

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**THE MYTH OF IDEAL MASCULINITY: TRAITS, BLOOD
REVENGE PRACTICES AND THEIR IMPACT ON WOMEN IN
SEBENTERA *KEBELE*, DABAT *WOREDA*, NORTH GONDAR
*ADMINISTRATIVE ZONE***

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS
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BY

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ADVISOR: - ENGUDAY ADEME (PhD)



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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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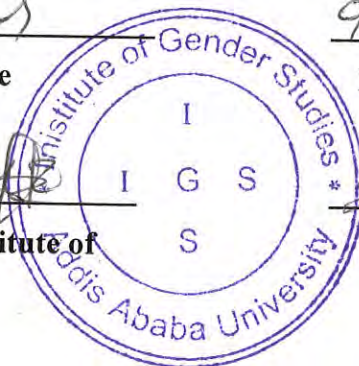
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Declaration

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

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Addis Ababa University

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Glossary of Local Terms

<i>Abeter</i>	an indigenous tree
<i>Agam</i>	carissa
<i>Arbegnoch Gimbar</i>	patriots' front, a name for the local resistance force
<i>Areki</i>	a traditionally distilled strong alcohol
<i>Asado geday</i>	a person known for hunting for murderer
<i>Atena</i>	an indigenous tree
<i>Badima</i>	an abandoned homestead
<i>Birr</i>	Ethiopian currency
<i>Buchille</i>	a derogatory term for the government's snatching squad
<i>Buhe</i>	a festival of a configuration of Christ
<i>Chechiho</i>	an indigenous tree
<i>Chibha</i>	an indigenous tree
<i>Debbo</i>	a collective labor performed in return
<i>Dedeho</i>	eaclea schimkeri
<i>Dega</i>	highland
<i>Dem adraki Komite</i>	a local committee established for settling conflicts associated with blood revenge
<i>Dem bekel</i>	blood revenge
<i>Dullet</i>	a traditional food made from mixing goats or sheep's tripe and liver with a small droplet of bile
<i>Enqoy</i>	plum
<i>Equb</i>	an indigenous saving association
<i>Girar</i>	acacia
<i>Gowbaz</i>	clever and able
<i>Hamot</i>	bile
<i>Hylegna</i>	aggressive
<i>Jegna</i>	brave, courageous

<i>Kebele</i>	the smallest political unit
<i>Kibella</i>	a festivity season known for wedding and other
<i>Kidane Mihiret</i>	pact of mercy
<i>Kola</i>	lowland
<i>Mahiber</i>	a religious association in which members get meals and contribute money to be used to support members and their families during times of adversities such as death in the family together once a month in the saint's day to share
<i>Misana</i>	croton marcos stachy
<i>Sefer</i>	residential area
<i>Shola</i>	fig tree
<i>Teff</i>	a small-seeded grain, endemic to Ethiopia
<i>Tejji</i>	hydromel
<i>Tell</i>	a traditionally brewed alcoholic beverage
<i>Wanza</i>	cordial africana
<i>Woina dega</i>	temperate
<i>Woirra</i>	olive tree
<i>Wondnat</i>	an idealized traits of masculinity
<i>Woreda</i>	administrative unit above <i>kebele</i>
<i>Worka</i>	oak
<i>Wot</i>	a sauce consumed with <i>enjera</i>
<i>Yager shimaglewoch</i>	assembly of local elders established to settle conflicts

Acronyms

EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
UN	United Nations
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
DWIMC MP	Dabat <i>Woreda</i> Media and Information Compilation Management Process

Abbreviation

E.C	Ethiopian calendar
KM	Kilo meter

Abstract

The Myth of ideal masculine traits has links with the genesis of blood revenge practices. Since blood revenge practices bring serious impact on women the myth of masculine traits are co-responsible for the evils that follow. The custom of blood revenge is prevalent in Sebentra kebele. It brings diverse socio-economic problems to the society in general, and to women in particular. This study is made to address the traits of ideal masculinity and their linkage with blood revenge and the impact of blood revenge practices on women by using qualitative inquiry strategies. To this end, qualitative data gathering methods (semi-structured interview, focus group discussion, case studies, and observation) were employed to obtain relevant information from the research participants such as local elders, religious men, security forces, and women and men both from the murderer's and victim's group. With regard to the study findings, it has been found out that traits like sympathy, banditry, grudge holding, holding fire-arms, courage and others are treated by the participants as "the traits of ideal (standardized) masculinity." These traits have a role in encouraging revenge killings. They are deeply anchored in the patriarchal institutions and gender role expectations. Besides, it has also been found that blood revenge practices bring social, economic, psychological, political and other impacts on women. The study has also explored the customary strategies of settling disputes associated with blood revenge practices Thus, the study concludes that in order to tackle the multi fold impacts of blood revenge practices on the society and particularly on women, mainly the society's conception of masculine traits have to be revisited and reconstructed in a different way.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The mythical traits associated with ideal masculinity vary according to the context and time in which it is used. Though men are alike as they are different, some of the masculine traits considered ideal are not as such easily attainable by all. These unattainable traits are reserved for the few who are believed to be standards by which other men are judged (Shaw & Lee, 2007). In the United States, for instance, white, middle class, heterosexual, able, physically strong, and successful men are considered in possession of ideal masculine traits. While in Nuer, Southern Sudan, a man who is successful in hunting, aggressive towards his enemy, and who defend his family or lineage's honor against shame is considered as an ideal man (Gluckman, 1995; Lee & Shaw, 2006).

The Amhara culture also associates ideal masculine traits with aggression and militancy. These serve as an aspiration to a rationalization of the qualities of hardness and are further affirmed with the killing of enemies and wild beasts (Levin, 1966). These illustrate that the myths associated with ideal masculine traits are fluid and contextual in their nature.

Generally speaking, what makes the myths of ideal masculine traits diverse across nations is that they are all culturally imposed ideals (Unger & Crawford, 1992). As the components of culture, they are, therefore, dynamic and contextual. Besides, the images of ideal masculinity convey cultural demands, irrespectively of whether or not these images are socially and psychologically congenial. Thus, to fulfill these cultural demands, men often involve themselves in competitions, disputes even in life threatening activities and other culturally prescribed expectations of ideal man's myths.

One of the myths associated with the traits of ideal masculinity is that no man tolerates a dishonor done to him, such as a murder committed against his close relative or an attempt made to murder him will not remain unavenged. Unless he retaliates this with a balanced action, he will then be exposed to public criticisms and mockery. Because it is believed that such a tendency is unmanly and out of the conventional (myth) masculine traits (Williams, 1969; Kuschel, 1993; Czaplicka, 1969).

That is why in areas where blood revenge practices are common and rampant an ideal man has the obligation to kill in retribution for the death of a member of one's family or tribe. By doing this, the avenger exhibits his bravery, one of the components of the traits of ideal masculinity. As a reward, the person will then reap the societal rewards associated with these traits of ideal masculinity. Therefore, unless a man accomplishes this cultural demand successfully, he will not share the privileges reserved for ideal masculine bravado (Kuschel, 1993).

Although blood revenge is mostly practiced for reinstating the threatened male honor, it brings so many sufferings to women, children and the family. Among these are destruction of properties, displacement, death and fermented fear and uncertainties are a few to be mentioned (Keizer, 1972).

As the researcher is originally from around the study area, where blood revenge is deeply entrenched in the overall values, norms, and beliefs of the society, he has got the chance to witness the magnitude, consequences, and rationalities behind blood revenge practices. This initiated the researcher to conduct further studies on the issues and to suggest alternative mechanisms of tackling blood revenge practices.

Thus, the purpose of this study is delineated to outline the traits of ideal masculinity and their linkage with the instigation and perpetuation of blood revenge practices, and with an equal weight to investigate the multitude impact of blood revenge practices on women.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Blood revenge practices are strewn throughout the world. Though the magnitude of the practice varies from country to country, it is still practiced especially in developing countries where the formal legal institutions barely exist (Grutzpalk, 2002; Price, 2009; McKnight, 1986). However, the ineptitude of the legal institutions does not bear the prime responsibility for the sustenance and prevalence of blood revenge practices. The myths associated with the traits of masculinity play a considerable role in the genesis and continuity of this practice (Esiner, 2009; Kuschle, 2002).

Scholars, however, argue that since blood revenge is common in 'stateless societies,' it is the absence of the formal legal institutions that paved the way for its prevalence in these societies (Turney, 1971; Price, 2009). Nevertheless, the researcher strongly agrees with Otterbein that no connection can be traced between the degree of political complexity and the absence or existence of blood revenge (Otterbein, 1993, cited in Kuschel, 2002, p.3). Because the people who practice blood revenge customs are not "primitive" and are not as such far from the realm of "modern" formal legal institutions. In Albania, for instance, blood revenge is practiced not due to its statelessness, but due to the widely held belief that blood revenge is the means of restoring the threatened male honor (Masluk, 1954, quoted in Keizer, 1972, p.32) such that failure to avenge the wrong done to him is severely criticized by society. Keizer (1972, p.43) has also pointed out that in Tausug society where the value of bravery and masculinity are highly expected in adult males, an offense committed against a man results in a reduced self-image. This situation creates a state of enmity and has a potential for further conflict and war (Turney, 1971).

Moreover, among the Asante of Ghana, Amhara, Oromo, and Tigray societies proverbs, praise poetry, and songs are often composed to honor a man who takes revenge against his family member's killer. To them, this man is an arch type of a real manhood (Levin, 2006; Obeng, 2003). This cult of heroes instigates other men to engage in revenge killing activities and share the blessings. Of course, revenge begins when somebody has taken one's land, harmed one's relative, having an affair with his wife or due to a serious insult. Nevertheless, a man could have withstood these successfully had not been deviated from

the image of ideal masculine traits and had not been blamed for failing to avenge his kin's death (Levin, 2006). But it is a must to conform to the myths of ideal masculine traits in order to escape from severe derision, public criticisms, ostracization, etc. Thus, the societal constructed images of ideal masculinity, in one or another way, serve as a genesis for blood revenge

Even though blood revenge is practiced for the sake of glorifying masculinity, it brings unconstructive outcomes to the family members and the society at large. It has myriad sufferings such as destruction of properties; dislodged communities, death, fermented fear, spoil social relation, and a drum beat of uncertainties (Keizer, 2005; Yihune, 2010). These consequences are principally harsh for women.

When specifically coming to the study area, Sebentera *Kebele*, blood revenge practice is frequent and pervasive. In this kebele no one is enthusiastic about receiving any blood compensation or redress through the *woreda* or *kebele* social courts. Because it is believed that these arrangements are considered as a sign of fear, submissiveness, or weakness.

Blood revenge practices bring negative consequences to the residents and the society in general. Due to blood revenge, the residents especially men leave their homes and migrate to the urban areas looking for safe shelters. Thus, as an agrarian society, this highly weakens the local economy by reducing the labor force required for grain production, and generally the agricultural sector. Apart from this, since women are exempted from revenge killings, exceptions can be found to this rule, most of the times they remain in their houses covering both domestic and productive works like weeding, hoeing, mowing, trampling and other activities. Those women who are unable to cope with the burden of tedious agricultural works and rural poverty migrate to urban areas and engaged in prostitution, petty trade and begging. And their children will drop out of school and fled to the adjacent urban centers in search of better livelihood (Source: an interview with a resident of Sebentera *kebele*, at Dabat town, August, 2010).

Though blood revenge brings about the above depressing consequences and other countless sufferings to women and to the society as a whole, generally in Ethiopia and particularly in Sebentera *kebele*, it did not receive sufficient to look into the problem. Thus, in the absence of any significant attempt to search for the underlying causes of blood revenge, the link between ideal masculine traits and blood revenge practices, and the impact of blood revenge practices on women, it would be impossible to comprehensively understand the subject. Bearing these gaps in mind, this study is made to explore the links between blood revenge and the traits of ideal masculinity, the impacts of blood revenge practices on women, and the factors that perpetuate blood revenge in detail and precise manner.

Based on these premises, therefore, this study has attempted to address the following basic questions:

1. What are the traits of ideal masculinity that are linked with blood revenge practices?
2. What are the causes that maintain blood revenge practices?
3. What are the consequences of blood revenge practices on women?

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study has both general and specific objectives.

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective of the research is to explore the link between the traits of ideal masculinity and blood revenge and the impact of blood revenge practices on women by taking Sebentera *kebele* as a case.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:-

- Analyzing the traits of ideal masculinity in relation to blood revenge practices.
- Identifying the mechanisms that perpetuate blood revenge practices
- Investigating the consequences of blood revenge on women.

- Exploring alternative customary strategies of tackling blood revenge.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Extensive researches have not been undertaken on the link between blood revenge and the traits of ideal masculinity and the impact of blood revenge practices on women, to the researcher's knowledge, in the Ethiopian context. As result, this study would break new ground in bringing the issue to the academic world. And, it may inspire other researchers to look into the issue further and in the course of action; therefore, it may also be used as an input for similar studies too.

Apart from this, since the study has made an effort to explore the issue from gender perspective, it may provide pertinent information about the impacts of blood revenge on women, children, and generally on households and thus the policy makers and the concerned body may comprehend the situation from gender dimensions and act accordingly.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

This study has focused on exploring the traits of ideal masculinity and its linkage with blood revenge practices and the impact of blood revenge practices on women in *Sebentera kebele*, *Dabat Woreda*, in Amhara Region, North Gondar Administrative Zone. The study would be more valuable, had it been explored the situation in the remaining *kebeles*. Due to practical reasons such as time and financial constraints coupled with manageability matters, however, it has not able to come up with a more detailed account of the issue in other *kebeles*. Nonetheless, the absence of the remaining *kebeles* in the incorporation of the realm of study may not significantly reduce the validity of the study.

The study was not primarily made to address the multiple impacts of blood revenge practices on the community as a whole or to trace the causes of blood revenge to other factors. Many studies have been conducted on the impacts of blood revenge practices without a particular emphasis on the gender-specific consequences and additionally researchers knowingly or unknowingly give little attention for the link between blood

revenge and the myth of ideal masculine traits. Thus, in such a situation it was advisable to focus on the less researched aspect of the problem under discussion than bothering about the widely investigated issue.

With regard to the methodological aspect, the study avoided employing quantitative research methodology. This was done owing to the unique characteristics of the study. The study was an attempt to understand not one but the multiple factors. Thus, it has been focused on the participants' perceptions and experiences and the way they made sense of their lives. Besides, the study was made based on the assumptions that are not established apriori and thus attention was paid to particulars of a case rather than generalizations.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

To carry out a study in a far away exotic rural village is not an easy task and it had never been. The challenges become visible when one thinks about the distance, the climate, the social amenities, etc. this reduces the researcher's ability to stay on the field for extra time and thus to generate lots of information. This problem, to a manageable extent, was overcome by contacting lots of informants within a short period of time.

Moreover, the under researched nature of the subject, in the Ethiopian context, made the research more challenging. This highly affected the quality and relatedness of the reviewed literature. To fill this gap different books, both electronic and non-electronic, were thoroughly consulted as soothing lotions.

Apart from the above, the inaccessibility of ready-made political map of the specific study area further hinders to portray the study area in precise way for the research audiences. As a result, the researcher was obliged to use hand-sketched map.

Furthermore, establishing a cordial relationship with the informants was not easy. They have considered the researcher as a spy or a government agent. Thus, persuading them to collaborate in the study and to record their views were the greatest challenges that the researcher has ever faced in the entire field work. This a little bit hindered to obtain

genuine information from some key informants. It was overcome by recruiting more participants who were believed to be equally important in generating the required information.

1.7 Ethical Considerations

This study considers the ethical implications and potential and immediate psychological consequences of the study findings on the research participants. To this end, the researcher has notified all participants about the overall objectives of the research and he further confirmed to them that the study will not bring any proven harms. After persuading them by mentioning the importance of the research findings to participants, he requested them to willingly participate in the study for free.

Since the issue under study is very sensitive, the researcher avoided using participants' name. Most of the participants during the data gathering processes have strongly criticized the government for failing to maintain the social order and peace and they have also enemies who strive to avenge them. For this reason, they strongly requested the researcher not to transfer their names and the recorded interview to the third party. Accordingly, the researcher has made every effort not to disclose any personal information.

1.8 Definition of key Terms

Blood revenge- is the practice of taking revenge against someone or his relative for killing one's family member.

Traits- in this context are a particular quality in some one's character that comes due to one's gender identity.

Myth- in this context, it is an idealized and widely held but mistaken belief surrounding masculine traits. Myth, therefore, though it could not be scientifically proved, is true simply because it existed and serves a purpose.

Ideal Masculinity – is the quality or standard of being a masculine in a given culture.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This paper has five chapters and each chapter has its own sub topics and sections. For the sake of simplicity, the contents of each chapter are briefly discussed below.

In chapter one, the thesis tried to present background information on the issue under study, the extent of the problem, the significance of the study, the delimitation and limitation of the study, the ethical considerations and finally the key terms that the researcher seeks to define for the audience.

In chapter two, various related literatures are reviewed on the cross cultural conception of ideal masculinity, the definition of blood revenge, the impacts of blood revenge on women, the customary conflict resolution mechanisms associated with blood revenge, and it also assessed blood revenge practices both in global and Ethiopian contexts.

In chapter three, the methodology, the study design, the population and the sampling technique, data gathering methods and data analysis techniques have been discussed.

In chapter four, the link between the traits of ideal masculinity and blood revenge practices, the multifarious impact of blood revenge practices on women, and the indigenous means of deterring blood revenge are discussed in detail. The findings are communicated through narration.

In chapter five, based on the study findings, conclusions have been drawn and in line with this, to alleviate the problem, some recommendations have suggested. Finally, materials used in the study are listed in the reference section, and interview and focus group guides and other materials annexed at the end.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Definition of Masculinity

Masculinity is defined in different ways. Sai, for instance defined it as: *a socio-cultural construction of men. One assumes a masculine identity through his socialization of norms and values upon his physical and psychological conditioning. Again, masculinity is fluid and made up of an over changing assemblage of meanings and behaviors. There is no constant, universal essence of masculinity; and masculinity is a continuum of varying meanings where some men are more masculine than others* (Sai, 2007, p. 108).

It is difficult, therefore, to give a unanimous definition of masculinity without considering the context and the place it is formed. That is why Connell defined it as a “place in gender relations, the practice through which men and women engaged that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experiences, personality and culture” (Connell, 1995, p. 75, cited in Ferguson, 2001, p.119). Similarly, “masculinity is about those behaviors, languages and practices existing in specific cultural and organizational locations, which are commonly associated with males and thus culturally defined as not feminine” (Whitehead and Barrette, 2001, p. 17 cited in Sai, 2007, p.281).

So in defining the term masculinity, great care must be taken to avoid naive generalizations. Without missing the mutability and contextual nature of the concept, however, Connell (2005) provided four approaches to the definition of masculinity.

Essentialist Approach: the proponents of this approach define masculinity by picking the core features/the most defining features of a man. To them, activity, aggressiveness, and risk taking are the dominant essences of masculinity.

Positivist approaches define masculinity based on the empirical facts gained from masculinity/femininity scale in psychology. The results of this scale oscillate based on ones' gender attributes. Thus, it helps to empirically construct what a femininity/masculinity really is.

Normative approaches recognize the plurality of masculinity and define it accordingly: masculinity is defined based on the social norms in which it is located. For instance, according to the west traditions the blue prints of manhood are: No sissy stuff, The Big Wheel, The Sturdy Oak, and Give 'em Hell (Connell, 2005; Shaw & Lee, 2007).

Semiotic approaches define masculinity through a system of symbolic differences assigned to feminine and masculine qualities. For instance, aggressiveness and rationality are considered as masculine while passivity, emotionality, and weakness are symbolized as feminine.

2.2 Theoretical Perspectives on Gender Identity

Gender is a term primarily designated to express the psychological, social, and cultural aspects of being a male or female (Kessler, 1985). Stoller (1968, quoted in Kessler, 1985, p.7) also further said that "gender is the amount of masculinity or femininity found in a person." It is, therefore, psychologically and culturally constructed entity that ascribes certain traits, behaviors, and interests to men or women and thus assumed to be appropriate for that person (Unger & Crawford, 1992). This self-attribution of gender is called Gender Identity.

