



Addis Ababa University

College of social Sciences

Department of Social Anthropology

**The political and religious significance of “*Odaa* Tree” and
“*Odaa Nabe*” among Tulama Oromo in Akakki Wereda, Oromia
special zone surrounding Finfine**

By: Solomon Debebe

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March , 2017

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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Abstract

The ultimate aim of this paper is to investigate the socio-political and religious values of Odaa tree among the Oromo and to make a particular investigation on Odaa Nabe's socio-political and religious value among the Tulama Oromo in Akaki Wereda. Under different circumstances, the symbolic picture of Odaa is very importantly used in different contexts. The study is undertaken by descriptively analyzing the very complex socio-political and religious Values of Odaa Nabe with a special focuss on the religious and political practices performed by the Tulama Oromo in Akaki Wereda of the Oromioia Regional State. The study identified that there are gaps in level of understanding of the actual representation of Odaa tree among the members of the society regardless of the local interpretation. A qualitative methodological approach is employed in eliciting information from different but complementary sources on the subject in question. In eliciting the necessary data, the study basically relied on primary sources comprising of officials and functionaries of the Wereda and local administrations, community elders youths women, and participants in focus group discussions. With regard to collecting the primary data, interview: semi-structured interview, observation, focus group discussion and case study was conducted and the information was gathered depending on the objective of this study. The secondary Data was reinforced by conducting detailed review and analysis of literatures that also helped in formulating the theoretical frame work. According to the findings and analyses of this study, Odaa is a symbolically very important Tree of all kinds of trees species among this particular society in terms of its social, politica and religious fuctions. The symbolic and mythical use of Odaa Nabe was historically once reached at its highest level with the development of use the practicality of Gada system among the Tulama Oromo in Akaki Wereda but its current condition shows that it is limited to function as ceremonial and memorial place. The Aba Gada has already shifted its center from Odaa Nabe to the town of Dukem due to different impacts such as political, economic, and other social, factors. The religious practices are being undertaken more effectively than the political practices. However, the study revealed that there is a decrease in the number of participants from time to time. Thus, based on the those findings and analyses, the study suggests that further scholarly descriptions need to be made to increase the various explanations and interpretive meanings of Odaa tree as the investigation on Odaa Nabe provides with certain amount of contribution to show the local points of views being charged with viewing its current condition

Key words: *Tulama Oromo, Odaa, Gada, Odaa Nabe*

Acronyms

E.C: Ethiopian Calendar

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

FDRE: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

CSA: Central Statistical Agency

OFM: Oromo Federalist Movement

OLF: Oromo Liberation Front

OPDO: Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization.

Glossary of Local Terms

Abbaa _____ Father

Abba bokku _____ owner of bokku (scepter)

Abba duula _____ Leader of war

Abba gadaa _____ Leader of gadaa system

Assennaa _____ a type of marriage in which a girl identifies her own mate by herself and force the family of the boy and the boy himself to marry her. Such marriage can not be denounced by the boy as well as his family.

Ayyaana _____ spirit

Buqqee _____ small pot like material used for holding milk and water

Buttaa _____ abduction, a marriage construct by force

Caffee _____ Cuoncil, General assembly

Caaccuu _____ Ceremonial tool mostly used worn by ladies

Dhaala _____ a type of marriage that is constructed by inheriting wife

Dhadhaa _____ Butter

Eebba _____ Blessing

Gaddisa _____ Shade

Gumaa _____ A compensation paid for wrong doings (penalty for both civil and criminal damages)

Gumii _____ Assembly

Haadha _____ Mother

Hadhaa siiqqee _____ Mother or owner of the siiqqee ceremony

Iddir/ Afoosha _____ a community level association for funeral readiness.

Ikkee _____ first/supreme Laws

Iqub _____ community level association for short term credit.

Irreecha _____ a thanks giving and prayer ceremony

Jaarsa _____ Elder

Jaarsa araara _____ arbitrators, elders of reconciliation

Jaarsa biyyaa _____ community elders

Jarsummaa _____ Mediation by male elders

Kebele _____ the smallest administrative unit in the government structure

Kooluu _____ surrender

Mana _____ House

Muudaa _____ to assign, to give representation

Naannoo _____ Region/State

Nabi _____ God, Creator

Odaa _____ Oromo Political and religious center

Qaalluu _____ a spiritual leader, a spiritual person

Rakoo _____ a sheep slaughtered for marriage purpose

Sadden Soddo _____ The three Soddo

Sadeen Tulama _____ The three Tulama

Seera _____ Law

Seera Waaqaa _____ The law of God

Seera Gadaa _____ Gada Laws

Seera Tumaa _____ A place the laws of Tulama Gada is passed

Seera Tumaa _____ The process of passing Gada laws among the Tulama.

Tulluu _____ Mountain

Tullu Erer _____ Mount Yerer/Mount Erer

Tullu Cuqqaalla _____ Mount Zeqala/Mount Chukala

Waaqa _____ God/Creator

Woreda _____ a small unit of government Administration

Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The intimate contact between human and the very natural environment had eventually been brought to exist since the very beginning of human history. Since human being started to form a social group within themselves, it is thought that the early human ancestors started to understand their surroundings on which they had depended to survive and made use of the earth's properties. Whitebeck explained about the close relationship between human and its environment as follows.

Early man was impressed by those particular phenomenon of nature which seemed mostly to affect his life. These might be the sun, the rain, the wind, the overflow of a river, or something else. At any rate they would be the elements of his particular environment. The ocean, for example, would not, in the very nature of the case, be expected to play a part in the mythology of the tribes of interior Asia or of Central Africa; but it did play a part in the mythologies of Greece, Rome, and Scandinavia. The annual overflow of a river was a matter of utmost consequence to the people of Egypt; the cause of the periodical rise of the Nile was a mystery, but the people knew that their very lives depended upon it, and the adoration of the Nile inevitably became a part of their religion; but there was no such river to influence the religion of Palestine or Norway or Persia. Again, the occurrence or the failure of the monsoon rains is a matter of plenty or of famine to the people of India, and these seasonal rains could scarcely escape playing a part in the early religions of that country; but to the aborigines of the Amazon Valley, where the rain is so frequent as to be an annoyance, the rain giver might easily be held in disfavour (White beck 1918, 318)

Like Whitebeck, researchers from many different other scholarly disciplines have also tried their best to explore and explain the relationships between humans and their environment stating that it depends on the people's perception of the natural landscape.

Though in the modern world, influenced by the powerful impact of industrialization, we tend to see nature as something to be dominated and controlled by human effort; early human cultures were shaped and informed by an awareness of the power of nature (Goucher,

LeGuin, and Walton. 1998). Though there was and still is a big debate regarding which more affects the other among the two as a determinant factor to each other, the relationship and interdependence between human culture (Nurture) and the environment (Nature) remained inevitable. While environment includes the natural surrounding such as the land, forests, water, animals (or the land and all its inhabitants), culture is composed of the values, norms, beliefs, languages, arts, technology, knowledge and/or generally all the products of human capability. Therefore, humans starting from depending on some elements of the environment for shelter and food sources, enjoy their ritual life by the attachments they built in forming different religious and political practices as well as artistic expressions along the forests, trees, river banks (rivers) and others. Hence, according to Alemayehu Haile (2002, 78), Oromo religious ceremonies and Gada ritual practices such as *irressa*, *ateetee*, *nabi*, *boranticha*, *dhibayyuu*, *garanfata*, *ayyana*, *wedaja*, and prayers, etc, are performed at the big river basin, big mountains, large water bodies, under the shade of big trees like *Odaa*. Although the aforementioned areas are considered as holy places, the religious and political centers of the Oromo have been remained the *Odaa* trees. This study explores this nature – human relationship of Oromo through *Odaa* tree.

Thus, my interest in this topic developed after I joined the department of Social Anthropology in Addis Ababa University, and was allowed by my instructor to make a deep analysis on one particular ethnographic text for the fulfilment of the course “Ethnographic Analysis”. It was during this time that I got a chance to read the work of “Collins Turn Bull”, entitled, “The Forest People”. The book was about the life of pygmies living in the Ituri forest in the Congo. Turn Bull (1962) describes in this book that the fact that the pygmies were linked to the forest in all their life aspects made them be called the “people of the tree” even by ancient writers like Homer. Collin Turn Bull also described the pygmies as one of the original inhabitants of Africa as many other writers mention that the Oromo are one of the oldest Cushitic people in north eastern region of Africa. However, the total dependence of the pygmies on the forest only convinced me to ask myself whether there are other people who have some cultural relation at least in terms of their religious and political life to nature. Hence, it was after reading the detail presentation of the book about BaMbuti pygmies of the Congo basin that I started to think about the socio-political and religious value of certain wild trees to different human societies and the close emotional (spiritual) interaction between human nature and the forest plants. Getting an insight from the work of Collins, I started to read some local written anthropological ethnographic sources provided by different local

scholars in my country which then made me remember some practices that I had long observed during my early child hood.

I also remember when I was around at my early twelve and thirties; I had observed a cultural practice that was conducted by people living in the next door to my grandparents. The practice was called “*Follee*”. It was a kind of cultural practice that was dominantly known among Oromos of the south west showa zone. *Follee* is celebrated by Oromo elders under a sacred tree called *Odaa*. The people celebrate this prestigious event under this tree because they give a special value for that tree as a scared species. Though the culture by itself needs a further study, I was impressed by the value of this sacred tree among those people. For instance, the members of the community are not allowed to cut the tree to perform any home based activities because of the value they have already attached to it. Even if it is naturally broken, no one takes it home to use it as a fire wood or something else. They prefer to go several kilometers to find fire wood than using the broken parts of *Odaa* tree. This shows that there should be something to be understood behind the simple observation of what is under practice. Therefore, it needs more research to reach the source of explanations and bring it to the public with its original version.

Odaa is found in different parts of the Oromia regional state. There are different local *Odaas* beyond the five main *Odaas*. According to Alemayehu Haile, “ *Odaa*, the holy sycamore tree” was traditionally believed to be the most respected and the most sacred tree the shade of which was believed as a source of tranquility”(2002.79). This explanation doesn’t only stand for the main *Odaas*, but also it includes all local *Odaa* trees which are assigned as political centers of different Gada parties existing in that particular place. The main *Odaas* of Oromo are thought to be five in number. These include, *Odaa Roobaa*, *Odaa Nabee*, *Odaa Bultum*, *Odaa Bissile* and *Mada Walabu*. The scope of the study on *Odaa Nabe* goes beyond the local *Odaas* to the main *Odaas* as well. However, the main purpose of this research is to understand the socio-political and religious value of “*Odaa Nabe*” among *Tulema* clans of the Oromo in *Akaki wereda*, Oromia special zone surrounding Finifinne.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Extended studies long conducted on Oromo culture and society by several social scientists focusing on certain cultural elements and historical events such as the origins and/or places occupied by the population as well as certain popular issues of focus such as the “*Gada*

System” in its general context. Different historical documents also indicate that most of the oral traditions that are preferred to be told by elder members of the population need to concentrate on these specific cultural and historical elements. For instance, the study of *Gada* system is the most extensively conducted by several scholars of different fields in the social sciences from both local and foreign origin including Amarom Legesse (1973). One of the major studies thus far conducted for an academic requirement was the popular document produced by this anthropologist. As to him the book entitled *Gada the Three Approaches to the Study of African Society* was a P. h. D dissertation in social anthropology which was submitted to the department of social relation, Harvard University. This study hit its specific focus on the study of Borena Oromo central institution, the Gada system. Similarly, I have also read another document published by the Culture and Tourism Bureau of Oromia which entitled “Gada system, the Politics of Tulema Oromo” (2002). The book also takes Gada as a historic political, ritual and economic identity of the Tulema Oromo. Other recent studies which were under the passion of such former researches/researchers have dealt with certain cultural and traditional elements which have a close relation with the Gada system with a less focus on the socio-political and religious values of Odaa tree. From my observation, among certain traditional and ritual elements which have been parts of different social elements and which have been studied by different social researches such as Negaso Gidada, Workeneh Kelbessa, Gemechu Megersa, Mohammed Hassen and others were history, *ateetee*, “*irecha*”, *siqqee*, folklore, and linguistic behaviours. Hence, I understood that it is better for beginner researchers including myself to make my point of focus on such cultural elements as *Odaa*, in a particular place existing in association with certain social practices because it has broad meanings, practices and mystical relations with the life of the society.

Therefore, taking this in mind, I started to think that there should be a gap in the study of the socio political and religious values of “*Odaa*”, a tree under which the *Gada* system which has been serving the people but which sufficient research products had not been produced for. But my point is that the system (*Gada*) takes place under the shade of the Odaa tree because it takes a symbolic meaning among the people from the religious, political and historical views in general. A special study by Dereje Hinew Dehu, (2012), on the historical significance of *Odaa* among *Bale* Oromo has clearly revealed about what Meda Walabu is for Oromo in *Bale* so far. But in the case of *Odaa Nabe* which is closely associated with Tulama Oromo, it needs a very critical investigation on its past and current conditions with regard to its political and religious significance. Among the Tulama Oromo, there are some local

evidences that Odaa nabe is also one of the Odaas which had been and stil is functioning as a political and religious center. For instance, it is clearly stated in Alemayehu Haile (2002/2009, 56) “Odaa Nabe was the religio – political center of Tulama Oromo”.

Then, after proposing the investingation in my mind I made an extended contact with the target people in that place. According to some information gained from both the local people (elders in focus) and the Akaki Wereda Bureau of Culture and Tourism, I came to know that the *Odaa* tree known by specific name “*Odaa Nabe*” is a very respectful and sacred tree. It functions as a Gada center for *Tulama* Oromos. However, except the Oral speechs of both the local people and the governmental officers, I have found no any written document that tells about *Odaa Nabe*. But I also heard that some academic researches have been and are being conducted by students coming from different Universities regarding its current situation with special focus on its significance as a tourist attraction site and the place’s conservation though never been submitted to the office of Culture and Tuorism.

But, I believe that cultural, symbolic, and historical or in general the socio-political values as well as the benefits the people of the Tulama Oromo in Akaki Wereda could produce as a result of their existence in a particular area should be clearly investigated and be understood by the academic community.

In addition to the literature gap so far observed, the authorities from the *Akaki woreda* Culture and Tourism Bureau, tried to explain some kinds of problems that need to be solved by further researches. This include, unscientific explanations made by local tour guides about the *Odaa* due to lack of understanding. This happens due to the absence of written or document to be used as a reference.

However, there are many thoughts among many local people that *Odaa* is a symbol of Oromoness in general Odaa Nabe is a symbol of the Tulama in particular. However, beyond such a simplified generalization, it is important to involve in certain deep investigation on the knowledge and understanding of the local people on both the political and religious values of *Odaa Nabe* which can help to observe the broad context from the insider’s point of views. Hence, this study has investigated the variety of cultural values and symbolic functions ascribed to *Odaa Nabe* specifically with reference to the Tulama Oromo in akaki Wereda. Thus, I tried to make maximum investigation on the local discursive explanations about the

symbolic representation of *Odaa* tree in general and *Odaa Nabe* with a particular focus. Generally, the research is aimed to answer at least the following basic questions.

- What is the symbolic relevance of *Odaa Nabe* for Tulama Oromo in the study area?
- What does the community feel for possessing such an important *Odaa Nabe* as an indicator of their clan's identity in the *Gada* system?
- How does the *Odaa* tree contribute to the peaceful co-existence of different Oromo clans and sub clans as a result of its existence in the study area?
- What is the level of peoples understanding about the socio-political and religious values of *Odaa Nabe*?
- Are there changes and continuities?

1.3 Research objectives

1.3.1 General objective

As an overall objective, this study attempted to study the socio-political and religious values of *Odaa* Tree among the Tulama Oromo in Akaki Wereda.

1.3.2 Specific objective

- ✓ Exploring the reason behind preferring *Odaa* as a sacred Tree
- ✓ Examining the effects of *Odaa* tree among Oromo people in resolving conflicts
- ✓ Investigating the meanings of the religious and cultural practices that are undertaken by the local people
- ✓ Identifying the kinds of practices/rituals being undertaken by men and women under the shade of *Odaa Nabe*

1.4 Significance of the study

In Essence, the study on understanding the socio-political and religious values of *Odaa* among the Oromo people which make its major focus on *Odaa Nabe* in Akaki wereda of the Oromia regional State is believed to contribute at least through provoking further researchers by providing some basic and up to date information about subject under study and the study area. It is also assumed to serve as a relevant and reliable ground for policy makers and development partners (government bodies, civil society groups, community based

organizations, etc.) in their endeavors towards initiating, implementing, managing, supporting and realizing the development of the study area and other similar localities of the state.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The major limitations of the study were the amount of available literature on the topic or with this specific issue. Further, respondents found it difficult to gain free time to participate in the study due to different problems such as seasonality of agricultural activities since they worked almost all the week. A third challenge is related to access to documented data due to lack of data documentation and transparency and extraordinarily extended bureaucracy in government offices. Financial limitation is the other particular challenge as the researcher is a self sponsored student sometimes supplemented by family.

1.6 Methodology

1.6.1 Research approaches

Qualitative research is a social research and an ethnographic one in itself. The aim of ethnographic research is to capture the character of naturally occurring human behaviour. This can only be achieved by first-hand contact with it, not by inferences from what people do in artificial settings like experiments or from what people say in interviews about what they do elsewhere. This is why ethnographers carry out their research in "natural" settings, settings that exist independently of the research process, rather than in those set up specifically for the purposes of research. This is called principle of *naturalism* (Bojan Zigic 2007, 124)

Qualitative research is in-depth research that seeks to understand why people do what they do. So, in an attempt to understand culture which is a product of human behaviour it needs a close intimacy rather than taking a sample of a particular group for generalization, it is important to use such methods as interview and observation which are preferable to get a first hand explanation. Obviously, this research method usually requires a smaller sample group. It is concerned with the nuance of a social situation, the culture and emotion, and things that cannot be totally determined quantitatively.

Thus, this research is conducted based on a qualitative method. Because the qualitative approach provided the researcher with certain types of clear and detail information regarding the issue under study. It was planned to spend some time researching this topic in Akaki

Wereda Oromia Regional State with the great emphasis to the qualitative approach, a field work was made to collect local tangible and relevant information/data after developing a rapport for self introduction with the key informants and informants at the beginning. I believe that this might have helped me in providing not only with the needed information, but also to get good familiarity with the target population that eased my way to identify real key informants. It has also been a base for my activities and my main method of gaining interview accesses.

In addition, with a hope that I would get relevant data regarding the issue, there have been many exposures to visit Oromia Gada center which is found in Bishoftu town which helped me meet different *Gada* Officials who came to the town to participate in the special annual celebration of *Irrecha* Holiday in 2016. This also provided me with a chance to include them in my informants and conduct interview as major additional sources of primary data of the study.

1.6.2 Method of data collection and sampling.

1.6.2.1 Observation

According to Ian Robertson (2012) cited in prana Dua (2016), observational studies usually involve an intensive examination of a particular group, event, or social process. Thus, in my research, so as to conduct a successful collection of primary data, I devoted myself to spend a great deal of time hanging out to observing certain practices, recording the thick descriptions about the place as well as the rich potential of local perception and the interaction between the public regarding the issue under study. I have participated on females' ritual which was conducted in October 2016 under the shade of *Odaa Nabe* and observed the very detail of the rituals such as *dhibayyuu* (a sacrifice that is performed by women under *Odaa Nabe*), coffee ceremony undertaken by the female members of the community and material gifts provided by their believers for the social and family wellbeings as a result of their prayer to *Odaa Nabe*.

