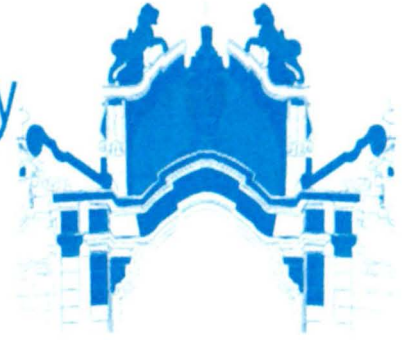




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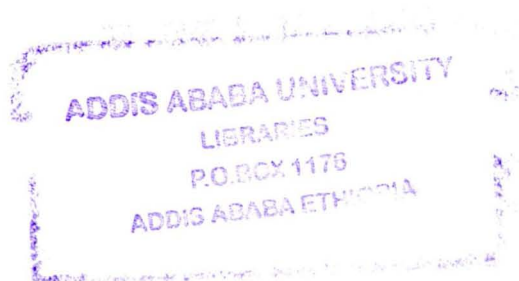
**HISTORICAL SURVEY OF SOCIO-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS
AMONG THE PEOPLES OF GIDDA *WOREDA*, EASTERN WALLAGA
(1936-2000)**

By: Seketa Akuma

June 2018

Addis Ababa,

Ethiopia



**HISTORICAL SURVEY OF SOCIO-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS
AMONG THE PEOPLES OF GIDDA *WOREDA*, EASTERN
WALLAGGA (1936 -2000)**

**A Thesis Submitted to Department of History of Addis Ababa University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in
History**

Seketa Akuma

Advisor: Professor Tesema Ta'a


**June 2018
Addis Ababa,
Ethiopia**

Addis Ababa University
College of Social Sciences
Graduate Program

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Seketa Akuma Kedida, entitled: “*Historical Survey of Socio- Cultural Interactions among the Peoples of Gidda Woreda, Eastern Wallagga (1936-2000*” and submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in History complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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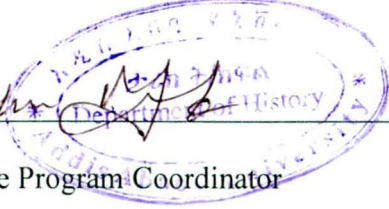
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Examiner Girma Negash Signature  Date 25/06/2018

Advisor Tesema Tadi Signature  Date 25-06-18

Advisor _____ Signature _____ Date _____


Chair of Department or Graduate Program Coordinator



DECLARATION

The thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University and that all sources used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Seketa Akuma

Signature 

Date 25-06-2018



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This study is the fruit of contribution obtained from different institutions and individuals. Enumerating all of the contributors is difficult. Therefore, I would mention a few of them. First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my advisor, Professor Tesema Ta'a, for his constructive guidance, comments and criticism. I am grateful to all members of my family for their moral support in the process of conducting this study. Their contribution had been beyond the fruit of the study because they shaped my personality. Their vision had been beyond what I have reached yet. I could not express their thanks in words.

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PREFACE

Social history at large and history of socio-cultural interactions in particular has not yet been comprehensively studied. Social history is a history of ordinary people. Socio-cultural interaction is one among many elements of social history. It focuses on the study of the way how learning, developments and interaction are embedded in social and cultural activities. The existing historical and anthropological works are fragmented and concentrate on particular aspects of socio-cultural interactions.

This thesis is a historical survey of socio-cultural interactions among the peoples of Gidda *woreda* from 1936 to 2000. The year 1936 is taken as a landmark because it was a period when Italians occupied the country. The Italian occupation of the area interrupted the social-cultural superiority of the Amhara conquerors. It was also a period when patriots and collaborators emerged from among the local people. The division was based on the way they accepted Italian occupation. Accordingly, collaborators and patriots became the two opposing groups. The year 2000 is also a landmark because the indigenous-resettlers complex which had existed for half of a century begun to show its escalation through actual occurrence of an inter-ethnic conflict.

The primary purpose of this thesis is to reconstruct a history of interconnectedness between the peoples and culture on one hand and among the peoples themselves on the other. Interactions among the peoples also got two dimensions. These are interrelationship among the indigenous people and their interactions with newly settled groups. This study is conducted through systematic collection, investigation, analysis and interpretations of primary and secondary sources. It begins with geographical and social background of the study area where the geographical setting, early settlement, peopling and economic activities are outlined. The socio-cultural overview of the people until the Italian occupation of 1936 is considered in this chapter.

The second chapter deals with imperial rule and socio-cultural interactions among the peoples until the downfall of Haile Sellassie I. The third chapter focuses on dynamics of socio-cultural interactions between the indigenous Oromo and non-Oromo groups from mid 1974 to 2000. The last chapter outlines the socio-cultural impacts of the newly introduced

religions in relation to particular aspects of the indigenous practices, value systems and customs.

However, the process of obtaining sufficient historical sources and realization of this thesis is not free of hardships. The most difficult challenges come from the collection of archival sources. This is because of the mismanagement of archives in general and destruction of local archival sources just after the downfall of the *Darg* government in particular. Zonal and *woreda* archives were burnt and many of them destroyed with moisture outside storage room which was given to the soldiers of the new government. Some archives found in East Wallagga administration office are so disorganized that getting them with complete information and obtaining materials relevant to the topic is difficult. Most of the sources found in National Archives and Library Agency as well as Walda-Maskal Tariku Memorial Center are not related directly to a history of socio-cultural interactions.

Furthermore, socio-cultural history had been out of the domain of many scholarly works. Most of the thesis, dissertations, journals and books written on Wallagga concentrates on Western, Qellam and Horro-Guduruu Wallagga. They stated a history of Gidda Oromo within a few lines. During the researcher's field work to the area, some of our informants were reluctant to share their memories due to Ethiopia's political uncertainty of the period. They suspect and consider someone who approaches them as a spy. Researcher overcomes this problem by giving them a detailed awareness concerning the objective of the study.

Due to the aforementioned problems, researcher need to express that this thesis is not an end by itself but could possibly be taken as beginning for an end. Other scholars could use this work to conduct further comprehensive study of a history of socio-cultural interactions among the peoples of the district.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a historical survey of socio-cultural interactions among the peoples of Gidda district from the Italian occupation in 1936 to the period when interactions between indigenous Oromo people and the Amhara resettlers gave rise to open war in 2000. Gidda district is located in Eastern Wallagga zone of Western Ethiopia. Until the Gojjame and Shoans conquered the area in the last quarter of the 19th century, no new order was imposed on the socio-cultural lives of the people except for the emergence of monarchical chiefs whose powers had weakened the gadaa system. Therefore, the people of the district who had different clans, sub-clans and lineages had lived by practicing their indigenous religion and other socio-cultural practices. Throughout the period under study, three historical developments had been experienced and transformed the socio-cultural interactions of the people. These are the natural socio-cultural interactions among the local people, the impacts of the newly introduced religions and the arrival of resettlers from northern parts of Ethiopia. The legacies and the consequences of conquest accompanied by these three historical developments as well as other changes and continuities brought the socio-cultural transformation among the inhabitants of the area. On the side of the newly arrived resettlers, their spontaneous advent and the continual changes in their sentiments increased their interactions with the indigenous people. Consequently, combinations of cooperation and conflict as well as interactions and isolationism characterized the relationships between the two groups. Most of the time, intensity of inter-ethnic suspicion and isolationism exceeds that of the cooperation and consistent peaceful interactions. This problem emanates from and utmost related to the roles played by the exploitative and suppressive Ethiopian governments. Among the newly introduced religions, Orthodox Christianity and Protestantism brought remarkable socio-cultural transformations. As the people adopted and added the ideologies of the new religions to their own, many of them modified their social lives, food and food habits, marriage practices, funeral system and their attitudes towards different rituals to the extent that the ideologies of the two religions intermingled at least in the heart of the people. As a part of the gadaa system, the indigenous religion of the people had already been internalized. Therefore, the newly designed administration system and the newly introduced religions faced hardships in snatching the principles of indigenous culture. Therefore, the people retained some aspects of their value system and indigenous religion.

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ACRONYMS

CMF - Christian Missionary Fellowship

CSA - Central Statistics Agency

EECMY – Ethiopian Evangelical Church *Mekane Yesus*

EOC – Ethiopian Orthodox Churches

EPRDF – Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front

OLF – Oromo Liberation Front

RRC - Relief and Rehabilitation Commission.

KEY TO TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

- I. All words of Oromo origin are spelled according to the writing system in *Afaan* Oromo alphabet to ease the problem of reading. The five vowels in *Afaan* Oromo language whose doubling result in meaning changes are:

Short	Long
a	aa
e	ee
i	ii
o	oo
u	uu

- II. The seven sounds in Amharic and *Afaan* Oromo are represented as follows:

<u>Amharic</u>	<u>Afaan Oromo</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
ቦ	ba	be
ቦፕ	bu	bu
ቦቢ	bii	bî
ቦባ	baa	ba
ቦቤ	bee	bé
ቦብ	bi	bi
ቦቦ	boo	bo

- III. Length in vowels results in meaning changes.

Example: *Ayyaana* – spirit

Ayyaanaa – name of the town of Gidda district

- IV. Oromo consonants are stressed or germinated by doubling similar phonemes and this also results in meaning changes.

Example: *gadaa* – Oromo socio-political organization

Gadda – sorrow

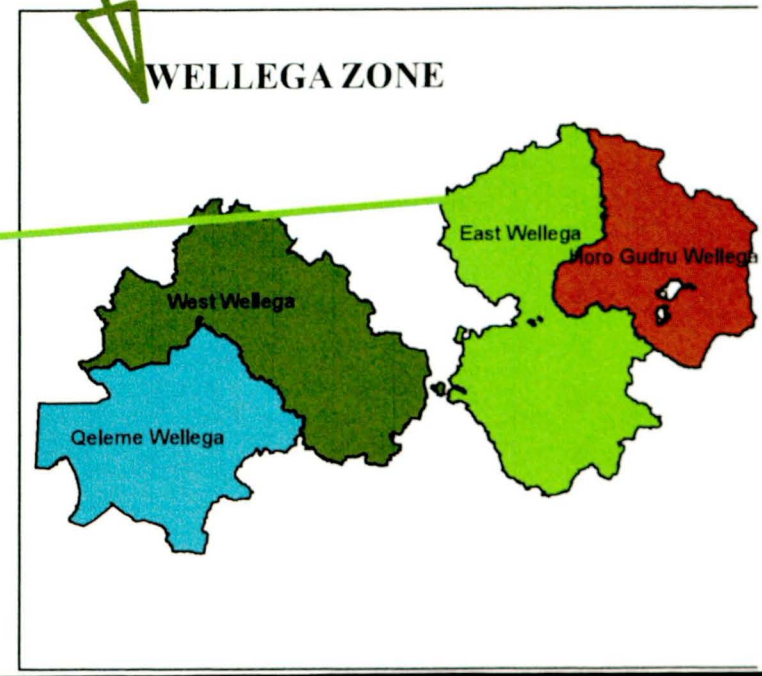
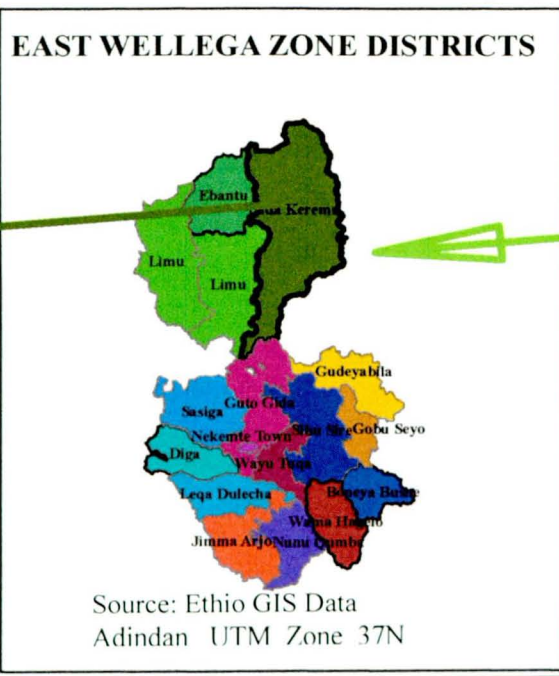
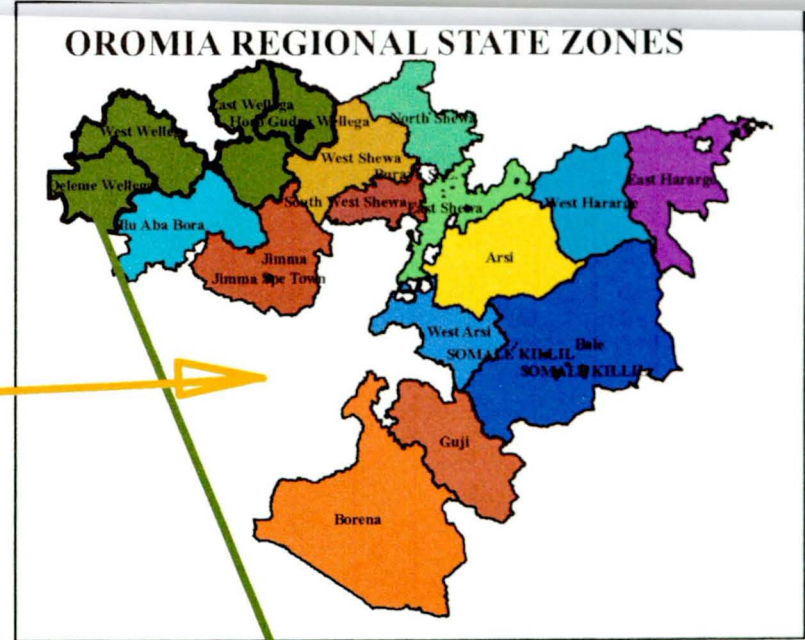
- V. There are paired phonemes that are formed by two different consonants and read different of the two consonants. These are ch, dh, ny, ph and sh

Example: *dhadhaa* - butter

Nyaata - food

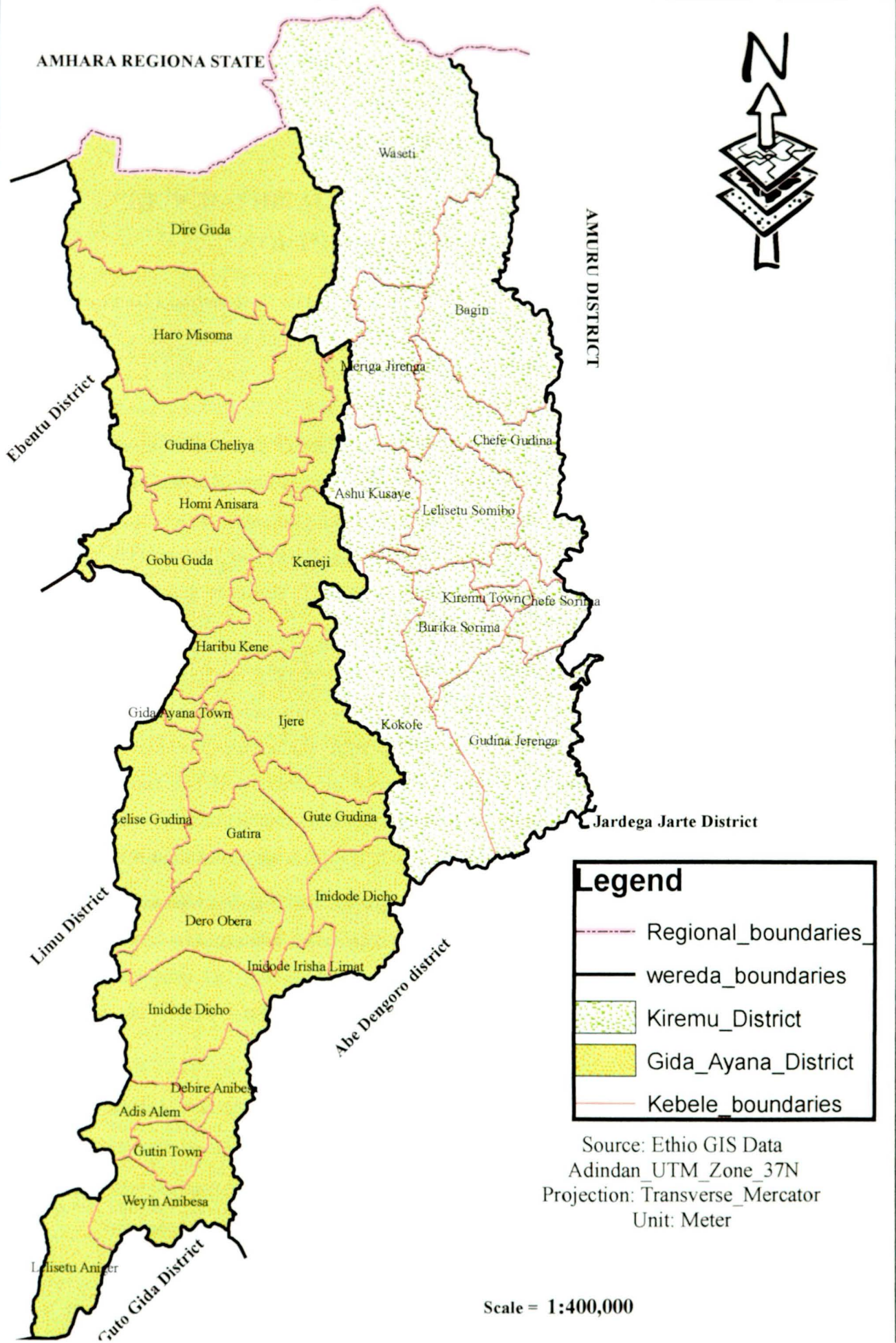
- VI. In Oromo alphabets, consonants like C, Q and X have different sounds while the rest have almost the same sound as English consonants.

<i>Afaan Oromoo</i>	Example	English Meaning
C	<i>Caffee</i>	Oromo parliament; meadow
Q	<i>Qaalluu</i>	high priest
X	<i>Xaafii</i>	teff



Source: Ethio GIS Data
Adindan UTM Zone 37N

THE FORMER MAP OF GIDA KIREMU DISTRICT



CHAPTER ONE

GEOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF NORTHEASTERN WALLAGGA

Geographical Landscape of Gidda *Woreda*

The naming and size of Gidda *woreda* experienced many changes due to changes in boundary and administrative structure. Concerning the naming of the area, establishing clearly defined intervals of the periods was found to be difficult. Informants remember its name in the pre-1960s with Gidda-Ebantu-Kiramu-Calliya. During the early 1970s, it was called Gidda-Calliya-Kiramu district. This was the name of the district when Holcomb came to the area to collect data for a paper entitled “Oromo Marriage in Wallagga Province, Ethiopia”.¹ From 1987 to 1991, it was renamed as Gidda-Kiramu *awraja*. In 1991, EPRDF changed the naming of *awraja*. Then after, the name Gidda-Kiramu *awraja* was replaced by Gidda-Kiramu *woreda*.²

During both Imperial and Military Governments, the study area was part of Horro-Guduruu *awraja* whose administrators were accountable to the Wallagga province. It was during the EPRDF government, particularly after 1997, that Gidda *woreda* became part of East Wallagga Zone and Horro-Guduruu became an independent zone.³ Throughout all these periods, the peoples of Gidda *woreda* experienced ups and downs in their socio-cultural and economic life and retained some aspects of their culture.⁴

In 2008, it was renamed as Gidda-Ayyaanaa by changing the name Gidda-Kiramu. This is because Kiramu was separated from Gidda and became independent *woreda*. Though Kiramu was geographically and administratively separated from Gidda, the people who had been living in the district were considered as descendants of Gidda Oromo.⁵ In order to

¹ Bonnie K. Holcomb (January 1973), “Oromo Marriage in Wallagga Province, Ethiopia,” *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, XI (1), p. 107.

² Informant: Imiru Yadeta.

³ After the coming to power of EPRDF government, Wallagga is divided into four zones namely East Wallagga, Horro-Guduruu Wallagga, West Wallagga and Qellam Wallagga with their respective capitals Naqamtee, Shambu, Gimbi and Dembidollo.

⁴ Informant: Cherinnet Wakweyya.

⁵ Informants: Gemechu Birra and Imiru Yadeta.

compromise the changing of its naming throughout different periods, the researcher preferred to use the name *Gidda woreda*.

Gidda⁶ with its capital, Ayyaanaa, is among the seventeen districts⁷ of present day East Wallagga Zone in Western Ethiopia. It is located at about 112 kilometers from the zonal capital, Naqamtee, in its northeastern direction. The distance between Ayyaanaa town and Finfinne, the capital of both Ethiopia and Oromia Regional state, is around 444 kilometers.⁸ The district was bounded by the Abbay River (Amhara Regional State) in the north, the Angar River (*Guto Gidda woreda*) in the South, *Kiramu woreda* in the East, Abe Dongoro *woreda* in the South East, *Limmu woreda* in the West and *Ebantu woreda* in the Northwest.⁹

The climatic condition of *Gidda woreda* is said to be a combination of *Dega* (2%), *Woyna Dega* (48%) and *Qolla* (50%) with the elevation of 1500-2290 meters above sea level. There are 21 rural *kebeles* and 7 urban *kebeles* (sub-towns)¹⁰ in present day *Gidda Ayyaanaa* alone. In the absence of accurate data, the present population size of *Gidda woreda* is hard to figure out. Based on the population and housing census of 1994, the total population of *Gidda-Kiramu woreda* was 106,895, urban dwellers constituting only 12,176.¹¹ The population and housing census of 2007 indicates that the total population of *Gidda-Kiramu woreda* was 159,861. This was the largest population size of the period ever recorded in Eastern Wallagga and followed by that of the *Sibu-Sire woreda* with the total population of 102, 214. From the total population, urban dwellers constitute 27,917 and that of the rural population were estimated to be 131, 944.¹² This implied that the majority of the people were rural dwellers.

⁶ The time and reason for the beginning of using two names for the same *woreda*, 'Jidda' and 'Gidda', is mysterious among the elders of Northeastern Wallagga. More complicated than this, the elders often made debate on the decision of identifying the original name. Some of the elders had stated that the original name is 'Gidda' and the name 'Jidda' is related to the coming of Muslims who have tried to associate this *woreda* with that of 'Jidda' located somewhere in Saud Arabia.

⁷ The present day seventeen districts of East Wallagga Zone are *Ebantu*, *Haro-Limmu*, *Limmu*, *Gidda*, *Kiramu*, *Guto Gidda*, *Sasiga*, *Digga*, *Leka Dullacha*, *Jimma Arjo*, *Nunu Kumba*, *Boneyya Boshe*, *Wama Hagelo*, *Gudeyya Bila*, *Gobbu Sayyo*, *Sibu Sire* and *Wayyu Tuka*.

⁸ *Gidda Ayyaanaa Tourism and Culture Office* (2001), "Seena Aanaa Giddaa Ayyaanaa" (A History of *Gidda Ayyaanaa District*), p.1.

⁹ See the former Map of *Gidda Kiramu district*.

¹⁰ The seven sub-towns in present day *Gidda Ayyaanaa* alone, when we collected our data, are *Ayyaanaa town* having 01 & 02 *kebeles*, *Angar Gute* with 01 & 02 *kebeles*, *Lalistu Angar*, *Jangir* and *Andode*.

¹¹ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Population Census Commission (1995), *Summary and Statistical Report of the 1994 Population and Housing Census*, Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Authority.

¹² Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Population Census Commission (2008), *Summary and Statistical Report of the 2007 Population and Housing Census*, Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Authority.

The total size of the *woreda* is 2,505 km². However, Kiramu was separated from Gidda and became an independent *woreda* in 2008.¹³

Gidda *woreda* has a comfortable weather condition and rich natural resources including big rivers, Valleys, hills and mountains. To mention a few of them, Ditcho escarpments, which is located along the way to Naqamtee, have been serving the travelers as a source of recreation for its beautiful ups and downs. It was for these ups and downs that opening of the way between Gidda and Naqamtee took a long time endeavor. Consequently, the problem of road for the Gidda district was an age-old and one that was not solved for long. During the imperial period, people had complained for long since the road from Shambu to Gidda did not reach the Ayyaanaa town (See Appendix I).¹⁴ In addition to the Ditcho escarpments, there are big rivers like Angar, Wajja, Worabessa and Dedim which make transportation within and out of the *woreda* so worse. Crossing all of these rivers without the help of bridges or swimmers is tricky.¹⁵

Goobo valley itself which is located at about 20 kilometers to the north of Ayyaanaa town in the present day Goobu Gudda *kebele* is not less than the status of being a tourist site albeit it has been unknown yet due to transportation problem. Goobo valley is supposed to have gold deposit. However, the successive Ethiopian regimes neither checked its existence nor ventured the deposit for the benefit of the society.¹⁶

From the center of its present day capital, around the area locally identified as Qilxuu Farajaa or *dhaabii dammaa*,¹⁷ Gidda Ayyaanaa lost one of its beautiful natural features. Traditions collected from Gidda *woreda* are unanimous that a large and beautiful *Haroo* (lake) survived in the center of Ayyaanaa town until the middle of the 20th century. It was believed that one who trained himself in swimming the lake would possibly be successful if he/she swims the Abbay River. Nicknaming the Ayyaanaa market with this lake, many people of the *woreda* say “Let we go to *Haroo* market” instead of saying Ayyaanaa. This name continued to be

¹³ Gidda Ayyaanaa Tourism and Culture Office, pp.1-2; Bayyanaa Biiftu fi Galata Hayilu (2007), “Seenaa Magaalaa Ayyanaa Hundeeffama irraa hanga 2007tti” (A History of Ayyaanaa Town to 2007), p. 19.

¹⁴ East Wallagga Administration Office Archive Center, No Folder and File Numbers, Date *Hidar* (November) 18, 1944, Reference Number 26 88 33, A Letter Sent to *Dejazmach* Dereje Mekonnin.

¹⁵ Informants: Kebeda Guta and Akuma Kedida.

¹⁶ Informant: Akuma Kedida.

¹⁷ *Afaan Oromo* term *dhaabii* implies a particular area where specific commodity is sold. *Damma* means honey. Hence, *dhaabii dammaa* literally means specific area in the town where honey had been sold.

used until a very recent period. People of the town had conducted sacrifices, thanksgiving and prayers at this lake for long years. Bulls were slaughtered at this place for long period by selected individuals like Duessa Mati, Lammi Olika and Tesfaye Lammi, one after the other.¹⁸

Had it continued up to this day, the lake would be used either as a tourist site or *irreecha* center. Unfortunately, the lake had dried up when the people of the town, who wanted to use the area for building house destroyed it. Finally, uncalculated instruction of the *meslene* or the *Mikitiil ghazi*¹⁹ of the *woreda* completed the total drying up of the lake around the middle of the 20th century. The district administrator of the period was said to be Fatane Hordofa. As the lake dried up, socio-cultural rituals and prayers which were previously conducted there ceased to be practiced.²⁰

Throughout long parts of their history, the lowland parts of the district including Guttin, Sire Doro and Wasti had been covered with dense forests and hosted big games like buffalos, elephants and lions. Guttin is located in the lowland areas of present day Gidda, Abe-Dongoro and Limmu *woredas*. The present day town of the area, Angar Gute, is located at 43 kilometers south of the Ayyaanaa town and 69 kilometers north of Naqamtee.²¹

According to some group of our informants, the naming of the Guttin was traced back to an ancient story of the period of hunting and gathering. Accordingly, the group of hunters who had been going to hunt were said to have asked the group who had been returning from hunting to check whether there were animals to be hunted. The latter group responded by saying “*guutan*” an *Afaan* Oromo term for ‘full or complete’ and informed the existence of the animals. Then after, the area was named and continued to be called Guttin after an *Afaan* Oromo word *guutan*.²² Another group of our informants corroborate that the area was named after a name of an individual who had lived in the area. According to this group, a certain

¹⁸ Informants: Gusse Mersha and Dessalegn Feyisa.

¹⁹ *Meslene* or *Mikitiil woreda ghazi* was a common name for the district administrators of the time. It was among the result of the coming of the conquerors.

²⁰ Informants: Gusse Mersha; Dessalegn Feyisa and Gemmechu Birra.

²¹ Informants: Yadesa Gurmessa and Awoke Biterf.

²² Informants: Yadesa Gurmessa and Wegari Geleta.

Oromo named Guttin had lived around the present day Angar Gute town. He might have left the area due to human and animal diseases.²³

Guttin occupies an extensive stretch of land conducive for modern large-scale agriculture. Until the second half of 20th century, it was uncultivated and people had not settled in many parts of the area.²⁴ During the reign of Haile Sellassie I, a person called Banti Ballis had taken the area of Guttin from the *balabat* of Gidda named Mekonnin Sima. According to the agreement between Banti and Mekonnin, Banti promised to protect the area from the bandits.²⁵ In return, he was allowed to collect *hirbo*²⁶ from the area. The effective control of this lowland part of Gidda had been restrained by the prevalence of dense forests and big animals as well as its resultant unsafe movement into the area.²⁷

The construction of bridge over the Angar River had far reaching consequences on the ecological and socio-economic changes which occurred in the area of Guttin. Angar River is located between Guttin and Naqamtee. As it is found on the way to the zonal town, Naqamtee, the difficulty of crossing and re-crossing the Angar River had been the long lasting problem of the people who had lived on both sides of the River. The first bridge over the River was constructed by the Italian engineers who had entered into contractual agreement with Emperor Haile Sellasie I in 1965. Its construction was financed both by government and people of the present day Limmu, Ebantu, Gidda and KIRAMU *woredas*. Construction of the bridge was completed in 1967 and had functioned until the new bridge was constructed in 1990 by a company called *Tikur* Abbay. After its construction people got easy access of crossing and re-crossing and settled in both sides of the river.²⁸

The population settlement in the area had shown significant changes since the second half of the 20th century. The variation in settlement pattern had occurred largely due to the coming

²³ Informant: Dorsis Dhuguma.

²⁴ Informants: Yadesa Gurmesssa; Wegari Geleta and Awoke Biterf.

²⁵ During the Imperial period, Guttin area was one of the stations of the bandits where they had robbed the merchants and other people coming across the area. This was because the Guttin area of the period was covered with dense forests. Most of the robbers were said to have come from Horro and stayed in the jungle in order to rob the people who might cross through the area. Horro of the period was suspected as the major producers of the bandits who came to Guttin and its environs. The suspicion had been made simply by checking the existence of barley in the faeces or excrement in the forests around where the victims were robbed.

²⁶ *Hirbo* is a kind of dues which was collected from honey producers.

²⁷ Informant: Dorsis Dhuguma.

²⁸ Informant: Wegari Geleta.

of the new resettlers from the drought affected areas of northern parts of Ethiopia. In response to the coming of the resettlers, the indigenous people of the *woreda* had moved to the lowlands. This was because both groups entered into competition over the control and use of resource in the area.²⁹

Until the second half of the 20th century, many parts of the district were sparsely populated and covered with dense forest. It was said that lowland parts of the *woreda* had remained the home of many kinds of big animals and the hunters gone to these areas from Horro, Amuru, KIRAMU, Limmu, Ebantu and other adjacent districts. After the coming of the resettlers, forests were destroyed and big animals were removed from the area.³⁰

Inhabitants of the district are made up of peoples who belong to different ethnic, religious and linguistic group. Before we discuss about the peopling of the district, brief investigation of the peopling of northeastern Wallagga seems to be significant in order to understand the general social background of the area.

The Peopling of Northeastern Wallagga

The Oromo are the largest ethnic group in the country. They shared some significant features. To mention few of them, wherever the Oromo have expanded and settled, there were mixture of different clans, sub-clans, lineages and families who share common language, history and similar socio-cultural aspects.³¹ The Oromo people speak *Afaan Oromo* as their vernacular language. The traditional Oromo societies were governed by the *gadaa* system. Each clan had their own representatives to attend the *gadaa* assembly. *Safuu*³² plays major roles in the socio-cultural interactions of the people. In almost all cases, the Oromo socio-cultural interactions have undergone changes due to various reasons. These are among the common features of Oromo nation living in different corners of the country. Despite the existence of

²⁹ Informant: Wegari Geleta and Awoke Biterf.

³⁰ Informants: Wegari Geleta and Gobana *Abbaa* Burka.

³¹ Tabor Wami (2015), *Barreeffamoota Loogii fi Seenaa Dhugaa* (Partisan Discourse and Authentic History), Artistic Printing Press, Addis Ababa, pp. 54-55; Lambert Bartels (1983), *Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia – An Attempt to Understand*, Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin, p.13; Informant: Insarmu Nemerra.

³² *Safuu* is social norm that regulates the one's own behavior and determine his/her relations with creator and creatures.

varying sources concerning the origin and clans, all sources unanimously stated that the Oromo were originally from the same base and belong to single man.³³

The inhabitants of Northeastern Wallagga including those of the study area are predominantly the Oromo. They belong to the Jaawwii clan of the Maccaa branch. The Maccaa Oromo belong to those Oromo groups who currently inhabit in Western Shewa, Wallagga, Jimma, Ilubabor and Matakal areas. 'Maccaa' literally means 'many', indicating the number of people who were multiplied from this branch.³⁴ Presently, the protestant Oromo often speak the term 'Maccaa' and use it in their *Afaan Oromo Bible*.³⁵

The settlement pattern of the Oromo was based on genealogical elder-younger arrangements. The Jaawwii groups, as it might be true to the others, followed the footsteps of their *daggal saaqii* and their bull, and expanded into different areas of Northeastern Wallagga. The *daggal saaqii* had a great role in settling the late comers on the land so that peaceful social interactions were ensured. This system was known as *qubsiisa* which literally means allowing others to settle.³⁶ Oromo had used different mechanisms for their settlement among which one was the use of their bull. According to this tradition, they followed their bull to identify good places for their settlement. It was said that the owner of the bull had to settle on the place where the bull rested. This was based on Oromo traditions that the bull had been believed to possess the potential of choosing appropriate places for the residence place of the people.³⁷

For some group of sources, the descendants of Maccaa Oromo were divided and moved to different directions after their separations in western Shewa. According to this tradition, the

³³ Informant: Amsalu Temesgen.

