

**ADDIS BABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**

**DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
STUDIES**

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY BASED  
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN MENZ-GUASSA  
COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AREA, ETHIOPIA**

**MA. THESIS**

**BY: GOMEJE AMESSIE SIFRAAYISHU**

**MAY 27, 2014**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

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COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AREA, ETHIOPIA**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
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**Gomeje Amessie Sifraayishu**

Approved by

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Internal Examiner

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

External Examiner

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that a Thesis entitled “**Opportunities and Challenges of Community Based Natural Resource Management in Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area, Ethiopia**” has been carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Singh (PhD), Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Addis Ababa University during the year 2013/14 as a part of Master of Art program in Geography and Environmental Studies with a specialization “**Natural Resources and Environmental Management**”. I further declare that this work has not been submitted to any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

Place: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Date: May 27, 2014

Gomeje Amessie

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May 27, 2014

*Dedication*

*This thesis work is dedicated to the memories of my mother Basazen Haile, she passed away to save my life and my sister Ayelech Worku and my sister in Christ Kokebe Gedamu, who was eager to see my successes. Dear my beloved may the almighty God rest your soul in heaven.*

Acknowledgments .....	I
List of Figures .....	VII
List of Tables .....	VIII
List of Appendices .....	IX
List of abbreviations and Acronyms .....	X
<i>ABSTRACT</i> .....	XI
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Background of the study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem .....	2
1.3 Objectives of the study.....	4
1.3.1 General Objective .....	4
1.3.2 Specific Objectives .....	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	4
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	4
1.6 Limitation of the Study .....	5
1.7 Organization of the Thesis .....	5
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITRATURES .....	7
2.1 Concepts of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) .....	7
2.2 Definitions of CBNRM.....	7
2.3 Principles of CBNRM.....	8
2.4 Practices of CBNRM .....	8
2.5 CBNRMs in Ethiopia.....	11
CHAPTER THREE: DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA.....	14
3.1 Location .....	14
3.2 Geology and Soil .....	14
3.3 Climate.....	15
3.4 Rain fall.....	15
3.5 Temperature .....	15
3.6 Humidity .....	15
3.7 Flora.....	16
3.8 Fauna.....	16
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHOD AND MATERIALS.....	18

4.1 Study Site Selection .....	18
4.2 Rational .....	18
4.3 Data Source .....	19
4.4 Target Populations of the Study Area .....	19
4.5 Research Approach .....	19
4.6 Research Design .....	19
4.7 Subject or Research Participant Selection .....	19
4.8 Data collection Instruments .....	20
4.8.1 <i>In-depth interview with Key Informants</i> .....	20
4.8.2 <i>Focus Group Discussion (FGD)</i> .....	20
4.8.3 <i>Observation and Field Notes</i> .....	21
4.8.4 <i>Questionnaire</i> .....	21
4.9 Data Quality Assurance .....	22
CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION .....	23
5.1 Background of Respondents .....	23
5.1.1 <i>Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of Sampled Respondents</i> .....	23
5.1.2 <i>Characteristics of Interviewed respondents</i> .....	28
5.2 Historical Background of Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area .....	29
5.3 The Current Status of Menz Guassa Community Conservation Area .....	31
5.3.1 <i>The Physical Status of MGCCA</i> .....	31
5.3.2 <i>The current Administration System of MGCCA</i> .....	32
5.3.3 <i>Benefits of MGCCA</i> .....	33
5.4 Opportunities for Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area .....	34
5.4.1 <i>The Consciousness of the Local Community to conserve Natural Resources and Their Attitude and Value towards MGCCA</i> .....	35
5.4.2 <i>The Involvement of Governmental and Non-Governmental Parties at different level and Tourism</i> .....	37
5.4.3 <i>The Accreditation of MGCCA Formal law</i> .....	41
5.5 Challenges Affecting the MGCCA .....	42
5.5.1 <i>Lack of Awareness and Threat of The local Community</i> .....	43
5.5.2 <i>The Existence of Anti-Plant weed (cherenfe), Weakness of the Current Community Councils and less-fairness of the bylaw</i> .....	44

5.5.3 Drought and Poverty.....	45
5.5.4 Land administration Policy and Policy implementation issues .....	45
5.5.5 Population Increment and shortage of farm land.....	46
5.5.6 Shortages of Infrastructural Services and Limitations of Technology.....	47
5.6 The Situation, Question and Attitude of Non Beneficiary Groups .....	47
5.7 Measures Taken To Minimize Challenges .....	49
5.8 Facilities of the Park .....	49
5.9 The Prospect of MGCCA.....	50
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	53
6.1 Conclusion.....	53
6.2 Recommendations.....	54
REFERENCES.....	56
APPENDIX.....	60

**List of Figures**

Figure 3.1: Menz Guassa Community Conservation Area Map .....14

Figure 4.1: The Annual Income Generated from Tourism sector of MGCCA from 2009-2013  
(Frankfurt Zoological Society Office Report, 2014).....39

**List of Tables**

Table 5.1: Socio-demographic figures of sampled respondents..... 24

Table 5.2: Economic background of sampled respondents .....26

Table 5.3: Animal feed sources of sampled respondents..... 27

Table 5.4: Characteristics of interviewed respondents .....28

Table 5.5: Opportunities for MGCCA mentioned by beneficiary sampled respondents..... 34

Table 5.6: Challenges for MGCCA mentioned by beneficiary sampled respondents ..... 42

Table 5.7: Prospects of MGCCA mentioned by beneficiary sampled respondents by ..... 50

**List of Appendices**

Appendix I. Time frame work of the thesis .....60

Appendix II. Questionnaire for beneficiary groups.....61

Appendix III. Questionnaire for non-beneficiary groups.....66

## List of abbreviations and Acronyms

CBCP:	Community Based Conservation Practices
CBNRM:	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CCAP:	Community Conservation Area Park
CMNRA:	Community Management Natural Resource in Africa
CPNR:	Common Property Natural Resources
CSA:	Central Statistics Agency
FDRE:	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
FZS:	Frankfurt Zoological Society
GCC:	Guassa Community Council/ Committee
GCPRCA:	Guassa Common Property Resource Conservation Area
IIED:	International Institute for Environment and Development
MGCCA:	Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area
NGO's:	Non Governmental Organizations
NRM:	Natural Resource Management

## **ABSTRACT**

### **OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREAS:**

*A Case of Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area*

*Gomeje Amessie Sifraayshu*

*Addis Ababa University, May 27, 2014*

*Nowadays, the degradation of biodiversity reaches its climax due to lack of sustainable natural resource management even if some areas saved from total damage by the indigenous community conservation practices for seeks of the commons. This study tries to investigate the challenges and opportunities of Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area (MGCCA) of Ethiopia, the exemplary area of community conserved area for the last 400 years in the Eastern Africa. To examine the current status of the area in terms of challenges and opportunities (in-depth interview, focus group discussion and key informant interview) methods were employed. The data obtained analyzed in descriptive ways. Lack of awareness of local communities about government interfere conservation practice and their threat, land policy issues, shortage of farm land and population increment, drought and poverty etc were identified as major challenges of MGCCA. While the interference of governmental and nongovernmental parties, accreditation of formal law, interest and values of the community to conserve MGCCA, the moving of the world to green revolution, expansion of culture and tourism sectors, local communities indigenous consciousness to conserve natural resources identified as opportunities. Similar to other developing countries Ethiopian people's also practiced conservations for direct benefits solely. Accordingly, the researcher recommended that urgent intervention of governmental and nongovernmental organizations is needed mainly to alleviate farmers economic problems, empowering religious and local leaders for more integrated conservation with sense of ownership and increasing public awareness through education about the benefit of community conservation areas to encourage existing practices and save similar areas.*

*Key words: Common Property Resource, Community Conservation Area, Opportunities, Challenge's, Prospects, Menz Gera Midir Woreda, Afro Alpine*

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

Different studies (IIED-CMNRA, 2009; Adugna, 1996) show that Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) based on indigenous knowledge has playing a significance role in the world, especially in developing countries like Ethiopia as a means of livelihood for the poor's. Reddy (1999) pointed out that, poor people depend more heavily on a limited natural resource base, they attach greater value to its conservation and so have developed sustainable management strategies for their direct benefit. Galudra (2005) also explained that, indigenous communities have developed ways of life remarkably tuned to their local environments. The long associations with their territories has resulted in developing strong ties with their lands expressed in customary laws, complex religious ceremonies, symbolic activities and extremely detailed knowledge of their resources. Such knowledge may be deeply coded within traditional lore's, handed down by words of mouths to generations and refined too.

Religious norms and beliefs also play a great role in maintaining adherence to rules governing common property. In several cases, use and access to the commons is restricted by local religious institutions, both in terms of kinds of use, or where resources may be accessed (IIED-CMNRA, 2009). Alden Wily (2008) notes that, over 90% of Africa's rural population accesses land through customary institutions, and a quarter of the continent's land - some 740 million hectares- serves as a communal property such as forests and rangelands. CBNRM requires a local person is reasonable degree of tenorial control over land and resources so that they can make decisions about resource use, access, and allocation.

Over the last 400 years the Menz-Guassa People's conserve natural resources on which they depend without outside assistance, and it is ,perhaps, one of the earliest known examples of indigenous Natural Resource Conservation Area in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Menz-Guassa community evolved their own management system known as *Yekero Siri-at* or *Qero* system with selected leaders called *Aba Qero*, who were responsible for protecting and regulating the use of the Guassa area; now which is well accredited by the Amhara National Regional State as the "Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area/ MGCCA" under the proclamation number 97/2012. According to *Yekero Siri-at*, any natural resource found in Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area is tended for three to five consecutive years before it is used and when *Aba Qeros* felt the Guassa grass is well grew the

area becomes open usually from mid of April to mid of July for the communities to use. The Menz-Guassa Orthodox Christian community declares that the area is closed for protection starting from July 12, which is the date of breaking the Apostles fast for many Orthodox Christians. From this day on, guards chosen by the community patrol the area, enforcing the local custom of protecting the natural resources of the mountain again (Zelalem, 2005; Getachew, 2010; Biniyam et al., 2011).

Ethiopia is a country endowed with a range of fauna and flora (Hillman, 1993). For instance, with regard to MGCCA, there are 18 species of birds of which 14 are endemic birds of the area, 18 species of mammals of which 7 are endemic. Thus, Guassa harbors respectively 22.6% of the endemic mammals and 48.3% of the endemic birds of Ethiopia (Getachew, 2010; Biniyam et al. 2011). According to Kingdom (1991), the Ethiopian highlands have been the focus of a wide range of human land uses for at least four centuries and, probably still longer, yet are rich in endemic species of plants, birds and mammals. Ethiopia was once richly endowed with common property resource regimes amongst its diversity of ethnic groups (Admassie, 2000). However due to lack of information the coordination of communities with governmental and non-governmental bodies regarding to management were limited. Also programs and projects emanated from governmental bodies become short lived since there is lack of socio-economic mainstreamed natural resource management studies and most of the conservation practices were not in-line with indigenous knowledge's and lack of the full involvement of the community (Yeraswork, 1995).

The traditional, natural resource management practices have been carried out by communities for centuries and continue being done so. In many cases, these traditional activities, based on local rules, norms, and knowledge, are functionally much more representative cases of CBNRM than many of the formal, externally-supported projects and programs that could also be considered as CBNRM (IIED-CMNRA, 2009).

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Now a day, many communities world-wide face serious environmental degradation, including deforestation, overgrazing, soil erosion, overexploitation of biodiversity and serious air and water pollution problems, which are certainly resulted from all associated with mismanagement of natural resources. In the developing countries, from the beginning policy makers and natural resource

managers were not adapt with the consideration of proposed outcomes since it is not developed by mainstreaming socio-economic and cultural issues. As with broader economic policies, the design of natural resource governance institutions in sub-Saharan Africa are often driven not by considerations of technical efficiency but by an array of personal interests revolving around patronage networks and the exercise of political power (Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Van de Walle, 2001; Nelson and Agrawal, 2008). Destruction of the vegetation and inappropriate land use and practices has resulted in degradation of the fertile soil in MGCCA (Ashenafi et al, 2005).

On the other hand low productivity of land as a result of fertility decline, soil erosion and high rate of population growth has compelled rural households to use natural resources extensively and focus on ecologically sensitive areas. Much of the Ethiopian landscape from sea level up to 4,000 m is altered by agricultural activities, deforestation and overgrazing to meet the basic needs of a growing human population (Hillman, 1993). In the study area, most of the highlands and some of the lowlands have been converted into agricultural and pasture lands; major trees have been used for fuel wood, construction and other related purposes (Getachew, 2010). This also results from unsustainable natural resource management emanating from lack of knowledge and awareness about scientific and sustainable natural resource management. Even at the existing condition, since community conservation practice is carried out for the sake of the common interest of the community living around the area, it may be rescued from any sort of damage emanating from the community members themselves. However, the area is potentially exposed to challenges from those who are not legal members of the community. Besides, some members of the community or beneficiaries also abuse the conserved common areas consciously or unconsciously and such unwanted practices of members sometimes developing in to serious problems.