Then the question comes then how gender identity- the feeling of being masculine or feminine- formed and passed on to the next generation without any radical alteration? Social scientists employ different theoretical perspectives to explain gender identity formation and gender socialization. These perspectives, though they are laden with different values and assumptions, attempt to uncover the scene behind gender identity formation in the following way:

According to psychoanalytic perspective, children internalize what it means to be a male or a female by identifying with their same-sex parents. This identification process in children takes place unconsciously through unconscious learning. This unconscious learning coupled with the child parent relationships shapes the children's gender identity (Andersen, 2005; Wharton, 2004; and Unger & Crawford, 1992).

On the other hand, the social learning theory asserts that gender identity is formed through an ongoing process of reinforcement. Children rewarded for engaging in gender appropriate behavior while punished or discouraged if they engage in gender - inappropriate behavior (Wharton, 2004; Andersen, 2005).

The other theory brought here to explain gender identity formation is cognitive development theory. According to cognitive development theory, gender identity do not formed through identification with same sex parents or reinforcements but rather children can construct their gender identify. Then once children have labeled themselves as female or male, and recognize this is stable overtime and situations, they begin benefit to the socially lauded gender appropriate behavior (Santrock, 2000; Wharton, 2004).

To sum up, holding their respective assumptions aside, each of the above three theories remind us gender is one of the core aspects of early childhood socialization.

2.3 Ideal Masculine Traits across Cultures

Ideal masculine traits are not only manly traits but also what people think of masculine traits are. These traits are not easily attainable by the ordinary men folk. They require a determined effort to acquire them and that may even extend upto standing serious challenges (Aguilar, 2005). Thus, only those men who are resolutely prepared and determined even to risk their lives are destined to acquire these traits and then exclusively enjoy the privileges that come with them. It is these privileges that encourage Trukese men, in Micronesia, to participation in deep sea fish expeditions hardly fearing shark attacks (Aguilar, 2005).

The notions of ideal masculinity are relativistic (Connell, 2005; Coles, 2009; Liar, 2009; Sai, 2007). It is culture-specific. Across cultures, there are various traits considered to be ideal masculine. In the United States, according to Brannon (1976, cited in Anselmi and Law, 1999), men who are anti-feminine, inexpressive and independent, adventurous aggressive, and striving for success are symbolized as ideals.

Among the Aboriginal Mehinaku in Brazil, an ideal man is one who is efficient in everything, gets up early, go for fishing expeditions over dangerous terrain, active competitor in sports and games, has many lovers, generous, and who satisfies his wife sexually (Deaux, 1999). The Buid society, in contrary, treats those adults as ideal who believe in personal autonomy, equality, and continuously perform the material and ritual obligations to their society (Gibson, 1989).

Furthermore, in Brazil, ideal men are those who are financial providers for their family, courageous, adventurous, competitive, and heterosexual (Medrade, Lyra, and Monteiro, 2000). And in Philippines, the attributes of ideal masculinity are virility, physical strength, good looks, and a capacity to take risks (i.e. gambling and having illicit affairs), trust worthy, helpful, decent and understandable (Pingol, 2001 cited in Aguilar, 2005).

However, in Orokaiva, the attributes of ideal masculinity are enemy slayer, courtesy, practical honesty, good temper, and married chastity (Williams, 1969). Similarly, among the agricultural Massai of the Northern Tanganyika, ideal men are conceptualized as physically strong, daring temper, and adventurous disposition (Gulliver, 1968).

2.4 Local images of Ideal Masculine Traits

The concepts of ideal masculine traits surveyed across cultures so far remind that it is dynamic and contextual. In Ethiopia, the Amhara concepts of masculinity embrace aggressiveness, courageous, forcefulness, and over confidence as the core values of ideal masculinity (Levine, 1966, p.20).

The Amhara men have also a belief in masculinity called '*wandnat*.' This involves "aggressiveness, stamina, and courageous action in the face of danger; it means never backing down when threatened" (Reminick, 1982, p.108). Amhara youths are forced to participate in whipping contests called *Buhe*. It is similar with other rituals common to primitive cultures that inculcate the spirits of ideal masculinity into the youngsters through fierce beatings and wrestling competitions (Levine, 1966; Reminick, 1982; Strecker, 1988).

Other studies also show that the core features of ideal masculine traits among Amharas are military prowess, aggressiveness, and fearlessness (Messing, 1957; Levine, 1966 and 2006). Surprising enough, during the battle of Adwa, the Amhara soldiers refused to get down in trenches, they preferred to fight out without any strong hold so as to befit the image of 'a real man' (Levine, 2006). Contrary to the Amhara and Hamar notions of ideal masculine traits, in the Awramba community, autonomous behavior, predictability, honesty, and obedience are treated as the ingredients of ideal masculine traits (Mulat, 2005; Lydall, 1992).

2.5 Definition of Blood Revenge

The term blood revenge is usually synonymous with terms like feud, vendetta, blood feud, vengeance and simply revenge. But some scholars make distinctions among these terms. According to Kuschel (1993), for instance, blood revenge is different from blood feud both in its course of events and in its scale of consequences. However, the Miriam Webster Third International English Dictionary makes no distinction in meaning between blood revenge and vengeance (Webster, 1976). And similarly, Grutzpalk (2002), in his article entitled "Blood Feud and Modernity," terms such as blood feud, vendetta, and blood vengeance have been used as synonyms.

Kuschel (1993), however, distinguishes feud from vengeance killing based on the number of homicide attacks. To be regarded as a feud, according to Kuschel (1993), there should be a sequence of at least three homicides or homicide attempts occurring between

members of a discrete, autonomous group. Nevertheless, Kuschel made no distinction between blood feud and feud.

Leaving aside the disagreements on these terms, Webster's dictionary defines blood revenge as a vengeance for bloodshed requiring bloodshed in return (Webster, 1976). In addition, Ginat defined blood revenge as "the act of avenging a previous murder in order to terminate a conflict by reestablishing the balance of honor and power" (Ginat, 1987, p.40 cited in Kuschel 1993). Chagnon also defined blood revenge as a "retaliatory killing in which the initial victim's close kinsmen conduct a revenge raid on the members of the current community of initial killer" (Chagnon, 1988, p. 4).

2.6 Blood Revenge Practices: A Global View

Blood revenge is one of the traditional harmful practices still existing in the four corners of the globe particularly, however, it is common and frequent in largely lawless societies or in areas where tribal rules hold more sway than the national government or in places where there is no any other means of obtaining justice (McKee Cited in price, 2009). But Otterbein and Otterbein (1965, p.1476 cited in Kuschel, 1993), based on the cross-cultural analysis of fifty societies, maintained that "there is no any verifiable connection between the degree of political complexity and the appearance or absence of blood feud".

Religious texts are also full of revenge accounts. For instance, the story of Cain and Able is one of the revenge stories in the Bible. In Quran also there is a similar account on revenge. When Islam came, the main modification introduced to the Bedouins was that all Muslims were obliged to avenge a Muslim who was slain and to defend a Muslim slayer against all outsiders (Pockscn cited in Patton, 1901).

2.7 Blood Revenge Practices: the Ethiopian Context

Blood revenge practices are strewn throughout the world. In Ethiopia also, irrespectively of the magnitude of the problem, blood revenge is practiced in the country (Alula & Getachew, 2008). In a study conducted among Waliso Oromo, however, blood revenge is rarely practiced due to the nature of their customary dispute resolution methods which

favor reconciliation over other personal means of averting injustice (Dejene, 2002). Among the Afar society blood revenge is common. Though now a day it becomes obsolete, a person who killed someone is extradited to the slain's family so as to kill him in a similar way as he killed their member and thus circumvent further killing (Getachew & Shimelis, 2008).

In his book entitled "Traditional Mechanism of Conflict Resolutions in Ethiopia," Giday (2000) and Melaku and Wubishet (2008) revealed that revenge killing is still functional in Amhara, Tigray, and other regions of the country. Other studies also confirmed that it is common to Burji, Konta, Koma and Majangir societies (Cerulli, 1956; Tipper, 1970 cited in Alula & Getachew, 2008, p.67).

2.8 The Underlying Reasons of Blood Revenge Practices

Scholars in the field warned that blood revenge is not merely an instinct driven barbarous practice. But it has some cultural and adaptive behavioral patterns (Eisner, 2009). McCullough (Cited in Eisner, 2009 p.49) asserted that blood revenge solves the following three interrelated problems:

First, revenge deters aggressors from attacking again. A person known for taking revenge against his enemy is less likely to be repeatedly attacked than a person who is not. Thus, according to McCullough (Cited in Eisner, 2009), revenge has a preventive strategy for further aggression or bellicosity.

Second, revenge warns would be harm doers to back off revenge. Therefore, it has a deterrence effect on bystanders. This rationale also confirms the study conducted by Williams (1969) on the Orokaiva society.

Third, it invigorates the smooth existence of altruistic behavior by safeguarding it from external aggression. Furthermore, citing the recent research that has been conducted by de Quervain and his colleagues, Eisner (2009) noted that feeling of belongingness or the

enthusiastic desire to secure the societal ties that keep them intact attributes to frequent bloodshed across various cultures.

The obligation of blood revenge also arises in a society where ideal masculinity is closely associated with a culture of honor that attributes pride in manhood, masculine coverage, assertiveness, physical strength and warrior virtue (Figuerdo and et al cited in Eisner, 2009, p.50; Herdt, 1987; Sai, 2007). For instance, in Sambia and Chilas societies, a payback killing against a slayer brings prestige to the avenger, usually male (Herdt, 1985; Sai, 2007). Among Amharas, the competition for winning titles such as *gegana*, *haylegna* in terms of physical exertion instigate males to engage in fierce fighting (Reminick, 1971). Moreover, the culture of masculine assertiveness among the Suri of Southern Ethiopia is one of the attributes of ideal masculinity (Abbink, 1998, cited in Eisner, 2009, p.50). Among the Waliso Oromo the male relatives of the Slain is expected to embark on vengeance (Dejen, 2002). The Albanian code of honor also dictates that the slain relative ought to reinstate their threatened honor through vengeance killing (Arsovka, 2006, cited in Eisner, 2009, p.50).

Thus, according to Eisner (2009), Turney (1971), and Williams (1969), the ability to retaliate effectively is valued highly. Those who lose in fights are linked to lose face, honor and reputation. Those who win are respected, gain in social status, and are often admired by women.

In contrary to the above notions of blood revenge, Patton (1901) also suggests that the custom of blood revenge has a religious element. The Arabs, according to Patton, equate the slain of the tribe with that of the violation of their god's rights. To them, the tribe god forbids to let kinsman's blood remain unavenged. Inability to embark on vengeance, therefore, will cause him to break off the generation old communion with them. To the Witotos of North Western America, blood revenge is also a means for appeasing the ghosts of the deceased (Murdock, 1957).

Besides, the Arabs believed that the spirit of unavenged man who has been slain finds no peace in the grave until “the death bird,” which hovers at the head crying, “Give me to drink,” has been satisfied with the blood of the murdered or one of his tribe” (Patton, 1901, pp. 712-713). So they take revenge against the slayer’s tribe or the slayer out of the conviction that the spirit of the dead man must be propitiated. In a similar vein, among the Gilayak, “if a death has not been avenged, may become a hostile spirit and bring trouble upon the clan” (Czaplicka, 1969, p.26). The Orokaiva society also believed that “the unpaid debt of blood probably entailed a painful sense of inferiority which could only be removed by the satisfaction of killing one of the aggressors” (Williams, 1969, p. 170).

Grurzplak, citing the Italian ethnographer’s work, also maintained that “the universal basis of every blood vengeance is the idea that “only blood may wash away blood” Whoever sheds the blood of men by men shall his blood is shed (Grutzpalk, 2002, p. 117).

In Weber’s view, the very existence of clan structure is guarded by blood revenge. Thus, attempting to dismantle blood revenge practice is taken as threatening the stability of the clan-based societies. Apart from this, according to Weber, blood revenge remains the main source of securing individual justice in societies that do not have an integrated and efficient legal apparatus used for effectively rendering justice (Weber, 1978 cited in Grutzplak, 2002).

“Blood vengeance, for Durkheim, is a phenomenon that can only be understood in relation to mechanical solidarity¹. Organic solidarity² doesn’t know the passions that breed blood vengeance. Blood revenge is a very passionate and coarse reaction against external threat and it helps to distinguish group members and allies. It is not a real social

¹Mechanical solidarity is the quality of social bond found in traditional society.

² Organic solidarity is the quality of social bond common to the “modern society” (Schaefer, 2000).

sanction as it is executed by individuals. Yet society most often accepts the use of vendetta as an implementation of morality in Mechanical Solidarity” (Durkheim, 1893 cited in Grutzpalk, 2002, p.128).

To conclude, various conceptions lie behind the custom of blood revenge. These conceptions motivate men to engage in counter vengeance and thus directly or indirectly sustain further killings. Then it follows that, therefore, the blood of a man cannot spilled without any be it moral, cultural or religious grounds.

2.9 Gender Socialization and its Implication for Blood Revenge

To reproduce the status quo values, norms, and traditions associated with gender, whether right or wrong, children ought to be socialized with culture –appropriate patterns of behavior. Thus, for the successful indoctrination of these bundles of expectations, the early socialization processes is often escorted with rewards and punishments based on one’s level of conformity to the established codes of behavior. “Socialization plays a vital role in shaping ourselves, how we see ourselves and how others see us. Being masculine is apparently upholding male values by following norms set for male behaviors. Socialization into gender roles from childhood to adulthood shape men’s liking for certain things like guns, forms of behavior like womanizing, and forms of leisure like long range shooting, gambling and drinking” (Angeles, 2001, p.19 cited in Aguilar, 2005).

This type of socialization is common in gendered societies, whereas in egalitarian society like Samai, there is no gender difference in access to knowledge, no purely male /female personality attributes, and there is no puberty rite or other rites of passage defining differential ideals of manhood (Willis, 1989). And in Arapesh of New Guinea, “men and women were found to be trained to be competitive, unaggressive and responsive to the needs and demands of others” (Berry, etal, 1992 cited in Mulat, 2005, p.7). However, in Shavante, belligerence is systematically instilled in males as proper behavior from a very young age, and boys and girls are separated from one another as playmates. Boys are encouraged to be small tyrants, to react violently if thwarted, to endure sufferings,

participate in duels and display physical prowess (Maybury-Lewis, 1971 cited in Overing, 1989). Among the Samburu, "if a boy cries while his flesh is being cut of so much as blink an eye, he is shamed for life as unworthy of manhood" (Gilmore, 1989, p. 216). The Samburu boy, therefore, to escape embarrassment, is expected to stand the pains during the rites of circumcision (Gilmore, 1989).

Similarly, in the high mountains of Melanesia, young boys undergo similar trials before being admitted into the select club of manhood. They are forced to undergo a serious of brutal rituals including whipping, bloodletting, and beating, all of which the boys must endure stoically. The Tewa peoples of New Mexico also believe that boys must be made in too manly by whipping them mercilessly (Gilmore, 1989, p. 218).

Moreover, among the Nuer, "when a boy passes into the grade of manhood his domestic duties and privileges radically altered. From being ever boy's servant and interior, he becomes an independent adult. He becomes a 'true man' when he has fought in war and has not run away, has quarreled with his age mates, has cultivated his garden and has married" (Eisenstadt, 1971, pp.31-32 cited in Mazrui, 2009).

In Ethiopia, males are socialized to be brave and courageous while females are socialized to be shy and submissive (Eshetu, 1997). For example, among the Hadiya people, boys are socialized to be brave. For the inculcation of this trait, boys are expected to engage in various fighting like wrestling (Gubancha). The victorious boy in the fighting will be rewarded with special food and milk, and if he continually becomes triumphant over the game, he will be honored by the community as a hero (Dessalegne, 1983). On the contrary, Dessalegn further added, losers of the game are not encouraged to come home in tear.

An Amhara father teaches his son, from the time he begins to walk and talk, about the virtue of warriors, the qualities a good father, and about heroic deeds. The child's parents praise him for displaying imitations of heroic deeds and courageous behavior. On the contrary, the parents of a weaker and more submissive boy will be scolded for

unbecoming behavior. Even he may be reprimand or beaten, for his cowardly performance, while a boy who succeeds in pummeling someone will be welcomed by his parents and will be praised as a *gwobaz*. Due to these cultural expectations and rewards, a child always strives to maximize opportunities to express dominance and superiority (Reminick, 1971).

For their successful imitations and acquisition of superior masculine qualities, the Amhara and Gurage people encourage boys through proverbs, praise chants by minstrels, and folk poetry (Messing, 1957; and Shack, 1981). For instance, among shallallas (warcries) couplet in Amhara society:

If a male child is born, and is not like his father
Give him a spinning stick; let him spin like his mother
(Levine, 1966, p.20)

Besides, naming of children in Amhara society has its own latent function in glorifying masculine traits. Among these names some of them are mentioned below:

Azbitachew – ‘make them bend’
Ashenafi – ‘conqueror’
Admachew – ‘bleed them’
(Messing, 1957, p.112)

These expressions of masculinity concept are widely seen in the names of the *Manz* of Amhara tradition. All of them are exhortations on how to behave in terms of the cultural values espousing masculinity (Reminick, 1971).

Moreover, “proverbs play an important role in reinforcing the cultural ideal of masculinity such as competitiveness, dominance, forcefulness, endurance, confrontation, and self reliance” (Hussein, 2005, p. 67). Similarly, some of the proverbs among Amharas highly valued baby boys over baby girls. This can be seen in the following proverbs.

One man is more important than thousands of women.
He who begets a male weighs like Gold.
If you marry a woman and beget a female,
Where is the business? (Yeshi, 1995, p.30)

Furthermore, applying a feminine term to a male among Amharas is derogatory. Conversely, the use of a masculine term to a female is taken as praise (Helen, 1992).

The cross cultural review of socialization processes, especially in gendered societies, helps to understand how male children rearing practices are designed to equip them with a 'true masculine' qualities. And above all, it shows how the early introduction of male children with 'the true traits of masculinity' manifested in their later years involvement in lethal conflicts.

2.10 Impacts of Blood Revenge Practices on Women

Blood revenge is practiced for the sake of negotiating masculine honor, to placate gods' wrath and to warn would be harm doers to back off (Patton, 1901; Eisner, 2009). Nevertheless, this killing also brings overwhelming consequences to the society. It sours any relationship between the slayers and slain's group and in an extreme case, in "tribal" societies, blood revenge may develop in to full scale war (Turney, 1971; Murdock, 1957; Eisner, 2009; and Patton, 1901). Yost (1981 cited in Eisner, 2009, p.45) found that 44% of adult deaths in Woarani, a people in Ecuadorian Amazon, were a result of internal feuding related to vendetta, quarrels, or accusations of sorcery.

In "tribal" warfare, the Sambia warriors take enemy women as captive brides and other women and children will be put to death in retaliation (Herdt, 1987). This can be partly explained that they cannot easily manage to escape from fighting grounds, especially from their village. Thus, the avengers easily inflict more damages on women than on men.

Widowhood is also one of the results of blood revenge. Particularly in societies where the families' livelihoods depend entirely on men's labor, widows suffer a lot from severe socio-economic problems. For instance, in Sidama, widows without a son do not inherit their husbands' property. Apart from this, if they have sons they cannot control household resources, since they are expected to keep them in trust for their children (Sintayehu, 2000). These facts also tally with the Hamar widows. According to Lydall (1980, p.156), "though a widow controls her own economic wealth, she is economically worth off than the woman with a living husband, because she has no man obliged to her as a husband to assist her in her economic pursuits". Above and beyond, in most societies, widowhood has a negative connotation and it also results in psychological stress, isolation, poverty and loneliness (Papilia and Olds, 1985; Unger & Crawford, 1992).