³⁴ Wandimmu Nagash and Boni Tesfaye (2015), *Seenaa fi Sirna Gadaa Oromoo Maccaa Hanga Jalqaba Jaarraa 20^{faatti}* (A History and Gadaa System of Maccaa Oromo to 20th Century), Volume 1, Bole Printing Enterprise, p.22.

³⁵ Informant: Kitata Gerbi; Gemmechu Birra and Cherinnet Wakweyya.

³⁶ Boshera Jarbo (1988), "Land Tenure System in Limmu Woreda, Northeastern Wallagga (ca.1870-1936)," B.A Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, pp. 9-10; Tesema Ta'a (1986), "The Political Economy of Western Central Ethiopia: From the Mid 16th to the Early 20th Centuries," PhD Dissertation, Department of History, Michigan State University," pp.55-56; Informants: Gusse Mersha; Insarmu Nemerra and Gemmechu Birra.

³⁷ Informants: Gusse Mersha and Cherinnet Wakweyya.

eldest son of Maccaa, Liiban, had remained in western Shewa as the majority of the Maccaa Oromo had been doing³⁸ to solve question related to land holding.³⁹

Other groups of sources corroborate the existence of twelve sons of Maccaa⁴⁰ Oromo. According to this group of sources, the nine sons of Maccaa; Jaawwii, Liiban, Galaan, Donfa, Abbo, Jibaat, Sooddo, Dhaahe and Walal are found between the Abbay and Gojeb Rivers. Whereas the three sons namely Gunde, Aballan (Daalle) and Laalo Maccaa are found beyond River Mormor in Gojjam and Wambara.⁴¹ The Oromo of Wallagga use the name 'Mormor' instead of Abbay. They claim that the name 'Abbay' was given to the river by the Amharas, not by themselves. Therefore, the people prefer to use the name Mormor than Abbay. The same group of sources corroborate that Jaawwii was the eldest son of the Maccaa. They went on explaining that the Jaawwii Maccaa gave birth to nine sons; Guduruu, Horro, Amuru, Jimma, Guddaayya, Gidda, Limmu, Ebantu and Ilu.⁴²

The second group confirmed that the Horro, Jimma, Guduruu, Amuru, Gidda, Kiramu, Calliya, Limmu and Ebantu belong to the sons of Jaawwii. This group corroborated that Jaawwii groups expanded towards the left bank of the Abbay, in present day northeastern Wallagga.⁴³ According to this group, Horro was the eldest son of Jaawwii who occupied the area between the Abbay and Angar Rivers. And Limmu, Ebantu, Kiramu and Gidda inhabited the other side of the Angar River just west and Northwest of Horro. The Angar River divides Amuru *woreda* into two parts.⁴⁴

The habitation in Gidda *woreda* has a long history of population movement, demographic change and socio-cultural as well as administrative rearrangements. It had been a home of both Oromo and non-Oromo, the former being indigenous and most dominant group. The dominant Oromo people of Northeastern Wallagga are said to be the agglomeration of

³⁸ Traditionally, if a given clan or lineage of Maccaa Oromo had so many sons that the land could not be enough for all of its sons, the eldest daughter has a respect, and could hold the land. Thus, the youngsters had to search for alternative land from somewhere else.

³⁹ Informant: *Abbaa gadaa* Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁴⁰ As the traditions and sources vary, one might get the name and number of Maccaa's sons different of this one.

⁴¹ Wandimmu Nagash and Boni Tesfaye, pp. 35-36; Informant: Cherinnet Wakweyya.

⁴² Informant: Cherinnet Wakweyya.

⁴³ Boshera Jarbo, P.5.

⁴⁴ Ginbar Nagara (June 2000), "A Biography of Abiishee Garbaa," B.A Senior Essay, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, p.3.

various sons of the Maccaa Oromo. In Gidda *woreda*, for instance, the Calliya⁴⁵ and Gidda clans have been living together. The existing oral and written sources diverged on the clan and sub-clans of Calliya. Our sources identify Calliya differently. One group of source considered Calliya as one among the sons of Jaawwii Maccaa who have been living in Gidda *woreda*. For this group, Calliya was the brother of Gidda, Limmu, Ebantu, Amuru and some other sons of Jaawwii.⁴⁶

The second group classified Calliya as one among the descendents of Galaan Maccaa.⁴⁷ Yet, the third group said that Calliya was one among the five sons of Maccaa, namely Liiban, Jaawwii, Oboo, Calliya and Limmu.⁴⁸ Accordingly, the Calliya Maccaa moved toward northeastern Wallagga, joined the Jaawwii Maccaa, and had used the *gadaa* center of Odaa Bulluq with the sons of his brother, Jaawwii. This group further explained that the reason why some informants categorized Calliya wrongly as a son of Galaan Maccaa was perhaps that they were influenced by the story on ‘Galaan’s tour to Gidda’. According to the story, ‘Galaan once came to Gidda and the people asked him about the purpose of his coming. Then, Galaan responded as if he came to visit his son whose name was Calliya’.⁴⁹ Calliya was said to have only one son called Sob who in turn gave birth to the lineages like Eeban, Jaarso, Daalle, Seedaa, Deeree, Udoo and Siriifo. Therefore, Calliya was a grandfather of these sub-clans.⁵⁰

The Oromo had great respect for its own clan and claim that changing one’s own clan or sub-clan would result in social exclusion.⁵¹ Moreover, the Oromo members of the lineages must not marry from the same lineages. In the indigenous marriage practice of the people, one has to count and marry outside of seven generation back to his/her own lineage. If he/she marry

⁴⁵ It was obvious that similar names of places are found in different parts of Oromia Regional State. For example, Calliya is found both in Eastern Wallagga and Western Shewa. Jidda is also found in Northern Shewa and Eastern Wallagga. However, Calliya and Gidda that we are discussing in this thesis are that of the Eastern Wallagga.

⁴⁶ Wegari Mosisa (September 2015), “A History of Horro District (1910-1991),” M.A Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, p.16; Ginbar Nagara, “A Biography of Abiishee Garbaa...,” p.2; Informant: Gemechu Birra.

⁴⁷ Informant: Kebeda Biftu.

⁴⁸ There are also other traditions which mention the other sons of Maccaa different of what we have listed here. For instance, some of the traditions mentioned Liiban, Jaawwii, Guduruu, Daallee (Daadhii) and Jidda.

⁴⁹ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁵⁰ Informants: Dessalegn Feyisa and Jirra Duressa.

⁵¹ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

from his/her lineage, it is known as *haraamuu* (incestuous) and would led to different forms of punishments. Torture and ostracism on the individuals as well as divorce of the marriage were among the possible measures that the Oromo often took on the *haraamuu* practicing individuals.⁵²

The evidences on the KIRAMU clan were also overlapping. While some of the sources identify KIRAMU as the direct son of Jaawwii,⁵³ other sources categorize KIRAMU as a sub-clan of GIDDA.⁵⁴ Those groups who identify KIRAMU as a direct son of Jaawwii stated that Ajaje (Dongoro), Nya'a and Dubaro were the three clans of KIRAMU, each of them having their own sub-clans. Accordingly, while Gofto, Abeto and Meti were the sub-clans of Dongoro; Bukko, Hagayya, Maru and Babbo were the sub-clans of Nya'a. Similarly, Ebano, Daido and Nole were the sub-clans of Dubaro.⁵⁵ Wandimmu Nagash and Boni Tesfaye had listed the sons of Jaawwii, but they did not mention KIRAMU probably because they supported the view that KIRAMU was a sub-clan of GIDDA.⁵⁶ However, Ginbar Nagara mentioned both Calliya and KIRAMU in the list of clans who were said to be the founders of the *gadaa* center of *Odaa Bulluq*.⁵⁷

As it has already been stated earlier, Oromo group who live in a given territory might not necessarily be from among the same clan. Possibly, the mobile feature of traditional human beings, mixed nature of Oromo population movement, access of the early freedom to settle at one's own choice and the existence of blood relationships among all Oromo groups and the resultant interest of the people for visiting each other brought about the mixed nature of their settlement patterns. In addition, prophecy told to the people by the traditional fortune tellers locally called *oodduu* (necromancer) was among the main reasons for the changing of individuals' original places. Therefore, in many parts of the areas in which the Oromo people settled, there was a great probability of finding mixed clans and sub-clans.⁵⁸

⁵² Informant: Cherinnet Wakweyya.

⁵³ Boshera Jarbo, p.5; Informant: Imiru Yadeta.

⁵⁴ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

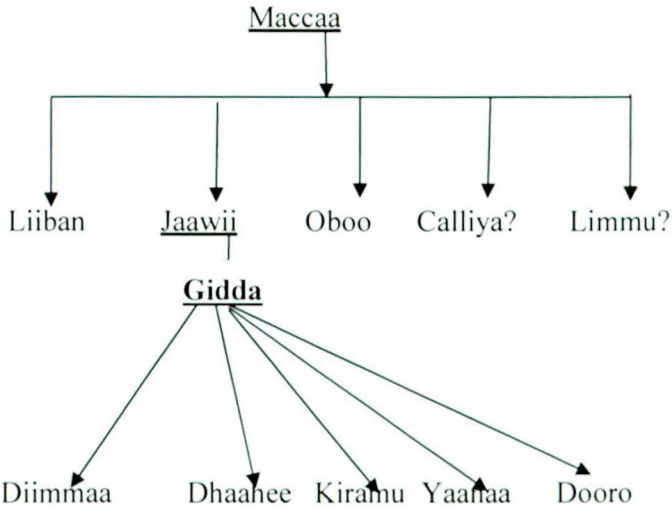
⁵⁵ Informant: Imiru Yadeta.

⁵⁶ Wandimmu Nagash and Boni Tesfaye, p.40.

⁵⁷ Ginbar Nagaraa (2010), *Seenaa Abiishee Garbaa (ca.1835-ca1877) fi Gootota Oromoo biroo Gabaabinaan* (A Short Biography of Abishe Garba and Other Patriots of Oromo), Adaamaa," pp.26-27

⁵⁸ Informant: Yadessa Gurmesssa.

Accordingly, the population of Gidda *woreda* was said to be the combination of various clans and sub-clans. Therefore, one could find either the Jaawwii clans or the direct descendants of Maccaa in the district under study. Convincingly, the two most dominant clans of the area were Calliya and Gidda. Despite the existence of variations from different sources, Diimmaa, Dhaahe, Kiramuu, Yaanaa, and Dooroo were said to be the sub-clans of Gidda whereas Eeban, Jaarso, Daalle, Seedaa, Udoo and Siriifo were the sons of Sob Calliya. Undoubtedly, the other sub-clans from the neighboring *woreda* were living in the district and the main sub-clans of the district were also living in the nearby territories. The work of Mesfin Dereje supports this fact when he stated that the sub-clans like Sirba, Halaba, Harele, Saperu, Warsu and Kebbo have settled in Gidda from Limmu with insignificant numbers.⁵⁹



(Source: Interview with Desalegn Feyisa and Gemechu Birra)

The mixed settlement patterns of different clans and sub-clans within a given district could presumably be the case for the fact that the concept of district itself was strange among the Oromo people. Despite the Oromo, non-Oromo group had also been lived in the district.⁶⁰

An Overview of the Non-Oromo Groups in the Gidda *Woreda*

The movement of peoples from place to place in search of better life is as old as human history. Traditional societies might have lived in different parts of the country by changing

⁵⁹ Mesfin Dereje (1995), "The History of Jidda-Ayyana Town to 1974," B.A Senior Essay, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, pp. 2-3 ; Informants: Gusse Mersha and Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁶⁰ Informants: Gusse Mersha and Dessalegn Feyisa.

the area of their residences. There would have been systems that they had used to adapt themselves with their environments. One of these systems was assimilation into the indigenous people of the area.⁶¹

The non-Oromo ethnic groups who had lived in Gidda *woreda* could be categorized in various ways. Based on the period of their advent, the early groups include the Damoto, Kaza and Sinicho. Historical sources regarding the conditions in which these early non-Oromo groups had arrived and lived in Gidda *woreda* were found to be obscure. Broadly speaking, the early non-Oromo and/or “impure Oromo” groups were called by the indigenous people as the *yaabbata*. The *yaabbata* in general had never established ownerships over the territory.⁶²

While some of these early non-Oromo peoples were assimilated and mixed with the Oromo particularly through the process of *guddifachaa* and *moggaasa*, the others who did not want assimilation were pushed out and had left the area by the advancing Oromo. The existence of the Kaza, in particular, was limited to the Valleys of the Angar, Dhidhessa and Abbay. The name of this group had encountered many changes as Adare, Sanqalla, Kaza and Gumuz one after the other. However, the people did not prefer to be called by the first three names for it was considered as derogatory.⁶³

The Damoto were said to have fled to Gojjam across the Abbay as the Oromo arrived in the area. However, the Sinicho were divided into two groups. While some of them were assimilated into the Oromo, the others moved to other neighbouring areas. According to Oljira, the Sinicho who adopted the Oromo culture and ways of life appeared to have been very difficult to be differentiated from the Oromo. More significantly, they did not trace their origin other than the Oromo. Majority of the assimilated Sinicho are found in the Amuru and the Gidda *woredas* of Northeastern Wallagga. Those who lived in Wasti area of the present

⁶¹ Informants: Dessalegn Feyisa; Gemechu Birra and Gusse Mersha.

⁶² Informants: Gobana *Abbaa* Burka and Shiferra Tesso.

⁶³ Oljira Tujuba (1994), “Oromo-Amhara Relations in Horro-Guduruu Awraja (Northeastern Wallagga) c. 1840s – 1941,” M.A Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, p. 14; Mesfin Dereje, p.4; Informant: Gobana *Abbaa* Burka.

day KIRAMU *woreda* were believed⁶⁴ to have been endowed with the ability of practicing magical activities.⁶⁵

The Sinicho who had refused assimilation were moved to other areas. For instance, the Sinicho who moved to Southern Gojjam are currently called Shinasha whereas those who are living in Wambara were identified locally as Dangabo.⁶⁶ The Dangabo were known in the local traditions for preparing a kind of traditional magician 'medicine' which was believed to have helped the people to have different fortunes. Therefore, many people from Gidda *woreda* used to visit this group of people. Nevertheless, those who had visited the Dangabo did not want to be disclosed. This was because the local people considered those who visited the Dangabo as sorcerers or at least their supporters.⁶⁷

The next group of the non-Oromo individuals who had lived in Gidda before the 20th century belonged to the Amhara people. They were brought to the area from the early 1870s till the close of the 19th century. These groups of individuals were assigned to the area first by Ras Adal Tesema of Gojjam. Later on, particularly after 1882, Menilek II continued the same process. It was carried out after a large number of ethnic groups were incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire. They came to the area with their own religion, Orthodox Christianity, and Amharic language as significant aspects of their culture.⁶⁸

Many of the Amhara people who were brought to Gidda *woreda* in the second half of the 19th century by Ras Adal Tesema and Menilek II could no more be socially distinguished as the non-Oromo. This was because of the fact that the majority of them were assimilated to the Oromo culture and way of life. As they were Oromized, many of them could not even speak the Amharic language, the vernacular language spoken in their own original homeland. Moreover, they did not prefer to be called Amhara.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ According to the available traditions, many of the magical activities were practiced secretly. Those who used to practice the magical activities would never tell us the ways they practice it. Therefore, ensuring each and every process involved and identifying the individuals who practice it is found to be very difficult.

⁶⁵ Oljira Tujuba, p.18.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 16.

⁶⁷ Boshera Jarbo, p. 3; Informant: Akuma Kedida.

⁶⁸ Oyvind M. Eide (2000), *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia: the Growth and Persecution of the Mekane Yesus Church, 1974-1985*, Oxford: James Currey, p.1; Informant: Kebede Biftu.

⁶⁹ Informant: Akuma Kedida.

They refrained from identifying themselves as Amhara partly because they were influenced by the negative attitude planted in the minds of the local people against the Amhara conquerors in general and the soldiers of the conquerors in particular. As the local people were suppressed by the *naftagna*, they did not have good attitudes towards the Amhara people who had arrived to Gidda *woreda* in the last decades of the 19th century. To express their aversion, a maxim was used by the Oromo of the area. In the Oromo traditions, it was called “*Foon Amaaraa lafee Oromoo mura*” meaning ‘the flesh of an Amhara amputates the bone of an Oromo’.⁷⁰ This saying has been common among the Gidda Oromo since 1897. This was among the indications of the occasions where the atrocious government system resulted in discrimination and hatred among the peoples of Ethiopia.

The Amhara individuals of the period were only identified with nominal and genealogical bases. This group of the non-Oromo people had lived in the area for more than a century. Many of their fathers and grand fathers were born in the area. Therefore, Gidda *woreda* seemed to be the original homeland for almost all of them.⁷¹

Finally, the non-Oromo groups who arrived in the Gidda *woreda* since the second half of the 20th century came to the area because of some other reasons. The main reasons were natural and manmade in nature. The non-Oromo of the period constituted the foreign investors, missionaries and the internal migrant-resettlers. The latter groups were the combinations of the Amhara and Tigre people who came from drought-stricken areas of Northern Ethiopia. The foreign citizens, the missionaries and the investors had played a great role in the history of resettlement and other socio-cultural life in the area. This was particularly true in Kiramu, Goobu and Guttin areas of the *woreda*.⁷²

Unlike those who had arrived accompanied by the conquest, the major non-Oromo groups of the second half of the 20th century had been arrived as migrant-resettlers coming from different parts of northern Ethiopia.⁷³ Therefore, Wallagga province in general and Gidda *woreda* in particular had been a home of the Oromo, Amhara, and Tigreans.

⁷⁰ Informant: Kebede Biftu.

⁷¹ Informants: Kebede Guta and Akuma Kedida.

⁷² Informants: Duressa Gonfa and Gobana *Abbaa* Burka.

⁷³ Informant: Gemechu Birra.

As it is already stated, the Oromo constitute the predominant and indigenous group who had lived in the area by using their egalitarian socio-cultural, political and economic system called *gadaa*. It regulated all aspects and everyday life of the Oromo. Wherever the people resided, it had been common that they often interacted and developed connections with one another.⁷⁴

For instance, the clans of Jaawwii Maccaa had close connections and a common *gadaa* centre at Odaa Bulluq for about two centuries (1600-1800). During this period, they were administered by laws promulgated at Odaa Bulluq *gadaa* centre. During this period, different clans of Jaawwii Maccaa had sent their representatives to attend the *gadaa* assembly at Odaa Bulluq. Possibly by natural and man-made causes, the further division and the split of some Jaawwii clans became inevitable by the beginning of the 19th century.⁷⁵

The Establishment of Kora Goobu as a *Gadaa* Assembly

Gadaa centers are places where Oromo people met each other for the making of *gadaa* laws, rules and regulations of the society. They are cultural and political centers of the people. Consecration and thanks giving for the *Waaqa* as well as *jeekkarsa*⁷⁶ are performed at these centers. It was also at these places that power was transferred to the next *Abbaa gadaa/Abbaa bokkuu*. Under one *gadaa* center, there were usually different *galmas* or compounds used for religious and other social discussions.⁷⁷

The splits and establishments of new *gadaa* centers from the relatively older ones had been initiated largely by natural demographic increment. The tremendous increase in population size often leads to the expansion and settlement of the people in remote areas. Due to the remoteness of the areas in which the people had settled on one hand, and the lack of modern transportation to travel to the older *gadaa* centers on the other, the people who had gone away often established new *gadaa* centers. This helped them to practice *gadaa* in their locality. These were common episodes in the history of the Oromo in general and those of

⁷⁴ Informants: Dessalegn Feyisa; Gemechu Birra and Gusse Mersha.

⁷⁵ Ginbaar Nagaraa, "Seenaa Abiishee Garbaa (ca. 1835-ca. 1877) fi gootota biro....," p. 3.

⁷⁶ According to Oromo traditions, the ritual songs of *Waaqeffannaa* religion are often called *jeekkarsa* or *dalagaa*. This was similar to *faarsaa* (hymn) of Christianity.

⁷⁷ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

Northeastern Wallagga in particular. Therefore, the number of *gadaa* centers were multiplied as the Oromo population increased and expanded over vast territories.⁷⁸

The first well known *gadaa* center established in Northeastern Wallagga was known as Odaa Bulluq. It was said that this center was established by the Jaawwii Oromo, following the northward movement of the sub-groups. It was located in the present day Horro *woreda*, 10 kilometers to the north of Shambu town, capital of Horro-Guduruu Wallagga. Almost all clans of Jaawwii Oromo had used this *gadaa* center until their diffusion. With tremendous population increase and settlement of some clans in the remote areas to its western direction, some of the founders faced hardships of attending the celebration of *gadaa* at this center. In the absence of modern transportation, they had used horses, as a means of transportation, to attend meetings at Odaa Bulluq.⁷⁹

Consequently, by the beginning of the 19th century⁸⁰, those Jaawwii clans beyond the Angar River were separated from Odaa Bulluq and used their own *gadaa* assembly at *Kora Goobu*⁸¹, located at about 12 kilometers to the north of Ayyaanaa, the capital of Gidda *woreda*. It is located at about 135 kilometers far from Odaa Bulluq, the *gadaa* center from which these Jaawwii clans were separated. Based on local traditions and a few unpublished materials, the Maccaa Oromo beyond the Angar River namely; Amuru, KIRAMU, Gidda, Calliya, Ebantu and Limmu selected *Kora Goobu* as a new *gadaa* center after a bull of a certain Akke Risa rested over the area.⁸²

Though some of them made a separation from Odaa Bulluq, the Maccaa Oromo on both sides of the Angar River have been making contacts with each other and were celebrating their *gadaa* rituals by inviting each other. Socially and politically, they had helped each other

⁷⁸ Dereje Hineu (June 2005), "Historical Significance of Some Major *Gadaa* Centers in Oromia," MA Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, p.97; Informants: Cherinnet Wakweyya and Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁷⁹ Ginbar Nagaraa (2010), *Seenaa Abiishee Garbaa...*, pp.26-27; Informant: Insarmu Nemerra.

⁸⁰ Ginbar Nagaraa, "A Biography of Abiishee Garbaa..." p. 5.

⁸¹ It is important to note the difference between Goobu and Gobbu, in this case, mainly to avoid confusion. Gobbu was the eldest one from among different sub-clans of Ebantu. Many families from among the Gobbu clan were remembered by having black tongue and wisdom of 'stopping rain', locally called *Caamsituu*. Goobu, on the other hand, was a place located in Gidda *woreda*, at about 12 kilometers north of Ayyaanaa town, the capital of Gidda *woreda*. It was at this place that *Kora Goobu*, the second *gadaa* center next to Odaa Bulluq, was established in Northeastern Wallagga.

⁸² Bayyanaa Biiftu and Galata Hayilu, "Seenaa Magaalaa Ayyanaa..." p. 6; Informant: Gusse Mersha.

against common enemies. Their interactions had a very long history. For instance, Odaa Jimma of Gidda had fought against the Gojjame on the side of Abishe Gerba of Horro.⁸³

Our sources are insufficient to figure out the duration of the period when *Kora* Goobu was used as a *gadaa* center of Maccaa Oromo beyond the Angar River. Based on the dominant oral sources, Amuru, Kiramu, Gidda, Calliya, Ebantu and Limmu had used this *gadaa* center for many years. The name *Kora* itself is a reflection of this episode. On its *Afaan* Oromo context, *kora* mean ‘an appointment’ which denotes the agreement between these Oromo sub-groups to meet each other at a place called Goobu.⁸⁴

After they had used this center for unspecified period of time, they were separated and each clan established their own *gadaa* centers in a similar manner, all following the places where their bulls rested. The reason for their separation was the vast territories over which they had settled and the remoteness from *Kora* Goobu. The first individual who opted for separation was said to be Bekku Dedde of Calliya. This was understood from the traditional saying: “*Maali yaa Beekkuu Deedde, maaliif macci si eegde?*” literally means ‘What happened Bekku Dedde, why did the public wait for you?’ This was said when Bekku became late for the last meeting of *Kora* Goobu and asked for the reason. It was said that Bekku responded by informing the others to search for their own centers as he had already got his *gadaa* center of Sob. Bekku Dedde was remembered in the traditions of Calliya as the first *Abbaa gadaa* of Sob *gadaa* center.⁸⁵

Accordingly, Amuru, Kiramu, Gidda, Calliya, Ebantu and Limmu established their own *Ardaa Jilaa* or *gadaa* centers at Nafuro⁸⁶, Darrabba, Dirre, Sob, Dilallo and Lemanti respectively. The new *gadaa* centers of these Maccaa Oromo were functional until the coming of the conquerors. Until then these clans used to slaughter different domestic animals at their newly established *gadaa* centers for the celebration of *gadaa* ceremony and *jaarii* ritual. Those of Ebantu, for instance, had been celebrating *jaarii* at a place called Fooqa Dilallo. Dubbuk Tirfi of Gobbu clan was remembered in the traditions of Ebantu for he was

⁸³ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁸⁴ Informants: Gemechu Birra and Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁸⁵ Informants: Gusse Mersha and Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁸⁶ The places identified with this name are found both in Gidda and Amuru *woredas*. However, the Nafuro which the Amuru Jaawwii had chosen as their *gadaa* center is located somewhere in Amuru district, and identified particularly as Nafuro Hole.

selected for slaughtering a bull at Dilallo. This was because of the fact that Dubbuk was from among the *hangaftuu* (eldest clan). The Oromo people give special recognition for the *hangaftuu*. One could not bypass river, begin limerick song, begin blessing and slaughter animal before the *hangaftuu*.⁸⁷

The same was true for those of Calliya except that the Sub-clans of Sob had slaughtered series of domestic animals by the eldest to youngest in the order of their seniority. Accordingly, the sub-clans of Eeban, Jaarso, Daalle, Seedaa, Udo and Siriifo had slaughtered bull, sheep, cow, heifer, goat and hen respectively. These respective animals had their own meanings in the view of the people. Based on their order, bull, sheep, cow, heifer, goat and hen represent praying for the goodness of men, compromise with God, women, girls, flowering plants and climate respectively.⁸⁸

After the conquest of the areas, the *gadaa* system was destroyed and the *gadaa* centers in turn ceased to give their functions. The conquerors started to propagate their own culture since the last quarter of the 19th century. Moreover, the new forms of political entities including regions, zones and *woredas* were less preferable to the *gadaa* system. This is because the *gadaa* system works well in clan based administration system. Throughout the process, however, emergence of monarchical system and urbanization brought about significant socio-cultural and economic transformations. Particularly, urbanization had brought together different individuals from different corners of the area and resulted in intense socio-cultural and economic interactions.⁸⁹

Urbanization and Socio-Cultural History of Gidda *Woreda*

The establishment of Ayyaanaa town was preceded by the emergence of early markets which were located between the Abbay River in the north and the Angar River in the south. These were like Nafuro, Calliya and Wasti. Particularly, Wasti, which was found to the extreme north of Ayyaanaa, near the Abbay River, was mentioned as main outlet for the Oromo of Gidda and the Amhara people of Gojjam long before the establishment of Ayyaanaa market.

⁸⁷ Informant: Kebeda Biftu.

⁸⁸ Informant: Gusse Mersha.

⁸⁹ Informants: Gusse Mersha and Dessalegn Feyisa.

This is remembered in Gidda traditions as, "... *daakuufuu daaksisuufuu yoo gabaan Waasti tole*" literally means, to grind or use a mill is if and only if the Wasti market is ok!⁹⁰

With the passage of time, particularly since the second half of the 19th century, the emergence of chiefs and establishment of region based administrative structure became inevitable. With the coming of territorial and monarchical based administrative structures, smaller entities like *woredas* or districts and provinces were established in different parts of the country. Most of the time, the establishment of markets in various areas of the country precedes that of these structured administrative entities.⁹¹

Traditions on the foundation of Ayyaanaa town were remembered in relation to a prominent woman called Ayyane Goro. Ayyane was the wife of Kumsa Odaa and mother of Jibat Kumsa.⁹² Since the last decades of the 19th century, Ayyane was a strong and well known *kommaarii* (a woman having the skill of preparing traditional alcoholic drinks). She had lived in the eastern part of the present day Ayyaanaa town. Men who returned from hunting and merchants of long distance trade often used her house to stay and drink alcohol drinks. Perhaps, Ayyane was the first famous woman to host different men in her house and sold her traditional beverages. When Ayyane started her work in the area, the territory of the present day Ayyaanaa town was inhabited by few individuals notably Berenda Kekebi, Abbaa Kotal and Soyom Kachisa. In memory of the third, the northeastern part of the town was called Soyoma Kasa. This name continued to be used until this day.⁹³

According to our informants, Ayyaanaa market was established by the efforts of Ayyane Goro at about 1815. This was said to be done with the permission of the *Mootii* of the period.⁹⁴ A profile of Ayyaanaa town which is obtained from the Mayor's office mentions the year 1815 as the year of its establishment. (See also Appendix II).⁹⁵ In this case, the

⁹⁰ Mesfin Dereje, p.26; Informant: Gemechu Birra.

⁹¹ Informant: Gusse Mersha.

⁹² Informants: Gemechu Birra and Abbabu Nagasa.

⁹³ Informants: Gusse Mersha; Dessalegn Feyisa and Gemechu Birra.

⁹⁴ In the absence of accurate sources, mentioning the name of the *Mootii* of the period was found to be difficult. This was because two contradictory sources were collected from two equally important groups. While one of the groups mentioned Kumsa Odaa as a *Mootii* of the period, there are also others who attested that Kumsa Odaa was too old and the power was in the hand of his son Jibat. Kumsa was the second *Mootii* of Gidda after his father Odaa Jimma.

⁹⁵ Mayor Office of Ayyaanaa town, Profile of Ayyaanaa town, No Folder, File and Ref. Numbers.

establishment of Ayyaanaa as a market center preceded the age of Finfinne, the capital of the country, by about eight decades.⁹⁶

After the coming of the Menilek soldiers, Ayyaanaa market served as the seat of the *nacci lebash*. With the coming of the Italians too, it became the place of their fortification. After the liberation of Gidda⁹⁷ from the Italian occupation, Ayyaanaa became the place of the *woreda* central administrative office having other *Miketil woredas* in Ebantu, Kiramu and Calliya. Ayyaanaa was established as a town and started to be ruled by municipality from the beginning of 1960s. The first governor of this city was a man called Amanu Duressa. From 1995, Ayyaanaa town began to be ruled as a modern town having two urban *kebeles* namely Ayyaanaa 01 and 02.⁹⁸

The foundation and growth of Ayyaanaa town was associated closely with surplus agricultural products, population settlement, abundant natural resources, transaction of commerce and its strategic location. It is found at the crossroad to Benishangul Gumuz, Haro-Limmu, Limmu, Ebantu, Kiramu, Naqamtee, and Amhara Regional State. The centrality of Gidda was understood from the existing proverb, '*Gidda gidduu lafaati, kan moggaa taa'u jira, Qeelloon biyya Dammaati kan gagaa hawwu jira, Horroon biyya horiiti, kan tokko dhabu jira*' meaning 'though Gidda is the central land, one lives on the edge; Kello is a home of honey, but there is one who misses wax, Horro is a land of livestock, but there is someone who does not have a cow'. Therefore, people who came from different corners met and had exchanged their products, ideas and culture in the town.⁹⁹

Since its establishment, Ayyaanaa market served as a place where one could get bean, onion, *teff (eragrostis)*, maize, *nug (guizotia Abyssinia)*, *daguzza*, ivory, butter, honey and different kinds of livestock. During the long distance trade, the town served as a center of exchange for those who came from southwestern part of Ethiopia and passed through Assendabo of Horro-Guduruu. The road which took to Basso of Gojjam passed through Gidda *woreda*. Triulzi had rightly stated this fact:

⁹⁶ Informants: Gemechu Birra and Kebeda Biftu.

⁹⁷ The liberation of Gidda was partial as it was then returned back to the feudal exploitive system. The only difference between the Italian occupation and the Amhara dominated feudal system was the fact that while the Italians were the foreigners, the *naftagna* were the internal colonizers.

⁹⁸ Bayyanaa Biiftuand Galataa Hayiluu, "Seenaa Magaalaa Ayyaanaa....," p. 27; Informant: Gemechu Birra.

⁹⁹ Informants: Gemechu Birra and Gusse Mersha.

*The merchants of the long distance spent some time in Horro-Guduruu. From Assendabo, the traders could reach the Thursday market of Embabo in a half day's easy journey, or proceed to Kombolcha where they would branch off Westward towards the markets of Horro, Amuru and Jidda.*¹⁰⁰

More significantly, Ayyaanaa town was one of the major slave markets of Western Ethiopia. The merchants bought and sold slaves at Ayyaanaa market. The merchants mostly drove slaves from Gidda through Burie market and took them to Dangila¹⁰¹ at night in fear of bandits. At Burie market, as Mesfin had stated, the price of slaves exported from Gidda cost 70 and 80 Thalers for young boys of about the age of ten, and 95 to 110 for young girls. Mesfin went on explaining that the price of the slaves increased in proportion to their beauty.¹⁰²

The slaves who have been exported from Gidda were not Sanqallas or dark-skinned at all. For the sake of getting high price, the influential chief of the period had sold many beautiful girls and strong non-Sanqalla men by smearing their faces with liquid made of charcoal. This was a mechanism which was used to make them black temporarily. For instance, during the reign of Haile Sellassie, when *Fitwarari* Amsalu Jibat was the chief of the district, the bandits had brought the Oromo, Sanqalla, Kaffa, Wolaitta and others as slaves. They brought these slaves to the house of Amsalu Jibat by going through Horro and Amsalu in turn sent these slaves to Gojjam. A certain Sheqo was among these bandits. This was against the cultural respect of humanity and had disturbed the social, cultural and economic freedom of the people. The exploitation of natural resources and suppression of the local people was made by the close connection developed between the chiefs of the district and that of the bandits.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ A. Triulzi (1975), "The Guduruu Oromo and their Neighbours in the Two Generations before the Battle of Embabo," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Volume XIII (1-2), p. 55.