In addition to this conflicts between local groups and other more powerful actors are rampant across the sub-continent, including both state agencies and private sector investors. Different land tenure systems and government policies have also affected Community Based Conservation Practices (CBCP) by exposing the conserved areas for unsustainable use. Poverty by itself becomes the driving force to dare conserved areas by the communities. Generally, the main important CBNRM areas were affected by unsustainable natural resource management due to different pull and push factors; which might have resulted from different obstacles created by different bodies consciously or unconsciously.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study is assessing the main opportunities and challenges of Menz - Guassa Community Conservation Area of Menz Gera Midr Woreda, Ethiopia.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The study does also have specific objectives:

- ❖ To assess the opportunities and challenges of MGCCA
- ❖ To assess the Current status of MGCCA
- ❖ To assess the aims and methods of workings of MGCCA
- ❖ To assess the practicability or acceptability of the project among the communities
- ❖ To assess the involvement of Governmental and Non-governmental Agencies in MGCCA

### **1.4 Research Questions**

This research targets at trying to answer the following questions which are related to the opportunities and challenges that affect the MGCCA in one or another way.

1. What are the opportunities of MGCCA?
2. What are the challenges of MGCCA?
3. What is the aim and methods of workings of MGCCA?
4. What looks like the practicability or acceptability of the project among the communities?
5. What looks like the involvement of governmental and nongovernmental agencies in MGCCA?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Natural resources are degraded because of the rapid population growth and shortage of land. Especially in the developing countries like Ethiopia and this problem is directly related to unsustainable management. Studies (IIED-CMNRA, 2009) show that, nowadays, Community Based Conservations have become more successful than government induced conservations. This Community Based Natural Resource Management Areas play a great role in changing the lives of the local community, who are the beneficiaries by generating means of incomes in many ways. However, there are always challenges to continued sustainability of such areas and hence the ups and downs of the outcomes on which the prospects can be predicted. This study has also shown the

involvement of governmental and non-governmental organizations to sustain Community Conservation Areas and challenges around MGCCA. Therefore, this thesis has the following significances:

- ❖ It provides information for all concerned bodies such as policy makers, environmentalists, investors, natural resource managers, local communities, etc to advocate at any cost sustainable natural resource conservation. It also tries to clearly cite the main conservation opportunities in the study area.
- ❖ Particularly, it helps the discipline of natural resource management to identify and improve its dedication to Community Conservation Areas and review efforts, regulations/institutional framework and types of incentives provides to the local community.
- ❖ It would serve other interested researchers as a spring board and pinpoints a direction for further research in MGCCA and other similar localities.
- ❖ The recommendations drawn from the findings of the study could provide a life giving approach to policy formulation of natural resource management in general and CBNRM in particular.

Generally, the researcher believes that understanding the socio-cultural and related economic problems will be highly helpful to solve problems related to the existing community based natural resource managements, since socio-cultural and economic activities are the governor of natural environment (man affects the environment and the environment also affects man).

### **1.6 Limitation of the Study**

There may be the sort of bias and subjectivity with regard to the data gathering instruments, indeed. Since the research was mainly conducted by using qualitative means of data collection like interview and focus group discussion. Also, due to time and budget constraints this study is focused only on limited issues of MGCCA.

### **1.7 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis comprises six chapters. The first chapter deals with the background of the study, problem justification, significance of the study, objectives of the study, research question and limitation of the study. Chapter Two discusses review of related literature. The third chapter

presents description of the study area and Chapter Four contains method and material of the study. Chapter Five presents descriptive summary of the empirical data collected with detailed analysis and discussions. Chapter Six in turn deals with conclusion and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITRATURES**

### **2.1 Concepts of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)**

The idea of Natural Resource Management is quite a recent phenomenon emanating after the long and unscientific use, becomes it started showing depletion of the resources which were considered to be unlimited and in exhaustive. Since then, different ways had been experimented by Governmental and Non-Governmental Agency's so as to have the most effecting results.

But, in different areas of the world it was practicing for some centuries before it came with the name CBNRM; it was practiced with other names like Common Property Resource Conservation/Management. The practice under the Guassa highlands of Ethiopia also this type of Natural Resource Management for the last four centuries by the local community alone without any interference of the state except affecting sometimes in the name of land tenure. This may result from the exceptional highly use of most highland areas of Ethiopia.

Under the evolutionary process emerge the concept of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) where the central assumption is that local people will be able to manage lands and natural resources through locally devised rules and procedures, as communal property (Ostrom, 1990). The laws and legislations by which the common property resource management administration were emanated from the social and religious practices, norms and traditions are more respectful rather than official or formal state laws, since it is formulated by the society .

### **2.2 Definitions of CBNRM**

According to International Institute for Environment and Development-Community Management Natural Resource in Africa (IIED-CMNRA, 2009), Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) is defined as a term to describe the management of resources such as land, forests, wildlife and water by collective, local institutions for local benefits. CBNRM takes many different forms in different locations and different sociopolitical and bio-physical contexts. It may be based on commercial uses of natural resources, such as managing wildlife for local tourism or hunting enterprises, or it may be based on primarily subsistence uses of resources such as Non-Timber Forest Products.

CBNRM refers to the management of natural resources that is primarily driven by, or occurring at, the community level. Management rules may target the resources themselves or the environment in which these resources exist. CBNRM is a term that refers to local and collective resource governance arrangements and practices.

Across the Continent CBNRM is defined and understood somewhat differently from region to region and indeed within regions. Consequently it is shaped and perceived in various ways. This is not surprising. CBNRM exists in a variety of ecological, economic, social and policy contexts which inevitably shape the profile of its specific manifestations. Each CBNRM enterprise is context and content specific; no two are identical (Murphree, 2008b).

This indicates that it is dangerous to over-generalize about CBNRM and its components. In this context CBNRM emphasizes on the practice communities to manage and conserve natural resources, based on their own social and economic interests in the sustainable use of those resources. Most of the time the control or being a beneficiary power comes from blood relation.

### **2.3 Principles of CBNRM**

There are principles in different societies related to CBNRMs. Even if it may differ in different areas and time some principles were common all over the world since the initial goal is the same.

CBNRM is premised on the idea that communities will sustainably manage local resources if they:

- are assured of their ownership of the natural resource
- are allowed to use the resources themselves and/or benefit directly from others' use of them
- are given a reasonable amount of control over management of the resources

### **2.4 Practices of CBNRM**

Community-based natural resources management (CBNRM), which emphasizes community empowerment, participation and enhanced use of indigenous knowledge in resources and environmental management, is an increasingly popular discourse for sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite its popularity, CBNRM faces various discursive and institutional challenges in countries with a recent history of top-down development (IIED- CMNRA, 2009).

The practices under CBNRM are not a new phenomenon, rather are being practiced by the people starting from the previous times till now by managing and using the land surrounding them. CBNRM, thus, covers a wide range of resource use practices, given the great diversity of both human communities and resources. CBNRM is premised on the ability of local people to exercise a significant degree of authority over resources, in practice.

CBNRM equally applies to traditional resource management arrangements, such as the collective regimes governing rangelands and pastoralists grazing, reserves, in-shore fisheries, or communally managed forests. CBNRM can thus be formal or informal, and often straddles both realms, particularly given the contemporary social and institutional transformations occurring across much of Sub-Saharan Africa (IIED-CMNRA, 2009).

Some resources have traditionally been managed collectively or communally, rather than individually, because the resources are subject to shared uses and it would be too costly to individualize the resource. At the same time, if such resources are left entirely ungoverned (or ‘open accesses’) then the resource will be subject to depletion through a ‘tragedy of the commons’ scenario whereby all users compete to access and utilize the resource.

Recent interest in indigenous resource management systems arises for several reasons. First, from the failure of many formal, state-sponsored conservation initiatives and the search for viable and sustainable alternatives to current models of resource use that advocate exclusion in the name of protection. Second, from renewed interest in indigenous resource management systems arising in part from a new found pride in traditional values and institutions in developing countries; indeed, most cultures and practices in the developing world emphasize responsibility and a vested interest in the community, rather than on individualism (Berkes and Farver, 1989; Alcorn, 1997, cited by Ashenafi et al, 2005).

Indigenous common property resource management systems promote the ideals of communal welfare and responsibility. Such principles are enshrined in the codes of resource appropriation and protection. It is no accident that traditional resource management systems are almost always community-based.

Indigenous African communities often developed elaborate resource management systems (Fabricius, 2004), like the other local communities throughout the world (Ostrom, 1990; Borrini et al., 2004).

Today, local groups of pastoralists, farmers, and hunters-gatherers throughout Africa maintain many traditional systems of collective natural resource management which help to sustain the livelihoods and cultures of millions of people. In the last few decades, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of collective natural resource management practices and institutions, and recognition of the ways that historic forces have disrupted local people's ability to manage the lands and resources they depend upon. A wide range of policy makers and development and conservation practitioners have supported efforts to revive or bolster local natural resource management institutions in response to various economic, social, environmental and political pressures. Increasingly, debates over local communities' ability to manage their lands and natural resources are a part and parcel of broader struggles over political and economic power and authority in African countries (IIED-CMNRA, 2009).

The emergence of CBNRM in southern and eastern Africa often had deep locally derived roots (Jones and Murphree, 2001). In the natural resource management field, the emergence of an array of new studies documenting sustainable forms of collective resource management based on traditional rules and norms transformed thinking about communal property rights and institutions (Berkes, 1989; Ostrom, 1990).

Sustainable collective resource governance arrangements are characterized by local groups of resource users ('communities') developing and agreeing to share rules that limit and regulate resource uses. In this way, local communities can sustain and conserve valuable shared resources through their own self-governance arrangements.

In East Africa, 'CBNRM' is not a commonly used term at all in an acronymic sense, even if Community-Based Natural Resource Management is widely practiced across the region. East African countries tend to feature relatively sharp divisions between different resource sectors-

forests, fisheries, and wildlife. In the wildlife sector, 'community-based conservation' is the more common term for CBNRM.

The traditional, natural resource management practices have been carried out by communities for centuries and continue so. In many cases these traditional activities, based on local rules, norms, and knowledge, are functionally much more representative cases of CBNRM than many of the formal, externally-supported projects and programs that also define themselves as CBNRM.

## **2.5 CBNRMs in Ethiopia**

It is unquestionable that peoples of the world adopt Community Based Natural Resource Managements to solve problems related to uneven distribution of natural resources and to use resources in combination which were difficult to distribute the existing society. Also, may be if the exciting natural resource were partitioned with small area coverage's result severe land degradation and unsustainable. But now it is improved since there were severe environmental degradations.

The idea is not new or produced over night, but it is emanated from the exciting traditional practice called Common Property Conservation. The only different were CBNRM mostly refer to Natural Resource Management practices may be with the intervention of governmental agencies. In the 1980s, a community-based counter-narrative began to emerge as a result of manifold trends, ideas, and crises which led to a broad rethinking of both development and conservation fields (IIED-CMNRA, 2009).

Ethiopia is one of the most endowed with diverse natural resources with indigenous conservation practices called Common Property Resource Conservation. Most highland area of Ethiopia were severely degraded because of high population pressure and extreme and unwise use of resources. Different findings show that the Common Property Resource Conservation Practice developed before four hundred years ago. Researchers also emphasize that the highland areas of Ethiopia were main focus of human settlement for the past centuries. Understandings of the concept of natural resource are diverse. According to Gilpin (1996, p. 156), "it is any portion of the natural environment such as the atmosphere, water, soil, forest, wildlife, land, minerals and environmental assets generally". It is the backbone of every economy directly or indirectly. In particular, for

developing countries like Ethiopia, where about 85% of the population are living in rural areas and dependent on agriculture, natural resources are the base for economic development, food security and other basic necessities (Alemneh, 2003).

However, as the different research findings reveal, the rate and extent of natural resource degradation is appalling. For instance, according to Karamachandani (1989, cited in Azene, 2001, p.137), “20% of the Ethiopian highlands are in a seriously eroded condition and a further 24% in moderated erosion condition. Cognizant of this fact of resource degradation and its consequences, various debates have been made in academic and policy circles about appropriate resource conservation approaches through appropriate policy and institutional reforms (Tarekegn, 2001). These approaches range from a centralized state based natural resource management approach on one side of the spectrum, to community based natural resource management (CBNRM) on the other side.

The centralized state based Natural Resource Management (NRM) approach is mainly based on the argument of Hardin’s tragedy of the commons model, which assumes that common property means the same as ‘open-access’ and that such resources are doomed to overexploitation, since each resource user places his or her immediate interest above that of the community (Eyasu and Trench, 2001). This argument has persuaded many policy makers to favor policies that promote either strong central management or complete privatization of the resources (Paul Lee, 2002).

In the case of Ethiopia, during the 1970s and 1980s the government took the initiative to counteract the resource degradation of the country by adopting a top down centralized approach to conservation. In this government owned approach, little emphasis is given to involving the community that has a link with the resources. Rather, as Azene (2001, p. 152) argues, “Farmers have been considered ignorant of proper land use management although they have engaged in agriculture for millennia. Consequently, they have been excluded from planning and commenting on, strategies and technologies of implementation”.

Though, in quantitative terms, the achievement of this national effort was impressive (Yeraswork, 1995), lack of the full involvement of the community has made it short lived and interpreted

differently. As Dessalegn (2001b, p. 38) pointed out, “to many peasants, ‘conservation’ came to be synonymous with the appropriation of local resources by the state”. Consequently, the local community turned against the program and in Ethiopia in particular, during its period of instability, national parks and forests were set on fire, and various wild animals were killed (Shibru and Kile, 1998).

