

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**Traditional Cloth Making
in Kutaber of South Wollo**

By Zufan Fikre



**June, 2010
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

DECLARATION

I here declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
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Traditional Cloth Making
in Kutaber of South Wollo

A Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Documentary Linguistics and Culture in Linguistics and Philology

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June, 2010

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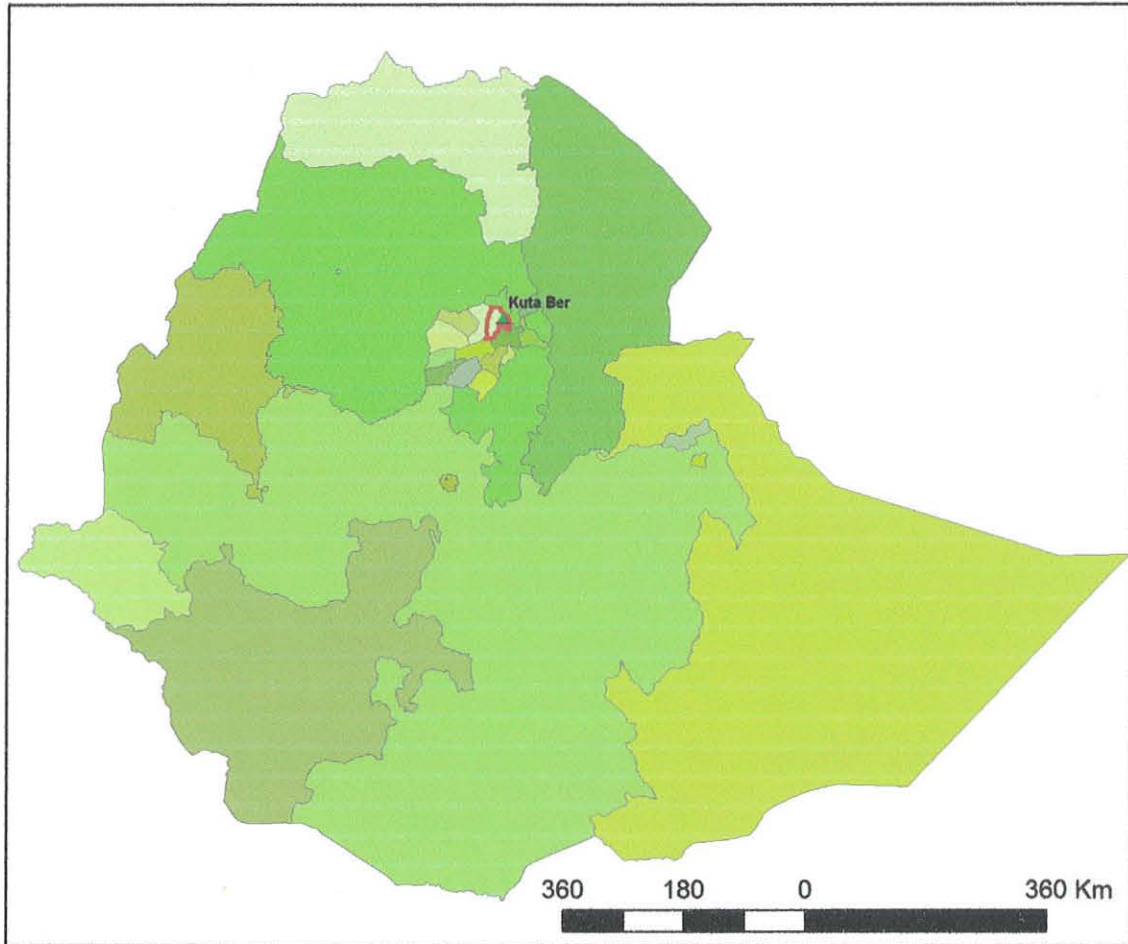


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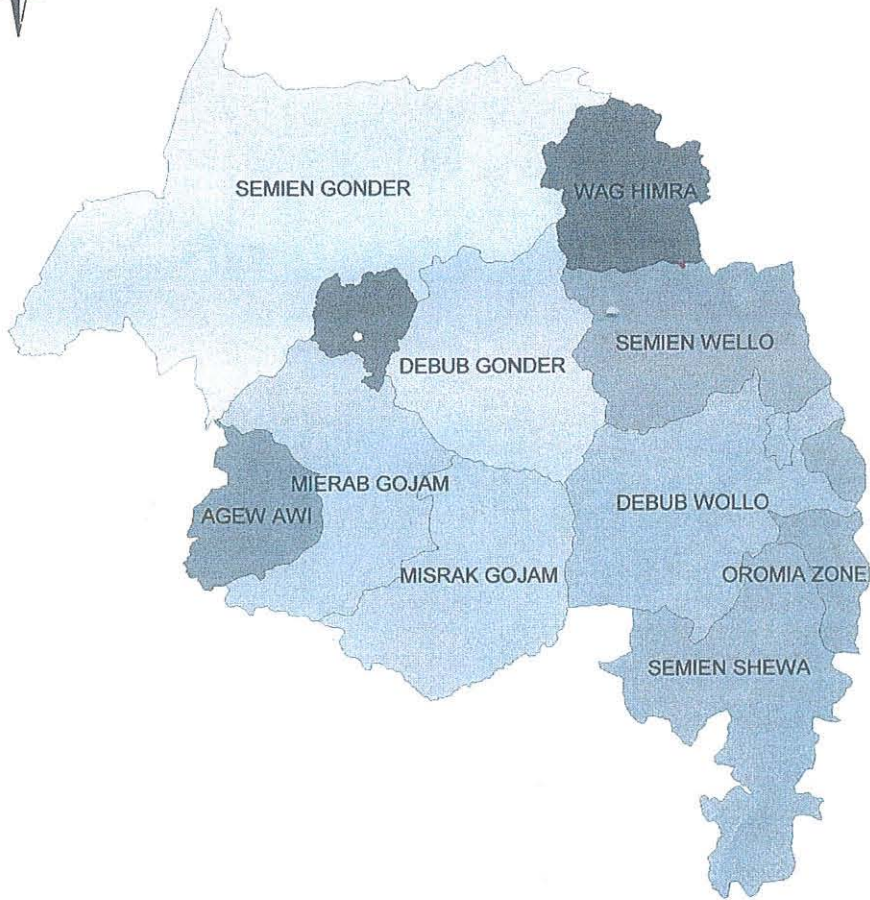
Map of the Study Area



Ethiopia

Source: AAU Geography Department GIS Lab

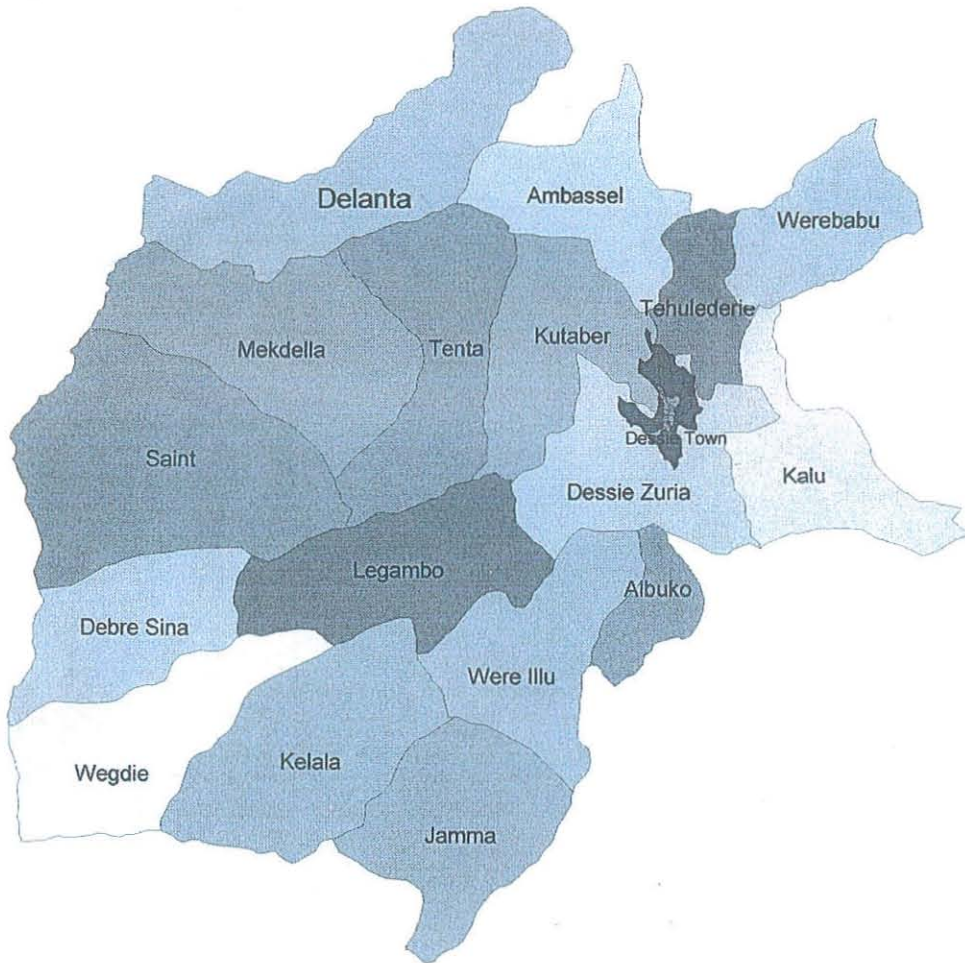
MAP OF AMHARA REGION



Source : Ethio-Gis

1 : 3086000

MAP OF SOUTH WOLLO



Source : Ethio-Gis

1 : 1165000

MAP OF KUTABER WOREDA

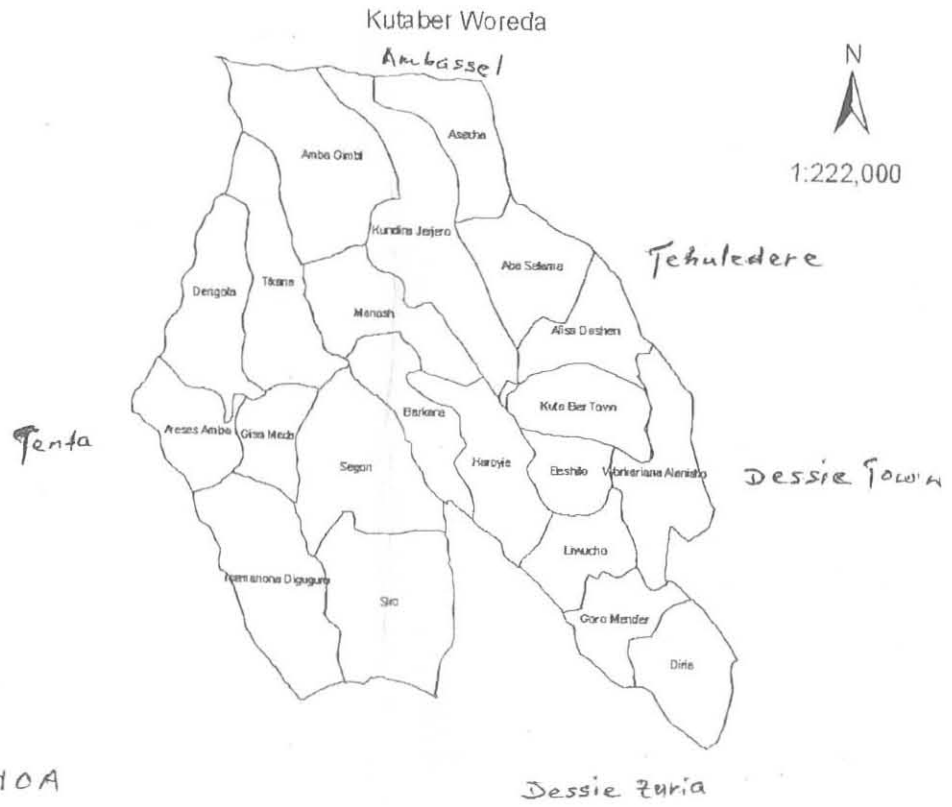




Fig 1. W/o Zewde Birhanu, Key informant (Kutaber)

Glossary

meska	reproach
mekenet	woven waistband
mekentebia	neck of gourd
mebezek	cooking warp
mebazet	smoothing of cotton
mettareria	arrow like thin wood
mezewor	made of bamboo like plant used to unroll the yarn
meddamecha	an instrument which serves to separate cotton – seeds from the cotton
meferket	to loosen and separate cotton-seeds
mizan	weight measuring instrument
mag	weft thread
selalamelala	poor quality weft
kelem	made of thin hollow bamboo like plant (Kesem in other areas)
buluko	heavy blanket like woven material
kuta	light woven material
amelmalo	twisted lock of cotton
arb	set of weaving tools
agelgil	made of grass that serves for taking or carrying food while travelling long distances and keep spinning products.
ersbessu	woven from warp only
Inzirt	spinning reel
gabi	woven material lighter than buluko

debo	communal work
degan	a curved bow like wood the ends connected with catgut
jendi	made of local cattle hide used as carpet to spread cotton or other materials. It is also used as bed sheet
jimmat	catgut made from intestine of sheep or goat
jobira	flaying bird
yangetlibs	woven scarf material
tibbiko	local child cloth
tilet	color stripe
tiftif	colorful stripes

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Dedicated to

Ruth, Fikir, Kidus and the comers.