¹⁰¹ During the long distance trade of 19th century, Dangila was the known slave market in Western part of Gojjam.

¹⁰² Mesfin Dereje, pp. 41-42.

¹⁰³ Informants: Shiferra Tesso and Gobana *Abbaa* Burka.

Basic Economic Activities

The basic means of livelihood for the peoples of the *woreda* are agriculture and animal husbandry. Some of the main crops of the area include maize, *teff* (*eragrostis*), *nug* (*guizotia Abyssinia*), *daguzza*, *salit* (*sesamum indicum*), wheat, barley, bean and onion. It had been common that the people of the area worked their agricultural fields both individually and cooperatively. When cooperative work is needed, voluntary based members were recruited and form particular groups like *daadoo*. *Daadoo* is a form of cooperative work based on circulating mutual help on agricultural fields. Despite its economic advantage, it helped the members to interact and make intense relationship among each others.¹⁰⁴

Daboo is also a kind of cooperative work which is asked and prepared by someone who wants to get help from the others. Then, they work agricultural field of *abbaa daboo* in cooperation. Someone who has violated *safuu* of the society and, as a result was secluded socially, could not prepare *daboo* for the people should not work for him. In addition to *daadoo* and *daboo*, people identify those who are in needy and help them on voluntary bases. When an individual faced a problem against his/her normal agricultural work, the neighbours, members of *iddir* or those who had close relationship with the victim often help him/her by working his/her agricultural fields. This is often done on voluntary bases. The invitation and food for all of these forms of work-oriented self-help associations was prepared based on one's own capacity.¹⁰⁵

In addition to agriculture, people were engaged in livestock rearing. The dominant livestock of the area are cattle, sheep and goats. Gidda is the major source of honey and butter with many *dhibbisoo*¹⁰⁶. Having one hundred cows would bring prestige beyond economic value. The *dhibbisoo* got improved social status than the others. If one's own cows reached a hundred, the owner usually prepares ceremony to accomplish 'stomach wearing' ritual. On the 'stomach wearing' ceremony, the relatives, neighbours and friends of the owner were invited to celebrate it together.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Informants: Kebeda Guta and Akuma Kedida.

¹⁰⁵ Informants: Gusse Mersha and Gemechu Birra.

¹⁰⁶ *Dhibbisoo* are those 'rich individuals' who have a hundred cows and thus 'wore the stomach of a cow' as a sign of richness.

¹⁰⁷ Informants: Kebeda Guta and Akuma Kedida.

As a form of economic activities, women prepare different kinds of beverages and used it for their livelihood. Different *kommaariis* competed each other in preparing best beverages with required qualities. Men used to drink such alcoholic drinks often collectively by inviting each other on voluntary bases. The indigenous socio-cultural life and economic activities were affected with decline of the *gadaa* system. Its decline was not an overnight phenomenon but came to happen through gradual processes of transformation.¹⁰⁸

The Decline of *Gadaa* and Socio-Cultural Changes

Gadaa helped the society to live a peaceful life. One of its principles had been the equality of all human beings. It also stressed elder-younger arrangement where the latter has to respect the former. The era of spear weakened the *gadaa* system because the chiefs used force and strived to hold power for long period. Consequently, people who were ruled under the chiefs were forced to participate in the wars. In the last quarters of 19th century, the coming of the conquerors had worsened the problem and the dying *gadaa* system was declined.¹⁰⁹ With absence of the *gadaa* system, its principles of equality and social justice were affected. This in turn endangered social interactions and social developments.¹¹⁰

A history of northeastern Wallagga during the first half of 19th century was called *Jabana Eeboo* ('Era of a spear'). Era of spear implies the period of power competition between different chiefs found in the south of the Abbay River and use of spear to come to power. The known chiefs of the period in south of the Abbay were Odaa Jimma of Gidda, Nekus Delana of Limmu, Kachir Bari of Ebantu, Garba Addamo of Kiramu, Kitil Gosu of Amuru, Tesso Kenno of Jardega, Qadida Wanabe of Jimma Rare and Sori Gela of Jimma Genneti. These were the first threat to the *gadaa* system. This was because they worked and ruled the people out of the *gadaa* values. They remained in their position for more than eight years. Odaa Jimma was known as the first *Abbaa Eebo* (father of spear) of Gidda. Odaa was said to be the prominent leader who had contested with Abishe Gerba's power in the early 1860s.¹¹¹ The society under these chiefs did not live peaceful life for they were forced to participate in

¹⁰⁸ Informant: Kebeda Biftu.

¹⁰⁹ Informants: Dessalegn Feyisa.

¹¹⁰ Dereje Hineu, p.13.

¹¹¹ Ginbar Nagara, "A Biography of Abiishee Garbaa..." p. 44.

the civil wars on the side of their respective chiefs. This all were against the tradition of the *gadaa* system.¹¹²

Odaa was famous in Gidda before the coming of the Gojjame. He was born at Sombo, around Watino forest in Kiramu area of the district. He was born from a poor family of Abebe sub-clan. Informants confirm that Odaa was famous for his physical strength. There was a very long exciting story about the contact between Odaa Jimma and *nyaataa*.¹¹³ According to informants, Odaa Jimma was advised by this *nyaataa* which acted as a prophet and changed his house from Sombo to Dirre. Sombo is place which is located in present day Kiramu district and Dirre is located in present day Gidda Ayyaanaa. It is located 8kms to the northeast of Ayyaanaa town. As time went on, Odaa Jimma became the first Chief of Gidda and extended his power over Gidda, Ebantu, Limmu and Amuru. He was the first famous chief in northeastern Wallagga even before Abishe Gerba of Horro.¹¹⁴

Odaa was said to be a contemporary chief with Bakaree Godaana of Naqamtee. Mesfin stated that Bakaree had developed diplomatic relation with Odaa Jimma of Gidda in defeating the rebels like Dano Bera of Leeqaa Qumba. When Bakaree sent delegates to Gidda under the leadership of his son, Ligdi Bakaree, for military assistance, Odaa Jimma responded by sending military support under the leadership of Tufa Sabu, one of the renowned war commanders of *Mootii* Odaa Jimma of Gidda. The combined forces of Gidda and Naqamtee overwhelmed the force of Dano Bera. The folklore collected by Mesfin Dereje confirms this connection and its results as follows:

Afaan Oromo
Warri Bakaree Godaanaa
Mootii Giddaa nutti waamanii
Bakakkaadhaan gad nu reebani

English
The Bakaree Godaana's Family
Called up on us the king of Gidda and
Bombarded us as a thunder.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Informant: Cherinnet Wakweyya.

¹¹³ *Nyaataa* among traditional Gidda Oromo is hard to define. It is a confusing animal which can change its type, once as a man and at its wish to other animals.

¹¹⁴ Ginbaar Nagaraa, "Seenaa Abiishee Garbaa (ca. 1835-ca. 1877) fi gootota biro...", p.53; Informants: Dessalegn Feyisa; Gemechu Birra and Abbabu Nagasa.

¹¹⁵ Mesfin Dereje, p.21.

The chief system started by Odaa Jimma was continued to usurp the hereditary power and endangered the socio-cultural interactions until the second half of the 20th century. Different chiefs had usurped the position of the *gadaa* leaders and controlled power based on hereditary bases. Odaa brought together people of different *woredas* under his control. However, the successors of Odaa namely Kumsa Odaa, Jibat Kumsa and Amsalu Jibat ruled only Gidda *woreda* without extending their powers on the neighboring districts. The seat of their administration was Dirre¹¹⁶ except for Kumsa who had used Gendo as his seat. The prevalence of rivalry between different chiefs affected the socio-cultural interactions of the people. For instance, Garba Addamo of Kिरामु had fought Kumsa Odaa as Kumsa was not as strong as his father. But Kumsa was yet victorious over Garba Addamo. The horse of Kumsa was called Doro.¹¹⁷ As Kumsa became too old, he gave his son Jibat to a man called Adal Moti so that the latter was requested pleasantly to take care of Jibat and brought him to power. Adal had lived in Konnojji area of Gidda *woreda*. Accordingly, Jibat was grown up in the house of Adal Moti.¹¹⁸

It was said that Jibat Kumsa had participated in the battles of Adwa in 1896, and Segale in 1916. He had built Orthodox Churches at Gendo and Wasti. The two churches were *Iyesus* and *Kedanemeret* respectively. Unlike Dhuguma Jaldesso of Limmu, Jibat Kumsa had not fought hard with the *naftagna*. Jibat was said to be the first *mootii* of Gidda to get the title of *Fitwarari* by allying himself with Menilek II of Shewa and for he had participated in the battle of Adwa. It was also said that Menilek had sent him about 500 rifles known locally as *wajagera*. The head of the delegates who went to bring the rifles from Ankober was *Grazmach* Berenda Kekebi, on behalf of *Fitwarari* Jibat. However, the alliance of Jibat and Menilek did not save the indigenous socio-cultural and economic structure.¹¹⁹

The last hereditary chief of Gidda, *Fitwarari* Amsalu, was also a prominent chief but had submitted to the *naftagna*. *Fitwarari* Amsalu was the greatest chief over many *balabats*¹²⁰ of the *woreda*. The known *balabats* in the *woreda* who were accountable to *Fitwarari* Amsalu

¹¹⁶ There are two areas of the *woreda* which had been identified with this name. These are Dirree Guddaa and Dirre Amsalu. It was the latter which was used as the seat of the chiefs.

¹¹⁷ Informant: Gusse Mersha.

¹¹⁸ Informant: Gemechu Birra.

¹¹⁹ Mesfin Dereje, p.52; Informant: Gemechu Birra.

¹²⁰ *Balabat* was the highest authority over a sub-clan and occasionally rule other neighboring society. The status of becoming a *balabat* was more of hereditary.

include Kebeda Gerba of Seedaa, Bajira Agayyo of Kamela, Saba Adu and Farada Ofgai of Bidaru, and Birra Wakke of Nonno. Qanno Warabu of Udoo was another *balabat* under Amsalu. When Amsalu allied himself with the *naftagna* and made an expedition to Calliya, Qanno Warabu defended them and they faced difficulty of passing through Goobu.¹²¹

The *balabats* in the area of present day Kiramu *woreda* did not come under the lordship of *Fitwarari* Amsalu. They were independent of Amsalu and ruled their own respective areas. The known *balabats* in Kiramu were *Balambaras* Abdisa Jaleta, *Balambaras* Mulgeta Bekela, Ballis Sori and Siyyoum Gameda. The boundary between *Fitwarari* Amsalu and that of the lords of Kiramu was said to be the *Waraabessa* River.¹²²

Many of the *balabats* made their connections with the bandits so smooth that they shared the stolen things from the latter. During the time of Amsalu Jibat, for instance, the society was disturbed not only by the feudal system but also by the prevalence of bandits in Gidda. Therefore, people were discouraged to develop strong interactions among themselves. The known bandits remembered in the traditions of the area include Qinat Dame, Kitila Hunde, Bekana Geneti and Dinka Feyisa. As it was stated earlier, a certain Sheqo was also a bandit known by bringing slaves to the house of *Fitwarari* Amsalu. When the issue of the bandits became serious, the Gondores warned Amsalu to arrest and bring them to Arjo. The only bandit who was killed with warning of the Arjo based Gondore administration on one hand and Amsalu's order on the other was Qinat Dame. Perhaps, for he was from among the Abebe, the sub-clan of the chief, Kitila Hunde was saved from murder. Others were not caught either for they were hidden or protected by the public. The problems related to *naftagna-gebbar* system also continued until it was interrupted by Italian Occupation.¹²³

During the early period of their entrance to Gidda, *Fitwarari* Amsalu inflicted heavy resistance against the Italians and their *bandas*. Later on, however, he was surrendered to the Italians and was then detained. He returned to Gidda after his release and continued to rule Gidda until his natural death around 1964.¹²⁴ His wife *Giiftii* Abbabu raised two reasons for the illness of Amsalu. One was said to be the role of *tolchituu* (sorcerer) and the other was

¹²¹ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

¹²² Informant: Imiru Yadeta.

¹²³ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

¹²⁴ Informants: Gemechu Birra and Abbabu Nagasa.

the result of the sin that he had done against innocent people. His sin in this case implies Amsalu's measures on his slaves and the whole peasants under his control. Whatever the real cause for his serious headache might have been, Amsalu died in 1964 in Dirre Dawa where he stayed for treatment with the help of Abbabu's relatives living in Dirre Dawa. Then, his dead body was taken to Gidda. From the death of her husband to the coming of the *Darg, Giiftii* Abbabu replaced her husband's position and administered Gidda for one decade (1964-1974).¹²⁵ As it was stated earlier, how much strong the chiefs were, the incorporation of Gidda became practical as they submitted first to the Gojjame and later on to Menilek II.

Incorporation and its Socio-Cultural Impact

Traditions and some scholarly works tell us that various factors lead to the coming of Gojjame king to the area. These include the internal conflicts and competitions among the local Oromo, the invitation made to him by some of the notorious leaders and his own age-old ambition of controlling the resourceful areas of Northeastern Wallagga. This enabled *Ras Adal Tesema* (later King Teklehaymanot) to come to Horro-Guduruu around 1872. His ambition became practical when Jibat Busho of Guduruu and Qadida Wanabe of Jimma-Rare allied themselves with Adal Tesema and invited his military intervention in their local quarrels with Abishe Gerba of Horro. After he crossed the Abbay River and camped at Qoqor plain, Adal tactfully sent a message to Abishe through Jibat Busho and Qadida wanabe promising to make him master of Gidda and Limmu. In this manner, Jibat Busho and Qadida Wanabe had thrown both Abishe and Northeastern Wallagga into the hands of the common enemy.¹²⁶

After they controlled Horro, the forces of Adal proceeded to the neighboring regions like Amuru, Gidda, KIRAMU, Ebantu and Limmu. Informants also argued that the forces of Adal massacred around 900 households from Amuma sub-clans of Ebantu at the battle of Tarbi. This destroyed three sub-clans of Amuma. The Gidda Oromo did not fight hard with the Gojjame. Jibat Kumsa was said to be the *mootii* of Gidda during this period. Mesfin had stated that the only Oromo chief of Gidda who challenged the Gojjame of the period was

¹²⁵ Informant: Abbabu Nagasa.

¹²⁶ Tesema Ta'a (1986), "The Political Economy of Western Central Ethiopia...." p.129. Informant: Gusse Mersha.

Kassa Dako. According to Mesfin, Kassa was defeated by *Fitwarari* Wirtu of Dongoro who acted on behalf of the Gojjame to secure promotion of rank.¹²⁷

This was a period when Oromo indigenous culture and *seera gadaa* (*gadaa* laws) of the area declined and the Amhara culture started to be implanted in northeastern Wallagga in general and Gidda *woreda* in particular. The Gojjame camped around Cabir, Nafuro, Ayyaanaa, Dagam and Ilala asked for the coming of their wives and the Orthodox priests to build churches just after one year of their coming. Based on their question, *tabots* as well as the wives of the Gojjame were brought to them after around two years of their coming.¹²⁸ Then the Gojjame started the building of Orthodox churches on ritual places of the Oromo.¹²⁹ Through this manner, the Orthodox religion had succeeded in its expansion in Wallagga only after more than fifteen centuries of its introduction to the country.

The defeat of Adal Tesema at the battle of Embabo (1882) and the coming to Wallagga of Menilek II brought no significant improvement for the socio-cultural lives of the Gidda Oromo. But it brought the transfer of real power from Gojjames to Shoans. The Oromo of Northeastern Wallagga were among the first to be conquered by Menilek's general, *Ras* Gobena, in 1882.¹³⁰ While the feudal system exploited Oromo resources, the *naftagna* suppressed the Oromo rights, tradition and culture. At the expense of the indigenous culture, different unfamiliar practices and consumption oriented rituals were introduced. The form of *qaalluu* was transformed during this period. One which had been existed since the period of conquest had not been *qaalluu* rather it was the *qaallichaa* (magician-priest).¹³¹

The Amhara people of the period who were brought to Gidda, either by Adal Tesema or Menilek II, became lords of the local people. Particularly, Menilek's soldiers were the ardent enemies of the Oromo. Oromo people were enslaved on their own land. Evidences

¹²⁷ Mesfin Dereje, p.43; Informant: Biratu Melese.

¹²⁸ Informants: Kebeda Biftu and Wejega Nukus.

¹²⁹ A.Triulzi, p. 61; Tesema Ta'a, "The Political Economy of Western Central Ethiopia" p.129;

Informant: Gemechu Birra.

¹³⁰ Trimmingham (1976), *Islam in Ethiopia*, Oxford University Press, London, p.128.

¹³¹ Tesema Ta'a, "The Political Economy of Western Central Ethiopia" p.129.

from our informants corroborates that “if the *naftagna* saw fat bull or sheep, beautiful trousers or wife they would make it their own”.¹³²

The Gondore, who were settled in Arjo and were distributed to different *woredas* of Wallagga, had lived peaceful and safety life with the labour of local Oromo peasants. These Gondores were those who had returned from the battle of Adwa, camped at Arjo at about 1897, distributed to different districts, and in turn given land by the Emperor. It was in relation to their coming that Arjo became the seat of central administrators of parts of Wallagga from 1897 till the Italian occupation.¹³³

Informants told us that the *nacci lebash* (an Amharic terms for ‘white wearers or men in white clothes’), in particular were those who were assigned as ‘peace keepers’. They resided in towns and had given power of punishing people for some offences. Therefore, prayer of the period was remembered in the tradition as, “*nacci labaashii jalaa Rabbi nu baasi adaraa*” meaning ‘Please God, save us from the hands of the white wearers’. This was among the clear manifestations of the superiority of one nation over the others.¹³⁴

In addition, there were *melkegnas* who were assigned as *mootii* of the *safars*. The feudal exploitation started by the Gojjame in the last quarter of the 19th century continued until the coming to power of the military government in 1974. However, there was interruption with the coming of the Italian occupation in 1936. The Italians drove out the Amhara from the *woreda*. The rivalry between the Italians and the Amhara conquerors was reasonable for both of them were ‘colonizers’ of the same land. The Italian occupation (1936-1941) intervened in and interrupted the ethnic and cultural superiority of the *naftagna* for five years. However, the exploitive feudal system and egotist *naftagna* group were restored after the withdrawal of the Italian occupiers.¹³⁵

¹³² Informant: Kebeda Biftu.

¹³³ Informant: Cherinnet Wakweyya.

¹³⁴ Tabor Wami (2015), *Barreeffamoota Loogii fi Seena Dhugaa* (Partisan Discourse and Authentic History), Artistic Printing Press, Addis Ababa, p.559.

¹³⁵ Informant: Kebeda Biftu.

CHAPTER TWO

IMPERIAL RULE AND SOCIO-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS AMONG THE PEOPLES OF GIDDA *WOREDA* (1936-1974)

The Italian Occupation and its Socio-Cultural Impact in Gidda *Woreda* (1936-1941)

An Italian Catholic missionary of Naqamtee, who succeeded Barlasina in 1924, was called Parde Borello. Borello made detailed study of geographical and socio-cultural conditions in and around Naqamtee. After the fall of Finfinne to the Italians, Borello, who was expelled once, returned to Ethiopia to serve as a guide to Italian occupation of Naqamtee and its surrounding. The former priest Borello then became a guider of the invaders and informed them the situation in Naqamtee which he considered favorable for occupation.¹

Accordingly, in the fall of 1936, Naqamtee and its surrounding areas fell under Italian occupation. In the same manner, Gidda *woreda* in particular was occupied in the late 1936.² Dispatched from Naqamtee, the Italian invading troops guided by Dhuguma Jaldesso of Limmu occupied Gidda, Ebantu and Limmu. The Italian leader of this region was General Baketi. Dhuguma Jaldesso was assigned to them by *Dejjazmach* Habte Mariam of Naqamtee who was already surrendered to the Italians. Due to uncoordinated resistance and Muslims' inclination to Italians, Gidda Oromo in particular became an easy prey to the Italian occupation. The Muslims inclined to the Italians because they were not happy with the Christian domination and suppression of their rights.³

In Northeastern Wallagga in general and Gidda *woreda* in particular, the Italians used the Eritreans whom they had trained for the purpose of Ethiopian invasion. They were locally called *Amasani*. For subduing patriots in the whole parts of Gidda, Limmu, Ebantu and Amuru *woredas*, the Italians used their fortification in Ayyaanaa town, around the present day Gidda Ayyaanaa hospital.⁴

¹ Amsalu Temesgen (1983), "Italian Occupation and Response in and Around Naqamte, 1936-1941," B.A. Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, p. 17.

² Boshera Jarbo, p.46.

³ Mesfin Dereje, p. 57; Informant: Mustefa Ibrahim.

⁴ Informant: Gusse Mersha.



Gidda Oromo experienced both submission to and resistance against the Italians due to the existence of two opposing groups, *bandas* and patriots. Correspondingly, the society was divided into two opposing groups. Patriots of the period were divided into two. The first groups were those of the local patriots who conducted their own struggle in the area of their villages and its surroundings. The second group was those of the Shoan patriots who were from among the former officials of Emperor Haile Sellassie I. After the emperor had left the country for London, they continued strong patriotic resistance. The latter group remained in forests and revolved in various parts of Northeastern Wallagga and confronted the Italians as well as their *banda* in different areas. The notable leaders of this group were *Shalaaqa* (later *Ras*) Mesfin Sileshi, *Bilata* (later *Dejazmach*) Takla Walda Hawariat, *Grazmach* (later *Dejazmach*) Zawde Asfaw and *Woyzaro* Kebedach Seyoum. There were cases where both groups had helped each other towards their common objectives. The common goal was defeating the Italians and their patriots.⁵

The early resistances of the local patriots like *Fitawrari* Amsalu Jibat of Gidda were unsuccessful and surrendered by the Italians in 1937. Then, *Fitwarari* Amsalu was taken first to Naqamtee, and then to Bedelle, Jimma and Italian Somaliland as prisoner. Jimma was the head quarter of Italian administration over Western Ethiopia. There was also a rumor⁶ that Amsalu and Sima Hirpha of Haaroo who later took Christian name Sima Hailemariam in Kिरamu were later transferred to and were detained in Rome where they stayed until liberation. The following proverbs were uttered by Dhuguma Jaldesso and other *bandas* of the period to show their happiness for the capture of *Fitwarari* Amsalu:

Afaan Oromoo

English

Amsaaluu fi Simaa hoo Roomaa buusanii
Yaa warra Giddaa moofaa duutani
Maalumaaf teessu duukaa hin buutani?

Amsalu and Sima were taken to Rome
 You Gidda people, you died with worn out cloth⁷
 Why don't you wake up and follow them?⁸

⁵ Oljira Tujuba, p.134; Informant: Gusse Mersha.

⁶ The gossip that Amsalu and Sima were detained in Rome was either true or the strategy that the *bandas* had used to demoralize the patriots.

⁷ The expression 'worn out cloth' in this case was used to mean that the patriots were hopeless for their strong leaders were surrendered.

⁸ Informant: Abbabu Nagasa.

This was a happy day to Dhuguma Jaldesso of Limmu and other *bandas*. Dhuguma Jaldesso was the one who had organized the collaborators of present day Gidda, Ebantu, Limmu and KIRAMU *Woredas*. His title was more than *banda*, and he was locally called *Kapo*. *Banda* and *Kapo* are titles which were given by the Italians for their collaborators and organizers respectively.⁹

The patriotic resistances in the area had not ceased with the capture of *Fitwarari* Amsalu Jibat. There were other strong local patriots who had fought the Italians and their *bandas* from different parts of the district. Some of the notable patriots like Kitila *Abbaa* Danbo and Nemerra Defersha of Eban, Getachew Siyoum of Wasti, Tolera Agayyo of Kamela, Sori Kuma of Nonno, Farada Ofgai of Bidaru and Akkasa Saidu of Irga were remembered in Gidda tradition for their strong resistance against the Italian occupation of Calliya and its surroundings. Dhuguma Jaldesso suffered strong resistance from these patriots. For instance, the following traditional limerick songs express the strong determination and resistance of Farada Ogai.¹⁰

<u><i>Afaan Oromoo</i></u>	<u>English</u>
<i>Karaa Fareen dhaabatu</i>	On the side where Farada stands
<i>Limmu karaa hin gaafatu</i>	Limmu do not ask the way
<i>Baandaan mataa hin baafatu</i>	Banda cannot stand upright
<i>Baandaan Dhugumaa Jalduu</i>	Banda of Dhuguma Jaldesso
<i>Calliya Buutee hin galtu</i>	Cannot escape from Calliya
<i>Akkas jedhe Faannichi</i>	The patriots has said this
<i>Caakkaa Calliyaa galee</i>	Entering the juggles of Calliya
<i>Baandaa keessatti qale</i>	Slaughtered the <i>banda</i> ¹¹

There were patriots who had killed the *bandas* deliberately. For instance, Nemerra Defersha of Eban was a strong patriot and had once looted the *bandas* and tortured Italians. After he escaped to Gojjam crossing the Abbay River, his lordship over Eban was taken over by Hafa Gusha of Seedaa. The latter had no legitimate right to be

⁹ Informants: Abbabu Nagasa and Gusse Mersha.

¹⁰ Informants: Gusse Mersha and Dessalegn Feyisa.

¹¹ Informant: Gusse Mersha.

balabat over Eban clan for he was from Seedaa clan. Despite this illegitimate inheritance, Nemerra was disappointed by Hafa's collaboration with Dhuguma Jaldesso of Limmu. Therefore, Nemerra had once returned from Gojjam and killed Hafa Gusha at Jangir. This was happened towards the last years of Italian occupation of the area. Similar sounding limerick songs were said for the strength of Nemerra Defersha as follows:

Afaan Oromoo

Namarraa Dafarshaa

Isa garaan nyaqarsaa

Yoo dute hin bubbisa

Yoo dha'e hin kuffisa

English

Nemerra Defersha

whose heart was as strong as stone

mistrals if he was disappointed

if he hit, everyone would fall down¹²

However, the main problems were lack of coordination among the patriots and superiority of the Italian firearms. The Italians used their military guns.¹³ Therefore, many of the patriots were defeated morally and materially. Many of them were killed in the hands of Dhuguma and his supporters. These were like Gemechu Tuli and Saraqa Seto of Seedaa and Haga Bakure of Udoo.¹⁴

Informants told us that Tesso Danfa of Ebantu, Dinsa Rorro of Limmu and File Mendera of Guduruu were also strong patriots in fighting the Italians and the *bandas* of the area. The commitment of File Mendera in particular initiated other patriots to fight Italians. The strength and endeavor of File Mendera was also remembered by the following sayings:

Afaan Oromoo

Amaasaniin daggalaa

Kamin ciree danda'aa?

Jedhe Filee Mandaraa

Inni Coomman qarqaraa

English

The *Amasani* were as forests
Whom could I cut down and finish?
File Mendera has said this
Who was nearby Comman and

¹² Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

¹³ Informants: Gusse Mersha and Dessalegn Feyisa.

¹⁴ Informants: Gusse Mersha and Abbabu Nagasa.

Despite the existence of strong patriotic resistance, the Italian occupation of Gidda *woreda* had gained many collaborators. Most of the people opted to be ruled under the Italians than under the ‘internal colonizers’ or Amhara conquerors. This was due to severe exploitation and oppression that the *naftagna* had carried out in the area on the eve of the Italian occupation. As a result, large numbers of people were organized under the leadership of Dhuguma Jaldesso and persecuted the *naftagna* from the area. The fact that Dhuguma persecuted the Gondore and aligned himself with the Italians resulted in severe dissatisfaction by many patriots. Consequently, conflict of interest developed between the patriots and the Dhuguma’s group. The grievance developed between the patriots and the collaborators resulted in division of society, minor skirmishes, large battles and death of many individuals. In addition, many houses (of the patriots) were burnt down by collaborators. For instance, the house of *Fitwarari* Amsalu Jibat of Gidda and that of Nagasa Gurmū of Amuru were burnt by Dhuguma Jaldesso and his supporters.¹⁶

Dhuguma Jaldesso of Limmu led the combined forces of Limmu, Gidda, Ebantu, Kiramu, and Amuru, and faced the forces of the Shoan patriot under Mesfin Sileshi at the battle of Deggo in Amuru towards the last years of Italian occupation of the area. The patriots of eastern parts of Horro Guduruu had sided with the Shoan patriots against the forces of Dhuguma. Moreover, there was weak coordination among the forces of Dhuguma. As a result, the battle of Deggo was completed with the victory of Shoan patriots.¹⁷

After the battle of Deggo, the forces of Mesfin Sileshi marched to Limmu and confronted with Dhuguma Jaldesso once again at the battle of *ulaa* Bole. The forces of Dhuguma Jaldesso were made up of Dimmaa, Guutoo and Anno sub-clans. Though the Anno sub-clan had shown great determination in fighting the forces of Mesfin, all were defeated at the end. The great commitment of the Anno sub-clan at the battle of *ulaa* Bole was remembered by a saying, “*Gaafa ulaa Bolee, Annoon dhugaa lole*” meaning “On the day of the battle of *ulaa* Bole, Anno fought a true war”. However, the Dhuguma’s resistance ended in failure.¹⁸

¹⁵ Informants: Gusse Mersha and Kebeda Biftu.

¹⁶ Informants: Gemechu Birra and Abbabu Nagasa.

¹⁷ Informant: Imiru Yadeta.

¹⁸ Informants: Gemechu Birra and Alamu Regassa.

How much strong the patriots were, the Italians stayed in the areas and influenced the socio-cultural, economic and political conditions. Traditions remember both positive and negative consequences of the period of Italian occupation. To start with the positive ones, the interruption of feudalism, restoration of lands snatching it from the *balabats* to the peasants, road constructions, abolition of slavery and liberation from the *naftagna* were observed at least for five years. More significantly, the Italian occupation falsified the view that power was given to the Semitic groups 'from above' (the creator).¹⁹

Under the rule of the Italians, Wallagga *gabbars* (tenants) were allowed to use the land which they previously rented from the landlords. Our informants corroborates that the period of Italian occupation was characterized by the abolishment of free labor services and reduction in the amount of tax paid by the peasants than that of the Gojjame, Gondore and Shoans. In the same manner, the cultural defect brought about by the Italian occupation was far less than that of the *naftagna*. The purpose of the Italians was said to be to weaken the possible coordinated resistance by isolating the Amhara from the Oromo. The early Amhara resettlers (the *naftagna* group) and Italians fought each other over the control of Northeastern Wallagga because both considered themselves as superior group than the indigenous people.²⁰ No matter what the real plan of the Italians was, the expulsion of many people of Amhara origin from Gidda and its surroundings by the Italians had helped the local people to regain more access to land. However, many generous Oromo individuals like Tita Neno of Ebantu had protected and had hidden many Amhara in their area and saved them from the persecution.²¹

Though it involved inhuman treatment of the people, the Italians constructed road over Dicho hills and opened the way between Gidda and Naqamtee. The road building was accompanied by coercion and one has to dig the ground being incarcerated his two legs. General coordinator of the construction of the road was a certain Italian called Gibtan. Phimpho was also an Italian who was responsible for the security of the area, and his

¹⁹ Informant: Insarmu Nemerra.

²⁰ Informant: Gobana *Abbaa* Burka.

²¹ Informants: Wejega Nukus and Insarmu Nemerra.

station is currently called Phimpho.²² The Italians had used *jalba* (boat) to cross and re-cross the Angar River as there was no bridge on the river.²³

However, the Italian occupation of Gidda had many defects as well. More than the other defects, *Amasani* of the Italians were said to have taken away wives from their husbands, and ate calves of the people. They created these problems on all people including the Muslims who had shown an inclination towards them. The *Amasani* often ate different kinds of birds which were not allowed in the culture of the area. The groupings as *bandas* and patriots remained common during the period of the Italian occupation and continued for some years even after the liberation.²⁴ The Italian collaborators became ashamed of their activities and highly deserted by the society and they were insulted as traitors.²⁵ Death of people and the burning of patriots' house were also obvious during the Italian occupation of Northeastern Wallagga. For instance, Golja Sobo of KIRAMU was killed in the hands of the *Amasani*.²⁶

As it was the case in many parts of Ethiopia, the combined efforts of internal patriotic resistances and external supports resulted in the withdrawal of the Italians on one hand and the restoration of Haile Sellassie I with its feudal administration on the other. When they left northeastern Wallagga in 1941, the Italians tossed almost all of their materials into the Angar River to avoid its possible use by the peoples of the area.²⁷

Restoration of Imperial Rule and Socio-cultural interactions (1941-1974)

The restoration to power of Haile Sellassie I in 1941 was followed by the return of the *balabats* and the feudal system. Whether it was planned to compromise dissatisfied patriots²⁸ or to reward them for their endeavor of not giving their independence to Italians, the emperor rewarded them with prestigious titles. Indeed, the patriots were given new titles and wore the *qamisa* (typical cloth of respect) and various *bandas* found themselves with the fear of their fate. Amsalu Jibat of Gidda was among the few patriots of Northeastern Wallagga to get the

²² Informants: Akuma Kedida and Kebeda Guta.

