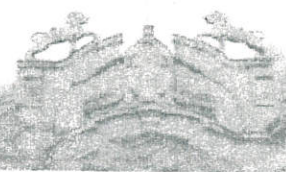


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Practices and Contributions of Islamic Education to Modern Education in Ethiopia: the case of Bati Azhar Mesjid

Ibrahim Endashaw

A thesis submitted to

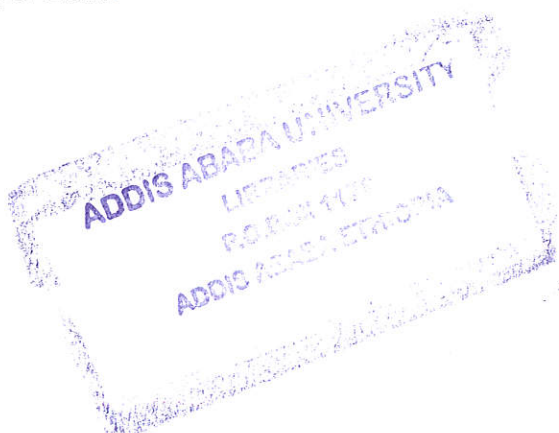
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Abstract

In Ethiopia, like the Christian education, Islamic education has been playing a significant role in the literacy development of the country. However, insignificant scholarly works have so far been produced and disclosed the real legacy of schooling system in Muslim education. So, the primary purpose of the study is to describe and analyze the nature of some of the educational practices of Islamic education in Bati Azhar Mesjid from the points of view of its legacy and benefits for modern education. Many of the ideas were dealt with the works of Ahmed (2008) and Muhiddin(2010) on another setting. The intention of the writer is based on the assumption that although certain characteristics of education seem to be similar, some practices may differ as the social groups differ from each other. In order to reach the intended result ethnographic case study was employed. In the course of the study, all the necessary information was gathered using open ended interview, focus group discussion and observation. Based on these methods information was collected from the Sheikh and Daressas (students) of the school. Besides, former students and community members were included through snow ball sampling. The findings of the study showed that, the teacher taught by working with small groups (sherika) of students who were at the same level in their studies. Besides, students also allowed to attend courses as per their pace. Regarding evaluation, there was no formal test, only the demonstration of masterly- reading, answering, reasoning and executing of responsibilities properly. Corporal punishment was non existent, advises and offering responsibilities were widely used to remedy mis-behavior and to punish a student for not studying well. In short, in the school, education was offered in a pedagogical approach that has fundamental similarities with the inventions and recommendations of many modern educators. Hence, giving attention for the domestic traditional schools legacy can offer many geniuses of pedagogical principles in the state contemporary modern secular education.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The preamble of the Ethiopian (FDRE, 1995) constitution has given recognition to the diverse nations, nationalities and peoples of the country. Among the multi- cultural and plural nature of the Ethiopian society, the Muslim community comprises more than one third part, as reported by the National Statistical Agency bureau in the 2007 census (CSA, 2008). Despite this fact , the insufficient recorded literature on Islam has so far hardly disclosed the historical legacies that are hidden under the debris of the pages of antiquity (Hussein, 2001:Xiii). Among the legacies that the Muslim community kept for a long is ISLAMIC EDUCATION. However, scanty of resources have identified so far about the legacy of the traditional Islamic education system (Braukamper, Ulrich.2002: x, Hussein, 1998).

Education, by which man transmits his experiences, accumulated knowledge and findings (MOE,1994), has a deep rooted interaction with religious teachings, worldwide in general and in Ethiopia in particular. In line with this fact, Derebssa (2008: 6-7) stated that though with the age of enlightenment the association between religion and education became diminished, the origins of education, in the west, are organized religion. According to Hunt (2005:2) religious institutions have the potential of influencing behavior and consciousness down to the level of the individual. That is why; Christianity has generated and promoted values which are today part of the proud legacy of civilization in America and other developed countries (Mcchean, 2004:207).

With much relation to the global reality, according to Derebssa (2006:131), until the end of the ninetieth century, Ethiopian Orthodox Church was the center of formal religious instruction in Ethiopia. Furthermore, for Derebssa (2008: 60-61) starting from the 7th century in Ethiopia, like the church, the Mesjid in the Muslim areas, in much of the southern and south east Ethiopia, had a parallel function in the

establishment and expansion of non formal school system and theology of Islam. In conformity with the above statement, writers (Seyoum, 1996 and Woube, 2004) believe that the Orthodox Church and the Mesjid (Mosque) had a deep rooted contribution for the introduction of religious education in some part of the country. The reality of these works shed their light to unearth the fact that the two religious institutions have long served as educational institutions until their role is replaced by the contemporary secular education.

For Hassen (2008), Traditional Islamic and Christian Ethiopian are literate societies possessing their own highly developed bodies of literature comprising religious and historical works. The work done and the written language, of the Orthodox church and Muslim schools, were significant contributor in spreading the skills of readings and writings, and enriching the cultural and educational heritage of Ethiopia over many centuries, created a useful foundation for the modern school system, which is dated back a century ago, with the founding of Menelik II school (Bahru, 2002: 108).

The graduates of traditional Muslim schools have been studying the Arabic language and acquired knowledge in many fields, not only religious subjects but also secular one's (Hassen, 2008:11). As a result, some of the graduates were assigned in some government offices that require trustworthiness (Mohammed,2007).

The effort of the graduates also goes beyond the engagement of official works and spiritual excellence. As a partial fulfillment for the Masters of philology, in AAU, recently, few researchers have digged out and identified some literary productions that were written by the fruits of Islamic schools. To mention a few, from many others, according to Hassen (2008:2-3), individuals like

- Fakhr ad-Din abu'Umar (1314A.D) wrote a book entitled "Demonstration of the truth of the commentary of Niceties' Treasure-(It is six volumes),

- Abd Allah ibn Yusuf (1361 A.D) "Raising the flag for interpretation of the prophet traditions"-(four volumes),
- Hassen ibn Ali (1685 A.D) (he has treatises on mathematics and other subjects),
- Hassen ibn Ibrahim (1771 A.D) (he has many treatises, one is an astronomical work) and others.

However, these huge accumulated heritages of Islamic schools, and others that are not mentioned here, have been neglected and their contribution underestimated, except some attempts made by Cerrulli and Wagner on the manuscript collected from Harar (Gori, 2002:306), recently some manuscripts from Wollo have also followed (Hassen, 2008:11).

Hence, understanding the gaps and the insufficient literary productions of the legacy motivated the researcher to engage in the study. Therefore, the study will try to investigate the issues surrounding the features and the possible contribution of Islamic Education for modern education in Ethiopia: the case of Bati Azhar Mesjid.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Unfortunately for us and fortunately for ignorance, researchers could not maintain so far the legacy of Traditional Islamic Education, which involve children as well as young and aged adults and have a history of more than a thousand years in Ethiopia. In relation to this, Hussein (1988) stated that general studies on education in Ethiopia have consistently overlooked the significance of Traditional Muslim Education for the development of modern education system.

Islamic education, like other traditional educations, though it has its own limitations, could provide basic practices to modern education on how to organize Multi-grade class room, on how to treat gifted students, on how to establish cooperative class

rooms and others. Understanding this fact, the education and training policy states that traditional education has to be encouraged by integrating with modern education (ETP, 1994). This shows in short that the traditional schooling system has got a pivotal place in the policy for the fact that it activates to provide education that go in line with students' experience. However, for Elleni cited in Woube(2000), the attention of international organizations, donors and scholars has been devoted to African modern education whereas no serious efforts have been made to study, promote and incorporate traditional school systems.

Consequently, anyone who is out of the traditional school stream has no access for adequate source information about what is going on there. In addition to failure of recording and dissemination of the legacy of the traditional education, scholars of the schools have also been confronted with social exclusion and discrimination. Luckily, in some spots, if the sheiks get accepted and respected, their role is only sought for issues that are only related with religion. This is in short to mean that the roles and ingenious minds of the scholars were only employed in ritual activities that are compounded in the fence of Mesjid's. Therefore, their role is not yet exploited, to the extent of benefiting the society, in addition to their spiritual activities. As a result, according to Muhiddin (2009) for education to be developed – and for scholars caliber to be employed—significant work has to be done in advocating positive attitude toward the development and scaling up of the traditional trends.

In addition to failure of recognizing the "Sheiks" or "Qalechas" work done, in the history of knowledge in Ethiopian context, some are also considering them / the "Sheiks" or "Qalechas"/ as magicians, cheaters or ignorant. In relation with this one of the writer's friends was highly impressed and told him that he has attended one TV program; which was broadcasted and aired by the EBS channel, in sep.2011, under satellite TV line. The program was TV talk show. The title of the discussion was, "Islam and Education". With the aforementioned topic Muslim scholars were

invited to attend the discussion and comment the issue. When the program proceed, the way how they were making their views, according to the informant "was ingenious and compounded with wisdom". "Frankly speaking", said the friend, "they can speak like a highly educated person, who has attended schooling under modern education". The manner, how my friend was depicting their picture was compounded by stereotype and ignorance, though when the program ended his gloomy picture was illuminated.

This form of episode is not the only ignorance of individuals, like my friend; rather it is also prevalent even among offices that are working in the educational arena. In line with this event, according to one of the informants, in one rural part of the state, one of the privileged Ethiopian sheikh home was marked with a sign which distinguishes illiterate house hold from literate one; so that basic education will be given by the state.

The same trend was happening worldwide, for Deliar (1978) the reformers were described as modernists and the Sheiks as traditionalists with the insinuation being that the Sheiks were more concerned about maintaining centuries old practices than they were about adapting to the modern context. The reality was also pronounced by Buresh (2002) that the religious institutions have been viewed by many reform movements as hindrances to the development of a modern society due to their adherences to the four classical schools of Islamic Jurisprudence and theology and more mystically oriented religious practices.

No matter how the work of the traditional schooling system has been underestimated and though insignificant literatures have been produced so far on Islamic Education, as part of the traditional education in Ethiopia, beside church education. It is believed by the writer that Islamic schools could contribute basic practices to modern education. With this motive the writer was instigated to engage in a study where the

possible contributions of Islamic Education can be assessed with particular emphasis in Bati Azhar Mesjid. Hence, with the completion of this paper, the researcher will, therefore, try to unearth the following questions:

- ✓ What is the nature of the schooling system in Traditional Islamic Schools?
- ✓ What kind of methodology have Islamic schools employed to meet their intended objectives?
- ✓ What are some of the best practices of Islamic Education that could be scaled up to modern education?
- ✓ How do we employ these best practices of Islamic Education to Modern Education?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study is aimed at investigating primarily the practices and potential contributions of Islamic Education to modern education. In doing so, the ideas of the following specific objectives will be taken in to account

The Specific objectives of the study are

- To describe some features of the schooling system in Bati-Azhar Mesjid.
- To assess the teaching and learning practices of the school
- To identify some of the best practices of Islamic education that could be scaled up to modern education.
- To analyze the relevant practices that could provide better experiences for modern education.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study is aiming at investigating and offering important practices of Islamic education that could minimize some wrong perception of the society about traditional Islamic schools. Besides, policy makers, curriculum developers, educators and all concerned bodies can gain broader insight and wisdom about the practices of Islamic education. More specifically it could have the following advantages:

- Provides valuable information about what practices can be adopted from Islamic education for modern schooling system.
- Helps governmental bodies, especially offices under ministry of education, to employ some indigenous traditional contents in the process of expanding education for all.
- To the best knowledge of the researcher, a thorough study was not carried out so far in those traditional schools of the zone that could alleviate the prevalent problem of traditional education and hence will help as a spring board for further studies on similar legacies in contributing additional information and document base.

1.5 Delimitation of the study

The scope of the study was delimited to investigation of some features of schooling system in Bati Azhar Mesjid (mosque). Then, in order to achieve the educational objectives of the school what methodologies were employed was assessed. Moreover, the best practices of Islamic education that could be scaled up to modern education was identified and their implications was sought. With this intention, Bati Azhar Mesjid education center was selected with the assumption that it could provide the required information easily.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

The researcher would like to state that the study has come across with some limitations. Owing to certain constraints, time in particular, the writer has not been able to solicit the opinions and criticism of educators and experts on Muslim education. In addition, because of the mere availability of medium and advanced education in the center, the writer could not get a living experience of beginners early primary education (Lefzel-Quran), in collaboration with an interview based information gathered from the informants. Moreover, the placement of the educational center is situated in urban area, where secular educational institutions are available and modern telecom infrastructures are prevalent. Therefore, though efforts were made to separate the values of secular and Islamic education through in-depth interview and FGD that were made with informants, it is feared by the writer that there might be some values that the Islamic education borrowed from the secular one.

1.7. Organization of the study

This research was organized in to five chapters. In the first chapter the problem and its approach which covered the background of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study were included. The second chapter focuses with review of related literature and explores some of the basic features of Islamic education in Ethiopia and worldwide. Then, the third chapter deals with research methods and procedures employed in the study to gather data required to assess issues under investigation. Presentation, analysis and interpretation are treated in chapter four. Finally, chapter five concentrate on the major findings, summary and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this part of the paper literatures were consulted and various ideas produced by the scholarly inks, that go in line with the purpose of the study are cited logically. The introduction of Islam, how it was propagated through education and the nature of the schooling system in Ethiopian and worldwide context are stated here under.

2.1 Introduction of Islam in Ethiopia

According to Erlich (2007:2) Islamic Middle Eastern States and Christian Ethiopia share a long and intensive history. The story as narrated by Muslim historians of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), when he begins his preach of Islam and get some followers, the Qoreish (the leading tribe of Mecca) began to act violently on the prophet and his believers. Such of the followers, who did not hold an independent position or had no member of the family to come forward and support them, were the chief victims; and the brunt of their wrath fell up on them. They were seized, imprisoned, torched and even some are killed (Safdar, 1997:44-47). In the circumstance, it was no more possible for the followers of Mohammed to live in peace any longer in Mecca; nor a place where the listeners might be exposed to assaults. The prophet therefore advised the suffering Muslims to be take themselves to a place of safety, and suggested to go to Habashah across the Red Sea, "where a king rules with justice" (Mohammed, 1992:226) and "who oppresses no one" (Erlich, 2007:2).

Under the advice of Prophet Mohammed, a group of individuals, about one hundred and sixteen refugees, escaped to Abyssinia in 615 AD. They were received with marked kindness by Nejashi (Negus), the Christian king of Ethiopia (Safdar, 1997:47). From the narrated ideas, one can generalize that, one of the earliest contacts of Islam outside the Arabian Peninsula was with Ethiopia. This means Ethiopia was the first foreign relation case for Islam and the land of the first Hijra (migration to Ethiopia).

When the prophet and the Muslim community get stabilized and established state in Medina, and the refugees went home, the prophet invited the king of Ethiopia to embrace Islam and let the people of the state to be under it (Erlich, 2007:2). However, this call could not get access on the spot or immediately, rather the state opened the room for Islam, according to Hussien (2001), in the ninth and tenth century, through Red Sea, with the decline of the Aksum Empire.

