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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**CHANGE AND CONTINUITY OF THE SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICES AMONG  
THE ZAY COMMUNITY IN ETHIOPIA**

**BY  
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THE ZAY COMMUNITY, IN ETHIOPIA.**

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Solomon Assefa, entitled: *Change and Continuity of The Socio-Cultural Practices Among The Zay Community in Ethiopia* and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts of Social Anthropology complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

AJCWOR:	Adamitulu-Jido-Combolcha woreda office report
APDWOR:	Annual profile Dugeda woreda report
Art:	Articl
Ato:	Mister
CSA:	Central statistical authority
E.C:	Ethiopian calendar
EPRDF:	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE:	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD:	Focus group discussion
HCA:	Hawassa City Administration
HOF:	House of federation
HPR:	House of people representatives
NGO:	Non-governmental organization
RVLBAB:	Rift vally lake basin administration bureau
SNNPR:	Southern nation nationalities and peoples region
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
WHO:	World health organization
Wro.:	Mrs.

## Glossary of Local Terms

<i>Abole</i>	Is a type of special boat made up of papyrus plant. The Zay community, use this kind of boat for carrying the bride during the wedding ceremony trip.
<i>Ashenbeye</i>	The <i>Meskel</i> ceremony closing event.
<i>Ashiche</i>	Butter
<i>Atmach</i> or <i>Amach</i> ,	The local elders' representatives who sent to the parents of the girl.
<i>Berchuma</i>	Small wood carved chair.
<i>Chika Shum</i>	Headman
<i>Choftu</i>	Traditional small clay made pot.
<i>Chechi</i>	Mat
<i>Damera</i>	piles of wood gathered and made to towered pyramid of bundles of eucalypt. <sup>1</sup>
<i>Edo</i>	Mean friends of the bride who are in similar age and childhood friends.
<i>Ensera</i>	Water container made of clay.
<i>Enshoshela</i>	Decorative plant made ink and the women spread on their hands and feet.
<i>Enzeret</i>	A spinning tool used for making a thread from cotton.
<i>Fija</i>	Is a system that leads economical, administrative, a detail of marriage processes as well several socio-cultural practices.
<i>Gar Wegbat</i>	Is the engagement ceremony, which includes organizing a feast and presenting dowry to the girl and her family, interims of cash and items in the Zay community.
<i>Gebera</i>	Is a kind of Dowry in the wedding ceremony
<i>Hibrete Mirkuz</i>	In Zay "Hiber" means an old person whereas "Merkuz" means a cane. Thus, "Hibrete Mirkuz" is a reference to indicate that the elderly has arrived to "Sekela" for blessing. In short it is praising and blessing date.
<i>Kebele</i>	Originally small geographical unit; the smallest administrative unit. <sup>2</sup>
<i>Kebero</i>	Traditional hand held drum.

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1. .HCA, 2012E.C

2. *kairidin*, 2018

<i>Mahaber</i>	A voluntary religions association organized around a parish church in honor of chosen saint and members take turns providing food and drink. <sup>3</sup>
<i>Meri</i>	Friends of the bridegroom who are in similar age with the bride groom.
<i>Metefia</i>	Is an oar made of wood used to paddle for “Yebela” canoe.
<i>Mukecha</i>	A traditional Shallow grinding vessel made of tree log.
<i>Musho</i>	Is an act of expressing grief, common in most part of country, mostly by woman beating their chest and uttering melodic lyrics of sadness during the funeral of a person. The word Musho is used both in Amharic and Zay as well as some ethnic groups in our country.
<i>Silcha</i>	A container of cereal, which is made up of livestock
<i>Sumsuma</i>	Blessing event, this is done in melodic praise.
<i>Teff</i>	A cereal mostly used to make <i>Injera</i> .
<i>Tella</i>	Traditional homemade local beer brewed.
<i>Teskar</i>	Memorial ceremony for did person
<i>Tsiwa</i>	Is the turn of an individual to celebrate the mahaber by providing food and drink for its members.
<i>Wondabo</i>	Is colorful Zay community traditional cloth that is worn for wedding ceremony.
<i>Woreda</i>	District, administrative subdivision(Amharic) (kairedin,2018)
<i>Yebela</i>	Is a type of canoe made of “Embila” (a grass family plant) that grown in the lake. It is a one man ride canoe in which the person’s paddles it by stretching his leg in to one end of the canoe. It is used for fishing and transport.
<i>Yegi</i>	Yang stars
<i>Yemserach</i>	Man the best men break the good news to the family of the bride that their daughter remained with her womanhood honor. This practice is well known in our country.
<i>Zeker</i>	Food and drinking in the ceremony of teskar
<i>Zemat</i>	The bride’s family gives the newlywed gift of a plot of land.

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3. Gudaye, 2005.

## **List of Case Studies**

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## **Abstract**

*This study primarily seeks to analyze the change and continuity of the socio-cultural practices among the Zay community in Ethiopia. The study principally employed qualitative research approach. In line with this approach, observations, in-depth interview, oral history interview, FGD and case study methods were used to gather data. Research informants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Accordingly, the findings of the study reveal that, the Zay Community has managed to establish vibrant and harmonious community composed of people who originated from different parts of the country and who developed remarkable success of solidarity, culture, values, and language unique to the Community. The Zay community composed of five major clans that have sub-groups (gosas) under each clans. The community has also achieved to introduce and establish its own unique customs and practices of marriage, funeral and wake ceremonies and celebration of the Meskel holiday upon which the tantalizing values of the community manifested. The study also identified, the Zay community is known for practicing terracing technique since a long period of time. Besides, the study shows that, members of the Zay community have been forced to leave the islands and live elsewhere due to internal and external factors and this forced the migrants from the islands adopted the culture and customs of other communities gradually disregarding their original socio-cultural values and identity. Migration and being overwhelmed by urban life and cultures and languages of dominant ethnic groups are indeed threatening the survival of the Zay community's unique and remarkable socio-cultural values which are now virtually limited in the islands. Form this, the researcher has concluded that this is a matter of great concern and all the relevant stakeholders should endeavor to address array of the factors that are posing threat to the continuation of the identity of Zay community with its own socio-cultural values.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The contemporary globalized world and its unprecedented change in various aspects have far-reaching impacts in shaping, molding individuals and communities' behavioral and their culture. Since learning and sharing is the typical manifestations of human society, globalization has increasingly paved fertile ground for human society to interact, learn and share ideas, cultural values, and ways of life across the globe. In this regard M. Seel *et.al.* (2012:1) articulated, "Social and cultural changes occur in the context of human relationship and activity". In line with this, with the development of globalization individuals and community impressed by new development like; new product of electronics, media, way of living, modern education and other related technological product and globalization, then after increasingly influenced by them (Berkes, 2016).

Culture as a shared way of life and as the heart of socio-cultural practices is largely developed shaped and changed by our interaction with family, neighbors, schools, and intra and inter community engagements. It plays a critical role on the development, maturation and transformation of individuals and people's attitude and behavioral patterns as well as their knowledge at large (Heid, 2008). As it is a well-known fact that cultural practice, values and beliefs systems have played an indispensable role on socio-economic, political and religious life of human society. Culture also has its own far-reaching impacts on natural environment (Ibid). As highlighted earlier, cultural vitality is basically determined through internal and external social interactions. Culture as historical and social process influenced and shaped or changed by social actors who create social rules, conventions, relations that give meaning to culture. Thus, it is viewed as a collective process (Maury, 2014).

On the contrary, to mainland, many Islands in Africa or elsewhere in the world is the mosaic of incredible cultural practices. Most of such Islands compared with mainland, succeeded in maintaining their unique cultural and ecological heritages that less affected by exogenous forces

(Solomon 2014: 22). There are a number of lake islands in Ethiopia of which Islands of Tana and Ziway well known by their great socio-cultural and religious heritages.

Lake Ziway, the home of the Zay, is located 160 km away from Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, and is one of the Great East African Rift Valley lakes. The lake and its Islands have a long history and unique culture that flourished for several hundred centuries (Henze 1973:19). Beyond its socio-cultural importance, Lake Ziway has a great economic significance for Zay community who inhabited in three islands within the lake (Desta 2018; Zerihun 2008; Solomon 2014 and Bruk 2015). The origin of the Zay community lacks agreement among scholars and informants. Thus, it is difficult to assume that Zay community had a common origin. But several researchers argue that the different origin of people cross the Lake and settle in the Lake Ziway Islands (Tuma 1982; Tesfaye 1988; Graham 1992; Vinson 2012 and Solomon 2014). However, the Zay communities who have similar language and religion currently inhabited three of the five islands of Lake Ziway and their livelihood highly depending on the lake resources especially fishing activity.

Different scholars and writers argued that the culture and language of Zay community is rapidly changing. For instance, Meyer (2016) stipulated that "Zay" language is nearer to endangered and their culture also has been rapidly changing due to socio-economic, political, demographic and other related factors. In this regard, the Island community migrates to the surrounding rural and urban areas like Ziway and Meqi towns and *Bocessa*, *Meto-Aba* and *Welda-Meqdella* rural areas (Zerihun 2008:15). Thus, their increasing interaction and dependence with the mainland communities both in rural and urban setting resulted in a significant change on their socio-economic life as well as cultural heritage. Their culture, language, political and economic life have increasingly been influenced by surrounding communities (Ibid).

The Island communities of Zay have had indigenous socio-cultural identity and traditional practice like marriage and mourning ceremony, religious and traditional ritual festivals, poems and traditional music. Economically they have well known by fishing, handicraft, waving, and small-scale agriculture (Vinson 2012, and Solomon 2014). Currently, the Island communities of Zay have been facing the above-mentioned challenges, which are eroding their socio-cultural

identity. Thus, this thesis principally intended to investigate and analyze the dynamics of the socio-cultural changes and practice among Zay communities.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Culture is a whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a particular society or social group. It also includes modes of life, value systems, traditions, and beliefs (UNESCO 1982; and Serageldin 1994:14). Every people or community has its own cultural values that has deep sense of peculiar identity and helps them to define shared image of self and creates a collectivity of unique cultural identity. Though every society has its own different cultural identity, there is a possibility of sharing cultural elements with other symmetric or asymmetric cultural groups. Thus, culture is exposed to change and continuity. Cultural identity and its evolving continuity are essential to create an integrated and integrating cultural framework, thus all members of society interact with culture and involving in creating it (Serageldin 1994:19). Cultural continuities can be likened to individuals' habits and comfortable patterns of behavior that gives them a sense of security. There is a high correlation between the rate of social and cultural change and resistance to that change (Preston 2016).

Different researches come up with different results on the continuity and change in socio-cultural practice, religion and so on. For example:- (M. Smith *et,al.*, 1982) studied about basic concept of continuity and change, (Anita and Fiona 2014) on change and continuity in terms of social norms and practices in Naples, (Merlan 2015) on the process of socio-cultural continuity based on Christianity from context of contemporary indigenous Australians, (Presto 2016), on continuity and change in relation to social practices. (Eyerman 1992), on social change associated with modernity and demographic process. (Wuthow, 1992) on cultural change related with social movement (Alejandro Miranda 2016), on the circulation of social practice across networks of relation. On the other hand WHO (2010), study focused on the issue of continuity and change related with medical issue.

Besides in Ethiopia, different researchers conducted their studies on the issues of continuity and change in the socio-cultural practices of communities. For instance, Mamo and Masayoshi, (2015), conducted a research about continuity and change by focuses on gender equality in Arsi Oromo Women. Tizazu (2011), on the title of “socio-cultural integration: the case of kuti

resettlement site in keffa zone” he focuses on the dynamic aspect indigenous society culture. Eshetu (2012), conducted a research about socio-cultural factors that affect the role and states of women among the Bayso community. Gemechu (2013) also focuses on his research about religious transformation among the Arsi Oromo.

In the context of zay community in which the current study focused on, different researches conducted by many scholars on the Island community of Zay people. Among these, Henze, P.B. (1973a, 1973b, 1989), studied about 'Lake Ziway and its Islands' Patterns of Cultural Survival and their religion, Hancock, G. (1992), on the title of “*The Sign and the Seal: the Quest for the Lost Ark of the Covenant*” describe on the origin of Zay community; (Tuma, 1982) on the history of Zay people. Haileab (2004), and Zerihun (2008), on the degradation of the plant resources in the Island. (Teklu, 2017) studied the decreasing of the volume of lake water and lake’s vulnerability to pollution and such impacts on the aquatic lives; (Birhanu and Gutema, 2017) investigated on the identity risk of Zay community; (Fekadu, 2014) studied on “fishing and brewing in Zay”. Meyer in (2002a and 2006); Endashaw (2008) studied on the vulnerability of Zay language extinction. Buruk (2015) studied on the sacred religious treasures of the Zay Islands.(Abebaw *et.al.* 2004), also studied about Bipolar disorder that focused to determine the prevalence of major psychiatric disorders among the adult population of Ziway islands. (Tesfaye 1988, Wolf 1999, and Solomon 2014,) also studied respectively on the title of socio-economic life of the Zay with special emphasis on the fishing industry, classification of the Semitic language of Ethiopia, and the cultural History of the Zay people of Ethiopia, explain related issue with the above issue.

As highlighted above, most studies fail to explore, the origin of Zay community, socio-economic, cultural aspect, about Zay language which categorized under the Semitic language family and how their language come to endangered, and about the community livelihood, environmental and ecological, political , crisis of fishing activity, religious treasures and other related aspect of the Lake Ziway. But they didn’t give full picture about socio-cultural practice at the time of their study. Moreover, they do not give any detailed description on its socio-cultural practices in religion and cultural rituals and festivals, wedding and mourning ceremony, waving and handicraft, and the Island communities interact with the surrounding rural-urban areas and their outcomes. Also they did not give enough attention and no one studies which tried

to compare the continuity and change process of the current statuses of Zay community. So far, no detailed ethnographic work has been done the socio-cultural practice on the Zay community. Therefore, this study differs from the previous studies in the following three major dimensions. First, unlike the previous studies, this study is aimed to examine and analyze the socio-cultural practice and the current states of the Island communities. Because, most of the previous studies underrated: the fishing activity, language, ecosystem, and agricultural livelihoods. So, this study tried to focus their indigenous socio-cultural practice on religion and cultural rituals and festivals, wedding and mourning ceremony, and waving and handicraft activity, and examine the dynamics aspect of it. Second, although there are ample studies on Zay language, it comes too endangered because of several socio-political and other related factors, including the community economic aspect, particularly agriculture and fishing activity. So, this study gives major emphasis on the current states of their language, livelihood and ecosystem of the Islands lake of Ziway and their community. Third, it focuses on the Island communities interact with the surrounding rural-urban areas, as well as among themselves, and their outcomes. Because, of political, economic, demographic and development (modernization) aspect the Island community highly interact with the surrounding community. In this regard, these studies examine and analyze the dynamics aspect of their indigenous socio-cultural practice.

In general, this study is focused on the dynamics of socio-cultural lives; continuity and change of the socio-cultural practice among the Zay community in Ethiopia. Therefore, the aim of this study, examine and analyze the change of the socio-cultural practices among the Zay community. So, the study attempted to fill the above mentioned research gaps by exploring and analyze the Island indigenous socio-cultural practice and the community social interaction.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to assess the changes and continuities of the socio-cultural practices among the Zay community in Ethiopia.

### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

Specifically, the study intends to address the following objectives:-

1. To explore the indigenous socio-cultural practice of the Zay community
2. To examine the socio-cultural interaction of Zay community with the neighboring rural and urban people, and among themselves.
3. To identify the factors that challenges the continuity of their socio-cultural practice.
4. To describe how and to what extent this changed in turn might have contributed to disintegration of local socio-cultural systems and loses of their identity.

## **1.4 Research Question**

- ✓ What are the indigenous socio-cultural practices of the Zay community?
- ✓ How do interaction of Zay community with the neighboring rural and urban area people, and among themselves that contribute for the dynamics of socio-cultural practice?
- ✓ What are the major factors that affecting and challenge to continue their socio-cultural practice?
- ✓ How and to what extent this changed in turn might have contributed to disintegration of local socio-cultural systems and loses of their identity?

## **1.5 Methodology**

### **1.5.1. Research Approach**

This research was guided by a qualitative approach. The major reason behind is that ‘in qualitative research, social inquiry has the purpose of helping investigators to interpret and deeper understanding of a phenomenon, like the socio-cultural specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and the social context of social actions rather than to generalizing the findings (Ghaljael, *et,al.* 2017). In addition to this, qualitative approach refers to inductive, holistic, emic, subjective and process-oriented methods used to understand, interpret, describe and develop a theory on a phenomenon or setting. It is a systematic and subjective approach that stresses on the way of people interpret, and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals and the community belief, experience, and meaning systems fromthe perspective of the people. It relies on the integration of data from a variety of methods and sources of information (Mohajan, 2018).

In line with this, among qualitative research techniques, extended case Method and Ethnography were used for this study. These research designs enable the researcher to investigate the detail of the topic that they going to investigate. Ontologically this research guide by constructivist orientation, and epistemological the research guided by interpretivist orientation for providing a kinds of knowledge are possible and both adequate and legitimate to grasp the meaningful detailed reality, including a comprehensive description of the continuity and change of the socio-cultural practice in the context of the Zay culture. Thus, I tried to give some clarification about extended case method and ethnography method.

### **1.5.1.1. Extended Case Method**

According to Burawoy (1998), *the extended case method* applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique, to move from the “micro” to the “macro,” and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on preexisting theory”. Therefore, is to bring “reflective understanding” to the extended case method by raising it to the “level of explicit consciousness.” Ethnography means writing about the socio-cultural practice from the standpoint of participant observation; by science mean falsifiable and generalizable explanations of empirical phenomena. In developing my argument it will be necessary to distinguish different research methods to investigate the reality about changing or continuity about the people being studied. In line with this, extended case method, also highly helped for participant observation and cultural studies. So, I hope to improve its execution, albeit a reflexive science, and draw out broader implications for the way I study the the Zay community (Burawoy 1998:5).

As Eliasoph and Lichterman, explained that extended case method, it helps for construct and reconstruct cultural research, which cultural research conceives of the connection between culture and structure. Like (culture and social structure interpenetrate, people apprehend social structure only through culture; culture structures people's ways of interpreting their own conditions. and culture itself a structure (Eliasoph and Lichterman, 1999). In this regard it, has highly important for my study concerning on the socio-cultural practice and their structure as well as cultural values.

### **1.5.1.2. Ethnographic Method**

According to Astalin, “Ethnographic studies require widespread fieldwork by the investigator in the current sceneries, and provide scientific description of individual human societies”. There are several techniques for data collection. These data collection techniques include both formal and informal interviewing. In the Ethnography analysis of data the researcher adopts an “emic” and “etic” approach to balance the truth (Astalin 2013:120).

### **1.5.2. Research Participants**

It was difficult to collect data from everyone in a community in research process. Due to this fact, in this qualitative research a subset of a population was selected through purposive and snowball sampling methods. In the purposive sampling ‘the researcher deliberately select appropriate research respondents to get what is believed to be a representative Gentles *et.al.* (2015:1777-1780). Therefore, in this study research informants were selected based on their age in order to have clear, and rich data on the socio-cultural practices of the community being studied due to informants rich experience and knowledge that they have on the topic being investigated.

In line to this, snowball sampling technique was the other method used to select those interviewees who represent the community through e network system that the interviewer spoke first then suggests other who are knowledge on other knowledgable persons (Kirchherr *et.al.* 2018). Generally, beside to my participant observation, 60 individuals both from Island of Tulu Gudo (Debra Zion), Island of *Tadacha (Aysut)*, and Island of *Funduro Zay* community as well as Zay language speaking communities in Ziway city and professionals from Ziway city cultural and Tourism office were selected and participated as informants in this study. Four FGD group (each group has seven participants), eighteen oral history interviewee, four case study, and in-depth interview with ten key informants were informants of in this study.

### **1.5.3. Source of Data**

Qualitative data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources to answer research questions in this study. Primary data was gathered from through observation, FGD, indepth interview, informal interview from the above listed groups of informants and extensive

observation. Secondary data were collected from previous researches related to the topic being studied. Therefore, secondary data were obtained from published books, journals, articles, different websites and unpublished materials and were used to strengthen the study.

#### **1.5.4. Methods of Data Collection**

Both primary and secondary data source were used for this study. The study employed triangulation method of research that employs more than one type of research methods to generate more detailed, representative and valid information. Therefore, the researcher employed the following data collection methods:

##### **1.5.4.1. Participant Observation**

In the research, the researcher has both observer and participatory role. During the ethnography field work, I carried out an extended observation on the overall situations, behavior and activities of the local community who involved in the socio-cultural practice which helped me to observe real life situation of the community, and understand their socio-cultural interaction. Thus, I got a chance to attend and be participant in different ceremonies, rituals, and other social events that gave me the true picture on changed and continuity of their socio-cultural practice, how they keep their social identity and factors that are affecting their socio-cultural practice in the study area.

During the field observation, I took intensive field notes to analyze the conformity and verification of data collected through other methods and I also took photographs and videos of elders, younger groups and children, in their gatherings, houses, work place, ceremonial and ritual events and other available sources to understand and document their indigenous cultural materials, language, actual events like morning and wedding ceremony, religion and cultural festivals, handicraft activities and other livelihood practices in the study communities.

##### **1.5.4.2. Key Informant Interview**

Another important qualitative research method that employed for this research was key informant interview to collect data from the local community as well as from the concerned government organization. In this regard the method of data collection has been used based on

unstructured questions. The purpose of in-depth interview is to get more and detail information on some key issues.

In depth interviews, key informants who have a rich knowledge about the socio-cultural practice and informants who come from different background like elders, religion leaders, young household heads, elites and local community members as well as Ziway city cultural and Tourism bureau. In this regard I conducted interviews with ten informants of which four from Island of *Tulugudo (Debra Zion)*, two from Island of *Tsedacha*, two Island of *Funuro*, one from Ziway city who belongs to Zay community and one Ziway city cultural and Tourism bureau representatives'. All of them were active participants in the socio-cultural practice and provided sound information on the socio-cultural practice on the Zay community. Their information greatly helped the researcher to reconstruct some of the major conversation and events to be documented as narration form.

#### **1.5.4.3. Focus Group Discussion**

Focus Group Discussion is one of anthropological methods of data collection that is a type of in-depth interview to get different views and perspectives from research participants whose meeting presents good chance to obtain detailed and rich information on the topic that being investigated (Mishra, 2016). In another word FGD is a method in which some people are asked to come together to discuss various issues for the purpose of research. Thus, four FGDs was carried out of which the first FGD selected from the Island of *Tulugudo (Debra Zion)* community, the second group from the *Wolda-Mekdela kebele* Zay community, the third group from the *Bochesa kebele* Zay community and the fourth group from Ziway city who represent Zay ethnic community and government representatives from cultural and Tourism bureau. Participants' selected from different age, sex, educational status and occupation.

The purpose of FGDs as stated earlier, is to generate and cross check data gathered from group perspectives. It helps to compare the perception among FGD participants and extract further information, attitudes, share ideas through group interaction on their indigenous culture, continuity and change on their socio-cultural practices, the factor that affect their identity, their

interaction among each other and with other people in the area. For FGD discussion guided questions were prepared and their insight was recorded and later transcribed.

#### **1.5.4.4. Case Study**

Case study is a type of qualitative method that is used to explore in-depth information, multitude of understanding of complex issues in real-life context. As Thomas (2011), explain it "Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods" (Thomas, 2011 in Astalin 2013:122). In this study, particularly an extended case study technique was employed to explore the socio-cultural values and practices as well as individual perceptions on continuity and changes within the study community socio-cultural practice, understand personal experiences and views on several socio-cultural practices. Individuals who have rich personal experiences on history, culture, various social practices, marriage ceremonies on the Zay community selected from different areas like within Islands, Ziway and Meki towns to share their view on the topic being studied. These techniques helped me to collect ethnography data based on the lived stories and actual performance of their cultural values. It also helped me to triangulate the data collected from FGD and interview. Thus, four case studies were selected and interview was conducted with the selected individual cases studies and information obtained from each case was examined, tabulated and analyzed to understand the realities and how the community interacts with each other to protect their socio-cultural practice.

#### **1.5.4.5. Oral History Interview**

In addition to participant observation, an in-depth interview, case study, and FGD; Oral history interview was conducted to gather historical data through an in-depth account of personal and communal past experiences. Through the oral history interview, information of the past events and experiences, it play a significant role to understand the pace of change and continuity on different historical stage. Oral history interview also helps to get more information to examine and understand the social and cultural values as well as practice (Russell, 1987).

To obtain detail historical past events, information as well as socio-cultural identities of of the study community, eighteen interviewees were selected from the community elders as oral-historians who lived in the study area starting from late 1940 GC or until recent time. By

conducting an interview with the community elders I tried to uncover the extent of change observed in the socio-cultural structure comparing such changes across time. In addition to this, I also investigated the challenges and benefits that the Zay community have been experiencing.

#### **1.5.4.6 Secondary Sources**

Secondary data has an advantage of saving time, ease of access and serves as instrument for understanding and interpreting primary data. Secondary data such as books, proceedings, research reports, journals articles, newspapers, electronic materials and other publications related to the topic were reviewed. Thus, I used different materials to support and triangulate primary data that gathered from the informants.

#### **1.5.5 Research Site Selection**

This study was principally conducted in the areas like Zeway Islands and its surrounding lake shore areas as well as in the town of Ziway and Meki that are nearby towns of Zeway Islands which are residential areas of Zay ethnic group. The reasons behind the selection of the above areas as research site were:

- Geographical the islands of the lake Ziway and its surrounding shore areas are the original territory of Zay ethnic groups and a place where the majority of Zay people settlement areas. Ziway and Meki towns and the study area were as are nearby towns and rural areas are destinations and residential areas for migrant members of the Zay community which brought significant change on the indigenous culture of the Zay community.
- The researcher was born and upbringing around and in the Zay community (in Ziway/Batu) town, *Adami-Tulu Jido-combocha woreda* and brought up in the study areas, so that I established good social relation and attachment with the local people.
- The researcher also studied the same community History in his BA Degree thesis before seven years and wants to further and an in-depth investigation on the socio-cultural dynamic of Zay ethnic group.

#### **1.5.6. Method of Data Analysis**

The data analysis process, took place side by side as a qualitative researcher. As Kairedin explains it; “Analysis of the data is a process which begins as the research progresses and that requires refining and reorganizing the data in light of the emerging results” (Lodico *et.al*, 2010 in

Kairedin 2018:37). Before analyzing and presenting the research findings to assure the reliability of the study, triangulation was employed. Therefore, the data gathered through participant observation, in-depth interview, FGD, case study and oral history interview. However, all the field work electronically recorded and filed notes documents have been transcribed and then translated into English from Amharic and Zay language, and then analyzed in a qualitative description. The presentation and organizational framework of qualitative data followed the sequence of specific objectives of the study. The data collected from the Zay community and Ziway city culture and tourism bureau. So, during the analysis process of data, I used narratives in order to summarize and explained capture the lived experiences of the participants. Besides, I critically reviewed relevant conceptual and theoretical frameworks to strength and support the findings of my study, and reflected on their implications for the questions in the study.

## **1.6. Fieldwork Experiences**

This study was conducted in the Lake Ziway Islands, Bochesa and Wolda-mekdela rural kebele as well as Ziway and Meki towns of *Adamitulu-jido-combolcha*, *Dugda* and *Ziway-Dugda woredas* in East Showa and WestArsi Administrative Zone of Oromiya National Regional State from 25 January 2020 to 03 May 2020. By using the support letter that I obtained from Addis Ababa University, I got permission from the three *Woredas* Administrative offices and the Islands community elders to conduct the fieldwork soon. For the first two week, I stayed in Meki town, Ziway town, the *Dugda* and *Adami-Tulu Jido-combolcha woredas*, and I collected preliminary data about the research objectives and basic data on the demographic characteristics of the *Woredas* population. Then, I went to *Wolda-mekdela* and *Bochesa* rureal *kebele* including the lake ziway Islands with the help of the *Dugda Woreda* culture, Tourism and sport bureau experts and passed there maining periods by conducting the fieldwork activities. Since I was borne and upbringing around and in the Zay community (in Ziway town). As I knew many people in the area, it was easy for me to establish good rapport with the society. This enabled me to immediately immerse into the local culture. Therefore, in the field, my first task was identifying key informants among different social groups by the assistance of the community elders and Tourism experts. I conducted interviews and discussion with the selected key informants, case study participants and FGD participants in theirHome, farmlands, around the church compound, in the lake side refreshment area, in the *woreda*<sup>1</sup> and city Administrative

centers, in the local institution centers and other areas. Moreover, the first informant himself began to indicate other individuals to me whom I wanted to work with.

During my fieldwork (25 January 2020-03 May2020), I encountered many challenges and opportunities. Some of these include:

1. Due to the problem of transportation, most of the time, I traveled the lake shore and *Ziway-Dugda woreda*, *Abura* town 7-30 Km by using contract Motor bicycle and I was forced to walk 3-5Km on foot(particularly in the islands and the two towns) to cover the whole areas of the study. Also, the absence of light, pure water, bedroom and restroom combined, and the islands landscape a serious challenge on me during the fieldwork activities.
2. When I moved around the houses of the study communities and traveled by Boat on the Islands, some members of the communities challenged me because they considered anybody how come from Addis Ababa as a transmitter of corona virus (covid-19) thus, they abusing me and unwilling to give information. In the bottom of my heart this is the worst challenge for me. But, gradually it solved the problem with the help of my high school friends (belongs to Zay community) and the Tourism expert, and after one month relationship they were very much friendly and happy to invite me in to their house, this was an important opportunity for me during the field activities.
3. The adventure tour of boat travel on the Lake ziway is so difficult for me. Indeed, I do have some experience but in this rainy season traveled more than 3hr. in the lake it needs some strength.

Generally, despite little uneasiness because of the Corona virus (covid-19), I passed a special time with the people and felt great pleasure.

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1. *Woreda- mean district, administrative subdivision (Amharic) (Kairedin, 2018).*

## **1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

All the necessary ethical considerations were adopted in this research. Thus, informed consent from participants to take part in the research, assurance of confidentiality (non-exposition of secret information and use of abbreviated names), and consent from the participants to present the data collected and the absolute right of the participants to withdraw from the research study at any time were adopted in the study.

## **1.8. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

### **1.8.1. Scope of the Study**

Thematically, this study was revolved around four major and interconnected issues. First, the study describe about various socio-cultural values and practices in the study communities. Secondly, it focused on investigating the factor that affecting for changed or continued their socio-cultural practice; and finally, the study attempted to explore and identify the major constraints to protect their socio-cultural values, then which have been changed through various factors in the study communities.

Geographically, this study was conducted in Island of Lake Ziway and the lake shore, Ziway and Meki city Zay community of Eastern Showa and West Arsi Zone of Oromia Region, Southern part of Ethiopia. In this area, a special focus was given for the five Islands on Lake Ziway (Island of Tulu Gudo (Debra tiyon), Island of *Tadacha*, Island of *Funduro*, Island of *Gelila* and Island of *Debre-sina*), Ziway town and *Bochesa kebele* in *Adami-Tulu Jido combocha wereda* and Meki town and *Welda-mekedela kebele* in *Dugda woreda*. These places have been chosen based on the number of population respectively.

### **1.8.2. Limitation of the Study**

In the process of conducting this study, especially through the process of data collection the study has got the following major limitations:

- This study covers only the dynamics of socio-cultural lives: change and continuity of the socio-cultural practices among the zay community. Due to time constraints, I was not able to explore other anthropological issues in the subject under study.

- There were no prior anthropological researches in the study area and I faced a problem to get sufficient relevant secondary data on the issues under investigation and about the study communities. So, I found it difficult to support the primary data collected by using different methods with related secondary sources.
- Due to corona virus (covid 19), I faced a great challenges unwillingness of individuals to be an informants and provide the data required from them, and it is difficult easily to move in the study area (particularly in the rural *kebele*<sup>2</sup> and in the Islands).Moreover, Failure to find and observe some societal ceremonies such as *Meskel* festival ceremony and funeral ceremony in order to uncover the interaction and integration of the Zay community in that practical situations.
- Budget constraint: to fulfill all important materials for the study and to reach all significant informants who live outside the study area (particularly around the lake shore areas) and travel by Motor boat in every significant areas of the lake and its shore. Moreover, I faced a problem of finding equivalent English translation for some Amharic transcripts. Thus, due to budget constraints, I couldn't use professional translators.
- Fear of the people to explain sensitive events: dreading authorities of the government officials in the *Woreda*.

## 1.9. SIGNIFICANCES OF THE STUDY

Ethiopia is the home of incredible socio-cultural and biological diversity, and long history of state formation that never colonized by European colonizers (I.M.Lewis, 1976). Its rich cultural diversity manifested through different religions, ceremonies, festivals, celebrations, rituals, and other living expressions (UNESCO, 2013). Culture has greater power in promoting and giving clearer understanding for others on the identity, values, way of life and history of a particular nation and its ethnic groups. It helps to build nations positive image. On the other hand as Bhasin (2012:1), stated that culture has the power to reshape the environment, and influence economic and political system.

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<sup>2</sup>. *kebele*- originally small geographical unit; the smallest administrative unit.(Kairedin, 2018).

This study attempted to depict the dynamics of socio-cultural lives of Zay communities and their interaction with the neighboring rural and urban societies. Therefore, this study has examined and analyzes the existence of change of socio-cultural practice in the study area. In this regard, the finding of this study, contribute to understanding of the dynamic aspect of socio-cultural practice on indigenous Zay community from the emic perspective based on in-depth ethnography study. It will also help to have a comparative understanding of different society's cultural setting. Furthermore, the finding of this study can add new material to the literature of Zay community.their culture in rapidly changing world. Moreover, the findings of this study contribute for other researchers to get an initial idea for further research and those who are working on the conservation of socio-cultural values and identity.

### **1.10. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

This thesis is organized into five different main chapters and other supplementary components. The first chapter focuses on the introductory parts of the study. It includes background of the study, problem statement, study objectives, methods used to collect and analyze the relevant data, ethical considerations, fieldwork personal experiences, scope, limitation and significance of the study. The second chapter critically reviews relevant conceptual and theoretical frameworks as well as related studies. The third chapter is all about the description of the study area and the people. It describes the study area's geographical location, climatic conditions, demographic characteristics, administrative system, ethnic group and other relevant elements. Chapter four describes the indigenous socio-cultural practice of the Zay community, the community interaction among themselves as well as with neighboring people, factors affecting to continue their socio-cultural practice and observable change on the cultural and social practices of the Zay community as a result of major factors and related issue. Lastly, in chapter five of the paper concluding remarks and summary of the study findings with recommendations was presented.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CONCEPTUALIZATION OF BASIC CONCEPTS and THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

The first part of this section consists of various concepts employed in this study. These concepts include continuity, change, society, and social change. The second part of the chapter will look into the various theoretical frameworks the study situated itself.

#### **2.1 BASIC CONCEPTS**

##### **2.1.1. CONTINUITY**

According to Smith *et al.*, (1982:127), the term continuity denotes the process of uniting past, present, and future is very different from conservation, preservation, or traditionalism. It is also the synthesis within which tradition is persistent viability through adaptation and change which entails the novel manifestation of a durable identity (M. Estellie Smith, *et al.* 1982:135).

Durkheimian (1976) stated that, society is perceived as functionally integrated, with ideal culture, serving social solidarity and it is a force for continuity. The socio-cultural systems of all communities, though certainly not the perfect mechanisms of adaptation that some would make them out to be, include strategies of survival. These strategies work to sustain continuity by the use of existing knowledge and the management of innovations through the successive phases of accumulation, adoption, adaptation, transmutation, and, finally, integration of new with old. A socio-cultural system may be deemed successful when, by evaluation of its members, there is a sufficiently viable population for the reproduction of new members who mature committed to continuity of the socio-culture's identity writ large (i.e., details may vary, but basic principles remain). Evidence for this is that members state a preference for the life-style of their own natal society; that the majority, despite other available options, prefer living within their natal community to leaving and adopting a "foreign" lifestyle elsewhere; and that members explicitly strive to make whatever adjustments are considered necessary to ensure the continuity of the socio-culture (M. Estellie *et al.* 1982:130).

##### **2.1.2. CHANGE**

The dictionary meanings of change are so many. One of the definitions describes change as "*Something new and fresh used in place of something old*" (Logman Dictionary of English,

1986). However, the meaning given in this way is slight and not descriptive. The meaning given by Nisbet (1972:2) is more plausible and comprehensive. According to Nisbet "change is a succession of difference in time in persisting identity". He explicates the meaning; "When change takes place, there is an observable difference; with observed difference, there is reference and duration of time in which the difference appeared; and with the change that appeared, identity of the subject under change persists". However, Continuity and change' is a dynamic pairing often applied in the context of cultural transition, which the socio-cultural systems are evidently undergoing (Galvin 2009; Catley *et al.* 2013: in Berekes *et al.* 2016:2).