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe and document the traditional cloth making process and tools in Kutaber, Woreda of South Wollo Zone. The tools used for traditional cloth making, the processes from raw material collection to weaving and embroidery techniques have been discussed.

In addition to the cloth making process, on work traditional chanting (music) and socio cultural functions and implications of traditional clothes were described.

The data was collected mainly from kutaber town by interviewing officials, cotton and cloth traders, spinners, weavers, embroiders and by documenting cloth making processes and tools using video and photo Cameras.

The study indicates that the majority those who wear traditional clothes currently are elderly men and women. Adult and young men wear 'Buluko' or 'Gabi' on holidays, Worship places and weddings. Women also wear traditional 'kemis' and 'kuta' on religious ceremonies and weddings, however they often wear imported or locally manufactured 'Kemis' and put on 'kuta' or 'Shemma'. The 'Kuta' even is made of factory-manufactured threads as 'Dir' and 'Mag' and the product is called 'Ers Bersu'.

Traditional spinning instruments are rarely found in elderly mothers houses. They are not readily available anywhere. Those who spin cotton thread, 'Mag' or sell woven 'Gabi' for their living or some mothers who sometimes spin cotton thread do not roll and apply bow to get clean and fine tufts of cotton but they simply separate cotton seeds with hands and spin which exerts a negative impact on the quality of cloth produced.

Spinners and weavers learn the skills from their parents. However they are not transferring same skills to successors because of wider access to

modern schools. Children go to school as a result they do not learn spinning or weaving skills.

Embroidery has a relatively higher demand; however it is not used on traditional clothes but on clothes made of manufactured thread namely 'Dir Bedir'.

This alarming condition necessitates documentation of skills of traditional cloth making and instruments which are heritages of our ancestor's indigenous knowledge, but which are gradually disregarded or neglected by the current generation as boys and girls are not willing to take up their parents' traditional skills of cloth making.

Chapter One

Introduction

Kutaber, one of the Woreda's (districts) of South Wollo Zone in the Amhara Regional State, is predominantly inhabited by rural ethnic Amhara. People in different areas of the study area wear long embroidered 'Kemis' with waist belt ('mekenet'). 'Buluko' and 'Gabi' made of home spinned cotton thread are also worn in the area. Elderly fathers and mothers tell oral poems appreciating women's skill of spinning. As Kutaber is part of the area characterized by cold and windy climate, it was customary to the people to wear traditional clothes ranging from simple 'Shamma' to 25 meters 'Bulko' Similar to factory made blanket of today. However these typical traditional clothes are in a state of being replaced by factory made ones.

Instruments used for spinning are not available except in limited elderly mothers homes hung on walls or put improperly anywhere in houses exposed to damage with out being used. Some of the instruments are near to extinction.

The traditional cloth making skill and the quality of products is deteriorating. The youth give special attention to modern education. They do not have time to learn spinning or weaving and above all they consider the skill a reflection of backwardness and lack the interest to learn. This is an important indication in maintaining the indigenous knowledge for the coming generations. Therefore, documenting traditional cloth making become essential.

The thesis has four chapters namely:-

Introduction: - contains the introductory part itself, statement of the problem description of the study area and the people, objectives of the

study, research methods and field experience, significance, limitations and delimitations of the study. The second chapter, review of literature, has two parts. They are related works and theoretical perspective. Related works, the gap between this study and previous studies, the relationship among the studies, their similarities and differences have been exhaustively assessed. The second part, theoretical perspective, deals with the theories of renowned scholars in the field which is of paramount importance to this paper. The third chapter, description and analysis of traditional cloth making, has been presented backed with self-explanatory pictures (Photos) taken during the field survey. The fourth chapter contains conclusion of the study and recommendations based on findings of existing problems. References and indexes have also been attached.

1.1 Background of the study and Description of the Area and the people

“Clothes are classified as pioneer of material culture. They vary depending on natural resources available in the environment. History witness, that man used banana leaves or other wide leaves and the likes to cover bodies”(Martin,2001:687). Now a days people living in different environments wear various kinds of cloth based on different climate differences, standard of living and economic development.

“The Ethiopian people at an early date involved a handcraft industry which meets the everyday needs of the population.” (Pankhurst, 1964:221). One of these handicrafts is the traditional cloth making which gives the answer for question what the pre industrial population used to wear before textile industry begun in the country or manufactured clothes were imported.

According to Pankhurst (1964:222), “It was customary to produce cotton clothes by handicrafts in various places of the country...the dress of highlands is made mainly out of white cotton worn alike by men and women.” He also noted that Ethiopians were proud of their unique traditional clothing and could not succumb easily to foreign domination. So the large quantity of imported textiles and the rapid introduction of the sewing machine, European dress were slow to win acceptance. However, from time to time the indigenous technology and instruments have since then been on the process to be replaced by industrial products.

The motivating factor for studying the tradition lies in that I was born and brought up in the Rural Amhara Region. The age long tradition and knowledge of spinning and weaving are not well studied and known by the young generation. I have been inspired to contribute in recording and preserving tradition for the coming generation.

The study focused on South Wollo, which is one of the eleven zones in the Regional State. It is rich in antiquities and historical places such as Mekdela, Haik St.Estifanos Monastery, Geta and the palace of King

Michael and 'Ayteyef' Hall. The population of South Wollo according to the 2007 census figures at 2,519,450. (CSA: 2007)

The target area of the study, Kutaber, is one of the twenty woredas of the Zone. The woreda town called Kutaber lies 423Kms far from Addis Ababa and 23 Kms from Dessie. According to the CSA (2007) country wide census, the population of the woreda is stands at 95,385 of which 90,446 people are rural dwellers and 4,939 urban. Kutaber is near to Dessie Zuria woreda in the South. It is bounded by Ambassel in the North, Tenta (Worehimeno) in the west and Tehuledere in the East.

The woreda is characterized by

Dega (cold zone) 42% climatic conditions

Woyna Dega (Warm zone) 54% and

Kola (Hot zone) 4% climatic conditions

Agriculture features as the most important economic basis. Crops such as barely, wheat, peas and beans are the most widely grown in the area. Horticulture and spices especially 'Abish' and 'Tikurazmud' are also common. As the agricultural production system is mixed farming in such a highland and mid highland part of the country, animal husbandry, i.e, breeding of cattle, sheep and goats is an important occupation.

100% of the woreda population is ethnic Amhara of which 70% are Muslims, 29.5% Orthodox Christians and the remaining 0.5% Protestants.

The town was established in 1937 and the first Woreda Governor was Dejazmach Belay Ali according to the Woreda Bulletin. Local tradition maintains that the name Kutaber was given by a passer by. According to this tradition: "Once up on a time, while a gentle man was walking around the present day locality of Kutaber, his traditional cloth known as 'kuta' was blown up by the wind. To indicate this incident, the man shouted 'Kuta berere'; which literally means the 'kuta' was taken away by the wind. It was this expression 'Kuta berere' which gave rise to the name 'Kutaber'". (Local elderly informant).

The people of Kutaber reflect their culture through various social performances among which the main ones are marriage and mourning ceremonies. Marriage in the study area has its own system and cultural processes from the first request to the wedding day. According to Hailu Tadesse¹, If a young boy in 'Kutaber' and its surroundings, goes home late in the evening as the saying in the area goes "dares the darkness", makes his own 'kot Alga' raised wooden bed close to the main house and sleeps there, his parents and relatives discuss on the issue and decide that he is at puberty and start looking for a girl to be married to their young son.

Now-a-days however the boy informs his parents and relatives the girl he might have met on public holidays or wedding places and gets her willingness for marriage. In both ways the family discusses the issue of the marriage and decides. Then two or three men, close friends of the family are sent to the family of the girl and request for their willingness for the marriage tie between the two families.

The family of the girl will take their time to think thoroughly and discuss with friends and relatives and inform the three men who first presented the request whether they have agreed or not. If the requested family agrees they inform the other family to come to their house and celebrate the engagement. On the day of engagement, they prepare food and drinks; invite close neighbors, friends and relatives to the event. It is necessary to correlate with what Robert Jerome in Dorson explains about rites of passage

¹Ato Hailu Tadesse, South Wollo Zone Culture and Tourism Office, Culture Development Officer. Interviewed on cultural heritages, their preservation, support provided to handcraft workers and cultural practices. February 26, 2010

One life, in most cultures of the world, is not only a simple biological progression from birth to death but also a social movement from one status to another is marked by special ceremonies and festivities by rites of passage (1972:165)

The father of the young boy along with his close relatives and cousins 3-5 persons go to the house of the girl's parents. Then they again raise the question of the marriage and get a positive response. The host family invites food and drinks and the engagement ceremony will be over. The weeding date will be discussed and determined later by the mutual consent of both families. Then the weeding date will be determined.

Two weeks before the weeding date "Bikle breaking" program will be held in the house of the bridegroom and the bride. As economic condition of the host family allows food and drinks such as 'Injera' or bread and 'Tela' will be served. 'Gan' big container made of clay used to ferment and make the local beer like drink 'Tela' is collected from neighbors. 'Gesho' leaves of a plant that gives the bitter test of 'Tela' and helps in the fermentation process of alcoholic drinks will be broken into smaller pieces using a big mortar and pistle like instrument called 'Mukecha'. The 'Bikle' barely used in 'Tela' preparation that has already sprouted and dried in the air compacted like a loaf of bread is broken into pieces on the back of the bride. The lady that breaks first the 'Bikil' is a married woman who has maintained her first marriage or has never divorced. The woman is used as a role model for a strong long standing marriage. This indicates how divorce is hated, condemned and unacceptable by the community.

From this day on wards up to the weeding for two weeks, young neighbors and friends gather in both houses of the bridegroom and the bride, sing and dance every evening. Three days before the weeding the bridegroom with his best men, neighbors and friends constructs a small hut with bush wood wall and grass roof for his honey moon.

The father of the bride on the other hand builds temporary shelter 'Das' with neighbors and friends for the guests to be invited. In the house of the bride, in the eve, 'Insosla' or 'Gurshit' program will be held.

'Insosla' or 'Gurshit' is tuber root of a plant that gives brown color to feet and hands soaked while boiling. The best women relatives, friends and neighbors sing and dance during this ceremony.

On the wedding day, nail cutting of the bridegroom will be conducted in the morning and they travel to the bride house at 10:00 – 12:00. In the bride's house preparation of food and drinks would be completed and all the congregation sing and dance waiting for the bridegroom. Religious leaders will conduct prayers before the gathering. If they are Muslims, they will lead a 'Nika' ceremony. If Christians they will sign marriage contracts. Then at 5-6 o'clock they will travel to the bridegroom house singing and dancing. The bridegroom and the bride travel on mules or horses while those who accompany them walk on foot. In the bridegroom's house, relatives and invited guests will gather earlier and wait for the bridegroom and the bride to welcome and bless them.

On the wedding day men particularly adults and elderly wear coat and trousers and put on the traditional cloth 'Shamma' or 'Gabi'. Women wear complete traditional cloth embroidered 'kemis' or 'kemis' with colour strips at the extremities or specially designed 'Tibeb' kemis. A woman should wear traditional clothes on wedding days otherwise it is shameful. One can see how important the traditional clothes are for the society especially on such popular occasions.

Late in the evening the bride and the bridegroom go to the hut called 'Chagula' meaning a hut for honey moon. The next morning a ceremony called 'Mizewegi' will be undertaken. The best men will go to the house of the bride, parents, relatives and friends of the family will gather and wait for the best men to come and herald/ inform the crowd that she was found to be virgin. The crowd will be delighted and proud to hear that the bride was virgin and give gifts such as sheep, goat or money which will be used for the two weeks period of the honey moon.

At the end of the two weeks honey moon period the best men will contribute money, purchase sheep, goat or bull and invite the community around and declare the wedding ceremony is over.

According to the explanations of Hailu Tadesse (see page 5) whenever a person dies, the bereaved particularly the Christian faith follower women, they pull out their hair forcefully with their hands, rub their faces with rough pieces of clothes or sacks until blood oozes out and facial skin is damaged. However the Muslims just cry and weep, but never do what Christians do. Although hair pulling, face rubbing are expressions of deep heart felt sorrow for the late relative, these practices damage parts of the body and deteriorate beauty, professionals of the Culture Office have been trying to teach and eradicate this harmful traditional practice.

The Ethiopian Orthodox church is teaching the laity early, working very hard towards the eradication of these practices, condemns so that conditions are said to be improving. Regarding the different signs of mourners, a woman turns the strip of her 'shamma' up sides, turns the embroidery of the 'kemis' inwards. If the deceased is a husband, the wife puts rope around the waist like belt and shaves her hair completely," (Taitu Ejigu²). Through out the zone there are community based organizations called 'Kire' similar to 'Idir' in Addis Ababa.