The expansion of Islamic Ideology in the state is strongly related with activity of Muslim traders, accompanied by Muslim scholars and Sufis, in the Ethiopian hinter land. Furthermore, it was around the Zawiyaa (a multi functional institution which served both as a prayer house and a study center) that the early cultivators of Islam, the first organized and emerging Muslim Communities, began to propagate Islam amongst the people of surrounding villages.

2.2 Religion and Formal Education

According to the teaching of Quran it is written as "Say, O my Lord, advance me in knowledge" (Quran, 20:114). This is the grand principle which instructs everyone to seek out wisdom for achieving the right path and success. In line with this fact Derebssa(2008: 5) associated the origin of education with organized religion. For Axtel, Cited in Derebssa (2008), the religious purpose of learning to read is to serve the interest of God Almighty, rather than Satan. From the believe in the importance of knowing how to read God's law, parents should ensure that their children read and write so that they do not serve the purpose of Satan due to ignorance of God's law. In short terms for Samuel Morrison (1936) cited in Derebssa(2008:5), the religious and secular components of education were inextricably tied together.

In the west, as in the Islamic World, before the period of secularization and modernization, during the Renaissance and the 11th - 17th century, education was related to religion and the educational institutions were either directly or indirectly

controlled by the church. It is also important to remember that the western educational institutions, especially the university, are not part and parcel of the modern world and that in their origin they, like the church, belong to the pre modern history of the west (Hossien, 1994:209)

Similar with the global reality, for Derebssa (2006) the background of traditional or church education, and Islamic education (Derebssa, 2008), can offer better understanding of Ethiopian tradition of teaching. According to World Bank (1988:11) in about the 4th century, the Ethiopian Christian church established a comprehensive system of education that provided Ethiopian cultural, spiritual, literary, scientific and artistic life. Derebssa (2008: 60-61) also stated, until the early 1900s, under the sponsorship of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, formal education was confined to a system of religious instruction. “ like the church, the mosques in the Muslim areas had a parallel function in running Quranic schools starting from the 7th century in Ethiopia”.

2.3 Islamic Schools

Islamic schools that facilitate the teachings of Quran and Hadith have existed in the Middle East and Africa since the seventh century AD. These schools share a set of historical roots that can be traced back to Arabia and the educational practices of the prophet Mohammed. These practices continued and expanded after his death, as Arab armies and then traders spread Islam West and South to Africa, East to Asia, and North in to Europe (Omar,1993). As Islam spread, so too did the schools that taught the Quran. Like the religion they promulgated, these schools intermixed with local institutions and took on the distinctive cultural characteristics of the localities in which they were situated (Wanger, 1991).

However, for Boyle (2004:1), while Quranic schools are historically significant in terms of the role they played in shaping the development of the Muslim world, they are not merely quaint, historical curiosities to be discovered through manuscripts in

the dusty archives of Harvard, Ilorin, or Al Azhar Universities. In the early twenty – first century, Quranic schools (Islamic schools) continue to be vibrant actors in the daily lives of millions of children and communities worldwide.

What are Islamic Schools?

The archetype of traditional Islamic education across the Middle East and Africa was a one – room school with a male teacher and several assistants (graduates of his school or advanced older students) who taught children to memorize the Quran through a combination of recitation and copying activities. Through memorization of the Quran, children learned to write and read in the Arabic language. The typical school consisted of students of varying ages, mostly males from about 7 to 20 years. The students and the teacher sat on straw mat on the floor. Students wrote with an inky mixture on a wooden slate called a luh. Support for school came from the community, which supplied the school with space and housing and food for the teacher, and made decisions on the hiring of teachers and on the provision and kind of school resources necessary (Boyle,2004:2)

The teacher taught by one-on-one coaching of individual students or by working with small groups of students who were at the same level in their studies. Students also worked in groups (learning circles) and worked independently. Learning was self paced. There were no formal tests, only the demonstration of masterly – reciting and writing the verse properly. Corporal punishment was widely used both to remedy misbehavior and to punish a student for not studying and memorizing well. Students often came and went, depending on their family's need for help with work around the home, no stigma was attached to dropping out of school (Houston,1994).

2.3.1. Early Islamic Educational Institutions

The earliest Islamic school was the Mosque; the prophet Muhammad would sit in the mosque and instruct his companions in the sacred texts. The companions would sit around him in a semi-circle (so that no one would sit behind him). The assembly of learners was referred to as the *Mejlis* (council), or more frequently, the *halaqah* (which means learning circle) (Boyle, 2004:11). *Halaqas* continued to function throughout the expansion of Islam, well in to the ninth century. Teachers would associate themselves with a particular mosque and people would travel from all over to study in a particular *halaqah*. Some mosques even had several *halaqahs*. The curriculum included, during the latter periods, in addition to religious subjects, courses like philology, grammar, Chemistry, physics, arithmetic, algebra and geometry (Omar, 1993).

A second form of education during prophetic times was the *Suffah* School. *Suffah* refers to a room attached to the mosque in which travelers or homeless people resided. Residents of the *Suffah* studied "reading, writing, Muslim law and the memorizing of chapters of the sciences" under the tutelage of the prophet himself (Boyle, 2004:11). In terms of form, since they are quasi-residential, *suffahs* were precursors of the later *medresas* (boarding schools), where students lived and studied at higher levels (Omar, 1993). As the mosques were not sufficient to house scholars, residence halls were established near the mosques to house students and teachers (Boyle, 2004:12). By the tenth century, the mosque turned in to the *medrasa* and "by the thirteenth century AD, great Islamic universities had been established in Cairo, Tunis and elsewhere, drawing advanced students and teachers from the ever expanding Islamic community (*Umma*)" (Wagner, 1991:265).

2.3.2. Schools of Law (*Madh'hab*)

Knowledge derived from Quran and *Hadith* posses three major branches. The first type is the general tenets of Islamic belief in the oneness of Almighty God, in his

angels, books, messengers, the prophet hood of Muhammad (PBUH) and soon (Fewzan, 2002:25).

This knowledge may be derived, by all of us, directly from the Qur'an and *Hadith* as is also the case with a second type of knowledge, that of general Islamic principles to do good, avoid evils, cooperate with others in good works and so forth (Nuh Hamim, 2000).

The third type of knowledge is that of the specific understanding of particular divine commands and prohibitions that make up the sharia (Islamic law). Here because of both the nature and the sheer number of the *Quraan* and *Hadith* texts involved, people differ in the scholarly capacity to understand and deduce rulings from them. But all of us have been commanded to live them in our lives. In such circumstances, the ordinary individuals are expected to rely on *Mujtahid Imams* (Bilal ,2006).

According to Boyle (2004:12), the science of Islamic Jurisprudence was developed with the expansion of Islam and with the need to train the complex interpretation of Islamic texts, for legal and administrative purposes, in the Quranic school called *medressa*. Within medressas the understandings of different scholars have been taught under the name *Medhhab*. Here, for Bilal (2006) literally, *medhhab* means a way of going or simply a path. The word *madhhab* is derived from the verb *dahaba* which means to go. The position of an outstanding scholar on a particular point , was also referred to as his *madh-hab* (the path of his ideas or his opinion). Eventually, it was used to refer to the sum total of the scholar's opinions, whether legal or philosophical. Later it was used to denote, not only the scholar's opinion, but also that of his students and followers.

In line with this intention, with in the Sunni Islam, among many other *Mujtahids*, the following four major *Madhhabs* (a school of taught or religious jurisprudence, or *Fiqh*) were identified (Nuh Hamim, 2000 and Wikipedia, 2007& 2008).

- a. **Hanafi** – The **Hanafi** (Arabic: *Ḥanafī*) school is one of the four *Madhhab*s (schools of law) in jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) within Sunni Islam. The Hanafi madhhab is named after the Persian scholar Abu Hanifa an-Nu'man ibn Thābit (699-767CE), whose legal views were preserved primarily by his two most important disciples, Abu Yusuf and Muhammad al-Shaybani. Among the four established Sunni schools of legal thought in Islam, the Hanafi school is the oldest and by far, the largest. It has a reputation for putting greater emphasis on the role of reason and being more liberal than the other three schools. The *Hanafi* School also has the most followers among the four major Sunni schools.
- b. **Maliki** - The **Mālikī** *madhhab* is one of the schools of *Fiqh* or religious law within Sunni Islam. It is the third largest of the four schools. The Mālikī School derives from the work of Mālik ibn Anas, primarily the *Muwattaʿah* and the *Mudawwanah*. The *Muwattaʿah* is a collection of hadiths which are regarded as sound and find their place in al-Bukhārī with some commentary from Mālik regarding the '*amal* "practices" of the people of Medina and where the '*amal* is in compliance with or in variance with the *hadiths* reported.
- c. **Shafi'i** - The **shafi'i** madhhab is one of the schools of fiqh, or religious law, within the Sunni branch of Islam. Named after *Imām ash-Shafi'i*, it is the second largest school of taught interms of followers. Because of Imam *alShafi'i's* exhaustive knowledge and systematic methodology to religious science, he is also known as the "First Among Equals" . The Shafi'i school of thought stipulates authority to four sources of jurisprudence, also known as the *Usul al-fiqh*. In hierarchical order, the *usul al-fiqh* consist of: the Quran, the Sunnah of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, *ijmā'* ("consensus"), and *qiyas* ("analogy").
- d. **Hanbali**- Hanbali is considered to be the most conservative of the four schools and the one that relies on *Hadith* the most. Hanbalis reject the use of philosophical argument in matters of religious belief. The school was started by the students of Imam Ahmad. Hanbali jurisprudence is predominant among Muslims in Saudi Arabia

For Hussein (1988,96-97), two of the four universally recognized schools of law (madahaib, sig: madhhab) are represented in Wallo: the shafi'iyyah and the Hanafiyyah. Broadly speaking, the shafi'iyyah has the largest number of followers in Wallo and is predominant in the lowland areas like Dawway and Ifat, whereas the Hanafiyyah is strong in high land areas such as Qallu, Borana, Warra Himano, Warra Babo and Yajju.

2.4 Islamic Education in Wallo

Although no conclusive period for the early penetration of Islam in Wallo can be put forward, according to Hussein (2001) orally preserved traditions connect the Introduction of Islam with the arrival of Arab Immigrant groups' settlement in the fringes of South Eastern Wallo bordering on Ifat and Awsa. It is quite likely that these traditions of Islamization are later day elaborations of the accounts of ninth - centaury Arab geographers and travelers about the arrival of descendent Arab refugees who are considered to be ancestors of low land communities such as the Argoba.

The first half of the sixteenth century was the next period of the diffusion of Islam in Wallo. This is the time for the wake of the conquest launched by Gagn, in which the process of the conversion of the local communities to Islam was accelerated. Sheikh-Sabir and Sheikh Garad, are credited with having converted the surrounding Amhara communities (Hussen,1988).

Further expansion and consolidation of Islam in Wallo in the 18th and 19th centuries have happened because of two reasons; the establishment of a number of local dynasties and the introduction and dissemination of the mystical orders (turuq). During this period situation made room open for pilgrims to travel to Hijaz where they also came into contact with new ideas and acquired further knowledge about Sufism. The introduction and propagation of the religious orders was crucial

for the revival of Islam and the diffusion of classical education through the various centers of learning and local pilgrimage (Hussein, 1998). This idea also strengthened by Hussein, (2001:91), for him the history of Islamic education in Wallo had a parallel history with the flourishing of Sufi centers as typical Muslim institutions representing Orthodox learning, were the numerous seats of Islamic education, where both primary and advanced instruction in the classical subjects was offered.

The rural Zawiyaa, in the context of indigenous Islam, which has been defined as a resting house, a gathering place where command prayers were held, and where the daily and weekly congregational ritual prayers were performed, was the earliest nucleolus of Islamic education. Long before town mosques began to be built; it was around the Zawiyaa that traditional Islamic educations were given (Hussen, 2001) Islamic education in Wallo was traditionally offered by scholars who were recognized for their mastery of the different branches of ILM (Haile Gebreal, 1971). Generally speaking, because of the length of time required for proficiency in all the subjects, and because of the acute shortage of resources needed to pursue advanced studies, the various subjects, and because of the acute shortage of resources needed to pursue advanced studies, the various subjects were taught by different scholars residing in different places.

Centers of Islamic Learning in Wallo

The following most famous centers of education were identified by Hussen (1988), with their founders and famous scholars.

To shed light on a few of many:

- At Graddo, Dawway.....founded by Mufti Dawud ibn Abi Bakr (1818/19)
- Shonkefounded by al – Haj Jawhar bin Haydar
- At Jema Negus, Albukko, Central Wallo-----Sheyk Mohammad.(1806/07)
- At Legot in wera Himano-----Sh. Umar Surur was a recognized teacher
- In Warra Babbo, at a place called Oda – Sh. Abdal-Wahhab Abdel- Jelil

2.5. Subjects, methods and objectives of Islamic Education (IE)

2.5.1. Subjects of Islamic Education

The range of subjects offered, and the nature and aims of the educational system, are similar to those of other centers of learning in all regions of Ethiopia (Haile Gebriel, 1971) and the Islamic world (Hussen, 2001 ; 93). The stage of the IE had two levels; the first stage and the higher Islamic schools; "The ILM" (Haile Gebriel, 1971).

The primary stage locally known as "Teenhaji". The term is mainly known in wollo and Yifat. The same stage is known as "Mejlis Quran" in Harar, Jimma and Arussi (Haile Gebriel, 1971). In this stage, the students were made to learn the Arabic Alphabet and recite the Quran. In the later higher schools stage, students were engaged in the study of Islamic law and commentaries on the Quran (Hussen, 1988). In line with the higher school stage, Haile Gebriel (1971), divided major parts of ILM (knowledge) in the following broad parts.

- Study of classical Arabic ; Nahw
- The Islamic canon law ; Fiqh
- The prophetic Tradition ; Hadith
- The commentaries of the Quran ; Tefsir

Specifically speaking, for Hussen (2001), beside the Quran and its exegesis (tefsir), Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), Nahw (Arabic Grammer and Syntax), Sarf (morphology) and Tawhid (theology) are widely taught, usually each under a separate sheik, specialized teacher. Other highly specialized fields such as 'ilm al-balaga' (rhetoric), 'Mantiq' (logic), Arud and Maani (Prosody), bayan (eloquence), badi (the science of Metaphors or of good style), 'usul al - Fiqh' and 'hadith' (the study of the tradition of the prophet) are also part of the subjects.

2.5.2. Methodology of Teaching

The method of learning is mainly based on reading, oral recitation and memorization. The teacher sits in his house or in the open place known to all. A student or a group of student go to the teacher (Mudarris) and sit in a circle around him and read the text loudly they are learning. After every sentence or phrase the teacher translates and the students listen to him, in a teacher centered style, students will sit with their sherika (school mates) to revise and comment as they learned under the supervision of the Shiek (Hussen, 1988:99 and Haile Gebriel, 1971). If a student makes a mistake he is interrupted by the teacher who comments or interprets again.

If the teacher feels the student mastered the interpretation of the text, the student read new passages and the teacher comments. The interpretation of the subject matter is conducted from Arabic to the tongue (language) of the society, contrary to Geez schools of the church, where Amharic is the only language used in instruction other than Ge'ez (HaileGebriel, 1971). This is to mean, if the student speaks Amharic or any other language, the teaching learning process will be conducted in the language that they know most.