In contrast, CBNRM starts with communities as a focus and foundation for assessing natural resource uses, potentials, problems, trends and opportunities, and for taking action to deal with adverse practices and dynamics (Little 1994 cited in Uphoff, 1998). It advocates partnership in which community is considered as the main actor in decisions and selection of appropriate technology and overall management, as they are the frontier of both the risk and benefit of the resource management efforts (ibid). Nevertheless, many advocates of the participatory approach to natural resource management further question the rhetoric of ‘community participation’. It is apparent that a true participatory approach, in which the communities express their feelings and take part in the decision-making, is possible only if they have room in the prevailing power structure to mediate access to and control over particular resources. A number of scholars undertaking research in the field of participatory resource management have emphasized the significance of community empowerment as a pre requisite for sustainable management of natural resources. In this regard, Dessalegn (2001a) notes the unequal power relations between the state and the peasantry in which the latter is always the victim, as one of the main reasons for accelerated environmental degradation in Ethiopia. Therefore respecting the expertise of land use “farmers” and appreciating indigenous community conservation practices will assure projects and programs of saving natural resources.

## CHAPTER THREE: DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

### 3.1 Location

The study incorporates the Menz Guassa Community Conservation Area (MGCCA) of Menz-Gera Midir *Woreda*, located in the central highlands of Ethiopia: North Shoa *Zone* of Amhara National Regional State. Menz is the popular name of the area and Gera Midir *Woreda* is one of the district of North Shewa *Zones* of Amhara National Regional State. The capital of Menz Gera-Midir *Woreda* is Mehal Meda which lies about 265 Km North East of the national capital Addis Ababa by road and 135 Km North of Debrebirhan; the capital of North Shoa *Zone*. MGCCA is occurs at 248 Km before arrive to Mehal Meda. Astronomically it lies between 10° 15'-10° 27'N latitudes and 39° 45'-39° 49'E longitudes. The total area of Guassa is 78sq.Km. Its altitude ranges from 3200 m to 3700 m above msl (Biniyam et al, 2011).

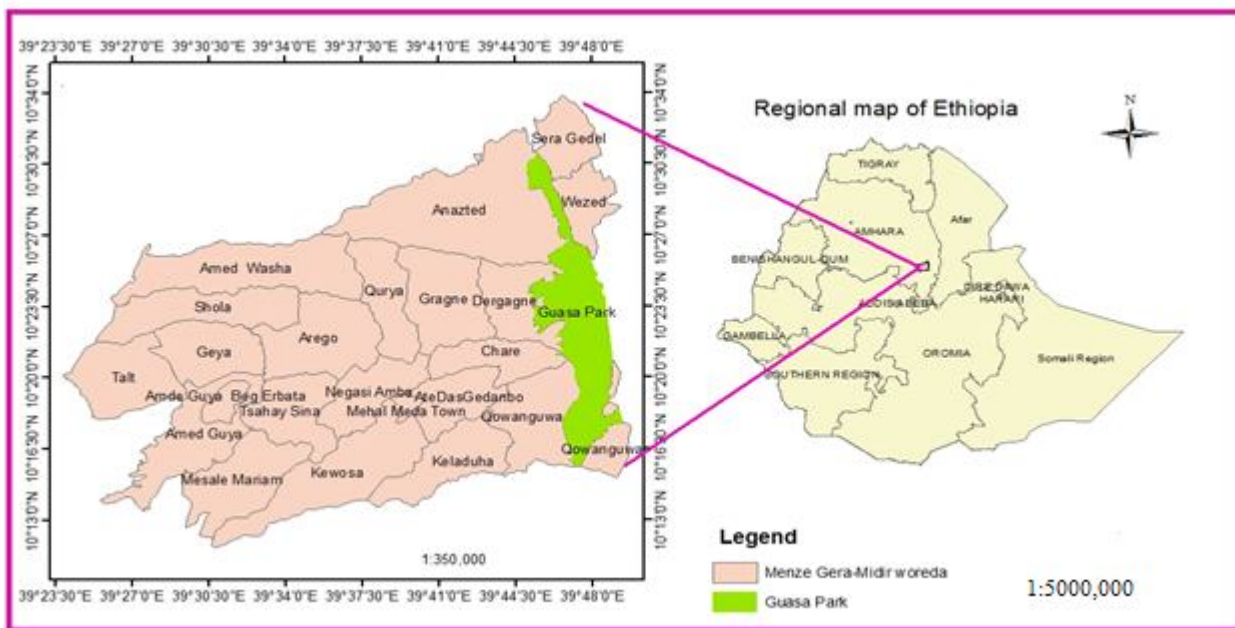


Figure 3.1 Location Map of study Area (Source; CSA, 2014)

### 3.2 Geology and Soil

Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area (MGCCA) is the result of tectonic movement during Oligo- Miocene. At present, the area consists of 15-26 million years old Miocene Thyolitites and basalts and 20-26 million years old Oligo-Miocene Tarmaber basalts and Phonolites. The central highland consists of black-clay and reddish brown heavy loam soil. Guassa area is characterized by

deep and humic soil though the higher ground has shallow and highly mineralized soil (Zelalem, 2000; Hailu, 2010).

### **3.3 Climate**

The climate of MGCCA varies with altitudes gradient and seasonal changes. At higher altitude, wet season is characterized by a combination of high rain fall, frequent hail storms and occasional snow. But during dry season, frosts are common. There are sharp temperature fluctuations between night and day time. Generally night times are colder than the day times (Zelalem, 2001; Woldemedihin, 2011; Hailu, 2010; Getachew, 2010).

### **3.4 Rain fall**

Rainfall data for Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Areas was not available. Instead the rainfall data recorded from the nearest metrological station at, Mehal-Meda, is used. The Equatorial Westerly's and the Indian Ocean air streams are the sources of rain for Guassa at different times of the year. Though showers of light rain can occur in any month of the year, but informal there are two main rainy seasons (Kiremt or Meher) between June to September and minor rainy season (Belg) in February, March and April. The annual rainfall at Guassa ranges from 1200-1600mm (Zelalem, 2001; Hailu, 2010).

### **3.5 Temperature**

Temperature data for Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Areas was not available. Instead the temperature data recorded from the nearest meteorological station, Mehal-Meda, is used. The area is characterized by mild day temperatures and cold night temperatures. During the dry season (December to January), the temperature would rise up to 21°C at day time, but it falls to -7°C at night. In the wet season, at the day time temperature is 12°C while a night temperature is 3°C (Zelalem, 2001; Hailu, 2010).

### **3.6 Humidity**

The area is characterized by high humidity in the wet season and low humidity in dry season. The annual humidity ranges from 55.18% - 80.90% (Hailu, 2010).

### **3.7 Flora**

The Afro mountain vegetation varies with altitude, and is a key attraction of the area. The high-altitude Afro alpine *Festuca* grassland or Guassa grass gives its name, but other vegetation habitats include *Euryops*-*alchemila* shrubland and *Erica* moorland. Common plants include *Carex monistachia*, *Carex fisheri*, *Hydrocotyle mannie* and *Kniphofia foliosa*. Moving upwards, *Euryops*-*alchemila* shrubland occurs over 3200m on flat, gentle slopes and well drained areas. The shrubby vegetation of *Euryops inifolius* ('charanfe') is extensively used as firewood by the communities living adjacent to the Menz- Guassa Community Conservation Area (MGCCA). Above 3200 meters, *Euryops*-*Festuca* grassland is usually interspersed with scattered 'Mima' mounds that can reach a height of 1.5m and a diameter of 5-10m. These mounds consist of highly organic and deep soil and are made by rodents, the most important of which is the common mole rat. As the altitude increases, the vegetation changes rather abruptly into *Helichrysum*-*festuca* grassland followed by *Erica* moorland. The torch lily or red hot poker (*Kniphofia foliosa*) covers entire hillsides with its flame colored flowers between June and November. The palm-like giant lobelia (*Lobelia rhynchopetalum*) is most spectacular and reaches up to 12m in height (Biniyam et al., 2011).

### **3.8 Fauna**

The Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area (MGCCA) harbors 23% of the endemic mammals of Ethiopia, including the Ethiopian Wolf (*Canis simensis*), gelada (*Theropithecus gelada*) and the Abyssinian hare (*Lepus starcki*). The Ethiopian wolf is legally protected, and with a total world population of 500 individuals it is the most endangered canid in the world. It is threatened predominantly by habitat loss and disease transmission from domestic dogs. With some 25 animals living in six packs, the MGCCA is a key population. The other large endemic mammal of notes is gelada. This is the only living member of the once widespread genus *Theropithecus* and is only found in the highlands of northern Ethiopia. This species lives in larger fission-fusion bands, where the spectacular males guard harems of females. Other potential mammal species to observe on the MGCCA plateau are the grey duiker, klipspringer, spotted hyena, leopard, common jackal and serval cat. To date, 114 bird species have been recorded in the MGCCA, 12% of the 861 species of birds recorded for Ethiopia. These include the endemic spot breasted plover (*Vannellus melaocephalus*) and the range - restricted and globally endangered Ankober serin (*Serinus*

ankoberensis). The MGCCA is a raptor-watcher's paradise as a result of the high density of rodents which are prey for raptors. Among the raptors, the bearded vulture, the golden eagle and the augur buzzard are the common species. The augur buzzard has beautiful black and white plumage and is more common in the MGCCA plateau than anywhere else in the country (Biniyam et al., 2011).

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHOD AND MATERIALS**

### **4.1 Study Site Selection**

The very area for this study was purposefully selected for two important reasons. The first one is the researcher is familiar with the study area. Second, the area on which this study focuses is faced with lack of sustainable resource management. These days, natural resource degradation is reaching its climax in the sub-Saharan African Countries including Ethiopia, due to unsustainable management practices. In response to this, different resource conservation strategies are developed, like Community Based Natural Resource Managements without and with the interventions of Governmental and Non-governmental agencies which to some extent differ from the indigenous Common Property Resource Management Systems. Different researches show that the indigenous Common Property Resource Management Systems show better successes than systems developed by the government. As studies put it, Menz-Guassa Community conservation Area is one of the evidences of success of these systems over different challenges over the last 400 (four hundred) years. Therefore, the researcher studied the challenges and opportunities of MGCCA so as to identify how resources can be best managed and to resolve the challenges and propagate the opportunities.

### **4.2 Rational**

Destruction of the vegetation and inappropriate land use practices has resulted in degradation of the fertile soil of Menz highlands including the Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area. Researches on Guassa Afro Alpine highlands of Ethiopia will mostly focused on its physical and biological aspects (Ashenafi et al., 2012; Getachew, 2010; Hailu, 2010; Woldemedihn, 2011; Zelalem, 2001; Ashenafi, 2005) but not address the socio-cultural and economic issues that cause and exacerbate the problems through directly or indirectly. The researcher rational behind the proposed study was socio-cultural and economic issues that were affecting physical components of CPR are not addressed in the study area. So, to save these ecologically significant area researches should be done related to its challenges emanated from socio-cultural and economic drawbacks for sustainable conservation and the researcher also concentrated on this un-researched area of the older MGCCA.

### **4.3 Data Source**

The researcher collected the required data for this study using both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from the target population through administering Focus Group Discussion (FGD), in-depth interview with Key Informants, Questionnaire, simple observation and field notes. While the secondary data was collected from both published and unpublished documents including Books, Journals, Essays, National Reports and Reports of the Menz Gera Midir Woreda Offices and FZS. Relevant websites were also used to collect the data.

### **4.4 Target Populations of the Study Area**

People involved in the Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area were the main target of this study. In addition, Governmental and Non-Governmental Agency's of Menz Gera-Midir Woreda were taken as the supporting actors, while non-beneficiary groups were included for a comparative evaluation or scenario.

### **4.5 Research Approach**

Qualitative research can entered into aspects of human life that could not adequately covered by quantitative research; aspects such as culture, expressions, beliefs, morality and imagination and have the ability to describe phenomena in real-world language. Also, Qualitative research methods have the additional advantage of gathering subjective data that can come directly from the source being investigated. Hence, in this study the researcher employed qualitative method of analysis.

### **4.6 Research Design**

This researcher has used descriptive research design for this study because it is more useful to explore and describe the local community understanding, values and practices of conservation. It is also most appropriate to describe the existing challenges and opportunities pertinent to the community benefit and sustainable usage of local resources.

### **4.7 Subject or Research Participant Selection**

In this research, a non-probability purposive sampling method was applied. First, *kebele* in the research site were classified into two categories based on their direct and indirect contact and level

of benefits. The *kebeles* that had indirect contact and benefits used the product of this reserved by purchasing from the direct beneficiaries. Both groups are included in this study to know how they explicitly perceived and had impact on the conservation of the resources. Accordingly, nine *kebele*/farmers association such as Kuledeha, Gedenbo, Quanguye, Chare, Gragn, Dargegn, Quria and Keyewula are direct beneficiaries that were selected for the target of the study. From these, Gedenbo, Quanguye, and Chare were selected purposively for this study based on their level of direct beneficiaries' and accessibility for transport. For validating the perception of indirect beneficiaries on the benefits of other *kebele* communities, Negasiamab *kebele* was selected. The actual respondents of the study were selected from the identified *kebeles* based on purposive reasoning sampling method. Since the study was depended on a specific targeted population who was beneficiary of the MGCCA and experienced with the management systems of the area; this method was believed appropriate to meet the objectives of this study.

#### **4.8 Data collection Instruments**

The researcher used different data collection instruments to accomplish this paper.