Furthermore, widows and particularly revenge widows in Siberian and Hamar societies cannot inherit a part of their husbands' property and their ties with their husbands' relatives would be lessened through time respectively (Czaplicka, 1969; Lydall, 1980). Similarly, in Orokaiva, due to blood revenge, the young women of the slayer might become vulnerable for rape and taken as captive wives (Williams, 1969). In addition to these, in this society the widow of a man slain by an enemy tribe must continue her seclusion until the capture and killing of a man from that tribe. This seclusion is a means to shun oneself from shame (Williams, 1969). Widows in Darasa society also lose their status of membership and destined to live outside of the community at least for two years. Apart from this, to remarry they have to undertake clitoridectomy (Tsehai, 1980).

2.10 Indigenous Mechanisms of Tackling Blood Revenge

So as to address counter vengeance, in areas where blood revenge is common and frequent, various indigenous formal and informal sanctions are imposed on the victim's and the slayer's relatives. These indigenous sanctions are preferred over the more formalized legal techniques and methods of conflict resolutions due to their nature of accessibility, timeliness, legitimacy, restorative capacity, community-based sanctions, and in their ability of building community cohesion (Alula & Getachew, 2008).

For instance, in order to deter further killings, the Orokaiva society enforces the slayer to adopt the name of the slain and the Aboriginal Siberians also cool the tension by taking a man from the slayer's family to replace the slain and assume his responsibilities as the slain did (Williams, 1969; Czaplicka, 1969).

Nwanunobi (1992) stated that in Africa there are a lot of conflict resolution strategies which can be categorized into four. These strategies can be settled by individuals, when their kin, property, and interest have been violated. Secondly, conflicts can also be handled by peer group assembly. This is mostly associated with societies typically organized on age grades out of the conviction that such groups' best understand the intricacies of issues in which members are involved. Thirdly, village council is the other means of conflict resolution in Africa that settles conflict through the mediation made by contestants, their kinsmen, and other allies. Finally, Nwanunobi (1992, p. 155) forwarded that "the council of elders is the most effective customary mechanism of conflict resolution in Africa due to the rationale that in environments where experience and wisdom tend to be correlated with age and decisions by the elderly are the best to be expected."

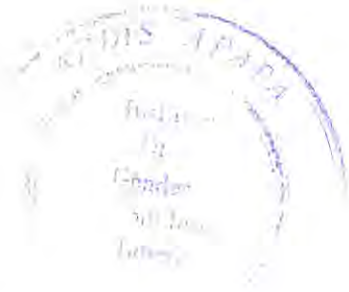
In Ethiopia, apart from the formal legal institutions, various indigenous formal and informal sanctions are established to curb conflicts and thus restore the endangered social order. For instance, among Afars, murder cases are handled before they intensified into revenge killings either by allowing the victim's relative to kill the murder in the same way as he murdered or through offering blood compensation- it may range from 100 head of cattle for men and 50 head of cattle for women (Getachew & Shimelis, 2008).

The former means of deterring blood revenge is also common among Burji, Konta, Koma and Majangir societies (Cerulli, 1956; Tipper, 1970, cited in Alula & Getachew, 2008, p.67). The latter is common among Amharas, Oromos, and Tigreans (Melaku & Wubishet, 2008; Areba & Berihamu, 2008). Money compensation along with carrying stone of penitence, usually by the slayer, and prostrate him before the victim's family is

the most favorable means of avoiding further killings among Amharas (Melaku & Wubishet, 2008).

Unlike to the above mechanisms of tackling blood revenge, the Nuer and the Irobs in Tigray region settled murder cases through arranging marriage between the slayer's and the victim' families (Dereje, 2008; Shimelis & Taddese, 2008). Furthermore, the Shinasha people deter counter-vengeance by obliging the killer to move to another location where it is supposed to be inaccessible to his relatives and the relatives' of the deceased. Besides, the killer is demanded to pay a blood compensation worth up to 2000 *Birr* to the relatives' of the deceased (Bayisa & Lemessa, 2008).

Generally, in Ethiopia, these indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution associated with blood revenge, according to Alula & Getachew (2008), can be categorized into blood wealth complex- compensation for the death, bride compensation complex- providing a bride to a relative of the deceased, and ghost marriage complex- using the blood wealth for a relative to marry in the name of the deceased.



CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Research Methodology

A qualitative methodology was chosen, primarily because the purpose of the study was to explore and capture the traits of ideal masculinity and their linkage with blood revenge and the impact of blood revenge practices on women. Thus, the study objective was so complex and detailed that a quantitative method has little use in investigating the issues (Kanjit, 1999; Creswell, 2007). The under researched nature of the topic under study also made qualitative methodology preferable for studying the issue in detail.

Qualitative approach is chosen by researchers when they need to understand the participants' views, meanings, cognition and intentions and when they are intended to present the gathered information in detail and complete form. In addition to this, it helps to capture reality as it is and it has also an inherent openness and flexibility that allow researchers to modify their design and data collection tools in accordance with the realities existing in the field (Maxwell, 2005; Seale & Uwe, 2007).

Moreover, it was chosen for the study out of the strong conviction that the entire research process focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem under investigation. It, therefore, offers the opportunity to unfold issues, what lies inside of the participants' mind, and to explore the phenomena in the study participant's own terms (Creswell, 2007; Ritchie & Lewis, 2005).

3.2 Research Design

Generally, qualitative design was chosen for the study based on the following three rationales.

First, **its philosophical world view**- it holds the assumption that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work and thus the goal of the study was to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied.

Second, **its strategy of inquiry**- case study is one of the five qualitative inquiries. In line to this, the study has explored the issue being studied by taking a single *kebele* as a case.

Third, **the research methods used**- in this study qualitative methods such as observation, focus group discussions, case studies, and semi-structured interviews were used.

Thus, in this study, efforts were exerted to stimulate, explore, and develop new ideas about the possible links between the traits of ideal masculinity and blood revenge practices, and their overall impacts on women.

3.2.1 Data Sources

All primary information for the study have been collected from informants through semi-structured interviews, individual cases, focus group discussions, observations and secondary data have been gathered from books, unpublished materials, journals and electronic sources. The primary data collection process had begun on October 13th 2010 and ended on December 24th 2011.

3.2.2 Methods of Data Collection

Primary sources of data were collected through the following qualitative data gathering techniques.

Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion is “a valuable and time-efficient method for gathering qualitative data from multiple respondents at one time. Thus, “it allows the qualitative researcher to unearth individual narratives and group narratives that are larger than the sum of their parts” (Biber & Leave, 2006, p.223). According to Morgan, *what makes the discussion in focus group discussion more than the sum of individual narratives is that the participants both query each other explain themselves... such interaction offers a valuable data on the extent of consensus and diversity among participants* (Morgan,1996, p. 29, cited in Biber & Leave, 2006, p.26).

In addition, focus group discussion was selected for the study owing to its cost effective techniques of gathering information, its efficiency in bringing individuals together who share a common attribute, be it age, experience or gender, and in its ability to generate diversities and differences either within or between groups. This helps the researcher to grasp the unanimous views of the participants and to draw the individualistic understanding of the issue as well (Dayon & Holloway, 2002).

For this purpose, five focus group discussions were held with the local elders, women from both the victim's and slayer's group, religious leaders, and the *kebele* militias with 6 members in each group. The participants were selected based on their experiences and knowledge about the issue. The themes of discussions were focused on the qualities of being an ideal man, the links between the traits of ideal masculinity and blood revenge, the causes that perpetuate and maintain blood revenge practices, and finally the impact of blood revenge practices on women.

To enhance the validity and reliability of the focus group discussion, the researcher recording non-verbal and verbal languages simultaneously, developed ground rules, controlled the balance between individual participants, focused on participants' personal view, encouraged in-depth exploration of emergent issues, and looked into contradictory views.

Semi – Structured Interview

It was decided to employ semi-structured interview to collect data related to the links between the traits of ideal masculinity and blood revenge, the impact of blood revenge customs on women, and other related information on the subject under discussion.

This data collection method helps the researcher “to modify research question based up on the perceptions of what seems most appropriate in the context of the conversation can change the way they are worded, give explanations, leave out particular questions which seem inappropriate with a particular interview” (Robson, 2005, p.231). Besides, the researcher believed that it also helps to gather information which is personal and cannot be harnessed by any other data gathering techniques.

Based on their experiences and knowledge about the theme of the study, 21 key informants were selected for the semi-structured interview. The informants have been comprised of three key female informants from both the victim's group and the slayer's group, four elders, three priests, two experts from Dabat *woreda*, a local teacher, a police man, a development agent and three militiamen.

To the researcher's level best, the reliability and validity of the semi-structured interview has been checked by designing easily understandable guiding questions, by paying attention to the interviewees' verbal and non-verbal expressions, by imposing further probing questions, by building good relationship with the informants for a better acceptance and trust, re-interviewing six informants after a week for identifying variations from their previous responses, by checking other literature written on the issue under study and by checking the overall formal interviews against informal interviews.

Case Studies

Case study enables to collect detailed information across a wide range of dimensions about one particular case or a small number of cases. They were selected for the study due to their focus on direct and verifiable life experiences and especially as feminist researchers suggested that they "are suitable for studying a group of women who do not fall within the ordinary or standard notion of women and are also essential for putting women on the map of social life" (Reinharz, 1992, p.74 in Ribbens & Edwards, 2000).

By assuring unanimity and establishing cordial relationship, the researcher has been able to unearth a detailed account of personal life stories, encounters, and experiences from four cases. At the beginning, these informants were selected for interview. But due to the strong bond that was established following frequent contacts, the researcher has got the chance to excavate more information outside of the mainstream interview processes. This helped him to gather plentiful information about these informants which cannot be otherwise gained through the utilization of other data gathering techniques.

Observation

“Observational techniques, whether conducted online or conventionally, involve watching and recording contemporary events and activities as they occur in a particular setting” (Dayon & Holloway, 2002, p.211). It is also one of the tools of data gathering methods in qualitative research. It is mostly employed to record events that are both sensible and observable in their nature. It includes procession of rituals, ceremonies and special public holiday celebrations.

In a similar vein, observation method is used in this study out of the strong belief of the researcher that blood revenge practices bring material damages and other observable effects to the study people. To this end, the researcher has observed damaged farms, demolished properties, and ruined and abandoned houses. This strongly supported him in fusing both the oral accounts of the study participants with that of what he has been observed during the field work and thus to bring the true pictures of the issue to the audience.

3.2.3 The Population, Sampling and Sampling Technique

The population of the study was all inhabitants of Sebentera *kebele* with age range of 25-70. With regard to their educational background, the study has incorporated illiterates, who had church education, who completed primary and secondary education, and diploma and degree holders. The total number of Sebentera *kebele* residents is 6082 (DWIMCMP, 2003 E.C).

For obtaining adequate information on the study under discussion, various residents of the *kebele* have participated. For the focus group discussion, the researcher has been divided the informants into five groups out of the conviction that it could result in detailed and wide-ranging information on the issue being studied. The group members were recruited based on the participants' proximity to the research questions and gender. Thus, a total of 30 individuals participated in the focus group discussions and they provided valuable information about the subject under study. In addition, from the

participants of the focus group discussion, three individuals from each focus group discussion were chosen for in-depth interviews.

The total number of the interviewees who participated in the interview was 16. Apart from this, two experts at Dabat *woreda*, a local school female teacher, a development agent, and a policeman were taken as key informants and they were interviewed about the general background of the study area and the topic under discussion.

The aim of qualitative research is “to gain an understanding of the nature and forms of phenomena, to unpack meanings, to develop explanations or to generate ideas, concepts and theories. Samples, therefore, need to be selected to ensure the inclusion of relevant constituencies, events, processes and so on, that can elucidate and inform that understandings” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2005, p.82). However, qualitative research involves a small sample which cannot be generally governed by the principles of probability sampling (Ritchie & Lewis, 2005).

As a result, following strict procedures of sampling seemed less important for qualitative researchers. They are not typically used with qualitative research because the goal of qualitative research is not to make generalizations about the larger population but to understand things in-depth and directly from the perspectives of those being studied. Thus, the goal of qualitative research is extracting detail information from the few, rather than the many (Kalozi et al., 2008; Ezzy, 2002). Based on the participants’ relevant knowledge and experiences on the issue under investigation, the study participants were drawn from the population by purposive sampling method.

3.2.4 Procedures of Data Collection

The Stages of focus group discussion

For the focus group discussion, five focus group discussions were organized, these were held with religious leaders, local elders, militiamen, and with the local men and women whose age range were between 25-70 years. The selection of the participants was based on the information gained from the kebele officials and acquaints living there for more

than three years. Six participants were recruited to each focus group. The discussions were conducted in Amharic language.

Stage One: Scene setting and ground rules

For the successful handling of the focus group discussions, the researcher had prepared the necessary pre-conditions such as recruiting potential participants, designing strategies of pre-empting difficulties later in the discussion, and structuring the overall discussions.

At the beginning of the discussion as the participants have arrived at the venue, the researcher thanked them warmly for their coming, welcomed them and tried to relax them with a friendly conversation. When all the participants arrived, the researcher launched the discussion with a personal introduction and then he briefly described the research topic, background information on the purpose of the study. Confidentiality was stressed, and explanation was given about what will happen to the collected data.

The researcher also included an indication of expected roles of the participants. For this purpose, he prepared ground rules. These rules stressed that there are no right or wrong answers, participants should feel free to say what they think, seek for explanation on unclear topics, avoid to talk to each other, and not to seep out what a participant say as confidential.

Stage two: Participants' introduction

Switching on the tape recorder, the researcher asked participants to introduce themselves in turn by saying their names, occupation, educational status and religious background. This helped the researcher to link the recorded voice with their name and other personal profiles during the data analysis process.

Stage three: Opening the discussion

After the participants' introduction, the researcher started off the general discussion by asking them to talk about how had raised their sons and daughters, was their upbringing processes different? How did they reward and punish their children's conformity or failure to confirm to their anticipated behavior?

After the end of discussions on these issues, the discussion turned to focus on the traits of ideal masculinity, the privileges of possessing these traits, on the links between ideal masculine traits and blood revenge, and then the impacts of blood revenge practices on women.

During the discussions, through the active listening and observation the researcher kept writing on what was said and expressed through non-verbal speeches. He probed the participants for more information and to balance the contribution of each participant, he has interfered in the discussion while it seemed dominated by a few participants.

Finally, after reaffirming them that he would not disclose what they had said confidential, the researcher ended the discussion and thanked the participants for their unreserved contributions.

Interview Stages

Interviews, especially in-depth interviews, excel other qualitative data gathering methods in providing thorough accounts about the research participant's world-views, beliefs attitudes, and so on. The interview was conducted in Amharic language.

Stage One: Introducing the research topic/ objectives

The researcher started interaction by introducing the study topic. This involves briefing the nature and purpose of the study, reaffirming that what they say would be kept confidential and seeking permission to record the interview.

Stage Two: Beginning the interview

The interviewer began by asking some neutral questions. Such as the types of crops growing in the area, social services available in the area and about other contextual information needed for the study. At the same time, the researcher asked the interviewees background information about their occupation, religion, and whether they were affected by revenge killing.

Stage Four: The interview

This is the most important stage in the interview processes where the researcher captured the interviewee's thoughts, feelings, views and experiences about the issue under study. At this stage, the researcher raised questions related to the traits of ideal masculinity and their links with blood revenge practices, the impacts of blood revenge practices on women, factors responsible for the continuation of blood revenge practices and personal suggestions.

Each theme was explored in-depth with a series of follow up questions and probes. These themes were anticipated by the researcher and those which emerged from the interviewee's response. After the end of the interview, the researcher thanked the interviewee and finally he guaranteed them the confidentiality of the interview data.

3.2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The data acquired through focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, observations and individual case studies were analyzed using exclusively qualitative data analysis techniques. The process of qualitative data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data. It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data. It involves collecting open-ended data, based on asking general questions and developing an analysis from the information obtained from study participants (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative analysis usually depends on inductive reasoning processes to interpret and structure the meanings that the informants attached to their motives, intentions, and daily practices (Maxwell, 2005).

“Descriptive accounts which involved, detection, categorization and classification of the substantive content and dimensions of phenomena, are frequently used in qualitative analyses. They require exploring the data to generate descriptions that are conceptually pure, make distinctions that are meaningful and display content that is illuminating” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2005, P.261).

After the completion of the data collection processes, the researcher organized and prepared the data for analysis. For this purpose, field notes and tape recorded interviews were transcribed and depending on the sources of information the data were further arranged into different categories. Based on these categories, similar topics were clustered together and the unique ones were used for checking naïve generalizations. As a result, greater care was taken to understand the general sense of the whole participants' idea through a detailed examination of the participants' tone of expression, mood and experiences.

Finally, the major themes, personal interpretation, and the cross checked findings with the information gleaned from related literatures were interconnected in to a story line and then the researcher used his level best to convey the findings through narration.

CHAPTRE FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

In the ensuing discussions, the traits of ideal masculinity and their linkage with blood revenge practices, the causes that perpetuate and maintain blood revenge practices, the impact of blood revenge practices on women, and the indigenous mechanisms of deterring blood revenge are analyzed in detail. The relevant information has been obtained from various groups of the community and concerned officials both at *kebele* and *woreda* levels through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, case studies, and personal observations

4.1 Ethnographic Background of the Study Area

Sebentera *kebele* is one of the 26 rural *kebeles* found in Dabat *woreda*. Dabat *woreda* is located in Amhara region, specifically in North Gondar Administrative Zone. It is 814 km far from Addis Ababa and is also 75km (kilometers) away from Gondar city. Dabat *woreda* is bordered in the north and north east by Debark, in the south Wogera, and in the west Sanja *woredas* (DWIMCMP, 2003 E.C).

An unpublished document gained from Dabat *woreda* information and media compilation management process revealed that Dabat *woreda* was established in 1910 E.C by Dejazmach Ayalew Birru. He was the governor of Dabat *woreda* and neighboring *woredas*. The geographical location of the then *woreda* was about 8 or 9 kms away from its present setting. The founder's corpse is mummified and still preserved at the local church, St. Gabriel, which was constructed by him in 1910 E.C. It is open for visitors and is also displayed for the local Orthodox Christians every year at St. Gabriel's Day (Personal experience and DWIMCMP, 2003 E.C).

According to the local elder, the present *woreda* was formerly a farmland owned by two farmers named Degalas and Gebrehiwot. The present town was established by Italians

following 1928 E.C occupation. There are still some buildings in the town that witness the Italians' architectural and building style influences. These buildings are now used for various public services (personal observation and DWIMCMP, 2003 E.C).

Moreover, the Gondar-Shire gravel road, which was constructed by Italians for the prime aim of connecting the central Ethiopia with Eritrea, passes through it. And also some of the villages are named after the Italians' metropolitans. For instance, Romegna *safar* (Romans' residential area).

As an unpublished document obtained from Dabat *woreda* information and media compilation management process revealed currently, this *woreda* has 4 urban kebeles and 26 rural kebeles that cover 122,328 ha. In terms of population size, according to the 2001 E.C national census, it has a total population of 153,549 among which 75,701 are females and 77,848 are males. With regard to religious composition, 97% of the population is a follower of Orthodox Christianity and the rest are Muslims (DWIMCMP, 2003 E.C).

Dabat *woreda* receives annual rainfall ranging from 800mm to 1400mm. and its average elevation ranges from 1500m to 3200m. Its topography consists of 30% plain, 55% mountainous, 5% gorges and 10% ragged lands. The climate is dominantly 52% *dega* (highland), 14% *woina dega* (temperate) and 34% *kola* (low land). The residents' livelihoods, in order of gradation, depend on mixed agriculture (97.9%), handicraft (0.3%), trade (1.75%), and casual work (0.05%) (DWIMCMP, 2003 E.C).

Dabat *woreda* is endowed with both natural and man-made tourist attraction sites. Among the natural heritages, the Agenov cave, Semein cave, and Emebet cave are the famous ones. Ancient monasteries dated back to the 17th and early 20th centuries are also found in Dabat *woreda* like Dequa *Kidane Miheret* (Kidane Miheret literary means "pact of mercy"), Kirnamba *Kidane Miheret* and Abba Yohannes *Marriam* (St. Virgin Mary) church were constructed during the reign of Emperor Adiamseged Iyassu and Emperor Isaac, respectively (DWIMCMP, 2003 E.C).