2.5.3. Objectives of Islamic Education

The general objectives of traditional Islamic education have been the teaching and dissemination of Islamic dogma and practices, the training of the clerical class and the spread of literacy. For Boyle (2004:12) formal Islamic education developed out of the need to preserve of God in the form of the Quran, by ensuring "proper" memorization, and to understand both the Quran and the Hadith (narratives about/sayings of the prophet). In the early years after Mohammed's death in AD 632, the Quran had not been written down. An official version of how it should be recited had been agreed up on, but according to Omar (1993), it had not been formally

recorded and its preservation relied on the fact that it was memorized by the companions. When it was written down, the earliest Arabic texts lacked vocalization and punctuation. This perpetuated mistakes in the recitation of the Quran, which affected the meaning of the message. The rapid expansion of Islam exacerbated the need for schools and teachers throughout the newly conquered territories, so that the Quran could be transmitted to the newly converted exactly as it had been given to Mohammed (Omar 1993).

Hussein (1988), also further elaborated the idea that, Islamic education was intended to serve as the chief medium of providing religious instruction to the faithful on the central precepts of Islam. Furthermore since the essence of Islamic education is moral and character training Muslim scholars also thought the ordinary man about the nature of his relationship with God and his obligation towards him, about permissible and reprehensible behavior and action and about the laws governing his social relationship with fellow Muslims. The purpose of education is to refine student's morals, educate their sprites, propagate virtue, teach propriety and prepare them for a life full of sincerity and purity.

In the same explanation, Hussein (2001:91) stated that, the traditional Islamic education institutions had certainly been flourishing and playing seminal role in the preservation and diffusion of Islamic scholarship, and in maintaining a culture link with the Islamic world through the acquisition of teaching and devotional materials for both instructors and students.

2.5.4. The contributions of Islamic Education for Modern Education “World Wide”

According to Boyle (2004:1) in the early twenty-first century, Islamic schools continue to be vibrant actors in the daily lives of millions of children and communities worldwide. To assure and make clear this, many scholars are coming to engage in research work in Islamic education. More recent research on Morocco points out some of the innovative features of Qur'anic schooling, which belie claims that it is without educational value vis-à-vis “modern” educational ideas (Wagner, 1983a)

Wagner found reason to be optimistic about the use of Qur'anic schools to promote better quality learning by pointing out that many of the outcomes of public and Qur'anic schools can be said to have characteristics in common:

In spite of numerous regional differences, Quranic schools can be said to teach children how to:

1. Learn in a structured setting
2. Respect the teacher
3. Use language and recite in unison
4. Encode and decode an alphabet
5. Be a moral person and a good citizen ; and
6. More recently do basic arithmetic (Wagner, 1989:8)

Since Quranic schools are often used as pre-schools for children (e.g. in Morocco), they could prepare students for public schooling by initiating them in to the culture, behavior and expectations of formal schooling, and possibly making them more ready to learn and succeed in school. The above writer (1989: 5-6) stated that, indeed, these traditional schools are “perhaps the most important example of indigenous education in today’s world”. Whether as the sole source of education or as supplementary “after school” schools, summer schools, or preschools, Islamic schools reach of millions and millions of children worldwide.

In Morocco, for example, approximately 80% of all children still attend some form of Islamic schools for a portion of their school years (Wagner, 1989). Islamic education has seen a steady resurgence in Nigeria (Reichmuth, 1993), where many Islamic schools, especially in the North, now compete with public schools because they offer a full range of subjects in addition to the standard religious instruction. UNICEF estimates that 40% of students in Senegal attend Islamic schools (Kamara, 1995).

The Qur'anic schools are often sources of literacy. With this regard Wagner (1983b:187) cites evidence from work he has done with the Morocco literacy project, which suggests that prior memorization helps reading acquisition in Arabic. He also cites work by Chomsky, which suggests that being able to orally recite passages before having to decode them, helped children who normally had trouble with reading fluency.

In addition, in Muslim countries where Arabic is not the national language, for Boyle (2004:20) Arabic literacy at least has the advantage of already being embedded in the culture through the religion. And the above writer also believed that, literacy rate in non Arabic speaking countries, for example, in Senegal, would be higher if those who could read and write some Arabic were counted as literate.

Through the archives of historical pages, Hossien (1994:209) stated that, in the early Middle Ages Islamic educational institutions themselves began to have an influence, especially in the domain of higher learning, up on their western counter parts through Spain, Sicily and France as well as Italy. In fact, the whole college system which gave rise to the modern western universities had a close relationship to the Islamic madrasah system which survives to this day in the Islamic world. Such terms as the "chair" used in Western Universities is, of course, the direct translation of the Arabic word Kursi and there are many educational practices which have survived to this day in the older institutions of higher learning of medieval origin in the west

such as Salamanca, Paris, Bologna, Oxford and Cambridge which bear deep resemblance to practices in the classical Islamic Educational System

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS OF THE STUDY

This chapter of the study deals about the methodological approach that was used in the process of collecting all the necessary information and analyzing it, to the extent of giving comprehensive message with convincing outlook. Here under, the study design, the sampling procedures, the data collection procedures, the data collection instruments and the analysis parts are discussed in detail.

3.1 Study Design

This study was conducted with an ethnographic case study which is considered, according to Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen (2010), field research because it is conducted in a natural setting or "field". The researcher observes group behavior as it occurs naturally in the setting, without any simulation or imposed structure. So, the researcher also went to the school where the class room situation is observed as it occurs and conducted an interview with individuals who can give better information about the school. To associate with example, according to Best and Khan (1993), in educational research, ethnography has been used to study the culture of schools and the people who reside there.

As a process for Creswell (2007: 69), ethnography involves extended observation of the group, most often through participant observation, in which the researcher is immersed in the day to day lives of the people and observes and interviews the group participants. Through all these processes, ethnographers study the meaning of the behavior, the language and the interaction among members of the culture sharing groups and interpret the data in the context of the situation in which they gathered the data (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Razavieh, 2010 and Creswell, 2007 : 69).

Qualitative procedures provide a means of accessing unquantifiable facts about the actual people researchers observes and talk to or represented by their personal traces. As a result, qualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings

and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. Researchers, using qualitative techniques, examine how people learn about and make sense of themselves and others (Berg, 2001:7). Hence, a description study was conducted since it was intended to describe and interpret the educational practices of the Islamic schools.

3.2. Sampling Procedures

In order to meet the main purpose of the study, the researcher designed an ethnographic case study in a selected site. Then, to get better representative site and rich informants, plan and unreserved endeavor was made. Hence, in this part of the paper, the methods that were employed to achieve the research objectives will be presented.

3.2.1. Study Area Selection and Its Rationale

In the first and second round field visit the researcher was intended to select a representative site for the main field investigation through snow ball sampling procedure. Owing to this process Bati Azhar Mesjid was selected among the Islamic schools observed in the Oromiya special zone (Kemise). Quran Tefsir, Hadith and Tewheed subjects are given in the school. Having this and the below listed justifications the school were selected.

- ✱ The informants in the net work (snow ball) strategy suggested the school as representative.
- ✱ In the first and second field visit, the researcher got the school as a place which best fit with his Islamic educational back ground.
- ✱ It was reported by the potential informants that there is no difference in the educational tradition of this school with other schools that are specialized in Fiqh and Nahu.

- * Because of the prior observations the researcher believed to get all the necessary cooperation from the school.

On the account of the aforementioned justifications, the Bati Azhar Mesjid Islamic school center was selected.

3.2.2. Participants Selection

A combination of the snow ball method and deliberate choices were employed to identify and approach the informants. Thus in some cases, the writer intentionally sought individual whom the researcher assumed would provide particular information on a given topic, or one informant directly or indirectly led to another participant. In the course of the research, certain key informants were identified, who were interviewed several times and who become important in cross check information.

Thus, using snowball strategy, it was discussed with different people in the community, and then selected those who have a good knowledge about the issue under study as sources of data. Within this course, participants of the study were the head and assistant teacher (sheikhs) of the school, twelve students (darassas) , three community members and students of the school and one community member and former student of the school. Accidentally, while the researcher was in the field, he got the sheikh as traditional healer and informal interview was made with three patients who were under treatment and healed of their problem.

3.3. Data collection Procedures

After identifying the site where the research could be conducted, the primary consideration of the writer was to judge the participants who could provide the best information to achieve the objective of the study. The researcher, then, made communication and informal discussion with head of Arabic department in AAU and IRCC (Islamic research and cultural centre) coordinator on the overall activities

of the research. On the bases of their rich experience in the subject under study, they gave recommendation. Then the researcher selected two Muslim scholars from Bati-town, who were likely to have the required information and be willing to share it. With this intention, these scholars, as the basis of the study were interviewed on the following issues.

- ✳ About the current status of Islamic education in Oromiya special zone in Amhara Regional Government.
- ✳ About a better known Muslim education centre (If there is any other place to make some adjustments in site selection).
- ✳ About the background educational system and the existing educational practices of the school.
- ✳ About the steps the researcher would follow for field observation.
- ✳ About the individuals that would be included in the interview

Based on the collected information from the above individuals, the writer observed four Islamic education centers including the selected area as a pre-field study visit. However, the rest three areas were not conducive for the writer. Among the inconveniencies, the media of instruction and the schools organization can take the primacy. Through observation, and some interview the researcher managed to reach a better understanding of the curriculum, methods of teaching and school culture of different education centers.

The last field study of the school was conducted from April 8 to 28/2012. The prior two pre-study field visit enabled the researcher to decide that the Bati Azhar Mesjid education center was better representative for the study.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

In order to collect the data input of the study, which comprises primary sources, interviews, observation and focus group discussion were employed. For Berg (2001 : 6) novice researchers are instructed to make use of research strategies composed of multiple methods in a single investigation. In line with this fact, the above writer also argued that, the decision to discuss field research strategies under the broad umbrella of ethnography ensures the inclusion of a wide combination of elements, such as, direct observation, various types of interviewing, listening and others. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) argued that data collected from impersonal interviews and direct observations are needed in a qualitative case study evaluation. Furthermore, focus group discussion is also stated as a complementary technique to collect data in qualitative case studies (Wellington, 1996).

3.4.1. Interviews

In a qualitative case study, interviewing is a major source of data needed for understanding the phenomena under study. The ethnographic interviews employed in the study were in the form of unstructured (in-depth) interview, where the researcher had the freedom to formulate questions as they come to his mind around the issue being investigated. Through this, according to sideman (2006:9), an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience can be achieved. This interview was undertaken in the form of person to person encounters using open-ended questions to enable respondents address matters in their own words. As to Creswell (2012 : 218) this approach of data collection is useful when the researcher intends to collect detailed personal information or little is known about the area.

After getting the permission of the "gate-keepers" and identifying the interviewees, schedule was prepared in advance and informants were told about the purpose of the study. To interview the students in the Mesjid and in the Sheiks residence, which

are used as a learning center, an arrangement was prepared with the school's administrators, the Sheikh, the assistant sheikh and the leader of the students (Amir). However, for Seidman (2006), interviewing as a process turns others in to subjects so that their words can be appropriated for the benefit of the researcher. Having in mind the above notion and the purpose of ethical consideration, the informants were guaranteed that no harm will come to them or to the school environment because of their participation in the study.

While the interview goes on, some of the students, specially the mid-class attendants, were too shy to communicate, however, efforts were made to make them intimate and communicative. Moreover, two female students and the member of the community were interviewed beyond the curtain as the religious principle command to do so. In a nut shell, eight students were interviewed separately, the rest were in pairs and groups. Accordingly, 16 formal interviews with different individuals and groups were administered.

More specifically, the researcher conducted the open ended interviews with.

- ✳ The sheikh and the assistant sheikh.
- ✳ Eight most advanced students, including the Amir (leader) of the students.
- ✳ Four mid level students.
- ✳ One community member and the former student of the school.
- ✳ Three community members, two of them are females, and the students of the school.

Beside this the researcher has got the sheik working as traditional healer in his residency. And fortunately for the researcher, three individuals were found to be interviewed informally and to get some miraculous witnesses. Among the three, two were previously treated of Gangrene and hemorrhoids, but the other came for hemorrhoids treatment.

As a medium of communication, students employed Amharic and Amharic - Arabic mixture expressions. Therefore, the interview were reshaped and made to hold Amharic Arabic mixture to make communication more effective.

3.4.2. Focus Group Discussion /FGD/

The researcher employed focus group interview as a part of data collection instrument. Through which, according to Cress well (2012 : 218) shared understanding from several individuals and specific views from specific people can be collected. For kleiber (2004 : 92) focus group interview can be used alone or in combination with other methods of data collection. Therefore, the purpose of the FGD was to supplement and enrich the information that was collected through observation and interview.

The focus group discussions were conducted with two mid-level and four advanced darassas of the school. That is the size of the focus group was determined with the work of Creswell (2012 : 218) saying "a focus group interview is the process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people, typically four to six". In the course of their action, the opinions of the shy mid-level students were disclosed. Creswell (2012 : 218) suggested that when conducting a focus group interview, encourage all participants to talk and to take their turns talking. For the author, when the interviewees are similar to and cooperative with each other, the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information.

3.4.3. Observation

Observation data, especially participant observation, permit the researcher to observe the naturally unfolding worlds of the population under study (Berg, 2011 : 117). As a technique for gathering information, as a participant, the researcher assume the role of an "Inside" observer who actually engages in activities at the study site. At the same time the researcher records information (Creswell, 2012 : 214).

The writer planned to visit the school in the natural setting where the investigation was taking place. As an insider of the Medressa, the researcher, by making himself in place of the darasas, decided to spent twenty one days observing the educational activities of the school.

In addition to the use of multiple data gathering techniques, to investigate the same phenomenon, researcher suggested that the use of multiple investigators in qualitative research is one method to enhance validity (Berg, 2001 : 5). However, due to the financial constraints, the writer could not employ researcher who can assist him. As a result another alternative means were sought by the investigator to collect better information. In line with this course, the researcher planned and used individuals as assistant observers after giving prior training and discussion during field work.

3.5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

In the study, qualitative analytical procedures were employed. It was focused on an in-depth qualitative analysis of the educational practices in the Islamic school. In the field study the researcher tried to grasp the educational system of the school through interview, observation and focus group discussions. Based on the consent of the participants, interviews and focus group discussion were taped in audio tape recorder. For Corbetta (2003 :280) qualitative interviews must be taped. The temptation to write a summary while the interview is taking place should be avoided, as the result would be incomplete, dull or incomprehensible. This is in short to mean, recording preserves the interviewee's account in its original and complete form. Furthermore, recording the interview enabled the interviewer to concentrate solely on the conversation and to maintain a more natural relationship with the interviewee.

With the sheikh, the assistant sheikh and four advanced students, the researcher conducted a series of three separate interviews. In line with this, Seidman (2006:16-

17) suggested that the series of three interviews allows the interviewer and participant to build the experience and to place it in context.

The conversion of the recorded interviews in a written form transcriptions as well as the translation of all interviews were difficult due to the large volume of the data. Thus transcription was selective depending on the use and relevance of the material. The research involved using an open ended data for the most part. This required raising general questions and developing a comprehensive interpretation from the information granted by the informants.

