as additional data collection methods especially in studying roles and activities of a Gumuz girl. Thus an observation format consisting of issues of physical and social settings, gender roles, and daily activities of Gumuz girls, work, feeding and sleeping arrangements of the Gumuz girls was employed to collect relevant data on these issues.

4.4. Ethical considerations

While conducting this study, I tried to consider some basic ethical guidelines. Thus, as I mentioned at the beginning of this section, the first activity that I had to do was to get permission from each site that would enable me conduct the study. Therefore, I managed to get permission from Dibati district Culture and Tourism office and from each respective site.

Once permission had been got, oral informed consent was obtained from each participant before conducting the indepth interviews and FGDs. Accordingly, school girls and mothers were informed about the purpose of the study and participating in the study was based on their full interest.

In general, I tried to make the participants feel safe and secure regarding the information they provide on the issue of investigation. In other words, participants were assured that the information they provide would be used only for research purpose so that they could feel free to talk about their experiences. There was also a deal between the researcher and participants that the preliminary data would be presented to check whether their voices are correctly addressed or not.

Besides this, each informant was pre-informed that her/his real name would not be used while reporting the findings in order to make her/him feel more confident. Once the participants had been convinced about participating in the study, the next step that I had to deal with them was about recording the data using audio and image recordings and fortunately all of them were happy about it.

4.5. Data analysis

Qualitative data collected using multi-method approach were, transcribed, translated and organized into codes, categories, and themes. Data sorting and analysis were carried out using ATLAS.ti7 software, guided by the thematic content analysis. As data collection went on, analysis was done simultaneously till the point of data saturation and this involved looking at frequently recurring pattern of responses and themes. Meanwhile, after the data were collected, I looked at all the protocols and categorized common themes. These themes were developed by thematic analysis of participants' responses and finally they were conceptualized into developmental and psychosocial themes. The identification of themes was based on transition-rite theories and psychosocial theory of Erickson.

Data analysis involved activities such as listening the audio-recorded data and transcribing them, reading the transcribed data thoroughly several times to understand key concepts; underlining and highlighting the key concepts; reducing and categorizing codes; writing memos

under quotations when needed, and finding relationship among different categories ;observing the image data to get meaning behind them and so on. During data analysis, single words or short phrases were most often used in coding data.

In reporting the findings, most of the data display was done in narrative form by emphasizing on those data quoted from participants plus interpretations of these quotations.

I employed an interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994) while analyzing data for this study. This model involves four interactive processes: data collection, data coding (reduction), data display and drawing conclusions or verifications. In other words, I began by transcribing and translating data collected through different methods. Next, I coded these data and displayed them. Finally, themes derived from coded data were categorized and interpreted through narration.

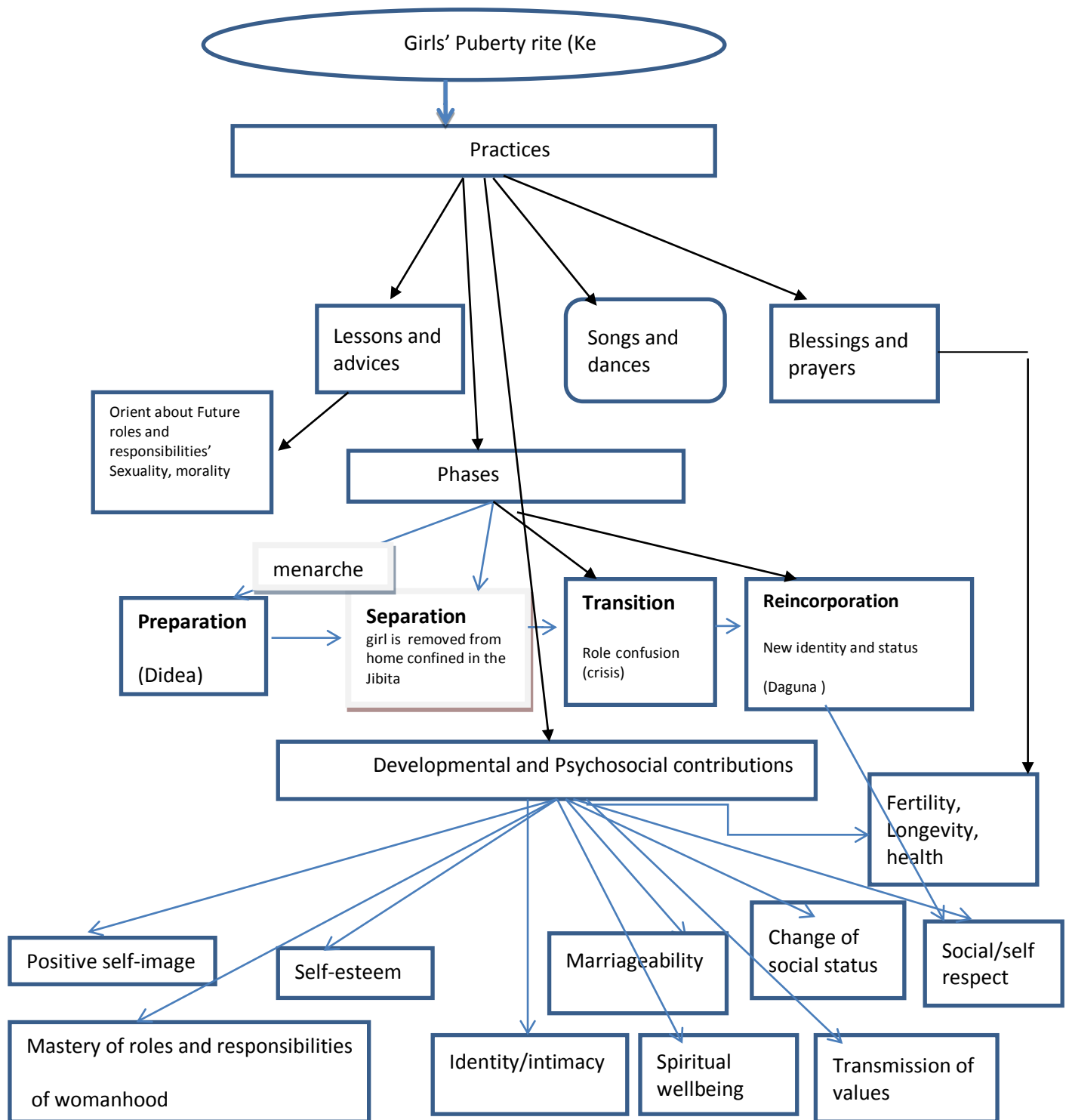


Figure 4.3: Major Categories, themes, and subthemes emerged from data analysis

4.6. Data validation

While conducting this study, I made an effort to maintain the plausability of data by following the rules of qualitative research in the data collection and analysis processes. For example, before data collection, two expert judges from the school of Social work and school of Psychology from Addis Ababa University tried to determine whether the items in the interview protocols were representative of the research objectives and questions as evidence of content validity. Accordingly, each expert judge reviewed the protocols and matched them with the research objectives and questions.

Having done all the above steps, data were collected by using multiple methods to ensure the validity of the findings. In other words, attempts were made to triangulate data obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, FGDs and different informal discussions. Moreover, transcribed data were given to two colleagues from the school of psychology so that they will develop themes and categories. Finally, the themes and categories identified by colleagues were compared with those themes identified by the researcher. Thus, the majority of these themes and categories were similar to each other.

An attempt was also made to validate data by participants. Hence, once preliminary analysis was done and major themes were identified, it was presented to schoolgirls and mothers who participated in the FGDs and indepth interviews in each site. This was done for two major reasons. First, while I was getting oral informed consent from each informant, I had assured them that the findings of the study will be shown to them so that they would check if their voices had been addressed or not. Secondly, I intended to get additional inputs and verifications of themes related to Ke Gehaja from participants

In general, all these activities were done with the intention of maintaining the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings and to ensure that the voices of all participants have been captured.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

5.1. Overview

The aim of this research was to investigate girls' puberty rites (*Ke Gehaja*) among the Gumuz of Northwestern Ethiopia, specifically in three selected rural and urban areas of Dibati District. The study was an exploration of the developmental and psychosocial contributions associated with the ritual. In order to explore these issues, I employed a multi-method qualitative approach and sources of data encompassed in-depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and corresponding field notes. Therefore, this chapter deals about the major themes that emerged from the analysis of data obtained from school girls, mothers, and key informants.

5.2. Salient themes

In Gumuz culture, girls' puberty rite which is also known as *Ke Gehaja* holds several meanings. Hence, analysis of data obtained from in-depth interviews and FGDs from school girls, mothers, elderly men and experts led to the identification of fourteen noticeable psychosocial and developmental themes. The identification of these themes was based on the recurring responses from different groups of participants during in-depth interviews and focus groups. Categorization of these themes was done based on transition-rite theories and Erickson's theory of psychosocial development.

At the early stage of data analysis, there were about one hundred codes generated and a revision was made on these codes in order to check whether they could further be integrated into major themes. At last, these codes were condensed into fourteen categories. These are practices of *Ke Gehaja*; phases of *Ke Gehaja*; perceived meanings of *Ke Gehaja* by initiated and non-initiated girls; pubertal development; emotional reaction to menarche; Gumuz female life cycle; developmental cues for the transition from *Didea* to *Daguna* stage; purposes of *Ke Gehaja* rite;

developmental tasks of a Gumuz girl; the development of identity and intimacy; psychosocial benefits of Ke Gehaja; lessons of morality, sexuality and life skills; menstrual hygiene and taboos and future prospects of Ke gehaja rite. Next, I discuss these themes one by one in detail by supporting them through quotes taken from participants.

5.2.1. Ke Gehaja rite Practices

There are several activities performed throughout Ke Gehaja ceremony. These activities are meant to facilitate her transformation from childhood to adolescence stage. Participants in FGDs and in-depth interviews in all the three sites mentioned that *Ke Gehaja* rite is accompanied by different practices. These include physical and spiritual cleansing, body painting, prayers and blessings, offering of traditional food and drinks and traditional music and dancing. The major practices of the Ke Gehaja and their psychosocial contributions are summarized in table 5.1.

The first practice, which is done immediately following the onset of menarche, is isolating the girl from the rest of family members. For example, an initiated girl from Geerz mentions the practices and events of Ke Gehaja rite as follows:

As soon as I experienced my first menstruation, I went out of the main house and stayed in the Jibita. I used to eat food provided by others. Hen and goat were also slaughtered. My mother also made Kiya and boys and girls were singing and dancing.... Some of the elderly women showed to me how to grind by holding my hands. I was also asked to put my hands on a hot '*mitad*' with the supervision of an elderly woman and she asked me to bake practically.

Explanations from the above informant imply that one of the practices done during Ke Gehaja focuses on helping the young girl to master socially expected developmental tasks of young adult woman. Therefore, mastery of these tasks would transform her to Daguna

(adolescence) stage. The singing, dancing and festivities symbolize the social support given to the young girl in the transition process.

Another practice done during Ke Gehaja rite is to give psychological support for young girl during the transition process. For example, a woman from Geerz recalled that she was blessed by the elderly to bear many children as well as to get a good husband. She added she was able to deliver ten children and all of them were healthy and she believes that this is because she was blessed during her Ke Gehaja rite.



Figure 5.1: an elderly woman giving practical lesson of grinding millet to an initiate during Ke Gehaja rite

Table: 5.1. Summary of the major practices, symbols and psychosocial contributions of Ke Gehaja

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Support Group</i>	<i>Symbolism</i>	<i>Psychosocial explanation</i>
Staying in the Jibita following first menstruation	Menza (closest girl friend). Adolescent girls and boys, parents	Conclusion of the old identity	The girl understands that she is matured sexually and her childhood period is over and prepares for the next stage of development.
Washing, painting Gifqa, shaving, scarification. Singing and dancing. Lessons and advices about sexuality, menstruation, delivery etc	Adult females (Mitichipiga), adolescent boys and girls	Physical and spiritual cleansing, beautification, orientation about future roles	Transition to adolescence stage ;development of positive self-image, Help a girl achieve the developmental tasks, and resolve the identity crisis
Slaughtering, Blessing and prayers, Festivity	Parents, Elderly women and men, Neighbours/extended family members	Reintegration to the society with new new social identity, End of the transition period	Ascribed identity, Communal recognition of the young girl's new developmental status

As a whole, the practices symbolize the transformation of the girl from *childhood* to *adolescence* and these practices have an impact in shaping the girl's physical and psychological development. For example, painting Gifqa could be equated with the makeup that women use in modern societies and it is done for spiritual well-being as well as to boost her self-image.

One mother informant in Geertz mentioned that there are different practices of the *Ke Gehaja* performed by both the initiate, young boys and girls, and elderly women. She explains about the overall practices as follows:

At the beginning of the menstrual flow, the menstrating girl will be taken care of by her *menža* (closest girlfriend). The news about the beginning of the first *Gehaja* by the girl will be announced to all the residents in the village so that they will prepare some gifts to be presented to the initiate's parents. There will also be chanting, singing and dancing by adolescent boys and girls every night from the beginning of the menstrual flow to the end. Besides these, the boys and girls play by throwing *Offa*⁶ (ash) to one another. Then, the initiate and the other boys and girls who were singing and playing with ash will go to the nearby river and wash their body to remove the *offa*. After washing her body, the initiate with the help of her *menža* will decorate her body with white *Gifqa*.

On the other hand, a 17-year old initiated girl in Qido explained that only a few of the above practices were done during her *Ke Gehaja* ceremony and regretted that the celebration was not so big compared to her friends: She explains:

During my *Ke Gehaja*, I remember that my hair was shaved, *Enga* was also prepared by my mother and my friends were invited... But when I compare my *Ke Gehaja* with that of my friends', it was not that much colorful.... I have observed from other ceremonies that a goat was slaughtered... and there was plenty of salt, *ashotere*⁷, pepper meat and the like. But only a few of these practices were done during my ceremony. Mine was a simple one.

Similarly, I witnessed that almost all initiated school girls and women who participated in the interviews had scarifications on both sides of their faces and I was informed that this physical

⁶ *Offa* is an indigenous term for ash.

⁷ This is a local term referring to soya bean.

operation symbolizes that a female has achieved sexual maturity and has already become a Daguna. The scars also symbolize that the girl belongs to the new group (Dagunas/ konjo⁸).



Figure 5.2: FGD with school girls in Qido

The process of Ke Gehaja ritual begins with the separation of the menstruating girl in the Jibita. For example, a teacher informant in Qido School explained about the practices of the ritual as follows:

Once it is known that a girl has just begun her menstruation, she will be isolated not only from the family members but also from other adult members of the community. She will stay in the ‘Jibita’ assisted by one of her closest friends.

⁸ ‘Konjo’ is an Amharic term which has equivalent meaning with the Gumuz term ‘Daguna’. Literally, it means ‘a beautiful girl’. The term also symbolizes the physical attractiveness of a newly initiated girl. The majority of informants used this term to refer to sexually matured young girls who are involved in dancing and singing during Ke Gehaja rite.

In addition to this, a 16-years-old adolescent girl in Dibati claims that she was not initiated ceremonially but has informally learned about the *Ke Gehaja* practices by attending her friends' ceremony in the neighborhood. Likewise, a 15 years old girl in the same site who was initiated to *Daguna stage* through *Ke Gehaja* ritual about two years ago explained that the most remarkable event for during her *Ke Gehaja* was the songs and different games by her friends. ...“my friends were playing by throwing *offa*⁹, mud and cow dung to one another. They were even throwing human feces to one another.” Similarly, one Gumuz mother in Qido, who was involved in mentoring the *Ke Gehaja* ceremony in her village explained about the practices as follows:

First, when the girl experiences her first menstruation, a small hut will be constructed where she will stay until the end of the blood flow. Her mother and father would also prepare for the ceremony. For example, the mother will prepare, ‘kiya ‘opa¹⁰,’ ashotere¹¹, ...and other types of food and drink. The father will slaughter a goat and the celebration will continue for two weeks. The girl will also be painted ‘gifqa’ on her forehead and her friends will celebrate the occasion by singing and dancing at night.

The festivity is mainly done during the official closing day of the *Ke Gehaja* ceremony. An initiated girl in Qido remembers the typical *Ke Gehaja* songs (Ge Gehaja) which were played by her friends. The song was translated from Gumuz to English as follows:

*My substitute has just come
She has stood there... in the forest,
She has stood there... in the fense
She has stood there, in the forest,
Why does she stand there in the forest?
Please tell her to come and help my mother,
Because I am leaving her*

⁹ This is a local term which literally means an ash coming from burnt firewood.

¹⁰ Refers to spice plant used by the Gumuz as a sausage for porridge.

¹¹ *Ashotere* is a Gumuz term, which literally means soya bean.

Who will carry wood to my mother, because I am leaving her.

The song is played by adolescent boys and girls who are the new support group for the initiate by representing her. It denotes the separation of the initiate from her family due to exchange marriage. In this type of marriage, a girl from one clan is sent to another clan and a substitute is needed from the later. The song has the message that the young girl leaves the domestic unit of her birth place due to marriage and moves to the home of her husband's clan.

Obviously, the song is made by the *Daguna* and *Geshera* and its major theme is to the incoming girl who is going to be a wife to the initiate's brother or father or other male family members. It is just a message given by the initiate to the new comer (woman/girl) that she (the new comer) has to help her in-law mother in all the activities that the initiate used to do before her departure to another clan. Moreover the song is made to ease the anxiety of separation.

Other ritual activities performed during *Ke Gehaja* include physical and spiritual cleansing, hair shaving (which symbolize that the old identity has culminated and a new developmental stage has just begun) ; painting *Gifqa*, gifts by neighbors and members of the kinship, prayers, blessings by the elderly men and women, traditional food, drink and so on.

In general, the practices could be categorized under two themes: Psychosocial supports and symbols of identity. That is, the teachings given during *Ke Gehaja* rite have developmental, sexual, social and moral contents and help the young girl master roles and responsibilities of womanhood, marital skills, menstrual hygiene and sexuality.

Second, practices such as spiritual washing, hair shaving, scarification, and *Gifqa* painting symbolize new identity and status of the young girl and the successful resolution of the psychosocial crises (Identity versus role confusion). Besides being a symbol of transition to a new stage of development within the life cycle, these practices give the initiate a sense of distinctiveness from others who have not yet gone through this rite.

I want to note that the whole community is engaged in the process of Ke Gehaja rite. Primarily, parents, extended family members, young girls and boys, and elderly men and women perform different activities during the ceremony. For example, the girl's parents are responsible for preparing food and drink for the ceremony. Specifically, her mother and other co-wives prepare local drink (Kiya) and other food items for the festivity. Meanwhile, her father is expected to kill an ox or a goat and invite the people attending the ceremony. Meanwhile, a middle adult woman (Mitichipiga), who is mainly the girl's aunt, takes the role of teaching and advising the initiate about future roles and responsibilities. The miticipiga is also in charge of shaving the initiate's hair and scarifying the girl on both sides of her face.

Adolescent girls and boys have an extended role. That is, they are expected to sing and dance from the beginning of the menarche by a girl to its end. This entertaining activity is meant to welcome the girl to the group of adolescent girls (Daguna).

One of the closest friends of a girl, locally known as *Menza* has the responsibility of serving the girl throughout her (the menarcheal girl) stay in the jibita. In addition to this, the *Menza* is expected to take the initiate to the nearby river, wash her body, and paint Gifqa.

At the end of the transition phase, elderly women (Ganza) and men (Gunza) bless the initiate and pray for her so that she could be healthy, fertile, and live longer. In general, such communal engagement in socializing a girl implies that bringing up a child is not left to parents among the Gumuz, but it is a shared responsibility of the society.

5.2.2. Perceived meanings and contributions of Ke Gehaja rite

The term 'Ke' in Gumuz literally means 'drink' while 'Gehaja' refers to 'menstruation'. This transitional ritual is a joyous occasion and includes a range of activities and lessons necessary to prepare the young girl for aspects of her future life.

Initiated and non-initiated girls hold opposite views about Ke Gehaja rite. That is, initiated ones as a group expressed that they are really proud of having gone through it and for them it is part of their developmental process. For example, a girl from Qido who has already been initiated through the rite expressed her feeling that the ritual is an important component of her life and she has a firm stand that she wishes to do the same for her future daughters. On the other hand, another girl from the same site who was not allowed to be initiated following her menarche expressed her feeling at that moment as follows:

I was very sad because my parents were already convinced that Ke Gehaja rite is a harmful traditional practice. As a result, I could not do anything then. Even I thought I wish I were born in olden days to get this opportunity, ... but at last I was convinced because the Government ordered that *Ke Gehaja* is a harmful practice and should be stopped.

Similarly, another girl in Dibate town who has experienced her menarche three years ago expressed during the interview that she was very sad because no ceremony was prepared following her menarche unlike to what was done to her elder sisters. She speaks "I was disappointed about that... but I just kept quiet and did not inform this to my parents".