1.6.2.2 Interview (semi- structured)

So as to acquire a reliable and valid data from the identified informants spread out between the governmental and local spheres with which I was conducting interviews, I have spoken to all the contacts in order to conduct a more longitudinal and in depth interview. I thus

interviewed in an in depth way based systematically on a semi structured type of interview with the following people. These include 11 Gada officials two from *Odaa Bultum* and *Odaa Roobaa* Gada centers who came to Bishoftu town for the purpose of celebrating *Irrecha* ceremony and the rest from *Odaa Nabe*. I then met them while they were making pre-*Irrecha* celebration press conference with the local media such as Radio and television programs and interviewed them. The other source of information in my research was the officer of Akaki Woreda Culture and Tourism Bureau. Seventeen members of the local community whom I had met at different times of my field visit to the study area were also other informants who have been included in the study without numerically limiting them because the members of the local community were combinations of different age and gender backgrounds and found arbitrarily, in different situations of my field experience.

Regarding how I have conducted the interview, my interview was conducted was more of semi- structured type but sometimes both structured and unstructured interviews took place based on the nature of the needed information and the context of the informants. For instance, the general *Gada* officials and officers from the government centres such as the kebele and Wereda administrations were interviewed relatively with a more formal but still unstructured way while fully unstructured interview was applied to most of the youth and other participants of *Irrecha* ceremony.

Finally the information gained from the informants was recorded based on different methods such as videotaping, audio/voice recording, and some information were recorded being written down on a field note book and later transcribed.

1.6.2.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

According to Bryman, there are several reasons for using focus groups as a data collection tool. Among other things conducting an FGD helps the researcher to develop an understanding about why people think the way they do. Members of the focus group can bring forward ideas and opinions not foreseen by the researcher. Furthermore, the interactions found in group dynamics are closer to the real life process of “sense making” and acquiring understanding (Bryman 2012: 247-8). Therefore, considering the advantage of conducting an FGD and the time given for completing the research, a focus group discussion session conducted with various categories of informants with the aim of accessing a broad range of views about the topic under study. The Focus Group Discussion was held within two

sessions. The participants of the study were selected from Gada officials, local government officials (from kebele administration) and members of the local community which were systematically selected based on their potential significance for my study. Age, knowledge about the topic and official position in the public institution are the major determinant factors for the selection of the participants. In the selection of the participants of this session, the administrator of *Odaa Nabe* Rural Farmers' Association played his great role to facilitate the participants for me. The second session was held at the Akaki Wereda Administration office which is found in the town of *Dukem* while the *Abba Gadas* were performing a judicial function to resolve conflict between the local people at their temporary office. The participants among the local community were included in the session were just from those who came to the place to present their problem to the *Abba Gadas*. Numerically, both of the FGD sessions were attended by seven participants for each. And the participants on the two sessions of the focused group discussion were selected by snowball sampling method.

1.6.2.4 Case study method

A case study is expected to capture the complexity of a single case, and the methodology which enables this has developed within the social sciences. Such methodology is applied not only in the social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics, but also in practice-oriented fields such as environmental studies, social work, education, and business studies (Rolf Johnson, 2003)

Case study research, through reports of past studies, allows the exploration and understanding of complex issues. It can be considered a robust research method particularly when a holistic, in-depth investigation is required. (Zaidah Zainal, 2007). Hence, some supplementary ideas can be explored by deeply investigating the personal experience on the issue under study. Three of the sampled members of the research population among the local community were identified under this categorical method for case development.

1.6.3 Method of Data analysis

All the data from the individual interviews, observation, focus group discussion, and case study were hand written, voice recorded and videotaped. According to Bryman (2012: 482), voice recording is one of the best methods of data collection, especially for qualitative social researchers, because, in qualitative research, it is not only what people say that matters, but

also the way in which they say it. Hence, voice recordings enabled me to grasp the non-verbal communication that people use. It also helped me review the recorded interview and attentively understand the informant's point of view.

The recorded data was transcribed immediately after completion of the fieldwork, so as to keep all the situations in mind. I took maximum care so as not to misunderstand the opinion of the research subjects, as this could result in misleading the finding of the study. Also I tried to write down these responses word by word. The interviews were conducted in *Afaan Oromo* (the region's working language). Therefore, I was very concerned and careful in translating the interviewees' words to English.

Qualitative analysis refers to the non-numerical examinations (verbal expression) and interpretation of data for making a detailed description of a given phenomena. This method of analysis to data gathered through such techniques as participant observation, an in-depth semi-structured interview, focused group discussion and the like. Hence, taking the nature of qualitative analysis has helped to have interpretation of all the result of my conversation. Data collected from observation, participation and other ways of physical involvement was also analyzed so as to prevent certain redundancies and common mistakes such as misinterpretation, data loss and mis-utilization. At last final data analysis was made so as to put the data into its appropriate forms, steps (sequences) and / or categories.

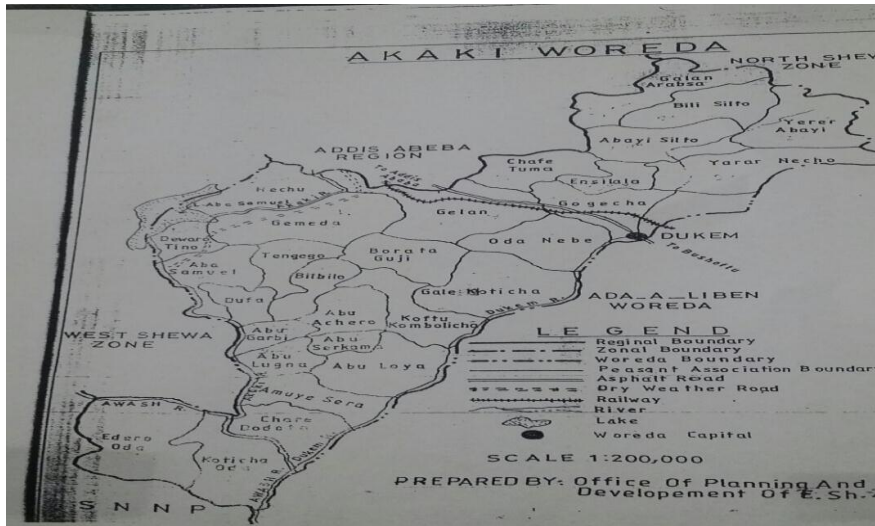
1.7. The Study Area and people

This part describes background of the study area. This includes location, demographic settings of *Akaki Wereda*, religious and Ethnic composition, political system of the *Tulama* and their association with *Odaa Nabe*, kinship, and Marriage systems.

1.7.1 Location

Akaki is one of the woredas in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia. Part of the Oromia Special Zone Surrounding Finfinne, *Akaki* is a *Wereda* administration bordered on the southwest by the *Dehub Mirab* (Southwest) *Shewa* Zone, on the west by Sebeta Hawas, on the northwest by Addis Ababa, and on the east by Misraq (East) *Shewa* Zone. The administrative center of this *wereda* is *Dukem* (Annual Report of *Akaki Wereda* Administration Office 2008 E.C).

The altitude of this *Wereda* ranges from 1500 to 2300 metres above sea level. Mount Yerer, on the border with *Ada'a*, is the highest point in Akaki; other notable peaks include *Guji*, *Bilbilo* and *Bushu*. (*Akaki Wereda* administration, Annual report 2008, and *Akaki wereda* Bureau of Agriculture 2008 E.C).



Map 1. Map of Akaki Wereda administration

Source: Akaki Wereda Bureau of Agriculture

1.7.2 The Demographic Composition of Akaki Wereda

According to Akaki Wereda Report 2008 E.C, total population for this wereda was 83,332, of whom 41,999 were men and 41333 were women; 6,670 or 8.57% of its population were urban dwellers. With an estimated area of 571.41 square kilometers, Akaki has a population density of 129.5 people per square kilometer which is less than the Zone average of 181.7.

1.7.3 Ethnic and religious composition

Out of the total population of this *Wereda*, the two largest ethnic groups in *Akaki* were the Oromo (81.24%), the *Amhara* (17.1%). All the other ethnic groups made up 0.85% of the population. *Oromiffa* was spoken as a first language by 81.42%, and 18.14% speak *Amharic*; the remaining 0.44% spoke all other primary languages. The majority of the inhabitants are followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, which is 85.86%, while 7.01% of the population practiced traditional beliefs (*Waqeffannaa*), 3.52% of the population were Protestant, and 3.34% of the population were Muslim. (Akaki Wereda Administration office).

1.7.4 The political system of *Tulama Oromo* in Akaki Wereda and their Association with *Odaa Nabe*

According to different local oral sources, *Tulama Oromo* have the political system similar to other Oromos which is known as Gada system. Hence, the *Tulama* are those who had played great role in the preservation of the *Gada* system of traditional (indigenous political administration). Making their political center at *Odaa Nabe*, *Tulama Oromo* used to perform their political, economic and social affairs for a very longer time. Accordingly, *Gada* is a political indigenous political system in which all member of the society participate being classified into different age groups. In the *Tulama Gada* system people participate in the political, religious, economic and other social affairs through five different political parties. These are, *Birmajjii*, *Roobalee*, *Horataa*, *Melbaa* and *Michillee* (*Duuloo*). The rotation of transfer of power as it currently exists is indicated in the figure below.

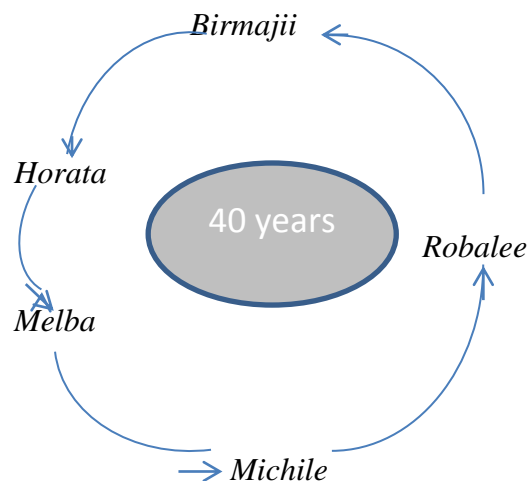


Fig 1 The political structure of *Gada* parties among the *Tulama*

Source: produced by the researcher

According to the above figure, the current ruling party of the *Tulama Gada* is *Birmajjii* as shown by the figure being at top center of the rotation sign. *Birmajjii* had taken its power from *Robalee*, six years ago or in 2011 G.C. The next party which is expected to take power after two years will be *Horata*. After *Horata* the power identified goes to *Melba*. Then, *Melba* also transfers the leadership taken from *Melba* to *Michillee* and *Michillee* to *Robalee*. So, *Birmajjii* or the currently ruling *Gada* party will get the chance to be back to power 34 years later from now on. The public participation takes place according to the age sets classified into an interval of eight years.

1.7.5 Kinship and Marriage systems of the *Tulama* Oromo in Akaki Wereda

1.7.5.1 Kinship system

It is clear that *Tulama* one of the main clans in the study of Oromo genealogy as to Alemayehu, among the ‘*Hidda Latiinsaa*’ genealogy means the root of generation that is counted back to the ancestral father. This study on the genealogy of *Tulama* Oromo relies on oral accounts, historical records and other sources (2002, 18). I have also tried to investigate the genealogical background of the *Tulama* Oromo from through elders and *Tulama* gada leaders as well as some written sources. Therefore, according to both the oral and written sources, *Tulama* is one of the main Oromo clans such as *Macca*, *Tulama*, *Barentu*, *Borana*, *Arsii*, *Gujii*, *Ittuu*, *Karrayyuu*, *Yejjuu*, *Liiban*, *Rayyaa*, and *Humbaana*. *Tulama* is also commonly known as *sadden Tulama* / the three *Tulama*/ because the clan is subdivided in to three sub-clans. These are the *Daaccii*, *Bachoo* and *Jillee*. All these sub-clans are also sub-classified into different smaller sub-clans.

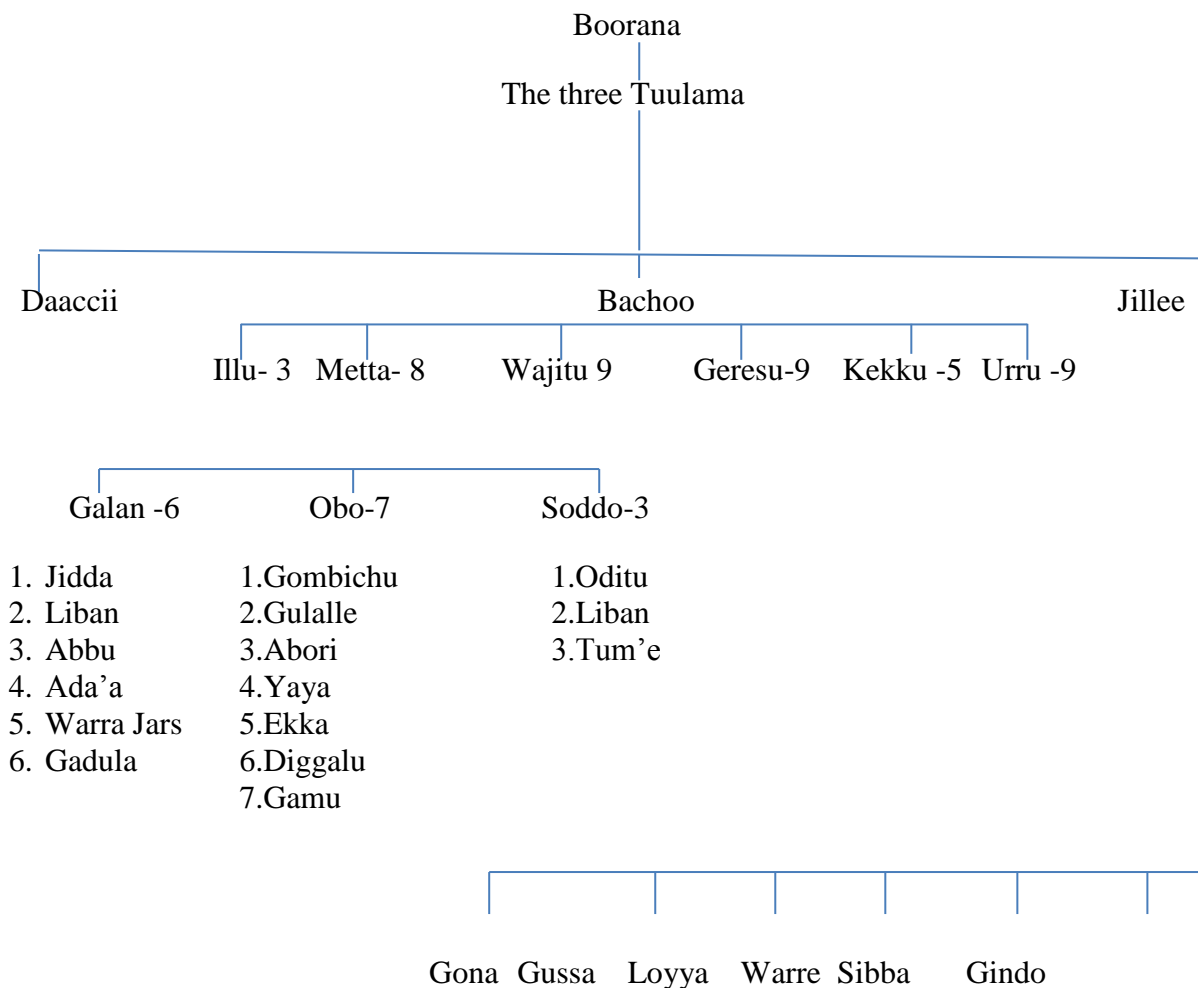


Fig 2 The genealogical structure of the Oromo Tulama

Here, most of my informants stated that they belong to the *Daccii* as their clan division from the Tulama clan mainly, and they identify themselves as the *Abu* and *Warra Jaarsoo* sub clans. This also shows that mostly *Odaa Nabe* is surrounded by these two sub-clans accordingly, the elders agree that the two sub-clans had played greater role in conducting several activities under *Odaa Nabe* and as a result, they are mostly benefited from the spiritual and ritual (political) gains of the *Odaa* because their residential system permitted them to become active than others.

1.7.5.2 Marriage systems

The marriage system of the *Tulama* Oromo living in Akaki Wereda is not extensively different from other Oromo people living in other parts of the region. Hence, before all, what every Oromo boys and girls do if they have an idea to form a marriage relation is that they start to count the ancestral background of each other. If it goes beyond their capacity of knowledge and both seek assistance from their respective families. Then also, family from both sides weather the boy or the girl side study about their genealogical kinship relation counting back up to at least seven ancestors starting from father and mother of children going to get hitched each other. According to the information from elders among the local community and *Aba Gadas*, there are about five types of marriage systems practiced among Tulama Oromo in the study area. Having all as indigenous traditional marriage system, the Tulama Oromo also classify these marriage systems into formal and informal marriage systems based on their practices. These include *Naqata (kadhata)*, *Aseennaa*, *Dhaala*, *Buttaa*, and *Mata- Gala (Sigaba)*. While the first one is a formal traditional marriage system in which all the requirements are believed to have been fulfilled and had got a full acceptance, the remaining are considered as informal marriage systems as they are considered not to fulfill the public (cultural) expectations and also they are differently administered to fill the criteria of formalness.

1.8 Ethical considerations

In the process of conducting research, especially in the social sciences, where subjects are conscious human beings, the values of social research that revolve around treatment of the informants of study and activities that researchers should or should not do are among the most important points to seriously take into account (Bryan, 2012: 130). In collecting the necessary data for this research, all protocols with regard to ethics were considered. Starting

with my first contact, I informed both *Wereda* and *Kebele* administration officials which I thought they could be the ones who could help to reach my research population and whom I also recruited as my informants as well. I openly told them that this research was part of my master's study program and I described the objective of the research. For confirmation, I also received a letter from the Department of Social Anthropology, Addis Ababa University as an additional convincing mechanism and realization of the legitimacy of my activities. Both the *Wereda* and other local administration bodies were informed and they also recognized that I was conducting a research on *Odaa Nabe*.

During interviews, I briefed each interviewee on who I was and the purpose for which I would use the data. I also informed them that their participation was voluntary and they had the right to drop out at any time. Furthermore, I guaranteed all the interviewees that the information they would give me would remain confidential so as to build their confidence. For both groups in the focus group discussion, government and civilians, I briefly described myself and my research, then reconfirmed their interest in taking part in the study. Following this, I guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of all of their information. Thus, some of the names used in the explanation of the data were pseudo names except their social statuses in the community.

1.9 Field experience

In order to collect data from the sample research entities, I first acquired formal letter from my department. After receiving confirmation that the entities permission for the study to commence, I immediately visited the entities to deliver instruments to the identified respondents and conducted interviews with the selected personalities. During my fieldwork, first I contacted with experts from Akakai Wereda culture and tourism office and they informed me the exact locations of the place under study and gave me certain information related with its current condition and wrote me an other supportive letter so as to help me get acceptance from the local administrators. Then I directly went to the Kebele of Odaa Nabe rural farmers' association administration office. I found the administrators of the rural *kebele* who himself is one of the local elders. I took an appointment from the *kebele* administrator and the next day, he introduce me to some informants among the local elders and women who have close relation with *Odaa Nabe* the tree about which I am conducting my thesis. They accepted me as their relative and shared what I need from them. Though there was uncertainty about my personality among some of the members of the society it was a good

chance to meet some people who were very much willing to share their experience and what they know *Odaa Nabe*. The frustration was raised due to the then political unrest in different places in Oromia region including some of the Neighbouring *Kebeles*. However, the local *Abba Gadas* and the *kabele* administrator tried their best to familiarise me with the people and the where the *Odaa* is found. I have also visited *Galma* of *Tulama Oromo Gada* Leader which is found in *Bishoftu* town here i have also got the chance to interview other *Gada* leaders who came from different *Gada* centres with the relevance that I thought there could be similarity or difference in performance of *Gada* under *Odaa* trees and between different *Gada* centres. But in general the travel was from *Bishoftu* (my home town) to *Dukem* then to *Odaa Nabe kebele* every time.