##### **4.8.1 In-depth interview with Key Informants**

To overcome this research in-depth interview with selected key informants was very significance and believed to increase the quality and reliability of the data. Hence, the interviews were conducted with ten (10) key informants; one from the *Woreda* Administration Office, four from the *Woreda* Agricultural Office, one from the *Woreda* Culture and Tourism Office, one from the *Woreda* Environmental Protection Authority, one from the *Woreda* Land Administration Office, one from the current Gauss Community Council and one from the *Woreda* Non-Governmental Organization/ Frankfurt Zoological Societies. The data regarding to the participation and role of governmental and non- governmental sectors, current status of MGCCA and challenges and opportunities of MGCCA were collected through this method.

##### **4.8.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

This method of data collection was also applied as the second very important source of data next to in-depth interview with key informants for this study FGDs were conducted with three separated groups consisting of 6 individuals in each group. The first two groups were from the beneficiary

farmers group while the other one was from the non-beneficiary farmers group. This was done to know differences in attitudes and perceptions of the two groups i.e. beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries as well as to make clear the question what the non-beneficiaries raise.

All the discussions involved both sexes but most of the participants (90%) were male. It may conform the limited participation of women in activities performed out of the house. The focus group discussion (FGD) that was conducted with the beneficiary groups included the Guassa Community Councils to make the discussions meaningful, and they provided important information since they know and understood more about the research area. Through this method data related to attitudes and awareness of beneficiary groups and non-beneficiary groups about natural resource management were collected.

#### ***4.8.3 Observation and Field Notes***

The researcher also recorded information through simple observations by seeing the characteristics, hearing the perceptions and understanding the attitudes of the target population without interference. Also, the researcher used primary field notes that were collected during the observation of the study area.

#### ***4.8.4 Questionnaire***

For this research questionnaire was not the major means of data collection, but it serve as strengthening the data collected through qualitative methods (in depth interview and FGD's) and cross checking whether the data gathered were representative of the whole community or not. This method also used to evaluate the level of understanding between local communities, community councils and governmental and non-governmental officers about sustainable natural resource management and CBNRM with the interference of governmental bodies.

Based on this aim 82 respondents were participated in filling questionnaire. From which 62 were from direct beneficiary groups and 20 of them were from non-beneficiary/indirect beneficiary groups.

The data collected through this method are analyzed using qualitative means. Through this the researcher collected data related to general understanding and consciousness of the local

communities about science of natural resource managements and its practices and communities' attitude towards MGCCA with their threats.

#### **4.9 Data Quality Assurance**

Both qualitative and survey questions were pretested to ascertain their validity before the final administration was conducted. Necessary adjustment was made to improve the questions after pre-testing. For example before the pretest the researcher added the Ethiopia Orthodox Tewahido church administrators as a key informant by considering their administration role on MGCCA. But after knowing that currently the Church have not that much interference the researcher excluded the Church administrators from list of key informants. Also before the pilot test the researcher used different names for the study area but after the pilot test only the current accredited name called "Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area" was used.

The researcher has planned to make in-depth interview with one "Qere"/ "Abaa Qero", but now as the park is administered through the councils of all beneficiary kebeles and the traditional system is not in force, hence the researcher picked up one individual who knew the details of the Qere system and the current administration.

Regarding to questionnaire, it was translated in to the local language of the community, Amharic. The actual administering of the questionnaire was done by 4 selected enumerators amongst the group of grade 12 complete candidates from local community and working in the Menz-Gera Midir *Woreda* Offices under the overall supervision of the researcher.

There enumerators were given orientation by the researcher before the launch of the survey in order to familiarize them with the questionnaires and the method of extracting as far as possible, correct information's, since the survey was collected from limited respondents purposively.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

As has been discussed in the objective part of this study, the main objective of the study is to assess the challenges and opportunities of Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area (MGCCA) in Menz Gera Midr *Woreda* of Amhara National Regional state, Ethiopia. In this chapter an attempt has been made to offer detailed presentations and discussions of the data collected through in-depth interview, focus group discussion, observation and documents and questionnaire. In this chapter, the two main objectives have been dealt in detail, namely, identifying the challenges and opportunities of MGCCA. This analysis also discuss with the current status of MGCCA.

### **5.1 Background of Respondents**

#### ***5.1.1 Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of Sampled Respondents***

The total number of the questionnaire respondents participated in this study is 82. The respondents were selected from local communities purposively. The sample includes both beneficiary and non beneficiary groups of MGCCA. Twenty (20) of the respondents were from non-beneficiary groups and the remaining (62) from the beneficiary groups. Unfortunately, though there is redundancy and with some unanswered questions all questionnaires were filled in and returned since, the questionnaire was filled in the presence of the researcher. Interview was conducted among respondents from government offices, NGOs and local community members and Councils.

Table 5.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of sampled respondents

No.	Characteristics	Respondents	
		count	Percentage (%)
1	Age(in year)		
	Below 16	-	-
	From 16-25	5	6
	From 26-35	18	22
	From 36-45	46	56
	above 45	13	16
	Total	82	100
2	Marital Status		
	Married	82	100
	Total	82	100
3	Religion		
	Orthodox	82	100
	Total	82	100
4	Educational Level		
	Read and write	8	10
	Primary level first cycle (1-4)	41	50
	Primary level second cycle (5-8)	25	30
	Secondary level first cycle (9-10)	8	10
	Total	82	100
5	Family size		
	1- 5	57	70
	5-10	25	30
	Total	82	100

Source: (Survey, 2014)

Based on the data gathered through survey from purposively selected respondents or members of community councils; the people living around Guassa Conservation Area belong to Amhara Ethnic Group of Ethiopia and followers of Coptic Orthodox Christianity. Based on the above table almost 72% of the respondents were aged above 36 years old and this may show that the communities invites individuals who lived longer time in the area and well know about their areas. Available trainings related to natural resource management also given for those groups exclusively with a consensus that they will transfer to the remaining community members. But it is not practicable and this condition also makes big difference in understanding and applying scientific natural resource management. Regarding to the age, the council excludes youths who will become the receiver of the

area and they may damage it due to pull and push factors with lack of knowledge and awareness about sustainable natural resource management. Based on the current information youths who lived with their parents without alternative means of income were cut and sold the Guassa grass and making charcoal to secure their livelihood. This will also put in question the sustainability of the area, because the future adults and elders were the current youths.

All of the respondents were married. With regard to educational background of respondents 80% of them were attend primary cycle education and there were no any illiterate person, since most of them were passed through Coptic Orthodox Church traditional education. Even if all of the respondents were can read and write, we can't dare to say that, they are educated and they can understand every scientific aspect easily. This lack of enough knowledge and skill is one of the very challenges of the area.

Family size of 70% of the respondents was 1-5 and the remaining 30% were 5-10. This indicates that the issue of family planning seems internalized and the communities became decrease their family size. However, based on the data collected through FGD and interviewee with key informants the general population growth rate becomes increased and this may exacerbate challenges on MGCCA, since the economic activity of the area is mixed farming they highly depended on natural resource.

Table 5.2 Economic Background of Sampled Respondents

No		Respondents	
		count	Percentage (%)
1	Occupation		
	Farmer	82	100
	Total	82	100
2	Types of economic activity		
	Mixed-farming	82	100
	Total	82	100
3	Types of crops		
	Stalks, Pulses and Cereals	82	100
	Total	82	100
4	Number of cattle, Sheep and goats		
	Below 10	9	11
	10-20	53	65
	20-30	-	-
	30-40	10	12
	above 40	10	12
	Total	82	100

Source: (Survey, 2014)

Based on the collected data, from the total population of Menz-Gera Midr *Woreda* (105, 218) about 50% or more than 50,000 peoples lived in the 9 nearby kebeles are beneficiaries of MGCCA directly. More than 93% of the people are rural dwelling that entirely depend on natural resources. Based on Table 5.2 100% of the economic activities of the respondents is mixed farming, which is also the predominantly economic activities of the study area. Barely, beans, wheat, lentils, pea and linseed are predominantly cultivated. Livestock husbandry is the key element of the economy of the area. This is because of the unreliability of crop production due to the unpredictability of rain in the area. The communities also heard sheep for two purposes first sheep is serve as a source of income with soled and meat; secondly the wool of the sheep is used for weaving traditional blanket (*Zitet* or *Bana*) for protection against severe cold.

Previously the community was known by keeping large amount of Livestock but now the training changing their attitude and the farmers were concerned on the quality of Livestock's than their

number. The result of respondent shows that above 51% of them kept 10-20 Livestock and only 24% of them kept above 20.

Table 5.3 Animal feed sources of respondents

No		Respondents	
		count	Percentage
1	Source of animals feed	82	100
	Total	82	100
2	Size of grazing land in hectare		
	below 1	40	49
	1-5	42	51
	Total	82	100
3	Is the existing source of animals feed enough?		
	Yes	57	70
	No	25	30
	Total	82	100
4	If no, how to address the problem		
	Buying grass and fodder	43	52
	Using communal lands	18	22
	Wise use of hay	12	15
	Reducing number of cattle	9	11
	Total	82	100

Source: (Survey, 2014)

Table 5.3 shows that the sources of animal feed in the study area and mechanisms applying by the locals during time of shortage. Based on the collected data hay, crop residue, straw and privet and common grazing lands were the main sources of animal feeds. Over 50% of the respondents have a grazing land of 1 to 2 hectare and the remaining hold below 1 hectare of land.

For the question whether the existing sources of animal fodders were enough or not, 70% of the respondents answer that is enough and the remaining 30% were said not. Currently the shift of the community from number of livestock's to quality helps them to escape from shortage of fodder. The status of animal fodder also directly linked to the weather condition of the area that may or not good season of crop production, since their main source of animal fodder were crop residues and straw. Regarding the fodder shortage alleviation mechanisms, almost all of the respondents mentioned buying from available areas as the only means in addition to using communal grazing

lands. But the data generated from interview and Focus Group Discussion shows that the local communities were touching prohibited areas like Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area and even they ask to use publically when they faced shortage of animal feed.

### 5.1.2 Characteristics of Interviewed respondents

The second most important data gathering instrument is interview with different respondents drawn from different governmental and non -governmental offices.

Table 5.4 Characteristics of interviewed respondents

<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>Categories of interviewees</b>	<b>Number of interviewed individuals= 10</b>
Respondents from the <i>Woreda</i> government offices	Menz-Gera Midir <i>Woreda</i> Land Administration Office	<b>1</b>
	Menz-Gera Midir <i>Woreda</i> Culture and Tourism Office	<b>1</b>
	Menz-Gera Midir <i>Woreda</i> Agricultural Office	<b>4</b>
	Menz-Gera Midir <i>Woreda</i> Environmental Protection Authority	<b>1</b>
	Menz-Gera Midir <i>Woreda</i> Administration Office	<b>1</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>
Respondent from local community	Menz- Guassa community Council	<b>1</b>
Respondents from NGO	Frankfurt Zoological Society	<b>1</b>

Source: (Survey, 2014)

As Office of Agriculture does have a direct relation to the natural resource conservation effort in line with agricultural lead industries, the respondents with regard to interview account for 40%.

Focus group discussions was conducted with both beneficiary and non-beneficiary farmers group in Mehal Meda, the capital of Menz-Gera Midir *Woreda* , during top ten farmers training as matter of coincidence. The researcher has planned to conduct the discussion on the nearby kebeles of MGCCA, but unfortunately they came to Mehal Meda for training. The discussion took 40 minutes for 6 members of the three groups.

## 5.2 Historical Background of Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area

The historical background of MGCCA is described based on the data gathered through in-depth interview with key informants and FGDs. Accordingly, MGCCA, the sole Afro-Alpine in Ethiopia and in Sub-Saharan Africa countries by conserving with the local communities solely without the interference of any agency is being the source of water for neighboring areas. The area is surrounded by Ephrata and Gidim, Antsokiya, Gishe, Gera Midir, Lalo Midir and Mama Midir at every corner. Different studies show that it is the only Community Conserved Park in Ethiopia as well as in the Eastern Africa (Ashenafi et al., 2001; Hailu, 2010). According to the legend articulated by the royal families which also seems true since the time is fit, the founder of the MGCCA were sons of Negassi, Asebo and Gera who came from Gonder since Gonderian were civilized in the late 17<sup>th</sup> C. and conquered other areas. After they reached to the place they wanted they found a Church called Negasi Amba Kidane Mihiret and developed areas around MGCCA.

After some times the two brothers was agreed to divide the area in to two parts. At that time, they left Guassa and other two places (Amerguya and Gadillo) as a communal land. Relating to its historical background the areas that were not occupied, developed and managed by the two brothers couldn't benefit from MGCCA. Some respondents described that if a person comes from other area and tries to use the resource, he will be beaten seriously and chased away.

The two brothers also evolved their own traditional administration system called *Qero* and *Afero*. *Qero* refers to men specially who are physically strong and have a militia experience and *Afero* refers to women and children who are considered as weak. The *Afero* serves to protect the area from cattle grazing and referring them to the *Qero* and *Qero* plays the main role in protecting the area forcefully and taking measures. *Qere* derived from the local word *Qre/ቅሬ*, a traditional institution which serves the community during the time of death and funeral ceremony. The head of the *Qere* is called *Aba Qere* and those who are assigned to lead the system. *Aba-Qere* was selected from the royal family, because they had time to visit the place since they were not busy by caring production and other activities as the remaining community member. According to key informants, the last two *Qere's* of the study area based on the indigenous administration system were Ato Sheresher Wolde from Gera and Ato Demeke from Asebo.