In the same way, a 16-year old initiated girl in Qido expressed that passing through *Ke Gehaja* rite has provided her a sense of security from bad spirits and boosted her self-confidence in performing anything else independently. She added that she can cook *Enga* and prepare *Kiya* to the family without assistance from her mother. She argues that the lessons she got

during her *Ke Gehaja* rite has helped her to be confident. In addition to this, she explains that she does not worry about her health because she believes that passing through *Ke Gehaja* rite will protect from evil spirits. Meanwhile, I asked an expert from Culture and Tourism office about what *Ke Gehaja* is meant for a Gumuz girl and the psychosocial impacts. She explains as follows:

If *Ke Gehaja* rite is not held for a girl following her menarche, she would be worried much and blames her parents for failure to prepare the festivity...and because she wants to pass through this rite like her friends. If there is no festivity following her menarche she would be extremely worried and perhaps this may lead her to be a victim of mental illness.

More importantly, *Ke Gehaja* rite is perceived to be a source of dignity, social respect, and a way of learning good conduct for initiated girls. I asked one Gumuz mother in Geerz about these issues and she informed me that *Ke Gehaja* is important to a girl's social relationship because an initiated girl gets the opportunity to learn the morality related to respecting elders during the ritual. This woman also added that others in turn will give the initiated girl a respect because she has high status.¹²

To the contrary of mothers and initiated girls, the majority of non-initiated perceived the ritual as a harmful traditional practice and they argue that there is no any psychological or social problem that they have ever faced as a result of not being initiated. For example, a non-initiated girl from Dibate who had already experienced her menarche explained during the interview that she did not go through *Ke Gehaja* rite but she argues that she is confident in what she is doing. When I asked about the perceived negative consequences of not being initiated, she reacted emotionally that she is inferior or lower to those girls who had gone through *Ke Gegehaja* rite.

¹²Note: *Menarcheal rite, ke Gehaja rite* or *Girls' puberty rite* are referring to the same event and these terms have been used interchangeably through the manuscript.

Besides, she argued that the so called lessons and advices to be given during the ritual are useless and backward. She reacted as follows “they don’t give useful lessons... these lessons are useless instead and lead the girl to the ‘ditch’.”

With regard to the perceived psychological impacts of Ke Gehaja rite on health, one of the non-initiated girls in Dibate explained that her classmates from rural ‘Kebelles’ used to tell her that unless a girl is initiated through *Ke Gehaja*, she would be mentally ill, forgetful or a liar. But she does not agree on such beliefs and disputes that these are just myths and have no truth at all. She refuted this by taking her own case. She reacts emotionally to the situation as follows “... for example, I haven’t gone through Ke Gehaja rite, but I am normal... I have never been forgetful and a liar... you can check this from my neighbors”.

One of the perceived psychosocial advantages of being initiated through Ke Gehaja rite is that the ritual is a means by which a young girl would be given lessons about delivery, child care and so on. Hence, those initiated girls and mothers perceive a non-initiated girl as the one who faces birth complications in the future. In contrast to this belief, a young mother in Dibate disagreed and reacted in the following way; “... no that is just a myth... For example, I was not initiated through *Ke Gehaja* rite and yet I gave birth without any difficulty... if that was true, I would have faced a problem then”.

To summarize, Ke Gehaja is perceived as a positive socialization practice by those women and school girls who have already gone through it. Yet, those girls who were not initiated condemned it and categorize the ritual as one of the harmful practices. Therefore, my role at this level is not to give judgement or take a side either with the view of initiated or non-initiated girls but to explore the perceived meanings of Ke Gehaja by different groups of participants.

5.2.3. Pubertal development and menarche

One of the objectives of this study was to explore the age at which a Gumuz girl enters to pubertal stage. Accordingly, the majority of girls explained that they experienced menarche when they were 15 years old (see table 4.2) while some of them reached to puberty stage at 12, 13 and 16. Therefore, age 14 was the average menarcheal time.

I probed to learn about the physical and psychological changes that girls experienced during their pubertal time and the majority of them recalled that there was enlargement of breasts and increase in height. For example, an 18-year old initiated girl from Qido mentioned the following regarding her pubertal time; “A few months before menarche, my breasts were getting bigger and round and I was becoming taller”. Similarly a 17-year old non-initiated girl from Geerz remembers her pubertal time very well and the relationship she had with her parents. “...I remember that I was disobedient to my parents. I was also snobbish and showy and considered myself unique to others. ...Even I remember that I disagreed with my mother and ran out of home and went to town deceived by one of my friends.”

In the same way one mother from Qido explained that one of the developmental markers of puberty is that the girl will be disobedient and emotional besides the enlargement of breasts and increments in her physical development.

In short, data revealed that there is no much age variation of menarche .It was also found that the occurrence of menarche was reported to be preceded by the appearance of secondary sexual characteristics. This includes the enlargement of breast and other aspects of physical development .Part of data revealed that parent-daughter relationship was not a smooth one.This was evident from some girls response that they were a bit disobedient to their mothers.This suggests about the need of more autonomy and independence by young girls.

5.2.4. Emotional reaction to menarche

The beginning of menarche by a pubertal girl is not a sign of shame and silence among initiated girls because this event is believed to be critical in the life of a Gumuz female. For example, menarche is considered as a symbol of sexual maturity and transformation to the new stage of development within the life cycle. It is also with the advent of this physiological response that a girl will be separated from family members and stay in the *Jibita*.

Women and girls' reaction during menarche is a mixed one in that some of them explained that they were embarrassed at that moment while others reported that they were proud of it. For example, an 18-year old non-initiated girl from Dibate mentioned that she had the feeling of anxiety and embarrassment during the first menstruation. She added that she did not get any orientation before about how to manage her menstrual flow. On the other hand, the majority of other girls replied that they had mixed reaction to their menarcheal time. For example, one initiated girl from Qido explains: "I was not worried at all... rather I was happy about it". Similarly, a 17-year old initiated girl from Geerz stated that she was happy when she suddenly knew that she has begun menstruating. This girl added that she was eagerly waiting to this event for long.

Likewise, in one of the interviews, a 16-year old initiated girl in Qido explained her feeling the day she learned that she has begun menstruating as follows: "I was very happy then...I had even the feeling that I am superior to my friends... of course it was not only me who becomes happy ... any Gumuz girl feels like that during her menarche and becomes 'boastful' about it. For me menarche meant I could have children".

In-depth interviews with initiated girls from Qido and Geerz also suggest that menarche was perceived to be a positive event. For example, one girl from Geerz mentioned the feeling she had at that moment as follows: "After my first menstruation came, I felt that my Childhood

(Didea) stage had passed and that I had attained maturity and should no longer behave like a child”.

In general data related to emotional reaction to menarche shows that those initiated girls from the rural area had positive emotional reaction during the time of menarche. In line with this, data analysis also reveals that girls from Qido and Geerz had better exposure to menstrual issues on how to manage it than those in Dibate.

In Gumuz culture, mothers play important role in teaching their daughters about menstrual hygiene such as about preparing local sanitary pads (*Chicha*) and hence a girl would not be confused during her menarche. To the contrary, for a Gumuz girl who had inadequate preparation and information about menstruation, the first period is traumatizing. For example, one girl from Qido mentioned that when she suddenly saw that she had begun menstruating while she was wedding in the farmland with two of her friends, she was confused and cried. She said that the two girls laughed at her and departed from her during that incident and this made her to feel guilt and shame about herself.

In brief, initiated and non-initiated girls differed on their emotional reaction to the incidence of menarche. Those girls who were born in rural ‘Kebelles’ and who at the same time were initiated through Ke Gehaja informed that they were happy at the time of menarche despite the difficulties surrounding menstruation. To the contrary, non-initiated girls had negative emotions such as embarrassment, loneliness and even crying. I presume that these emotional differences might be due to the degree of exposure to information related to menstruation at pre-menarcheal age. That is, initiated girls seem to have better exposure about menstruation related issues earlier than non-initiated ones. In short, the more knowledge a girl had about menstruation during her pre-pubertal age, the less was the anxiety and embarrassment during the actual menarcheal time and viceversa.

5.2.5. Stages in the Gumuz Female Life cycle

One of the emerging themes during the pilot study was the existence of different stages of development within the Gumuz female life cycle and each stage of development is associated with culturally set developmental tasks. Accordingly, data obtained from girls, mothers and key informants suggest that Gumuz female life span development consists of six developmental stages and transition from each stage of development to the next requires resolution of a given psychosocial crisis. These stages are *Dideatsia*, *Didea*, *Daguna*, *Gafa*, *Mitichipiga* and *Ganza*. Meanwhile, these stages correspond to infancy and babyhood, childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood and late adulthood respectively but there are no specific age intervals that mark each stage of development. Instead, each developmental stage seems to be determined by the achievement of socially expected developmental tasks and readiness than chronological age.

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Gumuz terms for the Stage of development</i>	<i>Major Psychosocial crisis</i>	<i>Equivalent western terms</i>	<i>Developmental tasks</i>	¹³ <i>Initiation rite</i>
1	Didetsia	-	Infancy and babyhood periods	Weaning walking	<i>Birth and Naming rites</i>
2	Dide'a	-	childhood	Mastering gender specific skills. A girl does house hold chores supervised by her mother.	----
3	Daguna	Early vs Late menarche	Adolescence	Mastering gender specific skills of womanhood; preparing chicha; Passing through <i>Ke Gehaja</i> rituals, Preparation for marriage	Ke Gehaja rituals
4	Gafa	Intimacy (birth) vs being barn	Early Adulthood	<i>Marriage, Independent' living, becoming a mother</i>	<i>marriage/Delivery rite</i>
5	Mitichpiga	Menopause	Middle Adulthood	Blessing and guiding the young, mentoring girls' initiation rites, rearing children etc...	-----
6	Ganza		Late Adulthood	Same as stage 5	

Table: 5.2. Life cycles, developmental tasks and rites marking life stage transitions of a Gumuz

¹³ The type of initiation rites during the transition from Dideatsia to Didea and from Mitichpiga to Ganza were not reported by participants.

The first stage of development across the life cycle is locally known as *Dideatsia* and this stage is known with birth and naming rites. This is the stage of development that covers the time from birth up to breast weaning and it corresponds with the western conceptions of infancy and babyhood periods. Some of the developmental tasks associated with it are breast weaning, walking and self feeding.

The next stage that comes after *Dideatsia* is *Didea* and transition to *Didea* stage primarily requires breast weaning. A Gumuz female child (*Didea*) is expected to learn age appropriate feminine gender roles by imitating her mother and gradually builds confidence in performing some household chores such as cleaning the house, fetching water, collecting fire wood, and so on.

Transition from *Didea* to *Daguna* is biologically marked through the onset of menstruation and it is the third stage of development across the female life cycle. This stage comes following pubertal development of the girl especially with the aftermath of menarche. Though the beginning of menstruation by the young girl signifies her transition from *Didea* to *Daguna* stage, culturally, a girl is expected to master gender specific roles of womanhood such as sibling care, cooking, and preparing traditional drinks during her pre-pubertal time and mastery of these developmental tasks would simplify the degree of psychosocial crisis.

In short, *Daguna* refers to a developmental period of a Gumuz girl between childhood and early adulthood. In other words, this is a stage between menarche and marriage/ delivery of the first child. Of course, it is a transitional time when girls prepare for motherhood.

Since the onset of menstruation is the major developmental event, a girl who has experienced menarche and one who has mastered basic skills of doing household chores in an earlier age would enter to *Daguna* stage while the late maturing one may remain a *Didea* regardless of her age.

Once a girl has already been culturally transformed to Daguna stage, she would enter to the next psychosocial crisis of intimacy versus isolation. In other words, marriage (forming intimacy) is the major developmental task for entering young adulthood (Gafa) stage .For example, a 17-year old girl in Geertz informed me during the interview that she is culturally known to be a ‘Gafa’ because she is already a married one. Therefore, she perceives that marriage is the major developmental task for early adulthood (Gafa). To the contrary, an 18-year old girl in the same site explained that she is still a Daguna and not a Gafa because she has not given birth yet.

Transition from Daguna to Gafa stage begins with first time pregnancy followed by separation of the pregnant young woman from the main house following labour which symbolizes life crisis.Later on, the young mother along with her new baby will be reintegrated back to family and there is a celebration of this event.This implies that the young mother completes her old identity (Daguna stage) and enters into the next stage of development (Gafa).

A mother informant in Geertz explained that *Gafa* stage is achieved following delivery of the first child and living with one’s own home with a husband. I probed whether a newly married girl is socially considered as a woman or not. But, she explained that neither passing through Ke Gehaja nor marriage rites would guarantee a girl to claim the status of womanhood (Gafa). She explains:

Take my case for example. I got married before experiencing my first menstruation...It was after staying long with my in-laws that I saw my first ‘Gehaja’. Girls who experienced the first ‘gehaja’ are ‘Dagunas’, not ‘Gafas’.For example, it was after the delivery of my first child that I became a Gafa ...In Gumuz culture, one might get married at an early age or when getting old. No age limit exists for marriage.

Thus, quotes from the above informant denote that the end of Daguna stage does not automatically confer a young girl to enter to early adulthood (*Gafa*) stage unless she is a married one with a child. In short a *Gafa* is a Gumuz female past child-bearing.

Mitichipiga literally means ‘big person ’and it is a stage of development within the life cycle that corresponds with middle adulthood. One mother in Geerz states that she has given birth to ten children and because of this she is a *Mitichipiga*. Similarly a woman in Qido mentioned that she is a *Mitichipiga* because she has given many children and she has stopped menstruating. Therefore, *Mitichipiga* is also a stage within the female lifecycle where a female reaches menopause. Meanwhile, a key informant from Culture and Tourism Office mentioned that *Mitichipiga* refers to those female members of the society who are married, and have children but it does not include those who are too old.

Mitichipiga is the time in which a Gumuz female becomes a grand parent and the stage of development when a woman’s reproductive ability will stop. This is a time when husband needs a younger wife (male key informant in Qido). Therefore, the senior wife (*Mitichipiga*) is expected to teach skills of womanhood to the junior one and this corresponds to Erickson’s term of “generativity” versus “stagnation”. The *Mitichipiga* also contributes in mentoring, teaching and counseling pubertal girls in their village during Ke Gehaja rite and this exemplifies their generativity to the young members of the society. For example, one of the social role that a *Mitichipiga* does is guiding the newly initiated girl.

Ganza is the last stage of development within the female life cycle. *Ganza* literally means ‘old woman’ in Gumuz and corresponds with late adulthood. A *Ganza* is physically weak but she is supposed to have wisdom about womanhood. In relation to this an expert from Culture and Tourism Office explains: “...the *Ganza* are those adult members of the society who bless the young

generation, ...this stage includes women in their middle ages ... This is the stage in which women are respected by the community members”.

Being curious about age limits for each stage of development within the life cycle, I probed if there are estimated time intervals between each stage. However, the Gumuz have less sense about timing and use different culturally defined developmental and social markers such as birth, naming, puberty rites and menopause to categorize females within the life cycle.

Overall, transition from one stage of development to the next is guided by biological maturation and readiness to accomplish biologically driven developmental expectations. For example, in the case of transition from Didea to Daguna stage, a girl has to achieve physical maturation. Meanwhile transition from Daguna to Gafa stage demands a girl to marry and give birth. Similarly, transition from Gafa to Mitichipiga is marked by the end of ovulation or reaching to menopause.

To summarize, the Gumuz female life cycle is characterized by major roles and responsibilities of each stage, as well using biologically driven and socially set developmental transitions. Among the rituals performed at each life cycle, Ke Gehaja and marriage rites are the major ones. Besides, there are critical stages of development within the female life cycle. For example, data obtained from different groups of participants suggested that Daguna and Gafa stages are important periods within the female life span development. Both stages are important because it is within these stages that a female is sexually important and believed to be fertile. A Gumuz female's reproductive role ceases when she enters *Mitichpiga* (time of menopause). As a result, the husband needs to marry a female who is either in Daguna or Gafa stage.

5.2.6. Developmental cues for the transition from Didea to Daguna

In the previous sections, I mentioned that the Gumuz have their conceptions about female lifespan development and each stage of development is guided by biological maturation and culturally set developmental tasks than chronological age. For example, sexual maturation which is symbolized by the first menstruation is the best and clear indicator for the transition from childhood to adolescence stage. Though there are different primary and secondary sexual characteristics manifested when a girl reaches puberty, menarche guarantees that a girl has concluded her childhood stage and entered to adolescence stage.

Data from all school girls and women informants revealed that menarche was a turning point in their life in the sense that they were socially approved to be known as Daguna (adolescent) after the first menstruation. For example, a 17-years old girl from Dibate replied as follows regarding her transition to Daguna stage: “I was known to be a Didea till the time of my first menstruation but after that I became a Daguna”. I probed further whether there is an indigenous term used to label a girl who has already experienced menarche but was not initiated through Ke Gehaja rite. Yet, the response obtained from all participants was that any girl who has experienced menarche is said to have been transformed Daguna regardless of being initiated or not initiated through Ke Gehaja rite.

Menarche serves dual developmental purposes for a Gumuz female: it marks the end of the childhood stage on the one hand and also announces the transformation of the pubertal girl to adolescence. A Daguna is culturally perceived to have achieved physical and sexual maturation and is ready to bear children. Therefore, this stage is a preparation time for Gafa (early adulthood) stage.

With regard to the role of menarche in marking developmental transition of young girls, mother informants in Qido and Geerz explained that because of the fact that the Ke Gehaja rite is recently considered as a bad practice, it is difficult for the community to know the developmental status of girls within the life cycle. Hence, there is a sort of confusion among the community whether a certain girl is still in 'Didea' stage or entered to 'Daguna' stage. She speaks:

These days, we do not know exactly if the girl is menstruating or not... now, we do not announce to the village that a certain girl has begun menstruation. But, there are some mechanisms by which one can judge whether the girl is fully grown or not. For example, a girl who has fully grown shows some emotional changes, such as showing disobedience to her mother she will increase in body height, and dimension and her pelvic gets wider. During Didea stage, the girl is thinner. But, when she is a 'Daguna', she will become fatter.

Also, a 45-year old mother from Dibate mentioned that these days girls do not clearly tell if they have begun menstruation or not to their mothers. She explains "We don't know if they have started it or not. ... These days girls are secretive and they don't inform us about that. Today's, girls are not open enough even to their own mothers."

Responses from the above informants imply that because of the declining of Ke Gehaja ritual which is a clear marker of developmental transition and the absence of open communication about sexual matters between mothers and daughters, some Gumuz parents do not know whether a girl is in Didea or Daguna stage. Alternatively, the beginning of pubertal development by a girl is learned through observing some physical and behavioral changes especially in terms of communication and relationship with her mother.

In short, it is evident from mother informants that as a result of the absence of Ke Gehaja rite today, some families learn about the developmental stage of a girl just by looking her secondary sexual characteristics such as changes in size, shape and some emotional characteristics

of a girl , which of course are less clear indicators for developmental changes. Emphasizing on the importance of menarche as a developmental marker, an expert from Culture and Tourism Office in Dibati district contended that these days, some Gumuz families know whether a certain girl is in Didea or Daguna stage just by looking at changes in the secondary sexual characteristics. But, he remarked that menarche is a clear marker for the transition to womanhood than other physical and psychological characteristics of girls. He explains:

A Gumuz girl like any girl of her age mate from other societies shows physical changes like the enlargement of breasts and increase in height and other bodily changes. The enlargement of breasts is even more visible for a Gumuz girl than non-Gumuz one since the former does not cover part of her body above the waist. Despite these physical changes, however, parents wait until a girl experiences her menarche to declare that childhood time is over and transition to Daguna has just begun.

In summary, the majority of data obtained from participants of this study suggest that the main developmental cue that the Gumuz employ to mark the end of childhood and the beginning of adolescence by a girl is menarche. In this regard, one mother informant in Qido expressed her concerns about the impact of modern education and the absence of girls' puberty rites following their menarche. One of the major repercussions is that many young girls spend their time far away from their village for they have to attend formal schooling .As a result, they are practicing premarital sex as well as being abducted by male teachers and police officers.

I want to note that using menarche as a mark of transition from Didea to Daguna seems to be less relevant among certain Gumuz families. This in turn could be attributed to cultural dominance and pressure from Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations against Gumuz socialization practices including Ke Gehaja. Consequently, knowing the developmental status of a

girl and the expected roles and responsibilities might be somewhat difficult as some mothers explained in in one of the FGD sessions.

5.2.7. Developmental tasks of a pre-menarcheal Gumuz girl (Didea)

A Gumuz girl begins mastery of tasks of womanhood at an early age. First she learns all the activities from her mother through observation and then as she progresses in age and achieves physical maturation and motor coordination, she is given the autonomy to do certain household chores independently. For example, I observed that small girls in Geerz ‘Kebelle’ go to the nearby river along with their mothers and fetch water with small containers (*Siyas*). Gradually, the pre-pubertal girl is allowed to perform household chores without any supervision which implies the need of parents that a girl should be industrious, self-sufficient and independent.



Figure 5.3: A Pre-pubertal girl (Didea) washing family clothes in the nearby river

The accomplishment of certain tasks is a pre-requisite to a young girl's progression to the next stage of development. Therefore, the major developmental tasks that a girl has to achieve just before she is socially known to be a *Daguna* are achieving biological maturity; learning to prepare *Kiya* and *Enga*; developing the skills of making *chicha* to manage her future monthly menstrual cycle; collecting firewood; grinding corn and other related tasks. In relation to this, a key informant in culture and tourism office in Dibate explains:

...A Gumuz female child (*Didea*) learns from her mother all activities that an adult woman can do and ...by the time she reaches puberty, she has already learned collecting fire wood, fetching water, preparing porridge, carrying heavy loads, grinding at night , ...hoeing during the day time and so on. In short, the girl can perform almost everything that her mother can do because she has been socialized by her mother during her childhood years.