When any one dies in a member family the chair person or secretary of the 'kire' is informed and they announce all members in the village to go to that house and assist in essential works. Members will take firewood, grains and 'Injera'. If the deceased is a Muslim, women just see off the coffin and stay at home to prepare lunch. Men take the body and undertake the burial at to the grave yard.

²W/o Taitu Ejigu, 50, addresses Kutaber Woreda Alasha Kebele peasant association. Taitu makes her living on spinning and weaving interviewed on spinning and use of traditional clothes, February 16 and 18, 2010

If the deceased is a Christian, limited women stay at the late home the others men and women go to church to attend the funeral ceremony.

Relatives, friends and members of the 'kire' go to the deceased house, Muslims chew 'chat' or Kat and do prayers. The Christians pray on the third day and the priest sprinkles holy water. The prayers are carried out to cheer the bereaved family, drive out bad sprits and for the dead to rest his soul in heaven.

Therefore the material culture of the society with such rich culture should be studied, recorded and properly archived. According to Duncan (1981:1) "both oral and written history may reflect judgments that are inaccurate and biased, the artifact does not lie". Material cultures are therefore more efficient and reliable to witness beliefs, cultural practices, traditions and ways of life of a society. However this important part of culture is not well investigated. Material culture is significant data for understanding history and knowledge of a people as indicated by Pankhurst in the Ethiopian context. He says:

Like the Europeans before the industrial revolution the Ethiopian people at an early date involved a handicraft industry, which meets the everyday needs of the population. And in the pre industrial technology the population could produce beautiful clothing using indigenous knowledge, tools and available raw materials in the surrounding. They spun and wove both cotton and wool, producing excellent and often beautiful clothing. (1964:221)

Obviously the statement sheds light on what the pre-industrial population used to wear in the country or before manufactured clothes were imported. However the changes are not yet studied. Imported or locally manufactured clothes are currently replacing the traditional clothes. Modified traditional clothes are innovatively brought for market on the other hand. This fact also invites research with the aims of documenting traditions at great risk while rendering them to generations to come. Therefore the inheritance from our ancestors should be recorded for future generations.

Hence, the most important questions arise from these major concerns are:

- What are the materials from which traditional clothing are produced?
- What form and color or why they are selected for a specific environment?
- What are their distinct uses? Whom are they serving?
- What tools and implements are used for traditional cloth making?
- What are the purposes of each tool?
- What the complete process of traditional cloth making looks like?

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The over all objective of this study is to document and describe the traditional Amhara cloth, instruments used for cloth making and whole process from raw material preparation to finished cloth production.

The specific objectives are to:-

- 1/ Document traditional cloth making in one part of Amhara region
- 2/ Identify and document instruments used for the traditional cloth making and the process ranging from raw material preparation to cloth production.
- 3/ Introduce the indigenous knowledge and crafts skill of the locality.
- 4/ Document oral literature related to the traditional clothes and the workers who participate in cloth making.

1.3 Research Methods

This study utilized the qualitative way of data gathering. Methods used in the course of the study are interview and systematic observation. Thereafter, discussion and analysis conducted using description method. The reason for selection of qualitative method is that the study material culture as Fekade stated (1999:15)

“To study material culture, studying the material itself is a major function and studying how it was made is another. The researcher studies how a material is made listening to different writing down or recording with Tape or Video what they explain and transfers to the coming generation. On the other hand the researcher studies how they produce the material through observation from the beginning to finishing.” Based on the above recommendation, recording step by step production of the material and making descriptive analysis.

According to Yallem (2006:20) the process of qualitative research has a natural phenomenon which is under taking observation, recording and explaining.” Methods used in the course of the study are interview and systematic observation. Thereafter, discussion and analysis conducted using description method.

Interviews were used to know the opinion of key informants, and these key informants are systematically selected among weavers, spinners, cotton and cloth traders, elders and institutional representatives. I have applied structured and unstructured interviews. Structured interview uses pre planned and written questions on major issues to avoid forgetting and unstructured interview serves to get broad data by observing materials in the field and raising questions from the observation.

The information collected through interview helped me to analyze the different contents of the thesis to begin with, the information that is collected from spinners and weavers about transmission of knowledge helped me basically to analyze the way of transferring and continuity of skill. Whereas the data about marks of clothes for sex, age, and status collected through interview with elders.

Moreover, so as to address the issue of state motivation, governmental institutions were consulted those which have been directly interviewed the culture development unit of Zonal Culture and Tourism Office. Therefore interview conducted with 8 spinners, 3 weavers, 2 embroiders 2 elderly

women and the South Wollo Zone Cultural Development officer, totally with 16 informants.

Systematic observation since it is the study that involves practical activities, and material culture, it is very mandatory to observe how the system functions. Thus I used systematic observation as one of the data collection technique. As a result observation was made for example, on the entire process of spinning, weaving and embroidering from the stage of raw material collection to final product. Observation also put into on work discussions and chants.

1.4 Significance of the study

From the point of view of preserving heritages of our ancestors for the generations to come, documentation of traditional materials, indigenous knowledge and skill like the issue under question is of a paramount importance to and as a basis for development. Towards the fruition of such and other worthy endeavors, a scholarly support through accomplishing multifaceted inquiry upon local craft industry is very essential.

Thus the end result of this study can contribute to the efforts on introducing the local craft and preserving endangered cultural heritage which might be lost sometimes in the future due to external and internal influences. In addition, the paper could be used as source of inspiration and frame work for future studies on the issues from similar field of studies.

1.5 Limitations of the study

Under this sub-topic, discusses problems encountered during the study and possible solutions or recommendations forwarded. The study encompasses documenting of traditional cloth making and the instruments used in the Amhara ethnic society. It is generally believed that taking a large number of samples from wider areas of the Region might be necessary. However, due to budgetary and time constraints the study area has been delimited to south Wollo.

Kutaber has been selected to be the study area as 100% of the population is ethnic Amhara so that appropriate representative data could be gathered on traditional cloth making and the typical instruments used.

The problems encountered during the study are spinning is carried out by women therefore selected sample women as a matter of coincidence were engaged in mass women package area development campaigns for a period of time. It was difficult to conduct the data collection as per the preplanned schedule because the overlap was beyond their control. However it was possible to work with the sample women late in the afternoon after the development campaign work and their private business. Sometimes when the need arose the development campaign coordinators were requested to permit to some target women.

The other problem was that there were power interruptions while documenting with video camera. The Woreda Culture and Tourism Office was cooperative in providing a video camera with power light and complete recordings.

Chapter Two

2. Review of literature

This chapter deals with related works of under graduate and postgraduate students of, Anthropology and folklore of the Addis Ababa University, then it concentrates on theories of material culture with due emphasis on clothing.

2.1 Related Works

Thesis of Addis Ababa University students directly or indirectly related to this topic were thoroughly assessed and important information or experiences obtained. One among these studies conducted in Addis Ababa University students is of Wubshet, (1978) who has done research on clothes and jewelry of Amhara ladies of the upper class. Obviously Wubshet's work differs from mine as it chiefly concentrated on clothes and jewelry of the upper class Amhara ladies.

Zehara Mohammed (1992) focused on the contents of poems of Dessie Zuria. The objective of her study was to bring forward and record the songs of women on work. And she expressed that Women in Ethiopia particularly the rural ones do not have the culture and the right to say their feelings and grievances freely in the society. However they communicate their ideas in song poems. Therefore Zahara collected poems to show the life style and thoughts of women .The poems collected include songs performed about spinning cotton.

Helen Alamrew's (1999) study on Traditional weaving and leather works in and, around Dembecha deals with instruments and production processes including social life of handcraft workers. She also described hand craft workers learn skills from observation of relatives and gradually exercising

by themselves. The skills are transferred from generation to generation traditionally. And she showed in detail that the handcraft instruments were made of locally available materials such as wood and bamboo. Helen indicated that weavers in the locality produce cotton cloth used mainly by the rural community but the cloth is used in town sometimes on holidays and mournings.

She described services of weaves and traditional clothes but failed to include the basic stake holders, spinners and their traditional instruments. Therefore my work on traditional cloth making in a specific part of the Amhara Region may fill the gap observed earlier.

Yenealem Aredo (2000) studied the traditional clothes and jewelry of women in West Arsi Zone. She dealt on traditional leather cloth and jewelry of women past and present conditions in view of cultural values. The study area, the target ethnic group, the raw material of the cloth and the jewelry differ from the study in question.

Marsie Assefa (2008) studied "Youths and Beauty culture in Addis Ababa. The cases of Habesha cloth." Whose focus is to investigate into the reason of why habesha clothes are not worn on daily basis. Marsie studied changes, in forms and appearances of traditional and modern aspects. He collected data from local cloth designers in Addis Ababa youths and fashion Magazines. There is a difference as Marsies study area was the metropolis, Addis Ababa City, while the study in question is in the rural Amhara Region.

There is also a great variation in the themes of the studies as Marsies focus of study was on Habesha cloth fashion while the survey on traditional cloth making and the instruments used focuses mainly on the typical, non – modified clothes and cultural instruments. The similarity of these studies lies on the fact that both modified and typical traditional clothes are not commonly used.

Waltenigus (2000) dealt with the indigenous of wearing and embroidery associated with the life style, beliefs workshop and values of Axum.

There are some similarities regarding weaving instruments and embroidery process with Waltenigus. However there are distinctions on the target ethnic society and the main focus of studies.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

As the current study focuses on traditional clothes which are integral element of material culture, below I will focus on the conceptualization of material culture.

2.2.1 Material Culture

According to Weiss (1973:399) “Material culture is the sum total of the artifacts in a given cultural system at a given time. These artifacts are invariably classifiable in to artifact types or features of the culture”

Material culture has the power to clearly show things, which are difficult to describe in words and it is also the best discipline of research to learn past experiences and transfer to future generations.

Glassie (1999:46) explains it as follows: “Material culture is as true to the mind, as dear to the heart as language and what is more it reports thoughts and actions that resist verbal formulation”.

Material culture is a field of study of beliefs, values and outlooks of a definite society through handicraft products. On the other hand, man’s innovative handicraft products or those existing but modified or improved materials to help man meet the day-to-day requirements represent the material culture.

Prown (1982:1) confirms that “the word material is invented by men in the struggle with nature to meet their needs”. And this study investigates how materials are produced, assesses skills, past experiences and knowledge.

Glassie further describes that

“Material culture records human instruction in the environment. It is the way we imagine a distinction between nature and culture, and then rebuild nature to our desire shaping and reshaping and arranging things during life. We live in material culture, depend upon it take it for granted, and realize through it our grandest aspirations ... within which relativistic and existential thinking would be extended to history and art, the issues of human significance and human excellence. (1991:1)

Material culture is categorized as the first innovative product of man that helped human beings develop better life style, physical and mental capacities.

Fleming (1974:4) describes as follows “The earliest records of man include objects made to satisfy his many needs to extend his physical and psychic power over nature and his fellow man delight his fancy, affirm his sense of form and create symbols of meaning”. He further elaborates that artifacts made and used by man are not only expressions of the society but also culture by themselves. He expresses this idea as follows: “The artifacts made and used by people are not only a basic expression of that people, they are, like culture itself a necessary means of man’s self fulfillment” (1974:2).

For studying past experiences and history, material cultures have the capacity to better explain with out any bias than words.

Duncan explains, “Both oral and written history may reflect judgment that are inaccurate and biased the artifact does not lie”. (1981:1)

Hence to study culture of a society use of materials can lead to correct conclusions because a chance of materials to disappear soon or change forms and shape is little. Man can transfer history, culture and beliefs to generations through legends and written history. So, why are materials used as basis of studies? Different scholars have answered the questions as a basis of studies and gave explanations to the peculiar characteristics of materials. Among the scholars Prown explains the peculiar characteristics of material cultures in terms of inherent values, surviving historical events, veracity

1. *Inherent Attached values*

The most obvious cultural belief associated with material objects has to do with value. There are different kinds of value like intrinsic value e.g. with gold, silver, or precious stones. This kind of value is quite persistent. Utility value will inhere as long as an object continues to be useful and can return when an obsolete object again becomes useful. e.g. wood stoves in an oil shortage.

Aesthetic value material with more aesthetic value than use value such as paintings. Prown (1982:3) Traditional cloth from the point of view of these peculiar characteristics of materials, jewelry as Melgom of silver, beautification embroiders and different kinds of 'Tibeb' indicate esthetic value. Instruments used widely by our grandmothers such as 'Degan' and 'Medamecha' are for gotten at present. These instruments are found in some elderly women's homes serving no purpose as obsolete materials.

2. *Surviving Historical events*

Objects created in the past are the only historical occurrences that continue to exist in the present. They provide an opportunity through which we encounter the past at first hand; and have direct sensory experience of surviving historical events.

Artifacts may not be important historical events but they are to the extent that they can be experienced and interpreted as evidence significant Prown (1982:3). Traditional cloth making instruments will be useful for researchers in the future to study what our ancestors wore and how they made the cloth if they are properly preserved as surviving material evidences.

3. More representative materials

Materials are used by people irrespective of their sex, wealth and social status so that they have a more representative character.

