

Running Head: GUDDIFACHAA PRACTICE AS CHILD  
PROBLEM INTERVENTION

GUDDIFACHAA PRACTICE AS CHILD PROBLEM INTERVENTION IN  
OROMO SOCIETY: THE CASE OF ADA'A LIBAN DISTRICT

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Dessalegn Negeri

**ABSTRACT**

The practice of adoption as an institution has existed long period in Ethiopian societies where the term guddifachaa used to represent it. It implies adopting a child by satisfying the economic, legal, and social rights. Guddifachaa practices assume different socioeconomic purposes, not studied widely. This paper presents about the guddifachaa practice as community based child problem intervention. It creates just environment for the next generations especially for vulnerable children, when the Cultural knowledge and practices revitalized within the existing social structures. A research attempts to define the social work profession with country's socio cultural context in that the Guddifachaa practice needs less resource, skills, and less expertise in the process. This practice has significant effect with the social work advocacy, lobby and integration to children welfare policies in the country.

## **Introduction**

In this specific study, the major focuses are on the social problems and its ultimate solution at socio-cultural level. In the introduction part the problem of the statement, the scope of the study and the purpose of the study were discussed. In the background part, the paper tries to deal with the justification of the study, and the related literature on adoption in Ethiopian and other few countries experience that serve the social work profession.

In the result section, the paper approaches that the research findings as well as the discussion part is the section where most research objectives with systematic analysis of the major findings in line with the social work principles is discussed. Finally, the paper pointed out about guddifachaa practices' major social work implication, application and summary.

## **Problem of the statement**

In Ethiopia, the number of people living in poverty (about 45%) is very large vis-à-vis the total population and the existing resource utilization. Because poverty in the country has multiple dimensions with different social, economic, political, cultural and environmental factors (Oromia Finance and Economic Development Bureau (BOFED), 2005)

In societies like ours, problems that children face are various in numbers. The most common ones are child rights violations, child trafficking, child labor exploitation, child prostitution, street children, child abuses and neglects, etc. This is because of the country's limited resource capacity and misuse of the existing ones. The country needs an effort in appropriately addressing the problems of children with the existing

socioeconomic resource environment (Children and Youth Affairs Organization (CYAO), 1995)

Accordingly, these and other child socioeconomic problems should be solved at different social, community or organizational levels. The problems of children in contemporary society need integrated efforts from the government, non-government organizations and community based organizations. The care and support of children is important to see well-developed and healthy citizen.

Yet the community based child problem intervention mechanisms that emanate from the society's socio-cultural knowledge have not yet received research and the attention of the concerned bodies and various disciplines in Ethiopia. This paper reports on the investigation of community based social service practices, which will have implications to the social work practices in Ethiopia in solving the problems of children.

Guddifachaa practice is one of the common cultural practices of child caring, supporting, and right protection system used by Oromo society. Beyond its cultural practices among different ethnic groups in Ethiopia, guddifachaa practice may help resolve childcare problems as a community based approach of a culture as well as the responding to children at risk both socially and economically.

Many studies focus their work on the abundance of the problems rather than identifying the possible community based social systems with potential to intervene in the problems of children in specific and the society in general. This research focuses on how these social problems will be solved at community level within that society's perspective and later implemented by the concerned bodies are paramount issue of the study. Guddifachaa was one of the cultural institutions that the Oromo used as child getting techniques for infertile families.

The need to explore the state of child guddifachaa practice, changes, and continuity in Oromo society should not be overlooked. The purpose of the study is to show the extent of guddifachaa practice in solving children's problem in the country culturally.

The practices carried out by community themselves (within their cultural perspectives) have a significant effect in deterring complicated child problems. However, this child guddifachaa culture has not yet attracted most researchers and child rights protection agencies attention in Ethiopia. Some legal, ethnographic or anthropological and historical studies in some places in the Oromia Region were conducted. These studies did not focus on the practices potential intervention value.

This paper will be one of the baseline social work research documents in Ethiopia that will serve as a potential guide to intervention techniques for supporting and protecting the wellbeing of vulnerable children. This type of practice will support the principles of social work profession in relation to the child family reunification and integration processes and it would create conducive environment in solving the problem of vulnerable children. It can also assist in determining the resource allocation, policy formulation and decision-making processes in the country.

Ethiopia is one of the developing countries with a low-income population, with variable and interdependent social, political, economic and other demographic problems. The formulation of policy and decisions making with other models of welfare system may not solve the problems. The intervention should incorporate the country's socio-cultural perspectives, which is a culturally compatible way of defining the problem and solving it with the indigenous knowledge and resources (CYAO, 1995).

Guddifachaa practice of Oromo society has a central place in a socio-cultural welfare system for children in the community that links the tradition of childcare and a

support system to the modern child welfare systems. It supports the idea of the best place for a child is family system.

In this regard, guddifachaa practice that is primarily exercised by the Oromo society serves the purpose of Ethiopia's child welfare policy, if properly investigated and used as a vital socio cultural asset (Ministry of labor and social affair (MOLSA), 1991; 22). The customary guddifachaa practice can be children problem intervention further than the understanding and focus of its anthropological and historical aspect. It has a contribution to social work practice in the country.

In Ethiopia, the dependent population of is very huge as compared to the independent ones. The children make up the lion share with little or almost nonexistent practical social welfare system (Getnet, 1996).

Thus, guddifachaa practice can be a community's socio-cultural welfare strategy that could be a potential child problem intervention for vulnerable children even in a contemporary world. No reliable community based approaches and projects have been designed to address these social problems using culturally compatible systems (BOLSA, 1995)

It should be noted that guddifachaa practice is supposed to be an alternate community based childcare and support system in the reunification/ integration processes. For guddifachaa can be managed with minimum efforts at community level using fewer resources, shorter time and non-trained but culturally skilled personnel. It is also a voluntary type of child – family placement relationship used by the community.

Some of the concerned bodies may focus on reunification/ repatriations to family or inter-country adoption rather than the intra-country and cultural adoption like guddifachaa. Therefore, this study could be significant in identifying the practice processes, changes and continuity that occur in the process of time in solving the

problem of children at community level in relation to social work profession perspectives.

### **Background**

The Oromo people are estimated to comprise 40 percent of Ethiopia's population of more than 60 million (Oromia labor and social affair (BOLSA), 1995). However, according to the Central Statistical Authority (CSA (2004)) projection, the total population of Ethiopia is 73 million, of which the Oromo constitute 25.8 million (36.6 %) (Male are 12.88 million and female 12.93 million) (2004: 24).

This research takes place in Ada'a Liban, which is the sub clan of the Tulamaa Oromo. The Tulamaa constitutes one of the five moieties (anthropological social groups) that traditionally made up the Oromo. These paired moieties are the Rayyaa/Assebuu, Mecha/Tulamaa, Sabboo /Goonaa, Siikkoo /Mandoo, and Ittuu /Humbanaa represented the five territorial divisions of the Oromo. Spatially, the Oromo were further divided into the western (Booranaa) and the eastern (Baarentu) groups. Conceptually the Booranaa represented the children of elder (angafa) or first-born sons of Horoo, the eponymous ancestor of the Oromo, whilst the Gabra or Gabaro constituted the junior or younger brothers (maandha) (Asmarom Legesse, 1973, Gemechu Megersa, 1993: Aneesha Kasim, 1999).

The Tulamaa Oromo are among the Booranaa groups who spatially settled in the central Oromia west of the rift valley. The Tulamaa clan is also further divided into three clans: the Dachii, the Bachoo, and the Jillee clans (Alemayo, Boshi, Daniel, Sanbato, Umar, 2004). The name Ada'a Liban district is derived from the settlement pattern of the Tulamaa Oromo of Eastern Shawa (see annex three about the genealogy). It also includes other clans where dominant Tulamaa clans who live in and around

Bishoftu and Adulaalaa towns near mount Cuqaallaa (sometimes known as Ziquala) are the Ada'a and Liban clans (Ibid ; 2004)

Ada'a Liban district is therefore, one of the major vast and urbanized districts of Oromia National Regional State located in the Eastern Shawa Zone. It has a total land area of 1635.16 square kilometers with a population density of 210.1 persons per sq. kilometers (CSA, 2004:35). The district is about seventy km away east of Addis Ababa where Bishoftu is its capital town. The other is Liban Cuqaallaa area which is 45 k.m.s away to south of Bishoftu town where its main town is Adulaalaa.

Many societies practice guddifachaa in Ethiopia but it is predominant in Oromos in Oromia national regional state. The Oromia zones East Shawa, Western Shawa, Booranaa zone, Gujii Zone, Wallaggaa, Jimma Zone, South Western Shawa, North Shawa Zone, etc are some of the places that guddifachaa is practiced among the Oromo society. Moreover, the guddifachaa practiced in Booranaa, the Shawa zones and Gujii zones keeps its originality with the cultural setting. Eastern Shawa zone also is culturally significant place for Oromo's culture practices such as gada system, guddifachaa, moggaasaa, irreechaa (ritual) in the Waaqqeffannaa religion and others. East Shawa has about 13 districts of which Ada'a Liban is one of the dominant cultural practices centers in the zone (BOLSA, 1995).

For instance, in the 'Waaqqeffannaa' religion, 'irreechaa' (Oromo religious ritual) is celebrated in Bishoftu around 'Hora Harsadi' (Lake Harsadi) once a year where followers from each corner of Oromia come to the place. In the district of Ada'a Liban, the community members undertake the ritual Practices of guddifachaa or moggaasaa for different purposes

According to the population projection of Bureau of finance and economic development (BOFED), Ada'a Liban district have a total population 335190 of which

169704 are male and 165486 are female. The total urban population is 128084 where 63003 (49.2%) are male while the rural population is 207176 of which female are 100475 (48.5%) (BOFED, 2005)

Ada'a Liban district is currently subdivided into three areas as Ada'a district, Bishoftu town and Liban Cuqaallaa district. Ada'a and Liban Cuqaallaa are predominantly rural in structure and Bishoftu town district is urban and the capital of the district.

Bishoftu town is one of major recreational centers where there are hot springs to be found. These hot springs attract both local and foreign tourists' attention; tourists can stay in the place and contribute to the development of the town. This attracts children who hope that tourists provide alms to them. The town is also a seat of different NGOs and federal government organizations such as Bishoftu Community Development Workers Training Center, the Defense Force University, Ethiopian Management Institute, Ethiopian Agriculture and Development Research Center, Ethiopian Air Force Training Institute, and other private colleges. Jerusalem Children and Orphanage, Mekane Yesus church, Compassion, Angelical church, and Facilitators for Change Ethiopia are most of these NGOs are working in the areas of children and families (CSA, 2004).

For the study, I considered the former Ada'a Liban district as a unit and chose two places for study: Bishoftu town as urban, Adulaalaa as rural and semi rural area. In these areas, guddifachaa practice is a very common practice due to its long history.

### **The Development of Adoption (guddifachaa)**

Adoption is a common practice throughout the world and throughout history. However, laws regulating adoption vary from country to country, culture to culture. According to Taka Daba (1983), citing of the Ballentine's law dictionary, which defines

adoption as “the means by which the legal relationship of a parent and child between persons who are not so related by nature is established or created. It is the taking of one’s family child into another as son or daughter and heir, and conferring up on it a title to the rights and the privileges of such” (1983, 2).

As Bequele HabteMichael cited in Beckstrom (1972, 146) indicated that the numerically predominant ethnic group in Ethiopia, the Oromo, has had an influence on customary adoption practices in the country that even outweigh their number. “Adoption” is a full assimilation of an outsider in to the family as a child, originated with the Oromo in early 1800s. (Beckstrom, 1972, 146)

In Oromo society, guddifachaa practice has a long history and started during the time of Gada<sup>1</sup> system commencement. According to four informants (Abbaa gadaas or gada experts, leaders), they celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> gada with their gadaa grades in 2000 which is estimated to be 560 years. Six of the informants (five Abbaa gadaas and one community member) claimed that the gada system and the guddifachaa practices as an institution started together 2000 years ago. They report 360 gada stages or 2880 years in Oromo. There are no anthropological and historical research accounts that confirm this notion in the country and for the Oromo society in specific.

In Ethiopia, the term guddifachaa as a form of adoption was inherited from the Oromo language. It means adopting a child by fulfilling all the economic, psychological and social rights of a family member. The term was unanimously approved and incorporated in to the civil law at the parliament session that convened to promulgate the civil code as part of the modern legal system of Ethiopian empire in 1960 (Civil code, 1965; MOLSA, 1991).

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<sup>1</sup> Gadaa is an arrangement of social categories usually called grades, or 'an arrangement of men into groups usually called parties, "sets," "classes," or an arrangement of tasks to be performed, and/ or an arrangement of ideas, principles, and rules among Oromo society. Asmarom, (1973 )

In Oromo customary law, guddifachaa is a system of moving a child from his/her biological parents to another of the community's social family members through ceremonial rituals of the guddifachaa institution. The systems created with such customary procedures are irrevocable by the parties concerned or any other third party. The guddifachaa child has all the rights with regard to status, marriage, inheritances, and maintenance (Taka, 1983).

According to Bekele (1958) cited in Alula (2002), guddifachaa is the adoption of child or children of some one by a family via fulfilling every necessity to the child as self or own in the presence of the community members and leaders such as 'Luba'<sup>2</sup> from the Gada system officials.

In the process of guddifachaa, the request and consent is made between the biological and the social family of the child. It is a legal phenomenon where the economic and social rights of the child must be fulfilled. The right of the adopters in the community is equally honored and respected like children. (Oromia family law, 2005) The revised code of the empire, defines guddifachaa in its proclamation number 213/2000, in article 180 states that adoptive affiliation may be created an agreement between a person and a child (FDRE Family Code, 2000).

However, in the modern law, the term "adoptive parent" designates an adult other than the biological parent to whom the state has assigned complete parental responsibility. Legal adoption cancels out the legal rights of biological parents in the United States (Goldstein, 1979). In the same manner in Ethiopia, the adoption brings to an end the tie between the relationships of child to biological family by creating a new bond with his or her social family who are not related by blood where the new juridical

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<sup>2</sup> Luba in gadaa system has two meanings 1<sup>st</sup> it means the fifth stage, the highest age class attained by an Oromo every body who is in this class is Luba. The Luba choose from among themselves five who represent them are also called Luba. Each village, clan and the larger group in Oromo choose their respective lubota (Pl). The main task of Luba is to deal with legal problems and to ensure the right application of the customary. Bekele Nadi, (1958)

tie makes the child a member of the adoptive family with all the entitlements (Taka, 1983). This trend is true in both the customary and the modern law in Ethiopia with respect to the inheritance of names, and properties of the biological parents. (Family code, 2000)

Goody (1969:57) attempted to show in his analysis of the cross-cultural difference in adoption practices of Eurasia and Africa that the functions of adoption in Western Europe are to provide homes for orphans, bastards, foundlings and children of impaired families; to provide childless couples with social progeny, and to provide individual couples with an heir to their property. Contrary to Eurasian adoption practices, Goody argues, “there was no adoption practice in African societies due to the non-existence of status, wealth and private ownership of property and land” as quoted by Ayalew (2002; 6-7). According to Goody, in Africa adoption is rare where the lineages provide a long series of potential heirs and resulted in fostering which involves no permanent change of identity.