A girl who successfully performs the above developmental tasks is said to be ready for transition to Daguna stage but she has to remain in *Didea* stage till her menarche, which is a confirmation for the end of childhood stage and the beginning of transition to Daguna.

Data obtained from mothers also suggest that a girl who has gone through Ke Gehaja rite is perceived to have mastered the skills of womanhood because the major goals of the ritual is to shape her so that she would have successful life in her marital relationship and the ritual is a confirmation of mastery of roles and responsibilities of womanhood. For example, in one of the FGD sessions in Geerz I was informed that a girl who has been initiated through Ke Gehaja rite is believed to have developed loyalty to her husband and learns to respect elders.

In general, developmental tasks of a premenarcheal Gumuz girl center on mastery of future roles and responsibilities of motherhood and other duties of a female in the society. These include, performing household chores, sibling care and working on the farm.

5.2.8. Purposes of Ke Gehaja rite

Ke Gehaja is practiced among the Gumuz of Dibate district for different reasons. Primarily, the ritual is held to assign appropriate social identity to the young girl within the female. Besides, the ritual is performed for different spiritual and social reasons. With regard to its spiritual purpose, Gumuz parents have the belief that menstrual blood is highly feared to cause anger of spirits unless it is managed properly. Therefore, any sexually matured girl should be given lessons on how to manage her monthly cycle so that she would not bring a curse to herself, family and to the community at large. Thus, one of the themes of teachings during ke Gehaja rite is about managing menstrual hygiene.

It is widely perceived among the society that if a girl is not made to go through *Ke Gehaja* rite following menarche, her overall well-being will be in danger and she is even believed to die young or face delivery complications. This in turn has an effect on her psychological wellbeing

during her fertility years. Besides this, an initiated girl is more valued by the society than a non-initiated one because of the belief that a girl who has gone through this rite is perceived to be healthy and knows her roles and responsibilities clearly. Accordingly, she is culturally more preferred over a non-initiated one for marriage. In other words, one of the social reasons for initiating a pubertal girl through Ke Gehaja rite is to facilitate her marriageability. With regard to this, a female expert from Women's Children and Youth Affairs Office explains:

Gumuz men prefer a girl who has been initiated through *Ke Gehaja* rite for marriage because she is perceived to be better than the one who has not been initiated in many respects. Culturally, an initiated girl is believed to be more knowledgeable, healthy, good mannered and comes from a well-to do family. To the contrary, the non-initiated one is perceived to be poor and with little knowledge about skills of womanhood.

Similarly, data obtained from both initiated girls and mothers suggest that *Ke Gehaja* rite has multiple perceived purposes. The major ones are to save the family from anger of spirits and to teach the young girl about the skills of womanhood which includes sexuality, good manners, fertility, child care and menstrual taboos as well as to ascribe a new identity.

An expert from Culture and Tourism Office also explained the social and spiritual values associated with Ke Gehaja rite as follows: "...a girl would be worried if *Ke Gehaja* ritual is not prepared and will blame her parents for this. ...If there is no festivity, she would be worried extremely and perhaps this may lead her to mental illness.

Besides its individual psychological contribution, Ke Gehaja rite promotes emotional bonding and strengthens social cohesiveness among family and clan members. The ritual is also an opportunity through which Gumuz values, accumulated knowledge, skills and behavioral expectations are transmitted to the young girl.

I was informed both by initiated girls and mothers that there are several perceived psychosocial advantages for an initiated girl over a non-initiated one. In contrast to a non-initiated one, an initiated girl will not be a victim of bad spirits during delivery and lives peacefully with her future husband and in-laws. She will also be more confident in her actions and will not contaminate the *jinga* while cooking *enga*. Another psychosocial advantage of an initiated girl include having a better chance to get a husband. To the contrary, the non-initiated one will not be trusted more by her husband and in-laws; and she is feared to die early in her age before giving birth or bear unhealthy children”

In general, initiating a girl ceremonially is perceived to be essential for her future health and longevity as well as for other positive developmental features. This is because the initiate is given advises, lessons and prayers which in turn have positive contribution for the development of morality, positive self-concept, self-confidence as well as helping the girl master future roles of womanhood. Regarding this, a mother informant in Geertz site explained about purposes of the *Ke Gehaja* as follows:

The girl will be advised on matters of living with her husband... She is blessed to live longer and bear many children. She is advised how to handle her husband. She will also be instructed not to refuse to have sexual intercourse any time her husband wishes and to show respect to her husband and not to look down upon him.

In short, the purposes of the *Ke Gehaja* ritual is to teach the initiate about the skills of marital life; revealing the secrets of sexuality, and giving lessons about child care, and motherhood as well as empowering her to spiritual and psychological wellbeing.

To summarize, the Gumuz primarily hold *Ke Gehaja* to communally acknowledge the young girl’s maturity. But equally, the ritual is an occasion to teach about taboos,

norms, and responsibilities of womanhood. It is widely believed that if a girl is not initiated through this spiritual event, there is a social fear that she will be sick, infertile and incapable of carrying out her motherly duties. Thus, besides its role of marking developmental transition, *Ke Gehaja* is believed to save her from such misfortunes and to make her psychologically healthy and socially useful member of the group.

5.2.9. The Development of Identity and Intimacy by a Gumuz female

A pubertal Gumuz girl would be in crisis following her menarche. This is symbolized by her separate living and restrictions from normal activities. While she is living in the Jibita during her menarche, a girl is not allowed to perform the activities that she used to do as a child because she is no more a child nor will she be allowed to participate in activities that other *Dagunas* are doing. The rationale behind these restrictions is that she is not yet communally recognized to be a member of the *Dagunas*. Therefore, this phase of the ritual is a time of identity confusion related to role.

A 16-year old girl who had been initiated through *Ke Gehaja* rite mentioned the time of separation as follows: “As I began menstruating, my mother told me to go to the Jibita soon....She informed me not to go out or do the usual household chores. ...and I was alone till the flow was over... and I was confused then.” Similarly, another girl from Dibate speaks the situation during the first menstruation: “When I was in the Jibita, one of my friends brought me food and water. I had separate utensils for eating and drinking.... the situation was very worrying because my friend who was serving me frequently left for home leaving me alone ... then I cried ...when no one was around to give me those things”.

The time of crisis is implied from the above quotation because a menstruating girl is perceived to be unclean and she has no autonomy to perform activities. These restrictions would be over when the menstrual flow ends so that the young girl would have a bath by her friend and her hair will be shaved. Besides, she would paint red and white *Gifqa* on her face, hands, and legs. These practices symbolize that the crisis is over and now she is “re-born” and has a new identity and transformed to the next stage of psychosocial development.

A school girl from Qido who had been initiated to Daguna stage through Ke Gehaja rite explained that she looked very beautiful when the *Gifqa* was painted on her head, hands and legs and *Chicha* was put around her neck at the end of her menstruation. This implies that the make ups help the young girl to have a positive self-image and self-concept with the new phase of development.

In certain situations, a girl might be given practical tests on cooking and grinding during her Ke Gehaja rite, which are the major developmental tasks of young Gumuz women. These practical tests have positive impact for the development of self-reliance and independence by the young girl.

Once a young girl had passed through Ke gehaja rite, she is believed to have achieved fidelity to the values and traditions of the society. This in turn will have positive contribution in resolving the psychosocial crisis of intimacy versus isolation. Put differently, a Gumuz girl who has been initiated through the ritual is culturally considered to have mastered the skills of womanhood and she is free from perceived psychological and spiritual risks of illness, delivery and confusion while doing her tasks. This helps her be trusted more by others and she is highly demanded for marriage by men from another clan. To the contrary, a non-initiated one is believed to have missed the lessons, advices and

prayers of *Ke Gehaja* rite and hence she is feared to be poor in health, and no knowledge about skills of womanhood. Moreover, she is feared to be barren or die soon before giving birth and hence men are less interested to engage with her.

Here I want to note that a Gumuz female faces crisis at different phases of her life. First she is expected to resolve crisis related to role confusion following her menarche and transition from Didea to Daguna. At this level, she is restricted not to do normal daily activities that she used to perform before. Second, once she has been transformed to Daguna stage, the girl will have new social status and privileges. In other words, the crisis during the transition from Didea to Daguna was related to role and developmental status. But she is required to resolve identity crisis related to belongingness. Predominantly, once a Gumuz female gets married, she belongs to her husband, his family and clan members. Therefore, she identifies herself with the new clan and sometimes she is considered as a property of her husband's clan. For example, if her husband dies, she would be inherited by his brother or other family members.

5.2.10. Psychosocial benefits of *Ke Gehaja*

From the psychological perspective, *Ke Gehaja* is perceived to help the young girl to be well and live longer and ensures that she has mastered proper skills of womanhood and be comfortable to the new status and identity. The ritual is seen as a psycho-social preparation of the young girl to cope with the future challenges of womanhood.

Initiated mothers and girls who participated in the FGDs and in-depth interviews agreed that participating in the *Ke Gehaja* ceremony has several psychosocial benefits. For example, the ritual provides a girl self and social respect and dignity. Being initiated through this ritual is also the first step towards the young girl's achievement of seniority and responsibility over her former

groups (Didea). Thus, having passed through Ke Gehaja rite, the girl will develop self-respect and others will respect her, which in turn boosts her self-esteem.

Table 5.3. Summary of *Perceived psychological and social impacts of Ke Gehaja rite on initiated girls*

<i>Category of Responses</i>	<i>Theme</i>
“The society gives respect to an initiated girl”	Social respect
“The girl will have positive judgment about herself”	Positive self-concept
“The ceremony helps to teach the skills of womanhood”	Mastery of adulthood developmental tasks
“The ceremony is an occasion of happiness and joy”	Positive emotion
“The girl will be strong and free from anxiety of being a victim of bad spirits”	Psychological and spiritual well-being
“The ritual avoids birth complication and infant mortality”	Maternal and infant health
“Preparation of the ceremony is costly”	Uneconomical ¹⁴

A 47-year old mother in Geerz explained about the psychological and social advantages of the *Ke Gehaja* ceremony as follows: “The ceremony has a big impact on how the community perceives the girl... the girl will also feel very happy. Especially, the one from the well to do family will be respected more because of the big festivity. ”

At the same time, the above informant explained about the impacts of participating in the *Ke Gehaja* by comparing initiated and non-initiated girls .She explained that initiated girls have more psychosocial advantages over non-initiated ones in many respects especially in mastering life skills.

... A girl who has passed through Ke Gehaja would perform her task properly while the one who has not been initiated will be confused. For example, look at this woman!¹⁵ Had she not been initiated, she would have contaminated the ‘Jinga’¹⁶ with soil while she is making

¹⁴ One of the major challenges of Ke Gehaja ritual is that preparing the festivity is costly and families may not be able to afford. This is one of the reasons for the criticism of the Ke Gehaja ritual by governmental and non-governmental organizations.

¹⁶Jinga is a Gumuz term referring to a piece of wood used to mix corn flour in the process of preparing kiya.

Kiya¹⁷ . The one who is not initiated will contaminate the ‘ Jinga’ with dirt when she is making ‘enga’.

Ke Gehaja ceremony is also perceived to have a positive outcome on the way young initiated girls perceive themselves. For example, a 16-years old initiated girl in Qido indicated that she is happy about being initiated through *Ke Gehaja* rite because the ritual is necessary for her future health and wellbeing as well as for the well-being of her future children. She explains:

I am happy about passing through the ritual because I believe that if a girl does not go through the ceremony following the first *Gehaja*, her baby will die early, and she will be a victim of evil spirit....and because I went through *Ke Gehaja*, now I am free from the fear of danger.

Likewise, a 17-year old adolescent girl asserted that she participated in the *Ke Gehaja* so that she was blessed and hence would not be a victim of bad spirit. Moreover, she *argued* that *Ke Gehaja* has a positive impact on the delivery process. For instance, it is attributed that those young women who are not initiated through *Ke Gehaja* rite face health, delivery and reproductive problems. For example, one initiated girl claims that her participation through *Ke Gehaja* has helped her to build self-confidence and psychological strength that she will not be troubled by risks related to delivery and overall health.

From experience, I have observed that those girls who participated in the *Ke Gehaja* ceremony did not face delivery problems and hence I was happy to go through *Ke Gehaja* rite....but the ceremony would have been very useful had it not been the big expenses. The problem is not on the ceremony, but on the amount of money it requires for preparation.

¹⁷ Kiya refers to the most common local drink of the Gumuz. The interviewee was pointing towards the nearby young Gumuz woman who was roasting maize flour for preparing kiya(local drink).

Explanations given by participants imply that the practices that a girl has to go through during initiation rites helps her to be psychologically strong and tackle the hardships that she would face in her future roles as a woman such as during delivery process which is commonly done without any birth attendant among rural Gumuz mothers.

Ke Gehaja ritual is also supposed to be a source of happiness and pride to the initiate. For example, one of the mothers, who went through the ritual in the past, explained during the interview in Geerz that she was very excited during her *Ke Gehaja*. “I still remember that day was very special in my life. I felt as if it were my wedding day. Both boys and girls were singing and dancing... I understood that I am the cause for all of these things.”

Ke Gehaja ceremony is believed to boost confidence and self-esteem of young girls. For instance, a 16-year old initiated girl in Qido stated that she is very happy and proud about going through the ritual. Likewise, a Gumuz woman in Geerz explained that a girl who has been initiated through *Ke Gehaja* feels happy, healthy, confident, and strong. Conversely, the one who has not been initiated is perceived to be unhealthy. To use her own terms, the uninitiated girl is perceived to be ‘abnormal’ and ‘valueless’ and confused while doing household chores.

A 16-years-old adolescent girl from Dibati site mentioned that she would never forget her *Ke Gehaja* which was prepared three years ago. She said that she feels good everytime she thinks about it: “I remember the playing and singing ... I will never forget the plays with throwing mud, ash and so on. When I think about that event, I just become amazed and laugh. I feel good and zxeven laugh sometimes.”

An in-depth-interview with a key informant from culture and tourism office of Dibati District also ratifies that participating in the *Ke Gehaja* ceremony has a contribution for the young girl’s psychosocial wellbeing. He explains:

A girl who has not attended the Ke Gehaja ceremony does not feel good for what was done for her friends was not done for her. Hence, she might feel somewhat psychologically inferior. However, I don't think that social problems such as the denial of her marital engagement by the society. In general, unable to participate in the puberty rites ceremony has more of a psychological problem than a social one.

During data collection, I expected that both negative and positive psychological and social aspects of the *Ke Gehaja* would be reported by the participants. Accordingly, initiated girls and mothers emphasized on the psychosocial advantages of *Ke Gehaja* rite while the non-initiated ones argued that the ritual is a harmful traditional practice. But the latter could not justify how its psychosocial disadvantages except mentioning that it is uneconomical

In short, Ke Gehaja is highly valued by initiated girls and mothers and participating in this ritual is thought to be essential for a female's well-being and her overall functioning. Accordingly, a girl who has already passed through this ritual is more hopeful and optimistic about her future. Similarly, the fact that the community gives more value to an initiated girl than to a non-initiated one implies that participating in the ritual enhances the self-confidence of a girl while performing her activities.

5.2.11. Phases of Ke Gehaja

All data obtained from participants of this study imply that there are four phases in the *Ke Gehaja*. These are *Preparation*, *Separation*, *Transition* and *Reintegration*. An expert from Culture and Tourism Office in Dibati district informed me that, ideally, preparation for puberty customs among the Gumuz begins earlier. That is, the female child is kept close to her mother and as she matures cognitively, she will learn developmentally appropriate tasks and roles of womanhood.. Similarly, in one of the FGDs in Geerz an elderly woman explained about the different phases and practices of the Ke Gehaja as follows:

Preparation for the Ke Gehaja begins when a girl experiences her first menstruation. The girl will hide in the Jibita immediately following the menstrual flow and someone from the village will announce that she has just begun her first menstruation. Then, both her family and the neighbours will begin preparing food and drink. There will also be singing and dancing by the initiate's friends while she is still hiding on the Jibita. The singing and dancing will continue from the beginning to the end of the menstrual flow. The girls and boys will go in each house and continue playing with 'offa'. Finally, they will go to the river and wash their body. Then the initiate will be shaved and there will be slaughter of an ox, hen, or goat,...eating of 'ashotere', drinking kiya etc. The shaving will be done at the end of the menstrual flow and after washing in the river. There will also be blessings by the elderly and this ceremony will be held in the initiate's father house.

Descriptions by the above informant imply that there are practices symbolizing the preparation, separation, transition and reincorporation phases of *Ke Gehaja*. In the context of the above informant, menarche is the cue for preparation of the ritual and refers to the arrangements made by parents and significant others for the festivity.

The second phase involves the physical *separation* of the menstruating girl in the *Jibita*. This phase is characterized by physically and socially isolating the initiate from her family, age mates and the community and making her to stay in a separate place. This process continues *until* the menstrual flow is over and the public officially recognizes her transformation into *Daguna* stage.

In the separation phase, the girl is taken for confinement for the entire period of her menses and enters upon the period of seclusion and instruction. The physical separation emphasizes the need for the girl to abandon her old identity and learn the manners of womanhood. Separation is

also the condition in which the initiate experiences agony and loneliness. In other words, the pain from the menstrual flow which she has experienced for the first time in her life added with isolation from family and the community will make her to develop feeling of uneasiness.

However, having understood the ultimate outcomes, the menarcheal girl will make psychological readiness and endure anxiety related to isolation, and manages to leave behind all of the things of her childhood to take on the responsibilities that fall on women in her culture. For example, one initiated girl explained her feeling during separation as follows: “I was not afraid at all... because I was already informed about it”. Similarly, a 45-year old mother explained that she was very happy while she was in the Jibita following menarche and she mentioned that other girls (*Dagunas*) were serving her.

The third phase of Ke Gehaja is transition and covers the time from separation to the reincorporation phase. This is of course the period in which the girl will have no social status and fixed identity. In psychological term, she will be in a state of moratorium or in identity diffusion. However, though the young girl is in a state of confusion in this phase, she gradually understands that the future is not bleak because the reinforcement symbolized by the singing and dancing by adolescent girls and boys and the big festivity is meant giving recognition and regard to her passage to the new stage of development. This communal support and recognition in turn will be a source of happiness and psychological strength to withstand the challenges of separation from the normal life activities. In addition to this, the social support from others has a positive implication to the young girl’s sense of her ethnic identity and belongingness which in turn boosts her self-confidence and ethnic identity that she is meaningfully connected to the society.

During the reincorporation phase, the girl is reintegrated to family and community and there are celebrations to mark her transition into the life of the *Dagunas*. In other words, reincorporation phase is the culminating phase of the ceremony in which there will be recognition

and public approval of the abandonment of an old identity and the acquisition of a new one. This is also the phase by which a girl gets a sense of achievement and regain the state of equilibrium and start to be comfortable with herself as well as feeling a sense of accomplishment within the community. This phase is also characterized by making the girl different in her appearance and feeling. In other words, the girl is reborn with a new identity which is symbolized through the facial scars and body paints (Gifqa). It is after the reincorporation phase of the ceremony that the girl's self-perception and society's perception towards her changes because of the new identity.

To summarize, preparation encompasses childhood events leading up to the rite of passage. Separation encompasses rituals that disentangle the pubertal girl from her former secure state (Didea) and transition to an insecure condition in which the girl is in a state of identity confusion while reincorporation involves the re-assimilation of the young girl back into society along with her new roles and statuses (Daguna). At that point, the passage has been concluded and the girl is once again in a stable state. The social support by significant others such as friends, parents and family members from the preparation to reincorporation phase has a positive contribution in resolving the role confusion. Details about the phases, processes and practices of Ke Gehaja rite in contrast to the Ritual Process Paradigm are presented in table 5.4.