Glassie(1952:3) in Prown elaborates that “Objects are used by a much broader cross section of the population and are therefore potentially a more wide ranging more representative source of information than words”.

4. Veracity:

Materials are physically visible and touchable so that they are true and reliable evidences as stated below. “Stylistic evidence can be found in all modes of cultural expression whether verbal behavioral or material. But a society puts a considerable amount of cultural spin on what it consciously says and does cultural expression is less self conscious and therefore potentially more truthful in what a society produces specially such mundane, utilitarian objects as domestic, buildings, furniture or pots” Prown (1982:4). Materials in material culture should be interpreted from many angles to understand more about the culture of the society.

Schlereth (1980:8) also explains that “Material culture study attempts to explain why things were made why they took the forms they did, and what social functional, aesthetic or symbolic needs they serve.”

He developed nine models to interpret material culture by using one or more of them. These are:

1. Art Historical:

Material with more aesthetic value than utility.

The beauty inherent in an object has a value all it own.

2. Symbolic:

Materials serve a society as symbols of self-identity beliefs etc.

3. Cultural:

When undertaking studies on a material, one has to see whether it has peculiar characteristics to represent that society whether it reflects culture of that society.

4. Functional:

How useful is the artifact? How was it meant to be used? What was its primary function? Is it useful still today? It is used in the same way the creator intended? Why or why not?

5. Structural:

How was this artifact made? Of what materials was it constructed? Did any of those materials come from the estuarine environment? What tools were used?

6. Environmental:

Has the environment shaped the formation of this artifact or changed it in any way? Does the object reflect the natural world, the available natural resource? Which part of the estuary can be connected to this artifact?

7. Behavioral:

What does this artifact mean to people? Is there a relationship between the object and the behavior of people? Is it meant to change them in any way?

8. Community:

What is the artifact's role in the community? Does it have special significance to all members of the community or to a few? Would every one in the community view the object through the same lens?

9. Social History: -

What is the artifact's history? What is its age? Does it relate to a special period or event in our culture? Who made it or owned it?

Schlereth forwarded the nine models that are used to analyze material culture and Prown recommended sequences of analysis as follows.

To keep the distorting biases of the investigator's cultural perspective in check, these stages must be undertaken in sequence and kept as discrete as possible.

The analysis proceeds from description recording the internal evidence of the object itself to deduction, interpreting the interaction between the object and perceiver to speculation forming hypothesis and questions which lead out from the object to external evidence for testing and resolution. (1982:7).

Prown (1982) continues and recommends that a study based on materials should undergo through three processes according to the following sequence of importance.

1. Description; -

Description begins with substantial analysis an account of the physical dimensions material and articulation of the object.

To determine physical dimensions the object is measured and perhaps we lighted. The next step in description is analysis of content and finally analysis of the objects form or configuration its visual character will follow. (Prown, 1982: 7)

2. Deduction:

The second stage of analysis moves from the object itself to the relationship between the object and perceiver. (Prown, 1982: 8)

3. Speculation

Creating the data obtained from the study with previous theories and formulating new findings. (Prown, 1982: 9-10)

Based on this fact, we need first to have the right criteria and categorize the material to make the research methodology easier and convenient.

In studying material culture, materials are the primary sources of evidences so it is essential to decide first very carefully how to classify categorize and proceed with the research. Prown explains how broad and difficult is material culture to categorize/ classify and do a research. "The range of objectives that fall within the compass of material culture is so broad as to make some system of classification desirable." (1982:2)

Prown further elaborates how difficult classification of a material is on composition of substances as one material could be composed of a number of elements. It is also equally difficult to classify on method of production (fabrication) as there could be variations from time to time and from individuals to individuals. Prown therefore recommends classification of materials on the basis of function.

Sorting by physical materials does not work because of multiplicity of substances used, even at times in a single artifact. The same is true of methods of fabrication. The most promising mode of classification is by function. (1982:2)

The materials in this study have been classified by function as per the recommendation of Prown. And clothes are put according to the local nomenclature (classification).

For thousands of years, people have worn some kind of clothing. They probably made their first clothes from the fur of animals they killed. Gradually, they learned to use other materials and invented tools. (Martin, 2001:696)

As Martin stated before people learned making different tools or materials, they might have used animal skins and other natural resources available in their surroundings to protect their bodies from various natural phenomena. Therefore costume preceded any material and opened the door for the study of material culture. Regarding clothing and material culture Dorson 1972: (318-320)

The manufacture of clothing gives us insight into large areas of the material culture of a folk community such as the technology involved in the spinning and weaving processes, and the tools of this technology: the flax break, the carding comb, the spinning wheel, the reel, the loom, the fulling mill and the woolen mill.

2.2.3 Folk Costume

Material culture embodies wide concepts, which calls for application of the classification of scholars of material culture. Dorson's classification of material culture hence has been applied for this particular study.

According to Dorson (1972:294) material culture, there are five main divisions namely, Folk Crafts, Folk Art, Folk Architecture, Folk costume and Folk cookery. Among these parts of the material culture, this study focuses on Folk Costume. From the point of view of folk costume we will deal with what cloth is, how why and when man started wearing clothes.

“Clothing includes all the different garments accessories and ornaments worn by people through out the World” (Martin, 2001:686). Martin explained that clothing includes the material that covers the body and includes jewelry in all regions of the world and further elaborated when and for what purpose clothing started as follows.

No one knows exactly why or when people first wore clothes. But they probably began to wear clothing more than 100,000 years ago and probably for much the same reasons we wear clothes to day early people may have worn clothing to protect themselves, to improve their appearance and to tell other people something about themselves (ibid)

When we look at the present day conditions of clothing beyond the use of covering the body it is used to express status of wealth or class and appear attractive. According to Martin (2001) Clothing thought to be started 100,000 years ago. It was used to protect human beings from natural phenomena such as sun’s heat, cold and rains.

However, as man started living in stratified social classes, clothing for a society was used not only to protect the body but also to express a social identity versus status, as noted next “Folk costume is the visible outward badge of folk group identity worn consciously to express that identity.” (Dorson, 1972:295)

Dorson quoted in Richard Weiss “folk costume is what people wear in relation to their community life as a whole” (1972:296) and he says that a simpler definition emphasizing the local variation of folk costume, could describe folk costume as “the dialect of dress “that is the analogue in the world of dress to dialect are both local and regional but both are related to larger cultural entities in one case literary or national language in the other international fashion.

Dorson clearly explains that clothing like language and accent is used to identify a society of a definite geographical area and beyond that reflects citizenship/ nationalism and clothing has correlation with people's identity. Although there is no documented evidence how and when people started cloth making and wearing in Ethiopia. Clothes for individuals and the family, Jeweler, house hold utensils for different purposes were common handicraft products. There are written evidences regarding the life of rural Ethiopia, Alulla explains that "Craft workers products are vital for rural livelihood---- pottery is essential for processing food and carrying water, leather products are used for sleeping mats, storing and transporting grain and cotton cloth is basic for clothing." (2001:1-2)

On the other hand Pankhurst speaks that Ethiopians like the other world were owners of handicraft products including cotton clothes since ancient time.

Like the Europeans before the Industrial Revolution, the Ethiopian people at an early date evolved a handicraft industry which met the every day needs of the population. They worked in iron making knives, swords, spear-heads, plough shares and other implements. They span and wave both cotton and wool, producing excellent and often beautiful clothing. (1964:221)

Pankhurst indicated that it was customary to produce cotton clothes by handicrafts in various places of the country both for men and women. He also stated that the dress of highlands is made mainly out of white cotton cloth worn alike by men and women which is generally decorated with color in strips woven into at each end of the material. One can understand from the following statement how Ethiopians were strong and resistant to foreign cultural imposition in the past.

"Traditional Ethiopian dress was so well established that clothing from Europe was slow to make any impact." (Pankhurst 1964:230)

Further in his writing he noted on how Ethiopians were proud of their unique traditional clothing and could not succumb easily to foreign domination. Pankhurst also cited Mirab as: "excluding servants employed

in European houses, there were by 1909 not more than 100 Ethnic with European dress" (1964:230)

However, imported and locally manufactured clothes are currently substituting or replacing the clothes. Although modified traditional clothes are widely used and exported, the raw materials (mag and dir) are all factory products. The indigenous knowledge, the tools used for cloth making and the traditional dress are at great risk of extinction. This condition is likely to render the generation to come lack the basis of their legacy for future knowledge and development as emerging advancements largely depend on the past. Therefore the creativity of our ancestors should be recorded as heritages for the existing and future generations.

Based on this idea, documentation of handicraft products and life style of our ancestors are essential. We need to see the ideas of different scholars what documentation is, what methods and systems is used in documenting.

2.2.4 Documentation

Documentation refers to recording and describing or the state of being documented. Woodbury (2003: 46-47) gives us some common values on what would constitute a good documentary corpus:-

- 1/ diverse – diverse in situation, in participants
- 2/ large – more than ever before, the technology is therefore to be arbitrarily large
- 3/ ongoing – distributed and opportunistic – if continually grows.
- 4/ transparent – they should be properly annotated
- 5/ perceivable - ethical and portable – proper Meta data information should be given about each item of data. It should be archived and handled.
- 6/ Ethical – data ownership should be protected.

Austin (2006:100) advised that documentation should strictly follow the order recording/ capturing, analysis, archiving and mobilization. It should

consider relevant procedures including the project planning. In line with documentation, Austin further explains that this technological era calls for digital archiving and how comfortable its use. Digital archiving involves the preparation of the recorded meta data and processed analysis so that the information it contains is maximally informative and explicitly expressed, encoded for long term accessibility and safely stored with a reputable organization that can guarantee long term curatorial.

He also describes tools for processing data by categorizing into two as follows: "general purpose software" for which the user must design the data structure and can write application programs to manipulate the data and carry out various tasks for instance MS Word and Excel and "Specific purpose software" which is designed to be used for particular tasks like shoe box /toolbox for text and lexicon annotations, Praat for speech analysis and annotation, Elan for audio and video annotation. Accordingly, the above recommended technology equipment, softwares and other similar tools have been used to collect and process the data for the study.

Chapter Three

Descriptive Analysis of Shemma Making

3.1 Origin of Shamma Making

The basic idea that Cotton and cloth made of cotton were first found in Ethiopia has been controversial. Some explain that Weaving equipment and technology were imported in to Ethiopia from countries such as India and Egypt but not from indigenous knowledge. On the contrary others advocate and explain that Ethiopia had introduced Cotton plant and cotton cloth technology to the world. The argument on the origin of cotton is that, (Gervers, 1988:213) speaks about the instruments that the origin of the technology pit treadle loom in Ethiopia is the result direct in portion from India. On the other hand (Nicholsen, 1958) in Sintayehu, *Gossypium herebaceum* is believed to exist only in Ethiopia. Sintayehu also mentioned (Phillipson D.W.1998, and Enno Littman 1913) and stated that some writers considered Ethiopia as the origin of Cotton Weaving technology.

The origin of cotton plant and cotton cloth technology is very controversial and requires ample time and financial support to under take further studies by researchers. Let us see how shamma works expanded in Ethiopia. Shamma has been woven and worn widely in various parts of Ethiopia in general the Dorze, Amhara and Tigray in particular. Such cultural practices could commonly be shared among peoples due to inter-cultural relations which is also true for languages. Regarding the origin of Shamma making for the question in which part of the country it start, different scholars have different views.

One of the views, according to Panchurst (1964:222) the cotton was imported via Massawa, Gonder and Adwa where a great center for cores

and cotton cloth which is unrivalled in any other part of the country. The other idea reaffirms that in addition to the red sea rout, cotton might have been introduced through the Indian ocean in to south Ethiopia and cotton including it's technology might have started simultaneously in north and south Ethiopia, but does not negate the idea of Panchurst (1964:221) that states "Cotton cloth had been woven and worn by north Ethiopian people since time immemorial".

When we examine evidences in the study area taking in to consideration long history of traditional cloths, cotton cloths used for performing indigenous believes or rituals known in the study area as 'Rahelo' or king (names of spirits) either in individual homes or communal ritual places, people wear traditional cotton cloths especially with wide red strip 'Jano'. he majority of the people in the society also wear this traditional cotton cloths on such occasions as weeding and mourning expressing the culture which indicate that shamma is an age old traditional cloth. On the other hand the necessary spinning instruments made of locally available materials 'Medamecha Dingay and Biret', 'Degan' and 'Mekentebia' and the likes which are obsolete and found in few elderly women houses inherited from there foremothers and grandmothers according to their responses to the interviewees with the author indicate that traditional cotton cloths have been worn for a very long time since time immemorial. Zenebu Birhanu explains that "our mothers and grandmothers used both the 'Medamcha' and 'Degan'. We also used this instrument in the early days of our lives to make 'Dir' (warp) after rolling and twingling to make thufts of cotton.

However, the objective of this study is not to determine the part of the country that was the origin if cotton and cotton cloths. Cotton cloth was very widely woven and worn and currently traditional. But cotton cloth and the instruments are alarmingly reduced and there by threatened to extinction which necessitates documentation of traditional instruments and waving technology.