According to Bhasin (2012) and Bevan (2014), the study of socio-cultural continuity and change is the systematic study of variation in social and cultural change, because things do not remain the same, and people are involved in the process of social change. In this regard, Social continuity cannot simply be defined as absence of change but it is interdependent. However, in societies there are structures and processes which are more prone to change while there are others that are resilient to change.

The structures which do not change are social continuities, but it happens that social continuities like family, religion and law also undergo changes. As Bhasin explain, the family has always been the basic foundation of society, its structure and composition may vary or go under change. The efforts to improve or bring development cannot ignore culture. The very process of socialization is one in which cultural knowledge is constantly transmitted, acquired, and produced (Bhasin, 2012:2).

### **2.1.3 SOCIETY**

The concept of society is central to several areas of philosophy and difficult to explain or define in one general concept. But, I tried to explain basic and significant concepts related with my study. Parsons (1966:17) argue that, society is a type of social system, which attains the highest level of self-sufficiency as a system in relation to its environment, and a group of society must contain cultural materials and individuals to meet their fundamental personal exigencies at all stage of the life cycle (Parsons 1966, and Copp 1992:186).

Durkheimian (1976) stated that a ‘society’ means the social relationships, values, norms, etc., found among the people within a territory corresponding to the nation-state’. This identity is found not only at the level of modern society and the nation-state, but also at the level of primitive society and the tribe: kinship structure is social structure rather than political structure (Durkheimian 1976, Walker 2001:34).

Society is humanly created organization or system of interrelationships that connects individuals in a common culture. All the products of human interaction, the experience of living with others around us. Humans create their interactions, and once created the products of those interactions have the ability or power to act back upon humans to determine or constrain action (anonymous: Undated)

### **2.1.4 CULTURE**

The concept of ‘culture’ has different statuses and several meanings, and different functions in theory, as well difficult to define on a single general universal meaning. But I can see some contextual clarification on the bases of anthropological context. Thus, a typical conception within cultural anthropology divides culture into three sectors; ‘material culture’, ‘ideal culture’ and ‘social culture’. The first two correspond in social sciences terms to technology and ideology respectively.

‘Social culture’ relates to society (Walker 2001:32). The meaning of “culture” from the “Encyclopedia of social and cultural anthropology” which clarify that:

*The term was used in works of speculative history from the second half of the eighteenth century and, crucially, started to be used in the plural in the sense of humanity being divided into a number of separate, distinct cultures. On the one hand, there is what has become known as the ‘humanistic’ sense of culture, which is singular and evaluative: culture is what a person to acquire fully worthwhile moral agent. Some people have more culture than others they are more cultured, and some human products are more cultural than other the visual arts, music, literature. Then there is what has become known as the ‘anthropological’ sense which is plural and relativistic. The world is divide into different cultures, each worthwhile in its way. Any particular person is a product of the particular culture in which he or she has lived, and differences between human beings are to be explained (but not judged) by differences in their culture (rather than their race).*

*(Alan Barnard, et al. 2002:206)*

The concept of culture according to the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies, held in Mexico City in 1982, adopted a declaration that stated:

*Culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.*

(UNESCO 1982; in Serageldin 1998:18).

The idea of “culture”, as defined by Guy Rocher, inspired by the work of anthropologists (Rocher 1968) : “everything a person needs to know to live in a particular society” that is “a vast symbolic set, including knowledge, ideas, thoughts, rules, common to a plurality of social actors, considered in a given space at a given time”. Presented in this way, culture is action, it is a behavior related to acquisition, learning, to the values and symbols that compose it, it corresponds to “ways of life” in a given society; human groups produce it to meet the needs they share. At the same time, culture is not static rather it is a dynamic set which entails relative plasticity. In line with this, Culture is a historical production; it is experiencing changes, transformations: it is in interactions that social actors create social rules, conventions, relations that give meaning to culture viewed as a collective process (Yolande, 2014:3-4). As Heid (2008), stated that Culture in the anthropological sense is determined by our interaction with family, neighbors, schools and community.

Cultural erosion has accordingly become an issue of increasing concern since numerous modes of life are being lost and many cultural forms and expressions are disappearing. There is a widespread sense that globalization is leading to pervasive cultural homogenization, not to say hegemonization by stealth (UNESCO, 2009). In countries of emigration we can see a good example, which mean that in one hand the human relationship inevitably involves some weakening of the socio-cultural fabric, on other hand in receiving countries, migrants face the challenge of integrating a traditional system of cultural values, norms and social identity with different customs of the host countries. Therefore, the outcome of this challenge most immigrants partially or totally avoid their cultural identity and adopt new culture (UNESCO, 2009:13-14).

In the context of demography or economic or globalization and other related caucus, the world's dramatic restructuring has concerned the issue of cultural identity crisis. Within this serious crisis of cultural identity, ethnic minority groups confronted with a serious crisis in its cultural identity. Based on this specially the young generation impresses by modernization and unwilling to protect and practice their cultural values. As Xi Chunai, *et.al.* (2012), argued with these idea on their works about Blang ethnic groups in China:

*Language and dress are the most significant symbolic representation different from other ethnic groups, but the young generations unwilling to wear traditional dress and having no ability to speak their native language. With traditional culture gradually being stripped from the real life; young people are slowly unfamiliar to the culture of their own ethnic group; showing less and less identity on the ethnic group culture; intentionally or unintentionally alienating their traditional culture. With the changes of society, the natural environment of the Blang survival is also constantly adjusting their original culture in order to survive. The way of livelihood change is the most typical example. Shifting to the city has become a goal that the new generation of Blang people pursues and the aged and children leaving in the village. These led to the increase of social mobility. Furthermore, because of their parents' long-term absence from home the left-behind children in the countryside then ignored family education and weakened, which has become one of the reasons why children are steadily straying away from their native history and culture. These phenomena show that the Blang is experiencing unprecedented impact in the modern tide. (Xi Chunai, *et.al.*, 2012:232-233).*

According to UNESCO (2009), report based on the world Tourism Organization's forecast a global tourist flow of almost 1 billion in 2010, and seven percent of tourists arrive in East Africa and the Pacific including five percent in Africa. A significant trend of tourism developing world it has negative impacts especially in the developing country. With this regard, the sheer volume of interaction and exchange transmits with it with the risk of culturally 'freezing' local populations as objects of tourism. It seems clear that Cultural homogenization come to risk through the influence of global development paradigm the indigenous practice would come to disappear (UNESCO, 2009).

Meanwhile, culture also works as a force to reshape the environment and therefore influences economic and political systems. Anthropological perspectives on cultural continuity and change can thus make critical contributions to more informed and enlightened policies and practices in the new millennium (Bhasin, 2012:2).

## **2.2. THEORETICAL LITERATURE**

Every human society has social past. In line with this, “past” commitment exerts a powerful influence on the way that societies respond to current circumstances. Therefore, because of historical influence, and a complex web of interrelationship, societies usually do not adopt to new conditions optimally (A.Barret, 1991), but in the contemporary world modernity entails new possibilities for the expression of human subjectivity in forms of social interaction that are not entirely a product of tradition (Eyerman, 1992). On these perspectives, the ways social change has been identified have varied greatly. Barrett, stated that there are always elements that persists from prior condition and that inevitably sets limit to future flexibility enforcing continuity or persistence of status patterns (A.Barret, 1991:211-215).

From anthropological perspective, Malinowski (1954), Brown (1972), Persell (1987), Farely and Macionis (1990) defined social change as a readjustment of social structure. Although the definition given above have their own points of emphasis, they all revolve around in something and/or phenomenon which is also the focus of this paper. So one of the general nature of social change among others is factors affecting the socio-cultural practice are among issue of this research.

Meanwhile Eyerman, (1992), describe that the concept of social change associated with modernity on the classical sociological theory perspective it referred to a new experience of the world and constructed a new through the active and conscious intervention of actors and the new sense of self in this perspective. Haferkamp (1992), stated that Change is introduced by either personalities, significant actors, or very small groups who exploit elements of the current social and material situation. He, fourthly explain that modern societies concern with a secure and better life, which first means survival, then living the good life (Haferkamp, 1983,in Haferkamp, 1992: 102-103). Furthermore, social changes associated with demographic processes that drive change at all levels of society, from the broadest, long–run, global patterns of human population development to the most contemporary trends in fertility and immigration. The focus here is on what driving changes is complicated society’s life in demographic change (Eyerman, 1992; Healy, 1998).

On the other hand, the study of cultural change relishes a long and venerable history in sociological theory. Which had thinks of the more dynamic aspects of cultural change through evolution. My intention here is to address the theoretical perspective of cultural change and it's dynamics that studded about culture. Robert Wuthnow briefly discusses about cultural changes and classified in to three:

*First, there are many instances of cultural change that are part of a specific social movement and seem to do little more than reinforce or challenge a particular idea, Second, cultural change is depicted primarily as a gradual, incremental process, apparently occurring largely as a result of imperceptible shifts in socialization patterns, and Finally, cultural change sometimes appears to happen fairly abruptly, on a largescale, and as part of a relatively distinct social movement or set of social movements (Wuthnow, 1992: 257-276).*

Cultural change has often been characterized in sociological theory as a developmental or evolutionary process that occurs in a sequence of analytically distinct stages in response to changing societal conditions. Talcott Parsons's (1971) describes that cultural change as a process of "value generalization" that is specifically induced by the growing complexity of social patterns: "When the network of socially structured situations becomes more complex, the value pattern itself must be couched at a higher level of generality in order to ensure social stability" (parsons 1971, 27: in Wuthnow, 1992:259). In this regard the cultural adaptation literature the most general source of cultural change is identified as increasing societal complexity. But complexity has a host of diverse empirical indicators: populations size, occupational diversity, urbanization, cultural heterogeneity, technological specialization, and so on.

There is a parallel stream of thought having emerged from social scientists' interest in cultural change, where investigating continuity and change at a local scale, rather than systems-level, the interest here is how traditional knowledge, or cumulated knowledge, practices and beliefs (Berkes et al. 2000: in Berekes *et,al.* 2016:2), interfaces with the trend of individuals and communities who increasingly embrace influences from development, globalization and modernity (Sillitoe *et,al.* 2002: in Berekes *et,al.* 2016:2). We employ continuity and change in the precise context of knowledge, in particular concerning the institutions of production of knowledge and its application. This paper pulls from the interest in socio-cultural practice that

found in complex systems understanding of continuity and change, in the analyses of cultural change (Berekes *et.al*, 2016:2).

### **2.2.1 THEORY OF SOCIAL PRACTICE**

Regarding theories of social practice, various studies (e.g. Bourdieu 1976, 1986a, 1990b, Giddens 1979, 1984, & Robbins, 1991) look into it as one of the emerging theories that can help understand a given social setting. There are emerging body of literature that has gained a certain salience in the context of contemporary cultural theories, particularly among researchers looking some of them (see, for instance, Schatzki, 1977, Bourdieu 1976, 1986a, 1990b, Giddens 1979, 1984, & Robbins, 1991). Theories of practice tend to locate the social in a field of practices; that is, in the series of connections that link complex forms of ‘socially established cooperative human activities’ (MacIntyre, 2007: 187, in Miranda, 2016:2).

Recent theorizations of practice agree in the assumption that practices are constituted by interconnected elements. In this respect, the philosopher of social science Theodore R. Schatzki (1997:300) refers to practices as composed of ‘doings and sayings’. It related to embedded in practice in terms of its values and aesthetics, including a cultural and societal sense, and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge’. With the aim of bringing understanding to the constituent elements of practice, this strategy has the advantage of providing broad categories that reduce the complexity of the elements that integrate practice. Most importantly, the arrangement of elements is seen as an ongoing process, hence the emphasis on the dynamic character of social practice (Miranda, 2016:2).

King’s refer to “practical theory,” is a social relations and the cultural understandings which inform those relations exist only insofar as individuals recreate and agree upon them in their interactions with each other, therefore, social life is the mutually interactions and practices between individuals or groups that facilitate adopting new things and it became change their socio-cultural practice (King, 2000: 429-431). Fuchs argues that in socio-cultural practice human being that enters group relationships has the ability to create the conditions for his further (Fuchs, 2003:398).

Social practices, concern to the aspect of social actions, are dependent on habitus, capital and the social field (Bourdieu, 1986a: 101, in Fuchs, 2003:394). Similar with this Miranda, (2016), stated that the terms, 'practice' refers to a collective form of action (Miranda, 2016:3). On this emphasis on progressive gradual practice considers the mutual interactions of group members would production new life-styles on the society (Fuchs, 2003: 394-397).

Therefore, this theory it helps to understand and/or guide to me who the Zay community interact each other, who they practice their indigenous socio-cultural practice, values, traditions...etc. This is what I have tried to link the theory to my objective in trying to explain or understand this phenomenon of the community socio-cultural practice, I can notice that some aspects socio-cultural practice as social practice approach are applicable, because in most contexts the Zay community interaction among themselves were expected as to facilitate on keep and practice their indigenous socio-cultural, in the fact that social practice is not solely taken by their groups rather the group it facilitate by individuals men/women and each member of the community is part of the socio-cultural identity and contribute to their value for keeping and practicing their indigenous culture.

### **2.2.2 THEORY OF SOCIAL CHANGE**

Change is such an evident feature of social reality that any social-scientific theory, whatever its conceptual starting point, must sooner or later address it. In this regard as Neil J. Smelser *et al.* (1992), describe about the Contemporary theories of social change in three main elements which stand in definite relation to one another: "Structural determinants of social change, such as population changes, the dislocation occasioned by war, or strains and contradictions, secondly, Processes and mechanisms of social change, including precipitating.

Mechanisms and social movements relating to socio-economic as well as political factors, finally, directions of social change, including structural changes, effects, and consequences" (Smelser, *et al.* 1992:2). Therefor, this three point it shows that highly integrated each other and how much societies influenced by several progressive factors and change their structural system then it became change their indigenous social values and other social practice through progressive period regarded having significance in change.

However, this theory it helps to understand and/or guide to me who the people perspective, culture, traditional practice, social interaction would be changed through gradual process. This is what I have tried to link the theory to my objective in trying to explain or understand this phenomenon of change and continuity in the community socio-cultural practice, I can notice that some aspects social changes approach are applicable, because in most contexts the Zay community interaction among themselves were expected as to facilitate to keep and practice their indigenous socio-cultural values in other side their interaction it may be affected by their community members also their interaction with the outside community it have positive as well as negative impact for keeping and protecting socio-cultural values. In the fact that social changes is not taken only by their groups rather the group it affected by the individuals men/women and other several factors it pull and push in the social change activity. I have mention some related theoretical point related with social change below:

#### **2.2.2.1 THEORIES OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND ECONOMIC CHANGE**

Our societies actively involving on using technology; as well as they facilitate positive or negative contribution of technological changes (Wajcman, et al. 1999). Because Technological change, it have either scientific advance or effects on society. According to instrumentalist understanding of technology, it appears to account for the tensions between tradition, ideology, and efficiency that arise from sociotechnical change. Modernization theory, for example, studies how elites use technology to promote social change in the course of industrialization. Whereas, Substantive Theory, argues that technology constitutes a new cultural system that restructures the entire social world as an object of control (Feenberg, 2002:6-7). Therefore, in this section I have to explain about Technological change theories related with social changes and its theoretical advantage for ethnographic field work analysis.

Theories of Technological changes it has several parameters and purposes. Thus, among its different theoretical definition of Technological change, I concern with the conceptual and clarification of human related and changing society perspectives. As Thomas J. Misa (1992), definition, “to understand technology we must understand technology with the relationships between the material world and the human world”. He gives more impasses in social change than technological development (J. Misa, 1992:1-10).

Kieran Healy (1993), describe that Technology is its own mechanism, and the timely appearance of a new invention is a sufficient cause of social change on the value of socio-cultural practice, and Ron Eyerman (1992), underlie t (M. Estellie Smith, 1982) he development of post modernity it has three societal dynamics: “the expansion of the state, the explosion of the knowledge industry, and the development of the new mass media. These three dynamics of social change have both influenced social movements and been influenced by them” (Eyerman, 1992:37-47). With this regard I give more impasses how far technological developments negatively affect the Zay community socio-cultural values. We can see the large impact of mass communications, especially through computer, telecommunications equipment, radio and television, with their twin effects of global exposure and rapid propagation on the island community. Serageldin, (1998) also stated that, the people especially youngster’s impressed by this global productions, then it became adopt and change their socio-cultural values because all members of society interact with culture and participate in creating it (Serageldin, 1998:20-23). This is a critical point among many more factors for social change that how far affect the community that I will be investigate and embedded to grasp the challenge of the Zay community on their socio-cultural practice including their response for technological change.

The other factor for social change, which is synthesis with technological development, would be affect the socio-cultural identity related to economical issue. Theory of economic change, examine the development of technology, economical and the perspective of human in the technological progress related with economic aspect. Thus, an international or global scale, macro-economists, comparative sociologists and modern historians examine the present shape and future dynamics of capitalism. With this emphases the progressive development of technology and economical it has great contribution to social change as well as culture change to the interactions of material culture, economically relevant elements of the natural environment, and population factors (Walker 2001:40-46). Because, the development progress it brings “people to rethink their identity and in the meantime cultural identity is facing multicultural intrusion with the result of increasing declining of cultural identity” (Xi Chunai, 2012: 230).

On the one hand, the concept of globalization on technological development and market system, on the other hand the role of nation–state relation with technological and financial aid as well as

human resource, the government would be reorganizes worldwide capital and labor flows and trying to design and enforce such policies on the bases of development and modernization. This show that, social and political choices are made by economic managers, presented that economic interests determine major features of technological design Feenberg (2002:22); and Serageldin (1998), describe that this evolving thinking that goes beyond the economic and financial aspect of development. Thus, the rapidly modernizing process it brings that societies comes to the cultural evolution and they will come to be changed their cultural values (Serageldin, 1998: 22-32).

Furthermore, in the development process change, it comes through action for Example; learning effects occur in the process of social change. Rapid developments in one society serve as models for change in other societies. Thus, change means that altered or even new actions or modes of behavior generate a whole series of ramifications, not simply repetitions of the past (Haferkamp, 1992:101), because, new sources of knowledge acquired through learning, experimentation and sharing (Berkes C. J., 2016).

This study has investigated the socio-cultural changes the Zay community has been experienced for long specially in its contact with the main land. Therefore, I have adopted parameters from the concepts of continuity, change, society, and social change and the theories i.e. theories of social practice, theories of social change, theories of technology and economic change, in and anthropological perspective as a framework to understand and analyze the dynamics thr community has been witnessing for long. For this study, the following parameters are undertaking:

- (1) The practice of the Zay from its socio-cultural practices: a theory of social practice is carried out. Since, this project attempted to understand the community in its current given social setting. Furthermore, it helps show the social in a field of practices; that is, in the series of connections that link complex forms of ‘socially established cooperative human activities’.
- (2) Change and continuity: here, the factors that accounted in the theories of social change, technology change and economic change are take in to account. And, a more empasses has given to how technological developments negatively affect the Zay community socio-cultural values and their interaction with it. We can see the large impact of mass communications, especially through computer, telecommunications equipment, radio and

television, with their twin effects of global exposure and rapid propagation on the island community.

## **2.3. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE**

### **2.3.1. SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICE IN ETHIOPIA**

Ethiopia is the largest and oldest state in Africa I.M. Lewis (1976), which have a deep tradition and religious practices dating back to the history of King Solomon in the Bible, Ethiopian society is also known for many traditional healing practices often mixed with Christian, Muslim and other traditional religious and shamanic rituals including a remarkably rich linguistic and cultural diversity. This diversity includes tangible and intangible heritage with both traditional and modern cultural expressions, languages, and centuries old know how in handicraft production. Moreover, Ethiopia is a land endowed with immense biodiversity. In contrast to its rich cultural and natural heritage, Ethiopia is among the least developed countries in the world. Historically, state support for cultural pluralism was very limited and institutional capacity continues to be inadequate (UNESCO, 2013:3).

On the contrary, the 1994 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) constitution articulated the right of all nation, nationalities and people of Ethiopic of self-determination and governance (Article 39). The constitution acknowledges cultural diversity to the extreme consequence of using ethnicity as the fundamental organizing principle of the state. As mentioned, the FDRE constitution defines Ethiopia as a polity composed by the nation, nationalities and peoples of the country. It is to these cultural and linguistic ‘groups’ that according to Art. 8.1 and 8.2 of the FDRE constitution – sovereignty is assigned, the definition of ‘nation nationality and peoples’ contained in Art. 39 (5) of the FDRE constitution focuses on commonality of culture, language and identity (FDRE, 1994). Thus, after the military regime, the FDRE acknowledge cultural pluralism on the constitution. The introduction of ethnic federalism equality of all of its more than eighty ethnic groups, and cultural diversity is publicly celebrated. On the contrary, the implementation of some of these policies caused resistance on the part of the local communities, because there is some contradictions and inconsistencies within Ethiopian law and polices, as well as clashes between certain policies and particular cultural values and

practice at the local level (Susanne *et,al.* 2012). We can see the minority groups of Ethiopia like the Island community of Zay.

Ethiopia had reached in Indigenous knowledge that practice in their socio-cultural practice. Among this traditional conflict resolution mechanism, traditional government system like (*Gadaa* system which include *siiqqee* institution), producing medicine, handicraft material are some of among several indigenous knowledge or local knowledge and other several. According to Endalkachew (2018), Indigenous knowledge is a traditional knowledge that the indigenous people have used for a prolonged period of time. It has enabled them to pass through the ups and downs of life in the attempt to lead their day to day life in their immediate environment. It is also called local knowledge. Among several indigenous social practices in Ethiopian Sidama traditional dispute resolution. Sidama is one of the nations, which practices traditional alternative dispute resolution. The place where the activity takes place is called “*Gudmale*”, which is structured in hierarchical chain of power. The cases submitted to the tribunal are dealt with depending on their magnitude. The tribunal begins step by step move to process of forgiving judgment. The judiciary system reduces and discourages criminal acts in a strategic and artistic way; and it avoids unnecessary bloodshed and get solution and just judgments by the tribunal of the *shango* (HCA, 2010E.C).

In line with the above point, in Ethiopia people especially in different ethnic groups practice weeding ceremony, funeral ceremony, new year festival (*fiche chembelala*), Meskel festival...etc also in rural area its common and a long history to use traditional medicine in their indigenous cultural practice. They were producing and using from medical plants to treat variety of disease and have displayed medical value for human and livestock by using their local knowledge (Gonfa kewessa *et al.* 2015: 171).

### **2.3.2 CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICE IN ETHIOPIA**

Ethiopia is one of the ancient nations of Africa, with long culture and history. The society often confronted with new ideas and foreign values. As a result, social changes and modernization some wanted change and progress at the expense of indigenous values, specifically cultural and political independence, while others chose for a more cautious approach. According to Ethiopian history, the church and the state

were seeing as two sides of the same coin. On the contrary this connection there was socio-cultural ramifications of reform (Mohammed, 2018). For Example: the spontaneous settlers in Kaffa after the conquest the people adoption of some Amhara cultures. This is a factor that decries or changes their socio-cultural identity (Tizazu, 2011:18-19).

With the expense of religion expansion and changing, religion-political movement it affected several traditional/indigenous religion practices on the people's socio-cultural value. Among this *waaqeffannaa* is one of the others. Practices of *Waaqeffannaa*, the religion practiced by the Oromo long before the introduction of modern religions, but gradually it have been exposed to change their indigenous traditional religion including traditional religious practice and value. According to Gemechu (2013), the Arsi Oromo who had been exposed with the factor of; the introduction of Islam to Ethiopia and eventually to Arsi Islam became the religion of the majority of the Arsi Oromo in the 1970s, thereby decreasing the importance of the *Waaqeffannaa* religion, also the conquest of the Arsi Oromo by the Christian Shewan Empire towards the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the activity of Protestant missionaries. The factors that have contributed for religious change among the Arsi Oromo (Gemechu, 2013: Vii-Viii). Based on these, the society which had not been affected only on their traditional religion but the situation also affected on their socio-cultural value and practice.

On the other side in SNNPR, with the introduction of technology in different types of societies for example; in rural area of *Butajira*, because of cultural differences and household behaviors of cooking concern along with safety issues were found to be barriers to change the existing traditions of cooking (Mulugeta Tamire *et al.* 2018). Beside to this, especially those living in the South Omo Zone sixteen ethnic groups have been lived and are known for their 'traditional' lifestyles that have been left unimpeded by globalization and modernity until very recently, still rely on agro-pastoralism and follow to their marvelous cultural practices and traditional beliefs. But, today with the regard of national development plan, both national and international investments have been made in the area of infrastructure, education, and the modernization of agriculture. The objectives of plan, is to transform one of the remotest areas of Ethiopia. In these regard, the introduction of market, electricity, media and other traces of modernity have brought formerly remote groups into contact with different forms of life, and the people have been experiencing changes. Investment plans are begin put into effect. But still many people tend to

resist change when they suspect that the continuity and integrity of their cultures and lifestyles are being threatened by it (Susanne Epple *et. al.* 2012:158-161).

However, the expansion of modern religion including the emergence of modern world systems and the impact of globalization have much contributed in changing the long established cultural values of Ethiopian people. Hence, the introductions of foreign cultures into the cultural of the indigenous peoples have contributed massive changes in indigenous people's philosophies (Asafa Jalata. 2012, in Endalkachew, 2018: 8-9).

### **2.3.3 THE ISLANDER COMMUNITIES IN ETHIOPIA**

The Ethiopian rift valley and mainland as well as Manmade lakes are important sentinels of environmentally very vulnerable areas in Ethiopia. There is also a number of Islands where indigenous people inhabited in the rift valley and mainland Lakes (Teklu Gebretsadik, 2017:2). They have their own age-old indigenous traditional socio-cultural identity. Fishing and agriculture use as a means of livelihood by the indigenous inhabitants of the islands. As Zerihun (2008:12) stated that, the maintenance of cultural identity by the islanders in Ethiopia lakes, and the challenges they face mainly from external. Thus, I have to describe below a survey of ethno-historical and cultural traces of islander communities in the major Lakes of Ethiopia:-

#### **2.3.3.1 LAKE ABIJATA- SHALA**

Lake Abijata is a relatively shallow, small, alkaline, closed lake Lake Ziway and Lake Langano (Tafesse, 2008, and Teklu, 2017:3), seems to have never hosted an Island and no trace of human settlement along its shores. Lake Shalla, is a deep saline crater lake (Teklu, 2017:3), supports eight islands in the western part of the Lake (Tafesse, 2008). The Islands of Lake Shalla are remote and out of access from local people, but its important breeding sites for Cormorants, Storks and Pelicans. Beside to these, one of the Islands on Lake Shalla called *Flat* islands, previously *Flat* islands have had a special sacred places for local people. Currently, because of the expansion of mosque in their reach area and spread of education, there is no such spiritual and traditional belief (Tafesse, 2008), and no known human settlement and the Island is a home only for bird life (Zerihun, 2008:12).

### **2.3.3.2 LAKE ABAYA- CHAMO**

The two southern most rift valley lakes, Lake Abaya “is rich in islands and cultural survivals”. It is the largest of rift valley Lakes and the second to Lake Tana in Ethiopia (Henze, 1973:92). According to Eshetu (2012), The islands of Lake Abaya host two ethnic groups, the *Gidicho* and *Gatami*; *Gidicho* is the name of the largest island and most of the *Gidicho* people live on the largest island in Lake Abaya, and *Bayso* is the name of a particular people, who inhabited the two villages (*shigma* and *Bayso*) and its language. Their language belongs to Cushitic sub family and practice agriculture with cattle rising.

On the other hand, Lake Chamo has few islands, of which one is inhabited. Two other islands appear to have been inhabited in the past. The inhabited Island is called *Ganjule* situated on the northern part of the Lake. They eat fish, hippo and corn. Most of the *Ganjule* moved out to the shores, while the Island still remaining the center of their culture (Zerihun 2008:13). As a result, the islanders’ the *Ganjule* of Chamo and Lake Abaya islanders have been face serious challenges to their cultural survival and ethnic identity similar to that of Lake Ziway Islands, because most of them are moving out to the main land and live in urban areas as well as different regions of the country, and facing external challenges to their livelihoods (Eshetu 2012; Zerihun, 2008:12-13).

### **2.3.3.4 LAKE TANA**

The largest lake of Lake Tana, located outside the rift valley and it has many Islands. The monasteries and sanctuaries host beautiful paintings and parchments. The lake also hosts about 26 fish species and 17 are endemic to Lake Tana. According to (Tesfaye, 1998), poor members of the farming communities gradually adapted to fish consumption and subsistence fishery and using both similar with Zay community. There are some ethnic minorities in the area, such as the Bete-Israel (Ethiopian Jews) and Weyto (Moges, 2018), they are indigenous inhabitants of the Lake region; the islands display no traces of earlier occupation. The islands of these Lake have had a special place in Ethiopians Orthodox Christian religious which have different monasteries (Moges 2018, and Tesfaye 1998).

### **2.3.3.5 LAKE ZIWAY**

Lake Ziway is the home for more than six islands. The islander people of Zay inhabits in the five islands (my observation). As Henze (1973), describe that the people under increasing several pressure to merge into the mainstream of social and economic development with this trend continuing in intensified manner. The rich cultural heritages, livelihood systems, mode of adaptation to the harsh island ecosystem, and Socio-cultural practice are rapidly endangered.

### **2.3.4 HISTORY OF ZAY PEOPLE**

The study community believed that, their ancestors came to the islands from different parts of Ethiopia and settled in Zeway islands to protect themselves from different wars at various times in Ethiopia. The Zay have traced thier genealogies to the Gurage, the Silte, the Oromo, the Amhara, the Tigray and other ethno-linguistic groups (Zerihun, 2008). According to oral-history informants<sup>1</sup>, the Zay ethnolinguistic group does not have a common origin and represent an ethno-linguistic minority group within the Ethiopian context that still preserves its own linguistic and cultural identity. They mainly inhabit the islands of Lake Ziway, especially the three islands *Tullu Guddo*, *Tsedecha* and *Fundurro* and the shores of Lake Ziway (Meyer 2001:317, in Fekadu 2014). Furthermore, in the Island of Gelila and Debre Sina also inhabited few Zay peoples<sup>2</sup>. Ancestors of the Zay most likely moved on a large scale to the islands during the Oromo migrations during the 16th and 17th centuries (Henze 1973:31). The first inhabitants of the islands were most likely from different groups, as some Zay have claimed that they were religious refugees from the northern city of Aksum or the eastern city of Harar during a time when these cities were sacked by Muslim conquest (Zerihun, 2008: 13).

The Zay, who inhabit the islands of Ethiopia's Lake Zway, as well as lakeside towns and villages, claim to have first settled in the area in the 9th century, when, religious refugees were fleeing Queen Yodit who was destroying churches and church property in Aksum. Other migratory waves to the islands and Lake Zway area are said to have occurred during the reign of Amda Tsion(r. 1314-1344), Zara Yaqob (r. 1434-1468) and finally during the wars with Imam

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Ato Decon Tebabu Meskele, Mamire G/Meskel and Ato Zewge Bedane in 14 May 2020.

<sup>2</sup> I Observed that the people of Zay inhabite in the two islands in 05 March 2020. I understood that the number of the people who sateld in the two islands very few.

Ahmed ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi around 1527. References to the islands are found in various Royal Chronicles and travelers' accounts such as: a chronicle collected by a priest *Qésä Gäbez* Täklä Haymanot of Aksum (Andersen 2000; Sergew Habte Selassie 1972); the chronicle of Susneyos (Esteves Pereira 1892); the *Futuh al-Habash*, a chronicle of the Muslim conquest of Abyssinia (Shihāb 2003). Eike Haberland (1963), Paul B. Henze (1973a, 1973b, 1989), Ronny Meyer (2000, 2005) Finally, linguistic surveys of the Zay language (Zay or Zayña) have also been carried out, and can provide information as to how many Zay speakers there are (Vinson, 2012).

The first wave of refugees to the Lake Zway area was during the reign of Queen Yodit (around 842), (Vinson, 2012: 34). The second, the first mentioned of Christian Ethiopia delving into matters near Lake Zway and its inhabitants comes from the southern incursion of one *azmach* (general) Sebhat, an imperial commander during the reign of Amda Tsion I (r. 1314-1344) around 1323. It is said that *azmach* Sebhat was from the town of Gura'é in Akala Guzay (Tigray, now Eritrea). He is supposed to have settled in Aymellel in northern Gurageland. Bahru Zewde (1972) have noted that the local traditions of the Aymellel Gurage (also known as Kistani, or Sodo Gurage). Also trace their origins back to *azmach* Sebhat. According to Vinson (2012) The villages of *Aymellel* on Galila Island have been inhabited by people from this migration. It is claimed that these settlers came from *Aymellel* in Gurageland. Moreover, we can see that according to tradition, the reason for *azmach* Sebhat going to the area was because Christians were in conflict and being subjugated by "pagans." Even now the *Aymellel* Gurage are predominantly Orthodox Christians. Migration is rather obvious in this account as we see that the militia first settled in *Aymellel* and then some of them migrated to the islands. The migration theme is important and a major aspect of Zay traditions, as almost all Zay are said to be the descendants of various migrations (Vinson, 2012: 39-40).

Third, In 1445 Zara Yaqob (r. 1434-1468) defeated the Muslim ruler Sihab al-din Badlay of Dawaro in the battle of Gomit. This was done in response to Ahmad Badlay's rebellion against the empire (Pankhurst 1967:36-38; in Vinson, 2012). After the defeat of Ahmad Badlay, Zara Yaqob placed a garrison of soldiers in the area as a means to safeguard the frontiers of the empire, the descendants of whom are said to be the members of the modern day Zay, Gurage and other groups (Conti Rossini 1937:132-133). The province of Dawaro (roughly the Arsi area to the east of Lake Ziway) was under imperial control, and *chäwa* (imperial troops) were stationed

in the area, some of whom proved to be insubordinate and more soldiers had to be brought in (R. Pankhurst 1997:133-134). We do see a propensity for the *chäwa* to be insubordinate, as during the reign of Baeda Mariam (Zara Yaqob's successor) we are told that the *chäwa* were again involved in a plot to defect (R. Pankhurst 1997:120; in Vinson, 2012)). It is quite possible that some troops did defect under Zara Yaqob and made their way to Lake Ziway, and it is said to be these soldiers who formed another wave of settlement on the islands. A prophet, Abba Mikael, head monk at Dabra Malago (in Simean), was banished to the islands by emperor Baeda Maryam (r. 1468-1478) for predicting the defeat of the Amhara army at the hands of the Muslims (Perruchon 1893, in Vinson, 2012:40). The oral-history informants elaborated about some migration during this period as follows:

*“During the period of Zara Yaqob there was an army, or militia, in the Gurageland, the kings were conquering the area, and some people came to the island and settled where as others moved to Guragelands. Therefore, today we found some clans in Zay community who belong from the Gurage people.”<sup>3</sup>*

From this perspective, third wave of migration to the islands and the link to two villages on Debra-Tsion /Tullu-Gudo/ where they are said to have settled. We also see yet another relationship, this time more likely with the Amhara area, even the name of one of the claimed *gosas* from this migration has a link to the Amhara through the name “Amharege” who came from from Ankober.

Finally, invasion of Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi in 1527 was cause for another wave of refugees to the area. The Lake Ziway district was located in a territory known as Waj, about which little is known (Braukämper 2004:43). Recorded in both written and oral tradition, we can see how this event greatly affected the area. Both the Gurage and Zay claim to be the descendants of religious refugees fleeing the wars with the Imam (Shack 1966:15- 16). Based on the study community informants, there are some evidences which show that, not only the Arsi and Jile Oromos, but also other ethnic groups such as Silte, Gurage, the north Shewa Meze, and Tigray lived around the shores of the lake and the Islands.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with my key informant Tesfaye Edeto in 01 May 2020, Ziway town.

According to oral history informant<sup>4</sup>, on the *Chefe Jila* side of the lake, a community that is called *Adere Lepo* lives in six *kebeles*. These are people who have been Oromized after benignly concurred during battles that took place in the past. This demonstrates to us that there was large population of the *Silte* ethnic group that lived around the Lake Ziway. The other sign or evidence that may serve as indicative of the settlement of the *Silte* ethnic group in the Debre-tsiyon Island, during the field I observed<sup>5</sup>, the existence of a cave called the Cave of *Silte* in the western part of the islands. This is also an indication that the people of the islands lived in harmony with people of other communities and the significant influence of the *Silte* language reflected in the *Zay* language is also one evidence that the *Zay* people may have close links with the *Silte* ethnic group in the past. The study participants believed that, it was the three brothers who led the earliest settlers of the island to travel to the islands. As oral history informants<sup>6</sup> explained that; these brothers are called *Amhaeyesus*, *Tmeherete-meskel* and *Aseke-Silassie*. It was *Askesillasie* (*Ateku/Atsebu*) who arrived to Debre-tsiyon (Tulu Gudo) while *Amhaeyesus* remained in Abura woreda in *Netile* area and established the Abura clans after converging with the local native residents. *Tmeherete-meskel* permanently settled in *Medere-kebed* (*Sodo Gurage*) after he was sent by *Azmach Sibehat* to serve as part of expedition. Due to the fact that the two were siblings, descendants of the men still consider themselves as blood relatives. For centuries the *Balabats* of these areas have used to come to islands to attend annual religious holidays. This relation has created strong link that remains to date between the *Zay* People and the people from the two areas. Due to this fact the language and culture of *Zay* have strong similarities with their *Silte* and *Gurage* counterparts. In addition during the time of Gergan Ahmed people of *Gurage* fled from a place called *Adadi* and lived in areas around the lake.