Steps in the Ritual Process Paradigm	Phases and psychosocial conceptions	Ke Gehaja Applications
1. Old support group—Significant others have prepared her for this ceremony	Preparation	A Gumuz mother socializes a girl to anticipate her Ke Gehaja rite.
2. Old identity—Previously acquired social roles, personal traits, and affective or cognitive features that will be transformed.	Ethnic group awareness and identification	A girl continues to be engaged in socially set gender specific household chores supervised by her mother
3. Old identity completion—Cues that the initiate is ready for the ceremony.	Cognitive advancement(formal operations) Affective and social Maturation	Menarche marks the end of old identity (Didea). The Menza (closest friend) and a Mitichipiga (adult woman) are selected to mentor her transition. Parents and neighbours begin preparation for the ceremony
4. New environmental demands—The initiate is pushed into the insecurity of new roles and requirements.	Separation Role confusion	The menarcheal girl is removed from the main house to the Jibita The menarcheal girl will stay in the Jibita for two weeks assisted by her <i>Menza</i> Initiate is fed by her menza.
5. Liminality—Marginal, “betwixt and between” status.	Disequilibrium, dissonance, confusion/uncertainty lead To:	The girl is restricted from normal daily activities. She feels lonely and be in a state of confusion.
6. Numinosity—Respect and awe and openness to learn and to be guided	Transition Developing comfort with new self and circumstances.	The girl is given advices, and practical teachings about baking and grinding by the Mitichipiga,; Singing and dancing by other Daguna and Geshera,
7. Accommodation -Initiate begins to incorporate new roles	Developing connection to new identity	End of menstrual flow Girl moves out from the Jibita . She understands the crisis is over and have full orientation about her new roles and responsibilities
8. New identity—New roles, commitments, and responsibilities expected for oneself and demanded by the community.	4.Reincorporation Developing connection to new identity Role enactment. Having direction in life. Perceived sameness	She joins her new groups(Dagunas and Gesheras) and goes to the river with them for washing Her hair is shaved and her body is painted with Gifqa as a symbol of new identity and status
9. New support group—Mentors assist the initiate’s understanding of and mastery of new roles	Affirmation of identity by others. Equilibrium. Feelings of accomplishment	Elderly women(Ganza) and men bless the girl to live longer, be healthy and bear many children Girl feels happy and enjoys singing and dancing with other Daguna

Table 5.4. Phases and processes of Ke Gehaja rite contrasted with the conceptual model of Ritual Process Paradigm (Adapted from Markstrom, 2008).

5.2.12. Lessons of morality, sexuality and life skills

Ke Gehaja rite which is held following the first menstruation by a pubertal girl is a multipurpose ceremony in which Gumuz parents employ to transmit values, teach future gender roles and responsibilities of womanhood. Data analysis suggests that elderly women teach the girl in many matters including menstrual hygiene management. Other lessons given during *Ke Gehaja* ceremony include teaching about food taboos, marital relationship skills, sexual conduct, and self-reliance during delivery, fertility, child care, health, giving respect to marriage partners and the majority of lessons of morality center around the understanding of responsibility and relationships.

In order to explore the lessons of *Ke Gehaja* rite, I asked mothers and initiated girls on the topics of teachings in which lessons are given. Accordingly, they mentioned that the lessons focus on baking, prepring Kiya, grinding, menstrual hygiene, marriage and family life and issues related to sexual intercourse. Meanwhile, I probed further how these lessons and advices could be helpful to a girl's psychosocial wellbeing. Some initiated girls and mothers mentioned that the teachings would help the girl to make life adjustment and to be confident while she is doing these activities later in life. In general, the responses obtained from participants regarding the type of lessons and advices given during the *Ke Gehaja* ritual have been categorized into themes in the table 5.5.

Table 5.5. Summary of the major lessons of *Ke Gehaja* and psychosocial themes

<i>Lesson themes</i>	<i>Psychosocial meaning</i>
The girl is advised to avoid to touch any household utensils , going to the farm, or shake hands with others during menstrual cycle”	
“ The girl is warned to avoid eating meat and milk throughout her fertility age”	Morality
The girl is advised to use <i>chicha</i> during her monthly cycle	Taboos
The girl is advised not go to the farmland during her monustral periods.	
The young girl is taught to give high regard to her husband and not to cry when having sexual intercourse with him	Fidelity and sexuality
The girl is instructed about procedures of sexual intercourse and she is advised not to refuse to have sex with her husband any time he wishes to have it.	
The girl is blessed to be healthy, and live longer	Health and longevity
The girl is blessed to bear many children	Fertility

As shown in table 5.4 the Gumuz employ *Ke Gehaja* rite for teaching various issues. The themes in these lessons are sexuality, fertility, health, delivery, motherhood and childcare. The ritual is also the means by which the society transmits its values and customs to the next generation particularly about feminine and motherhood roles, responsibilities and taboos related to menstruation and food. For example, one initiated adolescent girl from Dibate site explained that

her mentor advised her about menstrual taboos and restrictions from some activities. This was what she said about the issue: “I was given an advice. For instance; I was advised not to do any work when my menstruation comes every time... I was advised not to grind, fetch water or collect firewood.”

The Gumuz believe that menstrual blood is powerful and hence a menstruating girl should not be involved in normal daily activities. For example, there is the belief that menstrual blood will cause several illnesses and it has the power of wilting crops in case a menstruating girl goes to the farmland. Therefore, one of the lessons given during the *Ke Gehaja* ceremony is about what a girl should do and not to do during her monthly cycle.

Besides teaching about menstrual hygiene management which is important for the overall psychological wellbeing of the initiate and family, the lessons given during the *Ke Gehaja* ritual focus on giving prayers and blessings to the young girl by the *Ganza*. This in turn will help the girl to be psychologically healthy and live longer. For example, an elderly woman in the FGD session in Geerz explained that during the girl's *Ke Gehaja*, there are a lot of lessons, prayers and blessings given to the initiate particularly about on the type of food items that the girl should not eat following her menarche. She explains: “There are important blessings and prayers given by fathers, grandfathers, and elder men and women, uncles and so on... a girl is blessed to be fertile and to have more children as well as to be a good woman ... she is advised to be loyal and show respect to her husband and not to look down upon him.”

A 16-years-old initiated girl from Qido told that she remembers some of the lessons and advices during her *Ke Gehaja* rite. She believes that being initiated through the rite has relevance for her wellbeing and it was an opportunity to learn lessons about womanhood. She remarked about the importance of *Ke Gehaja* ceremony as follows: “I have seen that those girls who went through *Ke Gehaja* did not face difficulties during delivery because they had been given lessons on

the delivery process and they were blessed... the ceremony is important for my well-being.”

Responses from this informant imply that passing through the *Ke Gehaja* rite makes initiates to be psychologically healthy.

It is evident that lessons given during the *Ke Gehaja* rite are very comprehensive and consist of all the essential aspects of development such as sexuality, health, longevity, skill development, and spiritual values. Informants especially those initiated girls and women believe that lessons and prayers bring substantive changes on the initiate's self and social image. It is an educational ritual whereby a young girl will be assured about her overall wellbeing and be competent in her future roles as a woman.

The initiate is also given lessons related to sexuality, child care, menstrual hygiene, grinding, baking and so on. These lessons and advices are provided through singing and dancing by the Daguna and Gesheras who are the new support group for the initiate. For example, in one of the FGD sessions in Qido with mothers, I was able to observe, a dramatized *Ke Gehaja* ritual practices and songs, dancing and teachings.

In general, the lessons, advices and prayers are based on values of the Gumuz society and its conceptions of female gender roles and responsibilities. Besides this, these practices have an indirect psychological impact on how an initiated girl perceives herself and how the society perceives her.

5.2.13. Menstrual hygiene and Taboos

Though menstruation is a normal biological process for every sexually matured female, it has been surrounded by myths, taboos and restrictions. Thus, once a Gumuz girl reaches sexual maturity, it is assumed that she has achieved a cognitive level of understanding the norms and taboos of the society and one of these expectations is learning taboos related to menstruation and abiding by them.

As I explained under the theme of “lessons of morality, sexuality and life skills” one of the teachings given to a pubertal girl during her *Ke Gehaja* rite is about how to manage menstruation. Thus the initiate will be instructed not to do any work during her monthly cycle nor should she touch utensils that the family uses because of fear of contamination. These restrictions continue throughout her fertility years.

There is a belief among the community that any bleeding by females especially the first menstruation is conceived to be more powerful and it is associated with several negative spiritual consequences. For example, the Gumuz perceive that menstrual blood has the power to wilt plants and hence a menstruating female should not go to the farmland to avoid failure of crops. With reference to this, one girl from Dibate mentioned that she was really confused about what to do when her menarche suddenly occurred while she was working on the farmland and she felt as if she were causing a disaster to herself and to her family.

Blood is thought to be dangerous to the wellbeing of the menstruating girl herself as well as for others. That is why she has to be kept in a separate hut till the flow is over¹⁸. In relation to this, one male key informant in Dibate explained that if one eats food cooked by a menstruating girl or shakes hands with her, he will be affected by illnesses such as epilepsy. In addition to this,

¹⁸ The gumuz believe that the first menstrual blood is more powerful than the latter ones. It is believed to cause harm to both the girl herself and other people. Because of this, menstruating girls are not allowed to touch their bodies nor shake hands with others.

it is widely believed that if someone who has been a victim of evil spirits eats food cooked by a menstruating girl, his/her illness will aggravate and recovery will be difficult.

Because of the general belief that female blood is dangerous to spiritual wellbeing, women are isolated from the family and the community not only during their menstrual cycles but they are also made to deliver outside of home without any birth attendant. Therefore, one of the lessons to be given for a young girl during her Ke Gehaja ceremony is about self-delivery process outside of the main house and manage the blood flow. With respect to this belief, an elderly woman informant in Geerz said that she delivered all her ten children in the forest in order to avoid anger of spirits and retributions that may occur due to blood drops inside the main house. Also an adolescent girl who was initiated through Ke *Gehaja* rite two years ago in Qido told that she was restricted from doing household chores during her monthly cycle. She was warned not to do things which are believed to be taboos. She elaborates:

When I experienced my menarche, I stayed in the Jibita for two weeks. During that time, I was given some advices by elders. For example, I was advised not to do any work when my menstruation comes every time. I was advised not to grind millet, fetch water or collect firewood.

A woman in Qido explained about taboos related to menstruation by comparing the past and the present practices. She mentioned that unlike the past, menstrual taboos and restrictions are just easing in recent days and she attributed that these changes are the results of modern education, and pressures from Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations:

There are many differences between the past and the present. In the past, we were suffering from problems like putting the chicha under our buttock without wearing other clothes sitting under the burning Sun during menstruation period. We also used to tie our arms tightly with goatskin, which is painful and blocks our blood circulation. But these practices are very rare today.

Therefore, from her explanation, one may understand that customs related to menstruation were more rigid compared to the present. But, it is still widely believed among the society to consider females who are in their menstrual periods as unclean and avoiding them socially. The above informant further stated that in addition to isolation from the family and society, menstruating females are restricted from touching objects that other family members use.

In the past, it is completely a taboo to eat with the menstruating female or to eat the food cooked by her. Let alone these, it was a taboo to cook food with the wood she has collected. However, these days, we do not even know whether the girl is menstruating or not.

The main reason for menstrual taboos and restrictions is associated with the belief that menstrual blood is so dangerous that a menstruating female should be kept isolated. It is implied that protective measures taken toward menstruation and menstrual fluids are reflective of both perceptions of power, as well as perceptions of being contaminated.

The other taboos and restrictions made on an adolescent girl following menarche are on some types of food and drink. These taboos and restrictions are also related to the beliefs of the wider community about fertility. For instance, a woman in Geerz site indicated that eating some types of food especially flesh of wild animals affects the young girl's fertility negatively. Thus to avoid this danger, food taboos and restrictions begin following the first menstruation.

The Daguna who has begun her first 'gehaja' will be warned not to eat meat of wild animals such as meat of an antelope, pig, birds, and egg. Girls who attended the Ke Gehaja are advised to avoid eating meat from wild animals, at least until their shaved hair grows again.

Fertility is highly valued among the Gumuz and the first menstruation is an assurance to the family that a girl is fertile. Yet, to maintain her reproductive capacity, the initiate is instructed to avoid certain food items such as kimma, milk and meat obtained from hunting.

In addition to menstrual and food taboos, a pubertal girl is also advised not to make any kind of sexual engagement with a male who is not circumcised because it is culturally believed that a male is not considered as sexually matured regardless of his age.

By and large, data revealed that menstrual taboos emanate from the general belief that menstruation is powerful in that it negatively affects the health of the menstruating female as well as others who may come closer to her. Menstruation is also believed to be dirty and causes of anger of *Missa* (god) if it drops in the main house. The Gumuz believe that *Missa* lives with them in the house and brings curse such as illnesses to the family if a female blood drops in the main house. Thus, every sexually matured female is taught about how to manage her monthly cycle during her Ke Gehaja ceremony. By doing so, the Gumuz believe that it is possible to prevent all the misfortunes against the menstruating girl, her family and the community at large.

5.2.14. Future prospects of Ke Gehaja

All mothers who participated in the in-depth interviews and FGDs explained that they had participated in the *Ke Gehaja* following their menarche. For example, mother participants in Geerz emphasized the importance of *Ke Gehaja* ritual and argued that in those days, it would be very dangerous if *Ke Gehaja* ceremony is not prepared for a menarcheal girl. Besides, they mentioned that in the past, there were adult women (Mitichpiga) whose role was to teach and initiate young girls to Daguna stage unlike recent days.

As I discussed throughout this paper, the Gumuz employ the *Ke Gehaja* ceremony for several purposes such as to demarcate life stage transitions; inculcate values in the mind of new girls; teach young girls about sexuality and marital life. Yet, the ritual is recently regarded as a harmful practice by different groups. For example, both school girls and mothers who participated in this study agreed that *Ke Gehaja* rite is diminishing from time to time and they attributed this to modern education, acculturation and campaigns of Governmental and Non-Governmental Organization against the practices.

I read from Government Communication Affairs Bureau of the Region Annual Bulletin that the Regional women in general and Gumuz women in particular had been victims of discrimination and harmful traditional practices including *Ke gehaja* rite for long and the Regional women, youth and children's Affairs Bureau in collaboration with Non Governmental Organizations is giving awareness creation training on issues like harmful traditional practices, HIV/AIDS, Gender and so on. The report also indicates that there are more than thirty five non-Governmental international and national organizations operating in the Benishangul Gumuz Region and some of them like CPAR are working against indigenous practices including *Ke Gehaja*.

The interviews I had with key informants from women's Children and Youth Affairs and Culture and Tourism offices from Governmental Organizations and also with an expert from CPAR substantiates that Ke Gehaja rite is being tackled by different Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations. These organizations are working collaboratively and teach the Gumuz society about the harmful effects of Ke Gehaja rite and other 'harmful traditional practices'. For example, one expert from CPAR informed me that there are ten Community Conversation Programs in eight 'Kebelles' which aim eradicating HTPs and he explained about the outcome of the program as follows:

...In Qido and Angtog, we have some model Gumuz women whom we use as active participants in changing the attitude of the people... but it is very challenging because people are resistant and suspicious and do not accept what you teach... you know. But the current status of these harmful traditional practices is in a lower rate ... because of our intervention. But there is a lot of work to be done. There are still so many people who still adhere to these harmful traditional practices.

Head of the Women's Children and Youth Affairs Office in Dibate mentioned that there is little attitude change among the society regarding Ke Gehaja rite because of resistance by the community. I raised a question to one mother in Geerz site about the prevalence of *Ke Gehaja* in recent years. She explains

These days, celebrations of the *Ke Gehaja* and using *Gifqa* are considered as signs of backwardness. As a result, girls in our village are using modern ointments instead of *Gifqa*. They are also using modern sanitary pads instead of *chicha* during their menstrual periods. The main reason for abandoning the tradition is that these things cannot go in line with modernization. Also an officer in CPAR mentioned that the prevalence of Ke Gehaja rite

and other traditional practices are getting lower especially in areas where there are community conversation programs:

... The current status of these harmful traditional practices is in a lower rate today because of our interventionBut there are so many people who still adhere to these harmful traditional practices. In our community conversation program, we use ‘Yekedemu¹⁹’ people as agents. These people accept novel ideas easily. So we work with them together in order to reach others.

Another evidence suggesting the decline of the ritual is that the duration of the ceremony has been minimized from three months to two weeks among those Gumuz communities who hold menarchical ritual. This implies that this transitional ritual is almost disappearing. Regarding this issue, a 47-year-old woman in Qido indicated that traditions of the Gumuz including *Ke Gehaja* are being abandoned and replaced by non-indigenous ones, particularly by that of the highland settlers, leading to loss of indigenous values and cultural identities. The abandonment of past practice is also a partial loss of identity. She expresses her concerns as follows:

Practices such as delivery and Ke Gehaja are being abandoned today and the Amhara culture has been adapted. ...The Government is teaching us to stop the Ke Gehaja ceremony. ...We have just been taught to abandon this practice. Even the songs have been abandoned. These practices are considered as backward... these days, Gumuz girls do what the ‘Amhara’ girls do during their menstruation.

An in-depth interview with a key informant from culture and Tourism office of the Dibate district implies that the Ke Gehaja ritual is not common compared to the past. “The traditional practice of transitioning girls through Ke Gehaja rite is almost disappearing these days especially

¹⁹ ‘Yekedemu’ is an Amharic term and it is used to mean those Gumuz members of the society are open to accept new ideas and innovations and who are not resistant to change.

in urban areas.” In the same way, an adolescent girl from this same site explained that her *Ke Gehaja* ceremony was not as big as her friends’ in the neighborhood because of the resistance by her father. She explained that only a small portion of the events and practices of the *Ke Gehaja* ceremony were done following her menarche.

My father justified that he has heard from people from the Government and the ‘*shuwa*’ that preparing *ke gehaja* ceremony is a harmful tradition and wastage of money. Because of the disagreement he had with my mother about the issue, the full ceremony was not prepared for me. Finally, only my mother prepared a mini-ceremony and only the basic and inevitable components of the ritual were done. For example, my hair was shaved...some *enga* was made and a few of my friends were invited. But when I compare this with that of my friends’, it was not that much colorful. For example, I have observed from other ceremonies that a goat or a hen was slaughtered.

I asked one mother informant if her daughters were initiated through *Ke Gehaja* rite. She replies “...No, because my daughters were born in a different time. I was initiated because this practice was mandatory in the past but today it is not common. ...Today’s girls live in a civilized world.”

In general, data analysis indicated that as a result of the gradual disappearance of *Ke Gehaja* rite, young girls of the Gumuz grope in confusion in search of an identity and they are in an elusive certainty from their marginal existence within the fringes of multiple cultural imperatives and condemnation of their values and traditions. The weakening of these cultural practices also implies that the Gumuz have been abandoning their indigenous developmental ideas and practices and they have been caught up in the web of cultural transition where there are no longer clearly defined values and moral codes of behavior that should be instilled in young girls.

5.3. Combined meaning of salient themes

The following major themes emerged from data analysis: practices of Ke Gehaja; perceived meanings of Ke Gehaja; Gumuz female life cycle; pubertal development and menarche; emotional reactions to menarche ; developmental cues for the transition from Didea to Daguna; developmental tasks of a pre-menarcheal girl; lessons, advices and prayers; phases of Ke Gehaja ; purposes of Ke Gehaja ; psychosocial benefits of Ke Gehaja; the development of identity and intimacy and other related ones.

The final step in this thematic analysis was reviewing the themes in order to develop an explanatory framework, which incorporates the major themes identified in the analysis and making sense of the phenomenon under investigation. In order to do this, the themes were revised and some of them were merged with others. To begin with, the Gumuz have their own conceptions about female life cycle. They believe that a female is socialized to be good mother, good wife, loyal to her husband, fertile, healthy and strong. Accordingly, socialization practices including Ke Gehaja rite are meant to inculcate these values on the young girl.

Each theme has relationship to one another. For example, the practices, lessons, advices and prayers are related to the purposes. Similarly, the practices; taboos and restrictions; as well as lessons, advices and prayers are related to phases because these practices are performed within the three different phases of Ke Gehaja. In the same way, the perceived meanings and contributions of Ke Gehaja rite are related to the purposes of the society to initiate girls and this includes teaching to the girl about roles and responsibilities of motherhood as well as taboos and restrictions. Ultimately, these themes fall into Gumuz philosophy of life and gender role socialization practices which in turn are dictated by the spiritual and social values of the society.

In general, when these major themes are combined, they provide an explanatory framework of girls' puberty rites, practices and developmental and psychosocial contributions. Figure 5.4 shows the interrelationship among these themes.