Since the responses to the open -ended questions were detailed, they helped the researcher to understand in- depth the experience of the informants. The series of three interviews conducted with key informants helped the researcher to understand in depth the experience of the interviewees. The series of three interviews conducted with key informants helped the researcher also to get better chance to select information relevant to the issue.

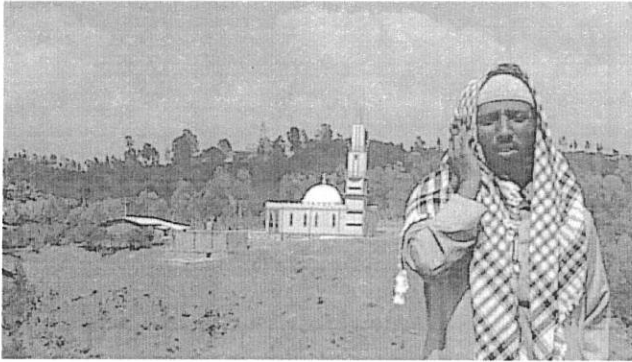
In the field visit, the researcher stayed and observed for twenty one days in the school. The focus was on recording the constructed realities as demonstrated by the participants. Detailed data, what occurred while the researcher was in the field, were recorded as field notes. The recorded notes were dated and the context was identified. The field notes were summarized immediately after the researcher back to his temporary residency. The main interactions and scenes observed, suggested questions and tentative interpretation were daily synthesized. The validity of the study was maintained through triangulation technique among the data collection strategies. The data collected through interview and focus group discussion were analyzed with the support of the data collected from observation. For the analysis, the researcher included his own interpretation and understanding of the data found in the research.

In the paper, some local words were used as they were. This include, terms like Sheikh, Ustaz , Darasa, Mesjid and others, instead of teacher, student, Mosque, etc respectively.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION ON THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Some Features of the Schooling System in Bati Azhar Mesjid

4.1.1. Brief Discussion on the School



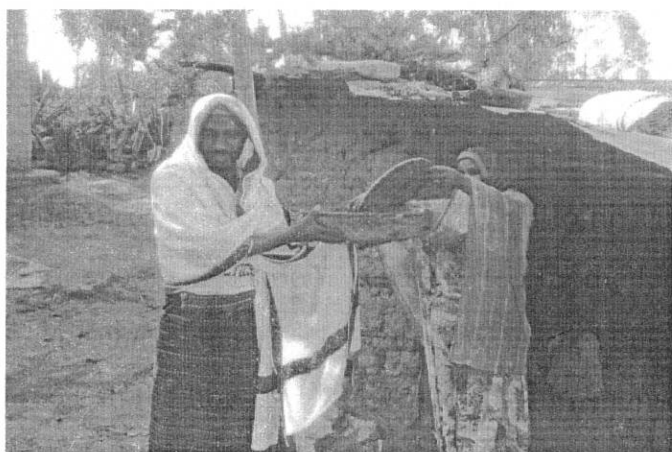
The mosque and the school with the writer (photo: by Seid)

The history of the school dated back three decades; however, it was strengthened after the present *Sheikh* (head teacher) had received *ijaza* (certificate of competency) from his former *Hadith Ustaz* (teacher), Sheikh Ahmedel Hadi. The *ijaza* was granted on Hadith related subjects. The grand Sheikh, who gave the *ijaza*, went to 'Qobo' to establish another *Medressa* by substituting the present *Ustaz*. This was according to ustaz Idris "*the beginning of my life as a young Muslim scholar in Bati, despite the inconveniences of some aged people for the Hadith course*".

For the informant one of the biggest challenges of the newly assigned Sheikh was the responses of the local aged people, who were in a traditional mystical order, which they claim was the way of their fathers. However, with these all hustling turmoil's about hundred darasas were gathered from various localities. Under this open enmity, said the Sheikh "as said a diamond cannot be polished without friction nor a man perfected, without trials", the school is coming to exert huge influence not only at the individual level but also at the societal stage. After years of hardship and bitter dialogue with the *Shafi'iyyah* and *Hannafi'iyyah* *Madhhab* *Sheikhs* and with the local aged people, many accepted what the school was established for. So far, thousands of

students have attended the school, but only fifty three students are certified with the blessing and certificate of permission (ijaza) of the Sheikh. Currently, the school has, though there was no recorded list of students, around 150 students comprising both regular and non regular attendants.

The school has better societal backing and provisions, though it is currently becoming a great challenge because of economic recession, attracted many *darassas* and allowed them to finish the scholastic trainings. In conformity with the above ideas, Hailegebreal (1966) and Hussein (1988 and 2001:93) stated that Islamic educational institutions lacked the patronage and financial backing of the local or regional authorities, but depended entirely on voluntary contributions and allowances made by pious and well-to-do cultivators and traders. The sheik and students of the school are supported by the local community and by some domestic *Ahlulheirat* (the owner of good deeds or sponsors). Some of the students are allowed to live in the houses of their patrons and sponsors, either freely or by teaching Quran and Hadith for their children. Their sponsors were known locally as *quallabi* (Amh: provider of daily food).



Student in Qaria (Photo: by Seid)

Others, finding no sponsors, were forced to seek out their daily meals by walking up and down the town and the surrounding rural areas begging for food from door to

door. The daily routine of searching for provisions was locally known as *qari'a* (from the Ar. *Qari'a*: adversity or misfortune). However, for local community, according to informants, provisions are made ready always for the darassas, either in the form of money or in kind. This is to mean, the community budgeted from their daily expenses for the darassas as part of their family members. Besides, the villagers give a certain amount of their *Sedeqa* or *Zakha* in order to help students cover some other expenses such as clothing or books. Such community based support to professional Muslim students made the sustainability (continuity) of the school far reaching.

4.1.2. Brief Discussion about the Educational Background of the Sheikh



Ustaz Idris (photo: by Ibrahim)

Ustaz Idris has received two other ijazas from famous Islamic scholars, Sheikh Muhammed Awol wrebabo and Sheikh Mohammed Ali Borene (now he is teaching and writing in Saudi Arabia) in addition to what he was granted by his former Ustaz. Both ijazas were in comprehensive Islamic knowledge known as *Ulume Shereya* (sheriatic knowledge like Tefsir al Quran, Hadith and Fiqh) and *Wealatiha* (tools that can make the former subjects easy- courses like Nahw, Belaga, Mentik, Usulal-fiqh, Serf and others).

According to my informant, Sheikh Idris Muhammad, the above honors are the result of twenty years scholastic struggle and hardships. In his educational life, in addition to the above stated courses he has attended subjects like *Ilmel Felek* (Astronomy), *Ilmel*

Tib (knowledge of Medicine) and others. For the informant the *ijaza*, the twenty years of accumulated knowledge and experience, and the interest of some committed individuals made the environment a bit convenient.

4.1.3. Objective of the School

According to the report of the *Sheikh* (master teacher) and his *darassas* (students), the main objectives of the school are the preservation of orthodoxy by its emphasis on conformity to the revealed guidance (Quran) and the tradition of the prophet (*Sunnah*) through *tafsir al-Quran* and *Hadith*, and in the further expansion of Islam by producing clerical class. For informants expanding Tefsir al-Quran, Hadith and Tewhid are viewed as key to maintain Islamic tradition and to separate habitual practices from orthodoxy of religious principles.

The interviewed *darassas* expressed their strong desires to be *Sheikh* (teacher) and as a result to be a moral guide and resource scholars (Ulema) for the Muslim community. Similarly, according to Hussein (1988), the principal aims of Islamic education comprise the teaching and dissemination of Islamic dogma and practice, the training of the clerical class and the spread of literacy.

From the above ideas, it can be concluded that the purposes of the education stream of the school are producing qualified competent Ulema (scholar) and leaders for the Islamic society. Maintaining the original version of Islamic dogma and tradition was also an integral part of it.

4.1.4. Administration System of the School

The overall activities of the school are supervised by the discussion (*Shura*) which is held between the *Sheikh*, the community members and representatives of the students. In the process of solving the students' and the school problem, the role of the students' Amir (leader), who was elected based on his personality, educational

level, experience in the school and ability of leadership, was decisive. Regarding the election of the Amir the sheikh expressed his idea as follows:

"The school is expected to perform many internal activities. To manage them effectively, in addition to me and the local community members, two representatives' of the students are usually assigned in the school to deal with students' affair. To elect them, as a first step I make discussion with students to recommend their candidates. Next, I consider the candidates ethical conduct; relation with the society in general and with the school compound in particular. Besides, their academic performance, seniority and the reasoning capacity are taken in to account. Then, I assign two students as Amir and vice Amir of the students. (interview, April.12 ,2012)

Furthermore, concerning the responsibilities of the amirs, the vice amir of the students', Sheikh Said Hassan stated his idea as follows:

" The amirs are responsible in leading the weekly students' Shura (meeting) and offered solution for simple problems based on a participatory style of leadership, through which students' feedback are taken for decision makings. But if the problem is found to be complicated, it will be taken to the higher administrative hierarchy. .(interview, April.13,2012)

In the field observation, the researcher himself has attended a meeting, where students' issues were discussed for consecutive three Friday mornings. Under the leadership of the Sheikh the community members and the amirs of students with some advanced students forward ideas and seek out solutions for the problems. However, if the problems are serious, additional members, from the locally respected aged people are invited.

Besides, the Sheikh also supervises the role and activities of his graduated students by the meeting that is held every six months. The gathering comprises a group of

individuals including the Sheikh, the deputy Sheikh, famous scholars of the area, the graduated students and respected community members. In the opening, the Sheikh reported the overall activities of his school, what problems they confronted with and how they managed the problems. Others also presented their experiences and problems turn by turn. With scholarly wisdom and accumulated experiences, solutions will be sought and suggested. According to one informant, "if the Sheikh hears something bad about his former student, he will advise him alone, while the six month summit is going to be completed". But, if the same mistake is committed repeatedly, according to the Sheikh, "his ijaza will be taken until the teacher is found to make better relation with the society and with the school compound. Furthermore, another competent candidate will be sent to the school to quench the knowledge based thirst of the community.

Academic calendar of the school

Unlike the modern educational system, the school has no rigid academic calendar. The opening and closing days of the school are determined by the Sheikh and the darassas conventionally. Through the school has no official closing days, except in the last ten days of the month of Remedan, one week to two weeks for the two religious holidays (Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha) in a year as well as every Friday of the week, during farming and harvesting season of the area the students are free to go and engage in various works either in the surrounding or it other localities.

Admission of students in the school

The administration of the school is simple and local, both the master teacher (Ustaz) and the students (darasas) conventionally determine the overall activities. In the school, students can attend classes at anytime of the year if they show interest and the required competency. For the Sheikh, *"the entry requirement is the interest of the students and their ability to read Quranic verses"*. So, all individuals, with different age

levels, who appear in the school with interest to learn, just after a short report and orientation about the unwritten rules and regulations of the compound, are considered darassas of the school. In the report, the new comer is expected to reflect where he comes from, his educational background and other important information that enable the Sheikh either to prepare a new Ma'ad (program) or to let the students seek out Sherika (friend) who has already began on the course.

4.1.5. Educational Content and Levels of the School and Students

According to the master teacher "the school was established to offer Quran Tefsir and Hadith courses, which were not widely taught as the other subjects". For the informants, Quran Tefsir refers the commentary given by respected scholars for the book which is considered by Muslims sacred and the word of Allah -Noble Quran or al- Quran al- Mejid. In fact, there was from the very beginning an oral tradition of commentary up on the Quran which had been taught by the prophet to his companions and which continued from generation to generation. It was on the basis of this oral tradition and of course, the Hadith itself, which is the sayings of Mohammed and the first commentary up on the Quran, that the commentators (Musafirs) began to write all kinds of commentaries up on the Quran.

As for the Hidith, it consists of a vast body of sayings of the Blessed prophet assembled during the first three centuries of Islamic history by generations of devout scholars, who are called Muhaadithun. It is important to note here that, according to the Sheikh, in assembling the sayings and practices of the prophet, examining the chain of transmission and studies step by step how from the prophet himself a particular saying was transmitted from one generation to another until the time when they were recorded. After thorough examinations, Hidiths are classified and compiled as completely authentic hadiths, the partly authentic, the weak hadiths and those without any authenticity. Such collection were made possible by the development of the science of Hadith criticism, the science at the basis of which Isnad

(chain of Hadith transmission) was critically analyzed all the way back to Muhammed (PBUH).

The first groups of these writings are those which were assembled by the authors of the so called "al-kuttubu al-sittah" or "sahih al-sittah" (the six canonical collections of Hadith). The two most highly respected collections are "Sahih al-Bukhari and sahih al-Muslim". Moreover, the other respected collections, although not the degree of the above two, are the sunnan of Tirmidhi, Nasa', Ibn Majah and Abu Dau'd.

Students who have attended schooling in the study area had leveled in to two; the primary and advanced. However, the primary leveled has also two major branches these are locally known as "Ayen Yalkefetu" and "Ayen Yekefetu". Among the informant students, most of the advanced trainees have attended their primary studies in the rural medressas (school).

According to the informants, in the beginning of their primary Islamic education, the letters of the Arabic alphabet were learned to memory before the pupil starts learning how to read them. The alphabets were written for them on a wooden slate called "luh" by the head teacher or advanced students. Next the student learns the several signs of dots on or under the letters. This is done, according to informants, in the form of singing a song. For instance, the following points are read by the teacher and students follow with a melodious voice, saying

"Alif Yelew, Ba Ketach Aned Alew"

"Ta Kelay Hulet Alew, Sa Kelay Soset Alew"

"Jim Ketach Aned Alew, Ha Yelew"

This, for Mohammed Hussein " facilitates students to identify and memorize the alphabet and their several signs of dots".

The next stage known locally as wutettu, involves the mastery of Arabic vocalization or the harakat. This facilitates the reading of the Quran. When the pupil completes

some parts from the Quran, his family prepares various feasts with locally known foods "kollo" and "Dabo" (roasted grains and bread). Moreover, a bigger feast is held, when the pupil completes the whole book (khitmah), to which the Sheikh and fellow students are invited. This for Said Mohammed "motivates students to strengthen the future attendance and successful completion of Islamic education".

The next level of learning, for most advanced students, varies according to the school of law to which the students Ustaz passed through.

In the study area, where the Imam Ahmed Mezhab (school of taught) and the Salafi schools of belief is dominant, the primary (Ayen Yalgeletu- beginners) Students are expected to attend, based on the scholarly recommendation of the Sheikh, the following Tawhid (Islamic theology) and Hadith books, respectively.

1. Usul al-selasse - by Shekh Muhammad Abdulwehab
2. Kitabul - Tawhid - by Shekh Muhammad Abdulwehab
3. Keshfu al- Shubuhah - (Tewhid book)
4. Arbaa al-Newewiyat - Hidith book)
5. Umdetu al- Ahkam - (Hadith book)

After attending the above books students are named as ayen yegeletu students. Then the following books are followed turn by turn or side by side.