The functional members of the *Qero* system were land holding groups in the *Atsme Irst* land tenure system. From members of the nearby communities of MGCCA, individuals or groups that can count and reached their lineage with Gera and Asebo were the beneficiary of this area. Based on the rule of *Qere*, MGCCA is open every 3 or 4 years based on its growth from mid of April to mid of July. During the time of drought and severe shortage of grass, it is open before 3 years and it is closed when the rainy and production season sets in.

Of all communal lands the law is strict on MGCCA since it is the main source of livelihood for the locals starting from animal fodder to building of a house. Especially in the previous eras there was no corrugated sheet of iron and Guassa grass was the only choice by the locals. Still now the communities have used Guassa grass for this purpose largely. A traditional rain proof material (*Gessa*) is also made from Guassa grass. Previous studies (Biniyam et al., 2011) show that about 98% of the households in the district thatched using Guassa grass harvested at the MGCCA. It is being identified as the main water source for its surrounding area like Ephrata, Gidim and Afar with 26 large and medium sized rivers. Two major rivers of Ethiopia, Abbay (Blue Nile), and Awash also gain part of their water resource from MGCCA.

Especially during hard time of drought, the local people encroaches the area and keep their cattle there for some time. Thus, MGCCA is an important site for livestock grazing by the locals. Gera and Asebo had the founder of MGCCA had their own rule called “Gera catches head when Asebo seizes leg” in line with the *Qere* administration system. The rule advocates the unity, integration and harmony to conserve the area. Clearly attempts when Gera fights at the front, Asebo should involve consolidating effort during the prevention of enemies stand on the ownership right of MGCCA. If one of the two doesn’t participate at the time, they shall be fined based on their agreement. Almost all of the fines were unattainable even unthinkable since they are out of nature. The one who break these laws were supposed to pay: *100 daula of gomen zer* (100 sacks/Quintal of cabbage seeds); *IrtibYearas nebr lemed* (a wet new born tigress skin); *Andi kolet barya* (a single testicled slave); *Yebirr Zenezena* (a long silver pestle); and *Yekechemo mukeha* (a mortar made out of a shrub which never grows a stem). None of these items were available in Menz and some of them were not available anywhere at all (Ashenafi Zelalem, 2005). Because of this members of the

community were not violate those rules. If they were not ruled for this law they will evacuate Menz and loss the right of *Atisme Irist*.

Until the end of Hileselasie I regime the area was administrated by the indigenous restricted rule. In connection with this, if cattle's were found on the prohibited area during the closed season they were slaughtered and ate by the local communities together; if the animals were horse, mule or donkey they will sold and the community members paid tax for MGCCA. Besides, if a person found covering his home with fresh Guassa grass at the time of prohibition, his home would be burned out and he also hammered by the community. The key informant from the Culture and Tourism Office explains that rule was very binding by mentioning one true history. A case in point, once a person had a cow with a timely gestation period. That cow was found in the MGCCA during the time of prohibition and the community council decides that the cow should be slaughtered and the owner pleaded them leave the cow alone and he could give them another animal in place. However, they rejected his request and slaughtered that in month cow. This clearly shows that how the rule was quite strict. Furthermore, if a member of the community didn't participate in the time of any sort of act against MGCCA, he/she will be beaten seriously, and his/her crop would be taken to be roasted and eaten by all the community members, and the remaining is spread all over the nearby areas. Also, if a person zipped the mouth of an ox bought from market with Guassa grass, he would be punished assuming that he provided the ox with Guassa grass. So, they should tie it with a trap, (leather trap of course).

### **5.3 The Current Status of Menz Guassa Community Conservation Area**

#### ***5.3.1 The Physical Status of MGCCA***

According to key informants and respondents of the questionnaire (MGCCA) is found in a medium condition regarding its current status. 50% of the respondents say that it is at a good condition, since now there is an intervention of governmental and nongovernmental bodies even if there are different problems related to security matters. The government has also show its commitment by accrediting the formal administration rule for MGCCA that was drafted by FZS. While 40% responds that it is severely damaged when compared with its status in the previous time by justifying the areal coverage is shrieked from 111Sq.Km to 78Sq.Km.

Illegal grazing and Guassa cutting especially from the side of Asebo were very severe and damaged the area due to misunderstanding. But at the side of Gera, it is at a good condition and all the local people are determined to protect it for the sustainable use of Guassa grass. It is continued being as a source of water for surrounding areas including the Renaissance Dam of Ethiopia. The weakness of the formal law of the area also rose as another cause of damage. Following the damage of the Guassa grass and different trees, the endemic animals are highly endangered, though the tourism activities are intensified. The Guassa grass is damaged and easily uprooted because of untimely illegal acts. Some respondents also explained that the MGCCA is being highly damaged due to the high rate of population growth.

### ***5.3.2 The current Administration System of MGCCA***

At present the communities living in nine Farmers Associations (*kebeles*) adjacent to the MGCCA have both user and managers of MGCCA with the coordination of governmental offices. A MGCCA conservation Committee at *Kebele* level and a community conservation council at *Woreda* level coordinate the conservation of the whole area with representatives drawn from all user communities alongside some government representatives. Currently it is administered based on the accredited law.

Regarding to the beneficiaries of MGCCA area, the approach is changed though not it changes from the previous one even if it is not practicable. Previously the beneficiaries were a specific community group who lived in 9 *kebeles* (020, 05, 04, 02, 03, 016,017, 014 and 015) around the conservation area and has a lineage relation with the founder or developer of the MGCCA. The community who lived in those *kebeles* was solely use the MGCCA as they were entitled to have *rist* (land ownership).

Some of sampled respondents and FGD participants were explained that at present since there is the intervention of government and natural resources become identified as communal all people who live in and near Menz Gera Midr *Woreda* becomes beneficiary of MGCCA as part of the local community and the residence of Menz Gera Midr *Woreda*. But it seems controversial with the current accredited formal law of MGCCA. Under Article 10 of the proclamation that “**those kebeles**

**participating in the development and protection activities pertaining to the conservation area and which might have so far benefitted there from shall have the same entitlement there to as per this regulation”.** This seems contradictory to what the beneficiaries, key informants and non-beneficiaries responded.

### *5.3.3 Benefits of MGCCA*

Most of the respondents (80%) explained that they were benefited from the MGCCA in one or another way. The benefit that the local peoples gain from the MGCCA were; Guassa grass for thatching and building and covering traditional house, livestock feed, for quachera (the wrapped grass that will use for binding traditional houses), for selling and know benefiting from eco-tourism activities like renting mule and preparing food for tourists. While the remaining 20% were elucidated that they are not benefiting from MGCCA for different reasons like, low accessibility, the restriction especially starting from the coming EPDRF in to power, since the law doesn't allow the people to graze animals but just cutting the grass as much as they can. Some people also claim that during the previous time the society who lived in the Gera Midir *Woreda* were benefiting by grazing and cutting but now since it is prohibited for tourism investment they can't enter and use it as usual.

The local communities explain their problem by comparing the cost of a single corrugated iron of sheet with Guassa grass that would cover their entire house. They also rise financial problems to bought corrugated iron of sheet and mentioned Guassa grass as an exceptional choice. Base on the collected data still they want to use as they did previously. But now the reality is different and they can't use it because of the restriction imposed by the government. This may want consideration from concerned bodies to ensure sustainable resource management without breaking the right of the locals, who were the owner of the area. They had also used it as a means of income generating selling it for remote areas or indirect beneficiaries. Because of all this importance's, the local community's said that “Guassa is our cloth, food and shelter, simply our entire livelihood.

## 5.4 Opportunities for Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area

Table 5.5 Opportunities for MGCCA gathered from research participants

No.	Responses	Respondents	
		Count	Percentage (%) from research participants
1	The concern of the world for Afro-alpine areas	6	10
2	The consciousness of the local community to conserve natural resources	35	56
3	The attitudes and values of the local communities about MGCCA	32	52
4	The role of current Guassa Community Council	6	10
5	The participation of governmental parties at different level	30	48
6	The Interest of International Organization to save natural resources	19	31
7	The accreditation of MGGCA formal law	31	50
8	The emerging of tourism industry	24	39
9	Total	183	100

NB: Percentage of responses are not added because of multiple responses mentioned by respondents and participants

The three leading opportunity for MGCCA mentioned by the sampled respondents were the consciousness of the local community to conserve natural resources (56%), the Attitudes and values of the local Communities about MGCCA (52%) and the accreditation of MGGCA formal law (50%) respectively. The participation of governmental parties at different level mentioned by (48%) of the sampled respondents and expansion of tourism industry also mentioned by (39%) of sampled respondents. The Interest of International Organizations to save natural resources like FZS, the Concern of the world for Afro alpine Areas and the role of current Menz-Guassa Community Council also mentioned by 31%, 10% and 10% respectively of the sampled respondents as an opportunity for MGCCA.

#### ***5.4.1 The Consciousness of the Local Community to conserve Natural Resources and Their Attitude and Value towards MGCCA***

The data gathered through survey, FGD and In-depth interview shows that the first and main opportunity for MGCCA is the consciousness of the local communities about the benefit of natural resource management and their understanding about the result of their conservation practice. But their traditional conservation practice was not supported by scientific methods and lacks sustainability. The data shows that the entire participant of this study believed that protecting MGCCA is very crucial for maintaining the environmental condition of the area including annual rainfall and sustaining livestock fodder, fuel wood and Guassa grass which serves as building a house and generating income.

The local peoples conserve the area consciously even before they got the fragmented and discontinuous insufficient short term to medium trainings (70%) since 2008 about the science of natural resource management by Agricultural Office of the *Woreda* and Frankfurt Zoological Society (NGO carry out different activities on MGCCA). They explained their understanding like “when the natural resources like tree and grass become damaged, the environment would becomes barren and experiences concurrent shortage of rainfall and drought. The endemic wild animals like Ethiopian wolf (red fox) will also disappear when they lose their shelter.” They also aware of about natural resources maintain the existence of fertile soil, water and rain. Especially now the local people become very conscious about natural resource degradation and are taking actions like recovering and making degraded areas green in line with the green policy of the government to tackle starvation and desertification.

They also know that human beings will not survive if natural resources are highly degraded. They also described that the degradation of natural resources will expose the area to desertification, starvation as well as migration and affect the development of the country vastly. So, to prevent degradation the society were accepted conserving natural resources and they insist the government must interfere in such valuable activities. Participants ask the concerned bodies to give emphasis about the security of MGCCA to improve smokeless industry, tourism. They also suggested some mechanisms how to apply sustainable natural resource management based on their level of

understanding such as social organization like ‘*Idir*’ should put some measures to punish those who violate the community rule and formal administration law of MGCCA. They also mention structures like 1 to 5 as best ways of natural resource management system with describing the local community should agree upon each and every step and the role of the government should be monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the society to ensure their benefit.

Regarding to implementing the experience gained through training in to practice, the community in collaboration with the government is securing the safety of MGCCA by taking appropriate measures against abusers. They also harvest water that comes out of mountainous areas for irrigation and protect soil erosion and due emphasis to awareness rising about the protection of basins. International organizations like UN awarded the area following its exemplary conservation practice and it also received from the hand of ex-President of FDRE, Ato Girma W/Georges the coordinator of Green Development in Ethiopia.

Regarding to the value of local communities towards MGCCA, they described that MGCCA is their own resource and the park should be protected from illegal actions like grazing and cutting. The local peoples also accepted their separation from the park area. They also suggest for those who abuse MGCCA to change their attitude and to be positive and responsible about the future generation since MGCCA is their livelihood. The locals explain that the issue of MGCCA is a matter of life and death. Based on their understanding and indigenous rule MGCCA is conserved for so many reasons. Some of them elucidate by the research participants were;

- They take MGCCA as their pride and home to many endemic and other wild animals.
- They belied that MGCCA maintains the surrounding environment in addition to being as a means of income generating from direct sell and eco-tourism, as a result it would support the government and the local people to run activities.
- It entertains the community and serves as a source of Guassa grass for thatching and building of a house and source of animal fodder. The local communities develop conservation system for its benefit and now the government also helping them to promote efforts.

- The local communities describe their great value for MGCCA like this “It is our air that we breathe and our source of water and basin during drought. It also maintains annual rainfall”. That is the case all *kebeles* protect MGCCA in addition to scouts.
- They also compare the benefit of Guassa grass found in MGCCA with a corrugated sheet of iron, “today, a piece of corrugated sheet of iron is bought at least at a cost of 120 birr and we can’t buy it since we are poor. But with this amount we can buy enough Guassa grass and to finish the entire building of our house”.
- It is the drainage source of East Africa and also the main source of Abay/ Blue Nile on which the renaissance dam is built. So, we should protect it more than the previous time.

Generally their great value to MGCCA was clearly shown from their words and emotions and they are ready to strengthen their protection for MGCCA with a coordination of governmental and non-governmental organizations. Based on the data MGCCA doesn’t compromise any area that will serve for grazing land, farming land and settlement area as it comprises communal land.

#### ***5.4.2 The Involvement of Governmental and Non-Governmental Parties at different level and Tourism***

The *woreda* or district government involved in it since the downfall of the regime of Emperor Haile Silase I. The current government started its involvement on the conservation practice of MGCCA since 2008. The governmental bodies interfere through different administrative and technical systems taken as one of the major opportunities for Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area (MGCCA). As the governmental organizations work together with others at all levels entertaining efficient managerial system and provide trainings for the local community, the area has been kept well. This practice is also encouraging the traditional community conservation practices and creating awareness about the science of natural resource management in addition to the inherited indigenous traditional practices.