As R.Pankhurst (1997; in Vinson, 2012), mentioned that when the Imam began to wreak mayhem on Ethiopia, Waj was one of the first provinces attacked. The emperor, Lebna Dengel (r. 1508-1540) was at his palace at Gebergé (in Waj) when the invasion began. After Waj was finally conquered the Imam tried to force its inhabitants to convert to Islam (R. Pankhurst 1997:204-205; in Vinson, 2012). Owing to pressure from the conflict, it is likely that the islands

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with oral history informants Ato Kabeto Tola and Ato zewge Bedane on 13 March 2020 and 14 March east showa zone, Meki and Ziway town.

<sup>5</sup> I observed that the Island of Debre-Tsiyon *Silte* cave in the south of the Island Gumarge area on 22 January 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with oral history informants Mamire G/Meskel Hirpho, W/ro Kushe Gonder and Ato W/Michael Negewo on 14, March 2020, 30 April 2020 and 06 March 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island, Gelila Island and Welda Mekdela rural kebele.

took on many refugees who were fleeing persecution. These refugees would have been from Waj, the Amhara region, and even Harar.

Lake Ziway is also mentioned during the time of the wars with Ahmed Grañ (a 16th century Muslim ruler from Harar who is said to have destroyed many churches and church property), under the rule of Lebna Dengel (r. 1508-1540) and Galawdewos (r. 1540-1559). An account is given of a Muslim general who camped on the shores on the lake and wanted to sack the churches there. However, his men were frightened at the thought of crossing by boat so the general had to give up on this idea (Shihāb 2003:306). Again, the lake and the islands are mentioned during the reign of Emperor Sartse Dengel (r. 1563-1595) (Vinson 2012:8-9). This version coincides with what another that claims after the area was under Muslim control Lebna Dengel sent valuable manuscripts to the islands of Lake Ziway for safekeeping, as they were still under Christian control (R. Pankhurst 1997:207). During the field work, I observed<sup>7</sup> that the manuscripts and several old aged church treasures can still be found in the churches of Lake Ziway today.

Therefore, the origin of the Zay to the reasons for the various migratory waves to the area. A major relationship is between the Zay and the other groups that are said to have begun during the *Ager* migrations, i.e. the first three migrations, and the *Wayzaro* migration. The three migration groups; *Aregn*, *Obborubar* and *Zafit* are believed to be the most ancient people who lived on the shore of Lake Ziway in ancient times. Later, many of them were able to cross the lake and settled at the three south-eastern islands: Debre-Tsiyon (*Tullu-Guddo*), *Tsedecha* and *Funduro*. Having fled from the warriors, the *Aregn* and *Obborubar* minority settled on the south-eastern part of the *Tullu Guddo* Island. The *Zafit* were able to cross to the *Funduro* and *Tsedecha*, and *Wayzaro* with northern Ethiopia and royalty (Fekafu 2014:14). It was these connections that enabled *Wayzaro* to rule the Zay until 1974. Currently their shared experiences, cultural assimilation, and the passage of time they have merged into a single ethnic group. Of course there are the usual internal divisions inherent in all groups (Vinson, 2012:48).

Generally, by isolating themselves on the islands, the Zay are said to have been able to preserve their Orthodox Christian faith and develop a unique culture, despite being surrounded by the

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<sup>7</sup> I observed the Tseyone marriyam monastery and their musiem on 07, March 2020 in the Island of Debre-Tseyon.

predominantly Muslim and “pagan” Oromo. It wasn’t until 1886, when Emperor Menelik II ‘reconquered’ the Zay region, that they were reconnected with Christian Ethiopia (Henze 1989:34-35). Fekadu (2014), stated that the Zay living on Lake Zway remained tenaciously Christian even though they were isolated from the center of the Ethiopian church until Menelik II conquered the region in the 1880s. Prior to that time, contact with the northern Ethiopian Empire was very limited and typically involved monks or priests visiting the islands for short periods. After recognizing the authority of Menelik II, the Zay were granted the status of an independent tribal entity, governed by a *Balambaras* (title granted to local governors). Due to the relatively amicable relations between the Zay and the surrounding Oromo, currently many Zay have settled on the lakeshores and farming large tracts of land and keeping herds of cattle. Many of the Zay who settled on the lakeshores have assimilated to Oromo culture and intermarriage is not uncommon (Vinson 2012:9).

#### **2.4 THE ORIGIN OF THE TERM “ZAY”**

There is no evidence as to the origin of the name Zay or Ziway. Tuma (1982:1-2), too, assumes that the original homeland of the Zay was not a single historical place. However, oral tradition traces the time at which the word Zay has been coined back to the 9th century when the first Ge’ez-speaking immigrants who came from the northern part of the country to the area were stunned by the landscape of the islands and subsequently named them Zay, which means ‘this thing’ or ‘this place’ (Tesfaye 2000 E.C.:5; in Fekadu 2014:12). As seen before, there are often different stories and explanations for single events. We must not discount the discrepancies as mere inaccuracies but intend these separations and see the relationships and themes that they may help to explain. One informant narrates the legend how the lake was formed as follows:

*“There was no lake in the past only simple vast plain of land. So before people came from the northern part of the country, the natives used to live in mountains. There was a spring that flowed between the now Fundro and Tsedecha islands. The stream could be closed or opened by the people. However one day while a woman was fetching water from the stream, her child started to cry and she was distracted by the weeping child and forgot to close the stream before she leave the stream. The stream poured water in to the dry land gradually forming a small pond and through time took the lake form in*

*has now. Because of this the settlers after the earliest settlers had to paddle to the islands to settle in the islands.<sup>8</sup>*

These traditions are similar to those of how other lakes in Ethiopia were created. Looking at the story, despite that groups such as the Oromo were not there until the sixteenth century, and the Silt'e were not "created" until around the time of the wars with Ahmad Ibrahim, what we can see from this tradition are several relationships that should be pointed out. First, the Zay are the result of many ethnic groups coming together, as the story tells of the Areñ, Silt'e, Oromo, Gurage, Tigray, Amhara, and other groups in the area who went to the mountains during the flood. It is a way of explaining the rationale for how people from different groups were able to come together and create their own society and unique culture, which in the end is a patchwork of the various groups and cultures that assimilated throughout the years. Despite this assimilation, there is still a sense of difference between different sub-groups within Zay. By knowing one's own *gosa*, and the specific traditions and identities may come out at certain times (Vinson 2012; 31-32).

Second, as the Zay community believed that there were already people living on the islands before these other groups arrived and settled on the islands. This also stresses the similar experiences of the groups that would come to the lake and the islands later, through waves of different migration. In this regard something that we do not see here that should be pointed out is the lack of anything related to Christianity in the creation of the lake or the rationale for the people coming together, as the Zay are an almost homogeneously Orthodox Christian people. Let us now turn to the Zay as a people.

Within Zay oral tradition it is commonly accepted that the first wave of migrants to the area came from the Northern part of the country especially from Aksum and live together with Ager. One of my oral- history informants further elaborated as follows:

*"The newly arrivals from the northern part of the country, upon reaching Sengo (area situated the lakeshore), they saw bunches of grasses being washed away in to the lake. After observing the situation, they collected bunches of grasses tied them together a floating device and sailed to the islands paddling using only their hands.*

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Ato Gebiso Tufa on 06, March 2020 in east showa zone Dugda woreda Welda-Mekdela rural kebele.

*They first island they reached was the island of Ayesut/Famat/Tsedecha. The name “Aysut” means “nonmoving or stationary”. After settling in the island they look towards the islands of Debre-tsiyon and they were impressed by size and largness of the islands. They saw the island to be better suited as fortress and place to lead convenient life. They stayed on the lower part of the island at first and moved towards the higher grounds of the island established permanent settlement there together with the Aregn people. It was on top of the Debre-stiyon (Tulu Gudo) island, that these early settlers started their life on the island. This place is called Tumbat (Wozero). They stationed the tabot (the Ark of the Covenant) in a place castle called Kechen Defer.<sup>9</sup>”*

A rather recent development in Zay oral tradition is that many people from *Wayzaro* have begun to say that it was their group that came during this first migration to the islands. It seems that they want to equate their group with this migration to defend their previously dominant position as the ruling class. However, most Zay from *Ager* and even many from *Wayzaro* accept that *Wayzaro* was the last migration and that *Ager* is comprised of the first three migrations. The Zay distinguish between those who live on the mainland and those that live on the islands. First, we have the *tinta Zay*, the *Areñ gosa* who were on the islands before the advent of the migratory waves. Next we have *ydeber Zay*, those Zay who came to live on the islands, both during and after the various migratory waves. Finally, we can see *yderga Zay*, the people who lived around the lake (Vinson 2012:32-33). In the next chapter it was discussed in more detail about *woyzero gosa* /sub-groups/ and class administration system.

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with oral- history informant Ato Zewge Bedane on 14, March 2020 in Ziway town.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA AND THE PEOPLE

#### 3.1 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF ADAMITULU JIDO KOMBOLCHA WOREDA, ZIWAY/BATU TOWN, AND DUGDA WOREDA, MEKI TOWN

##### 3.1.1 PHYSICAL SETTING /LOCATION OF THE DISTRICT

This study was conducted in the two Oromia regional state zonal administrations (East showa zone and Arsi zone) of the Lake Ziway Islands community including the *Adamitulu-Jido kombolcha woreda Ziway/Batu/ town* and *Bochesa rural kebele*, and *Dugda woreda Wolda-Mekdela rural kebele* and Meki town. Ziway/Batu/ town which is found in Oromia Regional state East shoa Zone to the South East of Addis Ababa at 163km the road to Hawasa and 115km from Adama which is capital city of East Shoa zone respectively and West of Lake ziway. It lies between 7<sup>0</sup>56' latitude North and 38<sup>0</sup>43' Longitude East in the Great Rift Valley. Its annual temperature range between 21<sup>0</sup>c- 27<sup>0</sup>c and it has an overall hot climate/ kola climate zone. The town has a total surface area of 1,743.80 hek and currently the total surface area of town is about 5,063.40hek, and the town lies on a flat land that slopes roughly from North West to south East with a slope range of 2-4%. It also lies 1,646m above sea level and has an annual average rain fall of 750-850mm. on the other side Soil class around the lake is Anodosol and Fertile soil. It has a light texture, which is vulnerable to both wind and soil erosion (AJCWOR, 202:5-6).<sup>1</sup>

Whereas, The District of Dugda is one of the 11 districts in the E/S/Zone regional state of Oromia located in the central part of rift valley (southern part of Oromia region). The district lies b/n 08.14942<sup>0</sup> N (Latitude North) and 038.82362<sup>0</sup>E (Longitude East) in the great rift valley of Ethiopia. The district shares boundary line with Bora woreda in the North and NW, Arsi Zone (Ogolcho/Abura/Ziway Dugda Woreda) in the East, *Adami-Tullu Jidd-Kombolicha* district in the south and SNNPR (Southern Nation Nationalities Peoples Republic of Ethiopia) in the west. The Capital town of the district is Meki which is located 134k from Addis.

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1. During my field work in the study area I was spend five months from 25 January 2020- 30 Jun 2020.

### 3.1.2 POPULATION

The central statistical Authority (CSA) data of 1999 indicates that, the population of Ziway town was estimated to be 47,204. Out of which 24,960 are male and 22,244 are female. The recent study indicated the size to a range of male: 39,514 female: 36,959 Total: - 76,473. The population growth rate is 2.9%. The crude population density of the town is 46 people per square Km. The town have a great potential for residential, tourist and investment attraction. The Zay people also found in the town of Ziway and their rural kebele like *Bochesa, Abosa, Eido Kontola* (AJCWOR, 2020:5-8).

Beside to the above, Dugda district has a total population of 187190 about 98087 (52.399 %) and 89103 (47.6%) of the district's population are males and females respectively. About 71.18% of the total Population (133239 = Male 69171 and Female 64068) are residing in the rural parts (Peasant Associations) of district and while the remaining 28.82% are living in the three urban Kebeles (01, 02, 03) (APDWR, 2018: 6). However, I observed that<sup>2</sup>, the Zay people are found in Meki towns and their rural counterparts lived in *Wolda-Meqdella, Qerato Shubi, Meto-Arba, and Qorke-Adi* spread across the aforementioned *weredas*. Mixed farming is a common practice prevailing in the district. As a result the livelihood of the rural people is dependent on both crop farming and livestock rearing. Among this, this the *Wolda-Mekdela* rural kebele which is found in the shore of the lake ziway/Dambel/ part of Dugda woreda and the people highly employed on the small scale irrigation.

### 3.2 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA

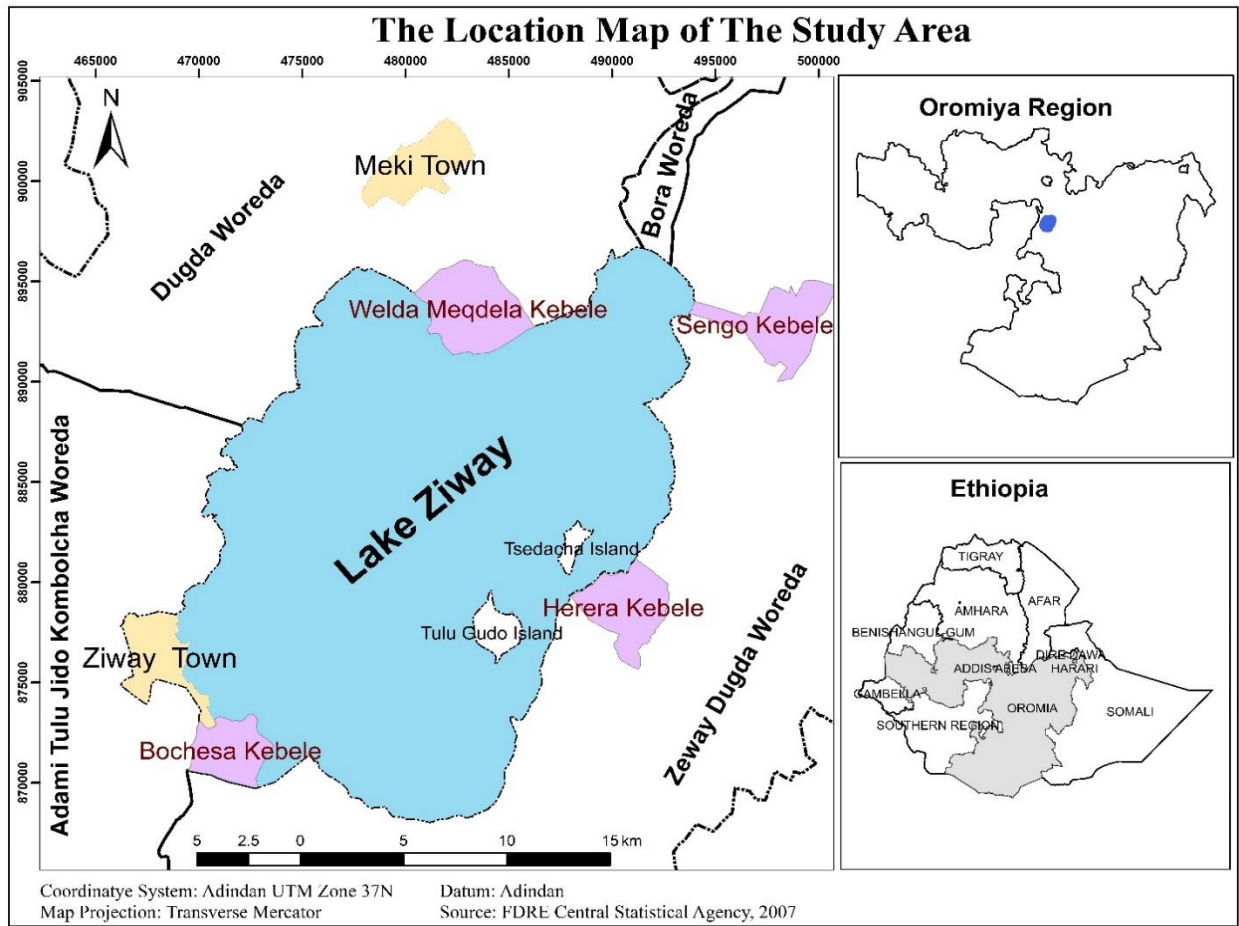
Figure 1: map of the study area



Adopting from Michael A. Vinson, 2012:98

2. I observed the the Zay people settlement and livelihood activity on 27, January 2020 in Dugda woreda

**Figure 2: MAP OF THE STUDY AREA AND THE SURROUNDING THREE WOREDAS**



### 3.2.1 LAKE ZIWAY

Lake Ziway is one of the largest fresh water Rift Valley Lakes. The Lake have long been used as source of Ziway/Batu/ town’s water supply, small scale irrigation, bathing, animal watering, domestic water use, fishery and eco-tourism. But recently, because of Large-scale irrigation projects the water quality of Lake Ziway has been threatened and becoming less suitable for the variety of purposes being used. The intensive use of agro-chemicals in modern floriculture may have detrimental effects on human health, water quality and the entire environment. Several studies indicated that the most visible impact of floriculture on the environment comes from the massive use of toxic chemicals including fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides, insecticides, nematocides, soil fumigants as well as plant growth regulators (RVLBAB, 2020). The surface area of the lake is 434 km<sup>2</sup> and an average depth of 4 meters.

This lake is known mostly for its large size, fisheries and islands (FAO, 1999 and 2000, Elias Dadebo, 2000: in Teklu Gebretsadik, 2017:2). The area lies on the eastern edge of the Northern Plains, from Meki in the north to beyond Adamitulu in the south. The western and northern shorelines of Lake Ziway lie within East Showa Province, whereas the southern and eastern lakeshores are in North West Arsi zone (M J Makin, 1975:200). The provincial boundary continues south along the Bulbula River dividing Showa from Arsi to the East as well as drained by the Bulbula River which enters Lake Abijatta (Dejene, 2018). The lake is fed by Meki and Katar rivers from the north and northeast respectively, and by rainfall on the lake surface (M J Makin, 1975:200).

The water volume of Lake Ziway fluctuates according to rainfall around the neighboring highlands and in most cases the surface level of the lake becomes high at rainy seasons. Upstream irrigation practices depending on the tributary rivers to the lake also impacts the amount of water of the lake to decrease. The aquatic life or biodiversity in Lake Ziway includes different species of fish, macro invertebrates, flora and fauna, and many more. The composition and richness of the lake's biodiversity is decreasing from time to time. The candidate reasons for this decrement might be the water pollution due to the chemicals used for different purposes around the lake (Demeke, 2018).

### **3.2.2 FISHING**

Lake Ziway is the home of many species of fishes. Fishing is widely practiced. Among fish species found in the lake the only indigenous to African lakes, including Nile Tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) or *koroso* and barbus species and recently introduced species such as tilapia zilli, calarias griepinus, crussian carp carassius and golden carp, *Carassius ouratus*. *Oreochromis niloticus* has been the dominant species in the lake consisting over 80% of the fish stock (shroder, 1984). Landing in the lake Ziway increased during January- March due to the growing demand during the fasting period and spawning aggregation of tilapia which becomes more vulnerable to fishing. One of my key informant stated that<sup>3</sup>, the landing of lake Ziway is dominated by *Koroso* (*Oreochromis niloticus*), but recently *Ambazza* (African cat fish or calarias

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3. Interview with Ato Beru Bedasa on 27, January 2020 in Arsi zone Ziway-Dugda woreda Funduro Island.

griepinus) and *Dubbe or Abbasamuel* (crucian carp or craziers caracius) are appearing in small amounts in the total landings.

The fish production potential is estimated for 51,500 tons per year in Ethiopia. However, only 30-38% of this potential is currently used (Mitike, 2015; Temesgen and Getahun, 2016). According to Temesgen and Getahun (2016) the exploitation of fish is depending on the socio-economic factors, resource accessibility and religious causes on fish utilization that integrates into human diet (Tesfahun, 2018:94).

**TABLE 1. FISH SPECIES FOUND IN LAKE ZEWAY WITH THEIR LOCAL NAME**

Fish species	Scientific name	Local name
Nile Tilapia	Oreochromis niloticus	Koroso
African cat fish	Clarias gariepinus	Ambazza
Carp species	Crucian carp (carassius carassius), Golden carp (carassius Ouratus)	Dubbe(Abbasamuel)
Bard species	Barbus intermidus	Bilcaa
Tilapia Zilli	Tilapia Zilli	Addise (Tikure)

**Source:-** Adami-Tullu Jido kombolcha woreda administration office annual report (2020)

### 3.3 THE ISLAND COMMUNITY/ ZAY PEOPLE/

The lake is the largest of the north rift valley lakes. Some of the birds are long tailed cormorant, duster saddle bill stork, green pigeon, black headed Oriole, Wood hoop and parable (AJCWOR, 2020:7). Besides to that Lake Ziway, the home of the Zay, The lake and its islands have a long history and unique culture that flourished for several hundred centuries (Henze 1973:19). According to several scholars argued that “the Zay peoples of Ethiopia inhabit on the three eastern islands (out of the five) of Lake Ziway” and on the shores of Lake Ziway (e.g *Bochesa, and Welda-Mekdela*) including Ziway town, Meki town and Abura town (Tilahun 2007:2, Henze 1989, Tesfaye 1988, and Zerihun 2008). My key informant’s expland that<sup>4</sup>, Lake Ziway doesn’t only have five islands. It also consists by Birds Island which is the six island of the lake. That’s why number of scholars agrees Lake Ziway is abode of Birds. The Island covers three hectare of

the land near to Gelila Island with 300m distance. People can see different bird species on the Island that's way the lake ziway it home of different birds. According to my key informants<sup>5</sup>, there are two small Islands which are been found between the Island of *Debre-Tsiyon/Tulu-Gudo/* and *Debre-Sina*, which is called by the Zay community as *YegeDer Deset* (medium Island) and *Yanes Deset* (small Island). On the Island of “*YegeDer*” the Zay community especially fishers stay during the fishing activity and other who come from the Island of *Debre Tsiyon* and *Tsedecha* cultivate the land and produce crops, when we see the Island of “*Yanes*” there is no agricultural and settlement activity in the area but the fisher men during the fishing activity temporarily settled and leave the island. In this regard, beside to the community informant's argument I observed that<sup>6</sup>, the Zay people who is not inhabited in the three Islands rather they settled in the five Islands. Thus, the lake ziway which have eight Islands including Birds islands.

In today's politico administrative structure, those who are currently living in the three islands which are: *Debre-Tsiyon(Tulu-Gudo)*, *(Famat)Tadacha* and *Aysut(Funduro)*, and two bird Islands under the Arsi Zone, *Ziway-Dugda Woredas adminstartion*, and *Gelila, Debire-Sina and one bird Islands* under East Shoa Zone *Adami-Tulu Jido-kombocha Woreda* administration of Oromia Regional State. Whereas the majority Zay people live among the nearby urban and rural Oromo communities (mainly *Arsi /Herera, Abura/and Shewa Oromos/Bochesa/, Wolda-Mekdela, korki adi...etc*). The two urban centers where most Zays live are Ziway and Meqi (Zerihun, 2008). The largest Islands of the lake ziway is *Debre-Tsiyon (Tullu-Gudo)* which is clearly visible from the mainland. On the highest peak the Monastery *Debre-Tsehona* is quite possibly the oldest active monastery in the southern Ethiopia. Its area coverage is 413hek and 14.5km away from the town. The second large Island is *Tedecha* with 227hek area coverage and 19.7km far from the town followed by *Fundro, Galila* and *Debre-Sina* Islands with area coverage of 47hek, 30hek, and 21hek respectively(ZWAR, 2019).

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4. Interview with my key informants Ato Aleme Hailu, Ato Eshetu Beresa and Ato Tesfaye Dinqi on 12, March 2020, 23 March 2020 and 22 April 2020 in Ziway town, Gelila Island and Bochesa rural kebele.

5. Interview with Ato Firafis Nebi and Ato Gudeta Ruso on 19, March 2020.

6. I observed and actually had the chance to talk to some informants who not only live in three islands but rather they live on five islands including Gelila and Debre-sina Islands. Also the lake it have three bird islands. Thus the lake it has eight islands. From 12-15 march 2020.



***Debre-Tsiyon (Tulu-Gudo) Island***

### **3.3.1 ZAY LANGUAGE**

Zay is one of the severely endangered languages of Ethiopia which is an ethnolinguistic minority group that spoken by a few thousand speakers, inhabit the Islands of Lake Ziway and on the shores of the lakes, such as in *Bochessa* (south of the lake) and Meki (north of the lake) (Desalegn 2016:17), Ziway (West of the lake), Wolda-Meqedela (North west of the lake), Abosa (West of the lake), Abura (North of the lake) and Herera (East of the lake)(my observation). The Zay are a Semitic-speaking people whose language is part of East Gurage language together with Kistane, Silt'e, Ulbarag and Wolane dialects (Meyer 2005:21, and Henze 2000:114), as well as correlates the language and culture the Zay with Harar (Haberland 1963:787 and Tesfaye 2000E.c:6).

According to Meyer (2001:317), that Zay is an amalgamation of Ge'ez, various Gurage varieties, Tigrinya, and Amharic. According to historical accounts (Tuma 1982:26ff.), the Zay exchanged goods with the Kistane, the Silt'e and the Libido in the 19th century. This trade relation might have resulted in the intermingling of languages and cultures (Fekadu, 2014:16-17).

The minority status of the Zay were not mentioned in the subsequent 2007 Population and Housing Census (CSA: 2008) probably because the census sometimes counts different languages as one, for example Eastern Gurage contains Wolane and Zay (cf. Hudson 2012: 209). Another indicator for the severe level of the endangerment is the absence of monolingual Zay speakers.

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7. I observed *Adamitulu jido combolcha woreda*, *Dugda woreda* and *Ziway-Dugda woreda* annual report in 2019, 2020 and 2020 on 13 March 2020 and 27 April 2020.

Even if I observed that, *AJCW, DW and ZDW* report in 2019, 2020 and 2020 respectively mentioned based on high populated ethnic groups but the people categorized under others (different language as one). The absence of literate informants' on the number of Zay speakers mentioning that no appropriate census has been taken place for this ethnolinguistic group. However as Zerihun (2008), mentioned that the total population is about 7500. As Fekadu (2014), mentioned that the total Zay speaking population at the five islands as well as in the hinterland was 13,665. While during the field work investigation, I have got essential Information from the respected three woredas administration. But, I don't have any reliable information about the exact number of Zay people mentioning that no appropriate census has been taken for this ethnolinguistic group. However, informants<sup>8</sup> estimated that the current Zay speaking population in the island and at the hinterland is more than 20,000 peoples. Among this 4000 are living on the four islands.

The rapid population movement and intermixing with other communities contributed to language contact that facilitate the people are bilingual/ multilingual in Zay and Oromo and/or Amharic. These language also have a strong on the Zay (Desalegn, 2016:17; Tilahun 2007:6-7; Meyer 2001: 318). But still preserves its own linguistic and cultural identity which is strongly influenced by a long history of isolation from the rest of Ethiopia (Fekadu, 2014:3).

The meaning of the word "Zay" has different interpretations. According to one oral history informants<sup>9</sup>, the word "Zay" has two basic meanings. The first meaning is traced with the Geez word "Zay" referred in the Bible which means "people blessed and anointed by God" and its is believed that the name was given the Axumite who arrived from the north carrying the Arc of the Covenant and other various spiritual relics. The other meaning for the word "Zay" is attributed to the combination of two words in the Zay language. "Za" means "this" while "Wye" means a hot or desert place or land and the word "Zay" is given to the place to describe that has desert climate areas. One of my key informant<sup>10</sup>, further explained that the lake and the nearby Town, both called "Ziway" got their names from the word "Zay". Meyer (2001:317) also argue this on

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8. Interview with Ato Gebiso Tufa, Ato Kabeto Tola, Ato Tesfaye Dinqi and Ato Tesfaye Edeto and Ato on 6 March 2020, 13 March, 22 April and 01 May 2020 at wolda- Mekdela, Meki town, Bochesa rural kebele and Ziway town respectivel.

9. Interview with Ato W/Cherkos Ture and Ato W/Michael Negewo on 03 April and 06 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island and Welda-Mekdela rural kebele respectively.

10 Interview with Ato Tesfaye Edeto on 01 March 2020 in Ziway town.

his work that makes clear that the term Zay refers to both the ethnolinguistic group and the language while the word Ziway refers to the lake and the town.

According to oral tradition<sup>11</sup>, in the middle of the 16th century, these three tribes (*Aregn* [arəŋ], *Obborubar* [obborubar] and *Zafit* [zəfit]) were joined by a group of people who came from *Menz* [mənz], led by a certain man known as *As'k'u Sillase*. As he explained that, he was wise and powerful enough to usurp power from the then ruling group and consolidated his power all over the islands. Subsequently, he named the various islands uniformly as Zay and made them under his leadership.

### 3.3.2 THE ZAY COMMUNITY ETHNIC GROUP

As it the case for most of the ethnic groups in our country to comprise different tribes, the Zay community similarly embodies different ethnic groups within the community. According to oral-history informants, there are five major ethnic groups in the communities and each of these ethnic groups is composed of smaller sub ethnic groups. Due to permanent settlement of members of these tribes outside the island in the lake, we now found descendants' of the tribes living in the rural Kebeles located in the lakeside such as *Bochesa*, *Herarar*, *Welda-Mekdela* and other adjacent Kebeles > Members of the tribes can also be found in the towns of Zeway, Meki and other neighboring towns. One of oral-history informant described that<sup>12</sup>, the detail description of Zay ethnic group genealogy chart, who prepared and organized by a scholar called Teacher Hirpo Maregn, representing the origin of the Zay Community and the different tribes making up the community.

In addition to the major five clans, there are individual/independent tribe with small number of members' within the Zay community. One of my key informant stated that<sup>13</sup>, this particular small size tribe is named *Asela* since the group was formed from people who moved from the Asela area and they live in the island of *Debre-Tsion* and in *Bochesa Kebele*.

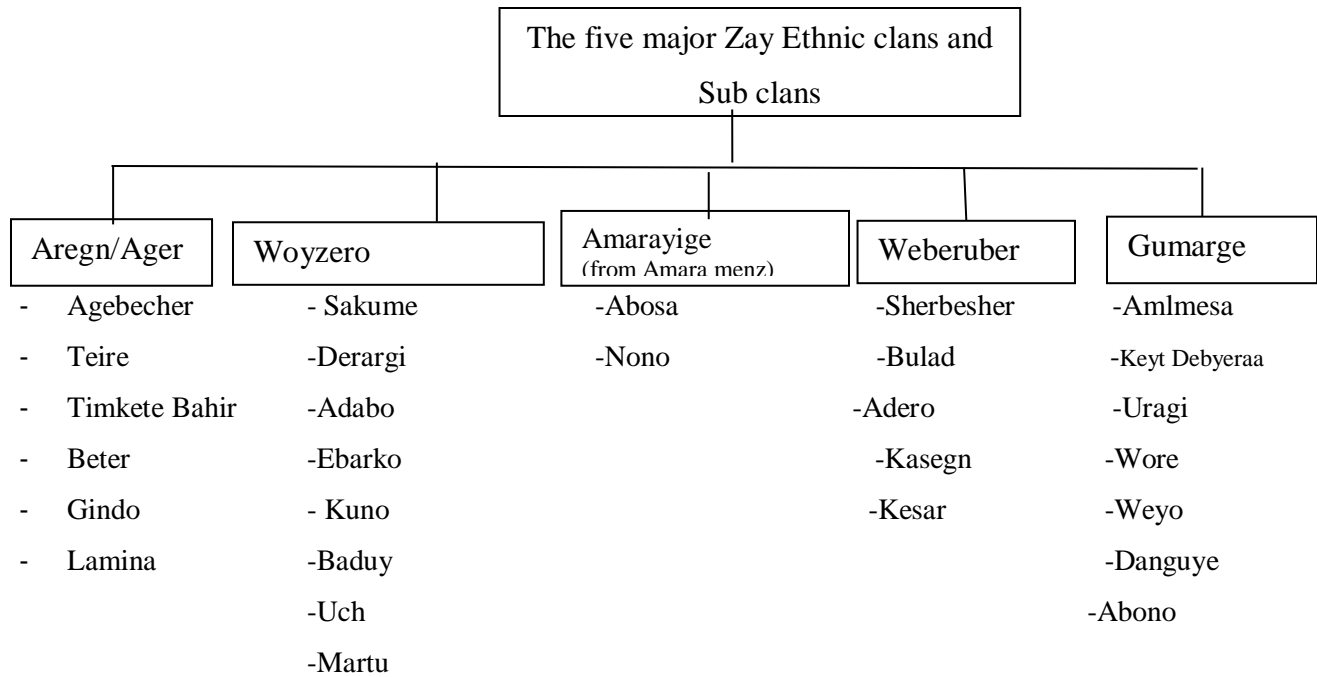
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11. Interview with Memire G/Meskel Hirpo on 05 April 2020 at Debre-Tsion Island.

12. Oral-History interview with memehere Gebere mseql hirepho on April 5/2020 in Debre-Tsion (Tullu Gudo) Islands. The informants serve the church as a priest as well as Museum administrator. He also works as partner of traditional community elder's committee (Yagre shimagele) in the area. I also visit the church and the church museum, and taken note and picture from the Zay ethnic chart. However, the description provided to me corroborated and demonstrated similarities with the narratives of the members of the Community residing in the other islands of the lake, the lakesides and the two towns who took part during the research.

13. Interview with Ato Qabeto Hireso on 27 January 2020 in Bochesa rural kebele

**Figure 3. THE ZAY COMMUNITY MAJOR CLANS AND SUB-CLANS**



**SOURCE:** Fieldwork data collected from oral-History informants and key informant

Concerning the settlement pattern of the Community, as elaborated by key informants<sup>14</sup>, members of the *Woyzero gosa* are the majority residents of *Debre-Tsiyon* Island and the *Gumarege* tribe is the next largest number of people in the island while other tribes with small numbers of members occupy some part of the island. The *Mesguni* and *Akoferach* sub-tribes of the Main *Gumaregi* tribe have disappeared as their members migrated off the island as the result of marriage with other non-residents of the island. Oral-History informants<sup>15</sup> in interview explained that, the people of the *Amarge* tribe used to occupy by large numbers the islands of *Tsedecha* and *Fundro* islands, however, many of the people left for *Dugda Woreda*, in particular to the Town of *Meki* and *Welda-Mekdela* area. On the other hand, the *Gindo* sub-clans of the Main *Ager* Tribe and *Gumaregi* that used to live in the *Debre-Sina* and *Gelila* islands left the island started to live in *Bochesa*, *Ziway* and *Meki* localities that resulted only a handful of their people to remain in

14. Interview with Ato Eshetu Beresa and Ato Gebiso Tufa on 06 and 23, March 2020 in Welda-Mekdela rural kebele and Gelila Island

15. Interview with Ato Assefa Tehi, Ato Biru Insene, Ato Midagi Segni, Ato Tsegaye Boku and Wro Ayo Chere on 05 and 28 March, 17 Jun, 06 Jun and 12 April 2020 in Bochesa kebele, Ziway Town, Tsedecha Island, Meki Town and Funduro Island

the Islands. In a similar pattern, the four sub tribes (*Gindo, Wore, Weyo and Danguye*) of the *Agerand Gumargi* head tribes can now be found in the tribes of the Oromo ethnic group, the reason for existence of the sub tribes in both ethnic groups being, the fact that the Oromo tribes are among the Ethnic groups that fled to the island due to wars in the past. In addition, the *Keyet-debyera* sub-tribe of the *Gumarge* main tribe traces their origin to the people who came from the *Amara Menz* area while the *Almelemera* sub-tribe has its origin from the *Silte* Ethnic group and they share blood line of the *Sebat-Bet Gurage* clans to some extent. In general the Zay community (ethnic group) is comprised of five main clans each with sub-clans groups with some tribes that ceased to exist in the course of time. Each tribal group is led by its respective tribal chief.