6. Bulug al-Maram
7. Riadu al-Salihin
- 8.. Tejrid al-Serih

In the primary phase of the study about 2-3 years are needed. Then, the later stage requires 3-5 years of period, however only a year is sufficient for the gifted and outstanding trainees. The student who completes successfully the matn (text) is recommended to learn Arabic grammar (Nahw/Sarf) in another area, where specialized grammar teachers are found, before he directly passes to the next

commentary phase. This is due to the fact that according to Said Mohammed, one of the informant, "a good knowledge of Nahw (grammar), Sarf (Morphology), Mantiq (logic deductive reasoning) and soon, for Muslim scholars are the base for the mastery of advanced Haidith courses and Quran Tefsir".

Furthermore, Hussein Wollega, who attended Arabic grammar in wollega stated that

"Even to conduct a public lecture (Daw'a), the knowledge of Arabic grammar is mandatory. Moreover, the course entitled "Mantiq" is also crucial as said "Menlem yetealem Mantiq, La yentiq" (those who do not learn how to communicate, should not make public speech. (Interview, April.14, 2012)

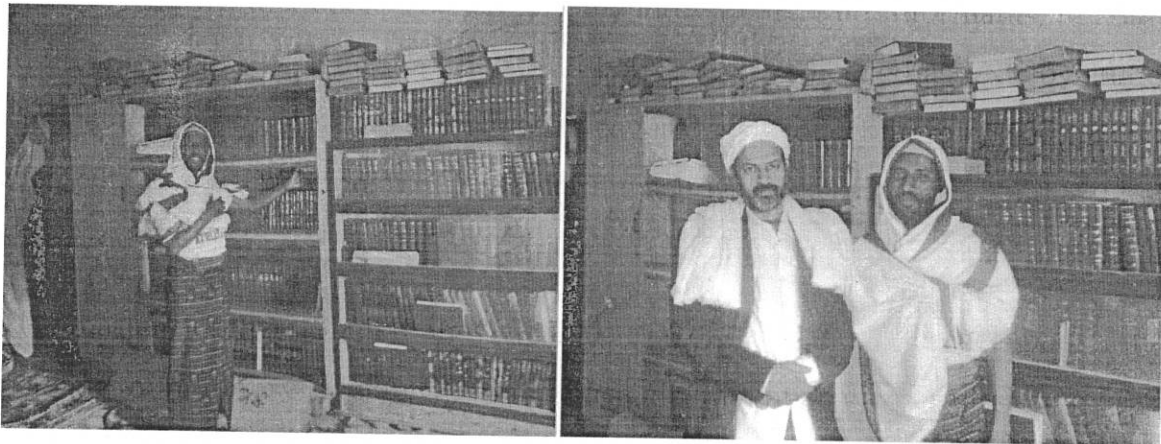
As a final step, the advanced students, who locally called Talibel Ilm and pursued Arabic grammar related courses are expected to attend Tefsir al-Quran and advanced Hadith books. At this level students also study additional writings and literatures of scholars, and use them to solve practical societal problems.

The above explanations indicate that the content of the subjects continuously progresses over a period of time from the lowest text (matn) to the highest commentary (Sherh). Through the course, students are leveled on the basis of their intellectual development as "Ayen Yalgeletu, Ayen Yegeletu and Talibel Ilm". Those students of "Ayen Yalgeletu" and "Ayen- yegeletu" levels learn proper reading, spelling and direct translation of matn texts. At the lower level students require proper assistance and continuous follow up from advanced students and the master teacher. However, as students grow and reach at the advanced stage, they feel much more independent in their studies. So that, their role will not be restricted as a student, rather they act also as a tutor for the lower students.

4.1.6. Instructional Materials in the School

The major instructional materials in the school are text and reference books. To pursue schooling in the school every student must have, either by borrowing or buying, his own text book. Thanks to some individuals, said informants, in addition to their assistance for survival they send books that are needed as texts by students. The field observation witnessed students eagerness to collect more books (kitabs) for their continued education and the writer himself was asked by some students to buy them books.

The master teacher (Sheikh) has a collection of text and reference books in his personal mini library (Mekteba), from which all students have permission to use and return back. The books in the mini library are shelved in shelves in accordance with different knowledge.



The mini library of the Sheikh (photo: by Seid)

The Sheikh and the researcher in the library(photo: by Seid)

4.1.7. Students Life in the School

In the Azhar educational centre, most of the regular attending students came from different parts of neighboring and distant areas. Based on the discussion with the students and observation of the school the writer was able to hear neck names that were associated with students original place; like Hussein Wollega, Mohammed

Borene, Seid Oromo and others. There are two causes why students leave home and come to the area to study Hadith. The first reason is "the school is the specialized centre for Hadith and Tefsir al-Quran. The second was students believe that when a student is engaged in schooling in his locality he may not be able to invest all his time and energy to his studies because of family members interest to get assisted by their child. Consequently, hard ship and lack of comfort are the day by day problems of students. However, students believe that hardship will make future of their life bright and they consider it as part for their scholarly advancement. In coincide with this, one of the advanced student Said Ali said that "...it is choosing to suffer now in the hope that the future suffering will not exist. To gain something best, I have to sacrifice something I like most."

When the itinerant students arrived the school, they are asked to introduce themselves and their background by the Amir of the school. Having been cleared about the needed information, the new comers will be presented in front of the Sheikh to get permission. After a brief discussion, the Sheikh either prepares a new maad (program) to the student or let him proceeded with the already began schedules. The newly admitted student, to continue his education in the school, either find sponsors locally referred as qallabi, or should collect daily rations from the inhabitants of the village by begging - this is known as qari'a. The resident students are locally known as mu-qim and the distant students are musafir.

The Azhar Mosque, which is the centre of lecture hall in the study area, is used for most students as a site of shelter. That is why most students are observed to take rest and sleep in the corners and surrounding of the Mesjid, as the students do not look for any sort of comfort. Alongside the hardship of life, students show humility and concern for one another's welfare. Lower students give higher respect for their tutors' and advanced students; and succor also offered by advanced students to the lower level attendants.

4.1.8. The sheikh and Traditional Medication

Every day, after Zuhur prayer, the Sheikh is found to engage in many social responsibilities. Among them, traditional medication is one part. According to the report of the Sheikh, he picked the practice from his former teacher who taught him *Ilm al-tib*. With in decades of his engagement in the practice, many got relief with simple treatment. Regarding the types of medication, the Sheikh his idea as follows:

"Different physical problems like hemorrhoid, gangrene, cancer and others as well as spiritual (psychological) illnesses are treated in my home. So far many individuals got relief and recommend me to broaden the service in other areas. However, I don't like to engage in as my usual work. I am educator and prefer to stay in my school." (Interview, April. 25, 2012)

One of the informant, who came from Djibouti and treated by the Sheikh stated his witness as follows:

"While I was treated in Djibouti, doctors told me that my leg was infected with gangrene and unless it is amputated it may lead me to death. However, I insisted and resorted to die than losing my legs while I am alive. Within this event, one of my relative pointed me to to go and get treated to Ustaz Idris's home. Thanks to allah, within three days of treatment, though it was very painful, I got relief and told by physicians statement as the disease is cured." (Interview, April. 25, 2012)

The other patient also stated his case as follows:

"I lived with the problem of hemorrhoid for about two decades. When I answer to the first call of nature, I see many troubles with painful moments. Though efforts were made to get remedy with modern medication, I couldn't get any possible solution for the suffering. Finally, when friends recommend

me to go and search the medication in Sheikh Idris's home, I came with hope to get remedy. And, I was not wrong, every thing was fixed with in a week treatment. Now, thanks to God, I am feeling well." (Interview, April. 25, 2012)

The above statements of interviewee make clear that the Sheikh has great experience of traditional medication. If all the necessary supports are given by the concerned body, after detail investigation of the practice, the sheikh can offer better services to patients. When the work done of the sheikh is seen with in the 24 hours of the day, it signals the hard working nature of the Sheikh and leads everyone to share on how to discharge many responsibilities per day.

4.2. The nature of Teaching and Learning Process in the School

After the Morning Prayer (Subhi), before 6:00 AM, in every days of the week, except Friday, advanced students and non- regular attendants gathered in the Sheik's private house for the morning lesson. While advanced students are learning, lower level students were studying individually or in group in the Mesjid. This practices are respectively called Murajaa and Mutallaa. During Mutalla (Murajaa), if students faced something vague, they will bring the questions either to the advanced students or to the master teacher. After the end of the morning class the Sheikh takes two hours rest and continues his second session from 9.00 AM to 12.30 PM. Every day, in the second session, class will begin with the honored Hadith collection "Sahhal-Bukhari".

In the mid afternoon (nearly at 4.20 pm), the lower levels and advanced students assembled in the mosque for the last session. This time is a regular class schedule for the lower level students and a revision session for higher level attendants. The daily regular program is supposed to end at about 6.30 pm. However, the Sheikh continues his last session for non regular students up to 9.30 pm. Beside all these activities, the Sheikh has many social responsibilities to deal. This ranges from giving advice,

leading religious ceremonies to offering traditional medication. The detail discussion of some of the daily routines are discussed here under.



Discussion with students (photo: by Seid)

4.2.1. Classroom Organization

Teaching and learning process was regularly conducted in the Sheik's private house and the Mesjid (Mosque). The mosque was used for large class size managing purpose. It occupies the lower, the advanced and the non-regular attendants at once. This form of class room resembles a multi grade class.

Early morning, mid morning and mid afternoon sessions were observed as a regular program of the school. The former two programs are the regular class for the advanced students and tutorial program for lower level students by the deputy Sheikh of the mosque. The mid afternoon session is a regular class for the lower level students and a revision session for higher level students. Moreover, after Isha prayer (which is conducted with the range of 7:40-8:20pm) another class also held for the non-regular students.

a. Classroom organization in the early morning and mid-morning session

In the field visit, it was observed that the first session of the class began after the early morning prayers. At about 6.00am the higher level students and some non regular attendants assembled in the Sheikh's private house for the morning session. The students sat forming semi-circle before the Sheikh, where he is made to be at the centre. Every student held his own text book. They sat and lay their arms on the ground to read and hear what the master teacher is translating and explaining.

The early morning class was started with "Tefsir al-Quran" and "Fiqihu al-sunna". The first session was attended by many attendants even junior students, based on their interest, were allowed to involve in the learning process. That is why, they explained that the concept which was discussed with their senior is not as such new for them, except its depth. The later class was conducted with two non-regular students.

With the completion of 1 hour class, the advanced students left the class and join the "lower level" grouped students who are under their tutor. After the Sheikh took two hours rest, the second session began with the "six advanced Haidth books", which includes Bukhari, Muslim, Abi-Dawd, Tirmithi, Nasai and Ebun-Maja for 30 minutes each.

In the class room each class are represented by one student who present the daily lesson before the Sheikh. Here, translations and explanations given by the teacher is minimal. Explanations occurred only, on the basis of the student's request. When the student faced something difficult, he paused and raised question until he reached the deadline of his time. In the question and answer, the teacher and students were observed while making strong argument and discussion. Here, other advanced

students, who were pursuing other ma'ad (course), were allowed to make comments on the issue. However, the final conclusion was given by the Sheikh.

b. Class room organization in the mid afternoon session

On the basis of the daily field observation, the learning process of the primary and secondary lower level students regularly started at 4:20 pm. In this session all level students are duty bounden to be combined in the multi-grade class room (the Mesjid). The semi circled sitting arrangement of the students was patterned according to their educational levels. Beginners were lined in the left side of the teacher. The middle part was reserved for mid level students and the right side was for the advanced students.

In this shift of the classroom, the beginning of the session was given for beginners, next the mid level learners took the stage. Finally, the advanced students, who attended the class to make revision of what they had been studied; continue book based discussion with the Sheikh.

Students in the same ma'ad (program) were represented by one student to read the daily lesson in front of the Sheikh. Each group members are obliged to take and respect his turn in the role of representation. In the observation days the beginners and the mid level students were seen as represented by one student who read the matn (text) before the Sheikh. Of course, the explanation was found to be brief and word by word translation since the assumption was that the students had studied individually and with tutors, and supposed to engage in Mutallaa (Group Discussion) immediately after the class.

According to the reports which were gathered from the rigorous interviews and focus group discussion, the students repeatedly underlined the benefits of the mid afternoon multi- grade class for the following reasons.

- ✱ It helps the teacher in giving revision for the advanced students.

- ✳ It helps the junior students in getting assistances from the advanced tutors.
- ✳ Helps the junior students to share practical experiences from advanced students. This is what in the school called Nekl.
- ✳ Prepares advanced students for their teaching career.
- ✳ Assists “fetin’ (gifted) students to attend more courses at a time. Consequently, they can shorten their time of graduation.
- ✳ It enables the Sheikh to assess the advanced darasas by raising questions of their lower level lessons etc.

In addition to the above benefits the multi – grade school supports the slow learners to pursue education with their pace. That is why informants did not complain about class repetition. However, if a student passes a lesson with poor mastery, he will get chances to revise with the next lower level attendants. For such reason, every advanced student is advised to bring texts that he had already attended. In this regard, because of its multi directional benefits, Thomas and Show (1992) described that multi- grade classroom schools provide quality services in rural parts of Scotland, the Scandinavian countries, Canada, France, Britain and Netherlands. Based on this fact, the Ministry of education in its third educational sector development program (ESDP III) has planned as one strategy to expand access of primary education in the rural area through the expansion of multi graded classrooms. Therefore from the above fact, it can be said that traditional Islamic schools can give better practices on how to implement multi- grade system in Ethiopian modern schooling.

c. Classroom organization for non-regular students

The Sheik has arranged a non-regular session for the community members who could not participate the regular class. However, the school was also not closed in its regular program for the community members. That is why non-regular students

were allowed to attend the early morning class lesson with regular attendants. The special non-regular program was designed after Isha prayer for the local civil servants and merchants. This shift program usually extends up to 9:30 pm. One of the peculiar natures of the non-regular program is the attendance of female students. About 13 females were attending the lesson in the early morning and night program. Based on the religious commandments, they sit beyond the curtain and attend the daily lessons. Regarding female students of the school, Sheikh Idris Mohammed stated his ideas as follows:

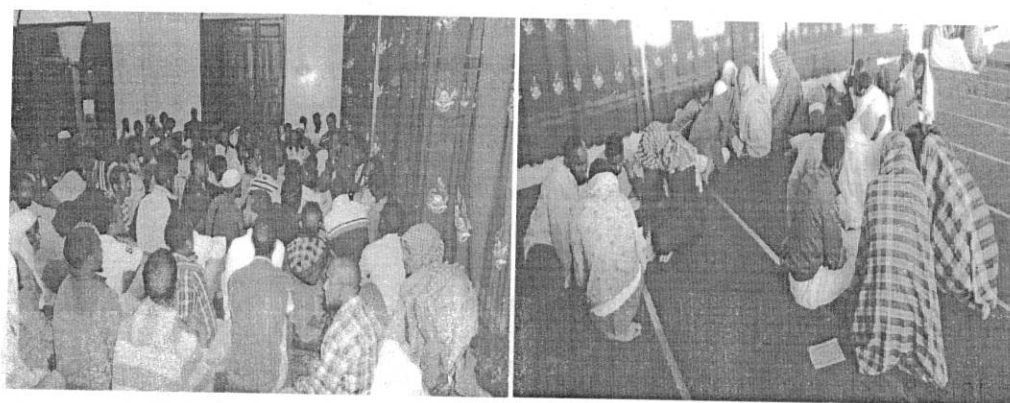
"Females are a half part of the world population. They have many rights and responsibilities to share with their male counterparts. Among these rights, opportunity for education is the primary one. However, it was denied for a longer period of time. Islamically, it is advised by the prophet to teach females as we ought to teach males. Up on the tradition of the prophet it was narrated that "seeking knowledge is an obligation up on every believer" without taking in to consideration their sexes. Having this fact, I appreciate and repeatedly advise the community to send their daughters to schools, not only here but also to secular institutions." (Interviewee, April. 14, 2012)

One of the interviewee, the 24th years old Aminat Yimam also continued her speech on females education as follows:

"As to me, we, females are a highly stereotyped and alienated group of the society from education. However, the knowledge that I gathered in the school made me know that I have the right to seek out opportunities for education. The knowledge enabled me to discern myth from real Orthodoxy of the religion. Besides, it opened room for me to act as the first madrassa (school) to my child, as said "mother is the first school for her children". I spent most of my time home, so I try to teach my child as I ought to teach him. (Interviewee, April. 14, 2012)

From the report of the sheikh and Aminat Yimam, it is understood that the school has opened opportunities for females to pursue religious knowledge. As the religion commandment state, females have the right of education to be respected. Besides, they are regarded as "the first school for their children". This is to mean that females' education can bring better societal change as they spend most of their time, energy and knowledge domestically with their children. The above statement in short resembles with the motto of "girls' education benefits the all".