²³ Informants: Gobana *Abbaa* Burka and Shiferra Tesso.

²⁴ Informants: *Hajj* Mustefa Ibrahim and Gobana *Abbaa* Burka.

²⁵ Beyene Biftu (2017), "A History of the Maccaa Oromo of the Angar-Gadii Region, Ca. 1870s-1991," M.A Thesis, Department of History, Jimma University.

²⁶ Informant: Imiru Yadeta.

²⁷ Informant: Kebeda Biftu.

²⁸ Many patriots were dissatisfied with Haile Sellassie I for he had left the country for the enemies.

title of *Fitwarari*. There were many individuals who were given the title of *Balambaras*. Few of them were Abdisa Jaleta of KIRAMU, Kebeda Gerba of SEDA, Mekonnin Sima, Terefa Golasa, Abetu Guluju and Hundera Kesesa.²⁹

The exclusive recognition given for the influential persons including the landlords and patriots had not benefited the society. Throughout the resistance movement, some of the people had supported the patriots in many ways. However, they were not appreciated and the subsequent period only brought them suppression and aggravation of their relationships with the Amhara people of the area. The soldiers of the conquerors who were returned back to the area in the post liberation period developed two distinctive relationships towards the local people. With some patriots and those individuals who protected them from the persecution, they developed good relationship. For instance, those who were protected by Tita Neno had considered him as 'their father'. However, their enmity continued with majority of the people.³⁰

However, it was a hard time for *bandas*. More than others, Haile Sellassie I heard the role played by Dhuguma Jaldesso, the only *kapo* of the area. The appealing case heard by the emperor was the insult that Dhuguma had once spoken against Dinsa Roro, one of the famous patriots in Limmu. Comparing Dinsa Roro with Haile Sellassie, Dhuguma spoke to his *bandas* by saying, "Be strong, Wolete Selassie had rose up, but she should not escape from our hands". Deliberately, Dhuguma changed the name from Haile Sellassie to Wolete Sellassie. Wolete had been among the traditional female names unusual for male. Dhuguma's chose of this name for Haile Sellassie was because he wanted to insult him as a woman for the emperor had left the area and had remained outside of the country out of fear.³¹

Irritated by this, Haile Sellassie passed an order to bring Dhuguma Jaldesso to his office. Then when he was asked, Dhuguma replied with the counterfeit reason that he could not go to Finfinne for he was sick. Then the *balabats* on the left bank of the Abbay brought Dhuguma to the office of the emperor as a 'relay running', by carrying him and passing it over to the next. Informants relate that Dhuguma and Haile Sellassie I negotiated either

²⁹ Informant: Gemechu Birra.

³⁰ Informant: Gemechu Birra.

³¹ Informants: Gusse Mersha and Kebeda Guta.

through bribery or the intervention of *Ras Imiru* who was the close friend of *Dhuguma* during the battle of *Maechaw*. Furthermore, it was said that *Dhuguma* told *Haile Sellasie* that he uttered the saying to live because it was a hard time. Whatever the means of the negotiation were, *Dhuguma* was returned to his *Limmu* with a warm reception.³²

With the restoration of the Emperor, the *Amhara* who had participated in the resistance against the *Italians* were allowed to return to *Gidda* and were given *qalads* of land. Many of the *woreda ghazis* or the *meslenes* were said to be the *Amhara* and *Amharanized Oromo*. For instance, the notable early *meslenes* of *Gidda woreda* who had rearranged feudal administrative structure of the *woreda* were *Ayala Chare*, *Mesfin Adoye* and *Dejjazmach Zawde*.³³ During this period, there were different *Miketil woreda ghazis* under the *woreda ghazi*. In *Gidda woreda* alone, for example, the *Miketil woreda ghazis* were established at *Calliya* and *Kiramu*.³⁴

There was hierarchical structure of the society during the reign of Emperor *Haile Sellasie I*. Two contradictory groups, the exploiters and the exploited ones, lived within the same area. Among the exploiters, *balabats* were found at the top of the society. They served as bridge between the local people and the *meslenes*. Next to the *balabats*, there were *ciqashums* (village chiefs who had served as *shengo*). *Ciqashums* were followed by *goboz aleqas* (commanding officers). *Ciqashum* concerned with crimes committed in villages through a mechanism called *Afarsaataa*. It had been used as mechanism of detecting suspected individuals or groups regarding committed crimes. Orders were passed from district governors to the *ciqashum* to gather the people for *Afarsaataa*. Finally, there were *cisegnas* or the peasants who were the victims of different forms of exploitations and suppressions. In such successive orders, the lower ones were accountable to and recognized the next upper group. Such administrative structure helped the upper bodies to exploit the tenants.³⁵

The *nacci lebash* was the special body who had resided in towns and would come to peasants for especial cases that were found to be above the *goboz aleqas*. Those who did not pay taxes, for instance, were taken to the office of the *woreda ghazi* by this body. Within

³² Informants: *Gobana Abbaa Burka* and *Shiferra Tesso*.

³³ Informant: *Gemechu Birra*.

³⁴ Informants: *Dessalegn Feyisa* and *Imiru Yadeta*.

³⁵ *Beyene Biftu*, p.93; Informant: *Dessale Gudeta*.



different villages, there were spies or undercover agents to listen and expose the possible secret talks among the people. The punishment on those who were exposed by the agents was so serious that many individuals were taken and hidden for last. In Kiramu for instance, Geletaa Saba and Gobena Jamu were taken and then disappeared.³⁶

The district administrators and different *balabats* of the *woreda* cooperated so that it would help them to have easy access of exploiting the society in various ways. To start with payment, peasants were forced to pay different forms of tributes and taxes as well as render manual works to the *balabats*. The *hudad* was among the typical examples of these compulsory works where both men and women had to work for the *balabats*. While women served in grinding grains, fetching water and preparing food for the *balabats*, men were also forced to engage in labor work for him on the agricultural fields of the *balabats* and building of fences. Payment in kind which was ceased during the Italian occupation was restarted. For instance, *siso* was a form of tribute where a peasant had to give one third of his products to the *abbaa lafaas*. As it has been stated elsewhere, different *balabats* under him and *Fiwarari* Amsalu himself allied with the bandits and shared what the bandits robbed from people. It was said that the prevalence of these bandits discouraged traders and travelers in the area until the coming of the *Darg* government. The *Darg* government had taken harsh measures on the bandits and his reign was characterized by great reduction of the bandits.³⁷

During the period of the Imperial regime, the peasants' relations with the authorities were indirect and were dominated by excessive respect to the authorities.³⁸ For instance, the peasants paid taxes to the *balabats* over them and the *balabats* in turn submitted it to the *woreda* administrator.³⁹ More than this, everyone who came across *balabats* had to kiss the ground in front of his feet and could not pass without doing this. Therefore, there were no transparency, equality and respect to human dignity.⁴⁰

Culturally too, the people were not free to conduct their cultural practices, beliefs and traditional religion. However, the people practiced some of them secretly. *Jaarii* was among

³⁶ Informants: Gobana *Abbaa* Burka; Shiferra Tesso and Imiru Yadeta.

³⁷ Informants: Wejega Nukus and Abbabu Nagasa.

³⁸ Informant: Gusse Mersha.

³⁹ Different *balabats* had ruled peasants living in specified territory. The extent of the territory was determined by the title of the *balabats* and its connection with the higher body.

⁴⁰ Informant: Wejega Nukus.

these practices which the people had clandestinely practiced in their own villages and protestant religion continued in forests. *Gadaa* system, which was dying during the coming of the conquerors, was regarded as one among the bad cultural practices. The *balabats* deprived the right to slaughter animals by different Oromo clans in general and that of the Gidda Oromo in particular. They did it for their own advantage.⁴¹

Moreover, the socio-cultural defects of the feudal system brought the culture of Amharic naming for both humans and places. After the conquest first by the Gojjame and later by the Shoans, naming and renaming or giving baptismal and Amharic names became common among the Oromo of Wallagga. The Amharic language was imposed on and the Amharic name continued to be used by the Oromo for more than a century. The tradition of giving Amharic names to the Oromo children and renaming adults or influential figures with baptismal names is still creating difficulties or uncertainties in testing of one's clear lineage.⁴²

Furthermore, speaking an Amharic language is considered as a simplistic supposition of labeling an individual as educated and inability to speak it is interpreted as illiterate or at least *duudaa* which literally mean 'deaf'. The researcher is not in a position of ignoring the importance of learning many languages than one's own vernacular language. However, it is undeniable to disclose that speaking a particular imposed language could not rightly be taken as a criterion to identify intelligence. Such unrealistic assumption was the case in Wallagga at least for those areas to the south of the Abbay River. This misconception emanates from egoistic nature of the *naftagna* and seems to persist in today's Ethiopia.⁴³

Yet, there were different remnants of Amhara culture which persisted as if they were Oromized as the people themselves. Baptism, respect to *tabots*, fasting, *senbets* and burying dead bodies within the compound of the Orthodox churches were few of them. The original and traditional burial places of the Oromo were cemeteries than compounds of churches.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁴² Informant: Mustefa Ibrahim.

⁴³ Informant: Efa Wayessa.

⁴⁴ Informant: Cherinnet Wakweyya.

In addition, many Oromo people, at least those of Northeastern Wallagga, were speaking and recognizing some Amharic words as if they were already *Afaan Oromo* words. Initially, the interactions between the two languages, *Afaan Oromo* and Amharic was said to be effected due to the imposition of the latter over the former often forcefully or at least with fear of being tortured by the conquerors. Later on, the role of the EOC and language policies were crucial in the national integration policy of Haile Sellassie I. Language, in particular, was designed to facilitate the unification of the ethnic and linguistic diversity.⁴⁵ More significantly, the natural intermingling of words from the two languages resulted in the use of some Amharic words as if they belong to *Afaan Oromo* origin. Few of these words were like 'eshi' instead of saying 'ok', 'beqa' instead of saying 'enough' and 'gena' to express 'future time'. They were often used by the people in speech than in writing.⁴⁶

The only groups who were not suppressed during the feudal and military periods were said to be the sorcerers and *qaallichaa* partly for their own benefits. *Balabats* and other individuals of higher positions did not act harshly against these groups due to the fear of their curse.⁴⁷ However, sorcerers of Northeastern Wallagga were few in number and did not make grouping as that of the Muslims who had their 'society' of sorcerers when cursing or blessing was required.⁴⁸ Therefore, refraining themselves from exploiting this specified and a few individuals was irrelevant for the whole region because the sorcerers in the area were small in number.⁴⁹

The most victimized groups of the society were the whole peasants. Then the peasants' humanity, moral, spiritual and economic conditions were not the concerns of the feudal government except that of the Orthodoxy. This was one of the manifestations of the superiority of one nation and one religion.⁵⁰

Both Haile Sellassie's feudal and the *Darg's* military governments did not treat the so called *budaa* (evil-eye) differently from the other members of the society. *Budaa* was a malignant

⁴⁵ Oyvind M. Eide, p.19.

⁴⁶ Informants: Kebeda Guta and Akuma Kedida.

⁴⁷ Informant: Gusse Mersha.

⁴⁸ Trimmingham, p.262.

⁴⁹ Informant: Gusse Mersha.

⁵⁰ Informant: Cherinnet Wakweya.

man who transforms himself by night into some animal and goes about seeking victims.⁵¹ There was a belief that these *budaas* use hyenas as a means of nightly transportation. The authorities could not take measures or typical treatment against the *budaa* as they could not easily be identified from the other people. However, it was believed that people knew them albeit they might not expose the *budaas* to the public or authorities either for fear of their evil-eye or due to uncertainty in identifying who the *budaas* surely were.⁵²

Despite the prevalence of various forms of suppressions and exploitations, some of the social services were provided and institutions were established in Gidda since the period of Haile Sellassie I. To mention a few of them, the first *genjabet* (as finance office of the period was called) beyond the Angar river was established in Ayyaanaa town in 1950. Then the first primary school and police station were opened around the same town at about 1953 and 1961 respectively. Gidda Ayyaanaa Secondary School was established in 1978, during the military government. Until this period, the Gidda people got social services only from Horro, the seat of the *awraja* administration. They had to travel three days to reach Horro to get the social services. The establishments of various social services since the Imperial period improved such a tiresome journey.⁵³

More significantly, Imperial regime supported the existence of foreign citizens in different parts of the country. This was because the emperor believed that the benefits that the country and people obtain from these citizens would help them to have better life. It was for this reason that foreign citizens were welcomed in different parts of Northeastern Wallagga. In Gidda *woreda*, for instance, missionaries of North America and investors from Holland were allowed to reside and accomplish their tasks during the 1960s and early 1970s. Reasonably, the society had gained different social services and economic benefits from these citizens.⁵⁴

However, people were not happy with the feudal system and resistance became unavoidable. Resistance against the exploitive feudalism and suppression by the landlords became serious in the early 1960s and gradually resulted in the outbreak of the revolution. For instance, struggle which expressed the exploitive and inhuman character of the *balabats* was

⁵¹ Trimingham, pp. 261-262.

⁵² Informant: Akuma Kedida.

⁵³ Informant: Gemechu Birra.

⁵⁴ Informant: Wegari Geleta.

conducted in kiramu area. The spies told the authorities that some individuals like Teferi Duressa, Regasa Dinsa, Olani Kumi and Imiru Yadeta had organized the people against the feudal system. Then the suspected individuals were detained in Gidda. Their detention remained in Gidda because the case of the struggle could not be decided both at Gidda and Horro-Guduruu, *avraja* center of Northeastern Wallagga. While they were waiting to be taken to Finfinne for decision of the case, the emperor was overthrown from power and then they were released from prison.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Informant: Imiru Yadeta.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS (1974 – 2000)

Socio-Cultural Transformations during the Military Rule (1974 – 1991)

The prevalence of exploitative and suppressive system resulted in the outbreak of the revolution around the beginning of 1970s and resulted in the down fall of Haile Sellassie I on one hand and the coming of the military committee called *Darg* in 1974. At its initial period, people were happy with the motto of the military government. This was because the new government acknowledged people's rights in land use and its ownership. Undoubtedly, the military government abolished both feudal structures in general and the *balabat* system in particular. People were encouraged to abuse the previously brutal *balabats*. In Gidda *woreda*, for instance, the power and materials of *Giiftii* Abbabu Nagasa, the third wife of *Fitwarari* Amsalu who held Amsalu's position after his death, was taken over by Alemayehu Goboto, on behalf of the newly established military government.¹

Moreover, one of the strong and malicious *balabats* in Limmu, Mekonnin Gobu was killed during this period. This was happened just after the downfall of the *Darg* government. Mekonnin was said to have been killed not by the *Darg* rather by the people who were dissatisfied with his cruelty when he was a *balabat*.² The *balabats* reacted in various ways. Some of them left their original places to escape and others gave their hands to the *Darg*. There were also *balabats* who opted to commit suicide rather than being killed in the hands of the *Darg*. For instance, Beyena Gemeda of Amuru was from among the *balabats* who committed suicide for similar reason. *Giiftii* Abbabu left Gidda and moved to Guttin for she feared for her life. The *Darg* looted her property. Some other *balabats* tolerated the people's and *Darg*'s measure and remained in their previous area. For instance, *Balambaras* Kebede

¹ Informant: Abbabu Nagasa.

² Informant: Alamu Regassa.

Gerba of Calliya was tortured and his hands incarcerated on his back, by the *Darg*. However, he continued to live in his house.³

During the initial years of the Ethiopian Revolution, the people had mounting hopes that the economic, political, cultural and social dominations from which they had suffered for so many years would end. The *Darg* regime promised a lot, but did very little indeed.⁴

The new system began to disturb the socio-cultural interaction not less than feudalism. Though the *balabats* had disappeared and most of them were looted, the *Darg* government developed its own party structure to replace the *balabats*. Under the *woreda ghazis*, there were successive authorities like *liqemenbers*, *shengo*, *kutitir* Committee and police one after the other. In fact, some reforms occurred with the coming to power of the *Darg* government.⁵

The most important reform of the mid 1970s in the area was the land reform proclamation and establishment of peasant association. Land reform proclamation made rural land the property of the people. This was aimed to liberate the peasants from age-old feudal oppression. As a result, land was distributed to the farmers, evicted tenants, farmers coming from outside of the area and to the former landowners. Peasant Associations established, and in the course of time, became the agent of the military government. They were given different responsibilities.⁶ In line with the establishment of Peasant Association, peasants were encouraged to be organized. This enabled the peasants to develop strong interactions within the area of their residence. Unlike the *balabats*, the Peasant Associations did not openly force the peasants to serve them at least ostensibly. The *liqemenbers* were elected by the people and their fields were cultivated by the volunteers. While the peasants served the *liqemenbers* on voluntary bases, working for the *milishas* or soldiers who went to the battle field was a compulsory one.⁷

For instance, the program of Development through Cooperation, Enlightenment and Work Campaign was issued. It was intended to narrow the gap between the the former landlords on

³ Informant: Imiru Yadeta and Akuma Kedida.

⁴ Tesema Ta'a (July 2004), "The Place of the Oromo in Ethiopian History," *Journal of Oromo Studies*, Volume 11, Number 1 & 2, P. 6.

⁵ Informant: Desale Gudeta.

⁶ Negarit Gazeta, Public Ownership of Rural Lands Proclamation No. 31, 1975, Berhanena Selam Printing Press.

⁷ Informant: Wejega Nukus.

one hand and the tenants on the other hand. Based on the philosophy of *Ethiopia Tikdem* (Ethiopia first) of the *Darg*, education does not emanates from restrictive classroom instruction but from education which was set in work practically. Therefore, students of secondary schools as well as those of the university were forced to participate in bringing literacy and better standard of living. However, the program was not true to some of its objectives. Theoretically, the participants of the campaign were instructed to collect cultural items and disseminate knowledge about them. Practically, however, the *Darg* government suppressed the culture of the society. More than the others, people's demands for celebrating cultural rituals were discouraged.⁸

Culturally, the *Darg* was found to be more aggressive than Haile Sellasie I. Various forms of cultural practices which were practiced during Haile Sellasie I, albeit secretly, were forbidden at all. The *jaarii*, for instance, was forbidden openly. For example, the *woreda ghazi* of Gidda district, Abera Bargessa, gave a deaf ear to the appeal of the Calliya people when they asked to conduct *jaarii*. It was said that Abera had threatened those petitioners.⁹

Even if it undermined the significance of all religions, the *Darg* government was very severe towards *waaqeffannaa* and Protestantism. It had shown some recognition for other religions including Orthodox Christianity and Islam. This was clearly manifested in its proclamation of the 1975. According to the proclamation, observance of public holidays of both Orthodox religion and that of Islam was legally recognized. For instance, *Maskal*, Epiphany, Christmas and Easter were proclaimed to be observed with the program issued by the Orthodox Church. In similar manner, *Id Adeha*, *Mawlid* and *Id Alfetir* were proclaimed to be observed in accordance with the program of the Imams of the Mosques. However, no indication and recognition was given for *waaqeffannaa* religion and Protestantism.¹⁰

Socially, people suffered from the persistent wars and obliged to send all of the adult members to the battle field. The compulsory song known locally as *kineti* was sung on the meetings by selected individuals in order to motivate everyone to go to the battle field. Putting our legs into the shoes of the *Darg*, blaming the government for it motivated

⁸ Negarit Gazeta, Development through Cooperation, Enlightenment and Work Campaign Proclamation No. 11, 1974, Berhanena selam Printing press; Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁹ Informant: Gusse Mersha.

¹⁰ Negarit Gazeta, Observance of Public holidays proclamation No. 28, 1975, Berhanena Selam Printing Press.

everyone towards the battle field was less reasonable. This was because it was aimed at defending the sovereignty of the country. Unquestionable problems of the *Darg* on socio-cultural life of the people were related directly or indirectly to its aggressive rule, cruelty, heavy taxation and lack of freedom among the society as whole.¹¹

For instance, there was no freedom of movement within the country. For the first time in the history of northeastern Wallagga, the need of having clearance paper started for someone who wanted to travel relatively to remote areas. This clearance paper was said to be used to identify the possible new faces locally called *tsegure lawit*. This partly had benefited the society since it served as a means of controlling the bandits. There were more or less no bandits during the period of the military government. This remained the long lasting benefit that the society gained from the *Darg* period. For instance, merchants travelled from Gidda to Naqamtee on foot without being robbed.¹²

Contrary to the tradition of the peoples, the *Darg* taught Marxist-Leninist education which aimed at destroying people's attitudes towards any religion. The teaching of Marxist-Leninist undermined the value of religion. Peoples were discouraged to come together for religious purpose. Informants who had either attended or heard Marxism-Leninism learning class conducted in Xosse Primary School told us that the lesson focused on undermining the role of religion in the society. Those who were caught practicing religion, Protestants for instance, were tortured and forced either to bring Jesus Christ physically, stop praying or took alcoholic drinks which were forbidden for the followers of the religion.¹³

Likewise, foreign citizens who had given various forms of social services were deprived of doing so and were expelled in the second half of the 1970s for unimpressive cases. For instance, the missionaries who lived in Goobu Guddaa and Kiramu *kebeles* were driven out by the *Darg* members in 1977. Before their expulsion, they served the society in various ways. To mention a few of them, they opened the first primary school and the introduced the grinding mill to the *kebeles*. In addition to the provisions of first aid treatment for patients, their airplane served the people as ambulances.¹⁴

¹¹ Informant: Akuma Kedida.

¹² Informant: Dessale Gudeta.

¹³ Informant: Duressa Gonfa.

¹⁴ Informants: Duressa Gonfa and Gusse Mersha.

During their residence in Goobu, for instance, a certain Oromo individual called Jote served both as a pharmacist and a teacher. Jote and Olana Geleta were from among the Oromo who were trained by the foreign citizens and in turn served the local people. The same was true in Kiramu where the same group of the foreign citizens served the people in similar manner. By 1977, however, the people of Gidda district and its neighbors lost these beneficial groups from Goobu, Kiramu and Angar Gute *kebeles*.¹⁵

Economically too, all households were forced to pay heavy taxes which have different names. In place of payments for the grasses and landlords, payment of taxes during the military government was equally heavy at least for two reasons. Firstly, unlike the *cisegna* of the feudal period who were more or less capable of paying taxes, the *Darg* imposed taxes on all households no matter their capability to pay was. In addition, payments in different kinds like rich farmers' payment, payment for rehabilitation (*melso makuakuam*), payment for the call of motherland (*Ennat ager tir*), payment for sport and the like were imposed on peasants.¹⁶

Throughout their lifetimes, the Oromo had been living together by using a form of ethical norms and values called *safuu*. It involves rules and regulations which people had to follow in living with each others. Every members of the society learned this system from their own parents and their neighbours. Though the period before the last two decades of the 19th century was the golden age of the development of the Oromo values, people retained it throughout the hard times of feudalism and the military government.¹⁷

Villagization and resettlement were other programs of the *Darg* government. While Villagization was conducted mainly within the region, resettlement was carried out both at local and national level. To start from the former one, the purpose of the internal villagization was opaque for the peasants. It involved the regrouping of homes into scattered households and traditional villages into new pattern based on the government directives. It was started in the late 1984 and many people were forced to leave their original areas of residence and resettled in somewhere else. People were forced to live with others on involuntary bases. Some forms of suspicion developed within villages and affected peoples' interactions. The

¹⁵ Informants: Duresa Gonfa and Dessalegn Feyisa.

¹⁶ Informant: Dessale Gudeta.

¹⁷ Informant: Wejega Nukus.

peasants continued to farm their own previous land. Nominally, the program was aimed at paving the way for the easy access of providing social services to the compacted villages. Practically, however, social services were hardly established in rural areas of the *woreda*.¹⁸

The national resettlement, in this context, refers to the arrival of resettlers who were brought from Northern Ethiopia and resettled in different parts of the district. It was carried out by self-settled and government sponsored schemes. The resettlement, whether self initiated or government sponsored, had socio-cultural and economic influence on the local people.¹⁹

The Role of Foreign Citizens for Resettlement in Guttin Area

The advent of the foreign investors in the 1970s and the resettlers in the 1980s into the area was carried out for there was no more problem of crossing the Anger River after 1967. The merchants, the government and private sector employees, partners and the other groups of people who had lived on both sides of the Angar River used the bridge to cross and re-cross it for various purposes. For example, it enhanced communication and exchange of products among the people who had lived on both sides of the River.²⁰

In Ethiopia, commercialization of agriculture in the post Italian occupation (1936-1941) period led to the development of private farms and foreign investments.²¹ In 1970, the three brothers from Holland: Abraham Haybor, John Haybor and Khez Haybor took the Guttin area based on contractual agreement with the governor of Wallagga. They used the area for mechanized farming. As soon as they arrived, they set fire to the forests and beaten off the big animals from the area. The three brothers had specializations. Accordingly, Abraham, John and Khez were manager, technician and road surveyor respectively.²²

The Hollanders established agricultural development projects and engaged in repairing activities. Moreover, they performed buildings in the town of the present day Angar Gute. In the investments, they hired the local men. Later on, they began to hire women. During the early period of its establishment, almost all of the people hired in the projects were the

¹⁸ Informant: Akuma Kedida.

¹⁹ Informant: Gobana *Abbaa* Burka.

²⁰ Informant: Wegari Geleta.

²¹ Alula Pankhrust and Francois Piguet (2004), "Contextualising Migration, Resettlement and Displacement in Ethiopia," In Alula Pankhrust and Francois Piguet (eds.), *People, Space and the State, Proceedings of the Workshop by the Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists and the United Nations Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa University Press, p. 4.

²² Informants: Yadesa Gurmessa and Awoke Biterf.

Oromo. The early centers where the Hollanders established their projects were in Tulluu Gaanaa, Tulluu Leencaa, Warabboo, *Mender Arat* and *Mender Amist* of the Guttin areas. At each center, they had chosen their representatives locally known as *kapo*.²³

Around the middle of the 1970s, someone from Germany called Koler came to Guttin and started Bakko's branch of agricultural experiment and cultivation of vegetables. Koler's experiment became successful and he had worked in Guttin for two years till he left Guttin for Didessa. Like the Hollanders, Koler had brought no viable cultural defect to the area. He had hired people in his project and opened job opportunities for many people. After a year, the hired people brought their wives and had built houses in and around Guttin. In this way, people were resettled in Guttin area.²⁴

As their plan was more of an economic one, these investors did not work much on the culture of the society. The Hollanders were the followers of Catholic religion. However, they neither persuaded the others to accept Catholicism nor imposed new order on the local culture in general and that of the hired people in particular. The only new thing which they had introduced to the area was the use of a single Ox to plough. The local people had originally been using two yoked Oxen to plough. After the foreign citizens were expelled and deprived off by the *Darg* in 1977, the technique of ploughing with a single Ox continued no longer and the farmers retained the practice to plough with the paired oxen.²⁵ Those people who were employed in the projects invited their families and relatives to the area. Therefore, it resulted in the resettlement of the local people and migrants from northern Ethiopia.²⁶

Resettlement Initiative in Gidda Woreda

During the second half of the 20th century, the northern parts of Ethiopia were struck by famine. The most drought stricken areas were Wallo and Tigray. Resettling people in less populous and moisture sufficient areas had been one of the policies that the Ethiopian governments had introduced to manage and prevent famine. It was viewed as a way of addressing the food security crisis in the drought-prone, over-populated and environmentally

²³ Informants: Yadesa Gurmessa and Wegari Geleta.

²⁴ Informants: Yadesa Gurmessa and Awoke Biterf.

²⁵ Zelalem Teferra (2009), "State Sponsored and Self-initiated Resettlements: Their Impacts on the Ecology of Resettlement Areas (The case of Angar Guttin in Eastern Wallagga)." In Svein Ege and *et al* (eds.), *Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Trondheim, p. 883; Informants: Yadesa Gurmessa and Wegari Geleta.

²⁶ Informant: Wegari Geleta.

degraded areas. However, there might have been cases where the government had displaced people from their original homeland in order to bestrew his opponents. This was said to have been true of the *Darg* government of Ethiopia.²⁷

In the case of the movements of the Amhara people to the area under study, combination of factors were mentioned by informants. Accordingly, the Amhara people²⁸ who were affected by drought, famine, poverty as well as other social problems like feuds and minor disagreements within the families had moved to Gidda through the present day Burie *woreda*, in Gojjam. The coming to Gidda of these Amhara resettlers started during the reign of Haile Sellassie I. This was a period when the Walloyye had arrived and resettled in Haaroo²⁹ and Dongoro. The resettlement in the Dongoro and KIRAMU was carried out in the late 1960s and early 1970s respectively.³⁰

In 1965, one of the *balabats* in KIRAMU area of Gidda, Mulugeta Bekela welcomed and enabled the Amhara resettlers to settle in Bagen, Addis Alem and Saggi lowlands. For Mulugeta, his action was reasonable in two ways. The firstly, Mulugeta need to raise the number of his tenants who pay tributes. Secondly, he believed that settling them in such lowland areas would help the indigenous people to be saved from the possible hazards of wild animals.³¹

Resettlement became part of the government scheme since 1966. Then after, various resettlement initiatives were executed by governors, missions and aid agencies.³² After 1974, the recurrence of drought forced the military government to launch more resettlement schemes mainly under the auspices of the then Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC).

²⁷ Derese Getachew (2009), "Resettling the Discourse on Resettlement Schemes Towards a new approach," In Svein Ege and *et al* (eds.), *Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Trondheim, p. 867; Alula Pankhrust and Francois Piguët, p. 11; Informant: Wegari Geleta.

²⁸ Amhara people in this case refer to those migrants who came to Gidda from Amhara National Regional State due to the prevalence of various pushing factors like feuds, drought, famine, poverty and other social problems. They include the Walloyye, Gojjame and Gondore, the first two of them being greatest in numbers. For the sake of convenience, they were commonly called the Amhara resettlers throughout this chapter.

²⁹ Haaroo is located in present day KIRAMU *woreda*. However, KIRAMU was a part of the Gidda *woreda* until 2008.

³⁰ Assefa Tolera (1995), "Ethnic Integration and Conflict: The Case of Indigenous Oromo and Amhara Resettlers in Haaroo Addis Alem, KIRAMU Area, Northeastern Wallagga," M.A. Thesis, Department of Social Anthropology, Addis Ababa University, p.6; Informant: Awoke Biterf.

³¹ Informant: Imiru Yadeta.

³² Alula Pankhrust and Francois Piguët, p. 10.

In this manner, the post revolution state land nationalization, the establishment of institutions and the repeated incidence of drought resulted in an increase in the pace of resettlement. Among the institutions, RRC was established after the 1973 famine whereas a Settlement Authority was set up in 1976. Both of them were established within the Ministry of Agriculture to promote the resettlement schemes.³³

In Gidda *woreda*, large numbers of government-sponsored resettlers arrived in the 1980s. Of these, the share of Angar Guttin resettlement area was immense. In accomplishing the resettlement scheme in the area, the government deployed all the ministries and its political cadres to take part in the execution of the programs.³⁴

Generally, based on the ways in which they were displaced from their homeland and brought to the Gidda *woreda*, the resettlers were divided into two groups. These were the self-initiated and government sponsored resettlers. The resettlers who came to the area spontaneously from about the middle of the 20th century based on their own motives were known as the self-initiated resettlers. However, those of the Walloyye and Tigre who were brought to Guttin by the government in 1980 and 1985 were called the government-sponsored resettlers.³⁵

According informants, self-initiated individuals from Amhara National Regional State initially arrived and lived in different parts of the *woreda* including KIRAMU and Guttin. After their arrival in the *woreda*, most of the migrants first served as share-croppers with the local people or early Amhara, who were partly their own relatives and obtained the plots of land for farming. In this case, their own relatives mean those of the Amhara individuals who came to the area before and during Menilek II.³⁶

My Informant, Awoke, for instance, came to Gidda from Gojjam in 1972 and has lived in Ayyaanaa town in Dereje Tadesse's home³⁷ for three years. After that duration, he had gone to Guttin in 1975. As the Hollanders posted a notice to employ workers, individuals from

³³ Derese Getachew, p. 867; Alula Pankhrust and Francois Piguët, p. 11; Informant: Wegari Geleta.

³⁴ Zelalem Teferra, p.885.

³⁵ Informant: Wegari Geleta.

³⁶ Tesfaye Tafesse (2009), "The Predicaments of Amhara Migrant-resettlers in East Wallagga Zone, Ethiopia," In Svein Ege and *et al* (eds.), *Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Volume 3, Trondheim, P. 857; Informant: Awoke Biterf.

³⁷ Dereje Tadesse was said to have been from among the Amhara who came to Gidda after the incorporation of the *woreda*, and he has been living in Ayyaanaa town until the present time.

both Amhara and Oromo origin were engaged in the projects and began to live in Guttin and its surrounding areas.³⁸

According to Tesfaye, this migration of the Amhara people from their homeland to Gidda *woreda* passed through series of phases.³⁹ At the beginning, small, male dominated, individual based and self-initiated Amhara people migrated from their original homeland and joined their relatives or the local Oromo living in the present day Gidda Ayyaanaa, Kiramu, Abe-Dongoro and Limmu *woredas*. Similar to what Oljira had argued regarding the resettlers in the Horro Guduruu,⁴⁰ some of the share-croppers remained behind and established permanent settlements in Gidda *woreda*.⁴¹

Both self-settled Amharas and the local Oromo were recruited in the projects of the foreign investors. At about the middle of the 1970s, for instance, a certain Walloyye called *Abbaa Musa*⁴² arrived in Guttin and was hired in the projects of the Hollanders. The area in which he settled became known as *Abbaa Musa* after the name of the settler. Before the coming of *Abbaa Musa*, the area was known as Maqa-Limmu.⁴³

The government-sponsored resettlement scheme in Guttin started in 1980. This was a period when the *Darg* government brought resettlers from Tigray by packing them to avoid their possible return back to their original places. Around the middle of the 1980s, unemployed and the hoboos from Finfinne were taken to Guttin in the same manner with that of the Tigre. They were evicted from their original places and resettled in new areas. Therefore, it could be taken as forceful resettlement.⁴⁴

The resettlement pattern took two forms. Accordingly, the resettlers were divided into two groups. These were the resettlers who were settled in separate territories and those who were integrated within the formerly established villages. The latter pattern was locally known as *sigsega* which in Amharic means insertion within the villages. For instance, the Tigre resettlers in the *Mender Sost*, *Mender Arat* and *Mender Amist* were those who had settled in

³⁸ Informant: Awoke Biterf.