1.10. Organization of the paper

This thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter one provides the background of the study and it introduces the objectives and significance of the research including the scope, limitation, and the organization of the paper in general and methodology of the research, method of data collection and analysis, and about the study area and people. Chapter two, deals with the review of related literatures, and theoretical background of the research. Chapter three and Chapter four discuss about the the data analysis and presentation respectively. Finally the fifth chapter deals with the concluding remarks provided based on the outcome of the research.

Chapter Two

2. Review of Related Literatures and Theoretical Orientations

This section mainly presents related works which have helped me in the understanding of the concepts, perceptions and perspective on *Gada* rituals and processes. Furthermore, it is intended to shade light on the historical, cultural and religious aspects of Oromo society and socio-political and religious values of *Odaa* Tree in general. It also includes the theoretical orientations, which could have close relationship with the explanations and methods that are applied in this research as well. Hence, in this part, it is tried to briefly give a minimum but understandable picture on the trees' relation to human culture and belief systems, history and identity of Oromo in terms of religious, political and ethnic contexts in Ethiopia. It also discussed the history of *Gada* system since its prestigious time to its current existence as one of the major informal political and religious institutions that are supplementarily helping modern administrative systems of supporting, promoting, and realizing people's socio-political and religious needs.

2.1 Tree's relation to culture and religion

Forest trees, the links between the sky and earth, often symbolise links between the spiritual world of ancestors and people. Rituals and ceremonies which draw on forest symbols often serve to link people with their cultural heritage, as well as their ancestral past (Calame-Griaule 1969, 1970 in Arnoud and Fademan 1998, 23).

In Malaysia, people maintain a very intimate relationship with trees. "There is a practice of tree planting around houses to the extent that the walls and wooden structures are allowed to give way to the roots of creeping plants, purposely sown at the bases of these structures." (Calame-Griaule 1969, 1970 in Arnoud and Fademan 1998, 24) The graveyards in Malaysia are covered so thickly with trees that the entire grounds are cool and sheltered from the tropical sun. The trees are allowed to take root into the graves and it is said that the trees whisper prayers to the creator asking for forgiveness of past transgressions of those buried in that place (Jocelyn Mercado, 2015)

Such concepts in Oromo cultural and religious world view as *Ayyana*, and *Ateete*, represent the spiritual link of the people with the Holy God (*Waaqa*). A tree symbol that is believed to connect them with spirit of *Waaqa* is known as *Odaa*. Thus, the tree is also regarded as a

sacred tree because of its provision of different ritual performances and serving as praying site or centre.

On the other hand, in an extremely interesting study, Calame-Griaule uses traditional stories and myths to analyse the symbolic function of trees in African oral tradition.

The tree features in many myths and tales. It consistently reflects a few important symbolic images. The tree stands between heaven and earth and is associated with creation as well as the underworld (“cosmic” tree). The tree is a maternal symbol: a protector and provider who gives fruit, other foods and medicines, provides a reservoir for water, protects against the elements and evil spirits. The tree often symbolizes human fecundity. It may also be a phallic and paternal symbol, symbolically linking people with their ancestors while being a symbol of political unity (Calame-Griaule 1969, 1970 in Arnoud and Fademan 1998, 39).

According to Vergiat (1969. 64),

Trees play a role in all facets and periods of West African peoples’ lives. The Oubangui (Centre Afrique) plant is a tree in the bush for a newborn child. For female children a fast-growing profuse fruiter is planted. The child’s development is linked to the growth of the tree. If tree growth declines, people fear for the health of the child and a healer is called upon. When the child is sick it is brought to the tree for treatment. When the tree begins to fruit, the time will have come for the child to marry. Throughout a person’s life, gifts are occasionally left for the tree. When someone dies their spirit goes to reside in their personal “birthright” tree.

In this context, the Oromo especially the *Tulama* women pray to *Odaa Nabe* with a hope to get a child whenever they become sterile. They also reward with different materialistic aspects when they think that they got to be successful with their prayer.

For the Sng’oi, people of Malaysia a person and a tree can belong with each other, and this relationship is maintained for life. Certain trees and certain people belong together. When a person belongs with a tree, they also belong with its offspring: any trees that grow from the seeds of the first tree, no matter how far the seeds may

scatter. The Sng'oi people call upon their intuition to know which child trees have sprung from which parent trees (Jocelyn Mercado 2015. 13).

Mercado (2015, 15) also the contextual symbolization 'Bodhi Tree' among the followers of Buddhism,

Buddhists have a deep reverence for the Bodhi tree, a type of fig tree with heart-shaped leaves, beneath which the Buddha is said to have meditated for 49 days, trying to reconcile his mind to the fact that there was suffering in the world. On the 49th day, he stood and thanked the tree for providing shade for him, and in that instant he attained enlightenment. Today, in the same location where the Buddha is believed to have sat, there grows a descendant of that same Bodhi tree. Buddhist myths say that the tree will live there until the world is destroyed, and the place where it grows will be the last place to be destroyed; and when the world is reborn, that site will be the first place to appear.

2.2 Historical Identity of Oromo people

Ethiopian is a country of very diverse nations, nationalities and peoples having their respective languages, cultures, customs, and way of life. A unity in diversity based on tolerance, mutual respect and cooperation therefore, is possible only and only when the true history of these diverse peoples is written (Alemayehu 2002/09, 114 The Oromo are one of the Cushitic speaking peoples and the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia inhabiting most areas of the country. History tells us that they had enjoyed almost a homogenous culture, a common political religious and legal institutions (Dereje 2012, 28). Other sources also state that the Oromo are people who constitute 40% of Ethiopian total population and they are also one of the major peoples with single largest national groups in the horn of Africa united by language, culture, custom, and way of life, historical experience and traditional Oromo religion. For instance, Dereje strengths this fact in that he stated "the Gada system was the constitution of the society through which the Oromo administered their people, defended territory, maintained and developed there economy" (2012 26).

According to writers like Gusarova, the origin, history, identity and expansion against the Ethiopian Christian states in the late 16th and in the first half of the 17th century play a particular role in the Ethiopian literature (2009). In relation to their location, Gusarova (2009,

35) describes that the Oromo are people who spread across the vast territories of North East Africa and apart from Ethiopia also live in North Kenya, in Eritrea, and Sudan.

Hence, Oromo is one of the largest nations/ Ethnic groups occupying large territories in the country. Different scholars since the classical time had written the history of the people based on different possible sources mostly on oral traditions that were collected from elder member of the nation. Recent writers have also tried to write the history of the nation putting their bases on classical writers as well as the local oral tradition. For instance, Ekartina Gusarova, in that article that described about the origin of the Oromo saying “The question about the place of origin of the people (Oromo) is controversial”. For example, as to Bassi (1996), various points of view also exist on the question of the origin of the Oromo. Two of them are the following. In the middle of the 20th century the main theory also shared by Heberland, was that the Oromo originated from the table land of Bale in the west of Ethiopia. In more recent times this theory was re-elaborated and deepened by Mohammed Hansen who supposed that the famous expansion of the Oromo was in fact a way back to the territories that had already been occupied by them in the past (Gusarova 2009. 38).

Alemayehu Haile (2002) in the book in which had discussed that some linguistic studies revealed the Cushitic identity of the Oromo with very better clear explanations.

Alemayehu also asserts that there are thoughts that also had long confirmed the pre-16th century presence of the Oromo in the Northern Ethiopia particularly, around the upper course of Tekeze River and Lake Ashange (Ibid).

Apart from their explanations about the Cushitic identity of the Oromo different chronicles and other written sources had also long contributed to show the presence of the people from the south western part of the country to the northern tip. Gusarovas idea as already indicated in above strengthens this view. “The people in question (Oromo) are spread across vast territories of North east Africa apart from Ethiopia also live in the North of Kenya, in Eritera and sudan” (2009 . 5)

Where ever the place this people had expanded and we can understand that there existed one system of governance that they had long practiced all along with their presence. According to Asmarom Leggeses (1973), there is some historical evidence that in the sixteenth century one system of *Gadaa* classes governed over a major part of the *Afaan* Oromo speaking

community. Between the seventeenth and the Nineteenth century however the major division of the society, drifted apart each evolving slightly different version of the *Gadaa* institution (1973, 8)

The occurrence of the major division in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in various consequences faced by certain cultural elements. That is while some regions remain under the dominance of the Oromo people's culture and traditions, in some other areas it failed under the dominance of other cultural groups such as the Amhara.

Asmarom (1973) also argued that the Oromo had penetrated far into Gojjam, Begemder and Tigre as early as the seventeenth century. In all probability this population was absorbed by the Amharic and Tigrigna speaking populations.

Through the process of assimilation, it is also obvious that they had far worked for the preservation and conservation of their culture especially their *Gadaa* institution in the most areas of the south western to the central part of Ethiopia. Here while the Guji, Borena, and Bale are the prominent ones in the south west to keep their originality, both culturally and territorially, *Tulama* and *Mecha* Oromos had also long practiced and led by/or ruled their region under the *Gadaa* institution, using it as a centre of governance and a place of performing different religious practices.

Hence, according to Asmarom Legesse (1973, 17), more importantly the preservation of the *Gadaa* institution over several generations had been strongly kept among the southernmost pastoral populations, the Borena and the Guji.

Among several factors, he suggested the fact that they did not leave their original territory has in all probability contributed to the conservation of their institution. He also mentioned that pilgrims from Wollaga and Shoa had travelled across half of Ethiopia to go to Borena land to take part in the anointment (*Muda*) of Borana ritual leaders by considering Borana as senior segment of the Oromo society.

In line with the contribution of the Borana to keep and remain as the major ritualists and central *Gada* experts being briefly indicated by Asmarom and other researchers, Alemayhu Haile and his friends paid their attention to Gada system as a religio-political intuition of Tulama Oromo. According to them, Tulama Oromo had also long preserved Gada system

taking *Odaa Nabe* as a center of religio-political issues (practices) (Alemayehu, 2002). However, some other literatures also state that all the clans of Oromo including Borana had very close Association with *Odaa Nabe* since it had long served as a religio-political centre of the whole Oromo especially during the medieval period.

2.3. Oromo Political and religious identity

In Assafa's statement, Oromo political identity was described as under the *Gadaa* republic of historic Oromia, between the sixteenth and the mid seventieth century, all Oromos lived under one *gadaa* administration. In the *gadaa* republic, the Oromo people were organized around political, economic, social, cultural, and religious institutions on regional and national levels. Between 1522- 1618, with their increased population and extended territories, different Oromo groups started to form autonomous *Gadaa* governments (Asaffa Jalata, 2009).

Accordingly, being a unique political group, the Oromo had been in association and links with other nations. In that case, Assafa clarifies that "historically, while establishing autonomous local governments, the Oromo formed alliances, federations, and confederations to maintain their political and cultural solidarity and to defend their security and interest from their common enemies" (Asaffa Jalata, 2009).

The development of class within Oromo society in some areas and external factors such as Turko-Egyptian colonialism in eastern Oromia between 1875 and 1885, European and Ethiopian colonialism, the emergence of an Oromo collaborative class, and the spread of Islam and Christianity undermined the political, military, and ritual/spiritual roles of the *gadaa* system in some parts of Oromia. Though the institutions were weakened, some elements of Oromo democratic values still exist in areas where the *gadaa* system was suppressed. In its modified form, the system is still practiced among the Boorana, Guji, and *Tuulama*, helping in maintaining peace, exchanging knowledge of society, and practicing rituals among some moieties and groups (Asafa Jalata 2009).

2.4 Gadaa: Oromo Traditional Political System

Gada is an Oromo traditional political institution. However, according to Zelalem tesfaye's argument, "the term *Gadaa* has no single and unanimously accepted definition. It seems *Gadaa* is more conceivable lexically than analytically. Tsegaye G/Medhin presents the

etymology of Gadaa as *ka'aada*, which is the combination of two archaic terms: ka and aada. He states Ka means God (*Uumaa* or creator), and 'aada', in this sense, refers to norms. Together it would mean "Norms of God." However, the term 'aada' in common parlance refers to culture that encompasses religion, customary laws, and social norms (Tsegaye 1964 in Zelalem 2012, 56).

Further, in Zelalem's argument, it was stated as follows. "From chronological perspective, *Gadaa* refers to a period of eight years during which a *Gadaa* class stays in power (Asmarom 1973: 81). In this respect, it refers to the sixth *Gadaa* grade (*Gada/Luba*) through which every *Gadaa* classes have to pass once every forty years. If this assertion is taken, it then indicates the sixth *Gadaa* grade that is also used to refer *Gadaa* institution as the grade is also used interchangeable with the institution itself (Ibid).

In Gudrun Dahl's (1996) term, it is understandable that *Gadaa* has both the religious and political dimensions. According to him,

At one level in its totality, the *Gadaa* system expresses this idea of sacredness as the office-holders and members of active and appropriately timed cohorts are a collective all approaching "ideal life span". Within the complex of the officers particular sanctity is attached to the senior counsellors but vene more so to the ritual officials, *Wayyuu* and to the leanages within which these offices are inherited. As it appears, sanctity too, is a relative value and a form of power which has to be defused rather than limited. There is also outside the *Gadaa* system itself, a small number of heritable positions as *Qaalluu*. These are more direct intermediaries to God with strong power to bless and to curse and whose sanction is needed to legitimize all appointments. The term is often translated "priest king" but like other holders of offices, and title, the incumbents are not very drastically marked off from other herd owners in their lifestyle.

Hence according to Dahu's idea the *Gadaa* system especially, among the Borana, combines elaborated system of ideas of sacredness and sanctity with an everyday attitude towards such values as which observers often find surprisingly relaxed.

Alemayehu (2002) also stated that the system (*Gada*) gives opportunities to every member of age-set to be trained, share experience and play significant roles turn by turn. This might be related to the ancient division of labour. On the other hand participation in the *Gadaa* system was a pre-requisite to be a member of a society. Participation was a symbol of belongingness. Scholars who studied the social organization of the *Gadaa* system argue that the nature of *Gadaa* and the participation of *Gadaa* members were along with democratic principles (Alamayehu 2002; 41). On the other hand, according to Geremew Negatu, *Gada* system is neither a single man nor a single institution headed system. Rather it is a 'polycephalus' or a triple or triangular institutional headed and pentagonal political system, but it is based on extremely unified ideological system employing senior-junior-opposition headed institution, consensus political process and administration system (Geremew, 2015)

As to Asmarom Legesse quote in Zelalem Tesfaye (2012. 56-57), the *Gadaa* system is a system of generation segments or *Gadaa* classes that succeeded each other every eight years in assuming political, military, judicial, legislative and ritual responsibilities. Each active *Gadaa* class beyond the first three grades has its own internal leadership (*Adula*) and its own assembly (*yaa'a*), but the leaders of the class become the leaders of the nation when their class comes to power in the middle of the life cycle stage of life called *Gadaa* among the Boran or *Luba* among the central Oromo. The class in power is headed by *Abba Gadaa* in Borana, *Abba Bokku* elsewhere (Asmarom 2006).

Gadaa class refers to a segment of genealogical generations constituted by two cross-cutting elements: age-sets and moieties. For example, if a father belongs to the Gona moiety and he is at the fifth *Gadaa* grade and if he got a son at that stage, his son will be initiated to the same *Gadaa* class as a *Dabballe* like his father. However, to be initiated to the *Gadaa* system, in principle, they have to be always having *Gadaa* grades apart from their father. In this example we have age requirement, genealogical relationship, and moiety. Hence *Gadaa* class is the cross-cutting three organisations: age-sets, generation-set and moieties, (*Luba*) and the age-sets (*hiriyaa*) (Zelalem, 2012, 61).

On the other hand, with regard to the democratic nature of *Gadaa* administration, Alemayehu (2002) stated that the sequence of the *Gadaa* social organization begins with group of individuals, clan administration, administration of fathers of a country (elders) and the kings. Similarly, *Gadaa* system of governance is not different from the above types of social organizations.

For example, among Tulama Oromos *Gadaa* is system of governance. While the *Gada* Officials were executive body and each member had significant role in different aspects of the *Gadaa* system.

According to his view although the *Gadaa* system of governance was not based on bureaucratic functions like the modern states, for long it fully governed the social, political, economic and religious life the Oromo people (Alemayehu 2002).

The nature of *Gadaa* System resembles to both presidential and parliamentary form of government. That is it may be likened to presidential system especially in a relation to the direct election of its leaders (*Abbaa Gadaa* and the two vices) by the people for fixed term once. However, when it comes to the responsibility of *Gadaa* leaders to the General Assembly and their membership of the *Gadaa* Assembly it exhibits the feature of distinct parliamentary system. In this sense the *Gadaa* government can be regarded as presidential-parliamentary system (Zelalem 2012: 98).

Regarding the politics of division of power, Asmarom's argument seems convincingly righteous to agree. So according to him, unlike the division of powers between the federal and the states the *Gadaa* system of division of power follows generation and age-group based power division. It is the type of division of power in which every citizen" involve actively in political and legal affairs of their country. One of the advantages of division of power across the generation has great value in creating egalitarian society. That is, all inclusive political system in which all citizens (can shoulder responsibilities and bear rights) are stratified and powers distributed to them. This is the main quality of the *Gadaa* democracy. In the West the system of governance the issue of inter-generational inequality are incumbent puzzle to the extent that redressing the inequality is almost impossible (Asmarom 2006 in Zelalem 2012, 111).

In its religious context, the *Qaalluu* institution is one of the main parts of the *gada* institutions. According to Mohammed *Qaalluu* is the guardian of the history, culture and the law of the nation. In the *Seera Caffee* (Oromo Customary law) there is an expression, which explains more about the nature of *Qaalluu* i.e *Waaqa* is said to have communicated with the Oromo through the *Qaalluu* which was responsible in guiding the Oromo in their prayer of peace, fertility and rain (Alemayehu, 2002, 95).

In the other context, though *Qaalluu* handled the *Gada* institution that functions with religious activities, in the *Gada* political system also *Qaalluu* also plays greater role. In the *gada* political system, as mentioned by Alemayehu, *Qaalluu* is the guardian of *safuu* (ethics) and *seera* (law). Hence, *Qaalluu* regulates the safe power transfer of power from one *Gadaa* class to the next according to the prescribed laws in the *Gada* system.

2.5. *Waaqeffannaa*: Oromo Traditional Religion

According to scholars, Oromo traditional religion is one of the African traditional religions. They defined Oromo traditional religion (*Waaqeffannaa*) as a belief in a supreme being (*Waaqaa*) from which the life/existence of all creatures in this world is evolved. They have confirmed that Oromo had its own religion in addition to the religions known in Oromia land such as Islam and Christianity which are still practiced by members of the nation as well. For instance, for Badassa, Gabisa Aga, (2016) “*Waaqeffannaa* is the religion of the Oromo people. Given the hypothesis that Oromo culture is a part of the ancient Cushitic cultures that extended from what is today called Ethiopia through ancient Egypt over the past three thousand years, it can be posited that *Waaqeffannaa* predates the Abrahamic religion in its origin. It is a monotheistic religion that emanates from and based on belief in the Supreme Being of *Waaqaa*. To believe in *Waaqaa*, means to be loyal to his laws, acknowledge his wisdom as the creator and source of all lives. According to Oromo mythology, *Waaqeffannaa*, the Oromo God created all human beings. It is a system of faith believing in *Waaqa Tokkichaa* (One God) by considering him as a source of life.” (Badasa Gabissa Aga, 2016), 1-2).