Stages in Gumuz Female Life Cycle

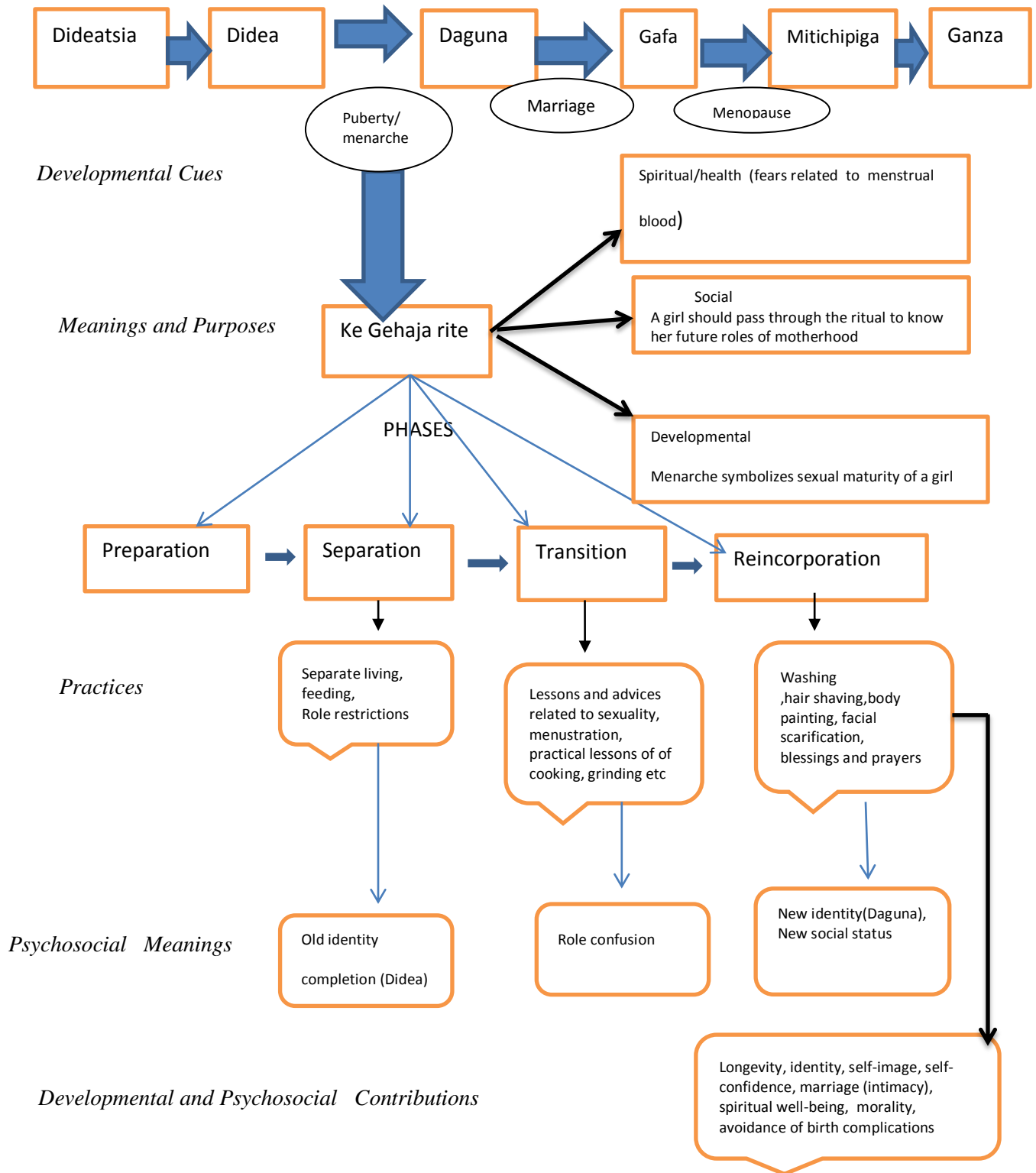


Figure 5.4. An explanatory framework that shows the interrelationship among salient themes and sub-themes of the study

5.4. Summary of Salient Themes

This study was conducted to explore on girls' puberty rites (Ke Gehaja) and its developmental and psychosocial contributions. Accordingly, the study found salient themes associated with the issue of investigation. One of the major themes of the study is about the Gumuz conceptions of lifespan development. From indepth interviews with mothers and key informants, I learned that the Gumuz female life cycle consists of six stages of development. These are *Dideatsia, Didea, Daguna, Gafa, Mitichpiga, and Ganza*.

Ke Gehaja rite is perceived differently among different groups of participants. That is, initiated girls and mothers perceived the ritual as a positive event and mentioned its psychosocial contribution especially in helping the young girl in her transition to adolescence. Moreover, they mentioned that passing through the ritual is an opportunity to learn about future roles and responsibilities of womanhood. Similarly, the study found that initiated girls have positive emotional reaction to menarche because they had the expectation that Ke Gehaja rite, which is a celebration of the first menstruation, would be held following this event. To the contrary, non-initiated girls as a group denied the positive contribution of the rite to the positive psychosocial development.

With regard to the purposes, the current study explored that Ke Gehaja rite is performed for psychological, spiritual and social reasons. Spiritually, the rite serves to teach about menstrual taboos and restrictions for a sexually matured girl especially on how she is going to manage her monthly cycle properly. Therefore, lessons about menstrual hygiene are given to the girl during her Ke Gehaja ceremony which in turn contributes not only to her psychological and spiritual wellbeing but also to her family and kin members. Besides its individual psychological contribution, Ke Gehaja rite has a social contribution in that family members come together to

celebrate and acknowledge the young girl's sexual, biological and social maturation and her transformation to a new developmental stage.

A Gumuz girl is perceived to be psychologically and sexually matured when she begins her first menstruation. Therefore, menarche is the critical period in the life of a girl because it is after this biological event that she would be licenced to certain privileges of womanhood such as marriage and sexual relationship .In general , menarche marks the end of childhood(Didea) stage and the beginning of adolescence stage within the female life cycle. The study also found that there are noticeable bodily changes among which the enlargement of breasts and increase in height by girls just before their menarche.

The study found out the major developmental tasks of a Gumuz girl during the pre and post-menarcheal time. Accordingly, it was found that a Gumuz girl begins the process of mastering culturally set developmental tasks early in life. These tasks are mainly doing house hold chores and learning the roles of womanhood including child care, fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking, house cleaning and so on. A Gumuz girl learns these tasks by observing her mother. Hence, it seems logical to argue that a girl spends her full time with her mother to learn these roles and responsibilities and the mother has also the responsibility to closely supervise her daughter .As the young girl matures gradually, she would be given the autonomy to accomplish certain tasks by her self and this implies her autonomy, self-confidence and self-sufficiency.

Psychosocially speaking, the time of menarche is the situation in which a girl belongs neither to her former groups(Dideas) nor to the Dagunas. In other words, this study found that a menarcheal girl would be in identity confusion following her first menstruation . This can be implicated by the fact that the menstruating girl is separated from the rest of the family and the society which normally lasts to the end of the menstrual flow. Meanwhile, the study found that there are differences in the length of crisis because data obtained from mothers indicate that a girl

would remain in transition or crisis for about three months while school girls argue that transition phase is concluded with the end of menstrual flow.

The last phase of the psychosocial crisis is characterized by reuniting the young girl with new developmental and social status. With regard to the practices performed during this phase, both mothers and initiated school girls explained that the girl will have scarifications on both sides of her face; her hair will be shaved, and her body will be painted with Gifqa and these practices are meant to symbolize her new identity and developmental status.

Extended family members provide psychological and financial support to the initiate during her Ke Gehaja rite. For example, there are songs and dances by adolescent boys and girls who are her new support groups, in praise of her transformation. Besides, neighbours bring food and local drinks during the festivity and also witness her transformation to *Daguna* and her legitimacy for marriage.

An attempt was also made to know about the existence of Ke Gehaja rite in recent days. Thus, it was found that this transitional ritual is diminishing from time to time especially in the town area. For instance data obtained from girls, mothers and key informants reveals that there is high pressure from both Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations against the practice. Despite this, the ritual is still being practiced in some parts of the rural Gumuz.

Overall, Ke Gehaja rite contributes to the society in the sense that it is a means to teach morality and values of the society and it is a way of providing psychological and social support to the young girl in her time of crisis. It was also reported by initiated girls and mothers that passing through this ritual boosts young girl's self-confidence and self-esteem and ensures her future psychological and social wellbeing.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1.Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore girls' puberty rite and its developmental and psychosocial contributions among the Gumuz and it led to the identification of salient themes which are interrelated to one another. The study was guided by social constructivism and hence the themes were derived from participants' conceptions of Ke Gehaja rite. Meanwhile transition-rite theory and Erickson's theory of psychosocial development were employed to guide the study.

This section deals about discussion on the major themes and thereby checking whether the objectives of the study have been met and the research questions have been answered. Besides this, the discussion is crosschecked with relevant theoretical and empirical literature. Accordingly, the study seeks to address about the meaning of girl's puberty rite as perceived by initiated and non-initiated girls, mothers and other stakeholders of the practice; stages of development within the female life cycle and the biological and cultural markings for the transition from one stage to the next in general and from childhood to adolescence in particular.

The study explored several issues related to the contribution of Ke Gahaja rite to the psychosocial development of the initiate. Hence, themes related to concepts of human development and social aspects of the ritual emerged from data analysis and the discussion section emphasizes on elaborating further on these issues. Hence, this section focuses on discussing about the major practices and phases of the ritual and their contribution to the individual psychological development. In addition to this, issues like the stages within the Gumuz female lifespan development and the major developmental tasks associated with each stage have been discussed especially by comparing and contrasting them with the eight stages of Erickson's psychosocial

development. Moreover, the role of Ke Gehaja rite and its implication for the development of identity and intimacy is presented.

Though the major emphasis of the study is transition during pubertal development, I discuss highlights on how transition from one developmental stage to the next is marked across the Gumuz female lifespan development. In fact, the major biological changes and social expectations from a female of a certain developmental stage have been outlined based on participants' perceptions of stages of development and tasks associated with each stage.

Identifying the current challenges of Girl's puberty rites and the psychosocial repercussions associated with its disappearance and the significance of the ritual as a process of transforming girls from *Didea* to *Daguna* was also one of the focuses of the study. Therefore, I present the pros and cons of the ritual from the perspective of school girls, mothers, and experts from Governmental and non-Governmental Organizations.

6.1.1. Perceived meanings and contributions of Ke Gehaja

Initiated girls and mothers perceive the ritual as a useful socialization practice while non-initiated girls and experts from Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations argue that it is one of the harmful traditional practices. Initiated girls and mothers who were transformed to *Daguna* through Ke Gehaja rite explained that going through this developmental rite has provided them psychological security against anxiety and bad spirits and helped them develop self-confidence to perform their roles and responsibilities. In addition to this, mothers expressed that being initiated through Ke Gehaja rite helps the young girl to get lessons about menstrual hygiene, future marital relationship and skills of motherhood. Besides these, prayers and blessings given during the ceremony have implication for her psychological wellbeing and longevity.

Regarding the social impact of the ceremony on a pubertal girl, I learned that non-initiated girls are viewed by initiated ones as less competent, less trustful and psychologically and spiritually unhealthy. This is similar to Maluleke's (2001) finding in which non-initiated girls were perceived to have missed one developmental stage across the female lifespan development in South Africa. The current finding is also similar with Matobo, Makatsa and Obioha (2009) finding that unless a girl is initiated, members of the communities have no trust in her for specific tasks.

To the contrary, non-initiated girls had a negative view of the ritual and perceive it as a barbaric and harmful traditional practice and they denied its positive impacts suggested by initiated girls and mothers. From my own observation, I understood that Ke Gehaja as a socialization practice by the Gumuz is more relevant in the rural 'Kebelles' than in Dibate town. This implies that indigenous customs of child socialization are more meaningful in rural areas where there is little influence of modernization.

Data from indepth interviews with initiated girls revealed that girls informed to their mothers or closest friends the moment they experience menarche. This implies that there is open communication between mothers and daughters about sexual development starting from pre-pubertal time in the case of initiated girls. For example, one initiated girl from Dibate explained that she had already been taught about managing menstrual hygiene by her mother earlier than the actual menarcheal time. As a result, she already knew what to do during her menarche and hence she was not disturbed then.

Overall, initiated and non-initiated girls as well as mothers perceive Ke Gehaja in different ways. Especially, for mothers Ke Gehaja had been a mandatory transitional rite because every menarcheal girl used to be transformed to adolescence through this ritual during the past. Yet, it is an optional one for today's girls.

All initiated girls and mothers agreed that they had been happy during their menarche and expressed that they got lessons about managing the subsequent monthly cycle. Besides this, they mentioned that they looked attractive which implies that they had positive body image. This might be because the first menstruation is culturally viewed as a symbol of sexual maturation and transition from a junior to a senior social status in rural areas where *Ke Gehaja* is still popular. Therefore it is possible to argue that girls from rural areas expect *Ke Gehaja* rite following menarche which is characterized by a big festivity. In line with this finding, previous studies found that women and girls who had no relevant prior information about menstruation were found to be shocked and scared during their menarche. This in turn has a negative psychological impact on how women feel during each monthly cycle throughout their fertility years (Sasser-Coen, 1996). Menarche is unfamiliar experience and girls would show greater anxiety and stress and initiation rites help to ease this stress (Misaki, Leslie, and Mendle, 2010; Chang and Lin, 2013).

Initiated girls and mothers perceived menarche as sign of being grown up and maturation. One of the reasons for this might be the social meanings and support given to a pubertal girl through this transitional ritual. Besides this, initiated girls and mothers had positive emotions while non-initiated ones explained that their first menstruation was somewhat stressful. In societies where there are no initiation rites, menarche becomes a more stressful event to a young girl and her sexual and psychological maturation and the conclusion of her childhood stage is learned through the beginning of menarche (Sasser-Coen, 1996; Chang and Lin, 2013).

In contrast to the current finding, Van Gennep (1908/1960) and Kapungwe (2003) explain that though puberty rites tend to occur around pubertal time, the physical changes of puberty are rarely the focus of the rites because initiation rites may occur before or after puberty depending on the specific goals and meanings associated with this transition. Thus it is possible to argue that puberty rite is a social construction and may not always coincide with the biological maturation of

a girl. But the current study explored that Ke Gehaja takes place following biological maturity which is implicated through menarche.

6.1.2. Ke Gehaja phases and practices

Ke Gehaja was found to consist of four phases each of which is associated with different practices and activities. The current study reveals that phases of Ke Gehaja rite consist of practices that symbolize the preparation, separation, transition and reincorporation and this is similar to the ritual process paradigm (Markstrom, 2008) mentioned in the theoretical framework section of this study.

Preparation entails to learning the tasks of future adult roles by a pre-pubertal girl. Meanwhile, separation phase begins with menarche. In terms of Erickson's theory of psychosocial development, experiencing menarche by a Gumuz girl could be equated with the end of childhood stage and the beginning of psychosocial crisis of identity versus role confusion.

Transition phase, which lasts from the beginning of menarche to its culmination, is somewhat a difficult time for the girl as she has to be isolated from family and society. In line with my finding, a study done in Nepal found that girls are kept in a dark room for twelve days during their first menstruation (Padhye et al, 2003). According to these authors, girls reported being very embarrassed, feeling very isolated, and unhappy during the period of seclusion.

There are several practices that symbolize the menarcheal Gumuz girl to be in identity crisis. For example, she would be isolated from family and her former groups (children) immediately following her first menstruation. This is the phase in which she would belong to neither to the Didea (children) nor to the Daguna (adolescents). She is also restricted from her previous roles and responsibilities. This state of role confusion would continue till the initiate's transformation to Daguna stage. Both transition rite and Psychosocial theories characterize such a situation to symbolize transition. For example from the psychoanalytic point of view, Halley

(2012) suggests that just as boys may develop sex-identity conflict if they sleep with their mothers as infants, girls who sleep with both parents develop a similar conflict and therefore must be initiated to resolve their sex-identity conflict.

In the course of the transition phase, there are different teachings, advices, blessings and prayers given to the young girl by the adult women (Mitichpiga) and this is similar to Erickson's argument that society must provide psychological and social support to the individual at the time of transition (Erickson, 1963). In the case of a pubertal Gumuz girl, there are songs and dances by young girls and boys which symbolize reinforcing the initiate's transition to adolescence. But there are still gaps about how puberty rites are perceived by Erickson. For example, in his Book "Childhood and society", Erickson regards puberty and adolescence to be overlapped and the major psychosocial crisis at this level is resolution of identity versus role confusion.

The current study explored that there are practical guidances and tests about major roles of adult women such as baking and grinding. These practices imply approving the mastery of roles and responsibilities of womanhood by the initiate and help her avoid role confusion before she gets married and becomes a mother. Besides this, she is advised to be loyal to her husband and avoid extra marital affair, accept her husband's sexual demands and not to tell lies. This corresponds with Erickson's conception of ego virtue of fidelity. Moreover, the current finding resembles to Skinner, et al (2012) study in that girls in Malawi are taught about personal hygiene. In addition to this, they are taught how to show respect for elders, how to take care of the family, and how to please their future husbands during sexual intercourse.

There are several practices marking the end of the identity versus role confusion by an initiate. For example, the end of the menstrual flow, spiritual washing, hair shaving, scarification and painting the body with local cosmetics (Gifqa). These practices symbolize the young girl's new identity and the end of the transition phase as well as the beginning of the reincorporation

phase with new privileges and roles. In this regard, the current finding is similar to Zenden and Crandel's (2007) explanation about the major practices and activities of puberty rites.

Empirical literature indicates that there are physically and psychologically harmful bodily operations associated with the initiation of girls and this includes the enlargement of the labia minora, removal of the clitoris, scarification, tattooing and so on (Nangoli, 1990; Hambley, 1937; Kenyatta, 1965; Erickson, 1963). But in my study, I found that there is only scarification on the face of the newly initiated girl to inform to the society about the new developmental status and identity of the young girl. Meanwhile, making scars on the face during initiation was perceived as a non-harmful one by the initiated girls and mothers who participated in the current study. The scars made on both sides imply sexual, psychological and social maturity of a girl and her readiness for marriage.

6.1.3. Stages within Gumuz female lifespan development

In Gumuz culture, initiation rites are part and parcel of the beginning and the end of a particular developmental stage within the female life cycle. This study uncovered that there are different stages across Gumuz female lifespan development and these stages resemble stage theories of development in the mainstream developmental psychology. Therefore, findings of this study indicated that the Gumuz female passes through six stages of development: *Dideatsia*, *Didea*, *Daguna*, *Gafa*, *Mitichipiga*, and *Ganza*. These stages correspond to Erickson's conceptions of infancy and babyhood, childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood and late adulthood respectively. But they differ from Erickson's psychosocial stages in the sense that they are only six while Erickson's life span development consists of eight stages.

Gumuz female life cycle is guided by readiness than chronological age of a female. This is evident from the inability of mothers and school girls to remember their current age. Instead, the Gumuz mark different stages of development within the life cycle based on certain critical

biological or social events. This implies that the Gumuz use maturational processes and developmental readiness as a guide for transition from one stage of development to the next than chronological age. In other words, transition demands a Gumuz female to reach some level of biological maturation and her ability to accomplish socially set developmental tasks. To mention some, experiencing menarche, marriage, child birth and menopause are some of the developmental milestones in the process of transition of a Gumuz female from one stage to the next.

Since the focus of this study is on puberty rites, more emphasis was given to the time between childhood (*Didea*) and adolescence (*Daguna*) because puberty is a critical phase in the life of a Gumuz female. This phase is synchronized with the occurrence of menarche and major changes in the physical, psychological and sexual maturation of a girl.

Theoretical literature suggests that early and late menarche is associated to social factors. For example Paternal investment theory, (Drapper and Harpending, 1982) explains that low paternal investment, father's absence and the presence of a step-father triggers accelerated menarche and early sexual intercourse. This theory seems to be applicable to the Gumuz female in which a husband has multiple wives and children which implies that the father gives little attention to each child especially for female children. This is because Gumuz female children develop more attachment with their mothers while male children do with their fathers.

Daguna stage is mainly similar to adolescence period because it is relatively short one in terms of duration within the life cycle. Therefore this stage is primarily characterized by sexual maturation and changes in the perception of self and parent-child relationship. For example, some adolescent girls reported that they had conflict with their mothers and ran out of home. Therefore, it seems that Ke Gehaja rite is a mechanism of resolving this daughter-mother conflict. This is done by separating the girl from her mother through exchange marriage which requires sending the girl away from her birth place.

Marriage occurs at an early stage of development among the Gumuz. Psychosocially speaking a Gumuz girl enters to the intimacy versus isolation crisis before she achieves her identity and this shows Erickson's argument that females resolve the identity crisis after achieving intimacy. In this regard, Ke Gehaja rite helps the girl to form long lasting intimacy with her future husband. This is because an initiated girl is culturally more preferable to be a good wife than a non-initiated one because the former is believed to have the necessary exposure to roles and responsibilities of motherhood.

There were disagreements about the role of marriage among school girls who participated in this study during FGD sessions. For example, some argued that the rite of marriage ends Daguna (adolescence) stage and the beginning of Gafa (early adulthood) stage while others reacted that the rite of marriage alone does not indicate transition from Daguna to Gafa stage. But marriage plus delivery of the first child ensures the end of Daguna stage. This implies that fertility would guarantee the transition of an adolescent girl to early adulthood stage. In other words, marriage which ideally indicates the formation of intimacy would not be an assurance for long lasting relationship with her husband especially in the case of polygamous marriage. Instead, it requires that a Gumuz young woman should have peaceful relationship with other co-wives in the family and prove her fertility through giving birth. Otherwise, the negative psychosocial crisis of isolation (divorce) would occur and the girl will be sent back to her family. This implies that commitment to one's marital life and degree of love between couples alone does not give much sense to the continuation of marital relationship.

Infertility is the greatest of all tragedies and humiliations of a Gumuz female and it is just one of the obstacles against resolving the intimacy versus isolation. Hence, it is perceived that the prayers and blessings given by the *Ganza and Gunza* during menarcheal rite are meant to give spiritual support and psychological empowerment to the young girl so that she would be fertile

and face no delivery complications as well as maintain long lasting relationship with her husband. In relation to the current finding, a study conducted in Southern Ethiopia found that adherence to traditional rituals during antenatal period was found to have a positive impact in preventing mental health problems on pregnant mothers and facilitate safe delivery (Hanlon, et al, 2010). On the other hand, with regard to the role of the *Mitichipiga* in initiation rites, a similar study conducted in Zambia found that elderly women are involved in supervising girls' initiation rites (Kapungwe, 2003).