Janora is a place which geographically covers six kebeles such as Bentero, Sebentera, Chilaydiba, Gurnamba, Guwenatamba, and Kenta *kebeles*. Nevertheless, traditionally the name Sebentera *kebele* is always associated with Sebentera kebele. Because the *kebele* is serving as the seat of the six *kebeles* administrative offices and other social services rendering institutions. Among these *kebeles*, Sebentera *kebele* is particularly chosen for the study because of its pervasive and highest frequency of revenge killings.

Sebentera *kebele* is bordered by in the south and south west by Gewentamba, in the east Chilaydiba, in the north Gurnamba and Bentero *kebeles*. Small villages like Jinger Ber, Agamoch, Sonfelge, Serdo Bet, Jinger, Woizero Mesk, Tirgoseye, Dekmoch, Menderge, Gulmit, Dero mekurecha and Madoye are found in Sebentera *kebele*.

According to 2001 E.C national census found from Dabat *woreda*, Sebentera *kebele* has a total population of 6082 whose livelihood is depend on dominantly on agriculture, handicraft and small scale retailing trade. Orthodox Christianity is the predominant religion found in the kebele. Nevertheless, a few number of Islamic religion followers are also reside in the *kebele*.

The physiographic of Sebentera *kebele* varies from gently undulating plains to hills and mountains. The climate of this *kebele* dominantly befits with kola climatic conditions. Plants such as *Misana*, *Worka*, *Chechiho*, *Girar*, *Chibha*, *Shola*, *Dedeho*, *Enqoy*, *Wanza*, *Agam*, *Woirra*, *Kirkra*, *Atena*, and *Abetere*, are largely grown in this kebele. The *kebele*'s soil is also suitable for bean, sorghum, chick pea, maize, nigger seed, *teff*, linseed, millet, peas and sesame production.

4.1.1 Informants' Background

Fifty one informants participated in the study. Among these 31(60.78%) of them were males and 20 (39%) were females. The age distribution of the respondents ranges from 25 to 70 years with an average age of 35 years. Most of the respondents' age falls below 50 years. In terms of occupation, 38 (75%) of them were farmers and others were

government 4 (6.67%) employees, traders 4 (8.3 %) and casual laborers 5 (10%) (Source: field data, *Sebentera*, December, 2011).

With regard to educational status, 15 (29.4%) of the informants were illiterate, 20 (39.2%) of them have church education, 7 (13.7%) were elementary school completed, 5 (9.8%) were high school completed, and 2(3.9%) of them were diploma holders and 2 (3.9%) were degree holders. In terms of religious composition, 42 (83.3%) of the participants were orthodox Christians and the rest 9 (17.7%) were Muslims (Source: field data, *Sebentera*, December, 2011).

4.2 The Traits of Ideal Masculinity and Blood Revenge

The customs associated with blood revenge are ubiquitous across cultures. Because, to every culture, avenging a death is believe to serve certain functions. Such as to ward off the wrath of gods, to let the slain rest in peace, to deter further aggressions, and for the sake of prestige (Eisner, 2009; Herdt, 1985; Patton, 1901; Chagnon, 1988). In the study area, however, blood revenge is practiced for the sake of males' honor. Because there is a myth that males are begotten to defend themselves and their families from attacks or any humiliation by using any means even up to risking their lives. Thus, as in the Suri of Southern Ethiopia (Abbink, 1998, cited in Eisner, 2009, p.50), males honor plays a crucial role in sparking off blood revenge in *Sebentera kebele*.

Every society has its own standardized norms of masculinity. These norms are institutionalized and ossified with proverbs, sayings and myths that anchored in the society's long standing culture (Yeshi, 2000; Reminick 1971; Hussein 2005). These norms dictate what to mean an ideal man, how is an ideal man defined and the associated privileges for those who conform/befit to the standardized qualities of a "man" and impose sanctions on non conformists.

Likewise, the *Sebentera kebele* residents have their own mythical norms associated with ideal masculinity. These mythical norms outline the traits of ideal masculinity, the

qualities of a sissy boy, and the values and traits of femininity which can be perfectly fitted with the blue prints of manhood in the West (Connell, 2005).

In relation to the traits of ideal masculinity, in the focus group discussions held with the elders and women, it has been learnt that the local culture embraces aggressiveness, bravery, courage, forcefulness, vengeful tendency, rebellious, marksmanship and toughness as the defining traits of ideal masculinity. These traits are more or less visible in the whole Amharas' conception of ideal masculinity (Levin, 1966; Mazrui, 2009; Messing, 1957; Reminick, 1971). Through socialization, these traits begun to be instilled in boys' mind during their early childhood.

“Ethiopian fathers play the role of masculine gender socialization agent, encourage acts, teach skills, and develop interests in masculine gender appropriate roles, bravery, strength, power, successes, winning titles, etc” (Belay cited in Mulat, 2005, p. 11). This fact is also validated when one scrutinize the role of Sebentera *kebele* fathers in socializing their sons with masculine gender appropriate roles and behaviors such as hunting, fearlessness, competitiveness, and defending honor. The local female school teacher, during the interview, also explained the socialization of boys in the study area as follows:

Starting from ten years onwards, boys are trained to cock fire arms, to handle weapons and to hit targets on. Fathers erect a replica of man and order their sons to shoot on it. If they exactly shoot on the target, their fathers will hug them, but if they do not, their fathers will insult or yell at them (an interview with a female teacher, at Fendika, December, 3 2011).

The above socialization process also strongly conforms to what the Nigerian fathers do to their sons. According to Delaney, in *Ohafia, Nigeria*, a father provides his son with a bow and arrows around age seven or eight, the boy practices shooting at targets until he develops the skill to kill a small bird. When this task is accomplished, the boy ties the dead bird to the end of his bow and marches through his village singing that his peers

who have not yet killed their first bird are cowards. His father, then, dresses him in finery and takes him to visit, often for the first time, his maternal family. His new social role distinguishes him from the "cowards" and marks his entrance into manhood (Delaney, 1995, pp. 891-987, cited in Shaw & Lee, 2006).

In the focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews, the participants also forwarded many traits of ideal masculinity. Due to the objectives of the study; however, the ensuing discussion is delineated to focus on the linkage between ideal masculine traits and blood revenge practices. Thus, only those masculine traits that trigger off individuals to engage in revenge killings are discussed as follows.

A Sympathizer

In an individual interview held with *kebele* officials and women who were victims of blood revenge, they unanimously considered sympathy as one of the traits of masculinity. In the *kebele*, according to them, all agnates within the same patrilineal and matrilineal kin groups are expected to assist each other in life breaking points such as death, illness and including defending, attacking enemies and taking revenge against kin's killer.

This is especially done, according to the informants, owing to the fraternal affection and the obligations of close-kin in providing mutual support including revenge. Here, it seems consistent with the Arabs and Tausugs conception of fraternal affection and kin obligation as the agitator of blood revenge (Patton, 1901; Keifer, 1972). Therefore, as, Gnat argued, "any act or omission by one individual reflects on the group as a whole in the sense that the group is responsible for and must accept, the consequences of that any act of omission" (Gnat, 1997, p.2 cited in Keifer, 1972, p.49).

The male interviewees further said that any member of the descent group is anticipated to participate in the retaliatory action. This is especially common among closely related kin because in such a kin if a person refused to embark on taking revenge against his kin's killer, he will then be proscribed from being present at familial feasts, communal labor

activities and gain inheritance from the deceased person. The same fate also faces the Belloneses' males (Kuschel, 1993).

Besides, as in Bellonese society (Kuschel, 1993), in Sebentera, the members of the descent group begin to call a person who refuses to embark on revenge as a coward, a lazy and a worthless fellow. This public labeling is also mired to Tigrean, Arabian, Israeli, Bellonese, Orokaiva and Aboriginal Siberian males (Shimelis & Taddese, 2008; Paton, 1901; Kuschel, 1993; Williams, 1969; and Czaplicka, 1969). Every member of the male descent group considers himself as exclusively responsible for avenging his kin's blood. In an individual interview, one of the slain's family said "No one sleeps in peace unless he avenges his kin's' killer." And he said, "No one let the slayer to lead his normal life while the slain battles with warms."

In the course of an interview, one of the informants told the researcher that a fifteen years old boy has been wounded recently while attempting to avenge his brother's killer. According to him, since the local tradition demands males, in any case, to absolve any shame done to their relatives, even youngsters show a tendency to avenge their kin's killer. Such occasions mostly occurred in a family where the bulk of the slain's kin members are females.

One of the local elders, during the interview, also remarked that no one refrains from revenge killing unless all members of the descent group are females. In this regard, the residents' of Sebentera *kebele* are similar to the people of Bellona Island (Kuschel, 1993). They said that males are begotten to guard from attacking enemies and to protect the agnate's reputation. As a result, only animal's killer is left unavenged. Some of the informants, however, criticized that most of the revenge killings are targeted at the slayer's family than the slayer himself. They further challenge that how someone could satisfy his rage by killing innocent members of the slayer's kin group?



Banditry

As many scholars agree, there is no constant and universal essence of masculinity (Connell, 2005; Sai 2007; Coles, 2009). For instance, in Brazil, courageousness, heterosexuality and competitiveness are considered as traits of ideal masculinity (Merdrade...etal, 2000). But the Mehinaku people consider those men who have many lovers, active competitor in games and generous as ideals (Deaux, 1999). The notions of ideal masculinity, therefore, are relativistic.

However, contrary to the above notions of masculinity, in Sebentera *Kebele*, banditry is taken as one of the traits of ideal masculinity. They believed that within the notions of banditry, courage, aggression, rebel and other traits of masculinity are sheltered.

Participants of the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews in the study area have pointed out that those bandits are praised by the society as braves and overall as ideal men. Most of the local bandits are murderers. They are feared by the residents. Thus, their families are highly cherished by the society and, therefore, no one dares to inflict damages on them.

These bandits are also known for their skill of marksmanship. Alike Sambian society (Herdt, 1987), such sharp shooting and the skill of marksmanship are highly valued in the study area. In the informal interview with the local adults, they also asserted that being a bandit is a prototype of an unparalleled masculinity- it is a means of asserting one's superiority over others. In the focus group discussion, however, one of the local elders strongly disagrees with the above informants. He said, "How could a bunch of murderers be praised for their mis-deeds? Paradoxically today bandits are more honorable than championed farmers. I know [bitterly regrets about the situation] the notions of ideal masculinity are changing over time."

In a similar spirit, the local elders, in the focus group discussion, said that non-killers are not considered as bandits. To be a bandit, one must avenge his kin's slayer or kill someone else, protest against the local administration, and search for shelters in dense

forests. In the same way, in an individual interview, experts from Dabat *woreda* security office also stated that most of the murderers join the bandit's life due to blood revenge. It is a strong hold for killers, thieves and rogues. They further maintained that since bandits are considered as braves and determined to cost their life for their personal honor, the local people acclaim them rather than denounce them.

One of the male interviewees also told the researcher a story: before five or six years, there was a war veteran named Gebre. He had been living in Dabat town. But life in town was not easy for him. The policemen had been abusing him and even the local people attested his manliness. To absolve the humiliations and abuses he had experienced, by robbing the local merchants, he bought a gun and killed some persons who had previously done him something embarrassing. To your surprise, he said, before a year he had killed three policemen who went to the forest to arrest him. As a result, currently, he is the top wanted bandit in the *woreda*.

The government deployed a special snatching squad, locally known as "*Buchille*," to get rid of him. Unfortunately, the force, after losing a member, backed to the barracks. Now he is a man well respected and feared by the nearby people at all levels. By the way the bandit lives in forests enroute to Sebentera where the researcher has passed through.

In addition, he said, the local youths admire him a lot and even when something inconvenient happened to them they threatened to join Gebre. The researcher has also, through an informal interview, understood that the local youths are fans of him and are looking forward to be a bandit.

In an individual interview with men, one of the interviewees who had previously been a bandit also told the researcher that he had killed lots of people due to blood revenge and for other reasons. Not only in the past, even today, he said, bandits are believed to be possessed with the spirit of courage, fearlessness, and aggressiveness and warrior virtues. These traits are also treated as ideal masculine traits in Shavante, Amhara region, Brazil, and United States (Maybury-Lewis, 1971 cited in Overing 1989, p.84; Medrade... et.al,

2000; Reminick, 1971, Levine 2000 and 1966; Brannon, 1976, cited in Anselmi & Law, 1999, p.161).

Banditry promotes blood revenge at least in two ways; the local elders have explained during the focus group discussion. First, to be a bandit the local adults have to kill a person or the slayer of their family. Second, it safeguarded murderers from public prosecution. Consequently, it encourages every man to commit whatever he wants and then join the bandits. Thus, banditry prompts blood revenge, directly or indirectly, to take place.

Courage

Courage is another masculine trait that has links with blood revenge practices. According to the local people, as in the Amhara and other African societies, in Sebentera, courageousness is one of the ingredients of an ideal man (Hussein, 2005; Levine, 2006).

The Orokaivas men display courage through slaying enemies, (Williams, 1969). Among the Aboriginal Mehinaku, Brazil, men display courage by engaging in fishing expeditions over dangerous train (Deaux, 1999). Moreover, the Amhara men show their courage through never backing down when threatened and by participating in whipping contests (Levine, 1966; Reminick, 1982; Strecker, 1988). In Shavante, boys show courage by enduring sufferings and displaying physical prowess (Maybury-Lewis, 1971, cited in Overing, 1989, p.84). On contrary, to be considered as courageous, in Sebentera *kebele* a man has to prove his courage through beating or killing of his opponents. He has to dream how to avenge his kin's slayer not the dire consequences that followed.

The above view was further explained by one of the local priest interviewees. According to this priest, courageous behavior is displayed through grabbing weapons bare handedly or battering armed people. Recently, he added, a person went to an armed person's home and attempted to snatch his weapon. He defended himself with all the available means. But the offender was not in a position to stop it. As a result, the armed man killed him. Now, the slain's kin are threatening to take revenge on the slayer and his family.

Moreover, during the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, the local male and female adults stated that a courageous man has to avenge his kin's blood. No matter what the opponents' strength and bravery are, an individual is expected to dishonor him at any cost. For them, courage is valued more than physical strength. One of the adults better explained it in the following way:

Courage is symbolized as bile. As small droplets of bile sour the entire dulet (a traditional food made from mixing goats or sheep's tripe and liver with a small droplet of bile) courage enables a weak man to defeat a gigantic man. Thus, one's physical strength does not determine his courage (Source: Mr. m1, December, 5, 2011).

Holding a Grudge/Avenging Kin's Blood

The local people believed that forgetting a grudge is unmanliness. A man who neglects to hold revenge is publicly criticized and exposed to mockery. An elder informant said that "a man dies when he forgets his grudge." The local school teacher also told the researcher that the people tell their sons at their early ages about some humiliating events done by their opponents. It may be killings, annexation of farm lands, theft, etc. They reminded them to avenge the injustice done against their kin when they grow up. To this end, days and nights, especially fathers advise their sons as "when you grow up, you have to take revenge and restore the lost honor of your family. If you neglect it, I will curse you and your descendents then." This view is consistent with what the Bellonese fathers told to their baby boys (Kuschel, 1993). Due to such type of constant indoctrination, a murder that had been committed eighty years ago was avenged by a grandson a year ago.

During the discussion, however, some elders and priests maintained that a few fathers advise their sons to stop holding grudges. But due to veiled criticisms and public pressures, most sons hardly forget grudges. According to the local militiamen, as in Ballonese (Kuschel, 1993), mostly grudges trigger blood revenge. Moreover, neighbors and the nearby society put pressure on the slain's male relative to embark upon revenge

by saying that no man has not to let the killer live in peace as his relative is not an animal's corpse left for vultures. Like the Albanians, in Sebentera *kebele*, "The price of human lives is alike for everyone and has to be taken as a kind of equal treatment principle" (Vodo, 2010, p.19).

An Attitude of Superiority and competency

Every man in the *kebele* detests disrespect. In an individual interview with the local men, a person said that no one is subjected for mockery, or degrades unless belittled by someone else. As a result, similar to the Mediterranean countries (Pitt-Rivers cited in McKnight, 1986), they would pay any sacrifice required for maintaining personal honor. Like Albanians (Keifer, 1972), therefore, in Sebentera the cost may extend to even killing any rival.

Moreover, a female interviewee has stated that according to the local tradition any man's masculinity should remain uncontested. Otherwise, something worse would follow. Another male interviewee also said that in the 1990s E.C weapon inspection had been carried out by the government security forces. The investigation processes were involved severe beatings and imprisonment. After several years, suddenly, one day among the alleged offenders subjected for such torture one was mocked by someone as "you cried like an immature boy. But now you utter battle cries like a brave". The insulted man was angry at the slander because his friends laughed at him. Thus, he boiled in rage and killed that man. Nevertheless, this unanticipated death was avenged immediately. This reminds that even unintentional slip of tongue, if not usual, brings an incalculable human loss.

Some of the male focus group participants also noted that a person instigates to kill a person when he feels that someone has done unfavorable things on him. As in the Chilas people (Azam, 2000), in this *kebele*, even an insult may lead to killing. In addition to this, they said, the local people reason out that what a person killed is not an animal. It is a human being like him. So how a person could let his kin's blood unavenged? He should show his competitiveness through doing similar things to his

opponents. This helps to bring back a lost balance in honor and power (Kuschel, 1993; Murdock, 1957).

In addition, some sections of the local men consider themselves as superior. If a person is killed from their kin group, they will avenge it with more than three souls. Sometimes, these people will respond to minor disputes with killing. Surprisingly, a key informant has confided to the researcher, if an animal is hurt by someone, these people will not be restrained from avenging the person who inflicts harm on their domestic animals. Thus, alike Arabs (Patton, 1901), in the study area, a competition for superiority motivates the local people to engage in avenging their kin's blood and looking down on other descent groups. This brings in further killing from both groups.

A Persecutor of Enemies

The local adult males are expected to defend their family members from any attack. In an interview, a person who lost his cousin due to blood revenge argued that males are the protectors of their families' wellbeing. They are expected to defend their family from danger and thus suddenly if something appalling happen to one of the family members; he has to scarify a price. Thus, as in other parts of Ethiopia, in this kebeles, males are socialized to be the defenders of their families' honor and successful in every activity that they are assigned to (Eshetu, 1997 E.C).

For instance, one of the key informants has confided to the researcher that his uncle went to Dessie in order to avenge his brother's death. Because the slayer was there to protect him from the slain's family attack. According to him, no one lives in peace unless he avenges his kin's blood irrespectively of the place where the slayer lives. They hurry to avenge the blood not out of the belief that it may appease gods or to give spiritual peace for the slain as to the Arabs, the Aboriginal Siberians and the Witotos of North West Amazonians reason out, respectively (Patton, 1901; Czaplicka, 1969; Murdock, 1957), but out of retribution for the wrongs that the enemy had done to them.

In the focus group discussion, a woman participant stated that an ideal man is a man who determines to chase his enemies up to the end of the world, no matter what it costs him, no matter what damage it inflicts on him. He is a man of action; nothing satisfies him more than destroying his opponents. This view is consistent with Azam's study on the Chilas people that ideals of masculinity demand the relatives of the murdered not to go to the police but to take revenge by themselves. But since it is the duty of the police to investigate a murder case, the victim's relatives do not co-operate with the police and instead take revenge directly (Azam, 2000). Similarly, in Albania imprisonment of a male from a family seeking revenge is unlikely to act as a deterrent to other males from taking revenge to 'cleanse' their family's honour (IRB, 2011). This view is also shared by Dabat *woreda's* judge. He said that in a place where the acceptance of the legal machineries is low and disputable, individuals appoint themselves in persecuting criminals. This duty is mostly given to males.

"*Asado geday*" (literary, a person who hunt to murder) is a title given for such personalities. This man made every effort to kill his enemy irrespectively of how far the enemy lives and the time it takes to accomplish the task. Thus, similar to the Bellonese as Kuschel (1993, p.124) expressed "persons or kin groups who do not defend their honor would be socially dead."