It is the faith of Cushitic people including the Oromo who decided to lead their life according to the law and will of *Waaqaa*. They are mostly characterized by the love and respect they have for a human being; by their abhorring of all evil things including hatred towards persons and peoples as well as by their attempt to refrain from committing such sins as stealing, lying and murder. (ibid)

Feyyis explains about the faith system of Oromo traditional religion *Waaqeffannaa* saying,

According to the faith system of *Waaqeffannaa*, there is nothing we have to do now to earn eternal life after death; life after death is simply a free gift we got from our father, *Waaqayyoo*, whom we just need to celebrate and thank as we do daily and

during the yearly celebrations like *Irreechaa*. We also don't need a savoir, who has to suffer and die for us, so that we can get life after death. The only area where we have to work on is trying to live the quality life (the character of the eternal life) according to the will of *Waaqa* here on earth. To live this quality life, we need to activate our potentials given to us from *Waaqa* and then walk on the *karaa nagaa* towards the *kaayyoo Waaqa* for our life, being free from *cubbuu* by keeping both *safuu* and *laguu* (Fayis. 2011).

In workeneh kelbessa's term, we can understand that though there is an identified traditional indigenous religious system among the oromos there are also other religious practice that have been long accepted by the people. Hence as to him these religious systems include, Traditional religion, Islam and Christianity. Hence many Oromo practice traditional religion parallel with Islam or Christianity. Oromo religious belief is based on the view that there is only one *Waaqa* (God). The Arabic word *Rabbi* is also used by the Muslim Oromo and others to refer to their supreme being. According to the Oromo traditional religion, *Waaqa* has multiple attributes. *Waaqa* is He Who is before everything else. *Waaqa* is *Uumaa* (a creator of everything in the world). *Waaqa* is *Hunda beekaa* (omniscient). *Waaqa* is *hundaa tolaa* (omni benevolent). *Waaqa* is *hunda danda'aa* (omnipotent). *Waaqa* is the source and lover of *dhugaa* (truth). *Waaqa* is *Qulqulluu* (pure). *Waaqa* is intolerant of injustice, crime, sin and all falsehood. The Oromo never worshipped carved statues, trees, rivers, mountains ' or animals as substitutes (Workineh. 2001, 22)

However, Feyyis's has focussed on the traditional one which is known as *Waaqeffannaa* a monolithic traditional religious system among the people and internally plays very great role in the people's religious life.

Waaqeffannaa (Amantii Oromoo), the traditional faith system of the Oromo people, is one version of the monotheistic African Traditional Religion (ATR), where the followers of this faith system do believe in only one Supreme Being. African traditional religion is a term referring to a variety of religious practices of the only one African religion, which Oromo believers call *Waaqeffannaa* (believe in *Waaqa*, the Supreme Being), an indigenous faith system to the continent of Africa. (Fayyis O. 2011).

The historical relation between *amantii Oromoo* and the two big religions of the world suggests that *waaqeffannaa* is the older version of monotheism and

humanism. *Waaqeffannaa* as a faith system and *Irreechaa* as a major national celebration were part and parcel of Oromo public life. Now, some Oromo nationals prefer the name *Amantii Oromo/Amantii Africa* to *Waaqeffannaa*. It is important if we all can agree to call the Oromo traditional religion as *Amantii Oromo/Amantii Africa*, just like we agreed on calling our language *Afaan Oromo* and our country *Biyya Oromo* (ibid).

Fayyis (2011) argued that the logical use of the term *Waqeffana* is a bit ambiguous in nature because the term *Waaqa* just to mean God in *afaan Ormo*. So as the expression of the terms *waqeffanna* holds both the concepts of a belief in God, the process means to say it may also represent other religions which have directly linked to God such as Christianity and Muslim. So it is better to say *Amanti Oromo* to directly characterise the meaning of the religion and identify the belongingness of *Waaqeffanna* to Oromo only.

.....the designation *Waaqeffannaa* (believing in and living with *Waaqa*) can also be applied to Christian Oromo and Islam Oromo even though most of the Islam Oromo prefer the name *Rabbii* to the name *Waaqa*. They all are believers in *Waaqa = God = Allah = Rabbii*. *Amantii Oromo* differs only because of its specificity for it is the older Oromo faith embedded in only Oromo/African culture without any influence from alien culture (Ibid).

With regard to the concept of God in *waqeffanna* religion, it is clearly indicated in Getu Assefa's paper as follows

God is black, *guracha*, an expression that essentially summarizes notions of uninterferences, originality and lack of distinction. Everything flows out of this undifferentiated state in the form of *Ayyaana* (spirit). Accordingly, then *Waaqa's* creative activity and its role as guardian is manifested through *Ayyaana* which is fear personalized and invoked. The multi character of *Ayyana* is manifested through personalities and/or collective prayers and rituals. Gemechu Argues that *Ayyaana* is abstract, immaterial but has material manifestation in this world. It is untouchable and undetectable with our senses. It has been there and is there and will remain there. Being the worldly manifestation of *Waaqa*, it is basic order of things and everyday life whether they are characteristically tied to particular Calendar days, human personalities and tasks in life, or the collective fates of specific group of people, they

can be experienced by human senses, even if the *Ayyaana* are immaterial themselves. *Ayyaana* of phenomena represents its basic essence (Getu 2015, 37).

2.6. Theoretical Orientations

This part is committed to provide a clear theoretical background on which this particular study depends. Having this objective in mind, the first section attempts to create a general understanding on the theoretical analysis of discourse which the researcher chose as his preference for this study. The second part presents the benchmark approach of this study i.e., the symbolic representation and the use of this theory as well as its importance in cultural studies as the local interpretation of the symbolic cultures and the cultural representations are inseparable phenomena. The symbolic representation and its local interpretation of the symbolic character of a specific cultural element is one of the very significant things that help one in undertaking social research.

2.6.1 Socio Political discourse Analysis

Theoretical analysis and discourse is widely practiced and is critical endeavour in the humanities and the social sciences among which anthropology is one of the mother disciplines. The anthropological study of the socio-political and religious values can also be understood from the local discursive approaches governed widely used by the society under study. To genuinely understand local cultures, like Oromo culture in its more complex nature in terms of the socio- political, religious, historical and economic aspects of humanity, it needs to choose a convincing way to get oneself with understanding of the culture from within.

Discourse provides the cultural analyst with a concrete object of investigation (Lilie 2008, p 2) and culture is constituted by the resource of meaning making language and image, which are available for use in a community of social actors at any given time. Hence the term discourse refers also preciously to the capacity of meaning making resources to constitute social reality, forms of knowledge and identity with in a specific social contexts and power relations.

Therefore, in seeking for a clear understanding of Oromo culture particularly the “Gada system” which implies power classification it is strongly believed that Discourse as a major theory plays very greater role in providing with a particular communication which is

comprehensible, truthful, sincere and appropriate for all participants independently of their status. It can also contribute to this study in that it equips with fairer conception of the local culture both from historical and Anthropological (scientific) accounts regarding the issue under study and local public conceptualizations of the culture (visual representations). Hence, in Teun A. Van Dijk's term "ideological Discourse analysis", Social properties or relations of e.g. class gender or thirty are thus systematic ally associate with the structural units, levels or strategies of talk and text embedded in the social, political or cultural contexts. (Dijk, 2007, 135-136).

The same is true for the relation between social organizations, institutions, group roles, situations, power or political decision making on the one hand and discourse structures on the other hand. In such an account, language users are defined as members of the community group or organization and are supposed to speak write or understand from a specific social position (Ibid).

The strongest reason to choose discourse analysis as part of the theoretical approaches included in this study is the idea that in relationship between the data inquired and the power of speech in undertaking the investigation. In this research, such ideological discourses may serve to sustain or challenge social position hence in the socio-political and religious value of *Odaa* tree among Oromo society. There also expected to be a high level of resistance among the traditional political system and the traditional religions against the modern ones. Therefore, through discourse analysis the attitude of different member of the nations could be well understood.

Speech should be appreciated as having meaning, force and effect. In particular, an important range of speech acts, 'performative utterances', do not merely describe the social world('declarative') but give it form and content too (Austin 1971, 1975) Nigel Rapport and Joanna Overing 2000, 119)

The idea of power is also another element of the major topics discussed in theory of discourse. As clearly stated by French Anthropologist Michel Foucault with his understandings of discourse especially in terms of the focus on the relation between discourse, knowledge and power, is a very important to acknowledge. This special and covenant idea was quoted in Susan M. Pearce acknowledge "critical perspectives on ideology, Identity and Interaction" (2012) as follows.

Each society has its regime of truth, its' general politics of truth, that is, the types of discursive which it accepts and makes functions as true and false statements, the means by which is sanctioned the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth, the status of those who are charged with saying what accounts as true" (Foucault, 1980, 131 cited in Susan Pearce 2012).

Hence and hereby we can observe the *Gada* system in Oromo society had once been a very bigger importance to be transmitted intergenerationally, which had been and even still be told by different writers as well as local elders. So what had happened through history of social changes faced by the members of the nation and what does it seem with regard to the local knowledge (understanding) and attitude (perception) of the society, the power (prestige) of the *Gada* leaders, the value of the religious and political systems, the value the so mention political and religious center *Odaa* Tree.

The importance of discourse analysis in almost all encompassing competition of world, goes beyond the historicity, power and knowledge, as to Monikas emphasis on its broadest range. For instance, it was stated in the same article that "Contemporary theoretical approaches, (whether marxist or non-marxist) continue to explore the cognitive and social embedding of ideology, it's of dominant group political economy gender and culture as well as its ideological effects of texts or generally discursive representation (Thmpson 1984, Eagleton 1991, Larrain 1998, cited in Susan M. Pearce, 2012).

In Oromo *Gada* system, though there seem to be egalitarian political system in nature, power stratification among *Gada* leaders, knowledge variation on the symbolic representation of their political and religious centers among the local society, economic level to effectively use the traditional political system as a means to solve social problems and other issues could be discursively analyzed.

The potentially rich oral traditions related to the socio-political and religious value of *Odaa Nabe* among the local elders could play great role for the use of social discourse. These oral sources which some of them are recorded in different scholarly works and undecidedly exist among the society but transitioned from generation to generation may also have a chance to be discursively manipulated in this research so as to eliminate misleading as well.

2.6.2. The symbolic interactionist Approach to culture and religion

Symbolic Interactionism is a theoretical approach to understand the relationship between humans and society. The basic notion of symbolic interactionism is that human action and interaction are understandable only through the exchange of meaningful communication or symbols. In this approach, humans are portrayed as acting as opposed to being acted upon. It focuses on the concrete details of what goes on among individuals in everyday life.

Interactionists study how we use and interpret symbols not only to communicate with each other, but also to create and maintain impressions of ourselves, to create a sense of self, and to create and sustain what we experience as the reality of a particular social situation. From this perspective, social life consists largely of a complex fabric woven of countless interactions through which life takes on shape and meaning (Carl Raschke. 2005)

According to Dereje (2012), the Oromo conceptualization of Gada was related to *Odaa* and rooted in religious and symbolic dichotomies, which were associated to it.

Here we can understand that *Odaa* not only used as a centre of the *Gada* but also great attention is paid to it as a symbolic representation of their political, religious and national identity. With this idea in action, Assafa Jalata (2011) also described the symbolic representation of *Odaa* as “*Odaa* is more than a generalized symbol of democratic discussion The *odaa* has long been sacred meeting ground for the enactment of many Oromo ceremonies which re-enforce political philosophy of *Gadaa*” (cited in Alemayehu, 2009, 79).

As to Max Weber explanation of symbolism, what is primarily distinctive in this whole development is not the personality, impersonality or super personality of these supernatural powers, but the fact that new experiences now play a role in life. The notion of supernatural powers or processes not only existed but also played a role in life because it "signified" something.

Every religion and any group of people assembled for some function or that wants an identity different from others coalesces around some symbol of special significance to its members. Sometimes that symbol is displayed proudly and openly and an ambiguously; most times, however, it is intentionally used to separate “us from them”. Because the openly used symbols are sometimes used and also function as means of identifying certain element of the

society's social life such as culture norms and religions as differing from others. This can be expressed as a means of showing ones own power relation in reference to the other.

All objects can be given meaning, and of varied types. Beyond the meanings of an object as matter, to be studied by physicists, chemists and biologists for example, it can be argued that cultural objects have three broad types of meaning. First, there is the object as involved in exchanges of matter, energy and information. We can talk of how the object is used, and how it conveys information about social characteristics, personal feelings and religious beliefs. This is to talk of the technomic, sociotechnic and ideotechnic functions of the object (Ian Hoddler, 1994, in Susan Pearce 1994).

The object's meaning is the effects it has on the world. Second, we can say that the object has meaning because it is part of a code, set or structure. In fact its particular meaning depends on its place within the code. Third, there is the content of meaning. The first and second types of meaning are little concerned with the non-arbitrariness of cultural objects. In the first, the object is assessed in terms of its ability to do a job (cut down a tree or convey information), and there is no way of choosing between equivalently efficient tools. Particularly in the realm of information exchange, any object will do as long as it conveys the correct information (Ian Hoddler 1994, in Susan Pearce 1994).

In the second type of meaning any object will do as long as it has found a place within the code the sign is arbitrary. So the third type of meaning is the historical content of the changing ideas and associations of the object itself, which makes its use non-arbitrary (ibid).

In Dereje (2012, 5) statement, it is also clearly stated that “*Odaa* is like a human being; it has trunk and arm, it grows upward, and it lifts its arms to the sky like praying. The trunk is our first ancestor and the branches are our clans and sub-clans and lineages and family and our children are like the fruits of the tree”.

Here it is obvious that the tree's symbolic value goes beyond something simply coined by anyone, and it symbolizes the relation between the past and the present in general.

Chapter Three

3. The political and religious Values of *Odaa Tree* and *Odaa Nabe*

In this chapter, the collected data are analyzed and organized in a way that is meaningful to the research questions. This part in this paper has two major parts based on the following sub topics. These include, the political and religious roles of *Odaa Tree* among the Oromo different local perspectives, the meaning and representation of *Odaa Nabe* among the *Tulama Oromo* in the study area, the true central *Caffee* of *Tulama Oromo* in the study area and a debate on its current status, the transfer of *Aba Gada* and *Gumi* from *Odaa Nabe* to *Dukem*, major factors and their impact on *Odaa Nabe*.

3.1 The political and religious Role of *Odaa Tree* among Oromo

Ways of understanding the world varies from society to society. The systems of developing and modifying religious and political institutions are also determined based on the societies' interpretation of their surrounding environment. *Gada* is not only about the principle of Oromo democracy or the political practice where power is transferred from one generation to the next, but, it is also a religious system in which the members of *Gada* leaders especially, *Qalluus* give curse and blessing to the members of the society for both wrong doings and good/praised activities respectively. *Odaa* is also a place where all activities related to *Gada* system are performed. Therefore, it is a place where Oromo people undertake both religious and political activities. However, the question on why, when & how *Odaa* has become a socio – political center of Oromo people seems to be crucially important. Hence, as far as discourse is important, different explanations made by different scholars and Oral tales from the *Gada* leaders (*Abbootii Gadaa*) and /or elder members of the community need to be discussed very well. Many writers of the Oromo history had stated that the socio- political and religious lives of the Oromo were mainly associated with huge trees under which they used to be assembled for both religious and political purposes. According to Yilma Deressa, the Oromo used to pray to *Waaqaa* (the creator) under the sacred tree and around big rivers since there were no mosques and churches (Yilma, 1967 Cited in Dereje Hinew 2012). Here Dereje Hinew in his publication about *Madda Walaabu* also stated that Yilma's interpretation of *Odaa* in relation to other religions and religious centers should also be critically investigated. Another explanation by Workeneh Kelbessa (2001) is about the parallel practice

of the Oromo traditional religion with Christianity and Islam. According to him, many Oromo Practice traditional religions parallel with Christianity or Islam. The Oromo religious belief is based on the view that there is only one God *Waaqa* (God). The Arabic word *Rabbi* is also used by Oromo and others to refer to their supreme being. So, Oromo, no matter whether Christian or Muslim one's, use *Odaa* as their special place of communication with *Waaqaa* (Werkeneh, 2001).

The Communication with *waaqa* takes place through the holly sprit called "Ayyana". Ayyana is attached to individual *Qaalluu* and speaks through his mouth during possession. Both are inseparable. The *Qaalluu* serves both as an intermediary between human and the *Ayyaana* (Spirit). The role of *Qaalluu* is similar to a bishop in the Christianity and Imam in Islam (Ibid).

As both the Bishop and the Imam serve their community everywhere, (i.e, in the churches, in the Mosques as well as at their own home base or at the home of the believers) the *Qaalluu* also serves his/her community both under the *Odaa* and at their or his/her home base. However, the *Qaalluu* orders the believers to make the sacrifice under the *Odaa* because the holy spirit of *Waaqaa* is believed to exist under *Odaa* prayers, curses and blessings are also among certain religious dogmas undertaken by *Qaalluus* under *Odaa* tree.

There are various explanations about the reason why *Odaa* became a socio - political center. Among the explanations given by local elders and *Abbaa Gadas*, the sacred value of *Odaa* can be understood from its origin. A *Tulama* Oromo elder who has been living in the area for about fifty years and who is now around his seventies explained saying, "legends state that *Odaa* originated its identity from wetland (*lafa-jiidhaa*). It grows in areas where there is abundant water which is regarded by Oromos as a sign of lushness/ luxuriance. The water is also considered as a source of life and fertility with its abundantly existence." One of the *Gada* leaders who was sitting beside the speaking elder during interview at the office of *Tulama Gada* leader interrupted the speech of the old man and said the following,

Even being one of the sacred places where 'Waaqa' invoked spirits of dedication to, *Odaa* is also considered as a place where bad spirits emerge out. So it is through the spirit of *Waaqa* that the members of the society be praised and be punished too. So there are uncountable reasons behind its selection as our socio –political center. Here, I mean that while the good spirit works on the situations of peoples' good doing the bad spirit consequently originates from the curses of elders for wrong doings. These

are neglect of the rules of '*Waaqa*', when someone neglects to obey the rules of *Waaqa*, when someone neglects to obey the rules and orders of *Waaqa* or the words of *Abbaa Gadaa*, disrespects his/her family commit any kinds of abuses, crimes, intentionally causes accident to someone, and the like. So one may consequently face some bad lucks caused by the bad spirit. As a result, he/she is expected bring a sacrifice under the *Odaa* tree to stand against his/her wrong doings and the consequence of that bad spirit.

Hence, I think it may not be illogical to understand and say *Odaa* Tree contributes for the peaceful co-existence of the the Oromo as one of the religious institution creating a sence of fear and courage among the society just for its existence as a sacred object. That is both the physical and mythical existence *Odaa* Tree among these societies does not only function as place where ceremonial activities are held under its shade then left until the next term of similar activities. Therefore, both the religious spirit and the pride of having such kind of political institution persist with the life of the community in the area through the time.

In Addition, *Odaa* also serves as a place where all members of the ethnic group perform their spiritual and political activities to the whole Oromo, regardless of their variation in gender, political and economic statuses. A woman gave me her explanation about the reason why *Odaa* became a socio – political center and its sacred value says proudly,

We all have equal right perform all activities according to our interest. Nobody abandons us from performing whatever we want to undertake under *Odaa* Tree except the division of roles during the rituals are being undertaken. We all have the right to watch, whatever takes place under *Odaa* because it is an open place for every one: children, women, youths, elders, and for all interested people. This means it is an open place for all people to participate on whatever being undertaken there, whether political or religious activities. *Odaa* is also a very sacred object for us. So, we don't even touch it without possessing the spirit of *Ayyaana* or at least getting any permission from this spiritual being called *Ayyaana*. However, when the *Ayyaantu* allows or permits us; we perform different activities like slaughtering animals such as, sheep, Bull or oxen just according the spiritual order of the *Ayyaantu* through which we get to contact with the spirit of *Odaa*. During this time, we can use the broken branches of *Odaa* as a fire wood to cook the meals prepared from object sacrificed. Sometimes, *Ayyaana* does not allow us to use fire woods from the plants grown

outside the *Odaa*'s shade and its branches because it is believed as it contaminates the sacred value of sacrifice provided for the *Odaa*. During the time of drought, we pray to *Waaqaa* being gathered under *Odaa* tree because it is the only tree which remains wet while others got to be extinct. It is a very humble tree that shows *Waaqaa*'s omnipotence and ambivalence. It's origin, water which shows peace, calm and silence.