Transition from one stage of development to the next within the Gumuz female life cycle is accompanied by some sort of rites of passage. Hence, there are naming rites, puberty rites, marriage rites, and delivery rites. There are also psychosocial crisis associated with each stage of development. For instance early versus late maturation which is marked by the onset of menarche is a crisis to the transition from childhood to adolescence. Global literature attaches social stigma to early development for girls (Sasser-Coen, 1996). Yet, the current study reveals that early maturation is culturally perceived as an advantage to a Gumuz girl because this would guarantee her fertility and transition from junior to senior status.

Marriage and delivery of first child which denote the positive resolution of intimacy versus isolation symbolizes transition from adolescence (Daguna) to early adulthood (Gafa) stage to a Gumuz female. Here it is necessary to emphasize on the social and cultural values of being initiated through Ke Gehaja rite. The majority of key informants explained that passing through *Ke Gehaja* facilitates marriage which in turn marks the end of adolescence and entrance to early adulthood stage. But a girl who had been initiated through this transitional rite would remain a Daguna (adolescent) only for a short period of time in contrast to a non-initiated one. This is because an initiated girl has more probability to get married soon whereas a non-initiated one would have less chance to get a husband which implies a lengthy adolescence time.

For the Gumuz, transition from one stage of development to the next is determined by the achievement of socially set developmental tasks characterizing each stage of development. For example, a pre-pubertal girl is expected to learn to accomplish minor household chores by imitating the roles of her mother and spending time with her (the mother). By the time she reaches puberty, a Gumuz girl is supposed to master more advanced tasks such as cooking, preparing local drinks, buying, selling and grinding, preparing *chicha* for ornament and menstrual hygiene. In other words, accomplishing these tasks by a girl implies her advancement in cognitive development. Therefore, even though her roles are similar both in the pre and post pubertal time, the girl would master and perform these tasks with dexterity as she progresses in age.

6.1.4. Conception of adolescence among the Gumuz

Before entering to the field, I had the misconception that menarche marks the immediate transition of a girl from childhood to adulthood. However, data obtained from this study revealed that the Gumuz have different conceptions of adolescence in contrast to what the majority of theoretical literature explains regarding the absence of adolescence period in traditional societies in general. Accordingly, adolescence time is regarded as one stage of development within the life cycle of females and males among the Gumuz.

Adolescence stage covers the time between menarche (Ke Gehaja rite) and marriage in the case of females. With regard to the length of time, I was really amazed to learn from some key informants that a Gumuz female remains to be an adolescent (Daguna) for indefinite time unless she is able to marry regardless of her chronological age. Similarly, a circumcised Gumuz male would continue to be an adolescent (Geshera) unless he is able to get a sister or female relative to be exchanged with another girl to be his wife.

I want to emphasize on two points again regarding adolescence stage in a Gumuz female. First, the Gumuz regard adolescence as one stage of development within the lifecycle and entrance to this stage is marked by menarche. Secondly, the rite of marriage is a developmental task to be achieved for the end of adolescence stage and the beginning of early adulthood (Gafa) stage in females.

In general, findings of this study corroborate with previous theoretical and empirical literature regarding the fact that puberty rites mark transition from childhood to adolescence or from childhood to adulthood (Burbank, 1988; Shaffer and Kipp, 2010; and Schlgel and Barry, 1980; Crouch and Mckenzie, 2012) but it contradicts with the explanation of Gavazi, Alford and Lecroy (1996) and Bosch (2007), Paige and Paige (1981); Manabe (2010) and Markstrom,(2008) and this depends on the social context.

6.1.5. Perceived developmental and psychosocial impacts of Ke Gehaja rite

Initiated girls and mothers were asked the feeling they had during their Ke Gehaja ceremony and its perceived impact on their personality development. Accordingly, the majority of them explained that this transition rite has a positive impact in terms of status and what is expected of them. In line with this, Brooks-Gunn and Ruble cited in Sasser-Coen (1996) maintain that the experience of menarche by a girl has far-reaching developmental implications specifically on her identity as a woman and on her self-concept. These authors also mention that the ceremony has positive developmental impact in the sense that it reduces a complex and lengthy developmental period (puberty) to a one-time event (menarche).

Initiated girls and mothers also argued that the ritual has helped them to be respected by others and this in turn contributes for the development of positive self-concept. Some of them emotionally reacted that they looked attractive with the different colors of Gifqa painted on the body and felt as if it were their wedding day. In Gumuz culture, *Gifqa* is locally made cosmetic

which is primarily used by an initiated girl to symbolize her new identity development and this in turn has psychological impact in boosting the self-image of the girl. Besides, initiated girls and mothers mentioned that Gifqa paint was one of the practices they enjoyed most during their Ke Gehaja rite.

Some writers such as Hambley (1937); Mbiti; (1998); Kenyatta(1965);Sasser-Coen (1996); and Turner (1981) associate female puberty rites with psychological and physical abuse.This includes test of virginity, beating (slapping), clitoridectomy and so on. However, nothing that harms the physical and psychological wellbeing of a girl was reported by participants of the current study.

In general, though theoretical literature explains about the negative psychological impacts of female initiation rites (Maluleke, 2001) the current study came up with the fact that Ke Gehaja rite is perceived to be essential and non-harmful as experienced by initiated girls and mothers.

In contrast with the impacts of being initiated through Ke gehaja, I tried to explore the psychosocial impacts of not being initiated.Accordingly, mothers and initiated girls view that non-initiated girls miss several things in life because of not passing through this developmental ritual. For example they argued that an initiated girl is shaped to meet the physical, psychological and sexual needs of her future husband and she is taught to be obedient and loyal but a non-initiated girl would miss all these things .Moreover, initiated girls and mothers as a group mentioned that a non-initiated girl would be blind, liar, and she would face birth complications in the future. They further argued that failure to go through Ke gehaja rite would make the girl to be unfaithful to her husband and not trusted by her in-laws and ultimately she may be sent back to her family. This implies that a non-initiated girl would not develop ego virtue of fidelity and her marital relationship will be in danger. To sum up, there is a perception by initiated girls and mothers that non-initiated girls would face psychosocial problems in later life.

To the contrary of mothers and initiated girls' view, non-initiated girls denied that these are just myths and have no truth at all. On the other hand, literature sources indicate that initiation rites contribute both to the individual psychological development and for the benefit of the society (Young,1965; Hovort, 1990).

Another psychosocial impact reported by participants was the fact that Gumuz males prefer an initiated girl for marriage over non-initiated one because the former is believed to be skillful, confident and also better in terms of carrying out her wifely duties. But the non-initiated one is feared to be confused while performing house hold chores. Moreover, a non-initiated girl is perceived to have no guarantee about her ability to bear a child, and her own health. Likewise, it is believed that a child born from a non-initiated girl will die soon because of evil spirits.

In conclusion, I believe that such wide perceptions would affect the psychosocial wellbeing of a non-initiated girl especially on her struggle in resolving the intimacy versus isolation crisis (Marriage). Besides, these wider perceptions of the society about the impact of initiation has an indirect negative impact on the self-concept of non-initiated girl. In relation to the social impact of not being initiated, previous studies by Skinner, Underwood, Schewndt and Magoto (2013) found that in Malawi, non initiated girls face social discrimination and they are looked upon as outcasts and considered as children.

In this study, I made an attempt to explore not only the positive but also the negative psychosocial impacts of being initiated through *Ke Gehaja* rite. Accordingly there was a consensus among all participants; that is, initiated girls and non-initiated girls, mothers and even experts from Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations in that the ritual is costly and leads families to economic crisis.

6.1.6. Marriage and identity formation by a Gumuz female

Once a Gumuz girl is transformed to Daguna stage through *Ke Gehaja*, it is likely that she would get coupled with a man from another clan and hence she is expected to live far away from her immediate and extended family members. In other words, the girl's personal identity will be transferred from her family to her husband clan and his family (Hoebel, 1972) because she belongs to the new clan after marriage. In case her husband dies, she cannot return to her family since otherwise the woman for whom she was exchanged when she married would in turn have to be given back to her own family. Hence, as a rule, she is married to a brother or another male relative of her deceased husband. In short, the young girl's departure from family and clan members due to marriage symbolizes the process of abandoning her old identity and the beginning of a new one. In line with this, Erickson (1968) views that the order of identity and intimacy in men and women is different. He explains that men achieve identity before intimacy while women get their identity after forming intimacy and his argument seems to be true to a Gumuz female.

The purpose of *Ke Gehaja* rite is not only to inform her change of status within the female life cycle but also to inform to the community about her readiness to separate from her family and clan. In this respect, my finding contradicts with Brown's (1963) argument which states that girl's initiation rite occurs only in those societies in which a girl does not leave her birth place due to marriage. According to Brown, the purpose of girl's initiation rite is simply to announce her change of status within the clan.

With regard to roles, a Gumuz female's identity is termed to be identity foreclosure which is characterized by accepting the roles and values given by the society without exploring alternatives (Marcia, 1983). In other words, identity is pushed onto her and she is a passive recipient of roles given by the society. She is expected to be identified with her mother and works towards being a good wife and mother.

6.1.7. Lessons to be drawn from Ke Gehaja Rite

I believe that there are several good features of Ke Gehaja that need to be conserved and transformed to the next generation. For example, the lessons and advices given during the ritual have significant contribution for inculcating the values and traditions of the Gumuz and enhancing development of morality, responsibility, ethnic identity and other cultural and social heritages.

To mention more, teachings and advices about managing menstrual hygiene which are given during girls' *Ke Gehaja* ceremony are useful assets that need to be conserved. In my view, lessons related to menstrual hygiene could be adopted to non-initiated Gumuz girls and non-Gumuz ones where menarche is a stressful event. For example, recent study conducted by Ackatia-Armah et al (2014) about menarcheal practices in Amhara and Oromia found that girls have no orientation about menstruation and hence they are confused when it occurs to them suddenly. Besides, Ackatia-Armah et al found that because menstruation is considered as a shameful act in these societies, menstruating girls are mistreated by parents especially by their fathers.

Ke Gahaja is also an opportunity to give advice related to marital relationship and sex. I believe that this has positive implication for long lasting marriage and contributes in minimizing divorce rates which in turn contributes for stable family life.

6.1.8. Challenges of Ke Gehaja rite and psychosocial problems

Exploring the challenges of Ke Gehaja rite and its current status as well as investigating psychosocial problems related to its underutilization was one of the focuses of this study. Hence, the study revealed that it was compulsory for every pubertal girl to go through *Ke Gehaja* rite in the past. However, both school girls and mothers explained that these days, Ke Gehaja ritual is being abandoned because of several external factors.

One of the challenges against transforming pubertal girls to adolescence using *Ke Gehaja* rite is that the ritual is categorized as a harmful traditional practice by different Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations among which CPAR and Women's Children and Youths Affairs Office are the major ones. Concerning this issue, my finding is similar to previous studies by Matobo, Makatsa and Obioha, (2009) in South Africa in which rites were discouraged and discarded by the missionaries and were regarded as heathen and superstitions.

In addition to this, the fact that several Gumuz values and traditions including delivery, menstrual customs, marriage systems and rituals associated with birth, death and healing rituals are condemned to be signs of backwardness and hence Gumuz parents are forced to abandon them.

One of the most frequently given reasons for the weakening of girls' Ke Gehaja in recent days was cultural dominance of highland settlers. This is implicated from FGDs with mothers and girls. For example, a girl in Qido mentioned that she was not initiated because her father was convinced by other non-Gumuz people (Shuwa) that Ke Gehaja rite is a harmful traditional practice. Similarly, during the FGDs with mothers in Qido and Geerz, I was informed that Gumuz girls are losing their cultural identity and imitating the customs of Amhara girls concerning issues related to menstruation and body cosmetics.

Some mothers in Geertz and Qido also expressed their concerns that it is difficult to know the developmental stage of a girl in the village because experiencing menarche has become a private issue in recent days. For example, they mentioned that girls in their village do not inform to their mothers about the beginning of menstruation unlike the past. Concerning this, Sasser-Coen (1996) underlines that mothers are the major sources of information related to menarche and pubertal development of their daughter. This author further explains that when there is no open communication-between mothers and daughters, it is likely that girls will have no preparation for menarche and there will be confusion. Here, it is worth recalling a Gumuz girl's confusion and crying when she suddenly saw bleeding between her legs as a result of not having prior information and preparation about menarche. The absence of Ke Gehaja rite also implies that there are no lessons and advices to be given for a pubertal girl about menstrual hygiene and teachings about her future roles and responsibilities. Above all, the absence of Ke Gehaja rite implies the deprivation of social recognition to the young girl's developmental and social status.

Some mothers mentioned that there are social problems associated with the gradual decline of Ke Gehaja rite practices in their village. For example, modern education was reported to be one of the challenges of Ke Gehaja rite in the sense that school girls are being abducted and some of them were found to be pregnant because they have no knowledge about sexual risks. Mother informants argued that this is an indication for the lack of knowledge related to sexuality. In this regard, I share the concern of these informants because ignoring the menarche as a cue for developmental transition means depriving all the psychosocial support provided to the young girl during her critical period of development and her future roles of womanhood. This in turn may lead pubertal girls to be in a state of role confusion and it would be denying of them the support, connection and acknowledgement of their new identity by the society. In line with this finding Manabe (2010) found that Western based formal educational practices and religious conversions

were found to be the major challenges that contributed to the disappearance of initiation rites in some societies of South Africa.

Overall, the current study revealed that *Ke Gehaja* has recently begun disappearing and it is being replaced by non-indigenous practices. Its absence has negative impact on the young girls in particular and the culture sharing group in general. For example, absence of *Ke Gehaja* ritual implies that there are no lessons and advices to be given about sexuality and marital life to young girls. This in turn will result in individual psychological problem and social crisis. Moreover, the gradual disappearance of *Ke Gehaja* rite in recent years implies the disruption of psychosocial support provided to young girls in their transition to *Daguna* stage.

The nonexistence of acknowledging the developmental transition of young girls by the society had led some pubertal girls to conduct self-initiation. For example, a girl who was angry about the refusal of her parents to prepare *Ke Gehaja* rite following her menarche and who observed that other girls in the village were initiated through this ritual asked her friends to make scars on her face. This implies her need to be recognized as a sexually matured one by the society. It also suggests that the absence of community led *Ke Gehaja* rite led to self-initiation which is dangerous both to the self and to the society. In line with this finding, some literature sources indicate that the absence of adult sponsored puberty rites, leads to self-initiation by adolescents to announce their arrival in the adult social arena which is mainly characterized by sexual activity, body modification and gang initiation and other antisocial behaviors (Sande, 2002; Van Zenden, Crandel & Crandel, 2007; Gardiner and Kosmutzki, 2002; Markstrom, Berman, Sabino and Turner, 1998). Similarly, Hentges (2000), indicates that a lack of community-sanctioned rites of passage leads to self-initiation which can often be destructive, especially for girls. Similarly, Sasser-Coen (1996) argues that menarche is met with ambivalence and even trauma if it is not given cultural recognition through well-defined rituals.

There are further clues which indicate that Ke Gehaja rite is on the verge of disappearing among the Gumuz of Dibate District. For example, mother informants explained that *Ke Gehaja* rite was used to be celebrated for three months in the past. In line with this, Gobana (1996) also found that girls' and boys' initiation rites of the Gumuz usually last for three months in the past. However, my study revealed that these rites last only for one or two weeks and the celebration is concluded with the end of the menstrual flow.

From the above argument I conclude that the absence of Ke Gehaja rite has a negative impact on the identity of young girls in particular and the Gumuz society in general. Besides, I have the concern that cancellation of the rite without any substitute transitional rite may deprive the communal support that girls require during their time of crisis.

6.2. Summary

This study was conducted to explore girls' puberty rites of the Gumuz of Northwestern Ethiopia by emphasizing on the practices and perceived developmental and psychosocial contributions. The study employed an ethnographic qualitative design in which data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussion and participant observation. The study was guided by an interdisciplinary theoretical framework in which two theories were applied to guide the study: transition rite theory and Erickson's psychosocial theory of development.

The major participants of the study were adolescent school girls, mothers, teachers, elderly men and experts from Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations. In general fifty five Participants were selected by using different types of non-probability sampling techniques.

Data obtained from different participants were transcribed, translated, coded and categorized into different themes and subthemes. Besides, data obtained through different techniques and from different groups of participants were triangulated and recurring concepts from the transcribed data were given more attention during the process of coding.

Data analysis was done thematically and themes were constructed based on participants' perception of the issue of exploration plus key concepts from the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. Accordingly, the following salient themes emerged from the analysis: perceived meanings of *Ke Gehaja* rite; pubertal development and menarche; emotional reaction to menarche; perceived developmental and psychosocial impacts of *Ke Gehaja*, the formation of identity by a Gumuz female; stages in the Gumuz female lifecycle; developmental tasks of a pre-pubertal girl; developmental cues for the transition from *Didea* to *Daguna* stage; purposes of *Ke Gehaja*; *Ke Gehaja* rite practices; phases of *Ke gehaja*; lessons of morality, sexuality and life skills; menstrual hygiene and taboos and future prospects of *Key Gehaja* rite.

As a whole, *Ke Gehaja* is perceived by initiated girls and mothers to have positive developmental and psychosocial contribution to the initiate. But non-initiated girls viewed this ritual as a harmful traditional practice and denied its positive contribution.

6.3. Conclusion

The major objective of this study was to explore girls' puberty rites among the Gumuz girls. Primarily, the study was geared to explore the ritual as a transition process and its developmental and psychosocial contributions. In doing so, it was guided by the following central research questions:

1. What is the Gumuz female life cycle?
2. What is Ke *Gehaja* to the Gumuz parents and the community and the developmental cues employed for performing it?
3. What are the perceived psychosocial and developmental contributions of Ke *Gehaja* on girls?
4. How is Ke *Gehaja* rite being impacted by the current social changes?
5. What lessons could be drawn from Ke *Gehaja* rite?

Thus, this subsection briefly presents answers for research questions based on the findings of the study.

1. *What is the Gumuz female life cycle?*

The Gumuz have their own philosophy of life. Accordingly, there are different stages across the lifespan of a female. The Gumuz female lifecycle consists of six developmental stages. These are Dideatsia, Didea, Daguna, Gafa, Mitichipiga and Ganza. Each life stage is associated with culturally and biologically determined developmental tasks and transition from one stage of development to the next is mainly marked by some sort of rituals such as birth, naming, puberty and marriage rites. For example, transition from Didea to Daguna stage is marked by Ke *Gehaja* rite.

2. What is Ke Gehaja to the Gumuz?

Girls' puberty rite (Ke Gehaja) serves to mark developmental transition of a female from childhood to adolescence. In addition to this , the ritual has spiritual, social , health and economic values. For example, the Gumuz employ the ritual to teach the young girl about menstrual taboos because menstrual blood is perceived to be dangerous to the spiritual wellbeing of the family. Moreover, a girl who has been initiated through Ke Gehaja rite is highly valued and demanded for marriage. This is because she is assumed to be free from illnesses caused by bad spirits. Besides, Ke Gehaja rite is an opportunity to teach the girl about motherhood, childcare and other feminine roles. In short , Ke Gehaja rite is believed to help to shape the young girl's overall development.

3. How do the Gumuz know that a girl is ready to transfer from childhood to adolescence?

Gumuz parents are primarily informed about the conclusion of childhood stage and the beginning of adolescence stage within the female life cycle when a pubertal girl experiences menarche. In general, menarche is the major developmental milestone between childhood and adolescence in a Gumuz female, which brings new social status to the young girl. This biological event is a clue that a girl has achieved biological, psychological and social maturity.

4. What are the Perceived Developmental and psychosocial contributions of Ke Gehaja rite to a Gumuz girl?

Ke Gehaja rite is perceived by initiated girls and mothers as a useful gender socialization practice especially to cope up the future challenges of womanhood and it has positive implication for the stability of marriage among Gumuz families and minimizing divorce rates. Moreover, this rite is alleged to promote the development of identity, intimacy, self and social respect; maternal and infant health, positive self-image and other related psychosocial themes.

With regard to the practices of the ritual, the study found washing, body painting, and singing and dancing; blessings and prayers; lessons related to sexuality; marital relationship taboos and morality are given to the young girl as a preparation for motherhood. These practices are performed during the different phases of the ceremony. The lessons and advices given during Ke Gehaja about how a girl should live with her husband and satisfy him during sexual intercourse have implication for long lasting marital relationship.

Ke Gehaja rite was found to have four phases .These are preparation, separation, transition and reincorporation. While preparing the young girl to motherhood begins early in life, separating her from the former groups(Dideas) begins with the arrival of menarche. Developmentally speaking, menarche symbolizes the completion of her previous stage (Childhood). Separating the menarcheal girl from her former groups symbolizes completion of her old identity and the beginning of transition to adolescence stage.

Transition phase ranges from the time from which the girl is confined in the small hut (Jibita) to the end of her menstrual flow. This is the phase where a girl will not have status because she is neither a *Didea* nor a *Daguna*. Meanwhile, reintegration is the last phase of Ke Gehaja rite whereby the initiate will complete the transition or time of crisis and be reintegrated to family and the society with new identity and status.

5. How is girls' puberty rite being challenged by the current social changes and what are the negative psychosocial consequences?