According to oral-history informants<sup>16</sup>, the earliest settlers, the *Ager/Aregn* clan, that used to live in the *Debere-Tsiyon* island and the other islands has its number declined drastically and the *Teire, Beter* and *Agebcher* sub-clans of these main clans are totally extinct while the remaining few members of the clans has moved from the *Debere-Tsiyon* island and settled in the *Bochesa, Ziway* and *Meki* localities. As elaborated by oral-history informants<sup>17</sup>, One of the reasons of the extinction of the *Aregen* Main clan is attributed to the migration of its members from the island due to marriage with other communities while the other contributing factor is linked with the spread of severe disease that affected the island and took the lives of many of the male members of the clan. In reminiscence of this unfortunate event, an oral-tradition recalls the incident with saying that goes somewhat like:- «አርኝ ሀኛ ሄታሎ...ሞት ለምቢኝ ሄኛሎ»<sup>18</sup>. This traditional saying demonstrated to us the reason for the extinction of the *Aregen* people and how they were in despair and the event was taken the foremost cause for their extinction. This saying was recited in odes by the few members of the *Aregen* clan that survived the epidemic and this fateful incident is still recalled by the Zay community.

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16. Interview with Ato W/Michael Negewo and Ato Zewge Bedane on 06 March and 14 May 2020 in Wolda-Mekdela kebele, and Ziway Town.

17. Interview with W/ro Kushe Gonder on 30 April 2020 in Gelila Island.

18. አርኝ ሀኛ ሄታሎ...ሞት ለምቢኝ ሄኛሎ-While we were the ones who toiled to move the hills, death punished us harshly.

### 3.3.3 ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF THE ZAY COMMUNITY

As I observed in the field, it is difficult to find tangible evidence which shows what kind of administrative system was being used by, the *Aregn* clans, the earliest residents of the island; some claim that the clans were the first overseers of the administration of the islands and their inhabitants. However, According to all participants of the study community members believe that during the 16<sup>th</sup> century the *Woyzero* clan people who moved from the northern part of the country to the islands and who had considerable religious teachings backgrounds and better knowledge, started to challenge the tribal chiefs of the *Aregn* Tribe arguing that they deserve and should be given the responsibility of administering the island. Finally members of the *Woyzero* clan were given the administrative responsibility after passing the test arranged to select the clan to assume the administration responsibility. It was noted from informants that the *Woyzero* clan continued to lead and administer the islands until the reign of Minilik II, when the Balabat (federal) system was introduced in the islands. Oral-tradition claim the story related with the administrative takeover by the *Woyzero* clan. The Zay community elders elaborated as follows:

*“A test was given to both clans asking which would weigh more between an ear of Zengada or a seed of a cotton plant and the Woyzero clan members answered the seed of the cotton plant weighs more and by some reason of sorcery or another, when the two were put in a scale the seed of the cotton plant weighed over the ear of Zengada and that lead the native residents to be convinced that the Woyzero clan has special wisdom and handed over the leadership to them.”<sup>19</sup>”*

This is one proof that the *Aregn* people were the original leaders of the islands and *Woyzero* clan took over the leadership and administered through their tribal chiefs (tribal administrative system) the islands and their residents. According to FGD-1 participants<sup>20</sup>, the Zay community has been led and administered, since the middle ages, by the tribal chiefs of the *Woyzero* clan and the seat of the tribal chiefs was the largest island while they assigned their proxies, recruited from their own clan, in the remaining four Islands.

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19. Interview with Ato Assefa Teji, Ato Guye Tuse, Ato Kabeto Tola and Decon Tebabu Meskele on 05 and 13 March, 12 April and 14 May 2020 in Bochesa kebele, Ziway Town, Meki Town and Tsedecha Island.

20. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsion Island.

However since the beginning of the reign of Minilik II the islands started to be administered under the *Balabat* (feudal lord) system and among the notable leaders of the time, *Balmabaras* Biru Machegn had his seat at the Debere-Tsiyon Island and he had two deputies who were called *Balambaras* Welde-Amuel Machegn (his brother) responsible for the administration of the *Tsedecha* and *Funderao* (*Getesemani*) islands and *Balambaras* Wake Bedane who was appointed to administer the islands of *Gelila*, *Debere-Sina*, and *Bochesa*. In the course of time, *Balambaras* Wake Bedane began to administer the islands of *Gelila*, *Debere-Sina*, and *Bochesa* independently having the *Bochesa* as his headquarter after refusing to be accountable to *Balmabaras* Biru Machegn.

Moreover, as key informants<sup>21</sup> said that under the *Balabat*(feudal lord) system was administrative council comprised of tribal chiefs, local elders and religious elders whose main task was to assist the *Balambarases* (the feudal lords) in any matters. As the result, since there were churches in all the five islands, the members of the clergy became under the leadership of the *Balambaras* and served the *Balambarases* (the feudal lords) along with the officials assigned in each island. The islands also served as exile centers where prisoners in particular those who undignified, criticized or challenged Kings as well as elders that were sentenced for house arrest by the church. As oral-history informant pointed out as follows;

*“I even witnessed some of these issues when, during the rule of Emperor Hailesilassie, there were elders called Ababa Gebresilassie and another church elder who were under house arrest who were released when the Derg took over the government<sup>22</sup>”.*

This is evidence that shows that officials of the church received orders from the *Balambarases* and executed the orders and the islands served as prisons in addition to being place of residence for the inhabitants.

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21. Interview with my key informants Ato kabeto Hireso and Ato Tesfaye Dinqi on 27 January and 22 April 2020 in Bochesa rural kebele Adamitulu Jido-combolcha woreda

22. Interview with Ato Kabeto Tola on 13 March 2020 in Meki Town.

As FGD participants<sup>23</sup> more elaborated that the general administrative system was represented by the five representatives, appointed from the clan of *Woyzero*, assigned to each of the five islands. The representatives had the title of “*Chika Shum*”<sup>24</sup>. Whenever there is an assembly of general meeting or a matter of top secret that need a decision, representatives appointed by each *Balambaras* of the five islands (a total of five representatives) convene in *Funndro* Island in a place called “*Sekela*” or “*Shengo*”. However matters such as mediation, justice, holidays or ceremonies of appointments and other events were usually held in the *Tulu-Gudo* Island at the top the hill near the residence of the *Balambaras* which was called the main “*Shengo*”. The *Balambaras* administrative system lasted until the end of the reign Emperor Hailesilassie. Beginning from the Derg era the Islands become under the central government’s administration and currently the Islands are under the administration of the *Orimiya* regional state.

### **3.4 DESCRIBING THE ZAY LIVELIHOOD SYSTEM**

#### **3.4.1 FISHING**

Though there is no definitive evidence that prove the actual time in the past that fishing was started by the Zay community, there a shared belief that fishing was started in the 9<sup>th</sup> century by people who traveled from the northern Axum through the Amhara localities and settled in to the Islands and started to live with the indigenous people of the Islands. As oral history informants<sup>25</sup> said that, the Zay people, after settling in the Islands, had the custom of the travelling from one island to another using the traditional boat called by the locals “*Yebela*”. The people are also believed to travel as far to the dry land near the lake. These people first used a hook for fishing and later started to use small nets with 112 stone knots. These skills are indicative of the fact that some of these settlers came from areas near rivers or lakes. In this regard there is common understanding among all people that these settlers learned fishing and using fish for food consumption for the indigenous Zay people that were already living in the islands. Fish is one of

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<sup>23</sup>-This is taken from FGD informants who discussed the various issues on 26 January, 13 March, 12 and 29 April 2020 in Debre-Tsion Island, Wolda-Mekedela rural kebele, Ziway Town and Bochesa rural kebele.

<sup>24</sup>.*Chika Shum*-which mean that headman from Amhari <>English Dictionary developed by: Yohannes Ejigu 2015.

<sup>25</sup>. Interview with Ato Biru Insene, Ato Midagi Sengi, Wro.Emayu G/Hanna and Wro Kushe Gonder on 06 and 28 March, 28 April and 08 Jun 2020 in Ziway Town, Wolda-Mekedela kebele and Gelila Island.

the staple foods of the Zay community and it is cooked and prepared from meal in different recipes and forms. Though there is concerning declining rate in the productivity of fish from the lake, fish remains a source in come people of the community, in addition to being source of food, by selling fish to the nearby areas, and by some to other towns. Subsequently this research has shown that fish is the major source of income to the Zay community in addition to being a source of food.

My key informants said that<sup>26</sup>; Fishing has been an important and major aspect of the Zay livelihood. Previous time the Zay fishermen worked not for commercial profit but to satisfy their own food needs. While it is now the main income of the islanders and became even an important aspect of Zay identity (Fekadu, 2014:7). According to Tesfaye (1988: 21) fish became a central cultural food after it helped the islanders to survive the big famine at the end of the 19th century. The Zay regard fishing and fish as lifeblood of their economic well-being, socio-cultural identity. Tesfaye, argue that; “without the recourse to fishing as a way of life and source of survival strategy, the Zay could not have survived the harsh topographic and ecological niche of the islands” (Tesfaye, 1988, in Zerihun, 2008: 13).

The livelihood history of the Zay is not entirely hinged to fishing. They have been engaged in other additional activities such as weaving, cultivation of small plots of land, and, to a less significant degree, herding and small-scale local trade. Weaving, which is believed to have been introduced to the islanders by the immigrants from Menz in the 16th century, flourished around the 17th century and enhanced the trade relation between the Zay and the Oromo (Tuma 1982: viii; Tesfaye 2000 E.C.:33-34; Fekadu 2014:8).

### **3.4.2 AGRICULTURE**

Though the steep and high grounds that the Zay Community has lived for centuries is not suitable for farming, the Community, since the time they settled in the islands, they practiced terracing technique to prevent soil erosion and plant crops as source of livelihood. This practice is evidence to demonstrate the fact that terracing has been the integral part of the Zay Community and the community is rich with history that transcends generations. Accordingly it

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26. Interview with Ato Beru Bedasa, Ato Gudeta Ruso and Wro Roman Mia on 27 January and 19 March 2020 in Bochesa kebele, Funduro and Tsedecha Islands.

was noted that various crops are planted and harvested in the terraced highlands and some plain areas of the islands. As my key informants<sup>27</sup> explained that, the crops being produced in the islands include, *Teff*, small millet, maize, sorghum and wheat and cotton to a certain extent. Agriculture is extensively practiced, especially, in the islands of *Debre-tsiyon*, *Tsedecha* and *Fundro* islands while small sized farming is practiced in the remaining two islands. In recent producing onion and tomato using irrigation systems has become common in the islands and members of the community earn support their families farming and agriculture. In related manner members of the Zay Community residing in the in *Welda- Mekdela* and *Bochesa Kebeles* are dependent for their livelihood on farming and they produce maize, teff, wheat and barley in large volume.

According to FGD-2<sup>28</sup>, Members of the community has been able to improve their income by developing cast farm lands through irrigation by pumping water from the lake and their products include onion, tomato, indigenous cabbage, cabbage for most part and to some extent they produce red beet, carrot, indigenous cabbage and cabbage. In addition to those producers in *Weld-Mekdela* the community members also produce and supply to market in bulk papaya fruit. These common as well as irrigation based farming have enabled the members of the community outside the islands to earn better income than those living in the islands.

### 3.4.3 WEAVING

Weaving is one of the skills that the Zay Community is uniquely identified with by other people. In addition to supplying cotton yarns to weavers, the community gets economical benefit by producing various cotton made fabrics and clothes for the market. As key informants explained that, the Zay community makes *Gabi*, traditional *Habesha* dress (a dress made from cotton fabric), *Buluko*, *Wendebo* and *Netela* as well as the cotton woven fabric with red decorative edge that is usually a symbol for the community. Based on informants, the woven products are sold in the markets around the lake as well as in the markets located in the towns of Meki and Zeway. Their woven products are well known in Meki, Zeway, *Bochesa* and *Welda-Mekdela* areas.

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27. Interview with my key informants Ato Aleme Hailu, Ato Firafis Nebi and Ato Gudeta Ruso on 27 January and 19 March 2020 in *Tsedecha* Island and *Ziway* Town.

28. This is based on FGD-2 that was conducted with Ato Abu Golji, Ato Balcha Ajjero, Ato Degaga Ararso, Ato Edewo Hirpo, Ato G/meskele Negewo, Ato Jambo Dinke, and Ato Niguse Balcha on 13 March 2020 in *Dugda* woreda *Welda-Mekdela* rural kebele. I observed and meet some members of the community that supply their products to Addis Ababa as well as to their local markets.

### 3.5 SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICE AMONG THE ZAY COMMUNITY

Indigenous people see and protect their traditional lands and ecosystems as their cultural heritage from antiquity and regard the environment in reverent, ethical manner. They want to transmit their cultural heritage intact to their posterity (Zerihun, 2008:6). The culture of the Zay on the islands developed during the middle Ages (Henze 1973:77: in Fekadu 2014:15). The Zay people, who maintain a strong Christian belief, are weavers, tillers, and fishermen (Desalegn 2016:17).

They have exquisite socio-cultural practices like wedding ceremony, mourning ceremony, spiritual and cultural festivals or rituals, weaving, conflict resolution mechanism and clan administration system. The Zay community has five major clans and each of them have several minor clan groups. I discussed detail about the community socio-cultural activities in the next chapter. The Zay community interact each other on the socio-cultural as well as economic activity and protect their lives as well as their environment. Furthermore, Zerihun argue that:

*Indigenous people's interact with their environment they also sometimes contributed its own share. Although it is generally known that indigenous Islander societies have natural conservators of their own environment, they have also been "radical transfers of their island environments" (Kirsch, 1997: 30). Here, two notions exist in literature regarding indigenous Islanders' relations to their Island ecosystem. One dominant notion states that indigenous people are "conservators of their land habitats and resources". The other notion is that the indigenous people have drastically transformed the Island ecosystem, including deforestation, extinction of fauna, etc (Zerihun, 2008:12).*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DYNAMICS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL LIVES

This chapter briefly examines and presents empirical data generated from the field on the genesis and operations of Zay community socio-cultural practice that embodies the socio-cultural values involving socio-cultural systems, and traditional practices and their contributions to indigenous socio-culture among the study communities in *Adamitulu-jido combolcha, Dugda and Ziway-Dugda Woreda*, the study area. Theodore R. Schatzki (1997:300) describes that social practice as composed of ‘doings and sayings’. It related to embedded in practice in terms of its cultural values and aesthetics. Therefore, by extending the study community this chapter also explain and discribed about, Zay community Ethnic group, traditional administrative system, traditional wedding ceremony, Funeral ceremony, *Meskel* Holiday ceremony, and traditional items, foods, and attires of the Zay community. It also looks into the community socio-cultural interaction among themselves as well as with the neighboring rural and urban area people.

#### 4.1 INDIGENOUS SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICE OF ZAY COMMUNITY

##### 4.1.1 WEDDING CEREMONY OF THE ZAY COMMUNITY

Wedding, in Ethiopian, is ceremony which celebrates the union of a man and a woman in marriage. As there are different ethnic groups in the country, there are similar and different types of wedding ceremonies and marriage arrangement based on the custom, tradition and culture of each ethnic group. In Zay community the overall economical and administrative practices are carried out through and based on the “*Fija*”<sup>1</sup> system and this custom laid down the detail of marriage starting from the time of betrothal until the taking place of the marriage in addition to providing the processes, rights and obligations of the persons involved as well as the types of wedding gifts. There are some issues that are deemed to be essential for the community to be assessed before betrothal is initiated. Among these issues included are origin, religion, tribe and family line. The detail of wedding ceremony in Zay community is clearly provided in the system which also outline the customary and traditional practices of the community that need to be observed during the marriage.

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<sup>1</sup>. “*Fija*” is a system that lead economical, administrative, a detail of marriage processes as well several socio-cultural practices.

#### 4.1.1.1. Betrothal Ceremony

According to Zay oral-history informants<sup>2</sup>, there are two types of betrothing in Zay Community. The first is when a family of a boy ask the parents who are expecting a child, “*to give the child, if it is girl, her hand in marriage*”. The requesting parent, extend their blessing to the expectant parents should the child become a boy upon birth. When this type of betrothal is done, the girl, expected to be born, is said to be “*Betrothed before birth*”. The second and the most widely practice of betrothing is the process whereby the bridegroom to be informs his parents the identity and overall information of the woman he wishes to marry and his family dispatches their representatives (*Shimageles*) to the parents of the prospective bride to presented their request saying something like “*son of [someone] wishes to betroth your daughter*”.

According to FGD-1 and key informants<sup>3</sup>, for both betrothal processes representatives, “*Atmach*” (*Shimageles in Amharic*), are sent to the parents of the girl/woman. The “*Atmaches*” who set a date of visit to the house of the girl’s family and conduct their presentation to their family on the visit date why they have to visit the family. The elders remain outdoor when presenting their request and they don’t enter in to the house in any case. Since family of the girl also await, the visitors, having their elders on their side as well, the elders representing the girl’s family enquires the visitors the identity of the man seeking to marry the girl. We should note that in the Zay community, person’s “clan” is attributed to his/her father’s tribe and though a person may have blood relation in his mother’s side, is the girl is second cousin, she might marry the man as long as the man is not related by blood from her father’s side. The other question the girl/woman’s parent asks the visitors is whether “*the prospective bridegroom has a paddle or a plow tool*”. It is assumed that is the prospective bridegroom has one or both of the items; he would be able to support the bride to be. However, if the bride groom does not have either of the two tools, the family of the girl would decline by expressing their fear their daughter would be starved to death. Moreover, FGD-3 discussants and key informants<sup>4</sup> noted that, ginning cotton, is

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<sup>2</sup>. Interview with oral history informants Ato Midagi Segni and Ato Tsegaye Boku on 17 and 20 June 2020 in Tsedecha Island and Meki Town respectively.

<sup>3</sup>. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with such Key informants as Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Assefa Teji, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Kabeto Tola, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi, Ato Uke Burqa, Ato W/cherkos Ture in 05,13 and 26 March, 08 Jun 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island, Meki Town and Bochesa kebele.

one of the major skills that a woman in the community is measured for being skilled or not. Accordingly, the visitors would ask the family of the girl “*is the girl has Enzeret<sup>5</sup>?*”. Like most of the ethnic groups in our country, it is also the case in Zay Community that a girl whose hand is requested for marriage is not easily given to the man. As key informants<sup>6</sup> explained that, the family of the girl and their elder representatives would consult among themselves alone and if they show interest to accept the request, they would schedule a second appointment. However if the girl’s family is not happy or impressed by what they heard from the visitors and decline the marriage request, they immediately notify the visitors (*Amaches*) that their requests is declined. If a second appointment is set, the visiting elders would consider there is hope for positive reply to their request. One of oral history informant who is from the Island of Debre-Tsiyon explains about the “*Atmaches<sup>7</sup>*” activity during the marriage request situations as follows:

*“During their travel back and forth to the house of the girl’s family, if the encounter on their way a woman returning to her house fetching water, carrying a child, a person carrying freshly cut grass etc, they consider is a good sign. On the other hand if they encounter a woman carrying empty “Ensera<sup>8</sup>” or a woman throwing away garbage from a house, they consider is as bad omen and they may drop the issue definitely<sup>9</sup>”.*

According to FGD-2 participants<sup>10</sup>, on the second appointment date, the representatives of the man come to the house of the girl’s family and stay out door like it was during their first visit. On this date the girl’s family expresses their agreement by saying “*we welcome your request and we are happy to give you our daughter*”. This will be great news and both sides celebrate and bless each other and set the date for the third appointment before the visitors depart.

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4. This is based on FGD-3 that was conducted with such Key informants as Ato Aleme Hailu, Ato Mesfin Hailu, Ato Seyfu Degebo, Ato Telila Getu, Ato Tseganeh Assfaw, Ato Tesfaye Dinqi, Ato Yetinayet Tokuma, Wro Demebele Gutu, Wro Terefech Gebeyew in 12 and 22 April and 12 May 2020 in Bochesa kebele and Ziway Town..

5. *Enzeret*- a spinning tool used for making a thread from cotton.

6. Interview with Ato Gebiso Tufa and Wro Welela Dadi on 06 March and 05 April 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island and Wolda-Mekdela rural kebele.

7. *Atmach*” or “*Amach*”, in Zay language, that is the local elders’ representatives who sent to the parents of the girl.

8. *Ensera*” –round water container made of clay.

9. Interview with Ato Zewge Bedane on 14 May 2020 in Ziway Town.

10. This is based on FGD-2 that was conducted with the seven informants in 13 March 2020 in Wolda-Mekdela kebele.



***“Ensera”***

In the interview the study participants pointed out that, third appointment date is the day the mediation between the two families is wrapped up and this dated when both families officially express their agreement is called “*Unga-Wekochat*” in Zay language. on this date, family of the man would present to the girl’s family, through the representative elders, 2000 birr (it was less in the past) and one “*Silcha*” (50KG) ground white *Teff*. When the representative elders of the man go to the house of the girl’s family, they would wear different cloth, according to the custom. They would wear “*Gabi*” (cotton made sheet of cloth) which covers up to the hills of their feet and they carry attractive long walking stick. People who see the elders in such outfit and carrying the symbolic stick would know that they are going to the house of the “fathre in-low” and they give them their blessing to have success in their endeavor.

As my key informants said that<sup>11</sup>, on this date family of the girl would prepare huge feast welcome the elders and receive the gifts offered and let them in to the house. The elders would be seated in “*Berchuma*”<sup>12</sup> placed in a rag made of livestock hide carpet. This sitting arrangement is made for special guests. The would, then discuss and consult on the issue which they came for with the girl’s family/After agreeing, the family member of the prospective bridegroom to be would rise from his seat and kiss the shoulders and knees of the parents of the

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11. Interview with my key informant Ato Gebiso Tufa, Wro Roman Mia and Wro Welela Dadi on 27 January, 06 March and 05 April 2020 in Welda-Mekdela kebele, Bochesa Kebele and

12. “*Berchuma*”- small would carved chair.

girl and place the money the elders brought a gift. Afterwards all of the elders present take turn of blessing the proposed marriage and start to enjoy the feast. As oral history informant<sup>13</sup> explained that, after the feast is over, “*Tella*”<sup>14</sup> is filled in one of the cup of the relatives of the prospective bridegroom to be presented to the parents of the girl. The drinking from one cup symbolizes even more of the agreement of the girl’s parents.

The study participants stated that, since the official date of the betrothal, both families and the local residents and tribes would have strong bond and respect. There is a saying among the people of Zay which goes somewhat like “*In the house of the in laws, even the dog is honored let alone a man*”. Furthermore, the family a member of the future husband has the duty of provide help to the bride to be family in different tasks.

Generally, during the time of harvest family member of the bridegroom to be perform tasks based on the instruction given by the girl’s family members. Furthermore, the betrothed couples are forbidden to see each other from the date of the betrothal until the wedding day and the bridegroom to be will hideaway from the eyes of the girl’s family until the engagement ceremony is concluded.

#### **4.1.1.2 Gar Wegba<sup>15</sup>**

According to FGD-1 participants<sup>16</sup>, “*Gar Wegbat*” is the engagement ceremony of the Zay community. The ceremony takes place after the betrothal process is completed. In this regard, consultation is made by the request of one of the parties whereby the decisions regarding the date of the wedding, organizing feast and the dowry (*Gebera*<sup>17</sup>) to be presented to girl and her family

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13. Interview with oral history informants Wro Biritu Geleta, Wro Emayu G/hanna and Wro Tadelech Edeo on 07 April and 08 June 2020.

14. “*Tella*”- traditional home made local beer brewed.

15. “*Gar Wegbat*” is the engagement ceremony, which includes organizing feast and presented dowry to girl and her family, in the Zay community

16. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island.

17. “*Gebera*”-is a kind of Dowry, which is one of the elements in the wedding ceremony in most parts of our country. Presentations of the dowry have similarities and differences in different ethnic groups according to the custom and culture of the respective ethnic group. The word “*Gebera*” also similar in Zay and Oromo language.

would be passed. In the custom of the Zay community, the amount and value the dowry (*Gebera*) is determined by the number of people that would receive it. In most cases it may included six or seven livestock, one calf for the father, one calf for the mother, one calf for the girl, one calf for each of the girl's uncles, one calf for the girl's brother (of she has more than one brother, the number increased accordingly) and complete dress (these days birr 2000 is offered as alternative to have the cloth tailored) and "*Wondebo*"<sup>18</sup> to the girl. For the wife of the principal witness (Yewele Abat) which is called "*Yechigna Ayy*" in Zay complete dress and umbrella, four cotton spread cloth (*Buluko*), thin cotton spread cloth (*netela*) and for her grandparents, aunts, uncles and other relatives gift from birr 20-400, according to the economic capacity, is presented. One of my key informant<sup>19</sup> elaborated that, the amount of the monetary gift has seen increment in recent years.

In the study community informants disclosed that, these gifts are offered by the family of the man during the date of the "*Gar Wegbat*" to the girl's family. Upon arrival to the house of the girl's family, the girl's family and the elders of the family inspect the gifts to ensure the appropriateness of the gifts offered followed by reaching agreement on the presented subsequent blessing of familymembers and elders by following the necessary arrangement of taking turns. After enjoying the feasts prepared, just like on the date of the betrothal ceremony, a cup is filled and given to the parents of the girl and they express their agreement and finally the guests are sent away after the parents put a scoop of butter on the guests head. This marks the end of the engagement ceremony and bridegroom would stop his hiding from the girl's family. Furthermore, after this time the bridegroom to be has the duty to help the girl's family based on the instruction he receive from them and shall visit the girl's family in the most honored annual holidays of the Zay Community, the *Meskel* and Easter holidays by bringing a sheep or goat if it is possible to offer such gift.

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<sup>18</sup>. "*Wondabo*"-is colorful Zay community traditional cloth that is worn for wedding ceremony.

<sup>19</sup>. Interview with Ato Beru Bedasa and Ato Kabeto Hireso on 27 January and 06 March 2020 in Funduro Island and Welda-Mekedela rural kebele.

### 4.1.1.3 Activities carried out on Days Nearing the Wedding Day Ceremony

It is the custom in the Zay community, that after the ceremony of “*Gar Wegbat*” or dowry presentation, to set the date for wedding ceremony and both families start preparation of feast and gifts. In the field, I observed that the wedding ceremony and their preparation of both *Tsedecha and Debre-Siyon Islands*, During the days close to the wedding day, the bride to be mends and repair the different jewelries and crafts she has crafted since her childhood. Furthermore, FGD-3<sup>20</sup> discussants described that, Friends of the girl would help her mend and decorating the jewelries of the girl and assist her in other activities while singing a song about their separation and crying on each other shoulders expressing their love. It was more elaborated by saying the verse is included in one of their songs by key informants as follows:

In Zay language	English Translation
The bride: የደደዴ ሁም ቲያዎኛኔይ	While we love each other dearly
ተደድምኛይ ተደልምኛይ ሊያቆብጡኔይ	How would they separate us from one another
Her friends: የደደዴ ሁም ይውደሽን ናሩሀ	We loved you as you loved us
ቢትዌጭኒኝ ይውጥሽን ናሩሀ	If only we could swallow you to keep you from leaving. <sup>21</sup>

This song indicated the wedding day is near and their separation is certain. Furthermore, based on the Zay community culture there is two different ceremonies before the date of the wedding on the day called “*Hurtub Ayam*” and on the “*Koso Day*”.

#### HURTUB AYAM

The study community participants mentioned that, the day of “*Hurtub Ayam*” is considered the beginning of the wedding ceremony and is celebrated in different ceremonies and festivities at the houses of both families. As one of my Key informant<sup>22</sup> in interview explained that, the local residents and the relatives are gathered at night and they try out the “*Kebero*” made of hide

20. This is based on FGD-3 that was conducted with Ato Mesfin Hailu, Ato Seyfu Degebo, Ato Telila Getu, Ato Tseganeh Assfaw, Ato Yetnayet Tokuma, Wro Membele Gutu and Wro Terefech Gebeyew on 12 April 2020 in Ziway Town.

21. This verse and song perform by one of my key informant Wro Welela Dadi on 05 April 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island.

22. Interview with my key informant Ato Eshetu Beresa and Ato Gudeta Ruso on 19 and 23 March 2020 in Gelila and Tsedecha Islands.

prepared by spreading outdoor in heat of the sun to make have the drum make high sound of beat. This ceremony is held in both houses. In addition this is the date where the women at the girl’s house spread “*Enshoshela*”<sup>23</sup> on their hands and feet. After the local elders give their blessing, the “*Kebero*”<sup>24</sup> (drum) beat will start to mark the start of the wedding ceremony followed by a feast served to the people invited for the occasion.

In addition to this, as FGD 1 and 2<sup>25</sup> elaborated that, at the house of the girl’s family, household items presented as gifts from her relatives is presented to be seen by the people gathered and the handcrafts made of grass (*Sefet*) by the girl are mounted on the entire wall of the house’s interior to give recognition and admiration of her skills. After the dancing and singing began, the bride to be would slip from the eyes of the guests with her friends and go out to some place to hide and cry on each other’s shoulder lamenting their separation by singing sad songs. One of the songs verse has presented in the Zay language by one key informant as follows:

<b>In Zay language</b>	<b>English Translation</b>
<i>ያይርም አይራቁ</i>	Let one who doesn’t watch not be afar
<i>ጥርቃም አይዳምቁይ</i>	Let the moon stop shining
<i>ኤዴይ ቢሌሺ አውዳ</i>	In the place you my dearest friend is absent
<i>ሺባይ አይሙቁይ</i>	Let the songs stop striking
<i>አንቀን አሌሼይ/2x/</i>	It is right I know for you to cry /2x
<i>አሺ ኤዶይይ</i>	My best friend and my dearest heart
<i>የበሰል ሁሲ ትመስየሌሼይ</i>	Who looks like a ripe fruit of delicacy
<i>ኤዶይይ አንቅን አሌሼይ</i>	There is truth in you tears, oh my friend. <sup>26</sup>

After singings this and other related songs, the custom of “*Yegi*” (the community youngstar) is practiced as it is known in the culture of the community that the girl is hiding away. As FGD 4

<sup>23</sup> “*Enshoshela*” -decorative plant made ink and the women spread on their hands and feet.

<sup>24</sup> “*Kebero*”-traditional hand held drum.

<sup>25</sup> This is based on FGD 1 and -2 that was conducted with the main ten informants on 26 January and 13 March 2020 in Welda - Mokedela kebele and Debre-Tsiyon Island.

<sup>26</sup> This verse and song perform by one of my key informant Ato Gebisa Tufa and Wro Roman Mia on 27 January and 06 March 2020 in Welda-Mekedela and Bochesa rural kebele.



***SIFET'S (Mesob work sifet)***

participants stated that<sup>27</sup>, after the “Yegis” (youngstars) eating and drinking the feast together, the family of the girl ask the “Yegis” “*who would carry and return the girl from her hiding place*”. Then, one of the “Yegis” would volunteer and finds her hiding place and brings her to the house by carrying her to place her in “*Chechi*”(mat) laid on the doorstep of the entrance of the house to symbolize that she is a bride from that day on. In this moment, one of the bride friends sing the song to express their sadness. This song presented by FGD 1 and FGD-2 discussants as follows:

In Zay language:-***ኡርጎ ወሸርቦቱ ኤደኦ ማቲ ያኣንጎቱ ኡርጎ ወሸርቦቱ?***

***ኡርጎ የዳርሻኝ ኤደኤ በማጣልሻኝ ኡርጎ የዳርሻኝ?***

English translation: Oh my friend to whom should I give you to?

Oh my friend, how would you marry leaving me by myself? <sup>28</sup>

As FGd-4 informant elaborated that, the older women (mothers) who sees the sadness of the bride would approach her carrying a “*Kebero*” (livestock hide made drum) and sing the following song while circling and moving around her:

27. This is based on FGD-4 that was conducted with Ato Alemayew Qabeto, Ato Ashnafi Gutu, Ato Chala Yebo, Ato Habte Bersa, Ato Jote Telila, Wro Addis Bekele and Wro Mulu Guye on 12 April 2020 in Bochesa rural kebele.

28. This is based on FGD 1 and -2 that was conducted with fourteen informants on 26 January and 13 March 2020 in Welda- Mokedela kebele and Debre-Tsiyon Islad.

29.. This is based on FGD-4 that was conducted with Ato Alemayew Qabeto, Ato Ashnafi Gutu, Ato Chala Yebo, Ato Habte Bersa, Ato Jote Telila, Wro Addis Bekele and Wro Mulu Guye on 12 April 2020 in Bochesa rural kebele.

<b>In Zay language</b>	<b>English Translation</b>
<i>በራይ ታይዛኝ ባሌይ</i>	He promised not to give you up until the sun start shine again
<i>የገደደርሃይ ሰባዬይ</i>	His beloved girl he toiled to raise her like a queen
<i>አሉብ ሰላጋዬይ</i>	He promised not to give you up for a stranger
<i>ይኩላና ይኩላና ይሸሊሚና</i>	They say she has put on her eye liner
<i>ይኩላና ይኩላና ይሸሊሚና(ይቢቀራና)</i>	They have indeed made her pretty grander

Furthermore, FGD-1 discussants<sup>30</sup> elaborated that, the sister of the bride to be then rises up and makes a cross mark by the “*Kul*” (black decorative ink) on the forehead of the bride ending the ceremony at the house of the girl. The cross mark is also serves as symbol of being follower of the Christian faith. On the other hand at the house of the bridegroom, the “*Kebro*” made for the occasion is inaugurated and after the feats for the guests and relatives the bridegroom and his friends starts dancing. As one of my Key informant, performing the bridegroom and his friends sings to worship and glory to God as follows:

<b>In Zay language</b>	<b>English Translation</b>
<i>እግዚር በይዛኔይ</i>	God is good
<i>አገዛነን እግዛኔይ</i>	He will help us and he is our aide
<i>አቦ በይዛኔይ</i>	Out father is good
<i>አቲንደረን በዛዬ</i>	He who protected our lives in the island. <sup>31</sup>

They sing the above verse and discuss on the wedding. Moreover, as key informant explained that, if the area where the girl lives is distant, fellowship of the groom to accompany him will be appointed him. Since traveling on the lake is a dangerous affair, the persons selected are strong men and the day of “*Hurtube Ayam*” ceremony is wrapped up.

30. This is based on FGD 1 that was conducted with seven informants on 26 January 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island.

31. This verse and song perform by one of my key informant Ato Gebisa Tufa, Wro Roman and Wro Welela Dadi Mia on 27 January, 06 March and 05 April 2020 in Welda-Mekedela and Bochesa rural kebele.

## **“KOSO” DAY**

The “*Koso*” day is the ceremony that takes place on the next day after the day “*Hurtub Ayam*” or one day before the day of the wedding ceremony. According to FGD 1<sup>32</sup> discussants described that, this ceremony takes place only at the house of the girl and on this date the bride and her “*Edo*”<sup>33</sup> gather and drink the drink made from ground *Koso* seed. According to the custom, at late morning the bride and her friends drink the “*Koso*” drink and the friends would feast on the food prepared for them at around dusk while the bride remain abstained from food until she enters in to the house of the groom on wedding date. As oral history informant elaborated that, this is deemed necessary to prevent the bride from struggling, since she is a virgin, during the first consummation of the couple on the wedding night when she gives her womanhood to her husband.

### **4.1.1.4. THE DAY OF THE WEDDING CEREMONY**

According to oral history informants<sup>34</sup> explained that, on the late morning of the wedding day, the elders gather at the house of the bridegroom and give their blessing after which the sipping of the sour and sweet drinks (*Yechem Merara* in *Zay*) is done. The participants of this sipping ceremony are “*Meri*”<sup>35</sup> who accompany him and are his best men. By drinking the bitter and sweet drinks they promise not to betray one another and protect this marriage. Accordingly, “*Meri*” friends of the bridegroom will be seated in “*Mukecha*”<sup>36</sup> with the bridegroom and take turn to drink the “*Koso*” poured in to a “*Choftu*”<sup>37</sup>. After the bitter drink they would drink diluted honey. The bitter and honey drink<sup>38</sup> it has cultural symbolic representation in the *Zay* community.

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32. This is based on FGD 1 that was conducted with seven informants on 26 January 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island.

33. “*Edo*”- mean friends of the bride who are in similar age and childhood friends. They are called “*Edo*” in *Zay* language.

34. Interview with oral informants Ato Tesfaye Edeto, Tsegaye Boku, Ato Zeru Berke, and Memire G/Meskel Hirpho on 01 and 14 May, and 01 and 06 2020 Debre-tsiyon Island, Meki and Ziway Town.

35. “*Meri*” -friends of the bridegroom who are in similar age with the bride groom. They are called “*Meri*” in *Zay*.

36. “*Mukecha*”- a traditional Shallow grinding vessel made of tree log.

37. “*Choftu*” traditional small clay made pot.

38. The bitter drink symbolizes the cursing of the person who dishonors the promise and would have negative intentions while the honey drink represents blessing of even more sweet years to come living together as they have shared the sweetness of life in the past.