3.2 Materials of Traditional Clothing

Locally produced clothes in the study area are made of cotton. However color strips and 'tibebe' added to clothes are factory manufactured threads. Both 'Dir' and 'Mag' were spun by women for a family including trousers and shirts for men in the past. Currently cotton for the 'Mag' is bought from the market using traditional scale whereas 'Dir' and color threads for 'tibebe' decoration are purchased from shops.

As to the convention and observation, women are responsible for purchasing cotton and in charge of duties and routines. In the past, cotton was cultivated in different Woredas of South Wollo so it was available in markets. But in these days, cotton is not available as it was in the past, therefore, traders go to Gonder and Afar to bring the raw material for sale at local market.

Regarding this, my informant W/o Yetemegne Ali³, who had been in cotton retailing trade for more than forty years in Dessie told me the following:

"I started cotton trades during the Imperial era, forty years ago. Unlike the past many years, today there are some spinners. Women in Dessie do spin. But, there is shortage of cotton. Wholesalers bring cotton from Gondar and distribute to retailers. Spinners get cotton at more expensive prices". According to W/o Yetemegne, although spinning is not as common as the past, there are still women whose livelihood depends on it.

The other key informant, Mohammed Hussien⁴ said that "Dir" manufactured by factories is bought by women who order weaving or by the weavers themselves. "Thread is bought from shops measured by the Wholesalers bring cotton from Gondar and distribute to retailers. Spinners get cotton at more expensive prices".

³Interview with W/o Yetemegne Ali, Feb.13, 2010 Dessie.

⁴Sheh Mohammed Hussien, 50, a resident of Kutaber Kebele 01, who lives on weaving. Interviewed on weaving, instruments and warp /dir/ preparation on February 16, 2010

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The other key informant, Mohammed Hussien⁴ said that “Dir” manufactured by factories is bought by women who order weaving or by the weavers themselves. “Thread is bought from shops measured by the arm, cooked with boiled flour (Mebezek) and then unrolled with the help of “Mezewir”.

3.3 Tools and Implements used for Shemma Making

Tools and implements are applied from the beginning to finishing of traditional Shemma cloth. The tools are classified on the basis of their function. Hence they may be classified for this purpose as measuring scale of cotton trade, spinning tools weaving and embroidery implements.

3.2.1. Measuring device of Cotton Trade

Cotton is bought and sold using measuring instrument called ‘Mizan’. The traditional scale is composed of two circular metal discs each disc has three holes at the edge through which strips pass and converge at their vertex. Each vertex is connected to right and left ends of a 40 cm long wooden rod. The rod is bored at equidistant and suspended with catgut. Traditional Scale used in cotton trade while measuring, cotton is put on one of the flat circular discs, three expired, hammered and deformed dry cell batteries on the other disc. The three hammered dry cell batteries weigh about 500 g together. In the past smooth round black stones found from riverbanks river banks were used instead.

3.2.2 Spinning preparation Tools

Women in the process of preparing 'mag' use different tools/implements, one of which is 'jendi'. 'Jendi' is made of leather with an average size of 150cm – 100cm. The hide of an ox is larger in size than a cow. When an ox or a cow is slaughtered, then hide is taken fresh and spread on the ground the hair towards the earth for drying. It is tightly or tensely stretched with nail like wood and then it is hung on the wall for further drying and ventilation. Then it is smoothen with abdominal cattle fat or sheep tail fat. After it gets smoothen, 'jendi' is used as carpet to spread cotton or other materials in the sun for drying and cleaning or picking up debris. There are leather handicraft workers in any community to prepare such materials.



Fig 2. 'Jendi'

The other tool a basketry work known as is 'Enqib' in which a handicraft product made of mainly two kinds of grasses called 'Akirma' and 'Sindedo'. It is mainly used to measure grains, keep 'Injera' and 'Mugera' bread during special occasions, when a family prepares large volume of food for feast or to invite a large group of people. Whenever this material gets older, it serves for spreading cotton in the sun to dry and clean. To reinforce 'Enqib' for longer durability the outer part (the edge) should be laminated manually with pieces of old unused 'Jendi'/leather.



Fig 3. 'Enqib'

The other instrument used in the process is 'Medamecha'. 'Medamecha' serves to separate cotton-seeds from the cotton.

It is about 180 x 22 cm stone brought from river banks. Its upper surface is flat and smooth. The cotton is rolled on the smooth surface with almost a 30 cm smooth cylinder shaped iron rod. The iron rod is a handicraft product of metal workers.



'Medamecha Dingay'

'Medamecha Biret'

'Agelgil' Contains 'Mag'

Fig 4. From left to right, 'Medamecha Dingay', 'Agelgil' Contains 'Mag' and 'Medamecha Biret'

According to W/o Zewde Berhanu⁵ curved wood found in the bush. Sheep or goat intestine thinned and dried connected on each extremity of 'Degan'. There is also a thin wood with the 'Degan' called 'Metareria'. 'Mekentebia' is neck of gourd 'kil'.The degan contains all these parts. (February 12, 2010)

'Degan' as described above has a curved half moon like shape the ends connected with catgut, thinned, twisted and dried sheep or goat intestine. 'Degan' also contains materials called 'Metareria' and 'Mekentebia'.

'Metareria, a 50 cm thin wooden arrow like material connected at the center of the 'Degan' bow and the catgut to keep the later tense.

'Mekentebia', neck of a gourd 'kil' vibrate the catgut to clean the raw cotton from debris. Men bring 'Degan' wood from the bush while women prepare catgut and other materials. No women use 'Degan' now a days, spinner women even simply remove cotton seeds with hands and spin to get cotton thread as explained by W/o Belaynesh Kebede⁶. "I used to make my living spinning and selling for 9 (nine) years. I have already stopped spinning. I know my mother used the 'degan' and 'medamecha' but I simply removed cotton seeds and spin," (February 14, 2010)

⁵W/o Zewde Berhanu, 74, house wife, a resident of Kutaber kebele 01, interviewed on traditional spinning tools, February 12 and 14, 2010.

⁶W/o Belaynesh Kebede, 47, house wife, educational background grade 3, a resident of Kutaber town and a known spinner interviewed on training of spinning skill, February 14, 2010

The 'Mag' or thread is then unrolled on to the 'kelem' to make it easier for the weaver and fit in to the shuttle while weaving.



'Kelem'

'Inzirt'

(In other areas called 'Kesem')

Fig 6. Set of Spinning Materials

'Agelgil' just like 'Enqib' made of types of grass named 'Akirma' and 'Sendedo'. In the study area, sizes and volumes of 'Agelgil' vary ranging from the smallest 8 cm height by 16 cm width to the largest 18 cm height by 52 cm width. 'Agelgil' serves for taking or carrying food, bread and 'Injera' while traveling long distances. Keep spinning products such as 'Mag' or weft and cotton thread rolled on 'Kelem' and sometimes clothes are kept in it. For durability, 'Agelgil' alike 'Enqib' is covered or laminated mainly on its outer surface by pieces of old cattle hide.

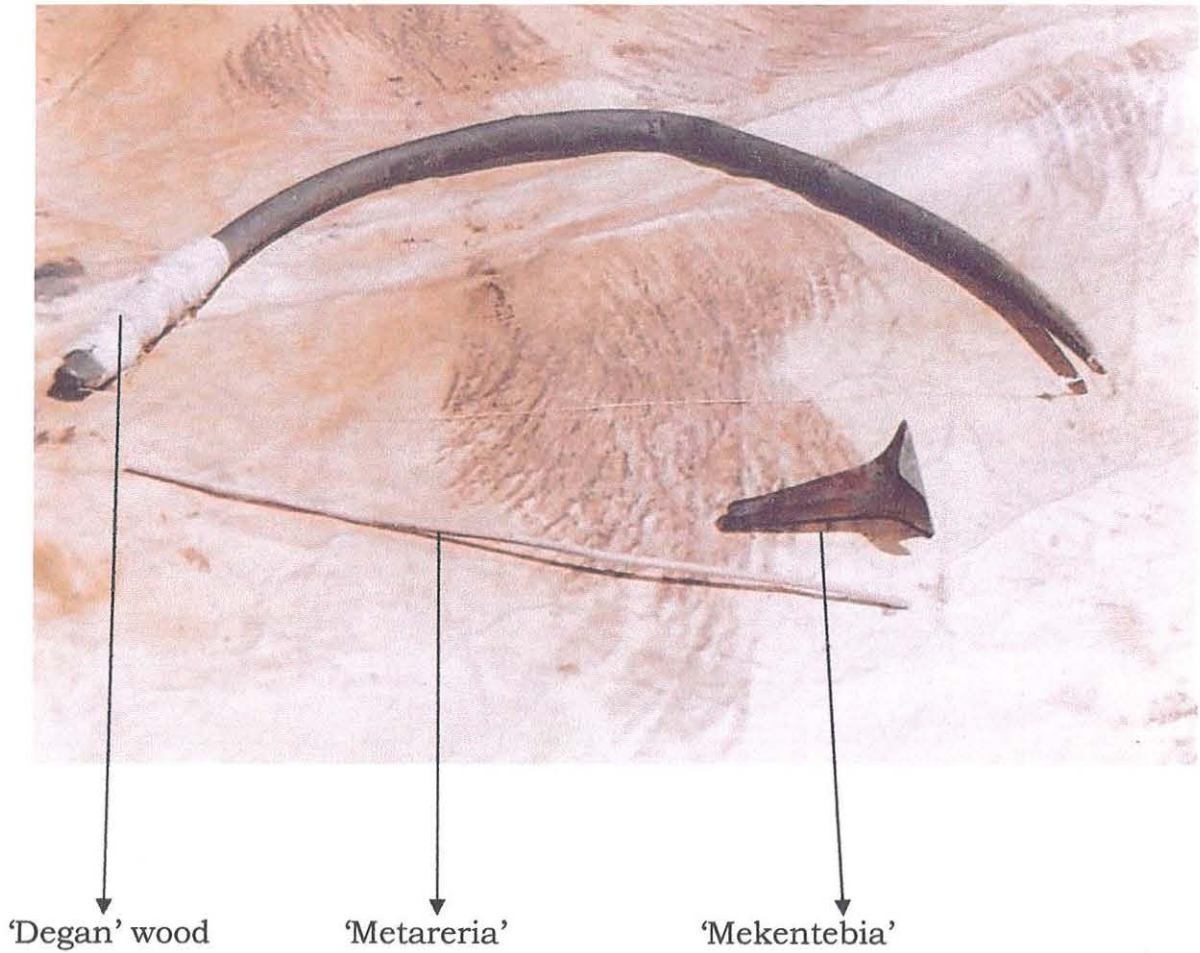


Fig 5. Parts of 'Degan'

'Inzirt' (spinning reel), about 20 cm long made of bamboo, thinned and smoothed and used to make cotton thread after cotton becomes ready for spinning. It has a spindle like structure with a small circular disc called 'Yenzirt Ras', head of spinning reel which has a wire hook fixed to the reel through the head. The wire hook used to suspend the thread, twist and strength tensivity of 'Mag' thread. 'Inzirt' can be produced at home from piece of bamboo or purchased ready made from market.

'Kelem' is made of thin hollow bamboo like plant called 'Shembeko' which is cut in to suitable pieces with the help of a sickle.



Fig. 7 'Agelgil'

Spinning and making materials out of grasses like 'Agelgil' are socially respected more than ability of making food and drinks. The following poem is a good expression for the capacity and skill of a woman.

ቀጭን ትፈትላለች እንደ ሸረሪት
 ቀጭን መፍትያዋ እንዠርቷ ስምንት
 የእንዠርቷ ማኖሪያ አገልግሏ ሶስት
 መች ትጋግራለች የሹሞች እራት

She spins fine weft like the spider
 Her fine spinning reel is eight.
 Her 'Agelgil' to keep the reel are three
 She Never bakes for aristocratic
 bosses.

Since ancient times, in the rural areas the criteria for determining capacity and skill of a woman are spinning and making materials out of

grasses i.e their ability to produce varieties of basketry products. Therefore a skillful woman is believed to produce many 'Agelgils' to keep her spinning reel, fine cotton and cotton thread, weft or 'Mag' she makes etc. A spinner lady proudly expresses the fine quality of her weft comparing with the spider web.

Therefore a lady appreciated with the above poem is famous or re known in the society for her knowledge products than looking food for the then aristocrats.

3.2.3 Weaving Tools

Weaving tools under this section are those used by the weaving from 'Dir' warp thread preparation to finished 'shamma' production tools. The loom (Arb) is a name given to the full set of tools used in Shamma production. Loom, which contains different parts for different functions, is made of soft wood from arid or semiarid areas. The tree that gives wood for loom production does not grow in such high altitude cold area of Kutaber. The weavers need to go to 'Kalu' Woreda to loom or 'Arb' in vernacular. According to Ato Ayalew Kebede⁷ who lives on weaving. 'Arb' and its parts are described as follows:

Front pole, one of the four corner poles which fix or hold tight the loom in place situated in front of the weaver.

This front pole helps to tightly hold the warp (Dir). The other poles at the right side of the front pole also help in tightly keeping and turning the warp back towards the side of the weaver.