4.2.2. Implication of Multi-grade Schools to Expand Basic Education



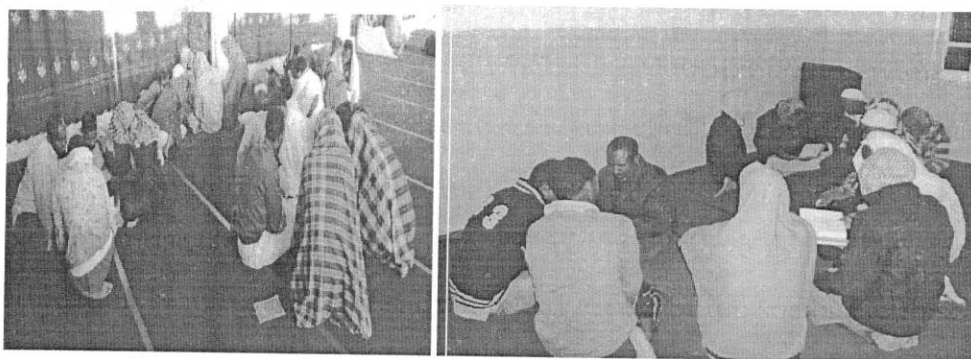
Students in multi-grade class room (Photo: by Ibrahim)

According to MOE (2002:9) accessibility of school services was extremely inequitable; huge gap existed among regions, genders and above all between urban and rural areas in Ethiopia. In the rural areas where the overwhelming majority of the populations are living, there was hardly any budget for elementary schools. However, for MOE (1994) article 3.9.4 of the education and training policy it was promised that "special financial assistance will be given to those who have been deprived of educational opportunities, and steps will be taken to raise the educational participation of the deprived regions." So that, in order to the government fulfill its promise basic education at least can be expanded with the aid of economical and simple educational practice – multi grade education.

Multi- grade teaching occurs within a graded system of education when a single class contains two or more grade levels. It is contrasted with the usual pattern of class

room organization in graded systems where a single class room contains students of only one grade level. This form of school, according to Thomas and Shaw (1992:1), fulfills an important role in improving access to primary education, and in maintaining services in light of budgetary and man power constraints. Through this course, many developed and developing countries are found to use the system. In such regard Thomas and Shaw (1992) comment that there has been World Bank support for multi grade schools in Gambia, Mauritania, Botswana, Niger and others. Besides, it is reported that, multi-graded schools provide quality services in rural parts of Scotland, the Scandinavian countries, Canada, France, Britain and the Netherlands. Hence, multi grade schools may serve as a means of expanding basic education services to the disadvantaged group of the society with scarce resources.

4.2.3. Cooperative Learning Practices in the School and Its Implication to Modern Schools



Students in Mutalla'a (group discussion in the Mosque and in the Sheikh home) (Photo: by Ibrahim)

In the early morning session, while the advanced students were learning in the Sheikh's home, the lower level students were engaged in studying, either the previous or the coming lessons in groups. In the interview made with a student named Mohammed Ahmed, it was reported that

"Immediately after the end of each class, I and my Sherika (group members) make a Mutallaa (group discussion) and a Murajaa (revision). Then, if we

get something difficult we get acquainted from the advanced students and the Sheikh. In the discussion, we study the concept as well as the spelling and pronunciation of the classical Arabic, which is used as a medium of instruction in the school, with our tutors. Finally before proceeding to the next lesson, we summarize the discussed points in group. Moreover, the coming lesson is also discussed in group and with the assistant Sheikh and tutors" (Interviewee, April. 14, 2012)

In the school students form a group which is referred by students as Sherika. The Sherika is established on the basis of the Sheikh recommendation and students educational level. Almost all the groups were established by homogeneous members who were attending similar courses. After the students received instruction from the Sheikh, they make Mutalla'a (group discussion) with the Sherika and Murajaa (revision) by themselves.

The lower stage students, in addition to the concept they were studying in the school, they were found to worry for spelling and pronunciation of classical Arabic language. According to informants the group interaction provides opportunity to better understand the subjects of study and how to pronounce the Arabic texts. In connection with this writers like Atkins, Hailom and Nuru (1996) stated that group work is the most useful form for oral communication and students perform better academically in cooperative learning programs. So, this learning strategy promotes the communicative skill of learners and their social interaction.

In the field observation, the overall learning system of the school was found to be organized in small groups. Consequently, the Sheikh and his students believed that, there are many benefits that can be gained by arranging a collaborative classroom environment. In the discussion, which was made with the Amir of the students, Sheikh Mohammed Hussien, it was stated that:

"The establishment of Sherika in the school has many advantages. Primarily students can get access to revise and understand what they learned in the class. Besides, students share experience and courage, as they show respect, encouragement and advices for one another. This promotes the habit of team spirit and cooperative interests. Moreover, many of the shy students, who are afraid of expressing their feeling and raising questions, can get free environment to discuss with their friends in the Sherika. So, having Sherika is not the question of choice rather it is must (Interview, April.12 2012).

As the interview and the field observation showed every member in the group was seen in giving a helping hand for one another to achieve the learning goals. In so doing, conducting discussion and making debates are the day by day activities of students. In this form of cooperative learning, the roles of each group members were not only observing the class lesson for personal understanding, but also ensuring that all the group members have understood the subject under study. They were all assessed each other on what they have learned. This seems to coincide with what Putnam (1997) said, in a school community where a truly cooperative classroom is established students show concern and caring for one another. They support one another when assistance and encouragement is needed, and they challenge each others to do their best. Students role in the cooperative learning is concerning, they share responsibilities turn by turn. One day student may take the responsibility of reading the text, the next day for interpreting and for the other day summarizing. This result is, therefore, coincides with the work of scholar like **Pounds and Garretson** (1996) who advocates the rotation of the leadership role from individual to individual.

In general, to deduce the above ideas, the Sheikh and the school environment in the study area encouraged students to establish a small group discussion which

facilitates students learning. Members of the Sherika in a cooperative learning spend more time interacting and there are more assistances of one another.

Trainees are advised to engage in a group discussion to better understand and master the subject that was learned with the Sheik, discussed with the Sherika, assisted by the tutors and revised personally. In the other side the coming lessons are discussed with the Sherika, tutors and assistant Sheikh, and finally summarized by the master teacher.

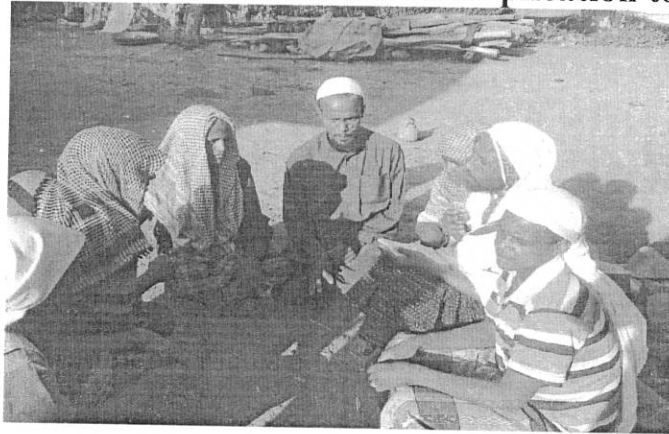
- **Implications of the Cooperative Learning Practices for Modern Education**

In the school, in order to attend the teaching learning process, students are advised to establish a group with the name Sherika. Before the beginning of the daily lessons each groups are offered with an assignment (the next lesson) which has to be performed individually and in group. Each group member shares responsibility in the discussion. They help one another to achieve the individuals' learning goal by discussing and debating on the issue. This coincides with what Aggrawal (1996:402) described, "cooperative learning methods are likely to enhance learning out comes if they combine group goals with individual accountability." Within the light of the school trend, in which there is division of responsibility among group participants, students can get access to work independently before every one is engaged in cooperative learning and there by develop the habit of reading. Thus, in the modern schools teachers are expected to employ group activities which will result in great accountability and responsibility among group members.

In the teaching and learning process of the school the members of the sherika are duty bounden not only to accomplish the daily lesson but also to ensure that all others in their groups understood the activity. This in other word implies, students know each other so that they give all the necessary support one another. According to Putnam (1997), in truly cooperative class room and school communities students

develop concern and caring for others. Thus, when students made to work in groups, better team spirit, social values, group interests and performances develop. The caring class room environment creates a less competitive set up and enables students to work together to reach shared goals.

4.2.4. Tutorial activities in the school and Its Implication to Modern Schools



Focus group discussion (photo: by seid)

Regarding the tutorial activities of the school, one of the attendants of the Focus Group Discussion, named Ahmed Abdullah described his ideas as follows:

"In the school classical Arabic is used as a medium of instruction. So, it is difficult for beginners to read and understand the concepts of texts. However, the Sheikh expects each student to read and study the text properly. This is the way how teaching and learning process is going on. As a result, a group of beginners are assigned to one of the voluntary (advanced) student who is given the responsibility of letting students to be competent. Before and after the class within and outside the school continuous assistances are given for tutees, until they reach the required point. Hence, proper readings and understanding of the contents can make students journey to pursue Islamic knowledge smooth (FGD, April.24, 2012).

For the informants, learners with academic difficulties require proper tutoring instruction which helps students to catch up a desired level of academic performance. Tutoring enables beginners to master how to read and understand the contents of classical Arabic texts. This, in the short run, make the daily interaction of students with tutors and the Sheikh simple and in the long run let students meet their future scholastic desire. Once the student acquired a clear ideas about the lesson to be accomplished, the Sheikh only summarizes the main ideas that help students, specially for the advanced students the Sheikh gives attention for evaluation and giving feedback, rather than detailed explanation of contents.

In the interview with two advanced students, Sheikh Mussa Werahibenu and Hussein Wallega, they stated their part about the function of tutorial from another perspective, based on their experience, as follows.

“When tutorial class is given for the beginners, both the tutees and the tutors can achieve advantage. The tutors gain experience on how to deal with students’ problem and how to handle their future carrier. As it is known the desire of all advanced students is to be a good religious scholar who can lead the spiritual life of the Muslim society. So, the tutorial session prepares us for our future carrier. On the other hand, the tutor can get access to differentiate student’s academic performance and need. So that, all the necessary strategies can be designed to offer support as per the academic performance and interest of students.(Interview, April.18, 2012)

This explanation indicates that tutorial activity is conducted as a practice development strategy for the advanced students. That is, advanced students who will finish their course in the near future, when they engage in Islamic education, they can realize and get acquainted on how to deal with students issues. Having knowing students academic performance enables advanced students and the Sheikh to predict student’s future performance in the school compound. So that strategies can be easily designed to support students. In addition, understanding student’s interest or need,

which is identified by the interaction of advanced students' with lower level trainees, enables the teacher to prepare a reinforcement which motivates the learners. This in other words explained, to willingly confront a problem early, by identifying students' interest and before we are forced to confront it by circumstances means to put aside something pleasant or less painful for something more painful. In line with this, Dandapani (2003:392) stated that Man's higher nature rests up on man's lower nature, needing it as a foundation and collapsing without this foundation. For the mass of mankind, identifying lower order need enables to achieve the higher order need.

- Implication of Tutorial Practices to Modern Education

Sherika based tutorial practice is a common experience for all students of the school at any level – from the beginner to the most senior students. Within the sherika, each group member helps one another and acts as a tutor and tutee turn by turn. Additionally, advanced and gifted students of the school are also assigned by the Sheikh as a regular tutor who often provides corrective feedback not only at the group level but also in a one-to-one relation.

The finding implies, if students in a secular schools are given opportunity to be tutored, either in a one to one relation or in a small group interaction, by someone other than the teacher, students mastery of the subject matter can easily be identified and immediate remedial actions can be taken before things goes astray. For instance, Good and Brophy (1997) suggested that "tutoring would be the optimal means of achieving most academic objective."

Moreover, students are observed in the school while giving help one another. They all act as a tutor and tutee turn by turn. This implies that the modern schools should open room for the helping relation among students. Then, one student can learn from the experience of the others.

4.2.5. Assessment and Completion in the School and Its Implication to Modern Schools

Students who have the interest in Islamic education and give sources for the society will continue until they get Ijaza (certificate of permission) from their ustaz. However, different evaluative methods are expected to pass through by the darassas (students) to determine whether a student has completed his studies. According to the Sheikh, students are directly observed by the master teacher or tutors about steady progress.

In line with this the master teacher of the school described the situation of how he evaluates his students promotion from one level to the next as follows:

"The way how a student reads texts, raises questions and state feedback enable me to differentiate the level of his understanding and performance. The sherika members and tutors also evaluate and make their words of appreciation for their friends, before me. In some instances, when I move from place to place, I assign some capable students to act on my behalf in my chair. So, with my return I assemble information about the student overall performance. In addition, because of student attendance in the school with full interest, they themselves engage in evaluating their academic performance. That is why they usually inform me about where they are weak and where they are strong in the courses. (Interview, April.12, 2012)

The above interview indicates that in the school the evaluation is done based on the students' activities which are performed in the form of reading, responding and reasoning capacities. The teacher does not use paper-pencil type formal evaluation. He employs his observation and oral based questions to continually assess students progress. This assessment is done on an ongoing basis instead of the end of the course or academic year. Hence the assessment helps the Sheikh to find out students problem so that strategies can be designed to assist students learning.

If the teacher finds that a student is having a problem he arranges remedial action through extensive one-to-one tutorial or Sherika based discussion with his tutor.

In addition to student ability to read and understand the texts, and to answer relevant questions on the subject, student's performance as a substitute for his teacher while the Sheikh was away, is used as the other method of assessment. When the Sheikh returned to school, he would find out from other students if the prospective graduate has carried out his assignment diligently and satisfactorily.

Moreover, student personal qualities (adab) such as truthfulness, integrity, credibility, tolerance and others are also being constantly evaluated. Regarding this, the Sheikh explained the ethical considerations as follows.