Contrary to Goody, adoption has been part of Ethiopia’s historical pasts where it was practiced among most nations and nationalities and is common among the Oromo people by the practice of *guddifachaa*. (Gadaa, 1988, MOLSA, 1991, H/Mariam, 1995)

According to a study by MOLSA (1991), adoption appears to be well established among 11 nation and nationalities such as Oromo, Kafa, Zay, Yem, Konso, Sidama, Warra Dube, Gedeo, Amhara (as *madego*<sup>3</sup>) etc of Ethiopia. The Oromo *guddifachaa* stands out clearly as a practice in the Dergues nine administrative zones. In addition, it was ratified and stated in the civil code of the country in 1960 (MOLSA, 1991, BOLSA, 1995).

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<sup>3</sup> *Madego* is a form of adoption undertaken by Amhara community. The child has no right of inheritance of material or any other possessions. The child has no psychological and emotional attachment with the family. it is a voluntary temporary foster care of children by families.

Adoption is a global trend today and has existed in the history of all societies though its practice varies accordingly with the culture of each society. Adoption is the virtually complete and irrevocable transfer of a child from one legal family to another (Haggot, 1993).

In Oromo custom, there exists a special social form of guddifachaa practice called moggaasaa of children or adults. It gives new name, clan and other rights to the child. In some literature, the concepts moggaasaa and guddifachaa are used interchangeably with English word adoption. In the community the adoption practice, that culturally is called guddifachaa and moggaasaa have and serve different social meanings. Both guddifachaa and moggaasaa are socio-cultural practice systems that tie with rituals of uniting children to the community's defined family unit. For instance, adoption (moggaasaa) has been a common practice for centuries among the Oromo community. It still exists, although Christianity and Islamism, the religions that were accepted lately by the Oromo, have been greatly reducing the importance and (cultural) features adoption (guddifachaa) (Bekele, 1958) quoted in (Alula, 2002).

The other point raised is that the introduction of orthodox Christianity and Muslim religions to the Oromo society also affected its progress: to discourage the functioning of guddifachaa. The Orthodox system, which was the official religion, created myths on nations, and nationalities where it was assumed that, being-Oromo was a serious, very cruel, warrior, uncivilized and giving mythical names which is pejorative and very derogatory by the Amhara ruling elites (Bekele, 1958; Gada Melba, 1988; Mohammed, 1990; Alula, 2002, Ayalew, 2002). Besides some of the community members, become orthodox Christians where their activity and faith system came to the Christianity partially and trying to influence the rest to become Christian.

In the community, guddifachaa refers to adoption where the adopted person is from a clan of Oromo, while moggaasaa is more related to foster adoption in which the adopted child or person is from the neighboring ethnic groups.

According to Bekele Nadhi (1958), in his study of “adoption among the Oromo of Shawa” states that, the Oromo society do not limit adoption to their (ethnic), group only. They adopt Amhara, Gurage, Sidama, and others with whom they are often intermingled. In such cases, no legal or ceremonial procedure is observed.

In the study area contrary to above, there is a ceremony for Moggaasaa too like guddifachaa, when adopting a person from other ethnic groups. The ceremony is prepared to change the original name and give the adoptee a membership position in the adopting families’ clan.

For the foster adopted children as Alemayehu et al (2004) said, a non-Oromo individual or tribe adopted as an Oromo through the moggaasaa institution could count genealogy through an Oromo line and cannot count their genealogy through biological parents. Such a change in genealogical counting is an outcome of social transformation within (2004:153). In other words, the adopted child inherits the identity from the adopting family side and continues as the born member losing his former ones.

In the past moggaasaa was inspired by political, military and economic considerations on both sides (the adoptee and adopters sides). This may explain why the Oromo assimilated more than others assimilated them. After adoption, the notion of belonging extended to include not only the clan but also the ethnic to whom the clan belongs. Through the new genealogy, the new members now become part of the Oromo people counting their ancestors several generations’ back to the ethnic Oromo (Mohammed, 1990:23).

Historically the incorporation or assimilation of other ethnic groups under the guddifachaa through moggaasaa is unique and significant cultural features in Oromo society (Mohammed, 1990; Trulizi, 1996; and Ayalew, 2002).

Subsequently Alemayehu et al (2004) in their book entitled, 'history of Oromo to the sixteenth century', pointed out that,

Some changes that manifested themselves in the history of Oromo resulted in a change in genealogical count. These changes are due to the process of Oromonization or foster adoption of non-Oromo individuals, tribes and the process in which members of the confederates (Borana and Barrentu) began admitting tribes that are out of the confederacies in the fourteenth century. Distinction among families in the genealogical counting since then will not classify Oromo in to sects of the adopted, original or the members of the confederacies rather accepts them equally and all inclusive. (2004:152).

The trend in the development of adoption is becoming very common where it attracted the attentions of different organizations, policy makers, professionals, experts, etc for the considerations in different legislative documents. Thus, in different countries at different times the adoption issues were incorporated into to their civil codes. The adoption within the country and the inter countries is quite different because of several reasons where the practice is done between different countries, communities, races, ethnics or economic status groups. Similarly, the inter country adoption is mostly done with the adopted from developing and the adopters from the developed countries.

### **Objectives**

The general objective of this assessment/study is to collect and document valuable socio-cultural practices data in solving the problems of children.

The specific objectives are:

- To see why guddifachaa is practiced by the community in the study area
- To see whether guddifachaa practice is community based problem intervention system
- To see the attitudes of guddifachaa children and the community on the guddifachaa practice
- To see the rights given to guddifachaa children by the adopting family
- To identify what factors influence guddifachaa practices
- To identify and recommend (if possible) guddifachaa as an alternative solution for the problems of vulnerable children in the country by revitalizing the institution with social work experience

### **Methodology**

In this specific research, both the primary and secondary sources of data are employed. The research method is assessment study of customary adoption or guddifachaa practice in specific place with qualitative analytically description of the practices. A questionnaire was prepared for the in-depth interview of key informants, to interview each groups of informants according to their category to get primary data. The research model is a categorical stratification of the interviewee as of the adopted children or adults, non-adopted persons, the adopters (guddifachaa) family, experts in office and respected community leaders who participated in guddifachaa practice processes directly or indirectly. A non-probability sampling technique that is purposive sampling based on the cultural knowledge of the people. The research is completed in two ways; first, sampling and data collection of primary data is based on the availability of resources, time, and the personnel involved. Secondly, the sources of data for the study of guddifachaa practices are different groups of informants, personal experiences,

case histories of the adopted, persons, manuals / documents, newspapers, survey data, journals, etc.

The underlying model of analysis I used in this specific research is that categorically analyzing and reporting the findings of the interview and reporting at an aggregate for those similarly patterned response of different groups of respondents. The results are shown with frequencies and descriptions of the tables under each category. These results are interpreted and presented under the discussion section.

### **Research questions**

In this study, the following questions will be addressed: -

- Why guddifachaa is practiced in the community?
- Can guddifachaa practice in Oromo community solve the problem of orphan and neglected children?
- How the guddifachaa child is treated (rights) in the family?
- Is the community-based adoption of children helpful for the vulnerable children?
- Do the adopted and adopters have good attitudes towards guddifachaa?
- Is there any change in guddifachaa as a cultural practice to the intervention strategy
- What social work implications does guddifachaa have if revitalized?

### **Instruments Used**

I have developed a questionnaire based on my specific objectives and research questions. The questionnaire is made up of the structured and semi structured questions. In addition, the questionnaire is classified according to categorical social statuses the respective interviewee (children, adult, elders and experts) by taking their age,

experience and knowledge on the guddifachaa practice and the problems children face in different places in to consideration. The questionnaire was developed for children, adults, elders and experts based on the different issues that concern. It is divided in to parts according to the age and social status category. Even the available literature on adoption and the different social work courses on family and children, policy and social justices, class comments on thesis proposal assisted me to consider different variables for my research. I designed the questionnaire as a checklist I used a tape recorder, note taking, pen, pencil, and the questionnaire during the interview. Informal discussions with community members and recording of the discussions were crucial for gathering data and were recorded after each session.

### **Sample**

The sample size proposed for the study was 50 subjects living in the area who had participated in guddifachaa practice processes. This sample includes the interview of key informants (elders, adopters), three case histories (the adopted children, adults), and people from the community who were interviewed both formally and informally. Thus, the interview was attempted for 50 people including the key informants and succeeded with 43 people. As model analysis, the results of the study can be organized according to the category of the informant or respondents. The respondents are the key informants, the adopters, the adopted and the non- adopted as well as the experts (staffs in government structures) in the study area. The key informants can sometimes be referred to as Abbaa gadaas or elders in the community while the non-adopted persons are referring to the adults and children, who were not adopted in the community; are living there.

## **Procedures**

I first went to Ada'a Liban district administration office in Bishoftu town where I talked with officials who guided and gave me information about guddifachaa linking with the community members and the community prominent figures such as Abbaa gadaas. The office gave me the persons of contact from each kebele (peasant association). They gave me places where I have to go. Then the kebeles these people and the elders gave me those people to interview. About 100 people were contacted and I selected 50 subjects for sources of data through systematic request of their consents and purposive selection methods such as their knowledge and experience on guddifachaa practice and their concern. Then I assured about the confidentiality of the information though they are open enough for the interview and clearly discussed about the purpose of the study before the interview commences. The questionnaire was prepared in English but not translated to Afaan Oromo because I am familiar to the Oromo language and the experts also easily understand the English. I did not translate the questionnaire into Afaan Oromo based on the pilot assessment of the place of study where most respondents cannot read, write and understand what the question is. The data is collected in March 2006 with the help of two community important figures who were Abbaa gadaas and served me as assistants in the process of primary data collection in the community. I know very little about the location, but knew the language and ethical issues of Oromo. The Abbaa gadaas assisted me in order that all the informants from different places in the study area provided reliable information on guddifachaa practice in their community. I did the self-administered interview of each participant, to minimize the errors in reporting on culturally sensitive issues and to keep the confidentiality of those who do not want the information to be confidential. The experts are (those who are staffs of government organization structures and are professionals) in office filled out

the questionnaire returned it to me. The experts brought some important points that the questionnaire does not include by attaching notes to the filled out questionnaire.

Additionally I discussed some points with the experts informally where a lot of information is collected.

### **Limitation of the study**

In conducting, the research in Eastern Shawa zone of Oromia national regional state, the study area covered and the people interviewed as compared to the total population of the district may be negligible and may not be a representative. The other limitations of the study were the sex of all respondents is male and the time allocated for the research is very short in trying to understand the whole process of guddifachaa in the community, because to know the attitudes of people I should build a rapport and stay longer. The available literatures on the areas of guddifachaa practices are limited and were sometimes unavailable. The literature was taken from the manuals of organizations (as BOLSA, MOLSA, DOLSA, BOFED, IES archives etc), research documents that serve the purpose of social work. The research documents on guddifachaa are mostly the anthropological description of the processes, the rituals attached to it in its undergoing in some areas, and even some of these materials are unavailable in library. The budget allocated for research can also determine the data collection process of the area (East Shawa).

### **Results**

The results of the study can be organized according to the category of the informant or respondents. The respondents are the key informants, the adopters, the adopted and the non- adopted as well as the experts (staffs in government structures) in the study area. The key informants can sometimes be referred to as Abbaa gadaas or elders in the

community while the non-adopted persons are referring to the adults and children, who were not adopted in the community; are living there.

Of the selected research respondents, the key informants are 10 (23.3%), non-adopted are 15 (34.9%) and the adopted are eight (18.6%). The proportion of children who were interviewed is 15 (34.9%) who responded completely and reported in table 1. In the analysis of the study, I used the category of the above four types based on their relative social statuses such as the children, the adults, families and experts. The children and the adults are both the adopted and the non-adopted, adopters and elders (key informants) are the family structure, and experts are those office workers of differences structures.

Table 1: Respondent's Status and Success in the Responding to the Research

Data sources		Planned	Succeeded	Percent success
Children	Adopted	10	5	11.62
	Others /non adopted	10	10	23.25
Adults	Adopted	5	3	6.97
	Non adopted	5	5	11.62
Families	Adopters	5	5	11.62
	Elders/key informants	10	10	23.25
Experts	Experts / officials	5	5	11.62
	Total	50	43	100

The following table 2 indicates the distribution of the ethnic group Oromos constitutes 30 respondents, 'others' five (includes Wolayta, Silti, and Sidama), three are Amhara people, and five Gurage people reported they had involved in the interview. In the interview, ethnic groups like Amhara and the Gurage were participated in the practice like the Oromos after they experienced moggaasaa. (See table 2)

Table 2 : Ethnic group of the respondents by group

Variables	Description	the social status of the respondents in the community					
		Elders	Experts	Adopters	Adopted	Non adopted	Total
ethnic group	Oromo	10	3	3	5	9	30
	Amhara	-	1	1	1	-	3
	Gurage	-	1	1	1	2	5
	Others	-	-	-	1	4	5
Total		10	5	5	8	15	43

In table three below indicates that Most of the respondents are people whose educational level is in the primary level of grade eight and below are 32 including the primary drop outs, secondary level five, and certificate and above are six. Those people were involved in and practiced guddifachaa have low education level but have well established cultural knowledge. The adopted whose educations in the secondary level are those who are adults adopted in the past.

In the community according to the interview, results of all respondents the possible number of children to be adopted by a family can vary from area to area. In table 4, about 23 respondents said that adopters mostly adopt only one child and sometimes adopt two in the case of Moggaasaa children. Seven people said one family could adopt two children, when they need both male and female children and sometimes people adopt two or more when the parents of the children are deceased- often these adopters are relatives. Those who adopt both sex children are reported that it is for their affection and interest in having better social bonds with biological parents. Thirteen people said that one could adopt more than two children for the sake of getting

much labor in agricultural production and increase the clan numbers through his line.

The motivation of the adopters' child sex preference of also determines families'

adoption number of one or two children.

Table 3: Educational level of the respondents

Variables	Description	the social status of the respondents in the community					
		Elders	Experts	Adopters	Adopted	Non adopted	Total
Educational level	Not Read and write	5		2			7
	Read and write	3		2			5
	Primary (1-8)	2		1	4	7	14
	Primary drop out			-	2	4	6
	Secondary			-	2	3	5
	Certificate			-		1	1
	TTI, diploma, degree		5	-	-		5
Total		10	5	5	8	15	43

In the community, one family can adopt more than one child but most of the time people adopt only one child. The males are the larger groups of children to be adopted. The females are also adopted but the assumption for the choice of adoption of male is that a female will not remain with the family after marriage. The male children remain with their family where they are considered as security and protection to the family as well as clan. In the community, the female children are adopted for the families' affection, and substitute for male. In addition, the adoption of female children is sometimes for the sake of replacement when families have only male children in the house.

Table 4: The number of possible children adopted by adopters

Variables	Description	the social status of the respondents in the community					
		Elders	Experts	Adopters	Adopted	Non adopted	Total
possible number of children to be adopted	Only one	5	3	3	5	7	23
	Two	2		1	2	2	7
	No limit	3	2	1	1	6	13
Total		10	5	5	8	15	43

In the same way, people adopt more than one child when they are tried to help the orphan and the neglected children for their own family and personal reasons. The guddifachaa of orphan or the neglected children in the community is practiced by those childless families and / or those who require additional child. They need the child as an asset, protection members or for their love and affection to children. The adoption practice for abandoned and orphaned children has less ceremony. This is because the children's families are not alive or not in the community.