Holding a Gun

Holding a gun is one of the attributes of masculinity in the study area. Hence, it is not uncommon to a visitor to see a 15 years old boy carrying a gun on his shoulder and firing a bullet during public holidays. This behavior is also seen among the Massai men who carry a heavy stick, swords, and spears and they are inclined to use them readily (Gulliver, 1968).

In the study area, beginning from early childhood, fathers train their sons on how to cock, shoot, and generally they train them on the operation of fire-arms. To this end, they take them to dense forests for training and hunting of wild beasts. For the purpose of effective acquisition of handling fire-arms, a series of trainings will be provided for them up to 16 or 18 years (Source: FGD conducted on December, 2011).

Since holding or having a gun is one of the means of defending or gaining respect, every male inhabitant of the *kebele* rushes to have it in any way. To own a rifle, it will cost them up to selling their oxen, or use the blood payment for buying firearms. Now a day it is barely difficult to get a person without a weapon. Alike the Chilas people (Azam, 2000), in Sebentera, the copious accumulation of modern fire arms caused more murders which automatically led in to more blood feuds, since more killings were possible. In the absence of these weapons, disputes might have ended in a quarrel rather than with a murder.

In the contrary, women are not allowed to have or hold a gun. The reason is that they are cruel, irrational and against their nature. Nevertheless, one of the elders in the individual interview told the researcher that this custom served as a stumbling block in defending women in times of conflict and to protect their property from thieves in the absence of their husbands.

A Sole Decision Maker

In the study area males are the decision makers in every household affairs and thus women have hardly ever a say in the decision making process. And partly due the strongly held belief about the women's lack of farsightedness, males have the uncontested authority in passing any decision within their household domain. With regard to blood revenge, according to female focus group participants, most of the time males hardly ever inform their wives or their female relatives on whether to take revenge or not, when to execute the killing, whom to kill, and how to cope with the risks that followed. As a result when a murder is committed, women become victims of the out come of blood revenge practices.

As men are the sole decision makers in every household affair, similarly they take revenge or any killing without the involvement of women. Accordingly, the local female teacher said that men hardly engage in any killing, if women have equal says in every household affair. As much as possible, by using their co-decision making power in the household; they would stop them from doing it. However, the myths associated to maleness such as rationality, farsightedness, analytic mind, risk taking, etc, prevented

women from contributing their part in the kin group or household decision making processes including in the planning and execution of revenge killings.

A Risk Taker

Among the African societies, in Philippines and the western world, one of the traits of masculinity is risk taking (Hussein, 2005; Pingol, 2001 cited in Coles 2009; Connell, 2005). So, is in Sebentera *kebele*, one of the cultural ideal of masculinity is the willingness to take risks. As a result, they prefer to bear the risks than dying in humiliation and dishonor. Thus, if something bad is done to them or their family by anybody, they swear to take retaliatory actions as soon as possible. In relation to blood revenge, without fearing the associated risks, the local men have the guts to engage in counter-vengeance.

In an informal talk with a victim's male relative, it has learnt that the public pressure and the fraternal affection they had, caused him to frequently remorse about his kin's death. He has expressed his regret in the following way: *Nobody stops me from avenging my brother's blood. Otherwise his bone will curse me. We had passed enjoyable times together. We love each other. When these memorable joys put off for ever, I have to do something irrespective of the risks.*

Thus, from the above dialogue excerpt, it can be understood that the tendencies of the local adult men to face any danger at the expense of avenging their close kin's death. Here, according to a male interviewee, risk taking is exclusively an attribute of manliness. Women are, however, hesitant, tolerant and negligent to engage in risk taking events. That is why, they said, they have never heard of female bandits and avengers in their locality.

4.2.1 Blood Revenge Practices in Sebentera Kebele

In interviews held with Dabat *woreda* crime investigation office and Dabat *woreda* security fringes officials, the *kebele* is notorious for staging revenge killings. Surprisingly, unlike other kebeles within Dabat *woreda*, in this *kebele* the magnitude of

to take retaliatory actions bring more killings to them. But bear in mind that in the former case, any killing will not remain unavenged, it waits for suitable time instead.

Similar to other societies such as the Oromos of Arsi, Waliso, Bellonese and Chilas (Azam, 2000; Dejene, 2002; Kuschel, 1993; Yihune, 2010), in Sebentera *kebele* women, children, and aged people are exempted from revenge killings. But in Sebentera *kebele*, this rule works as long as the enemy is refrained from killing them. If he killed them, their relatives avenged him as he did to them. So did the Arabs (Patton, 1901).

These rules also addressed the questions of liability and co-responsibility. "Blood revenge in many societies entails elaborate rules that specify who is obligated to avenge a death and, sometimes the range of kinsmen (brother, cousin, and so forth) of the killer that is an appropriate target for retaliation" (Chagnon, 1988, p. 992). Thus, the rules dictate whom to kill and whom to spare. In Sebentera, any killing is avenged by killing the murderer's father, brother, nephew, cousin, uncle and it has also the tendency to extend up to seven generations down, sometimes up to twelve generations. This is also the case in the Bellonese people but contrary to the Arabs to whom revenge extends up to five generations (Kuschel, 1993; Patton, 1901). In all cases, the descendents are assumed to be exclusively males.

The Arsi women are not targets of blood revenge due to the belief that killing them means stopping reproduction and it is also taken as against nature (Yihune, 2010). However, in Sbentera *kebele* any person who killed a woman is overtly criticized and exposed for ridicule. Besides, he is indebted to pay two fold of a blood wealth than for a man. This is contrary to the blood money payments made for women in Afar and Somali societies, which dictate half of the payment paid for men (Alula & Getachew, 2008, p.22). Therefore, killing a woman worthies nothing to the avenger. Due to these reasons, most of the time women are not targets of killing including revenge killing.

Akin to the Bellonese, Massai, and Aboriginal Siberians (Kuschel, 1993; Williams, 1969; Gulliver, 1968; Czaplicka, 1969), in Sebentera *kebele* the closest kin of the injured party

is supposed to take revenge on the slayers' fathers, brothers, cousins, nephews and uncles both from the patrikins and matrikins. Other distant relative are mostly refrained from plotting and participating in killings and thus spared from counter vengeance.

4.2.3 Homicide Crimes

Homicide crimes are common in Dabat *woreda*. According to the information obtained from the *woreda*'s police stations crime investigation office's unpublished document, in 2001 and in 2002 E.C, 10 and 20 homicidal crimes were committed in the *woreda*, respectively. In this year, the report says, in the first quarter of 2003 E.C, 4 homicide crimes have been committed.

In an individual interview with Dabat *woreda* officials, an expert on crime investigation affirmed that most of the homicide crimes were committed due to blood revenge and related reasons such as disputes on farmland boundary, theft, etc. He further said that these homicide crimes are mostly discernible in low-land areas such as Sebentera *kebele* where crimes related to physical injuries are common to the highland areas of Dabat *woreda*.

4.2.4 Ostensible Reasons for Blood Revenge

Though the underlying causes of blood revenge are mostly anchored in the social construction of masculinity, in the focus group discussions held with elders and militiamen, it has been found out that ostensible motives also appeared to be immediate causes for the eruption of recurrent killings in the study area.

In the focus group discussions and interviews, elders, priests, women and men unanimously indicated that usurpation of property, annexation of farm lands, serious insults, gambling, excessive alcohol consumption, harming one's relative, having an extra marital affair with one's wife and disputes over farm land boundary are the major causes for initiating conflicts and then killings. These ostensible reasons also kindle deadly conflicts in Arsi Oromos, Bellonese, Amharas, Shinasha, Chilas and Weliso Oromos (Yihune, 2001; Kuschel, 1993; Levine, 1966; Bayisa & Lemessa, 2008; Azam,

2000; Dejene, 2002). Such types of ostensible causes are mostly common in local beverage shops. During the field work, the researcher has observed many local bars that provide *Tella*, *Tejji*, and *Areki* to the residents. Besides, as part of the local male culture, most of the customers hold guns. This facilitates to end any minor quarrel in killing each other.

The researcher has also observed that drinking and gambling is also a regular entertainment in the local bars, especially card games. In these local entertainments, noisy disagreements are always ignited between the losers and winners of the game. Consequently, these disputes have the chance to develop into physical fighting and if not stopped, at physical fighting, it would explode into the exchange of fire.

4.2.5 Customary Mechanisms of Conflict Resolution

Conflict is an inherent nature of human beings (Ritzer, 2003, p.254). Making use of their customs, however human beings are able to settle conflicts and restore the strained peaceful coexistence in the aftermath. In various African and especially among Ethiopian societies, plenty of customary conflict resolution mechanisms are instituted to curb any disputes (Alula & Getachew, 2008; Nwanunobi, 1992).

In the same way, in the study area, the people have various customary mechanisms of conflict resolution. One of the customary mechanisms of conflict resolution associated with blood revenge is *Dem Adraki Komite*. This committee has been set up in collaboration with the government and the local people. The members of the committee are the local elders and some influential figures of the *kebele* such as elders, the local wealthy men, priests, militiamen, etc. The mandates of this committee are settling conflicts between the slain's and the slayer's relatives, passing binding decisions on the amount of money to be paid to the slain's family and overseeing any signs of further conflicts.

Moreover, similar to Oromos, Tigreans and other Amharas (Wubshet & Melaku, 2008; Giday, 2000; Yihune, 2010), there is also another traditional institution primarily

established to settle any dispute within the kebele- *Yager Shemaglewoch* (council of elders). The members of this assembly are the local male elders who are believed to be well experienced and knowledgeable in handling any conflict in the *kebele*.

As the researcher has observed during the field work, unlike the blood-drying committee, the council of elders is elected to mediate any conflict based on the consent of both disputant parties. Thus, before attempting to settle a conflict, one of the neutral conciliatory persons asks both parties to submit their favorable elders' name. And then he asks both parties: "Are you happy with these elders?" If both of them assent, they would say "we agree". But if one of the parties is not happy with the nomination of conciliatory elders another election will be held immediately (Source: observation at Fendika, Dec.5, 2011).

In addition to these, as in other part of Amhara region (Wubshet & Melaku, 2008), in the *kebele*, conflict is also resolved through the intervention of the two parties' respective confessors. These are Orthodox Christian priests to whom sins are confessed. They are effective in handling personal conflicts related to homicide, theft, and related crimes. The priests have the inalienable rights to condemn and to lift their fatherhood from the dissident party. Due to fear of those sanctions, therefore, the two parties swear before their confessors not to engage in any conflict up on which they agree.

The last customary or religious mechanism of conflict resolutions is patting the cross while verbally swearing not to avenge before priests. This usually takes place in churches where priests and the disputants' relatives are presented to witness the reconciliation processes. It is chaired by elder priests or arch priests. This is especially preferable in deterring further revenge killings. Because no one attempts to violate the accords due to fear of retribution from the divine power – they believed that the cross is the seat of the divine power.

Nevertheless, due to several reasons, currently these customary mechanisms of conflict resolutions are less strong in handling conflict in the study area. That is why nowadays,

by ignoring the sanctions of these religious institutions, lots of fierce conflicts and killings are now destabilizing the *kebele*. Though the aim of the study was not tracing the reasons behind the diminishing roles of the customary dispute resolutions, the researcher has invited interested researchers to carry out further studies on the diminishing roles of these institutions.

4.3 Causes that Perpetuate and Maintain Blood Revenge

In order to understand the dynamics of blood revenge practices, one has to carefully look at the cultural systems of the study people which are believed to be responsible for the perpetuation and maintenance of these practices. As culture often rationalizes what is thought to be morally wrong or good to the practitioners, blood revenge practices are not exceptional in veiling under the umbrella of such principles. Based upon this principle, in the study area there are lots of traditions and institutions responsible for the continuation of blood revenge practices. Some of these are discussed below.

The Patriarchal Ideology and Its Institutions

There are lots of systems of ideas and principles on which the patriarchal ideology is firmly based. These systems of ideas and principles espouse a given culture's concepts of masculinity and its qualities. In the study area, these qualities are warrior virtues (i.e. conquest, bravery, physical prowess, defending one's honor, confidence, etc), a breadwinner for a family, a household decision maker, rational, and others are mentioned by the study participants as "the persona of an ideal manhood."

As a dominant and leading ideology in the study area, it deals with how to maintain the patriarchal values and how to convey them to the next generation without any alteration, if possible. These values, directly or indirectly, promote competition for domination, hatred of submission, crushing opponents at any cost, defending both personal and family honors, the supremacy of masculinity over femininity, etc.

The abovementioned values are systematically ingrained in the local intuitions such as marriage, familial, economic, political and religious institutions. For instance, a

courageous man is preferred over a “coward man” for marital alliances. And also due to one’s previous heroic deeds and other manly behaviors, a person holds a public office. This portrays that the local institutions in some way are responsible for the maintenance and sustenance of patriarchal values, particularly ideal masculine traits. Thus, by cementing the traits of ideal masculinity, these institutions partly play a role in orchestrating blood revenge in the study area.

Similar to the Belloneses’ males (Kuschel, 1993), in Sebentera, the focus group discussants indicated that a man who refused to avenge an earlier homicide done to his close relative will be exposed to mockery and veiled criticisms. Especially, according to them, such types of criticisms are notable in wedding and memorial feasts where lots of people are usually present to attend.

On contrary to the above, a man who has successfully avenged his relative’s blood got lots of privileges from the society. No one dares to humiliate him. Also, in wedding and other public observances, he gets the upper hand in gaining respect and praises. Besides, he and his relatives are preferred for marital relations and other social alliances. Similar to male avengers in Southern Ethiopia (Alula & Getachew, 2008), in times of death, his mourning ceremony is colorfully celebrated through praises, battle cries and other occasions designed to honor his heroic deeds.

In the economic sphere, the elder interviewees also disclosed during the interview that the above types of men’s requests are hardly turned down when they ask the local men to help them in the trampling of farms, in the construction of houses, in harvesting crops, etc. As usual, they are feared and respected by the local people, thus establishing convivial relationships with them helps to obtain respect and to curb aggressions from other individuals.

Thus, as they are broadly mainstreamed in the local political, religious, familial and economic institutions coupled with the patriarchal ideology, the system where the society’s existence is based, no one easily deviates from the unyielding masculine norms.

Gender Role Expectations

Gender role expectations draw a line on men's and women's roles. These roles are appropriated based on the societal beliefs, expectations and attitudes towards a man and a woman. These expectations are envisaged through sanctions and rewards; conformity is highly encouraged, whereas deviation is severely criticized.

In the study area, women are expected to do household works, take care of infants, and be submissive to their husbands. And men are expected to do outdoor works, defending family members from enemy attack, humiliation and any incidents. Thus, if something humiliating is done to their family members, the male members are expected to take retaliatory actions against the offender or his family members. In a similar talk, if one of the family members is killed, they are anticipated to avenge their relative's death.

Letting a killing unavenged is not a manly behavior. Consequently, if a man refuses to avenge his kin's killer, women will question his manliness through different ways. For instance, his sisters, his wife, or one of his female relatives may offer him a spindle to spin. This is a symbol for his cowardice or feminine manner. Sometimes they may also request him to put on a dress. This means "you are a female and no one expects you to avenge your relative's blood. You are no longer a man; thus put on a dress like us."

Furthermore, they would also scatter the deceased man's clothes all over the compound. When their male relatives asked them why are they doing this? They respond "could you inform me a man to rectify the mess?" Metaphorically, they request them to avenge their deceased relative's blood.

In an individual interview a slayer's male relative told the researcher that in extreme case, wives disallow their husbands' to sleep with them unless they avenged their relative's blood. And symbolically it also means that "you are a female. So, how can a female sleep with a female. It is unnatural." The slain's female relatives also pressure their husbands and other male relatives to embark up on revenge day and night resentfully nagging or crying and by displaying a negligent attitude towards caring for their beauty.

Illegal Weapon Smuggling

Among the Chilas people in Afghanistan, illegal weapon smuggling exacerbates the intensity of revenge killings (Azam, 2000). Likewise, due to the *kebele*'s proximity to neighboring countries such as Sudan and Eritrea, through illegal smugglers the local people have access to fire arms. They use it during night times and when they need to attack their enemies. The researcher has observed that compared to other neighboring areas, here lots of people, legally or illegally hold guns. Due to this reason, in the *kebele* minor disagreements have the chance to develop in to killing each other. Since any killing requires a reciprocal killing, in the study area this accelerates revenge killings.

The Study Areas' Proximity to the Patriots' Front

A local resistance force named it self Arbegnoch Gimbar (literary "Patriots' Front") is stationed around the study area. As compared to other *kebeles* of Dabat *woreda*, therefore, the *kebele* is closer to the place where the local resistance force is present. This facilitates the offenders to escape the sanctions of legal prosecutions and join the force. Thus, the local people are triggered off to engage in any killing out of the conviction that they are no longer obliged to pass their lives in prison cells.

The Weakening of Customary dispute resolution mechanisms

Coupled with the aforementioned reasons, the weakening of the customary conflict resolution mechanisms also makes the *kebele* highly prone to blood revenge. In the study area, the council of elders responsible for settling any conflict including blood revenge. But due to the constant intervention from government officials in the elders' overall activities, lack of proper support from the local officials, people's preference to formal courts, and nepotism scandals, their ability to handle conflicts is diminishing from time to time. This exacerbates further conflicts, especially, blood revenge.

For instance, one of the elders described the current situations of the council of elders in the *kebele* as "flock of birds chattering on a large oak tree." Meaning, the role of the council of elders is now reduced to passing impractical decisions rather than enforcing them effectively.

The integration of blood revenge practices into the local culture

Similar to the Arabs and the Albanians (Patton, 1901; Keifer, 1972), in the focus discussion held with both the elders and the militia men, it is realized that blood revenge is one of the underpinning of the local culture so that no one able to change, alter, or stop it. Thus, unless something concrete has not taken to discourage the existing traditions associated with blood revenge, it continues to claim many lives and pose persistent challenges on the local people. Especially blood revenge since it is knotted with traits of masculinity. Any attempt to dismantle this “harmful” practice, therefore, has to take these traits into account.

4.4 Blood Revenge and Women

According to key informants, every inhabitants of the *kebele* willingly or unwillingly is involved in blood revenge. So these days it is becoming one of the challenges threatening the existence of Sebentera *kebele* residents. Strictly speaking, due to blood revenge, the socio-economic bases of the residents are being unprecedentedly eroded from time to time. This in turn is bringing about serious psychological, economic, social, and political impact on the local people. Particularly, women are nowadays scourged by these awful problems than men due to the age old beliefs, norms and expectations associated with gender.

Blood revenge practices are punishing innocent women than the men culprits. As the local elder said, during the individual interview, “women do not embark up on revenge killing. But the mere fact of uninvolved in killing does not let them free to bear the post revenge killing hazards.” Therefore, irrespectively of their degree of involvement, women equally suffer from the aftermath consequences. This unbalanced reciprocity more destabilizes them than men due to gender-based inequalities.

4.4.1 The Role of Women in Blood Revenge Practices

In focus discussions held with both women and the local elders, it has been found out that the roles of women in blood revenge practices can be categorized into two. Their first role can be seen in instigating men to embark on revenge and the second is the roles they assume after the revenge killing had taken place.

Even though men are the main actors in the execution and continuity of blood revenge practices, the contribution of women is not negligible. “The role of female grievers, in Yanomami; warfare is an important factor in perpetuating revenge killing” (Little field & Rushton, 1986 cited in Chagnon, 1988, p. 992). Similarly, in Sebentera, when a killing remains unavenged, it is a woman who is notorious longing for counter-vengeance. Besides, women are also ravenously known for ravaging the slayer’s belongings. The researcher has also observed while a group of victim’s female relatives were deliberately letting their cattle on the slayer’s farm to destroy it.

Apart from sparking off blood revenge, women’s role is more visible in the post killing period. Such as taking care of infants and elders, hiding precious and valuable materials from the enemies’ attention, informing their close relatives to defend themselves from the potential slain’s family retaliatory attack, and if time and condition permit, they will reconnaissance over the day to day activities of the enemy through gathering verifiable information from the market or the close neighbors. These roles are also consistent with the Arsi Oromos and the Aboriginal Siberians women’s roles in blood revenge practices (Yihune, 2010; Czaplicka, 1969).