Dereje also states that it is under the shade of *Odaa* tree that Oromo regarded the existence of abode of spirits, which used them to perform rituals and praying ceremonies (2012, 3). Another old man among my informants who is now 68 years old told me that he has a very long experience of participating in all kinds of ritual ceremonies under *Odaa Nabe* since his arrival in the area when he was around twenty seven years old.

I have been participating in all kinds of *Gada* rituals whether political or religious which are undertaken under *Odaa Nabe*. So, during both religious or political rituals are being held under this *Odaa* tree, a great deal of care is taken not to commit devaluation against the sacred value of *Odaa* tree. Every socio- political and religious performances are also undertaken calmly and peacefully. The speeches are always very spiritual. So, they are always believed to be full of truth because the spirit attached to the *Odaa* is feared to express itself through unexpected ways if a person lies in his or her conversation with everyone under *Odaa* tree because the spirit of *Waaqa* is believed to exist there at any time. For example, when a person speaks untruth under the *Odaa* while the political debate is being undertaken, it is thought that the branches will be broken down with the speech of the person. Therefore, both parties are allowed to make a swearing or an Oath in the name of God the creator "*Waaqaa uumaa*". Look there! Can you see that trunk? (indicating to a fallen trunk of *Odaa Nabe*). Let me tell you one true story. One day, a ritual was being undertaken here. Some honorable guests were invited from different government offices. One of the guests was making an opening speech of the ritual ceremony. It was just before the man finished his speech that this trunk was broken and fallen down. I swear in the name of *Waaqa*, in the name of *Odaa* or if you could also ask anybody who was there, they will tell you the same thing that there was not even a strong wind by that time. It was just because of may be a defect from the speech that individual official was making. Though, I remember who he was and details from his speech of the time,

but nothing has been performed among his promises. Our *Odaa* already had detected this reality and witnessed it though by that time, we also gave different other interpretations for the falling of that big trunk but now we proved.

Here, according to the *Tulama* Oromo in the study area, *Odaa* is a place where *Waaqaa* is believed to have witnessed the denial or the agreements to be achieved during the political issues and religious are being undertaken. Dereje Hinew's (2012) in his argument also stated that the reconciliation that were not held under *Odaa* tree were not regarded as binding because there is a deep rooted traditional attachment between a truth and the sacred trees among traditional societies. For instance, his explanation showed that it appears that the tradition about the beginning of the use of *Gada* centers had more of religious background. He also stated that the life of African societies of the past was dominated by religion than politics.

However, from my understanding during my field work among the *Tulama* Oromo in Akaki Wereda, and as to the symbolic meanings of the *Odaa* tree that are explained by the local people, the society indicated that sometimes both religion and politics are performed at once under *Odaa Nabe* and sometimes either. While the symbolic explanations are thought to be more religious as the meanings are attached with the nature (environment) and the creator (*Waaqa*), the main purposes for the use of *Odaa* are both religious and political issues (performances).

Informants among the *Abba Gadas* whom I have got the chance to speak to when they came to my residential town (Bishoftu) a week before the celebration of *Irreechaa* 2009 E.C/2016 G.C (an Oromo thanks giving ritual annually undertaken at *Hora Arsedi*) while they were making a pre – Ireecha celebration press conference for different national as well as regional media at the office of *Abba Gada* of the *Tulama*: told me that there are many local interpretations with regard to the sacred values of *Odaa* in relation to the natural environment and sometimes the meanings and interpretations are also attached to the behavior, culture and developmental aspects of Oromo people. I have recorded their explanations in relation certain concepts. According to those *Abba Gadas*, the concepts such as, *Gaddisa*, (shade), *Aannan* (milk), *Jiidhaa* (Wetness), *Obsaa* (patience, humbleness), *Harma/Guntuta* (breast) or which means the fruit of the tree are the main ones that showed the local perceptions of the society as a whole. The local explanation of *Odaa* tree as tried to understand from different *Gadaa* leaders was explained as follows.

A/Gaddisa /Qabbana

In its literal translation the word “*Gaddisa*” means the shade. However, among the Oromo the meaning of a shade when referred to *Odaa* is quite different and multi meaningful. During my field observation among the *Tulama*, I observed that the shade of *Odaa* is more respectful than the shade of other trees or any other standing objects. The term can also refer to a shade of any object. For example for simple things like when they want to take a rest or make simple discussions I heard that *Tulama* Oromo elders, women and/or youngsters can be gathered under the shade of any kind of tree, house and small hills, a pile of harvests and so on. As them, here it is just because the only reason they could choose *Gaddisa* (the shade) is for its coolness and protection from the sun’s burn. But, with regard to shade of *Odaa* (*Gaddisa Odaa*), its purpose and function seems very deep rooted as the tradition had everlasting historical and mythical contexts and came to be over several different generations. One of my informants among the *Abbaa Gadaas*, who said that he came from Eastern Harargie, has told me that *Odaa’s Gaddisa* in itself has a very much deeper meaning and many explanations. For example,

Odaa is a much respected tree under which many things are undertaken. Hence, we Oromo express our respect for *Odaa* in many different ways. For example, the color of *Oda’s* shade (*Gadisa Odaa*) is black. According to our belief system, we Oromo believe that the color of God (creator) is black. That is why we say in the name of the holy black God, when we want to swear to God or make an oath. That is why we say. I request you in the name of the black holy God when we beg towards each other so as to avoid any refusal from the person being begged or requested in seek of certain assistance or help or when we want to get the person’s full support or courtesy. Therefore we respect the shade of *Odaa* as its color is similar to God’s color .The shade is also source of coolness. Coolness shows peacefulness. Coolness is a very comfortable thing. It is also created by God. Every comfort comes only from God. The shade of *Odaa* tree also holds the spirit of God.

From my informant’s statement, it is easy to understand about the multi- purposefulness of *Odaa* both in religious and political activities. Let alone the detail explanation about the religio-political centerness of *Odaa* tree, Oromo’s biggest social organization (*Gadaa*) is not regarded as either of the two entities, rather both religious and political in nature. On the other hand, according to written sources, the term *Gadaa* is believed to have originated from

the name of the shelter /*Gaddisa*/. For instance according to Gemechu (1994), *Gada* is derived from the term *Gaddisa* (shelter or shade that protects from the heat of the sun). Here, he insisted that the name might have given owing to the democratic principles of the institution since it provided indisputable protection for the members (Ibid). Otherwise, another man, one of my informants has also explained as follows when asked about why *Odaa* became a *Gadaa* center.

Oromos selected *Odaa* as their *Gadaa* center because of its large shade/ shelter. When we compare *Odaa* to other trees it is very larger in size, so it can hold large number of people under its shade protecting them all from the sun's burn/heat and rain falls. During the *Gada* ceremony the activities might take very longer time or long hours. Therefore, the gathering of people might need to stay from the beginning to the end of the ceremony. So that, under *Odaa*, this can be possible as far as the protection is better, people can also take the messages of God as well as political proclamation from the *Gada* leaders sitting very close to the source. This also seemed to have played greater role for the everlasting functioning of our *Gada* system. In general *Gaddisa* of *Odaa* is the reason for our social gatherings and *Odaa* is our collector/*Walitti Qabaa*/.

B. *Aannan*: - the literal *Afaan* Oromo meaning for the term *annan* is "Milk". According to *Obbo Gazzuu Worku a Tulama Abba Gadaa* and next candidate representing *Horata Gadaa* party of the *Tulama*, whom I met and interviewed at the *Odaa Kebele* (a local administration where the *Odaa* is located and named after the *Odaa* itself), explaining,

Aannan is an *Afaan* Oromo word referring to milk. Milk has a great value in Oromo economic history. It is an ingredient used for the preparation of many cultural foods. While it is also considered as a sign of luck (*milkaa*) among Oromo, due to that milk is gained from the cow after the birth of a calf. When a cow gives a birth, it is considered among Oromo as a big luck/*milkaa'ina guddaa*/ because the cow not only gives a birth to a calf which will come to be an ox or another cow, but also the cow itself will become a source of milk which the children will be fed and many types of cultural foods are prepared from it. Milk is also a good source of butter which the mothers use to grease their hairs. Milk is good both for the development of the born calves and the children. Therefore Oromo have considered milk as a sign of good fortune.

Also, one of the characteristics of *Odaa* tree is its milkiness. When it is hit by stone or cut by hammer a watery like liquid that comes out of its body is white and have similar color with milk. The watery liquid (milk like liquid) is also dried to be used as a chewing gum by herders not only here but also especially in the (pastoral) lowland areas where there is no abundance of water. The gum is chewed so as to get maximum salivation to survive from thirsty. Therefore, in addition to its enduringness to drought it also helps the herders a survival where there is shortage of water to drink.

When I ask a teenage herder whom I met during the field work at this kebele, if this story told by *Obboo Gazzuu* was true, herder boy also smiley responded that “during summer season when there is a strong sun especially in the day time, I may become thirsty. Then, when I come across such circumstances, or even if I have held water in hand, I enjoy chewing the dried milk of *Odaa* to stay longer time without drinking water and it has also a good taste.”

Away from such advantages, the milky nature of *Odaa* is another value adding thing. During mediation (*Jaarsummaa*) is held by elders under *Odaa*, grass is held and milk is powered over the grass when prayers and blessing take place in the process of peace making.

Asnakeche Addaamuu one of the female informants, whom I met at *Odaa Nabe*, while she was performing *dhibaayyuu*, (according to the people in the study area, *Dhibaayyuu* is a sacrifice performed under *Odaa* tree as reward for new harvest) during the coffee ceremony held by females in September 2016, at *Odaa Nabe* said,

Our *Odaa* is a milky tree. Milk in our cultural context is also a sign of prosperity. Oromo herds cattle and produces, processes and consumes milk. We use cattle as a source of food (we produce cereal and milk using cattle). When a cow gives a birth, she gives us milk. She gives us a calf. Both are sources of food because when the gets bigger it becomes an ox which is used to in the production of crops or another cow which again give us a calf and a milk. Apart from this, milk is also considered as a source of good luck. I think that is why elders use milk and grass during mediation process to give blessing. Therefore, in general, as far as milk is something very respectful and *Odaa* is a tree which has a milky liquid within itself, they seem to have mythically a very close relationship.

Another indication of the relationship between milk (*Aannan*) and milky nature of *Odaa* tree is the religious performance of “*Ateetee*”. According to some written explanations, “*Ateetee*” is conceived as goddess of fecundity (Ceruli 1922, 127, Harris, 1968, In Workneh 2001) *ateetee* is a mother of cattle and the spirit of *baksaa* (melted or processed milk butter). The purpose of *Ateetee* rirtual is to help cattle bread well, to help oxen plough well (Ibid 29). The kinds of meals prepared during the performance of *Ateetee* ceremony are of milk products. For example , pouradge is prepared with pure milk, butter is melted to add to different kind of meals, milk is also stored to became youghurt, cows are poured on their back with milk because is belived that it helps the cows to breed well. The most important ceremony during ateetee the ceremony of coffee roasting (*Buna Qalaa*) is performed by coffee prepared of melted butter. Hence, in Workenh’s explanation about the performance of *Ateetee* ritual, the splashing of the chest and the neck with butter are the symbols of fertility procreation and continuation of life on earth. They Oromo) symbolize that the survival of most Oromos depend on the survival and rebirth of cattle/herds (ibid). Here, giving greater attention to the materials used during the practices show the reason behind the Oromos give a big value to a milk and milky nature of *Odaa* tree, because, if *ateetee* ritual is a kind of pray or invocation for fecundity, the greater value of milk is out sourced from the symbolic meaning of luck / fortune which is locally referred as a sign of *milkaa’ina*. Therefore the practice of *Ateetee* is also another contributing factor to Oromo prestige milk and redound *Odaa* for its milky nature.

C. *Odaa* as a place of truth

Some scholars also explain that mythically, *Odaa* is believed to have grown on the burial of the founding father of the Oromo. According to Mohammed, Oromo dealt with their socio-economic, political and religious affairs under *Odaa* tree at *lafa dhugaa*. *Lafa dhugaa* is to refer to the burial ground as Oromo traditionally consider people go to *lafa dhugaa* when they die (Mohammed, 1990, in Dereje, 2012, 5). The big stone under *Odaa* tree is believed to be the burial place (*lafa dhugaa*) (Place of truth) where it is totally forbidden to speak untruth. Hence, the customary laws are also proclaimed under *Odaa* tree by the *lalaba* (the one who announces), standing on the big stone (ibid). Thus, having such insights in mind, I asked an Old man, one of the Tulama *Abbaa Gadaas* namely *Obboo Kebede Abdi*, about the main reasons behind the consideration of *Odaa* as a place of truth. The man being amazed by

my question, (I read his emotion from his facial expressions when he gave me a very short smile and laugh) explained not only his ideas but also together with his emotion as follows.

When we Oromo say *Odaa* is a place of truth it is not just a simple thing or it is not without a reason. Everything that takes place under *Odaa* tree is based on truth. There are no lies (untruth) in our *Gada* system. When there is conflict between Oromo children, they come to *Odaa* and discuss their problems under *Odaa* and in front of Abba Gadas. Oromo fathers socialize their children teaching truth. Accusation when there is problem takes place under *Odaa* tree. According to our tradition, during this time if someone spoke untruth and found guilty, he/she would be punished additionally for his/her mistrust and untruthfulness under the *Odaa* because he/she is considered to be disrespecting *Odaa* and the father abba Gadas. Therefore, when it is difficult to judge that people are dishonest to each other, they are brought under *Odaa* tree to make Oaths in front of fathers.

According to explanations from other local sources based on Oral tradition, *Odaa* was first a tree which was grown on the burial of an ancient Oromo father. Since then, the Oromo started to consider *Odaa* as a place of truth. The other explanation about *Odaa* as a place of truth is that the place is where the *lalallaba* (proclamation) of the *gada* system takes place.

It is also the place where *Abba Gadas* make an oath during the *muudaa* ceremony. The *tulama Abba gada* simply responded to my question saying “what do you mean it is the place where we promise to take the leadership power from our people making an oath in the name of *Waaqa*.” Therefore, *Odaa* is regarded as a place of truth among the Oromos and for them it is one of the major characteristics of the place which provided it with a massive respect among the people.

D. The local interpretation of the fruits of *Odaa*

In Bartles explanation, *Odaa* is considered as human among the Oromo. As to him, “it has trunk and arms it grows straight upward, and it lifts its arms to the sky like..... Praying. The trunk is our first ancestor and the branches are our clans and sub clans, and lineages, and families, and our children are like its fruits (Bartles 1994 in Dereje 2012). On the other hand, according to the explanation from the elders, this interpretation is based on the natural structure of the tree. Showing the genealogical structure of the Nation as a whole, each

external bodies of *Odaa*, (the trunk, its branches and fruits) respectively represented the genealogy from its origin to the current young generation.

Hence, according to the explanation by a man from the *Tulama* elders whom I don't want to mention his name because of anonymity says,

We are very large in population. *Odaa* has also a very large uncountable number of fruits which are sometimes used to be consumed. For example parallely speaking, when it is necessary, we send our children to the national service, to serve the community which means we use them in exchange for different purposes. It is like that we consume the fruits of *Odaa*. Therefore, the fruits of *Odaa* are just like the off springs of a family among Oromo it is possible to eat fruits of *Odaa* tree. It is also interpreted as the nation uses its children or the young generation in different social services from helping their family up to serving in the army.



A symbolic picture of *Odaa* Tree and its trunks

Source: a photo taken by the researcher during field work may 2016

3.2 Meaning and representation of *Odaa Nabee* among the *Tulama* Oromo

From a personal observation, the Name *Odaa Nabee* is a very debatable issue among different Gadaa leaders of the *Tulama* Oromo. The *Abba Gadas* (Gada leaders) refer the

name based on different local mythical sources. This section is presented based on the information gained during Group Discussion sessions held with participants of different social background among the community. Their explanation was raised from various mystical, religious and political contexts. While some relate it to different religious explanations, for instance, according to the local mythical sources, it is believed that the name *Odaa Nabe* is derived from the two terms *Odaa* and *Nabe*. Here, *Odaa* means the name of a big tree which has a very wide shade and can serve as a place of meeting, a place to rest the herds, and for a big tree under which people gather to discuss their different social problems with their leaders or their divine beings. According to *Addee Wasanee Abbabaa* who serves as Haadh siiqqee (female member of *Tulama Gada* leaders) of the *Tulama* Oromo who was strongly debating on this issue with the other *Gada* leaders who were gathered during Focus group Discussion session, “the name ‘*Nabe*’ is the name of a man who first found *Odaa Nabe* as his political and religious center and regarded as the founding father of the place.” The other local perception raised during this session, was “this name was raised by the elders who call *Odaa Nabe* as it rather referred as ‘*Odaa Nabi*’” Here, While the explanation for the term *odaa* is similar to the above explanation, the difference is on the contextual difference between *Nabe* and *Nabi*. So, the two words created meaning difference because the last two letters ‘e’ and ‘i’, According to *Tulama* gada leader Beyene Sembetoo’s explanation about this kind of interpretation, it is more from the religious context that the name was first given to the *Odaa* and was insisted by the people through time to shift to such kind of calling system. Hence though it is thought that it refers to the name of the aforementioned person with its inclusion of letter “e” (*Nabe*), the word “*Nabi*” is also a very popular and important in the *Tulama* dialect as its meaning stands for god. In Oromo religion, *Qaalluu* (messenger) is a god between human and the creator God, (*Waaqa*). Thus, in this explanation my informant has argued with other explanations that the two terms *Nabe* and *Nabi* are interpreted just based on the local articulation of those words.

The other term is *Odaa Name*. Still I didn’t see any problem among the participants, with regard to the term *Odaa*. But like, the words *Nabe* and *Nabi*, another young participants of the FGD, *Mengistu* and *Deribe* who were university graduates and now serving in the Kebele administration, raised another calling system of the local people of this *Odaa* saying ‘*Odaa Namee*’.

According to them there is no difference between their explanation for the term ‘*Odaa*’ and ‘*Odaa Name*’ because it gives them a sense when it is generally explained without separating the two words *Odaa* and *Name*. So, ‘*Odaa Name*’ means a tree which is grown for humans or a tree which is created only for people to perform all their spiritual, religious and political activities (*Odaa Name* literally referred as *Odaa* of man, or for man). When people perform their rituals under *Odaa*, the shade of *Odaa* becomes full of people. So, the word ‘*Name*’ on one hand is used to express the selective and sacred ground is conquered by people, so became full of humans. On the other hand it also stands for its sacred value. When a tree is selected by God for a spiritual purpose and it is only used by man / human, it is also referred as *Odaa Name*.

Therefore, though there are differences on the local calling of this sycamore tree or the place in general, none of them lack their own explanation. Surprisingly, none of them also remain without justification as a simple mistake created from local articulation of the terms. However, most popularly used, the term *Nabe* is widely referred by different scholars in all of their writings/ literatures. In addition, based on its local explanation, there is a mythical justification for the word *Nabe*. It is told as follows.

The name *Odaa Nabe* is highly related to its basic foundation. Because at the beginning, a man started his journey from alaabu where waaqa created all its creatures and dispersed them throughout the world. So that man started his journey following his cow and two of her bulls. The main reason for his journey was that the cow was on her way to escape from the bulls who follow her for a sexual purpose/ ‘*Gaana*’ in Afan Oromo/. The cow moved to the northern direction. After making a very long time and tiresome travel the man with his cow reached Hora Arsedi and both the man and his cow drank water. By the time he reached Hora Arsedi, he realized that the cow became pregnant. So the man started to find a place to rest with his cow until gave a birth. So he started looking after his cow just around Hora Arsedi. (While Hora Arsedi is found in the current Bishoftu town, *Odaa Nabe* is also some few kilometers far from Hora Arsedi near the town of Dukem. So it is believed that the man stayed between *Odaa Nabe* and Hora Arsedi.) Thus, the cow rested under *Odaa Nabe* with her owner and one day showing a sign to give birth under *Odaa Nabe*, the cow moved to “*Handode*” (a place not so far from *Gelaan* town) and gave a birth to its calf. Then, the cow released its placenta in *Dongora*. Since then, the man became very

prosperous and lives between these three places for a very longer time. So, these places, including *Odaa Nabe* became very sacred places. Because these were the places where the man stayed and took a rest until the cow given a birth and finally became very prosperous. So since then and now, it is regarded as a place to rest and discuss on different social, religious and political problems.