³⁹ Tesfaye Tafesse, p.858.

⁴⁰ Oljira Tujuba, p.9.

⁴¹ Informant: Awoke Biterf.

⁴² *Abbaa Musa* was alive when the data of this thesis were collected and the area was still named as *Abbaa Musa*.

⁴³ Informant: Yadesa Gurmessaa.

⁴⁴ Informant: Gobana *Abbaa* Burka and Shiferra Tesso.

separate territories. These areas were inhabited by the resettlers alone. On the other hand, the resettlers in Lalistu Angar or *Mender Asir* area were those of the *sigsega*.⁴⁵

The hoboos were resettled in *Mender 1*, *Mender Hulet* and *Mender Sost* of Arqumbe. These hoboos and Tigre resettlers were taken to resettlement sites because they were said to have been suspected of political plots against the *Darg* government. Therefore, the government considered the dispersal of these groups as strategy to weaken the possible opposition against its power.⁴⁶ However, they were taken to the area as if the government planned it to improve the problem of unemployment. Perhaps, influenced by this cover, Zelalem explained the conditions of the hoboos in Guttin as follows:

*Apart from resettling the drought affected population, in an attempt to reduce urban unemployment, the Derg resettled some unemployed urban dwellers drawn from major cities, especially from Addis Ababa, at the foot of Arkumbe hill to the west of Guttin town. This group of resettlers was the worst challenge to the government resettlement venture. Being young & well acquainted with urban life, these people were proved to be unfit into the local setting. From the outset, their main intention was to escape at any cost. They were kept only at the cost of physical coercion and threat of the armed forces.*⁴⁷

In the attempt of solving the economic, political or other related problems, resettlement scheme would have encountered other subsequent problems. The victims were irritated more against the problems when the program was initiated by the government. Socially, the government-driven resettlement program resulted in considerable suffering, high morbidity and mortality. This was particularly true during the transport of resettlers. Other subsequent social problems include family separation, disintegration of institutions and difficulties in adaptation. Environmentally, the program led to deforestation and environmental

⁴⁵ Informant: Dorsis Dhuguma.

⁴⁶ Informant: Wegari Geleta.

⁴⁷ Zelalem Teferra, p.886.

degradation. This in turn led to serious conflicts with local people over the resources that the latter considered to belong to them.⁴⁸

Tigre informants were reluctant to be approached and give evidences. Those Tigre living in the Guttin suspected everyone who wanted to approach them. Those who were approached refrained themselves from giving deep information. This was because of the political uncertainty and ethnic suspicion during the researcher's trip to Guttin. Fragmented sources have shown us that the male Tigre were broken from their families and were taken to Guttin in 1980. The pretext used by the *Darg* to evict the male Tigre from their original homeland was said to be the scarcity of land. The *Darg* seemed to relocate the male Tigre with the assumption that they should go first to new areas in order to explore and prepare the area. The *Darg* government promised them to bring their families including their wives after some preparations.⁴⁹

According to Derese, families were pulled apart as some members were forced to move out to Wallagga and the rest stayed in Geblen which was one of the resettlers producing areas in Tigray.⁵⁰ Then the male dominated Tigre resettled in the areas of the present day *Mender Sost*, *Mender Arat* and *Mender Amist*. The *Darg* members or party workers were assigned to protect and prevent the possible return of those forced resettlers to their original places.⁵¹

The resettlers had got double support both from the local people and the *Darg* government. This enabled them to establish their villages and households. The local Oromo people welcomed the resettlers from the Tigray National Regional State and built houses for them. This was because the local people had neither chance nor capability of preventing the resettlers from the area. The government provided the resettlers with food and clothes. However, the government did not fulfill its promise. Against its own words, the *Darg* government did not bring the resettlers' families to the resettlement sites. The resettlers faced difficulty of adapting themselves with the new areas and disappointed with the *Darg*'s failure

⁴⁸ Alula Pankhrust and Francois Piguet, p. 14.

⁴⁹ Informant: Desta Algeda.

⁵⁰ Derese Getachew, p. 873.

⁵¹ Informants: Wegari Geleta and Dessalegn Feyisa.

of fulfilling its promise. Forced separation of families harmed the resettlers who felt detached from their families.⁵²

A letter of the Country's Relief and Rehabilitation Commission which was sent to the Worker Party of Ethiopia in Wallagga was a clear manifestation of this problem. The letter was written on 20 October 1981. The Workers Party of Ethiopia of the period had taken the entire activity of resettlement under its control. The letter requested for the identification of the resettlers' original *awrajas* from which their families could be brought to them. However, the detachment and separation of the Tigre resettlers from their families was not solved and the problem continued for long (See Appendix III).⁵³

Therefore, some of the resettlers escaped from the control of the *Darg* government and returned to Tigray on foot. This was because they could not use buses for they were against the scheme of the government. The returning of the people to their places of origin was a stark proof that people had not consented to be relocated but were coerced.⁵⁴ However, some others tolerated the hardships of living without their own families and adapted to the resettlement sites. According to Derese, young resettlers had adapted to the new physical and socio-cultural environment easily for it was less difficult to start new life.⁵⁵

The Tigrians and the hoboos continued to return to their homeland until 1983. In 1985, the *Darg* government brought the resettlers from Tigray National Regional State for the second time. The resettlers of this period were brought to Guttin with their families and the reasons for which they were removed from their original home lands were clearly drought and famine. Unlike the resettlers of the 1980, those of the 1985 did not attempt to return to Tigray. The newcomers were said to have been easily adapted to the local setting for some reasons. The first was because of the existence of pioneer compatriots in the area. In addition, they came to the area almost all of them accompanied by their families.⁵⁶

⁵² Derese Getachew, p. 874; Informant: Desta Algeda.

⁵³ National Archival and Library Agency, Folder Number, 14, andle Number, 03, date *Tikimt* (October) 12, 1973 E.C, Ref. Number *op* 30/1/35/128, A letter written by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission of Ethiopia and sent to Wallagga Kefilhager branch of the Worker party of Ethiopia.

⁵⁴ Derese Getachew, p. 873.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 875.

⁵⁶ Zelalem Teferra, p. 885; Informant: Desta Algeda.

As it was stated earlier, the Walloye arrived in Guttin in the same year with that of the second cycle of the Tigre resettlement in Guttin. The Tigre resettlers of the 1980 who remained in the resettlement sites and the local Oromo people built houses for the new resettlers of the 1985. My informants from the resettlement sites identified the government-sponsored and self-initiated resettlers as 'legal' and 'illegal' resettlers respectively. Moreover, they blamed the *Darg* government for it prohibited the legal resettlers from expanding their farming land. They argued that while the 'legal resettlers' were restricted from expanding their farm land, the *Darg* did nothing on the 'illegal' ones who did as they wanted and occupied vast territories by destroying the forests. As a result, the self-initiated resettlers were said to have been responsible for the extreme deforestation of the area.⁵⁷

The researcher's endeavor to get the size of the resettlers was unsuccessful since no credible document regarding the demographic characteristic of the *woreda* was available in any offices of the area under study. The 2007 CSA has not described clear data concerning the ethnic composition of the *woreda*. It only described that of the zone. According to Zelalem, the dwellers of Angar Gute alone reached more than 10,000 dwellers within in a period of less than two decades of their first settlement in the area.⁵⁸

The Interactions between the Resettlers and the Local Oromo of Gidda *Woreda*

An interaction among the people has been as old as humanity itself. People used to interact with one another everywhere in the world. Ethiopia is rich in the diversification of people from different ethnic and linguistic groups. Each ethnic group has been interacted with one another at different times. Historical relations between the Ethiopian highlanders and the lowlanders have been characterized by both conflict and co-existence. There had been times when they had been lived once peacefully and at other times in conflict. One of the areas where the highlanders and the lowlanders interacted with each other is Gidda *woreda* of East Wallagga. Therefore, multi-ethnic and diversified nations used to live in the area where the great majorities are the Oromo people.⁵⁹

The Amhara individuals have been arriving in Gidda since the middle of the 20th century initially as share-croppers. The early contacts between the resettlers and the local people

⁵⁷ Informants: Desta Algeda and Awoke Biterf.

⁵⁸ Zelalem Teferra, p.889.

⁵⁹ Alula Pankhrust and Francois Piguet, P. 4.

were limited to the Chairpersons of the Peasant Associations and their own Amhara individuals who had lived in the area long before their coming to the *woreda*. This was a period when a few local Oromo individuals who had enough farmland and large livestock made the Amhara individuals share-croppers in their houses. This was based on the agreement between the local people and the Amhara who agreed to serve either as share-croppers or livestock keepers.⁶⁰

During these early contacts, many of the local Oromo did not have Amhara share-croppers or livestock keeper in their houses for some reasons. Firstly, it depended on the skill of speaking Amharic language for which many of the local Oromo had problem. The second reason was the fact that the majority of the local Oromo had their own children and were able to farm their land and look after their livestock by themselves.⁶¹

The early interactions between the local people and Amhara share-croppers were dominated by peaceful co-existence. This was because of the fact that the two groups came together based on their mutual economic benefits. Therefore, they lived as host-client relationship in which two of them respected and recognized each other. There were many cases where the local Oromo considered their share-croppers as their own children and prepared marriage ceremonies for them.⁶²

The Amhara who joined the local people as share-croppers either bought the land or entered into contractual agreements with the local people or the chairpersons of the Peasant Associations and occupied the land. According to the traditions of Gidda *woreda*, the chairpersons were responsible for the Amharas' occupation of many areas. Assefa Tolera argued that the early resettlements were made either in consultation with the chairpersons or, in the lowlands, out of an easy reach of the peasant Associations. Accordingly, the Amharas established their households in Gidda *woreda*. Each newly built household attracted others from their homelands.⁶³

The interactions between the resettlers and the local people involved their relationships in the economic, ecological and socio-cultural spheres. The economic interactions between the two

⁶⁰ Informant: Gobana *Abbaa* Burka.

⁶¹ Informant: Akuma Kedida.

⁶² Informant: Gobana *Abbaa* Burka.

⁶³ Assefa Tolera, p.8; Informant: Awoke Biterf.

groups had shown significant changes. During the initial periods of their contacts, both share-croppers and the local Oromo had gained mutual economic benefits from their interactions. The local Oromo individuals who entered into agreements with the share-croppers had increased their products. Similarly, the share-croppers used the shared products of the farming and established their livelihood in the *woreda*.⁶⁴

Later on, however, the association between the land-owners or the local people and share-croppers was changed from intense relationship and mutual benefits of the group to the isolation and self-centered benefits of the latter. This was because the former share-croppers began to violate the contractual agreements and refused to recognize the land-owners.⁶⁵

The problem was worsened with the beginning of the government-sponsored resettlement schemes of the 1980s. As it is already stated, the resettlement schemes of the *Darg* government resulted in the coming of large number of the Walloyyes and the Tigres to the Guttin area of Gidda *woreda*. Undoubtedly, both self-initiated and government-sponsored resettlers were hard workers in their farms. Therefore, they were satisfied in the resettlement sites within a matter of a decade. The habits of contractual agreements and the buying of farm land continued in the second half of the 20th century. Gradually and conversely to the previous habits, the resettlers reached a position of recruiting the local people or having the Oromo share-croppers in their houses.⁶⁶

Despite the resource competition, the interaction between the two ethnic groups was characterized by some forms of socio-cultural disparities.⁶⁷ For instance, the Oromo farmers had been giving exclusive identifications to each of their domestic animals. Accordingly, bulls, oxen, cows, calves, horses, mules, donkeys and others had their distinctive economic uses and recognitions. The Oromo farmers used Oxen to plough, donkeys as pack animals and cows for milking. However, the resettlers, particularly those of the Amhara origin introduced ploughing with donkeys. This was against the culture of the Gidda Oromo

⁶⁴ Informant: Dorsis Dhuguma.

⁶⁵ Informants: Gobana *Abbaa* Burka and Shiferra Tesso.

⁶⁶ Informant: Gobana *Abbaa* Burka.

⁶⁷ Zelalem Teferra, p.195; Informants: Amsalu Temesgen and Imiru Yadeta.

farmers. Many of the local people had not accepted such tradition and continued to plough with oxen.⁶⁸

The next area of interaction where the resettlers and the local people came together was in the use of natural resources. The two groups interacted on the use of natural resources in the resettlement sites. A letter from Wallo *kefilhager* Administration written by Public Security department on 26 April 1979 was a clear manifestation of the environmental defects brought about by the self-settled Amhara in Wallagga. A letter informed the Offices of Borana *awraja* of Wallo, that of the Addis Ababa and Wallagga *kefilhager* about deforestations and social disagreements caused by the self-settled Walloyye. It was notified that the self-initiated resettlers burnt the forests and caused resultant conflicts with the local people. The letter also notified the offices about the need of controlling these self-resettlers (See Appendix IV).⁶⁹

Peoples' Interactions and Inter-ethnic Politics of the Post 1991

The problem which arose from competition over the use of resources and inter-ethnic problems were worsened in the post-1991. Unlike the *Darg* government who gave serious practical protection to natural forests, the EPRDF's protection of forests remained theoretical. During the *Darg* period, the resettlers, particularly the government-sponsored resettlers, were alerted for the preservation of forests and it banned the expansion of their farmlands beyond the area allocated to them. The next reason was that spontaneous and large number of resettlers arrived after 1991. As the resettlers arrived spontaneously, resource based indigenous-settlers competition was intensified.⁷⁰

The study of Geremew Huluka reveals that the coming of the resettlers resulted in the weakening of the role of the indigenous social values in the conservation of forest resources. Before the advent of resettlers, the Oromo of this area had used their indigenous social institutions or customs to use forest resources. Therefore, many of the areas were covered with dense forests and were far from the residence of the local people. But as the resettlers

⁶⁸ Informant: Wegari Geleta.

⁶⁹ National Archival and Library Agency, Folder Number, 14, File Number 03, Date *Miazia* (April) 28, 1971 E.C. Ref. Number 10050/191/358, A letter written by the Provisional Military Government Socialist Ethiopia Public Security Department of Wallo *kefilhager* Administration and its copies sent to the Country's Administration Office, Wallo Administration Office, Borana *awraja* Administration Office and Wallagga *kefilhager* Administration Office.

⁷⁰ Informant: Dorsis Dhuguma.

moved to the area, the Oromo began breaking the rules and entered into competition in the use of resources. As a result, both the indigenous forest managing institutions and forests of the area have been destroyed. The lands which were previously covered with dense forests were changed to farmland.⁷¹

Generally, it was reasonable to conclude that the deforestation of the area had happened not only by the expansion of self-motivated resettlers. Rather the combinations of the population pressure, competition between the inhabitants over the use of natural resources and lack of effective control particularly from the post 1991 onwards. Therefore, the intensity of conflicts between the indigenous and the resettlers increased a lot mainly in the post 1991. Lack of effective control on the self-initiated Gojjame resettlers in particular had resulted in the free clearing of forests. Broadly speaking, however, the greater human interference in the natural ecosystem led to depletion of wildlife and forest coverage. In this manner, the local people lost the big trees on which they had been hanging their traditional hives. Moreover, the same group lost the dense forests which they had used as traditional medicines.⁷²

However, the indigenous-resettlers tensions were not limited to natural resources. Gradually, the resettlers started to act as indigenous people and had shown interests of transforming the *gadaa* sites to that of the *gedaam*⁷³. This was particularly true to the Injiro *gadaa* center which is located near the town of the Angar Gute. This happened mainly in the post 1991. The need to establish the present day Injiro *gadaa* center was started by local people in the form of *jaarii*.⁷⁴

The initiation of holding the first *jaarii* at Injiro was related to the hardships of May 1991 and the horror that the people felt by observing large number of uncovered human bones. This was because it was against the culture of the society. The bones were the result of the conflict between the soldiers of the *Darg* government and that of the advancing EPRDF's forces. The latter group entered Gidda from Gojjam. The forces of EPRDF which was largely dominated

⁷¹ Geremew Huluka (2012), "The Role of Local Customs in Sustainable Use of Forest Resources in Andode Dicho Area, Western Ethiopia: an Ethnographic Account," *Science, Technology and Arts Research Journal*, I (2), p. 91; Informant: Wegari Geleta.

⁷² Zelalem Teferra, p.889; Informant: Dorsis Dhuguma.

⁷³ *Gedaam* is an Amharic translation of abbey which is a building for the residence of monks and nuns of EOC.

⁷⁴ Informants: Wegari Geleta and Dorsis Dhuguma.

by Oromo used the Ditcho hill as an important strategic site and inflicted strong war against the *Darg* at the battle of Guttin. The war was conducted in May 1991 and continued for about two weeks.⁷⁵

The outcome of the war was the death of many people to the extent that several dead bodies covered the battle field. After the down fall of the *Darg* government, the local people in Guttin believed that *Waaqa* will not rain for it was irritated by looking these bones. Therefore, to make prayer to *Waaqa Waaqa* and obtain rain, the Oromo people held the *jaarii* at the present day Injiro *gadaa* center in 1991. After *jaarii* was started there, the Amhara resettlers complained to the court in order to establish *gedaam* center on the area. The case was completed with the success of the indigenous people. The detail investigation of its politicization was beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is worth noting here that the coming of the resettlers had affected the ritual places of the local people.⁷⁶

In fact, blaming the resettlers for they had practiced their religions and established their religious centers was unreasonable. Since the early years of the large scale conquests of the Christian kingdom, the Orthodox Churches were built in the area. However, the ritual places of the local people should have been out of their target. There had been other alternative places for the establishment of the *gedaam*. The request of transforming the *gadaa* center to the *gedaam* had created inter-ethnic suspicions and disagreements between the local people and the resettlers with Orthodox religion.⁷⁷

The Muslim Oromo who had been living in Gidda *woreda* were celebrating the *gadaa* system. Likewise, the Wallo Muslim resettlers of the *woreda* were acknowledged by the local people for they had good attitudes towards the Oromo traditional religion. Most of the time, they attended the *gadaa* celebrations held in the *woreda*. The reason might have been related to their genealogical affinity with the Oromo. At the celebrations, they had been given animals to be slaughtered. This was because the Muslims refrained themselves from eating the animals slaughtered by the followers of the other religions.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Informants: Gemmechu Birra and Dorsis Dhuguma.

⁷⁶ Informant: Dorsis Dhuguma.

⁷⁷ Informants: Jirra Duessa and Dorsis Dhuguma.

⁷⁸ Informants: Dessalegn Feyisa.

Most of the time, the resettlers and the local people interacted only slightly. Theoretically, the integrated settlement pattern or the *sigsega* would have been better in allowing the resettlers to interact with the local community. Practically, however, the resettlers of both integrated and separate villages of the resettlement sites had not developed strong relationship with the local people. The social affiliation in the resettlement sites were established mainly along ethnic lines. The formation of inter-ethnic social institutions like *iddir* and *daboo* rarely developed between the three major ethnic groups; the Oromo, Amhara and Tigre. Each group was suspicious of one another and preferred to make ethnic based rapport.⁷⁹

For instance, marriage in the resettlement sites had been established by following ethnicity. The local Oromo people established marriage ties with their Oromo counterpart and the same is true to the resettlers. This was based on anticipation that the resettlers might leave the area in the future because it belongs to the Oromo people.⁸⁰

Therefore, a few inter-ethnic marriages had been practiced in the area. All groups preferred to marry from among their ethnic group. Most of the peoples had no good attitudes for those who had married from outside of their groups. The marriage practice among the three major ethnic groups involved some distinctive activities. For instance, the Tigre resettlers endow the groom with land and/or money while the Oromo prepare home materials and some domestic animals like mules as dowries. The three ethnic groups who had been living in the settlement sites had not exchanged such distinctive ceremonies. All retained to live by practicing their own system.⁸¹

According to Assefa, the Amhara resettlers in Kiramu expressed their status as *yasaw agar saw* (“a man in another man’s country”).⁸² This implied the fact that the resettlers had not developed a sense indignity. However, they had attempted to hide their strangeness to the area by using different mechanisms. The main reason for which the resettlers needed close and friendly ties with the local people was to gain security which in turn would enable them to continue working and living on the land. Therefore, the marriage ties as well as other

⁷⁹ Informant: Jirra Duressa.

⁸⁰ Informant: Wegari Geleta and Gusse Mersha.

⁸¹ Informants: Jirra Duressa and Dorsis Dhuguma.

⁸² Assefa Tolera, p.72.

forms of social ties between the resettlers and the local people targeted the benefits. Consequently, the marriage was characterized lots of divorcees.⁸³

Although the feeling of suspicion had been prevailed between the three ethnic groups in resettlement sites, no open fighting was experienced until 2000/2001. Albeit it was limited among the neighboring groups, the resettlers and local people had shown some kinds of integrations. For instance, they had attended the funeral ceremonies of one another. A few commonly established social organizations like *iddir* and *daboo* had functioned at least among the neighboring households of the three ethnic groups. They invited each other on their respective ceremonial activities. Both resettlers and local people used to recognize the value of respecting the elders. More significantly, they tolerated each other and lived together by avoiding the possible escalation of the minor disagreements into inter-ethnic conflicts.⁸⁴

The schools which were built in the area of Guttin had been delivering education program with double language in separated classes. These were *Afaan* Oromo for the local people and Amharic language for the resettlers. Even if they were a few in numbers, there were resettlers who had learned the native language of the area and the indigenous people attempted to learn the Languages of the resettlers. This is particularly true to Amharic language. For many of the youngsters, living and working with the Amhara resettlers was taken as one of the best mechanisms to learn Amharic language. Therefore, the prevalence of inter-ethnic suspicion does not mean the total disagreement and total isolation of the groups.⁸⁵

Particularly, the Raayyaa sub-group from among the Tigre resettlers and Wallo Muslims from the Amhara resettlers had more moderate relationship with the local Oromo. This was due to the fact that the two groups traced their lineages to the Oromo. Due to the prevalence of competition over resources, isolationism and inter-ethnic suspicions, a kind of host-client complex developed between the three co-existing groups.⁸⁶

The Indigenous-Resettlers' Complex in the Resettlement Sites

It was said that the issue of indigenous-resettlers complex was intensified since the 1991. However, some indications had shown the prevalence of the host-client bigotry just after the

⁸³ Informant: Jirra Duressa.

⁸⁴ Informant: Wegari Geleta.

⁸⁵ Informant: Jirra Duressa.

⁸⁶ Informant: Dorsis Dhuguma.

coming of the resettlers. Many of the local individuals resented the coming of the share-croppers for they did not have blood relations with them. The fear of the local individuals was partly on the expectation that their wives and girls might be entered into the sexual relations with the share-croppers or livestock keepers.⁸⁷

The issue of the indigenous-resettlers complex was intensified for various reasons. The first among the dominant causes was the question of indigeneity or indigenosity. On the one hand, many of the resettlers arrived during the period when the area was uncultivated and was covered with dense forests. At the time, no individuals had established effective control and ownership over the area. Therefore, the resettlers considered themselves as legitimate owner of the area. As it was stated earlier, many of the households from the resettlers' background were born there in Guttin. It was partly for this reason that the intention of rearranging the administration of the area as the Amhara special *woreda* in Oromia Region was developed in the view of the Amhara resettlers.⁸⁸

On the other hand, the local Oromo people considered themselves as the only legitimate group who had ownership right over the area. For this group, the ownership of the area was already established by the Oromo *daggal saaqii* of the 16th century. In the view of this group, the area was reforested as the inhabitants left the area due to malaria and animal diseases. After they had left the area to relatively safe lands adjacent to the Guttin, the Oromo had used the dense forests of the area as sources of ivory, traditional medicines and place where they had produced honey by using their own traditional hives. As the result, the resettlers of the second half of the 20th century had no reason of establishing ownership right over the area.⁸⁹

The other reason which increased the tensions between the local people and resettlers was the various attempts made by the resettlers towards the transformation of the area. First of all, they acted as if the area belonged to them. In order to formalize their intention, they tried to erase the original names of the area by giving the more 'Christianized' names. The local people opted to keep the very original naming for it had helped them to remember their past. However, the resettlers considered the local people's resentment of deforestation as the

⁸⁷ Informants: Kebeda Guta and Akuma Kedida.

⁸⁸ Informant: Awoke Biterf.

⁸⁹ Informants: Gobana *Abbaa* Burka and Shiferra Tesso.

strategy used by the indigenous people to discriminate the resettlers. The following lists are a few from among the places that were renamed after the coming of the resettlers.⁹⁰

Original Name	After being renamed by the resettlers	Location
1. Kistaana Biiftuu	Tena Teferi (by the early resettlers)	Kiramu
2. Haaroo	Haro Addis Alem	Kiramu
3. Maqa-Limmu	<i>Abbaa</i> Musa	Gidda
4. Hoofata Warabboo	Debire Ambessa	Gidda
5. Tulluu Leencaa	Mender Sost	Gidda
6. Dalasaa Makkaannisaa	Mender Arat	Gidda
7. Lalistuu Angar	Mender Asir	Gidda
8. Caffee Saree	Aroge Safar	Gidda
9. Teessoo Birruu	Lali Mariyam	Gidda
10. Dhakaa Jigii	Shasho Ber	Gidda

(Source: Tesfaye Tafesse, p.861; Informants: Wegari Geleta and Dorsis Dhuguma).

The habit of renaming the places was politicized for various reasons. On the side of the resettlers, the justification behind their need for the renaming was related to the resettlers' inability to pronounce the original names. Therefore, it was done only to make easy access of communication among all inhabitants of the area.⁹¹ Tesfaye disclosed that the identification of place names with the newly established churches was the norm in the Amhara societies.⁹²

The local people resented the habit because of many reasons. They interpreted the renaming as the resettlers' attempt to make the area of Guttin a special Amhara *woreda* in Oromia National Regional State.⁹³ Another equally important reason for which they disliked the renaming was the significance of every original name. The Oromo used name in order to remember specific meaning for which it was named originally. Changes in names would result in the loss of the said meaning. The loss of the original meaning of place names in turn would bring the distortion of people's memory of their own history.⁹⁴

The establishment of the Orthodox churches was also another source of tension. Broadly speaking, the local people had not totally hated the construction of the Orthodox churches. Many churches were established in *Gidda woreda* since the last quarter of the 19th century. In almost all of the Churches, the priests were ordained from among Tigrians or Amharans. The

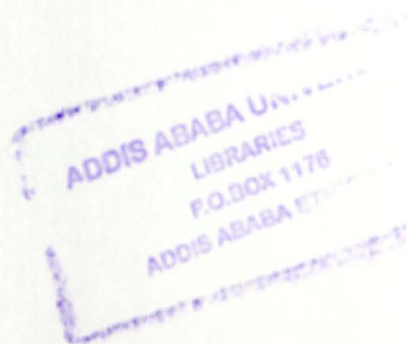
⁹⁰ Informant: Imiru Yadeta.

⁹¹ Informant: Awoke Biterf.

⁹² Tesfaye Tafesse, p.861.

⁹³ *Ibid*; Informant: Wegari Geleta.

⁹⁴ Informant: Gemechu Birra.



local people demanded their own participation in the decisions of answering the questions of 'where and how to build the Churches'. However, the resettlers believed that the consultation of the local non-Orthodox groups for the construction of Orthodox churches would have no conceivable value.⁹⁵

Another factor which brought both the resettlers and the local people together was deforestation problem in and around the settlement areas. Certainly, deforestation occurred due to the unbalanced relationship between the people and the environment. This was manifested when the resettlers and the local people transformed the area from the dense forests to bare farmland. Deforestation problem was severe after 1991.⁹⁶

The first reason was the uncontrolled and spontaneous adventure of the self-settled Gojjame in the area. Self-initiated resettlers were blamed for the deforestation of the resettlement sites. The second reason was related to the fact that the EPRDF government gave relatively less attention to the protection of forests as compared to the *Darg* government. However, it adopted a policy which would most likely brought deforestation unless proper follow up was made. Among the others, the results of free movement of people and resettlement would have been at menace without proper follow up. Free movement refers to the right provided by the EPRDF for people to move freely in the country. Whereas resettlement was a right given to the people to resettle and establish their livelihood in the area to which they had moved.⁹⁷

Freedom of movement and resettlement provided by EPRDF after 1991 was expected to solve various problems but it exacerbated the problem of indigenous-resettlers complex in East Wallagga. As a result of resource based competition, deforestation and the resettlers' intention of making the settlement sites their own special *woreda* resulted in open fighting between the two groups. The conflict was started in Gudayya Bila, Sibul Sire and Gidda-Kiramu *woredas* one after the other.⁹⁸

It was very severe in Kiramu and Guttin area of the district. The conflict between the Amhara resettlers and local Oromo people in Kiramu area in 2000/2001 was among the clear manifestations of the resettlers' attempt to transform their status from *ya saw agar saw* to

⁹⁵ Informant: Awoke Biterf.

⁹⁶ Informant: Dorsis Dhuguma; Dessale Gudeta and Gobana *Abbaa* Burka.

⁹⁷ Informant: Dorsis Dhuguma.

⁹⁸ Informant: Wegari Geleta.

bale agar. While *ya saw agar saw* is an Amhara term which literally mean "a man in another man's country"), *bale agar* denotes "a country man". In 2000/2001, the inter-ethnic suspicion between the indigenous people and the Amhara resettlers escalated into inter-ethnic war. This was the climax stage of indigenous-resettlers complex in the area understudy.⁹⁹

The main cause of indigenous-resettlers conflict in Kiramu area in 2000/2001 was the intense competition between the two groups over land. The resettlers also attempted to make the settlement sites special Amhara administrative unit in Oromia National Regional State. In order to pave the way for this, they started to ask question of making Amharic language the working language of settlement sites. However, the indigenous people in Kiramu opposed their demand. In Guttin resettlement sites, there have been schools working in Amharic language. In Kiramu, however, resettlers' targeted schools were not established. Generally, resource completion and question of creating special *woreda* resulted in an inter-ethnic conflict.¹⁰⁰

The conflict resulted in the death of many people from both sides. Finally, it was resolved with the intervention of the regional government. From the Oromia regional security, Yonatan Dhibisa went to the area and intervened in the conflict for its resolution. However, he was accused as if he encouraged the massacre of the resettlers. As the result of the conflict, some resettlers left the area. Those of the Amhara resettlers who were surrendered after the war continued to live in the area by compromising, adapting and associating themselves with the local people. When the data of this study were gathered, the two groups established *iddir* and marriage relationships with one another.¹⁰¹

In addition to individualism, isolationism and inter-ethnic suspicion, another historical development which affected the smooth interactions among the peoples of district was the expansions of the newly introduced religion. In the olden days, the Oromo society of the *woreda* were *Waaqeffataa* at all and there were no religious based divisions. In modern days,

⁹⁹ Zelalem Teferra (2006), "The Dynamics of Ethno-Social and Socio-Cultural Relations in Gidda Kiramu *woreda* of Eastern Wallagga (Oromiya) Regional State: A Preliminary Survey," In Siegbert Uhlig (ed.), *Proceedings of the XVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Humburg, July 20-25, 2003, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, p.195; Informant: Amsalu Temesgen.

¹⁰⁰ Informant: Imiru Yadeta.

¹⁰¹ Informants: Dorsis Dhuguma and Imiru Yadeta.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT OF THE NEWLY INTRODUCED RELIGIONS IN GIDDA WOREDA

Introduction

Giving a precise meaning of culture is a very difficult task. This is because culture as a term constitutes a very broad concept. According to Wemlinger, culture involves all of the learned conceptual aspects of human society. It is a primary tool through which identity is expressed. Religion, language, ways of life and social structure are all aspects of cultural expression.¹ Culture determines the day to day activities of the people. Human behavior is largely shaped by the culture in which he/she is grown. Therefore, historical investigation of a given people would become incomplete unless their culture is examined thoroughly. Scholarly works has shown that culture is an integral part of every society. It is important in the understanding of history as are dates and facts. Regarding this concern, Wemlinger pointed out that without cultural context, the dates are only numbers and the facts are meaningless words.²

As a form of people's expression, culture is created, expanded, imposed, modified and/or is changed due to various factors. Cultural changes or acculturation would happen due to cultural interactions, fusions, modernization, technological transformation, globalization or dynamism in other socio-cultural aspects of the society. It happens in a continuous, prolonged and gradual process.³

Yet, one of the main problems in the study of cultural history of the society is its wide-ranging nature. Studying every aspects of culture is broad and unmanageable. This fact delimits the scope of this chapter to religion and dynamism in a history of culture among the Gidda Oromo. For the Oromo people, the belief system, identity and indigenous religion are given with birth.⁴ Accordingly, this chapter deals with interactions between the newly introduced religions and the

¹ Cherri Reni Wemlinger (2008), "Identity in Ethiopia: The Oromo from the 16th to the 19th Century," MA Thesis, Department of History, Washington State University, pp. 72-73.

² *Ibid*, p.73.

³ Informant: Wegari Geleta.