4.5 The Impact of Blood Revenge Practices on Women

Blood revenge brings a disastrous impact on women’s lives. Due to this, they experience so many social, economic, and psychological problems as members of the society and also as women. Though the problem affects both women and men indistinguishably, it inflicts more damage on women.

For the detail understanding of the impact of blood revenge practices on women, it has discussed as follows.

4.5.1 Economic Impacts

Poverty

Poverty is one of the strenuous economic problems caused by blood revenge practices. In the focus group discussion held with the local women, the participants state that due to blood revenge they are obliged to spend their cash and fixed assets on blood compensation payments, *Badima* payment, and on the reconciliation processes. And now, they are incapable of meeting their basic needs.

Aside from this, another focus group participant also unveiled that due to the constant intimidations from the victim's group, they are not able to harvest their crops in time. So that the ripen crops are dropping and are also damaged by wild and domestic animals. The researcher, with the help of his acquaints living there, also has got the chance to observe the slayer's sorghum farm has been damaged by the slain's family's cattle.

Moreover, in an individual interview with women, a slayer's female relative also said that their cattle are confiscated and butchered and their houses are burnt down by the slain's family. In areas where blood revenge is practiced like in the Arsi, Afghanistan, and Orokaiva (Yihune, 2010; Azam, 2000; Czaplicka, 1969), families getting involved in blood revenge lose their jobs or their businesses get destroyed. In the *kebele* also, the female interviewee further said, since the male members leave their home early, the slayer's female relatives are not able to defend their cattle from the slain's relatives. Currently, she said, she and her family are without adequate number of oxen required for ploughing.

The local militia man has also pointed out that sometimes the slain's family steal any possessions owned by the killer and his kin group. This occurs, especially when the men are not around home. Nevertheless, a woman maintains that this problem is severe for those women who lost their husbands due to blood revenge. Because, she argued, they would not maintain as such strong social ties with their husband's relatives as it has previously been. On top of that, even their relatives will be unenthusiastic to provide the

indispensable protection and care for their property. Therefore, their property will be easily exposed for theft.

Furthermore, unless the conflict is concluded in agreement, all members of the slayer's descent group will not be allowed to take part in agricultural activities. During this time, only women have the right to partake in the tedious agricultural works. Since the farm lands are so big and far away from home, only women's labor will not produce the required amount of harvest. Thus, the household will suffer from food shortage and other socio-economic problems.

During the focus group discussion, the local elders also emphasized that due to gender-based division of labor, a widow of blood revenge is not able to plough farm lands. Therefore, she has to hire a male laborer to do the ploughing activities. In return, she has to pay an extra amount of money from her asset. The local school female teacher has shared this view. She said most widows plough their farm land through hired labor. Thus, more than a quarter of their produce goes to cover the cost of the hired-labor. In the mean time, nothing left in their hands. Consequently, they become easily vulnerable for abject poverty. This is consistent with Tizita's (2001) argument that the feminization of agriculture is often accompanied by increased poverty and sometimes malnutrition in rural areas.

Besides, like the Oromos of Arsi (Yihune, 2010), in Sebentera, the slain's relatives have the implicit customary right to impound the killer's and his family's property. As a result, following any killing, the slain's family often hurry to plunder and demolish the slayer's and his kin's property. The researcher has also observed a house ruined by the slain's relatives and he also has learnt from one of the interviewees that a slayer's kin's corrugated iron roof has been transferred to the slain's family house construction.

In Ethiopia, "ploughing is about the only activity women usually do not undertake, but they will take on even this task when there is no male assistance available" (Dicks &

Eddle, 1995:95). Nevertheless, in the study area, at any circumstances, women are not allowed to take on a male activity, i.e. ploughing.

In an interview, a woman told the researcher that after killing their enemy, all men of the kin group leave the area and hide somewhere else fearing of a reciprocal killing. But women with their children remain in their home. In Ethiopia (Tizita, 2001), as most of the time a cash money, either earned by women or men, is handle by men. Thus, when a killing is abrupt, women become vulnerable for instantaneuous problems such as homelessness, inability to cover miscellaneous expenses, food shortage and other related problems.

Dependency

This is another economic impact of blood revenge practices on women. According to female key informants, among women after losing their husband to blood revenge, they go to their relatives for better care and support. Because, as a patrilocal marital residence, women have no any consanguine kin around them who can help them in time of need. As in the Massai of Northern Tanganyika(Gulliver, 1968), in the *kebele* the affinal relationships terminate or sour due to the loss of her husband, a woman prefers to live with her relatives for a better support. This is especially common among infertile women and those who did not give birth.

The killer's wife too, she has to ask for the local people for harvesting and ploughing of her farm lands. Especially if she is a penniless, she has nothing to pay for a labor. So her livelihood more or less depends on the local people's openhandedness. She further said since some crops may have a short optimum period for planting, to fail to plant a particular crop within the favorable sowing season, inability to obtain a labor on equal sharing basis, through hiring labor for cash or request bring a disastrous impact on the size of the harvest. During the focus group discussion, one of the revenge widows acrimoniously expressed her feeling as follow:

When the ploughing and harvesting seasons come, I have to knock everyone's door repeatedly. Otherwise, I will die in poverty. Debbo is not

helpful for a widow, because it seeks reciprocity. As the custom dictates women are not allowed to participate in Debbo other than providing food and drinks for the Debbo participants, I cannot benefit from it (Source: A focus group participant, Fendika, December, 23, 2011).

The killer's wife or his family is obliged plead others because the male members will not be around the area or they will not go for work in order to guard themselves from the slain's kin assault.

In an interview with the *kebele*'s women's affairs chair women and other members, when the economic problem becomes awful, they said, the women go back to their parents home (some of them are with their children) and begin to lead their previous (pre-marital) lives.

From the discussions and interviews held with men and the local elders, blood revenge makes women also dependent upon their relatives and the local people. Their dependency ranges from seeking people's assistance in agricultural and related works to total dependence on close relatives for food and shelter services. The following case also portrays how dependency hurts the social, economic, and psychological well beings of widows.



Mrs W3. is one of the informants who were asked to reflect her view on the economic impacts of blood revenge practices on women. She is a blood revenge widow. She lost her partner to blood revenge three years ago. She bitterly complained that due to blood revenge, she has become “a blind household head” because it was her husband who ploughed and took care of the cattle. Consequently, now she is obliged to request the local people to help her in the harvesting and ploughing of farms.

Besides, she further said that the loss of her husband makes her to depend upon rental labor. This erodes her asset and highly depletes the amount of produce she would gain from her farm (source: Mrs. W3, Sofenge, Dec. 27, 2011).

4.5.2 Psycho-Social Impacts

Family Breakdown

According to female interviewees, blood revenge is one of the major causes of family disruption in the study area. This is particularly common in the slain's family. But they also asserted that the slayer's families are also highly subjected to family disorganization too. Similarly blood revenge disrupts the Aboriginal Siberian family organization also (Czaplicka, 1969). But the way it disrupts vary accordingly. Unlike the family in Sebentera kebele, the Aboriginal Siberians' family is disrupted because the member of the slayer is taken by the slain's relatives to assume the deceased man's role.

One of the female interviewees said that she has lost her husband three years ago. They have three children together. Today she lives with her younger daughter. Two of her sons live with their grandparents and aunts. “We have not seen each other for two years, she regrets, “had not happened that evil [blood revenge], I would have been the happiest person on earth. I would have lived with my children and my beloved husband. But God did not allow happening that.”

Apart from this, blood revenge does not let the killer's family to live intact. Mostly the killer and his close male relatives fearing of the victim's attack go to distant places. Only women remain at their homes. This makes them vulnerable to various psychological problems. A case to be mentioned is narrated by a female teacher in the following way:

All of the slayer's male relatives have already fled to some where only female relatives remained of home in order to ensure valuable possession into safety. Unfortunately, the slain's relatives arrived at their home and they began to slap, threaten and spite on their faces. Due to extreme fear and emotional instability, these women did nothing but stood before them in clam (Source: an interview with a Female teacher, Fendika, Dec. 27, 2011).

During this time, their relatives or family members suffer a lot from lack of emotional attachment, care, and support. Thus, according to Turney (1971), blood revenge loosens the taut feelings that that has developed for years. For this reason, especially married couples seek divorce.

As a basic social institution, the disruption of a family has a wider insinuation for the fragility and sudden collapse of the social system as a whole. Since the basic values of the family as a social unit is protection, emotional support, love, and co-responsibility in the household chores, the absence of a husband, sooner or later, affects the healthy functioning of the family system (Olson& Defrain, 2000).

Similar to other parts of Ethiopia (Eshetu, 1997 E.C), in Sebentera, the disorganization of the family severely hurts women than men. As the discussants in the focus group discussions, said, because of the presence of gender division of labor and the incompetence in the male dominated agricultural works, the produce they gained from their farms is minimum compared to the period where their husbands were available.

Similar to other societies of the Amhara region (Eshetu, 1997 E.C), a local development agent also pointed out that those women headed households are underrepresented in the workshops and conferences organized for the distribution of fertilizers, the adoption of selected seeds, and agricultural technologies. He further said that most of the female-headed households are revenge widows or revenge related divorcees.

In addition to this, one of the female interviewees bitterly told the researcher that her husband's relatives take over her farmlands and had taken the share of her husband's household possessions. She further said that:

I am now living in Kenta, another kebele, with my parents. I had been living in Sebentera with my children and my husband. I lost my husband three years ago due to blood revenge. Since then, I fled to my parents' home leaving our fertile garden behind. After a year, I came to this kebele in order to register the garden in my name. But my husband's parents claimed that it is their own garden. I have been complained to the local land registration and ownership workers. Still they said that they are still investigating the case (Source: field data, Mrs. W5 Agamoch, Dec. 17, 2011).

As the local land registration and ownership management process owner reported, following revenge killings, the residents come to their office to gain a legal conclusion over farmland ownership. Most of the complaints are women who either lost their husbands or recent divorcees due to blood revenge. According to him, "seeing them standing alone, every relative of their husbands or neighbors made every effort to grab lands from women". Thus, because of death of their husbands or divorce like the Zairian women (Braxton, 1995), they can easily lose the right to use farmland.

The local militia man also maintained that when thieves understand that their husbands are no longer around them, they began to rob women's property. Because they believed that nobody is around these women to safeguard their property. As he said, he has

witnessed so many theft crimes were committed against women's property that lost their husbands or separated from their husbands due to blood revenge.

To sum up, due to family breakdown caused by blood revenge practices, women easily become vulnerable for theft, confiscation of farmlands and other household possessions, low participation in social activities, poverty, emotional instability, and other related problems. These problems are also backed by the study which revealed that divorce is emotionally and financially risky for women (Andersen, 2005; Unger & Crawford, 1992).

Migration and Displacement

As in Tuasag, Shinasha people and Arsi Oromos (Kiezer, 1972; Bayisa & Lemessa, 2008; Yihune, 2010), dislocation is one of the social impacts of blood revenge practices in the study area. In the discussions and interviews held with the local people, it has also been understood that blood revenge is one of the main causes of migration in the study area. According to them, after losing their property and social ties, especially the avenger's family no longer wishes to remain in their home. And for the sake of better livelihood options, they migrate to another places where they think are inaccessible to the slain's kin attack.

According to the information obtained from the focus group participants, beginning from the previous two years to the present, more than 60 households left the area due to blood revenge. Most of them have been the slayers' families. The researcher has also got the chance to observe ruined and abandoned homes numbering at least fifteen. Others, according to them, are destroyed without any trace by the slain's family.

Darasa widows are displaced and mutilated due to cultural factors (Tsehai, 1980). In contrary in Sebentera, looking for assistance from close relatives and out of despair, the slain's wives leave their home and go to their parents' home. One of the revenge widows described the situation as follows: *What am I waiting for? The thread that linked me with my husband's relative has already been cut. Living with in-laws is horrible; what is left*

behind nothing except a blurred memory is (Source: field data Mrs. W6, Jinger, Dec. 9, 2011).

Contrary to this, one of the blood revenge widows asserted that she has maintained a good relationship with her husband's relative though she has moved to another place, "of course", she said, "our relationship will not be as good as what it had been previously."

An expert on security issues at Dabat *woreda* has also stated that most of the migratory trends follow a rural-rural migration pattern. Because both the slain's and slayer's family's relatives mostly reside in rural areas. However, he said, it does not mean that no one migrates to urban centers. An undeniable number of women and men also migrate to the adjacent or far away urban areas and engage in various income-generating activities. A local elder also noted that women migrate or move to other places not because of choices but out of necessity. There is no one around them who can help and take care of them as their husbands do. Therefore, they migrate to other places where they thought it is suitable.

Thus, blood revenge, by eroding both the instrumental and expressive needs of the family system, speeds up family disorganization and leads its members to migration, and related problems. In addition, it weakens the affinal kin ties that are established through the union of a husband and a wife. By doing this, it restrains, especially, blood revenge widows, from obtaining further assistance from affinal kin in times of harvest and ploughing seasons. Due to this reason, these widows change their place of residence and migrate to their close relatives' homes where the necessary support and care are thought to be available.

In relation to the slayer's female relatives, apart from constant threat from the slain's family, they migrate to other places in search of safe shelters and better support. Due to fear of reprisal from the slain's relatives, in a place where the killing has been taken place, no one raise his hands to help them in every aspect. Such type of help is, according to the slain's family, tantamount to the slayer's accomplice. Therefore, fearing of this

labeling, every resident of the *kebele*, other than close relatives, refuse to offer help in the harvesting of crops and ploughing of the farm lands of the slayer's female relatives.

Social Isolation

In Albania, the number of families who live in isolation out of fear of blood-feud reprisal figures from 124 to 133 across the country (IRB,2011). Among Shinashas and Arsi Oromos also, to minimize the danger of vengeance, the slayer's family is obliged not to fetch water from the spring or river and not to graze their animals at the same grazing land (Bayisa & Lemessa, 2008; Yihune, 2010).

This isolates the slayer's family from utilizing the local resources and further marginalizes them from social life. Similarly, social isolation is one of the social impacts of blood revenge practices in the study area. The killer's and the slain's relatives are not allowed to attend church services together, shop together, attend mourning and wedding ceremonies together and be a membership within the same community based associations such as *Mahiber*³, *Equab*⁴, etc. As community based institutions are primarily established to provide financial, social, emotional and spiritual support (Flemmen, 2008; Desalegne, 1991; Sintayehu, 2001), and losing membership associations in these institutions hinder women from obtaining a multitude of benefits.

Especially this is harsh for women, because as the local custom dictates women are discouraged to establish friendships outside the nearby community. But this is not the case for men. As a result, their friendships are only extended to drinking coffee together, offering help in times of wedding and mourning, and other similar occasions.

In the advent of revenge killings, all these occasions are destined to be disrupted. Even, an elder said, any slayer's relative is not allowed to pass in the vicinity of the graveyards

³ A religious association in which members get together once a month in the saint's day to share meals and contribute money to be used to support members and their families during times of adversities such as death in the family (Emebet, 2008, p.19).

⁴ An indigenous saving association

where the slain person is buried. Doing this, according to the elder, is considered as a sacrilege by the slain's family. He also added that the slayer's relatives are not allowed to attend church services in the church where the slain's body is rested. As the traditional women's mutual support network is based on residential proximity (neighborhood), kin-based, or religious oriented support networks, the dismissal of women from these network systems is socially, economically, and spiritually risky. Because women are the main beneficiaries of these mutual support networks including work sharing, labor exchange, lending agricultural implements, household utensils, and even processed food items, their dismissal, in all fronts, brings lots of troubles to them (Dessalegne, 1991; Kiros, 1995). As a result, the slayer's female relatives are overburdened during wedding and memorial festivity seasons. A slayer's relative narrates the situation as follows:

In times of wedding and mahiber, we work day and night while preparing wot (stew), washing containers, and fetching water from the nearby wells. Since we are the slayer's relatives, no one wishes to offer us help. Fear of the slain's relative attack and gender based division of labor; restrain men to contribute their part in the preparation and conclusion of wedding feasts and mahiber (Source: field data Mrs. W4Madoye, Dec. 23, 2011).

The Prohibition of Widows Remarriage

A study conducted on the Orokaiva and Hamar societies revealed that widows and particularly blood revenge widows are not allowed to remarry and are temporarily secluded from any social relationship (Williams, 1969; Lydall, 1980). This continues until the slayer is captured and killed by her husband's tribe. In the study area, however, blood revenge widows are not secluded from any social relations, but implicitly they are discouraged from remarrying before their husbands' death is avenged.

As one of the female interviewees told the researcher that blood revenge widow who shows a strong desire to form a new marital relation with a man is considered by the society as having lust, selfishness, and ingratitude. They, therefore, eliminate the idea of remarriage from their minds soon. Surprisingly enough, if the deceased husband's

relatives suspected that she is planning to remarry another man, they will discourage her through verbal insulting, threatening to confiscate her husband's possessions, and threatening to kill her new would-be husband.

On part of a widow, there is an unbending decision to remarry another man unless her husband's death has not been avenged. During the personal interview, one of the female interviewees hypothesized that such attitudes indirectly prompt the slain's male relatives to take revenge on the slayer or his relatives.

With regard to the slayer's wife, if she is divorced from her husband, no one dares to establish any marital relationship with her. Because of fear of attacks from her previous husband or the slain's relatives. Especially remarriage is mostly impossible for those women who had children from their previous marriage. Thus, their remained alternative is to migrate to far away urban centers and begin their own life afresh.

Prostitution and HIV/AIDS

Experts at Dabat *woreda* indicated that blood revenge practices as one of the major causes of rural urban migration in the study area; women come to the adjoining urban centers looking for better job opportunities and thus better livelihood choices. Nevertheless, when they understand that the true urban life is totally different from what they previously dreamt about, to sustain their lives, they involve themselves in prostitution and other low paying jobs.

In the focus group discussion held with the local women, questions raised on the relationship between prostitution, HIV/AIDS and blood revenge practices, some of the participants denied drawing relationships among these issues. But more than half of the participants asserted that though it gives the impression that no direct links can be drawn from these interrelated issues, they cannot deny the latent causes of blood revenge practices for the former two social problems.

In the informal interview held with the local people, it was revealed that some of the resident's of Fendika⁵ are blood revenge widows. These widows' livelihood is depends on selling local beverages and some of them on prostitution. Due to public rage and criticisms, however, any sexual activity including prostitution is carried out in a hidden way.

Dropping out from School

This problem is common among female students of both the slain's and killer's kin group. According to the local school directress, blood revenge is one of the main causes of female students' school drop out. In one way, this practice obliged female students to cover both the reproductive and productive work at the expense of attending their education. This happens either when they lose their fathers, brothers or husbands who can help them at least in covering outdoor works and provide them with the necessary educational materials or when the male members of the slayer's family move to other places for security reasons, and even if they are available at home, they will not engage in outdoor works fearing of the slain's relatives' attack. Thus, they have to cover the male's duty too.

In another way, female students discontinue their schooling due to a constant threat and physical abuse from the slain's family. In the focus discussions and personal interviews, the participants unanimously argued that though females are excepted from revenge killings (this customary rule serves as long as women are exempted from any killing), and it does not mean that they are also spared from verbal abuse, physical attack and sexual harassment. Generally, the psycho-social impacts of blood revenge practices on women are vividly pictured from the following case.

⁵ Fendika is a town found in Janora sub-district, Sebentera *kebele*, which is serving as the administrative and commercial centers of the near by six *kebeles*.

Mrs. W2 is one of the sisters of the murderer. She asked to forward her views on the psych-social impacts of blood revenge on women. She indicated that it sours the social relationships that have existed for years. Due to blood revenge, now a days, they are not able to visit patients, attend church services, pay tributes to deceased persons, and above all they are not able to offer their labor in times of wedding and other religious observances.