Ke Gehaja rite as a socialization practice is diminishing from time to time. The ritual was mandatory for every pubertal Gumuz girl in the past. However, because of certain factors such as the introduction of modern education, cultural dominance , religious influence and campaigns against the practice by different Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations, Ke Gehaja rite is weakening from time to time. The disappearance of the rite as a transitional ritual has

negative implications for the development of identity by young girls. In addition to this, it may encourage pubertal girls to be involved in negative rites of passage such as self-initiation which is characterized by anti-social behaviors like teenage pregnancy and drug use.

6.4. Reflexivity of the Researcher

At last, it is important to reflect my own values and professional orientation in judging girls' puberty rites of the Gumuz (Ke Gehaja) and related issues. Thus I believe that this transition ritual has both positive and negative developmental and psychosocial impacts on a young girl. To begin with the positive ones, as a developmental psychologist by profession, I believe that menarche should be positively celebrated as a developmental marker because the first menarcheal experience has psychological impact on a female throughout her reproductive life. Besides this, passing through this rite is an opportunity for parents to offer lessons for a young girl and preparing her for the realities of adulthood life. Moreover, I feel that Ke Gehaja as a socialization practice contributes in transmitting values of the Gumuz from one generation to the other.

Despite its multiple psychosocial contributions, I feel that Ke Gehaja rite has its own drawbacks. For example, a girl has no free choice either to be initiated or not to be initiated following her menarche, especially in rural 'Kebelles'. Besides this, the ritual has a negative impact on girl's education because the initiation ceremony, which is biologically driven, is held immediately and unexpectedly following menarche and continues for two weeks. As a result the girl is forbidden to be involved in any activity including social interaction and going to school. Moreover, once a girl begins menstruation, completing her primary school education is even a challenge, let alone progressing to secondary school education because she has to get married soon.

Menarche has social implication in that it informs to the society about a girl's sexual maturity. While this might be bad news for a girl who is committed to grow academically, it is good news for some parents for exchange marriage. For example, an adolescent girl from Geertz mentioned that she was forced to leave her schooling and she was exchanged with another girl to be a wife of her elder brother following her menarcheal rite.

Facial scars are made on a newly initiated girl to symbolize her sexual and social maturity and social status and this is done by using a non-sterilized razor blade. Thus, I have the suspicion that the manner in which this physical operation could have a risk on the health of the initiate especially for the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

In addition to Ke Gehaja rite, Gumuz culture demands menstruating women and girls to live in separate hut (Jibita); not to participate in community life; not to greet others and avoid eating certain food items. Staying isolated throughout the menstrual period has a negative impact on the girl's social and psychological wellbeing at least at that moment. For instance people, especially males, are advised not to approach a menstruating girl because she is perceived to be dangerous to the wellbeing of others. Astonishingly, the current finding is similar to other cultures such as North American Indians where a menstruating girl is believed to be unclean and the blood is powerful and hence she has to be isolated from the rest of family (Markstrom, 2008).

6.5.Recommendations

This study found that girls' puberty rite of the Gumuz (*Ke Gehaja*) is perceived to serve multiple purposes. For example, it was found to contribute to mark developmental transition of a girl from Didea to Daguna within the female life cycle and help to teach a pubertal girl about her future roles and responsibilities. The ritual is also perceived to be helpful to resolve the psychosocial crises related to identity and intimacy. Moreover, *Ke Gehaja* was perceived to enhance the transformation of traditions and values of the society. Therefore, based on the findings, the following recommendations are formulated.

I have the concern that forced acculturation and campaigning against *Ke Gehaja* rite practice by different Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations would eventually lead to the abolition of this transition ritual. Hence, I believe that the abandonment of the ritual is meant the deprivation of indigenous child socialization practices and this may lead to total loss of cultural identity by the new generation. Therefore, stakeholders that is, Culture and Tourism Office; Women's Children and Youth Office and Non-Governmental Organizations such as CPAR should negotiate with Gumuz parents and come up with alternative rites that accommodate positive components of *Ke Gehaja*.

This study revealed that *Ke Gehaja* serves as protective factor against premarital pregnancy and other psychosocial and health risks. Besides this, the ritual was reported to ease anxiety related to transition from the less responsible stage of childhood to the more challenging stage of womanhood. Thus, parents, Women's, Children and Youth affairs Office of the Dibat District and also Non-Governmental Organizations may adopt *Ke Gehaja* as an asset for positive youth development and as an intervention method for adolescent girls in trouble.

The current study found that the Gumuz have their own philosophy and developmental ideas that accompany lifecycles, tasks, transition rituals and crises associated with transition

from one stage of development to the next which mainly resemble Erickson's psychosocial stages of development. Yet, in Erickson's theory, the psychosocial crisis of identity versus role confusion occurs at the fifth stage whereas in the case of Gumuz female life cycle it occurs at the third stage. This implies that the universality of Erickson's theory is questionable. I believe that this disparity has a positive implication for the development of indigenous psychology. Thus I recommend that developmental stages across the Gumuz female lifecycle should be explored further with larger samples by developmental psychologists and other researchers from social science and humanities.

Ke Gehaja rite is an indigenous means of socialization which could contribute more to Gumuz girls and parents if it is integrated with the curriculum in modern education. The basic components of Ke Gehaja rite such as the teachings about sexuality, motherhood, childcare, roles and responsibilities and indigenous methods of preparing local sanitary pads (Chicha) could be taught to girls in schools.

This study was conducted only in three sites of Dibate district. Thus I recommend that more research should be done on Ke Gehaja rite by including more Gumuz 'Kebelles' and larger samples in order to explore female socialization practices among all Gumuz people.

Last but not least, this study explored that some of the *Ke Gehaja* rite practices require a Gumuz female to avoid eating certain food items such as eggs, meat, and the like. But as a student of developmental psychology by profession, I believe that such restrictions contribute negatively to the overall growth and development of Gumuz females who are in their reproductive ages. Similarly, deficiency of eating these food items will have a negative developmental impact on the prenatal and postnatal periods of children. Thus, I totally agree with the Community Conversation Program being conducted by CPAR in collaboration with Women's Youth and Children Affairs Office of the District in convincing Gumuz community about the harmful consequences of not eating these food items. Thus, I recommend that such efforts be continued in order to change the

attitude of the society towards food restrictions on Gumuz females who are in the reproductive age.

6.6.Limitations

This study was delimited to exploring girls' puberty rites among the Gumuz by taking three sites in Dibate district. Hence the results of the study might be true only to those Gumuz girls and women who participated in the study. In other words, the results of this study may not be representative enough to make generalizations about all Gumuz people. Thus, I feel that the study would have come out with better results if it had been conducted in many 'Kebelles'. But problems related to low infrastructure, transportation and also security problems restricted the researcher to conduct the study only in the three sites. Therefore, I would like to remind to the reader that the generalizability of these findings is limited since the study sample was small.

A male researcher studying female puberty rites is also another limitation for this study. In this regard, I have the speculation that there could have been certain issues that school girls and mothers have not revealed perhaps because I am a male researcher studying feminine issue.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A-1

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR INITIATED GIRLS (English version)

I: Demographic Data

Name----- Age----- Marital condition-----
Grade----- Residential area-----

II. Questions

1. What age were you when you started your period?
2. How did you react when you experienced menarche?
3. How did you feel about your physical change once you began menstruating?
4. What were the activities you were supposed to do and not to do during your menarcheal time?
5. What physical and emotional changes do you remember just before your menarche? How did you feel about these changes?
6. Do you feel that starting your period changed your feelings about yourself? How?
7. Did starting your period change the way others behaved toward you? If so, how?
8. What does it mean to you that you have been initiated through Ke Gehaja rite? What was your general feeling after attending the Ke Gehaja?
9. Please explain about the practices done during Ke Gehaja rite. What do these practices mean to you? Which event do you remember most? How do you feel when you think about it?
10. In what ways do you think that Ke Gehaja rite had been important to you? What do you think are its impacts of these practice on your overall development?
11. What lessons and advices were given during your Ke Gehaja rite? What is the impact of these lessons and advices on how you behave and perceive yourself?
12. How do you feel about being initiated through Ke Gehaja rite? In what ways, do you feel that you are more advantageous than non-initiated girls?
13. In what ways do you believe that Ke Gehaja rite has a positive impact on how you perceive yourself and how others perceive you?
14. How do you feel about being a Gumuz and passing through Ke Gehaja rite?
15. Please explain if there are any physical or psychological problems you faced while being initiated.
16. Please explain if you feel that you have been discriminated as a result of being initiated.
17. Since your Ke Gehaja, in what aspects do you feel that you are different from your childhood time? Do you feel that you have the skills and the competence to carry out various tasks and responsibilities of womanhood? If so how?
18. Which developmental stage are you now according to Gumuz culture? what do you think is the developmental criterion to be in this stage?
19. What are the social privileges you got as a result of being initiated?
20. What are the activities you are supposed to do as an initiated girl?
21. How do you argue that you are no more a Didea but a Daguna?
22. What lessons do you think non-initiated girls could learn from initiated ones?
23. What would be your feeling if you had not been initiated?
24. How do you feel about belonging to the Gumuz and being transformed to Daguna stage through Ke gehaja rite?

25. How did people treat you once you have been initiated?
26. Please explain how being initiated through Ke Gehaja has an impact on your relationship with peers.
27. In what aspects do you think that Passing through Ke Gahaja rite has an impact on your future marriage?

APPENDIX B-1

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR NON-INITIATED GIRLS (English Version)

I. Demographic Information

Name: _____ Age: _____ Marital condition: _____
Grade: _____ Residential area _____

II. Interview Questions

1. How old were when you experienced your menarche?
2. How did you react when you experienced menarche? How did you manage the menstrual flow?
3. What physical and emotional changes do you remember just before your menarche?
4. How do you feel about not being initiated through Ke Gehaja rite following menarche?
5. How do you feel about yourself especially when you compare yourself with other initiated girls?
6. What do you think is the impact of not going through Ke Gehaja rite on your identity as a Gumuz girl?
7. How do you feel about Ke Gehaja rite and other Gumuz values and traditions? Do you think that they should be continued? Explain.
8. Do you feel that initiated girls are just more capable than you? If yes, how?
9. What do you think you have missed in your life because of not going through Ke Gehaja rite?
10. It is believed that a non-initiated girl has less chance to get a husband or she would be infertile because she has not been taught about skills of womanhood or not blessed by elders. What is your reaction?
11. What is your current developmental stage according to Gumuz female life cycle? Didea? Daguna/Gafa? What is your justification to say this?
12. Do you feel that you have been socially stigmatized for not being initiated? If yes, would you tell us please.
13. Please explain why there was no Ke Gehaja ceremony for you following your menarche.
14. Do you feel that unable to participate in Ke Gehaja rite has an impact on your future marriage? If yes, please explain.

APPENDIX C -1

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR MOTHERS (English Version)

Name: _____ Age: _____ Kebelle _____

1. How old were when you experienced your menarche?
2. How did you feel at that moment? How did you manage it then?
3. What were the activities you were not supposed to do during your menarcheal time? Why?
4. Do you feel that starting your period changed your feelings about yourself? How?
5. Did starting your period change the way others behaved toward you? If so, how?
6. Have you been initiated through Ke Gehaja rite following your menarche? If yes, please explain the process.
7. What lessons and advices were given during your Ke Gehaja rite? What is the impact of these lessons and advices on how you behave and perceive yourself?
8. What does it mean to you that you have been initiated through Ke Gehaja rite? What was your general feeling after attending the Ke Gehaja?
9. Which developmental stage are you now according to Gumuz culture? what do you think is the developmental criterion to be in this stage?, What are the activities that a female at this stage is expected to do?
10. What would be your feeling if you had not been initiated?

APPENDIX D-1: FGD PROTOCOL FOR SCHOOL GIRLS (English version)

I. Background Information

School : _____

Date: _____ time: _____

Number of participants: _____

No	Name of participant	Age	Grade	Condition of initiation
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

II.FGD Guide Questions

1. What would be the developmental stage of a Gumuz girl who has already experienced menarche? Didea? Daguna? Gafa? What is the developmental criterion to enter to this stage?
2. What are the emotional and physical changes to be observed on a girl just before her menarche?
3. What are the restrictions made on a menarcheal girl ? What is the reason behind these restrictions?
4. According to Gumuz culture, what are the practices done following the experience of menarche by a pubertal girl? What do these practices symbolize?
5. What is Ke Gehaja? What are the psychological and social advantages of being initiated through Ke Gehaja rite? What about the disadvantages?
6. How does a girl feel about herself after she had participated in Ke Gehaja ceremony? Please explain by recalling your own experiences.

7. How does a girl feel if no Ke Gehaja ceremony is prepared following her menarche?(Please explain this by recalling your own experiences during the first menstruation).
 8. What are the psychological and social impacts of not being initiated through Ke Gehaja rite?
 9. What do you think are the lessons that non-initiated girls could learn from initiated ones?
 10. Is there anything that you would like to ask (add)?
-
-

APPENDIX E -1

FGD PROTOCOL FOR MOTHERS (ENGLISH VERSION)

II. Background Information

Kebelle/village : _____

Date: _____ **time:** _____

Number of participants: _____

No	Name of participant	Age	Condition of initiation	
			Initiated	Non-initiated
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

II.FGD Guide Questions

1. How does a Gumuz girl feel during her menarche?
2. What are the taboos and restrictions made on a girl following her menarche?
3. What are the stages within the Gumuz Female Lifecycle? What are the developmental tasks associated with each stage?
4. How do the Gumuz know that a female has completed one stage of development and entered to the next stage of development within the female life cycle?
5. What is the developmental criterion for the end of childhood (Didea) to stage and the transition to adolescence (Daguna) stage? What are the physical and emotional changes observed on her during just before menarche?

6. What are the lessons and advices given to the girl during her Ke Gehaja ceremony? Who is(are) giving these lessons? What are the themes of the lessons?
7. What are the psychosocial advantages of being initiated through Ke Gehaja rite? What are its disadvantages?
8. In what ways could an initiated girl be more advantageous than from a non-initiated one? What about the disadvantages?
9. Please tell me about Ke Gehaja rite in the past and present.

APPENDIX F-1

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR KEY INFORMANTS (English Version)

Site: _____ Time _____

Sex: _____ Educational status: _____ Job: _____

1. What are the stages across the Gumuz female lifespan development?
2. What are the roles and responsibilities that a female is expected to do at each stage of development?
3. How is transition from one stage of development to the next marked?
4. Which stage of development is believed to be critical in the life of a female? Why?
5. What is the major developmental demarcation between Didea and daguna?
6. What is the purpose of Ke Gehaja rite and the practices associated with it?
7. What are the perceived psychological and social advantages of Ke Gehaja practices on the girl? What about the disadvantages?
8. What is the impact of Ke Gehaja rite on the family and the community?
9. How do you evaluate Ke Gehaja rite in the past and the present?
10. What are the challenges against Ke gehaja rite at present?
11. What are the psychological and social problems associated with the disappearance of Ke Gehaja? How are parents coping with these problems?

Appendix G

Observation Format for settings, customs and roles and responsibilities of a Gumuz Girl

Name of Kebele/ village _____

Day: _____ Duration _____

I. General Physical and Social Settings

A. General Description about the Structure and appearance of the house

B. Family composition

C. Feeding habits

D. Sleeping arrangements of an adolescent girl?

II. Gender Roles

A. What are the roles and responsibilities of a pre-pubertal Gumuz girl?

A. What are the roles and responsibilities of an adolescent girl?

B. How does a girl learn her future roles and responsibilities?

B. How and with whom does an adolescent girl spend her day?

C. What are the daily activities that a girl is engaged in?

III. Symbols of Identity

A. What are the typical clothing that pubertal girls put on?

B. What are the typical physical characteristics that an initiated girl is identified with ?

IV. Playing

A. What kind of games does a Gumuz girl play?

B. With whom does she play?

C. When does she play?

D. Where do they play?

A. Additional customs observed by the investigator?

Appendix A-2

በጉሙዝ ብሄረሰብ ሴት ልጆች ከልጅነት ወደ ኮረዳት የሚያደርጉትን ባህላዊና እድገታዊ ሽግግር (ኬኤ ገሃጃ) ስነ-ስርዓት አስመልክቶ በስነ-ስርዓቱ አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት ከተሸጋገሩ ልጃገረዶች ጋር ለሚደረግ ቃለ-መጠይቅ መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

I. አጠቃላይ መረጃ

ቦታ----- እድሜ----- ክፍል----- የመኖሪያ ቦታ-----

II. መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

1. የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባሽን ያየሽ በስንት ዓመትሽ ነበር?
2. የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባሽን ባየሽ ጊዜ የተሰማሽ ስሜት ምን ይመስል እንደነበር ብታብራራልን።
3. የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባሽ መምጣቱን ተከትሎ ስለ ራስሽ ያለሽ አመለካከት ምን ይመስል እንደ ነበር ብታብራራልን።
4. የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባሽ መምጣቱን ተከትሎ ምን ምን ነገሮችን ማደረግ እንዳለብሽና እንደሌለብሽ ተነግሮሽ ነበርን? እስኪ አብራራልን።
5. የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባሽን ከማየትሽ በፊት በራስሽ ላይ ያስተዋልሻቸው ባህሪዎና አካላዊ ለውጦች ምን ምን ነበሩ? እነዚህን ለውጦች በተመለከትሽ ጊዜ ምን ተሰማሽ?
6. የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባሽን ካየሽ ጀምሮ ሌሎች ስለ አንቺ ላቸው አመለካከት ተቀይሯል ብለሽ ታስቢላሽን? እንዴት?
7. ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ የወር አበባ ማየትሽን አስመልክቶ የተዘጋጀው የኬኤ ገሃጃ በዓል ሂደቱ ምን ይመስል እንደነበር አብራራ።
8. በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ከልጅነት ወደ ኮረዳነት መሸጋገር በመቻልሽ ለአንቺ የሚሰጥሽ ስሜት ወይም ትርጉም ምንድን ነው?
9. በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓትሽ ወቅት የተከናወኑ ተግባራት ምን ምን ነበሩ? እነዚህ ተግባራት መከናወናቸው ለአንቺ የሚሰጥሽ ትረጉም ምንድን ነው?

10. የከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አስፈላጊነቱ ምንድን ነው ? ለአጠቃላይ እድገትሽና ማንነትሽ ያለው ጠቀሜታ ምንድን ነው ብለሽ ታስቢያለሽ?
11. በአጠቃላይ በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ወደ ኮረዳነት በመሸጋገርሽ ምን ይሰማሻል? በስነ ስረዓቱ አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት ካልተሸጋገሩት የበለጠ ተጠቃሚ ነኝ ብለሽ ታስቢያለሽ? እንዴት?
12. አሁን አንቺ ስለራስሽ ያለሽን ግንዛቤ ከማሻሻል አንጻር በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት መሳተፍሽ የተጫወተው አወንታዊ ሚና ምንድን ነው ብለሽ ታስቢያለሽ?
13. የጉሙዝ ብሄረሰብ አባል መሆንሽና በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ወደ ኮረዳነት የእድገት ደረጃ መሸጋገር መቻልሽ በማንነትሽ ላይ ያለው አዎንታዊ ተጽእኖ እንዴት ትገልጭዋለሽ?
14. የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባ ምምታቱን ተከትሎ በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ወደ ኮረዳነት በተሸጋገርሽበት ወቅት ያጋጠመሽ አካላዊ ወይም ስነ-ልቦናዊ ችግር አለ ብለሽ ታምኛለሽ? አለ ካልሽ እስኪ ዘርዝሪልን::

15. በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት በመሳተፌ የደረሰብኝ ችግር አለ ብለሽ ታስቢያለሽ? አለ ካልሽ እስኪ ንገሪን::
16. በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት ከተሸጋገርሽ ጀምሮ ከተሸጋገርሽ ጀምሮ በፊት ከነበርሽበት የእድገት ደረጃ ልዩ የሚያደርግሽ ምንድን ነው ብለሽ ታስቢያለሽ?(አሁን ያለሽበት የእድገት ደረጃ ከበፊቱ የሚለየው እንዴት ነው?)
17. በጉሙዝ የሴት ልጅ የእድገት ደረጃዎች መካከል አንቺ ራስሽን የምትመድቢው ከሚከተሉት ከየትኛው ነው? ልጅ? ኮረዳ? ጎልማሳ? ወይስ ሌላ? አሁን ወደ ጠቀሰሽው የእድገት ደረጃ ለመግባት እድገታዊ መስፈርቱ ምንድን ነው?
18. በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት መሸጋገርሽ ያስገኘልሽ ማህበራዊ ጥቅም ምን ድን ነው ብለሽ ታስቢያለሽ?
19. በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት መሸጋገርሽን ተከትሎ በማህበረሰቡ እምነት መሰረት ምን ምን ነገሮችን እንድታከናውኚ ይጠበቅብሻል?
20. በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት የእድገት ደረጃ ያልተሸጋገሩ ሴት የጉሙዝ ልጆች ካንቺ ሊማሩት የሚችሉት ጠቃሚ ነገር አለ ብለሽ ታምኛለሽ? አለ ካልሽ አብራሪ::

21.በኬ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት ባትሸጋገሪ ኖሮ ምን ይሰማሽ ነበር?