⁴ Gemetchu Megersa, "Oromumma: Tradition, Consciousness and Identity," In P.T.W. Baxter, Jan Hultin and A. Triulzi (eds.) *Being and Becoming Oromo*, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet 1996), p.94.

indigenous culture of the Gidda Oromo. Here too, investigating the socio-cultural impacts of the newly introduced religions seems to be very broad. Therefore, our main concerns would be confined to the survey of the impacts of a few religions, namely Orthodox Christianity and Protestantism on the particular aspects of the Gidda Oromo. For the sake of clarity, the researcher preferred to use 'the newly introduced religions' instead of saying Orthodox Christianity and Protestantism. This is because the two religions have been the most dominant and have affected the socio-cultural lives of the people.

Religious Overview of the Gidda Oromo

There have been three main religions in Gidda *woreda*. These were indigenous religion or *Waaqeffannaa*, Christianity and Islam. As it is already stated elsewhere, the Gidda Oromo were non-Christians and non-Muslims until the 19th century. Until then, *Waaqeffannaa* religion and the *gadaa* system had guided the socio-cultural lives of the people without any interference from alien religions and systems. *Waaqeffannaa* had been the indigenous and popular religion of the Gidda Oromo. It is a monotheistic religion where people believe in one-supreme God known as *Waaqa* or *Waaqayyoo*. Customs, practices, ceremonies, rituals and each of the day-to-day activities of the Oromo had been conducted in accordance with the will of *Waaqa*. *Waaqa* is the creator of the universe, powerful and capable of doing everything without limitations.⁵

Series of 'universal' religions were introduced mainly after the last quarter of the 19th century. These were Islam and Orthodox Christianity. They were non-indigenous and alien religions to the Gidda Oromo as it had been the case for other peoples of the country. They were introduced to the area long after the people had practiced the traditional religion. Christianity of the area constitutes three branches namely the Orthodox Christianity, Protestantism and Catholicism. The socio-cultural lives of the Gidda Oromo had been reshaped or at least modified with the coming of the Orthodox Christianity and Protestantism. This is particularly true in their marriage practices, funeral ceremony, traditional songs, social life and formation of cooperation. Among the newly introduced religions, the socio-cultural impacts of Islam and Catholicism were not immense for they were limited numerically and spatially.⁶

⁵ Daniel Ayana (1983), "The Concept of *Waaqa* and the Missionaries: A Preliminary Study in the Grafting of Christianity on a Traditional Belief in Wallagga," In Papers Read at the History Seminar, p.114; Lambert Bartels, p.14; Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁶ Informants: Cherinnet Wakweyya and Dessalegn Feyisa.

Despite the long period of its existence in Gidda *woreda*,⁷ Islam has not brought profound socio-cultural impacts among the people. This was at least for two main reasons. One was the fact that Islam has not penetrated into the interior of the rural territories where majority of the people live. The second reason was that the Muslims have not targeted the transformations of the indigenous culture of the area. They did not ignore the traditional ways of life or at least refrained themselves from working against the indigenous socio-cultural practices. More than the others, the Muslims appreciated the celebrations of the *gadaa* system.⁸

Conversion to Catholic Christianity was not encouraged by the Italian occupiers who were Catholics for themselves. Instead they were more inclined to pursue their anti-Amhara policies, to encourage Islam and the revival of indigenous culture.⁹ The very attempt made by the Catholics in the expansion of their religion was too late. It was started in 1981. This was a period when the resettlers-targeted Michael Church of the Catholics was established in *Mender Arat* of Guttin area. Catholicism was introduced to Guttin area of Gidda *woreda* in the early 1980s from its main branch in Naqamtee. Michael Church of *Mender Arat* was built by the excellency of the then well known papacy in Wallagga called Enri Bomers. A Catholic woman called Sisilia, and her supporters had also attempted to expand Catholicism in Gidda from the last decade of the 20th century onwards.¹⁰

The initial success of Catholicism had been observed because its expansion was accompanied by provisions of social services and donations of funds. As part of their social services, they had built schools, clinics and water pumps. Nevertheless, the attempts made for the expansion of Catholicism ended in failure¹¹ for various reasons. The donations which had been provided to their members and the needy remained short lived for it was ceased after a few decades of their arrival. As it had targeted the Tigre resettlers, Catholicism never attracted the Oromo who had been pre-occupied with *Waaqeffannaa*, Orthodox Christianity, Islam and Protestantism.¹²

⁷ Our sources confirm that the introduction of Islam into the Gidda *woreda* predated that of the Orthodox Christianity. It was said to have been introduced through the long distance trade.

⁸ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁹ Lambert Bartels (1983), *Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia-An Attempt to Understand*, Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin, p.26.

¹⁰ Informant: Dabala Gameda.

¹¹ When the researcher collected the data of this thesis, the total numbers of Catholics in the *woreda* were less than fifty individuals.

¹² Informant: Dabala Gameda.

Moreover, the Catholics propagated their religion in Amharic language which was unpopular among the indigenous people. Moreover, the propagation strategy of Catholicism in the area lacked testimony. Finally, lack of proper coordination and effective follow up resulted in the total decline of Catholicism in Gidda. Therefore, the socio-cultural impacts of Catholicism and Islam had been minimal as compared to the Orthodox Christianity and Protestantism whose fate has attracted the researcher.¹³

Socio-Cultural Impact of Orthodox Christianity among the Gidda Oromo

During the reign of Haile Selassie I, the issue of conversion to the Orthodox religion and accepting its ideology was not an option rather it was an obligation to be saved from humiliation. Therefore, many of the Gidda Oromo accepted the religion unwillingly. This was because the people conceived the conversion as the only means of saving themselves from the suppression by the governments and their agents.¹⁴

After the area was conquered first by the Gojjame in the 1870s, the Orthodox religion was introduced to and expanded in Gidda and its surrounding areas. Menilek of Shoa had defeated the Gojjame at the battle of Embabo in 1882 and declared Orthodox Christianity as the only official and legally established religion. Since then, many Orthodox Churches were built in Northeastern Wallagga in general and Gidda *woreda* in particular. The early Orthodox Churches established in and around Gidda *woreda* include *Iyesus* of Gendo, *Gabriel* of Dirre Amsalu, *Kidane-Mehret* of Wasti, *Mariam* Churches of Inde and Harru, *Michael* Churches of Qello and Ilaala and *Giorgis* of Gelila.¹⁵

After its introduction to the area, Orthodox Christianity had worked against the Oromo indigenous religion and traditional practices. Following the conquest of the area, the various local chiefs were ordered to ban the already undermined¹⁶ indigenous religion in favour of the Orthodox Christianity.¹⁷ Through this manner, the Orthodox Churches had dominated the social

¹³ Informants: Dabala Gameda and Girma Ebba.

¹⁴ Informants: Kebede Biftu and Akuma Kedida.

¹⁵ Informant: Kitata Gerbi.

¹⁶ Before the area was conquered first by the Gojjame and later by the Shoan forces, the indigenous religion and socio-cultural lives of the Gidda Oromo were weakened because of the emergence of Monarchical administrative system at the expense of the *gadaa* system.

¹⁷ Daniel Ayana (1984), "Protestant Missions in Wallagga: A Study of the Activities of the Missions and the Local Converts, 1898-1935," MA Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, p.48.

and cultural lives of the Gidda Oromo. The superior status and position of the Orthodox Christianity was maintained until Emperor Haile Selassie was deposed in 1974.¹⁸

From 1974 to 1991, the *Darg* government overlooked the role of religions and ritual practices but not for the concerns of the people. It did so only for the fact that *Darg's* ideology had given almost no place for the significance of any religion. Therefore, the impacts of the Orthodox religion among the Gidda Oromo remained intact even during the *Darg* government. The already established Orthodox churches had continued to downplay the roles and status of *Waaqeffannaa* and other socio-cultural practices of the Oromo. The intensity of persecution against Orthodox Christians had been less than that of Protestantism.¹⁹

According to Mohammed Hassen, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church clergies had cultural prejudice towards the Oromo. The clergies hated the Oromo, who in turn hated the Amhara clergies.²⁰ In the conversion of the Oromo, the state and church collaborated; the soldiers and priests of the imperial period worked together.²¹ This enabled the Orthodox churches and the Orthodox religion to be expanded in Gidda with more or less no systematic techniques. Unlike Catholicism and Protestantism, the Orthodox churches had not provided social services as a means of attracting the people. No one attempted to translate the Bible into *Afaan Oromo*. As it had been a religion of imperial court, it used to propagate its ideology only through forceful conversion or by threatening the people at least psychologically. Economically too, the people were obliged not only to pay money to the churches but also provided the priests with products of different kinds.²²

The Oromo traditional burial places had been done around homes. After the coming of the Orthodox religion, the people conducted it around grave yards of the Churches. People who had conducted the system out of the churches would have been threatened both by the churches and government authorities. *Waaqeffannaa* religion and the *gadaa* system were considered as

¹⁸ Tony Karbo (2013), "Religion and social cohesion in Ethiopia," *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, Vol. IV (3), P. 45

¹⁹ Informant: Kitata Gerbi.

²⁰ Mohammed Hassen (July 2000), "A Short History of Oromo Colonial Experience: Part Two, Colonial Consolidation and Resistance 1935-2000," *Journal of Oromo Studies*, Volume 7, Numbers 1 & 2, P.118.

²¹ Gemetchu Megersa (1993), "Knowledge, Identity and the Colonizing Structure: The Case of the Oromo in East and Northeast Africa," PhD Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of London, p.179.

²² Informants: Kebede Guta and Akuma Kedida.

ceremonies conducted for the evil spirits.²³ In reality, however, they have been important preservers and protectors of Oromo culture, more or less in the same way the Orthodox churches had been the preservers of Abyssinian culture.²⁴

People who had the skill of speaking Amharic language were considered by the Orthodox Churches as superior and better groups than those who could not speak it. Therefore, the Oromo people were forced or at least influenced to be assimilated to Amhara culture. Superior status of Amharic language was started from the 1870s. Recognition of the language continued during the reigns of both Haile Sellassie and the *Darg*, and it was formalized by the 1995 FDRE constitution. According to Mekuria, assimilated Oromo and others spoke Amharic among themselves, taught their children only Amharic and behaved as if they were Amharas.²⁵ This was partly because people who could not speak Amharic language were considered as less civilized than those who speak it. The higher status attached to the Amharic language before the 1991 came from the influence of the government. The same episode of the post 1991 was the elongation and continuation of the psychological makeup planted before this period.²⁶

As Tesema had already stated, new forms of human cooperation system were introduced among the people following the advent of the Orthodox Churches. They were alien to the Oromo people of the area. These include *mahiber* and *senbete*. They were more or less consumption oriented cooperation systems in which members met and celebrated it monthly. The members of either *senbete* or *mahiber* rarely engaged in cooperative works. While *senbete* was attended by men, *mahiber* was attended by both men and women. *Senbete* ritual was conducted on Sunday once a month. Based on a rotating order arranged by the agreement of the group, every members of the *senbete* must prepare what would be consumed on the day. Food and local drinks provided by the *bale-tera* (order owner) would be eaten and drunk after prayers was conducted usually by the priests of the Churches.²⁷

²³ Informant: Kebede Biftu and Dorsis Dhuguma.

²⁴ Alemayehu Debelo (July 2001), "The Indigenous Oromo Religion, *Waaqeffannaa: The Case of Warra Gibinaa*, Northeastern Wallagga, Limmu District," B.A Thesis, Department of Sociology and Social Administration, Addis Ababa University, p.28.

²⁵ Mekuria Bulcha (1996), "The Survival and Reconstruction of Oromo National Identity," In P. Baxter, Jan hultin and A. Triulzi (eds.), *Being and Becoming Oromo*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, p.57.

²⁶ Informant: Kebede Biftu.

²⁷ Tesema Ta'a (1996), "Traditional and Modern Cooperatives among the Oromo," In P.T.W. Baxter, Jan Hultin and A. Triulzi (eds.), *Being and Becoming Oromo*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, p.207; Informant: Kebede Biftu.

Mahibers were held on the days identified with particular saints recognized in Orthodox religion. A few of these saints for whom the people prepared the *mahibers* include *Michael, Gabriel, Mariam*,²⁸ *Giorgis, Medan-Halem* and *Balegiari* on the days of a month on 12, 19, 21, 23, 27 and 29 respectively. Therefore, various *mahibers* were celebrated by different groups in the name of various saints. Other commemorations for these saints were conducted for respective *tabots* (ark of covenants) of the saints. This had been held annually. These were on the days the *tabots* came out of the churches and assumed to drunken water and accept sacrifices as well as endowment from the followers. On these days, the people had practiced their own traditional dances and songs.²⁹

The introduction and expansion of the Orthodox Christianity had its own impacts on the working habits of the people. Before its introduction to the area, the Gidda Oromo had been working on their agricultural fields all days except Sundays on which the people took rest, visited the sick and their relatives or close friends who were detained in prison. After the advent of the Orthodoxy, the *laguu* days³⁰ of the week were multiplied. In addition to the six days mentioned above, there were other days of the saints on which the people were forbidden to work their agricultural fields. Working on these 'holy' days was considered by the Christians as one of the taboo practices and believed to bring God's punishment. As Protestantism expanded in the area, particularly after 1991, some sorts of social division and discrimination happened between those who recognize the *laguu* days and those who did not. Protestants did not celebrate the *laguu* days. In this way, the introduction of the Orthodox Christianity had reduced the working days of the people.³¹

However, minor positive steps had taken place in relation to the advent of the EOC. As Kumilachew has stated, the priests of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Churches had played a great role in settling various kinds of conflicts. Especially, when there is a conflict between

²⁸ *Mariam* is a name of Saint Mary recognized in Orthodox religion.

²⁹ Informants: Kebeda Guta and Akuma Kedida.

³⁰ *Laguu* is an *Afaan* Oromo term, and the *laguu* days implies the days on which the people were forbidden to work their agricultural fields for religious purposes. It is equivalent of Amharic term *senbet*.

³¹ Informants: Kebeda Biftu and Tola Nagaro.

husband and wife, the first person where the spouse chooses to solve their problem is a *neseha abbat* (father confessor) from the EOC.³²

During the imperial period, the EOC had not faced hardships in converting the people because it was a religion of the imperial court and the only religion allowed to be practiced in the country. However, the Churches failed to carry out deep propagation and there had been weak follow up. Therefore, many people of the countryside accepted the religion nominally and retained some of their socio-cultural practices. The majority of the rural people became the members of the EOC for at least two reasons. One is the fact that Orthodox had been the official religion. And the second factor was because people opted to get burial places in the churches which became the order of the day. Hence, the subjects did not totally abandon their traditional practices but added Orthodox Christianity to their indigenous religion.³³

Another equally important reason that made its impacts less significant was the exclusiveness of the EOC. The practices of the churches in the area were found to be exclusive and failed to attract followers of other religions. For example, religious fathers in the Church used offensive terms to refer to the followers of other religions. They used terms like *menafeq* (disbeliever) to non-Orthodox. Since the laities had learnt from their religious fathers, they had interacted less likely with out-group members in local institutions.³⁴

The Orthodox churches had expanded no noticeable social services. The only services that the churches had delivered to the people were limited to spiritual 'healing' through *tsebel* (anointment), advice and conflict resolutions for its members.³⁵ The Churches used no appropriate techniques of propagating the Orthodox religion. The only major way of expansion remained imposition. Thus, lack of other alternative techniques affected the expansion of the Orthodox Christianity as the attachment of the religion with the government was ended in 1974. Hence, a number of the Orthodox Churches established after 1991 was far less than that of the Protestant Churches.³⁶

³² Kumilachew Shiferaw (June, 2015), "The Socio-economic Roles of Religion: The Case of Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Churches in Addis Ababa," MA Thesis, Department of Social Anthropology, Addis Ababa University, p.45; Informant: Tola Nagaro.

³³ Daniel Ayana, "Protestant Missions in Wallagga....," p.49; Informant: Kebede Biftu.

³⁴ Kumilachew, pp.46-47.

³⁵ *Ibid*, pp.40-41.

³⁶ Informant: Kebede Biftu.

Generally, the Orthodox Christianity had interrupted the traditional religion, belief system, practices and cooperation systems of the local people. Nevertheless, the people had not internalized the Orthodoxy. The Gidda Oromo who were converted half-heartedly were not satisfied by the Orthodox Christianity and they remained open to accept other religions. This was because the people identified the Orthodox Christianity as the religion of oppressors. When the Protestant religion was introduced in the Northeastern Wallagga, the Orthodox Christianity had already disrupted the traditional religious practices and belief system. Through this manner, Protestantism became successful more easily among the Gidda Oromo from 1968. Many people welcomed Protestantism simply because they were in hard times when various alien concepts and divinities had threatened them. At this junction, Protestantism was taken as an alternative of liberating oneself from the ambiguities, hardships and terror related utmost with the new divinities including *saytan* (devil) and *qaallichaa*.³⁷

The Expansion of Protestantism in Gidda Woreda

Before we discuss the expansion of Protestantism in Gidda *woreda*, brief investigations of the same event in Wallagga seems to be important. Based on the period, places and the pioneering participants, the expansion of Protestantism had shown variations. Accordingly, it could be studied by dividing the expansion into three groups of participants. However, three of them had not played significant roles for the expansion of Protestantism in the area under study.

The first group of protestant missions who had brought the religion into Wallagga were the local converts from the freed slaves who had been influenced by the Swedish missionaries. The activities of the Swedish missionaries in Wallagga had its origins in the missions' activities in Eritrea. Among the local converts, Onesimos Nesib, Aster Ganno and their supporters from the local people were helped by the Swedish missionaries and started the missionary tasks in the close of the 19th century. Among the others, Onesimos became popular for he had translated the Bible into *Afaan Oromo*.³⁸

The provisions of social services and translation of the Bible had helped them in attracting the attention of the local converts as well as the authorities. Kumsa Morodaa welcomed the protestant missionaries for two main reasons. The first reason was that he had intended to use

³⁷ Informants: Gemechu Birra and Kitata Gerbi.

³⁸ Daniel Ayana, "Protestant Missions in Wallagga...", p.51; Informant: Teferra Gonfa.

their social services. He wanted to use their knowledge and wisdom for the advantage of the people. The second equally important factor was the fact that they had made use of vernacular language of the area in their missionary work. During their early advent in Naqamtee, Kumsa Morodaa ordered the gathering of people to listen to their sermon. The missionaries had rejoiced with Kumsa Morodaa because the sermon was conducted in *Afaan Oromo*. For Kumsa, a sermon in *Afaan Oromo* seemed to mean liberation from Geez language of the Orthodox Churches which the people could not understand. As a result, the early missionaries were allowed to live and work in Wallagga.³⁹

These protestant missionaries were active in Naqamtee from 1905. They were strong in resisting the ups and downs in the processes of the expansion. Despite their profound success in expanding Protestantism in Western regions including Naqamtee area, Western and Qellam Wallagga, this group had not brought the gospel into Horro-Guduruu *awraja* where the study area is located. One of the freed slaves from Guduruu origin was Daniel Dabala. His attempt of bringing the gospel to his birth place was prevented by the conquerors of the area. Hence, no significant social services were expanded in Gidda by the Swedish Missionaries of the period. This was because they had initially moved with Governor Kumsa Morodaa of Leqa Naqamtee who had once changed his seat from Naqamtee to Nadjo.⁴⁰

Different kinds of social services were expanded in Wallagga by the efforts of the missionaries who had got some forms of supports from the local converts and government employees. A letter written by Western Synod Evangelical Church *Mekane Yesus* in Ethiopia and sent to *Darg* Member of Wallagga *kefilhager* Administration provides a clear description and report of these services. Among these services, the letter has mentioned the establishment and expansions of schools, hospitals and other health organizations. Moreover, they were said to have donated money by which the peasants bought oxen for farming. They had provided awareness concerning documentations and management of money. Roads, bridges and water services were also significant. Particularly, the letter has mentioned roads and bridges constructed and repaired in Lalo Asabi, Boji Cheqorsa, Boji Dirmaji and Aira *woredas*. In addition, water service was

³⁹ Informant: Cherinnet Wakweyya.

⁴⁰ Informant: Teferra Gonfa.

expanded in Begi town and Boji Dirmaji *woreda*. Obviously, all of these areas are located in Western parts of Wallagga (See Appendix V)⁴¹

Starting from their early expansion till now, the EECMY have made different formal discussions and had exchanged letters with East Wallagga Administration Office. In this manner, the missionaries had informed the governors regarding their intention of developing social services in the region. Moreover, they had requested the Wallagga administrative governors so that the government policies would become clear for them, and they in turn would help its implementation. However, the successive Ethiopian governments of pre-1991 had not shown bright faces towards the missionaries and their converts.⁴²

For instance, the military government and its parties were remembered in the traditions by their harsh measures on Protestantism as it was true for other religions. During this severe persecution too, the missionaries were said to have requested the government authorities to attend their meetings. This was because one of their purposes behind the meetings was to bring developments in different sectors.⁴³

A letter written by John Eriksson to Abiyu Geleta was among the clear manifestation of missionaries' endeavor in the provision of social services in different sectors. John Eriksson was EECMY Development Department and Abiyu was chief Administrator of Wallagga region at the time. In the letter, Eriksson had notified the plan of the missionaries that one of their aims was improvement of social services and invited Abiyu to attend their meeting on April 3, 1976. The letter also described their willingness of establishing mutual cooperation and assistance with the government authorities (See Appendix VI)⁴⁴

The Swedish missionaries were followed by the American and German protestant missions. They were initiated by the willingness of Ethiopian government of the period in allowing their existence in the country. The Ethiopian governors and the protestant missionaries have been in mutual agreement for their respective benefits. The imperial government of Haile Sillasse, for

⁴¹ East Wallagga Administration Office Archive Center, Date (*Ginbot*) May 27, 1969, No Folder, File and Ref. Numbers, A Letter Written by Western Synod Evangelical Church *Mekane Yesus* in Ethiopia and sent to Wallagga *kefilhager* administrator *Darg* member.

⁴² *Ibid*; Informant: Kitata Gerbi.

⁴³ Informant: Dereje Hailu.

⁴⁴ East Wallagga Administration Office Archive Center, No Folder and File Numbers, Date, March 27, 1976, A letter written by EECM Development Department, John Eriksson, to chief Administrator of Wallagga, Abiyu Geleta.

instance, gave the Protestant missionaries the permissions to establish different social services. This was true in Horro Guduruu *awraja* where the researcher's study area is located. In 1965 for instance, the Vice Directorate of Imperial Ethiopian Government's Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, Dr. Mengesha G/Hewet had sent a permission letter for the missionaries in Horro-Guduruu *awraja*. Through this letter, he announced the missionaries that they were permitted to establish schools and clinics in the area.⁴⁵

Particularly, the American missionaries who had been known as Christian Missionary Fellowship (CMF) were active in Gidda and its surroundings since the mid 1960s. The CMF were an American-based evangelical mission group.⁴⁶ In 1965, the CMF had established their mission stations in Kiramu, Xosse (Present day Goobu Guddaa), Haro Limmu and Akkayyu in Jardega Jarte. Their stations were the first place where Protestantism got its root in its history in Northeastern Wallagga. These missionaries were from North America area of Indiana. Mr. Jaz was a leader and organizer of Kiramu and Goobu mission stations of Gidda *woreda*. Their missionary works were accompanied by provisions of different forms of social services. They gave the social services without discriminating the local people based on the religious background. This was continued until they were deprived of their property and expelled by the *Darg* government in 1977.⁴⁷

In their schools, they taught Bible as a major subject. They also preached the gospel in their health centers. Despite their attempts and conversions of a few individuals, they did less in the propagation of Protestantism and the socio-cultural life of the people was almost unaffected. This was because their mission was not purely religion. They targeted the development of social services. The only places in which they used to preach the religion were schools and health centers. However, the works of the Christian Fellowship missionaries were unstructured. They had no central office and churches were not persistent.⁴⁸ In the preaching, they did not believe in the significance of the Holy Spirit. According to their view, the significance of the Holy Spirit had already ended in the Old Testament. Consequently, they were not successful in their

⁴⁵ East Wallagga Administration Office Archive Center, No Folder and File Numbers, Date (*Megabit*), March, 6, 1976 Ref. Number 18/11625/6268/9, A Letter written by Imperial Ethiopian Government Ministry of Education and Fine Arts to Christian Fellowship Missionaries, P.O. Box 3219 (See Appendix VII).

⁴⁶ Bonnie K. Holcomb, p. 107.

⁴⁷ Informant: Duressa Gonfa.

⁴⁸ Informant: Dereje Hailu.

missionary activities. As the *Darg* expelled them from the areas, the local converts were mixed with those who had begun the mission in Amuru.⁴⁹

Evangelism from Unexpected Groups

Pentecostal activity which was started in 1968 in Amuru elementary school was neither the direct result of the activities of the foreign missionaries nor that of the freed slaves from Massawa. The case of Amuru Pentecostal movement was different from that of the Naqamtee, Western and Qellam Wallagga. Although the movement was started by the non-missionary individuals, their works remained the only successful and great revival of protestant mission in Horro-Guduruu *awraja*⁵⁰ where the study area is located. The mission became successful in engulfing the traditional socio-cultural practices and belief systems of Northeastern Wallagga. Some of the indigenous socio-cultural practices which had not been affected by the Orthodoxy were humiliated by Protestantism.⁵¹

According to Dugasa, the mission was initiated by the activity of two elementary teachers namely Mekuria Mulgeta and Asrat Zerihun who might have encountered salvation and conversion in their respective origins. When they started their mission, there was no single separate church. It was started as fellowship prayers known locally as All Believers' Church or *Andinet Amilko Betekristian* as it was commonly called in Amharic.⁵²

The year 1969 was a turning point in a history of Protestantism in Northeastern Wallagga. In this year, two more local teachers namely Taddese Negewo and Tamirat Bajjiga were added to the initiators of the mission. It was a period when most of the people accepted Protestantism, the gospel exploded and preached in many areas of Northeastern Wallagga. It was during this period that theqaallichaa and remnants of traditional religion were humiliated. Many miracles were done and these attracted many people towards the religion. Many people from the adjacent

⁴⁹ Informant: Teferra Gonfa.

⁵⁰ During the reign of Emperor Haile Sellassie I, Wallagga *tekelay gizat* was once made up of six *awrajas*. These were Horro Guduruu, Naqamtee *Zuria*, Arjo, Gimbii, Qellam and Asosa. Horro Guduruu *awraja* of the period constituted ten *woredas* namely Guduruu, Abbay Comman, Jimma Gannati, Horro, Abe-Dondoro, Jardega Jarte, Amuru, Gidda-Kiramu, Limmu and Ebantu.

⁵¹ Informants: Teferra Gonfa and Kitata Gerbi.

⁵² Dugasa Hirpa (June 2011), "History of Meserete Kiristos Church in Agamsa, Northeast Wallagga," B.A Senior Essay, Department of History, Wallagga University, pp. 17-18; Informants: Teferra Gonfa and Kitata Gerbi.

woredas as well as those beyond Abbay River notably Oromo from Gojjam and Matakal came to Amuru saying, "Jesus was born in Amuru".⁵³

The main reason for which the people were converted to Protestantism was because the religion had been believed to have possessed the power of healing them from every kind of diseases and evil spirits. Whereas, alcoholic drinks and an interest of having more than one wife were among the main challenges that had prevented many people from conversion. These were against the doctrine of Protestantism. Therefore, advices and the preaching of the evangelists were against these habits. The converts were ordered not to cultivate *geeshoo* tree.⁵⁴ Moreover, they were ordered to destroy particular kinds of their household utensils and clothes used formerly in *Waaqeffannaa* religion. This was because they were considered as components that were used to serve different kinds of evil spirits. These all were made to discourage the traditional religion and to reform the socio-cultural life of the people in line with the ideology of Protestantism.⁵⁵

As far as its expansion was concerned, Protestantism in Gidda *woreda* had been propagated from rural to urban areas. Accordingly, the rural areas of Koba Jarra, Konnojji and Arbukanne had been the base from where the religion was expanded throughout the *woreda*. For instance, the members who had later formed the Full Gospel Church began their prayers in Konnojji. This was the situation in 1971 when they began their prayers in the house of private individual. However, the Full Gospel church was built in Ayyaanaa town in 1994. This was after twenty three years of its informal prayers in Konnojji. The same was true to *Meserete Christos* Church which had expanded from its base in Arbukane rural area of Gidda.⁵⁶

The only protestant churches in Gidda *woreda* whose origins were traced to Amuru are *Meserete Christos* and Full Gospel Churches. Churches other than these came to Gidda from other areas. For instance, EECMY came to Gidda after the middle of the 1980s as a result of expansion of its major branch in Naqamtee. A man called Negeri Gemechu, who was disgusted⁵⁷ from *Meserete Christos* Church of Arbukanne, brought EECMY to the area in 1987. Those who had started

⁵³ Informants: Dereje Hailu; Teferra Gonfa and Kitata Gerbi.

⁵⁴ *Geeshoo* is a kind of plants which is among the main components used in the preparation of local ale and other alcoholic beverages.

⁵⁵ Informants: Teferra Gonfa; Duressa Gonfa and Kitata Gerbi.

⁵⁶ Informant: Pastor Teferra Gonfa.

⁵⁷ It is almost common among the Protestant Churches that one who worked against the rules and regulations of the church and that of the Bible at large would be punished for specified period of time. The punishment was often specified in the Bible and any crime doer would be sacked. If he/she was not in a position to accept advice and warning of the Churches, the only option was removing out the individual from the church.

their protestant mission in Amuru and their converts were divided later into Full Gospel and *Meserete Christos* Churches. According to some of our informants, one of the dividing lines by which the early converts were distinguished as members of either the *Meserete Christos* or Full Gospel Church was the way they had accepted the Holy Spirit. In line with this view, those convert who were 'filled with' the Holy Spirit and spoke 'new language' as soon as their conversion would be classified as members of the Full Gospel Church.⁵⁸

Since then, gospel went up like a fire in dry straw with alarming speed. Persecution by the Ethiopian governments was not successful in stopping the process of evangelism. The persecution was very severe between 1970 and 1974. After about two years of its coming to power, the *Darg* government also started harsh measures on the followers of Protestantism. Amazingly, as persecution became severe, the number of new converts increased from time to time. This was because the followers of Protestantism in the area never gave up their hope and determined to practice the religion. Our informants told us that the support of God through its Holy Spirit had believed to have helped these early Protestants to stand against hardships and persecutions. From its beginning in 1968 to the coming of EPRDF government, the evangelists and new converts had practiced prayers of Protestantism in jungle forests and/or in individuals' house. This was done to be saved from possible torture by the government authorities.⁵⁹

Both Haile Sellassie I and the *Darg* governments had carried out severe persecutions against Protestantism. Due to the prevalence of severe persecution, they were not in a position either to conduct prayers of the religion openly or built their own churches. The followers of Protestantism were tortured and forced to deny the religion and to work against its ideology. For instance, they were forced to drink alcoholic beverages. For more than two decades, the prayers continued to be conducted without churches, secretly and being patient of the hardships. While the government authorities had been working for stopping Protestantism, the evangelists had preached the religion, carried out testimony and ordered the converts about the need of stopping the traditional religion and other forms of socio-cultural practices.⁶⁰

After 1991, religious freedom provided by EPRDF government and the establishment of many protestant Churches resulted in large scale propagation of Protestantism. The establishment of

⁵⁸ Informant: Bekele Debelo.

⁵⁹ Informant: Kitata Gerbi.

⁶⁰ Informant: Teferra Gonfa.

Protestant churches and permission of getting burial places for the Protestants were only allowed by the EPRDF government. The establishment of Protestant Churches had been expanded to the extent that the members of a given church had started to show indications of discriminating the members of other churches. Accordingly, particular identifications were labeled to each of the protestant churches. For instance, EECMY had been considered by the government authorities as OLF or at least its honorable supporter. This was mainly because the early members of the church had been working and requesting for the improvement of social life and human dignity. Identifying everyone who might have raised such questions as OLF had been the order of the day.⁶¹

Likewise, the works of the Full Gospel church had been considered by some people as Amharization agent. This appellation was due to various reasons. Firstly, when the church was established in Addis Ababa, its founders were mostly Amhara speaking group. And the second reason was due to the fact that the Full Gospel Churches often invited evangelists, pastors or other workers of the gospel from Amhara speakers. Most of the time, the church delivered its program by using Amharic language. On the other hand, *Meserete Christos Church* was considered as 'cool court'. Perhaps, this was because it emphasized the laws of the churches. As compared to other churches, chanting had been less persistent in *Meserete Christos Church*.⁶²

Although they had got different appellations, all churches had expanded the doctrines of Protestantism in an alarming speed. Evangelists accomplished their tasks openly. The religion had interacted in every aspects of socio-cultural life of the people. Some of our sources confirmed that the impacts of Protestantism destroyed the traditional religion and other forms of the socio-cultural practices more than that of Orthodox Christianity. For this group of sources, Protestantism was the ardent enemy of Oromo traditional practices and ways of life.⁶³ However, it is undeniable that the *gadaa* system was weakened and the *qaalluu* institutions were already vanished during the advent of Protestantism.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Informant: Dereje Hailu.

⁶² Informants: Dereje Hailu and Duessa Gonfa.

⁶³ Wandimmu Nagash and Boni Tesfaye, p.300; Informant: Kebeda Biftu.

⁶⁴ Informant: Teferra Gonfa.

A Brief Assessment of Interactions between Indigenous Religion and Christianity

Waaqeffannaa is indigenous religion of Oromo that emanate from and based on belief in the Supreme Being of *Waaqa*. To believe in *Waaqa*, means to be loyal to his laws, acknowledge his wisdom as the creator and source of all lives. One of the difficulties of studying *Waaqeffannaa* is the lack of written scriptures to understand its beliefs, rituals, liturgies and institutions.⁶⁵ It is also difficult to translate many of the *Afaan* Oromo terms into English without distorting their full meanings.⁶⁶ For example, *ayyaana*, *irreecha* and *safuu* are a few among many *Afaan* Oromo terms which would lose their full meaning when they are translated into English language. Roughly, the direct translations of the three terms are spirit, a prayer ceremony (thanksgiving) and moral standards respectively. Nevertheless, the carefully analyzed meanings of the terms seem to be broader than the assumed translations.