In the old good days, she said, “we have had lots of neighbors who come to our home for drinking coffee and for just chatting. However, today those neighbors are turned into enemies and they no longer come to our home. For women, attending coffee ceremonies together, helping female counterparts in times of wedding and mahiber, and visiting friends were the only enjoyments that women they in this kebele. Nevertheless, all these have gone due to blood revenge (Source: Mrs. W2, Sofenge, Dec. 7, 2011).

4.5.3 Political Impacts: Low Participation and Representation in the Local Politics

The inherent low participation and representation of women in the political processes coupled with heavy work burden due to blood revenge practices worsen off their degree of participation at the local level. According to the *kebele* officials, this is especially noticeable in the local administrators’ election, consciousness raising meetings such as seminars on women’s rights, and other popular participations and public mobilization events.

In the focus group discussions and interviews held with the local women, they indicated that due to blood revenge women are obliged to do the household chores and also the tedious agricultural works in the field. Thus, they hardly get spare time to spend on the local political affairs and aired their views. One of the slayer’s female relative illustrated the situation as follows:

Our village is grouped in to two-the slayer's and slan's relatives residence. All the slayer's male relatives spent the day while keeping their eyes on the slain's relatives' movement. So, only female relatives of the slayer cover both the laborious farm works and the household chores. Even milking and taking care of calves are left for us. Thus, in such a situation how can we expect to attend meetings? (Source: FGD participant, Mrs. W6, Menderge, Dec. 27, 2011).

Apart from heavy work burden, migration, dislocation, family disorganization, fear of threats and physical attacks from the slain's relatives' blood revenge also affects the political participation and representation of women in the study area. Due to these reasons, the political participation and representation of women in the local politics is very low compared to the women who are not affected by blood revenge practices.

4.5.4 Other Impacts

Heavy Work Burden

Blood revenge practices make women co-responsible for both out door and household activities. This diminishes their spare time that would be spent on leisure and on the various village-based popular activities. A local elder shared his personal observation to the researcher, he experienced when he has been a guest in one of the villages where blood revenge is severe and common. He has narrated what he was observed in the following way.

I arrived at my hosts' home in the afternoon. I found only the husband while pointing his fire-arm towards the entrance of his compound. I asked where his wife was. He told me she has been harvesting maize crops in one of their farm lands. After taking some food and drinks, we waited her for a long time.

But she had come home after 6 pm in the night fall. Then she began to milk the cows immediately. She did not stop doing work; she began to

churn a pot of milk while roasting beans of coffee. It was laborious. She went to her bed around the time of the cock crow (Source: an interview with a man, Fendika, Dec. 7, 2011).

Similarly, blood revenge practices bring heavy work burden to blood revenge widows. As the only basic pillar of the household existence, these women are expected to cover both the reproductive and productive works. Thus, for the betterment of the family's livelihood, as a woman interviewee said, "Women must say no to boredom and exhaustion." Otherwise their families fail to meet the necessary requirements that help to maintain their members intact.

The immense impacts of blood revenge practices, especially in increasing women's work burden, on women are also known to the local men. This can be partly seen from the following case.

Mr. m4 is a slayer's brother who was asked to reflect his view on the impacts of blood revenge practices on women. His response was that, he cannot focus on his seasonal farms and livestock, does not church, and do shopping and other agricultural tasks. Instead, therefore, his wife substitutes him in carrying these activities. As a result, she has no spare time.

He said "she and I are innocent victims. Both of us have played nothing in the planning and execution of the killing. Especially, my wife is punished for the sin she has not committed. But so as to meet the family's need she gets up early in the morning to do the farm works and at dusks she comes home exhausted in spirit and body thinking of the awaiting household chores (Source: Mr. m4, Fendika, Dec. 7, 2011).

Victimhood

In most cultures of the world, women are exempted from revenge killings. But the case in the study area is totally different. According to all focus group participants obtained from the study participants, if a person kills a woman intentionally, he will be avenged through the killing of his sister or his close female relatives. This custom is also applicable in the Arab society (Patton, 1901). In both cases, even though the killing is often committed by men, women will be targeted in the course of counter-vengeance.

A female interviewee also stated that in the *kebele* women were killed by the avengers while doing household chores at nights. It matches with the time that the slain's relatives spy out about the slayer's whereabouts. Thus, in an attempt to murder their husbands or relatives, they, by chance, will be killed. Besides, she further said, in the absence of males, the slain's kin put pressure on the women to obtain information about the whereabouts of the slayer or his male kin. Mostly, they will not collaborate in disclosing their relatives address. As a result, the slain's relatives may use the most cruel means to gain that information ranging from verbal abuse or physical threat to brutal beating.

One of the female interviewees indignantly expressed her view as "women are not the main actors in the stigmatizing and perpetuating blood revenge practices but men. So they are innocent victims of what they are not directly liable for it." Though women of the slayer group are not susceptible for rape or taken as captive wives and brides like the Sambia and Orokaiva societies (Herdt, 1987; Williams, 1969), in this *Kebele*, however, they would be severely beaten or killed by the slain's relatives for the murder they have not committed.

Widowhood

As a common sense, blood revenge is responsible for the genesis of widowhood. In areas where blood revenge is frequent and common like Orokaivas, Aboriginal Siberians, and the Massai people, by claiming the male section of the society, it lets widowhood to come about (Williams, 1969; Gulliver, 1968; Czaplicka, 1969). According to the local people, blood revenge is also the main cause of widowhood in the study area. Although it is difficult to present authentic statistical figures, according to them, the number of people

killed due to blood revenge surpasses the number of people who died of any other reason. This shows that blood revenge is the most important cause of widowhood in the study area.

Moreover, through the killing of males, blood revenge contributes a lot in the explosion of female-headed households. Most of them are poor and chained to live in poverty due to the presence of the long standing tradition of gender inequality reflected in the distribution of farm lands, customary laws of inheritance, belief systems and the general cultural make-up of the society. The psychological and other associated impacts of blood revenge practices on blood revenge-widows are briefly discussed in the following case.

Mrs. D. is one of the blood revenge-widows who explained the psychological impacts of widowhood on women. She have married for four years and lost her husband before a year. She said "previously we have had lots of guests and visitors in kibella. But following the loss of my husband, most of them hardly show willingness to visit our home. My husband's relatives are neglected me as if I killed him. So now adding to the negative connotations of widowhood in the area, I live in despair and desolation.

Moreover, she said that she wished to go to her parents' home. But, her husband's relatives would confiscate her farm lands if they discover that she no longer reside in her husband's place of residence. Thus, lack of options, she prefers to suffer from these nefarious problems (Source: Mrs. D, Fendika, Dec. 4, 2011).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



5.1 Summary and Conclusion

There are lots of cultural demands associated with the traits of masculinity. These norms define what masculine traits are and what they are not. They are widely ingrained in every society's imagination of what a masculine person ought to behave and act. The conception of masculine traits, therefore, is different across cultures.

This study has tried to explore the traits of ideal masculinity and its linkage with blood revenge practices on the one hand and the impacts of blood revenge practices on women on the other hand. It was conducted out of the conviction that a detailed examination of the study of people's conception of masculinity would reveal the truth behind the recurrent explosions of revenge killings in the study area.

Thus, this study has shown that though ostensible reasons act as catalysts for the sparking off revenge killing, the societal conception of masculine traits along with gender role expectations are highly responsible for it. In the study area men are conceptualized as courageous, brave, chaser of enemies, endowed with the skill of marksmanship, assertive, defender of family honor, superior, etc.

These traits are considered standardized in the local culture against which the extent to which a man displays a manly behavior is measured. Those who successfully fulfill these traits would be encouraged through the provision of various privileges and those who are not damned to expose for mockery and

public criticisms throughout their span of lives. These masculine traits, if they are closely examined, trigger blood revenge directly or indirectly.

In spite of its role in glorifying men's honor, blood revenge brings catastrophic impact on the society. But due to gender ideology and other related factors, its impact is more serious on women. The impacts of blood revenge on women can be seen from economic, social, political, and psychological angles.

In the economic sphere, it depletes their assets through compensations paid for the victim's family, property usurpation, theft, etc. Besides, due to gender division of labor, especially blood revenge widows are not allowed to plough their farm lands. Thus, they become easily vulnerable for various forms of economic problems such as hunger, homelessness, and frustration.

With regard to the slayer's female relatives, since males are kept home to avert a reciprocal attack from the victim's family, women are required to do the farm works such as harvesting and taking care of crops. Due to less number of labour, the agricultural produce become minimal and therefore, they are exposed for poverty and related problems.

Apart from this, their husbands went to far away places looking for safe shelters. During this time, no one dares to help them in harvesting and take care of farms. For this reason, they were not able to produce what they are supposed to.

In the social aspects, blood revenge causes social isolation, family breakdown, prohibition of remarriage, sour affinal ties, discontinuation of schooling, prostitution and HIV/AIDS, migration, etc. Moreover, it also brings psychological impacts on women including constant fear, distress, emotional abuse, and feeling of uncertainty, obsession, and despair.

In the political aspects, by souring social relationships and increasing women's work load, it lessens the level of women's participation in the local politics.

The study has also investigated the customary mechanisms of settling conflicts, related to blood revenge. In the study area, there are some customary conflict resolution strategies devised to lessen tensions associated with blood revenge and to dissuade potential disputes. These are council of local elders, priests, *Dem-Adraqi-Komite*, which has been formed in collaboration with the community and the local government, and patting crosses. These conflict resolution institutions use various techniques and sanctions to enforce their decision on both parties.

However, these institutions are now-a-days losing their influences and acceptance especially in their capacity of enforcing decisions. Due to this reason, they become only makers of tiger on paper decisions and thus no one cares to abide by these decisions.

In conclusion, this study maintained that coupled with illegal weapon smuggling the diminishing role of the customary dispute resolution mechanisms, and above all the local concepts of ideal masculinity such as courage, banditry, competitiveness, etc, play a pivotal role in the instigation and continuity of blood revenge practices in the study area. Thus, to decrease the incidence of blood revenges and to lessen their multiple impacts on women, the researcher has forwarded the following recommendations based on the major findings of the study.

5.2 Recommendations

- **Ascertaining Gender Equality:** Like other rural areas in Ethiopia, gender equality in the study area is almost non-existent. Still men are sole decision makers in the household affairs, dominant, superior, etc. gender-based division of labor is also anchored in every socio-economic activities. In times of conflict, their husbands will no longer be available at

home due to imprisonment, exile, or death. This, coupled with the existing gender inequality in the study area, makes them vulnerable for homelessness, famine, and other problems. To lessen the impacts of blood revenge practices, therefore, gender-based division of labor should be disintegrated and both the local government and the local people should work together in the realization of gender equality in the *kebele*.

- **Dismantle the myths associated with the traits of ideal masculinity:** It is imperative to make an assortment on the traits of masculinity on the basis of their capacity in triggering killings and change them into a more constructive way through awareness creation, mainstreaming in the extra-curricular activities of the school system, deconstructing the institutions that are responsible for the continuity of these traits, etc.
- **Strengthening the influences of customary dispute resolution institutions:** Currently, in the study area, the influence of these institutions is questionable. They are not able to discharge their duty effectively. In violation of their decisions, now a day recurrent killing is breaking out in the study area. Therefore, stringed actions must be taken by the local government and people to restore the lost honor of these institutions and thus prevent further killings.
- **Follow up the current land registration and certification processes at the grass-root level:** Since disputes over farm lands are one of the main ostensible reasons for the explosion of killings, the concerned bodies must take the necessary steps in the allocation and registration of land. To this effect, the militia men, rapid security forces, the community, and the local development agents have to contribute their parts in the fair distribution and confirmation of land holdings.

- **Tackle illegal weapon smuggling:** Due to its proximity to neighboring countries such as Sudan and Eritrea, the *kebele* is suitable for illegal fire arm exchange. Thus, the government, with the support of the local people, should devise contextual-appropriate strategies of tackling illegal arm smuggling.
- **The local officials need to take the necessary measures to safeguard the slayer's property from the victim's family.** When any killing abrupt, the murdered family instantly rushes to demolish and loot the murderer's and his relatives' property. Therefore, when killings occur, the local authorities should take the necessary actions to protect the slayer's relatives' property from vandalism and deliberate property destruction by the victims' group.
- **Scale up the efficiency of legal institutions in a way to render rapid justice and balanced punishment to the offenders:** The *woreda* courts are inefficient in delivering justice due to corruption, measly evidence and their innate under-staffed nature. As a result, the local people turn their back on them and look for alternative means of obtaining personal justice, in this case blood revenge. Thus, the local officials need to work hard to equip the local courts with the required number of professionals, to establish a corruption free, if possible, court system, and restructure the courts in a way to render rapid and balanced retribution to the offenders
- **Permanent security forces should station in the *kebele*.** As it had been discussed in the previous section, the study area is highly prone to different forms of conflicts due to lack of permanently stationed security forces and other law enforcing bodies. Thus, by maintaining order and peace in the *kebele* through permanently stationed law enforcing bodies, it is possible to prevent further conflicts that can lead to killings and then counter killing.

- The local authorities, health extension and development agent workers should make efforts aimed at enabling female-headed households to have equal access in the participation of the local politics, household-based health extension services, and acquisition of new agricultural technologies through organizing women- specific meetings, workshops, exhibitions and other awareness raising events. These will enable them to empower themselves and pull out of dependency and other blood revenge-induced problems.
- Banditry should be deterred through community based awareness raising trainings, timely patrolling activities by the security forces, and community based policing.
- Finally, academic, governmental and non-governmental institutions should promote further large-scale studies aiming to investigate the root causes of the problem and to bring new, contextual, and comprehensive mitigating mechanisms on the impact of blood revenge practices on the local people in general and on women in particular.

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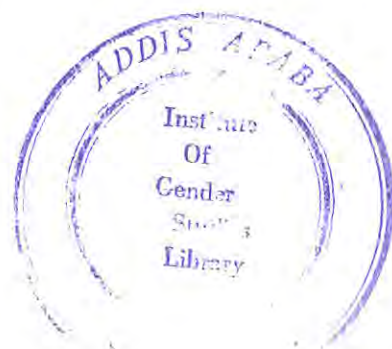
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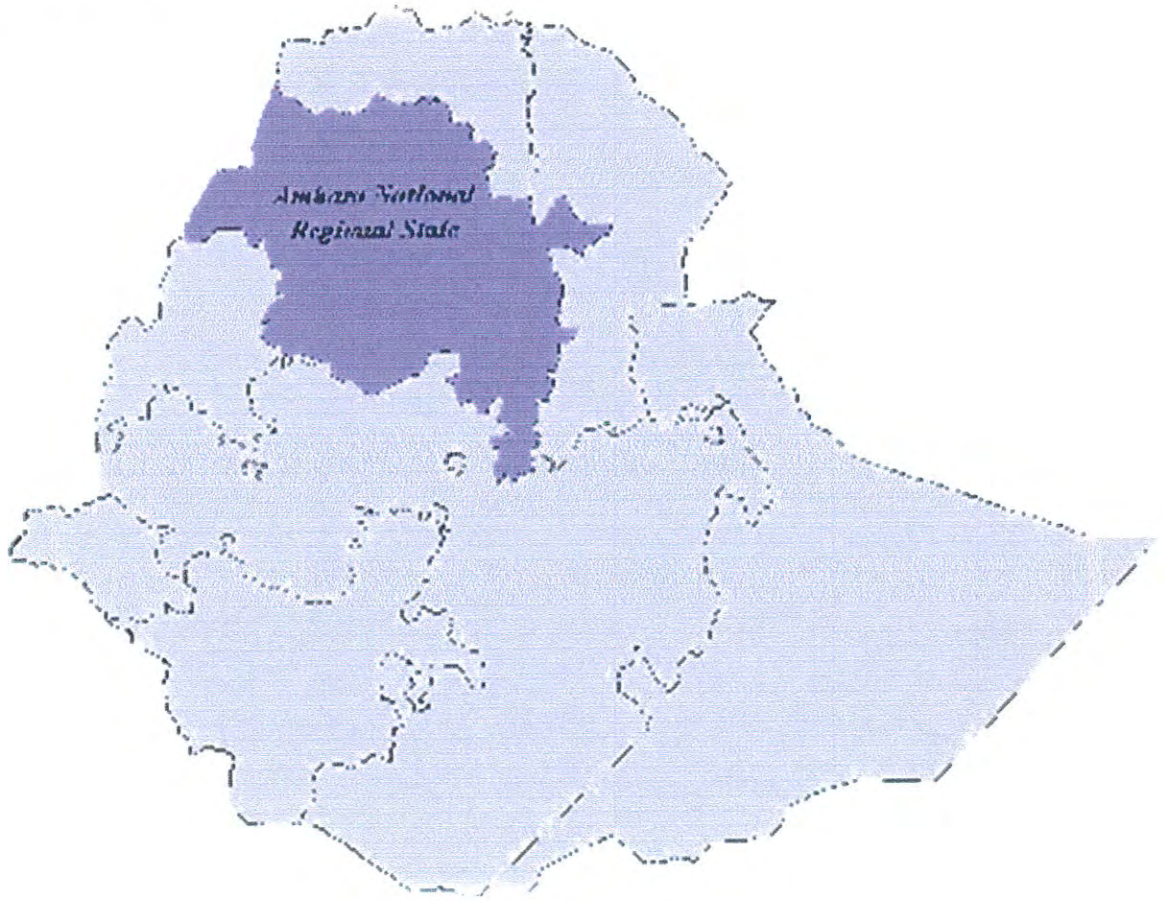
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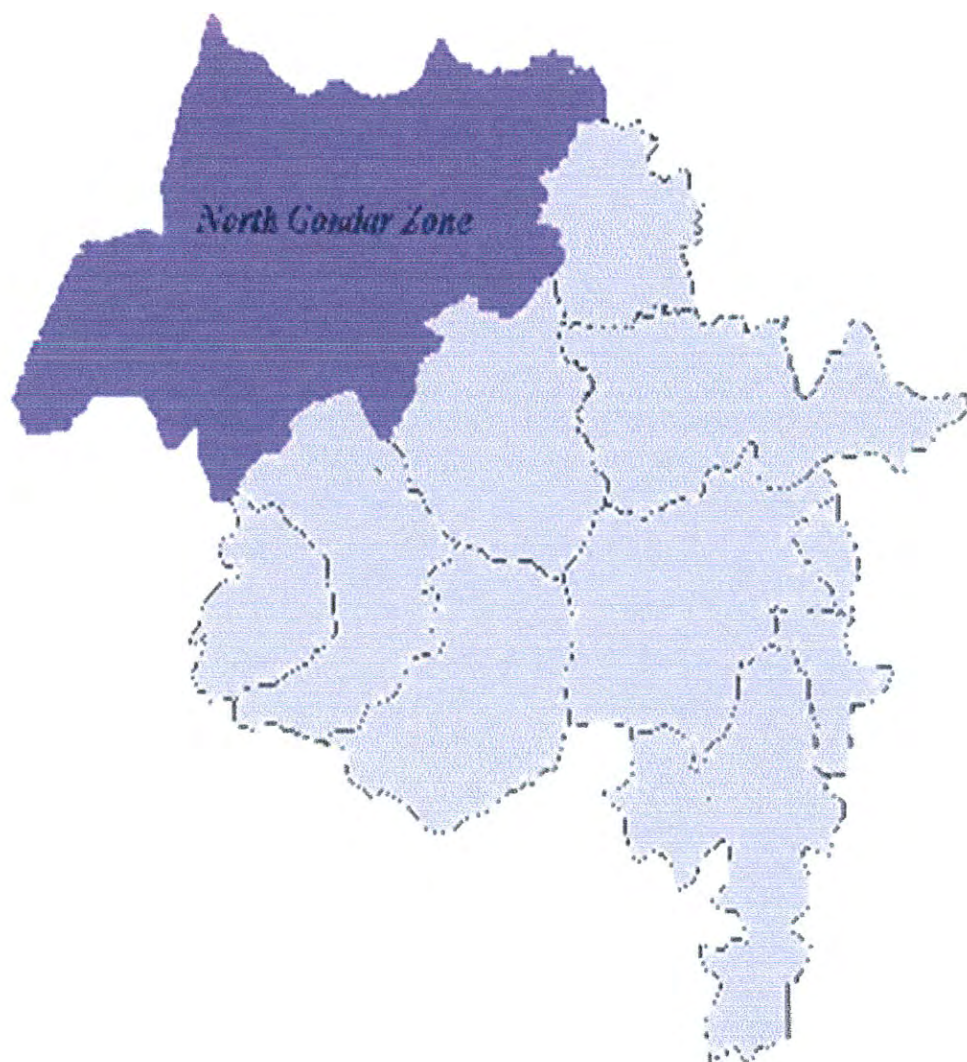
ANNEXES. 1 MAPS