Source: *Adde Wesene Abebe*, August, 2016 under the shade of *Odaa Nabe*.

Generally, with regard to the naming system by the local people and *Abba Gadaas*, what should be appreciated is that all the wording or calling system mentioned above have their own explanation and persuasive points in the detail explanation. However the commonly used and far mentioned in many life natural works is the word *Nabe* than the two words “*Nebi*” and “*Name*” Hence in my discussion of the whole part of this research, I used *Odaa Nabe* as a common name as other writers did except my trial to investigate what is behind the difference in local articulation.

3.3 The true central caffee of *Tulama Oromo* and a debate on its current status.

In some historical sources *Odaa* was a centre of pilgrimage before its shift to *Odaa Robaa* and *Mada Walabu* in western Arsi and Bale respectively around the 16th century. The reason was thought as that could be because of the then internal socio – political and economic changes and external pressures upon the state as a whole. According to Alamayoo, it was after the shift of pilgrimage centre from central showa to the south that some Oromo groups like the *Tulama* started to perform *Mudaa* ceremony at *Odaa Nabe* (Alamayehu. 2004.91). Since then, *Odaa Nabe* became a political and religious center of *Tulama Oromo* and started to be used as a central caffee. However, according to the gained from the local elders and some local people who were participating on both sessions of FGD and interviews, *Tulama* had never used other *Odaa* as a central political and religious canter except other clans of the Oromo had been using *Odaa Nabe*. Hence, it is being undertaken at *Odaa Nabe* in commemoration of its past glorious time. This commemoration festival takes place at *Odaa Nabe* twice a year in autumn and spring seasons. While the feast that takes place in spring season is considered as a commemoration of its past glorious time, the autumn feast is a practice of thanks giving of the past and prayer for the next economic, social and political well beings. The two festivals (ceremonies) indicate both the religious and political roles and values of *Odaa Nabe* among *Tulama* people in Akaki Wereda.



Full View of Odaa Nabe during winter and summer seasons from right to left respectively

Source: Photos taken by the researcher May, 2016, July 2016

3.3.1 Political Roles, Values and practice of Odaa Nabe

According to written sources about the Oromo Gada system, the impact of Odaa Nabe in relation to the socio-political life of *Maccaa* and *Tulama* Oromo is a very significantly raised issue. For instance, in Gemechu Megesa's orientation of Odaa as a "Galma" (Ceremonial house) of the *Qaalluu* or *Abbaa Gada*, it has always been as much a political as it is a religious institution. (Gemechu, 1996) Hence, *Odaa Nabee* is one of the main political centers in Oromia. On the other hand, the symbolization of *Odaa* in many modern political movements made by different Oromos, *Odaa Nabe* has also played greater role in the preservation of political tradition of *Tulama* Oromo. This is what other historians also witnessed that it functioned as a base of political awareness and continuity of the *Gada* politics. According to local elders, the position *Odaa Nabe* has among the local societies is as strong and respectful as the supreme law or any national constitution, because the laws are proclaimed with the grace and protocol of the *Gada* institution and *Odaa* tree. It was also told

by the local residents that even the local government uses *Odaa Nabee* as a place of conducting different political meetings such as peaceful demonstrations held in support of the local governments' different political activities especially during the election time.

As it could be understood about the local perception from the participants' view towards its political value, an idea of one of the Local *Abba Gada* who is serving his leadership role being represented from the *Birmajjii* party since six years ago said

Odaa Nabe is much respected tree out of all kinds of tree species found in our *Woreda* and/or generally among the *Tulama* Oromo because it is where seera (law) is used to be and still being proclaimed. It was also a place where *Qaalluus* used to make the *Muudaa* ceremony for the new *Abbaa Gadaas*. A place where disputed bodies such as clans, sub – clans, and individuals come together in seek of peaceful settlement of their conflict. A place where harmed party presents its case to the elders in seek of justice, where truth can be investigated without any violation of the rules of *Waaqa* even when the national law fails to be just. Therefore, the political roles and values of *Odaa Nabe* can be discussed in terms of these political practices undertaken under its shade. Other political practices undertaken under *Odaa Nabe* also include the *Muda* ceremony of *Tulama Abbaa Gadaa*. It is a peaceful transfer of power even through which I took the power of *Gada* leadership from the previous leader of the *Tulama* who is now serving as a (*Gorsaa*) counsellor. He made his sit in the town of Dukem. He performs conflict resolution through mediation when there exist disputes between people at different levels, such as group disputes between individuals, disputes between clans and sub clans, *Gada* initiation and participation.

Here, it can be very important to discuss how these political practices determine the political values and roles of *Odaa* tree among the given society. According to information gained from many elders among the local community, including youths, women and the *Gada* leaders as well as some scholarly documents, it is a bit tried by the researcher to illustrate the following political practices and their association with *Odaa Nabe* in keeping the public perception towards the *Odaa*. In addition, the researcher's personal observation also had provided a contributing outcome on the level of description.

3.3.1.1 The *Muudaa* ceremony (peaceful transfer of power)

Firstly, it is obvious that Democracy is all about the rule of people and the government system is formed by the full participation of all citizens of a given country.

One of the indications of good governance is also the free transfer of power between the competing parties for the highest public vote after the participation of all members based on their age, ability and achievements. Nevertheless, in the *Gada* system of government *Gada* parties, it has its own systematic principle of checks and balances. Thus, all the *Gada* parties follow a rotational system to reach a specific period of leadership than competing between them selves. The power transferring process is also peaceful and trustful among all Oromo. This peaceful transfer of power is known as *Muudaa* ceremony (*sirna mudaa*).

In *Tulama Gada* administration, *Gada* leaders from all *Gada* parties come together so as to discuss who takes the next *Gada* power but not which party. The place of these *Gada* assemblies is *Odaa Nabe*.

Though all the *Gada* parties of *Tulama* have assigned their own *Galma* (*Odaa*) under which they perform political activities, they meet under *Odaa Nabe* because it is the *Hangafa* (Sacred) *Odaa* of all others. After agreement is reached on all political issues of discussion under *Odaa Nabe*, the next *gada* leader (*Abbaa Gada*) goes to *Qaalluu*. However, as capacity, previous achievement and other criteria are raised and discussed upon as well as decided on under *Odaa Nabe*, the *Tulama* consider *Odaa Nabe* as a place of *Muudaa* ceremony (a very prestigious ceremony). Even except being anointed at *Qaalluu* center the *Abba Gada* also consider themselves that they took their power from the people of *Tulama* because it was decided at *Odaa Nabe* which is a center of *Abba Gadas* of *Tulama* (representatives of the sub- clans and parties) Hence, very importantly one of the participants of the *Tulama* elders *Obboo Solomon Wolde* who was a very active participant and was striving his best to share all what he knows about *gada* system and *Odaa* without any hesitation during the FGD session described his idea as follows:

Odaa Nabe is respected just more than an individual *Gada* leader (*Abba Gada*) or individual *Qalluus* (*Abbaa Mudaas*, the owners of *Muudaa* Ceremony) who are highly respected among their people because different *Gada* leaders of *Tulama* had been appointed inter generationally here under the shade of *Odaa Nabe*. Therefore,

Odaa Nabe is considered as a source of political power as well as a father of all the past leaders of *Tulama*. Thus, one can escape any harm or attack coming against him/her if he/she begged in the name of *Odaa Nabe* (Saying “*Adera Odaa Nabe*”). Here, it means the person is begging in the name of all the past respected leaders and then who refused to stop the attack is considered as he/ she disrespected *Odaa Nabe* and the late father’s in all. So the person might face discrimination, exclusion and other informal punishments by the members of the group (clan) in general, the performance of *muudaa* ceremony under the shade of *Odaa Nabe* is one of the main reasons behind its prestigious political roles and values because the ceremony is a very prestigious ceremony.

The other political role of *Odaa Nabe* was that it serves as a palace of conflict resolution. This was described under the topic below based on the data gained using different instruments held to approach the local people.

3.3.1.2 Peacemaking /conflict resolution through Mediation/*Jaarsummaa*

Much can be talked about peacemaking/conflict resolution when one needs to speak about the *Gada* Politics as far as it is one of the indigenous political system in which the concept of peaceful coexistence is at its highest concern of the political leaders. Oromos in general and the *Tulamas* in the study area in particular had practiced *Gada* system for a very longer time as expression of their peaceful relationship between other people and within themselves. However, as far as conflicts are inevitable phenomena among any human groups, they had formed their own internal mechanism of resolving conflicts and settlement of peace between people. Some scholars also indicate that conflicts are as old as human societies themselves. Hence, we can also guess that conflict resolution systems could be as old as the development of the culture of human interdependence, i.e. one can assume that people could have developed different mechanisms so as to create healthy interaction with others. As Reichel illustrates individuals, social groups and societies have disputed and competed against one another over scarce commodities and resources land, money, political power, and ideology. They have even fought one another and bitterly sought the elimination and/or subjugation of rivals, in order to control these resources and commodities (Reichel, 1998, in Dejene Aredo and Abdurahman Ame, 2012). In addition, it is argued that indigenous conflict resolution systems have their origin far back to ancient time and even served as sources of modern dispute solving rules. For instance, the older forms of dispute resolution, particularly those

practiced by the Indigenous or Aboriginal peoples around the world, challenge the originality of present-day court system (Osi, 2008, *ibid*). Therefore, when scholars argue that *Gadaa* system is a model of the current democratic system of government, it is obviously to mean its elements were practical in the main time of the application of the institution. As to my informants' witness at *Odaa Nabe*, the trend of practicing different conflict resolution systems is as far back as the history of other *Gada* rituals. Among the main types of conflict resolving systems, mediation is the most frequently held event by local *Abbaa Gadas* of *Tulama* Oromos under *Odaa Nabe*. The main purpose of discussion about the ritual taking place under the shade of *Odaa Nabe* is not to show/ reveal how conflict is settled through the process of mediation under *Odaa Nabe* by *Tulama Gada* leaders. Instead, it is a trail to reveal the other dimension in that the performance of this ritual have a great power to catch a public perception towards that specific object that constructed in their political philosophy which they consider as primary means of their government system. Here I discussed the concept of mediation as a valuable concept to the politically powerfulness of *Odaa Nabe* among *Tulama* society.

By definition, the term mediation as discussed by scholars is a very wider concept. For instance, Mediation can take many forms ranging from a complex academic endeavour to something simple that even young school children can perform.

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential method of solving conflicts. An impartial third party (the mediator) is brought in to help the two conflicting parties reach a solution that both find satisfactory (Vestergaard B, H. Erik. and R. Sorensen, 2011). The goal of the process is for both parties to claim ownership of the conflict. Those in conflict have a chance to speak their truth and having that truth heard and are required in turn to listen and hear the other side's truth as well. Hopefully this results in a restoration of the dignity of both parties and the relation between them, as well as lasting agreements concerning future interaction (*Ibid*).

It is a peace making process mainly accomplished by very capable and procedurally experienced elders (Alamayehu, 2002, 195). Coming back to my point of discussion under here, one can wonder how a ritual can have an impact to keep people's perception towards an object except for the leaders of the ritual (practice) and /or spiritual powers held by the practitioners. But, in some societies the roles played by or the benefits gained from any thing as a result of its existence in a given place as part of the social life. Here the main thing to question here is the how this practices control the people's attitude towards the specific place

they being undertaken. For instance, without any religious or spiritual attachment, the safe nature of the space/ place is the result of the respect the people towards it. Among *Tulama Odaa Nabe* is a place of justice. So it is very respectful place under which two disputed parties come together and get persuasively accepted decision. This attitude is preserved by the people of Tulama as a tradition. The tradition also kept the political value of the even when there are many alternative place and systems of conflict resolution. In addition to this, the mediators' (*Haayyuu Gosaa*, legal experts of the clan) knowledge is believed to have evolved from the law of *Odaa Nabe* (*Seera Odaa Nabe*, refers to Gada Law). An old informant who told me that he had been participating on *Jaarsumma* since a very long time, when he responded to my question on how the performance of *Jaarsumma* determines its political importance he said "We respect *Odaa Nabe* and consider it like our political leader as much as we respect it as our center of *waqeffanaa* as well because; we feel we got this exemplary political practice from our late fathers only because of its existence at here." And another woman participant smiley and proudly raised her hand and interrupted the old man's speech and said,

We are very special because we have *Odaa Nabe* the biggest *Gada* center. So we live adjacent to it, its roots, leaves, trunks protect us from any external attack because no one has a power to break through our palace. It is not a magical power but our society considers that the crown of our past leaders is at the hand of our current elders this is realized when they peacefully solve the problem of the disputants through their peacemaking wisdom. *Odaa Nabe* doesn't give our elders a fire arm to go for a war and fight against our enemies or between ourselves rather it gives us wisdom to make peace and live peacefully with others.

On one of my field days among the Tulama of Akaki Wereda, there was an inaugural ceremony of a new police station at the *Odaa Nabe kebele*. People of the kebele were gathered to participate in the ceremony. During this time there were also *Abbaa Gadas* invited to make opening speech in collaboration with the police officials from the *Wereda* administration. They also had an appointment with the people to undertake *Jaarsumma* ceremony on certain cases which have been previously presented by two disputants among the members of the residents in the kebele. After they finished the inaugural ceremony I and my friend (field assistant) stayed with the elders after getting their consent to observe what

will then takes place. They told us that it was the process of *Jaarsummaa*. In the process of *Jarsummaa* the elder start making his speech saying,

Our late fathers have passed away leaving *Odaa Nabe* as a source of our peace. So it kept us together under its shade. It protected us from extinction. We survived because of it. If it did not exist here we may not live the way we are living now. We might become another people; instead it kept us together and helped us to follow the footsteps of the late ones. It taught us the biggest tradition in the world. That is the tradition of peace and harmony. So we apply it just here starting from now. Nobody is allowed to stand against the other, his friend, sister, brother, wife, husband, family and so on. This is the achievement of *Odaa Nabe*.

After cases were presented again and debate between the disputants were held, I asked an elder next to me why the disputants didn't present their cases to the police as they were there before short time. The man responded, "When we sometimes go to the court and tell them that we came from this village, they make us to feel ashamed saying you had a better place to solve this problem. Why you come here? You know why? This is not because the court was not able to decide on the case but it is to express the grace and political position of *Odaa Nabe* among the society".

I also heard when some elders sing a song that expresses their pride of *Odaa Nabe* saying,

"*Biyya Odaa Nabe, Biyya ajjefta hin dhoksine, biyya seerri wal hidhabne, Odaa Nabetti walgessi, dogoggortullee Guma bafti*". Translation: - a country of *Odaa Nabe*, a land where killers never hide, a place where laws never clash, gathered under *odaa Nabe*, pays indemnity for the mistakes".

From this song, we can understand that *Odaa Nabe* is a place of mediation even when there is dispute between people as dispute is an inevitable phenomena of every humans social life. It also shows that the Gada law is fair and it is a place of justice because, the law is clear and never clash with each other. When an individual commits a crime, he pays an indemnity through a process held in *Jarsummaa*. So as a general statement, the contineous performance and undertaking of mediation/*Jarsummaa* under the shade of *Odaa Nabe* is one of the contributing factors to be political value among the Tulama Oromo.



Tulama Oromo elders and Gada Leaders performing Blessings (Sirna Eebbaa) before jarsumma mediation

Source: A photo taken by the researcher during fieldwork, June 2016 *woliso* a place near *Odaa Nabe*

3.4. Women's Participation

In Tulama Oromos women's participation in the Gada system is realized by an institution known as *siinqee* (*siinqee*). One of major institution of peace making system in the Gada system is *siinqee*. *Siinqee* is an institution through Oromo female struggle for the equality and respect of their right. Just like *Bokkuu* and *Horooro* symbolize the ritual power of Gada leaders *siinqee* and *caaccuu* are symbols of ritual leadership (Almayehu,2004.196) A female began to hold *siinqee* (thin stick) just after her marriage and this signifies fertility. Like *caaccuu*, *siinqee* is a symbol of blessing for fertility, production and prosperity in her life time (Ibid).

Acoording to my informant *Addee Wesene Abebe*, who have got this tittle and working with the *Gada* leaders,

In Tulama Oromo, *siinqee* has both religious and social power that signifies women's participation in the peace making processes along with the legal experts and elders. Among the Gada community of *Odaa Nabe*, the power of *Haadha siinqee* is parallel to the power of *Abbaa Bokkuu*. When there is conflict between individuals, family members or inter family up to inter-clan conflict, *Haadha siinqee* (mothers of *siinqee*) intervene between the fighting and points *siinqee* to the sky so as stop the fighting at the point.

Haadha siinqee is one of the members of the *Gada Tulama* at *Odaa Nabe* i.e., *Tulama Oromo* have identified *Haadha siinqee* selected from others females members of the community. This is indication of the democratic nature of *Gada Tulama* at *Odaa Nabe*. Women's participation in the *Gada Tulama* is not only limited to peace making process. Farther it women have a protective law in the *Gada* laws is also popularly applicable among *Tulama Oromo Gada* system. It is known as *seera Haadha* (the law of mothers) According to Alamayehu's statement, in the *Gada* system mothers and generally females have special places and the laws enforce that females should be respected, protected and served (2004,111). Hence, the place of women in the *Tulama Oromo* in *Odaa Nabe* is highly considerable and practically and inevitably, applicable among all members of the society. Their participation in the *Gada* rituals is also a very free and democratic.



***Tulama Oromo* elders performing *Jaarsummaa* at a place round *Odaa Nabe* with the *Haadha Siinqees*.**

Source: Aphoto taken by the researcher, June 2016 at *Odaa Nabe*

3.5. Religious roles, Values and practices

The concept of a Tree of Life, often symbolizing the connections between all life forms, is found in many religions and philosophies, dating back as early as ancient Egypt. The Egyptian tree of life symbolized creation and represented the chain of events that brought everything into existence. (Jocelyn Mercado. 2015)

According to my observation among the *Tulama* Oromo in the study area, Odaa tree also represents and symbolizes the connecton between life forms and their creator. One of the religious events undertaken by *Tulama* Oromo under the shade of Odaa is *Irreecha*. Here, the practice of Irreecha ceremony particularly takes palce under *Odaa Nabe*. This kind of religious sacrifices and their symbolization is discussed based on the information gained from the local perspectives.