The Menz Gera Midir *Woreda* Administration Office, Land Administration Office, Agricultural Office, Culture and Tourism Office, Police, Militia and *kebeles* are governmental organizations which involve in different areas of the conservation of the MGCCA by taking their part. According to the key informant from the *Woreda* Agricultural Office in line with its main aims, improving the

product and productivity of the *woreda* farmers it works on forest conservation, basin development and tree planting to tackle water and soil degradation. In addition to this the office concentrated on recovering the degraded areas with grass and trees by coordinating the locals as quickly as possible since the land surrounding MGCCA is much degraded. All of those activities help to minimize the influence of the local communities and their cattle on MGCCA in finding water, fuel wood, animal fodder etc. Further the office encourages the community to plant animals feed near to their home or backyard ,minimizing the number of cattle, sheep and goats, by providing animal fodder for farmers with cheep coast and providing them with loan to cover their animals feed requirements by buying from available areas. Sometimes the loan is even not paid as its main target is encouraging farmers actively engage in reproducing their animal feed. Through this activity, the *Woreda* minimizes the grazing rate of degraded areas and the MGCCA. There is also natural cogitation resource campaign run by the *Woreda* Agricultural Office with the collaboration of other Offices annually and it hires formal MGCCA forest keepers and they are working effectively. It also and participate in awareness creation to the locals and by this creates sense of belongingness among the society to conserve the area.

The *Woreda* Administration in its part encourages and developing different income generating activities by giving training for the local communities regarding crop production, basin development and cattle rising. By this, the communities become changing their attitude towards number of livestock's and shift to quality. The data from the FGDs and key informants witnessed that, previously one farmer owned 75-150 sheep and goats and 5-10 cattle but the benefit was not satisfactory relating with shortage of fodder. Now the average maximum number of cattle, sheep and goats kept by the farmers were 5, 13 and 6 respectively. In securing livelihood of the nearby *Kebeles* to MGCCA (016, 017, 018 and 019) without compromising the conservation practice they were participated in bee keeping by the co-joint support of the *Woreda* Agricultural Office and Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS). The *Woreda* Administration plays a significant role by securing the ownership right of the local peoples. The *kebeles* in their turn participated by presenting the new formal law of MGCCA for the locals.

The *Woreda* Culture and Tourism Office in its turn undertaking activities from the side of tourism in line with its involvement in the conservation practice as a committee member. The Office works

in introducing the culture and cultural values of the MGCCA area or Menz. The Office also gives trainings for the locals to create alternative means of incomes relating to tourism activities like building and managing traditional houses, producing handicrafts in a modern way by inviting experts from abroad and promotes their products every time. Women’s and Youths of the *Woreda* can also call for gallery by producing traditional closes like “melawosha”, “Bana/Zitet”/ a blanket made from local sheep wool, “Bernos”/ long cloaks and “Gesa”/ the material used for protecting from rainfall) based on their skill they got. The tourism sector expected to create 26% of the *Woreda* job opportunity.

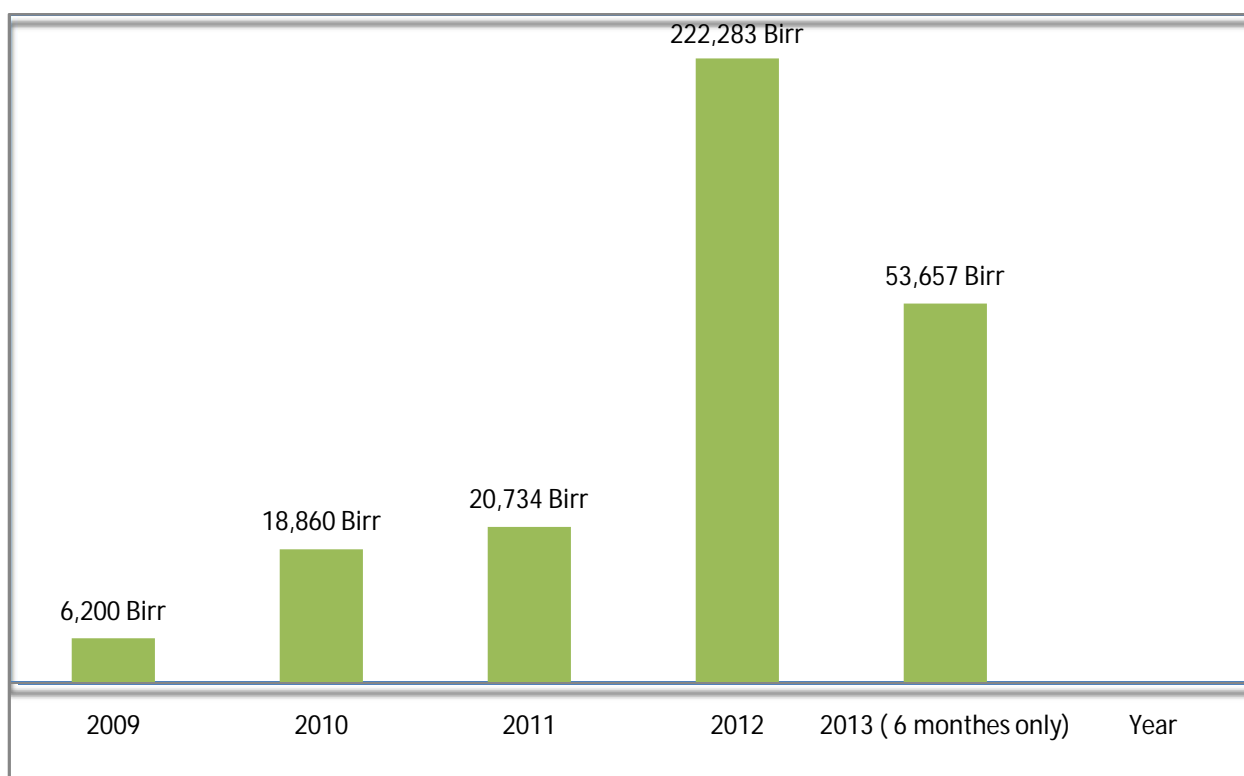


Figure 5.1 The Annual Income Generated from Tourism sector of MGCCA from 2009-2013 (Frankfurt Zoological Society Office Report, 2014)

Starting from its beginning since 2009 the money generated from the tourism sector shows increasing relating to its familiarity and facilities of the park which includes reception, securities, restaurant and traditional means of transportation (pack animals). The total Amount of the money that was generated from the tourism sector of MGCCA from (2009) till (January 2013) is 321,734

Ethiopian Birr. According to the key informant from FZS the area generates 130,000 birr from scientists who are conducting study at various areas only every year.

There is also an association called Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area Artisans Association which is found in 2011 by 8 men and 2 women with an aim to create economic stability and to increase the participation of the Guassa-Menz Community in the ongoing tourism development and conservation of the Guassa Community Conservation Area. Currently, the association produces various types and sizes of wool curtains, rugs, mats and table coasters made from wool. They also have women members and artisans who produce basketry, pottery and jewelry from precious stones.

The Culture and Tourism Office further facilitates experience sharing with similar areas like Gonder, Ras Dejen and Bale Mountain National Parks and through this the community councils gain experience and shared for the remaining localities. Over all this Office founds the Guassa Conserved Area National Park Office in combined with the *Woreda* Environmental Protection Authority and the established Office trying to create awareness to the nearby *kebele* communities to protect the park. The *Woreda* Militia office takes the major security activities by presenting the illegal peoples before the law and creating awareness among the community about the wrong doing and giving training at all level.

While Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) is the main and sole NGO which has contributed a lot for MGCCA. Its primary aim was saving afro-alpine areas and developing mountainous degraded places and as MGCCA is one of the world afro-alpine areas found in the most degraded areas of Menz the society going to Menz based on its primary aim, but when they reached to the area they change their mind and start a program that encourages the indigenous conservation practice. The society started its activity since 2009 by aiming to save the Iconic Ethiopian Wolf since the topography of this area and its natural resources are believed to be highly important. Its contribution reached to preparing the draft of accredited formal rule and laws by which MGCCA now administered. The society also supports the volunteer securities/guards by providing them with shoes, cloth and torch light and facilitates international experience sharing with similar areas. Based

on the experience they got from Namibia, volunteer securities/guards monitor the progress of water and Guassa grass of MGCCA.

The society was an assessment and identified that there is a severe shortage of firewood in the area and instead the local communities use the shrubs and woods of MGCCA. To overcome this problem the society has founded nurseries and distributes seedlings to the community to plant in place of using shrubs and woods. In addition to this FZS expand the planting of animal fodder to solve the shortage along with the *Woreda* Agricultural Office. Now, the Society transferred the area for the local communities on December 2014 and shifted its program to beekeeping to develop environmentally sound economic activities for the farmers. These uncounted roles of FZS sustain MGCCA when the indigenous conservation practices become weak and it becomes a role model for other NGOs.

#### ***5.4.3. The Accreditation of MGCCA Formal law***

The new formal law also accredited by the regional state government to strengthen the conservation activities and being one of a great opportunity for MGCCA sustainability. However, the interference of the government on policy development and taking legal measures against elucidate the traditional measures. The Amhara state Government accredits MGCCA as a Community Conservation Area Park (CCAP) and the state council approved its rules and laws that were primarily prepared by Frankfurt Zoological Society The law endorsed following the proclamation number 97/2012 E.C and announced by the FDRE Negarit Gazette for conserving the area formally.

Based on the accredited rule the prohibited activities related to the MGCCA either by the concerned bodies or participants mentioned on article 9 of the accredited bylaw were: creating nuisance or using sound instruments in excess of limit in the conservation area; hunting for , frightening or driving away wild animals; cutting of wood, making charcoal or undertaking agricultural activities within the MGCCA; cutting, gathering or transporting the Guassa during the season where the area is closed for harvesting same; taking away eggs, hatchlings or cubs of wild animals; picking up, taking away, damaging or running natural or manmade items at the conservation area; letting domestic animals in the area for grazing during closed seasons; moving about in the conservation area accompanied by dogs; carrying out mining exploration or digging activities; making fire, with

the exception of those places specifically reserved for the purpose of tourist lodges; moving about with the possession of poisonous substances; arbitrary or careless disposal of man-made materials used by visitors for packing food and similar purposes; establishing dwelling houses, planting grinding mills or construction of other similar institutions in the conservation area; riding motor vehicles beyond the legally prescribed speed limit or doing so before 6:00 am in the morning and after 6:00 pm in the evening and being apprehended with a trap or setting same in order to attack wild animals.

In addition to this, the time of opening season becomes strict. In the previous times during some unexpected cases like drought the opening season was reduced from the formal time to meet the locals need but now it is not, as evidence got from the *Woreda* Administration Office, in 2012/3 there were a severe drought and shortage of animal feed in the area but MGCCA is still not opened according to the proclamation issued by the state.

### 5.5 Challenges Affecting the MGCCA

Table 5.6 Challenges of MGCCA gathered from research participants

No.	Responses	Respondents	
		Count	Percentage (%) from research participants
1	Lack of Awareness and threat of the local community	12	19
2	Anti-plant Weed, les-fairness of the bylaw and weakness of current community councils	25	40
3	Drought and poverty	35	56
4	Land administration and policy implementation issues	12	19
5	Shortage of infrastructural services and limitations of Technology	12	19
6	Population increment and shortage of farm land	60	97
7	Total	180	100

**NB:** Percentage of Responses are not added because respondents was mentioned multiple responses

The above table (5.6) shows that the major (97%) of the challenge influencing MGCCA were high rate population increment and shortage of farm land. The second severe challenges (56%) were drought and poverty. Following this (40%) the research participants mentioned the anti-plant Weed (cherenfe/nechilo), les-fairness of the bylaw and weakness of current community councils a third respondent the third bottlenecked challenges for MGCCA. Other challenges also mentioned by the research participants; lack of Awareness and threat of the local community (19%), land administration and policy implementation issues(19%), Shortage of infrastructural services and limitations of Technology (19%).

#### ***5.5.1 Lack of Awareness and Threat of The local Community***

Even if the local communities explain that MGCCA is their means of livelihood they used it illegally intentionally and unintentionally. Especially the current law makes the local communities more flexible and invite them to use their right unlawfully. The research participants explained that “the problem rises from the local people since the unlawful individual’s had don’t come from a different area.” They further described that the difference of communities’ wrong action on MGCCA during the previous time and now is very high; for example at the Derg Regime the communities was oppressed and forced to dare the traditional rule in the name of “land is communal” but now they use their right extensively. Since MGCCA is very wide, it is suitable to those who can use it illegally.

The fear the local community developed was about the interference of the government since they thought the government snatch the area from them in the name of land investment. Since, their life is interwoven with land and land related activities people of the Menz area give especial concern to land. Even they try to provide the document by which they paid tax during the previous regimes to alleviate their fear. Because of their fear sometimes they hadn’t actively participating in activities comes from the top or the governmental parties. One of the FGD participants explained the response of the local communities to governmental projects “if the community members do not believe in what they are going to do by the pushing of government they assume that the Derg regime resumes”. Generally both the abuser and the beneficiary were the local communities themselves since they have the power to save or damage it.