The adopters conduct the ritual to announce to the public that they adopted a child legally. The ritual process is not related to children's family background and social status to be undertaken for orphans and neglected. This kind of adoption is called gudifata seeraa (will be discussed in the following section) and the rituals occur at the home of the adopters where the adoptees were given names, the adopters take responsibility in public for the child, and publicize their relationship to the community that they are parents. After that session, the adopters understand the child as their own child. The need of adopting more than one child is linked with the idea of families' reasons of adopting children in the past and today that will be discussed latter (see table 6).

**Key informants** -The youngest age for the respondents in the sample is six years where the eldest is 80 years. The interview focused on the children's issue to each group. There is one cultural point about the age structure of the community under study. They are using the age structure of the gada grades to define children.

According to eight key informants, the age group of defining "being a child" varies from one clan to the other clan of Oromo. For instance, the age category of the child in Machaa clan is between zeros to eight years while in Tulamaa Oromo it is below 16 years. Because they referred to children those whose age is below 16 years, Saying that "ijjoollee jechuun nama umuriinsa gada lama hin caallee" i.e., children means persons whose age is below two gada grades. One gada grade is duration of eight years (Asmarom, 1973).

The children who were eligible for guddifachaa are those below the age of 16 but occasionally guddifachaa is practiced for ages up to 20. There are a number of rules regarding customary adoption. The rules in the Gudifacha –moggaasaa practice includes that a "minor" (presumably under eighteen) cannot be an adoptive parent and a child older than twelve is traditionally not adoptable (Beckstrom, 1972; MOLSA, 1991). The age between 12 and 16 is sometimes a transitional period to the responsible adolescent. According to the table 5, most respondents are raising the age at which child or person is taken for guddifachaa or for Moggaasaa.

One can see that the age for guddifachaa is mostly below the 16 years in that its major focus area is on children according to most (28) of the respondents. The age level considered for moggaasaa by some respondent is above 12 years (13) and most (26) said it has no limit, which means moggaasaa has more room for adults. The word 'no limit' is to designate by community above 16 years and even the aged can be adopted by moggaasaa to get protection and inheritance from adopters too. This is because families

mostly practice the moggaasaa when the application comes from the person to be adopted.

Table 5: Their view of age limit by guddifachaa and/or moggaasaa

Variables	Description	the social status of the respondents in the community					
		Elders	Experts	Adopters	Adopted	Non adopted	Total
Child age for guddifachaa in the community	0-12	2	2	1			5
	0-16	6	2	3	7	5	23
	0-20	2		1		1	4
	No age limit		1	-	1	9	11
Age of the person for Moggaasaa in the community	0-12			-			
	0-16			-	2	2	4
	12+	5	3	-	2	3	13
	No age limit	5	2	5	4	10	26

## Discussion

According to Children and Youth Affairs Organization (1995), in its Research report on child abuse and neglect, in predominantly agricultural communities like Ethiopia, children provide the demanded labor both at home and out side. Female children ordinarily share the burden such as baking, fetching water, grinding with their mothers. In addition, the male children assist their fathers in the laborious task of farming, looking after cattle and other activities outside the home. In urban centers, children engage in begging, manual daily labor, petty trade and in similar activities to earn only meager income for themselves or to their family (CYAO.1995, 3).

Children in the area participate in production activities not because they are guddifachaa but for the reason of the overall community's socio economic condition. In principle, though there is the problem of exploitation with the working children, the children in Ethiopia are involved in child work for the survival of the family. It may be true that children may be exploited in different places and times with respect to their labor, sexually, and sometimes beyond their working capacity. This is not because of their being guddifachaa child but due to the demand of the production system of the country with the moral and cultural perspective of the individuals involved. Therefore, the assumption is relevant to the social worker practitioner, to solve these and related problems of children out side or inside of the family setting where stepchild, street children, the abused or abandoned, and orphaned children need alternate family to survive and work as normal citizens (see child right issue in following session). This alternate family system can be achieved via guddifachaa, and/or moggaasaa practice of the Oromo society. However, in the past and today people believe that the main reason for guddifachaa is to enable childless couples to have children and heirs (Haberland, 1963; Blackhurst, 1996; Ayalew, 2002).

In the community, the child work is something considered as a social capital in which the families were using the children as protection, welfare (when become old), and economic production partners as noted by the Abbaa gadaas and adopters. However, to change the system of child work in the country is very difficult and takes long period because the country's production system s predominantly agriculture. The involvement of social work practices is paramount to integrate the country's cultural systems with the UNCRC.

### **Reasons for adoption**

According to the all the respondent in the study area, guddifachaa is practiced in the community for three reasons in both the past and today. First, it is desired by parents who receive children of some family to assure continuity of their successor, secure inheritance of properties or leaving paternal names of their line by childless couples. In the past, it is called ‘arraddaa eeggachuu’ to mean keeping their genealogical line via the child line if the family is unable to give birth to a child. This idea is linked with the problem of a family as being childlessness where 21 respondents agree of the past and 14 respondents said guddifachaa is a response to childlessness today (see table 6).

Second, some families adopt children because of their resources and affection for children demanding larger family size to show social and economic status. Moreover, 16 respondents said that children were adopted in past while 12 people (see table 6 for the breakdown) said that families adopt children today for their labor or economic purpose.

Third, in the past, some families adopt children to help them get assistance of being orphan (six) and 17 people said that today guddifachaa is practiced to help the orphans and the neglected. This shows that recently the trend changed in that most families adopt children who are vulnerable to social and economic situations. More people report that guddifachaa in the community is practiced for the sake of helping the vulnerable families (especially children without families). The family provides the privileges that they can do for their biological child and the guddifachaa child has the right to go to school, to have land, inherit property and names.

Most respondents said that some families have many children but are not capable of caring for them due to different economic, social and other problems. Seldom have extended families, the neighboring clans, or relatives insisted on helping

orphan and the neglected children while they are in a family home. Occasionally the closer kins or any other philanthropic people, adopt the child to assist the family. They adopt the child as their own-based on guddifachaa procedures where they serve as parent for the child.

Table 6: Reasons for practicing guddifachaa in the past and today

Variables	Description	the social status of the respondents in the community					
		Elders	Experts	Adopters	Adopted	Non adopted	Total
Reasons for practicing Guddifachaa in the past	Childlessness	6	3	3	2	7	21
	Economic	3	2	1	4	6	16
	Helping orphans or neglects	1	-	1	2	2	6
Reasons for practicing Guddifachaa today	Childlessness	4	2	1	4	3	14
	Economic	2	2	1	1	6	12
	Helping orphans or neglects	4	1	3	3	6	17

When the children in the community face problems like being orphaned or neglected, the community solves such problems in two ways via guddifachaa. These techniques are: First the community requests their closer kins to take the neglected or orphaned children as guddifachaa (lammacha lammii type), and second if the relatives are not capable of doing this, the community elders arrange a guddifachaa family where the child is integrated in to a family and live his/her life time as part of that family.

### **Children rights**

Children play significant roles in social and economic activities of the Oromo people. Children are the generation base of strong social relationships between the two parents; minimize the ambiguity of divorce, if husband and /or wife are sterile, they can culturally adopt (*guddifachaa*). Children in Oromo have some social and cultural rights. (Gada, 1988; 68) However, in reality almost all children in the country contribute labor to their family's economy production irrespective of their status i.e. ethnic, sex, age, adopted or not adopted.

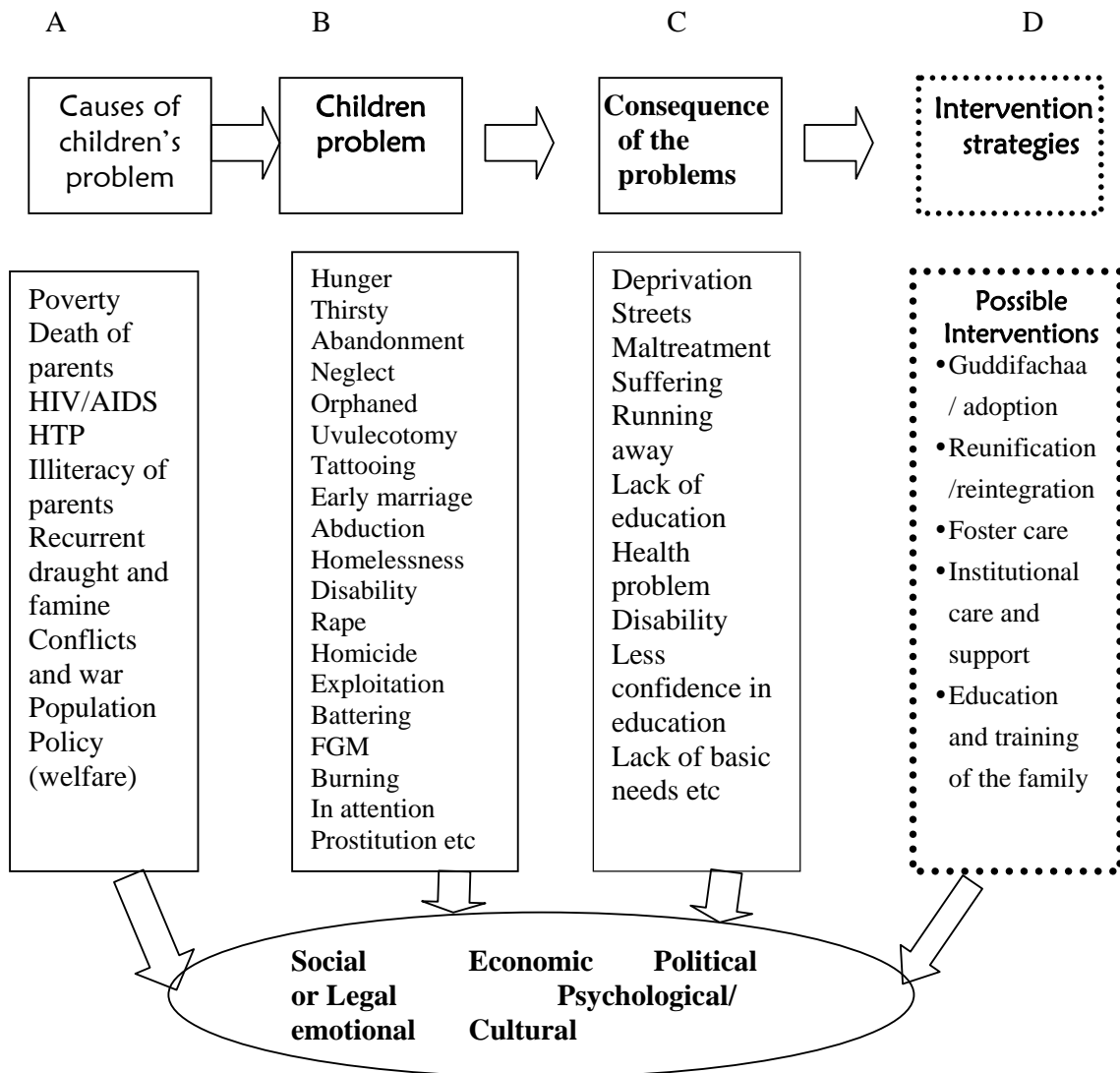
H/Mariaam Kebede (1995) and Gada Melba (1988) discussed that, Children in Oromo have the right to speak because children are considered as the mouthpiece of *Waaqaa* (God). They are free to speak their minds, express their feelings at public gatherings especially in the rural areas. In addition, children have the right to participate and celebrate their cultural rights such as *guddifachaa* celebration, *handhuuraa buusaa* (cutting of umbilical cord), *hammachiisaa* (name giving), *roggee buusaa* (first hair shaving) and other cultural celebrations in which the community recognizes children.

In fact, the participatory discussion with children and family could develop a positive relationship between them. This participatory form of socialization can be exceptional for the family who entertain with their children. Nevertheless, it is not uniform across the places and clans in Oromia. Other types of child socialization are repressive types of socialization where the parents are punishing children, and maltreating children.

Therefore, the study in general focused on the areas of child social, economic, psychological, emotional and other basic needs with the perspectives of the community culture and the social work practices.

The following model shows the cause -effect relationship of the process. In addition, the study focuses in the area of intervention (column D).

Figure 1 the cause effect relationship with the possible intervention strategy in line with guddifachaa practice.



As discussed earlier in Ethiopia the level of income of households and the number of people living in poverty is very large. Children face many socioeconomic problems that are caused by the general poverty situation of the country. The issues of poverty, which encompasses different factors at aggregate level, can be breakdown as the death of one of or both parents, HIV/ADIS victims, by Harmful Traditional

Practices (HTP), illiteracy of parents and the community, the recurrent famine and drought, conflicts and wars, population growth with limited resources, and the countries welfare system with its implementation problems.

Of these populations of the country, the dependent age groups are those who cover the larger proportion. Due to this and the related issues, children in Ethiopia face problems of hunger and thirsty, abandonment, neglecting, being orphaned, food shortage, health problems, psychological, physical problems, disability, exploitations, traumas, violence, rape, abduction or early marriage, etc which may have different and multiple dimensions of consequences on their general wellbeing.

For instance, according to CYAO (1995), sexual exploitation of female children is becoming a major concern today. This problem arises partly due to poverty of children who may be orphans, abandoned children or runaway. Dreadful poverty makes the children so desperate that are willing to do any thing to earn something that contributes to their survival.

The possible effects of such problems are the deprivation of the rights, leading their life on and off the street, maltreatment by adults, physical and psychological traumas, stress and tensions, less confidence, improper or deviant behaviors: drug addiction, delinquencies, becoming victims of HIV/AIDS, unhealthy and suffering, malnutrition, lack of love and affection, no protection in general.

The possible intervention models for the problems of children are education and training with the capacity building as preventive measures; and child family reunification or reintegration, integration into new families, foster cares services, institutional care and support, guddifachaa and moggaasaa as curative measures. The guddifachaa is an alternative child family integration where the family is a social one. It

is a curative measure that assists children to stay in the family environment with in the principle of “the best place for a child is family.”

In addition, guddifachaa is a community-based approach that requires less resource, strict customary and modern legal support. It is appropriate in the search of solution for children especially abandoned / neglected, or orphans in the country. Therefore, the model indicated above serves the purpose of studying guddifachaa practice as an intervention strategy of children problems.

In general terms, this model frames the scope of the study in relation to cause-effect chain, where the problem of children and its intervention strategies get emphasis. Thus, of the above lists of problems, the guddifachaa practice as child problem intervention focused on the issues of child neglect or abandonment and orphan in relation to guddifachaa practice in Ada'a Liban district.

The model is not linear as seen from the figure one, but it is complex set where factors such as legal or political, economic, psychological or emotional, cultural and other environmental factors have a contribution in the process of children problem intervention by guddifachaa practice. Here what is supposed to be a cause in the model can be an effect or the problem by itself.

### **Guddifachaa Practices**

Expert - In the study district, there are two types of adoption<sup>4</sup> according to discussion with Experts. These are the international adoption and national child customary or guddifachaa and modern legal adoption practices. According to the experts, the international adoption system is an adoption practice where the street children, abandoned or orphaned children were taken to foreign countries. The children

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<sup>4</sup> The terms adoption does not necessarily represent the Oromo Guddifachaa because guddifachaa is beyond the meaning of English adoption what is equated with adoption in Oromo is moggaasaa

in the area were taken for international adoption. It is handled by NGOs, along with the youth and child adoption department of MOLSA. It is a kind of inter country adoption where the laws of this country are integrated with the UN child right conventions (CRC). The general process, practices and procedures are dealt with the ministry line departments (which is macro level adoption).