MAP. 1 AMHARA NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE- ETHIOPIA



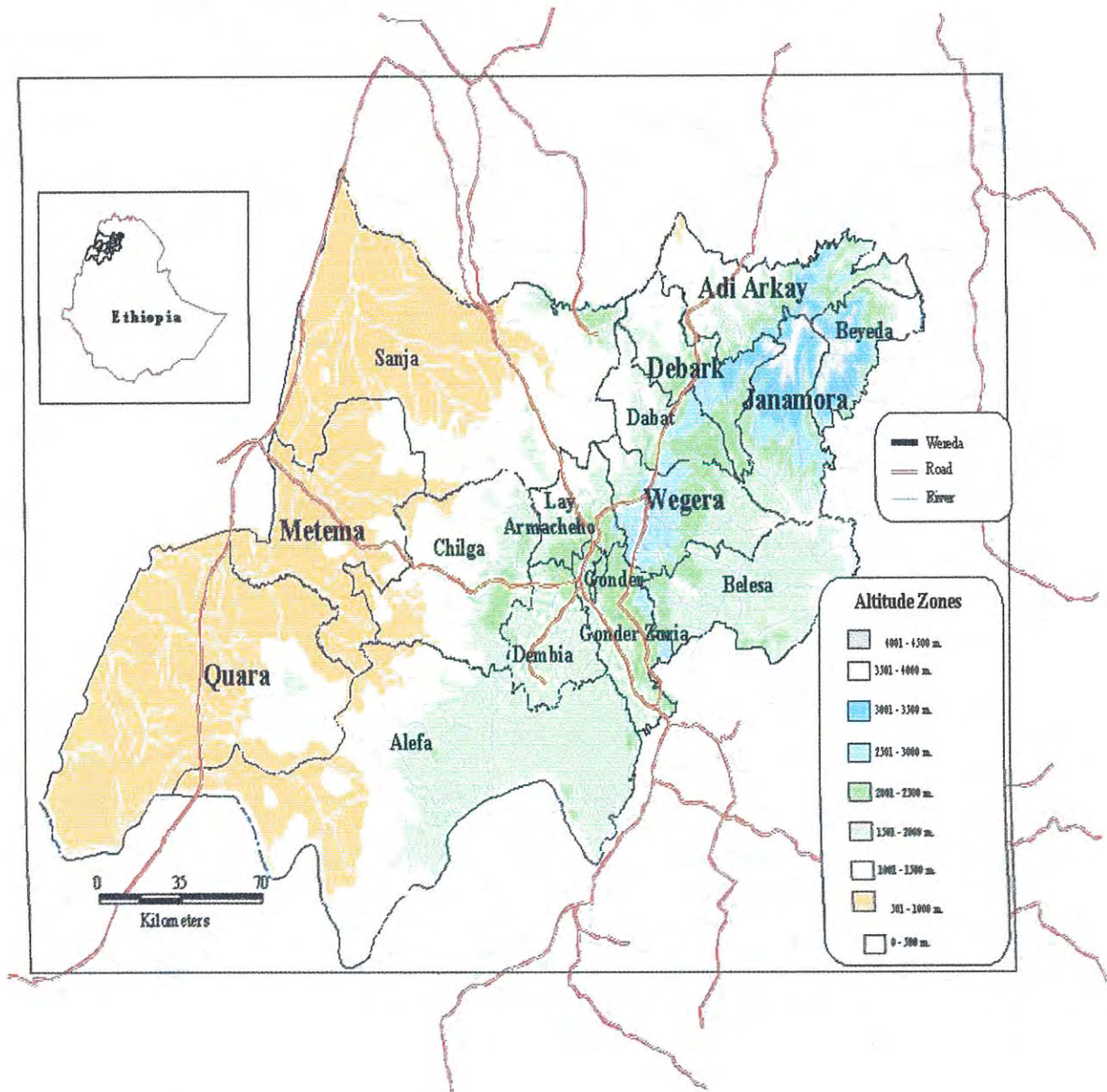
Adapted From UN Capital Development Fund-Ethiopia (2007)

**MAP.2 NORTH GONDER ZONE-AMHARA NATIONAL
REGIONAL STATE**



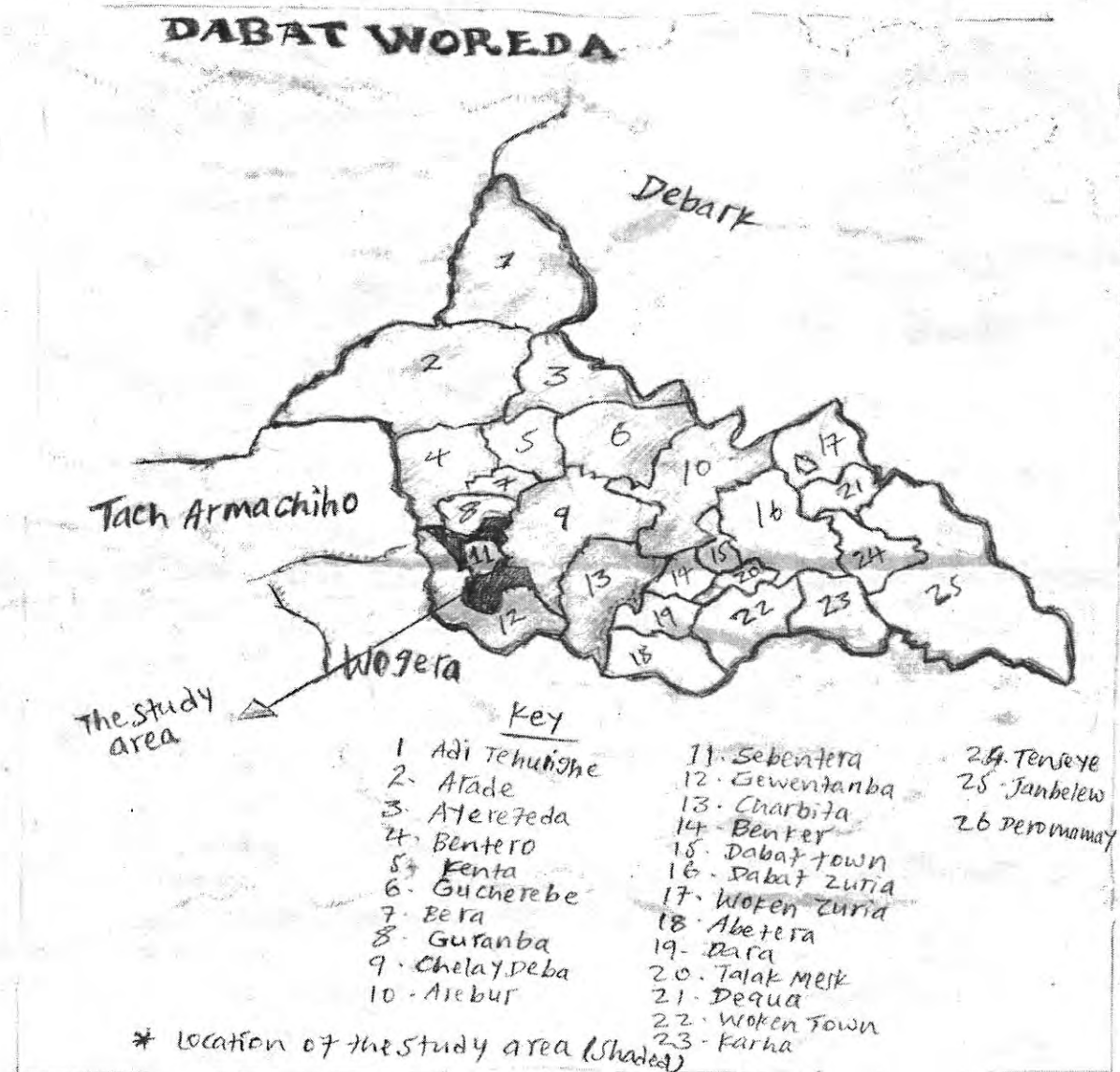
Adapted From UN Capital Development Fund-Ethiopia (2007)

MAP .3 NORTH GONDER ZONE WOREDAS



Adapted From UN Capital Development Fund-Ethiopia (2007)

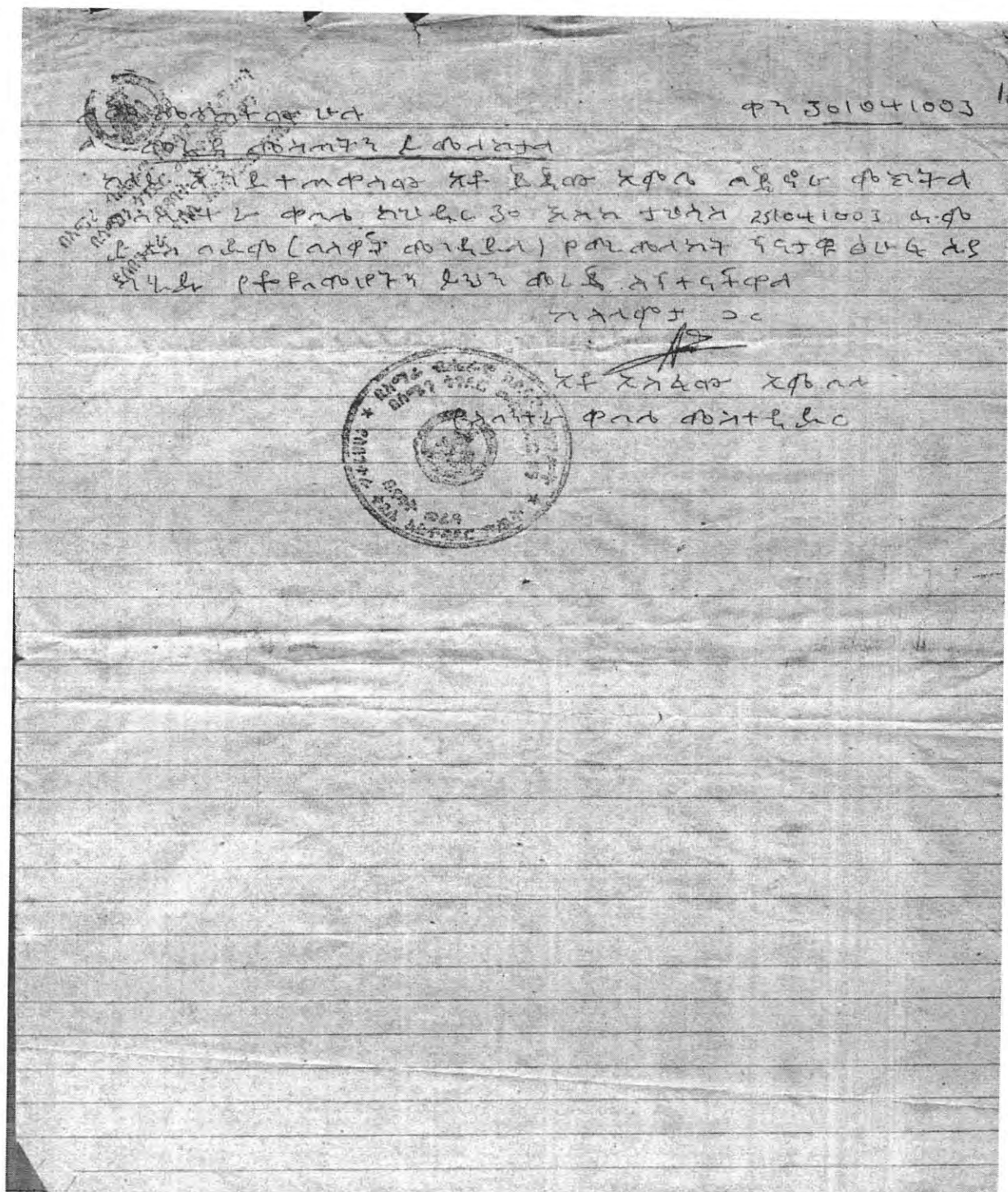
1.4 A Hand-Sketched Map of Dabat Woreda



(Source: copied from Dabat woreda Government Communications Affairs office)

ANNEX 2. LETTERS

Letter-1



Letter -2



ቁጥር ዳወአስ/ዐ/-፪፯፻-2003/

ቀን 29/3/2003/

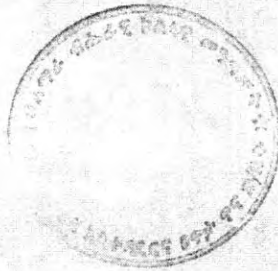
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ሰበንተራ፣

ጉዳዩ፣ ትብብር እንዲደረግለት ስለማሳወቅ፣

ከላይ በእርሱ እንደተገለፀው ተማሪ ጃጂው አንቤ ወ/ሚካኤል የተባለው ግለሰብ በቀበሌው ስለደም ብቀላ ጥናታዊ ፀሐፍ ስለሚያደርግ በናንተ በኩል አስፈላጊውን ትብብር እንዲደረግለት ስንል እናሳስባለን፡፡



ከሠላምታ ጋር //

ዳንኤል ታረቀኝ ጎሹ
Daniel Tarekegn Goshu

ኃላፊ የጥናት ወረዳ
አስተዳደርና ፀጥታ ጥናት ጽ/ቤት
ጋላሬ

ANNEX 3. STUDY QUESTIONS

3.1 DISCUSSION GUIDES FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Date _____ Time _____

Venue _____ Duration _____

Group Name _____ Name of the Moderator _____

Name of the note taker _____

GENERAL PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Code/ Name	Sex	Age	Educational background	Religion	Occupation
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

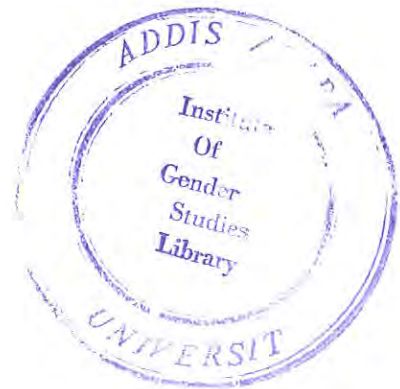
DISCUSSION GUIDES

1. Let’s start our discussion on how we are bringing up our children? Is boys’ and girls’ upbringing process different? How? Why? What types of behavior are expected from boys and girls? How are they rewarded and punished for their conformity or failure to conform to their expected behavior? Are their gender specific games for children? What roles do these games play in children’s present and future lives? How?
2. What are the traits of ideal masculinity? Does every man have these traits? How could an individual posses these traits? What are the privileges and benefits of

having these traits? Is there any proverb, war cry, praise song or any thing that can glorify an ideal man? How are these traits linked to blood revenge?

3. How could you describe a feminine man? What types of tasks and behaviors are expected from this man? Do you have any proverbs or poems or any other expression for a feminine man?
4. Do myths of ideal masculinity have any relationships with blood revenge? How? What will happen to the victim's family refused to avenge? Why?
5. What motivates individuals to engage in blood revenge? Are both men and women equally targets of blood revenge? If not, why? To how many generations does blood revenge extended down ward?
6. Do you think that blood revenge brings justice to the victim's family? How? Why?
7. What are the impacts of blood revenge on women, children and the family? Do women encounter especial problems in the course of a pay back killing? Why? How? What are these problems?
8. What sort of preventive mechanisms shall install to tackle blood revenge?
9. Is there anything else that you would like to share with the group?

Thank you!!



3.2 INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviewee _____ Date of Interview _____
Venue _____ Time of interview _____
Duration of Interview _____

GENERAL PROFILE OF INTERVIWEES

Code/ Name	Sex	Age	Educational background	Religion	Occupation
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

Guiding Questions

1. Do you have children? Are they boys or girls or both? Are boys’ and girls’ up bringing processes different? What do you expect from boys and girls? Why? How do you reward or punish if boys/girls conform to their expectations or they deviate from these expectations? Do you know any gender specific games for children? What roles do you think these games play in children’s present and future lives? How?
2. What do you think are the traits of ideal masculinity? Do you think that every man has these traits? What are the privileges and benefits of having these traits? Do you know any proverb, war cry, praise gong or any that can glorify an ideal man?

3. How could you describe a feminine man? What types of tasks and behaviors do you expect from this man? Do you know any proverb, poem or any other means of expression for a feminine in man?
4. Do you think that the myths of ideal masculinity have any relationships with blood revenge? How? What will happen to the victim's family refused to embark up on avenge?
5. What do you think causes individuals to engage in blood revenge? Are both men and women equally targets of blood revenge? If not why?
6. Do you think that blood revenge brings justice to the victim's family? How? To what extent do you believe in legal institution's efficiency of handling homicide matters?
7. What do you think are the impact of blood revenge on women, children, and the family? Do women encounter special problems in the course of a pay back killings? Why? How? Can you mention some of the problems that women face?
8. Are you a victim of blood revenge? Can you tell me some of your experiences? How could you cope up with the outcomes of blood revenge? What should be done to stop blood revenge?

Thank you!!

ANNEX 4: PROFILE OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

4.1 Profile of FGD Participants

Code	Sex	Age	Educational background	Religion	Occupation
	Male/ female				
P1	M	32	Church education	Orthodox Christianity	Farmer
P2	M	28	“	“	“
P3	M	42	“	“	“
P4	M	70	“	“	“
P5	M	25	“	“	“
P6	M	36	“	“	“
E1	M	42	Elementary complete	“	“
E2	M	37	Illiterate	Islam	Causal laborer
E3	M	52	“	Islam	Trader
E4	M	72	Elementary complete	Orthodox Christianity	Farmer
E5	M	60	Illiterate	“	“
E6	M	59	Elementary complete	“	Farmer
M1	M	28	High school complete	“	“
M2	M	31	“	“	“
M3	M	30	“	“	“
M4	M	26	Illiterate	“	“
M5	M	42	Church	“	“

			education		
M6	M	40	“	“	Farmer
W1	F	25	Illiterate	Islam	“
W2	F	32	High school Complete	Islam	Causal laborer
W3	F	40	Illiterate	Orthodox Christianity	Farmer
W4	F	27	Church education	“	Farmer
W5	F	28	Elementary complete	“	Farmer
W6	F	33	Church education	“	“
M1	M	29	Church education	“	“
m2	M	36	High school complete	“	“
m3	M	42	Illiterate	“	“
m4	M	45	High school complete	“	“
m5	M	26	Illiterate	“	“
m6	M	30	Church education	“	“

Keys

1. P = priests
2. E= elders
3. M= militiamen
4. W = women
5. m = men

4.2 Profiles of Interviewees

Code	Sex	Age	Educational background	Religion	Occupation
	Male/female				
1	M	26	Degree holder	Orthodox Christianity	Government employee
2	F	28	“	Islam	“
3	M	30	Diploma holder	Orthodox Christianity	“
4	M	33	“	“	“
5	F	27	Illiterate	“	Farmer
6	F	29	“	Islam	Trader
7	M	32	Elementary complete	Orthodox Christianity	Farmer
8	F	26	Church education	“	Farmer
9	F	25	“	Islam	Trader
10	F	27	“	“	Farmer
11	F	35	“	“	Causal laborer
12	F	32	“	“	Farmer
13	F	31	Illiterate	“	Causal laborer
14	F	26	“	“	“
15	F	31	Elementary complete	Islam	Trader
16	F	30	“	Orthodox Christianity	Farmer

17	F	31	Church education	“	Farmer
18	F	39	“	“	Farmer
19	M	37	“	“	Farmer
20	F	32	High school co.	Islam	Farmer
21	F	35	Church ed.	Orthodox Christianity	Farmer