3.5.1 *Irrecha/Irressa*

According many informants, *Irreecha* is one of the distinct celebrations in the Oromo traditional religion which is conducted mostly in the two seasons (spring and Automn). They defined it as it is thanks giving and prayer ceremony to *Waaqa* (God) alongside big rivers, mountains, and other ritual places like *Odaa*. Most writers of Oromo religion mention that *Irreecha* is conducted on two ritual places mountains and river basin during these two seasons. However, having problem with time indicated the explanations for the two defined places is found with a problematic judgment in Alemayoo Haile's discussion about this topic in his book, *Gada system, the politics of Tulama - Oromo*, Irreecha is sub-divided in two sub-categories, Irreecha of mountain and Irreecha on the side of water bodies (Irreecha melka) (Alemayehu. 2004, 69). Neverthles, according to information from the local informants, among the Tulama Oromos of Odaa Nabe, the practice of *Irreecha (Irreeffana)* takes place under *Odaa* tree as well. Hence, Odaa Nabe, beside Hora Arsadi is another ritual place for Irreecha ceremony. Obviously, Irreecha from its meaning refers to thanks giving from which the religious ceremony is labled. One of the female informants Addee Wesene Abebe decribed about the time it takes place at *Odaa Nabe* saying “in the season of spring (*Birraa*), *Irreecha* takes place at *Odaa Nabe* by all Oromo coming from the whole Oromia region. It is conducted at this place just a day after *Irreecha* at Hora Arseddi. I have also been participating on different irreecha Ceremonie that took place in other places. So, this Irreeffanna is also similar to all Irreecha ceremonies such as of mountains and river basin except the difference in

places and objects on which the spirit of *waaqa* is believed to have involved in”. Some fifty meter at the adjacent of Odaa Nabe between *Odaa Nabe* and *Odaa Horata*, there is a small lake which is believed to have existed there since the beginning of the *Odaa* to serve as center of Gada. According *Addee Wesenee*,

Because the number of the participant sometimes could count up to almost around half of the number of participants at Hora Arsedi. The celebration takes place here in the commemoration of glorious time of *Odaa Nabe*. People perform the *Irreeffanna* in both places under Odaa Nabe as well as along the small lake side. But now days, because the lake is getting to be very small in size, when some of the participants perform their prayer to *Waaqa* and their thanks giving on this small lake side, others conduct the similar *Irreeffanna* ceremony under the *Odaa* which located some 50meters from the lake. This is done

Another informant from *Akaki Wereda* culture and tourism office also stated

In addition to *Abbaa Gada* from the five *Gada* parties of *Tulama Gada* system, other *Gada* leaders who came to participate on *Irrecha* ceremony at Hora Arsedi also attend the ceremony at *Odaa Nabe*. The religious ceremony is led (guided) by *Qalluu* (*Abbaa Muudaa*) of the *Tulama*. The context of thanks giving is regarded as an expression of happiness to meet back after their connection was disrupted due to winter rain which had resulted in an increased rivers' volume and being filled with flood but now, the rivers are also getting back to their usual size, color and purity as the flood which have been disrupting the water bodies had run and already stopped away with the passage of the black winter season. The song “marewoo....” is used to praise *Waaqa*. The *Tulamas*, praise *waaqa* in reward to his response to their past prayer at the same place (*Odaa Nabe*) for fertility, peace and surplus production during the ceremony held in autumn (*Arfassa*). Therefore, this day is more meaningful for *Tulama Oromos* of the area than others participants (invited, voluntary participants who came from other places) because it is a commemoration of their prestigious time and a praise to God for their current success. The activity of *Irreeffanna* also continues at *Odaa Nabe* on a group or individual basis for about more than a month by performing different religious sacrifices. The sacrifices vary based on the promises made by the individuals, or family during their prayer for their well beings or success or sometimes it also depends on the order of *Qalluu*. The promises are made for God

(the creator) but performed to sprit (*Ayyaana*) of *Odaa* with the belief that held that it rests on the *Odaa* and transfers their honesty to *waaqa* as a messenger. Then *Waaqa* fills their sows with blessings.

According to these elders, some of the sacrifices are common based on the previous trends and traditions i.e individuals, or family make a promise to bring sacrifices that are known commonly defined/ experienced for what purpose / the kind of prayers or begging they are used to be sacrificed. The promisory rewards are determined by the context of what they prayed for and greasing the *Odaa* with butter.

For example, slaughtering bulls is considered as a reward for economic and social well beings, conducting a coffee ceremony is regarded as reward for house hold based well beings. Decorating the tree with different kinds of cloths and different decoration materials is a reward to getting children or continuation of the generation. The kinds of scarifices are discussed based on their meanings or what they are rewarded for just as rewards for the social and economic well beings and rewards for house hold/ family / personal spiritual gains.

a. Scarifies as a reward for the social and economic Well beings

Basically, I think the socio economic aspects of any society can be dependent on the system (practices) held in their environment. The symbolization of different ceremonial occasions that are related to the socio – economic well being could be the result of the people’s attitude towards the nature. During my filedwork among the *Tulama*, I have observed that *Tulama* Oromo in *Odaa Nabe* kebele practiced a mixed agriculture. They cultivate grains, fruits and vegetables beside the animal production, so that they depend on both environment’s soil and rain. Therefore, for them, a socio – economic wellbeing is insured when there is good rain for the soil, good soil fertility, good animal health and enough abundance of water. Here after, they could have enough food to feed the family, enough grass to feed their animals, enough money to send their children to school, to pay land tax (*gibir*), to receive fertilizers and insecticides and pesticides, enough income to save for the next year’s production, to pay some social expenses such as *idir/ Hafoosha* and *Iqub*, to buy some household based materials and equipments. These economic & social glories are believed to be gained from God’s (*Waaqa*’s) will. Hence, according to my understanding from their explanation , in reward for these economic gains which have been given from the creator (*Waaqa*) and social glories, given from the creator, all members of the society provide a sacrifice once a year,

under *Odaa Nabe* which is their center of both religious and political activities. Most of the time an animal anointed as a common scarifies is a Bull. When I asked one of the participants on ritual ceremony held at this place during my participatant observation on October 2016, he answered, “Bull is sacrificed because it is a symbol of fertility and reproduction animals as well as crops because it is the which bull impregnates a cow and then reproduction continues. A bull itself may also become an ox and be used to plough the land for crop production.” so, Tuama Oromos in the study area symbolize a bull as source fertility, prosperity and their socio- economic strength. On the other hand the sacrifice can also be made as prayer for fertility and prosperity just before the time of cultivation. My informant also added that when different animals and insects invade their cultivated land and become beyond their control by other protection systems, from the farm, they just sacrifice a bull and pray to God under *Odaa Nabe*. Then it immediately avoids them from it.

For instance, *Obboo Solomon Welde* who was of the the representative of the *Tulama Gada* council in Akaki Wereda, stated:-

When there is shortage of rain in many *kebeles* even recent times including the last year, our area was very wet because we have *Odaa Nabe* where we solve all our social problems. Even we have a power to solve the natural problems through our prayers and scarifies. In the last year we were also conducting a ritual to pray for the other areas which have faced long period of shortage of rain (drought) in this surrounding (showing me with his hand to the areas of mount *Zequala* and mount *Erer*). Therefore, we believe that we played an exemplary role by our preservation of our late ancestors’ culture and their spritual coping mechanisms.

b. A Sacrifies as a reward for household/Family/ Personal/ Spiritual gains

People engage in spirituality so as to secure a personal family or group benefits. In religious life spirituality is related to the human spirit affected by spirit than the material or physical things (Oxford, 2012) , Religious (Spritual) people say spiritual gains depend on the level of a belief an individual or group commit to the spritual being. Oromo attached their spritual life to *Qaalluu /Ayyaantuu* (Spritual Father/ mother) to communicate with God (*Waaqa*). In *Odaa Nabe* people commit their religious activities both with and without the presence of *Qaalluu*. They pray to *Waaqa* for something they couldn’t get in the normal circumstances because they believe that everything is possible with the presence of *Odaa Nabe* in their

village if they could make themselves free of any sin and believe that *Waaqa* is in their surroundings. Any bad moment is also considered as a result of bad spirit. Hence whether there is good spiritual gain or bad moments among a given family or person in *Odaa Nabe*, it is directly related to the spirit or *Ayyaanaa* of *Odaa Nabe*. For instance, when a person loses his/ her children or cattle, and/or wife or husband to death for a repetitive times, or a person becomes *Maseena* (being unable to give birth) or get children along only one sex (only male or only female), he/she is advised to pray under *Odaa Nabe* both by *Qaalluu* or the members of the community who had such an experience before. The case of a woman who was unable to get a male child illustrates the above circumstances as follows.

The type of scarifies performed/Committed is decided by will of the prayer (promissory) or by the *Qaalluu* (Spiritual father). The decision of *Qaalluu* on what to sacrifice depends on what the individual prays for and the economic background of the individual. To know the economic background or the level of the person's economic strength the *Qaalluu* uses different mechanisms such as asking cross-cutting questions. As it is believed that it is embracing to lie in front of the *Qaalluu*, the person is expected to exactly tell the truth on what he/she is asked. The fear of an exaggeration of the problem unless he/she speak the truth is another factor. Therefore, based their responses the *Qaalluu* decides what to sacrifice taking the case or the issue to be delivered to God and their economic status into consideration. On the other hand, they can also be simply suggested by a person who has a previous experience or who have got similar problem and obtained a spiritual gain after making that scarifies. The cases of the following informants from their own experience and based on others story illustrates the above circumstance at *Odaa Nabe* as follows.

Case 1

A Woman whom I don't mention her name for the sake of anonymity is a permanent resident at *Odaa Nabe*. She has 4 girls and 3 boys, totally seven children. She lives with her husband since their marriage in 1978; they had got only girls until the birth of their fifth child boy who is at his 25th of age now. Both the woman and her husband wanted to give a birth to boys from the beginning. But they only got girls until their fourth trial. The woman said,

one day, nightmarishly I shouted saying "Ok" Ok my Lord I will, I will" In the early wake up, my husband who was very eager to hear from me has asked what happened to make me shout like that. Being surprised of that moment, he

asked me when I was supposed to tell him, I told him that a man with a lot of brightening decorations, wearing a very neat and white cloth came to me and talked to me about that I am a good mother but I am in dispute with my *uumaa* (creator). So I had to come to be in peace with my creator and if I did that, I could get a baby boy or a protector. My husband also feeling very excited told his neighbor what he heard from me his wife during the morning coffee. Again his neighbor also told him saying ‘your wife could get a babby boy if she could go to *Odaa Nabe* and makes a prayer and promissory’ telling him a story of another woman whom he had known very longer time ago. So I went and reached under *Odaa Nabe*, made a coffee ceremony, called elders of the village and invited them for coffee implicitly to get help for praying and for their blessings. I and my husband had got that our fifth child was boy.

Imotionally speaking she told me that she immediately came to *Odaa Nabe* and decorated it with “*Qaacila*” (a beautiful metal which sometimes tied under horses’ neck but symbolized as male reproductive organ by some Tulama Oromos). Not limited a single boy they consequently got two other additional boys and they have now seven children. Since then, she prepares coffee ceremony and celebrates with her children once a year. She also considers that all her children are the gifts of *Odaa Nabe*. The sacrifice of “*Qaacila*” was a suggestion of local elders.

Case 2

A story of a woman from *Odaa Nabe* is presented as follows as it shows her and others her like have close religious and spiritual relation with this *Odaa* in their personal life. Her grandmother’s name is *Odaa*. It is not a name given by default. Rather it has a very long story. When her grandmother was born in *Galaan*, (one of the neighboring *kebele*, of *Odaa Nabe*), her father had communicated with the spirit (*Ayyaana*). He went to the *Qaalluu* of the time and told what had he observed and heard at night. The *Qaalluu* based on his information asked him whether his wife was pregnant. He also told the *Qaalluu* that she is of course about to give a birth and he is expecting for his first baby. What he told the *Qaalluu* was that a man came to him and told him to call the first baby by the name “*Odaa*” and the second by the name *Dame* (trunk). Then the *Qaalluu* also gave him instruction about what he had to do going to *Odaa Nabe*. The *Qaalluu* of the time also announced that *Odaa Nabe* has got a baby which was born from family of *Waaqa* (believers of *waaqa*) to be servant itself. The man also

labeled his girl and taught her all about the gada Tulama. After she grew up on the hand of her family *Odaa* became a servant of *Odaa Nabe*. Everybody used to communicate her for any activity to be under taken. She stayed all her lifetime there marrying to a man from *Odaa Nabe* (village). Since then, after my informant's mother has also served there for some time and now it is around 34 years since she took over her mother as a servant of the *Odaa* during gada rituals. She is also a leader of more than 46 female members who conduct a ritual ceremony under *Odaa Nabe*. She also serves as a member of Tulama *Gada* Association representing the females of the village being crowned the title of *haadha Siiqqee* (mother of *Siiqqee*). She also is playing greater role for renewals of *Odaa Nabe* at the moment.



A photo of Tulama Women in performing coffee ceremony under *Odaa Nabe*

Source: A photo taken during feild work October 2016, *Odaa Nabe*

Chapter Four

4. *Odaa Nabe's* current political and religious condition

According to Alemayehu's indication, recent studies date the history of *Odaa Nabe* as far back to 204 AD. It is said that beginning from the time that *Odaa Nabe* became a *Gada* Center, about 225 *Gadaa* periods elapsed. This gives $(225 \times 8) = 1800$ years before present. Besides it is claimed that for one *Jaatama*, (360 years) *Odaa Nabe* wasn't served as a center and *Gada* was reformed at about (1116.AD) at the same place (2002). However, since the shift of the pligiriamge of Oromo *Abbaa Gadas* from *Odaa Nabe* to *Odaa Roobaa* then *madda Walaabuu*, many studies are in consensus that *Odaa Nabe* remained a religion-political center of Tulama Oromos. It is also claimed by scholars and localelders that *Odaa Nabe* is the *hangafa* (respectful) to other odaas of its surrounding which are named after the five *Gadaa* parties of Tulama such as *Odaa Birmajii*, *Odaa Duloo*, *Odaa Melba*, *Odaa Roobalee* and *Odaa Horata*. Alamayehu's conclusion that though "*Odaa Nabe* was an inter-clan *Odaa* of the Oromo and better only for the *Tulama*" (2002, 124), strengthens the above idea. Having such a grateful historical and discursive scholarly explanation is something important to think more above what it looks like today. Hence, as a trail was made to look through local perspectives, the current reality shows nearly the reverses.

4.1 Current political condition at *Odaa Nabe*

According a speech of an elder member of the *Tualama Abbaa Gadas* whom I met while he was herding his cattle near *Odaa Nabe*,

Since *Odaa Nabe* is the *Hangafa* (sacred, respectful) of other *Odaas* of its surrounding, it means it is the main center (*Gumii*) or general assembly of Tulama Oromo in general. This on the other hand means a leader of the General assembly regardless of his party's background, used to call the General Assembly only under *Odaa Nabe*. However, during other lower level political or religious matters the *Abba Gadaas* in collaboration with the *Qaalu* or religious leader can conduct the ritual under their respective *Odaa*. For example if the current leadership is under the leadership of Birmajjii Party all activities are under taken under *Odaa Birimaji*. But if it needs the Birmaji party's political decision that could be held, *Gadaa* parties come together under *Odaa* for which they call *Godaansa* under *Odaa Birmaji*. But if it

needs the participation of the General Pan –Tulama assembly, *Abbaa Gada* calls the members under *Odaa Nabe*.

As also heard from other informants, this is made to show and preserve the respect of *Odaa Nabe*. All the members of the Tulama consider the *Tulama Gada* laws and rules as laws and rules of *Odaa Nabe* because all the *Gada* representatives of all *Gada* rules from each other. Here, while the next *Gada* leader takes the decisions make the proclamation to all members and announces his coming to power after the end of the previous *Gada* period, others parties who had stayed come together under *Odaa* for which they call *Godaansa* learn the laws and rules from each other . Here, while the next *Gada* leader takes the decisions made the proclamation to all members and announce his coming to power after end of the previous *Gada* period, others who had stayed with him performing *Godansa* would go back to their community to share the decisions passed to function among the community under the current *Gadaa* leader from now on. According to elders the session of *Tulama Gumii* of law making can take about two weeks. The participants of the Gumi are represented from the five *Gada* parties of *Tulama* and are known as “*Miseensa*” (member). Eventually, the enactment reformation and recognition of the *Tulama Gada* law takes place at a place called (*Cafffee Tulama*) in *Aqaaqi (Akaki)* locally called ‘*bakkee sreera Tulama*’ a place of enactment. However, the laws are proclaimed under *Odaa Nabe* by the *Abbaa Gadaa* who holds the next *Gada* power immediately after the approval of all the *Gadaa* sentiments.

Odaa Nabe had conducted (hosted) one *Gadaa* assembly two years ago other rituals such as the resolution of lower level disputes such as theft, mistrust, physical, harms, moral insult, disrespecting elder, either locally hold or taken to the formal court. According to these elder informants, before long time, except the leaders preference to hold different local rituals under the *Odaa* assigned for their respective *Gadaa* parties, most of the time all Tulama identify themselves as they belong to *Odaa Nabe*. Nevertheless, practically the rituals that showed the value of *Odaa Nabe* are getting weaker from time to time. Though it is true that almost all the local community react furiously to the reality the current central *Cafffee* of *Abbaa Gada Tulama* of *Akaki Wereda* is in Dukem in the main compound of Akaki Wereda Culture and Tourism office. The shift from *Odaa Nabee* to Dukem town was justified by different people with different factors. Though the factors are acceptable for some people and not for the others, all are in consensus with fact that the shift to Dukem town has its greatest impact on *Odaa Nabe* and the rural people.

4.1.1.1 Political Factors and their impacts

The political factors are viewed in two main perspectives. These two dimensions are gained through systematic cross-cutting issues raised during group discussion session held with the *Abbaa Gada* Women, youths and government bodies from *kebele* Administration. Accordingly, the factors mentioned were first viewed as accusations of the *Gada* leaders for finding a comfortable place for themselves than striving for the conservation of the place. In this case, the *Odaa* except its long history, huge prestige and spirituality, nothing had been done to prevent the place from destruction. The physical outlook of the place shows its endangeredness. Therefore, although the leaders have played greater role in the preservation of the cultural elements both politics (*Gadaa*) and religion, they are accused of doing nothing for the conservation and renewal of the place in collaboration with other stake holders. In this regard *Abba Gadas* have also reacted to justify with their own views regarding the main problems behind the misconervation of the place until now and what forced them to shift their center to Dukem. According to them, the *Gada* had historically passed through several generational challenges from different social, economic, political and religious dimensions. So, the shift was made based on the request from the government with an intention to collaborate the national laws with the customary laws based on the application of FDRE constitution article, 34 sub article 5. On the other hand others accused the local government inability to collaborate people and the *woreda* administration for the conservation and failure to keep the *gada* center at its original place. This idea was justified as the influence of central government (*wereda* administration) instead of empowering both the *kebele* administration and the customary administration and working to meet the people's political need based on the public preference. Though the customary *gada* laws such as *seera Qaalluu* (*Qaalluu* laws) such as *seera Ikkee* and *seera Rakoo*, cardinal laws /law of merge/) have greater role in keeping peoples' political stability and insuring peaceful co-existence parallel to the national laws, the presence and continual of *Odaa Nabe* as a *gada* center was an idea on which the participants of the session reached on consensus.

4.1.1.2 Economic Factors

According to the information gathered through interview and focused group discussion, most of the participants from the *Gada* leaders stated that "We *Gada* leaders served the community without any payment, except some informal honorary gifts from members of the community. The gift is based on the will of the individual the amount also varies from one to another

giver". As one of the informant whom i don't want to mention his name because of anonymity, and whom I met in Dukem the new *Gada* center stated,

No payment is offered for us from the government. We serve our people based on our interest. Even we don't have a transport allowance. We come only at our own cost. But we were expected to report our work to the woreda administration court even when we were at *Odaa Nabe* as well. Then they pulled us to here. We were promised by the Regional government to reconstruct the place at *Odaa Nabe* some three years ago. After many ups and downs we got this (*Gumii*) and now some activities are started for the reconstruction of our original place.

As to an old informant whom I met under *Odaa Nabe* and whom I don't want to mention his name because of anonymity,

The government collects additional money from the community in the name of *Odaa Nabe's* reconstruction during annual tax collection. Nevertheless, we saw no activity of reconstruction. When we raise this question on different public meetings they told as that the problem is mentioned as budget deficiency. But we kept asking the question at every chance we get.