The national adoption is a guddifachaa practice within the place of birth for children within either their community or other communities in the country. The national adoption practice is divided into two places as the customary laws and the modern law of Ethiopia. The customary law of adoption is referred to as cultural guddifachaa, which has the rules and ritualistic procedures and not written in the law. The modern law of adoption bases itself on written documents with rules, procedures, proclamations of government, and the policies designed for the welfare of children in Ethiopia.

Adoption of a child in the Oromo society and under federal adoption law has both similarities and differences in practices and procedures. The adoption law of the country rooted in the civil code of 1960 has eleven articles 796-806 under one unit of adoption and its implementations. The modern adoption law even used the term guddifachaa to refer to adoption (Civil code, 1960).

In the FDRE family law of proclamations of July 2005, states various possibilities and impossibilities in adopting a child in Ethiopia (proclamation no 213/2005). Moreover, the Oromia regional national state has incorporated adoption proclamation in the formulation of “seera maatii Oromia (Oromia family law)” in articles 197-213 in accordance with the country’s civil code (Oromia family, 2005).

However, the customary practice of guddifachaa has its unique characters of exercise in the society understudy where both laws are compulsory to each other (see types of guddifachaa and annex 1).

According to the experts (March 2006), the domestic guddifachaa practice in Ada'a Liban district (Bishoftu area) is undertaken in two settings: an urban and rural setting. The districts office of Labor and Social Affair in collaboration with the districts Police and the court office carry out the guddifachaa practice in urban center. This has processes, procedures and strict rules designed by ministry of labor and social Affair in line with the civil code and family proclamations. The guidance has the following major features as to the major criteria that adopters should fulfill to take a child for guddifachaa /adoption).

These criteria are:

- adopters should apply to the office of labor and social Affairs why she/she need to take the guddifachaa
- Bring supporting letter from Kebeles he/she is living
- Availing Medical certificate from hospital that signify he or she is normal and capable of earning their living by working.
- Marriage certificate (if married)
  - a) if the adopters are married, 2 photographs of each couple
  - b) if the adopter is single the adoption of a child is given to female only

(MOLSA, 1991; Oromia BOLSA,1995)

Based on these set criteria by the ministry and the community's guddifachaa practice, the office provides services for vulnerable children in the urban (Bishoftu). Orphans (of both parents), abandoned children, street children and children of the poor were getting advantage in the town according to the experts. However, the number of

orphan children in Bishoftu town is not properly recorded; there were about 37 identified orphans in the town. The total numbers of street and abandoned children is not yet surveyed but are estimated to be 500 children. This shows that the number of vulnerable children in the district is not clearly known for there is no survey undertaken /implemented in the site (DOLSA annual report, 2005).

However, many children suffer from different socio economic problems in the town of Bishoftu. These children came mostly from the nearby rural areas and the Bishoftu town itself. Most children are children born to maidservants, prostitutes, street mother or girls, female students etc. Police reported they are thrown away children that appear on the street, at hospital yards, at police yards, and in the compound of labor and social affair office of the district. Then the children are taken to the police for further investigation, as to whom their parents are, where they live, or do they have family, and even at what time the child was put in these places.

The experts further discussed that, after verifying that the children have no family/parents, the police give the child to the District Office of Labor and Labor Affair (DOLSA). Then the DOLSA starts searching for ‘the would be family’ for the child and places the child in the family, only after verifying each of the above set criteria for those family who requested before the child’s arrival were fulfilled.

The office arranges a transitional care home for the child until the child is adopted under the legal system. In addition, the office can arrange a temporary family who cares for these children. These families can be the family who reported to the police, or other philanthropic individuals in the town.

As the experts pointed out that, the self-reporting strategy of the poor as potential adopters may have unplanned consequences when the most poor families are willing to take care of the abandoned and orphaned children. This means that

sometimes adoption by the poor is done for the sake of expectation of assistance or other instrumental reasons. Some families even report to the office saying that, “a child is with them and they can take care of him or her as their own or will adopt.” Their assumption is that they benefit from assistances given to the child if the assistance is provided by the office or other agencies in the area. These types of family affect the growth and wellbeing of the children for they misuse the resources provided to them in the name of adopted children. It fosters dependency and creates problem on the cultural practices like guddifachaa. Because this method is not relevant to the welfare of children, the organization (DOLSA) designed a system to handle it. The office can collect information via different sources about the transitional family whether they are capable of meeting the responsibility and fulfilling the need of the child being in their home as the experts indicated.

Likewise, there are organizations, which provide different social services to children in the district. These organizations provide home based care, institutional care and child placement /foster cares. There is also a custom by institutions to provide some material and financial supports to those who voluntarily accept children from organizations. Thus, it created competing groups among people to take child for care from institutions because they will get income via that way.

In order to solve such kinds of problems different NGOs and BOLSA working in Bishoftu area started developing a means for children care and support system that is community based approach. It is done in collaboration with Idirs (CBOs) where the Idir members know each other and who can do what when supported by training. They are responsible for the care and support of abandoned and orphaned children technically supported by NGO's as well as the Bishoftu municipality and the labor and social affair desks (DOLSA, 2005). This means a direct contacting of caretakers, or adopters will be

stopped by the poor caregivers, and the Idirs plays the role on behalf of the agencies by building its capacity for implementation.

The other problem observed in relation to children adoption in the town is the case of disabled children's who are rarely adopted. The reason is that people attach a meaning (social and cultural) to the disability of a person in the urban centers and rural areas. In rural areas, it has no further meaning for disability except magnifying his or her inability to participate in the productive activities of the family of community. Thus, even the rural areas for adoption of disabled (physical and mental) children could not be done as the experts noted.

In rural areas, adoption of the disabled is non-existent. The discrimination is based on customary belief where clan groups assume that the disability happened to them due to their past ancestors sins or wrong deeds. Thus, the child will be cared among his/her clan member if he/ she is orphan and not eligible for guddifachaa in the community. According the key informants, the reason that the child is not eligible for guddifachaa is that because the child could not get equal privileges like the non-disabled. Guddifachaa is a life long care of child including the disabled child with all the privileges and the responsibilities of the family.

The interviews of experts from different offices indicates that, guddifachaa, as a customary legal system of taking some ones child as his/her own, can make a significant contribution in solving the problem of children on the streets (abandoned or others )and orphans. In addition, the community was working in the intervention of child problems based on their natural knowledge especially for children who are orphaned and abandoned.

The potential of the community to accommodate the adoption of street children is limited by the current community attitude and without change in community attitude

may not solve the problems. However, if some efforts from the social work profession and policy environments were added, I believe guddifachaa can contribute to the solutions of the problem in the long-run (See table 9).

### **The practice of guddifachaa and moggaasaa**

Key informants and adopters' discussion - Mohamed Hassen (1990) pointed out that, "an important Oromo institution which seems to facilitate the process of the population movement was called moggaasaa (adoption). One from of moggaasaa is known as guddifachaa." In reality in Oromo, the concepts guddifachaa and moggaasaa, of course, are distinct, interdependent and used for different purposes in the community even though both are traditional adoption institutions.

Culturally, guddifachaa refers to the process of taking another family's son or daughter as a child of the family and making him/her a member of family with all his /her privileges, rights, responsibilities and other duties based on the gada law by adopters. In the past, it was practiced mostly because of childlessness and affection for children by the adopting families.

Guddifachaa ritual process is practiced by group where clan members to participate in the whole system. It is prepared by holding cultural materials called 'Kallacha' by the 'would be' father and 'Caacuu' by the 'would be' mother of the child. The 'Kallacha'<sup>5</sup> and 'Caacuu'<sup>6</sup> in Oromo society of the area have equivalent meaning and respect with Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity 'tabot'<sup>7</sup>.

According to all the elders and community leaders, some times the guddifachaa child is referred to as "ilmo Kallacha' or 'Caacuu' " to mean that the child is born

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<sup>5</sup> Kallacha refers to material made up metal which is believed to be given spirituality by Waaqaa/God in Oromo

<sup>6</sup> Caacuu is a decorative materials used by woman to decorate materials carried by women

<sup>7</sup> Tabot is a the arc of covenant used by Orthodox Christian; held during the epiphany and the various religious setting in church

legally to the family. It is not necessary to describe completely the ritual process rather a few points to insight the practitioners for their future career in the area is helpful.

The customary practice of guddifachaa is done in the following ways to point a few. The families who need to adopt the child from another family go with community leaders especially Abbaa Gadaa, Hayyuu holding 'ulfa' and request the family saying:-

Afaan Oromo	English meaning
Isin ijoollee qabdu	you have children
Kan Rabbi isinii kennu	that God gave to you
Ani ilman dhabe	but I did not have
Ilma seeraan naa kenni	so give me the child legally
Kan araddaa Koo qabatu	who may continue my lineage

Then it is followed with a song called 'Gabisayoo'<sup>8</sup> by men and 'Marehoo' by both men and women to express ritualistically their feelings to God ('Waaqaa'), earth (dachee), and the people among themselves to ask the family who has many children to be given one legally. The song is prepared for the appreciation that the people have for nature especially for God's generosity with different respects. This was done in the past and only rarely present times in the Liban Cuqaallaa area. According to six key informants (March 2006), however, the rituals that are linked to the guddifachaa process have declined with introduction of Christianity (Orthodox) and Islam in the area. Both religions have their own way of rituals and ceremonial practices different from guddifachaa practice. Some Oromo society became the followers these religion leaving their religion Waaqqeffannaa that has a strong connection with guddifachaa rules and obligations. Nevertheless, most of the communities in the area are well acquainted with the practices of own religion (Waaqqeffannaa) and cultural practice.

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<sup>8</sup> 'Gabisayo' and 'mareehoo' are ritual songs sing by Oromo of the Ada'a Liban during Gada ceremony, guddifachaa ceremony, during annual celebration of Waaqqeffannaa religion

Moreover, four elders said, “Gabisayo and Mareehoo are still practiced when the adopter families are rich.”

The elders in the area said that when, “we sing Gabisayo during the guddifachaa of a child and we saw that there would be a rain. We say that God (Waaqaa) heard us and send his message to us that, the child is the child of ‘ulfa’ who keep the ‘araddaa’ (heir) of the adopters.” In the processes of practice, there is a vow from both sides based on the customary law and belief system, while handing over of the child from biological family to the adopters. It is based on the gada rules and the Waaqqeffannaa belief systems of the community.

During guddifachaa ritual ceremony it is the Abbaa Gadaa who on behalf of his gosaa (clan) undertakes adoption. That means the Abbaa gadaa leads the process from the beginning to the end of the ritual session. Before guddifachaa practice animals slaughtered, they place five spears (two pointing west and three pointing east) on the ground, and each clan members dips his/ her hand into the blood and commit oath lead by Abbaa gadaa. The spears positions signify the Oromo confederacies of Barentuu (with two pairs) and Booranaa (with three pairs of clan) direction to show unity while the blood shows the readiness of the gosaa (clan) to fight for the right of its new member. Then the Abbaa gadaa blesses the new members, the adopted of the groups according to the key informants’ description of the process. For instance for moggaasaa the oath says:

Afaan Oromo	English
Kan ati jibbittu nan jibbaa	I hate what you hate
Kan ati jaalattu nan jaaladha	I like what you like
Si waliin nan duula	I fight what you fight
Karaa deemteen deema	I go where you go

Gumaa kee nan baasa

I revenge your blood etc (informants

March 18, 2006)

The oath is binding and unbreakable law on both sides. It is a mutual responsibility and obligation in that the adopted get protection and material benefit. This kind of cultural processes assist the social workers to integrate the orphan and neglected children to families via admitting and facilitating what is existing in the community.

As five informants stressed the law says, “the child is the one whom you adopt socially to make yours, has the right of privileges that you do for your born child. You cannot separate the child from yours if you get child in future. He/she can inherit you legally; every thing required from you will be fulfilled on the request of the child etc. If not the child is supposed to be called ‘ergarama’ or “neglected.” When the child did not get any proper care from the adopter family, therefore, the biological family is responsible to look after him/her properly. The child is returnee to family or again neglected. To reduce the neglecting of children social work practices are paramount in the areas of counseling the family and the adopted child by maintaining the family system and reinforcing the underlying cultural values that the child is the child of the adopting family with all rights and responsibilities.

### **Types of guddifachaa Practices**

According to discussion with informants, adopters and the adopted adults, the customarily practiced guddifachaa has four major processes based on the type and place of practicing the rituals. These are 1) Gudifata Gulanta, 2) Lammacha Lammii, 3) Gudifata Kallacha, and 4) moggaasaa. The following description of the guddifachaa types are more of anthropological and historical components, but it is also relevant to

know for social practitioners while working for children adopted by relatives and non-relatives where guddifachaa is practiced predominantly like in East Shawa

Gudifata Gulunta (within house guddifachaa) - In some Oromo society, males have the custom of marrying more than one wife. When one of the wives of the man is barren and the rest have children. They practice adoption of gulantaa (within the house) of both mothers. The adoption is prepared within or among the same family member where a person has two wives of which one is infertile. It is the process in that the father being the same, when the barren women (other wife of the child's father) request one of the fertile mothers' children, according to the law. It is done within the home of the biological mother in that father sits in between them, takes the child (who is nude), and pass to the adopting mother. All the necessary ritual ceremonies are undertaken and arranged according to the customary law of the area.

Lammacha Lammii (siblings or close kin adoption) is a type of guddifachaa exercised among close relatives counting their genealogical line up to three-generation in father's line. Its ritual ceremony is prepared in the compound of the families (both the receiver and the biological parents) where the relatives give and receive children based on the 'Ulfa<sup>9</sup>' system.

'Guddifata seeraa' (customary adoption) is a type of adoption practice that is arranged among clans of Oromo to the receiving community clan/or family. The ritual processes are similar with others. It is practiced outside the compound of the social family. Guddifata seeraa has several names and meanings according to the closeness in Genealogical line. 'Guddifata' seeraa is sometimes referred to as guddifata kallachaa (legal child), 'Guddifata koluu', or 'dhakaraa' (money). The meaning of each them is, if unmarried person of other Oromo clan or other ethnics below age 20 came to the

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<sup>9</sup> *Ulfa is the collective name of Kallacha and Caacuu*

society and apply for adoption, she/he is assumed called 'kolu' (refugee) or gudifata ilma galu(adopted returnee) (Ayalew, 2002). This is unique in that sometimes definition of children in the society is up to 16 years but have a four years reserve after the last age childhood (age16). Recently guddifata kallachaa moved the ages to 20 years in some special cases like 'guddifata kolu' (see the previous points on age of child for guddifachaa and Moggaasaa)

The respondents pointed out that, the moment the person crosses the boundary, and stays longer than six month, he is not considered as a member of adopter's family or clan. Guddifata kallachaa is the adoption practice where the child is bring about by holding the 'ulfa' in the community by adopters from Oromo clans of the neighboring areas while gudifata dhakaraa is the adoption of a matured person of age 12 and above who requests the adopters by himself coming from different community of Oromo via provision of his money. Gudifata dhakaraa is practiced for the benefit of the adopted protection and security. The applicant can be from Oromo or non-Oromo. Today it is rarely practiced and sometimes referred to as ilma galu. Guddifata ilma galuu can be Moggaasaa of persons without ceremony.