22.በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት መሸጋገርሽ ከጓደኞቻሽ ወይም ከሌላው ማህበረሰብ ጋር ለምታደርገው ግንኙነት ያለው አስተዋጽኦ ወይም ተጽእኖ ምንድን ነው ብለሽ ታስቢያለሽ?

23.በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት መሳተፍሽ በወደፊት የጋብቻ ህይወትሽ ላይ ሊኖረው የሚችለው ተጽእኖ ምንድን ነው ብለሽ ታስቢያለሽ?

Appendix B-2

በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት ሴት ልጆች ከልጅነት ወደ ኮረዳነት የሚደርጉትን ባህላዊ እድገታዊ ሽግግር(ኬኤ ገሃጃ) አስመልክቶ በስነ-ስርዓቱ አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት ካልተሸጋገሩ ልጃገረዶች ጋር ለሚደረግ ቃለ-መጠይቅ መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

ቦታ----- ክፍል-----እድሜ----- የጋብቻ ሁኔታ-----

የመኖሪያ ቦታ-----

1. የመጀመሪያ ወር አበባሽን ያየሽ በስንት አመትሽ ነበር?
2. የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባሽ በመጣ ጊዜ የተሰማሽ ስሜት ምን እንደነበር ብታብራራልን። ፈሳሹንስ እንዴት መቀጣጠር እንደቻልሽ ልትነግሪን ትችያለሽን?
3. የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባሽ ከመምጣቱ አስቀድሞ በራስሽ ላይ ያስተዋልሻቸው ባህሪያዊና አካላዊ ለውጦች ካሉ ብታብራራልን።
4. የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባሽ መምጣቱን አስመልክቶ በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ባለመሳተፍሽ ምን ይሰማሻል?
5. በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት ከተሸጋገሩ ልጃገረዶች ጋር ራስሽን ስታነጻጽሪ ምን ይሰማሻል?
6. የጉሙዝ ብሄረሰብ አባል እንደመሆንሽ መጠን በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ያለመሳተፍሽ በማንነትሽ ላይ ያስከተለው ተጽእኖ ምንድን ነው ብለሽ ታስቢያለሽ?
7. ስለ ኬኤ ገሃጃና እንዲሁም ሌሎች የጉሙዝ ባህላዊ እሴቶች ያለሽ አመለካከት ምንድን እንደሆነ ብታብራራልን።
8. በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት የተሸጋገሩ የጉሙዝ ሴት ልጆች ካልተሸጋገሩት የተሻሉ ናቸው ብለሽ ታምኛለሽ? አለ ካልሽ ዘርዝሪ።
9. በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት ባለመሸጋገርሽ በሕይወቴ አጥቸዋለሁ የምትይው ነገር ምንድን ነው?
10. በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ያላለፈች የጉሙዝ ሴት ልጅ ባል የማግኘት እድሏ ጠባብ ነው ፡ መካንም ልትሆን እንዲሁም ቶሎ ልትሞት ትችላለች ወዘተ የሚባሉ

አባባሎች አሉ። በዚህ ዙሪያ ያለሽ ምላሽ ምንድን ነው ? እነዚህ ነገሮች አሳስበውሽ ያውቃሉን?

11. በጉሙዝ የሴት ልጅ የእድገት ደረጃዎች መሰረት አሁን አንቺ ያለሽበት የእድገት ደረጃ ምን በመባል ይታወቃል? ዲዳ ? ዳጉና ? ጋፋ ? ወይስ ሌላ? ወደዚህ የእድገት ደረጃ ለመግባት እድገታዊ መስፈርቱ ምንድን ነው?

12. በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባ መምታቱን ተከትሎ በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት በለመሳተፌ ምክንያት የደረሰብኝ ማህበራዊ መገለል አለ ብለሽ ታምኛለሽ? አለ ካልሽ እስኪ ንገሪን።

13. በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ያልተሳተፍሽበት ምክንያት ለምንድን ነው?

14. በከኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ባለመሳተፌ ምክንያት በወደፊት የጋብቻ ህይወት ተጽእኖ አለው ብለሽ ታምኛለሽ?

በጉሙዝ ብሄረሰብ ሴት ልጆች ከልጅነት ወደ ኮረዳነት የሚያደርጉትን ባህላዊ እድገታዊ ሽግግር አስመልክቶ ከእናቶች ጋር ለሚደረግ ቃለ መጠይቅ መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

I. አጠቃላይ መረጃ

ቦታ ----- ቀን ----- ሰዓት -----

II. መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

1. የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባዎትን ያዩት በስንት ዓመትዎ ነበር? በውቅቱስ የተሰማዎት ስሜት ምን እንደሚመስል ሊነግሩኝ ይችላሉ? እንዴትስ ሊቆጣጠሩት ቻሉ?
2. የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባዎ መምጣቱን ተከትሎ ያከናወናቸው ተግባራት ምን ምን ነበሩ?
3. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባዋን ማየት ስትጀምር ማድረግ ያለባትን የሌለባት ነገሮች ምን ምን ናቸው?
4. በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት የሴት ልጅ ከልደት እስከ ሞት ድረስ ያሉት የተለያዩ የእድገት ደረጃዎች ምን ምን በመባል ይታወቃሉ?
5. በተለያዩ የእድገት ደረጃዎች ስር ያለች አንዲት የጉሙዝ ሴት ልጅ ማከናወን የሚጠበቅባት ኃላፊነትና ተግባራት ምን ምን ናቸው?
6. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ሴት ልጅ የመጀመሪያውን የእድገት ደረጃ ማጠናቀቅና ወደ ሚቀጥለው የእድገት ደረጃ ለመግባት መዘጋጀቷን እንዴት ማወቅ ይቻላል? ሽግግሩስ ምን ይመስላል?
7. አሁን እርስዎ ያሉበት የእድገት ደረጃ በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት ምን በመባል ይታወቃል? ወደዚህ የእድገት ደረጃ ለመግባት እድገታዊ መስፈርቱ ምንድን ነው?
8. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ የልጅነት (ዲድኦ) ጊዜዋ ማጠናቀቅና ወደ ኮረዳነት(ዳጉና) ለመሸጋገር ብቁ መሆኗን ማወቅ የሚቻለው እንዴት ነው? እስኪ የራስዎትን ተሞክሮ በመውሰድ ያብራሩልኝ?

9. በአጠቃላይ የኮረዳነት የእድገት ደረጃ መጀመሩንና እንዲሁም ማብቃቱን ለማወቅ የሚቻለው እንዴት ነው? ልጅቷ በዚህን ጊዜ የምታሳያቸው አካላዊና ባህሪያዊ ለውጦችስ ምን ምን ናቸው?
10. እርስዎ የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባወን ባዩ ጊዜ ኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ተዘጋጅቶለዎት ነበርን? ተዘጋጅቶ ነበር ካለ በዚያን ጊዜ ምን ተሰማዎት? በዚያን ወቅት የተሰጠዎት ትምህርት ወይም ምክር ካለ ቢነግሩን። ትምህርቱና ምክሩን የለገሰዎት ማን ነበር?
11. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ሴት ልጅ በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት መሸጋገር የሚያስገኝላት ማህበራዊና ስነ-ልቦናዊ ጥቅም ምንድን ነው ብለው ያምናሉ? ጉዳቱስ?
12. በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ዳጉና የተሸጋገረች አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ በስነ-ስርዓቱ አማካኝነት ካልተሸጋገረችዋ የበለጠ ተጠቃሚ ናት ብለው ያምናሉ? ለምን?
13. በድሮው ዘመንና በአሁኑ ዘመን ያለውን የኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት በማወዳደር ያለውን ልዩነት እስኪ ያብራሩልኝ።

Appendix D-2

FGD Protocol for School Girls (Amharic version)

በጉሙዝ ብሄረሰብ ሴት ልጆች ክልጅነት ወደ ኮረዳነት የሚያደርጉትን ባህላዊ እድገታዊ ሽግግር በሚመለከት በኬኤ ገሃጂ ስነ-ስርዓት ከተሳተፉና ካልተሳተፉ ልጃገረዶች ጋር ለሚደረግ የቡድን ውይይት መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

1. አጠቃላይ መረጃ

የት/ቤቱ ስም: _____

ሰዓት _____ ቀን: _____

ተ.ቁ	ስም	እድሜ	ክፍል	አድራሻ	የኬኤ ገሃጂ ስነ-ስርዓት ተሳትፎ	
					የተሳተፈች	ያልተሳተፈች
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						

2. መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

- አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባዋ ከመጣ ጀምሮ በማህበረሰቡ አማካኝነት የምትመደበው ከየትኛው የእድገት ደረጃ ነው? ዲድኦ?/ዳጉና? ጋፋ? ወይስ ሌላ? ወደዚህ የእድገት ደረጃ ለመግባት መስፈርቱ ምንድን ነው?
- የአንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባዋ ከመምጣቱ አስቀድሞ ባሉት ጊዜያት በልጅቷ ላይ የሚታዩ ባህሪያዊና አካላዊ ለውጦች ምን ምን ናቸው?

3. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባዋ በመጣ ጊዜ እናዳታከናውን የሚከለከሉ ነገሮች ምን ምን እንደሆኑ ልትነግሩኝ ትችላላችሁ? ምክንያቱስ ምንድን ነው?
4. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባዋ መምጣቱን ተከትሎ የሚከናወኑ ተግባራት ምን ምን ናቸው? ለምንስ ይከናወናሉ?
5. ኬኤ ገሃጃ ምንድን ነው? አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት በመሸጋገሯ የምታገኘው ማህበራዊና ስነ-ልቦናዊ ጥቅም ምንድን ነው? ጉዳቱስ?
6. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ከተሳተፈች በኋላ ስለ ራሷ የሚሰማት ስሜት ምንድን እንደሆነ የራሳችሁን ተሞክሮ መሰረት በማድረግ ብታብራሩልኝ።
7. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባዋ መምጣቱን ተከትሎ የኬኤ ገሃጃ ስርዓት ሳይዘጋጅላት ቢቀር ምን እንደሚሰማት የራሳችሁን ተሞክሮ በመወሰድ ብታብራሩልኝ። በዚህ ስነ-ስርዓት ባለማለፍ ምክንያት በልጅቷ ላይ ሊያሳድርባት የሚችለው ማህበራዊና ስነ-ልቦናዊ ተጽእኖ ምንድን ነው? በስነ-ስርዓቱ አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት መሸጋገር ጥቅሙና ጉዳቱ ምንድን ነው?
8. አንዲት ልጃገረድ የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባ መምጣቱን ተከትሎ የኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ባይካሄድላት የሚያስከትልባት ማህበራዊና ስነ-ልቦናዊ ጉዳት ምንድን ነው?
9. በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ወደ ኮረዳነት ያልተሸጋገሩ ልጃገረዶች በስነ-ስርዓቱ አማካኝነት ከተሸጋገሩት ሊማሩት የሚገባ ትምህርት ምንድን ነው?
10. በመጨረሻ የምትጠይቁት ጥያቄ ወይም ወይም አስተያየት ካለ

Appendix E-2

FGD with Mothers (Amharic Version)

በጉሙዝ ብሄረሰብ ሴት ልጆች ከልጅነት ወደ ኮረዳነት የሚያደርጉትን ባህላዊ እድገታዊ ሽግግር አስመልክቶ ከእናቶች ጋር ለሚደረግ የቡድን ውይይት መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

I. አጠቃላይ መረጃ

ቦታ ----- ቀን ----- ሰዓት -----

ተ.ቁ	ስም	እድሜ	አድራሻ
1			
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II. መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

1. በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት አንዲት ልጃገረድ የወር አበባ መምጣቱን ተከትሎ ልጅቷ በወቅቱ የሚሰማት ስሜት ምንድን ነው?

2. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባዋን ማየት ስትጀምር ማድረግ ያለባትን የሌለባት ነገሮች ምን ምን ናቸው? ለምን?
3. በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት የሴት ልጅ ከልደት እስከ ሞት ድረስ ያሉት የተለያዩ የእድገት ደረጃዎች ምን ምን በመባል ይታወቃሉ? በተለያዩ የእድገት ደረጃዎች የሚገኙ ሴት ልጆች ማከናወን የሚጠበቅባቸው ተግባራትስ ምን ምን ናቸው?
4. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ሴት ልጅ የመጀመሪያውን የእድገት ደረጃ ማጠናቀቅና ወደ ሚቀጥለው የእድገት ደረጃ ለመግባት መዘጋጀቷን እንዴት ማወቅ ይቻላል? ሽግግሩስ ምን ይመስላል?
5. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ የልጅነት (ዲድኦ) ጊዜዋ ማጠናቀቅና ወደ ኮረዳነት(ዳጉና) ለመሸጋገር ብቁ መሆኗን ማወቅ የሚቻልበት እድገታዊ መስፍርት ምንድን ነው? ልጅቷ የወር አበባዋን ከማየቷ አስቀድሞ የምታሳያቸው አካላዊና ባህሪያዊ ለውጦችስ ምን ምን ናቸው?
6. አንዲት ልጃገረድ የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባዋን መምጣቱን ተከትሎ በሚዘጋጅላት የኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ወቅት የሚሰጣት ትምህርት እና ምክር አለ ይባላል። እስኪ ትምህርቱና ምክሩ በምን ላይ የሚያተኩር እንደሆነና እንዲሁም ትምህርቱንና ምክሩን የሰጠው ማን እንደሆነ በዝርዝር ብታስረዱኝ።
7. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ሴት ልጅ በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት መሸጋገር የሚያስገኝላት ማህበራዊና ስነ-ልቦናዊ ጥቅም ምንድን እንደሆነ ብታብራሩልኝ። ጉዳቱስ ?
8. በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ዳጉና የተሸጋገረች አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ በስነ-ስርዓቱ አማካኝነት ካልተሸጋገረችባ የበለጠ ተጠቃሚ ልትሆን የምትችለው እንዴት ነው ? ምትጎዳበት ሁኔታስ አለን? አብራሩ።
9. በድሮው ዘመንና በአሁኑ ዘመን ያለውን የኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት በማነጻጸር ያለውን ልዩነት እስኪ ንገሩኝ።

Appendix F-2

FGD with Mothers (Amharic Version)

በጉሙዝ ብሄረሰብ ሴት ልጆች ከልጅነት ወደ ኮረዳነት የሚያደርጉትን ባህላዊ እድገታዊ ሽግግር አስመልክቶ ከእናቶች ጋር ለሚደረግ የቡድን ውይይት መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

I. አጠቃላይ መረጃ

ቦታ ----- ቀን ----- ሰዓት -----

ተ.ቁ	ስም	እድሜ	አድራሻ
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II. መነሻ ጥያቄዎች

1. በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት አንዲት ልጃገረድ የወር አበባዋ መምጣቱን ተከትሎ ልጅቷ በወቅቱ የሚሰማት ስሜት ምንድን ነው?
2. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባዋን ማየት ስትጀምር ማድረግ ያለባትን የሌለባት ነገሮች ምን ምን ናቸው? ለምን?
3. በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት የሴት ልጅ ከልደት እስከ ሞት ድረስ ያሉት የተለያዩ የእድገት ደረጃዎች ምን ምን በመባል ይታወቃሉ? በተለያዩ የእድገት ደረጃዎች የሚገኙ ሴት ልጆች ማከናወን የሚጠበቅባቸው ተግባራትስ ምን ምን ናቸው?

4. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ሴት ልጅ የመጀመሪያውን የእድገት ደረጃ ማጠናቀቅንና ወደ ሚቀጥለው የእድገት ደረጃ ለመግባት መዘጋጀቷን እንዴት ማወቅ ይቻላል? ሽግግሩስ ምን ይመስላል?
5. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ የልጅነት (ዲድኦ) ጊዜዎ ማጠናቀቅንና ወደ ኮረዳነት(ዳጉና) ለመሸጋገር ብቁ መሆኗን ማወቅ የሚቻልበት እድገታዊ መስፍርት ምንድን ነው? ልጅቷ የወር አበባዋን ከማየቷ አስቀድሞ የምታሳያቸው አካላዊና ባህሪያዊ ለውጦችስ ምን ምን ናቸው?
6. አንዲት ልጃገረድ የመጀመሪያ የወር አበባዋን መምጣቱን ተከትሎ በሚዘጋጅላት የኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ወቅት የሚሰጣት ትምህርት እና ምክር አለ ይባላል። እስኪ ትምህርቱና ምክሩ በምን ላይ የሚያተኩር እንደሆነና እንዲሁም ትምህርቱንና ምክሩን የሰጠው ማን እንደሆነ በዝርዝር ብታስረዱኝ።
7. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ሴት ልጅ በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት መሸጋገር የሚያስገኝላት ማህበራዊና ስነ-ልቦናዊ ጥቅም ምንድን እንደሆነ ብታብራሩልኝ። ጉዳቱስ ?
8. በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ዳጉና የተሸጋገረች አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ በስነ-ስርዓቱ አማካኝነት ካልተሸጋገረችዋ የበለጠ ተጠቃሚ ልትሆን የምትችለው እንዴት ነው ? ምትጎዳበት ሁኔታስ አለን? አብራሩ።
9. በድሮው ዘመንና በአሁኑ ዘመን ያለውን የኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት በማነጻጸር ያለውን ልዩነት እስኪ ንገሩኝ።

Appendix G-2

በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት ሴት ልጆች ከልጅነት ወደ ኮረዳነት የሚደርጉትን ባህላዊ እድገታዊ ሽግግር (ኬኤ ገሃጃ) ስነ-ስርዓት አስመልክቶ ከዋና አስረጅዎች ጋር ለሚደረግ ቃለ-

መጠይቅ መነሻ የሚሆኑ ጥያቄዎች

ቦታ----- ቀን----- ሰዓት----- ጾታ-----

የት/ት ደረጃ----- የስራ መደብ-----

1. በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት የሴት ልጅ የእድገት ደረጃዎች ምን ምን በመባል ይታወቃሉ?
2. በእያንዳንዱ የእድገት ደረጃ ወቅት አንዲት የጉሙዝ ሴት እንድታከናውን የሚጠበቅባት ሃላፊነትና ተግባራት ምን ምን ናቸው?
3. በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት አንዲት ሴት ልጅ ከአንዱ የእድገት ደረጃ ወደ ሚቀጥለው የእድገት ደረጃ በምትሸጋገርበት ወቅት የሚደረገው ባህላዊ ስነ-ስርዓት ምን እንደሚመስል ቢያብራሩልን፡፡
4. በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት ከተለያዩ የሴት ልጅ የእድገት ደረጃዎች መካከል ከፍተኛ እድገታዊ ለውጥ ወይም ወሳኝ ነው የሚባለው የትናው ነው ? ለምን?
5. በአንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ በልጅነት እና በኮረዳነት የእድገት ደረጃዎች መካከል ያለው እድገታዊ ልዩነት ምን እንደሆነ ቢያብራሩልን፡፡
6. በጉሙዝ ባህል መሰረት አንዲት ሴት ልጅ የልጅነት ጊዜዋ ማብቀቱንና ወደ ኮረዳነት ለመሸጋገር ዝግጁ መሆኗን የሚያውቁበት እድገታዊ መስፈርት ምንድን ነው?
7. የኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ዋና አላማ ምንድን ነው? በዚህ ስነ-ስርዓት የሚከናወኑ ዋና ዋና ተግባራት ምን ምን ናቸው? ምንንስ ያመለክታሉ?
8. አንዲት የጉሙዝ ልጃገረድ የወር አበባዋን ማየቷን ተከትሎ የሚዘጋጀው የኬኤ ገሃጃ በዓል ለልጅቷ የሚያስገኘው ስነ-ልቦናዊ እና ማህበራዊ ጥቅም ምንድን ነው ይላሉ? ጉዳቱስ?
9. የኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ከልጅቷ ባሻገር ለቤተሰቦቿና ለማህበረሰቡ የሚያስገኘው ጥቅም ምንድን ነው?

10. በቀድሞውና በአሁኑ ዘመን የሚደረገው የኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት ልዩነት አለው ብለው ያምናሉ? እስኪ ያብሩልን።
 11. በአሁኑ ዘመን የኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት እየተመናመነ የመምጣቱ ምክንያት ምንድን ነው ብለው ያስባሉ?
 12. ለአቅሙሄዋን የደረሱ የጉሙዝ ሴት ልጆች በኬኤ ገሃጃ ስነ-ስርዓት አማካኝነት ወደ ኮረዳነት ባለመሸጋገራቸው ምክንያት በወደፊት ህይወታቸው ሊያጋጥሟቸው የሚችሉ ስነ-ልቦናዊና ማህበራዊ ችግሮች ምን ምን ናቸው ብለው ያምናሉ? ሴት ልጆችን ከእነዚህ ችግሮች ለመታደግ ወላጆች በመፍትሄነት የሚጠቀሙባቸው ዘዴዎች ካሉ ቢነግሩን።
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