Roller /Metekleya, a rectangular smooth wood used to roll the cloth begin woven.

⁷Ato Ayalew Kebede, 50, a resident of Kutaber town who makes his living on weaving. Interviewed him on how he was trained and weaving instruments, February 16 and 17, 2010

It has four holes on one side. The weaver rolls the cloth while weaving as more and more cloth is woven and puts the roller on the 'Kuminchir' through the holes.

This wood assists to constantly keep tight or tense the warp against the front pole. It also helps to keep the warp closer to the weaver to progressively weave and roll the woven 'Shamma' or cloth.

'Arb' has a similar name as set of weaving tools. It is made of soft flat, lumber which contains many teeth called weavers combs for the passage of warp and used to beat the weft after each alternative passage of the shuttle.

Shuttle is a boat shaped weaving instrument made of about 15 cm long wood. It is bored and open on the upper part like the boat where the bobbin or 'kelem' with rolled cotton thread or weft is kept through a piece of umbrella wire rod and freely moves to unroll the weft while interviewing with the warp. At the center of the shuttle, there is a small hole or outlet through which the thread comes out while unrolling.

'Mekenato' serves the 'mun' keep balance and opens space for the shuttle 'mewerweria' moving sideways, from side to side so that 'mag' cotton thread or weft is interwoven with the 'Dir; warp

'Mesakeya' is a thick rope of fiber or hide used to connect and tie the 'mekenato' with the wood that transects through four corner poles like a roof wood of a house.

'Mun', four in number are also made of wood. Two thin ropes connected to four wooden 'mun' one rope on two 'mun'.

The ropes held between the toes and fingers of a weaver and while alternatively moving upwards and down wards, they open space for the shuttle and facilitate interweaving process.

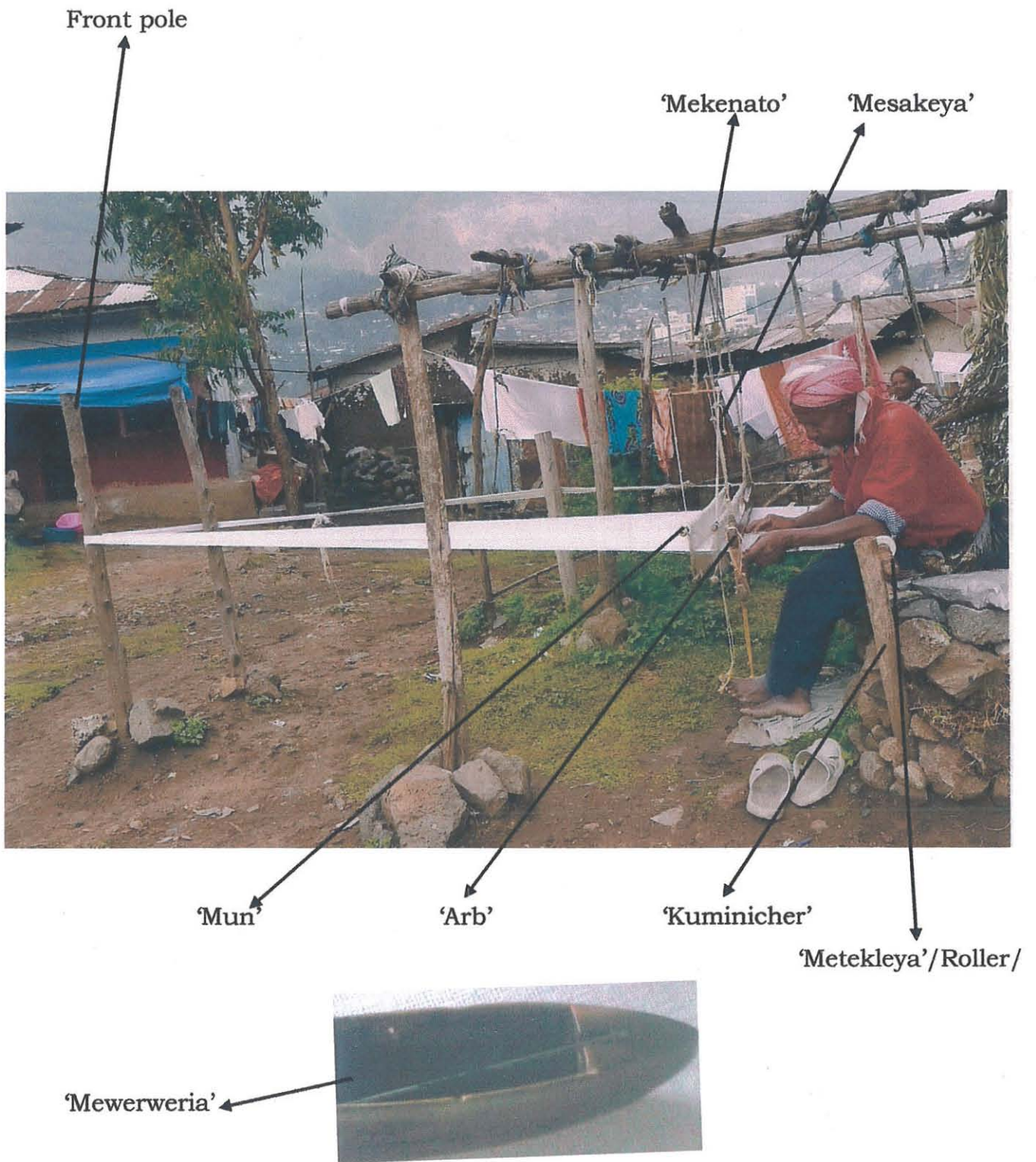


Fig 8. Set of weaving Tools /Arb/

3.2.4. Embroidery tools

Needle locally called 'Arekimerfe' used for embroidery. It is similar in shape to any ordinary needle but it is smaller in size. Its hole is wide to enable the entrance of thread easily. It is comfortable to handle in doing the embroidery. Pencil/pen used to make the draft design on the dress.

3.3 Process of Cloth Making

3.3.1 Spinning or weft making

According to w/o Lubaba Hussen⁸ after the cotton is brought from the market, it is spread on 'enqib' handicraft material made of grass or 'Jendi' made of cattle hide and put in the sun to dry properly for ease of separating debris from the cotton. As observed the operation begins with cleaning the raw cotton. Women pick up the debris or dirt particles with their hands, and then try to loosen seeds from the cotton, ('Meferket'). The cotton is put on 'Medamecha Dingay' flat stone with a smooth upper surface and seeded tufts of cotton are rolled out with the help of iron rod ('Medamecha Biret').

W/o Zewde Birhanu (See page 33) explains that 'for the cotton to be further cleaned from dust and extraneous matter, 'alarge' bow (Degan) extremities connected by a strong catgut is used. The cotton is then placed on a clean soft hide. The woman keeps twingling away, each vibration scattering and throwing lighter filaments while heavier mater sinks. The finer portion is taken off.

⁸W/o Lubaba Hussen, 47, educational background grade 10, house wife and resident of kutaber kebele 01 interviewed on spinning and weaving, February 22 and 23, 2010



Fig 9. The woman Twingling away the cotton

After the cotton has been cleaned, the beautiful white material is taken and piped to get twisted lock (Amelmalo) ready for spinning. But she continues on her expression that by now only few old women do the cotton work as stated above. Most of the women do not use 'Medamecha' and 'Degan' or bow; they simply use their hands to loosen seeds from the cotton.

One can extrapolate from w/o Zewde (see page 33) explanation that the traditional tools which were used to produce good quality cotton threads (weft) are no more used to day. Many of these tools are forgotten and there is a clear threat of extinction. Spinning is carried out with the help of a reel (Enzirt) ending with a disc held on with a wire hook. It is carried out in such a way that a spinning reel ('Enzirt') is held on with the right hand and twisted lock of cotton with the left hands. Thread is pulled out of the cotton and the reel twisted to make the thread thinner and stronger.



Fig 10. Women on Spinning

The reel is still more twisted and rotated on the right thigh to increase tensility of thread. When the weft is full, reaches reasonable size and takes a pyramid shape, it is taken out of the spinning reel and kept in 'Agelgil'.



Fig 11. 'Mag' /Weft Thread/

The thread is then unrolled on to a straw which serves as a bobbin (kelem). Two spinning reels are used to unroll the thread into the bobbin (straw). This operation is called 'Maklem'. One reel weft thread could produce 7 - 10 straws of thread which is later unrolled by the weaver who transfers the thread to his shuttle.

Spinning is carried out in door by women for the family and themselves.

While working individually in their respective houses, they usually do the work in evenings and say their traditional music. Ethiopian women in general and the rural ones in particular are not free to express their ideas, love, hate, grievances directly as they feel shy in the society.

However while spinning and making baskets, they sing traditional songs and express their feelings.

Tayita Ejigu (See page 8) chants the following poem of love affairs

ስዳምጥ አትምጣ እዳምጥሃለሁ	Never come when I roll cotton
ስባዝት አትምጣ እባዝትሃለሁ	I will roll you
ስነድፍ አትምጣ ጥጥ ይቦንብሃል	Never come when I loosen cotton,
ካንተ የበለጠ ሰው ተገኝቶብሃል	I will loosen you.
	Never come when I clean cotton,
	you will inhale cotton particles/dust
	A man better than you has been found.

From the above poem of spinning woman, we can understand that the woman is not worried for the man's comfort, but she does not want him anymore. The woman explains in her poem and chant that she is working and does not want to interrupt and beyond that rolling, loosening and bowing cotton are continually done and take their time so that she does not have time to talk to the man and thereby tells her hatred and loves of another man.

According to w/o Fate Tiku⁹ expression, the woman chants to express the ups and downs life and the boring, bitter and tiresome way of life she is leading. Hearing bad words and operation lead oneself to self cursing. She explains in her chants heart breaking feelings on one hand and the need for hard working for survival on the other, otherwise it would be difficult to get the daily bread. So they are fully occupied with different works in the day, and do spinning late in the evenings and chant as follows

አፈር ብላ ሆዴ አፈር ያስበላህ	Let my stomach/ belly eat soil
አንዳንድ ቀን እንኳ መስቃ እማይመርህ	Why does not feel bitter
እንዘርቱ ተሽከርከር ማጉ ሙላ ሙላ	and unjustified reproach
እንዲሁ አይገኝም የሰው ቤት እንጀራ	Let the spinning reel rotate and fill the weft
	Never get others bread for free.

Such mistreated maid servants sing such a poem to express their feelings opposing their masters anger and insult. They tolerate all these unjustified reproach as they eat and fill the belly when hungry and express feelings how bad and bitter is living for eating.

There are women in rural area who make their living selling either weft 'mag' or readymade 'shemma'. Spinning is their security to lead normal life and support children. Therefore the woman chants or songs to express the spinning reel and her skill help her living. The woman chants to express that she needs to do her spinning day and night. To make her spinning reel more efficient and comfortable, it is smoothen with knife and circular disk fixed on the lead of the reel. Otherwise the reel will be deformed and makes spinning difficult and reduces efficiency so that the spinner explains

⁹W/o Fate Tiku, 47 educational background grade 5, address Kutaber 01 kebele. A leading spinner and known in chanting, on work songs. Interviewed on February 10 and 11, 2010

እስኪ ልነሳና እንዠርቴን ላስላው
ምን ያስቀምጠዋል በጁ አዳሪ ሰው

Let me get up and
sharpen my spinning reel
why does a person sit
idle making a living on handicrafts.

W/o Fate Tiku (see page 45) says it is customary that the majority of young rural ladies appreciate their lovers mentioning places they have been together in their chants as follows

እንዳላሻ ሜዳ የራቀው ወገብ
መቸ ያስታውቃል ራብ ጥጋብ

His waists is far like 'Alasha' field
No one can detect whether he is full or hungry

እንዴት ነው ኩታቦር ባህር ዛፍ ያለበት
ልቤ እንደጃቢራ ሰፈፍ የሚልበት

How is Kutaber with eucalyptus trees
Where my heart is attracted like the 'Jobiera' bird.

'Alasha' is a very wide plain field so that it is difficult to see the other end. Based on this fact young girls never forget 'Alasha' in their love songs and reflect the same during spinning for instance a spinner who appreciates the beauty of her lover compares and explains the thinness of his waist with the distance of 'Alasha meda'. She also recalls the area with eucalyptus trees where they have enjoyed life.

Group spinning sometimes is done by neighbors and friends in order to help a woman whose daughter is to be married soon.

During group spinning, the host provides them with homemade bread or 'kolo' roasted wheat and chick pea.

In this occasion, women usually discuss, and exchange views about their social problems, children marriage, health and market issues which are common or individual matters.

When we take a look into the above chants and poems, spinning in addition to 'shamma' making service as a source of art/ literature for the ladies to express their feelings and ideas making use of art talents.

This art is the source of modern Ethiopia traditional music.

3.3.2 Weaving

Sheh Mohammed Hussien (see page 29) who is a weaver in Kutaber expresses the process of weaving as follows.