### ***5.5.2 The Existence of Anti-Plant weed (cherenfe), Weakness of the Current Community Councils and less-fairness of the bylaw***

There is a white weed called “cherenfe/nechilo” grows in recent years and affects the Guassa grass severely with unknown cause. The California University Scientists take it for research to know its root cause. The avoidance of indigenous rules and laws also exacerbates the challenge since the communities do not fear the current laws as they did in the previous time. The measurements were taken on both beneficiary and non-beneficiary illegal users are similar but its implementation is different from place to place and *kebele* to *kebele*. The illegal user of Guassa grass was fine with 500 birr to 600 birr after the grass was taken from them. If they are not willing to pay the fine, the measurement will increase and it may reach to 6 month prison. If the guilty persons are not present to the law the kebele administrators will negotiate with them and if the illegal user were very poor the fine is only taking the Guassa grass from him and gives advice but if he has another source of income he will fine from 50 birr to 600 birr based on the level of wrong doing.

These measurements are showing change from time to time and it can be said that it is successful but it will be best if the rule will be interpreted similarly with all *kebeles*. Creating awareness for the local community taken as the best method of conservation in addition to the fine. Still there is a gap in the security of Guassa, for example people produce charcoal with in the park, graze cattle and cut the Guassa for sale. The illegal users were highly influencing MGCCA by farming, cutting, killing wild animals, fire burning; collecting fuel wood and illegal grazing which leads the much degrade. Especially on the side of Ephrata and Gidm specifically around Ate Wuha the park affected by illegal farming due to the less fairness of the law.

The data generated from the research participants show that, the current Guassa Community Council (GCC) or Committee was not effectively accomplishing their duty because of weakness. They can't stop the act of thieves especially who cut the Guassa at night and this act compromise equality over benefits. In this case there had been conflicts among members of beneficiaries and this may raise serious problem. The council also has limitation on forwarding the awareness and capacity building what they acquire from different trainings.

Now the protection shows progress but still it doesn't get concern from the Councils of Menz-Guassa Committee. While the *kebele* administration is working at a better way by implementing the

skills that they have acquire from the *woreda* administration. Though the conservation practice is good but the Menz-Guassa Community Councils will expect to work more. It is also mandatory to organize a secular body that protects the area permanently. Otherwise, if the councils concern falls on one side of the park, the other part would be damaged.

### ***5.5.3 Drought and Poverty***

The main pushing factors that exacerbate the challenge of MGCCA were drought, lack and absence of rain fall, lack of animal feed, starvation, poverty and shortage of farm land. Local peoples use MGCCA as a source of pocket money, fuel wood and being as a means of livelihood. There is a severe shortage of animal fodder in the nearby areas especially during the drought season the problem becomes a bottlenecked. The ecological zone of the area also *Dega* and it is not that much comfortable for crop production and this affects MGCCA indirectly since their main source of fodder is the residue and straw of crops. The remaining *kebeles* found in the *Woiadega* ecological zones have better resources and when they got good harvest they also collect enough residues for their animals. But it doesn't mean that they were not faced with shortage of animal fodder.

Since 2000 E.C, Ethiopia has faced a severe drought and this area too. When the government bodies prohibit MGCCA from the community, they relied saying “**is a fox greater than our life and that of our cattle?**” The *woreda* administration tried to convince them telling that the grass is not enough for your cattle and you will fight each other, the cattle will be infected with a disease when they collect together and the cattle disease widespread. But they refused and took their cattle over MGCCA and damaged it within a week. After that they have not asked that type of question since they saw what happened and they understood that it is better to protect because it is their livelihood. Some people also took their cattle in MGCCA for searching water since it is the only water tower during the drought season. People who have not any alternative source of income were continuing to sell the prohibited Guassa grass by cutting illegally and even the Menz-Guassa Community Council can't control this practice though it is not sold at central market areas.

### ***5.5.4 Land administration Policy and Policy implementation issues***

This type of sensitive area will be damaged because of lack of commitment to apply good policies and rules practically and endemic animals also become distinct. The government officials influence

the area negatively by allowing building of school on the center of MGCCA in the FDRE regime. The understanding of the community is that the school is more important than the biodiversities. Previously there was a herding of sheep with in the park and that causes a severe damage for Guassa.

With regard to the influence of governmental policies that have highly affected the MGCCA and become very autocratic since it serves only for 9 *kebeles* near the Guassa and concerning only few patrols was the land administration system of Derg Regime. During the Derg regime, the protection of the area decreased in relation with the decree called “land to the tiller” and its communal nature. Even the government Officials was started the project of planting trees on MGCCA but was not leave that practice carelessly rather they prevent it by negotiating with the existing government.

#### ***5.5.5 Population Increment and shortage of farm land***

Due to population increment, there is shortage of land and the community wants to till the prohibited area MGCCA by pushing the demarcation clearly and lose its protection. In so doing, they seriously affect biodiversity. The reality shows that their benefit has decreased because of high rate of population growth and number of cattle.

The area was covered 111 square Km till coming of the Derg regime, but now it reduced to 78 squares Km due to the influence of nearby communities. Based on the research participants, especially the transition period was very dangerous for MGCCA since there were unlawful activities in line with the civil war. During the time of prohibition, the local peoples use illegally through stealing to secure personal interest. The local youths who get married with their family without their own land also use MGCCA as a source of income for everything by selling Guassa grass especially the very poor one and this activity this illegal action becomes uncontrolled problem still now. Guassa grass also serves as means of exchange of goodwill by the locals. This results from alternative means of livelihood.

Research participants explained that, due to this continuous disturbance of the nearby societies, the Endemic Wolves and Wolverers migrate to other areas which are covered with forests and being damaged by other carnivores animals like jackal. The interaction of the society with the park and

wild animals will also be the other cause of damage; because the Wolf is easily attacked by rabies the disease of dog and this will damage Wolf's genetic.

#### ***5.5.6 Shortages of Infrastructural Services and Limitations of Technology***

The other challenge of MGCCA is related to infrastructural problem like road, electricity and networking, which threat the local community from participating in different alternative activities to minimize impacts on MGCCA. This also affects the flow of large number of tourists. Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area can only be reached by road, either in private vehicles or by public buses which run daily from Addis Ababa to Mehal Meda town. If this is solved, tourists can reach easily to Guassa from different places and the annual income generated from this sector will also increased and will create job opportunities for those who have not land and work. Now a days, the park uses solar lights to be protected from human induced technologies but the area does have chance to develop geothermal wind power and natural spring water, but it couldn't be applicable due to lack of technology and infrastructures.

#### **5.6 The Situation, Question and Attitude of Non Beneficiary Groups**

The ecological zone of the non-beneficiary farmer groups includes *Dega, Woinadga and Qolla*. It has the chance to produce different things that can't in the beneficiary areas. For example, they can produce *teff*, corn, millet, onion, cabbage, carrot and beetroot in addition to what beneficiary areas can produce. They have also better animal feed sources when compared to the beneficiary groups and the key informant from the *Woreda* Agricultural Office also describe that, "the *woreda* can't respond the question of the non-beneficiary groups regarding MGCCA because they have better alternatives and resources than the beneficiary areas and they have also communal lands similar to MGCCA like Amed Guya and Gadillo".

The data gathered shows that their land size seems equal (ranges from 0.123—2 hectare) to the beneficiary groups rather than their mentioned alternatives. The economic activities are similar to the beneficiary groups, mixed farming. The average numbers of cattle 5, sheep 13, goats 6, horse 1 and mule 1. Regarding the mechanisms they use to solve the shortage of animal feed, they practice the direction of government through the *Woreda* Agricultural Office minimizing the number of cattle. The government bodies also take actions to enforce the direction by creating awareness that

land is the property of the state, saying that the existing land in this area becomes recovered by cover the grazing lands with tree and this did not allow the local farmers to raise large amount of cattle which are there sources of livelihood during drought season.

The main sources of fodder for their animals were grazing land, crop residue and fodder and 80% of the fodder are private and the remaining 20% is communal fodder sources. However, they didn't hide the reality that much of the communal land becomes the area of investment, for example Amed guya. Most of the farmers had balanced number of cattle and fodders, others who were faced shortage of fed solve their problem by buying from available areas similar to the beneficiary groups. As far as exclusion is concerned 20% of the community does not accept but the majority 80% accepted since they didn't participate in conservation in addition to their residence is very far from Guassa and have similar communal lands near to their area and endowed with better sources of animal fodder than the beneficiary groups. They prefer to use Guassa grass by buying from the beneficiary groups as usual. They highly suppose that Guassa should be kept sustainably since it maintains the surrounding environment and an exceptional resource for the communities.

But sometimes they use MGGCA illegally for building and covering of their house and preparing a rope. And some of the participants think that, they should get the right to use MGCCA, since it is their common resource. Based on data 30% of the non-beneficiary groups want to get benefit from MGCCA by describing that Guassa grass is a special resource and not found anywhere except this area. They had also raised the question of being beneficiary especially during Derg regime by using the government direction, that land is communal and they benefited, but after the downfall of Derg the indigenous rule is resumed and they excluded again even if they can cut Guassa during the opening time.

They were described the current conservation practice of MGCCA, it has not been well consolidated. They also suggest that there should be permanent security than the volunteer one by explaining the current security is not strong and this may lead MGCCA for damage. They also explain their good will by suggesting that the government should give emphasis to this area and the existing nearby *kebeles* also should continue their protection as they did previously. Regarding to the issues of exclusion based on involvement in the protection of MGCCA, they thought that they

were not participated but even if they want to protect it the beneficiary groups do not give their ear saying that “what concerns them?” So, it will be better if all peoples will have the right to use sustainably with sharing responsibilities of protection especially the nearby non-beneficiary *kebeles*.

### **5.7 Measures Taken To Minimize Challenges**

The Menz-Guassa Conserved Area taskforce group members share their responsibilities under the coordination of the *woreda* administration. The *woreda* administration interferes to the community during the occurrence of wild fire, fight between *kebeles* etc. These days the fine on illegal persons is changed and the first means is creating awareness, because the fine only can't give sustainable solution without the well acceptance of the community.

Encouraging volunteer scouts from the local community to continue their security by creating opportunities like make them much beneficial from the park resource also taken as one means of measure. The *Woreda* Administration Office aware the society to manage the grazing land by means of area closure for some times, or dividing the grazing land in to cells to let the livestock over one cell after another.

The government also tried to plant different trees like “match wood” in place of the MGCCA shrubs and trees which serve for fire wood. It also develops alternative water sources for whom that use water into the park for their cattle by digging water wells out of the park area. This also use for planting animal feed and irrigations. Even if those measures were appreciated they should be continued with other alternative measures.

### **5.8 Facilities of the Park**

For those who want to visit MGCCA, there are appropriate facilities even if there were shortage of infrastructures and technology limitations. It facilitates by the local people to pass pack animals like mule for inter-park travelling and there were a strong security service, reception and restaurants are available. Guassa Community Lodge is nestled between the mountain scenery and Afro alpine meadows of the Guassa plateau, and is built in traditional style, albeit on a larger scale. The lodge, owned by the Guassa Community that manages the area, consists of four twin bedded rooms in the

upper storey and further bedroom, dining and kitchen area, as well as an education and information center, are available. A separate annex contains a bathroom block with shower and toilets that are currently being upgraded. There are also designated camping grounds around the lodge and along the trekking routes, where guests can pitch their own tents or rent one from the Community Tourism Association, but still enjoy the fireplace and facilities in the sitting room when the weather is bad. Currently guests must bring their own food for self-catering, although basic supplies and meals should be available in the future. There are also different brushes and Guiding books which makes things easier for visitors

## 5.9 The Prospect of MGCCA

Table 5.7 Prospects of MGCCA predicted by research participants

No	Responses	Respondents	
		count	Percentage (%) of respondents from total respondents (62)
1	Inherited by the government	15	24
2	Change the image of the local communities and the woreda also	35	56
3	Damaged if the security condition continued like this	24	39
4	National or international park	30	48
5	Depends on the will of local communities and the involvement of governmental and non-governmental agencies	54	87
6	If the government work actively by assuring the benefit of the community it will be continue as an exemplifier community conserved area	18	29
7	Total		100

**NB:** Percentage of Responses are not added since participants were mentioned multiple responses

The above data shows that the sole (87%) determinants of the prospects of MGCCA were the local community since they have the power to save or damage it. 39% believed that the interference of the government at different levels will determine the prospect of MGCCA to continuing as an exemplifier community conserved area with the cooperation of the local community.

Based on the above mentioned determinants if the MGCCA will protect sustainably and formally it will become very significance, since it is the home of different endemic animals like Ethiopian Wolf, Gelada, different birds, vegetation and water ponds for the surrounding area and the renaissance dam as well as for East African. The second (56%) prospect mentioned by participants is MGCCA will change the image of the local community, *woreda* and also the country nationally. MGCCA the smokeless industry will became the livelihood of the local communities by facilitating job opportunities for the youths and those who have not job as it already begun. MGCCA will have the chance to become a research center if the endemic wild animals and birds are kept and it can serve as a source of plants use for medication.

48% of the research participants mentioned MGCCA can be in the future State Park or State conserved Area or Community Based Conservation Area and Wild Life Park if the local communities continue their unique conservation practice. Further than conservation area it can be International Park within a short period of time since it endows with so many attractions and there is no any park in the Sub-Saharan Countries that has been kipped by the local community for so long time.