**“Choftu”**

**“Mukecha”**

The study community members believed that, a person who shared the “*Yechem Merara*” drink is considered to be more loyal than a brother. In addition to that, as explained by key informant<sup>39</sup>, after sipping the “*Koso*” and Honey drink they would rise and the bridegroom would break the “*Choftu*” using his left hand. The breaking symbolizes wish of inflicting harm on anyone juts like breaking of the “*Choftu*”. As I observed in the field, after this ceremony of promise, the “*Meris*” would tie a red thread of fabric in their forehead and head to the house of the bride dancing and singing. As oral history informant descried that, when they reach around the house of the bride, they start to sing the following song:

**In Zay language**

*ለሃሽ ብዬ መጣሁ*

*ለሃሽ ብዬ*

*ሀገሬን ጥዬ*

*ባሪሼይ ባሪሼይ(2)*

*ዘመን ያበሉይ ትብያለሼይ ባሪሼይ*

**English Translation**

Here I am, I came for you

Only for you

Living my home town

Though I may not see you

I came here to feed you of years.<sup>40</sup>

39. Intervoeew with my key informant Ato Gebiso Tufa and Ato Qabeto Hireso on 27 January and 06 March 2020 in Welda-mekedela and Bochesa rural kebele.

40. This verse and song perform by one of my key informant Wro Roman Mia 27 January 2020 in Bochesa kebele.

According to FGD 2 discussants<sup>41</sup>, while the bridegroom and his company dance and sing the mother and the other women would shout with ululation announcing the arrival of the bridegroom and welcome them. However the bride would remain in the house with the “Edos” and sing the song. Among their several songs, one song presented by oral-history informant, as follows:

<b>In Zay language</b>	<b>English Translation</b>
The bride: <b>ቤይኛ ቀባይ ጥሪኛ</b>	Oh....the bride ...please call me my friend
<b>አይ ገልባህጊ ሙትን ቤይኛ</b>	Consider me dead if refuse to answer your call
Edo: <b>ኩሌይ ከሌሺኛይ</b>	You put on the <i>Kul</i> on my eyes
<b>ዬያይ ደርማ በማጣልሺኛይ</b>	Oh my friend to who did you left me for
<b>አፊቴሼይ አቴጌሌጩይ</b>	Hide your face behind the veil
<b>አንኩ ያዩ በዩ ያለጋን በዩ</b>	He is not the son of your mother, don't be fooled
<b>አቴቤ ሌጩይ</b>	He is not a stranger, don't be naïve
The bride: <b>ሹሙይ ጄሮ በመቀያይ</b>	Let the <i>Nefro</i> be boiled
<b>ቀባብኛያይ በነገያይ</b>	Farwell my friends I hereby depart off to my life. <sup>42</sup>

This representing the inevitability of their separation and they time for the bride to depart has come. While the bride and her friends sing their song of departure the mother of the bride and the other women who went out to welcome the part of the bridegroom would exchange the “*Kebero*” (the drum) with the drum brought by the company of the bridegroom and usher them to the place of the feast. As explained by my key informant<sup>43</sup>, as soon as they enter the feast hall and upon meeting face to face with the bride and her family, the family would ask them “*what they have to offer for the occasion?*”, then one of the “*Meris*” would then reply “*Eje kemehareb*” or Handkerchief and place the handkerchief in front of the elders, the elders would untie the knotted handkerchief and make sure there is gold necklace and silver ankle, and proceed to blessing after which the bridegroom and his company are ushered in to the seat prepared for them. After the feasting ends the dancing and celebration would continue.

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41. This is based on FGD-2 that was conducted with Ato Abu Golji, Ato Balcha Ajiero, Ato Degaga Ararso, Ato Edewo Hirpo, Ato G/meskele Negewo, Ato Jambo Dinke, and Ato Niguse Balcha on 13 March 2020 in Dugda woreda Welda-Mekdela rural kebele.

42. This verse and song perform by one of my oral history informant Ato /Michael Negewo on March 2020 in Welda-Mekidela rural kebele.

43. Interview with my key informant Ato Eshetu Beresa and Wro Welela Dadi on 23 March and 05 April 2020 in Gelila and Debre-Tsiyon Islands.

As point out by FGD-2 and 3 discussants<sup>44</sup>, at about the end of the program, the bridegroom would enter to the room of the bride and bring her to the tent of the feast to be received with ululation and cheering of the crowd. Next the list of the household gifts and wedding gifts, livestock, the grass made handcrafts made by the bride would be presented to the guests of the wedding celebration. In the study community participants believed that, based on their culture the family of bride would give twice as much as the bridegroom offered to the bride. In addition to this gift, as explained by one oral history informant<sup>45</sup>, the bride’s family also gives “*Zemat*”<sup>46</sup>. After all gifts are given for the custody of the principal elder (*Yewel Abat*), called “*Chigegna*”, of the marriage, ceremony of a blessing which marks the wrapping up of the wedding ceremony is delivered by family members, the local elders and religious elder. The father of the bride, after blessing the couple, would end the blessing ceremony by announcing the following; “*I have given you my entire daughter. But beware to keep an eye on her because I haven’t given you her eyes, her teeth and her ears*”. This, in addition to the obvious message, is a warning to the husband to refrain any kind of physical abuse or beating on this wife.

Finally the “*Meris*” take turn to carry the bride in their back and start heading to the house of the bridegroom accompanied by the “*Edos*”. According to key informant, if the trip is to be made by a boat, the boat (*Yebelaboat*) that carries the bride is called “*Abol*”<sup>47</sup>. As Keyinformants<sup>48</sup> explain that, during their trip accompanying the bride to the house of the bridegroom, they cheer and celebrate by singing on their language «ሲኖ ሲኖ ያርባርባል ሲኖ.....ያጋር ሰቦ ገረ ደል ነቀልኖ» which mean that “*Here we return delivering the bride to*”. Beside to this, FGD-1 discussants<sup>49</sup> elaborated, the family of the bridegroom would await the return of those who are sent to accompany the bride, by singing the following song as a good wish for the bride:

<b>In Zay language</b>	<b>English Translation</b>
<b>ነቦ ነቦ ነቦ</b>	we plead you to come, oh come please, come

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44. This is based on FGD-2 and FGD-3 that was conducted with Ato Abu Golji, Ato Balcha Ajiero, Ato Degaga Ararso, Ato Edewo Hirpo, Ato G/meskele Negewo, Ato Mesfin Hailu, Ato Jambo Dinke, and Ato Niguse Balcha, Ato Seyfu Deqebo, Ato Telila Getu, Ato Tseganeh Assfaw, Ato Yetnayet Tokuma, with Wro Dembele Gutu and Wro Terefech Gebeyew on 13 March and 12 April 2020 in Dugda woreda welda-Mekedela kebele and Ziway Town.

45. Interview with one of my oral-history informant Ato Kabeto Tola on 13 March 2020 in Meki Town.

46. “*Zemat*” the bride’s family gives the newlywed gift of a plot of land and this gift is known as “*Zemat*” in the Zay Community  
 47. “*Abole*”- is a type of special boat made up of papyrus plant. The Zay community, use this kind of boat for carrying the bride during the wedding ceremony.

48. Interview with Ato Eshetu Beresa and Ato Gebisa Tufa on 06 and 23 March 2020 in Gelila Island and Wolda-Mekdela kebele.

49. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Islan.

ኡኔ መልከማኑ ነዮ	Pleas comemy brother that handsome for you to be gone;
በፊረሽ ዳማ ነዮ ነዮ	Please come onride back to me by that <i>Dama horse</i>
ኡድም ኡድድቤሾ ነዮ	You wouldn't have to face any problem
ዳጉሳይ ድልብኑ ነዮ	The <i>Dagusa</i> is filled in the silo
ኡኔ ያረሴይ ሊትቢዩ	You would feast on what my brother harvested

The family awaits the company that accompanied the bride’s trip until they return home. Elderly women and family members lay down rag made of the livestock hide or “*Kurbet mentaf*” on which the newlyweds would seat. According to oral history informant<sup>50</sup>, When the newlyweds and their crowd arrive the family would have them seated in the rag and start dancing encircling them and singing the song called “*Zewoyera Zewoyera*”. They also perform deffirent songs. One of oral history informant performs the sing a song called “*Yebhereto*” with the following verses:

In Zay language	English Translation
የበሀሬቶ የበሀሬቶ የነፍሴቶ	You are the first born, yes you are and you are my life
ጌያይ ደርማ የበሬቶ	My gentleman, indeed you are a special one
የ----(የነሳው ስም) ዘንባባ	Elegant as a palm tree (they call his clan name)
የውዳመኒዋይ ቦቆል ምስክነዋይ	His blessing is from his birth, go and fetch the mule for him
ኡቦሂይ ምን ቀበጠመል	You father have everything
ለኸር በስሪን ኡዲበሰመል	He has offered “Tej” everywhere to our muse. <sup>51</sup>

After this warm welcoming ceremony and the gifts brought by the incoming party, blessing ceremony will take place followed dinner feast. The community participants believed that, on the next day of the wedding ceremony, the best men of the bridegroom would take sign of the first physical consummation of the newlywed which is known as “*Yemserach*”<sup>52</sup>. Key informants explained that, on the third day of the wedding date, a naming ceremony will be held. This ceremony is known as “*Efit Meglecha*” in Zay. During the ceremony the bride would be presented presented, with her face covered in veil, in front of the relatives of her husband accompanies by the

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50. Interview with oral history informants Ato W/Michael Negewo, Ato Zewge Bedane Wro Biritu Geleto and Wro Kushe Gonder on 06 March, 07 and 28 April and 14 April in Welda-Mekdela kebele, Ziway Town, Debere-Tsiyon and Gelila Islands.  
51. This verse and song perform by one of my oral history informant Ato W/Cherkos Ture on 03 April 2020 in Debere-Tsiyon Island.  
52. “Yemserach” – mean the best men break the good news to the family of the bride that their daughter remained with her womanhood honor. This practice is well known in our country.

“Meris”. Members of the gathered family would take turns to unveil her veil and gives her name while presenting gifts.

According to the informants in the study community, on the fifth day after the wedding, a showering event, called “*Wetrat*” is held. As oral history informants explained that<sup>53</sup>, on this date the bridegroom go to the shore of the lake accompanied by the “*Meris*” and wash their bodies by the water of the lake. The bride on her part will have her body washed by the wife of the principal elder (*Ychegna Ayy or Yewel Abat*) and other women of the neighborhood with warm water mixed with butter and different aromatic leaves. This symbolizes their wish and blessing for her to bear children. Furthermore, the gifts of the dowry and other jewelries are taken out from a box and she would wear on the clothes and the jewelries in the presence of “*Ychegna Ayy*” and she will be groomed. Moreover, as key informant<sup>54</sup> elaborated that, on this day sister of the husband would serve “*Chechebsa*” in large “*Gebete*” (shallow tray made of wood) to the bridegroom (her brother) and the “*Meri*”. The people gathered would eat the “*Chechebsa*” and “*Cheko*” prepared by “*Ychegna Ayy*”. Based on the informants from the study community participant believed that, this date marks the end of the entire wedding ceremony.

According to the tradition of the Zay community, the bride would remain indoors for a year. She would not go to the market, funerals or other social gatherings. But she would attend the feasts prepared by the relatives and family members for celebration of the marriage she has consummated. As FGD-1 discussants<sup>55</sup> explained that, she would not work for this period and would remain under the care of her mother in law, and the entire family as well as the “*Edos*”.

In general, this part of this paper has attempted to describe the wedding ceremony of the Zay community starting from the betrothal process up to the day of wedding and events that follow after the wedding date. Moreover, it was observed that the Zay community considers marriage as symbol of honor and criteria for the purpose of one’s life. I believed that, the whole process to marriage is a demonstration of the community’s respect and acceptance on for girls of the community.

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53. Interview with oral history informants Ato Tesfaye Edeto and Memere G/Meskele Hirpo on 01 and 14 May 2020 in Debre-Tsion Island and Ziway Town.

54. Interview with Ato Gudeta Ruso on 19 March 2020 in Tsedecha Island.

55. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsion Island.

#### 4.1.2 FUNERAL CEREMONY IN ZAY COMMUNITY

There are different funeral and wake ceremonies in various cultures of Ethiopian society as well as societies across the world. In the case of Zay community, there are particulars of such events unique to the community as there are similarities that are shared with other cultures and communities. Among the events that takes place during funerals in the community include, different bravery and heroic lyrical recitals (*Fukera* and *Shilela*<sup>56</sup>) and the tradition of “*Musho*”<sup>57</sup> (Lyrical song of lament). However, as explained by FGD-1 and 2 discussants<sup>58</sup>, in Zay community this “*Musho*” process has a unique feature. The attendants would form a circle and recites the “*Musho*” verse while hopping and slapping their thighs. If the person who died is a popular person, the men would go out holding the different weapons, such as spear and shield, used by the dead person in remembrance of his bravery. If the person that passed way is an ordinary person, they simply shout out his bravery and his achievements without displaying any weapons of his.

According to key informants<sup>59</sup>, the “*Shelela*” and “*Fukera*”, during a funeral the men strides and leap from one point to another shouting and crying while calling the name of the dead person and they celebrate him by poems and melody. As FGD discussants<sup>60</sup> explained that in Zay community this tradition is common and the event commemorated by the song sang by the men as “*OO Olimensho... Olimmensho*”. Men who were close and who were affectionate towards the dead person would mourn by beating and whipping their chest to bleed with spiked plant called “*Kentefa*” to express their love for the person that passed away. Yarn to express their grief for the passing of a family member.

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56. The “*Shelela*” and “*Fukera*” recitals are common acts performed during war, funeral or wake services and other occasions and the recitals differ based on the occasion. but in the Zay community it has unique feature.

57. “*Musho*” is an act of expressing grief, common in most part of country, mostly by woman beating their chest and uttering melodic lyrics of sadness during the funeral of a person. The word *Musho* is used both in Amharic and Zay as well as some ethnic groups in our country.

58. This is based on FGD 1 and -2 that was conducted with fourteen informants on 26 January and 13 March 2020 in Welda- Mokedela kebele and Debre-Tsiyon Island.

59. Interview with my key informants Ato Beru Bedasa, Ato Eshetu Beresa and Ato Gudeta Ruso on 27 January, 19 and 23 March 2020 in Islands of Debere-Tsiyon, Gelila and Tsedech.

60. This is based on FGD that was conducted with four group of informants on 26 January, 13 March, 12 and 26 April 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island, Welda- Mokedela kebele, Ziway Town and Bochesa Kebele.

As Key informants<sup>61</sup> describe that, since it is considered that the grief of a wife is even deeper when her husband dies, in addition to the above marks of sorrow, she would spread a skin of a sheep beneath the pillar of her hut and spend the entire sitting and sleeping there and cries every morning to mourn the death of her husband. As oral history informants<sup>62</sup> argue that, sitting beneath the pillar represents that, as a pillar is what supports the house, the husband was the pillar that held the family together. Therefore, one may immediately recognize a widow when going in to a hut where a woman is sitting on a spread skin of a sheep beneath the pillar or if the house is made of iron sheet with a rectangular shape, on the back corner of the room (*in front of the door wall corner*) seated on the sheep skin. Though, a husband may not mourn the death of his wife sitting on a skin of a sheep, he would nevertheless mourn her death for an entire year.

According to the Zay Community culture, when either a woman or a man passes away, the next day morning, during the burial ceremony and the wake ceremony different songs, are sang. As my key informants described that, the following are some of the song being sang when a married woman/man passes away after the last breath has stopped;

<b>In Zay language</b>	<b>English Translation</b>
<i>በጋርሂይ ዋዕራሬዎ ቦልቢ</i>	Not that you have passed away, strangers put their hand in the house.
<i>በጋርኼህ ዋዕራሬዎ ቦልቢ</i>	Now that you have gone (for woman) strangers put their hand in the house. <sup>63</sup>

In addition, my key informants also explained that, the next day after the death of the person the song are sang as follows:

<b>In Zay language</b>	<b>English Translation</b>
<i>አላሀይዎ አይክኛ አንደርሂይ</i>	Are healed' How is your morning? Or Have you perished (for a man)

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61. Interview with my key informants Ato Kabeto Hireso, Ato Tesfaye Dinqi and Wro Welela Dadi on 27 January, 05 and 22 April 2020 in Debere-Tsiyon Island and Bochesa Kebele.

62. Interview with Ato Tesfaye Edewo, Ato Tsegaye Boku, Ato Zeru Barke on 01 May, 02 and 06 June 2020 on Debere-Tsiyon Island, Meki and Ziway Town.

63. Interview with my key informants Wro Roman Mia and Wro Welela Dadi on 27 January and 05 April 2020 in Debere-Tsiyon Island and Bochesa kebele.

**አላይሽዋ አይክኛ አንደርሂይ**

Are healed’ How is your morning? Or  
have you perished (for woman by changing the  
pronoun for feminine reference).<sup>65</sup>

The “*Musho*” songs for persons who die unmarried are different. On the other hand, as FGD-1<sup>66</sup> participants explained that, during the burial ceremony the “*Shilela*” and “*Fukera*” as well as the “*Musho*” sang for married person goes as follows:

**In Zay language**

**English Translation**

**አኦ አሊ መንሾ አሊመንሾ ቦይ መር**

Oh...I have cried and heartbroken hearing the bad news

**አኦ ቦራ ሃይላሎ**

Oh...my hear enflamed and you death burns my soul

**የዋሻ የዋሻ ንቦ ድሃሄ ማን ይሰብስቦ**

Oh , bee of the caves, who would gather your children

**ቲዋኅሽ ዋለማ አልሽሽ ላለማ**

He was braved and he praised not to give up

**ኤ አፈን አፈን**

But now, see him off

**ፊሪ ቦኤ ኢጂባቴ**

For the family could not hold him with their tars

**ሽረ ዋይ ገላሽ ቲባይ በላሽ**

Oh...your shining body has become prey of the earth (For a woman)

This and other songs of grief is and while the funeral ceremony is underway. After the funeral and returning to the house, friends and relatives comfort the family of the dead person and other events would take place in the days that follow.

**4.1.2.1 THE CONCLUSION OF GRIEF PERIOD (*TESKAR*)**

The word and the event of “*Teskar*<sup>67</sup>” is widely known and practiced across the different parts of our country. However the event has unique characteristic in Zay community. According to the study community participants argue that, if the person who died is either of the parents, the mourning period would last for a year and the “*teskar*” event is held on the one year commemoration of the death of the person. However, one of mykey informants<sup>68</sup> said that, the event is held on the 80<sup>th</sup> day if the person who died is son or a daughter/ accordingly to the

65. Ibid,

66. This is based on FGD1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shuguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island.

67. “*Teskar*”- memoreal ceremony for did person

68. Interview with Ato Firafis Nebi on 19 March 2020 in Ziway Town.

tradition a tent is erected and people would go to the grave of the person being mourned and a prayer for the 80<sup>th</sup> day would be held and inaugurate the tomb stone built on the grave. Afterwards they would return to the house and eat and drink on the “*Zeker*”<sup>69</sup> prepared for the occasion and comfort the family. The local elders and relatives advise the family to end their grief and return to their normal life.

In this ceremony, after the local elders and relatives comfort and advise the family, hats worn by the father, sons, uncles and male relatives and the black colored hair cover worn by the mother, daughters, uncles and female relatives is taken off and all of these cloths and symbols of grief are torn to pieces and stomped by the elders, rubbed with a dirt and finally a water is poured on the items. According to oral history informants<sup>70</sup> described that, this represent the elder’s advise to the grieving family saying “***Let your grief be dissolved in the dirt and let you sorrow be washed away and end***”. Then after, all of the grieving family members would change their black clothes and the woman would be made to wear a “*Netela*” (Cotton yarn made thin sheet) and the men wear “*Gabi*” (Cotton yarn made thick sheet) and the elders take turn to bless the family, the traditional drink served and the butter served a small plate or bowl is called “*Ashiche*” in Zay.

According to FGD-1 and 2 discussants<sup>71</sup>, after the blessing ends, the youngest daughter of the family would hold the “*Ashiche*”<sup>72</sup> and the father dip his finger in to the “*Ashiche*” and apply the “*Ashiche*” in the chest and forehead of his daughter and tells her to end stop mourning and bless her womb to bear a child. The girl would then kiss the forehead and head her father and dip her finger in to the putter and apply “*Ashiche*” in to his forehead and the middle of his head and turn to her mother and repeat the same process with her mother and goes to her sisters, brothers, elders and all attendants to apply the “*Ashiche*” on their heads. According to oral history informant<sup>73</sup>, this represents “***You have grieved with us and you are heartbroken because of the grief and your head has been drained. But now it all over and let the year to come be prosperous***”. According to the Zay culture, applying “*Ashiche*” is a sign of ending grief. Finally,

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69. “*Zeker*”- food and drinking in the ceremony of teskar.

70. Interview with oral history informa Memere G/Meskele Hirpo and Ato Tesfaye Edeto on 01 and 14 May in Debere-Tsiyon Islan and Ziway Town.

71. This is based on FGD 1 and -2 that was conducted with fourteen informants on 26 January and 13March 2020 in Welda- Mekedela kebele and Debre-Tsiyon Island.

72. “*Ashiche*” is butter

73, Interview with oral history informans Memere G/Meskele Hirpo and Ato Tesfaye Edeto on 01 and 14 May in Debere-Tsiyon Islan and Ziway Town.

the ceremony is concluded by eating prepared for the event. This event also serves as an opportunity to reconcile any dispute or grudge that may be between family members or with others.



During the field work, I had the chance to attend the “*Teskar*” ceremony in the southern tip of *Debre-tsiyon* Island prepared by the family of a person who was called Mr. Aklilu Ordofa. The family had lost a son and a ceremony of ending grief (80<sup>th</sup> day commemoration) was being held. By remind myself of the information I have gathered which I described above, I have followed each process of the ceremony and I noticed that each of the attendants gave birr 20 and above, by having his/her names registered, to assist the family for the expense incurred to organize the event. In the event, I witnessed as the elders gathered around alone to comfort the family and summoned the family and all the attendants of the event in to the tent. The mother was seated in a carpet surrounded by the neighborhood women and the other attendants and family members were seated in a bench. Then, elders rose and introduced themselves, where they came from, their family and their clan and other personal details. They made different speeches, calling the family to end their grief. The following is among the speeches made by one of the community elders:

*“It was God who took the boy. So you should stop mourning him and pray to God to bless the others. It was all of us who lost the boy not only you. He was our son too. But God does what He will. Grief has no fruit. Not only taking away the hats and our grieving clothes, we should clean our mind from it too. We are seeing how the epidemic*

*of our time, Corona, is taking the lives of many. We are seeing people being buried without anyone to mourn their death and without descent ceremony. This is a sign to us to return to ourselves. You have taken care of him while he was sick and did what you had to do. But God only does what he wills. So it is only proper for you to stop your grief”.*<sup>74</sup>

In the event where I attended<sup>75</sup>, the elders, after speaking the family with advising and words of comforts, the elders asked “*If there is any one of you in the family who is at odd with other family member or hold grudge with one another of neighbors, speak now and if there is a problems let us solve it together*”. One of the neighbor’s elder told the crowd that there is conflict between Mr. Aklilu and one of his sons. Mr. Aklilu was given the opportunity to speak every detail of the truth and Mr. Aklilu spoke of the conflict between him and his son. Then after, the elders resolved the problem and the son rose and kissed the knee and forehead of his father and hugged, they were reconciled. Mr. Aklilu wife also told another conflict that Mr. Aklilu further confessed the fight between him and his brothers due to the inheritance land. They deliberated on the issue for an extended period of time and finally the issue of the inheritance land was resolved in traditiona wayin the presence of relatives and three elders were assigned to oversee the division of the land according to the will left. Finally, after eating and drinking, the tent was disassembled and the ceremony ended.

In general, in the Zay Community when a person passes away, there are difference events that takes place and the grief period last from 80 days up to one year. My attendance in the grief ending ceremony has made it possible to take personal account of the actual ceremony and I was able to verify the information I collected on the event.

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74. The speeches made by one of the great community elder Aba boku, who cme from Dugeda woreda Welda-Mekedela kebele Zay community on 03 May 2020 in Debere-Tsiyon Island. He also one of the rerepresentatives of conflict retholition beetwen Mareqo and Meska.

75. I observed and attend the “*Teskar*” ceremony in the southern tip of *Debre-tsiyon* Island at the Mr. Aklilu Ordofas family on 02-04 May 2020 in Debere-Tsiyon Island.

### 4.1.3 THE *MESKEL* HOLIDAY CEREMONY

The Meskel holiday has more of cultural aspect in some parts of Ethiopia (for example, the Gurage ethnic group). The reason for the holiday is mainly to commemorate the finding of the true holy cross which is believed that Christ was crucified on and it colorfully celebrated by the Catholic and Orthodox Tewahido Church. The ceremony is registered as one of the intangible heritages of the world. In Zay Community, in addition to being a religious ceremony, the holiday has significance in terms of oral tradition and culture and it is the major events with which the identity, culture and custom of the community is expressed by. Thus, this research has made an in depth look at the “*Meskel*” holiday starting from the preparation stage until the actual date of the holiday including the social and cultural processes and activities related with the holiday. In Zay Community the *Meskel* holiday is observed from September 27 up to October 9.



*“Demera”*

According to FGD-4<sup>76</sup> discussants explained that, starting from the month of September first, all members of community would bring piles of wood, to be used to make the *Damera*<sup>77</sup> (Bone fire) when returning from their farms and daily business to their home. The piles of wood gathers in time would make it possible to build the *Damera* as enough would be available. The *Demera* is

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76. This is based on FGD-4 that was conducted with Ato Alemayew Qabeto, Ato Ashnafi Gutu, Ato Chala Yebo, Ato Habte Bersa, Ato Jote Telila, Wro Addis Bekele and Wro Mulu Guye on 12 April 2020 in Bochesa rural kebele

77. “*Damera*”- piles of wood gathers and make to towering pyramid of bundles of eucalypts.(HCA, 2012E.C)

torched at the top of the islands in a place called “*Sekela (Shengo)*”. Therefore, as oral history informants<sup>78</sup> explained that, the *Damera* is torched in three separate occasions. The first ceremony is held, according to the tradition of the Orthodox Tewahido and Catholic Church, on the evening of September 16 at the compound of the church and the ceremony is exclusively religious. The study community participants believed that, the second and the main part of the holiday is held on September 27 at dawn and there are different cultural events leading to the beginning of the holiday and it is the day that members of the Zay Community expected with high enthusiasm and energy. Regarding to this, one of my oral history informants explained as follows;

*“The reason why this day is selected attribute to the belief by the community that crosses was found exactly at dawn on the 17<sup>th</sup> in E.C. Thus an elder who first lit the Demera is selected earlier and the selected and the selected elder would have messengers who tour around the homes of everyone blowing horns and declare in Zay ‘Wetahunu wete....wetahunu wete.....wetahunu wete....mesekele itiechuse gome weche wtahunu wete’ which is translated in to ‘Come out.....come out...Meskel has arrived.....Damera has arrived. I am to lit the Demera.....get your torches (chebo) and follow me’. Upon hearing this message the people would come out holding tourcehs and gather at the Shengo and await the person who is selected to light the Damera”.*<sup>79</sup>

According to oral history informants<sup>80</sup>, when the selected person reaches to the *Shengo*, the elders and religious leaders with him would express words of admiration and honor about the *Damera*, the bravery of the people, and bless the wise and popular persons. As key informants<sup>81</sup> described that, this blessing event, which is done in melodic praise, is called “*Sumsuma*”. Moreover, according to FGD-1 discussants<sup>82</sup> explained that, after the blessing, the selected person circles the *Damera* three times holding his torch and light the *Damera* and the rest of the people would add their torches in to the *Damera*. The *Damera* would be burning with high and graceful flames. All the people gathered would shout in ululation and sing as well as dance in traditional rhythms and songs. The young and adolescents would dance and party and sing

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78. Interview with oral history informant Ato Assefa Teji, Memire G/Meskel Hirpo and Wro Kushe Gonder on 05 March, 28 April, and 14 May 2020 on Bochesa kebele, Debere-Tsion and Gelila Islands.

79. Interview with oral history informant Ato Kabeto Tola on 13 March 2020 in Meki Town.

80. Interview with Ato W/Michael Negewo, Ato Zewge Bedane and Decon Tebabu Meskele on 06 March and 14 May 2020 in Tedecha Island, Welda-Mekedela rural kebele and Ziway Town.

81. Interview with my key informant Ato Gabiso Tufa on 06 March 2020 in Welda-Mekedela kebele

82. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsion Islan

different song when the *Damera*s lighted in to flames. Among the songs, my oral history informant presented the following songs:

<b>In Zay language</b>	<b>English Translation</b>
<i>አረሬ አረሬ ፋቂ በደረት በረሬ</i>	When the torch is lighted the birds would fly on the sky
<i>ለመስቀል ያጂጂኔይ ለቀሪጣ ያጂጃን</i>	Thank you for gathering us for this <i>meskel</i> and bless us for the future the same
<i>ያመስቀል ሰኸል ወቅነጥ ወቁባት</i>	Over fire the lighted the <i>Meskel Demera</i> let us leap over and rub the ashes on to ourselves
<i>እሼት ሞጥበስ</i>	Let us roast fresh crop in the fire of the <i>Demera</i> . <sup>83</sup>

They also demonstrate what they sing at the site of the *Demera*. Furthermore, the FGD<sup>84</sup> discussants argue that, according to the Zay culture it is frowned up on to light *Demera* and eat the holiday feasts alone at a family level and due to this custom, when the *Demera* ceremony is over all the people to their areas of residences, and light the *Demeral* built based on their respective clan after announcing blessing and share the foods prepared together and celebrate the holiday by dancing, cheering and elation and this is the third part of the holiday celebration.



**Burning torches (*chebo*)**

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83. Interview with Ato Kabeto Tola and Ato W/Michael Negewo 06 and 13 March 2020 in Meki Town and Welda-Mekedela kebele. they perform the poem and the song.

84. This is based on FGD that was conducted with four group of informants on 26 January, 13 March, 12 and 26 April 2020 in Debre-Tsion Island, Welda- Mekedela kebele, Ziway Town and Bochesa Kebele.

Moreover, according to oral history informant<sup>85</sup> elucidate that, after September the 27<sup>th</sup> the community celebrates the holiday by one clan blessing another, visiting relatives and friends and unmarried young people and adolescents gather every night at the *Sekela* or the *Shengo* where the main *Demera* ceremony was celebrated and the girls and boys would dance, cheer, chat and enjoy themselves by lighting fire and show their skill of singing. The other adults and married young people would attend this event until the end of the holiday season that is October 9<sup>th</sup>. Since the date the *Demera* has been lighted, girls would gather each day and sing different songs. Some of the lyrics of the songs is presented by FGD-1 informants as follows:

<b>In Zay language</b>	<b>English Translation</b>
<b>እንጂ ቶ ሰሌና እንጂት ተዘኛቶ ሰሌና</b>	The people are seen gathered as swarm of bees in the break of dawn
<b>እንጂት አጉብሮ በቤቶ በሮ አርግፍንን ባሌ</b>	Oh people, come and save us in the turf of the lords
<b>ሽምነልባቱ በሰላሳ ሽምነልባት ለግሬ። በሰላለርግሬ።</b>	Let your necklace shine you and show it to all and let me put the <i>Sholla</i> seeds away for you
<b>ያልሞተንግሽዬ ሆዬ የመስቀሎዬ ኢሺሽ አቡርሽዬ</b>	One who lives would see this holiday so let me put a butter on your head
<b>እጅቶ እጅቶ የመስላዬ ሻሽ አሮ በደፍለጅ ወከፍ አይንከኝ</b>	So fresh is everything, let the sprinkles of the <i>Meskle</i> rain refrain from your hair
<b>አሮ አሮ በሸማ አሮ በሸማዬ</b>	My shining one... go ahead and let me hide on your <i>shema</i>
<b>አሮ አሮ በሸማ ቲሾ ተጅማዬ</b>	here comers that tanned boy let me hide behind your cloak. <sup>86</sup>

They all sing in his lyrics very popular *Meskel* songs among the Zay community. According to key informants<sup>87</sup> argue that, one the reason for the popularity of this holiday among the community is that it is a season that young people betroth each other. According to the custom, a young boy would eye a girl of his choice during the dancing and party and after investigating her

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85. Interview with Memere G/Meskele Hirpo and Ato Tesfaye Edeto on 01 and 14 May in Debere-Tsiyon Islan and Ziway Town.  
 86. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Islan.  
 87. Interview with key informants Ato Aleme Hailu and Ato Eshetu Beresa on 23 March and 12 May 2020 in Gelila Island and Ziway Town.

clan, he would inform his intent to his family to betroth the girl so they would send a mediators (*Shimagele*) to her family. The other reason is that, as oral informant and FGD-2 participants<sup>88</sup> elaborated that, though the custom prohibits betrothed couples from seeing one another until the date of their engagement, they may attend this dancing and celebration which may create a chance to see each other. This happens when friends of the man shows him his betrothed among the crowd.

However, is she get a hint from the songs being chanted that he is around she would immediately hide and get away from the area. If she is in middle of dancing, she would put her head down. She also does the same thing to get a pick of the man she betrothed for. Thus, Due to this reason, couples who are destined to be married are usually seen dressed to impress and groomed.

#### 4.1.3.1 DAY OF “*HIBRETE MIRKUZ*” AND “*ASHENBEYE*”

The study community participants described that, one of the events that take place in during the *Meskel* holiday season is the “*Hibrete Mirkuz*”<sup>89</sup> day which falls on October 1<sup>st</sup>. As oral history<sup>90</sup> informants explained that, the day is celebrated with huge feast and it is the day that the elderly and respected persons gathered and different events take place. Moreover, the day is the first day newly married women appear in public and it is an occasion for people to examine and scrutinize how the newly married woman has been treated and taken care during her bridal time. This is the day newly married women appear at their best groomed and clothed with impressive attire. In addition, since it is the same day when the husband and wife took a peek of each other before they were married and it signifies the hiding of from public which lasted for a year, the day is expected with huge excitement by couples embarking on a life of marriage.

Furthermore, As FGD discussants<sup>91</sup> said that, during the event youngsters who are single would sing and dance with songs with verses which recite in Zay “*ይብርተ መርኩዝ ኣብርሃም እቤዮ*”

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88. This is based on FGD-2 that was conducted with Ato Abu Golji, Ato Balcha Ajiero, Ato Degaga Ararso, Ato Edewo Hirpo, Ato G/meskele Negewo, Ato Jambo Dinke, and Ato Niguse Balcha on 13 March 2020 in Dugda woreda Welda-Mekdela kebel.

89. “*Hibrete Mirkuz*” In Zay “*Hiber*” means an old person whereas “*Merkuz*” means a cane. Thus, “*Hibrete Mirkuz*” is a reference to indicate that the elderly has arrived to “*Sekela*” for blessing. In short it is praising and blessing date.

90. Interview with oral history informant Ato Biru Insene, Ato Kabeto Ato Tesfaye Edeto, Ato Zewge Bedane and Wro Kushe Gonder on 13 March, 28 March, 01 and 14 May 2020 in Gelila Island, Meki and Ziway Town.

91. This is based on FGD that was conducted with four group of informants on 26 January, 13 March, 12 and 26 April 2020 in Debre-Tsion Island, Welda- Mekedela kebele, Ziway Town and Bochesa Kebele.

means, “*let us play and cheer for today is the day of Meskle*”. On this day the elderly and respected figures would assess how newlyweds have been during their honeymoon and communicate a message to them to do good deed when they join the community and to raise their children according to the religion and custom. In addition, this is the date the elderly praise God for having them see the day. In general, this day of “*Hibrete merku*” is a day dedicated for praising of God and blessing. The *Meskel* holiday season is concluded in the Zay Community, by the closing event that is held on the October 9 and the day is called “*Ashenbeye*”. “*Ashenbeye*” means, Farwell and on this date after the elderly and respected figures open the event by blessing, eating and enjoying the feast would begin and different dancing and traditional shows us presented.

According to oral history informant<sup>92</sup>, explained that, on this date young people who are betrothed for marriage express sadness of leaving their friends by hugging and crying over the shoulders of their friends. They would be sad because, this time next year, they would all leave their childhood and young lives and become new brides and bridegroom. This is the last date that they would dance and cheer as singles. To sum-up, at the end of the event the elderly, who are have significant place and regard by the community would send out a message well which and bless the people and the land marking the end of the holiday that lasted for the last 14 days.

#### **4.1.4 TRADITIONAL ITEMS, FOODS AND ATTIRES OF THE ZAY COMMUNITY**

Similar to people across the world in different cultures with their distinct clothing, tools, household items and variety of foods which are unique to each community, we may found such features shared with other communities. In this regard, the clothing, artifacts, tools and foods forming the daily life and culture of the Zay Community may be found in other ethnic groups. This proves to us the intermingling and mixing of the culture and way of life of the Zay people with other cultures.