The yarn purchased from the market under goes the following process. White flour mixed with water is boiled and the warp is boiled well in a wide pot. This process is called 'Mebezek'. When the warp is boiled, some beans are also cooked together. If the beans are well cooked, we make sure that the warp is also well boiled to ready for the next process.

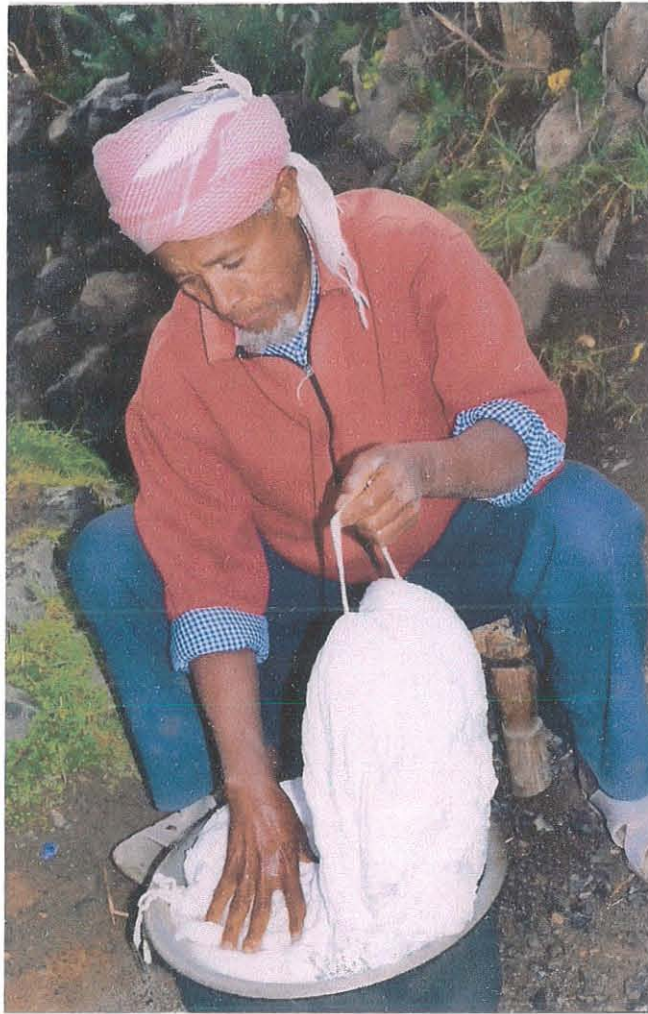


Fig 12. Boiling the warp

After the warp is boiled, the water is let to drain and spread in the sun for draying. According to Sheh Mohammed's (see page 29) expression, the warp is boiled to increase its tensile strength. After the yarn is dried in the sun, it is unrolled around outer walls of houses or fences using a tool, which is made of bamboo like plant called 'Shembeko' and then connected to the stubon the loom to begin weaving operation.



Fig 13. 'Mezewur', used to unroll the yarn

Weaving begins at the extremity with color strips. Size and color of strips depends upon the interest of the owner. W/o Tayitu Ejigu (see page 8) explains further that the weaver just like the spinner chants while weaving. On chant occasions, the weaver criticizes a lady that supplies with poor quality weft and explains her deficiency as follows

ሰላላ መላላ የሆነው ማግሽ
ሽማግሌው ተማሮ ሸዋ ገባልሽ

For your poor quality weft
the weaver went to shewa
disappointed.

On the other hand, if the weaver falls in love of any lady or costumeer and explains his need not to separate from her.

ምነው ባደረገኝ የመቀነቷ ድር
ከወገቧ ውዩ ከራስጌዋ እንዳድር

May I be the warp of her
waist band, so that
I will stay whole day on her waist,
and sleep under her head as a pillow.

The weaver usually works chanting like this.

The loom is usually fixed close to a house where sun light is available.

If a space is available and the room is bright, the loom is preferably fixed indoor so that weaving will be done in the evenings and it rains without difficulties.

The close woven could be 'Jano', a wide single red color strip; 'Tibebe' well designed embroidery of various colors, a single narrow color strip or non color strip ('Guda') as shown below in the picture and also it could be 'Buluko' as big as a blanket, 'Gabi', 'kuta' 'kemis' (women dress) 'yangetlibs' (scurff) and 'Mekenet' (waist band)



Fig 14. Weaving

3.3.3 Embroidering

Embroidering is practiced by both male and female. There is no limited place for embroidering. It could be carried out indoor or outdoor or road sides, or hillsides any convenient place.

According to Fikremariam Getahun's¹⁰ statement Embroider carries the threads used for embroidering around the neck and the needle in the pocket can do the work anywhere outside home where ever he/she moves at any convenient time.

¹⁰Ato Fikremariam Getahun, 35, educational background grade 8, a resident of Kutaber town who lives on embroidering. Interviewed how he was trained the skill, types of embroidery, his costumeers age group and standard of living, February 22, 2010

The embroider carries the threads around the neck for easy of alternatively using them. After the kind of embroidery is determined by costumeers, the embroider drafts the design on the 'kemis', woman dress.

Then does the embroidering using a small needle locally called 'Areki Merfie' that is used for efficient work as it is small and comfortable.



Threads used for embroidering

Embroidering

Fig 15. Embroidering a dress

3.4. The way of Transmitting Skills

“Our ancestors passed the knowledge and skills of handicraft works from one generation to another”. Spinning and weaving skills have continuously been transmitted to relations. Kutaber and the surroundings saying quoted above by ‘shamma’ handicraft workers is in conformity with this idea. Responses of spinners and weavers for the interviews how and from whom they learnt the skills confirms the ideas.

W/o Mulu Hussien¹¹ explained that she learnt spinning skills from her mother. But her mother did not deliberately train her. “My mother did not formally and purposely train me but I was trained from close observation of spinning”. She continues “my children do not want to learn handicraft skills for they go to school.” (Feb 22, 2010)

W/o Kedija Seid¹² explained that she was trained spinning during the reign of Emperor Hailesilassie. Her mother used to wake up her in the evenings and train her cleaning, rolling, spinning in detail but her children are now students and do not know even spinning instruments. W/o Kedija also informed that she herself does not usually do spinning for health reasons.

W/o Belaynesh Kebede (see page 34) explained that she learnt spinning skills from her mother. She did spinning more than the family consumption. She earned her livelihood for 9 (nine) years from spinning but currently she has been engaged in another job for her living.

Belaynesh also said that she sometimes does the spinning and further explained that her mother used the ‘medamecha’, roller and removes cotton seeds and do the spinning.

¹¹W/o Mulu Hussien, 29, house wife, educational background grade 7, a resident of Kutaber town, interviewed regarding spinning on February 22, 2010.

¹²W/o Kedja Seid, 50, a resident of Kutaber 01 kebele, a known spinner in the past. Interviewed on how she transfers the skill, February 10 and 11, 2010. the ‘degan’ bow, but she does not use these instruments. She simply

The response of the three women clearly indicates that they learnt spinning skills either from observation and imitation or the mothers deliberately trained their daughters to discharge their maternal responsibilities to help their daughters become skilled spinners probably imposing their own interest. The handicraft skill in both ways was transferred from mother to daughters.

However tools used to prepare good quality cotton and thereby produce superior quality clothes are no more used by the present generation but remained history of their parents. These mothers could not also transfer spinning skill to their children. They responded that “their children do not know absolutely traditional handicraft tools. The reasons given are children are fully occupied by their educational lessons and they are not interested in handicrafts.

The weavers, Sheh Seid Ali¹³ and Ato Ayalew Kebede (See page 38) who make their livelihood responded for the same questions as follows “I started weaving during the reign of emperor Haileselassie” said Sheh Seid and further elaborated that his uncle was weaving outside the house and he used to sit closer supplying bobbins (‘Kelem’), and gradually exercising weaving. However he has a son who does not want to learn weaving.

Ato Ayalew Kebede was trained weaving and embroidery in Dessie prison as a prisnor. But he has never been requested and trained any one.

Ato Fikremariam Getahun (see page 50) who lives on embroiding was also trained in Dessie prison and generates better income as a part time weaver.

From the explanations of handicraft workers above, we understand that in former days the skill had been transferred from parents, relatives and neighbors to young children; however the process of transferring handicraft skills has been halted because children are not interested in weaving.

¹³Sheh Seid Ali, 70, a weaver at Kutaber town. Interviewed on weaving and how weavers train their relatives, February 16 and 17 2010

3.5. Clothes as a markers of sex, age, status and Identity

3.5.1. Clothes Marking Gender

Men in kutaber wear light 'kuta' or heavy 'Gabi' with a single color narrow strip or non-colored stripes or sometimes 'Tibeb' on the extremities. Women wear dresses with deep single colored strip usually red or green or 'Tibeb' kemis and kuta. Men's or women's 'Kuta' or 'Gabi' do not differ in the materials they are made of but in size and width of strips or 'Tilet'

3.5.2. Clothes marking Wealth (Standard of living)

The men who wear light 'kuta' or 'Gabi' or sometimes 'Buluko' are considered richer, but the majority of men wear 'Gabi' without color stripes or narrow strip of 'Tilet'.

According to W/o Zewde Berhanu (see page 33), years ago rich ladies and wives of the nobility used to wear embroid 'kemis' decorated with 'melgom' of silver In the feudal . However at present as silver is dam expensive silver 'melgom' has been replaced by white silk put as a mark of silver 'melgom'. Fikremariam Getahun (see page 50), embroider, also explains that women get their dresses embroidered as per their standard of living. Due to cost of embroidery and quality of clothes that match a particular embroiding, the standard varies.

The types of embroidery known in the area are Axum, 'Fikir – Kurit', 'raya' and 'zemzem'. Except Axum the other types of embroidery are simple and take relatively short time, not more than a week. The designs are simple and cost of embroidering is cheaper, they are worn by the majority of women. However 'Axum' embroidery takes longer period of more than two weeks, it is made up of silk and the design is more sophisticated so that cost of embroidering is more expensive about birr 140 for each dress or

'kemis'. Few better off women who live in towns only prefer 'Axum' embroidery. Therefore if a woman in and around 'kutaber' wears this 'Axum' designs embroidered 'kemis' it is known that this woman is wealthier than others.



Fig 16. 'Axum' Embroidery



Fig 17. 'Fikir Kurit' Embroidery



Fig 18. 'Bale Melgom' Embroidery

Melgom



Fig 19. 'Zimzim' Embroidery

3.5.3 Status and Age indicator Clothings

Men before marriage do not put on light 'kuta' or 'Gabi' but married young men wear /light 'kuta', adults and elderly put on 'Gabi' or 'Buluko'. According to w/o Taitu Ejigus (see page 8) explanation, unmarried young girls wear 'kemis' with a single color or many color strips on the suck one half of the 'kemis' which looks like semicircular and put a single round narrow waist band called 'Mekenet'.

But married women do not wear 'kemis' with semicircular many color strips, they wear 'Tibeb' or a unicolor strip either semicircular at the back or circular as they like. Their waist band is so long that they put it five round and tie it on the front side. The waist band is wide and many deep colored strips. Any person who knows culture of that particular area can early identify a girl who is unmarried wearing many colored semicircular strips and a single round short waist band. As Martin (2001:686) stated as "people may have worn clothing to tell other people something about themselves" is a good evidence for such a culture.

Regarding embroidered 'Kemis', young in the past preferred 'Fikir – Kuret' design but now-a-days they have abandoned wearing traditional clothes, and there are no many young ladies who order for embroidered 'Kemis' "Fikremariam explained. Middle aged adult women based on their standard of living wear 'Raya' and 'Axum' design embroidered 'Kemis', but elderly women wear zimzim design.