In fact, there are many resemblances between the doctrines of Christianity and *Waaqeffannaa*. Both religions are monotheistic. Their doctrines also resembled on some of the socio-cultural aspects. For instance, they underscored that children must respect and obey the command of their parents as well as those who are elder than themselves. They stressed that the parents in turn should follow up and look after their children. In addition, the followers of both *Waaqeffannaa* and Christianity believed in the importance of prayers, blessing, love and human cooperation. In order to develop cooperation among the people, local institutions like *iddir* and *daboo* were established, in most cases, between co-religious groups.⁶⁷

Both Oromo traditional religion and Christianity played major roles in peaceful co-existence of the people and in solving the disputes. Therefore, they paved the way for peaceful co-existence of the people. The *gadaa* system have been found to be serious in digging out the true cases of disputes among the conflicting parties, and believed to have transparent judgments than both courts and religious institutions. As a result, some of the Christians went to the *gadaa* centers in order to accuse the offender. The protestant churches in particular did not allow its members to go to *gadaa* centers and took serious measures against those who had gone there.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Bedassa Gebbissa (2016), "Oromo Indigenous Religion: *Waaqeffannaa*," *IJRSI*, Volume III, Issue IV, pp.1-2.

⁶⁶ Gemetchu Megersa (July 2005), "The Oromo World-View," *Journal of Oromo Studies*, Volume XI, Numbers 1 and 2, P. 69.

⁶⁷ Informant: Teferra Gonfa.

⁶⁸ Informant: Duessa Gonfa.

For some specific reasons, Protestantism paved the way for the restoration of the *gadaa* system. To mention a few, its doctrines are against the existence of the *laguu* days. According to the doctrines of Protestantism, there are no *laguu* days than Sundays. In this particular case, it is similar with the *gadaa* system. During the early period of the violation of the *laguu* days, particularly from 1969, the non-protestants expected that the ignorance of *laguu* days would bring punishment from the God. As Protestantism became the dominant religion in the area, other people including *Waaqeffataa* but not the pious Orthodox Christians had worked on the previously *laguu* days. This was because no actual punishments had followed Protestants' ignorance of *laguu* days. In this manner, Protestantism liberated the people from the yoke of the Orthodoxy which had reduced the working days of the Oromo until the late 1960s.⁶⁹

The two religions, *Waaqeffannaa* and Christianity, are not the same and their followers did not follow exactly the same doctrines. While the followers of Christianity are known as Christians, those people who believe in *Waaqa* are called *Waaqeffataa*. *Waaqeffannaa* religion has neither formal churches nor sacred scriptures or Bible. The establishment of churches allowed the gathering of people and resultant interactions among them. Instead of written scriptures as of the Christian Bible and Muslim Quran, the *Waaqeffataa* hold the principles of their religion in their own heart and obtain its principles from the tradition. The bottom-line of the religion is based on the belief that everyone has to respect the *seera waaqaa* (the laws of the God).⁷⁰

As a part of *seera waaqaa*, one has to live according to the *safuu* (social norms) of the society. According to Oromo Philosophy, human beings are differentiated from other animals due to their awareness and recognition of *safuu*. It guided human relations with creatures and creator. Living according to *safuu* not only means giving respect to culture. It also implies respecting *waaqa* and its laws.⁷¹ According to Tesema, there is *safuu* between parents and children, young and old, guest and hosts, God and earth which regulate the activities of human being.⁷² Bartels has encountered through an informant called Asafa Disasa who concluded the concept of *safuu*. Accordingly, one who knows *safuu* means he/she is well aware of how to behave according to

⁶⁹ Informant: Kitata Gerbi.

⁷⁰ Informant: Akuma Kedida.

⁷¹ Wandimmu Nagash and Boni Tesfaye, pp.190-191.

⁷² Tesema Ta'a (June 2012), "Religious Beliefs among the Oromo: *Waaqeffannaa*, Christianity and Islam in the Context of Ethnic Identity, Citizenship and Integration," *Ethiopian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, p.95.

the laws of our ancestors⁷³. Instead of *safuu*, the newly introduced religions used to practice and were guided by principles written in their religious book. The language skill of reading the principles from the sacred script is not a matter in *Waaqeffannaa* religion where *argaa-dhageettii* (traditions) plays major role for one who needs to learn the wills of the *Waaqa*.⁷⁴

Safuu and *kakuu* (oath) have been the two basic routines of the Oromo philosophy. Though *kakuu* has similar features with promise, its intensity is stronger than the latter. It involves the one's own curses which would threaten the individuals who are against their words in the oath. The terms of *kakuu* are based on the concern for which it was intended. In all cases, it has power of frightening anyone neither to violate the terms nor to enter in *kakuu* for unrealistic cases. In the *gadaa* system, an oath have been used as technique to make decisions, resolve disputes, identify the wrong doers and ensure peaceful interactions among the people. Guided by these two basic routines, the Oromo people lived peaceful life. The impacts of the newly introduced religions have weakened the use of these habits in the socio-cultural life of the people.⁷⁵

Unlike the new religions where the Priests, pastors or evangelists delivered and taught the principles of the God from their sacred books, the *qaalluu* served as a high priest and ritual leaders among the traditional Oromo society without having sacred book. The *qaalluu* had performed ritual and other socio-cultural as well as political functions among the people until the last quarter of 19th century. For instance, it often blessed the individuals, gave name to the new born and used to elect the *gadaa* leaders without getting modern preaching or other forms of training. In other monotheistic religions, the religious leaders notably priests, pastors or evangelists need to have modern education for the position require the language skills of reading and writing.⁷⁶

The Oromo indigenous religious leaders had been men who were generally believed to be of Borana origin (pure Oromo) and righteous by virtue of their behavior.⁷⁷ In that case, the non-Borana Oromo could not be selected as either a religious leader or *gadaa* councilors. In the newly introduced religions, however, there is no indication that the religious leaders would be from the pure Oromo or not. The only criteria by which the religious leaders of modern religions

⁷³ Lambert Bartels, p.331.

⁷⁴ Informant: Cherinnet Wakweyya and Gusse Mersha.

⁷⁵ Informant: Amsalu Temesgen.

⁷⁶ Informant: Gusse Mersha.

⁷⁷ Daniel Ayana, "Protestant Missions in Wallagga...", p.47.

would be selected were knowledge of the religious books and individuals' willingness to preach the religion. Therefore, the *yaabbata* themselves could be selected as the 'servants of the gospel'. This ensures the existence of equality among the followers regardless of their clan background.⁷⁸

On the other hand, the Oromo indigenous system of governance and religion encouraged all the people to accept, live with and treat others equally. In olden days, there had been no problem of religious based divisions among the society. This value was not free of the impact of the newly introduced religions. After the introduction of the newly introduced religions, there were indications that the people preferred to cooperate with their co-religious group. A pursuance of co-religious group in the formation of human cooperation of the area was started by the Orthodox Christians in the last quarter of the 19th century.⁷⁹

The protestant Christians continued to follow the same inclination after 1969. Protestants' pursuance of their own religious group was increased after 1991. This was mainly because they were freed from persecution by the government. As a result, friendship network linking and social cohesions were established largely by following the religious background of the parties. Accordingly, various traditional cooperative systems like *daboo* and *daadoo* came to be established mostly by the members who have similar religious background. A strong preference of co-religious grouping in social cooperation was reasonable partly because the behavior, consumption and management of the group seemed to be attainable with less effort. Yet, the religious based differences had not reached its severe and alarming stage.⁸⁰

The indigenesness of *Waaqeffannaa* and strangeness of Christianity had been reflected in various ways. One of these indicators has been the use of language. In the prayers and teachings of the two religions, the use of language has shown some variations. While the *Waaqeffataa* used their own language, *Afaan Oromo*, during the whole processes of their prayers, Christians used to speak other languages in some of their religious speeches and prayers. Most of the time, the priests of the Orthodox churches often spoke and conducted prayers in Geez language. Hence, laities who did not understand the Geez language would not get equal understandings of the teaching and prayers with those who recognize the language.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Informant: Kitata Gerbi.

⁷⁹ Informant: Kebeda Biftu.

⁸⁰ Informant: Duressa Gonfa.

⁸¹ Informant: Tola Nagaro.

In the protestant religion as well, there were some disparity in understanding some languages of the prayers and the preaching. This was due to the use of some Hebrew words and other 'new language'. In the context of Protestantism, the 'new language' was believed to be the language given by and of the Holy Spirit. It was spoken and understood by those who were 'endowed with' the language. Unless there were interpreters of the 'new language' in the churches, those who did not understand the language could not get its message. In such cases, the only option of the latter group would not be more than the mere sitting without prayers and preaching.⁸²

The *Waaqeffannaa* religion has various unique features which distinguished it from the other religions. Bedassa has mentioned some of the characteristic features of *Waaqeffannaa* by which it was distinguished from the other religions. For instance, it has no individual(s) who were considered as the founder(s), reformers or missionaries of the religion. Unlike other monotheistic religions, it has no unusual persons who engaged themselves in its expansion. It does not need to and never imposed its cultural values upon the other society in the form of propagation. The *Waaqeffataa* had never stressed the second coming of the God at a certain time. According to *Waaqeffannaa*, only *Waaqa* knows what would happen in the future and particularly after the earthly life. The religion is guided by unwritten scriptures grown in human personality and have been transmitted by traditions.⁸³

In the absence of churches, the Oromo had used to practice different kinds of their ceremonies in other alternative places. For instance, the Oromo had used *gadaa* centers as political, social and ritual centers. They used the *gadaa* centers and shade of *Odaa* (sycamore tree) as places of meetings where they often discussed the socio-cultural and political matters. They start the meetings by blessing. Similarly, the Oromo used the cemeteries (*kistaana*) as a burial places. *Kistaana* is a grave yard not far from the home of the deceased person.⁸⁴

When somebody dies, the Oromo traditionally believed that its spirit is changed into *ekeraaa* or ghost. The ghost was believed to live around the person's former residence. For the *ekeraaa*, one has to undertake a ceremony known as *dhibaayyuu* meaning sacrifice for the ghost. This was

⁸² Informant: Akuma Kedida.

⁸³ Bedassa Gebbissa, p.5; Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁸⁴ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

similar to the *teskar*⁸⁵ of Orthodox Christianity.⁸⁶ In the case of Protestantism, the spirit of deceased person is believed to be disconnected from its body as soon as the person was died. Therefore, no ceremony could be undertaken for the spirit of a deceased person and the fate of the spirit of a deceased person is believed to be determined by the quality of the person while he/she was alive. Praying and good works are considered as prerequisites to determine the fate of the spirit of a deceased person. The traditional Oromo recognized the importance of prayers but not for the fate of life after death.⁸⁷

The Oromo celebrated *irreecha* ceremonies in order to pray and give thanks to God who is believed to possess power of liberating them from both natural and manmade problems. It is usually undertaken in the river meadows or mountain tops⁸⁸ to glorify *Waaqa* for its creation of such graceful natures. When their indigenous religion persisted with its full vigor, the Gidda Oromo celebrated this thanksgiving ceremony twice a year. These are in spring and autumn seasons. *Irreecha* of the spring season had been celebrated to ask the God so that it would give them a normal and timely rain. Praying of this period was also made for the safe passage through the dark season of spring. Therefore, it is considered as a prayer for raining. On the other hand, the people also conducted *irreecha* of the autumn as a thanksgiving for the God who enabled them to have been passed from dark mud to bright season. In addition, people have been gathered at any times and made prayers to solve various seasonal problems. This was true only before the conquest of the area and after 1991.⁸⁹

The celebrations of the *irreecha* ceremonies involved large gathering and participations of not only the Oromo but also other ethnic groups. In this way, it has been used in creating more harmonious interactions among the peoples of particular areas.⁹⁰ This is true to the people of Gidda *woreda* particularly from the year 1991 when *irreecha* ceremonies was freed from the suppression of successive Ethiopian governments.⁹¹

⁸⁵ A *teskar* among the Orthodox Christians is a kind of festival prepared for the spirit of a deceased person on the 40th or 80th days of his/her death. It is usually prepared for belief that the spirit will return back and fed what was prepared for its invitation. Another purpose is to conducted prayer for the ghost.

⁸⁶ Daniel Ayana, "The Concept of *Waaqa* and the Missionaries....," p.116; Informant: Kitata Gerbi.

⁸⁷ Informants: Akuma Kedida and Kitata Gerbi.

⁸⁸ Tesema Ta'a, "Religious Beliefs among the Oromo....," p.94.

⁸⁹ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁹⁰ Tesema Ta'a, "Religious Beliefs among the Oromo....," p.95.

⁹¹ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

The Christians, both Protestants and Orthodox, conducted praying. The *irreecha* of *Waaqeffannaa* and prayers of other Christianity were conducted for the goodness of the adherents. Both of them were believed to help the people in solving different kinds of human problems. But the two forms of prayers differ in various ways. Unlike *irreecha* where people must be gathered, slaughtered the animals and made prayers, Christians conducted pray in two ways either individually or collectively without slaughtering animals. The prayers of Christianity emphasized the destiny of life after death. Prayers had also been undertaken, in both cases, for the goodness of the nature.⁹²

According to their traditional belief system, the Oromo had developed particular bond with nature. For instance, there had been a form of personification of land among the Gidda Oromo. They believed that land has eyes and ears. As a result, the land can and will often act upon the wrong doers.⁹³ Those who lied, usurped others or committed other crimes will be punished by the land on which they reside. Not to be annoyed by both the land and God, the Oromo had been refrained themselves from committing awful crimes. It was also believed that the land has a power of giving good fortune to the right doers.⁹⁴

The historical development of and the reasons behind such bond between the land and human beings was beyond the memory of our informants. However, there were indications that the bond was based on a belief in the existence of strong ties between the *Waaqa* and the land. According to this view, the bond had persisted for long until it was weakened by the advent of the newly introduced religions. Therefore, the Oromo elders often used the blessing statement like, "*Waaqitii fi lafti siif haa tolu*" meaning "May God and land make your fate Okay". Due to the impacts of the newly introduced religions, the mystical bond between land and human being was disconnected. The Gidda Oromo gave similar attachments to other kinds of nature. It was against such traditions and practices that Protestantism had intervened after 1969.⁹⁵

The people have developed good recognition and respect towards big trees and dense forests. They refrained themselves from cutting the big trees and clearing of dense forests. This was partly because the big trees and dense forests had believed to possess remarkable power and

⁹² Informant: Gusse Mersha and Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁹³ Tesema Ta'a (1980), "The Oromo of Wallagga: A Historical Survey to 1910," M.A Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, p.32, Nega Jibat, p.41; Informants: Dessalegn Feyisa and Gusse Mersha.

⁹⁴ Informants: Gusse Mersha; Kebede Biftu and Dessalegn Feyisa.

⁹⁵ Informant: Kebede Biftu.

ayyaana given to them by the *Waaqa*. Christianity has given no recognition for such spirits. During their early expansion in the area, many of the Orthodox Churches were established on the *gadaa* centers and other areas which were believed to possess outstanding spirits. This was presumably done because they need to divert the spirits onto themselves.⁹⁶

Protestantism has also targeted the pre-existing spirits of the area but differently of the Orthodox Christianity. One of the main targets among the Protestants has been disconnecting the people from any spirits except the Holy Spirit. As we have already stated elsewhere, the followers of Protestantism conducted their secret prayers from 1968 to 1991 not to be tortured by the government. During this early period of its expansion, Protestantism has not played a great role in disproving the existence of many spirits. An open attack was started only after 1991 when publicly held prayers began to work against the existence of any divinities other than the Holy Spirits.⁹⁷ When he addresses this concern, Assefa states that the preaching of the missionaries adversely affected the relationship between people and forests. The people who adopted the preaching have learned that the dense forests possessed no power. Therefore, the local people cleared the forests and used to cut big trees to plant maize and to cultivate other crops in subsequent years. As a result, it became one among the possible factors of deforestation.⁹⁸

Through such gradual and continual processes, a history of Oromo indigenous religion and the *gadaa* system have shown dynamism. They were suppressed first by monarchical administrative system, conquest and the subsequent Ethiopian regimes. Their steady decline has been continued due to the impacts of the remnants of conquest⁹⁹ and that of the newly introduced religions.¹⁰⁰ These were what Daniel had identified as internal and external forces that had affected the Oromo traditional religion and the socio-cultural practices during the 19th century.¹⁰¹

The suppressions made by the systems of successive Ethiopian governments as well as other monotheistic religions had disrupted *Waaqeffannaa* religion and other indigenous practices. However, many aspects of Oromo traditional religion were able to withstand the challenges of heavy-handed government and other religious intervention because of various reasons. Among

⁹⁶ Informant: Gemechu Birra.

⁹⁷ Informant: Teferra Gonfa.

⁹⁸ Assefa Tolera, p.110.

⁹⁹ Remnants of the impacts of the conquest include the expansion of Orthodox religion and that of the *qaallichaa*.

¹⁰⁰ Informant: Gusse Merasha and Dessalegn Feyisa.

¹⁰¹ Daniel Ayana, "Protestant Missions in Wallagga..." p.46; Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

other reasons, it was retained because of its indiginity and popularity. Many aspects of traditional religion and belief systems were deeply rooted in the Oromo cultural universe. The suppressive governments and influences of the alien religions failed to clean out the unwritten principles of *Waaqeffannaa* from the heart of the Oromo people. One undeniable fact was that each of the governments and religions were not exactly the same in disrupting the Oromo indigenous religions and other forms of the socio-cultural practices of the people.¹⁰²

According to Daniel, the contact between the local people and the conquerors had brought about cultural interactions and exchange of ideas. In this manner, non-Oromo concepts had found their way into the Oromo worldview and had been penetrated among the Oromo. This was particularly true to concepts like *qaallichaa*, *senbet*, *mariam* and different kinds of vows paid to various divinities and saints in the EOC.¹⁰³

Before the conquest of the area, there were no *qaallichaa* rather *qaalluu* among the Oromo of Northeastern Wallagga. What had arrived following the conquest were not the *qaallichaa*-holders but its ideology. One of the distinguishing features between the *qaalluu* in *gadaa* society and the present day *qaalluu* (hereafter called *qaallichaa*) could be understood from the benefit they obtained.¹⁰⁴ The more oppressive, selfish and corrupted *qaallichaa* introduced into the Oromo people following the conquest of the area. In line with this, the infamous *qaallichaa* had replaced the position of *qaalluu* after the last quarter of 19th century. *Qaalluu* among the traditional Oromo was popular. It was considered as high priest and *beekaa* (intelligent). It had neither exploited nor threatened the Oromo. The *qaalluus* were all humiliated by the impact of the conquest and subsequent expansion of the Orthodox Christianity. Therefore, the *qaalluu* had existed no more after the last quarter of 19th century. In Northeastern Wallagga, Protestantism had never met the *qaalluu* institution. What it met was *qaallichaa*.¹⁰⁵

On the other hand, the *qaallichaa* had been dishonorable and self-centered divinity which had exploited the people after the conquest of the area. Since then, many *qaallichaa* were known among the peoples of Northeastern Wallagga. Some of them were Oofaa Sarbaa and Butaa Nadow of Horro, Dorsis of Gidda, Balfinno and Ayyole of Limmu, *Giiftii* Mandiya of Guduruu,

¹⁰² Bedassa Gebbissa, p.8.

¹⁰³ Daniel Ayana, "The Concept of *Waaqa* and the Missionaries....," p.115.

¹⁰⁴ Alemayehu Debelo, p.27.

¹⁰⁵ Informant: Cherinnet Wakweyya.

Diigaa of Abbay Comman and Daache of Abe Dongoro. Peoples who visited the *qaallichaa* for different purposes were obliged to give sacrifice unless they would be threatened by ruthless punishment of the spirit.¹⁰⁶

When people consulted them for the solution of their problems, the *qaallichaa* often command different socio-cultural practices and rituals which were exploitative and ambiguous in the lives of the society. The *qaallichaa* confused the people regarding the very concept and nature of spirits or divinities. For instance, different *dhaabatas* were started. *Dhaabata* is a religious rite performed as a commemoration for different divinities and/or spirits whom were believed to protect children, women, girls, cattle and crops from various misfortunes. To mention few of them, *dhaabata Maarem*, *dhaabata Dallaa* and *dhaabata Gorobbee* were performed for the protection and goodness of women, kraals of cattle and girls respectively.¹⁰⁷ The impact of the Orthodox Christianity never destroyed such rituals. However, Protestantism destroyed them gradually but continually.¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, a practice called *galchii wareegaa* (submission of vow) exploited the society for long period since the conquest of the area. This was a form of sacrifice paid to the *qaallichaa* and different saints of the Orthodox Churches. Although the sacrifice had been based on the promise that an individual entered in, many people opted to do so because they were seduced psychologically.¹⁰⁹

Another customary practice which had been commanded by the *qaallichaa* but affected by Protestantism was the *warajoo* system. According to Nega, *warajoo* is a practice of setting aside the vowed things (often animals) as offering to the spirit who had believed to heal a person from illness. Any products of the *warajoo* would not be given to anybody outside of the family members. In this manner, it weakened people's habit of eating together and thus affected the social life of the people. For smaller animals or any other things that can be carried by our hands, the *qaallichaa* commanded the people to perform a rite called *watwaata*. This was a practice of swirling animals like chicken, sheep or things like money and mostly *tussoo daaraa* (pancake

¹⁰⁶ Informant: Teferra Gonfa.

¹⁰⁷ Nega Jibat (June 2005), "Socio-Cultural Impacts of Protestantism on Wallagga Oromo: The Case Ifa Biyyaa Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (Jimma-Raaree)," B.A Senior Essay, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Addis Ababa University, p.31; Informant: Dorsis Dhuguma.

¹⁰⁸ Informants: Dorsis Dhuguma and Akuma Kedida.

¹⁰⁹ Informant: Akuma Kedida.

aving more or less *amole* shape which is often made in hot ash) over one's head and let it
rown. More specifications regarding its process had been commanded by the *qaallichaa* that
the victim(s) had contacted. Most of the time, it was performed in faraway places from the house
of the victim for it was believed that the illness would be disappeared with the thrown things.
This kind of rituals were also ceased to be practiced by the impact of Protestantism.¹¹⁰

Neither the conquerors nor the subsequent suppressive Ethiopian governments had threatened the
position of the *qaallichaa* and other kinds of exploitative divinities. This would presumably be
for either of the some reasons. One was based on the view that both the *naftagnas* and the
suppressive Ethiopian governors possessed neither willingness nor capability of threatening these
spirits because they feared for themselves. The divinities were arrived to the area accompanying
with and as one element of conquest. The conquerors brought the *qaallichaa* as pseudo-*qaalluu*
so that they could seduce the people tactically. Therefore, they were free of governments' or
other forms of persecutions. In this manner, they existed in the area for nearly one century until
they were humiliated by the influence of Protestantism in the late 1960s.¹¹¹

Reciprocity between Protestantism and the *Gadaa* System

The *gadaa* system regulated the day to day activities of the Oromo. What are requested from
different individuals and age-groups of the society have been determined by the system.
Recognizing one's own rights, obligations and opportunities could be difficult without clear
understanding of its concepts and involvement in the system. Some of the scholarly works
provided an indication that the *gadaa* system overrides the modern government system. It had
the advantage of avoiding the exploitation of man by man and concentration of power in the
hands of one man or group for long period of time.¹¹² In the long run of its history, dynamism in
socio-cultural conditions had affected values and status of the *gadaa* system.¹¹³

When Protestantism was started in Northeastern Wallagga, the impact of the conquest and that of
the Orthodox Christianity had disrupted the Oromo indigenous religion. Particularly, *qaalluu*
institution and celebration of the *gadaa* system were already declined by the time Protestantism
started in the area in 1968. Orthodox Christianity was not in a position to destroy some of the

¹¹⁰ Nega Jibat, p.33; Akuma Kedida.

¹¹¹ Informants: Dessalegn Feyisa and Amsalu Temesgen.

¹¹² Tesema Ta'a, "The Oromo of Wallagga...", p.7.

¹¹³ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

Oromo traditional practices in the deep corners of the area. Many of the human behaviors and indigenous habits which were planted in the heart of the people mainly by the *gadaa* system have been practiced without the formal celebration of *gadaa* system.¹¹⁴

Roughly speaking, the impact of Protestantism on the *gadaa* system was relatively insignificant because the religion was introduced to the area after the system was already weakened. Nevertheless, the critical study of the impact of Protestantism has shown that the religion affected the *gadaa* system in various ways. Some principles of the *gadaa* system were almost unaffected by the conquest and were remained practical even after the formal celebration of the *gadaa* system was forbidden. In line with this view, many of the values and principles of the *gadaa* system were deteriorated by Protestantism. For instance, traditional marriage ceremonies, the use of cultural and ritual clothes, food and feeding habits and other forms of socio-cultural practices were functional until the advent of Protestantism.¹¹⁵

Despite the revival of the *gadaa* system after 1991, Protestantism posed overwhelming challenges on the system. It has brought division among the people regarding the significance of the *gadaa* system. The Protestants themselves had shown disparity regarding their views towards the *gadaa* and its celebration. Majority of them opposed the *gadaa* system and did not participate in any of the *gadaa* ceremonies. The protestant churches did not allow the people's appreciation of the *gadaa* system. However, some of the Protestants appreciated and attended the *gadaa* ceremonies. For the latter group, the *gadaa* system is a non-religious, secular and national affair system while religion is of personal matter. According to their view, participating in the system might not hurt the doctrines of one's own religion. Therefore, such group of Protestants often went to *gadaa* centers in order to conduct oath, curses and to solve their disputes with other people. People's appreciation of the *gadaa* system was based on the view that the oaths, blesses, curses or conflict resolutions made under the auspices of the system were more serious, logical and transparent than those made in the churches.¹¹⁶

More significantly, Protestantism affected the *gadaa* system in reshaping the mind of the people. Traditionally, the Oromo brought up their children with the values of *gadaa* and *Waaqeffannaa*. Every Oromo individuals had grown up from their childhood by learning these values and norms

¹¹⁴ Informant: Kebeda Biftu.

¹¹⁵ Informants: Kebeda Biftu and Gusse Mersha.

¹¹⁶ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

from their parents as well as from the neighboring elders. After the introduction of Protestantism, the protestant Oromo parents brought up their children by adjusting their mind towards the doctrines of Protestantism. As a result, skill gap had happened regarding the awareness of the *gadaa* values.¹¹⁷ Due to aforementioned reasons, Protestantism could be taken as one factor for the further decline of some values of the *gadaa* system.

The *gadaa* system accommodated every aspect of human economic activities. As long as they had obeyed the *gadaa* values, people were allowed to engage themselves in different economic activities. For instance, many of the Oromo women made local ale and other kinds of alcoholic beverages. They used it for sale. However, Protestantism had no room for and did not allow anyone to make and/or consume such kinds of beverages.¹¹⁸

As the *gadaa* system had been the preserver of Oromo socio-cultural practices, its deterioration by the newly introduced religions in turn means a decline of many aspects of the social, economic and religious life of the people. While some of the practices were totally disappeared, the others were modified by the impact of the newly introduced religions. Not all changes were brought about by the influence of the newly introduced religions. There were transformations which were occurred as a result of globalization, influence of the Western technologies and modernization.¹¹⁹ However, an investigation of the impact of globalization, technologies and modernization are found to be broad and beyond the scope of this paper.

Cultural Practices and the Changes Brought about by the Newly Introduced Religions

Studying the dynamism in each and every aspects of the socio-cultural life of the people within this paper would be very broad and difficult to accomplish. Therefore, we are obliged to select some of the socio-cultural practices and foremost changes observed in the life of the people. Accordingly, profound changes which had been observed in marriage, traditional songs and limerick verse, social life and attitudes towards different customs like *milkee* and *oodduu* helped the researcher to sketch thematic delimitation of its scope.

¹¹⁷ Informant: Dereje Hailu.

¹¹⁸ Informant: Akuma Kedida.

¹¹⁹ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

Impact on Marriage Practices

Marriage can be defined as personal association, union and relationship between a man and a woman so that both parties would live together as husband and wife. It ought to be recognized legally and socially. After its establishment, marriage becomes an institution. The successful marriage is believed to be blessed by God in that a husband and wife begot children. The impact of the newly introduced religions in general and that of Protestantism in particular had affected the traditional marriage practice in various ways.¹²⁰

More than the others, Protestantism highly affected the processes, types and nature of the marriage practice of the people. In fact, all changes were not the results of the impacts of the newly introduced religions. For instance, globalization and modernization had played their roles in modifying the traditional marriage practice of the people. The traditional process involved in the formation of marriage has changed or at least modified and replaced by canonical marriage. The formerly dominant participants and main decision makers in the process namely parents and neighboring elders were replaced by the elders of the churches. In the new case, bride and groom got the opportunity of deciding whom and how to marry. The church only interferes after the two parties agreed up on their affairs and complained it to the church elders. Then, the church elders would look the case, conduct prayers by themselves and order the parties to make prayers. The parents of both parties (that of bride and the groom) only hear the cases from the church elders if it became okay. According to the order of the newly introduced religions, the bride and groom must be co-religious.¹²¹

Traditionally, *milkaa* (omen) had played a major role in the process of establishing marriage as it was a case for other socio-cultural activities of the society. *Milkaa* is an omen or sign of good or evil to come. They had traditionally been considered as presage markers. Parents of both bride and groom need to consider these sign markers in order to establish healthy and successful marriage. For instance, a fire should not be turned off from the home of both bride and groom. According to Holcomb, the *milkaa* gives warnings of factors or indications that could make or break the marriage union after it were formalized.¹²² However, marriage practices established under the control of protestant churches became free of these *milkaa*. Observance of the *milkaa*

¹²⁰ Informant: Akuma Kedida.

¹²¹ Informants: Kebeda Guta and Akuma Kedida.

¹²² Bonnie K. Holcomb, p. 112.

became negated at least for the followers of protestant Christians. In accordance with the doctrines of protestant churches, there were no *milkaa* to tell us an evil or good to come.¹²³

Despite the existence of many types of traditional marriage, the only one that got the approval of the church became the marriage that is accomplished through *naqachuu*¹²⁴. Other types of marriage like *butii* (abduction), *aseenna* (girl's sudden entry to the home of her future groom's parent) and *hawwii*¹²⁵ were totally considered as taboo and could never get approval of the church. More significantly, the doctrines of Protestantism are against the polygamous marriage of Oromo. Traditionally every Oromo men can marry as many wives as his wealth, capability and interests allowed to them. However, Protestantism does not allow anyone to be polygamous.¹²⁶

As it was the case in other traditional ceremonies of the Oromo, the weddings were often accompanied by invitation of the relatives, close friends and neighbours with foods and drinks. Among the invitations, *injera* was usually provided with meat. A marriage of betrothal types has been planned to be conducted on days other than Wednesdays and Fridays, and in the months out of what the Orthodox Christians do not fast. This enables everybody to eat meat. In rare cases, casual decisions would make the day of the marriage on the fasting days or in the fasting months. In such cases, particular feedings were prepared for those who fast.¹²⁷

Traditionally, most kinds of drinks that had been provided on the ceremony were often those which intoxicate the guests. Introduction of Orthodox Christianity had not brought remarkable changes of the culture of invitation during the ceremonies except for the fact that animals were slaughtered after it was sanctified with the name of particular saint(s) of the area. As we have stated elsewhere, Protestantism preached the need of neglecting the use of alcoholic beverages. This was particularly true to the period after 1969. This was followed by steady decline in the number of drinkers who were formerly been engaged in various kinds of quarrels among themselves as well as with other individuals.¹²⁸

¹²³ Informant: Akuma Kedida.

¹²⁴ *Naqachuu* or its dialectic option *Naqata* is a kind of marriage in which parents and the elders intervened in the process of its formation. This type of marriage is known as betrothal or an arranged marriage.

¹²⁵ *Hawwii* is *Afaan Oromo* term and it is a kind of marriage when decision was made by fiancée fiancé alone because they wished and established their marriage without the involvement of any third parties.

¹²⁶ Informant: Duressa Gonfa.

¹²⁷ Informant: Kebeda Biftu.

¹²⁸ Informants: Kebeda Biftu; Gusse Mersha and Akuma Kedida.

Albeit traditional marriage differs from a marriage established under the domination of the churches, both of them shared some common features. For instance, both traditional and more or less canonical marriages underscored and taught the importance of blessing, honesty, transparency and purification for establishing successful marriage. Therefore, weddings and every activities of the marriage were preceded by blessing of the elders. In both cases, bride and groom were not allowed to conduct sex before their actual marriage. The celebration of marriage practice or other socio-cultural practices of Oromo had been accompanied by different songs as well as food and feedings. The songs and feedings were not beyond the impacts of the newly introduced religions.¹²⁹

Transition from Song to Hymn

Traditionally, the Oromo people in general and that of the Gidda *woreda* in particular had used songs to praise or blame, motivate or demoralize, insult or appreciate individuals, groups or other things like events. Particularly, there had been songs that were sung in marriage, for killers of big games, patriots or other forms of excellence. The people had used different kinds of songs in order to transmit any of the intended messages to the audiences. Oromo traditional religion had also made use of songs in the ceremony of *qaalluu* and this was known as *dalagaa* (equivalent of the Christian hymn). Hence, the different kinds of songs enabled the people to have shown their feeling and interact with one another, with their God or other supernatural forces like divinities.¹³⁰

For instance, there were songs in the commemoration of various spirits like *Maarem*. Among the Oromo, *Maarem* refers to the divinity of women who had been believed to help pregnant women in deliverance of children. Therefore, the ceremony and commemoration is undertaken, the *Maarem* being invoked and addressed in the chorus.¹³¹ This had been conducted on the fifth day of a woman's delivery of child. On this day, women of the same vicinity met each other in the home of the woman who had delivered child. Then after, they undertake prayers and sung for the excellence of *Maarem*. The songs of this day also show the lucky that the parents got and happiness for the new born. Barren women could also made invocations for their own cases.¹³²

¹²⁹ Informant: Cherinnet Wakweyya.