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92. Interview with oral history informant Ato Assefa Teji on 05 March 2020 in Bochesa kebele

#### 4.1.4.1 TRADITIONAL CLOTHES AND CARPET

According to key informants<sup>93</sup>, The Zay community is commonly accustomed to wearing cotton made outfits owing to the fact that cotton is grown in the islands. The informants further explained, it is believed that the profession of weaving was brought by the Amhara people who settled from the Menz area of North Shewa in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. As described by oral history informant, among the main types of clothes made and worn by the community includes the following:

- “*Kentiba*”- is cotton woven white suit with the legging of the pants tight on the legs with wider and puffed thigh part completed with white coat (the cloth is commonly known as *Tenefanef*). The suit has a type of cloak made of cotton called *Gabi*. This cloth is mostly worn by the middle aged men and the elderly.
- “*Buluko*”- is a sheet of cloth made of thick cotton yarn, similar to a blanket and it widely common within the Oromo ethnic group.
- “*Wendebit*”- is colorful red color cotton made top wear with different pattern of weaving. This cloth is usually given as dowry to brides for their wedding.
- “*Gabi*”- is a white sheet of cotton made fabric with decorative hem with large and is worn in different occasions.
- “*Netela*”- is a white cotton made thin sheet of fabric worn by woman when going for different events or as casual wear.
- “*Shema*” is cotton made white dress with decorative hem worn by woman.
- “*Kurebet*”; is animal skin made rag or mat used as carpet of bed.

However, except “*Wendebit*”, all the foregoing listed clothes and the *Kurbet* mat and the red edged cloth can be found in other areas and since the red color has special consideration in the community, the community is identified with wearing red edged clothes.

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93. Interview with Ato Aleme Hailu, Ato Beru Bedasa and Ato Gebiso Tufa on 27 January, 06 March and 12 May 2020 in Welda-Mekedela kebele, Debere-Tsiyon Island and Ziway Town.

#### 4.1.4.2 TRADITIONAL FOOD AND DRINKS

According to FGD discussants<sup>94</sup> described that, the following are cultural foods and drinks to the people of Zay:

- “*Fish*”- this is the staple food of the community and is prepared in different ways including smoked, stewed, roasted and as a soup.
- “*Enjera*”- is flat bread made of *Teff* flour and is eaten with “*wot*” (stew).
- “*Genfo*”- is a porridge made of barley flour and is eaten with butter and pepper.
- “*Derek Kita*”- is flay parched bread made of *Teff* flour with small round shape and in the community full “*Kita*” is called “*Kita*” and half of it is called “*Sedek*” while  $\frac{1}{4}$  of it is called “*Anza*”(explained by my key informant *WeldeMichael*).
- “*Huthut*”, also called “*Chechebsa* in *Oromifaa*” is a snack made from flour of wheat or maize made from broken flat bread dipped with butter. It is served in different events.
- “*Tela*”- is malt fermented traditional beer.
- “*Chuko*”- the word is an *Oromiffa* word and it is a snack made with flour of barley mixed with ample amount of butter and is served during big holidays and events. As *kabeto* explained that, it was adopted from the Oromo ethnic group.
- “*Atemok*” or “*Chunko*”: is non-malt drink brewed from *Dagusa*.

The foregoing are the major types of food and drinks of the Zay Community. However, fish and some of the above foods and drinks are consumed in other communities and the community proud itself for “*Atemok*” being one of a kind drink.



*fish*

94. This is based on FGD that was conducted with four group of informants on 26 January, 13 March, 12 and 26 April 2020 in Debre-Tsion Island, Welda- Mokedela kebele, Ziway Town and Bochesa Kebele.

#### 4.1.4.3 TRADITIONAL TOOLS AND ITEMS

The community mostly uses tools and items made of clay, *Sendedo* and *Sebe*, wood, *Embila* and other materials. Therefore, FGD-1 and 2 discussants<sup>95</sup> described the following traditional tools and items are among those used on regular basis by the community:

- “*Yebela*”:- is a type of boat made of “*Embila*” (a grass family plant) that grown in the lake. It is a one man ride canoe in which the person’s paddles it by stretching his leg in to one end of the canoe. It is used for fishing and transport.
- “*Metefia*”:- is an oar made of wood used to paddle for “*Yebela*” canoe.
- “*Menteko*”:- is a hook used for fishing and is widely used in many areas.
- “*Mereb*”:- is a strong net made of braided rope used for fishing.
- “*Yedengay Wofecho*”:-is elliptical shaped stone with sloped feature in the front and thick anterior and flat surface used to crush cereal, seeds by using “*mej*” which is the mobile counterpart that crushes the seeds by pressing and moving against the *Dengay Wefeshco*.
- “*Shekina*”:- is a cup made of “*kel*” (calabash) used for drinking *Tella*.
- “*Dulo*” :-is a cup used for present *Dagusa* brewed *Tella* for blessing occasions.
- “*Debegnit*”:- is a traditional cereal container silo.
- “*Wechit*”:- is bowl made of wood decorated with skin and embroider used for serving *Chechebsa*, *Chuko* and *Genfo*.
- “*Kolomeshosh/Chechi*”;- is legged and flat surfaced tray/table that only the head of the family (the husband) would use to eat and is hanged in to wall after he ate his meal. This item is removed from the wall only when he passes away.
- “*Sinchegn*”:-is a closet made of wood with narrow moth used for storing clothes of brides
- “*Sifet*”;- includes households items and utensils made of *sindedo* grass decorated with different colors and patterns. It is made by women. Among some *sifets*: *Mesob* (bread and *enjora* storing compartment), *Kolomeshosh*, *Mesob werk*(a gift given to newlyweds), *Sefed* and different food and *Kolo* (roasted cereal snack serving plate).

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95. This is based on FGD 1 and -2 that was conducted with fourteen informants on 26 January and 13 March 2020 in Welda- Makedela kebele and Debre-Tsiyon Island.

Thus, “*Dulo*”, “*Kolomeshoshe/Chechi*” and “*Schagn*” are special items unique to the Zay Community while *Yebela* canoe and *Metefia* can be found in Lak Bahir Dar. Though the other items are found in some areas as well, they are made different by the Zay Community. Weaving and agricultural tools and equipment’s are also found in the community.



**“*Yebela*” boat and “*Metefia*”**

**“*Yedengay Wofecho*”**



**Housboldes made “*mesob werk*”**

**“*sefed*”**

**“*Wechit*”**

## **4.2 SOCIO-CULTURAL INTERACTION OF ZAY COMMUNITY WITH THE NEIGHBORING RURAL AND URBAN PEOPLE, AND AMONG THEMSELVES**

### **4.2.1 SOCIO-CULTURAL INTERACTION AMONG THEMSELVES**

Looking at the Zay Community's origin, we find that the very fabric of the community's features are results of the mixture and merger of different language, religions, cultural systems and identities which created one unique and uniform community with its own distinctive social, cultural, economical and political dynamics which survived in the islands generations from generations. This merger and composition of different characteristics, it seems, the major source of solidarity and harmony of the Zay Community. Similarly, Heid (2008) illustrated that Culture determined by people's interaction with family, community and others. Thus, based on extended study during my field observation, I was able to extensively assess the dynamics of one group (clan) with another one dwelling in a different location in the islands as well as other the study area and the cohesion and the sense of unity between of this remarkable community. As I have tried to pointed out in the preceding sections of this paper, there are number of clans within the Zay community with their own mediation procedures and systems which are mainly administered and led by the clan elders and who are also responsible to coordinate and lead the community's social, economical and political aspects and resolving problems faced by the community from time to time. This has contributed in the reinforcement of interaction between distinct groups within the Zay community and such practices that are based on mutual interest and livelihood remains widely practiced to this date paving the way for the strong social and cultural interaction and bond between the groups.

In the field, I observed that is an everyday and common practice in the community share unfortunate and triumphant times together and collectively work in farming, building terraces, water travel, fishing, building of houses, environmental protection and conservation and share many of the tasks in their social life with strong sense of solidarity and culture of helping one another. According to FGD participants<sup>96</sup>, in the areas of division of tasks, the men are often

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96. This is based on FGD that was conducted with four group of informants on 26 January, 13 March, 12 and 26 April 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island, Welda- Makedela kebele, Ziway Town and Bochesa Kebele.

responsible for much of the works while the women are expected with fewer burdens as they are very much respected within the community. The men are responsible for paddling a canoe or a boat, fishing, fetching the different types of grasses (*Fila*, *Bofefe* and *Embila*) that grow near the shores of the lake, tending grazing livestock, farming, terrace building, fetching water and milking cows (this is unique to the islands only), fetching wood for fuel and house building, participate as member of mediation panel and other tasks. On the other hand, women are given simpler tasks such as, making thread by spinning cotton, grinding cereals or have cereals ground in a grinding meal, cooking, brewing *Tella*, taking care of children and any other household chores, assisting neighbors with tasks in particular during funeral events and critical problems. As key informants<sup>97</sup> explained that, such assistance might include material and financial assistance in addition to labor. Furthermore, oral history informant<sup>98</sup> stated that, the responsibility of raising children disciplined with the appropriate moral conscious is also shared by the local community in addition to the parents. This collective endeavor in particular demonstrates the community's strong interaction and integration in resolving problem together as well as institutionalized system of raising children with the appropriate discipline to produce productive generation equipped with ethical behavior.

Based on my field work I have observed that families both within the Islands and the kebeles located at the shores of the lake living very close to each other due to the fact that the areas are small in size helping one family to be come closer with another one and to observe almost all activities of neighbors. This has contributed in the creation strong bonds between families living and particular area. In line with this, FGD-4 informants<sup>99</sup> said that, due to the fact Christianity (Orthodox Tewahido) is the only religion practiced by all groups in the Zay community; it has highly contributed for their strong social cohesion between themselves. This is because; the origin of the community has religious backgrounds and the groups of the community meet in the annual religious holidays and festivities and on Sundays in addition to the formal gatherings

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97. Interview with Ato Gudeta Ruso and Wro. Welela Dadi on 19 March and 05 April 2020 in Gelila and Debere-Tsiyon Islands.

98. Interview with oral history informants Ato Kabeteo Tola and Decon Tebebu Meskele on 13 March and 14 May 2020 in Meki Town and Tsedecha Island.

99. This is based on FGD-4 that was conducted with Ato Alemayew Qabeto, Ato Ashnafi Gutu, Ato Chala Yebo, Ato Habte Bersa, Ato Jote Telila, Wro Addis Bekele and Wro Mulu Guye on 12 April 2020 in Bochesa rural kebele

called “*Tsiwa*<sup>100</sup> and *Mahaber*<sup>101</sup>” that takes on monthly basis which is normally attended by only women. Being members of the church has caused the all members of the Zay Community to actively participate in any issues concerning the church and to become informed and aware of current problems and seek solutions for such problems. Furthermore, this religion aspect contributed in creating everlasting and trust based interaction and bond of the Zay community including their communities living outside the islands around the shores of the lake.

Marriage, as I have noted earlier, is allowed between prospective couples after tracing the genealogy on the father’s side of both the man and the woman and the marriage would be approved if the it is found either the man or the woman do not have ancestral relation with one another. The couple may be allowed to marry if even if they may have second bloodline relations as long as they are not from the same clan. A boy could marry a girl who is from second bloodline descent of his close relative. Oral history informant elaborately explained as follows:

*let’s take Mr. X and Ms. Y. let’s say “A” and “B” are sister, and “A” is the daughter of “C” and “C” is gives birth of the daughter we named “Y” and “B” gives birth to daughter we could name “E” who would give birth to a boy named “X”. Finally “X” marries “Y” according to the custom. Accordingly the wife of Mr. “X” would be the daughter in law of “E” while “E”, mother of Mr. “X”, would be aunt to “Ms. Y”. Similarly “C” would be aunt to “X” and Mr. “X” would become the son in law to “C”<sup>102</sup>*

In this context, if we follow the birth line of the persons we described, we find out a marriage between second cousins though they are from different clans but with blood relation with one another. This type of marriage arrangement is still widely practiced which has helped to tie divorce while creating strong cultural and social bond. To this end, we can learn and understand from this study that the strong unity and integration of the community is not only the result of the members of the community with their second or above blood relatives contributing for low rate of culture of helping one another and sharing their traditions and customs, but also as the result of the arrangement of marriage links between not so distant blood relatives.

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100. “*Tsiwa*”- is the turn of an individual to celebrate the *mahaber* by providing food and drink for its members.

101. “*Mahaber*”-a voluntary religions association organized around a parish church in honor of chosen saint and members take turns providing food and drink.(Guday 2005:212).

102. Interview with Ato W/cherkos Ture and Ato Zewge Bedane on 03 April and 14 May 2020 in Debere-Tsiyon Island and Ziway Town

#### 4.2.2 INTERACTION WITH OTHER SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

As we have tried to explain in the above paragraphs, the strong bond and interaction of the Zay community within themselves, has helped to lay grounds for establishment of harmony and affirmative interaction with other communities and people living in the surround areas of the lake. This interaction is not an event of recent times, but it dates back and is related with their historical settlement of the Zay community. We have discussed in Chapter Two that before settlers came from the northern part of the country in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century and settled in the islands, there were already settlers in *Sengo* and *Herera kebele* of the Zeway-Dugda Woreda and other communities that were already living around the shores of the Lake, where is the Town of Ziway was established. This shows that how the Zay community was able to settle in to the islands and mixed with the indigenous people of the *Aregn/Ager* clans. This fact is also evidence demonstrating the fact that the social interaction of the Zay community has existed for long lines of generations.

Oral-history informants stated that<sup>103</sup>, after dwelling on the Islands, members of the Zay community started to move from the Islands to the areas around the shores of the lake started to interact and create ties with other communities. This movement accelerated in particular in the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the times of Menelik II and Emperor Hailesilassie when members of the community began settling permanently in *Bochesa*, *Herera* and *Welda-Mekdela*. Such movement greatly contributed for the social, cultural and economic ties between the Zay community and other communities outside the Islands. Furthermore, members of the Zay community who were living in the Islands began mix with local Oromo people (in particular with the *Jile* Oromos) through marriage and child adoption “*Gudifecha*”<sup>104</sup> creating assimilation of language and culture between the two communities. The fact that the *Bochesa kebele* Oromo people called the Zay community as “*Laqi*” the magnitude of the interaction and bond with the Zay Community which helped in creating common economical interest of trade and agriculture.

Furthermore, as key informants<sup>105</sup> stated that the movement of the Zay community out of the Islands due to education, work and other causes, resulted in permanent settlement in other areas

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103. Interview with oral history informant Ato Guye Tuse, Ato Midagi Segni, and Ato W/cherkos Ture on 03 and 12 April, and 17 June 2020 in Dbere-Tsiyon and Tsedecha Islan, and Ziway Town.

104. “*Gudifecha*”-adoption

105. Interview with Ato Eshetu Beresa and Ato Gebisa Tufa on 06 and 23 March 2020 in Gelila Island and Welda-Mekedela kebele.

and assimilate other cultures which resulted in the creation of strong relation and interaction with peoples of other communities. Beside to this, FGD participants<sup>106</sup> elaborated their interaction with the neighborhood people during annual religious ceremonies and holidays as follows:

*Celebration of Tsion Mariam on Hidar 21 E.C; Asterio Mariam, In Tir 21 E.C and Lideta Mariam in Ginbot 1 E.C in Debre Tsiyon/Tulu Gudo/; Tir 28 Abraham Holiday on Tir(January)28 and Nehase 28 E.C in Debre Abraham/Tsedecha Island; Arbatu Ensesa holiday on Hidar 8E.C in Fundro /Gete Semani/, Kahinate Semay Holiday on Hidar 24E.C in the Island of Gelila; Tsion- Mariam holiday on Hidar 21 E.C in Debre-Sina Island, many people from the towns of Bochesa, Welda-Mekdela, Herera, Abura, Ziway and meki Town as well as from different area flock to the islands to attend the celebration of the holidays.*

As FGD-1<sup>107</sup> discussants furtherly elaborated that, the most notable of such type of events is the Holiday of Epiphany which is Held in January 21(Tire 11 E.C<sup>108</sup>) when the tabernacles of churches in the islands of *Gelila* and *Debre-Sina* are paraded ceremoniously to the plain field in *Bochesa* where the tabernacles joins their counter parts that arrived from the *Bochesa Medhanialem* and *Ziway St. Gabriel Churches* and celebrate the holiday together in jubilation and festivities attended and enjoyed by many people including residents of the islands that came to *Bochesa* accompanying the tabernacles of the churches of the islands. After the holiday is over and the tabernacles begin their journey back to the islands many of the residents of the areas surrounding the lake accompanies the tabernacles to their respective churches in the islands. I also attended such events. Therefore, the study area participants believed that due to this events the Zay Community has assumed numerous features of the social and cultural dynamics of the communities living in the towns and the communities in who live in the shores of the lake were also able to learn the cultures, norms and traditions of the Zay community which created mutual understanding and affirmative interaction between the Zay community and the other people living beyond the lake Ziway.

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106. This is based on FGD that was conducted with four group of informants on 26 January, 13 March, 12 and 26 April 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island, Welda- Mokedela kebele, Ziway Town and Bochesa Kebele.

107. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island.

108. E.C- mean Ethiopian calander.



***The zay community celebrating Holiday of Epiphany which is Held in January 21(Tire 11 E.C)***

The other reason that contributed for creation of everlasting and strong cohesion between the Zay community people and peoples of other communities is trade. It was more elaborated by one of my key informant as follows:

*Many of our people living in the islands often travel to the nearby towns in particular to the town of Meki and Ziway to trade or sale crops, goats or sheep and return to the islands after buying essential goods and items. The Zay people played significant role in spreading the culture of eating and inclusion of fish in the daily meals which created the business of supplying different types of fishes while establishing fruitful and mutually beneficial relation with other people living beyond the islands.<sup>109</sup>*

On the other hand, one of the FGD-2 partisipants noted the following reasons;

*The Bochesa and Welda- Mekdela Kebeles produces, in large quantity, different crops and vegetables, especially maize, onion, tomato and various breeds of cabbage and supply to the markets in the Ziway and meki towns and this has created establish continuous trade relation with other people and promote the culture and people of Zay Community as well as an oppportunity of the Zay People to learn about the dynamics of other peoples cultures and customs.<sup>110</sup>*

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109. Interview with my key informant Aleme Hailu on 12 May 2020 in Ziway Town.

110. The point that I took from the FGD-2 partisipant Ato Niguse Balcha on 13 March 2020 in Welda-Mekedela kebele.

Furthermore, as elaborated by FGD-1 discussants<sup>111</sup>, the community went further in utilizing this inter-relation with other people by changing their traditional canoes in to engine powered boats and accelerating their trade transactions as well as generating additional income by providing water transport services. This increased economical transaction also facilitated increasing interaction with other communities in addition to getting professional assistance from the Woreda's agriculture experts. To sum up, Looking as this regular interactions, the exchange created as the result of members of the Zay Community who supplies different products on the shores of the lake facilitated connection and integration with other people living in the nearby areas of the lake, contact with the Woreda's experts leading which led to establishment of strong economical, social and cultural assimilation and integration between the Zay Community and other peoples in the neighboring localities.

According to key informants<sup>112</sup>, the relationship between the Woreda and Zone Administrations, we find that the Zay community, since the time of *Derg*, ceased to independently administer itself and was incorporated in to the government of administrative organs of the towns surrounding the lake. Accordingly under the current structure the islands fall under the three *Woredas* (*Adami-Tulu Jido-Komblocha Woreda*, *Duduga Woreda* and *Ziway-Dugda Woreda*) of the Oromiya Regional State. As one of my oral history informant<sup>113</sup> elaborated that, the supports and services provided to the community from the Woreda's management, experts and Bureaus of different sectors in economical, political, educational, cultural, social and environmental aspects has enabled in the establishment and maintaining of affirmative relations, especially in economical aspects, between the Zay community and peoples of neighboring areas. Moreover, Members of the Zay community also have some participation in the politics of the surrounding areas. For example, as Mr. Kabeto Tola explained that:- "*Elders of the Zay community were among the delegates dispatched to mediate and resolve the conflict that occurred between the Meskan and Mareko people*". This is can be considered as an evidence of their participation in the politics of the locale. But, key informants argued that, the interaction and relationship of the

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111. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island.

112. Interview with key informants Ato Firafis Nebi and Ato Qabeto Hireso on 27 January and 19 March 2020 in Bochesa kebele and Ziway Town.

113. Interview with oral history informant Ato Tsegaye Boku on 06 Jun 2020 in Meki Town.

Zay Community is better and strong with the other people of the surrounding areas than the *Woreda's* and *Kebeles* administration and experts.

In general, it was evidently observed that people of the Zay community has established strong relations with people living outside the islands in terms of education, marriage, child adoption, trade, agriculture, religious ceremonies, mediation and reconciliation, government administrative structures. I also noted that members of the community that lives around the shores of the lake have established tied with other communities in particular through marriage and child adoption and there is a wide spread assimilation of culture, language and way of live between the people of the Zay community and other communities in the said areas. The Zay community people are mostly speakers of the Zay and Amharic languages while the middle aged members of the community living in the islands as well as the people of Zay living around the shores of the Lake additionally speak the *Oromiffa* language making them speakers of three languages. Furthermore, any of the three languages are used in during the mediation and conflict resolution session that take place either in the islands or the towns situated in around the lake. Therefore, it is concluded that there is strong relations and interaction of cultural, social and other dynamics between the people of the Zay community within themselves as well as peoples of all other communities living around the lake which is existed and continues to exist for long line of generations.

#### **4.3 MAJOR FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE CONTINUATION OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PRACTICE OF THE ZAY COMMUNITY**

According to the studies of other researchers and as presented extensively in this research, the Zay Community are gifted with and owner of several social and cultural values that came down generations from generations which are still upheld and practiced by this generation of the Zay Community. Despite extensive efforts being exerted by the Zay Community to maintain and hand down such values without alteration keeping their original features, there remain issues that pose challenge for the community to transfer or hand down such remarkable values in their original feature and way of practice to the next generation. The sources of such challenges are attributed to the internal influences within the community itself and external influences. In this section of this paper, we will classify the reasons or causes for these challenges in to five categories.

### 4.3.1 THE SOCIO-CULTURAL INTERACTION WITH OTHER PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

We have seen in the preceding chapter that, in addition to the strong interaction that the Zay community has within the community itself, the community has developed and build strong interaction with other peoples and communities all aspects including, social, economical, cultural and political dynamics. However, aside from the fact that this interaction enable the creation of positive outcomes, such interactions have also caused issued that might be detrimental for the integrity and continuation of the Zay community as one distinct community. Seel.*et.al* (2012) stated that social and cultural changes occur through human interaction. Therefore, The study community informants argued that, the social interaction, in particular marriage ties, and relation established between people of Zay community and people of other communities living around the lake has helped the integration of the Zay people with the other people. However, such interaction has resulted in alteration and ultimately diminishing of original cultural values of the Zay community in the course of time. According to FGD-1 participants<sup>114</sup>, the *Bochesa, Welda-Mekdela* and *herara rural Kebeles* are areas where most members of the Zay community settled and leaving in the areas. The most significant reason for such resettlement is marriageties with the local Oromo people. One of the participants of this FGD-1 noted the followingremark;

*“Establsihment of marriage ties with other people has helped our people to learn and speak the language of other locales which in turn has assisted us to deeply and closely understand and adopt the culture, custom, way of life, and practices of this people and create strong link with people of other communities. While this is a positive result, the mixing and assimilation with other people from other communities is gradually making our people to forget their original culture and way of life. Since our children spend most of their time with Amharic and Oromiffa language speakers instead of their mother tongue, i.e., the Zay language, they are unknowingly abandoning the culture of their origin and are being overwhelmed by the culture, customs and practices of the Oromo people while their knowledge of their origin is increasingly diminishing through time.”<sup>115</sup>*

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114. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa on 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsion Island.

115. The point that I took from FGD-1 partispants Ato Afework Kindalem on 26 March 2020 in Debere-Tsion Island.

Based on the above point, the cultural assimilation with other communities and ethnic groups is widely observed in urban areas. On related concern, one of my key informant clarifies it as follows:

*“When a girl is married to man from the Oromo ethnic group, she is automatically referred to Oromo ethnic group, that is the origin of her husband, and the children born would also be considered as only Oromo since it is the custom to trace ones ethnic origin based on the father’s origin. This is the major and one of the reasons that lead to decline in the number of our people in time”.*<sup>116</sup>

The adoption (*Gudifecha*) system and practice is also one issue that contributed for the decline in the number of the people of the Zay community. FGD participants<sup>117</sup> described that, according to the culture of the Zay community, it is forbidden to adopt a child from other ethnic group but it is permitted to give a child from the community for adoption to other persons from other communities. This has significantly exasperated the decline in the number of children of the next generation that would carry on the legacy, culture and custom of the Zay community. According to my key informants<sup>118</sup>, as soon as children are given for adoption to parents from other ethnic groups, the children automatically assume the ethnic identity of their adoptive parents and are raised abandoning the culture, values, language and custom of their Zay origin.

In addition to this, oral history informants<sup>119</sup> explained that, that direct integration, the adopted Zay children usually marry girls from the Zay community causing other members (the girls) to change their identity in to the Oromo ethnic identity which has already been assumed by their husbands (the adopted Zay children) fueling the decline of the number of Zay people in addition to causing the evolvement of the original culture and identity of Zay in to another culture and identity. This was further elaborated by the following case from Meki town *korki-adi Kebele* as follows:

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116. Interview with key informant Ato Tesfaye Dinqi on 22 April 2020 in Bochesa kebele.

117. This is based on FGD that was conducted with four group of informants on 26 January, 13 March, 12 and 26 April 2020 in Debre-Tsion Island, Welda- Mekedela kebele, Ziway Town and Bochesa Kebele.

118. Interview with Ato Beru Bedasa on 27 January 2020 in Debere-Tsion Island.

119. Interview with oral history informants Ato Assefa Teji, Ato Kabeto Tola, Ato Tesfaye Edeto, Memere G/Meskele Hirpo, Wro Ayo Chere and Wro Tadelech Edeo on 05 and 13 March, 17 April, 01 and 14 May, 02 June 2020 in Debere-Tsion and Funduro Islands, and Meki and Ziway Town.

### ***Case Study 1: The child adoption practice and its impacts***<sup>120</sup>

*Mr. Balcha Dalecha is 65 years of senior living in the Korki-Adi Rural Kebele located near the Meki Town. Mr. Balcha was born in the island of Tsedecha and when he was at the age of five he was adopted, after his family was requested according to the custom, by a man called Mr. Dalecha Teji, who was from the Hareke tribe of the Oromo ethnic group. He was taken from the islands and raised by his adoptive parent. After Mr. Balcha was separated from his birth parents he was raised within the family of Mr. Teji with the Oromo culture and custom as one member of the adoptive family. As the result he was raised in the Oromo culture speaking the language and practicing and being part of the practice and culture of the Oromo ethnic group. Mr. Balcha became member of the Hareke tribe and an Oromo according the requirement and custom of the adoption arrangement. Mr. Balcha, is able to speak and write in Amharci language, in addition to Oromiffa language as he was raised in the Korki – Adi Kebele, a locality situated near the town of Meki. However his ability to communicate in language of his origin, the Zay language, is not that much impressive. Mr. Balcha also started his marriage life after getting married in the Kebele he is now residing in and gave birth to 4 sons and 5 daughter a total of 9 children who are all independent and leading their own life. He lived 40 years in marriage and earns his living from farming. Mr. Balcha's children are speakers of Amharic language in addition to their native tongue, Oromiffa. They noted that they do not have any clue about the language, culture and the social dynamics of the Zay Community due the place they were born and raised. Mr. Balcha says that the mother has attempted to teach them the language but she herself forgotten the language and she now has difficulties to speak the language well.*

Based on the filed observations, most of the Zay people who live in *Bochesa, Herara and Welda-Mekdela* kebele's have even taken Oromo names and they almost, all the time practice the culture or the Oromo ethnic group. Some of them, mostly middle aged and older men, still maintain the

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120. Interview with Ato Balcha Dalecha, age 65, from 1-6Jun 2020 in Meki Town Korki-Adi kebele.

history, culture, customs and practices of their Zay origin parallel with the Oromo culture and practices. However, most of the people of Zay origin living in these areas has totally forgotten the culture and language of Zay except some words and limited expressions. Due to this it is easy to say for most of the young and teens of Zay origin to identify themselves with Oromo ethnic group rather than the Zay Community.

What's more, as I observed in the field, most of the Zay people living in Ziway and Meki towns have abandoned their culture and language due to the links and integration (either through the acceptable practice of Zay or against such practice) with other people from other cultures byway of marriage while some them (especially children of this generation) have entirely assumed the culture and custom of the society they live within and have become Amharic speakers with no or limited knowledge of the Zay language. One of the reasons for such abandonment of the Zay language and culture might be attributed to the children's parents who show little effort to teach their children the culture and language of their roots. As one of oral history informant<sup>121</sup> stated that: *“One of the notable gaps and limitations in our community is that we assume and adopt their culture than they may adopt and assume our culture from us”*.

In general, owing to the link and ties that started to generations ago between the people of Zay and peoples of other communities through marriage, child adoption, now, it has come to the point that the mediation and reconciliation sessions and meetings that take place in the islands are being conducted additionally in Oromiffa language and custom contrary to the past practice which was only conducted in Zay language and custom. This assimilation is creating changes in the marriage practices common to the areas around the lake as well as in urban areas. It should be further noted that, the Zay people, instead of maintain and preserving their culture, language, identity and cultural values, they have become increasingly influenced and overwhelmed by other cultures and values which in turn has resulted in the decline of the number of Zay people at an alarming rate. Members of the Zay Community who are living in areas outside the islands are faced with endangerment of their culture, language and values due to the reasons discussed above.

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121. Interview with oral informant Ato Zewge Bedane on 14 May 2020 in Ziway Town.

### 4.3.2 ECONOMIC FACTOR

Based on my field observation, Zay community has been engaged in economical activities to reinforce their social and economical capacities and managed to protect the integrity of their family as well as the community at large. They managed to do so by using different economical alternatives. The community has been using the terracing techniques to preserve the soil in the highlands of the islands in addition to farming the plains to produce various crops for their consumption. They have also been engaging in fishing which generated revenue in addition to using fish for food. However, the community is now facing formidable crisis as both of these means of livelihood are affected by various events and issues. The major ones of these issues are shortage of farm land and decreasing in fish productivity of fishing.

I have observed<sup>122</sup> that, The land in the five Islands in the Lake Ziway has been used for many years by the community for farming of crops for the consumption of the community members and as of recent times the Zay people has started irrigation farming in the Islands of *Tulu Gudo*, *Tsedecha* and *Fundro* and this recent endeavors has made it possible for the community to improve crop productivity. Beside to this, as FGD-1 participants<sup>123</sup> argued that, the area covered by arable land is increasing becoming insufficient due to population growth in the islands. This has created two issues that are challenging the residents of the islands. The first is consequence is migration of many of the productive population in to other areas outside the islands looking for employment or means of living due to shortage of land. The second issue is the fact that many of the arable highlands which has been protected by terracing has become idle as growing many of the productive part of the population are unwilling to return back to the islands once they left the islands. Key informants<sup>124</sup> furtherly stated that, this has caused the production of the crops (*teff*, *maize*, *Daugusa*) and cotton to be limited and decrease from time to time. Oral history informant<sup>125</sup> explained that, to make matters worse the culture of terracing that has long been the

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122. I observed economical aspect of the community livelihood activity as well as their farming areas and irrigation system during the period of field work from 25 January -30 Jun 2020.

123. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island.

124. Interview with Ato Beru Bedaso and Ato Gebiso Tufa on 27 January and 06 March 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island and Welda-Mekedela kebele.

125. Interview with Ato Midagi Segni, Ato W/Cherkos Ture and W/ro Tadelech Edeo on 03 and 07 April, and 17 Jun 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon and Tsedeche Islands.

practice of the community weakened as of recent years posing the danger of high level of erosions. On the other hand, the fact that there seems to be no generation takeover the values of the community is endangering the continuation of such values in the future.

The other reason contributing factor is the pollution of the lake with chemicals which caused the decrease in the type and quantity of fish in the lake which subsequently resulted in decline of fishing productivity at an unprecedented rate. This is what one of my oral history informant noted the reasons as follows;

*Fish is one of the staple food of the Zay Community and it also the major a source of income for the people of the community who sales fish in markets around the lake in the nearby towns of Meki and Ziway. It has been a means to support ourselves economically. However, the growing population of other fish breeds such as the Ambaza, Dobiand Jabih as caused the decline of the most demanded breed of fish, Koroso. Our people are the primary victims of this decline in the said fish breed as our people are highly dependent in the fish for daily food consumption and source of income.*<sup>126</sup>

This factor has created inflation and escalation of cost of living for the people of the islands presenting a formidable challenge to have food security and economically self-sufficient. This subsequently forced most of the productive member of the community to flee the islands looking for secured means of livelihood. The following case provides additional explanation of the life experience of an individual from *Bochesa Kebele*.

***Case study 2: Laving the Island seeking for employment/better means of living***<sup>127</sup>

*Mr. Teji Bedane was born in the Island of Gelila in due to the decrease in yield of farming, he was forced to leave the islands and started to live in Bochesa with his relatives and started to work the Gerbi Agriculture Development Enterprise located near where he lived. Mr. Teji says it has been 30 years since he settled in Bochesa and he married a woman from the Oromo ethnic group and he is now engaged in farming and livestock fattening in the plot of land his relatives gave him. He also noted that his siblings followed his footstep and left the islands to live in the towns of Meki and Ziway and his mother was brought to him as she became alone and that there no family*

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126. Interview with oral history informant Ato Tesfaye Edeto on 01May 2020 in Ziway Town.

127..Interview with Ato Teji Bedane, age 60, from 11-13 May 2020 in Bochesa rural kebele.

*member living in the island. Mr. Teji was married in accordance with the Arsi Oromo culture, which is the common culture for the areas and he and his children are better speaking in Oromiffa and Amharic language than Zay language. Mr. Teji further said that he practices and have better knowledge of the Oromo culture than his Zay origin culture.*

In general, as I have been able to observe in the areas covered by this research and according to the information availed by my informants, due to the main problems described above, the productive part of the population has been forced to leave the islands and settle in other localities looking for job and economical opportunities. These members of the community that mainly settled in *Bochesa, Welda-Mekdla* and *Heara kebeles* as well as in the towns of Ziway and Meki gradually adapted the social, economical, cultural and political systems of the and ultimately became part and practitioners of the system. The situation is even more concerning for the children who are born in these areas as surrounding environment dynamics makes them to become farther apart from their origin and identity and completely adopt and assimilate the social life, language, cultures and systems of the areas they are grew up in. Consequently, these reasons has prevented the preservation and continuation of the cultural practice, language, custom and values of the Zay community as these fabrics of the community are gradually overwhelmed by their counterparts in these new settlement areas of the Zay people. Walker (2001) also argue with this idea he stated that progressive technological development would be affect the socio-cultural identity as well as cultural change related to economical issue. Moreover, the migration of the community's members to other areas indeed has caused drastic decline of the population of the Zay community to ensure the continuation of the community enact with its own dynamics and the community is now facing the danger of losing its social and cultural values to the point of extinction.

#### **4.3.2 POLITICAL INFLUENCES**

The constitution provides that the rights of ethnic groups is preserved and observed equally within the Federalist Government System of the country. However, in reality, the participation and rights of minority ethnic groups is negligible and the Zay Community is one example that shows this ironic reality. The Zay communities are minority ethnic groups with no strong

capability for self- administration and the community is being governed by the decision of the Oromiya National regional state. According to oral history informants<sup>128</sup>, various efforts were made parallel with countless requests to both the Federal government and the regional administration to have the area occupied by the Zay community recognized as special zone under the government administrative structure. However these requests failed to get the proper response from the central and regional government in the past. The informant, however, said that:

*“There are hopes in the present time that their requests would be addressed and they are following up the issue awaiting for a response though they under constant pressure of the current administration and they express that they are unhappy with how the administration is acting towards their request”.*<sup>129</sup>

FGD-2 participants<sup>130</sup> pointed out that, children of the community in *Bochesa, Welda-Mekdela* and *Herara* areas attend their primary education, from 1<sup>st</sup> grade to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, in *Oromiffa* language. This act alone has dire consequences in maintaining the continuation of the language of the community from the old to the new generation as the children are unable to attend their education in their mother tongue. On the other hand, FGD-1<sup>131</sup> discussants explained that, the fact that there are no children in *Debre Sina* and *Gelila* Islands, children are sent to attend primary schools, from 1<sup>st</sup> grade to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, which are established by considering the population settlement pattern of the community, are found in *Debre-tSION (Tulu Gudo)* and *Tsedecha* Islands. Children who attended these schools received their education in Amharic languages as the children are fluent speakers of Amharic language in addition to Zay. However, in recent years the local government administration has “forced” delivery of classes in *Oromiffa* language without the interest and wish of the community. It was more elaborated by key informant as follows:

*Many of the children has been taught in Amharic language which they speak fluently. However, since the forced application of Oromiffa language as medium of teaching, the children have been embattled with their results since most of them have had trouble to learn and speak the language which made it difficult for them to understand what they*

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128. Interview with oral history informant Ato Ato Guye Tuse and Ato Zeru Barke on 12 April and 02 Jun 2020 in Debre-Tsion Island and Ziway Town.