The Menz Gera Midir *Woreda* believes that, MGCCA will be secured more by the strong community by working them for their own benefit and it will be the role model of Green Investment. Though, currently, even in rare cases if the society will reduce its protection government do not let it alone since know it is the well-known and very attractive area. The life of the society also depends on it, if the community continues its protection; it will continue to be a major source of livelihood. The income generating from this park is also planned to use for the building of health centers, veterinary center and expanding tropical fruits like apple that providing indirect benefits for the society. Each year the government distributes 1.5 million apple plant seedlings to assure the security of the park by introducing alternative means of economic sources.

The future generation also will be keep MGCCA as their parents for maintaining the health of the environment and securing the water sources of the surrounding areas which will determine the production of feed and by this it will can play a great role in saving the land and lives of the community. To assure the transfer of conservation to the new generation parents of the surrounding

community are significantly important; the interference of the government is also appreciated by securing the ownership right of the local community. But its sustainability will be in “question” if the current gaps and problems of conservation are not solved. It is not least number of participants (39%) that was explained their threat, the area will be damaged if the current security related problems are not addressed by the concerned bodies. Even if it will not be totally damaged its areal coverage will shrink from time to time. This was also observed that it shrinks from 111 square Km to 78 square Km for the last 20 years. Relatively the least percentage of respondents’ (24%) threat that the prospect of MGCCA will be inherited by the government.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Conclusion**

Nowadays, natural resource degradation is a severe problem in the world. In developing countries poor people's were interwoven their live with natural resources. Though there have community conserved areas, local communities planned to use directly to fulfill their need that can't be fulfilled in any other way and indirect benefits that provides the means of fulfilling some other need. Ethiopia has 16.5% of protected areas as a world poorest country. Most of Ethiopian conserved areas were protected for the direct benefits without considering the indirect benefits like fulfilling other needs that were not found around the communities' settlement area through different ways like tourism.

Menz Guassa Community Conservation Area (MGCCA) is one of the protected areas by the local communities solely for over 400 years for its special resources called Guassa grass. As the world poor most of Ethiopian people lived in the rural areas were depends on natural resources to secure their economic need. This is also direly relate to the economic activities of local communities, in case of MGCCA more than 93% of the livelihood of the local communities depends on subsistence agriculture.

Even if highland settlers of Ethiopia were familiar with community conservation practices they have a failure of co-joining with governmental bodies because of their threat due to the lack of awareness about science of natural resource managements that mainly focused on indirect benefits of the community and also the government as a means of income generating. This was affecting governmental and non-governmental agencies commitment to participate in community conserved areas without enough awareness creating for the local communities.

In case of implementing projects that come from the top the will of the locals should be considered and without the active participation and good will of local communities, every activity that has taken by any governmental or nongovernmental parties will danger areas which were conserved by local communities for their common interest. Because when other parties become interfere without creating enough awareness for the existing communities, the community itself will damage the area in the name of state land and the prospect of the conserved areas will become endangered.

## 6.2 Recommendations

Once the challenges and opportunities that influence community conserved areas are identified, plans and strategies shall be developed based on the full participation of the local communities. On the bases of the findings, the following recommendations can be forwarded:

- The homogeneity of the society especially in terms of religion is one means of controlling the community through empowering religious leaders. Therefore the government should involve religious leaders as previously exercised and elders in conservation plans and actions of the diverse resources of MGCCA.
- Since awareness about governmental and nongovernmental parties' action is found to be one of the major influencing factors, it is a must the government and NGOs to create enough awareness before the implementation of any strategies and that will increase the effectiveness of the actions.
- In the existing new law of MGCCA the opening and closing season were determined by the regional state government in line with the Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Park Office, but the participation of local elders should be encouraged by the government bodies, since they know that when and how the Guassa will open since they were more expertise on the area.
- Since poverty related with drought and unreliable rainfall were the major driving force for extensive use of natural resources, the government should provide the society with an alternative means of livelihood and expanding drought resist plants and trees.
- Urgent intervention of governmental and non - governmental organizations that incorporated the willingness and values of the local community is needed mainly to alleviate farmer's economic problems.
- Guassa grass selling, being the major and continuing activity performed by youths, has negative impacts on physical damage of MGCCA, loss in the overall biodiversities of the park and its beauty that has a vital role in the ecotourism sector. These people should provide with trainings on the natural resource managements by the regional land resource management office, so that they could minimize while cutting Guassa grass.
- Based on the collected data more than 72% of the respondents were aged above 36 and almost all in the age of adultery, the youths were not shown as actively involved in

community council activities. So, it will be better if those groups were trained and aware more by the concerned bodies.

- Agriculture and Environmental Protection Expertise should also work more towards the improvement of established basins and animal fodder production near to communities surrounding out of the park.
- MGCCA, having a variety of shrubs and trees, also suitable for beekeeping. Therefore, the government should provide training for interested people in modern beekeeping and improving the established activities as a means of livelihood in place of cutting and selling Guassa grass.
- Governmental and nongovernmental parties should concern on the upgrading of local communities educational level to increase their level of understanding and acceptance level of government and NGO induced conservation programs.
- Another challenge of the area, mentioned by the research participants was the weakness of current community councils in line with the formal by law, which increases the risk of the park from time to time and encourages illegal users more and more. Effective and long lasting solution in strengthening these councils by the government and NGOs should be part of plans in securing the protection of the park.
- The limited intervention of the stakeholder took the direct beneficiaries but excluded others who have indirect beneficiaries. Yet, the evidence from the respondents strongly indicated that the other *kebele* in the woreda's had claim on the MGCCA because they bought Guassa grass for their animals and covering as well as thatching houses. This scenario should take into consideration by the concerned bodies.
- The established activities by Frankfurt Zoological Society and the woreda administration should encouraged and developed on tree planting to alleviate the shortage of fire wood.
- Last but not least, this researcher recommends feature researchers to work detail on the prospect of MGCCA for its sustainability.

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## Appendix II

### Questionnaire for beneficiary Groups

Addis Ababa University

Faculty of Social Science and Humanity

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Dear respondents'

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess the challenges, prospects and opportunities of Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area (MGCCA), in Northern Shewa Zone of Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia. To achieve this goal your genuine response is important and essential. I kindly request you to read all the questions in this questionnaire and give your response clearly. I assure you that response will be used for the research purpose.

#### NB

- ✓ You do not need to write your name
- ✓ Response to the closed-ended questions by putting X
- ✓ Write short and clear explanation for the open-ended ones

#### **Part I. Socio-economic back Ground of Respondents**

1. District.....village.....
2. Age of house hold head;-----
3. Sex of house hold head;-----
4. Marital status;-----
5. Religion;-----
6. Ethnicity;-----
7. Size of house hold ;-----Male-----Female

8. Education Levels of the house hold head.
  - A. Can read and write
  - B. Cannot read and write
  - C. 1-8<sup>th</sup> grade
  - D. 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade
  - E. Above 12<sup>th</sup> grade
9. For how long have you lived in this area? -----
10. Source of income or occupation: A. Herding B. farming C. Both D. If any other please specify-----
11. If you heard Livestock, can you tell me their item and number?
12. If you farm can you mention the types of crops that you produce?
13. Do you use grazing lands for livestock fed?
14. If your answer for question number 13 is yes, what is the status of grazing land
  - A. Communal
  - B. Private
  - C. Shared
  - D. Others.....
15. What is the size of your private grazing land?
16. Is there any restriction about the number of your livestock? Who put the restriction and why?
17. Do you have sources of livestock feed?
18. Are your sources of feed enough to feed your livestock? If your answer is no, what measures do you take?

**Part II. Information Sought about the current status of MGCCA**

1. What do you think about the current status of MGCCA by comparing with the previous years?
  - A. Very good
  - B. Good
  - C. poor
  - D. Very poor
2. Put your reason for your answer for the question number 1 please? -----
3. What looks like the current administration system of MGCCA?
4. How do you describe the role of current community councils of MGCCA?

**Part III. Information about the attitude of local communities towards MGCCA**

1. How do you think about MGCCA? Is this important or not? -----
2. If you think that MGCCA is important, what benefit did it give for the local communities?
  - A. Being source of livestock feed
  - B. sustaining rainfall
  - C. Being source of fire wood
  - D. Being source of Guassa for thatching and covering house
  - D. Any Other-----

3. What is the influence of MGCCA on local Communities?

A. It affect the grazing land   B. It affect the farm land   C. It covers the land that is importance for settlement   D. Any other-----

4. Do you believe that, it is important conserving MGCCA for the future?

5. If your answer for question number 4 is yes please explain why and how will be conserved?

6. What do you think about the future relationship between the local communities and MGCCA?

7. What do you know about natural resource management?

8. Do you ever heard or get training about natural resource management?

9. If you get training, how do you apply it?

10. What do you think about the best mechanisms of natural resource management?

#### **Part IV. Information sought about the participants of MGCCA**

---

1. Is there any national or international agency that supports the conservation of MGCCA? If there are please mention?
2. How did they do to sustain MGCCA? Did they incorporate the local communities? How?
3. Is their activity is permanent or temporary? If it is permanent, for how many years did they work?

#### **Part V. Information sought about the administration system of MGCCA**

1. What do you think about the administration system of MGCCA?
2. Can you describe the role of the administration for the sustainability of MGCCA?
3. Who are the beneficiaries of MGCCA? How and why?
4. Do you obtain benefit from MGCCA? How?
5. If your answer for question number 4 is yes, what benefit that do you obtained?
6. What do you describe the MGCCA administration? Is this important or not?

7. Are there any preventive measures to solve MGCCA administration related problems? What looks like their outcome?

**Part VI. Information sought about the challenges of MGCCA**

1. In your opinion what are the major challenges that hinder MGCCA?
2. What are the driving forces for those challenges?
3. Is beneficiaries abuse MGCCA during the prohibition time?
4. Is non-beneficiary groups abuse MGCCA?
5. What measures did take on those who break the rule of MGCCA?
6. Do you think that governmental or nongovernmental parties affect MGCCA?
7. What are the pull factors that exacerbate challenges to MGCCA?
8. What are the push factors that exacerbate challenges to MGCCA?

**Part VII. Information about Opportunity and prospects of MGCCA**

1. Are there opportunities that sustain MGCCA? Please mention?
2. What do you think about the prospect of MGCCA?
3. What do you think about the determinants of MGCCA prospect?

**Thank You!!!**

## Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Questioners for Beneficiary Groups

1. Why do you protect GCPRA?
2. What is the benefit that you gain from it?
3. What is your level of decision on the GCPRA?
4. Do you really agree about the conservation of GCPRA or do you protect it due to the fear of the bylaw?
5. Did you have ever been broken the rule of the community? If you why and how?
6. What things that are faced with you after you broken the rule?
7. Is there an imbalance relation between your cattle and grazing land?
8. How did you solve the problem?

Appendix III

Questionnaire for non Beneficiary Groups

Addis Ababa University  
Faculty of Social Science and Humanity  
Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Dear respondents'

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess the challenges, prospects and opportunities of Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area (MGCCA), in Northern Shewa Zone of Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia. To achieve this goal your genuine response is important and essential. I kindly request you to read all the questions in this questionnaire and give your response clearly. I assure you that response will be used for the research purpose.

NB

- ✓ You do not need to write your name
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21. Sex of house hold head;-----
22. Marital status;-----
23. Religion;-----
24. Ethnicity;-----
25. Size of house hold ;-----Male-----Female
26. Education Levels of the house hold head.  
C. Can read and write                      C. 1-8<sup>th</sup> grade                      E. Above 12<sup>th</sup> grade  
D. Cannot read and write                      D. 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade
27. For how long have you lived in this area? -----

28. Source of income or occupation: A. Herding B. farming C. Both D. If any other please specify-----
29. If you herd Livestock, can you tell me their item and number?
30. If you farm can you mention the types of crops that you produce?
31. Do you use grazing lands for livestock fed?
32. If your answer for question number 1.13 is yes, what is the status of grazing land  
B. Communal B. Private C. Shared D. Others.....
33. What is the size of your private grazing land?
34. Is there any restriction about the number of your livestock? Who put the restriction and why?
35. Do you have sources of livestock feed?
36. Are your sources of feed enough to feed your livestock? If your answer is no, what measures do you take?

**Part II. Information Sought About Their Attitude for MGCCA**

1. What do you think about MGCCA?
2. Can you explain that why you are excluding from benefits of MGCCA and your say on this?
3. What do you think about your exclusion?
  - A. Since you have better source of livestock fed and grazing land
  - B. Since you have similar common land
  - C. Since your residence is far from MGCCA
  - D. Others.....
4. Have you ever been use Guassa from MGCCA? How and Why?
5. Did you ever face any problem after you use Guassa?
6. Do you want to share benefits from MGCCA?
7. If your answer for question number 6 is yes, what do you think that expected from you?
8. Do you present your question peacefully and legally for the concerned bodies? If you, what was the result?
9. What did you think about the future MGCCA utilization and protection?

**Thank You!!!**

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) questioners for non-beneficiary groups

1. What do you think about your historical exclusion from MGCCA?
2. Did you ever have been benefited from GCBNRM? If you say yes why and how?
3. What things are you faced after you broke the rule?
4. Is your village different from the beneficiary one?
5. Is there any similar Community Conservation Area (CCA) in your village?
6. If you say yes; how you and the community's around protect or manage the CCA?
7. Did you face shortage of animal fed?
8. What mechanisms do you apply to solve the problem?