"Through my interaction with the students, in addition to their academic performance, I see and evaluate students ethical qualities (adab). The way they interact with their friends, Sherika and community members are taken in to account before granting them ijaza (certificate of permission). The grand rule of the school is instruction for action, not for academic discussion. Unless the students try to bring change in their life, as they taught, their knowledge does not make sense for me. Having ethical trainees ensures the continuity of the school as a recruiting ground for the Muslim scholars. (Interview, April. 12,2012)

The idea of the Sheikh indicates that the way how a student acts in the class room and lives with his peers and community shows how the student will act while engaging in society activities. Consequently, the school can be either recognized in its bright or gloomy future. Therefore, to preserve the teaching and dissemination of Islamic dogma, practice and orthodoxy by its emphasis on conformity to the revealed law (shariah) and the precedent of the prophet (sunnah), determined and ethical graduates have to be awarded with the certificate of permission (ijaza) from the school.

The assessment conducted in the school is individual oriented. It does not compare an individual student with others. The student's previous performance is compared with his progress to a learning outcome. With this regard, Mohammed Ahmed explained in the focus group discussion as follows.

"In the school there is no paper-pencil evaluation. We are evaluated based on our progress in our day by day activities. The Sheikh observes each and every student how he reads and observes how a student answers and reasons out relevant questions. Then, based on student's pace, achievement and interest, the Sheikh recommends him to promote from one level to another. (FGD, April.24, 2012).

Mohammed Ahmed's explanation concerning the assessment technique coincides with criterion referenced assessment. According to Elliott, Kratochwill, Littlefield and Travers (2000 : 478) criterion referenced assessments are increasingly popular because of renewed emphasis on individualized instruction, behavior objectives and mastery learning. This is to mean that the assessment is designed so that it will describe a student performance on specific learning tasks. The above writers further explained that criterion referenced assessment help teachers to determine if a student is ready to move to the next level as the assessment focus on providing information about students performances in the context of an objective standard of performance.

During the interview with the master teacher about the assessment of students, the writer heard a new method which is termed by the Sheikh in-service assessment. The idea was stated as follows:

"In every six months there is a meeting which is conducted by me, the previous students, and the respected local Sheiks and community members. The gathering is held in different areas where the local community members show interest to sponsor the program. In due course, many religious issues

and scholastic experiences are raised. Then, the newly graduated students and other Sheiks are given opportunity to state their views and make discussion on the basis of their Islamic knowledge and experience. So that, the program allows me to evaluate where my graduates are. Besides, the other attendants comment on their Arabic construction, Hadith and Quran knowledge, communication skills and reasoning capacities. More over if I hear something wrong about one of my student personality. I advise him in person and with some respected individuals. However, if he insists and continues on the problem, his ijaza will be cancelled and called to take additional trainings under my tutor. If the student not ready to accept my call, his ijaza will be cancelled and another Ustaz will be sent in his chair"
(Interview, April.19 , 2012)

The Sheikh explanation seems that students are assessed even after they get their ijaza that can show their completion of the course. The assessment is done not only by the master teacher, but also by the other external examiners who have many experiences in Islamic education. The Ijaza (certificate of permission) is not an end by itself; rather it is a means to serve a certain Islamic institution. When a graduate student of the school found to show some disciplinary problem, in his institution, his ijaza will be cancelled and called to take additional course. This in other word means that the school gives great emphasis not only in the classroom set up, but also in the working area. This is what instruction for action mean.

In a nut shell, the assessment technique in the school is a formative continuous assessment which involves students, tutors and the teacher. Through which each students competence and personal qualities are evaluated based on predetermined instructional objectives before being move at a higher level or completion.

In the school after the completion of the study with continues assessment the Sheikh, who is responsible to certify the learner, grants a certificate of permission (ijaza) to teach. The ijaza comprises testimonials about the student's teaching skill, personality

and blessing from the Sheikh. The newly authorized teacher engages in teaching in another province where the society shows interest for the course. In due course, while the newly graduated student is onboard, the Sheikh and other external examiners still engage on assessment in the six months summit. This for the informants can assure the continuity of the school – as it gets trust from the community and strengthens the expansion of similar institutions as a recruiting ground of the Ulama' and other professional men of religion and as a depository of Islamic culture and traditions.

- Implications of assessment for modern education

Assessment in the school is done by many actors; by the Sheikh, peers, advanced students and the student himself. This is also done through continuous direct and indirect observation while the students are studying individually, discussing in groups, tutoring others and reasoning questions, etc. It takes place without paper and pencil tests. Of course, regarding tests (Hjorth, 2000:104) stated that "what tests do not measure is intelligence, and they usually do not measure creativity or who is the smartest in the class." The main focus of the assessment in the school is to compare student's previous performance with his progress to a learning outcome. The assessment is individual oriented. It does not compare an individual student with others. In line with this Sadker and Sadker (2000:193) stated that effective schools carefully monitor and assess student progress. Within this informal observation of individual performance in continuous assessment, Sheikhs can design strategies to teach better, to help learners better and to promote from one level to the other. The above idea coincides with what Elliott, Kratochwill, Littlefield Cook and Traverse(2000:478) explained that criterion referenced assessments help teachers to determine if a student is ready to move to the next level as the assessment focus on providing information about student's performance in the context of an objectives standard of performance.

The finding implies that a secular school teacher should not focus on tests to assess students performance. Rather, he or she has to stretch their hands to employ continuous informal assessment that the teacher and his students gather and interpret specific pieces of information about students' achievement. So that the assessment result tells what to improve and what is not. If the result shows promising progress, the teaching and learning practice will continue as it is, whereas if the result does not show as required, the teacher search out possibilities through one to one based tutorial.

Students in the school are allowed to be promoted from one level to the other by the aid of continuous informal assessment. The assessment also done in addition to the Sheikh by many actors; such as by the peers, tutors and student himself. Thus, if students are allowed to evaluate the work done of their friends, they can forward their ideas in evaluation. With this regard, Kyrincov (1998) stated that "cooperative activities are very important in assessment method since they enable learners to obtain greater insight in to the conduct of learning through observing the performance of their peers and sharing procedures and strategies."

The other interesting aspects of assessment in the school is students are assessed even after they got graduated (Ijaza). This implies that graduated students should be assessed on the basis of their day by day performance and if they found to be weak their cleavage has to be filled with appropriate trainings and continuous follow up.

4.2.6. Talented/Gifted (Fetin) Students in the School

The school recognizes that learners are different in their academic performances. The assessment which is employed in the school by many actors, used as a means to differentiate learners as gifted medium and slow. In this respect the master teacher of the school reported the consideration of individual differences as follows:

"In nature we human beings are different. This is also observed in students' day by day performance. As my observation and other students witness, there are students who stay here for a year only but accomplish and master many courses that has taken 3 to 4 years on others. This is really a great gap. Beside there are some students learning slowly and some learn in an intermediate way.(Interview, April.12,2012)

This indicates that the Sheikh and students realize that there are individual difference in the school. The difference can be stated briefly as slow, moderate and fast in their performance. Understanding this fact, the Sheikh let students to pursue the courses based on their pace. The explanation shows that the school considered the individual difference. According to Aggarwal (1996 : 69) no two children are alike and for teaching to be effective must have room for individual differences of children.

Having in mind the above ideas, informants were interviewed about the causes that brought individual difference in the school. With this regard the 38 years old, Said Mohammed, explained as follows:

"The reasons behind of students' difference in the school are many. The background of students is one factor. There are students who follow better primary level (Quran'ic school) education and introductory tewhid and hadith courses in their locality. Then, this can help them to better understand the learning activities of the school. Besides, students' background of modern education assists them to adapt with the situation easily. The other is the situation of their life. Some of the students are living

with the qallabi; who provides daily meals, and some are without sponsors and search provisions by the qari'a. So, the former are usually observed of leading stable life than the later. As a result, the sponsored student was found to succeed in the school. There are also hard working tireless students who read and make discussion day and night with great interest. This, enable them to master many courses with in a very short period of time (Interview, April.11, 2012).

Besides to the explanation of said Mohammed, another advanced and gifted student Said Ali stated his perception as follows:

"For me, the place where you grown up determine your performance. Among most of the students that I know under my tutor, the urban students' are very fast and understand easily what I want to say. Moreover, students' internal interest and readiness to work hard affect their success. I personally believe that, my interest and hard working effort made me to reach where I am now. (Interview, April.19,2012).

The explanation of the interviewee shows that in the school there is awareness of the causes of individual differences among the students. Need (interest), curiosity to learn, educational background, environment and stability were explained as a cause of students difference. It is this understanding that supposes the Sheikh and the tutors to arrange the instruction methods to meet the needs of darassas who vary in performance in a class. In this regard Sadker and Sadker (2000: 84) explained that we are a population of diverse learners and different learning styles - diverse ways of learning, comprehending, knowing. Having the information of difference in abilities, interests and learning style, according to UNESCO (2004) enables teacher to use on what and how to teach to differentiate various components of the curriculum.

In a discussion made with the Sheikh about the treatment given to individual differences, particularly for Fetin (vary fast) students, he stated as follows:

"When I faced very fast and unique student, I often assign him as a tutor for a Sherika of lower students so that he can enhance his experience as an educator. Besides during the time of Qiraa (learning) while students raise questions, I invite him to answer on my behalf. The other treatment is done by assigning the student as a substitute in my chair while I am away from the school. With my return I gather information about his overall activities. In the other way, I allow this student to engage in many courses at a time for he can complete with in a very short period of time. (Interview, April.19 ,2012)

The discussion shows that the Sheikh has different learning experiences to make gifted students to perform and shoulder extra responsibilities. This in other word implies, for Elliott, Kratochwill, Littlefield cook and Traverse (2000 : 160) enrichment, which is a method of instruction for gifted students in which they are furnished with additional challenging experiences. This additional activity according to the above writers can provide challenging, meaningful work for gifted youngsters while they remain with their peers so that they can get wider opportunity to go deeper in their academic work.

In the other part of the treatment the informant respond that students are allowed to attend many courses at a time. As a result, the treatment permits gifted students to accomplish the program within a short period of time or at an early age than usual. The school, in such regard, allows acceleration that is gifted students complete courses of the curriculum at their own pace. As stated by Sadker (2000: 114) the qualities of effective gifted programs include a mastery dimension that allows students to move through the curriculum at their own pace.

Besides the Sheikh explanation about the enrichment and acceleration, one of the member of the FGD and graduated student, Sheikh Said Hassan, stated special grouping as a means of treatment for gifted students, as follows:

"In some cases based on the recommendation of the Sheikh and students interest active learners are allowed to establish groups and learn by themselves. Each member takes a part from the text to study and teach the other members. In so doing, if there is something vague and open for controversy, they bring to the Sheikh to get acquainted. (Interview, April. 24, 2012)

Another advanced student, Sheikh Mohammed Hussein, also continued on the issue as follows:

"The Sheikh (master teacher) of the school gives recognition for the gifted students even by calling them "SHEIKH" and by allowing them to lead religious ceremonies. This form of appreciation for me enables the student to work hard and move a head of what is expected." (Interview, April. 24, 2012)

The description of the advanced students' show that the school allows the set up of a small group that can facilitate independent learning with in a cooperative structure. At the same time, the discussion enables them to share their work and experiences. Moreover, the Sheikh recognition and his assignment for different social responsibilities can promote gifted student experience and interest.

- Implication of gifted (fatin) students' treatment for modern schools

In every aspects of life it is natural to see differences that are created as a result of various reasons. Understanding this fact, the schooling system of the Sheikh in the traditional Muslim school has been entertaining students as per their achievement. High achiever and gifted students are allowed to finish courses in earlier period of time than usual. With many supportive actions, the slow learners are also given chances to finish courses as per their pace. Book which takes months for one student might take years for the others. However, all are supported and helped in a manner they ought to be helped. Regarding individual differences Dandapani (2003:317)

stated "no two individuals are alike and that is what makes life interesting and exciting."

Modern school teachers could get lessons from the traditional schools that identification of individual difference is the first step in helping students with different learning abilities. As much as possible, each student's problems, interests and abilities have to be understood by the classroom teachers on the basis of the school curriculum. In order to inspire the learner, based on student learning profile, and fulfill his/her potentialities several class room elements have to be identified. Among the elements that are employed by the traditional school system and can be practiced in the modern school to facilitate the learning of talented (fatin) students include enrichment, acceleration and ability grouping.

The enrichment practice in the school is done by the aid of additional activities which can provide challenging and meaningful work. The Sheikh assigns fatin (fast) students as a tutor Sherikas' (groups), encourages student to answer and reason out unique questions, and sometimes substitute the student on his chair while the Sheikh is away from the school. This in turn can promote the reading habit and independent study of the student. Thus, from the experience of the school, a lesson can be learned that the modern secular educational institutions can assign multiple responsibilities on gifted students so that they can utilize their intrinsic potentialities in a multidirectional manner.

In a similar way, the school permits gifted students to complete courses in shorter period of time than usual. So, if the modern secular schools allow gifted students to skip from one level to the other by their pace, they can get comfortable and complete courses with interest. If not, according to Sadker and Sadker (2000:114) "the failure to accelerate gifted children may lead to boredom, apathy, frustration and even ridicule."

As part of the other treatment, the school allows gifted students to form group and learn by themselves. Based on students interest and the Sheikh recommendation the group is established and division of topics is made among the students. Then, the group of individuals share what they studied and comprehend. Through the course of this action, independent learning and the habit of shouldering responsibility can be promoted. Thus, in light with the practice of the school, modern secular institutions can benefit the student if they establish ability groupings.

4.2.7. Disciplinary Measures in the School and Its Implication to Modern Schools

Disciplinary problem is not an issue of concern in the school administration because every student has come to the school, at least with primary Islamic knowledge, where disciplinary matters are a high concern. Humbleness, respectfulness and submission to the will of the teacher as well as senior students are characteristics of the students. According to the Sheikh the disciplinary issues of the school are expressed as follows:

"the darassas come to the school with interest and Islamic knowledge that make them eager and disciplined. Hence, disciplinary problems are not highly observed in the school. However , if a miss behaving student appears to the school, especially young children, it is the responsibility of the students leader (Amir) to advise him. The advice can be made, based on the severity of the problem, either alone or with the Jema'a (group) of the advanced students. In the weekly meetings, every Friday morning, the students and their Amir, in addition to the Shura (discussion) members, prepare a preach that presents about ethical principles in Islam" (Interview, April. 12, 2012)

Besides, the Amir of students, Sheikh Mohammed Hussein, said *"in the program, even in some cases, if the miss behaved student is advanced in his Ilm (knowledge), he is entitled to the presentation of the day"*. Through which according to him, *"the student*

might try to imitate, what he is trying to say, as the Quran orders to not to say what we do not act". But, when things go beyond the limit, the last decision will be given by the Sheikh and advanced students mutual shura. But for the aged trainees, the Sheikh himself will take any appropriate measure, that ranges from oral warning to complete dismissal. Surprisingly, sometimes, if the sheikh wants to make some strong words, he keeps small children away so as not to see and be affected.