129. Interview with oral history informant Ato Kabeto Tola on 13 March 2020 in Meki Town.

130. This is based on FGD-2 that was conducted with Ato Abu Golji, Ato Balcha Ajjero, Ato Degaga Ararso, Ato Edewo Hirpo, Ato G/meskele Negewo, Ato Jambo Dinke, and Ato Niguse Balcha on 13 March 2020 in Welda-Mekdela rural kebele

131. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsion Island.

*were being taught in classes. Due to this most children are sent away when reaching, which would not be easy, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, to attend their education from 5<sup>th</sup> onward to the schools found in Ziway and Meki towns while some would be sent away after completing the 6<sup>th</sup> grade albeit with frustration. I sent my two children to my grandfather in Ziway town so they would attend their education starting from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. The children have had psychological problems due to being away from their family.*<sup>132</sup>

The following case provides additional explanation about the impact of political influence on the Island community education system from Debre-Tseyon Island.

### ***Case Study 3: Serching for education and influence of the government***<sup>133</sup>

*Mr. W/mariam Wake is 55 years of age man who was born in Bochesa Kebele and moved to the island of Debretsiyon, where he still lives in, 30 years ago because of marriage. Mr. W/mariam is from Wore clan and he lives in an area called Wozero in the island. He gave birth to three sons and one daughter (fourchildren) and he continues to live in the island. The first child (his son) of Mr. W/mariam attended school until the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and now he lives by means of farming in the island. His second child (a daughter) attended until 6<sup>th</sup> grade the islands and completed her education in Ziway town and now she is employed. Mr. W/mariam explained that it was difficult for his children to understand the education they received as the classes were given by Oromiffa language. We tried to inform this difficulty but we were told that the children should learn in Oromiffa language. We were so worried and troubled by this so I send the youngest two children to their sister in Ziway where they are attending school. One of my sons is called Yonas and he is now attending sixth grade and his elder brother is 10<sup>th</sup> grade student. What makes me sad is that we send them away separating them from us when they were too little to know anything. They come here to visit at once every other time but since they are raised in urban areas, they do not have any knowledge of their language of origin or the cultural values. They just come for the annual Meskel holiday because they like the festivities. They attend the celebration of the holiday but*

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132. Interview with key informant Ato Gebiso Tufa on 06 March 2020 in Welda-Mekedela Kebele.

133. Interview with Ato Welde-Mariam Wake, age 55, from 06-08 May 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island.

*their knowledge of their origin is limited to that event and I don't blame them for this. If only the government was considerate have let our children attend school in Amharic language, things would have been different.*

In line with the above, oral history informants<sup>134</sup> said that, the fact that children are sent to towns permanently presented challenge for the children to follow their education as other children's because of the absence of educational bases, that live in the towns, of their age though the education is delivered in Amharic Language. The other unfortunate, one key informants<sup>135</sup> explained that consequence of sending away children from the islands is loss of identity and culture and language of their origin. The children are prone to assimilating the culture and way of life of their surrounding areas which make the children to forget their language and culture of their origin with ultimate abandonment of the same. This is one of the major reasons that fuel the loss of new generation that would take the responsibility of practicing and preserving the language and culture of the Zay community. One may point out that change in the medium language of teaching has significantly aggravated the endangerment of the community's integrity and survival. The study community informants also points out that, the other influence is the division of the Islands administrative in to two jurisdictions, which become effective following political decision passed by the government. This was further elaborated by key informant as follows:

*“The Deberestion, Tsedech, Fundro, Geder and Yanes isalands became under the jurisdiction of the Arsi Zone, Zeway Dugda Woreda, and the Debertsion and Tsedecha islands have their own Kebele administrative structures while the Fundro is incopprated under the administration of the Herara Kebele, which is located nearby the lake and comprises of three Kebeles. The Gelila, Debre Sina and Wof islands are incorporated under the Eastern Shewa Zone, Adamitulu Jido Komblocha Woreda, Bochesa rural Kebele while Welda Mekdela Kebele is under the administration of the Dugda Woreda. Due to this administrative structure residents of the Gelila, Debresina and Fundro islands have to travel outside the islands to have their affairs is addressed by the Kebeles located outside the islands. All matters including the community's social, economical, political and other issues of the residents of all islands and the Kebles*

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134. Interview with oral history informant Ato Assefa Teji and W/ro Ayo Chere on 05 March and 17 April 2020 in Bochesa kebele and Funduro Island.

135. Interview with Ato Beru Bedasa and Ato Gudeta Ruso on 27 January and 19 March 2020 in Debere-Tsiyon and Tsedecha Islands.

*around the lake need to be presented for processing and responding of the three Woredas to which the islands and the Kebles report to. This has created division between our communities to have their voice heard together”.*<sup>136</sup>

The informant expressed that, this political pressure that the community is undergoing. One of oral history informants, on the other pointed out the following statement:

*“The issue is even more difficult especially in Bochesa, Welda- Mekdela and Herara Kebeles where our people are under pressure not to use their language and our children are forced to attend education in Oromiffa language resulting in preventing the children from learning and using their native language. Furthermore it should be noted that it is inappropriate to change the original names islands such changes is one proof of the magnitude of the influence the Zay Community is undergoing.”*<sup>137</sup>

During the field, on similar issue with the above, I was able to found the population of the Zay community has not been indicated or included on local censuses of the *Adamitulu-Jido-Kombolcha Woreda* and *Dugda Woreda* and *Ziway-Dugda Woreda* as well as in the 2007 E.C national censuses. This has made it difficult to know the updated number of the population of the community. On the other hand, as one of my key-informant noted that, the following statement concerning the initiatives and activities being made towards protecting the culture and social values, of the community, which are under high risk of being evolved or overwhelmed by other cultures:

*“We are carrying out activities to promote and create awareness of the Islands and the things that are unique to the Islands by compiling general information of the Islands in to published materials and it is our hope that such works would contribute for the growth of tourism”.*<sup>138</sup>

Nevertheless, one of oral history informants said that,

*“The fact that we only took part once in the November 29 (Ethiopian Calendar) Ethnic Groups of Day each year, which is held to promote the cultural and traditions of the ethnic groups of the country, is of course one proof that the required attention and focus has not been given to our community”.*<sup>139</sup>

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136. Interview with Firafis Nebi on 19 March 2020 in Ziway Town. He is working the *Adamitulu-Jido Kombolcha Woreda* Culture and Tourism Bureau.

137. Interview with oral history informant Ato Zewge Bedane on 14 May 2020 in Ziway Town.

138. Interview with Ato Aleme Hailu on May 2020 in Ziway Town .

139. Interview with oral- history informant Decon Tebebu Meskele on 03 May 2020 in Tedecha Island.

From what I have witnessed firsthand during my observation and based the information I have gathered from my informants, the level of efforts and seriously carried out tasks in documenting the history, language, culture of Zay community as well as the social dynamics and practices of the community, has been negligible and almost nonexistent and initiatives focusing on the community are very limited. This shows that, there are less or no initiatives from the *Woreda* Culture, Tourism and Sport Bureau to preserve and promote the culture, tradition and values of the community and the attention given to the community is really negligible.

To summarize the political situations relevant to the community, such undue political influences has prevented children of the community to achieve academic success and influencing them to gradually ignore and forget the culture, customs, values and practices of their origin and overwhelmed by new cultures and social systems which has indirectly caused the diminishing to the population of the community at unprecedented rate. The fact that children are not able to access classes in the schools of *Bochesa*, *Welda Kebele* and *Herara kebeles* by their language of origin is highly impacting the growth, or in fact the survival, of the language of Zay community. What's more dividing the administrative area of the community, which has uniform and unique identity, in two five *Kebeles* which fall under three different *Woredas*, would not only weaken the solidarity, unity and interaction of the people of the community, but it also creates and barrier that prevent members of the community to voice their concerns together and resolve their problems collectively and put hurdles for them to gather and deal with their issues. Furthermore, it was noted that there has been little effort and attention offered or given from the concerned organs of the *Woredas* to preserve and promote the history, cultural and social values of the Zay community.

#### **4.3.4 MIGRATION AND GLOBALIZATION**

The three major factors discussed in the above section of this paper have become the major reasons for the migration of the productive members of the Community to settle in other areas for one or more reasons. The migrated young population is succumbed to losing their identity and culture and language as they increasingly become influence by the local culture and social systems that ultimately overwhelm the young people to the point that they end up totally assuming the culture and identity of the area they settled in. The situation has aggravated as the attitude, opinions and identity of these young people is highly influenced and tuned by

technology and globalization. Berkes (2016) and Serageldin (1998) articulated that individual and community impressed by new development of modernity, with this matter many are learning fast and are attuning themselves with alien culture forgetting their origin and identity within such short time. The generational slippage from its origin culture, origin and social values is of course directly impacting the continuation of the community's culture and its very survival as a community.

Based on my field observation on the study area, due absence of access to electricity in all the Islands, the community is using lamps, candle or traditional torch (*Kuraz*) as source of light at night. In recent times solar technology has been introduced in the islands and the *Debere-Tsyion*, *Tsedecha* and *Fundro* Islands have been able to use the technology to some extent. However, it still remains to find other technology products except few mobile sets, radio and stereo players. On the other hand availability of access for electricity in other areas had made it possible for these areas to use technologies, in addition to transportation by Bajaj, car and motorcycle, such as television, computer, internet access, refrigerator, modern designed buildings and houses, entertainment facilities and open air garden areas. In line with this, Kieran Healy (1993) and Meanwhile Eyerman (1992), stated that social change associated with modernity, As key-informants<sup>140</sup> explained that, Availability and access to this technologies and services have made the people of the Zay community to make the decisions to permanently settle in these areas found outside of the Islands. As oral history informant<sup>141</sup> further elaborated that, the clothing culture has also shown serious decline especially in the young population of the Zay Community as these young people are increasingly attracted and choose western style clothing. Some writers such as Preston (2016), Copp (1992) and As Xi Chunai, *et.al.* (2012), stated that the young generation impresses by modernization and unwilling to practice and protect their culture. I also observed this in the study areas.

Therefore, this cultural effect has influenced the young Zay people to lose interest for permanent residency in the Islands. One of oral history informant more elaborated this as follows:

*“While there are some of our children who migrated to urban areas that keep and practice their culture and social practice of their origin, many are drowning in to*

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140. Interview with my key informant with Wro. Welela Dadi on 05 April 2020 in Debre-Tsyion Island.

141. Interview with oral history informant Ato Ato Guye Tuse and Tsegaye Boku on 12 April and 06 Jun 2020 in Meki and Ziway Town.

*cultures and behaviors, with wrong attitude of being modern and civilized person, which contradict the culture and identity of their origin. Such acts and behaviors of the young people is seriously overshadowing and weakening the social and cultural values, of our community, that has been kept from generations to generations.”<sup>142</sup>*

This statement signifies the magnitude of cultural erosion as more and more of young people are abandoning the cultures and identities of their origin, the Zay community. As key informants<sup>143</sup> also noted that, understanding and acknowledging the presence of numerous natural attractions and historical and cultural phenomenon of tourist attractions, the Ziway town Culture and Tourism Bureau in collaboration with the *Woreda* and NGO's has established and Tour Association by training some people for this purpose. The Association has opened an office in Ziway town and facilitated the construction of grass roofed huts (*Gojobet*) to be used as accommodation, entertainment, dining and relaxing facility in *Deber-stiyon* Island. This has helped to receive and accommodate guests over night or just for a day. It also created job opportunities to the local residents in the form of tour or food services. However, oral history informants explained that, many members of the community highly criticize and voice their concern on the opening of this facility stating that the disadvantage of the facility weighs over its advantage for a number of reasons. Azarya, (2004) stated that, beside the positive side Tourism it has negative impacts especially in the developing country Through interaction and exchange transmits with it with the risk of culturally 'freezing' local populations. FGD-1 participants stated the following related with this issue;

*“New arrivals to the islands are polluting our culture by teaching the young western dancing, clothing styles, taboo language and other unacceptable behaviors such as clothes that shows naked bodies and showing inappropriate images and videos to our children and introducing harmful habits of smoking and chewing Chat and alluring the children in to this alien and harmful cultures and behaviors. Furthermore since the islands are sacred and place of spiritually, we fear that our respected and spiritual culture would be polluted and we rather want the closure of the facility.”<sup>144</sup>*

As I have observed during my field visit, the fact that entertainment center is opened near the church, I have found it inappropriate to establish such facility near spiritual establishment.

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142. Interview with oral history informant Ato Kabeto Tola on 13 March 2020 in Meki Town.

143. Interview with Woreda culture and Tourism biro officer Ato Telila Getu on 12 April 2020 in Ziway Town.

144. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island.

Generally, based on the remarks of the study community informants and my extended field observation, I came to understand that, while it has its own positive side to introduce and adopt new technologies, such technologies and new cultures has trapped the people of the Zay community who left the islands in the areas they settle where they have access to technologies by getting comfortable with easy way of living which compelled such descendants of Zay community to make the decision not to return to the islands in addition to abandoning and losing their identities, tradition and cultural values. Xi Chunai, *et.al.*(2012), argued with these idea that the young generations unwilling to wear traditional dress and unable to speak their language as well as changed their livelihood then gradually they become unfamiliar with their cultural values and losses their identity. These phenomena show that how much the people curiosity and experiencing unprecedented impact in the modern tide. Furthermore, the introduction of cell phones and fast transport means to and from the Islands have created easy access to the young people of the community to learn, during their travel to the nearby towns for trade and other reasons, more and more the outside world with endless opportunities and alluring life to migrate to towns to live what they assume to be a better life. The young people are also pressured to migrate the nearby towns by watching their peers living in the nearby towns and comparing themselves with them.

To sum up, members of the community who migrated to urban areas for different reasons tuned themselves to another culture and social behaviors through technologies and globalization in addition to the transformation of their identity due to spending extended period of time outside their community within different groups of people, which resulted in the abandonment of their original cultures and values. UNESCO (2009) Argue that the influence of global development could lead the disappearance of indigenous practice. This cultural and behavioral transformation occurs mainly due to the marriage links created between the members of the Zay community and people from other communities. On the other hand, while the introduction and accessibility of technology in the islands has its own positive impact, it has nevertheless exasperated the migration of people from the islands in addition to introducing new cultures and behaviors that adversely impact the social and cultural values of the Zay community.

## **4.4 CHANGE AND CONTINUITY OF THE SOCIO CULTURAL PRACTICE AMONG THE ZAY PEOPLE**

This episodes briefly described and presented the community socio-cultural practice that continue to be practice until the current time as well changed socio-cultural practice and contributed to disintegration of local socio-cultural systems and loses of their identity. Furthermore, this section presents empirical data generated from the field on the genesis and operation of Zay community and concerned government bodies. A took It discusses the measure been taken against the endangerment of the social norms, cultural systems and overall identity of the community as well as the dangers caused on the survival of the community as an ethnic group in general.

### **4.4.1 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EVENTS AND SYSTEMS THAT CONTINUE TO BE PRACTICED**

This section briefly explores the various socio-cultural practices among the life of the Zay ethnic group. This section mainly focuses of Socio-cultural practices that continue to this date standing the test of time and with their originality from generation to generation. The study community participants argued that, in the *Meskel* Holiday which is attended by many of members of the community, the holiday's celebrations takes place in the three Islands of *Tubugudo*, *Tsedecha* and *Fundro* in a particular place known as *Shengo*. with the exception of this change the *Meskel*holiday is still celebrated with it originality and process as well as event starting from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the holiday called *Sumsuma* until the end of the holiday which is called *Ashenbya* lasting from September 17 up to October 9. According to key informants<sup>145</sup>, the holiday is still observed by the community with great in to enthusiasm and expectation and is considered as a symbol of social solidarity and unity. The holiday is mainly an outdoor event.

Based to this, FGD-1 discussants<sup>146</sup> explained that, the dowry practice in the Islands and *Herara* area has shown changes and increase in the quantity of dowry items. Except this change in the

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145. Interview with key informant Ato Gebiso Tufa and W/ro Roman Mia on 27 January and 06 March 2020 in Bochesa kebele and Welda-Mekedela kebele.

146. This is based on FGD-1 that was conducted with Ato Adane Seyfu, Ato Afework Kindalem, Ato Bekura Tusa, Ato Negash Shguru, Ato Tadese Bedaso, Ato Tesmamu Yabi and Ato Uke Burqa in 26 March 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island.

marriage custom of the community, there has not been any significant change in the marriage custom of the community. Marriage between second level family members is widely practiced to date within the community.

According to FGD-1 discussants<sup>147</sup> and Key Informants<sup>148</sup>, the roll of elders in officiating festivities, religious and cultural events and holidays, unfortunate event, as well as resolving any social and economical problems that happen within the community is still significant and the mediation system headed and operated by the elders is still practice. In the Island areas, the researcher was able to witness that the elders has started using the *Oromiffa* language in addition to their original language during the proceedings of the mediation and the other processes and practice of the mediation are still the same as they were before. In addition, as oral history informants<sup>149</sup> stated that, the elders are still well accepted and respected among the community members and they participate in the politically based identity self-determination demand forwarded by the community to the concerned governmental entities. Based on the key informant, except that people of the community has started to include some lyrics and odes during the funeral ceremonies and except stopping the old custom beating oneself with spikes the other funeral and wake ceremonies and customs are still at their original state and such unique practices remained the very futures that the community is identified by other communities and peoples. One of FGD partispants more elaborated this as follows:

*“If we look at the funeral custom in Zeway and Meki towns, one can easily identify whether family of the person who died is from Zay community by just simply observing the funeral ceremony as well as the lamenting songs expressed by attendants of the funeral.”<sup>150</sup>*

This indicates that the Zay community highly practiced their funeral ceremony beyond the Islands and other communities and peoples like Ziway and Meki town. Thus, this culture and custom well survived the test of time and influence of local communities and cultures.

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147. Ibedi.,

148. Interview with key informants Ato Aleme Hailu, Beru Bedasa, and W/ro Welela Dadhi on 27 January, 05 April and 12 May 2020 in Debere-Tsion Island and Ziway Town.

149. Intevue with oral history informants W/ro Emayu G/hanna and W/ro Kushe Gonder on 28 April and 08 Jun 2020 in Gelila Island and Ziway Town.

150. I took the point from one of the FGD-1 partispants Ato Tesmamu Yabe on 26 January 2020 in Debere-Tsion Island.

Furthermore, as I observed in the field and one of my key informants explained that, there are improved types of boats. But, “*Yebela*” boat still functional for transporting as well as for fishing the Islands and *Bochesa*, Ziway Town and *Herera* areas. While, the custom and operation fishing is still the same as ever before in the Islands and *Bochesa* as well as *Herera* areas. However, this fishing and water travel in *Wolda-Mekdela*, Ziway and Meki areas is only practiced by few people. Related with this the foods and drinks of the community is widely consumed in all areas.

According to FGD informants<sup>151</sup>, people of the community living in the islands still practice cultural weaving and cloth making in traditional means and offer the products to generate income. Due to the settlement of some of the weavers outside the island in the shores of the leg, Ziway and Meki towns, the practice of traditional weaving and their traditional clothes is spreading cross other cultures outside the islands. In particular *Buluko*, *Gabi*, *Wendebo* and *Netela* are the most popular cotton made fabrics by other communities and peoples. In addition the traditional farming that was widely practiced by the community in previous times is now limited to the Islands and *Herera kebele*. Furthermore, the grass made household items that use to be a common products produced by the women except the two towns.

In general with exception of few socio-cultural practice changes in the islands and *Herera kebele* the other practices of the Zay community is still widely practiced. Nevertheless, depending on the area cultural marriage and mediation ceremonies, funeral ceremonies, using “*Yebela*” boat for transportation and fishing activity, the making of traditional foods and drinks, traditional clothing, traditional farming and traditional handcrafts still remain and practiced the unique cultural values that the Zay community is still proud of after such long time.

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151. This is based on FGD that was conducted with four group of informants on 26 January, 13 March, 12 and 26 April 2020 in Debre-Tsiyon Island, Welda- Makedela kebele, Ziway Town and Bochesa Kebele.

#### 4.4.2 CHANGED SOCIO-CULTURAL CUSTOMS OF THE COMMUNITY

Based on the ethnography field work on the study community that, members of the community has been migrating and resettling to other areas other than the Islands due to interaction with other ethnic groups and economical, social and political influences (internal and external factors that has resulted in the mixing and adulteration of the customs and practices of the community members which has been long upheld by the community for generations. Such merger with other communities is also posing danger for extension of some of the cultural practices of the community. Similarly, UNESCO (2009) illustrated that, how much migrants face the challenge of integrating their traditional system of cultural values, norms and social identity with different customs of the host countries, and finally loses their cultural identity and adopt new culture. Therefore, this section discuss on the changes that resulted due to the influences and factors stated above. One of the changes is the practice and tradition of funeral ceremony. According to the study participants, the local elders and religious leaders, in consultation with the community managed to eliminate the harmful custom of beating oneself with spikes and turns for expression of deep sorrow until the body is mutilated and bleeding. The elders managed to influence the community to stop such practice after advising and explaining members of the community that such practice does not have any significance either for the dead or living except injuring one self. This self-mutilation practice has been abandoned in on areas since 10 years back.

The other change is application of technologies in agriculture practice. According to FGD-1 and FGD-2 participants<sup>152</sup> argue that, with the support and monitoring provided by the *Adami-Tulu Jido-kombolcha woreda* and *Dugda woreda* agriculture Bureau and the MCS, CRS and other NGOs operating the area, the community was able to learn modernize agricultural practice and learn from the *Gerbi* plantation (currently the land is under the Castel Winn factory). The community was able to learn and acquire experience from plantation being developed by irrigation systems and applied such practice of irrigation farming and *Bechesa* and *Welda-Mekdela kebeles*. Such practices began 20 years back by the Zay community. In line with this

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152. This is based on FGD 1 and -2 that was conducted with fourteen informants on 26 January and 13 March 2020 in Welda- Mekedela kebele and Debre-Tsiyon Island.

one of my key informant explained about the positive aspect of technologies in agriculture practice, the changes that are taking place within the community as follows:

*“the community has started farming their lands by Tractor and watering the plantation using water pipes ranging from small to large size, using water pump and planting different improved vegetable and crop seeds in addition to making the use of different herbicides and pesticides. This has helped us to produce mass quantity of product. We the residence living in Wolda-Mekdela kebele has almost full transformed our farm land that we used to produce Maize, Teff and other crops in to fully irrigation operated farm land and has started to produce Onion, Tomato, different types of cavegs and Papaya by plowing the land using Tractors and applying irrigation cannels that are used in traditionally develop farmlands in traditional ways using Oxen and producing different crops which is mixed farming practice.<sup>153</sup>”*

Furthermore, one of oral history informant responded the following regarding the government’s assistance in modernizing their agricultural practices:

*“In Adamitulu-Jido-Kombolcha Woreda, which is where we reside, we were able to introduce modern agricultural technologies in to the islands so that the community may have better productivity. Introduction of irrigation is one of such assistances provided in addition to providing monitoring and support in conservation of theecosystem of the islands. In the case of Bochesa area, however, irrigation has been practiced since long time ago and there are vast plots of lands developed using irrigation system. Our people in this Kebele are practicing irrigation just as those in Welda Mekdela. The areas alongside the lakeshore and the islands are being supported and given assiatance by the Agricultural Bureaus of Adamitulu Jido-kombolcha Woreda, Dugda Woreda and Zeway Dugda Woreda to adopt modern agricultural practices, use certified seeds and herbicides and pesticides. In this regard the areas outside the islands have been successful<sup>154</sup>”.*

In short, due to the influence of technology, the communities found in *Bochesa*, *Wolda-Mekdela* areas started using modern way of agriculture technics abandoning the traditional practices, and which has accelerated the economical benefits secured by the community. Since few years back the communities living in *Tulugudo*, *Tsedecha*, *Fundro* and *Gelila* Islands as well as *Herera kebele* have been able to befit from additional income by producing water pipe and

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153. Interview with my key informant Ato Gebiso Tufa on 06 March 2020 in Welda- Mekedela Kebele.

154. Interview with my oral history informant Ato Tsegaye Boku on 06 Jun 2020 in Meki Town.

smaller pipes produce onion and tomato. Therefore, the above two ideas explained that how the traditional agricultural practices have changed in to modern agricultural practices in the Zay community. Also the extension of technology across the island has helped the community to develop and increase its practice of applying modern agricultural technologies.

During my field work with exception of the two towns, in other areas where the research was conducted in most of the houses of the people of the Zay community are made from wood rock and mud which might be large one room or two room house with round structure and grass roof. Though many of the community members still living such type of house (*Gojo-bet* in local term), in recent years the construction of the houses has been changing and they are constructed by timber, mud, mud made locks or ordinary block and rock with corrugated iron sheet roof and glazing for the windows and doors(which called *qorqoro-bet* in local term). The community has also started to decorate their houses with different kinds of colors and decoration. The *Yebela* boat, which has a limited capacity to transport people, was gradually replaced with timber made boat and Motor boats with the capacity from 10-60 peoples as well as different goods and animals. I have also observed during my field work that, with exception of Meki town and *Wolda-Mekdela kebele*, three of the boat types that is the *Yebela*, timber made boat and Motor boats are used interchangeably while the *Yebela* boat is completely abandoned in Meki and *Woleda-Mekdela* areas and the people residing in this area are using the other types of boats.

The other change is the change in celebration of traditional *Meskel* Holiday ceremony. Due to the migration of large number of the community's members to the nearby *kebeles* and towns since the time of Menilik II, the population in the island has shown drastic decline and due to this migration and other reasons the celebration of the *Meskel* holiday has also undergone some notable changes.

One of my oral history infoemant explained these changes as follows:

*“With the exception of the Fundurow Island, residents of the other islands used to have the habit of gathering at the top of Debr-tSION Island in a location in front of the Balanbaras called “Shengo”. However due to the abandonment of the Balabat system, the practice has been abandoned and many left and settled in to the banks of the island and constructed the church and their houses and constructing the church in the same*

*area of settlement. This has resulted in division of people of the community preventing them to celebrate the Meskel holiday together. Due to this reason the people living in the part of the island called Gumarge celebrate the holiday around the school and in the irrigation channel area and people living in part of the island called Weyzero celebrate the holiday in the area where the Asela clan and the kesar area. Generally, the community celebrates the holiday in four different areas. But the Funduro Island community still celebrates in one previous place.<sup>155</sup>*

On the other hand FGD participants<sup>156</sup> explained that, the people living the *Tsedecha* Islands celebrate the holiday by lighting bonfire (*Demera*) in two locations. Since there few population in *Gelila* and *Debrsina* Islands (only about 20 people living in island), and in case of the members of the community who live in Ziway and Meki Towns and in the *Bochesa*, *Herera* and *Welda-Mekdela Kebeles*, since they are under the high influence of the social dynamics of other communities of the area, they have totally stopped celebrating the *Meskel* holiday according to their original tradition and custom and now only celebrate the holiday in a religious ceremony. However, as oral history informants elaborated that, members of the community who wants to celebrate in the cultural ceremony travels to the *Tsedecha*, *Funduro* and *Tulu-Gudo* Islands and attend the cultural festivities held in these Islands.

Overall, based on my observation during my fields and the information I have gathered from my informants, except the Islands mentioned, the cultural ceremony of the *Meskel* holiday is has been totally abandoned in the two Islands (*Gelila* and *Debre-sina*) and other areas nearby the lake where members of the Zay community live. This unfortunate gradual abandonment of the cultural celebration of the *Meskel* holiday has caused the vanishing of the values of the community and impacting not only on tradition of the holiday but also on the marriage aspect of the community's culture. The fact that the different festivities and events that the young people of the community used to holds for several days, following the beginning of the holiday, is now being held and observed in seven different locations has forced the young people to gather in different locations whether to select their future bride the number of the gatherings also become different one place to another and this unique culture is now limited to the islands.

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155. Interview with oral history informant Ato Zewge Bedane on 14 May 2020 in Ziway Town.

156. This is based on FGD that was conducted with four group of informants on 26 January, 13 March, 12 and 26 April 2020 in Debre-Tsion Island, Welda- Mekedela kebele, Ziway Town and Bochesa Kebele.

Cultural wedding ceremony is another change in the Zay community. In this regard we need to examine the cultural shift and change in two parts. The first aspect is the customary practices unique to the Islands. The previous practice of dowry which mainly consisted of giving *Netela*, *Buluko*, *Gabi*, *Wendebo* and cash ranging from birr 200.00 to 800.00 has these days taken another form whereby from four up to seven livestock, from 7000.00 to 10, 000.00 birr is offered in additions to other gifts, including gifts given to the bride when she leaves her family, such as Sofa set, buffet cabinet, spring mattress and bed, comfort blanket, full house hold furniture and livestock (the family of the man are required to give twice as much for each gift). This change mainly occurred in the members of the community living in the Islands, but it also spried in the areas outside the island, i.e., *Bochesa*, *Herara* and *Welda-Mekdla* localities. When younger people of the community who live in these areas marry a person from their community or other communities, in addition to the gifts common in the Islands, refrigeration, TV and stereo player have come to be common gifts. This dowry custom is similar with the custom and culture of the *Arsi* Oromos that live in the area. On the other hand, as key informants stated that, when we look at the dowry practice of the people of the community living in urban areas, we observe that the dowry giftsoffered are completely different (for example cash up to 10000 birr , *Gabi*, *Buluko*, different jewelries and clothes to the bride) except the betrothed is from the Zay community.

Based on the study community participants and my field work on the outside community if the Islands, When members of the community who intends to the betroth a girl from their own community, they attend the *Meskle* celebration to select a bride while arranged marriage under which parents of a boy and girl agree on marrying their children, is still practical. In addition to the two customs of marriage, due to the absence of *Meskel* celebration gathering, a member of the Zay community may court a girl from his community and may ask the parents of the girl, through elder representative according to the custom, to give him permission to marry their daughter. However of the girl is from the island the entire process of until the date of the marriage shall be conducted in accordance with the culture of the community. However if both are members of the community living outside the islands, there would not be events of *Ertub* day or *Koso* drinking ceremony neither there would be the cultural event that takes place before the man goes to the house of the bride . The bride would only spend about a week or two count indoors during the bridal period as opposed to the one year according to the culture.

The process of the betrothing up to the actual wedding day for the members of the Zay community living in *Bochesa*, *Herara* and *Welda-Mekdla* localities has changed. As study participants argue that, if the bride is from the Zay community, the handcrafts made by the bride, the songs sung by her *Edos* and the cultural clothing are still applied and practices. Similarly the traditions practiced by the man period to the wedding such as tying red thread on the foreheads of the groom and his friends (*Mere*) and the cultural clothes are practiced while the other processes, including the mediation (*shemgelena*) process is replaced by the Oromo culture in particular with that of the *Arsi* Oromo culture. On the hand, based on the study participants when we look at members of the Zay community that live in the Meki and Ziway Towns, when they marry to a person from another ethnic group, the mediation (*shemgelena*), dowry, wedding, counter wedding fest (*Meles*), *Kilkil* and honey moon traditions are conducted. As oral history informant argue that, this traditions have very different serious of events and features from the tradition of the Zay community. One of FGD participants explained about the current cultural wedding ceremony around the lake shore *kebele* and towns as follows:

*“The undefined and out of the culture marriages that are taking place outside the islands between our people themselves and other communities, has increasingly becoming tendency characterized by disregarding the ingenious cultural marriage customs and embracing what they understand to be modern way of marriage practices. Such newly adopted marriage customs have become more inclined to materialistic values as the marriages ceremonies are engulfed with offering and receiving consumer materials and technological products. In fact the culture is only preserved in its original form in the islands and the Herara Kebele. Since there has been dramatic and fundamental changes on the culture, it might be almost impossible to reinstates the original culture and practices. However, we at least propose, and we believe it is possible, our people to follow the culture and practices of their origin in the process of getting in to marriage with people from other ethnic groups and if this would be found impossible we do that, at the least, the person from our community need to practice the culture and practice of the community while the other person from the other ethnic group maintain their cultural practice in their end. This solution has been discussed between religious elders, local elders and clan leaders and they have resolved that parents should advise and oblige their children to keep their original culture and custom. We have seen some changes in the areas alongside the lakeshore, However, it still remains challenging in the Ziway and Meki Towns to have our people to respect the culture of first getting the blessing of the parents before getting marriage as young people from our community in these towns pursues marriage at their own sole discretion disregarding the permission of the parents. This is utterly disgraceful act that*

*is very conflicting the belief and persona as a community with its own culture and practice of marriage. Nevertheless we keep on advising and telling, every time we have the chance to do so, the parents and young people not act in such unacceptable behavior<sup>157</sup>”.*

This statement is evident that fundamental changes have taken place in marriage practice by members of the community as of recent times. Furthermore, one of my oral history informant elaborated the marriage practice On Ziway and Meki town as follows:

*“If couple is suited to another and live together and have children without any prior a ceremony, and if the woman is from Zay community, the couple would rejoin the community with the reconciliation system established recently. The process takes place by sending elders messengers to the family of the woman to negotiate reunion with the family and offering birr 8000 as token of reconciliation. The couple then would be welcomed to the family without getting any gifts from her family. This custom of living together as a couple without formal wedding ceremony has become the norm among the young people which is strictly against the custom and culture of the society. For this reason young these types of young people have less acceptance by the society even though they are reconciled after they start life as a couple without the blessing of the community.<sup>158</sup>”*

Therefore, except the Islands and the shore of the lake some of zay community members who live in the towns practice marriage or living together against the custom and culture of the society. This was further elaborated by the following case from Ziway town as follows:

#### ***Case study 4: The marriage practice of young people against the cultural practices and norms<sup>159</sup>***

*Mrs. Kidist Tsegaye (a woman of 32 years of age) was born in the island of Tsedech but her family moved to the town of Zeway looking for better means of living. She says that she attended her primary and secondary education in Zway and lived in the town for 26 years/ Mrs. Kidist stated that, after she began to live in Zeway twon, she has been distant from her relatives that live in Tsedecha island except seeing them on few visits or when she attend wake when some close family member passes away. She says her*

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157. I took the point from FGD-1 one participant Ato Mesfi Hailu on 12 April 2020 in Zway Twon.

158. Interview with oral history informant Ato Beru Insene on 28 March 2020 in Ziway Town.

159. Interview with W/ro Kidist Tsegaye, age 35, from 26-30 Jun 2020 in Ziway Town.

*reason for being distance from the place of her birth is first because she is afraid traveling in water and her second reason is because there are no interesting things in the island as there are in Zeway Town. Mrs. Kidist says that, due to her upbringing in urban lifestyle, she is unaware of any of the culture of the Community except the practices that take place during funeral and wake event. She recall that she only travelled to Tsedecha Island with her family once when she was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade to attend the Meskel holiday festive. Mrs. Kidist further stated that she married a man she came to know due to her work and her marriage was not according to the culture and custom of the Community but she became at odds with her family to this date due to this reason. She now lives in the city of Addis Ababa with her husband. She explains her entering in to the marriage in such way stating that neither she nor her sibling speak the language and the culture of the Zay community as they were raised in urban area. On top of that, she said, the culture is very conservative, and I do not want to get marry in such a way (culture) and it doesn't get along with her identity she assumed in the process of her upbringing. The second reason, according to her, is that the dowry (Gebera) is such a heavy financial burden that even if she tells her family her intention of the marrying the guy, they would not have been able to marry. 'Just think about it', she remarked, and 'what kind of man raised in a city would be willing to give such heavy load of dowry? No one will be willing. So I decided what I had to do. I live my own life. I knew that I was living my own life from that time on. I would not remain single because of the culture of my family and my community. You need to understand that I live in a city not in the island. My family may forgive me one day and if they don't there is nothing I could do about it. I was not taught to live my life succumbed to the restrictions of a culture, recalling the denouncement and resentment she faced from her family because of her marriage she entered in to three years ago.*

In general, the marriage culture including the processes of betrothal and wedding ceremony is only limited practiced in the Islands. The marriages between couple from the community living in another area under go the same practice and custom with only few changes. The marriage and wedding ceremony between one Zay person and a person from other ethnic group living in the nearby *kebels* of the shores of Lake Ziway include few customs of the Zay community while most of the custom related with the usual Zay marriage tradition is

almost abandoned. On the other hand the marriage custom of Zay people is completely forgotten in other areas located farther from the lake. On related issue, the marriage practice by young members of Zay community living in urban areas is completely against the social and cultural practice of the Zay community. Moreover, some areas have also started to serve *Tej, Areke*, Beer and Whisky in addition to the customary *Tella* brewed from *Dagusa* and Maiz. In this regard the marriage ceremony and practice of the Zay people outside the Islands has been changing and merging with other cultures and the original custom remained limited to the Islands.