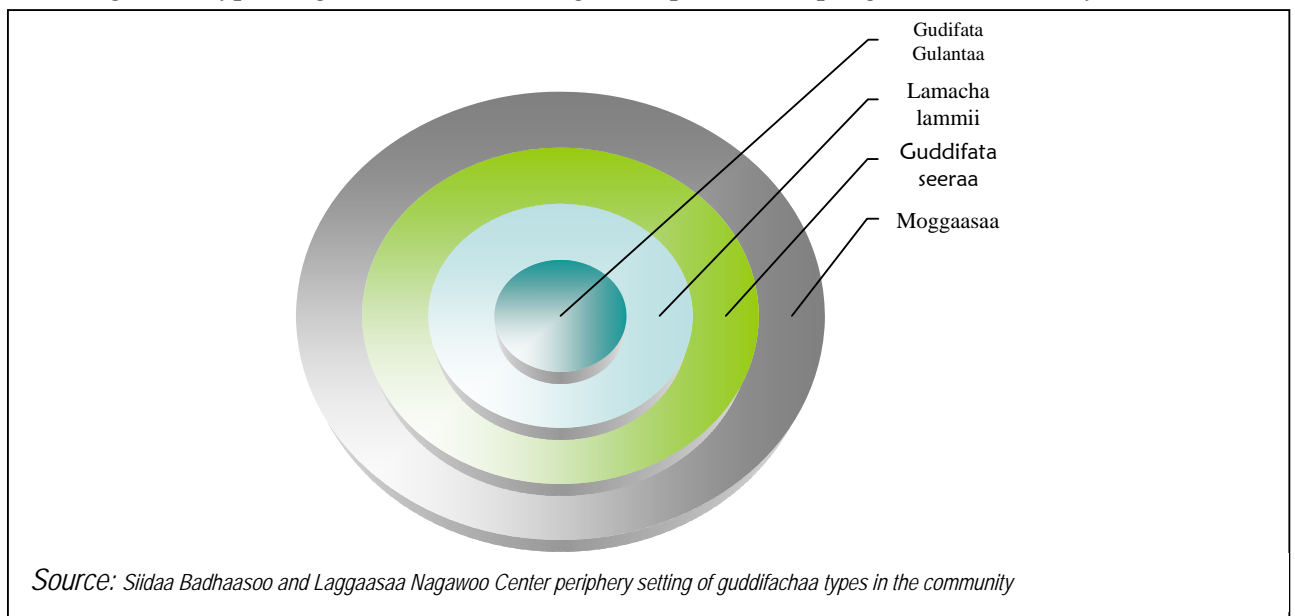
Moggaasaa is the type of guddifachaa where the child or the person requests the adopting family for life long fostering. It is practiced with the non-Oromo societies like Amhara, Gurage, Wolayta, Silti and other ethnic groups who reside with Oromos of the areas. Then again, whose locality is adjacent to the adopting family clan or further are taken for moggaasaa. The ceremony for moggaasaa is undertaken like the guddifata seeraa outside the compound of the adopters. This is to show that the distance in genealogy of the child and the parents.

Each type of guddifachaa practices can be demonstrated with the figure three where the center of reference is taken in line with the adopter parents. The diagram has

a center periphery structure where the practice of guddifachaa is undertaken in the community understudy. Hence the center of the figures signify inside a house, the next stage inside the compound but out side of house, the third and forth are the same except the naming and slight difference in variables. The periphery is the moggaasaa and the guddifata seeraa prepared outside the compound of the adopters. The place indicates that the close relationship of the adopted and the adopters in the clan genealogy or others. The ritual can be done inside the home, in the compound and outside the compound of the adopters.

On the other hand, moggaasaa is a process in which the child or an adult requests the family to adopt him as their own by accepting the rules and procedures of the existing social system. The moggaasaa process is slightly different from guddifachaa in that the name of the child or the adult is changed during the ritual process. It has restriction for female by the virtue that women are given for marriage to outsiders and she cannot stay with the adopting family for life.

Figure 2 Types of guddifachaa according to the place of adopting in the community



The interdependence of ‘guddifachaa and moggaasaa is that moggaasaa can be guddifachaa but guddifachaa cannot be Moggaasaa. The term moggaasaa cannot interchangeably used with the term guddifachaa. Moggaasaa is a culturally accepted way of naming the person to the adopting family. It is the institution where the adopted apply to be a member of family or clan willingly.

In some instances, in the past Oromo society adopted a neighboring ethnic (non Oromo) by recognizing it as part of the Oromo clans, once the Soddoo Gurage were adopted by the Soddoo Oromo (Bekele, 1958: 37; Alula, 2002:312)

In short, guddifachaa and moggaasaa have some similarities and differences. Guddifachaa is referring to an English equivalent with adoption while moggaasaa refers to foster adoption of a child or an adult in Oromo society. The continuum in table 12 of annex four compares and contrasts the guddifachaa and the moggaasaa in Oromo (See annex four table 12).

To wind up of the four types of guddifachaa practices exercised pointed out by the respondents; I noticed that the guddifata seeraa and the moggaasaa could play a significant role in the integration of children to family system. Because the restrictions posed by the first and the second type of guddifachaa practice are strong. Hence, the social work practitioners in Ethiopia should identify what types of guddifachaa are relevant to children in the communities to use in the intervention process like Liban Cuqaallaa area.

#### **Eligibility criteria for guddifachaa of children in the community**

The custom of Oromo adoption practice has been perpetuating itself from generation to generation. The eligibility criteria of adopting children in the community are set by community gada system. The following discussion is the reports of Abbaa

gadaas (elders), the adopted and adopters. It is mostly taken key informants and the adopters' discussions.

There are culturally set social norms that govern activities, practices of a given society. Oromo society has its own culturally set rules and regulation for the guddifachaa practices. Guddifachaa practice as institution has its own way of performance in child receiving and taking. On the other hand, the eligibility of children to be taken by guddifachaa family is based on the factors such as sex, age, birth order and social status and ethnic group.

Age -To undertake such adoption the age of the child should be below 16 years old, because it is believed that it is easy for the adopters to socialize the child in a manner that they need him/her to be shaped. The child also can easily learn and adapt to the adopting family environment. For this reason, adopting families fulfill the requirement for the adopted children with respect to basic needs, love and affection within that family.

Moreover, the age has set for guddifachaa of children in the customary law as between zero and 16 years old. It is linked with the age set of Gada grade in Oromo. Children are eligible for guddifachaa when they are in first two age sets of Gada. However, in the modern law of Ethiopia children eligible for guddifachaa, when they are below 11 years (MOLSA, 1991:55)

In other words, the eligibility criteria set in the custom for the adopters is that any person whose age below the age of 20 and single can not adopt a child because they not be responsible. In the community, there is a belief of children age status in the adoption process to become young for the reason of easily management of the behaviors.

Sex - Adoption of children in Oromo society is practiced for male and female children. Most adopters prefer the guddifachaa of male rather than the female. This sex

preference in the society is for the social and cultural influences such as the lower status of women. It could also be the patriarchal orientation of the family system where the male are dominant. Rarely guddifachaa of female is practiced in the community within her own clan. The reason may be for the assumption that female children will marry or leave their parents home and for marriage among Oromo is possible from other clans. In Ada'a Liban, for example, the Galan sub clans do not to adopt a female child from Liban, Ada'a or Warra Jaarsaa sub-clan living in the same area.

Social status and ethnic - According to the elders, Abbaa Gada or clan chiefs, there are children who may not be eligible for guddifachaa based on different socio-cultural statuses. Those children who are not eligible for guddifachaa may be eligible for cultural practice like 'harma hodhaa (breast feeding). For guddifachaa to be exercised, the adopters as well as the child should be from Oromo. There are differences in accepting social groups for guddifachaa because of the fear of inheriting resources such as land, cattle and others by the non-Oromo in the past. The social groups who cannot be adopted (guddifachaa) by the Oromo are identified as 'faajjoo' (refers to the people who are castes because of their social and health status). There were children who did not qualify for guddifachaa. These are children born of slave parents, children born from parents with skin diseases, children from evil eyed (buda) parents, and children from degraded professions ( pottery, blacksmiths etc). These parents can only carry out adoption among themselves (MOLSA, 1991). This is seen from the interview result shown in the table 7 where 26 respondents approved the existence of social status difference for adoption in the community while remaining said that there is no. this seems that the idea is related to the current loosening of some social statuses. Where some of the above institutions were abolished because of orphan and

neglected children adoption is started. The following is the supporting evidence from the interview results of the study.

Table 7: Social status difference to adopt a child

Variable	Description	the social status of the respondents in the community					
		Elders	Experts	Adopters	Adopted	Non adopted	Total
social status difference to adopt a child	Yes	4	4	4	5	9	26
	No	6	1	1	3	6	17

In the interview of the respondents the eligibility criteria for guddifachaa and moggaasaa is reflected according to the numbers seen below in table 8. This table shows that the guddifachaa have very slight differences of practices in the community though clearly defined in the past. The guddifachaa and moggaasaa of children and adults in the community is variable in the choice of the adopting families' interest of adoption. The guddifachaa is mostly practiced among Oromos themselves while the moggaasaa is practiced for others by Oromos. However, this does not moggaasaa is not practiced among Oromos. Moggaasaa of a person either Oromo or any other groups is exercised in the area under the study. The community adopts (moggaasaa) of persons of any distant places which encompasses Oromos and others based on the application of the adoptee.

Numbers and birth order -In the customary law, the number of the children of family is clearly identified before some family intends to adopt. If the biological family of a child has only one child, or two: one male and one female, they are not requested to give their child to social parents. Even the adopters would not attempt this, the number

of children that an adoptive parent can take is one child but sometimes people adopt two or three.

Table 8: Ethnic groups' eligibility of children for gudifachaa and/or moggaasaa

Variables	Description	the social status of the respondents in the community					
		Elders	Experts	Adopters	Adopted	Non adopted	Total
people who is eligible for guddifachaa	Oromo	6	3	3	3	6	21
	Non Oromo	4	1	2	2	1	10
	No discrimination	-	1	0	3	8	12
people who is eligible for moggaasaa	Oromo	3	1	1	3	2	10
	Non Oromo	7	3	4	5	7	26
	No discrimination	-	1	-	-	6	7

In the same manner, the birth order of children has meaning to request of child for guddifachaa. The first-born child (angafa) in the family is not given for adoption because it is believed that, the elder child has good sprit and ('Ayyanaa<sup>10</sup>) dignity for the continuity of the family.

### Attitudes towards Guddifachaa

In order to understand the community's attitudes on guddifachaa, I interviewed two groups in the community. These groups are the adopted children and the adopted adults. The following descriptions suggest that determining factors exist in the lifetimes of the adopters and the adopted with various social, economic, cultural and other problems.

<sup>10</sup> Ayyanaa refers to the extra ordinary sprit of a person given to him/her by the almighty 'Waaqaa' because of the blessing and love. it is an equivalent name to the Holly Sprit

The discussion deals with attitudes of people on the guddifachaa practices and the aftermath processes.

In the study of guddifachaa practice the attitudes of different groups' of respondents was examined. In this attempt to study the attitudes to wards adoption (guddifachaa) in the area, the adopters and the adopted groups pointed out the following.

**Adopters** – In the process of assessing the attitude of the adopters towards gudifacha, the adopters have a very strong respect and dignity for the institution of guddifachaa gives them a chance of having children as their own by cultural law. However, adopters' attitude is geared towards the behavior of adopted children where the behavior of children is expressed as both negative and positive.

In the past, most adoption of the children was undertaken for childlessness and social bond creation among themselves. It was also a means of assuring the continuity of the family lineage when the adopting family did not have a child born in their wedlock. Alternatively, adoption is simply to have many children when children considered as resources. In the process of practicing adoption in the community, many children were adopted and integrated to family structures.

In the process of fostering the adopted child families experience different behavior patterns reflected by the children. Some families even do not remember that the child is guddifachaa due to their love, affection and the good manners that the child expressed to them. The family does not sometime realize that she or he is guddifachaa child despite the fact that they adopted him/her. They consider him/her as a born one because they have him/her based the society's law (customary law). The adopting families share their every responsibility; provide them property, protection and other socio-economic supports like the born children.

However, there will also be families who were seriously upset on their guddifachaa children when the guddifachaa child has created problems of conflicts attacks on people, stealing and robbing people property. Occasionally the guddifachaa child left the family after identifying his/her biological family, the guddifachaa child's behavior is rude and mischievous. In addition, the guddifachaa child tries to cheat them and other people in their social life. The guddifachaa child tells or spies their family affairs to outsider saying that "they maltreat me" after they got a child" and when he/she deviate from the communities social norms values and others.

Of the interviewed families, almost all said that, guddifachaa practice should continue with the current changing structure not as the past. In the past, it demands many resources to undertake the rituals, to take child you pay cattle and the clan pays at least one cattle. In the past, the child was the child of clan when someone adopts him/her but today the clan role is decreasing where the child is under the responsibility of the adopters.

The general trend of families (adopters) attitude for guddifachaa is as an institution positive, though there is lack of proper indicators for measuring it. The attitudes of adopters for guddifachaa become positive due to two main reasons. First, for it gives families a child as biologically born by customary law. Second, for it gives a room for the adoptees of the orphaned and the neglected children permanent care and support in the family system. This is revealed from the self-reporting of the interview of adopters. The existing of customary law in the area has a profound influence on the feelings of adopters as positive for guddifachaa institutions continuity. However, very few individuals (adoptees) behaviors and the change in the trends of family system as a whole are a signal for receiving children to their family by guddifachaa system. According to Joan H. Hollinger (1993, ) in his title "adoption law" "it (adoption law) is

complicated not only by virtue of the types of people and family arrangements involved but also by the number of governments which have authority for regulation of adoption.” (45)

Adopted persons - Just like the adopters, the attitude of the guddifachaa children is two fold. First, the children who were adopted at an early age, below 8 years, have a very positive attitude for the adopters and the adoption practice. They did not identify that the family is not their biological family. This is, according to them, the families were caring, supporting and doing what ever they need accordingly. “They do not segregate us from their children. Even they do not realize that they are guddifachaa.” They (adoptee) fight with people if they were told claiming ‘I am born to this family’.

For instance, when you look at the case of adopted persons (children and adults) in conducting the research in table one above, the results of the proposal and the success of interviewing is different for the society’s culture that the adopted persons were not told when they were taken at early age of infancy. This is because the community believes that if the adoptee were told that “they are adopted (guddifachaa)”, it would increase the probability of running away, feeling ‘orma<sup>11</sup>, and other problems.

Then again, there are persons who have a deep respect for the perpetuation of guddifachaa practice itself. From their personal experiences, they acknowledged that guddifachaa is something very relevant, which was created for children who have no families and for those families with many children to get help from other fosters. It is clearly seen that the guddifachaa children have a positive attitude from adopters. These kinds of children were those who were adopted at the earlier ages of guddifachaa age group.

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<sup>11</sup> in Oromo society the word ‘orma’ is used to refer to outsider, not family member or not relative, could also means non Oromo

One of the respondents said that, “I appreciate the one who created this cultural law of love and affection among non related people. For example, the moggaasaa children have a family because of their request and their immediate acceptance by the adopting family.”

In the contrary as some adopted respondents indicated that, sometimes the behavior of the adopters is subjected to the change with the behavior of the child when some children develop unnecessary behaviors like addictions to different local drugs. Then the families may punish the child or some not.