¹³⁰ Informant: Akuma Kedida.

¹³¹ Lambert Bartels, p.124.

¹³² Informant: Deshi Kitil.

Orthodox Christians developed *mezmur*¹³³ for one of their angel called *Mariam*. However, Protestant Christians had no *mezmur* for both *Maarem* and *Mariam*. They did not undertake ceremony for these two divinities. In fact they considered *Mariam* as a mother of Jesus Christ who became pregnant and delivered Jesus while she was yet a virgin. The only resemblances between *Maarem* of traditional Oromo and *Mariam* of the Orthodox Church was that both identified it as female and recognized that she was characterized by some good qualities.¹³⁴

Traditional Oromo society had similar songs and traditional verses for other individuals' deeds. For instance, there had been songs for the patriots, rich, soldiers and other personal qualities. In addition, the Oromo had their own songs which motivate the people towards hard work. For instance, they sung during harvest. Contrary to these, there had been songs which had shown idiom for attacking other persons. The *mezmur* of the newly introduced religions had no message for personal cases except those points which are related with the gospel. Every *mezmur* were made up of lines which had spiritual concerns. From its negative sides, the ignorance of traditional songs reduced the ways by which the people encouraged each other towards good works. Moreover, in the absence of such folklore which had enabled the people to remember and transmit their history, upcoming generation might not get good access of studying their pasts from the traditions.¹³⁵

The impacts of the newly introduced religions had transformed the traditional songs into canticle. Unlike traditional songs, canticles became less inclusive and only used to demonstrate peoples' feelings, prayers and thanks for their God or other admirable spirits in their respective religions. People would not use canticles for other functions than religious or other related cases that had religious or spiritual messages. In fact, there have been *mezmur* during the canonical or church dominated marriage ceremonies. However, it is gospel oriented and took its verse from the Bible than expressing the personal and biological relationship of the two parties.¹³⁶

In the traditional marriage, songs and dancing were conducted near the home of bride's and groom's parents. Those who sung near the home of the groom often insulted the bride, her sisters, brothers and close friends. The same is true in the singings held near the parent of the

¹³³ *Mezmur* is an Amharic term for hymn, and *Mezmers* is used to show its plural form.

¹³⁴ Informant: Dorsis Dhuguma.

¹³⁵ Informants: Gemechu Birra and Dessalegn Feyisa.

¹³⁶ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

bride and they insulted the groom and his group. It is difficult to establish the real purpose of the impoliteness clearly. Perhaps, it might have been used to show their amour. More than the others, it might have also been used as recreation technique. Therefore, the custom of insulting one another would neither continue nor resulted into avenge of the two groups after the completion of the marriage ceremony. This is because the two parties became *soddaa* for one another. In this manner, the groom became son in law for the parents of the bride.¹³⁷

Social Life

Before the expansion of the newly introduced religions, there had been good communication, invitation, cooperation and interaction among the Gidda Oromo. According to Bartels, every Maccaa keeps with him for life the social status ascribed to him by his descents.¹³⁸ Concerning this *hiriyyaa* (age-mates), one of our informants told us that there are only five groups of age-mates in every society. These are age-mates of our self, father, mother, brother and that of sister. According to this view, there could be no individuals out of these five groups, and each of them should be treated as oneself, our father, mother, brother and sister respectively. Particularly, there was no religious based discrimination among the people until the last quarter of the 19th century. This was partly because there were no other religions than *Waaqeffannaa*. After the last quarter of 19th century, sharp distinctions occurred between the *Waaqeffataa* and Christians.¹³⁹

During the Italian occupation (1936-1941), there was serious persecution against the Orthodox priests and existence Amhara citizens in the area. The Persecution was carried out by Dhuguma Jaldesso of Limmu who was a loyal collaborator of the Italians. He considered the *naftagna* as the ardent enemy of Oromo. Therefore, Dhuguma helped the Italians and this brought divide and rule policy. Accordingly, a kind of discrimination had occurred between the collaborators and the Amhara citizens. Similarly, discrimination persisted between collaborators and the patriots. These all had affected the social life and/or interactions among the people of Gidda *Woreda*.¹⁴⁰

From liberation to the down fall of Emperor Haile Sellassie I (1942-1974), supremacy of Orthodox Christianity was restored. The Orthodox Christians were considered as the only adherents of legally established religion. Accordingly, the Orthodox Christians continued to

¹³⁷ Informants: Amsalu Temesgen and Cherana Berio.

¹³⁸ Lambert Bartels, p.324.

¹³⁹ Informant: Cherana Berio.

¹⁴⁰ At the expense of *waaqeffannaa*, indigenous people started to consider either Orthodox or Protestantism as their own religion. Informants: Insarmu Nemerra and Gemechu Birra.

undermine socio-cultural aspects of the others. The *Darg* period was characterized by the ignorance of any religions. It persecuted the followers of all religions inclusively. From the downfall of the *Darg* regime, the provision of religious freedom and expansion of some other religions including Protestantism resulted in the emergence of different religious groups. In this case, people of similar religious background began to cooperate with their co-religions. The local people themselves developed some forms of religious based grouping and preferred to make good interactions with someone who follows 'their religion'.¹⁴¹

Internally, there had been some sorts of recurrent clan based and customary divisions among the local people. For instance, the *tumtuu* (blacksmiths) and *faaqii* (tanners) were the two most dominant submerged groups with whom other local people interacted slightly. While the *tumtuu*'s interactions with the non-*tumtuu* got two contradictory views, that of the weavers had been dominated by mere disregarding views only because their job was confined to weaving. Traditionally, every clan had their own technicians called blacksmiths and weavers on their land.¹⁴² These are individuals who had made metals and other home tools. It had been believed that the wisdom was given exclusively to the *tumtuu*.¹⁴³ The interactions between the *tumtuu* and non-*tumtuu* people of the area had been characterized by both cooperation and isolation.¹⁴⁴

To start from the cooperation between the *tumtuu* and non-*tumtuu*, the former group helped the latter in various ways. For instance, they made metal tools for the non-*tumtuu*. If thunder damaged humans or their property, the *tumtuu* conducted the system of 'compromising the God' whose punishment was believed to bring the situation. Furthermore, when someone got one hundred cows, the *tumtuu* undertake the system so that the owner would wear stomach of the cow. Then, the status of the owner would develop into *dhibbisaa* to mean owner of hundred.¹⁴⁵

On the other hand, the *tumtuu* were submerged and characterized by some peculiar features. Culturally, the non-*tumtuu* Oromo could not establish marriage ties with the *tumtuu* groups. There had been no *abbaa lafaas* (landlords) among this submerged group. All of them had classified as *gabbars*. The *tumtuu* did not trace their genealogy to any of the Oromo clans. In the former context, the *tumtuu* were acknowledged and lucky groups because they were endowed

¹⁴¹ Informant: Duessa Gonfa.

¹⁴² Lambert Bartels, p.186.

¹⁴³ Currently, however, non-*tumtuu* Oromo learned the wisdom of making metals.

¹⁴⁴ Informant: Dessalegn Feyisa.

¹⁴⁵ Informants: Akuma Kedida and Dessalegn Feyisa.

with wisdoms and gift to make metals and 'compromise people with the God'. However, they were considered in the second context as submerged and peculiar group. Our sources have not enabled us to establish clear reasons regarding contradictory identification of the same group (the *tumtuu*). This contradictory description requires another scholarly investigation. In modern days, the view towards both *tumtuu* and *faaqii* was improved for reasons related to the impacts of the newly introduced religions, modernization and globalization.¹⁴⁶

Another view which had halted the peaceful co-existence and interactions among the people was the belief that some particular groups were dangerous for others' lives and fortunes. These groups include *budaa* (someone with evil eyes), *tolchituu* (sorcerers), those who often visit the Dangabo or others who were alleged to conduct *digemt* (incantation) and any other magical activities. None of our informants clearly know the origin and expansion of such awful practices. However, there was common understanding that all these practices were against peaceful co-existence and were believed to be against the good fortunes of the people. After the introduction of Protestantism, many of these disgusting practitioners were believed to have dispossessed their evil spirits. More significantly, adherents of Protestantism were believed to have smashed the people's tension towards the *budaa*, sorcerers and other forms of incantations. Therefore, many people were liberated from the fear of such magical activities.¹⁴⁷

Protestantism had also reduced the status and acknowledgment of some groups. One among the victims was the *oodduu* (traditional prophets). Traditionally, people had visited the *oodduu* for different purposes. For example, the people often requested the *oodduu* regarding the *milkee* they had encountered, their fortunes that they would face and appropriate solution to the problem(s) they had faced. In modern days, many people did not visit the *oodduu* for their works were considered by the adherents of Protestantism as unrealistic and consumption oriented.¹⁴⁸

Generally, as the result of the expansion of the newly introduced religions, remarkable socio-cultural transformations were experienced and socio-cultural interactions were affected. Peoples preferred to live and work with their religious group. This had been against the indigenous religion where all people pray to *waaqa* and lived in unity. But the Oromo people of the area had never gave up their indigenous culture rather mixed it with the newly introduced ideologies.

¹⁴⁶ Informants: Kebede Biftu and Gusse Mersha.

¹⁴⁷ Informants: Gusse Mersha, Kebede Guta, Akuma Kedida.

¹⁴⁸ Informant: Kebede Biftu, Gusse Mersha, Gidda.

CONCLUSION

Forms of government, ethnicity, religion, language and competition over resources became the main factors for socio-cultural interactions. Dramatic transformations in the socio-cultural interactions among the peoples of the district had begun with the conquest of the area. The indigenous people suffered a lot from social, cultural and economic hardships. After the period of the conquest, indigenous people come across new concepts. Among many other problems, suppression on *Waaqeffannaa* religion and *gadaa* system affected the lives of the people in many ways. This is because both of them are cornerstone of Oromo identity.

As an important agent for the imposition of Amhara culture, Orthodox religion was introduced into the district. The Italians and their collaborators interfered in and worked against the domination of Amhara culture. They did it for their own benefits. Italians opposed the supremacy of the conquerors only because they needed to reserve the position for themselves. However, they were not successful because they faced strong resistance from the patriots. Italians had not introduced remarkable and long lasting socio-cultural transformation. The restoration of Haile Sellassie I resulted in restoration of exploitative feudal system under which the local people were discouraged to practice their own culture. Haile Sellassie I continued the supremacy of one culture, particularly Orthodox religion and Amharic language.

It was during this hard period that Protestantism was introduced to the area as another alien religion. The newly introduced religions approached the indigenous culture in different ways. While Orthodox religion used imposition, Protestantism has followed more moderate and systematic mechanism. It attracted the people on voluntary bases and recognized some aspects of their indigenous value system. However, the systematic approach that Protestantism used and its recognition of indigenous values did not bring absolute restoration of indigenous culture. People remained at crossroad adopting Protestantism and mixed its ideologies with their own indigenous religion. Though not as much they did with indigenous religion, the people adopted Protestantism. The *Darg* government also attempted to dislodge the people from their indigenous way of life. However, local people did not give up their value system.

Another socio-cultural problem that happened in Gidda *woreda* yet emanates from the errors of the previous systems. Most of the time, the previous Ethiopian governments were self-centered and accomplished their tasks exclusively. Among the best examples had been a program of resettlement and villagization. In fact, resettlement had taken place in two ways. These are self-

motivated and government sponsored. However, the indigenous people had neither participated nor encouraged to sit for the discussion concerning the resettlement. Both self-initiated and government sponsored settlements were accomplished without the consent of the people. Resettlement had been followed by deforestation, inter-ethnic suspicion and transformation of resettlers' sentiments to the extent that the resettlers claim the area as it belongs to their motherland. The combinations of resource competition, mutual suspicion and memories of the northern based suppression worsened the problem of indigenous-resettlers complex and gave rise to an open war in 2000.

The post 1991 Ethiopian government has not solved the problems of uncertainty which occurred in socio-cultural interactions because of many reasons. It provided the policy of ethnic federalism, freedom of religion and free movement of peoples as an opportunity. Therefore, different ethnic groups came together by giving less consideration for its possible impact. This played a significant role for the socio-cultural uncertainties and created inter-ethnic problems.

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LIST OF INFORMANTS

No	Name of Informants	Sex	Age	Place and of Interview	Remarks
1	Abebu Negasa (Woyzero)	F	74	Naqamtee January 2017	She was the third wife of <i>Fitwarari</i> Amsalu Jibat of Gidda. She knows the social interactions when her husband was a <i>balabat</i> over other <i>balabats</i> .
2	Akuma Kedida (Obbo)	M	65	Gidda November 2017	He knows the hardships of living under landlords and suppression brought about by the conquerors.
3	Alamu Regassa (Obbo)	M	54	Limmu January 2018	Teacher in Limmu Secondary School and knows the socio-cultural background of the area.
4	Amsalu Temesgen (Obbo)	M	55	Naqamtee April 2018	Expert in Culture and Tourism office of East Wallagga Zone. He has conducted his BA Thesis on Italian Occupation and response in and around Naqamtee. He knows the socio-cultural back ground of the people of East Wallagga in general.
5	Awoke Biterf (Obbo)	M	60	Gidda January 2017	Settler in Guttin from Gojjam. He knows the environmental and social back ground of the resettlement sites during the early advent of the resettlers.
6	Bekele Debelo (Pastor)	M	58	Gidda March 2018	Pastor in Ayyaanaa town. He knows the expansion and impts of Protestantism in Gidda and its surrounding.
7	Biranu Banti (Obbo)	M	56	Naqamtee December 2017	He knows the administrative divisions that had occurred in Wallagga at different times.
8	Biratu Melese (Obbo)	M	45	Naqamtee January 2018	He knows the socio-cultural impacts of Protestantism and social suppression brought by the conquerors.
9	Cherana Berio (Obbo)	M	80	Ebantu April 2018	He knows hardship of living with feudalism and changes brought about by the <i>Darg</i> government.
10	Cherinet Wakweyya (Obbo)	M	68	Naqamtee December 2017	Expert in Culture and Tourism office of East Wallagga Zone who was graduated from Addis Ababa University in History and wrote different unpublished materials. He knows socio-cultural background of the peoples from the period of conquest to the escalation of indigenous-resettlers' complex.
11	Dabala Gameda (Obbo)	M	58	Naqamtee March 2018	Among the Catholics who attempted to expand the religion but failed for various reasons. He knows the fate of Catholicism in

					Gidda <i>Woreda</i> and its surrounding areas.
12	Dereje Hailu (Evangelist)	M	53	Gidda November 2017	He knows the expansion and impacts as well as comparison among different churches of Protestantism in Gidda.
13	Deshi Kitil (<i>Woyzero</i>)	F	55	Gidda November 2017	She knows the cultural practices and rites performed in Gidda <i>Woreda</i> .
14	Dessale Gudeta (<i>Obbo</i>)	M	58	Ebantu January 2018	He was a known merchant from Ebantu going on foot before the road was done. He knows the main difference between Haile Sellassie I, <i>Darg</i> and the present government regarding their control of bandits.
15	Dessalegn Feyisa (<i>Abbaa gadaa</i>)	M	62	Gidda November 2017	<i>Abbaa gadaa</i> of present day Sob Calliya. He knows major socio-cultural impacts of the conquest.
16	Desta Algeda (<i>Obbo</i>)	M	60	Gidda January 2017	Settler from Tigray. He knows the pushing factors that brought them to the area and the interactions with the indigenous people.
17	Dorsis Dhuguma (<i>Obbo</i>)	M	64	Naqamtee February 2018	The first <i>Abbaa gadaa</i> of Injiro <i>gadaa</i> center who has participated as the agent of the local people in the debate of making the area of Injiro <i>gadaa</i> or <i>gedaam</i> .
18	Duressa Gonfa (<i>Obbo</i>)	M	83	Gidda November 2017	Among the first 'teacher' whom the CMF Missionaries employed in Goobu Guddaa. He knows the socio-cultural impacts of the missionaries.
19	Efa Weyessa (Msc)	M	48	Naqamtee December 2017	He knows the socio-cultural interactions between the indigenous people and its results.
20	Gemechu Birra (<i>Obbo</i>)	M	60	Gidda January 2018	Knowledgeable informant on the genealogy, social, cultural and economic life of Gidda Oromo.
21	Girma Ebba (<i>Obbo</i>)	M	53	Naqamtee March 2018	Attempted to expand Catholic religion in Ayyaanaa town and its surroundings. He knows the reasons for the decline of Catholicism in the area.
22	Gobana <i>Abbaa</i> Burka (<i>Obbo</i>)	M	86	Limmu January 2017	Knowledgeable elder who lives in Lali area of Limmu and he has good memories of early history of Gidda Oromo to present day.
23	Gusse Mersha (<i>Obbo</i>)	M	80	Gidda November 2017	Knowledgeable elder concerning socio-cultural life of Gidda Oromo during Italian occupation, the Imperial and the <i>Darg</i> periods.
24	Imiru Yadeta (<i>Obbo</i>)	M	65	Kiramu January 2017	Had worked in Kiramu as teacher. He knows the socio-cultural interactions of the local people as well as that which was done between the resettlers and indigenous people of the area.

25	Insarmu Nemerra (Obbo)	M	68	Ebantu January 2018	Knowledgeable informant in Ebantu regarding the early expansion of Oromo and their socio-cultural interactions during the Menilek's conquest.
26	Jirra Duressa (Abbaa gadaa)	M	54	Gidda January 2017	Abbaa gadaa of Injiro gadaa center who compared the socio-cultural life of peoples living in Guttin.
27	Kebeda Biftu (Obbo)	M	78	Gidda November 2017	He Knows the socio-cultural impacts of the conquest as well as that of the newly introduced religions.
28	Kebeda Guta (Obbo)	M	64	Gidda November 2017	He Knows the social hardship of living under feudal system and the role of Dhuguma Jaldesso of Limmu.
29	Kitata Gerbi (Obbo)	M	65	Limmu March 2018	He was among the pioneer in introducing and expanding Protestantism. He was persecuted by both Haile Sellassie I and Darg governments only for his religion.
30	Mustefa Ibrahim (Obbo)	M	58	Finfinne November 2017	He Knows the socio-cultural impacts of Italian occupation in and around Gidda.
31	Shiferra Tesso (Obbo)	M	70	Limmu January 2017	Elder living in Lali area of Limmu and knows the socio-cultural interaction of the Gidda, Limmu and Ebantu.
32	Teferra Gonfa (Pastor)	M	65	Naqamtee November 2017	Pioneer in the beginning of Protestantism in Amuru and has been writing "Fifty Years History of Protestantism" when this data was collected.
33	Tola Nagaro (Obbo)	M	85	Gidda November 2017	Among the early converts to Orthodox Christianity and knows its role in the socio-cultural interactions of the peoples. He was also treated by the CMF support when Tiger caught him.
34	Wejega Nukus (Obbo)	M	87	Ebantu November 2017	Elder in Ebantu who knows the ups and downs in the socio-cultural life of the peoples from early period.
35	Wegari Geleta (Obbo)	M	60	Gidda January 2018	Among the local people of Guttin who played significant role in the decision concerning the beginning of jaarii that later became Injiro gadaa center.
36	Yadesa Gurmessa (Obbo)	M	64	Gidda January 2018	He Knows the role of foreign citizens and the early settlement in Guttin area.

GLOSSARY

I. *Afaan Oromo*

Abba gadaa - leader of *gadaa* system

Abbaa - father; title used to refer 'owner'

Abbaa lafaa - landlords

Abbaa muudaa - father of anointment among the Oromo

Afaan - language

Afarsaataa - traditional mechanism of detecting one who has committed crimes secretly

Afre - confederacy of four

Amasani - local name for the Eritreans whom Italians trained for the purpose of Ethiopian invasion

Amole - salt bar

Angaftuu - senior, eldest son or clan

Argaa-dhageettii - oral tradition

Aseennaa - a type of marriage where a girl suddenly come to the house of a boy

Ayyaana - spirit

Beekaa - intelligent, knowledgeable

Bokkuu - scepter

Budaa - someone with evil-eye

Butii - abduction

Caffee - a long type of grass grown around the humid areas; the name of Oromo parliament

Daadoo - work party circulating among members

Daboo - one day work party

Daggal saaqii - pioneers or first openers of the forest in the expansion of Oromo

Damma – honey

Dhaabata - a religious rite performed for commemoration of different divinities

Dhaabii – a particular area within a market where people used to sell and/or buy specific type of items.

Dhibaayyuu - sacrifice for the ghost

Dhibbisaa – someone who owns hundred cows

Duudaa - deaf

Eeboo - spear

Ekeraa - spirit of the dead, ghost

Faaqii - tanners

Gadaa – oromo indigenous socio-political organization

Galchii – votive gift

Galma – indigenous compounds of Oromo that are used for religious and other social discussions

Geeshoo - is a kind of plants whose leaves and stems are used in preparing local alcoholic drinks

Giiftii – queen

Guddifachaa - adoption

Haraamuu – incest

Haroo - lake

Hawwii - a type of marriage where girl and boy decide their case

Hiriyyaa - age-mates

Irreecha - a thanks giving and prayer ceremony

Jaarii – sacrifice and prayer conducted in reaction to particular problem most often for rain

Jabana – era

Jeekkarsa – hymn of the Oromo indigenous religion. It is also called *dalagaa*.

Kakaa - an Oath

Kapo - representative; local name for organizer of collaborators perhaps adopted from Italic language.

Kistaana - cemeteries, traditional burial place of Oromo

Kommaarii - a woman having the skill of preparing traditional alcoholic drinks

Kora - meeting

Lafa - land

Laguu - prohibition from doing something due to religious observance

Maarem - a female divinity who is believed to give children to women

Milkii - omen

Mootii - king; chief of the district.

Naqachuu - betrothal

Nyaataa - animal which is believed to possess power of changing its type

Obbo - mister

Odaa - sycamore tree

Oodduu - traditional prophet among Oromo, necromancer

Qaalluu - traditional religious leader and high priest among the Oromo people

Qabiyyee - property, land or other kinds of ownership held by pioneer person or group

Qubsiisa - allowing others to settle

Sadacha - confederacy of three

Safuu - indigenous moral values and ethical standard among Oromo

Seera - law

Seera gadaa - the laws of *gadaa*

Seera Waaqa - the law of God

Soddaa - brother in law
Tolchituu - sorcerer
Tumtuu - blacksmith
Tussoo daaraa - pancake prepared in hot ash
Ulaa - corridor
Waaqa - God
Waaqeffannaa - indigenous religion of Oromo
Waaqeffataa - someone who believes in *Waaqa*
Warajoo - an animal or thing kept aside for ritual purpose
Wareega - vow
Watwaata - a rite of swirling animals over head assuming to throw problems or disease
Yaabbata - local name for non-Oromo

II. Amharic

Amist - five
Andinet amilko betekristian - all believers' church; fellowship
Arat - four
Asir - ten
Awraja - sub-Province
Balabat - landlords often hereditary chief
Bale-tera - order owner
Balambaras - 'commander of the fort'
Bega - enough
Ciqashum - village chief, authority in the Imperial period who had served as *shengo*
Cisegna - the peasants or tenants

Daboo – one day work party

Darg - committee

Dega - cold climate

Dejazmach – ‘commander of the gate’, a politico-military title below *Ras*

Ennat – mother

Ennat ager tir – call of motherland

Eshi - ok

Fiwarari – leader of the vanguard, a title below *Dejazmach*.

Gabbar – tenant

Ghazi – one who rule forcefully

Gasha - unit of land measurement equivalent to 40 hectares

Gedaam - abbey’, building for the residence of monks and nuns

Gena – express future time

Genjabet – early name of Finance Office

Goboz aleqa - commanding officer during the Imperial period of Ethiopia

Grazmach – commander of the left

Hirbo - a kind of dues collected from honey producers

Hudad – a kind of compulsory work for the landlords

Hulet - two

Iddir - self-help voluntary association

Jalba - boat

Kebele – lowest administrative unit below district

Kefilhager – name of province during the *Darg* government

Kineti – compulsory song for motivation purpose

Kommaarii - a woman having the skill of preparing traditional alcoholic drinks

Kutitir - controlling, follow up

Liqemenber - peasant association

Mahiber - celebration on the days of the Saints in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Mariam - saint mary

Melkegna - local official charged with collecting tribute from the tenants

Melso makuakuam - rehabilitation

Menafek - non-believer

Mender - village

Meslene - district administrator

Mezmur - hymn

Milisha - soldiers who went to the battle field

Mikitil - deputy, an administrative unit below the district administrator

Nacci-lebash - men in white cloth; special police force of the Amhara conquerors

Naftagna - soldiers of the Amhara conquerors; one who carry gun

Neseha abbat - a religious father/priest who gives spiritual counseling

Qaallichaa - magician-priest

Qagnazmach - commander of the right, a politico-military title above *Grazmach*

Qamisa - typical cloth of respect for patriots

Qolla - hot climatic zone

Ras - the highest traditional title

Safar - quarter, particular area in village or town

Saytan - devil

Senbet - holy days; days on which people do not work their agricultural field

Senbete – sabbath association

Shalaqa – leader of thousand

Shengo – local tribunal

Sigsega - inserting of the new resettlers within the formerly established villages

Siso – one third of the produce to be paid to the landlords

Sost – three

Tabot – ark of covenant

Teskar – sacrifice for ghost

Tsebel - holy water which is believed to possess a spirit of curing individual

Tsegure lawit – someone with ‘new hair’; stranger to the area

Wajagera – a type of gun which is very long in length

Woreda – district, administrative unit below *awraja*.

Woyna dega - moderate climatic zone

Woyzero - a title equivalent to Mrs.

Zuria – surroundings

Appendix II

1. Heena Hundeoffana Magaalaa Ayyaanaa.
 - 1.1 Bara Magaalaa Oiddaa Ayyaanaa Hundeoffanta 1807
 - 1.2 Qanna Sooraa kan argatte Bara 1953
 - 1.3 Qanna Du/Wag/tiin kan bookante 1987
 - 1.4 Magaalittin maaster pilaani kan argatte Bara 1988
 - 1.5 " Qanda lana (2) 01 fi 02
 - 1.6 Oiddinni Magaalitti Parsentiin 3.5 %n dabala jiraa.

Booyina Abbaa Warran.
 Dhira 1140
 Dhala 620
 idaa'ama 4760
2. Booyina Ummataa.
 - 2.1 Dhira 7003
 - 2.2 Dhala 7173

Idaa'ama 11,176
3. Booyina Hojjoota Hoortumaa Magaalaa Keessaa
 - 3.1 Dhira 251
 - 3.2 Dhala 37
4. Booyina Bulaloota Magaalaa Ilaalchisee.
 - 4.1 Dhira 403
 - 4.2 Dhala 125

Idaa'ama 528
5. Booyina Dafsaan bulloota Magaalaa.
 - 5.1 Dhira 124
 - Dhala -

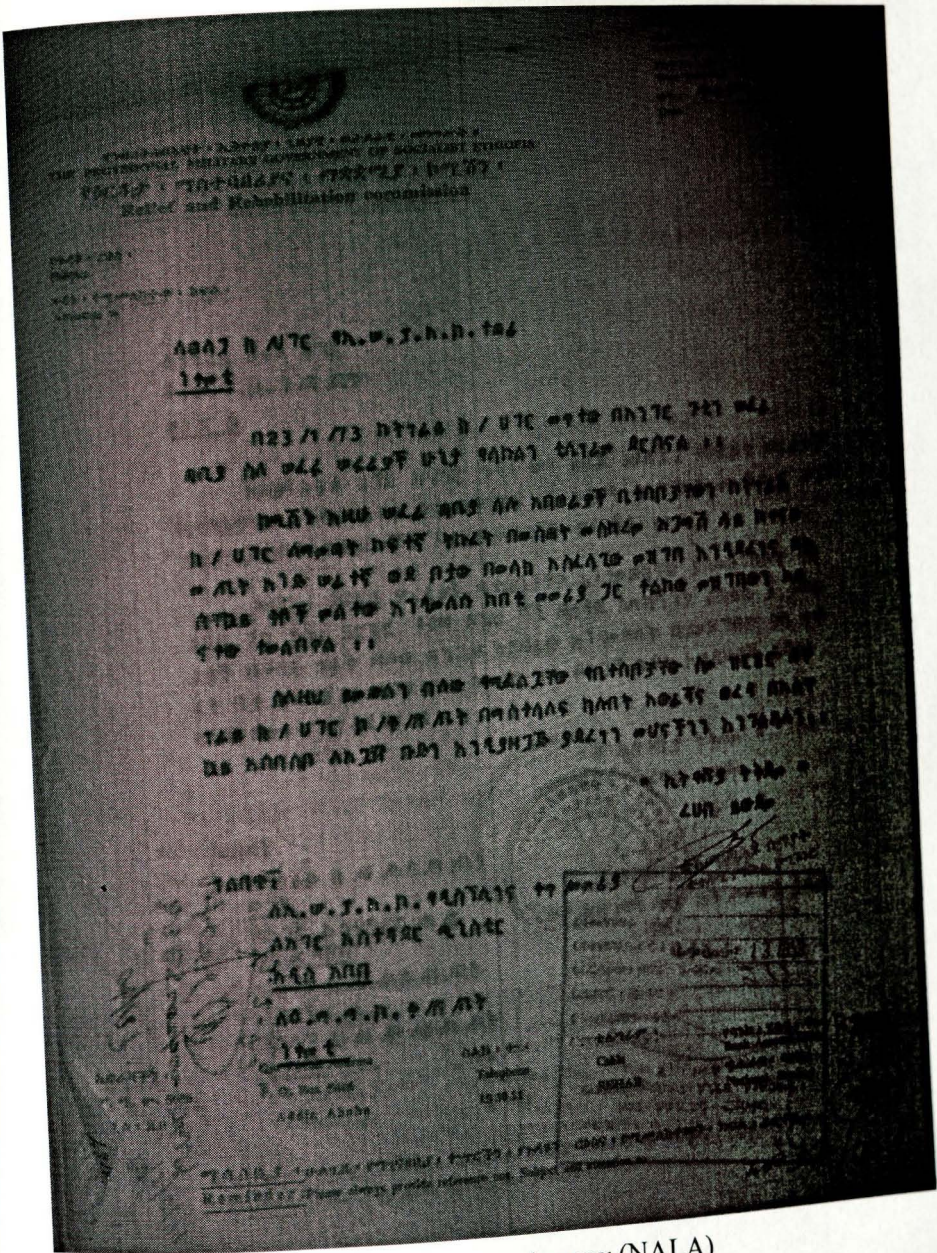
Idaa'ama 124
6. Booyina Waqiroolee Hoortumaa Magaalaa Keessaa.
 - 6.1 Waqiroo Misooma Qannaa
 - 6.2 " Barnootaa
 - 6.3 " Begumaa Fayya
 - 6.4 " Bulchiinsa Magaalaa Oidda Ayyaanaa
 - 6.5 " Faayinaansii
 - 6.6 " Abbaa Alangan
 - 6.7 " Sana Murtaa
 - 6.8 " Kaniibaniisii Ispoortii
 - 6.9 " Waldaa gagaagina Cantaa
 - 6.10 " Duudii Guddaa
 - 6.11 " Heestoojii
 - 6.12 " Bhiina Hawwaasummaa
 - 6.13 " Misooma Jallisii



27


Source: Mayor Office of Ayyaanaa town

Appendix III



Source: National Archives and Library Agency (NALA)

Appendix VI



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THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH MEKANE YESUS
 ቀንጭ ጠቅላይ ጽ/ቤት Central Office

CENTRAL SYNOD
 WESTERN SYNOD
 SOUTH ETHIOPIA SYNOD
 NORTH ETHIOPIA SYNOD
 KAMBAJA SYNOD

P. O. Box 2097
 ADDIS ABABA
 ETHIOPIA

Tel. 120344

Telegrams: ECMY, AddisAbaba

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Ref. No.

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 Date March 27, 1976

የወንጌላዊት ቤተ ክርስቲያን ጠቅላይ ጽ/ቤት
10/11

Ato Abiu Gellata
 General Administrator of Wollega Region

Nakamte

Re.: Meeting with ECMY Development Secretaries working in Wallega Region

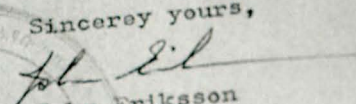
Dear Ato Abiu,

As you might be informed through Ato Tadesse Kanna I am planning to call a meeting with ECMY Development Secretaries working within Wallega Region on April 3 in Nakamte.

As one of the main reasons for the meeting is to bring our people together to try coordinate approaches and activities within the development sector within the region. We are also very much in need of the cooperation and assistance of the Governmental authorities of the region.

Hearing from Ato Tadesse that you yourself hopefully can attend our meeting atleast partly, I hereby want to extend my invitation to you to do so. This would be very helpful to us, as you than would be in position to present to us your policies and priorities for Development in your region. And possibly also could indicate how we in the future can establish a functional co-operation where ever our church finds itself in a position to participate in such work.

We plan to start our meeting to be held in our synod centre in Nakamte at 3.00 afternoon saturday April 3, or if the Dembidollo plane arrives later immediately upon the arrival of one participant arriving with this plane.

Sincerely yours,

 John Eriksson
 Director
 ECMY Development Department

Source: East Wallagga Administration Office Archive Center