The other change in the Zay community is the practice of child adoption. According to FGD-2 participants<sup>160</sup>, the Zay community does not adopt children from the other ethnic groups but the community gives his children to other ethnic groups for adoption. This has resulted in the decline of the speakers of the language of Zay as well as the population of the community. In view of alleviating these problems, the number of children given for adoption by the Zay community is decreasing from time to time and they have started adoption between the clans and family of the Zay community themselves. Beside to this, as study participants stated that the they community are the followers of Ethiopian Orthodox church followers after some years recently few of the community member that resides within *Wold-Mekdalakebele* and Maki town are converted to

Protestantism, even if it is not practiced this days some of the community southern part of the lake resident girls have been abducted by the Muslim Arsi Oromo that lives adjacent to them, this women that abducted and converted to Muslim are currently lives at *Chafe-Jila* and *Bochasa* area. Thus, there is diversification of different religion among the community.

When we look at their language, the community member that resides on the island, mixing and different contact with other community within the area made the elders of the community able to speak *Oromifa* language, additionally, the Zey community the resides within the *Bochasa, wolda-Mekdala* and *Herera* Zey community on the Island and on the other hand, since they speak Afan Oromo language fluently as the school is also conducted by Afan Oromo language, the community on the Island also starting to speak Afan-Oromo in addition to *Zeiygna* and

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160. This is based on FGD-2 that was conducted with Ato Abu Golji, Ato Balcha Ajjero, Ato Degaga Ararso, Ato Edewo Hirpo, Ato G/meskele Negewo, Ato Jambo Dinke and Ato Niguse Balcha on 13 March 2020 in Welda-Mekdela rural kebele.

Amharic and a little bit of Silte. On the other hand, as the study informants elaborated, the sizeable “Zey” communities that reside within the *Bocasa*, *Wold-Makedela* and *Herara* their children speak better Afan-Oromo than their own language and they also understand and practice this community’s culture. Key informants also argue that, the community member that lives in Maki and Ziway speak both Oromifa and Amharic or one of the two languages.

Beside to this, the study participants explained that, a Dictionary of the community’s vocabularies is being organized with the participation of the scholars with their origin from the community in order to preserve and promote the language of the community. In this regard some number of the Dictionary has already been published in books by the finance grant of donors from Germany. The informants expressed their hope and belief this initiative would have its own contribution in promoting the language of the Zay community. One of oral history informant commented on the issue as follows:

*“Though the effort and intiation of families, that live outside the islands and who are from the community is insignificant in terms of the support and assistance they provide to their children to learn language of their origin, the Dictionary published would have immense input in assisting parents to support their children learning language of the community of their origin. We are also working with the concerned authorities and entities to publish text books in Zay language so that children from the Zay Community attending primary schools are able to learn in their own language. If we are successful with this endeavor, we would be one step ahead to resolve the problems we are having and in particular it would it would be instrumental to revive and promote the use of our language. It should be noted that the Zay language has been adopted as a medium of teaching in the islands and this step has greatly help our children to better understand what they are being taught in classrooms and would have significant contribution in decreasing the number of children that leave the islands to urban areas seeking better education.<sup>161</sup>”*

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161. Interview with oral history informant Ato Kabeto Tola on 13 March 2020 in Meki Town.

Therefore, As noted from the statement of the above and the remarks of the other informants, this particular effort being exerted by the community, is not only helpful in promoting and the language of the community but also would decrease the number of the community’s children migrating from the islands which in turn would enable the children to grow up within the custom and cultural values of the Zay community. To this end it is considered significant leap forward in alleviating the array of problems faced by the Zay community. In line with this, it is ok to learn other language within the community they resides with the community but forgetting their own identity, will put an impact on their tradition value and identity, for this reason it is important to pay due attention on this, as some researcher argued that (e.g Endashw,) the Zey language is being replaced by other languages and put it on danger. Moreover, among the eight Islands the three islands that the communities are residing on name has been changed on the basis of the political and administration decisions, their former name and the current name of the Island presented on the following table:

**Table 2: THE FORMER AND NEW NAME OF THE ISLANDS**

No.	Former name of the Island	The current name of the Island
1	Debre-Tsiyon Island	Tulu-Gudo Island
2	Abrham Island	Funduro Island
3	Aysut/Getesemane Island	Tsedecha Island
4	Gelila Island	
5	Debere-Sina Island	Similar with the former name
6	Bird Island	
7	Yegeeder Island	
8	Yanes Island	

**Source:** from the study area informants

Generally speaking, as Neil J. Smelser *et.al.* (1992), describe about the Contemporary theories of social change related associated to migration and social movement with the factor of war, socio-economical as well as political and other related reasons. This is also highly related factor for Zay community socio-culture endangerment. The socio-cultural valued of the people of the Zay Community who remained vibrant and passed down from generations to generations, are

currently under unprecedented change that is alarmingly diminishing such values to the point that they are no longer being reflected within the community, due to the major reasons discussed in part five of this paper and one might say that there is cultural dynamics shift undergoing within the community. As we have seen in detail in the preceding section of this paper, while the socio-cultural practices of the Zay community is still being practiced and reflected, with few minor changes, in their original form in the islands, in particular in *Debre-tsiyon*, *tsedech* and *Fundro* islands, due to the mall population of the islands, nevertheless, in other areas outside the islands, the socio-cultural practices of the Zay community have undergone fundamental changes. On the other hand the changes registered in terms of modernizing agricultural practices and increasing productivity, through the assistance of the Agricultural Bureaus of the Woredas, might be considered encouraging and promising changes.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

This study has examined and analyzed the dynamics and continuity of socio-cultural changes among the Zay community, in *Adamitulu-jido-kombolca*, *Dugdaand Ziway-Dugda woredas* in East showa and West Arsi zones of Oromiya region state. The study is based on ethnography and extended case study strategies in which data gathered through a combination of field observation, in-depth interview, FGD, oral history interview methods. The followings are major findings based on the obtained through the above methods.

The Zay community is one of among the diverse ethnic groups of the Ethiopian state who lived in the above mentioned *woredas* of Oromia regional state with their unique cultural attributes. Though members of the Zay ethnic group traced their origin from different parts of Ethiopian state, they managed to maintain a vibrant and harmonious solidarity and a sense of commonness among themselves. Different clans who claim their origin from various parts of Ethiopia able to create a community and devised a clan based administration system that accommodates the interest of different groups within the community. They continued to keep and protect their unique cultural identity that passed from one generation to another generation. The Zay community has also achieved its own unique and amazing customs and practices such as marriage, funeral and wake ceremonies and celebration of the *Meskel* holiday upon which it reflected on their daily and occasional life. They also well knew by weaving that they used it as source income and to satisfy their clothing needs. In addition, the Zay community able to develop their own different type's food, drinks and traditional tools that reflect their diverse origin.

There are five major clans (*gosa*) within the Zay community with several small sub-groups (*sub-gosas*) under each clans who lived in Islands Ziway lake. Due to demographic pressure and search of better opportunities the significant number of members of the community has left the island moved to neighboring Woredas that surrounding Ziway lake and settled permanently in in places like he *Bochesa* and *Welda-Mekdela* and other rural *kebeles* as well as in Ziway and Meki Towns.

The *Aregn gosa* (clan) is the earliest people of the Zay community that settled in the islands and the community was led by the *Wozero Gosa* (clan), especially during the period from the 16<sup>th</sup> century until the reign of Minilik II. However this administration system was replaced by the *Balabat/ Balambaras/* administrative system since the time of Minilik II. Religious leaders, local elders and clan leaders, in particular those from the *Wozero gosa*, had influential role and participation in the *Balabat* administration system which survived until the military government of Ethiopia. Though members of the Zay community have had significant role during the clan and the later *Balabat* administration system, the administration of the community was put under the control of the central government during the time of the Derg regime. Currently their residential areas and territories are under *Oromia* regional state jurisdiction.

The community still practices the colorful and very interesting customs of betrothing, engagement and dowry (*Garwegebat*) processions, the day of *Koso* drinking and bright and festive wedding ceremony as well as marriage between couples that are related with each other by blood. It also worth noting that on matters such as marriage customs, the cultural *Meskel* holiday ceremony, the conflict resolution and reconciliation preceding and practice as well as other issues local elders play a very decisive role. They greater value for *Meskel* annual holiday celebration. *Meskel* holiday is celebrated from September 27 up to October 09 and the celebration involves different events such as the *Hibrete.-Merkuz* and *Ashenbeye* ceremonies. The custom of funeral and grieving process of the community is another value that is unique to the community. In wedding ceremonies, funerals and the *Meskel* holiday are events that unique odes, music and dancing are staged on for the feast of the eye. The Zay community is also known for practicing terracing technique since a long period of time. Agriculture, water travel and fishing are among the major activities of the community upon which the people of the community depending their livelihoods.

The other remarkable feature of the Zay community is members of the community have strong interactions among themselves and with other people that extends within different Islands and beyond them. Though their openness to interaction with other communities has promoted peaceful cohabitation and interaction with others, it has also proved to be one of the main reasons that threatens the original values, and even the survival of their culture to continue as unique.

To sum up, as some anthropologists (e.g. Malinowski (1954), Brown (1972), Persell (1987), Farelly and Macionis (1990), defined social change as a readjustment of social structure. Therefore, members of the Zay community have been forced to leave the islands and live elsewhere due to internal and external factors. The migrants from the islands adopted the culture and customs of other communities and then gradually disregarding their original cultures attributes. The migration of the community's members has also resulted in the decline of the number of Zay people living in the islands. Child adoption is one of the factors that contributed in the decreasing of the number of the Zay people as most adopted Zay children are raised in other cultures where there are no opportunities to help them continue maintain culture and language of their origin. Due these combinations of influences, their vibrant values and culture is now being threatened. Though some of the Zay community members managed to maintain and practiced their culture within the Islands and *Herara Kebele* which is situated near the lakeshore areas, it is becoming a prevalent fact that they are altering their original cultural practice for the reason that explained in different sections of this thesis. In general, the result of this research has shown that many of the values of the Zay community have been subjected to alteration, where some are completely lost, from their original form.

## **5.2 CONCLUSION**

The evolution in every conceivable spectrum of life, unforeseeable abrupt events, behavioral changes of human beings in due processes of discovering new things, innovation and technological advancements have influenced by shaping the behaviors and the way of life of people since time immemorial. Due to the very nature of man in his unquenchable thirst to discover new way of life and culture of different groups of people commonly adopt and be assimilated to others cultural attributes. This typical human experience has been more accelerated in this contemporary globalized world that leading the world to be like a small village where people in any part of the world are able to interact and exchange information within a very instant time. Thus, every community is prone to infiltration of others culture and subjected to the change and modification of its original culture.

Several communities across the world has demonstrated their capability to withstand the influence of cultures from other parts of the world. These communities have been successful to uphold the values and cultures unique to them and even promote their cultural and spiritual

systems to the rest of the world. The Geda System and the religious Meskel celebration in our country are some examples of maintaining a certain cultures and customs.

The case of the Zay community is not different from the case of other communities that gradually overwhelmed by outside cultural infiltration. However, due to the internal and external factors discussed in the foregoing sections of this paper, members of the community left the islands and the areas near the lake to urban that lured by technological materials and urban life style and other influences. As the result most members of the Zay community who left the islands are now influenced by the culture of other ethnic groups and they are on the verge of losing their identity as a Zay person. This trend has been prevalent in the past several years and it, therefore, has caused the socio-cultural values and customs of the Zay community to be limited in the islands. The major factors explained above are the leading causes of modification and alteration in the practice of thire language, culture and custom. On the other hand, I able to observe the community am on the way of combining their material cultural practices with new technologies (such as boats, house construction, agriculture etc.)

Generally speaking, migration and being overwhelmed by urban life and the cultures and languages of dominant ethnic groups are indeed threatening the survival of the Zay Community's unique socio-cultural values which are now virtually limited in the islands. Based on the findings of this research it is possible to conclude that this should be the concern of all the relevant stakeholders to address array of factors that are positing threat for the continuation of Zay's cultural identity and to exert maximum efforts their culture to be intact and preserved

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I: PHOTOS FROM THE STUDY AREA



*Bochesa FGD participants with researcher*



*FGD participants with researcher*



*Debere-Tsiyon church on the Island Of Debre-Tsiyon*



*Tsione-Mariam Church on the Island of Debere-sin*

## Appendix II:

### FIELDWORK GUIDING QUESTIONS

#### A. In-Depth Interview Guiding Questions

##### A1. In-depth Interview Guide for Local Community Level Key Informants

**General Introduction:** The purpose of this interview is to collect data about “Dynamics of Socio-Cultural Lives: Change and Continuity of the Socio-Cultural Practices among the Zay Community, In Ethiopia.” This interview guide is prepared only for an academic purpose of writing M.A Thesis in Social Anthropology. Therefore, you are kindly requested to participate in the interview in which confidentiality of any information is protected and valued. I also kindly request you to record your voices/responses through a voice recorder since it is difficult to write all your responses while interviewing.

**Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation!**

#### Part I. Personal Data of Key Informants

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
3. Religion \_\_\_\_\_
4. Marital status \_\_\_\_\_
5. Educational background \_\_\_\_\_
6. Source of income \_\_\_\_\_
7. Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
8. Current living area/ place \_\_\_\_\_
9. Year of stay in the area \_\_\_\_\_
10. Place of interview \_\_\_\_\_
11. Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_ Starting Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Interviewer’s Name \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part II. In-depth Interview Guide for Local Community Level Key Informants

##### 1.1. Questions related to the indigenous socio-cultural practice of the Zay community

1. What are the indigenous socio-cultural practices of the Zay community?
2. What are the different socio-cultural practices, values, traditions and belief systems in your community?
3. Do you think that the indigenous socio-cultural practices, values, traditions and belief systems

are unique to Zay identity? If so, please explain it?

4. To what extent these indigenous socio-cultural practice contribute to unique and continuity of Zay community identity/your community identity/?

## **1.2. Questions related to the socio-cultural interaction of Zay community with the neighboring rural and urban area people, and among themselves.**

1. Can you please explain the socio-cultural interaction among your community?
2. How do you interact with the neighboring rural and urban communities?
3. What are influences that caused by zay community interaction with their neighbors?
4. Do you believe the Zay ethnic group interaction with the neighboring rural and urban area people can contribute to change your socio-cultural practice? If so, what are these contributions?
5. How do you evaluate your interaction with your neighboring communities?
6. Do you have any additional idea or points on the issues that we discussed above?

## **1.3. Questions related to the Major factors that affecting for the Continuity of their socio-cultural practice**

1. What are major internal and external factors that affecting the continuity of your socio-cultural practice?
2. What measures/ solutions/ have been designed and taken by local community and the woreda administrations to preserve your socio-cultural practices?
3. What is your view regarding the future fate of your socio-cultural values?
4. Based on your understanding what has to be done to preserve and maintain your socio-cultural values?
5. Do you have any additional idea or points on the issues that we discussed above?

## **1.4 Questions related to changes that could have contribution for the endangerment of local socio-cultural systems and their identity**

1. What are major socio-cultural changes that pose greater challenge for the endangerment of your local socio-cultural systems?
2. How do you evaluate these changes can contribute for the alteration of your socio-cultural practice and lose of your identity?
3. What are the Zay community perception about this socio-cultural dynamics in /around your community?

4. Do you have any additional idea or points on the issues that we discussed above?

### **1.5 Summary Questions about Different dynamics of socio-cultural practice**

1. Are there any capacity-building program implemented in your community to protect your socio- cultural identity? If so, would you explain them?

2. Do you believe this socio-cultural dynamics/ change can contribute positive outcomes for the development of Zay community? If so, explain them?

3. Do you have any additional ideas related to the issue under discussion?

**Thank you very much for your valuable information!**

## **A2. In-depth Interview Guide for Woreda expert/biro/ Key Informants**

### **Part I. Personal Data of Key Informants**

1. Age\_\_\_\_\_
2. Sex\_\_\_\_\_
3. Religion\_\_\_\_\_
4. Marital status\_\_\_\_\_
5. Educational background\_\_\_\_\_
6. Occupation/Responsibility\_\_\_\_\_

### **Part II. Interview Questions**

#### **2.1 Questions related to the indigenous socio-cultural practice of the Zay community**

1. What are the current population number of Zay community?
2. Could you tell me major indigenous socio-cultural practices of the Zay community?
3. Do you think that the indigenous socio-cultural practices, values, traditions and belief systems are unique to Zay identity ?
4. To what extent these indigenous socio-cultural practice contribute the continuity of Zay community identity?

#### **2.2 Questions related to the socio-cultural interaction of Zay community with the neighboring rural and urban communities.**

1. Could you explain the socio-cultural interaction of Zay community among themselves who are living in islands, Lake shore areas and Ziway town?
2. How do evaluate the Zay community interaction with their neighboring rural and urban communities?
3. Could you describe the impacts of Zay community interaction with neighboring- communities on their socio-cultural traditions and identity?

4. How do you evaluate the impacts of such interaction?
5. Do you have any additional information or views on the issue under discussion?

### **2.3 Questions related to the Major factors that affecting and challenge to continue their socio-cultural practice**

1. Would you elaborate major factors that posing challenges on the preservation of Zay community socio-cultural values and their ethnic identity?
2. Based on your assessment, Is that internal or external factor that posing greater challenges for the protection of Zay communities ethnic identity and their cultural values? How?
3. What actions have been taken by local community and *wereda* administrations to minimize major challenges in relation to Zay identity and their culture?
4. As a *wereda* Tourism What is your view with regard to the future fate of Zay community socio-cultural values?
5. Do you have any additional idea or points on the issues that we discussed above?

**Thank you very much for your valuable information!**

### **2.4 Questions related to changes that could have contribution for the endangerment of local socio-cultural systems and their identity**

1. What are major socio-cultural changes that pose greater challenge for the endangerment of their local socio-cultural systems?
2. How do you evaluate these changes can contribute for the alteration of their socio-cultural practice and lose of identity?
3. What are your perception about this socio-cultural dynamics in this *wereda*?
4. Do you have any additional idea or points on the issues that we discussed above?

### **2.5 Summary Questions about Different dynamics of socio-cultural practice**

1. Are there any capacity-building program implemented in your *wereda* to protect ethnic socio-cultural identity especially for the Zay community? If so, would you explain them?
2. Do you believe this socio-cultural dynamics/ change can contribute positive outcomes for the development of Zay community socio-cultural identity? If so, explain them
3. Do you have any additional ideas related to the issue under discussion?

## **B. Focus Group Discussion Guide**

**A. General Introduction:** The purpose of this focus group discussion (FGD) guide is to collect data about the “Dynamics of Socio-Cultural Lives: Change and Continuity of the Socio-Cultural Practices among the Zay Community, In Ethiopia.” This discussion guide is prepared only for an academic purpose of writing M.A Thesis in Social Anthropology. Therefore, you are kindly requested to participate in the discussion in which confidentiality of any information is protected and valued. I also kindly request you to record your voices/responses through a tape/voice recorder since it is difficult to write all your discussion points.

**Thank you in advance for your kind participation!**

### **Part I. Personal Data of FGD Participants**

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
3. Religion \_\_\_\_\_
4. Marital status \_\_\_\_\_
5. Educational background \_\_\_\_\_
6. Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
7. *Kebele/Sub-Kebele* \_\_\_\_\_
8. Year of stay in the area \_\_\_\_\_
9. Place of the focus group discussion \_\_\_\_\_
10. Date of the focus group discussion: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Facilitator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

### **Part II. FGD Questions**

#### **2.1 Questions related to the indigenous socio-cultural practice of the Zay community**

1. Where is the origin of Zay community? Do you think that all of them trace one origin?
2. When the Zay community is believed to occupy Ziway Island?
3. How the common name of Zay was coined?
4. What kind of social structure exist within Zay community?
5. Could you tell me the number of clans within Zay community?
6. What kind of labor of division exists within Zay community?
7. Could you tell me the role and place of women in Zay community?

8. Would you tell me the traditional administrative system of zay community?
9. What are traditional leaders name? Could you explain their role and status?
10. Could you describe your indigenous socio-cultural practices?
11. Do you think that the indigenous socio-cultural practices, values, traditions and belief systems are unique to Zay identity? If so, please explain it?
12. Do you have any additional ideas related to the issue under discussion?

## **2.2 Questions related to the socio-cultural interaction of Zay community with the neighboring rural and urban area people, and among themselves.**

1. How do you and your family interact with your community?
2. Do you have interaction with the neighboring rural and urban ethnic groups?
3. What kind of interaction do you have with the neighboring rural and urban ethnic- groups?
4. How do you evaluate your community interaction with the neighboring rural and urban the neighboring the neighboring rural and urban ethnic groups?
5. Do you believe that your entry- ethnic group interaction has a contribution to change your socio-cultural values?
6. Could you explain the positive and negative impact of the Zay community interaction for their socio cultural identities or values in your locality/*kebele*?
7. Do you have any additional information or views on the issue under discussion?

## **2.3 Questions related to the Major factors that affecting and challenge to continue their socio-cultural practice**

1. What are the major factors that affecting and challenge to continue your indigenous socio-cultural practice in your locality?
2. Do you believe that, internal and external factors that impede to continue their socio-cultural practice in your kebele? If so, what are these?
3. What measurements are taken by your community members and *wereda* administrations to solve the major constraints of socio-cultural practice in your *locality*?
4. As a community members or Zay ethnic groups, what is your view regarding to preserve and protect your socio-cultural values?

## **2.4 Questions related to changes that could have contribution for the endangerment of local socio-cultural systems and their identity**

1. What are major socio-cultural changes that pose greater challenge for the endangerment of their local socio-cultural systems?
2. How do you evaluate these changes can contribute for the alteration of their socio-cultural Practice and lose of identity?
3. What are your perception about this socio-cultural dynamics?
4. Do you have any additional idea or points on the issues that we discussed above?

## **2.5 Summary Questions about Different dynamics of socio-cultural practice**

1. Are there any capacity-building program implemented in your kebele/*wereda* to protect your Ethnic socio-cultural identity? If so, would you explain them?
2. Do you believe this socio-cultural dynamics/ change can contribute positive outcomes for the development of your communities socio-cultural identity? If so, explain them
3. Do you have any additional ideas related to the issue under discussion?

**Thank you very much for your valuable information!!**

## **C. Case Study Interview Guides**

**General Introduction:** The purpose of this interview is to collect data about the “Dynamics of Socio-Cultural Lives: Change and Continuity of the Socio-Cultural Practices among the Zay Community, In Ethiopia.” This interview guide is prepared only for an academic purpose of writing M.A Thesis in Social Anthropology. Therefore, you are kindly requested to participate in the interview in which confidentiality of any information is protected and valued. I also kindly request you to record your voices/responses through a tape/voice recorder since it is difficult to write all your responses while interviewing.

**Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation!**

## **Part I. Personal Data of Case Study Participants**

1. Real Name/ Pseudo Name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
4. Religion \_\_\_\_\_
5. Marital status \_\_\_\_\_
6. Number of sons \_\_\_\_\_ and daughters \_\_\_\_\_
7. Marital status of children \_\_\_\_\_
8. Educational background \_\_\_\_\_
9. Children educational background \_\_\_\_\_
10. Source of income \_\_\_\_\_
11. Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
12. *Kebele/Sub-kebele* \_\_\_\_\_
13. Year of stay in the area \_\_\_\_\_
14. Place of interview \_\_\_\_\_
15. Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_ Starting Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_
16. Interviewer's Name \_\_\_\_\_

## **Part II. Case study Questions**

### **2.1 Questions related to the indigenous socio-cultural practice of the Zay community**

1. Where is the origin of Zay community?
2. Could you describe your unique and indigenous socio-cultural practices?
3. Do you think that the socio-cultural practices and values have contributions to strength your ethnic identity in your family as well as community? If so, what are these roles?
4. Do you practice different socio-cultural values, traditions, rituals, belief systems and other related to protect and keep your socio-cultural values? If so what are these socio-cultural practices, values, traditions and belief systems?
5. Do you have any additional ideas related to the issue under discussion?

### **2.2 Questions related to the socio-cultural interaction of Zay community with the neighboring rural and urban area people, and among themselves.**

1. How do you and your family interact with your community?
2. Do you have interaction with in the neighboring rural and urban ethnic groups?
3. What kind of interaction do you have with the neighboring rural and urban ethnic groups?
4. How do you evaluate your and your family as well as your community interaction with the neighboring rural and urban the neighboring the neighboring rural and urban ethnic groups?

5. Do you believe that your entry- ethnic group interaction has a contribution to change your socio-cultural values?
6. Based on you and your family view, could you explain the positive and negative impact of the Zay community interaction with their neighboring communities?
7. Do you have any additional information or views on the issue under discussion?

### **2.3 Questions related to the Major factors that affecting and challenge to continue their socio-cultural practice**

1. What are the major factors that affecting and challenge to continue you're indigenous socio-cultural practice in your locality?
2. To what extent the internal and external factors that impede to continue their socio-cultural practice in your community? If so, what are these?
3. How do you evaluate the factors that affecting your socio-cultural identity in your community?
4. What measurements are taken by your community members to solve the major constraints of socio-cultural practice in your locality?

**Thank you very much for your valuable information!**

### **2.4 Questions related to changes that could have contribution for the endangerment of local socio-cultural systems and their identity**

1. Which visible changes do you observed due to the socio-cultural interaction of Zay community?
2. Could you describe the Zay community disintegration of local socio-cultural practice and loses their identity? If so, what are they?
3. To what extent this changed in turn might have contributed to disintegration of local Socio-cultural systems in your locality?
4. How do you evaluate this change can influenced on your socio-cultural practice, and might have contribute to lose your identity?
5. What are your perception about this socio-cultural dynamics in your kebele?

## **D. Oral-history Interview Guiding Questions**

### **A1. Oral-history Interview Guide for Community elders Level Key Informants**

**General Introduction:** The purpose of this oral-history interview is to collect data about “Dynamics of Socio-Cultural Lives: Change and Continuity of the Socio-Cultural Practices among the Zay Community, In Ethiopia.” This interview guide is prepared only for an academic purpose of writing M.AThesis in Social Anthropology. Therefore, you are kindly requested to participate in the oral

–history interview in which confidentiality of any information is protected and valued. I also kindly request you to record your voices/responses through a voice recorder since it is difficult to write all your responses while interviewing. **Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation!**

#### **Part I. Personal Data of Key Informants**

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
3. Religion \_\_\_\_\_
4. Marital status \_\_\_\_\_
5. Educational background \_\_\_\_\_
6. Source of income \_\_\_\_\_
7. Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
8. Current living area/ place \_\_\_\_\_
9. Year of stay in the area \_\_\_\_\_
10. Place of interview \_\_\_\_\_
11. Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_ Starting Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Finishing Time: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Interviewer’s Name \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Part II. Oral-history Interview Guide for Local Community Level Key Informants**

1. Where is the origin of Zay community? Do you think that all of them trace one origin?
2. When the Zay community is believed to occupy Zieway Island?
3. How the common name of Zay was coined?
4. What kind of social structure exist within Zay community?
5. Could you tell me the number of clans within Zay community?
6. What kind of labor of division exists within Zay community?
7. Could you tell me the role and place of women in Zay community?
8. Would you tell me the traditional administrative system of zay community?
9. What are traditional leaders name? Could you explain their role and status?

10. What are indigenous socio-cultural practices of the Zay community?
11. How could be develop your socio-cultural identity?
13. Does your socio-cultural identity similar with other ethnic groups?
14. To what extent these indigenous socio-cultural practice contribute tounique Zay community identity/your community identity/?
15. With which ethnic group the Zay community has strong socio-cultural and linguistic ties?
16. Can you please explain your community socio-cultural interaction among themselves?
17. How could you interact with the neighboring rural-urban peoples? When did you start?
18. How do interact with the neighboring rural and urban area people, and among themselves that contribute for the dynamics of socio-cultural practice?
19. Do you believe the interaction with the neighboring rural-urban area people can contribute to change your socio-cultural practice? If so, what arethese contributions?
20. How do you see these interaction have they positive or negative impact for your socio-cultural identities or values?
21. Do you have any additional information or views on the issue under discussion?
22. What are the major factors that affecting and challenge to continue their socio-cultural practice?
23. How come this challenges it affect your socio-cultural identity? When and where they Start?
24. Do you believe that, internal and external factors that impede to continue your socio-cultural practice? If so, what are these?
25. What measurements are taken by local community members and community elders tosolve the major constraints of socio-cultural practice in your locality?
26. What is your view regarding the future directions to protect and actively practice your socio-cultural values?
27. What are major socio-cultural changes that pose greater challenge for the endangerment of their local socio- cultural systems?
28. How do you evaluate these changes can contribute for the alteration of their socio-cultural practice and lose of identity?
29. What are the Zay community perception about this socio-cultural dynamics in /around your community?
30. Do you have any additional ideas related to the issue under discussion?

**Thank you very much for your valuable information!**

## Appendix III: PROFILES OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

### A. Profiles of Key Informants

No	Name	Sex	Age	Kebele/ Sub Kebele	Marital Status	Occupation/ Position	Level of Education	Date of Interview
1	Gebiso Tufa Micho	Male	45	Welda-Mekdela	Marrid	Agriculture and Trade	Read and Write	06 March 2020
2	Roman Mia	femal	60	Bochesa	married	Household	Read and write	27 January 2020
3	Qabeto hireso	Male	50	Bochesa	married	Farmer	Read and write	27 January 2020
4	Tsefaye Dinqi	Male	55	Bochesa	married	Farmer	Read and write	22 April 2020
5	Eshetu Beresa	male	48	Gelila Island	married	Farmer	Read and write	23 March 2020
6	Gudeta Ruso	male	60	Tsedecha Island	married	Agriculture worker and seler	Read and write	27 January 2020
7	Wro. Welela Dadi	Femal	50	Debre-Tsiyon Island	Marrid	Household	Read and write	05 April 2020
8	Ato Firafis Nebi	Male	42	Ziway town	Marrid	Tourism officer	BA in History	19 March 2020
9	Ato Aleme Hailu	Male	48	Ziway town	Marrid	Rower boat	Gerad 12 complit	12 May 2020
10	Beru Bedasa	male	45	Funduro Island	married	Agriculture worker and fish seler	Read and write	27 January 2020

### B. Oral history informants

No	Name	Sex	Age	Kebele/ Sub Kebele	Marital Status	Occupation/ Position	Level of Education	Date of Interview
1	Ato Zewge Bedane	Male	52	Ziway town	Marrid	Government officer	BED in History	14 May 2020
2	Decon Tebabu Meskele	Male	45	Tedecha Island	Marrid	Deccan and local Tour guidance	Grade 12 complet and church education	03 May 2020
3	W/Michael Negewo Obseni	Male	44	Welda-Mekdela	Marrid	Agriculture and Trade	Read and Write	06 March 2020
4	Wro Kushe Gonder	Female	80	Gelila Island	Widowed	Household	Church education	30 April 2020

No	Name	Sex	Age	Kebele/ Sub Kebele	Marital Status	Occupation/ Position	Level of Education	Date of Interview
5	Tesfaye Edeto	Male	47	Ziway town	Marrid	Government officer	MA in management	01May 2020
6	Mamire G/Meskel Hirpho	Male	63	Debre-Tsiyon Island	Married	Monk, church musium administrative and community elder	Church education	05 April 2020
7	Assefa Teji Kena	male	58	Bochesa	Married	Agriculture	Read and Write	05 March 2020
8	Tsegaye Boku	Male	45	Meki town	Married	Government officer	BA in Accounting	06 Jun 2020
9	W/ro Biritu Geleto	femal	49	Debre-Tseyon Island	Married	Housholde	Read and write	07April 2020
10	W/ro Tadelech Edeo	Femal	50	Debre-Tseyon Island	Married	Housholde	Read and write	07April 2020
11	Zeru Barke	male	35	Debre-Tseyon Island	Married	Fisher man	Read and write	02 jun 2020
12	Ayo Chere	femal	35	Funduro Island	Married	Household	Read and write	17 April 2020
13	Guye Tuse	male	70	Ziway town	Married	Farmer	Read and write	12 April 2020
14	Biru Insene	male	35	Ziway town	Married	TEVAT Tacher	Veterinary	28 March 2020
15	Emayu G/hanna	femal e	65	Ziway town	Married	Household	Read and write	08 june 2020
16	W/Cherkos Ture	male	60	Debre-Tsiyon Island	Married	Agriculture worker	Read and write	03 April 2020
17	Kabeto Tola	Male	54	Meki Town	Married	Government worker	BA in History	13 March 2020
18	Midagi Zegni	Male	60	Tsedecha Island	Married	Farmer and fisher	Read and write	17 June 2020

### C. Profiles of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Participants

	No	Name	Sex	Age	Kebele/ Sub Kebele	Marital Status	Occupation/ Position	Level of Education	Date of Interview
FGD I	1	Negash Shguru	Male	41	Achayta	Married	Working on weaving cotton product and seler	Read and Write	26 January 2020
	2	Tesmamu yabe	Male	38	Debre-Tsiyon Island	Married	Agriculture & trade	Read and Write	

	3	Uke Burqa	male	55	Debre-Tsiyon Island	Married	Agriculture & trade	Read and Write	
	4	Bekura Tusa	male	60	Debre-Tsiyon Island	Married	Agriculture worker	Read and Write	
	5	Tadese Bedaso	male	54	Debre-Tsiyon Island	Married	Agriculture & trade	Read and Write	
	6	Adane Seyfu	Male	50	Debre-Tsiyon Island	Married	farmer	Read and Write	
	7	Afewerk Kindalem	male	60	Debre-Tsiyon Island	Married	farmer	Read and Write	

	No	Name	Sex	Age	Kebele/ Sub Kebele	Marital Status	Occupation/ Position	Level of Education	Date of Interview
FGD 2	1	Edewo Hirpo	Male	74	Welda-Mekdela	Married	Agriculture & trade	Read and Write	13 March 2020
	2	G/meskel Negwo	Male	52	Welda-Mekdela	>>	>>	Grade 9	
	3	Balcha Ajero	Male	60	Welda-Mekdela	>>	>>	Read and Write	
	4	Jambo Dinke	Male	73	Welda-Mekdela	>>	>>	Church education	
	5	Degaga Arareso	Male	49	Welda-Mekdela	>>	>>	Read and Write	
	6	Niguse Balcha	Male	35	Welda-Mekdela	>>	NGO, officer	BA in agriculrure	
	7	Abu Golji	male	42	Welda-Mekdela	>>	Farmer	Grade 12 complite	

	No	Name	Sex	Age	Kebele/ Sub Kebele	Marital Status	Occupation/ Position	Level of Education	Date of Interview
FGD 3	1	W/ro Terefech gebeyew	Female	40	Ziway town	Married	Woreda administration officer	BA in Jornalisem	12 April 2020
	2	Tseganeh Assfaw	Male	48	Ziway town	married	Local tour guide	Grade 12 complet	
	3	Mrs.Dembele Gutu	Female	50	Ziway town	Married	Fish seler	Basic education	

	4	Telila Getu	male	56	Ziway town	married	Woreda Culture and tourism biro officer	BA in History and heritage management	
	5	Yetinayet Tokuma	male	42	Ziway town	Married	Busnes worker	Grade 12 complet	
	6	Mesfen Hailu	male		Ziway town	married	NGO seftineat officer	MA in management	
	7	Seyfu deqeba	male	35	Ziway town	Married	Government officer	MA IN Economics	

	No	Name	Sex	Age	Kebele/ Sub Kebele	Marital Status	Occupation/ Position	Level of Education	Date of Interview
FGD 4	1	W/ro Mulu Guye	Female	56	Bochesa	Married	Household	Basic education	29 April 2020
	2	W/ro Addis Bekele	Female	34	Bochesa	married	Government officer	BA in managment	
	3	Chala yebo	Male	38	Bochesa	married	Agriculture worker	Diploma in TEACHNIG	
	4	Ashenafi Gutu	Male	45	Bochesa	Married	Farmer	Grade 12 complet	
	5	Alemayew qabeto	Male	60	Bochesa	Married	Agriculture worker	Basic education	
	6	Habte Bersa	male	40	Bochesa	married	Agriculture worker	Read and write	
	7	Jote Telila	male	45	Bochesa	Married	TEVAT teachers	BAS	

### A. Profiles of Case Study Participants

No	Name	Sex	Age	Kebele/ Sub-Kebele	Marital Status	Level of Education	Date of Interview
1	Ato Balcha Dalecha	Male	65	Korki-Adi kebele	Married	Read and Write	From 01-06 Jun 2020
2	Wro. Kidist Tsegaye	Female	35	Ziway town	Marrid	BA in English language teaching	From 26-30Jun 2020
3	<b>Mr. Teji Bedane</b>	Male	60	Bochesa kebele	Marrid	Read and Write	From 11-13 May 2020
4	<b>Mr. W/mariam</b>	Male	55	Debre-Tsiyon Island	Marrid	Grade 5	06-08 May 2020

## **Declaration**

*I, the undersigned, declare that this Thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other University and that all sources of material used for the Thesis have been appropriately acknowledged.*

*Declared byName* \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date* \_\_\_\_\_

*Confirmed By*

*Name* \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date* \_\_\_\_\_