Second, on the other hand, there were adopted children, who expressed their grief up on the adopters. They said that, ‘adopter abuse, mistreat, discriminate, make them participate in works that their born children were not supposed to do. Even some family forces them to return to their biological family home where they do not have much of a social relationship with their biological parents.

The pessimistic attitudes of the adopted persons rise due to the later lack of proper care and support of the adopting family, their relatives and neighbors. They say that they were maltreated during their stay where the family forces them to work in the field and in the houses. In addition, the guddifachaa children were not told that they are guddifachaa officially. The assumed reason is that the family and child relationship cannot be strengthened if it is told.

The guddifachaa children may face psychological discomfort when adopted against their will. The child may not submit to staying with the adopting parents or could develop bad behaviors such as disobedience, family objection. This kind children behavior occurs in the society and if such behaviors occurred, the adopter family arranges a meeting with child’s biological family and tries to convince him / her that, “you are their child we are relatives. We gave because they do not have a child. They

chose you because they love you we even gave them because you have a good behavior and soon.”

In general, the guddifachaa children have strong psychological, emotional and social attachments to the adopting family like children with their biological family. This and other trends make guddifachaa unique from other types of adoption in the country. Guddifachaa as an institutional practice has a very strong privileges from both adopters and the adoptees. But the adverse issues are attached to the behaviors of adopting family or adopted child rather than the institution.

### **Case histories**

In the same way, the interview results from which we can analyze our own perspectives included in the case histories of the adopted persons. However, here because the cases requested me for confidentiality I used Mr. ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ as adoptee and ‘X’, Y and Z as adopter families instead of their names.

#### **Case One**

Mr. ‘A’ was adopted in his early age where his biological family gave him to the adopting parents of ‘X’. Now he is 55 and from Tulamaa Oromo of the Jiddaa clan. He has five children and currently living in the Odaa Jiddaa peasant association of the Ada'a Liban district around Adulaalaa town. The following case is about Mr. “A”, which demonstrates how the guddifachaa children can be abused by the adopting family’s relatives and other community members. Thus, he said that,

When I was very kid, my parents gave me to guddifachaa for X’s family. They came with ‘ulfa’ and requested my parents to receive me as guddifachaa son fulfilling all the customary legal procedures. Because my parents have many children, agreed up on their requests, and sent me to

my current family. This is what I heard after the death of my father Mr. X and my mother. I do not consider anything about X's family as outsider or my adopters. Because they were doing every thing just like to my brothers and sisters in that home. However, I heard that Mr. X was not my real father after his death from his relatives who came for inheritance. They came and raised the issue of inheritance though I and the other children were in the houses that we have the right of inheritance by both the country's law and the 'seera Caffee tumaa' (customary law). Both the government and the community laws allow for us (children), not for the relatives. They said to me 'you are guddifachaa child; you do not have any thing to do with Mr. X's resources and others. Then they took the land, raid the cattle and attacked my family and me in different time to leave the area for them by saying "It is, we who can control everything on behalf of Mr. X's lineage." I took this case to 'Caffee tumaa', where the Abbaa gadaa solved the issue that it is shame (safuu) to maltreat the guddifachaa child in our community. The 'Caffee' passed decision for me and the rest of children, and then they refused to accept elders and Abbaa gadas decision and went to the district court where we are debating up on. The district court also decided for me again. However, they did not accept the court case, what the Caffee did was very interesting to help me via its rules and the government rules limited them officially.

### **Case two**

The second case history is the case history of Mr. 'B' who is adopted by Mr. Y family in 1990 at the age of six.

I was very kid and about five or six years when Mr. Y adopted me as his son. He has two children: one male and one female. However, I am the son of Mr. Y1 who was died when I was four years and my mother left the area. She took my sister and went to Addis Ababa. Since then I did not see her. Then Mr. Y took me as his son in front of many clan men and women with ceremony. I remember the vow we did with him and his family. It was very interesting because I was born again in that family. Though we are not related before, now I am his son legally and I love my family very well. Because he send us to school, buys clothes equally, and fulfills all for me. During the ceremony he game two heifers and a male calf. My cattle reached now about 10 and even I am rich toady. I like guddifachaa. I know every thing when he adopted me. However, I love my family (the adopters) very much. I have no problem being in this family.

### Case three

The third case is unique in which one of the informant experienced two positions in gudifacha practice: as adoptee and as adopter. The third case is called Mr. 'C' who living around Adulaalaa town. He passed through two stages adoption. The first one is that he adopted by Mr. Z at childhood stage and after he married he adopted two children one by Moggaasaa and one by guddifachaa. He said the following points about his life and guddifachaa practices

Mr. C said Mr. Z family adopted me when I was 16 years old. It is a time where I even started to look for girl fiend. Today I am 59 years old. Mr. Z family requested my parents to give them a child for adoption/

guddifachaa. That child was I as their son. After I heard the issue, my brothers and I refused to accept the claim but our parents agreed because they come with 'ulfa'. After sometimes, I even afraid of the 'ulfa's power that I will die if I refuse and said 'ok' and he took me with no guddifachaa celebration. The celebration was simply calling my parents relatives and his family and blessed me to go with him where the major ceremony will be held on arrangements and parents readiness. No ceremony was done in my biological family home and they took me to Mr. Z family as new member and considered me as elder son. My biological father warned Mr. Z family to fulfill the ceremony and privilege for my son that you took as yours on time saying 'utuu ati seera hin gutiin ilma koo irratti ibsaan ifnaan sirraa nan fudha. Ilmoo koo na duraa ergartee jedhee seera gadaan si gaaffadha" meaning if you did not fulfill the privileges and rights to my child before 'birraa<sup>12</sup>, I will take my son who is neglected and ask you on the gada law. He did not fulfill it to me. I was glad to returnee back to my biological family. In addition, I lived with my family and married. Now I am a man of 48 years. Today I even have a child who I adopted by fulfilling all the necessary requirement of the customary law. That child was abandoned in Bishoftu town when I get him. I brought him to my home, called the gosaa, and requested them to bless the child for because I got a child of age three. Now the child is learning and in grade six. I adopt him because I was neglected if my parents were with me. Thinking this and the fate of the child and my experience, I adopted him

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<sup>12</sup> Here Birraa refers to the time of irreechaa that is practiced every year in September in Hora Harsadi in Bishoftu town.

Based on the adopted people's case I talked to the Liban area judge about the case of Mr. 'A'. The court system in this area role is minimal in solving the problems of society because this society has very strong and equivalently established legal structure in the customary judiciary ('Shanachaa of Caffee tumaa') where they have already solved the case. In addition, we approved the case because Mr. 'A' is the son of Mr. X based on the evidences and the proclamations of the country, which give special privilege for guddifachaa children. The cases like Mr. 'A' came to the court sometimes because the trend of guddifachaa is changing for different reasons in the community. The above cases in the community signify the major problems children face about the abuse by the guddifachaa family, the advantages they have in the adopting family and the life experience of the adopted person serving as adopter.

Here the issue of cases shows two important notions in the guddifachaa practice in the study area. First, the case of 'A' is a paramount point to show how some families' behaviors affect the care and support within the extended (relatives) families realm. It clearly demonstrates that the weakness of individual families in the community rather it does not indicate the weakness of guddifachaa because the issue is about resource competition among the adoptee and the adopters' relatives after their death. It is about the factors that have a potential to threaten the guddifachaa institution in the future. This in turn by itself shows that there is incompatibility between customary law and the country law in the care of adopted children. However, by definition and practice, the guddifachaa has every privilege of the biologically born children in the community, the behaviors of some families and their relatives can violate this because of competition on resources like the case one discussed.

The stated points about guddifachaa family attitude as to the positive as well as the negative aspect have also contributed to the challenge and change in the process of practice. It does not hinder for further progress of guddifachaa. That is in the former times the family adopt children simply because they demand the child. However, today the trend has changed for the reason that most people are fertile and have at least one child at home so no need for adoption to continue among these groups of families. Today families adopt not because they do not have a child but they are willing to help those in problem.

### **Changes and Continuity in guddifachaa Practices**

The interview results discussed in the above sessions indicate that there are trends in the change and continuity of guddifachaa in the study area. There is a change in the development and increasing importance of adoption, which has gone beyond the national to the inter-country adoption by targeting children. It may be important in that, it links the way, in the process of solving children problem in contemporary society.

The guddifachaa practice has reached its present stage by passing different political, social and cultural influences form within and outside of that society. Guddifachaa is not something that emerged recently. It is part and parcels of that community's cultural and customary social activity/ phenomena. However, the guddifachaa practice in the Oromo society of the area has undergone slight changes in its area of attention the rituals practice, and the scope of dealing with the children has an interventionist realm. This does not mean that there was no positive change. In these processes of adopting children, the adopters and the adoptees are the key role players either for the continuity positive change. Because the guddifachaa son, in Oromo society is a socially and legally born into the family, has the same privileges and acceptance of the born child. He or she has the strict rule obligation responsibility in

the areas marital relationship with the adopters close kins. The rule of incest taboo for the adopted child is strictly punishable, enforceable and immoral or seriously disapproved not only by Oromo society but also from non-Oromos.

The Oromo society has been passing through multiple social, political, and other economic impositions under the Ethiopian ruling elites. Because of the political structures and inherent struggles, the Oromo lost power, which may contribute to the challenges, changes and /or continuity of different cultural, social, political and economic practices.

Guddifachaa as one of these cultural practices has many functions in terms of maintaining the family system in Oromo society. It has many relevance to the socioeconomic welfare people with different problems especially children and families. Irrespective of the contributions of the welfare of vulnerable people, it has passed through various socio political difficulties in the country and in the community in the specific. These factors, which influenced the practices of guddifachaa, are changes in religion, the abandonment of the gadaa system, the decrease in income/ wealth of people, population growth, and other social factors. The improvement of health status and other invisible factors that contribute to the infertility of women is reduced.

In the past the Oromo society practice guddifachaa for the sake of childless and creating a strong social bond among themselves. It was assumed that, it is done for the protection, inheritance securing, and increasing clan numbers. However, today this trend has changed to the system of humanistic or problem intervention mechanisms for children who vulnerable with different factors. Some factors that could make children vulnerable to problems are economically, social, and psychological problems. Thus, the guddifachaa is currently giving answers for such problems when children become

orphan and neglected due to health, and other calamities, abandoned due to economic and social (born illegally).

The other major change is that in the past change of name was mandatory to be included to the family. Now the child's name may not subject to change: only fathers name will be changed. The culture of adopting children in Oromo society has very well defined and patterned structures and practices. The pattern in turn has its own way of setting the rules and obligations for the adopters and the adopted children in the seera Caffee (customary law). However, this very organized institution is not without challenge and changes from the external environments of socio political systems.

### **Factors Affecting Guddifachaa Practice**

The most dominant factors raised by the community are the political struggles between Oromo and the past regimes, the changing role of extended family and the loosing power of gada system by the past governments' pressures. The community said that they did not stop under these pressures measures of past Ethiopian regimes. On the other hand, six Abbaa gadas reported that in the last decades the gada system is reviving to its former state in this area. This is an opportunity to reinvigorate the practice of guddifachaa as a constructive institution in the community.

According to six informants (Abbaa gadaas and adopters) of the clan of Tulamaa, the orthodox Christianity and the Amhara ruling groups of the country were tried to influence the practice of guddifachaa not only in the Oromo society but also in others in the country. "They tell us; this practice is very backward, unnecessary via their priests. However, in the contrary their government has ratified in the constitution, as guddifachaa is a legal child adoption in the country. They want us to leave our own way of adopting children and accept their way of fostering children such as 'ye tut liji', and 'madego (foster care child in Amhara culture). Where each of these are very loose

in their culture, have limitation for the child where it has no legal right of privileges that the guddifachaa child has.”

On the other hand, for instance, contrasting to the Oromo guddifachaa practice, currently there is a movie produced by individual (s) in one of the ‘cinemas’ by the name of “guddifachaa” with Amharic language that has a central theme of love affair between the guddifachaa son and the biological daughter of the family. Where the two (the brother and the sister) have committed themselves for love and the girl was impregnated and finally died while trying to abort it. It is done based on misinterpretation of the culture. The writer(s) knowingly or unknowingly waged a war on one of the core cultures of the country. Guddifachaa as the core cultures of many ethnic groups in Ethiopia has a legal recognition and sensitivity in the family system from country’s civil code of the past and even toady. The guddifachaa child in Oromo society, for instance, has deep respect and dignity equivalent to the biologically born child. However, the notions in the movie and show are taboo especially in this society.

It is a perspective that abuses guddifachaa culture of the society because as it was discussed earlier the Oromo society has rules that regulate the sexual relationship of the families in the clans and among close relatives including the guddifachaa child. The system of sexual or marital regulation is called the laguu (incest) beliefs. After adoption of a child in one of the family, the child has a strong kinship relationship like the biologically born children. Like other countries, the issue of incest taboo (laguu) in connection with kinship from the viewpoint of marriage prohibition rule for the adopted persons is effective (Ayalew, 2002:8)

As a person, who observed the living situation of guddifachaa children in the study area, I can say the following five points on the movie:

First, there may be confusion between the madego and the guddifachaa to use interchangeably by some people. Second, the individuals who produced the movie may be people, who do not know the relevance and practice of guddifachaa in Oromo and other nations and nationalities in the country. Three, these people may deliberately arranged the movie to promote their hidden agenda that may weaken the family system formed by adoption in Ethiopian societies; Four, this specific movie might not be censored by the concerned bodies before they appear to the stage that created the abuse on guddifachaa. Fifth, however, in reality I do not think that the adopted children in any culture of ethnic groups of the country exercise love affair in the adopters' home. In the country where each society has a strong religious and cultural sexual restrictions, movies like "guddifachaa" that are transmitted via media have the power to influence peoples attitude to negatively view Guddifachaa especially the next generation. It has also a side effect on those people who use the institution in their day-to-day life and is even a crime against the civil code of the country. It has also its unrecognized effect on the development of guddifachaa practice in the country, which may serve in the intervention of children problems.

Therefore, individual(s) should clearly understand guddifachaa and other sensitive cultural, social, political issues in the country before producing a movie and bringing to stages. The media may have strong influence on the behaviors of groups or individuals in challenging the practice directly or indirectly. In addition, the writer's should either ask apology to the people who using the culture if he (they realize (s) the societal emotions and motions.

### **Guddifachaa as an intervention for orphan and the neglected children problems**

The guddifachaa of orphan and neglected children in Ada'a Liban district community is a foster care and support of vulnerable children. The guddifachaa of

orphan and neglected children follow the same ceremonial rituals as children who were requested and received from their biological parents. Given that, their birth parents are either deceased or incapable of taking care or support the ceremony, it is prepared in the adopter's home or symbolic place. During that ceremonial time, the adopters call different people from community and declare that the child belongs to them.

According to six informants, the Abbaa gadaas of Tulamaa Oromo, they have revised and enforced the various gada laws during the 2000 gada ceremony in Odaa Nabee. Of these laws, guddifachaa was the one, which the Caffee (general assembly) discussed and approved with little modification. In the past guddifachaa was practiced to satisfy the demands of infertile families however, today this trend is changed due to the several socioeconomic problems that the community is facing. The change is not a complete change of the system, but represents the expansion and consideration of different conditions of children, women, and families.