According to the information from the wereda administration, the reconstruction is under consideration through the *Wereda's* culture and tourism office. Regarding the prospect of the *Abbaa Gadas*, the wereda administration, stated that the *Abbaa Gadas* who are now working here will continue working with formal court in performing dispute and conflict resolution at the wereda level and other *Abbaa Gadas* will be assigned of *Odaa Nabe* after the reconstruction of the place if the budget problem is solved with an uncertainty of the enhancement of the economic problem.

4.1.2. The current religious situation at Odaa Nabe

According to information from the local members of the community, the place under study is now a day becoming deprived of lack of attention and misconservation due to the impact of different religious ideologies especially Protestantism that led the people's ideological and belief change. As a result of the shift of ideological stand of the people and other things the place of *Odaa Nabe* and the traditional cultural and religious/ spiritual rituals became weakening from time to time. Consequently the place of *Odaa Nabe* is becoming weaker and

being limited to only a ceremonial place with only limited elements of ritual activities which have persisted among the local society and undertaken at this place very occasionally than in the past times back.

The few religious rituals that have yet persisted regardless of the social change were indicated in the discussion presented below. These include, the two ceremonial events /occasions; *Afrassa/* autumn as a seedling Holiday and *Birraa/* spring as a harvest, cattle, herders and women's holiday.

4.1.2.1. *Afrassa/* autumn as a seedling holiday.

Informants explained about the reason behind that it was called as a holiday of seedling is that the rituals undertaken during this time are supposed to be considered as a seedling ritual. As far as the *Tulama* Oromos are mixed farmers, they need to conduct ritual ceremonies for better agricultural or horticultural production. Almost all informants told me a similar story regarding the ceremonial event that takes place during the autumn season under the shade of *Odaa Nabe*. Among the informants *Obboo/* Mr. *Guddina* an old man who is on the verge of turning to his 86 has spoken about this ritual ceremony as follows.

We undertake prayer during the season of *afrassa* because as farmers who depend on the gift of the nature we need to pray for different things that could naturally be given to us from *Waaqa*. The natural gifts we need to pray for during this season are for example the rain. We pray for the rain because when we saw our crops to the ground it needs certain amount of rain water to seedle and grow. In addition when we slaughter a bull and pray for the rain it doesn't only mean we pray to *Waaqa* to give us all the abundant rain water found at his hand. We only pray to him to give us to the extent we need it to help our crops and with certain amount for the ground grasses which we need to feed our cattle's. Otherwise we know and believe that our God's mercy and blessings are unlimited. We also understand that he has all things that could administer the whole world. So, we don't need extra things that other world deserve unlike us. Even when we pray for a rain we pray implicitly for a peace fullrain. Otherwise, the rain we may pray might destroy us and our property. So we say in our prayers to give us a peaceful rain which is free of some such evil things as flooding and lightening which could destroy our properties. For if there is excessive rain, it might result in high flooding might then also take all the crops we have sown on the

ground. If that happens, we may end up with nothing to harvest at the end and we become poor. So, we may also go to beg for food. Therefore we pray not to lose as well as not have/ gain more rain than a certain amount of rain water needed for our crops and cattle. We lived doing this for communicating with God. We pray! We thank! (*Ni kadhanna! Ni Galateeffanna!*)

Another old informant local resident was *Obboo Gudina* who indicated that he's is now turning 86 told me a story that he heard from elders about what once had happened to the people of *Tulama*.

When I was a very young, I heard from elders that once famine had visited this area because the leaders of the prayer were said they committed sin during the prayer. The committed sin was just carelessness .By the time farmers were all rich even they plough a very little area of land and harvest with a very large amount. So, they were very rich with crops as well as number of cattle even grass lands were very abundant. Therefore they became very careless, they forgot about their God. They stopped to perform all the sacrifices and prayers for some seasons. And the on one season they couldn't harvest anything. They tried a lot to produce without performing any ritual. Everything became dried drought also persisted in the environment and to the people in general. Then eagerly, on the third season they prayed for a very large rain and when they got it accordingly, the fewly sown crops were unfortunately taken by flood. The then leaders and some members of the community's houses were hit by the lightning that falled during the rain; some animals were also taken by rivers and hit by the lightning. Starting from that time the prayers were undertaken properly and at a proper time and according the rules of the *Qaalluu*. But in my life I have never seen such kind of occurrences until recent times because all the rituals were being performed very carefully. Now days, there are times when some people from other weredas also join our prayer to share the blessing for their society's well beings. On the other hand, even some of our members had stopped to participate on the rituals because they shifted their religion to other religions such as protestant.

Though Tulama Oromo of the Akaki Wereda have strong belief system that had already been built by their late fathers in association with the foundation of Odaa Nabe as a religious and political center, it doesn't mean that all the members of the community depend on Odaa Nabe as a religious and political center. Instead there are also some approaches among the

members of the community that contradicted the belief system as well as the political system undertaken there. This led to the ideological and cultural shift to other newly adopted religious and political systems that were being experienced by the people in different times.

But, generally the symbolization of this ritual ceremony which is undertaken during the *afrassa* season is expressed by the practitioners as well as participants as a holiday of seedling which takes place during the farmer's time of crop propagation.

4.1.2.2. *Birraa* (spring) a harvest, cattle, herders and women's holiday (*Ayyaana*)

This holiday is also a very religiously significant and spiritually important event on which the people make a thanksgiving ceremony is conducted every year during the season of spring. The local people have many explanations on how and why it is regarded as a holiday of harvest, cattle, herders and women's.

1. *Birraa* (spring) as a herders' and cattle holiday.

According to *Obboo Bedane Abebe*, whom I met around *Odaa Nabe* during my field expedition, while he was herding his cattle,

This season is a very much prosperous season both for our cattle and the herds because the cattle get full enough as they can consume enough grass. The weather is also suitable so they spend all the time eating the grass. So the cows give large amount of milk, the oxen also recovers and store high energy and prepare for harvesting activities high. The donkeys also could carry heavy loads to collect the harvest when they could eat enough by this time. Our horses also get enough grass.

In addition I also went to *Obboo Bedane's* herder and his friends and after a friendly greeting I asked them what is the significance of the thanksgiving ritual ceremony undertaken under *Odaa Nabe* for herders like them all? They responded to my question as follows.

This thanksgiving ceremony is significant and very important. That is why the elders also include us during the ceremony is being undertaken. We participate. We pray with them and receive their blessings. But more importantly we thank our God with them because we don't need to go far in search of grass and water for the cattle because God has given every thing to us and for the cattle as well. Prevented us from

different problems during the winter such as muds, rains, icy rains, floods but now we are happy because the season is beautiful and the land is filled with his gifts of grass and water.

Another herd boy among these youngsters also smiley added

We also get foods from those fresh and row crops such as beans, maizes and other cereal crops that could be consumed simply during our stay at herd field. For example, when we had a fire at hand we roast some crops that are hard to eat raw otherwise we can also eat those that can not harm us. I.e does not lead to stomachach. We can also go home and eat food because we don't go far from home as we do in the other times/ seasons.

Therefore, it is generally known among the *Tulama* of *Akaki Wereda* that this holiday upon which this kind of ritual is undertaken is considered as herders' and cattles' holiday.

2. *Birraa* (aspring season) as harvest and women's holiday

According to my observation, the division of labor among the two gender groups in *Tulama* rural society of the *Akaki Wereda* is very clear. That is, while men are more responsible for out field/outside activities, women are responsible for more activities taken place at the home base. But it is not to denie that especially women also participate on other outfield activities conducted by men and vice versa. However, my idea is to indicate the logical link between these two concepts harvest and women in this particular cultural and religious event is very important. This logical link indicates that women are the prime thanks givers and lion's share holders of this event because the harvest is more significant for them as they are those who receive from their husabands and change it into an enjoyable food. It is also very significant for them because when the newly harvested crops are collected they become free of many stresses that were occurring during the rainy winter season in which it was difficult to prepare food and feed family as they might face shortage. They might also need to go to the market to buy cereals and the roads are also not suitable. Therefore, during this season they thank their God for becoming free of such activities and burdens. *Addee Wesene Abebe* an active participant woman both in the ceremony explained during the ceremony performed at *Odaa Nabe* with other women participants.

When we conduct this ceremony it is regarded as a thanks giving to *Odaa Nabe* and it delivers to our God. We conduct this ceremony being filled with a spirit (*Ayyana*). The place is cleaned early in the morning or a day before. Then it becomes ready. In the afternoon all the woman contribute certain amount of coffee. The coffee is used both for roaring and making (boiling) coffee. The coffee collected from all the women is made in one Coffee Jar (*Jebena*). The Coffee Jar is also large in size because the coffee collected from each participant woman is put in it. So we invite all the family members of the participants and others in the name of *Odaa Nabe*, to drink coffee prepared under *Odaa Nabe*. Many kinds of foods such as meat, bread, *Tella* (local beer) and Local *Arake* (local alcoholic beverage) are prepared and brought from all women's house. However before anybody eats all the meals and beverages, we first give all this things to the *Odaa* in the form of *dhibaayyuu* (sacrifice). This is made because it is the result of our previous prayer which we have conducted during the autumn season, so, the *Odaa* must enjoy it before any one. *Dhibbaayyuu* (the sacrifice) is conducted as a reward for God's prestige and our achievements. Thus, we prepare all the meals from the new crops which are harvested in this season. Therefore, it is very significant for us especially for women and that is why we are active participants of this event in all aspects.

However, as to the information from the members of the community (participants on this study) apart from these two occasional times the religious significance of this *Odaa* was historically very vast and the practices also used to performed frequently with out being limited to these seasons. For instance, *Addee Wesene* and her friends furiously and annoyedly speaking explained that now day they meet under *Odaa Nabe* only twice a year. In the past time, they used to conduct several events and ritual activities there very frequently at different times. For instance when a woman gives a birth, she comes here and make different kinds of sacrifices. They all used to go there even for other non- religious/ non- spiritual purposes such as *afosha/edir* (local social help association) but by this time, they are almost losing some active participants for unknown reason and which very annoying for them. But in general this event shows that *Tulama Oromos in Akaki Wereda* have women' and harvest related ritual system which is yearly conducted under the spiritual shade of *Odaa Nabe*.



The base of *Odaa Nabe* under which women's ritual and sacrifice (*Dhibaayyu*) is performed



Women performing a ritual ceremony under the shade of *Odaa Nabe* during spring season

Source: Photo taken by the researcher October, 2016, *Odaa nabe*

Chapter Five

5. Conclusion

The socio- political and religious values of trees could function in the society as it has first been ascribed by them. The interpretive meanings of such objects need to undertake a very careful description resulting from clear observation toward various cultural values. Hence, among the Oromo, sacred Tree (Holy sycamore) is regarded as a source of different spirits, centre of religious rituals and source of the people's political wellbeings. However, from the in depth nature of anthropological observations or inquiries these general conceptions serve us to make use of different anthropological methods as bases for further experiments. Hence, according to my observation not only the *Odaa* in general, I came to realize that each parts of the tree had got their own interrelated, mystical, and historical interpretations among the society. Because *Odaa* had been serving as a scared / holly meeting ground of the Oromos', various aspects of the social life such as political, religious and other ceremonial activities, different clan members of the ethnic group assign their own *Odaa* so as to meet the society's socio- political and religious need just atleast near to their locations. But according to my understanding from the explanation of all *Abba Gadas* consulted for the study, except the locational difference, the conceptualization of *Odaa* tree in general is very similar.

Odaa Nabe being one of the *Odaas* used as a center of *Gada*, the political and religious institution serves particularly the Tulama clans of *Akaki Wereda*. Nevertheless, due to the rapidly changing social and political systems which have weakened the traditional institutions decreases the public understanding, emphasis and consideration of the symbolic values of such important sacred objects and places. This also leads to lack of commitment by the young generation for the preservation of the cultural and symbolic values of those symbolically important objects and places which could play greaterrole in people's socio political and religious welbeings. The amin challenges of *Odaa Nabe* as observed from the research result are primarily origionated from the underconsideration of the roles it has been playing in past times and even now playing in the society. This directly affects the effectiveness of *Odaa Nabe* as well as the religious and political practitioners or leaders. For instance, when the *Gada* is practiced out of its original place, it lacks or loses its sacred value. Therefore, the official shift of the *Abba Gadas* to another place place decreases their effectiveness because the new place might not function with its original grace. It is also impossible to separate the

political, judicial and religious role of *Odaa* tree or specifically *Odaa Nabe* in the *Gada* or *Tulama Gada* system respectively.

As it has been tried to understand from the research's result, *Odaa Nabe*'s political and religious significance is inevitable. However, *Odaa Nabe* both as a sacred place as well as a sacred object is losing its previous prestigious political and religious or ritual values. The people also apart from using the symbol of *Odaa* as their identity, have no clear understanding of its socio-political and religious values. This also indicates that nothing is done even to create clear understanding about the place and the object itself (the holy sycamore Tree) by different stake holders among the society.

On the other hand, unless works are to be done effectively on the preservation of the cultural values, the symbolic usage of certain material cultures leads to mis-interpretation in the way *Odaa* tree is being used in the society by this time. It may also remain being only symbolically used for occasional events such as feasts, rather than functioning in the day to day life experience of a society. This also diminishes the *Odaa*'s importance in terms of the socio-political and religious matters as it is now being observed from this research which is investigated with reference to *Odaa Nabe*. However, not only being limited to *Odaa Nabe*, national attention should be given to all kinds of cultural values of natural and man-made objects in terms of their historical, mystical and sacred values as they could play greater roles in their association with the well beings of the society in different contexts.

Finally from observation, further scholarly descriptions need to be made to increase the various explanations and interpretive meanings of *Odaa* tree as the investigation on *Odaa Nabe* provides with certain amount of contribution to show the local points of views being charged with viewing its current condition.

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Appendices

Appendix1.

Guiding questions

1. Can you tell me your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Can you tell me about your family back ground? (You are married, divorced or single?).
4. What is your job and do you have any position in the gada institution?
5. How long have you been here?
6. What is Odaa in your understanding?
7. What do you know about odaa Nabe?
8. Would you explain about the role of Odaa nabe in the community?
9. Have you ever participated in the gada ceremonies and rituals?
10. What do the people feel for possessing Odaa Nabe as a gada center ?
11. Can you say anything about the challenges of gada and the current condition of Odaa Nabe?
12. Can you tell me experience of your own others with regard to the spiritual gains obtained from the link you have with Odaa Nabe?
13. Can you tell me experience of your own and others with regard to the political gains obtained from the link you have with Odaa Nabe?
14. Where do you prefer to present your social complaints? Why?

Appendix2. List of local informants

No	Name	Age	Sex	Clan membership	Occupation	Address
1.	Hirpha kena	52	M	Tulama	Kebele administrator	Odaa Nabe
2.	Dembelash Tesfu	37	M	Tulama	Farmer	Odaa Nabe
3.	Dejene dhakabi	41	M	Tulama	Farmer	Odaa Nabe
4.	Gudina Dirribi	79	M	Tulama	Farmer/ community elder	Odaa Nabe
5.	Alemi Korme	47	F	Tulama	Hose wife	Odaa Nabe
6.	Melaku Hundessa	28	M	Tulama	Kebele writer	Odaa Nabe
7.	Ahmed Fayyoo	34	M	Tulama	Farmer	Odaa Nabe
8.	Dinkinesh Taye	49	F	Tulama	Farmer	Odaa Nabe
9.	Korme Lema	68	M	Tulama	Farmer	Odaa Nabe
10.	Degefa Keneni	71	M	Tulama	Farmer	Odaa Nabe
11.	Mikessa Etana	27	M	Tulama	Farmer	Odaa Nabe
12.	Berke Adugna	51	F	Tulama	House wife	Odaa Nabe
13.	Nigusu Fayissa	25	M	Tulama	Student	Odaa Nabe
14.	Yaadene Mitiku	25	F	Tulama	Student	Odaa Nabe
15.	Anakech Adem	38	F	Tulama	House wife	Odaa Nabe
16.	Keneni kumera	62	F	Tulama	House wife	Odaa Nabe
17.	Fikadu Leta	64	M	Tulama	Security guard	Bishoftu

Apeendix 3. List of Abba Gada informants

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Clan membership	Social status	Address
1.	Beyene Sembetu	46	Male	Tulama	Gada Leader	Odaa Nabe
2.	Shamil Ahmedo	43	Male		Gada Leader	Odaa Bultum
3.	Gazu Werku	38	Male	Tulama	Member of Gada council.	Odaa Nabe
4.	Sambatu Badane	74	Male	Tulama	Member of Gada council.	Odaa Nabe
5.	Kebede Abdi	67	Male	Tulama	Member of Gada council.	Odaa Nabe
6.	Solomon Wolde	48	Male	Tulama	Member of Gada council.	Odaa
7.	Degiffe Telila	43	Female	Tulama	Member of Gada council.	Odaa Nabe
8.	Wesene Abebe	49	Female	Tulama	Member of Gada council.	Odaa Nabe
9.	Lema Dabele	38	Male	Tulama	Member of Gada council.	Odaa Nabe
10.	Bekele Dejene	46	Male	Tulama	Gadaa leader	Dukem
11.	Gelgelo Edamo	47	Male	Arsi	Gada Leader	Odaa Roobaa

Appendix .4: Pictures and Photos

On this back side of the paper, the pictures and different photos that are used as supplementary sources of information are listed below as follows



The picture in above indicates the cultural practices that take on the branches of Odaa Nabee



A land decorated with symbolic picture
of Odaa made in Bshoftu Town.

A picture of OdaaNabee



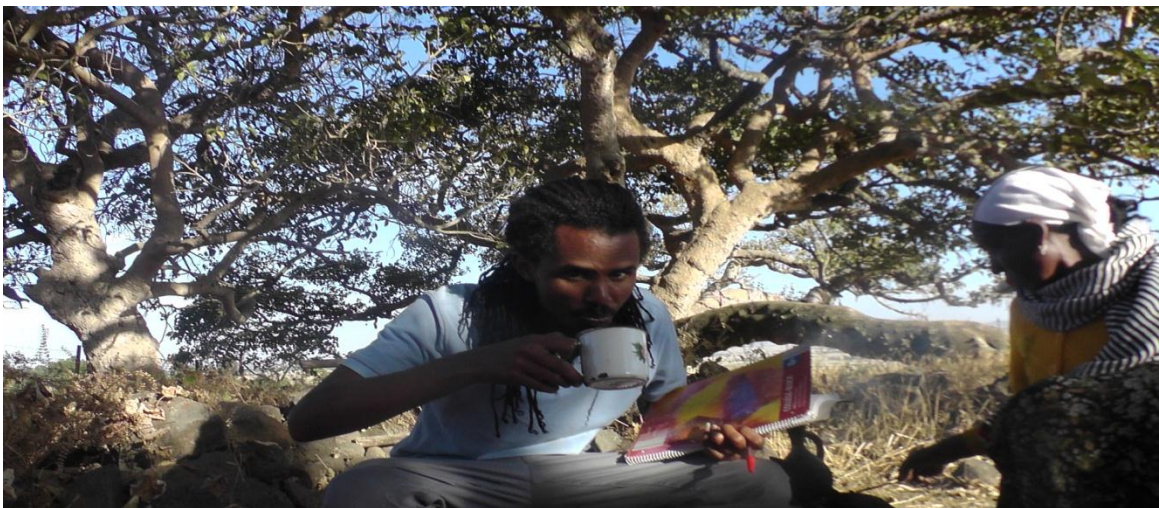
A coffee ceremonies Material decorated with an Odaa Picture



A picture found being used as beautifying the gate of a Hotel in Bishoftu Town



A Full view of Odaa Nabe surrounded by other trees.



Participant observation



Source: Photo taken by the researcher May, 2016; Bishoftu

The Galma of Oromo Aba Gadas Unity found in bishoftu town kebele 01

DECLARATION

The undersigned, declare that this thesis is May original work and has never been presented in any other institution. All the sources of information used for the study have been duly acknowledged.

Solomon Debebe

Signature: -----

Date: -----

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University advisor.

Dr. Teshome Emana

Signature: -----

Date: -----