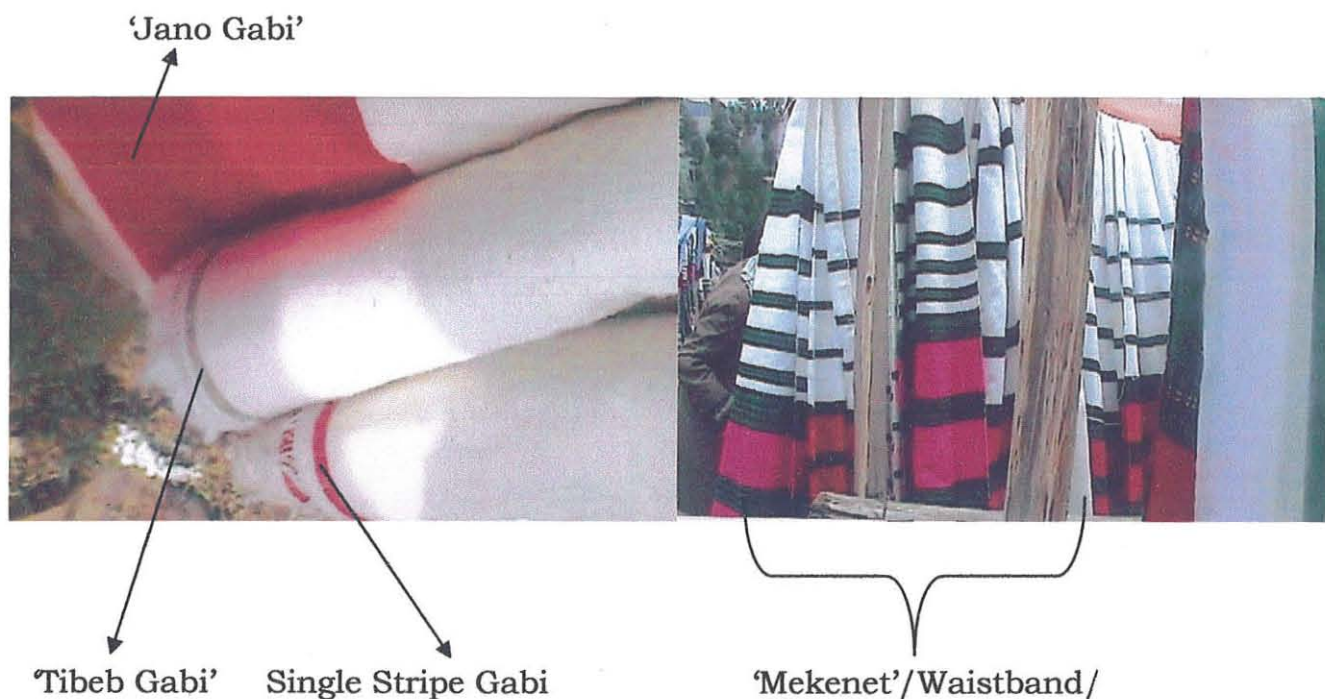


Fig 20. Gabi and Waistband

3.6 Occasions for dressing the clothes

Clothes worn in Kutaber on daily basis for regular daily activities are particularly or fully factory manufactured. Regular clothings of women are manufactured 'kemis' and light 'kuta' or factory made scurff commercially available in the area. Hence 'kemis' factory made cloth, purchased and tailored locally is worn with either woven light 'kuta' other factory made scurff.

However on special occasions such as weeding, different festivals and religious places, traditional clothes are properly worn. W/o Mulu Hussien (see page 52) a resident of 'kutaber' said that "Although I usually wear factory made clothes, on holidays I do not wear anything except traditional clothes." Even though traditional clothes are not worn on daily basis, on special occasions such as festivities both men and women wear and reflect their culture. The main occasions are weeding, festivities, mornings and worship ceremonies.

3.6.1. Clothings on wedding

The bride, bride groom and the majority of guests wear attractive traditional clothes on weddings. W/o Taitu Ejigu (see page 8) said that the bridegroom wears long embroidered 'kemis' with thin waist band and light 'kuta' while the bride wears one kind of coat and trousers and puts on narrow strip light 'kuta'.

Male gusts, relatives and friends particularly adults and elderly wear coat and trousers and they put on 'Gabi' or light 'kuta' on top elderly mothers wear embroidered or non-embroidered 'Tibebe Kemis' and 'Kuta' Young girls wear embroidered or non-embroidered traditional 'kemis' and thin waist band 'Mekenet' but do not put on any 'Kuta'.

3.6.2. Clothings on Mourning

One of the occasions when light 'kuta' and 'Gabi' like traditional clothes are worn is during mourning. As W/o Taitu (see page 8) explains a woman in and around Kutaber wears embroidered or non-embroidered 'kemis' turning the inside out when a close relatives passes away. She also folds her 'kuta' and wears the extremity stripes turned upwards. People other than mourners from the first day up to a week or more depending on the close relationship of the late or his family fold their 'kutas' strip turned upwards to the shoulder. Men when a relative passed away, they fold their 'Gabi' and put on their shoulders like scruff. Generally both men and women wear light 'kuta' with black stripe light 'kuta' turning the stripe up to the neck is considered as a sign of deep sorrow or mourning.

3.6.3 Clothings on Festivals and worship

The other occasions when traditional clothes are required are various religious holiday and worship times. On festivals such as epiphany, easter Christmas, Arefa, Id-Al feter etc men wear 'Gabi' and 'Buluko' as per their needs and financial status. Particularly wide red or green strip or green,

yellow and red combinations like the Ethiopian flag. Women also wear embroidered or non-embroidered “Tibebe Kemis’ or Kuta of the same strip. Young girls go to festival places wearing ‘kemis’ and waist band ‘mekenet’. Among the above holidays, on Ethiopia Epiphany, there will be high demand for traditional clothes as it is customary for the people to wear new traditional clothes. There is a saying that reads ለጥምቀት ያልሆነ ቀሚስ ይበጣጠስ meaning “If it is not used for epiphany, let the ‘kemis’ be worn out.”

According to Hailu Tadesse (see page 5), zonal culture Development officer explanations, in and around Kutaber, yearly in October and May in the majority of households red, white headed or white sheep and goat are slaughtered or sacrificed to entertain the guardian spirit what they call ውቃቢ.

On such occasions, people wear traditional clothes. If sheep or goat is slaughtered for the female guardian spirit named ‘Rahelo’ women wear embroidered red strip ‘kemis’ and ‘kuta’ called ‘Jano’. Men also wear red strip ‘Buluko’ and these spiritual activities are never carried out in factory made clothes.

Taitu Ejigu (see page 8) further explains that ‘Rahelo’ and ‘King guardian’ spirit are known in that locality. ‘Rahelo’ is celebrated in red strip traditional clothes and they wear green, yellow and red strip clothes for the king guardian spirit.

In the sample area, green, red and combination of green, yellow and red strip clothes are worn as sheh Seid Ali (see page 53) explained that these color strips are associated with their beliefs. Red, green and Ethiopian flag color strips are popularly by customers.

3.7 Changes and continuities in Traditional Cloth Making and Tools

This section focuses on the occurrences of change due to economical, social and cultural factors in traditional cloth making and using traditional tools in the study area. Interviewed women and men agreed that the traditional 'shamma' is being modified woven from factory warp and weft products instead of home spun cotton weft which is tailored as trousers, shirts and different styles of 'Kemis'. On the other hand people living in different parts of the country and abroad buy and use 'Dessie Gabi and Buluko' as well as embroidered 'Raya Kemis' so that traditional cloth making has not been discontinued and the cloth is still available.

Although it is not preferred to be used on daily basis, the demand for traditional clothes on holidays, weeding and different worship places occasions has helped it exist to date.

However traditional cloth making from spinning to weaving is very tiresome and time taking and income from sales of weft (Mag) or the finished product 'shamma' is not satisfactory to lead ones life so it has been a part time work but not a full time activity.

According to South Wollo Culture and Tourism office Development officers explanations, young entrepreneurs are not completely interested to be trained and engaged in traditional cloth making from spinning to weaving. In the efforts undertaken to organize unemployed youths in handicrafts, they are organized in wood works, metal works, construction, etc but not in weaving.

Spinning is still carried out only by elderly mothers. On the other hand, application (usage) of traditional cloth making tools is also tiresome and time taking so that people do not have the tendency for spinning or weaving. Since the return or income from spinning and weaving is not satisfactory, people engaged in micro-finance and small scale enterprises and other casual laborers generate better income.

In addition to this situation, the large scale textile production, distribution and usage have rendered traditional clothes at risk. The traditional cloth making tools are also at the verge of extinction.

The other factor that threaten traditional cloth making is attitude of the society towards weaving. In spite of the improving attitude and respect towards handicraft workers, degrading socio cultural condition of weavers as the backward saying goes “ቁጠታ በጣሽ” ‘Kutit Betash’ has been a great obstacle to the youth to join this field of handicraft ship. The existing handicraft workers engaged in spinning and weaving are aged, more than 50 years old, which is a great threat to spinning and weaving.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

4.1 Conclusion

The objectives of this study as stated in the introduction is to document and describe the traditional Amhara Cloth, the instruments used for cloth making and the whole processes from raw material preparation to finished cloth production. To efficiently achieve this objective, field survey, interviewing stake holders and close observations have been applied for collecting data. The data collected using these methods have been analyzed according to the different theories in chapter two of this paper and the analytical results or out puts have been summarized as follows.

- ◆ From the study on traditional clothes and instruments conducted in Kutaber Woreda, it has been confirmed that both the clothes instruments reflect the ancient Amhara clothes and cloth making skills descended from generation to generation.
- ◆ It has been observed that complete traditional clothes are not worn currently. The majority of women wear manufactured and tailored 'kemis' skirt and put on only light 'kuta' made of either weft and warp or warp only which confirms that traditional clothes are being discouraged.
- ◆ Tools used in traditional cotton weft preparations are not completely used at present except the spinning reel (Enzirt) They are hung on walls exposed to dust and smoke in those few houses they are found. These tools have been inherited from grand mothers or mothers to convey wealth of Historical information.
- ◆ The clothes are markers of age, gender and marital status.

- ◆ The traditional clothes have been modified both in content and form or shape differing from the original rendering the former to be forgotten.
- ◆ Wide coverage of manufactured textile products has imposed a negative impact on spinning and weaving.
- ◆ From the point of view of higher coverage of modern education there have been better opportunities for children to go to school. Children do not have both the interest and time to learn spinning and weaving which confirms that transferring this handicraft skill from parents to children or from predecessors to successors is at risk. In view of development of other handicraft works such as construction, wood works, and metal works, youths do not have the interest to learn and join spinning and weaving (shamma works)
- ◆ Elders explain that cotton had been cultivated and made available years back in south Wollo zone. But currently cotton is brought from very distant areas and there is an acute shortage of supplies and the price is so expensive that even women who make their living on spinning and selling weft has been discouraged.
- ◆ Culture and Tourism offices have been established at the Woreda level to conserve and develop heritages, teach the society in general and stake holders in particular.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the study conducted in Kutaber Woreda of south wollo zone on traditional clothes and tools and findings the following recommendations have been forwarded

- ◆ Elderly women are still making their livelihood on spinning but there is an acute shortage of cotton supply.

The concerned bodies particularly the zonal Agriculture and rural development office should include cotton cultivation in the ongoing extension program and teach motivate and provide technical assistance to farmers to produce cotton as cash crops in suitable agro ecological areas.

- ◆ The micro finance and small scale enterprise should extend the activities of organizing and training of weavers to the woredas as it is currently undertaken at zonal level.
- ◆ The major problem identified in transferring waving handicraft skill from parents to children is that children do not have the interest for traditional skills.

Therefore the Ministry of Education or the Amhara Regional Bureau of Education would better incorporate traditional cloth making skills in the curriculum of Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) to promote and develop the culture.

- ◆ Culture and Tourism office in collaboration with education office and schools should organize handicraft educational clubs at school level to introduce young students with culture material culture along with their uses so that they will have broad knowledge of the culture and a positive attitude towards indigenous knowledge.
- ◆ South Wollo zone culture and Tourism office should strengthen and develop collection and displaying of cultural clothes and materials giving special attention to material culture at risk of extinction.

References

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Informants List

No	Name	Age	Education	Address	Occupation	Purpose of the Interview	Date
1	W/o Zewde Birhanu	74	-	Kutaber 01 kebele	House wife	Traditional Tools	Feb 12, 2010 Feb 13, 2010
2	W/o Lubaba Hussen	47	Grade 10	Kutaber	House wife	spinning and traditional cloth preparation	Feb 22, 2010 Feb 23, 2010
3	W/o Taitu Ejigu	50	-	Kutaber, Alansha kebele	Spinning and weaving	Spinning and occasional dress	Feb 16, 2010 Feb 18, 2010
4	W/o Yetemegne Ali	70	-	Dessie	Cotton trader	Availability of cotton and measuring scale	Feb 13, 2010
5	W/o Belaynesh Kebede	47	Grade 3	Kutaber 01 kebele	House wife	spinning	Feb 14, 2010
6	W/o Kedija Seid	50	-	Kutaber 01	House wife	Spinning	Feb 10, 2010 Feb 11, 2010
7	W/o Fate Tiku	37	Grade 5	Kutaber 01	House wife	Spinning & Traditional music on spinning	Feb 10, 2010 Feb 11, 2010
8	W/o Belaynesh Asfaw	45	-	05 peasant association Dosheg & Elsa	House wife	spinning	Feb 15, 2010
9	W/o Mulu Hussen	29	Grade 7	Kutaber	House wife	Spinning	Feb 22, 2010
10	Sheh Mohammed Hussen	50	-	Kutaber	Weaver	Weaving and traditional weaving	Feb 16, 2010

						tools	
11	Ato Ayalew Kebede	50	Grade 4	Kutaber	Weaver and embroider	Weaving and traditional weaving tools	Feb 16, 2010 Feb 17, 2010
12	Sheh Seid Ali	70	-	Kutaber	weaver	Weaving	Feb 16, 2010 Feb 17, 2010
13	Ato Fikre Mariam Getahun	35	Grade 8	Kutaber	Embroider	Embroidery	Feb 22, 2010
14	Zemzem Mohammed	38	-	Kutaber	Spinner	Spinning	Feb 15, 2010
15	Zenebu Ali	54	-	Kutaber	Spinner	Traditional cloth and tools	Feb 15, 2010
16	Ato Hailu Tadesse	37		Dessie	Culture development officer	Documentation of cultural heritages	Feb 26, 2010