The Caffee Odaa Nabee discussed and confirmed with the consent of all the miseensa (member). This gada groups were the Roobalee and the coming is gada Birmajjii. In Oromo society, the purpose of every eight years of Caffee tumaa (assembly) is to revise the past eight-year's sociopolitical system. Asmarom Legesse (2000), in his book entitled "Oromo democracy; an indigenous African political system", pointed out that,

The role of Caffee or the national assembly is made up of all the assemblies and councils of the Oromo, who meet in the middle of the Gada period, once every eight years, to review the laws, to make new laws, to evaluate the man in power, and to resolve major conflicts that could not be resolved at lower levels of their judicial organization (2000: 100).

After that When the orphaned children found, the community searches adopters who are the close kins of the deceased. Brothers, sisters and other close kins adopt the child or the children. Adoption of orphans by sibling or closer kins does not change the name of their father's like guddifachaa (in cases of gudifata dhakaraa or koluu) and moggaasaa of different clans and ethnics respectively. This is for the reason that, relatives want the continuity of the deceased names in the family line. The practice of clan orphan guddifachaa can be name survival mechanisms.

On the other hand, for children found neglected, the community arrange who is going to adopt (foster) the children. They inform each member and the Abbaa gadaa about the found child. The community approach to the problem as group and individual. As group (1) they assess that whose child is it (if parent is found they reunify or reintegrate accordingly), (2) then searching voluntary receivers, (3) they assign member with few children to look after (for short period, if possible for life) or (4) looking people with better income to adopt on their willingness.

In the table 9, the respondents who said guddifachaa 'could solve' the problem of street children are 19 people while those said 'it could not' are 24 people. The issues of street children is not accepted by the community because of the notion that once a child starts living on the street, they said," the child learns a lot of unnecessary behaviors where it can't fit with the rural or urban life of a family. Becomes disobedient, even teaches in the home or in the community behaviors." but those who said 'yes', argued that if the child didn't too long (beyond one year) it easy for the family to change his behavior and socialize him/her via great care. This needs family tolerance since children move to street life may be because of low income of family, death of parents, family abuse or simply for personal behavior of the child." According to most informants, the group action on guddifachaa of the neglected children is done,

when the neglected child did not stay on the street or somewhere beyond 4-5 months.

Nevertheless, if the child stayed longer period on the street about a year it is not admitted for the belief society and the change in behavior of the child.

Table 9: Respondents' For Guddifachaa as Intervention

Variables	Description	the social status of the respondents in the community					
		Elders	Experts	Adopters	Adopted	Non adopted	Total
Gudifacha solves the problem of street children	Yes	3	3	1	4	8	19
	No	7	2	4	4	7	24
Gudifacha solves the problems of orphan children	Yes	10	3	5	7	14	39
	No	0	2	0	1	1	4
Gudifacha solves the problems of neglected children	Yes	8	3	3	7	13	34
	No	2	2	2	1	2	9
Gudifacha solves the problems of children in general	Yes	5	2	3	4	9	23
	No	5	3	2	4	6	20

Concerning the benefit of guddifachaa for the orphans and the neglected children in the community, most of the respondents (see table 9) agreed that it is relevant for children of poor families, those who are on the way to street, orphan of one or both parents, and /or other economic problems since there are changes and continuity in the area. Today people adopt children not because they do not have a child but to help some children with problem in the community.

In general, the respondents' belief of intervention prospect of guddifachaa has more or less similar attention from the community, in that some say, "guddifachaa can solve" the problem of children of special type while others say, 'it does not solve the

problem of children because of the socio economic changes in the community'. This can be one approach to problem intervention of children.

Guddifachaa practice as intervention strategy has a child-family reintegration in which the child will get the emotional or psychological, economic and social attachments from the adopting family. When the professional type or policy level adjustments were taken consideration in order to solve the major problems of children, the involvement of social work is paramount via different strategies for the institution like guddifachaa, which has legal backup but lack professional and technical support.

The opportunities that may assist the continuity of guddifachaa practice in the Ada'a Liban in particular and the general Oromo society are so many today unlike the past. : First, the current cultural revival struggles among the Oromo people from different corners, which may improve the enhancement of guddifachaa in Oromo. The efforts that some Oromia regional national government offices attempting in the development of Oromo culture may in the long-run help guddifachaa practice amelioration. Second the changing trend of guddifachaa of children with families opting adoption of orphaned and neglected children.

The trend of guddifachaa practice is also continuous process irrespective of the aforementioned factors. It will serve the purpose of family system maintenance in that the orphan and the neglected children have an attention, which demand an improvement with the support of professional skills in the Oromo society.

### **SWOT analysis of guddifachaa practice**

The guddifachaa practice in the community under the study and from the surrounding environment has strength and weakness as well as opportunities and threats respectively. From the findings and discussions, the following points were drawn based on its strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), which needs social work

applications. Guddifachaa practice has strength in that it requires less resources both skills and materials. It is a culture of the society, which does not need training, workshops of sensitization for introducing it as new because it is a deep-rooted practice in the culture. In the community, it is a reasonable practice for children and family that helps the maintenance of family system. It is a means of protection and inheritance that has a set of rules of practices. It is also a system of helping vulnerable children such as orphans and the neglected. This is the indirect assistance of poor families by giving their children to different families as a social network creation among families in the area.

In other ways, the guddifachaa practice has its own cultural based weaknesses because of its partiality in the areas of sex and statuses (street, neglected, disabled) of the children. It sometimes lacks transparency where children are not allowed to their biological families. Very often, some families adopt children for economic supports and as inputs of their family production systems. Though it is not clearly indicated as weakness of guddifachaa practice, there is resource competition among children (adopted and the born) because of the changing of family structure in the society.

The guddifachaa as an institution has the following opportunities

- the current development of social problems which gives it a chance for reconsidering this culture as an intervention
- its being exercise by other nation and nationalities in the country with legal support
- the cultural revival of Oromo society by Oromo scholars, and the regional governments with the development of educational system using mother tongue as medium instruction
- the establishment of community development training centers by the region

- the existence of NGOs, government organizations and others working on the child rights
- the international acceptance and development of adoption practices of children by different countries

Finally, there may factors that potentially affect the progress of guddifachaa practice in Ethiopia, which are limited. Because there exists a culture of adoption in different nation and nationalities, the meaning and the purpose of practice may vary can brings misunderstanding like considering guddifachaa as child labor exploitation tools. In addition, for guddifachaa is a cultural the attitude of others and the acceptance of as it is difficult by some societies are difficult because of fear of politicization. The increment of the population and the increased fertility rate in the country may reduce the demand of families adopting children, which may brings the competition among children and other relatives on the families' resource. The weakening of extended family structure and the mobility of people for the economic and social reasons to different places and others related factors also have effect on guddifachaa.

### **Social Work Implication**

Social work practice is one of the professional practices to solve the problems of vulnerable groups in society. It is attempting to create favorable and just social environment within the societal settings. Because children, women, and the elderly face various social, economic, political, psychological and other problems, the professional assistances in the area of counseling, advocacy, lobbying and facilitating for these groups is its major roles.

Thus, the child guddifachaa practice in Ethiopia is one of the cultural institutions that may serve the purpose of orphan and neglected child problem

intervention. It is worth lobbied and advocated by social work. This is because in studying ‘gudifacha’ practice as child problem intervention in Oromo society; it is assumed that the study is relevant for defining social work profession in Ethiopia. Guddifachaa, practice of the Oromo can be one of the models of social work intervention for the problem of vulnerable children. In Oromo and others who practice guddifachaa as culture, (See figure 1). In addition, ‘guddifachaa of children has the following major importance:

- With minimum resources maximum benefit
- It is a community based child problem intervention especially for the orphan and abandoned
- Needs proper understanding and integrations in child problems
- Needs less skills because it is inbuilt within the society’s socio cultural system
- It can be applicable in other parts of the country different

In this very specific study it is difficult to simply describe some and big cultural assets of a society to use for the interventions strategies in the world. Hence based on the above findings and discussion about guddifachaa in Oromo society in general and Ada'a Liban in particular, this research may provide clue for the purpose of social work practices. In the guddifachaa practice, those procedures that have social work implications are the reasons of adopting, the eligibility criteria, the change and continuity of cultural adoption as well as the attitudes of the community members to the customary guddifachaa practices in the region. As it was discussed in the findings, the reason of adopting children in that past and today in the study area is a clearly cultural type of practicing customarily ritualistic type of adoption (see reasons adoption)

The set criteria by the community in the guddifachaa of children have a paramount importance for the social work practice in the region. This is because in the process of

child family integration, the receiving family may have their criteria by the influence of his cultural knowledge and experience. Thus, the social work practitioners should make a strong lobby and advocacy by facilitating its development as local intervention model in this notion.

Note that the dramatic change in the cultural issues of a given community like guddifachaa that is deep rooted to the society's social, cultural, customary law and history is impossible. Nevertheless, guddifachaa institution as a common cultural practice institution among eleven nation and nationalities in the country has an opportunity to be advocated and lobbied by social workers. Because the country's civil code and different regional family laws also support it in principle. When the social work practitioners are facilitating the development of such cultural and social problem intervention practices, they should deal with the institution according to that society's cultural environment.

Social workers, policy makers, should approach each cultural set systematically and implement with partners of different child related projects and programs at each ethnic groups.

For the social work practitioners empower the society to bring a drastic change needs to identify the set of rules of the society thoroughly distinguish the cultural practices as guddifachaa as models of intervention is crucial.

There are greater opportunities in that guddifachaa practice in Oromo society is undergoing towards the implied practice of social work profession by itself, which needs very few effort to reintegrate the institution as social problem solving mechanisms as seen on the orphan and neglected children. The weaknesses and the threats of guddifachaa practices have a paramount implication to the social work

profession to bring this culturally established system to productive problem intervention via little training, lobby, advocacy and others.

### **Summary**

From the micro study conducted in the Ada'a Liban area, the attitude of the respondents serves for the future social work interventions in the areas of children's problems. I consider this study as taking a spoon of water from an ocean while guddifachaa practice of the area need further study by various disciplines. In practicing guddifachaa in the child- family integration process in the community, I also learned that there are strengths, threats and opportunities of it. These strengths and opportunities are the positive aspect of gudifacha practice in the community while the negatives are very negligible but critical to affect its development.

The strengths of guddifachaa practices are; to minimize or to deter the problems of children in a given society, some curative or prevention measures should be undertaken. These measures could also be done simultaneously within a community by those concerned bodies. The process of practicing guddifachaa varies from culture to culture and place to place with the social and cultural processes. The guddifachaa practice has its own laws and regulation of the activities of both the adopter and the adopted. This has a link with the types of guddifachaa discussed and the type of children to be adopted.

In relation to these, the characteristics summary of guddifachaa and moggaasaa children in Oromo of the study area could imply:

- Assimilation feature because the child father name will continue with adoptive parents line or Inherits names from the adopters and counts genealogy through them

- Both the guddifachaa and the Moggaasaa child Will stay in the family for his life period;
- Inherits property legally if the parents dead; has equal claim on the property and protection rights in the adopting family
- guddifachaa of infants is not told to him/her where the child assume the family as his/ her whose biological parents
- The adopted children do not inherit property from biological parents
- The child has the right to be returned if adoption is not viable but called in the community neglected (ergarama)

Because it is cultural element of many ethnic groups, guddifachaa practice can easily integrated and developing as intervention strategy in child –family integration processes in Ethiopia. In the contrary, by fear of Oromisuu (assimilation) from others may minimize the growth of guddifachaa among the few others for it is culture some societies which do not have such cultural feature is difficult to adopt with their culture.

When we look at the customary law based adoption of the areas under study, it can be practiced for different social and economic purposes. This customary law practice of adoption has its own rituals unlike the governmentally handled adoption. Though the description of the ritual look like purely cultural, it is necessary to know for social work practitioners working in the area of children in these societies.

The rights of children in the community for guddifachaa children are equal to the biological child of the adopting family because they have equal social, legal, economic privileges from the cultures and the practices of guddifachaa. A single adoption may seem personal and inconsequential matter but the cultural implications have a way of spreading like concentric ripples. (Brooks and Brooks, -)

The guddifachaa of neglected and the orphan children practiced by community can be one of the intervention of child problems. In addition, the attitude of guddifachaa children is relatively good which base itself on the adopters parents social and economic behaviors. In the community, the adopted children's problem may be due to the death of adopters they may be neglected because economic, psychological, and other social problems.

The behaviors of families are not similar in that, not all families may treat the guddifachaa children equally with their biological children. Thus, there might be the possibility of child abuses in the areas of provision of economic benefits and rights. The preferences of adopters to child based on sex, age, clan, and disability type made in the process may not solve the issue of all children with problems by guddifachaa because children adoption is practiced according to the preference of the adopters and the problems that the adopted could have. For instance if the guddifachaa child does not get the right of inheritance as stated in the ritual processes, working in the laborious area, not getting proper care and support by the adopters etc. That is the notion of advocacy and lobby by social workers and agencies working on the child problem interventions are needed .

The guddifachaa practices types that are relevant to social work practices are the gudifata seeraa and the moggaasaa to serve as child problem intervention. The changes and continuity in guddifachaa practice is an opportunity for the development of intervention strategies of family child integration.

The existence of different opportunities like Bishoftu community development workers training center and the commencement of social work education in Oromia and Ethiopia respectively helps the revitalization of cultural institutions like guddifachaa as

the intervention strategies. The training unit in the town can contribute to the development of sound social services in the area.

The social work profession has an integral prospect for which the establishment of the centers in Oromia helpful. Social workers should have an insight about the existence of such agency and agents in the community for social work practices and social problem interventions. The reason that social work practitioners who were entitled to intervene: the problem of street children, neglected or abandoned children, abused, as well as orphaned child, need to have the psychological readiness of knowing the family /community cultural contexts in the process. It helps them to realize the process of reunification, adoption /guddifachaa/, foster adoption/moggaasaa or child family reintegration. In Ada'a and Liban Cuqaallaa districts, there are little variations in the exercise of guddifachaa based on the urban and rural ways of life.

The social workers participation in the guddifachaa process before the ritual practices that means in the arrangement process and in the aftermath of adoption is important because there is a need to follow up the adopted children status in the adopted family. The role of the social worker is as one the participants of the ceremony. The following up of guddifachaa child in the community is done by elders but should be supported by professionals.

Case interviews demonstrated three different points about guddifachaa; where some families or relatives abuse adopted children, some families properly care and supporting for them and/or some adoptee becoming adopters after being matured.

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**Annex one**

Table 10 Comparison of modern and customary law on guddifachaa

Defining characteristics	Adoption explanation according to	
	Customary law	Modern law
Principle	guddifachaa is a practice of agreement between the biological parents and the social parents. It is sometimes agreement between the person (child and adult) and the social family.	Adoptive affiliations may be created by an agreement between a person and a child (article 180 the country, article 197 of the region)
Relationship with biological	The adopted child is not supposed to know the biological family. If he/she knows them, they were to be considered as close kins than birth parents	The adopted child shall retain his bonds with the family of origin or biology (article 183)
Age of the child/ adult	Any child whose age is less than 16 years ( with biological family, abandoned or orphans) can be adopted	Any person who is less than 18 years of age and under guardianship may be adopted.