From the explanation of the Amir and the Sheik, it is clear that behavior management system of the school was based on the age of students. Small children were given great concern as compared to the advanced aged students. On the other hand, assigning responsibility for misbehaving student is considered by the school as a remedial action to bring the required change in student manner.

Regarding corporal punishment, which was used by the Western tradition up until the early middle part of the twentieth century and still used in many traditional Islamic schools (Boyle, 2004:114), the sheikh explained his stand and practice as follows:

"In my primary education I have experienced a very serious punishment of the body. But now I come to realize that our Ustazes were wrong concerning the beating of students. The beating leads absolutely nowhere. I and the Amir of students can pose influence on students by talking instead of beating or humiliating. I don't even beat my own children, how can I beat the children of other people?. Sometimes, if I need to make strong comments on the advanced learners, I keep small children away so as not to see and be afraid. (Interview, April. 12, 2012)

The report of the sheikh argues that students should not be physically harmed to keep them disciplined, but should be advised and convinced so that they can bring behavioral change. Besides it is interesting that he acknowledges the small children should not be freighted. Bodily fright could result in ineffective learning and in a

feeling of alienation from schooling. Children need to be comfortable in body and mind to learn. If they are tense, afraid of being hit, and in pain from being hit in, they will not learn.

As a concluding statement, the Sheikh also stated the essence of education in Islam, based on his readings, that "the philosophy of Islamic education is that knowledge is the result of the development of the whole person, that is, the physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions of the person". This can be demonstrated by looking at three frequently used words in Arabic for education - tarbiya, ta'lim, and ta'dib. "Tarbiya refers to education in its broadest sense, meaning the development of the human personality and the nurturing and rearing aspects of education. Ta'lim refers to instruction involving mental activity, which develops reasoning and trains the mind, and ta'dib refers to the training of the mind and soul in terms of proper behavior or ethical conduct." So, for the sheikh the educational practice by itself can bring proper ethical conduct, if it is designed with ethical consideration

- Implication of disciplinary measure for modern schools

In the school the sheikh does not employ beating as a means of correcting students discipline. He believed that others other than beating like discussion, advise and assigning responsibilities can bring the required change in students behavior. This is also for Sadker and Sadker (2000:364) many schools in developed nations have prohibited the physical punishment of students. For Skinner, according to Dandapani (2003:135) punishment might produce emotional blocks and might not result in desirable behavior. The reason here is that for the same writer (2003:573) corporal punishment is the most dehumanizing method of treating misbehavior. Thus, the secular school teachers, rather than beating children they have to deal with students behavior in a human manner which involves advice, discussion and assigning responsibilities.

The school also includes ethics related lessons in its courses based on the principle of instruction for action. Therefore, students are left to learn , to take responsibility to preach others and simultaneously to act as per what they did say. So, in the modern secular educational institutions ethics related courses should be given for students with the intention not for mere learning rather to bring change. In line with this, article 2.1.3 of the education and training policy of Ethiopia stated that one of the general objective of education is bringing up citizens who respect human rights, stand for the well being of people, as well as for equality, justice and peace , endowed with democratic culture and discipline.

In the process of making decisions, on misbehaving and socially unfit students, the role which is played by the community members as an administrator of the school is decisive. Of course the same procedure is followed to make decisions on other important issues. In line with this, Ethiopian national agency for UNESCO (2001:3) stated, one of the missions of the Ethiopian Education, as follows

"Enabling the community to directly participate in the school management and administration with sense of ownership."

Thus, the secular school environment should open room for the public in administering the overall activities of the school with sense of ownership. So that, the possibility of achieving the designed mission and vision of the school can be easy.

4.2.8. General overview on the limitations of Islamic Education

Though many impressing pedagogical issues are discussed in Islamic education, among many, some of the grave limitations are listed hereunder.

- The Sheikh has no plan which enables him to lead and monitor the overall activities of the school and how to discharge his responsibilities. As a result every bit of the work in the school is done on the basis of the Sheikh interest and the routine experiences of the school.

- Islamic schools have a limited academic mission by contemporary standards in meeting the needs of developing societies seeking to initiate their people in to the world economy. The schools offer courses that are related with religious affiliation. As a result almost all of the graduates of the school have no access to engage to employment in governmental and non-governmental sector jobs. So, after their completion they only serve the religious issues of the society and seek the assistances of some rich individuals who sponsor their living expenses.
- Learning outcomes that belong to the set of cognitive domain are not measured with the help of paper and pencil tests. Students are assessed with the aid of direct and indirect observation only. But, the researcher has doubt about the capacity of observation to assess the writing based qualities of the student.
- The school has no different instructional devices that can assist the teaching learning process. The only instructional material in the school is textbook. By the aid of the textbook, the Sheikh speaks (gives lecture), the students listen and discuss together until the contents of the subject matter is understood or memorized. This form of routine works would make, especially for children, the classroom to be boring and uninteresting. Regarding this, Boyle (2004) stated that because of Qur'anic schools emphasis on rote memorization of Qur'an and Hadith books they have often been criticized by modern educators as uninteresting and stultifying to students. So, the overall teaching learning process may not meet the objectives of the school as designed.
- Students' participation, particularly at the lower level, is almost negligible. Students cannot fully challenge or question the verdict of the Sheikh.
- The life of the students is one of the hardship and humility that requires speedy intervention and remedy so that stable environment can be created at ease. In some situations students are forced to go up and down of the village for the search of daily rations. In so doing, students lose most of their time for

the search of food and if sometimes they could not get food they feel hungry and not stable. This may aggravate the discontinue of students in the school and even if they continue the schooling system may not be effective.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

The tradition of Muslim education in Ethiopia, although widely recognized has not attracted the attention of many historians and writers literary products. However, in reality if attention is offered various scholarly heaps of books can be produced by their emphasis on the legacy of the Muslim community as a depository of indigenous Ethiopian Islamic learning. The area of traditional pedagogy is also the one that deserves further study. Sheiks employed and still employ many instructional techniques that are considered "modern" by educators today. With this understanding, the research was conducted and many pedagogical principles, though they have limitations, that are common known practices and innovations on the contemporary schools were identified. The education is given in a one room class which comprises students of different ages, different abilities and different levels of study. Moreover, the one room school pedagogy relied on a host of more student centered learning methods, including peer tutoring group work, independent work, one on one coaching, self paced learning and a focus on mastery not on testing.

Hence from the above explanation, the general findings of the paper indicate that, rather than copying all the educational experiences from the Western tradition. If deep investigation is found to get conducted on indigenous Ethiopian Islamic learning it would give other vital educational practices from its richness. Besides, the finding would open rooms to seek out opportunities for practical implications in the development of modern education. So that, the legacy of the Muslim education can gets access to be accepted and supported by different stakeholders. As a result, with their full potentials, in contrast with what Haile Gebreal (1966) said, the school would be seen with its various productive activities for the community.

In a nutshell, the findings of the study can be deduced that traditional Islamic education can have different practices to be adapted. Hence, writers should stand to

unearth authentic non-western practices of indigenous Islamic education and their implication for the development of contemporary modern secular education.

On the basis of the findings, therefore, the main points are concluded as follows:

- ✱ In Islamic schools, at the beginning of education, children are introduced with the letters of the subject through singing a song (chanting) which makes students feel attracted for the mastery of the letters. Then the next part of learning can be achieved at ease.
- ✱ The school is providing the religious education in a one -room school where students of different ages, abilities and level of studies are prevalent. This in short mean that Multi grade instruction is a practice rooted in the school.
- ✱ The multi-grade instruction of the school seems to permit students to go through the curriculum by offering the required competency. Here, active learners can attend at a time more courses and slow learners revise concepts of their primary education with the lower (even with the lowest) level students. Moreover, the multi-grade class room provides opportunity for lower learners to share the best experiences of their seniors - this is in the school called Nekl. Besides, the interaction permits lower students to get support from the advanced students.
- ✱ Cooperative learning (group work) usually employed for instructional procedures in the school. The groups are established among students of the same level of study. The group formation depends on student's interest and the recommendation of the Sheikh. During discussion, each group members are observed with the chance to participate and take responsibility, turn by turn.
- ✱ The tutorial based instruction is another interesting aspect of the school. It is not the sole responsibility of the Sheikh to teach students in the school. Involvement of every darassa, one way or the other, as a tutor or tutee is common. This enables each of the darassa to work hard individually and to

share with group members. Here, as a foremost task, the Sheikh is duty bounden to summarize and assess the key points individual studied, groups discussed and tutors instructed.

- ✳ The tutorial practice is given with the objective of supporting the learning difficulties of students so that they can achieve the intended result with a rate appropriate to their abilities. Besides, the advanced students get the chance to revise the subject matter, as they take the responsibility of leading the lower level students' *sherikas* discussion, and to practice how to teach methods.
- ✳ In a *sherika* based tutoring (peer tutoring) each group members work together so that they can accomplish their daily lessons and assess the understanding level of their peers. This peer based tutoring further strengthen a sense of team spirit and responsibility shouldering capacity.
- ✳ In the school there is no paper and pencil examination. The school focus on the mastery of the content not on testing. But, to assess students performance on daily basis, direct and indirect observation are employed while *darasas* are answering questions, studying individually and in groups, tutoring others and making comments. The assessment is an ongoing and everyday activity which is installed to instruction.
- ✳ In the assessment, the sheikh compares individual student previous performance with his progress to learning out comes. He does not compare individual person with others. The assessment is individual oriented. Each of the students is given the chance to go with his/her pace and performance.
- ✳ In the school, students' abilities and needs are taken in to account to provide learning activities and practical experiences. Those who are gifted are allowed to finish courses as early as possible and they are also assigned as a tutor for the lower level students. Besides, many practical responsibilities are assigned as a probation on gifted learners. In short this is to mean that the school considers learners differences in their academic performance and style of

learning. Thus, the Sheikh gives support for students as per their ability and interest.

- ✳ In the school the Sheikh let children feel comfortable in body and mind to learn. He acknowledged that if students are tense, afraid of being hit, and in pain from being hit, they will not learn. So, in order to maintain students' adab (discipline) the Sheikh resort to employ advice and discussion rather than beating. For the Sheikh beating leads absolutely no where.
- ✳ Ethics related lessons are offered in the school with the intention of making students disciplined. Besides, the misbehaving students are made to take responsibility to preach from the topic of ethics so that they might act accordingly as the goal of the school is "instruction for action".
- ✳ The last but not the least surprising aspect of the Sheikh is his tireless hard working personality. Within the twenty four hours period of the day, the Sheikh engage on many activities - including teaching, societal services, personal readings and prayers. With the best knowledge of the researcher, only five hours per day is allotted for sleep.

5.2. Recommendations for further study

According to MOE (1994:1) one of the aims of education is to strengthen the individual's and society's problem solving capacity, ability and culture starting from basic education and at all levels. However, to meet the intended aim of the education, among many obstacles that Ethiopian education entangled with, MOE (1994:2) acknowledged "mode of presentation as one of the major problem of the education system. So, with the aid of research and problem solving activities better practices has to be identified to bring the required change in real life situations of the school.

In line with this, the area of Islamic pedagogy is one that deserves further study. Sheikhs employed and still employ many instructional techniques that are considered quite "modern" by educators today. Research on how to encourage the

transfer of these “new” old methods in to main stream educational institutions – Secular modern schools- could be quite valuable and could potentially greatly improve teaching and learning in Ethiopia.

The pedagogical principles that are discussed in the paper, if they get ground on the secular schools, the writer believes that they can bring better results on the arena of education. However, this requires optimist looking and detail study of the traditional Muslim school practices by the concerned body. Hopefully, the Ministry of Education, which is the primary concerned body for education, would consider the findings and dig all possible means to conduct more detail and frequent study. So that best practices can be adopted and implemented as school pedagogical approach. Besides, because of its significance for the Muslim community as a depository of religious orthodoxy and educational practices, it has to be studied. The schools teach culturally valuable behavior (adab) and by so doing represent the living past, the continuation of Ethiopian Muslims identity through traditional practice. To maintain students discipline, the school disown corporal punishment and link much more closely the mind/body connection in the overall learning process. Hence, to achieve all these multi-directional results and others that could not be reached by the study has to be studied by all the concerned bodies and their offices.

The MOE and its offices also should work hard to make use of the traditional Islamic schools as a means to expand literacy for the remotest areas where access for modern education is a challenge. Then, if the literacy gained in traditional schools is counted in national measures of literacy, the literacy rates of the state would increase to the extent of building the good image of the state.

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Appendix A

Definition of technical terms used in the school

Acceleration: Type of curriculum differentiation that allows gifted students to skip grades in less time or at an early age than usual.

Amir- (lit. Leader) students leader who assists the teacher and students in administrative issues of the school

Cooperative learning: students work on activities in small groups and they often receive rewards based on the overall group performance.

Deressa- student

Enrichment:- is a method of instruction for gifted students in which they are furnished with additional challenging experiences so that gifted youngsters can get wider opportunity to go deeper in their academic work.

Gifted student: those who master subject matter with ease.

Ijazaa - Certificate of permission for teaching

Ilm - Knowledge

Juz - Part from the Quran

Kittab - Book

Kitma – Graduation

Maad - Class prepared for the same level students

Matn - Text

Madrassa - School

Mastery learning: outcome-based education

Multi-grade classroom: A one room building class that combines students of

different ages, abilities and under the direction of one teacher.

Mutawal - Lengthy books with wider interpretation

Murajaa - Personal revision

Mekteba - Library

Musafir - A person out of his village

Muttallaa - Revision with friends

Sedeqa - A name given for all forms of charity.

Selat - Prayer

Subhi - early morning prayer

Zuhur- mid-day prayer

Asur -

Megerib - late after noon prayer

Isha - night prayer

Sheikh - (lit. Scholar). Clerk

Tutorial: Instruction given to a group of students or individual student by a teacher, advanced students and peers.

Zekah - A type of charity which is obligatory up on the rich individuals with specific amount in a yearly base.

Appendix B

Guiding interview questions

1. Would you mind tell me about yourself? (age, educational level, duration in the school)
2. Students of different educational levels are observed to be assembled in one-building class. What is the nature of this kind of class room organization? What are the advantages of the organization in the school?
3. Do you believe that group work based instructional procedure conducted in the school offered to achieve your learning goals? How do students establish and function in the groups? What are the advantages of group work for students?
4. How do you get the tutorial system offered in the school to achieve your educational goals? What are the advantages of tutorial system for the school community in general?
5. On what basis are learners performances in the school assessed? Who is responsible in assessing students' performance? How is assessment and promotion done in the school? What is the role and follow up of the school after a student get graduated and assigned in new working area?
6. Does the school consider individual difference in abilities and needs to provide learning activities? What are the causes of individual difference in the school? How does the Sheikh provide support for those learners who are gifted and for those who are slow?
7. How do you see students' disciplinary issue in the school? How does the Sheikh handle misbehaving students' character?

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Ibrahim Endashaw entitled: Practices and Contributions of Islamic Education to Modern Education in Ethiopia: the case of Bati Azhar Mosque was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Educational Research and Development) complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university, and that all sources consulted for the thesis have been properly acknowledged.

Name: Ibrahim Endashaw

Signature



Date

Nov. 05/2012

Approval

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my consent and approval as a thesis advisor

Name: Professor Drebssa Dufera

Signature



Date

Nov. 05, 2012