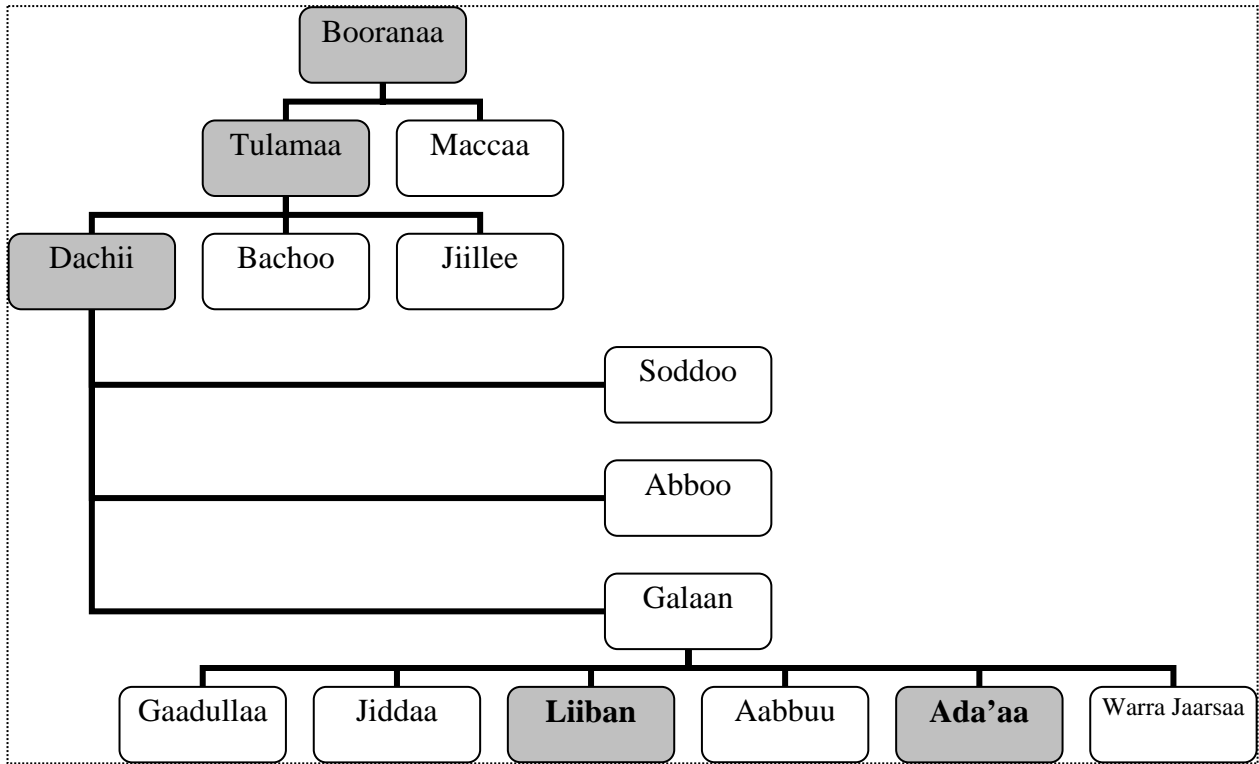
**Annex two**

Table 11: The list of key informants and the abbaa gadaas

S/N	Name of the Informants	Place of Residence in the District	Date Of Interview	Age
1	Siidaa Badhaasoo	Adulaalaa town/ Liban Cuqaallaa	March 6-8, 2006	78
2	Laggasaa Nagawoo	Adulaalaa town / Liban Cuqaallaa	March 6-8, 2006	76
3	Barudaa Birboo	Adulaalaa town	March 6-8, 2006	77
4	Wondimuu	Bishoftu	March 10- 12, 2006	65
5	Rattaa Nagaraa	Bishoftu town	March 10-12, 2006	70
6	Abraham workuu	Bishoftu	March 10-12, 2006	49
7	Urgechaa	Bishoftu	March 13-15, 2006	73
8	Belete Jilcha	Adulaalaa	March 16-18, 2006	68
9	Tarrechaa Hordofaa	Adulaalaa	March 21-23, 2006	48
10	Kedir Mohammad	Bishoftu	March 25-27, 2006	50

**Annex three**

Figure 3 the genealogy of Ada'a and Liban clans



Source: History of the Oromo to the sixteenth century, 2004: pp157

**Annex four**

Table 12: Similarity and differences of guddifachaa and moggaasaa practices summary

Defining variables	guddifachaa	moggaasaa
Age	Age of the child is between six month and 16	In principle there is no age limit set (every individual of age 12 and above is eligible))
Sex	Both male and female are adopted	female are not eligible for moggaasaa
Ethnic	It's practiced for both Oromo and non-Oromo's	The Oromo do not undergo moggaasaa, i.e. it is highly practiced for non-Oromo's'
Ceremony	It is practiced by use of cultural materials Caacuu and Kallacha, bull is slaughtered in both parents' houses, and the child is received nude.	it is usually done outside the compound of the adopting family, cow is slaughtered, holding the same material except Caacuu and the person is not nude like guddifachaa
Place	It can be practiced inside the house, inside the compound and outside (not clan member) of the compound of both parents	It is usually done outside the compound of the adopting family, that shows he is outsider and from different group to Oromo
Involvement type	It involves both giving and receiving a child	It involves submitting of self by the applicant

Table 12 continued

Defining variables	guddifachaa	moggaasaa
Negotiation on the process	-Parents and community leaders play the role of negotiating (agreement of two families) - role of the adoptee is not seen clearly (no right to negotiate)	The will be moggaasaa son, the receiver and the Abbaa gadaas or the clan chiefs negotiate (it is tripartite agreement) The Abbaa gadaas play the role of publicizing the adoptee as clan member
Application for adoption	The request comes from the adopting family	the request is from the will be moggaasaa son (be child or adult)
Right	The child has the right of inheritance and assuming every responsibility on behalf of the family, clan, and the ethnic group	Has every right of the gudifacha child except wife in inheritance from the clan but his children can inherit every thing
Name and line	The name of the child may not be changed if he is from Oromo and counts his/her name via the adopting family line	The name is completely changed, given new name from Oromo names and counts his clan through adopting family line

Table 12 continued

Restriction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A family with only one child are not requested to give their child for guddifachaa</li> <li>- marriage from the adopters clan and kin is strictly forbidden like the biological children ( it is called laguu; incest taboo)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-any person can be eligible for moggaasaa as long as he requests the family</li> <li>- marriage from the adopters family clan and kin is strictly forbidden like the biological and gudifacha children( it is called laguu; incest)</li> </ul>
Unique elements	No unique feature is observed except the child is not told to know the biological family (lack of transparency)	has assimilation attribute where the adoptee changes own name along with identities willingly by the ego concerned
Purpose of adoption	It has various proposes for the adopting family in that they assume their continuity in the clan genealogy	The person benefits everything that the community have as a member without discrimination the has social, psychological and economic protection
Marital status	the child should be single	can be bachelor or married with all list family
Others	Its practice varies from rural to urban, even clan to clan in Oromo while the principles are all the same among Oromo clans	It is not common in urban centers. It varies from place to place mostly name such as Oromsu(Borana), moggaasaa (Tulamaa)

Source: key informants, adopters, and abbaa gadaas group and individual interview

## **Annex five**

This questionnaire has three major parts where part one is to be filled by the adopting families and community leaders, part two is by the gudifachaa children, and the last part is to be filled by the officials or experts of different sectors departments.

Thank you in advance for giving me your precious time and energy in responding my all questions, in the course of our staying together and discussing about gudifacha. The information you provide me is of paramount importance for the future of young generations especially to children who are orphans and dwelling on the street. I promise that what you request me not to be disclosed by your name should be kept confidential between you and me (concerning sensitive issues).

Part one- adopters or community leaders

### **A. Background Information**

1. Name (Optional) -
2. Your status in the community
3. Age -
4. Sex
6. Educational Level
  - A) Not Read And Write B) Read And Write C) Grade 1 to 8 D) Grade 9 to 12 E)
  - Others Specify
5. Ethnic Group
  - a) Oromo b) Amhara c) Sidama d)
  - Others specify -
7. Marital Status
  - A) Single B) Married C) Widowed D) Separated/Divorce E) Others Specify -
8. What is your family Size? -
9. Do you have children? A) yes- B) No -

10. If Yes for Q8, how many? Male -female -
11. Did you adopt any child before? A) Yes B) No
12. If yes for Q10, Why did you practice gudifacha?
13. When did you adopt a child (practice) it?
14. At what age did you adopt him/ her? \_\_\_\_\_
15. How many children can one person adopt? -
16. Did you practice gudifacha or Moggaasaa? A)Yes -B) no-
17. If yes for Q15, how do you practice it?
18. What is the difference between the gudifacha and Moggaasaa? (Age, sex, clan, ceremony process etc)
19. How do you treat the gudifacha child?
20. Do you send him to school, clinic, or other?
21. Why did you adopt male? Why not female
22. What kind of family adopts a child?
23. Is there any problem you face after adopting him? A) Yes B) No -  
A) If yes for Q22, what are these problems?-
24. Is there social status difference to adopt a child in the community? A) Yes B) No  
A) If yes Q23, who cannot adopt a child in the community? Why?
25. Whose children cannot be adopted in the community?  
A) Why? B) Why not
26. Do you care for the adopted child as your own? A Yes -B No  
A) If yes for Q25, How? In what respects
27. How do you get the child to be adopted?

28. Is it by your request? A. Yes B. No -

A) If yes how

29. If no for Q27 the request is by,

A) Child's request

B) His family's requests

C) Others specify -

30. Can the children negotiate their rights with the adopters? A. yes B. No

A) If yes for Q29, how?

B) If No for Q29, why not they negotiate

B. Community's socio cultural data

Now I am going to ask you about the meanings of terms and the level of public understanding concerning gudifachaa practice in the community.

31. What is gudifacha in your society?

32. What is Moggaasaa in your society?

33. In the community who will practice gudifacha?

34. How is gudifacha practiced in relation to children/ adult?

35. Is there preference to gudifacha child? A. Yes B. No

A) Yes, (on what basis of sex, age, clan, disability etc) why

B) If No for Q34, can you adopt a child who is disabled, orphan, on the streets?

Which age or sex groups are in gudifacha or Moggaasaa?

C) Why (that sex or age groups)?

36. What are the reasons that the community practice gudifacha?

A. because of labor B) for childlessness C) culture to helping D) others specify -

37. What kinds of children could gudifacha helps?
38. Did you adopt the child who has no family? A yes -B No
- A) If Yes, why – B) If No for Q38, why not
39. Do you adopt a child different from clan to yours? A yes - B no -
- A) If No, why not
40. Do you adopt a child from non-Oromo? A yes - B no -
- A) If Yes, why B) If No for Q40, why not
41. How do you celebrate adoption (gudifacha or moggaasaa) of the non-Oromo? Is it similar with Oromo clan gudifacha ceremony? Yes - No -
- A) If Yes for Q41, tell the similarity B) If no for Q41, what is the difference
42. Can gudifacha solve the problem of children? (e.g. Orphan, street children, abandoned etc)
- A) Is gudifacha designed to solve problem of children or Adults? How can it solve?
- B) Who lead the gudifacha process in the community? How
43. Do you know how the Oromo started practicing gudifacha within Oromo or with non-Oromo?
- A) When did Oromo start? B) Where did it start? Why
44. Does gudifachaa practice need resources in the process? Yes No -
- A) If Yes, what kinds, for who B) Is it a gift for the child or the family? Why
- Part two- for the adopted
1. Name of the child/ adult (optional) -
  2. Age -
  3. Ethnic group
  4. Status of parents -
  5. Language ability -
  6. Educational level
- A) not enrolled yet B) 1-4 C) 5-8 D) 9 -12 E) others specify

7. Where do you live now? With whom do you live?
  - A) With biological family B) With extended family C) with adopters D) others specify
8. Are you an adopted child or person? A) Yes - B) No -
  - A. If yes, when did they adopt you?
9. Who adopted you? How
10. Do you remember at what age you were adopted?
11. Do you remember the ceremony/practice? A) Yes B) No-
  - A. If yes, what were done for you and your biological family?
12. Do you know your biological family? A Yes -B No
  - A. If No, what is the reason?
13. Do you have the chance to go to school? A) Yes - B) No-
  - A. If No for Q58, why not
14. What do you think about gudifacha practice for children?
  - A. Very Good B) Good C) Bad D) Very bad E) Others specify
15. Is gudifacha helpful to you and children? A yes - B no -
  - A. If yes, what did it help you?
  - B. If no, what are its problems?
16. How do your parents (gudifacha family) care for you? (discrimination from children in the family, community )
17. How the community perceive about you (being adopted)?
18. How your friends react with you?
19. What do you feel to be an adopted child?

**Part III. To be filled by experts**

Thank you in advance for giving me your precious time and energy in responding my all questions. The information you will provide has a paramount importance for the future of young generations especially to children who are orphans and dwelling on the street because it will be one of the first strategies to intervene children problems with the local resources. I promise that what you request me not to be disclosed by your name should be kept confidential between you and me.

1. Name (optional) -
2. Your age -
3. Sex
4. Name of the district -
5. Name your organization and Place of operation
6. Your department and position
7. Your educational level
8. Your work experience in the areas of children-----
9. Have you been working in the field of family? A) Yes B) No
10. If yes for Q73, How long did you work? (please explain your experiences in areas of children and family
11. What do you know about gudifacha practice in this area?
12. How does “family” defined in the community? Explain in detail
13. Are the orphans in the district? How many
14. How many are adopted culturally in the community?
15. What is gudifacha in the society? Definitions
16. What is Moggaasaa in your society?
17. Who will practice gudifacha?
18. How is gudifacha practiced in relation to children/ adult?

19. Is there preference for gudifacha child? A. Yes- B. No
- A. Yes, (on what basis of sex, age, clan, disability etc) why
  - B. If No for Q82, can you adopt a child who is disabled, orphan, on the streets?
20. Which age or sex groups are in gudifacha or Moggaasaa?
- A. Why is that?
21. What are the reasons that the community practice gudifacha?
- A. Is it because of labor, childlessness, culture etc
  - B. Is it to help a child? Yes /no
  - C. Is it for social gain/bond creation? Yes /No
22. What kinds of children could gudifacha helps?
23. Did you see adoption of the children with out family? A yes -B No
- A. If yes, how was it practiced?
  - B. If No, would you explain the reasons?
24. Do they adopt a child from other Oromo clans? A yes - No -
- A. If No, what do you think is the reason?
25. Do they adopt a child from non-Oromo? A yes - B no -
- A. If yes, what do you think is the reason?
  - B. If No for Q88, what do you think is the reason?
26. How do they celebrate adoption (gudifacha or moggaasaa) of the non-Oromo? Is it similar with Oromo clan gudifacha ceremony? Yes - No -
- (Please explain in brief from your experience and the community practice if you are familiar)

27. In your opinion, can gudifacha solve the problem of children? (e.g. Orphan, street children, abandoned etc)
28. Is gudifacha designed to solve problem of children or Adults? A Yes - B No
- A. If yes for Q91, how can it solve? .
29. Who lead the gudifacha process in the community? How
30. Do have information, how the Oromo started practicing gudifacha? A Yes -B No -
- A. If yes when did they start? - Where? -
- B. What do you think is the reason they use it? .
31. Does the gudifacha practice need many resources during adoption? Yes No -
- A. If yes, what are the kinds of resources and for whom?
- B. Is it a gift for the child or the family? What do you think is the reason they give?

Thank you

Declaration

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

Name of student: Dessalegn Negeri Guyo

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: Professor James Rollin

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_